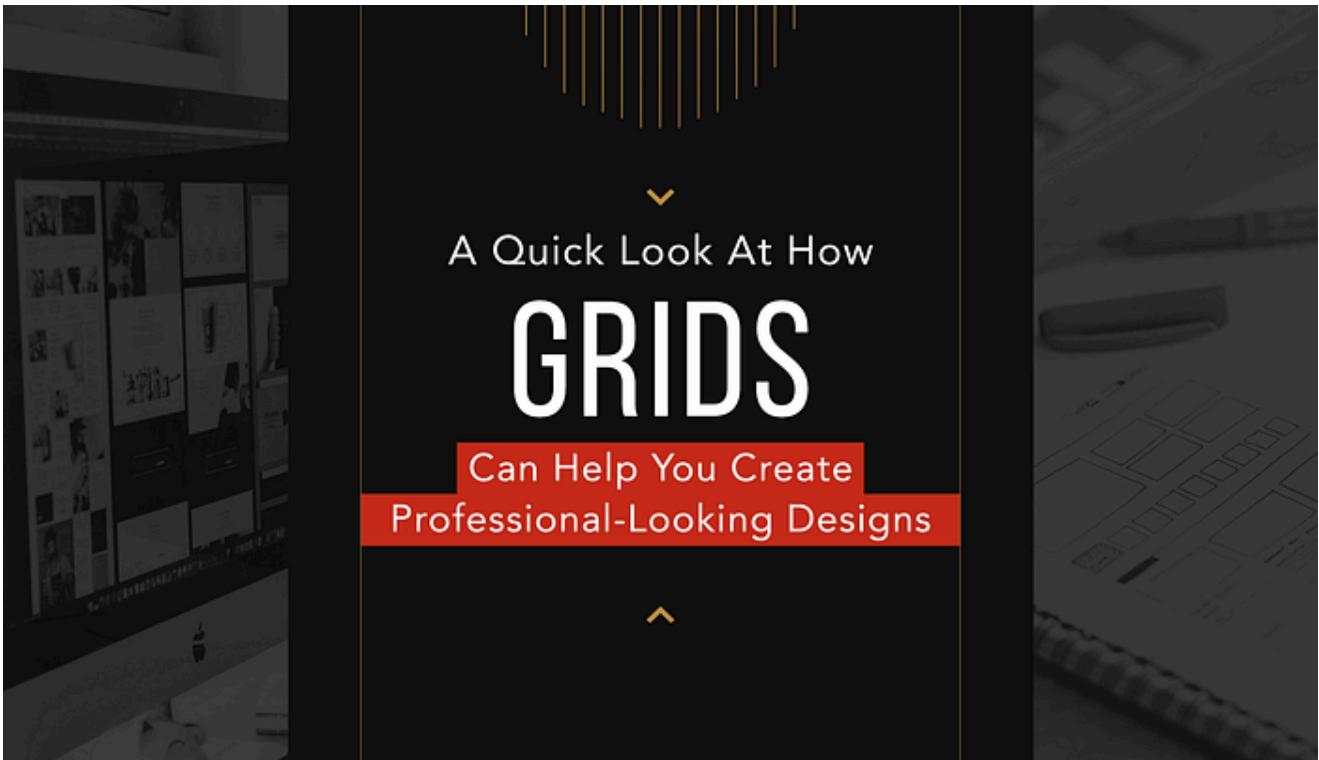


[

](https://paymantaei.medium.com/?source=post_page----8bf94b5d7041-----)

Designers have a wealth of tools under their belt when they start a new design. Typography, colors and composition are the building blocks of good design. But there is one tool that sometimes goes unnoticed: grids. Grids are the backbone of all layouts, infographics and presentations. When you are designing on an online editor like [Visme](#), you are using grids without even knowing it. Our in-house editors use grids to create the templates you love.

When starting a design, most designers use some [kind of grid](#) to organize the elements. This practice helps maintain a balance from page to page or slide to slide. Layout design involves using one grid or a group of grids, depending on what needs to be achieved. Believe it or not, grids also exist to help you break the rules.

Let's look at all the kinds of grids that exist in the layout design toolkit, starting with the anatomy of grids so you can better understand them.

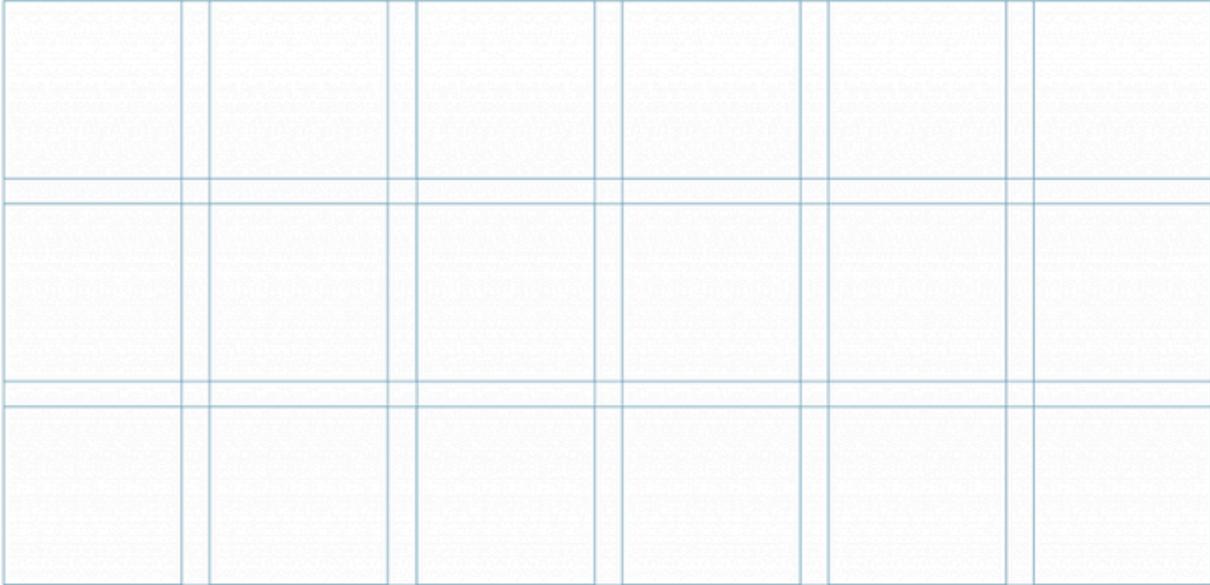
Layout Design: The Parts of a Grid

The anatomy of a grid is made up of several parts. Not every part is present in every grid; it depends on the sort of grid. Here we will look at the most important parts of a grid.

