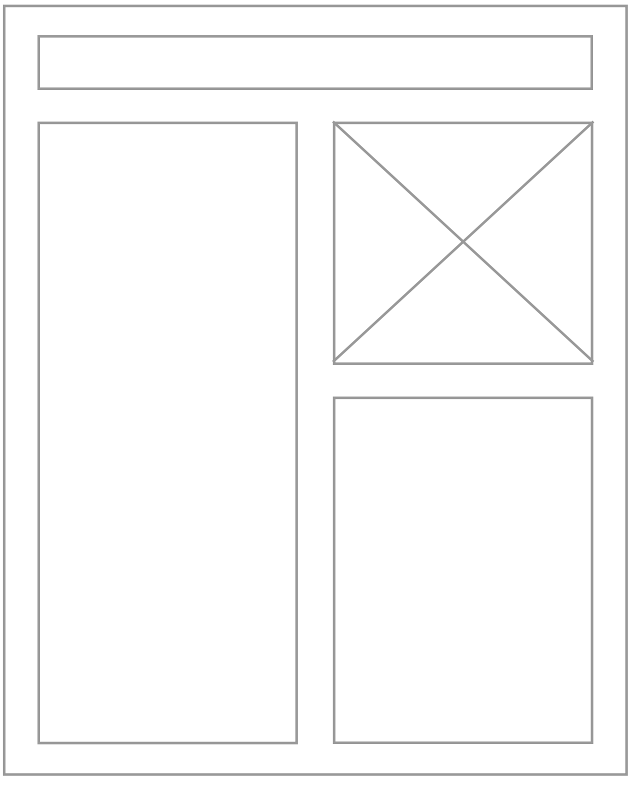
CREATING ACTIVIST PUBLICATIONS

course notes for lhmu delegates



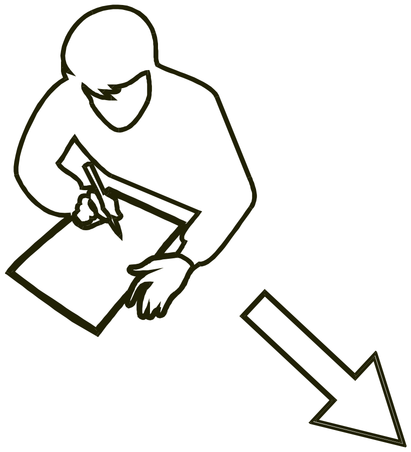
LHMU

YOU, YOUR PUBLICATION & YOUR AUDIENCE

Have you ever wondered why the media are called the media? It is because publications, TV shows and the internet are in the middle of their creator and their audience, and play a *mediating* role between them.

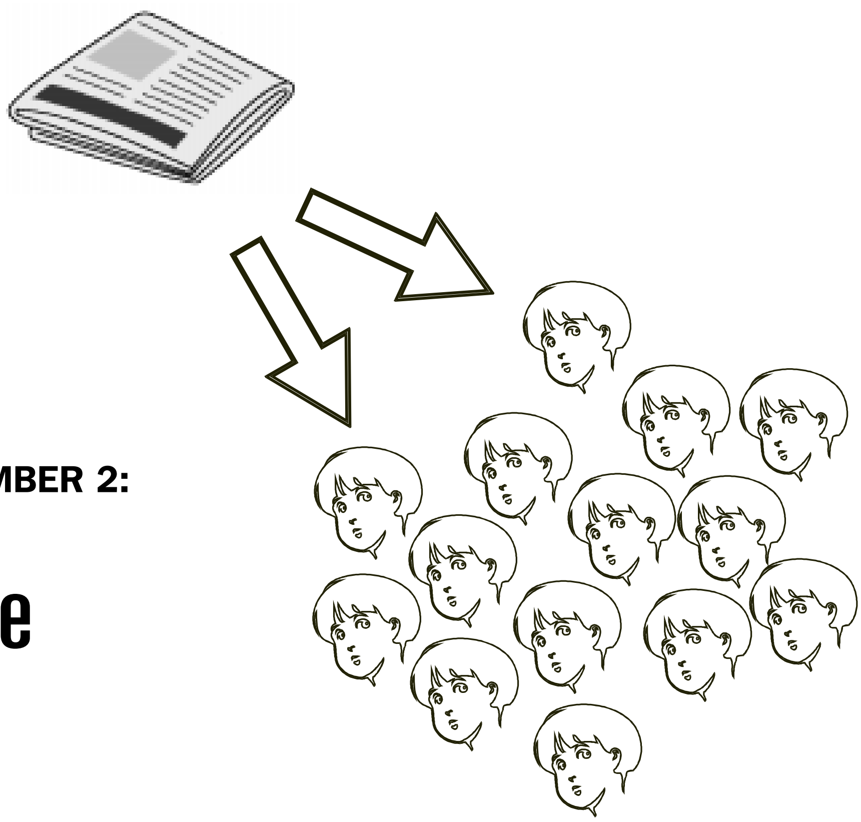
Publications are produced ***by*** an author (that's you) ***for*** an audience (your fellow workers). Whenever you create you need to remember who you are writing / editing / designing it for.

