

# Design tokens and assets

Learn more about the most common types of design decisions you can define and use across your UIs. Consider those design tokens and assets as the fuel of your Design API.

## What are design tokens and assets?

### Design tokens

Design tokens are names used to express design decisions in your organization's design system. They are used by humans like you and us. Examples include a color, an icon, a font size, a

ent between disparate

[n/wrote/designish-systems/\)](#)

[og/post/atomic-web-design/\)](#)

#### Can we store cookies?

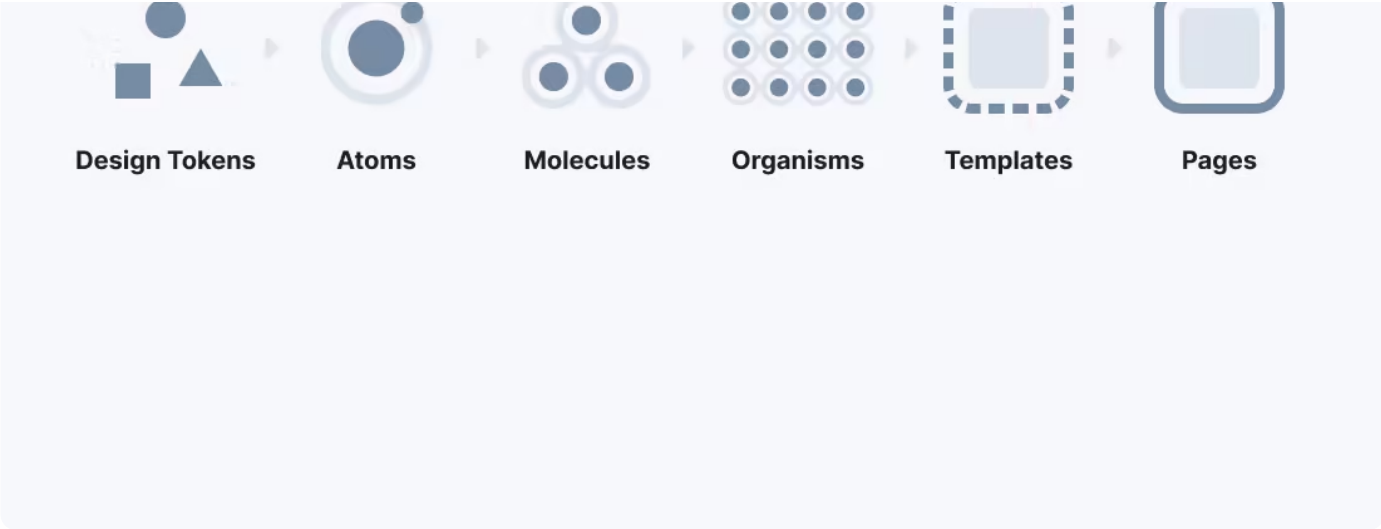
These will be used to power Statistics, Live Chat, and Essential.

