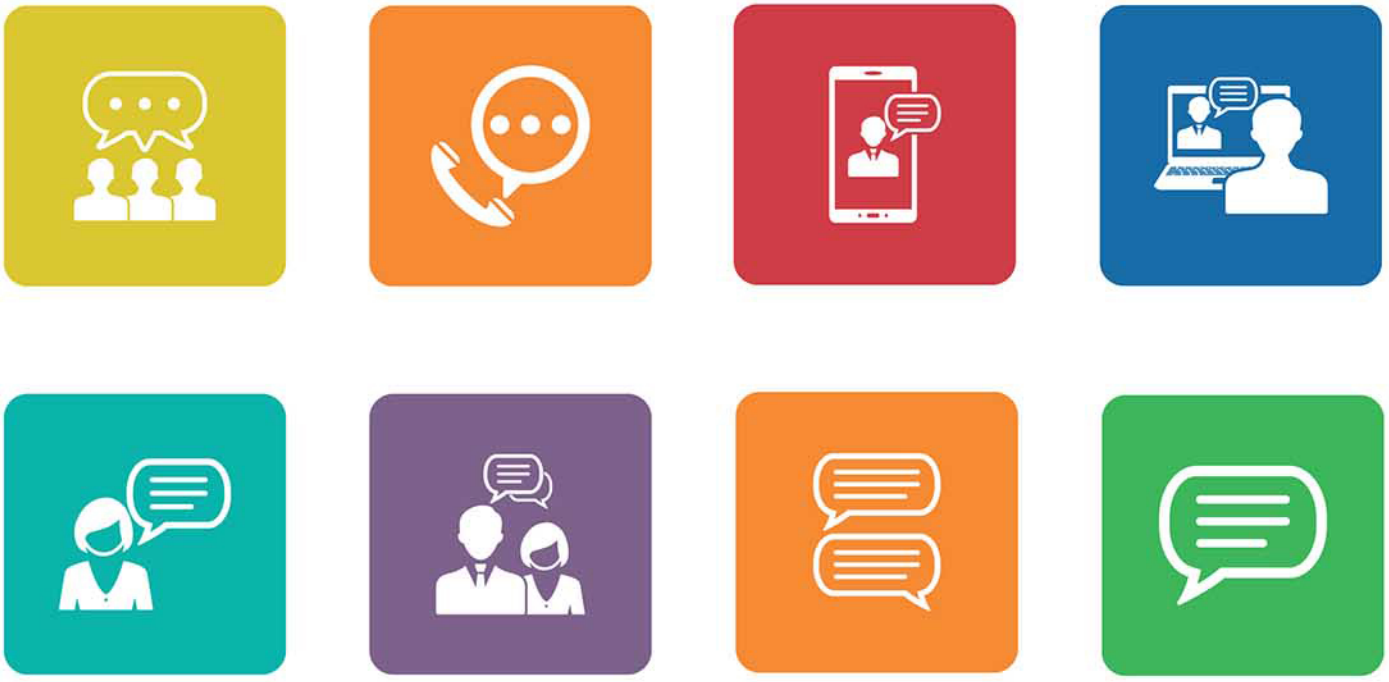
GLOBAL EDITION



Business Communication Today

FIFTEENTH EDITION

Courtland L. Bovée • John V. Thill

Fifteenth Edition

Global Edition

Business Communication Today

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Pearson

Harlow, England • London • New York • Boston • San Francisco • Toronto • Sydney • Dubai • Singapore • Hong Kong
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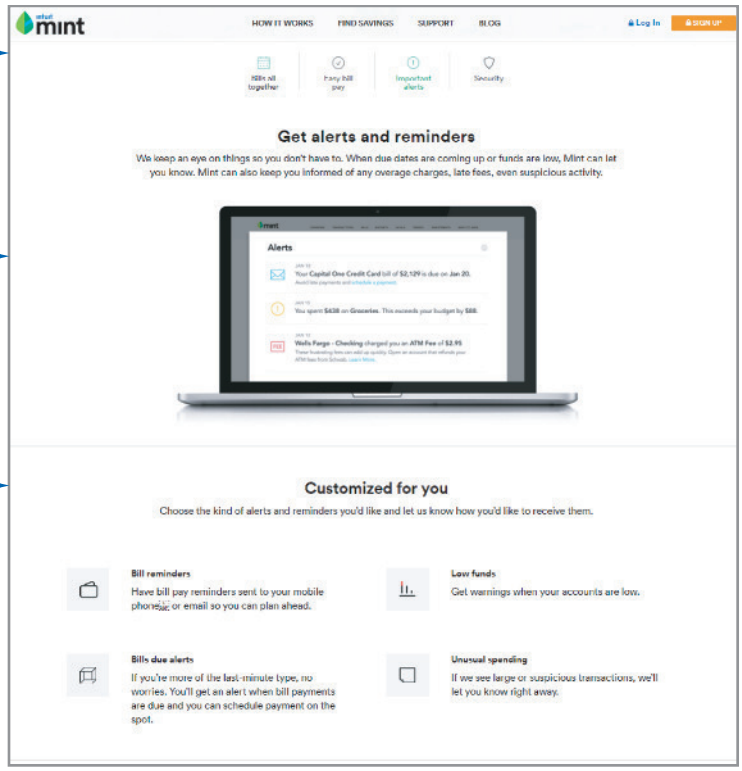
Thanks to the concise and clear navigation labels, headings, and subheadings, readers can skim down the screen and get all the key points in a matter of seconds.

Notice how generous use of white space, simple but compelling illustrations, and a limited amount of text make this webpage less intimidating than a screen packed with visually "heavy" blocks of text.

Font size changes and the shift from a single, centered column to two columns immediately signal the hierarchy of information, leading the reader's eye from major points down to supporting details.



Intuit, Inc.

Figure 6.3 Readability in Digital Communication
This page from Mint's website demonstrates effective design choices for online readability.

the tone of your language, visual balance can be too formal, just right, or too informal for a given message.

- **Restraint.** Strive for simplicity. Don't clutter your message with too many design elements, too many colors, or too many decorative touches. Anything that doesn't support your message should be removed, if possible.
- **Detail.** Pay attention to all the details that affect readability. For instance, extremely wide columns of text can be difficult to read, so it may be better to split the text into two narrower columns.

Even without formal training in graphic design, you can make your printed messages more effective by understanding the use of some key design elements: white space, margins and line justification, typefaces, and type styles.

White Space

