principle	principle description	feedback	explanation	identification (specific instance)	prominence	recommendation
hierarchy	Hierarchy refers to relative importance of elements on the canvas -- it can be achieved through using size, color, contrast, and white space (spacing) to emphasize certain characteristics of the design. It is particularly important to consider where the viewers' eyes are first drawn, this should be the most important element. By utilizing hierarchy properly, you can better understand how to draw attention to specific elements of your piece and guide a viewer's eyes to attend to different parts of your design in the order of their importance.	**weak point of entry**	The point of entry is the focal point of your design. If the point of entry is weak, it is unclear what element is the most important and viewers may not recognize the key message at first sight.	The title does not seem particularly emphasized compared to [other text], making it appear only slightly more important. e.g. it is currently only slightly larger in font than other text in the design The [other text] seems overly emphasized compared to the title text, making it appear somewhat more important. e.g. it is currently only slightly smaller than the title brighter, more bolded, etc.	another chunk of text at almost the same font size (under 10 pt difference) as title	increase contrast using size/color - make title bigger/make body smaller - change title text color to be brighter increase contrast in text - make title all caps/lowercase - make title bold - make title different font use additional white space to frame key message
		ambiguous levels of importance	If there is no distinct visual hierarchy, viewers may have trouble using visual cues to distinguish between elements of lesser or higher importance.	Relative importance of [element] to [element]/amongst [elements] seems unclear -- e.g. they appear to be the [same/different] visually. The [text] seems overly/under emphasized compared to [text].	there should be at least 3 distinct levels of hierarchy: title, body, tagline (can be via spacing, but should be clear separate groups, over 10 pt difference)	increasing importance - brighter colors (e.g. using accent colors in an otherwise monochrome design) - increase size - adding white space decreasing importance - softer colors (e.g. shades of gray or other neutrals) - decrease size grouping by importance - matching any color/formatting treatment - proximity - objects that are close appear to be related
		unclear grouping of content	If objects of similar significance or meaning are not grouped closer together, viewers may have a hard time understanding the relationship between elements.	[element] and [element], which seem to convey similar meanings, are not placed within the same area. *e.g. The date and location is placed on the top right, while the time is placed on the bottom left.*	a group (based on proximity/similarity) consists of content of more than one level of hierarchy (title, body, tagline); or content of the same level of hierarchy appear to be two distinct groups. defining a "group": - proximity: closer than one line of text apart - similarity: same font face, font size within 10 pt	visually group related elements - identify elements that convey similar/related messages (or are of similar levels of visual importance) and make them spatially close to each other visually separate less related elements - identify elements that convey unrelated messages (or are of different levels of visual importance) and make them spatially farther away from each other
alignment	Alignment refers to the arrangement of graphics and text in relation to both the various edges/margins of the canvas as well as the elements within the canvas. Alignment can be used to visually group or separate objects. The closer objects are in space, the more noticeable a difference in alignment will be to the viewer's eyes.	**arbitrary alignment of elements**	If elements aren't aligned to a common edge/axis, the design may appear scattered and disorganized.	[element] and [element], which seem to be grouped, are not aligned to the same [line/edge/axis]. Text box placement of [text] seems to be aligned with [top/right/bottom/left] edges, but text within is [center/left/right]-aligned, which doesn't seem to match. *e.g. The title is aligned to the left while the description is aligned to the right and the image is center-aligned.* Several text elements seem to be aligned to different axes, which can make the design appear somewhat incohesive. Spacing between several text elements seems somewhat uneven/misaligned, which can make the design appear somewhat incohesive.	alignment visibly off (slight misalignments not counted) text box is aligned towards an edge/corner, noticeably off center, but center-aligned; or text box is centered and not center-aligned >3 alignment axes	create and align common edges - consider aligning the edges of nearby text boxes - consider using the same alignment (e.g. left-justified) for related groups of text - consider matching alignment of overall text boxes to text alignment within the text box align text to common paths/margins - align to closest margin (e.g. left page margin) - align to common shape (e.g. image)

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		insufficient margins	If elements are placed too close to the edge of the canvas, the viewer may find it hard to see the contents of the design as a cohesive whole.	[element] is placed quite close to the [right/left/top/bottom] margin, which can make the design appear somewhat crowded. *e.g. The first letters of each line in the title are placed right on the left edge.*	generally closer to edge than one letter/line of text	elements in the design should have breathing room/space to frame - consider shifting text/graphic elements away from edge of page - consider size of elements when determining how much white space should surround it consider if space towards center of the design is being used effectively
