CREATING SIGNAGE & GRAPHICS

WHEN YOU'RE NOT A GRAPHIC DESIGNER

PRESENTED BY BETHANY FLEMING FOR GAYLORD ARCHIVAL

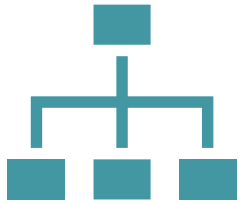
INTRODUCTIONS

Bethany Fleming

Exhibit Developer &
Museum Consultant

FLEMING
MUSEUM CONSULTING

CREATING SIGNAGE & GRAPHICS

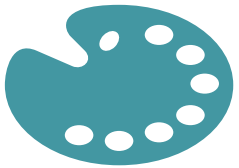


Content & Graphic Hierarchy

Label Copy

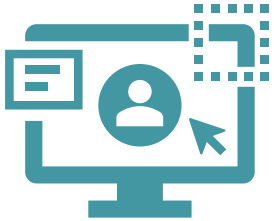
Typography

Color



Design Elements

Graphic Types



Design Software

Design Basics

Images

Printing & Mounting

CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Organize Your Content

Create a content outline

Consumers Energy – Learning Lab [working title]

Content Outline DRAFT v3 June 16, 2016

01.01 **Exhibit Title**

01.02 **Icons**

01.03 **Guiding Principles**

- **Guiding Principles**
  - We Act with Integrity: We believe integrity is a cornerstone of business success.
  - We Earn Our Customers' Business 24/7: We believe serving our neighbors, friends and family is an honor and privilege that must be earned every day.
  - We Cross the Finish Line Together: We believe success is achieved when we work together.
  - We Put Points on the Board: We believe success depends on delivering meaningful results.
  - We Leave It Better Than We Found It: We believe lasting value is created through making improvements every day.
  - It's a Great Place to Work: We believe in an environment where we can contribute to our full potential.

02.01 **Making Consumers Energy Great**

- **Consumers Energy is a Great Place to Work: Developing Employees**
  - Leaders are Teachers
    - Leaders share their knowledge and experience
    - Leaders model leadership principles and guide leadership development
  - We are a learning organization
    - Continuous development is key
    - We learn from each other
    - We collaborate
  - Leadership development is a priority
    - Leading with Impact (leaders of other leaders)
    - Emerging Leaders (leaders of individual contributors)
    - Curriculum of development opportunities
    - Customer Relationship Managers (CRMs) able to partner with the business to plan
  - Employees take responsibility for their own development
    - Employees work with their supervisors to find development opportunities through the Performance Expectations Feedback and Development (PEFD) process
    - Employees seek out self-development opportunities

CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Organize Your Content

Even better, create an exhibit script

Centier Bank Whiting Branch Museum Exhibit
Exhibition Script Outline DRAFT v13
January 12, 2021

This script outline shows each individual element of the exhibit. This version includes the first draft of final text. **Within the center column, text in italics is descriptive, non-italic text is actual label copy.**

Outline Color Key

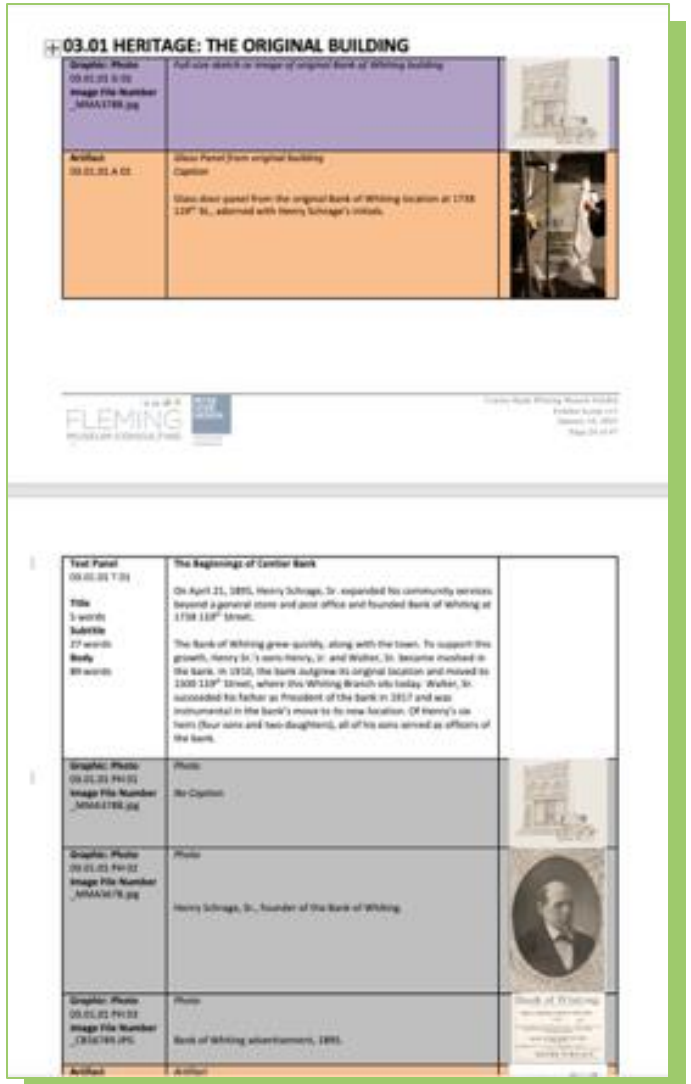
Gray	Graphic – Individual Photos, Murals, or Collages
Purple	Graphic – Created Graphics, Dimensional Graphics or Letters
White	Text – Panels, Dimensional Letters, or Integrated into Graphic
Green	Media Interactive – Touchscreen Interactives, Audio-Visual Interactives
Blue	Kinesthetic Interactive – Physical and Manipulative Interactives
Red	LightBox – Backlit Graphics, Photos, etc.
Orange	Artifact – Touchable or Non-Touchable Artifacts, in Open or Closed Cases

01.01 EXHIBIT TITLE

Graphic: Title 01.01.00 T 01 **Title** 3 Words	**Centier Bank Museum**

01.02 GLASS PANEL GRAPHICS

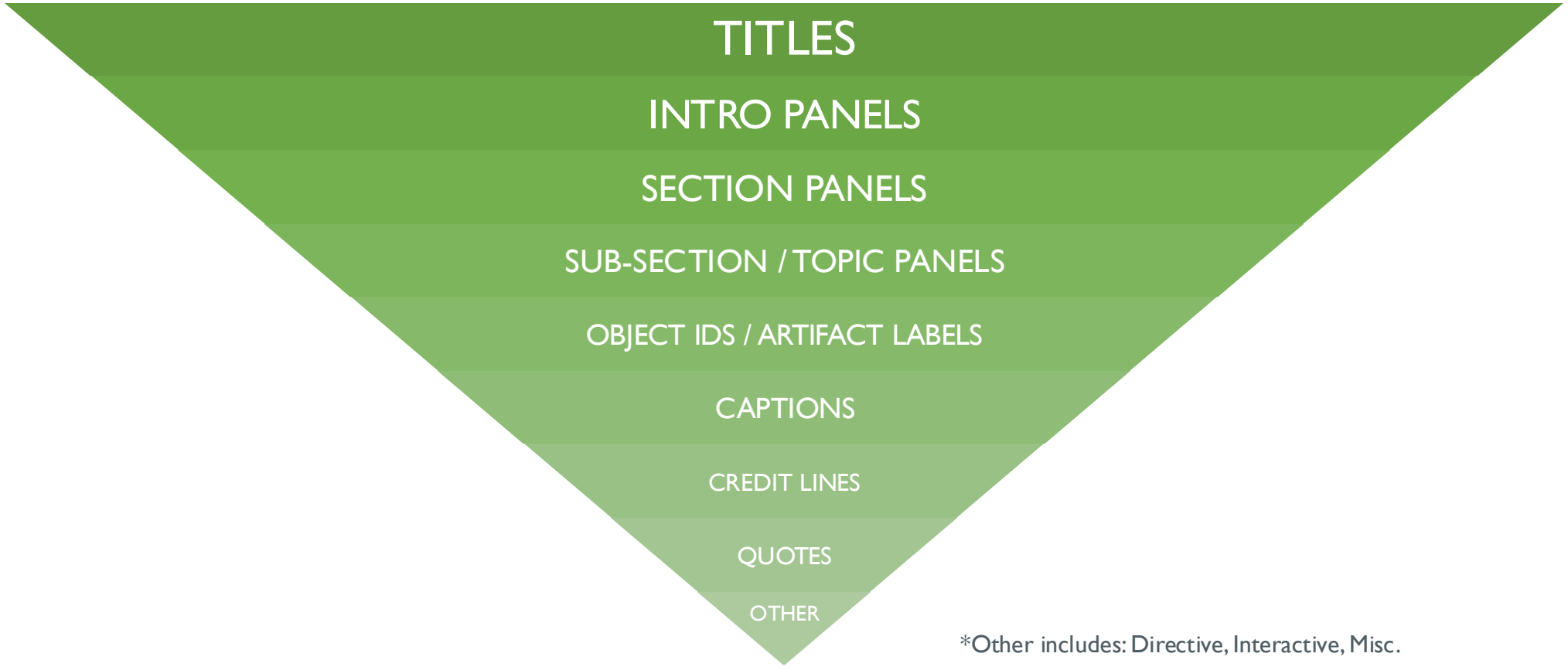
Graphic: Photo 01.02.00 G 01 **Image File Number** SP.01.053 And SP367_17in.tif	*Photo of Whiting Branch, current location, June 21, 1917.*	
Text Panel 01.02.01 T 01 **Title** 8 words **Body** 28 words	**The Whiting Branch of Centier Bank in 1917** In 1910, the Bank of Whiting moved from its original location at 1738 119th Street to 1500 119th Street, where the Whiting Branch of Centier Bank remains today.	



CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Create a Graphic Hierarchy

Think about your content, your space and the overall design



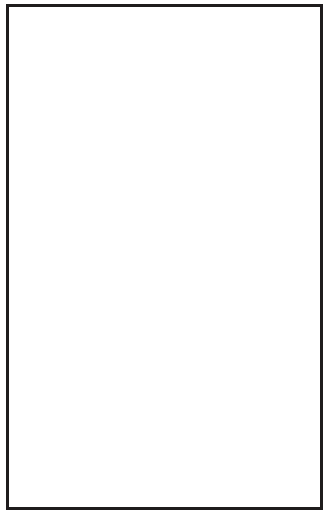
*Other includes: Directive, Interactive, Misc.

CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Label Copy Standards

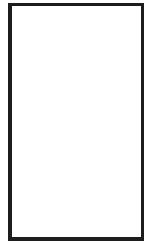
Create word counts and decide on titles, headlines, subheads, etc.

The LESS you write, the MORE people will read!



Intro Panels
58.5"x36", 22.5"x36"*
title: ~5 words
body: 125 words
images: 1-2 w/captions

Section Panel
14"x22.5"
title: ~5 words
body: 50-75 words
questions:
~15 words/one-liner;
kid-oriented.
images: 0**



Topic Panel
8"x14"
title: ~5 words
body: 25-50 words
questions:
~15 words/one-liner;
kid-oriented.
images: 0**

To accompany a group of artifacts and/or images.

Artifact Label
5.325"x3.125"
title: ~5 words
body: 20 words
images: 0

CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Label Copy Standards

Create word counts and decide on titles, headlines, subheads, etc.

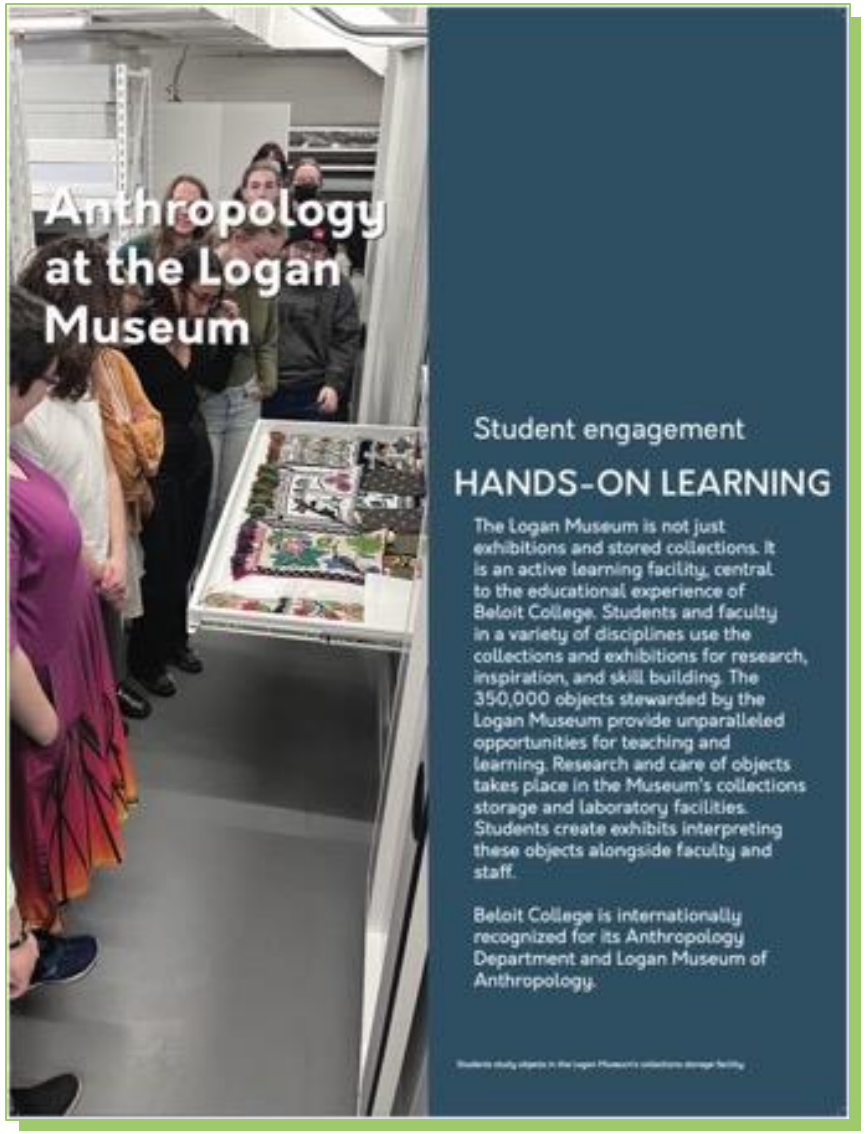
TITLES	1-7 words
INTRO PANELS	<150 words
OTHER PANELS	<100 words
CAPTIONS	<30 words
QUOTES	As short as possible

CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

Label Copy Standards

You don't need to write to the lowest common denominator, but do keep it simple.

- Keep your writing relevant and relatable to your primary audience
- Make sure labels connect to the exhibit's "Big Idea" and to what is on display
- Avoid complex, compound and long sentences
- Break text up into levels using titles, headlines, and multiple paragraphs or statements by priority of information

