

SECTION

8

COMPOSITION



# DESIGN FOR LIFE

## Relation of Forms

### INTRODUCTION

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In Section Seven you started exploring basic resources for drawing outlines. In this final section of Year One learning material, you will explore some advanced drawing techniques that will give your work more three-dimensional effects. You will learn about creating tones by applying rendering techniques that will help you achieve solidity in the drawings you make.

#### KEY IDEAS

Learning in this section will help you to gain knowledge of the following key ideas:

1. Light and dark tones can make drawings look 3Dimensional.
2. Tones can help define shapes and textures.
3. Shapes can work together to enhance work.
4. Marked contrasts in light and dark tones can make things stand out.
5. There are different techniques for rendering drawings into 3-D forms

## COMPOSE TONAL VALUES AND HUES FOR FORMS IN DRAWING

### Compose tonal values and hues for forms in drawing

In drawing, tonal values and hues play a very key role especially when creating forms, solidity or roundness. Tonal values and hues help artists to depict space in drawing compositions. Let us begin by understanding the term composition in drawing and some key principles of composition.

### Understanding Composition

The arrangement of visual elements in a piece of art or design is known as composition. It deals with the arrangement of elements in a design to achieve balance, harmony, and unity. Learning composition is crucial for making impactful and aesthetically pleasing art, whether it be in painting, photography, or design.

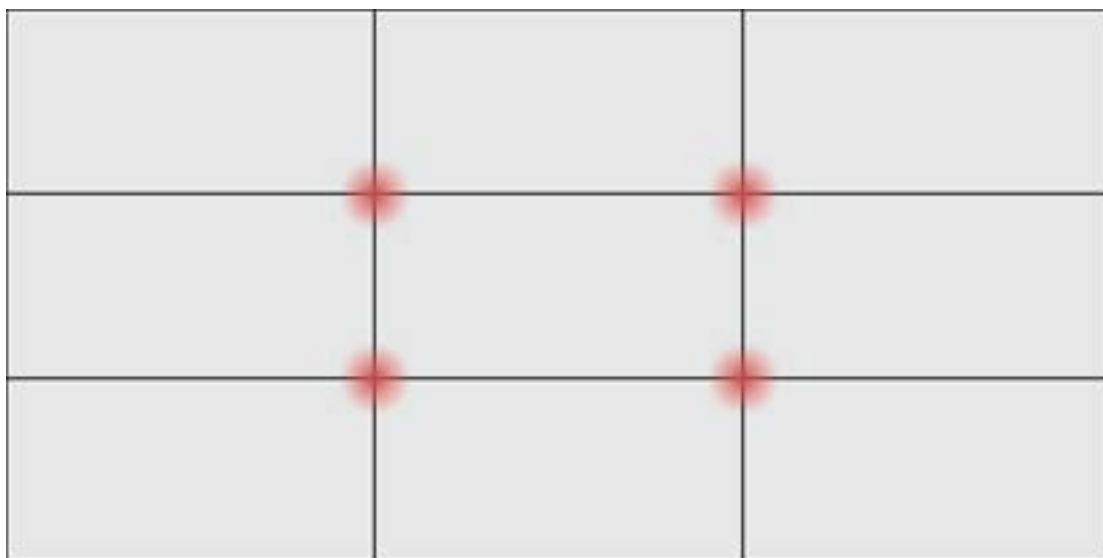
In art and design, fundamental composition principles help artists organise shapes, colours, and lines to produce an aesthetically pleasing image. These principles consist of balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, proportion, and unity. Each of these contributes to ensuring the elements function together in a unified manner. For example, balance guarantees that no section of the arrangement seems more weighted than another. Contrast highlights distinctions among elements, causing specific parts to be more noticeable, whereas emphasis directs the viewer's gaze to a specific area. Movement directs the viewer's gaze within the artwork, whereas proportion refers to the relative size and scale of elements in relation to one another.

