

# FORMAT

MAKE YOUR MESSAGE INVITING

# CONTENTS

## 4 CHOOSE FONTS

## 7 WRITE HEADINGS

## 10 USE WHITE SPACE

## 13 INSERT GRAPHICS

## EXAMPLE BANK STANDARD DOCUMENT FORMATS

## LINK & LEARN

## Required Reading



## Tips & Optional



## Examples



## Activity



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribute and ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Attribute the original source at [mcom320.net](http://mcom320.net). Email [byumcom@gmail.com](mailto:byumcom@gmail.com) if you would like to adopt the curriculum. This chapter updated 11 May 2020.

– This is Chapter 7

## GRAB ATTENTION

Well-formatted messages are more attractive and accessible to your readers, inviting them to engage. The very act of formatting also helps you clarify in your own mind what you want to say. When you

- select **fonts**
- write **headings**
- use **white space**
- insert **graphics**

you make decisions about your message priorities, and you guide your audience  
—and yourself—  
toward clearer structure.

Your audience will **scan** your message **before deciding whether to read** it. That's just human nature. So what do you want them to notice first?

## SECTION ONE

# CHOOSE FONTS

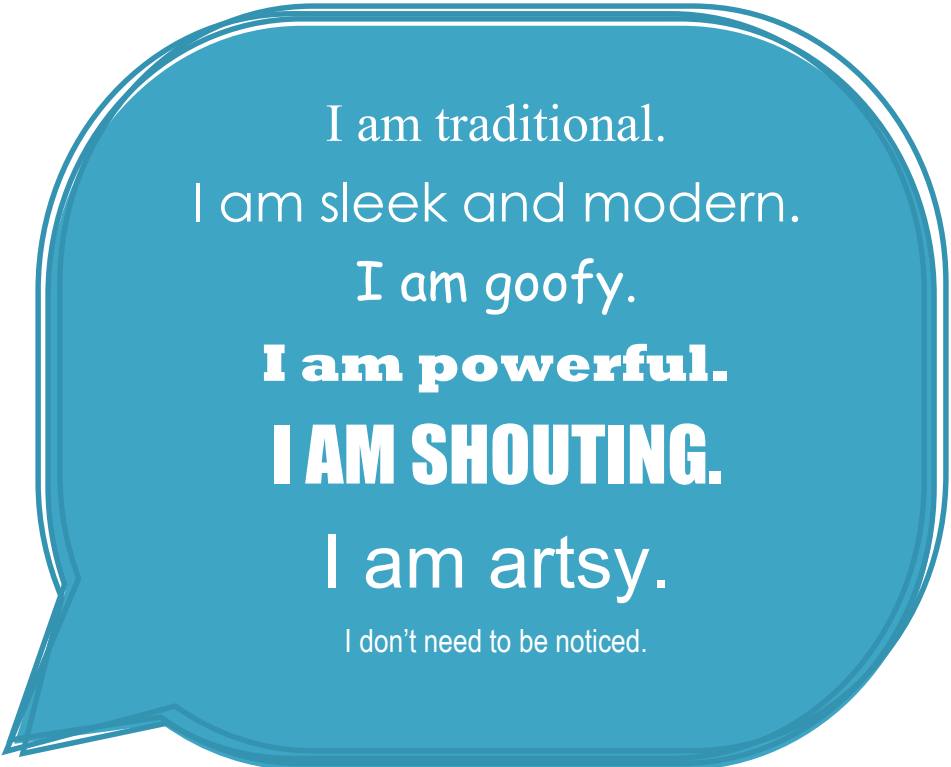
---

Some people are typography geeks because, frankly, **fonts are fun**. They're a form of art that quickly conveys a tremendous amount of information. Fonts are a voice in which your writing speaks.

When formatting a document, choose your fonts deliberately so that your message is supported by the look and feel of the fonts you choose.

The next few pages cover some basics you should know about fonts and typography.

