Advanced Higher

Graphic Communication

Graphic Presentation

Design Principles

Design Principles

This section discusses principles and how they can help you. The principles of design will determine how you will use the elements already discussed.

There are eight principles of design: Balance, Contrast, Emphasis, Rhythm, Unity, Proximity, Proportion and Alignment. These principles will help you combine the different design elements into a good layout. Each principle discussed in this section can be combined with, and applied to, the eight elements. For example, to create unity in a layout you can use any one of the elements such as line, texture, shape, space, size and colour.

The principles of graphic design affect where you place type and image, and influence every decision you make when designing a layout. The principles also affect how each piece of image and body copy relate to each other, what your message is and how you communicate it. When working with the design principles, always think about how each principle you use will enhance your layout, make it visually appealing to your audience, how it is organized and whether or not it helps to communicate your message clearly.

We will explore each of these elements in this section.

Balance - **Symmetrical**

What is the driving force behind balance? Gravity. If you are caught off balance, you may fall, or you may shift your weight to maintain your balance. In graphic design, if a layout is unbalanced, your readers will feel uneasy as if something is wrong with the page.
One approach to balance is symmetry, which is an equal distribution of weight. All of the elements on the page are centered and balanced. For example, you can arrange your elements so they are evenly distributed to the left and right of the center. Symmetrical design can communicate stability and strength, which appropriate for a traditional or conservative piece.

Balance in Composition

Three different types of balance with colour, shape and position.

* Symmetrical
* Asymmetrical
* Radial Symmetry
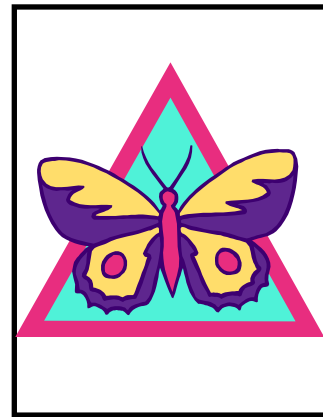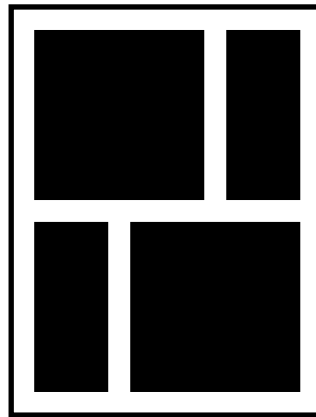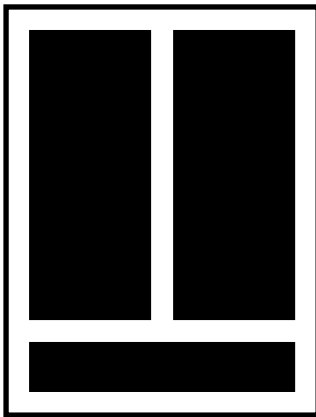
Many of the objects we use in everyday life are also symmetrically balanced. Cars, for example are for the most part the same on both sides. Chairs, tables, double doors, and numerous other items are symmetrical in design. Look around at the objects that surround you and mentally divide them in half.
Balance in general is seen as equal visual weight. **'Symmetrical Balance'** would be described as a central axis dividing the composition in the middle, horizontally or vertically, with the **same design on both sides**, what we would think of as a mirror reflection.

World Champion

SkateBoard 06

Vertical Symmetry — Each vertical half (excluding text) of the brochure is a near mirror image of the other. This symmetrically balanced layout is very formal in appearance

Vertical & Horizontal Symmetry —
This poster design divides the page into four
equal sections. Although not mirror images
the overall look is very symmetrical and
balanced. Each of the line drawings are more
or less centered within their section. The
graphic (text and image) in the upper center
of the page is the focal point tying all the
parts together.

Balance - Asymmetrical

The other approach is asymmetry, which is the opposite of
symmetry. The elements on the page are
not uniformly placed on the page. For example, if you
place a line at a 45 degree angle in the lower right
hand part of a page, you have created an
asymmetrical design. To balance an asymmetrical
design, use design elements such as colour, value,
size, shape and texture. Asymmetry can bring
contrast, variety, excitement, movement, surprise and
informality to a communication. It would be
appropriate for a piece that entertains as well as
informs.
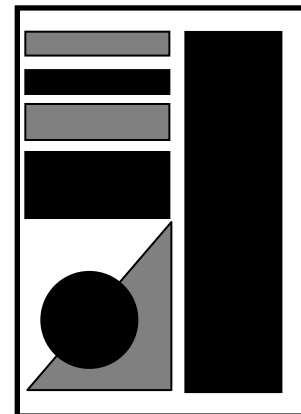
*"Uneven elements present us with more possibilities for arranging the page and
creating interesting designs than perfectly symmetrical objects. Asymmetrical
layouts are generally more dynamic and by intentionally ignoring balance the
designer can create tension, express movement, or convey a mood such as
anger, excitement, joy, or casual amusement."* Jacci Howard Bear

