



by Linda Sattgast

Design Beautiful Pages

Lesson 01-01: Photos for Minimal Design

I usually start with an explanation of the featured design and then talked about which photos go well with that design, but I decided to start with the photos because unless you understand the kind of photos used in a minimal design, you won't understand the design.

Minimal Design

Since Minimal designs use only one small photo, and there's very little else for decoration, that photo is crucial to the page. It should be a **stellar** photo.

Ideally the photo has ONE focus. There's usually just one person or flower or animal in the photo. Sometimes there's two, but, if you have more than that, I suggest you look at a different design.

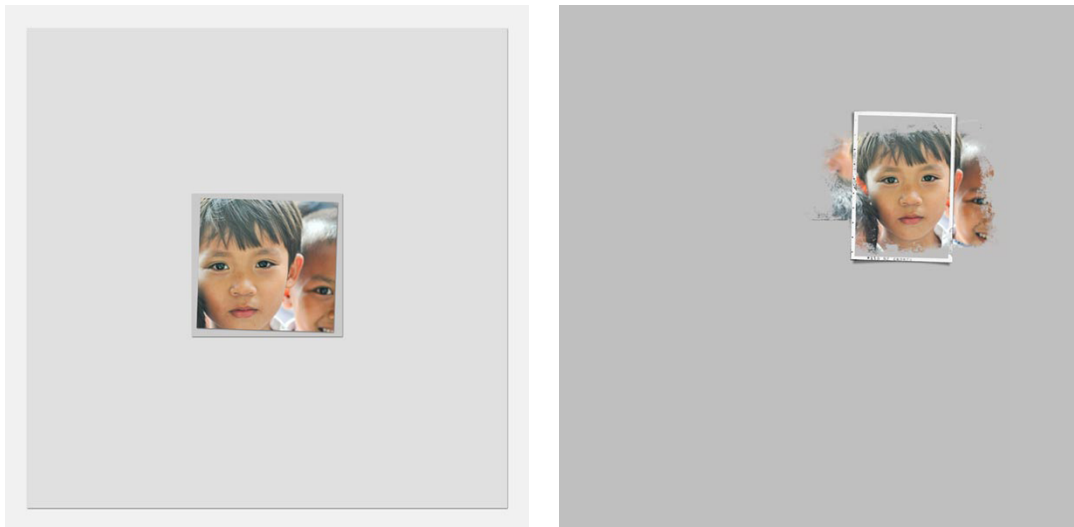
That photo should evoke some kind of emotion from the viewer.

Choosing Photos For Minimal Design

Avoid group photos. One, or at the most two, people or pets or objects is ideal.



Even if you single out one individual, it's hard to avoid distractions from other people in the photo.

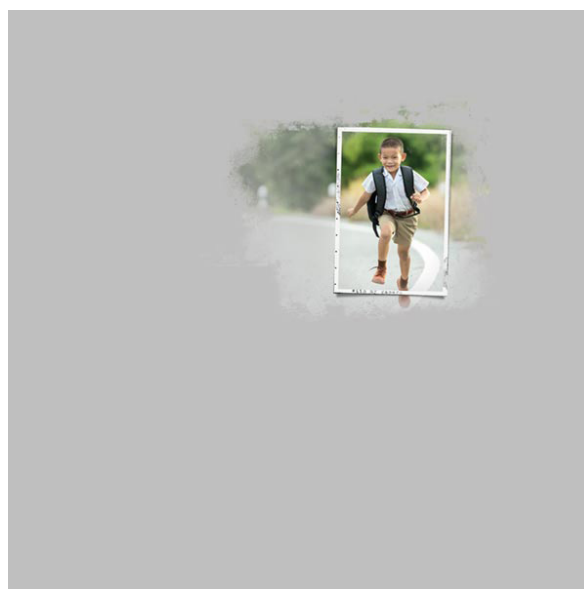


The Ideal Photo

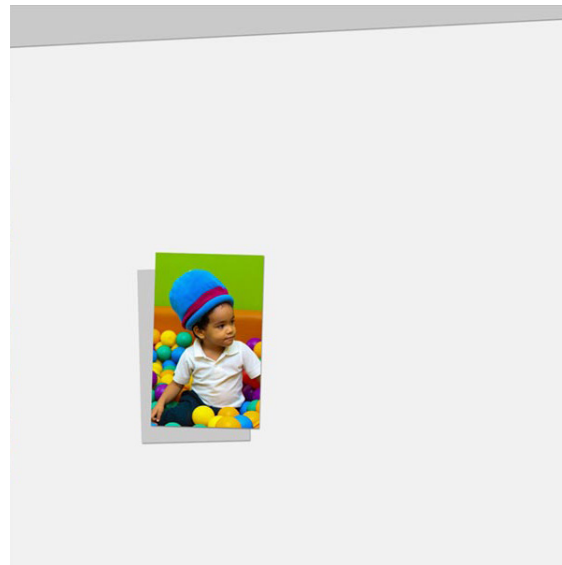
The ideal photos has one focus and no distractions.



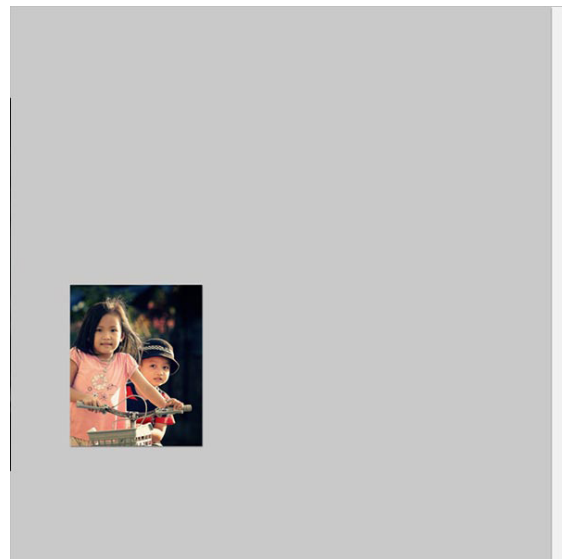
Here's how I might place this on a minimal design page. The photo almost designs the page for me.



Not every photo we take is ideal. Sometimes you can crop the photo and make it work. But this particular photo is a bit mediocre because the child's expression is kind of ho-hum. It still works, though for a minimal page design.



