



Simply borderless

How to design pages for desktop printers
that can't print to the edge.

Continued ►

Simply borderless

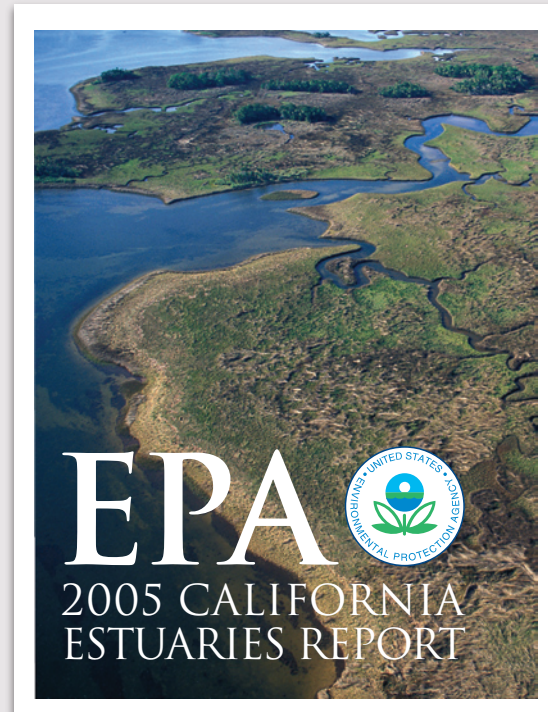
How to design pages for desktop printers that can't print to the edge

Modern desktop printers are small technical wonders that can put brilliant, high-resolution images on fine paper for pennies. But for \$99 they can't do everything, including print to the edges of the sheet (a full bleed). Most leave a white border, which is often irregular and differs from printer to printer.

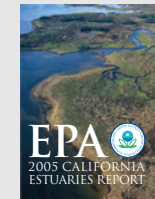
This border can be a big distraction. Its real problem, however, is that the border is undesigned and undesignable.

So what to do? Instead of fighting it, join it. Amplify the white space, and make it part of your designs.

Before



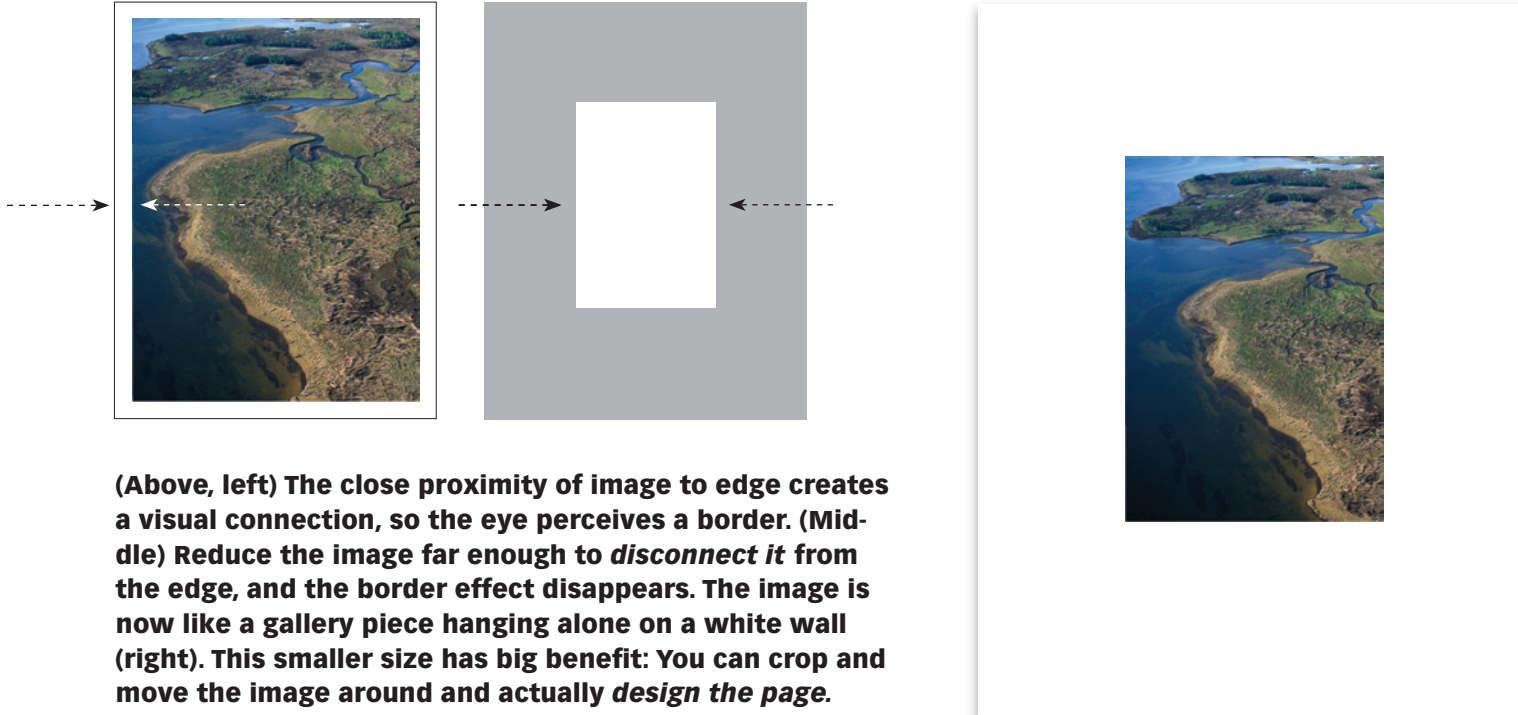
(Left) How many times have you been stuck with a page like this? You design a nice page that's perfect as a full bleed (inset), only to have it scale to fit the printer margins, which are rarely uniform on one printer, let alone from printer to printer. The result is an *undesigned* white border that distracts from your good work.





