

# REPETITION

## Introduction

The Principle of Repetition states, "**Repeat some aspect of the design throughout the entire piece.**" The repetitive element may be a bold font, a thick rule (line), a certain bullet, color, design element, particular format, the spatial relationships, etc. It can be anything that a reader will visually recognize.

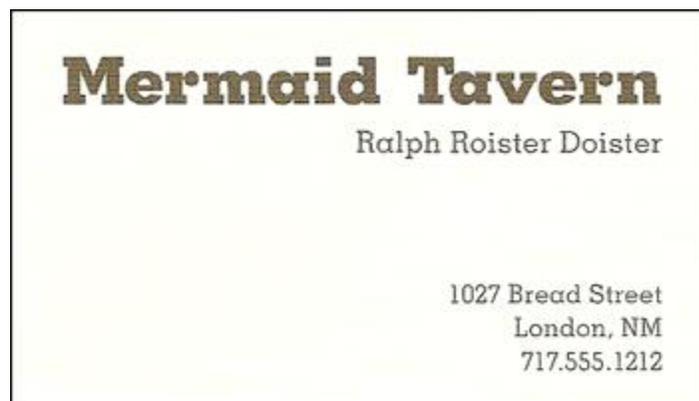
You already use repetition in your work. When you make headlines all the same size and weight, when you add a page number a half-inch from the bottom of each page, when you use the same bullet in each list throughout the project - these are all examples of repetition. What beginners often need to do is push this idea further - turn that inconspicuous repetition into a visual key that ties the publication together.

Repetition can be thought of as consistency: As you look through a sixteen-page newsletter, it is the repetition of certain elements, their consistency, that makes each of those eight pages appear to belong to the same newsletter. If page 7 has no repetitive elements carried over from page 4, then the entire newsletter loses its cohesive look and feel.

Repetition is not just naturally consistent; it comes from intentional effort to unify all parts of a design.

Here is the same business card we worked with earlier. In the second example below, I have added a repetitive element: a repetition of the strong, bold typeface.

Take a look at it, and notice where your eye moves. When you get to the phone number, where do you look next? Do you find that you go back to the other bold type? This is a visual trick designers have always used to control a reader's eye, to keep your attention on the page as long as possible. The bold repetition also helps unify the entire design. This is a very easy way to tie pieces of a design package together.



When you get to the end of the information, does your eye just wander off the card?

# Mermaid Tavern

Ralph Roister Doister

1027 Bread Street  
London, NM  
717.555.1212

Now when you get to the end of the information, where does your eye go? Do you find that it bounces back and forth between the bold type elements? It probably does, and that's the point of repetition - it ties a piece together, it provides unity.

## Guilty Looks

Wants pawn term dare  
worsted ladle gull hoe hat  
search putty yowler coils debt  
pimple colder Guilty Looks.  
Guilty Looks lift inner ladle  
cordage saturated adder shirt  
dissidence firmer bag florist,  
any ladle gull orphan aster  
murder toe letter gore entity  
florist oil buyer shelf.

Guilty Looks! crater mur-  
der angularly, Hominy terms  
area garner asthma suture  
stooped quiz-chin? Goiter  
door florist? Sordidly NUT!

### Wire nut?

Wire nut, murder? wined  
Guilty Looks, hoe dint  
peony tension tore murder's  
scaldings.

Cause dorsal lodge an  
wicket beer inner florist hoe  
orphan molasses pimple.

Ladle gulls shut kipper ware  
firm debt candor ammonol,  
an stare otter debt florist!  
Debt florist's mush toe  
dentures furry ladle gull!

### Hormone nurture

Wail, pimple oil-wares wan-  
der doe wart udder pimple  
dun wampum toe doe.

Debt's jest hormone nur-  
ture. Wan moaning, Guilty  
Looks dissipater murder, an  
win entity florist.

### Tree Beers

Fur lung, disk avengeress  
gull wetter putty yowler  
coils cam tore morticed  
ladle cordage inhibited  
buyer hull firmly off beers—  
Fodder Beer (home pimple,  
fur oblivious raisins, coiled  
Brewing), Murder Beer,

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Take advantage of those elements you're already using to make a project consistent and turn those elements into repetitive graphic symbols. Also, try new fonts! Are you still using Times, Times New Roman and Arial? Go looking for others!

