The EdTech Books User Guide

Tutorials, Tips, and Troubleshooting for the Open Textbook Platform

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Essential Concepts
Purpose

Yogi Berra once said, “If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.” Before you start designing your educational website, it is important to identify the purpose of your site so that you know exactly where you are going to end up in terms of the finished product. To help you identify the purpose of your site, consider two things: 1) **Who are you expecting to visit your site?** (e.g., Students? Parents? Administrators? Colleagues? Your professional learning network?) and 2) **What do you want your audience to be able to do on your website?** (e.g., Access class assignments? View student work? Learn about your teaching practice?)

Designing an educational website is much different than other types of website development. You are not trying to get users to buy your product. Instead, your target audience is coming to your website for a reason - what is that reason? You may be setting up a site for your students to keep track of what is going on day-to-day in the classroom or for students to find online resources and activities that extend learning related to class topics. Your website may end up serving several different purposes, but starting with just one can help simplify the initial design process. Whatever the purpose of your website is, keep that purpose in mind at all times and continually check that you are
meeting your goal.

![Figure 1: Mindmap of different reasons to create an educational website (created using Mindmup).]

**Planning**

Building a website without some degree of planning can lead to frustration. If you don’t have a plan, you may waste a lot of your time setting up your page with images, content, and menus only to find out that you need to start over because the setup does not satisfy the main purpose of the site. To reduce potential frustration, start your web design process with **researching** and **sketching**. For research, explore various websites, including ones that are similar to what you’ll be producing. Look for sites that have a similar purpose as yours and identify sites that you found easy to use or particularly memorable. Jot down highlights from those sites that you could incorporate into your site design. You don’t have to include everything at first. Just keep notes about what you liked and you can add features in over time.
Next, sketch out your website organization and visual design. Take a piece of paper and a pencil (several Post-Its work, too) and sketch the layout and content for each page. It is a lot easier in the beginning to rearrange post-it notes or switch around your layout on paper.
Visual Organization

Layout

The layout of a website defines the location of typical items on a website, including the menu, the banner or logo, the navigation bar, contact information, and social network icons. The layout involves decisions about the position of each item on the page, the size of images and text, and placement of visuals. If you were to look at popular websites (e.g., Google, Amazon, and National Geographic) you would find these typical items in similar locations. On many websites, the menu, navigation bar, and logo are found near the top of the page. Contact information and social media icons can be found at the bottom of the page or sometimes in the upper right corner of websites.

Figure 4: Screenshot of the top of National Geographic’s homepage, noting location of logo, menus and navigation bar.
Your visitors are most likely well-versed with website layout without even knowing it. They will look to the same place for the items they need to move around your website. For example, on most websites, when you click the header, you will be taken back to the home page. Keeping with this tradition on your site will ease user navigation. The graph below depicts the typical placement of common website elements:
Consistency

Your website should have a layout that is consistent from page to page (e.g., the menu, header, and search engine can be found in the same spot on every page of the website). This can make navigation easier for the user, as they will know where to look or click to move seamlessly throughout the site.
When deciding on the layout of your site, consider what information or visuals will be “above the fold.” This term originated from the design of newspapers - with only the upper half of the front page of a newspaper (the part above the fold) being visible to passersby, editors placed the most important and captivating information there to attract attention and increase readership. This concept applies to web design, but rather than a physical “fold,” you have the bottom of the screen. Anything that requires scrolling is below the fold. Since people spend only a few seconds deciding whether to stay on a website, you need to capture their attention and present the most relevant and interesting information “above the fold” on every page. You could do this by placing a short video at the top of the page, an attention-grabbing heading, or intriguing visuals or text. Keep in mind that the “fold” will be different depending on what device your visitor is using (see Figure 8). You need to be aware of the fold and design your page so that your most important content lies above the fold (to learn more, explore the Above the Fold vs. Below the Fold article).
Navigation

When designing the navigation for your site, keep in mind your website’s purpose and make sure that you are using the simplest and clearest method of navigation to accomplish that goal. You will begin the design of your website with your home page - your main page - the page your users will see first. This page may not be able to accomplish everything. Your visitors may need to navigate somewhere else to find what they need. If a visitor is unable to find what they need in an easy way, they will become frustrated and may not use your website (or curse it everytime they do). When someone wants to find something in a book, they look to the table of contents. On a website, navigation is basically your table of contents. How can you help your visitors find what they are looking for? The main technique used in all navigation schemes is menus. It is important that they are well-organized, easy to use, and easy to find (remember, the table of contents is always in the front of the book!). Also, keep in mind the concept of “serial position effect.” That is, most visitors will look at the first and last items in a list. So make sure the most important items needed to achieve your purpose are at the top of any menu list.
Search engines are also a popular navigation tool. Most web design tools, like Wordpress, allow you to embed a search engine within your site. If you opt to do this, make sure the search engine shows up on every page (consistency of layout) and that your pages consist of text (and images with alternative text descriptions) featuring key terms users would search for. For example, if a student visited your site and used the search engine to find “homework,” but your homework page is titled “after-school work” then the search engine would not be a helpful navigation tool.

Another type of navigation is within-page linking. If you have a long page of text or images, it can be beneficial to break up the content by headings and place a table of contents at the top of the page that users can click on to go to specific sections (rather than having to scroll through the entire page). If you setup your website like this, make sure there’s a “back to top” link at the bottom of each section so users can always get back to the table of contents and menu.

One other navigation method worth noting is the use of accordions. This method allows the user to view many heading at once and open as many sections as they want.
Navigation Tip: If you have your users navigate to an external site, make sure to have it **open in a new window or tab** so that they can always get back to your website.

**Visual Design**

Visual design covers a lot of territory. Often people hire graphic designers or professional website developers to create visually appealing website designs. Don’t worry! Just like all the other pieces of your website, you can do this too. Remember to keep it simple. You can always go back and add complexity. The main purpose of your website shouldn’t be lost among cool visual effects. Your visual design should not confuse your visitors while they try to navigate your website. In fact, the **visual elements should help lead the user to the key items on your website**. This is often referred to as **visual hierarchy**. Web design sites like Google Sites, Wix, Weebly and Wordpress take care of some of the visual design decisions by offering simple templates.

Some basic visual design elements are highlighted on this popular website:
Guidelines for typical visual design elements:

**Text**

With text, make sure that it is easy to read. Most browsers default to a **16-point font size** to ensure readability and accessibility. You should use that as a guideline and make sure you don’t go any smaller. Use larger text size for titles, headings, and subheadings, so that they stand out from the body of content. Even though it is tempting to use interesting fonts, remember that your website needs to be readable! It is good practice to **limit yourself to no more than 3 fonts** and maintain consistency in font style from page to page.

**Color & Contrast**

It may be tempting to use lots of color on your website, however **too many colors can be overwhelming and distracting**. Use colors to guide your visitor’s eyes to the most important parts of your page. Whatever color palette you choose, whether it is black and white or cool blue tones, use the same colors throughout your website. A helpful color palette generator for websites can be found at [Palletton](#). In terms of accessibility and readability, make sure that color isn’t the only thing used to signal important information (e.g., use bold, bigger font size, or italics) and ensure that the colors you select provide enough contrast so that the text is easy to read. Use the [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#) to test the contrast of the colors of your fonts and background.

**White Space**

It is not necessary (or recommended) to fill every square inch on a page. Use white space on your page to **reduce visual clutter**, make the visual path clear to your user and allow them to find what they are looking for efficiently.

**Icons**

Use standard icons and shapes on your website. For example, “help” is understood to be represented...
by a question mark and "home" is often depicted by an image of a house. The Creative Commons website features a list of free (with attribution) icons you can use on your site.

**Accessibility**

Educational websites are for everyone! Some of your users may have disabilities and your website needs to allow them to access the information you have presented. A recent study of more than 6,000 school and district websites found that the vast majority failed to be fully accessible (Accessibility in Mind? A Nationwide Study of K-12 Web Sites in the United States). Use the Accessibility Statement Generator tool to ensure your website is accessible and to put a statement on your site showcasing that you value accessibility. Also, for more information see Chapter 5: Digital Accessibility.

![Figure 12: Image of disability symbols - websites must serve and accommodate all people.](image)

**Adaptability**

Your visitors may be accessing your site using a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile device. It is crucial that your site work on all of the above. The purpose of your website cannot be lost or inhibited because of different screen sizes. Some of the free website building programs (Wix, Wordpress, Google Sites) incorporate a design or template that is responsive to any device. When thinking about a mobile device, make sure that the text remains legible, your most important information lies above the fold, and that buttons are not too small to be pressed by an average fingertip. Also, make sure to test your website across multiple devices and browsers. The big 5 browsers are: Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Opera and Safari (“How to Design a Website”, 2017). You must test every path, link, and
button for correct function.

Figure 13: Be sure to test that your website responds predictably on all types of devices.

**User Interface & Visual Design Checklist**

- Declare target audience of website
- Narrow down main purpose of website
- Research other websites
- Sketch out website design
- Build website layout
- Establish clear and easy navigation
- Main purpose remains clear
- Utilize simple visual design
- Make sure to address accessibility
- Test website on different devices
- Test website on 5 different browsers
- Test all links, buttons and navigation path
- Fix any issues
References


Writing For The Web

Torrey Trust

Introduction

The use of websites as educational tools provides a unique way for students to access material in a variety of different formats. However, while educational websites may increase access to information, they also present their own challenges. Research suggests that only 16% of people read webpages word-for-word. Most people scan (Nielsen, 1997). Additionally, people often spend only a few seconds exploring a site before determining whether to stay or leave. And, with the distracting world of the Internet, where a funny cat video is only a click away, it is even more challenging to maintain readers’ attention on a website.

When you are writing for the web, you must create content that is captivating, engaging, and informative while also being easy to scan. This means writing for the web looks very different than writing for print. Check out our chapter overview video to see an example of how to transform a traditional print paragraph into text that is easy to read on a website.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-uTd

This chapter will showcase the tricks you need to write web content to capture and maintain the
attention of your readers. We will begin by discussing how to use formatting techniques (e.g., whitespace, bold, italics, bullet points, headings, and font size) to facilitate quick reading and to draw the attention of the reader to key information. Then, we will cover how to use language in a way that appeals to your audience. Finally, we will showcase tips for writing subject specific content to engage learners.

**Formatting**

The way you organize and format a website is the first thing visitors will notice. It’s essential to design your website to be easy on the eyes. Websites that have a lot going on (often referred to as “busy”) are difficult to gather information from and can turn people away from your page. If viewers are overwhelmed and can’t figure out what to focus on, how to find information, or where to go on the site, they will make an immediate exit. The following section offers tips and ideas to improve how your website is read by visitors.

**White Space**

One way to avoid making your website look busy is by utilizing white space. White space is the unfilled space on your website. Keeping some space free of images or text helps to break up your page to make it less cluttered.

In the example below, the Lings Cars site fails to utilize white space as a means of breaking up the content for two reasons. First off, there is very little background space - most of the website has words, pictures, or menus on it. The remaining background has a complex pattern that is jarring to the eyes. This combination creates a website that is difficult to look at for more than a few seconds, which is not ideal when you want visitors to stay on your webpage.

In contrast, the Pisaccochronicle site featured below uses a lot of white space, which makes it easy to quickly scan. By minimizing content and maximizing white space, readers have only a few options (read, move to the previous or next page, or explore the menu). Rather than feeling overwhelmed, viewers are encouraged to read, scroll, and explore.
Breaking Up Text

Not every website has to be as simple and limited in text as The Pisacco Chronicle. Your website can include paragraphs of text. However, if you are planning to write a lot of text on a webpage, one way to make it easy to read is to break up the text into smaller paragraphs. Take a look at popular news sites, like the New York Times or Dallas News, which are known for producing long articles of text, and you’ll see that most often paragraphs are 2-3 sentences with white space or visuals in between. Another popular technique is bullet points. Using bullet points with short sentences:

- Breaks up paragraphs of text.
- Makes it easy to scan.
- Creates white space.

Take a step back and look at this paragraph again...what captures your attention? The bullet points stand out because they create a break in the text and are easy to quickly scan.

Accessibility tip: If you use bullet points, make sure to put a period at the end of each point. This allows screen readers to know that the sentence has ended.

Typographical Emphasis

Remember: “People rarely read Web pages word by word; instead, they scan the page, picking out individual words and sentences” (Nielsen, 1997, para. 1). Since readers tend to scan webpages or
skim right over large chunks of text, you can use typographical emphasis, such as **bold**, *italics*, font color, style, and size, to direct their attention to the most important information. Take a step back and look at this paragraph - what is the first word to capture your attention? Likely one of the bolded words since those stand out in contrast to the rest of the words. Italics can be used to capture attention, but not in the dominant way of bolding. **Use bold to draw attention to the most important words and phrases** and *italics to make any additional information stand out*.

Changing the font color will also draw attention, but be wary of using color only to highlight key information as that may leave out individuals who are colorblind or visually impaired. While shifting the font style and size are other ways to emphasize text, limit your use of this technique. The more you change style and size, the more overwhelming the text becomes to read.

**Inverted Pyramid**

Using the “inverted pyramid” concept is another technique to captivate and capture the attention of website visitors.

