

# Intro to Interior Design: A 12-Week Creative Journey for Emma

Welcome, Emma! This course is designed to be a fun, hands-on exploration of the world of interior design. Forget boring textbooks; we're going to focus on discovering your unique style and bringing your creative ideas to life. Each week builds on the last, culminating in a final project where you'll design your dream room. Let's get started!

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## Week 1: Discovering Your Design DNA

**Materials Needed:** A new notebook or sketchbook (this will be your "Design Journal"), pen, access to Pinterest, and your favorite magazines (fashion, travel, decor, etc.).

### Lesson Activities:

1. **What is Interior Design?:** It's more than just picking pillows! It's about creating spaces that are functional, beautiful, and tell a story. Watch a "Day in the Life of an Interior Designer" video on YouTube. In your Design Journal, write down three things that surprised you about the job.
2. **The Style Quiz:** Your space should reflect YOU. Take a few online interior design style quizzes (search "what's my interior design style quiz"). Don't take the results as absolute truth! Instead, use them as a starting point. Do the results like "Bohemian," "Minimalist," "Industrial," or "Modern Farmhouse" feel right?
3. **Image Association Exercise:** This is where the magazines and Pinterest come in. Create a new board on Pinterest called "My Design DNA." For the next hour, browse and pin images you are drawn to. Don't overthink it! Pin anything from a cozy sweater, a landscape photo, a piece of art, to a cool building. Do the same with your physical magazines, tearing out pages you love.
4. **Find the Pattern:** At the end of the week, look at everything you collected. In your Design Journal, identify the common threads. What colors repeat? Are there certain textures (wood, metal, soft fabrics)? What's the overall mood (calm, energetic, moody, bright)? This is the beginning of understanding your unique personal style.

**End-of-Week Goal:** Write one paragraph in your Design Journal that describes your emerging personal style, using the clues you just discovered.

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## Week 2: The Language of Design: Elements & Principles

**Materials Needed:** Design Journal, pen, access to the internet, your camera (or phone camera).

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Learn the Lingo - The 7 Elements:** The building blocks of any design are Space, Line, Form, Light, Color, Texture, and Pattern. Research each one online (a quick search for "7 elements of interior design" will give you great visual examples). In your journal, define each element in your own words and draw a small, simple sketch to represent it.
  2. **Learn the Rules - The 7 Principles:** These are how you *use* the elements. The principles are Balance, Harmony & Unity, Rhythm, Proportion & Scale, Emphasis (Focal Point), and Contrast. Research these "7 principles of interior design." Again, define each one in your own
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words with a quick sketch.

3. **Design Detective Scavenger Hunt:** Time to go on a hunt in your own home! Using your camera, find and photograph an example of each of the 7 elements and at least 4 of the principles.
  - *Example:* A tall lamp creates a strong vertical **line**. A large painting over the sofa is the room's **focal point**. Two matching chairs show symmetrical **balance**.
4. **Analyze a Pro:** Find a photo of a room designed by a famous designer (e.g., Kelly Wearstler, Nate Berkus, Joanna Gaines). In your journal, try to identify as many elements and principles as you can in that one room. How did the designer use them to create a successful space?

**End-of-Week Goal:** Create a simple digital presentation or a two-page spread in your journal with the photos you took, labeling the element or principle each one demonstrates.

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## Week 3: The Power of Color

**Materials Needed:** Design Journal, access to Canva or another free graphic design tool, paint chips from a local hardware store (they're free!).

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Color Theory Basics:** Let's get creative with the color wheel. Research these terms: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary colors. Then, look up these key color schemes: Monochromatic, Analogous, Complementary, and Triadic.
2. **Create Your Palettes:** Using the paint chips you collected, create a physical example of each color scheme. For example, for a complementary scheme, find a blue chip and an orange chip. For an analogous scheme, find three chips that sit next to each other on the color wheel (like blue, blue-green, and green). Glue them into your Design Journal.
3. **Color Psychology:** Colors make us feel things! Red can be energetic, blue can be calming. Research "color psychology in interior design." Make a chart in your journal listing 5-6 colors and the common emotions or feelings associated with them.
4. **Digital Palette Challenge:** Go to a website like Coolers.co or use Canva's color palette generator. Your challenge is to create three different color palettes for the same room.
  - Palette 1: For a "Calm & Relaxing" bedroom.
  - Palette 2: For a "Creative & Energizing" home office.
  - Palette 3: For a "Dramatic & Cozy" living room.
 Save these palettes. Which one is your favorite? Why?

