**Identifying layout features**

Texts contain layout features such as:

* Headings (titles) and sub-headings
* Imagery including photos, pictures and illustrations
* Font size and style (bold, italic etc.)
* Bullet points
* Boxed text
* Structure (short or long paragraphs)
* Columns

**Why layout features are used**

The features used depend on:

* **Purpose** - **what the text is trying to do** (e.g. inform, instruct, persuade). For example, an information text may use bullet points to set out text clearly. A persuasive text such as an advert may use large headlines and images to grab your attention.
* **Audience** - **who it is trying to talk to** (e.g. children, adults, men, women). You might use playful fonts in a text for kids and more serious fonts for adults.
* **Mood** – **what feelings is the writing trying to express** (e.g. fun, excitement, fear, concern). The feelings should always be in tune with the target audience. Features to look out for to express mood include: pictures, fonts.
* **Memory – layout helps people to find and remember key bits of information.** These can include website addresses or phone numbers, advice or statistics. Features to look out for that are used to aid memory: bold text, headings and sub headings, bullet points.
* **Clarity – layout helps people to find information in a hurry.** Features that help make a text clear are: bold text, bullet points, sub-headings, paragraphs.

**Different layout features create different effects.**

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| **Description of feature** | **Layout feature** | **Effect it has** |
| I come right at the top of a text. | Headline/title | I am used to draw the reader’s eye to what the text is about. |
| I am often in bold and used to indicate what each section of text is about. I am sometimes found under a headline | Sub heading/title | I help the reader understand what the next section of text is about. |
| I am a round bold dot on the page indented from the margin. | Bullet points | I summarise the main points being made. |
| I separate different blocks of text that cover different topics. I usually contain a topic sentence. | Paragraphs | I break text up into readable blocks that tend to cover different points/topics. |
| I am a photo, cartoon or picture. | Imagery | I am used to help the reader ‘picture’ and quickly identify what a text is about. |
| I am text made thicker and darker than the rest of the surrounding text. | Bold text | I attract the eye to important points or phrases by making parts of the text stand out from the rest. |
| I am a block of text that is less that the width of the page. I am often used next to another block of text. | Columns | I help the reader read quickly by making the body of text narrower. |
| I am a separate section of text, often to the side of the main piece of text and contained in a box. | Text box | I separate important or interesting information from the main part of the text.  |
| I am a simple, short and memorable sentence. | Strapline | I help the reader to quickly understand what an article is about or remember a message. |

Question: What layout features have been used in this handout?