# DESIGN
## Dictionary

Ethos3

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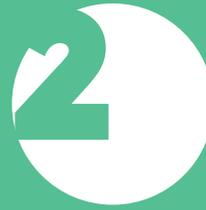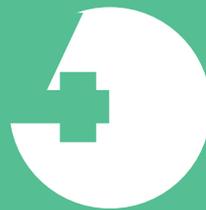
# Introductions

## I've never been especially good at art.

During my senior year of high school, I took an introductory art class and struggled more there than I did in any Advanced Placement course on my schedule. My eyes winced at the watercolor painting I created of a dolphin leaping against a pink and orange swirled sunset. The proportions of my clay sculpture of loving swans were more than way off. My sketches of ordinary objects only vaguely resembled what they were supposed to represent. An apple looked more like an over-inflated beach ball when my hands attempted to draw it. Luckily, I managed to scrape by with an A–, but I haven't ventured much more into the visual arts since then.

As a Content Strategist at Ethos3, I completely rely on my designer counterparts to take the words I formulate and display them in a visually engaging way. Yes. It's true. I am one of the 99.9% of the U.S. population who does not have the slightest bit of technical design skills. And chances are you are too.

You and I are like fish out of water in the design space. But we still need to have a basic understanding of the craft, especially when we are collaborating with creative colleagues on a project. That's why the Ethos3 design team highlighted the top terms everyone should know.

## Let's flex our design muscles together!

# The Basics

The words and phrases that follow are the ABCs of presentation design. They are part of the kindergarten stage of visual artistry. As the elements that designers combine to create every molecule of a masterpiece, these words are a foundation upon which your presentations will be built.
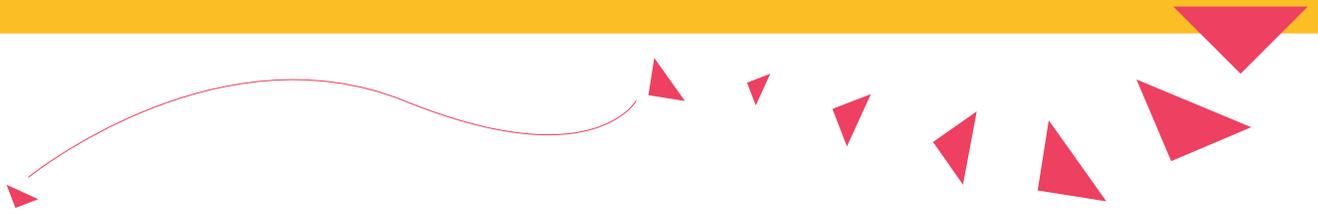
**Balance**
Balance is characterized by the distribution of visual weight within a design.

**Hierarchy**
When designers organize design elements to emphasize or signify relative importance, they are establishing hierarchy.

**Negative Space**
Also known as "white space," this term refers to any area of a design that is not filled with content or imagery. Negative space is just as important as the content and design elements on your page, helping your design to look clean and easy to understand, prevent needless clutter, and aid in the organization of the content and other elements of your layout.

**Rule of Thirds**
The Rule of Thirds is a theory that if you divide your layout or image using two evenly-spaced vertical lines along with two evenly spaced horizontal lines, the areas where your lines intersect will become focal points. This is a great rule of thumb to follow when composing or creating designs or cropping photographs, as this can create more energy and interest than simply centering the main subject of a composition.

**Scale**
As the relative size of an object in relation to surrounding objects, scale is pivotal when forming a hierarchy for your designs.

**Texture**
Designers refer to the tactile, or seemingly tactile, qualities of an object as its texture.

# Color

If you were to take a peek into my closet, you'd notice a simple color scheme – various shades of blue mixed with whites and blacks. I don't stray too far outside of my color comfort zone. Even though I may not push the aesthetic limits with the way I dress, our presentations should. Here are a few definitions to help you improve the look and feel of your decks.

## CMYK/RGB

There are two basic color models you can use when creating visual assets. Choose your color model depending on whether your project is intended to be printed or viewed digitally:

**CMYK**
This particular color model is used for print purposes.
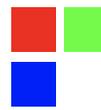
**RGB**
This color model is used to display colors digitally using light.

## Color Wheel

A color wheel is an abstract organization of color hues that shows the relationship between colors. This is an excellent tool for selecting a color palette for your project. The artist Marc Chagall coined the phrase "All colors are the friends of their neighbors and lovers of their opposites," meaning that colors next to or directly across from each other on the color wheel are a harmonious pairing.

