

Gestalt Principles

What is Gestalt?

- “Gestalt” is a German word meaning “form,” or “shape.” Gestalt Principles help us form a “whole” finished composition from various unified visual parts. According to Gestalt theory the human mind attempts to recognize objects as a whole before examining their individual parts. Information that is unrelated in size, shape, orientation, etc will appear chaotic and unorganized to a viewer.

Grouping

- Elements that are alike one another perceptually join to create whole units or figures. If a shape is repeated often enough it creates a pattern or recognizable form/figure.

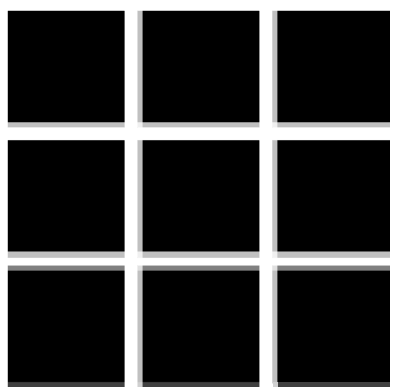
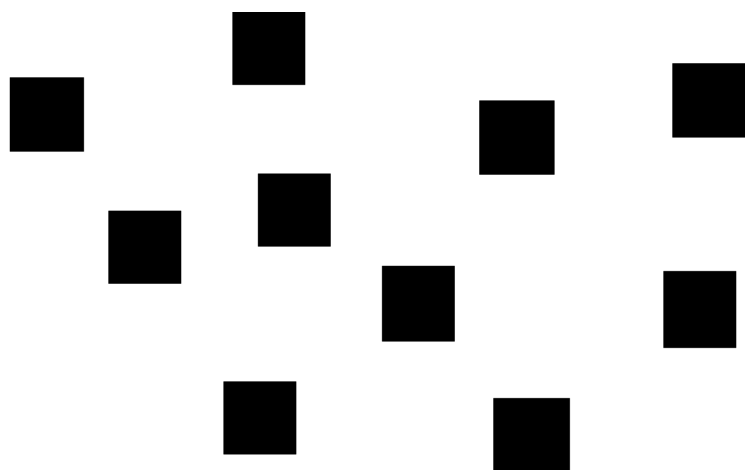


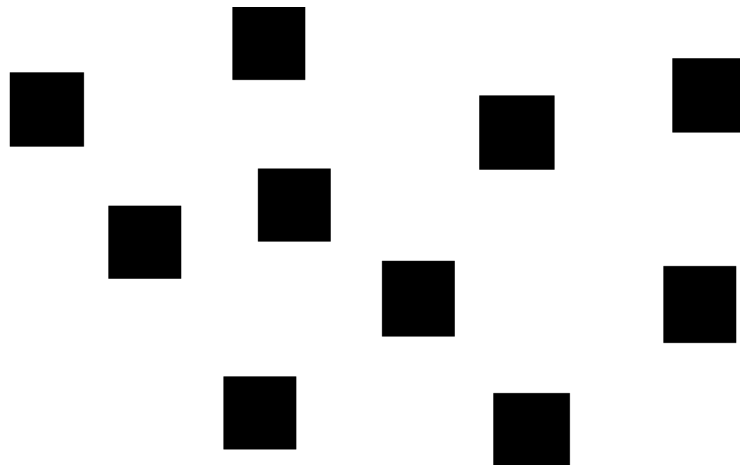


- This example (containing 42 distinct objects) appears as **two distinct groups** we naturally want like objects to exist together. The circular shapes become one group, while the square shapes become a separate group.
- Other methods for grouping include orientation, shape, value (color), size, subject matter, etc.

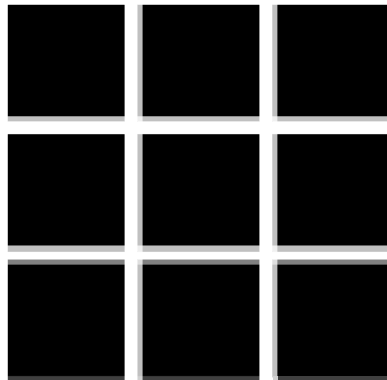
Proximity

- When individual elements are placed close together they tend to be perceived as a single group.





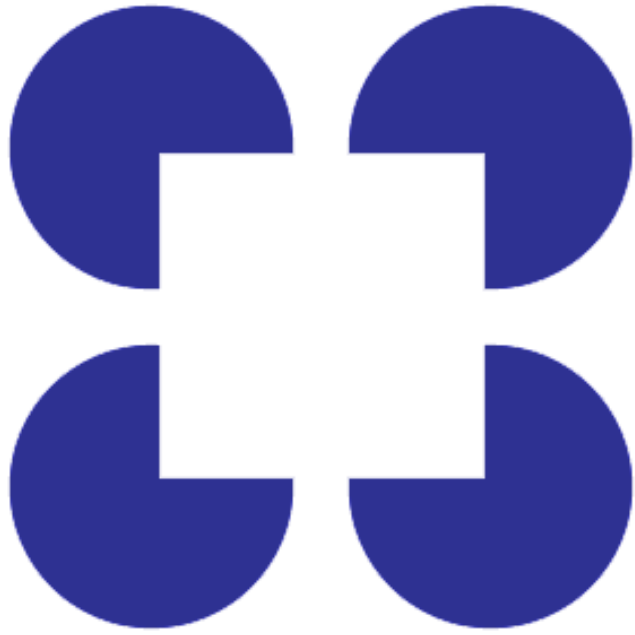
- The nine squares to the left are placed without proximity. They are perceived as **separate shapes**.

