

Hierarchy is Everything

Not all elements are equal

- Visual hierarchy refers to how important the elements in an interface appear in relation to one another, and it's the most effective tool for making something feel "designed".
- u deliberately de-emphasize secondary and tertiary information, and make an effort to highlight the elements that are most important

Size is not everything

- Don't rely too much on font size to control your hierarchy
- A dark color for primary content (like the headline of an article)
A grey for secondary content (like the date an article was published)
A lighter grey for tertiary content (maybe the copyright notice in a footer)
- Stay away from font weights under 400 for UI work

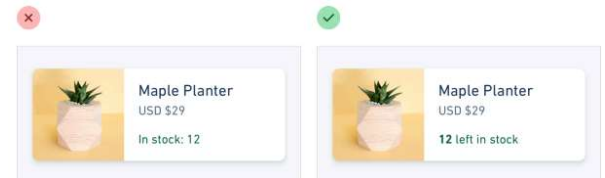
Don't use grey text on colored backgrounds

- Making the text closer to the background color helps create hierarchy
- Choose a color based on background color
- Hand-picking a color this way makes it easy to reduce the contrast without the text looking faded

Emphasize by de-emphasizing

Labels are a last resort

- Put down the accessibility pitchfork
- Combine labels and values
- Labels are secondary
- When to emphasize a label



1. If you're designing an interface where you know the user will be looking for the label, it might make sense to emphasize the label instead of the data

