# **Proximity as a Principle of Design**

## **Proximity in Graphic Design**

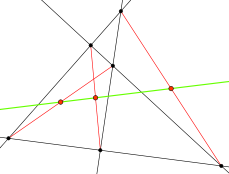
[**Graphic design**](https://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-graphic-design.html) consists of the use of media elements that are created into a single design. It may include images, graphics, words, or a combination of all three. Graphic design is important to convey a message and grab the viewers' attention. Typically, graphic design is used for advertisements, websites, flyers, and other materials. Several principles or elements of graphic design affect how the design is organized and created. These principles include balance, [alignment](https://study.com/learn/lesson/alignment-principles-types-graphic-design.html), white space, and proximity.

Proximity, in general, means closeness, such as the proximity of the building to other buildings or the proximity between group members giving a presentation. Similarly, the **proximity** definition in art, or graphic design, refers to the closeness between objects or components of the design. It refers to the spatial relationship between elements. Proximity in graphic design can refer to how close the words and images are or how far apart they are within the design. For example, a graphic design with two side-by-side elements would be close in proximity.

The central concept of proximity shows how related elements in a design should be placed close together. The primary goal of proximity is to create organization. Graphic designers use the proximity principle to show a connection between objects or subjects within the design. Using this proximity rule shows relationships between the objects. Notice a basic example of a [graphic design image](https://study.com/learn/lesson/graphic-design-images-concept-importance.html) that incorporates several lines.

All of the lines within the image are essentially close in proximity. The connecting lines which overlap show the proximity and the connectedness of the image, while some of the other lines do not meet at all. Notice how the lines which don't connect are further accented with a different color.

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***The group of lines is connected by distance, color, and intersection points, demonstrating the principle of proximity.***

**Proximity in Art**

Graphic designers use the proximity principle to create organization and show connections within the design. They may also use proximity to show the distance between two figures or objects or multiple elements. The proximity principle can be implemented to group similar objects so that the viewer can distinguish one group from another. This is beneficial so that the viewer can understand which elements are connected. It is also used for the purpose of making the design neat and eliminating any messy aspects within the design.

Proximity is also an important aspect of [web design](https://study.com/academy/lesson/web-design-types-principles-tools.html). The layout of a website should not only be intuitive but also organized. Proximity can help group certain areas of the website, such as the menu or navigation bar, to improve readability for users. This is where categories or different sections of the website are created to group related components, such as images or articles.

## **How to Use the Proximity Principle?**

The methods of using the proximity principle can vary depending on the type of graphic designs being created and the purpose for creating the design. If the graphic designer or artist wants to portray a sense of connection or separation, the proximity principle can be used accordingly and appropriately. In general, designers should focus on the organization of the design and should consider the other design principles when creating the piece.



***Example of the proximity principle between two objects***

In this example, there are two birds seemingly communicating with one another. Notice the proximity between the birds, which shows how they engage with each other. Proximity is used here to convey the relationship between the birds. They are essentially two parts of the design that are grouped together.

In general, artists should keep the number of elements low, with the ideal number at three elements, since this represents the amount that is easily sorted from the viewer's perspective. The **rule of thirds** is a concept in art that divides the image into three sections because people naturally seek a pattern to follow. Designers should also consider other principles such as white space, alignment, and balance.

**Negative space**, referred to as white space, is the blank areas that give the design a sense of a break from the main pattern or object. While some designers opt to fill the design entirely with color, some choose to use the negative space. Notice how this is implemented in the image. When concerning proximity, the use of negative space is essential.



***Example of negative space in design***

The image offers plenty of white space as the background, but the design is highlighted as the primary focus. By implementing this, the deer is now emphasized in the design.

Other principles include **balance**, which refers to how the design is distributed and focused, and **alignment**, which refers to the placement of objects and their connections in the design. Both balance and alignment are considered with proximity.