Layout & Type: A Crash Course
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## Your guide to InDesign

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Introduction
What is layout, and why should I care about it anyway?

Layout is the word we use in graphic design to describe the way in which parts of something are arranged or laid out. It is known as space and composition in traditional art, cinematography in video, (to an extent) choreography in dance, arrangement in music, and layout in graphic design. InDesign is the industry standard for page layout, and is used for print media.

And this is just a taste of what gets done in layout! We’ll start with the basics...
Your Friend InDesign

This program is large, but no scarier than Microsoft Word.

### Top Bar Menu When Text is Selected

- **Typeface**
- **Font Size**
- **Font/text style**
- **Leading**
- **Kerning/tracking**
- **Baseline shift**
- **Skew text**
- **Paragraph alignment**

### Top Bar Menu When Object is Selected

- **Horizontal scale**
- **Vertical scale**
- **Rotate**
- **Outline size**
- **Outline color**
- **Object text wrap**
- **Constrain proportions for scaling (on/off)**
- **Tilt/degree rotate**

**NOTE FOR MAC USERS** - Replace all “Ctrl __” commands with “⌘ ___”
Your Friend InDesign

Get some type on this page before we worry about how good it looks.

With InDesign open, go to **File, New** to create a new document.

To create text, select the **type tool** \( T \) and click and drag across your page. This will make a box where you can begin typing. To change typeface, font, font size, leading, kerning, etc, highlight the text you have typed and make changes using the menu bad at the top of the screen (see previous page, “Top Bar Menu When Text Is Selected”).

To change type color, highlight the text, then click on your **Swatches** box (located under the **Window** pulldown menu if it isn’t up by default).

Now that we’ve got the program basics down, we can go into more depth about layout and type from a design aspect, then figure out the technical “how to” step by step in InDesign.
Type: Getting To Know Your Type

There are thousands of typefaces, and even more fonts. What’s the difference? Read on...

What most people call different fonts are actually all different typefaces. Within one typeface, there are many fonts. This, this, and this are all different fonts within the one type family, Adobe Garamond - but most people just call everything a font, and that’s ok.

Knowing what type to use is really important, but the basics are: for large chunks of text, type with serifs is a lot easier to read, and for small, bold statements, use sans-serif type. What are serifs? Well here you go...

This has serifs.
This has no serifs.
This is script.
This is italic.
This is blackletter.

This is a display typeface, and shouldn’t be put in a body of text like this; it’s not readable - but it’s great for titles or really short quotes!

This is a digital font - great for being tiny on computer screens, but it prints pretty pixel-y and rough...
There’s a time and place for everything, including fonts. In most practical contexts, these fonts to the left (and ones like them) should never be used. They are unreadable, not to mention tacky! These fonts can be used sometimes - but as display text for very specific contexts, not body text (all of this is body text, by the way)!

Designers hate Comic Sans with a passion, and for good reason - it’s available in basically every word processing program, and everyone sees it as some sort of “cute” or “friendly” font, when in fact it is totally unreadable and makes people not take you seriously. Don’t use it!

There are many good, standby fonts. There’s a reason everyone uses Helvetica; it’s very readable and clear, but you don’t want to use it in big chunks of text - it gets hard to read. I’ve set all of this packet in Adobe Garamond Pro, which some of you may recognize from Harry Potter. All of these fonts to the left are good, reliable, common fonts; they might look boring here, but in the right context, they can look awesome.
**Type: Kerning & Letter Spacing**

“Kerning” is adjusting the space between two letters. This is very important for creating any kind of display type.

Here’s what my name looks like without any adjustments.

This is fine if it was in a block of text, but big and by itself, there are some big gaps that stand out. Problem areas are marked on the left.

Highlight a letter, and go to the Character palette, or look at your top menu for the icon that looks like this. Use the arrows to increase or decrease the number until the letters look less awkward. Here, I indicated how far I kerned these letters.

Your biggest problems will always be when you have a round letter next to a letter with a hard line, or a diagonal letter form or a capital letter next to almost anything. These are all examples of words that desperately need some kerning.
“Auto leading” is what InDesign automatically uses when you begin typing a block of text, like this one. Here, I have adjusted the leading.