Make more white

The surest way to eliminate the white border is to *make more white*. Reducing your live matter visually disconnects it from the edge of the page.



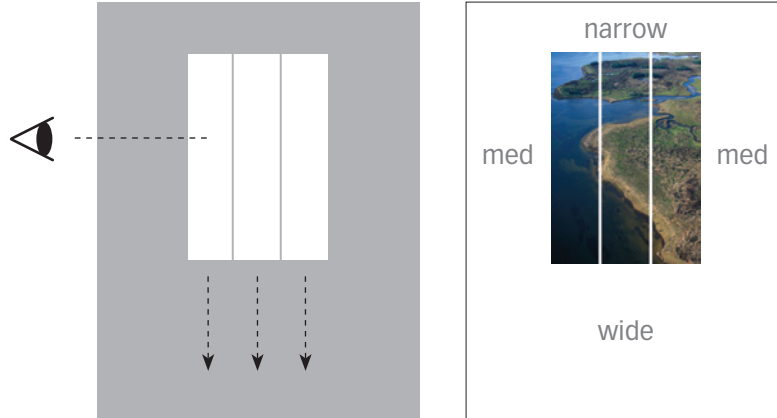
(Above, left) The close proximity of image to edge creates a visual connection, so the eye perceives a border. **(Middle)** Reduce the image far enough to *disconnect it* from the edge, and the border effect disappears. The image is now like a gallery piece hanging alone on a white wall **(right)**. This smaller size has big benefit: You can crop and move the image around and actually *design the page*.

(Above, middle) Note that to maintain equal margins on all sides, the image has been cropped (it's skinnier), and the result is more focused on the descriptive coastline and more dramatic.



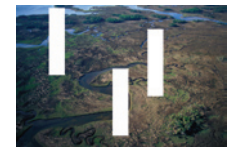
Get moving

Moving the image to eye level creates three different margin widths, so a frame never forms. Segmenting the image vertically moves the eye down the page.



Borders are static, so what you need is movement. (Above, left) The image at eye level yields more natural viewing plus three different margin widths—narrow (top), medium (sides) and wide (bottom)—which eliminates the border effect. Segmenting the image in columns creates activity within it and moves the eye down the page.

Above is one image divided vertically. You can also create a collage of two or three images (right). Mix and match colors, shapes and textures until you have a strong composition.

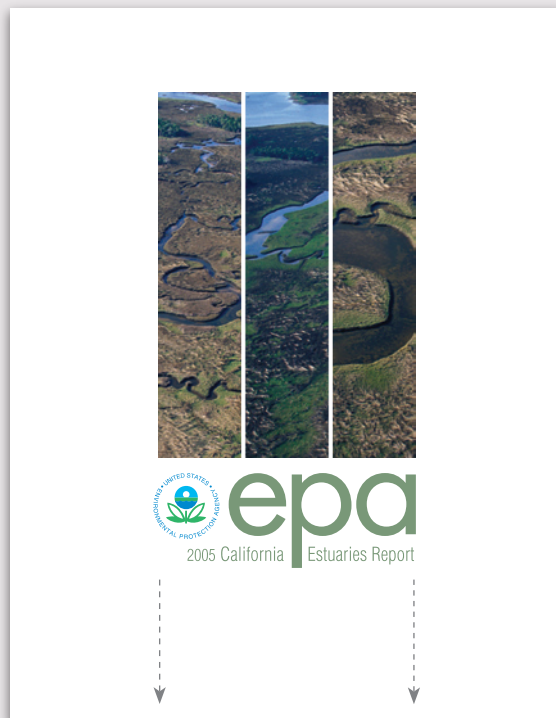


From one image you can pull out three or more column- or row-shaped areas. This is an excellent technique for using images that have more than one area of interest, because you can pick the most descriptive parts and eliminate the rest.



