

Elements of Design

Use the following design principles to effectively organize your instructions.

Proximity

Don't place information in the corners and middle of the page just to space them out. A user's eye stops at each chunk of information—design your page so that the user focuses on and recognizes the most important information.

People assume that information placed together is related—if information is not related, separate it.

Alignment

To create a sharp, professional look and visual coherence, align text, headings, and graphics. Aligned right or aligned left typically looks more professional than center alignment because centering does not create a strong line. Avoid multiple page alignments (e.g., centering headings and right aligning text).

Repetition

Repetition signals users that the page they are reading belongs to the same document and helps them navigate through the document. Repetition starts with being consistent, e.g., making headings the same font and weight, including the page number in the same location, using the same bullet throughout the document, using the same color for all background pages, putting the company logo in the same place on each page. If you consistently place like information in the same manner or place, users can more easily recognize and find that information. Avoid repeating the element to distraction.

Contrast

You can add interest to the page and create organizational hierarchy by creating a striking difference in similar elements (e.g., font type and size, line thickness, color). Using special fonts can create emphasis on the page.