Here, I haven’t changed the leading. It really hurts me to do this, but we must learn. See how awkwardly far apart these lines are?

And it only gets worse with larger text. See that gaping hole? Ugh.

Back to good leading. A good rule of thumb is, when you have a chunk of text, have the leading two points higher than the text size. If you have this open in InDesign, you can see this is 18 pt Adobe Garamond Pro, with 20 pt leading. However, when you have different sizes of text on different lines, you have to do some adjustments. Let’s look at the title:

This is a headline, it needs to be important, and set aside. So there’s a big space between the heading and the subhead.

This is a subhead - it’s smaller, so the spacing between the two lines is a lot smaller. However, the second line is all caps, so we’ll need bigger leading than usual - see the bottom of the “p” in “space”? If we didn’t have bigger leading, it would almost be touching that “S” in “USE”
Type: Big Changes

With a letter selected, go under Type, and select Create Outlines to warp, change, add to, subtract from, and bend letters using bezier lines. The “a” here has the points already plotted.

Now, you can double or triple click the letter and have access to bezier lines; or use the direct select tool . Select the pen tool from the menu bar, hold it down to get “Add anchor point” or “Delete anchor point,” if desired. This allows you to create more or less points - here, I deleted all of the points from the middle of the “a.”

With the direct selection tool, you can go crazy and absolutely mutilate the letter form, too. And you can add even more points to the line with the pen tool for further mutilations.

Skewing Type: I totally do not endorse this normally, but if you want to just squish your type around a little, highlight your normal letter (no outlines), then go to the menu at the top of the screen or the character palette and look for the “Ts” with arrows next to them.
Type: Effects

These can get really tacky really fast, so use sparingly.

Type your text, get the regular selection tool, and right click the text box. You can click on **Drop Shadow** or **Feather**, and you’ll get a menu screen for either of these effects. Adjust the bars and numbers to change the blending styles; click “Preview” at the bottom left to see what it looks like. Experiment with different shadow/feather colors for different effects, like glowing, shaded, or cut-out looking text. Later versions of InDesign have more effects.
Layout: Transparency

An effect that is much easier in InDesign than it ever was in real life.

Normal Transparency: Right click the object, and go to Effects, Transparency. All of these are on various amounts of “normal” transparency. Think about the ways you can use this in a layout by making big color shapes blend in and out of each other. Transparency of any kind is effected directly by the color behind it - notice how the bottom of the cat is slightly pink from where I put a pink square behind the picture instead of the white of the page.

Transparency Effects: Right click the object, and go to Effects, Transparency, and then use the pulldown menu where it says Normal. These are all variations of the transparency effect for a picture with a white background on a colored shape. From left to right, we have no effect, Multiply, Darken, and Color Burn. As you can see, some of the color integrity of the image is lost by using these effects. If you want an object with a white background to retain its color and look like THIS:

You’re Going to Need Photoshop.

1. Open your image in Photoshop, double-click the image in the Layers palette to unlock it. Use the magic wand tool to select the background white space, and delete all of it (you may need to use “Refine Edge” on more detailed images).

2. Go to File, Save As, and change the image format to .TIFF. On the screen that comes up after you hit “Save,” MAKE SURE YOU CHECK THE BOX FOR “SAVE TRANSPARENCY.”

3. In InDesign, go to File, Place, and select your image. The image will now have no white space, and should stand out on color.
This is a block of pure red. Overlapped on it are a lot of squares of white at 33% opacity, layered on top of each other. Here, I have created tints of the original color. A color will always coordinate with one of its tints, and making a tint simply means adding white. An easier way to do this is to simply have a colored object selected, then, in the swatches panel, change the tint %

When you add black to a color, the colors will coordinate as well. This is tone or shade - the more you add, the darker the tone or shade.

You can make hues by adding one color to another color - these are tones of purple being added to yellow, and then blue to purple.
Layout: Arranging Your Space

Putting together text and image in a single, unified space.

**Pick your pallete:**
Limiting yourself to a handful of colors forces you to coordinate your layout; make sure they go with each other and your photos!

