

# Design With a Message

## How do graphic designers visually share information?

**L**ike fine artists, graphic designers share ideas through the images they create. But while artists are often interested in conveying a mood or emotion, graphic designers aim to share important information. Graphic designs are all around you. "Everything that is not made by nature is designed by someone," explains graphic designer Chip Kidd. The most powerful graphic designs are usually creative and memorable.

Which elements of this design make it easy to understand?



### Make It Universal

Successful designs, like the stop sign, communicate meaning clearly and quickly. Invented in 1915 in Detroit, Michigan, many early stop signs were yellow so drivers could see them at night. Then in 1954, designers changed the sign to red and started adding reflective material. The change to red was important. Stoplights were already red. By changing the stop sign to match, the designers created a universal meaning. Today, red is the only color we associate with stop.

The **typeface**, or font, in the stop sign is also significant. The bold uppercase letters stand out against the red background, making them easy to read. Together, the octagonal shape, the clean, white lettering, and the bright-red background are instantly recognizable to most drivers worldwide. This makes the roads safer for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians.

### Be Unique

Graphic designers who work in **branding**—promoting a product—want consumers to recognize their products. A lot of companies hire graphic designers to create custom designs for everything from product packaging to marketing materials. Many of them use a unique typeface or **logo**.

Designers first created Coca-Cola's script logo, above right, in the 1880s. It has remained the same for well over 100 years. The logo's typeface is now so iconic that even if you saw a different word written in this font, you'd probably still think of Coca-Cola.

### Create a Big Statement

Whether scrolling through Instagram or driving down the highway, people are constantly bombarded with images. There is a lot of competition for people's attention. To make an impact, graphic designers have to make designs that stand out and make an impression.

All billboards have two things in common: They are very big, and most drivers will see them as they whiz by in their cars. Designers



### Know Your Audience

It is just as important for a graphic designer to understand the **target audience** as it is for him or her to understand the message the client wants to convey. Think about how and when you use emoji. You wouldn't include emoji in a school paper because it wouldn't be appropriate for schoolwork. But you would use them in a text message to invite your friends out for pizza. Great graphic designers think about their audience as they work. Their designs must make sense within a particular context and culture. Emoji designers create images that relate to contemporary life and are useful for quickly and clearly communicating a message—like the pizza emoji.



Why must graphic designers consider their audiences?

usually don't include intricate details or subtle messaging in billboards. Instead, they aim to create memorable billboards that are easy to understand.

The design team that developed the billboard below for Apple's iPod used a bright **background** to grab the viewer's attention. The figure is a dark **silhouette**, which **emphasizes** the white iPod he holds. The only text is the word *iPod*, next to Apple's iconic logo. This billboard was part of a larger **advertising campaign**. Imagine driving down the road and seeing many billboards like this, each featuring a figure with a distinct hairstyle in a unique pose against a brightly colored background. Since each figure is a silhouette, rather than a specific person, the designers invite you—the viewer—to place yourself in each scene, dancing to your own soundtrack. They hope this will make you remember (and buy!) their product.

Which characteristics make this design memorable?



### WRITE ABOUT ART

Is this magazine layout a graphic design? Why or why not?

Photographer (Coca-Cola logo, pizza), Mike Thompson/istockphoto and Getty Images (billboard)

Photographer