## Contrast

Contrast is the degree of difference or juxtaposition between two elements.

## Hue

Normally referred to by its color name, hue is a term used to describe the attribute of a common color.

## Mono-Chromatic

A color scheme or palette that utilizes a single color, including lighter and darker values of that hue is said to be monochromatic.

## Palette

The specific selection of colors established for use in your design to create consistency and order is called a palette.

## Saturation

Saturation is the degree of intensity or brightness of color in an image or design element.

# Typography

I've learned through my experience working at Ethos3 that even the most conservative decks can be visually enhanced by an expert use of typography. In most cases, typography is the opening act of the headliner: your presentation design. The right font can intrigue your audience and compel them to press forward through your presentation while the wrong font can disengage, bore, or even annoy your audience before the main show has even begun. Don't forget — after you select the perfect font, you have to be mindful of how the type is placed and arranged on the slide.

## Alignments

**Left/Right/Centered/Justified**

A method of arranging type, alignment is crucial to achieving balance, order, and visual form.

## Kerning

Kerning involves the adjustment of space between individual letter-forms to achieve a more proportional balance of visual space between each character.

## Leading/ Line Spacing

The adjustment of space between lines of type to achieve legibility. Loose leading can make the type feel disjointed, whereas tight leading can cause tension and overlap which makes the content appear unreadable. The key to proper leading for your font is much like Goldilocks and the Three Bears—you don't want your lines of type to be too tight or too loose but rather a balance between the two to create a visual look that is "just right."

## Legibility

Legibility is a measure of how easy it is to distinguish one letter of type from the next, ultimately improving the overall readability of your content.

## Orphans/ Widows

When single words or short lines appear by themselves at the top or bottom of a column of type, they are consider orphans or widows.

## Pull Quote

A pull quote is exactly what it sounds like. It's an excerpt or quote pulled from the main copy to highlight important ideas and to create visual interest.

## Tracking

Like kerning, tracking refers to the space between the letter-forms. Instead of the spacing between each individual letter-form, tracking adjusts the space between the letters in an equal and uniform manner. This is often utilized to adjust the density or appearance of a large block of body copy.

# Type Styles

### SERIF

A serif is the small line attached to the end of the stroke of a letter-form or symbol. Serif fonts tend to look more professional and traditional in appearance and are widely used for body copy, because they are considered to be easy to read in large blocks of text.

### SANS SERIF

A sans serif typeface is a letter-form without a serif or decorative element at the end of its strokes. San serifs typically have less line variation than serif fonts. These typefaces, used for both headlines and body copy, are commonly regarded as more modern and stylish.

### SCRIPT

A script is an expressive font in a varied and fluid stroke, similar to calligraphy or handwriting. They are typically used for headlines rather than body copy since their legibility is inferior to serif or san serif fonts. Scripts can range from elegant and personal to friendly and casual.

### SLAB

A slab is a serif font with thick, block-like serifs. Slab serifs were invented in the nineteenth century, and most feature a geometric design with minimal stroke variation. Rarely used as body copy, this bold style can create impacting headlines that grab your audience's attention.

# Presentation Design Terms

You're at the bar ordering a drink when you lock eyes with the person sitting across the table from you. After engaging in some small talk, you find out that the person is a designer. You immediately ask, "What kind of design do you do?" That's because "design" encompasses so many different disciplines. Graphic design. Web design. Newspaper design. And even presentation design. Each style comes with its own language and terms, as you'll see by exploring the definitions below.

## Animation

Within PowerPoint, designers can create animations, or a series of stylized movements and transitions.

## Aspect Ratio

The aspect ratio is the width and height of an image—in this instance, referring to the size of the slides within PowerPoint. There are two common sizes:

### 4:3 Standard

▶ This aspect ratio is PowerPoint's default slide size and is, therefore, the most commonly seen format. For every 4 inches of width, the slide will have 3 inches of height. In comparison to the 16:9 widescreen format, it is shaped more like a square and has dimensions similar to that of an old-school TV. This format is recommended when presenting on a tablet.

### 16:9 Widescreen

▶ This aspect ratio is wider, providing more room on the slide for content and visuals. For every 16 inches of width, the slide has 9 inches of height. Despite 4:3 being referred to as the standard size, most up-to-date TVs, monitors, and computers utilize the 16:9 format. This format is best for most presentations and helps to create a sleek appearance that works well with modern technology.

