



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



**WHO:** groups of three to five people

**WHAT:** produce a magazine in English on a topic related to your area of studies

**HOW MUCH:** Some pages will be produced jointly – the cover and three pages where there is less textual content than in the main part of the magazine, including the contents page and at least two advertisements. Each group member will also have to individually produce a minimum of 4 pages including one feature article which is at least 1000 words long. Therefore the minimum page count will depend on the number of people in the group – 3 people = 16 pages, 4 people = 20 pages, 5 people = 24 pages.

**WHEN:** the final product will be delivered and presented during the final session. You must provide an electronic copy (pdf format) and a paper copy. Each group will be expected to present your magazine orally, and answer questions on it.

**HOW:** each week we will concentrate on an aspect of the process, from conception to delivery. You will have a mission for each session. Some sessions may take place in the computer laboratory, and others in an ordinary classroom. You can use dictionaries, and **ideally each group should have access to a laptop**. Your meetings should be essentially in English. French is only to be used as a last resort.

## SESSION 1: CHOOSING THE TOPIC

**Your mission:** each group should hand in a text explaining the concept in three points

- Editorial need: What is it about? What makes it different from others on the same topic?
- Editorial concept: Nuts and bolts on what the magazine will contain. The wrong editorial concept is the main reason magazines fail. (How will it instruct, inform, and entertain?) This section also contains a short list of possible articles.
- Reader potential: Who is the target audience? Age, sex, profession (if relevant), social category. What do they read/watch on TV etc.?

### EXAMPLE:

This is a new magazine on psychology, focusing essentially on the hard science behind it, and attempting to explain the subject to a non-specialist audience. Unlike most popular psychology magazines, this is not a mere extension of the health articles and problem pages found in women's magazines.

The aims are to use illustrations, interviews and in-depth articles to explain aspects of psychology from a scientific perspective. Possible articles for the early issues are: *The Myths Of Happiness*, *What Can Brain Scans Really Tell Us?* *Technology In Psychology*, *Psychology At The Movies*, *And Does Mind Over Matter Really Work?*

The target audience is aged 25 and above, probably evenly split between male and female readers. They are likely to be fairly educated, and interested in science, but not experts in psychology or neuroscience. They probably like science fiction, and may read general science publications such as *New Scientist* or *Scientific American*.

**Please note that your concept is only a rough outline, and you may wish to change some of it. At this stage it is not necessary to have a title for your magazine. (FYI, the above example is 150 words.)**



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 2: BRAINSTORMING CONTENT

**Your mission:** You will decide and list **who** will do **what**. Each group member should leave the meeting with an idea for their feature article, and other ideas to hit the 4 page mark. Remember, it is better to have too many ideas than not enough. THE GROUP WILL HAND IN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING WITH DETAILS OF THE DECISIONS YOU HAVE MADE.

### TODAY'S MEETING – AGENDA

1. First of all, has the original concept changed? If so, modify the document you produced in session 1.
2. **Get organized** – Who is good with illustrations, art & photography? Who is a natural leader and will be editor-in-chief? Who has an eye for colour and layout? Who is good at research? Who would make a good proofreader? Who is the most comfortable with the various types of software you'll be using (Desktop publishing, Image editing...) Make sure you **use each other's strengths**.
3. Is there a **theme** for the issue? (This is not an obligation)
4. **Brainstorm**

Suggestions on how to get the creative juices flowing

- What kinds of items are there in other magazines? Can they be adapted in a novel way?
  - Explore a word and its associations (the dictionary can help)
  - Use pictures as a stimulus
  - Run through an A to Z of the subject
  - Think about your target reader – what does he want/need to know?
  - Is there a book you read/film you saw that might be relevant?
  - Start with an arbitrary sentence concerning the topic, and change words to come up with something new.
  - How does your subject relate to other subjects?
5. You may also like to start discussing a name and slogan for your magazine



**REMEMBER:** Your meetings should be essentially in English.  
French is only to be used as a last resort.

For a model on which to base the written record of your editorial meeting, see the next page.



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## MAGAZINE EDITORIAL TEAM

Minutes of the first September meeting

**Members Present:** Lionel Brain, Jane Snakehead, Philip Shrink

**Members Absent:** Malcolm R Ingle

### Agenda:

- Concept
- Organization
- Theme
- Brainstorming

### Discussion and decisions

Lionel Brain offered to chair and called the meeting to order at 10.15a.m. Philip Shrink offered to take notes and write the minutes subsequently.

