The UI/UX Playbook

Tips & Tricks for Exceptional Design

Personal Account
01234567 00-00-00

Payment card

1234 1234 1234 1234

$32,987.05

John Doe

12/2022

Send

Request

Contacts

See all

Add new

Daniel S.

Mina P.

Laura L.

Jessy M.

Transactions

See all

Kai Fisher
17 Nov 2022

− $48.29

Starbucks, NewYork...
16 Nov 2022

+ $13.20

Pauline

Portfolio

View your portfolio diversifications across different asset classes.

Portfolio
$129,987.05

25%
Cash

15%
Bonds

60%
Cash

Your investments

See more

Nike Inc
100 shares at $70

$14,000
+ 100%

Visual Hierarchy

Visual hierarchy involves structuring and prioritizing elements to guide the user's eye movement. By manipulating the color, size, position, and contrast of various elements, you can effectively highlight key information and guide users through the interface intuitively.

A common mistake is emphasizing the wrong elements. For example, consider two designs that display metrics:
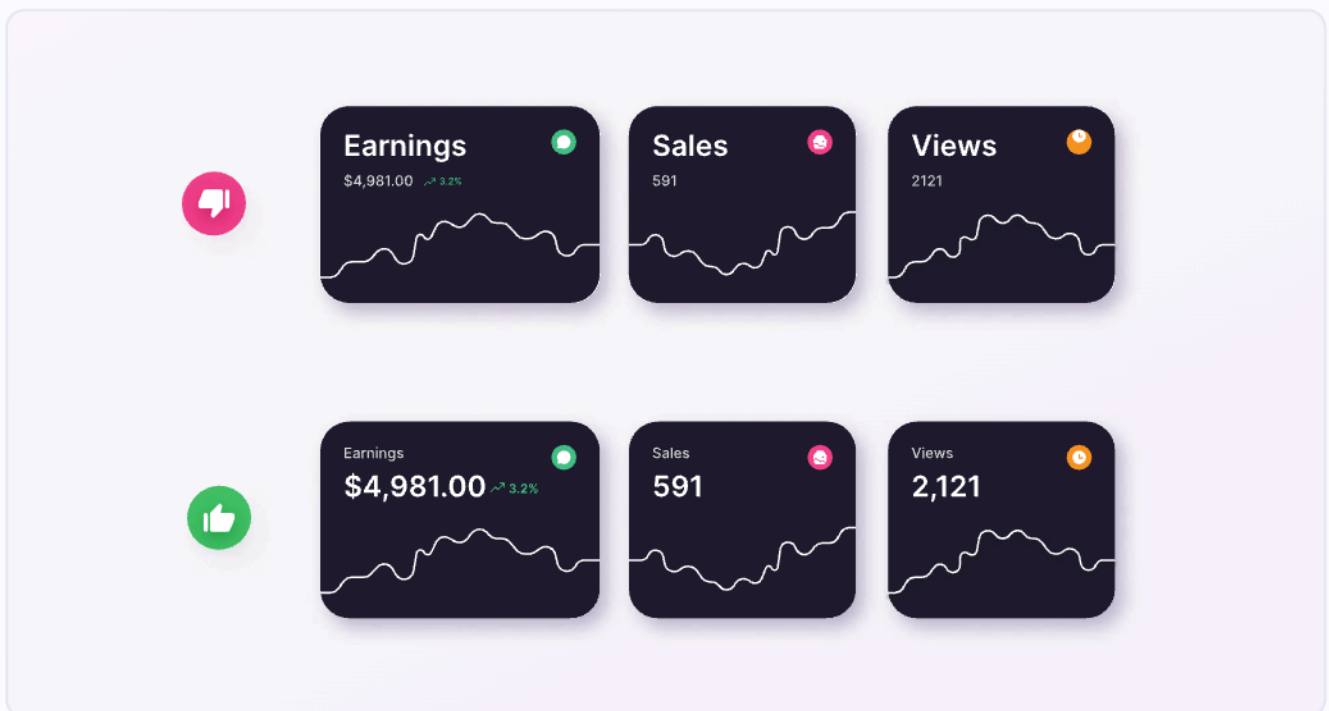
- In the first, the titles of the metrics (like 'Sales', 'Earnings', etc.) have large fonts, taking the focus away from the actual values.
- In the second, the important figures (e.g., '591') are more prominent, giving users the information they seek more quickly.

The second design gets it right. By making the key values stand out, you help users find what they're looking for more easily.