Coordinate the type

Typestyles and sizes that correspond to elements on the page will unify the design. Similarities convey harmony; contrasts convey energy.



Alignment sustains the vertical movement.



EPA



epa

Straight-round



A straight, uppercase typeface contrasts beautifully with the round logo. But since the page and image are also rectangular, adding this heavy block would overwhelm the light logo (inset).

All round

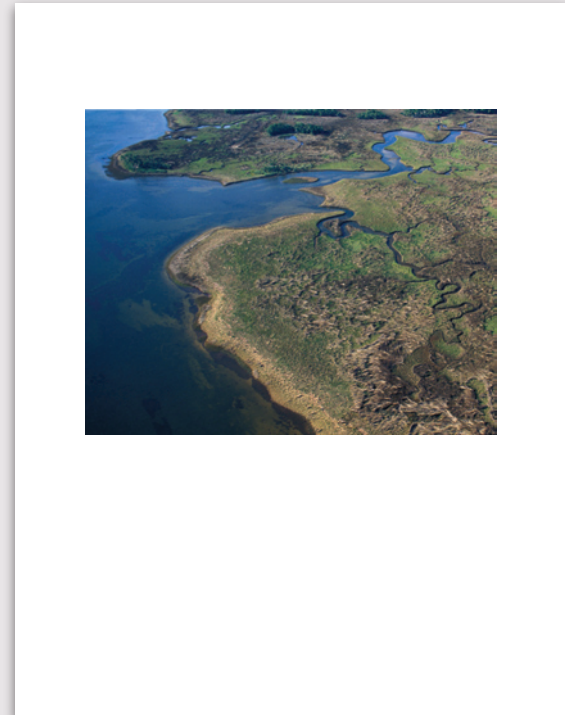
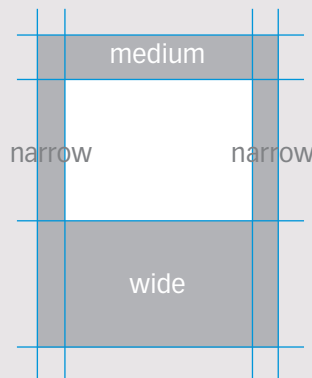
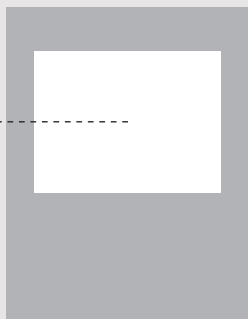
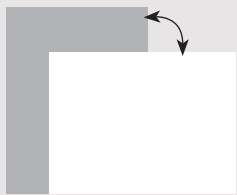


A round, lowercase typeface (same height, similar weight) mirrors the round logo. Now seen as a group of four circles, the line contrasts beautifully with the rectangular image and gives the page two strong shapes.



Make a landscape

A horizontal image can be quite large. It has the energy of *contrasting direction* and still appears borderless because of its varying margins and side-to-side movement.



Same proportions

Unify image and page easily by using the same proportions for both; just rotate 90° and reduce to about 60%.

Eye level

A letter-size page is about the same size as the human head. Result: Eye level is the strongest and most comfortable place for a focal point.

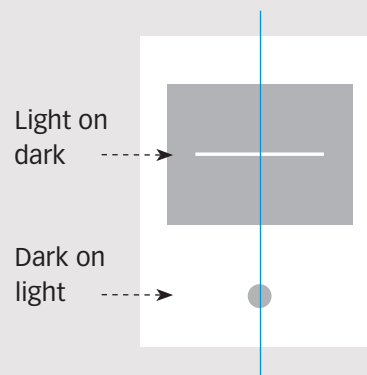
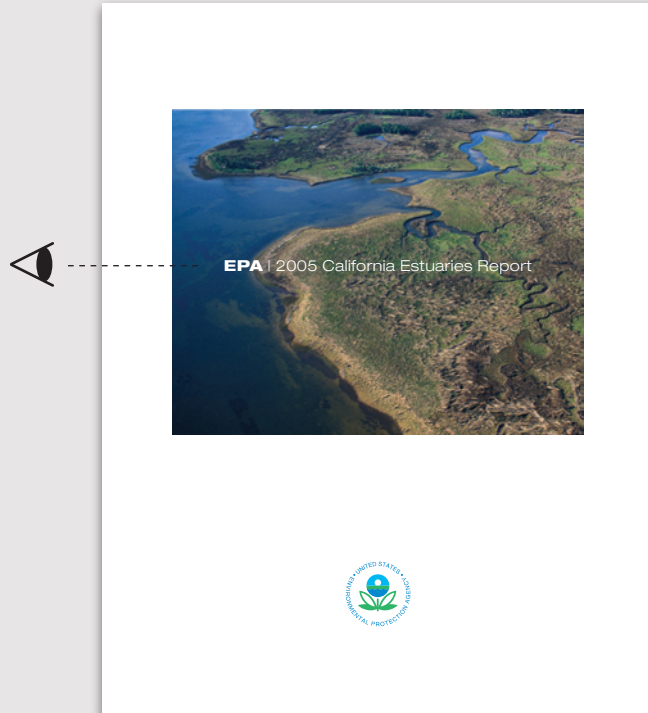
Varying margins

