

Creating Page Layouts



25 min



Effective document design depends on a clear visual structure that conveys and complements the main message. The right layout should provide a consistent framework to help you organize the various elements of your pages, but should also be flexible enough to let you exercise your creativity.



In **Page Layout Design**, we explore the various ways that layout elements can be placed together on an underlying invisible grid structure.

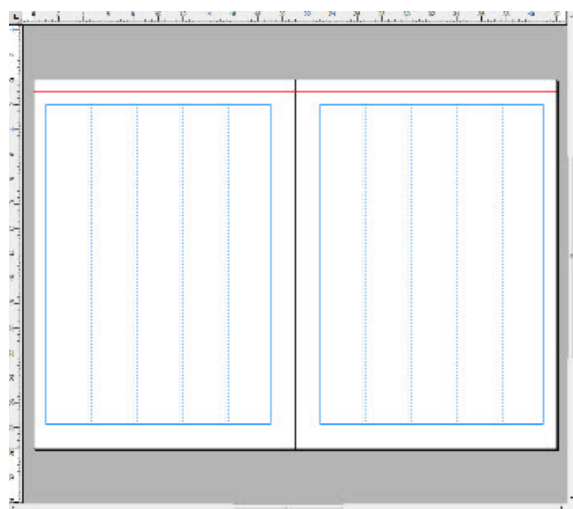
In this tutorial, we will show you how to set up a basic grid for a multi-column layout.

By the end of this tutorial you will be able to:

- Use the **Page Setup** dialog to set up your page size and type.
- Use the **Layout Guides** dialog to set up margins, columns, rows, and bleed area guides.
- Work with ruler guides.
- Create asymmetrical grids.
- View and customize the dot grid.

The grid is a traditional layout tool that dates back to the days when text was typeset onto vertical strips of paper, which were then manually cut and pasted onto card sheets. The print production process has changed dramatically since then, but the grid is still a popular page layout tool because it provides some crucial functions—for both reader and designer.


When reading any type of document, we expect a certain consistency from page to page. For example, we expect to find page numbers, footnotes, sidebar text, and so on, in the same place on each page. When all the text and design elements in a document have a consistent look and feel, readability is significantly enhanced.



A grid structure—such as the one illustrated here—makes it easier to provide this consistency by helping to determine such things as the width of text columns, the space around images and graphic objects, the placement of repeating elements throughout a publication, and so on. As you work with the grid, you'll find that having these guidelines for object placement significantly speeds up the layout process, and helps to ensure that your final layout will be a success.

In this tutorial, we'll introduce you to the various elements of the grid, and show you how to set up a basic grid structure in PagePlus. If you want to use a grid, but don't want to create one from scratch, you can quickly get started with one of our ready-made grid templates. You can use the templates 'as is,' or customize them to suit your needs using the procedures outlined in the following sections.



To download the tutorial project file(s), right-click the  link(s) and, depending on your browser, select either **Save Target As...** or **Save Link As...** In the subsequent dialog, ensure that you choose a suitable file location, such as a 'downloads' folder or the 'desktop', so that you can easily browse to your file when required.

 [A4_Brochure_3_Column_Asymmetrical_with_Bleed.ppp](#)

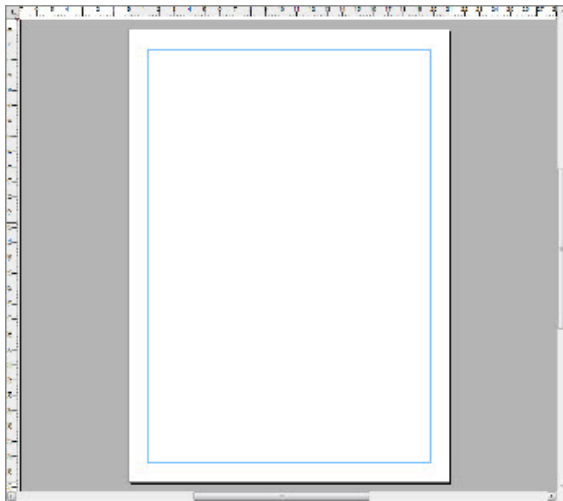
 [A4_Brochure_3_Column_Sidebar_with_Bleed.ppp](#)

 [A4_Brochure_5_Column_with_Header_and_Footer.ppp](#)


 [A4_Brochure_5_Grid_with_Header_and_Footer.ppp](#)

Let's begin...

