

**WHY** you need to analyse  
and  
**HOW** to do it!

Resource for second year students

# Exam Board Specification

**Below are some key aspects of the course criteria that you need to demonstrate you are skilful at:**

**Record** experiences and observations, mainly in visual form; **undertake research** and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information.

**Explore** relevant resources; **analyse**, discuss and **evaluate** images, objects and artefacts; make and **record independent judgements**.

**Use knowledge and understanding of the work of others** to develop and extend thinking and inform own work.

SO, YOU CAN SEE THAT YOU'LL NEED TO ANALYSE THE WORK OF OTHER DESIGNERS,  
THEN USE YOUR THINKING AND WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT  
TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN DESIGNS.

HOW do you do this? Well, firstly you need to understand the ELEMENTS and PRINCIPLES that can be utilised in designing.

When used within the context of Art and Design, 'element' and 'principle' each have a very specific meaning.

- **ELEMENT**

An essential or characteristic *visual* part of something e.g. component, part, section, piece, bit etc.

- **PRINCIPLE**

A *concept* used to organise or arrange the structural elements of design.

For example,  
'line' and 'colour' are ELEMENTS,  
'balance' and 'use of hierarchy' are PRINCIPLES.  
PRINCIPLES use ELEMENTS to achieve a desired visual effect.

# ELEMENTS



Line is a mark with greater length than width. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal; straight or curved; thick or thin.



Shape is a closed line. Shapes can be geometric, like squares and circles; or organic, like free-form or natural shapes. Shapes are flat and can express length and width.



Forms are three-dimensional shapes expressing length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes, and pyramids are all forms.



Space is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space; negative space has shape. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth. Real space is three-dimensional; in visual art, when we create the feeling or illusion of depth, we call it space.



Color is light reflected off of objects. Color has three main characteristics: hue (the name of the color, such as red, green, blue, etc.), value (how light or dark it is), and intensity (how bright or dull it is).

- White is pure light; black is the absence of light.
- Primary colors are the only true colors (red, blue, and yellow). All other colors are mixes of primary colors.
- Secondary colors are two primary colors mixed together (green, orange, violet).
- Intermediate colors, sometimes called tertiary colors, are made by mixing a primary and secondary color together. Some examples of intermediate colors are yellow green, blue green, and blue violet.
- Complementary colors are located directly across from each other on the color wheel (an arrangement of colors along a circular diagram to show how they are related to one another). Complementary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complements, because green is made of blue and yellow. When complementary colors are mixed together, they neutralize each other to make brown.



Texture is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures do not always feel the way they look; for example, a drawing of a porcupine may look prickly, but if you touch the drawing, the paper is still smooth.

# PRINCIPLES



**Balance** is the distribution of the visual weight of objects, colors, texture, and space. If the design was a scale, these elements should be balanced to make a design feel stable. In symmetrical balance, the elements used on one side of the design are similar to those on the other side; in asymmetrical balance, the sides are different but still look balanced. In radial balance, the elements are arranged around a central point and may be similar.



**Emphasis** is the part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.



**Movement** is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.



**Pattern** is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.



**Repetition** works with pattern to make the work of art seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the work of art.



**Proportion** is the feeling of unity created when all parts (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other. When drawing the human figure, proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.



**Rhythm** is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement. Rhythm creates a mood like music or dancing. To keep rhythm exciting and active, variety is essential.



**Variety** is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work of art.



**Unity** is the feeling of harmony between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.

# Some other ELEMENTS

<p><b>COLOUR</b> What we see when light is emitted from an object. Colour can be used to communicate.</p> <p>Identify Primary and Secondary, warm and cool colours and harmonious or complimentary colours. Discuss the tonal values and creation of depth.</p> <p>Consider the symbolic meanings of colours and how they make us feel. Consider the role of colour in creating Hierarchy.</p>	<p><b>SHAPE</b> Shape refers to the contours or outline of something.</p> <p>Identify organic or natural shapes that remind the viewer of nature. Geometric or sharp and hard edged shapes, more likened to manmade and mechanical things.</p> <p>Shapes can help a designer create atmosphere, express emotions and convey a message.</p>	<p><b>LINE</b> A usually narrow and long mark or band.</p> <p>Identify what kind of line you can see. Organic or straight, natural or geometric. They can be light, thick, textured, flowing or jagged. How do they work with other parts of the design?</p> <p>Lines are often used to outline and as lines of composition.</p>	<p><b>TONE</b> The addition of grey to 'tone down' a colour. Tone is usually used to emphasize form.</p> <p>Tone can create a subtle or dramatic effect. Identify where tone has been used and how it creates depth.</p> <p>Tone also describes light direction and style of light. Harsh or softer light can be created through use of tone.</p>
<p><b>TEXTURE</b> The feel or appearance of a surface.</p> <p>There are hundreds of textures but they can usually be described as either 'smooth', including slick, silky, soft and slimy, or 'rough' for example bumpy, scaly, coarse, sandy and rocky. Identify how texture is created and how it is used to enhance atmosphere or communicate a message.</p>	<p><b>FORM</b> The visible shape of something.</p> <p>Identify recognisable forms such as cubes or spheres, as well as more original forms.</p> <p>Form is created by other design elements, usually shape, line and tone.</p>	<p><b>TYPE</b> Something written on a typewriter or computer keyboard.</p> <p>Identify a particular design of type, such as serif, sans serif, decorative, freehand etc. Discuss the colour, case, alignment and any adjustments to leading and kerning.</p> <p>Typeface can create atmosphere and convey emotion, helping a designer deliver a message.</p>	<p><b>ELEMENTS</b> These elements are commonly used together in the creation of graphic design.</p>

This list is not definitive... can you identify any others in the work you study?  
Check our Glossary on GOL for ideas.

