

## Elements and Principles of Design Help Sheet (Boone County)

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/boone/kidsteens.htm>

(look under 4-H Club Resources on the right)

### **Elements of Design**

#### **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 or 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 2-dimensional. Are the shapes geometric or realistic or abstract?  
If your design has 3-dimensions it has form – describe the form (balls, cylinders, pyramids, boxes.)

#### **Space**

Space is the amount of room you have.  
Describe the negative space (background)?  
Describe the positive space – the design?

### **Principles of Design**

#### **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? (such as textures have similar feel, lines or shapes repeat, colors are harmonious)

#### **Proportion**

How does the design fill the space?  
How do parts of the design relate to each other?

## **Elements of Design**

Design has individual elements, which are a part of every item. These include color, texture, line, shape, and form.

**Colors** have hues, intensities, and values. They affect each other. They affect how you think, feel, and act. Hue refers to the name of the color. Value tells the lightness or darkness of a hue. Intensity refers to the brightness or dullness of a hue.

**Line** can be horizontal, vertical, dotted, zigzag, curved, straight, diagonal, thick, thin, bold, or fine. Lines can show direction, lead the eye, outline one object, divide a space, communicate, or create a mood.

**Textures** are the feel or look of every surface. Textures create a mood. Terms include smooth, slick, shiny, rough, raised, bumpy, fuzzy, grainy, soft and hard.

**Shape and form** are created when a line comes around and meets itself. Shapes are geometric (round, square, rectangular) or free irregular shapes. Forms are three-dimensional, or can be seen from all sides (spheres, cylinders, cubes).

**Space** is the amount of room you have. It can be defined as positive or negative. Positive space is made up of the shapes and forms that make up design. Negative space is the background.

## **Principles of Design**

Principles of design are the directions or guidelines for mixing the elements. Principles included are balance, rhythm, emphasis, scale, proportion, and unity or harmony.

**Balance** is the placement of visual weights. It creates a feeling of steadiness and of things looking as if they belong where they are. Balance can be formal (symmetrical) or informal (asymmetrical) – sides are different, but looks balanced).

**Rhythm** is organized movement. It allows the eyes to move from one part of a design to another. It can be achieved through repeating, graduating, and alternating.

**Emphasis** is making a center of interest in your design. It is the part of design which catches your eye first.

**Scale** refers to the size relationship of two or more objects to each other and the space that they fill.

**Proportion** refers to the relationship of parts within an item and that the parts relate well with each other.

**Unity or harmony** is the feeling that all parts belong together.