

Midjourney Style Guide: Complete Visual Reference

A comprehensive guide for AI image generation - From Prompt Engineer to Practitioner

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Essential Parameters

Core Parameters Every User Should Know

Aspect Ratio (`--ar`)

- `--ar 1:1` - Square (default)
- `--ar 16:9` - Widescreen/cinematic
- `--ar 9:16` - Portrait/mobile
- `--ar 3:2` - Classic photography
- `--ar 4:5` - Instagram portrait

Stylize (`--s`)

- `--s 0-50` - Literal interpretation, follows prompt closely
- `--s 100` - Default Midjourney styling (balanced)
- `--s 250-500` - More artistic interpretation
- `--s 750-1000` - Highly stylized, creative liberties

Chaos (`--c`)

- `--c 0-25` - Consistent, similar results
- `--c 50-75` - Moderate variation
- `--c 100` - Maximum variation, unexpected results

Quality (`--q`)

- `--q 0.25` - Faster, less detailed
 - `--q 0.5` - Balanced speed/quality
 - `--q 1` - Default quality
 - `--q 2` - Higher detail (more expensive)
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Classic Art Styles

Renaissance & Baroque

[subject], Renaissance painting style, oil on canvas, dramatic lighting, sfumato technique
[subject], Baroque style, dramatic chiaroscuro, ornate details, golden hour lighting

Impressionism & Post-Impressionism

[subject], Impressionist style, loose brushstrokes, dappled sunlight, en plein air
[subject], Post-Impressionist style, bold colors, geometric forms, expressive brushwork

Art Nouveau & Art Deco

[subject], Art Nouveau style, flowing organic lines, botanical motifs, elegant curves
[subject], Art Deco style, geometric patterns, metallic accents, luxury aesthetic

Modern Masters Style (without naming artists)

[subject], Cubist style, fragmented forms, multiple perspectives, geometric shapes
[subject], Surrealist style, dreamlike imagery, impossible scenes, symbolic elements
[subject], Abstract Expressionist style, gestural brushstrokes, emotional intensity

Modern & Contemporary Styles

Digital Age Aesthetics

[subject], Synthwave style, neon colors, retro-futuristic, 1980s aesthetic
[subject], Vaporwave style, pastel colors, glitch effects, nostalgic elements
[subject], Cyberpunk style, neon lighting, urban decay, high-tech low-life

Minimalism & Clean Design

[subject], Minimalist style, clean lines, negative space, monochromatic palette
[subject], Scandinavian design, natural materials, soft lighting, hygge aesthetic
[subject], Brutalist style, raw concrete, geometric forms, monumental scale

Street Art & Urban

[subject], Graffiti style, vibrant colors, urban walls, spray paint texture
[subject], Street art style, stencil technique, political messaging, urban setting
[subject], Pop art style, bright colors, commercial imagery, bold graphics

Photography Styles

Portrait Photography

[subject], Professional headshot, studio lighting, shallow depth of field
[subject], Environmental portrait, natural lighting, contextual background
[subject], Fashion photography, dramatic lighting, high contrast, editorial style

Landscape & Nature

[subject], Golden hour photography, warm lighting, landscape composition
[subject], Black and white landscape, dramatic contrast, fine art photography
[subject], Macro photography, extreme close-up, shallow depth of field

Architectural & Urban

[subject], Architectural photography, leading lines, geometric composition
[subject], Urban street photography, candid moments, natural lighting
[subject], Night photography, long exposure, city lights, dramatic mood

Illustration & Digital Art

Traditional Illustration

[subject], Watercolor illustration, soft washes, organic textures, transparent layers
[subject], Pen and ink drawing, crosshatching, fine linework, detailed illustration
[subject], Gouache painting, opaque colors, matte finish, vintage poster style

Digital & Contemporary

[subject], Digital painting, smooth gradients, polished finish, concept art style