**YES!** These are similar tints and tones, they look nice together, nothing stands out much

**NO!** These are way too different! The green and dark red totally dominate, and you can barely see the other colors next to them.

**Make some shapes:**
Blocks of color lead the eye around the page, and can emphasize words or images you want to bring attention to - use the pen tool!

**How to make it POP!**

**Pictures and words:**
Putting pictures with text is tricky. Make sure images have room to breathe, don’t plop your image dead center in your layout, and make spacing the same amount on all sides of the image. See notes on the clapping bear about text wraps on images.

Headline is large, has big leading, and is a different color.

Pictures with words, pictures with a bear. What I have here is called a “text wrap,” I changed the border on this picture to go around the bear’s outline, then did a text wrap on the bear (with bear selected, Window, text wrap, wrap around object shape). Once you’re in the text wrap window, you can choose how close to the object you want the wrap to go - not too much closer than this.

You don’t have too many instances of text on a picture, but make sure it stands out and that the picture isn’t too dark.
Layout: Working With Lots of Text

You’ll typically be doing a lot more than headline/subhead!

Make sure your margins and gutterspace are large enough to accommodate comfortable reading.

If you change the length of your columns, don’t change it more than 2-3 times in a layout, and make sure the change is consistent!

Subheads can be slightly larger than body text, and a different color too.

Object is centered on page, but creates movement to the next page using color blocks and the movement within the photo itself.

Make pull-out quotes interesting using color, varying text size, or just creative type design.

Make your text and column size interact and respond to the space that your images occupy.

Photo captions should be no larger than the body text, and indicate which photos on the page they’re referring to.

Even something as simple as telling the difference between an open door and a window can be deviously tricky for a robot.
Layout & Type: Things to Avoid

This applies as much for web design as it does print!

Text on a staircase:
This wasn’t good in the 1980s, and it’s not good now.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit laborum.

Dueling corners: This creates tension, which can make a good effect for a logo, but not good for text. It also leads to trapped space, a definite no-no for design.

Occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit laborum.

Type soup: Changing a million different things. Generally, keep it to one font, one size for a block of text. For display type, you can vary the size up a few times, but try to stick to just two fonts.

Widows: When there’s a single word on a line. With any kind of display type, avoid these at all costs!
Layout & Type: Things to Avoid

This applies as much for web design as it does print!

Not enough text per line: It is very uncomfortable for the human eye to read five or less words per line of text for a long time. Make your font smaller or cut up your text into small bits.

Drop Shadows: Drop shadows can be used well, but usually aren’t. Put the shadow close to the word, don’t make it too dark, and don’t do it to a squiggly font - bold, thick fonts work best.

Black on blue: Or really black on any dark color. This applies to putting text on dark photos, too, and white text on light colors or photos.

Tension: When text is really close to something, but not quite touching it. BAD!
Layout & Type: Putting It Together

Tightened leading

Kerned letters

Light colored text on dark background; contrasting colors.

Coordinating colors, tints, and hues.

Color blocks and lines used to emphasize text and move the eye around the page.

Off-center, but large main object.

Interesting type arrangement, but still readable.

the leader of the pc revolution predicts that the next hot field will be robotics.

a robot in every home. by bill gates
Helpful Hints

Do Sketches: Even if you’re working on a computer, it’s best to start with some kind of hand-drawn sketch so you’re not flying into something totally blind. This is especially important for type or logo design.

Never Be Satisfied With One Idea: You’re done? Good! Do another one! Then another one! Like with photography, the more choices or drafts you have to pick from, the more likely it is you’ll end up with something amazing.

KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid! A clean, simple layout or logo is much better than a crazy, busy one, and is a lot easier to make look professional.

Use a Grid: Those rulers aren’t on the side of InDesign for fun; you can drag rulers off of them. When doing multi-page layouts, you want to be consistent with where everything is on the page, and using the rulers helps your layout look professional.

Don’t Tuck Things in Corners This is by far the easiest mistake that even the most experienced designer can make. The more you can make visual movement in your space, the less likely it is that something will be stuck in a corner. If you do put an object in a corner, make it move toward the rest of the page.

