

Inventory

- Mount Fuji
- Three boats
- People in the boats
- A large wave
- The top of a smaller wave
- Clouds in the sky

Elements

- Lines - Thick and thin lines that are curved make up the water.
- Shape - Mount Fuji is a triangle; the boats are also pointed, and almost triangular.
- Form - The waves are made up of natural, sloped, forms.
- Space - Created by the large wave in the “front” of the print, and a distant, smaller, Mount Fuji.
- Value - The sky becomes darker closer to the horizon and closer to the shadow of the mountain.
- Color - The entire print is subdued and full of cool hues; mainly blue.
- Texture and Pattern - The texture of the waves is portrayed by the lines and the change in color at the top of the waves.
- Movement - The diagonal position of the boats makes them look as if they are churning through the water, moving in a wild, unorganized fashion. This is one of the strongest elements in the print.
- Time - The water spray depicted near the wave makes this print look like an ongoing span of time, with the sea moving and the boats rocking continually.

Principles

- Scale and Proportion - The wave is proportioned to seem bigger than Mount Fuji, even though the mountain is bigger than waves in real life.
- Focal Point and Emphasis - The focal point of the print is the mountain, but the emphasis is on the wave, because the wave is large and draws the viewer’s eye.
- Unity and Variety - There is a uniform color throughout the picture, blue. However there is variety with the contrast of the sky, sea, and land.
- Rhythm and Repetition - There is a repetition of the curving lines of the water, and the hooked ends of waves. This repetition helps to create a sense of rhythm.

Description

Created between 1831 and 1833, “The Great Wave” by Katsushika Hokusai is a **woodblock print** that depicts Mount Fuji. This print is part of a 36 piece series, all depicting Mount Fuji in some way. The Great Wave is a very vivid piece due to its strong focal point, movement, and dramatic color.

Hokusai makes the wave in this print large and looming, so it draws the eye toward the water. However, in the center of the print, far off in the distance, is Mount Fuji. Because of the mountains positioning, Mt. Fuji is the central focal point for all of the print, bringing the mountain into the focus of the viewer. Likewise, the triangular shape of the mountain makes it have the straightest lines of all the print, making the focal point even stronger.

Even though Mount Fuji is the focal point, the large amount of movement is caused by the waves. The artist uses a multitude of curved, waving lines to make the water seem as if it is sloshing everywhere. The correspondingly hooked edges of the individual waves make them seem as if they are about to crash down on top of the boats, sending them flying. The final element that contributes to the movement of the print is the overlapping of the water; the way it rolls about until the mountain arises in the center of all the water.

The final element that ties the art together is Hokusai’s use of color. He uses all shades of blue, from the top of Mount Fuji to the color of the people’s shirts. The waves are even the same blue as the body of the mountain. This makes the brown wood of the boats contrast sharply with the waves, along with the rest of the print. This also makes the horizon line very clear since the sky is not blue, so it differs intensely from the mountain and sea. The artist purposefully makes the sky almost tan, so it appears very bright and different against the cool hue of the entire picture.

“Under the Wave off Kasagawa”, also known as, “The Great Wave” is a **piece of art painted (Japanese woodblock print)** by Katsushika Hokusai using ink and color on paper. **Among** Many elements and principles of design are present in this work, such as **line**. **Line** is one of the strongest elements in “The Great Wave”. The lining that appears within the waves, fishing boats, and Mount Fuji **line** clearly define and separate these objects from each other. The **color** in the piece helps to do this as well but without the strong lines the contrast diminishes greatly. Also through the use of **color, form** is given to the waves, while the fishing boats and Mount Fuji have mostly flat color. The use of **space** is especially interesting in this piece. Mount Fuji, placed nearly center, pales in comparison with the massive wave crashing down (**scale**). The **negative space** of the gray sky creates an upside down wave shape, adding a “yin and yang” type **symmetry** between the top of the wave and the sky.

The most relevant principle of design used in Hokusai’s painting is **movement**. The dramatic **movement** created by the great crashing wave is what I believe to be a large part of why this piece is so famous. The splatter of white that represents ocean spray from the wave adds to the feeling of movement as well. The wave is undoubtedly the **focal point**. In “The Great Wave”, compositional **balance** is strong. The ocean in the foreground before the large wave serves as a solid foundation for great wave to emerge from, pleasantly harboring the fishing boats and Mount Fuji on top as they await (**uniformly** bow down and hold on in hopes of avoiding) catastrophe from the wave. The last principle of design I ~~especially noted~~ within the piece is the use of proportion. Mount Fuji, the fishing boats and their tiny oarsmen are scaled down in order to express the massive size of the wave. This is very effective because “The Great Wave” appears fearsome due to its sheer size.

Looking at the Great Wave, you can see elements throughout the work. Color, is the obvious element, giving the wave **two** different shades of blue. The wave looks more realistic in this way. And then giving **them** (the waves) the line and color at the peak of the wave cause's the dramatic feel of how rough the seas are. As well, the boats being engulfed by the wave giving the same **affect**. The **space** created from the overlapping of waves and boats and Mt. Fuji in the back. The **shapes** of the waves also help create the dramatic **effect**. The artist creates the wave as if its **caps are a hand or claw reaching** out to grab the boats at sea. **It** also helps create the movement along the waves just as the patterns of color helps create the same effect. The piece does lack texture no sense of real feel and not much form.

You can also see some principles in the art. **Pattern** in the colors is what helps create the **movement** - which is also a principle of design. **Movement was already discussed**. Then there is **emphasis**, the artist creates this with Mt. Fuji in the background. It's subtle but it's a **focal point** in the piece. Overall this is a piece made of many different **Elements and principles**.

Hokusai's "The Great Wave" has several art **elements** that he used to create this piece.

