

## Discovering the Elements of Design: Shape, Form, Space, Texture

### 4-H Line and Design Project

Part of the Family and Consumer Sciences 4-H Project Series

**Project Outcomes:** -Understand elements of design: **Shape, form, space, texture.**

- Label the elements of design (space, line, mass, shape, texture) in a specific works of art, crafts, graphic design or interior design.
- Label positive and negative space in a specific work of art.

**Project Indicator:** Complete the project exercises in activity including identifying elements of design in specific pieces.

Look around you at objects that surround you. Everything you can see has a design. When you describe something you see, you use words that tell about the colors, lines, shapes, forms, textures, and spaces. This activity will focus on shape, form, space, and texture.

### SHAPE

Shape is defined as the contour of an object (silhouette) that is 2-dimensional. Shapes are made by connecting lines. Shapes are geometric such as circles, squares, triangles, or free form lines.

- Look at the objects around you and describe their basic shapes.
- Are they one shape or are they a combination of many shapes?

After looking at several objects, you will begin to understand how shapes are used to form objects. If you are interested in drawing or painting, recognizing the shapes that you see in an object will help you to improve your finished design. Line creates 2-dimensional or flat shapes.

#### Examples of Shapes



Triangle      Circle      Free form

#### EXERCISE:

Identify the shapes within the objects below or as a free form object:

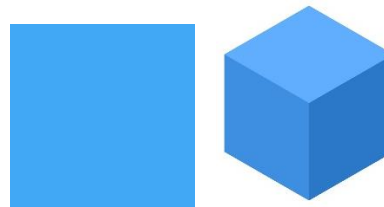
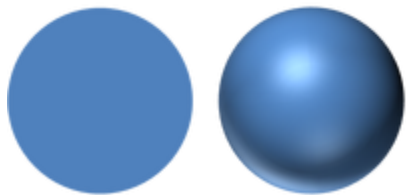


### FORM

When shapes are three dimensional, we call them forms.

A circle is a shape; a ball is a form.

A square is a shape; a cube is a form.



A drawing is a flat shape; a sculpture is a three-dimensional (3-D) form.



(Degas, Little Dancer)

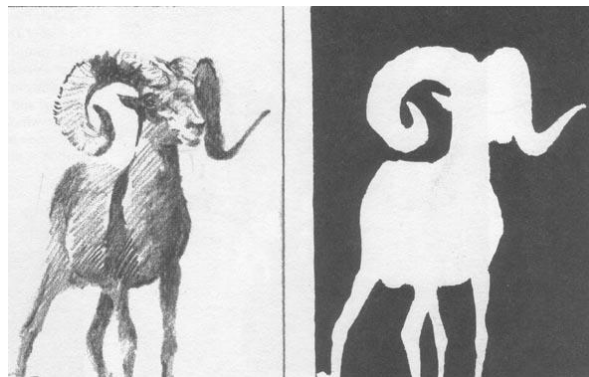
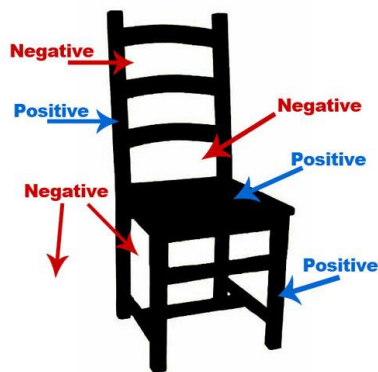
The world we live is made up of forms.

When you are remodeling your room, you are probably moving around forms like chairs, lamps, desks, and pillows.

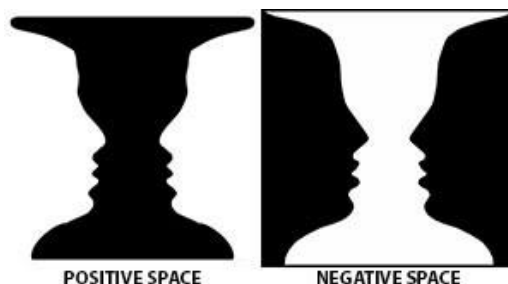
## SPACE

Space refers to the area that a shape or form occupies. It also refers to the background against which we see the shape or form. Space can be defined as positive and negative. *Positive Space* refers to the actual shapes or forms (the object). *Negative Space* is the empty space between the shapes or forms

The relationships between the positive and negative shapes help the brain understand what is being seen.



The positive space is the animal. The negative space is what is in black here.



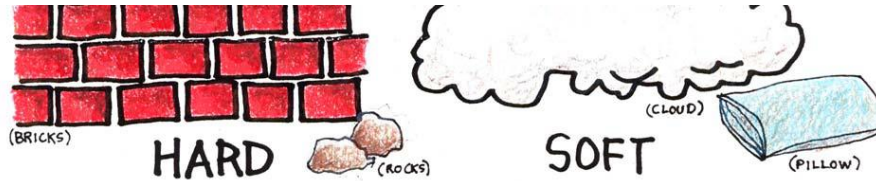
Examine these unique images of positive and negative space. Do you see the vase (on the left) as the positive space and that the negative space of the vase (on the right) are profiles of two people?

**EXERCISE 1:** Find an object and make a drawing of the object. Identify the positive and negative space in the drawing.

**TEXTURE**

Texture is the surface quality of an item. It's how something feels when touched or looks like it would feel if touched. Sandpaper is rough. Velvet is smooth. Search for ways to add texture to your projects. Texture adds variety and interest.

**Examples of Texture**



**DULL**



**SHINY**



**PLUSH**



**COARSE**

**EXERCISE 2:** Describe the textures in this room and describe the overall feel effect of the textures. Choose from the following terms: Soft, Coarse, Crisp, Shiny, Dull, Delicate, Plush, Bulky, Stiff, Heavy, Light.



Wallpaper texture: \_\_\_\_\_ Lace Tablecloth texture: \_\_\_\_\_

Overhead light texture: \_\_\_\_\_ Wood of furniture texture: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall feel of room (choose 2 from: cozy, formal, warm, cool) Justify answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Applying What You Have Learned

Now that you have learned about the elements of design: shape, form, space, and texture, identify/describe these elements using terms in this lesson.



Native American Basket

Describe:

Shape \_\_\_\_\_

Form \_\_\_\_\_

Space (positive and negative)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Texture \_\_\_\_\_



3-Dimensional Sculpture of Van Gogh's  
Sunflower Painting

Describe:

Shape \_\_\_\_\_

Form \_\_\_\_\_

Space(positive and negative)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Texture \_\_\_\_\_

By: Sue Byrd, Professor Emeritus, University of Tennessee at Martin; Sources: thevirtualinstructor.com; The ABCs of Art: awesomeartists.com; Design Exploring the Elements & Principles, Iowa State University Extension

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.  
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.  
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.