

Hart Ballot Design Guide

Summer 2010, V.1

Jenny Greeve

AIGA / D4D Washington State Design Fellow

Hart InterCivic

Washington State Hart Counties

Washington Secretary of State
Elections Division

HAVA



Washington
Secretary of State

Introduction

Welcome to the Hart ballot design guide! Here you will find helpful references for your Hart template & instruction image selection process, as well as best practices information about ballot design from the Office of the Secretary of State's Design for Democracy Fellow.

When to use this guide

- **Right now:** Take 10-15 minutes to skim over the contents & materials. This will give you a sense of what is included.
- **Throughout ballot design:** As you begin to get a sense for what size & type of ballot template you will use, reference this guide to narrow down your image selection & for design guidance.
- **During ballot proofing:** Refer back to double-check that you selected the right image & to answer any outstanding questions or concerns you may have as you proof your ballot.

Acknowledgements

Thank you so much to all our wonderful contributors, collaborators & supporters. Together, we are facilitating civic engagement through design.

Office of the Secretary of State Elections Division
AIGA Design for Democracy
Hart InterCivic
HAVA
Klickitat County
Yakima County
Chelan County
Okanogan County
Lewis County
Mason County
Island County
San Juan County
Columbia County
Garfield County
Asotin County
Cowlitz County
Skagit County
King County

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	OSOS: Ballot packet checklist

* **Washington Secretary of State** refers specifically to the Design for Democracy fellow working in the office of the Secretary of State & consulting with Policy, Certification & Training & Voter Education / Outreach teams. From this point forward, it will be abbreviated to “OSOS.”

* **Existing ballot design & election design research** refers to multiple reports, books & usability studies concerning ballot design & plain language. No, this stuff is not made up. A full list of resources is provided in Section 6. From this point forward, it will be referred to as “existing research,” unless a specific source is referenced & duly noted.

How to use Hart templates + images

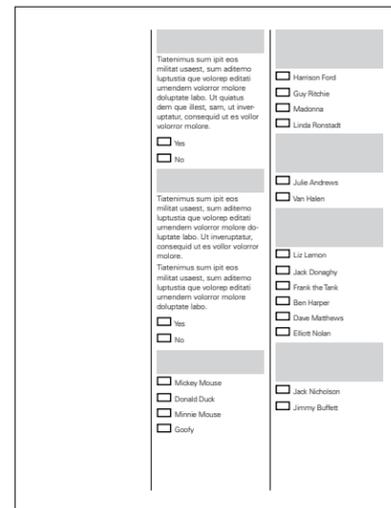
Step 1: Select your template

- What type of election are you holding?
- Will there be many races, or just a few?
- Will you use a 2-column or 3-column ballot?

These are sample questions you work through for each election to select your template.

Your new Hart templates feature different type sizes to offer you flexibility when answering these questions.

- ➔ **Visit section 1** for more information on & visual samples of the Hart templates.
- ➔ **Visit section 5** for more information on how King County selects their templates & for usability information on running races below the instructions.



Step 3: Consider miscellaneous images

- Will you need the "READ" statement?
- Do you have PCO races on the ballot?
- Would you like to use section dividers?

There are statute requirements for additional information on the ballot & these requirements can vary by type of election.

Miscellaneous images have been created for you to use to fulfill these requirements, while maintaining consistency with the instructions images & templates, in regard to shading, type size, style, etc.

- ➔ **Visit section 3** to see all miscellaneous images & corresponding filenames.

Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party.
For this office only:
If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party.

Federal: Partisan Offices

County Measures

Continue voting next side ➔

Step 2: Select your instruction image

- Are you using a regular or condensed template?
- Will you place races below the instructions?
- How will you handle "write-ins?"

As part of the Hart / OSOS partnership, you now have almost 40 different options for your instructions.

The differences are in the details: type size, use of graphics, how to identify races below the instructions & "write-in" treatment.

- ➔ **Visit section 2** to see all instruction images & corresponding filenames.

Instructions

How to vote

Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

Step 4: Consider conducting usability testing

- Are you trying something new on your ballot?
- Is it a presidential primary with new rules & design?
- Have you experienced a voter intent increase that you think may be due to something with ballot design?

Usability is fun! It's also easier than you may think & can provide support for design changes you make.

- ➔ **Visit section 6** to see materials from the LEO Test Kit for ballot usability testing, altered for the 2010 King County usability study.

study = cookies!

we need you!
help out Washington State Elections

it's a usability study
like a survey, but more fun!

free cookies
for less than 10 minutes of your time

This project began in early 2010, when Hart sought to bridge the gap between template design, recommended-by-research ballot design, & county needs / expectations.

After initial rounds of design, almost-finalized templates were reviewed by Hart counties during a 2-week Hart / OSOS roadtrip.

Template testing & final design was conducted in late Spring 2010.

Hart template list

English

8.5 x 11

2 column regular
2 column condensed
3 column regular
3 column condensed

8.5 x 14

3 column regular
3 column condensed

8.5 x 17

3 column regular
3 column condensed

11 x 17

4 column regular
4 column condensed

English / Spanish

8.5 x 11

3 column regular
3 column condensed

8.5 x 14

3 column regular
3 column condensed

8.5 x 17

3 column regular
3 column condensed

11 x 17

4 column regular
4 column condensed

Regular v. condensed templates

The difference between regular & condensed templates is the type size of Arial used throughout the ballot.

Regular templates feature type sizes recommended by existing research for maximum legibility.

Condensed templates, which feature smaller type sizes, are provided as a “last resort” when you are in a long ballot situation.

Regular or condensed?

While not always possible, attempt to use a regular template before using a condensed template.

Because condensed templates use 8 point Arial, your voters with low vision may have problems reading their ballot.

➔ **Visit section 5** to see King County’s decision-making matrix. A visual guide used by their ballot designers for each election to manage difficult questions such as what size ballot to select, whether to place races below the instructions & when to compromise on type size.

? **These ballots look funny.** Yes, they do. They are missing party preferences, “write-ins” & races are completely in the wrong order & sometimes repeated. These were delivered from Hart as samples, meant to give you a general feeling of the formatting.

➔

Regular template

10 point

- Proposition text
- Specific race information (excluding race title)
- Specific race instructions
- Party preference

12 point

- Everything else

➔

Condensed template

8 point

- Proposition text
- Specific race information (excluding race title)
- Specific race instructions
- Party preference

10 point

- Everything else

About shading & type size / style

Arial is the typeface used throughout the templates & instruction images.

Arial black, bold & regular, in sizes 12, 10 & 8 (ballot header features larger sizes).

Tints of black have been limited to 70%, 20% & 10%.

70% is used for the main instructions header, section dividers (if used), & wayfinding (start voting here, continue voting next side).

10% is used as a subtle background to offset the ballot instruction images from the rest of the ballot.

20% is used to identify the beginning of a new race, behind race titles & specific race information.

The importance of consistency

One key to effective, usable design is consistency.

Consistency in type size & style, shading, color & placement of items. Consistency works in a way unbeknownst to the untrained eye to make types of information recognizable & able to be categorized.

To give you a non-elections example of consistency, next time you go grocery shopping, take a look at the items that are part of the same brand & how that brand uses color, type, sizes, placement & style to make their brand easily recognizable by the busy shopper.

Vote Both Sides

General and Special Joint Election
Non-Partisan Ballot
Sample County, WA
January 16, 2525

Precinct
1060456-02
Page 1 / 2

Instructions 70%

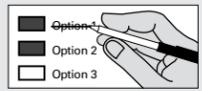
How to vote 10%



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" & print the name on the dashed line.

United States Senator 20%

Vote for one

Harriett Tubman
prefers Green party

Walt Whitman
prefers Whig party

Fredrick Douglass
prefers Republican party

Governor

Vote for one

Susan B. Anthony

Mark Twain

Cesar Chavez

Mayor

Vote for one

Charles Dickens

Martha Washington

Write In
.....

County Judge

Vote for one

Betsy Ross

James Madison

Vote Both Sides

The new image collection represents collaboration among vendor, design professional, OSOS, county & elections official.

These images have been carefully planned & executed. Each phrase & graphic is usability-tested in either other jurisdictions or here in Washington. These images were also carefully reviewed by Hart counties as part of the 2010 ballot design roadtrip.

These images represent a streamlined, with options, approach. While your county will feature graphics & language similar to other Hart counties, you will be able to select for your ballot situation & for how you handle "write-ins."

Image list

Visual examples with corresponding filenames begin at 2.10.