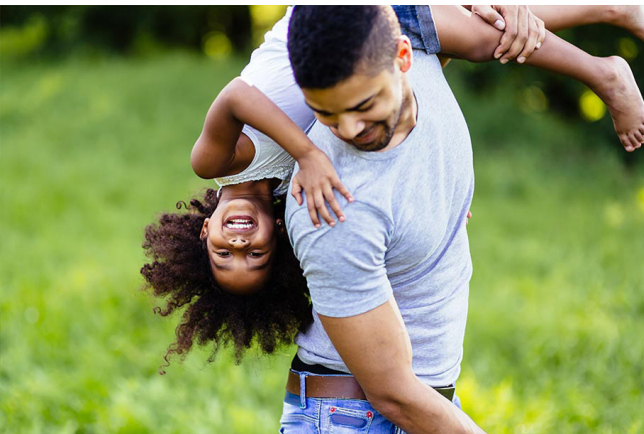
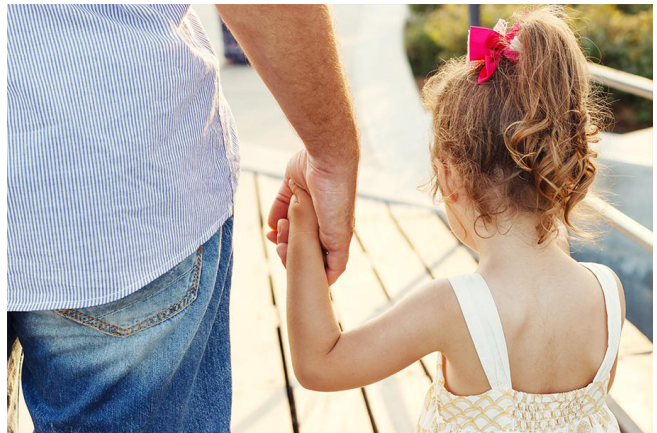
Better to start with a great photo and then begin to build your page!

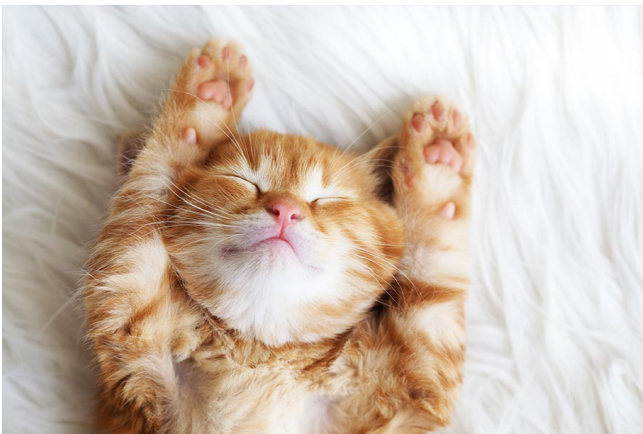


Remember that photos used for minimal design are not every day, run-of-the-mill photos. Save your minimal design pages for extraordinary photos with a single focus. If you try to use an ordinary photo with this design, you'll more than likely have trouble being inspired, and it's very hard to make a minimal page without being inspired! With minimal design we want to focus on one beautiful thing, or expression of someone we love, or something that inspires us.

Minimal Photos Evoke Emotion

Minimal photos should evoke some kind of emotion. See if you can identify the emotion you get with the following photos.





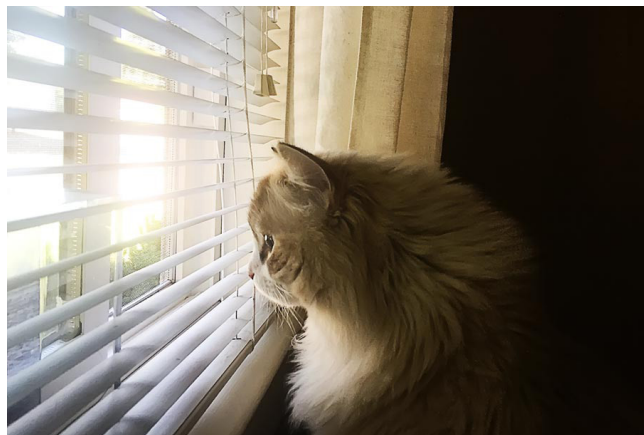
A Few Tips

- Animals are great subjects for minimal photos, but make sure the photo is good. Don't choose average photos of pets for this design.
- If the photo is of a person, he or she can have an expression that you can't fully interpret, and that's OK. Just like a poem, a minimal photo can leave you guessing about the meaning but still tug at your heart.
- The size of the photo on your page is going to be small, or medium at most. It will be the only photo on the page, so the photo must be very good. Don't skimp here. Scrutinize the photo to see if it needs fixing—lighting, contrast, color, etc.—and do it. This photo definitely needs fixing. If you don't know how to fix a photo, check out my class on Fixing Photos and Enhancing Photos.

Image before fixing:



Image after fixing:

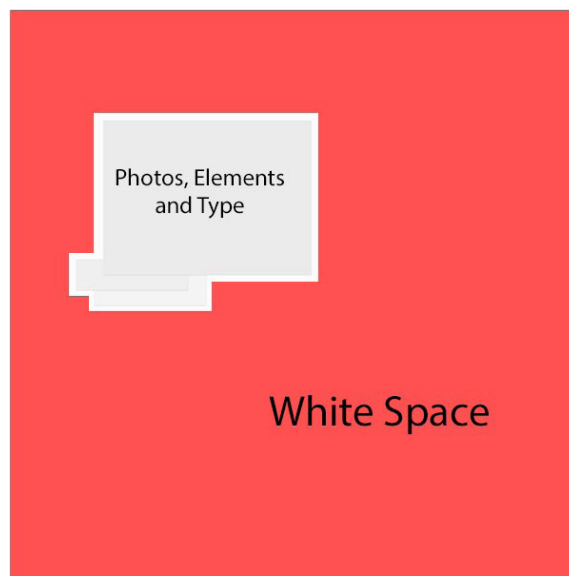


Once you discover your very special photo and you've done your best to fix or enhance it, then you're ready to think about making a minimally designed page with a lot of impact. But you can't do that if you don't understand white space, so our next topic is about white space.

Lesson 01-02: The Magic of White Space

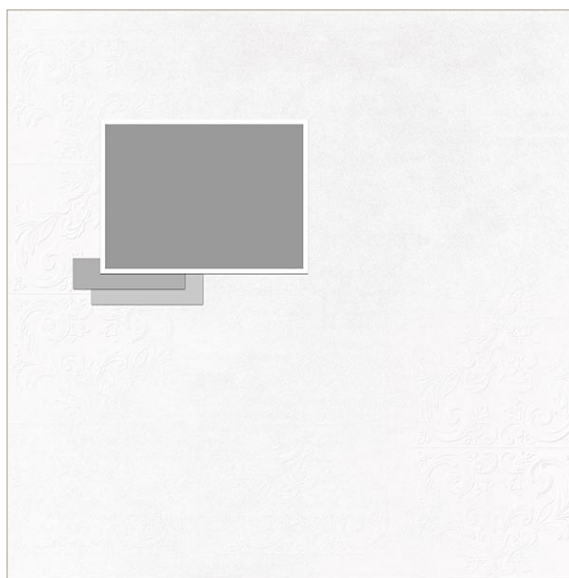
A Minimal page design is dependent on white space, so let's take a look at what that means.

