week::three
Emphasis, Hierarchy, & Contrast

Emphasis

Defined

- o Emphasis focuses on both the intellectual identification of your important information, and then visually stressing the important information. (Graham pg 20)

Hierarchy

Defined

- o A system or organization in which information is ranked one above the other according to status or importance.
- o Hierarchy tells people where to look and what is most important.
- o A well formed hierarchy will guide the viewer through your piece.

Deciding what's important (Graham pg 22-23)

- o What is your primary message?
- o Which element best communicates this primary message?
- o Is there a secondary and/or tertiary message?
- o Which element best communicates this secondary/tertiary message?
- o Which visual element is the most interesting?
- o What, if any information, can you afford to delete?

Type Hierarchies
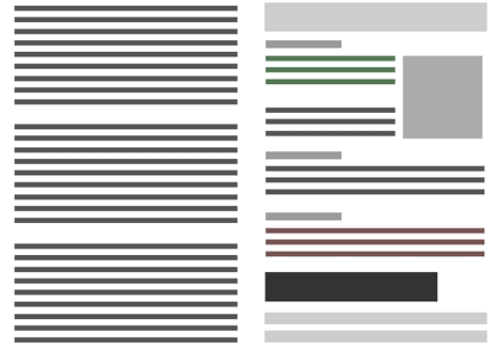
Primary Type:

- o Headers, display quotes
- o Purpose is to bring readers into the design.
- o Usually the first thing they look at.

Secondary Type

- o Captions, subtext, subheads
- o Anything that isn't the headlines or body copy.

Tertiary Type

- o Body copy
- o This is the bulk of text documents and should be extremely readable

Contrast

Defined
- o Two or more forces operate in opposition (Stewart pg 96)

Contrast is a powerful organizational element
- o Low contrast lowers an element's position in the hierarchy
- o High contrast raises an element's position in the hierarchy
- o Contrast can work for and against a designer.
  - ▪ Often contrast can distract or displace the hierarchy
  - ▪ Photos often have high contrast in unimportant areas (snapshots)

Contrast is a powerful element in creating visual interest
- o Created impact and emphasis (our focal point)
- o It is tempting to overdo contrast to create visual interest, but overdone contrast destroys hierarchy, unity, and balance.

The 80/20 rule:
- o Dedicate 80% of the compositional space to one "force"
- o Dedicate the remaining 20% to the other

Contrast is a powerful element in creating mood
- o Low Contrast == Calming, relaxing, confident, professional, experienced
- o High Contrast == Dynamic, excitement, youthful

Using the Elements of Design to Create Contrast

Line
- o Weight: Thin vs. thick
- o Form: Jagged vs. Smooth
- o Style: Rough vs. Mechanical, Calligraphic vs. Even weight

Shape
- o Geometric vs. Organic
- o Smooth vs. Jagged
- o Simple vs. Complex
- o Abstract vs. Realistic

Texture
- o Busy vs. Simple
- o Smooth vs. Rough

Space
- o Open vs. Crowded
- o Grouping
- o Busy vs. Simple and Open
- o Centered vs. off-center

Size
- o Big vs. Small
- o Most common type of contrast
  - ▪ Often a too obvious, elementary technique to create hierarchy
  - ▪ Before resorting to size, try keeping important elements smaller using other Elements of Design to maintain hierarchy.

Value

- o   Value is what we usually think of first when we think of contrast
- o   Light vs. Dark
- o   Mood element
- o   High contrast is usually easier to work with
- o   All components of a layout have value: Type, photos, shapes, etc.

Color

- o   Saturation: Bright vs. Dull
- o   Spectrum: Color opposite from each other on the color wheel
- o   Color is good to use thoughtfully, but often troublesome when not taken into consideration.
- o   Too much color creates chaos
- o   Too many ill-placed bright colors distract and misdirect the viewer attention.
- o   Eliminate unwanted color contrast with monochromatic images and repetition of logo colors.
- o   Color is also a powerful mood setter.