

Writing in Organizations

Prepared by Dr. Adam Yagoub

MGM 202

Lecture 6





مجموعة جامعة
الجميع الذكية
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MIDOCEAN
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Designing Successful Documents, Visuals, and Websites.

Lecture 6

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Course Outline

Lecture 1: Getting Started: Writing and Your Career.

Lecture 2: The Writing Process and Collaboration at Work.

Lecture 3: Writing Routine Business Correspondence.

Lecture 4: Writing Letters: Some Basics for Communicating with Audiences Worldwide.

Lecture 5: How to Get a Job: Searches, Dossiers, Portfolios, Résumés, Letters, and Interviews.

Lecture 6: Designing Successful Documents, Visuals, and Websites.

Lecture 7: Writing Instructions and Procedures.

Lecture 8: Writing Effective Short Reports.

Lecture 9: Writing Proposals.

Lecture 10: Writing Careful Long Reports.

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Lecture Outline

- 1- Characteristics of Effective Design.
- 2- Organizing Information Visually.
- 3- The ABCs of Print Document Design.
- 4- Successful Document Design: A Wrap-Up.
- 5 - The Purpose of Visuals.
- 6- Choosing Effective Visuals.
- 7- Generating Your Own Visuals
- 8- Inserting and Writing About Visuals: Some Guidelines.
- 9- Two Categories of Visuals: Tables and Figures.
- 10- Using Visuals Ethically.
- 11- Using Appropriate Visuals for International Audiences.
- 12- Writing for and Designing Websites.

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Designing Successful Documents, Visuals, and Websites

1- Characteristics of Effective Design:

In designing documents and websites, you need to project a positive, professional image of yourself, your company, and your product or service. A report or website filled with nothing but thick unbroken, long paragraphs crowded to the margins, with no visual clues to break them up or to make information stand out, is sure to intimidate readers and turn them away. They will conclude that your work is too complex and not worth their effort or time.

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Your company, too, will win or lose points because of your design choices. A visually appealing document or website will enhance a company's reputation and improve its sales. A poorly designed one will not.

Make your documents look user-friendly—clear and logical—by signaling to your audience that your message is

- easy to read
- easy to follow and understand
- easy to recall

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2- Organizing Information Visually:

Today's web-based culture prizes visual thinking when you design all kinds of documents. The way you organize and visualize information can help readers move quickly and clearly through your document. design or layout plays a crucial role in an audience's overall acceptance of your work.

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Positive Design

- visual appeal
- logical organization
- clarity
- accessibility
- functionality
- balanced

Negative Design

- crowded
- disorganized
- hard to follow
- difficult to read
- uneven
- inconsistent

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3- The ABCs of Print Document Design:

The basic elements of effective document design are

- page layout
- typography, or type design, including using color
- graphics, or visuals

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- Page Layout

Each of your pages needs to coordinate space and text pleasingly. To design an effective page layout, **pay attention to the following elements.**

- 1. White space.** White space (blank space), which refers to open areas on a page such as margins and space around images, is free of text and visuals.
- 2. Margins.** Use wide margins, usually 1 to 1 ½ inches, to “frame” your document with white space surrounding text and visuals.

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3. Line length. Most readers find a text line of 10 to 14 words, or 50 to 70 characters (depending on the type size you choose), comfortable and enjoyable to read.

4. Columns. Document text usually is organized in either single column or multicolumn formats.

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- Typography

Typography consists of font (also called typeface), font size, font styles, justification, heads and subheads, lists, and captions.

- Font

Readability of your text is crucial. Select a font, therefore, **that ensures your text is**

- legible
- attractive
- functional
- appropriate for your message
- complementary with accompanying graphics

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The most familiar fonts are the following four.

Times New Roman

Arial

Helvetica

Palatino

- Font Size

Font size options are almost unlimited, depending on your software package and printer capabilities.

- Font Styles

Font styles include boldface, italics, shadow, underlining, small caps, and shading.

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- Justification

Sometimes referred to as alignment, justification consists of left, right, full, and center options.

- Heads and Subheads

Heads and subheads are brief descriptive words or phrases that signal starting points and major divisions in your document.

- Lists

Placing items in a list helps readers by dividing, organizing, and ranking information.

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- Captions

Used to accompany, explain, highlight, or reference pictures or other graphics (like charts and graphs), captions are titles that help a reader identify a visual and quickly explain the nature of the picture or other graphic.

- Using Color

Using color in workplace documents is a good way to enhance readability, break up long segments of text, and tie important ideas together.

