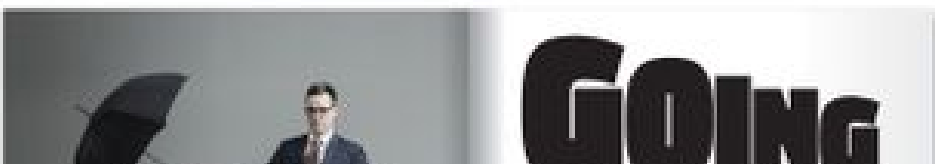


The main part of text in your design or publication – the written website content, the book contents, even this type you’re reading right now, it’s all body copy.

[illegible]

Type that is designed with the objective of attracting attention. Think of movie titles on posters, article titles in magazines, newspaper headlines, etc.





04. Hierarchy

The visual arrangement of design elements in a way that signifies importance. For example, you might make a title big and bold to ensure it attracts more attention than a small, lightly colored image caption.

Do you know the [5 principles of effective visual hierarchy](#)?



05. Kerning

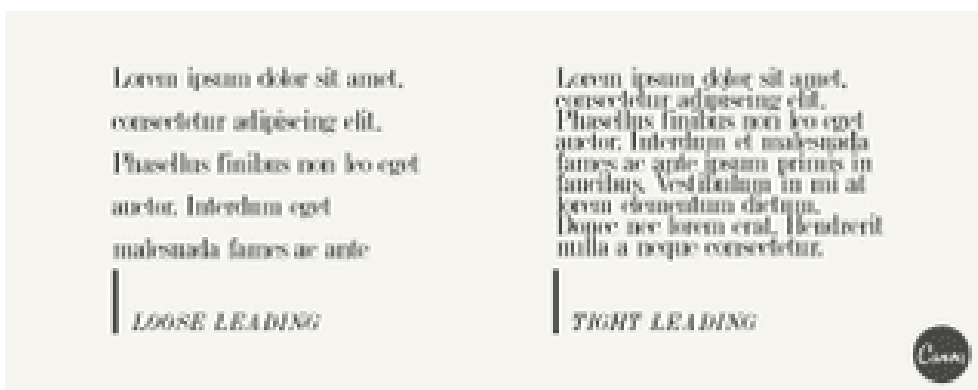
The adjustment of space between two characters in your type. Kerning usually aims to achieve a more proportional and pleasing balance of space between each character.

Want to learn more about kerning? Read our [beginner's guide to kerning like a designer](#).



06. Leading

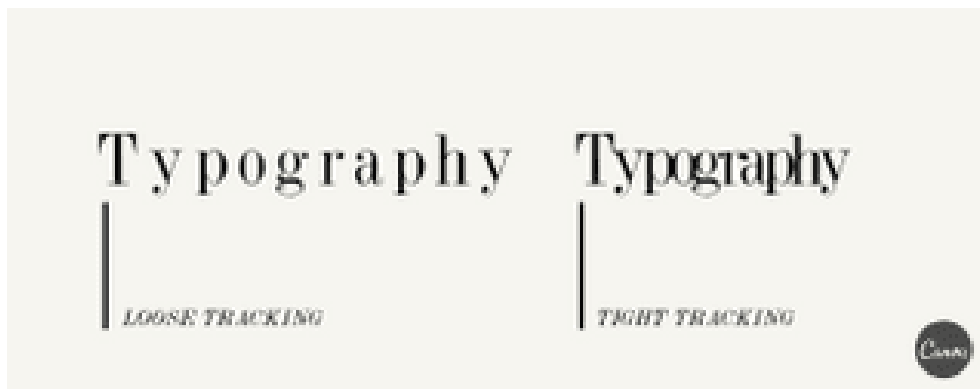
Pronounced ‘ledding’, leading refers to the space between lines of type. Overly tight leading can cause tension and overlap, making the content unreadable, and too-loose leading can equally make the type appear disjointed, so we usually try to find a nice balance between the two.



07. Tracking

Tracking concerns the space between letters. When we track bodies of text, we are adjusting space between every letter in a word in order to change the density or appearance of a large block of type (i.e. body copy). Tracking shouldn't be confused with

kerning, which concerns the adjustment of space between individual pairs of letters.



08. X-Height

The average height of lowercase letters. X-height gets its name as this value is usually exemplified by looking at the height of the letter x in any given typeface.

Read more about X-Height and other typographic terms in the Design School's [visual guide to typography](#).



09. Ascender

The part of a lowercase letter that extends above the x-height. Some common examples of this are 'b', 'd', 'f', etc.

Read more about Ascenders and other typographic terms in the Design School's [visual guide to typography](#).



10. Descenders

The part of a lowercase letter that extends below the x-height. Some common examples of this are 'g', 'j', 'p', etc.

Read more about Ascenders and other typographic terms in the Design School's [visual guide to typography](#).



11. Orphans and Widows

The words or short lines that appear by themselves at the top or bottom of a column of type. It's always a good (and easy) idea to check over your body copy before finishing up, and manually removing these when they appear.

“WIDOWS” & “ORPHANS”

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam blandit efficitur hendrerit. Donec at leo nibh. Pellentesque eleifend lacus ut leo varius pulvinar. Phasellus eu elit tempor, blandit turpis vitae, auctor metus. Nunc lorem ac magna euismod, eget mollis ornare vehicula. Cras faucibus urna augue, non egestas sem vestibulum a. Integer porta sollicitudin fermentum. Duis eu augue aliquam, placerat neque non, pellentesque dui. Praesent non metus lectus. Mauris ut.

