

SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



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BASICS

DESIGN

**Gavin Ambrose
Paul Harris**

C8

DESIGN THINKING

Ethical:
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academia

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Stages of thinking

Design is a process that turns a brief or requirement into a finished product or design solution. The design process can be said to comprise seven stages: define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement and learn. Each of these requires design thinking. This chapter will outline each of the seven stages and the design thinking aspects they entail, while subsequent chapters will look at specific stages of the process in more detail.

The design process engages a high degree of creativity but in a way that is controlled and directed by the process so that it is channelled towards producing a viable, practical solution to the design problem, meeting or excelling the stated aims of the brief.

While creativity in design is important, design is an activity that serves economic as well as creative goals. The design process helps ensure that a design satisfies all such considerations. The process seeks to generate a number of possible solutions and utilises various techniques or mechanisms that encourage participants to think outside the box in the pursuit of creative or innovative solutions.

The design process

Within the design process, seven steps can be identified: define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement and learn.

First, the design problem and the target audience needs to be **defined**. A precise understanding of the problem and its constraints allows more exact solutions to be developed. This stage determines what is necessary for the project to be successful. The **research** stage reviews information such as the history of the design problem, end-user research and opinion-led interviews, and identifies potential obstacles.

Ideate is the stage where end-user motivations and needs are identified and ideas are generated to meet these, perhaps through brainstorming.

Prototyping sees the resolve or working-up of these ideas, which are presented for user-group and stakeholder review, prior to being presented to the client.

Selection sees the proposed solutions reviewed against the design brief objective. Some solutions might be practical but may not be the best ones.

Implementation sees design development and its final delivery to the client.

Learning helps designers improve their performance and, for this reason, designers should seek client and target audience feedback and determine if the solution met the goals of the brief. This may identify improvements that can be made in the future.

While the design process is often linear, as shown below, it frequently involves revisiting earlier segments for reworking as it evolves.

The seven stages of design



Stage 1 – Define

Establishing what the problem is.

This is the first stage in any design process and almost always involves generating or receiving a design brief.

The brief

A design brief presents the client's requirements for a job. These may be verbal or written, simple or complex. A brief contains a specific goal that is to be met by the design but it may also be couched in terms that have varying interpretations.

A brief may be as basic as 'we need a brochure that makes us appeal to 20–30-year-olds' or 'we need a brochure that makes us appear cool and stylish'. As a working relationship develops between a designer and a client over several jobs, a greater understanding of what key terms mean is obtained. A designer needs to interpret the brief and define what words such as 'stylish' and 'cool' mean. This ensures that both parties have shared expectations. This may involve questioning the validity of the brief's elements. For example, a brochure might not be the best way to reach out and appeal to 20–30-year-olds, and perhaps an online campaign would be more effective?

Writing and re-writing a brief

Clients have varying experiences of design services. For this reason, the quality of the briefs that they provide will also vary. A brief needs to include anything that will allow the design team to initiate the design process. However, if it is not robust enough, it may need to be rewritten and reworked with the client.

Checklist:

Do you understand what the client is asking for?

Does the client understand what they are asking for?

Do you agree on the definition of terms?

Does the brief have any flaws?

Can you manage client expectations?

The first stage is to define the problem accurately



Stage 1 – Define

Objectives

Objectives are simply what the client hopes to achieve through commissioning a design job, and it is important that these are fully understood and ‘mapped’ to your design thinking.

Objectives need to be specified so that the design team knows what it has to achieve. Asking the client simple questions gets to the heart of the matter and focuses on what the client expects, what the project boundaries are and what deliverables are required.

‘The Five Ws’ (borrowed from news writing), refers to five words beginning with ‘w’, which, when asked, elicit factual answers that are necessary to adequately define a design job. They are: who, what, when, where and why (‘how’ is often tacked on to the end too). Asking questions such as these provides detail that the design team can use throughout the design process and identifies key restraints that they have to work to.

- 1 Who is the client and target audience?**
(size, nature, characteristics)
- 2 What design solution is the client thinking of?** (print, web, video)
- 3 When will the design be needed and for how long?** (project timescales)
- 4 Where will the design be used?**
(media, location, country)
- 5 Why does the client think a design solution is required?**
- + How will the solution be implemented?**
(budget, distribution, campaign)

Stage 2 – Research

Collecting background information.

