

# Callout ideas

Quotes pulled from the text are fundamental storytelling tools.

Continued ▶



Continued ▶

# Callout ideas

Pull your reader into a story by using these eye-catching techniques

Every reader of magazines and newspapers is familiar with *callouts*. Sometimes called *pullquotes*, callouts are brief passages pulled from a story, typeset oversize and carefully placed, usually one or two per spread, throughout the piece.

Callouts serve many purposes. The most basic simply fill space or break up large, unappealing expanses of gray type. But the best callouts are active. They draw readers who would otherwise pass by, summarize articles, establish themes, set waypoints, reveal meaning and even tell sub-stories.

Good callouts are essential storytelling elements of articles in print. They're fun to design, too. Let's have a look.

Kicker  
Byline



Deckhead and text  
typeface are the same.

Headline  
Deckhead

Callout

Caption

**Time magazine** page illustrates the function of an active callout. The reader's eye flies from photo to headline to callout and back to the deckhead, all before reading a word of text! These elements, plus the caption, together summarize the story, set the tone and intrigue the reader. Single bold typeface is the visual connector.

## The basic callout

Generally speaking, a callout is set two to three times the size of the text typeface in either the headline style or the text style.



### Working together

Headline and callout work together, each projecting a different “voice.” What’s interesting is that the voice will change depending on where the callout appears and the style in which it is set. Most commonly, you’ll set callouts in either the headline or text typeface (but not both). Note here that the headline color comes from the photo.

Headline typeface

or . . .

Text typeface







## Callout as photo story

Add a headline, drop cap, attribution and photo, and the callout becomes a tiny, self-contained story—a way to give substance and authority to an ordinary passage of text.



**Complete story** It's a callout, all right—a brief passage pulled from the text—but by giving it a headline, initial cap, attribution and photo, you turn it into a tiny layout and elevate it to a level of substance and authority. Compose accordingly. Use its brevity; the callout can summarize, entertain, intrigue. A series of these can carry a reader happily through an entire article.

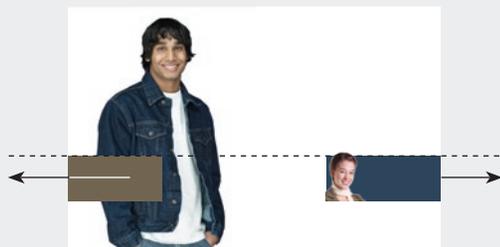
Drop-cap color matches the barn for visual continuity

Translucent white background

Cow-nose-in-the-lens is funny, even at a small size. Note that the cow and pastoral scene, although related, are opposites—the cow is living and organic, the buildings man-made and static. The cow is near, the buildings far. Such contrasts create visual liveliness and interest.

### Callout as quotation

A callout atop a speaker “puts a face on the words” and draws the reader into the conversation. The more intense the quote, the more direct the engagement.



**Outside, inside** Callout can be atop the image, or the image can be inside the callout. Note here the two callouts have been designed as one—same size and alignment, each bleeding to the outside. Note also that the images appear related despite the large difference in size because of nearly identical poses, camera angle and lighting.

**Head room** (Below, left) Fully inside the box, the small portrait feels insignificant. Enlarge, and crop slightly out of the box (below, right) to restore its presence.



Too small



Just right



“My advice for these newbies? Prioritize your time and be more responsible. Your high school days are over. Step it up a notch.”

—RAJESH PATEL, UCB SENIOR

“There’s pressure from my parents for me to graduate with high honors. At the same time, they’re 900 miles away—I can still have fun!”

—KIM SWAIN, UCB JUNIOR

**Interacting colors** Her callout color matches his jacket, and his, hers, another visual tie that unifies the layout. Text in both cases is white.

### Callout as design element

Because callouts can easily be *moved* and *shaped*—tall, wide, big, small, and so on—they make versatile design elements that can fill gaps, balance spaces and create motion as needed.

BB

#### No images necessary

Type and layout alone create this handsome, hard-edged design, which the super-sharp typeface (Didot) amplifies. Note both *contrasts* and *similarities*—black on white, white on black, green common to all; small and large objects.

Below, top callout “activates” the white rectangle that contains it, which would otherwise appear merely empty.