White space doesn't refer to color. It's the part of the page that does not contain photos, elements, or type. On scrapbook pages it's customary to have paper in the empty white space.

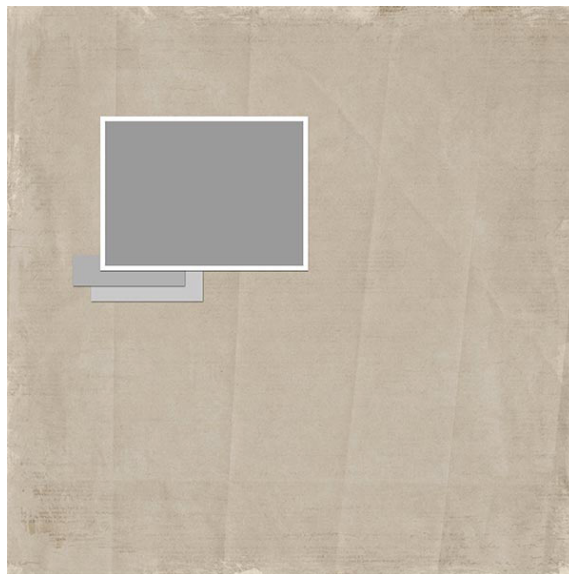


Sometimes the paper is actually white, but it's more common to use a solid neutral color as the background paper for a Minimal Design.

Kit: Give Thanks by Anna Aspnes

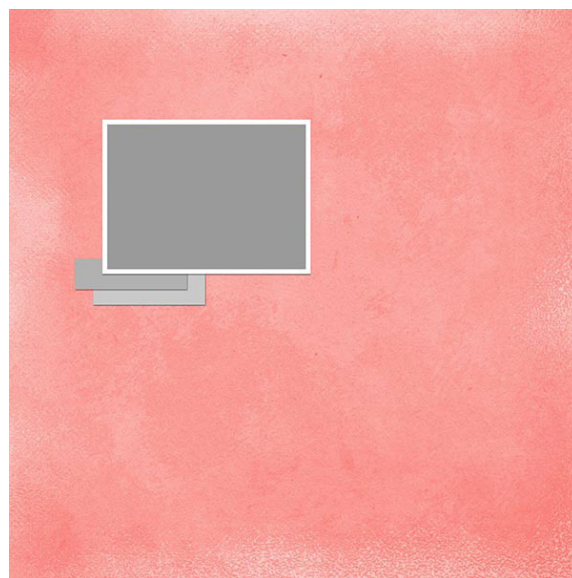


Kit: Count The Ways by Joanne Brisebois



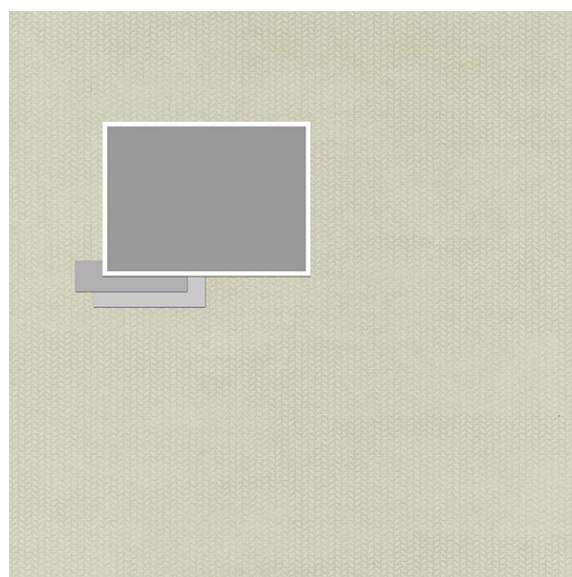
The background paper can be any color, though, as long as it keeps the focus on the one stellar photo.

Kit: A Love Story by Krystal Hartley

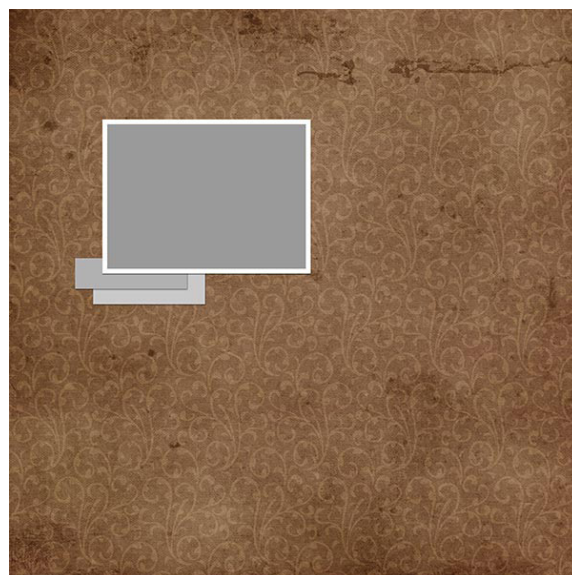


With Minimal Design you may occasionally see lightly patterned paper for the White Space. Here are four examples of patterned paper that might work well, as long as you have the right photos to go with them.