*Fonts are the voice in which your writing speaks.*

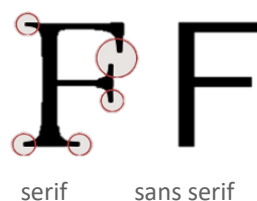


I am traditional.  
I am sleek and modern.  
I am goofy.  
**I am powerful.**  
**I AM SHOUTING.**  
I am artsy.  
I don't need to be noticed.

# TYPOGRAPHY BASICS

## SERIF VS. SANS SERIF

Fonts are generally classed as either “serif” or “sans serif.” Serifs are the widened feet at the end of font strokes. Sans serifs don’t have those widened ends.



## STROKE

Typography

Light   ←————→   Regular   ←————→   Bold

## TYPOGRAPHY ANATOMY



## KERNING

Kerning is the space **between** letters. The best kerning is achieved when spacing looks even. Kerning is most often adjusted with large headings or titles. Body copy is rarely kerned.

NO

T Y P O G R A P H Y

YES

TYPOGRAPHY

## SAFE-BET FONT PAIRINGS

Helvetica  
Garamond

Avenir  
Bell MT

Century Gothic  
Century

Baskerville  
Helvetica Neue

Arial  
Georgia

Bebas neue  
Helvetica Light

## FONTS FOR HEADINGS

Choose fonts for 3-4 levels of text:  
headings, subheadings, body text &  
annotations.

LEVELS	EXAMPLES
<b>Headings</b> SUBHEADINGS body text	<b>Garamond</b> HELVETICA Helvetica
<b>HEADINGS</b> subheadings body text annotations	<b>Bebas neue</b> Bebas neue Helvetica Light Garamond (italic)

FIGURE 6.2

## HOW TO CHOOSE FONTS

Readers scan for titles and headings first, so those elements need to stand out.

Generally, choose two different fonts: one for title/headings, and one for body text. A rule of thumb is to choose a serif font for one and a sans serif font for the other. Some reliable pairings are shown in Figure 6.2.

Go to [fontpair.co](http://fontpair.co) to experiment with a range of free Google fonts in tandem. Remember, if you are sharing a copy of your document in editable form, your recipient's device may not display unusual fonts. If you save and share your work in PDF, your fonts will be consistent.

Choose fonts that

- ▶ Convey the right impression for your document
- ▶ Look good on multiple screen sizes
- ▶ Are large and dark enough for your audience to read easily
- ▶ Are deliberate, distinct, and bold



Remember, the population is aging. Choose a font size that will be easily readable by your audience.

## SECTION TWO

# WRITE HEADINGS

---

Our brains are attuned to information hierarchy. “What should I pay attention to first? What can I ignore until later?” Give your reader some help by using **headings** in messages longer than three or four paragraphs.

Because you’ve spent time planning and organizing your document, writing headings won’t be hard.

The stylized document in Figure 7.3 shows a title and headings that coordinate in color and size. Make sure your headings are also parallel grammatically and that they indicate useful content. For instance: “*Why buy from us?*” is a clearer heading than simply “*Why?*”

