

Formatting and Printing a Publication

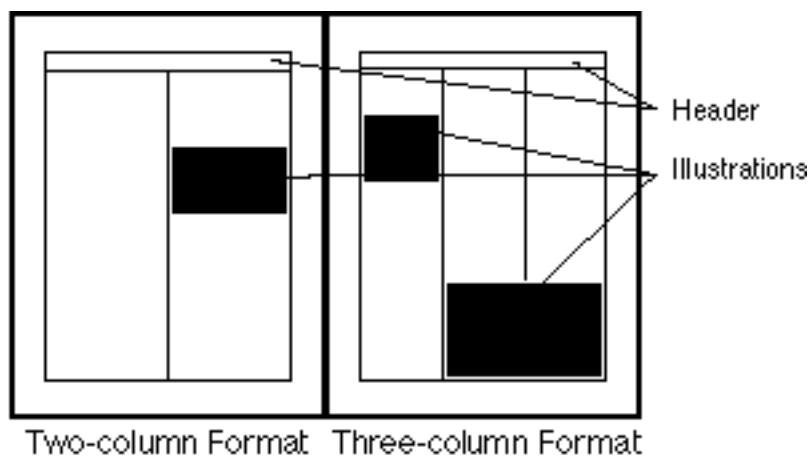
Putting a publication (magazine, newspaper, or book) together is a big task. Creating the content is only the first step. Formatting and printing are also important. The following tips will help you as you pull your publication together.

A **format** is the arrangement of text and illustrations on a page. The purpose of formatting is to make a page look inviting and to help readers find their way around. Formatting can also be used to highlight the importance of various items on a page. Most people never notice the format of their books, magazines, or newspapers, but formatting helps them read intelligently. The following tips will help you develop an attractive format for your publication.

Page size: Determine how large your pages will be. It's generally a good idea to use the common 8-1/2 by 11 inch page size.

Number of pages: Decide on the number of pages for your publication, including the front and back covers. If you plan to print your publication using the folded sheet method (see below under printing) the total number of pages needs to be divisible by four.

Columns: Think about how many columns you want per page. Two or three are probably best for an 8-1/2 by 11 inch page. A single column format makes the lines of text seem very long. Four columns makes the lines too short for easy reading.



Type style: If you are using a computer to create your text, you will be able to choose among several type fonts (or styles of type). Generally readers find a "Swiss" or "Helvetica" style of type easier to read than the more formal "Roman" type style found in most textbooks. Whatever font you decide on, use it for almost all the text. Nothing makes a publication look more confusing than a wild variety of type styles.

Type size: If you are working on a computer, you will also have a choice of several type sizes. A 10-point typeface is just about perfect for magazine or newspaper text. Most people find anything smaller hard to read. Books may look better in 12-point type.

Titles: Titles of articles or chapters should be larger than the text type to make them jump off the page. If you are using a typewriter, you can make titles stand out by typing them in capital letters. Titles can go across several columns if all the columns under them are part of the same article.

Subtitles: Use subtitles to break up long blocks of text. Your subtitles should be a smaller type size than your titles, but still should stand out from the text. This can be accomplished using **boldface** type, *italics* (type that slants), and underlining. Short pieces do not need subtitles.

Illustrations: Page after page of nothing but text looks dull. Try to include illustrations to break up solid blocks of type. Generally simple black-and-white drawings or photographs work best. Experiment with interesting combinations of photographs, graphs, diagrams, drawings, or other artwork.

Captions: Almost all illustrations will need captions. Captions can range in length from short phrases that simply identify the illustration to an information-filled paragraph. Generally a caption is placed beneath or beside the illustration. Try to make your captions stand out from the text by using italics, a different type font, or another type size.

Special features: Think about sprinkling some special features in your publication. Such features might take the form of a timeline, a profile of a person or place, or a table with information that relates to the material on that page but that cannot be smoothly included in the text. You can make your special features stand apart from the text by placing them in a box, printing them in a different font, and/or printing them in wide columns.

Page layout: Once you have assembled your written text, illustrations, and special features, you are ready to lay out each page.

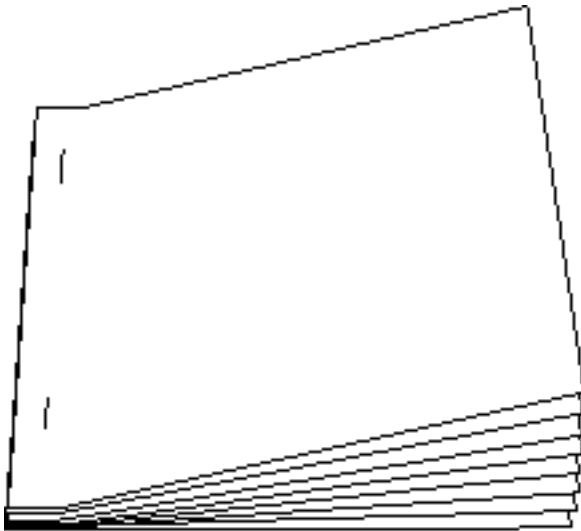
If you have access to a computer and desktop publishing software, you can do most of your layout on a computer screen. If you have a scanner as well, you may even be able to import your illustrations directly into your text. If not, try to leave exact spaces on your computer printed master copies and paste the pictures in before you print. Use a reducing/enlarging photocopy machine to shrink or enlarge your illustrations to fit your layout.

