

# What is lorem ipsum, and when did publishers begin using it?

The standard lorem ipsum passage has been a printer's friend for centuries. Like stock photos today, it served as a placeholder for actual content. The original text comes from Cicero's philosophical work "De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum," written in 45 BC.

The use of the lorem ipsum passage dates back to the 1500s. When printing presses required painstaking hand-setting of type, workers needed something to show clients how their pages would look. To save time, they turned to Cicero's words, creating sample books filled with preset paragraphs.

However, it wasn't until the 1960s that the passage became common when Letraset revolutionized the advertising industry with its transfer sheets. These innovative sheets allowed designers to apply pre-printed lorem ipsum text in various fonts and formats directly onto their mockups and prototypes.

## What does Lorem Ipsum text say?

Printers in the 1500s scrambled the words from Cicero's "De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum" after mixing the words in each sentence. The familiar "lorem ipsum dolor sit amet" text emerged when 16th-century printers adapted Cicero's original work, beginning with the phrase "dolor sit amet consectetur."

They abbreviated "dolorem" (meaning "pain") to "lorem," which carries no meaning in Latin. "Ipsum" translates to "itself," and the text frequently includes phrases such as "consectetur adipiscing elit" and "ut labore et dolore." These Latin fragments, derived from Cicero's philosophical treatise, were rearranged to create the standard dummy text that has become a fundamental tool in design and typography across generations.

The short answer is that lorem ipsum text doesn't actually "say" anything meaningful. It's deliberately scrambled Latin that doesn't form coherent sentences. While it comes from Cicero's "De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum," the text has been modified so extensively that it's nonsensical.

Why scrambled text? That's exactly the point. By using text that's unreadable but maintains the general pattern of regular writing — including normal word length, spacing, and punctuation — designers can focus on the visual elements of a layout without the actual content getting in the way. The pseudo-Latin appearance gives it a natural feel while ensuring it won't distract from the design itself.

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## Why use a lorem ipsum generator?

If everyone used the identical lorem ipsum copy, search engines would flag it for plagiarism and downgrade the site for its lack of helpful content for the reader. However, when you send sample layouts filled with fun lorem ipsum to your customers, they will focus on the look and feel of the page instead of digging into and arguing about the content. Nevertheless, lorem ipsum generators do not spew a random bank of words and paragraphs.

### A/B testing copy

Dummy text sections filled with fun lorem ipsum make it easier to swap out one web page, letter, or email version with another. For example, in a Mailchimp bulk email campaign, send these multiple versions during A/B testing to discover which call to action garners the desired response.

In addition, placeholder text stands out when eyeballed, ensuring that you overwrite the correct paragraphs before updating and reissuing past appeals. Your lorem ipsum generator can also provide multiple versions of a section of text on a single page surrounding the real test message.

