Presentations Made Easy

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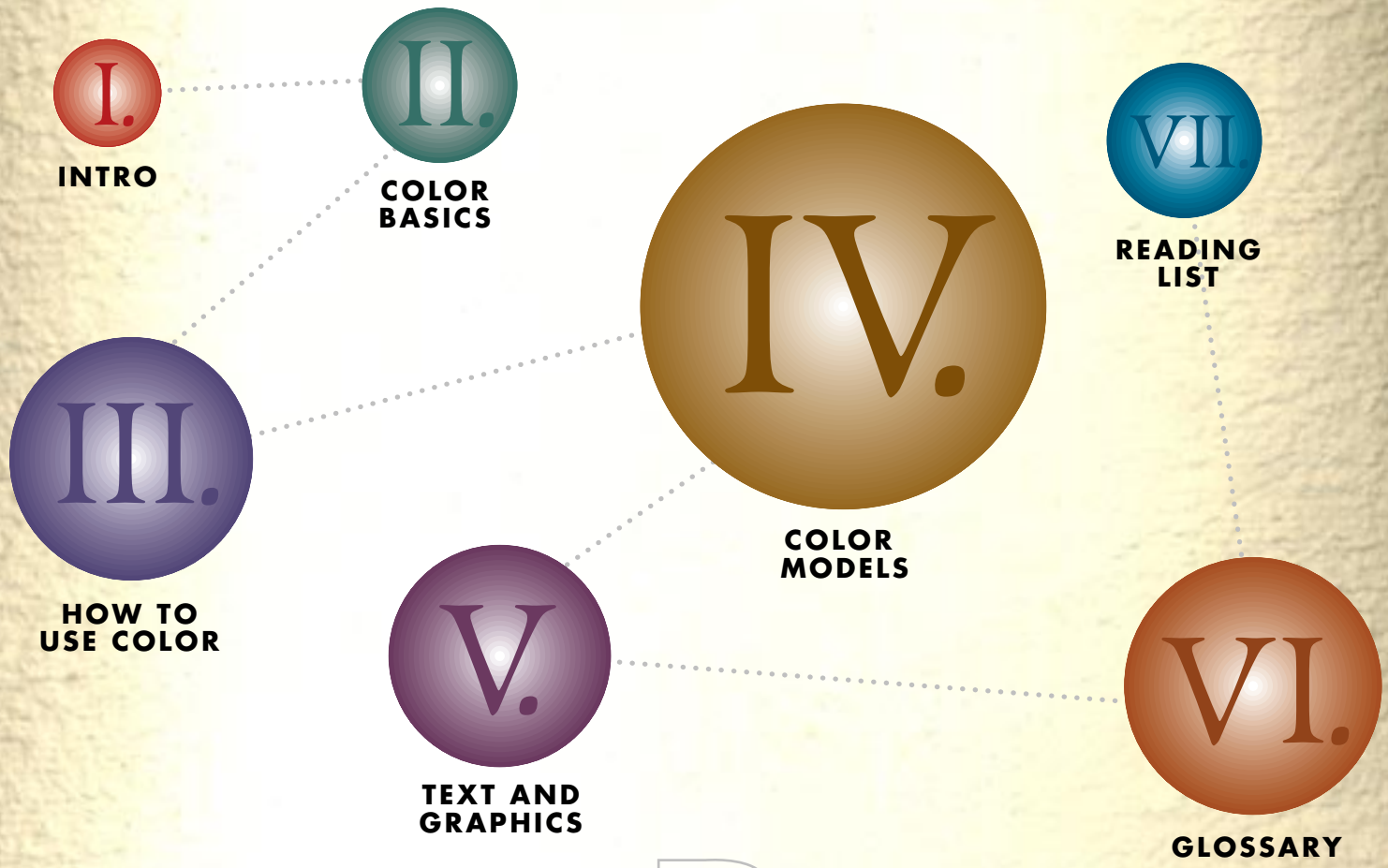


I. INTRODUCTION

In most offices today, you'll find easy-to-use presentation software, a variety of typefaces, graphics programs, clip art, even color printers and film recorders—everything you need to create successful presentations. But few of us have been taught the basic principles of black-and-white or color design, the kind of information that can make the difference between a ho-hum presentation and one that compels an audience to action. Which is why we put this guide together.

Presentations Made Easy is a quick study in the simple but powerful principles behind the design of successful communications. And while it focuses specifically on presentations, you'll probably find yourself applying what you learn here about color, typefaces, and graphics to other kinds of communications as well.

HOW TO NAVIGATE

You can page forward and backward through this guide by pressing the right and left arrow keys on your keyboard or by clicking the forward and backward arrows at the bottom of the screen. Or use the Table of Contents to go directly to a topic of interest. To return to the Table of Contents, click on the curved arrow at the bottom of your screen.

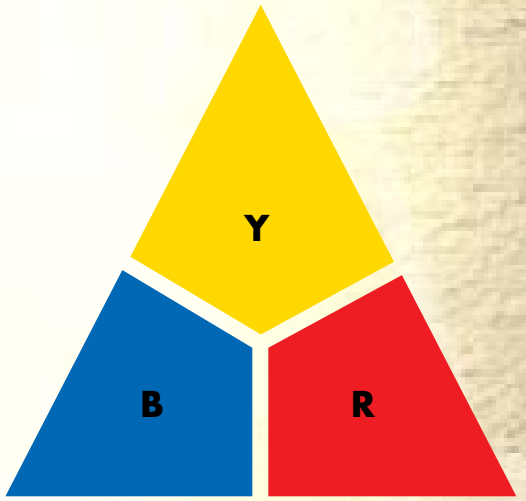
You can print this document according to your standard printing procedure.

II. COLOR BASICS

PRIMARY COLORS

Red, yellow, and blue are called primary colors because they cannot be created by mixing any others. Think of them as the building blocks of color.

The millions of other colors within the spectrum all derive from these three primary colors in combination with one another, as well as from black and white—which, surprisingly, aren't considered colors at all; black and white are classified as neutrals.

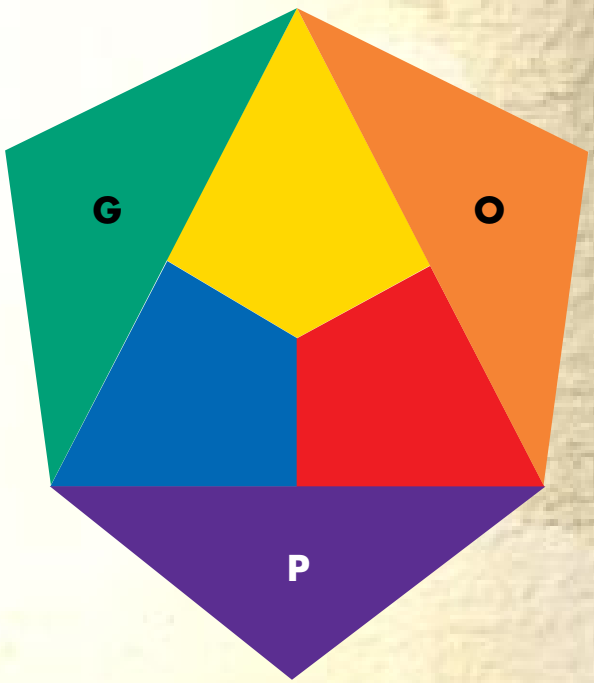


II. COLOR BASICS

SECONDARY COLORS

Secondary colors are created by mixing any two primary colors. Green is created by mixing blue and yellow, orange by mixing red and yellow, purple by mixing blue and red. When all three primary colors are combined, the theoretical outcome is black.