I feel that **line** is one of the strongest elements, he also uses size and layering to create **depth**, **movement** and then lastly he uses **color** to emphasize different **aspects** in this work.

The first thing you notice in this picture is the wave. Hokusai uses **curved lines** to create the enormous wave with claw-like tips that looks as if it is about to engulf the boats below. I love the clawed tips, they add to the intensity of the waves as well as the lines used in the water to show they're not tame, it draws the viewer into the scene and lets them know that something serious is about to happen. **Linear perspective (Implied Line?)** is an element that is portrayed by the wave falling at an angle toward the mountain on its left and then the boat coming in at an opposite angle on the right. This creates a **focal point** at the tip of the mountain. Line is also a strong element in creating the **shape** of the boats. *These boats are not small and they are well built because they are fishing boats that go out frequently and they are designed to be very quick. The way he created the wave makes them seem like a piece of drift wood that will soon be tossed to and fro. The viewer can imagine the size of them because there are 10 people in each boat so they are able to get an idea of how massive the wave is in comparison.* The mountain itself is also a **size** element that helps create depth. It's Mt. Fuji, which is a very large mountain. The viewer knows that they are out in the ocean a ways because the size of the mountain compared to the wave makes Mt. Fuji appear to be small in stature. The element of **color** is very important in this piece as well. The artist creates **texture** with the **value of blues** that he used against the white. I feel this gives the illusion of intense **motion** of the waves. He uses **shading** on the tip of the waves with the light blue against the white, this helps give them form. From what I read, he chose the particular color of blue to pay tribute to his influence of Dutch art that he loved. I also read that amidst all of the drama in this picture he was being a little playful with showing **(a suggestion / associaton of)** the snow falling so delicately over Mt. Fuji. (Waves in Foreground - Not distant snow)

The **principles** of design that I feel Hokusai uses are **emphasis, movement, proportion and pattern**. **Emphasis** is placed on the wave. That is the main feature of this piece. Through the use of line, shape and color ~~that makes~~ the wave stand out. **Movement** is created through the lines cut into the water and the **curved shape** of the waves. your eye is drawn in a way that makes the water look as though it's **moving** **as** the wave is about to crash down. I feel he uses proportion by the size of the boats to the waves. They look realistic in size. Lastly, he uses **pattern** in the **repeating colors** of the water, this gives a pattern of dark to light with the color blue.

After studying "The Great Wave," I felt like I had witnessed a critical part of a story. I want to know what happens next. Hokusai did an excellent job in creating a piece of art that comes to life.

There are many elements and principles that are very strong and stand out a lot in “The Great Wave of Kanagawa”.

The elements that stand out the most in my opinion **are movement, space, and color.**

The principles that stand out the most to me are **emphasis and proportion.**

Movement would have to be the strongest out of all the elements that stands out to me the most because Hokusai portrays the wave as if it was alive. It represents a very exciting **moment in time** which in reality you would only be able to enjoy for a split second rather than for ever in this painting. The element that **I** noticed second would have to be **space**. I feel space is strong because how Hokusai **overlaps** the wave over the boat and then overlaps the same boat over another wave, it gives me a sense of **depth**. Also the mountain's **small** size and being overlapped by a **boat** give a sense of depth, portraying the mountain **as being** very far away. Color is another element that stands out to me because there are not a lot of colors but the colors that are there are strong and give a major meaning to the objects they give life to.

I feel **emphasis** is a strong principle in this painting in the way that Hokusai **emphasizes** the **huge** wave on the left. The wave takes up most of the height of the picture and is coming down over **the mountain** as if it could swallow **the mountain**, which helps strengthen the wave's power and **size**. The other principle that stands out to me is **proportion**. The size of the boats and people in the boats give me a really good idea how **big** the wave actually is.

The elements and principles Hokusai uses in this painting are really strong and help me to interpret what he is trying to portray in this painting.

The Great Wave uses many elements to show its dramatic view of crashing waves. The main element I feel is used is line. **Curved and smooth lines** to show the water and the foam of the waves, while more **straight and angled** lines show contrast between the waves and the boats in the print showing us what is organic vs what is manmade.

The way the print is **balance is through asymmetry**. The **large wave takes up most of the left side** while the right half the sky is mainly **empty** and it feeds the movement of the piece.

The way the colors are used as well adds another dimension the balance of the print.

When it comes to **depth** in the painting the first thing I noticed being used is size, Mount Fuji, while large in life, is small and under most of the crashing waves. There is also overlapping used showing us which waves are closer, and which boats are near what waves. The sky shifts from pale to dark giving us another depiction of depth.

The eye goes straight to the large wave so it strikes me as the **focal point** of the print as well as the **emphasis** on Mount Fuji seeming to be in the way of the crashing waves to be left behind.

Colors feel more **monochromatic** with mainly **blues whites and creams** being used even down the passengers on the boat.

Movement is done well in the piece as it feels like the wave could come crashing down at any moment.

The print lacks any texture but has interesting shapes that contrast from **rounded to more angular**.

The Great Wave Off of Kanagawa – by Hokusai

Hokusai depicts three boats going out to sea encountering massive waves, the line and the **shape** of the waves are different from each other in **size**, giving the impression the waves are much bigger than the boats and the oarsmen. The spray off the waves helps to add **space and depth** and also creates texture as the waves are about to crash into the boats. The color in the wave is used to contrast with the grey on the sky, which adds a dramatic tone in the picture.

In addition, the size of the waves, help to identify **movement** and help emphasize Mount Fuji as the main focal point in the picture as if it was rising from beneath the ocean. Proportion and Unity are two other strong principles being depicted by the way the artist is capable to bring a **chaotic situation in the foreground, versus the serenity of Mount Fuji in the background.**