



# TERMS FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

A collection of key terms and definitions used by Creative Professionals. Learn more about them from **Yes I'm a Designer** courses!

## GRAPHIC DESIGN GLOSSARY

**Action** Recorded series' of steps in Adobe Photoshop for simplifying repetitive tasks.

**Adjustment** Powerful tools in Adobe Photoshop. They can enhance, repair, and correct the color and tonality (lightness, darkness, and contrast) of an image. They can be used non-destructively as Adjustment Layers.

**Alias** The jagged edges on curves and diagonal lines in a bitmap image are known as aliasing. Aliasing can be minimized with a smoothing process called anti-aliasing which adds additional pixels to make the edges appear less jagged.

**Alpha** A fourth color component in the RGB color model that represents opacity. By changing Alpha values, images can be rendered completely transparent to completely opaque.

**Artboard** In Adobe Illustrator you can use Artboards to organise your artwork and save or print them out.

**Balance** One of the principles of design, balance places elements on the page so that text and graphic elements are evenly distributed. In layouts with an even balance the graphics don't overpower the text and the page doesn't seem to tilt to one side or the other.

**Baseline Shift** The baseline is an invisible line onto which all type characters sit. Moving characters up or down in relation to the baseline and using it effectively can make a huge difference to the professional look of your type.

**Bevel** Raised effect created by applying highlight and shadow colors to the inside and outside edges of the border of an image or text area in order to create the illusion that the image or text area has three dimensions. Also see at Emboss.

**Bezier curve** Mathematically defined curve used in two-dimensional graphic applications. The curve is defined by four points: the initial position and the terminating position (which are called "anchors") and two separate middle points (which are called "handles").

**Blend mode** Blending modes determine how the pixels in a layer blend with pixels on underlying layers. Most commonly used modes are Normal, Multiply, Screen and Overlay.

**Bleed** When an image or printed color extends beyond the trimmed edge of a page, it is called a "bleed". Bleeding ensures that the print extends to the edges of the paper. The paper is usually trimmed to the desired size after printing.

**Body copy** Main text part of an advertisement or any printed matter (as distinct from the logo, headline, subheadings, and graphics) that provides the 'meat' of the communication. Usually a professional copywriter writes the body copy.

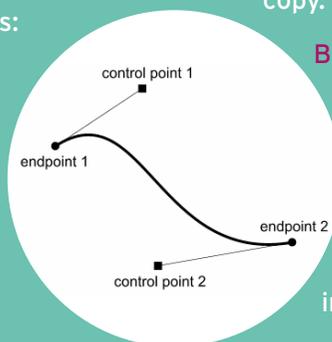
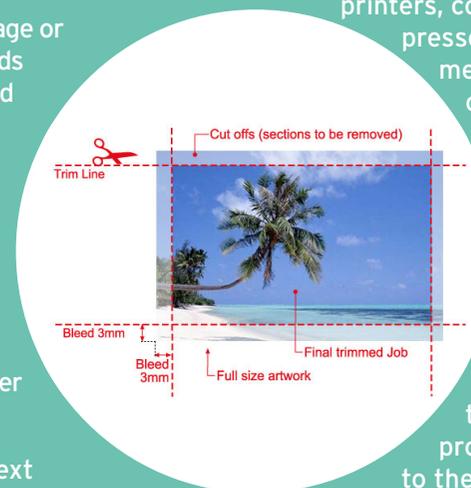
**Brightness** The brightness (light/dark) of an image, the intensity of a light source or color luminance.

**Canvas** Working area in Adobe Photoshop, which can be extended or reduced to fit more image content into the document.

**CMS** Color management is the controlled conversion between the color representations of various devices, such as image scanners, digital cameras, monitors, TV screens, film printers, computer printers, offset presses, and corresponding media. The primary goal of color management is to obtain a good match across color devices

**CMYK** The CMYK color model (process color, four color) is a subtractive color model, used in color printing, and is also used to describe the printing process itself. CMYK refers to the four inks used in some color printing: cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (black).

