

Module 1: What is Graphic Design?

Definition:

Graphic design is visual communication through the use of images, typography, colors, and layouts to convey messages and solve problems.

Where Graphic Design is Used:

☐ **Marketing & Advertising:**

- Social media posts
- Billboards & posters
- Brochures & flyers
- Email newsletters
- Banner ads

☐ **Branding:**

- Logos
- Business cards
- Letterheads
- Brand guidelines
- Packaging

☐ **Digital:**

- Website designs

- Mobile app interfaces
- YouTube thumbnails
- E-book covers
- Presentations

□ **Print:**

- Magazines & newspapers
- Book covers
- T-shirt designs
- Event invitations
- Certificates

Types of Graphic Designers:

Type	What They Do	Tools
Brand Identity Designer	Logos, brand guidelines	Illustrator, Photoshop
Marketing Designer	Ads, social media graphics	Canva, Photoshop
UI/UX Designer	App & website interfaces	Figma, Adobe XD
Print Designer	Magazines, packaging	InDesign, Illustrator
Motion Graphics	Animated videos,	After Effects

Type	What They Do	Tools
Designer	GIFs	

Module 2: Essential Design Principles

1. Balance

Definition: Visual weight distribution

Types:

Symmetrical Balance (Formal):

[Logo]

Title

Subtitle

- Mirror-like
- Professional, stable
- Used in: Corporate designs, certificates

Asymmetrical Balance (Informal):

[Large Image] Small text

details here

Small element [Medium Image]

- Dynamic, modern
 - More interesting
 - Used in: Posters, social media
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2. Contrast

Definition: Making elements distinctly different

Creates:

- Visual interest
- Hierarchy (shows what's important)
- Readability

Ways to Create Contrast:

- **Size:** Large headline vs small body text
- **Color:** Black text on white background
- **Shape:** Circle among squares
- **Texture:** Smooth vs rough
- **Typography:** Bold vs light font

Example:

BIG BOLD HEADLINE

Small supporting text below

3. Hierarchy

Definition: Organizing information by importance

Visual Hierarchy Order:

1. Main Headline (Largest, boldest)



2. Subheading (Medium size)



3. Body Text (Smallest, regular weight)



4. Call to Action Button

How to Create Hierarchy:

- **Size:** Bigger = more important
- **Weight:** Bold = more important
- **Color:** Bright = draws attention
- **Position:** Top/center = seen first
- **Spacing:** More white space = more important

4. Alignment

Definition: Lining up elements to create organization

Types:

Left Aligned (Most Common):

Headline text here

Body text starts here
and continues flowing

- Easy to read
- Professional
- Best for long text

Center Aligned:

Headline

Centered text
looks formal

- Formal, elegant
- Used in: Invitations, certificates
- Don't use for long paragraphs

Right Aligned:

Text on right

creates tension

use sparingly

- Unique, modern
- Hard to read in large amounts

Justified:

Text fills the entire width
creating clean edges on both
sides of the text column here.

- Clean, formal
- Can create awkward spacing

5. Repetition

Definition: Repeating design elements for consistency

What to Repeat:

- Colors
- Fonts
- Shapes
- Icons

- Spacing

Example: Instagram Feed Grid

[Pink bg] [Pink bg] [Pink bg]

[White bg] [White bg] [White bg]

[Pink bg] [Pink bg] [Pink bg]

- Same colors repeated
 - Creates cohesive look
 - Builds brand recognition
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6. Proximity

Definition: Grouping related items together

Rule:

- Things that are related should be close together
- Things that are unrelated should be spaced apart

Bad:

Name:

Age:

Email:

John

25

john@email.com

Good:

Name: John

Age: 25

Email: john@email.com

7. White Space (Negative Space)

Definition: Empty space around elements

Benefits:

