

THE VISUAL CREATOR'S TOOLBOX

Essential Terms for AI-Powered Design

Understanding and using the following terms in your prompts will enable you to create visuals that more accurately reflect what you have in mind.

1. Composition

How visual elements are arranged within a frame.

Rule of Thirds: Dividing an image into thirds both horizontally and vertically, and placing key elements along these lines or their intersections for balance.

Golden Ratio: A mathematical ratio used to create aesthetically pleasing proportions, often found in nature.

Symmetry: Balanced visual weight on both sides of an axis (mirrored image).

Asymmetry: Uneven distribution of elements, yet still maintaining balance.

Nostalgic: Sentimental, reflective of the past.

Negative Space: The empty space around elements that helps focus attention on the main subject.

Framing: Using surrounding elements to focus attention on the central subject (e.g., trees framing a person).

2. Colour Theory

The psychology and impact of colours.

Monochromatic: A single colour in various shades, tints, or tones.

Analogous: Colours next to each other on the colour wheel (e.g., blue, green, and teal), creating harmony.

Complementary: Opposing colours on the wheel (e.g., red and green), which create contrast and pop.

Warm Colours: Reds, oranges, yellows—often associated with energy or warmth.

Cool Colours: Blues, greens, purples—often associated with calm or professionalism.

Saturation: The intensity of a colour. Highly saturated colours are vivid, while desaturated ones are muted.

Gradient: A smooth transition between two or more colours.

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3. Visual Styles

Refers to the overall aesthetic or "look" of the image.

Minimalism: Simplicity, with few elements and lots of negative space.

Abstract: Distorted, exaggerated, or simplified forms, often emphasising shapes, colours, or textures.

Realism: Combines realistic elements in unusual, dream-like, or fantastical ways.

Surrealism: Uneven distribution of elements, yet still maintaining balance.

Flat Design: Simple, two-dimensional visuals without depth or texture, often used in modern digital interfaces

Vintage/Retro: Styles that imitate aesthetics from the past (e.g., 80s design, old film posters).

Futuristic: Clean, sleek, often metallic or high-tech looking, with neon or abstract elements.

Cartoonish: Exaggerated features and bright colours, often playful or childlike.

Grunge: Rough, distressed, or worn textures, often with dark or muted colours.

4. Lighting

How light interacts with objects in a visual.

High Key: Bright lighting with minimal shadows, often used in fashion or beauty photography.

Low Key: Dramatic lighting with deep shadows, creating contrast and mood.

Backlighting: Light coming from behind the subject, creating a silhouette effect.

Side Lighting: Lighting from the side, used to emphasise texture or create drama.

Soft Lighting: Diffused, even lighting that minimises harsh shadows.

Hard Lighting: Direct light that creates sharp shadows and strong contrasts

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5. Perspective

The way objects appear in relation to each other within a space.

One-Point Perspective: All lines lead to a single point on the horizon, used for a sense of depth.

Two-Point Perspective: Two vanishing points on the horizon, used to show objects at an angle.

Bird's Eye View: A shot from above, looking down.

Worm's Eye View: A shot from below, looking up.

Forced Perspective: Making objects appear larger or smaller than they are by manipulating the camera angle.

6. Iconography

The use of symbols or icons to represent concepts.

Pictograms: Simplified drawings of objects or activities (often used in signage).

Logos: Graphic symbols representing a brand or company.

Infographics: Visual representations of data or information, combining text and icons for clarity.

7. Patterns

Repetitive visual elements or designs.

Geometric: Repeating shapes such as squares, triangles, or circles.

Organic: Patterns inspired by natural forms like leaves, waves, or clouds.

Abstract: Irregular, often random patterns without a clear motif.

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8. Visual Effects

Enhancements or alterations to a visual.

Blur: Softening the focus, often to draw attention to a specific area.

Depth of Field: The amount of the scene in focus, typically with a sharp subject and a blurred background.

Vignette: Darkening or lightening the edges of an image to focus attention on the centre.

Lens Flare: A streak of light across the image, often added for a cinematic effect.

Drop Shadow: A shadow cast behind an object to give it depth.

Glow: Adding a soft light around an object to make it stand out.

9. Branding Elements

Consistency in visual style for identity and recognition.

Colour Palette: The specific set of colours a brand consistently uses.

Typography Style: The fonts or typefaces associated with a brand.

Logo Treatment: Specific ways the logo is used (size, placement, variations).

Brand Guidelines: The set of rules a company follows to maintain visual consistency.

10. Image Types

Different kinds of images depending on format and purpose.

Raster Graphics: Pixel-based images (e.g., JPEG, PNG), used for complex images like photos.

Vector Graphics: Scalable images made from paths or shapes (e.g., SVG, EPS), used for logos or illustrations.

Stock Images: Pre-made images available for commercial use.

GIFs: Animated or still images in a looping format.

Icons: Small, simple images representing actions or objects, often used in interfaces.