

Everyday Design

Hello Students!

Oftentimes, much like the chair, we overlook the fact that there are so many items in our world that are simply a result of good design. Almost everything we use is designed by someone, and then produced to make our lives easier in some way. Without design, a lot of the everyday items that we rely on would not be very functional, and they may not even exist.

The Everyday

These seemingly simple objects have a huge impact on the way we live and interact with the world around us. If they work well, chances are we don't pay much attention to them, but we know quickly when an object fails to meet our expectations.



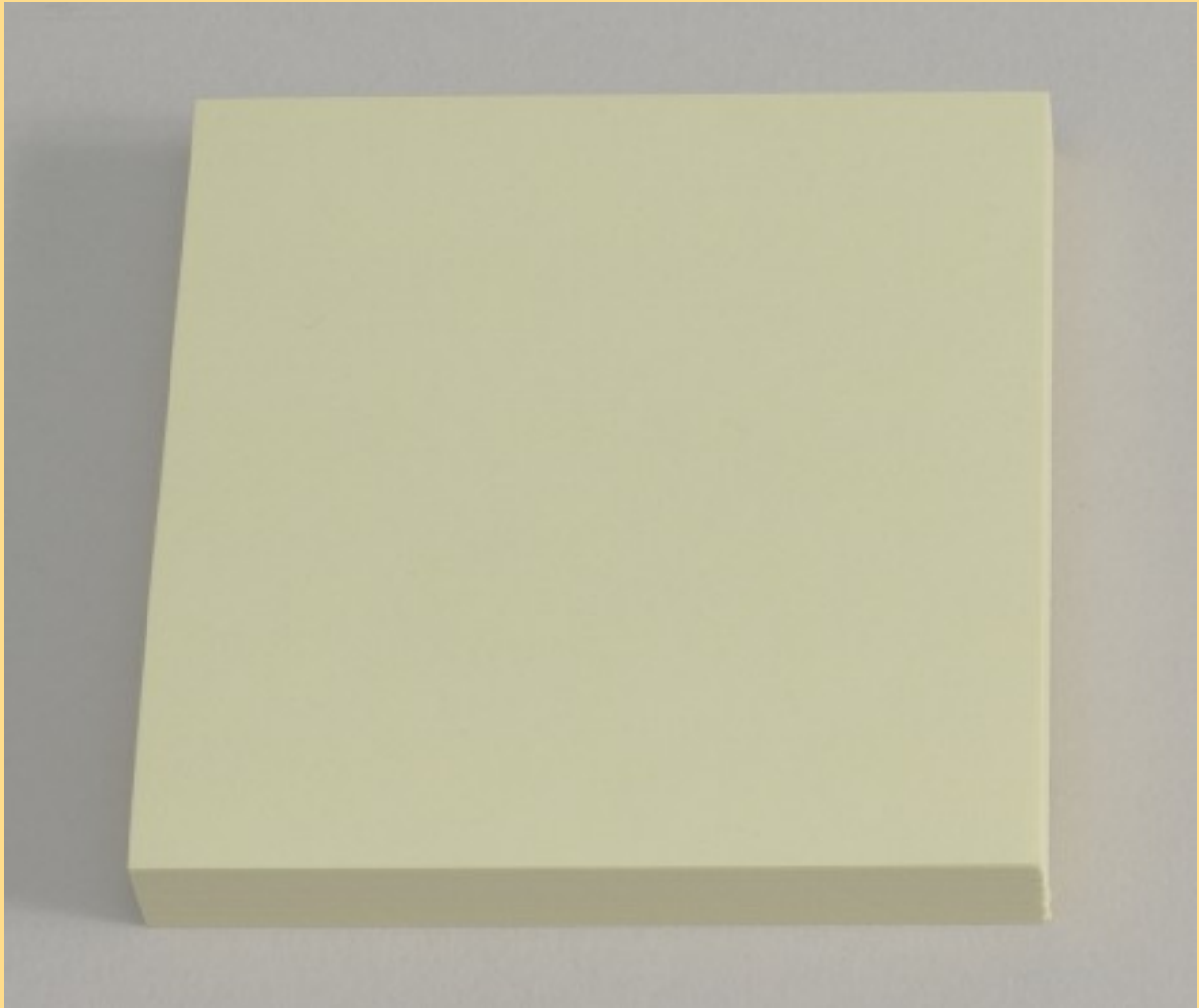
You may be wondering why a paper bag is significant. Yet, it took several **iterations** before the right design could be made. Knight and Stilwell developed a machine that could easily produce these durable bags. Now, we see them all the time, despite their origin years ago!

