Design Fundamentals

Basic stuff you need to know.

Ryan Gunterman, MJE

Executive Director
Indiana HS Press Association
rgunterman@franklincollege.edu

Design Principles

- Alignment
- Balance
- Component
- Composition
- Concept
- Contrast
- Direction
- Division
- Emphasis
- Flow
- Grouping
- Harmony
- Placement
- Proportion
- Proximity
- Rhythm
- Unity
- Value

Alignment
The lining up of components with each other based on the edges or guides within a composition.

Balance

The distribution of the components of a composition giving it a stable feel or appearance.

Component

Each of the elements placed within a composition: headline, captions, copy, byline, photos, graphics, etc.

Composition

The way in which components of a design are visually combined and arranged to create a final product.

Concept

Elements of theme, connotation, message, and style.

Contrast

Differences in color, size, shape, or location that compares or creates differences in a composition.

Direction

The management of the movement of components within a composition.

Division

The use of white or negative space to separate or distinguish components in a composition.

Emphasis

A component that stands out in a composition and draws a viewer's attention.

Flow

Guides a viewer through a composition by the placement of components.

Grouping

Elements that are unified as a whole based on proximity, similarity, continuation, or alignment.

Harmony

Visual harmony means agreement between elements, and is a key component to concept development.

Placement

Placement of items determines relationship between other elements as well as relevance, significance.

Proportion

The relative size and scale of components within a whole composition that create a feeling of unity.

Proximity

The grouping of objects based on their closeness to one another.

Rhythm

The repetition or alternation of components within a composition.

Unity

The feeling of harmony between components of a composition, creating a sense of completeness.

Value

The measure of lightness and darkness in composition.

Design Philosophy

- Plan Ahead
- Modular Mood
- Maintain Balance
- Don't Get Full
- Show Restraint

- Consistent Tone
- Bigger = Better
- Main Entrance(s)
- Never Stop

Plan Ahead

Develop ideas (yes, plural) for your design before you ever sit down at a computer.

SKETCH!

Modular Mood

Even some of the most tricked-out pages are just a bunch of squares.

Maintain Balance

Remember that all visual elements have "weight" that drag the reader's eye to it.

Don't Get Full

Filling up the entire page with copy gives your publication a textbook vibe.

Show Restraint

You may have all the fonts and colors, but you shouldn't use all the fonts and colors.

Consistent Tone

Develop a style that represents your publication and audience then use it throughout.

Bigger = Better

Take those visuals (photos, graphics, display text) far beyond sizes you would ever imagine.

Main Entrance(s)

Make sure pages have at least one point of entry that lure readers into the content.

Remain Relevant

Stay tuned to the changing design trends by consuming multiple publications and resources.

Never Stop

The best way for you to improve as a designer is to do as much of it as you can, whenever you can.

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http://ihspa.net/ryangunterman

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