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vel non est.

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12. Serif Typeface

A typeface with small decorative strokes (called ‘serifs’) found at the end of horizontal and vertical lines. Serif typefaces tend to look professional, authoritative, and traditional in appearance.



13. Sans Serif Typeface

A typeface without the small decorative serif strokes. Sans serifs tend to look more modern, stylish, and cleaner than their serif counterparts.



14. Script Typeface

A typeface that mimics cursive handwriting. Script typefaces tend to look elegant, personal, and/or more casual, depending on how embellished they are.



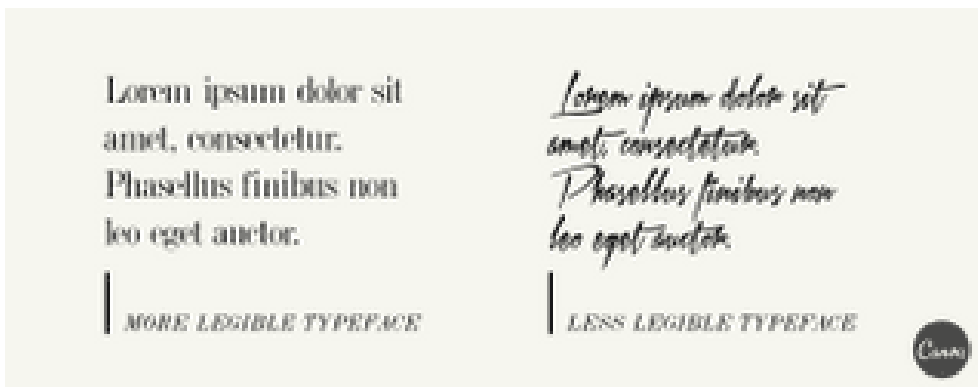
15. Slab Serif Typeface

A typeface with thicker, blockier serifs, very commonly used in headlines and titles, but rarely in body copy. Slab serifs tend to look sturdier, stronger, and bolder.



16. Legibility

The measure of how easy it is to distinguish one letter from the next. Legibility has a lot to do with your choice of typeface and how you use it, i.e. simpler serif or sans serif typefaces are generally better for smaller body copy.

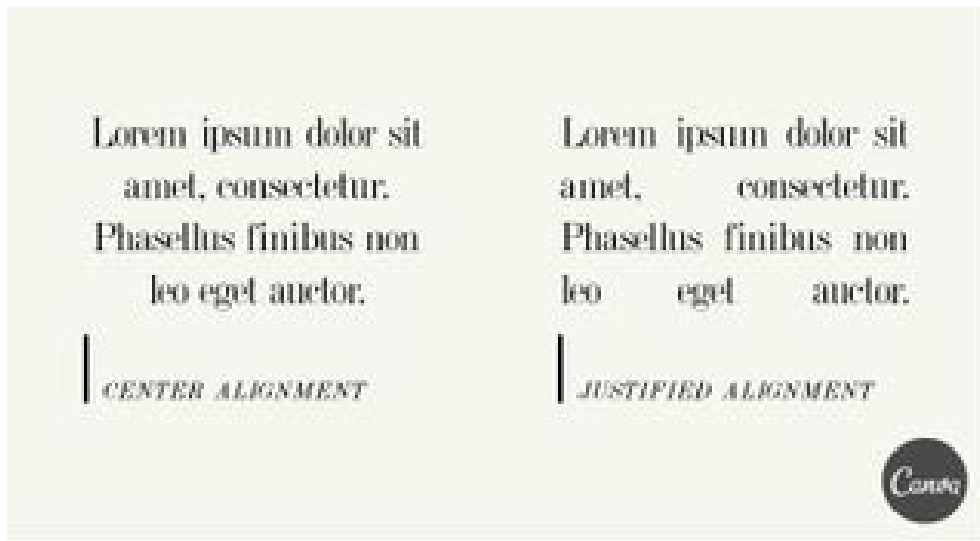


17. Alignment

The lining up of elements to achieve balance, order, and a more logical layout. There are also four common types of typographical alignment – center, left, right, and justified, each with their own time and place for application.

[Read more about alignment and other typographical tips here!](#)





18. Pull Quote

A short quote or excerpt pulled from the main text and used as a visual element to help highlight important ideas and draw interest to the piece. Pull quotes are very common in magazine design.



19. Palette

The selection of colors that you choose to use for your design.

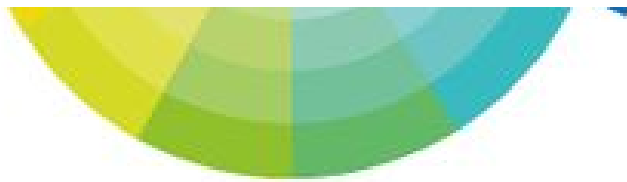
For more tips on building a beautiful color palette [check out these color secrets from designers](#).



20. Monochrome

A color scheme built out of only one color, including lighter and darker tones of that color.





Monochromatic Color Scheme



21. Analogous

A color scheme built out of three colors that are next to each other on the color wheel.



Analogous Color Scheme



22. Complementary

A color scheme built out of two colors that sit opposite each other on the color wheel.



