

AESTHETICS!

IF IT LOOKS RIGHT, IT IS RIGHT!

Aesthetics is one of the most considered design factors for many products.

Aesthetics is more than just how a product looks. It is about how it makes the user feel about the product and the impression it can make.

Learn these terms to describe aesthetics...

EMOTION

Certain products can create an emotional impact on a user. It is hard to define how or why this is achieved within certain products.

Most likely, it is achieved by the sensitive application of all the aesthetic areas, including the relationship a user may have with the brand.

MASS

How heavy an object can have a dramatic impact on a user. Some objects are designed to look heavier or lighter than they actually are.

TEXTURE

Designers use texture to enhance the shape of a product, where one part of the product may be gloss and another a smooth lightly textured finish to aid grip for the user.

For example a game controller might have the grip in a textured surface for ease of grip but gloss or smooth finishing for the main body to enhance appearance.

Clothing and footwear uses texture predominantly, it allows designers to accentuate aspects of the design.



FASHION & TARGET MARKET

Colour is very much personal taste, however, designers use colour to help define the product's function.

For example television and audio equipment is often black/brushed steel, children's toys make use of bright primary colours, safety equipment is often bright yellow/red.

Often colour is used to define a product that is intended to be used by male or female users.

Colour choice of key components on a product not only provide aesthetic appeal but also have ergonomic uses, for example lights in a car dashboard or a television remote control.

PROPORTION

Product dimensions are usually constrained by their function and/or any technologies used within them.

However, a designer needs to ensure that their solutions not only fit ergonomically but fit visually. Products which have good proportion i.e. not too tall, not too wide, not too heavy, etc are considered aesthetically pleasing and attractive.

The original Apple iPod is considered a good example of excellent proportion.

For instance if a product has too many buttons of the one size or if all the components are mathematically or equally divided out it can sometimes result in a rather dull design.

SHAPE + FORM

Products are often defined by their shape, some products are very angular with straight edges and some products use curves to provide both performance enhancement and attractive aesthetics.

Shape is usually one of the aesthetics that consumers will place highly on their list when selecting a product. Some products have such distinctive shapes that they are very recognisable as a particular brand.

Form can be described as the overall shape, profile and or visual appearance of a product.

Products are often designed purely with form in mind e.g. fashion items like watches, shoes and bags.

Products like these, where form has dominated over function in the design, will have been designed with current fashions in mind and have a short lasting consumer appeal.

DESIGN + MANUFACTURE

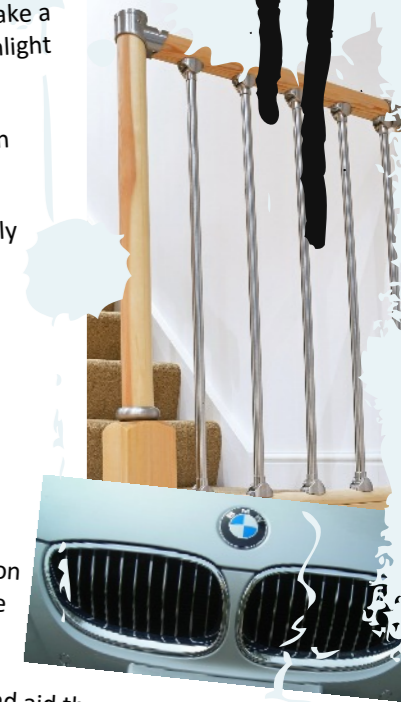


CONTRAST / HARMONY

Contrast may occur in the terms of size, shape, colour or material. This can make a design appear more dramatic, or highlight a key feature to a user.

Too much contrast can make a design appear too loud and in-your-face.

Harmony is using similarities to gently enhance a design.



SYMMETRY

The placement of the light indicator or position of buttons on a remote will often be placed symmetrically to improve ergonomics and aid the user in it's use.

However, designers also use symmetry to provide aesthetic appeal, for example the front grill of a car, electronic products like mobiles or laptops.

Symmetrical products are visually easier for us to 'take in' and appreciate. It can make products look organised and allows designers to improve the ergonomic of their products. However, too much symmetry and shapes become complex and 'mathematical' in appearance.

CHALLENGE - DO THIS!



Three sets of headphones are shown above, each aimed towards a different target market.

Describe the use and impact of aesthetics in the design of these headphones. Present this report professionally. Images available at DesignClass.co.uk

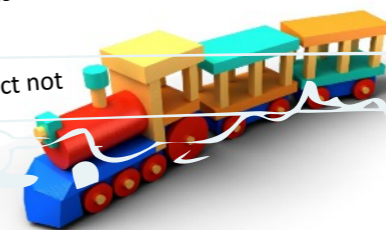
COLOUR

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QUESTIONS

1. Describe how a designer might make use of proportion to enhance the appearance of a television remote control.
2. Explain how a designer may use texture to improve the visual appearance of a product.
3. Proportion and colour are two aspects of aesthetics that the designer needs to consider.
 - (i) Explain what is meant by the term proportion and give one main reason why it is an important consideration for the designer.
 - (ii) Outline three different ways that colours may be used in products in order to improve aesthetic appeal.
4. Explain how texture and symmetry can influence the aesthetic appeal of sports footwear.