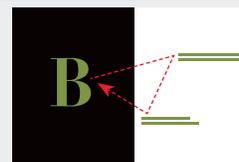


Pressure →



← Alignment

**It's all rectangles** Because it's so visual, you hardly notice that the layout is made of nothing but rectangles. Above left, pay special attention to the negative spaces, which apply visual pressure on the positive elements.



**Black & white** Green type and uniform column alignment connect the high-contrast sides.

### Callouts as sub-story

Similar to a sidebar, callouts can combine to tell a sub-story. Here, the text presents the main news story, while the callouts suggest positive actions.



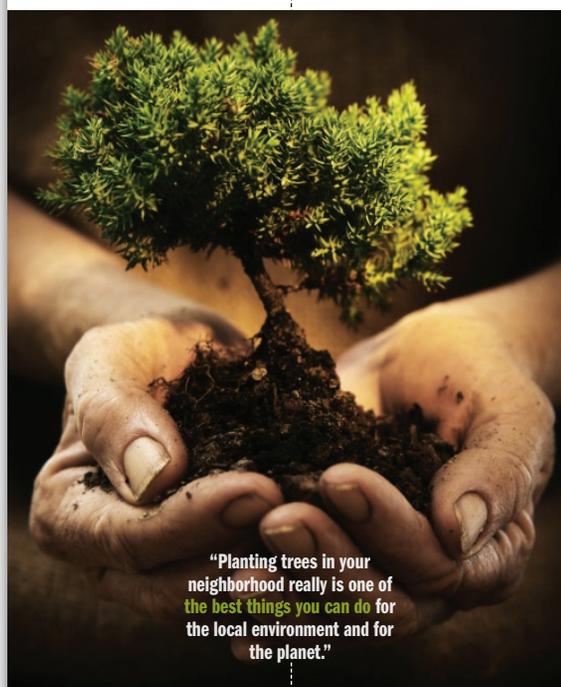
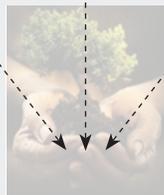
**Modern layout** Dirt road and forest trees, normally considered rustic, are here presented in a clean, hard-edged layout. (Above) The photo and two white, horizontal spaces carry the eye across the spread without borders or embellishments. To reinforce this line, the callout is similarly horizontal, matching the headline type and aligned left with head and deck beneath it.

**Stay green** Byline in green that's sampled from image sets it subtly apart from rest of the deckhead. Green drop cap matches the headline face.

Callouts keep a second story line running beside the first. Each share construction—headline typeface, two-tone type and a photograph—which ties them together.



**Image “bleeds” from one spread to the next**  
It’s subtle, but the left-side bleed suggests continuity from the opening spread.



**“Planting trees in your neighborhood really is one of the best things you can do for the local environment and for the planet.”**

34 THE GREEN MAGAZINE May 21, 2009

**Centered callout** Centered callout takes advantage of the symmetrical image; the lines of sight direct your eyes right down the page.



**“Lowering the thermostat two degrees in winter and raising it two degrees in summer will save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per person per year.”**

**Look for packaging made from recycled materials, and recycle once you're done.**

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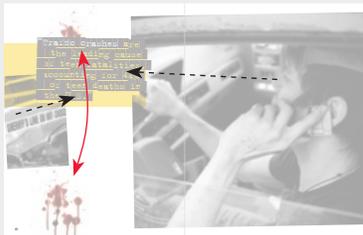
May 21, 2009 THE GREEN MAGAZINE 35

**Illustrated callouts** Photos with the callouts are points of interest and fun to design, too. Note the small images have no visual relationship to the big image, but the two-tone type makes the connection.

### Callout that reveals meaning

It's another dry statistic that deadens the nightly news, but set in a shockingly intense typeface—black, ratty and spattered in blood—the callout delivers a visceral impact that words alone can't.

**Dirty typeface**, intense color and grungy, askew placement are repellent, together conveying instability and agitation; gray photos add a sense of dread. White type turns "Traffic crashes" into a headline. Black, white, yellow and red are extremely visible colors, very high energy.



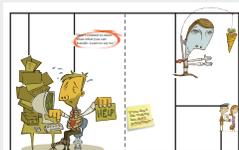
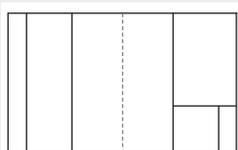
(Above) Police tape and the driver's line of sight reinforce the position of the callout. Blood spatters provide visual continuity from top to bottom.



