Project 7
Newsletters

Timing: 11 to 16 hours

Project overview

Newsletters are publications that are distributed on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, yearly, and so on) to target a particular audience who share a common interest. Newsletters usually cover a main topic, or theme, with various articles or advertisements related to the topic or theme. They can be used to promote products or services; to maintain relationships, as in club or alumni newsletters; to offer information to experts on a particular topic; or to offer information on a particular organization. Newsletters can be sent via e-mail or standard mail or distributed manually. In this project, students work in teams to create the theme, purpose, and content of a newsletter and to design the layout and graphic elements with Adobe InDesign CS6, Adobe Illustrator CS6, Adobe Photoshop CS6, and Adobe Acrobat X Pro.

Student product: Newsletter

Note: Portions of the Newsletters project align to the Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives. Within the instruction steps and technical guides, the specific learning objectives for the exam are referenced with the following format: [1.1]

Project objectives

At the completion of the project, students will have developed the following skills:

Project management skills

- Organizing into print production roles
- Managing tasks based on roles
- Identifying asset needs
- Working with copy
- Creating and managing a project plan
- Engaging in full print production process

Design skills

- Designing a nameplate
- Using design to differentiate content
- Designing multi-column and multi-page layouts
- Incorporating color and layout consistently (using themes)
- Integrating imagery and text to express story content
- Providing clear navigation
- Using design techniques to provoke interest

Research and communication skills

- Analyzing newsletters
- Using design tools to communicate between team members
- Accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing content from multiple sources
- Reviewing and revising content to match goals
- Collaborating with teammates
- Presenting a newsletter
- Understanding the journalistic code of ethics

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Technical skills

InDesign

- Creating templates
- Reusing objects with the Library
- Putting text on a path
- Creating multi-page spreads
- Transforming objects
- Managing text flow between frames and columns
- Importing text from Microsoft Word
- Adding page numbers
- Adding captions

Illustrator

- Understanding the Illustrator interface
- Adding text and creating a text outline
- Drawing in Illustrator
- Drawing in perspective
- Comparing vector and bitmapped images
- Understanding Illustrator filters
- Creating polygons
- Smoothing and simplifying paths
- Selecting stroke and fill

Acrobat Pro

- Packaging a newsletter for distribution

Project materials

- Adobe Photoshop CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe InDesign CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Illustrator CS6 installed on all machines
- Adobe Acrobat X Pro installed on all machines
- Worksheet: Project plan
- Illustrator guide: Overview of Adobe Illustrator CS6 workspace
- Illustrator guide: How to draw in Illustrator
- Illustrator guide: How to draw in perspective with Illustrator
- InDesign guide: How to reuse objects
- InDesign guide: How to use document templates
- InDesign guide: How to transform objects
- InDesign guide: How to manage text flow between frames
- InDesign guide: How to add page numbers
- InDesign guide: How to create captions
- InDesign guide: How to import text from Microsoft Word

Background preparation resources

- Technical and content information
- Key terms
- ISTE NETS*S Standard for Students
- Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

Project steps

Planning a newsletter

(Suggested time: 50–100 minutes)

1. Discuss the goals of this project:
   - Create a newsletter.
   - Understand the basics of Illustrator.

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- Identify standard newsletter publishing practices and cite sources.

2. Show students examples of newsletters; include examples from businesses, schools, and community-based organizations.

   Note: You might want to gather some examples of newsletters to share with students.

3. For each example, discuss its purpose and audience. Ask students to identify the theme of the newsletter and analyze the design techniques used to integrate that theme across the newsletter content to meet the audience and purpose.

4. Ask students to examine each newsletter and identify common elements that all newsletters use. Discuss how the following elements vary based on the theme of the newsletter:
   - Nameplate
   - Content (and number of articles or entries)
   - Table of contents
   - Masthead
   - Titles and headers
   - Page numbers
   - Bylines
   - Continuation lines
   - Pull quotes
   - End signs
   - Photos/illustrations
   - Mailing panels

5. As students view the newsletters, also 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.

   Note: For more information, review the websites in the background resources section on the journalistic code of ethics.

6. Form student teams of two or three people. Where possible, mix members with different strengths, such as visual design or technical skill. Discuss the concept of working as a team and roles in newsletter production.[1,3] Some roles to cover include:
   - Editors
   - Writers
   - Photographers
   - Designers

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Note: Explain to students that they are responsible for managing the tasks that fall under their assigned role; however, all students will do work across the roles. Because this is a class simulation, students will use the roles to help them manage the project better. You can combine or split roles as necessary to accommodate the number of members on a team.