Complementary Color Scheme



23. Triadic

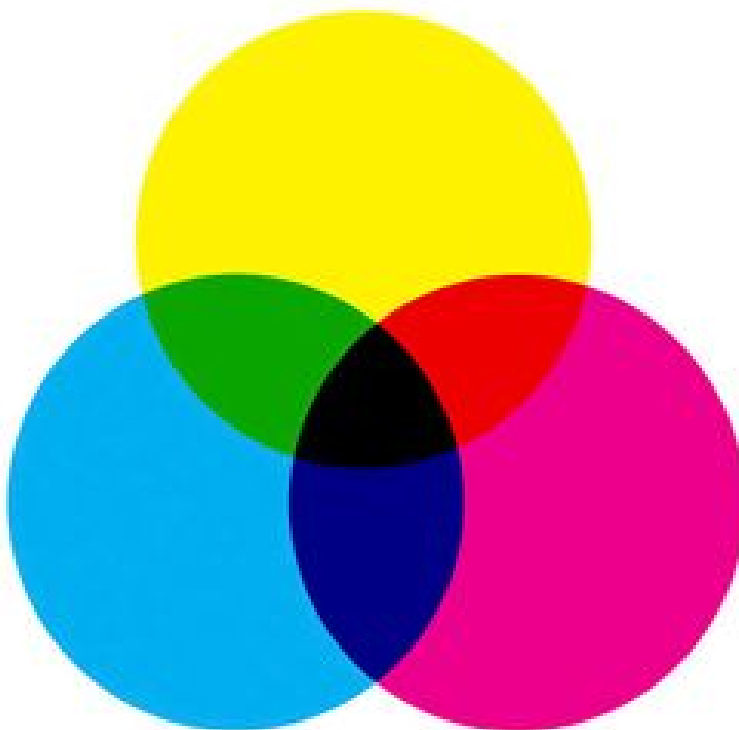
A color scheme built out of three colors equally spaced around the color wheel.





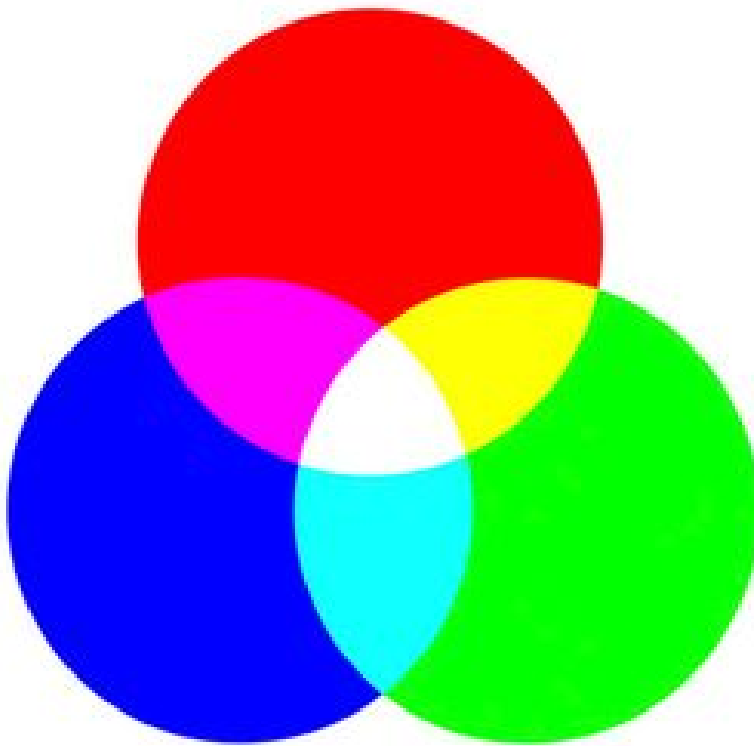
24. CMYK

CMYK or 'Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Key', is a color model that is used for print purposes. CMYK is a subtractive color, this means that we begin with white and end up with black. So, as we add more color, the result turns darker.



25. RGB

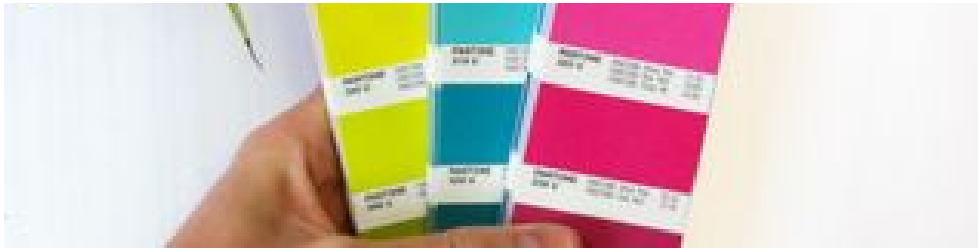
RGB or ‘Red, Green, Blue’ is a color model that is used for on-screen purposes. RGB is an additive color, meaning that when mixing colors, we start with black and end up with white as more color is added.



26. Pantone (PMS)

The ‘Pantone Matching System’ is a standardized system of colors for printing. Every Pantone shade is numbered, making it much easier for people to reference and identify exact shades of color.





27. Warm Colors

Colors that make you think of heat and warmth, like reds, yellows, oranges, etc. These colors tend to feel cozier, friendlier, and more cheerful. You are able to add more warm tones to an image or photograph by increasing the orange tones in your image.



Warm Color Scheme



28. Cool Colors

Colors that make you think of colder temperatures, like blues, greens, violets, etc. These colors tend to create a calm and soothing atmosphere. You are able to add cooler tones to an image or photograph by increasing the blue tones in your image.