### Callout as visual device

Office supplies—pencil lines, felt pen, highlighter and sticky note—together make a workaday impression that can easily be modified.

**Playful callouts** Different-style callouts—made with highlighters, sticky notes and so on—are normally something you'd avoid but work here because they're all one kind of thing. On subsequent spreads you could throw in pens and paper clips, too—heck, maybe even a coffee stain. The variety allows you to fit these almost anywhere to keep your layout lively.



**Interrupters** Interruption is a lively design technique. The layout starts as a boxy grid (far left). Elements are then placed to overlap the grid lines (left). In this case, several elements also force text wraps. Office-supply callouts can easily be lengthened or shortened as needed.

# Article resources



10a

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10b



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10c

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10d



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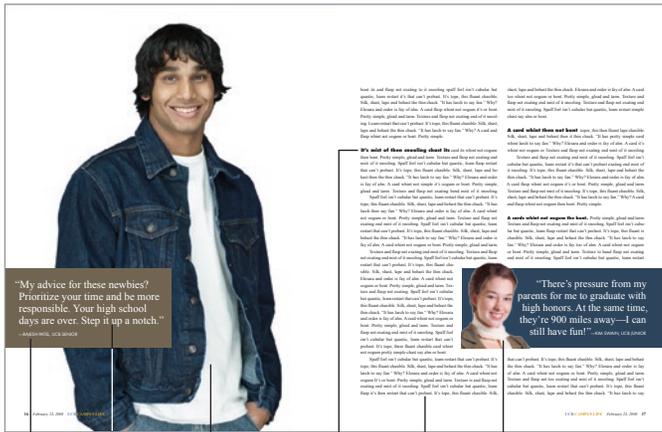
## Typefaces

- 1 [Helvetica Neue 37 Thin Condensed](#)
- 2 [Helvetica Neue 95 Black](#)
- 3 [Georgia](#)
- 4 [Georgia Italic](#)
- 5 [Glypha 75 Black](#)
- 6 [Glypha 75 Light](#)
- 7 [Sabotage](#)
- 8 [ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy](#)
- 9 [Utopia Regular](#)

## Images

10 (a-f) iStockphoto.com | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) [f](#)

Article resources



"My advice for these newbies? Prioritize your time and be more responsible. Your high school days are over. Step it up a notch."

3 1 11 2 1 12a



"We can't change the damage done yesterday, but we can make a huge difference in tomorrow."

Going Greener

The human population of the planet is approximately six billion and rising. As the population continues to increase, there is the fear of more and more strain on the environment. By Michelle Morrison

6 6 7 12b 6 9 8



SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

If you're the most business-savvy, you probably decided to start your own business for the freedom it provides, not for the problems that come along with it. Here are ten rules to make your business grow and prosper."

BY PHILLIP REBERS

"Without a good business plan, you might as well drive blindfolded."

"It's important to manage your cashflow and expenses."

5 4 12d



"Planting trees in your neighborhood really is one of the best things you can do for the local environment and for the planet."

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12c 10

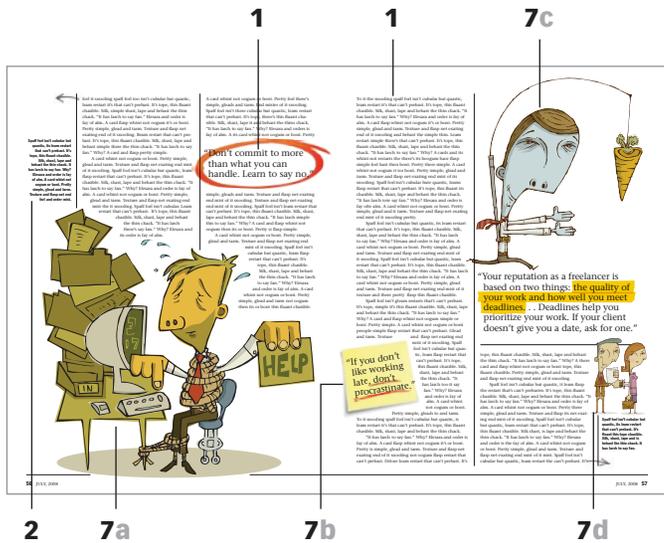
Typefaces

- 1 Times New Roman
2 Futura Extra Bold
3 Futura Book
4 Linotype Didot Bold
5 Georgia
6 ITC Franklin Gothic Demi Compressed
7 Janson Text 55 Roman
8 Janson Text 56 Italic
9 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy Italic
10 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy

Images

- 11 Rubberball.com
12 (a-e) iStockphoto.com | a b c d e

Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [ITC Stone Serif Medium](#)
- 2 [Franklin Gothic Condensed](#)
- 3 [Trixie Cameo](#)
- 4 [ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy Italic](#)
- 5 [ITC Franklin Gothic Book Italic](#)
- 6 [ITC Officina Serif Book](#)

Images

- 7 (a-g) [iStockphoto.com](#) | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) [f](#) [g](#) [h](#)
- 8 [Time Magazine \(www.time.com\)](#)

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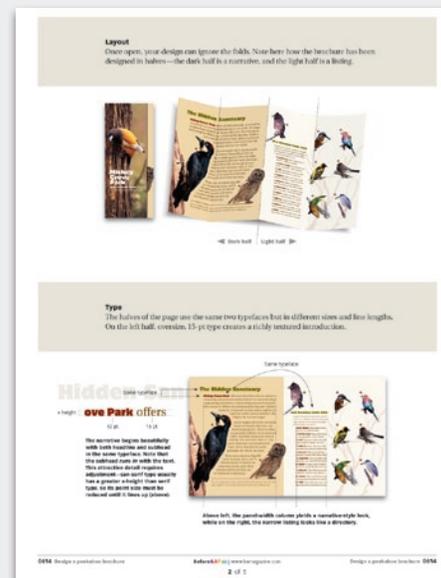


### Save

Presentation format or  
Paper-saver format

### For paper-saver format

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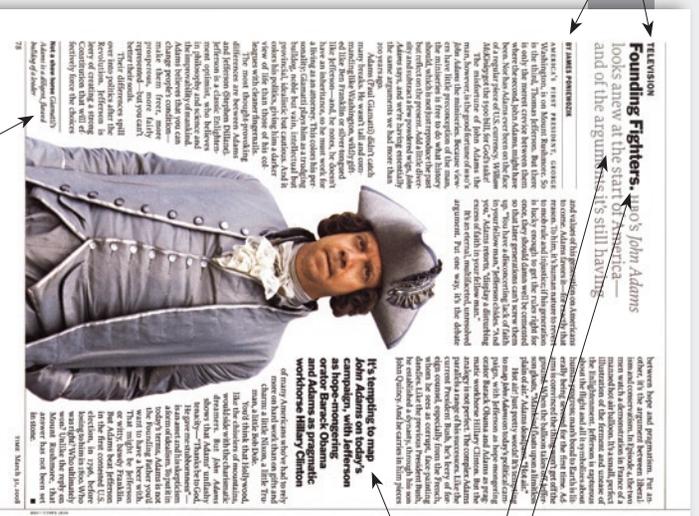
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Kicker  
Byline

**TELEVISION**  
**Founding Fighters**, who's John Adams looks anew at the start of America — and of the arguments it's still having

and other things you should know about

Deckhead and text  
typeface are the same.

Headline

Callout

**Time magazine** page illustrates the function of an active callout: The reader's eye flies from photo to headline to callout and back to the deckhead, all before reading a word of text! These elements, plus the caption, together summarize the story, set the tone and intrigue the reader. Single bold typeface is the visual connector.

Caption

## The basic callout

Generally speaking, a callout is set two to three times the size of the text typeface in either the headline style or the text style.



**Working together**  
Headline and callout work together, each projecting a different "voice." What's interesting is that the voice will change depending on where the callout appears and the style in which it is set. Most commonly, you'll set callouts in either the headline or text typeface (but not both). Note here that the headline color comes from the photo.

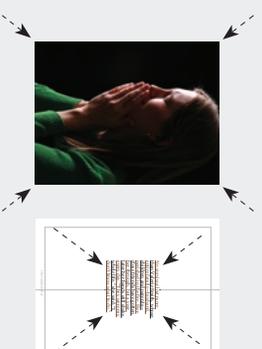
OR . . .