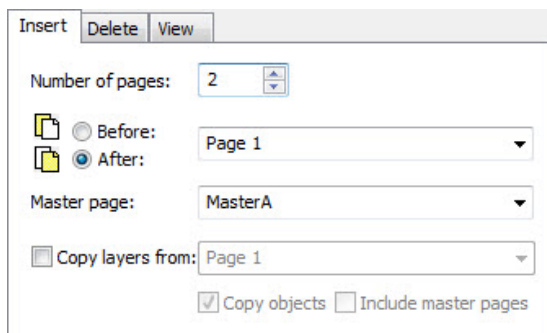
1. On the **File** menu, click **New > New from Startup Wizard**.
2. In the **Create** section, click **Start New Publication**.
3. Choose **A4** or **Letter** size paper, and click **OK**.



Let's add two pages to this publication.

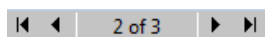
4. In the Hintline toolbar, click the  **Page Manager** (or click **Insert**, then **Page**).
5. In the **Page Manager** dialog, on the **Insert** tab:
 - In the **Number of pages** box, type **2**.

Notice that we can also select where to add our pages. For example, if this were a multi-page document, we could select **Before** or **After**, and then choose the page number from the drop-down list.



- We just have one page, so accept the default values (**After**, **Page 1**). Click **OK**.

The Hintline toolbar now displays '2 of 3,' indicating that you are currently working on page 2 of a 3 page document.



6. On the **File** menu, click **Page Setup**. In the **Page Setup** dialog:
 - To set up the page layout as facing pages (also known as spreads), select the **Facing pages** check box.

- To set up dual master pages (allowing you to run elements across the spread in the background of the publication, or position left- and right-side page numbers), select the **Dual master pages** check box.

The screenshot shows the 'Page Setup' dialog box with the following settings:

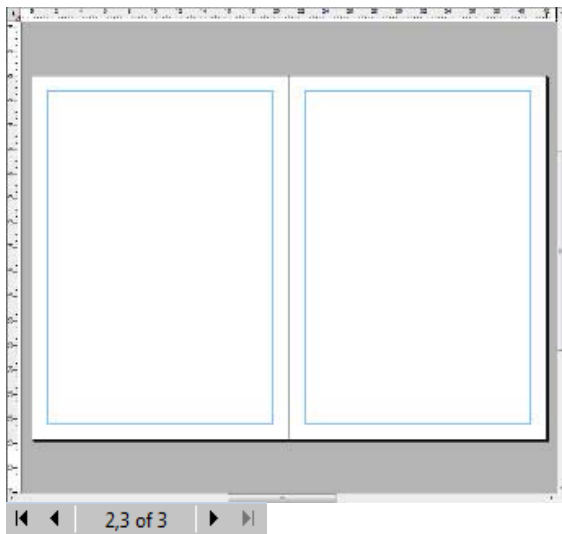
- Publication Type:** Regular/Booklet Publication (selected)
- Publication Size:** Width: 21.0 cm, Height: 29.7 cm, Portrait (selected)
- Page Size:** A4 (selected)
- Booklet:** None
- Start on:** Right Side
- Facing pages:** (highlighted with a red box)
- Dual master pages:** (highlighted with a red box)

- Click **OK**.




If you're setting up a facing-page layout where both left and right pages share the same master page, and you don't need to run background elements across the spread, clear the **Dual master pages** check box.

You will now see a double-page spread—pages 2 and 3 of your document, as indicated in the Hintline toolbar.




The blue box outlining the pages indicates the default **page margins**, which we'll adjust in the next section.

Setting up layout guides

Layout guides are visual guide lines that help you position layout elements, either 'by eye' or with snapping turned on (you'll find the  **Snapping** button at the right of the Hintline toolbar). Layout guides include page margins, row and column guides, and bleed area guides. In PagePlus, margins are shown as solid blue lines; row, column, and bleed area guides are shown as dashed blue lines.

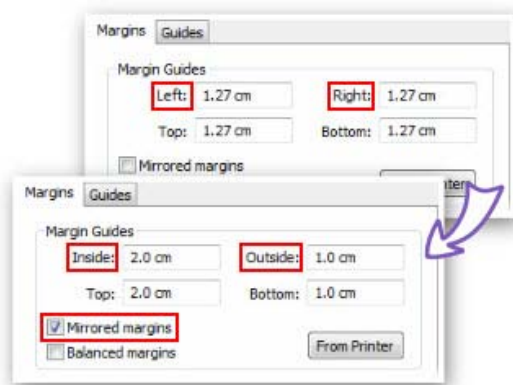
To set up layout guides:

- Click on a blank area of the page and then on the Page context toolbar, click  **Layout Guides**. (You can also click **File**, then **Layout Guides**, or right-click on a blank area of the page and choose **Layout Guides**.)

