

# InDesign Type

Professional Typography  
with Adobe® InDesign®

SECOND EDITION

Nigel French

# **InDesign Type: Professional Typography with Adobe® InDesign®, Second Edition**

Nigel French

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# Introduction

Today we are all typographers. Everyone knows what a font is, and most people have an opinion about the fonts they like and those they don't. Typography is no longer an arcane trade plied by curmudgeonly men with inky fingers, but rather a life skill. We make typographic decisions every day—the printed material we choose to read, the fonts we select for our correspondence, even the advertising we respond to, consciously or subconsciously.

This democratization of typography is empowering; anyone can participate. But to participate well it helps to know a thing or two—with power comes responsibility. If you are using InDesign, or plan to, then you have at your disposal state-of-the-art software for creating typographic layouts of any length and complexity. It's worth bearing in mind that the concepts behind InDesign didn't just arrive simultaneously with the program's launch in 1999. InDesign itself may be a mere pup, but the principles upon which it is built are part of a long tradition. InDesign is part of a continuum of technological advances going back to the fifteenth century with the invention of movable type and moving with a quantum leap through the mid 1980s with the development of the PostScript page-description software language. The terminology and typographic conventions around which InDesign is built have evolved over generations. The typefaces on our font menus—even the funky postmodern ones—are clearly related to the letter shapes chiseled into the Trajan Column nearly 2000 years ago.

Whether you are new to InDesign or a seasoned user, you've probably found yourself wondering: What are all these controls? Where did they come from? And, perhaps more important: How do I use them, and why? This book attempts to answer these questions. It is not just a book about working with InDesign. Because it is impossible to talk about InDesign without discussing typographic history and best practices, it is also a book about why certain type solutions work better than others.

It's an oft-repeated adage that good typography is “invisible,” meaning that, rather than drawing attention to itself, typography should serve the words it

represents. As Stanley Morison, who in the 1930s brought us Times (the font designed for The Times of London, although the newspaper no longer uses it), said: “For a new fount to be successful it has to be so good that only very few recognize its novelty.”

This perhaps makes typography sound like a thankless task. Where’s the fame? The glory? There are few celebrity typographers, and those few walk the streets in relative anonymity. Nonetheless, typography is a noble cause. If typefaces are the bricks and mortar of communication, then we, the typographers, are the architects. A simple and understated building may pass unnoticed by many, but everyone notices an ugly one. Likewise with typography: Good designs serve their purpose and may not elicit comment, but we can all spot bad typography, even though we may not be able to say why it’s bad. This book is about avoiding ugly and thoughtless type—a major step in the direction of creating beautiful type.

## Who Should Read This Book?

This book deals almost exclusively with English-language typography—not because it is the most important, but because it is what I know. It focuses on print rather than online publishing, even though many of the techniques presented here apply equally to Web typography. It is primarily concerned with the typographic conventions of magazine and book publishing. The techniques in this book will help you create pages and layouts to a professional standard by following a certain set of typographic “rules.” My approach is utilitarian rather than experimental. These rules are not intended to be stifling or limiting to creativity. Rather, they are intended as a starting point. Learn the rules. Then, if you choose, break them—but break them consciously, knowing why you do so. Whatever you do, don’t ignore them.

I should also mention that although it was written specifically for Adobe InDesign CS5, most of the techniques in the book are applicable to earlier versions of InDesign. Where there is a keyboard shortcut for a command, I indicate the Macintosh shortcut first, followed by the Windows shortcut in parentheses. For example: Cmd+Option+W (Ctrl+Alt+W).

I hope that you enjoy *InDesign Type* and find it a useful addition to your typographic bookshelf. I’m keen to get your feedback, so please email me with any comments, corrections, or suggestions.

—Nigel French  
nigel@nigelfrench.com

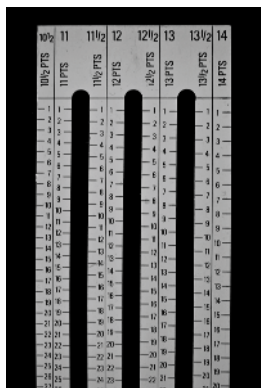
## CHAPTER 4

# Leading

LEADING (pronounced “ledding”) is the space between lines of type, sometimes referred to as *line spacing*. The term comes from the days of hot-metal typesetting when thin strips of lead, known as *reglets*, were inserted by hand between the lines of type to add vertical space. Lines of type without these strips of lead were—and still are—referred to as “set solid.” Leading plays a big part in the readability of your text. Body text is usually made more readable by a positive amount of leading (a leading value greater than the point size of the type). Headlines and display type, however, may benefit from negative leading (a leading value less than the point size of the type).

