

Fundamentals of Graphic Design

FARMERS MARKET EDITION

What is graphic design?

The fundamentals of graphic design are about seeing (and understanding) how the qualities of visual material—shapes, images, color theory, typography, and layout—work, and work together... and then being able to decide which qualities of each are relevant and engaging and useful for visualizing a particular idea or solving a certain problem.

– Timothy Samara

What's Your Message?

Who are you communicating with?
What are you trying to say?

Have your message be clear and concise.

Don't lose sight of your message. Always keep in mind your original intentions and purpose for the design.

The Tools

Tt

Type



Color



Lines & Shapes



Images

Typography

The art of arranging letters and text in a way that makes the copy legible, clear, and visually appealing.

Designing with type is not only about the letters themselves, but the space around and between them.

TERMINOLOGY:

A **typeface** is a family of **fonts**.

For Example: *Helvetica* is a typeface that includes the following fonts:

Helvetica Light

Helvetica Regular

Helvetica Bold

Type Rules

APPROPRIATE FONTS

Your choice of font should not be at random. Simply choosing a font you personally like from a list, will not result in the best choice. Choose a font that expresses the right tone for your audience.

Text is ultimately there to be read, so most importantly, make sure the font is legible

SIZE

Type should be scaled to fit the space it lives in. Billboards and banners should have large enough type to be read from afar.

LIMIT FONT USE

Do not use more than two to three typefaces in a design. Also, do not use too many variations of fonts. The design will look cluttered and be difficult to read

SPACING

Leading (the space between the lines) and kerning (the space between the letters) affect how words are perceived and read. Make sure your spacing is pleasing so it is easy to navigate between the words and sentences with the eyes.

Here are four main categories of common typefaces. They are designed for specific applications. Use of them incorrectly can lead to ineffective design.

Serif

Easiest to read.
Good choice for
body copy.
Can give off a
formal tone.

Sans Serif

These fonts are
easy to read
and legible at
small sizes, like
captions. Clean
and modern.

DISPLAY

Bold, decorative
styles designed
for big titles and
headers.
Does not work
as well with
large amounts
of copy.

Script

Many of these
are difficult to
read.
Use sparingly
and not with
large amounts
of copy.

Color

Color is an integral part of design. Designers use color theory to make colors work for them. Colors can be used to achieve harmony, balance and contrast.

Color can determine the overall mood of the design, evoking certain feelings, emotions. Color plays an important role in conveying the desired message and reinforcing the brand identity.

A bit on color



ANALOGOUS

Colors next to each other on the color wheel. These colors tend to be harmonious.



COMPLEMENTARY

Colors opposite on the color wheel. These colors are energetic when used together.



MONOCHROME

Same color in shades.



DESATURATED

Less saturated colors.

-  **PASSION, LOVE, BLOOD, DANGER, STRENGTH**
-  **ROMANTIC, FEMININE, LOVE, SENSITIVITY, EXCITING**
-  **OPTIMISM, SUNSHINE, CONFIDENCE, ATTENTION, SUCCESS**
-  **HEALTH, GROWTH, PEACE, VITALITY, WEALTH**
-  **ENERGY, HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, WARMTH, CREATIVITY**
-  **TRUST, SERENITY, PEACE, COMMUNICATION, SADNESS**
-  **ROYALTY, MAJESTY, MYSTERY, SPIRITUALITY, LUXURY**
-  **ORGANIC, HONEST, NATURAL, SIMPLE, WHOLESOME**
-  **COMPROMISE, NEUTRAL, BALANCE, CONSERVATIVE, FRUSTRATION**
-  **ELEGANCE, POWER, LUXURY, MYSTERY, SORROW**
-  **PURE, SIMPLE, INNOCENCE, VIRGINITY, MINIMALISM**

Lines & Shapes

Graphics such as these are useful tools to use for directing the eye around a composition.

LINES

Lines, both thick and thin, placed thoughtfully on the page help direct the viewer's gaze and lead them through content.

Line weight also carries meaning. Thin lines may fade into the background. Heavy weighted lines demand attention. Lines can divide a page into sections or isolate an element.

Graphic designers meticulously use lines to guide the audience through their work and create desired reactions.

