InDesign CS3 or later

Make use of grids for typographical layouts

Art editor **Jo Gulliver** shows how grids and templates can ease the pain of developing busy type layouts

Good typography skills are essential for any graphic designer – and those of us who work with text every day know how difficult it can be at times. A well-planned grid is key to creating a good typographical layout, as having a strong foundation to work with is a great way to keep a text-heavy document looking clean, consistent and easy to navigate.

InDesign has some great features to make this process simple, enabling you to achieve some impressive results with minimal time and effort. As designers, we're always experimenting and pushing the boundaries of design, at times creating very complicated layouts. However, I believe a clean, simple and well-structured approach can be just as effective. In this tutorial I'll show you some of the processes I go through when creating a simple page template from scratch in InDesign, from building the initial grid to adding picture frames.

Jo Gulliver
___Jo is *Computer Arts*' PPA Designer of the Year-nominated art editor. Her day typically involves commissioning cover art from the world's most exciting designers and shoots with design's biggest names. Jo will be giving one-to-one portfolio advice at the Graduate Showcase Exhibition Seminars. See page 67 for more info
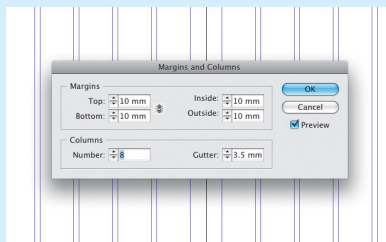
Time needed
1 hour

Skills
___Setting up a grid
___Styling text
___Page formatting
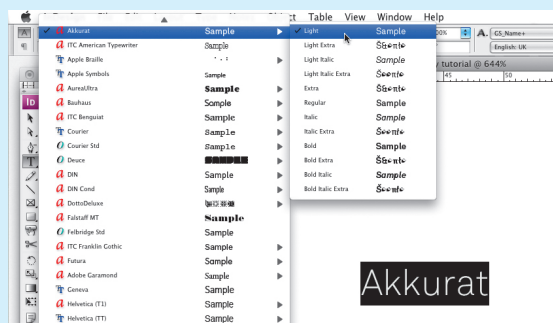
01_____Your first step is choosing your font, as your baseline grid will be dependent on the font size and the leading it needs. I've chosen to work with 8.5pt Akkurat for this project, setting the leading at 9.921pt, which is the metric equivalent of 3.5mm.


02_____Next set up the margins and columns. Select the A-Master in the Pages panel and open the Margins and Columns panel, found under the Layout menu. Enter the number of columns you want to use, making sure you consider the legibility you're looking for (40-80 characters per line). I've chosen an eight-column grid with a 3.5mm gutter that matches the leading.
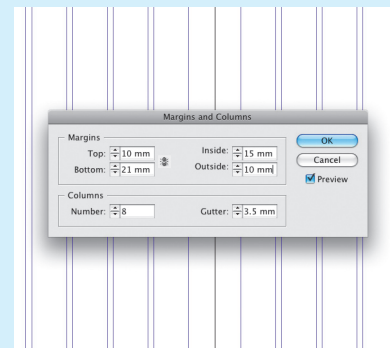
03_____It's common to have the border dimension at least double the gutter width. I've chosen to add more to the inside to allow for loss of text in the gutter due to binding, and more at the bottom to allow space for page folios.
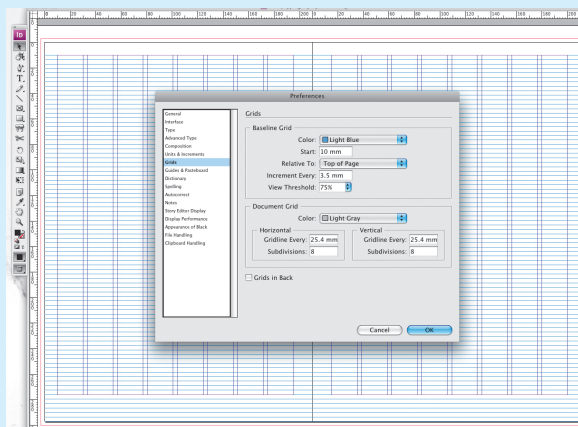

