

Baseline grid

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A baseline grid is based on the leading of the continuous text (body text) of a publication. Leadings and paragraph spaces of all text in a complex publication would then be mathematically derived from this leading. A baseline grid ensures that the sizes and leadings all text in a complex publication are related to each other and are locked into place, so that they line up across columns as well as across pages. Baseline grids are almost always used in newspapers, and often in other complex publications such as magazines and textbooks.

Headline 32/36 pt,
hitting the baseline
grid every line

Lead-in 20/24 pt,
hitting the baseline
grid every three lines

'Pullquote 14/18 pt, hitting the
baseline grid every three lines,
only align first line to grid'

Caption 7/9pt Captions typically use a type size that is smaller than the body text. It is therefore touching the baseline every 5 lines, only align first line to the baseline grid.

Body text 10/12pt Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis
ex exer iusciduis nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor
suscili quatam il iuscili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis
dionulla con veliquat am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse
quatam dolor senim zzriuscidunt vero eriore feum ea fa-
cipit, cor sit vent lor alit at lore verat augait luptatin eraese
delis tate tatum zzriueros nonummo digniat exercid
uissed moloboreet aliquis ex ent aliquatum vulputat lobor
sum quipsustio con ulput nibh ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.
Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatam il ius-
cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatam dolor senim
zzriuscidunt vero eriore feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delis tate tatum zzriue-
ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
ea feuisis etum atuercil elit, osto odiamco nsecte ming
exeriustin elisl del ut dolobor summodina facilit incip er sit
velenis alisi tat.

Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatam il ius-
cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatam dolor senim
zzriuscidunt vero eriore feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delis tate tatum zzriue-
ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
ea feuisis etum atuercil elit, osto odiamco nsecte ming ex-
eriustin elisl del ut dolobor summodigna facilit incip er sit
velenis alisi tat. osto odiamco nsecte ming exeriustin elisl
del ut dolobor summodigna facilit incip er sit velenis.

Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatam il ius-
cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatam dolor senim
zzriuscidunt vero eriore feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delis tate tatum zzriue-
ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.

36 An example of how subheads may fit within a body text that aligns to a baseline grid

Paragraph spacing and subheads

In order for the body text to always align with the baseline grid, the space before and after paragraphs must be set to zero or multiples of the leading (1, 2 or 3 blank lines). While a subhead does not always have to align to the baseline grid, the space before and after it must add up to the baseline grid increment, so that the text following the subheads will align with the baseline grid again.

The space after the first paragraph here is 12 pt, ie a blank line.

This large subhead does not align to the baseline grid.
before paragraph = 9 pt
after paragraph = 3 pt
9 pt + 3 pt = 12 pt (the baseline increment, ie leading)

This subhead also does not align to the baseline grid.
before paragraph = 8 pt
after paragraph = 4 pt
8 pt + 4 pt = 12 pt (the baseline increment, ie leading)

This subhead aligns to the baseline grid.
before paragraph = 12 pt
after paragraph = 0 pt

—
— **Body text 10/12 pt** Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et
— wis ex exer iusciduis nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor
— suscili quatum il iuscili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis
— dionulla con veliquat am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse
— quatum dolor senim zzriuscidunt vero eriure feum ea
— tatum facipit.

—
— Cor sit vent lor alit at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delisi
— tate tatum zzriureros nonummo digniat exercid uissed
— moloboreet aliquis ex ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum
— quipsustio con ulput nibh ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.

This is a large subhead

—
— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
— nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatum il ius-
— cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
— am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatum dolor senim
— zzriuscidunt vero eriure feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
— at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delisi tate tatum zzriure-
— ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
— ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
— ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.

Another subhead

—
— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
— nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatum il ius-
— cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
— am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatum dolor senim
— zzriuscidunt vero eriure feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
— at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delisi tate tatum zzriure-
— ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
— ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
— ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.

A smaller subhead

—
— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer iusciduis
— nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor suscili quatum il ius-
— cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat
— am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatum dolor senim
— zzriuscidunt vero eriure feum ea facipit, cor sit vent lor alit
— at lore verat augait luptatin eraese delisi tate tatum zzriure-
— ros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex
— ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh
— ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.

