DESIGN
PRINCIPLES
*for*the*
SCRAPBOOK
PAGE

by Debbie Hodge

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Introduction

Hi and welcome! I'm glad you've decided to spend time with me and these lessons. I love thinking about making scrapbook pages—combining photos, stories, and product to make a record of the life I'm living with family and friends. I found that once I understood layout design principles AND the essential parts of any page and how they relate to one another, scrapbooking got easier and more fun.

The 12 lessons in "Design Principles for Scrapbook pages" include an initial survey lesson, then 6 lessons covering the design principles important to making layouts, and then 5 more on what I consider primary parts of a scrapbook page.

We'll be breaking it all down and looking at each aspect individually—though, really, it's never possible to look at any aspect in total isolation. There will be some circling around and overlapping of material as we study it—and, then, ultimately, you'll want it all stirred up together when you make pages. That's how you'll get pages that are pleasing to look at AND that tell your stories well.

I hope you find these lessons helpful -- and I hope they get you chomping at the bit to scrapbook. If you have any questions along the way, please contact me via the Get It Scrapped website contact link.

Debbie

{LESSON ONE} A Structure for Page Design

In this class we break the work of making a scrapbook page into the simplest and most useful elements: *design principles* which *we'll apply to* **scrapbook page parts.**

I wouldn't make anything beautiful and stable without structure--or scaffolding. This class lays out that scaffolding in a way that's easy to understand and apply.

four goals

When i make a page, I use my page parts and the design principles along with a story to achieve four goals:

1. capture the viewer's attention,
2. control the eye's movement,
3. convey information, and
4. evoke emotion.

a structure for page design

Here's how these four goals were achieved on "Grandpa's Girl" using design principles to place page parts.

1. catch the eye: The photo of my aunts and my niece singing catches the eye for many reasons, including: appeal, placement, and matting.

2. control the eye's movement: The tendency of the viewer's eye is to move diagonally down to the cluster of photos at bottom center then up to the top right and then back around.

3. convey information: Information is conveyed via journaling, photos, and the motifs on the page.

4. evoke emotion: The viewer of this page comes to understand that my niece adored her grandfather, and he loved spending time with her. To remember him, she learned one of his favorite songs and found people to help her remember him with a joyful and quirky singing of this song on the front lawn of his farm.

Emotion is evoked by the story, the contrast of seeing my father in days past with his granddaughter and then seeing her without him, offering her own original tribute to him and his part in her life.

a structure for page design

The lessons in this class will get you achieving those goals by teaching you about 6 design principles, 5 scrapbook page parts, and how to use them together.

design principles
emphasis
repetition
alignment
balance
contrast
flow

applied to

page parts
photos
journaling
title
embellishments
canvas

yields

design principles

Even if you've never formally heard about design principles in conjunction with scrapbooking, you're probably already using them on scrapbook pages or in other pursuits, as you arrange furniture and decorations in your home, select an outfit and accessories for a nice occasion, or make an invitation for the neighborhood picnic.

We'll focus on these six design principles, which can be remembered with a mnemonic: ECBARF.

- Emphasis
- Contrast
- Balance
- Alignment
- Repetition
- Flow

The rest of this lesson is a quick overview of those principles and page parts. We'll get deeper into using them in later lessons.

Design Elements

Think of design elements as the basic building blocks of visual design. Design principles are rules you can use to combine those blocks.

Eight design elements that will go a long way toward making pleasing pages are:

- Space
- Line
- Shape
- Size
- Pattern
- Texture
- Value
- Color

More Reading

Design Elements: article at Get It Scrapped

if you're a GIS Member

Design Play: Masterful Scrapbook Design class on using design principles and elements as jumping off spots for design. Teachers include Emily Pitts and Lisa Dickinson.

Rule Play: Masterful Scrapbook Design class that reviews the dos of design principles and then explores breaking those rules. Teachers include Doris Sander and Tiffany Tillman.

Emphasis. Different parts of your page have different levels of importance, and the way you present all of the pieces should make this hierarchy apparent to the viewer. We'll cover this principle in more depth in Lesson 2, talking about the different parts that could be emphasized as well as how to emphasize them.

On "Proud and Happy Tourist," the larger photo of my son is the focal point. It's made so by several aspects, including its larger size, its positioning, its engaging content, and its embellishment

The viewer begins by looking at this photo and then takes in the smaller shots and the journaling.

More Reading

How to Create Focal Points on Scrapbook Pages: article at Get It Scrapped.

if you're a GIS Member

Focal Points: Masterful Scrapbook Design class on creating and using focal points in design. Ebook + videos with guest teachers Noell Hyman, Kelly Purkey, Krista Sahlin, Betsy Sammarco and Celeste Smith.

Repetition. Repeating elements on a page adds unity. You can repeat colors, shapes, textures, motifs, and patterns. Note, though, that repetition without variety can be dull. The challenge, then, is to think about how to change something while keeping it the same.

Take a look at the repetitions of color on "The Punch Bowl." A visual triangle of oranges (title, bookplate, circle burst spot) guides the eye around the page. There's another triangle of repeating greens.

Repetitions in texture occur with the pompom fringe and the crocheted doily. See also the repetitions of "splatters" behind the cluster of elements at the bottom left corner of the page.

Lily, Hannah Jane, Caroline
Christmas Eve
2011

More Reading

4 Ways to Use Repeated Photos on Your Scrapbook Pages: article at Get It Scrapped

Tap the power of "3" for your scrapbook page designs: article at Get It Scrapped.

Alignment. Alignments provide order, margins, and meaningful white space—they let you organize and group elements. You can even create visual connections between elements that are not near one another. (Note—this does not mean that everything needs to be perfectly lined up, but, rather, that you should consider when to align and when to break from alignment.)

"Leaving Seattle" is a page with several obvious alignments. When we get to the lesson that focuses on alignment, you'll learn about less obvious alignments and what they can do for your page designs.

Here, just to start, notice how the photos are all aligned along the bottom edges. Notice also that the end of the title aligns with the end of the photo block. Notice how the journaling block is the same width as the photo below it. This is the principle of alignment at work as I sized and placed page parts.

the end of a good day at EMP museum

July 4, 2013

Isaac & I spent the last afternoon in Seattle at the EMP museum (after lunch with Grant & Kathy). Neil didn't feel well & Josh wanted to hang out at the hotel. We took the monorail back over to the train to get us to our airport hotel.

summer fun.

leaving SEATTLE

design principles | balance

The parts of your scrapbook page should be distributed to create "visual" balance — a sense of balance. We never want to feel like the pieces in a layout are going to topple one another.

There's lots to talk about when we get to the lesson on balance, including addressing what might be your first question: Why not just balance things symmetrically.

For now, take a look at "Geo-cache," and note how the strip of photos along the left balances the larger landscape-oriented photo and the mat behind it. While this larger photo and mat fill more physical space, the smaller strip can balance it because it sits higher up and has more complexity.

It "feels" right – and we'll talk a lot more about how to get to this "good feeling" in a later lesson.

There should be obvious visual differences between the elements on your page. Contrast will draw the viewer's eye and add interest and variety.

Let's take a look at just a few of the contrasts on "H."

The green and blue patterned paper is bold and pops against the tan cardstock behind it. The white text print is yet another paper with enough difference in color and value to pop against the layers beneath.

There are also differences in scale on the page that make it interesting. An oversized butterfly rub-on is juxtaposed with small birds on the journaling card and in the cluster at bottom right.

All of these differences draw the eye and make the page pleasing and easily understood and viewed.

Flow refers to how the viewer's eye moves through the layout. Flow should begin with an element that is purposefully emphasized. You can arrange and choose other elements to move the eye through the rest of the page—and then end up back at the first, dominant element. If you can get the viewer to take in your page in a particular order – then you can show them the story as you'd like it understood.

When we get to the lesson on flow (or we could call it movement, too). We'll talk about a variety of flow patterns AND how to create those patterns.

On this page the flow starts with the focal point photo which is emphasized with size, embellishment and engagement. The arrow in the photo sends the eye over to the stacked photo and then, because of embellishments and repetitions, it circles around again.

archer

Isaac's early birthday present is a bow and arrows. He'd been loving archery in gym class and he's pretty good! May 2014.

# Page Parts

The basic parts of a scrapbook page are:

- Photos
- Journaling
- Embellishments
- Title
- Canvas

Not every page has every part—but most pages have most parts. Knowing this gives you a framework, touch points as you put things together and make photo, supply, and design choices. It's also a great starting point for getting new ideas for your pages.

Photos. The photos are very probably the reason for your page — though not always. The first concern is usually the selection of photos to put on your page. Then there are decisions to make about how many photos to use, whether to feature one or two over the others, how to crop your photos, and how to place them on the page.
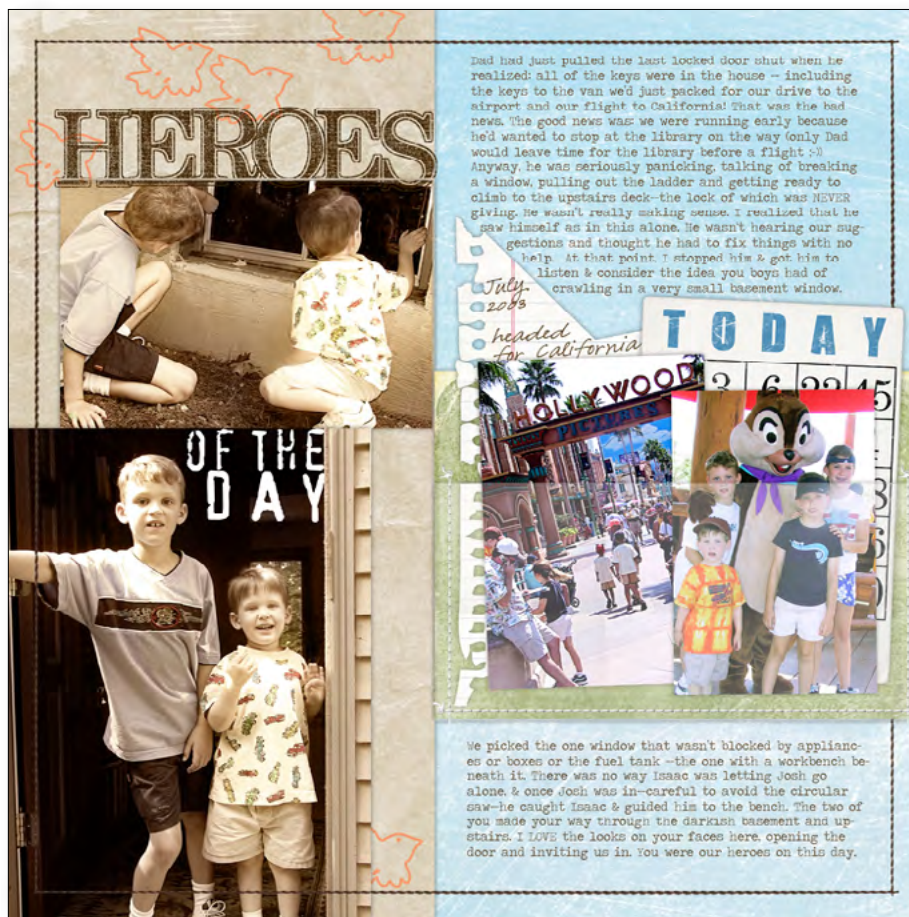
On "Heroes of the Day" I didn't have great photos BUT I really wanted to tell this story. We locked our house and car keys in the house and ourselves out right before we needed to leave for a trip to California and family and Disney.

The photos of my kids first getting in the basement window and second greeting us at the door as they saved the day were of poor quality I removed most of the color and did some digital "sharpening." To really reinforce the story (and the point of WHY being locked out at this moment was so important) I included two smaller and very colorful photos of us at Disney later. This combination of photos helps me present my story in a clear and compelling way.

More Reading

Photos articles on the Get It Scrapped blog.

If you're a GIS Member

Photos and Photo Play. Masterful Scrapbook Design classes including ebooks and videos with guest teachers including Katrina Kennedy, Anna Aspnes, Jana Morton, and Emily Pitts.

page parts | journaling

Journaling. Journaling can range from a few specifics about who is in the photos and where you were and when – to a detailed story like the one in my layout "Heroes of the Day" above.

Start making pages by understanding how much journaling you'll want to include – and understanding that you'll need to leave the appropriate space for it on the canvas.

As you move forward, this knowledge will factor into how you choose other elements, what you emphasize as well as how and where everything gets placed and the way in which you'll render your journaling (handwritten, typed, on a tag . . .).

I made "Work is Play" really just wanting to convey how much pleasure my mom takes in keeping her yard. I only need room for a small amount of journaling which I printed directly to a piece of patterned paper.

More Reading

20 Lessons on Scrapbook Page Journaling: article at Get It Scrapped

If you're a GIS Member

Journaling. Masterful Scrapbook Design class on the approaches to writing, rendering, and designing with journaling. Teachers include Dina Wakley, Lain Ehmann, Emily Pitts, and Paula Gilarde.

page parts | embellishments

Embellishments. Ah, embellishments: the decorations for your scrapbook pages!

Your primary tasks when it comes to adding the embellishments to your page are: 1) choosing them, and 2) placing them. These bits are great for adding repetitions and for creating flow. And they're just plain fun to work with.

The embellishments on "Senior party" add interest to the page and they support the story subject. The owl represents study, the butterfly change, and the cake just represents a cake at a party!

Embellishments don't have to be themed. Versatile and meaning-neutral bits like buttons, ribbon, gems and brads make great decorative touches.

page parts | titles

Most of my pages have titles. Not all of them—but most of them do. I like how a title cues the viewer to the subject. I like how it gives me an opportunity to immediately set tone or put a twist on the story.

There are lots of questions to ask and answer about your title when you begin a scrapbook page. How important will your title be? Will it be clever or straight-forward? How much space will it take up? Will you use it as a major design element—incorporating colors and textures that will be repeated elsewhere, lead the eye, and set tone? You don't have to know your title absolutely when you start, but you need to know if you'll have one and how much space you think you'll give to it. I often mull over title possibilities in my mind as I make a page, refining them as I go along.