Eye-level placement results in three different margin widths, which adds visual activity and keeps margins from “connecting” and forming a frame.



Create a focal center

A single line of type sustains the horizontal movement and is a powerful and sophisticated focal point. The small logo completely controls the open space around it.



Heavy

Light

EPA | 2005 Cal

Key to the headline is *quietness*. One typeface in one line at one size but different weights yields a beautifully low-key setting.

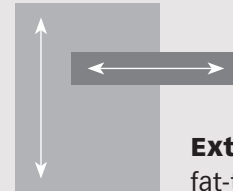
Small is definitely powerful. Here, the gallery effect—one image alone on a wall—is working to the max. The page has two zones, dark and light. Centered in each zone is a focal point—the headline in one at eye level, the logo in the other. Each controls its space. This subtle treatment is classier and more effective than SHOUTING—yohoho!—for attention.



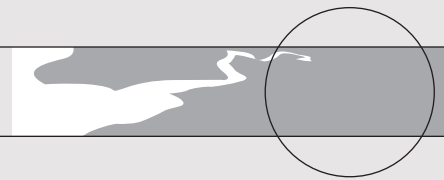
Energize the page

Cousin to the landscape format is the banner, an extremely panoramic shape whose total contrast to the vertical page creates real energy.

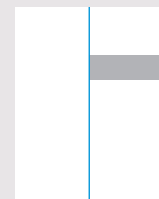
You'll almost always be surprised by how little it takes to convey the heart of an image. Here, one thin slice shows coastline, inlet, estuaries and wet and dry land masses. That's the whole story!



Extreme contrasts Tall-wide, fat-thin, up-down, side-to-side



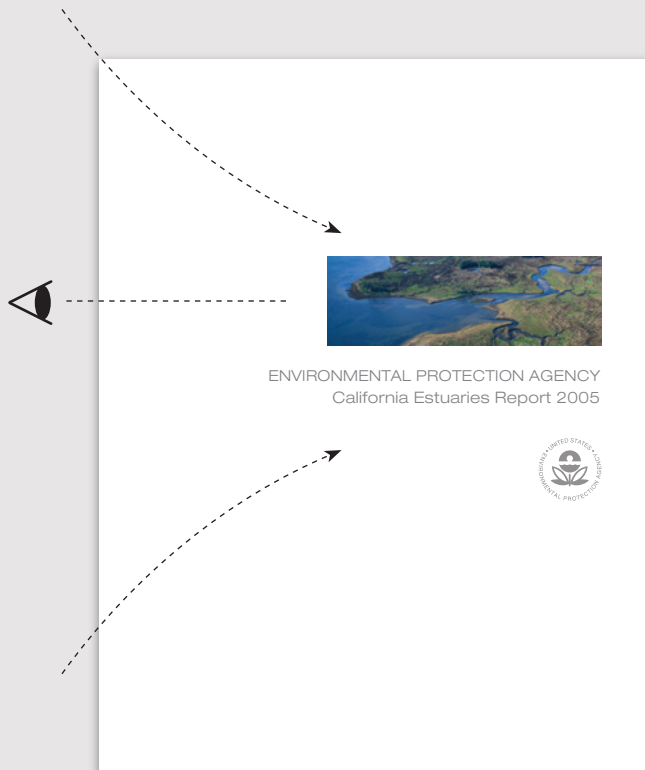
Dull space The beauty of the panoramic shape is that it's so *different* from the page. It works for many images, but in this case we're seeing a little more uninteresting space than we'd like (above), so we'll crop it to half a page (below).





Align right

With image and text aligned to the right and at eye level, the white space—normally thought of as empty—is controlling the page. This is a very *active* design.



(Left) Border? What border? There is very little on the page but it's really *designed*; it has a strong focal point and a lot of movement. Both text and logo are colored gray to recede, leaving the image center stage. The irregular left edge (right) keeps unwanted lines from forming.

