The Basics of Design
by Sarah Brown
1. The Color Wheel

This is a color wheel, it is a useful tool when creating color schemes for your designs. There are different ways you can use a color wheel to create a harmonious color palette.

I will use a basic color wheel to demonstrate different color schemes. You may want to use a more complicated tool to get a broader range of colors, here’s a website I find useful when creating my color palettes:

http://www.colourlovers.com/
2. Color Temperature

Warm and Cool Colors

Colors between red and yellow are warm colors. These colors tend to have energy and advance in space.

Colors between purple and green are cool colors. These tend to be more calm and recede in space.
3. Choosing a Color Palette

Monochromatic Color Scheme

A monochromatic color scheme consists of one color and its tints or shades. Tints are a variation of a color with white added, and shades have black added.

Monochromatic colors can be soft and soothing, they are easy on the eyes, but they are lacking in contrast. Use this color scheme for soft and elegant design, avoid it if you want your design to pop and be high in contrast.
4. Choosing a Color Palette

Primary Color Scheme

These are your primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. These cannot be created by mixing other colors, and all other colors and created by mixing these.

These are the most vibrant colors. This type of color scheme works best if you don’t mix different levels of tints and shades. Keep all 3 colors on the same level of vibrancy. If you want to add white or black to one color, add the same amount to the other two colors.
5. Choosing a Color Palette

Secondary Color Scheme

These are secondary colors, purple, orange, and green. They are made by mixing two primary colors. They are slightly less vibrant than primary colors.

This type of color scheme also works best if you keep all 3 colors on the same level of vibrancy. Again, if you want to add white or black to one color, add the same amount to the other colors.
6. Choosing a Color Palette

Complimentary Color Scheme

Colors that are opposite of each other on the color wheel are complimentary colors. This color scheme creates contrast and vibrancy, and can help your design pop.

This color scheme works best if you use a warm color against a cool color. Using complementary colors for both text and background should be avoided because there is so much contrast that it becomes hard to read. Use this scheme for elements & imagery and try setting text in white or black, or one of the colors against a white/neutral background.
7. Choosing a Color Palette

Analogous Color Scheme

Colors that are next to each other on the color wheel are analogous. Similar to a monochromatic color scheme, this type of color scheme can be soft and harmonious because the colors are not very different from each other. This color scheme works best if you choose 3-5 colors. Avoid combining both warm and cool colors.
8. Choosing a Color Palette

Triadic Color Scheme

A triadic color scheme is made of three colors evenly spaced around the color wheel. Triadic colors work well together because they are harmonious but have a lot of contrast.
9. Choosing a Color Palette

Split Complementary Color Scheme

A split complementary color scheme is based off of one color, and two colors adjacent to its complementary color. It offers a lot of contrast with more variety than the regular complementary color scheme.

Try using warm colors against cool colors and avoid dull warm colors.
10. Choosing a Color Palette

Tetradic Color Scheme

A tetradic color scheme is based on two pairs of complementary colors. This color scheme can offer a lot of variety and contrast but it is difficult to balance.
11. Choosing a Color Palette

Square Color Scheme

A square color scheme is composed of four colors spaced evenly around the color wheel. Similar to a triadic color scheme, this can offer both harmony, variety, and contrast.
12. Choosing a Color Palette

Color Scheme Based on a Photo or Nature

If you are having trouble creating a color scheme or plan on using photography in your design you may want to make a color palette based on a photograph or something found in nature.

You will be tempted to use the eye dropper tool and select colors right from the photo, I have noticed that this often creates muddier colors than expected. This approach works best if you try to create your colors from scratch while looking at the photo.
13. Color Hierarchy

Create Balance

For most color schemes, you will need to form a hierarchy of your colors to create balance. If you don’t, your colors will be competing with each other and possibly be jarring to the viewer.

Choose your primary color. Which color do you want to use most? What will support it? What will you use for small accents?