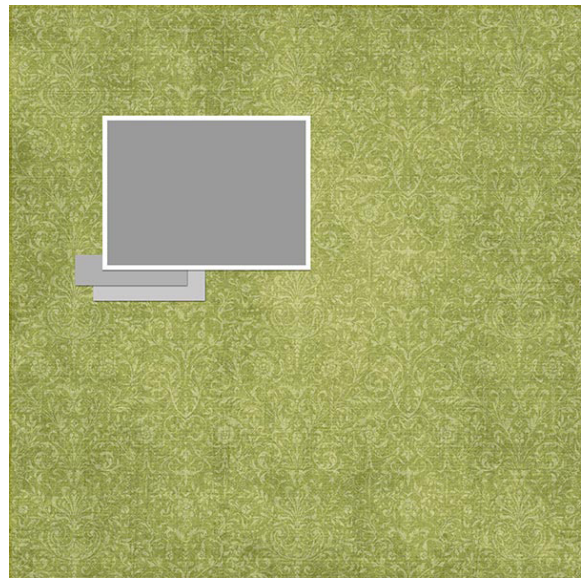
Kit: Give Thanks by Anna Aspnes



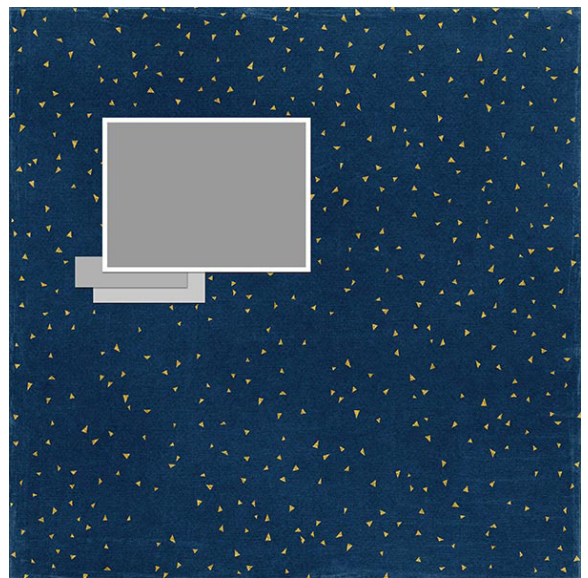
Kit: Beautiful You by Kristin Cronin-Barrow



Kit: Falling In Love by Ashalee Wall

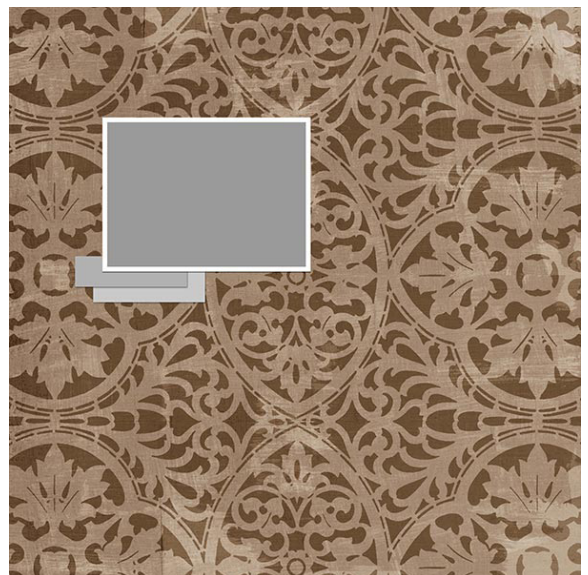


Kit: Make A Wish by Kim Broedelet

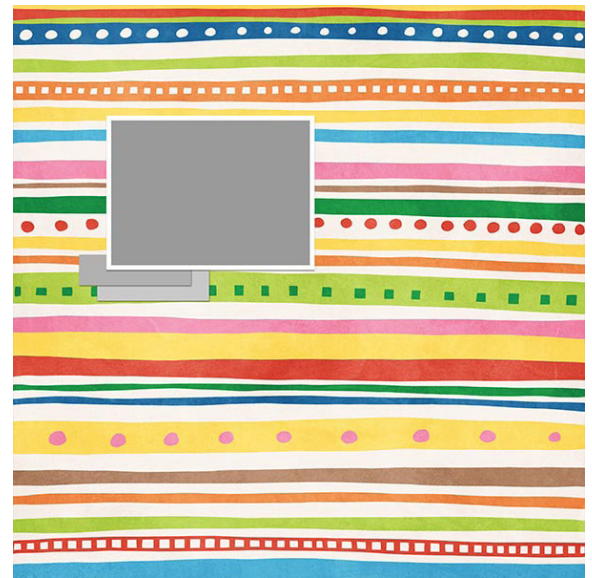


Don't use a highly patterned paper for a Minimal Design. The more distinct the pattern and the more colorful it is, the more attention it draws, and the whole purpose of a Minimal page design is to make you stare at the ONE photo as though it was the most important object on the page!

Kit: Lucky Ducky by Miss Mint



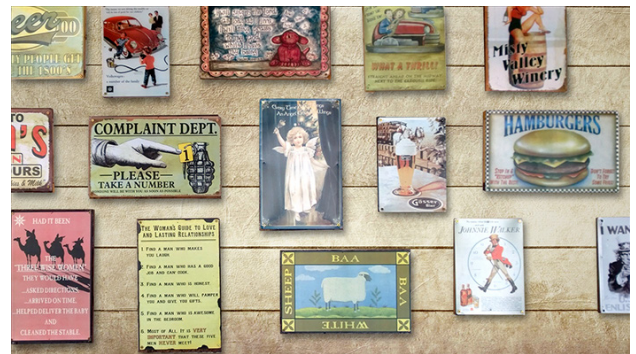
Kit: Weekend At Home by Kate Hadfield



The Logic Of white Space: Analogy 1

You may look at a minimal page and think it's wasteful to leave all that empty space. To help you understand the logic behind a Minimal Design, let me give you an analogy.

Let's say you have a lot of vintage plaques hanging on a single wall in your home. When you glance at the wall you may see the plaques as a group that forms a pattern on your wall rather than individual plaques. If you happen to be standing by the wall and have a little time, you might look through the plaques glancing from one to the other.



But now let's say that there was only one plaque on the wall and it had been carefully restored to most of its original beauty. Even if you were just walking by you would probably notice the little angel waving at you and perhaps smile to yourself. You might even stop and really look at it. All the empty space on the wall points to the one item that IS on the wall. It makes you pay closer attention to that one item.



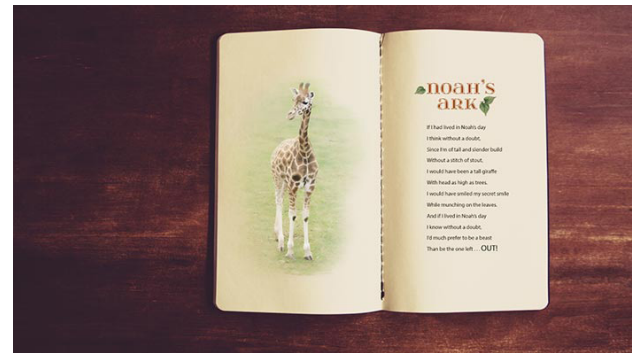
The Logic Of white Space: Analogy 2

Here's another analogy. A book has lots of type on a page, so in order to draw your attention to a phrase on a page you must do something to make it stand out, such as make the words bold or italicize them. You can also draw attention to a section of a page with a Title or subtitle.



But a poem? We often give a whole page to a single poem! Look at all the white space around this poem. Aren't we wasting a lot of the page by leaving it blank? Oh, no. We understand that a poem is special. The white space and the format of the poem tells us that it's special. The white space helps the reader focus on the poem in order to relish it and ponder the meaning.

