

**DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS**

# **DESIGN BASICS**

**Module 13**



**TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS**

# DESIGN BASICS

Welcome to Design Basics. In this Module, we'll learn the fundamentals of digital design, why it's important, and what tools you can use to create it.

Ready? Let's get started.

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## WHAT IS DESIGN?

Design is an art and a science. It's a general term for the process and result of communicating and expressing an idea or plan through abstract and concrete forms. There are several types of design, but we most often think about visual design, such as paintings, drawings, sculptures, or architecture.



# WHAT IS DIGITAL DESIGN?

[Digital design](#) is a form of visual communication. It aims to share an idea, message, or service through digital software. Digital design can be graphic design, photos, and video.

## Graphics

[Graphic design](#) takes an idea and communicates it through visuals and text. These designs can be shared online through social media posts, websites, and mobile apps. They can also be printed and translated to the physical world through posters, signs, business cards, and more.

Graphic design takes an idea and adds meaning, context, and power to it. Imagine if the internet and social media didn't have any designs or graphics; if it was all just text without varying colours, font sizes, organisation, or icons. It would be confusing and boring.

Design is what allows us to engage and communicate effectively online. It also makes it easier for us to consume and comprehend information.





Design is not  
just what it looks  
and feels like.  
Design is  
how it works.  
Steve Jobs



## How to be Eco Friendly

5 WAYS TO HELP THE PLANET



### Recycle Products

Recycle items when possible to reduce waste.



### Limit Use of Energy

Turn lights off and unplug chargers that are not being used.



### Reuse Containers

Instead of throwing jars away, repurpose them to store other items.



### Use Products That Last

Buy products that leave a small footprint or no footprint at all.



### Choose Digital

When possible, ask for a digital receipt instead of using paper.



# WHAT IS DIGITAL DESIGN?

## Photos

In the past, photographers held control of the camera. If we wanted to capture a moment, processing and developing images took time. But with the development of smartphones and social media, everyone is a photographer at some level. We can instantly take pictures and share them with the world online.

Quality images are needed for business websites, social media pages, and branding. Images are often used to showcase a product and establish trust, with brands and with individuals.

## Videos

Videos are gradually taking over the digital space, from YouTube to TikTok and Instagram. As discussed in our introduction, video is one of the most prevalent ways users spend their time on the internet.

Right now, brands are emphasising video to create authentic connections and gain trust with their customers and clients, whether it's a 10-second or 10-minute video.



# HOW IS DIGITAL DESIGN IMPORTANT IN THE MODERN WORLD AND WORKPLACE?

Digital design affects how a brand or individual communicates with others. Digital design can make or break how someone presents their resumé when applying for a job. Or it can make their website and social media more appealing to customers. It can establish trust and communicate a particular message.

Any profession centred around online communication, marketing, or creativity requires basic digital design skills. Modern-day design roles allow creative individuals and artists to make a living doing what they love. If they grow and develop their digital design skills, they can open up job opportunities such as a:

- **Graphic designer**
  - Average Australian salary: \$82,852/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$69,177/year
- **Social media specialist**
  - Average Australian salary: \$90,000/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$70,000/year
- **Web designer**
  - Average Australian salary: \$91,019/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$78,500/year
- **User experience (UX) or user interface (UI) designer**
  - Average Australian salary: \$110,000/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$90,000/year
- **Digital marketing specialist**
  - Average and entry-level salary: \$75,000/year
- **Photographer**
  - Average Australian salary: \$82,875/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$66,188/year
- **Videographer**
  - Average Australian salary: \$92,017/year
  - Entry-level salary: \$81,873/year

# ELEMENTS OF VISUAL BRANDING

Organisations combine these elements to establish their brand. In Part I of Social Media Strategy, we discussed how brands use social media to build their presence and connect with their audience. One of the most powerful ways they do this is through visual branding and design.

Elements of a brand's visual design identity include:

## Fonts

Let's take a look at the power of fonts. Notice how the word "bold" looks bolded. This makes it stand out. This is important if you want to draw attention to a word or phrase.

But what if we changed the font entirely?

- **Bold** vs. **Bold**

See the difference? Some fonts can give the same messages an entirely different meaning. Brands will consistently use 1-2 fonts to convey their desired meaning and make it recognisable in their unique style.

## Colours

It works the same with colours. If we were to create content about nature and use designs with **blues**, **greens**, and **browns**, you'd think about the ocean or forest -- even if there weren't any images of an ocean or forest.