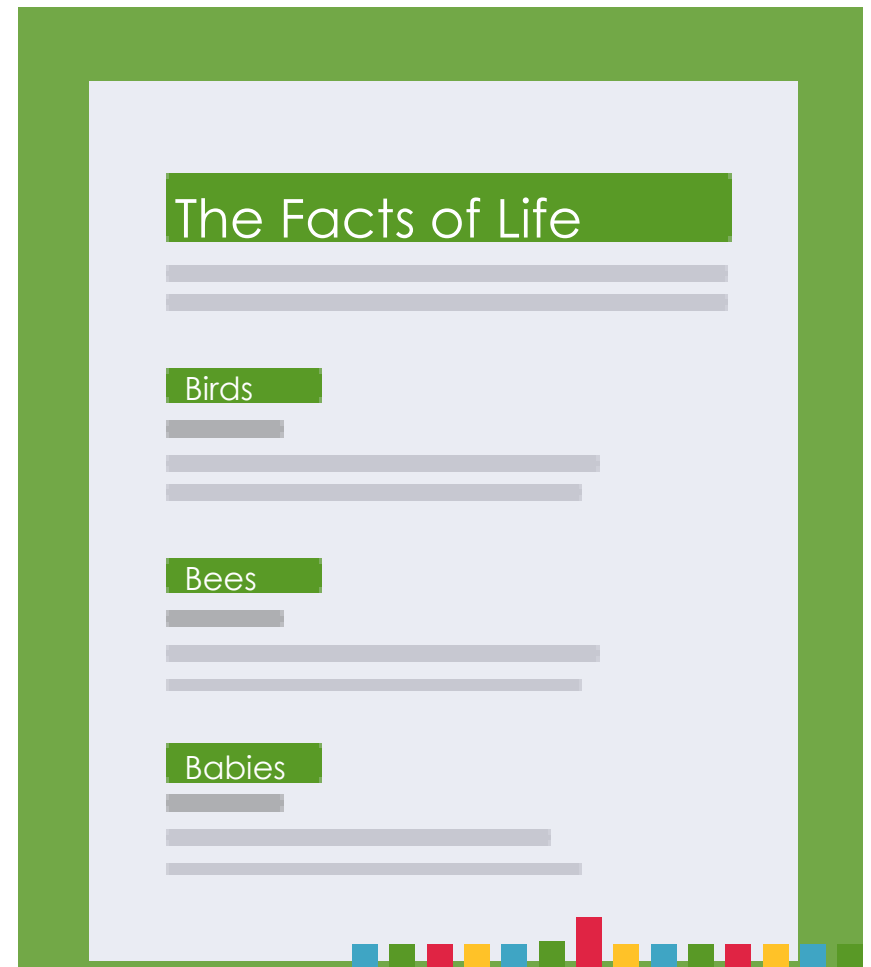


FIGURE 7.3

# BE CONSISTENT

Be sure to write and format headings consistently throughout your document, and make sure same-level headings are grammatically parallel.

Save yourself some time by learning and using “styles formatting” tools for titles, headings, and body text. When you apply styles to your headings, you can easily generate an outline or change the style or color of all your headings with one click. Here’s how it’s done in Google Docs: [Working with Heading Styles](#). (Word, Pages, and other text editors have similar capabilities.)

# PLACE EMPHASIS

When you need to emphasize part of your text, do it properly. Back when everyone wrote on typewriters, the only tools for emphasis were capitalization and underlining, but all-caps now looks like SHOUTING, and underlining interrupts the descending strokes of letters. Instead, use size, italics, grayscale, bolding, or colors to make your point.

## Write Grammatically Parallel Headings

NO

Hiring three new project managers for the next fiscal year will benefit our department in the following three ways.

### Project Cycle Time

Blah blah blah

### Resource Management is improved

Blah blah blah

### Budget Reduction

Blah blah blah

YES

Hiring three new project managers for the next fiscal year will benefit our department in the following three ways.

### Shorten Project Cycle Time

Blah blah blah

### Improve Resource Management

Blah blah blah

### Reduce the Overall Budget

Blah blah blah

## Place Emphasis Skillfully

NO

ALL CAPS FEELS LIKE SHOUTING.

Underlining interrupts the descending strokes of letters, so avoid using it.

Don't use **TWO** forms of emphasis at once. Just *choose* the right one.

YES

**Size** draws the eye.

Italics *emphasize* key words.

**Grayscale** provides contrast.

**Bolding** catches attention.

**Colors** please the reader.



# FORMAT EMAIL

In an email, use bolded paragraph headings for scanability. Doing this helps you stay organized, and readers love it.

## YES

To: Hannah.Jones@email.com  
From: Arianna.Cortes@email.com  
Subject: 3 Goals for Our Team Meeting

Hi, Hannah. Jackie asked us to emphasize three goals to the team at our meeting tomorrow:

### **UPDATE CARDS DAILY**

We all need to update our assignment cards on Trello each day by 5 p.m. Jackie would like to be able to do a company-wide review of project status in the evenings.