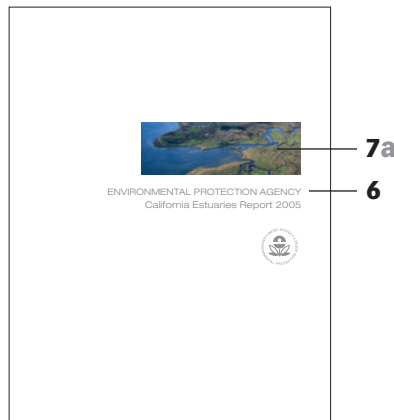
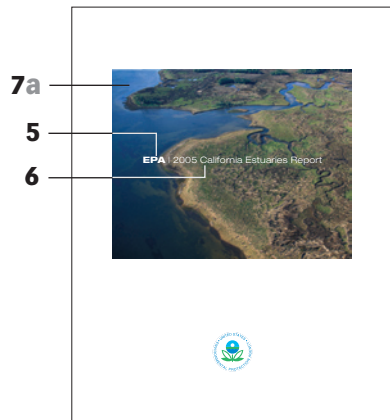
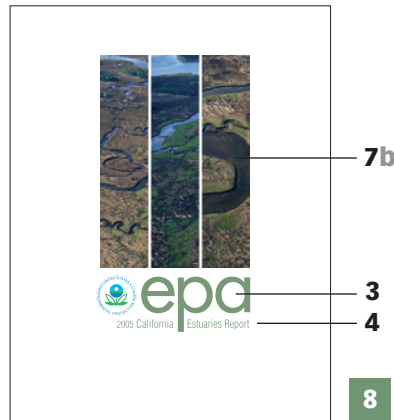
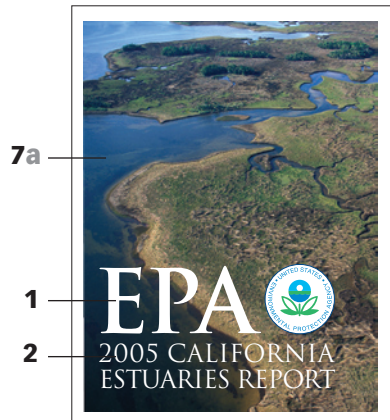


What size should the type be, and where does it go?

Work with what's in front of you and nearby. In this case, the peninsulas and inlets (above) become our rulers and govern type size, line spacing and logo size. This creates *visible relationships* that unify the design. Similarly, the extended typeface echoes the horizontal shape of the image.



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Trajan Bold](#) | 164 pt
- 2 [Trajan Regular](#) | 46/47 pt
- 3 [Futura Book](#) | 160 pt
- 4 [Helvetica Condensed Light](#) | 21 pt
- 5 [Helvetica Neue Heavy Ext](#) | 16 pt
- 6 [Helvetica Neue Light Ext](#) | 16 pt

Colors

- 8** C50 M15 Y55 K20

Images

- 7 (a-b) Photos.com



Subscribe to Before & After

Did you enjoy this article? Subscribe, and become a more capable, confident designer for pennies per article. To learn more, go to <http://www.bamagazine.com/Subscribe>

E-mail this article

To pass along a free copy of this article to others, [click here](#).

Join our e-list

To be notified by e-mail of new articles as they become available, go to <http://www.bamagazine.com/email>

Before & After magazine

Before & After has been sharing its practical approach to graphic design since 1990. Because our modern world has made designers of us all (ready or not), Before & After is dedicated to making graphic design understandable, useful and even fun for everyone.

John McWade Publisher and creative director

Gaye McWade Associate publisher

Vincent Pascual Staff designer

Dexter Mark Abellera Staff designer

Editorial board **Gwen Amos, Carl Winther**

Before & After magazine

323 Lincoln Street, Roseville, CA 95678

Telephone 916-784-3880

Fax 916-784-3995

E-mail mailbox@bamagazine.com

www <http://www.bamagazine.com>

Copyright ©2005 Before & After magazine, ISSN 1049-0035. All rights reserved

You may pass this article around, but you may not alter it, and you may not charge for it. You may quote brief sections for review. If you do this, please credit Before & After magazine, and [let us know](#). To feature free Before & After articles on your Web site, [please contact us](#). For permission to include all or part of this article in another work, [please contact us](#).

Before & After is made to fit your binder

Before & After articles are intended for permanent reference. All are titled and numbered.

For the current table of contents, [click here](#). To save time and paper, a paper-saver format of this article, suitable for one- or two-sided printing, is provided on the following pages.