But if we were to use designs with **reds**, **oranges**, and **yellows**, you might think more about the sun, desert, or bright flowers. These each evoke a different message and emotion. By carefully choosing and using a consistent palette of colours, brands can communicate intentionally and powerfully with others.



# ELEMENTS OF VISUAL BRANDING

## Logos

Logos combine fonts, colours, and shapes to create an identifier for a brand. You'll recognise some major brands just by seeing their logo, whether the Nike 'swoosh' or the Amazon 'smile.' The goal is for a logo to confirm a brand's identity and become memorable.

## Imagery

What kind of images a brand uses depends on their target audience. For example, should a jewellery company selling gold and diamond jewellery have the same imagery as a jewellery company promoting colourful beaded necklaces? Probably not.

The *first* might attract a wealthier, more mature audience. Imagery with middle-aged women, soft silvers and golds, and other luxury photos will connect with their audience.

The *second* might attract a younger, vibrant audience. They might include imagery of younger individuals wearing bright colours in exciting places.





# ELEMENTS OF VISUAL BRANDING

## Design Best Practices

If you have access to the internet, you can learn to be a digital designer. There are many free and entry-level tools designed to help anyone get started.

Before we dive into these tools, let's review 5 core design principles to help you communicate with power:

### 1. Consistency

With any type of design, it's essential to be consistent. This is what allows you to solidify your message and brand identity.

Suppose you're always using different colours, fonts, and styles. In that case, it will be difficult for your audience to understand what message you're trying to convey.

The best brands use the same 1-2 fonts, 3-5 colours, and imagery style in their digital design to get their message across and become recognisable to their audience.

### 2. Readability > Style

Readability is far more important than style. If someone can't easily read what your design says or what your image includes, they aren't going to receive the message, even if the design is stunning.

Opt for contrasting backgrounds and text colours if you're creating a text-based graphic. For example, dark colours on a light background or vice versa. Also, ensure the text is big enough for users to read with ease.

### 3. Typography

Typography refers to the art and strategy of fonts. We discussed the power of fonts earlier. Here are a few reminders:

- When writing important text, **bold**, *italicise*, or make it bigger.
- Opt for easy-to-read fonts over cursive or eccentric fonts. Ex: This is easy to read, and *this isn't as easy to read.*
- Serifs are any font with decorative lines and structures on the ends. Sans serifs are any fonts without these decorative elements.
- Typically, serifs are viewed as more formal and luxurious. Sans serif fonts are viewed as more modern and minimalist.

# ELEMENTS OF VISUAL BRANDING

## 4. Focal Points

A *focal point* is the subject that draws your attention within a design. Most often, it's whatever's centred, emphasised, or contrasting in a frame.

If you want a specific focal point in an image, video, or graphic, you can bold it, place it in the centre, or find a way to make it stand out from the background.

## 5. Keep it Simple

When it comes to design, less is more. Too much text or decorative elements can make it challenging to know what to focus on. By keeping designs simple, you can communicate your message with power and clarity.



# DESIGN TOOLS

Now, let's put these principles into practice. Let's go over beginner and advanced tools for creating graphics, editing images, and composing videos.

You can capture and create designs simply by having a smartphone with a camera and a computer with the following software:

## Graphic Design

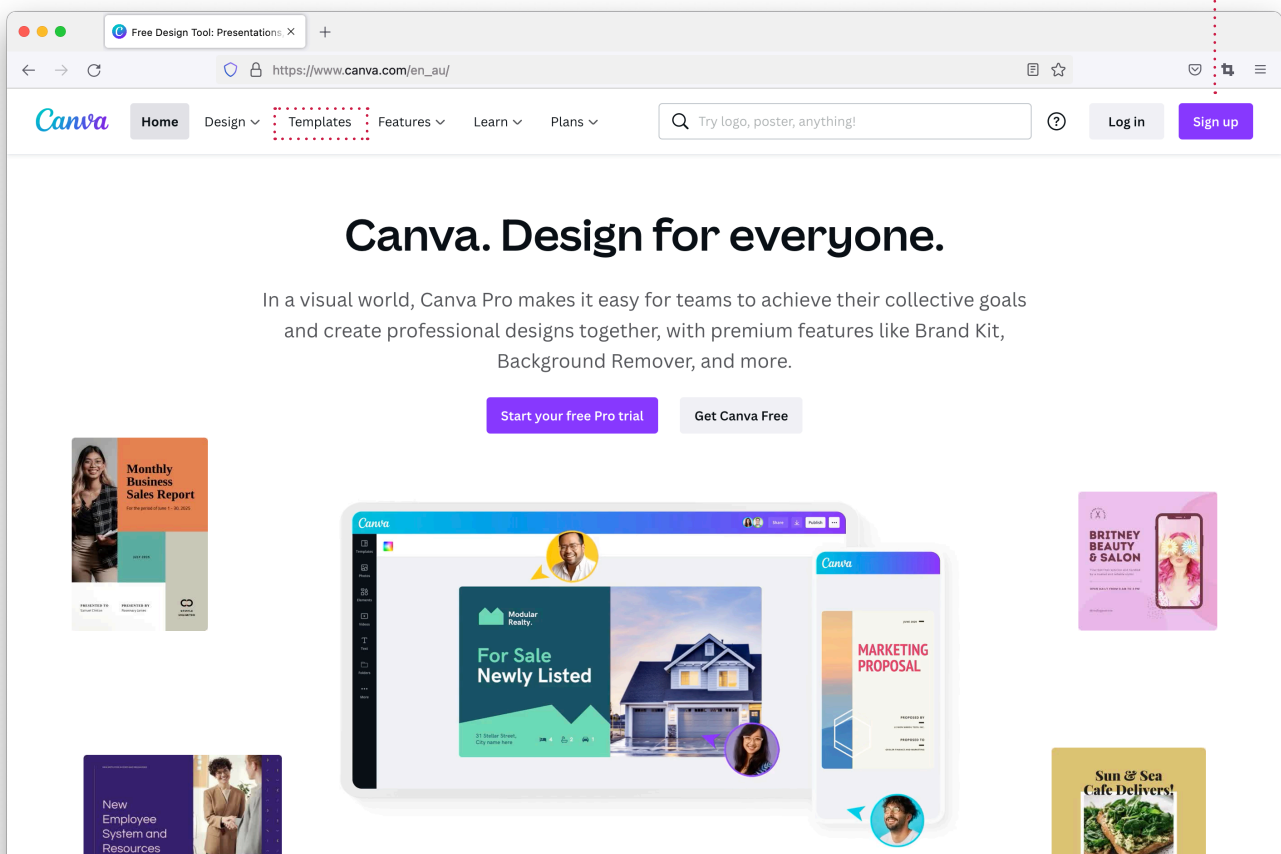
### Beginner: Canva (free)

Canva is one of the most popular tools for beginner designers. They have easy templates you can customise to create your own social media posts, slideshows, resumés, advertisements, brochures, logos, and more. Professionals in basic design roles like social media managers or digital marketing specialists often use Canva for their jobs.

There are free and paid versions of Canva. You can access most of the features with the free version.