You might recognize many of these terms from document creation programs like Microsoft Word, Google Docs or Pages. The way your document looks is defined by these sections of a grid, including the margins, the header, the footer and page numbers.

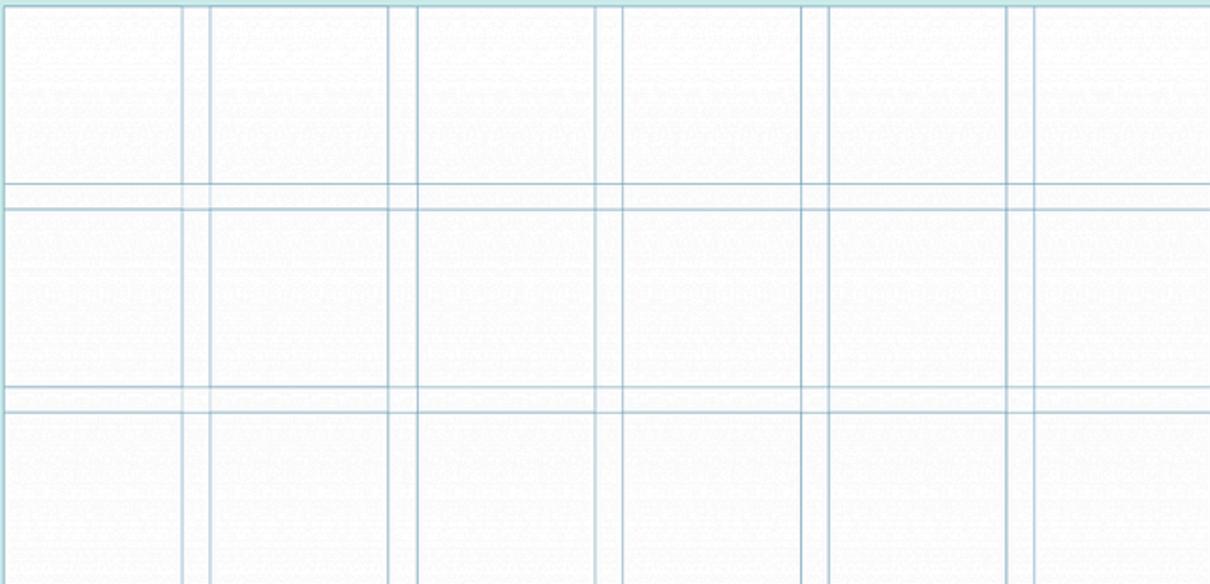
Format

The format is the full area where the final design will be laid out. In print design, the format is the page and in web design the format is the browser window.



Margin

Margins are the empty spaces between the edges of the format and the content. The size of the margins is what gives the content a general shape, usually a rectangle.

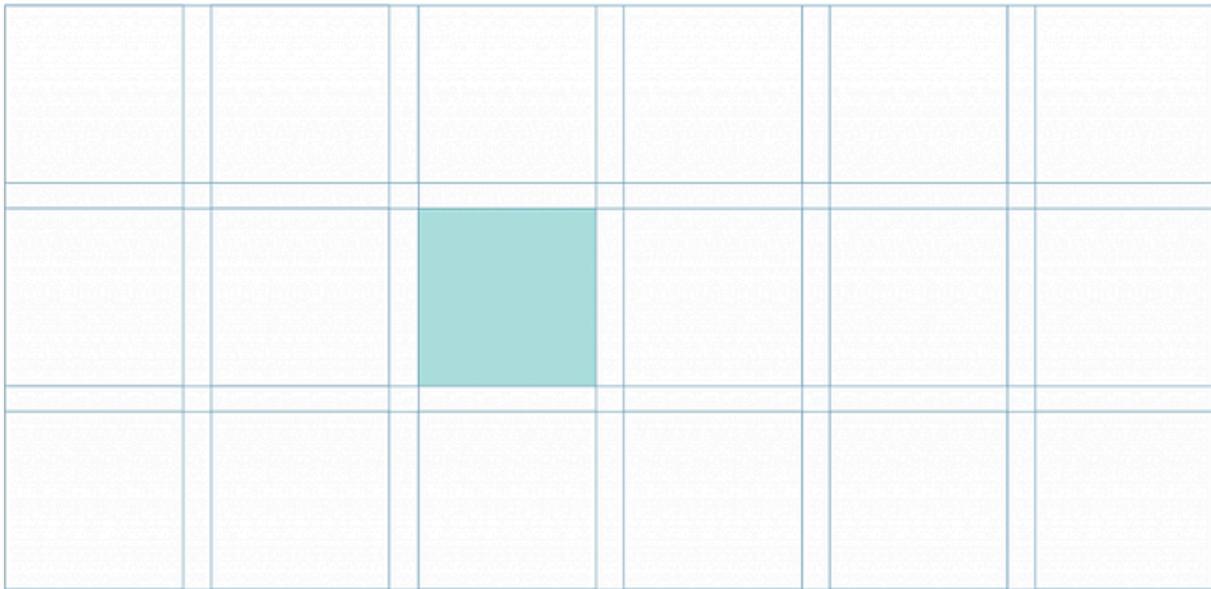


Flowlines

Flowlines are horizontal lines that separate the different sections of a grid into parallel bands. They help the reader follow the content of the layout. Flowlines also create stopping points, or edges for the elements to be placed on. Some flowlines are called hang lines and others are called baselines.

