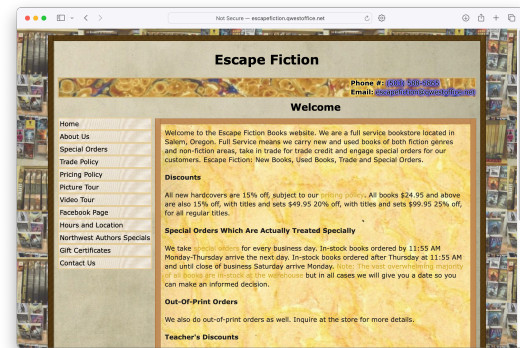# project::escape fiction
Escape Fiction Website Redesign

Assignment ::

For this project, create a new desktop website design for a small business in our area: *Escape Fiction*. They are a full-service bookstore in South Salem that offers both fiction and non-fiction titles. Specifically, we will be redesigning the **home page**, plus creating the design of two other pages of their site, using their existing site as a starting point for content and structure. We'll follow our standard web design process, performing research, creating sketches, wireframes, and finally design mockups for this website, including wiring-up the mock-ups in Figma's Prototype mode.

Scope ::

For this project, review the current website for Escape Fiction, analyzing what works and what could use some improvement (and, oh boy, is there a lot to improve on). You can find their site here:

escapefiction.qwestoffice.net.

For our project, we will be creating a complete design of three pages, all of which should use the same header and footer design:

- **Home Page** — You get to determine which content stays on the page, and which content needs to be added or removed. Many of the existing pages can be removed and their content simple included on the home page. The home page's main purpose is to highlight books and other key content and encourage visitors to dive deeper into the site—enough so that they either purchase a book online or make a visit to the retail location. And please, don't use the word "Welcome" in your version of the home page.

- **Books** — This is a new page whose focus will be displaying both featured new and used titles, as well as functioning as a draw to bring people into the retail location. There are several potential actions that a user can take on this page. Decide the appropriate hierarchy for the actions and design the page in a way that is visually engaging. Do research and see what others have done. You may use an alternative label for this page if you prefer a different one.

- **One Other Page** — You can choose any other page to design for the third page, either an existing page or a new one from your primary navigation. Make sure the page you decide to create has a reasonable amount of content.

- **Placeholder Pages** — For all other pages in your site navigation, create placeholder pages that include just your header and footer components plus a simple page title. You do not need to add any other content to these pages.

Resources ::

You may use any and all content found on the current site. In addition, you can use content posted to social media accounts like Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/escapefictionbooks). There is no logo for this business, so consider creating a simple logotype to identify the business in the website header. The overall navigation structure is thorough and straightforward but certainly could use some tweaks and consolidation. Make changes to the primary navigation where you feel they are necessary—aim for 5–7 total primary navigation areas.

Objectives ::
As you work on your design, concentrate your efforts on the following areas:

- **Brand Consistency** — The three pages you design should share many elements, including the header and footer, and your type, color, and grid choices. Work to ensure the home page and the secondary page feel part of the same design scheme.

- **Layout & Grids** — Use a multi-column grid to guide placement of your page content. Experiment with different number of columns, grid module sizes, and flowline locations. Good use of gutters and whitespace should help organize your content and create visual hierarchy across all pages.

- **Typography** — Focus on using typography to convey style, meaning and structure. Stick with web-safe system fonts, or fonts from Google Fonts when making font choices.

- **Prototype Testing** — We will use Figma's Prototype mode to create a functional mock-up of our re-designed website.

Process ::
We will use a process similar to the one we used in the first project. Key components include:

- **Competitor Research** — Begin your process by completing competitor research, locating and analyzing at least two websites of similar companies. Work to locate the websites of similarly-size organizations in the area and review them for what works and where they could be improved. Do this step first, summarizing your results in a word processing document with two screenshots of the competitor sites. You can find the list of questions to answer for this component at the end of this handout.

- **Information Architecture** — Review the current Escape Fiction website, and work to create a new list of primary navigation items. Think about how their customers might expect this information to be organized, and come up with simple, straightforward labels to use in your design. This process, part of the Structure phase of the Elements of User Experience, is called *Information Architecture*. Include this list with your competitor research.

>>> *A PDF containing both the Competitor Research and Information Architecture are due on* **Tuesday, February 10th, 2026** *(Week 06) to the Escape Fiction Strategy Phase assignment on Canvas.*

- **Thumbnails** — After you have completed your research, create eight thumbnail sketches of the presentation of the content of the home page only. These are rough sketches of ideas for the general layout of the website.

- **Wireframe** — Once you have completed your thumbnail sketches, select one of those sketches and create in Figma a detailed wireframe drawing of the page. This should be in grayscale, with basic type hierarchy and layout being conveyed.