And then be bold! Take the repetition you have already and push it so it is stronger and more dynamic. Not only is your page more visually interesting, but you also increase the visual organization and the consistency by making it more obvious. Headings and subheadings are a good place to start when you need to create repetitive elements, since you are probably consistent with them already. So now, take that repeated element and choose a font (typeface) that makes it stronger!

## EXAMPLES OF REPEATING ELEMENTS

**Damn Honor Form**  
Here's rheumatic starchy offer farmer's dodder, Violate Haskings, an wart hoppings darn honor form. Violate lift wetter fodder, oiled Former Haskings, hoe latter repetition doe bang furry retch—as an furry starchy. Infect, pimple orphan set debt Violate's fodder worse nozing button oiled mooser. Violate, honor udder hen, worsted furry gnats parson—jester putty ladle fern gull, sample, morticed, an unaffected.  
Win moaning Former Haskings modest haze dodder setting honor cheer, during nozing.

**Nor symphony**  
VIOLATE! sorted dole former. Watcher setting darn far? Your canned gat zech setting darn during nozing? Germ pup otter debt cheer!  
Aem tarred, Fodder, resplendent Violate warily.  
Watcher tarred far, outer starchy former, hoe dirt half madh symphony further gull. Are badger dirt doe madh woke disk moaning! Ditcher curry dose buckles fuller slob darn curry peg-pan an feeder pegs?

**Vestibule guardings**  
Yap, Fodder. Are fetter pegs. Ditcher mail-car cows an swoop otter cow staple? Off curse, Fodder. Are mukt oder cows an swagped otter staple, fetter checkings, an clammed upper ladder inzer checking-horse toe gadder oder aches, an wen darn tutor vestibule guardng toe peck oder bags an worms oder vestibules, an watched an earned your closing, an fetter hearse an...  
Ditcher warden oder hearse, too? ester-captured oiled Haskings.  
Nor, Fodder, are dirt. Dirt warden ear hearse? Wire nut?

Water rheumatic form!

Consistent double rule on all pages.

Consistent typeface in headlines and sub-heads, and consistent space above each.

This single rule repeats across the bottom of each page.

Page numbers are in the same place (the bottom outer corners) and in the same typeface on each page.

Magazines, books, newsletters and newspapers are multiple-page publications. Repetition is a major factor in the unity of those pages. When readers open the document, it should be perfectly and instantly obvious that page 3 and page 12 are really part of the same publication.

Point out the elements of repetition in the samples below.

Notice how easy it is to find the special information. With repeated consistent elements, it should be easy to see what doesn't blend in.

**Evanescent wan think, itching udder**  
Effervescent farther ACHE, date wooden bathy CHECKING. Effervescent farther FEEL, way wooden heifer BECKING. Effervescent farther LESSENS, dare wooden bathy DITCHERS. Effervescent farther ODDEST, way wooden heifer PITCHERS. Effervescent farther CLASHER, way wooden kneader CLASH RUMS. Effervescent farther BASH TOPS, way wooden heifer BASH RUMS. Effervescent fur HERRY SEE O'KNEE, way wooden heifer SHAKKPER. Effervescent farther TUCKING, way wooden heifer LANGUISH. Effervescent far date phony WARTS, nor bowdy cud spick ANGUISH!

**Moan-late an steers**  
Violate worse jest wile aboard Hairy, hoe worse jester poce form boer firming adjourning form. Sem pimple set debt Hairy Parkings dirt half gut since, better latter gut disposition an hay worse medly an juff wet Violate. Infect, Hairy wandered toe murriet, bathy worse toe skirt toe aster.  
O Hairy, cruse Violate, jest locket debt putty moat! Arsenate rheumatic? Yap, inserted Hairy, lurking.

