



# Week 9: Layout

Nicole Meng-Schneider

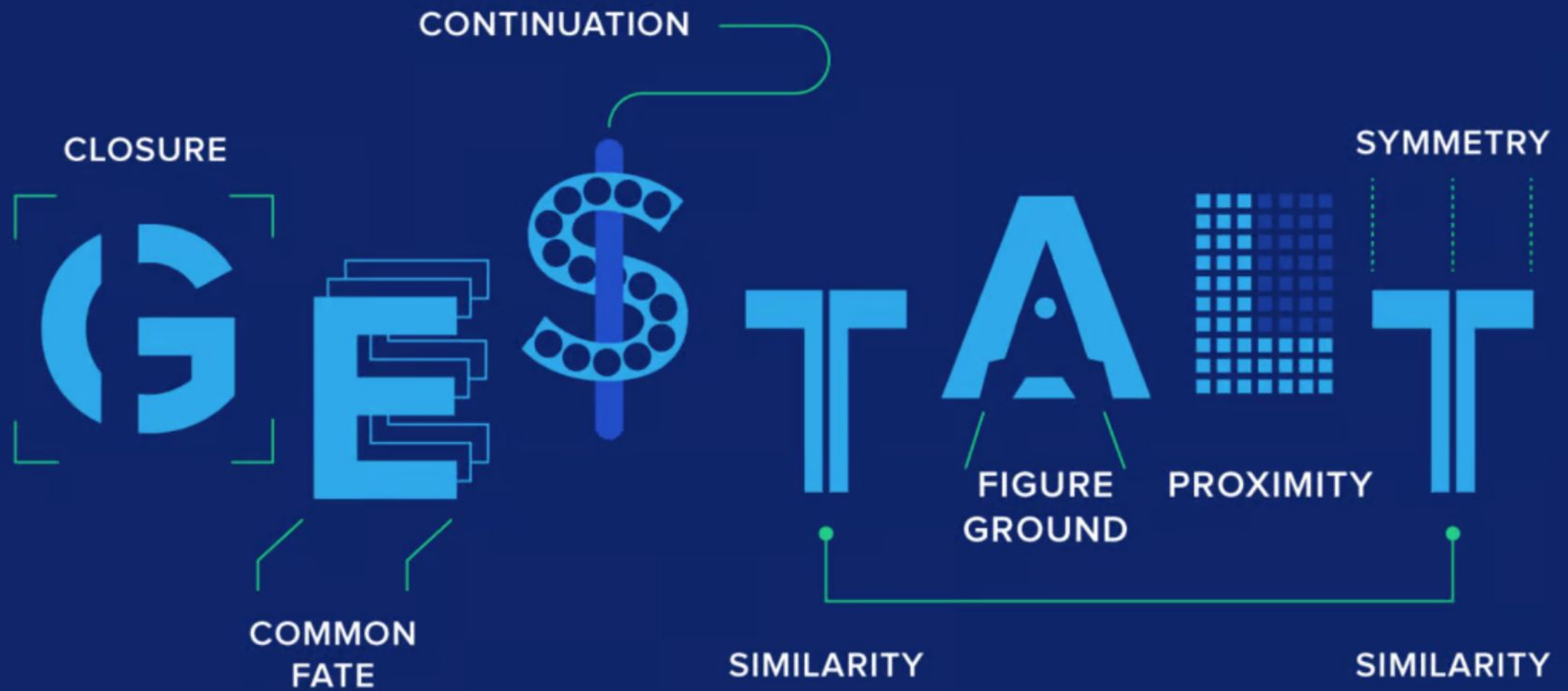
# Recap Gestalt Principles

# Gestalt Principles

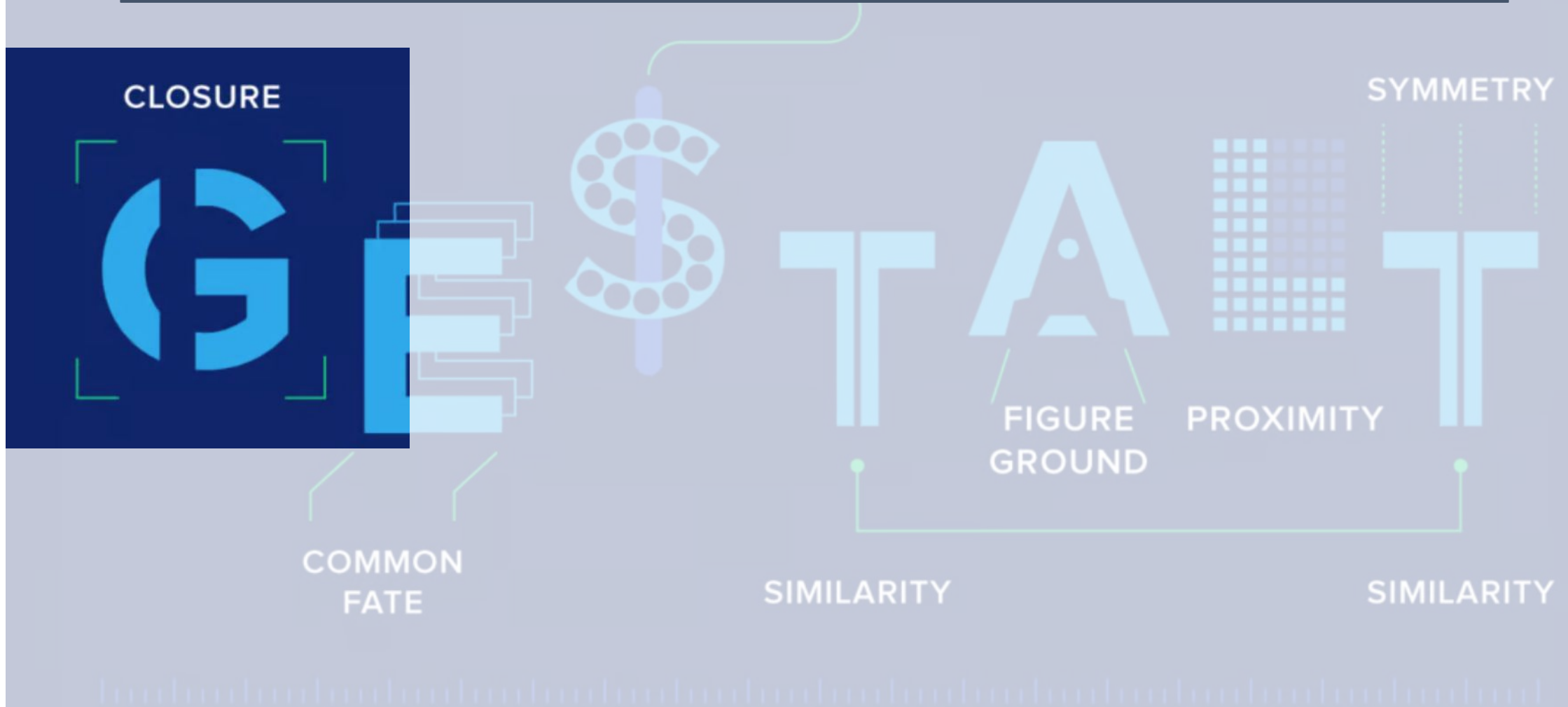
Based on psychology of how humans **perceive patterns** and **organize visual elements**

Create designs that are:

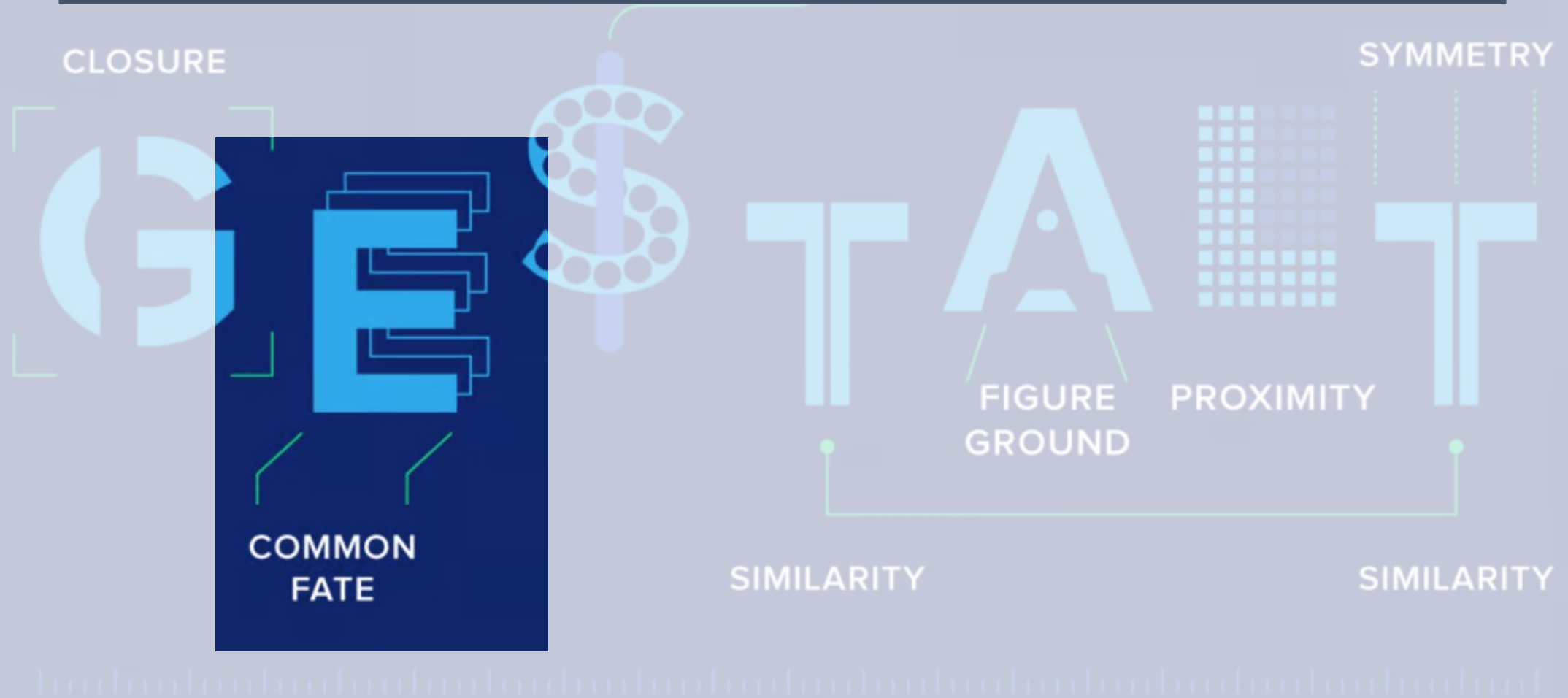
- more intuitive
- visually pleasing and organised
- guide users focus
- easy to navigate



**Closure:** Our minds tend to complete shapes even when parts are missing, which is often used in logos and icons to suggest forms without fully defining them.



**Common Fate:** Elements moving in the same direction are perceived as related. This principle can apply to animations or grouped elements with similar directional cues, helping users understand which items belong together.

