Design Quick-Start Guide

1
ASSESS THE MATERIAL

❏ What is the subject matter?

❏ Is there a lot of running text?

❏ Are there a lot of elements? Section headings? Subheads? Run in heads? Charts? Tables? Images?

❏ Has an editorial staff determined and marked the hierarchy of information, or do you need to figure it out yourself?

❏ Does art need to be created or photographed?

❏ Will the piece be printed traditionally or posted online?

2
PLAN AHEAD.
KNOW PRODUCTION
SPECIFICATIONS

❏ How will the material be printed?

❏ Is it one color, two color, or four color?

● ● ● If the material will be printed traditionally, you must work with or assemble 300dpi tiffs at reproduction size.

● ● ● 72 dpi jpegs are not suitable for printing; they're suitable for the Web only

❏ Are there a lot of elements? Section headings? Subheads? Run in heads? Charts? Tables? Images?

❏ Will the piece be printed traditionally or posted online?

❏ What is the trim size of your piece and your page?

❏ Does the project need to be a specific number of pages? Is there any leeway?

❏ Does your client or printer have minimum margins?

3
CHOOSE FORMAT, MARGINS,
AND TYPEFACE(S)

❏ Work with the number of pages/screen you have and determine best format.

● ● ● If the material is technical or on a larger size page, it may warrant two, or multiple columns

❏ Determine your margins. This is the trickiest part for beginners. Allow yourself some time for trial and error. Keep in mind that space helps any design, even when there's a lot of material to fit onto the page.

❏ Given the subject matter, which you assessed in step 1, determine your typeface. Does the material warrant just one face with different weights or a number of typefaces?

● ● ● Most computers have a lot of resident fonts, but familiarize yourself with fonts and families. Dare to be square sometimes. You don't always need to use funky faces.

❏ Think about the type sizes and the space between lines. After visualizing and maybe sketching, go ahead and flow (pull) the text into your document to see how it fits.

This Quick-Start Guide was devised for the book LAYOUT ESSENTIALS by Beth Tondreau, published and copyrighted by Rockport. The book covers mainly print media, BUT the principles are similar whether for page or screen.

4

KNOW THE RULES OF TYPOGRAPHY AND TYPESETTING

❏ In typesetting, there's only one space after a period.

●●● Working in layout programs differs from word processing; you're setting correct typography now. The double spaces originally set up to mimic typewriters are history.

❏ Within a paragraph, use only soft returns if you need to break text to eliminate too many hyphenations or odd breaks

❏ Use the quotation marks in the typeface, not the hatch marks (those straight marks used to denote inches and feet)

❏ Use the spell checker

❏ Make certain your italic and bold setting is the italic of the typeface. If your layout program enables you to bold or italicize the words, don't be tempted. It's wrong.

❏ Watch out for bad line breaks, like splitting names, or more than two hyphens in a row, or a hyphen followed by an em dash at the end of a line

●●● And yes, if you catch bad breaks in this book, I'll be happy to hear from you and rectify any gaffes in the next printing

❏ **Dashes make a difference.**

Em Dash. Use for grammatical or narrative pauses. The width of the letter m in the chosen face
(Shift-Option-hyphen)

En Dash. Use for the passage of time or to connect numbers. Half an em; the width of the letter n in the chosen face.
(Option-Hyphen)

Hyphen. Connect words and phrases; break words at ends of lines
(Hyphen key)

GET SMART; AVOID "DUMB QUOTES"

"Dumb Quotes"
"Smart Quotes"

"Dumb Quotes"
"Smart Quotes"

5

KNOW THE RULES OF GOOD PAGING

PAGING

❏ When paging, avoid widows and orphans (*See* Glossary)

❏ See, but don't copy, the examples in the previous pages

❏ Be aware that when you send a project to a printer, you'll need to collect (if you're working in QuarkXPress) or package (if you're working in InDesign) the fonts along with your document and images

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SPECIAL CHARACTERS AND ACCENT MARKS

SPECIAL CHARACTERS

–	Option – hyphen	en dash
—	Option – Shift – hyphen	em dash
…	Option – ;	ellipsis (this character can't be separated at the end of a line as three periods can)
•	Option – 8	bullet (easy to remember as it's the asterisk key)
■	n (*ZapfDingbats*)	black ballot box
□	n (*ZapfDingbats, outlined*)	empty ballot box
©	Option – g	
™	Option – 2	
®	Option – r	
°	Option – Shift – 8	degree symbol (e.g. 102°F)
¢	Option – $	
"	Shift – Control – quotes	inch marks (same as dumb qoutes)

ACCENT MARKS

´	Option – e	(e.g. Résumé)
`	Option – ~	
¨	Option – u	
˜	Option – n	
ˆ	Option – i	