

Rocking the Rectangular Grid



Class by Linda Sattgast

Design Beautiful Pages

Lesson 01-01: Rocking the Rectangular Grid

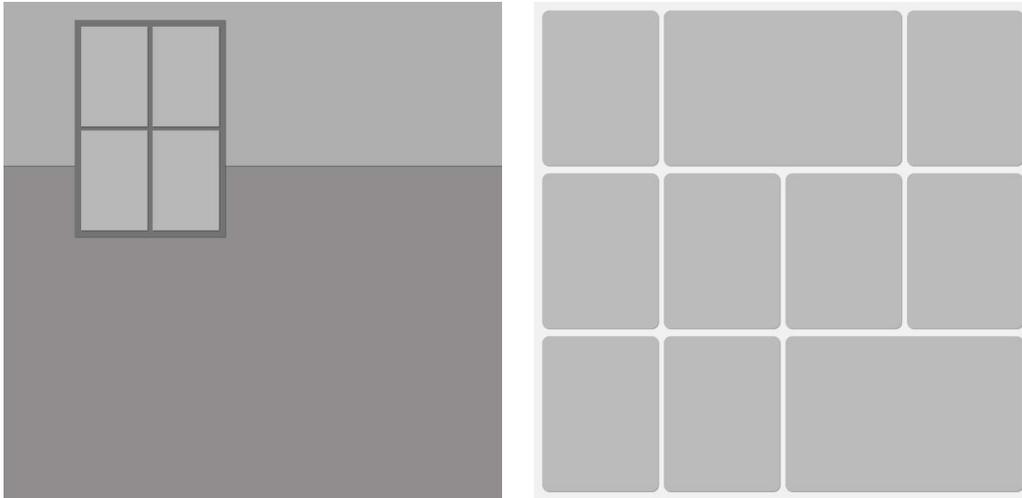
To start this series on page design let's look at one of the most historically stable designs ever—the Rectangular Grid. If a Rectangular grid sounds boring and passé to you, let me encourage you to give the humble grid a chance.

This kind of grid can go all the way from solid and orderly to quirky and fun. No matter how you present it, a grid tends to be pleasing to the eye. After all, a grid design wouldn't have stayed popular for this long if it didn't have universal appeal.

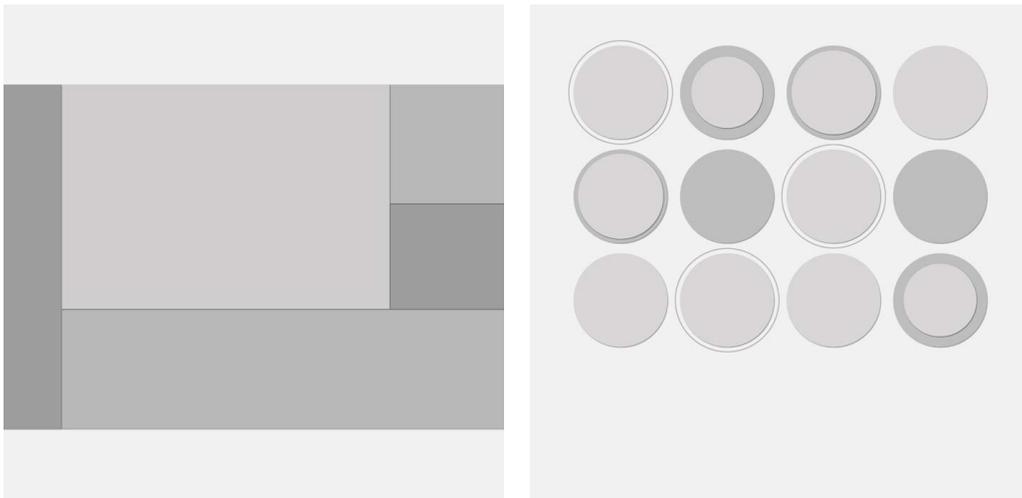


That's really the case with all the designs we're going to share with you in this Design series. They're all time-tested, proven designs that are hard to mess up and yet can be expressed in fresh new ways that feel as up-to-date as the latest blog post. Let's start with a definition of a Rectangular Grid.