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4- Successful Document Design: A Wrap-Up:

By following these three simple guidelines, **you can design effective documents for your readers.**

- 1. Keep it simple.** Don't try to impress your reader with visual effects—such as the overuse of italics or boldface (they will lose their purpose), fancy designs and scripts.
- 2. Make it clear.** Make your message logical and easy to understand by including heads, bulleted lists, numbered steps, and the like.
- 3. Have it flow.** Help your readers get through and understand your document easily and, if necessary, to go back and find information quickly.

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5 - The Purpose of Visuals:

Visuals are essential in the world of work. They are vital to the success of newsletters, reports, proposals, instructions, PowerPoint presentations, blogs, and, most certainly, websites. Even your company's logo reveals a great deal about its image and mission. The reason visuals are so important is that they help readers understand your work.

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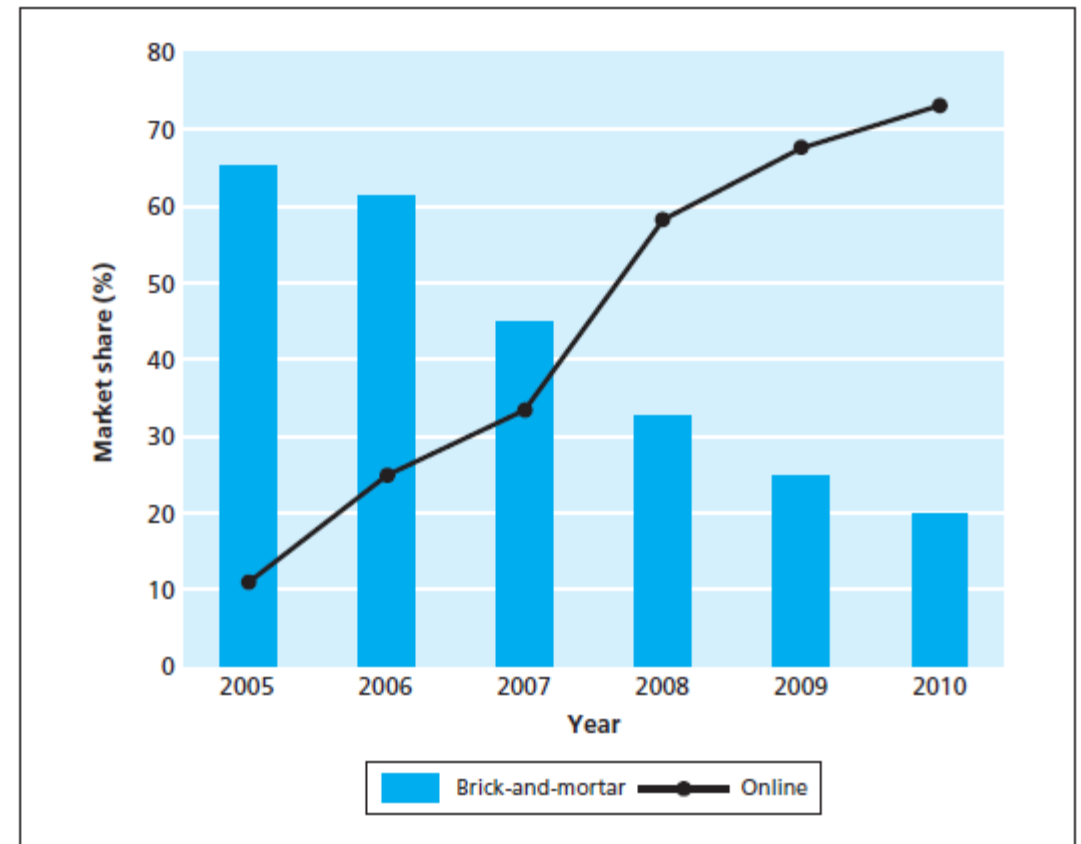
through our sense of sight. **Here are several reasons why visuals can improve your work:**

each point is graphically reinforced in **Figure 6.3 below.**

1. Visuals arouse readers' immediate interest.
2. Visuals increase readers' understanding by simplifying concepts.
3. Visuals are especially important for non-native speakers of English and multicultural audiences.
4. Visuals emphasize key relationships.

Figure 6.3

A line-and bar chart depicting market share of online computer purchases in the southwestern United States compared with those at brick-and-mortar stores.



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6- Choosing Effective Visuals:

Select your visuals carefully. You'll find that many of the visuals you use will originate from the Internet or from a graphics program on your computer. But you can also scan hard-copy visuals and upload digital photographs. Regardless of the source of your visuals, **the following suggestions will help you to choose them effectively:**

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1. Include visuals only when they are relevant for your purpose and audience.
2. Use visuals in conjunction with—not as a substitute for—written work.
3. Experiment with several visuals.
4. Always use easy-to-read and relevant visuals.
5. Consider how your visuals will look on the page.
6. Be prepared to revise and edit your visuals.
7. Take advantage of scanners.

