



Design Resource Sheet

Storytelling Through Design: Navigating Canva & Designing Graphics That Communicate Impact

General Design Tips

- Use hierarchy to guide the reader's eye. Make the most important information the most prominent.
- Leave white space. Empty space improves readability and helps important content stand out.
- Align related content to create a clean, organized layout.
- Stick to one or two fonts per design.
- Limit your color palette to two or three primary colors.
- Use high-contrast text and backgrounds to improve readability.
- Make slight edits to photos before using them (crop, exposure, contrast, vibrance, etc.).
- Use high-resolution images for print.
- Use original or properly licensed imagery whenever possible.

Before You Publish: Ask Yourself...

- Is the purpose immediately clear?
- Is the most important information the first thing people notice?
- Can someone understand this in 10 seconds?
- Is there enough white space?
- Is the text easy to read?
- Are all dates, times, links, and contact information correct?
- Is there a clear call to action?

Canva Tips & Time Savers

- Use templates as starting points—not finished products.
- Lock elements before editing other parts of your design.
- Duplicate elements instead of recreating them.
- Group related objects to keep layouts together.
- Save frequently used colors, fonts, and graphics.

Photo Tips

- Crop distracting backgrounds.
- Straighten horizons when needed.
- Increase contrast and vibrance subtly.
- Avoid stretching or distorting images.

- Use close-up images when telling personal stories.
- Consider the Rule of Thirds.

Accessibility Tips

- Use sufficient color contrast.
- Avoid relying on color alone to communicate meaning.
- Choose readable fonts.
- Keep body text at a comfortable reading size.
- Add alt text to online graphics whenever possible.

Free Design Resources

- Photos: Unsplash, Pexels, Pixabay, Canva Photos
- Icons & Graphics: Canva Elements, The Noun Project
- Color Inspiration: Adobe Color, Coolers
- Fonts: Google Fonts

Copyright & Image Use

- Do not copy images directly from Google Images.
- Look for Creative Commons or royalty-free licensing.
- Review licensing before using icons or graphics.
- When in doubt, use your own photography or trusted free resources.

Common Design Mistakes

- Too much text
- Too many fonts
- Low-resolution photos
- Poor contrast
- Everything is the same size
- No clear call to action

Understanding File Types

Use	File Type
Social media	PNG or JPG
Professional printing	PDF
Transparent logos	PNG
Photographs	JPG

RGB is typically used for digital materials, while CMYK is generally used for professional printing.