Separate visual hierarchy from document hierarchy

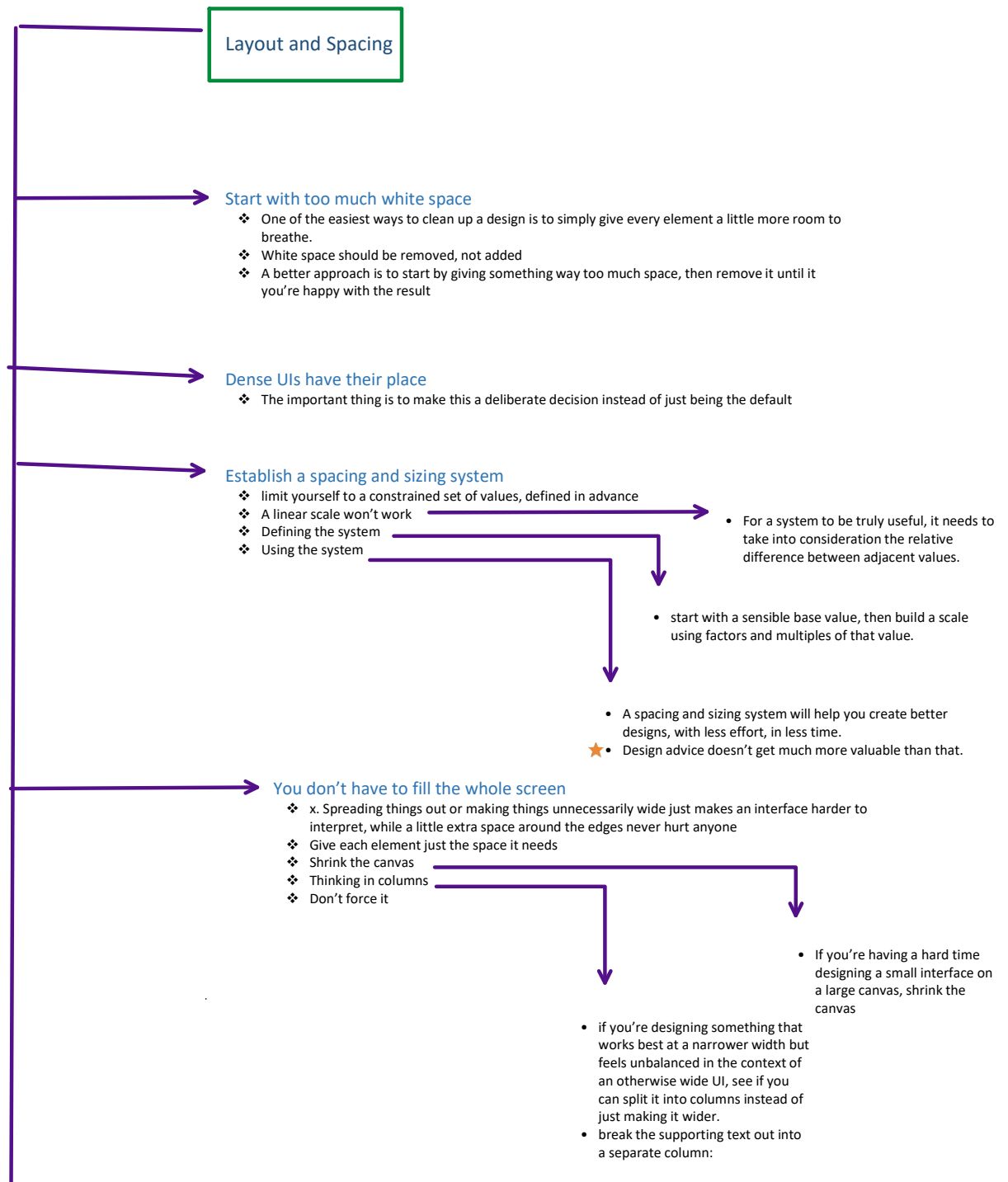
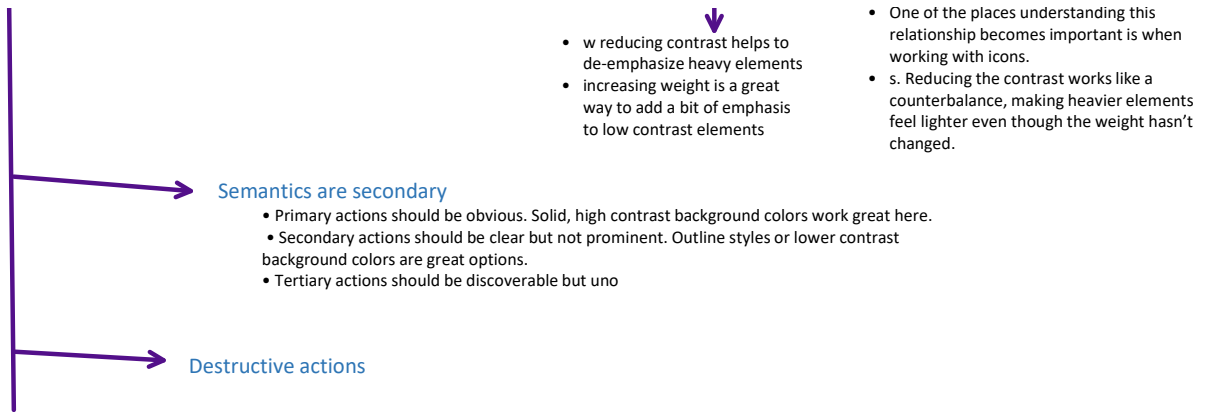
- It's important to use semantic markup when building for the web
- include section titles in your markup for accessibility reasons but completely hide them visually because the content speaks for itself
- Don't let the element you're using influence how you choose to style it

Balance weight and contrast

- the relationship between surface area and hierarchy has implications on other elements in a UI as well
- Using contrast to compensate for weight
- Using weight to compensate for contrast

- w reducing contrast helps to de-emphasize heavy elements
- increasing weight is a great counterbalance, making heavier elements

- One of the places understanding this relationship becomes important is when working with icons.
- s. Reducing the contrast works like a counterbalance, making heavier elements



- just making it wider.
- break the supporting text out into a separate column:

Grids are overrated

- ❖ Using a system like a 12-column grid is a great way to simplify layout decisions, and can bring a satisfying sense of order to your designs.
- ❖ Not all elements should be fluid
- ❖ Don't shrink an element until you need to

Relative sizing doesn't scale

- ❖ every part of an interface should be sized relative to one another
- ❖ As a general rule, elements that are large on large screens need to shrink faster than elements that are already fairly small — the difference between small elements and large elements should be less extreme at small screen sizes
- ❖ Relationships within elements
- ❖ Here the large button actually feels like a larger button, and the small buttons actually feel like smaller buttons, not like we simply adjusted the zoom. Let go of the idea that everything needs to scale proportionately — giving yourself the freedom to fine-tune things independently makes it a hell of a lot easier to design for multiple contexts.