Any space that doesn't contain text or artwork, both in print and online, is considered **white space**. (Note that "white space" isn't necessarily white; it is simply blank.) These unused areas provide visual contrast and important resting points for your readers. White space includes margins, paragraph indents, space around images, the open area surrounding headings, vertical space between columns, and horizontal space between paragraphs or lines of text. These text-free zones make pages and screens appear less intimidating and therefore increase the chance that people will read them.

White space separates elements in a design and helps guide the reader's eye.

Margins and Justification

Margins define the space around text and between text columns. In addition to their width, the look and feel of margins is influenced by the way you arrange lines of text, which can be set (1) *justified* (which means they are *flush*, or aligned vertically, on both

MOBILE APP
Genius Scan lets you scan documents with your phone and create PDFs on the go.

Most business documents use a flush left margin and a ragged right margin.

the left and the right), (2) flush left with a *ragged right* margin, (3) flush right with a *ragged left* margin, or (4) centered. This paragraph is justified, whereas the paragraphs in Figure 6.2 on page 202 are flush left with a ragged right margin.

Magazines, newspapers, and books often use justified type because it can accommodate more text in a given space. However, justified type should be used with care. First, it creates a denser look because the uniform line lengths decrease the amount of white space along the right margin. Second, it produces a more formal and less personalized look. Third, unless it is used with some skill and attention, justified type can be more difficult to read because it can produce large gaps between words and excessive hyphenation at the ends of lines. The publishing specialists who create magazines, newspapers, and books have the time and skill needed to carefully adjust character and word spacing to eliminate these problems. (In some cases, sentences are even rewritten to improve the appearance of the printed page.) Because most business communicators don't have that time or skill, it's best to avoid justified type in routine business documents.