The idea behind the inverted pyramid is to have the most important information “on top” (within your first paragraph), with the details coming in the subsequent paragraphs. Readers often scan pages for information, so by putting the big takeaways early on, you will increase the chances the readers learn the information they need.
Subheadings

Subheadings give the reader a roadmap of your website and are critical for accessibility and screen readers. Using subheadings helps chunk, or compartmentalize, ideas and concepts, while also reinforcing the hierarchy of information. For example, if you have a website heading for “atoms,” and subheadings for “protons,” “neutrons,” and “electrons,” the subheadings reinforce that they are the parts of an atom. It’s important to consider the size of font when making headings, below is the best way to determine it:

- **Heading One (H1):** The main heading at the top of the page, should be the largest font
- **Heading Two (H2):** The heading used to separate the content within your main heading, should be larger than your text font, but smaller than H1
- **Heading Three (H3):** The heading used to make small points/asides, may be the same size as your text font, but bolded or italicized to differentiate from the text

It is worth noting that certain web design platforms (such as Wix, Weebly and Google Sites) automatically set the page title to Heading 1, but you will want to check the settings to confirm this. These platforms often also set the size and style of the headings, so all you need to do is use them!

Language Usage

The most important thing to remember is that writing for the web is different than academic or print writing. You should be using “half the word count (or less) than conventional writing” (Nielsen, 1997, para. 3) on a webpage. With less words to communicate the information you want to present on your website, you need to ensure that every word that you use, the tone that you take, and the style of writing you employ increase the readability of your page. Ultimately, the language you choose to use can influence whether a reader explores the content on your site or makes an immediate exit.

Know Your Audience

According to the University of Maryland Baltimore Website Manual (n.d.), “Most users visit a webpage for 10-15 seconds. In that brief time, 80 percent will skim the page for keywords they already have in mind. Therefore, before you create content, it’s important to understand your audience and anticipate what content and keywords they’re trying to find” (para. 27).

Are you creating a website for your students? Parents? Colleagues? Administrators? Which words or phrases appeals to each of these groups? What type of tone and language do you use when communicating with each of these groups? You will want to keep this in mind when selecting the word choice and writing style for your website.

**Use language that appeals to your audience.** For example, if you are designing a website for your students, consider what language you use to capture their attention or give directions, and use this same style of language when creating your website content. Also, use a [readability checker](#) to ensure your content is written at a level that is accessible by your audience. By paying close attention to your language usage when designing your website and ensuring it will captivate your audience, you will keep them engaged in your content for longer.
Readability

The majority of Americans read between a sixth and ninth grade level (although your students might be even lower than this). Writing content that is too advanced or takes too long to understand will discourage visitors from exploring your website. **Using plain language that is simple, concise, and concrete “removes barriers between you and your readers”** (Loranger, 2017, para. 4).

While you may be thinking that using plain language will dumb down the content or lower student achievement, this doesn’t have to be the case. You can still present the information on your site in a professional manner, while also ensuring it’s easy to read or scan. Indeed, using plain language is “welcome by readers; in fact, studies show that it makes the writer look smarter. (If people understand more of what you’re saying, they will likely feel that you make sense.)” (Loranger, 2017, para. 4).

While academic literature is made of long complex sentences and highly specialized vocabulary, **studies show that professionals today value content that is “clear and concise”** (Loranger, 2017). Modeling this type of language on your website will make it easier for students to access and understand the content.

- **Word Choice:** Keep your vocabulary simple and make your points as plainly as possible. Prioritize nouns and verbs - use adjectives and adverbs only when necessary. Get rid of unnecessary words (once you have written your content, read it again and see how many words you can delete, then repeat this process).

- **Sentences:** Your sentences should be short and to the point. Avoid complex sentences. If you need to break up a sentence, a dash is the most effective way to do it. But, it is best to split the sentence in two.

- **Paragraphs:** Paragraphs should be no longer than five sentences long and should only address the specific heading they are connected to. Any information that strays from the topic will confuse the readers trying to move quickly through your page.
Tone

Establishing a rapport with your learners can lead to good learning outcomes. The same is true online. The tone that you take in your writing for the web will determine how your students “hear” you. Keep this in mind and follow these guidelines to establish an appropriate tone:

- Choose a tone that mirrors how you interact with learners in real life.
- Establish a tone that is consistent and appropriate for both age and context.
- Don’t be too rigid. This can be off-putting and offensive (University of Maryland Baltimore, n.d.).
- When it comes to tone, value brevity over voice and stay consistent.
- Write in an active voice and maintain a uniform verb tense throughout your work.

Credibility

As your students scroll through your educational website, they will be evaluating the trustworthiness of your information. The last thing you want is your students questioning whether the content you provide is accurate. The best way to avoid this is simple: Make sure your writing is comprehensive, correct, and current. Use a spell checker! When readers find spelling or grammatical errors on a website, they’re less likely to trust the content. Connect your content to the rest of the internet using links, multimedia, and other resources.

Cite all of your sources - this is not only essential for legal reasons, it’s also an important technique
to role model for students. You can decide what type of citation style to use (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago), just make sure to keep it consistent throughout your entire site. Use quotation marks to indicate any information directly pulled from another source, such as a website, blog, book, or video. Simply providing a link to an article without identifying the author (e.g., source) is not enough to cite borrowed information.

**How to Write in Plain Language for Teaching**

In this article, Bendici (2021) shares that it can be helpful to:

- Avoid acronyms.
- Avoid passive voice.
- Aim for a 8th-9th grade reading level.
- Be clear and concise (re-read your text and remove as many words as you can).
- Include relative pronouns (whom, who, which).
- Not use different words for the same subject.

**Writing for a Subject-Specific Website**

If you are designing a website to present your students with information and resources related to one or more subject areas, here are a few additional tips to engage your learners with the text on your site.

**Keep it Simple and Organized:** Limit the amount of information on your website so that your students don’t feel overwhelmed when they visit. Chunk information and resources for sub-topics into separate sub-pages rather than trying to feature everything the student needs to learn about a topic on a single page.

**Keep Your Content Up To Date:** Have you ever scrolled to the bottom of a website to see its copyright date (e.g., Copyright 2013) and then question the credibility of the information on the site since it hasn’t been updated in many years? Your students will do the same thing! Make sure you spend time at least once every few months modifying your site by revising information, adding or removing resources, and featuring related news. By presenting new content for your subject area, you can hook students in and have them stay on your site longer. For example, if you’re designing a social studies website, instead of presenting the same facts about American historical figures, you can add content that usually gets skipped over or left out of history textbooks such as LGBTQ history and notable African-American history. By incorporating interesting new content that appeals to your students, you will be increasing student motivation and engagement.

**Create Content that is “Made To Stick”:** Heath and Heath (2007) developed a set of guiding principles, called the Made to Stick principles, that can be used to create content that is “sticky,” (i.e., hard to forget). The acronym SUCCESS can help you remember the principles:

- **Simple:** As mentioned previously, don’t overwhelm the reader. Focus on one key point per paragraph. Omit extra words. Write in a concise and clear manner.
- **Unexpected:** Present information that surprises the reader.
- **Concrete:** Make it easy for the reader to see how the content is relevant to their life.
- **Credible:** Ensure the information you present is current, accurate, and reliable.
• **Emotion**: Present content in a way that make the readers feel something (e.g., joy, frustration, anger, excitement).

• **Story**: Tell a story. Storytelling is one of the most powerful techniques for communicating information since people who are reading or listening to a story mentally put themselves in the story, thus making it more memorable.

**Chapter Conclusion**

If you follow the tips from this chapter, you will be able to fill your website with content that your readers will find engaging, interactive, and memorable. Here is a checklist to help you remember the key points from this chapter:

• Keep your website simple - use white space and plain language.
• Break up large chunks of text.
• Use typographical emphasis (e.g., bold, italics, font size/color) to draw readers’ attention to specific words or phrases.
• Put the most important information at the top of the page (inverted pyramid).
• Use subheadings and sub-pages to chunk and organize information.
• Use language that appeals to your audience.
• Ensure your content is current, credible, and accurate.
• Keep your content up-to-date.
• Employ the Made to Stick principles to engage your website readers.

**References**


Copyright and Open Licensing

Learning Objectives

- Understand concepts of copyright, public domain, fair use, and open licensing;
- Find open educational resources (OER) online;
- Recognize how to cite and share OER.

Copyright is established in federal law and varies from country to country. In the U.S., copyright was written into the original constitution in 1787, wherein it was stated that copyright is established “to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries” (Article 1.8.8). Thus, at its foundation, copyright in the U.S. exists “to promote the progress of science and useful arts,” and authors are given control of their creative works for a specified period of time so that they can profit from them, thereby encouraging them to create more.
Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-gr

What do you think?

How do you think copyright considerations will affect or has affected your teaching?

a. I will often be afraid to use valuable resources
b. I will sometimes be afraid to use valuable resources
c. I will never be afraid to use valuable resources
Key Terms

Copyleft
an alternative to copyright that allows one's work to be copied, shared, or remixed (e.g., Creative Commons)

Copyright
legal protections for authors of creative works (e.g., books, movies, lesson plans) that prevent them from being used by others without permission

Fair Use
the limited ability to use copyrighted works without permission as determined by four factors (Nature of Use, Type of Work, Amount Used, and Commercial Impact)

Open
in the context of openly licensed materials or open educational resources (OER), this means gratis and libre; gratis means that content and resources are provided at no cost, while libre means that people are free to do what they want with these resources

Open Licenses
an license that allows users to freely use a resource without seeking permission (e.g., public domain, Creative Commons)

Public Domain
in the US, a technical term referring to works that are not subject to copyright protection, such as very old works

Royalty Free
a variation of copyright that allows materials to be used in some limited manner (e.g., print an image up to ten times) without paying a fee

Types of Works

Copyright applies to any tangible or electronic creative work, such as a book, movie, video, song, lyrics, poem, picture, lesson plan, web page content, etc. Any creative work is copyrighted as soon as it is created. Intangibles, such as ideas, concepts, and mathematical equations and works that lack originality cannot be copyrighted.

Gaining Copyright

Since copyright applies as soon as a work is created, authors do not need to go through any process to copyright their works. They are copyrighted automatically. However, proving that you hold the copyright on your creative work is another matter. For instance, say that you write a novel and lend
the manuscript to your neighbor to proofread. What is to prevent your neighbor from claiming that the novel is her creative work and, therefore, claiming to hold its copyright? To help in preventing and addressing copyright problems, the U.S. government allows copyright holders to register copyright with the U.S. copyright office [http://www.copyright.gov/]. Thus, while an author does not need to do anything to copyright a work, they do need to go through a process if they would like to register the copyright of that work to safeguard against infringement.

The Copyright Symbol

The copyright symbol may be placed on a work to remind and inform users of its copyright status: ©. However, the copyright symbol is only a reminder. The absence of the symbol does not mean that the work is not copyrighted, and the presence of the symbol is not proof that the work is copyrighted (as will be discussed further in the case of public domain works).

Ownership

By default, the author of a work holds the copyright on that work. The main exception to this rule would be if the author was being paid by someone else to create the work and the author had signed a contract stating that work created while on-the-job belongs to the employer commonly known as "work for hire". Contracts might also stipulate that this depends upon when and where the work was created (during standard work hours vs. after work hours or in the office vs. at home). Some educator contracts state that creative works by an educator are owned by the educator, while others state that they are owned by the school or district. So, if you would like to know who holds the copyright of works you create as part of your job, you should check your teaching contract or contact your employer.

Usage

Copyright generally means that others cannot use copyrighted material without the permission of the author and that permissions are restrictive. For instance, downloading a bootleg version of a movie is a violation of copyright, because you did not purchase the copy from the copyright holder. Further, even if you do purchase the movie from the copyright holder, you can only use the movie in the ways that the copyright holder allows (e.g., for private home use, not for public use). Thus, by purchasing a copy of a work, you do not "own" that work in the sense that you are not free to do whatever you like with it. You must still abide by any copyright restrictions placed on the work, which might determine how and where you use the work, your ability to make copies of the work, and your ability to modify the work.

Linking

You can generally provide a web link to copyrighted material from your own materials without permission from the copyright holder. This is different from copying/pasting the copyright material into your own work, because it allows the copyright holder to maintain control of their content and to generate revenue through web traffic. The primary exception to this rule would be if you provided a link to materials that should not be publicly accessible and, therefore, allowed your users to bypass restrictions placed on the content by the copyright holder.
Losing Copyright

Copyright comes with a time limit. The purpose of this is that the U.S. government recognizes that copyright can only benefit the copyright holder for so long and that at some point copyright should expire. Currently, the U.S. copyright law states that copyright ends 70 years after the death of the author. Upon expiration, copyrighted materials move into the public domain. Copyrighted materials may also lose their copyright status under other conditions. For instance, a copyright holder may relinquish the copyright status on their work, thereby allowing it to pass into the public domain.

Copyright and Technology

Advancing technologies, ranging from the player piano to the internet, have always had unintended consequences for copyright law, and copyright law has always been slow to keep up with advancing technologies. Copyright law has changed over time, but as new technologies empower us to share and use copyrighted materials in new ways and at greater scale, copyright law gradually changes in response.

Common Questions

Can I legally show my students videos from my Netflix account or other subscription streaming services?
No. Your license agreement does not allow you to do this.

When is a work copyrighted?
As soon as it is created or published.

Does a work need to be published to be copyrighted?
No, though it must be in some physical form (e.g., manuscript, recording).

Does an author need to register their work in order for it to be copyrighted?
No. Authors may register their work with the US copyright office to protect against infringement, but even unregistered works are copyrighted.

If something is labeled with a copyright symbol (i.e., ©), does that mean it is copyrighted?
Maybe. The symbol serves as a reminder, but the copyright might have expired.

If something is not labeled with a copyright symbol (i.e., ©), then is it copyrighted?
Maybe. Maybe not. The label has nothing to do with whether or not a work is copyrighted. The copyright label only serves to remind and to inform. If you see no label, you should assume that the work is copyrighted and look into the matter further.

Can I link to copyrighted materials?
In most cases, yes. Just be sure that you are linking to the resource as it is provided by the publisher (not uploaded to someone's personal server, etc.) and that your link does not bypass a copyright holder's login system.