In many UI designs, crucial information such as data points, and options are presented without clear distinctions. This often leads to a flat and monotonous visual landscape where users may find it hard to prioritize information.
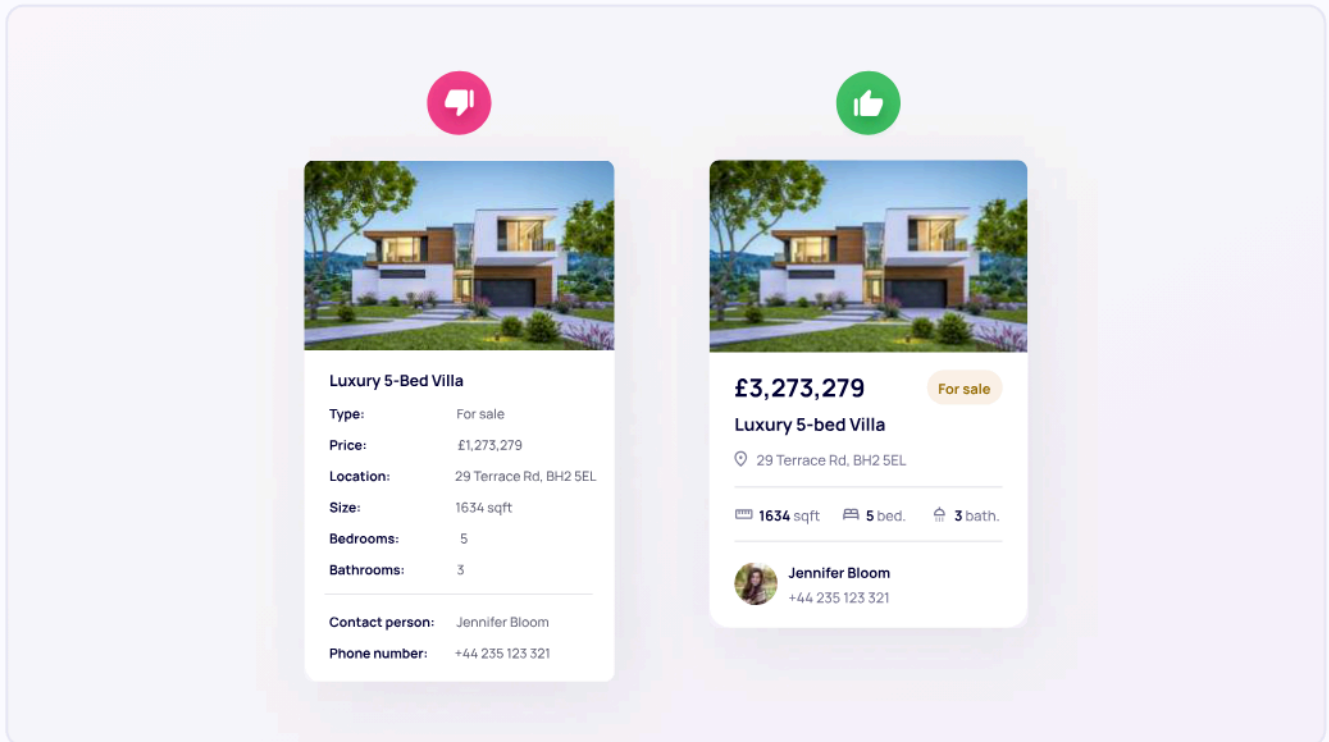
The design on the left presents a fundamental flaw: it over-relies on label:value fields, assuming that the data – such as price or name – would suffice for the user.
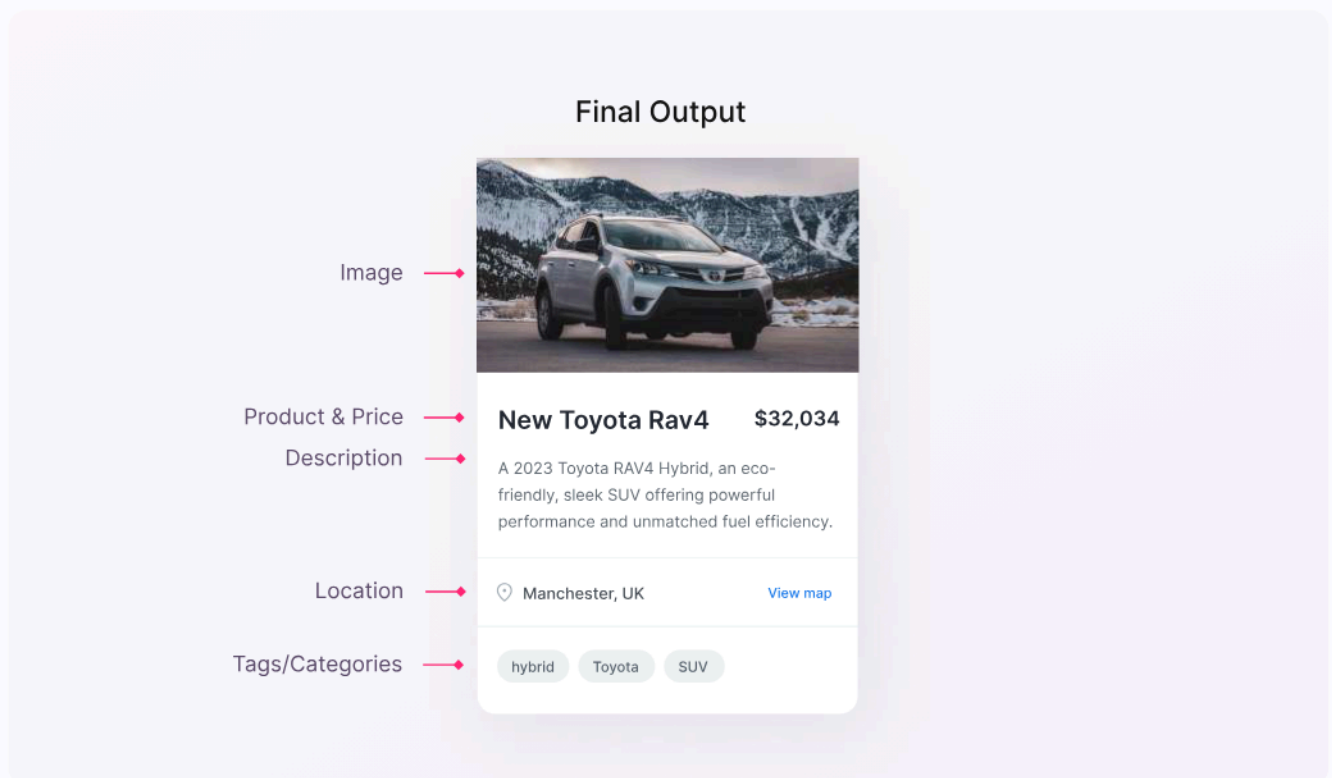
This may seem like an efficient approach; however, it creates a monotonous, flat experience due to the lack of visual hierarchy, differentiation, and icons.

In contrast, the second design dismisses explicit labels and instead uses visual cues, hierarchy, and icons to present the information. This is powerful because it leverages visual storytelling to guide the user's attention across the interface.

Form Design Inspired by the Final Output

Forms are the critical touchpoints where users share their information, preferences, and needs. Yet, they often get overlooked as dull or mundane aspects of design.

But what if we could turn this perception around? What if we could transform the form-filling process into a journey that is interesting, intuitive, and aligned with the user's goals?

Final Output

Image →

Product & Price →   New Toyota Rav4 $32,034

Description →   A 2023 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid, an eco-friendly, sleek SUV offering powerful performance and unmatched fuel efficiency.

Location →   Manchester, UK   View map

Tags/Categories →   hybrid   Toyota   SUV

A brilliant way to revitalize form design is to take cues from how the submitted information will be displayed or used.

Suppose you're designing a form for a marketplace platform where users list items they want to sell. Instead of a standard, linear form, you could design the form layout to mirror the final listing page.

If a user is listing a car, for instance, they could input the car's name, price, description and location in fields arranged similarly to how the information will appear in the final listing.

This approach gives users a sense of how their listing will look and function, making the form-filling process more relatable and engaging.

Designing for the Thumb Zone

Mobile devices are often operated using just one hand, and primarily the thumb. Therefore, when you're designing a mobile interface, it's important to keep the 'thumb zone' in mind. This is the area of the screen easily reachable with the thumb.

Here's why it's important:

- Placing key elements like buttons, navigation links, and calls-to-action within the thumb zone makes it easier for users to interact with your design.
- Elements positioned outside of this area can be difficult to reach and could lead to user frustration or misclicks.

So, when you're laying out your design, make sure the most used features are easily accessible within the thumb zone. By doing so, you enhance usability and make your interface more user-friendly.