In contrast to justified type, flush-left, ragged-right type creates a more open appearance on the page, producing a less formal look. Spacing between words is consistent, and only long words that fall at the ends of lines are hyphenated.

Centered type is rarely used for text paragraphs but is commonly used for headings and subheadings. Flush-right, ragged-left type is rarely used in business documents.

Typefaces

Typeface refers to the visual design of letters, numbers, and other text characters; *typeface* and *font* are often used interchangeably, although strictly speaking they are different entities.

Typeface refers to the visual design of letters, numbers, and other text characters. As the Type Together vignette at the beginning of the chapter noted, *typeface* and *font* are often used interchangeably, but typeface is the design of the type itself, while a font is a collection of characters using that design.

Typeface design influences the tone of your message, making it look authoritative or friendly, businesslike or casual, classic or modern, and so on (see Table 6.4). Veronika Burian, José Scaglione, and other type designers know how to make design choices that evoke specific emotional reactions and trigger particular visual associations, so be sure to choose fonts that are appropriate for your message. (Note that many of the fonts on your computer are not appropriate for normal business use.)

Serif typefaces have small crosslines (called serifs) at the ends of each letter stroke; *sans serif typefaces* do not have these elements.

Serif typefaces have small crosslines (called serifs) at the ends of each letter stroke. **Sans serif typefaces**, in contrast, lack these serifs. For years, the conventional wisdom in typography was that serif faces were easier to read in long blocks of text because the serifs made it easier for the eye to pick out individual letters. Accordingly, the standard advice was to use serif faces for the body of a document and sans serif faces for headings and subheadings.

TABLE 6.4 Typeface Personalities: Serious to Casual to Playful

Serif Typefaces	Sans Serif Typefaces	Specialty Typefaces (rarely used for routine business communication)
Bookman Old Style	Arial	Bauhaus
Century Schoolbook	Calibri	Broadway
Courier	Eras Bold	Forte
Garamond	Franklin Gothic Book	Edwardian Script
Georgia	Gill Sans	Schuss Hand
Times New Roman	Verdana	STENCIL

However, the research behind the conventional wisdom is not as conclusive as once thought.[3] In fact, many sans serif typefaces work as well as or better than some serif typefaces for body text. This seems to be particularly true on screens, which sometimes have lower resolution than printed text. Many contemporary documents and webpages now use sans serif for body text.

The classic style of document design uses a sans serif typeface for headings and a serif typeface for regular paragraph text; however, many contemporary documents and webpages now use all sans serif.

To ensure a clean, uncluttered design, limit the number of typefaces in a document or webpage, and use them consistently throughout. For example, you can use one typeface for body text and another for headings and subheadings. If you have illustrations, sidebars, or other elements, you might use a third typeface to set them apart from the main text.

Type Styles

Type style refers to any modification that lends contrast or emphasis to type, including boldface, italic, underlining, color, and other highlighting and decorative styles. Using boldface type for subheads breaks up long expanses of text. You can also boldface individual words or phrases to draw more attention to them. For example, the key terms in each chapter in this book are set in bold. Italic type also creates emphasis, although not as pronounced as boldface. Italic type has specific uses as well, such as highlighting quotations and indicating foreign words, irony, humor, book and movie titles, and unconventional usage.

Type style refers to any modification that lends contrast or emphasis to type, including boldface, italic, underlining, color, and other highlighting and decorative styles.

As a general rule, avoid using any style in a way that slows your audience's progress through the message. For instance, underlining or using all-uppercase letters can interfere with a reader's ability to recognize the shapes of words, and shadowed or outlined type can seriously hinder legibility. Also, avoid overusing any type style. For example, putting too many words in boldface dilutes the impact of the special treatment by creating too many focal points in the paragraph.

Use type styles (boldface, italic, and underlining) sparingly to preserve their ability to emphasize key words and phrases.

Type size is an important consideration as well. For most printed business messages, use a size of 10 to 12 points for regular text and 12 to 18 points for headings and subheadings (1 point is approximately 1/72 inch). Resist the temptation to reduce type size too much to squeeze in extra text or to enlarge it to fill up space. Type that is too small is hard to read, whereas extra-large type looks unprofessional. Be particularly careful with small type online. It may look fine on a medium-resolution screen but can be hard to read on both low-resolution screens (because these displays can make letters look jagged or fuzzy) and high-resolution screens (because these monitors reduce the apparent size of the type even further).

