

Making a printed page readable

Sofia Marino / 2026-04-15

A clear reading order

Readers need to identify the title, the main sections and the next action without inspecting every line. Use a small number of heading sizes and repeat their meaning consistently.

Place a label close to the value it describes. A wide gap can make a reader associate the label with the wrong number.

Type and spacing

Body text should have enough space between lines to remain readable in a long paragraph. Narrow columns often work better for short reference material than a full-width line.

Use tabular alignment for comparable numbers. Keep the unit beside the value or state it clearly in the column heading.

Checking the printed result

Print at the intended size before approving a layout. A page that looks clear when enlarged on a monitor may have small labels on paper.

Ask a reader to find a specific date, amount or instruction. Observe where they hesitate rather than only asking whether they like the design.

Key terms

Hierarchy: The order of importance shown through position and type.

Alignment: Placing related elements along a common edge.

Contrast: A visible difference between elements.

Questions for review

- When would a table be clearer than a paragraph?
- How could you test whether a deadline is easy to find?