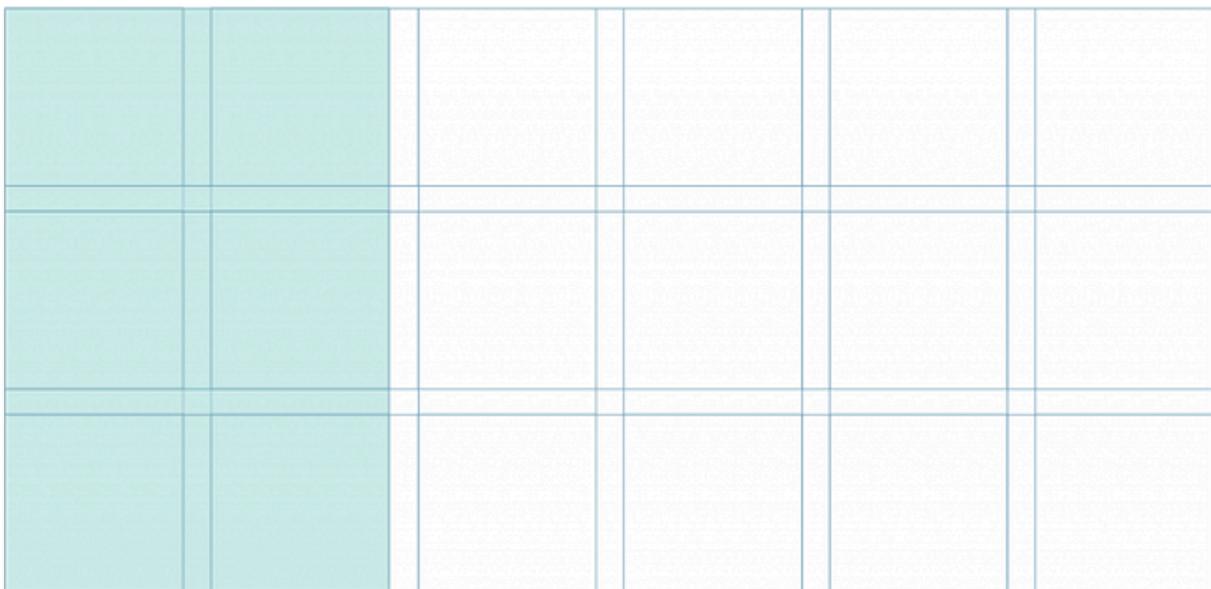
Modules

Modules are the building blocks of any grid. They are the spaces created between the flowlines and vertical lines. Vertical groups of modules together create columns. Horizontal groups create rows.



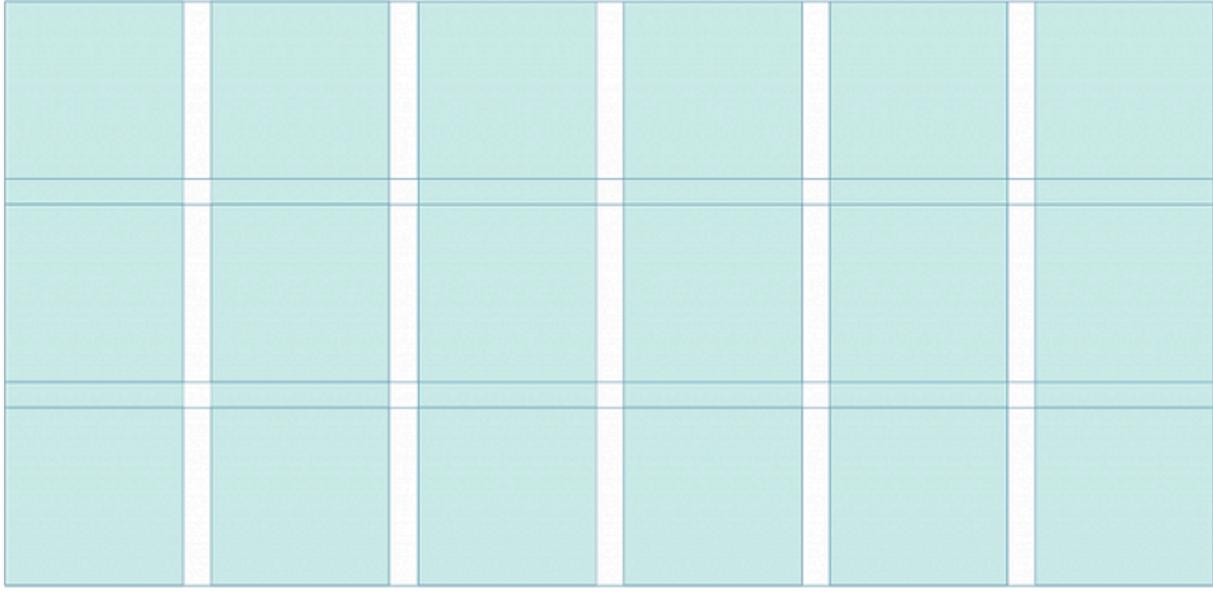
Spatial Zones or Regions

Groups of adjacent modules in vertical and horizontal areas create spatial zones or regions. A vertical region can hold a block of text, a horizontal region can hold a video. Regions can be organized proportionally or used to create overlapping zones.



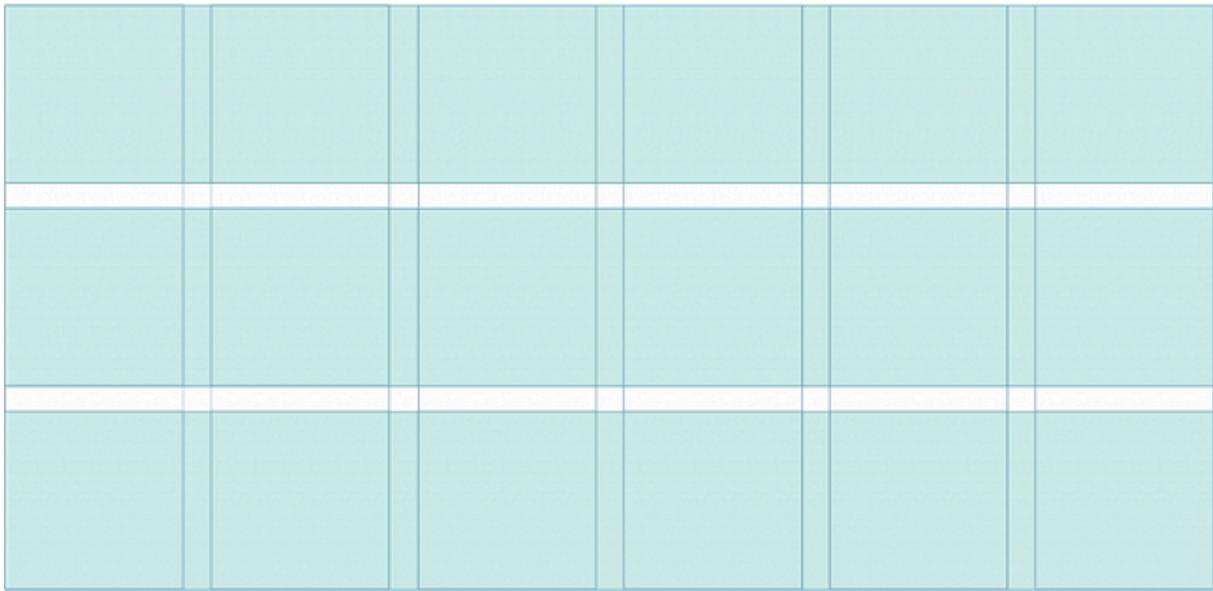
Columns

Columns are vertical spatial zones or regions that fit fully from the top to the bottom margin.