If you don't have desktop publishing software, try to have all the text printed using a computer, or neatly typed. You can then use scissors to cut the text into chunks the right size to fit around the illustrations and features on each page. Once you are happy with the design of a page, paste or tape the text and illustrations firmly into place.

Headers: When you have finished the layout, add headers to the top of your pages to help readers find their way around. A header is line of text with the publication's name, sometimes a section or chapter name, and the page number.

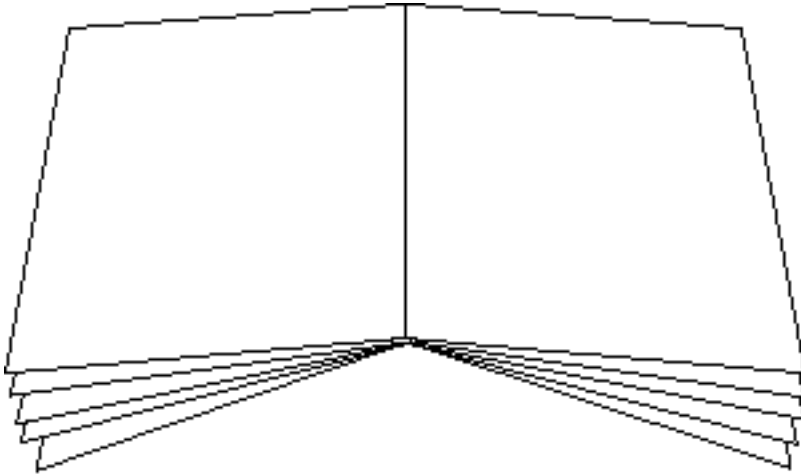
Final edit: Before printing, proofread your master copy one final time. Look for any misspellings or errors that were missed earlier. It is not too late to correct them. Make sure that text was not lost in the layout process. Does each illustration have the right caption attached to it? Are the pages in proper order? Are there any last-minute design changes that would improve the flow of information? Make the publication look more attractive?

Printing: The easiest way to publish your work is to print or photocopy your layouts on one or both sides of 8-1/2 x 11 paper. Assemble the sheets, including the front and back cover, and then staple them together along the left margin.



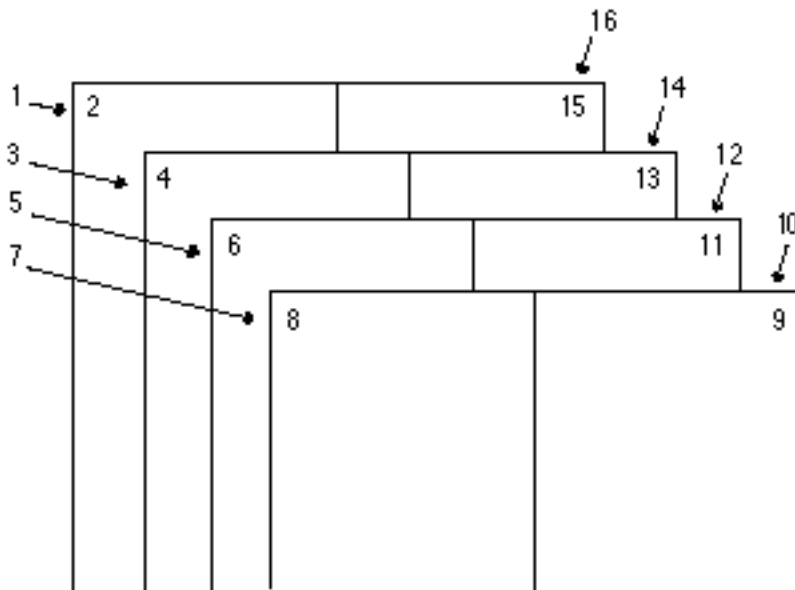
Staple Along Left Margin

A more elegant approach is print your publication on both sides of 11 x 17 inch paper. After assembling and folding the printed sheets, staple through fold to hold the publication together. This method of stapling, called “saddle stitching,” usually requires a special stapler.



Saddle Stitch

If you use the folded-sheet, saddle-stitched method, you will have to be careful how you arrange your pages. Except for the center pair of pages, no pages that are printed side-by-side on the same sheet will appear side-by-side in the finished magazine. The figure below illustrates the page numbering arrangement for a 16-page folded and saddle stitched publication.



Page Numbering Front and Back

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