DESIGN PRINCIPLES CHEATSHEET

VERSION 1.01

What is contrast?

Contrast makes elements stand out from each other. It can be created by changing small elements like size, weight, shape, and color.

CONTRAST

What is hierarchy?

Hierarchy is how elements rank in relation to each other. It's a subjective sensation created by combining other design principles with your audience's reading patterns.

HIERARCHY

What is balance?

Balance is a sensation of symmetry and asymmetry. The former creates a feeling of predictability and comfort, while the latter creates a feeling of unpredictability and tension.
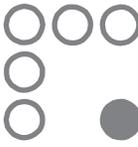
BALANCE

What is whitespace?

Whitespace is the area of your canvas that goes unfilled. It does not have to be white or empty. Whitespace is the absence of things that grab our attention. Not to be confused with negative space.

WHITESPACE
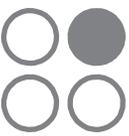
What is emphasis?

Emphasis is when certain parts of a design stand out from the rest. On the flip side, when one element has emphasis, the other elements blend in.

EMPHASIS

What is repetition?

Repetition is when similarly designed elements repeat. It can be achieved by reusing color, weight, shape, and even wording within sentences.

REPETITION

What is proportion?

Proportion is how the size of elements relate to each other. Larger elements are often seen as more important, while smaller elements are treated as dependent or tertiary.

PROPORTION

What is rhythm?

Rhythm is a pace and feeling. It can be slow and calming or fast and exciting. Repetition, movement, and whitespace are the basic building blocks of rhythm.

RHYTHM

What is movement?

Movement, or "momentum," is how a design or element guides the eye across a composition. It can be achieved with lines, positioning, emphasis, hierarchy, and more.

MOVEMENT

What is pattern?

Patterns are when repetition, rhythm, and other elements come together to create expectations in the audience. Patterns can be found in everything from layout, to typesetting, to art.

PATTERN

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EXPLORERS DESIGN