Intro to Graphics programs and processes

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit provides a sequenced exploration of visual design principles through both traditional media and digital applications like the Adobe Creative Suite. Students will examine how compositional strategies, such as value manipulation, contrast, visual weight, and directional movement, contribute to balanced and effective visual communication. Through guided instruction, career research, and hands-on studio experiences, students will develop strong visual literacy while evaluating the strengths and appropriate production applications of various Adobe programs. By the conclusion of the unit, students will seamlessly integrate fundamental design theory with project-based technical skills, empowering them to select the ideal software tools to create purposeful, organized, and visually dynamic design solutions.

Revised: August 2026

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions:

- What are the expectations and responsibilities of students in this course, and how are productivity, participation, and achievement assessed?
- Why are safety rules and procedures essential in a graphic design studio environment, and how do they contribute to a safe, productive, and professional learning experience?
- How can designers develop a personal creative style while effectively applying the elements and principles of design?
- In what ways do the elements and principles of design influence visual communication and support the development of a designer's unique artistic voice?
- What knowledge, skills, and personal attributes are necessary for success in the field of graphic design?
- How can exploration of graphic design careers help students determine whether the profession aligns with their interests, abilities, and future goals?
- What opportunities and career pathways exist within the graphic design and visual communications industries, and how do designers contribute to society through their work?

Enduring Understandings:

- Effective visual communication relies on the intentional organization of design elements and principles to solve specific problems.

- Professional graphic designers must balance their unique creative voice with technical constraints, media formats, and strict studio safety protocols.

- Exploring diverse career pathways within the graphic design and visual communications industries enables individuals to align their personal interests, strengths, and abilities with future professional goals.

- A deliberate, cyclical design process, combined with the thoughtful selection of digital tools, is essential for generating innovative solutions to authentic visual problems and design constraints.

- Active participation in self-assessment, teacher evaluation, and constructive peer critique is a vital component of the learning process that measures growth, improves aesthetic choices, and refines a designer's unique artistic voice

Objectives

Students Will Know:

- Students will know that the field of graphic design offers a wide range of career opportunities across industries such as advertising, marketing, publishing, web design, digital media, branding, and visual communications.
- Students will know that self-assessment and teacher assessment are important components of the learning process and are used to measure growth, performance, and achievement through standards-based rubrics.
- Students will know that adherence to established safety rules, procedures, and industry practices is the highest priority within the graphic design studio environment.
- Students will know that maintaining a safe and professional workspace protects the health, well-being, and productivity of all individuals in the classroom and studio.
- Students will know the importance of properly using personal protective equipment and safety attire when required to minimize the risk of injury.
- Students will know that the correct operation and maintenance of graphic design equipment, tools, and technology are essential for preventing accidents and ensuring a safe learning environment.
- Students will know that maintaining clean and organized workstations, equipment, and tools contributes to workplace safety, efficiency, and professionalism.
- Students will know that proper handling and disposal of liquid and solid waste generated in the graphics laboratory are essential for preventing accidents, reducing environmental impact, and maintaining compliance with health and safety standards.
- Students will know that responsible studio practices promote environmental stewardship, workplace safety, and the effective use of materials and resources.
- Students will know that professional behavior, accountability, and adherence to safety protocols are essential expectations within educational and industry graphic design environments.

Students Will Be Skilled At:

- Students will be skilled at applying the elements of design, including line, shape, form, color, texture, value, and space, to create effective and visually engaging design solutions.
- Students will be skilled at utilizing the principles of design, including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, unity, proportion, and hierarchy, to organize visual information and communicate ideas effectively.
- Students will be skilled at analyzing design problems and selecting appropriate elements and principles to achieve specific aesthetic and communication objectives.
- Students will be skilled at creating original compositions that demonstrate an understanding of visual organization, design theory, and effective communication strategies.
- Students will be skilled at evaluating and critiquing design work using appropriate design vocabulary and established design principles.
- Students will be skilled at developing and refining a personal creative style while maintaining adherence to fundamental design concepts and professional standards.
- Students will be skilled at conducting research on graphic design careers, educational pathways, industry trends, and professional opportunities within the visual communications field.
- Students will be skilled at actively listening to guest speakers, industry professionals, and peer presentations and identifying key concepts related to career development and professional practice.
- Students will be skilled at generating thoughtful, research-based responses to presentations, discussions, and career-focused learning experiences through written, verbal, and visual communication.
- Students will be skilled at asking relevant questions, engaging in professional discussions, and synthesizing information presented by guest speakers and classmates.
- Students will be skilled at analyzing career information to evaluate personal interests, strengths, and potential pathways within the graphic design and visual communications industries.
- Students will be skilled at presenting research findings, career investigations, and design-related topics using professional communication and presentation skills.
- Students will be skilled at collaborating with peers, providing constructive feedback, and participating in meaningful discussions that support both academic and professional growth.

