

## **Exercise** **“Reading Online”**

( Figma, HTML/CSS )

### Introduction

The world is full of templates. You just need to know where to look.

In this exercise, we'll start from a source website that you admire due to the ways it effectively breaks up or helps pace out larger pieces of text for better absorption and understanding by a reader.

We will deconstruct the website example by documenting it, recreating it, and understanding its design system (grid, typography, colors, etc.).

Then, we'll use the design system with our own text (from your source book for Project 3). The goal isn't to copy, but it is to understand how something existing works so we can use the best parts of it going forward.

Good designers are good at pattern matching. That is, design begins by noticing things you like. Always ask yourself why you like something! Then, it will be easier to recall it in the future when you might like to use that strategy. The best designers can pull upon multiple patterns they've experienced before to assemble something new and worthwhile.

### Goals

- Learn about an existing design system by deconstructing it
- Get comfortable laying out a website in Figma
- Explore the translation from Figma to HTML/CSS coded version

### Steps

1. Choose a website you'd like to recreate in Figma from the Are.na Channels we explored and contributed to last time:

“Reading Online”

<https://www.are.na/visual-principles-for-screen-fall-2025-washu/reading-online-xf3peewyeuq>

“Reading Online (Student Examples)”

<https://www.are.na/visual-principles-for-screen-fall-2025-washu/reading-online-student-examples>

Remember to choose a website for the ways it effectively breaks up or deals with text. Select a website that you imagine would be fun or useful to set your own book's text in, as an experiment. For example, maybe your text has multiple sections. In that case, choose an example that also deals effectively with multiple sections, etc.

2. Go to this Figma file:

<https://www.figma.com/design/7RFt10Qpm2FKCXw04jiVYc/Reading-Online-Exercise?node-id=0-1&t=2IUmk9utAJcJdGNT-1>

From here, create your own "Page" on the side with your name.

3. Just like our example (and after following our demo), you will:
  - Screenshots  
Take screenshots of your example website
  - Grid  
Use the "Layout" feature of Figma to approximate its grid system
  - Source Text  
Recreate its typography: fonts, font sizes, line heights, weights, etc.
  - Your Text  
Plug in your own text content into this system to see how it feels. Create long pages if you wish. Feel free to keep going with other pages in this design system, with your own text, if you like how it's going.
4. Once you are done mocking up your own text in this system, let's try translating it into a basic coded website, with HTML and CSS. Use your web browser's "web inspector" to inspect any properties from the original website to use in your own. When you're done, upload it to a page on your Neocities.
5. Copy and paste this web version into the Figma page as a link somewhere.