

FREE

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DESIGN

## *Even if you're clueless.*

**CHAPTER III**

## USE GRIDS TO YOUR DESIGN

Grids are invisible lines that help you place your elements evenly and neatly on your design. Think of it like graph paper that keep everything straight.

**How to Use Grids:**

- Turn on gridlines in your design tool or Adobe have an easy option!
- Snap your elements to the grid. This keeps everything aligned.
- Use columns and rows to organize content.

**Without Grids**

**With Grids**

**CHAPTER II**

## COMMON COLOR SCHEMES

Color schemes are like ready-made recipes. They help you pick colors that look good together and make your design feel balanced, bold, or calm depending on your goal.

<p><b>Monochrome</b> One color, many shades. Great for minimal, professional, or calming designs.</p>	<p><b>Analogous</b> Colors next to each other on the wheel. Soft, harmonious, and easy on the eyes.</p>
<p><b>Complementary</b> Opposite colors create strong contrast. Great for bold statements and attention.</p>	<p><b>Triadic</b> Three evenly spaced colors. Bright and balanced. Use each with purpose.</p>

**OS TO ALIGN SIGN**

Align your text, images, and other elements on the page. Think of them like the lines on a graph paper. Most tools like Canva have a built-in alignment tool. Just click on the text or image and choose the alignment option to show these lines. Then, click on the align button to align the element to the grid lines or guides. You can also use the grid lines to organize content into sections.

**NEED A NEW WEBSITE?**

**With Grids**

**BY: DISHA RAJANI**  
@designerdisharajani

A B O U T M E

# HELLO, I'M DISHA RAJANI



A Social Media Designer with 6+ years of experience creating scroll-stopping content that connects and converts. I will help you master Canva like a PRO with easy tutorials, smart hacks, and design secrets I've learned along the way.

I've worked with agencies, startups, and creators across industries building designs that don't just look good, but work hard. Clean layouts, sharp typography, and Canva magic? That's my thing.

I didn't start as a designer, I grew into it. Now, design is not just my skill, it's my zone of genius. If you're here to level up your design game, welcome you're in the right place!

*Disha Rajani*

@designerdisharajani

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

# EVERY EXPERT WAS ONCE A BEGINNER

You don't need to be artistic to be a designer.

Design is about making information easy to understand and nice to look at.

If you've ever made a social post, a flyer, or a resume, you've already done some design.

This guide will help you do it with purpose, clarity, and confidence.

**By the end of this guide, you'll understand:**

- The 5 basic design principles that make everything look better
- How to choose fonts, colors, and layouts that actually work
- The right way to create balance and flow in any design



**You don't need to know everything today.  
This guide is here to teach you the basics  
clearly and simply.  
The rest will come with practice.**

C H A P T E R   I

# DESIGN THEORY MADE SIMPLE

Design theory is the backbone of every great visual.

It helps you understand how to organize things, what to emphasize, and how to make your message easy to understand.

Good design is not about decoration.

It's about clarity, balance, and purpose.

## 3 Core Functions:



**Solves problems  
visually**

Design guides people  
without needing  
words.



**Grabs  
attention**

It shows the viewer  
where to look and what  
matters most.



**Communicates  
clearly**

It makes your message  
feel easy and natural  
to understand.

If it looks good but doesn't work, it's not good design.  
Focus on function first, then make it beautiful.

## CHAPTER I

# DESIGN PRINCIPLE 1: CONTRAST

Contrast is what makes things stand out.

It helps viewers know where to look first and what matters most.

Without contrast, everything looks the same and nothing feels important.

## Why it matters?:

- ✓ Draws attention to key parts
- ✓ Makes content easier to understand
- ✓ Creates hierarchy so people know where to start



Hard to See



Easy to Spot

## CHAPTER I

# DESIGN PRINCIPLE 2: REPETITION

Repetition means using the same styles again and again. It builds rhythm, creates unity, and makes your design feel complete. Without repetition, your design can look random or disconnected.

## What You Can Repeat:

- ✓ Fonts: Keep headings and body fonts the same across pages
- ✓ Colors: Repeat your main color or accent color
- ✓ Shapes: Use similar icons or background shapes



Inconsistent Design



Cohesive Design

## CHAPTER I

# DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3: ALIGNMENT

Alignment is what makes a design feel neat and easy to follow. When elements are aligned to the same edge or centerline, your layout looks polished. Misalignment makes even great designs feel messy.