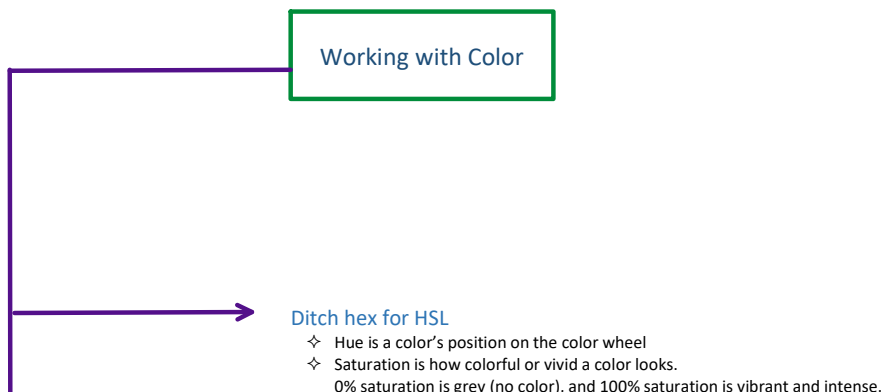
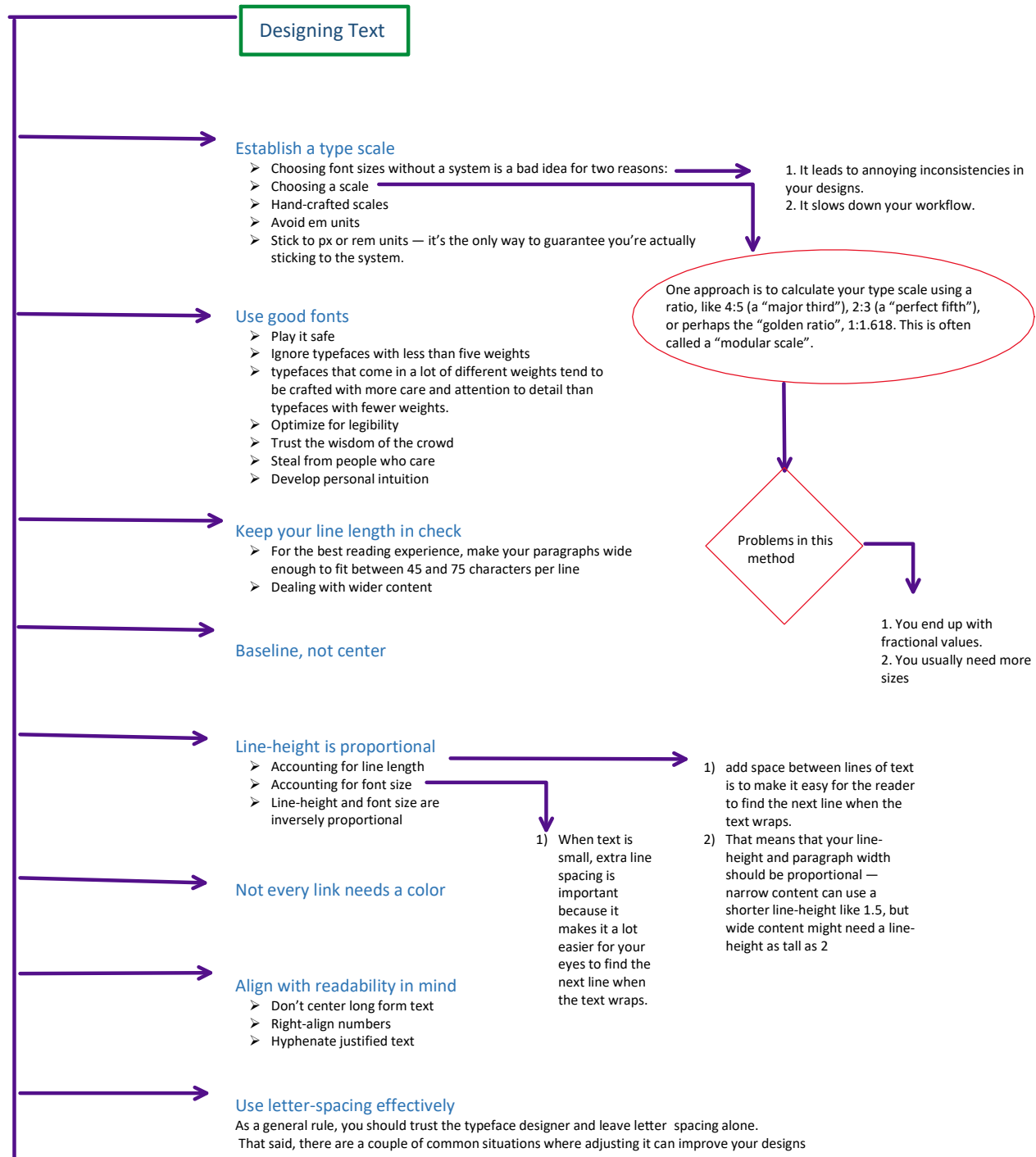
- Instead of sizing elements like this based on a grid, give them a max-width so they don't get too large, and only force them to shrink when the screen gets smaller than that max-width.