Additionally, certain rules, such as the Rule of Thirds, Rule of Odds, and Rule of Space, assist in positioning objects within the composition to improve aesthetics and visual interest. By understanding these principles and rules, students can create more engaging and meaningful artwork. A well-composed piece captures attention, evokes emotion, and effectively communicates the artist's message.

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

### Rule of Thirds

Visual art, photography, and design use the Rule of Thirds as a fundamental principle to create well-balanced and aesthetically pleasing compositions. It requires splitting an image into a three-by-three grid, resulting in nine identical sections. Placement of key elements along these lines or at their intersections is believed to draw the viewer's eye and create naturally balanced compositions.



**Figure 8.1:** The rule of thirds in graphic design divides a canvas into three even rows and three even columns. The four central intersections where the lines meet are the key “hot spots” where you should aim to place your main subjects, as those are where people's attention immediately lands.

This guideline helps to create a well-proportioned and lively composition by steering clear of placing the subject right in the middle, which may appear motionless at times. Rather than placing the focal point in the centre, shifting it off-centre makes the artwork more interesting and visually appealing. The Rule of Thirds is a valuable tool



for composition students because it helps arrange visual components and direct the viewer's gaze through the artwork in a seamless manner.



**Figure 8.2:** If designing a poster, event flyer, or other graphic design piece, think about conveying the key points of information as close to the central intersections as possible. [Coronavirus icons by Monkik].

## Key Principles of the Rule of Thirds

- 1. Grid Layout:** The image is divided into a three-by-three grid, creating a total of nine sections. The intersections of these lines are focal points where the eye naturally tends to focus.
- 2. Focal Points:** By placing key elements of the composition along these lines or at their intersections (often referred to as “power points”), artists and designers can create more interest and tension in their work. This often leads to a more dynamic and visually appealing composition.
- 3. Balance and Movement:** The Rule of Thirds encourages balance while allowing for movement within the composition. It helps avoid centring the subject, which can sometimes lead to a static and less engaging image.
- 4. Guiding the Viewer's Eye:** The placement of important elements along the grid helps guide the viewer's eye across the composition, making it easier to interpret and more enjoyable to look at.
- 5. Variety in Composition:** The rule allows for a variety of compositional frameworks, enabling artists to explore different arrangements and perspectives.

## Applications of Rule of Third

The Rule of Thirds is a fundamental principle for creating balanced and visually appealing compositions in visual art, photography, and design. It consists of splitting an image into a 3x3 grid, creating nine equal sections. Important components are positioned on these lines or where they meet, which are thought to attract the viewer's gaze and form harmoniously balanced arrangements.

This guideline assists in achieving a well-balanced and lively composition by refraining from positioning the subject in the exact middle, which may come across as unchanging. By placing the focal point away from the centre, the artwork becomes more attractive and captivating.

When students are studying composition, they can implement the Rule of Thirds to help them arrange visual components and direct the viewer's gaze smoothly and organically throughout the artwork.

## Rule of Odds

The Rule of Odds suggests that an odd number of elements in a composition is more visually appealing than an even number. This concept is effective because when there is an odd number of objects, the viewer's eye is drawn toward the central object, creating a sense of balance and focus.

For instance, in a painting or design, arranging three or five items in a group creates a more appealing contrast to two or four, which may seem too symmetrical or expected. The central object in an odd-number grouping naturally becomes the focal point, while the surrounding elements complement it.



**Fig. 8.3:** In this painting of an African village scene, the Rule of Odds can be observed in the group of people seated around the table. There are five figures, an odd number, which creates a sense of harmony and natural flow. This odd grouping draws the viewer's eye more effectively than if there were an even number, making the composition feel dynamic yet balanced. Similarly, the three huts and the arrangement of trees also follow this principle.

This guideline is especially helpful in still life or landscape composition, as placing items in odd numbers can boost visual appeal and produce a more harmonious outcome.