Can I embed copyrighted materials into my presentation or website (e.g., YouTube videos)?
That depends on the terms of the license that the copyright holder has released the content under. Generally, if a site like YouTube gives you an embed script, then you are able to use it (provided that you do not change the script, remove attribution, etc.).
What do you think?

In the last classroom that you taught or observed in, was a DVD player available for showing movies to the entire class?

a. Yes
b. No

Additional Resources

Some additional resources that may be useful for exploring these issues include the following:

- Copyright Crash Course
- Wikipedia: Copyright

Fair Use

Fair use is an exception or limitation to copyright law that allows you to use some copyrighted materials in particular circumstances without the copyright holder's permission. Specifically, if used for nonprofit educational purposes, some copyrighted materials may be used for teaching, but your use (a) should directly relate to your educational goals, (b) should only utilize a relatively small portion of the work, and (c) should not negatively impact the copyright holder's ability to profit from the work. Fair use means that copyright-restricted works can be used for educational purposes without permission under certain conditions. The four guiding principles that determine if use is fair are:

"Fair Use" Guiding Principles

- Nature of Use
- Type of Work
- Amount Used
- Commercial Impact

The first principle covers what you are doing with the content and whether your use aligns with the author's intended use. Fair use only applies to uses of works that are transformative in nature. This means that your intended use must be different from the author's intended use. Consider a novel. You can quote lines from a novel in a paper you write without permission from the novel's author, because you are writing the paper to analyze literary elements of the novel, not to tell a story. If, however, you took those same lines and placed them in your own novel, then that would not be an example of fair use, because your intended use would be the same as the original author's intended use. In education, this means that using someone else's educational content (e.g., an image from their textbook) would not generally be fair use, because your intent is the same as theirs (i.e., educational and, therefore, non-transformative).

The second principle gives greater flexibility in using informational or factual works than to artistic or creative works. Thus, copying a few pages from an encyclopedia is viewed as more conducive to fair use than doing the same with a detective novel, because the information's benefit to society is
readily apparent.

The third principle ensures that you only use as much of the copyrighted material as is necessary to achieve your goal. Thus, quoting a line from a novel would be considered fair use, but copying multiple chapters of the novel for this purpose would not. This is both a quantitative and qualitative consideration, in that you should not use more than is needed but fair use also should avoid using the "heart" of a work.

And the fourth principle considers whether copyrighted material negatively impacts the author's ability to profit from it. If you copy an article to share with your class, this would prevent the copyright holder from selling access to the article, which would be a violation. However, if you were to copy only a paragraph of an article for this purpose, it is less feasible that the copyright holder would potentially lose money on this use. So, this use would be more defensible as fair use.

**Examples**

If it weren't for fair use, you wouldn't even be able to write a paper that quoted a famous author without permission, which would be a serious matter for scholarly progress. Consider this quote from *The Fellowship of the Ring*:

> All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost. - J. R. R. Tolkien

Without fair use, the inclusion of this quote in a paper on literary analysis or on this website would be a copyright violation, because I did not seek the author's prior consent to make a copy of this text from his book or to distribute it online. However, my use in this case is a transformative use and is only large enough to make the educational point, so it is allowable. Would being able to read this quote on this website prevent someone from reading his book (thereby depriving the copyright owner of profits)? Certainly not. On the contrary, however, if I were to provide several chapters of Tolkien's book online without prior permission from the copyright holder, then this would certainly be a copyright violation that could be acted upon.

Similarly, copying another teacher's lesson plan, changing a few words, and posting it online would be a blatant copyright violation. Fair use becomes problematic in education if you are trying to use educational works in your own creations (e.g., materials created specifically for education, such as lesson plans or textbook chapters) and/or you are using too much (such that it might prevent the owner of the copyright from profiting from the work).

**Guidelines**

To determine if a desired use of copyright-restricted material would fall under fair use, ask yourself four questions:

1. **Use**: Is the use transformative? (Yes = Fair Use)
2. **Type**: Is the work informational/factual in nature? (Yes = Fair Use)
3. **Amount**: Is the use minimal? (Yes = Fair Use)
4. **Impact**: Does the use negatively impact the copyright holder's ability to profit from the work? (No = Fair Use)
Fair use is a judgement call, but the call is made based on the answers to these four questions. Thus, if your answer to all four questions aligns with fair use, then your use would likely be judged as fair. If the answer to one question does not align with fair use, then your use might still be fair, but it increases the potential for it to be judged otherwise. And so forth. In many court cases, uses that met three criteria have been deemed as fair, and in others, uses that only met one or two criteria have been deemed as fair, but there is never any guarantee. In short, only a judge can determine if use is fair, but a judge would use these four guidelines in making the determination.

**Institutional Rules**

To help safeguard their institutions and employees, many schools will adopt rules for interpreting fair use. For instance, some institutions will allow copyrighted materials to be used up to a certain percent of the work (e.g., a section of a book can be copied as long as it constitutes 10% or less of the entire book). These rules are not perfect reflections of the law but are rather interpretations intended to protect.

Here’s a comparison. Let’s pretend that 55 mph is the speed limit throughout the U.S. but that the government allows for people to exceed this speed limit “a reasonable amount” in particular cases of emergency. If such a law existed, it would be up to judges to determine if any case of traveling faster than 55 mph constituted a legitimate emergency case and if the actual speed was reasonable. Like copyright, this law sounds fairly fuzzy. Let’s also say that you are a bus driver and your school has a rule that this law means that you should only exceed the speed limit if a child is hurt and in these cases you should never go faster than 65 mph. Though this is not actually what the law says, it is your school’s interpretation of the law and is intended to keep you and the school safe.

Thus, when considering institutional rules, you should recognize that they are intended to prevent you from breaking a rather fuzzy law but that they also may not entirely reflect what the law actually states. In any case, you are safest abiding by your institutional rules for fair use, because this helps to ensure that your institution will be on your side if there is any question about your copyright-restricted material use.

**Parody**

Parody is one example of fair use in which copyrighted materials may be used to critique the author. Thus, using an image of someone to critique that person would probably be fair use (as in the case of Galvin v. Illinois Republican Party [https://edtechbooks.org/-PHQ]). However, using one person’s copyrighted works to critique a different person or an unrelated social issue (as in the case of many memes) would likely not be parody, since the copyrighted work is being used to make fun of something other than the author or the work itself.

**Positive Examples**

These are examples that would probably qualify as fair use (i.e. they probably do not violate copyright):

- Quoting a few sentences from a book in a paper on literary criticism;
- Adding text to a movie screenshot to critique/parody the movie;
- Including a paragraph of text from a book in a quiz as background for asking questions;
- Showing a short clip from a popular movie to analyze how it was made.
Negative Examples

These are examples that would probably NOT qualify as fair use (i.e., they probably violate copyright):

- Copying pages from a workbook for students to complete;
- Copying or remixing a lesson plan;
- Creating a calendar of pictures that were photographed by someone else;
- Including a popular song as background music on a YouTube video your students create;
- Holding a public screening of a movie in the school auditorium that you have purchased for personal use.

Navigating Fuzziness and Risk

Fair use can be very fuzzy, and it may be that educators violate fair use regularly in their classrooms without worrying about legal repercussions. Even if copyright is violated, the risks associated with violation tend to vary by use. For instance, if you copy a lesson plan for use in your classroom without first gaining permission, the odds are that you will not run into any legal issues. However, if you try to sell this same lesson plan online or share it on your teacher blog, then the legal risk increases. This does not mean that you should violate copyright discretely, but merely that this decision would be based upon a moral imperative rather than legal risk.

The Bottom Line

Fair use is complicated, only provides educators with limited opportunities for use, and is typically more of a headache than it is often worth when talking about any substantive use of copyrighted materials.

Additional Resources

The U.S. Government has recently started archiving court cases related to fair use, which may be instructive if you have specific questions about what courts are classifying as fair use and not.
What do you think?

If you followed all copyright restrictions, how do you think this would impact your ability to effectively teach your students?

- a. It would severely reduce my effectiveness
- b. It would moderately reduce my effectiveness
- c. It would somewhat reduce my effectiveness
- d. It would not negatively impact my effectiveness

Public Domain

Copyright law varies from country to country, but in the US, public domain is a technical term referring to works that are not subject to copyright protection.

Categories

In general, there are three groups of works that are in the public domain:

1. Old works for which the copyright has expired;
2. Exempt works that may not be copyrighted or that were created under certain conditions;
3. Any works that have been released to the public domain by their authors.

Old Works

Under the current US copyright law, any copyrighted work will automatically pass into the public domain 70 years after the death of the author. In general terms, this means that virtually all classics or materials older than 120 years or so are in the public domain. To determine if a specific work is in the public domain, however, you should find out when the author died and add 70 years in order to determine the date at which copyright expires. This time frame has gradually been lengthened in US history, so some works may still be in the public domain that were created less than 70 years ago.
For instance, the John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara movie *McLintock!* passed into the public domain in 1994.

**Exempt Works**

Copyright can only be applied to specific types of works (e.g., books, movies, images) and cannot be applied to general knowledge. For this reason, you do not need to cite anyone when you state a fact (e.g., "Jupiter is a planet"). Works may also be exempt from copyright if they are created under certain conditions of employment. The most common example of this is when US federal employees create works as part of their jobs (e.g., active duty service men and women in the armed forces). Works that these individuals create (e.g., photos taken) may be placed in the public domain by virtue of their employment.
Released Works

Any author of a work may willingly choose to release that work into the public domain by simply labelling the work (e.g., "this work is in the public domain"). By doing so, the author gives anyone (e.g., individuals, corporations) the right to use their work for any purpose, without limitation or attribution.

Use

Since they are not subject to copyright protection, public domain works may be used for anything and may even be included in derivative works and may be sold. There are no restrictions on how these works may be used, so citations are not generally needed. However, if you are using public domain content in your own work, it would be helpful for others to know what parts are public domain so that they know how they might also reuse and remix your content.

Public Domain Repositories

- Project Gutenberg
- Army Photos
- Library of Congress
- Internet Archive
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Digital Library
- Digital Public Library of America

"Open" Resources
The terms "open" and "free" colloquially have many meanings. "Free" generally has two that may be best understood by referring to their Latin equivalents: *gratis* and *libre*. In the context of openly licensed materials or open educational resources (OER), *gratis* means that content and resources are provided at no cost. *Libre* means that you are free to do what you want with these resources.

As an example of this distinction, you may find a website with "free" videos or another teacher may give you a set of old textbooks for "free" (i.e. *gratis*), but you are not then able to do whatever you want with those videos and textbooks (i.e. not *libre*). Similarly, Facebook is a *gratis* service, because you do not pay a fee to use it, but it is not a *libre* service, because you have only limited access to download, delete, or control your data within Facebook. This is an important distinction, because many *gratis* resources are not *libre*, and when we talk about *openness*, we mean both *gratis* and *libre*.

That is, *Gratis + Libre = Open*.

**The Five "R's" of Openness**

Openness may mean different things to different people, but when we refer to openness in terms of open licensing, we mean openness that gives us freedom to do the five R's:

1. Retain
2. Reuse
3. Redistribute
4. Revise
5. Remix

Open Licensing

Sometimes authors of creative works who want to share them openly want to maintain some control over what others can do with their work. Open licenses have arisen as a means for openly sharing content while at the same time preserving desired rights to the author.

Open licenses find a nice balance between the restrictions of copyright and the unfettered freedoms of public domain, making them a good option for anyone desiring to share their work with others. Authors of creative works have the right to release those works under any license they choose (except in cases where they have signed over that right to a publisher, employer, etc.). The table below provides three examples of common open licenses.

Table 1

Common Open Licenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Open Licenses</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Creative Commons" /></td>
<td>• Creative Commons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| GNU General Public License (GNU-GPL) | ![GNU License](image) | • GNU License  
• Wikipedia: GNU General Public License |
| MIT License          | ![MIT License](image)      | • MIT License Template  
• Wikipedia: MIT License |

Creative Commons

To help authors to release their works easily and in a manner that safeguards the rights that they care about, a number of template licenses have been created by Creative Commons. Many works found on the internet are licensed under one of these types of licenses, and in general, you do not need permission to use them in your work as long as you properly attribute (cite) them and abide by any additional requirements set forth in the license.

There are four requirements that may be appended to a Creative Commons license. These include the following:

- **BY or Attribution**—This means that you need to cite the author of the original work if you copy or remix it.
- **SA or Share-Alike**—This means that if you remix the work you should release it under a license similar to the one it was initially released under.
• **ND or Non-Derivative**—This means that you cannot make your own derivative version (or remix) of the work but must use it exactly as-is.

• **NC or Non-Commercial**—This means that you cannot use the work for primarily financial gain.

Depending upon which of these requirements are placed on the work, Creative Commons licenses can come in a number of varieties. Two are merely restatements of Public Domain, while the rest provide the author of a work the ability to retain varying levels of control of how the work may be used. The most common Creative Commons license is the **CC BY** or **Creative Commons Attribution** license, which basically means that others are free to reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix the creation as long as they properly cite the author. More information about each license is provided in the following table.

**Table 2**

**Creative Commons License Brief Explanation Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>License Type</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Brief Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Domain - By Age</td>
<td><img src="PUBLIC_DOMAIN" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>These works are not subject to copyright or their copyright has expired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Domain - Released</td>
<td><img src="PUBLIC_DOMAIN" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>These works are released to the public domain by their authors before the copyright has expired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix the creation as long as they cite you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY-SA" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix the creation as long as they cite you and share their creation under an identical license.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs (CC BY-ND)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY-ND" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse and redistribute the creation as long as they cite you. They may not create a derivative work (e.g., remix or revise it).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY-NC" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix the creation as long as they cite you, but they may not use your creation for commercial purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY-NC-SA" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix the creation as long as they cite you and share their creation under an identical license. They may not use your creation for commercial purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)</td>
<td><img src="CC_BY-NC-ND" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Others may reuse and redistribute the creation as long as they cite you. They may not create a derivative work or use it for commercial purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Finding Resources**

In general, copyleft and creative commons licenses value open practices in that they seek to allow for works to be **reused, redistributed, revised, and remixed**, but licenses vary based upon what is required of the user to do so legally. For instance, the Creative Commons Attribution license (or **CC-**
BY) requires the user of the work to give appropriate credit, to provide links to the license, and to not suggest that the original author endorses any new use of the resource.