Asymmetrical Balance — This page uses a 3
column format to create a neatly organized
asymmetrical layout. The two columns of text are
balanced by the blocks of colour (black) in the lower
left topped by a large block of white space. In this
case, because the white space is in a block shaped
much like the text columns, it becomes an element
of the design in its own right.

Balance – Radial

On square and rectangular pages we generally place elements in orderly rows and columns. With radial designs the elements radiate from or swirl around in a circular or spiral path. Parts of the design must still be arranged so that they are balanced across the width and length of the page unless you're intentionally aiming for a lack of balance.
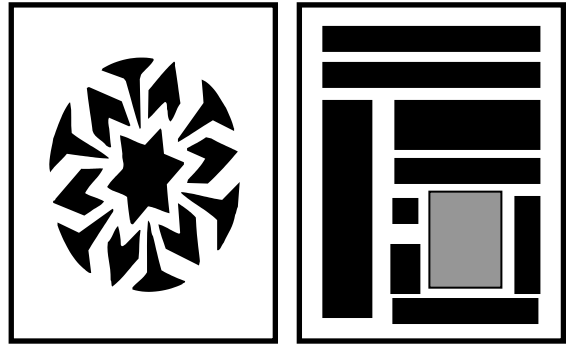
Look for examples of radial balance and ask yourself these questions.

- Does the piece radiate from a central point or does it have a spiral effect?
- Does the design pull you in or send you out to the edges of the piece?

To use balance in your piece:

Center typographic and image elements on the page.

Use a shape such as a circle or triangle and repeat the shape at regular intervals.

To offset a large image or block of copy, place several small visuals in one area.

Think about using one or two odd shapes if you are using 'regular' shapes.

To lighten up a piece with a lot of body copy, use a bright, colourful image.

Around large blocks of copy and dark image, use a lot of white space.

Use several bits of copy to offset large, dark images, leaving plenty of white space around each.

Use a grid with an equal number of columns or horizontal rows.

Balance – **Professional examples**

Symmetrical

Asymmetrical

Radial

Contrast

On the basketball court, one pro team looks much like another. But send a few of those players for a stroll down most any major city street and something becomes apparent — those players are much taller than your average guy on the street. That's contrast. In design, big and small elements, black and white text, squares and circles, can all create contrast in design.

Contrast can assist you in strengthening an idea and is a strong design principle that will help you distinguish your communication. When you add any element to a page, you've used contrast. How would you communicate a poster showing all of the moon phases? It would seem logical to make the different phases of the moon stand out on the page. Contrast can be used with the elements of design such as size, colour, shape, texture, line, value and space. When using contrast in your designs, think in contrasting terms such as small or large, white or black, crooked or straight, rough or smooth, dull or shiny, symmetrical or asymmetrical, serif or sans-serif.

When choosing the combination of contrasting elements, be sure that it best represents the mood or idea that you are trying to communicate.

The contrast choices you make do not have to be dramatic to be effective. Think about the overall message of your piece and then consider whether a diminished contrast or a subtle contrast would be suitable. When working with a subtle contrast, be sure that the difference is noticeable or it may go unnoticed, or look like a mistake.

CONTRAST with **SIZE**

Contrast with **VALUE**

Contrast with **Colour**

CONTRAST with **Type**

To use contrast in your pieces:

Strengthen your ideas.

Make your piece more visually appealing by using contrasting typefaces.

Contrast colour, shape, texture, line, size, space and value.

Strengthen a design using subtle colour shifts and differences in type.

Contrast – **Professional examples**

Contrast with Colour

Contrast with

Type and Size

Contrast with Value

Emphasis

In design, emphasis is whatever stands out the most gets the attention. For a communication to attract readers, it must have a focal point. Without a focal point, readers will move on. On the other hand, if there are too many focal points the reader will not know where to start and quickly give up.

As a designer, it is your job to choose what the most important element of the communication is based on the message you want to send to your target audience. You must choose the most important element based on the message you're trying to communicate to your target audience. To make an element bigger or bolder for the sake of making bolder or bigger won't enhance your piece. For example, if a poster has a large photograph that is of a bad quality may get a passing glance, but it will more likely leave a bad impression on the reader.