For presentation format

[Print: \(Specify pages 1–11\)](#)



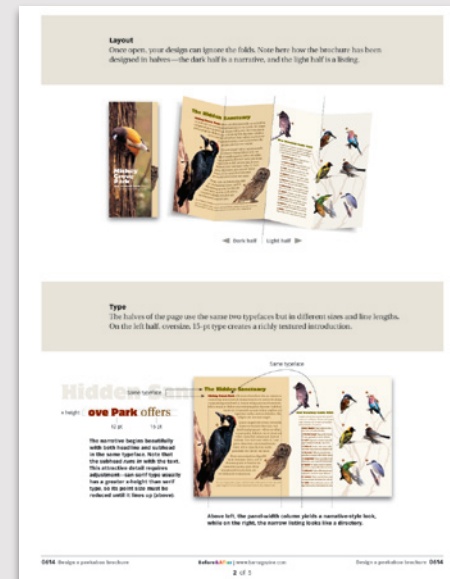
Print
Format: Landscape
Page Size: Fit to Page



Save
Presentation format or
Paper-saver format

For paper-saver format

[Print: \(Specify pages 13–18\)](#)



Simply borderless

How to design pages for desktop printers that can't print to the edge.

Before



(Left) How many times have you been stuck with a page like this? You design a nice page that's perfect as a full bleed (inset), only to have it scale to fit the printer margins, which are rarely uniform on one printer, let alone from printer to printer. The result is an *undesigned* white border that distracts from your good work.

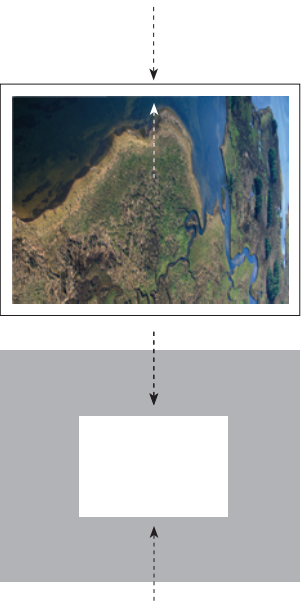
Modern desktop printers are small technical wonders that can put brilliant, high-resolution images on fine paper for pennies. But for \$99 they can't do everything, including print to the edges of the sheet (a full bleed). Most leave a white border, which is often irregular and differs from printer to printer.

This border can be a big distraction. Its real problem, however, is that the border is undesigned and undesignable.

So what to do? Instead of fighting it, join it. Amplify the white space, and make it part of your designs.

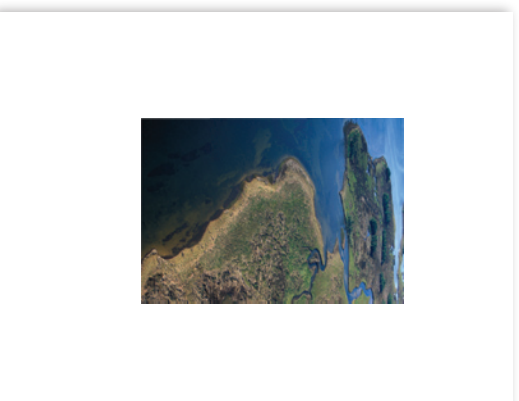
Make more white

The surest way to eliminate the white border is to *make more white*. Reducing your live matter visually disconnects it from the edge of the page.



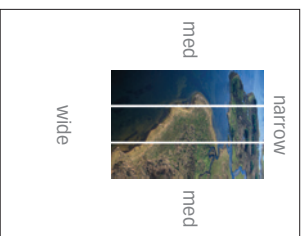
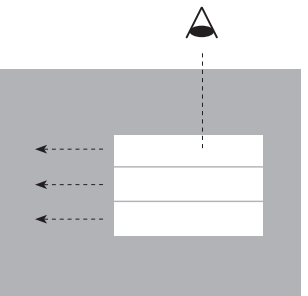
(Above, left) The close proximity of image to edge creates a visual connection, so the eye perceives a border. (Middle) Reduce the image far enough to disconnect it from the edge, and the border effect disappears. The image is now like a gallery piece hanging alone on a white wall (right). This smaller size has big benefit: You can crop and move the image around and actually *design the page*.

(Above, middle) Note that to maintain equal margins on all sides, the image has been cropped (it's skinnier), and the result is more focused on the descriptive coastline and more dramatic.

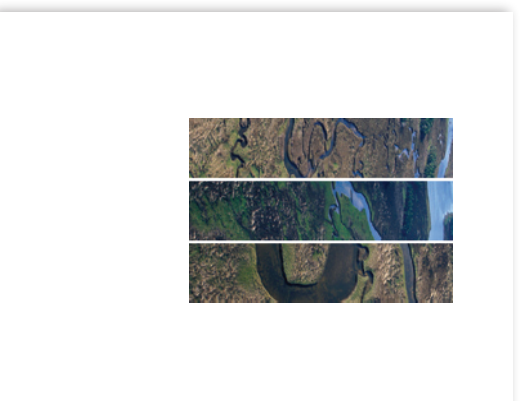


Get moving

Moving the image to eye level creates three different margin widths, so a frame never forms. Segmenting the image vertically moves the eye down the page.



