

Elements of Design

The elements of design are **shape/form, texture, color, line, and space.** These are the tools used to design a room or space.

Shape/Form

Shape is two-dimensional and appears flat while **form** is three-dimensional with length, width, and depth. (Square is a shape; box is a form.) **Form** is the structure of an item.



Words to describe shape include: square, rectangle, circle, oval, triangle, curved, wavy

Words to describe form include: cube, box, ball, cylinder, pyramid, free form, sphere

The chair above shows a number of rectangles with curved corners rather than sharp edges. The overall form of the chair is boxy.

Texture

Texture is the surface quality of an item. It is how something feels when it is touched or looks like it would feel if touched.



Words to describe texture include: rough, smooth, soft, prickly, squishy, grainy, hard, soft

The chair above is leather, an example of a commonly used material. Leather looks and feels both soft and smooth, slick, cold or crushed around the buttons. The back is textured by buttons so it may be bumpy and firm while the seat cushion looks softer.

Color

Color is what we see when light is reflected.

Words to describe color include: hue, value, intensity

Hue: the name of the color (yellow)



Intensity: brightness or dullness (soft yellow versus fluorescent yellow)



Value: lightness or darkness (pale yellow versus dark mustard yellow)

Line

Line is any mark greater in length than width.

Words to describe line include: vertical, horizontal, straight, curved, diagonal, thick, thin, dashed, zigzag, continuous, jagged, smooth

The chair at the right shows straight lines in the legs, seat, and chair back. The straight lines are both horizontal and vertical. There are curved lines in the chair back and between the front legs and diagonal lines between the legs on the sides.



Space

Space is the area between and around objects and the area that the object occupies. In a room you have a defined space so it's important to consider how much of the space each object will use. For this reason, space is an added element in home decor.

Words to describe space include: cramped, crowded, open, uncomfortable, comfortable, cozy, noisy, warm, cold

The depth and width of chairs A and B are similar. They occupy the same amount of actual space. However, chair A is light and delicate while chair B is heavier, making the amount of visual space they occupy different.



File: Youth and 4-H

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PULLING IT TOGETHER

Elements and Principles of Design in Home Improvement



By learning and using the elements and principles of design, you will increase your understanding of how and why some things work together and some simply "don't look right."