After choosing an element to emphasize, there are several methods of calling attention to it. Generally, a focal point is created when there is on element that differs from the other elements. For example, if you are working with a vertical layout, using a horizontal element will stand out (ie vertical columns of text with a horizontal picture).

Use italics to create subtle emphasis and to set apart certain names and titles. Italic fonts can also be used to add creative contrast, such as for pull-quotes or initial caps.

───────────

- Use bullets to organize lists, emphasize points
  Bullets are those traditionally round symbols found in most fonts. Use bullets to organize a list or draw attention to information.
- ✪ ◆ ➔ ▶ ↘

───────────

One way to grab attention in a sea of words is to set some **text in bold type**. It is heavier, darker than regular type. Many type families include bold versions of the basic typeface. They may also have Heavy or Ultra Bold weights and Bold Italic.

Eras Bold ITC
Eras Demi ITC
<u>Eras Light ITC</u>

To use emphasis in your piece:

Center a small line of reversed type or a small photograph in a large black and white area.

Surround an image with a lot of text.

Place an important line of text on a curved line or an angle, and keep the other lines of text in straight columns.

Set headlines and subheadlines in a bold typeface, and body copy in a lighter typestyle.

Place a small bit of copy near a large image.

Set the most important information in a colour, or use an unusual typeface.

Use bold type for emphasis, to highlight important points.

Use restraint with bold type, don't overdo it.

Emphasis – Professional examples

Emphasis - by placing a large image with the minimum of text on the same page.

Place an important line of text in a different font and/or different colour.

Set headlines and subheadlines in different colours or lighter typeface.

Surround a graphic or photograph with a lot of text.

Separate important information using a strong colour background in comparison to the rest of the page.

Rhythm

Rhythm is used to achieve movement and is the visual progression of repeating elements in a varied pattern. The two keys to using rhythm are repetition and variation. Repetition of repeats visual elements in a consistent manner, and variation is a change in the size, placement or form of visual elements.

Repetition helps to unify a piece. For example, to make text easy to read, use even columns. Without the use of variation, repetition can be boring. Many pages of identical columns of text should be varied with the use of headlines, subheadlines and images. You can balance repetition and variation by repeating elements to unify the piece, but vary some of the elements to keep your readers interest.

Use a single image multiple times

Tie the number of copies of a piece of clip art to the numbers in your text. A simple trainer used four times reinforces the "Buy Three, Get One Free" headline in the coupon/postcard. Each trainer is identical. A dashed line (as an actual or fake coupon) separates the first three trainers from the "free" trainer.

Rhythm is used to communicate a feeling or mood in a piece. To establish a calm and relaxing mood, place your elements at regular intervals, which is a smooth, even rhythm. This approach to rhythm helps your reader with dry, factual text. To establish a more dynamic mood, vary the size and spacing of elements. Advertisements will often use this type of rhythm to keep an audience attention.

The SkateBoard Club
Stephen Strained, President

The Grange Hill
Pitfour Lakes
0800 -123456

The SkateBoard Club
Stephen Strained, President

The Grange Hill
Pitfour Lakes
0800 -123456

By repeating the style of the title, your eye bounces back and forth between the two most important elements.

Sport Shops Inc.
Sale Time
BUY THREE

GET
ONE
FREE
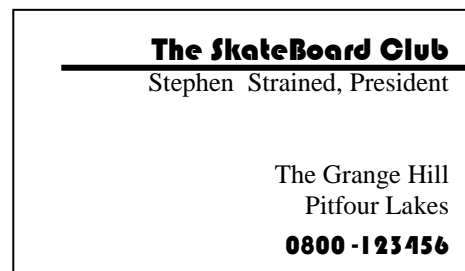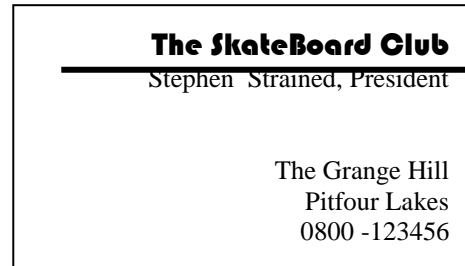
To use rhythm in your piece:

You can repeat a group of similarly shapes images along the same baseline with equal space between each element.

Use a series of progressively larger elements in a repeated series.

Set your text in one size, and use large images.

Alternate dark, bold type with light, thin type.

Repeat a similar shape in various areas of a layout.

Rhythm – **Professional examples**

You can repeat a group of similar shapes and colour throughout the document as in the "Children's News" above. (Refer to colour copy for full benefit.)

