[SLIDE 1]

[SLIDE 2]

Working on a logo, headline, or word graphic? **Want to use a typeface that doesn’t look like something straight from the font menu—but don’t want to create your letters from scratch? How about coming up with something original by making modifications to an existing face?**

**Your modifications could be simple and quick, as when the edges of a typeface’s letters are roughened with a digital effect, or when its letters are proportionally stretched using software treatments.**

You could also make more involved changes to a stock typeface. You could modify its strokes to include angular, curved, or spiked endings; remove or redraw some of its characters’ components for stylistic effect; and/or deform (warp, bend, twist, and the like using digital effects) its letters to the point where there’s little left of their original look.

You might want to begin work like this with a set of idea-generating thumbnail sketches, and then search for a typeface that will lend itself well to the ideas you’ve come up with.

Or, you could jump right onto the computer and wing it. Just plug in a few fonts and start cutting, carving, adding to, and/or taking away from one or more characters until you establish a look that could be applied to each of the letters you’ll be dealing with.

As with most any creative exploratory work, be willing to investigate solutions that seem to go both a little far and not quite far enough. It’s the only sure re way of making sure your work is truly sitting in the sweetspot of visual and thematic perfection.

[SLIDE 3]

**Each of the custom-made characters in these words was inspired by the visual cues established for the sets of letters featured on pages 61 and 62. Anytime you’re creating a font for a design project, keep in mind that you can speed up the process by beginning with only a few characters. An uppercase A, Q, and E and a lowercase d, i, o, m, a, g, and e, for example, can provide more than enough structural direction for an entire alphabet.**

If you’re working on a custom font for a logo, then you’ll probably only need to finalize a small number of letters for your design. That said, if you have something going that you’re especially fond of—or if your client wants you to go a step further with the typeface you’re creating—you could go ahead and develop a full alphabet complete with numerals and punctuation marks.

**From there, if you like, you could turn your typeface design into a fully functioning alphabet using font-editing software.** FontLab Studio has long been considered the benchmark font-editing program but not all designers consider it the ideal choice for their work. Do some online research to find out what the current leaders are among font-editing programs and choose one that fits both your needs and your budget.

[SLIDE 4]

Linework Options

Don’t forget that if you use linework to create letters in Illustrator, you can ask the program to apply a wide range of styles to your strokes. This feature can be very helpful as you decide on the best look for your characters.

For example, once you’ve drawn your letters using lines,

a few clicks of the mouse can let you see the letters as thin and uniform, bold with rounded stroke terminals, pseudo- calligraphically rendered with strokes of different weights, drawn as though with a pencil or a brush, and much more.

[SLIDE 5]

Hand-lettering based on existing fonts

**Looking for a more organic, casual, or whimsical way of placing words into a logo or on to a page? How about filling, tracing, or redrawing a typeface’s letters by hand? It’s a look that can suit some projects perfectly—particularly those that are meant to come across as grassroots or lo-tech.**

Be resourceful and open-minded when rendering letters in these kinds of ways. Launch Illustrator or Photoshop, set your word(s) in your chosen typeface, and then fill, trace, or reinterpret the letters using pen, pencil, and/or brush tools on a layer above. Try out different tools, settings, and styles as you work. Take advantage of the Undo command when things don’t go quite right, and turn your underlying layer off from time to time to see how your hand-rendered letters are looking on their own. Digital tools make it easy to cover lots of possibilities in a short amount of time when aiming for results like these.

Also, consider doing a variation on this process by printing your typeset word(s) on a sheet of paper and working with actual pens, pencils, or brushes on a layer of tracing paper over top. Once you’re done, you can scan or import your lettering into the computer.

[SLIED 6]

Lettering Analog

**Digital media can do a great job imitating real-life art tools, but few lettering artists would argue that working digitally is the same as using analog media like pens, pencils, brushes, ink, and paper.** Analog tools can sometimes pull off finished results that are more intriguing and attractive than those done digitally. And sometimes it’s the other way around. Try both approaches when lettering by hand before deciding which is the better t for your project.

Both of the samples above were done using hands-on tools: The one at top was rendered with ink and a sumi brush (see the next spread for a step-by-step description of how this was done) and the lower piece was created with a rolling ball pen on absorbent tissue.

[SLIDE 7]

Hand Lettering

Not all of us have impeccable skills when it comes to lettering by hand. If this is you, then here’s a method of creating hand-lettered words that allows for any number mistakes and less-than-perfect renditions along the way creating an attractive finished product.

First of all, decide which media you’d like to use: pen, brush, ink, paint, and so on. Also, if you have some samples of the kind of end results you’re after, place them in front of you so you can refer to them once you begin lettering.

Next, prepare your paper by adding some light guidelines with a pencil and a ruler. Guidelines are important since they’ll help keep your handwritten words the same size. This, in turn, will make it easier to cut good-looking letters from certain attempts and combine them with good-looking letters from others (as talked about ahead).

Now, go for it. Take a quick look at any samples you’re trying to emulate, or use the mental image of what you hope to pro- duce, get your tool of choice in hand, and then pen, paint, or ink your word on your sheet of paper. Next, do it again. And again and again. Write your word many times and, with every effort, strive for just the kind of lettering you’re hoping for.

And here’s the most important thing. **Don’t worry about it if not even one of your hand-lettered words looks perfect as a whole. That’s not the goal here (though if it does happen, be happy). The real objective at this point is to write your word enough times that you end up producing individual letters or sets of letters that look great on their own.** Given enough attempts, there’s a very good chance that you can come up with just the parts and pieces of your word needed to create a composite that has the look you’re after.

[SLIDE 8]

Once you’ve got a good stack of hand-lettered material in front of you—and possibly a very large stack at that—put down your writing tool, take a quick eye-clearing break, and then come back to the table and start looking for elements of your word that you can cut out and save for the step that follows.

Be sure to look carefully through each of your word-renderings for usable material. You might, for example, find whole letters or sets of letters that you think are perfect, or you might nd small details like the dot of an i or an attractively inky edge of a stroke that could be added to any character that could use it. Cut these letters and details carefully from your assortment of words using scissors or a knife and set them aside. If you come across more than one likable version of a letter or a detail, cut and save all of them for possible use.

Finish by finding the best possible way of composing the letters and details of your word into a scalable composite. Assemble all your parts and pieces on a fresh sheet of paper and tape them into place (avoid placing tape directly over any letters since this might cause problems when you scan your artwork).

Step back from time to time and evaluate what you have going on. Try out different versions of certain letters—and pieces of letters—until you have just the arrangement you’re looking for.

When you’re happy with what you’ve got, erase any penciled guidelines among your letters, scan your composite word, bring it into Photoshop, and use digital tools to fill in any unwanted gaps between letters and to make any other changes you like— including the addition of color or the application of effects.

[SLIDE 10]

Typography as it applies to solitary letters and individual words was the focus of this book’s earlier chapters.

Here, the topic is words. Plural—as in words that show up in logos or as headlines or word graphics within layouts. And more words means more opportunities for creative expression—which is always good news for designers, right?

Naturally, topics like typeface selection, the thematic effects of font choices, type-plus-images strategies, and legibility concerns will be talked about in the pages ahead—just as they were in earlier chapters.

New here will be discussions of baseline configurations (straight, slanted, curved, and so on) as they apply to both single and multiple lines of type, size relationships between words that appear together, and strategies involving using different fonts within multi-word designs.

