The principles of design are **emphasis, balance, harmony, variety, movement, rhythm, proportion**, and **unity**. The principles govern the relationships of the elements used, and organize the composition as a whole. Successful design incorporates the use of the principles and elements to serve the artist's purpose and visual goals. They help artists organize artwork so that it feels more comfortable to viewers and makes a greater impact.
Emphasis refers to a dominant area of interest. It is what first attracts attention in a composition. This area is more important when compared to the other objects or elements in a composition. Emphasis or dominance can be created by making the object larger, more sophisticated, more ornate, using different colors or sizes, or by placing it in the foreground, thereby making it appear to standout visually more so than the other objects in a design.
Balance is the arrangement of elements so that no one part of a work overpowers, or seems heavier than any other part. There are two different kinds of balance:

**SYMMETRICAL BALANCE**  
(Formal)  
when both sides of an artwork appear to be the same when split in half

**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE**  
(Informal)  
when the image does not weigh equally on both sides or has two points of interest that balance each other out
Harmony is achieved in a body of work by using similar elements and gives an uncomplicated look overall. A common trait between objects could be: color, shape, texture, pattern, material, theme, style, size, or functionality.
Variety refers to the differences in the work. By varying the components of a visual design, the artist creates interest and avoids monotony. A way of accomplishing this is to establish an approach which involves theme and variations—repeating the same image, but in different sizes, colors, values and shapes. You can also achieve variety by using different shapes, textures, colors and values in your work.
Movement is a visual flow that directs the viewers eye through the composition. It can be the suggestion of motion as you move from object to object by way of placement and position. Movement can also be created by using value, the placement of dark and light areas that can move your attention throughout the piece.
Rhythm is a type of movement where some elements recur regularly. These elements could be colors, lines, shapes, values, etc. Alternating areas of lights and darks can also give a sense of rhythm.
Proportion, also known as scale, involves the relationship of size between objects. Scale gives a sense of smallness or largeness and can add to the perception of depth. In figure drawing, proportion refers to the dimensions of the human body and face.
Unity refers to a sense that everything in a piece of work belongs there, and makes a whole piece. It is achieved by the use of balance, repetition and/or harmony. When a work of art has unity, we feel that any change would diminish its quality.