Let's take a closer look at these designs:
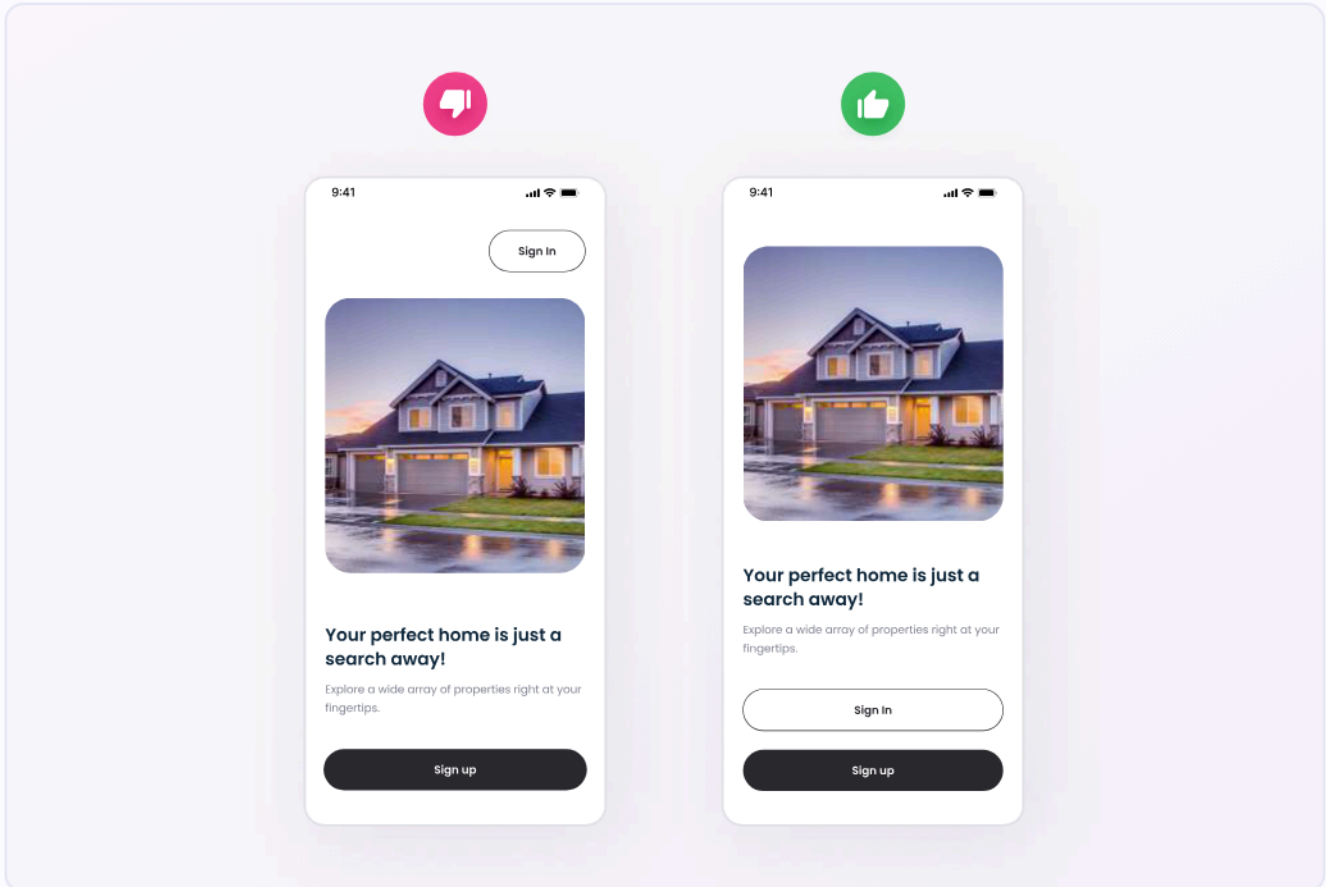
In the first screen, the CTA is located outside of the thumb zone, which means that users would need to stretch or adjust their grip to reach it. This can cause frustration and inconvenience, especially for users who are on the go or have limited mobility.

In the second screen, the CTA is thoughtfully positioned within the thumb zone, which is a common area where users' thumbs naturally rest when holding their mobile devices.

This placement ensures that users can quickly and easily interact with the CTA with just one hand, making it an excellent choice for mobile design.

Turning Empty States into Opportunities

In the world of UX/UI design, empty states are often overlooked. They can occur when users are first navigating a new feature, after clearing a list, or when no search results are found.

Traditionally, these spaces might simply display a generic message such as "No results" or "No items here." However, this approach misses an opportunity to guide users or initiate an action.
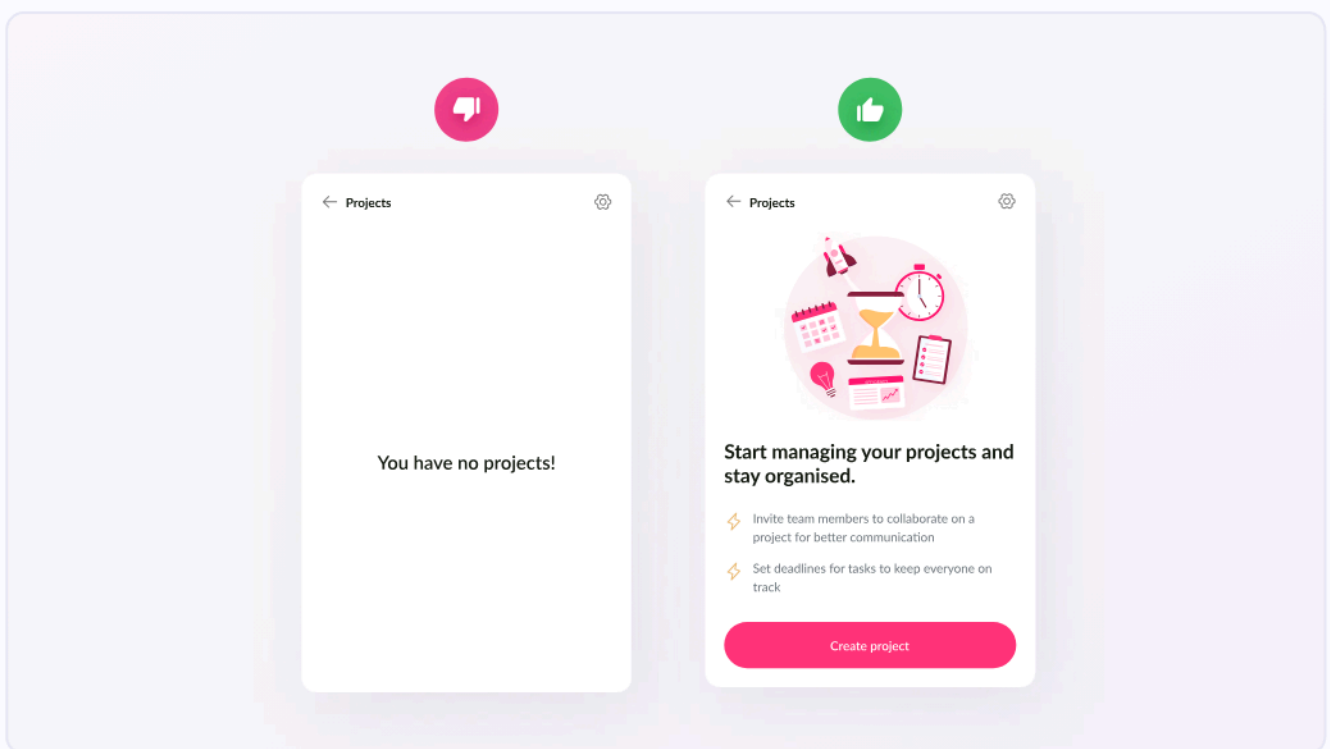

Adding images to your empty states can change an unengaging experience into a valuable one. Using illustrations and icons can capture interest and provide context. An empty state shouldn't merely signal a lack of content; it should encourage action. Incorporate a clear and straightforward call-to-action to guide the user to the next step.

Optimizing User Interactions: Tap Targets in UI Design

Tap targets are the interactive elements on a touch screen that users tap to perform actions. They can be buttons, links, or icons.