And lastly, because this chapter often deals with assembling multiple typographic elements into cohesive designs (sometimes with imagery, too), it also gets into a discussion of visual hierarchy. Visual hierarchy is the apparent pecking order of a composition’s elements, and it can be a real make-or-break factor when it comes to the aesthetic impact of logos and word graphics.

[SLIDE 11]

Simple and Effective

Before getting into more involved type and type-plus-imagery solutions for logos, headlines, and word graphics, a reminder: **Some of the most elegant and effective typographic solutions are also the simplest.**

**Each of the logos shown here are made from the characters of a single typeface, and each is presented without any kind of special effect, backdrop, or add-on imagery.**

[SLIDE 11]

Font choices, font voices

Going along with the notion that the man named Aesop lived and wrote fables about 2000 years ago (an assumption that’s been debated by historical scholars for many, many years), a quote from his fable The Jay and the Peacock is presented here through eight different typographic voices.

The two samples shown above are featured in fonts that might be seen as expected choices for time-tested words of conventional wisdom—in the minds of many viewers, anyway.

**A casual brush-style font injects the type at top with notes of playfulness, good-natured wit, and kitschiness (Pieces of art or other objects that appeal to popular or uncultivated taste, as in being garish or overly sentimental.).** This projection of personality is clearly different than that coming from any of the other quotations on this spread—a claim that could also be made by each of the other quotations individually.

**The ultra-bold Helvetica used for the lower example delivers the quote’s message with an emphatic feeling of absolutism.**

**Ponder for a moment how each of the quotes presented on these two pages might t into a layout, what kind of imagery that layout might include, and what the piece’s overall message might be. Quite a range of differences, aren’t there?**

[SLIDE 12]

At top, two weights of the same contemporary serif font lend different levels of in ection to the quote’s words—much like a speaker’s voice might be used to affect certain aspects of a verbal message.

At bottom, two typefaces that clearly don’t have any sensible business being seen together work as one to add inferences of a hidden meaning or an inside joke to this presentation.

If the highly unorthodox typeface featured at top were applied to this quote, and if the quote were part of a layout, then viewers might feel strongly compelled to read the layout’s text in search of an explanation.

The lower font, being heavily biased toward an era of bygone grooviness, might be just the thing needed to convey these words if they happened to be paired with imagery and/or text that was similarly themed.

**The lesson of all these samples? The moral of the story?**

**Take at least as much care choosing your fonts as you do your words.**

[SLIDE 13]

Combining Fonts

You can find much advice about combining fonts: what works and what doesn’t. Here’s this book’s straight-up recommendation on the matter: **Decisively aim for either clear and obvious connections or clear and obvious differences when combining typefaces.**

The example at the middle top is a demonstration of conspicuous visual harmony between fonts. Each word of this design (and the two dingbats as well) share a common ancestry as part of the extended Bodoni typeface family.

On the other hand, the lower three examples all depend on obvious differences for the successes of their font pairings.

[SLIDE 14]

This sample, too, works well both visually and stylistically because of pronounced differences between the script, display, and blackletter fonts it uses**. Marked differences in the sizes of the design’s words also contribute to its expressive conveyances of diversity and energy.**

**Spend plenty of time on the computer trying out different combinations of fonts when working toward results like these.** Experiment also with size relationships and color variables within your design. Give yourself plenty of possible solutions to choose from before deciding which ones are most worthy of further development.

**Multi-font failings**

The upper sample in this column pairs two sans serif faces: Futura Light and Helvetica Bold. Don’t do this. As typefaces, Futura and Helvetica are not nearly different enough to be used together.

And the lower sample—even though it uses adequately different typefaces (Helvetica and Garamond)—presents its fonts in weights that are far too similar.

Fixes? Solutions? **The upper sample could only be cured**

**by going with a light/bold combination of fonts from just one typeface. The lower assemblage could be saved simply by applying notably different weights to the two fonts it features.**

[SLIDE 15]

Breaking lines

Some of the most important logo-building considerations are also the easiest to overlook. Line breaks, for example.

Line breaks are the points at which multiple words are broken down into more than one row of type. A logo doesn’t necessarily need to have any line breaks (as demonstrated in the middle example above), but **designers often apply breaks to help direct attention to a certain word or a group of words within a logo**, and also to shape the footprint of a design into something other than a long horizontal rectangle.

**Explore all kinds of ways of breaking lines when designing logos**. Different sets of words provide unique compositional possibilities in this regard: Some line-break strategies may present positive design opportunities (like a functional

overall footprint) while others might create insurmountable compositional challenges (like a line of type that is way longer than any of the others in a design, and for no good reason).

In addition to trying out different line breaks for type you’re wanting to stack, investigate different weights and sizes for the words within your design. Weight and size attributes can also help put sought-after notes of emphasis where they belong.

[SLIDE 16]

Would the logo you’re working on benefit from a footprint that’s neither overly tall nor exceedingly wide, such as proportions that might lend themselves easily to a wide range of printed and posted applications? If so, **try out line breaks, font weights, leading solutions, and justification settings\* that help shape your design accordingly.**

\*The samples above make use of either justified or centered formatting, but flush-left, flush-right, and even asymmetrical solutions could also be used toward similar ends.

**Nontraditional line breaks**

Say you’re working on a logo for a creatively aligned organization. An artists’ cooperative, for example. Wouldn’t it make sense—given the presumably open-minded nature of the organization’s members—to explore unlikely and nontraditional solutions while you’re at it?

What about offering at least one idea that dismisses some of the so-called rules of typography when presenting designs to the client? What about, for instance, applying non-traditional line breaks to the words you’re working with, and using color- based cues to help viewers decipher what they’re reading?

[SLIDE 17]

**Baseline considerations**

**Typographic baselines usually sit straight and level. But they don’t have to—particularly when it comes to presenting words within logos and word graphics.**

In addition to being horizontal, baselines (and ascender lines, too) can be vertical, slanted, curved, bent, or broken. They can also follow the form of a circle, a rectangle, a triangle, or an abstract shape.

Illustrator and InDesign offer several ways of altering the orientation, direction, and ow of baselines. Learn how to use these software features fluently so you’ll be able to quickly and easily bring your ideas to life when aiming for out-of-the-ordinary baseline configurations.

Getting lucky

Here’s something worth keeping your eyes open for: situations where a word with a certain number of letters is being paired with a word that has either one more or one less letter. In these cases—and with the help of some wide-open letterspacing— you might allow baselines and ascender lines to overlap to produce an unorthodox and visually compelling arrangement of words.

[SLIDE 18]

**Directing the eye**

The eye likes to avoid confusion by being given cues as to where it’s supposed to look.

On this page, the eye is first drawn to a bold central word and its impossible-to-ignore colored character before being pulled toward typographic elements that offer themselves more quietly (this block of text among them).

[SLIDE 19]

**Size considerations**

Size differences, of course, are one way of ensuring that a logo’s type sends the right message to viewers. And not only that, size differences between any of a composition’s elements—especially when those differences are great—can add feelings of energy and excitement to a design.

**Note how two of these three designs play up the importance of just one word, and how one of them highlights two words equally.** The correct solution for any logo depends on the goals you and your client are after in presenting it to the world. You can help your client solidify these objectives through the range of ideas you present to them.