The Rhythm in this 3-fold leaflet is introduced by using two main colours for subheadings throughout the document. On several occasions the colours are combined linking the document in unity. (Refer to colour copy for full benefit.)

Unity

In design, unity helps the entire design elements look like they belong together. Your readers need visual cues telling them which parts of the layout go together. For example, relate a specific headline, body copy, and image that go together. If there is no clear organization or relationship between elements, you've lost your reader.

There are three ways for you to unify type and images: Grouping, Repeating and Grid Systems.

Grouping means that elements that are close together look that like belong together. Elements are repeated through the use of colour, shape or texture.

Repeating elements in a layout, unifies it. For example, if you are using an image of a flag, you can use the blue from the flag as one of your colours.

The pages, across, are examples of how you might combine text and graphics in a 7-unit vertical grid (such as for a newsletter). Notice how page 1 (Figure 1) and 2 have a consistent (reversed) layout. Text columns are two-grid units wide. One grid unit provides an extra wide column of space separating the main text from the sidebar elements. Page 3 (right hand page of the 2 page spread, Figure 2) is quite different from the first two pages but if you look at the underlying grid structure you'll see that all three pages use the same grid system.
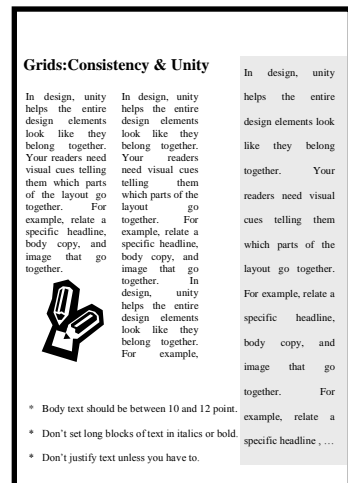

Figure 1: Left-hand page of newsletter with 7-unit vertical grid
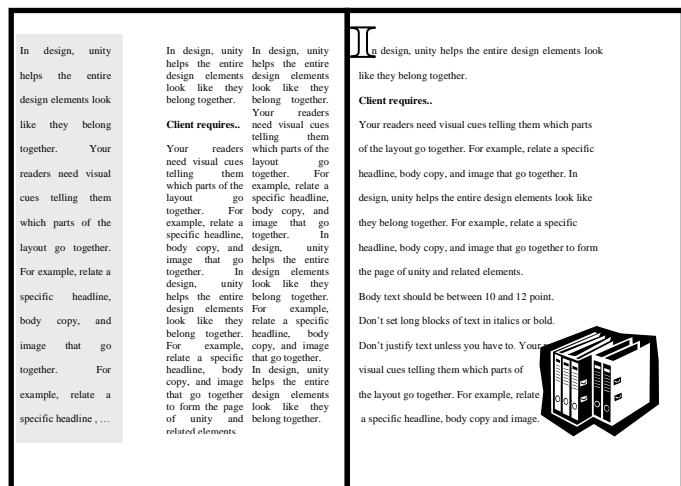

Figure 2: Two-page spread of newsletter with 7-unit vertical grid

A grid system is a division of page space. You can use a grid to divide the page into columns, margins and space A grid system helps establish a framework for the typographic elements and imagery on your page. Use variety to keep your layouts from being boring. Think about beginning with a theme using a circle. You can then use the circle and variations of the circle in different sizes and shapes. Your elements are related through the use of shape, and they are varied and add interest to your layout.

The odd column in a 5 or 7 column newsletter grid can offer extra "thumb space" along the outer edges. There are many ways to add white space to your designs – leaving some grid units open is one way.
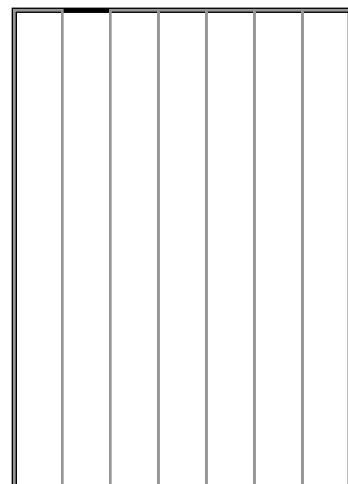
To use unity in your piece:

Repeat a specific colour, shape or texture throughout the layout in different areas.

Group related elements such as headlines, body copy, images and captions together.

Choose visual elements that have a similar colour, theme or shape.

Use one or two type families and vary the type size and weight for contrast.

Keep the type families or styles used for headlines, subheads, body cope and captions consistent throughout the layout.

