

# Design

{ Balance, Alignment,

# Principles

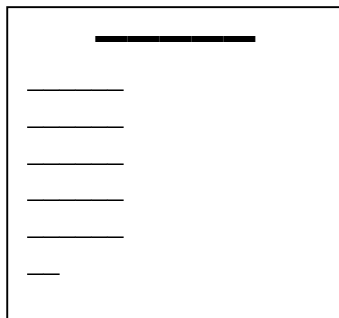
Grouping, Consistency, Contrast }

These design principles will help you create easy-on-the-eyes documents that allow users to quickly and easily access information. All of these principles rely on the idea that as humans have learned to process information, they have developed sophisticated ways of understanding patterns of information. Below are the five principles that guide a well-designed document.

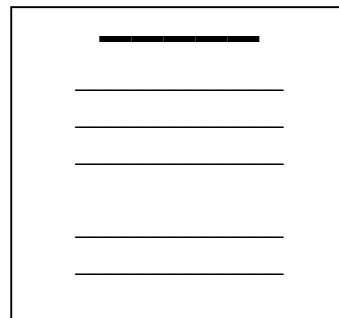
## ① Balance

Make sure to balance the weight of you page, so information is evenly divided. This gives the page a clean look, and makes your reader feel the document is worth their time.

**Example A:** Too much “weight” on the left leaves lots of unused space on the right.



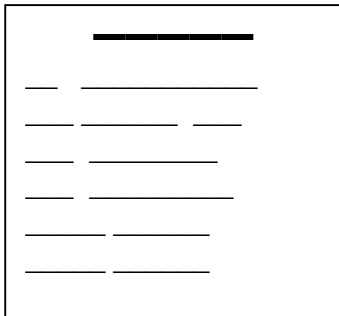
**Example B:** Weight is ‘even’; page feels right to reader



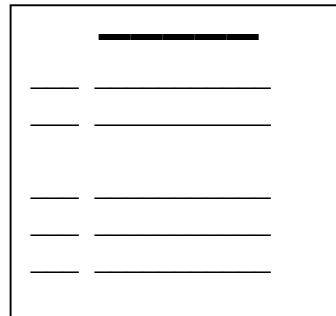
## ② Alignment

See the page as a grid in which horizontal and vertical lines divide the information and need to be aligned. If those lines are not aligned, the page looks sloppy. Also, see information as levels of information that your reader will drill down to much more easily when helped by alignment.

**Example A:** Alignment is off. The page looks cluttered.



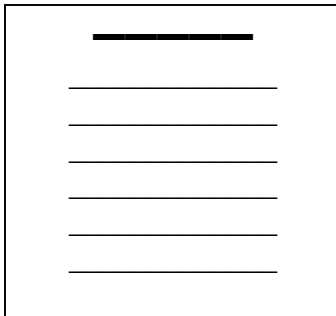
**Example B:** Alignment divides information visually; reader can “drill” down to information much quicker



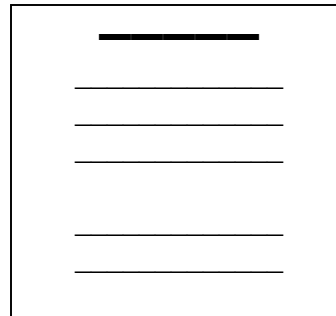
### ③ Grouping

Use white space to separate groups of information. Create chunks of information and “group” information together that belongs together and separate those that do not. Your reader will pick up on this and appreciate the organization of information.

**Example A:** Flat, ungrouped text



**Example B:** chunked, easier to read



## ④ Contrast

If layers of information in your document are not of the same level, you'll want to make them extra different. This will allow the reader to make out these relations quickly.

**Example A:** Not enough contrast; heading and text bleed together

Heading  
Text

Heading  
Text

**Example B:** Contrast used effectively between heading and text – they are dissimilar

**Heading**  
Text

**Heading**  
Text

## ⑤ Consistency

Be consistent in page design. So if you are using headers that are bold and underlined, be consistent all the way. This goes for every design principle you introduce

**Example A:** Inconsistent design

**Heading 1**

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*subheading*

Heading 2  
*subheading*

**Example B:** Consistent design

**Heading 1**

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*subheading*

**Heading 2**

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*subheading*