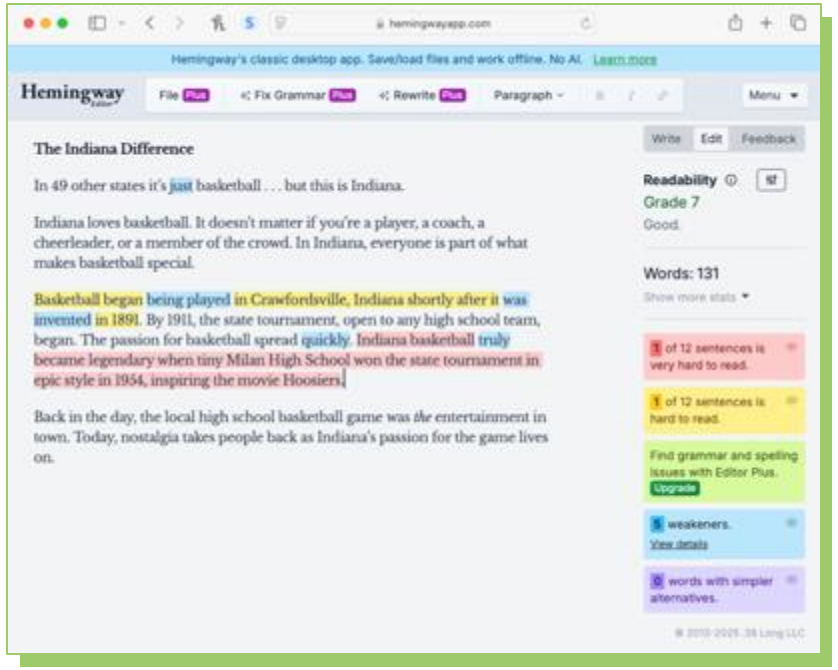


CONTENT & GRAPHIC HIERARCHY

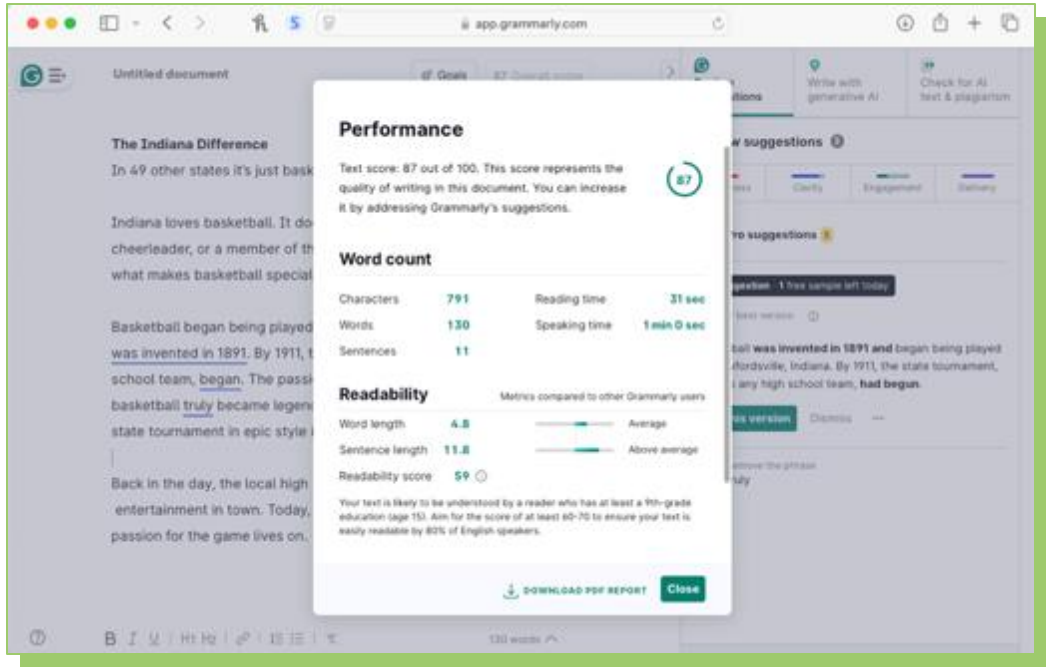
Writing & Editing Tools

Use free editing sites and apps to help you write better labels

Hemingway Editor, Hemingwayapp.com



Grammarly, Grammarly.com



Others:

readabilityformulas.com; charactercounttool.com

TYPOGRAPHY, FONTS, COLORS

Font Types & Styles

Choose fonts that fit your exhibit design, but are also easy to read

BODY COPY

Serif

Source Serif Pro
Times New Roman
Baskerville
Garamond
Goudy Old Style
Georgia
Merriweather

Sans Serif

Roboto
Gill Sans
Gotham
Avenir
Eurostile
Futura
Arial

TITLES, QUOTES, SPECIAL

Script and Display

Edwardian Script
Brush Script
Rockwell
Blackoak
Old Newspaper
Primetime
ENGRAVERS

Stick to 2-3 fonts at most.
Use different weights within your main font (**bold,** regular, *italic*, medium).
Sans serif is thought to be more readable, but with adequate spacing, either can work.

TYPOGRAPHY, FONTS, COLORS

Contrast & Spacing

Colors and spacing make a huge difference

LEADING:

vertical spacing

Leading adjusts how text is vertically spaced. It is a specific aspect of line spacing.

Leading adjusts how text

is vertically spaced. It is a

specific aspect of line spacing.

KERNING:

space between individual letters

AVA

A VA

HIERARCHY & CONTRAST

IN TYPOGRAPHY

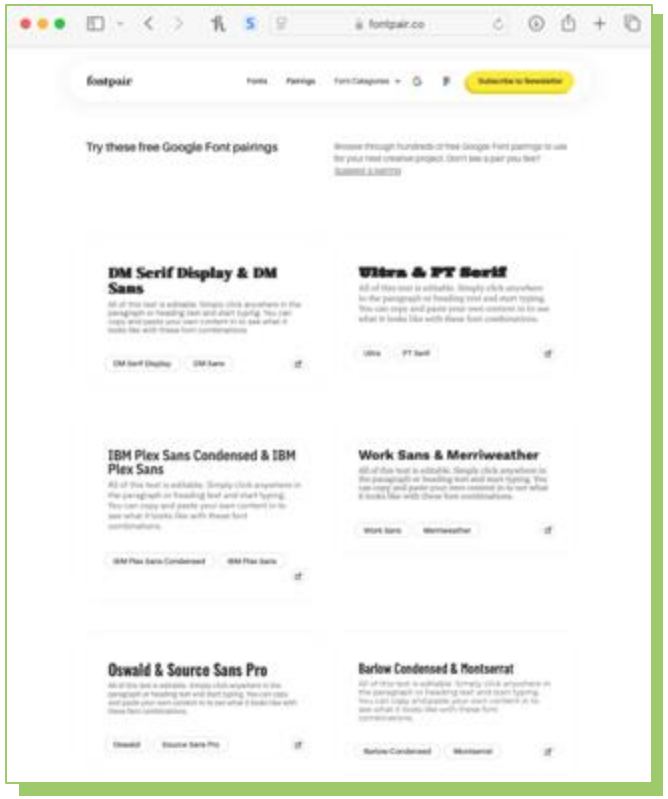
Hierarchy: arranging elements of different importance

Contrast: differences in size, **weight**, and color for readability and *emphasis*