## Brand Identity

A company's brand identity is how the business wants to be perceived by its consumers. The components of brand identity include company name, logo, tagline, typeface, and other design elements. Once a company's brand identity has been established, this is carried over to a set of guidelines that should be referred to when creating any visual materials for their company (See: Style Guide).

## Design Comp

A design comp is the initial draft of a project. It utilizes the chosen design elements (including color, fonts, illustration, iconography, and/or imagery), as part of the on-going design process.

## Presentation Types

There are three different approaches to slide design. Each has its benefits and disadvantages, and you should select your approach based on your individual presentation needs:
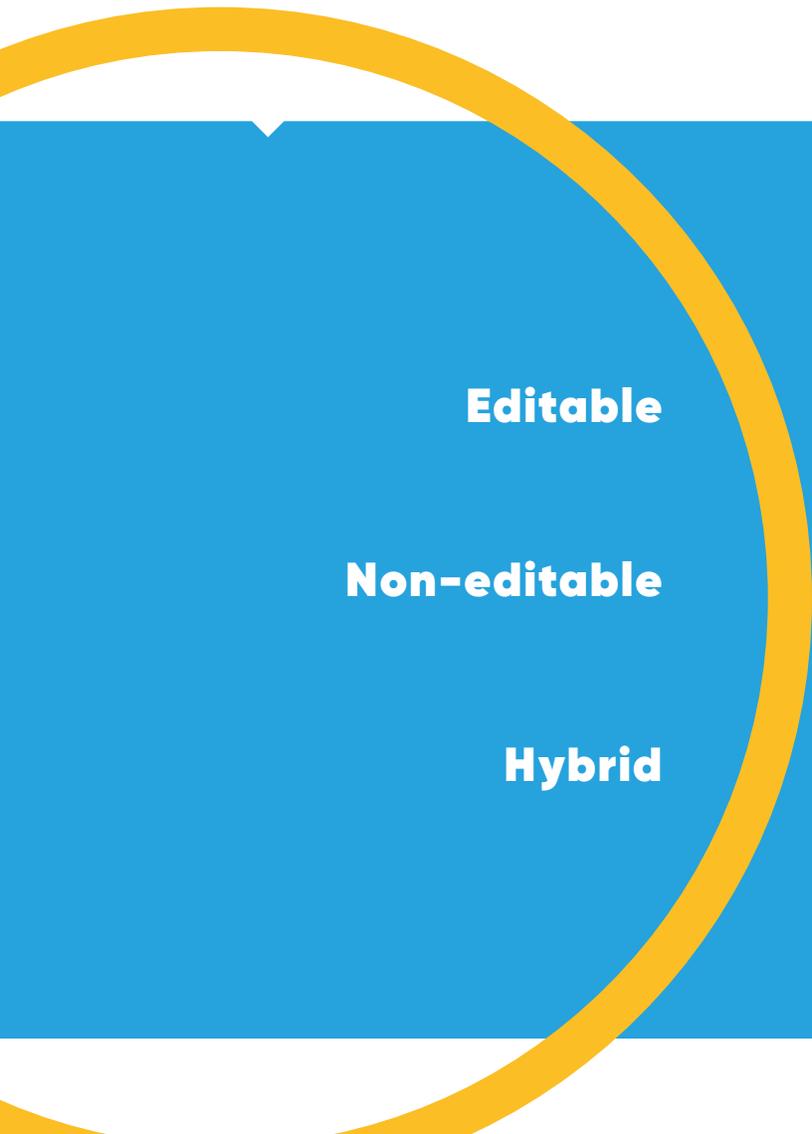
### Editable

This type of presentation is developed so that all of the design elements and text are editable in PowerPoint.

### Non-editable

This type of presentation consists of slides that are created using Adobe Creative software (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator).

### Hybrid

When both editable and non-editable practices are combined, it is called a hybrid deck.

## Flat Design

This is a popular style of design emphasizing the minimum use of design or stylistic elements that give an object the illusion of three dimensions. Flat design avoids the use of drop shadows, gradients, or textures and is focused on the use of simple design elements like typography and flat colors.

## Iconography

The graphic representation of a concept through a single, simple illustration is a practice called iconography.

## Illustration

Designers visually interpret concepts, processes, and ideas through illustrations.

## File Formats

**JPEG / PNG / GIF / PSD / AI**

There are many different file formats your images can be saved as. Learn the difference to know when to use each file type and to communicate more easily with your designer.

