

THE AWARD-WINNING, BEST-SELLING BOOK ABOUT DESIGN!

THE NON-DESIGNER'S  
**DESIGN**  
BOOK  
FOURTH EDITION

DESIGN AND TYPOGRAPHIC PRINCIPLES  
FOR THE VISUAL NOVICE

ROBIN **WILLIAMS**



# THE NON-DESIGNER'S **DESIGN** BOOK

FOURTH EDITION

design  
and  
typographic  
principles  
for the  
visual  
novice

Robin Williams



Peachpit Press  
San Francisco  
California

Contrast is crucial to the organization of information—a reader should always be able to glance at a document and instantly understand what's going on.



James Clifton Thomas  
Hino-machi 50-2-431  
Yonago-shi  
Tottori-ken  
683-0066  
Japan

**PROFILE:**  
I am a hard-working, dependable, cheerful person of many talents. My ideal position is with a company that values my combination of creativity and effort and one in which I can continue to learn.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

2011-present English Teacher, Yonago High School for Language and the Arts

2006-2011 Acts of Good, web designer and developer, working with a professional team of creatives in Portland.

2000-2006 Pocket Full of Posies Day Care Center. Changed diapers, taught magic and painting, wiped noses, read books to and danced with babies and toddlers. Also coordinated schedules, hired other teachers, and developed programs for children.

1997-2000 Developed and led a ska band called Lead Veins. Designed the web site and coordinated a national tour.

**EDUCATION:**

Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon: B.A. in Printmaking, 2002-2005

Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California: focus on graphic design and drafting, 1999-2001

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

2000-2002 Grand National Monotype Club, Executive Secretary

1999-2003 Jerks of Invention, Musicians of Portland, President

1992-1998 Local Organization of Travelers Wild

**LANGUAGES:**

English, native  
Japanese, fluent

**HOBBIES:**

Music (guitar, bass, trumpet, keyboard, vocals), photography, drawing, dancing, rowing, reading, magic.

**REFERENCES:**

Sally Psychic 505.818.0419

Foghorn J. Leghorn 415.808.1009

**typeface**  
Times New Roman

The information is all there in this résumé and it's pretty clean. If someone really wants to read it, they will—but it certainly doesn't grab your attention.

And notice these problems:

Job titles are not clearly defined; they blend in with the body text.

The sections themselves are not clearly defined.

There are two alignments on the page: centered and flush left.

The amounts of space between the separate accomplishments are the same as the amount of space between sections.

The setup is inconsistent—sometimes the dates are at the beginning, sometimes at the end. Remember, consistency creates repetition.

Notice that not only is the page more attractive when contrast is used, but the purpose and organization of the document are much clearer. Your résumé is someone's initial impression of you, so make it strong.



**JAMES CLIFTON THOMAS**  
HINO-MACHI 50-2-431  
YONAGO-SHI  
TOTTORI-KEN  
683-0066  
JAPAN

I am a hard-working, dependable, cheerful person of many talents. My ideal position is with a company that values my combination of creativity and effort and one in which I can continue to learn.

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**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

2011–present **English Teacher**, Yonago High School for Language and the Arts, Tottori, Japan.

2006–2011 **Web designer and developer**, Acts of Good, working with a professional team of creatives in Portland.

2000–2006 **Day Care Professional**, Pocket Full of Posies Day Care Center. Care of babies and young children. Also coordinated schedules, hired other teachers, and developed programs for children.

1997–2000 **Musician**, Developed and led a ska band, *Lead Vains*. Designed the web site and coordinated a national tour.

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**EDUCATION**

2002–2006 **B.A. in Printmaking**, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon.

1999–2001 **Graphic design and drafting**, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California.

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**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

2000–2002 **Executive Secretary**, Grand National Monotype Club.

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F. Leghorn 415.808.1009

**typefaces**

Warnock Pro Regular  
and *Italic*  
**Halis Bold**

The problems are easily corrected.

One alignment: Flush left. As you can see above, using only one alignment doesn't mean everything is aligned along the **same edge**—it simply means everything is using the **same alignment** (all flush left or all flush right or all centered). Both the flush left lines above are very strong and reinforce each other (**alignment** and **repetition**).

The heads are strong—you instantly know what this document is and what the key points are (**contrast**).

Segments are separated by more space than are the individual lines of text (**contrast** of spatial relationships; **proximity**).

Degree and job titles are in bold (a **repetition** of the headline font)—the strong **contrast** lets you skim the important points.