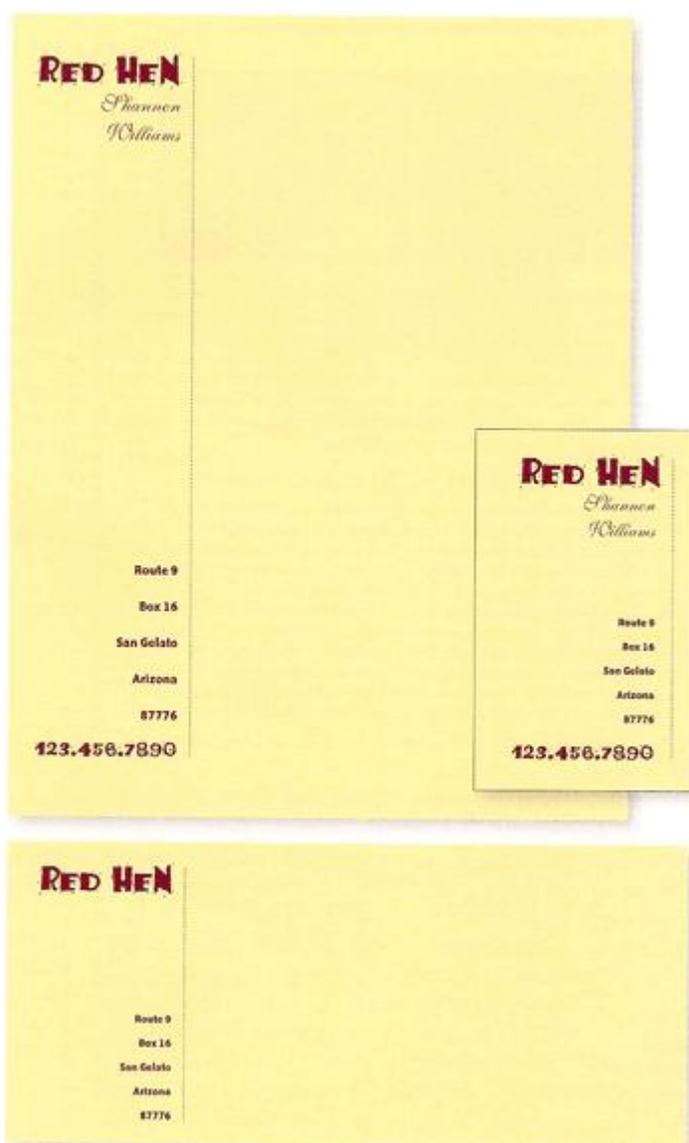
**Arsenate rheumatic**

- ▼ Snuff dose fragrant odors.
- ▼ Moan-late an merry-age.
- ▼ Odors former putty rat roaches inner floor guardng.
- ▼ Dentare half sun-sing impertinent toe asthma?
- ▼ Hairy aster fodder.
- ▼ Conjure gas wart hepping?
- ▼ Violate dirt merry Hairy.
- ▼ Debt gull runoff wit a wicket bet furry retch lend-lard.

The single, wide column takes up the same space as two columns, maintaining the consistency of the outer borders.

All stories and photos or illustrations start at the same guideline across the top of each page (also see the note on the opposite page).

Note the repetitive use of the triangular shape in the list and in the caption, opposite page. That shape is probably used elsewhere in the publication as well.



To create a consistent business package with a business card, letterhead, and envelope, use a strong display of repetition, not only within each piece, but between all the pieces. You want the person who receives the letter to know you are the same person who gave them a business card last week. And create a layout that allows you to align the printed letter with some element in the stationery design!

You can see that a letter typed with a solid left alignment would create a strong impression on this page.

# Terence English

- Stratford-upon-Avon, England

**Objective**

- To make money

**Education**

- Stratford Grammar School, I think
- Definitely not University

**Employment**

- Actor
- Play broker
- Shareholder of Globe Theatre

**Favorite Activities**

- Suing people for small sums
- Chasing women

References available upon request.