The title on "Awesome Boy" is mostly straightforward. Yes he's a boy. But there were lots of possible adjectives I could have used: outdoors boy, all boy, fishing boy. I settled on "awesome," though, because I really do think this boy is remarkable in many ways. I often incorporate contrast in my title as I've done here—"awesome" is in all caps and stamped to patterned paper while "boy" is lower-case and oversized and in chipboard with lots of dimension. The roughed-up chipboard supports the outdoor theme, and this title ends up being the dominant element on the page.

More Reading

Roundup of Ideas and Tutorials for Scrapbook Page Titles: article at Get It Scrapped.

If you're a GIS Member

Titles. Masterful Scrapbook Design class on coming up with rendering, placing, and using technique with scrapbook page titles. Teachers include: Karen Grunberg, Doris Sander, and Kayleigh Wiles.

page parts | canvas

Canvas. The canvas is the piece of paper (or digital background) upon which you build your page. For me, thinking about the canvas means thinking about how I will fill it and what role it will play in the page's design.

Just a look back at the layouts we've covered in this lesson, will give you an idea of the different ways there are to approach the canvas. You can fill it totally or incorporate white space. You can organize things in a grid with lots of alignments or you can layer or even scatter. You can use patterned paper or cardstock, narrow mats or fun edging techniques. We'll be talking about all of this in a lesson 12.

More Reading

6 Ways to Make the Scrapbook page Canvas: article at Get It Scrapped.

If you're a GIS Member

Canvas. Masterful Scrapbook Design class on approaches to the scrapbook page canvas.

a structure for page design

Make a scrapbook page with four goals in mind: 1) catch the eye, 2) guide the eye, 3) convey information, and 4) evoke emotion.

To do this you've got five basic page parts to combine on the page: 1) photos, 2) title, 3) journaling, 4) embellishments, and 5) canvas.

To know how to place those parts, let six design principles (which you can remember with the mnemonic ECBARF) guide you. Those principles are: emphasis, contrast, balance, alignment, repetition, and flow.

In the upcoming lessons, we'll go through each of the design principles with scrapbook page illustrations, and then we'll consider each of the page parts and how design principles work with them.

{LESSON TWO} **Design Principle of Emphasis**

Different parts of your scrapbook page should have different levels of importance. Without some variation in emphasis among the elements on your page, everything takes on the same level of importance and the viewer has to find some way into your page on their own. When emphasis exists, though, the viewer's eye is drawn to a starting point and then (with some good "flow management") knows where to continue. The result is the viewer "gets" what your page is about.

To incorporate emphasis you just need to **make something stand out.** Incorporate a strong focal point on your page that draws the eye first. The decision of which element will be the focal point will depend upon the subject of your page and what meaning you want to convey. Focal points are quite often photos but they could be other page parts.

In addition to catching the eye, a strong focal point should also delight or intrigue or just charm. The focal point on "Last Day of School" is a photo while the focal point on "Women Who Love Wool" is the title. Both of these have lots of appeal.
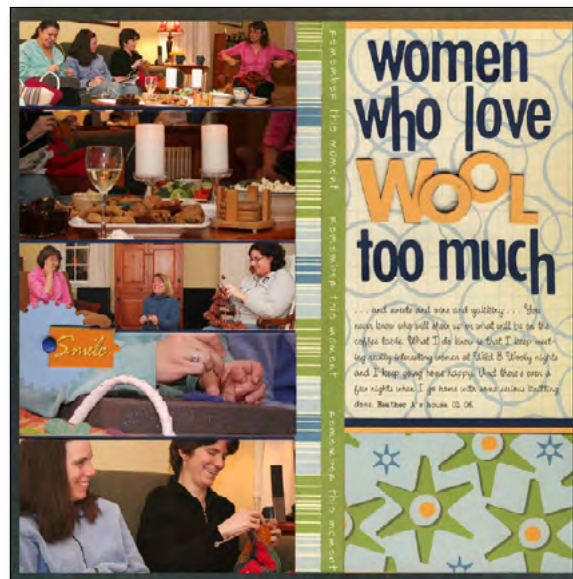
5 ways to create emphasis

How to create emphasis. Differences draw the eye. When one item is clearly different from the others around it, it is attention-getting.

In this lesson, I'll show you five ways to create emphasis:
1. with contrast
2. with embellishment
3. with placement
4. with isolation
5. with content

how to create emphasis | emphasize with contrast

Emphasize with contrast. Contrast is about differences: differences in size, shape, color, value, and even texture. When something is contrasting (or different) from the other items on the page it stands out.

On "Last Day of School" the photo is the focal point and it is so in large part because of contrast: it is the largest element on the page, the only portrait-oriented item (the other photo and journaler are landscape-oriented and the foundation is square).

Emphasize with embellishment.
When you decorate the mantle over the fireplace you increase its visual draw and significance. The same goes for an element on a scrapbook page. Tie a ribbon around a title letter, add a bright chipboard flourish or eye-catching frame to a photo, or fasten your journal block with eye-catching brads to strengthen their appeal and attention-getting potential on the page.

The focal point on "First Grade" is the larger photo at the top. It's embellished with vellum chevrons, flair, bow and even the title. All of these items get the viewer looking here first.

Emphasize with isolation. You can create a focal point by setting on element (or block of elements) apart from the others with white space.

The focal point on "Your {Full} Room" is the single photo grouped with the page title. Generous margins as well as the photo's content and the design interest added by the title make it the starting spot for the viewer's eye. What's more, the entire focal block contrasts well with the background paper, thus making it "pop."

Emphasize with placement. An object placed in a "sweet spot," on the page will take on importance. To find the four "sweet spots" on your page, divide it into thirds horizontally and vertically (as if drawing a tic-tac-toe board over it) and find the four spots where your dividing lines intersect.

The larger, full-color photos that is this page's focal point sits at the "sweet spot" in the upper right of the layout.

Note, though that this is not the only thing making this the starting point for the viewer's eye. It's a combination of techniques for emphasis that give it this honor: placement PLUS contrast in photo color and size, framing, and an engaging subject looking straight into the camera all add to the strength of this scrapbook page focal point.
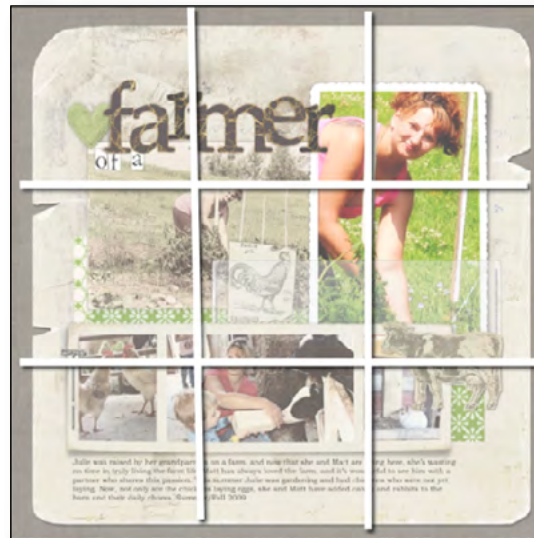
Emphasize with engaging content. A compelling photo—one with a strong image or with people looking into the camera or engaged in an interesting activity—will draw the eye and make a great focal point. You can use cropping to oomph the photo's draw.

"Beach Day" includes 6 photos, and they're all lovely, but the one at the top of the center column stands out because the crop zooms in much closer, the subjects are looking into the camera, and the photo is the most colorful.

If you're a GIS Member, check out:

<u>Focal Points:</u> Masterful Scrapbook Design class on creating and using focal points in design. Ebook + videos with guest teachers Noell Hyman, Kelly Purkey, Krista Sahlin, Betsy Sammarco and Celeste Smith.

emphasizing page parts | emphasize photos

Emphasizing photos. Photos are often the reason for a layout, and they are what most frequently gets emphasized.

Some ways to emphasize photos include: photo editing, cropping, matting, framing, embellishing, and contrasts in size, shape, color, and value. See more concrete ideas for doing this on the Get It Scrapped blog in Creating A Focal Point on Scrapbook Pages.

The layouts we've looked at in the lesson so far have all emphasized photos.

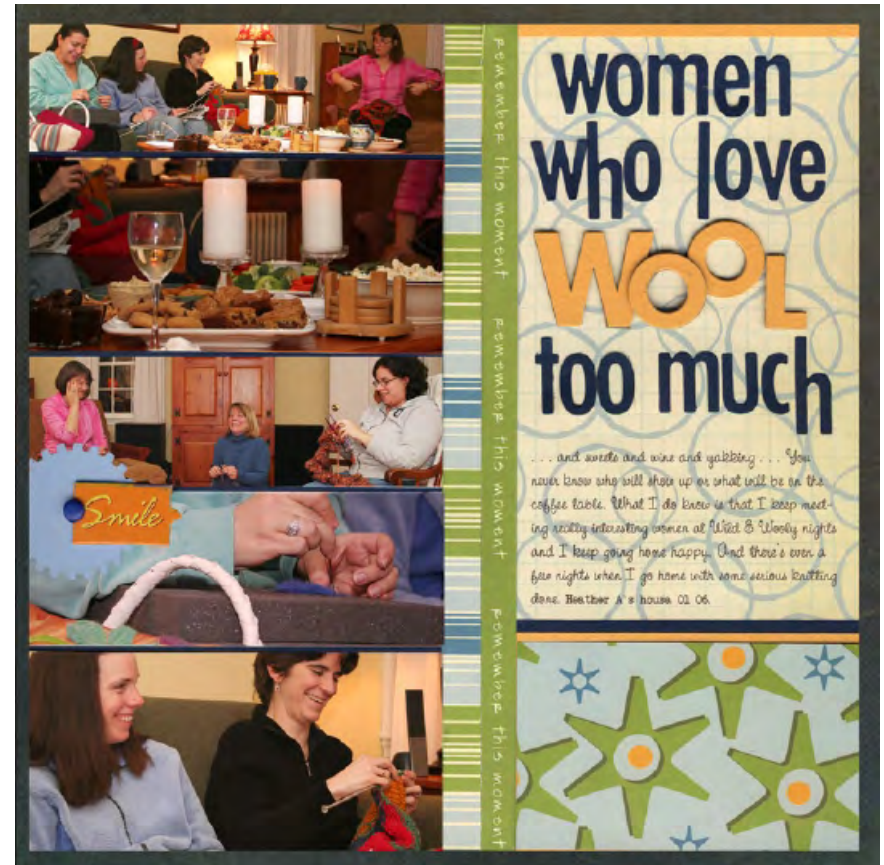**Emphasizing titles.** Scrapbook page focal points are not always photos.

Emphasize your title when you've got a point to make, and words do it best. The point doesn't have to be a serious one—it can be something light. Lots of times we come up with clever titles and showing them off by amping up their design is fun—for you as you scrapbook and for the viewer later.

Emphasize your titles with all of the things we talked about above. This means you could:

• give it lots of real estate on the page
• use a typeface that contrasts with your journaling OR use multiple faces that contrast with one another in the title
• decorate your letters with ties, gems, rub-ons, paint, ink — whatever you think works!

The title on "Women who Love Wool too Much" plays with the title of a book called "Women who Love Men too Much."
It seemed perfect for these photos from my knitting group—which we call "Wild and Woolly Night." I gave the title a good chunk of space on the page and used two different fonts for my die-cut letters. "Wool" used a chunk font and irregularly sized letters. What's more, "wool" is punched out of bright orange cardstock layered on punched chipboard to give it more dimension than anything else on the page.

Emphasizing journaling. When the story is the most important part of the page, you might choose to make the journaling your focal point. Think about the ways there are to create emphasis and then how they could be applied to emphasizing journaling on a page. Here are a few ideas:

- give the journaling lots of space on the page proportional to the rest of the elements
- isolate it with a white space
- put it on an interesting background (challenge yourself to figure out a compelling background)
- print it over a faded photo
- embellish it
- play with the type in the words.

Here are a couple of examples of dressing up your journaling so that it packs some punch on your pages if you'd like to emphasize your story.

Alignments (and a clever shaped peak on the last column) make the journaling on "Pool Days" eye-catching.

The journaling on "Approachable" includes selected words that are emphasized with a different and larger font. This gives the journaling more visual power.
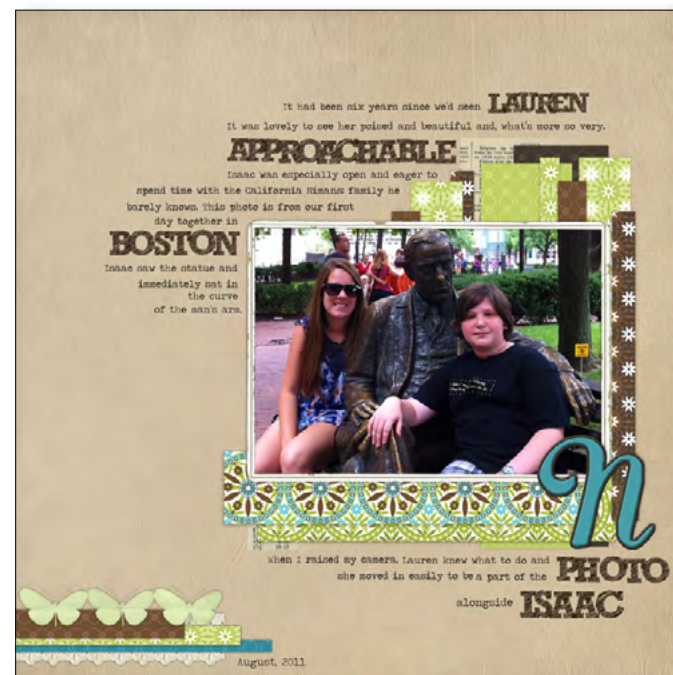
Emphasizing embellishments. On "The Challenges of Today," I emphasized the image of a bull looking straight out. The emphasis is a result of its large size, the surrounding white space, and its "bleeding" off the edge of the page.