- a grid system is just about giving elements fluid, percentage based widths, where you're choosing from

- The idea that things should scale independently doesn't just apply to sizing elements at different screen sizes

Avoid ambiguous spacing

- ❖ When groups of elements are explicitly separated — usually by a border or background color — it's obvious which elements belong to which group.
- ❖ Whenever you're relying on spacing to connect a group of elements, always make sure there's more space around the group than there is within it — interfaces that are hard to understand always look worse.



Ditch hex for HSL

- ✧ Hue is a color's position on the color wheel
- ✧ Saturation is how colorful or vivid a color looks. 0% saturation is grey (no color), and 100% saturation is vibrant and intense.
- ✧ Without saturation, hue is irrelevant
- ✧ Lightness is just what it sounds like
- ✧ HSL vs. HSB

You need more colors than you think

- ✧ To build something real, you need a much more comprehensive set of colors to choose from.
- ✧ it's not uncommon to need as many as ten different colors with 5-10 shades each for a complex UI.

Define your shades up front

- ✧ When you need to create a lighter or darker variation of a color in your palette, don't get clever using CSS preprocessor functions like "lighten" or "darken" to create shades on the fly
- ✧ That's how you end up with 35 slightly different blues that all look the same
- ✧ Choose the base color first
- ✧ Finding the edges
- ✧ Filling in the gaps
- ✧ A systematic approach like the one described above is great to get you started, but don't be afraid to make little tweaks if you need to.
- ✧

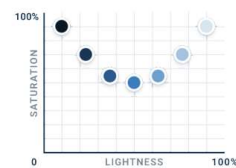
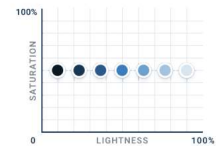
- lightness in HSL is not the same than brightness in HSB.
- In HSB, 0% brightness is always black, but 100% brightness is only white when the saturation is 0%.
- When saturation is 100%, 100% brightness in HSB is the same as 100% saturation and 50% lightness in HSL
- HSB is more common than HSL in design software, but browsers only understand HSL, so if you're designing for the web, HSL should be your weapon of choice.

- Start by picking a base color for the scale you want to create

- The darkest shade of a color is usually reserved for text, while the lightest shade might be used to tint the background of an element.