Was this the face  
that launched  
a thousand ships,  
And burnt the  
topless towers  
of Ilium?

**FIGURE 4.1** Leading is indicated by the red strips between the lines. The total leading is measured from the baseline of one line to the baseline of the next.



**FIGURE 4.2** You can measure the leading value used on a printed piece with a leading gauge.

## Getting the Lead Out

When it comes to leading there is no “one size fits all.” On one hand, tight leading increases the density of the type and gives your type authority. On the other, if you go too tight your type looks claustrophobic, and the descenders of one line may collide with the ascenders of the next. On one hand, loose leading can create a luxurious look. On the other, if the leading is too loose, the lines of type look like individual strips that don’t belong together as paragraphs. This is especially true if the leading value is greater than the size of the space between the paragraphs.

Leading is measured in points from one baseline to the next. The leading value includes the point size of the typeface and the actual space between the lines. Thus, 10-point type with 12 points of leading really means two points of space between each line. This is written 10/12, spoken as “10 on 12.” Other common type size and leading combinations for body text are 9/11, 11/13, and 12/15.

## How Much Is Enough?

Bad leading makes your text harder to read because the eye has trouble locating the next line of type. Getting the leading just right depends on several variables:

- **The nature of the text.** While text intended for continuous reading benefits from some breathing space, a short burst of advertising copy or a title might be more effective if the lines are tightly led.
- **Type size.** As type point size increases, you will want proportionally less leading. With display sizes, the same relative amount of space between the lines appears larger, so much so that it’s common to use negative leading for display type.
- **The width of the column.** Increase leading as you increase column width. Increasing the leading anywhere from 0.5 point to 2 points improves readability by keeping the lines distinct and preventing the eye from dropping off to the line below or doubling back to reread the same line.
- **The width of the column gutters.** Leading, like all type attributes, needs to work in harmony with everything else on the page. The width of the column gutters should be the same as the leading value or a multiple thereof. If the gutters are too small there will be a tendency to read across the columns; too large and the separate columns will look unconnected.

Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are a connoisseur of wine. For if you have no feelings about wine one way or the other, you will want the sensation of drinking the stuff out of a vessel that may have cost thousands of pounds; but if you are a member of that vanishing tribe, the amateurs of fine vintages, you will choose the crystal, because everything about it is calculated to reveal rather than hide the beautiful thing which it was meant to contain.

Perpetua 9/11

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10/12

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11/13

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12/15

**FIGURE 4.3** An excerpt from Beatrice Ward's influential 1932 essay on typography *The Crystal Goblet*, showing common leading and type size combinations.



I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.

Hoefer Text 9.5/Auto (11.4)

The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.

Hoefer Text 17/Auto (21.6)

The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.