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7- Generating Your Own Visuals:

You can easily generate charts, graphs, or tables by using the templates available in your word processing software, such as **Microsoft Word**, and by selecting Insert Chart or Insert Table.

Spreadsheet programs, such as **Microsoft Excel**, also provide easy to-use templates for creating graphs and charts using the numerical data you have entered into your spreadsheet. When using these software programs, though, avoid the temptation to make your visuals too showy. Although dazzling graphics may attract your reader's immediate attention, you don't want them to take over the report. Computer-generated graphs and charts should work with your words, not overshadow them.

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8 - Inserting and Writing About Visuals: Some Guidelines.

Using a visual requires more of you as a writer than simply inserting it into your written work. You need to use visuals in conjunction with what you write. The following guidelines will help you to (1) identify, (2) cite, (3) insert, (4) introduce, and (5) interpret visuals for your readers.

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1 - Identify Your Visuals

Give each visual a number and caption (title) that indicates the subject or explains what the visual illustrates. An unidentified visual is meaningless. A caption helps your audience to interpret your visual—to see it with your purpose in mind.

2 - Cite the Source for Your Visuals

If you use a visual that is not your own work, give credit to your source (newspaper, magazine, textbook, company, federal agency, individual, or website).

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3 - Insert Your Visuals Appropriately

Since many of the images you use will come from outside sources, especially the Web, you have to incorporate them clearly and in appropriate places in your written work.

4 - Introduce Your Visuals

Refer to each visual by its number and, if necessary, mention the title as well.

5 - Interpret Your Visuals

Give readers help in understanding your visual and in knowing what to look for. Let them know what is most significant about the visual.

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9- Two Categories of Visuals: Tables and Figures:

Visuals can be divided into two categories—tables and figures. A **table** arranges information—numbers and/or words—in parallel columns or rows for easy comparison of data. Anything that is not a table is considered a figure. **Figures** include graphs, pie charts, bar charts, organizational charts, flow charts, pictographs, maps, photographs, and drawings. Expect to use both in your work.

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1. Tables

Tables are parallel columns or rows of information organized and arranged into categories to show changes in time, distance, cost, employment, or some other distinguishable or quantifiable variable. They allow readers to compare a great deal of information in a compact space.

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- Parts of a Table

To use a table properly, you need to know the parts that constitute it. as you read the following:

■ **The main column** is “Amount Needed to Satisfy Minimum Daily Requirement,” and the sub columns are the protein sources for which the table gives data.

■ The stub refers to the first vertical column on the left side. **The stub column heading is “Source.”** The stub lists the foods for which information is broken down in the sub columns.

■ **A rule (or line)** across the top of the table separates the headings from the body of the table.

TABLE 6.1 Parts of a Table

Table number

TABLE 1 Efficiency of Some Protein Sources in Meeting an Adult's Minimum Daily Requirements				
Source	Percent of Protein	Percent of Amino Acids	Amount Needed to Satisfy Minimum Daily Requirement	
			(grams)	(ounces)
Cheese ^a	27	70	227	7.2
Corn	10	50	860	30.0
Eggs	11	97	403	14.1
Fish ^a	22	80	244	8.5
Kidney beans	23	40	468	16.4
Meat ^a	25	68	253	8.8
Milk	4	82	1,311	45.9 ^b
Soybeans	34	60	210	7.3

Source: From *Biology: The Unity and Diversity of Life*, 4th edition by C. Starr and R. Taggart. Copyright © 1987. Reprinted with permission of Brooks/Cole, a division of Thomson Learning: www.thomsonrights.com. Fax 800-730-2215.

