



INTERIOR DESIGN DEFINITIONS

The National Center for Interior Design Qualification defines the profession and field as follows:

Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals.

TERMINOLOGY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

DESIGN ELEMENTS

LINE Lines – horizontal, vertical, angular/dynamic, curved – define shapes and act as visual guides of an interior space.

SHAPE & FORM Shape is the contour of an enclosed space. It is 2D. Form is the 3D version of a shape.

COLOR can stand alone at any time. It can serve as a background or be a supporting element to other elements.

It can also heighten the impact of shapes, lines, and textures. The use of individual color is easy, but combining one with another requires a deeper understanding of its psychological implication in visual design.

LIGHT is lightness or darkness of a color. Natural or man-made, light sets the tone of a space and highlights the other design elements. Consider darkness, the lack of light as important as bright light.



SPACE Positive space is the object. Negative space is the voided area surrounding the object.

TEXTURE is the surface quality of a shape - rough, smooth, soft hard glossy, etc. Texture can be physical (tactile) or visual.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

BALANCE is visual weight. It can be symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial. Designers use balance to create stability or equilibrium.

CONTRAST is the variation of elements in a design. Contrast can be achieved by a difference in size, color, texture, or shape.

RHYTHM/MOVEMENT Rhythm is the way your eye moves throughout a design or picture. It is created by the repetition of elements.

REPETITION involves multiples of the same element. Repeated elements can vary in size, color, or axis placement. Repeated elements can create a pattern.

EMPHASIS is drawing attention to a main point. All elements can work together to direct your eye to the focal point.

PROPORTION/SCALE Proportion is the ratio between the size of one part to another. Scale is how the size of one object relates to another or to the space in which it is placed. Scale and proportion ensure that objects placed in a space look like they belong to each other.

UNITY & HARMONY Making all of the elements and principles work together.