

Starting Out Your UIUX Career

Module 9

Forms

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Forms

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Fields

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Dropdowns

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Checkboxes, Switches and Radio Buttons

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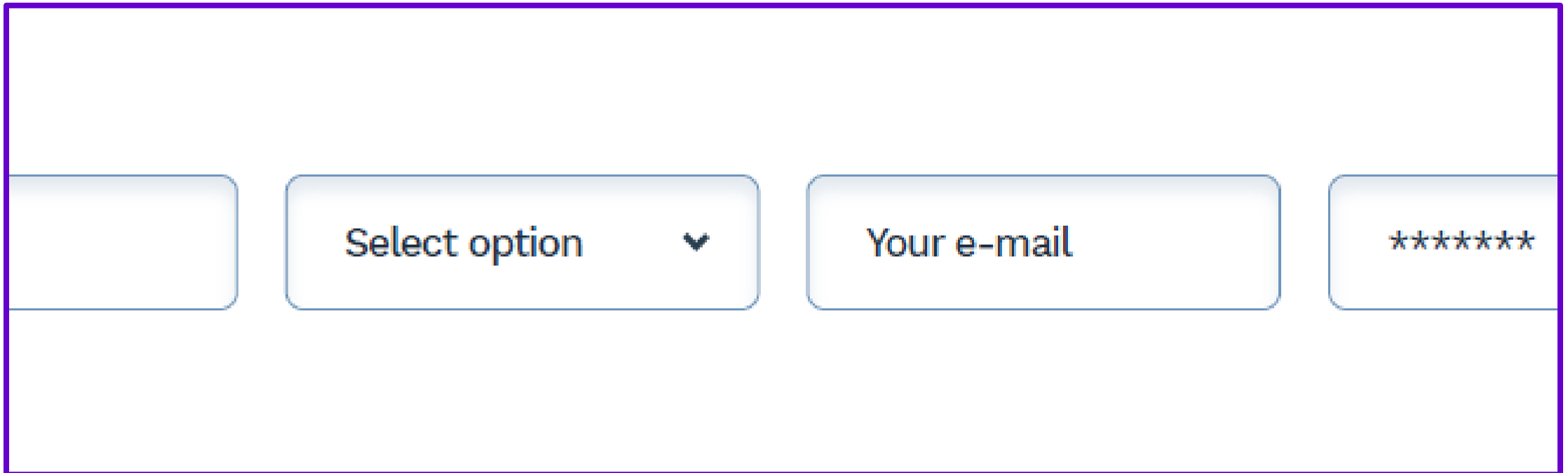
Sliders

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Best Practices

Forms

In simple terms, a form is a **set of labels and fields** in which we manually enter information, with a button at the end, to save everything in a database.



The image shows a horizontal form layout with four distinct input fields, each represented by a light blue rounded rectangle with a thin blue border. From left to right: 1. An empty text input field. 2. A dropdown menu containing the text 'Select option' and a small downward-pointing chevron icon. 3. A text input field with the placeholder text 'Your e-mail'. 4. A password input field indicated by seven asterisks '*****'.

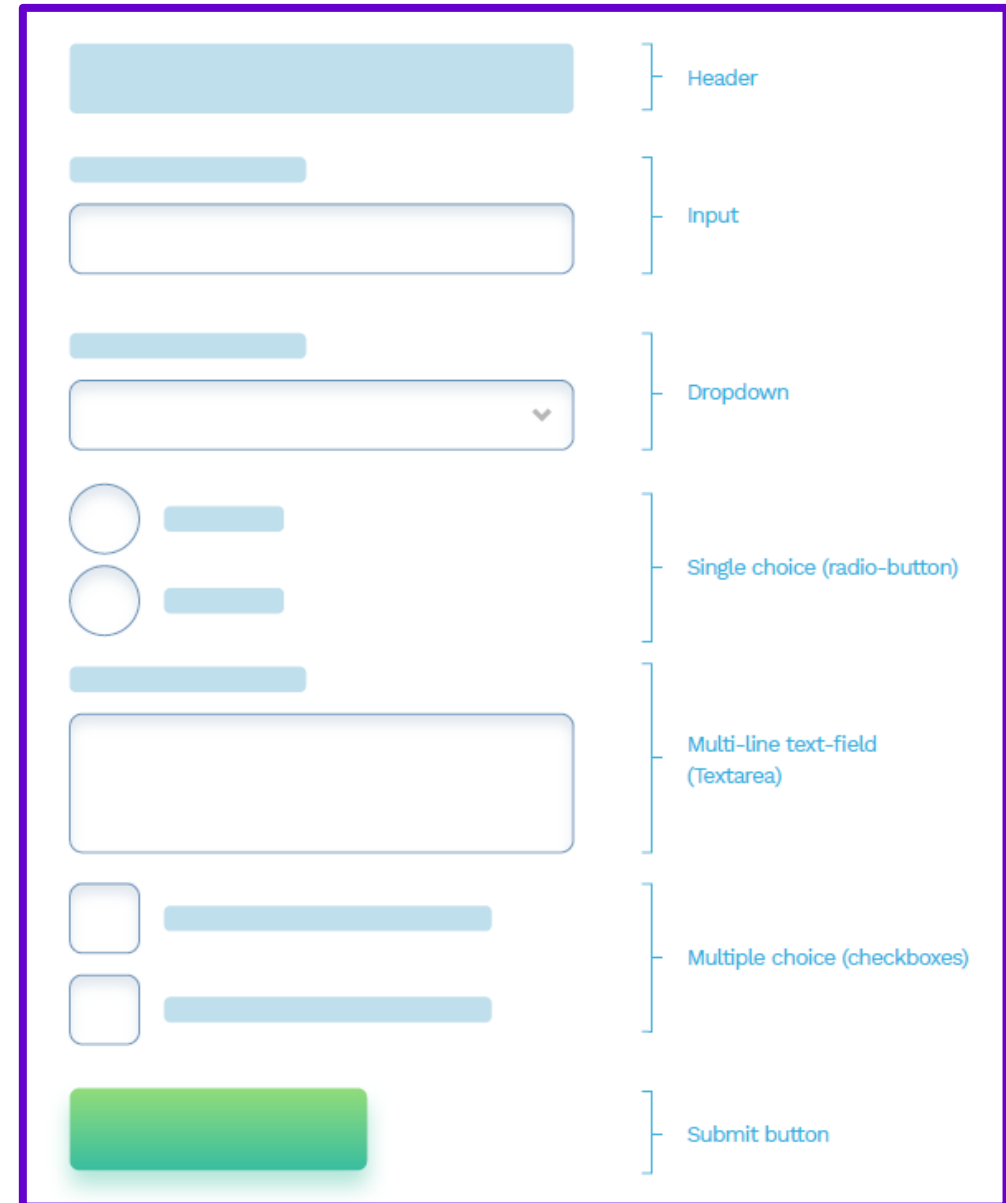
Conversion

Conversion is a percentage of completed form entries.
Every user that "drops off" before clicking that final "save" button is a decrease in our conversion rate.

Always test your forms on real users.

FORM ELEMENTS

The basic set of elements in a form includes a **text field**, a **dropdown**, and a **button**. We also have multiple-choice fields (**checkboxes**) and single choice ones (**radio-buttons**), **text-areas** for longer text entry. Other types (**like sliders**) are less common.



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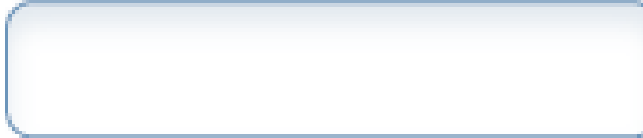
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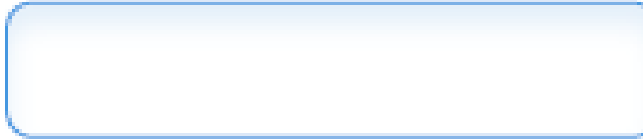
Best Practices

FIELD STATES

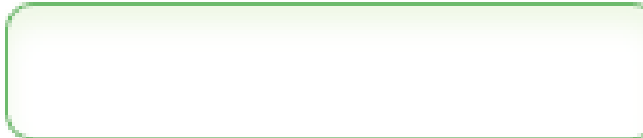
Design every form element (field, checkbox, radio, etc.) in all of those states.

A white rectangular input field with rounded corners and a thin blue border.

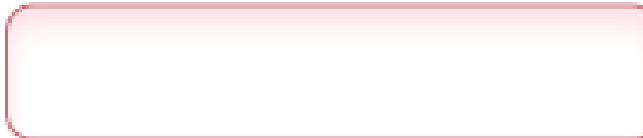
Normal

A white rectangular input field with rounded corners and a thicker blue border.

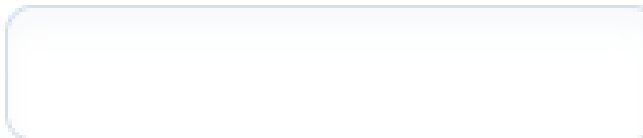
Active

A light green rectangular input field with rounded corners and a green border.

Completed

A light red rectangular input field with rounded corners and a red border.