Once the brief has been defined and agreed, a designer starts to search for information that can be fed into the creative process at the ideate stage. This research can be either quantitative, with hard statistical numbers about the size and composition of target user groups, or qualitative, with information about what that user group buys or consumes and what their lifestyle is like. It may be pertinent to build a mental model of a typical user in order to enable the design team to obtain a good feel for what would appeal to them. This includes factors such as education, career, holiday destinations, musical tastes, aspirations and so on.

Primary research

A primary source of research is the feedback generated during the learning phase of projects previously undertaken with the same or similar clients. Such feedback provides a starting point with regard to what worked and what did not work with a specific target group.

Secondary research

Secondary research is the information obtained from general secondary sources such as consumer market research reports. These provide the demographic breakdown and historic performance of given markets and market segments, and provide a clear view of how a market is structured.

Checklist

Do you have feedback from previous projects?

Do you have a statistical composition of the user group?

Do you understand the target market?

What is the education level of the user group?

What is the typical lifestyle of the user group?

What are the aspirations of the user group?

The second stage sees a period of research

Define
Brief

Research
Background

Ideate
Solutions

Prototype
Resolve

Select
Rationale

Implement
Delivery

Learn
Feedback

Stage 3 – Ideate

Creating potential solutions.

During the ideate stage, the design team draws on the research gathered and the constraints established during the define stage. This information is used to create ideas with which to tackle the design brief.

Designers use different methods to ideate, some of which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, 'Idea generation'. Ideation methods include brainstorming, sketching ideas, adapting a tried-and-tested design that already exists, taking a top-down analytical approach that focuses on the product, service or company or a bottom-up approach that focuses on the customer or user (both are further explained on page 56). Each method involves a varying degree of creativity and choosing which method to use will depend on factors such as how much money is available and how original the design needs to be.

At this stage, a design team might also choose to harness one of the multitude of art and design movements or paradigms. A design brief can be given a modernist, abstract, constructivist or a deconstructivist interpretation, for example.

As the ideate stage progresses, it will become clear whether there are any misunderstandings or shortcomings in the definition stage and whether sufficient levels of research were carried out. Feedback can be sought throughout the design process to clarify points of doubt with the client and to address aspects that were ill-defined during the definition stage.

Checklist:

Do you understand the brief?

Do you have sufficient research information?

Which methods will be used for idea generation?

During the ideate stage, design ideas are developed



Stage 4 – Prototype

Stage 4 – Prototype

Resolving solutions.

The ideate stage generates a variety of potential solutions to the design brief. Prior to selection, it may be necessary to further work up the most promising of these solutions. This will allow particular aspects to be tested and will provide a better basis for comparison at the selection stage. In such cases a prototype can be created.

A prototype can be used to test the technical feasibility of a design idea to see if it works as a physical object. Novel packaging or presentation ideas normally require the development of a prototype. A prototype can also test the visual aspects of the design by presenting them as they would be produced. This also provides the opportunity to test, where pertinent, a design in three dimensions.

A prototype gives the design team and client the ability to visualise and handle a design concept, to get an idea of its physical presence and tactile qualities.

As a prototype aims to test particular aspects of a design solution, it must be made so that those aspects are present and can be effectively evaluated. To convey the idea of what it will look like, a prototype does not need to be made with the final materials. For example, architectural models are often made from whiteboard and aim to give a three-dimensional visualisation of a building design. However, if a particular print finish is stipulated, it may be pertinent to present this via a prototype.

Checklist:

Do all potential solutions require prototyping?

What elements will the prototype test?

What functionality will the prototype have?

Prototyping designs adds detail and resolution, and allows for testing

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Stage 5 – Select

Making choices.

The select stage is the point at which one of the proposed design solutions is chosen for development. The key decision criterion is fitness for purpose: does the design meet the needs and goals of the brief, and will it effectively communicate to the target audience to achieve those aims? The winning design is typically that which most closely meets the design brief, or a significant part of it. It may not be possible or desirable to meet all the requirements of a brief within a single design. For example, market segmentation increasingly calls for different marketing and design solutions for different segments.

Other factors, such as cost and time, are relevant in the selection process, but these may change as the process develops. The budget available may not provide for the preferred solution and so a more humble option may be selected. However, budget and time constraints should be identified during the definition stage and must be considered throughout the design process.

