

Social Media Visual Design — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a finished production system. You will lock down platform specs, build a brand kit and template library, pressure-test your designs against the thumb-stop test, and run a full batch session. Work through one section per module, then use the templates to keep producing.

Platform Foundations and Canvas Specs

Build the technical reference you will reach for on every future design so you never start at the wrong size again.

Worksheet: Platform Specs Cheat Sheet

Fill in the exact canvas size, aspect ratio, and safe-zone margin for each platform and format you actually publish on. Keep this one page within reach whenever you design.

Platform and format (e.g. Instagram feed portrait)

Canvas size in pixels

Aspect ratio

Top safe-zone margin (px)

Bottom safe-zone margin (px)

Side margin (px)

Export format (PNG / JPG / MP4)

Exercise: Audit Three of Your Existing Posts

Open three graphics you have already published. Compare each against the correct specs and note every problem you find.

- Was each graphic designed at the correct native resolution, or upscaled?

- Did any critical text or logo fall inside a safe zone that an interface element covers or a thumbnail crops?

- Does any text look soft or blurry after the platform compressed it, and why?

- What is the single most common mistake across all three, and how will you prevent it going forward?

Checklist: Pre-Design Setup Checklist

- Confirm the exact pixel dimensions for the target platform and format
- Create the canvas at native size before placing any element
- Add a non-printing safe-zone rectangle to the canvas
- Set the correct export format as a saved preset
- Keep all critical text at least 64 px from every edge
- Plan to review the published post on a real phone

Building a Reusable Template System

Move from one-off graphics to a documented brand kit and a five-template library that makes consistency automatic.

Worksheet: One-Page Brand Kit

Define and record the tight visual vocabulary every future graphic must use. Capture exact values so anyone, including future you, can stay on-brand without guessing.

Primary color 1 (hex)

Primary color 2 (hex)

Neutral colors (hex list)

Accent color for calls to action (hex)

Headline font name, size, and weight

Body font name, size, and weight

Logo versions available (color / white / black / icon)

Logo clear space and minimum size

Photo style in one sentence

One logo do and one logo do-not

Exercise: Build Your Master Template

In Canva or Figma, create a single master layout that all other templates will derive from. Document your fixed decisions below.

- What margin will you use on a 1080 px canvas, and where does the logo sit?
 - Which zone of the canvas is reserved for the headline, and how large is it?
 - Which layers will you lock so they cannot be moved by accident?
 - What is your longest realistic headline, and does the master still hold when you paste it in?
-

Checklist: Five-Template Library Checklist

- Quote or single-statement card built and named
- Tip or list card built and named
- Carousel cover plus interior page built and named
- Announcement or promo card built and named
- Photo-with-caption card built and named
- Brand kit colors, fonts, and logos applied to every template
- Each template stress-tested with the longest realistic copy

Visual Hierarchy, Type, and Color That Read on Mobile

Pressure-test your design choices against legibility, hierarchy, and contrast so graphics work on a real phone.

Worksheet: Hierarchy and Contrast Audit

Pick one finished graphic and evaluate its design decisions field by field. Record the actual values, not what you intended.

What is the single focal point a viewer sees first?

Headline size (px) versus body size (px)

Color proportions: dominant / secondary / accent split

Text-to-background contrast ratio of the main text

Number of fonts used

Line spacing as a multiple of font size

What was cut to reduce clutter?

Exercise: Run the Thumb-Stop Test

Shrink a draft graphic to roughly 40 percent size, glance for one second, then look away and answer from memory.

- After a one-second glance, what is the one thing you remember?

- Was the headline instantly legible at thumbnail size, or did it blur?

- When you squint, does the most important element survive the blur?

- What single change would make the main idea land faster?

Checklist: Mobile Legibility Checklist

- Body text is at least 24 px on a 1080 px canvas
- No more than two fonts are used, with clear contrast between them
- Main text contrast is at least 4.5 to 1 against its background
- No light text sits on a busy photo without an overlay or text box
- Line spacing is roughly 1.3 to 1.5 times the font size
- Color split follows the 60-30-10 proportion
- Accent color is reserved for the single most important action

Grids, Carousels, and a Repeatable Batch Workflow

Tie everything into a cohesive grid, scroll-worthy carousels, and a batch session that produces a planned month of content.

Exercise: Plan Your Next Nine-Tile Grid

Using a grid preview tool or a nine-cell mockup, arrange your next nine to twelve posts before scheduling any of them.

- What pattern will you alternate across tiles, such as quote, photo, tip?

- Do any adjacent tiles clash in color or busyness, and how will you fix it?

- Does the whole grid stay within your brand palette?

- What does this grid signal to a first-time visitor about your account?

Worksheet: Carousel Structure Planner

Plan one carousel slide by slide before designing it, so the hook and flow are decided in advance. Cover slide hook (specific, promises a payoff)

Slide 2 single idea

Slide 3 single idea

Slide 4 single idea

Slide 5 single idea

Momentum cue used between slides (arrow / peek / numbering)

Final slide call to action

Checklist: Batch Session Checklist

- Month's topics listed and a template chosen for each
- All copy written in one pass before designing
- All photos and assets gathered into one folder
- Graphics assembled from templates, format by format
- Every graphic passes the thumb-stop test and safe-zone check
- All posts scheduled in a tool such as Later, Buffer, or Meta Business Suite
- Recurring monthly batch time blocked and protected

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the platform specs cheat sheet for every format you publish on
2. Set up your tool of choice with logos, hex codes, and brand fonts loaded
3. Write and save your one-page brand kit
4. Build a master template and lock its margins, headline zone, and logo position
5. Derive and name your five core templates from the master
6. Audit one existing graphic for hierarchy, contrast, and legibility, then fix it

7. Plan your next nine to twelve posts in a grid preview before scheduling
8. Storyboard and design one carousel using the structure planner
9. Run one full batch session to produce a planned month of content
10. Review analytics after the month and retire any template that underperforms