### How to use Canva:

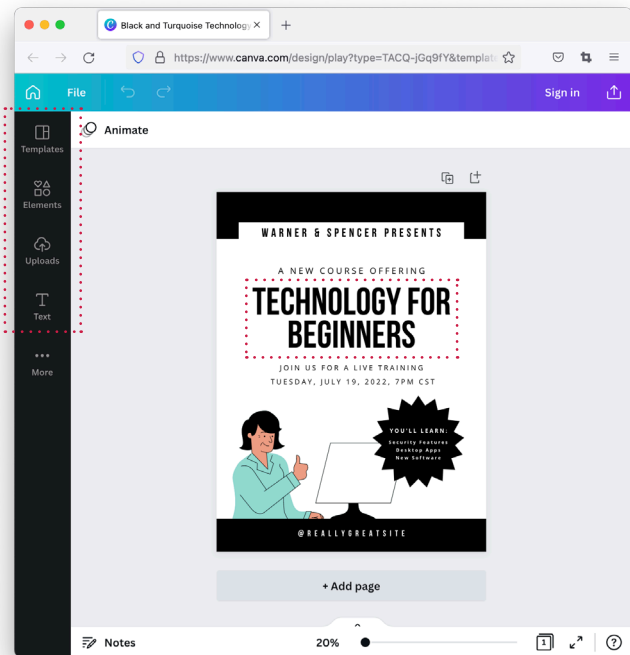
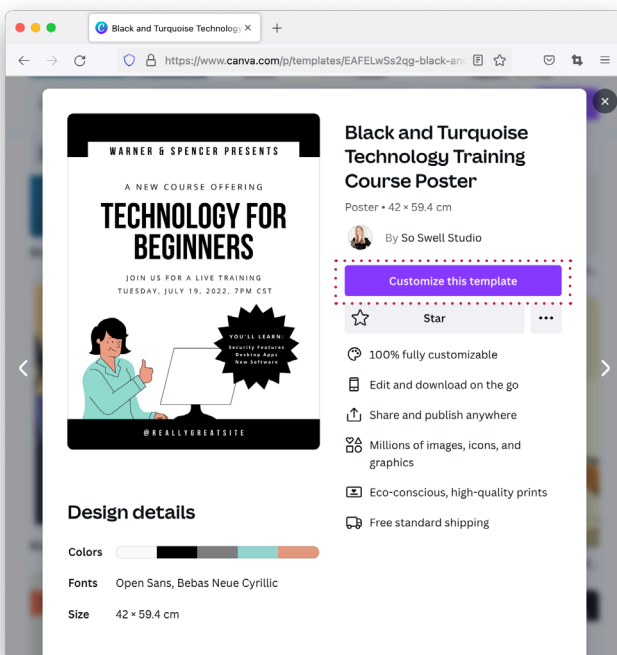
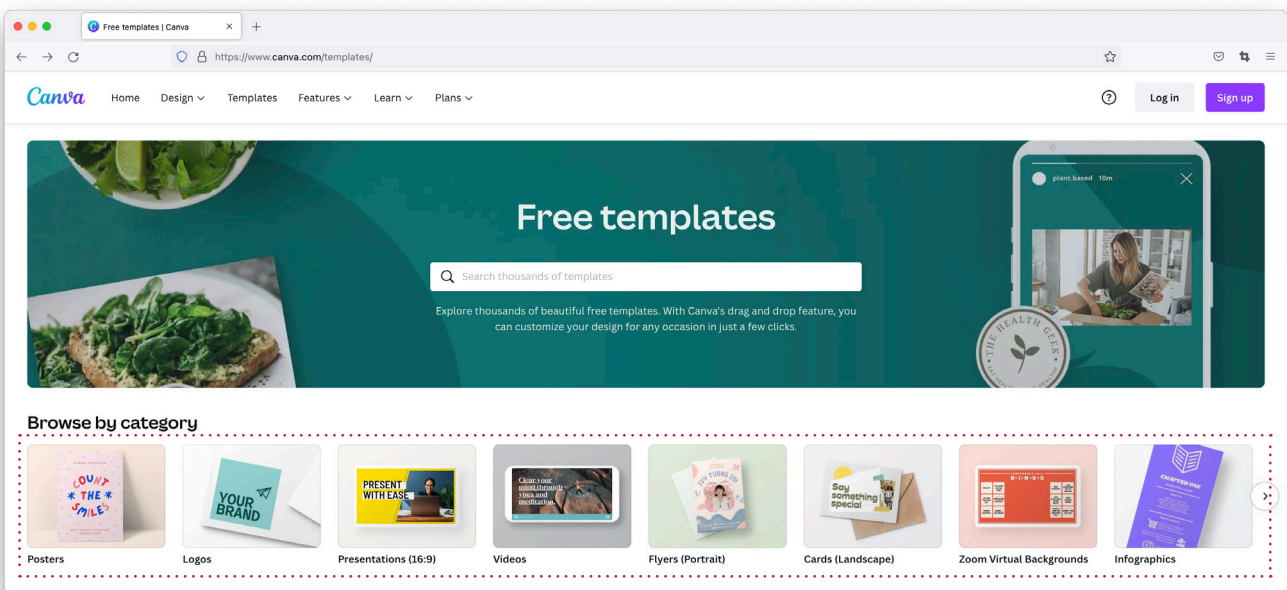
1. Create and log into your [Canva](#) account.
2. Select "Templates" on the left-hand menu bar.



# DESIGN TOOLS

## How to use Canva:

3. Click on the type of design you want to create. You'll see options like Videos, Presentations, Logos, and Instagram Posts.
4. Choose your template design and select "Customise this template."
5. Click on the text and other design elements to customise them. Explore the other features in the left-hand menu bar.