A studio may advance what it thinks are the best design solutions to the client, and while its opinion and advice are important, the client knows its business, market and clients best and will make the final choice. This could well be different to the designer's preferred choice. At the end of the selection process, the client will sign off the choice, thus initiating the next stage in the design process.

Checklist:

Does the design meet the defined needs of the brief?

Does the design resonate with the target audience?

Can the design be produced on time and on budget?

Are there other factors to take into account?

Has the client signed off the design?

The select stage allows only possible designs to be fully developed

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Stage 6 – Implement

Delivering the solution to the design brief.

During this stage, the designer passes the design artwork and format specifications to those who will be supplying the final product. This might be a printer, web builder or fabricator. This moment provides a good opportunity to confirm the production specifications such as print quantity and what you expect to receive. For example, a printer is usually given some leeway to account for set-up in the different steps of the the print process. This means an order for 100 flyers may not result in the receipt of 100. It may be more or may be less. By double-checking, everyone is clear about the level of expectation, and what the client expectations are.

The design team typically provides project management during this stage, in order to ensure that the end results meet design expectations, and to keep the project on budget and on time. Proofing may be necessary during implementation if a print job is involved. This will ensure that what is printed is an accurate reflection of the artwork supplied. For websites and other electronic media, proofing means testing functionality as well as the visual appearance. This stage ends with the final delivery to the client of the finished job.

Checklist:

Has the client signed off the designs?

Have printers or other production professionals been booked?

Has the artwork been delivered to production professionals?

Has the job been proofed against the design?

Has the finished job been delivered?

The implement stage of the design process sees the design put into production

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Brief

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Stage 7 – Learn

Obtaining feedback.

The final stage in the process involves learning from what has happened throughout the design process. This is a feedback stage during which the client and design agency might seek to identify what worked well and where there is room for improvement.

Following the implementation, the client may begin to look for or receive feedback on how the product has been received by the target audience and how beneficial its effects on the target audience have been. Thus, a design firm can find out how the audience responded to the design.

The feedback generated at the end of the process becomes a learning opportunity for future projects. It forms one of the sources of information for the define and research stages. Any problems with the design may have been because of inadequacies in the brief or lack of understanding of key points. Through the feedback process, designers and clients build up a shared understanding over time. This serves to facilitate the production of increasingly optimal solutions in the future.

Although the learn stage appears to be the last of the seven that we've identified, it actually occurs throughout the design process. At each stage you should take stock of where you are, where you are heading, what's working and what's not. The ability to learn from each stage will enhance the development of design thinking, and will help to generate radical and successful designs.

Checklist:

Has dialogue with the client about the success of implementation taken place?

How successful was the implementation?

What feedback has the client received or commissioned?

What aspects can be improved?

The learn stage is a valuable chance to refine and learn from the design thinking process

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Example project

These pages show the various different stages of the design process within the context of an actual design job. The sequence shows the design thinking at each step of the process.

Stage 1 – Define

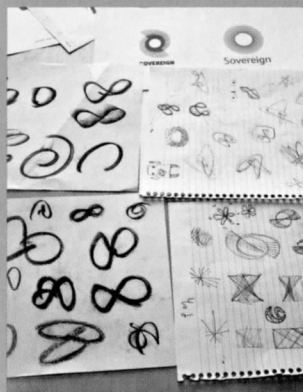
Sovereign is the parent organisation to a number of housing associations in England and as such, over time, has acquired a number of identities and brands. Design studio The Team was tasked with creating a new visual identity to bring all the different aspects of Sovereign's business under one overall umbrella design. The Team's brief was to create a strong brand identity using the Sovereign name. This would then need to be paired with a description to clearly identify the sub-brand, and would require a unique idea at its core in order to help the associations stand out from their competitors.

Stage 2 – Research

The Team undertook research to find out what made Sovereign different from other housing associations. This research included interviews and workshops with the client and consultation with the regional associations it had acquired in order to get a feel for the values and vision they had for the brand. An audit of competitors was undertaken to better understand the visual world that housing associations work in. The research showed that many felt that Sovereign's ability to balance the needs of current customers, while planning and developing for future customers, was its strongest asset. A web-based search for imagery and icons to represent the concepts of continuity and growth was also carried out to help generate ideas for the visual stimulus for the identity.