Poem by Linda Sattgast



Most scrapbook page designs act like a chapter in a book. A page may be telling a single story, but there are often many photos and elements to draw your attention.

Credits

Moving Mom

Photos by Linda and Charlie Sattgast

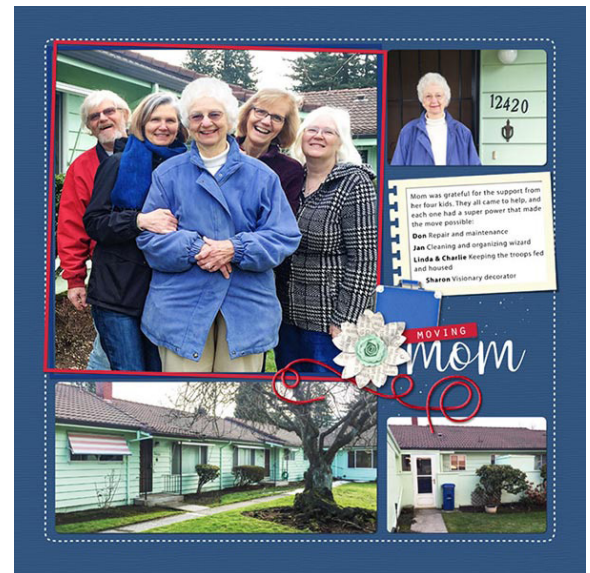
Page by Linda Sattgast

Kit: WorldTravel by HGD by LaurieAnn

Flower: Make A Wish by Kim Broedelet

String: Sweet Comforts by SMJ Designs

Fonts: Caleigh, Myriad Pro, and Orator Std



A Minimal Page Design is like a poem. The photo is special, and we say it's special by giving it lots of white space and thus making it the center of attention.

Credits

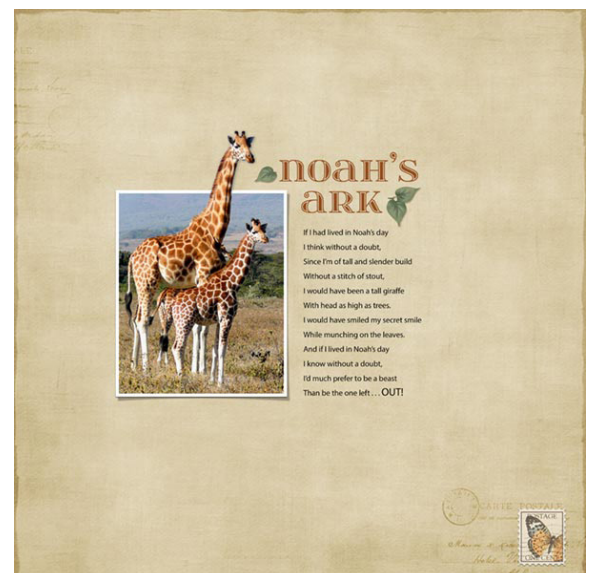
Photo: Pixaby.com

Page and poem by Linda Sattgast

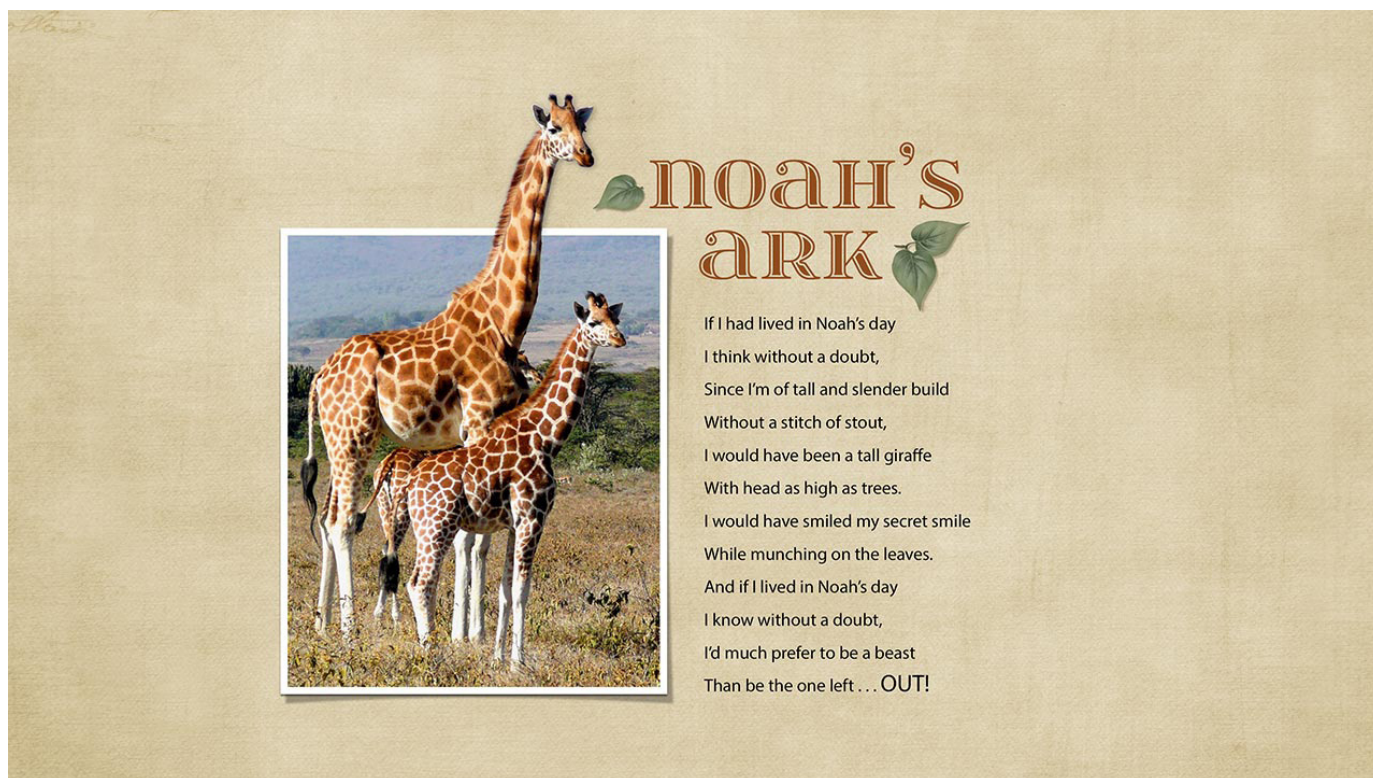
Paper: Winter Wonderland by Elise Hansen

Elements: Recollection by Joanne Brisebois, TheGraphicsFairy, and A Love Story by Krystal Hartley

Fonts: Myriad Pro and itsadzokeS01



Don't worry that the photo will be too small to see it well. In a gallery-sized image the photo can look pretty small, but when you print your page, the photo will be plenty large enough to enjoy.