### Key Points of the Rule of Odds:

1. **Visual Interest:** Odd-numbered groupings (e.g., 1, 3, 5) often create a focal point, drawing attention differently than even-numbered groupings, which can appear static or overly balanced.
2. **Dynamic Composition:** An odd number of elements tends to lead to a more dynamic and engaging composition. This can create movement within a piece, leading the viewer's eye around the artwork in a more interesting way.
3. **Focal Points:** In a grouping of three, for instance, one element can serve as the focal point, while the other two can support or complement it, creating a natural hierarchy.
4. **Variety and Harmony:** The use of odd numbers allows for a blend of variety and harmony. Multiple elements can be unified through shape, colour, or theme, but their arrangement in odd numbers can enhance visual intrigue.

The rule applies not only to the arrangement of objects but also to various artistic elements like colour, shapes, and lines in a composition.

### Exceptions and Considerations

Although the Rule of Odds can improve various designs, it is not a strict rule. Successful compositions can effectively utilise even numbers, depending on the overall concept and design intention. The emotional or conceptual resonance of a piece might dictate whether to adhere to this rule or to break it. The Rule of Odds is a helpful guideline for artists and designers aiming to make more interesting and lively compositions, but it should be used with an awareness of its context and possible exceptions.

### Rule of Space

The Principle of Space is a design and art guideline that emphasises the efficient utilisation of negative space, also called white space, in a composition. It highlights the importance of giving sufficient space around the focal points to improve clarity, flow, and overall visual attractiveness.

For instance, if a person is drawn looking to the right, the space in front of them should be left open to give the impression of where they are looking. Similarly, if a car is moving to the left, there should be space ahead of the car to imply the direction of motion. This rule helps to create a sense of narrative and encourages the viewer to consider what might happen next in the scene. It also ensures that the composition does not feel cramped or constrained, making the artwork more dynamic and balanced.



**Figure 8.4:** An Example of Rule of Space

## Key Principles of the Rule of Space

1. **Emphasising the Subject:** Ample negative space is provided around an object or subject you can draw attention to it and make it the focal point of the composition. This allows viewers to appreciate the subject without distractions.
2. **Creating Balance:** Space creates a sense of balance in a composition. A well-placed object in a spacious area can feel more grounded and can balance other elements within the design or artwork.
3. **Improving Readability:** In graphic design, particularly in web design and typography, using space effectively can enhance readability and user experience. It prevents clutter and helps the viewer to focus on important content.
4. **Suggesting Movement and Direction:** The Rule of Space can also be applied to suggest movement or direction. For example, in a photograph of a person looking or pointing off-frame, leaving space in front of them can create a sense of anticipation or direction.
5. **Creating Atmosphere:** Negative space can establish a mood or atmosphere within a piece. For example, an image with substantial empty space can evoke feelings of solitude or simplicity.

## Applications of Rule of Space

Photographers frequently use the Rule of Space to compose images by creating empty space in the direction the subject is facing or moving, to strengthen the narrative portrayed in the image. In designs for both print and layouts, proper spacing among elements, text, and images can lead the viewer's gaze and create a polished, professional appearance. Artists can use negative space to achieve surreal or abstract effects, encouraging the viewer's imagination to play a role in the interpretation.

Although the Rule of Space encourages negative space, excessive open space can result in feelings of disconnection or isolation. Finding the right balance is crucial to conveying the desired message or aesthetic. The Rule of Space's effectiveness depends on the context and the artist's intent, just like other compositional rules. At times, a more crowded arrangement can express vitality or disorder, which may be better suited for the work.

The Rule of Space is a useful technique in design and art that promotes the strategic use of empty space to improve clarity, symmetry, and atmosphere. Providing subjects with sufficient breathing room within a composition helps artists and designers to produce more captivating and impactful pieces. Nevertheless, one must always factor in the artwork's underlying intention and message before implementing this guideline.

By acquiring a firm grasp of these principles, students in their final years of high school can produce art that is not only captivating and well-structured but also powerful, allowing them to communicate their innovative concepts with efficiency.

