IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Academic Success Center

Designing Effective Visual Tools

Writing & Communication Consultations

- Writing and communication consultations are **free** and include both virtual and in-person appointment options.

- Consultations use a peer mentoring model and can cover all stages of the composition process and assist with course assignments like papers, speeches, and more, as well as professional documents.

- For the most up-to-date information, please visit our website: **https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/writingsuccess**

Agenda

- Agenda
  - Visual rhetoric
  - Design principles
  - Application practice with various examples

*Check out additional resources through our website:
https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/visual-and-electronic-resources

Visual Rhetoric

- Visual rhetoric focuses on what we see to help us communicate meaning (inform, persuade, etc.).
  - Can refer to images or texts and how they are arranged or designed.
  - Examples: presentations, research posters, websites, portfolios, art, infographics
  - **How have you used visual rhetoric?**
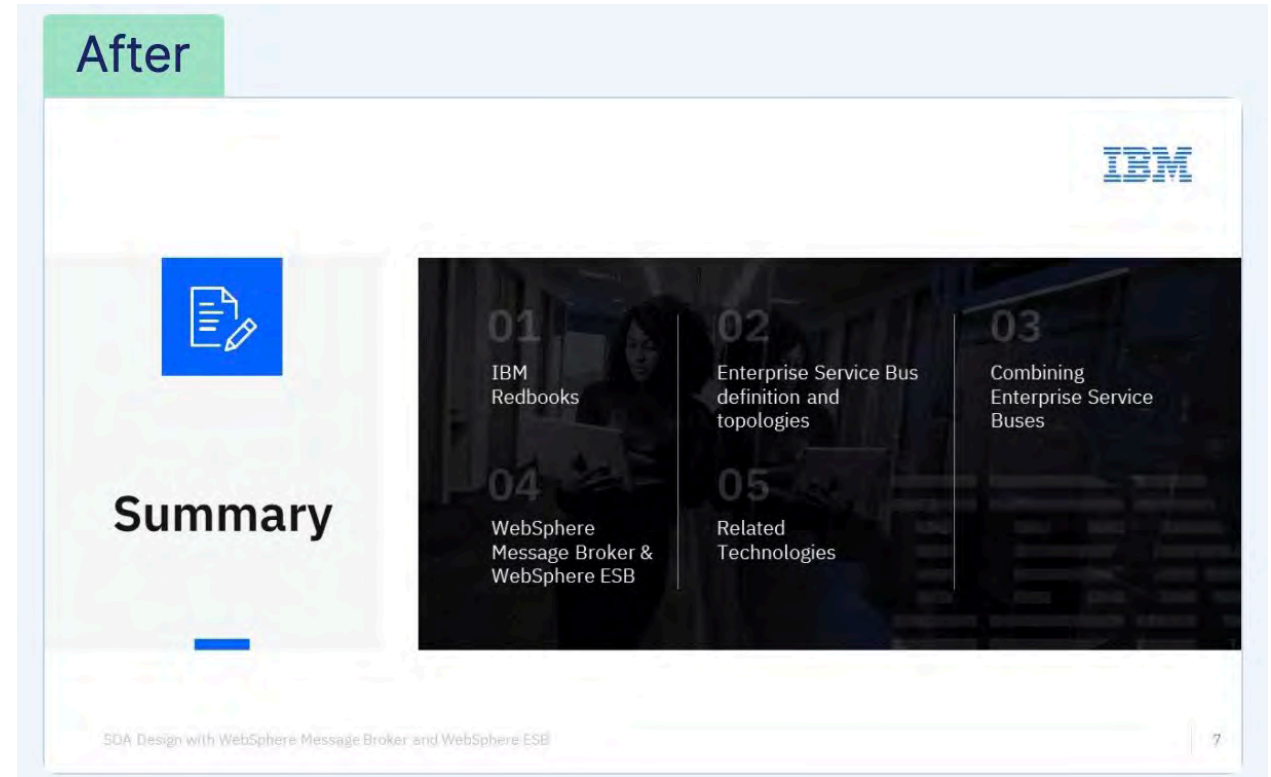
Basic Design Principles

1. Contrast
2. Repetition
3. Alignment
4. Proximity

(Williams, 2008)

Contrast

- Contrast = elements of a text are VERY DIFFERENT rather than the same or similar
- High or low contrast allows the communicator to **emphasize or deemphasize, respectively, certain elements of a design**.

