Writing Publications
Quick Reference Guide

What is the Purpose of the document?

Entertainment Is the reader reading to enjoy?

Assessment Is the reader assessing information?

"How to" Instructions Is the reader following step by step instructions?

Learning Is the reader trying to learn about a specific topic?

Choose the Right Font

Fonts are classified into 5 groups based on their characteristics and human personality traits:

1. All Purpose
2. Traditional
3. Happy Creative
4. Assertive Bold
5. Plain

Is this font suitable for the publication?

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3 Aspects of Design

1. **Functionality** The material is designed to help the user reach their objectives/goals.

2. **Usability** Readers can use the content effectively; find what they are looking quickly and easily.

3. **Readability** The bodies of text are easy to read and organized in a logical way.

Publication Divisions

Front Matter
This is section includes everything at the beginning of the document, leading up to the first section or chapter.

Common Front Matter Sections:
- Title
- Copyright
- Table of Content
- Introduction
- List of abbreviations/glossary
- Disclaimer

This section should be designed in a way readers can quickly find information without having to read the entire content.

Content Matter
This section is comprised of all the information that makes up the focus of the document.

Common Content Matter Sections:
- Chapter & Section Headings
- Body
- Callout
- Illustrations
- Captions
- Pull Quotes
- Lists
- Tables

Back Matter
This content includes everything after the final section or chapter. It typically includes additional information supporting the content of the publication.

Common Back Matter Sections:
- Appendix
- Glossary
- Bibliography or References
- Index

This section should be designed in a way readers can quickly find information without having to read the entire content.

Layout and Proportions

On Screen or Print

Single-sided vs Double-sided

Chapters and Sections

Planning your layout is the first step towards organizing all the elements and content of your design. Consider how the audience will view the publication, and how it should be organized.

Readers Prefer Certain Fonts for Certain Uses

In order to communicate effectively, a writer must select typefaces appropriately. Different fonts have different characteristics. For example, Cambria reflects a message of stability, politeness, and practicality. The typeface Impact presents a message of assertiveness, rigidity and coarseness. Take a look at the fonts below, and consider what kind of message they deliver.

Use	Font	%
Website Text	TNR	72%
	Calibri	70%
	Cambria	70%
Business Documents	TNR	78%
	Cambria	76%
Children's Documents	Kristen	78%
	Comic Sans	77%
E-Greeting	Monotype Corsiva	74%

Each typeface is its own non-verbal communicator. We need to be aware of these non-verbal messages and select our typefaces appropriately.

4 Basic Design Principles

Proximity

It is important for designers to organize related information together, and separate less relevant information. Creating an organized proximity helps visuality represent the structure of information, improving readability.

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast
Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries
Cheeseburger, French fries
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast

Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries
Cheeseburger, French fries
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries

See how proximity is adjusted to separate the Lunch menu items from the Breakfast items. In the first table, it is difficult for the reader to separate between breakfast and lunch items. In the second table, the reader can quickly find what they want, without having to scan the entire body of text.

Alignment

- **Left**
- **Right**
- **Center**
- **Justify**

Consider both alignment of text blocks and alignment of relevant elements close to one another.

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast $5.99
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit $5.99
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast $7.99
Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries $6.99
Cheeseburger, French fries $7.99
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries $6.99

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast $5.99
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit $5.99
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast $7.99

Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries $6.99
Cheeseburger, French fries $7.99
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries $6.99

Notice the alignment of the menu headings, menu items, and prices. Readers referring to the second table can quickly identify menu prices grouped together.

Contrast

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast $5.99
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit $5.99
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast $7.99
Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries $6.99
Cheeseburger, French fries $7.99
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries $6.99

Breakfast
2 Eggs, Bacon, Toast   *$5.99*
2 Pancakes, Bacon, Fruit   *$5.99*
3 Eggs, Sausages, Toast   *$7.99*

Lunch
Tuna Sandwich, French fries *$6.99*
Cheeseburger, French fries   *$7.99*
Chicken Salad Sandwich, French fries   *$6.99*

See how the bold and italics now highlights contrasting information, allowing the reader to quickly dissect different types of information.
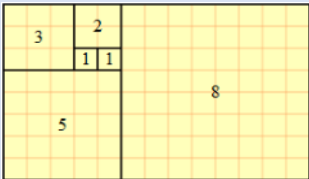
Repetition

To Register, follow the instructions below *

*To register for the event, please follow these steps.

Repeated elements, whether they are shading, or symbols, provide a cohesiveness to documentation, and allows readers to memorize certain cues. In the example above, the red Asterix is a prompt for readers to follow the indicated instructions.

Headers and Footers

Headers and Footers are lines of text that appear at the top and bottom of each page, and provide a reminder to the reader of what it is they are reading, and where they are in the publication.

Header & Footer Placement

Some things to consider:

- Frequently changing information should be on the outside edge
- Static information near inside of page
- Note: Header information is more visible than the footer information

Where am I?
- Page number
- Chapter Title
- Chapter number
- Section label

What am I?
- Company, department, group
- Publication Type
- Publication Title
- Revision number
- Publication Date
- Publication Status (draft, final)
- Author
- Copyright

Design Grids

How many columns?
How wide are the columns?
Odd vs Even number of columns?

Apply the Fibonacci Sequence by adding two previous numbers together to get the next number in the series. This can be used to create an arranged structure for your elements.

Consider proximity, alignment, and contrast, to determine proportions and positioning on your design grid.

Avoid These Bad Habits

Double Spacing

Double spacing between lines creates long streams of white space that may cause the reader to inadvertently jump lines, and miss information. It also adds unnecessary length to the document.

Using New Lines to Vertically Position Text

Manually inserting 'hard returns' is time consuming and inefficient. The Paragraph Settings in Word allows the user to adjust paragraph spacing and apply the spacing across the entire document.

Two Spaces After a Period

Double spacing after a period can create large chunks of white that pulls the reader's attention down, instead of across.

Underline vs Italicize

Underlining can make text difficult to read or scan. It is also often associated with hyperlinks. Alternatively, italicizing text can highlight words for the reader, without affecting readability.

Positioning Text Using Tabs/Spacing

Manually inserting tabs and spacing is inefficient, takes a lot of time, and makes layouts hard to change. Modern word processors use style formatting that allows users to make multiple changes to alignment all at once and apply those changes everywhere in the publication.

Paragraph Indents

Publishers used to indent paragraphs as a cost-saving measure to save paper. Today, publications are often read electronically, and the extra line does not come at a cost. Adding an extra line also creates a cleaner, uniform layout, as opposed to the small blocks of white space produced by indents.