**Color** Colors are the life of any type of graphic designing. Without effective colors it is nearly impossible to design a winning brand identity. Every color has its own meaning and each color describes different purpose and idea. One must take care of the selection of the color that it should exactly communicate about the brand and company's mission and vision. Color can aid organization so develop a color strategy and stay consistent with those colors. Color can give emphasis to create a hierarchy.



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**Composition** In the visual arts – in particular painting, graphic design, photography and sculpture – composition is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art, as distinct from the subject of a work. It can also be thought of as the organization of the elements of art according to the principles of art.

**Compression** There are two types of image file compression algorithms: lossless and lossy. Lossless compression algorithms reduce file size while preserving a perfect copy of the original uncompressed image. Lossy compression algorithms on the other hand allow for variable compression that trades image quality for file size.

**Contiguous** is a term used in Adobe Photoshop for a couple of tools (like the Magic Wand). It means neighbouring, adjacent or connected. If this option is checked then the Magic Wand will only sample from neighbouring areas with similar colours and will stop at the edges. When turned off the selection can spread freely.

**Contour/silhouette** The image of a person, object or scene represented as a solid shape of a single colour, usually black, its edges matching the outline of the subject. The interior of a silhouette is featureless, and the whole is typically presented on a light background,

usually white, or none at all

**Contrast** A principle of art, contrast refers to the arrangement of opposite elements (light vs. dark colors, rough vs. smooth textures, large vs. small shapes, etc.) in a piece so as to create visual interest, excitement and drama. The colors white and black provide the greatest degree of contrast. Complementary colors also highly contrast with one another. An artist can employ contrast as a tool, to direct the viewer's attention to a particular point of interest within the piece.

**Crop** One basic way to modify images is to crop them – remove some part of the image. Cropping changes the appearance of images in order to better fit the layout, make a statement, or improve the overall appearance of the design.

**Dominance** Dominance is created by contrasting size, positioning, color, style, or shape. The focal point should dominate the design with scale and contrast without sacrificing the unity of the whole.

**DPS** Digital Publishing includes the digital publication of e-books, EPUBs, Digital Magazines (also sometimes known as electronic articles), and the

development of digital libraries and catalogues.

**Drop shadow** A commonly used visual effect consisting of drawing that looks like the shadow of an object, giving the impression that the object is raised above the objects behind it.

**DTP** Desktop publishing is the creation of documents using page layout skills on a personal computer.

**Emboss** Embossing an image, gives it a three dimensional (3-D) quality. The 3-D effect is created with highlights and shadows on the edges of the image. Also see at Bevel.

**Emphasis** Something that is singled out or made more prominent has emphasis. An element of a design that dominates or becomes the center of interest has emphasis.

**Entry point** Point or points on the layout where the reader can start reading. The designer has to help readability by adding entry points.

**Feather** Feathering is a technique used to smooth or blur the edges of a feature.

**Filter** A filter is applied to images or art works to easily create special effects or to achieve a look that would be too difficult to create manually.

**Font** In typography, a set of all characters in a typeface.

**FPO** For Position Only is to indicate that the image (as seen) has only been added to the design to indicate its position on the layout and thus is not indicative of the appearance of the final printed image.

**GIF** GIF images display up to 256 colors. GIF images generally have very small file sizes and are the most widely used graphic format on the web. The low quality resulting from compression makes them unsuitable for professional printing.

**Gradient** Allows the user to fill an object/image with a smooth transition of colors.

**Grayscale** Grayscale images contains black, white and 254 shades of gray.

**Greeking** In computing, a means of speeding up the display redraw rate of a computer monitor by representing text characters below a certain size as gray lines, boxes, or illegible dummy type.

**Grid** An underlying structure of columns, rows, margins, and lines, that dictate the way information is organized on a page.



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**Guide** Guides help you position images or elements precisely. Guides appear as nonprinting lines that float over the image. You can move and remove guides. You can also lock them so that you don't move them by accident.

