

I. Graphic Design projects

Summary: Creative Brief, Research, Ideation, Production

The Creative Brief



Research

Colors, typography, image, tone

The goal is to understand the target audience.

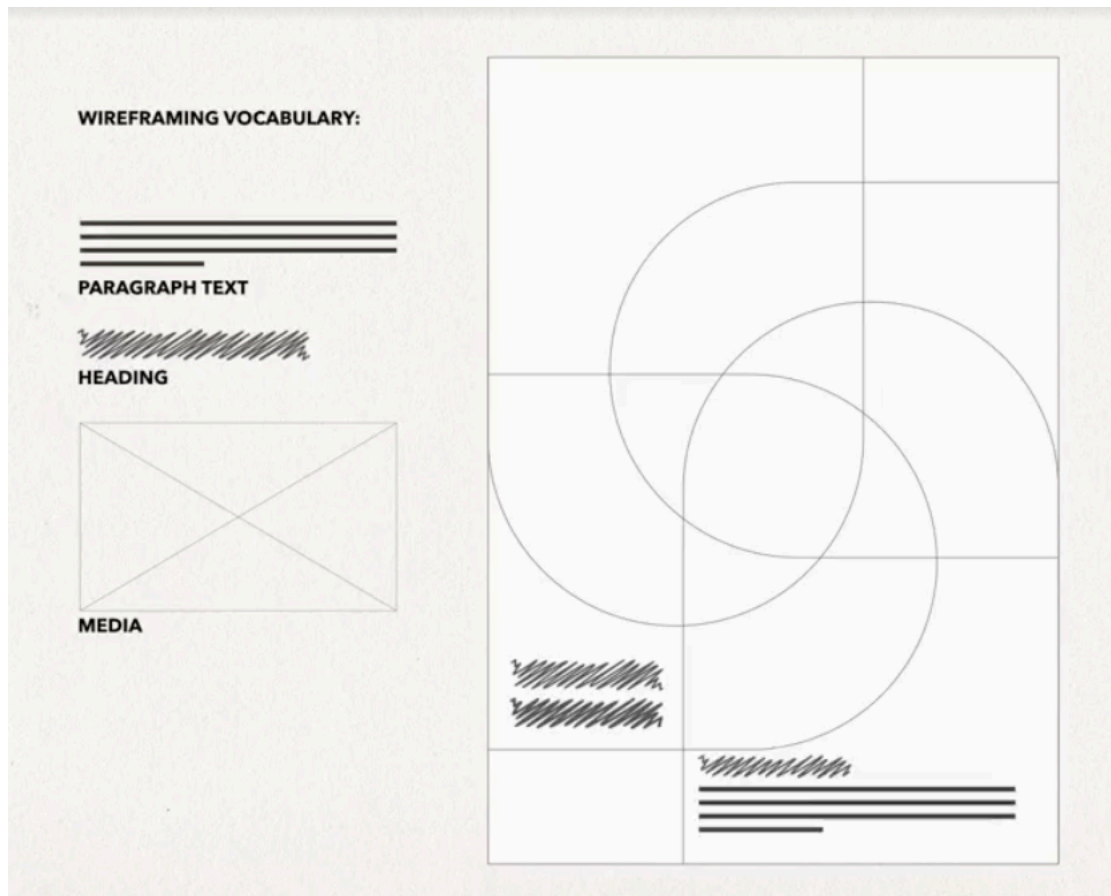
Visualize associations with sticky notes