Malcolm R Ingle was in another meeting and unable to join, but left a message with a suggested change to the concept. He requested that we concentrate more on female readers with the aim of drawing women to the real science behind psychology. However, Jane Snakehead said that she believed that psychology was already viewed as a feminine or soft science, and that our aim should be to build bridges. After a vote it was decided to stick to the original concept.

We then moved on to the second item on the agenda, and as the sole volunteer, LB agreed to be editor-in-chief of the new magazine. PS agreed his artistic eye would make him the ideal graphics editor. JS' computer expertise was felt to be useful in her role as layout designer. MRI had left instructions that he would be interested in being chief researcher. In addition, all group members agreed to be copywriters and proofreaders.

JS suggested either money or sex as a theme for the first issue, as these themes would draw more readers.

PS said that he felt we should wait until the readers got to know us before starting on sex, but that money or, more importantly riches, was not a topic that often appeared in other psychology magazines despite the many studies that had been done. LB cited the UCLA study on lottery winners as an interesting starting point.

During the brainstorming session that followed many ideas came up such as recreating some of the recent experiments, as well as devising some of our own making to test for example whether men's and women's brains respond in the same way to the sight of money, or whether the quantity would change the brain responses. LB said that this would be the ideal way to introduce hard science concepts such as magnetic resonance imaging and the anatomy of the brain.

It was agreed to submit a list of feature article ideas within 48 hours, and to meet again at the same time a week later.



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 3: RESEARCHING

**Your mission:** use the internet to gather notes, and produce an outline for your article.

### Where to start?

**Focus first:** What is the main topic of your article? And what do your readers want to know about the subject? What is the general aim? – persuade/inform and explain/describe/narrate

**Fan out:** Make a **list of keywords in English** that might help you in your search. The aim is to **write in English, not translate** a French text.

### Choose your tools:

Sometimes a simple search engine will produce interesting results, providing you use the right search terms.

Sometimes you might need to look through a human-edited directory of sites related to your subject. – You'll find a list of directories at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_web\\_directories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_web_directories)

Hidden gems can be found in databases. One directory of such databases is at <http://aip.completeplanet.com>, and there is also a specialized science search tool at <http://worldwidescience.org/>

### When to stop?

Your original idea may change due to your online discoveries. Don't throw away any of your notes in this case – they might be useful for insets to accompany the main article.

It is tempting to go on searching, but often this means you keep changing your original idea. You should stop once you think you have a clear idea of the outline. You can always go back online to check details or find a quote.

### The outline

Use a method that suits your style. You can use a diagram, list or any system that helps you clearly plan the article.

An article should contain **three main parts**.

**The introduction or lead.** This is where you grab the reader's attention, and make him want to read the rest

**The main body.** Break this up into **ideas or paragraphs** – they should expand on the introduction.

**The conclusion.** It is important not to disappoint the reader – however, it is not necessary to have it ready at the outline stage.

Your research may have unearthed interesting facts or information that will not be used in the body of the text. They can be used in boxes (or insets) to support and illustrate the main article.

– don't forget about copyright.  
:it MUST BE YOUR OWN WRITING.  
:nowledge the source of any quoted text.



## MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT MAGAZINE ARTICLES

#### The most common errors are:

**Abuse of Google Translate:** if you write your article in French and then translate it, you might have a lot of unpleasant surprises. Translation takes time, and resorting to a machine translation which you then correct often takes more time than writing directly in English. **So do your research in English and you will avoid this problem.**

**Plagiarism:** one of the traps of using the internet is the tendency to cut and paste chunks of text and including it directly in your article. However, this is not only dishonest but also illegal. You must not pass off someone else's work as your own. **Make notes on what you read rather than copying complete sentences.**

**Encyclopedia:** you're not writing an exposé on a subject, but a journalistic article. It can be very tempting to write everything you know about a subject, but a magazine article is supposed to inform AND entertain. **Try to find an original angle.**

**Poor structure:** don't use a 'question and answer' format. This is not a patient information leaflet. **Examine your subheadings and eliminate questions or things that seem too banal.**

**Pitch:** remember who you're writing for. If you've used specialist research articles to prepare your text, you need to change the tone. In addition, you don't need to add references or bibliographies. **Don't assume your reader is a specialist OR an idiot.**

**So what is an 'angle'?** Once you've chosen your general subject you need to find an original way of treating it. Let's say you want to write an article about something that is frowned upon, such as GM foods. Why not present the subject in a positive light (without going as far as making it look like propaganda). Or if you wanted to write an article on insomnia, you could look into the latest research on sleep problems. Perhaps dieting is an interesting topic for you. You could examine how diets and dietary advice have changed over the decades.

