

THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Visual qualities or the **elements and principles of design** may be defined as the **building blocks from which art is created**. Learning about the elements and principles compares to learning an alphabet from which increasingly complex meaning and form can be constructed and expressed.

The elements may be considered as the **parts of art**, whereas the principles may be described as the simple **directions which tell the artist how to use the elements**. Although the elements and principles are frequently studied individually, they are always found in works of art in combination with each other.

Lists of elements and principles vary slightly from source to source. For purposes of consistency, the following lists have been designated for use in the Irving Independent School District elementary art program. Teachers are encouraged to refer to the glossary contained within the teacher editions of *Adventures in Art* when defining individual elements.

Only from an intuitive and learned understanding of the elements and principles can the artist create, analyze, and discuss visual organization and meaning in works of art. From an early age children must learn that the creation of art is a thoughtful process, and that an ability to identify, control, and manipulate the elements and principles is essential.