



// General Design Terms

What is Symbolism?

Symbolism is the use of images, colors, or shapes to convey deeper meanings. In branding, it helps communicate values, emotions, or ideas without using words.

What is Semiotics?

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how they communicate meaning. It helps designers create visuals that align with cultural and psychological interpretations.

What is Dynamism?

Dynamism refers to a sense of movement, energy, or action in design. It is often created using composition, color, and typography to make visuals feel engaging and expressive.

What is Hierarchy?

Hierarchy is the arrangement of design elements in order of importance. It helps guide the viewer's eye to key information through size, color, contrast, and spacing.

What is Contrast?

Contrast is the visual difference between elements, such as light vs. dark, bold vs. thin, or different colors. It helps with readability, structure, and emphasis.

What is Negative Space?

Negative space (or white space) is the empty or unused space around design elements. It helps with clarity, balance, and focus, and can sometimes form hidden symbols (e.g., the arrow in the FedEx logo).

What are Assets?

Assets are the individual design elements, or 'deliverables' used in a project, such as logos, icons, images, color palettes, or brand guidelines. These assets ensure consistency across all branding materials.

What are Revisions?

Revisions are changes or refinements made to a design based on client feedback. They help fine-tune the work to better align with the project's goals. The number of revisions included in a project is usually agreed upon in advance.

What is an Abstract Design?

An abstract design focuses on shapes, forms, and compositions rather than literal representations. It often conveys emotions, concepts, or moods rather than specific objects or imagery.

What is Minimalism / Maximalism?

Minimalism is a design approach that uses only essential elements, removing unnecessary details to create a clean and focused composition. It often relies on simplicity, negative space, and clarity, 'Maximalism' being the opposite.

// Logo & Brand Terminology

What is Branding and Brand Identity?

Branding is the process of shaping how people perceive a business through design, messaging, and customer experience. A brand identity is the visual and strategic system that defines a brand, including logos, colors, typography, and imagery. Together, they create a cohesive and recognizable presence that distinguishes a brand from its competitors.

What is a Hero Mark?

A hero mark is the primary logo or symbol that represents a brand. It is the most recognizable element and is often used in key placements like websites and marketing materials.

What is an Ident?

An ident (short for "identification") is a short animation or design that represents a brand, often used in video content like TV channel intros or branded motion graphics.

What is a Monogram?

A monogram is a logo made from one or more initials, often stylized or intertwined (e.g., Louis Vuitton's "LV" or Chanel's "CC").

What is a Wordmark?

A wordmark, or logotype, is a logo made entirely of text, often using custom typography (e.g., Google, Coca-Cola).

// Typography & Typesetting Terms

What is Typography / Typeface?

Typography is the style, arrangement, and appearance of text. A typeface is a specific letter design (e.g., Helvetica), and a font is a specific version of that typeface (e.g., Helvetica Bold).

What is a Typesetting?

A typeset is the way text is arranged and formatted in a design, including font choices, spacing, and alignment.

What is Readability?

Readability refers to how easy it is to read and understand text, influenced by font size, contrast, spacing, and sentence structure.

What is Legibility?

Legibility is how easy it is to recognize individual letters and words in a typeface. High legibility ensures that text can be read quickly without confusion.

What is Kerning, Tracking & Letterspacing?

Kerning adjusts the space between individual letters. Tracking adjusts the space between all letters in a word or paragraph. Letterspacing is another term for tracking, referring to the uniform spacing between characters.

What is Line Height & Leading?

Line height is the vertical space between lines of text. Leading (pronounced "ledding") is the traditional term for line height, originating from strips of lead used in typesetting.

What is a Baseline?

A baseline is the invisible line that text sits on. Different fonts have different relationships to the baseline, affecting alignment and spacing.

What are Orphans & Widows?

An orphan is a single word or short line left at the top of a new page or column. A widow is a short line or word left at the end of a paragraph or column. Both can create awkward visual breaks.

// Digital & Print Design Terms

What are Pixels (Rasterized)?

Pixels are tiny squares that make up digital images. Rasterized graphics (like JPEGs and PNGs) are made of pixels, meaning they lose quality when scaled up.

What are Vectors (Paths)?

Vectors are graphics made up of paths instead of pixels. This allows them to be infinitely scalable without losing quality, making them ideal for logos and illustrations. Common vector formats include SVG, AI, and EPS.

What are RGB, CMYK, and Hex Colors?

RGB (Red, Green, Blue) is a color model used for digital screens, where colors are created by mixing light.

CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black) is a color model used for printing, where colors are made by layering ink.

Hex codes are six-digit codes (e.g., #FF5733) that define colors for web design and digital applications.

What are Pixels Per Inch (PPI) & Dots Per Inch (DPI)?

Pixels Per Inch (PPI) refers to the resolution of digital images. A higher PPI means more detail and clarity. 1080p screens are usually close to 72ppi, while 4k or retina displays require 144ppi for sharp imagery.

Dots Per Inch (DPI) is used for printing and refers to how many ink dots are printed per inch. Higher DPI results in sharper print quality, but 300 is standard.