More details on specific Creative Commons licenses are provided in the Attribution Quick Reference Guide. There are a number of libraries, search engines, and search engine settings that allow you to easily search for copyleft-licensed works. Some popular examples include:

- Wikimedia Commons [http://commons.wikimedia.org/]
- Creative Commons Search
- Flickr Creative Commons
- Vimeo Creative Commons
- Creative Commons Music

If a work (e.g., picture, song, video, lesson plan, rubric) does not have a statement of copyright status attached to it, you should generally assume that it is copyrighted and should seek permission before using it.

**Open Content Providers**

Open educational resources (OER) are made available from many different sources. This list, though not exhaustive, includes some of the more prominent providers. Explore these resources to find material that will be useful for you in your classroom, taking note of what licenses resources are released under. Watch this video to learn how to use a search engine to find openly licensed content.

**Open Textbooks & Curricula**

1. [Open Textbook Library](#)
2. CK-12 [http://www.ck12.org]
6. Textbook Equity [http://textbookequity.org/]
7. BC Campus [http://open.bccampus.ca]
11. Merlot [https://edtechbooks.org/-GA]

Search Engines

1. OER Commons [https://www.oercommons.org/]
2. Creative Commons Search
3. Google Advanced Search*
4. Google Advanced Image Search*
5. Yahoo Image Search**

* Be sure to set usage rights to "free to use share or modify". ** Be sure to click the arrow in the top left and select "Labeled for Reuse" in the bottom left.

Text Content Providers

1. Wikipedia - open encyclopedia

Media Content Providers

1. Wikimedia Commons [http://commons.wikimedia.org] - open media
2. Digital Public Library of America [http://dp.la/] - public domain works
4. Photo Pin [http://photopin.com] - open photos from Flickr
5. Internet Archive [https://archive.org] - public domain works
7. Flickr - creative commons images
8. Vimeo - creative commons videos
9. Creative Commons Music - various creative commons music sites
13. Internet Archive [https://archive.org] - public domain works

(mostly)
Open Courses

1. Lumen Learning
2. Wikiversity [http://en.wikiversity.org]

Tools

These tools are not technically open educational resources, but they can be used to aide you in creating, remixing, and sharing open educational resources.

5. Open Text Summarizer - summarizes nonfiction texts

Attribution

When utilizing someone else's work in your own, you should be sure to attribute the work. In education, we generally use formatting guidelines from the American Psychological Association (APA), and you should cite works according to these guidelines if required for a research paper or publication. However, in most situations, a simpler citation that includes the work's title, author, license, and url will be appropriate. All work licensed under an open license will generally require you to properly attribute (cite) the resource in order to use it in your own work. Failure to properly cite one of these works if it is used in your own work is a violation of copyright. At minimum, you should attribute such works with the following information:

Attribution Items

Title
What is the title of the work (e.g., name of article, picture, or song)?

Author
Who created the work?

Source
Where did you find the work (e.g., url)?

License
What license is the work shared under (e.g., CC BY)?

As possible, you should also cite these works in such a way that it is clear to which portions of content the attribution refers and so that the attribution is prominent. For instance, if you include a Creative Commons image in a book you are writing, the attribution should be included as a caption under the image. When such attribution is not possible, including attributions in a works cited page is acceptable if it is clear to which content each reference belongs (e.g., providing page numbers).
Common Questions

If there is no author mentioned, how do I cite the resource?
Use the author of the website. If the website does not have a mentioned author, use the name of the website (e.g., "CK-12").

What if there is no copyleft license or notice of public domain mentioned?
Remember, just because no copyright symbol is present does not mean that the work is open (e.g., not every page of a Harry Potter book has a copyright symbol on it, but it is still copyrighted). Since everything is automatically copyrighted, you should generally assume that all work is copyrighted and should not treat it as an open resource without further investigation.

May I use a copyrighted work if I properly cite the author?
This depends on what you are using it for (see the discussion of fair use), but generally, you must have written permission to use it in any significant way.

If something is marked as released under Creative Commons, but there is no specific license identified, which should I use?
You should probably either use the most restrictive license (CC BY-NC-ND) or the most common license (CC BY). Use your best judgment.

Can I modify or revise an openly licensed work?
This depends on the license. In most cases, yes, but you may need to release your new work under the same license. The primary times when you cannot do this would be when the license prohibits derivative works (e.g., any CC BY-ND and CC BY-NC-ND).

Can I use Royalty Free work?
This is tricky. Royalty Free does not generally mean free as in libre (i.e. free to use for whatever). Rather, it typically means that you can use a work in a very specific way (e.g., print an image up to ten times) that will vary based upon the provider. So, royalty free is essentially just another way of saying copyrighted, but the material might be able to be used in some very limited manner without paying a fee.

If something is copyrighted, does that mean I cannot ever use it?
You can use it if you have the copyright holder's permission. You can always contact the owner and ask her/him if you can use it. Open resources are handy, simply because they make it easier for you to use materials without asking permission every time you want to use something.

Sharing Your Work

As the author of a creative work, you can release your it under an open license or into the public domain. All you need to do is place the Creative Commons license on your work or state that the work is in the public domain, and this allows others to know how they can use it. For example, by simply placing "CC BY 3.0" below a picture, you give anyone the right to use it for any purpose as long as they attribute you as the author.

Public Domain or an Open License?

As the author of a creative work, you should consider the benefits of different ways of sharing your content. In short, if you don't care how it's used but just want others to be free to use it, release it
into the public domain. If you want to receive credit (be cited) when others use it, use CC BY 3.0. For a more detailed walkthrough of how you should release your content, follow the steps provided in the table below.

**Table 3**

**Workflow for Choosing a License**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you want to allow anyone anywhere to use the work however they want without giving you credit?</td>
<td>Public Domain</td>
<td>Go to Step 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you want to make sure that anyone who uses your work also shares their work in the same way?</td>
<td>Go to Step 3</td>
<td>Go to Step 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you want to prevent others from profiting from your work?</td>
<td>CC BY-NC-SA</td>
<td>CC BY-SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you want to prevent people from changing your work?</td>
<td>Go to Step 5</td>
<td>CC BY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you want to prevent others from profiting from your work?</td>
<td>CC BY-NC-ND</td>
<td>CC BY-ND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More details about the Creative Commons licenses may be found on the [Creative Commons website](https://creativecommons.org).

**Example Statements**

Releasing your work under an open license is easy. Just place a statement somewhere on your work that states what license you are releasing it under. The Creative Commons site provides a wizard to create a statement and image for you, or here are a few more examples:

- This work is released under a CC BY 3.0 open license by [Your Name Here].
- This work is released into the public domain.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of copyright, public domain, fair use, and open licenses. With this knowledge, teachers should feel sufficiently knowledgeable to use copyright-restricted resources in a legal manner. They should also be able to find and use public domain and openly licensed resources, to properly cite them, and to release their own creations openly.
1. Introduction

Outside the visual arts, color is rarely discussed by professionals in systematic ways; among UX and LX designers, color is generally approached in a strange give-and-take between technical prescription and intuitive preference. For instance, the color system outlined in Google’s (n.d.) material design visual language provides precise guidance on how to generate a color palette from your primary color, what to use secondary colors for, and what colors are typical for specific elements (such as error screens), but it does not provide designers any guidance on what primary color to pick in the first place, when to use different types of color palettes (e.g., analogous, complementary, triadic), and why. This is likely because, when designing for a corporate client, designers are generally constrained by the preexisting branding requirements of the client (e.g., “our brand is periwinkle”) and must work from a particular color starting point when making designs.

But designers must also often counterbalance their own and their clients’ everyday assumptions and receive wisdom about color in order to create the best designs for end users and learners. For instance, early in my professional experience creating websites for clients, I delivered a mock-up that I thought looked good and met the client’s requests perfectly. Frustrated with what he saw, the client furrowed his brow and slowly replied, “Yes, but I need something that pops.” This, in turn, frustrated me, because the only explanation he then provided would result in what I thought would be a terrible-looking design. “What does ‘pop’ really mean?” I thought. And “How can I fix the design to be something that the client likes and something that I’m proud of?” And, perhaps most of all, “How can my client and I communicate about color in more meaningful ways?”

Beyond this need for designers to meaningfully communicate with clients, color also plays an important affective and cognitive role in learners’ experiences. Various studies have shown that color-use influences learner attitudes, comprehension, and retention (Gaines & Curry, 2011). Some of these influences are broadly universalizable, others are contextual to the learner’s age, gender, or culture, and others are contextual to the subject matter or learning objectives being targeted. Furthermore, there might be multiple right or useful ways to use color in a particular design project, and inappropriate or ineffective color-use in one project might constitute optimal use in another.

For these reasons, clear and reliable guidance on the what, how, when, and why of color-use in UX design is difficult to come by, and the problem of effective color-use is a prime example of why UX design cannot be approached purely as a science nor as an art but as a craft that synergistically merges the two. Toward this end, I will begin in this chapter by briefly providing some rudimentary groundwork on the underlying physics of color and its technical representation in digital formats. This will give us a common vocabulary for referencing specific aspects of color (e.g., hue vs. tone) as well as some technical knowledge necessary for actually using color in UX design scenarios. After this, I will briefly explore the science of color-use in UX by summarizing some of the emotional, cognitive, and physiological effects that color-use has on learners.
With this backdrop, I will then address some of the applied aspects of color-use that will influence the craft of UX and ongoing research in this area. Specifically, I will explore four guiding considerations of color-use that should be addressed in UX — contrast, attention, meaning, and harmony—and then provide guidance on how to use color schemes to improve harmony by highlighting five dominant types of color schemes. I will then conclude by providing specific craft guidance on using color for UX projects and comment on how this should connect to ongoing UX research.

2. Physics of Color and Technical Use

We must begin this chapter by reviewing some of the physics of light and color. Color is a visual sensation created in the mind of the viewer from differing wavelengths of visible light, ranging from low-frequency reds to high-frequency violets. Some color sensations can be produced by a narrow band of wavelengths, but others are produced as multiple color wavelengths are mixed. For instance, when all color wavelengths are mixed together, they make white light, which is why a dispersive prism can be used to split white light into a rainbow of spectral colors. By putting the primary colors of light together, then, white can be created additively, as in Figure 1, and various other colors not even present in the rainbow can be created by mixing light wavelengths together, such as red and blue making magenta.

For this reason, computer screens and other displays have historically used differing intensities of only three primary colors of light: red, green, and blue (RGB). On screens, RGB dots are used in combination to create colors ranging from white, when they are at full intensity, to black, when they produce no light, and the millions of color combinations in between that are commonly used in movies, games, simulations, images, and websites.
However, visual media that rely upon physical materials to reflect (rather than generate) light, such as ink and paint, operate from a different model of color mixing. Though mixing a green ray of light and a red ray of light would produce yellow light, combining green paint and red paint would produce a dark brown. Such materials rely upon a subtractive color model (cf. Figure 1), wherein black is the sum of all colors and white is the absence of all colors.

Recognizing these two approaches to color mixing is important to understand common notations present in design and authoring software. For instance, when creating a website, video game, mobile app, or illustration, RGB notations are used, such as rgb(255,255,0) for yellow, wherein each number represents a range of 0 (lowest) to 255 (highest) intensity for the primary colors. Hexadecimal notations are also commonly used as a shorthand version of RGB, such as #ffffff, wherein the number ranges are converted to a base-16 number system, ranging from 0 to ff, without losing any information. When creating print media, on the other hand, CMYK notation is commonly used, such as cmyk(0,0,100,0) for yellow, wherein each of the primary colors is represented as a percentage of intensity (0-100%) and black is provided as a fourth color mix, because true black is difficult to make through mixing (in real-world applications, mixing would only generate dark browns and grays). Table 1 provides some notation examples of common colors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Additive</th>
<th>Subtractive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>rgb(255,255,255)</td>
<td>#ffffff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>rgb(0,0,0)</td>
<td>#000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>rgb(255,0,0)</td>
<td>#ff0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>rgb(0,255,0)</td>
<td>#00ff00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>rgb(0,0,255)</td>
<td>#0000ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>rgb(255,255,0)</td>
<td>#ffff00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyan</td>
<td>rgb(0,255,255)</td>
<td>#00ffff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magenta</td>
<td>rgb(255,0,255)</td>
<td>#ff00ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>rgb(127,127,127)</td>
<td>#808080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using any of these notations can generate millions of possible colors, including basic hues of the color wheel, low-saturation tints of hues (by lightening toward white), and low-brightness shades of hues (by darkening toward black), along with various mixtures of tinting and shading (cf. Figure 2). These terms will be important moving forward for understanding research on color effects for the affective domain. Thus, hue represents the color’s position around the color wheel, saturation represents the amount of white mixed with the hue, and brightness represents the amount of black mixed with the hue.
3. Emotion and Learning

When people see the colors represented by the color wheel, they have various emotional and physiological reactions to them that influence their general experiences and also their learning. Alongside the famous cognitive domain taxonomy, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) also proposed a taxonomy for what they called the affective domain of learning, or the aspects of learning related to “a feeling of tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection” as expressed through goals oriented toward “interests, attitudes, appreciations, values, and emotional sets or biases” (p. 7). Recent years have seen renewed interest in the affective domain as educators and designers have struggled anew with how to support learner self-regulation, motivation, and persistence. Though the connection between color and learning may not be obvious at first, by influencing learner emotion, attitude, and interest, color can influence learner behaviors and attitudes, which in turn will influence their learning.