## RENDERING

The fundamentals of rendering (shading) are light and shade. It is important to understand how light and shadow can bring your art to life to produce three-dimensional artwork that is realistic. Rendering is not exclusively reserved for pen, pencil and paper, it is done in a variety of mediums, including digital art and oil paints. Each medium has its own unique properties and finishing.

### Rendering Techniques

There are many different ways to create artistic representations, and they vary depending on what constitutes a conventional and digital portrayal. Rendering art may be defined as an artistic interpretation or portrayal of a location or item, usually in a different format from the original picture. There are various rendering techniques to make drawings look or appear three-dimensional. Some of these techniques include:

- Blending
- Stippling
- Hatching
- Scumbling
- Scribbling

**Blending:** Blending involves establishing a seamless transition between light and shade, giving your art a smooth, realistic impression. This method is frequently employed in pencil, charcoal, oil painting and digital art, enabling artists to seamlessly mix colours to produce a gradient effect. Patience is essential for achieving excellent transitions.

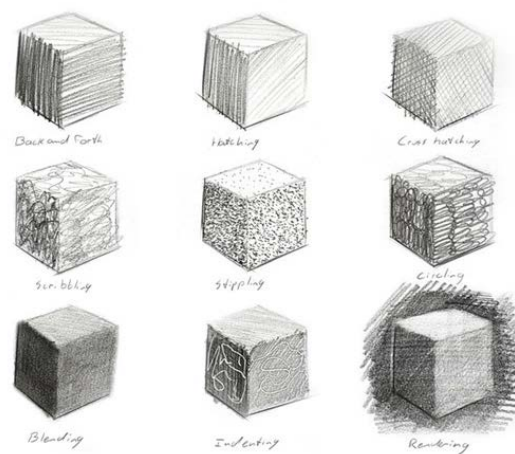
**Hatching:** Hatching is achieved by sketching parallel lines that are equally spaced in a single direction. The space should become increasingly constrained as you finish the pattern. It will impart a vibrant and dark aspect to your image in addition to colouring it. Certain regions of your drawing are emphasised, while others appear darkened or have shadows when hatching is employed in one section.

**Scumbling:** Scumbling in art refers to a painting method that includes laying a thin layer of paint with a dry brush and a loose hand over a previous layer. The goal is to enable elements of the previously existing paint underneath to stay visible.



**Scribbling:** Scribbling is a representational technique in which artists employ scribbles to tint (light) and shade (dark) a drawing. It is implemented to imbue the illustration with depth and texture. Artists employ scribbling as a leisurely activity due to its rapidity and lack of explicit direction. The item outline is surrounded by scribbles that are repeated, and it is composed of arbitrary and abstract lines.

**Stippling:** Stippling is the process of applying dots to darken an object and using fewer dots with intervals in between to create a lighter portion. Stippling enhances the design's texture, generates shadows, and increases the item's perceived size. This method is suitable for beginners,



**Figure 8.5:** Some rendering Techniques

### Activity 8.1 Understanding the concept of composition in drawing

As an individual or group of young artists you have been tasked to deliver a presentation on the concept of composition at the art and culture festival in your district. How would you be successful in achieving this task?

