## Summary

This writing sample is imbued with best technical communication practices. It illustrates design principles: proximity, alignment, contrast, color and hierarchy. The multi-page glossary was created using Adobe InDesign. The purpose of the document is to provide credible examples of each design principle with corresponding images. The images used properly reflect "good" design. Each principle is described in detail, i.e., how that principle is applied in the provided image, and why the image is an example of "good" design.

All of the images and subsequent text work together in harmony to create a visually appealing, informative document. The purpose of technical communication is to teach individuals new information using accessible language, and this document is an impeccable example.

# Design Glossary

Compiled by McKinley Heard
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Dr. Lane
University of Memphis

# Proximity

Proximity highlights relationships among design objects. Related objects on a document should be physically grouped together. Unrelated objects should be physically separated. Proximity improves the appearance of a document and makes the document easier to view; viewers' eyes do not have to flit all over the document. Instead, it is clear what order the objects are intended to be perceived.

Objects that abide by proximity can be images, text, and white space. It is just as important for white space to be organized as it is for images and text to be organized. Some designers are scared of white space, but every white space on a document does not have to be filled. Moreover, white space should not be used arbitrarily.

"As in Life, the proximity, or the closeness, implies a relationship" (Williams 17).

When objects are organized on a document, people are more likely to view it and remember its details. If a document is unorganized, people will not attempt to read it. For example, if a document is advertising a play, proximity issues can be detrimental to audience turnout. If a document with proximity issues is advertising a yard sale, and nobody comes to the yard sale, the seller will not make any money. Poor design choices can affect numerous areas of our lives.
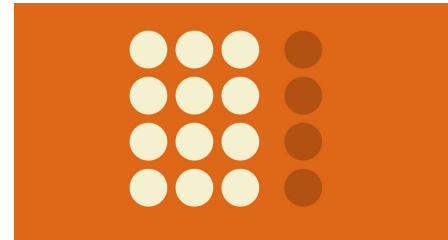


"Law of Proximity" by Laws of UX



"The Principles of Gestalt in Web Design" by Pedalo

# Alignment

Alignment teaches that objects should not be placed on a document randomly. Objects should be visually connected, or aligned. Objects that are physically separated are connected by an imaginary line. Even though the line is invisible, viewers can still see the line. Alignment does not imply relationships among objects. Objects that are aligned can be related, but they do not have to be related. Even if objects are not related, allignment suggests that they are each part of the same piece.

Like proximity, alignment organizes a document. An aligned document is calming to viewers' eyes, rather than stressful. Documents can be aligned left, right, center, and/or justified. Beginners in document  design typically feel more comfortable using center-alignment. Center-aligned documents are practical, yet they are often viewed as amateur. More sophisticated designs tend to lean away from center-alignment.
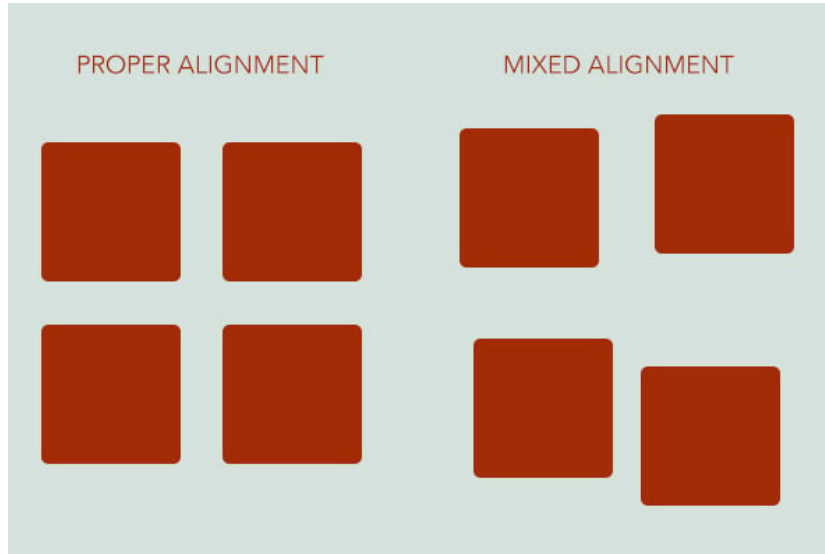


"Using Alignment to Improve Your Designs" by Rachel Shillcock

"Combining different types of alignment can yield dynamic and surprising layouts" (Lupton 116).

## Center Amignment

Lorem Ipsum is simply dummy text of the printing and typesetting industry. Lorem Ipsum has been the industry's standard dummy text ever since the 1500s, when an unknown printer took a galley of type and scrambled it to make a type specimen book. It has survived not only five centuries, but also the leap into electronic typesetting, remaining essentially unchanged. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages, and more recently with desktop publishing software like Aldus PageMaker including versions of Lorem Ipsum.

## Left Alignment

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## J u s t i f i e d Alignment

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"How to Use Alignment to Improve Your Design" by Graphic Design Fundamentals

# Contrast

Contrast is used to make objects stand out on a page.