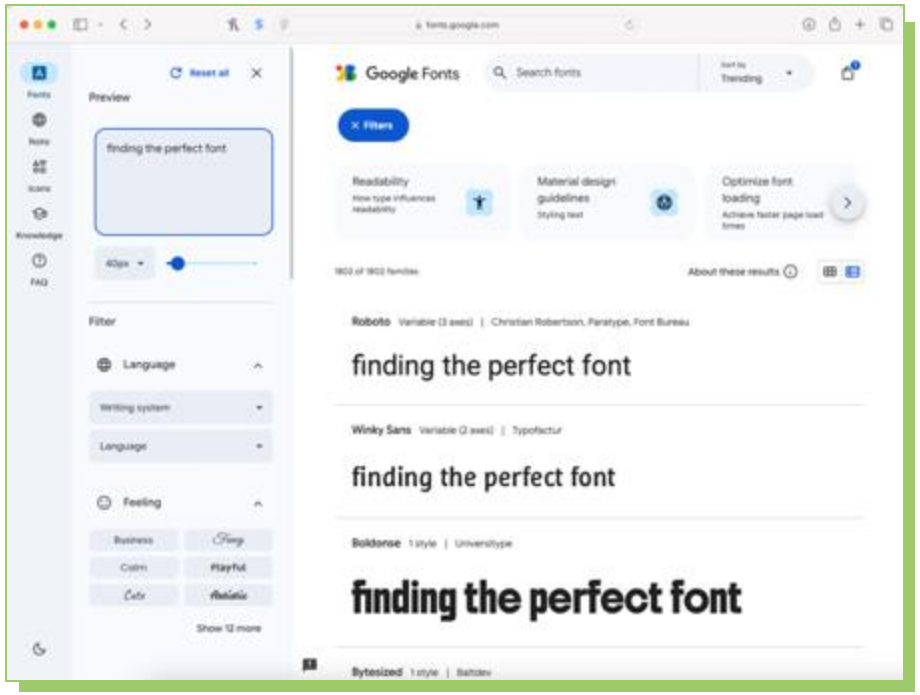
TYPOGRAPHY, FONTS, COLORS

Tools for Choosing Fonts and Colors

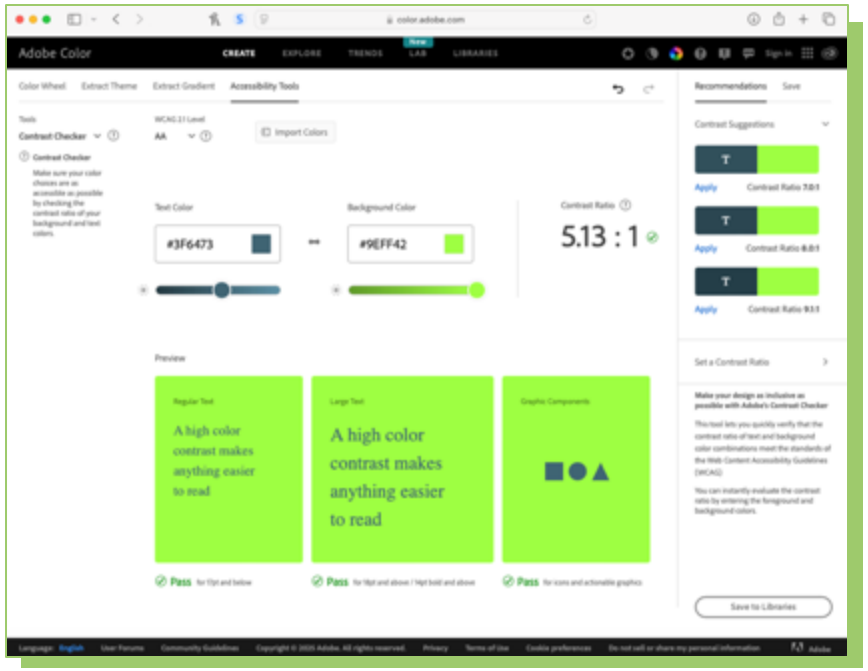
fontpair.co



fonts.google.com



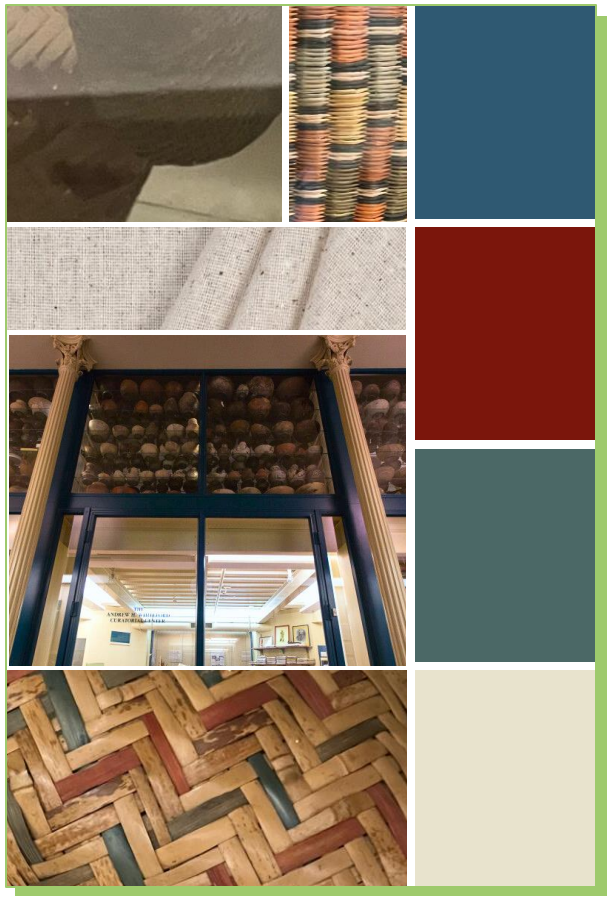
color.adobe.com

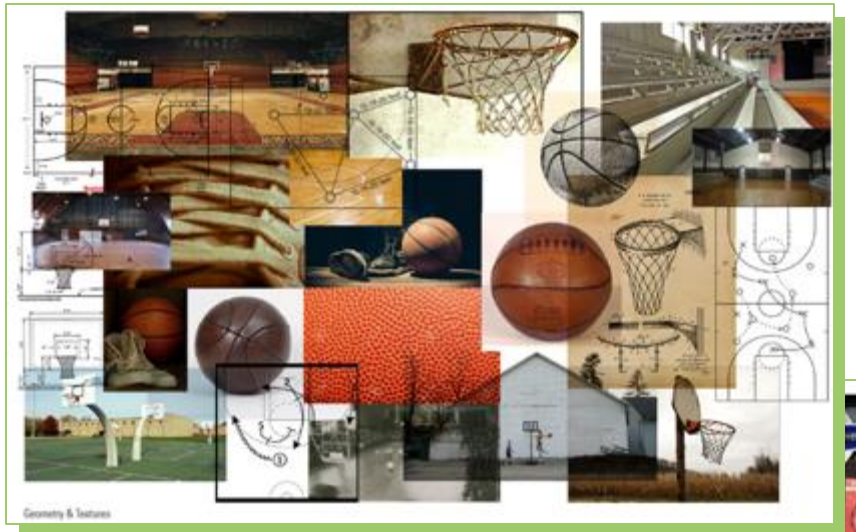


DESIGN ELEMENTS

The "Look & Feel" of Your Exhibit

Lean into your content (images, artifacts, etc.) to create your graphic style

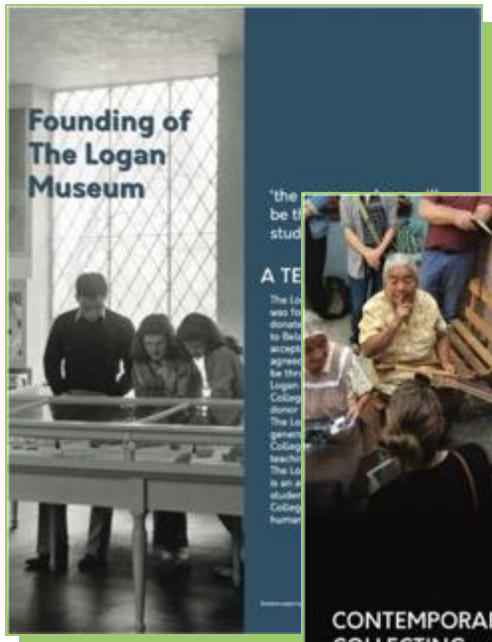


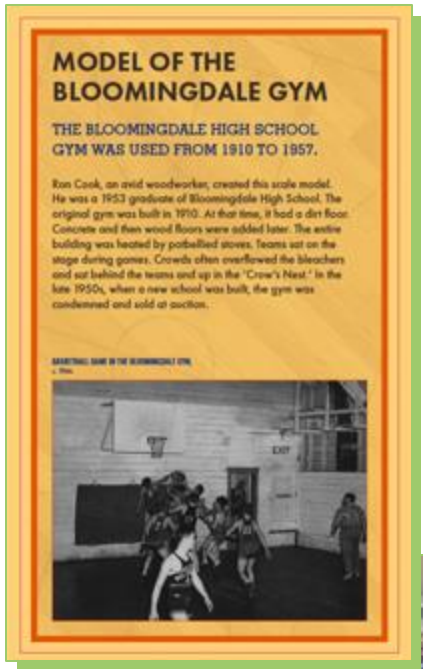


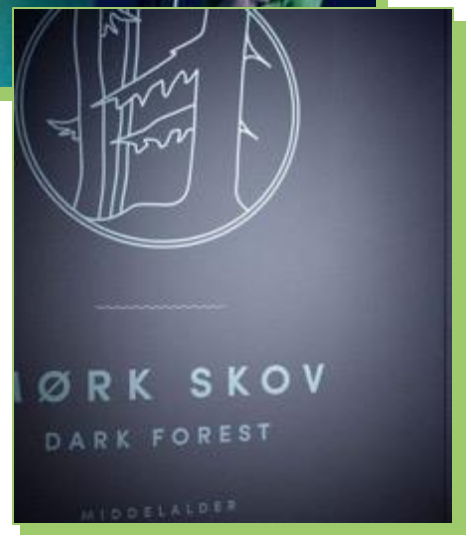