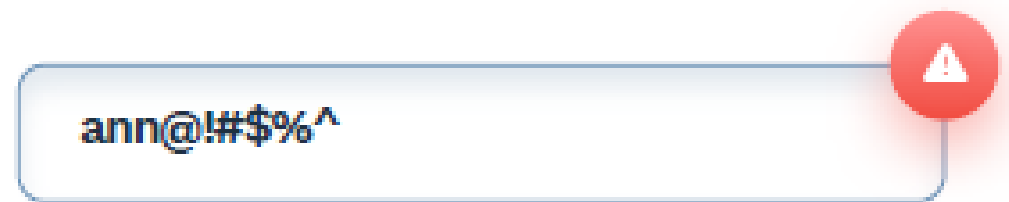
Unsuccessful / wrong

A light gray rectangular input field with rounded corners and a thin gray border.

Disabled

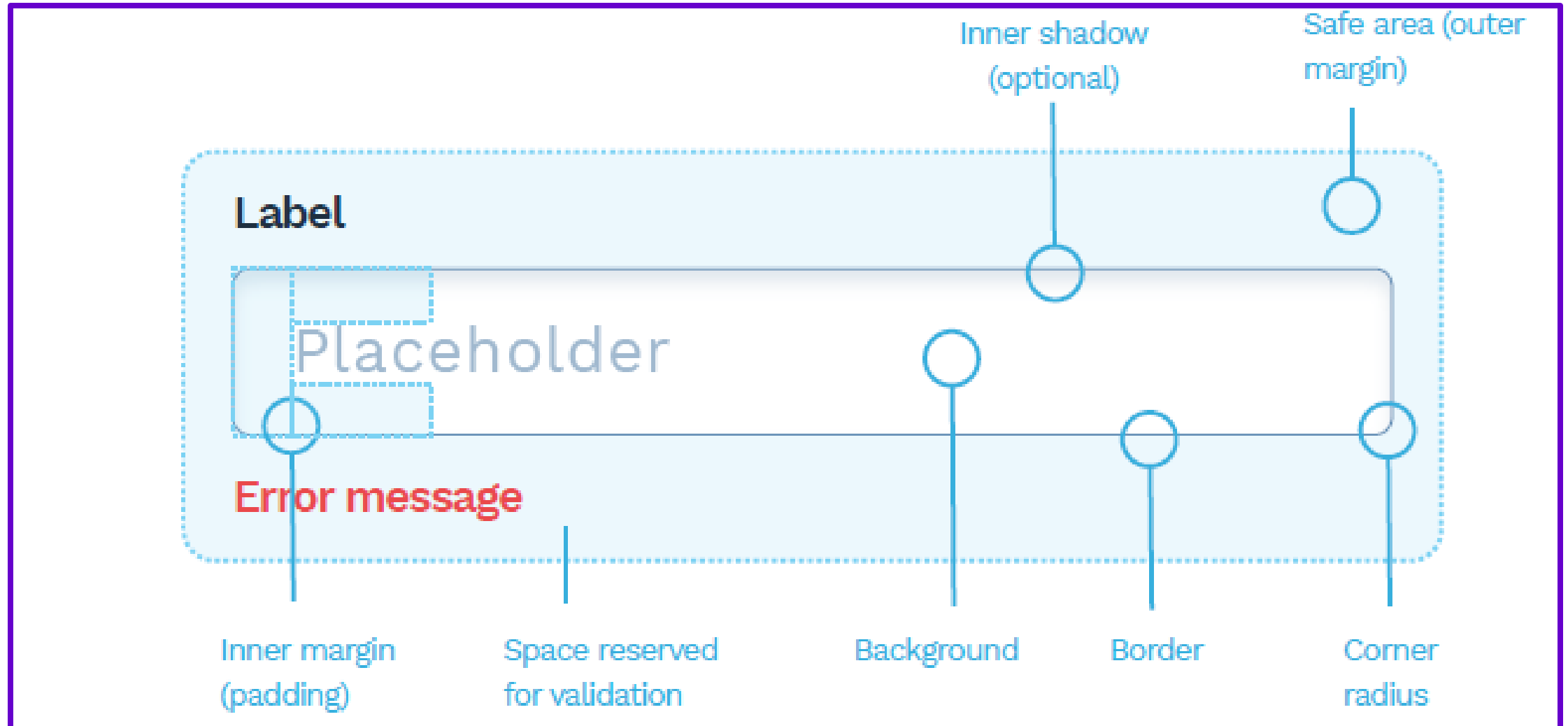
Invalid States

A short description of what went wrong should go directly under each field for better context and ease of use

A rounded rectangular input field with a red border. Inside, the text "ann@!#\$%^" is displayed in red. To the right of the field is a green circular icon containing a white checkmark. A thin red line connects the right side of the input field to the green checkmark icon.A rounded rectangular input field with a blue border. Inside, the text "ann@!#\$%^" is displayed in blue. To the right of the field is a red circular icon containing a white warning triangle. A thin blue line connects the right side of the input field to the red warning icon.

The entered text is not a valid e-mail address

How To Design A Text Field



TEXT-FIELD TYPES

There are two main text-field types: The standard one, and one that hides the text, which is ideal for password entry.

E-mail

hello@mail.pl

Standard text-field

Password

••••••••••

Password field - hidden

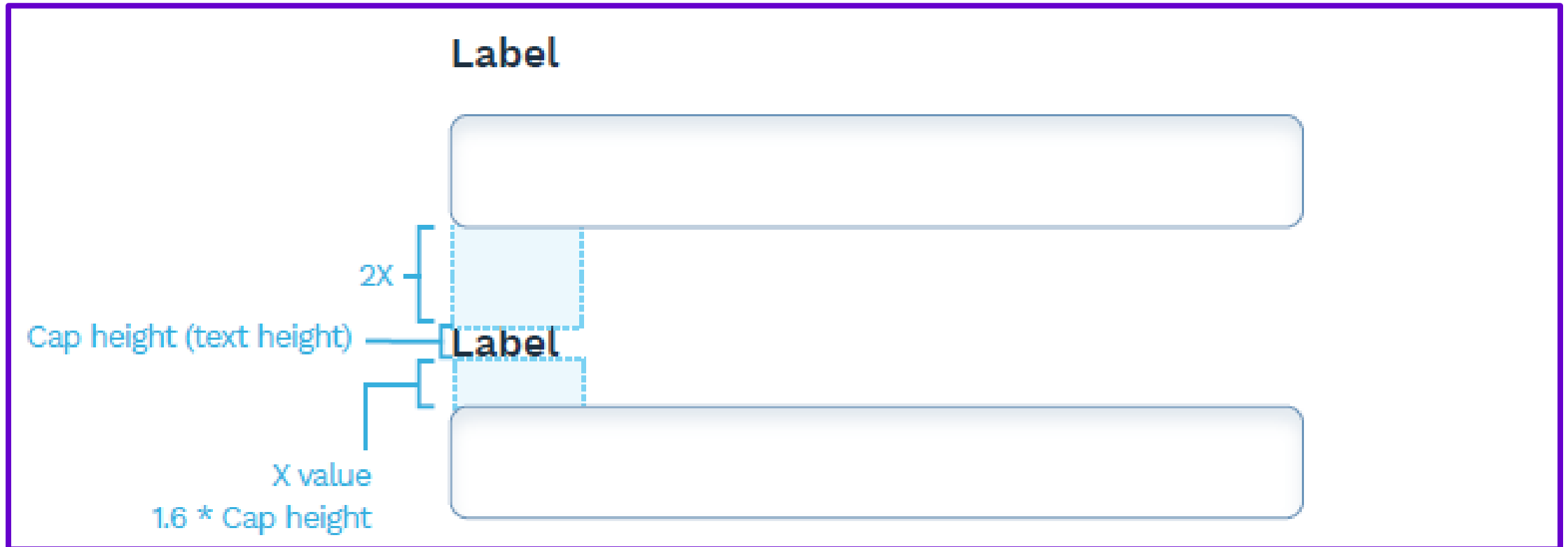
Password

xG32B-3!va

Password field - shown

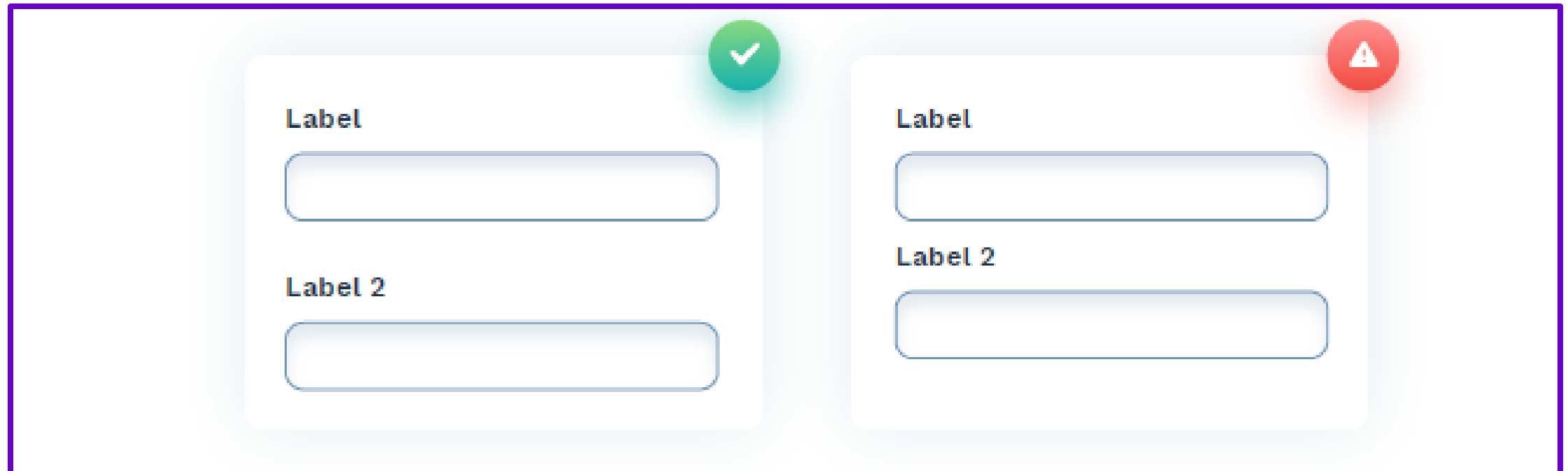
LABEL

A **Label** is a small, explanatory text accompanying the text-field. The **main goal for it is to provide a semantic connection** to the field and improve understanding.