**The following guideline could be of help.**

**Try it:**

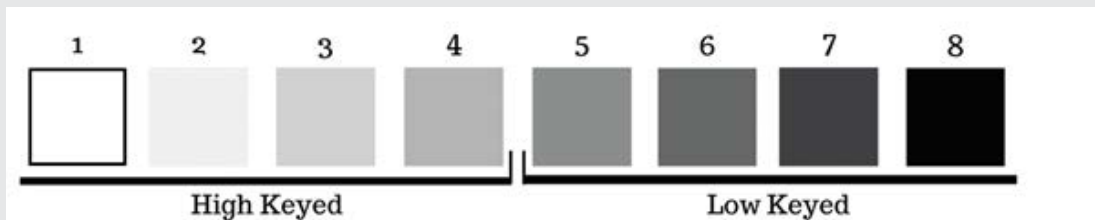
1. Search through this learning material or any other online source for the meaning or concept of composition in drawing (Ensure to compare the meaning from at least 3 different sources).
2. Reflect on the concept from your findings and write down your understanding of it.
3. Search through this learning material and other online sources to identify and read about some of the key principles of composition such as rule of thirds, rule of odds, etc.
4. Organise your findings into a brief hand note.
5. Present your notes in class for discussion.
6. Use the feedback from the discussion to improve and finalise your hand notes.

7. Proofread the final documents to ensure language quality and clarity.
8. Research your presentation to master it.

### Activity 8.2: Understanding the concepts Tone and Value

**Do this individually and share your knowledge with your peers:**

1. Search for the meaning of TONE and VALUE from a dictionary or online sources.
2. Compare the explanations from your search to that of this learning material.
3. Reflect on the importance of TONE and VALUE in drawing and composition.
4. Critically observe the TONAL VALUE scale in **Figure 8.6**
5. Reflect to identify at least 4 relevance of TONE and VALUE in composition and drawing.
6. Organise your reflections and ideas into a good essay. (NB: Your essay should include the concepts of tone and value, tonal value, the relevance of tonal value and how they are applied in drawing and composition).
7. Present your reflective notes to peers for review.
8. Use the feedback from your peers to improve on the reflective notes and file for future references.



**Figure 8.6:** Tonal Value Scale

### Try this Challenge alone:

- Select any drawing medium of your choice
- Identify and select at least 6 other rendering techniques from your personal exploration or online sources.
- Create a 10 panel Tonal Value scale for each of the 6 rendering techniques.
- Try to develop other TONAL VALUE scales by exploring different media
- Present your value scale to peers for review and feedback.
- Share your practical skills and experiences gained through this activity

## COMPOSE TONAL VALUES AND HUES FOR FORMS IN DRAWING

Drawing is more than just lines on paper; it's about creating the illusion of depth and form. To bring your drawings to life, you need to understand two important elements: tonal values and hues.

Tonal values refer to the lightness or darkness of a colour or shade. Imagine a black and white photograph. Even without colour, you can see depth and form because of the different shades of grey—from the lightest whites to the darkest blacks. In drawing, using a range of tonal values helps you show light and shadow, making your objects look three-dimensional.

### Understanding Hues

A hue is simply the name of a colour—like red, blue, or yellow. Hues are important when you add colour to your drawings. Different hues can express different moods or feelings. For example, warm hues like red and orange can make a drawing feel energetic, while cool hues like blue and green can make it feel calm.

### Combining Tonal Values and Hues

When you combine tonal values with hues, you create depth and interest in your drawings. Here's how:

1. Start by lightly sketching your forms' basic shapes. Use a pencil to outline where the light and shadows will fall.
2. In your drawing, determine where the light is coming from. This will help you determine which parts of the form are lighter and which are darker.
3. Gradually add shades to your drawing. Press lightly for lighter areas and harder for darker areas. This creates contrast and makes your drawing look more realistic.
4. If you're using colour, choose hues that suit the mood of your drawing. Remember to vary the tonal values within each hue to show light and shadow.
5. Use blending tools like your finger, a cloth, or a blending stump to smooth out harsh lines between different tonal values. This makes the transition between light and dark areas look natural.

### Tips for Effective Use of Tonal Values and Hues

1. **Practice Shading:** Fill a page with squares or circles and practice shading them from light to dark. This will help you control your pencil pressure.
2. **Study Real Objects:** Look at objects around you and observe how light creates shadows and highlights. Try to replicate this in your drawings.
3. **Use a Limited Colour Palette:** When starting with hues, use only a few colours. This helps you focus on tonal values without getting overwhelmed by too many hues.
4. **Experiment with Different Mediums:** Try using charcoal, coloured pencils, or pastels to see how they affect tonal values and hues in your work. Learning

the use of tones and colours can greatly improve your skills in your drawn art and even make them look real. Through following these techniques, you will enhance your artistic skills as well as draw stunning images. Hey, do not forget the fact that art is a process, and every single brush being painted on the canvas is getting one closer to be the best artist.

