

3 Manipulate a bitmap digital graphic for a particular purpose



3a Plan the digital graphic according to a brief



Fact file 1 - Visual literacy

Graphic design is the art of visual communication. The message of graphic products is communicated through an effective arrangement of image and text, words and pictures. Visual codes predominate. These pictorial codes are also known as 'semiotics', or the language of signs. Like any language you have to learn how to read and speak it fluently to communicate successfully. To do this words have to follow the same basic rules as pictures and photographs in terms of composition (or layout), **style** (or font), **scale** (or point size), **colour** (expressive or symbolic meaning) and medium/format (or fitness for purpose). In short, you should think of the text as another graphic element. Your aim is to grab the attention of your audience and communicate your message concisely and forcefully. The activities that follow give you practice in reading images and graphic products to improve your visual literacy.



Doing visual research by looking for examples of graphic products with a similar purpose to your brief is an important early stage of the design process. All designers draw inspiration from the work of others, especially at the start of their careers when they are just beginning to develop a signature style. Look critically at as many different types of graphics as possible. Be attentive to their particular design elements and layout, think about their intended audience and purpose, and start to make a collection of the types of graphics that appeal to you most. To be successful graphic products such as posters, web pages and flyers should have a visual hierarchy, meaning that the words and pictures are organised by size and prominence, as well as by their relationship to each other: elements that are related should be linked visually and the most important elements must be emphasised so that they get the message across.



Activity 1 - Graphic design elements



View this presentation that describes some key elements of graphic design and investigates how they have been applied to examples of club flyers. You can view it online at:

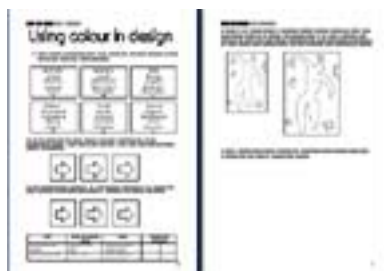
<http://breeze.bucksqfl.org.uk/p16032027/>

or you can download it from:

<http://www.virtualartroom.com/presentations1.htm#Flyers>



Activity 2 - Colour



Colour is one of the key elements in graphic design for different products. Open and complete the worksheet *Using colour in design* that you will find in the Extras section. Save it electronically (you will have to ungroup all the objects if you want to colour them in Word. Select *View > Toolbars > Drawing* and *Draw > Ungroup* when the object is selected. Save it as *colourXXX* (replace XXX with your own initials). Or print it out and complete it manually for your process book or sketchbook.



Activity 3- Graphic products

Collect three different types of graphic product e.g. a flyer, food packaging, a DVD cover, a printout of a web page. What colours are used? How do they work together? Are they appropriate for the type of product? Are they suitable for the type of audience or target consumer? Why? Think about your answers and discuss the products you collect in small groups, but don't write anything down yet. Scan or take a digital photograph of your three products and save them to your sources folder as *product1XXX*, *product2XXX*, *product3XXX*.



Fact file 2 - Milton Glaser

'Images of Labour'

Milton Glaser is an influential American graphic designer who was born in New York in 1929 and whose most famous design is probably the 'I ♥ NY' icon. The thumbnail sketch below illustrates one of his well-known posters called "Images of Labour"

Milton Glaser designed this poster in 1994. It was one of a series of ten posters by different artists on the theme of 'labour' or 'work' for the Bread and Roses Cultural Project. Each design was inspired by a famous quotation. Glaser's quotation was from Nicola Sacco, a poor Italian immigrant and pacifist, who had been executed in 1927 for a murder he didn't commit. Sacco said from prison, "It's true indeed that they can execute the body, but they cannot execute the idea, which is bound to live". These words appeared on the poster (see 4).