The easiest way to add interesting contrast is with typefaces (which is the focus of the second half of this book). But don't forget about rules (drawn lines), colors, spacing between elements, textures, and so on.

If you use a hairline rule between columns, use a strong 2- or 4-point rule when you need another—don't use a half-point rule and a one-point rule on the same page. If you use a second color for accent, make sure the colors contrast—dark brown or dark blue doesn't contrast effectively with black text.

### The Rules of Life

---

*Your attitude is your life.*

---

*Maximize your options.*

---

*Don't let the seeds stop you  
from enjoyin' the watermelon.*

---

*Be nice.*

---

There is a bit of contrast between the typefaces and between the rules, but the contrast is wimpy—are the rules supposed to be two different thicknesses? Or is it a mistake?

### THE RULES OF LIFE

---

*Your attitude is your life.*

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from enjoyin' the watermelon.*

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*Be nice.*

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Now the strong contrast between the typefaces makes the piece more dynamic and eye-catching.

With a stronger contrast between the thicknesses of the rules, there is no risk of someone thinking it's a mistake.

### The Rules of Life

---

*Your attitude is your life.*

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*Maximize your options.*

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*Don't let the seeds stop you  
from enjoyin' the watermelon.*

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*Be nice.*

---

This is simply another option using rules (this thick rule is behind the white type).

With contrast, the entire table is stronger and more sophisticated; it communicates more clearly.

**typefaces**

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*Garamond Premier Pro Medium Italic* and **Bold**  
**ANDDYNE COMBINED**  
**Aachen Bold**

If you use tall, narrow columns in your newsletter, perhaps use a strong headline to create a contrasting horizontal direction across the page.

Combine contrast with repetition, as in the page numbers or headlines or bullets or rules or spatial arrangements, to make a strong, unifying identity throughout an entire publication.

**iREAD SHAKESPEARE**

**You READ it?**  
Social reading groups spread Shakespeare across America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These were groups of adults (mostly women) who read and discussed the plays in community—without an expert to tell them what to think or an actor to tell them how it should be interpreted. They had not been told it was too difficult or complex to read—they just did it.

**I thought I was only supposed to see Shakespeare on stage?**  
Interactions with Shakespeare have changed over the centuries. For the first three hundred years Shakespeare was primarily seen as a literary dramatist and the plays were read by millions of people of all backgrounds. For the past half century, though, academia and theater have been the primary custodians, taking Shakespeare away from the community of active readers.  
But do not fear! A joyous resurgence in Shakespeare reading groups is afoot! Here is your chance to spend a little time invigorating your mind, savoring the language and the imagery in a way you cannot do at a performance, and making new friends.

**What do we do at a reading?**  
We just pick up a play and start reading. We stop regularly to make sure we understand what is going on, and we talk about it. Everyone has expertise in different things so we have a wide variety of thoughtful input for pondering and discussions. And if you bring cookies, we'll eat cookies!

**Am I invited?**  
Yes! Anyone who can read or who would like to listen to others read is welcome. If you are shy about reading aloud, be assured that no one will force you to do so!

**Can I bring a friend?**  
Of course you can! Bring your friends, your mom and dad, your neighbors, your teenagers! You can bring cookies, too!

**When is it?**  
Readings are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month, from 6 to 8 P.M.

**Where is it?**  
The Jemez Room at Santa Fe Community College.

**Is there a fee?**  
Nope. But you can bring cookies.

In addition to the contrast in the typefaces in this postcard, there is also a contrast between the long, horizontal title and the tall, narrow, vertical columns. The narrow columns are a repetitive element, as well as an example of contrast.

**typefaces**  
**VENEER REGULAR**  
Brandon Grotesque Thin and **Bold**  
Photina Regular



The example below is a typical flyer. The biggest problem is that the lines of text are too long to read comfortably. Also, there is little to draw the reader's eye into the text.

Design the headline so it will catch someone's eye. Now that their eyes are on the page, create some contrast in the text so even if they don't plan to read the whole thing, their eyes will be pulled to certain parts of it as they skim through it. Enhance this with alignments and use of proximity.

## Detox your Body

Detoxification is the most exciting tool in natural medicine for its simplicity, low cost and superior therapeutic results. It's actually fun to participate and you'll feel results almost immediately.

Our bodies detox continuously as a natural function. It's only when our detox mechanisms become overloaded that the process becomes less efficient and symptoms may occur.

