Squares

The square denotes honesty and stability. Squares are familiar, trusted shapes. Because the vast majority of the text we read is set in squares and rectangles, it has become familiar, safe, and comfortable.

Squares and rectangles are probably the most common geometric shapes we encounter. A few books, especially those for kids, may be cut in irregular shapes but adult (i.e. 'serious') correspondence comes in squares -- both the physical shape of the books, magazines, newspapers, and the rectangular columns of set text.

Some designers might equate square with boring. It's true that other, unexpected shapes, can grab attention better than the simple square but don't forget the importance of comfort and familiarity. Imagine how difficult it becomes to file everyday correspondence if letterhead came in a variety of triangles or freeform shapes. Try reading an entire book with all the text set in circles. Squares and rectangles definitely have a place in design.

Some ways you can use squares and rectangles:

- To symbolize honesty, stability, equality, comfort, or familiarity. It could also symbolize rigidity or uniformity.
- Related to the first bullet item, use repeating squares to suggest familiar themes (checkerboard pattern to represent a game board, the checkered flag at the end of a race, a tablecloth).
- To highlight, organize, or set apart information using a solid or outlined box.
- Use a square unexpectedly. Set a block of text in a solid or outlined but tilted box — with or without also tilting the text.
Shapes Exercise

1. Find an example of an ad that uses shapes. In your notebook, write a phrase that describes the use and feeling of the shapes used and how it affects the overall design and message of the ad.

   - Shapes can organize, highlight, separate
   - Symbolize an idea
   - Create movement
   - Convey a feeling or emotion
   - Provide emphasis
   - Provide framework