Type is thought
concretized

Type is spoken thought frozen on the page. Creating typography that "speaks" to readers requires a shift from prettifying the page to revealing the content's message.

Use typographic tone of voice to pull readers into the story
Show the reason to read on every page.

All elements must work together to make a single point. Boldness attracts attention by looking like a loud bass voice. Make bold headlines, especially all-caps settings, even darker by removing linespacing and tightening the letter and word spacing a bit. DTP programs' default settings are for text. Headline sizes require adjustment to get optimal darkness.

Use breakouts and pull quotes to lure the reluctant skimmer. When planning a story, imagine speaking it to someone. Using big all caps makes the message sound as if it were being SHOUTED AT YOU, which is only rarely an appropriate tone of voice.

Lead readers from headline to subhead to text.

Put goodies in the upper outer corners where eyes go naturally. Don't allow breaker heads to fall near column bottoms. It is like a voice trying to be heard from the middle of a crowd rather than from the stage. DTP programs allow you to decide a minimum number of lines of text must follow a breaker head before it is pulled to the top of the next column. Don't superimpose type on imagery. It makes the type very hard to read and reduces the image's ability to convince or communicate. Expressing hierarchy is the only reason to make typographic changes.

Hierarchy guides, attracts and clarifies the content
Divide information into three levels of importance: most important, least important, and all the rest. Develop typographic styles for these three levels of information (as well as captions and breakouts) that telegraph the content's importance and stick to the formulas. Change the type only to show a different kind of information. Typographic inconsistencies should occur about as often as setting type across new and exciting – though arbitrary – column widths.

Have a dominant typographic element. Bleeds are visually dynamic. Enlarge a worthy headline and let it dramatically bleed off the page, making sure, of course, that the remaining letterforms are still legible. Contrast display type's size and weight. Contrasts must be dramatic to be effective.

Contrast type's font and color. When a contrast is being made, add at least 50% more size, color, position, etc. Contrast type's position. Align elements and use belongingness.

Aligning elements connects and unifies them
Proximity, or nearness, is one of the most potent tools at a designer's disposal. Elements placed near or accurately aligned with each other look like they belong together. Extend alignments across the page or spread.

Breaker heads must belong to the text that follows them.

Captions should look glued to corresponding photos. Place captions and images in the same relative position. It's mere convention to put captions under the image. Use caption typography and placement as a design enhancement.

Add line spacing to one item to separate kinds of info.

Set type across different widths to separate kinds of info. It is possible to set type across too wide a column which repels readers. Unless you add more linespacing, do not allow more than 50 characters per line.

Allow columns to hang unfilled or size visuals to fill space. Tops of columns are much more valuable than column bottoms because that's where our eyes go. Do not sacrifice even spacing between elements or lines of type to have a neat rectangle of grayness on the page.

Liven layout by using an eccentric grid of five or seven columns. Leave one column mostly empty.

Break all display copy "for sense." The only copy that doesn't need to be line broken is text. Headlines and decks are obviously display type, whose job is to lure readers in to the text where the story is. Captions, breaker heads, and pull quotes are less obviously display type.

Use limited type and color palettes for unity.

Disciplined consistency reveals a publication's personality. Develop typographic styles and stick with them.

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