7. Introduce the guidelines for the newsletters. Guidelines might include:
   - Length should be 3–4 pages.
   - Include the various elements of a newsletter (nameplate, masthead, pull quotes, etc.).
   - Include 3–4 distinct sections.
   - Include 2–3 articles.
   - Include 3–4 photographs.
   - Create a 3- or 4-column layout.
   - Create a comp for review and one for redesign.
   - If appropriate, include the advertisement from Project 4.
   - Apply copyright and fair use guidelines for any applicable content or assets.
   - Follow the journalist code of ethics in the creation of newsletter content.
   - Follow sustainable design principles and make an effort to comply with economic, social, and environmental sustainability principles.

   Note: You might want to ask students to create the newsletter for a particular organization in the school or community. Additionally, you might make a guideline that one version of the newsletter must have a mailing panel and another version should be e-mailed.

8. Allow teams time to distribute roles and brainstorm the theme, purpose, audience, and goals for their newsletter.

   Note: If students are creating the newsletter for an organization, have them interview their clients to ascertain the goals, audience, and purpose and to brainstorm an appropriate theme. Have them alter questions from their previous client interviews and adapt them to this project. If it is difficult to find clients you can use the ideas in the client scenarios section of the extension activities to help you create client profiles.

9. Explain that because newsletters are created multiple times, streamlining the production process would be helpful. Discuss the advantages of the following:
   - Creating and working with reusable assets (layout elements, images, graphics, illustrations, etc.).
   - Creating and implementing a style guide with lists of fonts, colors, heading styles, and so on for their newsletter (this is especially helpful for consistency and in passing knowledge on to new workers).
   - Creating and using templates for their newsletter.

10. Ask students to create an initial project plan, assigning task managers and due dates for major milestones. They will build out more details when their design is approved.

    Worksheet: Project plan [1.3]

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Designing a newsletter

(Suggested time: 200–250 minutes)

11. Allow teams time to sketch two different designs, on paper, of their newsletter elements (including the nameplate) and sections, identifying which elements will be reusable and maintaining consistency across pages to improve readability for front and internal pages. Conduct a team review and redesign cycle of their layout sketches as they prepare to create the design comps in Photoshop.

12. Allow time for teams to use their sketches to create two design comps in Photoshop and review these with their client. Engage in review and redesign cycles until an approved look is reached.

Note: If students are not working with a client, you or other student groups could serve as the "clients."

13. Based on their approved designs, ask students to build a mock prototype in InDesign. Explain that students should use placeholder text for headers and articles and use graphic frames with short descriptions as placeholders for images and graphic elements.

14. Ask students to test the prototype with potential users of the newsletter. Some items to review and gather feedback for include:

- Consistency across pages
- Reusable elements
- Hierarchy of information
- Readability of chosen fonts
- Use of white space and rule of thirds
- Alignment of content and graphic elements

15. Allow teams time to implement any changes to the overall layout and design based on feedback.

16. Now that they have their layout design, explain that they need to brainstorm the scope of their newsletter, including number of pages, number of sections, number and content of articles, number and content of photographs, templates, style guide. Have teams update their project plans to include details they can now start tracking.

Worksheet: Project plan [1.3]

17. Have teams review and get approval for their final scope with you to be sure it is appropriate and doable.

Building a newsletter shell

(Suggested time: 200–250 minutes)

18. Explain that although Photoshop is an excellent program for manipulating images and can be used to create bitmap graphics, Adobe Illustrator is superior for creating vector-based graphics and images. Explain that students will learn to use Illustrator to create the nameplate for the newsletter. If you have not already done so, introduce students to the Illustrator interface.

Illustrator guide: Overview of Adobe Illustrator CS6 workspace

Note: You might want students to review the *Bitmap and vector images* guide from Project 2.

19. Explain that students will use their nameplate sketch to create the newsletter nameplate in Illustrator. Using the "I do, we do, you do" method, demonstrate how to use the drawing tools.

Illustrator guide: How to draw in Illustrator

Illustrator guide: How to draw in perspective with Illustrator

20. Allow teams time to create their newsletter nameplates.

21. Explain that because they learned about the advantages of creating and using reusable images [3.4] and templates, they will now learn to implement these techniques by using InDesign. Using the "I do, we do, you do" method, demonstrate how to use the library, the content dropper, and linked content, and create templates.

InDesign guide: How to reuse objects

InDesign guide: How to use document templates

22. As student teams build out their layout templates, they might need to use one or more of the following advanced techniques, based on their newsletters. Demonstrate these techniques to help students implement their layout designs:

- Transforming objects
- Managing text between frames
- Adding and creating page numbers
- Creating captions

InDesign guide: How to transform objects

InDesign guide: How to manage text flow between frames

InDesign guide: How to add page numbers

InDesign guide: How to create captions

Building a newsletter

(Suggested time: 200–250 minutes)

23. Ask students to conduct research on the articles they plan to include. Remind students to validate the content for currency and accuracy as they gather information for articles.

Note: If students are creating the newsletter for a client, they might need to gather this content from the client and then synthesize the information into articles.