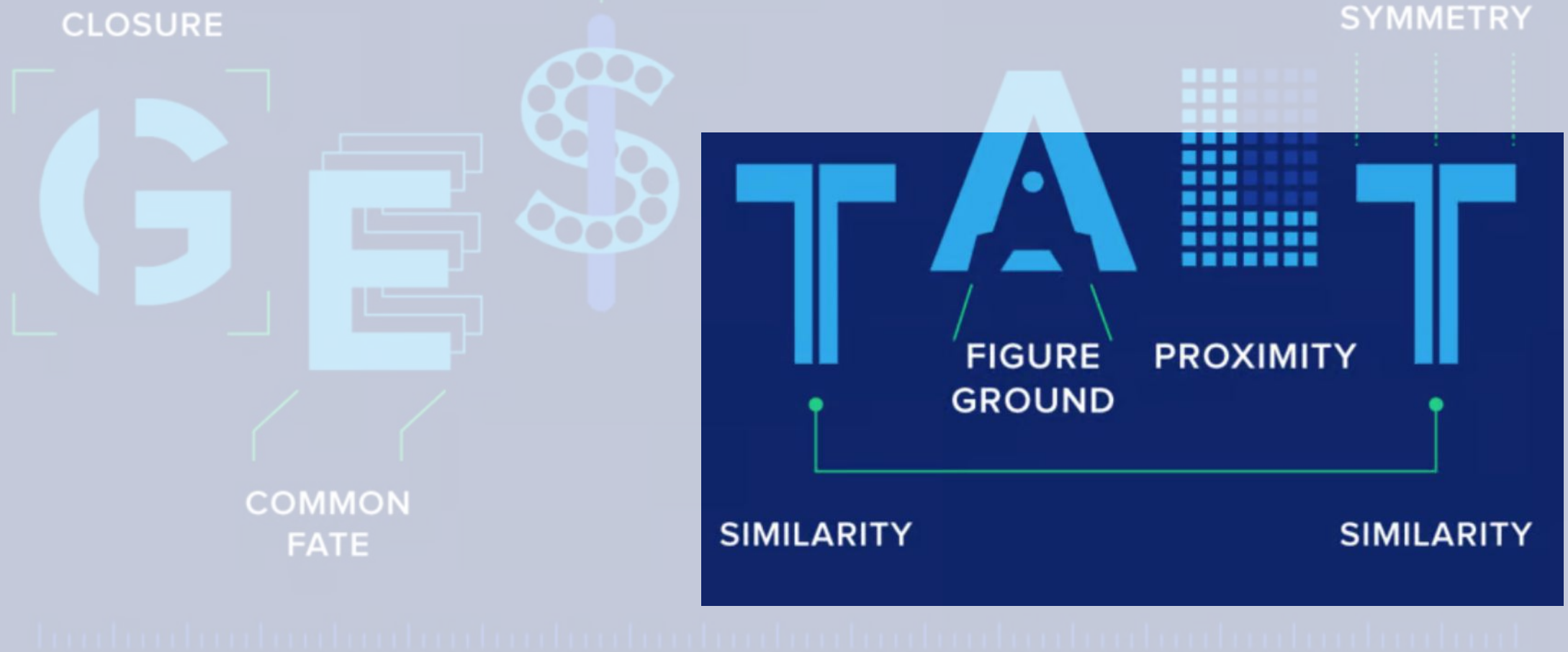




**Continuity:** The eye follows lines and curves naturally. Designers use this to guide users along a specific path, like directing their gaze from a headline to supporting information.