Tap target size plays a critical role in mobile UI design, impacting the user experience significantly. If your tap targets are too small, users will struggle to interact with your design, leading to frustration and potentially causing them to abandon their task.
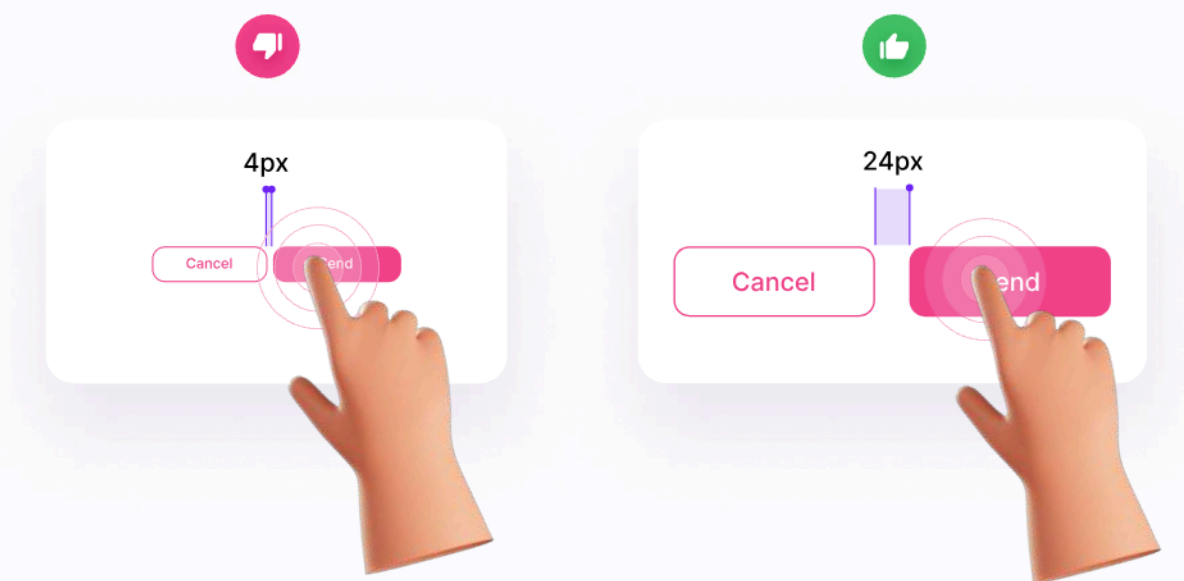
As a general rule, the recommended minimum size for a tap target is 48 pixels square for mobile interfaces. This size is based on the average finger pad size and allows comfortable interaction for most users.

Also, ensure there's adequate spacing between tap targets to prevent accidental taps. Smaller elements, like 24px icons, should be spaced at least 32 pixels apart, allowing for easy and accurate tapping.

Make Options More Creative

The traditional approach of a vertical list of text-based options can sometimes come across as bland and unengaging. The standard layout offers limited opportunities for visual differentiation, and while it provides clarity, it doesn't always contribute to a memorable user experience.
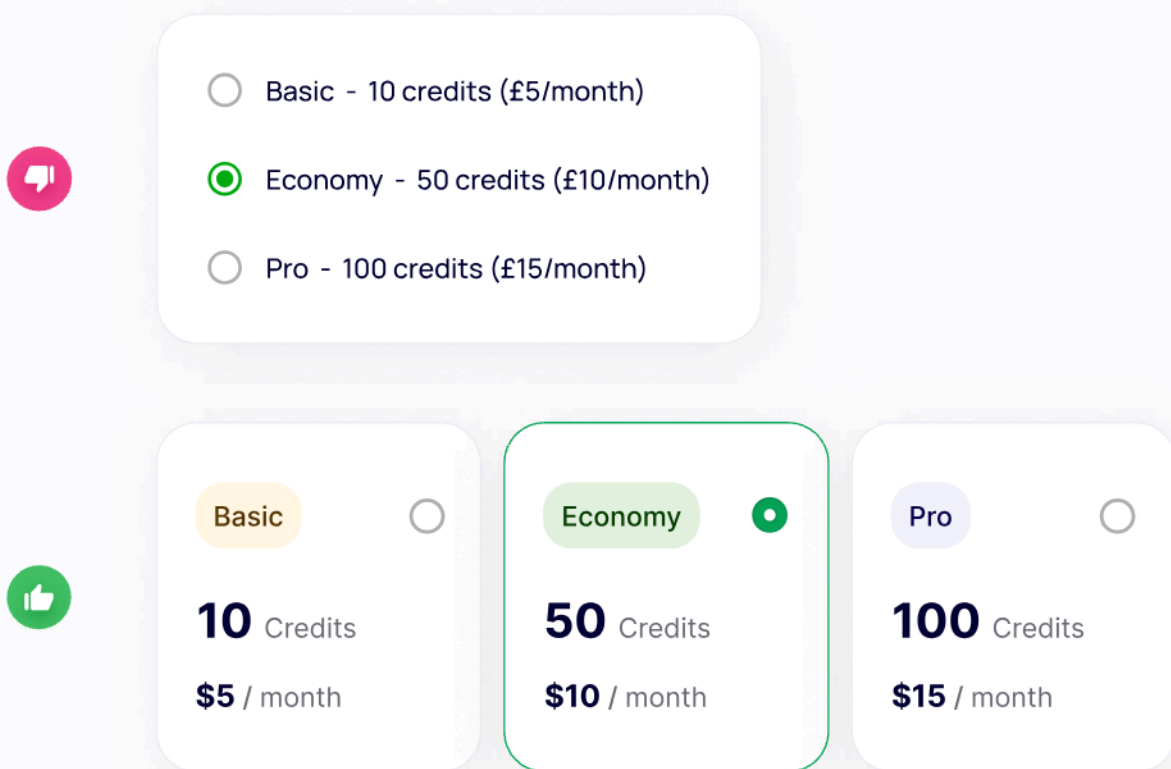
What if we could break free from the constraints of the typical list-of-options layout? An exciting alternative is to reimagine them as selectable cards. This approach adds a new layer of interaction and visual appeal to the user interface.

Each card can feature labels, colors, and even icons or images, providing more context and richness to the options presented. Such an approach not only increases the aesthetic appeal but also aids in making the information more digestible and the interface more engaging.