Watch the White Space: You want to make sure that you don’t have any trapped space, dueling corners, or objects too close to each other. An easy way to check for this is to zoom out - way out - on your layout, and squint a bit, you’ll see what needs to get fixed a lot easier.

Consistency is Key: When you think you’re done, always go back and make sure everything is right - you have the same kerning on all of your titles, the same amount of tint on that one color, all of your columns are the same width, etc. This is really important if you’re trying to look professional!
**Vocabulary**

**Typeface:** A particular design of type; Helvetica and Garamond are typefaces.

**Font:** A subcategory of type within a typeface; Garamond Italic, Bold, or Regular are all fonts within Garamond.

**Serif:** The embellishment or stroke on the ends of some typefaces.

**Script:** A typeface made to look like handwriting or cursive.

**Italic:** A specific font within a typeface with swashed, slanted letters used to emphasize certain words.

**Display Text/Decorative Type:** Type designed to enlarge well, or type that has a very specific look and is only suitable for a very specific context.

**Body Text:** Areas of text that are larger than a headline, caption, or subtitle; typically in paragraphs.

**Headline:** The title, and first thing you read in a layout. Typically at the top, or at least much larger than everything else.

**Subhead:** Either a longer, less important reiteration of the title under the headline, or a means of breaking up body text into sections.

**Kerning:** Adjusting the spacing between letters or characters in a word.

**Leading:** The amount of blank space between lines of print.

**Skewing:** In typography, stretching or squashing the actual structure of the letter forms.

**Tint:** Adding white to a color to make it lighter; will coordinate with the original, white-less color.

**Shade:** Adding black to a color to make it darker; will coordinate with the original, black-less color.

**Hue:** Adding one color to another color to make a blend of the two colors.

**Margin:** The edge or border of the page, typically blank or free of features.

**Gutter:** The amount of space between two columns of text; the blank area in the middle of this page is the gutter.

**Widow:** A single, isolated word at the end of a block of text. It’s a “widow” because it has its whole “life” (the text) behind it, “in the past.”

**Orphan:** A single, isolated word at the beginning of a block of text. It’s an “orphan” because it has its whole “life” (the text) ahead of it, and it’s all alone.

**Typography:** The art of creating, arranging, and setting type.
Troubleshooting

NOTE FOR MAC USERS - Replace all “Ctrl __” commands with “⌘ __”

How do I get rid of those blue lines around everything?

Go to “View,” “Hide frame edges.”

My workspace disappeared!

Hit “Tab.” Or go to “Window,” “Workspace,” and select one of the options.

How do I see my rulers?

Ctrl-; (semicolon) will show or hide your rulers. Ctrl-” will show a grid.

My object is behind something else, and I can’t select it.

With the regular selection tool, click and drag to make a selection box around the object you want to grab. This will also select everything on top as well. With everything selected, hold down “Shift” and click on the objects you don’t want selected. This works in Illustrator too.

I want to move an object in front of/behind something else.

Right click the object, and select what you need from “Arrange.” “Bring to front” and “Send to back” send an object to those extremes, and “Bring forward” and “Send backward” move an object one step at a time. Shortcut - Ctrl-[ and Ctrl-] will move the object up and down one step at a time through the layers.

My text wrap isn’t working.

Make sure you have text wrap set on your image (or wrapped object) and set to “Wrap around object shape.” Use the pen tool to add points around the object, then the direct select tool to manipulate these points. If the text still isn’t wrapping, you may want to right click the object and select “Move to back.”

When I use “Multiply” to make an object transparent, the background color is seeping through and making it look weird.

The easiest solution here is to take the object into Photoshop, double-click the image layer to unlock it, delete the blank background, select the white space, and delete it. Once your object is isolated on a checkerboard, go to “File,” “Save As,” and save it as a .TIFF. Make sure you select “Save image transparency” on the screen that comes up after you click “Save.” You should be able to bring this image into InDesign with a transparent background and without having to use an effect.

When I use copy-paste to bring in an image, it looks grainy/weird.

You may need to use “File,” “Place” instead - some image file formats do not import through copy-paste too well, especially things from Photoshop.