

Whether you plan to use them as they are, or as building blocks for more complex designs, there is a vast assortment of shapes and forms to choose from.

Shapes and forms can be divided into the five categories featured at right.

BASIC GEOMETRIC

Basic geometric shapes can be used as stand-alone graphic elements or as the root-components of symbols, icons, illustrations and patterns.

COMPLEX GEOMETRIC

More complex than the simple shapes above, these forms are still easily identifiable and often carry with them a specific connotation or meaning.

STRUCTURED FREEFORM

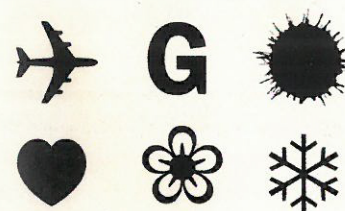
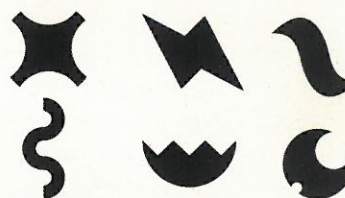
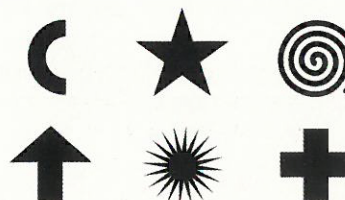
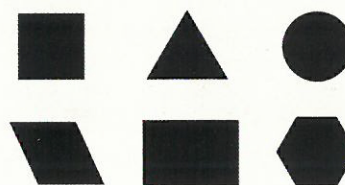
Abstract forms such as these can be built entirely from straight lines, curved lines, or a combination of both. The methods of construction described on pages 140-145 can be used to create this kind of freeform element.

RANDOM FREEFORM

A random and organic feel defines these forms. Ripe with irregularities and free-flowing character, they can be used to convey themes of informality, action and spontaneity.

LITERAL FREEFORM

This category contains recognizable letterforms, icons and graphic images.



EXERCISE:

Shape-building practice.

Needed: vector-based graphics software such as Freehand or Illustrator.

Vector-based programs (see the footnote on page 347 for more information about this type of software) are ideally suited for creating shapes, forms, logos, custom headlines, illustrations and entire designs destined for both print and electronic media.

Familiarity and fluency in a vector-based program is an important asset to any designer's skillset.

This exercise provides the opportunity to explore the capabilities of a vector-based program while building a set of elements that will be useful in the exercises ahead. If you are not yet familiar with the use of this type of software, now's your chance to learn in the best way—by doing!

You'll need shapes and forms for the exercises ahead, so here's your task: create 25-30 different shapes and forms—some from each of the categories at left. (See pages 140-141 for tips on creating more complex forms.) Remember to save the images you create for use in the activities ahead.