SHAPES

Circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles form the building blocks of logos, icons, illustrations, and layouts. Particular shapes chosen also carry meaning. Circles and curves are generally seen as organic, friendly, and approachable. Squares and rectangles feel stable and balanced. Triangles infer motion, energy, and tension.

Graphic designers intentionally select shapes to evoke desired emotions in the viewer.

Images

Images are an integral part of the design process, and when it comes to selecting them and using them in a project, it's important to make the right choices



Principles of Design

Good graphic design follows these principles for effective visual communication.



Composition

- Balance & Proportion
- Alignment & Proximity
- White Space
- Focal Point

Hierarchy

- Scale
- Contrast

Harmony

- Cohesiveness
- Pattern & Repetition

Composition

The way content is arranged in a space. These principles are used to achieve good composition:

Balance & Proportion

Balance refers to how visual weight is distributed on the page. It influences the viewer's perception of the overall design, drawing their eye towards heavier elements. Balance helps create structure and harmony.

White Space

The area of the design without print or pictures. The lack of any elements and gives your design breathing room to focus the eye on the important elements within the design. When a layout has no white space, it makes it harder to focus.

Alignment & Proximity

Alignment considers how each individual elements are positioned in relation to the others on the page. Designers use a grid structure to align elements to create order and consistency. Proximity can also have an effect of how elements interact on a page. It can create balance or tension.

Focal Point

Focal points are areas of interest, emphasis or difference within a composition that capture and hold the viewer's attention

Hierarchy

Hierarchy in graphic design is defined as a clear order of importance so that the viewer knows what to look at first, second, and third.

Graphic designers create hierarchy through size and scale, contrast and color, and other tools to ensure that important elements and information stand out.

Scale & Proportion

Scale refers to the size of an element in relation to another element.

Proportion refers to the ratio or balance of an element in relation to the whole composition or a specific part of it.

Size and proportion can be used to dictate visual hierarchy.

Contrast

Contrast helps to distinguish between different design elements and ensures that certain elements stand out, directing the viewer's attention and guiding their perception of the page.

Contrast is critical to ensure that text is clearly legible and that the viewer can easily make out individual elements.

Harmony

Do all the different elements exist harmoniously together?

Does everything appear to be in the right place and generally 'in sync'?

Unity

Unity is achieved through a combination of several graphic design principles: from the right amount of white space to repetition, balance, alignment, and proximity. Apply all of those principles correctly and you'll naturally achieve a sense of cohesion.

Pattern & Repetition

Both of these can create harmony in a design. Repetition can create texture and patterns. Repetition also contributes to consistency, unity, and brand recognition.

Best Practices Checklist

● ————— ●

Is the main purpose of the design the first thing that is seen?

Is all the relevant information included, easy to see and read?

● ————— ●

Does the tone suit its purpose and the audience?
Does it connect or reflect your market's brand?

● ————— ●

Is the design able to be read from where most people will view it?

Are there too many words?

● ————— ●

Are there any elements that can be taken out? Images, graphics, lines, etc.

