

# HANDOUT

## SHAPE

Two-dimensional shape has height and width. The area may be enclosed by line, but some shapes with indistinct edges are defined by their inner structure (such as a cloud). A tree or an elephant can be identified by shape, even if the color is strange. Two-dimensional form achieves the illusion of form through the use of shading and perspective.



Drawn after poster design, 1974, by Jacob Lawrence, 1917–2000.

### Shape and Form Definitions

*Abstract:* shapes that may be based on reality

*Amorphous:* lacking definite form (such as clouds)

*Complex shapes:* a combination of one or more shapes

*Cone:* circular form that comes to a point at top

*Cube:* six-sided boxlike form

*Cylinder:* circular form open at the top and bottom

*Free-form:* irregular and asymmetrical shapes (such as oil spills)

*Geometric shapes:* triangles, rectangles, squares, parallelograms, circles, ovals, and pyramids

*Implied shapes:* defined by space, line, value, and color

*Natural shapes or forms:* rocks, clouds, and water

*Negative shape:* the area surrounding the main form

*Organic or biomorphic shapes:* living organisms such as animals, fish, or flowers

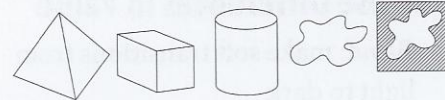
*Positive shape:* the main form of a composition

*Sphere:* a perfectly round or circular shape

Rectangle Square Sphere Circle Triangle



Pyramid Cube Cylinder Free-Form Negative



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### Using Shapes

*Overlap shapes* to create a feeling of depth

*Shape* appears to be a complete form, even when surrounded by an interrupted line

*Shapes parallel to the sides* of a composition create a feeling of tranquility

*Shapes at angles* to the sides of the paper appear to be pulling the sides inward

*Large shapes at the bottom* of a composition give it stability

*Large shapes at the top* of a composition give the feeling it may topple at any moment

*Modeling of shape* (shading on rounded surfaces) gives a sense of volume

## FORM

Three-dimensional form has height, width, and depth. An example is sculpture, which has three dimensions. Sculptors are aware of the importance of the openings and space around the outside of the sculpture, referred to as negative space.

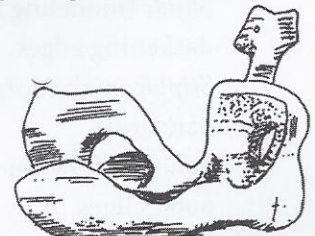
*High relief* (French: haut-relief): attached form that has significant depth

*Low relief* (French: bas-relief): attached form that has shallow depth, height, and width

*Mass:* shape in three dimensions, such as sculpture

*Negative shape* in three-dimensional art can be the air that surrounds a form or a hole that lets air through the shape

*Texture* in a form can call attention to an area the artist wishes to emphasize



Drawn after, *UNESCO Reclining Figure*, 1957–1958, Henry Moore, 1898–1986.