Borders are static, so what you need is movement. (Above, left) The image at eye level yields more natural viewing plus three different margin widths—narrow (top), medium (sides) and wide (bottom)—which eliminates the border effect. Segmenting the image in columns creates activity within it and moves the eye down the page.



From one image you can pull out three or more column- or row-shaped areas. This is an excellent technique for using images that have more than one area of interest, because you can pick the most descriptive parts and eliminate the rest.

Above is one image divided vertically. You can also create a collage of two or three images (right). Mix and match colors, shapes and textures until you have a strong composition.

Coordinate the type

Typestyles and sizes that correspond to elements on the page will unify the design. Similarities convey harmony; contrasts convey energy.



Alignment sustains the vertical movement.



EPA



epo

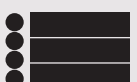
Straight-round

A straight, uppercase typeface contrasts beautifully with the round logo. But since the page and image are also rectangular, adding this heavy block would overwhelm the light logo (inset).



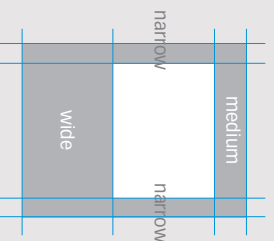
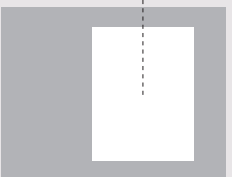
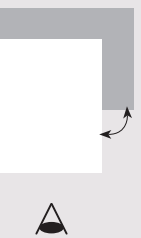
All round

A round, lowercase typeface (same height, similar weight) mirrors the round logo. Now seen as a group of four circles, the line contrasts beautifully with the rectangular image and gives the page two strong shapes.



Make a landscape

A horizontal image can be quite large. It has the energy of *contrasting direction* and still appears borderless because of its varying margins and side-to-side movement.



Same proportions

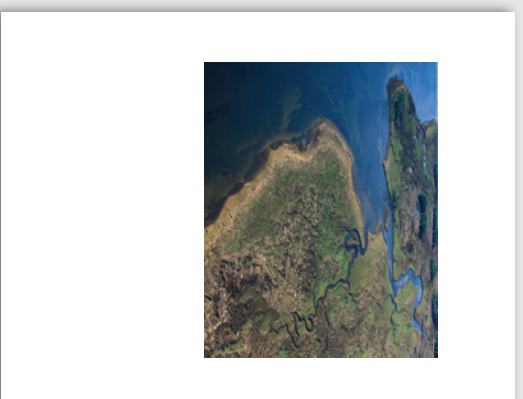
Unity image and page easily by using the same proportions for both; just rotate 90° and reduce to about 60%.

Eye level

A letter-size page is about the same size as the human head. Result: Eye level is the strongest and most comfortable place for a focal point.

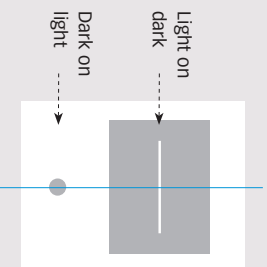
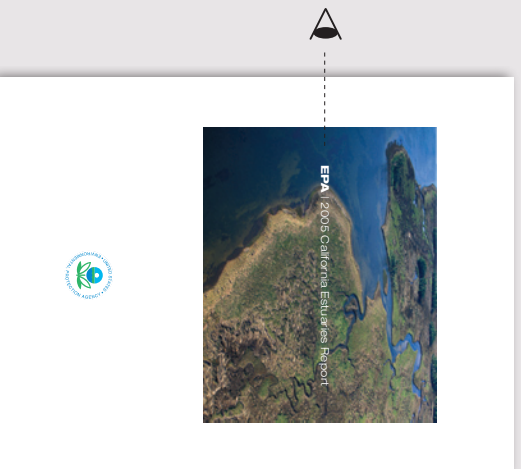
Varying margins

Eye-level placement results in three different margin widths, which adds visual activity and keeps margins from “connecting” and forming a frame.



Create a focal center

A single line of type sustains the horizontal movement and is a powerful and sophisticated focal point. The small logo completely controls the open space around it.



Small is definitely powerful. Here, the gallery effect— one image alone on a wall—is working to the max. The page has two zones, dark and light. Centered in each zone is a focal point—the headline in one at eye level, the logo in the other. Each controls its space. This subtle treatment is classier and more effective than SHOUTING—yoo-hoo!—for attention.

