Canva 101

A short guide by NNOMY

Includes

Introduction
pg 3

Toolbar Cheat Sheet
pg 4

Text Toolbar
pg 6

Image Toolbar
pg 8

Royalty-Free Resources
pg 10

Design Tips and Tricks
pg 11

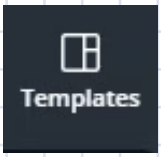
Introduction

What is Canva and why is it useful?

Canva is an online graphic design platform that makes the job of creating stylish social media graphics easier. Where software such as Photoshop or Illustrator are robust in their functionality, they can also have a very steep learning curve. Canva is much more approachable, with a clean UI that hides a lot of powerful tools.

This short guide was made as a reference for the main tools you'll most likely use while testing out Canva. Hopefully, it can give you some ideas to try out when creating graphics for your next campaign!

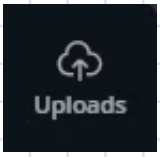
Canva Toolbar



Allows you to pick pre-designed templates for your graphics.

You can substitute the text in the template with your own, download, and you're good to go!

Where you'll see the images, videos, and audio you've uploaded to your Canva account.

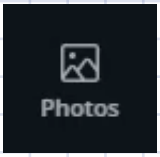


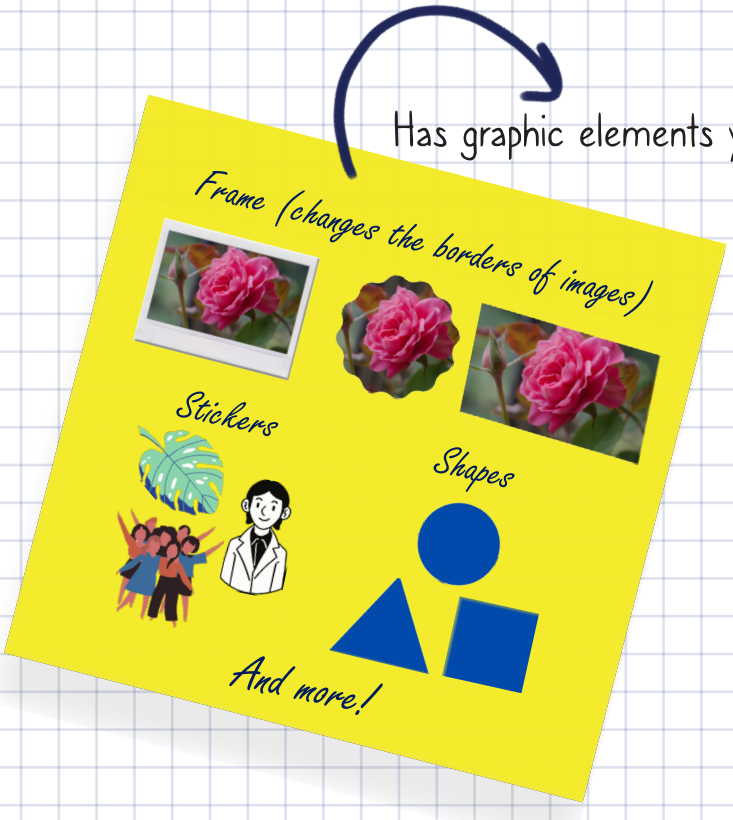
If you're using your own images, logo, and other resources, this can be helpful to keep track of everything and have it available for other projects.

Where you can select royalty-free images to use in your social media graphics.

They are usually the optimal quality for social media use.

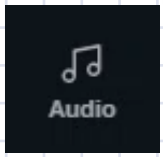
Has graphic elements you can use to spruce up your image.





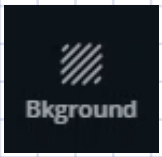
Canva Toolbar

Where you can add text to your images.



Used for creating videos and animations.

Videos can be a good choice when creating more dynamic social media posts.

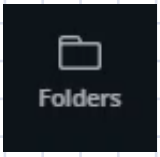


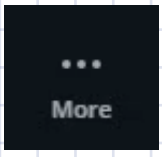
Where you'll find options for abstract or patterned backgrounds for your posts.