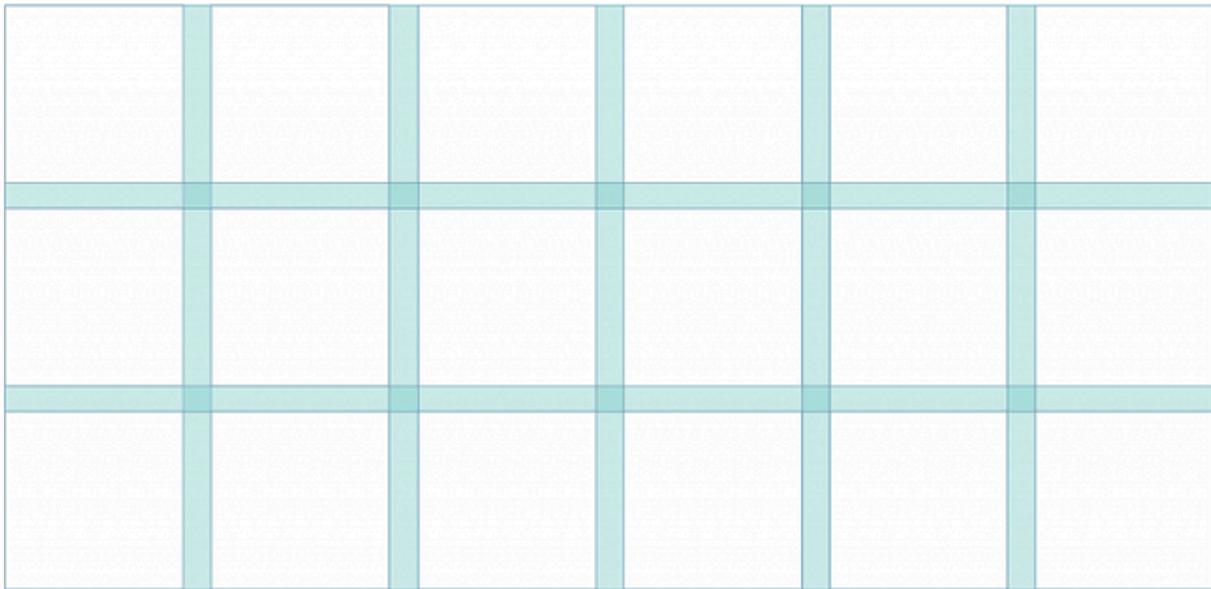
Rows

Rows are horizontal spatial zones that fit fully from the left to right margin.



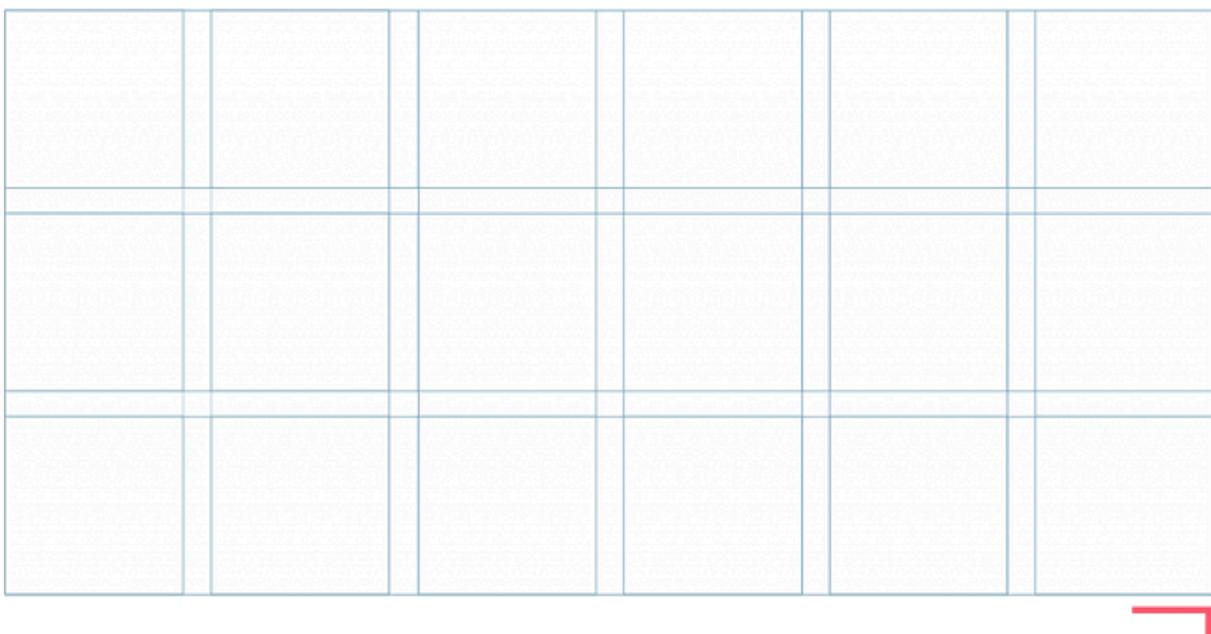
Gutters

The spaces between rows and columns are called gutters. These should always be equal between columns or rows, in order to maintain a visual balance.



Markers

Markers are areas inside the running header or footer that mark the exact place where repeating information is placed from page to page.



Types of Grids

Layout grids are used for design projects that have as little as one page or as many as hundreds. These are the kind of grids that organize elements inside a space. Word documents, for example, have a grid, they just aren't always visible. Layout grids help designers position text and images in a way that looks coherent and easy to follow.

Most layout editors, online or otherwise, have a tool called "snap to grid." These are blue or red lines that show up when elements are being moved inside the design. They let the designers know when the edges are lining up according to the grid or when it's centered. More complex layout editors will show the distance between elements so that they can be positioned proportionately.

All layout grids can be designed in two ways: symmetric or asymmetric. Symmetric grids follow a center line. The vertical margins are equal to each other, as are the horizontal ones. Columns in a symmetric layout are also the same width. In an asymmetric layout, both margins and columns can be different from one another. It is important to always look for balance when using an asymmetric layout.