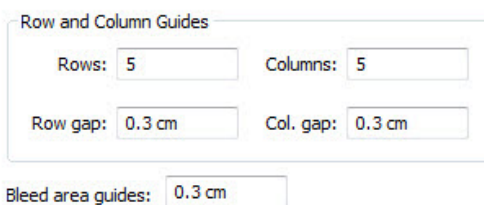
In the **Layout Guides** dialog, in the **Margin Guides** section:

- Select the **Mirrored margins** check box.

This tells PagePlus to change the **Left** margin setting to the 'Inside' margin on both facing pages, and to change the Right margin to the 'Outside' margin on both pages.

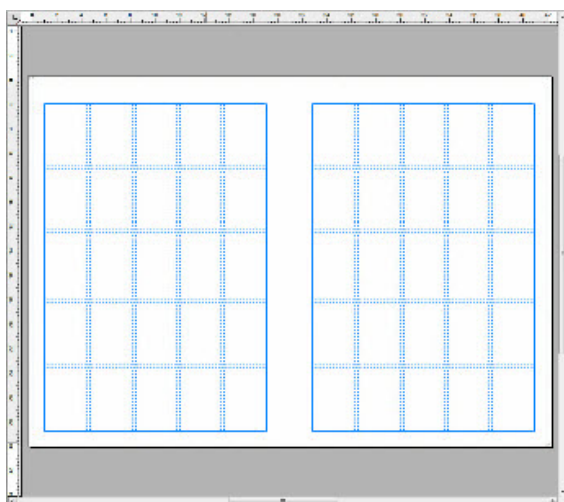


- Set the **Inside page margin** to 2.00 cm.
 - Set the **Outside page margin** to 1.00 cm.
 - Set the **Top page margin** to 2.00 cm.
 - Set the **Bottom page margin** to 1.00 cm.
2. In the **Row and Column Guides** section:



- Set the number of **Rows** to 5.
 - Set the number of **Columns** to 5.
 - Set the **Row gap** (the space between your rows) to 0.30 cm.
 - Set the **Column gap** (the space between your columns) to 0.30 cm.
 - Set the **Bleed area guides** (the 'trim edge' of the page) to 0.30 cm.
3. Click **OK**.

You should now see a 5 x 5 blue grid superimposed on each of your pages. Note also that the position of the margins has changed.



Can't see your layout guides? On the **View** menu, ensure that Guide Lines and Bleed Area Guides are selected, and that **Trimmed Mode** is not selected.



Bleed area guides

These guides help you to position 'bleed elements' that you want to run to the edge of a page. If your document is to be professionally printed, we suggest that you allow for inaccuracies in the trimming process by extending any bleed elements beyond the trim edge.

The page border expands by the distance specified, and the trim edge is shown with dashed lines and 'scissors' symbols.

Note that these guide lines are visual aids only; the **Print** dialog's **Bleed limit** setting extends the actual output page size.

See **Setting prepress options** in the **Generating professional output** PagePlus Help topic.


Adding ruler guides

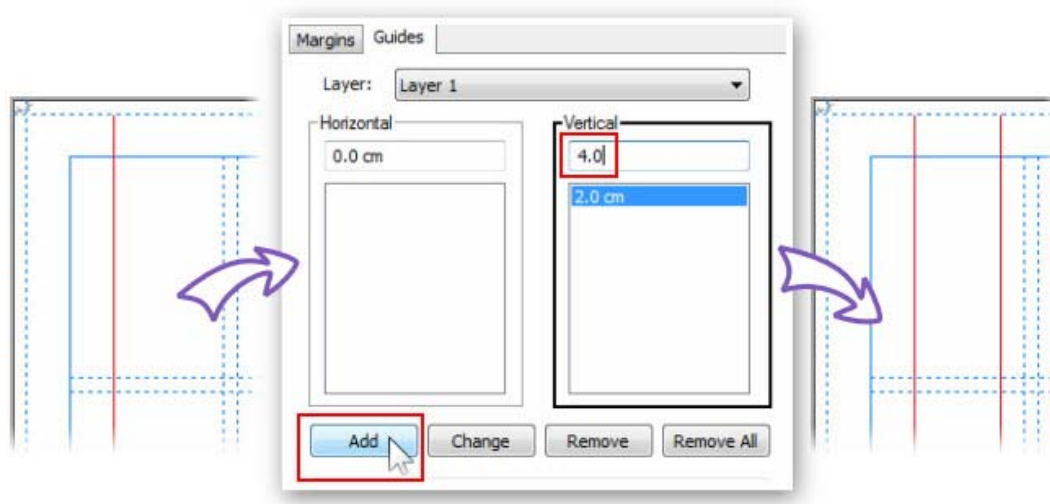
You can set up horizontal and vertical 'snap-to' ruler guides—non-printing, solid red lines that you can use to align headlines, pictures, and other layout elements.