LABEL

If your form has a lot of fields, remember to space them out far enough, so they don't get confused with each other



The image shows two side-by-side form panels illustrating the importance of labeling. The left panel, marked with a green checkmark, shows a form with two fields. The first field is labeled 'Label' and the second field is labeled 'Label 2'. The labels are clearly separated from the input fields. The right panel, marked with a red warning triangle, shows a form with two fields. The first field is labeled 'Label' and the second field is labeled 'Label 2'. However, the labels are positioned too close to the input fields, making them difficult to distinguish.

Label

Label 2

Label

Label 2

USING ICONS AS LABELS

Using more abstract icons (like in the example on the right) is not recommended as they're not clear enough. In general, icon use should be minimal inside the form fields.

The image shows two side-by-side panels of form fields, each with a status indicator in the top right corner. The left panel has a green checkmark icon, indicating it is a good example. It contains four form fields with clear, standard icons: a magnifying glass for search, an eye for toggle visibility, a padlock for lock, and an 'x' for close. The right panel has a red warning triangle icon, indicating it is a bad example. It contains four form fields with abstract icons: a trophy, a lightning bolt, a calculator, and a globe. These abstract icons are less intuitive than the standard ones on the left.

TWO MAIN STYLES

The standard rectangles, according to most studies, are faster processed and better understood by users, than the Material Design horizontal lines

E-mail

Enter your e-mail

E-mail

hello@designingui.com

E-mail

E-mail

hello@designingui.com

CONSISTENCY

You should always do is to make sure you only use ONE TYPE of inputs in your entire product.

Don't ever mix Material labels with the classic, rectangular shapes!

INNER SHADOW

Forms are one of the only exceptions, where it can make sense to consider an inner shadow.

E-mail

E-mail

DROP SHADOW

Adding an outer shadow to a text-field, while keeping an outline is a purely aesthetic choice and doesn't affect conversion in a meaningful way.

E-mail



E-mail



CORNER RADIUS

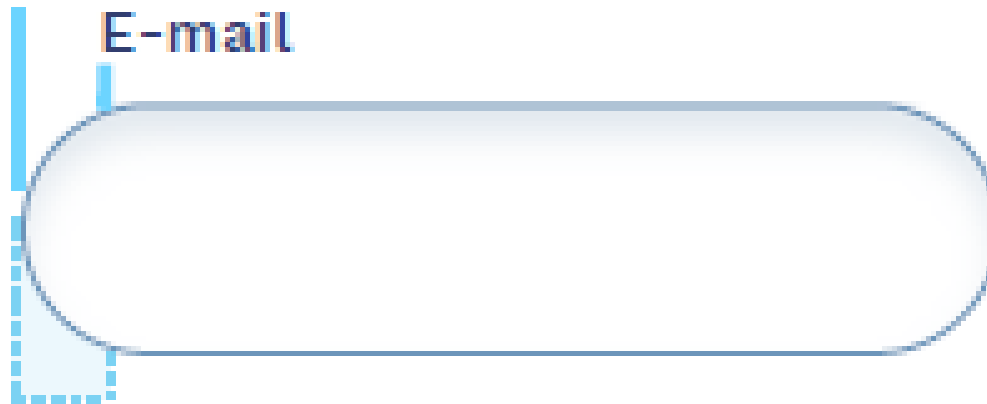
Just as with button designs, the corner radius can **profoundly affect the readability** of our labels. If you're using a very rounded corner field (pill-shape), the text is **visually floating away from the edge**.

E-mail

The image shows three horizontal input fields for an email address, each with the label 'E-mail' above it. The first field on the left has sharp 90-degree corners. The middle field has a moderate corner radius. The third field on the right has a very large corner radius, giving it a pill-like shape. In each case, the text 'E-mail' is positioned at the top left of the field. As the corner radius increases, the text appears to move further away from the top-left corner of the field.

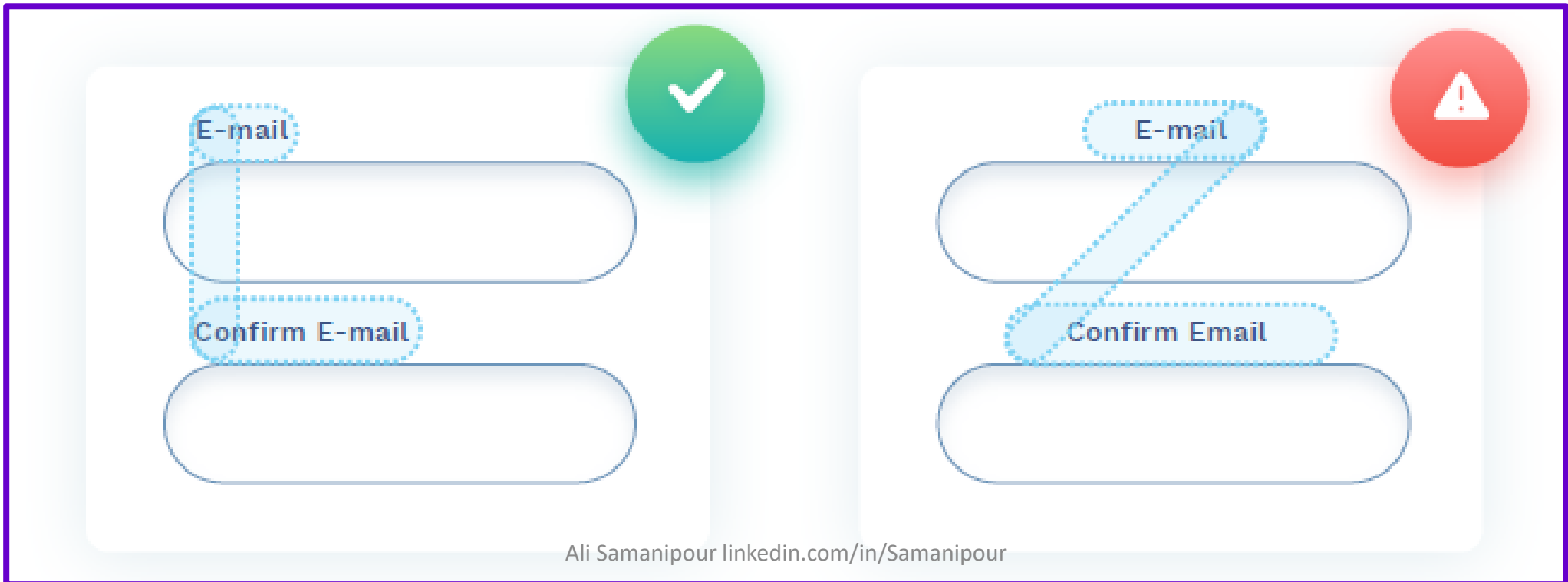
CORNER RADIUS and Label Position

You can try to solve this problem by moving the text to where the rounding stops and becomes a straight line. It's not a perfect solution.



Left Aligned Labels

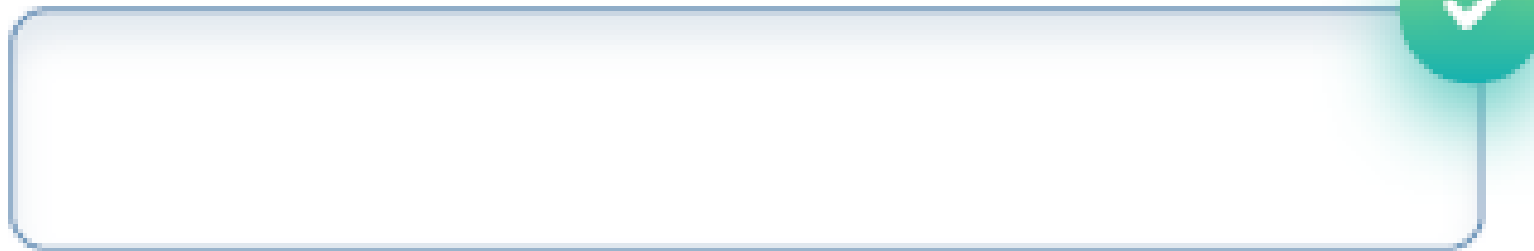
Avoid centering labels above your form fields, as it turns the natural F-pattern into a Z-pattern that's dramatically slower.



