

Type Alignment

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will define and recognize type alignment, and the best practices for its use by examining:

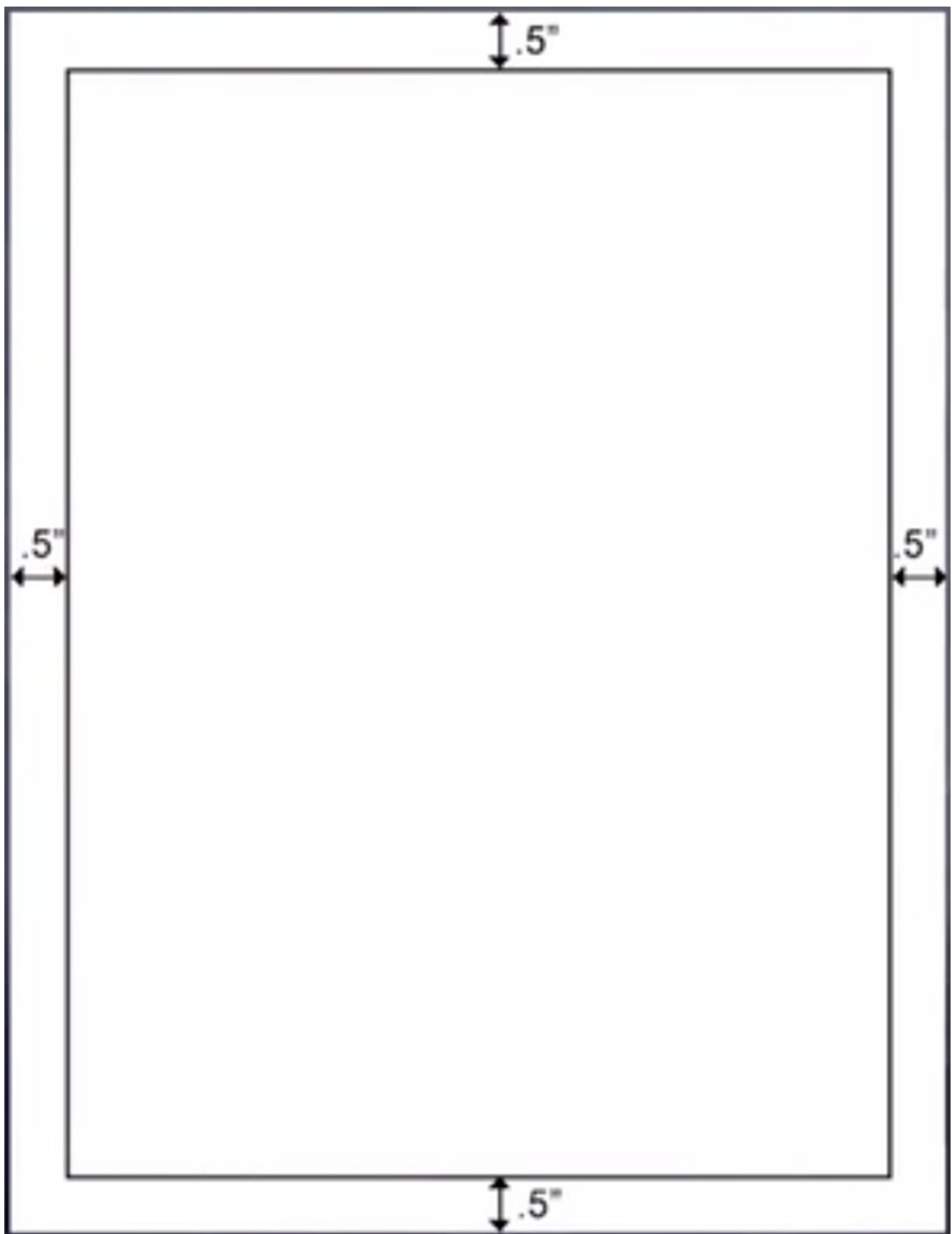
1. Margins

Margins are what determine the space, or amount of border, around a sheet. They set the space parameters, indicating where written text can appear. In other words, margins are the white space framing the elements in a page layout.

Common sizes of margins are:

- ½ inch
- ¾ inch
- 1 inch

The image below shows a common 8.5 by 11 sheet, with a half-inch margin. You can see how the margin creates a border around the area in which text will be written.