**End-of-Week Goal:** Finalize a personal color palette of 4-5 colors for your dream room, based on your style from Week 1 and what you've learned this week. Name your palette something fun (e.g., "Misty Forest Morning," "Sunset on the Pier").

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## Week 4: The Mood Board: Visualizing Your Ideas

**Materials Needed:** Large poster board or cork board, scissors, glue sticks or push pins, old magazines, fabric swatches, collected paint chips, access to Pinterest or Canva, your Design Journal.

### Lesson Activities:

1. **The Designer's Most Important Tool:** A mood board is a collage of images, textures, and colors that defines the feeling of a space before you ever buy anything. Its job is to keep your design focused and cohesive.
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2. **Deconstruct a Pro's Board:** Look up professional interior design mood boards on Pinterest. In your journal, analyze 3 different boards. What is the overall feeling? What colors are dominant? What textures do you see? Who do you think this space is for?
3. **The Physical Mood Board Project:** Let's make one!
  - Choose a theme for a fictional room (e.g., "A Cozy Reading Nook," "A Minimalist Artist's Loft," "A Bohemian Beach Bungalow").
  - Using your magazines, swatches, and paint chips, start collecting images, colors, and textures that fit this theme. Grab what feels right.
  - Arrange everything on your poster board. Play with the layout. Overlap images, group colors together. The goal is to create a composition that tells a story and captures the \*mood\*. Glue everything down.
4. **Digital vs. Physical:** Now, create a digital mood board for the same theme using Canva or a private Pinterest board. Explore how a digital board is different. Which process do you prefer? Why?

**End-of-Week Goal:** Create a beautiful, inspiring mood board (your choice of physical or digital) for \*your own bedroom\*. It should reflect your personal style and your chosen color palette. This will be the guide for your final project!

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## Week 5: Space Planning & Layout

**Materials Needed:** Graph paper, pencil, eraser, ruler, measuring tape.

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Measure Everything:** The first step to any layout is knowing your space. Carefully measure your own bedroom. Measure the length and width of the room, the locations and sizes of windows and doors, and the location of any outlets. Also, measure the key pieces of furniture you have (bed, desk, dresser).
2. **Drawing to Scale:** On your graph paper, you're going to draw a floor plan of your room. Decide on a scale first. A common scale is  $1/4" = 1'$  (meaning every 1/4 inch on your paper equals 1 foot in real life). Draw the outline of the room and add the doors and windows. This is your "master floor plan."
3. **Furniture Cut-Outs:** On a separate piece of graph paper, use the same scale to draw your main furniture pieces. Cut them out. These are your moveable pieces!
4. **The Puzzle of Flow:** Now for the fun part. Using your master floor plan and furniture cut-outs, experiment with different layouts. Think about:
  - **Traffic Flow:** How will you walk through the room? Are there clear paths?
  - **Function:** Is the desk in a spot with good light? Can you open your closet door all the way?
  - **Focal Point:** What do you want to see first when you walk in? Often, this is the bed.
 Try at least three different layouts. Take a photo of each one.

**End-of-Week Goal:** Choose your favorite of the three layouts. In your journal, explain why this layout is the most successful, referencing traffic flow, function, and focal points.

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## Week 6: Materials & Textures

**Materials Needed:** Design Journal, access to the internet, your mood board from Week 4.

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## Lesson Activities:

1. **Texture Makes a Room Interesting:** A room with all "flat" surfaces is boring. Texture adds depth and personality. Brainstorm a list of textures. Think of opposites: rough/smooth, soft/hard, shiny/matte. (e.g., rough wood, smooth glass, soft velvet, hard stone, shiny chrome, matte black paint).
2. **Material Deep Dive:** Choose three materials you're drawn to from your mood board (e.g., light oak wood, linen fabric, brass metal). For each one, do a little research.
  - Where does it come from?
  - What are its properties (durable, delicate, etc.)?
  - What style is it commonly associated with?
  - Find 3 photos of it being used beautifully in a room.
3. **Create a "Flat Lay":** A flat lay is an overhead photo of beautifully arranged objects. Gather small items from around your house that represent different textures you love. Think a knitted blanket, a ceramic mug, a smooth stone, a book, a plant leaf. Arrange them in a pleasing composition and take a photo. This is a great way for designers to visualize how materials will work together.
4. **Connecting to Your Project:** Look back at your mood board. What materials and textures are present? Make a specific list in your Design Journal. For example: "Walls: Matte paint. Bedding: Washed linen. Lighting: Brass metal. Rug: Natural jute."