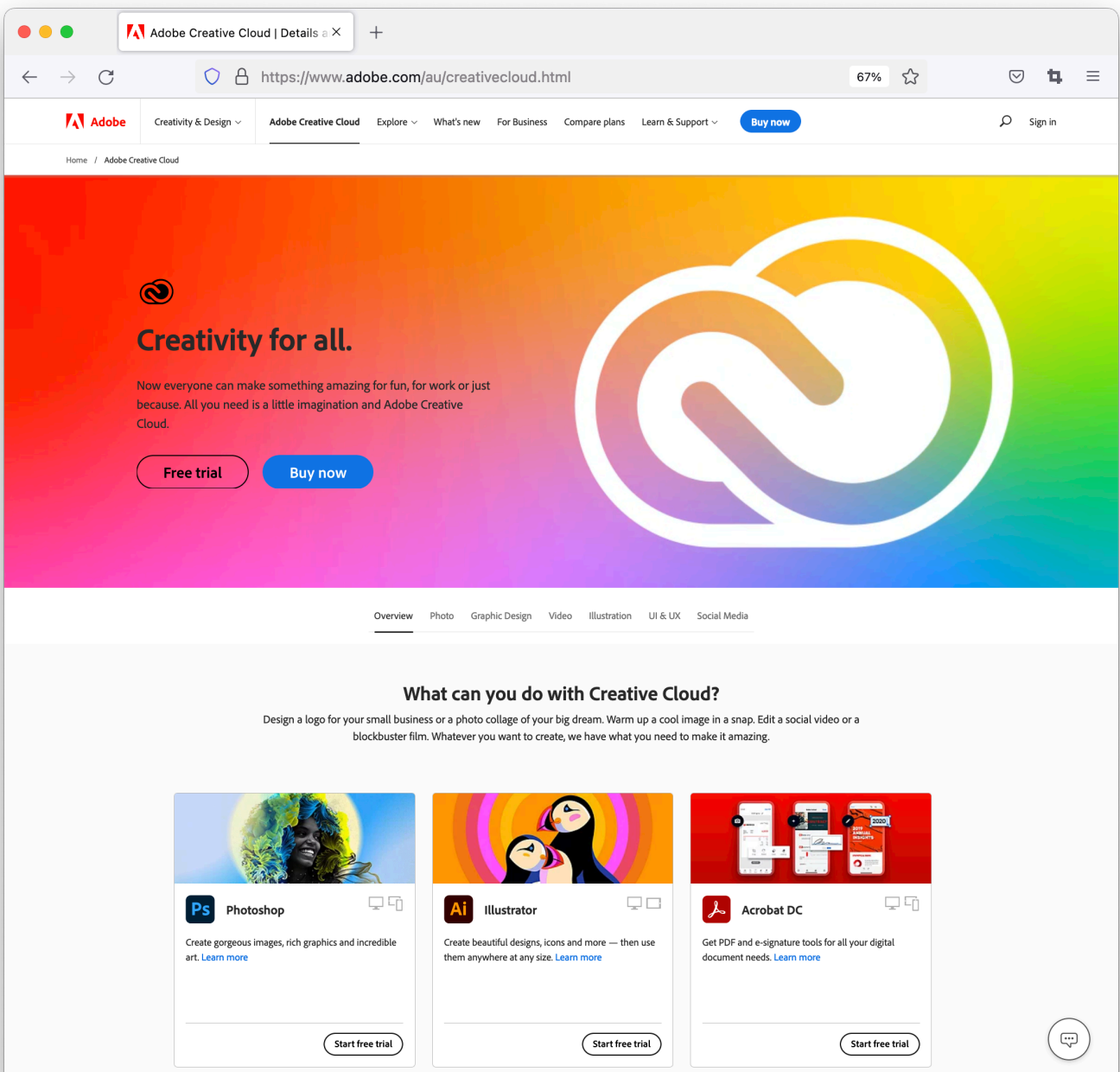
# DESIGN TOOLS

## Advanced: Adobe Illustrator and InDesign (paid)

[Adobe Creative Cloud](#) is the leading digital design software for graphic designers, illustrators, and animators. If a designer is applying for a job, they'll most likely need a complete comprehension of these. There are several Adobe tools, similar to how there are several unique Google tools. Adobe Creative Suite costs, but there are free trials.

*Adobe Illustrator* is the software designed for graphic designers to create original digital designs like logos, graphics, and more. You can create shapes, add text, and edit your visuals with its endless number of tools.

*Adobe InDesign* is used to create designs for print, like magazines, books, and invitations.



