



Layout and visual presentation

Looks count!

The main points

1. Use the appropriate style guide.
2. Organise the information from your reader's point of view.
3. Make your document look appealing and easy to read.
4. Use relevant images appropriately.

Organise the information from your reader's point of view

- Put the most important information first.
- Use dot points.
- Help your reader find the information he/she wants.
 - Use headings, and use a consistent style and hierarchy for the headings.
 - Use short, clearly separated chunks of text.
 - Use text boxes to highlight important information.
 - Include a table of contents for long documents.
 - Include page numbers, generally in the bottom right hand corner.



Make your document look appealing and easy to read

- Aim for 40–50 per cent white space (blank space), so the pages don't look crowded.
- Use **bold** font for important words/phrases.
- Minimise use of *italics*.
- Only use underline for web addresses.
- Avoid UPPER CASE ONLY, even in headings.
- Use heavy weight, matt paper for printing (no less than 100 GSM). A glossy finish creates a glare that makes it hard for people to read the text.
- Use colours, within the restrictions of your style guide, but don't depend on colours to get your messages across if your document is likely to be printed or photocopied in black and white. For example, avoid using colour to denote different variables on a graph. Use different styles of lines instead.

Use relevant images

Images can help get your points across and break up the text.

- Use relevant and appropriate images that support your messages.
- Always abide by copyright requirements.
- If your document will be online, always provide 'alternative text' for images. Screen readers (typically used by people with poor vision) will read the text out loud so users do not miss out on the information provided in the image. For more information about alternative text, see the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#).

Use the appropriate style guide and template

Most organisations have a style guide with the 'house rules' for writing and designing documents. Using a style guide will help you create a document that looks good, has a consistent style and gives your readers confidence in the information you provide.

If you are writing as an employee of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), use the DHHS Visual and Written Style Guides available on the DHHS Intranet. These guides are based on the [Tasmanian Government Style Guide and Logo Usage Policy](#). There is also a wide range of templates available on the DHHS Intranet, shared document drive and in the [Tasmanian Government Communications Toolkit](#). For more information, see the [Writing as a Tasmanian Public Servant](#) sheet in this toolkit.