- What have you created with paper?

Iteration (n.): the repetition of a process or

Margaret E. Knight, Charles B. Stilwell, (American)
Flat Bottomed Paper Bag
1889, Paper

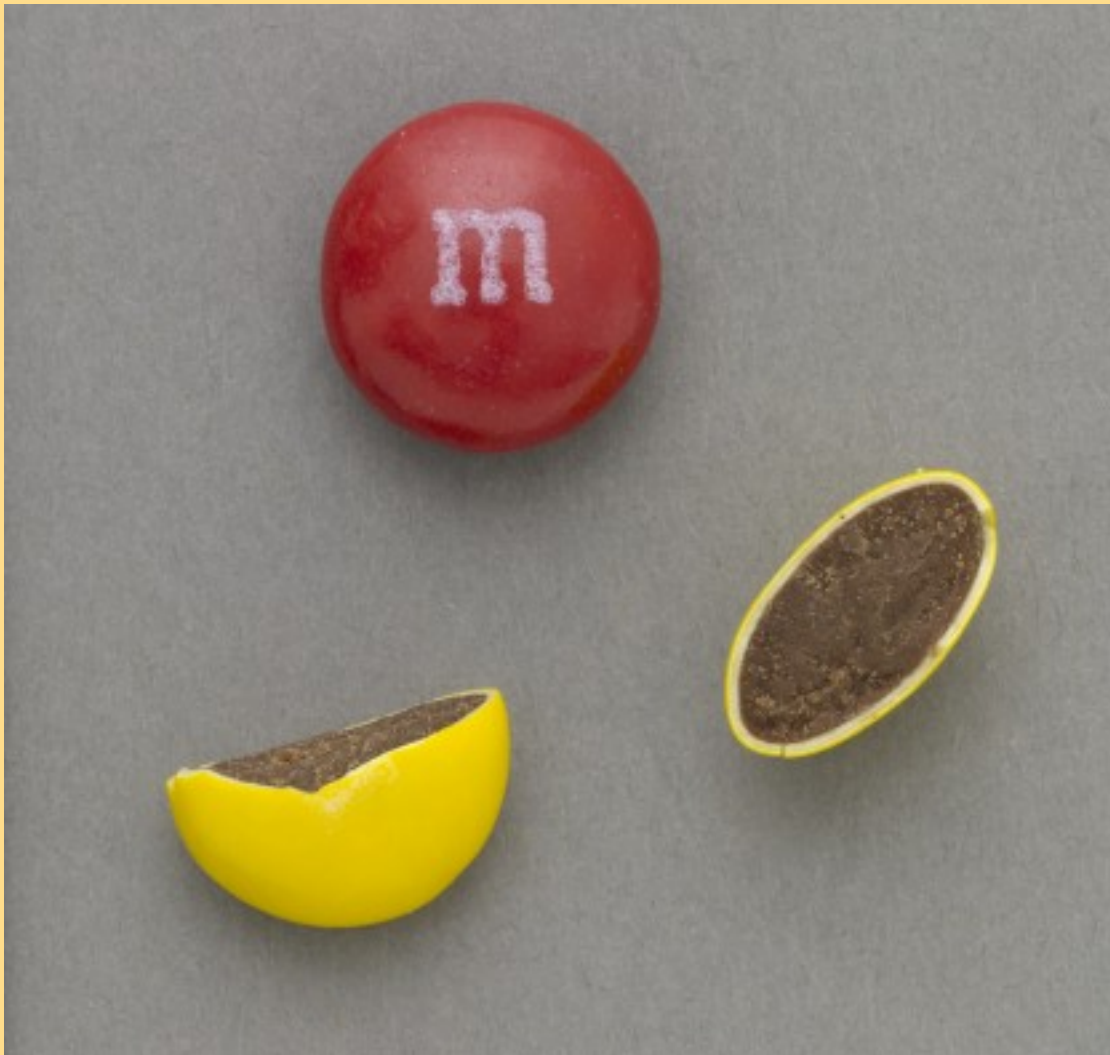
Here are some more examples below of everyday marvels we have thanks to design.



Art Fry, Spencer Silver, (American, born 1941), (American, born 1941)
Post-it® Note, 1980. Paper and adhesive

In 1968, while conducting experiments with adhesives for aerospace use, Spencer Silver, a research scientist at the company 3M, inadvertently invented a formula for a removable and reusable adhesive.