When a known image or shape bleeds off the side of your canvas, it actually takes up space that doesn't exist. The viewer's mind completes the missing part of the image and, thus, it ends up thinking of your page as being on a bigger canvas than it really is.

summary

The items on your page should have differing levels of visual weight--and thus emphasis. Emphasis shows the viewer what's important on your page and helps create a way into your story. Create emphasis with: contrast, isolation, placement, embellishment, and engaging content.
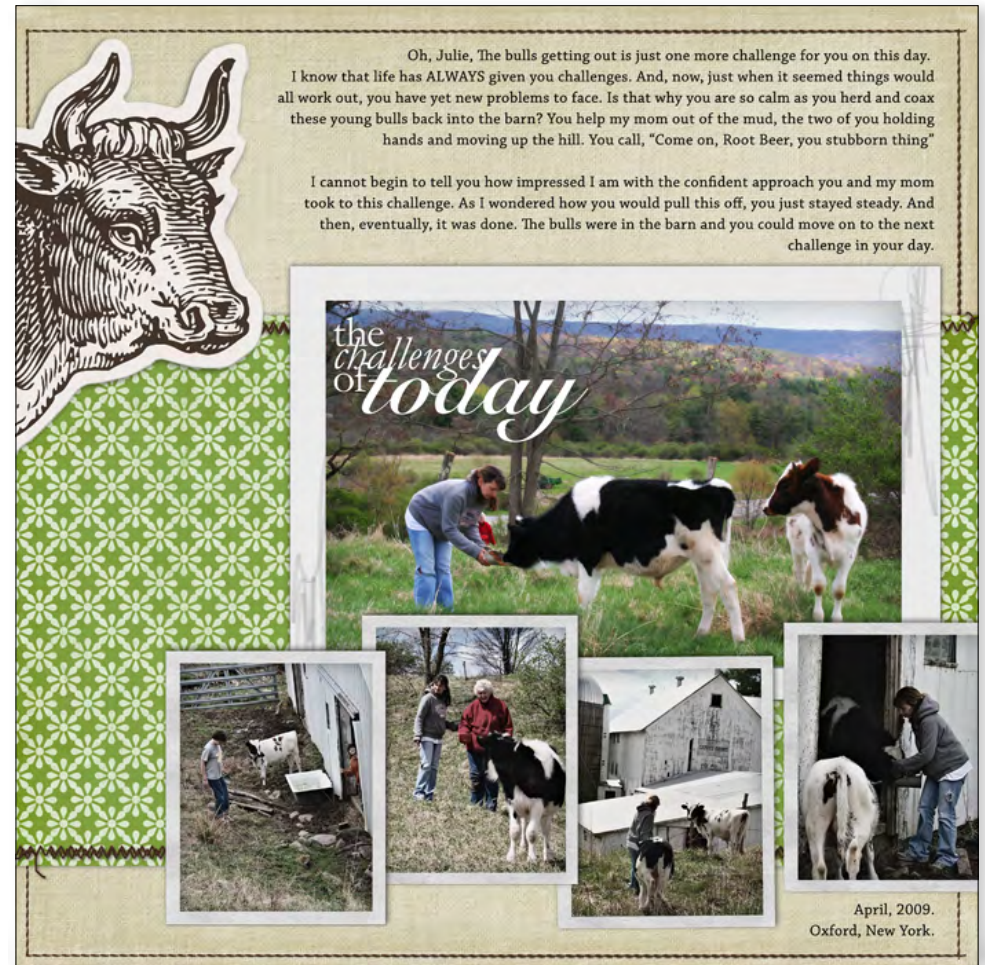
{LESSON THREE} # Design Principle of Repetition

Unity refers to how the parts of a design come together as a whole. If the elements on a scrapbook page look like they belong together (as opposed to having been collected and placed randomly) you have unity. In the quest for a design with unity, the WHOLE design is more important than any element or grouping in it.

Including repetitions is a good way to work toward achieving unity on a scrapbook page.

Repetition is a great tool for creating unity on a page—or in any work of art. Think about the recurrences of stormy weather in *Wuthering Heights*, of debt in the novels of Charles Dickens, and of smoke (from pipes, cigars, gas lamps, and, finally, of the fire) in Citizen Kane.

Think about that thrill you get when watching a movie or reading a book – and some image or key behavior reappears – and you say: "Oh, yes! I knew that was going to happen-"? BUT you didn't totally know, you just knew when you saw it that it was right. It was surprising but not unexpected.

Repetition without some variety can (and probably will) be dull. The design challenge, then, is to think about how to change something while keeping it the same. For example, Charlotte Bronte put that storm in both the weather and in Heathcliff's soul.

Cover Illustration by Fritz Eichenberg for 1943 edition of Wuthering Heights shows Heathcliff with his stormy soul out in the stormyweather. (Source: Flickr / JoulesVintage)

repetitions with variety are the key

Add repetitions with variety. Ways to get repetition with variety on the scrapbook page include:

- repeating an image or shape in different colors.
- repeating an image or shape in different sizes.
- repeating a color in different elements (i.e., alphas, ribbon, mats).
- using a variety of tones of the same color
- repeating a motif in different styles

On this page, "On Account of Snow," snowflakes are a repeated motif. There are snowflakes in a variety of sizes, colors, textures and shapes. She the large Kraft snowflake behind a blue flair. Smaller doodled snowflakes at bottom right, a crumpled and splattered snowflake near the journaling. There are also small snowflake illustrations on a patterned paper block below the photos, and the doilies, while not snowflakes, do share a lacy shape with them.

Add repetitions of color. In addition to repetitions of snowflakes, on "On Account of Snow," there are repetitions of the color blue.

There's blue in the tied rubber band, and then a darker blue on the flair. The blue in the title, though, which fills a greater visual area than the other two, is a pale blue.

On "Lamprey Skating,: repetitions of red flow through the photos, and then repetitions of yellow occur in the embellishments to create a visual triangle.

Add repetitions of texture. Repeating textures is another way to get the unity that repetitions with variety give a page.

On "Charming Kittens," I established three foundational embellishment spots with paper clouds and immediately topped them each with cork so that I've got repeated texture. Each of these cork pieces, though, has a different shape. There's a heart, a cloud, and a geo-tag. Glitter elements add another layer of textural repetitions as do the hand-stitched flowers.

Add repetitions of shape. Color is my most-commonly used method of including repetitions, and shape runs a close second.

On "Rabbit Rabbit Hare Hare," I've included many repetitions of rings and circles :

- There are chipboard rings (painted brown) and circling my son's initial and the "1" that represents the first day of the month

- There is a punched tag that says "Good Memories" (notice how this is backed up with a slightly larger brown circle which ends up looking like a ring and creating the third point in a visual triangle of brown rings)

- There are three different strips of patterned paper with circles bordering the page at top and bottom (and even the circles in these patterned papers are surrounded by or include dots)

- Notice the brad alphas spelling "July" are circular.
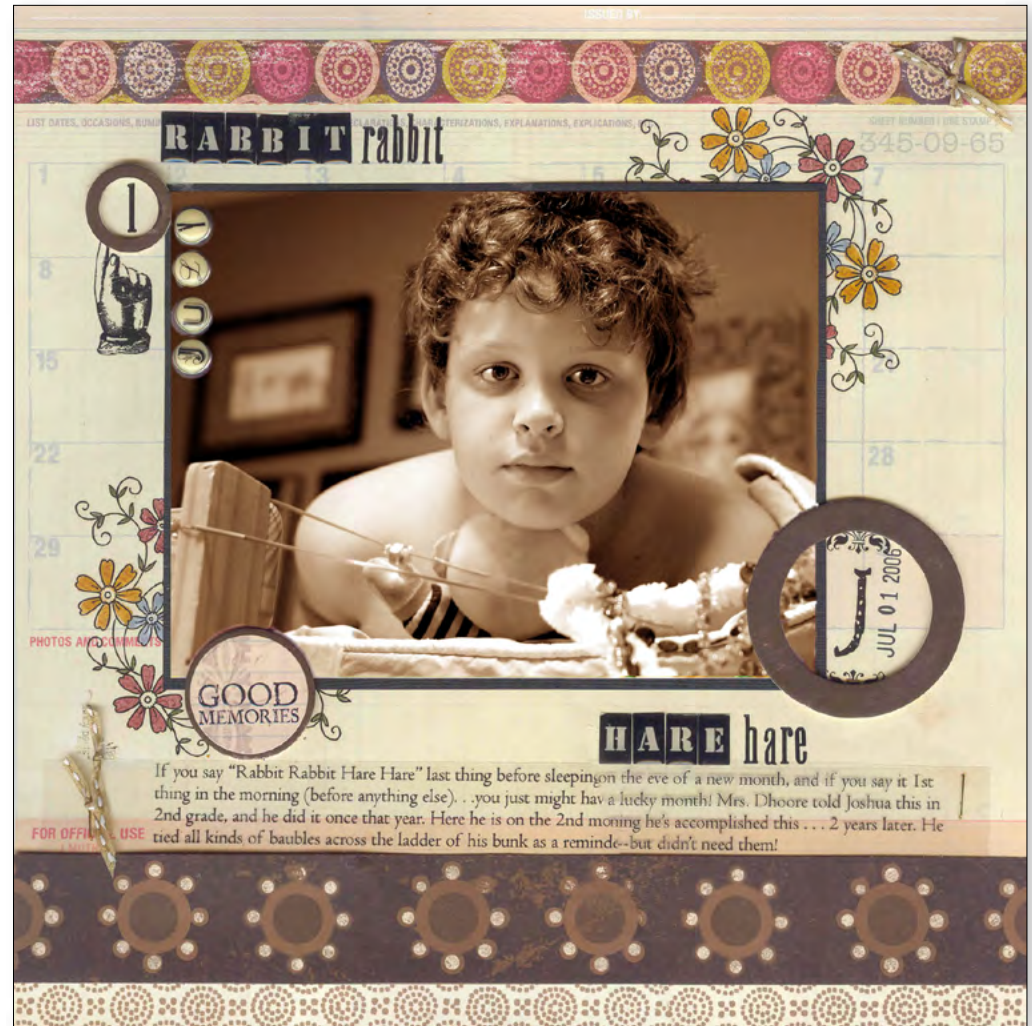
Add conceptual or themed repetitions. Sometimes your repetitions will be around a concept. For example, when you're making a themed page, you might find yourself collecting different images or word embellishments that are related by subject.

On "Happy Halloween," I included words, images, and colors that all connote Halloween: the bat, the monster, the word "boo," and the blacks, golds, and purples.

Add repetitions of motif.
Combining images of the same thing but in different styles and formats is a great idea for getting repetitions with variety onto your scrapbook pages—and creating unity along the way.

"Awesome Sight" is a page about my Dad, who loves the outdoors but who reached a point where he could longer move freely to enjoy it. He did get to sit on the front porch, though, and he loved his bird feeders and looking at birds. On this page there is a little sticker bird, a larger die-cut bird, and a collaged bird.

summary

Repetition is a great tool for creating unity on a page—or in any work of art. It's important that you have variety in your repetitions. You can create repetitions with color, texture, shape, thematic elements, and motif.

{LESSON FOUR} # Design Principle of Alignment

The principle of alignment tells us to consciously place each element on the page with a consideration for its relation to other elements on the page. Using alignments, you can create visual connections between elements, even if they are not next to one another.

While the landscape photo at the top of "Carry a Big Stick" is separated from the block of four photos below by a wide gutter, alignments connect it to them nonetheless. The left edge of the photo lines up with the left edges of the two photos below on the left—and the same is true for the right side.

The title block and the journaling block also share side edge alignments. By right justifying the journaling, the gutter between journaling and photos is made clear—adding to the strength of this vertical line.

To use alignments well, look for a strong line and make it stronger with clear alignments.

alignment and unity

Alignment and unity. In Lesson #3, I talked about unity – about the idea that the whole design is more important than any individual element or grouping. Alignments are a great tool for unifying and organizing the material on your page so that the viewer can take it in and understand and enjoy it.

The elements on "After Our Seder" are organized into two columns. The column to the left is created with edge alignments – alignments of the left and right edges of each paper strip, photo, and piece of trim.

There are also center alignments in this piece. The brad and the bracketed paper above the series of photos are centered. Additionally, the journaling and smaller photo to the right are all "center" aligned.

alignment and white space

Alignment and white space. White space refers to the areas of your page that are not filled with elements. White space not only gives the eye a resting point, it provides contrast and helps elements stand out. It's a great tool for grouping elements—and it helps you establish a hierarchy. (Think back to Lesson #2 on Emphasis to remember why this is important).

align with the photo edges. The effect of these alignments is to create page margins and gutters—which are the white space on this page. See how powerful alignments are?

Now here's the important part about white space and alignments: alignments can define the white space on your page.

"Joshua is Twelve" is a controlled and linear layout with all photo and journaling block edges aligned. Even the left and right edges of the title and decorative bars

Joshua is Twelve

Your birthday fell on a Tuesday this year -- which means you had school AND music lessons. Dad & I picked you and Isaac up, we went to music lessons and then hit your favorite restaurant: Pizza Hut (you're a much cheaper date than Isaac). After that, we went to gamestop and got you a new game, then headed home for gifts and jello cake. Happy Birthday, Josh.

creating alignments

To create alignments, find a strong line and use it – emphasize it – make it stronger. Place each element in relation to another element. And then . . . once you have a strong line, break out purposefully to keep things interesting.

creating alignments | centered alignment

Centered alignments. Aligning elements upon their center points (either vertically or horizontally) is often discouraged in design because it can be dull. The reasons for this have to do with asymmetry frequently being more visually interesting than symmetry.

Symmetrical or center-aligned designs are often used for formal design pieces like wedding invitations. Setting yourself the task to make a center-aligned design that has pizzazz is a great way to push yourself to designing in a new way.

"Stuffteds" is a page in which the elements are center aligned – except for the embellishments at top right and bottom left of the photo. While this is a center-aligned design, I really like it. Perhaps it's the curves and whimsical elements that save it from feeling overly formal and give it a bit of energy.

Edge alignments. Photos, blocks of journaling, and mats (all typically rectangular shapes) lend themselves to edge alignment. It is these kinds of alignments that create the organizing white space of margins and gutters.