TERM TO KNOW

Margins

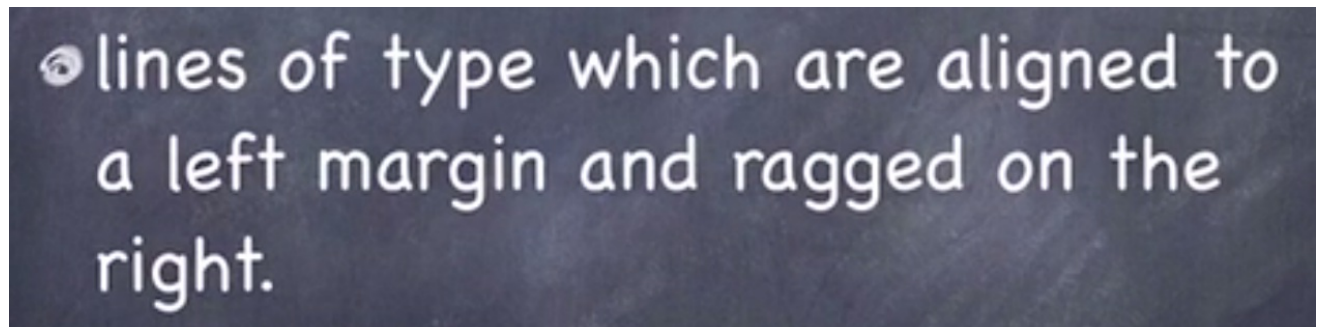
White space which frames the elements in a page layout.

2. Alignment

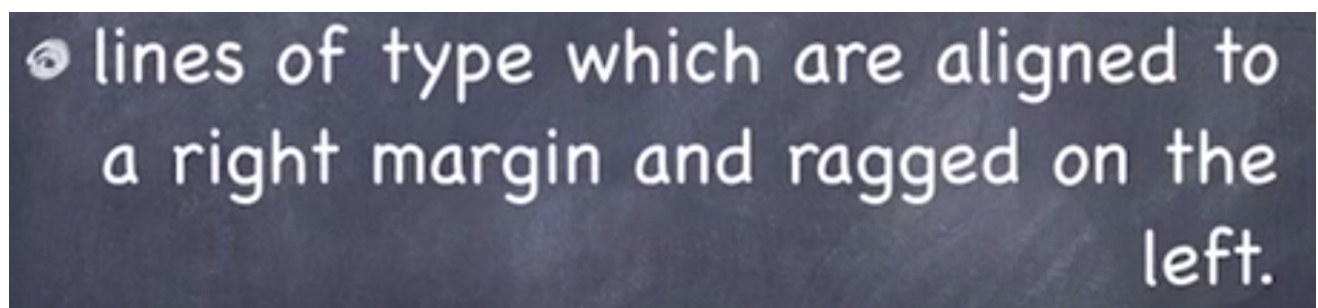
Lines of text can align on a margin in different ways. There is **left alignment**, **right alignment**, **centered alignment**, **justified alignment**, and **free form**.

Type alignment is typically considered a paragraph attribute. Depending on the type of alignment, the paragraph will take different forms and shapes.

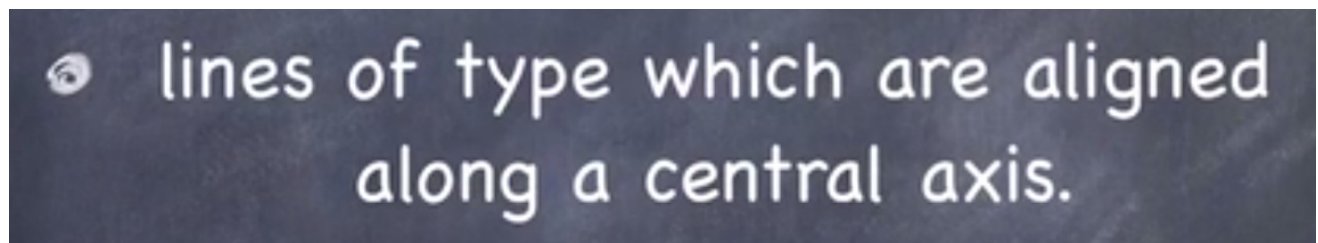
Below is an example of text arranged with left alignment.