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 on the next two pages illustrate some of the fundamental choices you need to make when designing and producing business documents.

FORMATTING FORMAL LETTERS AND MEMOS

Formal business letters usually follow certain design conventions, as the letter in Figure 6.2 illustrates. Most business letters are printed on *letterhead stationery*, which includes the company's name, address, and other contact information. The first element to appear after the letterhead is the date, followed by the inside address, which identifies the person receiving the letter. Next is the salutation, usually in the form of *Dear Mr.* or *Ms. Last Name*. The message comes next, followed by the complimentary close, usually *Sincerely* or *Cordially*. And last comes the signature block: space for the signature, followed by the sender's printed name and title. Your company will probably have a standard format to follow for letters, possibly along with a word-processor template. For in-depth information on letter formats, see Appendix A, "Format and Layout of Business Documents."

Refer to Appendix A for detailed guidance on formatting letters and memos.

Like letters, business memos usually follow a preset design. Memos have largely been replaced by digital media in many companies, but if they are still in use at the firm you join, the company may have a standard format or template for you to use. Most memos begin with a title such as *Memo, Memorandum*, or *Interoffice Correspondence*. Following that are usually four headings: *Date, To, From*, and *Subject*. (*Re:*, short for

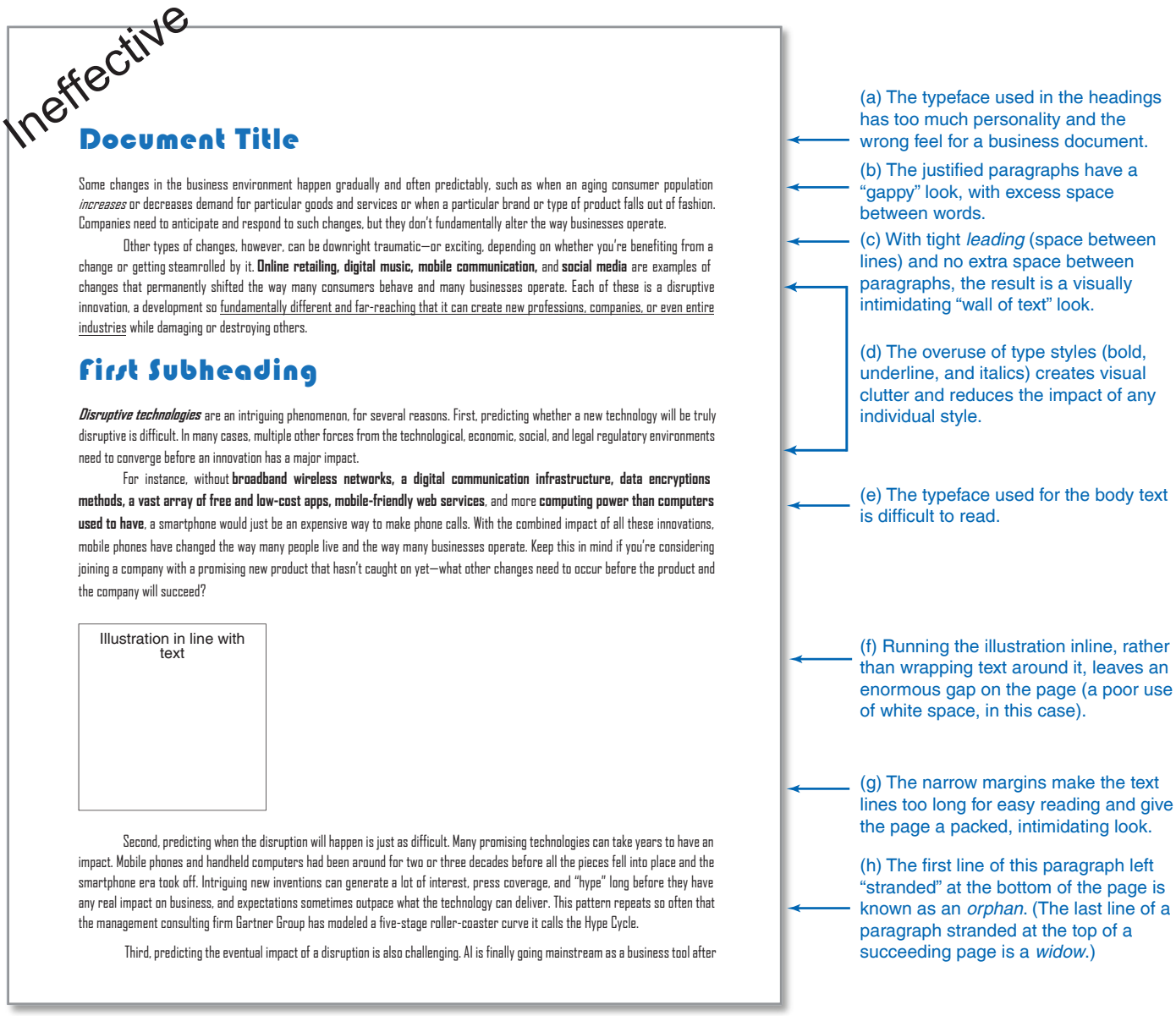


Figure 6.4 Ineffective Design Choices for Business Documents
The documents in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 illustrate some of the basic principles of effective document design (which apply to both printed and digital documents). Notice how with just a few simple changes, the ineffective version becomes much more inviting to read.

Regarding, is sometimes used instead of *Subject*.) Memos usually don't use a salutation, complimentary close, or signature, although signing your initials next to your name on the *From* line is standard practice in many companies. Bear in mind that memos are often distributed without sealed envelopes, so they are less private than most other message formats.

DESIGNING MESSAGES FOR MOBILE DEVICES

If your messages are likely to be read on mobile devices, think in small chunks of information and use lots of white space.

In addition to making your content mobile-friendly using the writing tips in Chapter 5 (see page 189), you can follow these steps to format that content for mobile devices:

- **Think in small chunks.** Remember that mobile users consume information one screen at a time, so try to divide your message into independent, easy-to-consume