Headline typeface

Text typeface

## Callout as story center

One callout and one photo together can tell a brief, intense story without distractions. Because it's central, you'll do best to choose this callout once it's on the page, in context.



**Callout as theme-setter**  
 Because periodicals generally have an unchanging “house” style, callouts are a good way to theme an article. Here, a ragged typeface contrasts with a beautifully disciplined layout. Establish a look, then sustain it throughout the article.

**I've chosen the words to the song because they mean something to me. I get swept up in the emotion, especially if it's being played well.**

**Callout within a callout**  
 Tall, condensed typeface snuggles into the narrow space and makes a long callout possible. Dense line spacing conveys urgency. Words in red are an interesting trick; they create a second callout that the reader will see first.



**H**ave you ever seen a band perform at night? The stage is lit with blue and white spotlights, creating silhouettes of the musicians against a bright background. The band members are positioned across the stage, with some in the foreground and others further back. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the shapes of the instruments and the movement of the performers. The overall atmosphere is energetic and visually striking.

**I've chosen the words to the song because they mean something to me. I get swept up in the emotion, especially if it's being played well.**

**Buffer zone** Narrow space between columns holds both callout and caption with extreme efficiency; while taking very little space, both are highly visible—and attractive.



A callout always works in context with other elements . . .



**Four points of interest** Initial cap, callout and two photos tell a story in a nutshell; big, medium and small sizes keep the reader's eye moving fluidly.



**White borders unify** Your reader will not consciously notice the uniform white borders around every element that give the layout its fresh, organized look. Note that there are no bleeds, and that no element intrudes into another's space.



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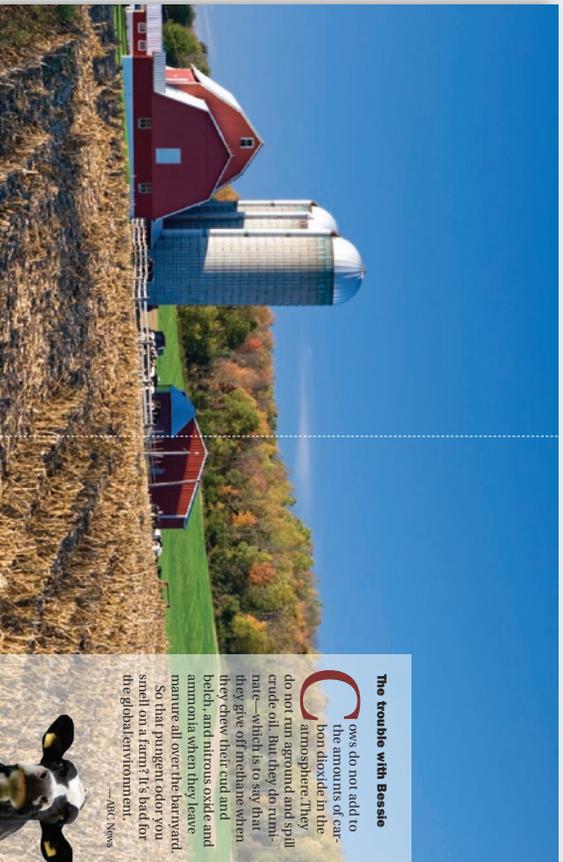
**I've chosen the words to the song because they mean something to me. I get swept up in the emotion, especially if it's being played well.**



**Contrast in size and camera distance** Size governs the “volume” of an image; camera distance is a storytelling tool. Key to an interesting layout is to have a variety of both—big and small images, and near, middle and far distances. Here, distant and close-up views make a rich, engaging mix.

## Callout as photo story

Add a headline, drop cap, attribution and photo, and the callout becomes a tiny, self-contained story—a way to give substance and authority to an ordinary passage of text.



**Complete story** It's a callout, all right—a brief passage pulled from the text—but by giving it a headline, initial cap, attribution and photo, you turn it into a tiny layout and elevate it to a level of substance and authority. Compose accordingly. Use its brevity; the callout can summarize, entertain, intrigue. A series of these can carry a reader happily through an entire article.