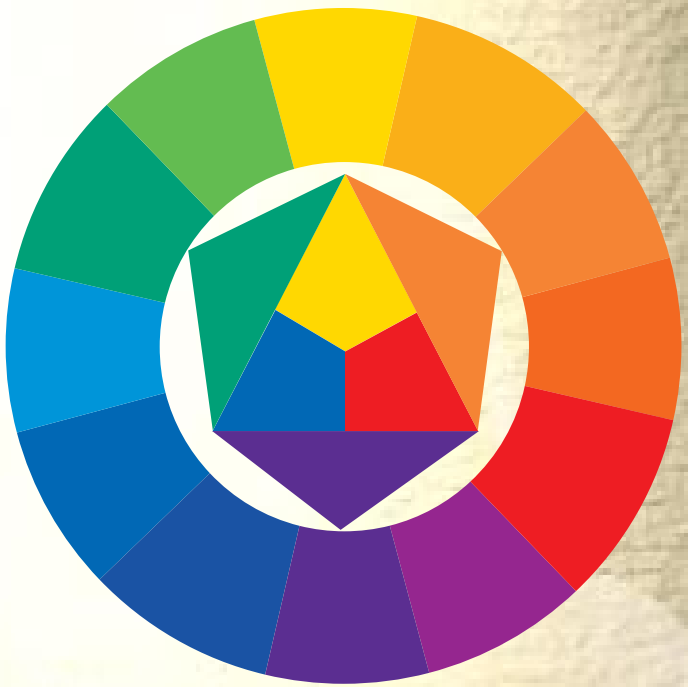
The color graphic to the right illustrates secondary colors as noted.



II. COLOR BASICS

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS

Complementary colors lie opposite each other on the color wheel. Complements are usually one primary and one secondary color, such as blue and orange, yellow and purple, or red and green. These examples also happen to be opposite one another in color temperature. Because they provide high contrast, complemenmentary colors are good choices for drawing attention to a graphic or to an important point in your presentation.



The color wheel

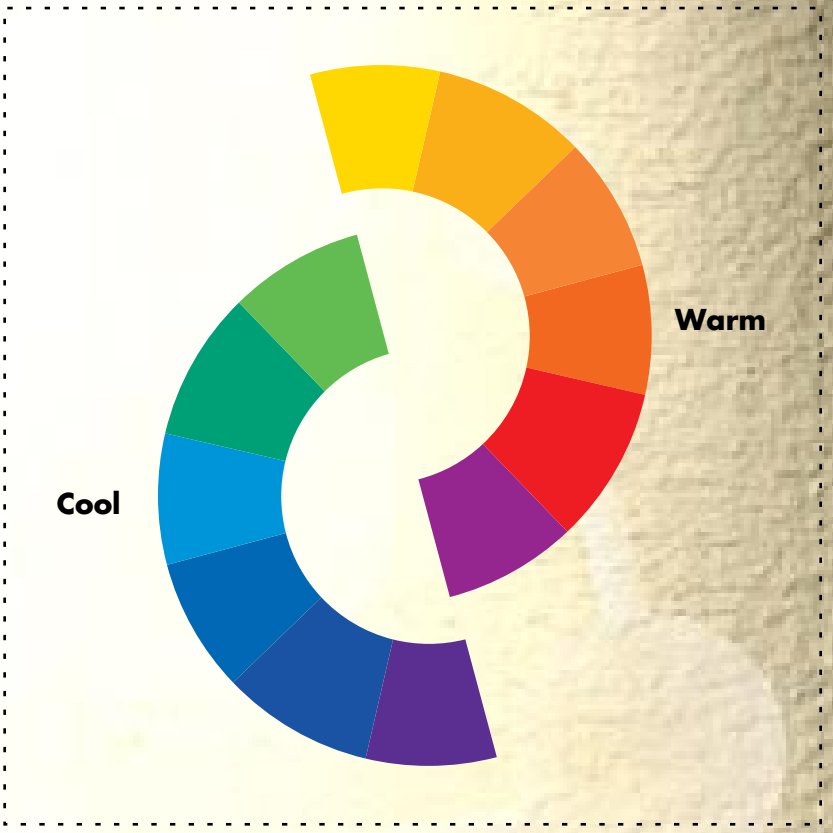
graphic source:
Johannes Itten. *The Elements of Color.* Ravensburg, Germany: Otto Maier Verlag, 1961.

II. COLOR BASICS

WARM VERSUS COOL COLORS

Colors are often discussed in terms of temperature—warm or cool. Red to yellow, including orange, pink, brown, and deep red are known as the warm colors. They reflect light at the infrared end of the spectrum—the one that transmits heat. Opposite the warm colors are the cool colors, ranging from green to violet, including all the blues and grays.

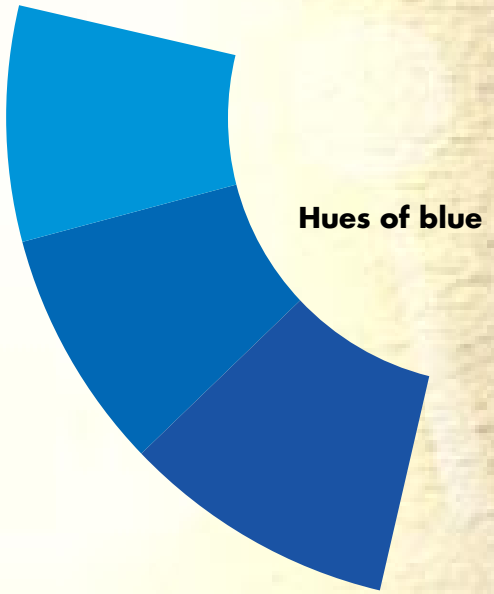
Warm colors attract attention because they appear to advance from the page or the screen. Cool colors, by contrast, appear to recede and are restful to the eye. The most successful presentations include a balance of warm and cool colors.



II. COLOR BASICS HUE

Hue describes all the variations of a single color family. Sky blue, aquamarine, and navy blue are all hues of blue, ranging from light to dark in color value.

Keep in mind that some colors carry a message all of their own. For example, if you're presenting a financial report, you might want to avoid setting the bottom line in red because of the association of "red ink" association with financial loss. In contrast, research has proven that blue, green, and purple hues in harmonious combination can leave an audience feeling relaxed. But is that what you want?