24. Discuss the ability to create content within InDesign or write content in a word-processing program and import it into InDesign. Using the "I do, we do, you do" method, demonstrate how to import text from Microsoft Word into InDesign.

InDesign guide: How to import text from Microsoft Word

25. Allow teams time to write drafts of the articles to be submitted for instructor review and approval.

Note: Ask students to use commenting tools in Acrobat to review and improve articles.

26. Allow teams time to create any needed graphic elements in Photoshop or Illustrator and then finalize the article content and layout in InDesign.

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27. Instruct the students to have a final editing review of the content and design, finalize the newsletter, and create PDF versions that can be printed and e-mailed.

Presenting a newsletter

(Suggested time: 50–100 minutes)

28. Explain that each team will present their newsletter to the class, identifying and explaining the following:[1.4]

- The design decisions they made so they could implement the theme and purpose through the nameplate, layout, graphic elements, and content of the newsletter.
- How they plan to distribute their newsletter.
- What they learned through this process and how they will continue to use and enhance these skills in the future.
- The differences of working in a team with assigned roles.

Extension activities

You can extend the project in the following ways:

- *Milestones:* To help students manage their time during longer projects, you can create milestones that give intermediate deadlines within the larger project. For this activity, you might have a class discussion to identify deadlines for the following:
  - Write up challenges in the review and redesign cycle
  - Create a style guide
  - Research similar newsletters
- *Online, interactive newsletters:* Ask students to consider how the design, layout, and typography would change if they were creating an online version. Ask students to add interactivity and publish the newsletter online using the export to HTML feature in InDesign. You might use some of the resources from Project 6 for creating interactive online documents in InDesign, including the *How to create interactive documents with InDesign* and *How to export for multiple screens* guides.
- *Client scenarios:* Use some of the following scenarios to create client profiles:
  - *Science club:* The science club wants to distribute a quarterly newsletter with articles on upcoming events, special features on club members and their areas of interest, and to highlight new and important research. Students need to research the science topics (perhaps tied to their science class) for the newsletter contents and make it specific to the science club.
  - *Architecture firm:* An architecture firm wants to distribute an internal newsletter to employees highlighting company news, events, projects, and shared practices. Students need to research content for the newsletter and showcase images taken at a project site before, during and after projects.

Assessment

- Project rubric

Background preparation resources

- Review the student step-by-step guides referenced in this project.
- To view video tutorials aligned with the skills required to complete this project, visit the Visual Design CS6 show on Adobe TV: http://tv.adobe.com/show/visual-design-cs6/
- For more teaching and learning resources on brochures and other topics in this project, search for resources from the community on the Adobe Education Exchange: http://edexchange.adobe.com
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Photoshop, see Photoshop Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of InDesign, see InDesign Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Illustrator, see Illustrator Help.
- For an overview of the interface and for more information on the technical aspects of Acrobat, see Acrobat Help.
- You might supplement this project with the following design books:
  - Lupton, E. (2010). *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students, Second Edition.* New York: Princeton Architectural Press. Review the companion website: www.thinkingwithtype.com.
  - Lawler, B. (2009). *The Official Adobe Print Publishing Guide, Third Edition.* Berkeley: Adobe Press.
  - Williams, R. (2007). *Robin Williams Design Workshop, Second Edition*. Berkeley: Peachpit Press.

Newsletters

- The 12 parts of a newsletter: http://desktoppub.about.com/od/newsletters/a/newsletter_part.htm.
- Articles and tutorials for planning a newsletter from start to finish: http://desktoppub.about.com/od/newsletterplanning/Newsletter_Planning_and_Strategy.htm.
- Articles and tips for writing newsletter content: http://desktoppub.about.com/od/newslettercontent/Newsletter_Content_How_to_Write_a_Newsletter.htm.
- Articles and tips for designing and publishing newsletters: http://desktoppub.about.com/od/newsletters/Newsletter_Design_and_Publishing.htm.
- Articles and tutorials on newsletter design: http://desktoppub.about.com/od/newsletterdesign/Newsletter_Design_How_to_Create_a_Newsletter.htm.

Journalistic code of ethics

- You might want to review the journalistic code of ethics from the following sources:
  - Society of Professional Journalists: www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp
  - Business Week: www.businessweek.com/ethics.htm
  - The New York Times: www.nytco.com/company-properties-times-coe.html
  - The Association of Electronic Journalists: www.rtnda.org/pages/best-practices/ethics.php

Sustainable design

- An independent online toolkit for sustainable graphic design: www.re-nourish.com

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- The Living Principles for Design framework: http://www.livingprinciples.org/framework/introduction/
- The Living Principles Resources: http://www.livingprinciples.org/resources/context/overview/
- You might supplement this project with the following sustainable design books:
  - Dougherty, B. (2009). *Green Graphic Design*. New York: Allworth Press. www.greengraphicdesign.net/
  - Jedlicka, W. (2009). *Packaging Sustainability: Tools, Systems and Strategies for Innovative Package Design*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Key terms

- bylines
- continuation lines
- end signs
- masthead
- nameplate
- pull quotes

ISTE NETS*S Standard 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.