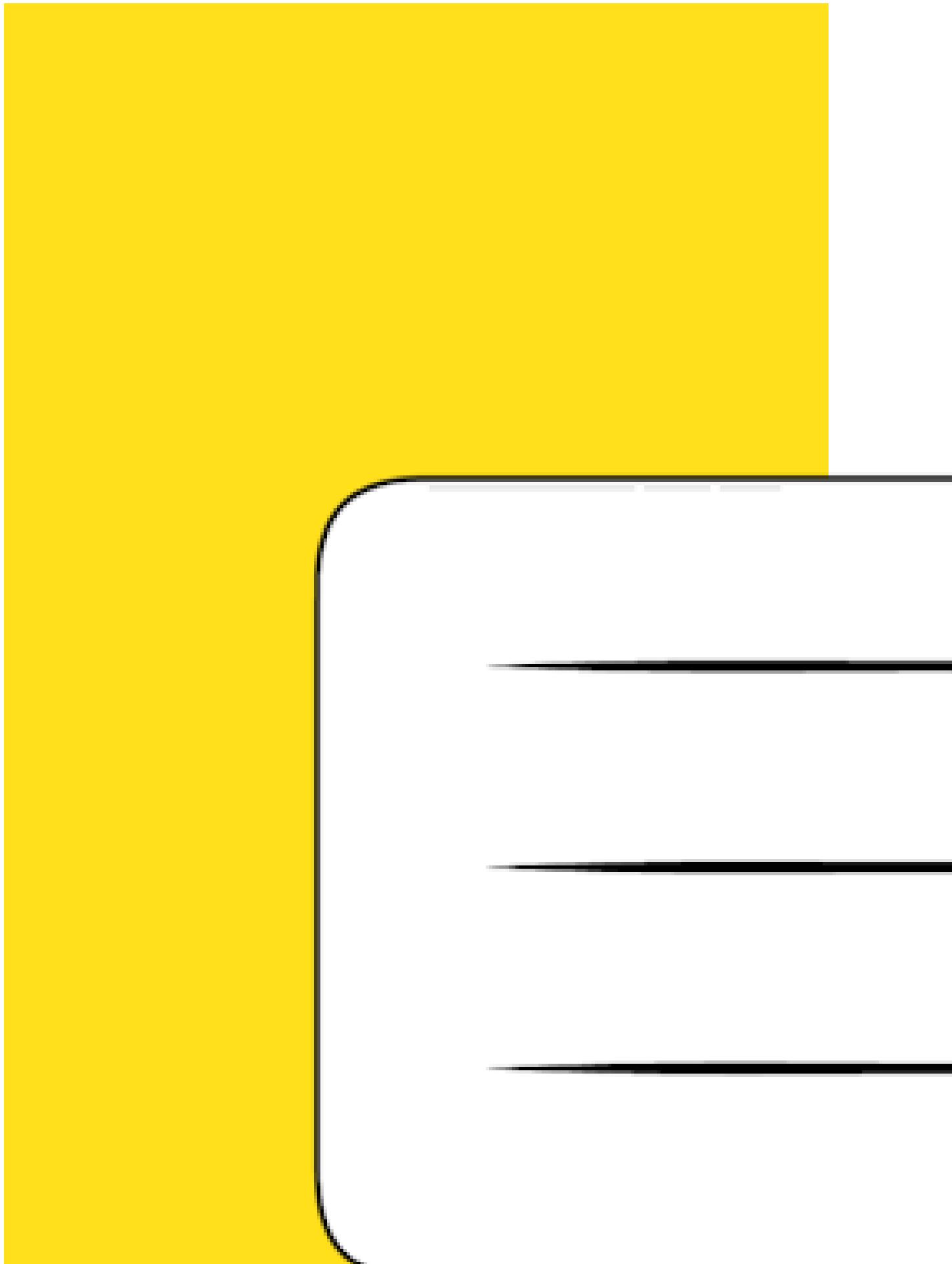
### Wireframes, mockups, and prototypes

When your page includes dedicated advertising and editorial slots that do not vary from issue to issue, using dummy copy allows you to preserve the total possible letter or word count. Blocking out that space in your Mailchimp wireframe or mockup ahead of time will enable you to create banners, buttons, and headers to help announce and maintain your brand and highlight the page or email's flavor or "voice."

### Avoiding offensive lorem ipsum content

Tossing your favorite band or singer's song lyrics into a translator to generate lorem ipsum may sometimes produce offensive content. To avoid this, remove vulgar or explicit words from the original, uncensored lyrics before running them through the translator to create your word bank.

Use the "find and replace" feature in your favorite online word-processing program to make this easier. Then, load your cleaned-up sample text into a generic random text generator and set the number of words or lines of necessary placeholder text for your layout.



Dummy text helps structure wireframes and mockups while maintaining branding and layout consistency.

# Hobby and interest-based placeholding text generators

Your traditional lorem ipsum passage might look like:

"Lorem ipsum quia dolor sit porro quisquam est qui amet consectetur adipisci, sed quia  
duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit dolore magna aliqua, porro quisquam est qui nisi ut  
aliquid ex ea commodo. Culpa quia officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum."

However, modern generators let you add personality to your placeholder text while maintaining the same benefits. From pirate speak to cupcake ingredients, these specialized generators help your mockups feel more aligned with your brand's tone and industry. Here are some creative alternatives:

## 1. Pirate ipsum

The randomized scurvy dog [Pirate Ipsum](#) text generator already exists for those who publish nautical or pirate-related content. Select your words per sentence, number of sentences per paragraph, and the total number of sections, and click "Get Me Ipsum" to obtain a screed in pirate slang. For example, you could use it before updating the landing page for the [Blessing of the Fleet](#) in Biloxi, Mississippi.

## 2. Cupcake ipsum

Do you own a bakery or cake decorating business? Then [Cupcake Ipsum](#) will provide a layer of paragraphs with a pastry chef in mind. This dummy text generator includes words like halvah, tiramisu, macaroon, and other confections that allow you to be sure that your sugary placeholder message resonates with your marketing department.

## 3. Hipsum

Do you prefer a long pour of irony with your dummy text? Have you single-handedly helped gentrify your neighborhood? Do you sell craft beer and artisan bread with your own hand-mixed container garden herb pesto? Then Jason Cosper's [Hipster Ipsum](#) generator will provide you with the gastropub mumblecore your email marketing campaign needs.