ELEMENTS
Value: relative light and dark.

Line: the most basic design element: a point set in motion. It may divide space, define a form, describe contour, suggest direction. Often defined by boundaries between darker and lighter tones. Can also be implied, i.e. the direction of a subject’s gaze or the connection drawn between two objects in proximity.

Shape: space enclosed by lines.

Form: three-dimensionality or volume of a subject.

Texture/Pattern: repetition of small shapes, lines, or tonal areas over an area of an image.

PRINCIPLES
Unity: sometimes called harmony. Means that a congruity or agreement exists among the elements in a design. The individual elements work together to create a whole which predominates over the parts.

Repetition: elements within an image may happen to create a repeating pattern that is either chaotic or ordered. Lines and shapes found in a scene can contribute to this.

Emphasis/Focal point: emphasis of image. Area eye is drawn to first. For example, areas of tone different from the rest of the image, a centered element, an element of extreme scale, or distinct subject matter.

Scale / Proportion / Perspective: relative sizes of elements within an image. It is also possible to abstract the subject by being extremely close or extremely far, or to exaggerate distances.

Balance: arrangement of the elements within an image so equilibrium or unity is achieved.
  - Symmetrical: centered, formal, static. Simple balance of same elements.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Shutter Speed: describes motion. Captures movement either frozen or blurred

Aperture: affects focus, depth of field: selectively highlighting an area by having it in sharp focus in contrast to an unfocused background. Using the aperture to control the actual range of items in focus (large aperture gives a shallow depth of field; small aperture gives a long depth of field)

Lens/Focal Length: from wide angle (distorts, stretches space) to telephoto (compresses, flattens space)

Lighting: affects contrast, tonal range, mood, emphasis, among other aspects of scene. Photo can also capture interesting phenomenon or patterns of light, natural or human-made, such as: reflection, refraction, diffusion, or distortion through other mediums.

Point of view: How does a change in the camera’s angle change the composition of the image? For example; unusual perspectives, exaggerated vantage points.

Framing/cropping: revealing/withholding information; showing a portion of subject to describe whole; use of frame and edge to create tension, ambiguity, mystery; use to challenge and disorient the viewer. Also sometimes an element in the image can act as a framing device.
  - Passive: edge of picture doesn’t draw attention to itself; elements are more or less centered within the frame
  - Active: edge of picture actually contributes to dynamics of image

Juxtaposition: the flattening tendency of a photograph can show odd relationships between objects within a composition (classic example: tree growing out of person’s head). Can be used intentionally to convey humor, irony, absurdity, etc. See Garry Winogrand’s work.