To do this you need to be both informative and interesting to your audience. Always think about ***who*** you are writing for.



PUBLISHING RULE NUMBER 1:

Communicate to your audience



PUBLISHING RULE NUMBER 2:

Keep it Simple

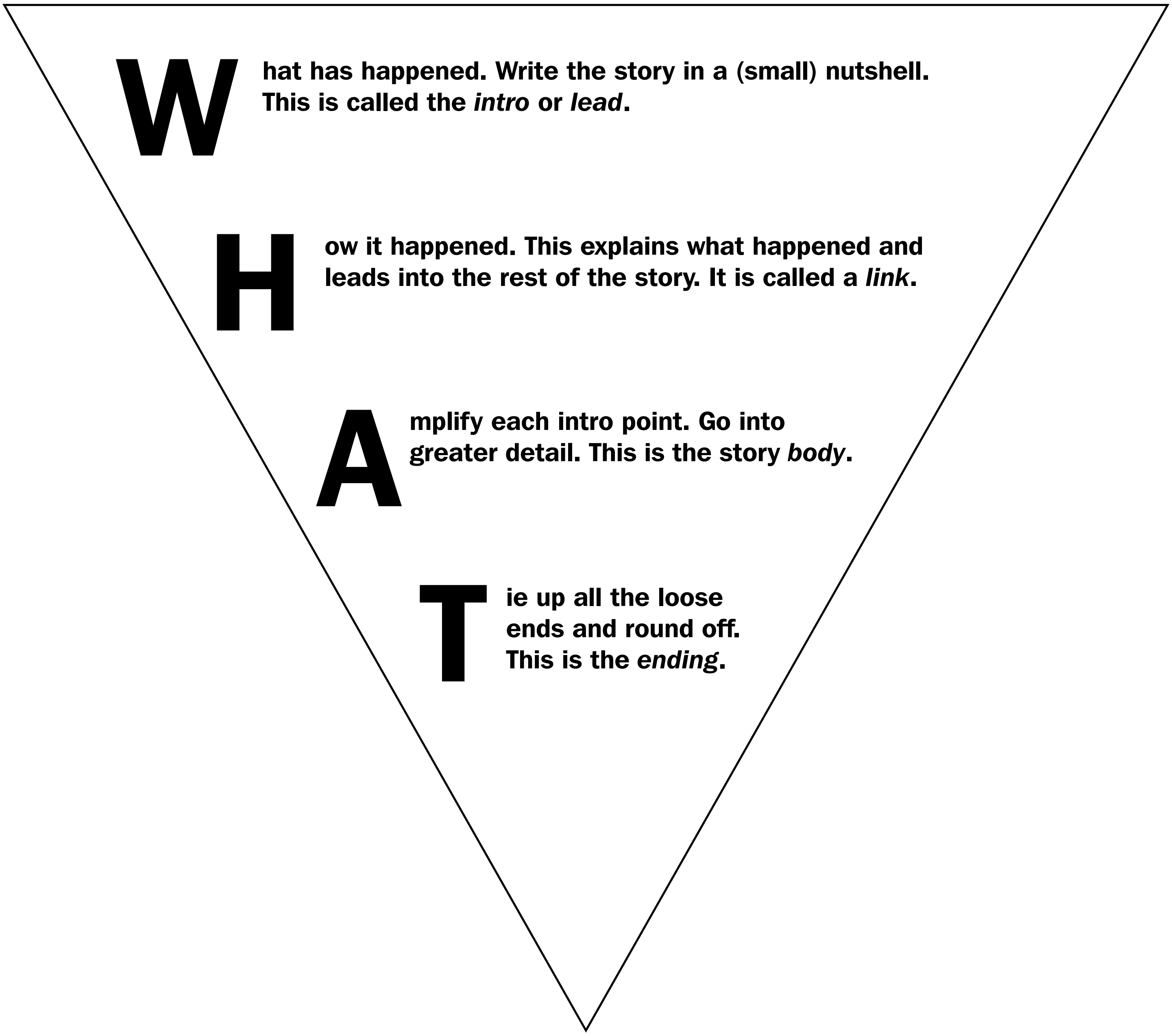
writing basics

STRUCTURE OF A NEWS STORY

The inverted triangle

News stories are written differently to anything else. It is their structure which sets them apart. Once you have written your intro or lead, the rest of the story elaborates on this – teasing out in a logical and coherent way the entire story. This structure is known as the *inverted news triangle*.

Always spend five minutes planning your writing to make it fit roughly into this structure.



W **hat has happened. Write the story in a (small) nutshell. This is called the *intro* or *lead*.**

H **ow it happened. This explains what happened and leads into the rest of the story. It is called a *link*.**

A **mplify each intro point. Go into greater detail. This is the story *body*.**

T **ie up all the loose ends and round off. This is the *ending*.**

INGREDIENTS OF A GOOD STORY

There are no hard and fast rules of what makes a good story for publication, text for a flyer or whatever. But remember that a good story is one that is interesting to your audience and will make them read.

Below is a list of seven standard ingredients of newsworthiness in mainstream media.

Timeliness	Events that are immediate and recent.
Impact	Events that will affect your readers.
Prominence	Events involving well-known people or institutions.
Proximity	Events close to your readers.
Action	Events which involve colour and action.
Currency	Events that are being talked about by your readers.
Conflict	Events about clashe between people or institutions.

WRITING THE INTRO

The first paragraph of your article or flyer is the key to everything else. It is called the *intro* or *lead*.

The intro should do two things. It should *inform*, so your audience will know exactly what you are writing about just by reading it. But it should also be *interesting*, so your audience will want to read on.

Above all, it should be short and simple – no more than 25 words, with 17 words as an ideal to work towards.

Answer at least 3 of the 6 basic questions

WHO	School cleaner, Joyce Fleming
WHAT	Got $17,000 in backpay, plans to go to Europe with family on money
WHEN	Last week
WHERE	Nowra High School, NSW South Coast
WHY	No shift penalties for four years
