

Design Rationale

Objective

Produce a small website, comprising 3 webpages. The design is focused entirely on typesetting and color. The homepage features a 600+-word piece of text, and two supplementary pages of content have ~600-word objective and subjective analyses of the text.

Problem to Solve

Present large blocks of text in a readable, attractive way, without relying on imagery to break up the text.

Process

- Prepare documentation, select visual elements and create a plan.
- Select a 600+-word section of the original text and write the supplementary content.
- Organize the content correctly in HTML following best hierarchical practices and minimalist, semantic code.
- Implement the visual plan via CSS.
- Gather feedback and refine prior to submission.

Visuals

Since the text discusses accessibility and inclusivity, the page design reflects this too. Fonts and colors were carefully selected so many different types of readers are able to engage with the text.

Fonts

Lora meets key criteria for being an inclusive font: each character looks distinct (see Example 1), and no letters mirror each other (see Example 2). These are factors that align with the ethos of the text – to consider all potential users, especially those different from yourself.

Example 1: Lowercase “L” vs. Uppercase “I”
II (Lora)
II (Arial)

Example 2: Lowercase “Q” vs. Lowercase “P”
qp (Lora)
qp (Arial)

These guidelines allowed me to rule out most sans serif fonts altogether. Since it met the criteria above, aligned with the sentiment of the book, and established an educational tone, Lora was well-suited for this project.

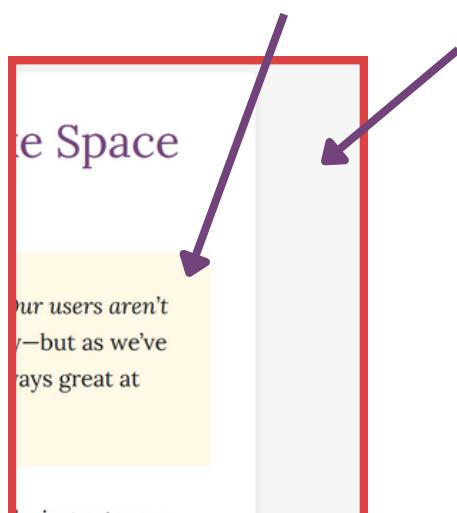
Colors

Again, accessibility was key here, due to the nature of the content I was working with. I found many online tools that help select accessible color palettes. I ultimately went with colors.co's palette selector, which let me explore lots of combinations and test them in different eyesight filters (shown below).

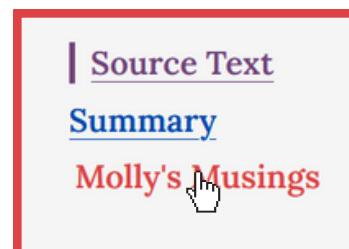
I knew I wanted to challenge myself to go with a bright color scheme, since that is completely out of my comfort zone. I tend to opt for minimalist aesthetics and earth tones. I started with the bright poppy red, something I would never ordinarily choose, and let the colors selector guide me from there to create something easily distinguishable for any viewers.

DE4343	004AAD	71437A	000000	F9FBF8	Original
9A9943	202095	5D5C6C	000000	F8FBF8	Protanopia
C17643	0031A0	685273	000000	F8FBF8	Protanomaly
A3AF43	1B168F	5F6369	000000	F8FBF8	Deuteranopia
BF6A43	0E369E	674E72	000000	F8FBF8	Deuteranomaly
D64343	03827D	6E625F	000000	F8FBF8	Tritanopia
D84343	02649A	6F516F	000000	F8FBF8	Tritanomaly
717171	3F3F3F	575757	000000	F8FBF8	Achromatopsia
A25C5C	224470	624D66	000000	F8FBF7	Achromatomaly

As I began compiling my page in the browser, that's when I added soft background colors to help with readability and a distinct visual hierarchy.



I'm particularly pleased with how nicely these colors look with link effects – something I recently learned how to do, and excited to be able to include in this design.



Layout

I decided to pivot away from my initial layout idea in my [slides](#) since learning how to make columns and grids. The left-aligned menu allows users to explore the different pages while the text panel remains the main focus. There's also a fixed max-width on the menu so that as a browser expands, the main reading panel is able to use the new added space instead of the menu taking up any of it.

Within the reading panel of the grid, distinctive header styling and spacing is used to create a visual hierarchy to guide readers in their initial skim through the page.

Additional Design Decisions

There were a few elements that I went back-and-forth over for awhile, but through research and consulting my classmates, I made some strategic decisions.

<h2> spacing

I spent a lot of time spacing out the subheads, since I wanted to make a distinct gap, but there are only two of them in my selected text, so I quickly discovered that too much of a gap for this particular selection looked really strange. I landed on a larger gap than a normal paragraph break, but nothing too extreme.

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Footer language

Since I wanted to keep the footer minimal, I went back and forth about how to label the three columns. I could either choose to be very specific with my language, which better described the content below it, or choose phrases that were more vague and the short length fit my layout better. I ended up deciding on the latter.

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Borders

The last design decision that I spent a significant portion of this project debating about was the border lines separating the sections. I liked the clear division that guides the eyes between the different sections. However, my minimalist-loving brain crept in and kept saying “but... wouldn’t it be cleaner without it?”

I sent around screenshots of both options to a few classmates, and consulted some design articles. I thought that no header border looked better on mobile/small breakpoints, but it looked too empty for wider monitors. So ultimately, borders won out – which aligns well with my goal of pushing myself out of my minimalist comfort zone.

An Exploration of Design for Real Life, Chapter 2

Source Text
Summary
Molly's Musings

Chapter 2: Make Space for Real People

OUR USERS AREN'T US. Our users aren't us. We hear this constantly—but as we've seen already, we're not always great at living it out.

It's not only a matter of considering extreme circumstances, though. Designing for real people is also about

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It's about giving people enough room within our interfaces to be themselves.

Understand your bias

Making space for our users begins with understanding our biases—something all of us have. Bias works like this. Our brains take cognitive shortcuts: rather than thinking through every situation, they conserve energy by developing “rules of thumb” to make decisions. Those rules are built off our necessarily limited past experiences. As a result, we routinely make assumptions about the world, and the people in it, based on a very limited amount of data.

In *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, psychologist Daniel Kahneman says these shortcuts come from our brains’ desire to do as much as possible using “System 1” thinking: quick, automatic decision-making. System 1 thinking is effortless, impulsive, and often stereotypical. In contrast, “System 2” thinking requires much more careful attention, and includes functions like focusing, comparing, counting, or reasoning—all of which take energy our brains want to conserve.

No top border, skinny

No top border, wide

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Top border, skinny

Top border, wide

References

[Scope for Business](#)

[How to Choose a Font](#)

[Butterick's Practical Typography](#)

[Colors](#)

[Adobe Color](#)

[Inclusive Color Palettes for the Web](#)

[Design for web - Typography](#)

[Design for web - Colour](#)