2-column

Regular

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Regular, race below instructions

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed, race below instructions

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed, race below instructions, 1 image only

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Special elections

regular
regular, race below instructions
condensed
condensed, race below instructions

3-column (also used for 4-column ballots)

Regular

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Regular, race below instructions

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed, race below instructions

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Condensed, race below instructions, 1 image only

"or write-in"
"write-in"
blank "write-in"

Special elections

regular
regular, race below instructions
condensed
condensed, race below instructions

About write-ins

The verbiage of the “write-in” area is at your discretion. Your instruction image must match how you program your “write-ins” on the ballot.

The “triple threat”

Existing research recommends the “triple threat” for handling “write-ins:”

- Use the word optional in the instructions (as featured in the new instruction images)
- In the race, use a dashed line (as featured in the new Hart templates)
- In the race, use the phrase “or write-in”

“Or write-in,” “write-in” or blank?

The choice is yours. If you have a race on the ballot with no filed candidates, you will have to program “write-in” for all your races (because there is no “or,” a “write-in” is the only option for that one race).

If your voters abuse the “write-in” area, you may believe that having no verbiage next to the target area will work to combat silly names like Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck. While there has been no formal usability on this, it is at your discretion.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of “or write-in” and print the name on the dashed line.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of “write-in” and print the name on the dashed line.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.



“or write-in” (the “triple threat”)

- Uses the word optional in the instructions
- Uses a dashed line
- “or write-in” next to target area



“write-in”

- Uses the word optional in the instructions
- Uses a dashed line
- “write-in” next to target area



Blank “write-in”

- Uses the word optional in the instructions
- Uses a dashed line
- No verbiage next to target area

Placing races below instructions

Research recommends: place instructions in the left column & begin races in the second column

Existing research advises to embed instructions in the ballot (as opposed to running them horizontally above vertically placed contests in columns) to support greater voting focus & autonomy for voters.

It also strongly advises against placing races below the instructions. Test voters often overlooked races located immediately beneath vertical instructions.

When possible, designate the first column for instructions & begin races in the second column.

Design matters when a race is placed below instructions

While a solid conclusion cannot be drawn, it is speculated that design was the reason & specifically the placement of I-1033 below instructions, that caused a large undervote for that race on King County's 2009 General Election ballot.

How could design have caused an undervote for King County's ballot? There are a few design hypotheses, among them: the use of bold shading (100% black & 90% black) alternating throughout the instructions. Many voters do not refer to instructions before voting, rather, when they encounter a problem during voting, they return to the instructions for guidance.

Of the tools in our design arsenal, 100% black & dark tints of black, contrasted with white, is one of our strongest tools for attracting attention. King County used this tool to attract voters to the different areas of the overall instructions, but after the split-second spent by voters to identify that they were instructions, voters may have jumped into their ballot, neglecting the more subtle shading used to begin the ballot, above I-1033.

SEA 43-2021
BALLOT CODE: 324
LEG DISTRICT: 43

Instructions
Making selections
Use a dark pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

Returning the ballot
Insert completed ballot into security envelope.

Optional
Write-in
To vote for a write-in candidate, write the name and darken the oval.

Making corrections
To make a correction, draw a line through the candidate's name. You then have the option of making another choice.

State of Washington
Proposed by Initiative Petition
Initiative Measure No. 1033
Initiative Measure No. 1033 concerns state, county and city revenue. This measure would limit growth of certain state, county and city revenue to annual inflation and population growth, not including voter-approved revenue increases. Revenue collected above the limit would reduce property tax levies. Should this measure be enacted into law?
 YES
 NO

King County, Washington
Official General Election Ballot
November 3, 2009

State of Washington
Passed by the Legislature and Ordered Referred by Petition
Referendum Measure No. 71
The legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5686 concerning rights and responsibilities of state-registered domestic partners and voters have filed a sufficient referendum petition on this bill. This bill would expand the rights, responsibilities, and obligations accorded state-registered same-sex and senior domestic partners to be equivalent to those of married spouses, except that a domestic partnership is not a marriage. Should this bill be:
 APPROVED
 REJECTED

King County
Charter Amendment No. 1
Repeal of Section 350.20.30 and Portions of Article 9 - Transitory Provisions
Shall those no longer relevant portions of King County Charter Article 9 relating to the county's prior transition to a home rule charter and King County Charter Section 350.20.30, relating to the county's transition to a metropolitan form of government, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 16484?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 2
Repeal of Charter Section 475 - Work Programs and Allotments
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 16546?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 3
Amendment of Section 800 - Charter Review
Shall King County Charter Section 800 be amended to clarify that charter commission appointees are to be confirmed by the council and to provide that the council is required to consider proposed charter amendments and act on them at an open public meeting, as provided in Ordinance Nos. 16547 and 16599?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 4
Adding New Section 897 - High Conservation Value Properties
Shall the King County Charter be amended to add a new Section 897 that would provide enhanced protection for certain county properties designated as high conservation value properties by prohibiting the county from conveying or relinquishing its interest in those properties or authorizing their expanded use, except in specified circumstances, as provided in Ordinance No. 16600?
 YES
 NO

County Executive
short and full term
nonpartisan office
vote for one
 Susan Hutchison
 Dow Constantine
 Write-in

Sheriff
nonpartisan office
vote for one
 Sue Rahr
 Write-in

Assessor
unexpired 2-year term
nonpartisan office
vote for one
 Graham Albertini
 Gene Lux
 Lloyd Hara
 Bob Rosenberger
 Bob Blanchard
 Write-in

Judicial
Court of Appeals, Division No. 1, District No. 1 Judge Position No. 3
nonpartisan office
vote for one
 Anne L. Ellington
 Write-in

Port
Port of Seattle Commissioner Position No. 1
nonpartisan office
vote for one
 John Creighton
 Write-in

Continued on other side



2009 General Election ballot, King County

When you glance at this ballot, what do you see first?

Then what do you see?

Do you see the race below the instructions?

Alerting voters to races below the instructions

Inspired by the Nebraska pilot test (part of the 2007 EAC report), OSOS & King County strategized on using more subtle shading for their instructions & bold shading with contrasted type for what really counted (identifying where to begin voting). The instructions were also shortened, removing information on returning the ballot, now that vote by mail is familiar to King County voters.

In the King County usability study conducted on 2 variations on the above outlined design, 100% of test voters voted the race below the instructions.

Lessons from the Nebraska pilot test & from the King County usability study have been incorporated into the Hart instructions images for use when placing races below instructions.

Consider ballot design in parts & holistically

It is simply not enough to plug in the instruction image for placing races below the instructions. Carefully consider other elements, such as placement of the READ statement & whether or not you will use section dividers.

A ballot is made of parts & the design of the ballot may be considered in parts: the instructions are one part; the section dividers are another part; the races one part, the front of the page can be one part & the back another part. The specific design challenges of each part should be considered & overcome.

After this, consider the design of the ballot as a whole. Consider how different parts are interacting & how they look in relation to each other.

Sample questions to ask include:

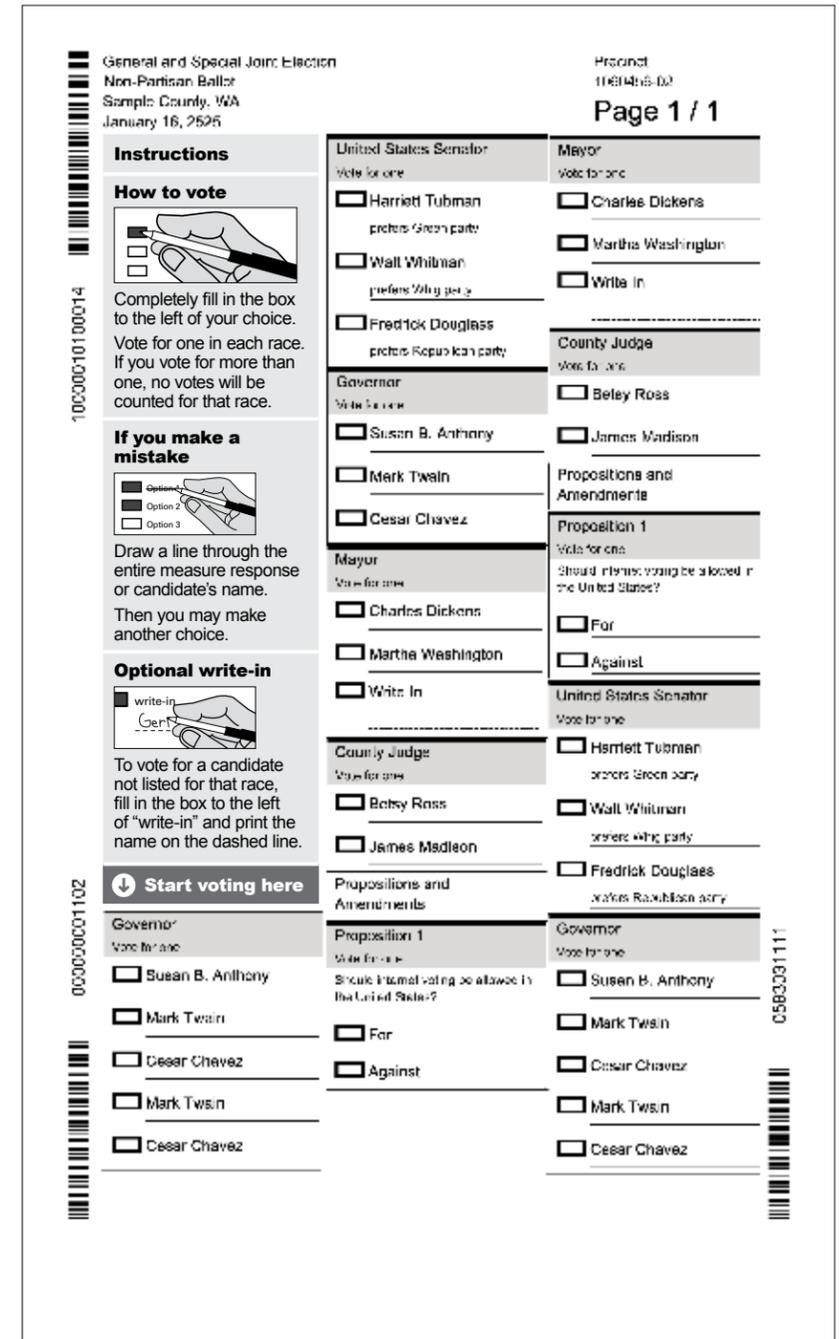
- How should the instructions look in relation to the race below?*
- How are the section dividers relating to the instructions and races?*
- Should the same value of shading carry over from one part to another part?*
- When I glance at the ballot, what stands out? Do I want that to stand out?*



A subtle tint of black (10%) is used in one solid block to differentiate the instructions from the rest of the ballot.



A bold tint of black (70%) is combined with white type & an informational icon to alert voter of where the ballot begins.



Extremely long ballots

As you work through the ballot design process & you make decisions on paper size, template style & what miscellaneous images you will use, you may still be challenged for saving space.

In extremely long ballot situations, consider using an instruction image that features only the graphic for making selections.

➔ **Visit section 5** to see King County's decision-making matrix. A visual guide used by their ballot designers for each election to manage difficult questions such as what size ballot to select, whether to place races below the instructions & when to compromise on type size.

Might it be time for your county to tackle these difficult questions into a set system for each election & draw up your own decision-making matrix?

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

↓ Start voting here

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

↓ Start voting here

How to use the instruction image library

The next several pages show visual examples of all images in the image library. They may look the same; the differences are in the details.

They are first categorized by column.

Then, by use on regular or condensed templates. This means that the type size used in the instruction image will match the type size used on the template you select.

Finally, they are categorized by how “write-in” is handled.

Use the references in the upper right of the right page to navigate where you are in the overall image library.



Narrow down what images you can use based on what Hart template you have selected: column structure & regular or condensed.

Bold text is the corresponding filename.

2 column

regular

“or write-in”

2col_1.bmp

Instructions

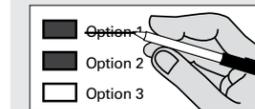
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of “or write-in” and print the name on the dashed line.

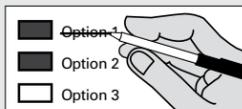
2 column
regular
"or write-in"

2col_1.bmp

Instructions**How to vote**

Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

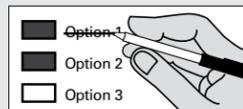
2 column
regular
"write-in"

2col_2.bmp

Instructions**How to vote**

Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

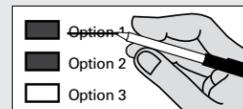
2 column
regular
blank "write-in"

2col_3.bmp

Instructions**How to vote**

Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

2 column
regular
"or write-in"

2col_4.bmp

Instructions

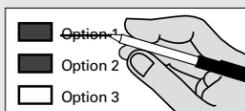
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race.If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

↓ Start voting here

2 column
regular
"write-in"

2col_5.bmp

Instructions

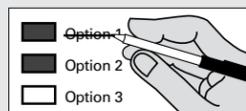
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race.If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

↓ Start voting here

2 column
regular
Blank "write-in"

2col_6.bmp

Instructions

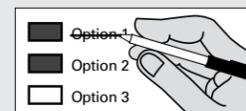
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race.If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

↓ Start voting here

2 column
condensed
"or write-in"

2col_7.bmp

2 column
condensed
"write-in"

2col_8.bmp

2 column
condensed
blank "write-in"

2col_9.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

Instructions

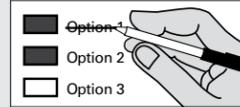
How to vote



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Instructions

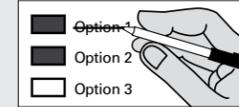
How to vote



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Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

2 column
condensed
"or write-in"

2col_10.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

Start voting here

2 column
condensed
"write-in"

2col_11.bmp

Instructions

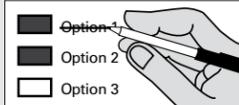
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

Start voting here

2 column
condensed
Blank "write-in"

2col_12.bmp

Instructions

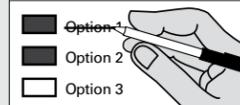
How to vote



Completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

Start voting here

2 column
condensed
"or write-in"

2col_13.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.
Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.
Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

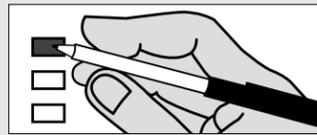
↓ Start voting here

2 column
condensed
"write-in"

2col_14.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



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Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

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Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.
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Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

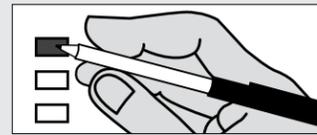
↓ Start voting here

2 column
condensed
blank "write-in"

2col_15.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



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Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.
Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

↓ Start voting here

3 & 4 column
regular
"or write-in"

3col_1.bmp

3 & 4 column
regular
"write-in"

3col_2.bmp

3 & 4 column
regular
blank "write-in"

3col_3.bmp

3 & 4 column
regular
"or write-in"

3col_4.bmp

3 & 4 column
regular
"write-in"

3col_5.bmp

3 & 4 column
regular
blank "write-in"

3col_6.bmp

Instructions

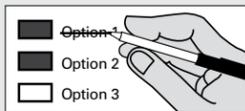
How to vote



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If you make a mistake



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Instructions

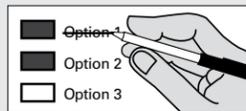
How to vote



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Instructions

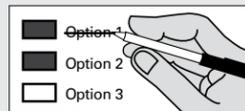
How to vote



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Instructions

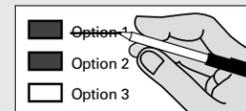
How to vote



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Instructions

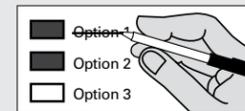
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Instructions

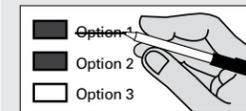
How to vote



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If you make a mistake



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Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

Start voting here

Start voting here

Start voting here

3 & 4 column
condensed
"or write-in"

3col_7.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
"write-in"

3col_8.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
blank "write-in"

3col_9.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
"or write-in"

3col_10.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
"write-in"

3col_11.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
blank "write-in"

3col_12.bmp

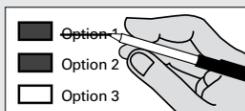
Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.
Vote for one in each race.
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If you make a mistake



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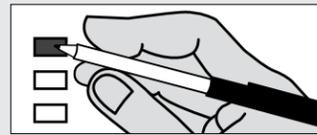
Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "or write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

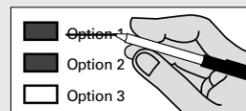
Instructions

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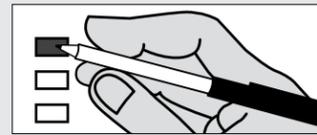
Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

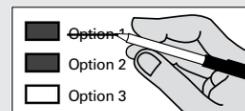
Instructions

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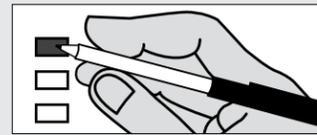
Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

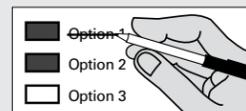
Instructions

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Start voting here

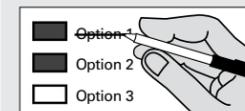
Instructions

How to vote



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Optional write-in



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Start voting here

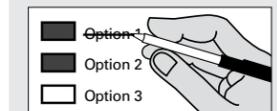
Instructions

How to vote



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If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



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Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

Start voting here

3 & 4 column
condensed
"or write-in"

3col_13.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
"write-in"

3col_14.bmp

3 & 4 column
condensed
blank "write-in"

3col_15.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



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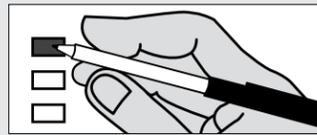
Optional write-in

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↓ Start voting here

Instructions

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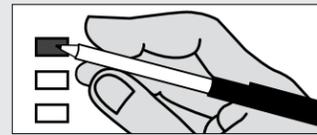
Optional write-in

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To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of the dashed line and print the name of the candidate.

