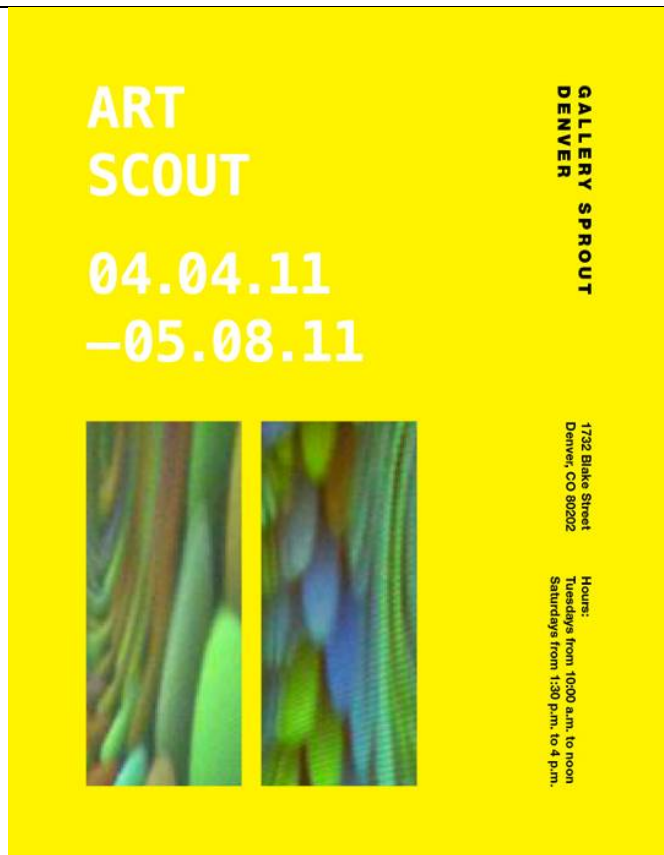


# Principles of Design: Alignment

**Directions:** The basic purpose of alignment is to unify and organize a page. First read through the rules for alignment, then study the three graphic designs in this resource and answer the alignment questions about each design.

### Rules for Alignment

- Our eyes like to see order! Every item should be connected with something else on the page by invisible lines.
- Information is instantly more organized if there is one type of alignment (right, left, or center) that connects separate pieces.
- Most designs that have a sophisticated look are not centered.
- Never center headlines over flush-left body copy or paragraphs that are indented. If text doesn't have a clear left and right edge, you can't tell the heading is centered.
- Find a strong alignment and stick to it. If the text is flush left, set the headings and subheadings to flush left.
- If blocks of text are across from each other horizontally on a page, align their baselines (bottom). If there are several different blocks of text on a page, align their left or right edges.
- Align the edges of graphic elements with other edges on the page.
- Check illustrations, captions, headlines, and rules to make sure they are aligned with text, and not sticking out over the edge.
- If you have an image with a straight edge next to a column of text, align the text along the straight edge of the image. (For example, if the image is on the right, then right-align the text.)



- Use a ruler to draw lines showing which elements in this design are connected by invisible lines.
- Why do you think the alignment is effective or ineffective?

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- Use a ruler to draw lines showing which elements in this design are connected by invisible lines.

- Why do you think the alignment is effective or ineffective?

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- Use a ruler to draw lines showing which elements in this design are connected by invisible lines.

- Why do you think the alignment is effective or ineffective?

## Reference Sheet: Text Alignment

### Flush left

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

### Flush right

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

### Asymmetrical

We hold these truths  
to be self-evident,  
that all men are created equal,  
that they are endowed by their  
Creator  
with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are  
Life,  
Liberty and the  
pursuit of Happiness.

### Centered

We hold these truths  
to be self-evident, that  
all men are created  
equal, that they are  
endowed by their  
Creator with certain  
unalienable Rights,  
that among these are  
Life, Liberty and the  
pursuit of Happiness.

### Runaround

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.



### Justified

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

### Concrete

We hold these truths to be self-evident,  
that all men are created equal, that  
they are endowed by their Creator  
with certain unalienable Rights, that  
among these are Life, Liberty and  
the pursuit of Happiness.

**Flush left:** The first letters of the text are aligned on the left while the right edge is allowed to flow naturally into a ragged edge. Typography experts consider flush left to be a very readable alignment.

**Flush right:** The end of each line of text is aligned on the right while the left edge flows into a ragged edge. This option works best for short amounts of text because it is hard for the reader's eye to find the start of the next line, especially if the text line lengths are very long.

**Centered:** Each line of text is centered, making both the right edge and the left edge ragged. This alignment implies formality and is often used in headline type. The irregular left edge makes it difficult for the reader's eye to find the beginning of the next line of type, so avoid using centered alignment for more than just a few short phrases.

**Justified:** Both the left edge and the right edge of each line are aligned. Justified alignment is very readable when set properly and is widely used in books, magazines, brochures, and other text-intensive pages, because this alignment allows for a higher word density. Because of the word density, justified columns tend to look visually darker. Justified columns also tend to develop "rivers" of white space that require adjustment to the lines of type.

**Runaround:** The text wraps around a picture or another piece of text. This alignment is commonly used in newsletters and other text-intensive pages. It is also called *text wrap*.

**Asymmetric:** This alignment conveys a sense of informality and energy. It is visually very interesting, but it is difficult to read because the beginnings and ends of lines do not align with each other. The viewer's eye has to work to find the beginning of the next line. This alignment is best used for short lines of type.

**Concrete:** In this alignment, the arrangement of the text takes on the shape of an action or object it describes. This alignment is often difficult to read but is visually very interesting. This text alignment has much creative potential, but it is not easy to move type into an identifiable shape!