LABELS AND TEXT-FIELD ALIGNMENT

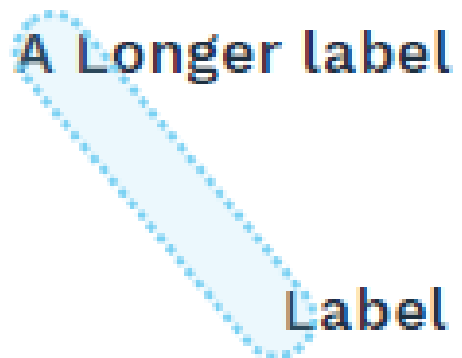
A left aligned text-field with a left-aligned label just above is always the best choice for both desktop and mobile applications.

Label

A diagram illustrating the recommended alignment for labels and text fields. It shows the word "Label" in a blue, sans-serif font. Below it is a light blue, rounded rectangular text field. To the right of the text field, there is a green circular icon with a white checkmark inside, indicating that this alignment is the correct or "best" choice.

LABELS AND TEXT-FIELD ALIGNMENT

On wider displays, you can try labels on the left side of your text fields. One way is to place the label left-aligned at a specific distance from the field.



A Longer label

Label

The diagram illustrates a design pattern for labels and text fields. On the left, there is a light blue, rounded rectangular area containing two lines of text. The top line is 'A Longer label' and the bottom line is 'Label'. A dashed blue line connects the end of the top line to the start of the bottom line, indicating a visual flow or alignment. To the right of this area are two identical, empty, light blue rounded rectangular text fields, stacked vertically. The text 'A Longer label' is positioned to the left of the top text field, and 'Label' is positioned to the left of the bottom text field, demonstrating left-aligned labeling with a consistent distance from the fields.

LABELS AND TEXT-FIELD ALIGNMENT

In rare cases, a placeholder text serving as a label can work (search bar), but avoid using it extensively. When entering the field to type, the label disappears, and the user can lose context



Label

SINGLE VS MULTI COLUMN FORMS

Single column forms convert a lot better than multi-column ones because you only have a single path to follow with your eyes, instead of jumping between blocks.

A diagram of a single-column form layout. It features a vertical stack of input fields and labels. At the top right, there is a green circular icon with a white checkmark. At the bottom right, there is a green rectangular button. The form is enclosed in a light blue border.

Single column forms convert a lot better than multi-column ones because you only have a single path to follow with your eyes, instead of jumping between blocks.

SINGLE VS MULTI COLUMN FORMS

The diagram illustrates two form layouts side-by-side. The left layout is a single column form with a vertical sequence of input fields and labels. The right layout is a multi-column form with two columns of input fields and labels. A red circular warning icon with a white triangle is positioned in the top right corner of the multi-column form. A green rectangular button is located at the bottom right of the multi-column form.

FIELD WIDTH AND CONTEXT

If you can anticipate the typical length of the user-entered text, try to design the fields to match that.

The image shows two side-by-side form panels illustrating the importance of field width and context. The left panel, marked with a green checkmark, shows a form where the 'E-mail' field is wide and the 'Area code' field is narrow and includes a placeholder '(5 digits XX-YYY)'. The right panel, marked with a red warning triangle, shows a form where the 'E-mail' field is narrow and the 'Area code' field is wide and lacks context. Both panels have a light blue background and rounded corners.

Left Panel (Good Design):

- E-mail:** A wide text input field with the placeholder text "enter your email".
- Area code (5 digits XX-YYY):** A narrow text input field with the placeholder text "___-___".

Right Panel (Poor Design):

- E-mail:** A narrow text input field with the placeholder text "enter your email".
- Area code:** A wide text input field with no placeholder text.

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Best Practices

DROPDOWN

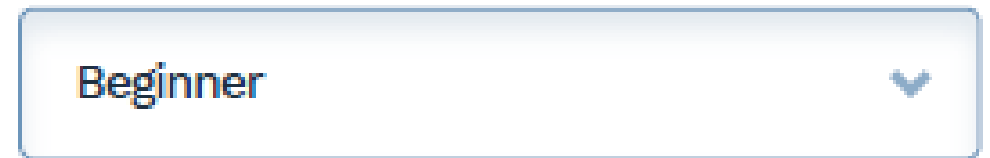
Dropdowns are another very popular form element. They allow for a single choice from a longer list, that expands on click.

Skill level

A standard, generic system dropdown menu. It consists of a light gray rectangular box with the word "Beginner" in a dark gray font. To the right of the box is a small, square, light gray button with a dark gray downward-pointing chevron icon.

Standard, generic system dropdown.

Skill level

A custom dropdown menu. It consists of a light blue rectangular box with the word "Beginner" in a dark blue font. To the right of the box is a small, square, light blue button with a dark blue downward-pointing chevron icon.

Custom dropdown, requires additional coding.

DROPDOWN

After our dropdown box expands, we need to show the selected option clearly.

Skill level

Pick one



Beginner

One design workshop

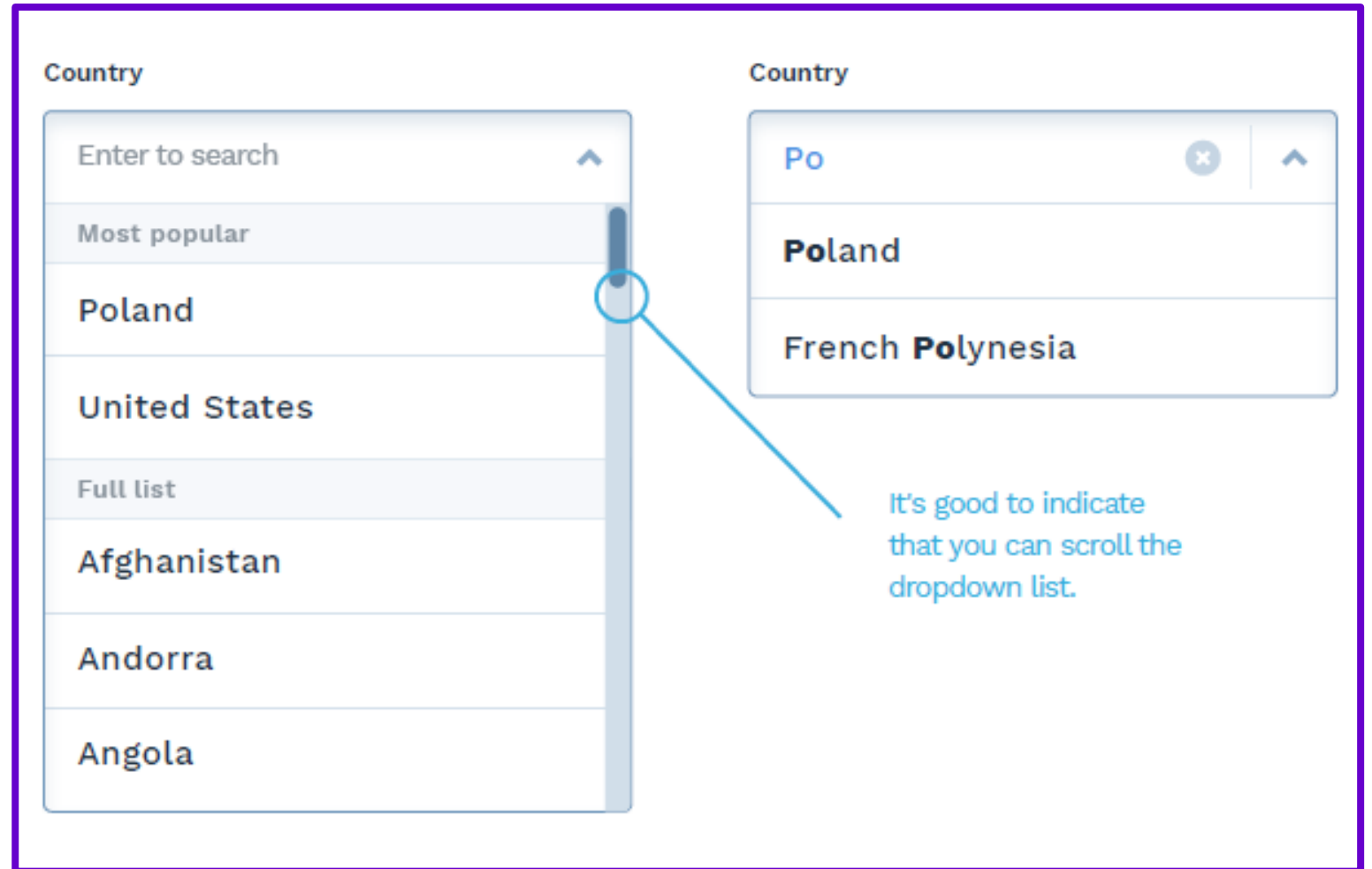
Intermediate

Advanced

Expert

LONG DROPDOWN LISTS

You can help your users by adding a search/filter box at the top of your long dropdown and highlighting the most popular options at the top of your list.