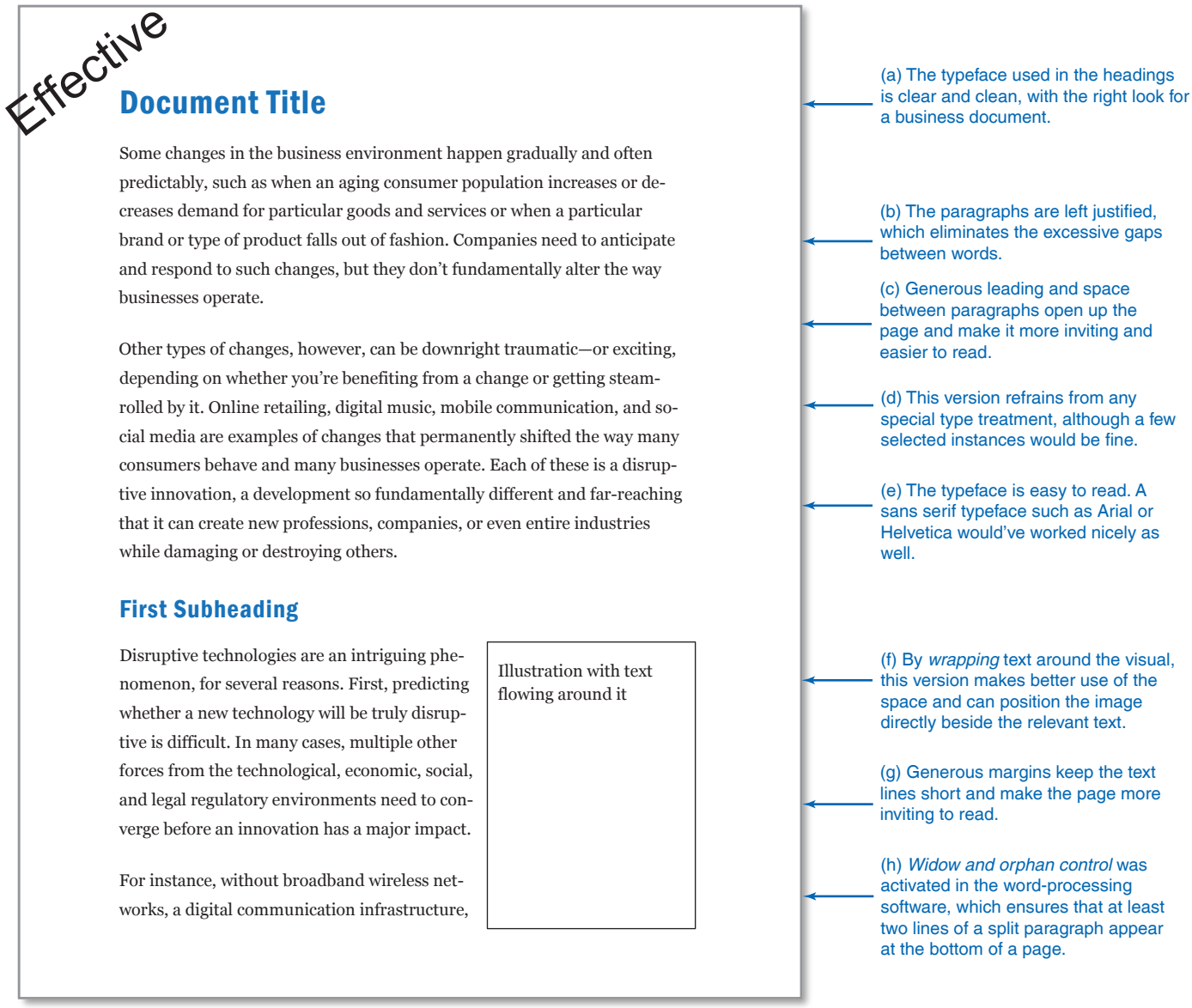