^a = Average value
^b = Equivalent of 6 cups

Footnotes

Origin of data

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2. Figures

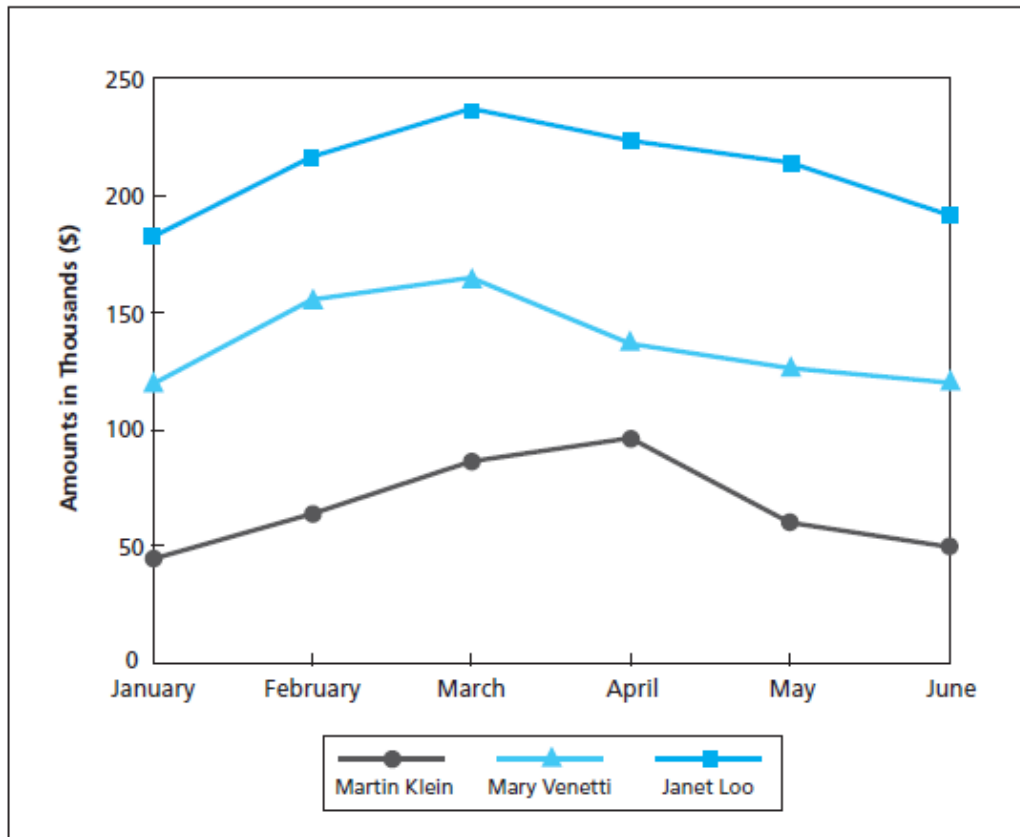
As we saw, any visual that is not a table is classified as a figure. **The types of figures are:**

- graphs
- pie, or circle, charts
- bar charts
- organizational charts
- flow charts
- pictographs
- maps
- photographs
- drawings
- clip art

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A multiple-line graph showing sales figures for the first six months of 2011 for three salespeople.

Figure 6.6

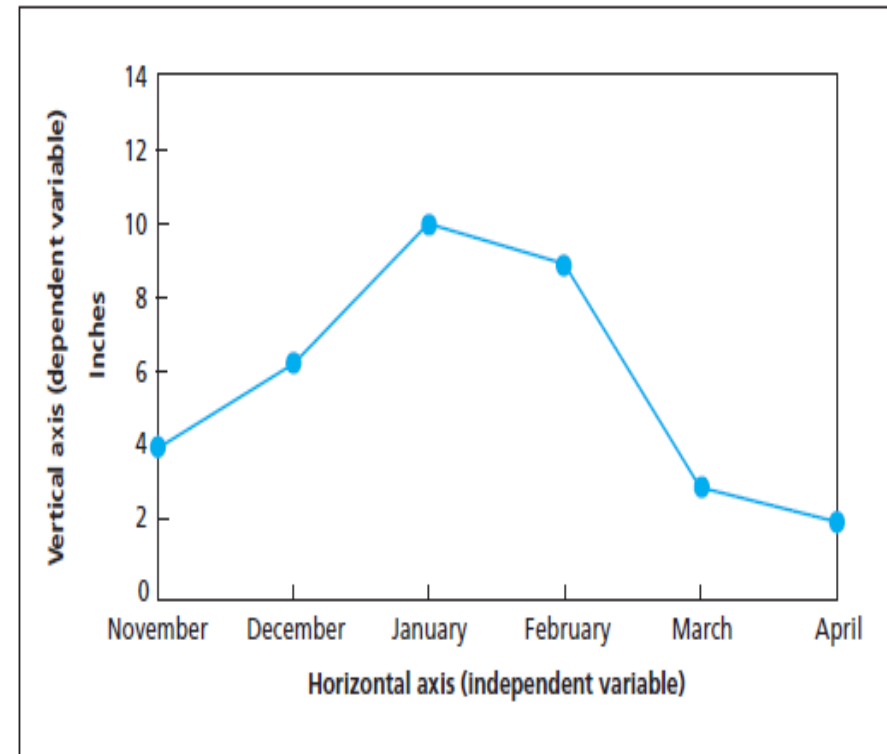


Uses different colors and symbols to represent each salesperson

Legend explains what different symbols and colors represent

A simple line graph showing the amount of snowfall in Springfield from November 2010 to April 2011.