Here's another example. Even though the entire design takes up less than a quarter of the scrapbook page, you can still see the photo fairly well.

Credits

Photo: Stock

Page by Linda Sattgast

Kits: APP Give Thanks and Family by Anna Aspnes, Christmas Wishes by Kristin

Cronin-Barrow, A Love Story by Krystal Hartley

Fonts: Amigirl Script and Orator Std



Here's the approximate viewing size once the 12x12 page is printed. There's absolutely no problem seeing and appreciating the image!



I know that some of you are still going to cringe at the idea of all that empty space. You'll want to do SOMETHING to fill that space!

It's perfectly fine to add a few tasteful decorations to a Minimal Page. In fact, we'll talk more about that in the next lesson on how to create a Minimal Page design, and Jen White will give even more ideas in her Finishing Touches video. So, again, don't be afraid of white space!

Now that you understand the kind of photo to use and the principle that white space forces the viewer to focus on that spectacular photo, you're ready to learn about the BIG effect of Minimal Design in the next lesson!

"If you find yourself staring at a photo because it's so amazing, then do it a favor and give it plenty of white space!"

~ Linda Sattgast ~

Lesson 01-03: How To Create A Minimal Design

In this lesson we'll learn the four kinds of Minimal Design pages you can create.

Classic Minimal Page

Classic Minimal Design focuses on one extraordinary small photo by using a large amount of white space and reducing decoration to a bare minimum.

This definition gives the three keys to creating an eye-stopping Minimal design page:

- Choose a fabulous, focused, and compelling small photo.
- Use white space to draw attention to your great photo.
- Use a spare, artistic approach to decorating your page. Why? because doing so will keep the focus on the photo, not on a clever display of elements.

Since we've already gone over the first two keys in prior lessons, in this lesson we'll focus on the third key: **Decorate Sparingly**. We'll look at examples of Classic Minimal Design that fulfill all three of these key components. Barb Brookbank, the "Queen of Minimal Design," has graciously allowed me to share some of her stellar pages to demonstrate the Classic Minimal design.

Look at the incredible amount of white space on this page! Even the color of the paper is white, and there's hardly anything on it. Just a bit of texture. Wow. My eye goes straight to that adorable squirrel!

To dress up her page Barb used a double frame with custom shadows and some overlay shapes that are fast and easy to use. And she used one journaling strip. Does it need anything more? I don't think so.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank
Art Play Palette Family' by Anna Aspnes



This page by Barb uses a watercolor technique for the photo, so the edges are irregular. A mask would create a similar effect. Again, Barb used a lightly textured white paper for her background, but you can see the edge of a blue paper behind it. This adds a subtle frame to the page.

Barb has a few more elements on this page, but they're the subtle kind of elements. It looks like she may have masked away some of the upper left corner and lower right corner of the white paper because it appears to be fading away there revealing a bit of the blue paper below it.

This page is so peaceful and quiet. Don't you just love the feeling you get when you look at it?

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank
Watercolor Exposé tutorial by Jen White
Cardstock - Blank Canvas by Susie Roberts
Gromments, brad from Under the Pier by Kellie Mize
Brushstrokes from Give Thanks Give Thanks by Anna Aspnes
Brushstrokes from Art Play Palette Family ArtPlay Palette Family by Anna Aspnes
String from 4 Seasons by Micheline Martin
Font: Arsenale White

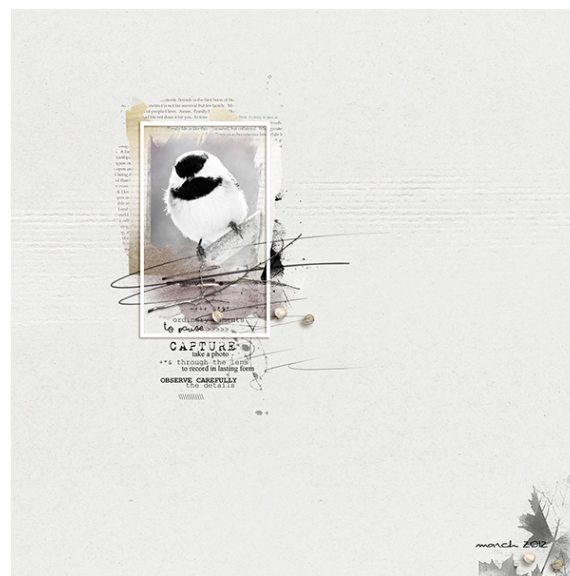


Here's another example by Barb. We're seeing some of the same ideas as the last two: a light, almost white background, a frame, doodles, a few very small 3D elements, a mask-like overlay, word art, and a small overlay in the corner along with the date.

Notice that Barb has used a very light background on all three of these examples.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteJardinier_SolidPaper1
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteFall2_8
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteFamily_Transfer6
 AASPN_FotoWordMix1_Capture
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteFall2_10
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteFall2_FotoBlendz
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteFamily_Branch
 AASPN_ArtPlayPaletteJardinier_Seeds
 Stroke Outline: Mine



It's perfectly fine, though to use color as I've done here. I desaturated the photo except for the pocket on his shirt. The pocket matches two elements of the same color, the button and the Bingo card, creating a repetition of three red items. The photo has a simple white stroke outline and drop shadow, so there's not a fancy mask or artistic frame here. It's pretty plain. The only other element used is some word art and a circular stamp.

The background paper isn't white, and yet we still call it white space. Really, the only unusual thing about this page is the strip of patterned paper across the top, which you don't see very often on a minimal page. But it goes quite well with the page, and the photo is still the main focus when I look at the page.

Credits

Photo: Stock
 Template: Design Beautiful Pages
 Page by Linda Sattgast
 Kit: Celebrate by Julie Billingsley
 Word Art: Perdiem by One Little Bird
 Stamp: Photographie by Joanne Brisebois



Not every page is highly artistic. It can be just plain fun and bright and cheery. Here I repeated colors for impact:

- There's red in the photo, the flag, and the paper strip
- There's also blue in the photo and two words in the title are blue.
- And then there's Black in the spatter in the lower corner and on two sections of the title.

Notice the mask behind the photo. A small mask like this with paper clipped to it makes a great anchor for a photo on a minimal page design.

But the photo itself is the main attraction for this page, and what a great photo it is!

