**Design Help Sheet**

**Every detail on a front cover is there for a reason. Every decision about layout and design is aimed at giving the reader information about the story within. Here is a list of design elements that will help you decide the best way to communicate information to your readers.**

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| **Symbols** | Symbolism is an important way of passing on information quickly. For example, if you want to show that your chosen story is about a person who feels trapped you could have a picture of a hand wearing handcuffs. If your story is about finding peace you could use a picture of a dove carrying an olive branch. |
| **Positioning of characters/ objects** | The positioning of things in the image is always important. In general, the most important characters or things are placed in the foreground. Things in the background give more details about the plot, the setting, the mood, the thoughts and/ or the feelings of a character. Sometimes objects are placed at the top or bottom of cover, on a strange angle or even upside-down. Always ask yourself, “Why has the designer done this?” |
| **Size of characters/ objects** | The size of objects in comparison to each other is also important. If one character is bigger than another we learn who is more important or dominant in the relationship. If one object is much bigger or smaller than it generally should be, there will be a reason. |
| **Empty Space** | Empty space is always important. Why has the designer left the space empty? What colour is the space? What effect does the empty space have on the object it surrounds? Does the empty space create a certain mood or atmosphere? Always ask yourself these questions. Empty space also helps objects visually standout and therefore emphasises their importance. |
| **Colour and shading** | All colours have different emotions or ideas attached to them. For example, red can symbolises love, passion, violence, anger, blood, life, the need to stop, danger, fire and many other things. Colour can also create a mood or atmosphere. For example, a dark image can create a mood of despair or a tense atmosphere. Contrasting colours can suggest tension. For example, red versus green suggest stop versus go. Hint: Colour generally becomes more clearly symbolic when it is combined with other objects. |
| **Font**  **Choice** | Often font choice will give us an idea of genre and intended audience. Also, it is used to give us more information about plot. Sometimes the title is made out of objects (for example, a bunch of pencils or written in tomato sauce). Think about why this has been done. |
| **Pictures of people or animals** | If a person or animal is used on the cover then you must consider their body position, their hand (or paw) gestures and/ or their facial expressions. A well chosen image will give us some of the following information about the character; dominant mood throughout the book, some idea of personality, perhaps some indication of specific skills they have, their relationship with other characters, what social or cultural groups they belong to. |

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