



# Starting from scratch in InDesign

Desktop publishing needn't be difficult, but many of the key principles aren't obvious. Follow our tutorial series to start out on the right road.

**O**ver the next few issues of *MacUser*, we'll run through the entire process of templating a publication in InDesign, from the nitty-gritty of typography to the broader issues of where to put everything on the page. We'll introduce the core tools you'll need to be familiar with and demonstrate how to use them to their best advantage. Beyond that, the method we describe isn't the only valid approach, but it's based on years of experience on many different magazines, from corporate newsletters and reports to newsstand titles.

Many designers prefer to sketch on paper before getting bogged down in software. That's fine with page layout too, especially when you are creating a publication from scratch or planning a one-off design-led feature. However, a publication is a more

complex project than an illustration or poster, for example, and requires clarity and consistency across dozens or hundreds of pages. So it's incredibly important not to skip the step of setting up master pages and paragraph styles before you start work on individual spreads (and bound publications are always designed as double-page spreads – DPSs – rather than single pages).

Getting this right will not only give the end result the elegance and legibility you need, but will also help to ensure you get as far as an end result without succumbing to the potentially limitless frustration of fiddling about from scratch with one page after another.

Next time, we'll start at the beginning, with body text. First, here's an overview of the elements that will go into your page designs.



**Adam Banks** is a freelance editor and designer who's produced magazines digitally since 1987. He's worked on layout skills with designers, subeditors and students.

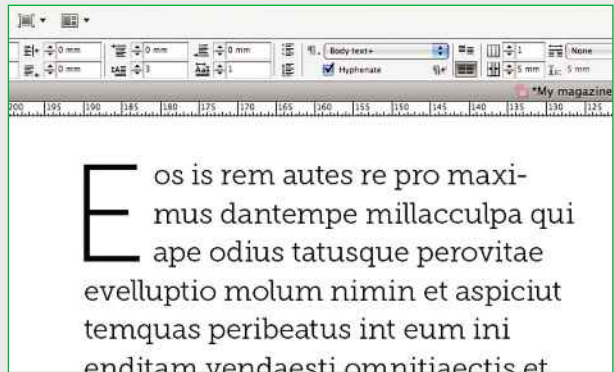
**Kit required** InDesign CS5 or any recent version



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### 1. Body text

Body copy – the text of the stories – is probably the trickiest and most important element to get exactly right. After sketching out the overall structure of your pages, setting up your body type is a good starting point, as its size and line spacing will dictate the ‘baseline grid’ that the bulk of your text should be aligned to.



### 2. Drop cap

Dropped capitals have been used to mark the beginnings of texts since before the invention of the printing press. In InDesign's Paragraph settings, in the Control panel, set how many characters to drop (usually one) and how many lines deep (here, three).

## BY NORRIS USEHOUND

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### 3. Byline

When you're creating magazine or newspaper-style publications, there's a lot of content to think about. The byline, for example, tells the reader who wrote the article. News publications usually place them at the top of a story; they can also go in the standfirst, after the copy, or tucked down the side of the page as a credit.

Cops probe journalistic ambitions as local freelancer  
and pet are hospitalised with tooth-related injuries

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### 4. Standfirst

Also known as an intro, a standfirst is there to tell the reader what the story is about at a glance. It's not a summary of the story (that would give the reader the perfect excuse not to read it), but should introduce it in a way that makes the reader want to carry on. Standfirsts are usually just a little larger than body text.