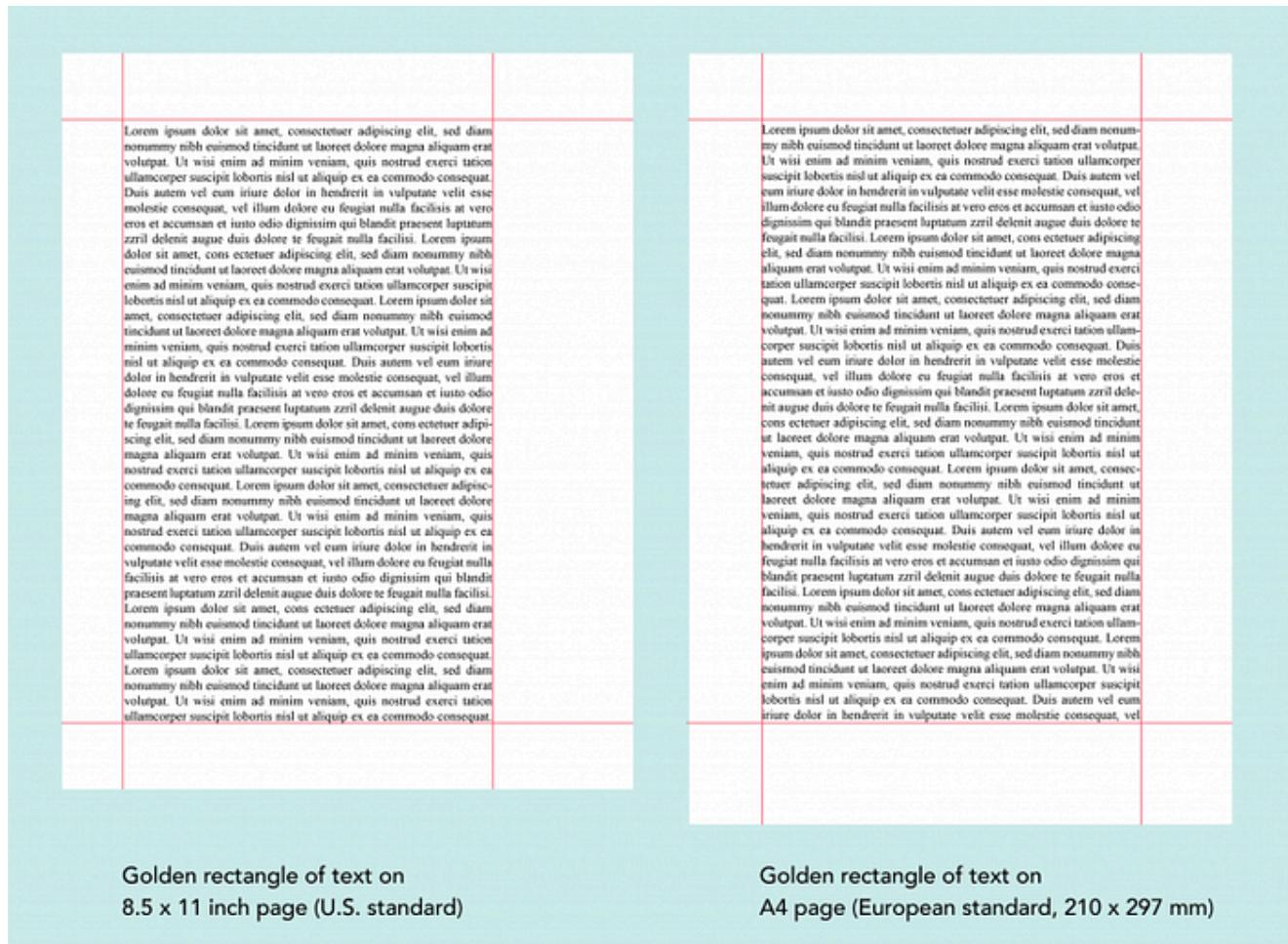
Let's look at five kinds of layout grids; manuscript, column, baseline, modular and hierarchical.

- **Manuscript Grids** are used in documents, ebooks, pdfs and presentations with lots of text.
- **Column Grids** are used for magazines to organize content in columns so it is easier to read.
- **Baseline Grids** are a bit more technical and are defined by the line in which the text sits. This grid creates a good reading rhythm for any design with lots of text.

- **Modular grids** are like a checkerboard that can display many things for easy access.
- **Hierarchical grids** are mostly used on websites, organizing content according to their importance.

Manuscript Grid

A Word document or a presentation template will always have a manuscript grid. Sometimes these grids are invisible, although they can be toggled to show up on documents editors like Word. Manuscript grids in a text document separate the header, the footer and the space on the edges (margins). The manuscript layout creates a rectangle inside the page (format), like a bounding box for text.



The Manuscript Grid is the foundation for all magazine, newspaper, ebook and all text-based design. The manuscript grid layout design is set up on the first page. The rest of the pages will follow the same measurements. It's good practice to keep the manuscript grid consistent inside one document design. Even if there are elements bleeding off the edge, like a shape or a photograph, the grid will still be there to help keep a good balance for the entire design.

Symmetrical Manuscript Grid

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Column Grid

Column grids are used to organize elements into columns. Magazines use column grids to place the text in easy-to-read sections. Some academic textbooks also use them. Column grids are used inside websites as well, like in online newspapers or blogs.

Column grids can have as little as two columns or as many as six or more, but that is not very common.

Text and images in a column grid are placed following the vertical lines and flowlines that make up the columns. Images can be placed inside one column, or across two or more to create a different visual layout. The spacing between columns (gutters) should be proportional and consistent throughout the entire document.

A symmetric column grid has all columns the same width, while an asymmetric grid will have some columns proportionally thinner or wider than others.

Printed newspapers usually use a symmetric column grid to organize their stories.



A great example of an asymmetric column grid is the general layout of a blog post (beneath the header). If you look at a [this example blog post](#) below, you can easily see that it is made up of two columns of different widths: the blog post content and the sidebar.

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FEATURES

Genesis 2.0 + HTML5 Markup + Mobile Responsive Customizer options for color & typography, 6 layout options, Recipe card column, Widgetized sidebar, and more.

The magazine example below uses a three column grid with proportional widths. The title and subtitle take up the space of all three columns while some highlighted text takes up the space of two columns.

Traveler Tips



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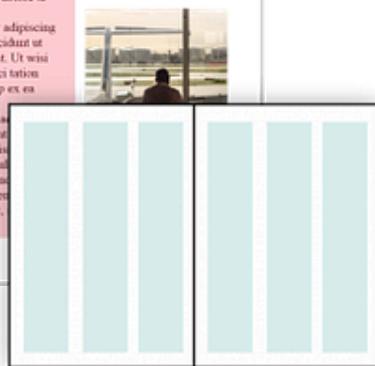
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Contrafactuals are statements that are true in some worlds but false in others. The following sentence is a **counterfactual**:
"If I had known about the accident, I would have stopped my car." This sentence is true in worlds where the speaker did not know about the accident, but it is false in worlds where the speaker did know about the accident.