Create Personas

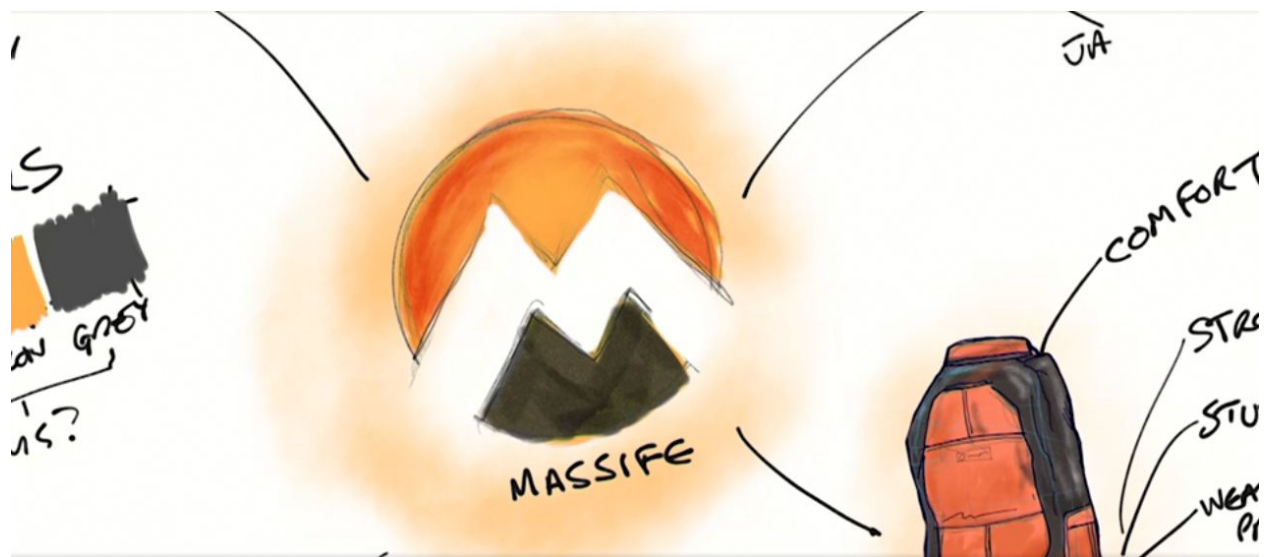
Gather project specific elements: Color Swatches, images

Ideation

You should start small by creating lots of thumbnail sketches that have very little detail. They should be the bare minimum to express what is going on in your head. Then start to create wire frame sketches to develop the ideas a little further.



Mood Board:



Production

Production is the final stage of the creative process and the part where the software tools come into play to create the deliverables for the project.

What are the 4 image formats we give to the customer?

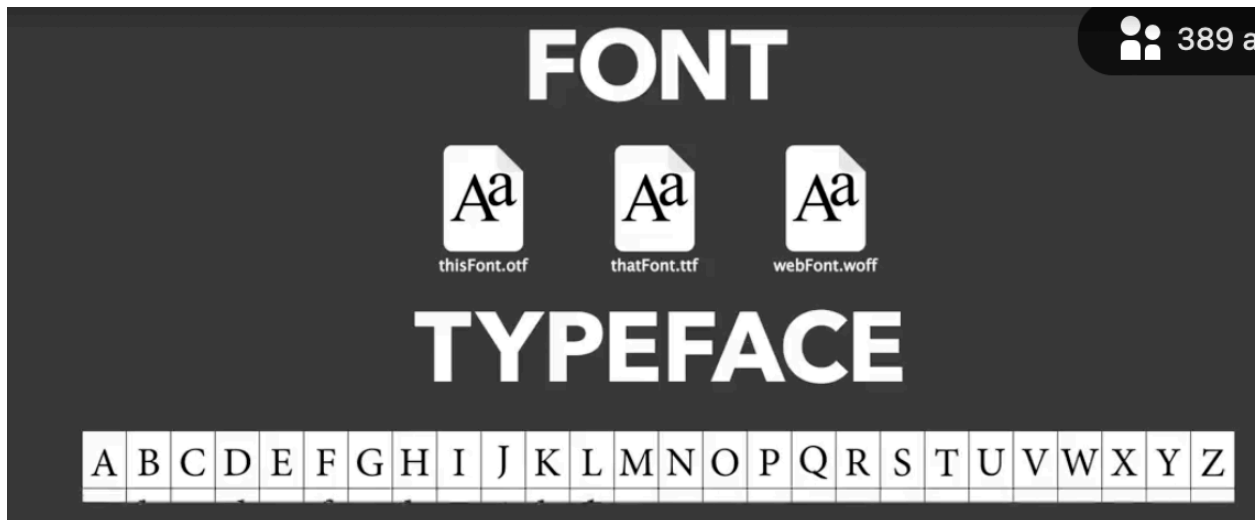
What about PSD?