Once you've purposefully incorporated alignments (and, thus, defined white space), it's O.K. and often essential to purposefully break those alignments for design interest.

On "My Inheritance" the edges of each title line, each photo, each strip of paper, and the journaling block all align with other elements. The embellishment cluster at right then breaks out of those lines to add interest and break into the white space and keep it from being totally symmetrical and regular and even dull.

"Mast Way Goodbye" uses edge alignments to organize 10 busy photos onto one two-page spread. The block of photos to the left is from the "graduation" ceremony. The strip through the middle is from the party afterward. The two remaining photos (which are not aligned) are details of my son and the decorations.

Notice how the right and left title edges are aligned with the photo block. It's attention to these kinds of details that will give you a strong page design.

You may align your elements along an axis. For example, you may have items in two columns, and those items might have varying widths. They they won't align on both edges for neat columns. Try aligning the ones in the left column along their right edges and then the ones in the right column along their left edges. The result will be a strong axis line between the two.

"Fast Forward" aligns the page elements along a vertical axis that runs between the two photos and the journaling. It's emphasized with strips of ribbon and stitching. Notice how the journaling on the right is left justified and the journaling on the left is right justified (remember: find a line and make it stronger).

The pieces of "Wood Cutting are arranged along an axis that runs between two columns. The right edges of everything in the first column are aligned and the left edges of everything in the second column are aligned.

On "Beach Days" a relaxed and imprecise horizontal axis run between the two rows of photos in the photo grouping. It organizes and provide a guide for working with photos of different sizes.
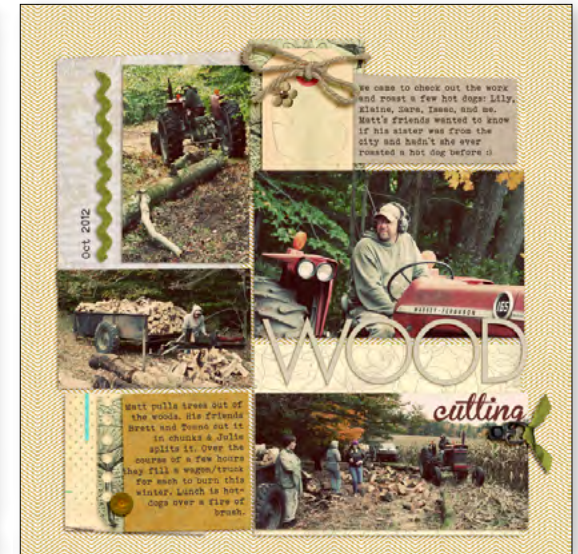
summary

Arrange your elements to create lines that make sense, that organize your page, and that just look good.

Look for opportunities to create lines. And if you're going to make a line: make it a strong one. Don't go half-way with it.

See how photos, paper strips, brushwork, journaling blocks and title work all align on "Pool Days."

For more reading on alignments, check out the Get It Scrapped blog:

- Strengthen your scrapbook page design with alignments

- Justification that strengthens scrapbook page design

{LESSON FIVE} Design Principle of Contrast

We all routinely scan our surroundings – even when we focus on a spot, we eventually change our field of vision. As we make this change, we do a quick scan of the environment, unconsciously looking for elements that stand out—elements that **contrast**. Think of the hunting lion looking for that movement or bit color that identifies prey.

When one element is different from another, there is contrast. The bigger the differences, the greater the contrast, and the more likely the scanning eye will stop. Purposeful use of contrast is a key element in solid page designs.

On "For Real Neighbors" the whole cluster contrasts strongly with the base and results in a page with interestingly shaped white space that grabs the eye and moves it through the page.

contrast

A good way to see what stands out on a page is to look at a small version of it, and squint your eyes. If you're working with a paper page, put it on the floor and stand on a chair above it. If you're working with a digital page, zoom out so that you've got a small version on screen. What stands out? What catches your eye?

On "Learn to Crochet," the red heart at the center stands out most. Usually my photos are the focal points of my pages, but these photos are quite busy.

Thus, to draw the eye into the busy photos and my story, I used an oversized and boldly colored element to catch the eye. Not only does it grab the eye and get the viewer started looking at the page, it connects this larger cluster to the cluster with the title and journaling because there is a smaller but same-colored button there.

Notice how there are three clusters on the page, each isolated with white space. Because the background is a light neutral, each cluster stands out quite clearly as a separate entity. With purposeful contrast you get appeal and clarity.

contrast strengthens page design

Incorporating contrast strengthens your page design

- It adds visual interest (especially if you use strong, eye-catching contrasts).

- It gives the eye a starting point by providing emphasis.

- It lets you establish relative importance between elements. Use it to make smaller or lighter elements recede while helping other elements take center stage.

- It gives you a way to guide the viewer's eye through the page (from one eye-catching point to the next-- probably with repetitions).

Be sure that all of the contrasts you include are in support of one another and exist in a hierarchy, themselves.

The title on "It's a Train!" stands out because of contrasts in size and color.

creating contrast

When you begin laying out a scrapbook page, the following are the easiest contrasts to think about incorporating.
- size
- color
- value
- type

creating contrast | size

Create contrast with size.
When one element is an OBVIOUSLY different size from the others, it stands one. Two things two note:

1. It's not always about being BIGGER . . . it's about being DIFFERENT. Thus, an element smaller than the rest can stand out as much as an element that's bigger.

2. Make the difference OBVIOUS. Don't go just part way.

The photo on "Halloween" is obviously larger than all other elements and immediately engages the viewer. It also emphasizes my son's costume and demeanor this Halloween.

Create contrast with color. Some color schemes have more inherent contrast than others. Complementary colors (those that sit directly across from one another on the color wheel) will contrast more strongly than "analogous" colors (those that sit next to one another on the color wheel).

Note that along with color differences, you should pay attention to opportunities to vary values (relative lightness and darkness) also.

"Done That" is a high-energy story that I told with strongly contrasting green (from the photos) and orange (in the patterned paper foundation). It's a good match for my story.

The right column is about photos and dominated by green. The left column is about the story and presented on a foundation of orange. The orange embellishment on the mostly-green photo stands out because of contrast and it contributes to the flow through the page.

Create contrast with value.
Differences in lightness and darkness are another way to draw the eye.

Here, on "We Love the Sunny Days of Summer," the photo is the darkest piece on the page and it sits at page center.

Behind it is a blue patterned paper with a slightly lighter blue made even lighter by its mix with white. And then below that is a piece of torn paper with strips showing above and below in paler blue.

These value differences help drive the eye right into the photo in the center with its deep blue sky and water.

Create contrast with type.
Incorporating differences in type is an easy way to get contrast onto the page— especially when you combine differences in typeface with differences in the alpha and font colors, values, and sizes.

The title work on "Whimsical Procrastinator" combines large script with a sketched and outlined typeface, and it is the focal point of the page.

summary

Contrasts are at the heart of what makes a page "pop" and draw the eye. Take a look at "Without Spiders" here. Not only are there several contrasts within the title and type treatment (color, size, typeface style, and value), there are contrasts on the page as a whole: of value, color, shape, and size.

Take a look at your pages – surely you've been incorporating contrasts. What are you go-to techniques? And what techniques do you need to start using?

{LESSON SIX} # Design Principle of Balance

What are the balancing acts in your life right now?

Are you trying to get enough exercise to feel good about that big ice cream cone you had last night? Maybe you're balancing saving and spending money. Perhaps you're getting up a little earlier so that you'll be done with work in time to spend time with family or friends.

Balance is about mixing and matching, giving and taking. It's about placing three small stones on one side of the scale to balance the single large stone.

When the different parts of your life are in balance with one another, your days are easier to navigate. When the parts of a scrapbook page are in balance with one another, you've got a page that's pleasing to look at and that tells your story well.
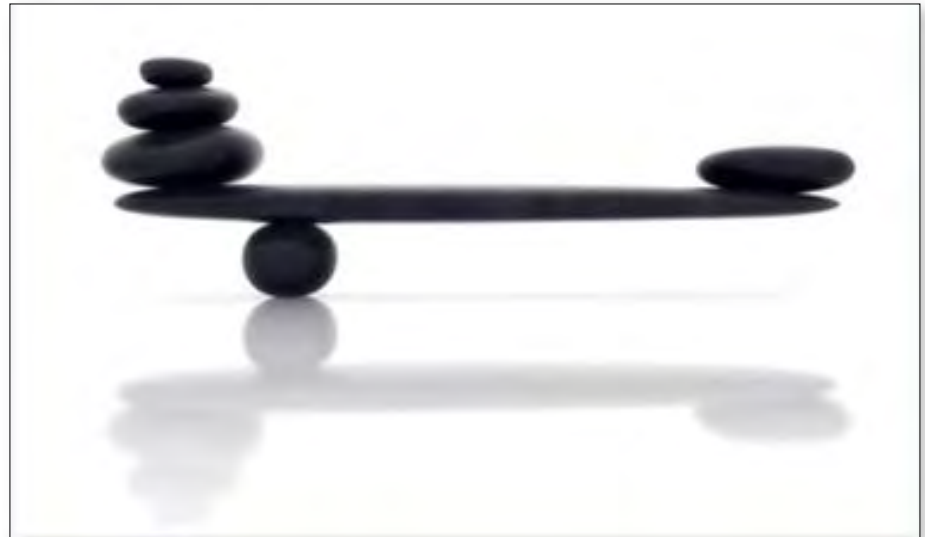
balance on scrapbook pages

Physical balance in our surroundings is something we're used to. We understand that if all the kids sit at one end of a narrow bench, it's going to tip, whereas distributing the weight means everything will be stable. Achieving balance on a scrapbook page isn't quite as clear cut: there isn't any actual physical weight to work with.

Successfully incorporating balance into a scrapbook page design is actually creating an illusion of balance. While you might not always be sure that you've been successful, what you can be sure about is when you have NOT been successful. You'll sense it.

Refining your ability to "see" visual weights and how they play off one another will help you design well-balanced pages.

Read on to understand how it is that the smaller cluster at top right can balance the larger four-block grid on "Greet the New Year."

simple machines and balance

There's a formula you might have learned about in science class that uses weights and distances from a fulcrum for figuring out how to get balance. I'm going to simplify it with a couple of cats and a dog.

If two cats of the same weight were sitting on a board with a fulcrum smack dab in the middle, the board would balance.
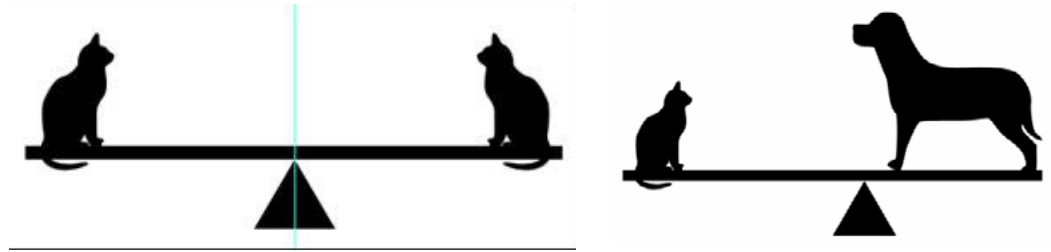
However . . . if there were a dog a lot bigger than the cat on one side of the board, we'd need to move the dog closer to the fulcrum in order to get that board to balance. The point you should take from this is that balance takes into account a fulcrum (or in page design this could be thought of as an axis) and weights.

visual forces and balance

So how do we "weigh" things in a visual design? Psychological concepts about how humans perceive things can be applied to art. The canvas and the elements on it work together, affecting perceived visual weights and balance and even causing a viewer to perceive visual "pull" or perceptual forces.

I placed a black circle on a white square. But you do not see the circle and the square separately. You see them as a whole: you see the circle as being off-center within the square. There's more, though: there is something restless about the circle. It looks as though it was at the center and wishes to return--or as though it wants to move away even farther away from center.

Objects in an image have weight and directional pull. How that object sits on its ground (or the canvas) can create balance or imbalance. What's more, how it sits in relationship to other elements causes balance or imbalance.
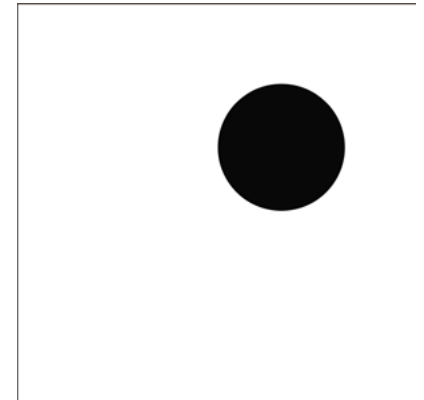
These ideas about perceived forces are from work by Rudolf Arnheim who brought psychological concepts about perception to the visual arts

visual weight

Use these general rules about psychological perception of elements on a ground to get a sense of how elements on your page take on visual weight.

Most scrapbook pages that achieve good visual balance do it either through symmetrical balance or asymmetrical balance.

Dark colors have more weight than lighter colors.

Bright colors have more weight than neutrals—in fact some colors just are weightier than others. Red tends to be heavy, and yellow tends to be light.

Warm colors tend to expand (and, thus, thus, have more weight) than cooler colors.

Regular (and known) shapes (rectangles, circles, triangles) are weightier than irregular shapes.

Larger elements are heavier than smaller ones.

As an element moves away from the center of your page, it gains weight.

An interesting element has more weight than a less-interesting one.

An element on the right side of your layout has more weight than the very same element on the left side.

Elements on the top seem to have more weight than those on the bottom.

The weight of an element increases with its degree of isolation.

Large flat areas without much detail can be balanced by smaller irregularly shaped objects since the eye is led towards the more intricate shape.

Filled space has more weight than empty (or white) space.

Elements on the right side of the layout have more weight than the very same elements on the left side.

Elements at the top of your layout have more weight than the very same elements on the bottom.

Elements surrounded (or isolated) by white space take on weight.

Interesting elements (this could be due to many things including interesting texture, image, dimension, color, or shape) have more weight than less interesting elements.

Most scrapbook pages that achieve good visual balance do it either through symmetrical balance or asymmetrical balance.