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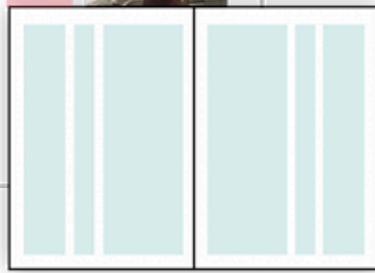
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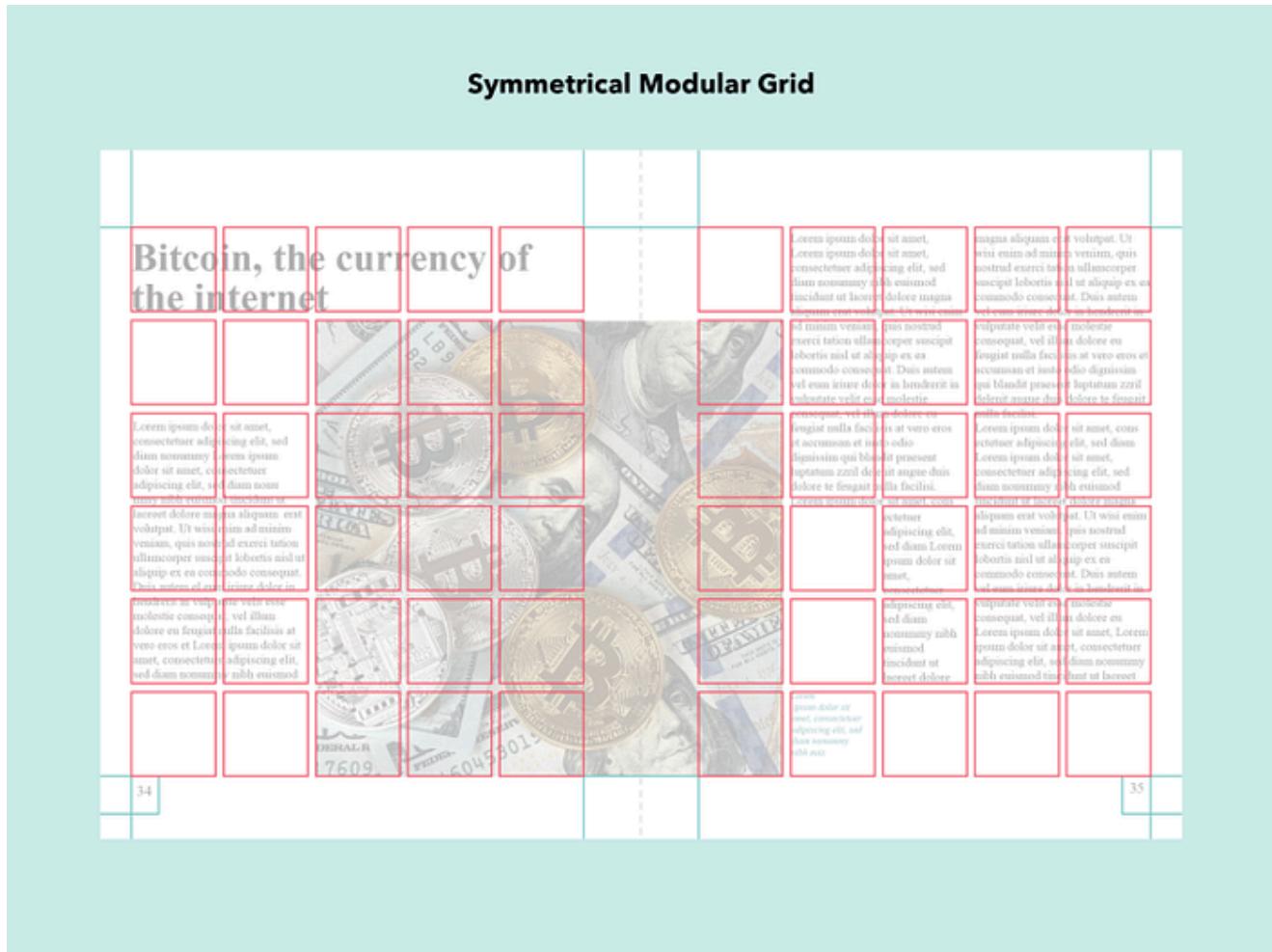
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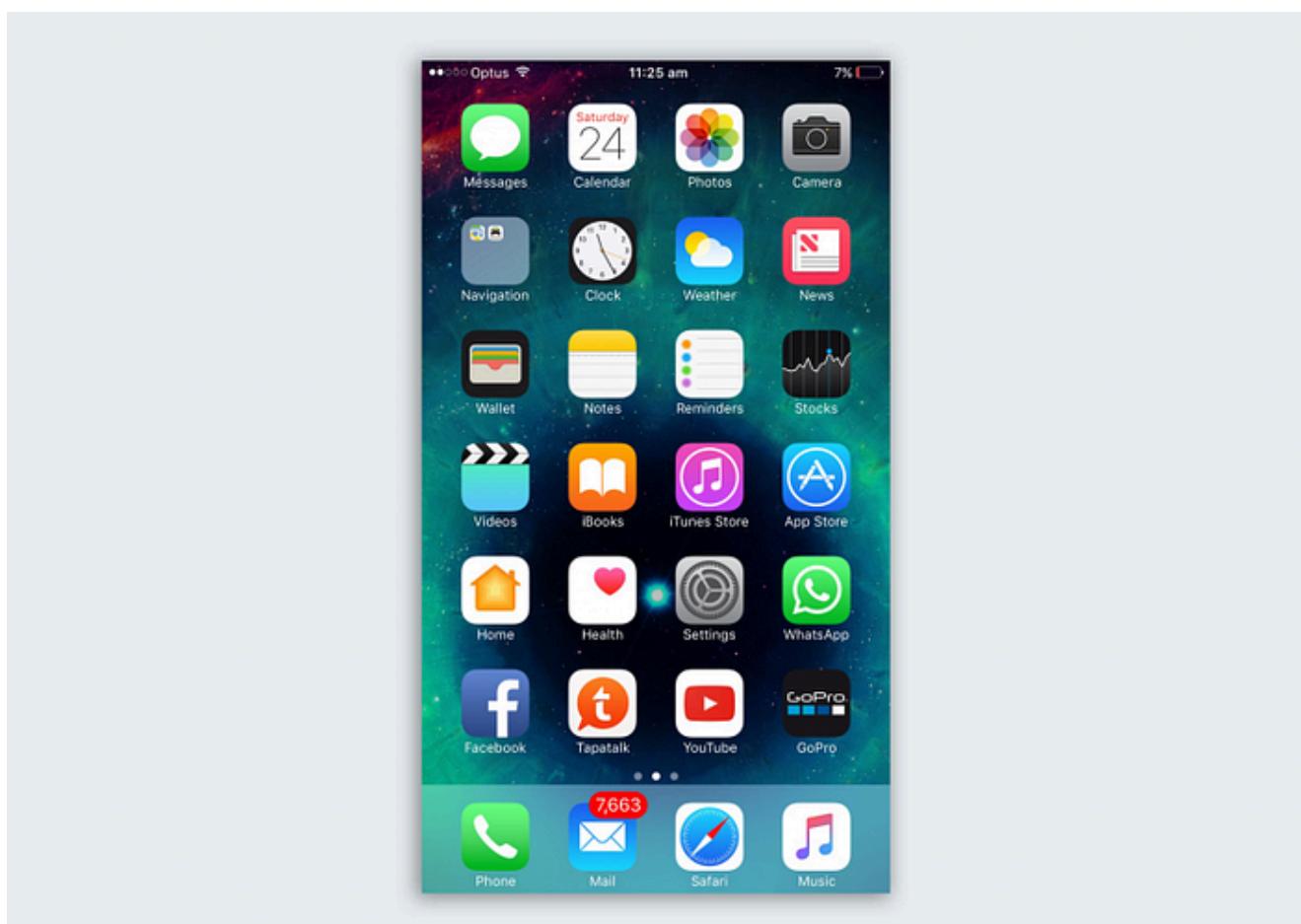
Modular Grid

