

SPACE

SPACE, as defined by the dictionary, is a boundless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction. However, in this class we will refer to space as **the area with which the designer has to work.**

Space is probably the most important element of interior design. Space suggests the ability to change. We can move physically, visually, or psychologically until we place barriers in our way. We change space thousands of times each day, simply by moving ourselves, an object, or shadows as the lighting changes. It changes constantly as we move.

A common use (manipulation) of space is to have a long hall lead to a large, open room, or a forest trail lead to a open, grassy meadow. Even though large, open spaces allow us a certain freedom, we usually have a need to eventually return to a more confined space for protection.

We learn to adapt or change according to the space around us. Think of different types of buildings. Do you like a building that is a series of small rooms that are self contained, or do you like buildings that have open rooms and flowing space? What type of space makes you feel most comfortable?

All of our senses are involved in the way we feel about space. Think about the smell, feelings, and sounds you hear in these different types of buildings and structured spaces: a business office, a ski lodge, a picnic area at a park, your bedroom, a restaurant. It is easy to imagine how space works with our senses to make us feel comfortable or uncomfortable.

There are two basic space problems: too much space and not enough space. The work of an interior designer is to use the other elements of design to make the space we have available seem spacious or intimate. The correct use of space makes for more ideal living conditions.

Show examples and explain different emotions of positive and negative space, open versus closed, horizontal versus vertical, and indoor to outdoor relationships. (See transparencies, "POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE".) Have students gather pictures that illustrate the various use of space. They should share their illustrations with the class and explain how they perceive the use of space.

To make an area seem more spacious (refer to lesson on furniture arranging):

1. Allow large openings between rooms so the eye can travel to adjacent rooms.
2. Place large furniture pieces near walls and perpendicular to walls so they do not break the space into smaller segments.
3. Use small furniture, patterns, and textures.
4. Use a minimum of furnishings and accessories.
5. Allow for empty space between furniture or on walls.
6. Allow as much floor to show as possible. Use furniture that stands on legs and glass or plastic items.
7. Use mirrors to help create the feeling of depth.
8. Unify space by using the same floor coverings throughout the house. Use floor-to-ceiling window treatments and patterns, textures, and colors that blend.
9. Use light, cool colors.
10. Place lighting around the outside of the room or underneath beds or sofas so they seem to float above the floor.

To make an area seem more intimate:

1. Place furniture perpendicular to the walls as room dividers.
2. Use furniture of different heights to break a long, unobstructed view.
3. Group furniture according to areas of activity.
4. Use large furniture that sits directly on the floor.
5. Use contrasting patterns, colors, and textures.
6. Use warm, dark colors.
7. Use natural lighting and be careful when using artificial lighting.
8. Use soft, rough textures to absorb sound and make the room feel private and intimate.

If space is not correctly planned, the other elements of design will not be as effective.