There are two ways to create ruler guides:

- Automatically—in the **Layout Guides** dialog, on the **Guides** tab. Use this method to place multiple ruler guides onto a page in precise positions.
- or -
- Manually—by clicking and dragging on the rulers. Use this method to place individual ruler guides onto a page as you work.

To create a ruler guide automatically:

- Click on a blank area of the page and then on the Page context bar, click  **Layout Guides**.
- In the **Layout Guides** dialog, on the **Guides** tab, type the desired position of your guide into the **Horizontal** or **Vertical** box. Click **Add**.
- As required, repeat step 2 to add more guides, and then click **OK**.

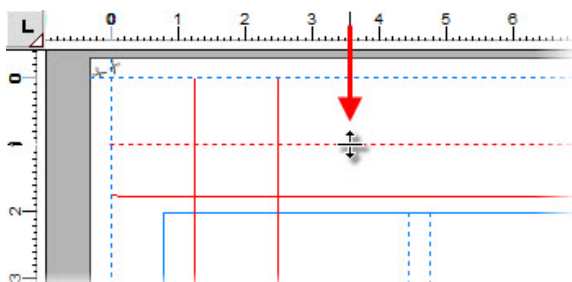


Solid red lines now indicate the ruler guides you created.

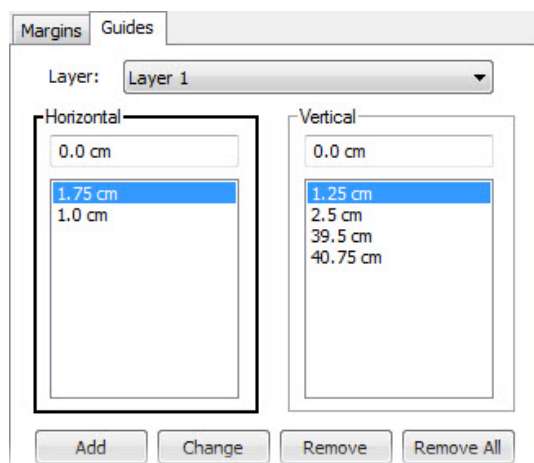
To create a guide manually:

- Click and drag on the horizontal or vertical ruler.

A red line indicates the new ruler guide.



If you now open the **Layout Guides** dialog and view the **Guides** tab, you'll see that your guide has been added to the list.



The dialog shows the guides we created to position the page headers and numbers in our publication.



If a text object is selected, clicking within the object's ruler region adds a tab stop; clicking and dragging elsewhere on the ruler creates a ruler guide.

Moving and deleting ruler guides

Whichever method you use to create your ruler guides, you can move them around or delete them at any time.

To move a ruler guide:

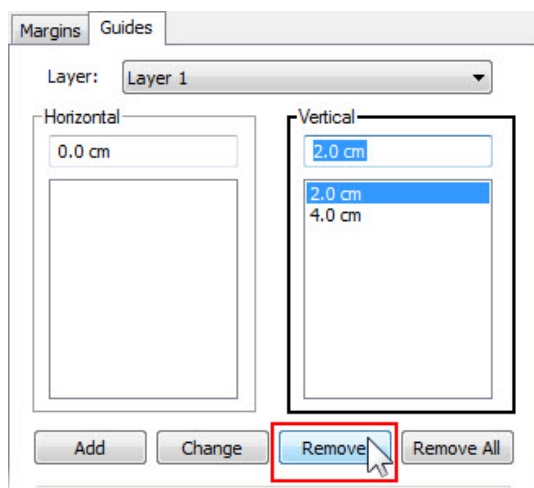
- Click and drag the red guide line.

