

For example, when \TeX typesets a paragraph of text and breaks it into a series of lines, it considers the paragraph's text as a sequence of boxes and uses the dimensions of those character boxes to find the best linebreaks. Each line of the paragraph is itself a box (containing other boxes — e.g., characters) and the typeset paragraph lines (boxes) are stacked (vertically) to produce the paragraph. Eventually, the largest box of all is produced: the typeset page. Clearly, this is a very simplified picture because you also need the ability to arbitrarily position those boxes and \TeX does this using so-called glue. Knuth commented (page 70 of *The \TeX book*) that “glue” probably should have been referred to as “spring” but the term glue was adopted early on and, to use Knuth's pun, it stuck.