Use a border around a page, photo or poster.

Group elements with the use of line, coloured background or shades of a chosen colour.

Proximity / Spatial Relationships

Grouping related elements and content together on web site or pages makes good sense. The relationship and Proximity of elements and information not only makes reading your pages easier, but navigating your graphic presentation or web sites easier as well. Using uniform spacing between design elements (graphics, pictures, links...) makes filtering through the information and content presented easier, quicker and more enjoyable.

Look at the Business Card opposite. How many elements can you see when you squint at it?

To make something easy to read, your eyes should not have to stop more than 3 or 4 times.

Did you know which information to read first?

Gavin Lennie   North Building
Pitfour University
01572 298765   School of DTP

Don't be frightened to leave white space round the elements in your design.

Hopefully you will agree that by grouping the elements it is easier to read the information on the card.

| **Pitfour University** |
| :--- |
| School of DTP |
| North Building |
| |
| Gavin Lennie |
| 01572 298765 |

Unity – **Professional examples**

Repeat of black, vertical lines, circle shape and colour throughout the layout in different areas brings unity to the 2-fold leaflet. The Fonts are also given the same colour as the circles adding to the unity of the document.

Elements have been grouped together with the use of line and coloured background.
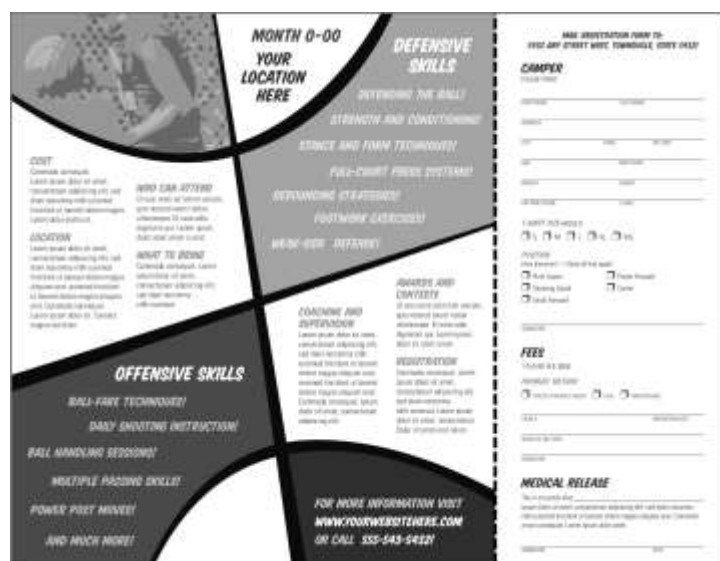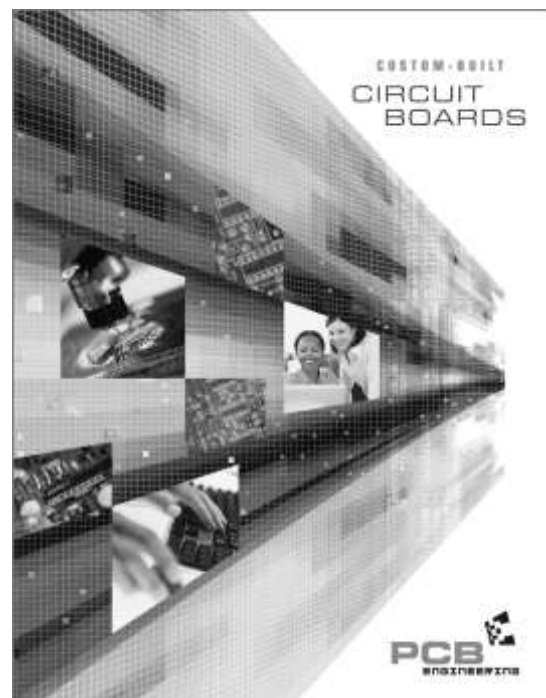
Proximity – **Professional examples**

Using uniform spacing between design elements makes filtering through the information and content presented easier, quicker and more enjoyable.

Proximity is grouping related elements and content together. In this graphic the photographs are grouped round the central coloured area.

Proportion

Proportion is the relationship among the elements on a page. Proportionally size the visual elements in your publication according to their importance.

DTP's most common shape is the familiar 210mm x 290mm "A4" page. When working on newsletters, magazines and other publications, however, the viewed image becomes the spread: two pages viewed at the same time. Proportion is controlled by the use of:

Grids: All documents stand to benefit from the use of a grid, a series of nonprinting horizontal and vertical guidelines on the page. Multiple-page documents are the greatest beneficiaries. A grid guarantees consistency throughout the document, identifying margins, and determining the orderly placement of columns and illustrations on the page.

