

Desktop Publishing

Elements of Design: line, shape, mass, texture, color

All designs have certain basic elements or building blocks chosen to convey the message — beyond the actual words or photos used. The five elements of **lines, shapes, mass, texture, and color** are the building blocks of design for desktop publishers. Many other terms are described as elements of design including form, space, and value (as in lightness or darkness of color). We will discuss those in further lessons.

Graphic design encompasses the creation of a great many types of projects but for the purposes of these lessons we're focusing on the elements of design as they apply to typical desktop publishing projects including logos, ads, brochures, business cards, newsletters, books, and to some extent, online materials.

We'll expand on the definitions of lines, shapes, mass, texture, and color and focus primarily on learning to recognize and determine the purpose of these elements in printed materials. Then we will apply these elements in desktop publishing projects.

First Assignment: Class Samples

Gather examples that you'll use in the next five lessons and future assignments.. Your first assignment is to create a folder (not on your computer--but a real paper folder) or a notebook to hold your samples.

In your folder, put printed samples of:

- display ads and fliers
- logos
- newsletters
- brochures of all kinds
- business cards
- letterhead
- magazines
- newspapers
- labels and packaging
- books, book jackets

Find at least 8 of these 10 items for all the points possible for this assignment. More than 8 different examples is BONUS, 7 is a B, 6 is a C, etc. Include the good and the bad — don't worry about the quality. Sift through your junk mail, magazines, newspapers, and your business card file. While you will get these returned, please do not bring anything very valuable. You can even include work that you've created yourself. Aim for a variety of printed materials.

Individual Lessons

For the remainder of these lessons I'll refer to your folder or notebook of materials as your samples or 'Class Samples'. With your Class Samples in hand, we will go through each of the elements of design individually. You will also use these samples as we create other projects in class.