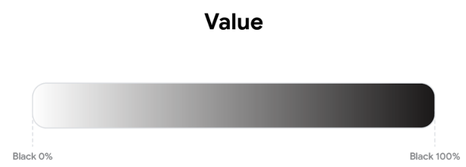
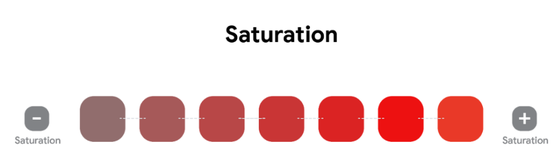
Consider additional visual design elements and principles

Now that you've learned about standard design principles like emphasis, hierarchy, and proportion, it's time to consider some additional design elements. As you continue to develop high-fidelity designs, you will focus more on visuals, aesthetics, and functionality. This reading will explore how to use visual elements like value, saturation, and orientation to enhance the user experience.



While **Hue** refers to color families (like red, green, or blue), **Value** is a color's lightness or darkness. The lightest value of any color is white and the darkest is black (as in the graphic above). Many programs have value settings, like a sliding scale that lets you add white or black to a selected color. **Value** is key to creating contrast in your designs. For example, a color with a lighter value stands out against a dark background, which can make a design easier to see.

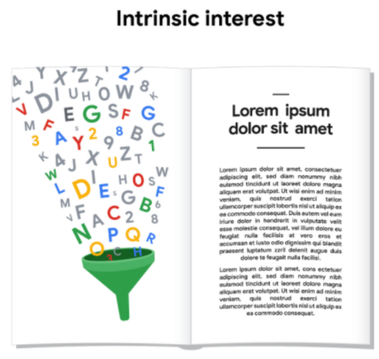


Saturation refers to the intensity and richness of color. Think of the highest saturation as the purest form of a color. For example, red, at its most saturated, is bold and bright. You can soften pure red by lowering the saturation and making it appear more muted. Lowering the saturation all the way would leave you with shades of grey, like a black and white film.

The saturation you choose depends on how bold you want the colors in your design to be. Highly saturated colors are great for grabbing a user's attention. Think of neon signs, highlighters, and sirens—all of which use intense saturation to emphasize their importance.

Orientation refers to the layout of your design. Orientation often corresponds with the platform or device you are designing for. For example, desktop computers tend to have horizontal (or landscape) orientations, whereas mobile phones and tablets let users alternate between vertical (or portrait) and horizontal orientations.

Some devices aren't oriented horizontally *or* vertically. Smartwatches, for example, are usually square, so smartwatch app designers need to take that into account. You can think of orientation as a grid that helps you plan your designs to fit within different shapes.



Intrinsic interest refers to how eye-catching a visual element is to users. Certain design elements, like logos or animations, are meant to grab a user's attention. For example, in the image above, the chapter title is big and bold, drawing the reader's focus. The text of the chapter, on the other hand, is smaller and more readable.

The graphic on the left side of the image uses variations in color, scale, and composition, which makes it stand out even more than the chapter title. The image of the funnel also helps draw the user's attention because images are generally more eye-catching than text.

You can use intrinsic interest in your designs by making sure the most important elements stand out—and that the least important blend in. For example, many magazines use serif fonts for article titles and sans serif fonts for body text. Serifs add flair to the titles that distinguish them from the rest of the content.

Perceived physical weight is the illusion of weight and volume that each visual element conveys. When creating elements that simulate objects with physical weight, you'll want each element's dimensions to proportionately relate to the others.

In the graphic above, each container appears to hold a different volume of liquid, from a measuring cup to a milk jug. The relative sizes of the containers range from small and light to big and heavy. It's the difference between a single serving and enough for a crowd!

Enrich the user's journey

Choosing different visual elements allows you to create more interesting, appealing, and usable designs. As you continue your design journey, remember that each element can enrich the user's experience and interactions with your products. Take the time to map out your visual choices and your reasons for choosing them. In UX design, there are no coincidences!

- For more on these elements and other design choices, check out this article on Design Principles from Interaction Design Foundation.
- This article from Springboard explores 16 Important UX Design Principles for Newcomers.
- For the fundamentals of successful designs, check out The 4 Golden Rules of UI Design from Adobe.
- Usability.gov has a great list of User Interface Design Basics to keep in mind as you design.

Mark as completed