Don't let lightness kill your saturation

- ✧ In the HSL color space, as a color gets closer to 0% or 100% lightness, the impact of saturation is weakened — the same saturation value at 50% lightness looks more colorful than it does at 90% lightness.
- ✧ That means that if you don't want the lighter and darker shades of a given color to look washed out, you need to increase the saturation as the lightness gets further away from 50%
- ✧ Use perceived brightness to your advantage
- ✧ perceived brightness doesn't simply change linearly from the darkest hue to the lightest hue
- ✧ Changing brightness by rotating hue



Greys don't have to be grey

- ✧ By definition, true grey has a saturation of 0% — it doesn't have any actual color in it at all.
- ✧ Color temperature

To maintain a consistent temperature, don't forget to increase the saturation for the lighter and darker shades. If you don't, those shades will look a bit washed out compared to the greys that are closer to 50% lightness.

Accessible doesn't have to mean ugly

- ✧ normal text (under ~18px) has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, and that larger text has a contrast ratio of at least 3:1.
- ✧ Flipping the contrast
- ✧ Rotating the hue

How much you want to saturate your greys is completely up to you — add just a little if you only want to tip the temperature slightly, or crank it up if you want the interface to lean strongly in one direction or the other.

Don't rely on color alone

- This can create hierarchy issues when those elements aren't supposed to be the focus of the page

Always use color to support something that your design is already saying

You can solve this problem by flipping the contrast. Instead of using light text on a dark colored

You can solve this problem by flipping the contrast. Instead of using light text on a dark colored background, use dark colored text on a light colored background

Creating Depth

Emulate a light source

- Light comes from above
- Simulate light in a user interface
- Insert box-shadow and all to make it look good and real
- Don't get carried away
- Use shadows to convey elevation
- Establishing an elevation system
- Just like with color, typography, spacing, and sizing, defining a fixed set of shadows will speed up your workflow and help maintain consistency in your designs.
- Combining shadows with interaction

Shadows can have two parts

- The first shadow is larger and softer, with a considerable vertical offset and large blur radius. It simulates the shadow cast behind an object by a direct light source
- The second shadow is tighter and darker, with less of a vertical offset and a smaller blur radius. It simulates the shadowed area underneath an object where even ambient light has a hard time reaching
- Using two shadows like this gives you a lot more control than you'd get with a single shadow
- Accounting for elevation

Even flat designs can have depth

- Creating depth with color
- Make an element lighter than the background color to make it feel like it's raised off of the page, or darker than the background color if you want it to feel inset like a well:
- Using solid shadows

Overlap elements to create layers

- Overlapping images

Working with Images

Use good photos

Add an overlay

1. Hire a professional photographer. If you need very specific photos for your project, entrust a professional. Taking great photos isn't just about using an expensive camera, it's about lighting, composition, color — skills that take years to develop.
2. Use high quality stock photography. If your needs are more generic, there are tons of great resources out there where you can purchase great stock photos. There are even sites like Unsplash that offer beautiful photography for free

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Use good photos

Add an overlay

Lower the image contrast

Colorize the image

- 1. Lower the image contrast, to balance things out a bit.
- 2. Desaturate the image, to remove any existing color.
- 3. Add a solid fill, using the "multiply" blend mode.

Add a text shadow

Everything has an intended size

- Don't scale up icons
- Don't scale down screenshots
- Don't scale down icons, either

Beware user-uploaded content

- Control the shape and size
- Prevent background bleed

Finishing Touches

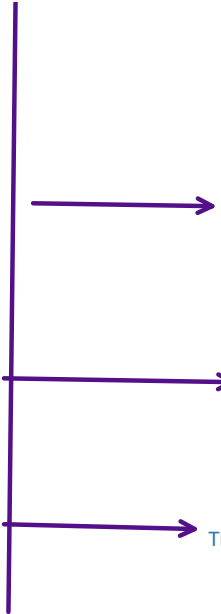
Supercharge the default

Add color with accent borders

Decorate your backgrounds

- Change the background color
- Use a repeating pattern
- Add a simple shape or illustration

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Don't overlook empty states

- If you're designing something that depends on user-generated content, the empty state should be a priority, not an afterthought
- If you're working on something that has a bunch of supporting UI like tabs or filters, consider hiding that stuff entirely

Use fewer borders

- Use a box shadow
- Use two different background colors
- Add extra spacing

Think outside the box