

CHAPTER 35

Effective Print Document Design

35a What is document design?

Document design refers to the visual appearance of a print document (how it looks), as opposed to the content of the document (what it says). Of course, design and content are closely related. For example, you need your document to look clean and accessible so that readers can easily find the information they seek. The process of document design includes everything from setting margins and headings to choosing and placing graphics to determining the use of color.

Some document design is standardized and therefore gives you few options. As explained in Chapters 33 and 34, the formatting of discipline-related styles such as those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) needs to conform to the guidelines that these professional organizations require, especially for formatting research papers. In addition, you need to format letters, memos, and e-mail messages according to customary patterns (38a). Most word processing programs have templates and “wizards” that provide many standard formats for such documents.

Other documents allow more leeway for your design creativity. Flyers, brochures, manuals, and certain kinds of reports give you considerable room for originality. In addition, some instructors encourage including design elements, such as pictures, in course papers. However, always check with your instructor before incorporating extensive design elements into your paper. Overall, the best design is always the one appropriate to the assignment or situation at hand.

35b What are basic principles of design?

The basic principles of design are *unity*, *variety*, *balance*, and *emphasis*. Box 35-1 describes these principles for effectively communicating your message in a document. The Web site for this book, <www.prenhall.com/troyka>, contains regularly updated links to several of the best sources for tips on design from professional document designers.

35c What is page layout?

Layout is the arrangement of text and visuals on a page, which makes the document a kind of spatial composition. You use layout to reinforce the organizational plan of your writing. The Web site available with this book

BOX 35-1 SUMMARY



Principles of document design

- **Unity** results from repetition and consistency. Ask: Do all elements in my document work together visually?
- **Variety** comes from a logical, appropriate break from unity that adds interest. Ask: Have I introduced design elements, where appropriate, that break up monotony—such as inserting headings in academic papers that add to clarity or on-the-topic illustrations that add to content?
- **Balance** refers to a sense of harmony or equilibrium. Ask: Are the parts of my document in proportion to each other?
- **Emphasis** directs the eye to what is most important. Ask: Does my document design draw attention to what is most important?

www.prenhall.com/troyka contains regularly updated links to several of the best Web sites that provide help with page layout.

35c.1 Positioning text and visuals

If you're using both text and visuals in a document, arrange them so that they balance and complement each other. Experiment with ideas for layout by creating mock-up pages on a computer or by sketching possibilities by hand. Group related items together. Such a visual grouping of like items makes the information more immediately understandable to your reader. Box 35-2 gives tips on page layout and positioning text and visuals.

BOX 35-2 SUMMARY



Page layout: Positioning text and visuals

- Consider the size of visuals in placing them so that they don't cluster at the top or the bottom of a page. In other words, avoid creating a page that's top-heavy or bottom-heavy.
- Avoid splitting a chart or table between one page and the next. If possible, the entire chart or table should fit on a single page.
- Try working with layout by dividing a sheet of paper into sections. Divide it in half (either horizontally or vertically), then divide it into fourths or eighths (depending on the amount of text and the size of your visuals).



Page layout: Positioning text and visuals (continued)

- Use the “Table” feature of your word processing program to position text and visuals exactly where you want them. Turn off the grid lines when you are done so that the printed copy shows only the text and visuals.
- Use the “Print Preview” feature to show you what the printed version will look like. This helps you revise before completing your final document.
- Print out hard copies of various layouts and look at them from different distances. Ask others to look at your layouts and tell you what they like best and least about them.

35c.2 Using white space

White space, the part of your document that is blank, allows readers to read your document more easily and to absorb information in chunks rather than in one big block. White space also indicates breaks between ideas and thereby focuses attention on the key features of your document.

Traditionally, **ACADEMIC WRITING** includes relatively little white space, except occasionally between sections of a document. For academic writing, you need to use double-spacing. It gives instructors and peers space to write comments in response to your writing. **BUSINESS WRITING** usually calls for single-spaced lines, with an added line of white space between paragraphs. Flyers, brochures, posters, reports, and other documents tend to make extensive and varied use of white space because they rely more heavily on graphical elements such as illustrations, different fonts and colors, bulleted lists, and so on.

35c.3 Justifying and indenting

When you make your text lines either even in length or even in relation to the left or right margin, you’re **justifying** them. There are four kinds of justification, or ways to line up text lines on margins: left, right, centered, and full.

Most documents are left-justified, including those for **ACADEMIC WRITING** and **BUSINESS WRITING**. This means that the right ends of the lines are unjustified, or *ragged*. Such a setup helps avoid end-of-line hyphens for broken words, which are correct but distracting to the reader. (Most lines in textbooks are full-justified, so you’ll see many hyphens.)

