

FIRST STORY **YOUNG
AMBASSADORS**
PROGRAMME

PUBLISHING MODULE



4. Designing your magazine



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There are four sets of decisions you need to make when designing your magazine:

- How you will distribute the magazine
- How you want the pages to look (page layout)
- What fonts you will use (typography)
- The cover design

These steps are outlined in each section of this guide.



Distribution format

Printed magazines

Professional: Printing costs could be recovered by selling your magazines. If you have money for this, research local printers to find out which offer best value for money. You'll need to tell them the size of the pages, how many copies you want, whether the cover and any pages use colour, and the type of paper to use. Printers are usually very helpful with guidance, so contact a few to see what they can offer.

Home printed: Print at school and make photocopies. If you plan to do this, make sure the teacher supporting you knows roughly how many A4 copies and how much paper you'll need, and ask them to approve it when you plan the project. If you're using colour, make sure this is possible (you'll print, rather than photocopy, all colour pages).

If you're planning a printed magazine, you'll need to save the files for professional printers as PDF files. We recommend using PDF files even if you're printing the magazine yourself.

Digital magazines

There are many ways to publish magazines digitally. These include: as a website or blog, as an ebook, or as a PDF file on a website such as issuu.com. Digital publishing is comparatively low-cost, but it needs a different set of skills.

If you plan to publish your magazine as a PDF file, you'll need to consider page layout and typography in the same way as you would for a printed magazine. Websites, blogs and ebooks work differently – many offer the the reader choices (through their browser or ebook reader) to say which fonts they want to use, and how the magazine is laid out. For example, you can choose for a particular photo to be included to the right-hand side of a piece of writing, or identify a group of words as the title, but won't know how wide the reader's screen is, the font and text size or how long each line will be. See the "Producing your magazine" guide for more information.

Page and cover layout, how to produce PDF pages or publish your magazine digitally is explained on the next pages.

Printed page layout design

There is a lot of information and many examples of printed page layout design on the internet ('[Design Your Way](#)' has useful hints and tips, the Wikipedia article on page layout or a web search will offer more information and examples).

The diagram shows a basic printed page layout. You will decide:

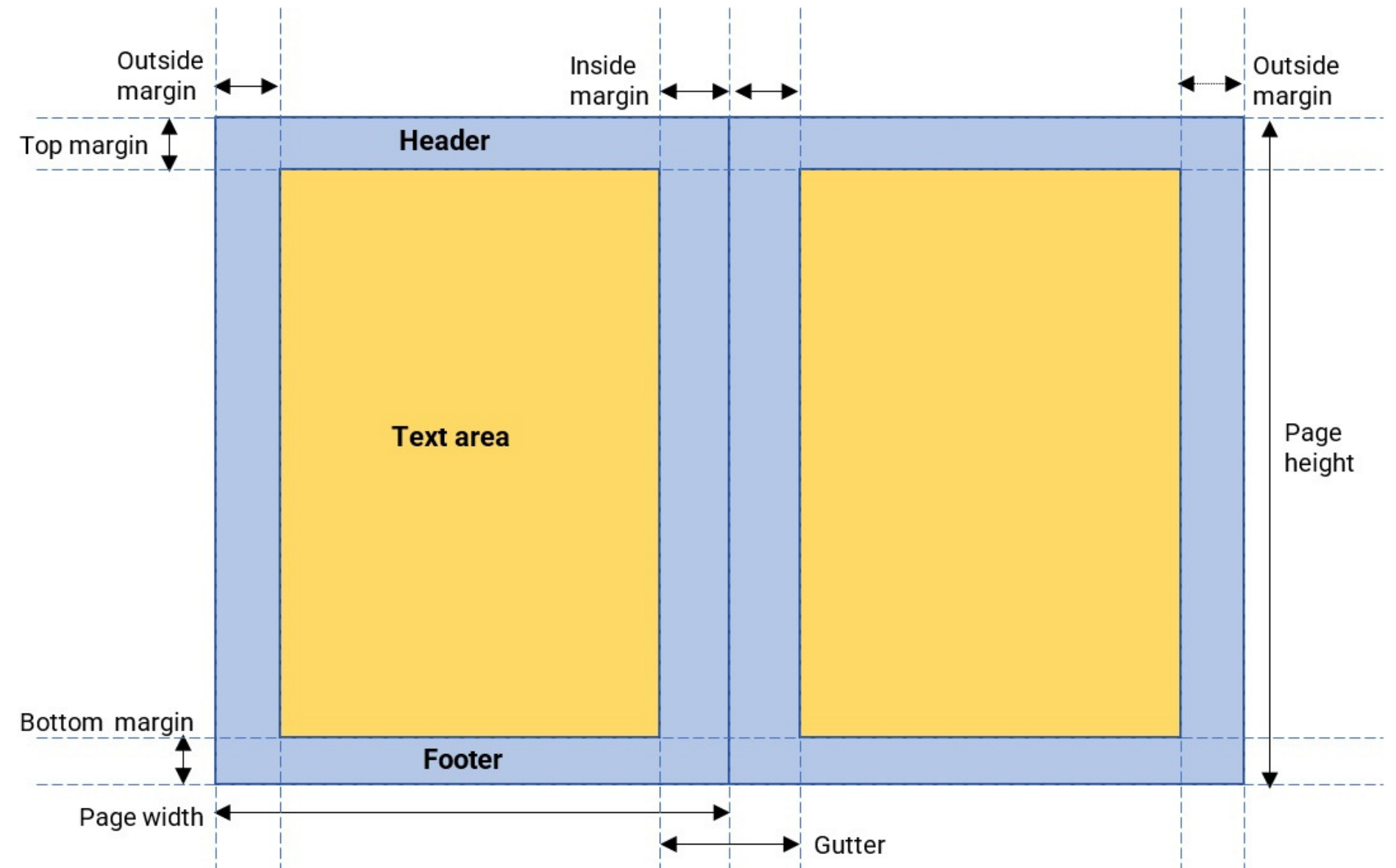
Paper: Standard size (A4: 297x210mm/A5: 210x148mm) is easiest, start with. Magazines are often in portrait orientation (as in the diagram) – you can rotate the paper for landscape.