Customize

No

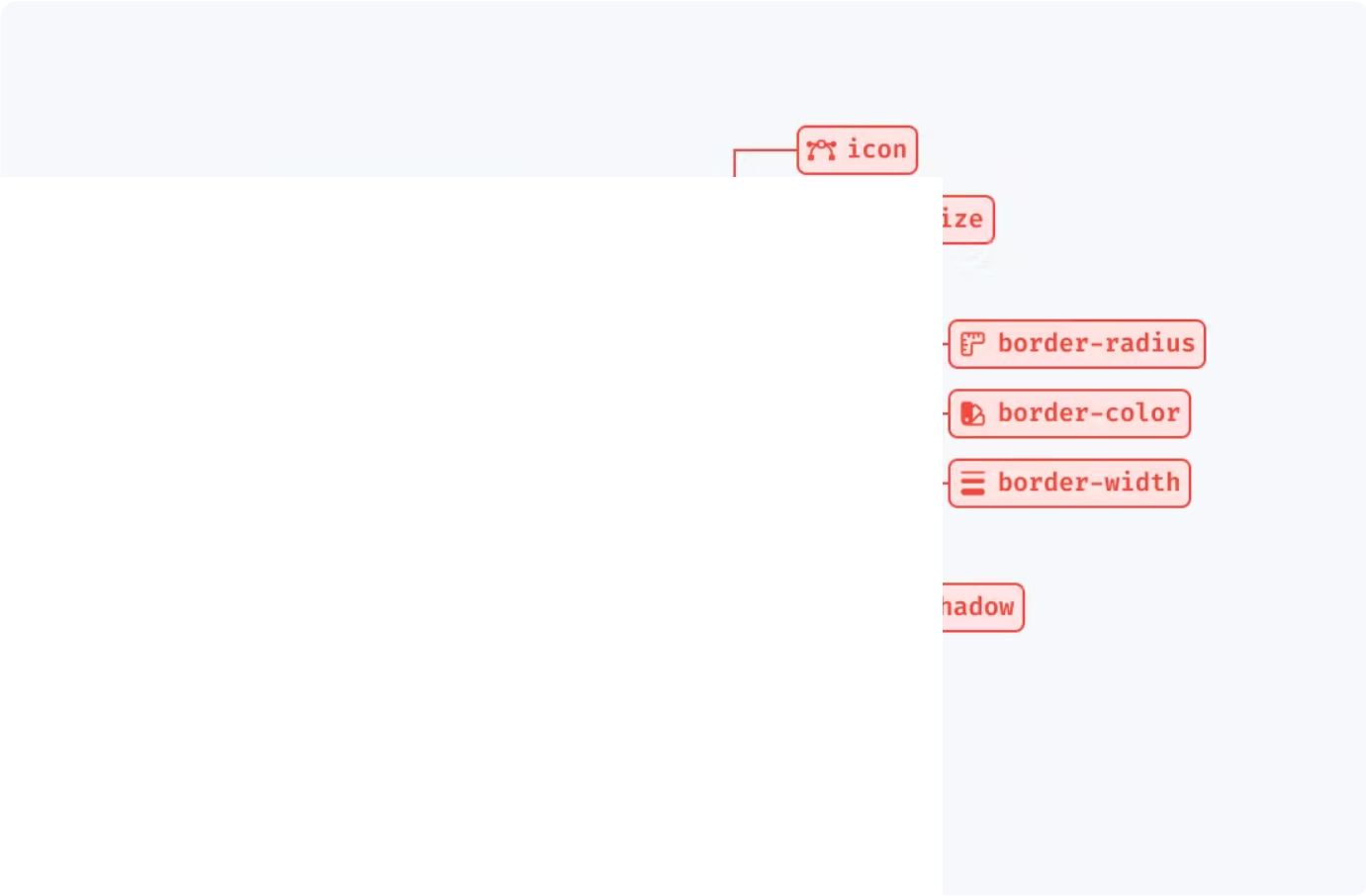
Yes





The place of design tokens within the Atomic Design taxonomy.

Example of a button component composed of many design tokens:



ponent.

[es/design-data-platforms-](#)  
ions.

Color

color-brand

color-background

color-border

color-gradient

color-text

color-text-link

Opacity

opacity

Shadow

shadow

Font

font-style

font-size

font-weight

font-line-height

Spacing

spacing

Depth

depth

Assets

bitmaps

vectors

Motion

motion-duration

motion-timing-function

Media Queries

mq-mobile

mq-tablet

mq-desktop

Gradient

gradient

Border

border

List of several famous types of design tokens.



**Introduction to design tokens, by Louis Chenais ↗**

Learn about what design tokens are and how they can help you scale your branding with confidence.

<https://specifyapp.com/blog/introduction-to-design-tokens>

## Design Assets

Assets are all the design decisions that can be stored within a file. Specify supports the following asset types:

- Fonts aka "font files" your text styles are inherently using ( `.otf` , `.ttf` , `.woff` , `.woff2` )
- Vector images for icons or illustrations ( `.svg` and `.pdf` )
- Bitmaps for "basic images" ( `.png` , `.jpeg` , `.webp` , `.avif` ...)

kens and how you can



**Figma Template: Design tokens and assets** ↗

This Figma template helps you index your design tokens and assets compatible with Specify.

(<https://www.figma.com/community/file/1078015059752018461>)

## Color

Colors have meaning and support the purpose of the content, communicating things like hierarchy of information, interactive states, and the difference between distinct elements in your UI. Among all your design token types, color is surely one of the most important ones.

"Color themes are designed to be harmonious, ensure accessible text, and distinguish UI elements and surfaces from one another."

[Material UI, Google's design system](https://material.io/design/color/the-color-system.html#color-usage-and-palettes) ↗ (<https://material.io/design/color/the-color-system.html#color-usage-and-palettes>)



MENU ☰



Example File



[stem.html#color-usage-and-](#)

[colors\)](#)

balance, hierarchy and  
why". To push this even  
reat deal of attention to

could be considered as

- a font size
- a letter spacing
- a font name

Text styles are considered as [composite design tokens](https://design-tokens.github.io/community-group/format/#composite-design-token) (<https://design-tokens.github.io/community-group/format/#composite-design-token>) because they are composed of several design tokens.

"Good typography often goes unnoticed because it just makes sense.  
Elements of good typography include consistency, hierarchy, and alignment."

[IBM Design Language](https://www.ibm.com/design/language/typography/type-basics) ↗ (<https://www.ibm.com/design/language/typography/type-basics>)



### Example type scale

[Typography for user-](#)