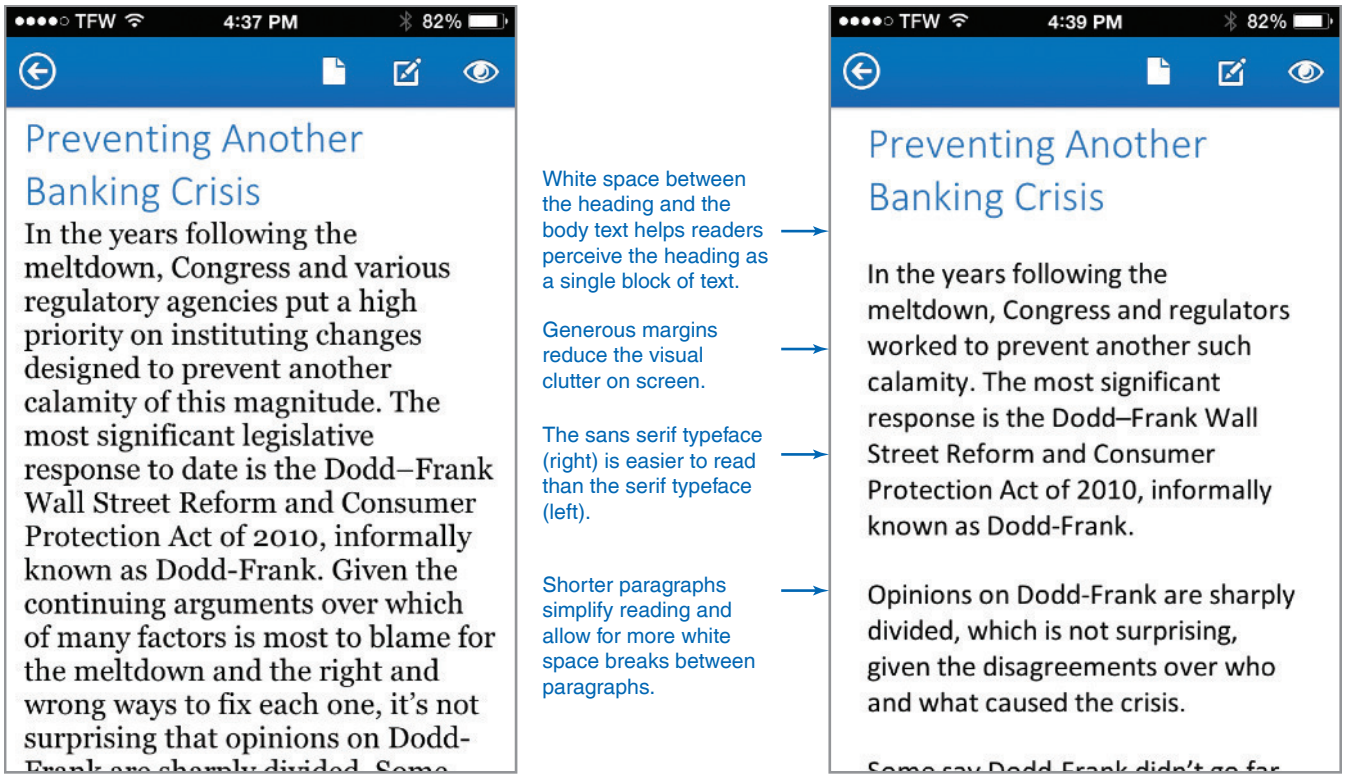