**End-of-Week Goal:** Create a "Materials & Finishes" page in your journal for your dream room. List the key materials you plan to use for the floor, walls, furniture, textiles (curtains, rugs, bedding), and lighting.

## Week 7: Let There Be Light!

**Materials Needed:** Design Journal, access to the internet.

## Lesson Activities:

1. **The Three Layers of Lighting:** Professional designs use three types of lighting to create a functional and beautiful space. Research and define them in your journal:
  - **Ambient Lighting:** The overall, general illumination of a room (e.g., ceiling fixtures, recessed lights).
  - **Task Lighting:** Focused light for specific activities (e.g., a desk lamp for studying, under-cabinet lights for cooking).
  - **Accent Lighting:** Light used to highlight something specific, like a piece of art or a textured wall (e.g., picture lights, uplights).
2. **Lighting Audit:** Walk through your own home, room by room. In your journal, identify the different types of lighting used in each space. Is there a room that does it really well? Is there a room that could be improved? How?
3. **Bulbs Matter:** The color of your lightbulb changes everything! Research the difference between "warm white," "cool white," and "daylight" bulbs. Look at the Kelvin scale (K). Warm light is cozy (around 2700K), while cool light is energizing (4000K+). Which type of light would you want for a bedroom? A kitchen?
4. **Dream Room Lighting Plan:** Look at your floor plan from Week 5. Sketch a simple lighting plan on a new sheet of graph paper. Where will you put your three layers of light?
  - *Ambient:* A cool ceiling fixture?
  - *Task:* A reading lamp by the bed? A desk lamp?
  - *Accent:* A small light to highlight a poster? Or maybe some fun string lights?

Find pictures online of the *style* of light fixtures you'd like and add them to your Pinterest board.

**End-of-Week Goal:** Finalize your lighting plan sketch and add at least 3 images of your chosen light fixtures to your dream room Pinterest board.

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## Week 8: Sourcing & Budgeting 101

**Materials Needed:** Access to the internet, your Design Journal, a spreadsheet tool (like Google Sheets or Excel).

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Where Do Designers Shop?:** Explore the websites of a few different types of home decor stores.
  - **Big Box:** IKEA, Target, Wayfair
  - **Mid-Range:** West Elm, Crate & Barrel, CB2
  - **Secondhand/Unique:** Facebook Marketplace, Etsy, your local thrift store's website (if they have one).
  - Notice the difference in price and style. There's no "right" place to shop; great design is about the mix!
2. **High/Low Design:** The secret to a beautiful, affordable room is knowing where to save and where to splurge. A common rule is to splurge on items you touch every day (like your sofa or bed) and save on trendy or decorative items. In your journal, make a "Splurge/Save" list for a typical bedroom. What would you splurge on? What would you save on?
3. **The Budget Spreadsheet:** This is a non-negotiable for real projects. Create a simple spreadsheet. The columns should be: Item, Store/Link, Price, and Category (e.g., Furniture, Lighting, Decor).
4. **Window Shopping for Your Dream Room:** Now, let's go on a virtual shopping trip! For your dream room design, find a real-world example of at least 10 items you'd need. It could be the bed, a rug, a desk, a lamp, curtains, etc. Add each one to your budget spreadsheet with a link and the price. Don't worry about the total yet—this is about practice.

**End-of-Week Goal:** Complete your "Window Shopping" spreadsheet with at least 10 items for your dream room project. This gives you a realistic idea of how much things cost.

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## Week 9: The Client Brief: Designing for YOU!

**Materials Needed:** Your Design Journal and all the work you've completed so far.

### Lesson Activities:

1. **You Are the Client:** In the real world, a designer starts with a "client brief"—a document that outlines the client's needs, wants, and goals for a space. This week, you are going to create a formal brief for your own dream bedroom project.
  2. **The Interview:** Answer the following questions in your journal as if a designer were interviewing you. Be as detailed as possible.
    - **About You:** What are your hobbies and interests? What do you do in your room besides sleep? (e.g., read, study, listen to music, draw).
    - **Function:** What is working in your current room? What is NOT working? (e.g., "I have no good light for reading," "My desk is too small," "I need more storage for my art supplies").
    - **Feeling:** How do you want to FEEL in your new room? Use 3-5 keywords (e.g., calm, inspired, cozy, organized, fresh).
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- **Must-Haves:** What are the absolute non-negotiables? (e.g., "I must have a queen-sized bed," "I need a large desk," "I want to keep my grandmother's chair").
3. **Synthesize Your Vision:** Read through all your answers. Now, write a one-page "Project Vision Statement." This should summarize the key goals. Start it like this: "The goal for this bedroom redesign is to create a [insert feeling words] space that supports my love for [insert hobbies]. The design will solve the problem of [insert functional problem] by incorporating [insert solution]. The overall style will be [your personal style] with a color palette of [your colors]."