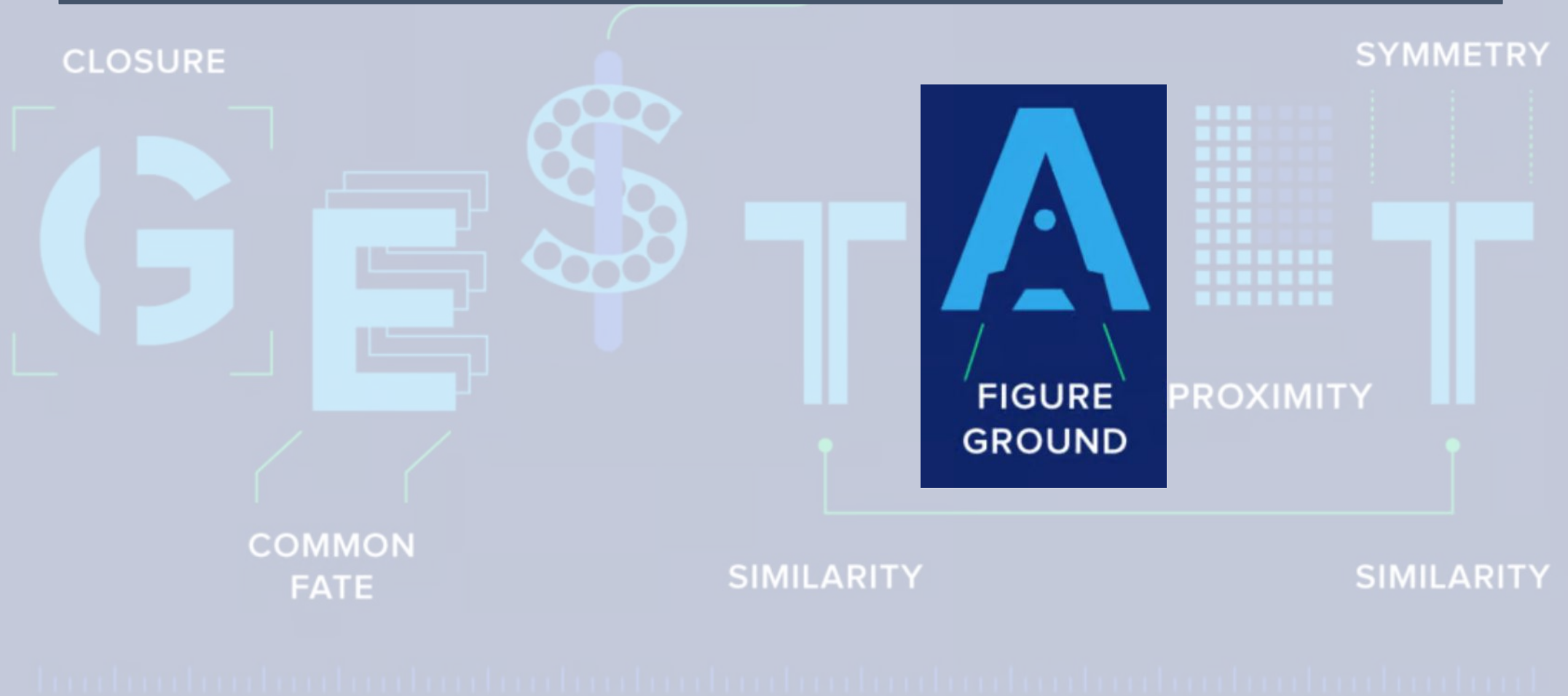
TY

**Similarity:** Similar objects—by color, shape, or size—are perceived as a group. This is useful for establishing consistency and visual relationships in a design.