To get symmetrical balance, place items of equal visual weight on either side of a centrally place fulcrum. On "Set A Course" items are mirrored on either side of a vertical axis.

You don't have to have such close symmetry though in elements for this balance to occur. On "Favorite Stop" this mirroring doesn't occur, and, yet, the weights on either side of a central fulcrum are generally equal.

"Without Spiders" is a page with approximate symmetry around both horizontal and vertical axes. Imagine folding the page in half either way and how the sides would mostly match up.

More Reading
Scrapbook Page Design: Asymmetrical Balance

Scrapbooking with Symmetry | This Formal Composition Yields Pages with Appeal
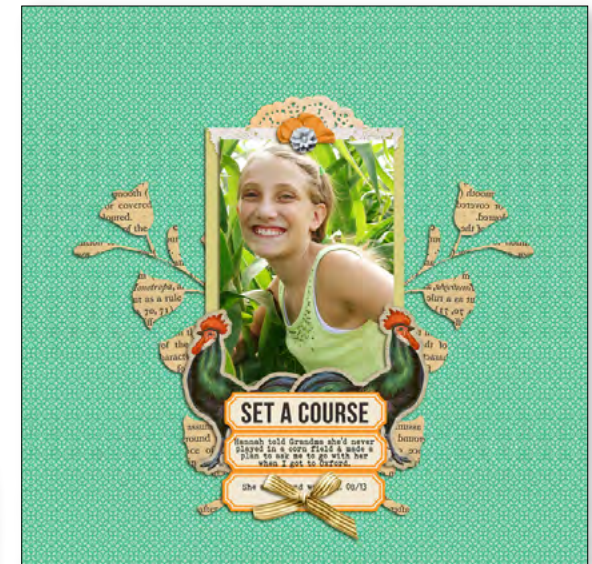
symmetry | asymmetrical balance

Asymmetry in scrapbook page design means that none of your page elements are mirrored on the opposite side. Equal weights are not balanced around a central fulcrum. Rather, the fulcrum is moved off center and unequal visual weights are placed to create a sense of visual balance.

Thanksgiving menu is split down the middle, divided into two columns but the elements on either side are quite different. More space is filled on the left side with a band of photos, while the right has one photo, title and journaling.

How does the right side balance the left? Items on the right take on more visual weight, as do items that are higher up and isolated by white space. This grouping meets all that criteria--and it's more interesting because this is where the story is being told.

On "Greet the New Year," the photo and journaling at top right balance against the grid of four blocks at bottom left. The cluster at top right gets extra weight from: placement high up, placement on the right side, and charm. It gets enough weight to balance against the two-by-two grouping across and below.

testing balance

Ask yourself where your eye goes when you look at the page. Is it moving around the page more or less evenly (thus having balance)? Or does it always return to an area that is not your intended focal-point? If so, you should rethink your design. If not, you are good to go.

summary

Objects in an image have weight and directional pull. How they sit on the canvas and in relation to one another can create balance or imbalance.

There are general rules of psychological perception that tells us how an item in a visual design takes on weight that we can use to create a balanced scrapbook page. The most common ways to create visual balance on a scrapbook page are symmetrically or asymmetrically.

{LESSON SEVEN} Design Principle of Flow

visual flow

When you can incorporate visual flow into your scrapbook page design, you'll guide the viewer's eye through it, revealing what's important along the tour.

take a step back

In order to talk about the sixth design principle in this class—flow—we need to step back.

Let's go back to **contrast**–to that idea that we all routinely scan our surroundings looking for things to put together, for patterns that help us make sense of what we're seeing. Our eyes are drawn to the things that stand out.

Source: stock.xchng / chingtc

Let's go back to **repetitions** – to how repeating things like colors, images, and materials connects the elements of

combine design principles to make flow

the page to one another and contributes to design unity.

Let's go back to **emphasis** – to how you cue the viewer to what's important depending upon what you emphasize. Remember that when one item is emphasized above all others, the viewer knows where to start taking in the story of your page.

Let's go back to **alignments** – to the idea that when two elements are aligned they are connected–even if they're not next to one another.

It's all intertwined. Using these design principles as you put together a scrapbook page will enable you to create a flow. By that I mean it will enable you to guide the viewer's eye on a path around your page.

Why do this? So you can show the viewer what's important.

When visitors come to my home, I really don't want them seeing into the bathroom that's next to my front door. I want them to look straight in to my home—to the big windows overlooking the river. So . . . I keep the bathroom door shut (or at least I try to) and I have spots of color leading the eye right over to those windows. Right now it's a series of yellows—a large planter, a yellow vase, and a wide bowl.

The human eye (and mind) will follow the natural order of things. The eye will follow:

- a sequential pattern
- the eyes of the people in your photos
- a line of perspective
- implied motion in your photo

**The direction your subjects look will direct the viewer's eye.** On "Holiday Shopping," a downward diagonal flow is created by the direction in which the girl holding the shirt looks. Her image is the most closely cropped, it's linked with the title, and it's a relatively bright spot on the page. Also, we're accustomed reading pages starting in the top left corner where this photo is placed. Thus, it's a natural starting point for the viewer of this page. The viewer's eye should follow her gaze, down to the embellishment and title and down to the photo at bottom right and it's embellishing details. An embellishment cluster at top right brings the eye back up and around.

A line of perspective can direct the viewer's eye. On "For Love," the diagonal of the horizon divides the photo into light and dark and makes a line our eyes follow--right down to the photo and title at the bottom of the cluster and then onto the rest of the page elements.

The viewer's eye will follow a sequence. You can set up a sequence as simply as by arranging similar shapes in a pattern. On "Is the Shortcut Shorter?" six identically-sized photos are lined up across the page and draw the eye through their story. This horizontal flow is amplified by the title placement. The beginning is at top left and the end is at bottom right. To read it, the eye will move across the page. One more thing to think about (in the natural tendency category) is that those who read left-to-write and top-to-bottom are prepared to move their eye in this pattern.
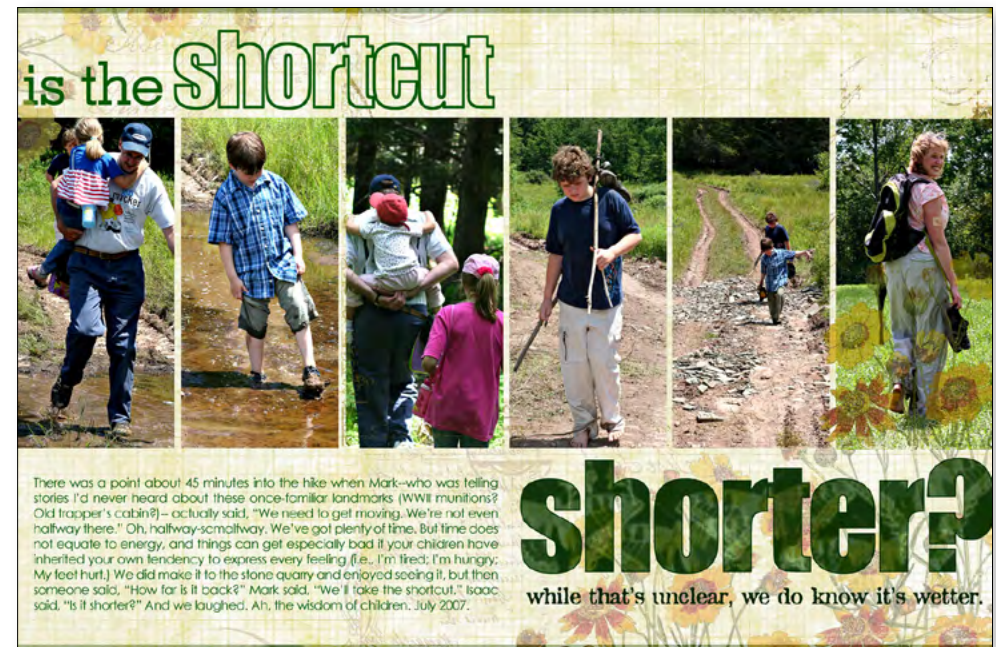
On "Cause and Effect" there are several ways in which a sequence is set up:

- a series of aligned photos moving horizontally across the page
- a sequence of numbers
- arrows pointing the way

Combine an understanding of these natural tendencies with good use of design principles and you'll be offering guided tours of your pages with no problem.

Use contrast and repetition to catch the eye and direct it.

These two design principles--contrast and repetition--are the easiest to use for creating eye-catching spots that incorporate connecting repetitions and that the eye around the page, thus creating flow.

On "Ride for 2," three clusters--each including cork and the color yellow stand out and are connected to one another, thus creating flow on the page.

Create flow in a visual triangle pattern. When you have three spots on your page that stand out, you create a visual triangle that catches the eye and takes it on a tour around the page. In design, odd numbers of objects are more interesting to the eye than even numbers of objects. An odd number of objects can be arranged both symmetrically and asymmetrically. Three is the odd number that is most frequently used in all kinds of design. Just for a start, look for it in architecture, home decor, and floral design.

Repetitions of green (which contrast with the background) create a visual triangle on "Tender Boy" that moves from title to bottom right to low on the left edge of the page.

On "Glass," three repetitions of circles (and the color green) create a visual triangle that moves from top left to side right to side left.

Create flow in a diagonal pattern. Composing a photograph so that your subject is at a diagonal almost always makes a more compelling shot--and we saw that on "For Love" earlier in this lesson. The same principle can be applied to the arrangement of pieces on the page. Note: the diagonal line does not need to be literal. Rather, you just need to set up at least two points along your diagonal that stand out.

A diagonal moving from top left to bottom right is created on "For Real Neighbors" by the placement of embellishments, title, and journaling above and to the left of the photo cluster and then below and to the right of the cluster.

Create flow in a z-flow pattern. If you read a language that's written left-to-right, your eye is used to moving in a z-pattern: it begins at the left, proceeds to the right, and then comes back again to the left. Since the brain already looks for patterns that flow this way, you can place items on your scrapbook page on a z-path to successfully guide the viewer's eye through it.

In "1st Fine Day," the "1" in the title is emphasized by its bold red color and its size and by the fact that it contains the page journaling. The eye moves across the three photos at page top and then comes back over to the beginning of the bottom strip of photos – and then across (left-to-right) again.

Create flow in a circular pattern. When you arrange your page elements (and the points that stand out and draw the eye) in a circular flow, you keep the viewer cycling through the page. On "We Love the Sunny Days," the photos are the dominant elements on the page. Their arrangement along with a triangle of white spots draws the eye clockwise around the page—and around again, and again.

summary

We've now made it through six principles of design you can use for making great looking scrapbook pages! And we wrapped up with a great principle—flow—because it calls upon you to put everything you've learned so far to work. In the next lesson we'll begin focusing on the key parts of a scrapbook page.

{LESSON EIGHT} **Page Parts**

Fresh ideas for scrapbook page design come easily when you've got: 1) a facility with the basics of page design, and 2) an understanding of what role the essential parts of a scrapbook page can play.

design principles

We've spent the last 6 lessons looking at the design principles of:
- emphasis
- repetition
- alignment
- contrast
- balance
- flow

These are your tools for combining the parts of a scrapbook page to make a well-designed layout efficiently.

page parts

The key parts of a scrapbook page are: photos, journaling, title, embellishments, canvas.

Not every page has every part—but most pages have most parts.

Approach each new scrapbook page by

1. taking inventory of how these parts will need to be incorporated, and
2. considering how best to combine them given the six basic design principles we've covered.

Take a look at the layout here and the labeled page parts. Can you now go through and find the design principles at work. As you find them, note which page parts are involved. For example: emphasis is incorporated with a focal point photo; alignments exist across multiple page parts with the left edge of the title block, journaling, and supporting photo all lined up. What else do you see? Can you find repetitions and contrasts?

In the rest of this lesson I'll outline a process for selecting and placing page parts that will be expanded in subsequent lessons.
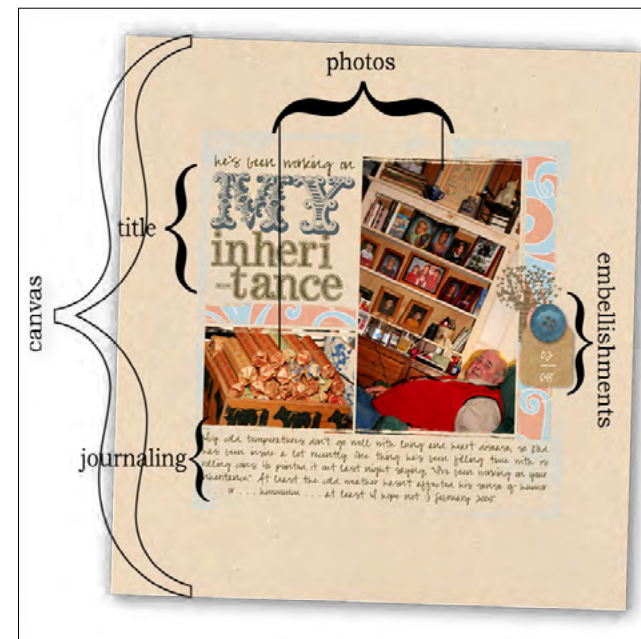
Q1: What's the point of the page? What is its purpose?

Begin by asking yourself about the purpose of your page. Knowing the answer to this will drive your page-parts choices.