Use center, right, and full justification in designing announcements, advertising, and similar public writing, because they can attract attention (see Chapter 38). Such documents also often include features such as wrapping text around boxes, pictures, or objects.

When you move text in from the left margin, you are *indenting*. College essays and research papers usually call for indenting the first line in paragraphs. The standard indentation is one-half inch. (See the indenting formats

of student research papers in MLA style in 33e and in APA style in 34h.) Business writing requires paragraphs in block style, which calls for no indent of first lines and single spacing within paragraphs, with double spacing reserved only for between paragraphs. Never mix these two styles of indenting. Box 35-3 lists helpful tips on using justification and indentation.

BOX 35-3 SUMMARY**Tips on justifying and indenting**

- Use the ruler line in your word processing program to control the indentation of text instead of using the space bar or tab keys. The top arrow of the bar sets the paragraph indentation, while the bottom arrow sets the indentation for everything else in the paragraph.
Alternatively, use the “Increase Indent” and “Decrease Indent” functions on your computer to control the indentation of text. This ensures that the indents stay constant in relation to the rest of the document, even if you change the type size or font of the text.
- Use indents to indicate subsections of a document except in academic writing. For example, in a brochure, you might left-justify headings and then indent the subsequent text.
- Indent bulleted and numbered lists to make them stand out.

35d How do I format text?

Text in writing consists of words and letters. To format text, you need to decide which typeface you’ll use. A **typeface** is a particular style of type, such as Verdana or Century. A **font** is a specific kind of typeface, such as Verdana italics or Century bold. You also have to decide how you’ll present headings and how you’ll highlight important material.

35d.1 Writing headings

Headings clarify your organization and tell your readers what to expect in each section. Longer documents, including this handbook, use headings to break content into chunks that are easier to digest and understand. In **ACADEMIC WRITING**, APA style favors headings and MLA style tends to discourage them. Keep your headings brief and informative so that your readers can use them as cues. Also, write in **PARALLEL** structure and use consistent capital letters. Box 35-4 on the next page presents common types of headings, with examples; Box 35-5 offers additional help on writing and formatting headings.

BOX 35-4 SUMMARY



Common types of headings

- **NOUN PHRASES can cover a variety of topics.**
Executive Branch of Government
- **Questions can evoke reader interest.**
How Does the Supreme Court Decide Whether to Consider a Case?
- **GERUNDS and -ing phrases can explain instructions or solve problems.**
Approving the Congressional Budget
- **Imperative sentences can give advice or directions.**
Identify a Problem

BOX 35-5 SUMMARY



Guidelines for writing and formatting headings

- **Create headings in larger type than the type size in the body of your text.** You can use the same or a contrasting typeface, as long as it coordinates visually and is easy to read.
- **Use parallel structure in writing headings.** Always start your listed items with the same part of speech. For example, the items in this box all start with VERBS. In longer documents, you can vary the form of the heading at different levels.
- **Change the format for headings of different levels.** Changing the format for different levels of headings creates a clear outline for the reader. You can do this in various ways: You can center heads or left-justify them; you can vary the typeface by using boldface, italics, or underlining; or you can use various combinations of capitals and lowercase letters. Always be consistent in the style you use within each document.

Top Level Heading (most important) **First-Level Heading**

Next Level Heading Second-Level Heading

Next Level Heading *Third-level heading*

35e How should I incorporate visuals?

Visuals, also called *graphics*, can enhance document design when used appropriately. A visual can condense, compare, and display information more effectively than words, but only if its content is suitable. A graph

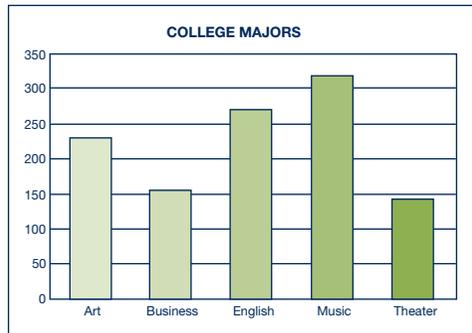
showing how sales increased over a period of time, for example, makes the point more quickly and clearly than an explanation would. A photo or drawing can illustrate or reinforce a point you want to make.

Remember that visuals should enhance your writing, not replace it. The Web site for this book contains links to Web sites on using visuals.

35e.1 Using charts and graphs

Business and scientific reports rely heavily on charts and graphs, and so do some research papers. They are compact ways to present large amounts of information.