#### IN THE AREA

## Dog and man bitten in story-creating pact

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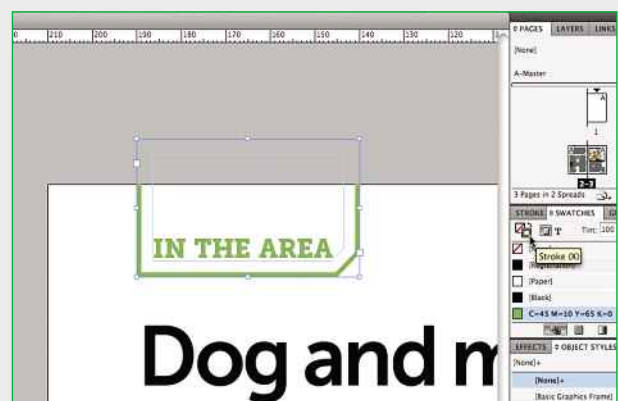
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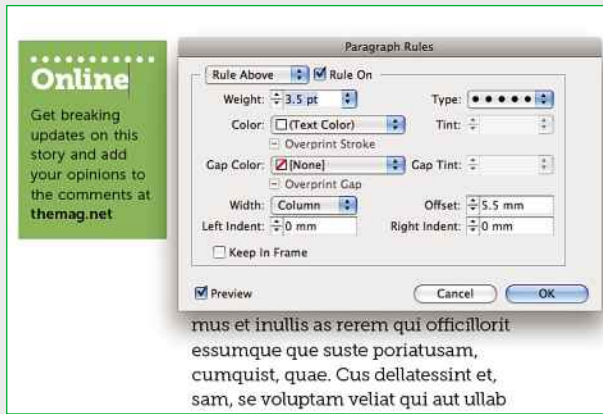
### 5. Headline

Headlines come in all shapes and sizes, but one way or another the headline should generally be the first thing that attracts the reader's eye, with the possible exception of the main picture. Notice how the bold type and large size achieve that here, without being so heavy as to completely dominate the page.



### 6. Page header

In any publication longer than a few pages, the reader needs a system to help them navigate through the various sections. Labelling the top left of each spread is a typical solution.

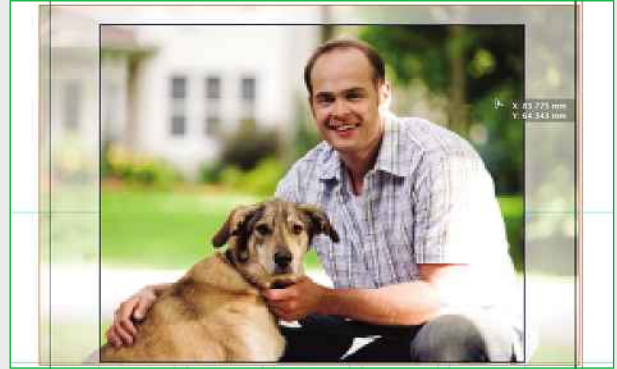


### 7. Teaser

Increasingly popular as publishers become more savvy and readers' attention harder to capture, teasers take a variety of forms, but are essentially internal adverts directing attention to another part of the publication (you'll see lots of these in newspapers) or to its sister outlets, in this case a website.

### 8. Picture

The way InDesign handles images takes some getting used to, but there are good reasons for it. You'll first define the area a picture will occupy (often fixed in your publication's template), then import an image and resize it within this frame to make the best use of the area available. Good cropping can make or break a spread.



### 9. Caption

Illustrations should explain themselves, but a photo always needs a caption. This generally goes below the picture, although short captions may be superimposed on top; white text often works better for this, depending on the photo. Captions are set at the same size as the body text or a little smaller, but usually in a bold sans serif typeface, making them relatively prominent. That makes sense, because once their eye is attracted by the picture, the next thing the reader will look for is the caption.

### 10. Photo credit

Every image should have a credit explaining where it came from (whether a photographer, illustrator, agency, photo library, stock photo service or a combination of the above). This is important as a courtesy – sometimes contractually required by suppliers – and also as a form of copyright attribution. An uncredited picture risks being an unlicensed picture; when you or an editor enters the name into the credit box, it means you have checked the source and haven't taken the image without permission.

### 11. Crosshead

Crossheads break up the body text, and save the reader from being presented with an endless-looking stream of copy to read. The less highbrow the publication, typically, the fewer paragraphs between crossheads. Crossheads are usually a little larger than body text and in heavy type; they may be coloured or reversed out of a strap (in white within a coloured box).



