



# COMPOSITION GUIDE

## *Principles of Design*

Art with Jane Monteith

If you're having trouble laying out your design then you can refer to tried and true technical aspects of art. These are well know principles used regularly in all areas of art , design and photography.

## DESIGN ELEMENTS

### LINE



A line is a mark between two points. There are various types of lines, from straight to squiggly to curved and more. Lines can be used for a wide range of purposes: stressing a word or phrase, connecting content to one another, creating patterns and much more.

### SHAPE



Height + width = shape. We all learned basic shapes in grade school - triangles, squares, circles and rectangles. Odd or lesser seen shapes can be used to attract attention.

There are three basic types of shape: geometric (triangles, squares, circles etc), natural (leaves, animals, trees, people), and abstracted (icons, stylizations, graphic representations etc).

### VALUE



Value is how light or how dark an area looks. A gradient, shown above, is a great way to visualize value - everything from dark to white, all the shades in-between, has a value. Use value to create depth and light; to create a pattern; to lead the eye; or to emphasize.

### COLOR

Color is used to generate emotions, define importance, create visual interest and more. CMYK (cyan/magenta/yellow/black) is subtractive; RGB (red/green/blue) is additive.

Some colors are warm and active (orange, red); some are cool and passive (blue, purple).

There are various color types (primary to analogous) and relationships (monochromatic to triad) worth learning more about as well.

*paper leaf*  
created by Paper Leaf Design. [www.paper-leaf.com](http://www.paper-leaf.com)

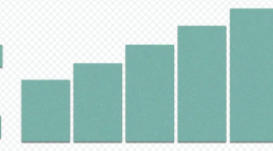
### TEXTURE



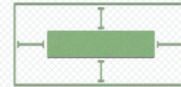
Texture relates to the surface of an object; the look or feel of it. Concrete has a rough texture; drywall has a smooth and subtle texture. Using texture in design is a great way to add depth and visual interest. Printed material has actual, textile texture while screen material has implied texture.



### SIZE



Size is how small or large something is: a small shirt vs. an extra large shirt, for example. Use size to define importance, create visual interest in a design (via contrasting sizes), attract attention and more.

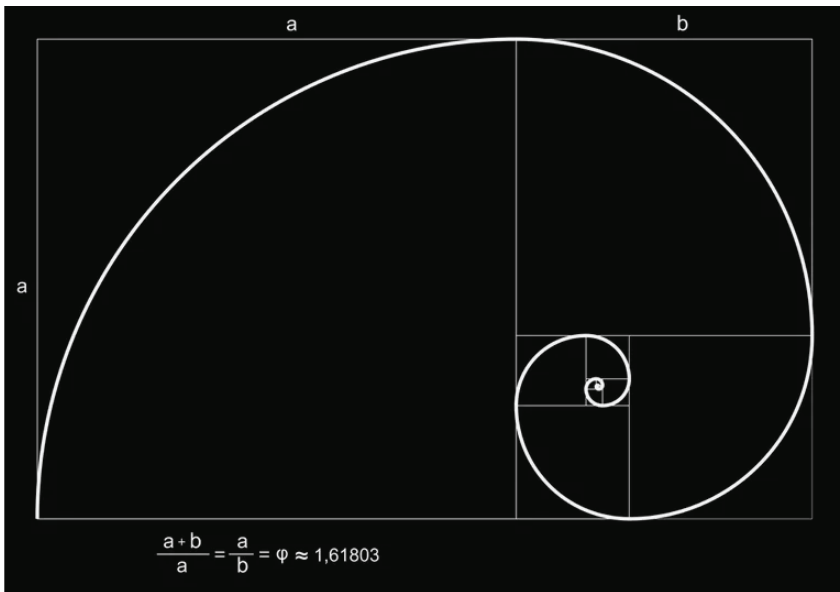


Space is the area around or between elements in a design. It can be used to separate or group information. Use it effectively to: give the eye a rest; define importance; lead the eye through a design and more.

### SPACE

Source: paper-leaf.com

## THE GOLDEN RATIO



José Miguel Hernández Hernández/Getty Images

The Golden Ratio is a term used to describe how elements within a piece of art can be placed. However, it is not merely a term, it is an actual ratio and it can be found in many pieces of art.

The Golden Ratio has many other names. You might hear it referred to as the Golden Section, Golden Proportion, Golden Mean, phi ratio, Sacred Cut, or Divine Proportion. They all mean the same thing.

The easiest way to picture the Golden Ratio is by looking at a rectangle with a width of 1 and a length of 1.618. If you were to draw a line in this plane so that one square and one rectangle resulted, the square's sides would have a ratio of 1:1 and the leftover rectangle would be exactly proportionate to the original rectangle: 1.618

Rectangles and squares are the clearest examples, but the Golden Ratio can be applied to any number of geometric forms including circles, triangles, pyramids, prisms and polygons. It's just a question of applying the correct math. Some artists are good at this, while others are not.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/golden-ratio-definition-in-art-182440>

Written By Shelley Esaak for Thought Co.

Explanation by Shelley Esaak.

## RULE OF THIRDS

The Rule of Thirds is one of the most basic composition guidelines in photography, making use of a natural tendency for the human eye to be drawn toward certain parts of an image. As a photographer, it is your way of making sure the viewers focus on what you want them to.

### Understanding the Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is an imaginary tic-tac-toe board that is drawn across an image to break it into nine equal square. The four points where these lines intersect are the strongest focal points. The lines themselves are the second strongest focal points.

Excerpt from Liz Masoner. Read full article - <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/rule-of-thirds-in-photography>



Image source: Bing images rule of thirds

### ADDITIONAL INTERNET SOURCED ARTICLES:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-are-the-elements-of-art-182704>

<https://www.liveabout.com/art-composition-rules-2578089>