

Exercise walk-through

2.1

Balance

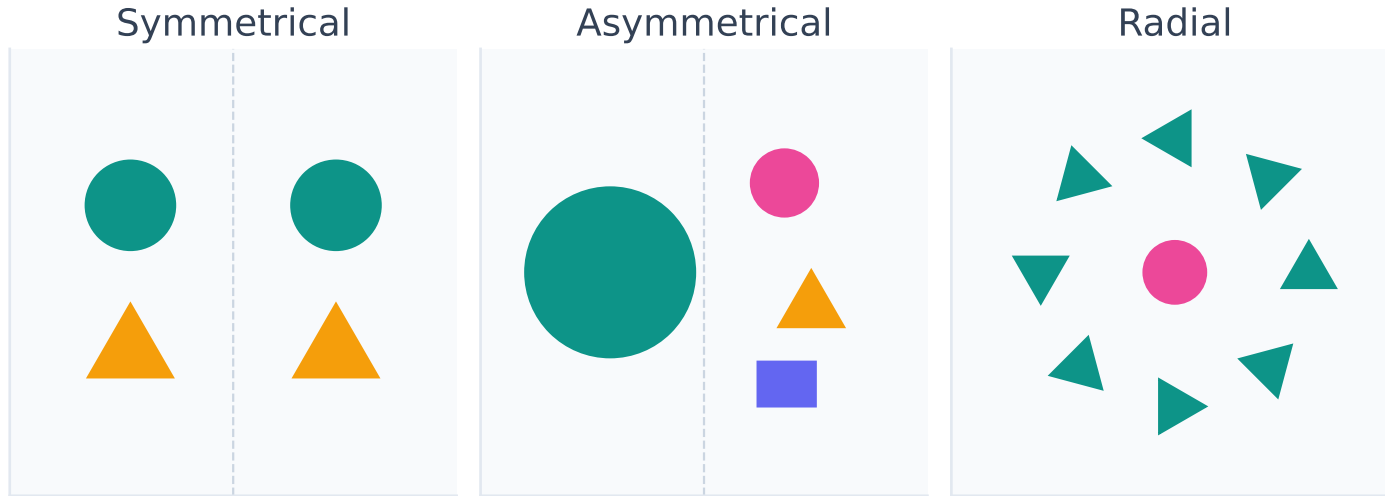
AP 2-D Art and Design

Balance – the distribution of visual weight

The **principles of design** are the rules for **arranging** the elements. The first is **balance**.

Visual weight depends on size, colour, value and position – a **small bright** shape can balance a **large dull** one.

Balance – the distribution of visual weight, in detail



AP Art 2-D · Principles · symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial balance

symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial

The **principles of design** first of them.

are the rules for **arranging** the elements – and **balance**

is the

Three kinds of balance

- **Symmetrical** – mirrors a central axis; calm and orderly
- **Asymmetrical** – equal visual weight; dynamic
- **Radial** – arranged around a central point

Justify balance through visual weight, not just symmetry.



Balance of light, mass and interest across the plane

Balance, and how the eye is carried

Symmetrical (formal) balance

Symmetrical (formal) balance: the halves mirror. Stable, calm, and formal – which is why institutions are drawn this way.

Asymmetrical (informal) balance

Asymmetrical (informal) balance: unlike elements balanced by visual weight – a small dark shape against a large pale one. More dynamic.

Continuity

Continuity: edges and implied lines that carry the eye from one element to the next without a break.

Progressive rhythm

A **progressive** rhythm repeats an element while changing it a little each time – growing, rotating, fading.

Radial balance is the third kind: elements arranged around a centre, as in a rose window or a mandala.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 A composition where different-looking elements still feel evenly weighted shows [1]

☐

- A** symmetrical balance
- B** asymmetrical balance
- C** radial balance
- D** no balance

2.2 Define visual weight and name one thing that increases it. [2]

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 A composition where different-looking elements still feel evenly weighted shows [1]

☐

- A symmetrical balance
- B asymmetrical balance
- C radial balance
- D no balance

2.1 B

- unequal elements of equal weight = asymmetrical balance

2.2 Define visual weight and name one thing that increases it. [2]

2.2

- the apparent 'heaviness' of an element in a composition; increased by large size, dark value, high saturation, or detail

Exercise 2.3

2.3 State a mood suited to radial balance. [1]

3 Studio & portfolio tasks

3.1 Create two thumbnails of the **same subject** with different balance.

(a) One **symmetrical**. [2]

(b) One **asymmetrical** but still balanced. [2]

3.2 Plan balance for a portfolio piece.

(a) Choose a balance type and justify it by the mood. [1]

(b) Thumbnail marking the heaviest visual element. [2]

Exercise 2.3

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3 Studio & portfolio tasks

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2.3

- energetic, focused, or hypnotic – drawing the eye to the centre

Full solution 2.3

2.3

- energetic, focused, or hypnotic – drawing the eye to the centre

3.1

- Look for: symmetrical version mirrors evenly (2); asymmetrical version uses unequal elements yet feels balanced by visual weight (2)

3.2

- Look for: balance type justified by intended mood (1); thumbnail's weight distribution supports the chosen balance (2)