

## **LESSON: four design principles**

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### **PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;**

#### **• Proximity**

The principle of proximity is that you **group related items together**. The key is to move them physically close to each other, so the **related items** are seen as one visual unit rather than several separate units. Items or groups of information that are not related to each other should be separated. You want to give the reader an instant visual clue as to the organization and content of the page.

Pay attention to where your eye is going:

what path do you follow?

where do you end up?

after you've read it, where does your eye go next?

Avoid:

don't put too many separate elements on a page;

don't cling to the corners or the middle of the page;

don't create relationships with elements that don't belong together;

don't fill every inch of white space on the page;

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### PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;

#### • Proximity

The principle of proximity is that you **group related items together**.

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In this example, none of the four design principles have been employed. By having no proximity, you do not know where to begin reading. With five separate groups of information, your eye stops five times.

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In the second example, the design principle of proximity has been applied. All the information has been grouped into one body of information. This has no hierarchy of importance and is a very boring layout, but there is the slightest amount of focus for the reader.

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In this example, the proximity of information has been pushed further. The copy has now been grouped into three units, separated by different amounts of space to indicate importance as well as relationship.

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### PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;

#### • Alignment

The principle of alignment is that **nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily. Every item should have a visual connection with something else on the page.** This forces you to be conscious of every item's position on the page and its relationship with every other item. UNITY is an important concept in design. To make all the elements on the page appear to be unified, connected, and interrelated, there needs to be some visual tie between the separate elements. Even if the separate items are not physically close on the page, they can APPEAR connected with other information simply by their position. Look at other design examples, no matter how wild or chaotic a well-designed piece may initially appear, you can always find the alignments within.

Pay attention to where you place elements:  
are there other elements to align it with?

Avoid:

- don't use more than one (or two at the most) text alignments on one page;
- don't center some text and right-align other text, use complementary alignments;
- don't use too many group alignments on one page;

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#### • Alignment

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In this example, none of the four design principles have been employed. By have no alignment, there are no relationships between the elements and there you do not know where to begin to read. With five separate groups of information, you eye stops five times.

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In the second example, the design principles proximity and alignment have both been applied. All the information has been grouped into two bodies of information. This infers a hierarchy of importance as well as focus for the reader.

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In this example, the information has now been grouped into three units, separated by different amounts of space as well as applying two different alignments to indicate importance as well as relationship.

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### PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;

#### • Proximity & Alignment

This list is hard to understand and hard to read — everything is too close to each other and there are no defined relationships. Once we apply the four design principles, the same list is transformed into a more communicative, and well resolved page.

CD ROMS  
CD ROMS  
CHILDREN'S CDS  
EDUCATIONAL CDS  
LASER DISCS  
EDUCATIONAL  
EARLY LEARNING  
LANGUAGE ARTS  
SCIENCE  
MATH  
TEACHER TOOLS  
BOOKS VIDEOS  
HARDWARE & ACCESSORIES  
CABLES  
INPUT DEVICES  
MASS STORAGE  
MEMORY  
MODEMS  
PRINTERS & SUPPLIES  
VIDEO AND SOUND

#### **CD Roms**

CD Roms  
Children's CDs  
Educational CDs  
Laser Discs

#### **Educational**

Early Learning  
Language Arts  
Science  
Math

#### **Teacher Tools**

Books  
Videos

#### **Hardware & Accessories**

Cables  
Input Devices  
Mass Storage  
Memory  
Modems  
Printers & Supplies  
Video and Sound

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### PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;

#### • Repetition

The principle of repetition is that you **repeat some aspect of the design throughout the entire piece**. The repetitive element may be a bold font, a thick rule (line), a colour, a design element, etc., or any combination of these. Repetition should be thought of as “consistency”. Weather you are designing a postcard or a multi-page book, you need a cohesive look and feel in the end solution. But repetition goes beyond just being naturally consistent—it is a conscious effort to unify all parts of a design.

The basic purpose:

the purpose of repetition is to unify and to add visual interest;

How to get it:

find existing repetitions and then strengthen them, for example: page numbers, rules, a font;

Avoid:

don't repeat something so much it becomes annoying or overwhelming;

be conscious of the value of contrast;

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#### • Repetition

The principle of repetition is that you **repeat some aspect of the design throughout the entire piece.**

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In this example, none of the four design principles have been employed. There are no relationships between the elements and therefore you do not know where to begin to read. There are no levels of importance, with five separate groups of information, you eye stops five times.

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In this example, the design principles applied are:  
proximity — related items grouped together;  
alignment — items placed with a visual connection;  
repetition — repeating an element.  
All the information has been grouped into two bodies of information. This infers a hierarchy of importance as well as focus for the reader. The all caps establishes a new relationship communicating 'important information'.