Challenge: “Brand of You”: - Here's your first challenge of this course. Imagine you had to market yourself as a brand. What would you call it if it wasn't your actual name? What characteristics would your brand have? What colors type and imagery would the brand of you use? What would your mood and tone be in your messaging? Try to write a brief as if you are going to give it to another designer for a full page magazine advertisement about the brand of you, and if you feel up to it, try creating that ad yourself, sticking to the information in your brief, you only need to draw it.

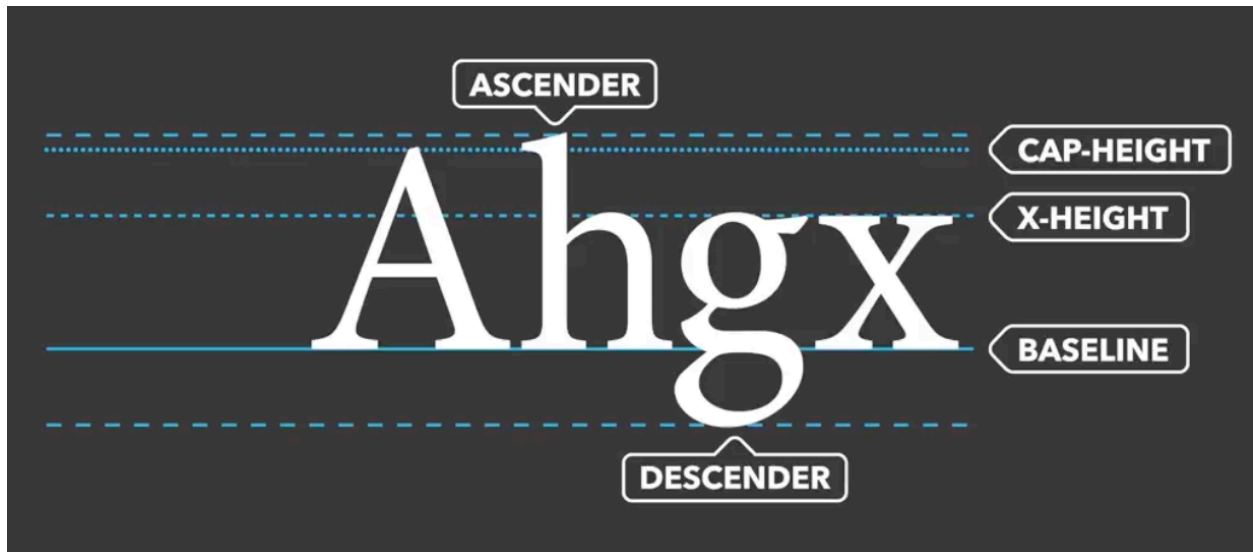
II. Learning About Type & Typography

Font v. Type

A font is the software file that delivers a typeface like Times New Roman, or Garamond, or Calibri, or Futura, et cetera, et cetera. A typeface is a design of a set of letter forms, which individually are known as glyphs inside of a font. Fonts can sometimes contain many glyphs for the same character, which is the name for a visual representation of a letter. It's



Key Typographic Terms



- Uppercase or caps
- Lowercase
- Old style numerals, lining numerals (good for tabular data)
- Construction Lines
 - Baseline (all text is relative to this line)
 - x-height (lowercase letter height)
 - cap-height (uppercase letter height)
 - ascender
 - descender

Basic Type Classifications

- 1) Sans Serifs
- 2) Serif
- 3) Slab Serif
- 4) Script
- 5) Blackletter
- 6) Monospaced
- 7) Hand
- 8) Decorative



