



Greene County 4-H Program

Elements & Principles of Design Help Sheet

The following questions will help you identify and explain the elements and principles of design you've used in your exhibits.

Do not turn this form in – it is intended solely to help you prepare your exhibits and your goal-card/write-up for fair.

Elements are listed on the front of the page. **Principles** are on the back side of the page.

Elements of Design

The elements of design are color, line, texture, shape/form and space.

These are the tools for the design of the artwork, room, or garment.

Color

Name the colors (hue).

Are the colors bright or dull (intensity)?

Are the colors light or dark (value)?

How do the colors make you feel?

Why do the colors look good together?

Line

Describe the lines – curved, straight, thick, thin, bold, fine, horizontal, vertical, dotted, zigzag, etc.

Do the lines lead your eye? Explain.

Do the lines show direction, outline an object, or divide a space? Explain.

Do the lines create a mood? Explain.

Texture

Describe the texture – smooth, slick, shiny, rough, raised, bumpy, fuzzy, soft, hard, grainy, etc.

Can you feel the texture or is it just visual?

Shape/Form

Shapes are two-dimensional. Are the shapes geometric, realistic, or abstract?

If your design has three dimensions, it has **form**. Describe the form – balls, cylinders, pyramids, boxes, etc.

Space

Space is the amount of room you have.

Describe the negative space (background).

Describe the positive space (the design).

Principles are listed on back

Principles of Design

The principles of design – emphasis, balance, proportion, rhythm, and unity – are how we use the tools (elements) to create the desired look.

Balance

Are both sides of the design the same (symmetrical)?

If they are not the same, they may be asymmetrical, but do they feel balanced? Why?

Or is the design radial – arranged around a center point, like a pizza, daisy or tire?

Emphasis

What is the first thing you see? Why?

(Examples are contrasting color, line or shape; larger or smaller shape; contrast from plain background)

Rhythm

What makes your eye move around the design? (Repeating, gradually bigger, alternating?)

Unity

Why do parts of the design feel like they belong together?

(For example: textures have similar feel, lines or shapes repeat, colors are harmonious, etc.)

Proportion

How does the design fill the space?

How do parts of the design relate to each other?

Highly recommended resources:

(available at the Greene County Extension Office or through ISU Extension Publications online)

- **Visual Arts:**
Design: Exploring the Elements & Principles (pub. 4H 634)
- **Home Improvement:**
Pulling It Together: Elements & Principles of Design in Home Improvement (pub. 4H 492)
- **Clothing/Fashion:**
Unraveling the Mystery of Design Elements and Principles in Clothing (pub. 4H 313)