Cool Color Scheme



29. Color Theory

The study of how colors make people feel and respond. Certain colors tend to evoke certain subconscious emotions and feelings in people – for example, we tend to associate blue with trust and dependability, hence why so many corporate businesses have blue logos and branding.

Do you want to learn [10 color inspiration secrets only designers know about?](#)

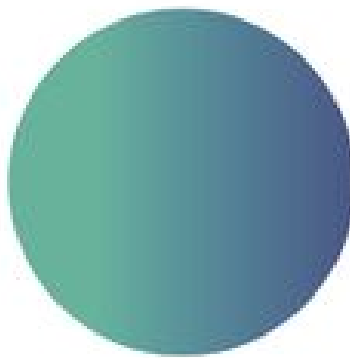
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | GREEN Green traditionally represents freshness and the environment, is a natural color choice for any brands related to the living world. |  | YELLOW Yellow represents happiness and joy. The warmth of this color stimulates mental activity and is said to capture more attention than any other hue. |
|  | BLUE Often used with technology brands, the color blue is associated with security, loyalty, integrity and harmony. |  | ORANGE Friendship and adventure are represented by the color orange. You will notice that a common visual representation of sports will include something orange. |
|  | RED Passion, emergency, sexuality and lust are the emotions most often associated with the color red. In eastern cultures, red is the color of good luck. |  | PINK Romance and love are related to pink. This hue also relates to nurturing and compassion. It is known to bring out the sympathetic qualities in people. |
|  | PURPLE Purple stands for independence, individuality and inspiration. You will see this color used to represent spirituality and magic. |  | GREY They say this tone is known as impartial, being not one or the other. It is commonly a neutral color that has no major emotion attached to it. |

30. Gradient

A gradual change in color from one tone into another. Two common types of gradients are the linear gradient where each color sits on opposite sides of the frame, and a radial gradient where one color sits in the middle, and another at the edge.



Radial Gradient

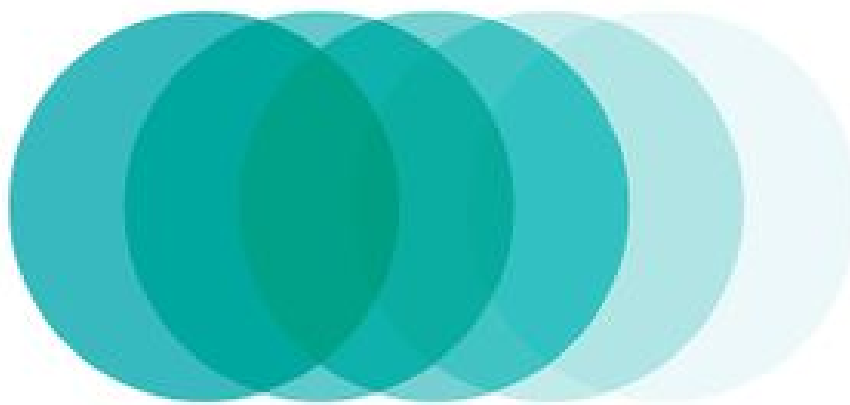


Linear Gradient



31. Opacity

The degree of transparency an element has. The lower the opacity, the more transparent an element is.



100%

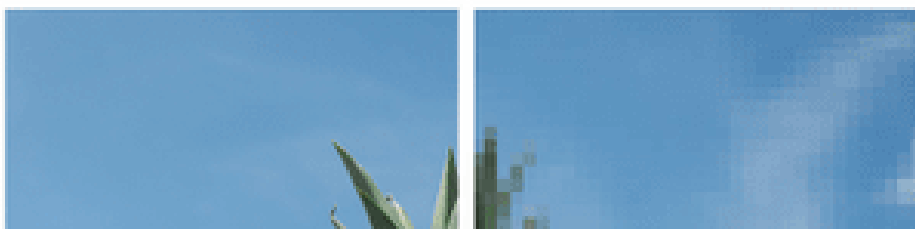
10%

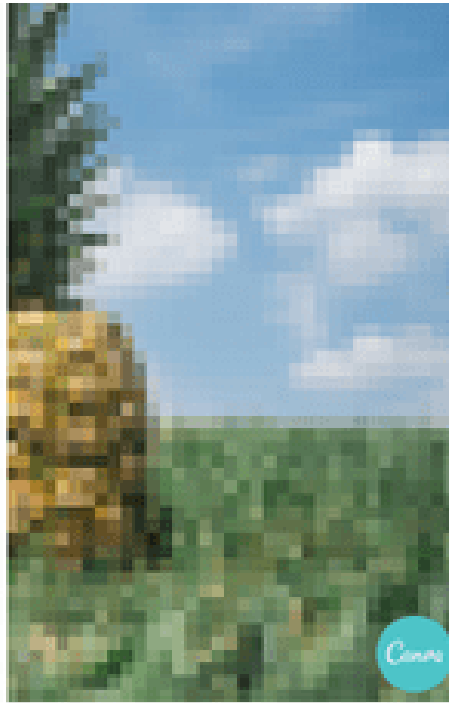
Opacity



32. Resolution

The amount of detail an image has. Generally speaking, the higher your resolution, the better your images appear, and the more detail is rendered. Whereas lower resolution images or graphic tend to appear blurry, pixelated or muddy.