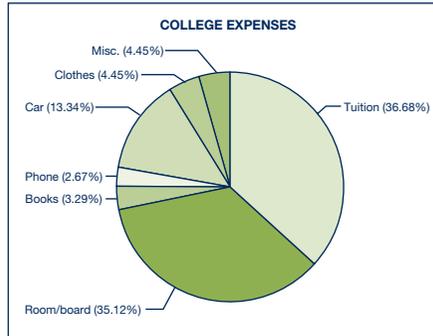
Bar graphs compare values, such as the number of different majors at a college, as shown in the graph below.



Line graphs indicate changes over time. For example, advertising revenue is shown over an eight-month period in the graph below.

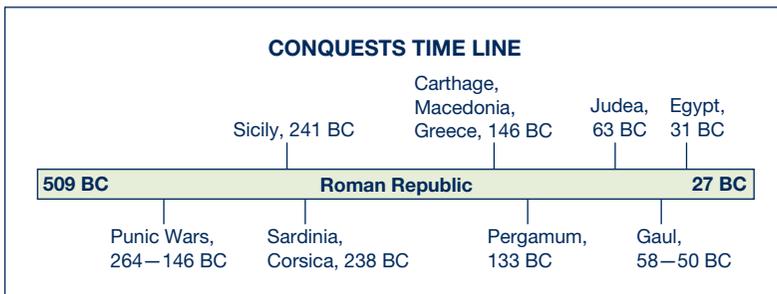


Pie charts show the relationship of each part to a whole, such as a typical budget for a college student, as shown in the chart below.

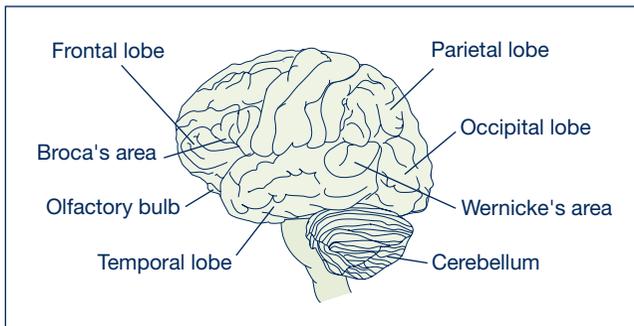


35e.2 Using other types of visuals

Time lines display events over time, such as the progress of historical events or a manufacturing process.



Diagrams show the parts of a whole, as in the following diagram of the human brain.



Tables present data in list form, as shown in the MLA-style research paper in 33e, and the APA-style research paper in 34h.

Clip art refers to pictures, sketches, and other graphics available on some word processing programs. It can also be downloaded from the Internet. Though clip art is rarely, if ever, appropriate in ACADEMIC WRITING and BUSINESS WRITING, it can add interest to flyers, posters, newsletters, and brochures designed for certain audiences. The Web site for this book, <www.prenhall.com/troyka>, contains regularly updated links to several of the best clip art sources.

Photographs can be downloaded from a digital camera or scanned from printed photos, books, and articles into a computer. Web sites exist that contain thousands of photographs available free or for a minimal charge. (See the Web site for this book for examples.) Once a photograph is in your computer, you can place it in your document, usually with an “Insert” or “Import” command. A modest software program like Microsoft Photo Editor or a powerful program like Adobe Photoshop can help you adjust a photograph by cropping it (trimming the top, bottom, or sides), rotating it, or even modifying colors. Cropping can have a powerful effect on the meaning an image conveys to your audience, as the photos below show.



Original version and cropped version of one photograph

When you use a photograph, always be sure to give credit to the SOURCE so you don't PLAGIARIZE the material. You may even need to secure written permission from the source to use the photo, so check the copyright information that accompanies the picture.

Box 35-6 offers guidelines and additional help in using visuals in your documents.

BOX 35-6 SUMMARY

Guidelines for using visuals

- **Design all visuals to be simple and uncluttered.** They should be clearly labeled, as needed, and easy to read.
- **Never use unnecessary visuals.** For example, a chart that summarizes your findings might convey more to readers than a basic piece of clip art.
- **Number figures and tables, if there are more than one, and number them sequentially.** If possible, choose only one term in a relatively short piece of writing: *Table 1, Table 2*; or *Figure 1, Figure 2*, and so forth).
- **Never overwhelm your text with visual elements.** If the visuals you want to use are much larger than the text, consider putting them on separate pages or in an appendix.
- **Credit your source if a visual isn't your own.** Always avoid plagiarism by crediting your source using DOCUMENTATION. If your source includes a statement or symbol that says it's copyrighted, you need written permission to use any part of it in your work. Check for this information in a print source by looking for a copyright notice (often at the beginning or end of the document) or a credits list. For a Web page, look at the top or bottom of the document.