[SLIDE 20]

Weight and color

**Each of the logos above features sets of words from a single typeface that are presented in identical point sizes. See how weight and color are employed to bring emphasis to one or more words within each design.**

When you’re looking for ways of establishing visual hierarchy within single-typeface logos, headlines, and word graphics, consider each of these variables—weight, color, and size—and think about employing one, two, or all three to bring emphasis where it belongs.

[SLIDE 21]

**It’s a great idea to begin any logo or word-graphic project by simply writing down the words you’ll be working with in different case configurations and with different line breaks**. What this does is give you a quick set of visual reminders of how your words might be presented as you begin considering font choices, type sizes, and line breaks.

For example, you might be thinking about pairing an especially thin and condensed font with an especially bold and wide font and are wondering how these faces might be applied to your given set of words. You can quickly find out (or at least narrow down your options) by taking a look at your handwritten word-configurations to see which ones seem best able to allow for the fonts’ different proportions.

So start here, with handwritten sets of the words you’re working with. It’ll only take a few minutes to jot them down, and it’s very likely you’ll find that they speed up and improve your search for both a font and a compositional arrangement for the logo or word graphic you’re creating.

As far as deciding on specific fonts for your project, try the following.

Type out some or all of your words using whatever software you’ll be using for your piece’s creation.

Type them out in the three case configurations shown above: initial cap, lowercase, and uppercase.

Place your words within oversized bounding boxes that will allow their letters to get bigger or smaller—depending on which fonts are applied to them in the next step.

Also, to help streamline the upcoming exploratory work, place your set of words in the upper left corner of a relatively large document. This will leave you with plenty of space to position copies of the words as you begin exploring typeface options.

[SLIDE 22]

Now it’s time to look at typefaces. This is where you search through your font menu to see which ones might work best for your project.

Do this by making copies of the words you typed in the previous step, going through your font list from top to bottom, and applying any that seem like they have the slightest chance of working out. Sometimes you’ll come across clear and expected winners, and other times you’ll discover unexpected choices that offer themselves irresistibly well to what you’re designing.

If a certain font looks good, keep it within your document and move on to additional possibilities. Keep at this until you’ve gone through your library of typefaces. This may take some time, but it’s time well spent: Afterwards, you’ll be left with a document that you can conveniently refer to—and sample from—when you begin assembling your logo or word graphic.

What happens if your typeface menu doesn’t provide you with just the right font for the project you’re working on? Well, naturally, this might mean it’s time to spend time (and possibly money) to expand your collection of typefaces.

[SLIDE 23]

**Color for emphasis**

Imagine you’re creating a headline and a subhead for a magazine or a website. You’ve come up with typography that looks good, and now you’re looking for ways of adding notes of style and/or emphasis through color alone.

What about coloring just the subhead or just the headline? It’s a simple and attractive solution that also helps the design’s two main components differentiate themselves.

How about using a bright accent color to bring emphasis to a single word—especially if that word is likely to attract notice and act as bait for further reading?

Note, also, that gray has been used to shade this example’s subhead—a ploy that adds a subtle degree of visual complexity to the design.

Don’t use just any good looking hue when adding color to type. Color should not only look good, it should also echo meanings and feelings that are being communicated through a design. The head/subhead examples on this spread have been adorned with the national colors of Italy: green, white, and red.

[SLIDE 24]

Things are turned around here as black is used as a background for white and colored type.

The headline/subhead presentation above gains an extra measure of visual air through an unconventional application of alternating colors within its first word and also through its use of three colors within the following two lines of type.

On a technical note, the red that appears on this page is slightly lighter than that used on the previous page. This page’s red was lightened to help it stand out better against its black backdrop. Be attentive to adjustments like these whenever applying color to type.

And what about a less intuitive application of color within your headline/subhead? In this case, an unexpected item is highlighted within the subhead to bring attention to certain words deemed more worthy of attention than the headline itself.

Note also that most of this design’s subhead is a light gray. Not something that readers would necessarily notice right away, but still a treatment that helps the headline and subhead stand apart from each other.

[SLIDE 25]

MULTI-WORD PRESENTATIONS

TYPE AGAINST BACKDROP

Type is almost always there to be read. Sure, there

are times when words or characters are set on a page purely as a visual backdrop or as peripheral matter, but those cases are relatively rare. The rest of the time, **type needs to be presented clearly and legibly.**

Which brings us to the topic of type-over-backdrop. **Few things can interfere with the legibility of an otherwise perfectly readable headline or block of text than a visually competing background color, image, or pattern. It’s very important, then, that you take whatever steps are needed to maintain the legibility of the type you set over a backdrop of any kind.**

The good news here is that while digital media makes it easier than ever to place text over potentially troublesome colors, images, and patterns, it also provides designers with tools to solve just about any readability issue that comes up.

When discussing strategies for type legibility, it’s important that you fully understand the meaning of the term value as it relates to art and design. Value is how light or dark a color or a shade of gray is. A deep burgundy has a dark value. A pale blue has a light value. And the key to maintaining the readability of type that’s set over a backdrop is to make sure that there are strong differences between the value of the type and the value of the backdrop.

**The legibility factor**

Just watch as the legibility of the text above rises, falls—and sometimes disappears completely—as it travels from backdrop to backdrop.

Except in the case of the white text, anyway: The white letters maintain their readability as they pass over the busy photograph because of a subtle and value-darkening drop shadow applied between them and the image (see pages 156–157 for more legibility-preserving techniques like this).

Never settle for almost when it comes to legibility. Always seek solutions that positively ensure that the text you set over a backdrop color, image, or pattern stands out clearly.

This is relatively easy to manage when you’re simply setting type over a single-color background. You just have to make sure your type is clearly darker or lighter than the color it’s sitting over.

Things get more complicated when type is set over a visually active backdrop—like a photo or a pattern— since the values in these backdrops can vary widely and abruptly. Stay tuned for more advice on handling backdrops such as these as the chapter continues.

[SLIDE 26]

Solid backdrops

Some designers are prone to feel lost when struggling with type-over-backdrop legibility issues. If you feel like you may be one of these designers, turn to this spread the next time you’re having trouble: Each of its logos (except for one) presents its type legibly and each has a lesson to offer.

First of all, a reminder: Value is critical (as mentioned on page 152). In the upper sample, dark type and a white line and litittle show up clearly against the mid-value gray backdrop over which they sit.

The lower example works simply by featuring type, line, and tittle that are clearly lighter than their dark gray backdrop.

Get used to seeing value difference whether you’re looking at shades of gray or at colors. Painters have a saying: A color can’t be right if its value is wrong. This is true, always. No exceptions. So take this advice to heart whether you’re applying colors to a landscape painting or to a logo design.\*

\*Color-related advice such as this and much more can

be found in this book’s Creative Core companion volume, Color for Designers.

[SLIDE 27]

**Maintaining value differences is all the more important when backdrops become more complex, since they may also become more disruptive to type that sits on top of them.**

**The upper sample is a failure.** Why? Because the blue and yellow in the background are so different in value that neither black nor white, nor any shade between, can simultaneously stand out against both colors. As a result, this logo’s lower type runs into serious legibility issues.

This problem is solved in the lower sample—not by altering the colors of the type but by lessening the differences in value between its backdrop’s colors.

Which isn’t to say that there’s no way to use the backdrop that failed so miserably in the previous column. At top is a solution where a dark halo was added around the white type, and the logo’s line and tittle were changed from black to a light and bright yellow.