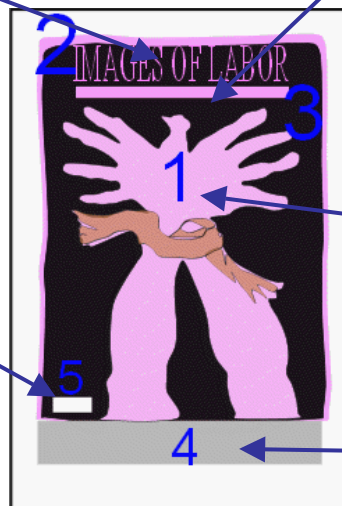
You can see the original poster at: <http://miltonglaserposters.com>

The design shows a bird being freed from a pair of hands that are tied together, symbolising ideas being liberated. The hands also represent the bird's wings.

The bird's head and beak lead the eye up to the main heading, which is centred in a traditional serif font like Times, that suggests official documents, the law, history.

Below this the subhead is aligned in a block

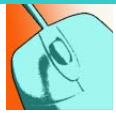
Glaser's signature is the final element to be noticed.



The visual hierarchy of the design is centred on the graphic of the bird/hands – the eye is drawn up to it by the negative space between the arms – that is, an inverted triangle or arrow pointing upwards.

The quotation is centred at the bottom of the design in a font that looks like handwritten script to make the words more personal.

The colours are simple and contrasting - pink, blue, white and black - adding emphasis and impact. The pastel colours could suggest hope or new life emerging from the darkness, as they are often used in designs for young children.



Activity 4- Poster design

<http://miltonglaserposters.com/>

Visit the Milton Glaser poster site and click on any of the thumbnail images of his famous designs to open a larger version and to find some information about the context and purpose of that particular poster. Select a favourite and save it, making a note of the URL and other reference details in your sources log. Insert the picture into a Word document and use text boxes and arrows to label the key elements and number the visual hierarchy, as in the "*Images of Labour*" example. Include the graphic, main heading (display type), subhead, and bodytext (copy). Unequal scaling, with either the picture or the heading dominating, has greater visual impact - which dominates in your chosen poster? The picture is certainly the main element in the "*Images of Labour*" poster. Why do you think the design is successful? If other students have chosen the same poster, group together and compare ideas. Each different poster group could nominate a person to present their ideas to the rest of the class using an interactive whiteboard or data projector connected to the internet to display the poster.

Save your labelled poster to your digital sketchbook or process folder as *posterXXX*, replacing *XXX* with your own initials.





Fact file 3 - Planning from a creative platform

Designers believe that 'form follows function'. In other words, good design is not just decorative; it must have a clear purpose. Advertising agencies routinely ask five key questions to clarify the main aims of the briefs their clients set. They call this a 'creative platform'. Add a sixth question about where your design will be displayed to help you plan your own projects successfully. Always begin planning by asking yourself these same six questions every time you are given an assignment. You can use the Creative Platform worksheet in the Extras section to make a record.

1. What is the purpose of your graphic or product?

To sell or offer something, to persuade, inform, educate, entertain, create a commercial identity, raise awareness, attract attention, impress?

2. Who is its target audience?

Think about gender, age range, interests, and different cultural or social backgrounds. Is it aimed at groups or individuals?

3. What is its basic message?

Can you explain the message in 5 words or less?

4. How do you want your target audience to respond?

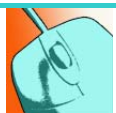
By voting, buying, feeling good, feeling shocked, feeling curious, identifying with it, learning, visiting, supporting, donating?

5. Where will the graphic or product be displayed?

On posters or flyers, on a website, on packaging, on book or CD covers, at point of sale, in magazines or newspapers, on advertising hoardings, at bus stops or train stations, in doctors' waiting rooms, as signage in a museum or gallery, on the side of a bus or taxi, on t-shirts or baseball caps, in a presentation or newsletter?

6. What style of visual message is appropriate?

Comic, solemn, simple, detailed, funky, fun, sophisticated, subtle, stylish, low-tech/high-tech, arty, hard-hitting, discrete, high impact, street style, business-like, retro?