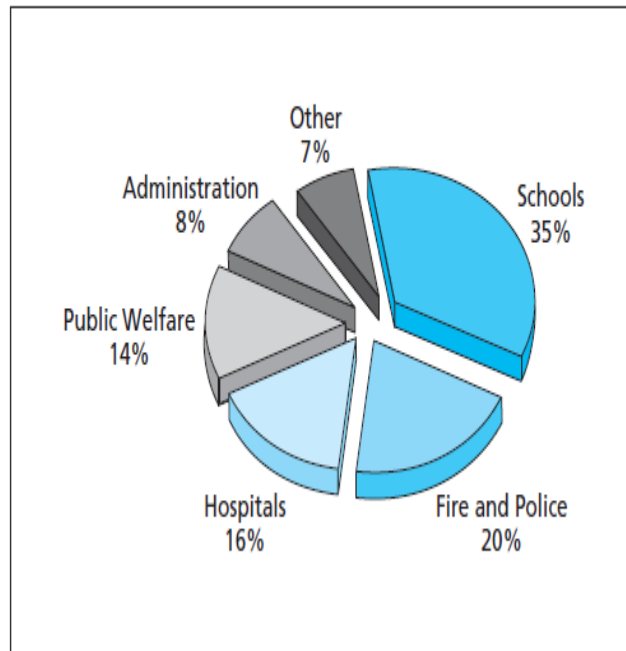
Figure 6.5



Graph is easy to read and follow

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Figure 6.7 A three-dimensional pie chart showing the breakdown by department of the proposed Palmer City Budget for 2012.



Source: Palmer City Statistics

Vertical bar chart.

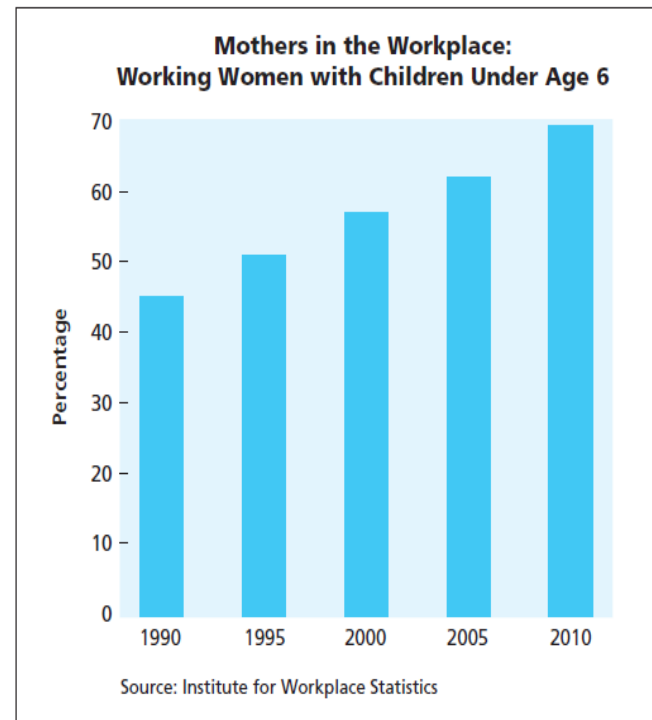
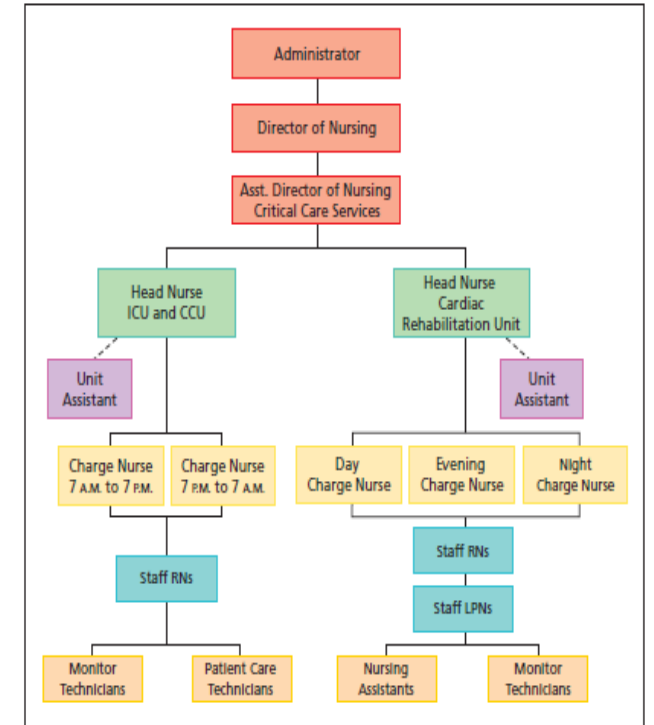


Figure 6.10 An organizational chart representing critical care nursing services at Union General Hospital.