"If two items are not exactly the same, then make them different. Really different. [...] If two elements are sort of different but not really, then you don't have *contrast*, you have *conflict*" (Williams 69).



"Design Principles" by The Paper

Contrast commands attention and conveys meaning. There are numerous ways to create contrast on a document using color, texture, sizes, fonts, and more. Without contrast, important messages get lost. For example, yellow writing on a green background would be extremely hard to see, so people are not going to hurt their eyes trying to read it. However, yellow writing on a purple background would make the writing incredibly easy to see and, therefore, more people will read it.

The image of the iris on fallen leaves exhibits contrast with a cool color on a background of warm color.

"Standing Up for the Little Guy" is art that creatively displays the juxtaposition of federal and state governments and small businesses through contrast of the shadow's massive size versus the man's tiny size.



"Leader's Edge Cover: Standing Up for the Little Guy" by Francesco Bongiorni

# Color



"Colour" by Design Your Way

Color is one of the most frequently applied principles in document design. Because of technological advancements that have amassed society, such as color inkjet, laser printers, computers and cell phones, designers are more likely to use color to modify design objects (Kimball and Hawkins 25).

Using color is more complicated than just making a document look pretty. Color theory is a sophisticated subject that cannot be summed up easily, yet it touches almost every aspect of our lives. Color theory is used to make audience members feel a certain way. If the right colors are not used, the audience will not experience the intended emotions. For example, cool tones promote calmness. Designers would not want to utilize the color red, a warm tone, in a stressful environment. However, red is said to promote hunger, so restaurants utilize it often in advertising. Designers frequently consult the color wheel to make sure combinations of different colors work well together.

Complementary colors are direct opposites on the color wheel. They often work together well as main color and accent color (Williams 99). Three colors that go together well make up a triad. The most popular example of a triad is red, yellow, and blue. Analogous colors are next to each other on the color wheel.
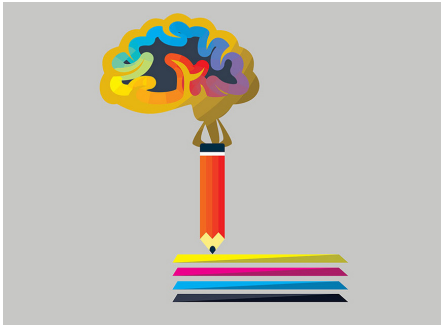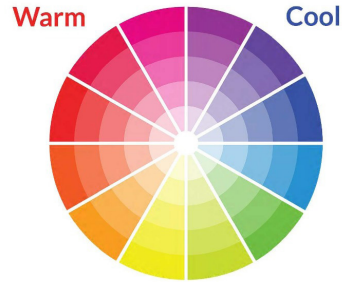
"Psychology of Color" by Nora Kramer Designs



"Color Theory" by Design Wizard

The hue is the pure color featured on the color wheel. Designers can add black to a hue to create a shade of that color. Designers can add white to a hue to create a tint of that color. Software programs allow digital designers to easily alter shade and tint.

Monochromatic designs feature one hue and its corresponding shades and tints (Williams 104). The image "Color Theory" shows different shades and tints of each hue.

Tone refers to the brightness or deepness of a hue. Similar tones create a "muddy" effect when combined (105).



"Understanding & Using Color in Branding" by David Murton

# Hierarchy

Hierarchy has numerous meanings. When people think of hierarchy they typically think of a power structure. Hierarchy in design refers to design objects' order of importance on a document. Hierarchy tells the viewer what to look at first and so on. It serves as a guide and prevents confusion.

Hierarchy supports the notion that people automatically group things together visually to derive meaning. Humans see patterns in life all the time, and innately pick them out. Once humans find a pattern in something, our eyes follow it. When hierarchy is not used on a page, the design objects look jumbled. Viewers cannot differentiate between the more important parts of a document and the less important parts of a document. If everything runs together, people are not going to look at a document for very long.

There are several ways to create hierarchy on a page by employing different design principles like size, shape, color, proximity, alignment, and others. Lupton states, "Each level of hierarchy should be signaled by one or more cues, applied consistently across a body of text. A cue can be spatial (indent, line spacing, placement) or graphic (size, style, color). Infinite varitations are possible" (132).

The image of the ticket exemplifies typographic hierarchy. The most important information is big, bold, and at the top
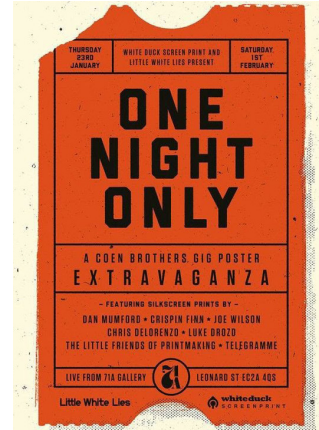


"Visual Hierarchy Examples" by Monica Galvan

The other text reflects importance through size as well. Our eyes naturally start at the bold text and move down.

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