If you feel like your text will be too long, or if you're adding a lot of elements to an image, like stickers, it might be a good idea to use a simple background.

Where you can create folders with items you've liked and/or purchased on Canva.

Canva is free, but it has a premium option, with more items available in each category.

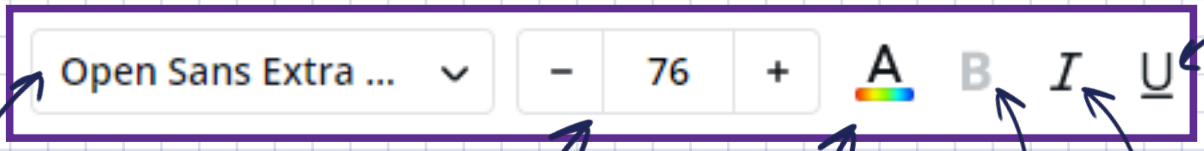




Integrates other platforms such as Pexels, Pixabay, Instagram, GIPHY, etc.

This gives you more options to import graphics into your image and share it.

Text Toolbar



Font selection drop-down menu

Font size adjustment

Font color picker

Bold

Italics

Underlined

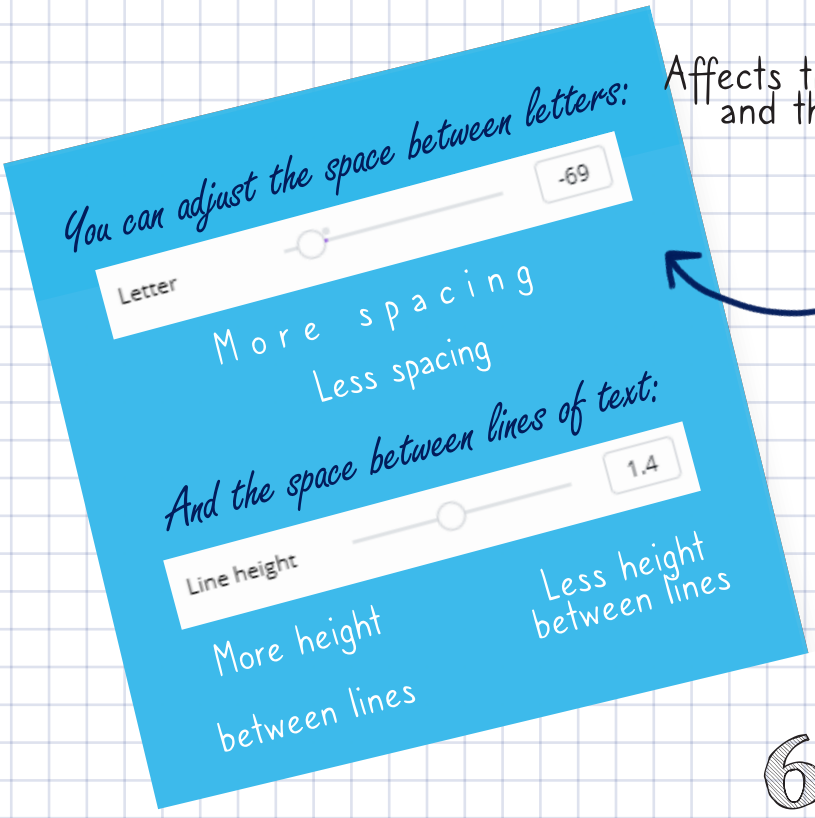
Converts text into bullet points or a numbered list