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A programming flow chart showing steps in writing a research report.

Figure 6.11

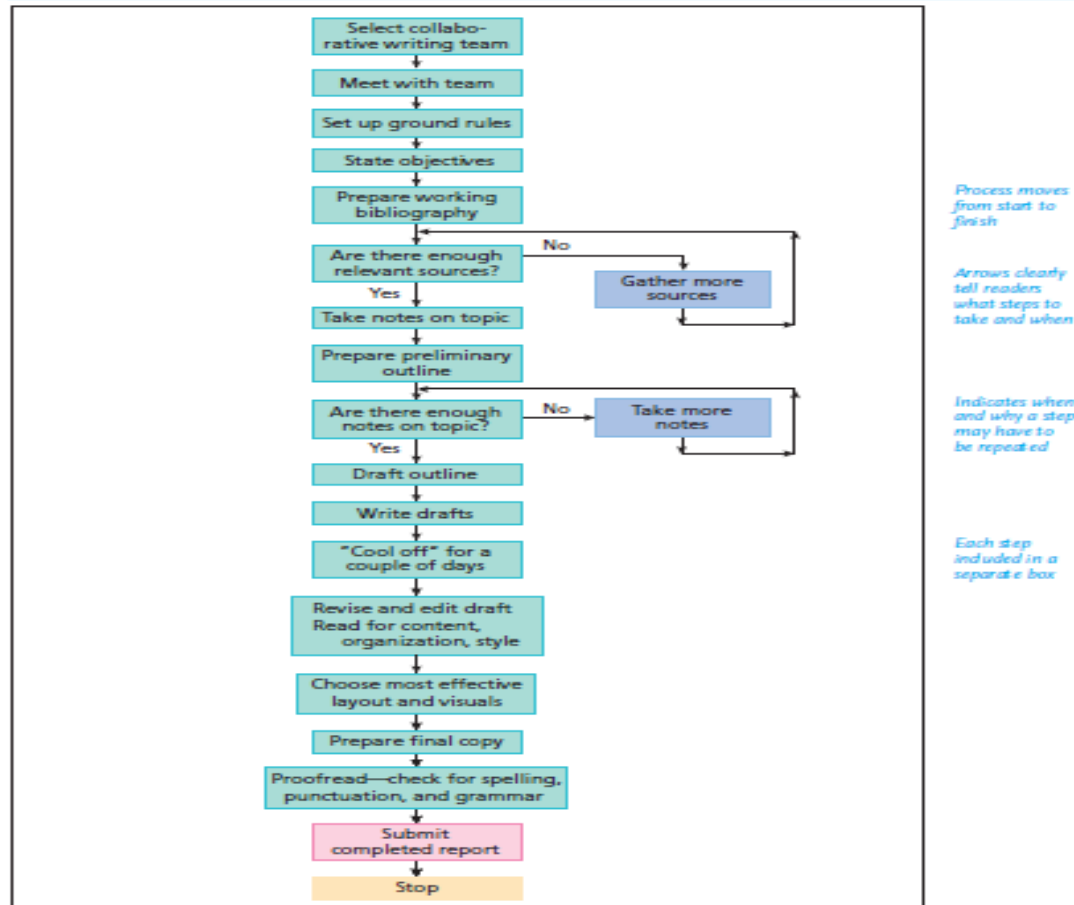
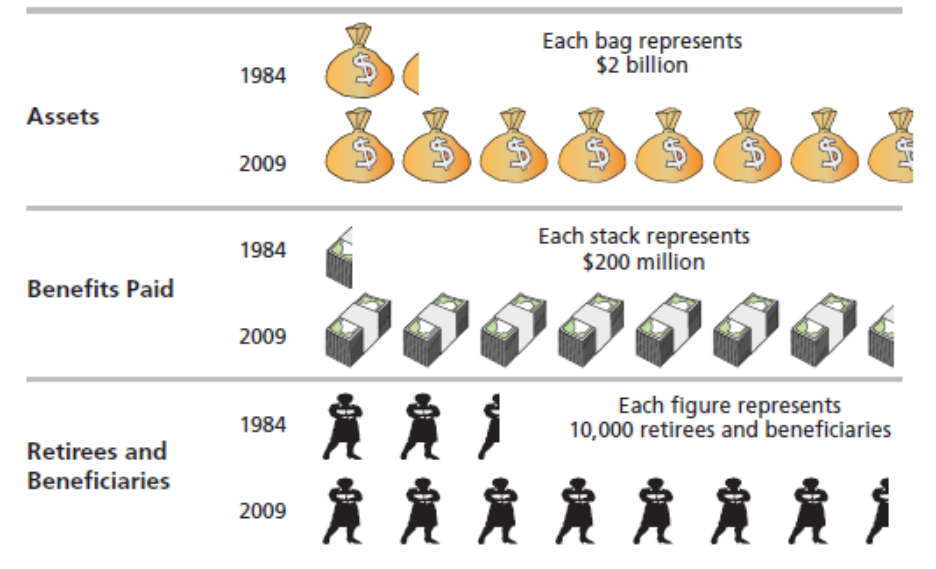


