

Design Elements and Art Principles

Design Elements include line, shape, color, texture, and space. Design principles are rhythm, proportion, emphasis, balance and unity. Design principles serve as a guideline to help us understand why some combinations of the design elements work better together than others.

Design Elements

Line can be horizontal, vertical, zigzag, bold, fine, diagonal, or curved. Lines can show direction, outline an object, divide a space.

Shapes are made from connected lines – geometric (□, ○, △) natural abstract lines that are connected or form. How they are arranged determines the design.

Color is described by the words hue (name), value (lightness or darkness), and intensity (strength.) Color helps define parts of objects and set off one area of a design from another.

Texture refers to the surface characteristic that can be touched or seen – its smoothness or roughness, tactile (can feel it), visual (can only see it.)

Space is the area which an object or design occupies. Space is divided into negative and positive areas. Negative space is background or unused space.

Art Principles

Rhythm is organized movement. Variation and repetition in lines, shapes, or colors keeps your eyes moving and helps create rhythm.

Proportion refers to the relationship of size, amount, or number among the elements. Unequal proportions in which one element dominates is desirable.

Emphasis is the center of attention. It captures your attention by unusual use of line, shape, texture, space, or value.

Balance gives a feeling of stability to a design. Three types of balance may be used – formal, informal, and radial balance.

Radial balance - same around a center point, like spokes on a wheel.

Formal balance - when one side of something is the same as the other side.

Informal balance - when the emphasis is to the right or left of center or dissimilar on both sides.

Unity

is the union of the elements in a design. All of the elements are working together according to the design principles to create the feeling that you want. The feeling of completeness of idea, mood, or emotion.