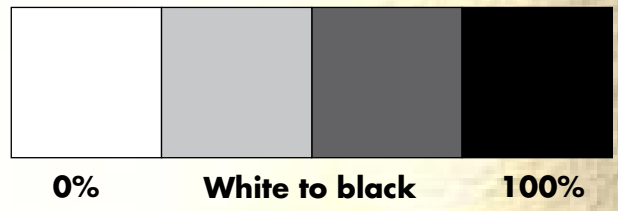


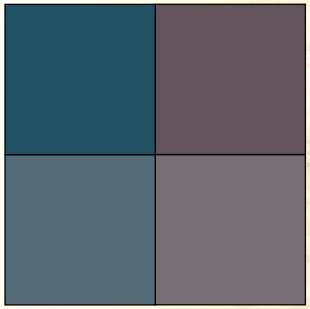
II. COLOR BASICS

NEUTRALS

White and black are neutral colors. Other neutral colors are created by mixing complementary colors to make millions of different shades of gray. They don't stand out as colors do, but neutral colors also range in temperature from warm to cool depending on the proportions of colors used to create them. The advantage of neutrals is that they accentuate the colors they're placed next to.

Use neutral colors when you want to add detail to a graphic without distracting from the main focus. Avoid using neutrals for important information in a graph or chart because it may be passed over. Neutrals—as their name suggests—are never the center of attention.

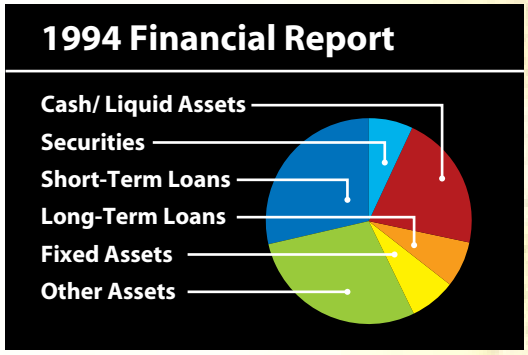




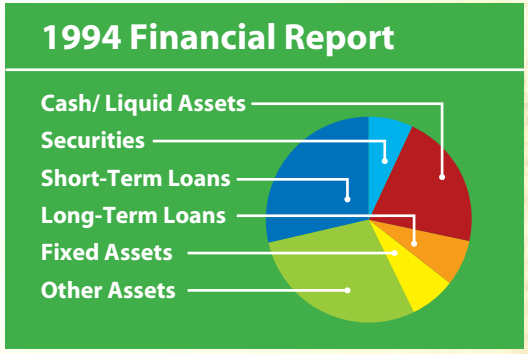
III. HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING A BACKGROUND COLOR

35mm Slides Make the slide's background dark: dark blue, dark green, dark purple, or—better yet—black. Dark background colors are easy on the eye. White or very light backgrounds are blinding when projected. But keep careful watch on dark backgrounds; although they may seem a welcome alternative to basic black, when you put that red pie chart against a dark green background, suddenly it's Christmas in July. That's why we recommend black; nothing clashes with it. Also, be sure to test slide color combinations on your output device. Colors that look good on-screen may print dark on your particular film recorder.



Easy to read

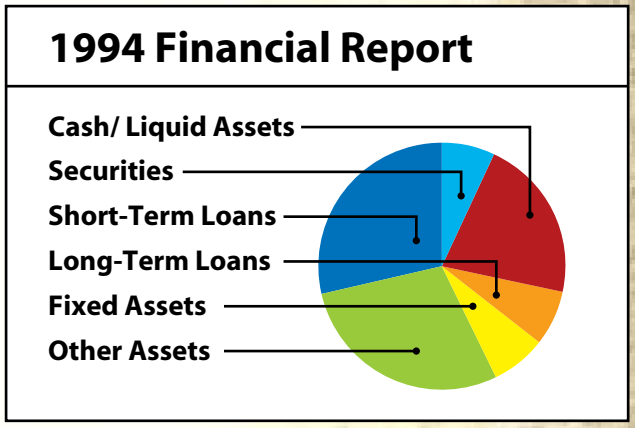


Harder to read

III. HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING A BACKGROUND COLOR

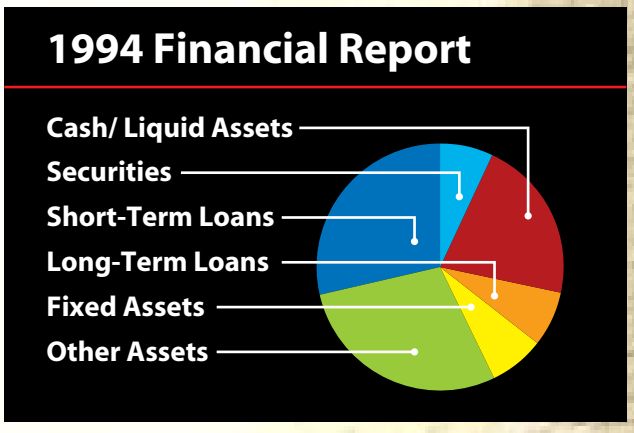
Overheads The best background for overhead transparencies is white, because most overhead presentations are delivered in a room with some ambient light. White projects well under such conditions and provides a neutral background for colorful graphics.



III. HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING A BACKGROUND COLOR

On-screen Presentations As with 35mm slides, a dark background is best, especially if you're going to project your presentation. The color alignment of projection systems is sometimes inaccurate, and light backgrounds might render your screens blurry. Also, given the nature of computer displays, a dark background makes colors appear richer.

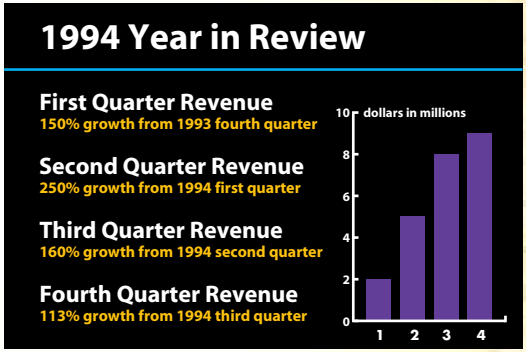


III. HOW TO USE COLOR

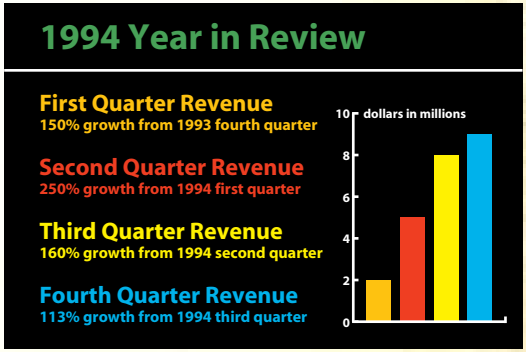
CHOOSING A TEXT COLOR

35mm Slides The best text color is one that contrasts highly with background color. When in doubt, choose white text on a black background. The lighter the text color, the higher the readability. In addition, if you need to print handouts of your presentation on a black-and-white laser printer, they'll be legible.

Avoid using different colors for the headline and body text. By the time you have those two colors and a color graphic on the same slide, your point is lost in the riot of color. Instead, keep the headline and the body text the same color and differentiate them with point size. Make the headline at least 4 points larger than the body text, and then pick up the color somewhere in the graphic to tie together all the elements on the slide.