Toxins may be internal or external in origin. Pollution or pesticides in our food source put undue stress on our detox organs, the kidneys and liver. Improper digestion and imbalanced gut ecology provide the internal form of toxins in the way of metabolic by-products stemming from certain bacteria which have toxic side effects and therefore impact negatively on overall health by compromising detox pathways.

It has been suggested that toxic overload contributes to more serious conditions such as autoimmune diseases, inflammatory/rheumatoid arthritis and neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Symptoms which may be relieved by following a detox program include:

- Digestive problems
- Joint pain
- Pallor
- General malaise
- Constipation
- Irritability Headaches
- Itchy skin
- Bad breath
- Fatigue
- Skin rashes

What a carefully planned detoxification program can offer you:

- Anti-aging effects
- Weight loss
- Clearer skin and eyes
- Increased productivity
- Greater motivation and creativity
- Reduction of allergic symptoms

---

Dr. Sara Ferguson and Certified Nutrition Consultant Pauline Williams invite you to join them for a 28-day detoxification cleanse. Learn proven methods for detox: How to prepare for a detox; How to safely detox; and What to avoid during detox.

Three mandatory meetings: Thursdays, August 2nd, 9th, and 30th at 7:00 p.m.

Avenues for Health  
190 San Felipe Valley Blvd., Suite 130  
Danville, CA 94526  
Limited Seating. Seminar fee is \$99  
RSVP 925-555-1212—Shannon Williams

Please note: This program is not covered by your health insurance. Specific detoxification products are required for successful results at extra costs.

**typeface**  
Times New Roman

Where do you begin to improve this flyer? At least it's not centered!

The lines are so long that a reader is automatically put off. When you have lots of text like this, experiment with using more than one column, as shown on the previous and opposite pages.

Pull out key phrases to set in bold so the visual contrasts attract the eye and lead the reader through the information.

Perhaps start off with the introductory bits of information so a reader begins with an understanding of the purpose of the flyer. It's less of a commitment to read the little pieces, so you can seduce the reader's eye into the piece by providing an introductory path.

Don't be afraid to make some items small to create a contrast with the larger items, and don't be afraid to allow blank space! Once you pull readers in with the focal point, they will read the smaller print if they are interested. If they're not interested, it won't matter *how* big you set it.

Notice all the other principles come into play: proximity, alignment, and repetition. They work together to create the total effect. Rarely will you use just one principle to design any page.

**Detox** your **Body**

Dr. Sarah Ferquon and  
Certified Nutrition Consultant **Pauline Williams**  
invite you to join them for a 28-day detoxification cleanse.

**Learn proven methods for detox:**  
How to prepare for a detox  
How to safely detox  
What to avoid during detox

**Detoxification** is the most exciting tool in natural medicine because it is simple, low cost, and gets superior results. It's actually fun to detox, and you'll feel results almost immediately.

Our bodies detox continuously as a natural function. It's only when our detox mechanisms become overloaded that the process becomes less efficient and symptoms may occur.

Toxins may be internal or external in origin. Improper digestion and imbalanced gut ecology create the *internal* form of toxins. *External* pollution or pesticides in our food put undue stress on our detox organs—the kidneys and liver.

Toxic overload can contribute to serious conditions such as autoimmune diseases, inflammatory/rheumatoid arthritis, and neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

**Symptoms that may be relieved by following a detox program include:**

- Skin rashes
- Irritability
- Headaches
- Joint pain
- General malaise
- Digestive problems
- Itchy skin
- Constipation
- Pallor
- Bad breath
- Fatigue

**A carefully planned detoxification program can provide:**

- Anti-aging effects
- Weight loss
- Greater motivation and creativity
- Clearer skin and eyes
- Reduction of allergic symptoms
- Increased productivity

**Three meetings:**  
Thursdays, 7 p.m.  
August 2, 9, and 30

Avenues for Health  
901 San Felipe Valley Blvd., Suite 130  
Danville, CA 94526

**Seminar fee: \$99**  
Limited seating  
RSVP Pauline Williams: 925.555.1212

Please note: This program is not covered by your health insurance. Specific detoxification products are required for successful results at extra costs.

#### typefaces

Coquette Regular

Brioso Pro Regular and *Italic*

We added some ornaments for visual interest and to provide an earthy feeling and add some interest and softness to the title. Since this flyer is to be reproduced on a copy machine on colored paper, we used various shades of gray for those ornaments.

Listen to your eyes as they scan through this document—can you feel how they are drawn to the bold text so you are almost forced to read at least those parts? If you can get people that far into your piece, they are bound to read more.