



Smithsonian  
*National Postal Museum*

## **Lesson 3: Art Vocabulary**

### **Elements of Art Vocabulary**

1. **Color:** The visual cue that defines a space or line in the design. Colors can be red, blue, yellow, green, purple, orange, brown, black, white.
2. **Line:** A mark that creates direction and structure in an image. Lines can be thin, thick, curvy, straight, broken.
3. **Shape:** A form that creates a distinguishable image in a space. Shapes can be circles, squares, triangles, and organic shapes (shapes that are natural and non-geometric).
4. **Value:** The light and dark shades of a color. The values of blue can be robin blue, royal blue, teal, cornflower, turquoise.

### **Principles of Design Vocabulary**

1. **Typography:** Words added to an image to give additional information to the viewer. Fonts can be printed, cursive, neat, crazy, embedded in an image or distinct from an image.
2. **Rhythm:** Showing a figure or object has energy or motion. This can be done using a repetition of colors, lines, shapes, or values.
3. **Unity:** The combination of elements to create a composition of a design that reflects high quality. Elements must be carefully chosen to reinforce the main subject message.
4. **Proportion:** How a composition should look when reduced or enlarged in scale. Each design must use careful selection of elements when thinking about how big or small the final product will be.