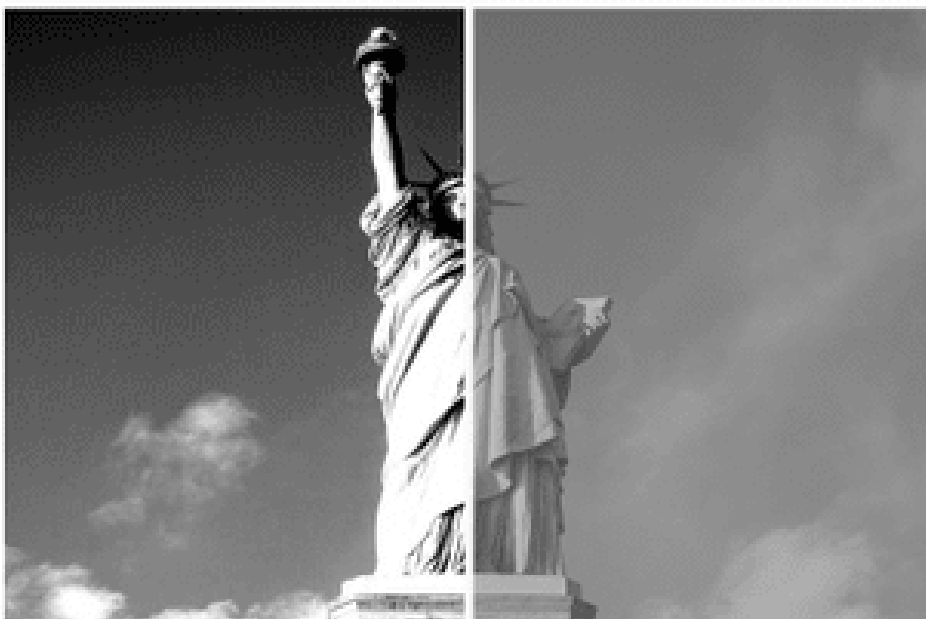


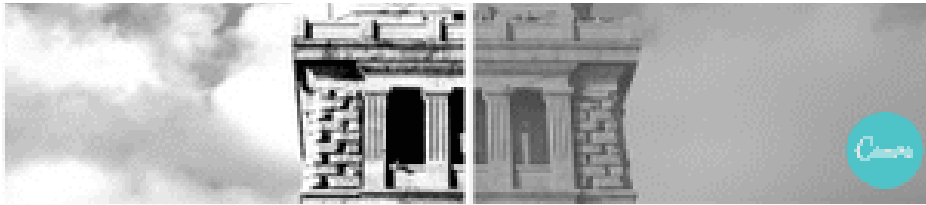
*High Resolution**Low Resolution*

33. Contrast

The degree of difference between two juxtaposed elements. Some other common types of contrast are dark vs. light, thick vs. thin, rough vs. smooth, etc.

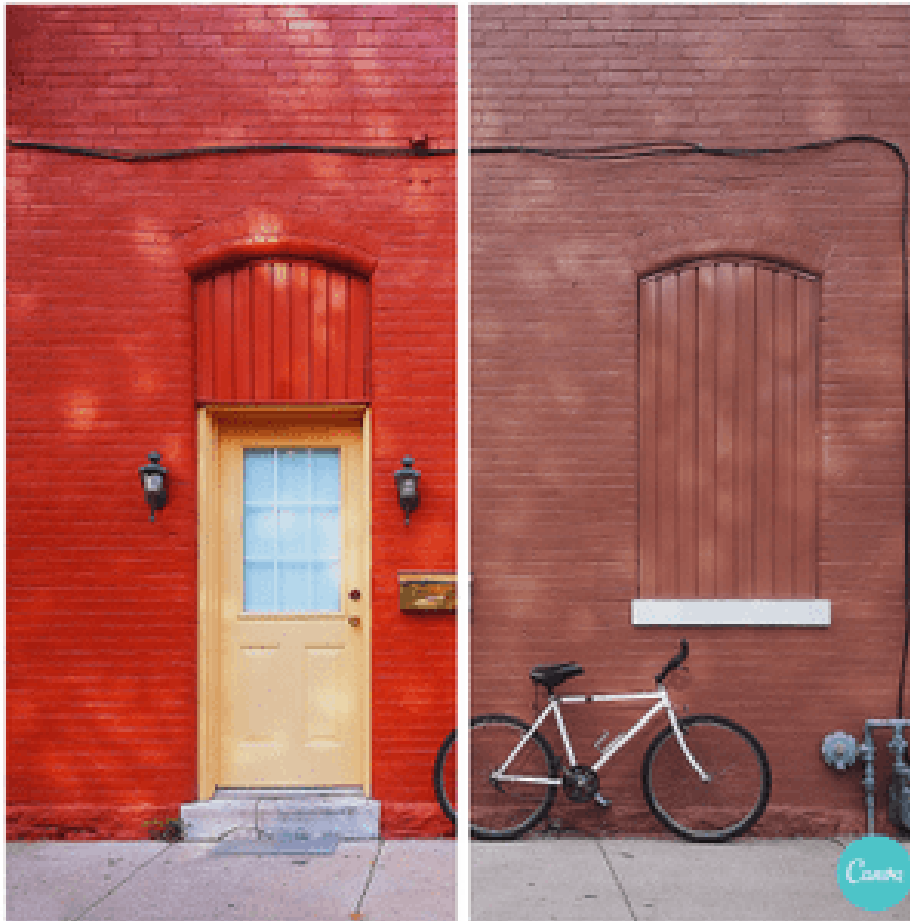
Want to find out how you can [use contrast in your designs like the experts?](#)



*High Contrast**Low Contrast*

34. Saturation

The degree of intensity and vividness of a color. For example, a low-saturation color may appear paler, and faded, whereas a more heavily saturated color may appear more vibrant and colorful.