Learning Plan

Students will engage in learning activities such as class discussion, question and answer sessions, cooperative group projects, role-playing, critique sessions, interactive demonstrations of graphic arts techniques, etc.

Engagement in the following will occur:

- Development of a personal style as a designer using the elements and principles of design
- Application of the different elements and principles of design
- Career surveys and exploration in Graphic Arts and Design
- Learning activities and collaborations including but not limited to: poster design defining the elements

and principles of design
- Safety rules and procedures for the design lab
- Collection of notes and reflections compiled in a notebook
- Investigation of career opportunities available in the field of graphic design and job descriptions and duties (illustrator, web designer, press operator, etc.)
- Reflective and responsive activities to the speakers and student presentations (research based) on graphic design careers
- Peer to peer response

SEQUENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING HOW TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

1. Teacher presentation of course information and assessment methods, such demonstrations may be done using Smart Board. 2. Discussion on safety 3. Discussion and review of the principles and elements of design 4. Pre-assessment activity exploring the elements and principles of design 5. Assessment of students' work: Group discussions, class critique, self- and teacher evaluation using rubric 6. Career exploration, such as but not limited to guest speakers, research reports, etc. 7. Student response papers to career exploration 8. Assessment of written responses: Self and teacher evaluation using rubric

Assessment

Formative

answer essential questions

exit ticket

meaningfully participate in guided question and answer sessions, group and individual discussions, and show an understanding of the purpose of the unit lesson(s), and their key terms and concepts.

Summative

Design and create

Benchmark

Midterm Exam/Final Exam

Alternative Assessment

Present the project to peers and/or the community.

Complete writing prompt:

Complete writing prompt.

Materials

-
    - Online design examples, tutorials, and step-by-step instructional guides demonstrating the use of Adobe Illustrator tools, design techniques, and professional graphic design practices.
    - Teacher-created demonstrations and instructional presentations modeling design concepts, software techniques, creative problem-solving, and project expectations.
    - Former student examples showcasing successful projects, logo designs, layouts, and applications of the elements and principles of design to provide students with reference points and inspiration.
    - Professional graphic design samples from advertisements, logos, branding materials, websites, posters, packaging, and digital media used for analysis and discussion.
    - Printed and digital handouts covering Adobe Illustrator tools, keyboard shortcuts, vocabulary, design terminology, project guidelines, and design process strategies.
    - Class notes and guided lecture materials related to the elements and principles of design, typography, color theory, composition, branding, and visual communication.
    - Instructional reference sheets and design process organizers to support brainstorming, sketching, concept development, and project planning.
    - Assessment rubrics outlining project expectations, grading criteria, technical skills, creativity, craftsmanship, and participation requirements.
    - Critique guides and peer review worksheets to support constructive feedback, reflection, and discussion during the design process.
    - Adobe Illustrator software for creating digital illustrations, logos, compositions, and design projects.
    - Computers or laptops capable of running Adobe Illustrator and supporting digital design work.
    - Digital projector or interactive display for teacher demonstrations, presentations, and group critiques.
    - Sketchbooks, drawing paper, or brainstorming worksheets for thumbnail sketches, concept development, and planning activities.

Standards

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.5.12prof.Cr	Creating
	Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed. Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.
1.5.12prof.Cr1a	Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.
1.5.12prof.Cr1b	Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art and design.
1.5.12prof.Cr2a	Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.
1.5.12prof.Cr2c	Collaboratively develop a proposal for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience of a particular place.
TECH.K-12.1.4	Innovative Designer
	Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful or imaginative solutions.
TECH.K-12.1.4.a	know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovative artifacts or solving authentic problems.
TECH.K-12.1.4.b	select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process that considers design constraints and calculated risks.
TECH.K-12.1.4.c	develop, test and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process.
1.5.12prof.Re8	Interpreting intent and meaning.
1.5.12prof.Cn	Connecting
I	Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.
I.A.2	Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.
I.B.1	Using evidence to investigate questions.
I.B.2	Devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps.
V	Explore: Discover and innovate in a growth mindset developed through experience and reflection.
IV.B	Learners gather information appropriate to the task by:
IV.C	Learners exchange information resources within and beyond their learning community by:
III	Collaborate: Work effectively with others to broaden perspectives and work toward

common goals.