[/eb](#) ↗

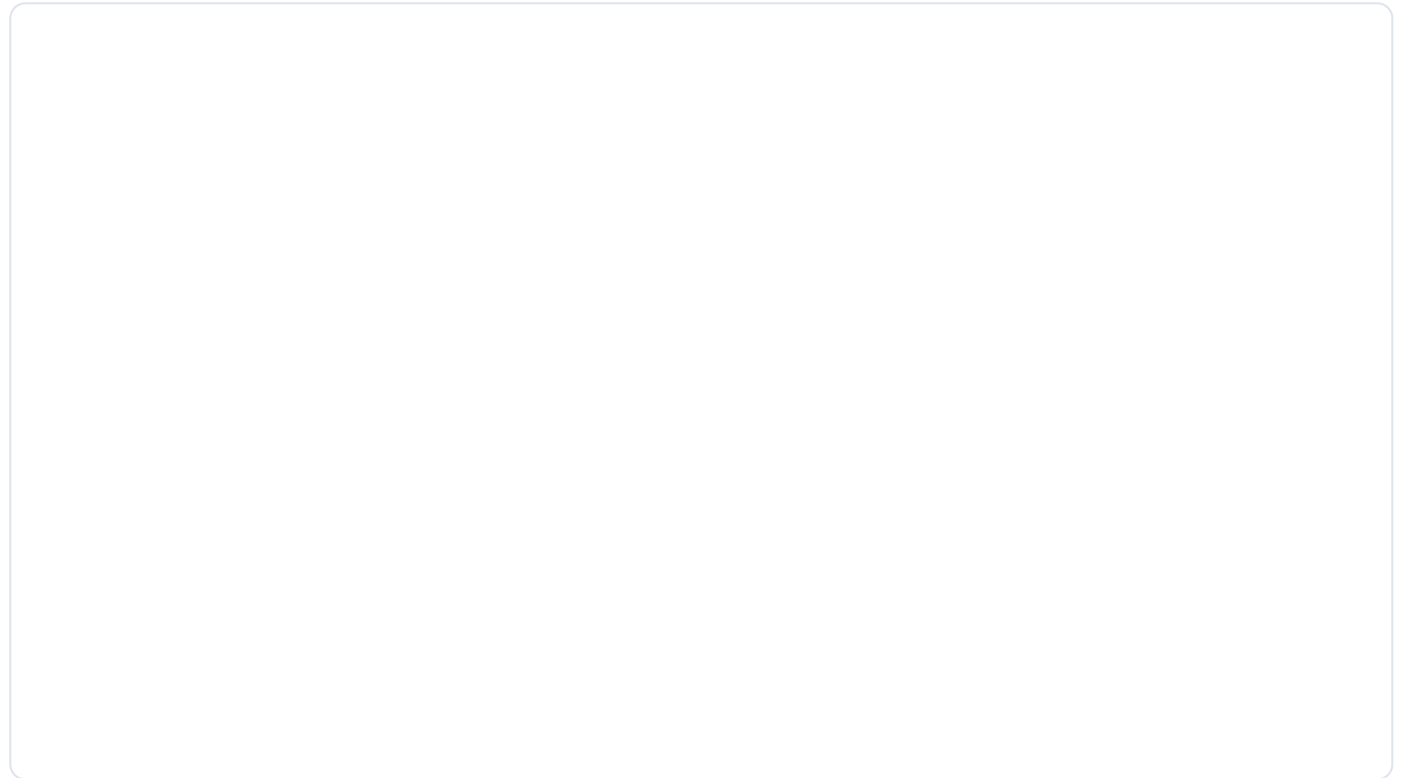
[inity-](#)  
values. You can define  
e, internal or external



"Consistent spacing creates visual balance that makes the user interface (UI) easier for merchants to scan. Apply consistent spacing to improve the quality of the UI."

Polaris, Shopify's Design System [↗ \(https://polaris.shopify.com/design/spacing\)](https://polaris.shopify.com/design/spacing)