For instance, one study found that exposure to red prior to taking an IQ test subconsciously impaired performance, presumably by triggering feelings of danger, failure, or avoidance (Elliot et al., 2007). Though such emotional states might have limited direct effects on learning outcomes, they may play
an important role in improving intrinsic motivation and the desire to keep working (Heidig et al., 2015); by employing positive emotion cueing, designers can help increase mental effort in the learner, reduce perceived difficulty of the material (Park et al., 2014; Um et al., 2012), and improve learner comprehension (Plass et al., 2014).

Psychological research on the emotional effects of color extends at least back to the 1950s. In their early work, Guilford and Smith (1959) found that, among the spectral colors, people preferred blue and green the most and orange and yellow the least. Subsequent research found that preference for blue, green, and white generally persisted across countries and cultures (Adams & Osgood, 1973). Additionally, some emotional reactions are universal, such as anger, fear, and jealousy being connected to red and black, while other colors, like purple, are more culturally mediated (Hupka et al., 1997) or are influenced by gender (Osgood, 1971). For example, women take slightly more pleasure in bright colors and find highly-saturated colors slightly more psychologically arousing (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). Furthermore, even within a single culture, emotional reactions may change somewhat with age, such as childhood feelings of surprise and fear toward green maturing into adult feelings of happiness (e.g., Terwogt & Hoeksma, 1995).

Physiologically, studies have shown that human reactions to color vary by hue, with long-wavelength colors (e.g., reds and yellows) being more arousing (e.g., increased heart rate and respiration) than short-wavelength colors (e.g., blues and greens; Jacobs & Hustmyer, 1974; Wilson, 1966). Additionally, many studies have found that primary hues are preferred to secondary or tertiary hues (Kaya & Epps, 2004) and that all of these are preferred to grays. Some of these reactions can be explained by differences in intensity of photoreceptor stimulation in the eye (e.g., the eye is more sensitive to red), while others likely stem from common environmental experiences, such as associating white with cleanliness and blacks and grays with dirtiness (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994).

For a simple example of how this relates to UX and LX design, consider the password prompt interfaces in Figure 3. If you were presented with each of these interfaces, how might your emotional and behavioral reaction to the prompt differ based upon its color? Seeing a red prompt might make you stop and consider “Is this really a secure site?” On the other hand, an orange prompt might get
your attention but be somewhat confusing or concerning, a gray prompt might feel bland but also seem secure or professional, and a blue prompt might make you feel comfortable about entering your information when perhaps you should not be comfortable.

Similarly, suppose you are designing a learning app for young children on how to responsibly care for pets. In Figure 4, four options are provided. Two use an aggressive image of an adult dog (1, 2), while the other two use an image of a soft puppy (3, 4). Two also use a blood red background (1, 3), while the other two use a neutral grey (2, 4). What might be student affective reactions to each of these and how might it impact their ability to achieve learning objectives related to being a responsible pet owner? Option (1) feels very aggressive both because of the content and the color, while option (3) feels like there is a mismatch between what is shown and how it is presented, thereby evoking conflicting emotions. The neutral grey background for (2) and (4), however, allows the content to convey the emotion. And so, if our objective is for children to have a positive attitude toward pet care, then option (4) would likely be the best.
Hue is not the only aspect of color that influences emotion; a color’s saturation (how little white is mixed in with it) and a color’s brightness (how little black is mixed in with it) also has an effect. In research studying color effects on the Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance emotion model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), brightness was found to positively impact pleasure and negatively impact arousal and dominance, while saturation positively impacts all three (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). So, if using a blue hue, as in Figure 5, you might choose from a variety of brightness and saturation levels, including (a) light blue (high brightness, low saturation), (b) azure (high brightness, high saturation), (c) blueish gray (low brightness, low saturation), or (d) indigo (low brightness, high saturation). Though each of these is a variant of blue, they all elicit different emotional responses in the viewer. For instance, (a) would be fairly pleasurable but not arousing or dominant, eliciting a feeling of tranquility; (b) would be the most pleasurable and somewhat arousing but not dominant, eliciting a feeling of amazement or awe; (c) would be the least pleasurable and fairly neutral for arousal and dominance, eliciting a feeling of boredom; and (d) would be the most arousing and dominant but neutral-positive for pleasure, eliciting more of a feeling of boldness or antagonism (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). In fact, brightness and saturation account for two-thirds to three-fourths of the detected variance in users’ feelings toward color (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). This means that shifting from soft pink to blood red in a design would likely impact users’ feelings more than shifting from soft pink to soft green or blue.
In addition, the context of color-use is important, as in the case of otherwise pleasant colors being used in inappropriate or unnatural ways (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). Consider the four variations of the same website design in Figure 6. Which of the four color variations is your favorite? For most people, (1) would likely be the preferred variation, because not only are the colors pleasant but the color-use more appropriately aligns with prior positive experience. In the other examples, the skin color of the hand looks a bit green, which may subconsciously suggest experiences of bodily disease or death to the user; similarly, the stems of the tulips in (4) are red rather than the expected green, which signals to the user that the experience is artificial or unnatural. In such ways, whether intentionally or unintentionally, our designs evoke affective responses; just as (1) might evoke memories of beautiful blue spring days with new life, the others might conversely evoke experiences of sadness, frustration, confusion, or discomfort, all of which will influence a user’s motivation and persistence with using the product.

4. Guiding Considerations

All of this research into the science of color-use is valuable, but how each of us then translates these findings into the actual, embedded craft of UX and LX design is a different matter. For this reason, a few considerations may be useful for guiding any color-use in UX and LX projects, including attending to contrast, attention, meaning, and harmony.

4.1. Contrast

First, ensuring high contrast is important in all designs for aesthetics but is especially important in those that use text. It is also a legal requirement for many UX projects to meet minimum accessibility
expectations in many countries, such as those stipulated in the W3C’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. Contrast problems are widespread in learning products. In fact, a recent study on K-12 school website accessibility across the U.S. found that contrast errors were the most common type of error among all sites (Kimmons & Smith, 2019). Contrast errors arise because, though two similarly-saturated colors, such as crimson and blue, may look quite different to most viewers, when superimposed (as in Figure 7) they can become difficult to decipher from one another. As a simple check of this, colored designs can be converted to grayscale to allow you to quickly see how similar the colors are to one another, or an automated contrast checker like the one provided by WebAIM can be helpful. To solve contrast problems, white and extremely light tints should be used to contrast highly-saturated colors, and black and dark grays should be used to contrast light tints.

![Figure 7](image_url)

### 4.2. Attention

Second, colors can be used to quickly and efficiently draw the attention of the eye to visual elements that matter. For instance, one eye-tracking study found that adding random colors to word labels on a grayscale figure moderately improved learner retention and transfer performance by improving the efficiency by which learners could differentiate textual elements (Ozcelik et al., 2009). On an app or VR interface, this might mean using a vibrant color only to effectively draw the learner’s attention to a few important elements, such as commonly-used buttons or interactive elements necessary for progression. Similar principles are often applied to print media, with color only being applied to text in the case of headings, key terms, or blockquote elements. Any variation in color will generally draw the eye of the learner to the variation, and this means that UX designers should use this principle to intentionally draw user attention to elements that matter and avoid unnecessary color variation in elements that are less important. It also means that color cues can effectively be used as guideposts for directing the learner through progressive elements and to influence user pathways in desired ways.
4.3. Meaning

Third, because color conveys emotional (and sometimes even conceptual) meaning to learners, colors should be used in a manner that synergistically emphasizes the intended meaning conveyed by the overall project and individual content elements. As with the pet care mobile app example in Figure 4, improperly using color can subvert intended meaning or set a tone that is either unhelpful, dissonant, or repulsive for learners. As mentioned earlier, actual meaning and affective influences of color can be complicated, contextual, and individual, but some influences are fairly universal, such as grays denoting lack of importance; warm colors evoking passion, dissent, or engagement; cool colors evoking comfort, closeness, or agreement; and so forth.

4.4. Harmony

And fourth, to use colors well in any design effort, the designer must not only understand the emotions elicited by each color itself but also understand how to use colors together in harmonious ways that meet the intended purposes of the project. For instance, it is common knowledge that warm (low-wavelength) colors draw more attention than cool (high-wavelength) colors and that highly saturated colors draw more attention than washed-out tints, but the mark of a skilled designer is knowing both (a) which colors to use and (b) how to use varieties of colors together in harmonious and intentional ways.

Even when two products use the exact same colors (as in Figure 8), how the colors are used in relation to one another will influence the learner’s affective experience. So, though both 8.1 and 8.2 use the same colors, 8.1 might feel cool, inviting, and professional, while 8.2 might feel comical, distracting, and amateurish.

As a rule of thumb, many designers propose following what is called the 60-30-10 rule, which is commonly used in many other visual fields such as interior design. According to this rule, you should choose a primary color to dominate 60% of the field of view, followed by a secondary color for 30%, and an accent or tertiary color for no more than 10%. For most UX products, this would mean choosing a subdued color as the primary color (such as the soft blue in Figure 6.1 or the white in 8.1), a vibrant color as the accent color (such as the pink in Figure 6.1 or the “Google” primary colors in 8.1), and some variation in between as the secondary color (such as the brown in Figure 6.1 or the
5. Color Schemes

To promote color harmony, and to implement the other guiding considerations mentioned above, most designers will begin color-use in a project by developing what is called a color scheme. In most cases, color schemes include between two and six colors that will be drawn upon in intentional ways. Common color scheme types include: (a) monochromatic, (b) analogous, (c) complementary, (d) complex, and (e) achromatic. Each type has its own strengths and weaknesses as well as design considerations to attend to, which I will now explain. For each type, an example image will also be provided, which has the five scheme colors depicted on the right of the image and the color wheel placements of each scheme depicted on the bottom-right.

5.1. Monochromatic

Monochromatic schemes (from mono meaning one and chroma meaning color) utilize a single, dominant color and provide color variation only by using desaturated versions (or tints) of the dominant color. Since they rely on a single color, monochromatic schemes are easy to use in complicated designs to provide a sense of cohesion and uniformity. Because the overall scheme is simple (i.e., one color), this also allows you to include richer secondary elements, such as images in a Facebook news feed or a variety of images on a Pinterest board. The trade-off, however, is that monochromatic designs can be boring or overbearing if highly-saturated versions of the dominant color are overused. To prevent this, use plenty of white and very lightly-saturated tints of the dominant color to offset the more highly-saturated attention areas. In the provided example (Figure 9), the navigation bars are a highly-saturated blue, so the content on the rest of the design needs to use plenty of white and very light blues for balancing.
5.2. Analogous

Analogous schemes rely upon two or more nearby colors on the color wheel, generally spanning no more than one-third of the color wheel (e.g., red and blue, green and orange, cyan and violet). Since the colors are not distinct enough from one another to allow them to be placed side-by-side, plenty of white space should be used to separate instances of the two colors. Analogous schemes are more visually interesting than monochromatic schemes, because they provide more color variation, but they are also more difficult to use, because the two dominant colors must be well-separated, and any other visual elements should fit the scheme. In the provided example (Figure 10), the crimson logo and carousel are clearly separated from the blue events block, and the image in the carousel has a dominant blue color (via the woman’s sweater) that roughly matches the other blues in the design. If the woman’s sweater was orange or green, however, the design would struggle to be harmonious; because the design is already using so much color complexity, any more complexity introduced by the secondary elements would be distracting. Because their colors are so close to each other on the color wheel, analogous color schemes in particular may introduce contrast problems.
5.3. Complementary

The color wheel is conceived as circular rather than linear, because colors on opposite sides when (additively) mixed will make white. These are called complementary colors (cf. Figure 11). Complementary schemes, then, use two dominant colors that are on opposite sides of the color wheel, such as blue and gold, orange and cyan, or pink and green.
Complementary schemes are also visually interesting, but the dominant colors are distinct enough from one another that they can be used in closer proximity than can analogous colors. In the provided example (Figure 12), the orange logo and thin horizontal bars are placed nicely beside or on top of the dark blues of the menu. However, though the two colors complement each other, one should be treated as the visually dominant color, and the other should be treated as the accent (in this case, the orange is the accent). Typically, the cooler color is used as the visually dominant color, and the warmer color is used as the accent. This allows for the design to show interesting variation while also using the accent color to draw the viewer’s attention to specific parts of the design, such as the logo, buttons, or content separators.
5.4. Complex

As the name suggests, complex schemes are the most complicated, because they use three or more dominant colors equally situated around the color wheel (e.g., blue, orange, red, and green). Because they use so much color variation, the visual space that the color takes up in the design should be very small and offset with plenty of white space. In the provided example (Figure 13), the website uses a large logo with four very different colors but offsets this by using little to no color in the rest of the design. Because of their variation, complex schemes can be very bright and interesting but can quickly become overpowering if the visual footprint of any of the colors becomes too pronounced (as in Figure 8.2).
5.5. Achromatic

Achromatic color schemes (meaning no color) use only variations on black, white, and gray. Of all the schemes, this scheme is the easiest to use but can also be the least interesting, because it provides the least color variation. Sometimes, however, less design complexity is desirable. In the provided example (Figure 14), the overall site design uses an achromatic scheme so that when colors are used in secondary elements they will draw the attention of the viewer (in this case, products that the vendor is seeking to sell are provided in full color, while menu items and logos are muted grays). Achromatic schemes may be helpful if secondary elements are complex and rich, but without these secondary elements, the design itself would be visually boring.
Various tools are available to designers that provide color scheme examples, such as the Adobe Color website or the Google Material Palette Generator, and there are many different ways to create a color scheme. For our purposes, however, I will offer two simple techniques to create professional-looking color schemes that anyone can follow.