### 5. **Composition and Rendering of Still-life Drawing**

Drawing allows us to capture the beauty of the world around us, even in the simplest objects. One of the foundational practices in art is still-life drawing, where artists depict a collection of inanimate objects. Understanding how to compose and render a still-life can greatly enhance your artistic skills.

### 6. **Understanding Composition**

Composition is the arrangement of visual elements in a work of art. A good composition guides the viewer's eye and creates harmony within the artwork.

## Steps to Compose a Still-Life Drawing:

1. **Select Objects:** Choose items that interest you and work well together. Common objects include fruits, vases, books, and fabrics.
2. **Arrange the Objects:** Experiment with different setups. Move the objects around until you find an arrangement that feels balanced and interesting.
3. **Consider the Background:** A plain background keeps the focus on the objects, while a textured or patterned one can add context.

# RENDERING YOUR STILL-LIFE

## What is Rendering?

Rendering is the process of adding detail, light, shadow, and texture to your drawing to make it look realistic.

### Techniques for Effective Rendering

1. **Light Source Identification:**
  - a. **Determine Direction:** Decide where the light is coming from in your scene.
  - b. **Consistent Shading:** All shadows and highlights should align with this light source.
2. **Shading and Tonal Values:**
  - a. **Gradient Shading:** Use a range of tones from light to dark to show form.
  - b. **Contrast:** Strong contrasts can make your drawing more dramatic.
3. **Texture Representation:**
  - a. **Surface Qualities:** Show whether an object is smooth, rough, shiny, or dull.
  - b. **Technique Variation:** Use different pencil strokes for different textures (e.g., cross-hatching for rough surfaces).



#### 4. **Blending:**

- a. **Smooth Transitions:** Use blending tools like stumps or soft cloth to soften edges between tones.
- b. **Avoid Over-Blending:** Keep some texture in your shading to maintain interest.

## Steps to Render Your Drawing

### 1. **Light Sketching:**

- a. **Outline Shapes:** Begin with light lines to map out each object.
- b. **Proportions:** Ensure the size and placement of objects are accurate.

### 2. **Detailed Drawing:**

- a. **Refine Shapes:** Add details to the outlines, such as curves and edges.
- b. **Internal Details:** Sketch in patterns or features within the objects.

### 3. **Apply Shading:**

- a. **Start Lightly:** Begin shading the lighter areas first.
- b. **Build Up Tones:** Gradually add darker tones where shadows fall.

### 4. **Highlighting:**

- a. **Eraser Use:** Lift graphite with an eraser to create highlights.
- b. **White Pencil:** On toned paper, use a white pencil to add bright highlights.

It is worth it to try to master a stilled composition and rendering of still-life drawings before one continues in their art career. Drawing things in a correct manner and intense uses of the techniques of shading bring depth into the work. Remember, practice is essential. Depending on the amount of drawing you want to do, your competency level increases with practise.

### Activity 8.3 Composition, drawing and rendering of still-life objects

**Do this individually and share your knowledge with your peers:**

1. Take a walk around your community or immediate environment at school or home.
2. Identify and pick found objects (e.g., containers, boxes, seeds, fruits, etc.).
3. Arrange the found objects in a pleasing but challenging composition (**NB: Apply the key principles of composition such the rule of odds in your arrangements**)
4. Critically observe the contours of the objects arranged taking notes of their unique shapes, forms, textures, etc.
5. Apply the skills you acquired through exploration of drawing outlines and rendering techniques to draw and render the objects on any suitable medium or surface. (NB: ensure you apply gradation of tonal values to achieve an effect of the solidity of the forms on the 2D Surface.)
6. Present your finished drawing to peers for feedback.

