Museums Libraries & Archives

A simple guide to applying our brand identity
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Our logo has been designed for clarity and ease of use. The complete logo with the typographic signature is known as the ‘lock-up’ logo and the logo without the typographic signature is known as the ‘three circles’ logo.

The ratio between the typographic signature (Museums Libraries & Archives) and the three circles has been balanced to ensure that the type is legible, even at relatively small sizes. This ratio should always be maintained when using the logo.

To ensure that the logo is always clear and legible, the lock-up logo should only be used above a minimum size of 40mm wide.

On occasions when the logo needs to be reproduced at smaller sizes, the three circles logo should be used. The minimum size that this logo can be used at is 25mm wide. Any representation of the logo below this size will compromise perceptions of our brand.

Only use MLA provided digital artwork. Please do not attempt to redraw or alter the logo.
There are three colourways for the MLA logo.

1. **MLA Pink**
   
   This is our preferred version. Where possible, use this version as it differentiates our brand most clearly and memorably.

2. **MLA Cool Grey**
   
   There will be occasions where a pink logo may not be appropriate. For example, some partnership arrangements may require that logos are given equality by reproducing partner in black, reversed out in white, or in a neutral colour. This logo is useful for such.

3. **Black**
   
   Similarly, black is also appropriate for the circumstances outlined above. There will also be occasions where black is the only available colour, for example, black and white press advertising.

   It is also worth noting that the white (reversed out) version of the logo can be used on any colour within the colour palette which contrasts suitably with white to ensure clarity and legibility.
MLA Pink is the colour which we will predominantly use for our logo and the one which will become most closely associated with our brand. To give variety and flexibility, we also have a palette of eight support colours to be used for backgrounds and panels to add a fresh, uplifting mood to our communications. All of the colours can also be used as tints to add subtlety and help with legibility when coloured text is required over a soft panel or background.

The colour references given here are:

1. Pantone® or ‘Special’ colours.
   These are specially mixed inks, for occasions when colours are limited to one or two. An example of this is stationery, which in our case is printed in MLA Pink and MLA Cool Grey. Printing in Pantone® colours is expensive when many colours are required, so CMYK equivalents are given as acceptable alternatives.

2. CMYK or ‘Process’ colours.
   For most printed material, these references will be the most useful. The numbers refer to mixes of the four ‘Process’ colours used in standard full colour printing, they are: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black.

3. RGB colours.
   These references are given for use on-screen. RGB refers to the Red, Green and Blue colours used to make up all colours on TV screens and computer monitors.

4. HTML colours.
   References specifically for web applications.
The MLA logo can be reversed out in white on most of our palette colours. The MLA logo will also work in MLA Pink on tints of the palette colours. The MLA logo will also work well in MLA Cool Grey on the paler palette colours.

Colours with good contrast between them work best together in pairs. Use tints of the colours if necessary.

The logo can be reproduced on a variety of coloured different backgrounds.

Most of the palette colours are dark enough to allow the logo to be reproduced in white with a high degree of legibility.

When the colours are used as tints, this allows the logo to be reproduced in the key brand colour of MLA Pink.

On some of the paler palette colours and tints of the darker colours, the logo reproduces well in the secondary colour for the logo, MLA Cool Grey.

The palette works best when only two colours are used together, but using colours from our palette can improve the impact of titles and quotes within communications. Solid pages using the palette colours are also useful as section dividers and front covers for publications.

When using colour as a background for general copy and images, use one of the colour tints to ensure that the clarity of body copy is not compromised. In all cases, please ensure that there is a good level of contrast to ensure that the logo/text can be read easily.
There will be many occasions when the logo is placed over a photographic background. On these occasions there are some simple rules of thumb:

1. On any photographic background, please ensure that the logo appears on a space that is relatively free of detail to avoid compromising its clarity and legibility.

2. On pale photographic backgrounds, always try the MLA pink logo first. If this doesn’t work for any reason, use the MLA Cool Grey logo or the black logo, whichever works best.

3. On darker photographic backgrounds, always use the white logo to ensure legibility.

4. On any coloured background that is not part of the MLA palette, use the white logo, unless the colour is too pale to ensure legibility. In these cases, use the MLA Cool Grey logo or the black logo, whichever works best. Black is also an exception. The pink logo will reproduce perfectly well on black.

This rule is particularly appropriate when the logo is used on partner and third party materials when the corporate colours of another brand are likely to be in force.
To ensure that our logo is applied as consistently and clearly as possible, it is also important that we keep the logo clear from unnecessary detail and clutter.

In order to achieve this, the logo has an invisible ‘exclusion zone’, that is, an area which should always be kept clear around the logo.

This area is defined by the diameter of the circles within the logo itself. This is the absolute minimum space to be left clear around the logo. This means imagery or type should not come any closer to the logo than this ‘exclusion’ zone.

The general rule of thumb is that, the more vacant space that is left around the logo, the better. It indicates that we respect and value it, and that we are careful to keep it clean and uncluttered.