Credits

Photo: Stock

Page and flag by Linda Sattgast

Kits: APP Give Thanks and APP My Camera by Anna Aspnes, 4 Seasons by Micheline Martin, Make A Wish by Kim Broedelet, and Carefree by Amanda Heimann

Font: Ostrich Sans



Not every photo will be a happy one, so if your photo is sad, make the page feel sad by the treatment and placement of your photo and the sparse and somber feel of the background. This quote is something my daughter said: “Mommy, this soup is getting to be not gooder and not gooder and NOT GOODER!”

Now that you have an idea what a classic Minimal Page Design looks like, let's look at three additional minimal styles that go a bit beyond the classic Minimal page.

Credits

Photo: Stock

Page by Linda Sattgast

Paper from Count The Ways by Joanne Brisebois and Love You Always by Amanda Rockwell

Stamp from Photographie by Joanne Brisebois

Journaling strip by Linda Sattgast

Font: 1942 report



Minimal Plus Small Cluster

I call the second style of minimal page Minimal Plus Small Cluster. This design adds a few more elements than the typical minimal page, but far fewer elements than you would see in a “Cluster Dump” around the photo.

With this expanded definition of a minimal design the photo tends to have more elements next to it than a classic minimal page, and it might even have elements that are elsewhere on the page—usually along one or two sides.

Avoid adding elements that might make the page look more like a Mirror page design.

Although this page does have a couple of repeating elements, it isn't formatted like a traditional mirror page, so it looks more like a minimal page.

Credits

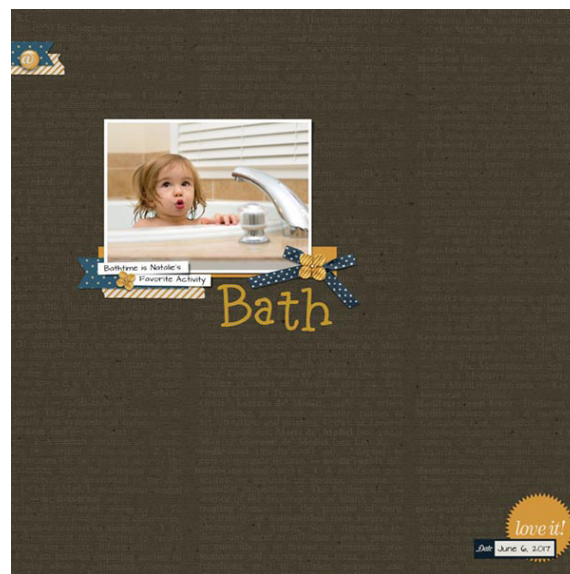
Photo: Stock

Page by Linda Sattgast

Paper: Me Personally by Taylor Made and Simple Joys by Anita Designs

Elements: Big Ideas One Little Bird

Font: Architect's Daughter and Carnation



This page has elements on both sides of the photo, almost like a line design, but the sections don't connect. Note the faint mask of type under the photo and along each edge. Can you see the repetition of red and yellow?

Credits

Photo: Stock

Template: Design Beautiful Pages

Page by Linda Sattgast

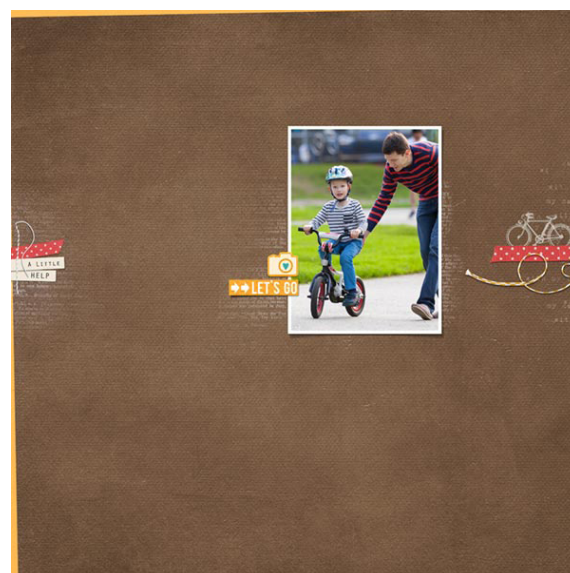
Kit: Such A Trip by Mommyish

Type Overlays: APP My Camera and APP Family by Anna Aspnes, and All

About A Boy by Shawna Clingerman

Stitching: All Stitched Up by Susie Roberts

Font: Orator Std



The third example combines paper strips with a mat and a couple of round elements. The photo is popped up a bit, and, again, we have a mask for an anchor.

Credits

Photo: Stock

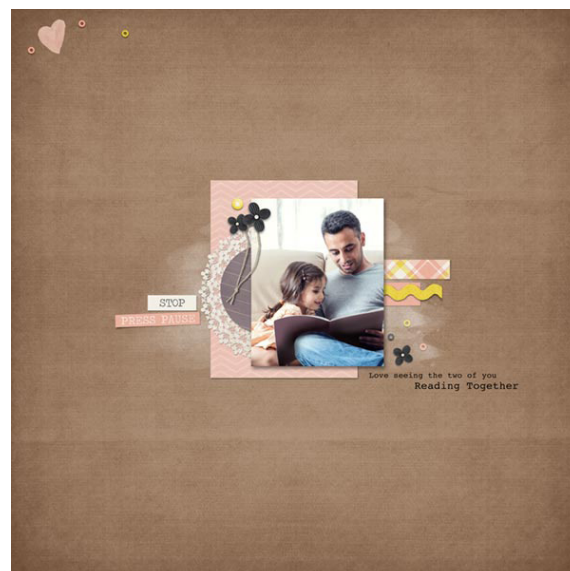
Template: Design Beautiful Pages

Page by Linda Sattgast

Kit: Press Pause Blue Heart Scraps

Paint: Seaside Vacation by Digital Scrapper Designs

Font: Courier



Minimal Plus Type

Another style of Minimal page is Minimal Plus Type. This design adds a journaling block tightly connected to the photo. The photo remains small to maintain the all important white space characteristic of a minimal design.

Let's look at a few examples of this. On this page, the background is bright and colorful but the focus is the photo and then the type. It still looks and feels like a minimal page, but there's more than a title or a simple line or two of text. There's actually a block of journaling. This journaling block is generally connected with the photo.