As you drag, the solid line changes to a dashed line; once positioned, the line again becomes solid.



To delete a ruler guide:

- In the **Layout Guides** dialog: On the **Guides** tab, select the guide and click **Remove** (to delete all ruler guides, click **Remove All**.)



- or -

- On the page: Drag and drop the red guide line anywhere outside the page area.



Locking and resetting your guide lines

To prevent your margins, columns, rows, and ruler guides from accidentally being moved, you can lock them.

To lock your guides:

- On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**.
- In the left **Options** list, expand the **Layout** category and click **Display**.

3. Select the Lock guide lines check box and click **OK**.

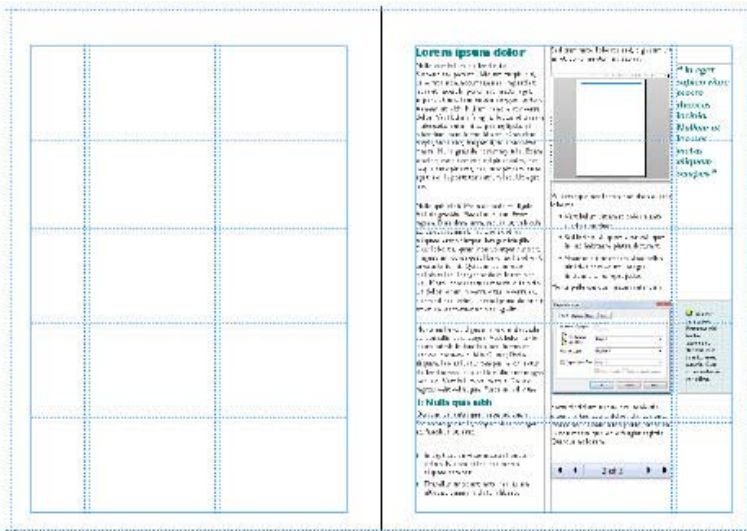
Note that this option will also lock the red ruler guides, so you will not be able to drag them freely around your page. If you choose not to lock your guidelines, you can still easily reset your original layout.

To reset your layout

- Click **File > Layout Guides**, click the **Margins** tab, and then click **OK**.

Creating asymmetrical grids

Once you've set up your basic row and column guides, you can manually adjust them to make your layouts even more flexible. This feature is particularly useful for setting up asymmetrical grid layouts, such as the three-column layout illustrated here.



In order to move the row and column guides, you must clear the **Lock guide lines** option in the **Options** dialog.

To adjust custom rows and columns:

- Click and drag a dashed blue row or column guide line.

You will have to adjust the row and column guides on each page of your document.

Asymmetrical grids on multi-page documents

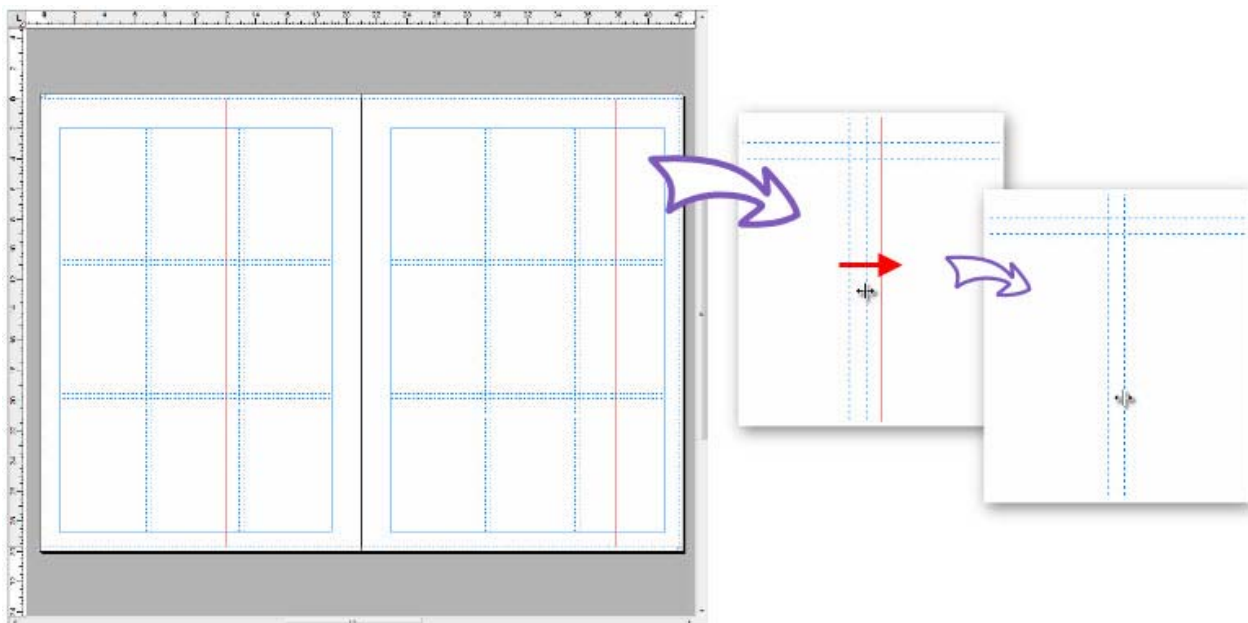
When working on multi-page documents, rather than manually adjusting the row and column guides on each page of your document, there are various ways to speed up the process.