HOW	Complained to Union, negotiated with boss, case to IRC, won money

You can also answer **HOW MANY?** and **HOW MUCH?**

There are three ways to decide on what to include in your intro:

1. Think about what you would tell someone if you were **talking to them face-to-face.**
2. Pretend you are **ringing someone long-distance** and want to get off the phone.
3. Look at the Ws and Hs and decide the **most interesting**.

So the start of the story could read:

A South Coast school cleaner is treating her family to a European holiday after the LHMU helped her win $17,000 in backpay.

Joyce Fleming, from Nowra High School in Nsw, contacted the Union when her employer refused to pay penalty rates for afternoon shifts.

After three months of unsuccessful negotiations with her employer, Joyce's case was taken to the Industrial Relations Commission.

The Commission has now ordered that Joyce should be paid $17,000 she earned in backpay for the four years she received no penalty rates.

WRITING LIKE A JOURNO

There are five keys to writing in the style of a journalist, known as *journalese*:

Know your ABC

Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity

Use simple words

You shouldn't need a dictionary to read. Use familiar words, picture words and preferrably short words.

Be concrete & give real examples, avoid abstracts

Don't just write "OHS is a serious workplace issue for many cleaners ..."
Instead write "Last year, 650 cleaners suffered painful injuries because of unsafe work practices."

Not "Our wages and conditions are under attack ..."
But "Workers stand to lose $35 a week ..."

Use quotes to add colour

Use direct quotes (such as from a fellow delegate) to break up the style of your story or flyer. They add colour and are great for including opinion.

Use active language, not passive language

Make sure that the language has lots of *doing* terms to make people look active, especially workers. eg not "the dog was walked by the man" but "the man walked the dog".

Just do it !!

An LHMU delegate taking part in an education course today wrote an article just like a professional journalist.

After learning about creating their own publications, the delegate produced a great story which told her fellow workers about illegal conditions in their workplace.

"It's all really, really simple," she said, "You just have to write simply and in the here-and-now."

WRITING YOUR HEADLINE

After you have written your article, go back to the start and write your headline. Make it as short and colourful as possible.