A good way to figure how to compose the hierarchy of your colors is to experiment with them on a small design. Note how much you use each color and implement that hierarchy in your final design.
14. Fine-tuning Your Color Palette

The Grayscale Test

One way to test out your color palette is to view it in grayscale to see if there is enough contrast between colors and make changes if there isn’t. There are a couple ways of doing this. The first method is to place each color in Adobe Photoshop. From the menu at the top, select ‘Image’, ‘Mode’ and then ‘Grayscale’.

You can also use an iphone to view your colors in grayscale. To do this, open your camera. In the bottom right corner are three circles. Click on this and you will see a menu of camera filters. Select tonal and you will be able to see the different tones of your color palette.
15. Typography & Font Licenses

Downloading Fonts

It is tempting to choose a font from the library of pre-installed fonts on your computer. Many of these fonts are over-used and the internet offers a vast amount of fonts for FREE!

When downloading fonts, it is very important to read through the license to make sure you have the right to use that font. I usually choose a font that is free for both personal and commercial use to be on the safe side. I recommend using fontsquirrel for free fonts:

http://www.fontsquirrel.com/
What is the difference?

Before we get started, it's important to know the difference is between a typeface and a font. A typeface is a family of fonts, such as Helvetica, Georgia, or Times New Roman. Often people mistakenly call these fonts. Fonts are a particular weight of a typeface, such as bold or italic.

Nexa:
- Nexa Black
- Nexa Black Italic
- Nexa Heavy
- Nexa Heavy Italic
- Nexa xBold
- Nexa xBold Italic
- Nexa Bold
- Nexa Bold Italic
- Nexa Regular
- Nexa Regular Italic
- Nexa Book
- Nexa Book Italic
- Nexa Light
- Nexa Light Italic
- Nexa Thin
- Nexa Thin Italic
17. Choosing Typefaces

Display Type

Display typefaces are meant to be large in scale and read in small quantities. They are generally used for titles and decoration. Display typefaces can be expressive and exciting but they are difficult to read in large amounts. Because of this, you should never use display type for body copy.

Body Copy

What you are reading right now is body copy. Body copy is an amount of type consisting of multiple lines. When choosing a typeface for body copy, you want to make sure it is legible at a small size. The negative spaces inside the letterforms should be a generous size. Use serif or sans serif for body copy (see next slide).
18. Choosing Typefaces

Serif vs. Sans Serif

A Serif typeface has little ‘feet’ on the ends of each letter. A Sans Serif typefaces has no feet or embellishment. Both of these work well for body copy as well as titles and displays. Serif typefaces are easier to read in print, and Sans Serifs are easier to read on screen.

Slab Serif

A slab serif typeface has thick square serifs that are usually the same width as the rest of the letter. Slab Serifs work well as titles and display fonts, but they can also act as sub-headings and small bodies of text.
19. Type Combinations

Using One Family

One of the easiest ways to combine type is to use just one typeface or type family and combine different weights. This is an excellent way to create unity and harmony, while the different font weights maintain contrast.

**Bitecte Conectatur** — **Nexa Heavy**

**Iusdanto Omnis** — **Nexa Bold**

**Nexa Book**

Ovid qui volorem ut vollitatur sumque eos acerchil ium ipid molorepre et pelis moloreh endelib usapel elessitiis aut ea cusam, totatus sum aperion rectur, consectatem. Xim assunt, que lam adis ius dendaestrum qui berrora tiurest iusdanto omnis dem quat unt.

Bitecte conectatur, solupta spellaut parupta tuscia. Cerum ut apicium expliquo optatiorio est, ut ut omnient facepel landernat.

Uptat. Natquo quam, ipiendae illiquodis idundis de eume cum lab iliatis etus, alicatis de maximet illis autem fuga. Vid quae nobitia cusant hil maio quiatem dis aut ditios non peris autem harios ent undi doluputa simpelesto eos modis nietum liqui blam cupatatatur am, tota idesto eum
20. Combining Multiple Typefaces

Creating Contrast

When combining typefaces you want to consider contrast in order to differentiate your type. This is called hierarchy. An easy and common way to do this is by combining a serif and a sans serif. Pay attention to the small details of these typefaces. You do not want them to be too different stylistically.