DESIGN ELEMENTS

Motifs & Design Elements

Simple motifs and elements, repeated consistently, can strengthen your design







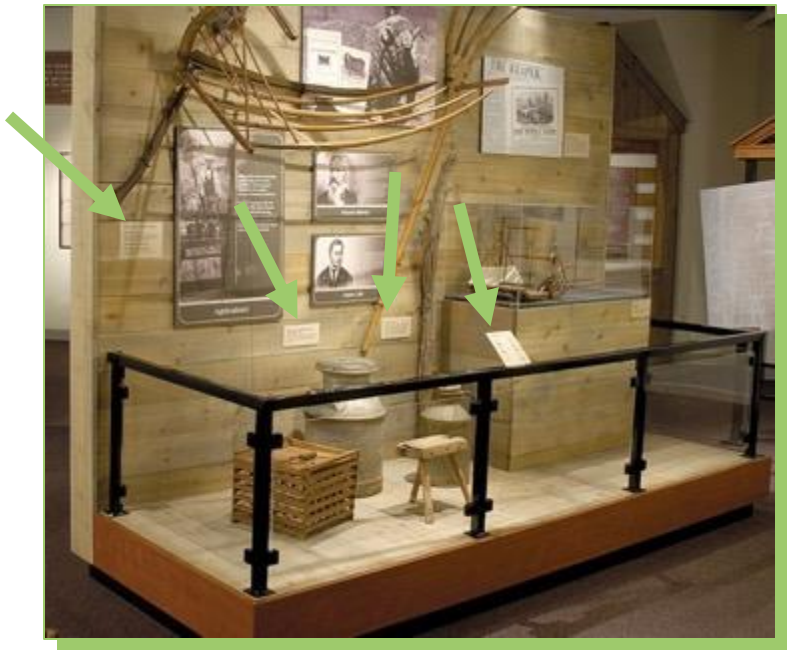
TYPES OF GRAPHICS

Simple, Somewhat Temporary Options

Foamcore

Gatorboard/Ultraboard

Matboard



TYPES OF GRAPHICS

More Permanent Options

Acrylic

Sintra / PVC

Direct Print

TYPES OF GRAPHICS

Specialty Graphics

Vinyl

Banners

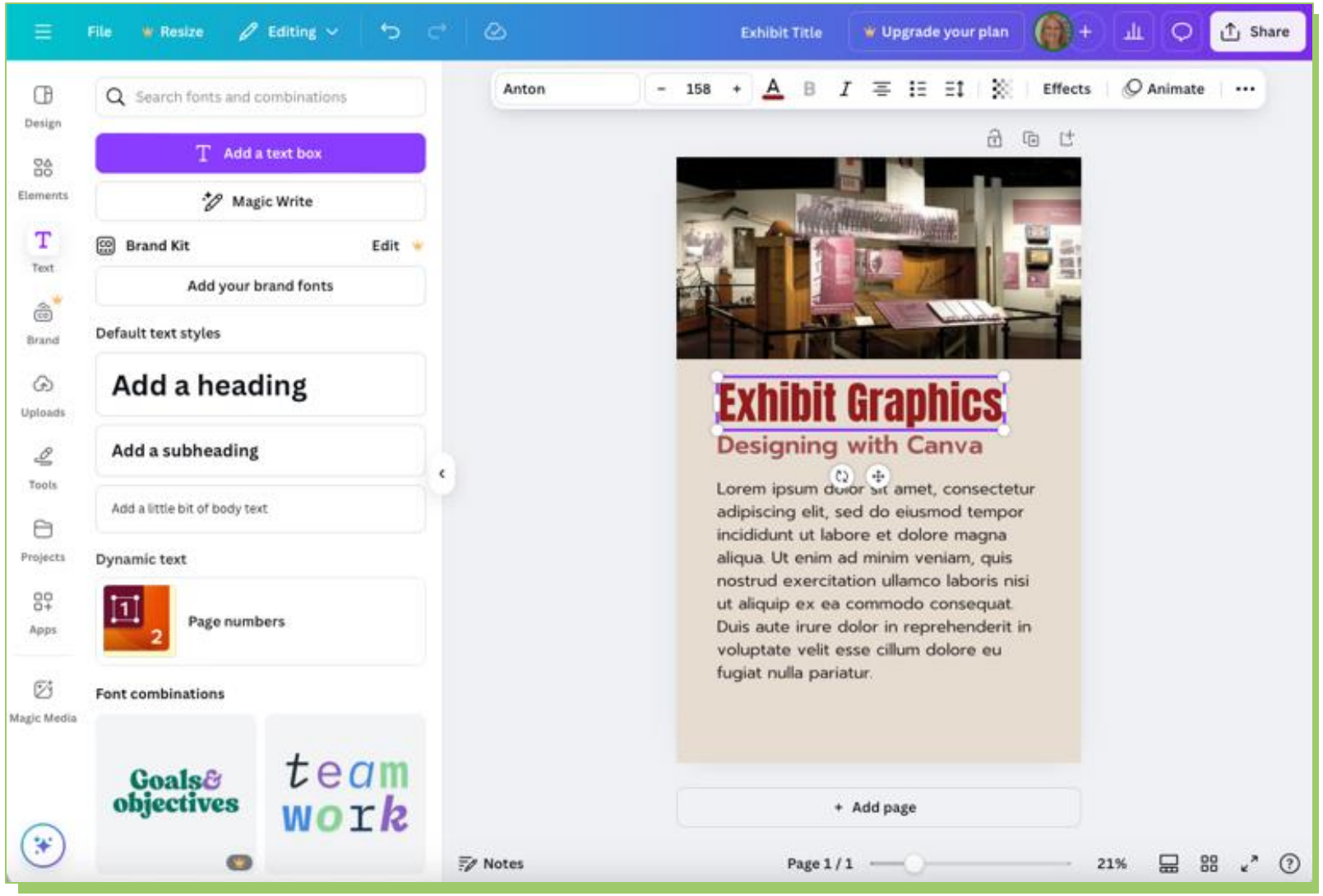
Gaylord Archival® Custom Vinyl Hanging Banner, VHB63, VHB84, VHB42