# DESIGN TOOLS

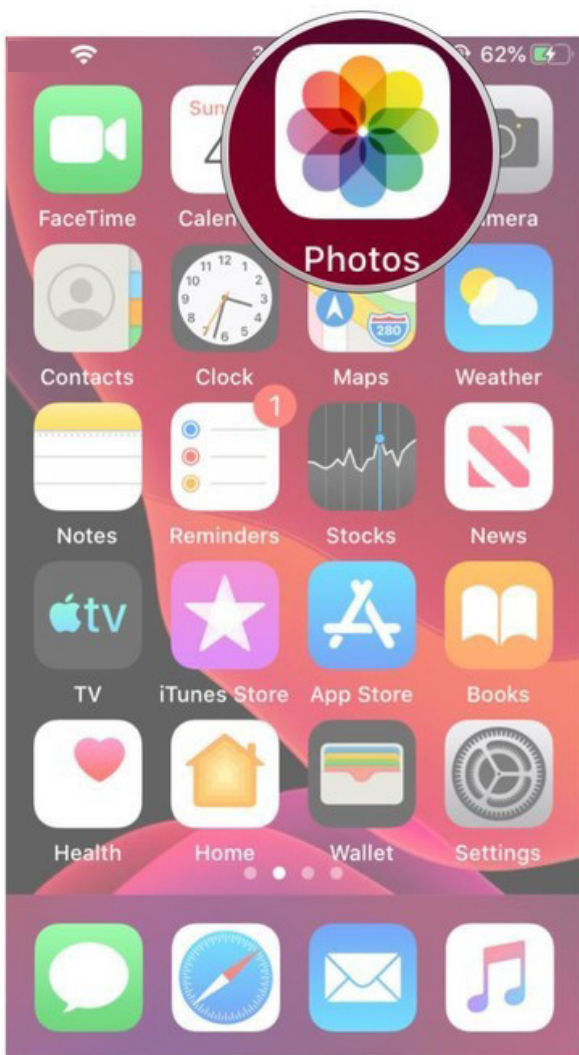
## Photo Editing

### Beginner: Photos App (free)

Every up-to-date smartphone or computer has a basic photo editing app built into its software. You can use these tools to 'crop' or change the size and adjust the lighting and colouring of your image.

Here's how you can start using it:

1. Open your Photos app on your smartphone or computer.
2. Tap on a photo.
3. Select "Edit."
4. Explore the different effects and tools you can apply in the menu bar.
5. Select "Done" to save your changes.



# DESIGN TOOLS

## Advanced: Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom (paid)

Adobe *Photoshop* is a professional tool for editing and retouching graphics and images. You can change colours, add textures, and combine photos into one. Some use it to edit out any blemishes or imperfections in an image. Most graphic designers, photographers, and videographers need to know how to use this software.

Adobe *Lightroom* is a tool photographers use to edit and organise their images. It's less about changing a photo and more about enhancing a photo's colours, hues, and lighting.

The screenshot shows the Adobe Photoshop website homepage. The browser address bar displays <https://www.adobe.com/au/products/photoshop.html>. The page features a purple and blue gradient background. On the left, there is a section titled "Start with Photoshop. Amazing will follow." with a sub-headline "From social posts to photo retouching, banners to beautiful websites, everyday images to total transformations — whatever you dream up, you can do with Photoshop." Below this, it states "Starting at A\$29.99/mo incl. GST." and includes "Free trial" and "Buy now" buttons. On the right, there is a large image of a smartphone displaying a social media post from "eatniceday" featuring a stack of burgers with the text "NICE DAY" and "ESE TAKE" overlaid. Below the main content, there is a section titled "Create anything you can imagine." with the sub-headline "Build your brand, make a meme or explore your inner artist with the all-in-one tool for creativity." This section includes an image of colorful ceramic pots and a profile of Chinzalée Sonami, a ceramic artist, with the text "Design posters and print ads with an artistic eye." and a "Free trial" button.