**Gutter** In typography, the term refers to the space between columns of type, usually determined by the number and width of columns and the overall width of the area to be filled.

**Halftone** Any image--such as a photograph--that exists as a series of small dots of varying size and color density, which serve to simulate the appearance of continuous gradations of tone. Halftones are necessary in the reproduction of photographic images; most printing presses cannot print continuous tones, so photographic images must first be converted to a series of dots in order to be effectively printed.



**Hierarchy** A good design contains elements that lead the reader through each element in order of its significance. The type and images should be expressed starting from most important to the least.

**Head** The top of a book, page, or column. In typography, the term head is also an abbreviation for the term heading.

**HSB** Hue, Saturation and Brightness is a color model used to describe colors with three values.

**Hue** The primary value of a color and how the color red, green, blue, purple, etc. is perceived through the eye.

**Invert** Changing the colors of an image or a layer mask to the opposite colors on the color wheel.

**JPEG** A common compression method that shrinks a file's storage size by discarding non-important picture detail. Excessive jpeg compression can cause poor image quality.

**Kerning** In typography, the reduction of letterspacing between certain character combinations in order to reduce the space between them, performed for aesthetic reasons.

**Layers** Layers are like sheets of stacked acetate. You can see through transparent areas of a layer to the layers below. You move a layer to position the content on the layer, like sliding a sheet of acetate in a stack. You can also change the opacity of a layer to make content partially

transparent. They allow the user to assemble, organize and re-edit their artwork with ease.

**Layout** Master plan or blueprint of a printed or published work (such as an advertisement, book, magazine, newspaper, or website) that lays out the arrangement of its different graphic elements (such as body copy, colors, headlines, illustrations, scale). It establishes the overall appearance, relative importance, and relationships between the graphic elements to achieve a smooth flow of information (message) and eye movement for maximum effectiveness or impact. Often alternative layouts (called roughs) are prepared to explore different arrangements before the final layout is made for printing or production.

**Leading** (pronounced "led-ding") In typography, an alternate and more popularly used term for line spacing.

**Line** The visual path that enables the eye to move within the design.

**Lorem Ipsum** Used as placeholder text because it approximates a typical distribution of characters in English.

**Margin** Any deliberately unprinted space on a page, especially surrounding a block of text. Margins are used not only to aid in the aesthetics and the readability of a page, but also

to provide allowances for trimming, binding, and other post-press operations.

**Master page** A master is like a background that you can quickly apply to many pages. Objects on a master appear on all pages with that master applied. Changes you make to a master are automatically applied to associated pages. Masters commonly contain repeating logos, page numbers, headers, and footers.

**Masthead** In newspaper and magazine publishing, the listing of the publication's staff, management, address, etc., commonly printed toward the beginning of the publication.

**Mock-up** Mock-ups are used by designers mainly to acquire feedback from users about designs and design ideas early in the design process. Mock-ups are very early prototypes.

**Mood board** A mood board is a type of collage that may consist of images, text, and samples of objects in a composition of the choice of the mood board creator. Designers and others use mood boards to develop their design concepts and to communicate to other members of the design team.

**Negative space** The space not occupied by the text or images. Negative or white space has the same importance as the text and images on the layout.

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Without proper use of negative space the design will look messy and crowded.

**Noise** Image noise is random (not present in the object imaged) variation of brightness or color information in images, and is usually an aspect of electronic noise. It can be produced by the sensor and circuitry of a scanner or digital camera.

**Opacity** A layer's overall opacity determines to what degree it obscures or reveals the layer beneath it. A layer with 1% opacity appears nearly transparent, whereas one with 100% opacity appears completely opaque.

**Orphan** A paragraph-opening line that appears by itself at the bottom of a page/column.

A word, part of a word, or very short line that appears by itself at the end of a paragraph. Orphans result in too much white space between paragraphs or at the bottom of a page.

**Pantone** The Pantone Color Matching System is largely a standardized color reproduction system. By standardizing the colors, different manufacturers in different locations can all refer to the Pantone system to make sure



colors match without direct contact with one another.