1. Creativity and Innovation

   Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

   a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.

   b. create original works as a means of personal or 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 or solve problems.

3. Research and Information Retrieval

   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 technology tools based on appropriateness of specific task.

4. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

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.

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.
   b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.
   c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

   Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems, and operations. Students:

   a. understand and use technology systems.
   b. select and use applications effectively and productively.

Adobe Certified Associate, Visual Communication objectives

1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of project management tasks and responsibilities.

1.4 Communicate with other (such as peers and clients) about design plans.

3.4 Demonstrate knowledge of producing and reusing images.

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Assessment

	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Design comps	Absent or incomplete.	Teams present two layout design comps for peer review.	Teams present two layout design comps with clear explanations of the design principles used and requests for specific feedback from the peer review process.
Project plan	Absent or incomplete.	Project plan details the estimated hours, the delivery date, and the owner of specific tasks in each project phase: the project definition phase, the design phase, the building phase, the delivery phase. Project plan identifies assets requiring copyright or fair use permission. Students track each milestone and adjust the plan based on any unforeseen challenges during the project cycle.	Project plan clearly and explicitly details the estimated hours, the delivery date, and the owner of specific tasks in each project phase: the project definition phase, the design phase, the building phase, the delivery phase. Project plan identifies assets requiring copyright or fair use permission. Students track each milestone and adjust the plan based on any unforeseen challenges during the project cycle.
Newsletter – content	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Newsletter theme and articles are for a target audience. Newsletter consists of 2-3 articles. Content is readable and properly aligned. Content adheres to the journalistic code of ethics, and appropriate copyright and fair use guidelines are applied when needed.	Newsletter theme and articles are for a target audience. Newsletter consists of 3 or more articles that are well-written and copyedited. Content is easy to read, properly aligned, and has a clear hierarchy established through the use of titles and headers. Content adheres to the journalistic code of ethics, and appropriate copyright and fair use guidelines are applied when needed.

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	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Newsletter – design	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Newsletter is 3-4 pages, and the nameplate design supports the newsletter theme. Newsletter includes elements such as titles, headers, page numbers, captions, pull quotes, and so on. Newsletter includes 3-4 sections and 3-4 images. Newsletter uses a multi-column and multi-page layout. Newsletter utilizes consistent design through layout templates and consistent styles. Newsletter is prepared for print and e mail distribution.	Newsletter is 3-4 pages, and the nameplate design clearly and consistently supports the newsletter theme and goals. Newsletter titles, headers, page numbers, captions, pull quotes, images, and so on are appropriately used to support the theme and connect to the target audience. Newsletter includes 4 or more sections and 4 or more images. Newsletter uses a multi-column and multi-page layout to create clear sections and readable content. Templates and consistent use of styles and font create a consistent design throughout the layout.
Presentation	Absent, incomplete, or unfocused.	Presentation explains the design decisions made throughout the process to implement the theme and purpose through all elements of the newsletter (nameplate, layout, graphic elements, and content). Presentation explains how students plan to distribute the newsletter and describes their experience of working as a team, especially while working in roles. Presentation reflects on what students learned through the process and how they will continue to use and enhance these skills in the future.	Presentation clearly explains, using specific examples, the design decisions made throughout the process to implement the theme and purpose through all elements of the newsletter (nameplate, layout, graphic elements, and content). Presentation details how students plan to distribute the newsletter and describes how the experience of working as a team differed because they were assigned and responsible for specific roles. Presentation reflects on what students learned through the process and analyzes how they will continue to use and enhance these skills in the future.

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	0 - Does not meet expectations	3 - Meets expectations	5 - Exceeds expectations
Team work	Absent or incomplete.	Student collaborates with other students as required to provide feedback or assistance. Fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Sometimes consults with other team members on major project decisions but makes minimal effort to help others build skills. Teams plan and manage multiple steps to ensure delivery to client and approval for design comps, content, and a final product.	Student collaborates freely with other students to provide feedback or assistance. Fulfills assigned team roles and contributes equally to project work. Consults with other team members on major project decisions and voluntarily helps others build skills to complete the project. Teams efficiently and effectively collaborate and interact with peers, experts, and others to create design comps and final newsletter. Teams efficiently and effectively plan and manage multiple steps to ensure delivery to client and approval for design comps, content, and a final product.
Time management	Absent or incomplete.	Student allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes most phases on schedule.	Student thoughtfully and effectively allots time for each phase of the design and development process. Completes all phases on schedule.

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