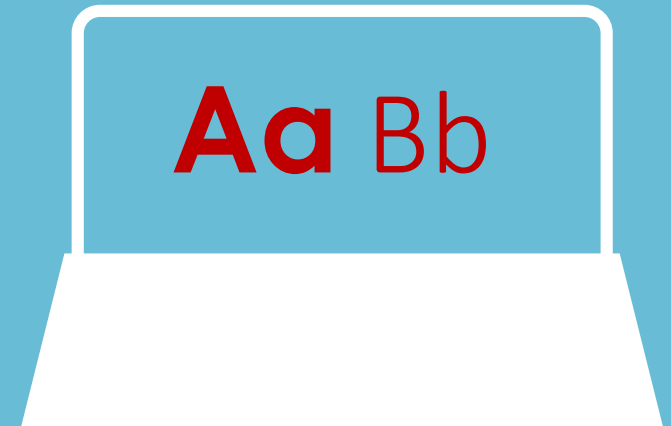
### **MAKE SEAMLESS HAND-OFFS**

A few projects were accidentally dropped during the staff change last year, so we need to make sure each project sheet is up to date before handing it off to someone else.

### **HARVEST CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

Treat customer complaints as valuable feedback. Be sure to record the complaint and the resolution in the appropriate log. If you see trends, bring them to Jackie's attention.

See you at 2:30.  
Arianna



## What font voice is your email speaking in?

For daily emails, make sure you're happy with the default font. Some designers claim that Verdana (sans serif) or Georgia (serif) are better choices than Gmail's default, Arial.

While you're at it, try creating a professional signature block that includes your contact information.



Activity 7.2

**Change your default font in Gmail by going to "settings" Choose a font that represents your voice well.**



## SECTION THREE

# USE WHITE SPACE

---

White space is, of course, just space. But like silence, it is remarkably powerful. A page full of black text with small margins feels daunting and unappealing to a reader, as *The Onion* so astutely reported: Nation Shudders at Large Block of Uninterrupted Text. Don't make that mistake. Build plenty of white space into your document to enhance readability, direct attention, and lighten the feel of the page.

The next pages demonstrate some practical formatting tips for using space well.

**Visual simplicity invites your reader's attention.**



# LEFT-ALIGN OR JUSTIFY

Text can be aligned four ways: on the left, the center, the right, or spread evenly between two margins. Although “justified” text (aligned between both edges of a column) can look sharp at a distance, odd spacing between words can occur. These distracting, jagged white spaces in your paragraph are called rivers. Left-justified, ragged-right text is easiest to read, and lets *you* decide how to use your extra white space, instead of sprinkling it throughout your paragraph. Narrow columns however, can be justified well if you find and hyphenate words that are causing rivers, or use smart text display software like InDesign.

# KEEP LINES SHORT

Keeping your lines short makes reading faster and easier. Instead of long lines, use generous margins to keep lines shorter. Another great solution is to use columns, which shortens the lines still further. A good rule of thumb is to keep each line of text no longer than 52-70 characters wide so the eye captures each line quickly.

# AVOID NARROW MARGINS

Margins give the eye a rest. Don’t skimp. One wider margin (up to two inches) on mirrored sides of the page can be a good spot for illustrations or pull quotes.

## LEFT ALIGNED

YES

Left-justified, ragged-right text is easiest to read and should be used most often.

## RIGHT ALIGNED

SOMETIMES

Right-justified, ragged-left text can be used to display short text units.

## FULL JUSTIFIED BETWEEN MARGINS

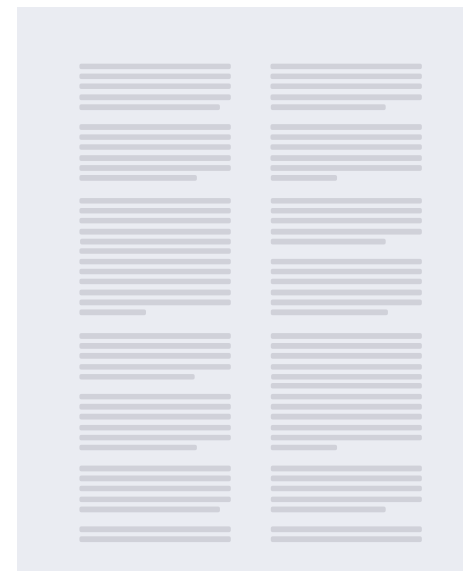
NO

Justified text can cause odd spacing in and between words. Avoid it.