The first approach is to start with a single, dominant color that matches your overall emotional objective for your product—blues might be calming or sad, greens might be fresh or healthy, yellows might be fun or playful, reds might be outrageous or dangerous, etc. However, this decision might already have been made for you via institutional branding or logo decisions. Once you have this color, plug the color into a color scheming tool such as Adobe Color, and use the provided radio buttons to switch between color scheme types (e.g., analogous, monochromatic, complementary). If you want a simpler, safer design, go with a monochromatic type, and drag the circles on the color wheel to various saturation levels to give you sufficient variation in the five-color scheme. If you want something more interesting, try the complementary or analogous type. In the case of analogous, you can drag the circles around the color wheel to increase color variation, but the colors generally should not extend more than one-third (120-degrees) the circumference of the circle, lest the variation be too great. In the example image (Figure 15), I started with the Twitter logo blue (#00bbff) and found that an orange hue (#ff8400) might serve as a nice accent (complementary).
The second approach is to choose a picture or painting that you enjoy (preferably of a natural setting) that you feel exemplifies the emotional state you want to create with your design. Then, upload the image to Adobe Color via the “Extract from an image” feature. This will attempt to identify the dominant colors in the picture and to situate them in relation to one another in a harmonious manner. Once imported, you can click back on the color wheel to see where the colors fall and to switch between color scheme types. In the provided example (Figure 16), the image of trees in autumn generated an analogous color scheme of oranges, yellows, greens, and burnt orange.

Once you have created a color scheme you are happy with, you can import the color scheme into other applications in a variety of ways. The simplest and most versatile method, however, is to simply take a screenshot and place it into your authoring tool or to manually transfer the hexadecimal codes.
6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of (a) the physics and technical notations for color, (b) scholarly literature on the relationships between color, emotion, and learning, (c) some guiding considerations on how to use color in UX design, and (d) concrete information on effectively using color schemes to improve harmony and contrast in designs. Some major takeaways for designers should include the following:

- Choose dominant colors that will influence emotions aligning with your intended design goals.
- Use colors in ways that are intentional (e.g., accentuating important content) and natural or appropriate by drawing upon users’ prior experiences.
- Ensure that color contrast is sufficient and that color is used strategically to allow learners to clearly and readily identify important content and follow intended user pathways.
- Choose a color scheme that counterbalances the complexity of your content (complex content requires a simpler color scheme, while simpler content can use a more complex color scheme).
- Use whitespace and white, black, or gray text to increase contrast and to balance color-use.

By following these suggestions, UX and LX designers can create designs that increase motivation and persistence by making user experiences more pleasing, more intentional, and less frustrating.

From a research perspective, much work is still needed to help designers better understand issues of contextual color-use, differential affective influences on learners, and interactions between various colors as well as between color, content, and objectives. Because effective color-use in UX design is best described as craft (or synergy between science and art) and because learning contexts vary so greatly, it is reasonable that the most important research in this area moving forward will focus on applied, focused uses of color through iterative design cases and continual improvement. Though UX designers might not have the same obsession with color that Monet expressed, hopefully our obsession for learning will help us to more fully recognize that color is an important aspect of the learner’s experience that should be better understood and more skillfully applied.

References


Behavior, 44, 81-95.


Teens today spend, on average, **9 hours every day consuming media** (Common Sense Media, 2018). Similarly, “American adults spend over 11 hours per day listening to, watching, reading or generally interacting with media” (The Nielsen Company, 2018, para. 2).

In a world where **media consumption is deeply embedded into nearly everyone’s life**, it is essential that your website offer the same type of multimodal learning experience. Multimedia can increase the appeal of the website, while also offering visitors different ways to connect with and explore the site content.

Consider the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which was designed to “improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn” (CAST, Inc., 2019, para. 1). One of the three UDL principles is Multiple Means of Representation - providing learners with more than one way to access and learn content. When you provide videos, podcasts, or images that present the text-based information in a multimodal format, you are giving the viewer a choice in deciding how to explore the information.
In Chapter 3 you will find tips, resources, and tools for using media designed by others on your website without infringing on copyright. This chapter focuses on how you can create your own multimedia to enrich the way you present and communicate the information on your site. The chapter will start with a brief overview of design techniques and then will be followed by a showcase of digital tools for creating audio, video, and images for your site.

Multimedia Design

It's easy to design digital media with the tools available today, however, designing digital media that positively impacts learning (aka whether visitors acquire information from your site) is quite challenging. This section will provide some tips and strategies for creating effective multimedia.

First and foremost, design with your audience in mind (see: Getting a scientific message across means taking human nature into account). Who is the audience of your website? What do they know already about your website topic? What type of words or phrases do you use when speaking with typical audience members in person (use this same language in your audio/video products)? Consider any myths or misconceptions your audience might have about your topic and make sure to debunk those first - Researchers have found that students are less likely to watch a science video when they think they already know the information from the video, even if their knowledge is incorrect (Helll-oo! Watching Videos Does Not Necessarily Lead to Learning).

Here are some more tips to creating more impactful media products:
• **Make sure the multimedia is accessible** - Add closed captions to videos, include a transcript for audio recordings/podcasts, use ALT text to describe an image.

• **Hook your audience** - Use humor, surprise, inquiry, a short vignette (Need more ideas? Read [12 Presentation Hooks Used By the Best TED Presenters](#)).

• **Be creative and social** - Break away from the traditional mold of educational multimedia (aka lecture videos, documentaries, infographics full of far too much information).

• **Use visuals** - quite simply, visuals are more memorable than words. The less on-screen text, the better. After watching this short TED Talk, what do you remember most? The visuals or the words? (Research article: *Pictures Move People More than Words* Emotional images can change people's behavior, while similarly charged words do not).

• **Use media in an ethical and legal manner** - If you upload a video to YouTube with a popular song as the background music, it will be flagged and taken down. Use your own original art or Creative Commons works with attribution (explore Chapter 3 for more information about finding and using Creative Commons media).

**Heath & Heath’s Made to Stick Principles**

The following principles provide a valuable guide to designing captivating media:

• **Simple** - Don’t overwhelm with facts, ideas, or information. Use the **rule of 3** (what 3 things do you want the audience to take away from your media?).

• **Unexpected** - Information and ideas that are shocking are more memorable. How can you surprise the audience with your media?

• **Concrete** - Don’t use abstract terms or complex jargon. Present information in a way that is relevant to the audience.

• **Credible** - Why should the audience believe you? Credibility can come in many forms (education degree, profession, personal experience).

• **Emotion** - Simply increasing an individual’s heart rate results in a higher likelihood of sharing a video. "Virality is partially driven by physiological arousal. Content that evokes high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions is more viral. Content that evokes low-arousal, or deactivating, emotions (e.g., sadness) is less viral" (Berger & Milkman, 2011, p. 1).

• **Story** - When you tell a story, people not only listen/watch, parts of their brain activate as if they are experiencing the story themselves (read: The Science of Storytelling: What Listening to a Story Does to Our Brains). Thus, storytelling is an incredibly powerful and impactful teaching tool (learn more: Stories are better than lectures at teaching us about health).

**Multimedia Learning Principles**

Through extensive research based on how multimedia impacted college students' learning, Richard Mayer (2009) developed 12 guiding principles for the design of multimedia. The following bullet point list is a synthesis of the key points from these principles:

• **Don’t Distract** - Get rid of extraneous information, stories, images, sounds, or content (while it might be fun to tell the story of the time you were white water rafting and saw a beautiful Scarlet Macaw, if this story is not relevant to your video about dividing fractions, then leave it out!).

• **Direct Attention** - Use text, arrows, bolding, sound effects, or other tools to signal key information (notice how the bolded text stands out and draws your attention!).

• **Use Visuals with Narration** - The combination of spoken words and pictures or videos is
stronger than words by themselves.

- **Keep it Together** - In an image, keep your graphics and their labels as close as reasonably possible to one another. In a video, make sure the visuals match the narration.
- **Chunk it** - Break up podcasts, audio files, and videos into shorter media files.
- **Keep in Conversational** - Speak in a conversational tone. Don’t use technical or academic jargon. Use plain, easy-to-understand language (review the Writing for the Web chapter for tips on how you can improve your audio or video scripts). If you do plan on using acronyms or uncommon words in your audio or video, make sure to define them early on.

For an in-depth overview of the 12 principles, visit Davis and Norman’s (2016) *Principles of Multimedia Learning* article. Keeping these principles in mind can help you create media that enriches, rather than detracts from, the content on your site.

**Designing Audio for Your Website**

Audio is one of the most common ways to keep your audience engaged. In classrooms, learners listen to their peers and the instructor. However, websites tend to overemphasize text and underemphasize the power of audio. One of the major advantages to using audio over text is the use of high pitches, low pitches, tones and inflection to match the context of the subject matter being taught. People tend to process auditory information quicker and easier than similar information in a text-based medium (to learn more, explore [The Use of Audio in eLearning site](#)). Your audio could be an instructional clip, an interview, a narrated story, or a podcast. In this section, we’ll cover the basics of how to record audio using the free online tools and software programs: [Vocaroo](#), [Online-Voice-Recorder](#), and [Audacity](#).

**Design Tip**

Before you proceed to record your audio file, make sure you are in a quiet location without any background noise. Use an external microphone, such as a lavalier or shotgun mic, rather than your computer or smartphone mic to capture higher quality sound. Pay attention to any external noises such as a person walking by, a door shutting, a car starting - as these can ruin an audio file.

**Tool #1: Vocaroo**

Vocaroo is a popular and intuitive flash-based tool for recording audio clips. Simply visit [Vocaroo.com](#) and select “Click to Record” to start creating an audio file.
That’s it! You can now download your recording as an mp3 or WAV file or share it via a link. If you’d like to re-record, you may do so.

**Tool #2: Online-Voice-Recorder**

Similar to Vocaroo, this is an online voice recording tool that is convenient and simple to use. You can also use this site to trim your recording and save a particular section. Head to [Online-Voice-Recorder](#), click the red microphone icon, and start your recording.

You can now **Save** the file in an mp3 format.

**Tool #3: Audacity**

Audacity is a more complex multi-track audio recorder and editor. It is also a free and open-source software. Unlike other online tools, Audacity is a program that needs to be downloaded to your computer before you can record your audio files. Visit the [Audacity Download page](#) and to get the software for your computer. While the basic recording function is virtually identical to that of the
prior two resources, it’s highly suggested that you take some time to familiarize yourself with the more advanced features (such as noise cancellation) if you choose to use Audacity.

Using Audacity, you can export your recording in various formats, including mp3, WAV, and OGG. Here is how you Export your file.
Audio Design Tips and Tricks

- Do a test run by recording a short bit of audio and playing it back to hear how it sounds.
- Anticipate the sounds you might hear during the recording (e.g., a person walking by your recording area or a plane flying overhead) and make adjustments to avoid noise.
- Stay close to the microphone, but not too close (hold the mic about 6 inches or a fist-width away from your mouth).
- Avoid typing on the keyboard while recording to avoid distracting keystroke noises.
- Don’t breathe heavily into the mic.

Designing Video for your Website

A properly made video will mesmerize your website visitors. Videos have become the most popular instructional tool and being able to provide your learners with videos like Khan Academy or Ted-Ed will make your website more engaging and appealing. Designing a video can be time consuming, and sometimes frustrating, but with the right tools and design skills, anyone can make captivating videos. The following section features two web-based design tools for creating videos: Adobe Spark and Screencastify. You can also use software, such as iMovie, Adobe Premiere, Shotcut (free), Windows Video Editor, or Final Cut Pro, to edit together professional quality videos.

Tool #1: Adobe Spark

Adobe Spark is a free online tool that lets you create beautiful videos, images, and web pages. This video-making software allows you to create compelling video stories quickly by piecing together slides of visuals with audio. Here is how you use it:

1. Visit Adobe Spark and create a free account.
2. After you sign in, click the blue “+” icon at the very top of the screen and select “Video”.
3. You will now be prompted to pick a story template or you may start from scratch.
4. Pick any template and you will be brought into the video editing mode.

This editing mode is comprised of three elements - the timeline area (at the bottom), the styling area (on the right), and the main video content area (in the center).
Add new slides to the video by clicking the “+” icon in the timeline area.

Change the layout of each slide from the styling panel and control how long each slide plays from the timeline panel.

Add Creative Commons music, images, and videos to your movie from the styling area.

You can also upload your own images (jpeg and png), videos (mp4 and mov), and background audio (mp3). When your video is complete, you can download the video in mp4 format or share it via a URL. Any time you’d like to make modifications to your video, you can login to Adobe Spark on a computer or smart device and make changes and download the new video instantly.

**Tool #2: Screencastify**

Screencastify is a screen recording extension for Google Chrome. It is a light-weight, powerful, and easy-to-use screen recorder. However, it has a **time limit of 10 minutes** per recording with the free account. To get started, you must download and install the Screencastify extension on your Chrome Browser. Click on the Screencastify icon in the top right corner of your web browser and sign in with your Google account.
This will let you save all of your screen capture footage to your Google Drive. Now, click the icon again and you can start recording the action.

All your recording sessions will automatically be saved on your Google Drive account.
Video Design Tips and Tricks

- Keep your videos short (e.g., 3-5 minutes).
- Use the design principles discussed earlier in this chapter to capture and maintain the attention of your learners as they watch your videos.
- Don’t use any copyrighted images or visuals in your video. Search for Creative Commons resources from Pixabay, Videezy, Unsplash, and more (e.g., Guide to Finding Media for Classroom Projects). Make sure to give proper attribution when using any Creative Commons licensed materials (review Chapter 3).
- Use the YouTube Audio Library or Unminus to find Creative Commons background music. Give attribution as needed.
- If you include background music, make sure it’s not too loud, otherwise, it’ll distract the viewer.