Bitecte Conectatur _______________ Sans Serif

Ovid qui volorem ut vollitatur sumque eos acerchil ium ipid molorepre et pelis moloreh endelib usapel elessitiis aut ea cusam, totatus sum aperion rectur, consectatem. Xim assunt, que lam adis ius dendaestrum qui berrora tiurest iusdanto omnis dem quat unt.
Consed utes earit odipis quiatur aut min ex excero eum late con corecesequam endenesti dest maios aut earum asimus nisque et porumque pra sequare nis molor re rerum volescilis abo. Et fugit offic tem solupta senimpor anis sed quisitios se prest
21. Combining Multiple Typefaces

Adding a Third

Avoid using too many typefaces as this will make your design complicated and it will start to lose its unity and harmony. If you want to add a third typeface, try adding a slab serif. As a general rule, don’t use more than 3 typefaces.

You do not necessarily have to use your typefaces in the order that I have. Keep in mind that a slab serif might be difficult to read as body copy. Always use a legible and readable typeface for body copy.

Bitecte Conectatur — Sans Serif
Iusdanto Omnis — Slab Serif
Ovid qui volorem ut vollitatur sumque eos acerchil ium ipid molorepre et pelis moloreh endelib usapel elessitiis aut ea cusam, totatus sum aperion rectur, consectatem. Xim assunt, que lam adis ius dendaestrum qui berrora tiurest iusdanto omnis dem quat unt.

Bitecte conectatur, solupta spellaut parupta tuscia. Cerum ut apicium expliquo optatiorio est, ut ut omnient facepel landernat.

Uptat. Natquo quam, ipiendae illiquodis idundis de eume cum lab iliatis etus, alicatis de maximet illis autem fuga. Vid quae nobitia cusant hil maio quiatem dis aut ditios non peris autem harios ent undi dolupta simpelesto eos modis nietum liqui blam cuptatatur am, tota idesto eum
What is Hierarchy?

Hierarchy is an order of importance. It is how you tell the viewer to navigate the content. What do you want the viewer to read first? Second? Third?

Hierarchy can be created by making changes in scale, weight, typeface, color, and space.

Qui Volorem Ut 1st
Sumque Eos 2nd

Nosam aut molorio et dellorem. Es 3rd videles cipidi qui dolluptatem imagnitem eicitat urempore ex eicide pra quatur? Quiscientur rersperio. Nam velestis re laut fugiatem earum et ex exerior uptatum dolore, inulpa vitassit estiis quia cum repro omnim quam, si re aut autatus reium eossimo Evenit quidis cullupt iatiis suntemporem qui ut vendell autentur molut elendam quam hil il etur? Ut hitium et accab iliaes aditibus seditibus sitatem incto quo eat dicto quatia pligniatesed et apit et aut lit rempernam quo quid eosapiet aut plaboria qui ut aute volorit, alignia cor alit optatquo omnihillupta nonsequi beaquamet liquatur, sediaspel id qui veris moluptatus moluptas volupta quid mos eatur si as dolestiae dolum di dolestrum
23. Hierarchy: Scale

Type Scale

One approach to creating hierarchy is by using a type scale. In general, things of more importance should be bigger in size and weight than things of less importance. You may want to develop a type scale for consistancy.

For this presentation, I have used a typescale based on fourths. You can develop a typescale of a different number or simply choose your sizes intuitively—just remember, the viewer will notice bigger things first!

- **Heading 32pts**
  
  \[ x(3/4)= \]

- **Sub Heading 24pts**
  
  \[ x(3/4)= \]

- **Body Copy 18pts**
  
  \[ x(2/3)= \]
24. Hierarchy: Weight, Color, & Space

You can use different weights and fonts to create hierarchy. Things of more importance should be heavier in weight (bolder). You can also use italics to create hierarchy.

Color, line breaks, and negative space can also be used to draw more attention to something of importance.

Hierarchy is also achieved using the type combinations we just learned! Feel free to use and combine different approaches when creating hierarchy.

