

THE VISUAL SCIENTIST PRESENTS

# TABLE DESIGN

CONTENT LAYOUT SCIENCE!



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[www.theVisualScientist.com](http://www.theVisualScientist.com)

# TOPICS COVERED

This is a how-to-guide for the fat and stupid scientiststs out there who don't know red from blue. These are guides, and suggestions.

HEADINGS VS. CONTENT

PADDING

LINES & BORDERS

STRESS WHAT MATTERS

SUBTABLES

TEXT IS PRECIOUS

COLOR SELECTION

SPARK LINES

# HEADINGS VS. CONTENT

<b>Character</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>
Mowgli	The Jungle Book	1894	Rudyard Kipling
Jane Banks	Mary Poppins	1934	P. L. Travers
Bilbo Baggins	The Hobbit	1937	J. R. R. Tolkien
Arthur	The Sword in the Stone	1938	T. H. White
Aslan	Prince Caspian	1951	Clive Staples Lewis
Cruella de Vil	The Great Dog Robbery	1956	Dodie Smith
Matthias	Redwall	1986	Brian Jacques

Row and column headings should be visually differentiated from body copy. Do this by changing the weight (bold vs regular) or color (black vs dark gray) of your chosen font.



# PADDING

Character	Story	Year	Author
Mowgli	The Jungle Book	1894	Rudyard Kipling
Jane Banks	Mary Poppins	1934	P. L. Travers
Bilbo Baggins	The Hobbit	1937	J. R. R. Tolkien
Arthur	The Sword in the Stone	1938	T. H. White
Aslan	Prince Caspian	1951	Clive Staples Lewis
Cruella de Vil	The Great Dog Robbery	1956	Dodie Smith
Matthias	Redwall	1986	Brian Jacques

Use padding between columns and rows to give the content room to breathe.



# LINES & BORDERS

<b>Character</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>
Mowgli	The Jungle Book	1894	Rudyard Kipling
Jane Banks	Mary Poppins	1934	P. L. Travers
Bilbo Baggins	The Hobbit	1937	J. R. R. Tolkien
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Avoid drawing every possible line; column lines may often be unnecessary, with appropriate padding. Row lines may be replaced by alternate row background colors (e.g., white and very light gray). Vary line thickness to demarcate table headings.



# STRESS WHAT MATTERS

Story	Author	Publisher	Pages	Year <sup>1</sup>
The Jungle Book	Rudyard Kipling	Macmillan Publishers	103	1894 (2000)
Mary Poppins	P. L. Travers	HarperCollins	224	1934 (2014)
The Hobbit	J. R. R. Tolkien	George Allen & Unwin	<b>320</b>	1937 (2012)
The Sword in the Stone	T. H. White	Collins	<b>312</b>	1938 (1993)
Prince Caspian	Clive Staples Lewis	Geoffrey Bles	195	1951 (2002)
The Great Dog Robbery	Dodie Smith	Heinemann	220	1956 (1989)
Redwall	Brian Jacques	Hutchinson	<b>311</b>	1986 (2002)

<sup>1</sup>Original Published Year (Most Recent Published Year)

All body content does not have to look identical. Use font weight, color, or size to direct attention to the most essential information, or diminish the visual weight of unimportant information.



# SUBTABLES

A diagram representing a table with a very wide header. The header row contains 12 columns of varying widths, each with a different shade of gray. Below the header are 8 rows of data, each starting with a red bar on the left and followed by a dark gray bar.

Table 1. Too Many Column Headings

A diagram representing the first subtable. The header row contains 4 columns of varying widths, each with a different shade of gray. Below the header are 8 rows of data, each starting with a red bar on the left and followed by a dark gray bar.

Table 2a. First Subtable

A diagram representing the second subtable. The header row contains 4 columns of varying widths, each with a different shade of gray. Below the header are 8 rows of data, each starting with a red bar on the left and followed by a dark gray bar.

Table 2b. Second Sub table

Break up overly crowded, complex, or long tables, repeating the duplicate headings in each subtable. Aim for a max of two levels of row or column headings in a single table. Also consider splitting up a table if it contains more than a few key points.



# TEXT IS PRECIOUS

Goudy Text

Blackletter

Mistral

Script

Curly

Decorative

Didot

Modern

Rockwell

Square Serif

Adobe Jenson

Oldstyle

Baskerville

Transitional

News Gothic

Sans Serif

In tables, Sans serif fonts are the most legible. Avoid fancy, decorative or script fonts! Choose one font to use throughout the table (e.g., Avenir, Gill Sans, Helvetica, Myriad Pro, Optima, or Univers.) Use either bold or italic to stress content. Do not underline text, as this greatly reduces legibility. Do not use stacked vertical text.





# COLOR SELECTION









	Americas	Europe	Asia	Africa
<b>Foundation</b>	86	92	128	14
<b>Caves of Steel</b>	172	12	62	142
<b>The Naked Sun</b>	106	84	82	68
<b>Fantastic Voyage</b>	24	146	12	48
<b>The Robots of Dawn</b>	18	122	80	26
<b>Norby Finds a Villain</b>	62	86	28	88
<b>Nightfall</b>	164	14	172	146

Number of Isaac Asimov's Books Sold

In general, tables should be black and white (and gray). Cell color should not be used as a tool to highlight content. Heat maps are an exception to this, but should be constructed using a monotone palette (e.g., dark and light reds)



# SPARK LINES

	Mean (pages)	Std Dev	Median (pages)	Histogram
<b>Marry Poppins</b>	115	27	120	
<b>See Spot</b>	5	2	5	
<b>Middle Earth</b>	100	44	97	
<b>Game of Thrones</b>	110	37	124	
<b>Ender's Game</b>	80	16	76	
<b>Disc World</b>	65	31	62	
<b>Foundation</b>	90	24	93	
<b>Wizard of Oz</b>	110	48	101	

Number of Pages in Book Series' Books

A very small graph showing a single trend rather than precise data can be embedded within a table. Such graphs, usually lacking axes or coordinates, are called sparklines.



# WANT MORE?

For more information about presenting scientific information, including templates and other guides, visit our website:

[WWW.THEVISUALSCIENTIST.COM](http://WWW.THEVISUALSCIENTIST.COM)

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