04_____Next, set up your baseline grid. In the InDesign menu, select Preferences>Grids. I'm using the same measurements that I've chosen for the leading of 3.5mm, and I've started the grid at my top margin measurement of 10mm.
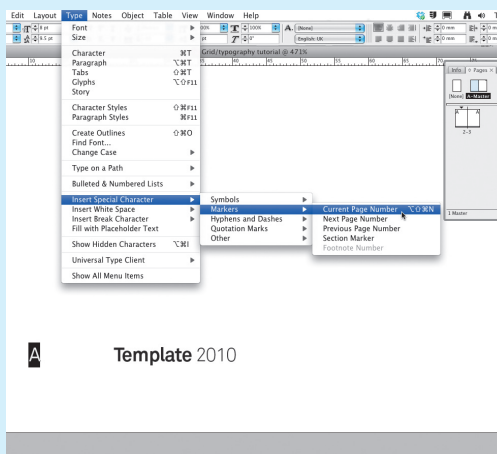
05_____At this point it's good to consider what page furniture you want to add to your master pages. You can add automatic page numbering very simply: draw a text box on the Master document in the position you want your number to appear, then go to the Type menu, select Insert Special Characters> Markers>Current Page Numbers and an A will appear. This will come up as the correct page number on the pages of your document.
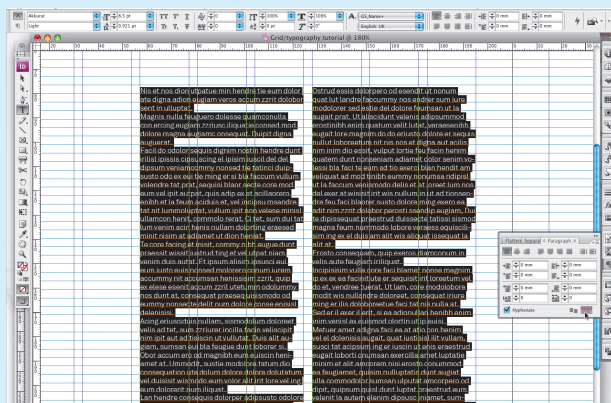
06 Now you're ready to add body copy. On your document page, draw a box and fill it with placeholder text. If you Right/Ctrl-click while in a text box, you'll see the option to 'Fill with Placeholder Text'. Open your Paragraph panel (Window>Type and Tables>Paragraph) and click the 'Align to baseline grid' button, found in the bottom right-hand corner.
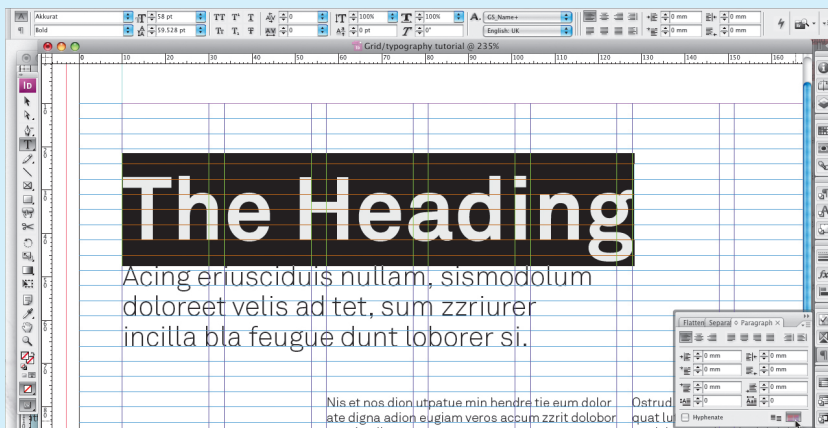

07 Next you want to add a heading. To get it to line up nicely with the body copy, make the leading of the heading multiples of your baseline grid's 3.5mm. This way you can lock it to the baseline grid and it will automatically line up with the flowing copy. I've chosen to have my heading 21mm, six times the baseline's 3.5mm leading – this equates to 59.528 pt, so I'm setting the type size at 58pt.