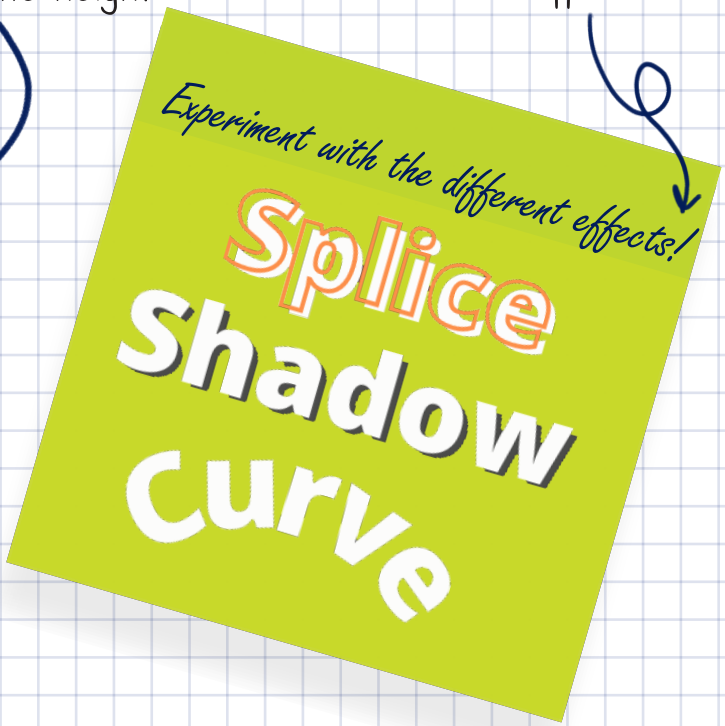
Makes letters uppercase

Aligns text to the left, right, center, or justified

Affects the letter-spacing and the line height

Has a variety of text effects





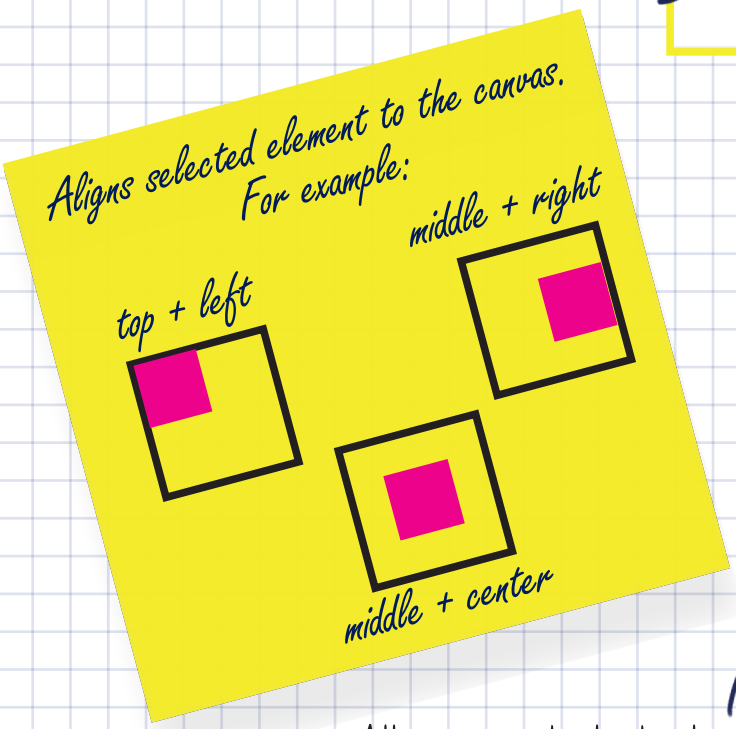
Text Toolbar

Where you can change the transparency of an image/text

Includes a variety of alignment and arrangement options

Used to create a hyperlink

Allows you to copy and paste the style of one block of text (font type, size, color, etc.) to other blocks of text



Allows you to lock elements, so you don't accidentally move/edit them

Deletes an element

Duplicates an element

Image Toolbar

Effects Filter

Takes you to a menu that has a variety of graphical effects for images.

Displays a menu that changes the filter options for an image

Has some fun effects, like:

Duotone

Liquify

Pixelate

And more!

Preconfigured adjustements to your image, like for example:

None

Whimsical

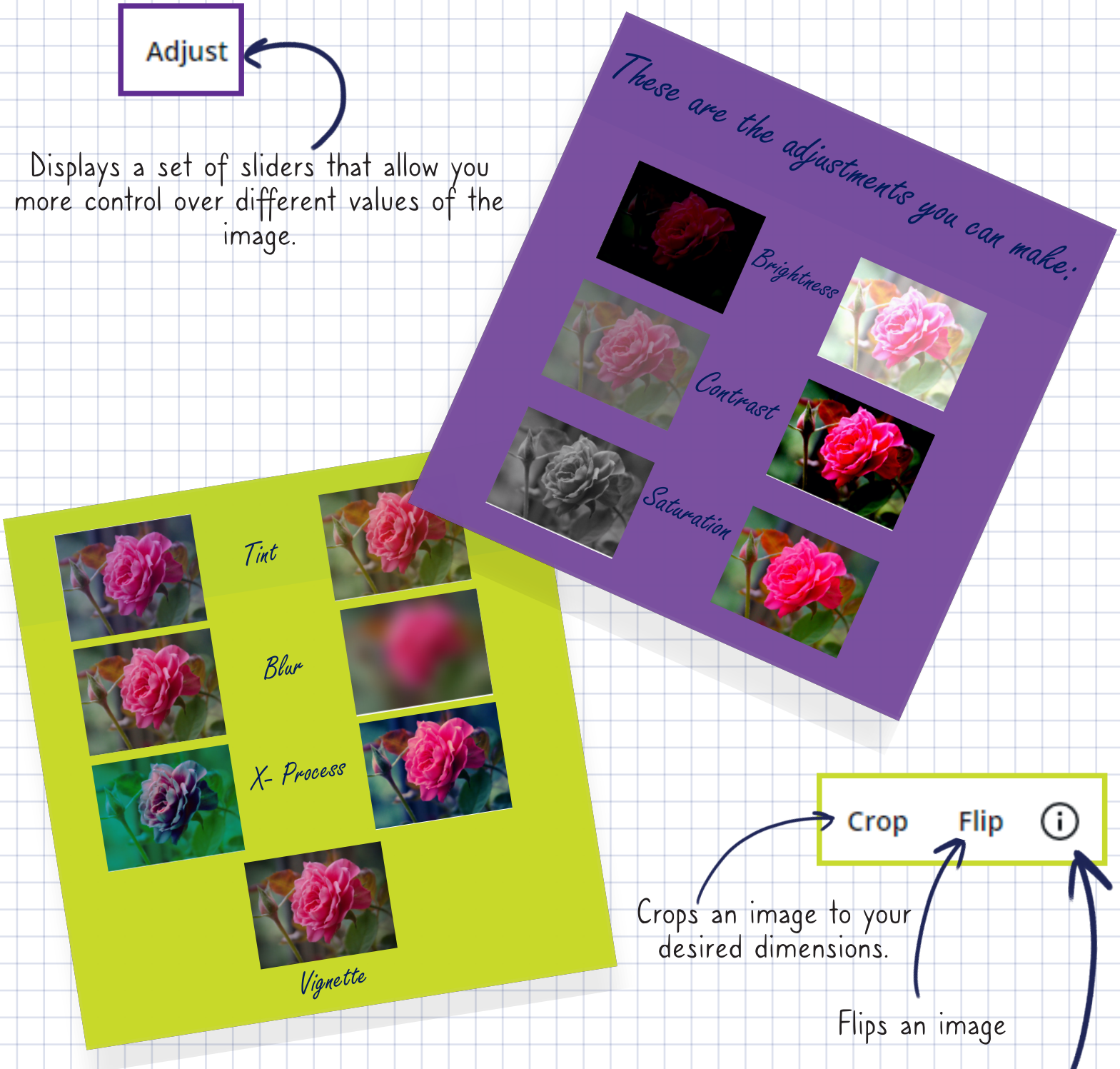
Festive

And more!

Image Toolbar

Adjust

Displays a set of sliders that allow you more control over different values of the image.



Crop Flip

Crops an image to your desired dimensions.

Flips an image

Displays some information about an image and allows you to save it in your favorites/folders

Royalty-Free Resources

freepik — www.freepik.com

pixabay — www.pixabay.com

Unsplash — www.unsplash.com

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS — commons.wikimedia.org

StockSnap.io — www.stocksnap.io

GRAPHIC BURGER — www.graphicburger.com

Design Tips and Tricks

Try to use large images

It is better to scale down an image than to scale it up.
Scaling an image up can make it become "pixelated" and won't look as nice.