Note: For each of the following methods, you'll first need to make sure that the **Facing pages** and **Dual master pages** options are selected in the **Page Setup** dialog.

Asymmetrical grid: Method 1:

1. In **Normal** page view, open the **Layout Guides** dialog, then, on the **Margins** tab, set up a 3 row, 3 column grid.
2. In **Master Page** view, add ruler guides to mark the asymmetrical units. You can set these up manually or automatically, as you prefer (see **Adding ruler guides**).

These guides will be visible on all pages of the publication.



3. In **Normal** page view, drag the row and column guides onto the ruler guides as you work on each page. You'll need to zoom in quite a lot to achieve precise guide placement. As the guides line up exactly, you may find that your ruler guide disappears underneath the layout guide.

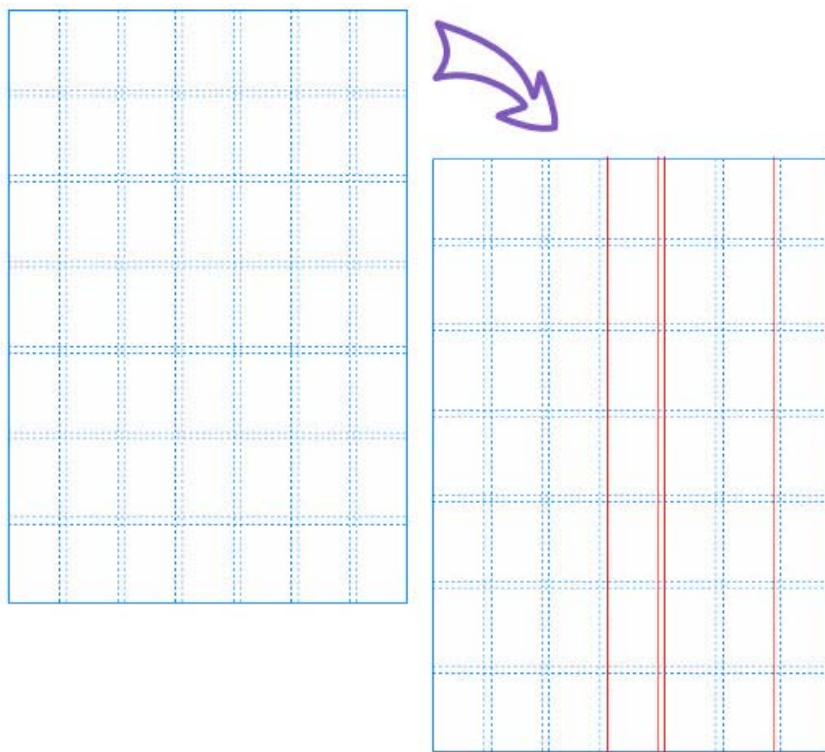
Asymmetrical grid: Method 2:

1. In **Normal** page view, open the **Layout Guides** dialog. On the **Margins** tab, set up either a 5 or 7 column and row grid structure. This will help us to develop a really precise asymmetrical grid.

In our illustration we used a basic seven-column grid as the starting point for a four-column asymmetrical layout.

You may need to experiment with the column numbers to get this right for your publication.

