

Graphic design basics: cheat sheet

A quick reference for your first business designs



Make your color pairings shine

The formula

1. Pick one **hero color** (the bold one).
2. Add one **neutral** (white, black or gray).
3. Add one **support** (soft or muted tone).

Neutral + accent



Adding an accent to a neutral (blacks, grays and whites) creates an easy, professional-looking pair.

Analogous



Analogous colors sit next to each other on the color wheel, and create a harmonious, unified look.

Complementary



Complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel, and when paired look bold and striking.

Font combinations that make sense

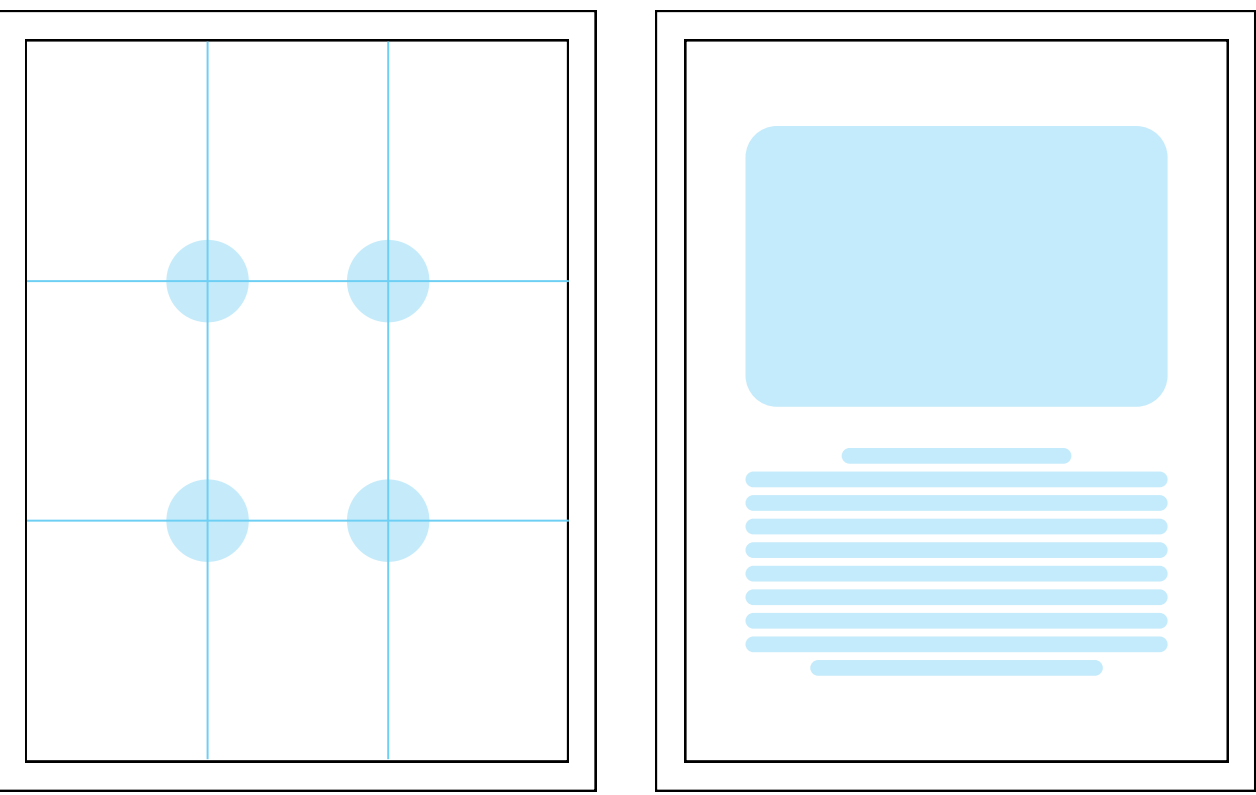
Good font pairing = one **headline font** with personality + **one body font** that's easy to read.

Category	Fonts	Best for
Classic and professional	Playfair Display Lato	Consultants, law firms, corporate branding
Modern and minimal	Montserrat Open Sans	Tech, startups, ecommerce, design studios
Friendly and approachable	Quicksand Quicksand	Cafés, lifestyle, handmade goods, wellness
Elegant and feminine	<i>Great Vibes</i> Lato	Boutiques, beauty, weddings, creative brands
Bold and playful	Fredoka One Open Sans	Events, kids' brands, food, entertainment
Editorial and high impact	Abril Fatface Lato	Fashion, media, luxury, posters, campaigns

The safest combinations are:

- **Serif + Sans Serif** to make a design feel polished
- **One font family** in different weights (e.g., Bold + Regular)

