

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

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UNIT 3 Dining Tables class notes, page 1

The way you set your table tells your guests and family much about the way you feel about them. Table settings leave a lasting impression. When you set a table, establish a plan. Harmoniously relate plant materials with the color, texture and style of the appointments - china, glassware, flatware and linen. Neatness and cleanliness are double important when doing a table. The tone should be uniform in all appointments and appropriate for the occasion. The decor in the room should be considered. Keys to the know how of a well-designed table are the Principles of Design and common sense.

A **functional table** is arranged for the service of food. It includes dishes, glassware, linens and a decorative unit (plant material) with or without accessories. The table should show correct placement of proper and appropriate appointments and decorative unit.

Buffet or Reception Service: Food should be conveniently arranged, placed around the serving portion of the table in logical sequence. It is always informal, but the table setting, appointments and accessories may be semi-formal or informal, depending upon the occasion and background decor. Tables may be **Traditional**, or classic (fashion of a past period), or **Creative**. Creative tables have striking contrasts, strong, rich color, dramatic designs of stylized simplicity.

Classifications of Table Service

Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symmetrically set• Highest degree of formality• Decorative unit does not necessarily allow for conversation across the table• Degree of formality established by the occasion, appointments and placement.
Semi-Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patterned after the formal• Even number of place settings symmetrically placed• Designed to permit conversation across the table, with decorative unit either above or below eye level• Linen: pastel, ecru or off-white, but bright solid colors and patterned cloths are also used.• Napkins may match or blend in fabric and color
Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be set at any time of day or evening.• May use fine quality appointments but incorporates freedom in color, decorative unit and seating placement.• More casual and relaxed• Buffet and outdoor table are informal no matter what the quality of appointments, placement and color selection.• The setting, service and food are the essentials that indicate the degree of formality.

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Principles of Design

Balance
Rhythm
Dominance
Contrast
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Scale

Elements of Design

Line
Color
Light
Texture
Pattern
Form
Size
Space

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Decorative Unit

1. Color and texture of container and plant material must coordinate with the appointments and design of the arrangement or the centerpiece will not look appropriate.
2. Select a container suitable in **size, shape** and **character**.
3. Size of table and number of settings determine the proportion and scale of arrangements. According to standard practice, the arrangements should measure 1/3 the length of the table. The width is reduced if the table is narrow and/or settings numerous. Flowers should never reach over into glasses or plates.

A basic rule is never to make an arrangement taller than the length of your arm from elbow to fingertips. It should not interfere with conversation across the table. You should be able to see over the design (or under an elevated one) which is usually characteristic of semi-formal or formal seating.

4. Candles should either stand well above or below eye level to avoid flickering flames in the line of vision.
5. Design should be finished on all sides but it does not have to be alike on all sides.
6. Decorative unit must be able to stand on its own after other appointments are removed from the table.
7. When using an accessory, it need not be functional but should contribute to the overall unity and aesthetic effect or to the theme or spirit of the occasion.
8. Flowers, fruit, vegetables or any combination may be used.

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Principals of Design Related to Tables

Proportion

- The cloth, mats, runners, etc. must be in good area relationship to the other appointments.
- Length of the table covering depends on the occasion and degree of formality.
- Number of appointments must be in proportion to the table space.

Balance

- May be symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on the formality desired and/or the occasion.

Rhythm

- Created through repetition, relative change in size, gradation in color or size.
- Variation in heights from plate to glass to decorative unit make for pleasing eye movement around the table.
- Settings may be mixed or matched but there must be overall harmony in color, texture and pattern.

Dominance and Contrast

- Dominance can be achieved by repetition of forms, colors and textures in the appointments.
- Every color scheme needs contrast for interest but too much results in confusion. One color should dominate.
- All round plates, round glasses, a round decorative unit on a round table will lack contrast in form.

Scale

- Size relationship of each individual item, one to the other.

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How do you begin?

1. Relate the appointments and centerpiece to the style, color and texture of the china pattern. Dinner plates normally dominate the table. Ornate plates require subdued linen and plain plates can use colorful print linens. Course textured linens go with heavier tableware. Damask, lace, etc. need more formal dinnerware.
2. Size of table determines the number of settings. Centerpiece need not always be in the center, but overall table design should appear balanced.
3. All china need not match but should coordinate in some way and have a unifying characteristic - such as similar design or related colors. Mix only those of the same type, ie. formal, informal, country, traditional, modern, etc.
4. Keep the setting uncluttered. Don't load the table with too many nonessential items.
5. Place settings squarely and uniformly one (1) inch from the edge of the table and at an equal distance of at least 24 inches from each other.

Check List

1. Set table neatly and correctly. Select appointments that are appropriate for the particular course the table is set to display.
2. Use correct napkins of correct size. (luncheon napkins are usually smaller than dinner napkins) folded according to their size, but in any manner the hostess wishes. (May be decorative folds.)
3. The cloth should be even on all sides with a graceful overhang. Place mats should be evenly spaced and may be used over the cloth is desired.
4. Have a variation in height among the decorative unit, glasses, candles, etc.
5. Avoid overmatching appointments.
6. Avoid monotony - do not forget a note of contrast adds interest and unifies dominant element.
7. Avoid too much variety in style, color, texture - destroys unity and creates confusion.
8. Feature a note of creativity in a unique design (perhaps by using a unique container which was not intended for flowers) or in distinguished appointments of different periods, or an unpredictable color scheme.

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UNIT 3 Dining Tables What to Bring to Class

We will work on two designs. Only one place setting will be necessary for the practice exercises.

Candlestick Design

1. 18" candlestick, with candle to match dishes. (If you do not have one available, we will have several to borrow)
2. A plate with which you can match flowers.
3. A goblet or cup and saucer.
4. Linen in the form of placemat or small cloth and a napkin to match.
5. Floral foam.
6. Waterproof tape.
7. Napkin ring (optional)
8. Flowers in scale with 30" round table.
9. Vine material (ivy, asparagus fern, stephanotis vine, yellow jasmine, etc.)
10. Clippers.

Low Arrangement

1. Small container
2. Flowers in scale
3. Use same plate as in candle design
4. Floral foam
5. Waterproof tape

Instructor will bring a candle adapter and extender for you to purchase. Cost not over \$2.50.

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