## Why It Matters?:

- ✓ Keeps things structured
- ✓ Guides the viewer's eye
- ✓ Makes content feel connected



Messy Design



Aligned Design

## CHAPTER I

# DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4: PROXIMITY

Proximity is about spacing. When related elements are placed close together, your viewer understands they're connected. When there's too much space between them, it feels like they don't belong.

## Why It Matters?:

- ✓ Improves clarity
- ✓ Organizes content visually
- ✓ Reduces visual clutter



Needs Improvement



Looks Clear & Connected

## CHAPTER I

# DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5: BALANCE

Balance is about giving your design a sense of stability. When elements are spread out with care, nothing feels too heavy or too empty. It's not about symmetry, it's about visual harmony.

## Why It Matters?:

-  Makes your design comfortable to look at
-  Helps guide attention naturally
-  Prevents confusion or “heaviness” on one side



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Off-balance Design



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Balanced Design

## CHAPTER II

# WHAT IS COLOR THEORY?

Color theory helps you choose colors that work well together and send the right message. The colors you pick affect how people feel, what they notice, and whether they trust your design.

## Why Color Matters in a Design?



### Sets the Mood

Red feels bold  
Blue feels calm  
Yellow feels cheerful



### Grabs attention

Bright colors pull the eye  
Use them for buttons or  
headlines



### Builds Trust

Soft, balanced colors  
feel safe  
Stick to consistent  
brand colors

## Before You Pick a Color, Ask...:

- What do I want people to feel?
- What should they focus on first?
- Is this color easy to read with text over it?

## CHAPTER II

# COLOR TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

To use color confidently, you need to know these 4 basic terms. These are the building blocks of every palette you'll ever create.

## Hue



Hue is the base color itself, like red, blue, green, or yellow.

## Shade



Shade is when you add black to a hue. It makes the color darker.

## Tint



Tint is created by adding white to a color. It makes the color lighter and softer.

## Tone



Tone is a hue mixed with grey. It mutes the color.

### PRO TIP

Hue = the starting point.

Shade, Tint, and Tone = how you style that color.

Use all four to make your designs feel more dynamic and professional.

## CHAPTER II

# COMMON COLOR SCHEMES

Color schemes are like ready-made recipes.

They help you pick colors that look good together and make your design feel balanced, bold, or calm depending on your goal.



## Monochrome

One color, many shades. Great for minimal, professional, or calming designs.



## Analogous

Colors next to each other on the wheel. Soft, harmonious, and easy on the eyes.



## Complementary

Opposite colors create strong contrast. Great for bold statements and attention.



## Triadic

Three evenly spaced colors. Bright and balanced. Use each with purpose.

## CHAPTER II

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLORS

Use the 60/30/10 Rule for Balance

**60%**

Main color

Usually your background or large areas

**30%**

Secondary color

Headlines, subheadings, or important shapes

**10%**

Accent color

Buttons, links, or things you want to stand out

This simple ratio keeps your design clean and stops colors from clashing.

Example:



Main color



Secondary color



Accent color



**PRO  
TIP**

Always pair light text with a dark background, or dark text with a light one. If it's hard to read, the design won't work no matter how nice the colors look.

## CHAPTER II

# COLOR TOOLS THAT MAKE LIFE EASIER

## Go-To Tools



### Canva Color Palettes

Explore ready-made palettes or build your own with Canva's built-in color tool.

[ACCESS HERE](#)

### coolors.co

A fast and fun color scheme generator. Just hit spacebar to shuffle.

[ACCESS HERE](#)

### Adobe Color

Create palettes from scratch or extract them from images.

[ACCESS HERE](#)

## Test for Accessibility:



WebAIM Contrast Checker: Checks if your text is readable over backgrounds.

[ACCESS HERE](#)

Aim for: High contrast between text and background

## CHAPTER III

# WHAT IS A LAYOUT?

Layout is how you place and arrange everything in your design, text, images, icons, buttons, shapes, and more. It's about creating a clear flow so the viewer knows exactly where to look and what to do.

## Why Good Layout Matters?



Guides the viewer's eye

A good layout helps the viewer follow the message in the right order.



Keeps things structured

Everything has a place - no floating elements or awkward gaps.



Feels clean and intentional

It avoids visual chaos and makes designs feel professional.



If you ever feel stuck while designing, pause and ask:  
What do I want someone to see first?  
Start building your layout around that.

