

# Elements & Principles of Design

## Teacher Resource

Grade 9-12: Visual Art – Elements & Principles of Design

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### Suggestions on How to Use this Resource

#### **At the Bata Shoe Museum**

**Elements of Design:** The class can be split into five groups. Each group will be responsible for one of the elements of design, answering the two questions on their worksheet. Groups will then present their answers to the class.

**Principles of Design:** Because the principles of design build on the knowledge of the elements, this part of the activity should be done after the students have already studied the elements of design. Students pick the principle of design that most interests them, and then find a shoe in the museum that exemplifies it.

#### **In the Classroom**

**Elements of Design:** Teachers will need at least one colour copy of the work sheets below in order to use this resource without going to the Bata Shoe Museum. Students can be split into five groups and work collaboratively on answering the questions on the sheets. Students can then present their findings to the rest of the class.

**Principles of Design:** The principles of design build on the knowledge of the elements of design so it is best if this activity is done after the students have a base of knowledge for the elements of design. Students can choose one of the principles of design and find shoes in their home, in stores, or in the online exhibition that they feel best exemplify the principle they have chosen. Students hand in their work or present it to the class.

# Elements of Design

## Colour

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Colour is described with the words hue, value and intensity. Hue refers to the name of the colour, value is the lightness and darkness of the colour and intensity is the amount of saturation in the hue.



*These shoes were used by the Hopi people in the American southwest. Because of the dry climate, religious ceremonies often included a request for rain. These boots would have been worn by a kachina, a masked dancer who embodies a spirit during religious ceremonies.*

1) Carefully examine the predominant colour of these boots. What name is given to this hue? In order to describe the value of this colour, imagine you have taken a picture of these boots in black and white. Would this colour be a light or a dark gray? Look at the saturation of this colour. Is it vibrant or dull?

2. The colour of these boots was significant in the religious ceremony. Why do you think the Hopi people would have chosen this colour for their boots?

# Elements of Design

## Line

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Line is the element of art that is used to define shape contours and outlines. Line may be a continuous mark or may be implied by the edges of shapes and forms. Line has many different characteristics and may be thick or thin, long or short, and curved or straight.



*These padukas, or toe knob sandals, were originally from India. The person wearing the shoe would have squeezed their toes around the knob at the front of the sandal in order to keep it on. The fish that is used to decorate the sandal was traditionally a symbol for fertility and abundance. In addition, the fish shape often refers to the deity Vishnu so these padukas may have had religious significance.*

1. Examine the outer contour and the interior lines that have been used to decorate the subtle fish-like shape and scale pattern. Describe how these lines have been used to enhance the image of the fish.

2. Consider how this shoe would have looked when it was worn. What lines would have been visible and what lines would have been hidden? Do you think these sandals would have looked better on or off the foot? Why?

# Elements of Design

## Shape/Form

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Shape is the element of design that occurs when a line intersects itself or another line to enclose a space. Three-dimensional shapes are called forms. Both shape and form can be either geometric or organic.



*This pair of mojari is from India. Mojari, also called khussa, feature dramatically upturned toes. These feature gold zardozi embroidery, jade beads, and brass bells that would have created a beautiful tinkling sound while the wearer danced. These lavishly embellished shoes were an item of luxury and would have been worn by the wealthy as a status symbol.*

1. Describe the shape of this shoe from profile. If you can imagine what they would look like from the top describe that shape as well. Which shape is visually more interesting? Why?

2. The shape of this shoe has been popular in Northern India for hundreds of years. Why do you think this shape has remained popular as a sign of luxury for the wealthy in India?

# Elements of Design

## Space

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Space falls into two categories: positive space and negative space. Positive space refers to the area that a shape or form occupies. Negative space is the space around the object. Both negative and positive spaces play an important role in design.