Art Fry, a product development researcher at 3M, used it to solve a problem. He combined Silver's adhesive with paper and made a reusable bookmark. In 1980, five years after Fry had presented his story to the company, 3M manufactured Post-it notes, that have now become ubiquitous in schools, offices, and homes. While the original Post-it note was small yellow square, they are now produced in over 62 colors and many different sizes, shapes, and varieties to suit a variety of tasks and needs.



Forrest Mars (American, 1904–1999)

M&M's

1939. Milk chocolate coated with a candy shell, $\frac{3}{8}$ x diam. $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1 x 1.3 cm)

Legend has it that Forrest Mars, Sr.—the first M in M&Ms—visited Spain during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), where he saw soldiers eating small chocolates



with a hard, sugary coating that prevented the candies from melting. In 1940 Mars made his own batch of chocolate candy pellets, inventing the recipe for M&Ms.

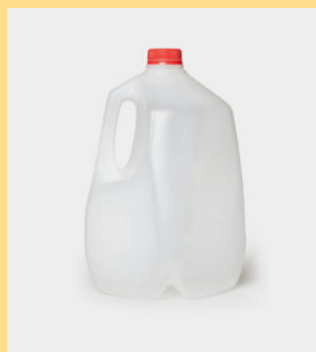


They used to be sold in cardboard tubes and were said to withstand warm temperatures. As such, they were marketed to soldiers in World War II. Originally, they came in 5 colors, and the tubes made it easy to distribute overseas.

Art and advertising went hand in hand during this time, showcasing good design and products. | Note: **Consumerism (n.):** Theory that spending money and consuming goods is good for the economy

Plastics

From Ziploc bags, cellophane, and soda bottles to computer keyboards and car fenders, plastics are a pervasive part of our lives today. The development of plastics in the early 20th century made it possible to create lighter, more durable, and more affordable **consumer** products.



- Do you believe that creating goods from plastic make them more affordable? Why?



Earl S. Tupper (American, 1907–1983)
Pitcher and Creamer
1959. Polyethylene

Earl S. Tupper was the first to bring this process to the design and manufacture of household items such as food containers. We use these all the time!

Through his utilitarian designs for storage, Tupper hoped to make “woman’s lives” easier. Once he had designed their forms to his desired specifications, he developed a patented *Tupper Seal*, which enabled users to tightly close the containers to preserve the freshness of the food inside. *Tupperware* stackable food containers became popular in the United States in the 1950s because they were lightweight and affordable. Prior to Tupperware, all food storage containers were made of glass and could not be firmly sealed shut.

This concept also helped create:

- Water containers for sanitary water distribution
- Milk jugs
- Plastic utensils, plates and cups

Consider: While this was good for consumers of this time period, what are some environmental issues relating to plastics now?



Paolo Lomazzi, Donato D'Urbino, Jonathan De Pas (Italian, born 1936), (Italian, born 1935), (Italian, 1932–1991)
Blow Inflatable Armchair
1972. Pvc plastic, Inflated



The Blow Inflatable Armchair, designed by Jonathan De Pas, Donato D'Urbino, and Paolo Lomazzi, is the first mass-produced inflatable chair. This icon of 1960s Pop furniture embodies the revolutionary spirit of its time. It is a youthful, playful expression of the free, casual lifestyle and culture of **ephemerality** associated with this period.