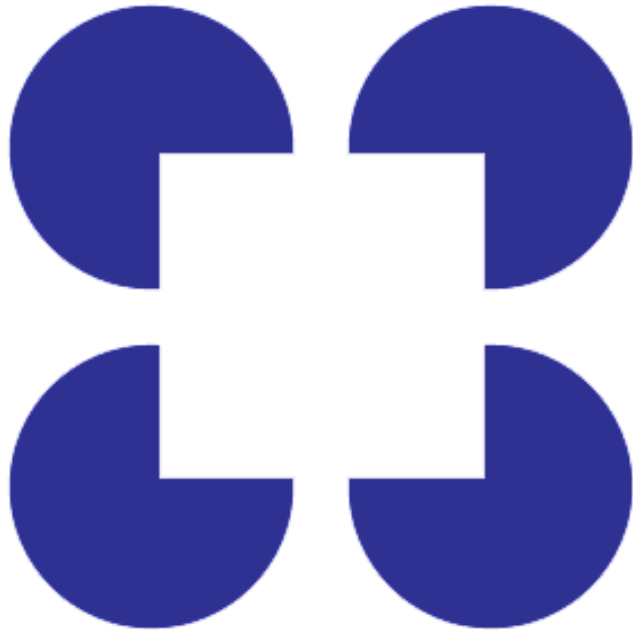


- When the squares are given close proximity, unity occurs. While they continue to be separate shapes, they are now perceived as **one group**.

Closure

- The innate perceptual tendency for a viewer to perceive multiple objects as a group or totality. The ability to close “gaps” and create “wholes” out of dis-continuous lines, forms, or masses. *Closure* occurs when an object is *incomplete* or a space is not *completely enclosed*. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

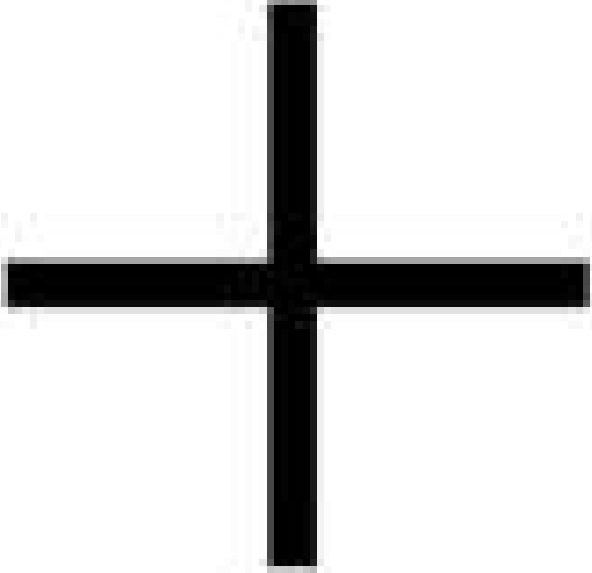


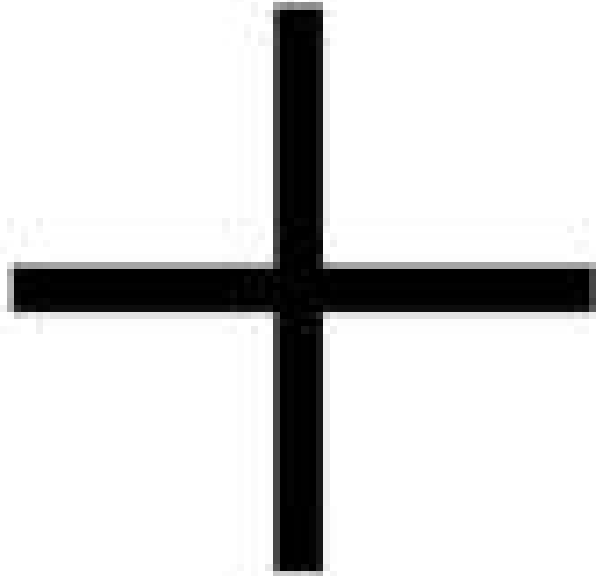


- Although the square is not complete, enough is present for the eye to complete the shape. When the *viewer's perception completes a shape*, **closure** occurs.