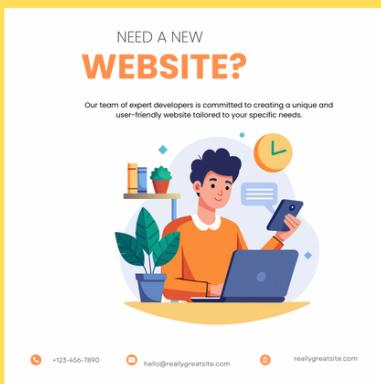
## CHAPTER III

# USE GRIDS TO ALIGN YOUR DESIGN

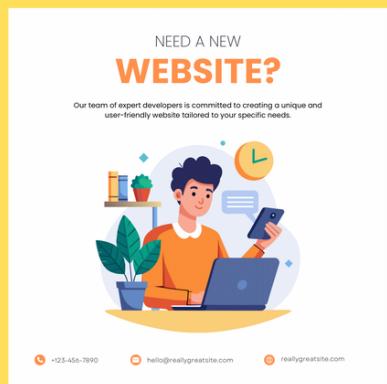
Grids are invisible lines that help you place your text, images, and other elements evenly and neatly on your design. Think of them like the lines on graph paper that keep everything straight.

## How to Use Grids?:

- ✓ Turn on gridlines in your design tool. Most tools like Canva or Adobe have an easy option to show these lines.
- ✓ Snap your elements to the grid lines or guides. This keeps everything aligned automatically.
- ✓ Use columns and rows to organize content into sections.



Without Grids



With Grids

## CHAPTER III

# USE WHITE SPACE EFFECTIVELY

White space, also called negative space, is the empty area around text and images. It doesn't have to be white — it can be any color or background — but it's space without clutter.

## How to Use White Space?:

- ✓ Don't fill every corner. Leave breathing room around your elements.
- ✓ Space out text lines and paragraphs with enough line height and margins.
- ✓ Use padding around images and buttons to separate them from other items.



Crowded Layout



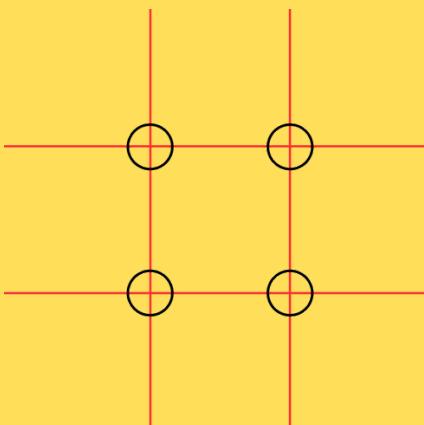
Layout with White Space

## CHAPTER III

# LAYOUT PATTERNS TO GUIDE THE EYE

## Rule of Thirds:

- ✓ Divide your canvas into 3 rows and 3 columns.
- ✓ Place key elements (text/images) where the lines intersect.
- ✓ It creates a naturally balanced layout.
- ✓ Great for posters, social media, and presentations.

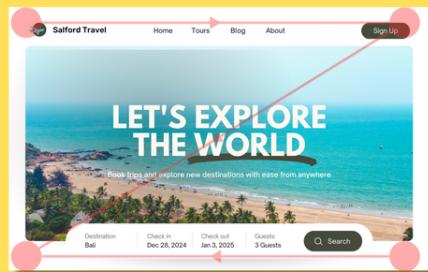
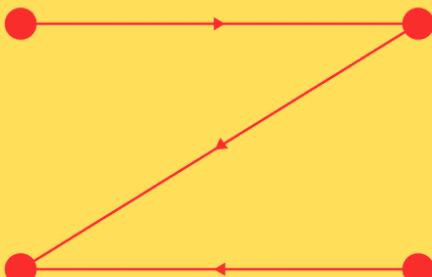


## CHAPTER III

# LAYOUT PATTERNS TO GUIDE THE EYE

## Z-Pattern

- ✓ The eye scans in a "Z" shape: left to right, top to bottom.
- ✓ Place your logo or headline at the top left.
- ✓ End with a strong call to action in the bottom right.
- ✓ Great for banners and slides.

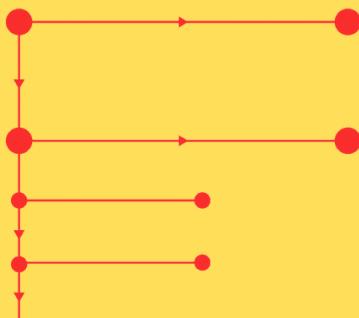


## CHAPTER III

# LAYOUT PATTERNS TO GUIDE THE EYE

## F-Pattern

-  The eye scans like the letter "F": top to bottom with strong left-side focus.
-  Place the most important info on the top and left areas.
-  Use headings and short paragraphs to match the scanning flow.
-  Best for websites and blogs.



