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# DESIGN PRINCIPLES for the SCRAPBOOK PAGE

## {LESSON TWELVE} The Page Canvas and Design Principles

The canvas is the piece of paper (or digital background) upon which you build your page. For me, thinking about the canvas means thinking about how I will fill it and what role it will play in the page's design.

Think back to Lesson #7 Flow. That was the final design principles lesson, and it was the coming together of all six design principles. This lesson—about the canvas—requires a similar wholeness in approach. Once again, everything is intertwined. Page parts and design principles are all up for consideration, for juggling, for cycling through in your mind.

The big questions here are: How will you fill the page? And how will you apply design principles as you do this?



## the canvas | foundations: underlying grid

**Use a grid as your foundation.** Your foundation is the base that connects the parts to the page. It's the starting point for filling the canvas, and using a grid or "blocked" design is one of the easiest ways to organize your page parts. In construction terms, "blocking" refers to the horizontal boards placed between wall studs.

Take a look at "Sledding" and its underlying grid of three columns and three rows. Photos fill several of the blocks. The title takes up another block (and even overlaps with another a bit, which keeps the page from being overly linear). Journaling fills the bottom right block. Embellishments sit in the top right block.





## the canvas | foundations: alignments

**Use alignments to define your foundation.** Using alignments is another way to create a structure for organizing and presenting your page parts.

“Making Your Acquaintance” relies upon the white space of gutters and margins to define a grid foundation that accommodates all page elements.

This white space is created by strong alignments: the beginning and ends of each title word and journaling are all lined up with the left and right edges of the photos.



## the canvas | foundations: mat or block

**Use a mat or paper block as your foundation.** A piece of paper (or mat) that houses most of the page elements can serve as a foundation that connects the elements to the page and keeps them from a free-floating feeling.

On “Oh Happy Day” the tan cardstock backing up the photos, title, journaling and embellishments is the page foundation.



### More Reading

[6 Ways to Make the Scrapbook page Canvas](#): article at Get It Scrapped.

### If you're a GIS Member

[Canvas](#). Masterful Scrapbook Design class on approaches to the scrapbook page canvas.



## the canvas | foundations: layered pieces

**Use layered pieces as your foundation.** Your foundational piece doesn't have to back up all of the page elements: a strong first layer can cover less area than your elements and still ground everything to the page. On "Get Around," the linen block with distressed edges backs up much of the inner canvas—but doesn't stretch completely to page edges. It is, though, the foundational piece that connects all of the elements to the canvas.

A "foundation" piece doesn't have to be a layer of paper. It can be anything that suggests a shape and that grounds the page elements to the canvas. On "Field Day," a brushed, portrait-oriented green block is the foundation for the page.



## the canvas | white space

How will you incorporate and use white space on your page?

**Given a blank canvas, your first instinct may be to fill it up.** This happens to me not only on my scrapbook pages, but in rooms of my home. I keep adding bits until one day I realize that it's too much—that I can't see any of the parts for the jam-packed whole. Open space is a luxury and can make an environment more accessible, inviting, and manageable.

**White space on scrapbook pages is not always white.** It can be any color—it can even be patterned paper. The term “white space” refers to an area devoid of photos, embellishments, journaling, and title. Understand the most important thing about white space: if it's interesting and unexpected (as on “A Boy and His Kite”) is has more interest than white space that is regular. The even margins backing up “2008” result in a white space that's hardly noticed – or only noticed as backdrop.





## the canvas | balance

What kind of balance would you like to achieve on your canvas?

A scrapbook page that is appealing to look at has a balance between the elements on it (including the white space). Snow Sculpture balances three smaller, square, framed photos on the left side with two landscape-oriented photos, title, and journaling on the right side.



## the canvas | layering

I can't tell you HOW to add layering to your pages as well as I can tell you the considerations that you should be holding and balancing in your mind as you choose, add, and place layers. It's not a science. It's creating, and it's personal, and it should be fun.

Ask yourself the following as you work to add layers to your design:

- What is your desired focal point? Is it a photo? Journaling? Something else? How will you emphasize it? Will you use size, matting, dimension, contrast, embellishments?
- What space do you plan to fill? How will you use/include white space?
- What's your foundation? Choose the foundational pieces while keeping in mind the answers to the questions above.
- What kind of balance will you incorporate?
- What is the tone or mood you'd like to create? How will you use color and pattern? How much contrast will you incorporate?
- What are the meanings you'd like to explore and, perhaps, reflect with element choices?





## summary

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The canvas is your ground for the figure your combined elements create. It is the space within which you combine photos, title, journaling, and embellishments to tell a visual story. Understand how much space you need for a story's page parts and plan for a design with white space and balance.

And that's it! We've looked at 6 design principles and 5 page parts and lots and lots of ways to put them all together. What are you motivated to create now that you have an understanding of the basic pieces and rules for putting them together? Do you feel equipped to scrapbook lots of new pages?

If you've enjoyed this class, and are ready to take things a step farther, check out the Get It Scrapped membership. [The Scrapbook Coach classes are a great next step and included with membership.](#) Each of these classes includes 4 video lessons that you can scrapbook alongside. I guide you in photo selection and crops, title placement and rendering, embellishment techniques and choosing colors and patterns.