Research included a web-based search for images using a circle or loop, representing continuity and growth. This would form the central part of the visual identity.



The design team made a series of initial sketches (above) exploring and developing ideas for a symbol. Different symbol ideas were worked up and given different treatments to develop and test them (right).



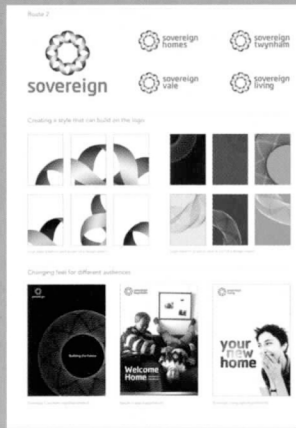
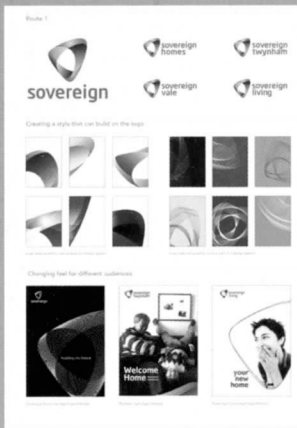
Stage 3 – Ideate

The initial ideas of the design team had the central concept of planning for today as well as tomorrow. The team wanted to create a shape or expression that could be used for the group logo as well as all its sub-brands. Initial sketches looked to create an abstract shape to represent the core idea of continuity and growth, which could be used to create larger graphics or expressions across printed materials to support the logo and brand concept. The initial ideas that went forward all carried a strong sense of this and appeared intricate and made up of many parts or sides. This helped reflect the different elements and areas of the client's business.

Example project

Stage 4 – Select

Three different design ideas were advanced to the select stage. The first was a Möbius strip idea, rendered in a 3D form to give a dynamic, sculptural and organic feel. There are many possible permutations for this logo shape, but the more angular shape used adds a feeling of energy and movement. The second route evolved from a two-sided yin-yang balance into a constantly moving and intertwined form. The third unites two interdependent shapes with a feeling of continuity and strength. These ideas were presented to the client on boards to facilitate discussion of each option.



Presentations of the three design ideas for selection.

Stage 5 – Prototype

The chosen design was refined using different treatments. The symbol is derived from a Möbius strip (a surface with only one side and only one boundary component), a never-ending shape that flows back into itself as its contours are followed by the eye. This reflects the relationship between addressing the changing needs of current customers while planning and developing to satisfy those of tomorrow. The sculptural and contoured form gives a feeling of strength and stability while the fluid triangular shape and dynamic, translucent shading captures an energetic and forward-looking spirit that is reinforced by the orange colour. The symbol is complemented by an uncomplicated yet powerful logotype that provides a strong and balanced relationship between the two elements. Lowercase lettering creates a professional, streamlined appearance.



Different forms of the resolved logo.

Stage 6 – Implement

The final design was rolled out across Sovereign's brands and sub-brands. This included all printed materials, such as stationery, ID cards, report covers, brochures and newsletters, as well as signage for vehicle livery and clothing. The logo also featured on signage around its corporate and local offices, as well as on building sites where Sovereign works to develop land and build new homes.



The final design was rolled out across Sovereign's brands and sub-brands.

Stage 7 – Learn

Learning occurred throughout the design process. The select process gave the design team a clear idea of what solutions resonated with the client, while client feedback following implementation would indicate which aspects were well received by its customers and which were not.

Inspiration and references

Inspiration is essential in any creative activity and design is no exception. Inspiration is key to the generation of exciting design ideas and design professionals draw inspiration from innumerable sources.

Creative people draw inspiration from both obvious and unexpected sources, such as magazines, music, literature and the urban environment. The work of other people in the field, past and contemporary, provides creative stimulation, which is one of the reasons why this series of design books contains so many examples of work by contemporary designers. Designers can cross-reference elements of contemporary life with those of bygone days, and delve back into the rich tradition of art and design history for visual stimulation.

Many designers and design studios formalise the inspiration process to a certain extent through the use of an ideas book. An ideas book is a collection of cuttings, photos, sketches, colour swatches, typographic examples, scribbled ideas, words and found objects that are accumulated to inspire. An ideas book may be a general collection that is continuously added to or it may be made as part of the preparation for a specific project. Designers often create characters that are a mental image of the typical target audience for a design, exemplifying their characteristics, lifestyle, aspirations and consumption habits.

