



CANVA DESIGN STARTER KIT

Your Beginner's Guide to Creating Better Designs with Canva

BY DAVEKA ACADEMY

Welcome to the Canva Design Starter Kit

Canva makes graphic design accessible to almost everyone. You don't need to be an expert designer to create professional-looking social media posts, flyers, presentations, business graphics, or marketing materials.

This starter kit will help you understand the basic principles behind good design and give you practical guidance you can immediately apply in Canva.

Your goal isn't to make complicated designs. Your goal is to communicate clearly and professionally.

01. Understanding the Basics of Design

Before opening Canva, understand these five foundational principles:

1. Contrast

Contrast helps important elements stand out. Create contrast through:

- Light vs. dark colors
- Large vs. small text

2. Alignment

Don't place elements randomly. Ensure your text, images, shapes, logos, and icons have a visual relationship.

- Bold vs. regular fonts
- Different shapes & sizes

Tip: Your headline should usually stand out from supporting information.

Good alignment immediately makes a design look organized and polished.

3. Hierarchy

Visual hierarchy tells people what to look at first, second, and third.

MAIN HEADLINE

Supporting statement

Additional information

CTA (Call to Action)

4. Balance & Consistency

Balance: Distribute visual weight evenly using images, text, shapes, and white space so no side feels overly heavy.

Consistency: Maintain brand identity across colors, fonts, logo placement, and design style.

02. The Power of White Space

One of the biggest mistakes beginners make is trying to fill every available space. **Don't.**

White space gives your design room to breathe.

Instead of asking: *"What else can I add?"*

Ask: **"What can I remove?"**

A clean design is often far more effective than a crowded one.

03. Choosing the Right Fonts

You don't need 10 different fonts to create a great design. Start with two fonts:

Font 1 — Heading

Use for Headlines, Titles, and Important statements.
Choose bold, clean, or distinct fonts.

Font 2 — Body

Use for Descriptions, Supporting information, and Small details. Prioritize high legibility.

Simple Rule: Maximum 2–3 fonts per design. Avoid using too many decorative fonts because they make your design difficult to read.

Beginner-Friendly Font Combinations

HEADING FONT	BODY FONT	BEST FOR
Montserrat	Open Sans	Modern Corporate & Tech

HEADING FONT	BODY FONT	BEST FOR
Poppins	Lato	Clean & Friendly Marketing
Playfair Display	Montserrat	Luxury, Editorial & Elegance
Bebas Neue	Poppins	Bold Announcements & Sports
DM Serif Display	Open Sans	Classic Publishing & Trust

04. Choosing Colors

Color communicates emotion and helps establish brand identity. Always consider your audience and brand tone.

COLOR	COMMON ASSOCIATION
Blue	Trust, professionalism, reliability
Green	Growth, nature, health
Red	Energy, urgency, passion
Yellow	Optimism, creativity, attention
Orange	Enthusiasm, friendliness
Purple	Creativity, luxury
Black / Dark	Elegance, authority
White	Simplicity, cleanliness

The 60–30–10 Rule

60%

Dominant Color

Backgrounds & Main Areas

30%

Secondary Color

Cards, Text & Structure

10%

Accent Color

Buttons,
CTAs &
Highlights

05. Choosing Images

A good image can strengthen your message. Follow these principles when selecting imagery:

- Choose clear, high-quality images.
- Make sure the image matches your message.
- Avoid unnecessary visual clutter.
- Consider the direction people in the photo are looking (lead the viewer's eye).
- Use consistent image styles when building a brand.

Remember: A beautiful image that doesn't support your message is still a poor design choice.

06. Canva Design Sizes You Should Know

Different platforms require different dimensions to avoid distortion or cropping.