Your choice of angle will determine how interesting your article is to a potential reader. You should try to bring something new to the subject.



## MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



### SESSION 4: WRITING YOUR FEATURE ARTICLE – PART 1

**Your mission:** Write the headline, byline and introductory paragraph of your feature article. At the end of the session you will submit your work (hand-written or by e-mail)

A two page article without illustrations is roughly 1000 words long. This should be your target. Knowing the length of the piece helps you to balance it. Remember you are writing for a magazine, not an encyclopedia, so the style should be both informative and entertaining.

Open any magazine article and the first thing you see is the headline. This is usually followed by the byline which gives the name of the author. In many cases, it is an introductory sentence in a font size in between that of the headline and the text.

#### Headlines

Some headlines ask questions directly, and invite the reader to react before reading: *Has science killed God?*

Other headlines intrigue the reader, omitting words, and thereby inviting him to make sense of the title before reading. List what you think the story is about for each of the headlines from science magazines below.

1. A Shake May Prevent a Crash
2. Marmosets Report for Lab Duty
3. Solving the Mystery of the Bearded Lady
4. A Nose for Disease
5. How Choosing Changes You

#### The Byline

Below are two examples of headlines and their bylines which develop the title.

## I WANT TO BELIEVE

From Diana's death to 9/11, conspiracy theories abound in today's world. Mark Blackmore looks at why they're so appealing...

#### The introductory paragraph

There are many techniques you can use to get started. Some articles use surprise, others appeal to the reader's prior knowledge or previous experience, others review history, others tell anecdotes, still others mention famous people. Whatever the technique you adopt, this paragraph should lay the ground for the whole article.

## Fair play

They are the least popular people on the football pitch and their decisions can turn the beautiful game ugly. But what does research say about the men in the middle? Ed Chipperfield officiates on the science of refereeing...



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 5: WRITING YOUR FEATURE ARTICLE – PART 2

**Your mission:** Write the subheadings, main parts and conclusion of your feature article. At the end of the session you will submit your work (hand-written or by e-mail)

### Subheadings

A 1000 word article will typically have two or three short subheadings. They are not obligatory, but can help strengthen the structure of the article and help you get organized. Use your outline to determine what subheadings you could use. Below are examples from the articles mentioned in the previous session.

## I WANT TO BELIEVE

Sowing seeds

Paranoia or Apathy

## Fair play

Home goals

New technology

### The Main Body

#### Contents:

Facts and statistics which support the writer's opinion.

Opinions, quotes and interviews from authorities and experts.

Anecdotes and stories.

Photographs, tables, diagrams and graphs. (make a note of any ideas – we will deal with illustrations later)

#### Form:

Length – is it too long or short? – edit if necessary

Comprehension – will the target reader understand?

Grammar and spelling – be careful if you wish to save time at the proofreading stage.

Structure – one idea per sentence, one topic per paragraph. Check the logical flow

Ease of reading – vary sentence length, and use active verbs when possible

### Conclusion

This is the part which the reader should remember, so writing it effectively is extremely important. The conclusion should remind the reader of the article's main idea, and can, depending on the type of article, suggest a course of action or solution to a problem, encourage a change of the reader's opinion, or open up avenues for the future.

Unlike in academic writing, expressions such as 'in conclusion' should NOT be used.



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 6: ILLUSTRATING

**Your mission:** Research illustrations for your magazine (main articles, other features and even the cover) and submit a list of possible illustrations.

Illustrations play different roles for the reader. Firstly, they serve to attract the reader's attention, and make him/her want to read the article. Secondly they supplement the content, often conveying information that text cannot.

### Types of illustration:

**Photos** – these can either be someone else's work (in which case remember the copyright information) or you can use your own. There is a lot of software (such as GIMP) which you can use to personalize an image. One good place to look for photos published under a creative commons license is Flickr.com

**Art** – draw your own and scan, or use an illustration program (such as INKSCAPE) to produce something original.

**Tables & graphs** – showing data can be interesting and brings added weight to your articles, but can be a bit dry. Check out these links for good ways to present data

- <http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/>
- <http://flowingdata.com/>
- <http://infosthetics.com/>

**Diagrams** – used for qualitative data, diagrams represent actions, processes, events and ideas. Some of the more common types are the flowchart, the mind map, the exploded view. DIA is free software you can use to create this kind of illustration.

**Maps** – whenever the information is related to geographical distribution maps can be handy. There are many resources available online, including satellite views etc. The images can be edited in a graphics program.