Resolve

To decide, bring to a conclusion or end. A design idea is resolved when it is worked up into a final form.

Resonate

To be received or understood, to come across well. A design resonates when the viewer understands and appreciates the various aspects of the message communicated.

Inspiration and references

Reference points to inspire design come in many forms due to the wealth of cultural information that surrounds us. The latest trends and styles are easily observable on the street, in films, on TV, in magazines and in the shops. Designers also seek inspiration from other creative disciplines such as painting, sculpture, music, architecture, photography and cinema. Designers browse art galleries, museums, libraries, bookshops and junk shops, as well as graffiti-covered streets and supermarkets as they seek inspiration for design.

The visual arts provide a wide and varied palette of historical and contemporary styles, reflecting our ever-changing views of the world. The pursuit of novelty in design means there will always be oscillation between divergence from contemporary styles and convergence towards concepts of the past as ideas get repeated, adapted, built upon, rejected, debased, renovated and tweaked.

The following are intended as pointers to possible sources of inspiration and reference and are far from exhaustive. The rich vocabulary of art and design knowledge can help generate and communicate ideas precisely, and familiarity with such material helps designers expand their vocabulary and be able to draw upon a wider knowledge base to generate ideas, and be better able to say what they mean and mean what they say.



Abstract expressionism

A New York art movement that presented large-scale works containing forms not found in the natural world. Pictured is *Cubi VI* (1963), by the American sculptor David Smith.



Art deco

An elegant decorative style that celebrated the rise of technology and speed via geometric designs and streamlined forms. Pictured is the art deco spire of the Chrysler Building in New York, built 1928–1930.



Art nouveau

A rich ornamental style of decoration, rooted in romanticism and symbolism and characterised by undulating lines and highly stylised natural motifs, as shown on this magazine cover.



Arts and Crafts Movement

A decorative arts, furniture and architecture movement that sought to reverse the demise of beauty at the hands of the Industrial Revolution. Shown here is Artichoke wallpaper (c.1897) by John Henry Dearle for William Morris & Co.



Avant garde

An artistic work that pushes the established limits of what is considered acceptable, often accompanied by revolutionary, cultural or political connotations or ideas. Pictured is *Fountain* (1917) by Marcel Duchamp.

abc

Bauhaus

An approach to design that featured the use of the three basic primary shapes and colours, and geometric fonts to convey a sense of modernity. Pictured is Bayer Universal, by Herbert Bayer, a font based on geometric forms.



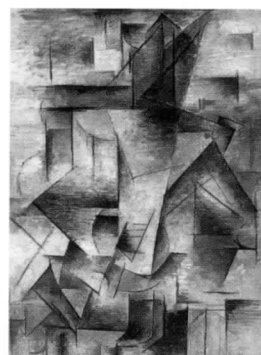
Collage/montage

Sticking paper and other media together in unusual ways (collage), or juxtaposing and/or superimposing pictures or designs to form a new image (montage). Pictured is *Das Unbild* (1919) by Kurt Schwitters.



Constructivism

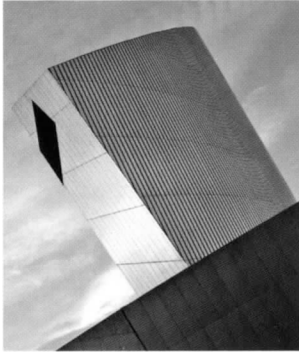
A modern art movement that used industrial materials such as glass and steel to create non-representational objects, with a commitment to total abstraction. Pictured here is a photo montage by Tatlin, 1924.



Cubism

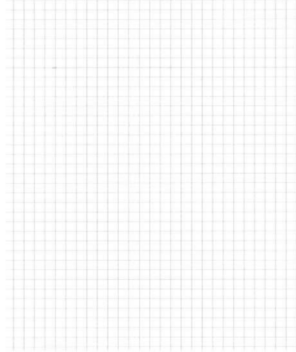
An art movement that rejected the single viewpoint and presented fragmented subjects from different viewpoints simultaneously. Pictured is *Le guitariste* by Pablo Picasso (1910).

