



The Grammar OF **LINES**

*A **line** is a dot out for a walk*

—Paul Klee

- **Lines can be thick or thin**
- **They can be long or short.**
- **They can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.**
- **They can be solid or dotted or dashed.**
- **Lines can be curved or straight or combinations of both**
- **Lines can be literal or implied. (Draw a series of 3, 4, or 5 points and your mind will fill in the line between them).**

CHARACTERISTICS OF LINES

THIN LINES

- **Are fragile / brittle**
- **Easy to break or knock over**
- **Suggest weakness**
- **Convey an elegant quality**
- **They are delicate**

THICK LINES

- **Difficult to break**
- **Suggest strength**
- **Thick lines are bold**
- **Make a statement**

HORIZONTAL LINES

- **Parallel to the horizon**
- **They look like they're lying down**
- **At rest**
- **Asleep**
- **Suggest calm and quiet**
- **Relaxed comfort**
- **Can't fall over**
- **Stable and secure**
- **Peace**

VERTICAL LINES

- **Perpendicular to the horizon**
- **Filled with potential energy that could be released if they were to fall over**
- **Strong and rigid**
- **Suggest stability, especially when thicker**
- **Vertical lines accentuate height**
- **Convey a lack of movement**
- **They stretch from the earth to the heavens**
- **Connected with religious feelings**
- **Tallness and formality may give the impression of dignity**

DIAGONAL LINES

- **Are unbalanced**
- **Filled with restless and uncontrolled energy**
- **Appear to be either rising or falling**
- **Convey action and motion**
- **Their kinetic energy and apparent movement create tension and excitement.**
- **More dramatic than either horizontal or vertical lines.**
- **Diagonal lines can also appear solid and unmoving if they are holding something up or at rest against a vertical line or plane.**

CURVED LINES

- **Softer than straight lines.**
- **They sweep and turn gracefully between end points**
- **They are less definite and predictable than straight lines**
- **They bend, they change direction**
- **Express fluid movement**
- **Can be calm or dynamic depending on how much they curve**
- **The less active the curve the calmer the feeling**

ZIGZAG LINES

- **Combination of diagonal lines that connect at points**
- **They take on the dynamic and high energy characteristics of diagonal lines**
- **They create excitement and intense movement**
- **They convey confusion and nervousness as they change direction quickly and frequently**
- **They can imply danger and destruction as they break down**
- **Long, perfectly even lines feel artificial**

TYPES OF LINES

Contour lines

- are used to define edges. They create boundaries around or inside an object. Most lines you encounter are contour lines. In web design these could be the borders you add around an object or group of objects.

Dividing lines

- can also define edges, but what distinguishes them from contour lines is they divide space. The lines between columns of text are dividing lines as are the lines separating menu items.

Decoration lines

- are used to embellish an object. Cross-hatching is an example of using decoration lines to add shading and form to an object. The line beneath liked text is a decorative line as are the lines used to create a *floral background image*.

Gesture lines

- are quick and rough continuous lines *used to capture form and movement*. They are generally used when studying the shape and motion of the human form. You likely won't use gesture lines (based on the technical definition) in a web design, but you could certainly create patterns of lines to signify motion or build up a form.