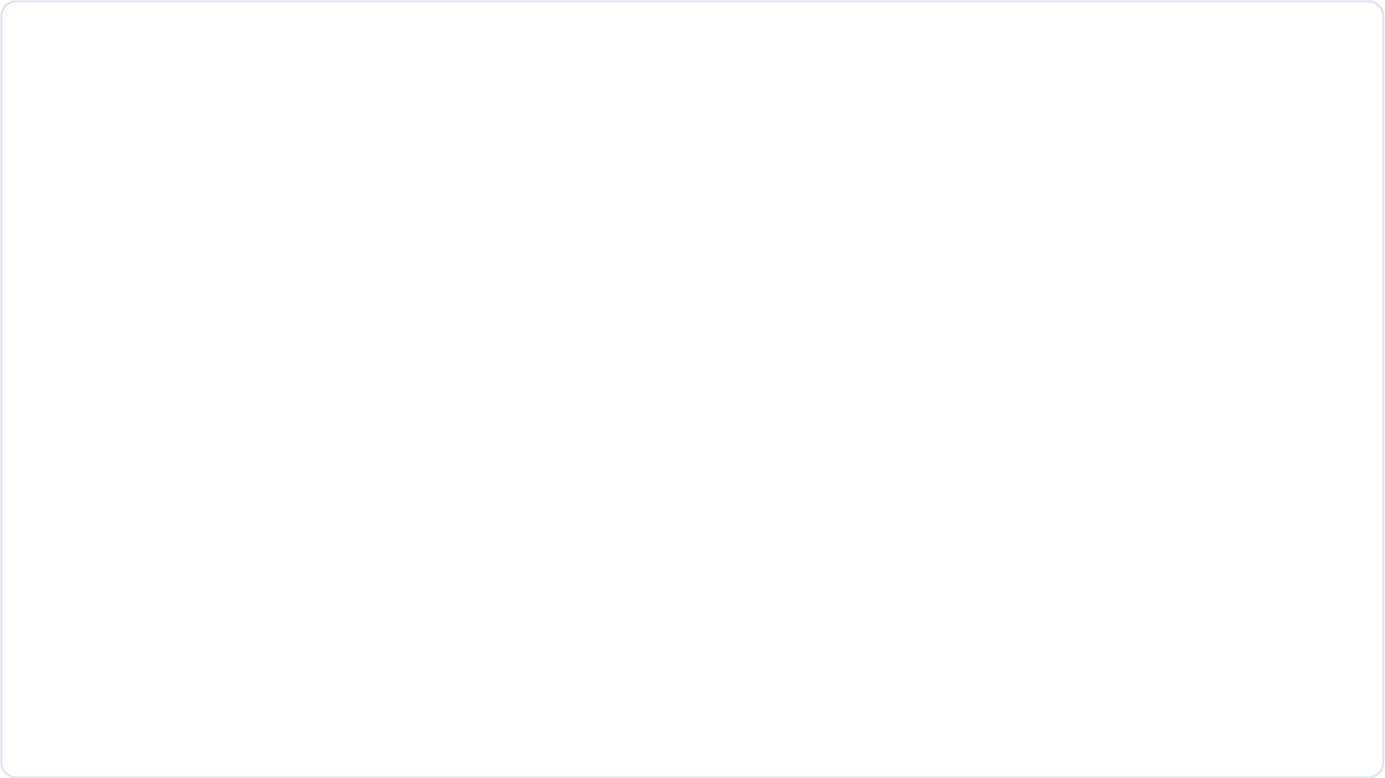




Visual harmony will naturally emerge after structuring a spacing scale and a typography scale that are complementary.

ation or animation cycle  
e property must be set

[group/format/#duration](#))

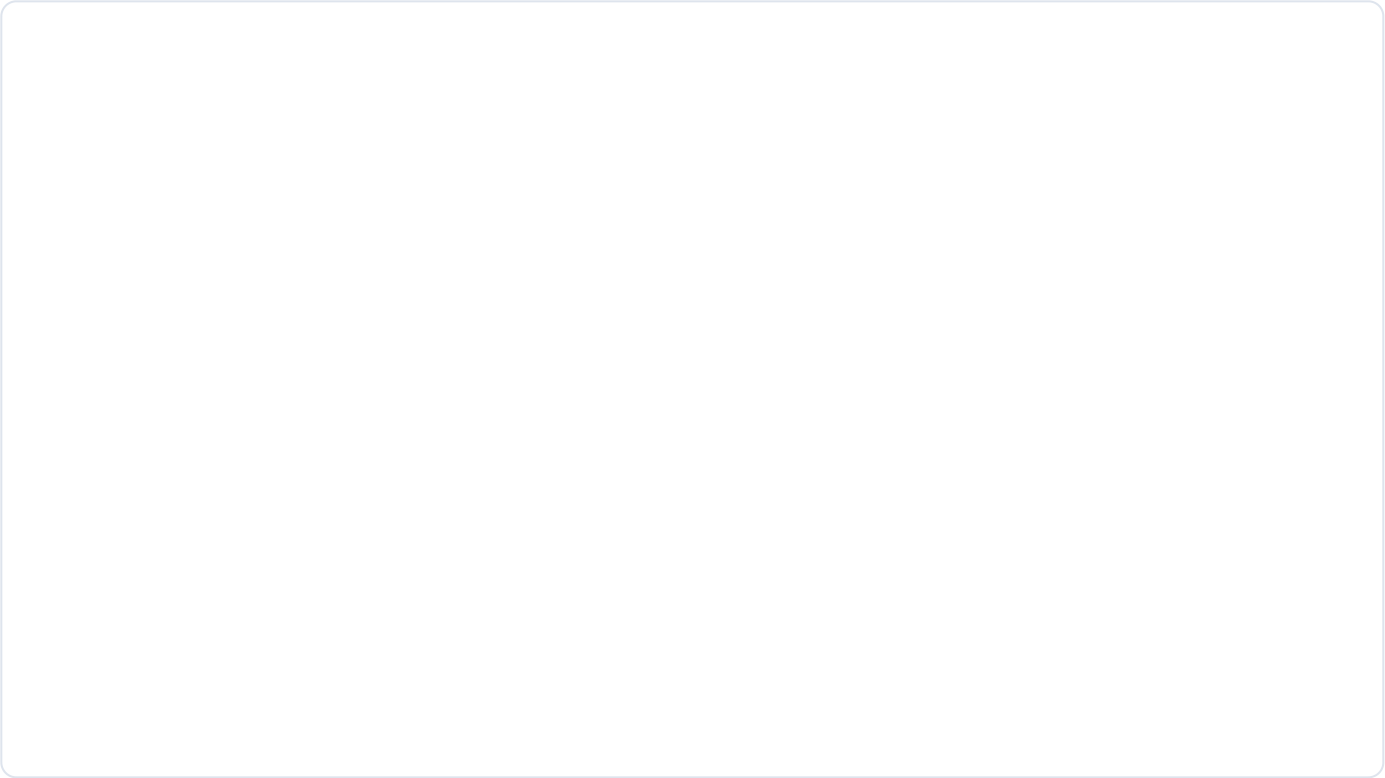


Shadow

UIs. Popular variations and

on/)

elevation along z-axis.