Inspiration and references



Deconstructivism

A method of critical enquiry that examines how meaning is constructed by challenging the prescribed values that are presented to us. Pictured, the Imperial War Museum, Salford Quays, Manchester, UK.



Grid

A graphic structure used to organise the placement of elements within a design. A baseline grid acts as a positioning guide for text, pictures, diagrams, folios, strap lines, columns and so on.



Kitsch

A style that is considered to be an inferior, tasteless copy of an extant style of art, that may be overly sentimental and/or pretentious, or mass produced items considered trite and crass. Pictured, German Lohengrin legend postcard (c.1900) by an unknown artist.



Modernism

A movement that was shaped by Western industrialisation and urbanisation and favoured simple, utilitarian traits and rejected elaborate decoration. Pictured is Lake Point Tower in Chicago, USA, designed by Schipporeit and Heinrich.



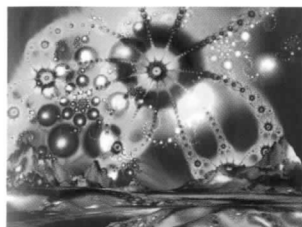
Pointillism

A painting style featuring tiny dots of primary colours that, when viewed from a distance, merge to produce secondary colours. Television screens work on a similar principle. Pictured is a detail of *La Parade* (1889) by Georges Seurat.



Postmodernism

A creative movement that returned to earlier ideas of adornment and decoration as it questioned the notion of a reliable reality by deconstructing authority. Pictured, Jeff Koons's *Puppy* at the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum in Spain.



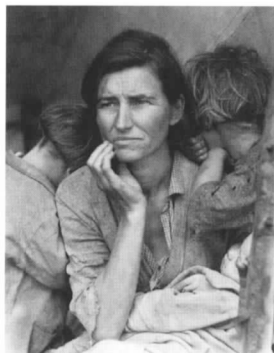
Psychedelia

A counter culture that challenged traditional boundaries in music, art and design, and saw the use of bright and eclectic colour schemes, interference patterns and curves. Shown here is Brian Exton's *Land of Psychedelic Illuminations*.



Tessellation

A repeated geometric design that covers a surface without gaps or overlaps, used in wallpaper design to provide a seamless pattern.



Reportage

A style of photography characterised by images that capture and detail defining moments of real life and the joys and horrors of the world. Pictured is Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* from 1936.



Vernacular

The everyday language through which a group, community or region communicates. Designers can incorporate the vernacular through 'found' items (such as street signs) or slang, for example.



Surrealism

A movement that sought to release the potential of the unconscious mind by depicting the real without being constrained by reality. We recognise what we see but it is not as we would expect it to be. Pictured is *La Trahison des Images* (1928–1929) by Magritte.



Zeitgeist

The moral and intellectual trends of a given era, the spirit of the age. Fashion, art and design are all subject to the zeitgeist and it is reflected in everything from the height of hemlines to typography.

Thinking in images

Images have the ability to convey an idea or a lot of information very quickly, which is why images are such a prominent part of graphic design. As we all know, a picture paints a thousand words, so it is worth spending adequate time on image selection and presentation.

Images can be used to communicate in many different ways as they are very versatile and their reading can be conditioned by other factors at play during their presentation. Images can have different cultural and social interpretations and these can be shaped by the contexts within which they are used. The cultural groups they are directed towards, the inclusion or exclusion of particular signs and symbols shared by a cultural group, the use or absence of conditioning agents such as wit and humour and appropriation of historical meaning, are all factors that might influence the meaning drawn from an image. The way an image or design is rendered also has an impact; a black-and-white sketch conveys a different feel from a glossy print, for example.



Receiving and interpreting images

What this means in practice is that one cannot just show a picture of a house. The designer must think about other design aspects that will condition how the viewer receives or interprets the image of the house. Does the house represent an Englishman's castle, a home, an architectural work, a source of joy or sorrow?

Thinking in signs

Signs are commonly used to communicate short, important messages in a simple way. As he investigated how people make sense of the world around us, American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce proposed that signs could be grouped into three categories: icon, index and symbol.

Icon

A graphic element that represents an object, person or something else. An icon can be a photograph and it can be diagrammatic or illustrative. An effective diagrammatic or illustrative icon seeks to reduce the subject to simple and instantly recognisable characteristics, perhaps by applying the laws of parsimony or Ockham's razor, which is to not include too much detail.