Figure 6.12 A pictograph showing the growth of one state's retirement assets.

How does the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) compare today with 25 years ago? During that time, PERS experienced spectacular growth, with both assets and benefits paid increasing more than sixfold.

- The market value of assets increased from \$2.3 billion to \$15.5 billion.
- PERS paid benefits of \$94.3 million in FY '92. The total reached \$1.525 billion during FY '09.
- Retirees and beneficiaries drawing benefits more than doubled, from 24,000 to 76,100.



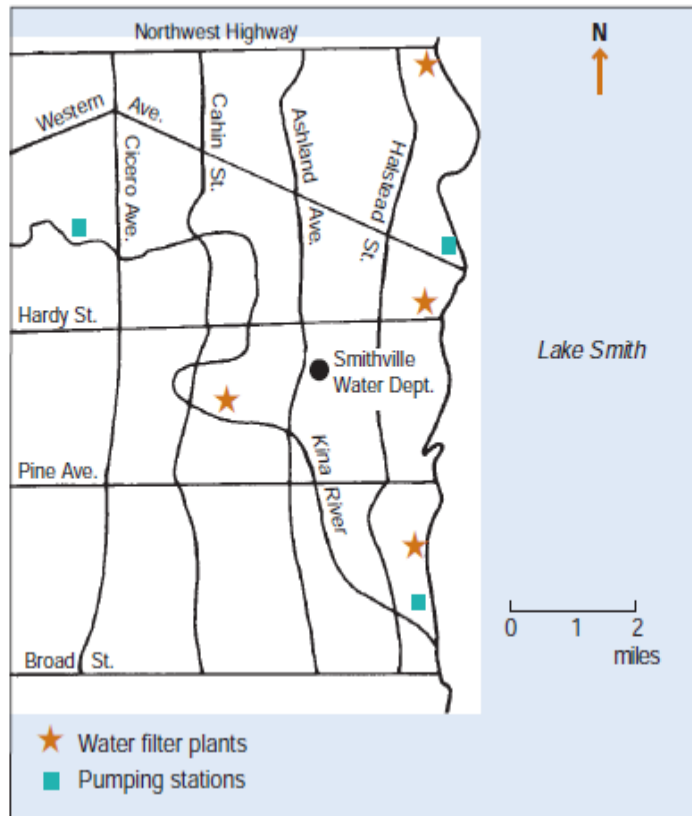
Source: PERS Member Newsletter, February 2010. Official Publication of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi. By permission of Public Employees' Retirement System.

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A map showing the location of the Smithville Water Department's filter plants and pumping stations.

Figure 6.13



Provides directional indication

Includes only necessary information

Includes a legend explaining symbols

Figure 6.14

A photo showing how to perform a procedure and comparing relative sizes and shapes of objects.

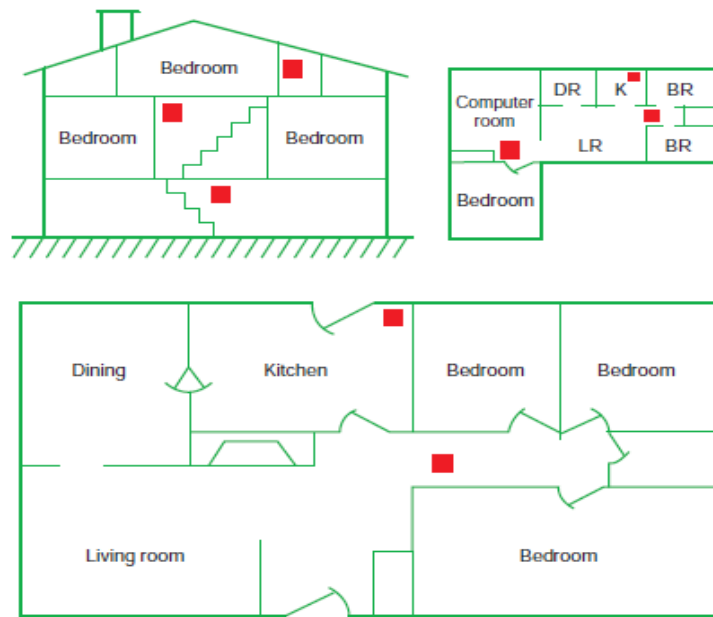


Source: ©Corbis

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A simple drawing showing where to place smoke detectors in a house.