Clear and readable



Distracting use of color

III HOW TO USE COLOR

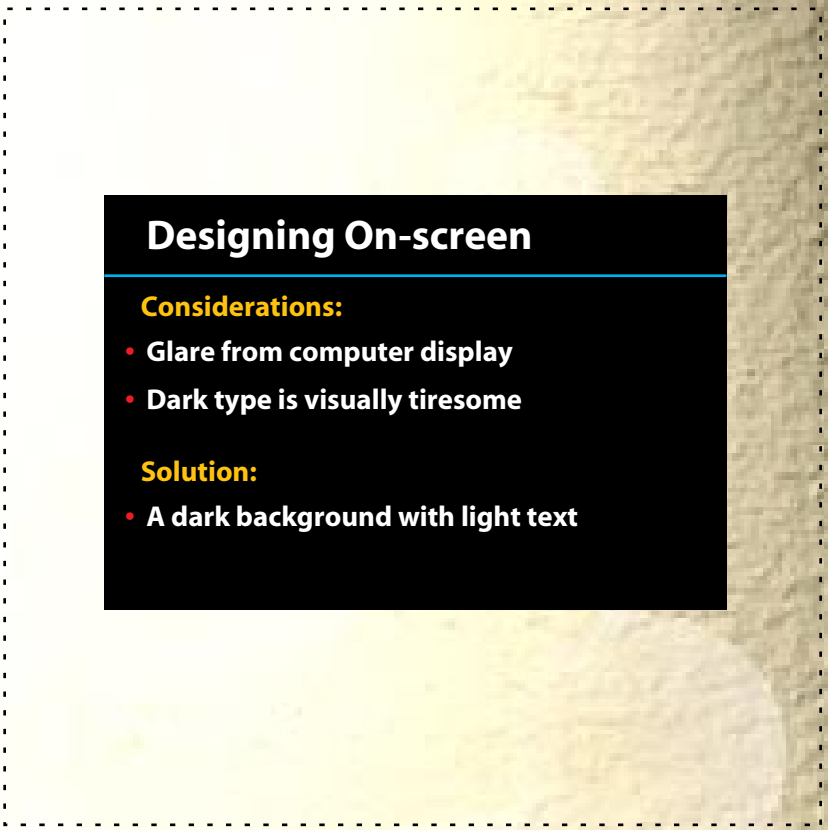
CHOOSING A TEXT COLOR

Overheads For text, choose a dark color—such as black or dark blue. High contrast is what you're looking for, and your background should be white or a very light color to ensure readability. Black text on a white background also makes for easily read laser-printer output of your presentation, if you want to provide handouts.

III. HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING A TEXT COLOR

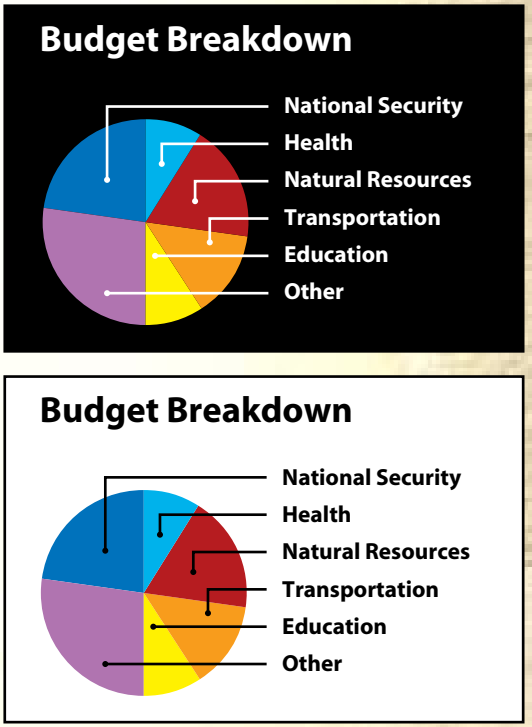
On-screen Presentations Dark backgrounds with light or white text work best for on-screen presentations, too. The glare from a computer display makes reading dark type on a light background difficult and tiresome. Choose a color in high contrast to your background, but keep in mind how it will print if you need to make a black-and-white laser-printer copy to hand out.



HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING COLORS FOR GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

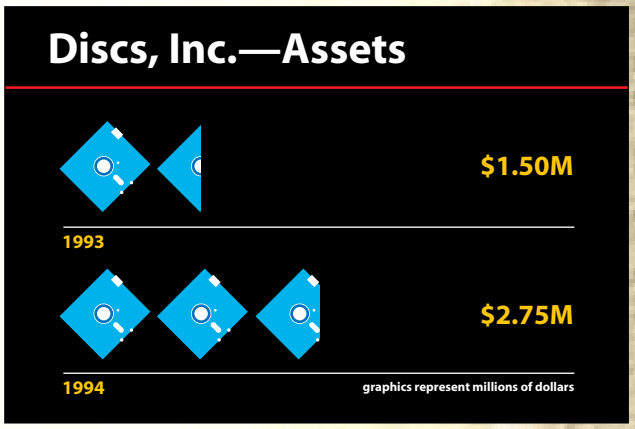
Callouts Callouts are the labels on graphics, such as the name or the percentage of a wedge on a pie chart. Usually callouts are somewhat smaller than normal text, so it's important that they contrast sharply with the background color in order to be readable. On 35mm slides and in on-screen presentations, white, bright yellow, light blue or bright orange are good choices, provided that the color ties in with the color you've chosen for your text throughout. On overheads with white backgrounds, black or dark-colored callouts work best, although bright orange might work too. Try projecting several colors before you make your final decision.



HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING COLORS FOR GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

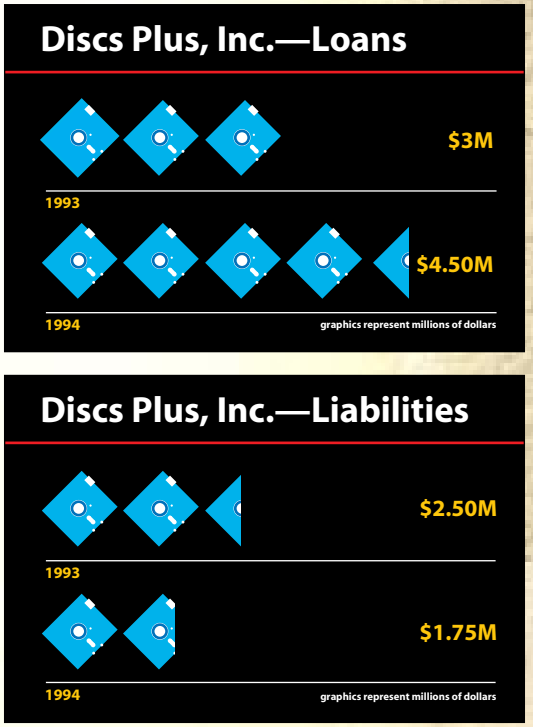
Objects When including clip art or your own graphics in a presentation, consider the background color you've chosen and the color you're using for text and callouts. If you're creating a flowchart, remember to use the same color for similar processes. Images of computers and printers work well as neutrals. Experiment with combinations of complementary colors and a secondary color, such as yellow and purple with green.