Type Anatomy

Serifs, stems, ascenders, f has a hook, g has an ear, y has a tail, s has a spine and a beak, 5 has a flag, f has a crossbar, the k has an arm and a leg, e has an eye (contained negative space in glyphs) - or “bowls”,



Understanding Character Attributes

leading, kerning, em, tracking (letter spacing), baseline shifts (subscript, superscript),

Understanding Paragraph Attributes

Left, center, right, justified (with options), layout away from spine, indent

Forced justification gives weird gaps - “rivers”

Space before and space after for paragraphs (as opposed to carriage returns)

Drop caps

Challenge: take a quote or phrase that you like from maybe a movie or a book or something like that, and turn it into a poster; rendering as well as you are able the typefaces that you think will bring the words to life for you. Now, normally in documents, you're trying to limit yourself to a maximum of three typefaces, but for this poster, you can have as wide a selection as you like.

III. Layout & Composition

Principles of Layout

- Balance
 - Symmetry/Asymmetry
- Alignment
- Proximity
- Contrast
 - adds visual interest
 - highlights key areas
- Repetition
- Space

The Design Space

- graphic design is all about space



The Design Space is the area you have to work with:



Divide it up to see relationships

Example: A page has margins

Space

You may well have heard the term **white space** used in relation to design. But as the space these days is frequently occupied by other content or color, it's maybe easier to use the terms **positive space** and **negative space** instead.

Positive space is of course the space that is occupied by active content, such as text or other objects. And **negative space** refers to the regions around them.

Negative space used wisely balances out a design.

Take a look at this poster. The bird is in the first third of the layout and the other elements are in different places, but it looks balanced. The negative space is almost equal to the positive space and it gives it balance.

Also use “Active” and “passive” in the lingo

Using Grids

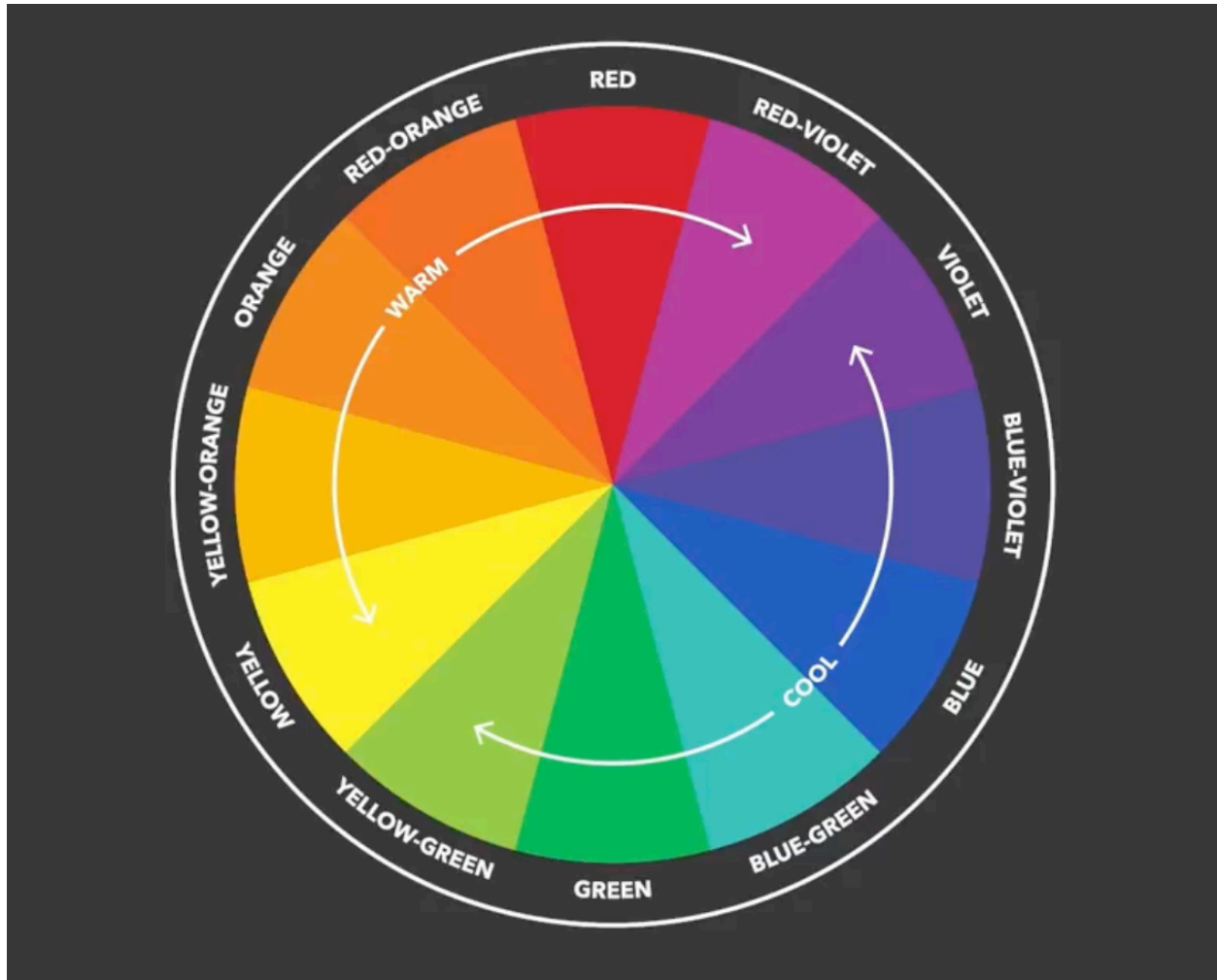
- It's OK to break the grid!
- Columnar Grid - 12 columns is popular
- Modular Layout - each is a unit of a "micro module" (the smallest unit)
- Axial Grid - rows with same angle, or perpendicular