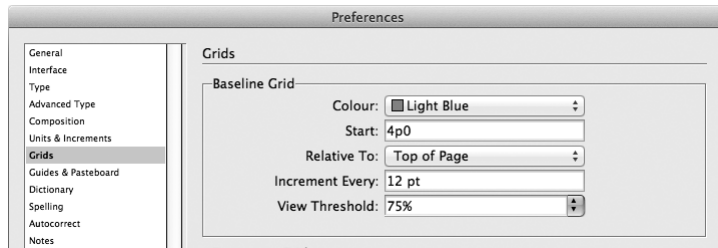
37 Setting up a baseline grid

In InDesign, set the baseline grid in Preferences > Grids:

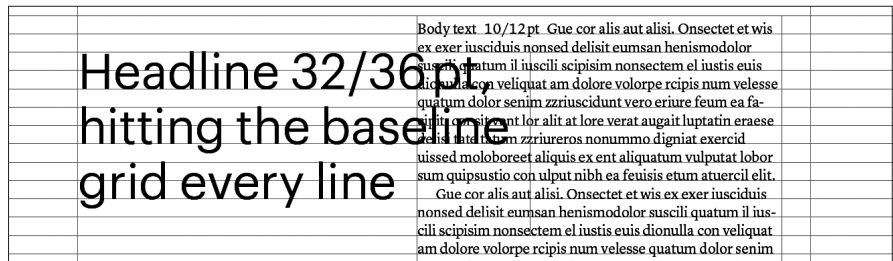
Start: Where the baseline grid starts, relative to either the top edge of the page or the top margin. This is usually at the top margin.

Increment Every: this is usually the leading of your body text, but can be in smaller increments. For example, if the body text has a leading of 12 pt, you may want to use a 3 pt increment. This is more difficult to control, however.

Turn on the baseline grid in View > Grids & Guides > Show Baseline Grid

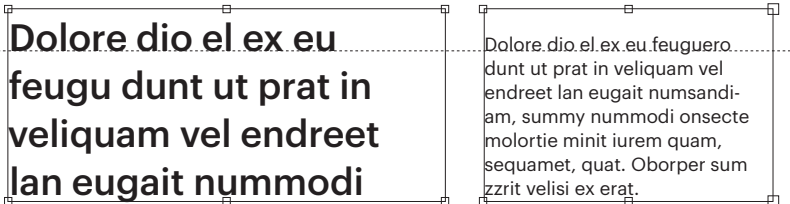


Click this button to align text to baseline grid

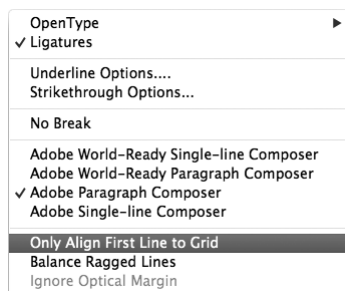


In Object > Text Frame Options... > Baseline Options, the first baseline could be set to fall on an exact position that you specify, ensuring perfect alignment horizontally across text frames and columns.

The offset can be set to base on the ascent, cap height, leading, x-height, or fixed. Fixed is the most precise for our purposes here. Type in the baseline grid increment in the **Min:** box.



For any text that does not have a leading that is an exact multiple of the baseline increment (body text leading), set it to align only the first line to the baseline grid. Go to the paragraph submenu and select 'Only Align First Line to Grid'. The pullquote and the caption shown in the example use this option, because their leadings are not multiples of 12.



Calculating leadings

Use the following method to calculate leadings based on the baseline grid increment, ie the leading of the body text.

Example 1 Finding the leading of type that is larger than the body text

2x [— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et
 — wis ex exer iusciduis nonsed delisit
 — eumsan henismodolor suscili quatum
 — il iuscili scipisim nonsectem el iustis

Body text leading = **12pt**
 Baseline grid increment = 12pt (1p)
 $12\text{pt} \times 3\text{ lines} = 36\text{pt}$

2x [— Gue cor alis aut alisi.
 — Onsectet et wis ex exer
 — iusciduis nonsed delisit

Calculating the leading for this larger text

$2x = 36\text{pt}$
 $x = 36 \div 2\text{ lines}$
 $x = \mathbf{18pt}$

The leading of the larger text should therefore be **18pt** so that it aligns with the baseline grid every two lines.

Select 'Only Align First Line to Grid'

Example 2 Finding the leading of type that is smaller than the body text

2y [— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et
 — wis ex exer iusciduis nonsed delisit
 — eumsan henismodolor suscili quatum
 — il iuscili scipisim nonsectem el iustis

Body text leading = **12pt**
 Baseline grid increment = 12pt (1p)
 $12\text{pt} \times 3\text{ lines} = 36\text{pt}$

2y [— Gue cor alis aut alisi. Onsectet et wis ex exer
 — iusciduis nonsed delisit eumsan henismodolor
 — suscili quatum il iuscili scipisim nonsectem
 — el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat am dolore
 — volorpe rcipis num velesse quatum dolor

Calculating the leading for this smaller text

$4y = 36\text{pt}$
 $y = 36 \div 4\text{ lines}$
 $y = \mathbf{9pt}$

The leading of the smaller text should therefore be **9pt** so that it aligns with the baseline grid every four lines.