*Shinto, or the way of the gods, is the traditional religion of Japan. These shoes were part of the formal attire of Shinto priests and would be worn on special occasions such as the New Year. These shoes are known as asagutsu or 'shallow shoes'. Asagutsu are carved out of paulownia*

1. Examine the interior space this shoe occupies. Why do you think they were referred to as 'shallow shoes'?

2) Asagutsu shoes are notable for excess space at the front of the shoe. What visual effect do you think this would have had on someone as they watched the Shinto priest walk in these shoes?

# Elements of Design

## Texture

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Texture is the surface quality of an object. There are two categories of texture: real texture and implied texture. Real texture refers to how the object would feel if it was touched. Implied texture refers to something that has been made to look as if it has texture through drawing or painting techniques (ie: a drawing of a tree with rough looking bark).



*These shoes came from the aboriginal people in Australia. Although most people would walk barefoot, the executioners in the community, or kurdaitcha as they were known, would have worn these ritual shoes made out of emu feathers and human hair. The soft emu feathers would have masked the kurdaitcha's identifying footprints.*

1. Are these shoes an example of real or implied texture? Explain your answer.

2. Compare and contrast the texture of the human hair and the texture of the emu feathers. Why do you think these two textures would have been combined in this shoe?

# Principles of Design

## Balance

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Balance is the weighted relationship between the visual elements. Balance can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Symmetrical balance refers to an item that looks the same on both sides of a line drawn through the center. Asymmetrical balance is when an item creates a feeling of equal weight on both sides even though they do not look the same.

***Find a shoe that you think is a good example of this element of design. You can find your example in the museum, on the online exhibition ([www.allaboutshoes.ca/en](http://www.allaboutshoes.ca/en)), in a shoe store or even in your own home.***

***Draw a picture of the shoe and describe why you think the shoe is a good example of this principle of design.***



### Some Questions to Consider:

Shoes are generally good examples of symmetrical balance. In cases of symmetrical balance a shoe is a mirror image of its mate. Can you find an example that shoe asymmetrical balance? How did the designer make each of the shoes feel evenly weighted?

Explain why you think this shoe is a good example of the principle of BALANCE.

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# Principles of Design

## Emphasis

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Emphasis refers to the focus of attention in the composition. It is the quality that draws the viewer's attention to a certain part of the design.

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***Draw a picture of the shoe and describe why you think the shoe is a good example of this principle of design.***



### Some Questions to Consider:

Where is your eye drawn to when you look at this shoe?  
Do you think that this was intentional on the part of the designer? Why would he or she have wanted to draw your attention to this part of the shoe?

Explain why you think this shoe is a good example of the principle of EMPHASIS

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# Principles of Design

## Proportion

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Proportion refers to the relationship between one part of a design to another. It is a comparison of sizes, shapes and quantities

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***Draw a picture of the shoe and describe why you think the shoe is a good example of this principle of design.***



### Some Questions to Consider:

Consider the proportion of the shoe compared to the person who might be wearing it. Is it meant to make the persons feet look different? Would their foot look smaller, longer, smaller or bigger in this shoe?

Explain why you think this shoe is a good example of the principle of PROPORTION.

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# Principles of Design

## Rhythm

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Rhythm is the repetition of an element to achieve movement in a composition. It allows the eye to move from one part of a design to another part.

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***Draw a picture of the shoe and describe why you think the shoe is a good example of this principle of design.***



### Some Questions to Consider:

Rhythm creates a sense of movement. What type of movement is created in this shoe? Is it fast or slow, gentle or lively? How are patterns being used to move your eye around the shoe? How different would the shoe look without them?

Explain why you the shoe you have drawn is a good example of the principle of RHYTHM.

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# Principles of Design

## Unity

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Unity is the organization of the elements and principles into a cohesive and pleasing whole design or composition.

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***Draw a picture of the shoe and describe why you think the shoe is a good example of this principle of design.***



### Some Questions to Consider:

Unity means that all the parts of the shoe work perfectly together.  
Is there anything you could add to or take away from this shoe to make it look better? If so, is it truly unified?

Explain why you think this shoe is a good example of the principle of UNITY.

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