Style it up

Remember, it's always useful to set up character and paragraph styles when you're creating a new template. It makes working on a document much quicker and can prevent any mistakes in font size weights and so on appearing when they're used properly.
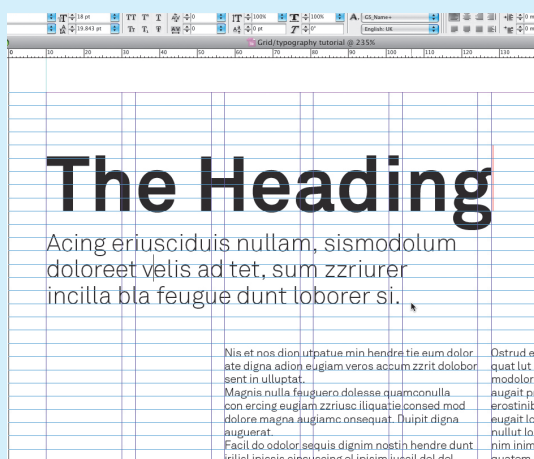

08 Next you want to introduce a strap line. Again, I'm going to use increments of 3.5mm for the leading, choosing 7mm (19.843pt) and setting the text size at 18pt. When choosing this size, I'm always thinking about the hierarchy of text in a layout, making sure the eye is drawn to the heading first, then the strap and finally the body.
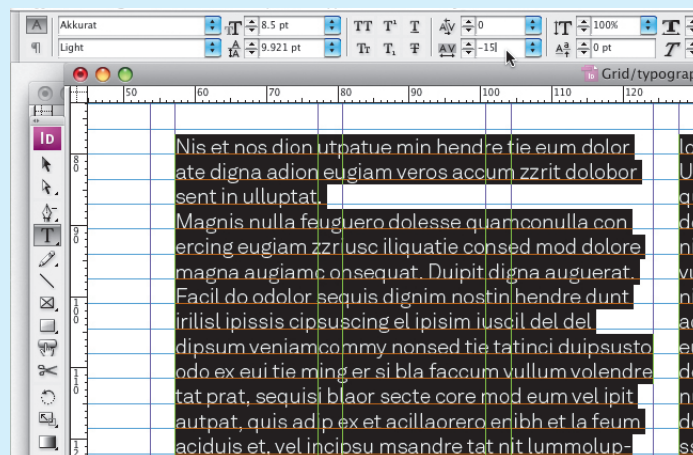
09 Now I'm going to go back to my body copy and look at tracking – you should adjust your tracking if you feel your font is a bit too loose or tight. Tracking is uniform kerning added to a block of text, and is used to tighten up character spacing. To remove or add space, use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+Left or Right Arrow key to increase and decrease. Alternatively, enter the value in the Tracking field.
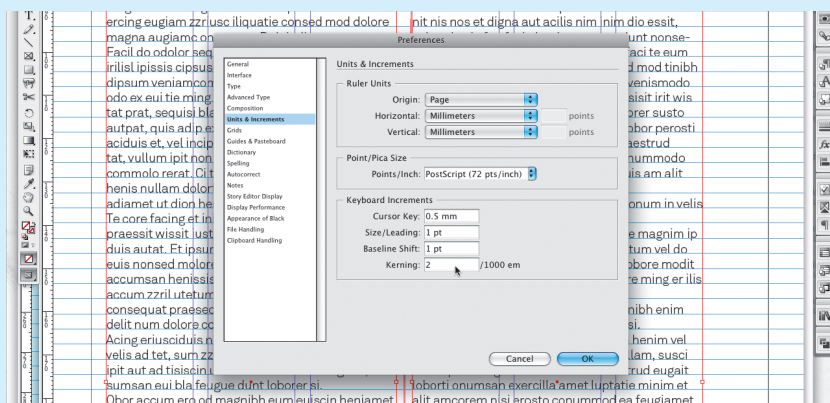