A modular grid is similar to a column grid in that it has columns, but it also has rows. This kind of grid is used when there are more elements to organize and a column grid isn't enough. Newspapers use column and modular grids to organize the stories comfortably and

easy to read. Modular grids have equal size modules. This makes it easier to "break the rules" and use the spatial zones in different ways.



Modular grids are also great for laying out forms, charts and schedules. They are also used a lot in e-commerce websites. Your phone homepage that shows all the apps, has a modular grid. Instagram also uses a modular grid to show your feed.



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Baseline Grid

A baseline is the line where text sits. Leading is the spacing between baselines. A baseline grid can be applied to any of the grids mentioned above. Using a baseline grid will give a flowing rhythm to the text. It will also give the headings and subheadings a proportional space in relation to the body text, making them more pleasing to the reader.

Main headline

16/18 Futura Bold.

Subhead

10/14 Minion Pro Medium Italic

baseline grids

Create a common rhythm

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Caption

7/8 Minion Pro Italic.

Primary text

7/8 Minion Pro.

*This measure determines
the baseline grid.*

There is a baseline grid in something you used a lot during school and might still be using now. Lined notebooks have a baseline grid. It's no wonder teachers always wanted us to write on notebook paper instead of white paper. It kept a good rhythm in our written assignments. Unless of course our handwriting was really tiny or really huge, and then the rhythm went out the door.

If you look closely at this piece of written notebook paper you will see that it also has a document grid that creates margins. Grids are pretty much everywhere that text and images are laid out on. Why not challenge yourself to find them?

01/24/

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Hierarchical Grids

Hierarchical grids are mostly used in web design. The purpose of a hierarchical grid design is to organize elements in order of importance. It is still called a grid because the modules are still set up inside a measured manuscript grid.

A hierarchical grid can be set up freestyle, or with a modular grid as a guide. Having the knowledge to set up a balanced hierarchical grid without a guiding modular grid, takes years of practice. This is why designers create website templates for non-designers to simply place their information in. Even seasoned designers use already built templates to save precious time.

In their move to digital platforms, newspapers moved from the usual symmetric column grids to hierarchy grids with columns inside the spatial zones.



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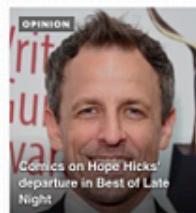
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ON POLITICS

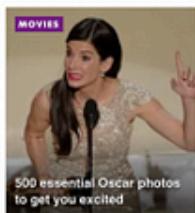
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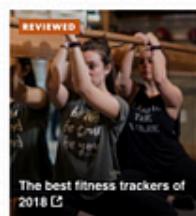
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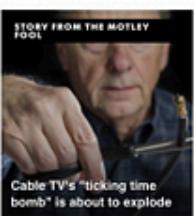
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12 of 23

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- Secondhand smoke kills over 38,000 Americans each year.
- Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and coronary heart disease in adults who do not smoke.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, severe asthma, and reduced lung function.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

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"Fat" runner redefines what athleticism look like

NCAAB | 29 mins ago
No. 2 Michigan State wins 13th in row, beats Wisconsin 63-60



NCAAB | 31 mins ago

Orange riding 3-game skid entering season finale vs. Clemson

A Little Design History Trivia

Before the age of computers, layout grids were drawn on mockups with blue pen. Every single line of the grid had to be measured and drawn by hand with T-rulers. If designers wanted to use a standard grid, they could use grid templates printed in blue ink that were placed underneath thick tracing paper.

The designer then set up their layout on top. Images were drawn as rectangles or squares with two criss-cross lines from corner to corner. Computer based layout editors mirror the layout grid design practices from years ago. Blue ink was used because it didn't show up on the pre-print films.

How Do Designers Use Hierarchy in Web Design?

Hierarchy is a condition in which elements are set up in order of importance. The word comes from the concept of royalty: the king and queen are first, then the prince and princess, then the dukes and so forth. Web designers use hierarchy to make sure the most important information is seen first. Call to actions and special notices are the first to stand out.

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It depends on the kind of website that is being designed. For example, an online magazine or blog might use an hierarchical design on its homepage, showcasing articles in different sizes. Using headlines in different font sizes as well. E-commerce websites use landing pages that have one or two calls to action and those need to be the most noticeable.

Hierarchical grids are the most unnoticed of all the grids. Their purpose is to call attention to specific elements and they do that without the viewer knowing that that it has been done on purpose. A good hierarchical layout can get you better conversions!

The image shows a grid-based layout of various graphic design projects by EHD. The grid is composed of several rectangular boxes of different sizes and colors, arranged in a non-linear pattern. Some boxes contain text labels like "studio values", "craft", "target mural", "walker mural", "chatbooks", "target lights", "zodiac print series", and "recent post". Other boxes contain visual elements such as a detailed mural of a city scene, a logo for Sonia Ashour, a stylized bull, a large green plant, and abstract shapes. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, utilizing a white background and a variety of typefaces and graphic styles.

studio values



CRAFT

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featured work

TARGET MURAL

A love letter to Minneapolis.