PLATFORM / ASSET	RECOMMENDED DIMENSIONS	ASPECT RATIO
Instagram Post	1080 × 1080 px	1:1 Square
Instagram Story	1080 × 1920 px	9:16 Vertical
Facebook Post	1200 × 630 px	1.91:1 Landscape
YouTube Thumbnail	1280 × 720 px	16:9 Widescreen
LinkedIn Post	1200 × 627 px	1.91:1 Landscape
TikTok / Short Video	1080 × 1920 px	9:16 Vertical

07. A Simple Canva Design Workflow

Use this step-by-step process whenever you create a new design project:

STEP 1 **Define the Purpose:** Educate, Promote, Inform, Inspire, Sell, or Announce?

STEP 2 **Identify Main Message:** Write the core message in one clear sentence.

STEP 3 **Choose Format:** Select exact canvas dimensions for target platform.

STEP 4 **Visual Direction:** Decide palette, fonts, imagery, and overall style.

STEP 5 **Create Hierarchy:** Place main headline and key visual element first.

STEP 6 **Supporting Info:** Keep secondary text smaller and simpler.

STEP 7 **Add CTA:** Direct the user (e.g., REGISTER NOW, LEARN MORE, BOOK SESSION).

STEP 8 **Final Review:** Check spelling, alignment, contrast, spacing, logo, and links.

08. The 5-Second Test

Before publishing your design, look at it for approximately **five seconds**, then close your eyes and ask:

"What did I notice first?"

If the answer isn't your main message, your visual hierarchy needs adjustment.

Can someone understand what this design is about without reading every word? If not, simplify it.

09. Common Canva Mistakes to Avoid

✗ Too Much Text

A graphic is not a document. Keep design focused and move detailed prose elsewhere.

✗ Too Many Fonts & Colors

Multiple typefaces create visual chaos. Stick to 2 fonts and a controlled 3-color palette.

✗ Poor Contrast & Low Quality Images

Ensure high visibility against backgrounds and avoid blurry, low-res graphics.

✗ Random Alignment & Overusing Effects

Use alignment guides. Shadows, glows, and outlines should support—not overwhelm—the graphic.

10. Your Beginner Canva Checklist

Review this checklist before downloading any finalized artwork:

- ✓ Is the main message clear?
- ✓ Is the headline easy to see and read?
- ✓ Are fonts readable and limited to 2–3 maximum?
- ✓ Are brand colors consistent throughout?
- ✓ Is there sufficient white space around elements?
- ✓ Are elements aligned properly using grid tools?
- ✓ Are all images sharp and high quality?
- ✓ Is the Call-to-Action (CTA) prominent and clear?
- ✓ Is the Daveka / Brand logo correctly placed?
- ✓ Have spelling, phone numbers, and web links been verified?

11. Your First Canva Practice Project

Challenge: Create a Social Media Quote Graphic

Format: Square 1080 × 1080 px

Copy Requirements:

- **Headline:** "Your Growth Begins With What You Choose to Learn."
- **Supporting Text:** "Invest in your skills. Build your future."
- **CTA:** "Start Learning Today"

Design Guidelines: Max 2 fonts, 2–3 colors, 1 relevant graphic element, strong hierarchy, and generous white space.

12. Your 7-Day Canva Practice Challenge

DAY	PROJECT GOAL
Day 1	Motivational Quote Graphic

DAY	PROJECT GOAL
Day 2	Promotional Event Flyer
Day 3	Multi-slide Instagram Carousel
Day 4	Business Announcement Graphic
Day 5	High-CTR YouTube Thumbnail
Day 6	Personal Branding Visual Asset
Day 7	Redesign Day 1 graphic & evaluate improvement!

BONUS: THE DAVEKA DESIGN FORMULA

**MESSAGE → HIERARCHY → COLOR → TYPOGRAPHY → IMAGE → SPACING
→ CTA**

Don't start by adding random elements. Start with the message, then build the design around it.

Final Thought

You don't become a good designer by simply learning where every Canva button is.

You become better by learning how to communicate visually.

Start simple. Practice consistently. Study good designs. Create & improve.

Ready to Go Further?

If you want to move from Canva beginner to confident designer, explore practical design training available through **Daveka Academy**.

Learn. Create. Improve. Grow.

Daveka Academy — Empowering People With Practical Digital Skills.