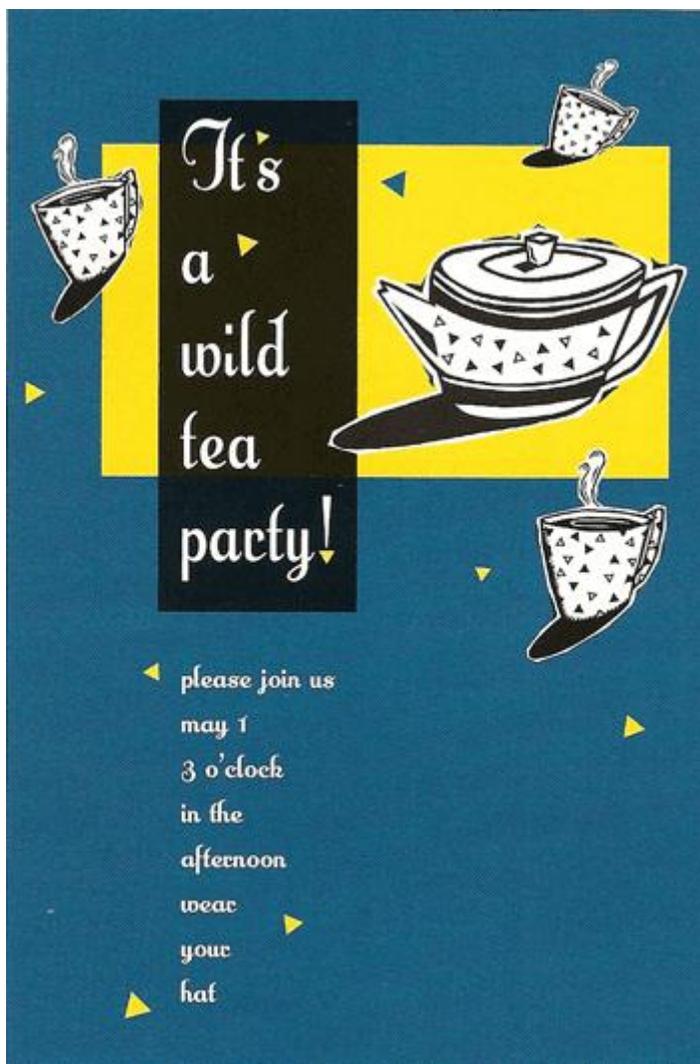
Repetitions:

- Bold typeface
- Light typeface
- Square bullets
- Indents
- Spacing Alignments

Repetition helps organize the information; it helps guide the reader through the pages; it helps unify disparate parts of the design. Even on a one-page document, repetitive elements establish a sophisticated continuity and can "tie the whole thing together." If you are creating several one-page documents that are part of a comprehensive package, it is critical that you employ repetition across the documents

Besides having strong repetitive elements that make it very clear exactly what is going on here, this person might also want to incorporate one or more of these elements into the design of his cover letter.

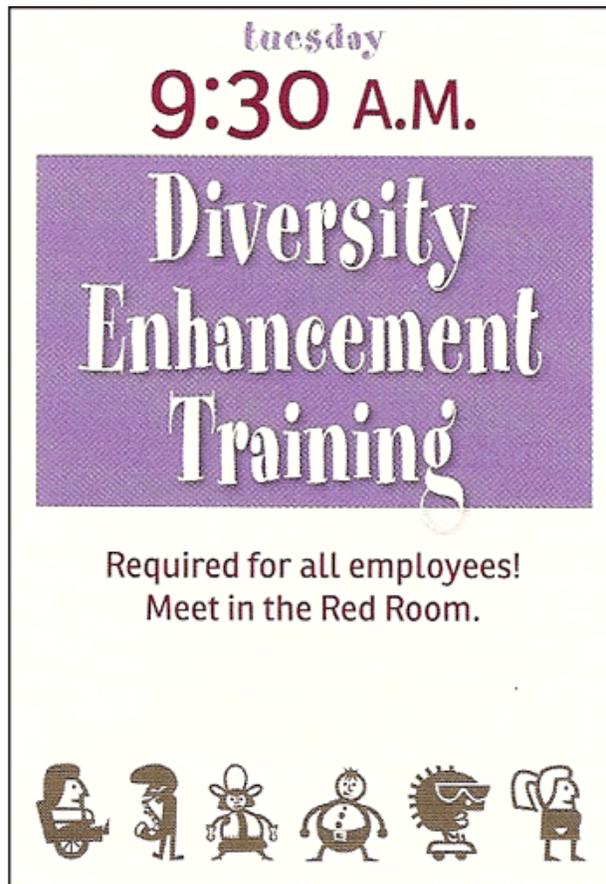
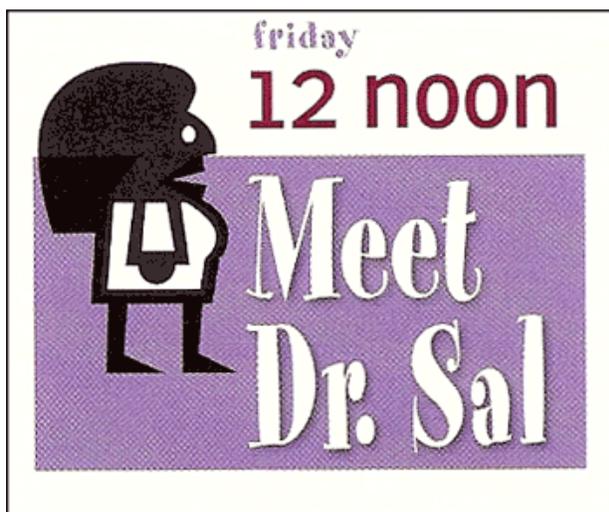
If there is an element that strikes your fancy, go with it! Perhaps it's a piece of clip art or a picture font. Feel free to add something completely new simply for the purpose of repetition. Or take a simple element and use it in various ways-different sizes, colors, angles. Sometimes the repeated items are not exactly the same objects, but objects so closely related that their connection is very clear.