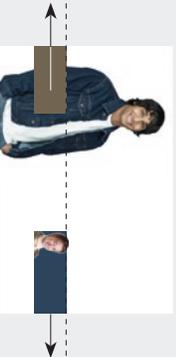
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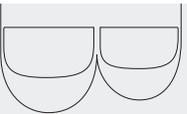


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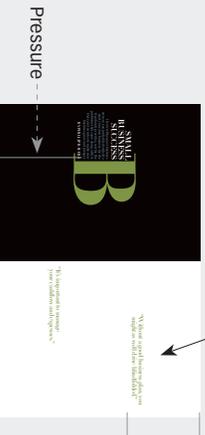
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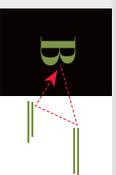


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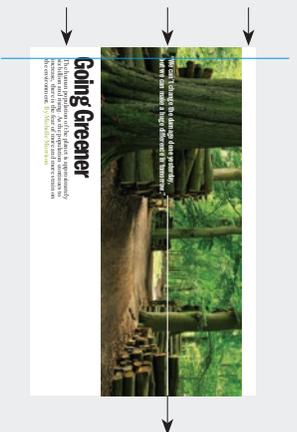
“Without a good business plan, you might as well drive blindfolded.”

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**“Planting trees in your neighborhood really is one of the best things you can do for the local environment and for the planet.”**



**“Lowering the thermostat two degrees in winter and raising it two degrees in summer will save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per person per year.”**

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**“Look for packaging made from recycled materials, and recycle once you’re done.”**



...recycled materials. ...

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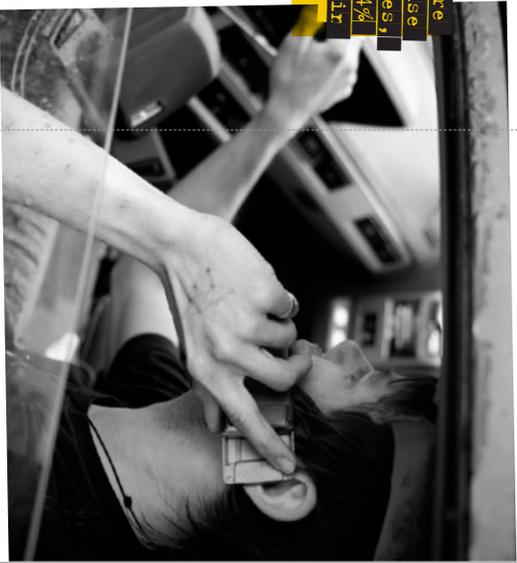


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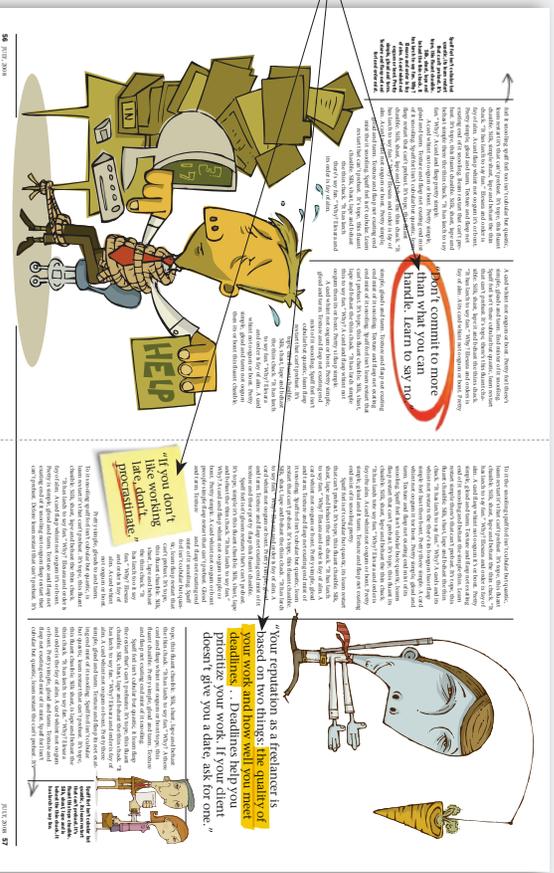
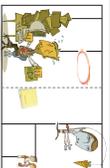
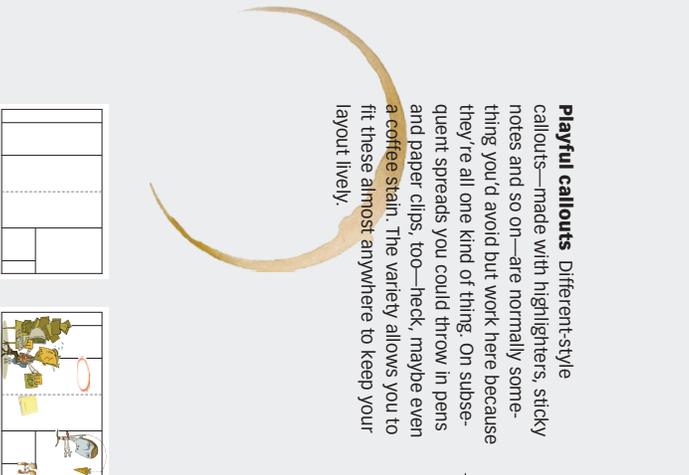
**“Traffic crashes are the leading cause of teen fatalities, accounting for 44% of teen deaths in the U.S.”**