Challenge: Building A Layout

Now you've learned something about layout and page composition, here's a challenge for you. Choose a layout or two from a magazine that you like and carefully remove two or three spreads. Remember, that's a left page and a right page to view. Use a pencil and a ruler to try and work out the composition of the pages. See if you can work out the margins and how many columns were used and the gutter in between them. Also examine if different layout schemes were used on the pages or if they all used exactly the same grid. This is an exercise that can be applied to other design spaces too, such as websites and apps. So start looking for grids at work in the world around you.

IV. Color

- Color is the lifeblood of graphic design
 - Primary Colors: Red, Yellow, Blue
- Color temperature: red colors are warm, blue colors are cool



Digital Color

HSB color model - easy to switch the hue and leave the other values the same

Color Harmonies

This helps us with our first harmony, monochrome. By choosing a hue, we can create a monochrome theme using tints and shades of that hue.

Analogous harmonies use neighboring hues along with their tints and shades, which by the way is something you can do with any harmony, because they are all guides.

Complementary hues are opposites on the color wheel. When placed close together, complementary colors can be very striking, but they should be used carefully, as they can create an optical vibration. There are variations of complementary colors, such as a split complementary, which uses hues on either side of the direct complement.

Extending this concept further, we can create a triad or triadic harmony involving colors that are 120 degrees apart on the color wheel, similar to the way primary colors are separated. Including a fourth hue results in a tetrad or tetradic harmony, forming a square or rectangle on the color wheel.

A useful tip is that tetrads always include two warm and two cool hues, so be mindful of the values of hues you select.

<https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel>

Color Associations

In many, if not all cultures in the world, colors have symbolic associations. Let's take for example, red. Physically, the color of heat and almost everywhere I can think of it is the color of danger. To many of us in the west, it's also the color of passion, anger, love, and courage.

In China, red is considered a lucky color. It's the color of a heroic figure in Japan, the color of joy, energy, and creativity to Hindus, yet the color of mourning and representative of death in some parts of Africa.

