Principles of Design

AP 2-D Art and Design · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
principles of design /ˈprɪnsɪplz ɒv dɪˈzaɪn/	Balance and contrast are **principles of design**.
balance /ˈbæləns/	A large shape on one side and two small shapes on the other give **balance**.
Symmetrical (formal) balance /sɪˈmetrɪkl ˈbæləns/	A face drawn the same on both sides has **symmetrical (formal) balance**.
Asymmetrical (informal) balance /ˌeɪsɪˈmetrɪkl ˈbæləns/	One big tree balanced by three small houses is **asymmetrical (informal) balance**.
visual weight /ˈvɪʒuːəl weɪt/	A bright red spot has a lot of **visual weight**.
Radial balance /ˈreɪdɪəl ˈbæləns/	A flower seen from above shows **radial balance**.
Emphasis /ˈemfəsɪs/	The bright red coat gives **emphasis** to the girl.
focal point /ˈfəʊkl pɔɪnt/	The **focal point** draws the eye first.
Subordination /ˌsʌbɔːdɪˈneɪʃn/	The soft grey background shows **subordination**: it supports the main figure.
Contrast /ˈkɒntræst/	Black next to white gives strong **contrast**.
visual hierarchy /ˈvɪʒuːəl ˈhaɪərɑːki/	Big, bold titles create a **visual hierarchy** on the poster.
Movement /ˈmuːvmənt/	Curved lines give the picture a sense of **movement**.

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rhythm /ˈrɪðəm/	Repeated shapes create a visual **rhythm**.
progressive /prəˈgresɪv/	Circles that slowly get bigger give **progressive** rhythm.
Repetition /ˌrepəˈtɪʃn/	**Repetition** of the same shape ties the picture together.
pattern /ˈpætn/	The wallpaper has a flower **pattern**.
motif /məʊˈtiːf/	Water is a **motif** that appears again and again.
Proportion /prəˈpɔːʃn/	The head is too big for the body: the **proportion** is wrong.
scale /skeɪl/	The large **scale** of the painting makes it feel powerful.
Hierarchical scale /haɪəˈrɑːkɪkl skeɪl/	In old Egyptian art, **hierarchical scale** shows the king bigger than his servants.
golden ratio /ˈgəʊldn ˈreɪʃɪəʊ/	Some artists use the **golden ratio** of about 1.6 to divide a picture. 1.6
Unity /ˈjuːnɪti/	Using the same colours everywhere gives the picture **unity**.
variety /vəˈraɪəti/	Different sizes of circles add **variety**.
proximity /prɒkˈsɪmɪti/	Shapes placed in **proximity** look like a group.
continuity /kɒntɪˈnjuːɪti/	Repeated colours give the series **continuity**.
Harmony /ˈhɑːməni/	Soft blues and greens create **harmony**.

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Composition /ˌkɒmpəˈzɪʃn/	The **composition** leads the eye to the centre of the picture.
picture plane /ˈpɪktʃə pleɪn/	The **picture plane** is the flat surface of the drawing.
format /ˈfɔːmæt/	A tall, narrow **format** suits a portrait.
rule of thirds /ruːl ɒv θɜːdz/	The **rule of thirds** puts key things a third of the way across.
Cropping /ˈkrɒpɪŋ/	**Cropping** the photo removed the empty sky.

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