



# Primer of Visual Literacy

*Donis A. Dondis*

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## **Primer of Visual Literacy** Donis A. Dondis

Responding to the need she so clearly perceives, Ms. Dondis, a designer and teacher of broad experience, has provided a beginning text for art and design students and a basic text for all other students ;those who do not intend to become artists or designers but who need to acquire the essential skills of understanding visual communication at a time when so much information is being studied and transmitted in non-verbal modes, especially through photography and film. Understanding through seeing only seems to be an obviously intuitive process. Actually, developing the visual sense is something like learning a language, with its own special alphabet, lexicon, and syntax. People find it necessary to be verbally literate whether they are "writers": or not; they should find it equally necessary to be visually literate, "artists" or not. This primer is designed to teach students the interconnected arts of visual communication. The subject is presented, not as a foreign language, but as a native one that the student "knows" but cannot yet "read." The analogy provides a useful teaching method, in part because it is not overworked or too rigorously applied. This method of learning to see and read visual data has already been proved in practice, in settings ranging from Harlem to suburbia. Appropriately, the book makes some of its most telling points through visual means. Numerous illustrated examples are employed to clarify the basic elements of design (teach an alphabet), to show how they are used in simple syntactic combinations ("See Jane run."), and finally, to present the meaningful synthesis of visual information that is a finished work of art (the apprehension of poetry...).

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