There's a good chance your purpose in creating any page will be one of the following:

- for your creative expression

- to provide an opportunity to experiment and/or play with product and/or design

- to explore a topic and better understand it

- to create a record of a something that happened (anything from a brief moment to a big event)

- to express how you feel about a specific subject and/or person

- to convey a message to whoever you plan to share this page with

- . . . or it may be something else . . . just figure that out and hold it in your mind as you move forward

My purpose with "New Spot" was to play with the design principle of balance--specifically, to make an asymmetrically balanced page and to make something really pretty to present this moment that I was primarily recording for myself.
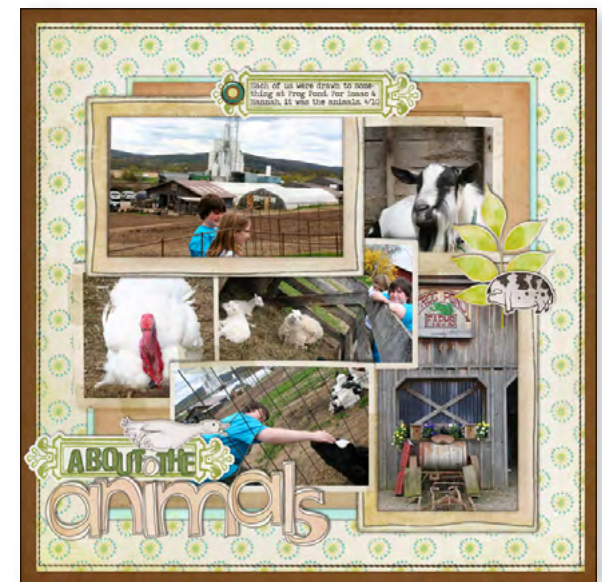
"About the Animals" needed to hold LOTS of photos and record an outing we made with extended family to a farm. It's part of an album from a week-long visit and I wanted to get a sense of the place and the animals onto a one-page layout.

Q2: Based upon the answer to Q1, consider the role of photos and journaling.

With your purpose in mind, consider what role the photos and journaling will play on the page. A big part of your work is allocating space on the canvas to include the pieces that will tell your story. You need to be able to plan to do this.

ask yourself about photos

- what photo(s) do you have?
- which do you **want** to include?
- which do you **need** to include to achieve the purpose of your page from Q1?

When I got ready to scrapbook the photos on "Sawmill," my purpose was to celebrate my brother and a new piece of equipment he had.

The one large photo here was what really compelled me, and I could have told the story with just this photo.

I included more, though--a shot of his tractor and of him with my son and his dog--because I love the context these other shots add (and because I didn't need much room for journling).

These articles cover some of the basics of making photo selections and organizing photos

- How to Select Events Photos for Scrapbooking
- Organizing Events Photos
- Organizing Everyday Life Photos
- Scrapbooking Stories on Two-Page Layouts

ask yourself about journaling

Now consider your journaling requirements:
- how much journaling do you need in order to tell the story of your page?
- how much space (relative to other parts) will you need for the journaling?

On "Playing Solitaire," I started by thinking about photos: two photos would have sufficed--one of my husband and son and one of my husband's hand guiding my son's hand to place a card in the game--but I loved all of these photos, and the interaction they showed, so I included more.

Once I knew the photos I was including, I thought about journaling. I needed space for more than just basic descriptive journaling and so used a linear design in order to carve out a block just for journaling.

Everything becomes more intertwined. You'll start to think about these page parts and how you should choose for good design. You'll circle around, revisiting these pieces in your mind--not for a long time, but as you begin moving things around on the page. It will be an iterative process.

If you want to see more examples and ideas for scrapbook page journaling check out this article -- it has links to 20 free lessons on scrapbook page journaling: 20 Lessons on Scrapbook Page Journaling

Q3. Based upon the answers to Q1 and Q2, consider the role of title, embellishments, and canvas while keeping design principles in mind.

consider title

Now that you've got an understanding of the photos and journaling you'll want to include, think about your title.

- do you need a title?
- would you like to use a clever title or would a simple label work?
- how much space does it seem you have for your title given the photo and journaling requirements?
- would you like your title to be a strong part of the design?
- would you like to use it to create flow?

I like including titles on my pages as much for the cues to subject they provide as for how I use them to create flow, contrast, and emphasis.

The title on "Spring Fever" tells the viewer that this biking was in the spring and not in the winter despite the snow in the photos. Further, it has a spot of red that repeats the red in the brad and my husband's coat. It creates a point on the downward diagonal flow that leads the eye through the page.

MARCH 7, 2012. Busy as you are lately, on this first warm day, you got home and pulled out your bike and Isaac's, pumped up the tires, and took a ride. The next day you rode to work, and then two days later we got another 6 inches of snow—but this coming week, you're on break and it supposed to be warm & sunny.

We've got lots of lessons and ideas for scrapbook page titles at Get It Scrapped all linked up here:
- Roundup of Ideas for Scrapbook Page Titles

consider canvas

Given the amount of space you are thinking you'll need to accommodate photos, journaling and title, what kind of a design will work well? How will you fill your canvas?

Will you need to fill the entire page or could you create a design with generous white space?

Given your page purpose what kind of tone do you want to set? A linear or blocked design will evoke different feelings than that of a freestyle design with flourishes and layers and unusually-shaped white space.

On "I Am a Schlepper," the title is probably the most important page part. It sets a fun, confessional tone, and, along with the photo, cues the viewer to the topic. One revealing photo is all that's needed and the result is lots of white space and a layered approach to the canvas. A cute bird and a row of aligned (but different) buttons are the embellishments.

Here are articles to get you thinking about the many aspects there are to your canvas:

- Get Started Scrapbooking | 6 Ways to Make the Page Canvas
- Get Started Scrapbooking | Why Canvas Shape and Size Matter

consider embellishments

As you start to understand how things are coming together, think about the tone you want to set, and, thus, the type and number of embellishments to include. Consider meaning and what kinds of motifs support your meaning. Think about all of the design principles and how embellishments can help you achieve strong use of them.

"In Your Room" is embellished with an eclectic mix of pieces that remind me of the treasures on my son's shelves. These pieces not only support page meaning, they also add repetitions of color and texture that move the eye through the page.

As you get these considerations about page parts in your mind, start moving things around on the page, working to integrate all of the parts using design principles and seeking a design with unity.

Check out these articles to get an idea of just a few of the things to keep in mind when embellishing pages.

- Place Embellishments to Support Scrapbook Page Flow
- Choosing Embellishments for the Scrapbook Page

4. Start moving things around on the page

With an understanding of your parts, the next step is to start moving things around on the page to get a design that works. This has been a overview of a process for understanding which elements to use. Subsequent lessons will show you more details of each step in the process.

{LESSON NINE} **Photos and Design Principles**

In the last lesson we made the move from focusing on design principles to looking at the basic parts of a scrapbook page. The choices you make regarding each page part should be done with an understanding of the implications for good use of design principles.

Today we'll look at photos. The general process we'll repeat each time we think about and choose photos is to:

1. consider page purpose

2. select photos

3. crop photos and consider placement options

4. place photos in combination with other page parts

More Reading

Photos articles on the Get It Scrapped blog.

If you're a GIS Member

Photos and Photo Play. Masterful Scrapbook Design classes including ebooks and videos with guest teachers including Katrina Kennedy, Anna Aspnes, Jana Morton, and Emily Pitts.

1. Consider Page Purpose

Knowing what you want to achieve on the page will drive your page parts choices. We talked about possible purposes in the previous section.

You can also use the Story Swoop tool which is part of a free Get It Scrapped membership to come to an understanding of your purpose.

2. Select photos

Decide:
- how many photos you will include,
- which photos you will include,
- and whether a photo or photo grouping will be your page focal point.

"Memorial Day" is an event page. I wanted to get lots of shots of the people and activities at our local parade (and that drove my decision to use a two-page canvas). I chose two photos to emphasize. The close in shot of my son and his friend in combination with the title is the focal point. The large shot of the boys posed with our local militia re-enactors is the next stop of the page. The rest of the photos are in a supporting block.

3. Crop photos

This is where you start thinking about how you'll use the design principles to achieve the effect you want.

crop photos | design principle: emphasis

If a photo is going to be your focal point, find a way to crop and emphasize it.

The focal point on "It's a Big Memory" is the photo in the middle with the title coming in a close second. Note how all of the photos are the same size but the one in the middle still dominates the other two.

That's because:

1. it's cropped in closer on my face,
2. it sits on top of everything else, and
3. it has a fancy frame.

Decide how much you want your photos to contrast with the background and with each other. Revisit the Contrast Lesson from this class, and keep in mind that for contrast to be a strong part of your design it needs to be obvious—no going part of the way.

Cropping options include:

• all photos the same size, with a focal photo emphasized in some way other than size

• a variety of photo sizes, with a focal photo emphasized via size and/or another technique

• one (or perhaps 2) focal-sized photos and supporting photos that are smaller but all of same supporting size

Consider how you want to

present the content of your photo. Will one or more photos be zoomed in close to the subject? Will one or more photos include context? Will you apply any effects to the photo? You could render one in color and the rest in black and white. You could use special effects like a vignette to make the content of a photo shine.

The photos on "Big" are arranged with one dominant, portrait-oriented photo cropped in close, and three smaller, landscape-oriented photos cropped to show the context of the schoolyard. The three supporting photos are connected by their cropping within a half circle.

Check out these articles for more details on cropping and editing photos.

• Cropping Photos of People for Scrapbooking

• Speed Scrapbook Page Design with Smart Crops

• Scrapbooking Photos with Busy Backgrounds (& working with photo context)

• 10 Quick Ways to Make Over Your Photos

4. Place photos

place photos | design principle: balance

In the previous lesson, I recommended thinking first about how much space you want to give to photos and journaling on your page, and then, based upon these plans, moving on to consider your title and how much space it will get.

These three page parts--photos, journaling, and title--are the three page parts that usually determine basic space needs.

As you select and begin to crop photos and make space for journaling and title, work to incorporate all of these elements in a design that has balance and flow (and hopefully at least a little bit of white space). To do this, consider the relative size of the page parts and how they will play off one another.
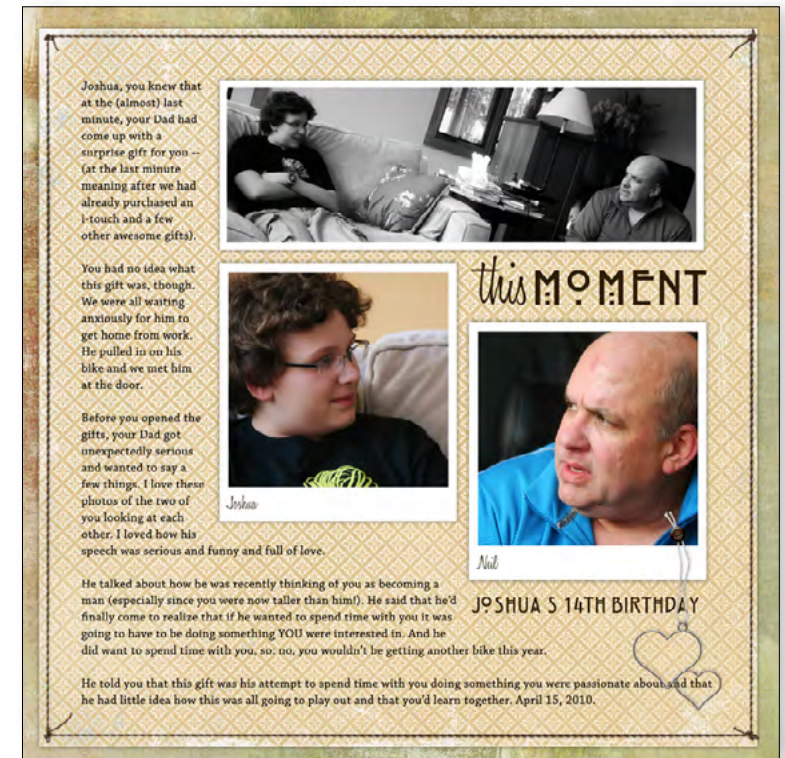
"This Moment" is a full page with 3 photos, substantial journaling, and a title. The challenge was to achieve balance with the photos and the lengthy journaling–which I really wanted to keep all together. At first, I had the square photo of my husband aligned with the square photo of my son, but things were out of kilter. Sliding the photo of my husband down and putting the title above it, lightened up the upper right area of the page enough that the lengthy but less-visually-dense journaling could hold its own.

Look to your photo content for colors, motifs, patterns, textures, lines (or anything else) you could repeat in other page parts.

A color that stands out in the photo could be repeated in the title or the embellishments. Motifs and patterns can be repeated in papers, embellishments, background stamping, and any other detailing you'll be adding. For a reminder on the importance of repetition and techniques for incorporating it (with variety) check back to the Repetition lesson.

In making "Cat's Cradle," I noticed the red in my mom's sweater and in the yarn she and my son were playing with. Adding a red date tab at the top of the larger photo and threading red yarn through the title gave this page the repetitions it needed for flow and unity. The red yarn does double repetition duty—repeating color and the image of the yarn in the photo.

The edges of your photos are great candidates for aligning with other photo edges and with other page parts, including the bottom, top or ends of a title, the justified edge of journaling, paper blocks, and embellishment borders.

The arrangement of the photos in "Seeing Me With You" drove the placement of all other elements on the page.

I placed one larger focal photo and three smaller photos in grid that ended up defining the borders for a patterned paper block, the title work and the journaling. See how the ends of the journaling and titles align with the photo edges.

And now, finally, we come to flow—though, really, flow should be on your mind throughout. Putting together a scrapbook page that does a good job of incorporating design principles isn't something that moves forward linearly. Rather, I think of it as making circles that slowly move forward.

Check out the Flow lesson, and keep the techniques for achieving it in your mind. As we cover the other page elements we'll talk more about this and how all of the page parts should contribute to a good page flow.

summary

Understand what your purpose with a page is as you select photos. As you crop and place photos, be sure to emphasize what's important. Look to your photos for their impact on and possibilities for adding flow and repetions to the design.

The focal point on "Archer" is the larger photo of my son emphasized with size contrast, content, and embellishment. The arrow that's in the photo points the viewer's eye next to the smaller stack of photos, which the eye will follow sequentially down, ending at an embellishment cluster--which then connects the eye back over to the embellishments on the larger photo.

{LESSON TEN} Journaling and Design Principles

When your family and friends open your albums, it's the photos that grab their attention first, and it's the journaling they look for next. Here's a process for making sure you are thinking about journaling as you create layouts.

In a nutshell, we'll cover:

1. How much space do you need for your journaling?

2. How will you render your journaling?

3. Where will you place your journaling?

More Reading

20 Lessons on Scrapbook Page Journaling: article at Get It Scrapped

If you're a GIS Member

Journaling. Masterful Scrapbook Design class on the approaches to writing, rendering, and designing with journaling. Teachers include Dina Wakley, Lain Ehmann, Emily Pitts, and Paula Gilarde.