Nexa Heavy
Nexa Bold
Nexa Book

Emporpostis
Volecen

Licimpor emporpostis volecen feriasperum que dendit lam quis rempere pro dusandin.

Emporpostis
Volecen

Licimpor emporpostis volecen feriasperum que dendit lam quis rempere pro dusandia con remporeperae nonsenihil incito ma nus.
25. Line Length

Line length is the amount of words or characters in a line of type. If the line length is too long or too short it will exhaust the reader. You want to make your body type as easy to read as you can.

A couple good rules to use for line length are: use a minimum of 5-6 words. Aim for 52-70 characters, anything beyond that is too long.

Too Short

Ugiam et ut audae. Me dolupta delique volores equibus abor alit veria veleccullaut volorpora ipsam que nitem id molum ullanto taquam sum doluptis soluptatis soles des quae conseque exerchit lia volorum et offic. Arciant distia nossit odist, solupta tempore pelicsuntes cullab il eos alisqui int magni as simus que volupid mi, simus, test aut venim fugiam

Too Long

Ugiam et ut audae. Me dolupta delique volores equibus abor alit veria veleccullaut volorpora ipsam que nitem id molum ullanto taquam sum doluptis soluptatis soles des quae conseque exerchit lia volorum et.
26. Leading

Leading, or line spacing, is the amount of space between lines of type. Like line length, too much or too little can disrupt the readability or your text.

If you have longer lines of text you will want more leading to make it easier for the reader to travel back to the edge. If you ascenders and descenders are crossing, you need more leading.

Too Much

Um voluptate volores abor magnis volorrum quasit volor apis ime eum seria digenecte nam, quo et aut volupta quodigenist as conet qui re, andanduci saecatem.

Not Enough

Um voluptate volores abor magnis volorrum quasit volor apis ime eum seria digenecte nam, quo et aut volupta quodigenist as conet qui re, andanduci saecatem. Veliquis nem quostiae sim expero tecabo. Ita dit iuntent ioritat labo.
27. Alignment

Left Alignment
Alignment can be expressive and fun to experiment with but it can also affect readability. In general, left aligned and justified bodies of text are easiest to read because the reader has a consistent left edge to return to.

Justified Alignment
Justified alignment aligns text to both the right and the left. It can look great on a grid but it is difficult to use. If your line length is too short you will see ‘rivers’ or awkward gaps in the text. Avoid this by using a longer line length.

Centered Alignment
A centered alignment balances nicely, however you should only use it if your body of text is small. The ragged edge is difficult for the reader to return to, making large amounts of centered text difficult to read. Use center alignment for bodies of text that have no more than 5–6 lines.

Right Alignment
Like a centered alignment, right alignment is difficult to read because of the ragged left edge. Use right alignment for bodies of text that have 5–6 lines or less.
28. Using Photography

Licenses

You may want to use photography in your design. If you do not have your own camera, you can find photographs online. Please know you cannot simply find a picture on google and use it, this is ILLEGAL. Downloading imagery online is similar to downloading a font, it is very important that you find the license and read through it!

Stock Photos

Stock photos are photos you pay for. Stock photography sites generally have broader options and will give you an appropriate license. Generally these photos will not require that you give attribution to the original photographer or artist.

http://www.shutterstock.com/

Free Photos

There are many sites that have excellent FREE photography. One that you can use is Flickr. Please note that most licenses on flickr will require that you give attribution to the photographer or artist. You would do this directly in your piece. The license will have specific instructions for attribution, follow them carefully. I recommend saving a link to the original photo so that you can always give attribution.

https://www.flickr.com/

No Attribution Photos

You can also find free photos and avoid required attribution. You can google ‘no attribution photos’ to find a website, however one site that I know and trust is pixabay. If you find another website, please remember to read through your licenses.

https://pixabay.com/
Interested in Design?

Here are a few resources and tutorials you can check out to learn more!

http://www.lynda.com/Ina-Saltz/450560-1.html

http://www.lynda.com/Sean-Adams/519270-1.html

http://www.lynda.com/Mary-Jane-Begin/1583769-1.html

http://www.thinkingwithtype.com/

Works Cited


