

LESSON PLAN

GATEWAYS TO DESIGN: USING INFOGRAPHICS TO CREATE VISUAL RESUMES

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SKILLS PRACTICED

Identifying audience, writing emails, summarizing, designing graphics and translating information from one medium to another

OVERVIEW

This lesson plan, which can be done in one Technical or Business writing class period, is an excellent “gateway” assignment to introducing students to design principles in technical and professional writing. In this assignment, which is done on the first or second day of class, students are required to write an **email of introduction** to their instructor and then translate that information into an **infographic** to share with the class in order to introduce themselves. Later in the semester, once students have mastered design techniques, instructors can apply this lesson to **resumes**.

IN PREPARATION

Students should read the following before coming to class:

- Mike Markel, Ch.1: Introduction to Technical Writing, *Technical Communication 10th Edition*
- Rebecca Hagan & Kim Golombisky, Ch.10: Infographics, *White Space is Not Your Enemy*

Student may like to peruse these websites:

- “7 Email Etiquette Rules Every Professional Should Know,” *Business Insider*
- “What is an Infographic?” *Customer Magnetism*

LESSON

1. Review email etiquette & have students craft & send their email to you (can peer-review with a partner if desired).
2. Introduce free infographic programs: **Piktochart**, **Easel.ly**, or **Infogr.am** and give them time to practice with each one.
3. Have students introduce themselves to their classmates using their infographics in the next class period.
4. Use their presentations to introduce design principles such as composition, color theory, typography, alignment, etc.

MATERIALS:

- COMPUTER
- INTERNET
- EMAIL ACCESS

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RESOURCES:

- **SAMPLE VISUAL RESUMES & WEBSITES (SEE RESOURCES)**
- **MIKE MARKEL, TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION**

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**LENGTH OF
LESSON: 1
CLASS PERIOD**

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Infographic Lesson Plan

ASSIGNMENT SHEET

PART ONE: Email of Introduction

For this part, you will write and send me a professional introductory email. Some questions to *reflect* on and *answer* in your introductory email:

Personal Information

Who are you? Tell us a little bit about yourself. What are your hobbies, passions?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What is your major and career plan after graduation? Why?

What is something interesting about you?

Course Goals

What are some of your personal goals for this course?

What experience do you have that will help you work on projects for this course?

What types of writing and research projects have you participated in?

Technology

What technologies are you familiar with and which ones do you still want to learn?

What technologies do you think you will use in your future career?

What kinds of software and hardware do you frequently use?

Format: Professional email

Organization

- Begin your email with a professional salutation
- Offer a brief overview that quickly summarizes the memo's purpose
- Offer brief well-organized sections (with ample white space) that respond to the questions
- Add bolded section headings to help readers quickly locate information
- End with a friendly but professional closing
- Add a signature line

PART TWO: Personal Infographic

For this part, you will take all of the information you provided in your email to me and visually translate that information to your classmates as an infographic. You can create your infographic using PiktoChart, Easel.ly, or Infogr.am (all free web-based programs). You will then post online *and* print your infographic to share with the class in the next class period. Remember that you must include ALL information from your email in a pleasing way—don't leave anything out! And, choose a design that you believe reflects YOU as a person, student, and future professional.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- *I am learning that technical writing is about effectively sharing ideas with an audience and that is what visual design does. It requires different fonts, different materials and different layouts, all in order to effectively communicate with the reader. How wonderful and surprising! --Bella*
- *Overall, creating an infographic was a different, think-outside-the-box experience, and I'd love to do it again. --John*
- *As I learning, sometimes, the power of visual aids are much stronger than just the letters and words, it not only attract more people, but also let people think deeper instead of just reading the words. --Hanqing*
- *This last week of activities and infographic assignments have been a nice change of pace from my other classes. I've learned a lot in general, about myself, and about my peers. Now to convince someone to let me write that biology paper as an infographic.... --Bryan*

THOUGHTS & REFLECTION

Though I used this assignment to ease students into the process of creating visually-oriented texts through experiential learning, this assignment can certainly be tailored to fit other translation assignments throughout the semester. I envision it being used to create client deliverables (by first writing a draft of text and then creating a visual translation of it), or to revise existing documents. As I reflect on this assignment, I would like to add a few additional suggestions:

- Instructors might like to foreground the lesson by teaching students some basic design terms.
- Instructors might also adapt this lesson and have students bring in their existing resumes and create more visually-driven resumes that they might wish to use in the future.
- Instructors can choose to require students to begin with a blank canvas, rather than allowing them to manipulate existing templates.
- Instructors might wish to assign some of the example visual resumes I have included below.

RESOURCES

IN PREPARATION

- Mike Markel, Ch.1: Introduction to Technical Writing, *Technical Communication 10th Edition*
- Rebecca Hagan & Kim Golombisky, Ch.10: Infographics, *White Space is Not Your Enemy*
- "7 Email Etiquette Rules Every Professional Should Know," *Business Insider*
<http://www.businessinsider.com/email-etiquette-rules-barbara-pachter-2013-10>
- "What is an Infographic?" *Customer Magnetism* -
<http://www.customermagnetism.com/infographics/what-is-an-infographic/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

VISUAL RESUMES

- "Can Beautiful Design Make Your Resume Stand Out?" *Mashable*
<http://mashable.com/2013/03/02/resume-design/>
- "50 Awesome Resume Designs," *Hongkiat*
<http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/beautiful-resume-design/>
- "How To: Spruce Up a Boring Resume (INFOGRAPHIC)," *Mashable*
<http://mashable.com/2011/07/10/digital-resume/>