Using Formal Elements in your work

In many of your the assignments, you are required to use formal elements, which are the bedrock of good design and idea generation. You need to identify these elements for assessment and comment on their use and purpose.

But, how do you do this? Hopefully, below will help you with this.

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| Element | Description | Example of Use | Annotation that could be used |
| Line | Line is the path left by a moving point. | Line drawing or design, with no shading, maybe even in a framework, so that the structure can be seen clearly. | ‘The line drawing allows you to see the detail better’  ‘The line drawing shows you how the design works’ |
| Tone | This refers to the lightness or darkness of something. This could be a shade or how dark or light a colour appears. | A design is shaded in light to dark, either in pencil or colour, to make it look more realistic and to help you understand the design. | ‘The tone makes the design more realistic’  ‘Tone adds depth to the design so it is easier to understand’ |
| Texture | This is to do with the surface quality of something, the way something feels or looks like it feels. | A design sheet where the wall surface, such a concrete, has a texture, such in the National Theatre in London. | ‘The texture adds interest to the design’  ‘The texture echoes the theme throughout the design’ |
| Pattern | A design that is created by repeating lines, shapes, tones or colours. | A pattern of circles and lines is added to the surface of the litter bin to create interest or directs the attention. | ‘By mixing shapes we can make the pattern on the surface more interesting’  ‘The pattern supports the theme through the product range’ |
| Shape | A shape is an area enclosed by a line. It could be just an outline or it could be shaded in. | The shapes drawn on a design sheet show the possibility for the hand-held unit and the variety that can be achieved. | ‘A range of shapes show the possibilities for the design’  ‘The shape has a clear outline which explains the design’ |
| Colour | Red, yellow and blue are primary colours.In theory, all other colours can be mixed from these three colours. | A design coloured in, using colours selected from the colour wheel, which evoke certain emotions and creates a focal points. | ‘The warm colours enhance the concept behind the design and the target group’  ‘Using the complementary colour creates the good focal point’ |
| Form | Form is a three dimensional shape, such as a cube, sphere or cone. | The design is drawn in 3D using one of the six fundamental shapes, assembled to create a range of solutions. | ‘The form is a cube to create the overall form of the bus shelter’  ‘The form of the hand-held unit mixes the sphere with the cube’ |
| Space | The distance around and between things. | A design has a number of parts, some connected, and with others in the correct place. | ‘I have created space between the objects to give balance’  ‘There is equal space between the objects based on measurements I have made’ |
| Symmetry | When two sides or halves are nearly the same. | A front of the building where there is symmetry between the windows and door that creates a design which is pleasing to the eye. | ‘The front of the building has symmetry to create a formal impact like, the British Museum’  ‘The symmetry helps the design look balanced’ |