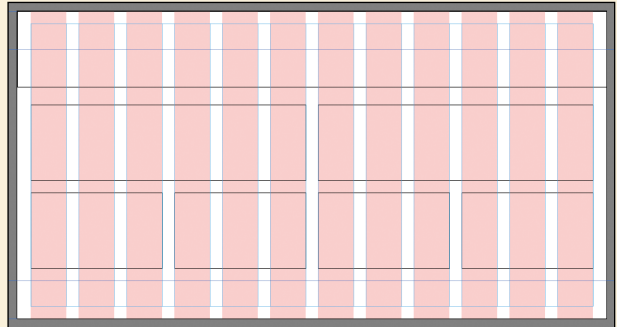# Understanding grid-based design

For most websites, you can use a grid-based design, which will make aligning and structuring your content (and ultimately your design) easier in Muse. The grid serves as a framework for page layout because it divides the page horizontally into columns, which work to order the elements of the design. Like guides in most Adobe applications, the lines of the Muse grid are not visible, but you can use them to create the proper width and height of elements to align content.

In the figure, notice what look like pink bars. Most of the grid-based designs show those to help with alignment, but they do not appear when the page is viewed in a browser. Muse allows you to see these grid lines by choosing View > Show Grid Overlay when a page is open in Design mode.

For designers, the grid helps to achieve balance, to maintain spacing, and to compartmentalize the data. The grid can aid with organizing the content and future additions; updates may be a bit easier if there is a specific place for the content to go.

One of the more widely used grid-based design systems is the 960 grid system. It requires that you set your page width to 960 pixels (there are variations for differing page sizes, but they call it the 960 grid for a reason). You then set either 12 or 16 columns in the New Site or Site Properties dialog box, depending on the level of control you want. A 12-column grid creates columns that are approximately 60 pixels wide (with margin set to 0). A 16-column grid creates columns that are approximately 40 pixels wide (with margin set to 0). You also typically set the gutter between the columns to 20 pixels. In Muse, this will create a series of column guides that you can then snap your content to, which makes it easier to align your page content consistently.