[subject], Pixel art style, 8-bit aesthetic, retro gaming, limited color palette

[subject], Low poly art, geometric facets, 3D rendering, minimalist design

Animation & Comics

[subject], Manga style, large eyes, dynamic poses, screentone effects

[subject], Western comic book style, bold outlines, flat colors, action scenes

[subject], Animation cel style, clean lines, flat shading, cartoon aesthetic

Advanced Prompting Techniques

Style Layering

Combine multiple style references for unique results:

[subject], oil painting + digital art hybrid, classical composition with modern colors

[subject], photography + illustration blend, realistic base with artistic overlay

Lighting & Mood Control

Lighting Keywords:

- Golden hour, blue hour, dramatic lighting, soft diffused light
- Rim lighting, backlighting, side lighting, studio lighting
- Neon lighting, candlelight, moonlight, harsh shadows

Mood Keywords:

- Cinematic, atmospheric, moody, ethereal, mysterious
- Vibrant, muted, monochromatic, high contrast, low contrast

Texture & Material Specification

Surface Textures:

- Canvas texture, paper texture, wood grain, metal surface
- Glass, marble, fabric, leather, stone, concrete

Artistic Mediums:

- Oil paint, watercolor, acrylic, charcoal, pencil
- Digital, 3D render, photograph, screen print, lithograph

Camera & Technical Settings

Camera Simulation:

- 35mm film, medium format, large format, instant film
- Wide angle lens, telephoto, macro lens, fisheye
- f/1.4, f/2.8, f/8 (aperture simulation)
- ISO 100, ISO 800, ISO 3200 (grain/noise levels)

Style Reference (SREF) System

Using Style References

Basic SREF usage:

--sref [URL or code]

Random style selection:

--sref random

Style Weight Control

--sw 0-100 (default: 100)

--sw 25 # Subtle style influence

--sw 50 # Moderate style influence

--sw 100 # Full style influence

Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

Essential Prompt Structure

[Subject] + [Style] + [Composition] + [Lighting] + [Parameters]

Example:

Portrait of a woman, Renaissance oil painting style, three-quarter view,
dramatic chiaroscuro lighting --ar 3:4 --s 250

Common Style Modifiers

- **Vintage:** aged, retro, nostalgic, faded
- **Modern:** clean, contemporary, sleek, minimalist
- **Dramatic:** high contrast, bold, intense, striking
- **Soft:** gentle, subtle, muted, ethereal
- **Bold:** vibrant, saturated, dynamic, energetic

Quality Control Tips

1. **Be specific** - "Renaissance oil painting" vs. "old painting"
2. **Layer descriptions** - combine style + technique + mood
3. **Use negative prompts** - `--no blurry, distorted, text`
4. **Control stylization** - adjust `--s` for interpretation level
5. **Iterate systematically** - change one element at a time

Professional Workflow

1. **Start with basic prompt** - establish subject and composition
 2. **Add style references** - define the artistic approach
 3. **Refine with parameters** - control technical aspects
 4. **Iterate and improve** - systematic refinement process
 5. **Save successful combinations** - build your style library
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Advanced Style Combinations

Hybrid Techniques

[subject], oil painting with digital enhancement, classical + modern
[subject], photography with illustration overlay, realistic + artistic
[subject], 3D render with painterly effects, technical + organic

Era Fusion

[subject], Victorian era meets cyberpunk, ornate + futuristic
[subject], Art Deco with contemporary minimalism, geometric + clean
[subject], Renaissance with pop art colors, classical + vibrant

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Style Not Applying Properly

- Increase `--s` value for stronger stylization
- Use more specific style keywords
- Add negative prompts to exclude unwanted elements
- Consider using style references (`--sref`)

Inconsistent Results

- Lower `--c` (chaos) value for consistency
- Use seed values for reproducible results
- Be more specific in descriptions
- Use style references for reliable aesthetics

Overly Stylized Results

- Decrease `--s` value
- Add "realistic" or "natural" to prompt
- Use `--style raw` for less interpretation
- Balance artistic terms with descriptive ones

This guide serves as a comprehensive reference for creating professional-quality AI art with Midjourney. Remember that the best results come from experimentation and systematic refinement of your prompting technique.