Gaylord Archival® Custom Vinyl Retractable Banner Stand, BS6086, BS3186, BS4786

Wallpaper

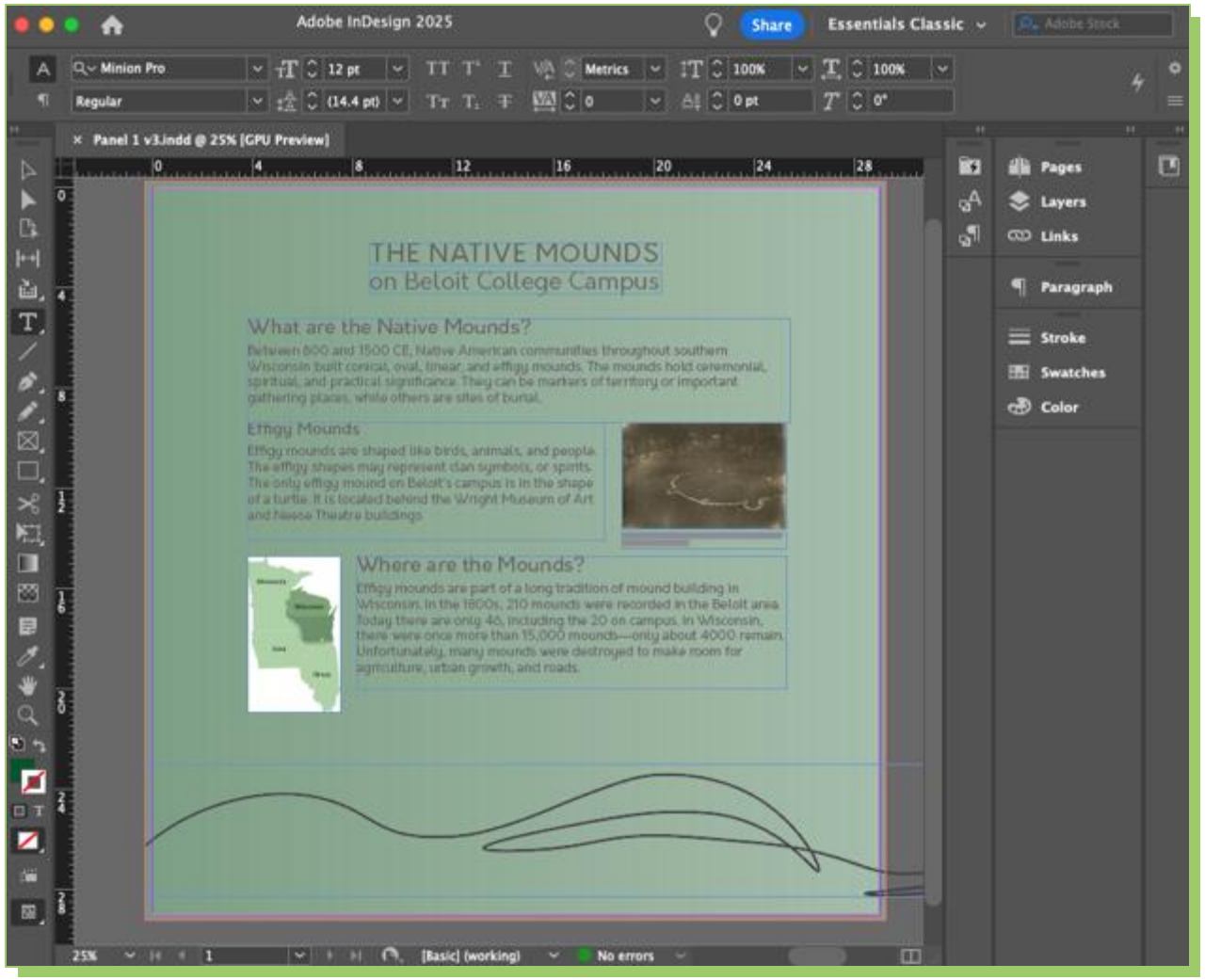
DESIGN SOFTWARE

Canva



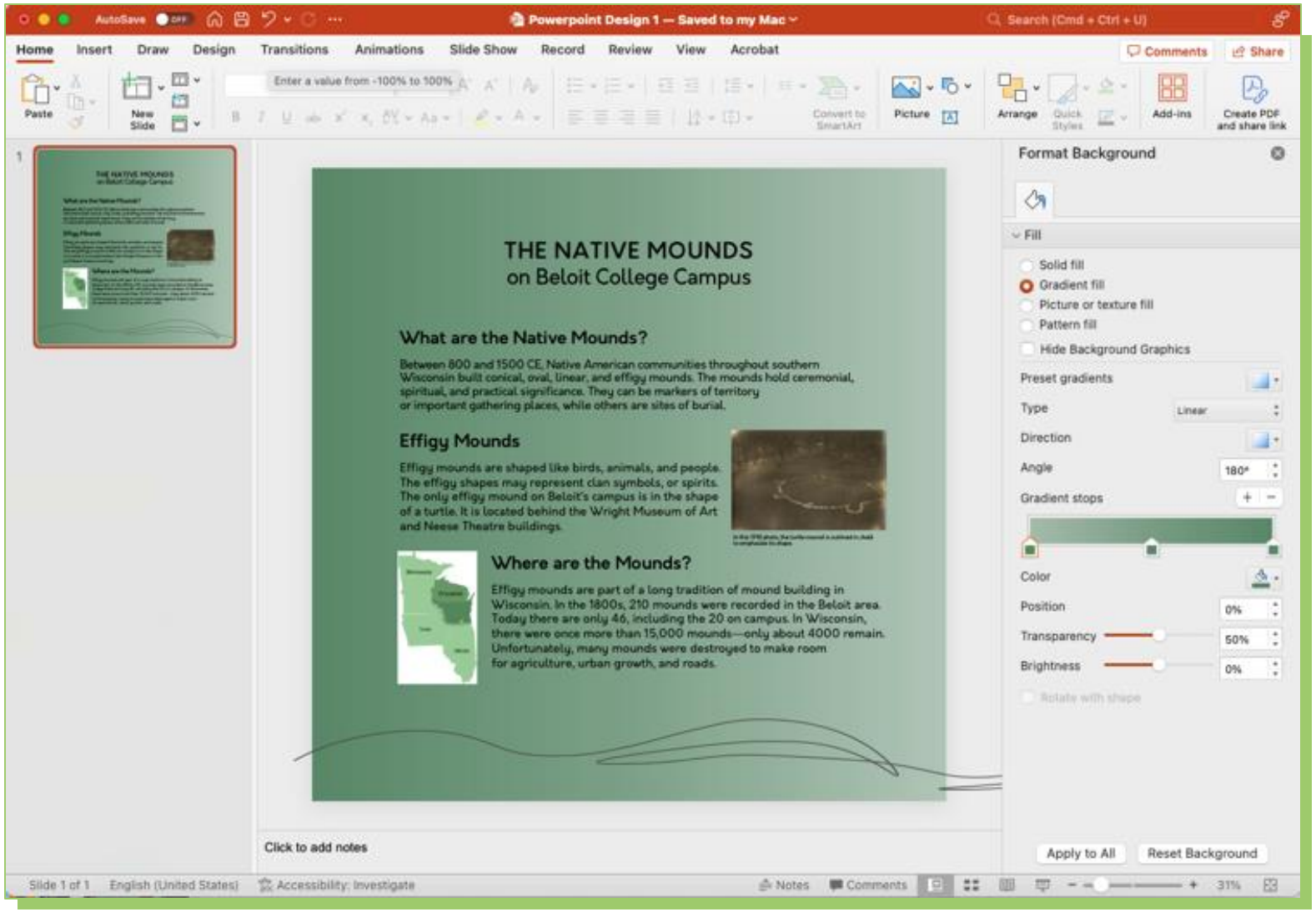
DESIGN SOFTWARE

Adobe



DESIGN SOFTWARE

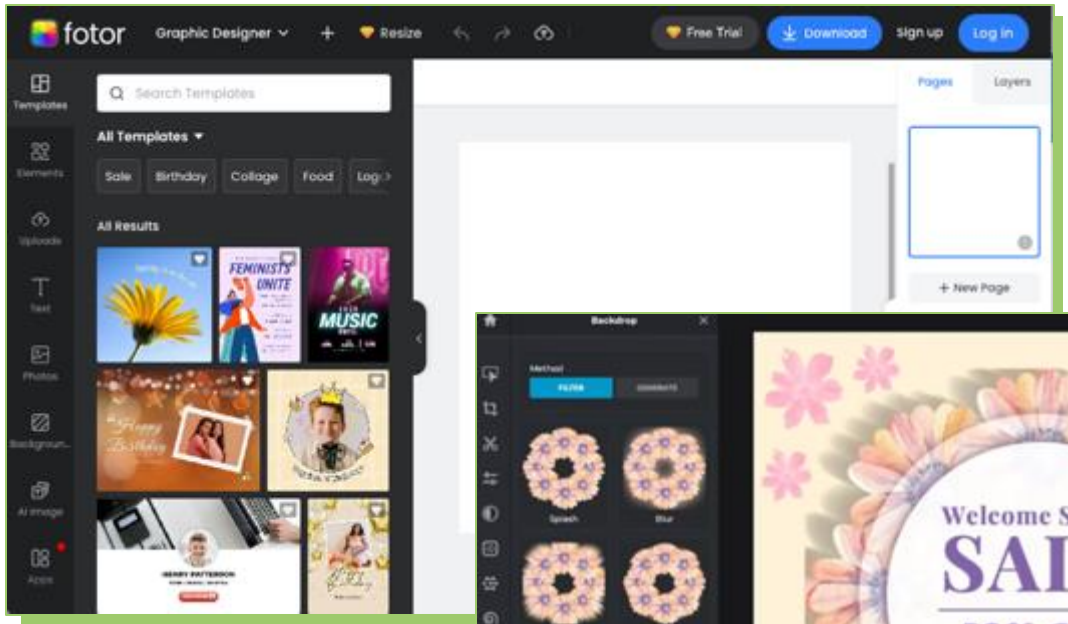
Microsoft PowerPoint



DESIGN SOFTWARE

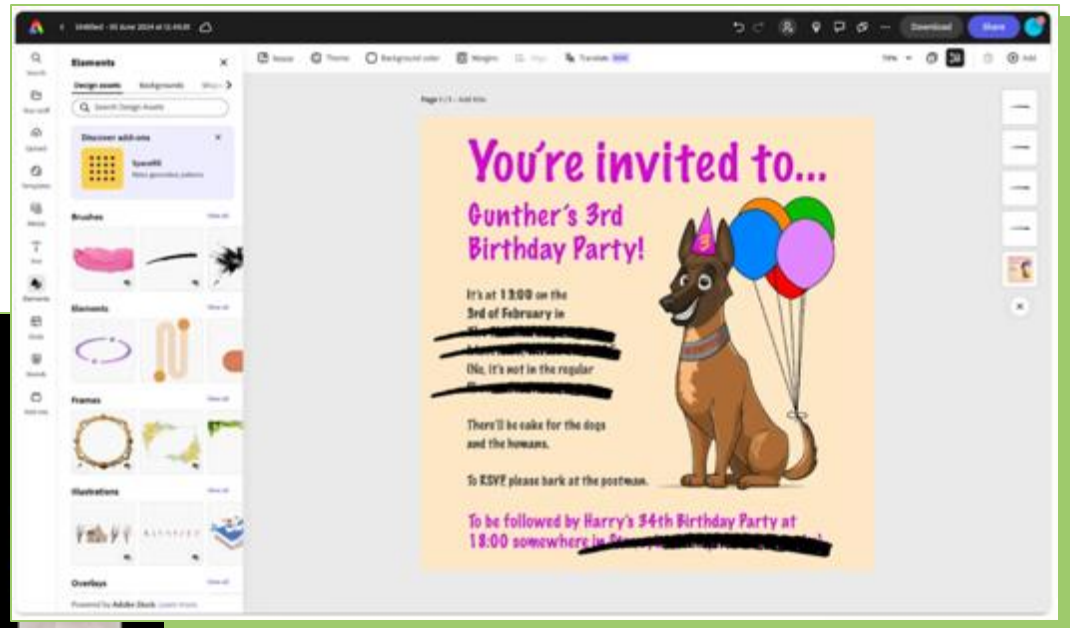
Other Options

Fotor



Pixlr

Adobe Express



All: Free with Paid Plan Options

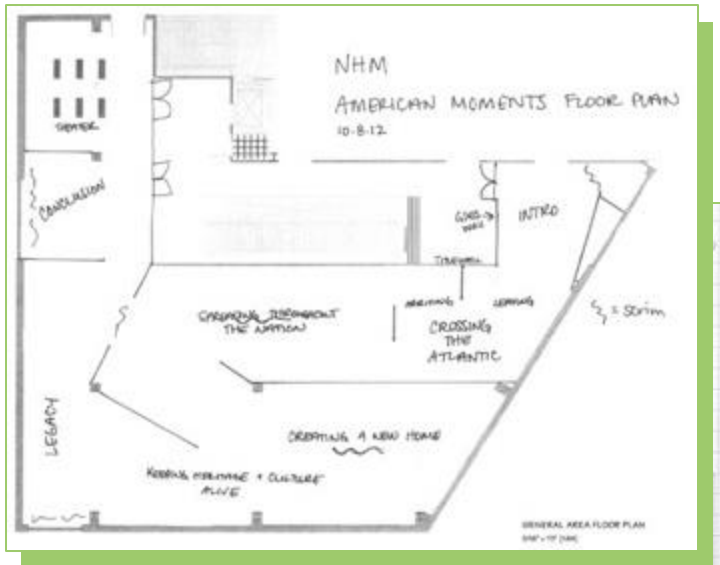
CREATING DESIGNS

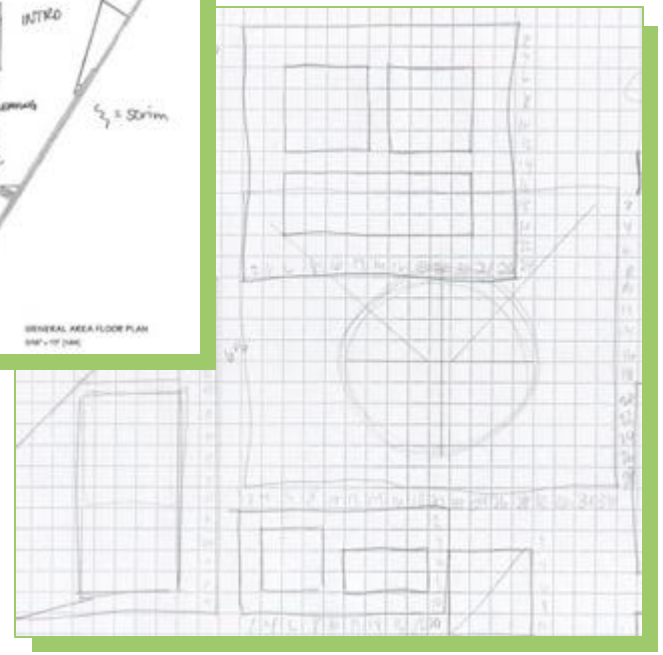
Map it Out

Create a simple floor plan and match your layout with your content

Digital: Existing Plans, Design Software

Analog: Existing Plans, Graph Paper