Credits

Photo by Michael Mosimann

Page by Linda Sattgast

Paper: Make A Wish Kim Broedelet

Elements: APP Give Thanks and APP My Camera by Anna Aspness

Font: Orator Std and Jenna Sue



The next few page examples are by Barb Brookbank. On this page I love how the type is almost circular, but along the photo edge it's straight. It also has a few elements, but overall it's a classic minimal design with a journaling block added.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank

Photographie by Joanne Brisebois

WordArt: AASPN_FotoWordMix1_Observe

Font: Rubia's Tiny Script



Here's another example by Barb. I love the artistic look of this page with the mask background and the stroke outline frame! And, of course, we have the type, which, in this case, is more of a list of favorite things.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank

ArtPlay Palette Family by Anna Aspnes

ArtPlay Palette Give Thanks by Anna Aspnes

Font: DJB Gimme Space by Darcy Baldwin



Again, this is by Barb and is a perfect example of Minimal Plus Type. Up until now all the type has been to the side of the image.

Credits

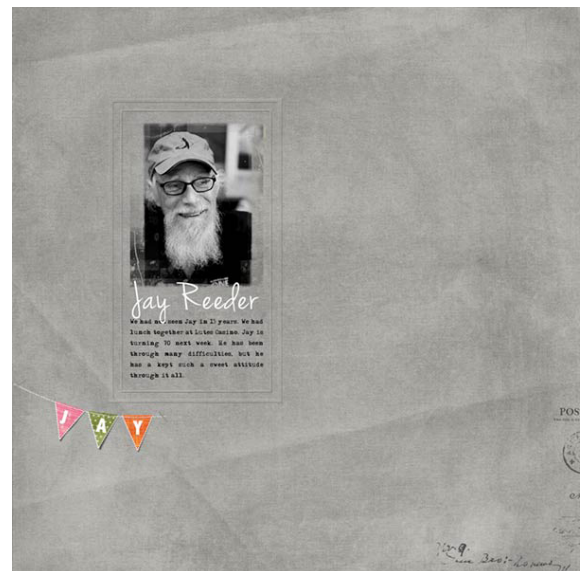
Page by Barb Brookbank
Double Duty Elements Video Tutorial by Linda Sattgast
Autumn Days Kit by Kristin Cronin-Barrow
Font: Scrap Casual



Here's an example of mine where I put the journaling block below the image. This creates a line effect, and that's fine. A page can be both a minimalist page and a line page.

Credits

Photo and page by Linda Sattgast
Paper: Being Me by Eva Kipler
Mask; Me Personally by Taylor Made
Postcard and type overlays by Susie Roberts and The Graphic Fairy
Banner by Linda Sattgast using paper from Thankfully by Krystal Hartley
Stitching from Happy Harvest by Susan Bartolini
Staples from Travel Album by Digital Scrappier Designs
Fonts: Adler and Jenna Sue



Expanded Minimal Page

And finally, let's look at an Expanded Minimal Page. These pages are similar to Classic Minimal Pages, but the photo is a little larger, which reduces the amount of white space. These Minimal pages may also contain type or more elements, like the two previous style examples. So it can be a combination of the three previous styles, only a little larger.

But it still retains the “minimal” feel.

Let's look at three examples by Barb Brookbank. This is a little bigger than we're used to seeing with minimal pages, but it still has a spare minimal feel. It's OK to go a bit bigger with your minimal design. Just make sure there's still plenty of white space.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank
 Custom Shadow Mastery 1 action by Linda Sattgast
 Art From Above Video Tutorial by Barb Brookbank
 Sweet Comforts by Shabby Miss Jenn
 Clipping Mask Me Personally by Amanda Taylor
 Background Paper ArtPlayPaletteJardinier by Anna Aspnes
 Spatter Per Diem by One Little Bird
 Font: Quilted Butterfly



This page by Barb also has a larger photo, but the elements and type are definitely minimal, and there's plenty of white space.

Credits

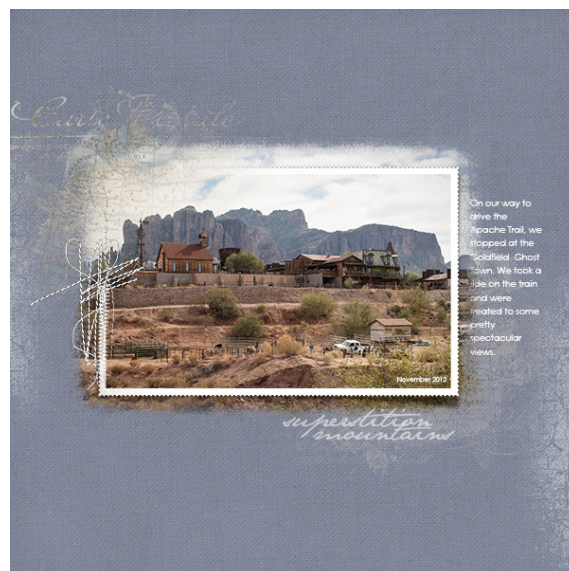
Page by Barb Brookbank
 Photo of my DGS by Tere
 Kit: Me Personally by Amanda Taylor



Here's the final example by Barb of an Expanded Minimal Page. This contains journaling on one side. Remember: it's fine to combine the different ways of creating minimal pages.

Credits

Page by Barb Brookbank
 Papers and elements by Susie Roberts
 Paper: Cozy Cardstock #7
 Stitches: All Stitched Up
 Photo Masks #6 and #4
 Travel Mates Stamp Frame #1
 Travel Mates Map Overlay #1
 Fonts: Jane Austen and Century Gothic



So that's an overview of the Classic Minimal design style and three variations:

- Minimal Plus Small Cluster
- Minimal Plus Type and
- Expanded Minimal

Some page designers use Minimal Design for a majority of their pages, but not everyone gravitates toward minimalism. You may love seeing Minimal pages by someone else, but when it comes to your own pages, you can't imagine using just one photo with all that space around it! "What a waste!" you may say to yourself.

Let me challenge you to give it a try, and here's why:

- It will force you to be more selective with your photos.
- It will give you practice making small clusters without feeling like you need to fill the page with decorations.
- You'll experience what it's like to go minimal, which may just give you new perspective for what is actually needed on a page.

A Personal Story

When I was in college I used to wear a fair amount of makeup, but at 21 I headed overseas with three friends on a backpacking trip through Europe and the Middle East.

At the beginning of that trip I made the decision not to wear makeup. At first I almost felt naked without it, but I soon got used to going without.

When I returned to the United States, around 9 months later, I started wearing makeup again, but I found that I felt too "made up" when I used the amount of makeup I had worn before. I toned it down a bit and found that it actually suited me better.



Is it possible that you're so used to heavily decorating your pages that you don't even realize a little more restraint might actually be more appealing?

Try making minimal pages for 30 days and then you'll be in a better position to make decorating decisions on your scrapbook pages of any design!

And while you're at it, check out the galleries and zero in on any minimal pages you find. Really look at them. Recognize every element—there won't be many. Notice where they're placed. Which minimal pages are you drawn to—and why?

Then it's your turn—go forth and conquer!