Figure 6.5 Effective Design Choices for Business Documents
Compare the version with Figure 6.4—notice how with just a few simple changes, the ineffective version becomes much more inviting to read. (Note that this open layout will require more pages, which could be a consideration if the document is meant to be printed.)

bites. If readers have to scroll through a dozen screens to piece together your message, they might miss key points or just give up entirely.

- **Make generous use of white space.** White space is always helpful, but it's critical on small screens because readers are trying to get the gist of every message as quickly as possible. Keep your paragraphs short (four to six lines) and separate them with blank lines so the reader's eyes can easily jump from one point to the next.[4]
- **Format simply.** Avoid anything that is likely to get in the way of fast, easy reading, including busy typefaces, complex graphics, and complicated layouts.
- **Consider horizontal and vertical layouts.** Most phones and tablets can automatically rotate their screen content from horizontal to vertical as the user rotates the device. A layout that doesn't work well with the narrow vertical perspective might be acceptable at the wider horizontal perspective.

MOBILE APP
Ginger Page offers a grammar checker, dictionary, thesaurus, translator, and other tools to help with mobile writing.



Courtesy of Android.

Figure 6.6a Figure 6.6b

Figure 6.6 Designing for Mobile Devices
Even simple changes, such as revising with shorter paragraphs, choosing cleaner typefaces, and making generous use of white space in and around the text, can dramatically improve readability on mobile screens.

Compare the two messages in Figure 6.6; notice how much more difficult the screen in Figure 6.6a is to read.

Proofreading Your Message

5 LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain the importance of proofreading, and give seven tips for successful proofreading.

Accuracy and attention to detail help build your credibility, so proofread messages and documents carefully.

Proofreading is the quality inspection stage for your documents, your last chance to make sure that your document is ready to carry your message—and your reputation—to the intended audience. Even a small mistake can doom your efforts, so take proofreading seriously.

Look for two types of problems: (1) undetected mistakes from the writing, design, and layout stages and (2) mistakes that crept in during production. For the first category, you can review format and layout guidelines in Appendix A on page 627 and brush up on writing basics with the Handbook of Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage on page 651. The second category can include anything from computer glitches such as missing fonts to broken web links to problems with the ink used in printing. Be particularly vigilant with complex documents and complex production processes that involve multiple colleagues and multiple computers. Strange things can happen as files move from computer to computer, especially when lots of fonts and multimedia elements are involved.

To be most effective, proofreading should be a methodical procedure in which you look for specific problems. Here is some advice from the pros:

- **Make multiple passes.** Go through the document several times, focusing on a different aspect each time. For instance, look for content errors the first time and layout errors the second time.
- **Use perceptual tricks.** To keep from missing errors that are "hiding in plain sight," try reading pages backward, placing your finger under each word and reading it silently, covering everything but the line you're currently reading, or reading the document aloud.