

Make it Shine: Focus on Format and Layout

This tip sheet summarizes what you learned in Module 3 of the Clear Communication Online Training Series. Refer back to it when you're writing.

Remember that good format and layout are essential.

- » Use a clear format and layout to amplify your main message and grab your audience.
- » Think about format and layout as you write — not just after you've finished.

Make reading easy.

- » Help readers find key information when they scan by placing it at the top or emphasizing it with visual elements.
- » Use clear headers, so your audience can tell at a glance what's coming up.
- » Break up large blocks of text into smaller chunks, so you don't have a "wall of words."
- » Use plenty of white space to give your material an uncluttered, inviting layout.
- » Add bulleted or numbered lists to organize information.

Use style to enhance understanding.

- » Emphasize key information with bold instead of italics, underlining, or all caps.
- » Use easy-to-read fonts that readers are familiar with — Arial, Calibri, and Lato are all good options for the web.
- » Keep your basic color palette simple — lots of bright colors can be hard to read.

When you're finished writing, always ask yourself:

Will the layout and design help my audience read, understand, and remember what I wrote?