SHORT DROPDOWN LISTS

If your dropdown has five options or less, consider changing it into radio buttons

Skill level

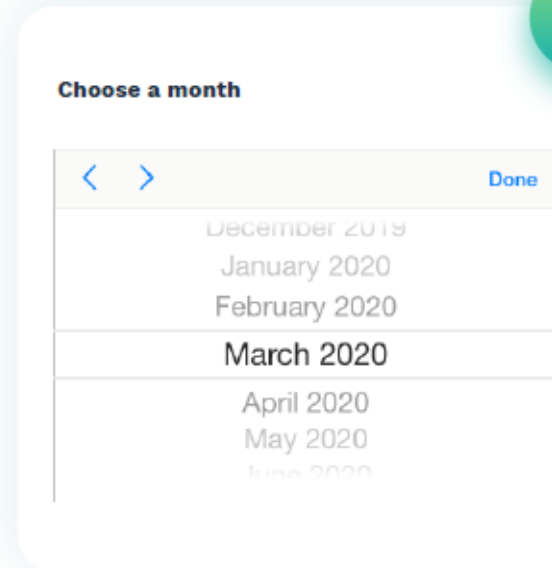
Low	Medium	High
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Skill level

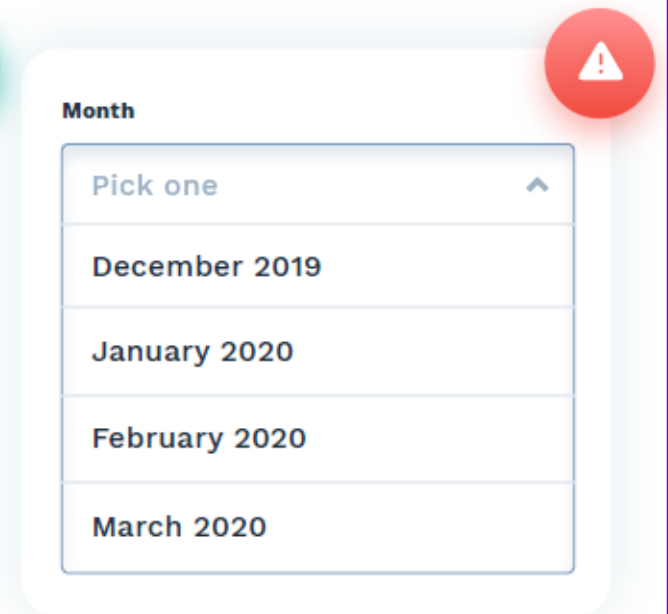
Low	Medium	High
-----	--------	------

DROPDOWNS ON PHONES

While we can go wild with dropdown designs for desktops, keep in mind that on mobile devices, it's best to use the native picker instead.



Classic iOS picker should always be used on phones instead of a web-imitation dropdown.



Enforcing a desktop style web dropdown on a mobile device is cumbersome and should be avoided.

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CHECKBOXES AND SWITCHES

Checkbox, or "tick," has three primary states: normal, selected, and nested, which allows for enabling some, or all checkboxes nested under one name



Normal



Selected



Nested (parent)



Option 1



Option 2



Nested (parent)



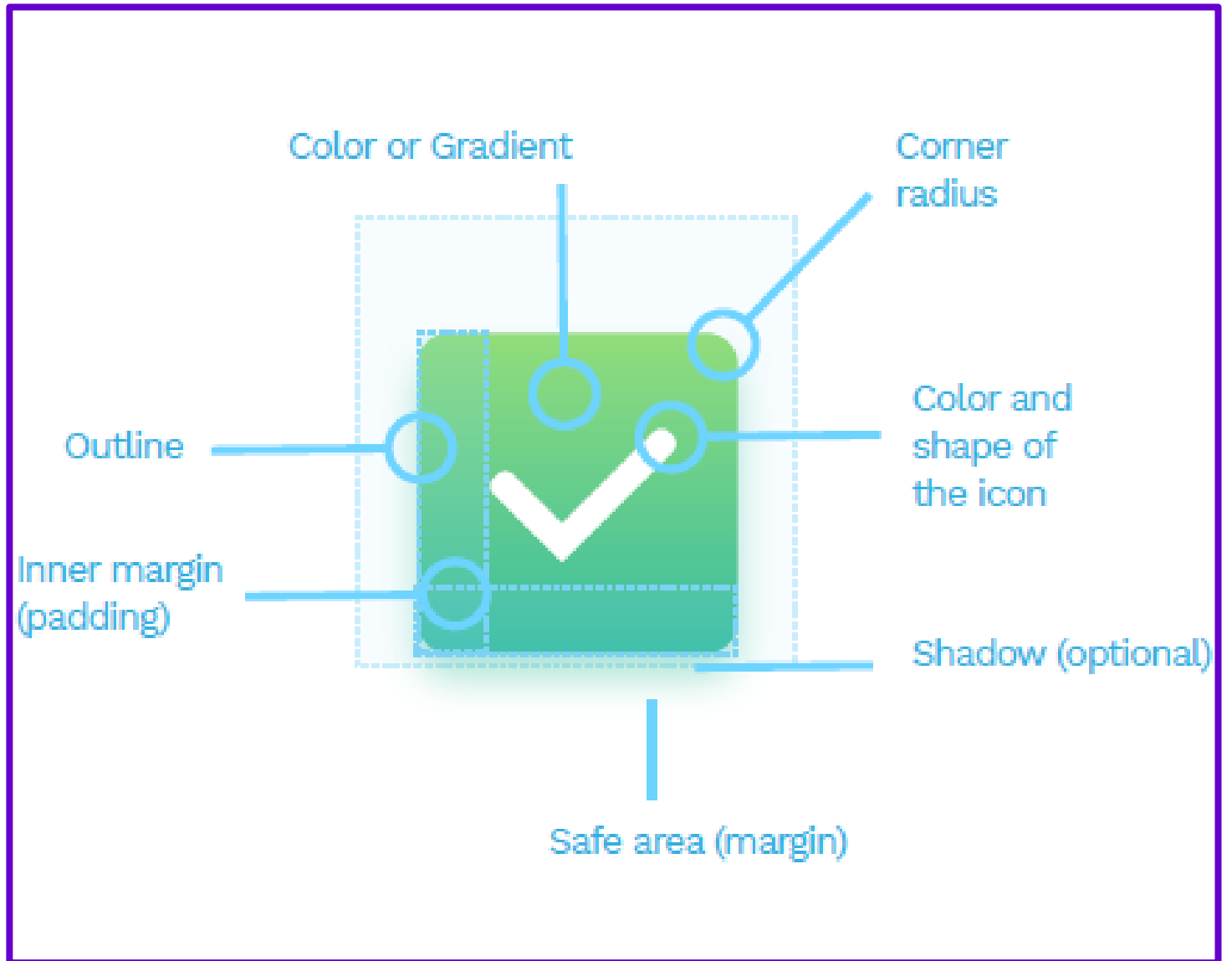
Option 1



Option 2

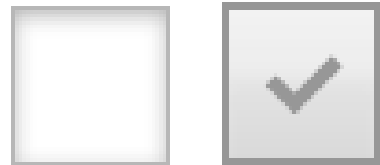
DESIGNING A CHECKBOX

Showing the checkbox in an enabled state means two things: the background needs to be a color fill (usually the accent color), and there should be a checkmark (V) inside.



CONSISTENCY

If we want the checkboxes to be consistent with the rest of our design, we need to apply a custom style to them. If we don't, they will look different on every OS.



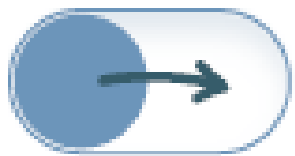
A generic, system checkbox.



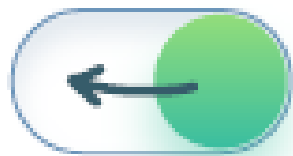
A styled, custom checkbox can have a background fill (or a gradient) and a custom icon.

Switch

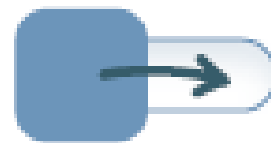
When the first iPhone came out, another version of the checkbox became popular - the Switch. It's still a multiple choice, separate entity, so toggling one switch, shouldn't modify the state of others.



Off



On



Off



On

Switches Labels

One of the main differences between checkboxes and switches is the label placement.



I accept the privacy policy



Sign me up for the newsletter

Checkboxes are usually confirmed (and take effect) after you click on the main CTA.