HOW TO USE COLOR

CHOOSING COLORS FOR GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

Charts and Graphs The key to readable charts and graphs is consistency. Use the same color text you've used for your preceding slides or screens. If, for example, in a bar chart you're comparing the same product's performance over several years, use the same color for each year. To highlight an important point, choose a bright color that complements the background but is still within the color range appearing on the slide. Remember, if it distracts your audience, using the wrong color or too many colors can be worse than not using any color at all.



IV. COLOR MODELS

YOUR MONITOR SPELLS COLOR: RGB

Monitors use the RGB (red, green, blue) model for creating color on your screen. These three colors combine in varying degrees to create hundreds, or even millions (depending on your monitor's video capabilities), of colors. This method of creating colors is called additive color.

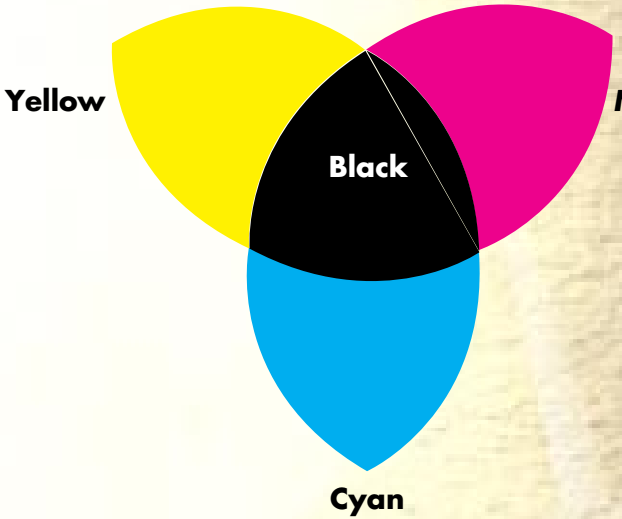
The RGB color model is completely different from the model used for color printing. As a result, the range of colors that can be shown on the screen differs from what can be printed and vice versa. Move to the next screen to learn about CMYK color.

The RGB, or additive, color model—red, green, and blue

IV. COLOR MODELS

YOUR PRINTER SPELLS COLOR: CMYK

CMYK stands for cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—the four component colors used by printers to create reflective color on a page, also known as process or subtractive color. The CMYK method is different from the RGB (red, green, blue) method used to create colors on your monitor. CMYK creates a range of colors that can't be duplicated on-screen. Therefore, what you see on the screen isn't always what you get on the page. Move to the next screen for some tips on how to work around these disparate color models.



The CMYK, or subtractive, color model—cyan, magenta, and yellow combined produce black

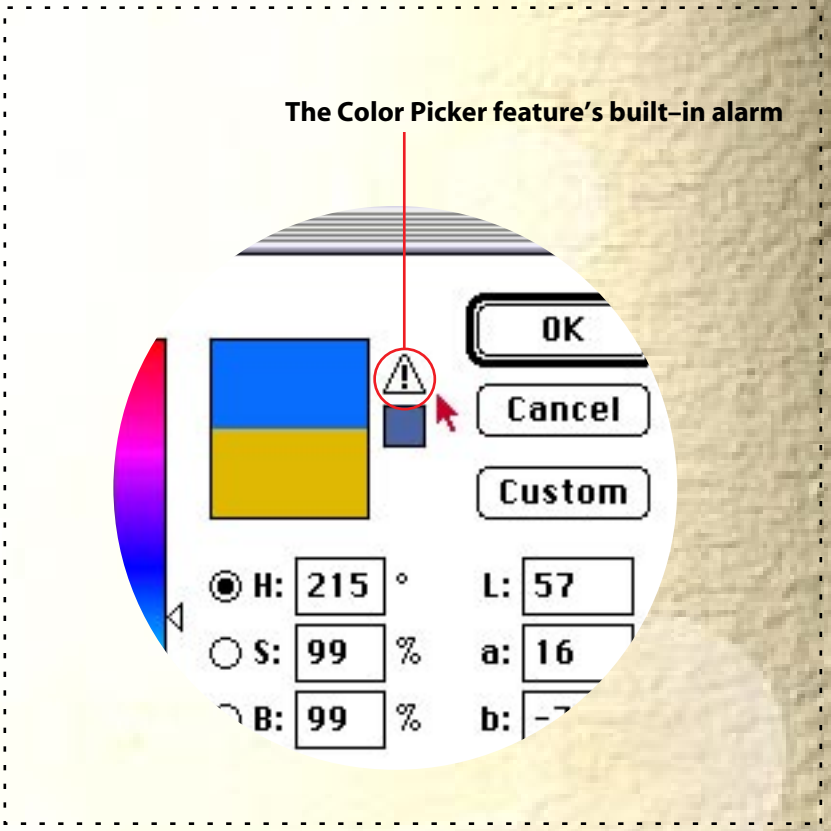
IV. COLOR MODELS

HOW YOU'D LIKE TO SPELL COLOR : WYSIWYG

Print screen no. 21 or any other screen from this guide. Then compare the screen image with your color output. They look different, don't they? So how do you get the colors to match?

One way is to use the color pickers found in some graphics software programs. They either tell you, through a built-in alarm, when a selected color can't be printed with process colors, or they show you what on-screen colors will look like when printed so that you can change them.

(continued on next screen)

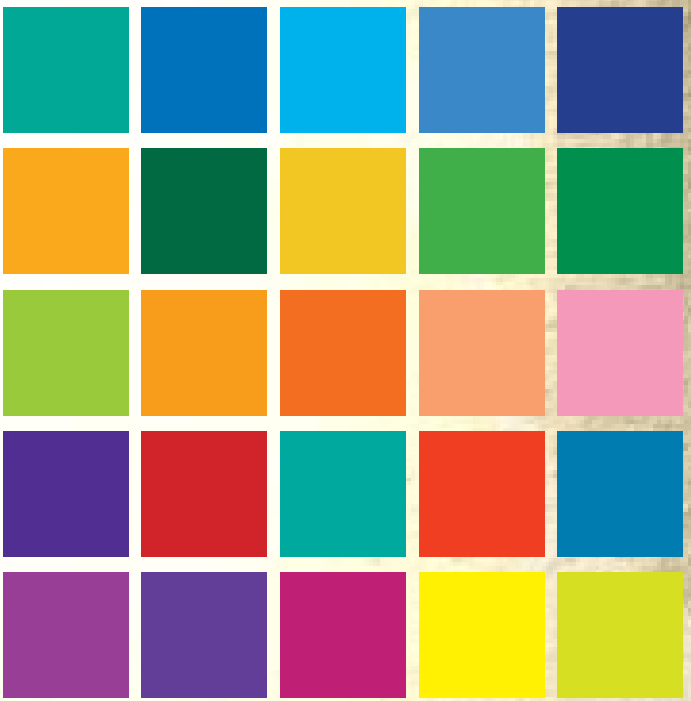


IV. COLOR MODELS

HOW YOU'D LIKE TO SPELL COLOR : WYSIWYG

(continued from previous screen)

If your program doesn't include a color picker, you can compensate. If your printer tends to wash out color, choose richer, more saturated colors to begin with. Several companies are working to develop color management systems that can solve the monitor versus the printer color problem, but no one system has yet been adopted as an industry standard.