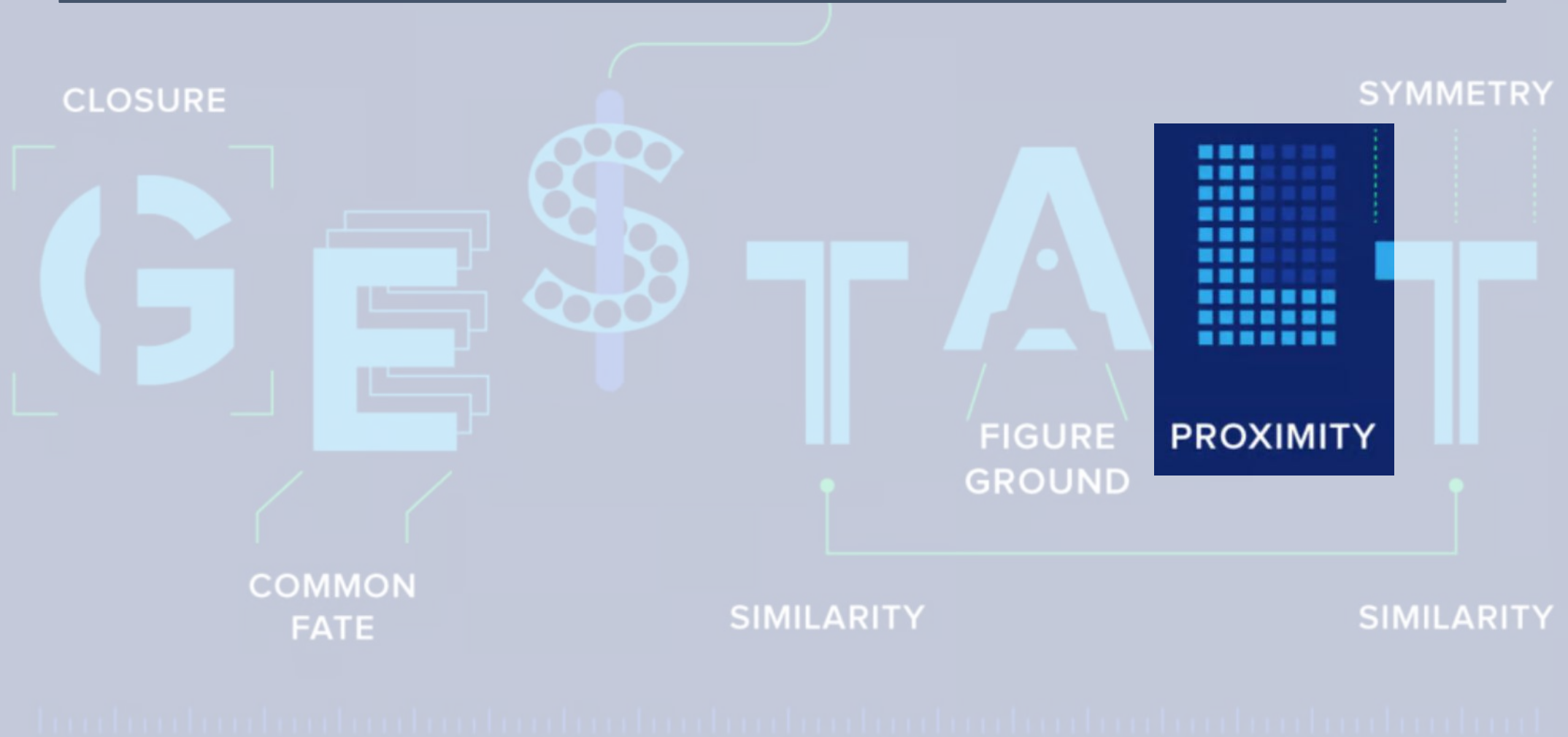




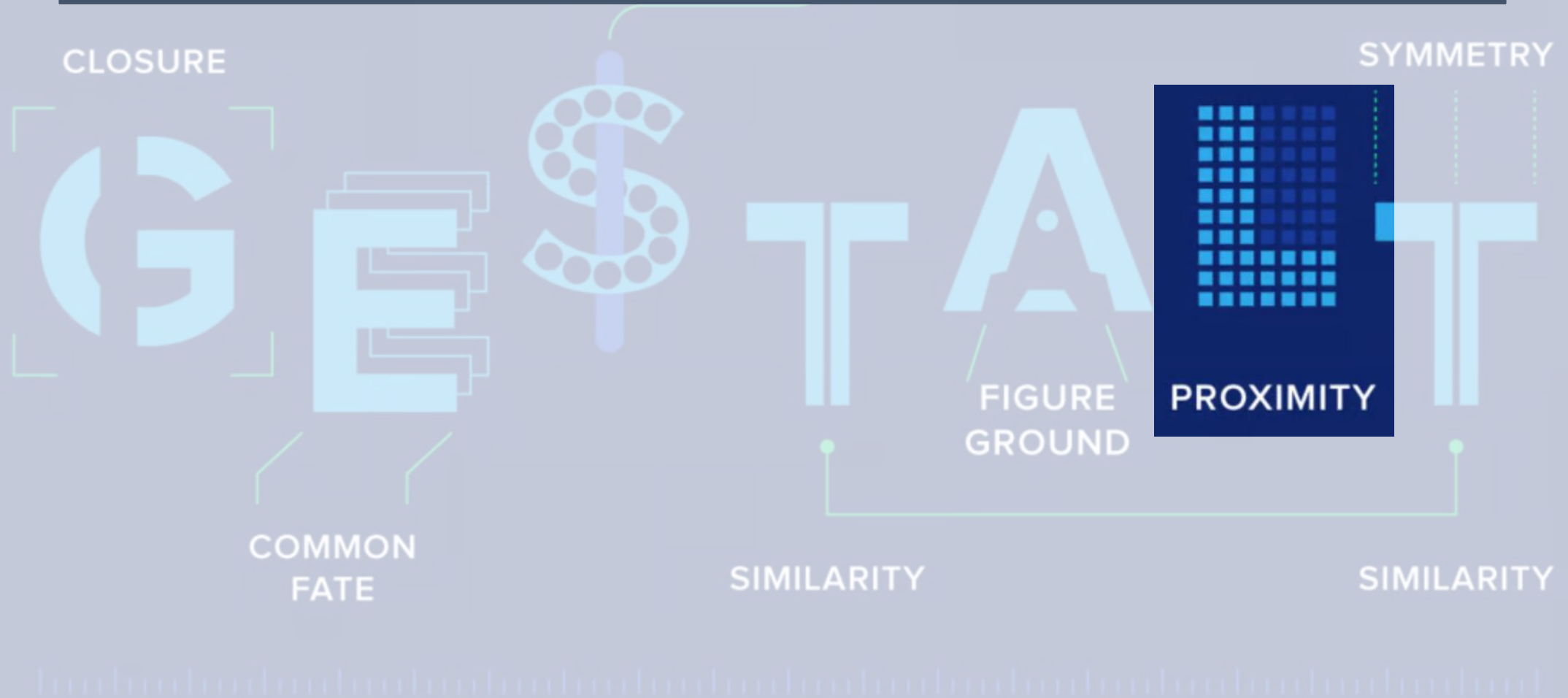
**Figure-Ground:** This principle refers to distinguishing an object from its background. It's essential in creating focus areas, like in imagery where either the figure or ground can take precedence.