And what about adding a translucent layer of white between a busy backdrop and the text it holds? If all else fails—or if you’re simply a fan of this look—then this might be the solution you’re looking for when dealing with a busy backdrop.

[SLIDE 28]

Here are ways of placing readable text over a visually active backdrop (an image, in this case). For starters—as shown in this column, and picking up where the previous page left off—you could put a translucent white (or lightly colored) panel between your text and its backdrop image.

**The yellow header at the top of this page demonstrates how making type extra-large is another way of maintaining legibility.** The mid-value yellow used to color this type would hardly help small text stand out against this spread’s photographic backdrop, but the hue succeeds here through a combination of its brightness and the image-spanning size of the type it fills.

You can use black—and dark colors—to create legibility- protecting panels for reversed type. Panels such as these can be presented as solids or as translucent shades.

Be opportunistic, too, when looking for ways to set type over busy background images. See the line of white type at the upper left corner of this page? Notice how the type is positioned just above some mountain tops before threading its way through a convenient gap in the clouds? This is no accident: The background image was placed in just such a way as to allow things to work out like this (and, in all honesty, Photoshop was used

to remove one small cloud that originally stood in the way of the type’s path).

[SLIDE 29]

[SLIDE 30]

[SLIDE 31]

Basic photoshop skills can help.

[SLIDE 32]

Logos can be created using only typography, or they can be designed to include an icon.

Type-plus-icon logos are the focus of this spread and the next. And since designers are very often asked to create logos like these, it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have your own strong and adaptable plan-of-action that you can go to whenever you’re asked to develop a set of designs for presentation. Got such a plan? If not, consider shaping the routine described here into a plan you can apply to upcoming projects.

**Start by talking to your client and finding out as much as you can about their hopes and expectations for the project**. Best to know these things right up front since information like this can guide you toward solutions that have a good chance of selling while also steering you away from ones that probably won’t.

**Get to to know your target audience, too. Your final design will have little value if its target audience isn’t wowed by it—regardless of how much you and your client love it.**

Next, brainstorm for both visual material and thematic inferences that might be at home in your logo. See pages 108–109 for more on this process.

Once your brainstorming has churned up some useful thumbnail sketches and given you a strong sense of direction, go to the computer to create your icons and to select just the right fonts for your designs.

From there, explore all kinds of different arrangements between the icons you’ve developed and the fonts you’ve selected. (Use the visuals and text on the next three pages to help you brainstorm for solutions during this stage of the project.)

Once you finalize your logo’s compositions, apply color and make any nishing touches needed to complete your designs.

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**Icon-over-type and icon-next-to-type associations between**

**a logo’s elements may be commonplace, but they shouldn’t necessarily be dismissed for lack of originality**. After all, logos built in this tried-and-true manner can look beautiful and function quite nicely.

The main thing to keep in mind when working with these kinds of arrangements—or any of the several others featured on the following two pages—is to make sure your icon and type aren’t ghting for attention. Establish visual hierarchy by making one larger, bolder, and/or more colorful than the other. That way, viewers’ eyes won’t have a hard time knowing which to go to rst when they come across your design.

[SLIDE 33]

Considering options

**Above, below, alongside, within, behind, or in front? Exactly where should my icon sit in relation to my logo’s type? Can my icon be used in place of a letter? Can it sit within a space between words? Should it be more colorful than the type? Should it appear faded and restrained?**

**Ask yourself questions like these whenever you’re developing a type-plus-icon logo.** Use the computer extensively to put potential solutions in front of your eyes and to give your designer’s mind plenty of material to consider when picking favorites.\*

\*Designers commonly present clients with three to five designs during the initial stages of a logo project. Ideally, each of the designs will convey itself differently than any of the others, and each would work beautifully if it were chosen by the client. Well-prepared designers might also bring a laptop to the meeting that holds variations to one or more of their designs...just in case.

[SLIDE 34]

Explore, explore, explore. What about wrapping your type all the way around the icon you’ve designed? How about framing your icon with type that arcs both above and below it? How about adding a backdrop panel to your design? And what about developing a more complex enclosure/emblem style of logo—something that might look especially attractive when silkscreened on a T-shirt or printed on vinyl as a vehicle graphic? (See pages 116–117 and 177–179 for more about emblem-style logos and word graphics.)

[SLIDE 35]

When things go just right within a layout, it’s usually because its typography, imagery, design elements, and textual content are contributing successfully toward in-common visual and thematic goals.

Given that this is a book on typography, this spread and the next focus mostly on the role type plays within this formula for success. This discussion mentions, however, other visual material and abstract concepts since typography must very often collaborate with these kinds of things in order to do its job effectively.

Much more will be said about typography and page compositions in the final chapter, Text and Layouts, beginning on page 182. But here you’ll get a good head start on later material by seeing how visual hierarchy comes into play whenever headlines, imagery, and text share space together.

Also, even though the examples on the next three pages have to do with headlines, imagery, and blocks of text, you can adapt and apply their lessons to layout scenarios of many different sorts.

For example, even though the facing page gets into a discussion of how conceptual matters might affect how visual hierarchy is established through a layout and its headline—know that the idea presented there can be easily adapted to logos, signage, packaging, and word graphics. And the examples of compositional visual hierarchy on the next spread, well, with a little imagination, their lessons can be applied to pretty much any work of art or design you create—whether or not they include type.

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Working on an advertisement or a brochure? Brainstorming ways of presenting a headline? **Ask yourself, What’s the point? As in, What’s the point of this piece? What’s its message? How is that message supposed to come across? And, as your layout starts coming together, ask, Is my headline speaking in the right typographic voice? Is it connecting conceptually with the piece’s imagery? Does it stand out properly against other compositional elements? Would a different font, different size, or different color help it call for just the right amount of attention? Try to answer each of these questions, not only as a designer but also as a target-audience member. Listen carefully to whatever responses come to mind and act accordingly.**

[SLIDE 36]

Use this spread as a tool. Turn to these two pages the next time you’re working on a layout and let these images spur you toward compositions that position your layout’s components at targeted levels of the visual hierarchy spectrum.

Take a look, for instance, at compositions that give strong visual precedence to your headline, to a single word within the headline, to the piece’s image, or even to white space that’s been granted the greatest amount of visual real estate within the layout.

[SLIDE 37]

**Sameness**

The visual strength of this layout’s headline, image, and text block are relatively similar. **Too similar, in fact, to be used as any kind of example of visual hierarchy.**

**Usually, it’s best to avoid visual sameness** within layouts since a lack of visual hierarchy can come across as uncharismatic and indecisive. Sometimes, however, visual uniformity is a perfect thing to aim for—as when you’re creating a layout that’s meant to present itself without strong hints of personality. If you do decide to pull back on the visual hierarchy within a layout, just make sure the design scores well in terms of its overall attractiveness—otherwise viewers may nd no real reason to be drawn into its message.

[SLIDE 38]

What about letters and words that work either alone or with a simple backdrop panel? Typographic structures that are themselves communicative and attractive standalone images?

This is a fun area of exploration for designers who love type— as most designers do. Use this spread and the next as brainstorming fuel the next time you see a chance to create a graphic from words.

For starters, how about going subtle? The letters of the sample above are actually invisible—it’s only their light gray outer halo that de nes their presence on the page.