Blank



p of each other. The  
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e light source within your  
set can increase and  
· UI elements means a  
[-platforms-101/04-design-](#)

ce. It means that the color  
s of the other elements in

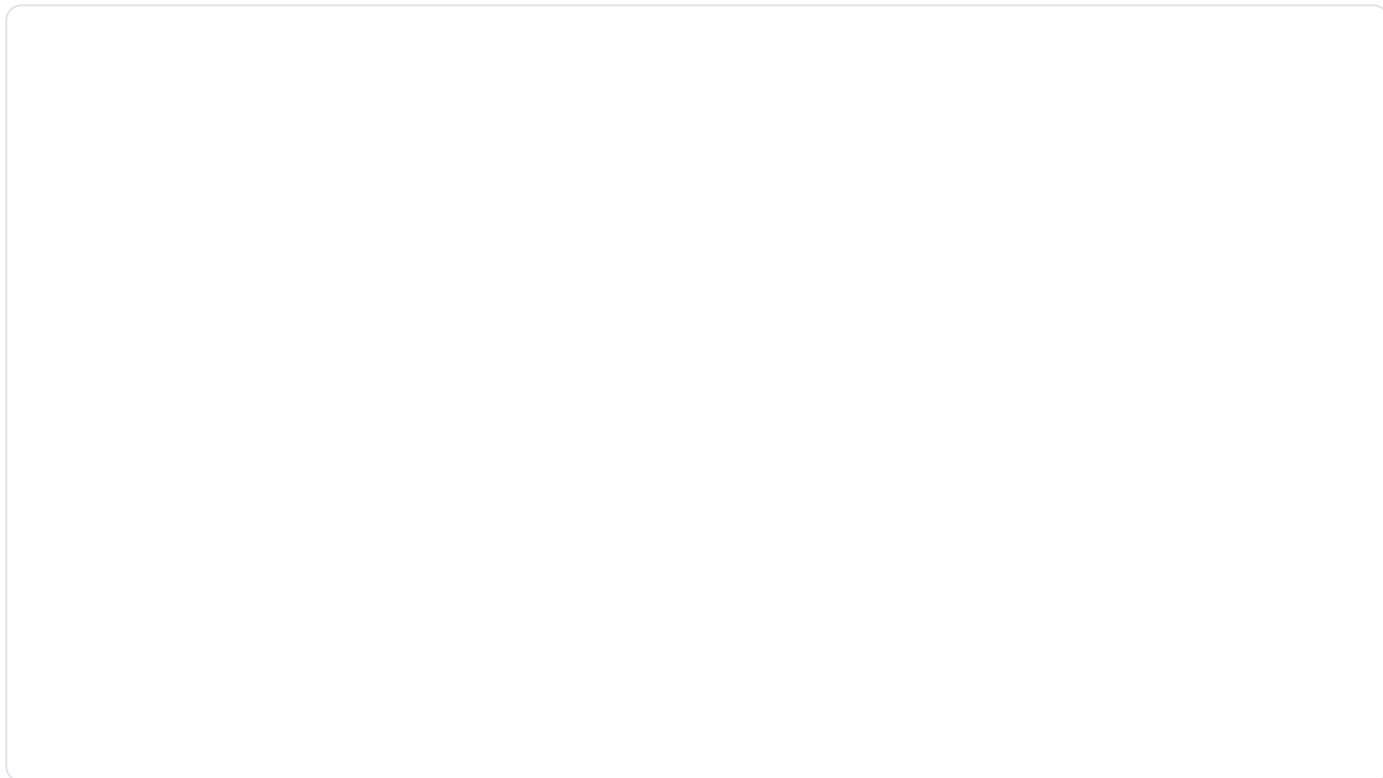
## Resources

- [How to use shadows in UI design - The Designer's Toolbox](https://www.thedesignerstoolbox.com/blog/ui-design-shadows/) ↗  
(<https://www.thedesignerstoolbox.com/blog/ui-design-shadows/>)

## Border

A border is a line surrounding a UI element. According to your target platform capabilities, you can define the border to go inside (inner border), outside (outer border), or between them (center).





