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Secrets of Terrific Type

Lesson 04-01: Alignment

In this lesson we will be covering all things to do with text alignment and justification. For this specific lesson, we will focus on alignment and how it impacts our designs.

Before we get into how alignment impacts our digital designs, let's first talk about what we (most likely) already know.

Alignment, in it's most simple form, is the position of text between a set of margins.

For both PS and PSE, we have Left, Center, and Right Alignment options.

Left	Center	Right
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And because we're already familiar with these settings in the Type tool's Tool Options, we're going to spend our time discussing how using the proper alignment can greatly improve our type designs.
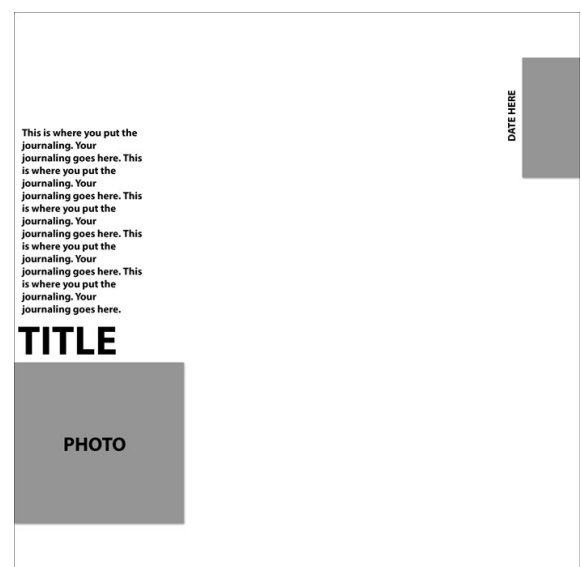
So, to start, let's quickly go back to the definition of Alignment. The key word here is margins. But unless you're creating a newspaper or a magazine where you have columns with clear margins, this idea of aligning text between a set of margins can be tricky.

The best way I can help you understand is to think of implied margins. Implied margins can be many things. But let's cover a short list of the most common ones.

1. Document Edges

Using the edge of a document is a great way to know how to align your type.

If you're using the left edge, use Left alignment.

If you're using the right edge, use Right alignment.

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling.
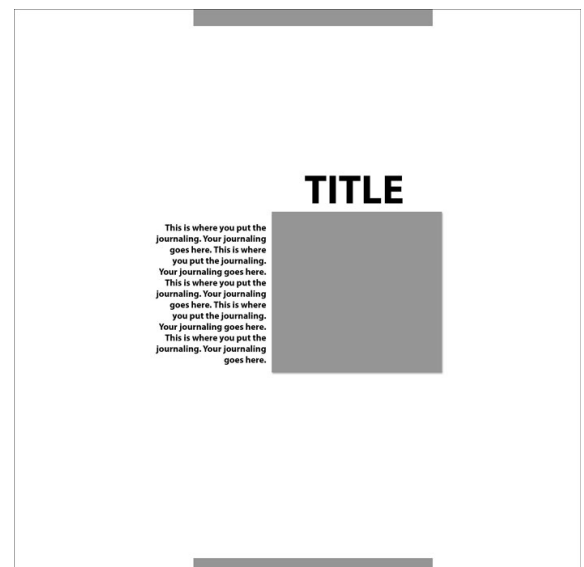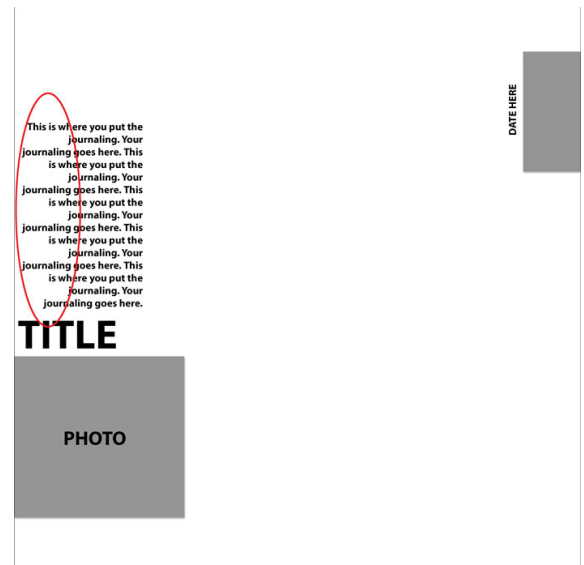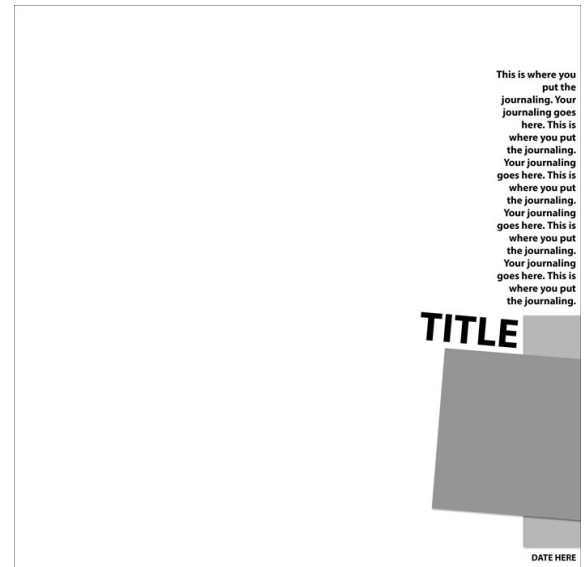
TITLE

DATE HERE

Why? You ask.