**Other sources** – sometimes you can think outside the box, and use an image outside of its habitual context (e.g. use a screenshot from a video game with a caption)



# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 7: TYPOGRAPHY AND LAYOUT

**Your mission:** first hold a group meeting to discuss fonts, and then familiarize yourself with DTP software.

**Type** in magazines is used on different levels:

- straight text**, whether in small bits nestled among the pictures or in whole pages of prose
- headlines** and other big display words or phrases
- small display** which includes bylines, subheadings, subtitles, and pull quotes.
- “infotext,”** like the labels in infographics, or the text in tables or broken-out lists.
- illustration** – sometimes the fonts themselves are artwork (see dingbats)

For some great examples and information on fonts and design, visit [www.smashingmagazine.com](http://www.smashingmagazine.com)

### Coherence

Throughout your magazine you will need to make sure that each article belongs to the overall style, and as a result you will need to make a group decision on which fonts to use, how many, and for what purpose. You should start by getting a feel for what kind of fonts you like. Here are some examples:

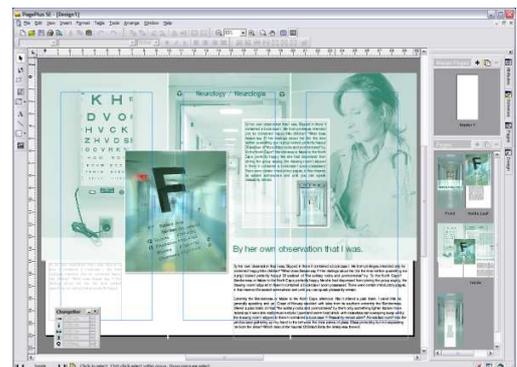
Garamond	COPPERPLATE	Tahoma	Lucida
Courier	Footlight	Pigiarniq	Maiandra
Caslon	Trebuchet	Papyrus	Gill sans
Arial	Times	Georgia	Goudy

(Many other fonts are available at sites such as [www.dafont.com](http://www.dafont.com))

### Layout

Take a look at <http://bestdesignoptions.com/?p=4076> for some great examples to inspire you.

While it is possible to use word-processing software for the layout, much better results will be obtained with desktop publishing software which allows greater freedom for the layout. Specialized DTP software can be very expensive, but there are also free solutions which produce professional-looking results. Open Source SCRIBUS ([www.scribus.net](http://www.scribus.net)) is a great choice and another free option is PAGEPLUS from [www.freerisefsoftware.com](http://www.freerisefsoftware.com)





# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 8: COVER MEETING

**Your mission:** hold an editorial meeting to decide on the final name of the magazine and the cover. The decisions you make will be very important because the cover sets the tone for the rest and first impressions count... The group will hand in a sketch or sketches illustrating the ideas.

**MASTHEAD with title and selling-line**

**Dateline**

**Cover lines – other feature articles, all have page numbers and the most important have subheadings too.**

**Main Cover line – the highlight article for this issue**

**Main Image**

**Other features (no page number)**

**More cover lines**

**Colours, pictures and fonts (and the way they all fit together) are extremely important. Sometimes the words are even more important than the pictures**

“Magazine covers are generally designed to attract attention (sometimes called ‘shelf presence’) and to reflect the style of the publication. With this in mind, there are some basic rules that make a good starting point. The use of a single, eye-catching image, for example, is a good place to start—and you will notice that these are the covers that once again proved successful. The golden rule of magazine cover design is that the image should contain some ‘emotional content’ that give it pick-up appeal. If the design is too ‘busy’, is too abstract, or the colours are too dark or dingy, it will not be immediately noticed on the shelf. By all means challenge the shelf browsers, but don’t ask too much of them. The publisher wants the magazine to stand out and attract new readers, as well as ring in the regulars. Try to create ‘graphic charisma’.” – from DG Magazine’s cover design competition tips