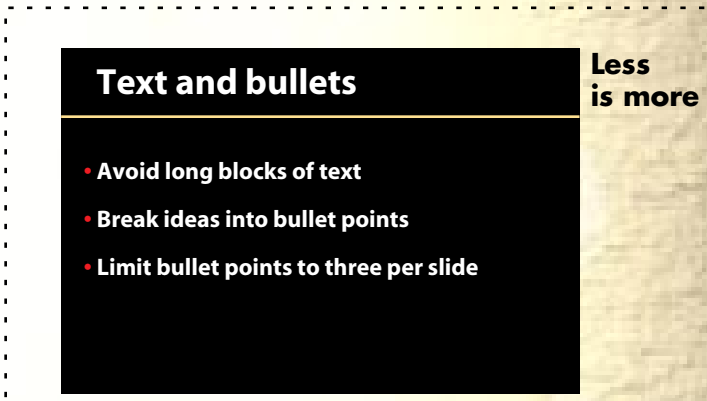


V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

In presentations, as in life, less is often more. Keep it simple. Lead your audience step by step. Make one main point per slide or per screen in as few words as possible. Think of your slides or overheads as billboards, not so much to be read as reacted to, hinting at rather than telling the whole story.

Some helpful rules to live by:

- Avoid long blocks of text
- Break ideas into bullet points
- Limit bullet points to three per slide

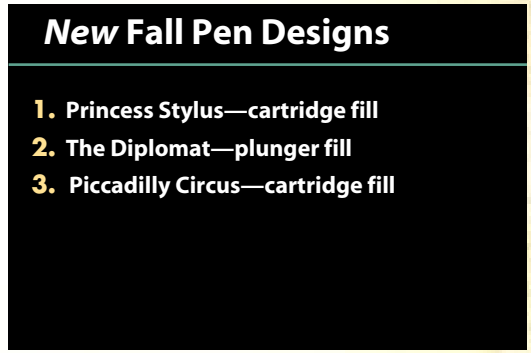


V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

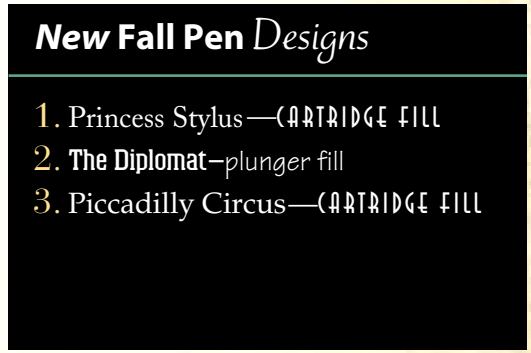
CHOOSING TYPEFACES

Light shining through slides or overheads calls for thicker, bolder typefaces than those used on the page, so choose accordingly. Sans serif fonts work best. And for unity and continuity, don't use more than two different typefaces on the same slide, overhead, or screen. Too many typefaces produce the "ransom note" effect. Of course, the typefaces should be the same throughout the entire presentation.

Keep in mind that type point sizes below 28 can be difficult to read in a large auditorium. As a rule of thumb, we recommend 30 to 36 point bold or demi-bold type for headlines and 28 to 34 point regular type for body text. *Use italics for emphasis.* If you're tempted to reduce point sizes in order to fit more on one slide or overhead, it's time to edit or break your message into two slides.



Futura® Bold at two sizes: easy to read

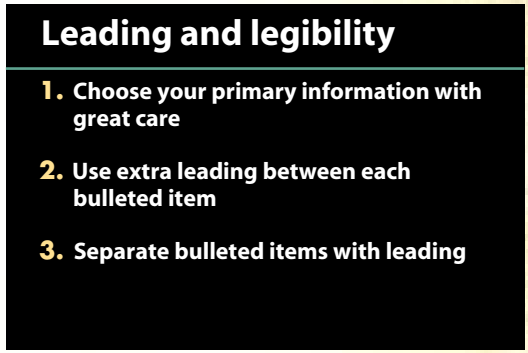


The "ransom note" effect: hard to read

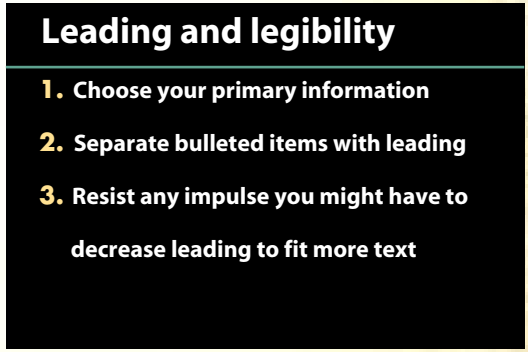
V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS LEADING

Leading (pronounced ledding) is the amount of space between lines. It's breathing room, so to speak, and it's particularly easy to see between bulleted items. Often leading is preset in your layout program and expressed as a ratio between the text size and the leading size—such as 11/12, which translates as 11-point type with 12 points of leading. Use extra leading between each bulleted or numbered item to clearly separate them, but use less leading between the lines of text within each bulleted or numbered item for legibility.

The sample to your top right uses 34/35 for body text and one carriage return between bulleted items.



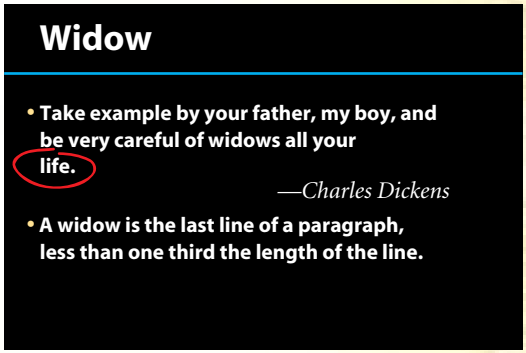
Sufficient leading



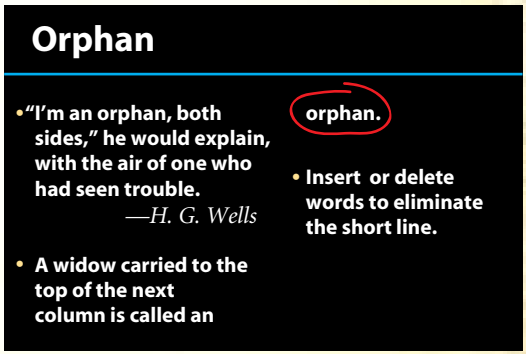
Too much leading shown on bullet 3

V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

A widow is the last line of a paragraph, less than one third the length of the line, usually beginning with the continuation of a hyphenated word. An orphan is a widow carried to the top of the next column. With slides, where line length is generally short, often a word can end up on a line by itself. When you encounter either, insert additional words to extend the final line to at least half the line length, or delete words to eliminate the short line.