balance	Balance refers to offsetting how the graphical weight of components balance with each other on either side of a design to create satisfaction, completion, and cohesion. Achieving balance does not imply that the layout should be completely symmetrical -- in fact, it is still important to have a focal point and contrast. It just means that the designer should consider how the layout of elements and white space might create feelings of imbalance/discomfort and should be intentional about doing so.	not enough space between content	Leaving too little white space between design elements can make it difficult to identify sections and comfortably read content.	[element] and [element] seem to be of varying importance, but appear to be quite close together, which might imply that they belong to the same group. [element] and [element] appear to be quite close to each other, which can make the design appear crowded.	generally elements closer than other spacing between lines of text	leave white space between elements - move elements away from each other - consider size of elements when determining how much white space should surround it group similar elements together spatially, but still leaving adequate breathing room - consider spacing within and around a single text box
		content lacks balance	When elements of different visual weight aren't intentionally arranged, a design can appear skewed/unbalanced/incohesive.	Most of your [elements] are in [area], which may make your design appear [direction]-heavy. [Area] appears to be underutilized/have a lot of unused white space, causing the composition to look somewhat skewed to [direction].	almost all elements skewed to one side (e.g. only one element on the left, etc.)	balance areas of heavy visual weight (while maintaining hierarchy) - add or shift elements into underutilized areas - decrease size of images, graphic elements, and/or text to reduce weight - change text emphasis and styles to shift weight towards other regions consider if you want symmetric or asymmetric balance
		uneven margins	Leaving margins of different sizes around a design can make it appear unbalanced.	The [left/right or top/bottom] margin of your design appears to be [smaller/larger] than the others [within the frame/design element], which can appear inconsistent or imbalanced.	margins should be visibly different (slight misalignments don't count)	consider creating even margins - match top and bottom (also left/right) margins to be similar in size (or more intentionally different) - similarly adjust top/bottom margins relative to left/right create clear visual edges - shift text/graphics to align edges - make sure each edge only has one margin - change size of text/graphics
unity	Unity refers to creating a more unified and cohesive design. A more focused design will help pull the elements together and make each element feel like it belongs in the design. By making any differences in design choices more intentional, viewers can also use this information to better interpret and understand the design -- e.g. they can assume that a difference in font weight implies a difference in relative importance.	inconsistent/too many variations in text	Using too many variations in typefaces, font sizes, font styles, and text color can make a design look incohesive and unorganized.	Your design uses [number] different [**typefaces**], which can make your design seem incohesive. [This paragraph] uses [number] [**colors**], which can make your design seem incohesive. Your design uses [number] different [**font sizes**] in this section, which can make your design seem incohesive. You use [treatment] for [element] but [**treatment**] for another. Is this intentional?	only call out if more than 3 different selections (for any category)	consider limiting number of font, font sizes, font styles, etc. - make similar font/font sizes the same - make different font/font sizes more different consider using text styles/treatments in a consistent manner - treat text of equal importance with same font size/color/style
		unnecessary design elements	Adding too many graphical elements irrelevant to the key message can draw attention away from the important parts of a design.	There seems to be several [graphic] in your design, which can somewhat distract from the main message/theme. There seem to be several kinds of [graphic] in your design, which can make your design seem incohesive. [Graphic] and [graphic] appear to be relatively distinct styles and can appear somewhat inconsistent.	only call out if more than 3 different selections (for any category)	decrease clutter quantiatively - remove some elements (text, graphic, image, etc.) decrease clutter qualitatively - pick a less busy image\n- pick simpler graphics

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		inconsistent color choices	Using too many variations in color between various elements in a design can make a design look busy and inconsistent.	Your text uses [list colors] but your image(s) use(s) [list colors], which can make your design seem incohesive. Your design uses quite a few colors, many of which don't seem to be reflected more than once, which can make your design seem incohesive. The green color of the rectangular element is not reflected elsewhere in the design, which can make your design seem incohesive. The text color and the background color don't quite belong to the same type of color palette (bright versus pastel), which can make your design seem incohesive.	only call out if more than 3 colors, with at least one only used once color palettes: bright, pastel, jewel, bold, etc.	make similar colors match consider limiting number of accent colors select colors from one type of color palette (e.g. pastel, neutrals, neon, jewel tone, etc.)