Albinagorta, C. (2020, June 18). *Professional PowerPoint examples to upgrade your designs.* https://24slides.com/presentbetter/professional-powerpoint-design-examples/

Repetition

- Repetition = the use of the same element multiple times
- Repeating elements of a visual design can emphasize the relationship between elements that are repeated

(2018, Oct. 15). Say it again: The power of repetition in print. *Twiisted Media*. https://twiistedmedia.com/say-it-again-the-power-of-repetition-in-print/

Alignment

- Alignment = how elements on a page are arranged, whether horizontally or vertically

- Effective use of alignment can help control how a reader moves through the piece of communication.

- Alignment creates visual order.

Albinagorta, C. (2020, June 18). *Professional PowerPoint examples to upgrade your designs.* https://24slides.com/presentbetter/professional-powerpoint-design-examples/

Proximity

- Proximity = distance between elements of a text

- Having items close together indicates a close relationship.

- Having items far away communicates that those items are not closely related.

McGuire, S. (2019, Nov 21). *What are the 9 types of infographics?*
https://venngage.com/blog/9-types-of-infographic-template/

Additional Visual Elements

- Universal Design
- Font style and size
- Background
- White space (margins, spacing, etc.)

Universal Design

- The Center for Universal Design defines UD as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design" (as cited in Burgstahler, 2021).

- This means accessibility benefits everyone through increased clarity and inclusion.

- Example: closed captioning for videos, minimum font size of 24 on presentation slides, and dyslexia friendly sans serif fonts

Text Size

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?
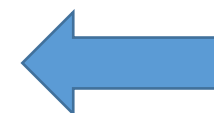
Which of these sizes is easiest to read?   ⬅ 24 font

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?

Which of these sizes is easiest to read?   ⬅ 12 font

HELPING CYCLONES SUCCEED
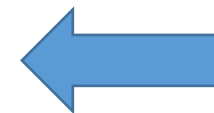
Text and Font

- Some fonts are difficult to read.
- Neutral fonts and avoiding all caps makes it easier to read.
- Best practice for slides is 6x6 rule: fewer than six bullet points with fewer than six words each

Background

- Brightly-colored backgrounds can take attention away from the speaker.

Background

- Darker backgrounds can be more relaxing.

White Space

- White space allows the eye to take in a message more easily.

- Using white space effectively can help your audience find the focal point of each slide.

- When possible, consider adding blank slides into your presentation when there is not a visual element needed.