## CHAPTER IV

# WHAT IS TYPOGRAPHY?

Typography is how your text looks. It's more than just fonts, it includes the size of your text, the spacing between letters and lines, and how readable your design is overall.

## Why Typography Matters?:

- ✓ Improves clarity: Clean text helps people understand your content faster.
- ✓ Sets the tone: A fun font feels different from a serious one.
- ✓ Creates structure: Size and spacing show what's important.



Coming  
soon

Hard to read

**COMING  
SOON**

Easy to read

## CHAPTER IV

# KNOW YOUR FONT FAMILIES

Fonts have personalities. Each category gives your design a different feel from formal to friendly, from modern to playful. Choose wisely depending on the message you want to send.

## Serif

- Look: Traditional, elegant
- Example Fonts: Times New Roman, Georgia
- Best For: Books, newspapers, formal brands
- Design Note: Small “feet” or strokes at the ends of letters

Times New Roman

“Design is intelligence made visible.”

## Sans Serif

- Look: Clean, modern
- Example Fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Montserrat
- Best For: Websites, tech, minimal designs
- Design Note: No strokes at the ends just smooth letters

Arial

“Simple is powerful.”

## Script

- Look: Handwritten or cursive
- Example Fonts: Pacifico, Great Vibes
- Best For: Accents, invitations, quotes
- Design Note: Decorative and flowing never use for long paragraphs

Pacifico

“Creativity takes courage.”

## Display

- Look: Bold, dramatic, eye-catching
- Example Fonts: Bebas Neue, Lobster, Impact
- Best For: Headlines or short phrases only
- Design Note: Use with caution, too much = hard to read

Lobster

“Make it pop!”

## CHAPTER IV

# HOW TO PICK FONTS?

Choosing the right fonts is all about balance. Your fonts should look good together and make your message clear. Here's how to do it without overthinking.



## Pairing Fonts



### Do This:

- Pair a bold title font with a simple body font
- Use contrast: one font grabs attention, the other makes reading easy
- Example:  
Title: Bebas Neue  
Body: Open Sans

### Avoid This:

- Using two bold fonts
- Using two decorative fonts
- Fonts that "fight" each other visually



### PRO TIP

Stick to just one or two fonts in a design. Using the same fonts across your work creates a consistent look. Too many fonts can feel messy and unprofessional, keep it simple.

## CHAPTER IV

# MAKE IT EASY TO READ

## Font Sizes That Work

Text Type	Recommended Size
Titles	24 pt and above
Subtitles	16–20 pt
Body Text	12–14 pt

## Line Spacing



Too tight =  
hard to read



Too loose =  
feels disconnected



Just right =  
comfortable flow

### General rule:

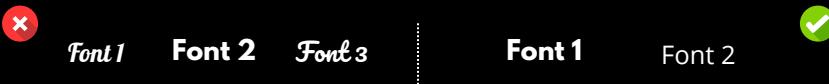
Line height should be 1.4x to 1.6x the font size.

## CHAPTER IV

# AVOID THESE COMMON MISTAKES

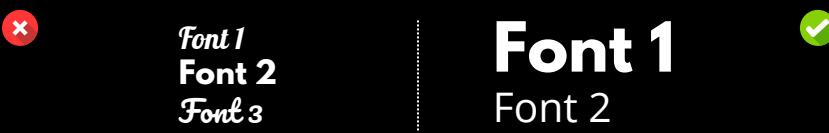
## Too Many Fonts

- **Mistake:** Using more than two fonts in one design
- **Why It's Bad:** Creates visual chaos and distracts the reader
- **Fix:** Stick to one headline font and one body font



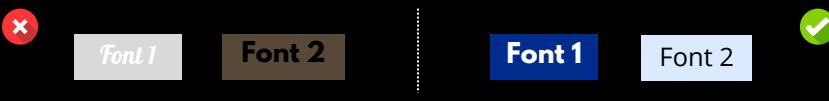
## Uniform Size

- **Mistake:** Making all text the same size
- **Why It's Bad:** Removes hierarchy and leaves the reader guessing what's important
- **Fix:** Vary sizes—large for headlines, medium for subheads, small for body



## Poor Contrast

- **Mistake:** Light text on a light background or dark on dark
- **Why It's Bad:** Harms readability, especially on screens
- **Fix:** Always check that text stands out clearly (dark on light or vice versa)



## CHAPTER V

# WHAT IS VISUAL HIERARCHY?

When someone looks at your design, they don't read it like a book. They scan it. Visual hierarchy helps you guide their eyes from what's most important to what comes next.