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### Your say

Have you bitten or been bitten by a domestic animal? Share your story with The Magazine and you could win £50. Email [mystory@themag.net](mailto:mystory@themag.net) now.

### 12. Invitation

'Community' and 'interactivity' are words you'll hear a lot in publishing. Rather than passively consuming printed publications, readers are encouraged to engage and contribute; this promotes loyalty. User-generated content, from true-life stories to blog comments, adds spice to the editorial mix. Sidebars and boxouts inviting these contributions need to be prominent but not intrusive.

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### 13. Folio

'Folio' is the printer's word for the page number, usually accompanied in a header (more common in newspapers) or footer (more common in magazines) by the title and date of publication. Bullets or a change of type weight distinguish these elements from each other. By convention, right-hand pages always have odd numbers; InDesign enforces this rule automatically.

### 14. Pull quote

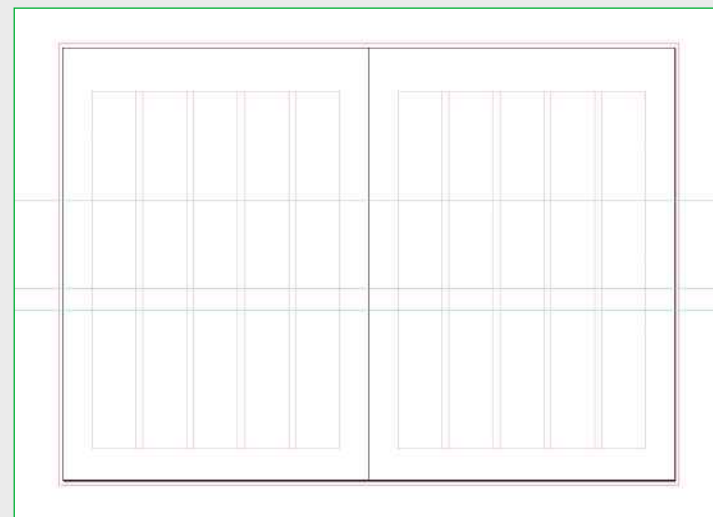
A pull-out quote, or pull quote, may consist of a pithy extract from any part of a story or, as in this case, an actual quotation from an interviewee, accompanied by a headshot. It's an 'entry point' to capture your reader's attention and get them into the page. Blown-up quote marks are often used to highlight pull quotes, although that trick is arguably over-used.

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*"The circumstances are still a bone of contention. We advise the public not to get hot under the collar."*  
—Laura Norder, Northumbria Police

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### 15. Margins and columns

The first step in creating your page structure is to adjust InDesign's margin and column guides, shown here in pink. You can do this in the Document Setup dialog box or later via Layout > Margins and Columns. The size of the margins plays an important part in the overall feel of your publication. Notice how we've set up five columns, then run two columns of text across two column guides apiece, leaving a smaller 'bastard' column for sidebars.

### 16. Guides

Column guides divide your page horizontally; you may want to add manual guides to set vertical positions for regular page elements, too. To add a guide, just display InDesign's rulers (press Command+R), then click the top ruler and drag down. You can also add vertical guides if necessary by dragging from the left ruler.

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The man and dog in happier times. Police are not seeking anyone else. PHOT

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### 17. Baseline grid

A baseline grid divides the page horizontally into regular strips. You can then 'lock' your body text format to this, so each line of text will automatically align across the page, even if columns begin in different places (here, below the standfirst on the left, below the picture on the right). Lay a ruler across any magazine or newspaper and you'll find this is the case.

### 18. Page grid

Where possible we advocate using a page grid. This is like working on a sheet of graph paper (like other guides, the grid is invisible when the page is printed, and can be hidden by pressing W). Line up your baseline grid, margins and columns with a page grid, and you need never worry about positioning items neatly.

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