There is only one exception to this rule. That is, our own Renaissance logo which is covered later in these guidelines.
The preferred position for our logo on any of our own communications is top left. This is a prominent position that is usually clear of other visual information.

Observing the exclusion zone, the general rule of thumb regarding size is that the logo and its exclusion zone taken together should never be reproduced smaller than 25% of the width of the document.

In the case shown here which is A4, the exclusion zone establishes a simple 10mm margin. This gives a logo height of 10mm and a logo width of 44mm. The overall width of 54mm is just over 25% of the width of A4 (210mm).

This keeps the design of the piece in balance and ensures that the logo is neither too big, nor too small.

Although this rule can be applied to all standard ‘A’ sizes of print it needs to be stressed that the size and position of the logo should be sensitive to the overall design. There will be occasions where the design of a piece requires a larger logo or which may be better placed justified with document titles. However, the logo should never go smaller than the ratio shown here and the default should be that the logo is positioned top left.
Using a grid for position

The size and position principles established on the previous page extend very simply into a four column grid. This grid can be very useful for creating visual harmony in layouts, especially on covers.

The grid is set at four equal columns with 4mm gutter and a 10mm margin all around.

These examples show how a simple grid can also help with visual consistency. The example on the left is a letterhead. The logo conforms to the size and position rule for A4 and the address details are set at 10pt on 11pt leading on a four column grid.

The example on the right demonstrates how the same grid can work on an A4 cover. The logo again conforms to the size and position rule for A4 and the title is set at 36pt on 36pt leading, ranged left at the third column.
On partner communications and occasions when the logo endorses the work of a third party, there will often be a requirement that the logo appears at the bottom of a piece. Under these circumstances it is preferable to align the logo to the left of the page whenever possible and scale so that each logo has a similar impact.

The light grey circles around the MLA logo represent the minimum ‘exclusion zone’, that is, an area which should always be kept clear around the logo.
There are several pitfalls to avoid when using the MLA logo. Listed here are a few of the more common ones.

Poor reproduction, compromised legibility and inconsistency all reflect badly on our brand and give the appearance that we do not give adequate consideration to our audiences.

So, please ensure that you always use approved MLA digital artwork of our logo and always take a step back from your communications to check that everything is clear and on-brand.

- Do not distort the logo or change its proportions in any way.
- Do not reproduce the logo in any colour other than the ones recommended in this guide.
- Do not switch the elements in the logo around.
- Do not reproduce the logo on a background with poor colour contrast.
- Do not try to recreate the logo - always use approved MLA digital artwork.
- Do not reproduce the logo on a photographic background that is too complex.
Futura BT is the typeface used for all communication materials such as brochures, leaflets and advertisements. The Book weight is perfect for body copy at a size of 11pt on 12pt leading, although there may be exceptional circumstances when this isn’t possible. Light functions well for large headings such as the large numeral and the heading on this page. Medium and Bold are perfect for highlighting and creating smaller sub titles. Futura is an excellent typeface (or font) with a modernist edge and excellent legibility. However, it is not part of the standard Microsoft® family for use on PCs. For this reason, Arial is suggested as a substitute font for use on the web, in Word® documents and in Powerpoint® documents. Arial is also a good font to use when typing a letter. 11pt is an acceptable size when using Arial as bodycopy. Pantone® Cool Grey 10 is a good colour for type, giving us a softer look. However, when high legibility is required, black is recommended as a colour for text, especially body copy.
Renaissance is a significant area of work for MLA and, as such it has its own logo. This logo has been designed to complement the MLA logo and fit squarely within the overall brand. It also avoids having to use both logos concurrently.

All of the rules regarding use of the MLA logo except its final size, apply exactly to the Renaissance logo. When it comes to size, it is likely that the Renaissance logo will need to function at larger sizes than those suggested for the MLA logo.
The Future of our Region’s Museums

Renaissance also consists of numerous regional ‘Hubs’, each with their own identity. Where possible always use the generic MLA Renaissance logo. However, we understand that occasionally Renaissance Hubs may be producing their own regional publications and in this instance only, a regional version may be used.
When commissioning new photography or choosing images from the MLA image library please take the following into account:

1. **People.** Use people to show interaction with our collections. Ensure you reflect our diversity as an organisation by showing people from different age groups, genders and ethnicity.

2. **Energy.** Shots of exhibitions alone aren’t enough to portray the eclectic nature of our organisation. Look for images which have movement, and show people actively engaging with our exhibits and with one another.

3. **Colour.** We are a bright and exciting organisation. Choose images with lively and vibrant colours, complementing our palette and bringing our brand to life.

4. **Light.** Images should be clear, bright and use natural light whenever possible.

5. **Simplicity.** Images shouldn’t be composed at 45 degree angles or be taken using unnecessarily wide angle lenses to avoid curvature and distortion in the photographs. Take simple photographs with clean lines.

6. **Negative (clear) space.** Keep the end purpose of an image in mind – if the image will be used across a brochure spread, make sure that there is sufficient negative (clear) space for body copy over the image and that the subject is not centred in the shot (to avoid falling into the central gutter of the brochure).