# DESIGN TOOLS

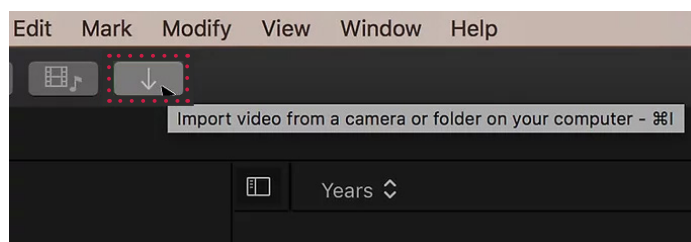
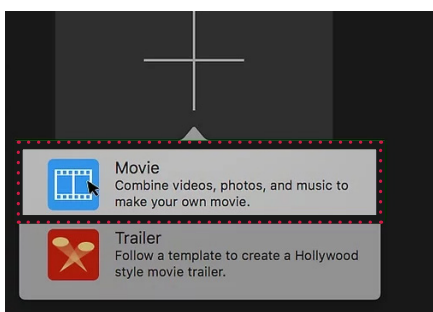
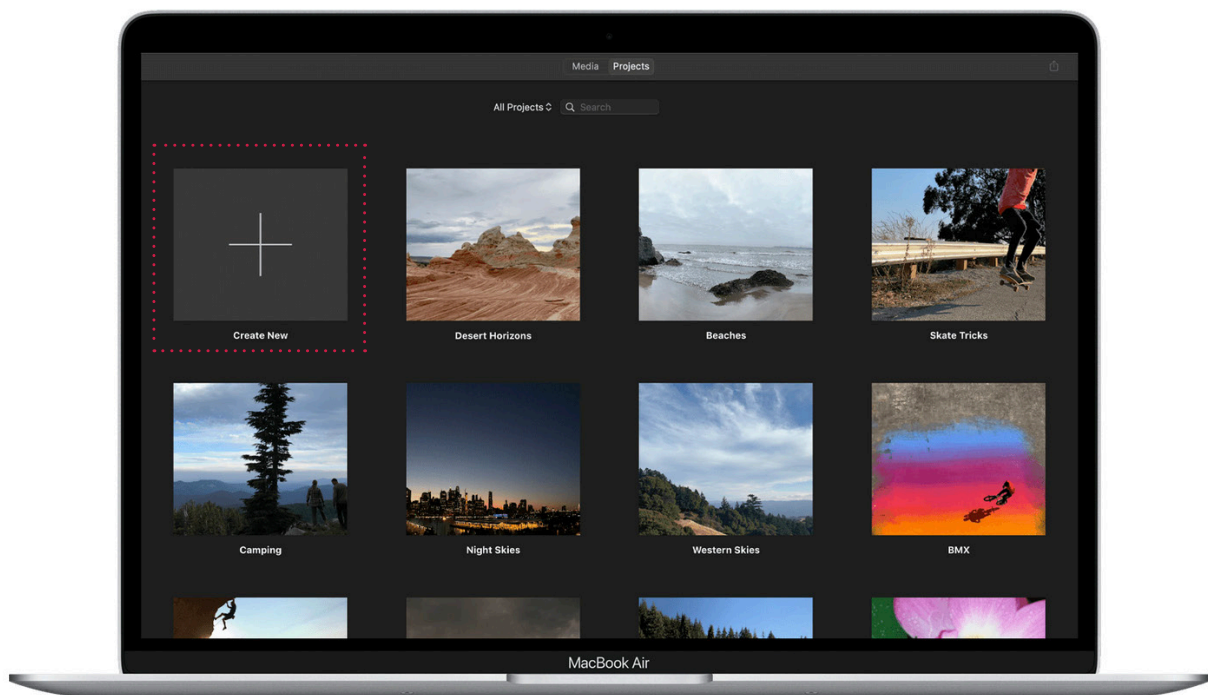
## Video Editing

### Beginner: iMovie or Windows Video Editor (free)

Most smartphones and computers also come with pre-installed video editing software. They're basic and mainly allow users to compile multiple video files into one to create a sort of slideshow or mini movie. You can also use these tools to add music or edit other sounds in the videos.

#### How to use [iMovie](#) (Mac):

1. Open your iMovie app on your smartphone or computer.
2. Select "Create New."
3. Tap "Movie."
4. Select "Import Media" to upload images and videos from your device.
5. Browse the menu bars to add text, audio, or other video effects.

