

# Emphasis

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will cover why emphasis is important in design and showcase a few examples of it in practice. Specifically, you will learn about:

## 1. Defining Emphasis

**Emphasis** is the most prominent element or focal area in a design and functions as a guide for the designer when applying a focal point or area of interest for the viewer.

Emphasis is important because it allows the designer to effectively convey a message or idea by dictating where the viewer's eye should go.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Emphasis

The most prominent element or focal area in a design.

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## 2. Establishing Emphasis

Design principles are interdependent, which is another way of saying that each principle is mutually reliant on another.

Emphasis can be established by using two other design principles: contrast and proximity.



In the example above, contrast is used to effectively create an area of interest. The dark silhouettes of the insects on top of the flower are clearly separated by using a lighter blurry background.

Now, look at the painting below called *Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper.



The painting uses proximity to distinguish between the couple having a conversation with the waiter and the man dining by himself.

Proximity not only creates a point of interest inside the diner, but it also creates additional focal points by grouping different elements together and creating emphasis in the piece. You have emphasis on the interior of the diner, and you have emphasis on the man dining by himself, or on the couple chatting with the waiter.

Finally, take a look at the example below of a musical performance.



Even though this is just a photo of the event, you can see that lighting was used in a very specific manner, resulting in high contrast between the singer in the foreground and the elements in the background.

Additionally, the photo uses proximity to leverage the singer's status and importance. All of this comes together to effectively create emphasis on the singer instead of on the crowd or any other element in either the foreground or background.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned to **define emphasis** as the most prominent element or area of focus in a design. You also learned that **emphasis is established** by using the principles of proximity and contrast.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ

**Emphasis**

The most prominent element or focal area in a design.