YES

Justified text can look sharp, though, if you use design software or use hyphens when needed.

## COLUMNS AND MARGINS



Columns make lines short

Use wide margins for visual relief

## USE 1.15 LINE SPACING AS YOUR DEFAULT

You're probably familiar with "single spaced" and "double spaced." (You in high school: "*Does my five-page essay have to be single spaced or double spaced?*") But the optimal vertical distance between lines for most documents is not 1, but about 1.15 (this spacing is called *leading*). This little bit of **extra space** gives the document a **lighter look**.

Single spacing is acceptable, but **do not double space** your text for any business document unless your boss is a retired high school English teacher. It looks unfinished, undesigned, and unprofessional.

Don't indent. Indenting the first line of each paragraph by five spaces is another typewriter holdover. Instead, leave an extra line between paragraphs and make all paragraphs begin flush with the left margin.

## WRITE SHORT PARAGRAPHS

**Paragraph breaks are the breath of reading.** Don't force your reader to go on for too long without a refreshing break. Paragraph length can be a *formatting* as well as a *content* decision. When writing text in columns, use very short paragraphs.



**To keep your paragraphs shorter,  
use links liberally.**

## CHOOSE YOUR LINE SPACING

NO

**0.7**

Leading is the amount of vertical space between lines of text. You probably know it as spacing.

YES

**1.15**

Leading is the amount of vertical space between lines of text. You probably know it as spacing.

NO

**2.0**

Leading is the amount of vertical space between lines of text. You probably know it as spacing.

## SECTION FOUR

# INSERT GRAPHICS

---

Sometimes the best way to communicate information is with graphics, not words.

If you are having trouble figuring out which kind of graphic will best display data, try using Andrew Abela's handy tool [Which Chart?](#) Then download one of Juice Labs [Chart Chooser](#) free templates. We'll cover the details of visualizing data and designing graphics in Chapter 11, but these resources can get you started.



# CHOOSING A GRAPHIC


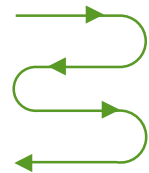

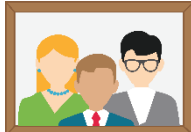






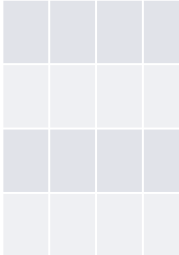
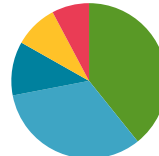




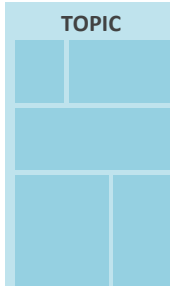





TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT . . .	Sequence	People	Location	Data	Trend	Topic	Action or concept
TRY A...	Timeline, Flowchart   	Photo, Org Chart   	Map, Diagram, Floorplan   	Table, Chart   	Line Chart, Bubble Chart   	Infographic ( <u>Canva</u> )   	Icon ( <u>The Noun Project</u> )    

FIGURE 6.7

# ANCHOR YOUR GRAPHICS

Don't just sprinkle graphics throughout your document, anchor, position, and interpret them. Figure 7.8 demonstrates how to do all three.



## ANCHOR

Anchor graphics to the text by writing a **clear reference** in the body of your document. Give readers a context for what they are about to see and a reason to care about it.



## POSITION

Next, **position graphics strategically** so that the reader's eye can quickly identify and locate the information you want to convey. When you insert a graphic, make sure you label it clearly and cite its source (citations are usually written in a small font at the bottom right).