*High Saturation**Low Saturation*

35. Stock Photo

A professionally shot photograph available online for licensing. Stock photos are usually used in lieu of hiring a photographer, or if a designer cannot access the images they need from their own inventory of photographs.

For a guide to the very best places to find beautiful, free, high quality stock imagery, [be sure to check out this list of 74 sites!](#)



36. Rule Of Thirds

Rule of Thirds is a theory that if you divide your image with two vertical and two horizontal lines, the areas where your lines intersect will become focal points of your design.





37. Brand

A collection of concepts, ideas, and emotions that encapsulate your company's values and ethos. A brand is a mix of all the fine conceptual details that make up the company, from the content the brand promotes, the way employees talk, the words used, the values upheld, etc.

For more information on building a brand that sticks, be sure to [check out these 12 simple steps to creating a memorable brand](#).



38. Brand Identity

The visualisation of your brand (see definition above) in a way that represents the values, content and ethos of the company. This can include things like a logo, business cards, letterheads, uniforms, packaging design, etc.

Want to learn how to [build a brand identity in 5 days?](#)





39. Logotype

A type of logo where the name of the company designed in a visual way. Think of brands like Google, Ikea, Disney.

FedEx

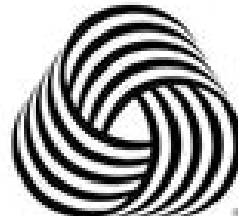
IBM

Coca-Cola



40. Brandmark

A type of logo design where a symbol is used in place of the company name, i.e. the Apple logo. Brandmarks are commonly accompanied by a logotype, but not always.



41. Thumbnail Sketch

No, not the kind of thumbnail on your hand. Thumbnail sketches are rough drawings of potential design concepts or solutions. These sketches are used to visualise and grow various ideas and concepts by hand before moving to the screen.

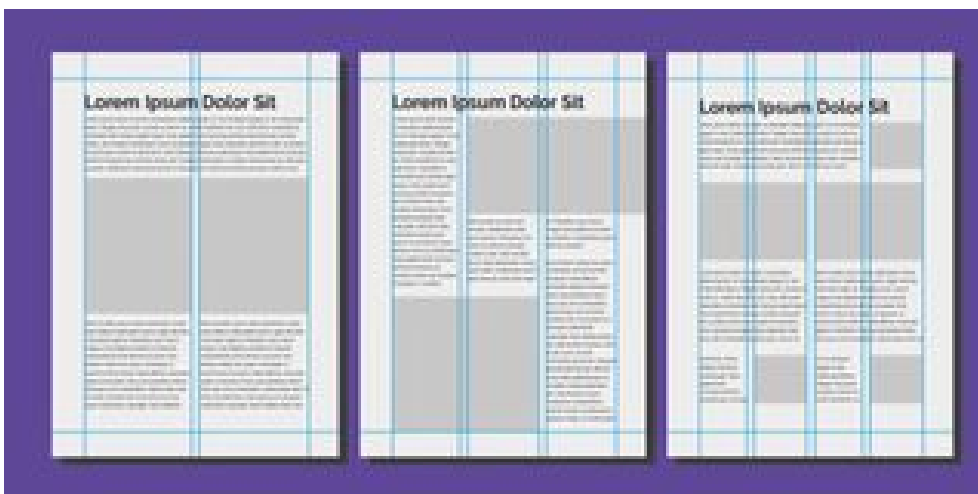




42. Grid

A framework made up of evenly divided, intersecting columns and rows. Grids help designers to align and arrange elements in a quicker, neater, and more consistent way.

Ready to get creative with grids? Here are [5 design ideas using grids](#).