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This example consists of:  
proximity — info grouped in three related units;  
alignment — three different alignments;  
repetition — repetition of caps;

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### **DESIGN PRINCIPLES: PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;**

#### **• Contrast**

The principle of contrast is that **if two items are not exactly the same, then make them different—obviously different**. Contrast is the most effective way to add visual interest or tension to your design. It is also used to create an organizational hierarchy among the different elements. A reader should be able to instantly understand the way information is organized. But remember, for contrast to be effective it must be **strong**.

How to get it:

You can create it in many ways: large type with small type; an old style font with a bold sans serif font; a thin line with a thick line; a cool colour with a warm colour; a smooth texture with a rough texture; a horizontal element with a vertical element; widely letterspaced word with a closely packed word; a small graphic with a large graphic; etc.

Avoid:

don't put elements together that are similar (it will look like a mistake);



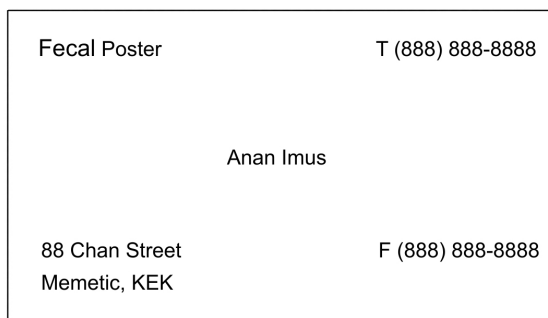
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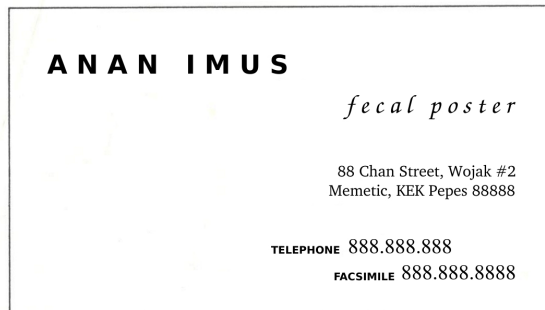
### PROXIMITY; ALIGNMENT; REPETITION; CONTRAST;

#### • Contrast

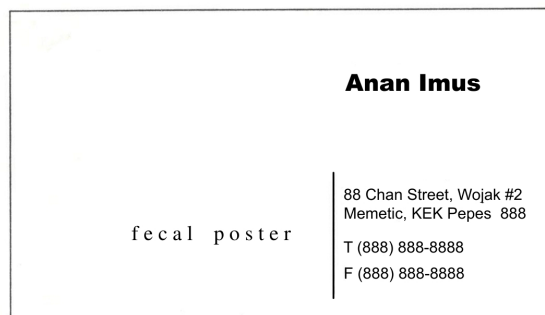
The principle of contrast is that if two items are not exactly the same, then make them different — obviously different.



In this example, none of the four design principles have been employed.



In the second and third examples, all the design principles have been applied: proximity, alignment, repetition and contrast. The information has been grouped into units, which infer a hierarchy of importance as well as focus for the reader. By introducing more contrast in the typography with two faces, italic, different sizes and weights, the copy has new relationships which communicate importance to the viewer.



## **ASSIGNMENT: student book cover**

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### **TOPICS**

- Type Categories: Old Style, Modern, Slab Serif, Sans Serif, Script and Decorative;
- Type Families and the various weights: light, regular, book, bold, heavy, condensed, extended, italic, etc;
- Type Contrast: size, weight, structure, form;
- Type Alignment: flush left, flush right, centered, justified, and random;
- Design Principles: proximity, alignment, repetition, contrast;

### **BRIEF**

- use EVERYTHING we've covered this term (all the topics listed above);
- design a BOOK COVER for the sentences of poetry you created through 'Exquisite Corpse';
- the cover should be EXPRESSIVE: communicate the book interior through your use of typography;
- focus on the APPROPRIATENESS of your typeface(s), degrees of contrast, proximity, alignment(s) and repetition;
- project can be hand rendered or digital art;

### **COVER TEXT (capitals or lowercase)**

- **title:** student handbook
- **sub-title:** year X - year Y (the words 'calendar year' are optional) Year X & Y being beginning and end year of the calendar
- **author:** school name

### **SIZE**

- actual book size is 8.5" x 6" (must be vertical);
- mounted on a CONTRASTING shade of black board, with a 2" boarder on the left, right and top, and 3" boarder on the bottom;
- cover with a trace and a black paper, and print your name and class time on the back;

### **COLOUR**

- two colours in total: completely your choice, including all the type and the background;

### **EXTRAS**

- although **NO** imagery may be used, you may apply GRAPHIC ELEMENTS such as: rules (lines), keylines (outlines of shapes), or solids (shapes of colour); DO NOT MAKE IT ILLUSTRATIVE;

### **DUE DATE: 3 WEEK ASSIGNMENT**

- Week 7, three completed, 100% size as, pencil rough solutions on tissue or bond paper are due beginning of class for review and comments; Note: the roughes should indicate type placement within a 8.5" x 6" frame;
- Week 9, final ink/painted or digital art projects are due beginning of class for a critique;