



Non-Designer's Design Checklist

Contrast

- Whenever two items are not exactly the same, they are **very** different.
- No conflicts, where two things are sort of different

Repetition

- Repeat some aspect of the design is repeated throughout the piece
- But not so much that it becomes annoying or overwhelming

Alignment

- Nothing is placed on the page arbitrarily, every element has a connection with another element.
- Find a strong line and use it
- Don't center align unless you can state a reason for doing so
- Don't stick things in the corners
- Either align or don't. Don't be a wimp!

Proximity

- Items relating to each other are placed close to each other
- Information grouped logically

Color

- Use compliments, triads, or analogous colors
- Just a splash of the second color will do
- Warm colors command attention, use very little of them to create contrast
- You need more of a cool color to create contrast

General

- Be brave. Be bold: do something out of the ordinary
- Be able to name your design features out loud
- Create a focal point to set what readers will see first
- Eyes of any person or thing on the page leads to the focus of the page
- Use strong subheads added so readers can scan
- White space is not trapped between other elements

Type

- Don't use Times, Arial, Helvetica
- Add extra leading and shorten line lengths of sans serif body copy
- Strive for contrast. There are six distinct ways to contrast type: size, weight, structure, form, direction, and color.
- Don't use two typefaces from the same category on the same page
- Don't use script and italic on the same page
- Don't make one element big and another element bold, choose one
- Do contrast a tall slender face with a short thick one
- Do contrast a modern with a sans serif or slab serif
- Do break the rules, if you can justify it
- If you can name the problem, then you can find the solution

Type Categories

- Oldstyle** is based on the handlettered pen strokes of old scribes, always angled serifs, like a quill pen, moderate thick-thin transitions, diagonal stress,
 - Good for large amounts of body copy due to their "invisibility"
 - Goudy, Palatino, Times, Baskerville, Garamond
- Modern** has very thin horizontal serifs, radical thick-thin transitions, no slant, stress is perfectly vertical, giving a cold, elegant look
 - Striking when set very large, not a good choice for body copy
 - Bodoni, Times Bold, Onyx, Didot, Walbaum
- Slab Serif** little or no thick-thin transition, good readability, used in kids' books, serifs are horizontal thick slabs, vertical stress
 - Clarendon, Memphis, New Century Schoolbook, Silica
- Sans Serif** are almost always monoweight (no thick-thin) and thus no stress
 - The best sans serifs have a variety of weights from light to extra black
 - Sans serifs without transition, (Optima) are hard to combine with other type
- Scripts** should be treated like cheesecake, use sparingly so no one gets sick
 - OK to make them big or even huge, but never all caps
- Decorative** faces carry obvious emotions, articulate and exploit.