10 If you find the tracking you've added is too extreme, you can adjust the tracking increments. Under InDesign>Preferences>Units & Increments, change the value in the Tracking/Kerning field to 2, giving you smaller changes to work with.
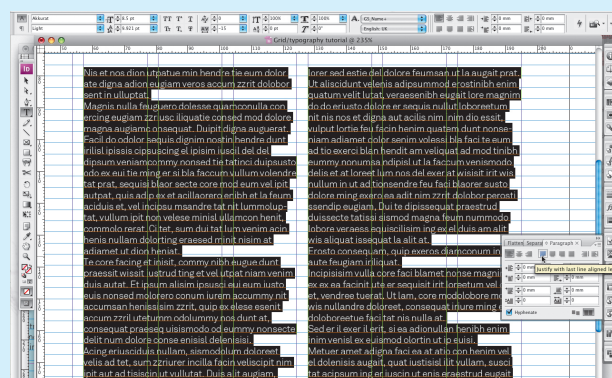

11 The next thing to consider is the alignment options of the body copy. Currently aligned left, I'm going to change this to justified text. Select the text to justify, with the last line aligned left, using the shortcut Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+J. Alternatively, use the buttons in the Paragraph panel. →
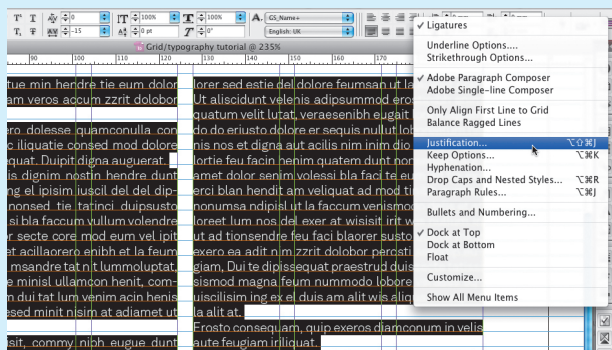
12_____One of the problems with justified text is the inconsistent gap spacing. One way around this is to alter the percentages in the Justification dialog box found in the pop-up menu in the toolbar. With your copy highlighted, select Justification to open up the dialog box.
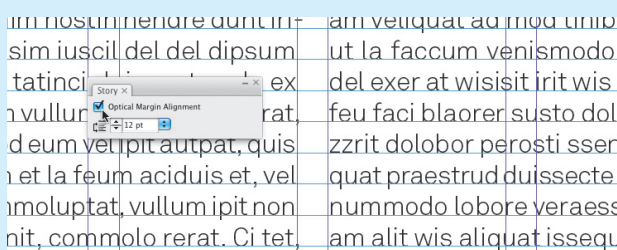
14_____ Another problem with justified text can be hanging punctuation, which makes the lines look jagged. Under Type>Story is the option to switch on 'Optical Margin Alignment'. This pushes the punctuation into the gutter, making the line slightly crisper.
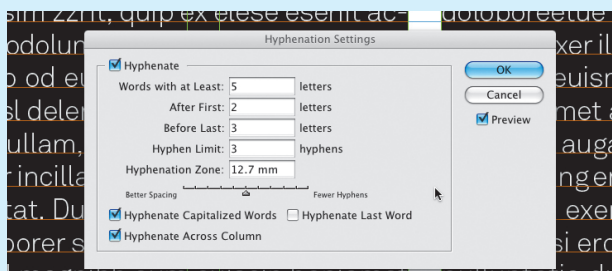
16_____ Usually, I choose not to hyphenate words less than five characters long, and start the hyphenation after the first two characters and before the last three characters. I also choose not to have more than three consecutive lines hyphenated in the Hyphen Limit field, and generally un-tick the 'Hyphenate Last Word' to avoid widows. Here you also have the option to choose fewer hyphens or better spacing on the sliding scale. If you remember to tick the Preview box, you can view the changes as they happen and find what works best for you.
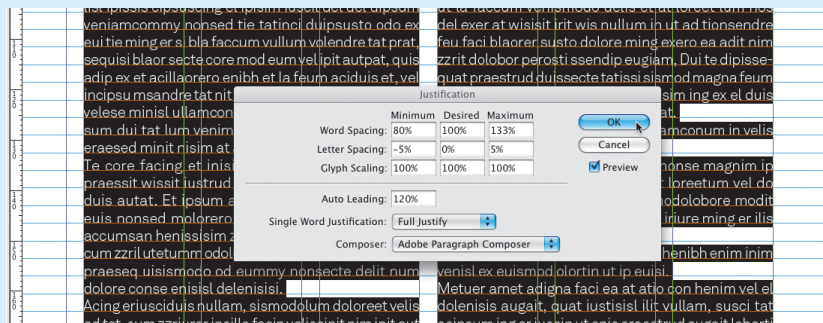
