

Image Generation / Character Design

Design distinct character silhouettes that read clearly at small scale — visual differentiation for games and animation.

Difficulty: Advanced

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Visual Differentiation, Iconic Design

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Why This Prompt Exists

Silhouette is the fastest way to identify a character. If all characters have the same silhouette, players can't tell them apart at a glance.

You get:

- hero and villain with identical body shapes (no visual distinction)
- characters that look alike from a distance (confusion in gameplay)
- no iconic silhouette (character isn't memorable)
- silhouettes that don't match personality (gentle character with sharp angles)
- unreadable at small scale (avatar, mini-map, UI icons)

But shape language creates distinction:

- triangle shapes: dynamic, aggressive, villainous (sharp edges, pointed)
- circle shapes: friendly, soft, approachable (rounded, curved)
- square shapes: strong, stable, reliable (broad, blocky)

- rectangle shapes: tall, elegant, noble (vertical, elongated)
- organic shapes: natural, fluid, unpredictable (asymmetrical, flowing)

Without silhouette design, characters blend together.

This prompt designs distinct character silhouettes.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a character silhouette designer who creates iconic shapes.

Your task is to design distinct silhouettes using shape language.

Generate:

1. SHAPE LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION

Shape Type	Emotional Signal	Best For	Silhouette Characteristics
Triangle	Aggressive, dynamic, dangerous	Villains, warriors, rogues	Sharp shoulders, pointed elements, angular
Circle	Friendly, soft, approachable	Heroes, companions, children	Rounded edges, curved lines, soft volume
Square	Strong, stable, reliable	Tanks, guardians, leaders	Broad shoulders, blocky, grounded
Rectangle	Tall, elegant, noble	Royalty, elves, ranged characters	Vertical, elongated, slender

| Organic | Natural, fluid, unpredictable | Nature beings, mages, monsters | Asymmetrical, flowing, irregular |

2. SHAPE VOCABULARY BY CHARACTER ROLE

| Character Role | Primary Shape | Secondary Shape | Silhouette
Keywords |

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
---|

| Villain | Triangle | Rectangle | Sharp, angular, pointed, threatening |

| Hero | Circle | Square | Rounded, heroic, approachable |

| Tank | Square | Circle | Broad, blocky, sturdy, protective |

| Rogue | Triangle | Circle | Lean, sharp, agile, quick |

| Mage | Rectangle | Organic | Tall, flowing, mystical, elegant |

| Healer | Circle | Rectangle | Soft, gentle, nurturing, tall |

| Nature being | Organic | Triangle | Asymmetrical, natural, unpredictable |

| Royal | Rectangle | Circle | Tall, elegant, refined, noble |

3. SILHOUETTE ENHANCEMENT ELEMENTS

| Element | Effect on Silhouette | Best For |

|-----|-----|-----|

| Cape/cloak | Adds volume, drama | Heroes, villains, royalty |

| Shoulder armor | Broadens silhouette, power | Tanks, warriors |

| Hood | Changes head shape, mystery | Rogues, mages |

| Tall collar | Vertical extension, elegance | Royals, villains |

| Skirt/robe | Volume at bottom, grounded | Mages, healers |

Wings	Horizontal expansion, dramatic	Angels, demons, flying characters
Weapon (drawn)	Extension, threat	Warriors, rogues
Pet/companion	Secondary shape	Heroes, nature beings

4. SILHOUETTE PROMPT TEMPLATE

`[Character role] character silhouette, [primary shape] shape language, [secondary shape] secondary, [silhouette keywords]. [Posture description], [weapon/accessory]. Dark silhouette, white background, readable at small scale. Character design.`

5. READABILITY TEST

Scale	Minimum Silhouette Requirements
256x256 (avatar)	Distinct head shape, recognizable weapon/accessory
128x128 (mini-map)	Unique overall shape, color helps
64x64 (UI icon)	Extreme simplicity, one distinctive element
32x32 (mobile icon)	Single shape, no small details

6. CAST SILHOUETTE COMPARISON

When designing multiple characters for the same project, ensure:

- Different heights (short vs. tall)
- Different widths (thin vs. broad)
- Different head shapes

- Different accessory silhouettes
- Different posture tendencies
- Different weapon/equipment placement

7. COMMON SILHOUETTE MISTAKES

Mistake	Why It's Wrong	Correct Approach
All characters same height	No visual hierarchy	Vary heights by role/importance
Similar body shapes	Confusion at distance	Use different shape language
Too many small details	Lost at small scale	Simplify, use large shapes
No iconic element	Forgettable	Add distinctive silhouette feature
Identical stances	Static, boring	Vary postures and poses

INPUTS:

Character role:

[E.G., "Hero", "Villain", "Tank", "Rogue", "Mage", "Healer"]

Personality:

[E.G., "Aggressive", "Gentle", "Noble", "Mysterious"]

Shape preference:

[TRIANGLE / CIRCLE / SQUARE / RECTANGLE / ORGANIC]

Key equipment:

[E.G., "Sword and shield", "Staff", "Bow", "Claws"]

RULES:

- Triangle = aggressive, dynamic, villainous (sharp edges)
- Circle = friendly, soft, approachable (rounded curves)
- Square = strong, stable, reliable (broad, blocky)
- Rectangle = tall, elegant, noble (vertical, elongated)
- Organic = natural, fluid, unpredictable (asymmetrical)
- Test silhouette at 128x128 pixels before approving
- Characters in the same project must have distinct silhouettes
- Add one iconic silhouette element (cape, hat, weapon, wings)
- Silhouette should communicate personality without details

How To Use It

- Triangle = aggressive, dynamic, villainous — sharp shoulders, pointed elements.
- Circle = friendly, soft, approachable — rounded edges, curved lines.
- Square = strong, stable, reliable — broad shoulders, blocky shapes.
- Rectangle = tall, elegant, noble — vertical, elongated, slender.
- Organic = natural, fluid, unpredictable — asymmetrical, flowing.
- Test silhouette at 128x128 pixels before approving — if it's not readable, simplify.
- Characters in the same project must have distinct silhouettes — no two should look alike.
- Add one iconic silhouette element — cape, hat, weapon, wings, or distinctive accessory.

Example Input

Character role:

“Villain — dark sorcerer”

Personality:

“Calculating, menacing, powerful”

Shape preference:

“TRIANGLE (with rectangle secondary)”

Key equipment:

“Staff with crystal, tattered cloak, tall crown”

Why It Works

Most character designs focus on details (face, costume) before silhouette — resulting in characters that look the same from a distance.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- shape language classification (triangle, circle, square, rectangle, organic)
- role-to-shape mapping (which shape for which character type)
- silhouette enhancement elements (cape, armor, wings, weapons)
- readability testing (silhouette at different scales)
- cast comparison (distinct silhouettes across multiple characters)

Failure modes this prevents:

- Hero and villain with identical body shapes (no visual distinction)
- Characters that look alike from a distance (confusion, poor UX)
- No iconic silhouette (character isn't memorable)
- Silhouettes that don't match personality (gentle character with sharp angles)

This improves on: Detail-first character design. Silhouette-first design ensures recognition at any distance.

Related to: CD-01 (Turnaround) for full views; CD-05 (Demographic) for proportions.

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