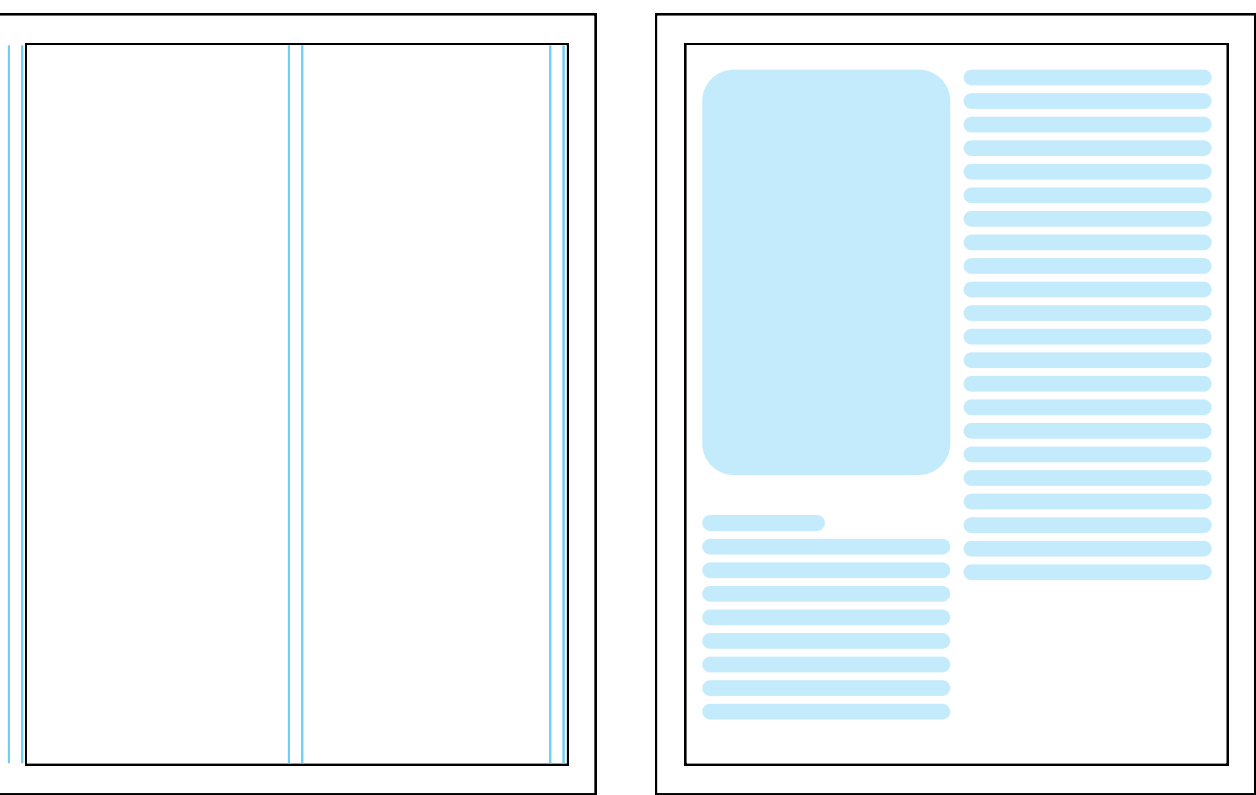
Beginner-friendly grid layouts



Rule of thirds grid

Divides the canvas into a 3×3 grid. Key elements (logo, headline, image) are placed where the lines intersect.

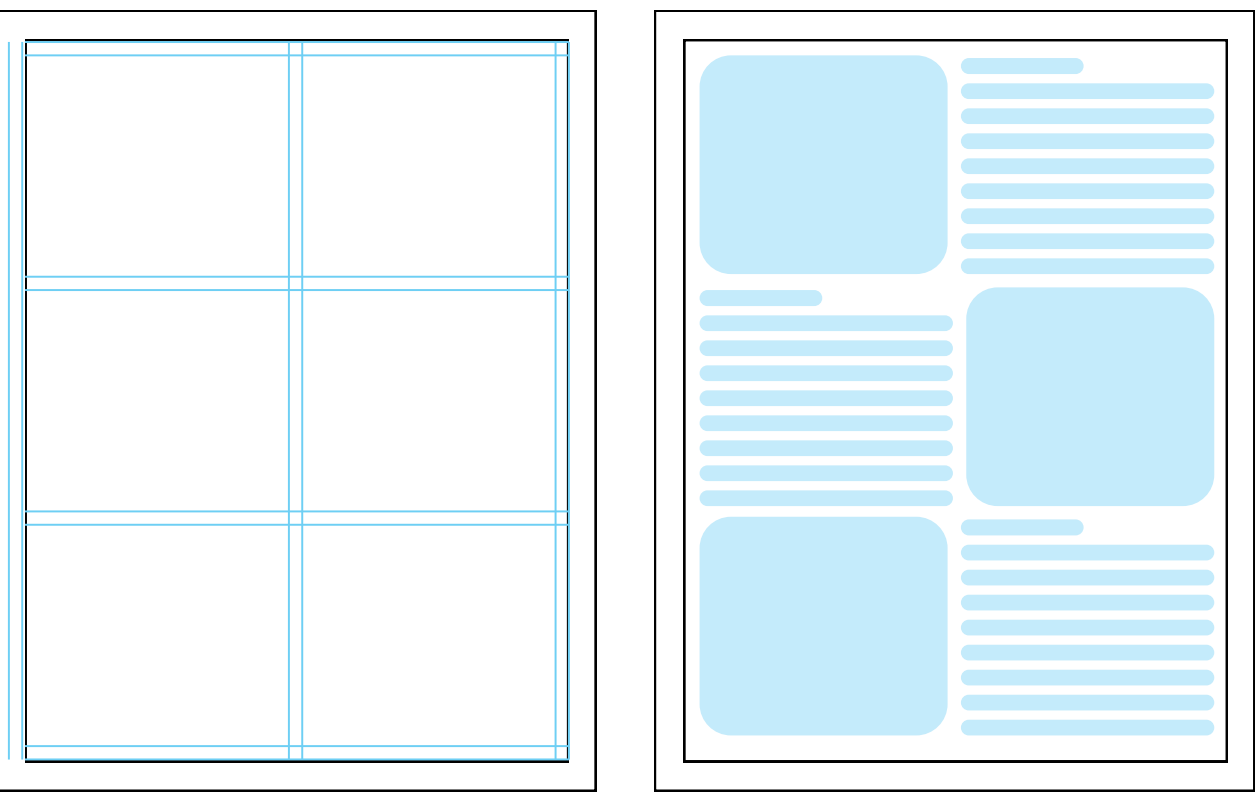
Best for: Flyers, posters, social media graphics