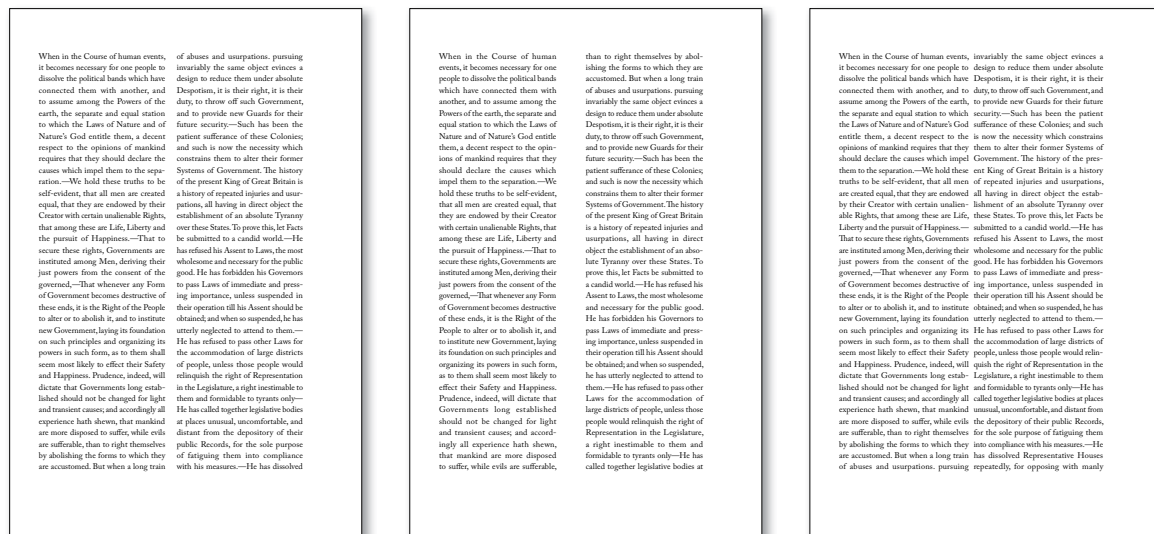
Hoefer Text 17/18

**FIGURE 4.4** Positive leading works OK for body text sizes (A), but as the type gets bigger (B), proportionally less leading is needed (C).

**FIGURE 4.5** Leading and column width. In the top example the leading is too tight; below, the leading has been increased to compensate for the wide column.

How will the struggle for existence, briefly discussed in the last chapter, act in regard to variation? Can the principle of selection, which we have seen is so potent in the hands of man, apply under nature? I think we shall see that it can act most efficiently. Let the endless number of slight variations and individual differences occurring in our domestic productions, and, in a lesser degree, in those under nature, be borne in mind; as well as the strength of the hereditary tendency. Under domestication, it may be truly said that the whole organisation becomes in some

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**FIGURE 4.6** In the example on the left, the gutter width is the same as the leading value. In the center, the gutter width is too big and the columns lose their visual relationship to each other. On the right, the gutter is too small so that the two columns look almost like a single line.

- **The size of the word spaces.** Justified type in narrow columns, such as in newspapers, may result in word spaces that are larger than the leading size. This causes the eye to jump to the next line rather than to the next word. In such situations, adding extra leading ensures that the space between the lines is at least as wide as the space between the words. Better still, don't set justified type in narrow columns.
- **The color of the background.** Because we're used to reading black type on white paper, when we use the opposite, we're guaranteed to get attention. However, reversed type tends to "sparkle," making it hard to read. A slight increase in leading—as well as avoiding fonts with delicate serifs—can compensate.

**TIP:** A convenient rule of thumb for determining leading is to take the width of a column in picas and divide it by the type point size, then round the result to the nearest half point. For example, if I have 10-point type on a 24-pica measure my leading is 2.4, rounded up to 2.5 and expressed as 12.5 (the lead added to the point size).

## Leading Shortcuts

The keyboard shortcuts for changing the leading of a selected range of text are Option+Up Arrow (Alt+Up Arrow) to tighten the leading and Option+Down Arrow (Alt+Down Arrow) to loosen the leading. The amount is determined by the value in the Size/Leading field in the Units & Increments Preferences. To increase or decrease the leading value by five times this amount, press Cmd+Option+Up Arrow (Ctrl+Alt+Up Arrow) or Cmd+Option+Down Arrow (Ctrl+Alt+Down Arrow).

How will the struggle for existence, briefly discussed in the last chapter, act in regard to variation? Can the principle of selection, which we have seen is so potent in the hands of man, apply under nature? I think we shall see that it can act most efficiently. Let the endless number of slight variations and individual differences occurring in our domestic productions, and, in a lesser degree, in those under nature, be borne in mind; as well as the strength of the hereditary tendency. Under domestication,

How will the struggle for existence, briefly discussed in the last chapter, act in regard to variation? Can the principle of selection, which we have seen is so potent in the hands of man, apply under nature? I think we shall see that it can act most efficiently. Let the endless number of slight variations and individual differences occurring in our domestic productions, and, in a lesser degree, in those under nature, be borne in mind; as well

**FIGURE 4.7** With justified type on a narrow measure, it helps to increase the leading to ensure that the space between the lines is not less than the space between the words.

One of London's most loved landmarks, Battersea Power Station now faces an uncertain future. Admired for its majestic four-chimney skyline silhouette, Battersea Power Station supplied London with electricity between 1933 and 1983. Designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, whose other design credits include Waterloo Bridge and the red telephone box,

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**FIGURE 4.8** Type that reverses out of a solid color benefits from increased leading (right).

- **The characteristics of the typeface.** Typefaces with larger x-heights, such as Helvetica, are perceived as bigger than other typefaces at equivalent sizes. The lowercase letters are large relative to the size of the overall character, and thus require more leading.

