



EduTrend Contents

W4C · DIGITAL ARTS · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Poster Design Lab

Use hierarchy, type and layout to communicate

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

60 minutes

Individual · up to 30

Activity 04

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Poster Design Lab

Students analyse real posters to find what they notice first, second and third. They learn contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity plus serif and sans-serif type, then design a poster for a school event and test it with a three-second glance.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- explain visual hierarchy;
- apply contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity;
- choose and pair typefaces for purpose;
- test and improve a design using feedback.

KEY WORDS

hierarchy · typography · serif ·
sans-serif · contrast · alignment ·
proximity · repetition · grid

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art and design: graphic communication. English: audience and purpose. Computing: digital design tools.

1**EXPLORE**

Look and play

2**IMAGINE**

Generate ideas

3**PLAN**Sketch and
storyboard**4****MAKE**

Create digitally

5**REFLECT**Review and
critique**6****REFINE**

Edit and share

Materials (per student)

- Printed posters or examples on screen
- A computer with free design software, or A3 paper and markers
- Rulers and tracing paper for layout grids
- Event brief cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Collect four posters with clear and weak hierarchy.
- Prepare event brief cards: title, date, place, one detail.
- Check design software logins or paper supplies.
- Make a thumbnail example.

SAFETY

Use only images you made or that are free to use. Credit sources. Take screen breaks.

ACTIVITY 04 • SESSION PLAN

Step by step

The three-second test is powerful: if viewers cannot say what and when, the hierarchy needs work.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Flash a poster for three seconds. What do students remember?	<i>“What did you see first?”</i>
10–20 min Principles	Introduce contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity and type choices with examples.	<i>“Which poster uses alignment well?”</i>
20–30 min Thumbnails	Students sketch three thumbnail layouts for their brief.	<i>“Which layout makes the title strongest?”</i>
30–50 min Design	Students build the poster on screen or on paper.	<i>“Are related items grouped?”</i>
50–60 min Glance test	Partners do a three-second test and give feedback.	<i>“What would you change first?”</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Design a poster that passes the three-second test: a viewer can state what, when and where after a brief glance.

ACTIVITY 04 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The art and tech in brief

Visual hierarchy is the order in which the eye notices information. Designers create it with size, colour, weight and position. Contrast makes key items stand out, repetition creates consistency, alignment connects elements, and proximity groups related information.

Serif typefaces have small strokes at the ends of letters; sans-serif typefaces do not. Designers often use no more than two typefaces and vary size and weight for hierarchy. Many layouts use an invisible grid so that elements line up and the page feels organised.

Common ideas to listen for

- “More fonts make a poster exciting.” Too many fonts make it confusing.
- “Everything important should be big.” If everything is big, nothing stands out.
- “Empty space is wasted.” White space helps the eye focus.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide a layout template with boxes for title, image and details.

Stretch

Create a second version for a different audience and explain the changes.

WORKSHEET 1

Poster analysis

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Analyse two posters.

Analysis

Question	Poster A	Poster B
Seen first		
Seen second		
Typefaces used		
Principle used well		
One weakness		

WORKSHEET 2

Thumbnails

Sketch three layouts.

Layouts



Draw three small rectangles. Show title, image and details in different positions.

WORKSHEET 3

Glance test and redesign

Record feedback.

What my partner remembered

Change I made

Principle that helped most

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Explains hierarchy	Applies layout principles	Improves design from feedback

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Poster Design Lab is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Digital Arts programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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