



Pathfinders: A Navigational Tool Through The Library  
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## Introduction to Pathfinders

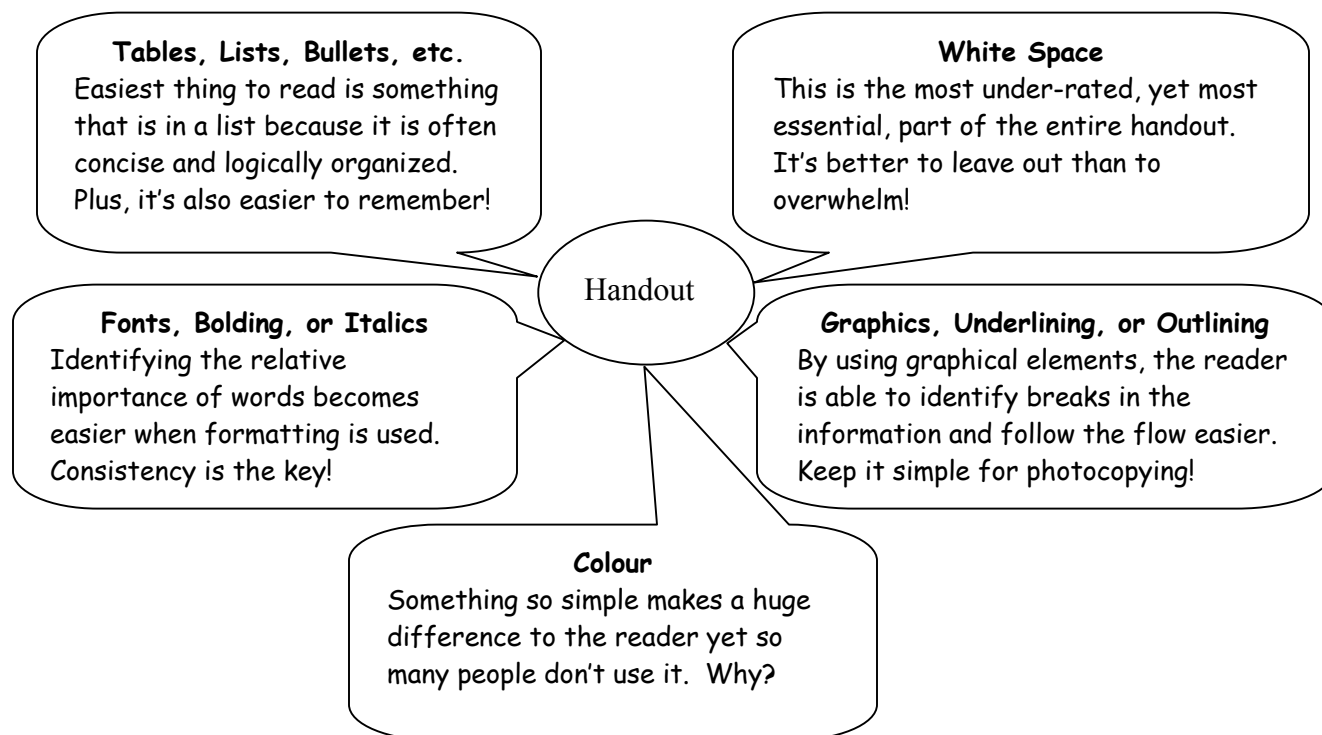
Pathfinders, the handouts Libraries create and distribute to facilitate students' independent use of Library services, are called by many names:

- Handouts, guides, information packages, instructional packages, etc.

## The Expertise That Students Can Develop Using Pathfinders

1. General Research or Reference Skills
2. Online Catalogue Skills
3. Database- or Software-Specific Search Skills
4. Discipline- or Course-Specific Research Skills
5. Assignment-Specific Skills
6. Internet Skills

## Design Elements To Consider



**Advantages and Disadvantages of Pathfinders:**  
Are they really the greatest marketing tool ever or a waste of time?

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
A quick answer to questions...	...but never a complete answer
Available online, anywhere, at any time...	...as long as the student has a computer and/or Internet access
Part of an initial step towards library research...	...as long as the student has an idea of what to look for
Great tool to help new staff orient to the library...	...as long as the handouts are current
Great way to market the library...	...as long as it's done well!

**Tracking Usage of Pathfinders**

- Rate of reprinting (especially certain times of the year)
- Number of times web-link is accessed
- Questions from students about the pathfinders themselves
- Rate by which sheets are updated

**Results of Survey on Yukon College Handouts**

- Handouts were most likely obtained from the Website and Spin Rack, then from a Librarian.
- 100% people liked colour in their handouts.
- Mixed results on opinions of layout but all liked having some formatting.
- The APA referencing guide is the most popular handout.
- Almost all didn't like it if the handout was too "busy."
- Many liked one page, hole-punched papers to go right into their binders.

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**Recommended Reading**

Kalfatovic, Martin R. (2002). *Creating a winning online exhibition: A guide for libraries, archives, and museums*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Malone, Debbie, and Videon, Carol. (2003). *First year student library instruction programs*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association.

Smith, Susan Sharpless. (2001). *Web-based instruction: A guide for libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association.