

Digital Writing

Follow these guidelines to create effective digital writing products.

Content

- Communicate a clear point of view or focus.
- Emphasize main ideas.
- Add necessary supporting details and examples.
- Cite your sources and include links to original works when possible.

Design Structure

- Plan how information will be arranged.
- Use an outline or storyboard to organize ideas around pages, slides, or scenes.
- Think about how the different components will look on the page.
 - Balance—Think about how much text or photos you have on each side of the page or screen. Does one side look “heavier” than the other?
 - Emphasis—Does important information catch the viewer’s eye?
 - Is the screen or slide attractive and neat?
- Make getting to the information people want *intuitive*, or easy to do without instructions.
- Structure information simply, with the main points easy to find.
- On a Web site, include labels of other pages with short descriptions, if necessary.
- Save elaboration and detail for linked Web pages.
- Make sure the media you use communicates your message without overpowering it.
- Follow copyright laws for all media.

Headings and Lists

- Show relationships among ideas with headings and lists.
- Use numbers for ideas that need to be in order to make sense and bullets for subtopics.

- Make sure all items in a list have the same structure—parallelism. Watch for:
 - Names of ideas
 - Action verbs
 - “-ing” words
 - Complete sentences or fragments
- Avoid non-action verbs as much as possible, such as be, been, being, is, are, was, were, and seem.
- Focus language on descriptive nouns and verbs instead of adding adjectives and adverbs.
- Use language that creates word pictures and stories to build interest.
- Use only necessary scientific language and define unfamiliar terms.