

Report style manual

Connecting
Communities:
Evaluation of
the Gasworks
Participatory
Artists
Residency
Programme

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Report Style Manual Intro

The Evaluation Report is a live document reflecting on Gasworks Participatory Residency published and maintained by Gasworks and the Evaluation Board. Although the initial [Nov 2020] version was heavily mediated by FOTL as evaluators this style manual is set up in order to transfer that role to the Evaluation Board. The guidelines below are suggestions aimed at making the maintenance of the report and the care for the Evaluation Board easier but they might be updated as needed.

The document is published using google docs in order to make it easy to update.

Content:

The texts are commissioned by/pitched to the Evaluation Board. The current rate is £50 per 500 words contribution for former participants or external commissions. Current artists and critical friends are expected to contribute writers as part of their broader working arrangements.

Although the role of updating the document is centralised and currently performed by Andrea Francke [previous evaluator and current maternity cover Participation Projects Manager], the idea is to rotate this role over the members of the board. We haven't agreed on the remuneration although it should be London Living Wage at minimum.

Images:

Because of a history of how images of participants are used as evidence in social art practices and participatory projects we have chosen to limit the report to text in order to forefront the descriptive and analytical work carried on by participants and members of the board. We also

wanted to make the document fully accessible and cheap to print.

Images can be found in other sections of Gasworks website, as well as through links to participants' self-representation in websites, social media and publications. Participants also contributed with self-led filmed discussions about the project with a broader number of participants available on Gasworks website.

Design elements

This design depends on three types of text:

1. A very big title.
2. The body text - sectioned into small parts.
3. Larger highlighted text that is also part of the body of the text.

The idea is to help the text “dance” through the page with rhythm because:

- it looks dope
- it gives us a lot of air and pieces of text, which is much friendlier for adhd and other neurodiverse people
- it gives every page its own “personality”, which makes them distinguishable from each other, easier to remember, and easier to navigate and search through.

For this “dance” we are using:

- Columns
- Switches between columns
- Paragraph styles
- White space

Columns

We always use two columns as a structural base. The option for applying columns can be found in Format > Columns.

We have some rules for our types of text:

1. The very big title goes through both columns
2. The normal text is always split into the two columns.
3. The larger highlighted text behaves freely depending on what is needed, but care should be applied into

“Do keep in mind that I have a marginally disrespectful relationship to rules, so if you think something would look better breaking the rules, by all means, trust yourself a lot more than you trust me.”
[Teresa Francke]

Switches between columns

The main idea here is that paragraphs have a value of their own, and they have their own contained information. The general idea is to not usually split paragraphs, but rather work towards isolating them, so up to a point they behave like very long items in a list in how they are processed by the reader.

To “jump” from one column to another, we insert a column break, which can be found in Insert > Break > Column break.

The idea with the column breaks is to:

- Help create these contained paragraphs, instead of splitting them
- Give each paragraph (or set of paragraphs, or pieces of text) a territory of their own (their own column) in which they can do their “dance”

To do the “dance”, some paragraphs have to start lower than others. To achieve this effect we place the cursor on the desired paragraph, go to the Line Spacing menu (it’s the icon that has an up/down arrow next to three lines, which is right after the justification options), and choose Custom Spacing, which pops up a menu. We use the “Paragraph spacing / before” option, it allows for a maximum of 250 pt of extra spacing, so it’s not perfect, but it is flexible enough.

A series of paragraph breaks is also a possible option, but keep in mind that empty paragraph breaks are not interpreted by code, so they’d disappear when turned into digital publications.

Paragraph styles

We have three actual styles, but only two are programmed into the Paragraph style google docs automation options:

1. The very big title, which is named Header 1 in the Styles menu.
2. The body text, which is named Normal text in the Styles menu.
3. The larger highlighted text is not in the Styles menu.

The Styles menu has limited usability in google docs, the most important being that it is not customizable. Since the Styles in the menu have a hierarchical structure, it doesn't allow for more than one way to express the body text within its options. Since the highlighted text is actually part of the body text, adding hierarchy would be incoherent.

The highlighted text serves a series of functions:

- It looks dope
- It helps the text "dance". It aids in composition; up to a point, what we're doing is composing the text in ways that push and pull the eye through the text and helps the reading flow.
- It aids with giving each page its own identity, and each article some more defining text, and ease navigation. They behave like visual (and textual) landmarks and signs about where we are in the texts.

When choosing highlights, you should in general choose small, easily readable text, powerful statements, clear sentences... texts that catch the reader's eyes, pull the reader forward, imbues them with new energy, and launches them back into the upcoming text. It is an aid in readability in that it regains the reader's focus and attention.

White space

The dance can only happen if white space makes it dance. Keep in mind the following:

- We're using the switches between columns, as well as the space before a paragraph, to force the white space to exist.
- Per the western reading standard, the reader's eye will naturally read from left to right and from up to down. This is important when minding readability especially with the split column, as we should tend towards starting the left column higher than the right one. To do so would most probably difficult the fluidity of the reading experience.

The large volume of white space in this document serves a key accessibility function: it removes text. I know it sounds silly but listen to me. Removing text means removing stimuli; it isolates an idea and lets it sit there, with fresh air around it. It makes every paragraph powerful, owner of its own land, standing in its own stage. When the dance happens, each paragraph stands in its place, talks clearly and calmly, and gives place to the next one.

Other tips and tricks

Use shift+enter for a forced break that is not interpreted as a paragraph break. This is specially useful when trying to format titles.

Use command+enter for page breaks.

Command+option+shift+V will paste your text without any formatting.

The “Paint format” option in the upper menu (the paint roller icon next to the zoom option) allows you to “paint” a format into another text. I use this a lot for the highlights.

Text-to-speech technology has a hard time with anything that is not programmed natively. “Drawing” bullets or “writing” numbers of a list, instead of applying the list formats can give those programs a hard time.

How to add a new contribution:

- Add the new contribution before the appendix by adding a page break
- There is a header describing what project the text relates to. Currently those are: Evaluation, Jacob V. Joyce or The Alternative School of Economics
- The header is formatted as Montserrat 14pts
- The title is [project initials] Month year - author / title formatted as Heading 2
- Format the body in two columns following the columns, paragraph styles and white space instructions
- Clean the outline on the lateral window by removing new additions that are not the title of the new contribution
- Re-generate the index
- Clean up the table of contents by keeping only the titles of sections/narratives
- Align the table of contents to the left