The layers of a forest
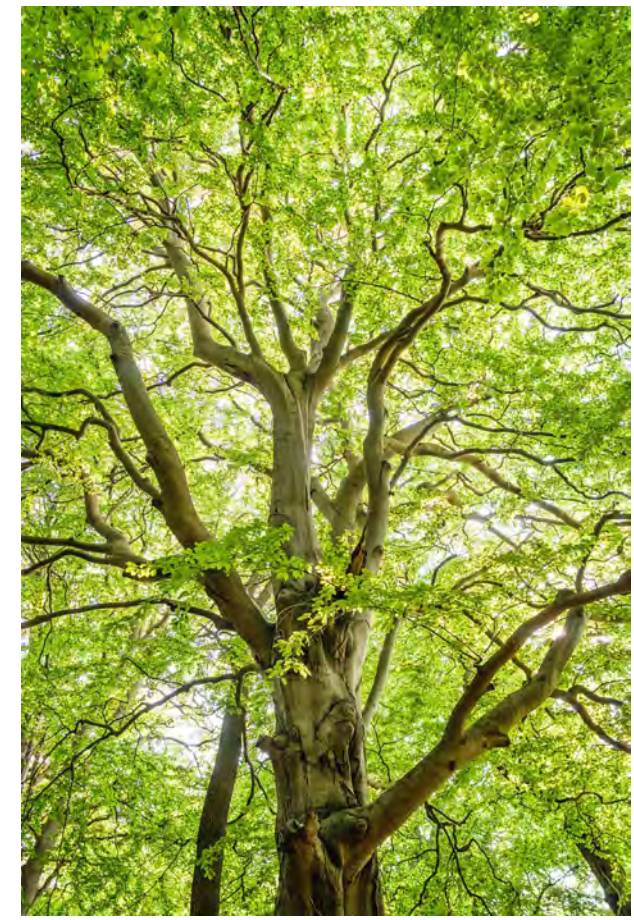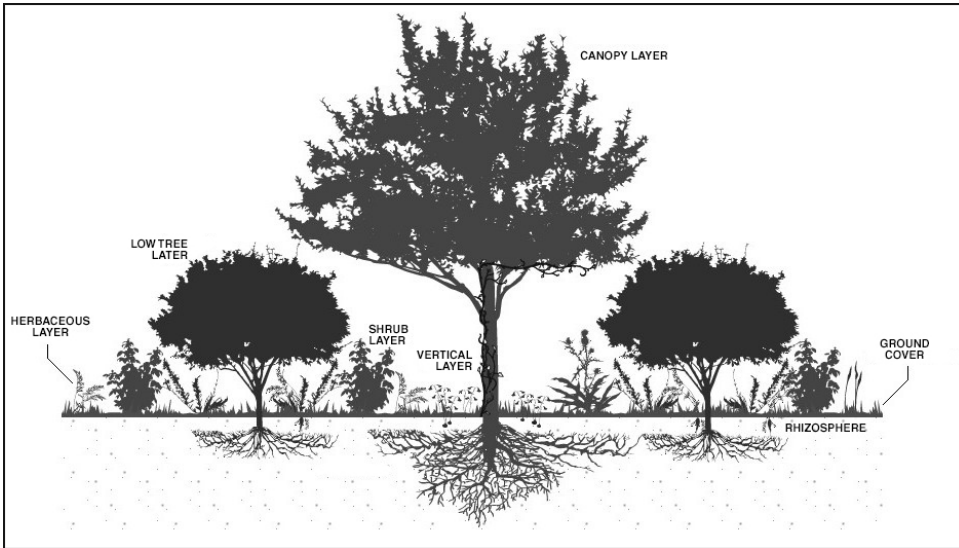
Canopy layer

- provides protection from too much sun, wind, precipitation
- adds structural diversity for a variety of lifeforms
- allows for better temperature control in a forest

Application

- In small groups, analyze the following images.
  - What is working well?
  - How can they be improved (based on universal and basic design principles)?

Abhishek, K. (2020, Dec 7). *Five worst presentations ever & why they went wrong.* https://www.orai.com/blog/worst-presentation-ever/

The University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). *Conflict minerals: Should businesses avoid or develop?*
https://ugs.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/ugs/images/uBIGbus1.png

Foley, L. *How to avoid the four biggest PowerPoint color mistakes.* https://blog.indezine.com/2011/10/how-to-avoid-four-biggest-powerpoint.html?doing_wp_cron=1612892921.1323320865631103515625

Babau Haus. 2013. *The type collective.*
http://www.baubauhaus.com/image/40292?utm_source=Feedburner&utm_campaign=feed&utm_content=Baubauhaus

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YALE SCHOOL OF ART

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Pause animations ❚❚

This website exists as an ongoing collaborative experiment in digital publishing and information sharing. Because this website functions as a wiki, all members of the School of Art community —graduate students, faculty, staff, and alums—have the ability to add new content and pages, and to edit most of the site's existing content.

Official School of Art COVID-19 Updates:

All public Yale School of Art events for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester have been canceled or postponed.

A Message from Dean Kuzma to MFA Students (March 21, 2020) >>

SoA COVID-19 Student Resources >>

Yale School of Art COVID-19 FAQ >>

Yale School of Art. (n.d.). *Official school of art COVID-19 updates.* https://www.art.yale.edu/

References

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Feedburner&utm_campaign=feed&utm_content=Baubauhaus

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Foley, L. *How to avoid the four biggest PowerPoint color mistakes.* Indezine.
https://blog.indezine.com/2011/10/how-to-avoid-four-biggest-
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infographic-template/

The University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). *Conflict minerals: Should businesses avoid
or develop?* https://ugs.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/ugs/images/uBIGbus1.png

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Yale School of Art. (n.d.). *Official school of art COVID-19 updates.* https://www.art.yale.edu/