Elevating Dropdown Design

Top navigation dropdowns help users navigate through the site, offering an intuitive way to access different pages or features.
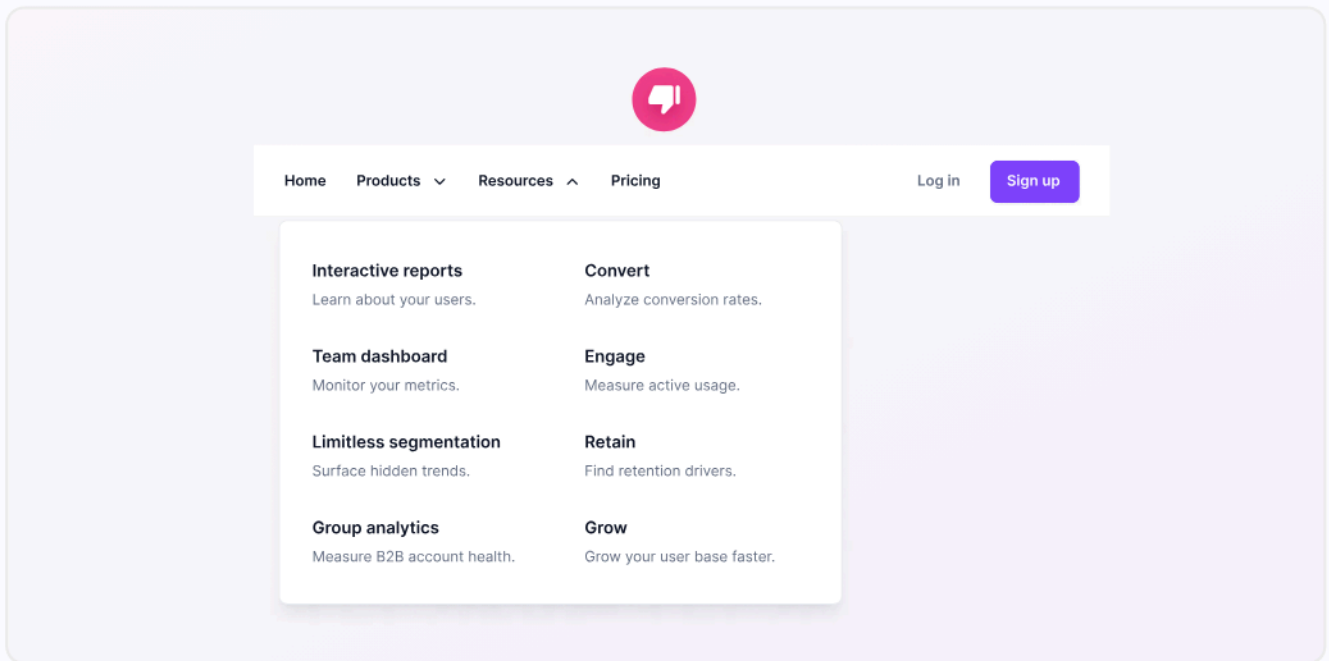
One method to improve the UX is to include icons in your dropdowns.
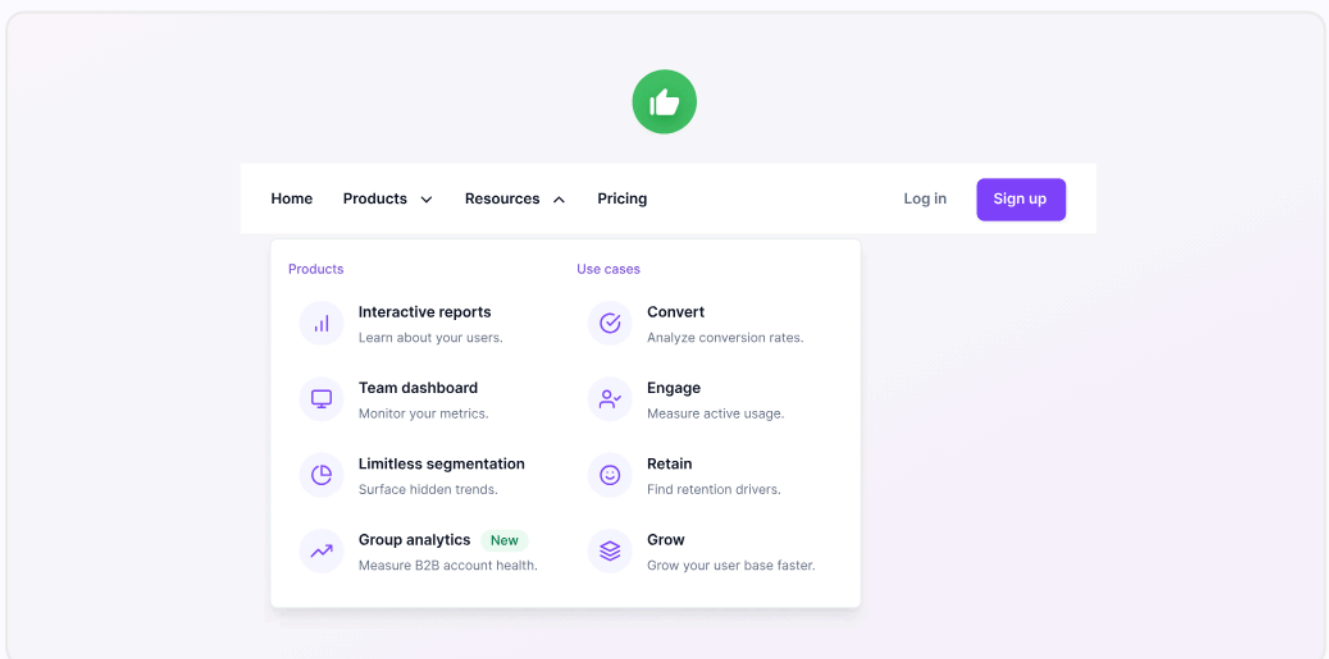
Icons serve as visual aids that can quickly communicate the purpose or content of a menu item. They not only make the navigation dropdown more attractive, but they also increase its usability.

It's also beneficial to group related items under distinct categories. By doing this, you help users quickly grasp the structure of your navigation and find what they need.
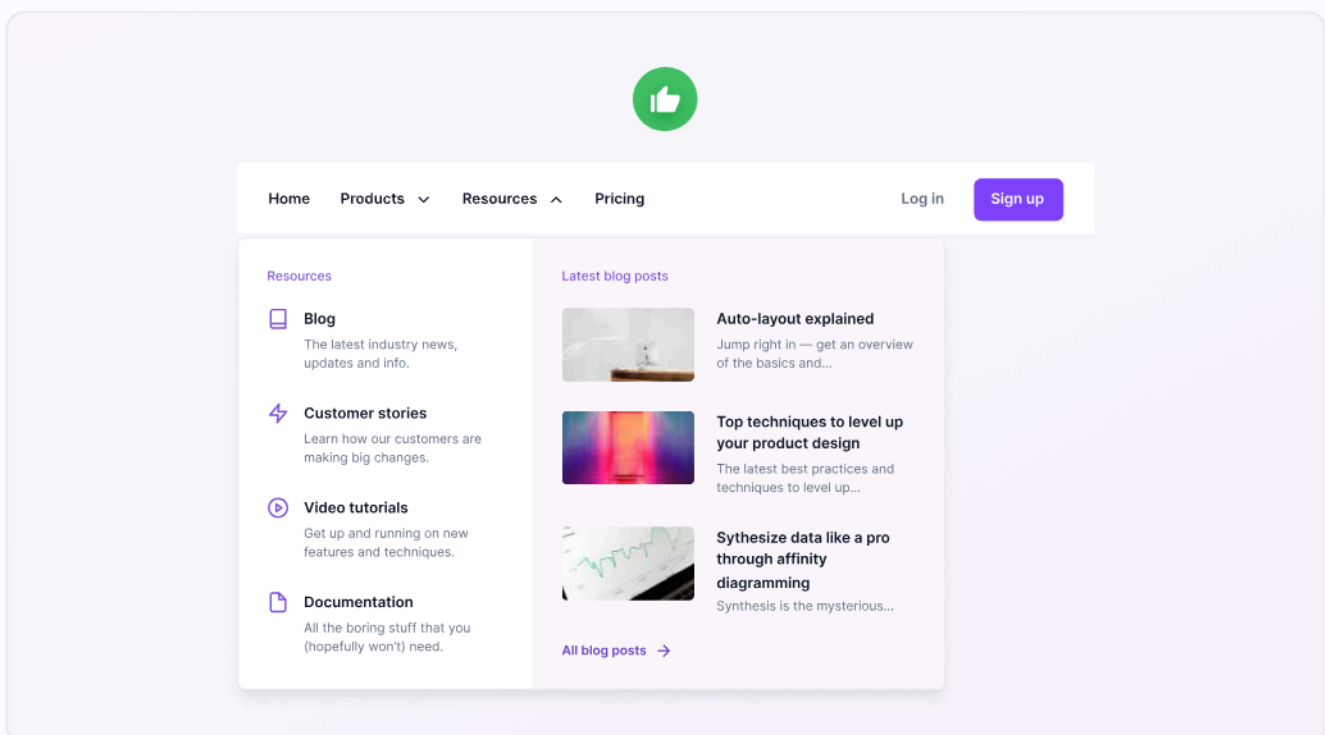
While icons add a layer of visual interpretation, images can take it even a step further by providing a more comprehensive visual context.