Design Examples

Canva templates with problems



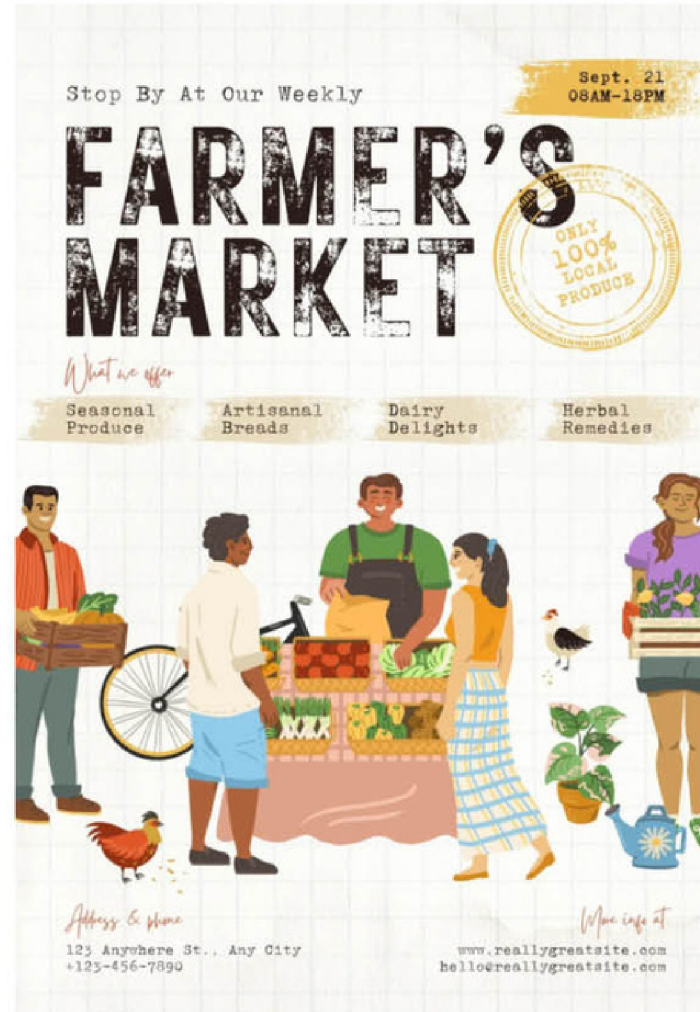
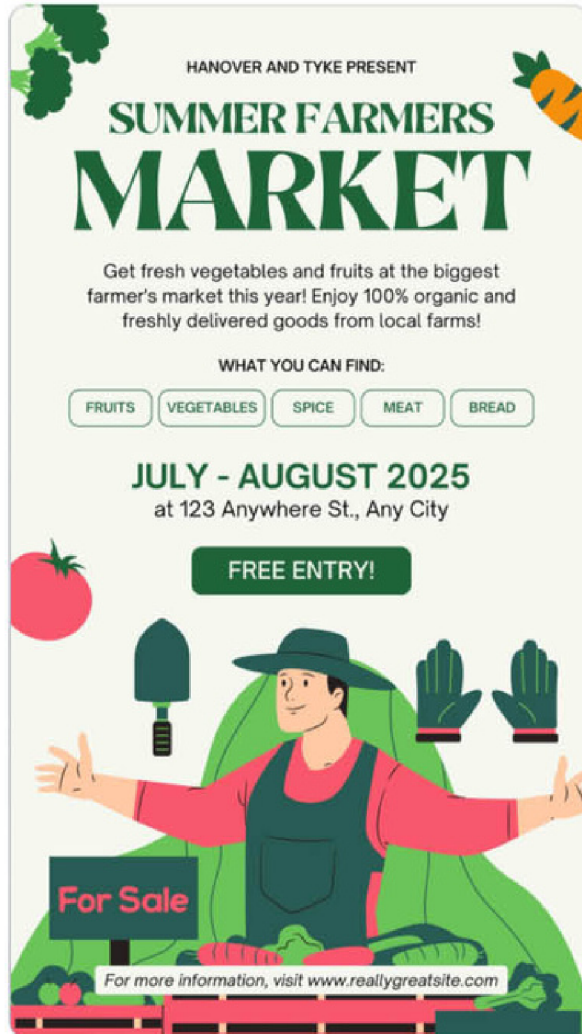
- Over decorative or fancy type is hard to read
- White type on dark color. Ok for headlines, not great for smaller text or lots of text
- The main information is not large enough to be easily read

Canva templates with problems



- Over decorative or fancy type
- Type over imagery is not legible
- The main information is not large enough to be easily read

Canva templates with problems



- Over decorative or fancy type
- Too much text
- The main information is not large enough to be easily read
- Bad information hierarchy



Example of good design

- Good information hierarchy
- Minimal, 2-color complimentary color palette
- Variation and playful use of type gives visual interest
- Graphics direct attention and frame the message



Example of good design

- Good information hierarchy, easy to read
- Pleasing & balanced composition
- Bright, clean color palette



Example of good design

- Good information hierarchy
- Watermelon as focal point is eye catching
- Bold type is easy to read
- Graphics direct viewers eye around the page

Canva templates - Editing Examples



original

Canva templates - Editing Examples



original



edited

Canva templates - Editing Examples



original

Canva templates - Editing Examples



original



edited

Handy Canva Tips & Tricks

1. Setting up brand kits
2. Templates & applying your brand in styles
3. View settings to Use *Always turn these on for anything that will be printed*
4. Position tab
5. Spacing text
6. Use high resolution images in designs for print: over 300dpi.
7. Text effects
8. Shortcuts
9. Resizing designs for other applications
10. Download settings

FROM A MARKET MANAGER