↓ Start voting here

special elections
2 column
regular

se_2col_1.bmp

Instructions

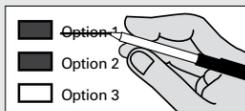
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

special elections
2 column
regular

se_2col_2.bmp

Instructions

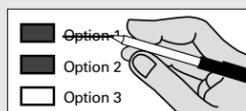
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

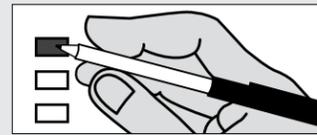
↓ **Start voting here**

special elections
2 column
condensed

se_2col_3.bmp

Instructions

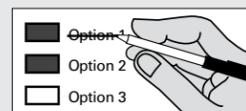
How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

special elections
2 column
condensed

se_2col_4.bmp

Instructions

How to vote



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice.

Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake



Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name.

Then you may make another choice.

↓ **Start voting here**

special elections
3 & 4 column
regular

se_3col_1.bmp

special elections
3 & 4 column
regular

se_3col_2.bmp

special elections
3 & 4 column
condensed

se_3col_3.bmp

special elections
3 & 4 column
condensed

se_3col_4.bmp

Instructions

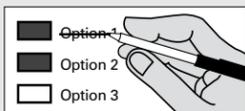
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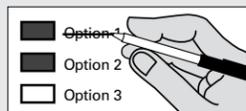
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↓ **Start voting here**

Instructions

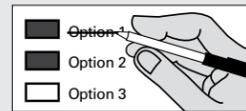
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Instructions

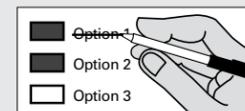
How to vote



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Then you may make another choice.

↓ **Start voting here**

Miscellaneous images refer to section dividers (Federal, Measures, State, Judicial, etc.), the “READ” statement, PCO statement & other optional wayfinding messages.

These miscellaneous images have been created to maintain design consistency. Their use is optional; you may decide to use the tools Hart has built in to BOSS, or to create your own.

About section dividers

Section dividers (Federal, Measures, State, County, Judicial, etc.), are optional. Some counties use section dividers to break up the ballot & / or to feature required information (if the offices are partisan or non-partisan).

The new Hart templates feature built-in shading for overall race information, which visually breaks up the ballot into attackable chunks. Because of this, you may consider eliminating section dividers.

Two sets of section dividers have been created (visual examples of the sets begin on 3.4) to accommodate what type of information you want to feature.

General and Special Joint Election
Non-Partisan Ballot
Sample County, WA
January 16, 2025

Precinct
1060456 02
Page 1 / 1

Instructions

How to vote

Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the box to the left of your choice. Vote for one in each race. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race.

If you make a mistake

Draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. Then you may make another choice.

Optional write-in

To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the box to the left of "write-in" and print the name on the dashed line.

Dividers: Partisan Offices

United States Senator
Vote for one

Harnett Tubman
Under Challenge

Walt Whitman
Under Challenge

Fredrick Douglass
Under Ballot Control

Governor
Vote for one

Susan B. Anthony

Mark Twain

Cesar Chavez

Dividers: Partisan Offices

Mayor
Vote for one

Charles Dickens

Martha Washington

Write In

County Judge
Vote for one

Betsy Ross

James Madison

Dividers: Partisan Offices

Mayor
Vote for one

Charles Dickens

Martha Washington

Write In



Set 2 section dividers

The section dividers have been designed to be slightly smaller in height from other wayfinding images, such as the "start voting here" prompt.

Shading is consistent with other wayfinding messages at 70% black.

➔ **Visit section 4** for information on creating your own images.

➔ **Visit section 6** for the Secretary of State's Ballot Format Checklist & Ballot Packet Checklist.

“Vote for one” & partisan / non-partisan

Legal requirements dictate that you must state how many for which to vote (it’s usually “vote for one”) & whether a race is partisan or non-partisan, but it does not state a specific location for this information. Some counties, in an effort to save space, will place this information with section dividers.

Existing research recommends that you feature both pieces of information with each & every race.

This may seem repetitive, but it establishes consistency & places the information in context. They can be considered two pieces of specific race instruction, just like the term length.



What are your options?

Consider different ways of displaying legal requirements such as “vote for one,” partisan / non-partisan & term length.

Research recommends placing this information in context, with each race.

Will you give each piece its own line? Will you group some of it together?

Legislative District 10 State Representative Pos. 2

partisan office, 1 year unexpired term; vote for 1

Laura Johnson
(prefers Democratic Party)

Terry Rhodes
(prefers Republican Party)

or write-in:
.....

Governor

partisan office
1 year unexpired term
vote for 1

Laura Johnson
(prefers Democratic Party)

Terry Rhodes
(prefers Republican Party)

or write-in:
.....

District Court Judge

non-partisan office, 4 year term
vote for 1

Laura Johnson

Terry Rhodes

or write-in:
.....

2 column
section dividers
set 1

Folder: 2 Column Set 1

State Measure	County Measure
State Measures	County Measures
State Initiative	County Initiative
State Initiatives	County Initiatives
State Referendum	County Referendum
State Referenda	County Referenda
Measure	
Measures	Partisan Office
Initiative	Partisan Offices
Initiatives	Non-Partisan Office
Referendum	Non-Partisan Offices
Referenda	
Proposed by Initiative Petition	
Proposed to the People by the Legislature: Amendment to the State Constitution	

Federal	County
Federal Office	County Issue
Federal Offices	County Issues
Federal Issues & Offices	County Issues & Offices
Congressional	Local
Congressional Office	Local Issue
Congressional Offices	Local Issues
	Local Issues & Offices
State	
State Office	County Office
State Offices	County Offices
State Issues & Offices	Local Office
	Local Offices

2 column
section dividers
set 1 (continued)

Folder: 2 Column Set 1

Hospital District	Water District
Hospital Districts	Water Districts
Fire District	Port
Fire Districts	
Fire Protection District	Parks & Recreation District
Fire Protection Districts	Parks & Recreation Districts
Cemetary District	
Cemetary Districts	Judicial
School District	Judicial Office
School Districts	Judicial Offices
Sewer District	
Sewer Districts	Election of Political Party Precinct Committee Officer
	Election of Political Party Precinct Committee Officer

2 column
section dividers
set 2

Folder: 2 Column Set 2

Federal: Partisan Offices	County: Partisan Offices
Federal: Partisan Office	County: Partisan Office
Federal: Non-Partisan Offices	County: Non-Partisan Offices
Federal: Non-Partisan Office	County: Non-Partisan Office
State: Partisan Offices	Judicial: Non-Partisan Offices
State: Partisan Office	Judicial: Non-Partisan Office
State: Non-Partisan Offices	
State: Non-Partisan Office	

2 column
other images

Folder: 2 Column Other

 Start voting here

Continue voting next side 

Continue voting next page 

READ: Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.

Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party.
For this office only:
If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party.

Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party.
For this office only: If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party.