Didone (also called Modern) typefaces, like Bodoni, that have a strong vertical stress guide the eye down the page rather than across the line. Adding more leading with these typefaces keeps the eye tracking horizontally rather than vertically.

**FIGURE 4.9** Typefaces with a large x-height, like Helvetica, require more leading. Didone or Modern typefaces, like Bodoni, that have a strong vertical stress require more leading to keep the eye moving along the line, rather than down the page.

# Type

If books are printed in order to be read, we must distinguish readability from what the optician would call legibility. A page set in 14-pt Bold Sans is, according to the laboratory tests, more *legible* than one set in 11-pt Baskerville. A public speaker is more *audible* in that sense when he bellows. But a good speaking voice is one which is inaudible as a voice. It is the transparent goblet again!

Adobe Caslon Pro 10/12

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Adobe Caslon Pro 10/12

# Type

x-height

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Helvetica 10/13

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Bodoni 10/12.5



Top Hat,  
White Tie  
& Tails

**FIGURE 4.10** Even though Bernhard Modern has elongated ascenders, it has a low x-height and short descenders, and so can be leaded tightly (bottom).

Colorful vintage  
matchbook designs  
advertising the  
Flying Rani.

**FIGURE 4.11** Raniscript has elongated ascenders and descenders, but its low x-height means it looks good tightly leaded.

Typefaces that combine a low x-height with particularly tall ascenders require special treatment. The low x-height begs for tighter leading, but tighter leading might lead to the ascenders and descenders colliding. Much depends on the characters themselves. If you're working on display type, rewording—if you have editorial license—might make all the difference. Let common sense prevail—and be open to the possibility that colliding ascenders and descenders might even look good in certain situations.

Bold and Semibold typefaces benefit from extra leading to prevent the *type color*—the darkness or blackness of the letterforms as a block—appearing too dense.

Typefaces with small x-heights, like Garamond, appear to have more horizontal space between lines and thus require less leading.

Type set in all caps requires less leading because the lack of descenders makes the lines appear farther apart.

**TIP:** The paragraph mark, or pilcrow, at the end of every paragraph carries the text formats. Not including it in a selection can result in inconsistent leading. To select the whole paragraph, click four times in the paragraph rather than swiping across it with the Type Tool—and make sure your Hidden Characters are shown.

The quick brown  
fox jumps over  
the lazy dog

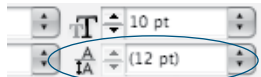
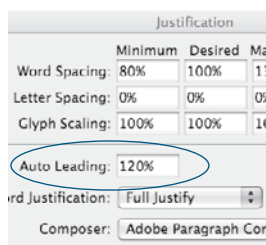
Chaparral Pro Semibold 28/31

THE QUICK  
BROWN FOX  
JUMPS OVER  
THE LAZY DOG

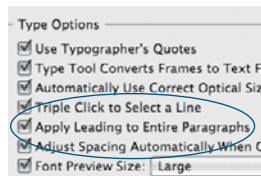
Chaparral Pro Semibold 28/27

**FIGURE 4.12** The same headline in all caps needs less leading because there are no descenders.

**FIGURE 4.13** Stacked all caps with negative leading to create a wall of type.



**FIGURE 4.14** By default the Auto Leading value is 120% of the point size of the type. When Auto Leading is chosen the value appears in parentheses on the Control Panel.



**FIGURE 4.15** The Apply Leading to Entire Paragraphs option keeps your leading within a paragraph consistent. However, it doesn't work with Auto Leading.

When you work in points, there's an easy way to determine the leading value for a specific number of lines in your type area. First, draw a rectangle between the top and bottom margins of a page. Then, insert your cursor in the Control Panel after the height value of the rectangle and type /N (where N is the desired number of lines). Press the Tab key to divide the height of the rectangle by the number of lines. The new height of the rectangle is your desired leading value. You can now delete the rectangle.

## (Not) Using Auto Leading

Auto Leading is a relatively new concept, emerging with desktop publishing in the mid-1980s. Auto Leading allows InDesign to assign a leading value based on the type's point size. By default, Auto Leading is 120 percent of the type size, although you can change this in your Justification options. Leading values in parentheses indicate Auto Leading.

The best thing you can say about Auto Leading is that it's convenient. You can change your text size as often as you like and your type will always be readable. As your font size increases or decreases, so does your leading.

