0   CLASSIC EXPLORER

THE CANVA VERSION

Sidebars!
This is what one looks like in this template.

Sometimes sidebars are for flavor. This is an example of that.

Block method.
When we can't input exact measurements, its helpful to build things around a singular object. Notice how the above block fits neatly between elements.

This template is for manuscript layouts. (Also known as single-column layouts.) If you're reading this in Canva, it's time to pull back the curtain. Go to *file* > *view settings* and turn on *Show rulers and guides*. Keep the margins view off.

There it is. The grid system. Even in software like Canva, the grid system lives on. Let's discuss how Canva can level-up our design skills.

What's different in Canva? We have less precise control over details in Canva, so we get to double down on the design fundamentals like contrast, proportion, symmetry, hierarchy, whitespace, and more.

How does spacing work in Canva? The fundamental building block in Canva is the pixel which doesn't play nice with the page's millimeters or the type's points. For this reason, we have to space things by eye and rely on some classic designer tricks.

What's different about this document? Unlike the starter and full versions, this document has even margins. In the others, the inner margins are wider. Since Canva doesn't build its UI around two-page spreads, I've made them symmetrical to save ourselves the headache.

You might also notice the typefaces changed. *Pirata One* is our header typeface, and *Libre Baskerville* is our body text.

1   DESIGNING IN CANVA

WHAT IS DESIGN?

No one can agree on what design is, except that it's many things.

Design requires problem-solving. Long before your game gets in someone's hands, it comes packed with riddles, traps, and monsters just for you.

That's why it's fun. This template won't remove your problems but will give you a map to find them.

EMBRACE THE PATTERNS

If you take the above block and drag it, you'll notice it fits perfectly between lines of text. Try it by dragging the box while holding down the Option key.

Your first puzzle is figuring out how to enforce patterns. Patterns are what make layouts what they are. Even the most chaotic design has some pattern, even if that pattern is disorder. (Looking at you Mörk Borg.)

In this template, we create patterns through the use of space. When laying elements, like text boxes and images, on the page, use the underlying grid and blocks like rulers.

You'll know when your blocks are perfectly wedged between elements when Canva creates a dotted line.

BEST PRACTICES

Word of advice... Use Canva for small projects like a zine or one-page rpg. Use your profit to upgrade after that.

Canva poses a few challenges for publishing. I recommend keeping your projects small and digital. Print projects require a level of precision that Canva is still developing. Until then, focus on its strength as a fast program.

2 EXPLORING FURTHER

CLASSIC EXPLORER CANVA STATS

- A5 format (148 x 210 mm) (ISO 216 Standard)
- *Header 1* is Pirata One
  - Size is 20.9 pt
  - Letter spacing +30%
  - Line height 0.5
- *Header 2* is Pirata One
  - Size is 12.9 pt
  - Letter spacing +30%
  - Line height 0.5
- *Body Text* is Libre Baskerville
  - Size is 8 pt
  - Letter spacing ±0%
  - Line height 1.6

ADDITIONAL READING

There's a first-class education in your book collection. Explore roleplaying games, cookbooks, novels, zines, and everything in between.

Design Principles. Mastering software will only get you so far. Understanding the fundamentals will help you throughout your design career.

Layout and the Grid. You might not have control over some aspects of the grid system in Canva, but knowing what they are will change everything.

Thumbnail Sheets. One of the best ways to improve your work is to start by sketching your ideas onto paper. The Thumbnail Sheets on Explorers Design are free to use.

Check out *explorersdesign.com* for everything else.