## INTERPRET

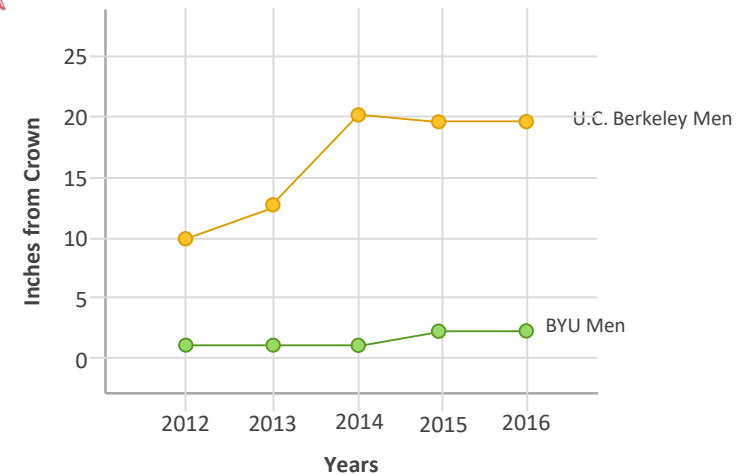
Finally, know that inserting a graphic is not enough. You must **interpret the meaning of your graphic** for your readers. Help them see how your graphic adds to your argument. Move them from "What?" through "So What?" to "Now What?"

## MEN'S HAIR LENGTH IS GROWING

The most significant data comes from the measured length of men's hair from the crown to the tips. Figure 1 shows those measures and an obvious trend toward longer hair.



Male Hair Length Growing Slowly in Utah



Source: < CGT-Studies.com/hairlength/byuberk.html > May 2017



The findings show that in the year 2012, hair length at Berkeley was five times the hair length at BYU. Years 2013 and 2014 saw an increase in that difference, reaching a maximum for the five years of more than 10 times the length of hair at BYU. Years 2015 and 2016 show the difference decreasing only slightly to a little more than six times the BYU hair length, with length at both universities remaining unchanged.

Not only do the findings support the premise that hair length of males at Berkeley is significantly longer, the findings also show a consistent difference; that is, for the five years of the study, hair length of men at Berkeley was always longer than that of men at BYU. Despite these differences, the data shows a key similarity in the growing trend of longer hair, relatively speaking.



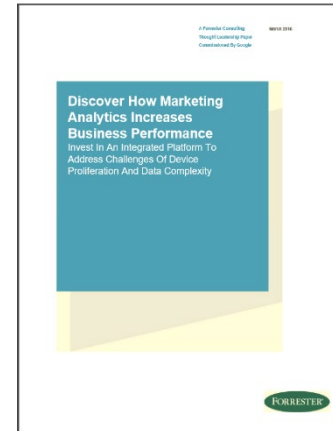
## EXAMPLE BANK

# STANDARD DOCUMENT FORMATS

Business relies heavily on email, but printed business letters and reports are still used. In fact, as more communication becomes digital, the power and durability of a printed document makes it stand out.

Click through the links to the right to see examples of standard formatting and get some design ideas.

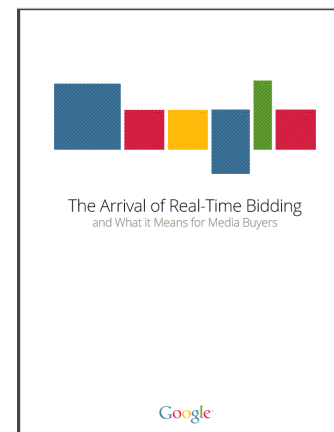
Need to type a memo?  
Standard Memo Format



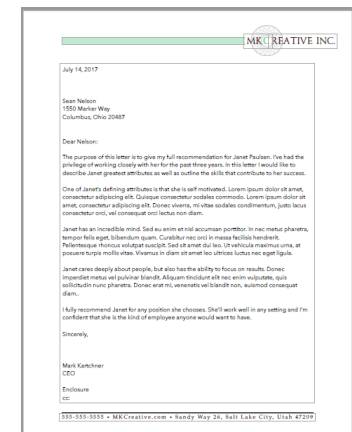
## REPORTS



## PROPOSALS



## WHITE PAPERS



## TRADITIONAL LETTERS



# IN CONCLUSION

Formatting a great-looking document takes time and practice, but the pay off is increased reader access . . . and increased credibility.

