

# Professional Writing Principles for Writing Instructors

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Because English students are learning how to produce materials that they will be using as professional instructors, it is to their advantage to learn some of the basics of professional writing. This will support the professional ethos that they present to both their administrators, peers, and students.

### Document Design

This document looks clean and is easy to read because I have used the following principles:

- White space: a document that is busy lots of text from margin to margin) looks like a daunting task to your audience
- Block paragraphs: create block paragraphs by using single-spaces between lines and double spaces between paragraphs. Not only does this make a text look cleaner, it also reduces the amount of "publishing space" by almost one-half from double-spacing. Double-spacing is for producing drafts and allows editors or instructors to place comments in-between lines. Since you are practicing how to produce professional documents, use block paragraphs
- Bullets & Numbers: use bulleted points for lists and numbers for sequenced lists; this makes them easier to read and to determine what parts make up a whole or what needs to be accomplished.

### Page Layout

To produce a clean looking document, consider the following principles from Robin William's Non-Designer's Design Book. Her principles are supported by research about the eye's physiology.

#### *Contrast*

Make visual elements (headings, subheadings, text) that are different appear different by adjusting font size, color, face, or style. Notice that the headings are a different font face and style (Arial, bold) than the text (Georgia, normal). This makes it easy for your audience to determine how the text is functioning.

#### *Alignment*

Create invisible lines down your page to show relationships between items. Notice that the text is all left aligned. The headings are consistently aligned with each other, as are the bullets, and the subheadings; this allows the audience to clearly see hierarchies in the text's organization.

#### *Repetition*

Repeat visual elements throughout the document. Notice that the headings and sub-headings all look the same. Notice the alignment is all the same. Again this orients your audience to the hierarchies you are creating.

#### *Proximity*

Place text next to corresponding elements. Notice that the headings and subheadings are close to the descriptions of the principles being described; this helps the audience to see relationships between what is written on the page.