## Border styles

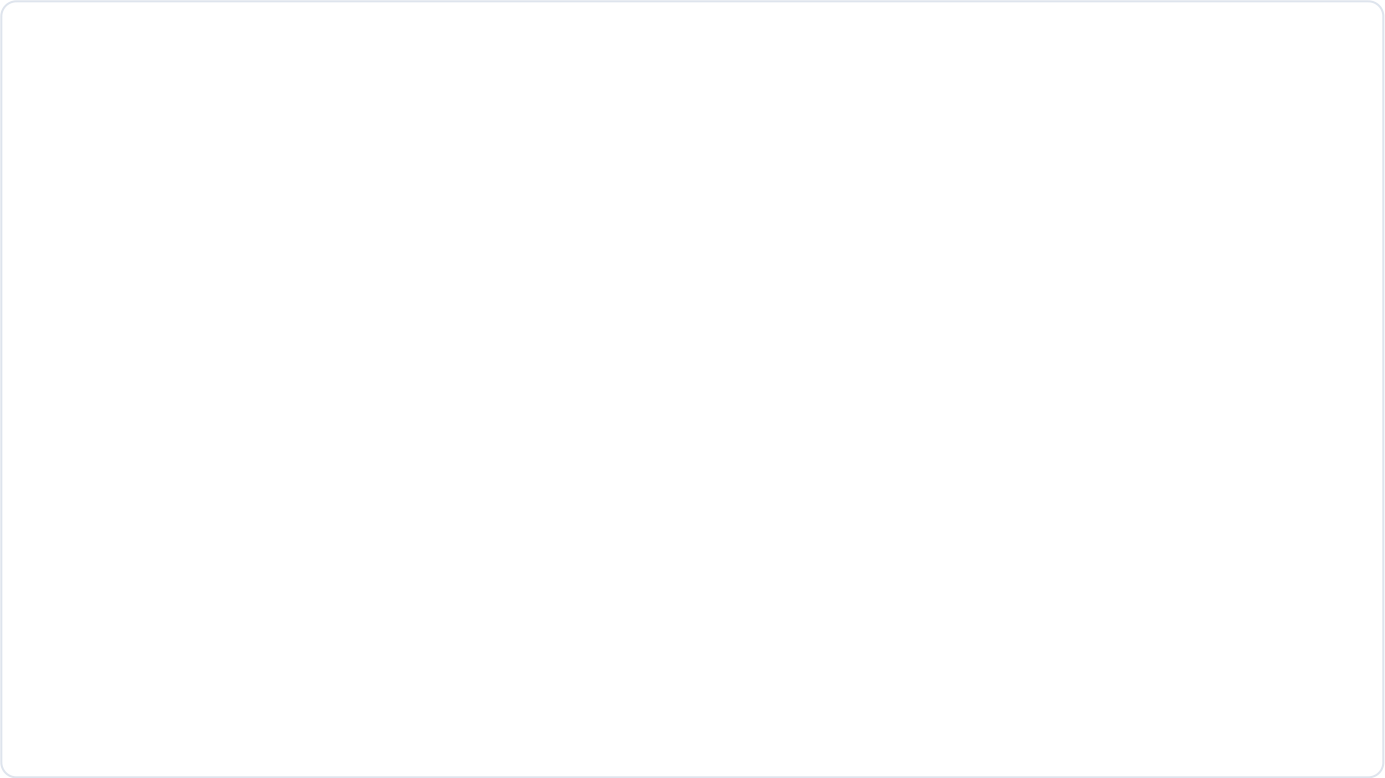
The border can be customized to have different widths and can be a dashed or dotted



enables the designer to  
g a new dimension to the  
ents add depth.

illustration, typography  
ate more color tones.  
lorful and playful and make





## Resources

- [Using Gradients In User Experience Design - Smashing Magazine](https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/01/gradients-user-experience-design/) ↗  
(<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/01/gradients-user-experience-design/>)

## What about other types of design tokens?

We previously listed all the main types of design tokens. We could have included other types like opacity, breakpoint or even depth (z-axis stack position) but we didn't feel it was needed to be honest. The most important thing to remember is that design tokens are at the heart of every component used in your UIs.

Define and structure them with care and the rest will follow.

## Assets

### Fonts



and [Fira Code](#)

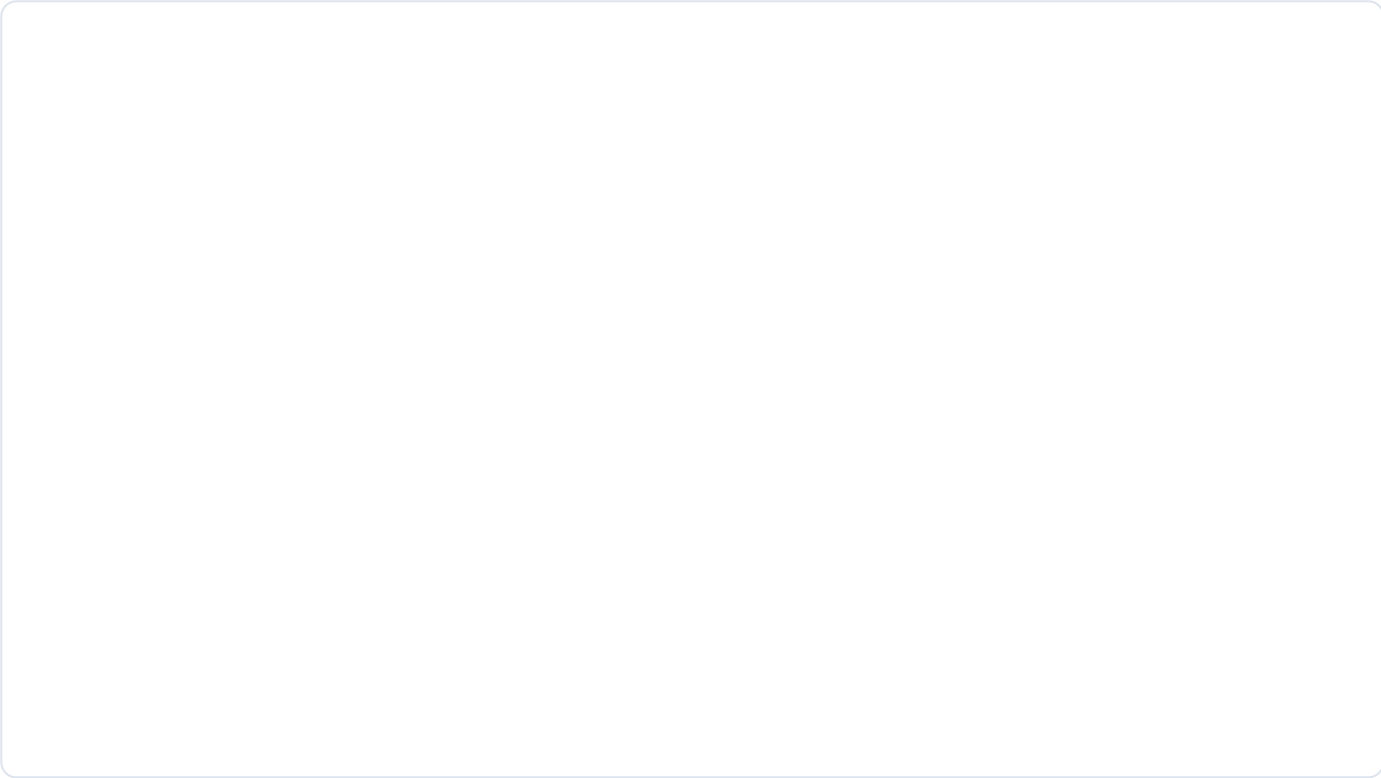
You can use them for 2  
action we will only focus on