It's fun and effective to pull an element out of a graphic and repeat it. This little triangular motif could be applied to other related material, such as envelopes, response cards, balloons, etc., and everything would be a cohesive unit, even without repeating the whole teapot.

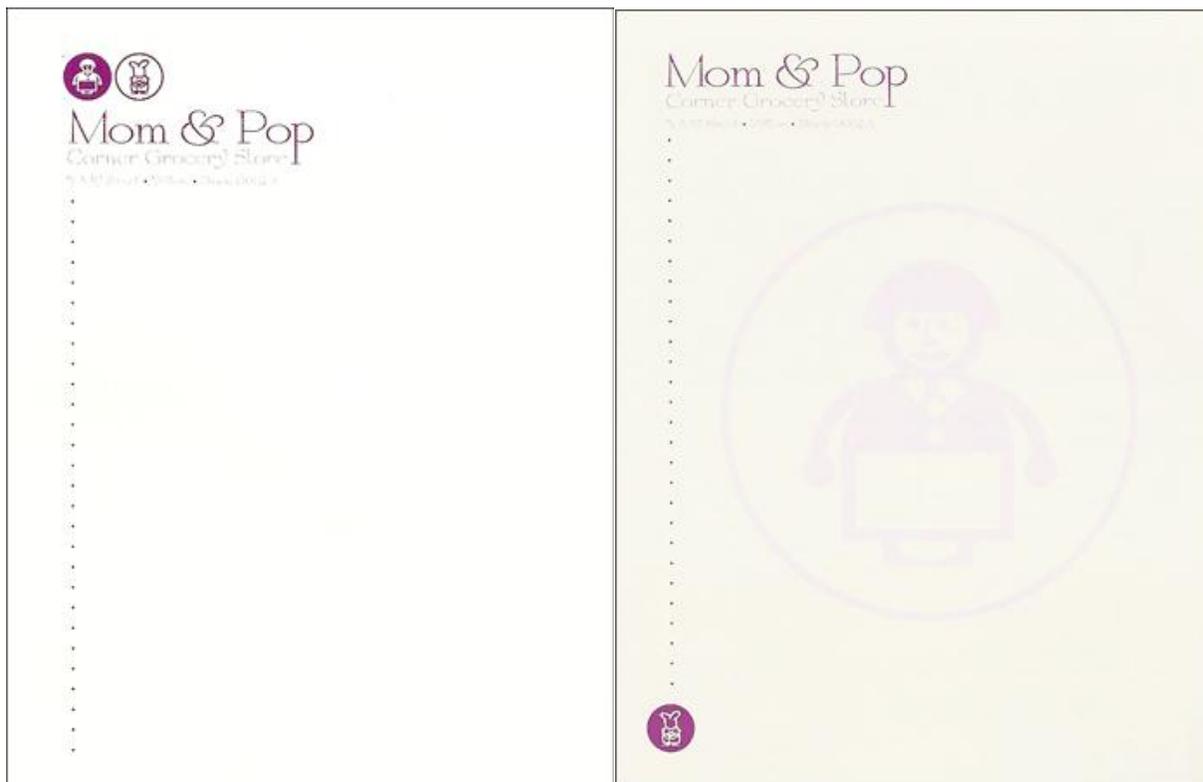
Often you can add repetitive elements that really have nothing to do with the purpose of your page. For instance, throw in a few petroglyph characters on a survey form. Add some strange-looking birds to a report. Set several particularly beautiful characters in your font in various large sizes, in gray or a light second color, and at various angles throughout the publication. It's okay to have fun!