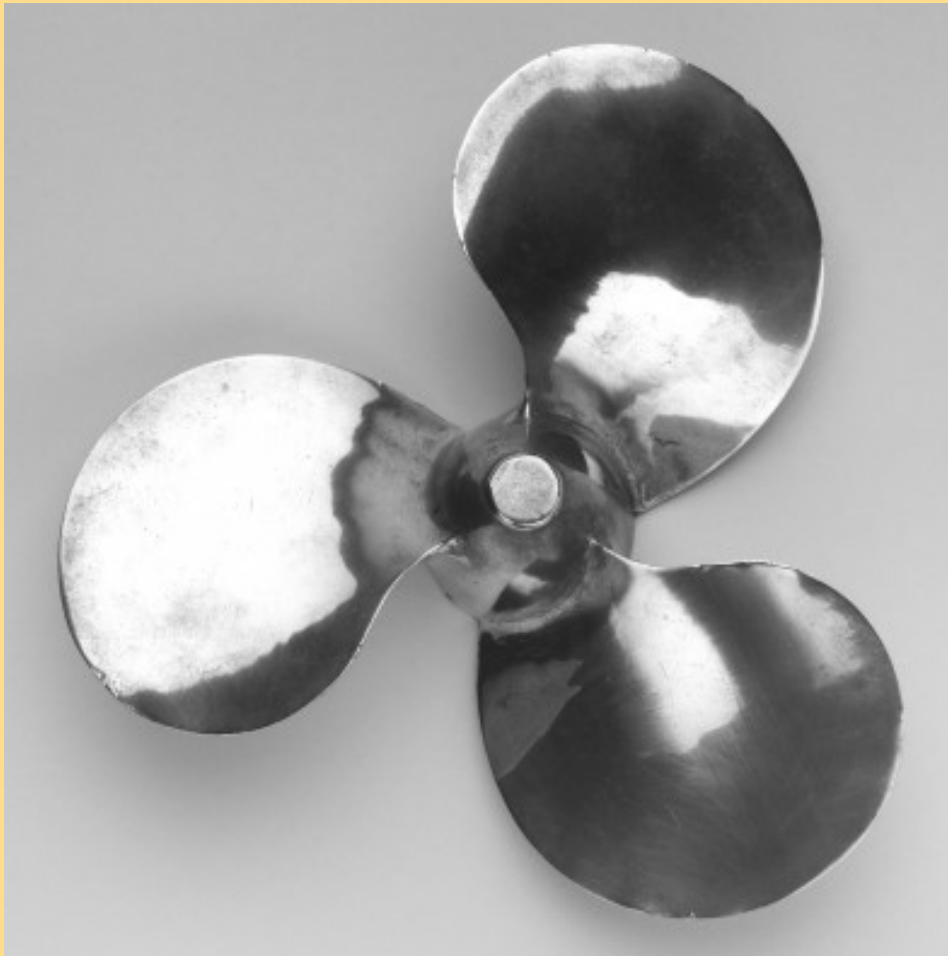
Ephemeral (adj): lasting for a very short time.

Simple Machines

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world of design began to make a significant shift. Moving away from pre-industrial methods of producing unique and hand-crafted objects (think ornate chairs as previously discussed), designers adopted an approach reflecting new techniques in science and engineering.

The concept behind simple machines, boils down to most of the qualities of **modern** design:

- Objects should be aesthetically pleasing
- Functional objects should be available to everyone, not just an elite few.
- Rejection of excessive ornamentation
- Shift toward more simplified and geometric shapes, some of which were much like organic forms found in nature.



- What does the propeller blade remind you of in terms of organic forms found in nature?

Aluminum Company of America, Pittsburgh, PA (est. 1888)
Outboard Propeller
1933. Aluminum

The outboard propeller is made of aluminum, a metal used to create objects as diverse as airplanes, canteens, chairs, trains, cookie sheets, bicycles, and walkers. It is both ductile and **malleable**, which means that it can be pulled into thin wire and rolled into foil.

Malleable (adj.): (of a metal or other material) able to be hammered or pressed permanently out of shape without breaking or cracking.



Karl Elsener (Swiss, 1860–1918)
Swiss Officers' Knife Champion (no. 5012)
1968. Plastic and stainless steel

The Swiss Officers' Knife is a multitool object with *16 blades* and attachments that can perform *29 functions*. It is complicated to make: *450 different processes are used in its manufacture*. Although the manufacturers offer a lifetime guarantee, the knife works so well that *only one in 10,000 are returned to the factory!* The first Swiss officers' knife was designed in 1897 in Switzerland to replace knives imported from Germany. To distinguish the knives from copies, designer Karl Elsener placed a white cross and shield on the outside.

Your Task

Find something in your home or one of your personal belongings that you believe has a good design. This could be because it is conceptually efficient, has certain materials you admire, is easy to use, or even affordable. Imagine yourself as a designer, and consider how you'd make the object differently if you believe this object could use improvement!



Ironically, the way that I would improve the design of my personal belonging has already been considered and designed! Below, is a silicone case cover with a keychain, that also protects the case itself.



I chose my Apple AirPods Pro. I like that the storage case for the wireless earbuds charges them without having to be connected to a USB port. Additionally, its design is sleek and minimal, reminding me modern design. However, I wish the storage case had a key hook to secure them to something else and make them easier to carry around.