The largest leading value in a line of type determines the leading for the whole line, which means that the leading will be inconsistent if you inadvertently make one character bigger than the rest of the text. You can change this behavior in your Type preferences by selecting the Apply Leading to Entire Paragraphs option. This ensures that only one leading value can be applied to any given paragraph. Changing this setting does not affect the leading in existing frames. This may be a worthwhile "safety" feature, but strangely, it does not apply to paragraphs with Auto Leading applied. The problem with having this preference turned on is that when you apply optical leading, you need to apply more than one leading value within a paragraph.

Auto Leading is useful when you're experimenting with type sizes, but when you decide upon the size, convert the leading value to an absolute number—even if it is the same as the Auto Leading value. Here's why you shouldn't use auto leading:

- Auto Leading is proportional to your type size—but specific to the biggest piece of type in the paragraph. This means that if you have one word larger than the rest of the paragraph, your leading value will be 120 percent of the largest word or character.
- Auto Leading doesn't give you the control that you need. Sure, if you're using 10-point type, Auto Leading is 12 points, a nice easy number to work with. However, if you're working with 11-point type, then your leading value is 13.2, which is difficult to calculate in multiples if you intend to work with a baseline grid.
- While Auto Leading works fine for body text, it can look terrible when applied to display type, which generally requires less leading.

## Auto Leading and Inline Graphics

Auto Leading does have a legitimate use: when you're using inline graphics—picture frames that are pasted into a blank paragraph in the text frame and thereafter move with the flow of text. If the text makes specific reference to figures above or below, these figures are candidates to be made inline graphics, so that the relationship between text and graphic is never disrupted by edits to the text. Inline graphics are a hybrid of text and graphics: You control the spacing of inline graphics using leading. Auto Leading ensures there's always enough space for the graphic on the line, since the leading value increases or decreases according to the height of the graphic. When you're working with inline graphics, make a paragraph style with the leading value set to Auto (you may wish to adjust the actual percentage of the Auto Leading) and apply this to the blank-line paragraphs into which the graphics are placed or pasted.

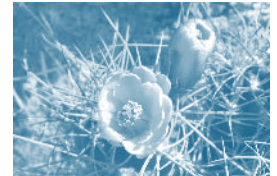
## Keep It Consistent, Except ...

Leading, like so much in typography, is about rhythm—and as with a piece of music, you want your rhythm to be steady and unflinching. The best way to achieve this is to set the leading values within Paragraph Styles. Should you need to change the leading values, you can edit the style definition rather than work on the text locally.

We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

**FIGURE 4.16** The problem with Auto Leading: 120% of what exactly? Because one character (a space at the end of line 5) is larger than the rest of the paragraph, the leading is inconsistent.

Sedit aut ut optaspitias dolorpor aut qui dolo. See picture below:



Blabor apero omnis renihit quos vel erio. Nam, atempori dolorae rferspe ligenditibus. See picture below:



Dunt quatusam quis aliquatis as quaspit, sinit quaeprem res opture.

**FIGURE 4.17** Using Auto Leading for inline graphics ensures that the height of the line grows to accommodate the size of the graphic.

When it comes to fixing widows and orphans, don't mess with the leading. You have other tricks up your sleeve—rewriting, tracking, discretionary hyphens, forced line breaks—to fix such problems. Tempting though it may be to tighten the leading a little bit here and there, your document will suffer if you do. Always keep your body text leading consistent, otherwise the rhythm of your type will wander like the beat of a distracted drummer.

Also, don't be tempted to go for the quick 'n' dirty solution of using vertical alignment, which increases the leading in a short column to make it bottom out (i.e., end on the same baseline as other columns). While columns of uniform depth are usually preferable in continuous prose, InDesign CS5 can now achieve this with the Balance Columns feature, which will adjust the height of all columns, rather than just extend the shortest one.

**FIGURE 4.18** Good leading gone bad: The columns are balanced, but at the expense of inconsistent leading across the two columns.

Olesequatie magna feu faci blam dolorem zzrit nosto euip ea adigna faccum velit autet lummod tem quametum quamcommod dolore molor sit, quat vent il et nonse commod tat iureet irit lortie dolorercin volobor peratueros nulpur laor sed dolum ad magnim incilit wisi bla facipit. Endrem	illa feu feummy nibh ercillam iure digna faccum ing eniamet lore exer in etue modolore veliquat ipisl dolessequat. Put in ut alis ad molor sumsandigna feupsu sciduisim acidunt nulla alis alisi. Perostrud tem eniametum quiscil. ■
--	---

## Leading and Baseline Grids

If your text is aligned to a baseline grid, the grid increment will trump your leading value. For example, if you have a 12-point baseline grid and you increase the leading value of text that is aligned to that grid to 13 points, the leading will round up to the next grid increment of 24 points. See Chapter 15, Margins, Columns and Baseline Grids, for more details.

