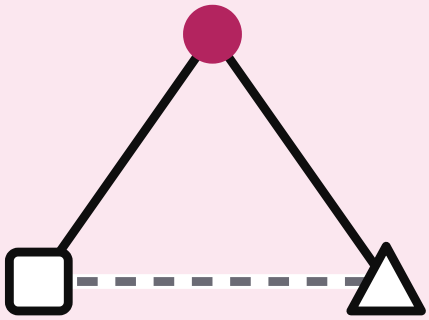
Field

Semiotics

Studies signs and how they produce meaning: how an image, a word, or an object comes to mean something to someone.

In Spanish
Semiótica

Origin
Saussure (1916) and Peirce; applied to images by Barthes (1964)



What it studies

How meaning is created. It gives design tools to analyze what an image, a brand, or an object communicates.

Principles

Signifier and signified
The form of the sign and the idea it evokes.

Denotation and connotation
What is seen and what it suggests.

It depends on who is looking
Meaning changes with culture and context.

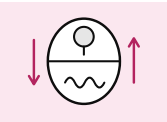
Applications in design

✓ Use it like this
Ask what your design suggests, in addition to what it shows.

✗ Avoid
Assuming a symbol means the same thing in every culture.

👁 Don't fall for it
Test icons and images with the real audience: you already know what you meant to say.

Theories and concepts



Concept

Signifier and signified

The two sides of every sign: the form you perceive and the idea it brings to mind.



Model

Icon, index and symbol

Three ways a sign connects to what it stands for: likeness, connection, or convention.



Concept

Denotation and connotation

What an image shows literally and what it suggests through cultural association.

Connections

Used in

- Brand design
- Packaging design
- Graphic design
- Brand identity design
- Pictograms and iconography

Related to

- Brand identity prism
- Product semantics

Authors and works

1916	**Ferdinand de Saussure**	Described the sign as the union of a signifier and a signified.
1964	**Roland Barthes**	Analyzed an advertisement to show how an image suggests more than it shows.
2006	**Klaus Krippendorff**	Proposed designing from what objects mean to people.

Sources

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- Krippendorff, K. (2006). The semantic turn: A new foundation for design. CRC Press.

Last reviewed: October 22, 2026

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