Activity 5 - Evaluate graphic products

(a) Write a creative platform for each of the three graphic products you collected and saved electronically in Activity 3, using the form in the Extras section. Save your work as *product_evaluationXXX* (replace XXX with your own initials). The guidelines in the presentation you viewed in Activity 1 will help you assess the effectiveness of their graphic design elements.

(b) Which product scored highest? On the second page, use the results of your evaluation and the key words to write a short review of the best design. Save your work.

3b Evaluate the digital graphic against the original brief



Fact file 4 - The planning and review cycle

Read and understand

When you are given an assignment brief, read it through carefully from beginning to end and make sure that you fully understand what you are being asked to do.

Make notes

As you read make a note of all the tasks that you are set.

Brainstorm

Brainstorm your first thoughts about the assignment brief in a group if possible, then use concept mapping software like MindGenius (<http://www.mindgenius.com/>) or Inspiration (<http://www.inspiration.com/>) to help visualize, organise and extend your own ideas so that you have a range of starting points. You can also use the ReadyShapes in Serif PagePlus or the AutoShapes in Microsoft Word to map out or storyboard your ideas. Even though many ideas will be discarded, it's important not to get fixed on a single theme or one idea too soon.

Draw up a project plan

Your iMedia assignment sets you specific tasks that have to be accomplished by a fixed deadline. You will have to produce a plan for the work using the form provided by OCR. You will need to note down your first ideas, explain what you finally propose to produce, what software and equipment you will use to do this and when the deadline is.

Develop the work

Try to keep to your timescale and refer back to the original brief and to your project plan frequently.

Test or prototype your work

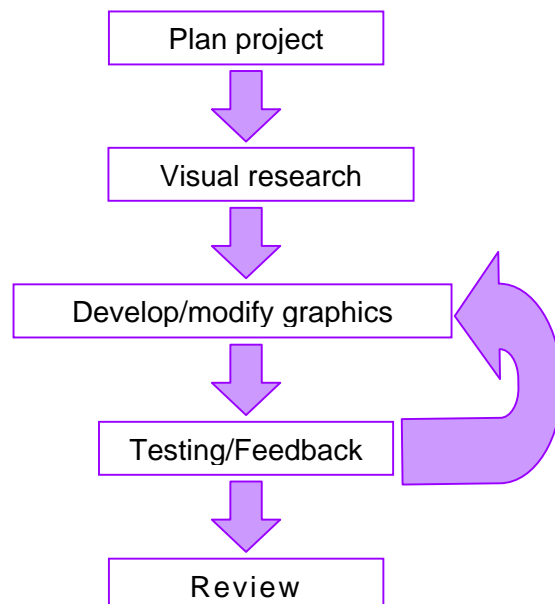
When you think you've finished a task, show your work to others and ask them for constructive feedback – what do they think is good about it and how could it be improved? If possible find one or two people who match the target audience for the product. Make a note of what they say. You should also get feedback from your teacher at key checkpoints while working on the assignment. You can use the feedback and review form in the Extras section to help you do this.

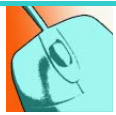
Revise your work

Take what your reviewers say into account and make any changes to the product that you think will improve it.

Review your work

The final stage is for you to review your work realistically against the original client brief explaining how your final outcomes meet the brief and where you could develop or improve them further.





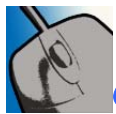
Activity 6

Save a copy of the planning sheet from the Extras section and save it for when you begin a new brief.















Self-review

Complete the Final Assignment Review form in the Extras section and save it as *final_reviewXXX*, replacing XXX with your own initials. How much have you learned about planning an assignment, developing digital graphics in response to a particular brief and reviewing your work?



Extras for this section

- 📁 Activity 2 – Using Colour in Design  
- 📁 Activity 5 – Product Evaluation  
- 📁 Activity 6 – Planning sheet  
- 📁 Creative Platform  
- 📁 Feedback and Review  
- 📁 Self-review: skills and evidence checklist  
- 📁 Final Assignment Review 