>>> *A PDF containing both your eight Thumbnails and Wireframe are due on* **Tuesday, February 17th, 2026** *(Week 07) to the Escape Fiction First Round Critique assignment on Canvas.*

  Design — Using the documentation created in the strategy phase, craft a website design using Figma. We will design three complete pages while also creating placeholder pages/frames for the other pages in your information architecture. Finally, use **Prototype Mode** to link navigation items to any pages you have created, and to create any other interactive elements (like hovers or image carousels).
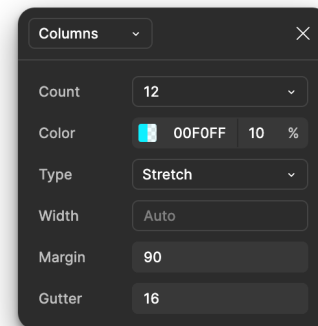
>>> *Your initial design is due on* **Tuesday, February 17th, 2026** *(Week 07) for small group critiques. Post a link to your design to the Escape Fiction Website Redesign assignment on Canvas. The final version of your design is due by the beginning of class on* **Tuesday, February 24th, 2026** *(Week 08). You do not need to re-post a link to your design.*

Design Notes ::
We will be targeting our standard screen size (use Figma's **MacBook Air 1280px × 832px** Frame as a start; add height as needed) and utilizing a maximum live area width of **1,100px** for our column grids. Add **90px** of margin to both the left and right side of our artboard when creating the grid.

The number of columns is up to you—make an extra effort to closely follow the grid when aligning elements in the design.

Remember that this is not just a static visual assignment—you are designing for *interactivity*, determining how your design will *respond* to user action. If your design calls for any hover states (something that changes when the mouse cursor is moved over it) or state changes (clicking on an item brings up an in-page pop-up window), create that functionality in Figma using **Component Sets** and **Variants**.

File Submission ::
In addition to turning in your **native Figma** files (`.fig`), we will also output your designs as **static PNG images** (to be viewed in other applications). To create the PNG images, select **Frame**, then the plus (+) button in the Export panel; select PNG 1x; File > Export > Export button). You can drag these images into a Web browser to preview your design in context. If your artboards are labeled well, those names will be used and meaningful to you as the filenames when exported by Figma.

Your native Figma files, static PNG images, and Figma link are all due both on the day of the class critique (**February 17th**) *and the final assignment due date* (**February 24th**). *Turn these in to the Drop Box on Google Drive for this class.*

The last step to turning in your work is to create a share link to your design in **Canvas**. To create a link to your design, click the Share button, then Copy Link. Be sure to set the permissions on your Figma file so that I am able to both *view* and *edit* it.

Figma Versioning Note — When you begin revisions to your design, save your current design in the "Version History". To do this, select Figma menu > File > Save to version history... (Command-Option-S), title it "Round One Design" and click save. Continue work on your Figma file, making revisions as needed.

Elements of User Experience ::

	Surface	You are responsible for the final design, feel, layout, and how imagery is used.
	Skeleton	You are responsible for the skeleton, defining how the content areas and content are to be arranged.
	Structure	Three designed pages: The home page, a Books page, and one other designed page. Basic content requirements and some of the page functionality is provided, though much is determined by you. Final primary navigation (information architecture) to be determined by the designer.
	Scope	At a minimum, provide site visitors with information about our products and services, how to find a book, and how to connect with us via social media. Additional scope requirements can be specified as needed.
	Strategy	Redesign the website for an existing small business—Escape Fiction. New site should showcase the products and services offered by the company, and work to drive customers to their physical retail locations. Social media should also be integrated into the new designs. Opportunities to buy items online are not required.

Requirements ::
Below are the key due dates and deliverable requirements for this project:

The following items are due on **Tuesday, February 10th, 2026** (Week 06):

- Your **competitor site research and information architecture** are due. Save these items in a single PDF document to be turned to the Escape Fiction Strategy Phase assignment on Canvas. These are the *Strategy & Scope* phase documents.
- This phase is worth 20 points.

The following items are due on **Tuesday, February 17th, 2026** (Week 07):

- **Round One** of your designs of three pages of the website: the **home page**, a **Books** page, and **one other** for desktop browsers are due.
- This will be **critiqued** in class—you must be present at the critique to receive full credit.
- In addition, your **hand-drawn sketches & wireframes** are due on this date. Post a PDF of these to the First Round Critique assignment on Canvas.
- Finally, your **native Figma file** and **PNGs** are also due to the class Drop Box in a folder named `lastname_escape_fiction_v1`.
- This phase is worth 20 points.

The following items are due on **Tuesday, February 24th, 2026** (Week 08):

- Your **final, updated website design** is due
- In addition, upload updated native Figma and PNG files to the class Drop Box in a folder named `lastname_escape_fiction_v2`.
- This phase is worth 100 points and is graded using the rubric posted to Canvas.

This project is worth 140 points.

Competitor Research Evaluation Questions ::
As you review the sites, consider the following questions:

- How is this website a competitor to Escape Fiction?

- Do they offer the same sort of functionality? What's different?

- What's the main goal of the site? What's a secondary goal?

- Can you buy their products online?

- What about the design and layout provides good user experience?

- What do you think about the colors, typography and graphic choices?

- Can you easily find things like contact information?

- Who do you think the target audience is? Think about basic demographics here – age/gender/geographical location/socio-economic status, etc.

- Are there any aspects of the site design that will influence how you design the Escape Fiction site?

- Are there any aspects of the site design that you think don't work at all or are poor choices? Why?

- Is the site mobile-friendly?