Widow circled in red here

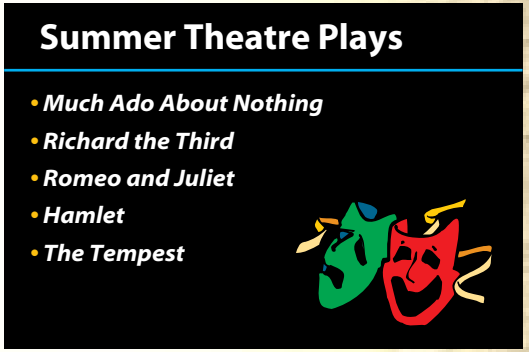


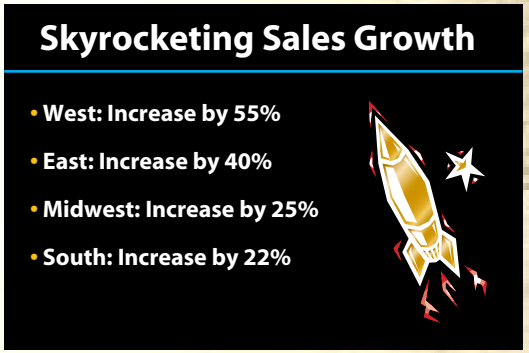
Orphan circled in red here

V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

ILLUSTRATE YOUR POINT WITH CLIP ART

Nowadays you don't have to be an artist to incorporate professional-quality artwork into your presentations. A wide variety of black-and-white and color Encapsulated PostScript™ (EPS) clip art is available from companies such as Image Club Graphics, at a very reasonable price. Use clip art whenever a picture is worth a thousand words, but avoid including unnecessary images. Less is always more when it comes to designing a clear presentation.





V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

IMPORTING GRAPHICS

There are basically three graphics formats you can import into your presentation program. Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), PICT, and TIFF™. Check the user's manual that came with your presentation program to determine which you can use.

EPS files are the highest-quality graphics you can import, and they support both black-and-white or color. If you import an EPS file, don't be surprised if it looks grainy on-screen. Monitors have a lower resolution (only 72 to 96 dots per inch) than most printers (300 to 600 dots per inch). To minimize the loss of resolution when you're working with color files, check your user's manual to make sure the program is set to render at the highest resolution possible.

To save time and space while you're working on slides or overhead presentations that include color EPS images, use the one-bit color version, if you have a choice. It will contain all the information necessary to print your file in color, but it will show only the black-and-white version on-screen. Note, however, that one-bit color versions of EPS files lack sufficient resolution for high-quality on-screen presentations.

V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

IMPORTING AND SIZING GRAPHICS

In addition to EPS files, you may want to import bitmapped graphics as PICT or TIFF files, which may be smaller than EPS files. All three formats contain the information you need to view and print black-and-white or color graphics when printed to a PostScript printer, but EPS files print most clearly because all necessary printing information is included in the file.

It's also a good idea, if you have the option, to save PICT and TIFF files in RGB mode. Doing so improves the file's appearance on-screen without affecting print quality, and it also creates a smaller file size. In fact, with RGB output devices, such as 35mm film recorders, PICT and TIFF files are quite suitable.

When creating or editing an EPS, PICT, or TIFF file, consider the actual size the image will be in your presentation. To do this, use the ruler in your presentation program to determine dimensions. Then create the image at that size so that no scaling is necessary. Scaling after importing can result in increased file sizes, distortion of bitmapped images, and other undesirable consequences.

V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

ADOBE POSTSCRIPT PRINTERS=HIGHEST QUALITY OUTPUT

You'll get the best results if you print your presentation overheads, handouts, and 35mm slides on Adobe PostScript printers and film recorders. That's because Adobe PostScript software lets you print high-quality, Encapsulated PostScript clip art as well as the highest quality Type 1 fonts—such as the more than 2,000 available from the Adobe Type Library. With Adobe PostScript printers, EPS art files, and Adobe fonts, you never have to worry about jagged edges or other irregularities in your output.

(continued on next screen)

High Quality Type

High Quality Type

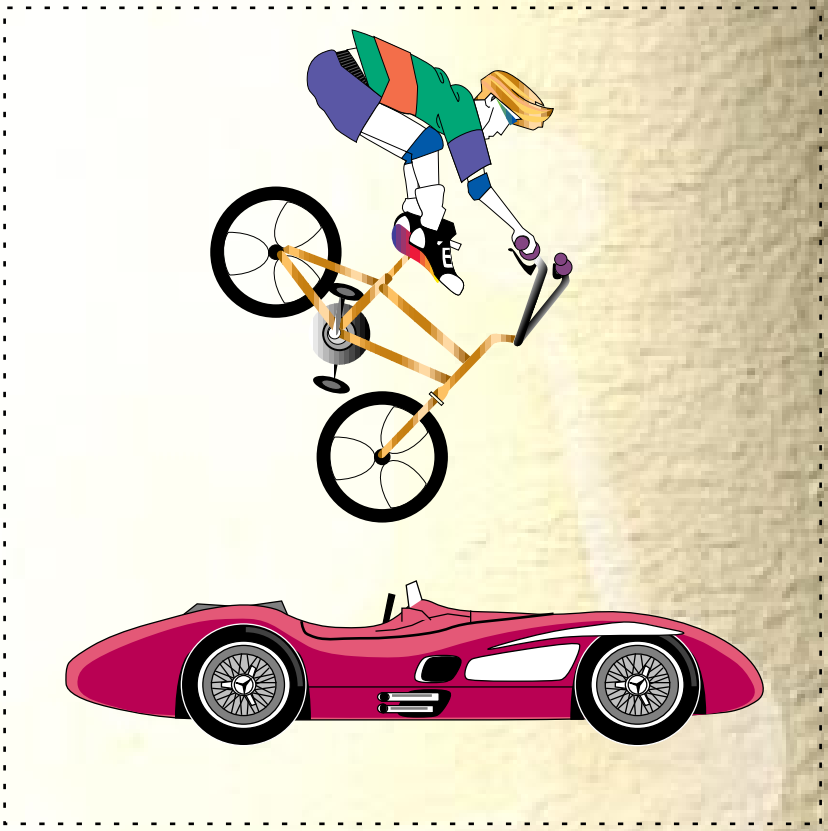
High Quality Type

TEXT AND GRAPHICS

ADOBE POSTSCRIPT PRINTERS=HIGHEST QUALITY OUTPUT

(continued from previous screen)

In addition, the Adobe PostScript Level 2 software found in most printers today provides consistent and predictable color output. Its compression and decompression filters speed up the printing of even large, complex color files, while allowing you to continue working on your computer without interruption.

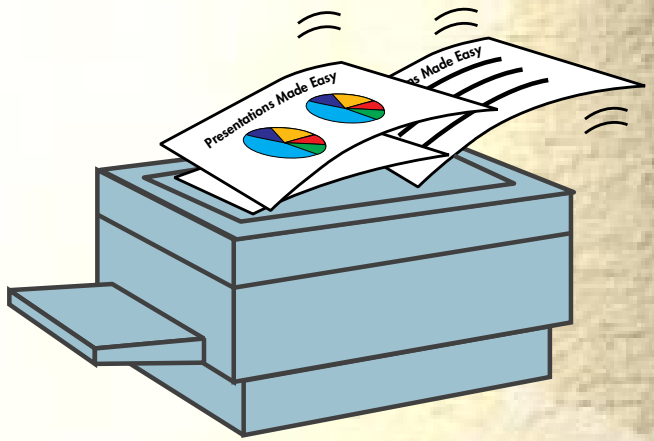


V. TEXT AND GRAPHICS

ADOBE POSTSCRIPT PRINTER TIPS

Every printer comes with a piece of software called a printer driver. Most Adobe PostScript printer drivers can be configured to optimize performance and color output quality. So, if you're using an Adobe PostScript Level 2 color printer, select the "Level 2" and "Optimize for speed" settings in your driver to increase performance.