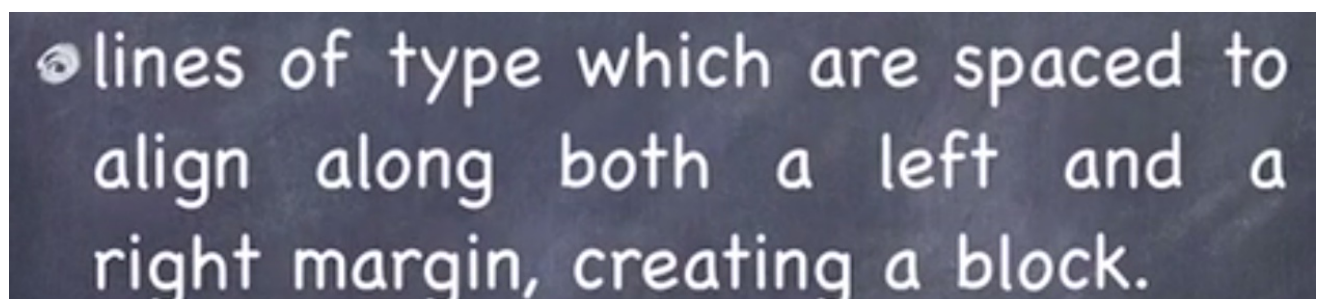
Now you can see right alignment, with text backed up against the right margin.



Centered alignment means the text is straight down the middle.



Justified alignment makes the block of text appear more square or rectangular.



Free form alignment varies in flow.

lines of type that do
not appear to follow a
strict justified or right, left or
centered alignment.



TERMS TO KNOW

Left Alignment

Lines of type which are aligned to a left margin and ragged on the right.

Right Alignment

Lines of type which align to a right margin and are ragged on the left.

Centered Alignment

Lines of type which are aligned along a central axis.

Justified Alignment

Lines of type which are spaced to align along both a left and a right margin, creating a block.

Free Form

Lines of type which do not appear to follow a strict justified, right, left, or centered alignment.

3. Eye Flow

Left and justified alignments are easier and less tiring to read, which is why they are the most common. The natural **eye flow** for people in the Western world is left to right.

Take a look at the following images of eye flow. The red highlight represents your eye flow; the blue dot is the starting point, and the green is the ending point. Look at each image as a whole unit so you can see the paragraph shape that starts to develop as your eye scans the page.

Left and justified alignments have the most uniform shape. They are tidier and almost create a square or rectangular form, allowing for a smoother eye flow.

Left alignment:

LOOK AT ALL THIS TEXT YOUR EYE
FLOWS MORE COMFORTABLY IN TWO
OF THESE ALIGNMENTS WHICH IS WHY
THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY USED IN
DESIGN, BE IT PRINT, WEB, AND OTHER
MEDIA AROUND YOU.

Justified alignment:

LOOK AT ALL THIS TEXT YOUR EYE
FLOWS MORE COMFORTABLY IN TWO
OF THESE ALIGNMENTS WHICH IS WHY
THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY USED IN
DESIGN, BE IT PRINT, WEB, AND OTHER
MEDIA AROUND YOU.

The centered and right alignments, as you can see below, create a type of corkscrew motion. This is an odd shape, considering that it's common to read from left to right in the Western part of the world. Typically, these alignments are used in moderation for this reason. They're just not as easy on your eyes.

Centered alignment:

LOOK AT ALL THIS TEXT YOUR EYE
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OF THESE
ALIGNMENTS WHICH
IS
WHY THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY
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IT PRINT, WEB,
AND OTHER MEDIA AROUND
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Right alignment:

LOOK AT ALL THIS TEXT YOUR EYE
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TERM TO KNOW

Eye Flow

The path of a viewer's eye.

4. Formal vs. Informal Alignments

It's worth noting that alignments with ragged edges, specifically noticeable with centered and right alignments, are not very tidy. In fact, the edges seem a bit messy. For this reason, these types of alignments are considered informal.

Justified, the alignment that creates eye flow from left to right via a rectangular paragraph shape, is considered formal.

➞ **EXAMPLE** At some point, you may have submitted a few papers for high school or college courses that had to be set with a justified alignment. The overall presentation is a lot more organized and structured. The text is also easier to read, which may explain why professors prefer it.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that while **margins** set the border of a page, **alignment** plays an even bigger role. A great way to determine if a written piece is organized is to evaluate **eye flow**, and make sure it's easy to read. Left and justified alignments are considered the easiest to read, and thus more **formal alignments**, while centered and right alignments are considered more **informal alignments** that are less organized.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: SOURCE: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ



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White space which frames the elements in a page layout.

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