

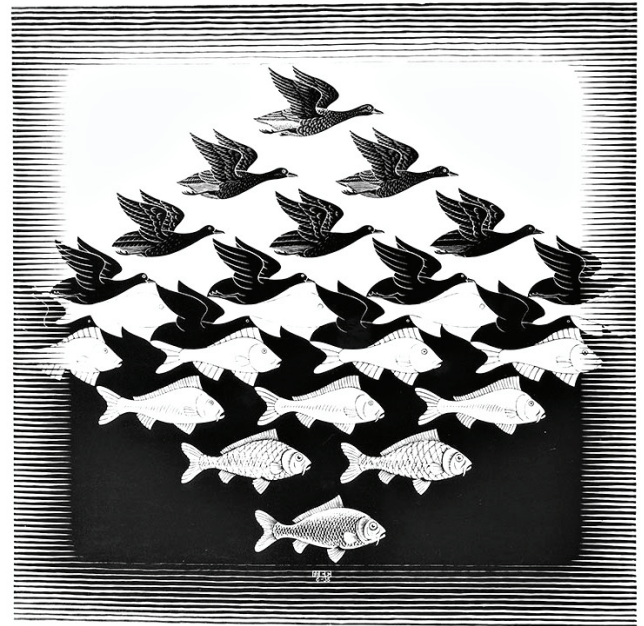
About Negative Space

What is negative space? Negative space in art is the space around and between an object. Instead of focusing on drawing the actual object (called the positive space) when drawing the negative space the focus is on the space between the objects. Sometimes those shapes are easier to draw and they allow us another way to look at an object and make an accurate representations of the objects we draw.

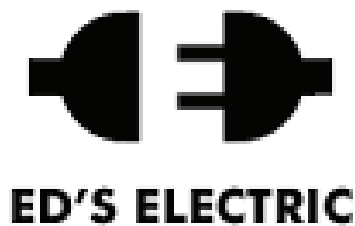
To the right you'll see a classic example of negative space in art. At first glance, you probably see a black vase (the positive space/subject of the composition), but if you shift your focus you'll see that the white on the sides, the negative space, creates not only the sides of the vase, but also two faces that are nose to nose.



An artist who enjoyed playing with the concepts of positive and negative space was M.C. Escher. In his work to the right, the bird at the top appears as positive space (a main subject), yet its shape is echoed in the dark negative shapes between the fish. Likewise, the positive shape of the fish at the bottom has its shape repeated in the white spaces between the birds.



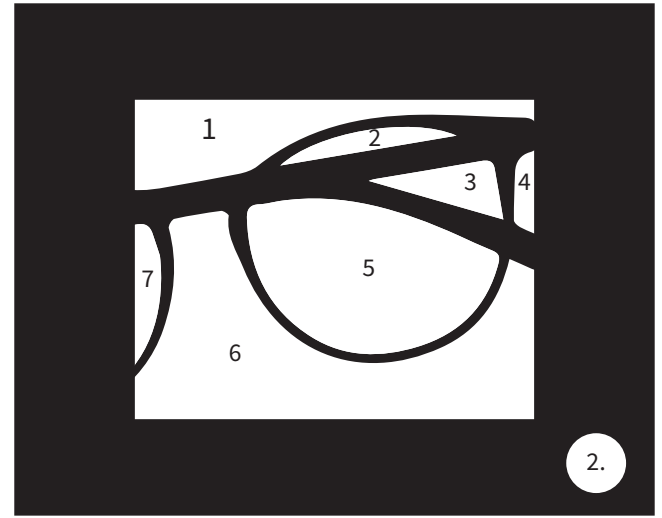
Graphic designers also utilize positive and negative space when designing. The interplay between positive and negative space allows designers the opportunity to create images that have dual or hidden meanings. See the examples below.



About Negative Space cont.

