Structure of Text

Creating Memory Aids through Typography

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Legibility Readability

Definitions
Legibility

Legibility is dependent on the design of the typeface, the letterforms themselves. How letterforms convey a recognizable familiar form.
Legibility

Three Qualities of Legibility:

1. **Contrast** – degree we can differentiated the printed to non-printed, the letterforms to the page they’re printed on.

2. **Simplicity** – the degree different letterforms differentiate themselves from other letterforms.

3. **Proportion** – difference of lengths of strokes and size of inner spaces of any given scale of type.
Legibility

Typefaces are most legible when the basic structure of the characters do not differ too much from historic conventions.
Readability

Readability is the arrangement of text to facilitate ease of reading for the different types of information we are reading for.
Factors That Affect Ease Of Reading
Margins

Give the page or media shape.
Support the active area of text and the edge of the page or media.
The framework which supports and isolates the text from the environment around the page or media.
Margins

Practical in that they provide room for our fingers, we don’t need to move our thumbs to out of the way when reading a book.

Help us keep our eye from falling off the page.

Can also provide room for additional elements: chapter headings, subheadings, captions and illustrations.
Margins

Aesthetic considerations in the framing, supporting, lighten the page.

Provide a sense of proportion from area of text to the document.
Measure – The Length of a Line of Text

Too long, can be difficult for the eye to travel back to the left and find the beginning of the next line of text.

Too short, slows down reading and fatigues the eye.
Alignment
Justified vs. Unjustified

Justified gives the body of text a regular shape on the page, created by uneven spaces between words.

Uneven spaces cause awkward gaps or rivers of white through the text.

Unjustified text has even spaces between words.

Many believe even spaces aid readability.
The whole duty of Typography, as of Calligraphy, is to communicate to the imagination, without loss by the way the thought or image intended to be communicated by the Author. And the whole duty of beautiful typography is not to substitute for the beauty or interest of the thing though and intended to be conveyed by the symbol, a beauty or interest of its own, but, on the one hand, to win access for that communication by the clearness and beauty of the vehicle, and on the other hand to take advantage of every pause or stage in that communication to interpose some characteristic & restful beauty in its own art.
Leading

The space between lines of text.
Too little white space between lines can cause the reader to miss or skip a line of text or re-read a line of text.

To little space between lines of text can make the text appear dense, dark and more difficult to read.
Aesthetic considerations

Larger, white horizontal lines between lines of text will make the page appear lighter.

Less space between lines of text will make the page appear more dark, dense and heavy.
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Text Size

Typical reading distance is 12 – 14 inches from the page.

Typically 9pt – 12pt most legible

Type which is too small destroys the closed in parts of the letterform reducing visibility.

Type which is too large can force the eye to read words in sections not seeing the word as a whole.
Spatial Cues

Indents
Dashes
Meaningful Line Breaks
Spatial Cues

Spatial cues- break text into meaningful segments for comprehension by the reader.
Indent

More subtle forms include the often overlooked indenting the first line of a paragraph.

Indenting the first line of a paragraph indicates not only a new paragraph to the reader, more importantly a new set of sentences, new set of thoughts which is essential to the readers comprehension.
Indent

The amount of space allowed for indents should vary with the size of the text. The larger the text size the further right the text should begin.
The whole duty of typography, as of Calligraphy, is to communicate to the imagination, without loss by the way, the thought or image intended to be communicated by the Author. 8pt

The whole duty of typography, as of Calligraphy, is to communicate to the imagination, without loss by the way, the thought or image intended to be communicated by the Author. 10pt

The whole duty of typography, as of Calligraphy, is to communicate to the imagination, without loss by the way, the thought or image intended to be communicated by the Author. 12pt
Dashes

The standard typewriter had only one short dash or hyphen. Professional typesetters had and most electronic media include:

a hyphen, an en dash and an em dash.

Because of the lack of typographic knowledge, the hyphen is still commonly used for all dashes.
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Dashes

Hyphens - connect link words and phrases
En dashes – connect numbers 2009–2010
Em dashes — express strong grammatical breaks, the em dash can imply a meaningful pause, pause for reflection, an unexpressed thought. (what the — ?)
Meaningful Line Breaks

Lines of text that are broken for linguistic or semantic reasons improve ease of reading, clarity of meaning. Breaking a word at the end of a line of text is disruptive to reading and when reasonably possible, should be avoided.
Meaningful Line Breaks

When breaking a word at the end of a line of text is unavoidable, hyphenation must be used sensibly.

Dictionaries demonstrate permissible places to break a word.

Avoid hyphenation after fewer than three characters.
Reading, Grouping.

Random letterforms take longer to read than letterforms that make up a word suggest the eye doesn’t read each individual letterform.

The eye reads arrangements, groups of letterforms. dog vs. odg

Bad hyphenation can disrupt the eye’s ability to group otherwise familiar words.
Type for the Screen

Many variables factor in, including ergonomics.

Some generalizations include: text on a bright white screen suffers from the glare effecting the shape, shrinking the letterforms slightly.
Type for the Screen

Choose a font with a bit more weight, stay away from fonts with a lot of variation of thick to thin strokes, (the font, Verdana, was designed with the screen in mind).

Have a clear order and many visual breaks.
Times
Verdana
Resources consulted:

*What Is Typography*
David Jury
2006
Rotovision
Switzerland

*Typographic Design: Form and Communication*
Rob Carter, Ben Day, Philip Meggs
1993 Van Nostrand Reinhold
New York

*The Form Of The Book*
Essays On The Morality Of Good Design
Jan Tschichold
1975
re-published 1991 by
Hartly & Marks Publishers Inc.
Vancouver, B.C.