**FIGURE 4.19** When using a baseline grid, the grid increment will trump the leading value, as in the right column. Any increase in the leading value causes the lines of the paragraph to snap to the next available grid increment.

Ebis deria aut porepuda  
consendae repuda simus, int  
maiorecto exeræ velecab  
oreptur as ides est voluptam  
facrib usciis reserum fugit  
alibeario blaccus sitatem  
excesti atiissu ndipidus dolest

Memphis Medium 10/12, aligned to grid

Ebis deria aut porepuda  
consendae repuda simus, int  
maiorecto exeræ velecab  
oreptur as ides est voluptam

Memphis Medium 10/12.1, aligned to grid



Ultimately, it is our eyes we should trust and not the math. There may be times when you need to relax consistency in favor of optical leading and tweak the leading of individual lines to make the leading *appear* more consistent. Such a situation may arise in display type, for example, if one line doesn't have descenders.

The only way  
to get rid of a  
**TEMPTATION**  
is to yield to it.

—Oscar Wilde  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The only way  
to get rid of a  
**TEMPTATION**  
is to yield to it.

—Oscar Wilde  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*

**FIGURE 4.20** Using optical leading: In the example on the right the leading for the fourth line has reduced to compensate for there being no descenders on the line above.

## Skip by Leading

There's a (deservedly) overlooked preference that determines how leading is affected by a text wrap. Choose Preferences > Composition and select the Skip by Leading option to ensure that text below the wrap object is moved down to the next available leading increment. The purpose of this is to achieve cross alignment of your baseline of type. This sounds like a good idea, but Skip by Leading only works when the text goes over—not around—the wrap object. Also, if the wrap object is at the top of the column, the preference is ignored. While it won't do any harm to have Skip by Leading turned on, it doesn't do a whole lot of good either. You're better off using a baseline grid to achieve the same effect.

Litatem sereptatias doluptatur, arcillabor re pa cone estiis isim  
ipsam reptas alit maximinis dol- es ipici dolut dis cullandi reiciun-  
labore, quam sin platemodi bea tem quam, nis delibus anihic te  
cum volutem deni voloreh ende-  
lesti doleniet que alignihilis solup-  
tatum eum venet et aute nus sit,  
nit ention conetur, ut et, sequiducil  
modipsumquam et ulpa aditati sin  
cus simoluptatia ea ni cusapelles  
a aboreptas rem que ium aci ut  
occuscidel estrum.  
Ne landebit ipsapid ma pro  
omnis re rem. Ut et et enecaest-  
est que eatiis conecto quatibe



modiorepere non poritem hit ali-  
quo quassum quiaeriandi tem ad  
quat aboreperiae quia qui optam  
asperchil ius.

Litatem sereptatias doluptatur, arcillabor re pa cone estiis isim  
ipsam reptas alit maximinis dol- es ipici dolut dis cullandi reiciun-  
labore, quam sin platemodi bea tem quam, nis delibus anihic te  
cum volutem deni voloreh ende-  
lesti doleniet que alignihilis solup-  
tatum eum venet et aute nus sit,  
nit ention conetur, ut et, sequiducil  
modipsumquam et ulpa aditati sin  
cus simoluptatia ea ni cusapelles  
a aboreptas rem que ium aci ut  
occuscidel estrum.  
Ne landebit ipsapid ma pro  
omnis re rem. Ut et et enecaest-  
est que eatiis conecto quatibe

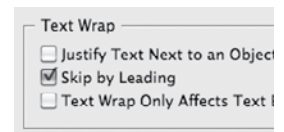


modiorepere non poritem hit ali-  
quo quassum quiaeriandi tem ad  
quat aboreperiae quia qui optam  
asperchil ius.

### Skip by Leading Off

**FIGURE 4.21** The Skip by Leading option pushes the line after the graphic down to the next leading increment. However, if cross alignment of baselines is what you're after, you're better off aligning your text to a baseline grid (see Chapter 15).

### Skip by Leading On





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