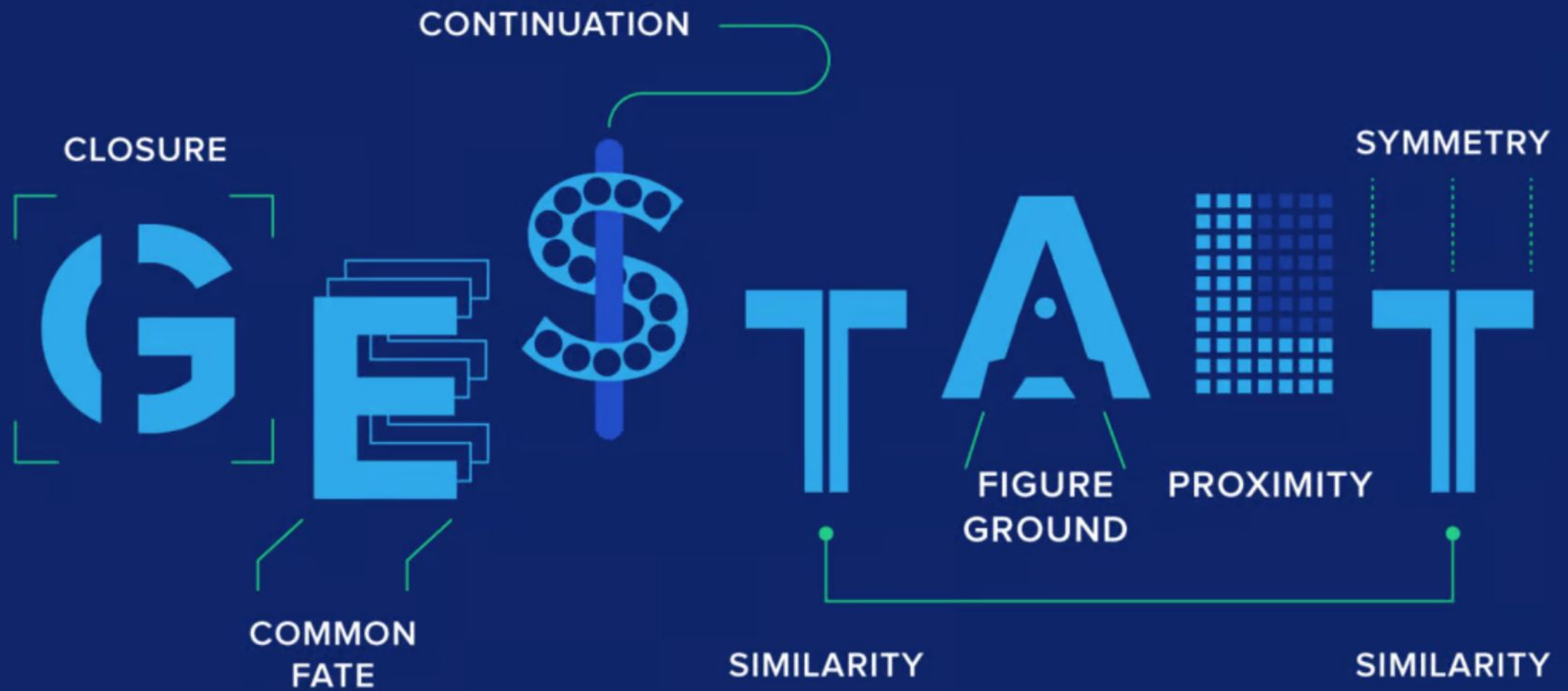


**Proximity:** Elements that are close together are perceived as related or grouped. Designers use this to organize information, like grouping menu items together.



