

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 the previous lesson; prepare a 3-paragraph template for any student who is missing theirs.
- Have the Core 4 checklist visible (narrow margins, header/footer, one image, one table) to display on the board during the step-by-step task.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Key Concepts

Step-by-step Task, Redesign Your Proposal

Common Issues

Independent Practice, Polish and Finish

Reflection

Lesson Summary

TEACHING MOVES

- During the step-by-step task, circulate the room and flag the Core 4 milestone 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.
- Display both 03_proposal_draft and 04_polished_proposal side by side during reflection 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 are too narrow, making the page feel cramped: Demonstrate standard margins (1 inch or 2.5 cm) and how they create white space that draws the eye to content rather than drowning it.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide a printed or on-screen checklist of the Core 4 so students work through design moves in a clear sequence. Pair with a stronger peer for the peer swap if confidence is low.
- Support: Pre-insert one image or table for students who struggle with the technical steps, so they focus on resizing and positioning rather than insertion.
- 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.