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 7/9 pt 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 10/12 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 faiciti consciquent 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.

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 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, 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 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 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, osto odiamco nsecte ming exeriustin 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 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 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.

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.

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 iuscili 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 zzriureros 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 iuscili 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 zzriureros 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 iuscili 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 zzriureros nonummo digniat exercid uissed moloboreet aliquis ex ent aliquatum vulputat lobor sum quipsustio con ulput nibh ea feuisis etum atuercil elit.
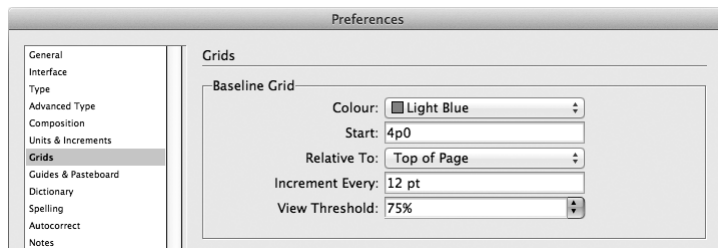
Setting up a baseline grid
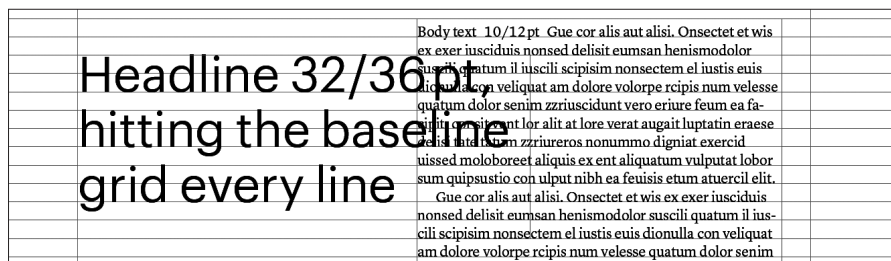
In InDesign, set the baseline grid in Preferences > Grids:

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.

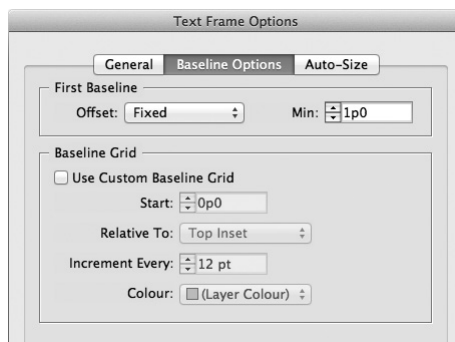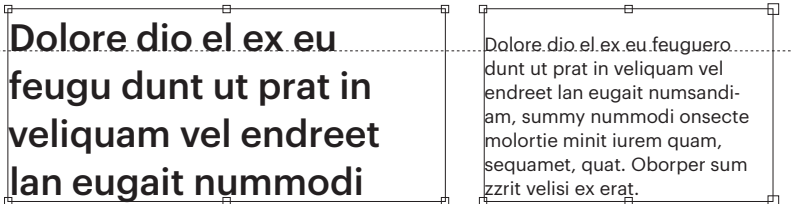Turn on the baseline grid in View > Grids & Guides > Show Baseline Grid

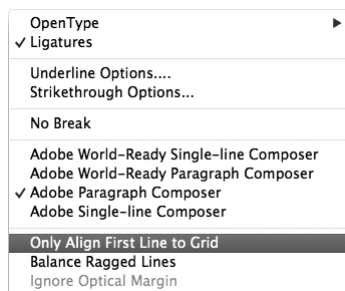Click this button to align text to baseline grid

Headline 32/36 pt hitting the baseline grid every line

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 fa- cilit commit ent lor alit at lore verat augait luptatin eraese velis lutat irem zzriureros 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 quatum il ius- cili scipisim nonsectem el iustis euis dionulla con veliquat am dolore volorpe rcipis num velesse quatum dolor senim

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.

Dolore dio el ex eu feugu dunt ut prat in veliquam vel endreet lan eugait nummodi

Dolore dio el ex eu feuguero dunt ut prat in veliquam vel endreet lan eugait numsandi- am, summy nummodi onsecte molortie minit iurem quam, sequamet, quat. Oborper sum zzrit velisi ex erat.

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)
12pt × 3 lines = 36pt

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

Calculating the leading for this larger text

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

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)
12pt × 3 lines = 36pt

2y [y [
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

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

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