

Timing: 1 to 2 hours

Level: Ages 15 and up

# Research and writing for design projects

## Activity Overview

Depending on the project, sometimes a client or another team member will provide the content and sometimes the designer is expected to create or take the content and make it project ready. Use this activity to review the general rules of writing to facilitate how the content is written and presented and/or giving advice to a client on content creation and presentation. Additionally students will learn how to research and write content for theme, purpose, and audience.

**Note:** Portions of this activity align to the Adobe Certified Associate objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam(s) are referenced with the following format: <sup>1.1</sup>

## Activity Objectives

### Project management skills

- Synthesizing content based on analysis and reflection
- Organizing and managing content
- Repurposing content
- Working with copy
- Understanding roles and responsibilities

### Research and communication skills

- Evaluating and analyzing content validity
- Writing and creating content
- Editing content
- Communicating information to particular audiences
- Accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing content from multiple sources
- Reviewing and revising content to match goals
- Understanding the journalistic code of ethics

## Project Assets

*Guide:* Assessing content

*Acrobat guide:* Using Acrobat Comment and Markup tools

*Presentation:* Writing for the web <sup>1.2</sup>

*Guide:* Writing for the web

*Guide:* Writing effective copy

## Background preparation resources

[Technical and content information](#)

[ISTE NETS\\*S Standards for Students](#)

[Adobe Certified Associate objectives](#)

## Activity Steps

1. Introduce the concept of creating and writing for a design project. Explain that, depending on the project, sometimes a client or another team member will provide the content and sometimes the designer is expected to create or take the content and make it project ready. In either case, a review of the general rules of writing will facilitate how the content is written and presented and/or giving advice to a client on content creation and presentation.
2. Explain that before they research or write any content, students need to determine and understand the theme, purpose, audience, and goals of their final product so they can create appropriate content. If working with a client, get their approval for the theme, purpose, audience, and goals of the project. Additionally, have students conduct a client interview to ascertain the client's content needs.  
**Note:** Use the *Working with clients* activity to assist your students in conducting a client interview.
3. Review and discuss the concept of working as a team and roles. Explain that it is best to have the roles of editors and writers as separate.  
**Note:** It is recommended that students already be taught the *Introduction to project planning, project management, and teamwork* activity.

## Researching and assessing content

4. Once they confirm the theme, purpose, audience, and goals, instruct students to conduct research to help them create the necessary content. As they research, explain to students they should be constantly evaluating the validity, currency, and bias of the content they are considering referencing, specifically when they find the information on the web. Some items for them to consider include:
  - Content bias
  - Content currency
  - Content source
  - Content corroboration
5. Instruct students to appropriately apply copyright and fair use guidelines when needed.  
**Note:** If needed, review the *Copyright and fair use* activity.
6. When applicable, discuss the journalistic code of ethics and the following concepts:
  - Truth: Journalists should be honest in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information.
  - Accountability: Journalists are accountable to their audience and colleagues.
  - Fairness: Journalists should present the news impartially and fairly, clearly representing various perspectives in a story.
  - Harm and Safety: Journalists should treat sources, subjects, and colleagues with respect. They should assess any potential danger they risk for themselves, sources, subjects, or colleagues in getting a story.

## Editing content

7. Explain that all content should be reviewed for content and copy-editing. Explain the concept of creating multiple drafts and that each version of the content should be edited via team, instructor, and/or client reviews.  
**Note:** For each project, determine when and how many times the content should be submitted for instructor review and approval. If working with a client, instruct students to get approval for their final copy.
8. When editing and conducting content reviews, encourage student to utilize the commenting tools in Acrobat. Using the "I do, we do, you do" method, demonstrate how to use the commenting tools.

*Acrobat guide:* Using Acrobat Comment and Markup tools

## Writing for the web

9. If your students are working on a web project, introduce the concept of writing for the web. Some things to discuss for creating web content include:
- Reading and scanning behaviors of their audience
  - Writing for their audience
  - Best practices for writing for the web
  - Ways to optimize page content
  - Best practices for working with organizations
  - Methods for testing their content

*Presentation:* Writing for the web <sup>1,2</sup>

*Guide:* Writing for the web

## Writing copy

10. If students are working on a print or digital media publication project, introduce the concept of writing copy and the following about best practices for creating good copy:
- Writing for their audience
  - Understand a project and identifying its features and benefits
  - Create great titles and headlines
  - Match the copy to the visual design
  - Use short sentences and simple words
  - Review, edit, and tweak and do it over and over and over.

*Guide:* Writing effective copy

## Assessment:

	0 – Does not meet expectations	3 – Meets expectations	5 – Exceeds expectations
<b>Content</b>	Absent or incomplete.	<p>The content is appropriately written and communicates information to the target audience(s). The content reflects accurate information gathered from reliable sources.</p> <p>When applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content utilizes titles and headers.</li> <li>• Appropriate copyright and fair use guidelines are applied.</li> <li>• Content adheres to the journalistic code of ethics</li> </ul>	<p>The content is original, creative, easy to read, well written, and communicates information effectively to the target audience(s). Content is copyedited and free of spelling errors. The content synthesizes information (either from an interview and/or research), and conveys a specific message. Brochure content reflects accurate information gathered from reliable sources.</p> <p>When applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content and has a clear hierarchy established through the use of titles and headers.</li> <li>• Appropriate copyright and fair use guidelines are applied.</li> <li>• Content adheres to the journalistic code of ethics.</li> </ul>

## Background preparation resources:

- For more teaching and learning resources on the other topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: <http://edex.adobe.com/>

### Journalistic code of ethics

- Society of Professional Journalists: [www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp](http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp)
- Business Week: [www.businessweek.com/ethics.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/ethics.htm)
- The New York Times: [www.nytimes.com/company-properties-times-coe.html](http://www.nytimes.com/company-properties-times-coe.html)
- AIGA Design Business and Ethics: [www.aiga.org/design-business-and-ethics/](http://www.aiga.org/design-business-and-ethics/)

## ISTE NETS\*S Standards for Students

This project is aligned to the ISTE NETS\*S Technology Standards. Depending on the subject and content area the student selects you may research your own state content standards to see how this project aligns to your state requirements.

### ISTE NETS\*S: Curriculum and Content Area Standards – NETS for Students

1. Creativity and Innovation  
Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:
  - b. create original works as a means of personal and group expression.
2. Communication and Collaboration  
Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:
  - a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.
  - b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
  - d. contribute to project teams to produce original works and solve problems.
3. Research and Information Fluency  
Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students:
  - a. plan strategies to guide inquiry.
  - b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
  - c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.
4. Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving & Decision-Making  
Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:
  - a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
  - b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
  - d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.
5. Digital Citizenship  
Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:
  - a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.

## Adobe Certified Associate Exam Objectives

### Adobe Certified Associate, Web Authoring objectives

1.2 Identify web page content that is relevant to the website purpose and appropriate for the target audience.

### Adobe Certified Associate, Print & Digital Media Publication objectives

2.1 Demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate properties of page layouts for print, web and digital publishing.

### For more information

Find more teaching materials for using Adobe software in your classroom on the Adobe Education Exchange: <http://edex.adobe.com/>.



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Adobe Systems Incorporated  
345 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95110-2704  
USA  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

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