[SLIDE 39]

Legibility is always king, but yes, there are situations where its kingliness can be challenged. For example, this piece might be allowed some leeway in terms of readability since it’s aimed at an art-minded audience that’s probably spent plenty of time looking at nonrepresentational freeform sculptures, expressionist landscape paintings, and abstract portraits.

And really, when you first saw the typography in the above sample, were you all that challenged by it? Probably not. Sometimes legibility can be surprisingly robust, and other times it’s the most fragile component of a design. Listen to your designer’s instinct on this one.

Type upon type upon type. Even the backdrop in this sample has been built from dozens of layers of overlapping words.

What about sticking to an ultra-strict all-type regimen like this when designing a word graphic? Your backdrop, line- work, decor, and border elements could all be made from typographic characters.

The dimensional treatment applied here (accomplished with Illustrator’s FREE TRANSFORM tool) and its use of Futura Bold lend notes of mid-20th-century design to this composition. It’s a look that’s bolstered by a shade of blue-green that would have appeared right at home on trendy dinnerware, clocks, and automobiles of that era.

In this sample, a constructivist-looking display font at center, muted and graduated colors throughout, and a touch of faux dimension add up to a design reminiscent of WPA (Works Progress Administration) posters of the 1930s.

How era-aware are you about typography and design? There’s much inspiration to be had, and much to be learned, by looking backwards and seeing what designers were up to in times gone by. Bookstores (including those with a good selection of used books), libraries, and websites are great sources for material like this.

Special effects, anyone? Illustrator and Photoshop offer plenty of choices when it comes to making letters and words blurry, transparent, skewed, rippled, bent, twisted, pixelated, or roughened up.

This design’s headline ignores convention and travels bottom- to-top rather than the usual left-to-right; its initials are used for the blurred stack of characters below; and the overall design is configured in a way that might bring notions of a ag or a banner to mind.

[SLIDE 41]

Here, three colored rectangles have been allowed into a composition that—truth be told—started out with the goal of being purely typographic. It just felt like the thing to do—to ll the spaces with colored boxes—when the crazy configuration of type created a few open spaces that begged for filler.

Be open-minded and open-eyed to unexpected and opportunistic solutions to all your design projects—type-related and otherwise. **Just because you started a project with a certain set of rules in mind doesn’t necessarily mean you can’t break those rules if a good enough reason comes along. After all, aren’t rules made to be broken? Especially when it comes to expressions of creativity?**

A subtitle has been added to this design, and, accordingly, some of the logo’s other type has been turned backwards to reflect the subtitle’s meaning.

It’s interesting how typeset words can deliver ideas and feelings—not only through their literal meaning and through the persona of their font—but also through how they are oriented, scaled, positioned, and colored. Design has many, many ways of delivering messages and emotions to viewers: Be ever open to possibilities that lie outside realms of normal, expected, and status quo.

[SLIDE 42]

Enclosures were mentioned in the previous two chapters, and they come up again here. Given that this is a book on type, why so much focus on not- purely-typographic creations like these? It’s because an enclosure can be to typography what a frame

is to a work of art or what a stage is to an actor: an attractive partition against the rest of the world that acts as a venue for creative expression.

**Often, enclosures are designed to unobtrusively frame the type they hold. Sometimes they’re allowed to contribute feelings of personality to similarly expressive type. And there are also cases where an enclosure is asked to do all of a design’s theme- setting work while wrapping around type that speaks in an impartial voice (a good example of this would be when a relatively neutral typeface like Helvetica is used within something like a starburst design filled with a lively pattern of bright colors).**

The enclosures shown on this spread are basic and simple. None took much time to create, and none took much planning or forethought to figure out. But still, each of these enclosures bring conveyances of unity, purpose, style, and containment to the words they hold.

It goes without saying that not all typographic logos need to be enclosed by linework, ornamental decorations, or backdrop panels. But what’s it really going to take to find out if the logo you’re working on might be improved by additions like these? Thirty seconds? A minute? Five minutes? Worth a look, right? And what determines if an enclosure should stay or if it should go? Your art sense, your awareness of current trends in design, and, possibly, the approval (or lack thereof) of your client.

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**Imagine removing the linework, ornamentation, and backdrop panel used to enclose these three logo designs (and while you’re at it, imagine the type in the lower example changing to black, since otherwise it would become invisible). Each logo would survive and work just ne as a purely typographic design, but each would be different, and each might also lose the very stylistic touch that sets it apart from competitors’ logos and makes it especially dear to the client.**

Evaluating whether or not an enclosure is needed for a typographic logo is a task that must be handled on a case-by-case and client-by-client basis. And the criteria for evaluation will be different in each situation since it’s bound to be mostly governed by stylistic preferences, which, as we all know, changes within ourselves over time, just as it changes for our clients and our target audiences.

In addition to matters of style and personal preference, there may also be practical considerations that tip the scales either for or against adding an enclosure to a logo. For example, you may learn that a client’s logo will often appear within crowded small-space ads—in which case an enclosure might be a handy feature in providing a clear boundary between the logo’s type and any encroaching text or graphics.

[SLIDE 43]

Above is a fairly involved graphic assemblage—and something that not only stands a good chance of catching viewers’ attention, but also of providing them with pieces of information that are usually missing from less wordy logo designs.

The interior gradations of color within this logo, as well as its radiating pattern of exterior lines, give this design a glowing- from-within appearance and a warmly energetic demeanor. (The exterior lines, by the way, could be considered an optional feature of a design like this—a feature that could be included when there’s space for them, and left out when there’s not.)

Multiple appearances of circles in the design at top help it connect to a gumball theme (circles were also used to carve out the expressive ring of outward-gesturing shapes around the logo’s perimeter.) The design’s central type features oversized first and last letters that help the word conform to the shape of its own sub-enclosure, and the logo’s mixture of fonts generates feelings of earlier times when multi-font configurations were the rule of the day.

The lower sample features an illustrative enclosure that lends clear feelings of history and formality to whoever Charles Stanley is, and whatever his company does (not all logos reveal these details up front).

[SLIDE 44]

Purely typographic solutions

At top is an interesting variation of the enclosure theme.

In this case, two lines of type are used to enclose—from above and below—another typographic element and two illustrated designs. The resulting assemblage holds together well as a composite visual.

The other example in this column is a purely typographic assemblage that also delivers itself in a compact and cohesive way. If desired, you could further emphasize the tight fitting look of a logo like this by wrapping the entire design with a close fitting backdrop panel.

Nothing but type: words wrapping around and crossing paths with other words.

You’ll likely need a company’s slogan, its address, or information about its product to build up a sufficient word count for a design like this. Consider your options and check with your client about some possibilities.

[SLIDE 45]

Helping the Reader Read

Text layout

**Once again, a reminder that type that can’t be read**

**is type that isn’t doing you, your client, or your target audience any favors. Readability is a top priority when it comes to presenting words through design.**

As mentioned on page 91, legibility is a subjective call. Typefaces that one group of people finds easy to read might challenge and irritate others. And text that’s plenty big enough for people with 20/20 vision might be impossibly small for people with less accurate eyesight. A good rule-of-thumb is to play it safe—to choose fonts and present text in ways that leave nothing to chance. Consider showing a draft of your layout to a few members of your target audience if you have any doubts about the design you’re creating.