- Improves readability
- Creates focus
- Looks professional
- Reduces clutter

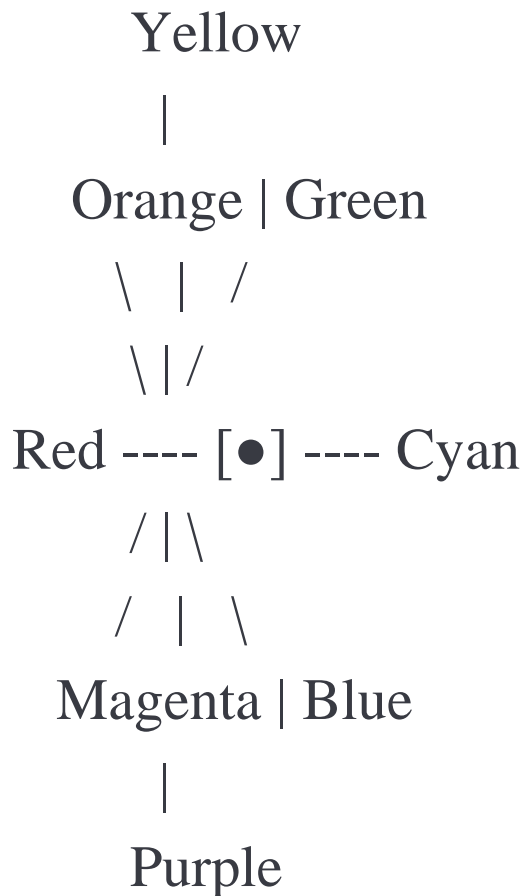
Examples:

- Margins around text
- Space between paragraphs
- Padding inside buttons
- Breathing room around images

Remember: White space is NOT wasted space!

Module 3: Color Theory for Designers

Color Wheel Basics:



Primary Colors:

- **Red, Yellow, Blue**
- Cannot be created by mixing other colors

Secondary Colors:

- **Orange** (Red + Yellow)
- **Green** (Yellow + Blue)
- **Purple** (Blue + Red)

Tertiary Colors:

- Red-Orange, Yellow-Orange, Yellow-Green, etc.
 - Primary + Secondary mix
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Color Harmonies (Combinations that Work):

1. Complementary (Opposite colors):

Blue + Orange

Red + Green

Yellow + Purple

- High contrast
 - Vibrant, energetic
 - Use one as dominant, other as accent
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2. Analogous (Next to each other):

Blue + Blue-Green + Green

Orange + Yellow-Orange + Yellow

- Harmonious, pleasing
 - Natural, calming
 - Use for backgrounds and gradients
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3. Triadic (Three colors equally spaced):

Red + Yellow + Blue

Orange + Green + Purple

- Balanced, vibrant
 - Fun, youthful
 - Use one as dominant
-

4. Monochromatic (One color, different shades):

Light Blue

Medium Blue

Dark Blue

Navy Blue

- Simple, elegant
- Easy to get right

- Professional look

Color Psychology:

Color	Emotion/Meaning	Used For
Red	Energy, passion, urgency	Sales, food, alerts
Orange	Friendly, fun, affordable	Children, creativity
Yellow	Happy, optimistic, warm	Happiness, warnings
Green	Nature, growth, health	Eco, health, money
Blue	Trust, calm, professional	Corporate, tech, medical
Purple	Luxury, creativity, wisdom	Beauty, premium brands
Pink	Feminine, sweet, playful	Beauty, romance
Black	Sophisticated, powerful	Luxury, elegance
White	Clean, pure, simple	Minimal, medical
Brown	Earthy, reliable, rustic	Natural, handmade

60-30-10 Rule:

Perfect color balance:

60% = Dominant color (background)

30% = Secondary color (main elements)

10% = Accent color (highlights, CTAs)

Example:

- 60% White background
 - 30% Navy blue for headers/sections
 - 10% Orange for buttons/links
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Tools for Choosing Colors:

Free Color Palette Generators:

- **Coolors.co** - Generate random palettes
- **Adobe Color** - Create custom schemes
- **Paletton.com** - Color scheme designer
- **ColorHunt.co** - Trending palettes

Color Picker Tools:

- **ColorZilla** (browser extension)
- **Eye Dropper** - Pick colors from websites
- Built-in Canva color picker

Module 4: Typography Basics

Font Terminology:

Typeface vs Font:

- **Typeface:** Font family (e.g., "Helvetica")
- **Font:** Specific style (e.g., "Helvetica Bold 12pt")

Font Categories:

1. Serif (with decorative strokes):

Times New Roman

Georgia

Merriweather

- Traditional, elegant
- Easy to read in print
- Used for: Books, newspapers, certificates

2. Sans Serif (without strokes - clean):

Arial

Helvetica

Roboto

- Modern, clean
 - Easy to read on screens
 - Used for: Websites, apps, posters
-

3. Script (Handwriting-style):

Pacifico

Dancing Script

Brush Script

- Elegant, personal
 - Harder to read
 - Used for: Logos, invitations, accents
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4. Display/Decorative:

Impact

Bebas Neue

Lobster

- Attention-grabbing

- Use sparingly
 - Used for: Headlines, posters
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Font Pairing Rules:

Rule 1: Contrast is Key

- ☐ Serif Heading + Sans Serif Body
- ☐ Bold Display + Light Sans Serif
- ☐ Similar fonts together

