

Adobe InDesign Complete Essentials

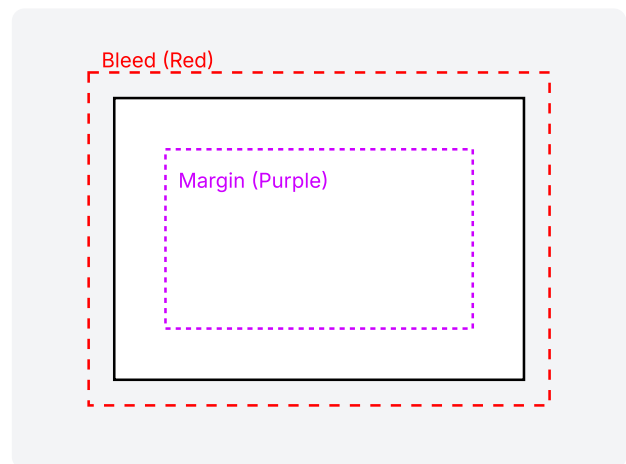
Comprehensive Quick Reference Guide (by Francis)

1 Document Setup & View Modes

Margins: Space between content and the edge of the paper (safe zone for text/content).

Bleed: Usually 0.125 in / 3 mm. Extend backgrounds/images beyond the page edge to avoid white gaps after trimming in mass production.

*Tip: Most document settings (margins, bleed, columns) can be changed in the **Properties** panel when nothing is selected.*



Screen Modes

- **Normal** (default): Shows guides, frames, pasteboard – best for editing.
- **Preview** (W): Hides all guides – best for final output preview.

2 Creating Shapes & Tools



Rectangle



Ellipse



Polygon
(double-click to
set sides)



Line



Pen Tool
(custom paths)

Transformation & Appearance: Select object → use **Properties** panel.

- **Stroke:** Weight, style, color.
- **Corners:** Round or custom.
- **Effects:** Drop shadow, outer glow (under Appearance).

3 Colors & Swatches

Window > Color > Swatches

- Select object → choose Fill/Stroke.
- Click **New Swatch** to save reusable colors.
- Use CMYK for print.

4 Images: Container vs. Content

Place image: File > Place or Cmd/Ctrl + D.

Black Arrow (Selection Tool)

Selects the **container/frame** (blue bounding box).
Resizing affects the frame → crops the image.

Content Grabber:

Hover over image → double-circle appears in center → click it to select **content** (brown bounding box). Now move/scale image inside frame.

Auto-Fit (Frame Fitting Options):

- **ON** → resizing frame scales image proportionally.
- **OFF** → resizing crops.

Fit Frame to Content: Removes excess frame space.

Paste Into: Copy image → select shape → Edit > Paste Into.

Text Wrap: Window > Text Wrap → choose style → adjust offset.

5 Links Panel – Avoid Missing Links!

InDesign **links** to images (does not embed by default). Open **Window > Links**.



Missing Link

Image file moved, renamed, or deleted → low-resolution or blank on print!



Modified Link

Image edited in Photoshop → click yellow triangle to update.

Golden Rule: Never move, rename, or delete original image files while working on or after finishing an InDesign project!

6 Typography & Text Formatting

Paragraph Styles (Essential!)

1. Format sample text.
2. Paragraph Styles panel → New Style → rename.
3. Apply style to paragraphs.
4. Future changes update everywhere.
5. Modified text → Redefine Style.

Tabs & Leaders (Never use spaces!)

Use **Tab** key → **Type > Tabs** .

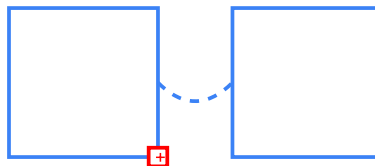
- Click ruler to add marker.
- Select marker → set alignment.
- Add **Leader** (dots, etc.).
- Selection Tool = whole frame; Type Tool = selected paragraphs.

```
Introduction .....  
p.1  
Getting Started .....  
p.5
```

Other: Columns, hyphenation, tracking/kerning in Properties/Paragraph panel.

7 Text Flow (Threading)

Red + in out-port = overset text.



Click red + → draw or click next frame to continue text.

8 Parent Pages (Repeating Elements)

For logos, headers, footers, backgrounds.

- Double-click Parent page in Pages panel.
- Add elements (send background rectangle to back).
- **Page Numbers:** **Type > Insert Special Character > Markers > Current Page Number** .
- Apply by dragging Parent icon to document pages.
- New Parent: Select existing → New Page button.

9 Tables

- `Table > Create Table`
- `Tab` = next cell, `Shift + Tab` = previous.
- Insert rows → right-click → Insert → Row.
- Resize frame manually after changes.
- Table/Cell Options for borders, fills, alignment.

10 Final Output & Delivery

Always use `File > Package` before sending to printer!



Package collects everything:

- Your .indd file
- All fonts
- All linked images
- Instructions PDF



Never send only the .indd file!

Printers will have missing fonts/images → poor print quality.



Best practice:

Check Links panel → Package → Send the entire folder.

Quick Shortcuts

`W` Preview mode

`Cmd/Ctrl + D` Place

`Cmd/Ctrl + 0` Fit
page

`Cmd/Ctrl + B` Text
frame options