3 & 4 column
section dividers
set 1

Folder: 3 Column Set 1

State Measure	County Measure	Federal
State Measures	County Measures	Federal Office
State Initiative	County Initiative	Federal Offices
State Initiatives	County Initiatives	Federal Issues & Offices
State Referendum	County Referendum	
State Referenda	County Referenda	Congressional
Measure		Congressional Office
Measures	Partisan Office	Congressional Offices
Initiative	Partisan Offices	
Initiatives	Non-Partisan Office	State
Referendum	Non-Partisan Offices	State Office
Referenda		State Offices
Proposed by Initiative Petition	Proposed to the People by the Legislature: Amendment to the State Constitution	State Issues & Offices

County	Hospital District	Water District
County Issue	Hospital Districts	Water Districts
County Issues	Fire District	Port
County Issues & Offices	Fire Districts	
	Fire Protection District	Parks & Recreation District
Local	Fire Protection Districts	Parks & Recreation Districts
Local Issue	Cemetery District	
Local Issues	Cemetery Districts	Judicial
Local Issues & Offices	School District	Judicial Office
	School Districts	Judicial Offices
County Office	Sewer District	
County Offices	Sewer Districts	Election of Political Party Precinct Committee Officer
Local Office		
Local Offices		

3 & 4 column
section dividers
set 2

Folder: 3 Column Set 2

Federal: Partisan Offices	County: Partisan Offices
Federal: Partisan Office	County: Partisan Office
Federal: Non-Partisan Offices	County: Non-Partisan Offices
Federal: Non-Partisan Office	County: Non-Partisan Office
State: Partisan Offices	Judicial: Non-Partisan Offices
State: Partisan Office	Judicial: Non-Partisan Office
State: Non-Partisan Offices	
State: Non-Partisan Office	

3 & 4 column
other images

Folder: 3 Column Other.

Start voting here	READ: Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.	Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party. For this office only: If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party.
Continue voting next side →		
Continue voting next page →		
		Precinct Committee Officer is a position in each major political party. For this office only: If you consider yourself a Democrat or Republican, you may vote for a candidate of that party.

Creating images **4**

Section forthcoming.

Section forthcoming

In early 2010, King County reached out to the OSOS for assistance with ballot design.

King County is ahead of the game in regard to ballot design. For years, they have featured D4D images with their ballot instructions & they have tried to adopt as much as possible from existing ballot design research.

King County & the OSOS thought that documenting the ballot design process & tackling some of the difficult compromises outside of the official ballot design time would lead to a consistent ballot design process to use from election to election.

This documentation became known as the “ballot design decision-making matrix.”

King County’s decision-making matrix & the report from the usability study are repeated here for you.

About this guide

This guide is a conditional design methodology that attempts to manage election variables, software constraints, statute constraints, & best design practices.

Translation: It's a general election & we have items required by statute, & we have enough races that we will need to increase the size of our ballot. What size do we use & what design items are adjustable, or not, or should we be aware of?

This guide is collaboration.

This guide was not written in a bubble. Quite the opposite.

King County managers, ballot designers, tech team & communications team members, with a professional communications design consultant, are the people responsible for collaborating on this guide. It included review of leading ballot design research & usability, & new usability research was conducted.

At some point during the life of a ballot, all these people & resources come into play. The designers design it. The managers are, in the eyes of the public, responsible for the ballot. The communications team members must understand & explain the ballot. When setting out to do this project, the question was asked: why not have all these people involved from the very beginning? So they were.

When to use this guide

- **Before an election:** As a refresher before the design really begins.
- **During an election:** To follow the decision-making matrix or for information on type size or placing a race under the instructions.
- **As a resource for someone new to the ballot design process:** To bring them up to speed with the ballot design process.
- **As a supplement to other ballot design resources:** This guide is greatly enriched when used in collaboration with the other ballot design resources.

Option 5

8.5 x 14
front + back

instructions share
column with races

(please see usability study
for information on placing
races under instructions)

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo. Ut inveruptatur, consequid ut es vollor volorum molore.

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo.

Yes
 No

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Harrison Ford
 Guy Ritchie
 Madonna
 Linda Ronstadt

Julie Andrews
 Van Halen

Liz Lemon
 Jack Donaghy
 Frank the Tank
 Ben Harper
 Dave Matthews
 Elliott Nolan

Jack Nicholson
 Jimmy Buffett

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Jon Stewart
 Hiroko Shirakata
 Tyler Luten
 Caroline Hurd

Jerry Seinfeld
 Julie Hatfield
 Madonna
 Linda Ronstadt

Jack Nicholson
 Jimmy Buffett

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Option 6 (left)

8.5 x 18
front + back

instructions share
column with races

Option 7 (far right)

8.5 x 18
front + back

instructions share
column with races

reduced type size

(please see best practics for
information on type size)

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo. Ut inveruptatur, consequid ut es vollor volorum molore.

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo.

Yes
 No

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Harrison Ford
 Guy Ritchie
 Madonna
 Linda Ronstadt

Julie Andrews
 Van Halen

Liz Lemon
 Jack Donaghy
 Frank the Tank
 Ben Harper
 Dave Matthews
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Jerry Seinfeld
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 Linda Ronstadt

Jack Nicholson
 Jimmy Buffett

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 Goofy

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 Jimmy Buffett

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Jon Stewart
 Hiroko Shirakata
 Tyler Luten
 Caroline Hurd

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo. Ut inveruptatur, consequid ut es vollor volorum molore.

Tiatenimus sum ipit eos militat usaest, sum aditerno lupustia que volorep editati umendem volorum molore doluptate labo.

Yes
 No

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Harrison Ford
 Guy Ritchie
 Madonna
 Linda Ronstadt

Julie Andrews
 Van Halen

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 Jimmy Buffett

Mickey Mouse
 Donald Duck
 Minnie Mouse
 Goofy

Jon Stewart
 Hiroko Shirakata
 Tyler Luten
 Caroline Hurd

Planning for Presidential Primaries

The presidential primary changes with almost each occurrence. Establishing best practices will provide the flexibility for the changing Presidential Primary landscape:

- **Understand ballot design principles:** Understanding of “The Top 10,” existing ballot design research & usability.
- **Begin ballot design early:** When specifics of the Presidential Primary are determined, establish a timeline incorporating research, creation of ballot design variations, usability, & manager sign-off.
- **Research:** Research other counties (even outside of Washington) & past elections for design ideas. There may be a jurisdiction elsewhere that was challenged with similar design dilemmas & may provide insight into how to design.
- **Consider entire ballot packet:** Some Presidential Primaries involve placing information on the envelope, others require information on the actual ballot. Understand the requirements & how they may effect other areas of the ballot packet.
- **Create variations:** Explore multiple instructions & layout variations. What you may think as the only solution may be one of a few & may not be strong in usability.
- **Conduct usability:** The election should not be the first time the Presidential Primary ballot layout is tested. Schedule 1-2 days of usability to see where there may be problems with concept, layout, shading or language.
- **Involve managers throughout the process:** If there is a problem during design/testing, or in the actual election, they will be held accountable. Engage them throughout the process so they understand the challenges & decisions made at each step.

Best practices: type size

Ensuring maximum legibility: 12 point, sans-serif font

Good typography is critical to enabling written language (*Design for Democracy: Ballot + Election Design, Marcia Lausen*). A sans-serif font is clean & crisp, ensuring clean printing at a range of sizes & treatments, versus a serif font which has delicate serifs that can cloud text depending on size & treatment. Existing research recommends the use of the sans-serif Univers font family.

The recommended type size for body text, to ensure optimal legibility, is 12-point. This may seem large to someone with full vision, but keep in mind the target audience: all voters. There will be voters with literacy issues, low vision & members of the older population. 12-point type is optimal for a diverse target audience.

Do not drop below 8 point type

There will be times when it is not possible to set type at 12 point. Experiment with gradually dropping type size (12 to 11, 11 to 10, etc), until you find a balance between the amount of content & type size. Do not drop type size below 8 point. Even at 8 point, some readers will have low enough vision that the material will be difficult to read.

Consistency matters

Be consistent when you adjust type size. Do not adjust type size for one race but not for other races. Type size serves as a visual cue & if type is smaller in one area, it sends the message to the reader that the material is different, when in fact, it may not be. Ideally, type size would be adjusted throughout all comparable areas of the ballot – or at a minimum – by page.

Type size is not universal among font families

While Univers is a readable font that offers many weights, it is not standard on most computers. You might opt to use a font that is more widely available, like Helvetica or Arial. Review the font you select & the size options before using on the ballot because the type size (vertically & horizontally) may appear different than another font. For example, 12 point Univers may set smaller or larger than 12 point Helvetica.

Introduction for Hart counties

Whenever possible, use the first column for instructions only & begin races in the second column. This is not always possible in the real world of elections. Counties fear the day they will have to go to a 2-page ballot. When it comes to the question of placing races below the instructions & having a 2-page ballot, counties will always choose to place races below the instructions.

In this scenario, what type of design techniques should be used? This was the question King County asked in early 2010 when they sought out to conduct usability on a few different ballot designs.

Following is the full usability study from May 2010.

About the study

Usability research to date advises against placing races below the instructions because test voters often overlooked these races (*EAC 2007: Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*).