## Why It Matters?:

- ✓ Saves time: people find what they need quickly.
- ✓ Looks professional: gives your design structure.
- ✓ Improves understanding: makes the message clearer.



No hierarchy



Clear hierarchy

## CHAPTER V

# BUILD VISUAL ORDER STEP BY STEP

Hierarchy is built using simple changes in how things look.  
You don't need fancy tools, just smart choices.  
Here are 4 things that help you control what gets noticed first.

## Size

Bigger = More Important  
Use larger fonts or shapes to highlight key messages.

# Heading

Body Text

## Color

Bright = More Attention  
Use high-contrast colors for buttons, calls to action, or key text.

BUTTON TEXT

## Font Style

Bold or UPPERCASE = Higher Priority  
Change the weight or case of text to show importance.

Normal Text

**Bold**

**ALL CAPS**

## Spacing

Separate Sections Clearly  
Add space between groups of text or elements. It makes your layout easier to scan.



White space is powerful,  
use it to breathe

## CHAPTER V

# LAYOUT TIPS FOR CLEAR HIERARCHY

Visual hierarchy isn't only about size or color.

Your layout choices shape how fast someone understands your design. Here are some beginner-friendly layout tricks to support your hierarchy:

## Stick to One Direction

Don't mix too many reading directions. Choose top-to-bottom or left-to-right and keep it consistent.



**Heading**

Body Text



**Heading**

Body Text

## Use White Space

Space isn't just empty, it frames what matters. Let your most important element "breathe" by adding margin around it.



**BUTTON**



**BUTTON**

## Define a Focal Point

Every layout should have one obvious thing the viewer sees first.



**Heading**

Body Text



**Heading**

Body Text

## Keep Alignment Clean

Even if it's not a "grid," things should line up. Buttons, text blocks, and icons should form clear visual paths.



**Heading**

Heading  
Body Text



**Heading**

Heading  
Body Text

## CHAPTER V

# EXAMPLES YOU CAN LEARN FROM

Great design doesn't just look good, it feels easy to understand.

Here are real examples where visual hierarchy guides what you notice first. You'll see what works, and how to use it in your own designs.

## Website Landing Page

### Eye Flow:

- Logo – Top left for instant brand recall
- Headline – Big, bold, and clear
- Call-to-Action Button – Bright color (like yellow or blue), placed just below the headline
- Image or Graphic – Supports the message, not distracts
- Supporting Text – Smaller, grouped near the button

PRO  
TIP

White space is powerful,  
use it to breathe

## Social Media Post

### Eye Flow:

- Main Message – Large text in the center
- Background – Simple or blurred, keeps focus on text
- Subtext or Hashtags – Small and spaced at the bottom
- Logo or Handle – Tiny, in the corner
- Visual Accent – Small icon or graphic to support the message

PRO  
TIP

White space is powerful,  
use it to breathe

## CHAPTER V

# VISUAL HIERARCHY MISTAKES

Visual hierarchy works when you make the important stuff stand out. Here's what to avoid so your design doesn't confuse people.

## Everything Looks the Same

- If all text and images have the same size, color, and weight, the viewer won't know where to start.

## No Clear Headline or Main Message

- Without a bold title or focal point, your message gets lost.
- Every design needs a "main star" to guide the eye.

## Over-Decorating Instead of Prioritizing

- Too many colors, fonts, or effects can distract and overwhelm.
- Keep it simple and purposeful.



Less is more.

Use visual hierarchy to lead people through your design clearly and calmly.

## FINAL NOTES

# YOU KNOW MORE THAN YOU THINK

If you've made it this far, you've already learned:

- What makes good design work
- How to apply design theory, color, layout, typography, and hierarchy
- The mistakes that confuse people and how to avoid them

That's more than enough to begin creating with purpose and confidence.

Keep this guide nearby, trust your instincts, and keep practicing.  
Every project will teach you something new.

## Show Me What You Made:

- Start a small project
- Recreate a design you like
- Keep your layout simple and spacing clean

## Want feedback or a shoutout?

Tag me on Instagram @designerdisharajani with your design.  
If it's great, I'll share it on my story. If it needs a few tweaks, I'll suggest helpful changes.

T H A N K   Y O U

# GRATEFUL YOU MADE IT HERE



**"You don't have to be great to start,  
but you have to start to be great."**

-Zig Ziglar