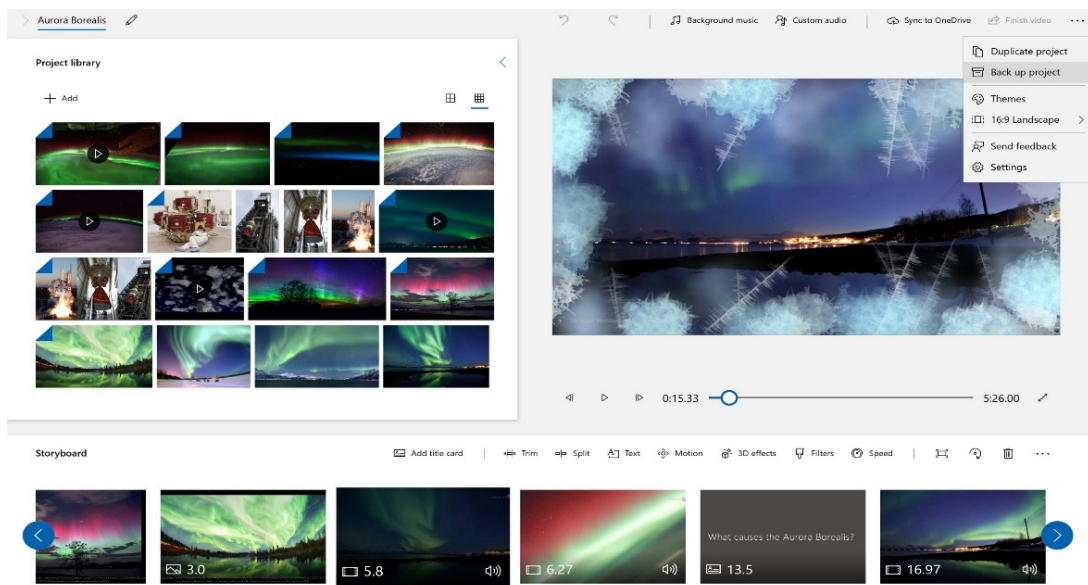




# DESIGN TOOLS

How to use [Windows Video Editor](#) (Windows):

1. Open the Video Editor app from your Start menu.
2. Select "New video project."
3. Type in a name for your video and select "OK."
4. Select "Add" to upload images and videos from your device.
5. Browse the menu bars to add text, audio, or other video effects.



## Advanced: Adobe Premiere Pro (paid)

Adobe Premiere Pro is a software program specifically designed for video editing. Professionals use it for videos shared on TV and in movies, social media, and advertisements. It can be used to combine video clips, create transitions, and virtually every other video editing feature needed to perfect videos.



# DESIGN TOOLS

## Screen Recording

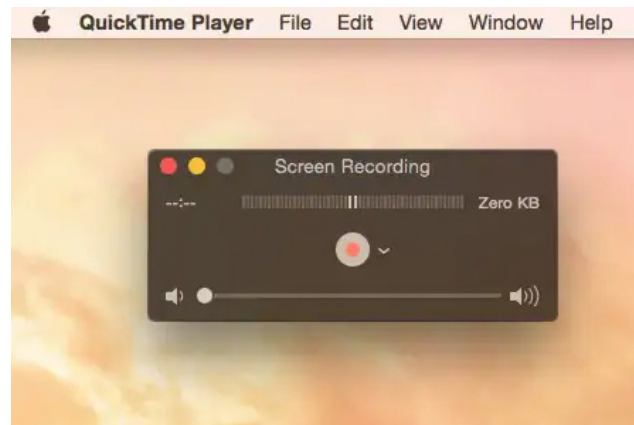
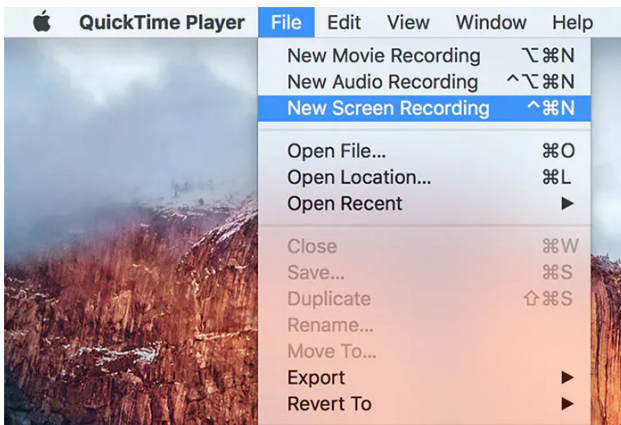
One more digital tool, and then we'll move on to our next Module. As a Volunteer Manager, you may need to record your presentations. This way, lessons can be rewatched and reused to solidify learning.

The best way to do this is to "screen record." Screen recording is a feature that allows you to record what's on your computer screen and save it. With certain settings, you can also record the audio of your video simultaneously, so at the end, you're left with a visual and audio recording of your virtual learning session.

Here's how to screen record on a Mac vs. Windows computer:

### Screen Record on a Mac: QuickTime Player

1. Open QuickTime Player from your Applications folder.
2. Select "File"> "New Screen Recording" from the menu bar.
3. Click the arrow to the right of the Record button. Select the microphone if you also want to record the lesson's audio.
4. Click the Record button.
5. Click anywhere on the screen to begin recording.
6. Stop recording by clicking the "Stop" button.



# DESIGN TOOLS

## Screen Record on a Windows: Microsoft Stream

1. Open Microsoft Stream from your Applications folder.
2. Select "Create"> "Record screen" from the menu bar.
3. Select "Allow Microsoft Stream to use your camera and microphone."
4. Click the Record button.
5. Select how much of your screen you want to share.
6. Hit the "Share audio" checkbox to include audio.
7. Select "Next" to stop and view your recording.