However, remember that less is often more. Including an image next to every item could overwhelm the user and clutter the interface. Instead, strategically choose to enhance only the items you want to highlight.

Another effective technique is giving a distinct background to one of the columns. This will draw attention to key options or features.

Proximity of Elements

When groups of elements are separated explicitly by borders, background colours, or other visual cues, it's clear which elements belong together.

However, things get trickier when there's no explicit separation, such as in form design.
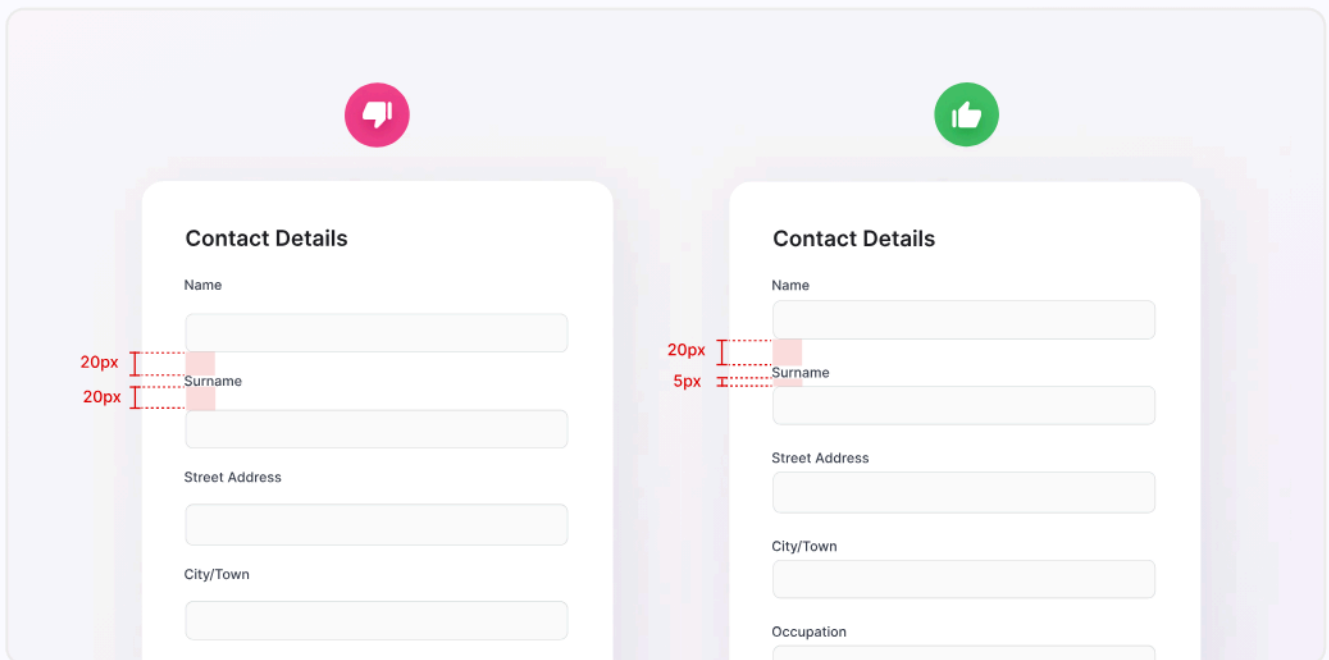
If the space between an input field and its subsequent label is the same as the space between that label and the previous input field, users might struggle to identify which label belongs to which field.

To avoid such issues, you can use the principle of proximity which states that elements that are closer to each other are perceived as related. Thus, by decreasing the space between an input field and its corresponding label and increasing the space between different input fields, you make the grouping more explicit.

Understanding Ideal Line Length

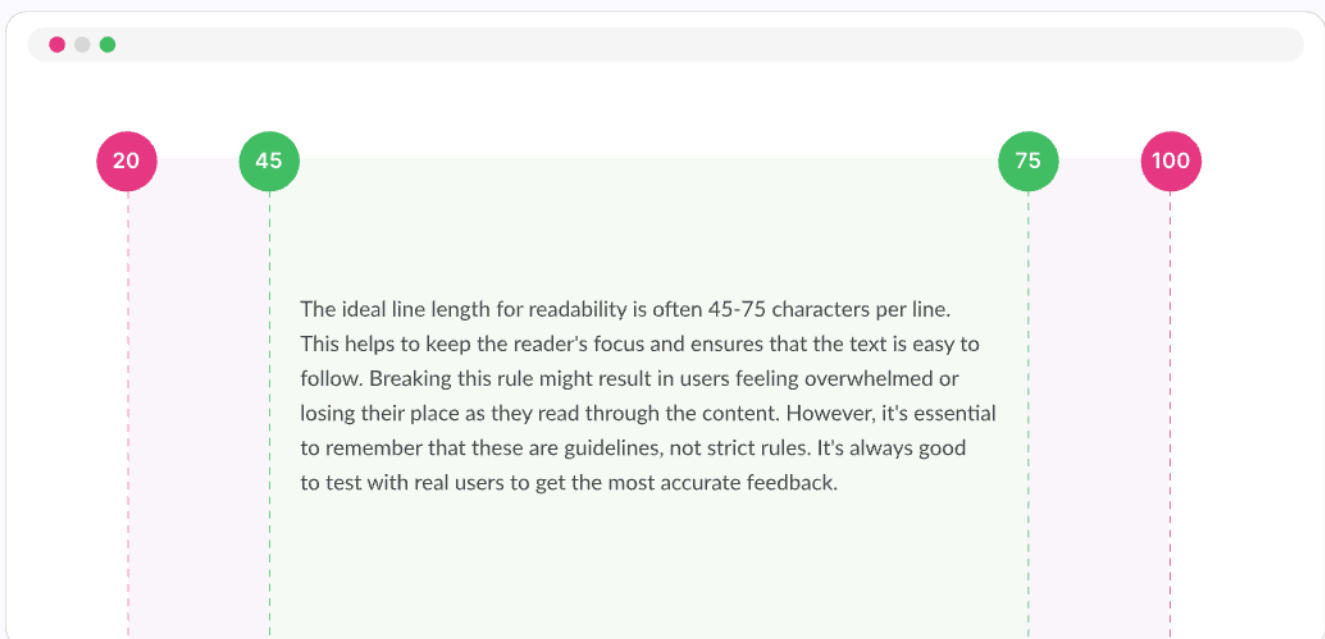Ideal line length might not be the first thing on your mind when you think of UI design, but it's key for readability and user engagement.