## JPEG

This is a standard raster image type which allows the file to be shared on a wide variety of platforms. Although they tend to be small file sizes and are great for sharing through email, the compression used to keep the file size small can affect the overall quality. JPEG files do not allow transparency, so they are not ideal for logos or other images that will need to be placed on a background. They can support both RGB and CMYK color spaces.

## PNG

This is a raster image type that utilizes lossless compression. PNGs are typically higher quality than JPEGs and allow transparency, which makes them great for visual assets like logos that will need to be placed on a background. However, PNGs are meant to be used for digital formats and can only support the RGB color space which makes them unsuitable for printing.

## GIF

This is a low-resolution file type mostly used for web and email purposes and can support animated frames. Most people know this file format from the funny meme animations that appear on the internet.  Although GIFS support transparency, they often suffer from pixelation and can be low in quality.

## PSD

This is the native file format for Adobe Photoshop (a standard software used by designers and printers). This file format allows transparency and keeps your design editable in Photoshop. PSD files are raster files, meaning that the image is made up of pixels and can lose quality when the image is scaled larger than its original size.

## AI

This is the native file format for Adobe Illustrator, which is a standard software used by designers and printers. This file format does not allow transparency but keeps your design editable in Illustrator. AI files are vector files, meaning that the image is rendered using math and a series of points, lines, and curves so that your image can be scaled to any size and still maintain quality.

## Margins

This refers to the space around the edge of an element or page. Use margins to prevent your objects or text from being too crowded. By increasing or decreasing the size of your margins, you can create a clean, calming design or a tense design.

## Master Slides

This slide stores information about the theme and slide layouts of your presentation, including the background, color, fonts, effects, placeholder sizes, and positioning. The benefit of using Master Slides is that you can make universal style changes by editing the Master Slide instead of each individual slide.

## Moodboard

A moodboard is a collection of images, colors, icons, and fonts created as inspiration for the design style of a project.

## Navigation Menu

Navigation menus are typically created as a slide within a presentation. That slide contains words, iconography, or images that are hyperlinked to other slides within the deck.

## Transparency

This refers to the opaqueness of an object. In PowerPoint, 0% transparency means that an object is completely solid, and 100% transparency means that an object is completely transparent.

# Raster/Vector

## Raster

Raster images are made of hundreds of tiny squares of color information commonly referred to as pixels. Although raster images allow for precise editing, the biggest downfall of raster images is that they become pixelated (meaning grainy and unclear) when you enlarge the image bigger than its original size. Typical raster file types include jpegs, psd, png, tiff, bmp, and gif.

## Vector

Vector images use math to draw shapes using points, lines, and curves. Unlike raster images, vectors can be resized and still maintain image quality since the computer uses math to render your shape or illustration in perfect detail no matter how large or small it's scaled. The most common types of vector files include eps, ai, and pdf.

# Presentation Design Terms

## Static Image

A static image is a fixed, non-editable image.

## Stock Photography

Unless the client provides photography that they own or have a license to use, Ethos3's designers use stock photography selected from an image library such as iStock. Designers always default to natural, unposed photos over cliché, cheesy, or staged images.

## Style Guide

A document that outlines the design elements and guidelines for usage for a brand or project is called a style guide.

## Template

This is a designed series of slide layouts, theme colors, theme fonts, background styles, and even content. You can create your own custom template to reuse and share with others. Templates work great for presenters who need to create a new presentation on the fly or maintain style/brand consistency across multiple presentations.

## Theme

Themes are preset colors, fonts, shapes, and other elements in PowerPoint. Applying a new theme changes the major details of your document in one click. Tables, charts, shapes, and other objects will automatically update to complement one another. This makes overarching design changes easy to implement.

## Windows Compatible Fonts

Fonts that are pre-installed on every Windows or Office program are referred to as Windows compatible fonts, meaning that each font will be available on any computer with PowerPoint.

Although only .1% of the population can walk the design walk, after perusing our handy Designer Dictionary, we can now all talk the design talk.

# Congratulations!

You now know about as many design terms and principles as a college freshman! Now that you understand critical design language, you'll feel super smart the next time you run into a co-worker at the water cooler. That's right. I am suggesting that you casually mention scale and vector images during the conversation. But, even more importantly, you'll know exactly what we are talking about when we work on your project together!

**Ethos3**

**Do you have a deck that needs revamped?**
**Check out our Ethos3 presentation design services at ethos3.com!**