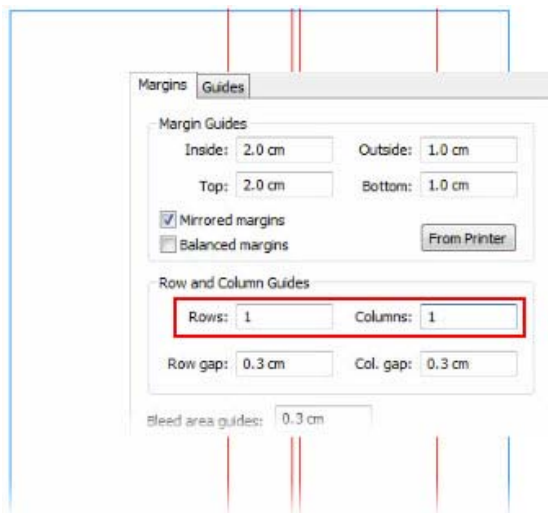
2. In **Master Page** view, use ruler guides to mark the asymmetrical grid units. You can set these up manually or automatically, as you prefer (see **Adding ruler guides**).



These guides will be visible on all pages of the publication.

3. When you've added all of your ruler guides, you can remove the original row and column guides.

To do this, simply open the **Layout Guides** dialog and type the number '1' in the **Rows** and **Columns** boxes. Click **OK**.



Asymmetrical grid: Method 3:

1. In **Normal** page view, in the **Layout Guides** dialog, set up a one row, one column grid.
2. In **Master Page** view, set up your asymmetrical grid using only the red ruler guides. You can set these up manually or automatically, as you prefer (see **Adding ruler guides**).

These guides will be visible on all pages of the publication.

Using the dot grid

PagePlus provides an optional dot grid, which you can use for precise placement of layout elements. If required, you can customize the dot grid—for example, by changing the grid display type and colour.

To display or hide the dot grid:

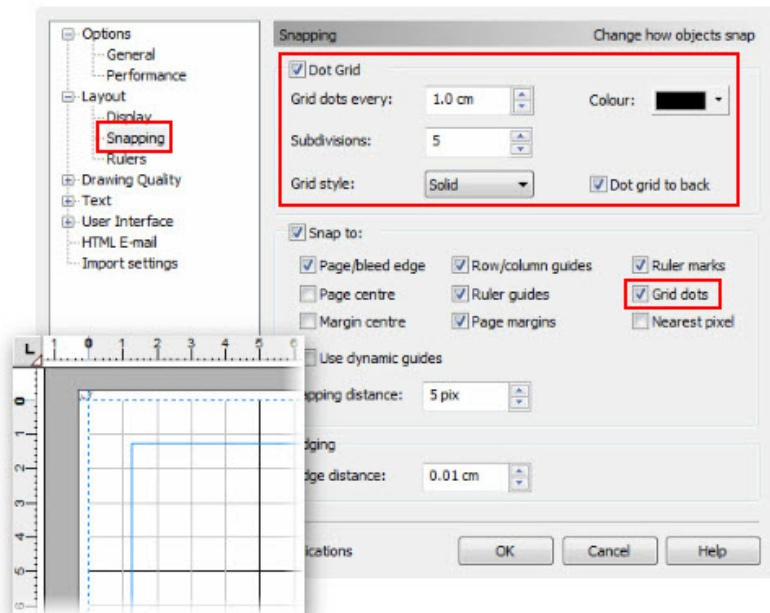
- On the **View** menu, click **Dot Grid**.

To customize the dot grid:

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**.
2. In the left **Options** list, expand the **Layout** category and click **Snapping**.
3. Select the **Dot Grid** check box.
4. Make the following changes as required:
 - In the **Grid dots every** box, choose the dot grid spacing.
 - To highlight certain lines, set the **Subdivisions**. In our example, every fifth line is highlighted.
 - In the **Grid style** drop-down list, choose the grid display type.

For example, to create the graph-paper effect shown here, choose **Solid**.

- In the **Colour** box, click to select a new grid colour from the drop-down palette. If you are using subdivisions, mid to light greys produce the clearest display.
- If you want your layout elements to snap to the dot grid, in the **Snap to** section, select the **Grid dots** option.
- Check the **Dot grid to back** option if you want the grid to appear behind the objects on the page.



What's next?

If you've followed the steps of this tutorial, you should now know how to set up a grid layout for any type of publication.

When you are happy with your layout, you can start placing your text and graphics elements onto it. If you need help with this, refer to the [Page Layout Design](#), for some layout ideas.