Margins: For most publications, margins should be unequal. Equal white space creates monotony. In facing-page documents, the inside margin should be the smallest, the top margin slightly larger, and the outside margin even larger. The bottom margin is usually the largest. These are known as progressive margins. This is steeped in tradition: Gutenberg's Bible featured progressive margins, as did the designs of Aldus Manutius (15 century).

Margins set off text and frame it. Overly small margins cramp the text and eliminate the frame. A good rule of thumb is half the page: 50% of any given page should be margins. (Margins may include page numbers or other information.)

White Space: There is a tendency among non-designers to try to fit too much material on a page. It is important to conceptualise white space as an element on the page, equal in importance to text and graphics. It is not leftover stuff, a "no-man's-land" between "important" elements.

Like margins, white space is an active portion of design. White space places other elements in perspective and organizes their arrangement. Ideally, white space should have a clearly defined shape. (If white space conveys a distinct form, the reader will recognize it as a graphical element and not a leftover.) Text occupies the area left over after the white space has been defined.
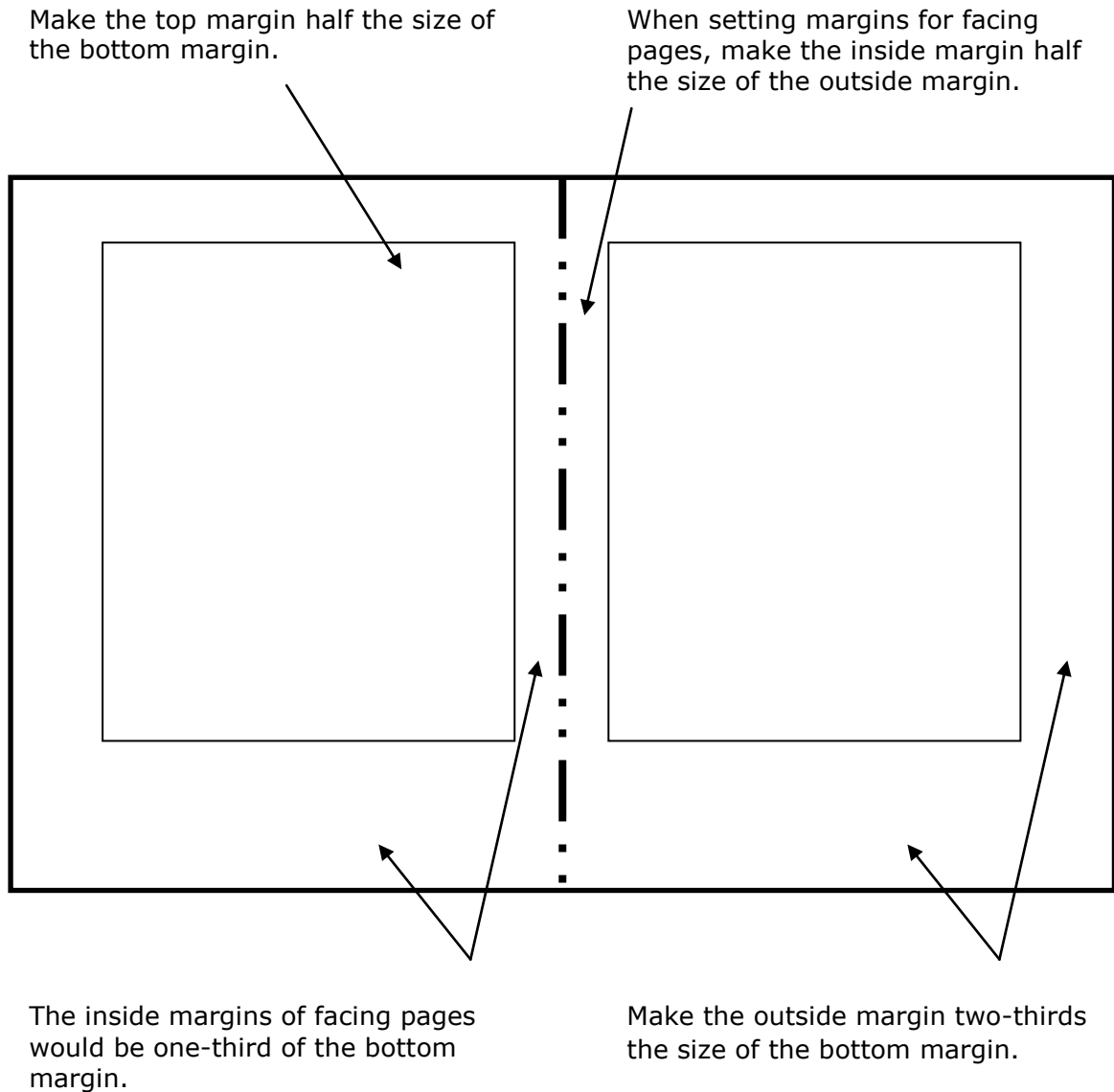
White space adds spaciousness, making a piece easier to read. White space is breathing space, a place to rest. Think of white space as a graphical element that can be shaped and defined, and you will be able to make use of it most effectively.