Rule 2: Limit to 2-3 Fonts

- 1 for headlines
- 1 for body text
- 1 for accents (optional)

Rule 3: Vary Weight/Size

HEADING (Bold, 48pt)

Subheading (Regular, 24pt)

Body text (Light, 16pt)

Great Font Combinations:

1. Montserrat (Heading) + Open Sans (Body)
 2. Playfair Display (Heading) + Source Sans Pro (Body)
 3. Raleway (Heading) + Lato (Body)
 4. Bebas Neue (Heading) + Roboto (Body)
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Typography Best Practices:

Line Length:

- 50-75 characters per line
- Too long = hard to read
- Too short = choppy

Line Spacing (Leading):

- 1.5x the font size minimum
- More space = easier to read

Font Size:

- **Headlines:** 24-72pt
- **Subheadings:** 18-24pt
- **Body text:** 14-18pt
- **Captions:** 10-12pt

Letter Spacing (Kerning):

- Increase for headlines
 - Don't adjust body text
 - Watch for awkward gaps
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Readability Rules:

☐ **DO:**

- Use high contrast (dark on light)
- Left-align body text
- Use plenty of white space
- Choose readable fonts

☐ **DON'T:**

- Use all caps for long text
 - Use too many fonts
 - Put text over busy images (without overlay)
 - Make text too small
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Module 5: Introduction to Canva

Why Canva?

- ☐ **Free** (paid plan available)
- ☐ **Easy** to use - drag and drop

- ☐ **Templates** - 1000s ready-made
 - ☐ **No installation** - works in browser
 - ☐ **Cloud-based** - access anywhere
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Getting Started:

Step 1: Create Account

1. Go to Canva.com
2. Sign up with email or Google
3. Choose "Free" plan

Step 2: Choose Design Type

Social Media:

- Instagram Post (1080x1080)
- Instagram Story (1080x1920)
- Facebook Post (940x788)
- Twitter Post (1024x512)

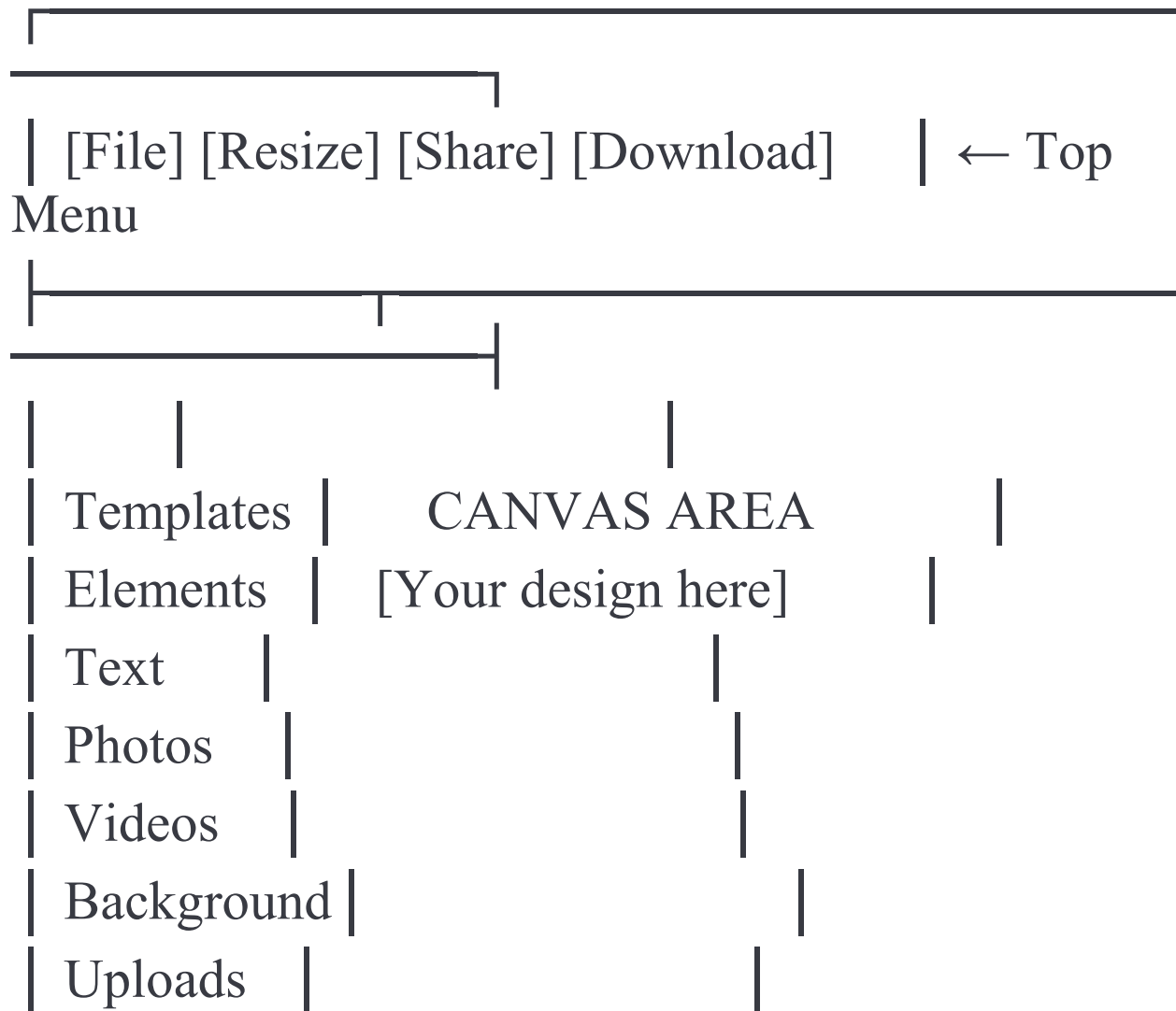
Print:

