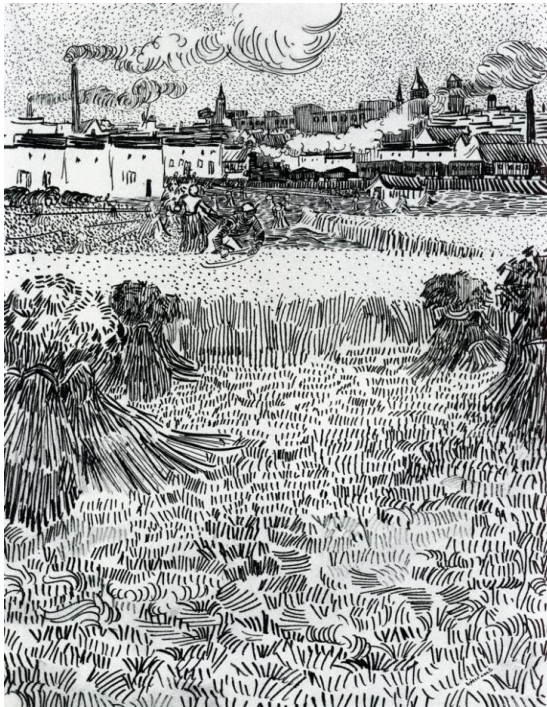


## PiXL Spine – Art – Formal Elements Booklet

### The Formal Elements

#### Line

**Line** is a moving point in space which can vary in **width, direction** and **length**.



Look at the artwork (shown) – ‘Arles, View from the Wheat Field’, 1888, by Vincent Van Gogh. Write a paragraph answering the following questions:

*What types of line can you see?*

*How would you describe the lines used?*

Think about the following: texture, movement, direction, width, length, etc.

Lines can be **horizontal, vertical, diagonal** or **curved**. They can also be used to demonstrate texture in a piece of work, also known as a **mark-making technique**.

**Contour lines** that follow the visible edges of a shape. These are used to enhance the form and lead the eye in a particular direction.

**Freehand lines** can demonstrate movement and energy within a piece of artwork, whereas **mechanical lines** can be very rigid.

**Broken lines** can demonstrate lack of strength, **thin lines** represent a fragility and delicacy, and **thick lines** can show strength.

Lines can also be used to reflect the way that we feel. Psychological responses include the use of jagged lines that could present anxiety or turmoil, whereas horizontal lines would represent tranquillity and distance.

**Think Harder:** Take a photograph or select an image of a landscape and use a range of freehand lines to build up texture and tone. To create darker tones, make your lines thicker and closer together. Areas of light (or highlights) will be created by applying lines lightly with more space in between them.

*What other materials or techniques could you use to create it?*

## Shape

**Shape** is an enclosed area of an artwork. Shapes are two-dimensional and can vary in **scale, width, height** and **proportion**. Examples include:

- **Geometric:** originally formed by hand using a ruler and compass. Examples include squares, triangles, rectangles and circles.
- **Organic:** can be asymmetrical or irregular shapes, anatomical forms or related to nature.
- **Decorative:** based on nature or geometry or a combination of the two elements.
- **Symbolic:** an object or sign. It can portray a certain belief, identity or subject.



**Think Harder:** Opposite is a piece of artwork from Henri Matisse's Cut Outs series ('The Eskimo', 1947). Use this as inspiration to create a range of organic shapes using a variety of coloured cards. Arrange these in a range of interesting compositions to create your own series.

*How could you push this idea further?*

## Texture

**Texture** describes the visual and physical properties of a surface. Examples include:

- **Visual or optical** is the illusion of the surface texture.
- **Actual or physical** is when they feel as they appear.
- **Ephemeral** includes forms that could change or alter – such as flames, bubbles, clouds, etc.

**Think Harder:** To create a series of 15cm by 15cm squares.

Using paper, create a series of textures by screwing up, twisting, ripping, curling, cutting and sticking the paper in a variety of ways.

*How could you portray a combination of visual and actual textures?*

## Space

**Space** refers to the area around, between and within a shape or piece of work. It can give us a sense of **perspective**, and it also contributes to the success of **composition** in a piece of artwork. For example, it helps us to focus on the main part of the picture or the background known as **positive** and **negative space**.

Look at the image opposite: 'Red Room (Harmony in Red)', 1913, by Henri Matisse. You will notice that the use of space is relevant in this piece of work. The composition of the objects, people and pattern is well balanced. It gives the viewer a sense of perspective and the positive and negative space is in harmony with each other.