you to have an harmonic

Icons are visual representations of commands, devices, directories, or common actions. Icons should be used in a purposeful manner to maximize comprehension and reduce cognitive load when you need to call attention to a particular action, command, or section. Use them infrequently — if you're questioning an icon's use, it probably doesn't need to be used at all.

Atlassian [↗ \(https://atlassian.design/foundations/iconography/\)](https://atlassian.design/foundations/iconography/)





**When to use icons**

. Overuse quickly results in

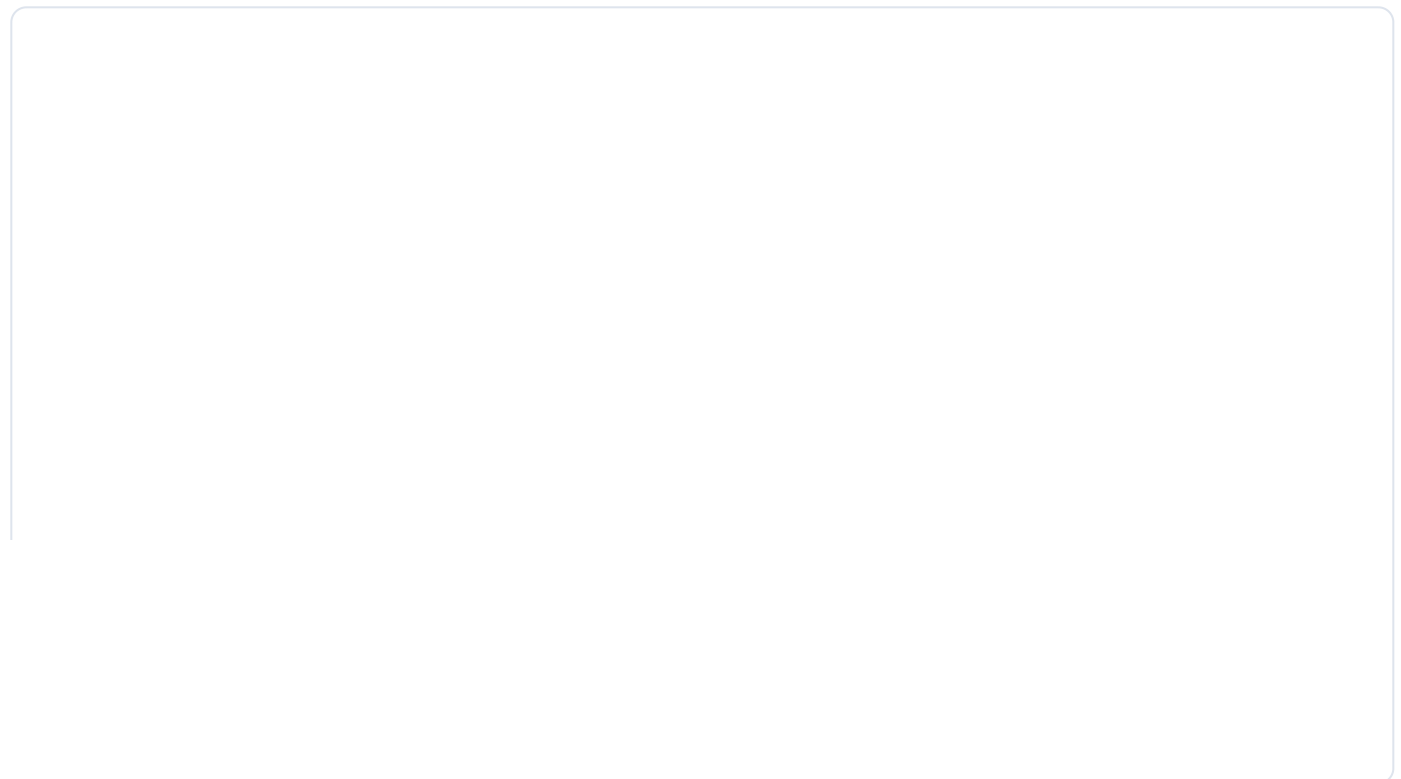
n announcement or an

ion on

— [Icons - Shopify Polaris ↗ \(https://polaris.shopify.com/design/icons#navigation\)](https://polaris.shopify.com/design/icons#navigation)

## Bitmaps

Bitmaps are raster images you can use in many contexts. They're basically any image you can display in a UI that is a `.png`, `.jpeg`, `.webp`, `.avif` ...