Your headline should sum up your story or flyer in 8 words or less, preferrably less. If you want to say more, you can include a subhead after your headline.

These should sum up the story in an interesting way. It has to be catchy. Here are three tips

Make it do something

Write it to be as active and alive as you can. Use snappy verbs where you can. Where possible make workers do things.

Be cliched

Add colour by hamming up the cliches. If you're writing about casino workers include "better deal", "roll of the dice", "trumped" or whatever else you can think of.

Go over it word by word

Once it has been written, go over it thoroughly to tighten it up. Cut out any unneccessary words. Change long words to short ones.

Writing news stories exercises

In a Federal Court decision handed down on 16 June 2000, the court awarded twenty contract cleaners working for Broadlex Cleaning Australia at the Russell Hill defence complex in the ACT, owned by the Department of Defence, large unpaid leave entitlements. The decision means that $100,000 will be presented by the LHMU, who took action in the case, to the workers involved. The court win is the high point in a campaign that has been running since 1998. In June of that year, Broadlex lost the contract for cleaning the Russell Hill site which they had held since April 1995.

The new enterprise agreement which is to be signed off on by workers and management at the Boags Brewery in Launceston, Tasmania will includesome innovative clauses. The agreement, to be finalised in July 2000, will include clauses negotiated by the LHMU which will create a forum on site at the brewery for workers to develop strategies and pursue membership concerns. It will also include clauses which will ensure delegates and members can receive training, paid for by the company.

design basics

DESIGN TO COMMUNICATE

Designing your newsletter or flyer is about creating the *look* of your publication.

Designing is using arrangements of *elements* – shapes, space, size, lines, text, pictures, etc – to communicate to your audience.

Always make your design fit your content, or at least not draw your readers' attention away from the writing. The best way to do this is to **keep it very simple**.

Remember that there are no set rules to a good design – they vary according to your audience.