Creating Proportioned Page Margins

Although you should never let strict formulas keep you from finding the right balance of page margins to printing area, they can provide a convenient starting point. Use these guidelines to create page margins with perfect proportions, then tweak them as called for in your graphic presentation.

Try the guidelines given below: -

For best appearance, size page margins progressively from smallest to largest: *inside margins, top margin, outside margin, bottom margin*.

Make the top margin half the size of the bottom margin.

When setting margins for facing pages, make the inside margin half the size of the outside margin.

The inside margins of facing pages would be one-third of the bottom margin.

Make the outside margin two-thirds the size of the bottom margin.

Standalone page: - With a standalone page, the side margins would be equal, both at two-thirds of the bottom margin.

Once set up, make any necessary adjustments to the page margins to fit the desired look and feel of the graphic presentation, to accommodate binding, and to fit any other page layout requirements.

**To use unity in your piece: -**

Larger margins with these *proportions* tend to create a more elegant aura.

Avoid using the same margins on all sides of a publication.

Proportion – **Professional examples**

In both the sport examples shown, the main graphic indicating the sporting activity, is the largest element on the page.

Looking at the layout the reader gets an instant indication of what the poster or book content is about.
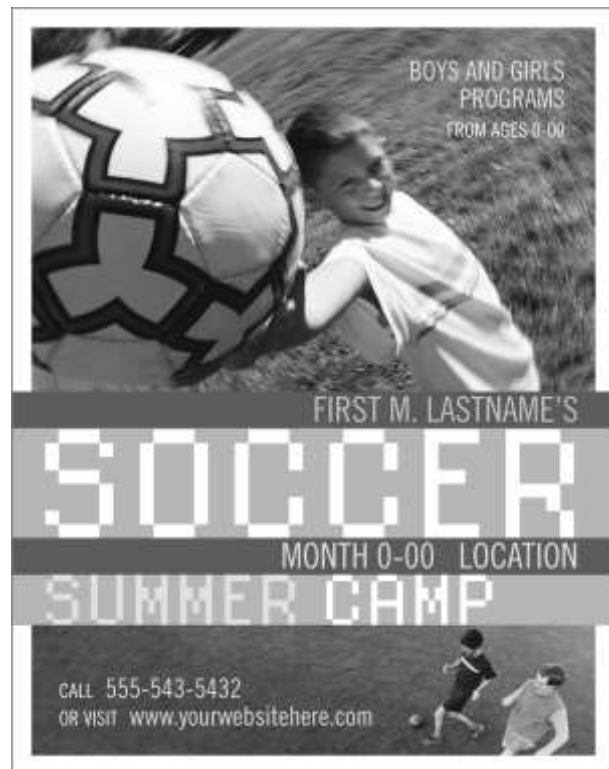
Alignment

Alignment is only a small piece of the puzzle. What works for one design might be totally inappropriate for another layout. As with all layouts, it depends on the purpose of the piece, the client, the audience and its expectations, the fonts, the margins and white space, and other elements on the page. The most appropriate choice is the alignment that works for that particular design. The examples of alignment demonstrated below also apply to other elements in a design layout.

Definition: The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**. Flush alignment is described as as flush-left or flush-right. **Also Known As:** Right-justified, Left-justified, Right-aligned, Left-aligned **Definition:** The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**. **Definition:** The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**. Flush alignment is described as as flush-left or flush-right. **Also Known As:** … graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**.	Flush alignment is described as as flush-left or flush-right. **Also Known As:** Right-justified, Left-justified, Right-aligned, Left-aligned **Definition:** The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush. Definition:** The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**. **Definition:** The alignment of text or graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**. Flush alignment is described as as flush-left or flush-right. **Also Known As:** … graphics up against one side or another of the page is called **flush**