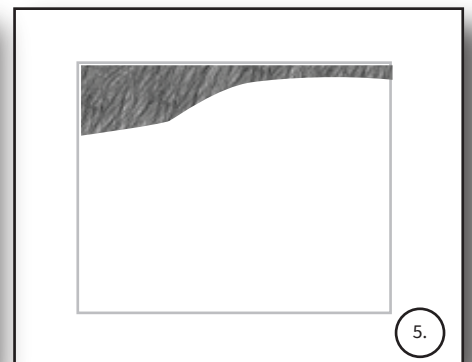
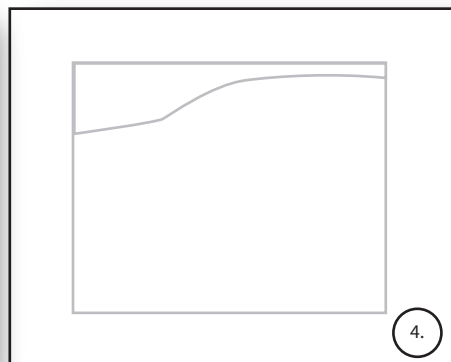
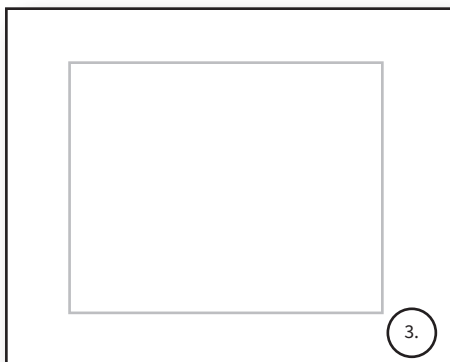
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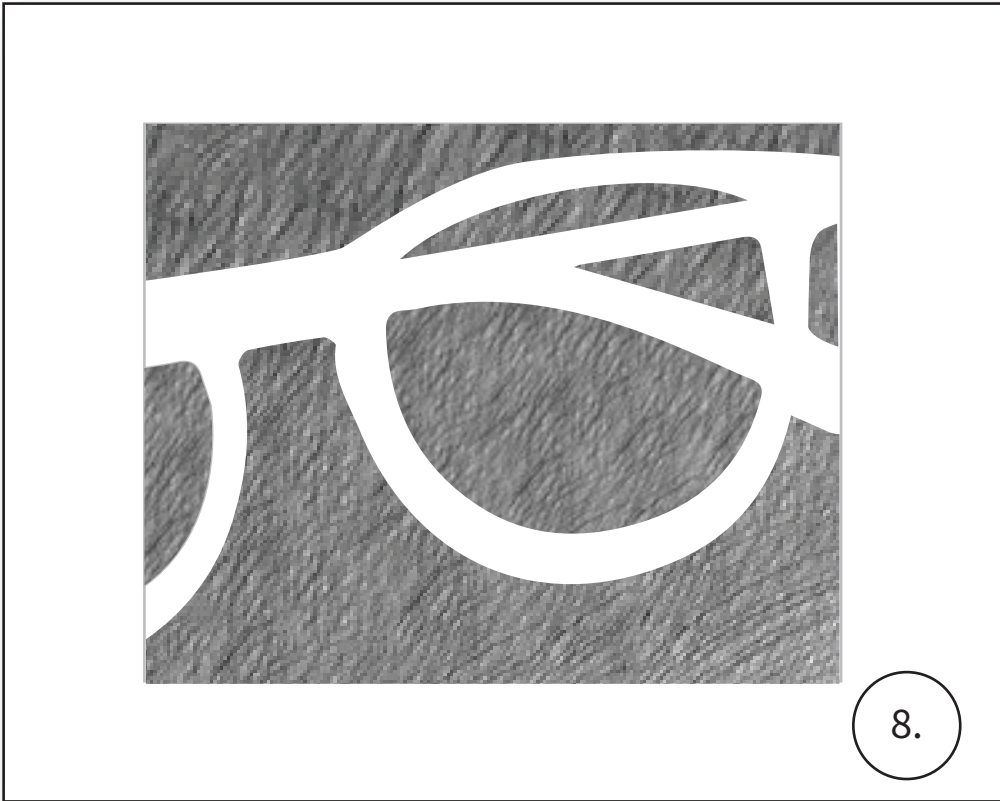
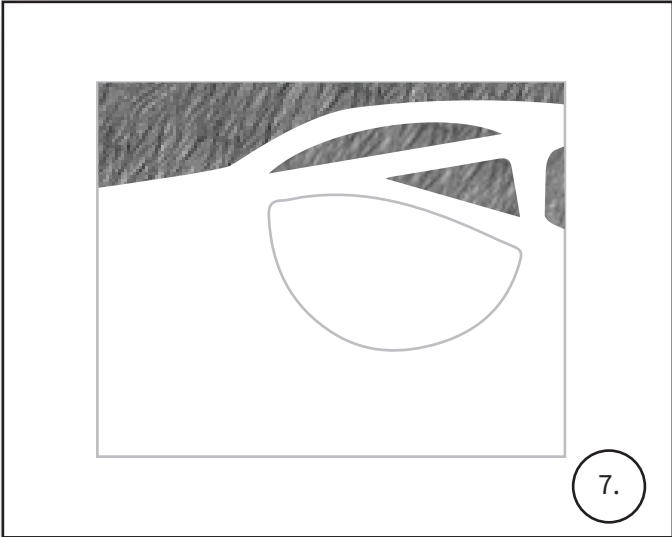
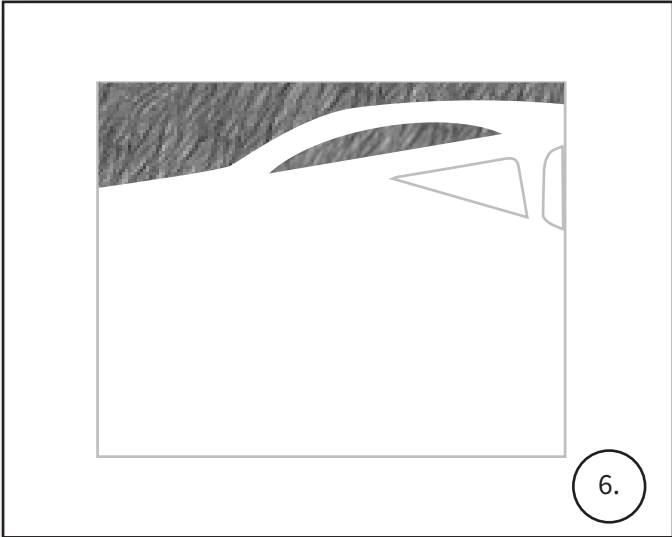


On a sheet of paper the artist draws the rectangle of the frame on a piece of paper. The artist must consider the proportion of the rectangle.

Once the rectangle is drawn, the artist can begin drawing the negative space (illustration 4). The artist draws the space and then shades it in (illustration 5). Turn to the next page to see the evolution of the drawing (illustrations 6-8).



About Negative Space cont.



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Now it's your turn to try. In a sketchbook or on a separate sheet of paper, try drawing the sewing scissors negative shape by negative shape. Use your eraser to make corrections as needed! Also, keep in mind that negative spaces never touch because there is always positive spaces in between.

