

What Does a Graphic Designer Do?

You can see the work of graphic designers everywhere you look. But what do graphic designers actually do?

Graphic designers use a combination of shapes and forms, images and words, to communicate a message to a specific audience. Think about something that caught your eye recently—a video, sign, or billboard. What made you stop and look? The image? The colors? The message? Whatever it was, it fulfilled the graphic designer's purpose: to communicate with you in a way that clarifies an idea, stirs your interest, or catches your eye. The graphic designer's goal is to get a message across that you'll remember and act on.



Fig. 1-X. Although you are told never to judge a book by its cover, captivating cover designs help communicate a book's tone and content while making it stand out among dozens of others on a store shelf or online listing.
Connor Gabbert, cover design for *I Am Not Your Perfect*, 2017.



Part One The Nuts and Bolts of Graphic Design

1 What Is Graphic Design?

"Not everything is design. But design is about everything. So do yourself a favor: be ready for anything."

Michael Bierut

Fig. 1-X. Besides determining the size and color of the letters, what other decisions might this sign's designer have had to make?
Michael Bierut at Designium, The Skirball Center of Performing Arts at New York University poster design, 2017.

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Communicating through Graphic Design

SECOND EDITION By Kevin Gatta and Claire Mowbray Golding

PRINT + DIGITAL

Communicating through Graphic Design presents one of the leading art careers to high-school students in an accessible, engaging format. Developed to **address the needs of contemporary graphic design programs**, this brand new and expanded edition uses **both digital and traditional media**. Students learn fundamental design thinking, drawing, and problem-solving skills that are applied to real world design challenges. Through the study of contemporary career profiles and examination of exemplary professional work they gain artistic production insight to help them identify the essential skills needed to be successful in specific art-related careers.

Features

- Three new chapters introduce your students to creating images for graphic design, developing motion graphics, and exploring careers in graphic design
- Digital and traditional approaches to each Design Brief
- Design challenges that reflect actual workplace practice
- Career profiles of contemporary working professionals
- Art and design historical references to help students develop objectivity about their work
- Fantastic examples of student work



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Design Brief

A Simple Story: Capturing a Classic with Minimalism

Society shares a collective consciousness of classic stories: fairy tales, myths, fables, and folklore that are retold and understood across cultures and generations. In this Design Brief, you will interpret a scene from a story, communicating its meaning through simple shapes and colors.

Before You Begin

Think back to the stories you loved as a kid. What characters, settings, scenes, and other images come to mind? Select one of these stories or another myth or fairy tale in the public domain for your design. Research the story to inform your thinking. How have other authors, illustrators, animators, and designers interpreted this classic source material? Be inspired by, but don't imitate, these interpretations.

Materials

- pencil and paper
- drawing media
- colored construction paper
- scanner
- computer with photo editing and layout software

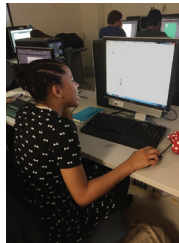


Fig. 2-X. Student working on Simple Story project.

Create It

- 1 **Brainstorm:** What are some key moments in the story you selected? Pick three iconic, memorable scenes that you could simplify visually. Brainstorm any colors and shapes that come to mind for each scene. Consider reading or watching an interpretation of the source material you're familiar with, or even tracking down the original. Note aspects of the story that are changed in each version.
- 2 **Sketching:** Create at least three thumbnail sketches to simplify the moments you selected into basic shapes. How can you use design principles to organize shapes within a space to create a recognizable scene? Compose your illustration carefully; the placement and size of each object is extremely important when there are a few other details.
- 3 **Review and Revise:** Present your sketches to classmates and other peers for feedback. Can they recognize the story? Which moment do they think is the most iconic? Which sketch best captures that moment in a clean, graphic way?

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Student eBook, Design Brief.

Design Briefs

Each lesson provides updated studio experiences designed to help your students develop the mindset of following a real-world design process. Each Design Brief brings students through the steps of defining the challenge, research, brainstorming, sketching, design direction, review, revision and presentation.

Design Brief *continued*

- 4 **Refine** Streamline your design even further. Limit your color palette to a maximum of four colors, plus black and white, if needed. How can you use color to create meaning? Where can you repeat colors throughout the design for continuity? Where can you omit extraneous details without compromising clarity?
- 5 **Create** Using cut paper, graphics software, or both, create your finished simple story. Keep only the details that are absolutely necessary and be precise with your choices in shape and color to communicate your story effectively.

Check It

After you draft your final version of your simple story, but before you glue everything down or flatten your digital file, take one more look at your artistic decisions. Reassess your color choices: have you used a maximum of four unique colors? Could your shapes be further streamlined or simplified without compromising your idea? Are any shapes confusing or misleading? Ask a peer unaware of your story selection if they can recognize the story to make sure your idea is being communicated effectively.

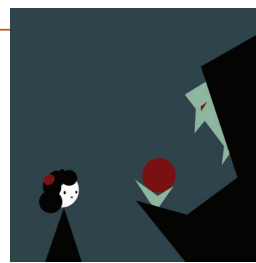


Fig. 2-X. Jarrin Jacobs, Snow White simple story, 2014. Digital artwork, 8" x 8" (20.32 x 20.32 cm).



Fig. 2-X. Ella Johanson, Rapunzel simple story, 2019. Digital artwork, 8" x 8" (20.32 x 20.32 cm).

Design Journal Connection

Research at least two other artists who have visually interpreted the story you chose, such as an illustrated book or film. Sketch or collage examples of their work into your journal. Then compare and contrast the moment you chose to illustrate with their images. What details are similar? What details did you focus on that are distinct from the other artists' interpretations?

eBook Class Set

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