In the UK, as well as being the most striking color of the ceremonial uniform of our most visible soldiers at Buckingham Palace, red is the color of pillar boxes where we post our mail. But for my friends in the US, their mail gets posted in a blue box and my friends in Barcelona, there's in a yellow.

Perhaps you can see where research in the early stages of the creative process is essential.

You should consider if any of these associations would have an impact on your design. I think that sometimes red is just red after all. It's down to the context in which it's employed. Don't forget though, you can change the effect of its interpretation by using a shade or a tinted value.

Color as Information (see demo in video)

Color can be used to organize and also convey information. Diagrams like this very common in displaying information about transit systems use color to simplify information. It is of course logical, but it is important to consider that some of us see the world very differently. Color vision deficiency or CVD affects one in 12 men and one in 200 women in the world. So it's a good thing to make sure that any system using color as its basis has good contrast. And if necessary, supporting elements such as shape icons or text to make the message clear. There are also various services and features in some apps that allow us to check to make sure our work is CVD friendly. So do make sure that your work is checked and your being as inclusive as possible.

Digital and Print Colors

RGD - additive color

CMYK - subtractive color

5. Imagery

Photo v. Illustration

Imagery significantly enhances communication and engagement. Visuals have a powerful ability to convey complex messages quickly and effectively, often more so than text alone.

They capture attention, evoke emotions, and can make a lasting impression on the viewer. Whether it's a striking photo, a detailed illustration, or an eye catching graphic, imagery helps to illustrate ideas, tell stories, and connect with the audience on a deeper level.

When it comes to illustration and graphic design, it's all about creativity and customization. Illustrations can convey specific moods, themes or messages that might be hard to capture with photography. This can be particularly advantageous for branding, where a distinct visual style can set a brand apart, and illustrations can be tailored to fit any context perfectly, ensuring the design feels intentional.

On the flip side, **photography** brings a level of realism and relatability that illustrations might not always achieve. Photos can capture genuine moments, emotions and textures, making them incredibly powerful for storytelling and creating real connections with the audience. They're especially effective for product advertising, lifestyle branding, and any design work where authenticity is key. With the right photo, a designer can convey a lot with just one image. Plus advancements in photography and editing technology means that photos can be manipulated in creative ways to blur the lines between realism and art.

Ultimately though, the choice between illustration and photography and graphic design comes down to the specific goals of the project and the desired impact on the audience.

Cropping Images (see demo in video)

An important part of using images is knowing when and how to crop images to tell perhaps a different story or maybe for other reasons. I'm here inside of Adobe Lightroom. Now, most applications that deal with images can do this, and in fact, even in InDesign, you can actually crop an image to some extent. So I've got this active, this freeform crop at the moment, and let's have a look at the whole picture here. So this tells us a story, okay? Just at the moment, it tells us we're looking at two deer who are part of a herd. And we know that because we can see the rear end of another deer just over on the right-hand side. But when we go ahead and crop that down, if I try and keep the same ratio, in fact, I can do that definitely here at the top if I just change this to Original here or As Shot, then it will keep those proportions for me. So if I bring this in like so, this now tells us a slightly different story because we don't know there are any other deer present here at all, okay? Even their positioning in the frame tells a different story. Really, we would want them as the main content to be along one of these thirds lines just here, but as it is, we can only get down to this one just here. Okay, so now we just know there are two deer there. But if we went still further and cropped in more tightly on just one of the deer here, and this might be a situation where I actually do need to switch to a freeform version here. So if I go ahead and do that and change this like so, then that's another story entirely. You can also do things like rotate your crop as well to tell a slightly different story. This is slightly unsettling because we can see the ground there, but in other images it might work quite well. Okay, so we can just go ahead and crop what we want. The only consideration we will need to make when we are cropping in this way is will the end result meet the resolution target that we'll need for the actual intended usage? So if I was doing this, for example, this is quite a large image to go to Instagram, square would be just fine. To go on quite a few different documents, it would be fine, but any larger than that, I might need to actually go ahead and look for another image.