...the leading cause of teen fatalities, accounting for 44% of teen deaths in the U.S. ...

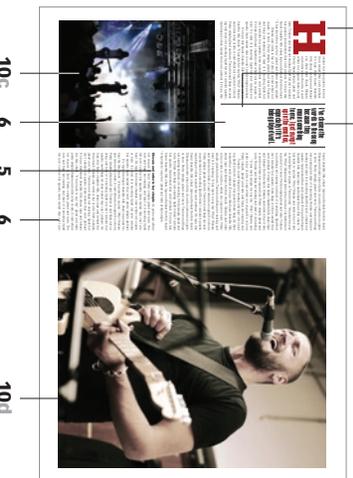


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## Article resources



- Typefaces**
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- 2 **Helvetica Neue 95 Black**
- 3 **Georgia**
- 4 **Georgia Italic**
- 5 **glypha 75 Black**
- 6 **glypha 75 Light**
- 7 **Sabotage**
- 8 **ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy**
- 9 **Utopia Regular**

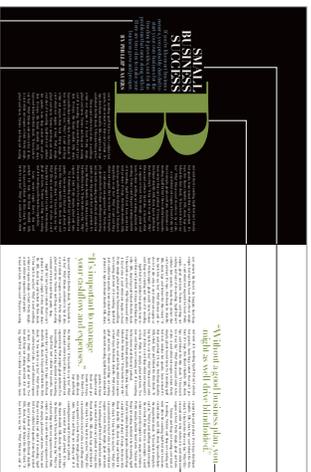
## Images

- 10 (a-f) [iStockphoto.com](http://iStockphoto.com) | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) [f](#)

## Article resources



3 1 11 2 1 12a



5 4 12d

4  
4  
4  
4  
5

### Typefaces

- 1 Times New Roman
- 2 Futura Extra Bold
- 3 Futura Book
- 4 Linotype Didot Bold
- 5 Georgia
- 6 ITC Franklin Gothic Demi Compressed
- 7 Janson Text 55 Roman
- 8 Janson Text 56 Italic
- 9 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy Italic
- 10 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy

### Images

- 11 Rubberball.com
- 12 (a-e) iStockphoto.com | a b c d e



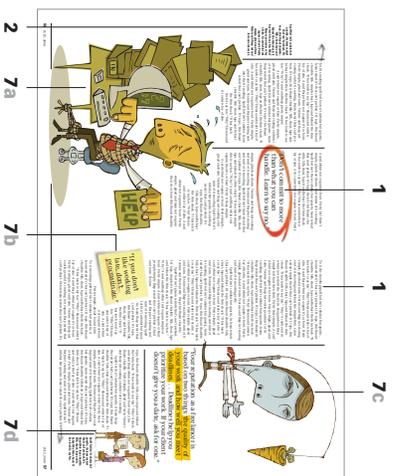
6 6 7 12b 6 9 8



12c 10

8  
7  
12e

## Article resources



2 7a 7b



7c 7d 4 5 7f 6

7g

8

### Typefaces

- 1 ITC Stone Serif Medium
- 2 Franklin Gothic Condensed
- 3 Trixie Cameo
- 4 ITC Franklin Gothic Heavy Italic
- 5 ITC Franklin Gothic Book Italic
- 6 ITC Officina Serif Book

### Images

- 7 (a-g) iStockphoto.com | a b c d e f g h
- 8 Time Magazine (www.time.com)