Integrated Accommodation and Modifications, Special Education students, English Language Learners, At-Risk Students, Gifted and Talented students, Career Education, and those with 504s

Instructional Accommodations

- Provide step-by-step written and visual instructions for all design projects and software demonstrations.
- Break larger assignments into smaller, manageable tasks with interim deadlines and check-ins.
- Use modeling and teacher demonstrations before independent student work.
- Provide guided notes, vocabulary lists, and graphic organizers for lectures and presentations.
- Offer repeated directions and clarify expectations verbally and visually.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary related to graphic design, Adobe Illustrator tools, and design principles.
- Allow students to access recorded demonstrations or tutorial videos for review at their own pace.
- Provide exemplars and sample projects to reinforce expectations and concepts.
- Use frequent comprehension checks during instruction and demonstrations.
- Provide one-on-one or small-group instructional support when needed.

Assignment and Assessment Modifications

- Allow extended time for quizzes, projects, and class assignments.
- Reduce the number of required design variations or sketches without compromising learning objectives.
- Modify project complexity based on student ability levels while maintaining core standards.
- Allow oral explanations or presentations in place of written reflections when appropriate.
- Provide alternative assessments such as guided critiques, interviews, or portfolio conferences.
- Use simplified rubrics with clearly defined criteria and visual supports.
- Permit revisions and resubmissions after feedback and teacher conferencing.
- Grade based on individual growth, effort, and mastery of essential skills when appropriate.

Technology and Software Supports

- Provide access to assistive technology tools, including text-to-speech and speech-to-text software.
- Allow use of adaptive computer equipment, alternative mice, keyboards, or styluses if needed.
- Create keyboard shortcut reference sheets and simplified tool guides for Adobe Illustrator.
- Provide templates, partially completed files, or scaffolded starter documents.
- Allow students to zoom in on workspaces or use accessibility settings within software programs.
- Offer digital copies of handouts and notes for organization and accessibility.

Classroom Environment Accommodations

- Preferential seating near instruction or teacher demonstrations.
- Provide a distraction-reduced environment for assessments or focused project work.
- Allow movement breaks or flexible seating options as needed.
- Maintain consistent classroom routines and clearly posted daily objectives.
- Use visual schedules and checklists to support organization and task completion.

- Provide additional time for transitions between activities or software tasks.

Organizational and Executive Function Supports

- Assist students with project planning, time management, and organization of digital files.
- Provide project timelines with checkpoints and reminders.
- Use task checklists and progress-monitoring sheets during long-term projects.
- Help students organize digital folders and save work appropriately.
- Encourage use of planners, calendars, or digital reminders for assignment deadlines.

Social-Emotional and Communication Supports

- Encourage participation in peer critiques using structured sentence starters and guided feedback forms.
- Provide positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout the creative process.
- Allow students to demonstrate understanding in multiple ways.
- Support student self-advocacy by encouraging questions and clarification requests.
- Create opportunities for collaborative learning with supportive peer partners or groups.
- Foster a classroom culture that values creativity, effort, revision, and individual growth.

Fine Motor and Processing Accommodations

- Allow additional time for precise digital design work requiring fine motor control.
- Provide alternative methods for sketching or brainstorming, including digital sketch tools.
- Reduce repetitive drawing or tracing requirements if they create unnecessary barriers.
- Allow students to verbally explain concepts before translating ideas into digital formats.

English Language Learner and Reading Supports (when applicable)

- Pair visual examples with written directions.
- Simplify complex reading materials and provide audio or translated supports when available.
- Reinforce concepts through demonstrations and hands-on learning opportunities.
- Provide sentence frames for critiques, reflections, and project discussions.

Collaboration with Support Staff

- Coordinate with special education teachers, case managers, counselors, and related service providers to ensure accommodations are consistently implemented.
- Maintain ongoing communication regarding student progress, challenges, and successful strategies.
- Adjust instructional pacing and supports based on individual student needs and documented accommodations.