DESIGN

Exploring the Elements and Principles in Home Decor

Elements of Design

The elements of design are line, shape, form, color, texture, and space. These are the tools used to design a room or space.

By learning and using the elements and principles of design, you will increase your understanding of how and why some things work together and some simply don't look right.

Line

Line is any mark greater in length than width. Words to describe line include vertical, horizontal, straight, curved, diagonal, thick, thin, dashed, zigzag, continuous, jagged, or smooth.
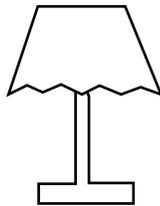
Color

Color is what we see when light is reflected. Words to describe color include hue (the name of the color), value (lightness or darkness of the color), or intensity (brightness or dullness of the color).

Shape

Shape is two-dimensional and appears flat. For example, a square is a shape. Words to describe shape include square, rectangle, circle, oval, triangle, curved, or wavy.

Texture

Texture is the surface quality of an item. It is how something feels–or appears like it would feel–when it is touched. Words to describe texture include rough, smooth, soft, prickly, squishy, grainy, or hard. The chair shown is leather. Leather looks and feels soft, smooth, slick, or cold.

Form

Form is the structure of an item; it is three-dimensional with length, width, and depth. For example, a box is a form. Words to describe form include cube, box, ball, cylinder, pyramid, free form, or sphere.

Space

Space is the area between and around an object and the area that the object occupies. In a room, you have a defined space, so it is important to consider how much of the space each object will use. For this reason, space is an added element in home décor. Words to describe space include cramped, crowded, open, uncomfortable, comfortable, cozy, noisy, warm, or cold.

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Principles of Design

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

Balance

Balance means that both sides appear to be equal even if they are not identical. Formal or symmetrical balance means if you draw a line down the center, both sides are identical. Informal or asymmetrical balance means if you draw a line down the center, both sides appear to be equal in visual weight although not identical.

Symmetrical

Asymmetrical

Emphasis

Emphasis draws your attention to a certain part of the room. For example, in the image below, the yellow chair draws your attention to the center of the room first.

Unity

Unity is achieved when all the elements and principles work together as a whole to create a look or theme.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a feeling of movement as it directs your eye around the room. It is achieved through the repetition of the design elements of shapes, forms, colors, textures, or lines.

Proportion

Proportion refers to the relationship of parts within an item. Scale compares size. Shown are two rocking chairs. All the parts–seat, back, legs, and spindles–are in proportion to each other. However, the big chair would not be the correct size or scale for a toddler, while the child's rocker would not work very well for an adult to use.

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