43. Scale

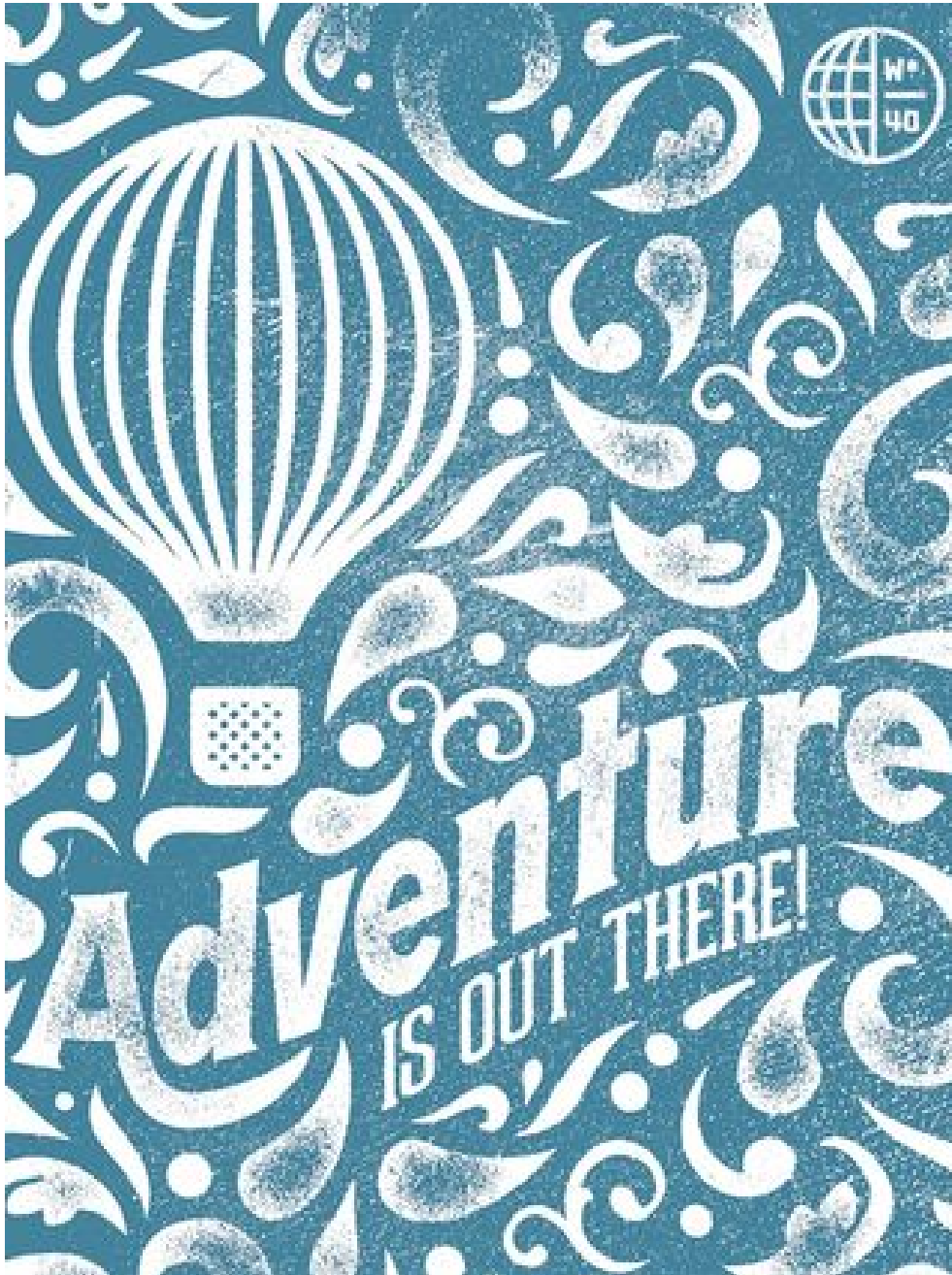
The change of size of an object while keeping its shape and proportions intact. Large scale can create drama, and smaller scale can create fine detail.

Get started with scale. Here are [5 creative ways to use scale in your designs](#).



44. Texture

When it comes to design, texture can refer to the actual tactile surface of a design, or the visual tactility of your design. By layering textured images and graphics over your design, you can often create a visual appearance of tactility that mirrors actual texture.



45. White Space

Also called 'negative space', white space refers to the areas of a design that are not filled with content. White space is an important

design element as it helps to let a design ‘breathe’, helps avoid overly complicated designs, and keeps designs looking clean.

See why [white space can be your best friend in design](#).



46. Margins

The space around the edge of a page. By increasing or decreasing the size of your page’s margins you can create a more calming or a more tense design respectively. The example below has larger, more open margins.





47. Die Cut

The process of cutting areas of your printed design in various shapes to create unique effects. Diecuts are created after printing and are classed as a finishing process.

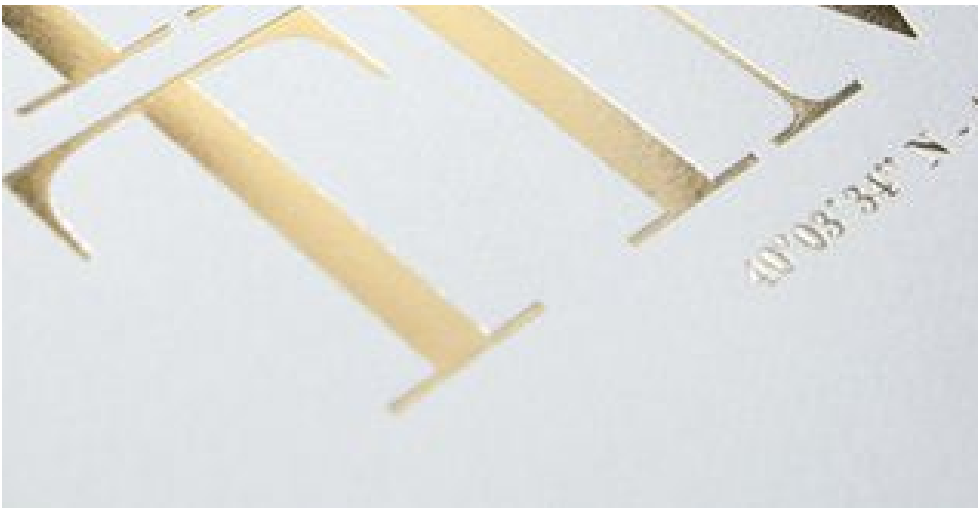




48. Foil Stamping

The heat-pressing application of foil to certain parts of a design to give them a shiny, metallic finish.



