

Interior Design Basics — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a single finished project: a complete design scheme for one real room of your choice. Each section follows a course module, building from design diagnosis through colour, layout, and finishing into a mood board and scheme document. Work through it in order with one room in mind, and by the end you will hold everything a designer would hand a client for approval.

Diagnosing Your Room with the Principles

Use the elements and principles of design to read your chosen room and decide what is working and what needs to change.

Exercise: The Two-Step Room Read

Stand in the doorway of the room you will design. Spend three minutes observing before writing. Then answer the prompts, naming specific elements and principles from the course rather than vague feelings.

- Which element is strongest in this room right now (space, line, form, light, colour, texture, or pattern) and why?

- Which principle feels weakest (balance, scale and proportion, rhythm, emphasis, harmony, contrast, or details) and what tells you so?

- Where does your eye land first, and is that the focal point you would want it to be?

- If you could fix only one thing about how the room feels, what would it be?

Worksheet: Scale and Proportion Audit

Measure the key pieces in your room or the pieces you plan to buy, then apply the course ratios to check whether they are correctly sized. Fill the measured value, then the target, then mark pass or fail.

Sofa width (measured)

Coffee table length (target: about two-thirds of sofa width)

Coffee table length (actual)

Artwork width above sofa (target: about two-thirds of sofa width)

Artwork centre height from floor (target: about 145 cm)

Rug overhang past dining table (target: 60 to 75 cm all sides)

Pass or fail for each, with the fix needed

Checklist: Balance and Focal Point Check

- Identified the single focal point for the room
- Largest furniture piece is positioned in relation to the focal point
- Visual weight feels even left to right (verified with a phone photo)
- Visual weight feels even near to far
- One accent colour is repeated at least three times around the room
- Used an odd number for any repeated grouping of objects

Building Your Colour Scheme

Construct a tested colour palette for the room using a scheme type, the 60-30-10 rule, and real undertone and light checks.

Exercise: Choose Your Scheme Type

Identify the hardest-to-change colour element already in the room (flooring, large upholstery, or stone) and build outward from it. Decide on one scheme type from the course and justify the choice against how the room faces and how it is used.

- What is your fixed starting colour (the element you cannot easily change)?

- Which scheme type will you use (monochromatic, analogous, complementary, split-complementary, or triadic) and why?

- Which way does the room face, and does that push you toward warmer or cooler colours?

- Is this room meant to feel calm, energising, or cosy, and does your scheme support that?

Worksheet: 60-30-10 Palette Plan

Assign your three colours to the dominant, secondary, and accent roles and list exactly where each appears in the room. Note paint names and codes where known.

60 percent dominant colour (name and paint code)

Where the dominant colour appears (walls, large rug, flooring)

30 percent secondary colour (name and code)

Where the secondary colour appears (sofa, curtains, bedding)

10 percent accent colour (name and code)

Where the accent colour appears (cushions, art, lamps, ceramics)

Undertone of each colour (warm or cool) and confirmation they agree

Checklist: Paint Sampling Protocol

- Bought sample pots of the top two or three colours
- Painted patches at least 60 by 60 cm, two coats, or on movable boards
- Placed samples on more than one wall to catch light variation

- Viewed samples in morning, midday, and evening light
- Viewed samples under the room's own artificial bulbs
- Compared near-neutrals side by side against white paper for undertone clashes
- Confirmed final sheen choice per surface (matte, eggshell, satin, semi-gloss)

Planning the Layout

Produce a scaled floor plan and a furniture arrangement that respects real designer clearances and traffic flow.

Worksheet: Room Measurement Record

Measure the room completely before planning anything. Record every dimension and fixed feature so your plan reflects reality, not memory.

Wall 1 length

Wall 2 length

Wall 3 length

Wall 4 length

Ceiling height

Door positions, widths, and swing direction

Window positions, widths, and sill heights

Radiators, vents, outlets, switches, and built-ins

Exercise: Draw and Test the Plan

Create a scaled floor plan at 1 to 50 on graph paper or in a free tool (Floorplanner, SketchUp Free, or RoomSketcher). Cut furniture to scale and try at least two arrangements. Then answer the prompts to evaluate them.

• Where are the main and secondary traffic paths, and are they clear of furniture?

• What is the focal point, and does the seating arrangement acknowledge it?

• Which of your two arrangements flows better, and what specifically makes it win?

• Does every conversation seat sit within 2.4 to 3 metres of the others?

Checklist: Clearance Verification

- Main walkway is at least 90 cm wide
- Secondary paths are at least 60 cm wide
- Coffee table sits 35 to 45 cm from the seating
- Facing seats are 2.4 to 3 m apart for conversation
- Rug is large enough for at least the front legs of all seating
- Dining chairs have 90 cm of pull-out clearance behind them
- Bed has 60 to 90 cm clearance to walls and dressers

[] Layout mocked up with painter's tape or boxes and walked through

Lighting, Materials, and the Mood Board

Design three layers of lighting, select fabrics and finishes by durability and texture, and assemble everything into a mood board and scheme document.

Worksheet: Three-Layer Lighting Plan

Plan each lighting layer for the room, the target light level for its main activity, and the colour temperature of the bulbs. Confirm what sits on a dimmer.

Ambient layer fixtures (type and location)

Task layer fixtures (activity and location)

Accent layer fixtures (what they highlight)

Target lux level for the room's main activity

Bulb colour temperature in kelvin (e.g. 2700K, 4000K)

Bulb CRI (target 90 or above)

Which circuits are on dimmers

Exercise: Fabric and Finish Selection

Order or gather swatches for your upholstery, soft furnishings, and hard finishes. Lay them together under the room's own light, then answer the prompts to confirm the combination works and will last.

- What is the double-rub durability rating of your main upholstery fabric, and does it match the room's use?

- List the textures you are combining, and confirm you have at least three that vary smooth, rough, soft, and hard.

- Which two or three hard finishes (wood, stone, metal, glass, tile) are you repeating, and where does each appear at least twice?

- Do all swatches still work together under the room's evening artificial light?

Checklist: Mood Board and Scheme Document Completion

- [] Stated the design concept in two or three words
- [] Placed the dominant colour and hardest-to-change material first
- [] Added the 60-30-10 palette as swatches in roughly correct proportions
- [] Added key furniture images at relative scale
- [] Added fabric and finish samples to the board
- [] Noted lighting choices and bulb temperature on the board
- [] Included a rough scaled floor plan beside the look
- [] Completed a scheme document listing every item with source, size, price, and quantity
- [] Confirmed the running total is within budget

Your Action Plan

1. Choose one real room to design and read it using the two-step room read
2. Measure the room fully and draw a scaled floor plan at 1 to 50
3. Pick your fixed starting colour and choose a scheme type
4. Build the 60-30-10 palette and sample every paint on the actual wall in all light conditions
5. Arrange furniture on the plan to the course clearances, then mock it up with tape and walk it
6. Design three layers of lighting with correct lux levels, bulb temperature, and dimmers
7. Select fabrics by double-rub rating and combine at least three textures, repeating two to three hard finishes
8. Build a mood board that pulls palette, furniture, materials, and lighting into one view
9. Complete the scheme document with sources, sizes, prices, and quantities, and total the budget
10. Review the whole scheme against the concept, remove anything that fights it, and finalise the design