Designing Images For Your Website

Research has shown that images are more powerful and memorable than text (see: Pictures Move People More than Words Emotional images can change people’s behavior, while similarly charged words do not). Every page on your website should have at least one image to complement and enrich the text (if you need help figuring out how to select or design an image that complements the text, visit Chapter 3). In the following section, you will learn about 3 digital tools for creating images: Pablo, Canva, and Adobe Spark.

Tool #1: Pablo

Pablo is a commonly used tool for creating quick web banners with custom text.

To get started:

1. Visit the Pablo website.
2. Select an image.
3. Double click on the image to add text.
4. When you are done, click on Share & Download button at the bottom of the screen to download the picture in a jpeg format.
Tool #2: Canva

Canva is a free website for designing professional quality images and graphics. Canva offers pre-made templates that you can customize, such as posters, social media graphics, infographics, and flyers. When you get to the website it will ask you to sign up with your email. Once you sign in, it will ask you invite friends to see your work but you can skip over that part and get started with the process of creating custom images and graphics. Click on any template, then double-click on any text/image to edit. When you are done creating your masterpiece, you can download it as a jpg, png, or pdf.
Tool #3: Adobe Spark

Spark (covered in the video section) is similar to Canva in regards to the creation of images. It offers pre-made templates that you can adjust and customize yourself. You can easily integrate Creative Commons and Public Domain images into your graphic. To get started, click the “+” sign and select Graphic. Select a template to use or start from scratch. When you are done, you can download the image to your desktop or share it via a URL.
Image Design Tips and Tricks

- Use copyright-free pictures or Creative Commons images with attribution (review the Guide to Finding Media for Classroom Projects).
- Don’t include visuals on your website just for the sake of mixing things up. Select visuals that complement and enrich your text (see Chapter 3: Finding Images that Complement Your Text).
- Limit how many words you put on an image. The power of images comes from the visual appeal.

Chapter Overview Video

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-Rrd

Additional Design Tools and Resources

- Creative Commons & Royalty Free Media
  - How to Give Attribution - Creative Commons
  - The Educator’s Guide to Copyright, Fair Use, and Creative Commons
  - Guide to Finding Media for Classroom Projects
  - Spreadsheet of OERs
  - Alternatives to Google Image Search - Chart
  - Sources of Free Sound Effects and Music for Multimedia Projects
  - Audio: YouTube Audio Library & Unminus & Dig CCMixer
  - Video: Videezy & Pixabay Videos & Pexels & Vimeo Creative Commons & Videvo

- Audio
  - Beautiful Audio Editor
- Anchor & Synth - podcasting
- Simple audio & video editing tools
- Sound Trap - music making
- Twisted Wave - audio editor
- Clyp.it (audio recording & sharing)
- Record MP3 Online
- How to Podcast for Free

**Video**
- Powtoon animation tool
- Wevideo
- Clips (for Apple) & Quik (for Android)
- Headliner
- Shotcut - free open source video editor
- 11 Mobile Video Creation Apps
- Video Creation & Editing Apps
- Tips for Shooting and Editing Videos
- The Best Free Video Editors for Windows
- iPad/iPhone Video Editors & Tools
- Screenrecording Tools
- Stop Motion Studio - capture a series of photos and turn them into an animated video
- Snapchat - capture photos and videos and embed Bitmojis, text, and other icons

**Images**
- KOED Design Courses (designing infographics, memes, etc...)
- Visualize Learning with Photo Challenges
- Pixlr & Sumo Paint (similar to Photoshop)
- Inkscape (professional vector editor)
- Tuxpi
- Comic Strip Creators
- Make a Meme
- Imgflip - GIFs and Memes
- Visme - graphic design
- 9 Web Tools for Creating Infographics
- Cycloramic & Google Street View app - capture 360 degree photos
- Thinglink & Google Drawings - interactive images

**References**


Basic Features
Book Covers

The Book Cover Tutorial and Template can be used to create book covers for textbooks. Alternatively, if you want to create your own book cover from scratch, the image should have dimensions equivalent to 5.5 x 8.5 and be less than 1MB in size.

To create a book cover using our template, begin by opening the Google Slides template. Upon clicking the link, you will open (and copy to your own Google Drive) a document that has been preconfigured to the correct book cover dimensions.

Follow the steps in the tutorial, which are also articulated below:

1. Add text
2. Change fonts
3. Choose a color scheme
4. Select images
5. Select vector graphics
6. Select icons
7. Put it all together
8. Save your cover

The final step is to save the book cover design as a JPEG image. After saving the image to your computer, navigate within EdTech Books to the textbook that you want to add the book cover to. Select the Settings option in the top-right drop-down menu.

Scroll down and upload your new image in the provided area. Your new book cover is now automatically applied to the textbook!
Callouts

Callouts are emphasized boxes of content that you can insert into your chapter to accentuate small blocks of information, such as learning objectives, key takeaways, or a vignette.

To insert a callout while editing a chapter, place your cursor where you would like it placed and go to Tools > Callout Box. The default style will look like this:

**Callout Box**

This is what the "Default" style looks like.

If you would like to change the style of your callout box after it has been inserted, go back to Tools > Callout Box and change the style under Custom Class.

**Alternate Styles**

There are a number of alternate callout styles built into the system. You can apply a custom callout style while inserting the callout by selecting the name of the alternate style in the "Custom Class" box. A formatted example of each follows.

**Alternate Style "Positive"**

Select Positive as the custom class.

**Alternate Style "Negative"**

Select Negative as the custom class.

**Alternate Style "Objectives"**

Select Objectives as the custom class.

**Alternate Style "Exercises"**

Select Exercises as the custom class.
Alternate Style "Information"

Select Information as the custom class.

Hidden Note Class

Additionally, a "Hidden Note" class is also available. These are for collaborative editing purposes. They will be visible to book and chapter editors but not to other readers.

Bootstrap Color Classes

Alternatively, you can also use Bootstrap's color classes to modify either the callout or any of its contents by adding a text-color or bg-color class. Here's an example:

**Heading with the "text-light" and "bg-primary" Classes**

The callout has the "text-primary" and "bg-light" classes added to it.

You can also modify the header directly by placing your cursor on the heading and selecting Formats > Bootstrap Headings. Not all changes will be visible in the WYSIWYG, so you should save the chapter to see the color change.

Custom Formats via CSS

You can also modify the formatting of callout classes across your entire book. In the example below, an additional class was assigned to the callout of "callout-example," and then the following custom CSS was added to the book by going to Advanced > Custom CSS:

```
#chapter-container div.callout-example { background-color: white; }
#chapter-container div.callout-example h3 { background-color: pink; }
```

**Custom Colors via CSS Override**

Change the custom CSS for the book.

Alternatively, you can also override the look of all callouts in your book by applying a similar custom style to the entire callout class, such as the following:

```
#chapter-container div.callout { background-color: white; }
#chapter-container div.callout h3 { background-color: pink; }
```

**Custom Formats via the Style Attribute**

As with any element, you can apply custom formatting to a single callout by editing its "style" attribute in the HTML directly, but this will not propagate to other callouts. An example of doing this
to increase the size of the callout's text would be as follows:

```html
style="font-size: 1.4em;"
```

**Example Style Editing**

This callout's "style" tag was changed.

**HTML Structure and Headings**

To make a callout, you simply need a div with the class "callout" assigned to it.

Callouts are designed to start with the H3 class as the highest heading (do not use H1 or H2 tags in your callout).

If you include a H3 element as the first element inside the callout, it will be properly formatted as the callout's title (with the top borders rounded and with no spacing at the top). If you wish to include multiple H3 elements inside a single callout, you can fix the rounded corners of subsequent H3 elements by adding the "no-border-radius" class to them.

**Example H3**

Example content goes here.

**Example of H3 with "no-border-radius" class**

Example content goes here.
Footnotes

There currently is no automated footnotes management feature. However, you can manually create footnotes by doing the following:

1. Create a heading at the end of your chapter called Footnotes and apply the “Heading 2” style to it.
2. Create a numbered list of any footnotes you'd like to include. (Note that you can change the numbering style to use letters, numbers, or Roman numerals from the dropdown.
3. In your text, write the letter or number that corresponds to the desired footnote and apply the superscript format to it by highlighting it and clicking Format > Superscript.

Here is an example:

Technology integration models are common in educational technology.\(^{a}\) However, there is no standard model that all researchers and practitioners use.\(^{b}\)

And the footnotes could be shown like this:

**Footnotes**

| a. Educational technology is a loosely-defined field. |
| b. Some common models include the following: TPACK, SAMR, etc. |
Glossaries

Each book has a built-in glossary, which may be accessed from the top-right dropdown on the cover page > Glossary.

These glossary terms may be accessed from any chapter, and if you would like to create a chapter for users to see your glossary, then you can do so by adding the Glossary Terms special include in any chapter's settings.

Creating Glossary Terms

While on your glossary page, you can add new terms using the form at the bottom of the page. Each glossary term requires a name, anchor name, and description as follows:

Name
The human-readable name of the term (e.g., "Project-Based Learning")

Anchor Name
The machine-readable name of the term, which will be used for linking purposes (e.g., "project-based_learning").

Description
The descriptive text for the term. HTML markup is allowed.

Editing Glossary Terms

For any term that is created, click the pencil icon next to it in order to edit.

Creating Glossary Lists within Chapters

You can include an automatically updated list of glossary terms with definitions in any chapter. This is useful if you would like to include a list of key terms within a chapter that will be updated as glossary definitions change.
To do this, edit the chapter, place the cursor where you would like the list placed, and select *Tools > Glossary Terms List.*

In the Anchors field, type in a comma-separated list of anchors for the book's glossary terms that you would like to have listed, and click *Submit.*

If you would like to edit the included list later, you can change the terms, delete them, or add new ones directly in the editor.

To update the text that appears in the chapter as glossary terms are changed, simply edit and save the chapter again.

**Creating Glossary Pop-ups**

You can create glossary pop-up elements within your chapter by editing the chapter, placing your cursor where you want the pop-up, and choosing *Tools > Glossary Link.*

Here is an example glossary pop-up: Example Term

**Creating Non-Glossary Pop-Ups**

You can also create pop-ups manually by editing the HTML directly, like this one: Example Non-Glossary Pop-up

To do this, use the following code, replacing YOUR DEFINITION HERE and YOUR TEXT HERE with your own.

YOUR TEXT HERE
Images

Media Library

Each book has its own media library that all chapters in the book share. To upload images to the book's media library, navigate to the book's home page and click on the media library button at the top of the page.

When uploading images, be sure that each desired image has a unique name. Uploading an image with the same name as a previously uploaded image will give the new image a new name. If you would like to update an image across an entire book, simply delete the image from the media library first and then upload the updated version with the same name.

Once an image is in the media library, it can be embedded in any chapter by editing the chapter, clicking on the "Insert/edit image" button, and selecting the image's name from the dropdown menu.

Alternatively, if an image is already hosted on another website on the internet, a chapter author can hotlink to it by pasting the image's URL directly into the image embed window. When saving the chapter, if the system detects that the image is hosted on another site, it will attempt to automatically download it and save it on EdTech Books.

Text Wrapping

Because all books created on this site are intended to be mobile-first, and because mobile devices have very small screens, most images you include in your book should fill the entire width. Otherwise, you may have instances where only a couple of words are shown on a single line of text.

However, there might be legitimate times when you have a small image that you do not want to take up the full width of the page (as with the media library icon above). Text wrapping in HTML-speak is done with what is called “floating.” Programmatically, we accomplish this by using some fancy styling that allows the page to change floating options depending upon the size of the page (e.g., floating the image if the width is large [as with a laptop’s web browser] while removing the float if it is small [as with a phone’s web browser]).
To do this in the editor, simply right-click on the image, choose “Image...,” and select one of the custom classes from the provided drop-down menu. If you want your image to be on the left of the page and for the text to wrap around it on the right, then choose one of the “Float Left” options. If you want your image to be on the right, then choose one of the “Float Right” options.

Note that the preview in the editor of the text wrapping may not be accurate, so you will want to save the chapter to see how it actually looks.

**Text Wrapping with Captions**

If your image has a caption, then floating becomes even more complicated, because the float must not just apply to the image itself but also to the caption and to their parent element (in HTML-speak, their "figure" element).

This means that if you follow the process above with your image, which applies a float just to the image, then the caption may be on its own—centered on the page or disjointed from the image it’s supposed to describe.
To correct this, simply right-click on any image with a caption and choose "Figure...". Then, choose the desired float option from this drop-down menu instead. Doing so will apply the float to the entire figure (which contains both the image and the caption), as in the example in this section.

You should not apply a float to both an image and its figure at the same time. When you apply a float to the figure (as described here), then it overrides the original float setting on the image, and vice-versa. So, if your image has a caption, simply set the float in the "Figure..." dialog and not the "Image..." dialog.

**Two Floated Images Side-by-Side**

You can place two floated images side-by-side by using the process above, applying a "Float Left" to the first and a "Float Right" to the second. This will show the two images side-by-side on larger screens but will reorganize them to a stacked view on smaller screens. To make this easier, you can also insert two placeholder images by clicking "Tools > HTML Snippets > Side-by-side Images" and then right-clicking each, choosing "Image...," and replacing it with the desired image.
You can test the behavior of the two images above by resizing your screen or by viewing the page on different devices.

**Avoiding Float Overlaps with Clear Fixes**

One final difficulty with floats is that it is not always obvious to the browser what text and other elements should be wrapped around the image and what should not. This can lead to some ugly layouts if you have multiple floated images near one another or don't have enough text following a floated image.