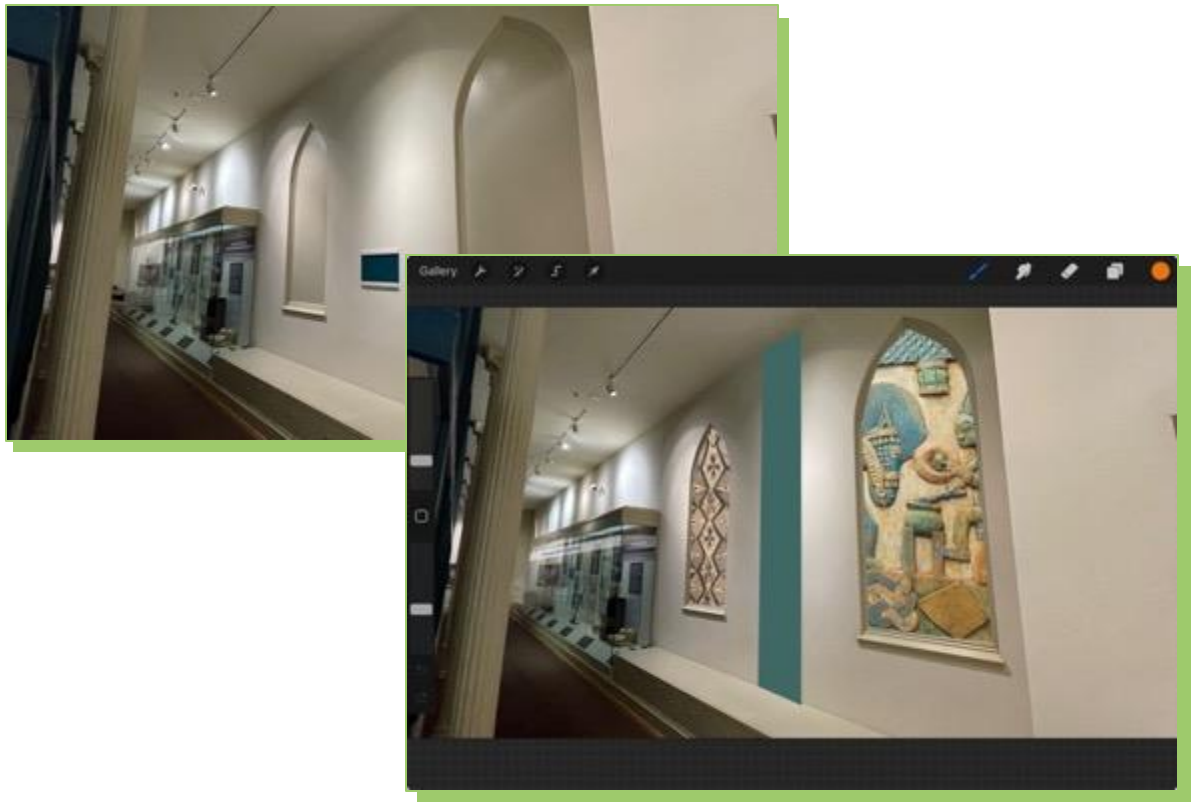


CREATING DESIGNS

Visualize It

Take photos and try out different options to visualize your graphics

Digital: Procreate, Photoshop



Analog: Photos and Cutouts

Tip: photos taken at a straight angle (unlike these) makes this much easier.

CREATING DESIGNS

Sizes

Decide sizes for graphics based on your hierarchy, space and style

Take advantage of your space
(architectural features, high ceilings, etc.)

Use different sizes and graphic types according to your hierarchy, but be consistent

CREATING DESIGNS

Create Templates that Match Your Hierarchy

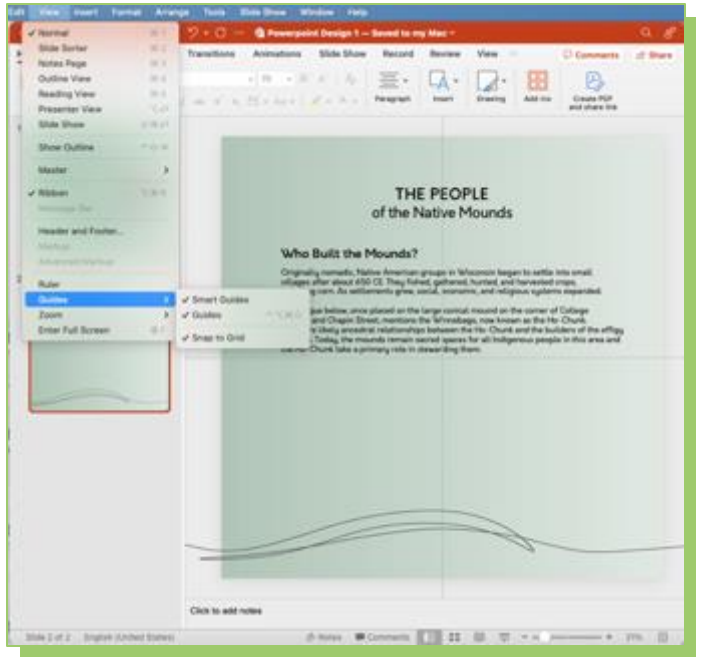
Be consistent—this not only makes it easier for you, but also your visitor!

