

LESSON 4

Make It Look Like You Meant It: Layout & Design

60 minutes

Creating Documents

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Learn practical design techniques to transform a proposal from homework into a professional document. You'll apply layout, headers, images, tables, and lists to make your work look intentional and serious.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand how page layout, typography, and visual hierarchy affect how seriously a document is received
- Apply margins, orientation, headers, footers, and page numbers to create a professional appearance
- Insert, resize, and position images to support written content without disrupting flow
- Use tables and lists strategically to improve readability and guide the reader's attention
- Assess design choices critically by comparing before and after versions

BEFORE THE BELL

- Check that students have their 03_proposal_draft file saved from lesson 3. A student who is missing theirs writes three quick paragraphs (what, why, how) in the first 5 minutes of step 3, then follows along.
- Students need access to their 03_proposal_draft from lesson 3. They need it open in Word Online or Google Docs.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Introduction
5 min	content	Key Concepts
20 min	activity	Step-by-step Task: Redesign Your Proposal
3 min	content	Common Issues
17 min	activity	Independent Practice: Polish and Finish
5 min	content	Reflection
5 min	summary	Lesson Summary

TEACHING MOVES

- During the step-by-step task, circulate the room and flag the first four moves (margins, a header, a page number and an image) early so students who feel behind have a concrete, achievable target rather than comparing themselves to peers already adding extra polish.
- Model image resizing live on the board if needed: drag a corner handle, not a side, to avoid distortion. Make this visual and explicit.
- The 30-second peer swap near the end is brief on purpose; time it to keep it from becoming extended chat. Students name one design change that visibly worked, which reinforces critical observation and keeps energy high.
- During reflection, have students open 03_proposal_draft and 04_polished_proposal side by side on their own screens so the before/after contrast is visible and memorable.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Images are oversized and push text to the next page: Show students how to click the image once and drag a corner handle inward to roughly 2-3 text-line widths. Emphasise corner, not side, handles.
- Tables are crammed with too much detail: Ask the student: 'If you had only 30 seconds to scan this, what is the one thing this table must show?' Simplify from there.
- Margins set smaller than the step says, making the page feel cramped: Narrow in Word, or 2 cm in Google Docs, is as small as a one-page proposal needs. Set them back to that and show how the white space draws the eye to the content.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Point students at the first four moves listed on their screen in step 3 and have them work through those in order. Pair with a stronger peer for the peer swap if confidence is low.
- Support: For students who struggle with the technical steps, sit with them while they insert the first image or table, so they can then focus on resizing and positioning.
- Extension: Challenge students to redesign a second proposal or document using a different layout (landscape, narrow columns, or a different colour scheme for headers) and explain why it works better for that content.