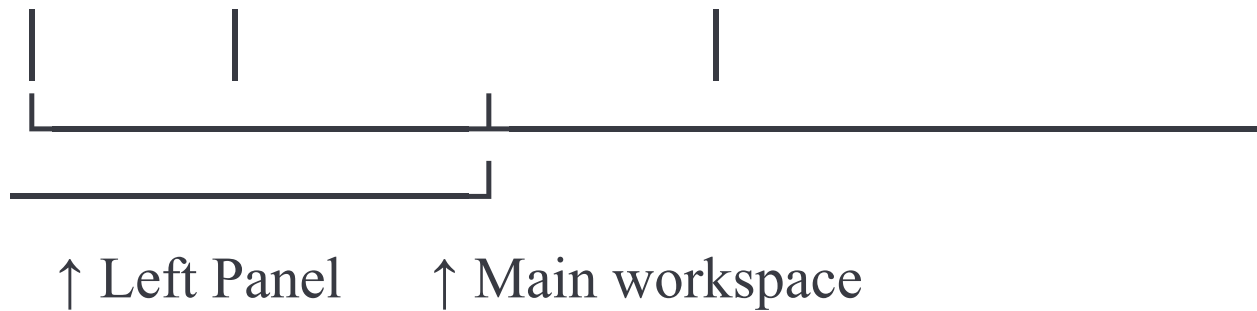
- Poster (A4, A3, custom)
- Flyer (A5)
- Business Card (9x5cm)

Presentation:

- Presentation (16:9)
- Document (A4)

Canva Interface Tour:





Basic Canva Tools:

1. Templates:

- Search by keyword
- Filter by style/color
- Customize to your needs
- Change text, colors, images

2. Elements:

- Shapes (circles, squares, lines)
- Icons
- Stickers
- Illustrations
- Frames

3. Text:

- Heading styles
- Body text
- Text effects

- Font combinations
- Pre-designed text layouts

4. Photos:

- Free stock photos (Pixabay, Pexels)
- Search by keyword
- Drag onto canvas

5. Background:

- Solid colors
- Gradients
- Patterns
- Images

6. Uploads:

- Upload your own images
- Add logos
- Brand fonts (Pro feature)

Creating Your First Design:

Example: Instagram Post

Step 1: Choose Template

- Click "Instagram Post"
- Search "motivational quote"
- Click template you like

Step 2: Customize Text

- Double-click text to edit
- Type your message
- Change font from left panel
- Adjust size with corner handles

Step 3: Change Colors

- Click element
- Color picker appears
- Choose from palette
- Or enter hex code (#FF5733)

Step 4: Add Elements

- Click "Elements" tab
- Search "arrow" or "circle"
- Drag onto design
- Resize and position

Step 5: Replace Photos

- Click photo to select
- Click "Replace" in toolbar

- Search new photo
- Or upload your own

Step 6: Download

- Click "Share" button
- Select "Download"
- Choose PNG (best quality)
- Save to computer

Module 6: Design Project - Social Media Post

Project Brief:

Create an Instagram post announcing a sale.