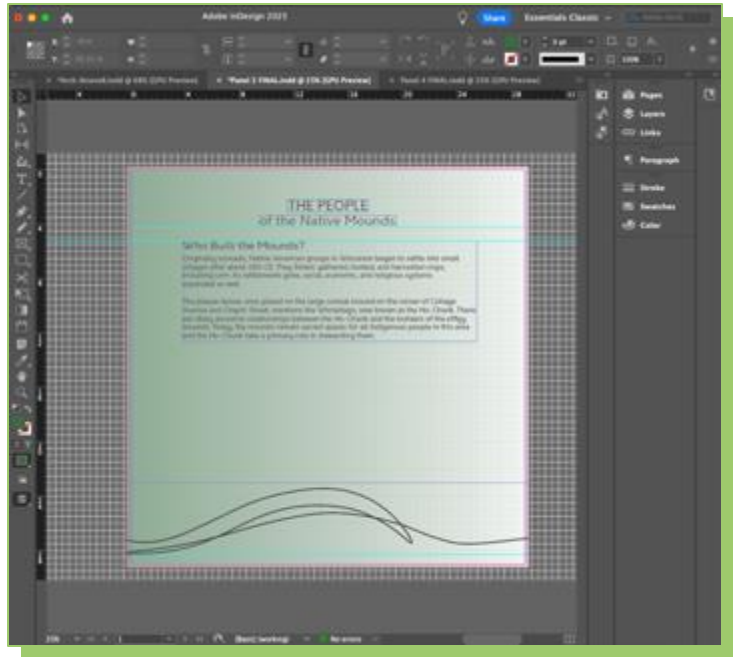
Typography:
Use the same font sizes and weights for chosen elements.

Location of Elements:
Use gridlines and duplicate or copy to ensure elements stay consistent.

Copy:
Keep to your chosen word counts so it's easier to lay in text on each panel.

Design Elements/Motifs:
Use variations in colors and motifs to help orient visitors, but be consistent.





CREATING DESIGNS

Use Simple Structural Elements

Create Relationships with Alignment, Grouping and Simple Elements

Simple borders, shapes, lines, colors, and other elements can help create strong visual relationships that elevate your graphics.

Left justification is best (right and full are much harder to use well and keep easily readable).

Adjust words so there are no ‘widows and orphans’ and no unnecessarily hyphenated words.

Birds of America

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore.

Birds of America

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

Sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore.

CREATING DESIGNS

Use High Resolution Images

Use the highest resolution you can scan or acquire

Scan images from your collections at the highest level your scanner can handle (at least 600 dpi).

Acquire the highest resolution available from online sources. An image can look okay on the screen, but when printed on a large graphic can look blurry or pixelated.

HIGH RES IMAGE 300dpi

LOW RES IMAGE 72dpi

CREATING DESIGNS

Not All Images Are Free to Use

Double check the usage rights before using an image

Images from news sites, Flickr, Getty, and many other sites require permission and licenses for use and high-res files.

Even free images often require attribution on your graphics.

Websites with High-Res, Rights Free Images

- **Library of Congress**
- **NASA**
- **Wikimedia Commons**
- **Unsplash**
- **Pixabay**
- **Pexels**
- **MorgueFile**
- **ISO Republic**
- **StockSnap.io**
- **Gratisography**
- **Life of Pix**
- **New Old Stock (nos.twnsnd.co)**
- **Libreshot**
- **Freerange Stock**
- **Negative Space**
- **PikWizard**
- **Noun Project (Icons)**
- **Vecteezy (Photos, Videos, Illustrations)**
- **ReShot (Icons & Illustrations)**

PRINTING & MOUNTING

DIY Printing & Mounting

With the right equipment you can create high quality graphics

Printing Larger Than Letter- or Legal-Size Will Make a Difference

A large format printer and a dry mounting press can be worthwhile investments for creating your own graphics.

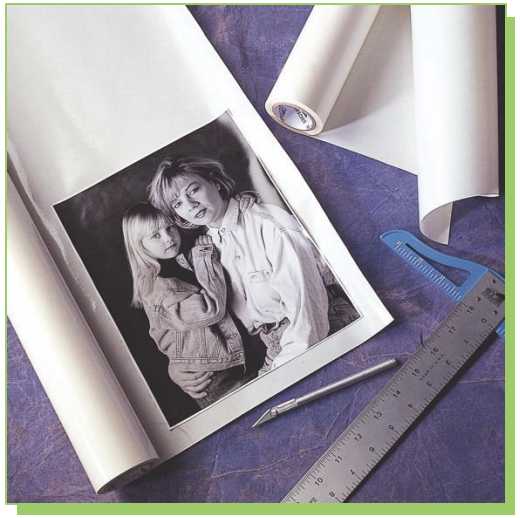
Order Prints, Mount Yourself

Check out architectural printing companies for affordable large format prints.

Cricut & Silhouette Cutting Machines

Create vinyl titles, quotes and shapes.

Mounting Adhesive



Neschen gudy® 870 Mounting Adhesive, GUDY-244

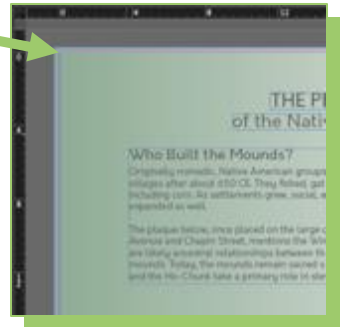
PRINTING & MOUNTING

Sending Things Off to Print

A few simple steps can make creating print-ready files easier

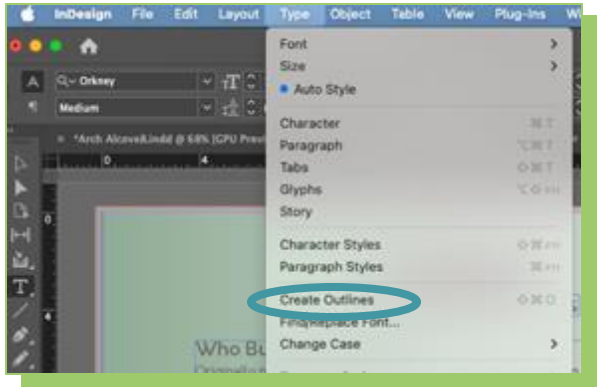
Use Bleed for Edge-to-Edge Graphics

In design software, add bleed to your documents when you set them up.



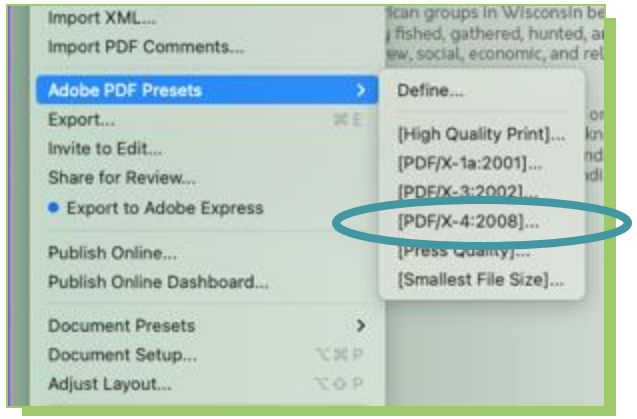
In Powerpoint, add .25 to all graphic dimensions (in Page Setup), and allow colors, shapes, etc. to go beyond the edge.

Some Printers Require Outlines



Outlines are only available in design software. They convert text to shapes so its more consistent.

Save as the best PDF Possible



Unless your printer has different preferences, use PDF/X.

PRINTING & MOUNTING

Double Check Everything

Allow Time for Proofing and Editing

Have Others Proof Your Graphics

Even with proofing, "Fox Rivr" in the caption was missed.

Budget in Time & Costs for Samples and Proofs

- **Soft/Screen Proofs** – digital PDFs (usually no extra cost)
- **Hard/Lo Res Proofs** – printed on paper
- **Hard/High Res & Digital Proofs** – closest without final materials
- **Wet & Press Proofs** – almost exact replication

Bethany Fleming

Exhibit Developer &
Museum Consultant

FLEMING
MUSEUM CONSULTING

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UPCOMING WEBINAR:

AV Preservation 101

with Rebecca Elder
Thursday, May 22nd
at 2PM ET

THANK YOU!