Continuation

- Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to **move through** one object and **continue** to another object. The principle of continuity predicts the preference for continuous figures

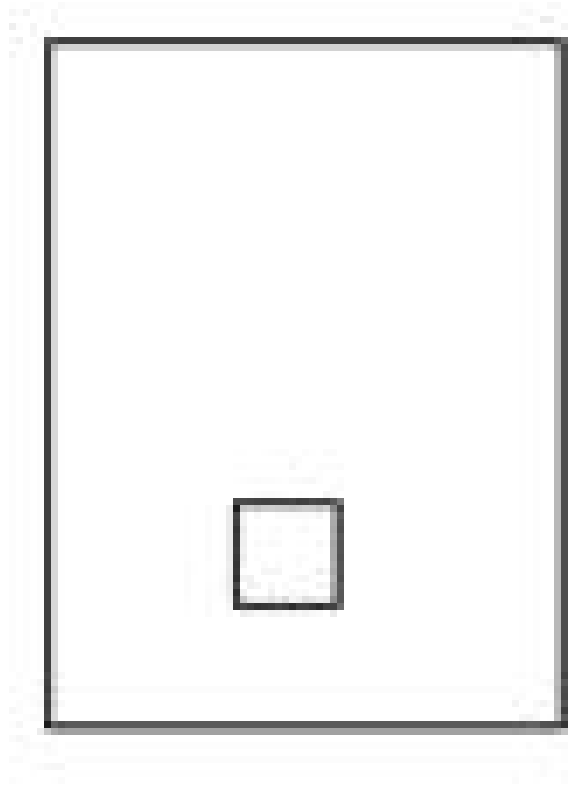


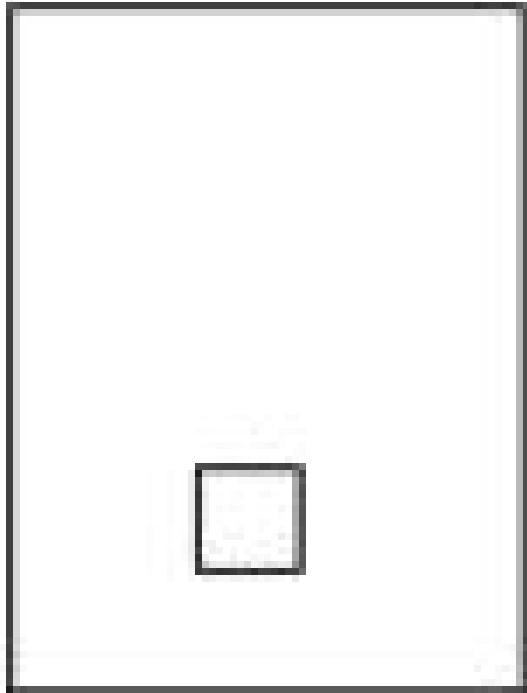


- As seen in this example, we perceive the figure as two crossed lines instead of 4 lines meeting at the center.

Containment

- A unifying force created by the outer edge of a composition or by a boundary within the composition. Containers encourage the viewer to make connections among visual units and adds definition to the negative space around a positive space.



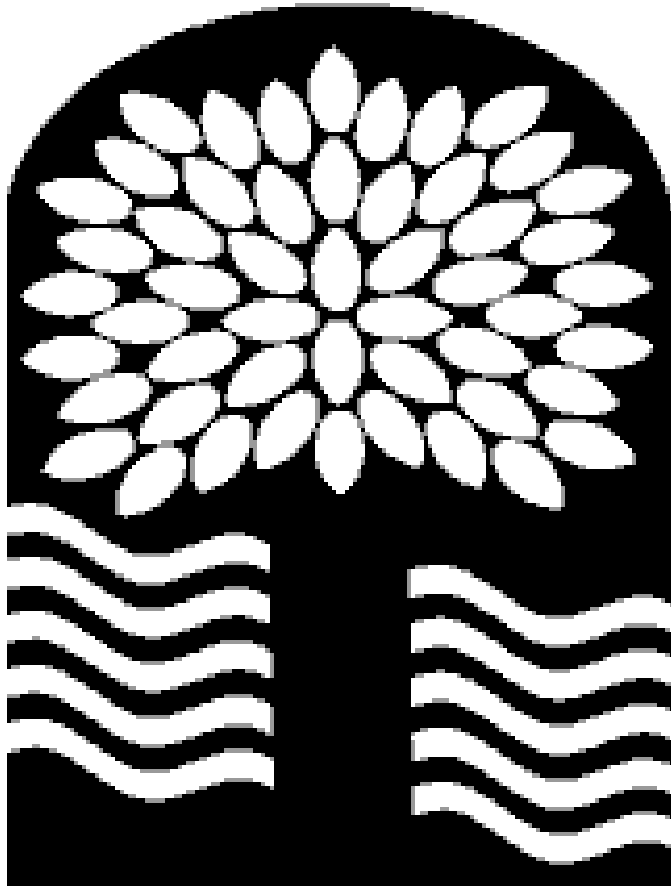


- The last thing you ever want to do is to direct your viewer off of the picture plane. The smaller square is located close to the center and low on the horizon, keeping the viewer eyes on the focal point.

Repetition

- The Gestalt Principal that states we look for pattern, and that pattern repeated over and over becomes salient in a composition. It moves forward in space, helping to define the composition as a whole.





- This image uses shapes that are repeated over and over again to create a complete visual image.