BIG

SMALL

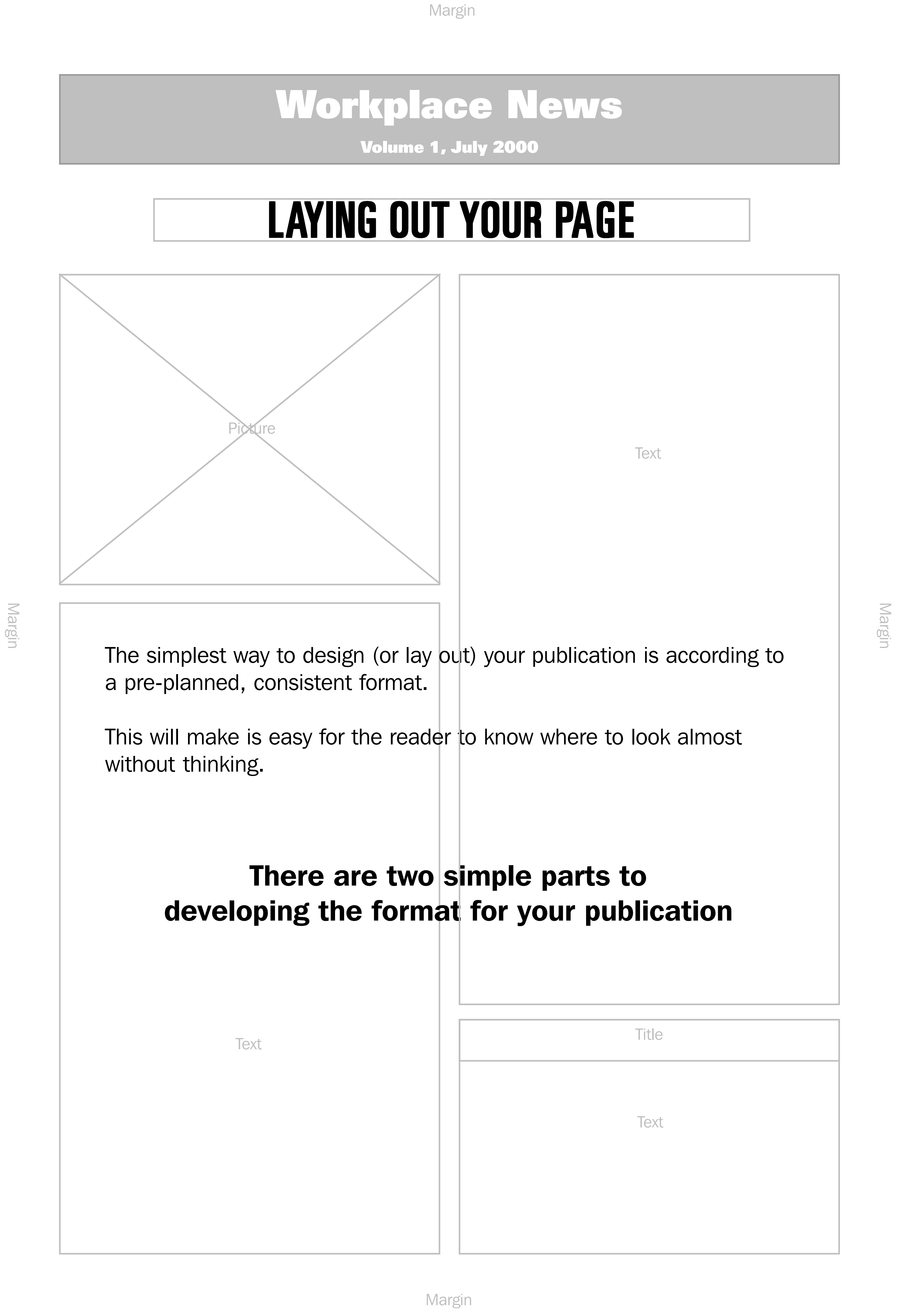
clear

fuzzy

Workplace News

Volume 1, July 2000

LAYING OUT YOUR PAGE


Margin
Margin
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Picture
Text
Text
Title
Text
Margin

The simplest way to design (or lay out) your publication is according to a pre-planned, consistent format.

This will make is easy for the reader to know where to look almost without thinking.

There are two simple parts to developing the format for your publication

SIZE AND SHAPE OF YOUR PAGE

The first step is to decide on how you want your pages to look. This involves working out the size and shape that you want your pages to take – what *grid* you want them to follow.

In Australia, the main paper sizes are A3, A4 and A5, with the size halving as is goes up a number (so A4 is half the size of A3). These can then be folded in any way or printed double sided.

There are two ways you can use the spaces of your page:
1. your margins (the area around the main area of text) and
2. the number and width of columns you want to use.

Keep your **margin** consistent on the page, so that your reader can follow the page down easily. If you have a lot to fit onto your page, make the margin very narrow.

Columns are the main way of organising text and pictures to run down the page. On an A4 page you can easily use one, two or three columns. You can even use three coloumns, but only have text in two of them, putting a picture in the other.

There are two main kinds of content
you can lay out like this –
***text* and *pictures*.**

WORKING WITH TEXT

Text is the main part of your publication – and type, the actual text on your page, will be the main part of your design.

But there are so many different kinds of type it can be confusing. You can vary your type in three ways:

FONT	Fonts are the families of type styles that you can use. Fonts come in almost every shape imaginable. Most designers group them as either *serifs* (which have little lines at the end of each stroke, like newspaper type) or *sans serifs* (just plain, like this text). This font is called Franklin Gothic Book BT.
SIZE	Size is the size of each *character* of type. It is measured in *points* (there are 72 (check this) points in one inch).
STYLE	Style is a variation of the font. Any type will be either roman (or normal), *italic* (slanted sideways), **bold** (thicker) or underlined.

Mm

Mm

CHOOSE YOUR OWN FONTS

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Agaramond

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Century Schoolbook

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Footlight MT Light

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Palatino

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Stone Serif

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Times New Roman

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Courier

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– ITC Officina Serif Book

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Arial

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Franklin Gothic Book BT

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Futura Book BT

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Helvetica

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– ITC Officina San Book

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Stone Sans

AaBbCcDdFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz
– Univers Ultra Condensed

CREATING YOUR STYLES

Consistency is the key to creating a readable, simple publication. When you work with text, this is done by coming up with a *hierarchy* for your headings and text.

This means coming up with a few types that you want to use throughout your publication. Never use fonts, their sizes or styles randomly and always use as few as possible. Keep these consistent.

For almost all publications, you will only need three or four type styles:
1. one (or two) for your headings,
2. one for subheadings and
3. one for your text
4. and, with newsletters, one for your writer names.

