

ELEMENT 10

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RULE OF THIRDS IN MATERIALS DESIGN

Objective

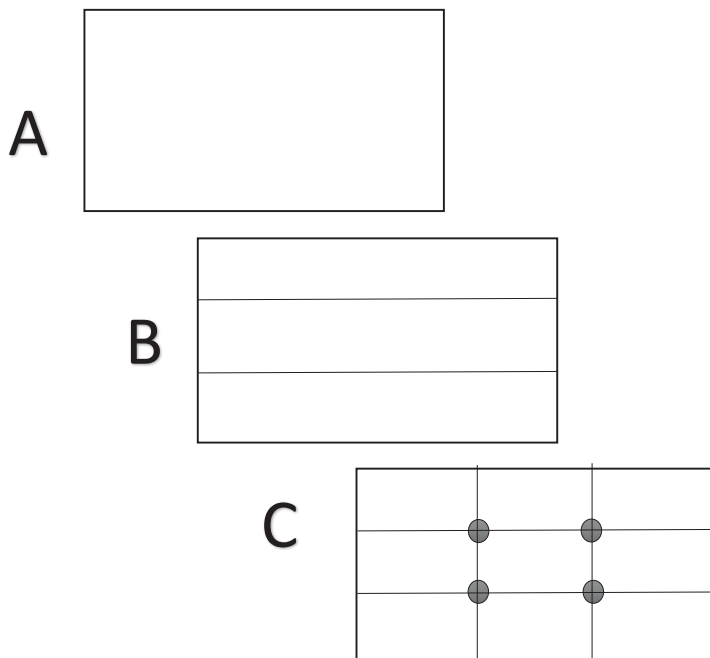
To understand space distribution for a page layout based on the rule of thirds.

Rule of Thirds

Rule of thirds has to do with the division, arrangement, and organization of elements in an image or page layout to create a focal point or points. As Amirshahi et al. (2014) stated, the rule of thirds is also a key point in image composition and photography. It is very common to place images and/or text in the central part of the space. In order to break this tendency, pre-service teachers can use a grid to divide the space while they are designing their teaching material. This division of space guides the viewers' attention to the desired focal points.

By simply drawing imaginary horizontal and vertical lines, we find certain parts for focal points. These focal points are where these lines meet. One easy way to divide the space in a page is by dividing it into segments with

three vertical and three horizontal lines. As a result, we end up with a grid in which the crossing lines could be used as focal points.



In the previous example (Figure C), we can perceive four focal points. They are located in the crossing parts of the vertical and horizontal lines identified with circles.

Rule of Thirds for Images

To create more attractive and balanced images, we need to place the main objects in one of the focal points or at least close to it. This simple choice creates a more aesthetic effect. Teachers, as material designers, need to bear in mind image composition connects students with the learning material. Take a look at the following example of the flower. The main object in the image is placed in one of the focal points.



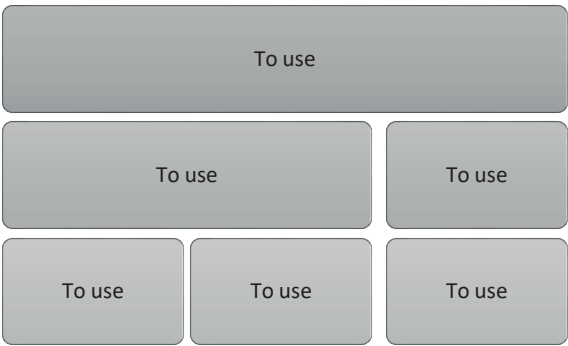
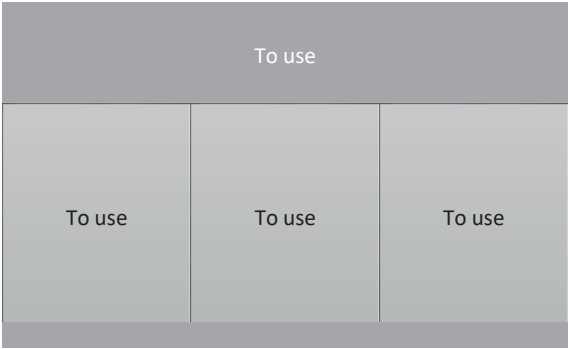
Rule of Thirds in a Page Layout

One way to improve the page layout is by applying the rule of thirds. This helps organize and balance content distribution. If teachers, as material designers, understand and apply the rule of thirds while designing teaching and learning material, it would help with the distribution and organization of the components (titles, subtitles, paragraphs, charts, graphs, images, etc.) in the page layout.