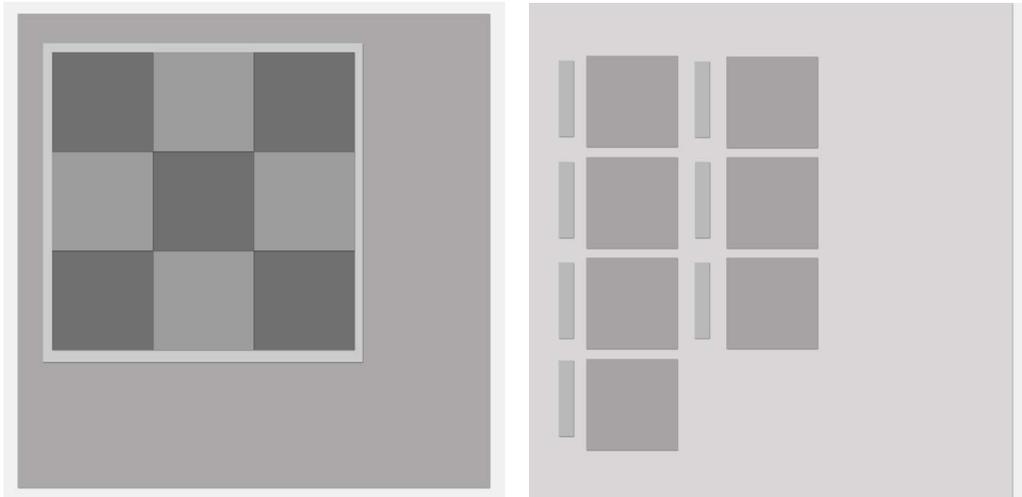
It consists of at least two rows and columns...but it can have more.



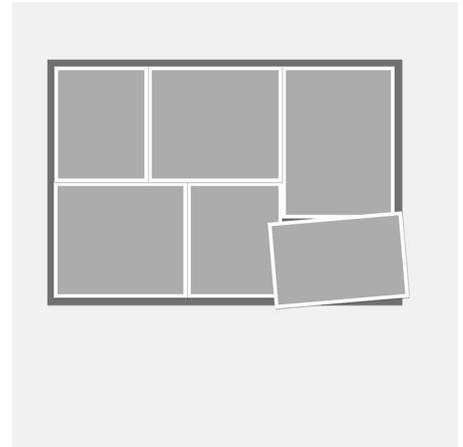
The grid sections are usually rectangular...but not always.



The outer edges of a grid block are straight. Don't confuse a Rectangular Grid with an Asymmetrical Grid, which we'll talk about in another lesson. With a Rectangular Grid the outer edges will be straight lines. But sometimes the straight line will be implied rather than actual.



And you're definitely allowed to break the straight rule for a surprise twist.



Rectangular Grid Variations

Now that you know what a rectangular grid is, you can begin to have fun with it! Here are some variations that will spice up your design:

- Vary the grid size—it can be large or small.
- Vary the grid placement on the page...and even the tilt.
- Vary all or some of the spacing between the grid pieces or rows, e.g. remove horizontal space or vertical space between rows—or remove all space between rows.
- Combine two or more grid pieces for emphasis or to accommodate a larger photo.
- Tip one or more individual grid pieces, or tip an entire row.
- Use rounded corners instead of square corners on the grid pieces.
- Remove one or more grid pieces.
- Offset the vertical or horizontal rows for a brick pattern effect while still keeping the outer edges rectangular.
- Use shapes other than rectangles, but keep them in a rectangular formation.

These variations will get you started, but as you observe rectangular grid designs in your favorite gallery, I'm sure you'll come up with other variations or even ideas of your own.