To remedy this, you can insert an invisible element anywhere on the page to tell the HTML to stop the wrapping and to put any new content below it on a fresh, new line. To do this in the editor, simply place your cursor where you want the wrapping to stop and choose "Tools > Clear Fix." This will insert the dashed, green element on your screen below to let you know that all wrapping will stop at that point.
The green indicator is only visible to you in the editor and will not be shown to your reader. This allows you to start a new line of text or even a new floated image on a new line, separate from any previous wrapping introduced by earlier images.
Any videos you wish to include in the chapters of your book must be embedded. To embed a YouTube or Vimeo video, select the "Tools" option in the WYSIWIG editor. Under tools, you can select either a Youtube or Vimeo video. If your video is from Youtube, enter either the Youtube ID or the URL and the resolution type. If your video is from Vimeo, enter the Vimeo ID. Press submit, and your video will be embedded in the chapter of your book.
Microsoft Word Conversion

By default, all chapters are available for download as Microsoft Word documents. To download a chapter, navigate to the chapter and append “/ms_word” to the end of the URL.

For example, the URL for this chapter’s Microsoft Word download is https://edtechbooks.org/userguide/ms_word/ms_word
PDF Conversion

By default, each chapter in your book and the book itself will build two different PDF files for download: mobile and printable. Mobile PDFs are optimized for tablet viewing, while printable PDFs are optimized for printing on U.S. letter-sized paper.

To make sure that PDFs are enabled on your chapter, while editing your chapter, click on Formatting and ensure that the PDF Rendering option is enabled. A similar option is available when editing the book's main page.

Once PDFs are enabled for your book or chapter, the download link will appear in the dropdown menu. However, PDFs must be built by the server in the background and may not be instantly available. Chapter PDFs generally take several minutes to build (depending on server load), and book PDFs may take a few days. This process can be expedited by the administrator upon request if needed.

Additionally, building PDFs is a difficult, highly-technical task, and authors should be aware that the PDFs generated by the automated system might not look exactly like the web version. If there are major issues, please contact a site administrator to see if improvements to the PDF building algorithm can be made. Otherwise, if you need your PDF to look a particular way, you may also build the PDF yourself in another program, host it on another site (like Google Drive), and include the link as an alternative PDF download link.
WYSIWYG Editor

This site uses the Tiny WYSIWYG editor [https://www.tiny.cloud/] to assist authors in formatting chapter contents.

Alternatively, authors also have the option to edit their chapter's HTML directly by choosing View > Source code within the Tiny editor.
Advanced Features
The Reading API for this site allows users and apps to access book and chapter objects in JSON format. The url for the Read API is the site's base url plus "api.php" (e.g., https://edtechbooks.org/api.php).

Two types of objects may be requested via the Read API: (a) a book or (b) a chapter. Book calls require the `book` variable, which will look up the book based upon the unique "short name" provided. Chapter calls require both the `book` variable and the `chapter` variable, which will look up the chapter based upon the unique "short name" for each.

Usage

The API may be used to display content in your own site or app provided that you include proper attribution for the content and the hosting site. This can easily be done by displaying the suggested citation for the book or chapter.

Data Structure

The platform uses three main data object types: authors, books, and chapters. Other objects are also sometimes used, such as glossary terms.

Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Default</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>action</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>Specify the action to be performed. If no action is specified, the API will attempt to return a book or chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The short name of the book, which is the path of the book’s base or cover url. For example: <a href="http://edtechbooks.org/qualitativeinquiry">http://edtechbooks.org/qualitativeinquiry</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The short name of the chapter, which is the last part of the chapter’s url. For example: <a href="http://edtechbooks.org/qualitativeinquiry/storyanalysis">http://edtechbooks.org/qualitativeinquiry/storyanalysis</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glossary_term</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The anchor name of the glossary term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glossary_term_id</td>
<td>int</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The term_id of the glossary term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Specify a search term for some actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limit</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Specify a limit. Maximum: 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offset</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Specify an offset for pagination purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key</td>
<td>string</td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The Reading API currently does not require a key.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actions

Options for the action variable include the following:

- read (default; requires book; also uses chapter)
- search_authors (requires term)
- search_books (uses term, but returns full list of books if no term is provided)

**Examples**

To request reference information for all books in the site, the API call would be:

https://edtechbooks.org/api.php?action=search_books&offset=0&limit=200

To request the book object for https://edtechbooks.org/k12handbook, the API call would be:


To request the chapter object for https://edtechbooks.org/k12handbook/connectivism, the API call would be:


To request the glossary term "constructivism" in https://edtechbooks.org/k12handbook, the API call would be:


To search for books with the term "education" in the title, the API call would be:


To search for an author with the name "Royce," the API call would be:

https://edtechbooks.org/api.php?action=search_authors&term=royce

**App Structure Example**

An example of a simple app that accessed books on this site might follow this structure:

1. A home page that called https://edtechbooks.org/api.php?action=search_books to return all available books (with short names). You can use the offset and limit variables to iterate through the entire list.

An example of an app that could download the entire available database might follow this structure:

1. A home page that called https://edtechbooks.org/api.php?action=search_books to return all available books (with short names). You can use the offset and limit variables to iterate through the entire list.
2. Download each book by accessing its short name at

3. Download each chapter by iterating through the chapter briefs for each book returned in Step 2 via

Authentication

The API currently does not require a key, but that could change as the site and its services develop. For more information on future plans for the API or to request a key, please contact the site administrator.
Canvas Embedding

The following video explains how to embed your textbook into Canvas so that your students can access its contents within the context of your course from the main course navigation.

Essentially, you simply use the LTI-enabled Redirect App within the Canvas interface to create a course navigation link to your book's cover page.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-uzE

Alternatively, you can also use the Simplified View feature to embed a single chapter into a Canvas module.
Checking Grammar and Spelling

EdTech Books does not have a built-in spell- or grammar-checker. Instead, you should either do most of this checking as you write your content on another platform before pasting it into the site (such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs) or use a browser extension such as Grammarly. If you encounter errors in your work after it has been uploaded to EdTech Books, you can use either the WYSIWYG Editor or the inline editing function in the top right corner of your screen. For more details on editing chapters, see Editing a Chapter.
**Code Snippets**

Code snippets can be displayed on any chapter page by using the "code" style.

```
# Here is an example block of code using the "Code" style.
var x = 1;
x++; console.log(x);
```

To add new lines to the same block of code, hold down Shift while pressing enter to do a soft line break.

Currently, displaying HTML (or any language that uses brackets < >) is not fully supported.
CSS Customization

While editing the book's cover page, you can include custom CSS into the Custom CSS field, and this will be applied to all chapters in the book.

This is very powerful and can have undesired effects, because the CSS is applied to the entire page (not just the chapter contents). For instance, including a line like the following

```css
body { color: pink; }
```

would make all text in the book pink, including the author bios and other non-content elements.

To prevent CSS from changing site formatting unexpectedly, you can limit your adjustments to only apply to content within the `article` tag or the `#chapter-container` id as follows:

```css
article h2 { color: pink; }
#chapter-container div.callout h3 { background-color: #6fbada; }
```
Flights or A/B Testing

Flights enable you to conduct A/B or comparative testing on your chapter contents. A chapter flight is a temporary copy of your chapter that your readers can be assigned to (either manually or automatically) so that you can compare reader behaviors based upon small adjustments to the chapter.

For instance, you might want to know whether the inclusion of a particular diagram influences your readers' ability to answer a practice quiz question correctly. To do this, you would simply (1) add the diagram and practice quiz to your original chapter, (2) create a flight (which copies the chapter), and then (3) edit the resulting flight to remove the diagram. User behaviors for each of the versions will then be tracked separately in the analytics section for each flight.

Manual Assignment

Each flight has its own unique URL and QR Code; the URL uses the following pattern: https://sitedomain/bookname/chaptername/flightnumber

You can manually send users to this flight by sharing it to an email list, on your learning management system, and so forth, but general readers will never be directed to the flight.

Automatic Assignment

All readers who view the chapter will be randomly assigned to either the original chapter or one of the flights.
In addition to the default analytics provided for each chapter, each book author may also set up Google Analytics to track information about page visits and users of the book.

To do this, perform the following steps:

1. Create a free user account at [Google Analytics](https://analytics.google.com);
2. Create an Account and Property for your book;
3. Assign the Property with the URL of your book (e.g., https://edtechbooks.org/lidtfoundations);
4. In your Property settings, find your Tracking ID in the tracking code (e.g., UA-XXXXXXXX-X);
5. Copy this Tracking ID, and paste it into the Google Analytics ID field while editing your book;

After completing these steps, you should be able to access the Google Analytics dashboard for your book and see any active users.

For further help setting up and using Google Analytics (i.e., steps 1-4), please consult the [Google Analytics User Guide](https://support.google.com/analytics).
Analytics documentation for developers.
Languages

Each book and chapter can be identified according to its language by selecting the desired language from the *Language > Content Language* dropdown menu while editing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This setting helps readers find content in their desired languages.

Once selected, the book will be listed with other books of the same language on the "Browse Books by Language" page.
Practice Quizzes

Practice quizzes can be created within a chapter by placing the cursor where you would like the quiz question and selecting Tools > Practice Quiz.

Enter some text for the question (e.g., "What is the zone of proximal development?") along with a question ID (e.g., "zpd" or "zone_proximal_development"). The question ID will be used in the analytics so that you can track question responses.

Then, include up to two answer options, like this:

Click "Submit." You will now see the question with the options in your WYSIWYG editor. You can add more answer options at this point by simply pressing enter after the last option and typing a new one, as follows:

To identify correct answers to the quiz question, simply select the correct option and make it bold as follows:
What is the zone of proximal development?

1. A **psychological term**
2. A teaching practice
3. A technology integration model

Now, when you save the chapter, the system will format the question appropriately like this:
A simplified view of every textbook chapter is provided to any reader by easily appending the word /simple to the end of any chapter URL.

The simplified view removes site navigation bars and only delivers the chapter content on a plain, white background. This is useful for improving user experiences and stripping away unnecessary distractors.

You can try it by clicking the drop-down menu at the top right of this chapter and choosing "Simple" (or by typing "/simple" at the end of the chapter name in the address bar).

This feature is especially useful if you are embedding chapters into an iframe and do not want readers clicking on navigation items in the book.

For instance, if you are creating a series of course modules in Canvas and want to embed a chapter into Canvas without allowing students to click on other chapters in the textbook or to be confused by the EdTech Books logo, you could simply provide a link to the simplified view of the chapter as an External URL (in this case https://edtechbooks.org/k12handbook/online_safety/simple).
Synchronization

If you imported a chapter from one book to another, you have the option of keeping the child chapter synchronized to its parent. This means that if the original author of the parent chapter updates it, any changes to the content will be synchronized to your imported chapter.

This is useful for boiler plate content or imported content that you do not plan to remix.

- **Synchronization**
  - **Parent Chapter**
    - Active Viewing Guide Template
  - **Synchronize with Parent**
    - ✔ Yes, synchronize with parent
      
      If synchronized, all changes made to this chapter will be overwritten by the parent chapter, and whenever the parent chapter is saved, this chapter will be updated as well. Only use this option if you want this chapter's content to constantly reflect that of the parent chapter.

      Save chapter
Feature List

EdTech Books provides various features to authors and readers. This page provides an abbreviated list of all of these features.

### Content Editing

- [Google Docs importer](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
- Wikipedia article importer
- [Easy WYSIWYG editor](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC) (using TinyMCE)
- Media library
- [LaTeX Equations](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
- [Easy image embedding](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
- [Easy YouTube and Vimeo embedding](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
- Easy H5P embedding
- HTML source editing
- [CSS overrides for books and chapters](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
- Easy chapter importing
- Automatic citation generation
- [Multi-language support](https://edtechbooks.org/-GMC)
• Chapter synchronization

Formatting

• Mobile-first, flexible design
• Professional, minimalist aesthetic
• PDF downloads of each book and chapter (mobile- and print-friendly formats)
• MS Word downloads of each chapter
• Simple view of any chapter
• Automatic URL shortening

Navigation

• Clean (short) URLs (e.g., https://edtechbooks.org/ux)
• Automatic chapter side navigation of headings, images, and tables
• Item-level linking (e.g., each paragraph)
• Automatic QR codes
• Automatic book indices
• Easy embedding into Canvas (and other LMSs)

Analytics

• End-of-chapter quality surveys
• Reading heat maps

Advanced Features

• A/B testing via Flights
• Interactive quizzes and surveys
• Chapter narrations
• Cross-site embedding
• Open Read API
• Data analytics on users
• Multi-site, cloud-based hosting
Community Meeting 2021

Royce Kimmons

This presentation was delivered on December 9, 2021 as part of our inaugural EdTechBooks.org Strategic Planning Meeting. In this meeting, we explained the current state of the site and provided the community with opportunities to give feedback, ask questions, and shape priorities for the site’s future.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-UADd
Book Authors
Dr. Royce Kimmons is an Associate Professor of Instructional Psychology and Technology at Brigham Young University where he studies digital participation divides specifically in the realms of social media, open education, and classroom technology use. More information about his work may be found at http://roycekimmons.com, and you may also dialogue with him on Twitter @roycekimmons.
Julie Irvine

Julie is an undergraduate student at Brigham Young University. She is majoring in editing and publishing and minoring in creative writing. Julie has three years of editing experience and over five years of writing experience. She loves editing, writing, and storytelling. Julie has been an editor for EdTech Books for 1.5 years, and she has enjoyed working on open resource textbooks, writing research articles, and bringing the vision of EdTech Books to university students. If you’d like to reach out to Julie about editing or writing opportunities, she can be reached by email or through her LinkedIn profile.
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