Because, if I were to use Center or Right Alignment against the left edge of a document, all of a sudden you have trapped space. See these empty spots where the text isn't there? This empty space breaks up the flow of the design and causes a less desirable effect. We always want to avoid trapped space whenever possible.

DATE HERE

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.

TITLE

PHOTO

2. Photo or Shape Edges

Using the edges of photos, journal cards, paper pieces, or other shapes with straight edges are another great source of implied margins.

Here's another template that can help us see how this works. If I place some type next to the left edge of a photo, I want to use Right Alignment.

TITLE

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.

If I don't, I'll again have trapped space.

TITLE

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. T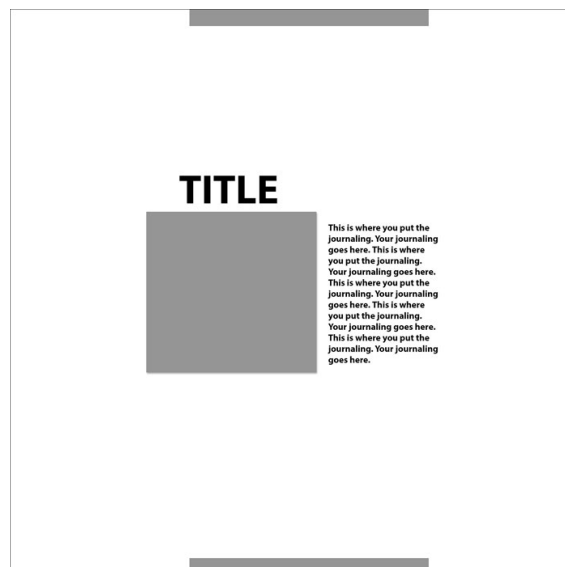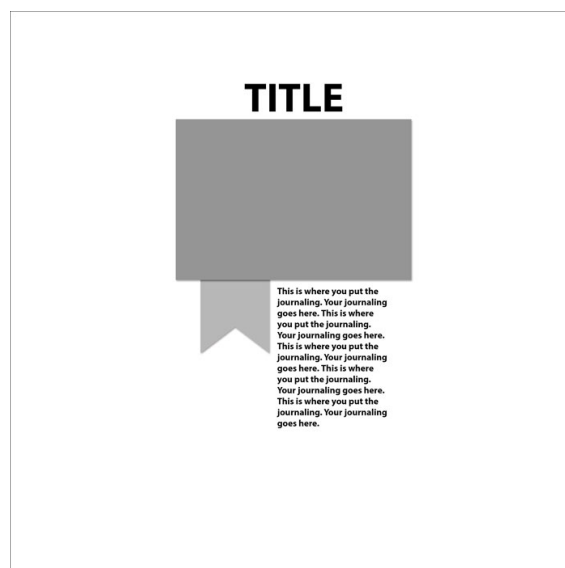his is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.

If I place the type along the right edge of the photo, I want to use Left Alignment for the same reason.

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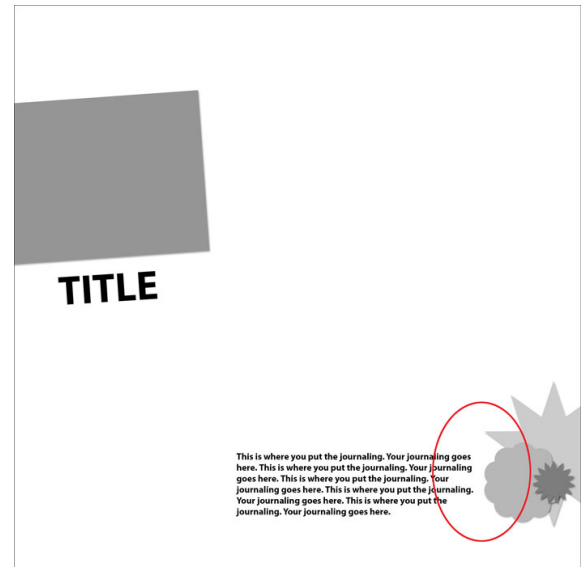
Here's another example where I placed my type below the photo but next to another shape. In this case, it's a small banner. I want to make sure I align my type up to the straight edge that's available to once again, avoid trapped space.

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This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.

3. Element Clusters

Sometimes, we can even use clusters as an implied margin. It's not always as straightforward to see, but if needed, clusters can help us establish the correct Alignment.

In this template, these shapes imply a cluster of elements. If I don't use the correct alignment, I once again, have trapped space.

TITLE

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.

But, when I use the correct alignment, everything looks so much better!

So, to summarize, is using alignment all that difficult of a topic? The answer is no. Both PS and PSE make it easy for us to quickly change the alignment of any type we add to our digital projects.

But, we do need to be careful and make sure we're using our implied margins correctly. Do your best to avoid trapped space and you'll be much happier with the results!

TITLE

This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here. This is where you put the journaling. Your journaling goes here.