Follow this recommendation when possible. The decision-making-matrix provides a guide for what ballot situations warrant beginning races in the second column (preferred method), or placing races below the instructions.

In May 2010, King County conducted usability tests on two different test ballot designs to observe how people would vote a ballot with a race below the instructions. The test ballots featured races from the November 2009 General Election ballot but differed by featuring shorter instructions, different shading & a design & language prompt for where to begin the ballot.

Major questions of study

- Was the ballot easy to use?
- Did voters vote the race below the instructions?
- Could they identify how they knew there was a race below the instructions?
- When they received the ballot from the moderator, was there an area of the ballot that stood out visually?
- Did voters vote the races on the back of the ballot?
- How did voters know there was a back to the ballot?

We comprised a team of five: one moderator, two observers, & two helpers to get voters. We approached people around the streets of downtown Seattle, in the shopping malls, & on public transit to / from Seattle-Tacoma Airport. We had a total of 26 participants.

Basic information about the voters:

Ballot Style 1

Total voters:	12
Average Age:	34
Youngest:	19
Oldest:	55
Males:	6
Females:	6
Voted before:	11 / 12

Ballot Style 2

Total voters:	14
Average Age:	36
Youngest:	19
Oldest:	76
Males:	6
Females:	6
Voted before:	12 / 14



2009 General Election ballot, King County

In addition to instructions on how to vote, King County still documents how to return the ballot since the transition to vote by mail was a difficult & misunderstood process for voters.

The instructions also feature bold shading (100% black & 90% black) alternating throughout the instructions.

More subtle shading is used above the first race.

SEA 43-2021
BALLOT CODE: 324
LEG DISTRICT: 43

King County, Washington
Official General Election Ballot
November 3, 2009

Instructions
Making selections
Use a dark pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

Returning the ballot
Insert completed ballot into security envelope.

Optional Write-in
To vote for a write-in candidate, write the name and darken the oval.

Making corrections
To make a correction, draw a line through the candidate's name. You then have the option of making another choice.

State of Washington
Proposed by Initiative Petition
Initiative Measure No. 1033
Initiative Measure No. 1033 concerns state, county and city revenue. This measure would limit growth of certain state, county and city revenue to annual inflation and population growth, not including voter-approved revenue increases. Revenue collected above the limit would reduce property tax levies. Should this measure be enacted into law?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 1
Repeat of Section 350.20.30 and Portions of Article 9 - Transitory Provisions
Shall those no longer relevant portions of King County Charter Article 9 relating to the county's prior transition to a home rule charter and King County Charter Section 350.20.30, relating to the county's transition to a metropolitan form of government, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 164847?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 2
Repeat of Charter Section 475 - Work Programs and Allotments
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 165467?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 3
Amendment of Section 800 - Charter Review
Shall King County Charter Section 800 be amended to clarify that charter commission appointees are to be confirmed by the council and to provide that the council is required to consider proposed charter amendments and act on them at an open public meeting, as provided in Ordinance Nos. 16547 and 165997?
 YES
 NO

State of Washington
Passed by the Legislature and Ordered Referred by Petition
Referendum Measure No. 71
The legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5688 concerning rights and responsibilities of state-registered domestic partners and voters have filed a sufficient referendum petition on this bill. This bill would expand the rights, responsibilities, and obligations accorded state-registered same-sex and senior domestic partners to be equivalent to those of married spouses, except that a domestic partnership is not a marriage. Should this bill be:
 APPROVED
 REJECTED

King County
Charter Amendment No. 4
Adding New Section 897 - High Conservation Value Properties
Shall the King County Charter be amended to add a new Section 897 that would provide enhanced protection for certain county properties designated as high conservation value properties by prohibiting the county from conveying or relinquishing its interest in those properties or authorizing their expanded use, except in specified circumstances, as provided in Ordinance No. 166007?
 YES
 NO

King County
County Executive
short and full term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Susan Hutchison
 Dow Constantine
 Write-in

King County
Sheriff
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Sue Rahr
 Write-in

King County
Assessor
unexpired 2-year term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Graham Albertini
 Gene Lux
 Lloyd Hara
 Bob Rosenberger
 Bob Blanchard
 Write-in

King County
Judicial
Court of Appeals, Division No. 1, District No. 1 Judge Position No. 3
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Anne L. Ellington
 Write-in

King County
Port
Port of Seattle Commissioner Position No. 1
nonpartisan office vote for one
 John Creighton
 Write-in

FRONT Card 324 RptPg 14330-10 "2021.021" Default

November 3, 2009
King County, Washington
General Election Special Ballot

#1
BALLOT CODE: 1
LEG DISTRICT: 37

Instructions
Making selections
Use a dark pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

How to correct a mistake
To make a correction, draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. You then have the option of making another choice.

Optional write-in
To add a candidate, fill in the oval next to the write-in line and print the name on the write-in line.

Begin voting here

State of Washington
Proposed by Initiative Petition
Initiative Measure No. 1033
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 165467?
 YES
 NO

State of Washington
Charter Amendment No. 2
Repeat of Charter Section 475 - Work Programs and Allotments
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 165467?
 YES
 NO

State of Washington
Charter Amendment No. 3
Amendment of Section 800 - Charter Review
Shall King County Charter Section 800 be amended to clarify that charter commission appointees are to be confirmed by the council and to provide that the council is required to consider proposed charter amendments and act on them at an open public meeting, as provided in Ordinance Nos. 16547 and 165997?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 4
Adding New Section 897 - High Conservation Value Properties
Shall the King County Charter be amended to add a new Section 897 that would provide enhanced protection for certain county properties designated as high conservation value properties by prohibiting the county from conveying or relinquishing its interest in those properties or authorizing their expanded use, except in specified circumstances, as provided in Ordinance No. 166007?
 YES
 NO

King County
County Executive
short and full term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Susan Hutchison
 Dow Constantine
 Write-in

King County
Sheriff
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Sue Rahr
 Write-in

King County
Assessor
unexpired 2-year term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Graham Albertini
 Gene Lux
 Lloyd Hara
 Bob Rosenberger
 Bob Blanchard
 Write-in

King County
Judicial
Court of Appeals, Division No. 1, District No. 1 Judge Position No. 3
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Anne L. Ellington
 Write-in

Continued on other side



Usability study test ballots

Design & language review was part of preparation for the usability study. Upon reflection on the success of vote by mail, King County decided to eliminate instructions for how to return the ballot.

More subtle shading was instituted, the most contrasted shading being used to indicate the ballot instructions & where to begin voting.

One test ballot featured an iconic arrow for where to begin, the other featured a numbered system: #1 for instructions, #2 for where to begin voting, #3 for returning the ballot (after all races).

November 3, 2009
King County, Washington
General Election Special Ballot

#2
BALLOT CODE: 2
LEG DISTRICT: 37

Instructions
Making selections
Use a dark pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

How to correct a mistake
To make a correction, draw a line through the entire measure response or candidate's name. You then have the option of making another choice.

Optional write-in
To add a candidate, fill in the oval next to the write-in line and print the name on the write-in line.

Begin voting here

State of Washington
Proposed by Initiative Petition
Initiative Measure No. 1033
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 165467?
 YES
 NO

State of Washington
Charter Amendment No. 2
Repeat of Charter Section 475 - Work Programs and Allotments
Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 165467?
 YES
 NO

State of Washington
Charter Amendment No. 3
Amendment of Section 800 - Charter Review
Shall King County Charter Section 800 be amended to clarify that charter commission appointees are to be confirmed by the council and to provide that the council is required to consider proposed charter amendments and act on them at an open public meeting, as provided in Ordinance Nos. 16547 and 165997?
 YES
 NO

King County
Charter Amendment No. 4
Adding New Section 897 - High Conservation Value Properties
Shall the King County Charter be amended to add a new Section 897 that would provide enhanced protection for certain county properties designated as high conservation value properties by prohibiting the county from conveying or relinquishing its interest in those properties or authorizing their expanded use, except in specified circumstances, as provided in Ordinance No. 166007?
 YES
 NO

King County
County Executive
short and full term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Susan Hutchison
 Dow Constantine
 Write-in

King County
Sheriff
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Sue Rahr
 Write-in

King County
Assessor
unexpired 2-year term nonpartisan office vote for one
 Graham Albertini
 Gene Lux
 Lloyd Hara
 Bob Rosenberger
 Bob Blanchard
 Write-in

King County
Judicial
Court of Appeals, Division No. 1, District No. 1 Judge Position No. 3
nonpartisan office vote for one
 Anne L. Ellington
 Write-in

Continued on other side

Ballot Style #1 Q&A Session Results

1. Did you think the ballot was easy to use?

Yes 12
No 0

2. Were the instructions for this ballot difficult to understand?

Yes 0
No 12

3. Do you think that most people would be able to use this ballot without problems?

Yes 12
No 0

Even an old person could figure it out

Yes; but people will say they have problems because they like to place blame.