Big headline for your story

Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text Body text

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Subheading

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Subheading

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– **Author Name**

WORKING WITH PICTURES

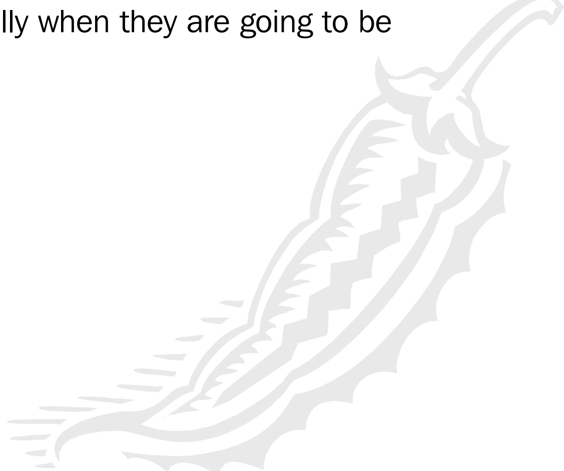
Pictures are the other important part of your publication. A good drawing, photo or *graphic* will make your publication better looking and more readable.

There are no rules for the best way to use pictures, so long as they fit into the story you are trying to tell.

There are two kinds of pictures you can use – black and white drawings and photos.

LINE ART

Cartoons or other forms of *line art* (simple drawings) are excellent to use in all publications, especially when they are going to be photocopied.



PHOTOS

Be careful using photos in photocopied publications. Only use pictures that are very clear and have high contrast (light and dark colours, but not much in between).

campaign basics

CHOOSE YOUR OWN MATERIAL

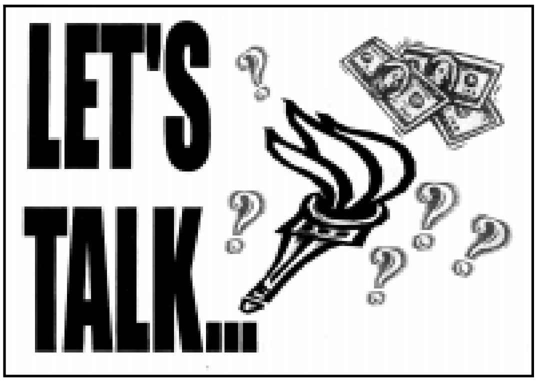
Campaign materials are useful only under particular conditions. Before you can make any materials you need to work out what materials would be useful.

Placards, for instance, are only useful if you have event to take them to. Badges are only useful if you have people to wear them.

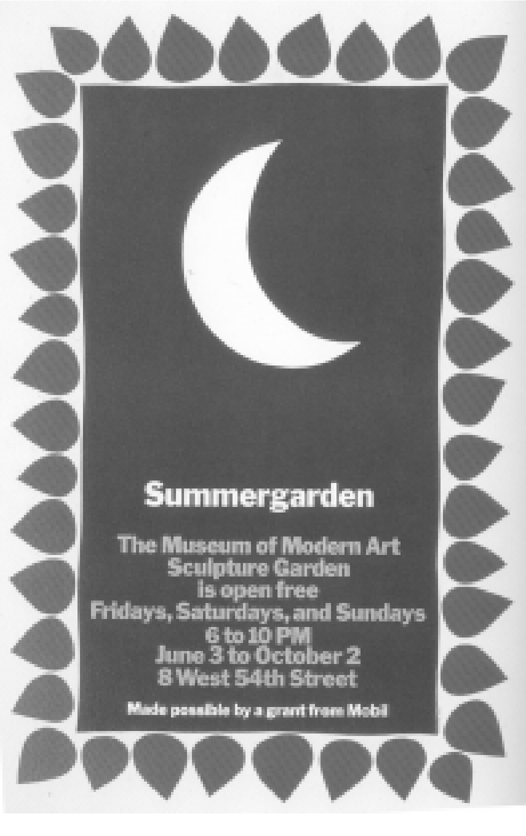
Before you can make any campaign materials you need to ask yourself some questions.

1. What issues am I campaigning about?
2. Who is campaigning with me and where are they?
3. Who are we targetting and when?

You can only start thinking about what materials you will need, and the ideas you want to put across in them, once have worked these out.



JUSTICE for JANITORS
SEIU
JUSTICIA


Summergarden
The Museum of Modern Art
Sculpture Garden
is open free
Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays
6 to 10 PM
June 3 to October 2
8 West 54th Street
Made possible by a grant from Mobil

DEVELOPING YOUR IDEAS

To get their messages across as quickly as possible, advertisers develop short sharp messages which are repeated over and over – called *branding*. You should try to do something similar.