Left Justified   Right Justified

Definition: Alignment refers to lining up the top, bottom, sides, or middle of text or graphic elements on a page. Horizontal alignment includes flush-left (also called left-justified or ragged right), flush-right (also called right-justified or ragged left), centered, and fully justified. With vertical alignment elements can be aligned vertically -- top, bottom, or middle (center), for example. **Definition: Alignment** refers to lining up the ragged left), centered, and fully justified. With vertical alignment elements can be aligned vertically -- top, bottom, or middle (center), for example.	**Definition: Alignment** refers to lining up the top, bottom, sides, or middle of text or graphic elements on a page. Horizontal alignment includes flush-left (also called left-justified or ragged right), flush-right (also called right-justified or ragged left), centered, and fully justified. With vertical alignment elements can be aligned vertically -- top, bottom, or middle (center), for example. **Definition: Alignment** refers to lining up the ragged left), centered, and fully justified. With vertical alignment elements can be aligned vertically -- top, bottom, or middle (center), for example.

Centred Justified Fully Justified

Left/Right-Aligned Text
Often considered more informal, friendlier that justified text. The ragged right edge adds an element of white space. Left justified text may require extra attention to hyphenation to keep right margin from being too ragged. The opposite for right justified of course. Generally type set left aligned is easier to work with (i.e. requires less time, attention, and tweaking from the designer to make it look good).

Fully-Justified Text
Often considered more formal, less friendly than left-aligned text. Usually allows for more characters per line, packing more into the same amount of space (than the same text set left-aligned). May require extra attention to word and character spacing and hyphenation to avoid unsightly rivers of white space running through the text. May be more familiar to readers in some types of publications, such as books and newspapers. Some people are naturally drawn to the "neatness" of text that lines up perfectly on the left and right.

Examples of the use of Alignment

A day at The Meadows

It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment. It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment
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 It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter

No apparent alignment of elements

A day at The Meadows

It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment

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Alignment of elements is centred

If someone insists that fully justified text is better than left-aligned text, tell them they are wrong. If someone else tells you that left-aligned text is better than justified text, tell them they are wrong. If they are both wrong, then what's right? Alignment is only a small piece of the puzzle.

Look at the posters on this page. Which do you prefer?

A day at The Meadows

It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment It doesn't matter what is typed here. It is just to show you problems with alignment

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Alignment of elements is left

Alignment – **Professional examples**

Centre Justified text is mainly used for headings but can also be creatively used as in the Garden Leaflet and neighbourhood column shown.

*Fully-Justified Text:* - Considered more formal and less friendly.

The page opposite is an example of combining Fully Justified text and Left Aligned text into the one document.

The Fully Justified creates a column element within the presentation and reduces the amount of white space.

The Left Aligned text creates a more open document by allowing more white space to be available.

Right Aligned
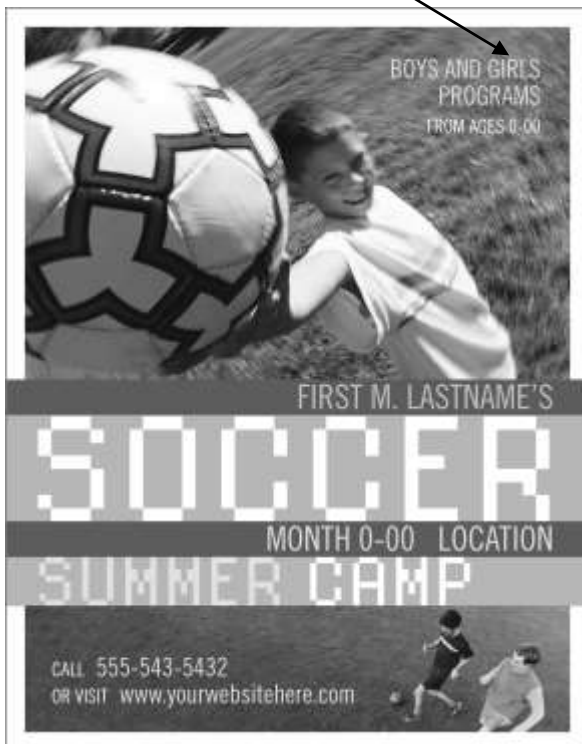
Right Aligned

The above two examples show the use of Right Aligned text within a document. As with Left Aligned text more white space is created. Although Right Aligned text is not used to a large extent used creatively it can help deliver eye-catching layouts.

When designing and creating a Graphic Presentation it is important to remember the Design Principles that will help to guide you in creating a professional looking document, which meets the client's requirements.

Remember to use the Design Elements and Design Principles together and continually review your work.

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