Requirements:

- **Dimensions:** 1080 x 1080px
- **Include:** Business name, "50% OFF", dates, call-to-action
- **Style:** Eye-catching, on-brand

Design Process:

Step 1: Plan

- What's the main message? (50% OFF)
- Who's the audience? (Your customers)
- What feeling? (Exciting, urgent)

Step 2: Sketch/Wireframe (on paper)



Step 3: Choose Colors

- Brand colors (if you have them)
- Or complementary colors
- Ensure good contrast

Step 4: Select Fonts

- Bold for "50% OFF"
- Regular for details

- Max 2 fonts

Step 5: Create in Canva

- Start with template OR blank canvas
- Add background color/image
- Add text layers
- Add decorative elements
- Adjust spacing

Step 6: Review Checklist

- ☐ Text is readable
- ☐ Colors are harmonious
- ☐ Hierarchy is clear (50% OFF stands out)
- ☐ Has white space
- ☐ Call-to-action is obvious
- ☐ Aligned properly
- ☐ Correct dimensions

Step 7: Export

- PNG for best quality
- JPG for smaller file size
- Share to Instagram!

Module 7: Free Design Resources

Stock Photos (Free):

- **Unsplash.com** - High-quality photos
- **Pexels.com** - Photos & videos
- **Pixabay.com** - Photos, vectors, videos
- **Burst.shopify.com** - E-commerce focused

Tips:

- Search specific keywords
 - Check license (most are free for commercial use)
 - Give credit if required
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Icons & Illustrations (Free):

- **Flaticon.com** - Millions of icons
 - **Icons8.com** - Icons & illustrations
 - **unDraw.co** - Custom color illustrations
 - **Freepik.com** - Vectors & graphics (free & paid)
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Fonts (Free):

- **Google Fonts** - 100% free, web-safe
- **DaFont.com** - Thousands of fonts
- **Font Squirrel** - Commercial-use fonts

- **1001Fonts.com** - Large collection

How to Add Fonts to Canva:

1. Download font file (.ttf or .otf)
 2. Install on computer
 3. Upload to Canva (Pro feature)
 4. OR use Canva's built-in fonts
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Color Tools:

- **Coolers.co** - Palette generator
 - **Adobe Color** - Color wheel tool
 - **Paletton.com** - Color scheme designer
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Module 8: Common Beginner Mistakes

Mistake #1: Too Many Fonts

- ☐ Using 5+ different fonts
- ☐ Stick to 2-3 max

Mistake #2: Poor Contrast

- ☐ Light gray text on white background
- ☐ Dark text on light background (or vice versa)

Mistake #3: No White Space

- ☐ Cramming everything together
- ☐ Give elements room to breathe

Mistake #4: Center-Aligning Everything

- ☐ All text centered
- ☐ Left-align body text, center headlines only

Mistake #5: Using Too Many Colors

- ☐ Rainbow design
- ☐ Stick to 3-4 colors (60-30-10 rule)

Mistake #6: Stretching Images

- ☐ Distorted, pixelated photos
- ☐ Maintain aspect ratio, use high-res images

Mistake #7: Using Comic Sans or Papyrus

- ☐ Unprofessional fonts
- ☐ Choose modern, appropriate fonts

Mistake #8: Inconsistent Branding

- ☐ Different colors/fonts every post
- ☐ Create brand guidelines, stick to them

Practice Exercises:

Exercise 1: Color Matching

1. Find 3 websites you like
2. Use color picker to extract their colors
3. Create a palette in Canva
4. Try recreating similar color scheme

Exercise 2: Font Pairing

1. Visit Google Fonts
2. Choose 3 heading fonts
3. Pair each with a body font
4. Create sample designs in Canva

Exercise 3: Redesign Challenge

1. Find a badly designed poster/flyer
2. List what's wrong with it
3. Redesign it in Canva
4. Apply principles learned

Exercise 4: Social Media Templates

Create 3 templates for Instagram:

1. Quote post

- 2. Product/service showcase
- 3. Behind-the-scenes story

Use consistent colors and fonts across all three.

Next Steps:

After mastering these basics, you'll be ready for:

- **Enterprise Level:** Adobe Photoshop, advanced techniques
 - **Premium Level:** Branding, advanced layouts, professional workflows
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Quick Reference Cheat Sheet:

Design Principles:

- Balance, Contrast, Hierarchy, Alignment, Repetition, Proximity, White Space

Color:

- 60-30-10 rule
- Use 3-4 colors max
- High contrast for readability

Typography:

- 2-3 fonts max
- Serif + Sans Serif pairing
- Large headlines, smaller body text

Canva Shortcuts:

- Ctrl+C = Copy
- Ctrl+V = Paste
- Ctrl+D = Duplicate
- Ctrl+G = Group
- Ctrl+Z = Undo

Resources:

- Canva.com (design tool)
- Unsplash.com (photos)
- Colors.co (colors)
- Google Fonts (typography)