Only if they were illiterate would they have trouble.

4. Do you find this ballot awkward to use?

Yes 1*
No 11

I didn't notice I-1033 at first, but I noticed it when I was about to turn the ballot over.

**It felt awkward because I didn't know the issues.*

5. Step me through what you did on the ballot.**(We tracked specific places if voters mentioned them)**

Looked at instructions first 5
Looked at first race first 2

I looked for where to start. I did not see the label to start. I do now.

I'm not sure how I knew there was a race in the lower left, but I voted that race.

The instructions were scannable. I saw "begin voting here," & I followed the linear fashion.

I worked down a column, then up the next. This is how I always vote.

I worked through in order. I did not see "begin voting here," I always look for the ovals.

I started at the date, then the instructions, then where to start. I read from top to bottom.

6. Was there an area that visually stood out when we handed you the ballot?**(We tracked specific places if voters mentioned them)**

Instructions 6
"Begin Voting Here" 2
Nothing 2

There is definite differentiation between the instructions & the race text/ovals.

I didn't see the "continue on other side" message.

Ballot Style #2 Q&A Session Results

1. Did you think the ballot was easy to use?

Yes 13
No 1

2. Were the instructions for this ballot difficult to understand?

Yes 0
No 14

The ballot was straightforward.

3. Do you think that most people would be able to use this ballot without problems?

Yes 14
No 0

4. Do you find this ballot awkward to use?

Yes 1
No 13

The ballot seemed long. Wouldn't circles for the bubbles be easier to fill in?

**5. Step me through what you did on the ballot
(We tracked specific places if voters mentioned them).**

Looked at instructions first 5
Looked at first race first 1

I've never noticed how to make a correction.

I expected the oval to be to the right of the choice.

I didn't see "continued on other side."

It seemed self-explanatory.

The wording of initiatives seemed hard to understand.

I liked the instructional diagrams.

I started at #2: Begin Voting Here.

**6. Was there an area that visually stood out when we handed you the ballot?
(We tracked specific places if voters mentioned them)**

Instructions 6
Candidate Names 1
Nothing 1

The instructions, but that's a given, right?

The graphics. They really helped.

Conclusions

Was the ballot easy to use?

Most definitely! Many of our questions were a rephrase of this overall question & a majority of voters thought the ballot was easy to use, that the instructions were clear, that the ballot was not awkward & that most people would be able to use the ballot without any problems.

Did voters vote the race under the instructions, & how did they know there was a race under the instructions?

100% of test ballots have the race under the instructions voted, so we can consider the test ballot designs to be a success. However, very few voters could explain why. Only two voters cited the language "Begin Voting Here" & only one voter specified the #2 on test ballot 2. A few voters noted that they used the ballot in a linear fashion, working from the top to the bottom of the columns.

Why the difference in action / answers & why do we think the new design features to help voters vote the race under the instructions, were a success?

A few theories:

- ***It's not uncommon in usability studies to observe a difference in action & answers***

The test opened with a script that made three points to the voter: it was a usability study, we wanted to understand how usable the ballots were & they should use the ballot as they normally would. We did not specify ahead of time exactly what we were observing & even in the follow-up questions, we did not address that we were interested in their actions concerning the first race & turning over the ballot.

We can assume that during the test, voters were not making mental note of visual clues & layout – we hadn't directed them to do that. We had hoped that questions 5 & 6 would prompt them to mention the visual cues preceding the first race, but in many of the Q&A sessions, voters did not.

- ***Good design is invisible***

Effective design is usually invisible to the user. Design is usually noted when it's bad design, causing frustration, delay, or misunderstanding. In the case of the test ballots, perhaps the design of the instructions & "begin voting here" worked so well & was not noted because it's truly working & the recognition of the design is not there because: good design is invisible.

- ***The design of the test ballots has evolved beyond that which inspired it – the 2009 General Election ballot – & this design is more effective***

The test ballots feature streamlined instructions. Three rather than five graphics & instructions that only pertain to voting the ballot. Bold visual shading was not used to differentiate types of instructions, like on the 2009 General Election ballot, but was used to visually differentiate two sections – the instructions & where the ballot begins.

Was there an area of the ballot that stood out visually when voters received it from the moderator?

It is a well known design principle that the eye begins with the upper left area of a document when it is viewed. A majority of voters noted that the instructions stood out. This could be, in part, due to this design theory. The instructions are visually much different from the races: they are graphics-intense. On a subconscious level, in that split second between receiving the test ballot & beginning to process the information, our brains say: something different is happening in the upper left area of this test ballot.

It is good that voters noted the instructions as the area that stood out. While they may choose to not read the instructions, the voter knows where they are if they have a problem further into the ballot.

Did voters vote the races on the back of the ballot & how did they know there were races there?

100% of test ballots have the votes on the back voted, but there were comments during Q&A noting the overlook of the "continued on other side" prompt in small red type at the bottom of the third column of the test ballots. Many voters were observed in noting the second side when they were handed the ballot (which is why we chose to hand them the ballot – we were curious if they would observe that second side).

Recommendations

When possible, place instructions in the left column & begin races in the second column

Existing research advises us to embed instructions in the ballot (as opposed to running them horizontally above vertically placed contests in columns) to support greater voting focus & autonomy for users.

It also advises us to avoid placing races below the instructions when possible. Continue to follow this standard.

Let the decision-making matrix guide you in deciding when to place a race under the instructions

The decision-making matrix was developed to carefully pinpoint (& limit) the situations when it is necessary to place a race under the instructions.

Consider ballot design in parts, & holistically.

When it is time to place a race under the instructions, carefully consider design.

A ballot is made of parts, & the design of the ballot may be considered in parts: the instructions are one part; the section dividers are another part; the races one part, the front of the page can be one part, & the back another part. The specific design challenges of each part should be considered & overcome.

After time is spent to work on the design of the parts, the design of the ballot as a whole should be considered.

Sample questions to ask include:

How should the instructions look in relation to the race below?

How are the section dividers relating to the instructions and races?

Should the same value of shading carry over from one part to another part?

When I glance at the ballot, what stands out? Do I want that to stand out?

One theory on the success of 100% of voters voting the race below the instructions is because the design had evolved, & the design had been considered in parts (the instructions still well-designed, but toned down in regard to shading) & as a whole (in relation to the "begin voting here" & the first race).

When design changes are implemented, review resources & conduct usability

We developed two test ballots & tested them as part of the evolution of instructions & ballot design. We have a body of usability & design recommendations available to us through existing research.

When design changes are considered, consult existing research & conduct usability.

This stuff is not made up.

Close to 100% of the research, recommendations & design in this guide is based on millions of dollars of research, long-term studies & established design principles.

Ready to learn more?

Feel free to peruse some of the following materials, or find some of the recommended reading online.

It is truly amazing we have such a wealth of knowledge & insight into ballot design.

Resources, reports & books

Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections

U.S. Election Assistance Commission & AIGA Design for Democracy
June 2007

Google Search for it: EAC Effective Designs

This can be considered “the bible” of election design. A whopping 266 pages, it covers existing research, planning tools, best practices & design guidelines for voter information materials, optical scan ballots & DRE ballots. Full coverage of 10 research / usability events.

Better Ballots

The Brennan Center
2008

Google search for it: “Better Ballots”

A wonderful overview with visual examples of 13 common ballot design problems.

Use of Language in Ballot Instructions (NISTIR 7556)

National Institute of Standards & Technology
May 2009

Google search for it: “NISTIR 7556”

The most up-to-date resource in regard to plain language for ballots, featuring some visual design / layout findings & recommendations.

The LEO Kit: Usability Testing for Local Election Officials

Usability Professionals’ Association
May 2009

Google search for it: “LEO Test Kit”

Ready to do some usability but you don’t really know how to do it? The LEO Kit is for people who have no specific training in usability. It includes materials to get you started, including a usability study overview, the usability script, forms for participants & a sample test report.

To get a taste for this resource, scan ahead in this section to see how the LEO Test Kit was altered for the King County usability study.

Handbook of Usability Testing

Jeffrey Rubin & Dana Chisnell
2008

[Amazon.com](#)

Ready for more in-depth information on usability studies? Consider this “the bible” of usability testing, written by Dana Chisnell, a frequent consultant to the OSOS.