**PDF** Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format used to represent documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. Each PDF file encapsulates a complete description of a fixed-layout flat document, including the text, fonts, graphics, and other information needed to display it.

**Pixel** The smallest picture element (used to display an image on a computer), that can be independently assigned a color.

**Pixel mask** Pixel masks determine opacity values based on a raster image with grayscale values that correspond pixel for pixel to the original layer. This makes them ideal for masking complex photographic imagery (e.g. the hair on a model or leaves on a tree). Pixel masks allow 100 shades of gray, which correspond directly to opacity percentages.

**PNG** Portable Network Graphics format. PNG (usually pronounced "ping"), is used for lossless compression. The PNG format displays images without jagged edges while keeping file sizes relatively small, making them popular on the web. PNG files are however generally larger than GIF files. PNG supports transparency.

**PPI** Pixels Per Inch. A measurement of the resolution of a scanned image.

**Process color** The printing of "full color" images utilizing a photographic color separation process in which each of three primary colors (cyan, magenta, and yellow, plus black) are separated from the original art and given their own printing plate.

**Proportion** Proportion refers to the relative size and scale of the various elements in a design. The issue is the relationship between objects, or parts, of a whole.

**PSD** Photoshop document, the default file extension of the proprietary file format of Photoshop.

**Rasterize** Rasterisation (or rasterization) is the task of taking an image described in a vector graphics format (shapes) and converting it into a raster image (pixels or dots).

**Resample** Resampling is changing the amount of image data as you change either the pixel dimensions or the resolution of an image. When you downsample (decrease the number of pixels), information is deleted from the image. When you resample up (increase the number of pixels, or upsample), new pixels are added.



**Resolution** The resolution of an image is an important factor in determining the attainable output quality. The higher the resolution of an image, the less pixelated it will be.

**Responsive design** Responsive web design (RWD) is a web design approach aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing experience—easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling—across a wide range of devices (from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones).

**RGB** (Red, Green, Blue) is the model used to project color on a computer monitor. By mixing these three colors, a large percentage of the visible color spectrum can be represented.

**Rhythm** Rhythm in design is also called repetition. Rhythm allows your designs to develop an internal consistency that makes it easier for your customers to understand. Once the brain recognizes the pattern in the rhythm it can relax and understand the whole design.

**Rule of thirds** The rule of thirds states that an image is most pleasing when its subjects or regions are composed along imaginary lines which divide the image into thirds – both vertically and horizontally. It is a powerful compositional technique for making designs more interesting and dynamic.

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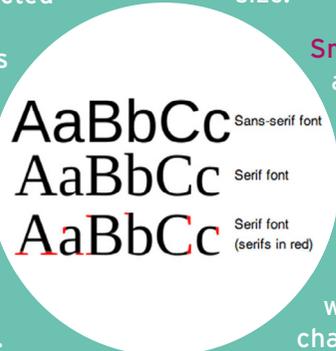
**Rulers** Rulers help you position images or elements precisely. When visible, rulers appear along the top and left side of the active window. Markers in the ruler display the pointer's position when you move it.

**Sans Serif** In typography, a sans-serif, sans serif, gothic, san serif or simply sans typeface is one that does not have the small projecting features called "serifs" at the end of strokes. The term comes from the French word sans, meaning "without". Sans-serif fonts tend to have less line width variation than serif fonts. In print, sans-serif fonts are used for headlines rather than for body text.

**Saturation** Saturation is the overall intensity of the color, any color that appears dull is referred to as desaturated.

**Selection** Selection refers to an area of an image that is selected (isolated) so it can be edited while the rest of the image is protected.

**Serif** In typography, a serif is a small line trailing from the edges of letters and symbols, such as when handwriting is separated into distinct units for a typewriter or typesetter. A typeface with serifs is called a serif typeface.