Header and footer areas can be used for page number, name of the magazine and other information.

Margins need room for your the above information (and staples).

Text area, where you put your magazine's content, can be have a lay out of one or more columns of text (more than one is often easier to read on a page over 200mm wide).

Images may follow a standard format (eg. a box around each, caption or credit to the artist/photographer below), or more varied, listing all image details somewhere else in the magazine.



Typography design

Typography design is deciding on the fonts that you will use for your magazine. For each type of text (e.g. body text, article titles, author names, header text, footer text, image caption) you need to select a font, specifying:

- the **typeface** (e.g. Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman)
- the **size** (e.g. 12 point)
- the **weight** (e.g. normal, bold, italic)

So you might use Arial 14 point bold for titles, and Times New Roman 12 point normal for the body of the text, for example. Try to keep the number of fonts used down to a minimum. A mixture of typefaces, sizes and weights can make a page look messy, and makes it harder to read. At most, two different typefaces (e.g. one for text and another for titles) and three different sizes (e.g. one for text, another for titles, and a third for image captions, header text and footer text) is enough. Use weight variation sparingly too – bold titles and image captions are OK, whole articles in bold are not.



Cover design

The cover is the first thing that will draw potential readers to your magazine. If someone doesn't like the look of the cover, chances are they won't consider reading it, so it's important to get it right. Some things you should think about are:

Who is your audience? What are they interested in? What sort of images might appeal to them?

What is the theme of your magazine? What does it contain? The cover should reflect the contents, so the reader will find what they're expecting inside the covers.

Simple or complex? In general simple designs are more eye-catching than designs with lots of contrasting elements. For example, one 'pop' of colour on a black and white cover will stand out more than a whole palette.

What typefaces will you use?

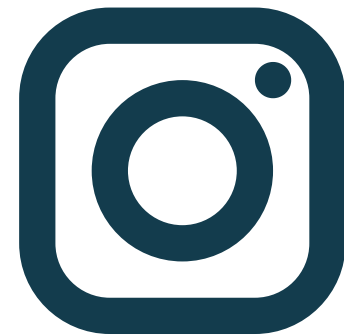
As a general principle, you should use a maximum of three typefaces on a magazine cover – one for the masthead (the magazine's name), a smaller one for the lead article, and an even smaller one for other important articles. If you link the typeface to the ones you've used inside the magazine (e.g. use the same font as you've decided on for article titles), it gives it a consistent feel and makes the design 'cleaner'.

There are lots of ideas and techniques for cover design on the internet. Check out articles that offer advice on how to produce a really effective cover and find examples of covers that you like.

A good tip is to look at the magazine shelves in a shop - especially those for creative writing - and take photos of ones you like the look of. Look through the photos and decide what it is you like about the covers – is it the images, the text, or the layout? Use those elements or their arrangement when you design your own cover.

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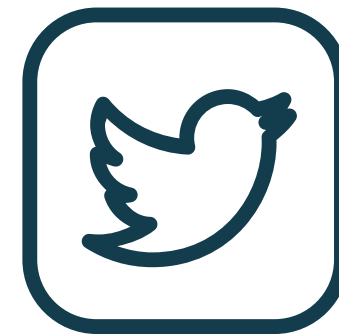
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