

Design Vocabulary and Definitions

Design Terms:

Asymmetry

Deliberate imbalance to generate stress, energy or tension

Balance

The arrangement of elements in a visual field that produces a sense of order and stability

Comp

(Comprehensive layout) A layout or dummy that is carefully drawn or proofed to size showing all elements in correct size and position. Rendered to present a close approximation of the finished printed piece

Composition

(Layout) The arrangement of elements, usually within a 2-dimensional format, intended to please the eye, and obtain an intended effect

Contrast

A relationship difference between two visual elements to generate emphasis, to distinguish and separate

Dummy text

ÓNonsenseÓ text, usually in Latin (Lorem Ipsum), used in a comp to represent areas of text. This is used so that the viewer can concentrate on the creative visuals rather than getting distracted by words and content. Also known as 'greeking text' or 'greeked text'

Emphasis

An area in a work of art that attracts the viewers attention first. The element noticed first is called dominant; the elements noticed later are called subordinate.

Flush

Even, or aligned, on one edge. This term can be applied to the alignment of an element in design

Format

A design area of uninterrupted space defined by edges. Term used to describe the appearance and style of an illustration or page layout. For example, a horizontal format is one in which the width is greater than the height

Grid

A planned architecture of space and elements on a page

Grouping

A powerful design tool. A way of structuring information that appears in a visual field. Threading parts together in manageable units to create hierarchical relationships

Hierarchy (dominance)

Manipulating the viewer by emphasizing design elements and content in order of importance through size, color, location, visual weight

Icon

An image; a representation. A simile or symbol. A picture on a screen that represents a specific command

Line

A line is direction, it has no beginning and no ending

Logo

A trademark or signature of a company or product

Layout

A drawing, sketch or plan of a piece, page or advertisement showing all elements in position, a blueprint

Mock-up

A prototype that shows how a three-dimensional object, such as a book or package, will look by using the proposed materials, but not necessarily showing all the graphics

Movement

Color can create a sense of movement. When the values in a work jump quickly from very high-key to very low-key, a feeling of excitement and movement is created. When all of the values are close together the work seems much calmer.

Point

The intersection of two lines

Proximity

Description of how far apart things lie in a design

Repetition

The reoccurrence of an element which has occurred before, elements are often repeated in design to create emphasis or texture

Rhythm

Rhythm in the visual arts is very closely related to rhythm in music. Rhythm is achieved by having a dominant visual path of line and or color through design, making design appear to be alive. When creating a musical composition, rhythm is achieved by repeating a pattern of musical notes. This repetition creates a musical line which flows through the air. In a composition, the visual notes are static but they are experienced like music as we move through the piece

Scale

Discussing relative lengths, areas, distances and sizes in relation to one another in a composition

Shape

Uniting lines to create a form that is two dimensional that possesses height and width.
Three basic shapes: triangle, square, & circle

Size

Is more than dimensions: length, width, height, can create hierarchy within a composition

Space

Widely used term in graphic design. 1. The space the actual work of art occupies 2. Negative space indicates the space around a positive shape. 3. Illusion of space in a two dimensional field

Spread

A term that refers to two facing pages in a publication

Storyboard

Used to show how an animation or film sequence will look by using a series of illustrations rather like a comic strip

Template

A page with pre-placed elements (lines, images, words) used as an aid for creating multiple pages having the same look

Texture

The tactile element suggesting or showing how something “feels”. Two types of textures: “actual” texture of the material used, “simulated” texture is created by the artist using visual elements

Tone

The voice of the visual language that reveals the attitude towards the audience and the subject

Type

Consists of a coordinated set of letters or characters designed with stylistic unity

Unity

Oneness, cohesiveness of composition and design

Variety

By varying the components of a visual design, the artist creates interest and avoids monotony. A way of accomplishing this is to establish an approach which involves theme and variations—repeating the same image, but in different sizes, colors, values and shapes.

Weight

The boldness or perceived heaviness of an element of the design understanding of how to use software related books and manuals, online help and web-based or cd-rom tutorials

Color Terms:

Analogous color

Also called harmonious colors, are colors that are adjacent to each other on the color wheel. Some examples are green, light green, and yellow or red, orange and yellow.

Chroma

The purity or degree of saturation of a color; relative absence of white or gray

CMYK

Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black. This form is usually used for print, while the opposite (RGB) is usually used on monitors

Complement (Complementary)

Two colors when mixed produce a shade of grey, 2 colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel (I would switch the order of these two as the second is the more common)

Cool

Suggest coolness and seem to recede from a viewer and fall back, e.g., Blue and green are the colors of water and trees).

Flat color

Solid areas of color without any tonal values

Gradation

Refers to when one color blends smoothly into another; with no visible steps

Hue

In color, the hue can vary depending on lighting, other surrounding colors, and even different perceptions of the human eye. Synonymous with the word "color" as used in everyday vocabulary (such as red, blue, or yellow)

Intensity

Brightness or dullness of a color. A pure hue is a high-intensity color. A dulled hue, a color mixed with its complement is called a low-intensity color.

Metallic

Of or pertaining to metal in nature or appearance

Monochromatic

Monochromatic colors are all of the hues (tints, tones and shades) of a single color. Monochromatic color schemes are derived from a single base color, and extended using its shades, tones and tints (that is, a color modified by the addition of black, grey and white). As a result, the energy is more subtle and peaceful due to a lack of color contrast

Pantone

The brand name of an internationally recognized color matching system which is standardized throughout the complete range of designer materials and applications. Also known as PMS (Pantone Matching System)

Saturation

The density or “vibrancy” of a color

Tint

An even tone area whether solid or screened

Tone

The varying shades of a color

Triad

A color triad is composed of three colors spaced an equal distance apart on the color wheel. The contrast between triad colors is not as strong as that between complements.

Value

A density or numeric assignment of a color, also called a “tint”, tone or density made by direct comparison or by use of a densitometer. Color printing values range from 2% minimum controllable dot to 98% maximum controllable dot. Values in color can be preselected for density, hue and depth by using a process printing guide. This is an excellent way to pre-visualize how a particular color may be expected to reproduce on a printing press

Warm

Suggest warmth and seem to move toward the viewer and appear closer, e.G., Red and orange are the colors of fire