So You Think You Can Design?

Four Design Principles

Based on Robin Williams and John Tollett’s The Non-Designer’s Web Book (Peachpit Press, 1998)
Four (Basic) Design Principles

- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity
What is Contrast?
This isn’t contrast.

Nope. Not contrast either.
This is contrast.
This is **contrast**.
This is *contrast*.
This is contrast.
This is contrast.
Contrast

- Establishes a hierarchy of information
- Creates a focal point
- Obtained by manipulating font (style and size), color, background designs, etc.

- Don’t overdo it, or the effect will be lost
Where is the focal point on this page?

- Is it this bullet?  
- Is it over here?

- How about this one?  
- How about here?
What is Repetition?
This is not repetition.
Repetition

- Refers to the idea that designers should repeat certain elements to tie the disparate parts of a document together.
- Makes it seem like the individual nodes (or slides) are all part of the same text.
What design elements has this slide show repeated?
It has repeated:

- Fonts
- Colors
- Alignments
- Design Themes
What is Alignment?
This isn’t alignment.

This isn’t alignment.

This isn’t alignment.
This is alignment.
This is alignment.
This is alignment.
This is alignment.
Alignment

- Items on the page are lined up with each other, both horizontally and vertically.
- There are three basic alignments: centered, left justified and right justified.
Don’t Mix Alignments

Please.

For the love of god.

It looks lousy.

And it’s confusing.
What is Proximity?
This isn’t proximity.

or

alignment

This isn’t proximity either.
Proximity

- Refers to the relationships that items develop when they are close together.
- Implies items are related (for example, the bullets on this list appear related because they are in close proximity to each other.)
Four Basic Design Principles

Contrast

Alignment

Repetition

Proximity