The next time you write a paper or create a handout, practice choosing **fonts**, writing **headings**, using **white space**, and inserting **graphics**.



# LEARN MORE

Suggestions?  
Click [HERE](#)



## ARTICLES

Abela, A. "Chart Suggestions—A Thought-Starter." *The Extreme Presentation Method*, September 6, 2006.  
[http://img.labnol.org/di/choosing\\_a\\_good\\_chart2.pdf](http://img.labnol.org/di/choosing_a_good_chart2.pdf), accessed February 2017.

Gaertner-Johnston, Lynn. "Write Better Executive Summaries." *Business Writing Blog*, May 29, 2013.  
[http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business\\_writing/2013/05/write-better-executive-summaries.html](http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2013/05/write-better-executive-summaries.html), accessed February 2017.

Kapterev, Alexei. "Which typeface should I use?" LinkedIn SlideShare, February 8, 2016.  
<http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/which-typeface-should-i-use/>, accessed February 2017.

"Nation Shudders At Large Block Of Uninterrupted Text." *The Onion*, March 9, 2010. <http://www.theonion.com/article/nation-shudders-at-large-block-of-uninterrupted-te-16932>, accessed February 2017.

Strizver, Ilene. "Pull Quotes." *Fonts.com*.  
<https://www.fonts.com/content/learning/fyti/typographic-tips/pull-quotes>, accessed February 2017.

Poole, Alex. "Which Are More Legible: Serif or Sans Serif Typefaces?" *Alex Poole Blog*, February 17, 2008.  
<http://alexpoole.info/blog/which-are-more-legible-serif-or-sans-serif-typefaces/>, accessed February 2017.



## BOOKS

Catmull, Ed. *Creativity, Inc: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*. New York: Random House, 2014.

Hagen, Rebecca, and Kim Golombisky. *White Space is Not Your Enemy: A Beginner's Guide to Communicating Visually through Graphic, Web, & Multimedia Design*. Burlington: Focal Press, 2013.

Kosslyn, Stephen M. *Graph Design for the Eye and Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Tufte, Edward R. *Envisioning Information*. Graphics Press, 1990.



## WEBSITES

Butterick's Practical Typography. "Home."

<http://practicaltypography.com/>, accessed February 2017.

Canva. "Choosing the Right Font."

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAB0nI1UHN0/4EPCm3m456\\_SQZgdVx\\_4Dw/edit](https://www.canva.com/design/DAB0nI1UHN0/4EPCm3m456_SQZgdVx_4Dw/edit), accessed February 2017.

Canva. "Infographics."

<https://www.canva.com/create/infographics/>, accessed February 2017.

Corporatelpsum. "Home." <http://www.cipsum.com/>, accessed February 2017.

Google Support. "Add a title, heading, or table of contents in a document."

<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/116338?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>, accessed October 2017.

JuiceBox. "Chart Chooser."

<http://labs.juiceanalytics.com/chartchooser/index.html>, accessed February 2017.

The Noun Project. "Home." <https://thenounproject.com/>, accessed February 2017.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. "Introduction to Grant Writing."

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/professional\\_technical\\_writing/grant\\_writing/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/grant_writing/index.html), accessed April 2020.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. "White Paper: Purpose and Audience."

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/professional\\_technical\\_writing/white\\_papers/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/white_papers/index.html), accessed April 2020.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. "Writing the Basic Business Letter."

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/professional\\_technical\\_writing/basic\\_business\\_letters/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/basic_business_letters/index.html), accessed April 2020.

Typeconnection. "Home." <http://www.typeconnection.com/>, accessed February 2017.



## VIDEOS

Brown University Computer Education. "Google Docs: Working with Heading Styles," YouTube, published February 9, 2012.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q58KRXwg93E&feature=youtu.be>, accessed October 2017.