

Handout 4.7: Principles Sort and Focal Point Game Cards

Name: _____ Date: _____ Team: _____

Directions: Day 1: Part 1 fills in during the slides; Part 2 is the sort with your team; Part 4 is the checklist you copy from the board. Day 2: Part 3 is the game; Part 4 is what you use to judge two other rooms. The furniture cards and the room outline are at the end; I cut them apart and put them in your team's envelope.

Word bank in other languages

[Check with a native speaker before printing.]

English	Turkish	Portuguese	Spanish
balance	denge	equilíbrio	equilibrio
symmetrical	simetrik	simétrico	simétrico
focal point	odak noktası	ponto focal	punto focal
rhythm	ritim	ritmo	ritmo
proportion	oran	proporção	proporción
scale	ölçek	escala	escala
unity	bütünlük (uyum)	unidade (harmonia)	unidad (armonía)
contrast	kontrast (zıtlık)	contraste	contraste

Part 1: The six principles

Principle	In a phrase	One example
Balance		
Symmetrical balance is:		
Asymmetrical balance is:		
Focal point (emphasis)		
Rhythm		
Proportion and scale		
Unity (harmony)		
Contrast		

Visual weight: things that weigh more to the eye are ____, ____, ____, and ____.

Part 2: The Principles Sort

Eight room layouts. For each one: the principle it shows best; if it is about balance, which kind; and one sentence about the visual weight.

#	The layout	Principle it shows best	Balance type (if balance)	Visual weight: what is heavy and what evens it out
1	Two matching wingback chairs facing a fireplace		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
2	A large dark sectional on one wall, one small light armchair on the opposite wall		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
3	Identical tables on both sides of a hallway entrance		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
4	A tall plant on the left, a tall bookshelf on the right		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
5	A heavy dark dresser on one side, two light chairs on the other		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
6	Three same-size picture frames evenly spaced over a couch		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
7	A wide rug on one side of the room, tall artwork on the other		☐ Symmetrical ☐ Asymmetrical ☐ Not balance	
8	A king-size bed in a room		☐ Symmetrical ☐	



	barely bigger than the bed		Asymmetrical [] Not balance	
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Grade 8 stretch: Write a ninth layout for the team next to you to classify.

Part 3: The Focal Point Game (Day 2)

Rules

1. Your envelope has a room outline, a set of furniture cards, and a focal point card. Nobody opens it until the timer starts.
2. The focal point goes where the card says. Everything else is built around it.
3. Every card is used, or set aside with a written reason on the line below.
4. The door has to open. A person has to be able to walk from the door to the window without climbing over anything.
5. Ten minutes. Tape at eight. Hands off at ten.
6. Label your room with the focal point and your team number and carry it to the gallery.

The design process, four words: define (what is the focal point and who uses the room), brainstorm (try three layouts before you tape), choose (pick one), test (walk the path with your finger).

Cards we set aside and why: _____

Our focal point: _____

The principle we used most: _____

Part 4: The critique checklist

Copy the six questions from the board on Day 1. Use them on two other rooms on Day 2.

Question	Room __: Yes / No	Room __: Yes / No
1. Is there one clear focal point?		
2. Does the room balance? Which kind?		
3. Is anything repeated so the eye moves (rhythm)?		
4. Is every piece the right size for the room and for each other (proportion and scale)?		
5. Does it look like one room, not five (unity)?		
6. Is there one thing that stands out on purpose (contrast)?		
7. Our own question:		



One specific fix for Room : ***Move the*** _____ to _____ so that
_____.

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_____.

The furniture card set (teacher: print one page per team, cut apart, put in an envelope with a focal point card)

Each card is drawn top-down, the way a floor plan shows it. Sizes are in “grid squares” so they match the room outline (one square is about one foot). Draw or print the shapes at these sizes.

Card	Shape from above	Size (squares)	Label on the card
Couch	long rectangle with a thin back edge	7 by 3	COUCH
Armchair 1	square with a rounded back	3 by 3	CHAIR
Armchair 2	square with a rounded back	3 by 3	CHAIR
Coffee table	oval	4 by 2	COFFEE TABLE
Rug	large rectangle, dashed outline	8 by 6	RUG
TV on a stand	thin rectangle	5 by 1.5	TV
Bookshelf	thin rectangle	3 by 1	BOOKSHELF
Floor lamp	small circle	1 by 1	LAMP
Plant	circle with a leaf	2 by 2	PLANT
Side table	small square	2 by 2	SIDE TABLE
Desk	rectangle	4 by 2	DESK
Small dining table with two chairs	circle with two small squares	4 by 4	DINING

The five focal point cards (one per envelope, face down): FIREPLACE (on the blank wall; draw it as a 5 by 1 rectangle on the wall), BIG WINDOW (the larger of the two windows), BIG PAINTING (on any wall you choose; draw it as a line 4 squares long), TV (the TV card is the star; nothing competes), BOOKSHELF WALL (the bookshelf card plus a drawn shelf line 8 squares long on one wall).

The room outline (teacher: print large, one per team)

A rectangle 16 squares wide and 12 squares deep, drawn on a grid.

- The door is on the bottom wall, 3 squares wide, starting 2 squares from the left corner; draw its swing arc into the room.
- Window 1 is on the top wall, 4 squares wide, centered.
- Window 2 is on the right wall, 3 squares wide, near the top corner.
- The left wall is blank (this is where the fireplace goes if that card is drawn).
- Label the four walls: TOP, BOTTOM (door), LEFT (blank), RIGHT (window 2).

Teacher key

Part 1: Balance: visual weight spread so no side feels heavier. Symmetrical: matching pairs mirrored. Asymmetrical: different things with equal weight. Focal point: the one thing the eye lands on first. Rhythm: repeating something so the eye moves. Proportion and scale: size compared to the other things and to the room. Unity: everything looks like it belongs together. Contrast: one different thing that makes the rest stand out. Visual weight: dark, big, rough, bold.

Part 2:

#	Principle	Balance type	Visual weight
1	Balance	Symmetrical	Two identical chairs mirror each other around the fireplace, which is also the focal point
2	Balance (or a balance problem)	Asymmetrical only if the armchair is bold or dark; otherwise unbalanced	The dark sectional is heavy; one small light chair does not even it out; add a lamp or art on the chair side
3	Balance	Symmetrical	Identical tables mirror each other
4	Balance	Asymmetrical	Different objects, similar height and weight
5	Balance	Asymmetrical	One dark heavy piece against two light pieces that together match it
6	Rhythm	Not balance (though the trio is symmetrical)	Even spacing moves the eye along the wall
7	Balance	Asymmetrical	Wide and low on one side, tall and narrow on the other
8	Proportion and scale	Not balance	The bed is too big for the room; nothing evens it out because the problem is size

Part 3: any layout that puts the focal point where the card says, leaves the door swing clear, and has a walkable path to the window meets the rules. A team that sets aside the dining table because the room is too small has learned scale; score that as a yes on question 4.

Part 4, scoring the built rooms: score each room on the six questions out of 6 for daily work. Read the students' critique sheets for a fix that names a piece and a place; "make it better" is not a fix.