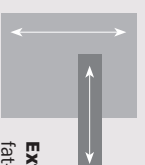
Heavy
EPA | 2005 Cal
Light

Key to the headline is *quietness*. One typeface in one line at one size but different weights yields a beautifully low-key setting.

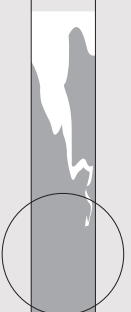
Energize the page

Cousin to the landscape format is the banner, an extremely panoramic shape whose total contrast to the vertical page creates real energy.

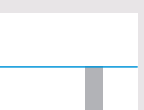
You'll almost always be surprised by how little it takes to convey the heart of an image. Here, one thin slice shows coastline, inlet, estuaries and wet and dry land masses. That's the whole story!



Extreme contrasts Tall-wide, fat-thin, up-down, side-to-side



Dull space The beauty of the panoramic shape is that it's so *different* from the page. It works for many images, but in this case we're seeing a little more uninteresting space than we'd like (above), so we'll crop it to half a page (below).



Align right

With image and text aligned to the right and at eye level, the white space—normally thought of as empty—is controlling the page. This is a very *active* design.

(Left) Border? What border? There is very little on the page but it's really designed; it has a strong focal point and a lot of movement. Both text and logo are colored gray to recede, leaving the image center stage. The irregular left edge (right) keeps unwanted lines from forming.

← -- ENVIRONMENTAL -- →
California Estuaries Report 2005

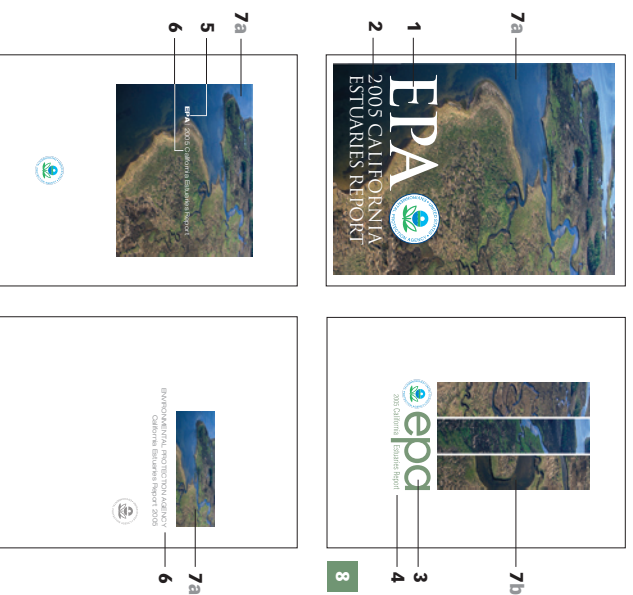
What size should the type be, and where does it go?
Work with what's in front of you and nearby. In this case, the peninsulas and inlets (above) become our rulers and govern type size, line spacing and logo size. This creates *visible relationships* that unify the design. Similarly, the extended typeface echoes the horizontal shape of the image.

Colors
8 C50 M15 Y55 K20

Typefaces
1 [Trajan Bold](#) | 164 pt
2 [Trajan Regular](#) | 46/47 pt
3 [Futura Book](#) | 160 pt
4 [Helvetica Condensed Light](#) | 21 pt
5 [Helvetica Neue Heavy Ext](#) | 16 pt
6 [Helvetica Neue Light Ext](#) | 16 pt

Images
7 (a-b) Photos.com

Article resources



Subscribe to Before & After

Did you enjoy this article? Subscribe, and become a more capable, confident designer for pennies per article. To learn more, go to <http://www.bamagazine.com/Subscribe>

E-mail this article

To pass along a free copy of this article to others, [click here](#).

Join our e-list

To be notified by e-mail of new articles as they become available, go to <http://www.bamagazine.com/email>

Before & After magazine

Before & After has been sharing its practical approach to graphic design since 1990. Because our modern world has made designers of us all (ready or not), Before & After is dedicated to making graphic design understandable, useful and even fun for everyone.

John McWade Publisher and creative director

Gaye McWade Associate publisher

Vincent Pascual Staff designer

Dexter Mark Abellera Staff designer

Editorial board **Gwen Amos, Carl Winthier**

Before & After magazine

323 Lincoln Street, Roseville, CA 95678

Telephone 916-784-3880

Fax 916-784-3995

E-mail mailbox@bamagazine.com

www <http://www.bamagazine.com>

Copyright ©2005 Before & After magazine, ISSN 1049-0035. All rights reserved

You may pass this article around, but you may not alter it, and you may not charge for it. You may quote brief sections for review. If you do this, please credit Before & After magazine, and [let us know](#). To feature free

Before & After articles on your Web site, [please contact us](#). For permission to include all or part of this article in another work, [please contact us](#).