The aim is not to develop a simple idea which encompasses your whole position, but something which will interest and excite people into wanting to know more.

These ideas can take two forms:

SLOGANS

These are short statements of five or so words which make a point related to your campaign. It should be colourful, preferrably witty, and roughly represent what you're on about. You can also develop a series of slogans which are linked by a common theme or idea.

GRAPHICS

If you can come up with a slogan with pictures, this is another big plus. This would be like a logo for your campaign, which can be used to identify it easily. Like the slogan, it should be colourful and roughly represent what you're on about. It can either be a picture you have seen, or a piece of artwork you have done.

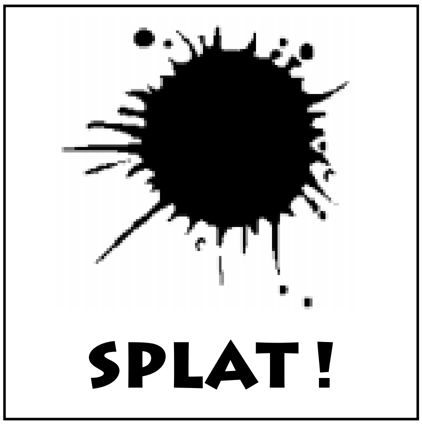
MAKING YOUR MATERIALS

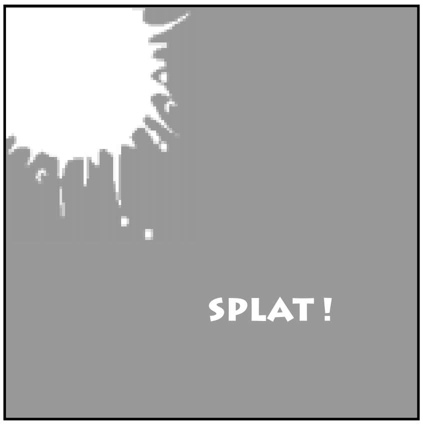
Making campaign materials is a *design* process. Design involves arranging a series of *elements* to create a look and convey a message.

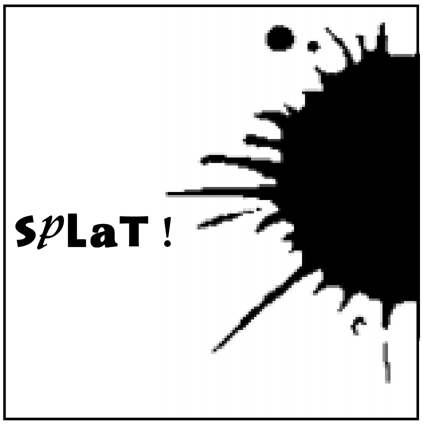
It involves two processes:

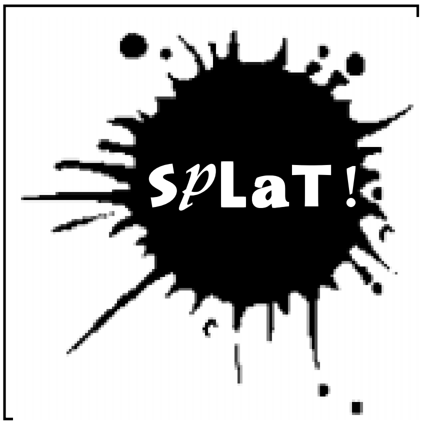
1. The creation of your elements – these are things like pictures, text, shapes, lines and space which make up a design. Your first job is to create elements (most simply a written slogan and image) which are suited to your message.
2. The arrangement of your elements – this involves changing the size and position of your elements to form a whole. There are many different things you can do to relate elements to one another.

Always remember the number 1 design rule: **less is more**.