Also, don’t rely on your on-screen view of a headline or a block of text to tell you whether or not the type in your for-print layout is being presented readably. After all, your monitor is almost always showing you either an enlarged or a reduced view of things, and sometimes its presentation of color and clarity are overly optimistic. So print it. Print a sample of your layout using a good-quality printer before getting too deep into its development. Hold your printed proof at reading distance and ask yourself, Is this type easy to read? Is it neither too large nor too small? Is there anything else in this layout—like a backdrop image or an encroaching compositional element—that interferes with the readability of the type I’m looking at? What would my target audience think?

Typography is a game of subtlety. Tiny differences between typefaces can generate large variances in the personas they lend to layouts, and can also affect how easily a layout’s type can be read. Opposite are a set of notes regarding both the look and the function of a handful of typefaces applied to a column of text. Use these notes to help kickstart your own awareness of some of typography’s ner points.

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Text font considerations

Baskerville, a transitional serif face with a pleasant and predictable ow of variations among its characters, is ultimately easy on the eyes as a text font.

Bodoni can also work for text, but note how the distinct differences between its thicks and thins amount to a somewhat raspier and less owing visual voice.

Tisa, a contemporary serif typeface, trades a measure of grace for notes of both informality and sturdiness.

Quench, another modern face, though an okay choice for small bits of text, might not be well suited for lengthy passages since its slightly quirky persona might become tiresome when viewed in large amounts.

Serif fonts might be the better choice for large masses of text since their horizontal serifs helpfully guide the eye along lines of words.

Still, cleanly designed sans serif fonts (like the two shown above) are also viable choices for text— especially when only small or moderate amounts of words are being presented.

It can be risky to reverse serif type from black or colored backdrops since

their serifs and ne strokes might partially (or completely) fill with ink.

Serif fonts of medium weight and above might be a safer choice when it comes to reversing text.

[SLIDE 46]

Tracking

**In typography, tracking refers to the spacing allowed between the letters within words as well as between words within an area of text.**

**Tracking should not to be confused with kerning, which generally relates to the targeted spacing between individual pairs of letters within a word.**

The top example on this page has very tight tracking—too tight for most people’s visual comfort. **Ultra-tight tracking should be avoided unless there’s a legitimate style-related reason for using it.**

The middle sample is set with default, neutral tracking and is nicely readable. This level of tracking is perfect for most presentations of text.

The wide tracking of the lower sample provides no real challenges to legibility, though it would make readers’ eyes work a little too hard if it were applied to a large amount of text. Tracking like this might be appropriate for small captions that are meant to come across as either relaxed and genteel or offbeat and quirky—depending on the personality of the font being used and the context of the message being presented.

[SLIDE 47]

Leading

**Leading is the distance between the baselines of stacked lines of type**. Here, 10 point type has been set with 10 points of leading. Solid leading\* can be applied when space is limited, though it may cause type to look a bit cramped.

\*When leading and type are the same size, they’re referred to as being set solid.

This is negative leading. Here,10 point type has been set with only 8 points of leading (verbally described as ten over eight, or printed in fraction-like form as 10/8). Negative leading is not usually applied to text since it can result in collisions between letters from line to line but it might be a good choice for carefully handled headlines or logos.

This block of text is set 10/12 (10 point type with 12 points of leading). A well chosen font, set with relaxed leading of this sort, comes across as comfortable to the eye and easy to read. Space constraints don’t always allow for ideal amounts of leading but it’s usually something to strive for.

The 10/16 presentation in this sample gives it an airy feeling of lightness. Elegant fonts, set in this way, can take on additional notes of grace and ease. Space permitting, leading like this can be a good choice for both short and long presentations of text (and

it can also be used to help a layout’s text take up more space when needed).

[SLIDE 48]

Column width versus type size

**It’s very important that you don’t set text into a layout in ways that discourage reading.** Font choices, font sizes, tracking amounts, leading measurements, column widths, and justification settings all must be taken into account when making sure that the text in your layout can be read with ease.

Take a look at the column-related advice offered by—and demonstrated through—the four blocks of text above.

[SLIDE 49]

Justification

Flush left and justified are the two most common ways to align text within a column. Flush-left tends to come across as more casual and natural than justified, and is often used for brochures and ads. You rarely see flush left columns in books, though, since their uneven right edges might upset sought- after projections of consistency from page to page.

Justified text can help make pages look clean and orderly. Be wary of justifying overly narrow columns since large gaps may appear between the words it holds. If you do run into minor problems in this regard, open InDesign’s JUSTIFICATION SETTINGS panel and see if you can find a good solution.

Flush-left text might be perfect if you want to add a caption along the vertical left edge of an image. Flush- left text is usually a poor choice for wide columns since the eye will have troublending its place along the column’s ragged left edge as it moves downward from line to line.

Centered text, like flush left text, can be difficult to navigate in large amounts for when it’s placed in wide columns. Still, it can be a practical and attractive way of setting type for things like announcements and business cards where textual material tends to be broken down into short sentences and small bits of information.

[SLIDE 50]

Wrapping text

The two most common ways of wrapping text around an object: Precisely follow the object’s contours from a small distance, or obey an artificially squared-off path around it (examples of both of these approaches can be seen in the column above).

Sometimes you’ll find only one feasible way to wrap text around a particular photo, illustration, or graphic, and other times you’ll get to take your choice of several workable options. In any case, however you go about wrapping your text, be wary of any solutions that cause certain lines of type to be cut off in awkward places or to be made too short for the words they need to hold.

Setting a text block in two columns makes it possible to insert an image right in the middle. If you decide to do this, and if your columns are as narrow as those shown above, know that you’ll probably have to manually insert at least one or two hyphens and returns among its words to help the type conform to the columns’ narrowest lines.

[SLIDE 51]

Best to avoid

This sample above summarizes several of the cautionary notes mentioned earlier in this chapter, as well as a couple of new ones.

(1) Avoid indents that are so small that readers may have trouble seeing them.

(2) Gaps between columns need to

be large enough to make it clear where one column ends and another begins. This gap is too small.

(3) Throughout this text, some lines feature extremely tight tracking, and some contain overly wide word spacing. When this happens, use InDesign’s JUSTIFICATION SETTINGS panel to even things out.

(4) Oops. Don’t forget to wrap text around all of a text-wrapped image—and not just part of it.

(5) It’s usually best not to leave a word hanging like this when wrapping text. Either break the line before the word reaches the image or reposition the image so that this kind of thing doesn’t happen.

(6) An orphan is a word that sits alone at the end of a paragraph. Orphans should be avoided whenever possible unless the orphaned word is especially long. When you see an orphan like this, nd a way to bring one or more of its preceding words down with it, or to bring the orphan up a line. Adjustments to tracking and/or manually inserted returns are your best bet when it comes to handling this issue.

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[SLIDE 52]

Paragraphs

Paragraphs, like typefaces, are something most people take for granted—and therefore never really pay much attention to until they’re given a good reason to do so.

Being involved in design is a very, very good reason to sharpen your attention toward both typefaces and text-formatting details (details that definitely include structuring and presenting paragraphs).

So, even though you may not have seen it coming when you chose to pursue a career in the graphic arts, now is indeed the time to expand your knowledge of design to include text-formatting issues you may have once thought were of interest only to copywriters, newspaper editors, and secretaries. After all, **it makes sense to add strong text-formatting skills to your personal résumé as a designer considering it’s you who very often has the final say in how written language is presented to readers through words, sentences, paragraphs, and page layouts.**

The paragraph, by the way, really is a great invention. Paragraphs break larger ideas and stories down to bite size pieces; let readers know where one chunk of information ends and where another begins; and lend feelings of organization and cadence to a page.

