Architecture deals with form and space. The designer must organize typographic elements in ways that are:

- **Coherent:** The page and the whole document must hang together and make sense as a whole.
- **Meaningful:** The pages should reveal a hierarchy or a logical progression.
- **Functional:** The page design should aid readability and navigation.

Success often depends on the underlying structure of the page. Often this structure is expressed as a grid. A grid is simply a set of intersecting lines uniformly spaced, like graph paper. This grid, the basic foundation for placing elements on the page, becomes part of the character of the page. It affects the look and the personality of the document.

“Excellence in design means mastering internal space, giving information a cleaner look and easing the reader’s journey through the page.”

— Mario Garcia, The Poynter Institute for Media Studies

**THE PARTHENON OF ATHENS**
The ancient Greeks developed the custom of building their temples to a proportion of about 2.25 to 1. The Parthenon follows that in its overall shape and in its inner rooms. Counting the corner columns both times, each side of the Parthenon had twice-plus-one the number of columns at each end. The dimensions of the foundation, 230 x 102 feet, followed the same proportion.
Ordering principles of architecture

AXIS

An axis is a line established by two points in space. It is the simplest way to organize space.

For any publication, a natural axis is formed by the edge of the page. The designer will add other axes, horizontal and vertical, to further divide the space. These axes are made apparent by the edges formed by columns of type. The axes are “implied” rather than actually drawn on the page. The axes are formed by the alleys and gutters. Alleys are horizontal bands of white space that separate page elements vertically. Gutters are vertically bands of white space (the space between columns) that separate page elements horizontally. We refer to alleys and gutters together as internal margins.

THE GRID
Ordering principles of architecture

AXIS

For most of the history of newspapers, layouts were governed entirely by the horizontal axis formed by the banner headline in a “T formation” with a vertical gutter, usually the gutter next to the dominant element on the page. This simple arrangement still is effective in contemporary publications such as ESPN the Magazine.
Ordering principles of architecture

AXIS

The eye naturally seeks out patterns of organization on a page, mentally connecting the dots to form axes. The page itself suggests an axis according to its length. Photographs used correctly, with its shape fitting its content, take advantage of this natural axis.
Ordering principles of architecture

The axes on these examples are in red. The example on the left is symmetrical and is said to have formal balance. The example on the right is asymmetrical, but it still feels balanced. It is said to have informal balance.

Symmetry

Symmetry is the balanced distribution of equivalent forms — photos, type blocks, white space, rules — positioned about an axis right down the middle of the page; one side is the mirror image of the other, at least in shape (left example). Most designers today seek an asymmetrical page (right example). Symmetrical pages can have a static feel; they don’t feel active. An asymmetrical page often has a feeling of movement. When done correctly, the asymmetrical page will still feel unified and at rest with itself; it will feel balanced.
Ordering principles of architecture

SYMMETRY

Formal balance (left page), or symmetrical balance, works when the design seeks a formal or conservative look, or when equality between two things needs to be emphasized. Informal balance (right page) is a more practical approach to avoid a dull, static design.
Ordering principles of architecture

HIERARCHY

Hierarchy deals with the importance or significance of a form or space by its size, shape or placement. Before any elements are positioned, the designer must study the content and decide on a hierarchy. The design then serves the hierarchy.

Research has shown that the eye is attracted first to the largest photo on the page, then to the largest type as the reader seeks more information. Thus, a large photo always will dominate the hierarchy of a page. It must be relevant to the remaining content.
Rhythm

The repetitive elements of any publication create a rhythm, a feeling of regularity, although as with music, that rhythm doesn’t have to be “square.” It can make use of asymmetrical balance and a planned variation in placement that feels syncopated.

Rhythm begins with the body text. The leading, the paragraph indents, the uniform internal margins all provide the underlying beat. Careful placement of typographical devices such as large initials, headlines, blurbs and pull quotes give the page a backbeat that breaks up the otherwise monotonous text, yet still is in time with it.

Pictures and graphics, arranged with careful attention to internal margins, add sizzle.
Ordering principles of architecture

RHYTHM

A page with rhythm has a natural feel, especially in the way readers take in the sequence of items. The use of a uniform design for repetitive elements ties the page together even as it deviates from exact alignment.