# **Space in Graphic Design**

## **Space Design**

When viewers look at artistic or graphic design compositions, the images, colors, and text are often the main focus of attention. However, the space between different elements is an equally important design component. This *space between* is referred to as space design or the intentional placement of space between and around a composition's design elements.

Space design in art and graphic design is used to focus the viewer's attention and to create perspective within a composition. For example, the placement of objects within a composition and the use of space around these objects can purposely draw the viewer's attention to a specific design element. Space can also provide depth to an image by creating the perception of objects receding into the distance.

As one of the primary [elements of design](https://study.com/learn/lesson/mass-elements-design-manipulation-influences-examples.html), space can contribute to the piece's overall message or create physical distance between objects. Indeed, as will be seen in this lesson, space consists of several different theoretical components and uses.

## **Space Principle of Design**

There are four main elements and principles of design:

* Line
* Shape
* Color/texture
* Space

Artists use lines to define objects' boundaries and generate movement within a space. Shapes formed by connected lines consist of two- and three-dimensional images like squares, cubes, spheres, or triangles. Both lines and shapes contribute to the main focus areas within a composition. Color and texture add further depth to an interest in objects by conveying a sense of how a design element would look and feel in the real world.

The space principle of design focuses on the areas surrounding the other three design elements. In art and design, artists and [graphic designers](https://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-graphic-design.html) use space for a variety of purposes:

* To create the perception of three-dimensions within a two-dimensional medium, such as paper or canvas.
* To refer to the actual dimensions of the area worked on by the artist.
* To distinguish between objects and the lack of objects, otherwise known as [*positive space and negative space*](https://study.com/learn/lesson/positive-negative-space-art.html).

The elements defined as parts of space are numerous and can refer to the active and passive use of the empty areas around other design elements. For example, positive space refers to the focal point of [composition in graphic design](https://study.com/academy/lesson/composition-graphic-design-principles-rules-examples.html) and art, while negative space is found in the absence of objects. The elements comprising the different forms of space are addressed in the following subsections.

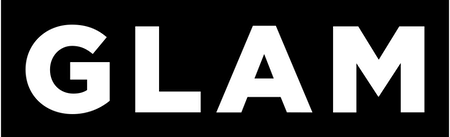
## **Real Space**

Real space is a concept with two different meanings. In art and graphic design, real space, or actual space as it is sometimes referred to, can represent the actual workspace in which the artist creates their composition. Real space can also refer to using three-dimensional space to place physical objects within a design. When used within art and graphic design context, artists create real space by creating the perception of three dimensions within a composition.

The following sections further discuss the other elements comprising the space principle of design.

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### **Positive Space**

When first looking at composition, an image or color often draws the viewer's attention to the main focal point representing the **positive space** of a composition or any part of a design that serves as the main focus of attention. In graphic design, positive space can combine text, shapes, textures, and colors. The positive space in graphic design conveys the central message of the composition to its target audience.

***An example of positive space in the white text and negative space in the black space***

### **Negative Space**

Negative space refers to the empty space surrounding the main text and images comprising the positive space. Sometimes referred to as white space, negative space is found between design elements such as lines of text and images and in the margins of a composition.

There are two main times of negative space- active and passive. The main difference between these two types depends on whether the space's balance is symmetrical or asymmetrical. In active negative space, the negative space is greater than the positive space, also known as [asymmetrical balance](https://study.com/learn/lesson/asymmetrical-balance-art-composition-design.html). This use of large expanses of negative space helps to convey its own message, in addition to the message created by the positive space.

Passive negative space, by contrast, occurs when the composition has equal amounts of positive and negative space. The balance between positive and negative elements lessens the impact of the negative space. As a result, passive negative spaces typically lack an intentional message compared to active negative spaces.

Negative space can also be categorized based on the size of the space. These two categories are micro-spaces and macro-spaces.

#### **Micro Space**

Micro-space refers to the small negative spaces between elements like letters and words. In graphic design, micro-spacing is essential because it contributes to the viewer's ability to read and easily understand the ideas conveyed within a piece. Micro-spaces also help to direct the viewer's attention towards essential elements in the design.

#### **Macro Space**

Macro-space means the large negative spaces found between design elements. In graphic design, macro-spaces often occur between blocks of text or a series of images. Macro-spaces also form the frame surrounding objects found in a design. As with micro-spacing, macro-spaces add to the readability of the composition.

## **Illusory Space**

Illusory Space uses a combination of perspective and shadow to create a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional surface. The [perception of depth](https://study.com/learn/lesson/depth-perception-cues-examples.html) is created by placing objects within a composition to make the design appear to recede into the distance. Artists create illusory spaces through the use of lines and the placement of objects within a composition. By varying the direction and distance between lines, for example, the graphic artist can draw the viewer's eye to an imaginary point in the background of the design. In addition, layering objects provide additional visual interest and depth by placing objects in front of or behind each other.

### **Text Design**

Text design represents another essential element in graphic design. The graphic artist uses text to convey direct messages about a product, idea, or concept. The text elements in graphic design are often manipulated through color, spacing, and letter size. For instance, prominent, bright letters attract the viewer's attention, whereas smaller text often communicates secondary messages.

The spacing between text elements also contributes to the messages communicated through the design. Larger spaces can shape the viewer's experience by slowing their reading process, thus highlighting individual words and phrases. Smaller spaces, by contrast, allow the audience to immediately process the entire message communicated by design.