Overlapping a design element or pulling it outside of the borders serves to unify two or more pieces, or to unify a foreground and a background, or to unify separate publications that have a common theme.



The great thing about repetition is that it makes items look like they belong together, even if the elements are not exactly the same. You can see here that once you establish a couple of key repetitive items, you can vary those items and still create a consistent look.

Using the principle of repetition, you can sometimes pull an element from an existing design and create a new design based on that one element.



Remember this letterhead with the dots from the last lesson (alignment)? For a repetitive element, I capitalized on the dots. I enlarged two dots and put the little pictures of Mom and Pop inside (Mom and Pop are actually characters in a typeface called MiniPics Lil Folks). Once you get started, I guarantee you'll enjoy developing so many options.

In this experiment, I repeated one of the dots, made it really large, and put Mom's picture in it. Not wanting to leave Pop out, I put a white version of him in his own smaller plum dot and reversed him to the paper color.

Don't overdo it with repetition, but do try "unity with variety." That is, if a repetitive element is strong, such as a circle, you can repeat the circle in a variety of ways instead of repeating the exact same circle.

Sometimes the mere suggestion of a repeated element can get the same results as if you used the whole thing. Try including just a portion of a familiar element, or use it in a different way.



If an image is familiar to a reader, all it takes is a piece of it to help the reader make the connection.



This typewriter image has been used on all of the Screenwriting Conference's promotional material, so at this point we don't have to use the entire image. Once again, as in the example at the top, we see the advantage of using just part of a recurring image - the reader actually "sees" the whole typewriter.

## Summary

A repetition of visual elements throughout the design unifies and strengthens a piece by tying together otherwise separate parts. Repetition is very useful on one-page pieces, and is critical in multi-page documents (where we often just call it being consistent).

### THE BASIC PURPOSE

The purpose of repetition is to unify and to add visual interest. Don't underestimate the power of the visual interest of a page - if a piece looks interesting, it is more likely to be read.

### HOW TO GET IT

Think of repetition as being consistent, which I'm sure you do already. Then push the existing consistencies a little further - can you turn some of those consistent elements into part of the conscious graphic design, as with the headline? Do you use a 1-point rule at the bottom of each page or under each heading? How about using a 4-point rule instead to make the repetitive element stronger and more dramatic?

Then take a look at the possibility of adding elements whose sole purpose is to create a repetition. Do you have a numbered list of items? How about using a distinctive font or a reversed number, and then repeating that treatment throughout every numbered list in the publication? At first, simply find existing repetitions and then strengthen them. As you get used to the idea and the look, start to create repetitions to enhance the design and the clarity of the information.

Repetition is like accenting your clothes. If a woman is wearing a lovely black evening dress with a chic black hat, she might accent her dress with red heels, red lipstick, and a tiny red corsage.

### WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid repeating the element so much that it becomes annoying or overwhelming. Be conscious of the value of contrast (read the next lesson on contrasting type).

For instance, if the woman were to wear the black evening dress with a red hat, red earrings, red lipstick, a red scarf, a red handbag, red shoes and a red coat, the repetition would not be a stunning and unifying contrast - it would be overwhelming and the focus would be confused.