Enable Dark Mode



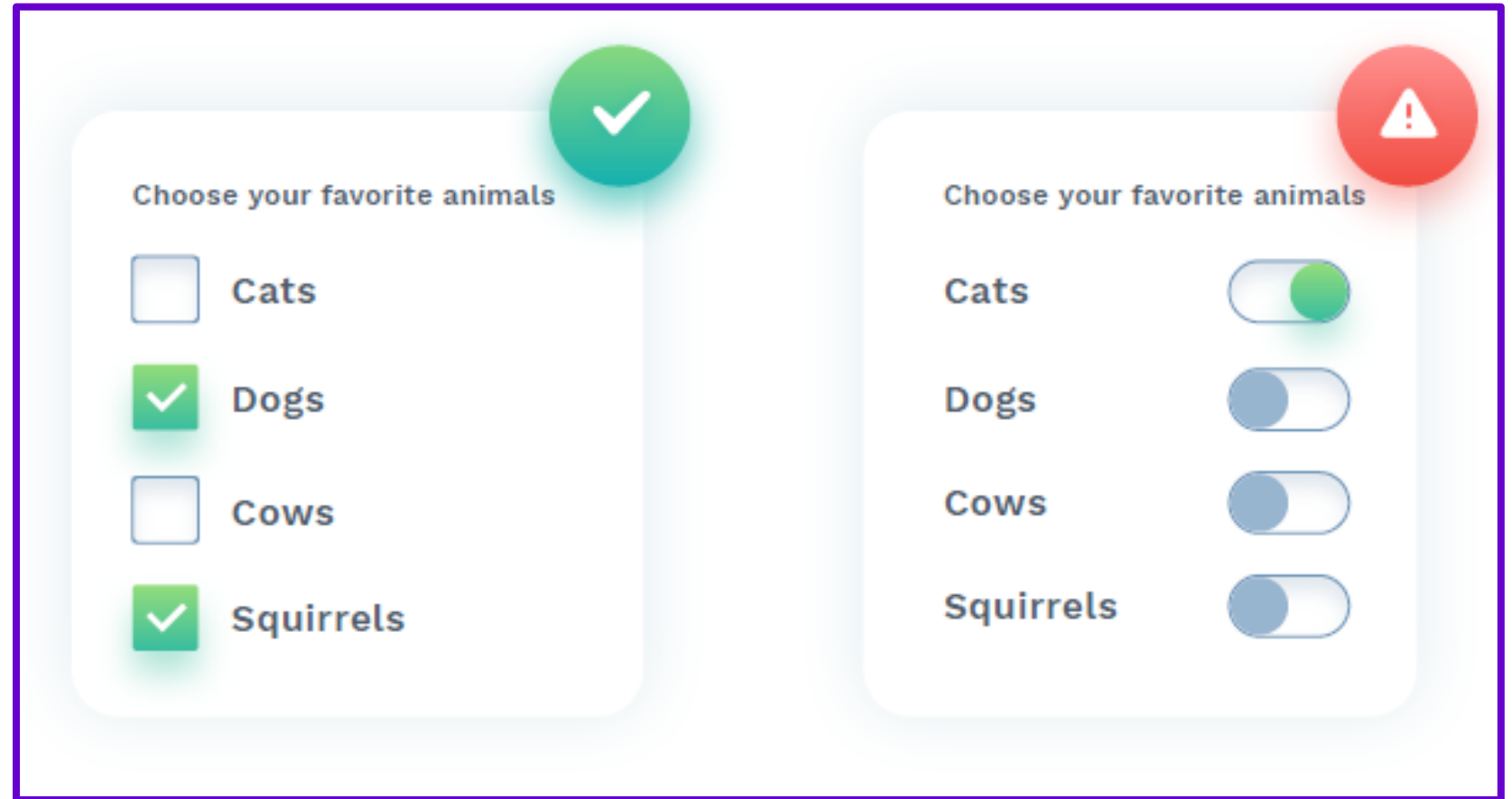
Display optional fields



The switch action should happen right after it changes position, without the need to click on a confirmation button.

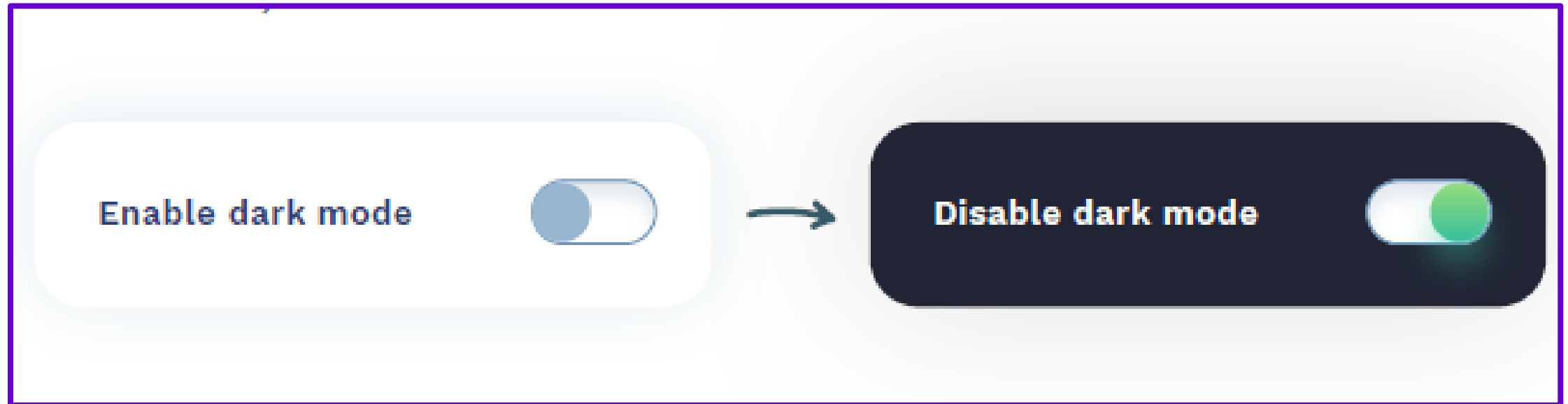
WHEN TO USE SWITCHES?

If you have more than 2 or 3 options to choose from, it's better to use checkboxes instead of switches.



WHEN TO USE SWITCHES?

Switches are better when they're individual, and they do a specific, instant action each.



SIZE MATTERS


On mobile devices, both the switches and checkboxes need to have an active zone around them, that's at least 44p in size.



The active (clickable) area should be larger than the actual box and contain the label as well for ease of use.

RADIO BUTTONS

Radio buttons are a way to choose one (and only one) option from a short (2-4 item) list.




Do you have the book?

☒ Obviously ;-)

☐ No

☐ I don't know



Do you have the book?

☒ Obviously ;-)

☐ No

☐ I don't know

Radio buttons are used to exclusively select just one answer from many. With those types of questions checkboxes are the wrong choice, and you should always use radio-buttons.

RADIO BUTTONS

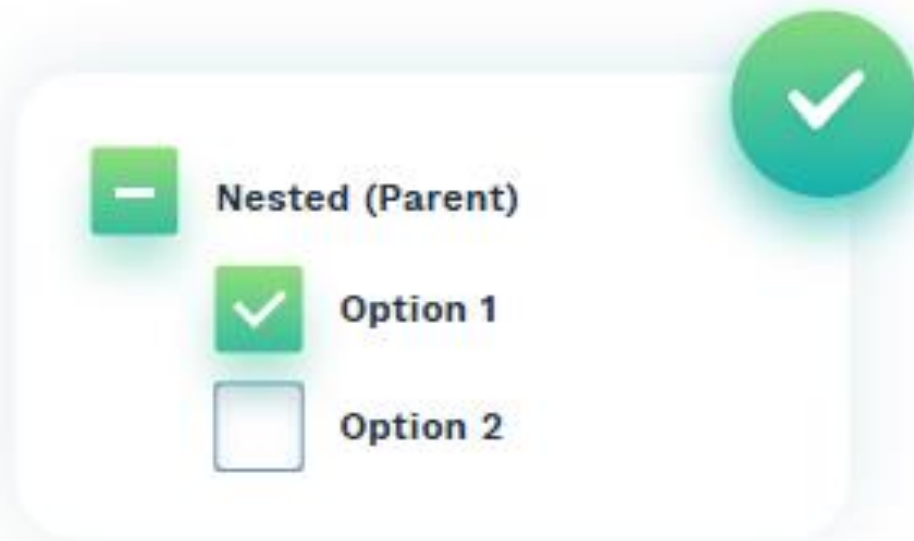
The active area should be large enough, so it's easy to both click and tap to activate the radio button. Just as with checkboxes, the label itself should also be clickable.



The active (clickable) area should be big enough and cover the label as well

Checkboxes vs Radio Buttons

One of the main differences between checkboxes and radio-buttons is also the fact that we should avoid nesting radio-buttons.



More Friendly Radio Buttons

Radio buttons can also exist in a more friendly, button form. It's usually best to keep the oval "radio" area on the left side of the button.

Do you have the book?

☒ YES ☐ No ☐ I don't know

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SLIDERS

A slider is a more visual way of choosing a number value.



