Visual Design Tips: Slides and Posters

STAY SIMPLE

- a visual should highlight, clarify, and condense information
- stick to key points and terms, but do not include too many bullet points (try 5-6 at most)
- put only one concept on each visual (i.e. one idea per slide, poster board, or handout)
- a visual should be used only to focus attention and reinforce verbal content—do not provide all details
- avoid using distracting backgrounds, photographs, or clip art—do not use these just to take up space
- if an image or effect does not have a rhetorical purpose, it does not belong

CAN YOU READ THIS FONT?

How about this one?

These are probably not good fonts to use.

- use block fonts instead of script fonts.
- They are much easier to read.

MAKE SURE IT IS VISIBLE TO EVERYONE

- use larger, more readable fonts so that everyone in the room can see the information (try using a font sans serif)
- make sure your font color is readable on the background you have chosen (for example, white on a black background is far more visible than green on a yellow background)
- stay consistent in format and style in order to seem more organized
- text is most legible when the line separation is about 1.5 times the letter height

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- CHECK THE TECHNOLOGY BEFOREHAND
- PRACTICE IN THE ROOM IN WHICH YOU WILL BE SPEAKING
- COME PREPARED WITH A BACK-UP PLAN (FOR EXAMPLE, BURN YOUR POWER POINT ONTO A CD AS WELL AS SAVE IT ON YOUR P DRIVE)
- PROOFREAD YOUR MATERIALS

You may want to provide handouts of the material so the audience has a record of the presentation afterwards; however, the goal is to minimize distractions. If the handout has too much information, or is passed out ahead of time, the audience will most likely spend their time reading rather than paying attention to what you are saying.

Information on this page inspired by:

www.ilstu.edu/lts/graphics/design.ppt
http://teachingteams.arizona.edu/docs/oralcommunication.pdf
Annotated Bibliographies (MLA Style)

Annotated Bibliography: an annotated bibliography consists of a list of books and other references you will be using in your paper, as well as a short descriptive commentary on each source.

Annotated = with notes and comments

These annotations will often vary depending on the assignment. But some things you may want to include are: The author’s thesis statement, a brief explanation of how the author develops or supports the thesis, a statement regarding the author’s purpose or reason for writing the piece, a description of the author’s intended audience, the author’s credentials (if known), and some indication of the role this source will play in your paper. Always consult with your instructor regarding what you should include in your annotations.

Here is an example of a very brief annotated bibliography on the history of libraries:


Dunlop reports on the history of libraries from the time of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria to those of the Renaissance. Dunlop is most detailed in his description of monastic libraries (Middle Ages) and of early Renaissance libraries in order to show how this early history influenced the libraries of today. He writes for other professionals in the field of library science. Dunlop holds a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. This book will supply background material for my topic.


This is an excellent collection of readings on the library history of the United States. Essays included deal with libraries in the colonial period, early college libraries, the development of the public library system, the Library of Congress, and the founding of the American Library Association. Harris holds a degree in Library Science and has written several books and articles on this subject. Harris’s argument in this book, that libraries started in Colonial America is in opposition to my own thesis.


Parsons’ account of the development and eventual fate of the Alexandrian libraries is quite at variance with many other accounts, but he provides elaborate documentation for his point of view. This book also includes a detailed account of earlier ancient Greek libraries. Parsons has written several published articles on Alexandrian libraries. This book will be instrumental in supporting my thesis that libraries predate Colonial American.