Why it matters

Getting the line length right can make your text not only more readable but also more inviting. Too short and you'll have the reader's eyes jumping from line to line; too long, and it becomes a chore to read. The goal is to keep your users engaged and comfortable as they interact with your design.

The ideal line length for readability is often 45-75 characters per line. This helps to keep the reader's focus and ensures that the text is easy to follow. Breaking this rule might result in users feeling overwhelmed or losing their place as they read through the content. However, it's essential to remember that these are guidelines, not strict rules. It's always good to test with real users to get the most accurate feedback.

Stick to the 45-75 character range

Keep your line length between 45 and 75 characters for optimal readability. This range has been researched and validated as a standard that balances both comfort and aesthetics.

Text Alignment

Center-aligned text can add formality and balance to your design. It's ideal for headlines, sub-headlines, and short paragraphs. Center alignment works well in these contexts because the text is short.
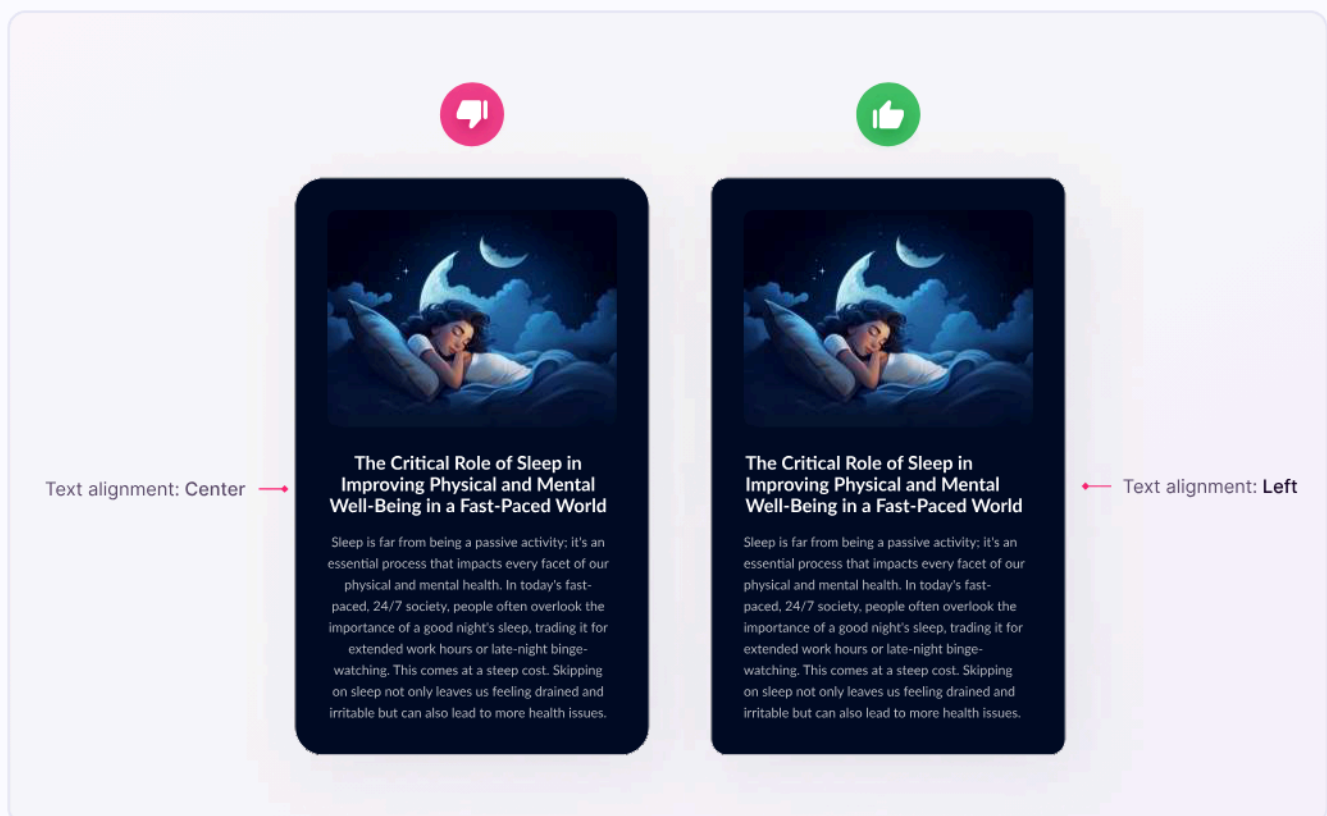
When dealing with larger blocks of text (typically more than three lines), left alignment is often the preferred choice. While center alignment has aesthetic advantages, left alignment is typically more functional for larger text blocks due to its superior readability.

Since we read from left to right, left-aligned text provides a consistent starting point for each line, helping users to read more quickly and comfortably.

Typography Styling

Effective typography in UI design is crucial for both aesthetics and functionality.

Line height: **120%**
Font-size: **28px**
Font-weight: **Bold**
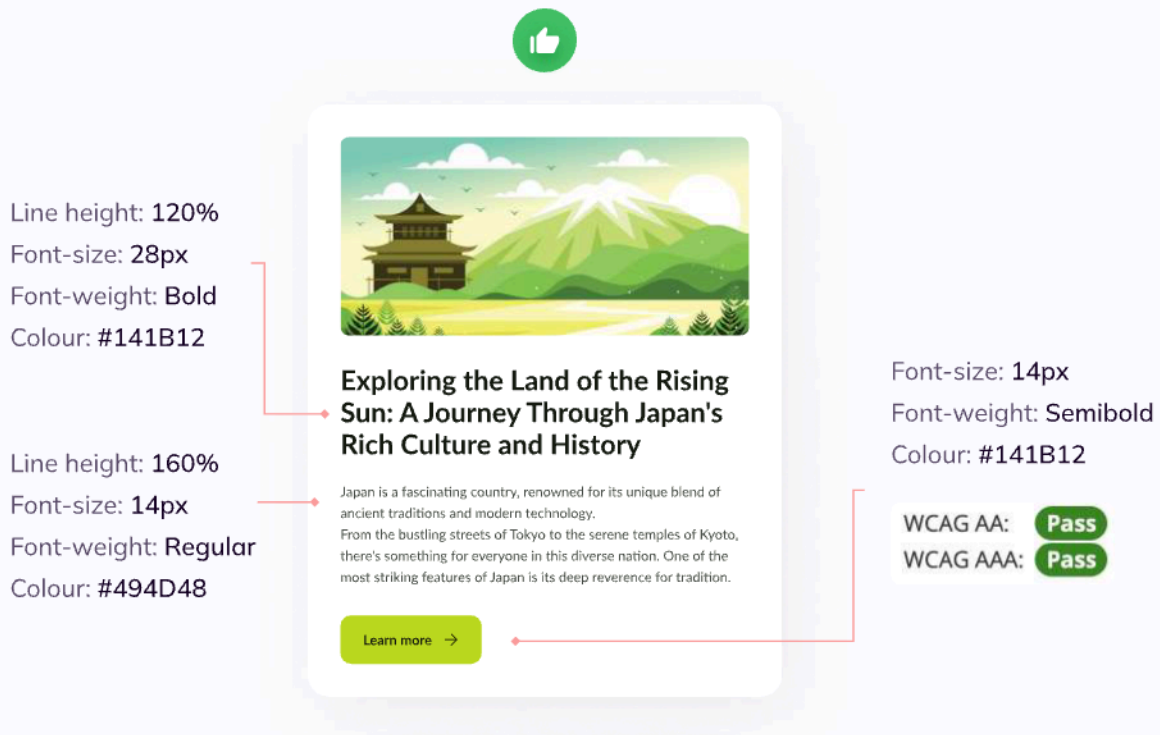Colour: **#141B12**