There are traditional, semi-traditional, and rule-bending ways of opening the rest paragraph of a chapter or a block of text (as demonstrated on the facing page) and also of marking the beginnings of new paragraphs within a page (talked about on the next spread). Consider plenty of options when it comes to presenting paragraphs since they offer many unique organizational and aesthetic opportunities.

Opening lines

For starters, let’s look at ways that opening paragraphs of a chapter or a block of text can offer themselves to readers.

Among other things, an opening paragraph can: simply start without so much as an indent (this, as mentioned on the next spread, is considered an inarguably acceptable way of presenting an opening paragraph); begin with an enlarged capital that’s set in either the same font as the rest of the text or in something different; or start out with an ornate drop capital.

What about opening a layout’s text with type that gradually goes from a larger size down to text-size over the course of a few lines? Or maybe employing the ages-old method of initiating an opening paragraph with a few words printed in a small-caps font? (The example in the middle of the column above was set using Adobe Garamond Pro—a typeface that includes small caps fonts.) And how about using color to add a touch of style and to help attract readers to the beginning line of your layout’s text?

[SLIDE 53]

Denoting new paragraphs

Strictly speaking, it’s not necessary, or even advisable, to use an indent for the first paragraph in a chapter or a block of text.

An excellent measurement for the indents of a page’s subsequent paragraphs is about 1.5 ems. An em is a flexible unit of measure that equates to the size, in points, of the type being used. As an example, the top paragraph is set in 9 point type; its em measurement, therefore, is also 9 points; and that means its paragraph indent is 13.5 points (9 x 1.5 = 13.5).

With widely leaded text, some designers prefer to use the leading size as an indent measurement. The lower sample, set in 9/18 Baskerville, features an indent of 18 points.

Line breaks can be used in place of indents to denote the beginning of a new paragraph. It’s generally considered bad form to use line breaks and indentations together: Choose one or the other.

Double line breaks are a perfect way of denoting fresh paragraphs with centered text since indents can be almost impossible to find when text is formatted in this way. Same goes for flush-right text.

[SLIDE 54]

You’ve heard of an indent, but what about an outdent? It’s a term you probably won’t find in a dictionary, but designers and typographers have long used it to describe the kind of formatting illustrated above.

Outdenting is not a means of paragraph notation that’s used very often, but every once in awhile you might sense that the job you’re working could be a good fit for an out-of-the-ordinary typographic treatment like this. Keep it in mind.

Solving the argument

**Using an indent for an opening paragraph is frowned upon by many typographic experts.** In the past, it was more common to see layouts that allowed opening paragraphs to be indented (especially in books), but it’s less and less common these days, and top level designers usually steer away from it. You may find that some clients (and some designers, too) have never noticed this detail of typographic formatting, and, as a result, you might need to educate them if the issue comes up. Feel free to show them this spread of Lessons in Typography to bolster your argument in favor of not indenting opening paragraphs (an argument that could be furthered with a copy of Bringhurst’s Elements of Typographic Style—a book considered by many to be the final word on most typographic matters).

[SLIDE 55]

Alternative paragraph indicators

And then there are paragraph-indicating solutions that are wrong in terms of the of focal rules of formatting, but also right in terms of simply indicating to readers where paragraphs begin and end. Solutions like these probably shouldn’t be used for typical layouts, but they might be good for projects that seem to beg for novel text-formatting treatments.

For one thing, you could let go of the idea of indents or line breaks completely and simply place ornaments within a block of text to denote the beginnings of new paragraphs.

Or, you could alternate between bold and light versions of a font, from paragraph to paragraph.

What about changing the color within a text area every time a new paragraph opens? Two different colors could be used for this approach, as could a much larger palette of hues.

How about applying two or more margin settings to a block of text to delineate paragraphs? You could even come up with settings that result in something like a diamond-like or a pyramidal structure for a layout’s text.

[SLIDE 56]

Here, all four of the non-traditional paragraph-indicating techniques shown on the previous page are used together: an ornament is positioned between paragraphs, fonts shift, colors change, and two different styles of justification are employed.

A nicely composed typographic arrangement like this might be put to good use as a standalone word graphic within a brochure or a book, a small-scale informational placard, or a large window graphic outside a gallery display.

[SLIDE 57]

Callouts

Eight styles of callouts are shown here. Rarely would a designer choose to present this many kinds of callouts within a single layout, so don’t be mislead by this example. Here, the point is to provide idea-generating fuel that you can use the next time you’re trying to come up with just the right way of featuring callouts in a project of your own.

As always, keep in mind the ultimate importance of legibility when adding text over an image. See pages 152–157 for tips and ideas about keeping type readable when it’s placed over imagery.

[SLIDE 58]

Captions

Captions are most often placed below, alongside, or above images. If you’re going with a plan like this, make use of your column and/or grid set up (mentioned on pages 208–211)

to help guide your placement of captions, and also let your designers’ eye direct you toward solutions that add to the overall balance of the page you’re working on.

You can set captions using the same typeface as a layout’s text (though possibly at a different size or weight, and/or in italic), and they can also be displayed in a font of their own (see pages 138–139 for tips on pairing unalike fonts).

There’s nothing wrong with setting a black caption against

a white page, but if you’re looking to do something different, and possibly add an extra note of connection between a photograph and its caption, try extending a block of color from the image (a color that echoes nicely with the image’s hues) and placing your caption inside.

Captions need not always be kept outside photos. If you’re working with an image that has an area that can be covered with type (and possibly with a solid or translucent panel behind the type as well), then think through a few different options along these lines.

[SLIDE 59]

Excerpts

What about pulling certain pieces of information or prose from within a layout’s type and featuring it as textual highlights?

Among other things, excerpted text could be placed in a column of its own, added alongside, above, or below a layout’s text block, or highlighted through a change in font (and/or color) right where it sits within a piece’s text.

And how about presenting an excerpt on a page of its own as either a standalone word graphic or a caption for an image?

Text wrapping text. That’s what’s going on with the two excerpts shown above. Variations on this theme—with or without the addition of colored backdrop panels—could go in many directions and reach many different ends: The text and its excerpt could appear in the same font, or not; could be the same point size, or not; and could be different colors, or not.

And what happens if you come across an excellent snippet of text within the layout you’re working on, want to feature it in some way or another, but can’t quite do so because it’s simply not written in any kind of standalone syntax? How about calling your copywriter and seeing if you can work together to make revisions to the piece’s wording?

[SLIDE 60]

Highlighting Text

To close this section on bringing attention to small pieces of text, here are a few highlighting ideas you could apply to one or more words within a block of type.

Some of the methods demonstrated above don’t require making changes to the text being highlighted, but rather involve adding color or linework behind or around the selected text. The other methods call upon changes in the text’s color, weight, size, and/or font.

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[SLIDE 61]

Laying it out

**When type isn’t being used for standalone designs like logos and signage, it’s usually part of a layout. And by layout, we’re talking about everything from page layouts to web page designs, advertisements, book covers, packaging, signage, and much more.**

In terms of sheer quantity, then, type is used in the context of layouts way more than for standalone designs. What this means to you—as a designer who wants to become as proficient as possible with type— is that you need to understand as much as you can about assembling your layouts into compositions that make the most of the type you’ll be putting into them.

