

Thinking about Design

In her book, *The Non-Designer's Design Book*, Robin Williams outlines four principles of graphic design. Below is her summary of those principles. In addition to quoting her, we've imitated her visual presentation of the principles as well.

Contrast

The idea behind contrast is to avoid elements on the page that are merely *similar*. If the elements (type, color, size, line thickness, shape, space, etc.) are not the *same*, then make them **very different**. Contrast is often the most important visual attraction on a page.

Repetition

Repeat visual elements of the design throughout the piece. You can repeat color, shape, texture, spatial relationships, line thickness, sizes, etc. This helps develop the organization and strengthens the unity.

Alignment

Nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily. Every element should have some visual connection with another element on the page. This creates a clean, sophisticated, fresh look.

Proximity

Items relating to each other should be grouped close together. When several items are in close proximity to each other, they become one visual unit rather than several separate units. This helps organize information and reduces clutter. (14)¹

¹ Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. Berkley: Peachpit Press, 1994.