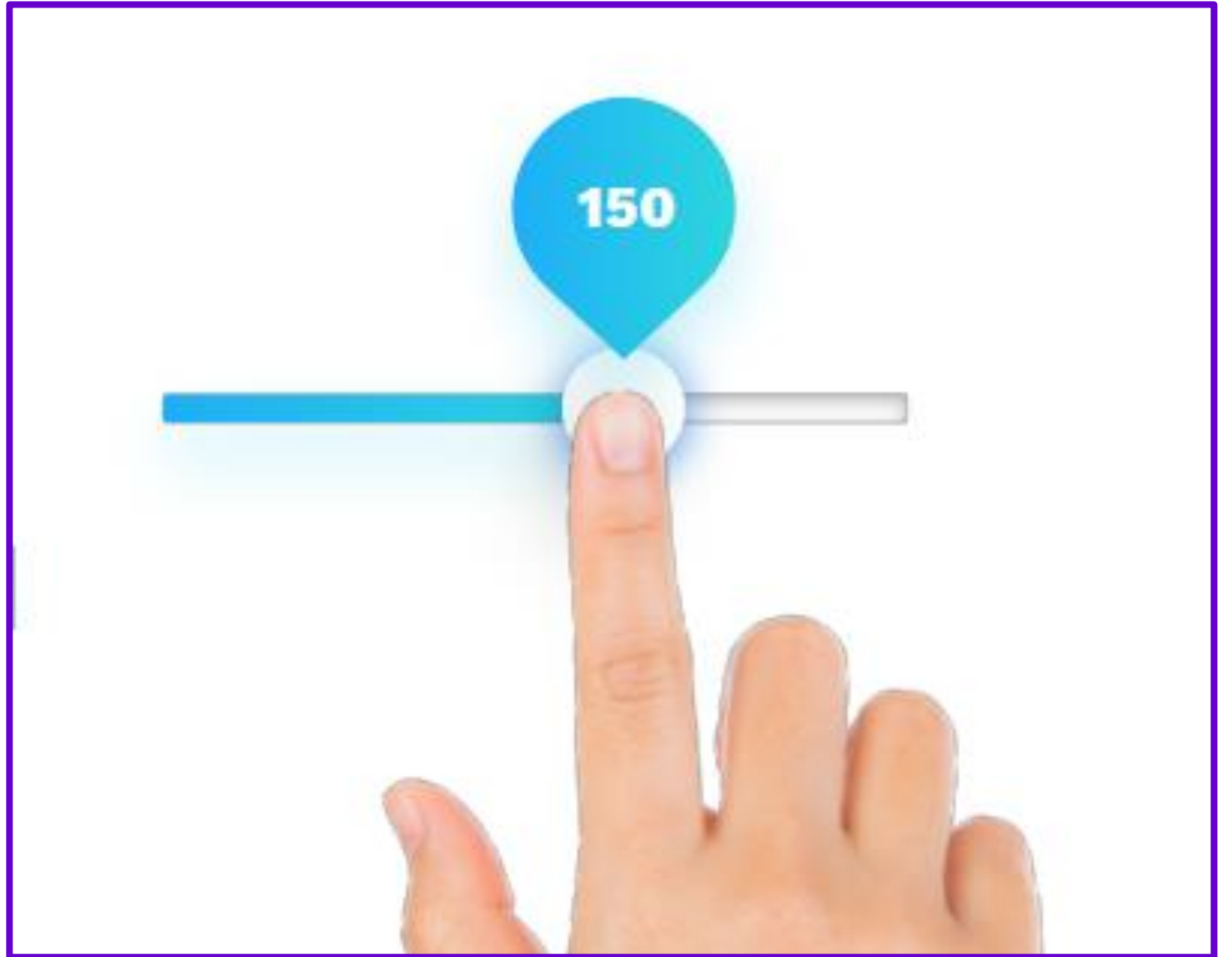
Classic slider



Range slider

SLIDERS

The main rule for fantastic sliders is clarity and ease of use.



CONSISTENT STYLES

Before you start building the actual forms, try to create all the necessary components first, on a separate artboard, to find inconsistencies and fix them quickly.

The image displays a variety of UI form components arranged in a grid-like fashion, demonstrating a consistent design style. The components include:

- E-mail:** A text input field with a light blue border and a placeholder text "Please enter your e-mail..." in a light blue font.
- Skill level:** A set of three buttons labeled "Low", "Mid", and "High". The "High" button is highlighted with a green-to-blue gradient and a shadow.
- Years of experience:** A dropdown menu with a light blue border and a "Choose" label, followed by a small downward arrow icon.
- Comments:** A large, empty rectangular box with a light blue border, intended for text input.
- Buttons:** Two buttons labeled "Cancel" and "Save". The "Save" button is highlighted with a green-to-blue gradient and a shadow.
- Slider:** A horizontal slider with a green-to-blue gradient bar and a white circular knob. The number "8" is displayed above the knob.
- Interests:** Two checkboxes. The first is checked and labeled "UI + UX", and the second is unchecked and labeled "Research". Both checkboxes are small squares with a light blue border.
- Do you have the book?:** Two radio buttons. The first is selected and labeled "Yes", and the second is unselected and labeled "No". Both radio buttons are small circles with a light blue border.

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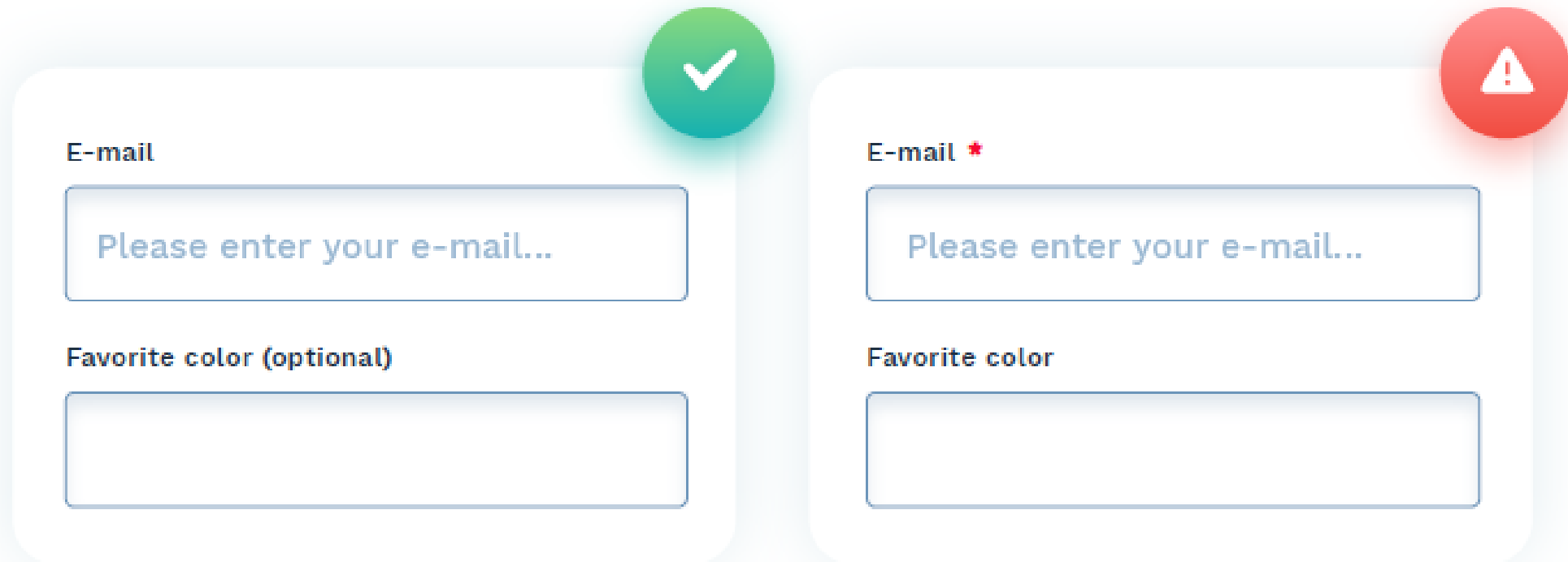
Sliders

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Best Practices

GOOD IDEAS

If you need the non-essential fields (optional) in your form, try to avoid the "red asterisk" to signify the necessary ones.

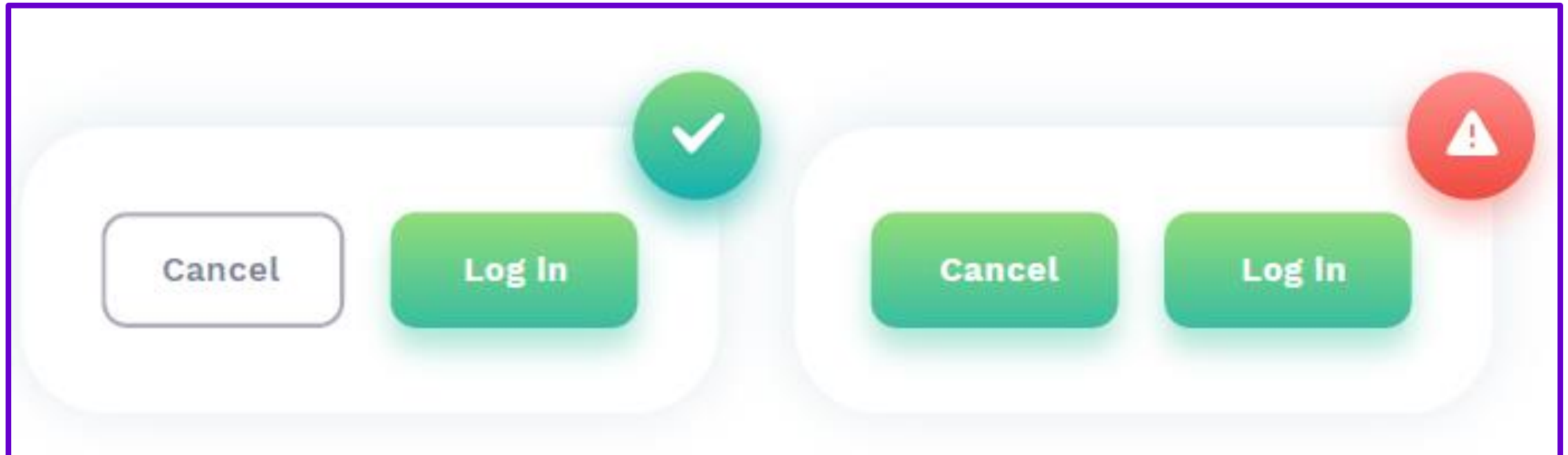


The image shows two side-by-side form designs. The left form is marked with a green checkmark icon, indicating it represents 'GOOD IDEAS'. It contains two fields: 'E-mail' and 'Favorite color (optional)'. The 'E-mail' field has a placeholder text 'Please enter your e-mail...'. The 'Favorite color (optional)' field is empty. The right form is marked with a red warning triangle icon, indicating it represents a less ideal design. It contains two fields: 'E-mail *' and 'Favorite color'. The 'E-mail *' field has a placeholder text 'Please enter your e-mail...'. The 'Favorite color' field is empty.