Index

An index sign is one where there is a direct link between the sign and the object. For example, most traffic signs are index signs as they represent information that relates to a specific road condition.

Symbols

A pictorial element that communicates a concept, idea or object, but without a logical meaning between them. Letters are symbols that represent the sounds we use to form words. Flags, for example, are symbols that represent different countries, geographic areas or organisations.



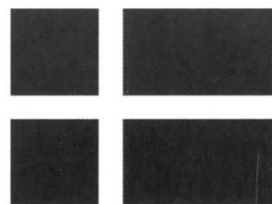
Icon

A graphic element reduced to its most simple characteristics, such as this globe.



Index

A graphic element that has a direct link to an object, such as the presence of old or infirm people, as illustrated in this road sign.



Symbol

A graphic element that communicates a concept such as a state, or country, represented by a flag.

Appropriation

When a designer incorporates or annexes an element from another design in a piece of work, this is known as appropriation.

Designers appropriate or incorporate elements from other works in their designs, perhaps drawing on the vast body of work that exists in creative visual disciplines such as fine art, design or advertising. Appropriation is often very direct, enabling a viewer to readily understand the intended message. The capacity for people to recognise appropriations makes it a very effective way to communicate. Some key forms of appropriation are described below and shown in examples on the following pages.

Imitation

Imitation is the copy, reproduction or adaptation of an existing design or image for use in a new design. Imitation provides a short cut to producing an effective design as the design decisions will already have been taken, tried and tested.

Adaptation

Modifying an original design to suit another purpose is known as adaptation. It allows a new design to benefit from original design elements although the content, the message or the medium may be different.

Parody

A design that mocks an original work through the use of humour or satire is a parody. The use of humour often changes or subverts the original meaning.

Paradox

An idea or statement that includes conflicting ideas; paradoxes in design often inject humour or force the viewer to question what they see.

Distortion

An optical phenomenon or deformation of a shape or object. Visual distortion sees the designer change the appearance of an object to make it less recognisable or even to form a different object from it.

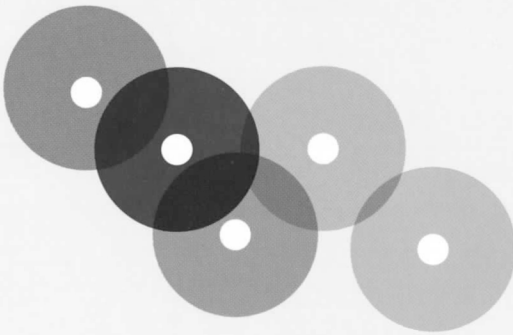
Homage

Designers can express their honour or respect for a particular work, artist or genre by incorporating it into, or using it as the basis for, their own work.

Visual metaphors

A visual metaphor refers to something it typically does not denote in order to imply a similarity to something else.

This new meaning implied by a visual metaphor is often created by the context in which the visual device is present. As such, for a visual metaphor to work (for the viewer to perceive a specific meaning, in other words) requires the presence of shared knowledge or culture. The existence of a common pool of shared knowledge allows the designer to place subjective clues or references within the overall design and this can form the basis of the metaphor.



The logo for *Five Towns Make a City* features overlapping circles that provide a visual metaphor for unification.

Modification

Designs often tell a story in a frozen graphic instant. Modification is a key design aspect that transforms text and images in a way that instills them with meaning.

Intervention

By intervening in an image a design can modify its meaning, stress or significance, or change its focus entirely.

Omission

An omission is when something has been left out or forgotten. This can be used to channel the viewer's focus to the omitted element, or draw attention to the context within which the omission occurred.

Opposition

When two or more ideas compete, conflict or resist each other, opposition occurs. In graphic design, opposition is a form of juxtaposition whereby elements are positioned to create an antagonistic relationship between them due to their inherent contrasts – a devil image next to an angel image to represent good and evil, for example. Effective opposition relies on recognisable cultural or societal norms.

Two-in-ones

Graphic devices can communicate two messages at the same time within the context established by the design. This can be achieved by making subtle variations to easily recognisable objects. Their success depends upon the viewer's ability to recognise and interpret the contextual references, which means two-in-ones can be created to resonate with very specific target audiences.