Composition and aesthetics are covered extensively in this book’s Creative Core companion volume, Visual Design. Here, a few especially relevant subtopics of these subjects involving columns, grids, linework, panels, and open spaces are addressed.

One overall aspect of composition that’s especially important to keep at the fore when working on layouts is visual hierarchy. First talked about on page 134, and mentioned elsewhere in this book as well, visual hierarchy is simply the pecking order of a design’s components: what catches the eye rst, second,

and right on down the order. Strong visual hierarchy provides the eye with a clear sense of navigation through a design; weak visual hierarchy can lead to

a mushy and indecisive look.

As you’re reading about columns, grids, linework, panels, and space in the pages ahead, and when you’re actually applying these kinds of things to your layouts, keep visual hierarchy strongly in mind. Increase it to improve notions of organization and to raise feelings of energy (from mild to extreme— depending on the degree of hierarchy employed), pull back on it to limit these projections, but never let it just happen by default or by chance.

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Levels of hierarchy

Two book cover designs. **Same words, same image, two very different presentations.** Both could be considered good solutions, and it would be up to you, the client, and/or marketing minds to decide which connects best with the book’s content while also standing the strongest chance of impressing its target audience.

**From a design standpoint, the main difference between these two covers (apart from their obviously different use of type) is their presentation of visual hierarchy. The design on the left gives the eye an active and energetic range of hierarchical levels to consider. The design on the right comes across far more static and reserved. The lesson? Make visual hierarchy happen, and happen clearly—regardless of its strength.**

[SLIDE 62]

Columns

Columns give type neat and logical places to reside while adding a sense of order and functionality to layouts. No doubt you’re already well acquainted with columns, so here are just a few reminders about using them.

Simply put, the right number of columns for a layout is that which looks the best and results in lines of readable and easy-to-navigate type. Ideally, as mentioned on page 188, a column’s line will hold between 45 and 75 characters (not a written-in-stone mandate, but it is a good range to aim for). The number of characters in a column’s line is affected by font choice, font size, column width, and text tracking.

When working with columns, keep an eye on the gutters (a..k.a. the spaces) between them as well. Too little space between columns can cause readability issues; too much space tends to make layouts look clumsy and disjointed.

Let your eye tell you what’s right and also whether or not you should add thin lines or rows of dots between your columns (as seen on pages 212–213) to help them stand apart from each other.

[SLIDE 63]

Flexibility

At top is a blank page with only its column guides showing. Below it are three examples of how these column guides might be put to use for a magazine article.

You’d hardly know that all three of the layouts have exactly the same underlying guides, and it just goes to show how far and wide designer can—and often should—look when deciding how to make use of the columns that support their layouts.

Same goes for grids. Grids can be interpreted and put to use in practically endless ways—as is discussed on the next spread.

[SLIDE 64]

Grids

Grids are sets of guidelines that provide visual cues for the placement of a layout’s components— including headlines, text columns, imagery, and open space.

Designers often use grids to help establish a cohesive look between pages of a book, magazine, or website. You can set up a layout’s grid using guidelines within programs like Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop. Use the grid to position visual elements as you work, and turn it off whenever you want to see things as they’ll actually look when a piece is printed or posted.

Grids are a very big topic, by the way. Much too big to be covered on this spread alone. Consider looking into books that cover the subject in depth and provide plentiful examples of how different kinds of grids can be established and used.

[SLIDE 65]

Adhering

When setting up a grid, or when following a grid that’s already been designed by yourself or someone else, decide (or nd out) whether or not the grid is to be followed strictly.

In the sample above, a grid’s guideline’s have been followed very closely: The headline, columns, and decor have each been put in place exactly where the grid says they’re supposed to go.

Overruling

Grids are sometimes intended to provide suggestions more than they’re meant to lay down the law. Here, a layout’s underlying grid has been interpreted with more artistic freedom than in the previous example. The grid still provides the design with a look of structure, but has been overruled in places so that the layout assumes a more casual feel (this being a fairly modest example of grid de ance—things can go much further a eld if you or the art-director-in-charge allows it).

[SLIDE 66]

Assistance from lines

**It’s rarely an absolute necessity to add linework to a layout, but sometimes it’s just the thing needed to connect with current trends and/or to help with the organization of a page’s type and imagery.** Lines can be used to mark divisions between columns, to help set a headline apart from other components of a layout, to border a design, and to help direct attention from one visual element to another (as demonstrated by the arrow-capped line in the sample at right).

Linework can be used sparingly or abundantly, and, among many other things, linework can be thin, thick, dashed, dotted, doubled, neat, or rough. Keep an eye on trends in design and you’ll notice that linework—like typography and color—is subject to trends: Certain specific styles of linework are always coming and going from favor.

[SLIDE 67]

Panels, too

You can also employ panels to add notes of style and/or structure to a layout’s words and images. Background panels can be: used with or without linework; darker or lighter than the type they sit under; black, white, or colored; plain or patterned; few or many.

Protect your type’s legibility by maintaining sufficient differences in value (also talked about on page 152) between text and backdrop panels. And, if value differences aren’t quite doing the trick, then consider presenting your type bigger and/or bolder as well.

A tip: When reversing small and/or ne type from a colored panel, make sure your panel’s color is built from only one or two of the four CMYK inks. The more inks involved, the greater the chance that registration issues will cause some of the reversed areas to fill in.

[SLIDE 68]

The spaces around

Type can be enclosed by linework, decorations, imagery, and the de facto edges of a piece of paper or a web page. Whatever the case, always take the time to speci cally consider the spaces around your layout’s text. Not enough space can make type feel claustrophobic and uninviting. Too much space, in some cases, can make type appear lost and abandoned.

Evaluating space(s), like so many other things we do as designers and artists, is mostly instinctual work. If you have doubts about the amount of space you’re leaving around your type, look at a few options and let your art sense tell you what’s best.

Also, there are times when unequal spaces around a page’s text might turn out to be an attractive option. In the past, books commonly presented their page-by-page text within creatively and asymmetrically positioned blocks, as exempli ed above.

Take a look at the spaces around the text in this sample. See how each is a different width? Unequal spaces like these can add to a layout’s feeling of energy and interest—inferences that are sometimes desirable or sometimes simply not called for. Again, call upon your creative savvy to help you decide whether or not to take advantage of conveyance-producing details like this.

[SLIDE 69]

Some messages beg for a minimalist presentation within fields of emptiness. Messages like the one above, for example.

[SLIDE 70]

Full page, purely typographic visuals

It’s not often that designers get asked to design full-page, purely typographic visuals. Which is why many designers don’t wait to be asked. They just go ahead and design a visual using nothing but type, add it to a page within the booklet, brochure, or magazine they’re working on, and hope that the decision-makers will be convinced by what they see.

Begin full-page typographic compositions the same way you would begin working on any illustration or graphic— by brainstorming thematic directions, making thumbnail sketches, going through your font menu in search of poten- tially useful typefaces, and then putting things together on the computer once you’re ready.

Be open to changes of direction as you work, too. You might, for example, struggle for some time with a certain creative approach, only to realize that switching to a bolder, lighter, more condensed, or completely different font will make things happen much easier. Or you might suddenly notice a different way of stacking the words of your design so that ascenders and/or descenders fall together more neatly than before.

Finalize your design by applying color, and possibly by employ- ing look-altering digital effects (like the subtle textural effect in the sample opposite, for example).