Column grid

Breaks the layout into 2-4 equal vertical columns. Content is aligned within columns for structure and rhythm.

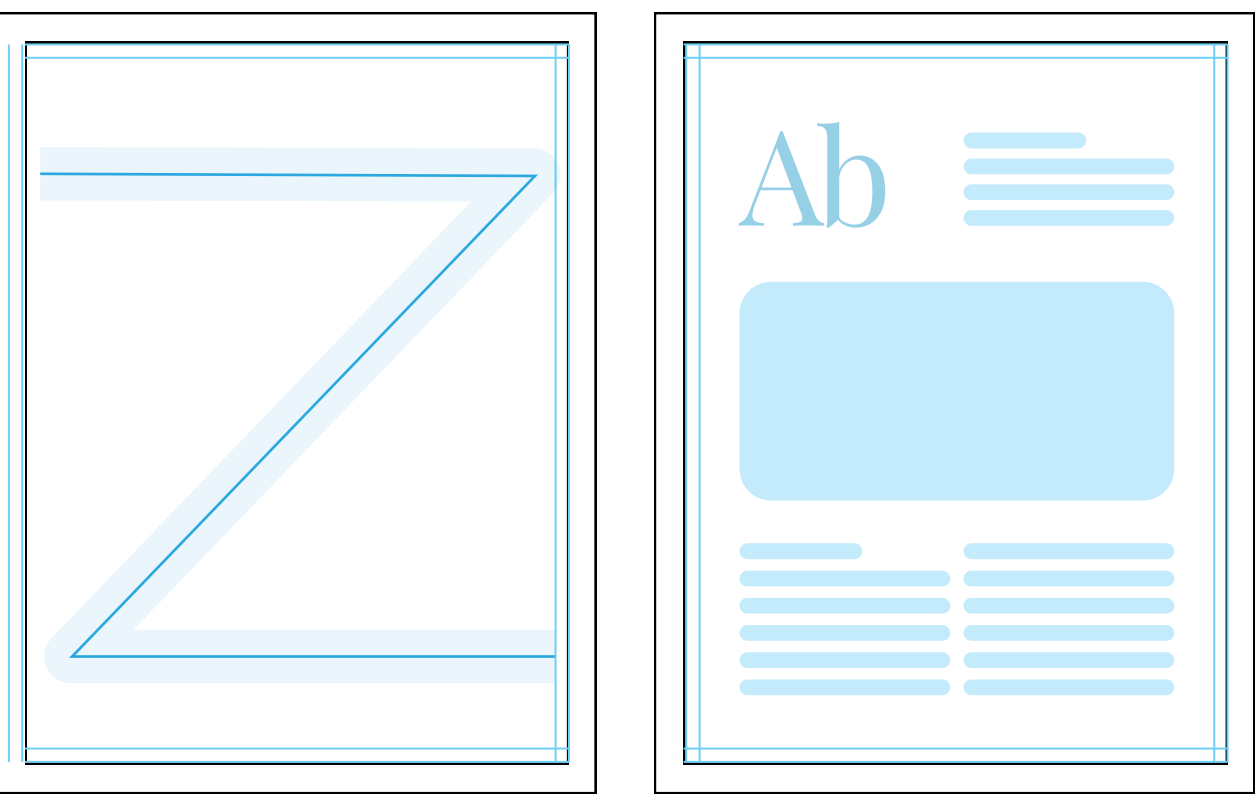
Best for: Catalogs, product cards, multi-product ads, presentation layouts



Modular grid

A combination of rows and columns to create evenly spaced modules. Each block can hold text or visuals.

Best for: Catalogs, product cards, multi-product ads, presentation layouts



Z-pattern grid

Arranges content along a “Z” path: top left → top right → bottom left → bottom right.

Best for: Hero banners, landing pages, simple ads, event invites