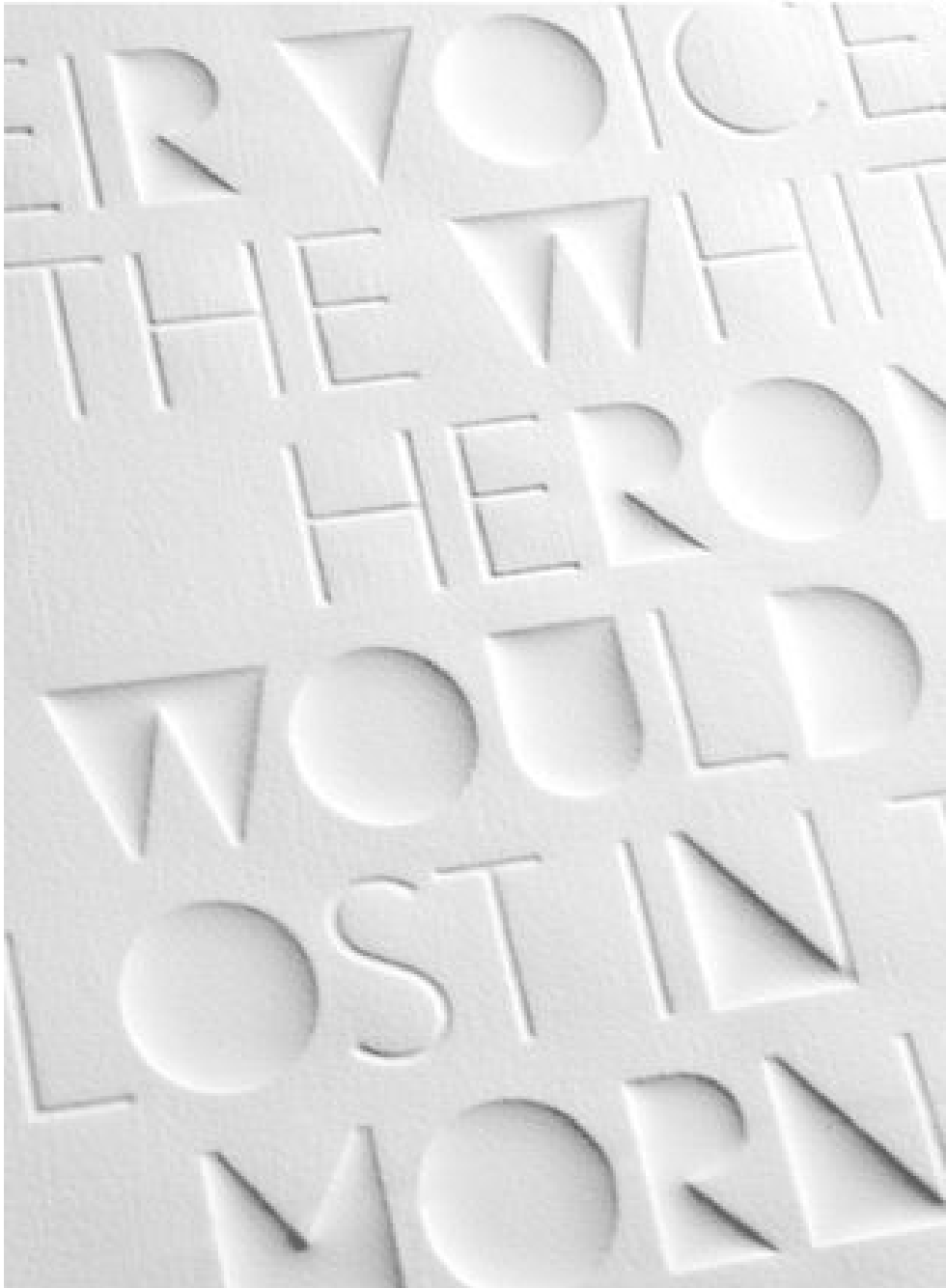
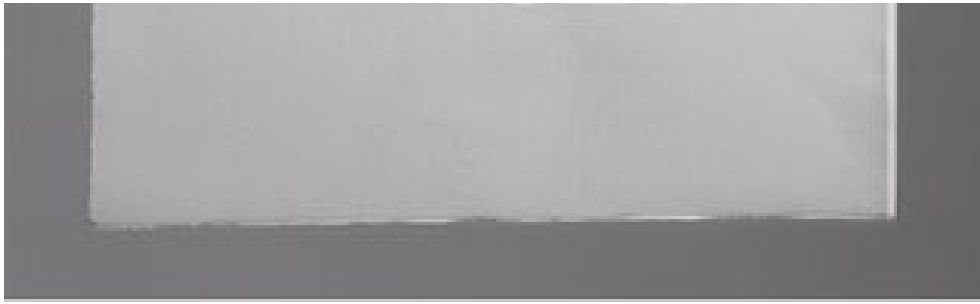


49. Letterpressing

The process of using metal plates to press a design into the surface of paper to create dimensional indentations.

Get inspired with letterpress with a [stunning collection of 50 letterpress business cards](#).





50. Lorem Ipsum

Also known as ‘dummy copy’, lorem ipsum is a generic filler text used when the real text is not available. It’s used as placeholder

text to demonstrate how a design will look once the real body copy has been included.



Well, there you have it, a small dose of some of the more common terms that you might encounter when working with (or as) a graphic designer.

Whether you're a designer or not, do keep in mind that while the terminology is important, it's not the be all and end all. Definitions change and adapt to different circumstances, so keep your eyes peeled for new concepts and ideas, keep an open mind, and ask questions! There's never any shame in asking others to help clarify any particular concept that you're unsure of. Or, if all else fails, Google away to your heart's content.

Now let's turn the tables: what graphic design terms do you use or see used frequently? Let us know down in the comments!