Letting Go of the Words

Janice Redish
2008

[Amazon.com](#)

This book is about plain language for web content, but it is extremely applicable to all types of writing for all types of places.

Design for Democracy: Ballot + Election Design

Marcia Lausen
2007

[Amazon.com](#)

A wonderful & visually-rich overview of election design.

AIGA's Design for Democracy website

www.aiga.org

Visual samples from around the country of ballots & election materials.

Usability Professionals' Association website

www.upassoc.org

King County usability study materials

Following are sections of the LEO Test Kit for usability testing that were altered for the 2010 King County usability study. This may give you an idea of how easy it can be to put together a usability study.

Supply list

- 3-5 clipboards (unless this is conducted where there is a workspace)
1 for each voter, 1 for moderator, 1 for each observer
- Pens
- Stopwatch or watch with timer
- Copies of each ballot design (enough for test & some extras)
- Copies of questionnaire / observer sheet
- Mini stapler
- Schwag (buttons, pens, anything to give away as a “thank you” for the voter’s participation)
- Voters

Session sequence of events

1. Find voter(s)
2. Moderator reads script
3. Have participant fill out demographic questionnaire
(completed questionnaire goes to observer, voter keeps clipboard)
4. Moderator finishes script
5. Hand voter ballot, voter begins (participant holds on to clipboard & ballot when finished)
6. Observer(s) ask follow-up questions (Usability standards recommend that the moderator ask the follow-up questions to maintain consistency & avoid the use of any leading questions. Because we tested multiple voters at the same time, we altered this study so that observers would ask the questions.)
7. Voter turns in ballot & clipboard
8. Observers staple ballot to demographic questionnaire & notes

Moderator Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate! This should take about 10 minutes.

We’d like to get your feedback about ballot design in King County for the August Primary Election. We’re trying to understand how well the ballot works.

For the next few minutes, as you use the ballot, you’ll pretend you’re voting in a real election. We’ll watch you doing that & we’ll be taking notes as you vote.

When you’re finished, our observers will ask you a few questions.

First, we have a few demographic questions for you.

[Hand voter the demographic questionnaire]

Please remember that even though the ballot will look real, you are not being tested in any way & this is not for a real election. You’ll remain totally anonymous. Your taking part in the study helps us evaluate how easy the ballot is for you to use. If you have questions or problems with the ballot, feel free to ask me. Please let us know when you’re finished.

Do you have any questions at this point?

[Hand voter the ballot]

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your zip code? _____
3. Are you:
 - Female
 - Male
4. Do you have physical limitations, such as:
 - Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment
 - A condition that substantially limits one or more physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying?
5. Have you voted before?
 - Yes
 - No
6. Are you registered to vote right now?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
7. What was the last election you voted in? _____
8. The last time you voted, what did you use to vote?
 - Punch card
 - Touch screen
 - Optical scan (filling in a bubble or joining the ends of an arrow)
 - Lever machine
 - Absentee / Mail-in
 - I don't remember

Observer notes

Participant Number _____

Ballot Style _____

Completion Time _____

*Did they spend time on the instructions? Did they seem like they were reading them?**Did they under or over vote? Miss any races? Seem confused (& where)?***Follow-up questions**

1. Did you think the ballot was easy to use?
2. Were the instructions for this ballot difficult to understand?
3. Do you think that most people would be able to use this ballot without problems?
4. Did you find this ballot awkward to use?
5. Step me through what you did on the ballot. Let's just go through it from where you started & tell me about any questions, doubts, or confusion you remember having along the way.
6. Is there a particular area of the ballot that stood out to you visually? Do you remember your eyes being drawn to one area when you were handed the ballot?
7. How did using this ballot compare with the last time you voted?

Top 10 Election Design Guidelines

Use lowercase letters

Mixed-case letters are more legible than ALL CAPITAL LETTERS because they are easier to recognize.

Avoid centered type

Left-aligned type is more legible than centered type, which forces the eye to stop reading in order to find the start of the next line.

Use big enough type

“Fine print” is hard to read and may intimidate or alienate voters. Use minimum type sizes: 12-point for optical scan; 25-point for touchscreens. (Following this principle for optical scan ballots may impact printing costs but will be a worthwhile investment in election accuracy.)

Pick one sans-serif font

Avoid introducing new fonts, which require the eye to stop reading and adjust. Sans-serif fonts with clean strokes (Arial, Univers, Verdana) are recommended for screen and for the quantity and variation of text found on paper ballots. For dual-language materials, use bold text for the primary language, regular text for the secondary language.

Support process and navigation

For optical-scan ballots, offer comprehensive instructions and page numbering. For touchscreen ballots, offer language and mode options, continuous access to instructions, consistent and flexible navigation and clear feedback about selections. Post notable wayfinding and instructional materials in and around the polling place.

Use clear, simple language

State instructions and options as simply as possible. Summarize referenda in simple language alongside required formats. Do not include more than two languages on any one material.

Use accurate instructional illustrations

Visual instructions help low-literacy and general-population voters. Photo images, which are difficult to shoot and reproduce well, are not recommended. Illustrations must be accurate in their details to avoid misleading voters.

Use informational icons (only)

Avoid political party icons. Icons that call attention to key information and support navigation are recommended in limited use.

Use contrast and color functionally

Use color and shading consistently: on optical scan ballots, to differentiate instructions from contents and contests from each other; and on touchscreen ballots, to support navigation, call special attention and provide user feedback. Color cannot be relied on as the only way to communicate important information.

Decide what’s most important

Page and screen layout and text sizes should support information hierarchy. For instance, the ballot title should be more prominent than any one contest, a contest header should be more prominent than its candidates’ names and a candidate’s name should be bolder than his/her party affiliation. Candidates’ names and options should be presented with equal importance.

Guidelines for a Plain Language Ballot

The following is Appendix 10 from NISTIR 7556, Use of Language in Ballot Instructions, 2009:

These guidelines are based on the results of an empirical study comparing a ballot with traditional language instructions (Ballot A) to a ballot with plain language instructions (Ballot B). Voters were more accurate voting the ballot with plain language instructions. Voters preferred the ballot with plain language instructions by a wide margin (82%).

What to say and where to say it

1. Be specific. Give people the information they need.
2. At the beginning of the ballot, explain how to vote, how to change a vote, and that voters may write in a candidate.
3. Put instructions where voters need them. For example, save the instructions on how to use the write-in page for the write-in page.
4. Include information that will prevent voters from making errors, such as a caution to not write in someone who is already on the ballot.
5. On a DRE, never have a page with only a page title (such as the Ballot A page that just said Non-partisan offices).
6. Make the page title the title of the office (State Supreme Court Chief Justice rather than Retention Question).
7. Have voters confirm that they are ready to cast their vote with a Cast Vote button, not a Confirm button.
8. At the end, tell people that their vote has been recorded.

How to say it

9. Write short sentences.
10. Use short, simple, everyday words. For example, do not use “retention” and “retain.” Use “keep” instead. For another example, use “for” and “against” for amendments and measures rather than “accept” and “reject.”
11. Do not use voting jargon (“partisan” “non-partisan”) unless the law requires you to do so. If the law requires these words, work to change the law. Instead refer to contests as “party-based” and “non-party-based.”
12. Address the reader directly with “you” or the imperative (“Do x.”).
13. Write in the active voice, where the person doing the action comes before the verb.
14. Write in the positive. Tell people what to do rather than what not to do.
15. Put context before action, “if” before “then.” For example, To vote for the candidate of your choice, touch that person’s name.

16. When you want people to act, focus on verbs rather than nouns. For example, Write in a candidate’s name.
17. When giving people instructions that are more than one step, give each step as an item in a numbered list.
18. Do not number other instructions. When the instructions are not sequential steps, use separate paragraphs with bold beginnings instead of numbering.
19. Put information in the order that voters need it. Don’t tempt voters to irrevocable actions before explaining the other options. (See, for example, the order of the information on the Ballot B Confirm page: a question, a note about consequences, an instruction on how to make changes, and then the irrevocable action described last.)

What to make it look like

20. Break information into short sections that each cover only one point.
21. Keep paragraphs short. A one-sentence paragraph is fine.
22. Separate paragraphs by a space so each paragraph stands out on the page.
23. Do not use italics.
24. Use bold for page titles.
25. Use bold to highlight keywords or sections of the instructions, but don’t overdo it.
26. Keep all the instructions in the left column. Do not put instructions under the choices for a contest.
27. Do not use all capital letters for emphasis. Use bold. Write all instructions in appropriate upper case and lower case as you would in regular sentences. If the law requires you to use all capital letters, work to change the law.
28. Use a sans serif font in a readable type size.