Field	Label	Placeholder	Required
1	E-mail	Please enter your e-mail...	No
2	Favorite color (optional)		No
3	E-mail *	Please enter your e-mail...	Yes
4	Favorite color		No

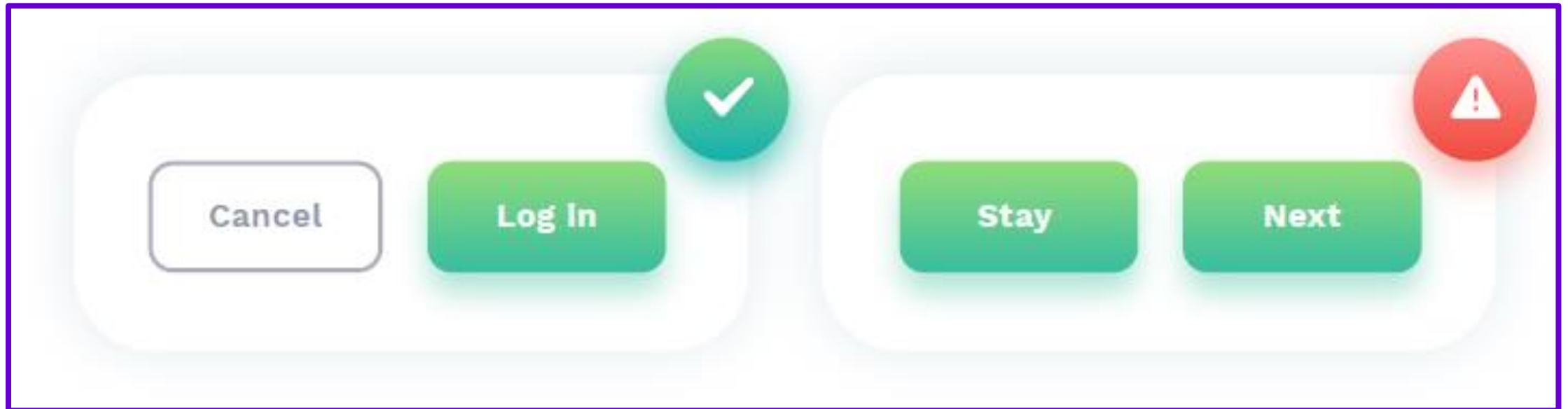
GOOD IDEAS

The best forms should only have one button. It will make it a lot easier and frictionless to take that final submitting action.



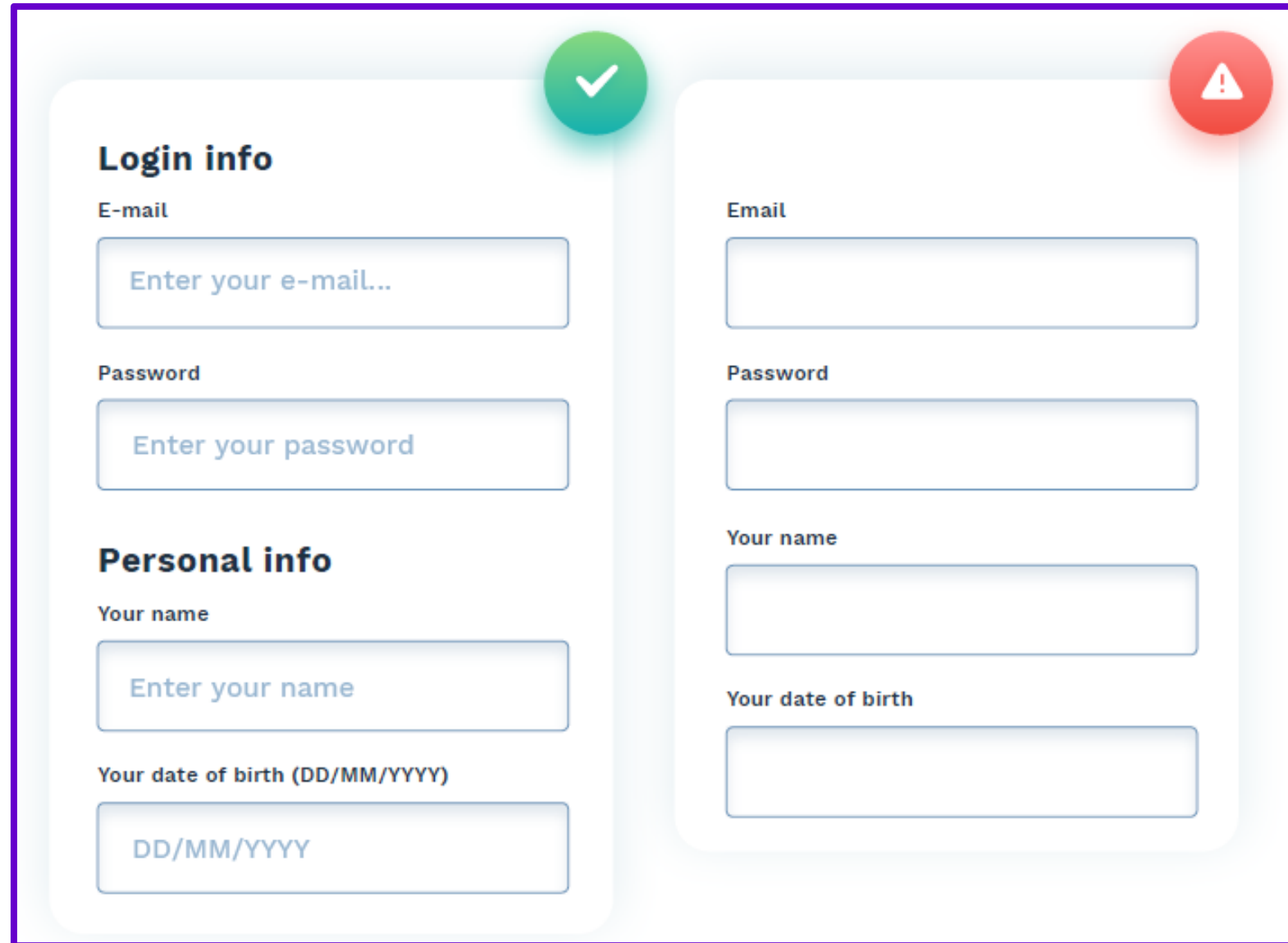
GOOD IDEAS

Our call to action button should precisely state what is going to happen when the user activates it. Avoid labels like "Next" or "Forward" when possible.



GOOD IDEAS

If your form is quite long, and you don't want to break it into separate pages, try to segment them by grouping similar fields.



The image compares two form layouts. The left layout, marked with a green checkmark, is a segmented form with two sections: 'Login info' and 'Personal info'. The right layout, marked with a red warning triangle, is a single-page form with all fields in one column.

Left Form (Segmented):

- Login info**
 - E-mail:
 - Password:
- Personal info**
 - Your name:
 - Your date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY):

Right Form (Single-page):

- Email:
- Password:
- Your name:
- Your date of birth:

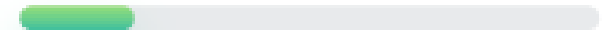
GOOD IDEAS

Split long forms into cohesive, separate steps.
Remember to inform your user on their progress with a % value, a number of steps, or a slider.

Personal information
Step 1 of 5

Personal information
20%

Personal information



ANIMATION AND MICROINTERACTIONS

Use animation (but subtle!) and micro interactions to give your form a memorable feel and make it more fun to use.



BE CREATIVE!

Forms don't have to be boring. You can create an animated character that follows the active field with its gaze and smiles when the user clicks submit.

There are no limits for creative ideas, but the form elements themselves need to be predictable at all times.

KEYBOARDS

If you're designing a form for a mobile device, remember to use the right keyboards

The image shows a mobile form titled "Bank transfer". It features a currency input field with a dollar sign (\$) and a numeric keypad. The keypad is a 4x3 grid with the following layout:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
.	0	x

The "x" button is highlighted with a blue glow.

Course References

- ***Designing User Interfaces***, Michal Malewicz & Diana Malewice, 2020
- ***UI Design Styles: Trends and Design Patterns***, Michal Malewicz & Diana Malewice, 2020
- ***What UX Is Really About :Introducing a Mindset for Great Experiences***, Celia Hodent, CRC Press, 2022
- ***Lean UX: Designing Great Products with Agile Teams 3rd Edition***, Jeff Gothelf & Josh Seiden, O'Reilly, 2021
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- ***Designing and Prototyping Interfaces with Figma***, Fabio Staiano, Packet Publishing, 2022

Accessing Course Resource



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