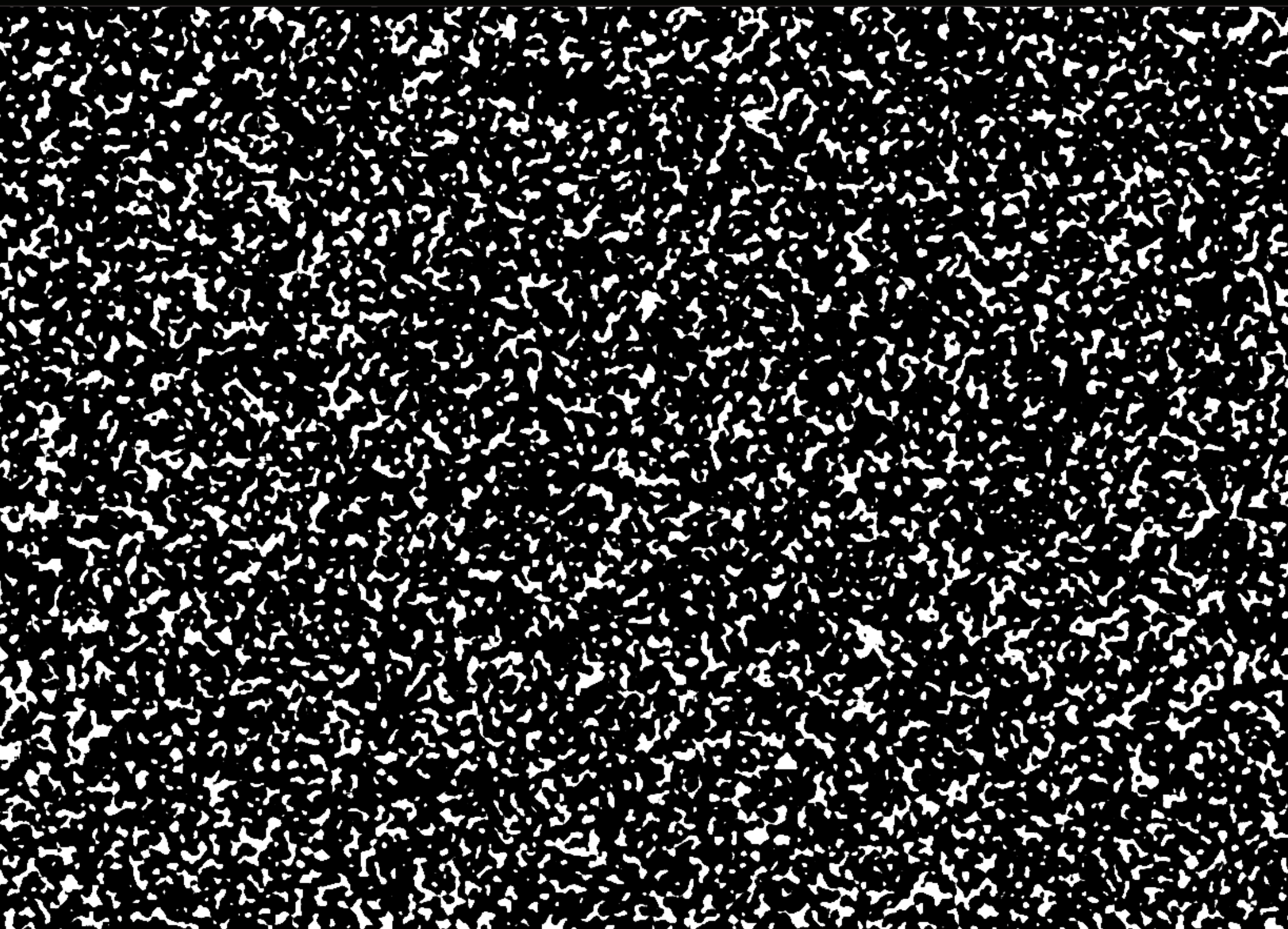
Pay attention to the contrast between the background and the text!

If the brightness of your text and background are similar, it'll be hard to read.

"Brevity is the soul of wit."

Don't have too many words on one image.
Choose fragments carefully, condense what you need to say.
If either is not possible, consider making several images instead of just one.

Look at how others create social media graphics.

You can learn a lot by looking at the way others do it successfully—or unsuccessfully.

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