In addition, setting the printer driver to "Calibrated color/grayscale" will ensure consistent and predictable color output. See the documentation that accompanies your printer for more information on the printer driver.



VI. GLOSSARY

Adobe PostScript: The industry-standard page-description language that is device and resolution independent.

Additive Color: Red, green, and blue light added together produce white light. This is RGB, or additive, color, the color model used on computer monitors and apparent in 35mm or on-screen presentations.

Ascender: The stroke on a lowercase letter (such as those of k, b, and d) that ascends above x-height of the other lowercase letters of a typeface.

Bitmap: A series of dots or pixels that make up a digital image.

Callouts: The labels or text on graphic images.

CMYK: (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) The color model used in four-color process printing. Also know as "subtractive color."

Color Picker: The software included in some graphics programs that tells you whether the colors you've selected are within the range of printed (four-color process) color or if they will look different on the page than on the screen.

Complementary Colors: Opposite each other on the color wheel, complementary colors usually consist of one primary color and one secondary color.

Cool Colors: Green to violet, including all the blues and grays. Cool colors appear to recede on the page and are restful to the eye.

Descender: The stroke on a lowercase letterform that falls below the baseline.

VI. GLOSSARY

EPS: (Encapsulated PostScript) A graphic format for transferring image, text, and line-art files; this format provides flexibility because it includes a low-resolution view file (for on-screen placement) and a high-resolution file for output.

Gamut: The range of colors that can be printed on a color output device, such as a printer or a film recorder.

Hue: All the variations of a single color.

Leading: The space between lines of text. Most applications automatically apply standard leading based on the point size of the text.

Neutrals: Created by mixing complementary colors—or white and black; neutrals encompass millions of shades of gray.

PICT: Developed by Apple Computer, Inc., the PICT (short for "picture") file format for bitmap images can be used on any Macintosh. It's often used to transfer images from Macintoshes to PCs, and vice versa.

Orphan: A single word on a line that starts a column of text.

Point Size: The common method of measuring type. One point is about 1/72 of an inch.

Primary Colors: Red, yellow, and blue; the three colors from which all others are built.

RGB: (red, green, and blue) Red, green, and blue are the three additive colors used by a monitor to display digital color information.

Resolution: A measure of the fineness of detail that a device can record or output.

VI. GLOSSARY

Secondary Colors: Created by mixing any two primary colors.

Subtractive Color: Yellow, cyan, and magenta mixed together produce black. The CMYK, or subtractive, color model is used in offset color printing.

TIFF: Tagged Image File Format. A document format developed as a standard for storing bitmapped graphics, including scanned images.

Type 1: The international standard for digital type, available on almost every computer platform. Type 1 is now the most commonly available digital type format. More than 30,000 fonts are available in the Type 1 format.

Warm Colors: Red to yellow; including orange, pink, brown, and deep red. Warm colors appear to advance from the page and attract attention.

Widow: The last line of a paragraph, less than one third the length of the line, usually beginning with the continuation of a hyphenated word.

WYSIWYG: Literally, "what you see is what you get". Used to describe a page where what is seen on the screen corresponds exactly to what appears on the printed page.

X-height: The height of the lowercase letters of an alphabet, measured from the baseline.

VII READING LIST

Adobe Magazine (formerly Aldus Magazine) published bimonthly by Adobe Systems Incorporated, except November and December when it appears monthly. For subscription information in the U.S. and Canada, call 1-206-628-2321.

Offers many tips and techniques fo creating presentations and presentation graphics. Free subscriptions are available to owners of Adobe software.

Design Essentials, Second Edition. L. Cohen and T. Wendling. Mountain View: Adobe Press, 1995. ISBN 1-56830-093-X

Revision of the first in the series of *Professional Studio Techniques* books from Adobe Press. A great step-by-step resource for those who want to create their own graphics and achieve the most professional results possible from their computer.

Effective Presentation Skills, Revised Edition. Steve Mandel. Menlo Park: Crisp Publications, 1993. ISBN 1-56052-202-X

Self-paced workbook from the *Fifty Minute* series by Crisp Publications. Has numerous exercises and assessments to guide you through the presentation process. Workshops are also available from the author.

How to Create High-Impact Business Presentations. J. Kupsh and P. Graves. Chicago: NTC Business Books, 1993. ISBN 0-8442-3492-3

Detailed book with in-depth information about creating effective graphics and using color, as well as tips for developing and delivering your message. The four appendices include great resource information, and although some company information may be dated, it's still a valuable starting point.

VII READING LIST

Imaging Essentials. L. Cohen, R. Brown, and T. Wendling. Mountain View: Adobe Press, 1993. ISBN 1-56830-051-4

Second in the *Professional Studio Techniques* series from Adobe Press. Step-by-step instructional guide for producing with electronic images, video, or 3-D drawings. If you intend to edit your own scanned photos or video, this is a must-have for your reference shelf.

Power Presentations. Marjorie Brody and Shawn Kent. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993. ISBN 0-471-55961-X

This easy-to-use book focuses on the importance of pleasing your audience and how to do so. Chapter 23, "How Visual Aids Can Help," is particularly good for novice presention designers.

Production Essentials. D. Tapscott, P. Soberanis, and L. Jeans. Mountain View: Adobe Press, 1994. ISBN 1-56830-124-3

Third in the *Professional Studio Techniques* series from Adobe Press, this book teaches you basic production techniques using step-by-step instructions. The numerous tips and techniques explained here are invaluable for desktop publishing novices.

Secrets of Power Presentations. Peter Urs Bender. Toronto: The Achievement Group, 1993. ISBN 0-9695066-0-0

Focuses on effective, dynamic, and impressive business presentations. Shows the importance of understanding what you want to communicate and the need for preparation.

VII READING LIST

The Mac Is Not a Typewriter. Robin Williams. Berkeley: Peach Pit Press, 1990. ISBN 0-938151-31-2

The PC Is Not a Typewriter. Robin Williams. Berkeley: Peach Pit Press, 1991. ISBN 0-938151-49-5

Whichever version you choose, these little books are indispensable sources for learning about the correct way to use type on your computer. Read them, save them as a resource, and then pass the information on to other desktop publishers!

The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Course: Business Presentations. Lani Arredondo. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994. ISBN 0-07-002841-9

This is an intense self-study program designed to guide you from concept and style development through creation to platform behavior. This may seem extreme to some, but if you pass the test at the end, you actually receive a certificate of course completion from the publisher.

Winning Numbers. Michael Thomsett. New York: AMACOM, 1990. ISBN 0-8144-5958-7

Shows nonfinancial people how to use business facts and figures to make their point. This is a guide to translating numbers into valuable information, *not* an accounting course.