**Shape** Areas defined by edges within the design, whether geometric or organic.

**Sharpening** An image enhancement technique in which the contrast between specific pixels is enhanced.

**Scale** is relative. A graphic element can appear larger or smaller depending on the size, placement, and color of the elements around it. When elements are all the same size, the design feels flat. Contrast in size can create a sense of tension as well as a feeling of depth and movement.

**Slug** Slugs hold printing information, customized color bar information, or displays other instructions and descriptions for other information in the document. Objects (including text frames) positioned in the slug area are printed but will disappear when the document is trimmed to its final page size.

**Smart object** Smart Objects are layers that contain image data from raster or vector images, such as Photoshop or Illustrator files. Smart Objects preserve an image's source content with all its original characteristics, enabling you to perform nondestructive editing to the layer.

**Soft proof** Soft proofing is simply a mechanism that allows you to view on your computer monitor what your print will look like when it is on paper. A specific paper. That paper and ink combination has been defined by the profile that you or someone else has made for your printer / paper and ink combination. To get an accurate soft proof your monitor has to be calibrated.

**Spot color** Refers to a method of specifying and printing colors in which each color is printed with its own ink. In contrast, process color printing uses four inks (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) to produce all other colors. Spot color printing is effective when the printed matter contains only one to three different colors, but it becomes prohibitively expensive for more colors. There are a number of color specification systems for specifying spot colors, but Pantone is the most widely used.

**Spread** A spread is the joining of two facing pages that are created to work as a unit in a double-sided document.

**Stock photo** Stock photos (stock photography) are professional photographs of common places, landmarks, nature, events or people that are bought and sold on

a royalty-free basis and can be used and reused for commercial design purposes.

**Stroke** A Stroke is basically the outline of an element. You could also call it a "Border." Stroke is not limited to only shapes, but can also be used on line segments.

**Style guide** A style guide or style manual is a set of standards for the writing and design of documents, either for general use or for a specific publication, organization or field. The implementation of a style guide provides uniformity in style and formatting within a document and across multiple documents.

**Swatch** A sample of a specific color, either printed or stored digitally, used to describe a particular printing ink or combination of printing ink colors.

**Text wrap** Text wrap is the spatial relationship that exists amongst graphics and blocks of text (or amongst two blocks of text). Usually a text wrap is rectangular in shape. However, a text wrap may also be arbitrary or irregular in shape.

**Texture** Surface qualities which translate into tactile illusions.



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**Thumbnail** A small drawing on paper (usually part of a group) used to explore multiple ideas quickly. Thumbnail sketches are similar to doodles, but may include as much detail as a small sketch.

**TIFF** A common graphic file format used for saving bitmapped images such as scans, photographs, illustrations and logos. Supports multiple layers.

**Tracing** is when you use an image that you recreate by drawing over it on another layer. Live trace is an automated tracing feature in Adobe Illustrator.

**Tracking** In typography, the adjusting of the letterspacing throughout a piece of typeset copy.

**Trim mark** Lines drawn or printed on a photograph, overlay, or printed product to indicate the proper cropping of the image or print in question.

**Unity** To achieve visual unity is a main goal of graphic design. When all elements are in agreement, a design is considered unified. No individual part is viewed as more important than the whole design. A good balance between unity and variety must be established to avoid a chaotic or a lifeless design.

**Value** Value is present in all design. It is the lightness or darkness of an object, regardless of color. Value is relative to

the background color and other items on the page.

**Vector** A vector graphic is created in paths. The paths permit a person to change an image's size easily without pixilated edges.

**Vector mask** Vector masks pick up where pixel masks fall short. By defining the mask's shape using paths, vector masks provide a superior level of finesse and flexibility. They're ideal for defining shapes with clean, crisp lines, such as interface elements.

**Vibrance** Vibrance is a smart-tool which cleverly increases the intensity of the more muted colors and leaves the already well-saturated colors alone.

**Widow** A paragraph-ending line that falls at the beginning of the following page/column, thus separated from the rest of the text.

**Wireframe** Wireframes are an important design tool used in Web development. It is a visualization tool for presenting proposed functions, structure and content of a Web page or Web site.