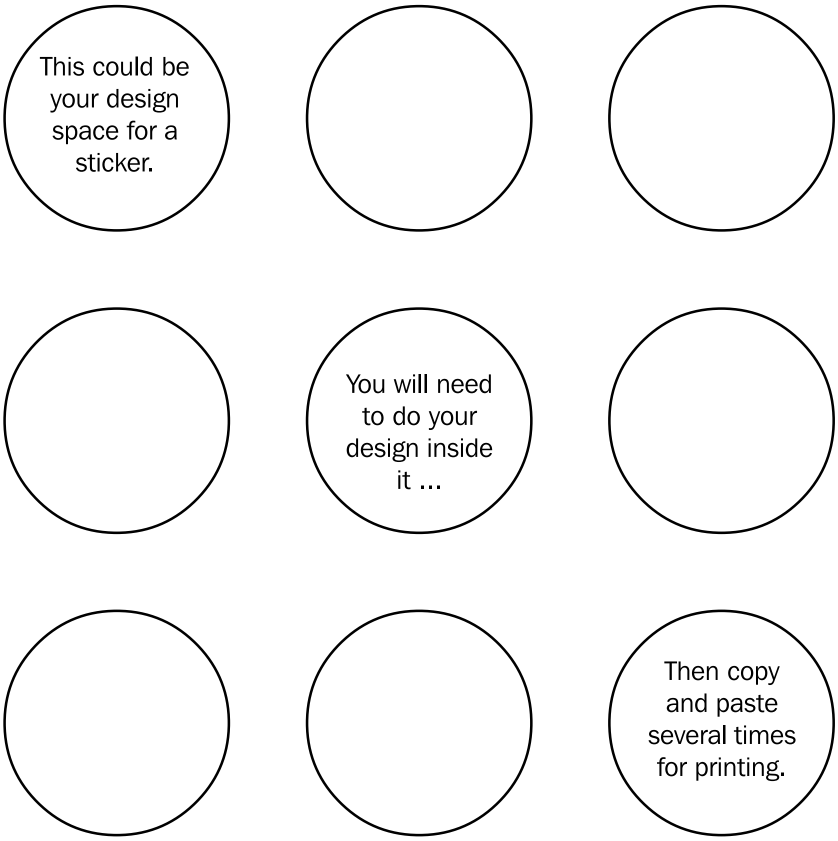
USING YOUR DESIGN SPACE

The area which you will be designing in is called the *design space*. This will vary in shape and size for different materials.

Postcards, for instance, will usually be a quarter of an A4 page; stickersare usually circular, square or rectanglular; badges are usually circular (and standard sizes of 32 mm or 44mm).

So the first step in the design process is to draw up your design space.

Always leave a margin (of at least a few millimetres) as room for error in the printing of the material.


This could be your design space for a sticker.
You will need to do your design inside it ...
Then copy and paste several times for printing.

USING GRAPHICS

Graphics are any image elements. They are the key to creating eye-catching materials.

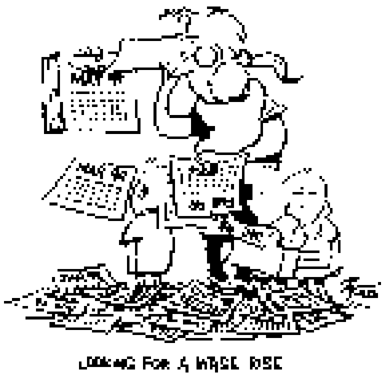
For simple materials (such as badges or stickers), try not to use more than one or two images – otherwise they will clutter it up.

Graphics can be:

LINES

SHAPES

LINE ART


LOOKING FOR A WAGE RISE

PHOTOS

USING TEXT

Text is more than just writing. It puts your message across as language, but also creates a look for your materials.

After getting your message right and in a simple, easy to understand form, you need to look at how to write it. The text should complement, not clash, with your message.

Text can be varied in several ways:

FONT

Fonts are the families of type styles that you can use. Fonts come in almost every shape imaginable. Most designers group them as either *serifs* (which have little lines at the end of each stroke, like newspaper type) or *sans serifs* (just plain, like this text). This font is called Franklin Gothic Book BT.

SIZE

Size is the size of each *character* of type. It is measured in *points* (there are 72 (check this) points in one inch).

STYLE

Style is a variation of the font. Any type will be either roman (or normal), *italic* (slanted sideways), **bold** (thicker) or underlined.

BIG

clear

SMALL

fuzzy

Formal

Casual

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Designing your materials is about creating *relationships* between different elements.

If two items are giving the same message, they should be linked together and made similar, but if they are about a different message then they should be made different.

There are many different ways to do this by varying different parts of your space and elements, but three of these are particularly useful.

CONSISTENCY

Elements which have a similar use, or carry a similar message, should be related to one another by having them look the same. Their size, shape and alignment should be kept similar.

CONTRAST

If the messages of elements are different, it is best to make sure they look different. Exagerrate these elements using size, colour, space and style.

LOCATION

Put elements which carry the same message close to one another, put those which carry a different message further apart.