One advisable way to distribute the space on a page is by dividing it into three equal parts (three columns or three rows). Then, use two thirds for the written content and one third for an image to create a balance in the space used. In this way, the whole page has a balance between written and visual components. Also, each of the thirds could be subdivided in order to add more visual attraction. Thus, teachers, as material designers, have to keep a balance in the content and distribution of the elements in the page layout. You can create endless arrangements by outlining the page layout and applying the rule of thirds. In the following examples, we have included ideas for space distribution.

In the following three examples, each chart represents one possible arrangement for a page layout using the rule of thirds.

For this template, we have two segments. There is one horizontal row, which takes up the first third of the space. Then, we can see the second two thirds subdivided in three columns.



For this example, we have three horizontal segments. Each represents one third. The second third is subdivided in two (the part on the right side takes up two thirds plus one last third segment). The lower row is subdivided into three equal parts.

For this page layout, three equal segments are arranged horizontally. Each row is subdivided into two parts. Notice that each row takes up one third plus two thirds of the space.

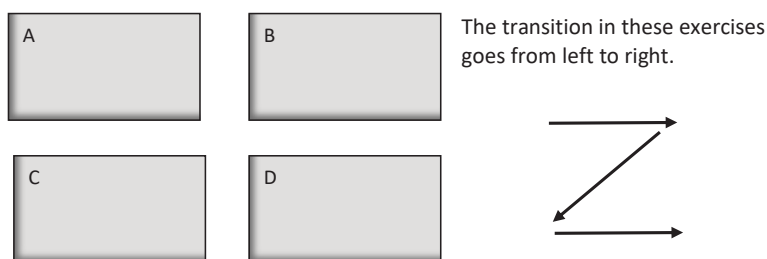


Movement and Transition

Teachers, as material designers, can decide how to guide their students' eye movement throughout the page. It is advisable to use some conventions as markers to help students follow a sequence. It might sound obvious, but teachers sometimes forget to place markers. As a result, learners can lose track of the exercise sequence. Also, sequence markers help teachers provide more precise instructions and locate a specific part in a text while providing instructions. The most common markers are cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, 4...), ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th...), roman numbers (I, II, III, IV,...), and letters (A, B, C, D,...).

In addition to thinking about content, teachers also should think about the way this content is displayed (titles, subtitles, paragraphs, dialogues, charts, graphs, images, etc.) and organized on the page. Part of the organization is planning how to move from one exercise to the next, which is indicated by markers.

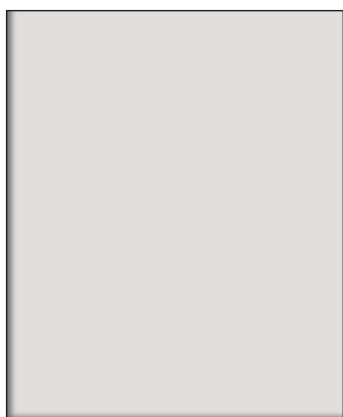
Observe how the following two examples have the same arrangement. What varies is the marker used and the transition it creates.



The transition in these exercises goes from top to down, then, from left to right.



1. Choose any English textbook or workbook. Then, select one page. In the following space, draw the layout design that you think the designer used. Finally, read the following question to analyze the layout in depth.



Which markers are used for the exercises?



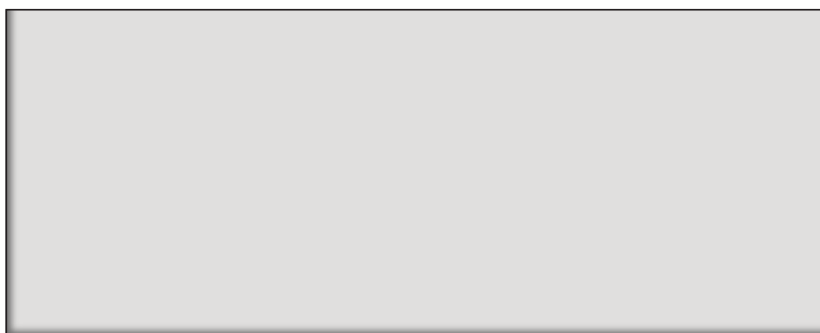
What transition or movement does the layout create?



Is the design text dominant or image dominant?



2. Use the following space to outline your own page layout template. Indicate where you would write the title and instructions. Specify the places in which you would add a chart, an image, and instructions. Also, select the type of markers you would use for movement and transition.



3. Share your outline with a classmate. Explain how you distributed the space using the rule of thirds.