Format
Objectives

• Define format
• Understand the role of the format in designing
• Realize format’s size and shape constraints
• Comprehend design elements and format interaction
• Appreciate each type of format and its shape functions
Objectives

• Recognize format as a creative consideration in any design
• Consider the quantity of images and text on a format
• Learn to include the format as a constituent voice in any two-dimensional design
Format Defined

• The defined perimeter, where a designer begins composing a design with his or her first mark, is what we refer to as the format.

• Whether the graphic design application is a printed page or viewed on a screen, the format is the outer perimeter that acts to frame and hold your design solution.
Shape and Sizes of Formats

- Formats can be any number of shapes: square, rectangular, a quadrilateral, and round.
- There are standard shapes and sizes of some formats for both print and screen-based media.
Shape and Sizes of Formats

• Shape and size are determined by the requirements of the project:
  – Function
  – Media
  – Appropriateness for the solution
  – Cost

• It is advisable to use standard sizes and utilize a standards guide.
Context

• Context—knowing how and where a format will be seen or used—is an important consideration.
Where

• Often graphic designers and art directors will deal with a range of formats, from those that are huge—such as environmental digital displays and outdoor boards—all the way to much, much smaller applications—such as business cards and mobile phone or PDA digital screens.
Single Formats vs. Multiple Formats

- Posters, magazine advertisements, outdoor boards, (most) business cards, letterheads, book covers and jackets, and CD and DVD disc covers are single formats.
- In these cases, a designer composes a design on one single page.
Single Formats vs. Multiple Formats

- Designers work with design applications that have multiple pages.
- Books, magazines, web sites, and newspapers can have hundreds of pages.
- Booklets, annual reports, a variety of corporate communications, newsletters, brochures, and various promotional pieces can also have many pages, as well as different folds and bindings.
Folding Styles

- 4-page
- 6-page
- 6-page accordion
- Roll fold
- 8-page (French)
- 8-page accordion
- 8-page short
- 8-page parallel
- 8-page gate
- 8-page map
- 8-page reverse map
- 10-page accordion
- 12-page letter
- 12-page broadside
- 16-page broadside
- 16-page booklet
Folding Styles

4-PAGE

6-PAGE ACCORDIAN

8-PAGE MAP FOLD

16-PAGE BROADSIDE
Binding Styles

- Saddle-wire stitched
- Side-wire stitched
- Case bound or sewn
- Plastic comb
- Spiral wire
- Binding post/loose leaf
- Perfect binding
Single Formats vs. Multiple Formats

- **Web site**
  - Seen by scrolling or clicking through to another page
  - Many operate as vertical scrolls
  - Can be a still image—and look like one still rectangle
    —viewed on a computer screen
Single Formats vs. Multiple Formats

- Multiple page
  - Some are seen as the viewer turns the pages or unfolds them, as in annual reports (Figure 1-1).
Single Formats vs. Multiple Formats

- Annual report: San Francisco International Airport 2000
- Design firm: Morla Design, Inc., San Francisco, CA
Working within a Format

• All elements, their direction, and placement interact with the particular shape of any given format.
Working within a Format
Working within a Format

• In the previous poster shown, the radiating diagonal lines create visual tension within the rectangular format.
Working within a Format

• Poster: San Francisco 2012, U.S. Olympic Bid City Poster (Olympic Games Poster)
• Design studio: Morla Design, Inc., San Francisco, CA
Parallel vs. Opposition

• When a line or mark parallels the given directions of a format’s edges, the resulting composition feels and looks different to the viewer than when lines or marks juxtapose or run counter to the edges of a format.
Parallel vs. Opposition

• Theater poster: “Servant of Two Masters”
• Studio: The Design Studio at Kean University
Parallel vs. Opposition
Parallel vs. Opposition

Rectangles, Squares, and Circles
Parallel vs. Opposition

• Let’s examine how linear movements might respond to differently shaped formats. All lines are responsive to the original shape of a format.
Standard Rectangles and Squares

• In relation to the edges of a standard size rectangle or square:
  – Vertical and horizontal movements tend to appear static
  – Diagonal movements tend to appear active (more forceful)
  – Curving movements tend to appear more active
Vertical Extension

• In relation to the edges of a prolonged vertical (portrait) rectangle:
  – Horizontal movements tend to appear static
  – Vertical movements tend to appear energetic (more pronounced)
  – Diagonal and curving movements tend to appear active
Horizontal Extension

• In relation to the edges of a prolonged horizontal rectangle:
  – Vertical movements tend to appear static
  – Horizontal movements tend to appear powerful
  – Diagonal and curving movements tend to appear aggressive
Round (also called a **tondo** in fine art)

- In relation to the edges of a round format:
  - Vertical movements tend to appear more powerful
  - Horizontal movements tend to appear more powerful
  - Diagonal movements tend to appear more powerful
  - Curving movements tend to appear static
Self-Contained Compositions

• Graphic designers also design logos, symbols, or pictograms which must work within self-contained compositions.

• In self-contained compositions, the format is the outer limits of the application, not the outer edges of a page.
Self-Contained Compositions

The logo for Trio is a self-contained composition.
Self-Contained Compositions

• Logo: Trio Television Network
• Design firm: Number Seventeen
Boundary of Vision: Open vs. Closed

• In *Principles of Art History*, Heinrich Wölfflin, German art historian, defines two basic categories of how the format is utilized as a boundary of vision: open and closed compositions.
Closed Compositions

• Space on the page or screen would seem closed off by something at the edge of the format, as in the famous CBS logo, where the composition of the logo is closed.

• Limits of a composition are defined by the objects or marks within the format.
Closed Compositions
Closed Compositions

Poster
Design Firm: Modern Dog Design Co. Seattle, WA
Client: Garden Tour

Both the typography and the image stay within the format; the solid green at the bottom of the poster reinforces the edges of the format.
PNA Home and Garden Tour

Designer: Robynne Raye
Client: Phinney Neighborhood Association
Year: 2009

Poster for annual Home and Garden Tour that has been a neighborhood tradition for over 20 years. This was the first year that both the Home and Garden Tour were combined, so I tried to capture both the garden and home themes in the illustration.
Explosions in the Sky

Designer: Robynne Raye
Client: Seattle Theatre Group
Year: 2009

Shogo doesn't know this but I used his big toe to make the drips on this poster.
M. Ward

Designer: Robert Zwiebel
Client: Sasquatch Music Festival
Year: 2009

M. Ward has a good earthy sound.
Climate Change

Designer: Shogo Ota
Client: Brumen Foundation
Year: 2009

Climate change poster for the Brumen Foundation and poster competition. I made just 10 posters of this by using spray paint and brush drawings.
Open Compositions

• Space appears or “seems” to stretch on beyond the limits of the format.
Open Compositions

• Web site design: home page and product page
• Design firm: R/GA, New York, NY
Summary

• The format is the substrate or support for the graphic design.
• Whether the graphic design application is a printed page or screen-based, your substrate is the format.
• There are many types of formats and variations within each format.
Summary

• Since the format is the surface where you place elements to compose a design, then it’s easy to understand that the other formal elements—line, shape, form, color, and texture—interact with the format.
Summary

• Formats can be single or multiple pages, either in print or online.

• A designer works with constraints and has practical considerations.

• A format can be predetermined by the assignment.
Summary

• Each type of format and its shape has different possible functions, with advantages and limitations that must be considered when designing.