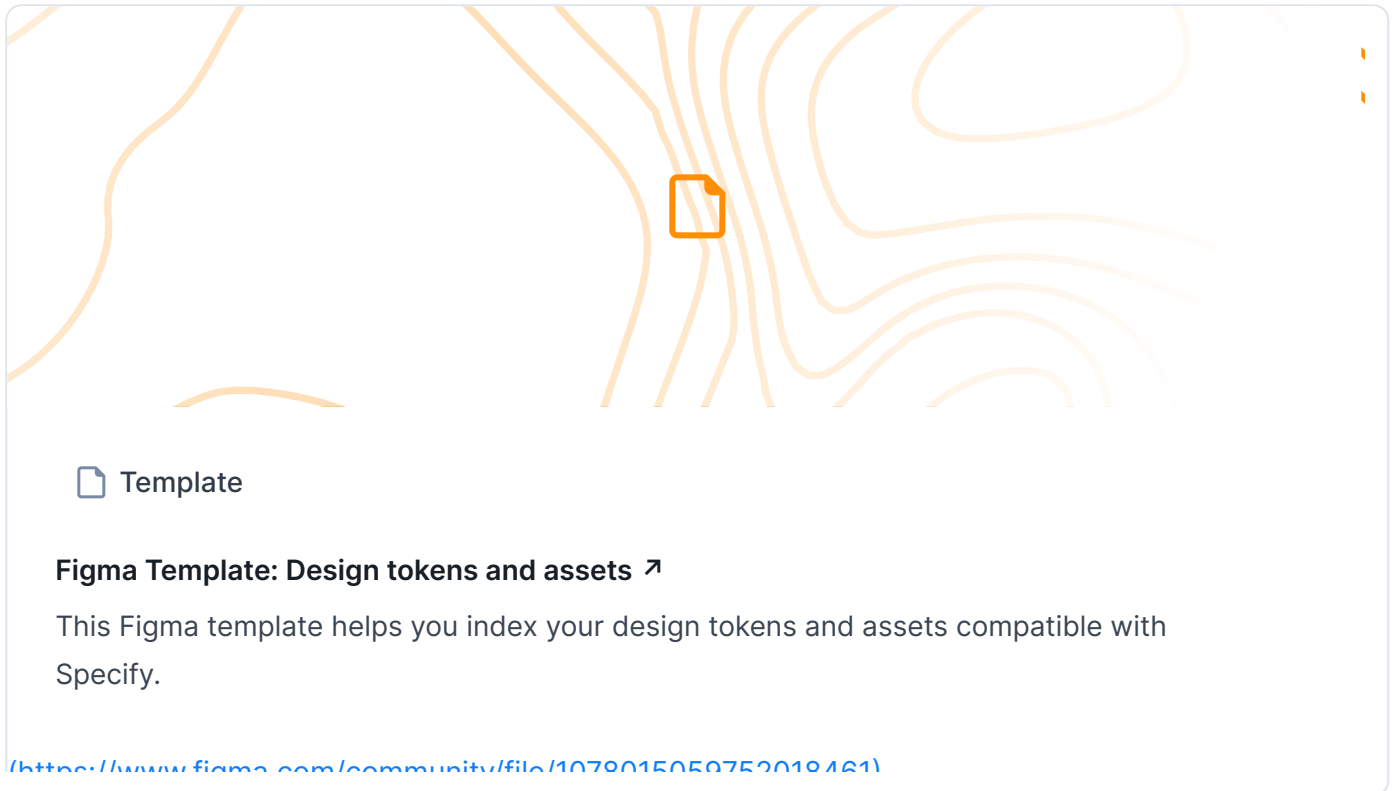


's the difference? |  
Understanding image file-

ces of design decisions  
s and assets as the fuel of

your Design API.

Now, let's see how we can collect, store, and distribute them across your design system.

A screenshot of a Figma template titled "Figma Template: Design tokens and assets". The template features a background of orange wavy lines and a central orange square icon. Below the image, the text "Template" is followed by the title "Figma Template: Design tokens and assets" with an external link icon. A description states: "This Figma template helps you index your design tokens and assets compatible with Specify." A URL is provided at the bottom: <https://www.figma.com/community/file/1078015050752018461>.

Template

**Figma Template: Design tokens and assets** ↗

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<https://www.figma.com/community/file/1078015050752018461>

platforms-101/05-collect-

cts.

Meet the design data platform you ever dreamt of.

Get started  
for free (https://specifyapp.com/signup)

Book a  
demo (https://calendly.com/d/z4b-g7n-ysf)



Product

Resources

— [Product tour](#) (https://specifyapp.com/product-tour)

— [Getting started](#) (https://specifyapp.com/getting-started)

[User stories](#) (https://specifyapp.com/user-stories)

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