**End-of-Week Goal:** A polished, one-page Project Vision Statement. This document will be your north star for the final three weeks of the course.

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## Week 10: Developing the Concept: Sketches & Models

**Materials Needed:** Your floor plan, tracing paper (optional), colored pencils/markers, computer with internet access.

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Elevation Drawings:** A floor plan shows a bird's-eye view. An elevation shows a wall head-on. Choose one important wall in your bedroom layout (like the wall your bed is on). On a new sheet of paper, draw it as if you were standing directly in front of it. Include the bed, windows, nightstands, and any art or lighting. This helps you see how things look vertically.
2. **Quick Perspective Sketching:** Don't worry about being a perfect artist! The goal is to communicate an idea. Watch a simple tutorial on "one-point perspective drawing for interiors." Try a quick, rough sketch of a corner of your room to get a 3D feel for the space. This is how designers quickly visualize their ideas.
3. **Explore Digital Tools:** Let's bring your design into the 21st century! Explore a free, user-friendly room planner tool online. Some popular options are SketchUp Free, Roomstyler, or the IKEA Home Planner. Spend time recreating your floor plan and placing furniture in one of these tools.
4. **Render Your Room:** In the digital tool, "furnish" your room based on your selections so far. Try to find items that look like your sourced pieces. Add your color palette to the walls. Many of these tools allow you to see a 3D rendering. Play with camera angles and save your favorite view.

**End-of-Week Goal:** Have one hand-drawn elevation sketch and one saved 3D digital rendering of your dream room concept. This shows your design from two different viewpoints.

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## Week 11: Finalizing the Design: The Presentation Board

**Materials Needed:** Large poster board (or use a digital tool like Canva/Google Slides), glue, printer, all your project materials (mood board, floor plan, budget, etc.).

### Lesson Activities:

1. **The Designer's Presentation:** When a designer presents to a client, they don't just show up with a floor plan. They present a complete vision on a "presentation board" (or a digital slide deck). This board tells the entire story of the project.
  2. **Gather Your Assets:** Collect all the components of your design:
    - Your Project Vision Statement (from Week 9)
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- Your Mood Board (Week 4)
  - Your final Floor Plan (Week 5)
  - Your Color Palette (Week 3)
  - Your Materials & Finishes list (Week 6)
  - Images of your key furniture and lighting selections (Week 8)
  - Your 3D rendering (Week 10)
3. **Compose Your Board:** Arrange all these elements on your large poster board (or in a digital presentation). The layout should be clean, organized, and easy to understand. Give it a title, like "The [Your Name] Bedroom Redesign." Think of it like a museum exhibit about your design. Print out images and text to glue onto the board.
  4. **Prepare to Present:** Practice talking through your board. Explain your concept, starting with the "why" (your vision statement) and then showing the "how" (your floor plan, color choices, and furniture selections). Tell the story of the room. Why did you make these choices? How do they solve the problems you identified in your client brief?

**End-of-Week Goal:** A completed, beautiful, and comprehensive presentation board (physical or digital) that showcases your entire design project from start to finish.

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## Week 12: The Grand Reveal: Presenting Your Dream Room

**Materials Needed:** Your final presentation board.

### Lesson Activities:

1. **Set the Stage:** Find a comfortable spot and set up your presentation board so it's clearly visible. If you're presenting to your family, treat them like they are the client!
2. **The Final Presentation:** It's time to share your hard work! Present your project from start to finish.
  - **Start with the story:** Introduce the "client" (you!) and the goals from your vision statement.
  - **Show the feeling:** Walk through your mood board and color palette.
  - **Explain the logic:** Show your floor plan and explain why the layout works.
  - **Reveal the details:** Talk about your material and furniture choices, explaining how they fit the style and function.
  - **The "Wow" Moment:** End by showing your 3D rendering as the final reveal of the space.
3. **Reflect and Celebrate:** You did it! After your presentation, take some time to reflect in your Design Journal. What was your favorite part of the design process? What was the most challenging part? What did you learn about your own creativity and style?

**Final Project Assessment:** The success of your project is evaluated on how well your final design meets the goals you set in your Week 9 Client Brief. Did you create a space that reflects your personality and solves your functional needs? Is the presentation clear, creative, and professional? Congratulations on completing your first full interior design project!