readability	Readability refers to how easy or difficult it is to read and follow the visual content in the design, in terms of both the text and imagery. Good readability can be achieved by using clear graphics and fonts that are legible or easy to read, as well as heavier font weights and colors with higher contrast.	**poor text legibility**	Unclear fonts, text sizes, and spacing can make text hard to read.	The 1. **font/size/kerning** (or: space between letters) 2. **leading** (or: space between lines) 3. **spacing** 4. **color** 5. **lack of contrast** 6. **line break** used for/in the [text] makes it somewhat harder to read ___ e.g. against the background Small font size for [tagline/other text] is somewhat hard to read. Make sure to consider the final medium (Instagram) when designing. *e.g. The letters of the title text "Lorem Ipsum" are overlapping.*	fonts that are hard to read from our font options: - script (if for non-title), esp if blurred together - narrow serif fonts e.g. PT Sans Narrow, Roboto One - bold display fonts in big paragraphs - thinner fonts like Nixie One (esp at small sizes) minimum font size: ~25	consider changing the treatment of text - adjust (increase/decrease) font weight - adjust (increase/decrease) font size - pick font with an average amount of font weight - pick a more standard, less visually complex font consider adding more contrast to text - add an opposite or neutral colored backdrop - adjust text color based on its background (or as an outline) consider adjusting the space around text - adjust (increase/decrease) space between letters - adjust (increase/decrease) space between lines consider making line lengths more even within a single text box
		unsuitable image manipulation	If the image subject is not clear, viewers may have trouble understanding the image and design visually.	1. The [**contrast/brightness**] of [graphic] is quite [low/high], *e.g. The man's face blends in with the background, making it hard to see clearly.* 2. [graphic] appears [**blurry/distorted/warped**], *e.g. The face of the woman has been stretched horizontally.* 3. The [**size**] of [graphic] seems to be quite [large/small], *e.g. The image of the object is smaller than less important information like the disclaimer.* 4. The subject of your image is partially **cropped** which may make the content somewhat hard to see.	if contrast/brightness causes over or under- saturation or exposure of any areas in the image any distortion/warping, blurring until the content is hard to recognize person in image being less than a quarter of the canvas height	consider picking a higher quality image - choose image with better resolution - choose image with clearer subject matter/less distracting background (e.g. less colors, simpler patterns, less subjects, more negative space) consider adjusting image manipulations to increase image clarity - increase/decrease image contrast - increase/decrease image size - avoid warping/stretching/distorting image

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		obscured content	If an element is covered by another, the message that the covered element conveys becomes lost or unclear.	[Element] is slightly/completely obscured by [element] --, e.g. due to low contrast which can make it somewhat harder to [read/see] clearly. *e.g. The concert title covers the face of Taylor Swift.*	if text overlaps with subject in the image by more than a letter or two if text is hard to read due to overlapping low contrast or noisy regions of the image	consider increasing contrast of text - choose color of higher contrast against background (neutral, complementary, accent) - add a solid/semi-transparent overlay between text and background - add a stroke/outline around text in a contrasting color (to text fill color) consider simplifying background - use a simpler image or solid color - crop image to have cleaner region as text background - reduce overall constrast within background - shift text to higher contrast/emptier spot in image