1. How much space do you need for your journaling?

Having a general idea of how much space your journaling will need on the page is a good way to start thinking about a composition that will incorporate all of your elements in an appealing design.

Your journaling could be:

- a brief listing of the names of the people in a group photo

- a caption addressed to your subject; for example a note to your son that when he was learning to walk he liked to carry something heavy and that's why this photo of him carrying a 2-liter bottle of soda is a treasured memory

- the extensive telling of how an event unfolded

- an anecdote

- a personal message about your feelings on the scrapped topic

- a stream-of-consciousness list related to the topic

The journaling on "Glass" fills a narrow vertical band along the left edge of the canvas. It adds a quick "who, what, where, when, and why" to this event page. Placing it in this way defines the remainder of the canvas as a portrait-oriented rectangle--a great base for photos and title.

I used a variety of font sizes to add to the journaling's visual interest and, in a way, to embellish with word bits since the emphasized words are taken in before the entire journaling.

The way in which you render and place journaling on a scrapbook page affects how much visual weight it takes on--and, thus, the balance on the page.

The journaling on "These things are true" is a block made dense by several choices: the black type, the small and tightly-packed type, the amount of space the journaling takes up relative to other elements, and the block defined by strong lines around three sides of it (left, top, and bottom).

As a result of its visual weight, this journaling can balance a larger photo sitting higher up on the page.
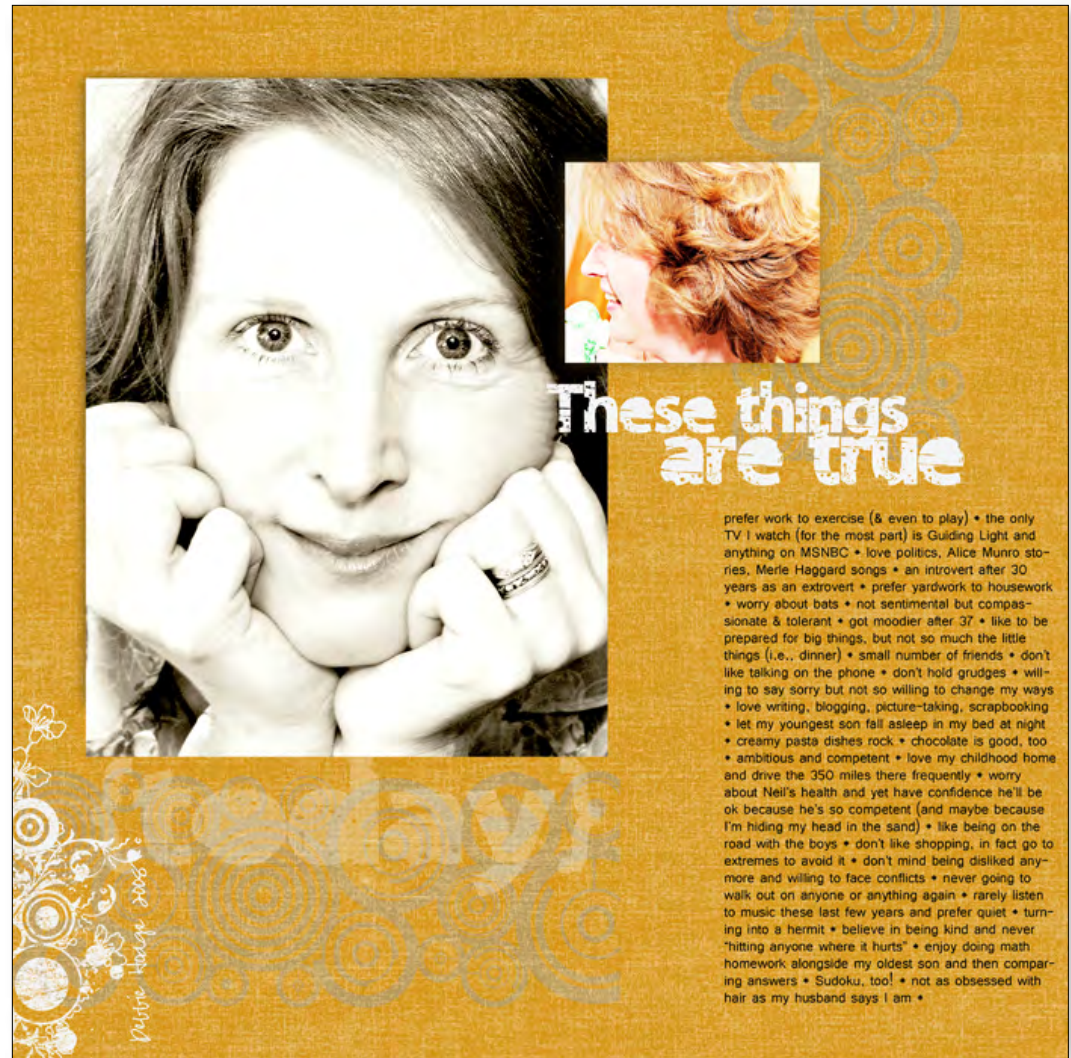
2. How will you render your journaling?

The number of ways you can render journaling on the scrapbook page are limited only by your creativity and journaling tools.

Here's a quick list of ideas and layouts showing them in action follow.

You could

- type your journaling–and the font choices available to you are numerous

- handwrite your journaling

- put journaling on a tag

- put journaling onto the canvas background

- place journaling in open space on a photo

- use journaling strips

- create a border on one or more sides of a photo or mat with your journaling

- create or complete a shape with your journaling

- hide your journaling

- include multiple, smaller chunks of journaling on your page

- fill a large area on your page with journaling

See detailed ideas on the Get It Scrapped blog in

A small bit of handwritten journaling sits on a decorative (and embellishing) tag on "Decked."

rendering journaling | examples

The journaling on "Celebrate the Everyday" is printed to the background canvas. By right aligning the type, the block has three strong edge lines (top, right, and bottom) – all of which end up creating nice gutters between the journaling block and the photo above and the paper strip to the right. The result is a design that looks "right" – that has unity.

The journaling on "Change of Plans" is extensive and has a shape that gives it a strong presence on the page. This shape fills all of the space remaining in a stitched square after the other elements are placed.

A border of journaling runs in a square around "It Was About Being Moms."

"Day 3" is a page with several bits of journaling. Each chunk of journaling here fills a block within the grid underlying this design.

Journaling strips (like the ones on "Super Ninja Sleuths") are easy to make and fun to place for a casual look. Print them to a piece of cardstock and then cut. You can glue them down or mount them with something visible like staples,brads, tape, or stitching.
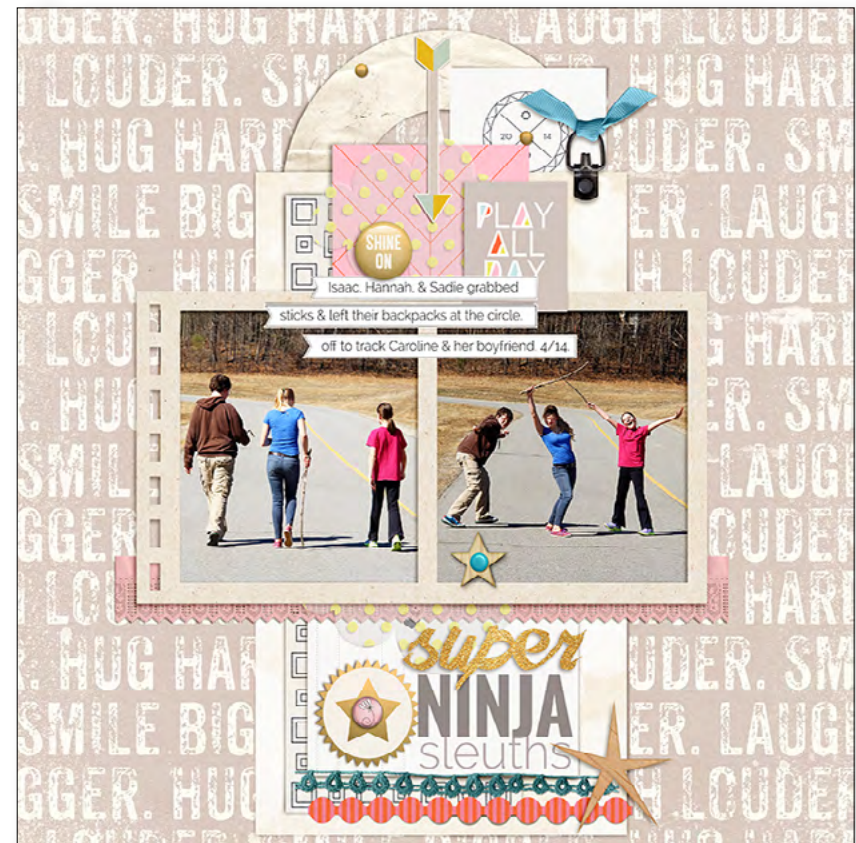
If a journaling is going to be your focal point, find a way to emphasize it--and contrast is a great tool for that

The only photo on "My Elusive Dreams" is subdued. The journaling fills a vertical strip on the left and is rendered in white type on a black background which gives it emphasis and contrast. While it is not the most dominant element on the page, it is still a strong and important piece of the page.
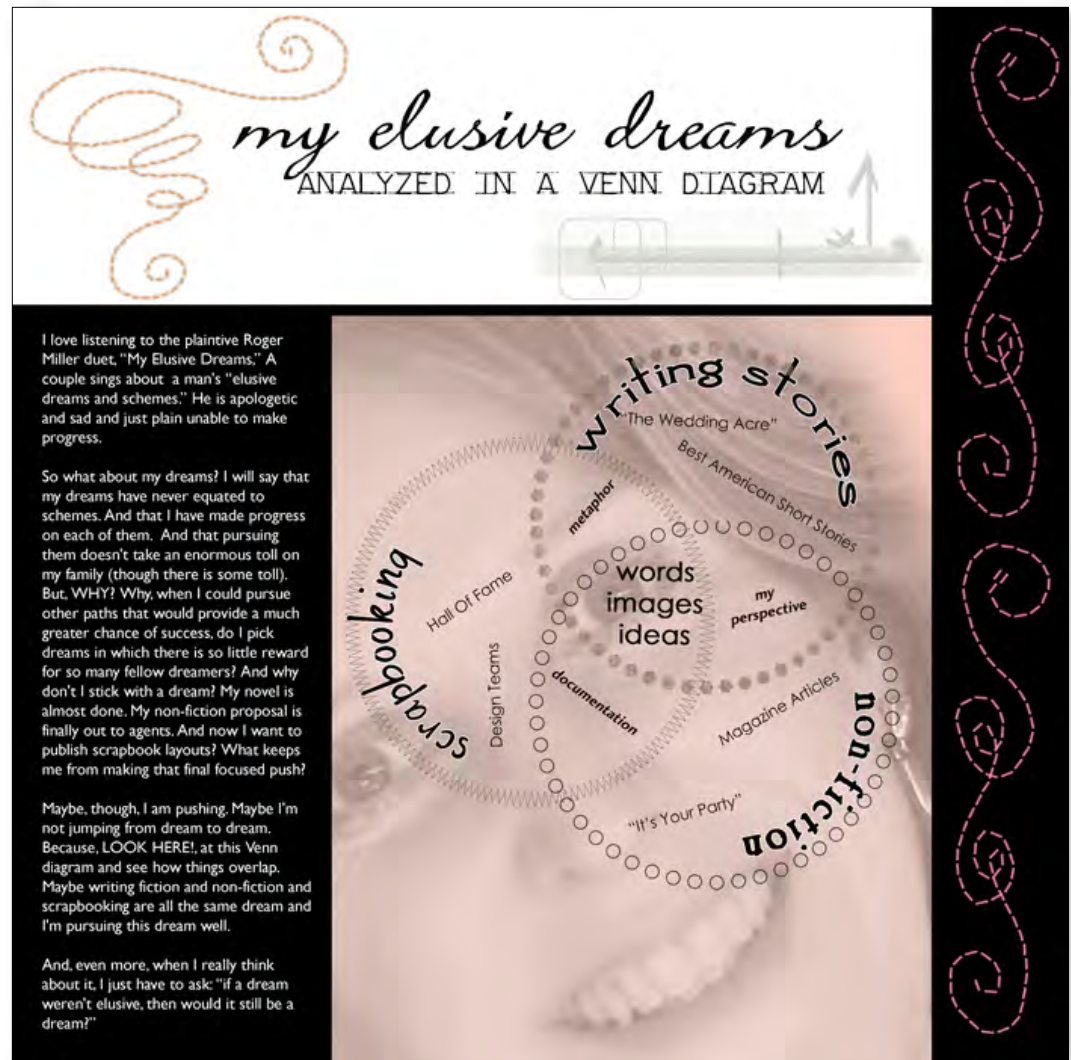
Every element on the scrapbook page--including the journaling--offers potential for working in repetitions.

The journaling on "Clarissa Dalloway Moments" is shaped to repeat the curve on the strip of patterned paper along the right edge of the layout.

3. Where will you place your journaling?

There are many options for making journaling a key aspect of your visual design.

placing journaling | design principle: alignment

The journaling block on "Jolly Hike" is printed to the canvas background with edges that align with the photo below. It has a shape that echoes that of the two smaller photos and that gives the page strong lines.

Emma, Isaac, Hannah, Joshua, Sara

JOLLY hike

We have never come to Oxford in the spring—we make the trip in Nov or Dec and then in Feb and then the summer. So it's winter and bare or summer and full-out green. It was really neat to be here in a new season. The weather was awesome & the girls had this same week off. On our 2nd afternoon we went on a "jolly hike" to what was always called "over back" when I lived here. We call the hike "jolly" because you all moan that you don't want to go, and then I tell you it'll be fun. And it was fun, and you can't convince me that you didn't all actually want to take this hike.   April, 2010.

the big wide world

placing journaling | design principle: flow

As I've said in other lessons, flow should be on your mind throughout the design of your page.

On "You Use Too Many Dishes" the journaling is shaped around the other elements and contributes to the strength of the diagonal flow going from top left to bottom right.