Line height: **160%**
Font-size: **14px**
Font-weight: **Regular**
Colour: **#494D48**

Exploring the Land of the Rising Sun: A Journey Through Japan's Rich Culture and History

Japan is a fascinating country, renowned for its unique blend of ancient traditions and modern technology.
From the bustling streets of Tokyo to the serene temples of Kyoto, there's something for everyone in this diverse nation. One of the most striking features of Japan is its deep reverence for tradition.

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Font-size: **14px**
Font-weight: **Semibold**
Colour: **#141B12**

WCAG AA: **Pass**
WCAG AAA: **Pass**

In this design, a soft color palette is used to reduce eye strain. The title's line height complements its size, clearly separating it from the paragraph while still feeling connected. This helps the eye flow naturally from the title to the content, providing a smooth reading experience.

The paragraph text is easy to read without requiring zooming in or squinting, promoting effortless engagement with the content.

Font weight is another big win in this design. The title stands out but doesn't overpower, thanks to a heavier font weight.

Lastly, the button's color and contrast are calibrated to meet accessibility standards, ensuring that it's not just clickable but easily visible.

Bad Example: What Went Wrong?

Line height: **150%**
Font-size: **22px**
Font-weight: **Medium**
Colour: **#000000**

Line height: **125%**
Font-size: **13px**
Font-weight: **Regular**
Colour: **#000000**

Font-size: **18px**
Font-weight: **Regular**
Colour: **#FFFFFF**

WCAG AA: **Fail**
WCAG AAA: **Fail**

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The use of pure black text on a pure white background might seem like a clean choice, but it's actually tough on the eyes.

Next, the line height for the title is bigger than for the paragraph text. This is a problem because it breaks up the flow and can confuse users.

Now, let's talk about font size. The paragraph text is so small that it's hard to read. Small text may look neat, but if it's too small, people won't bother reading it.

The font weight for the title and the paragraph is too similar. Font weight helps show what's important and what's not. If the title and paragraph look the same, it's hard to know where to focus.

Lastly, the button doesn't meet basic accessibility standards. It's not just about looks; it's about making sure everyone can use it.

Optimizing Input Field Length

When it comes to designing input fields, the layout often gets more attention than the details. It's easy to fall into the trap of uniformity—making all input fields the same length for the sake of visual consistency.
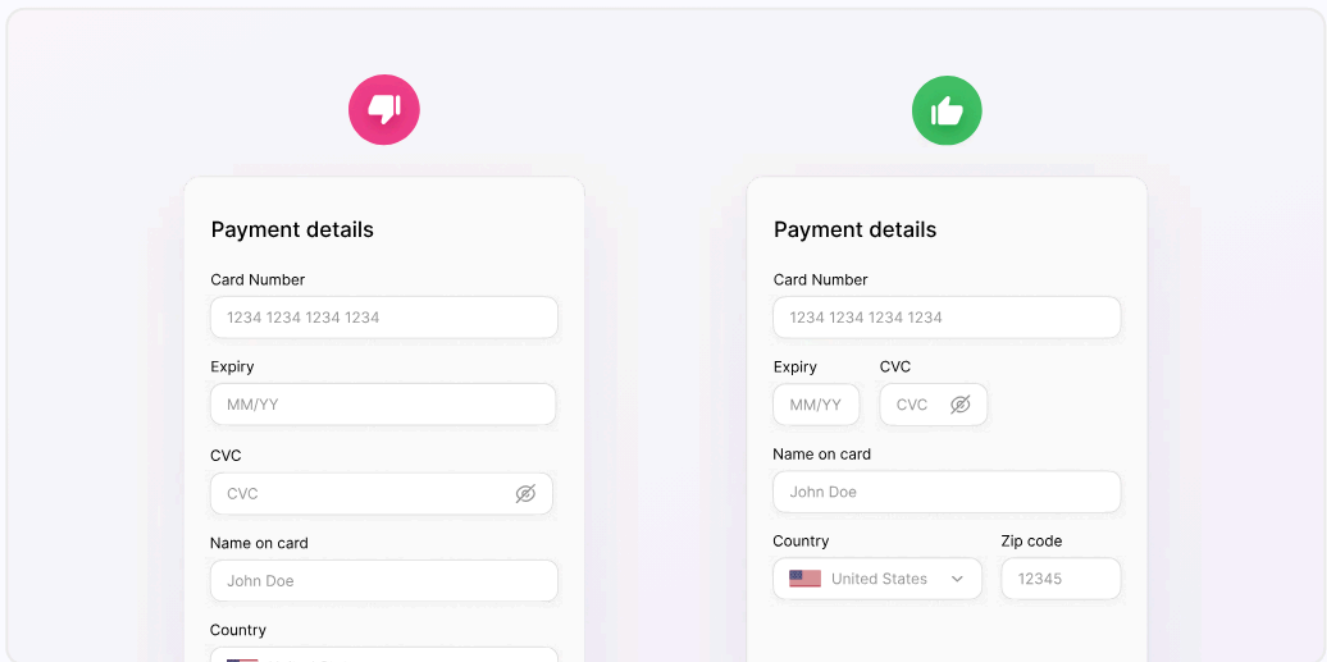
On the left side, all input fields on a card payment page are designed to be of the same length. While it might look neat and orderly, this approach overlooks the practicalities of what users are actually entering into these fields.

A credit card number, for instance, is significantly longer than a CVC. When these different inputs are placed in uniform fields, users may become unsure about whether they've entered their details correctly, especially when shorter details don't fully occupy the given space.

A more user-centric approach is to adjust the length of each input field to match the length of the actual input.

to hear?

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godzilla

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kentang

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Today

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BPM

← Portfolio

View your portfolio diversifications
across different asset classes.

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Sarah Willson
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