**Symmetry:** Symmetrical elements are seen as part of the same group or whole, providing a sense of balance and harmony. Symmetry in layouts often feels stable and visually pleasing, while asymmetry can add a sense of dynamism.





**It's not just about making things look nice.  
How can Gestalt Principles help with  
Layout?**

# **Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout**

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Consistency and Repetition
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity

# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
  - Establishes clear order of importance
  - Helps guide users on where to focus their attention first
  - Often achieved through contrast, size, and placement.
  - E.g. Homepage: Use of font size and weight, establish a hierarchy between title/logo, menu items, subheadings and body text
  - **Gestalt:** e.g. *continuity* and *similarity* support hierarchy by linking related elements visually, making the flow between elements seamless
- Alignment and Grids
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Consistency and Repetition
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity

# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
  - Elements look organised and it feels balanced
  - Consistent alignment makes content is easier to scan, and the structure feels more intuitive
  - Grids provide a structured layout through invisible lines which helps with alignment
  - e.g. aligning text boxes, images, buttons, or other design elements
  - **Gestalt:** Grouping elements through *proximity* and using *symmetry* within columns and rows creates a sense of order, make design feel stable
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Consistency and Repetition
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity



# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
- **Whitespace (Negative Space)**
  - Unmarked space around elements in a design
  - Purpose:
    - Prevents overcrowding
    - Allows elements to stand out
    - Gives the viewer's eye a place to rest.
  - Sufficient whitespace make a design easier to navigate and less overwhelming
  - e.g. whitespace around images, headings, and paragraphs makes each section clearer and more readable
  - **Gestalt:** Primary element stand out through *Figure-ground* and enough space around an element leads to *Closure*
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Consistency and Repetition
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity

# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- **Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)**
  - Arranging elements so that the design feels either stable (symmetrical) or dynamic (asymmetrical).
  - **Symmetrical layouts:**
    - visually balanced
    - feel harmonic and orderly
    - Often used in corporate websites or formal publications
  - **Asymmetrical layouts:**
    - introduce movement and interest
    - guide the eye in specific directions
    - feel more modern or dynamic
    - Often used for a portfolio website to draw attention to a standout piece of work
  - Gestalt: *Symmetry*
- Consistency and Repetition
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity

# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- **Consistency and Repetition**
  - Create familiarity through use of color, typography, and spacing
  - Visual language through repetition of design elements
  - Strongly related to Nielson's Consistency and Standards
  - **Gestalt: *Similarity***: repeating similar elements creates a predictable experience. Similar looking items behave similarly
- Use of Visual Flow and Continuity

# Applying Gestalt Principles to Layout

- Hierarchy
- Alignment and Grids
- Whitespace (Negative Space)
- Balance (Symmetry and Asymmetry)
- Consistency and Repetition
- **Use of Visual Flow and Continuity**
  - Visual flow: Guide the user's eye naturally
  - Continuity: Creates a path to follow without abrupt stops
  - E.g.: In a landing page, a clear visual flow leads the user from a headline to a call-to-action button and then to additional information below. Accomplished through visual elements like lines, curves, or directional elements like arrows
  - **Gestalt:** *Continuity* creates a smooth flow reduce cognitive load for the user. *Common fate* directs attention

# Activity



Link to tutorial

## Practice Layout and Gestalt

Get into groups and open the layout tutorial. Try to sketch either on paper or tablet.

1. Redesign Nile Valley
  - a. 10 min in group
  - b. 3-5 min show on document cam
2. Redesign Shopping Page
  - a. 10 min in group
  - b. 3-5 min show on document cam
3. Redesign installation Screen
  - a. 10 min in group
  - b. 3-5 min show on document cam

**Any questions?**



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