# Some other PRINCIPLES

<p><b>BALANCE</b> Balance refers to a relationship between two or more components on a vertical or horizontal axis. An axis can be created by the lines, shapes, type or images.</p> <p>Identify symmetrical balance; creating an ordered composition, or asymmetrical balance; creating a vibrant, dynamic composition.</p>	<p><b>CONTRAST</b> Contrast is the striking difference between two or more visual components.</p> <p>Identify contrasts between shape, colour, line, type or other elements.</p>	<p><b>CROPPING</b> Removing the outer parts of an image.</p>	<p><b>TOPE</b> The addition of grey to 'tone down' a colour. Tone is usually used to emphasize form.</p> <p>Tone can create a subtle or dramatic effect. Identify where tone has been used and how it creates depth.</p> <p>Tone also describes light direction and style of light. Harsh or softer light can be created through use of tone.</p>
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Can you identify the **Principles** and **Elements** discussed in this analysis?

The main image and typography are centred, giving a feeling of balance. The illustration is compiled from shapes that have been stacked to give a feeling of evenness.

Movement is created using the shapes of the sans serif typography; the contours of each letter guide you onto the next and the words flow downwards like poured liquid. This clearly shows the viewer which order to read the words in and leads the eye down to the image.

The combination of curved and straight edged shapes in the image and in typography creates contrast. The contrast of colours also helps define each image and word and enhances the sense of movement and flow. The variety of content within the illustration keeps the viewer's attention as their eye wanders through the image identifying the recognisable items such as unicycles, eyes and ladder.

Straight edged shapes feel mechanical, you can imagine the image being animated with various parts moving in sequence. With 46 acts fitting into 45 minutes I imagine the show will be very fast paced and seamless in its delivery. There are very few gaps between the shapes, therefore, implying there will be very few gaps between the acts. The use of circles and swirls seems to represent the human element of the circus acts, enhancing the feeling of fluid movement.

The paper has a subtly rough texture giving a slightly aged quality which could represent the history of the Circus.





Principle = orange    Element = purple

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**Movement** is created using the shapes of the **sans serif** typography; the contours of each letter guide you onto the next and the words flow downwards like poured liquid. This clearly shows the viewer which order to read the words in and leads the eye down to the image.

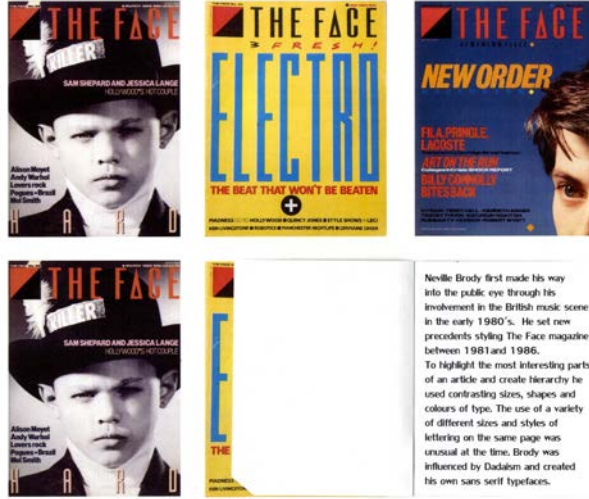
The combination of curved and straight edged **shapes** in the image and in typography creates **contrast**. The contrast of **colours** also helps define each word and enhances the sense of **movement and flow**.

The **variety** of content within the illustration keeps the viewer's attention as their eye wanders through the image identifying the recognisable items such as unicycles, eyes and ladder.

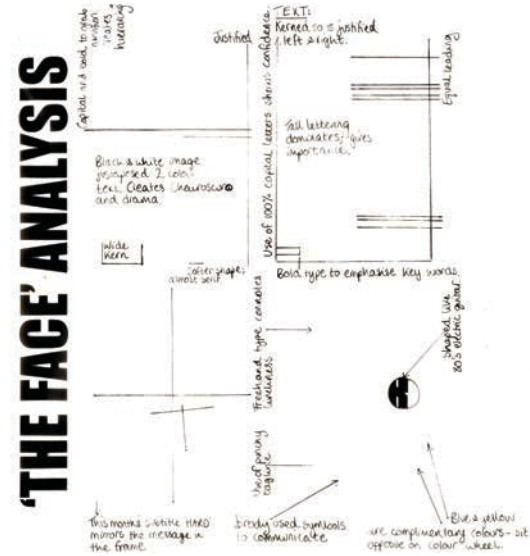
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Consider how you will present your analysis. You can use tracing overlays to highlight elements and principles. These can be hand-drawn or created digitally.



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Flap on bottom page creates space to write about the context of the examples.

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# Remember...

- Ensure you use the subject Glossary in the tips section of GOL.
- Look at other resources available on GOL which will help you understand design layout tools such as The Golden Ratio and Rule of Thirds.
- Do further reading on principles and elements when needed.
- You may find it easiest to make notes about a piece of design first and then write up into full sentences.