Awareness Challenge

Go to your favorite scrapbooking gallery and browse through the last week or so of layouts posted.

- How many rectangular grid designs can you spot?
- Are there a lot or just a few?
- Which ones are you drawn to?

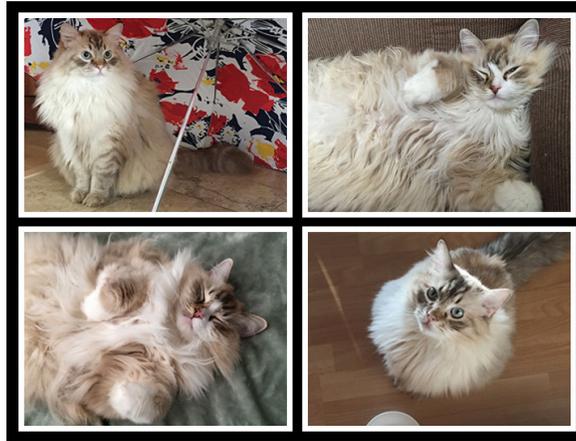
I keep a folder of my favorite layouts in each design category, and I look at them every so often for inspiration, so that's something you might also want to do.

Some of you will find it easy to create your own rectangular grid designs right away, but others may feel more comfortable starting with a template. For that reason we've included a starter set of grayscale templates in both a 12x12 inch and 8.5x11 inch size. You can download these templates on the Downloads page of the classroom.

Lesson 01-02: Photos For A Rectangular Grid Design

Here are some ideas for the kinds of photos that work well with a Rectangular Grid:

- Multiple photos of the same person, pet, or object



- Try to keep the zoom percent about the same for similar photos—especially faces. In other words, faces look better in a grid when they're approximately the same size.

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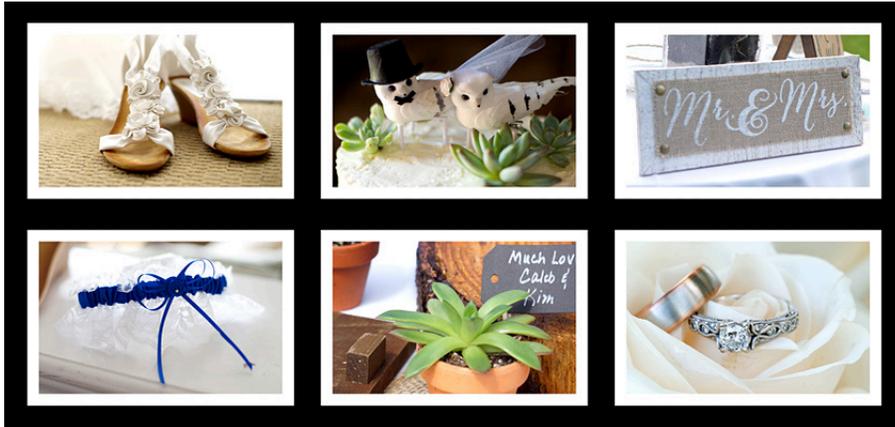
Not This >>>



- You can also use a rectangular grid for multiple photos of one theme, like a vacation, a holiday event, or a trip to the zoo.



- Since many grid pieces are small, make sure the subject of your photos is easily visible and recognizable. Zoom in to show the details if necessary.



- You can use all color photos or all black and white or mix them up.



- You can use one photo for the entire grid, but do choose your photo carefully for this option. Many photos don't look good divided up. I prefer to use this option with a photo that evokes a strong feeling. Place the photo carefully to create the effect you desire.



Above all else, make sure your photos look their best. It's not uncommon to see a beautiful page with a dark photo on it. To me that's a disconnect. It's such an easy problem to fix when your photo is digital. If you don't know how to do this, check out my Pre-Class video on how to lighten dark photos. Once you have your photos you're ready to get started creating your own Rectangular Grid!