Where to place smoke detectors . . .

In a single-level home (*bottom*), a smoke detector (*square*) should be located outside the sleeping area. But in a multilevel home (*top*) a smoke detector should be provided for each bedroom. In addition, smoke detectors should be placed at the head of the basement stairs and in the kitchen area.

Source: Reprinted by permission of Southern Building.

Figure 6.18 Examples of clip art

Dear stockholder: please cast your ballot by one of the ways below:

In Person



By Internet



By Telephone



By Mail



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10- Using Visuals Ethically:

Make sure your visuals, whether you create or import them, are ethical. Like your words, your visuals should represent you, your company, and the data truthfully. Ethical visuals convey and interpret statistical information and other types of data, products and equipment, locations, and even individuals without misinterpretation. Your visuals should neither distort events and statistics nor mislead readers. **Ethical visuals should be:**

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- accurate
- honest, fair
- complete
- appropriate
- easy to read
- clearly labeled
- uncluttered
- consistent with conventions

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11- Using Appropriate Visuals for International Audiences:

Whether you are writing for an expanding international business community in South America, China, or for multicultural readers in the United States, you will have to prepare numerous documents that require visuals. These can range from instructions containing warning and caution statements to tables, graphs, charts, and photos for proposals, reports, and online presentations.

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- Guidelines for Using Visuals for International Audiences

To communicate appropriately and respectfully with international readers through visuals and other graphics, **follow these guidelines:**

1. Do not use any images that ethnically or racially stereotype your readers.
2. Be respectful of religious symbols and images.
3. Avoid using culturally insensitive or objectionable photographs.
4. Avoid any icons or clip art that international readers would misunderstand.

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5. Be cautious about importing images or photos with hand gestures in your work, especially in manuals or other instructional materials.
6. Don't offend international readers by using colors that are culturally inappropriate.
7. Be careful using directional signs and shapes.
8. Avoid confusing an international audience with punctuation and other writing symbols used in the United States.

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12- Writing for and Designing Websites:

In today's global marketplace, you can apply the skills you have just learned in designing documents and visuals to an online environment (websites, blogs, etc.). In fact, companies often ask their employees to write for and prepare visuals for a corporate website, and while you won't be expected to construct such as website on your own, you will likely be part of a team of specialists in information technology, graphics, marketing, and engineering who are responsible for your firm's web presence.

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To be a helpful member of this team, your employer will expect you to keep up with the latest features of website design and information on how your company can incorporate them. You may also be asked to critique a competitor's website or to assist a client in preparing his/her website. **This section of Chapter 6 stresses the principles and guidelines you need to follow to:**

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- help readers navigate your website quickly, moving from one part to another easily.
- ensure that your site is current.
- make your site user friendly (for global readers as well as English speaking audiences).
- create a visually attractive site.
- keep your design and content ethical.

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- Web Versus Paper Pages

Writing and designing a website requires the same emphasis on planning, drafting, formatting, and testing that printed business documents do. Just as with these paper documents, writers must take into account spatial, rhetorical, and visual considerations when they prepare work for a website. Yet, clearly, a website differs from a hard copy memo, letter, or report in the way content is organized and visually illustrated.

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- Web Versus Print Readers

To help design and write for the web, you need to recognize how webpages are read differently from the way print documents are.

1. Readers do not generally go through a website word for word hunting for information, carefully studying each sentence.
2. Web readers want articles, news stories, and features to be more condensed, and more strategically arranged.
3. A web audience will not necessarily read your entire website.
4. Text on the Web needs to be shorter because of the size of the screen.
5. Web readers will expect navigational cues that readers of a print source do not have.

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- Designing and Writing for the Web: Eight Guidelines

Designing and writing for a website requires you to follow many of the rules By adhering to the following eight guidelines:

1. Make your site easy to find.
2. Make your site easy to download and navigate.
3. Make your site informative.

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4. Make your site easy to read for both native English speakers and international readers.
5. Keep your site updated.
6. Use images and icons effectively.
7. Encourage visitor interaction by soliciting feedback.
8. Make sure your website is ethical.



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References:

**Successful Writing at Work, Concise
Third Edition,
By: Philip C. Kolin
University of Southern Mississippi**

Chapter 6

Thank You

