



1.2.2 Gestalt

Gestalt is a German word for form and shape and here refers to the human mind's ability to visually organize forms and shapes into a unified whole. When first looking at a design we see the whole instead of the parts. When someone says "this design works" it's because gestalt is at play.

By controlling design elements and how each element affects those around it you affect the cumulative perception of the viewer. A small change in one element affects how the other elements in your design are perceived. This cumulative perception is gestalt.

We can manipulate gestalt through the same 4 basic principles mentioned above as well as through:

- **figure/ground** – the relationship of a subject to its surrounding space
- **closure** – the viewer's tendency to complete unfinished forms
- **continuation** – the arrangement of elements to lead the eye across the page and create flow in your design

Gestalt helps communicate your message through the cumulative perception of all your design elements.

Andy Rutledge has written a great series of posts on Gestalt principles which I encourage you to read

- [Figure Ground Relationships](#)
- [Similarity](#)
- [Proximity, Uniform Connectedness, and Good Continuation](#)
- [Common Fate](#)
- [Closure](#)