Branding SONIA ASHOUR

جذور - هنا لقائي

WALKER MURAL



CHATBOOKS

new work

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ZODIAC PRINT SERIES

A new letterpress print series of the zodiac.







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[Image Source](#)

Composition Grids

The Rule of Thirds

This is a composition grid that separates any space into a grid of nine equal spaces. This grid system can be vertical or horizontal but all the nine spaces always have to be the exact same size. The elements in the design are positioned in two ways. Focus points are placed according to where the lines cross from top left, top right, bottom left and then bottom right. Other important elements, usually body text, is placed inside the spaces created by the intersecting lines.

The Rule of Thirds is believed to create a pleasing composition for the viewer. By following the Rule of Thirds grid, you are making sure that your design is balanced and proportional. It is used in graphic design and also in photography.



[Image Source](#)

The Golden Ratio

The Golden Ratio is also called the Golden Spiral or Golden Mean. It is a phenomenon of composition found in nature that is also applied to design. Many famous logos were created using the Golden Ratio and it is very commonly used in photography as well.

The Golden Ratio is closely related to the Fibonacci sequence. This mathematical equation rules the measurement of the Golden Rectangle, a shape that is perfectly balanced. Using the Golden Ratio or a group of Golden Rectangles in your designs will follow the ancient composition of nature.

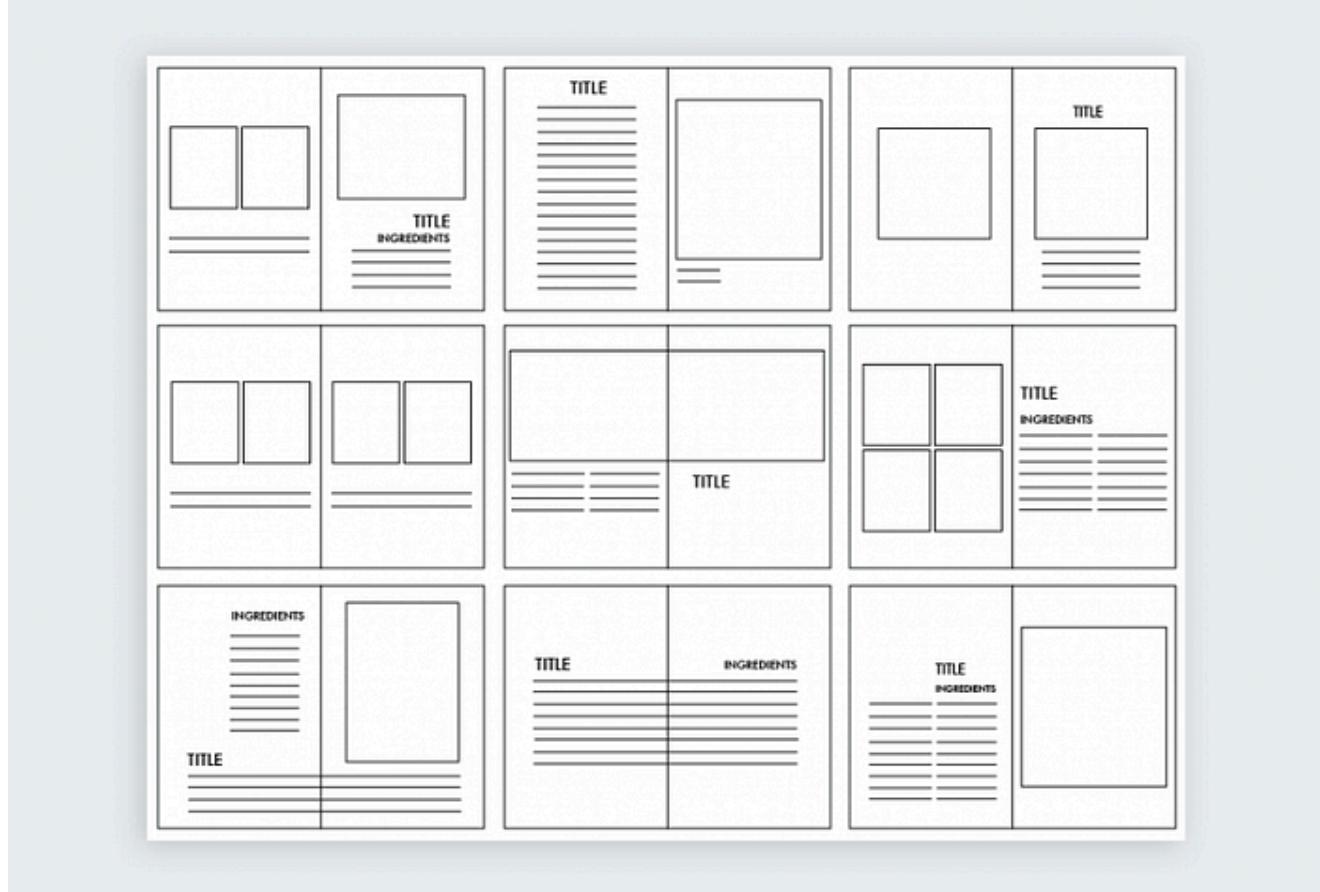


Composite Grids

When designers use grids they do not always stick to the basics. Mixing grids is a common way of making layout design more creative and appealing. A multi page document will follow the same measurements of the manuscript grid but will have different grids for different parts of the formats.

Take a look at what a magazine layout looks like when the pages are opened and set up side by side. Notice the spaces that maintain the same proportion from page to page and the others that are different on every page. Using composite grids in a creative way will make your

designs more pleasant. This mastery takes a lot of practice!



This example of the page by page layout of an entire magazine template from graphic river is a great example of a composite grid. Every page is different yet every page keeps a basic grid. You can notice it in the footer and page number and the centering of the columns and elements.



[Image Source](#)

Choosing the Right Grid for Layout Design

Choosing the best grid will depend on what kind of design will you be working on. Designs with lots of text, need layout grids. Designs with lots of abstract color and shape compositions do better with the rule of thirds or golden mean. If you are hiring a designer, trust your designer!

Templates exist to save you (and your designer) precious grid-building time. You can be sure that most of the templates inside the Visme editor were created on a grid. The ones that were not, were created by designers who have grids ingrained in their vision after years of practice. You can toggle the “snap to grid” option in the view options of the [Visme editor](#).