Contrast this with the journaling on decked which takes up a very discrete spot and draws the eye to one spot in combination with the other elements on the page.

summary

At the beginning of your page-making process understand how much room you'll need for journaling. Render your journaling so that it tells your story well and contributes to the visual design on the page.

{LESSON ELEVEN} Titles, Embellishments & Design Principles

In this lesson we're looking at placement of titles and embellishments using design principles. I've grouped the two together in this lesson because titles often work as page embellishments, and the design considerations for them are closely related.

Most of my pages have titles. I like how a title cues the viewer to the subject. I like how it gives me an opportunity to immediately set tone or put a twist on the story.

Ask yourself the following about your title:

- How important will the title be?
- Will it be clever or straight-forward?
- How much space will it take up?
- Will you use it as a major design element (i.e., incorporating colors and textures that will be repeated elsewhere, lead the eye, and set tone)?

The title on "We Burn Wood" is the focal element because of contrasts in size, color, value, and type as well as placement.

The eye moves from title to the embellishments at lower right which are rendered in the same oranges and greens.

The oval tag and fabric flourish provide the only dimension on the page, which helps them catch the eye.

The line from title to embellishment cluster takes the eye across the photo.

titles

You don't have to know your title absolutely when you start, but you need to know if you'll have one and how much space you think you'll give to it. I often mull over title possibilities in my mind as I make a page, refining them as I go along.

I played with a line from the movie "Field of Dreams" on this layout "If You Build It" about how my son and the neighbors were collecting and erecting every pop-up tent they could find in our yard.

The bold title is grouped with an embellished and tied tag. In fact, part of the title sits on the tag. Additional embellishments are the stamped flourishes at top left and bottom right of the photo block. Title and embellishments work together to draw the eye diagonally down and through the page.

If you're a GIS Member

Titles is a Masterful Scrapbook Design class on coming up with rendering, placing, and using technique with scrapbook page titles. Teachers include: Karen Grunberg, Doris Sander, and Kayleigh Wiles.

More Reading

- Scrapbook Page Titles

- 4 Formulas for Generating Scrapbook Page Titles You'll Love

- 20 Awesome Ideas for Making Scrapbook Pages Inspired by Movie Titles

- How to Come Up with Scrapbook Page Titles from Quotes, Famous Saying and Lyrics

- Big Scrapbook Page Titles that Earn the Space They Fill

- 5 Ways to Make High-Contrast Titles and Tell Your Scrapbook Page Story

- Do you need that scrapbook page title? Only if it's doing a job and doing it well

embellishments

The primary tasks when it comes to adding embellishments to your page are choosing embellishments and placing embellishments.

As you do these things, keep in mind what embellishments can do for your page. You can use embellishments to:

- deepen meaning and set tone
- add charm and design interest
- guide the eye
- provide emphasis and contrast
- contribute to unity on the page

On "Archer," the title is big and bold and placed near the photo. It's actually a part of one of the three embellishment clusters framing the photo.

The embellishments support this outdoor story with arrow, flora, and fauna motifs. Additionally, they add repetitions of color (orange and yellow) and shape (circles) that both guide the eye and contribute to unity on the page.

When you've got lots of detailed photos, set yourself the task of coming up with an awesome title and rendering it so that it's emphasize above all else on the page.

The title on "Women Who Love Wool Too Much" draws the eye first because of the large amount of space it takes up, its contrast with the background and the contrast in type fonts, colors, and dimension. Oh—and the fun content of the title helps, too!
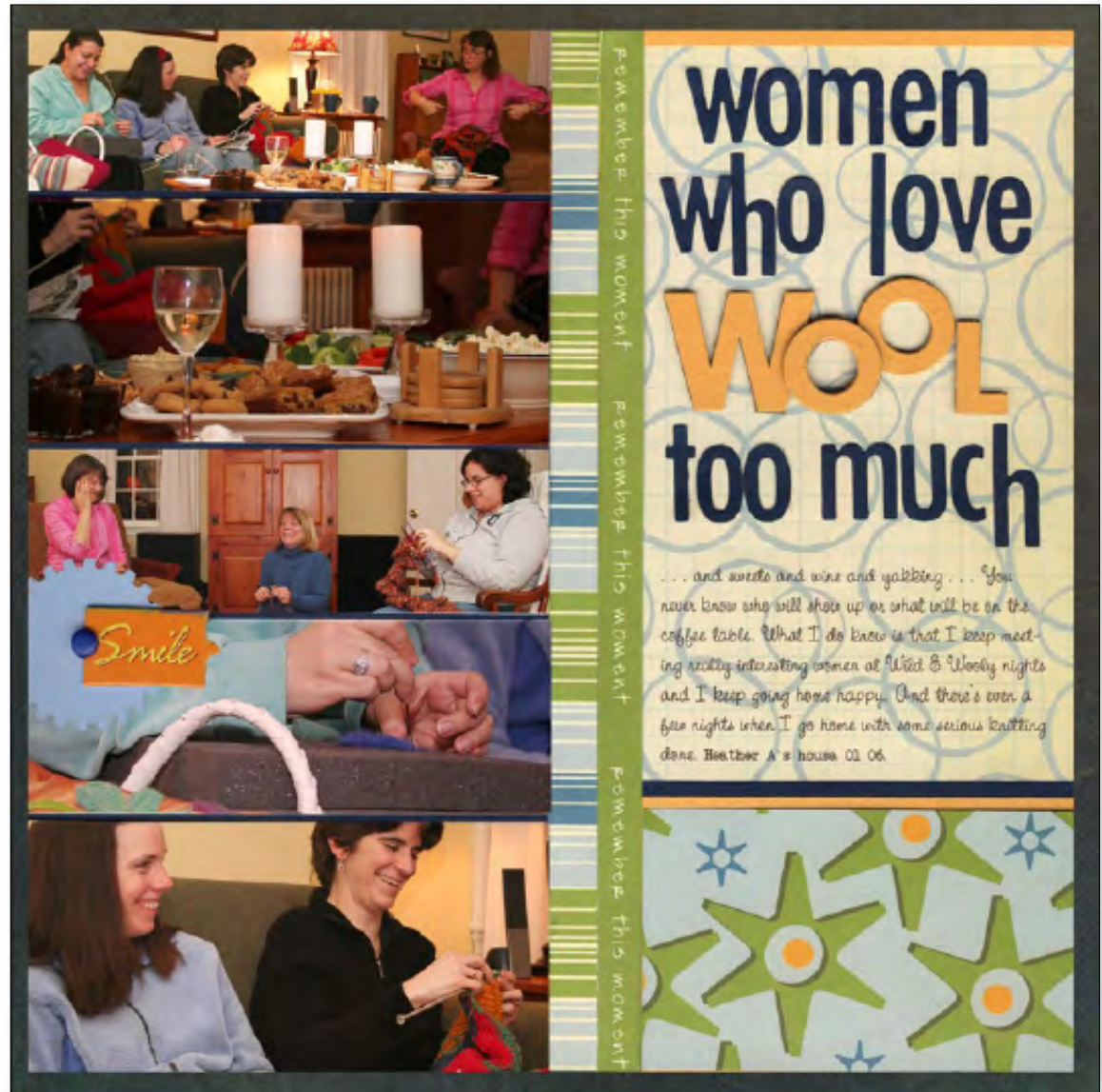
Recall from the Contrast Lesson of this class, that differences draw the eye. When you can make your title and embellishments contrast enough to stand out, they can combine to give the page design interest, unity, and flow.

On "If Your Friends Jumped Off A Bridge," the reds of the title and embellishments contrast strongly with the white and pale-blue background. Once again these contrasts draw the viewer's eye AND end up guiding it through the page.

Embellishments offer tons of opportunities for working in variety on the page. From your photos and papers, pick out colors, motifs, patterns, textures, lines (or anything else!) you could repeat in embellishments. Look to the first embellishment placed for your cue in selecting the next embellishment. Check back to the Repetition lesson for a reminder of the techniques you can use.

The layout here is without title, and it's full of layers, photos, and embellishments. The word strips, trimmed flower, and vintage print of children dancing repeat the page subject – happy play in the outdoors. Three spots of orange—a button, a die-cut ornament, and a strip of rick-rack—provide needed contrast and organization on this busy page. They draw the eye around the page in a visual triangle and keep the eye moving and taking in all of the details.

Try this: pay close attention to incorporating alignments on your page using photos, journaling, title and papers-- and then use embellishments to purposefully break those alignments.

The edges of photos, paper pieces, and journaling blocks all combine to create strong alignments on "Your Point?" which results in a cohesive design. The embellishments then step outside of those alignments, grounding the block to the page, creating interesting white space, and keeping the page from being overly linear (and dull). The leaves, the brad and stamping at top, and the sun brad and stamping at side right all break out into the margins. The bookplate steps over the line within the photo/paper block.

More Reading

Does that embellishment belong on your scrapbook page? 4 ways to know: article at Get It Scrapped.

If you're a GIS Member

Details and Artful Embellishing. Masterful Scrapbook Design classes on embellishing with Jenni Bowlin, Amber Ries, Erin Bassett, Kayleigh Wiles, Doris Sander, and more.

Visually, titles and embellishments work in much the same way on a scrapbook page, providing opportunities to incorporate eye-catching contrasts and repetitons to guide the eye through the page--and charm the viewer.

{LESSON TWELVE} The Page Canvas and Design Principles

The canvas is the piece of paper (or digital background) upon which you build your page. For me, thinking about the canvas means thinking about how I will fill it and what role it will play in the page's design.

Think back to Lesson #7 Flow. That was the final design principles lesson, and it was the coming together of all six design principles. This lesson—about the canvas—requires a similar wholeness in approach. Once again, everything is intertwined. Page parts and design principles are all up for consideration, for juggling, for cycling through in your mind.

The big questions here are: How will you fill the page? And how will you apply design principles as you do this?

Use a grid as your foundation. Your foundation is the base that connects the parts to the page. It's the starting point for filling the canvas, and using a grid or "blocked" design is one of the easiest ways to organize your page parts. In construction terms, "blocking" refers to the horizontal boards placed between wall studs.

Take a look at "Sledding" and its underlying grid of three columns and three rows. Photos fill several of the blocks. The title takes up another block (and even overlaps with another a bit, which keeps the page from being overly linear). Journaling fills the bottom right block. Embellishments sit in the top right block.

JANUARY 2009

after sledding, Quest introduced Joshua & Isaac to snow with maple syrup in front of the fire

Use alignments to define your foundation. Using alignments is another way to create a structure for organizing and presenting your page parts.

"Making Your Acquaintance" relies upon the white space of gutters and margins to define a grid foundation that accommodates all page elements.

This white space is created by strong alignments: the beginning and ends of each title word and journaling are all lined up with the left and right edges of the photos.

Use a mat or paper block as your foundation. A piece of paper (or mat) that houses most of the page elements can serve as a foundation that connects the elements to the page and keeps them from a free-floating feeling.

On "Oh Happy Day" the tan cardstock backing up the photos, title, journaling and embellishments is the page foundation.

More Reading

6 Ways to Make the Scrapbook page Canvas: article at Get It Scrapped.

If you're a GIS Member

Canvas. Masterful Scrapbook Design class on approaches to the scrapbook page canvas.

Use layered pieces as your foundation. Your foundational piece doesn't have to back up all of the page elements: a strong first layer can cover less area than your elements and still ground everything to the page. On "Get Around," the linen block with distressed edges backs up much of the inner canvas—but doesn't stretch completely to page edges. It is, though, the foundational piece that connects all of the elements to the canvas.

A "foundation" piece doesn't have to be a layer of paper. It can be anything that suggests a shape and that grounds the page elements to the canvas. On "Field Day," a brushed, portrait-oriented green block is the foundation for the page.

How will you incorporate and use white space on your page?

Given a blank canvas, your first instinct may be to fill it up. This happens to me not only on my scrapbook pages, but in rooms of my home. I keep adding bits until one day I realize that it's too much–that I can't see any of the parts for the jam-packed whole. Open space is a luxury and can make an environment more accessible, inviting, and manageable.

White space on scrapbook pages is not always white. It can be any color—it can even be patterned paper. The term "white space" refers to an area devoid of photos, embellishments, journaling, and title. Understand the most important thing about white space: if it's interesting and unexpected (as on "A Boy and His Kite") is has more interest than white space that is regular. The even margins backing up "2008" result in a white space that's hardly noticed – or only noticed as backdrop.

What kind of balance would you like to achieve on your canvas?

A scrapbook page that is appealing to look at has a balance between the elements on it (including the white space). Snow Sculpture balances three smaller, square, framed photos on the left side with two landscape-oriented photos, title, and journaling on the right side.

I can't tell you HOW to add layering to your pages as well as I can tell you the considerations that you should be holding and balancing in your mind as you choose, add, and place layers. It's not a science. It's creating, and it's personal, and it should be fun.

Ask yourself the following as you work to add layers to your design:

- What is your desired focal point? Is it a photo? Journaling? Something else? How will you emphasize it? Will you use size, matting, dimension, contrast, embellishments?

- What space do you plan to fill? How will you use/include white space?

- What's your foundation? Choose the foundational pieces while keeping in mind the answers to the questions above.

- What kind of balance will you incorporate?

- What is the tone or mood you'd like to create? How will you use color and pattern? How much contrast will you incorporate?

- What are the meanings you'd like to explore and, perhaps, reflect with element choices?

summary

The canvas is your ground for the figure your combined elements create. It is the space within which you combine photos, title, journaling, and embellishments to tell a visual story. Understand how much space you need for a story's page parts and plan for a design with white space and balance.

And that's it! We've looked at 6 design principles and 5 page parts and lots and lots of ways to put them all together. What are you motivated to create now that you have an understanding of the basic pieces and rules for putting them together? Do you feel equipped to scrapbook lots of new pages?

If you've enjoyed this class, and are ready to take things a step farther, check out the Get It Scrapped membership. The Scrapbook Coach classes are a great next step and included with membership. Each of these classes includes 4 video lessons that you can scrapbook alongside. I guide you in photo selection and crops, title placement and rendering, embellishment techniques and choosing colors and patterns.