**Think Harder:** Giorgio Morandi created a range of still life studies that focused on positive and negative space. Collect a range of objects and trace the outlines onto a large sheet of paper. Now fill the negative space – you could use different shades of colour or a range of mark-making techniques.

*How could you further explore composition, scale and space?*

## Tone

**Tone** is used to express how light or dark something is and can vary in value. Some tones can be **contrasting** – for instance, using black and white next to one another. They can also be used to create an **illusion of form** – making something look 3D on a 2D surface.

The use of tone can create a certain type of **mood/atmosphere** in a piece of artwork – such as using darker tones to create drama or lighter tones for tranquillity. It can also be used to portray depth or distance. Also, the way in which the tone is applied can help to demonstrate **rhythm** or **movement** in a piece of work.

**Think Harder:** Take two photographs of yourself or someone else, portraying two different emotions, such as happy and sad. Take a sheet of large paper and use charcoal to fill the whole page. You will then need a rubber for the drawing part! On one half of the paper, rub out the outline of one of the portraits and, on the other half, rub out the outline of the other portrait. Key questions: *How can you make the images contrasting? How can you demonstrate the illusion of form? How can you make one more dramatic or tranquil than the other?*

For instance, an angry image may remain quite dark but could play with dramatic use of light and expressive marks. The happy image could become lighter with smooth, blended tones.

## Form

**Form** can be represented in art in a variety of ways, such as using tone in a 2D drawing or artwork to provide the illusion that something is 3D. It can also be shown through the use (or construction) of materials to create a three-dimensional piece that experiments with **depth, volume, height and width**.

Three-dimensional forms could include:

- **Carving:** where sections are removed from a block of material, such as stone or wood.
- **Construction:** something that is built using one or more materials.
- **Modelling/casting:** where the material, such as clay or wax, is generally added to, altered or adapted.
- **Kinetic:** to provide motion or movement within a piece of work.
- **Land Art:** created using natural materials.

**Think Harder:** You will need the following materials: a bar of cheap soap, a butter knife, a spoon, a fork and a natural form. You will now create a carving of the chosen form.

*How can you use the tools appropriately to carve a realistic form?*

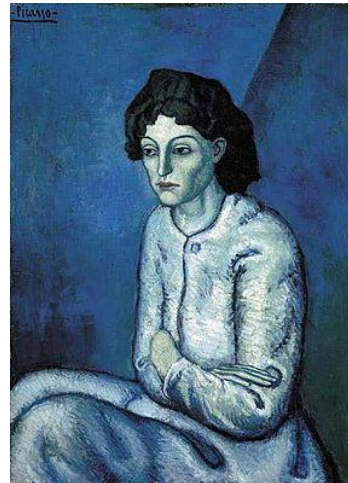
## Colour

**Colour** is one of the most important elements in art as it has the biggest impact on our **emotions**. We have a psychological response to colour as it can evoke a specific mood or feeling. It is also something that immediately attracts our attention.

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Look at the following artworks: 'Red Canna', 1915, by Georgia O'Keeffe and 'Woman with Folded Arms', 1902, by Pablo Picasso. Answer the following questions:

*What can you see? What do you think? How do the colours make you feel? How do the images differ from one another?*

(Think about the colours, the media used, the application of the media and the impact it has on you.)

**Think Harder:** Select a subject and an image or object that relates to this. Now draw the image – this could be a whole image, a section or a close-up. Now repeat this image onto a second piece of paper. On each piece use a combination of different colours to represent two conflicting emotions.

*What materials could contribute to the mood/emotion reflected?*

*How could the application play a role?*

### Pattern

**Pattern** can create **rhythm** or **movement**, but it can also provide an element of **harmony**, **balance** or **contrast**. Patterns can be **manmade** to be structural within a piece of work or purely to provide decoration. **Natural** pattern comes from nature and the forms we see, such as leaves, trees, flowers, etc. Some artists use patterns to build up an artwork to provide character and originality, whereas others use it to complement an existing image.



Look at the image opposite: 'Study of Regular Division of the Plane with Reptiles', 1939, by M.C. Escher.

Escher was a graphic artist, well-known for his explorations with **tessellation** (a repeated pattern close together with no gaps or overlapping). His work was mathematically inspired, exploring perspective and narrative themes. In this piece, Escher explores reptilian shape, using a geometric grid to construct the artwork. At the **vertex** (a corner point), the heads of the reptiles meet and the sides of the animal, legs and tails **interlock**.

**Think Harder:** Create your own tessellation using a triangle, square or hexagon. Design one or more patterns or symbols to use. Alternate the colours using two or three colours.

*Could you transform the shapes into a person, object or thing?*



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