### Take this Challenge on your own

1. Try several outline drawings and rendering of different still-life compositions using different types of rendering techniques
2. Give suitable titles or themes to your finished still-life compositions
3. Take photographs of your finished still-life drawings and upload them to your professional social media platforms.
4. Take note of the comments from your followers on your social media and use that to improve on your still-life drawing skills.

# REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define the terms tone, light, and dark
2. How does using different tones help to create the illusion of depth in a drawing?
3. In what ways can shading be used to define the texture of an object?
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of a drawing that uses strong contrasts between light and dark tones.
5. How do the elements of design such as line, shape, and tone work together to create a sense of volume in a drawing?

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://youtu.be/GX9tJShYmeU>
- [https://youtu.be/9tiRoQv\\_2as](https://youtu.be/9tiRoQv_2as)
- <https://youtu.be/3inWtEi4HTU>
- <https://youtu.be/IOdSVOC1qXU>
- <https://youtu.be/XJRxC0B4Giw>
- <https://youtu.be/723LopMcLGg>

## REFERENCES

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- Roberts, I. (2007). Mastering composition: Techniques and principles to dramatically improve your painting. Penguin.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Asymmetry</b>	A balanced composition where elements are not mirrored but still harmonious.
<b>Background</b>	The part of a composition that appears farthest from the viewer.
<b>Balance</b>	The distribution of visual weight in a composition.
<b>Composition</b>	The arrangement of visual elements in an artwork.
<b>Contrast</b>	The use of opposing elements such as light vs. dark or smooth vs. rough.
<b>Depth</b>	The illusion of space and three-dimensionality in a composition.
<b>Emphasis</b>	A technique that draws the viewer's attention to a specific part of the composition.
<b>Focal Point</b>	The primary area of interest in a composition.
<b>Foreground</b>	The part of a composition that appears closest to the viewer.
<b>Framing</b>	Using elements within the composition to frame the focal point.
<b>Golden Ratio</b>	A compositional rule where elements are arranged based on a ratio of approximately 1:1.618 to create aesthetically pleasing results.
<b>Grid Layout</b>	A compositional structure where elements are aligned based on a grid.
<b>Hierarchy</b>	The arrangement of elements to show their order of importance.
<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Placing contrasting elements next to each other for visual or conceptual effect.
<b>Leading Lines</b>	Lines within a composition that lead the viewer's eye towards a focal point.
<b>Movement</b>	A technique that guides the viewer's eye through the composition.
<b>Negative Space</b>	The empty or open space around objects in a composition.
<b>Overlapping</b>	A technique to create depth by placing one object in front of another.
<b>Pattern</b>	A repeated decorative design.
<b>Perspective</b>	The technique of representing three-dimensional space on a flat surface.
<b>Positive Space</b>	The space occupied by objects in a composition.
<b>Proportion</b>	The relationship of sizes between different elements in a composition.



<b>Repetition</b>	The use of the same or similar elements throughout a composition.
<b>Rhythm</b>	A visual tempo or beat often achieved through repetition.
<b>Rule of Thirds</b>	A compositional technique where an image is divided into thirds to place key elements along the lines or intersections.
<b>Scale</b>	The size of an object in relation to other objects in the composition.
<b>Symmetry</b>	A balanced arrangement where elements mirror each other.
<b>Tension</b>	A visual or conceptual conflict within a composition that engages the viewer.
<b>Variety</b>	The use of different elements to create visual interest.
<b>Unity</b>	The sense of harmony and completeness in a composition.

## Acknowledgements



Ghana Education  
Service (GES)



## List of Contributors

Name	Institution
Benjamin Quarshie	College of Education, Mampong
Prof. Eric Francis Eshun	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
Agatha Essel	New Juaben SHS
Yaw Boateng Ampadu	Prempeh College, Kumasi