PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Principles of design are how we organise elements of design. Principles of design are how we put all aspects together.

As with elements of design there are many variations that can be considered principles of design. This is a selection of the most common principles of design. Principles of Design can be difficult to define and are therefore interpreted differently by individuals. The following notes attempt to make definitions for each easier to teach and explain to students. There is some level of overlap between principles and classroom discussions can further define each in relation to particular projects. Not all pieces of art have all principles or elements of design it is up to the artist to decide which elements and principles are relevant to the art they are creating.

Using the fundamental principles of design correctly, can make or break a design. There are 7 principles of design to consider when creating any visual art of any form. They are:

1. **Emphasis**: referring to the focal point of a design and the order of importance of each element within a design.

2. **Balance and alignment:** Never forget that every element you place on a page has a weight. The weight can come from colour, size, or texture.

3. **Contrast:** Contrast creates space and difference between elements in your design. Your background needs to be significantly different from the colour of your elements so they work harmoniously together and are readable.
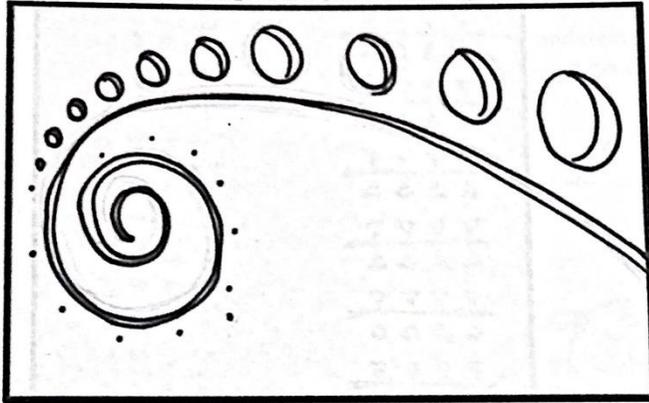
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4. **Repetition:** If you limit yourself to two strong typefaces or three strong colours, you'll soon find you'll have to repeat some things. Repetition unifies and strengthens a design.

5. **Proportion:** Proportion is the visual size and weight of elements in a composition and how they relate to each other. It often helps to approach your design in sections, instead of as a whole.

6. **Movement**: Movement is controlling the elements in a composition so that the eye is led to move from one to the next and the information is properly communicated to your audience. Movement creates the story or the narrative of your work.

7. **White space:** All of the other principles of design deal with what you add to your design. White space (or negative space) is the only one that specifically deals with what you don't add. White space is exactly that—the empty page around the elements in your composition.

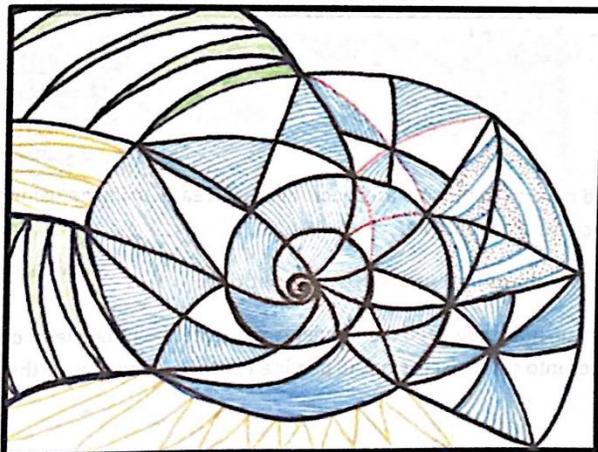**The differences of Principles of design and Elements of design.**

➢ The elements of design refer to the basic building blocks of any composition. The principles of design refer to how the elements are used, like the symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, pattern, emphasis, movement, and proportion. The principles of design are a set of cardinal rules and techniques for composing the various elements of design.

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1. This image illustrates repetition of shape. It creates an emphasis on the page as the viewers eye is drawn to the centre of the swirl. This in turn is radial and asymmetric in balance as the centre of the spiral is not in the middle of the page. The lack of other details makes the art appear simple yet still interesting.
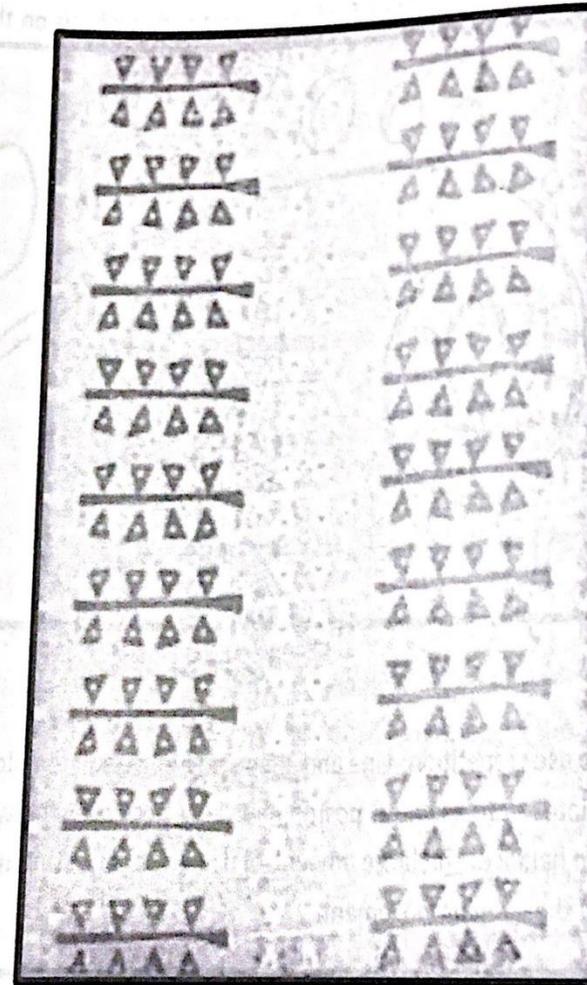   The size of the shapes varies adding further interest and emphasis on the image.

2. This image also uses repetition. Line and shape are repeatedly employed on the page. The design radiates from a central position but does not cover the whole page making it asymmetrical in balance. The large amount of white is contrasting to the details included within the circular movement.

This image repeats the same two blocks of shape. One block involves small circles inserted into triangles and lined up of either side of a central line. The second block is similar but smaller. Both blocks are repeated throughout the art. Value is added to create further interest. Colour could also be added.

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Design task 1 – Use the line, shape and size to create repetition. You can draw any object that you think of but just remember to include these elements and principal of design in that object.

Design task 2 – Use the following words to create Emphasis and Pattern.

- Table, flower and yellow
- Use the whole page to create a picture

Remember, use your creativity when doing drawing/answering these tasks.

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