13_____The justification works on word spacing, but here you can adjust the letter spacing a small amount to improve the problem. Change the letter spacing to a minimum of -5 and a maximum of +5 to fill some of the gaps.
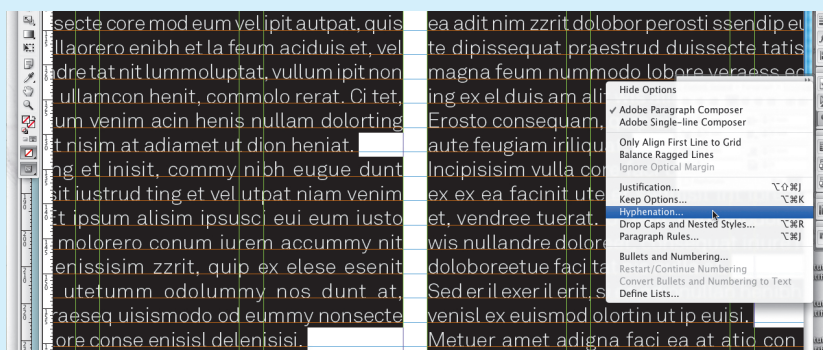
15_____At present my text contains hyphens, but I'm going to choose not to use them by un-ticking the Hyphenate box found in the Paragraph panel. But if you feel your layout requires hyphenation, then InDesign gives you great control. The Hyphenation dialog box can be found in the Content menu of the Paragraph panel.
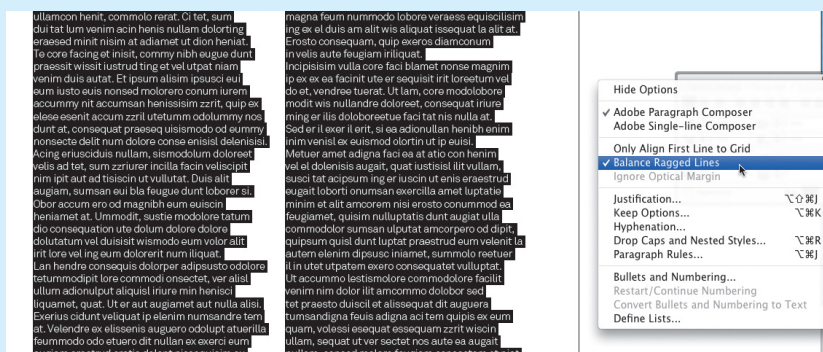
17_____There are a few options in the Paragraph panel drop-down context menu that can also be useful when working with body copy, and single-line and paragraph composers. Single-line composers adjust the spacing and hyphenation on a line-by-line basis, and paragraph composers make these changes based on the needs of the entire paragraph. I'm choosing 'Paragraph Composers' as well as the 'Balance Ragged Lines' option, which makes for a nicer edge on non-justified text.

The Glyphs palette

A great palette in InDesign is Glyphs. This contains all the special characters for the font you're using, and you can manually add and change them. You also have the ability to set up your own Glyph set, in which you can add any symbols that you use on a regular basis.

The Heading

Acing eriusciduis nullam, sismodolum doloreet velis ad tet, sum zzriurer incilla bla feugue dunt loborer si.
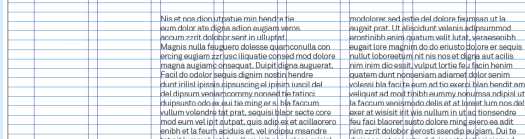
18_____It's always good practice to manually kern larger text, so I'm now going to kern the header. To do this, click between a pair of letters and enter a value in the Kerning field, or choose one of the predefined values from the drop-down menu to the left of the field. Alternatively, you can use the same keyboard shortcut as you did for the tracking step.