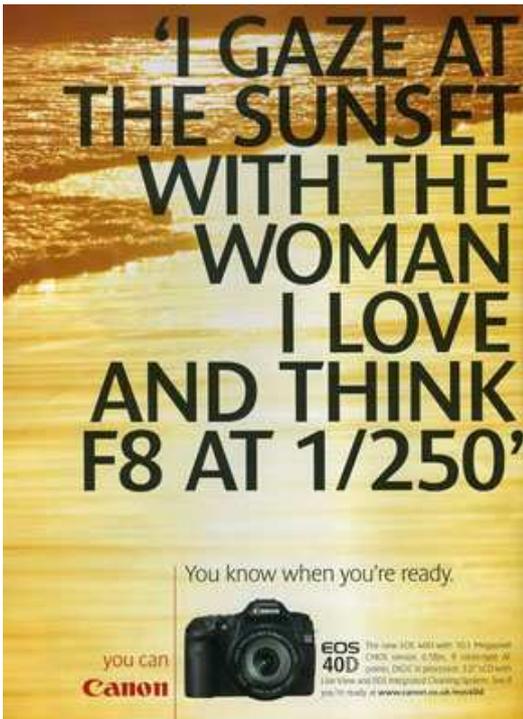


# MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



## SESSION 9: ADVERTISING

**Your mission:** brainstorm as a group and work on two ads – one full page where the graphics are generally the central element and there is a little bit of text, and another ‘advertorial’ type. First you need to decide what kind of product or service is likely to be advertised in your magazine – depends on the subject and the target audience. **Your completed magazine must contain one of each type.**



VISUAL (graphics or photo)

CAPTION – links the visual to the product

HEADLINE – can be the strongest element of the ad or secondary to a strong visual

COPY – Some ads have only a line or two or a single paragraph. Others may have many paragraphs of information

SIGNATURE – consists of one or more of; logo, advertiser name, address, phone number, map or directions, web site address

A reader tends to look over a full page ad in a z-shape, and usually views the different parts in this order:

visual, caption, headline, copy, signature

In this CANON ad the caption is just as important as the visual

## ADVERTORIAL

The term is a *portmanteau* word made up of *advertisement* and *editorial*. It is an advertisement pretending to be just another article in the hope that the readers will be tricked into trusting it as much as the articles that they have paid good money to read.

On the right is an advertorial for a video projector. Compare its features with the advertisement for the digital SLR above.

**HEY, YOU ON THE ROAD!**

**You have enough to do without worrying about your presentation.**

Shorten your to-do list and lighten your load with a Proxima UltraLight DS1™ multimedia projector. It'll help you cut your prep time in half, make last-second tweaks, and still leave a huge impression on your audience.

How? Simple! The Proxima UltraLight DS1 takes whatever's on your notebook screen, and projects it on a wall for everyone in the room to see. No transparencies, slides, or fiddling around with unfamiliar equipment in someone else's conference room.

The UltraLight DS1 works with the notebook computer and presentation software you already have, and projects onto any wall or screen, anywhere. It even works with video equipment, if you want to project from a VCR or DVD player.

With its Proxima Laser FX™ remote control, you can take command of your UltraLight DS1 and your computer from anywhere in the room. It's not just a laser pointer; it's also a remote mouse that controls your computer. Direct the flow of your presentation. Interact with your audience. Penetrate key messages. Even add special effects.

Finally, with its light weight and compact size, you can take the UltraLight DS1 anywhere. But it's no lightweight when it comes to power. Its 600 ANSI lumens of brightness gives punch and clarity to your projected images, even in brightly lit rooms. Its Digital Light Processing™ (DLP™) technology means photo-realistic images. And it supports VGA, SVGA, and XGA resolutions.

If all that wasn't enough, there are accessories, from cases to wireless stereo speakers, that can turn your Proxima UltraLight DS1 into whatever you need it to be. Call Proxima at 800-447-7692 for more information about the new UltraLight DS1 multimedia projector. It's the best way to lighten your load.

Proxima and Laser FX are registered trademarks and UltraLight is a trademark of Proxima Corporation. Digital Light Processing and DLP are trademarks of Texas Instruments Incorporated. © 2007 Proxima Corporation

**FITS IN A BRIEFCASE, FILLS UP A ROOM**  
Proxima's UltraLight DS1 measures 5.2 x 12.8 x 4.7 inches and weighs less than 10 pounds.

**UltraLight DS1**

- 600 ANSI lumens
- 3:1 priority
- 1.3:1 zoom lens
- 200:1 contrast ratio
- Free carrying case

Proxima Corporation  
San Diego, CA  
800-447-7692  
(619) 437-5500  
www.proxima.com

*To Do for presentation (without a Proxima UltraLight DS1)*

- create presentation on laptop
- send out for transparencies
- call client to make sure they have overhead projector
- pick up transparencies on way to airport
- make sure trans order back
- correct it
- send out to client

*To Do for presentation (with Proxima UltraLight DS1)*

- create presentation on laptop
- plug in UltraLight and present!



## MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



### PROOFREADING

**Your mission:** read through each others' pages and fix the errors before you hand in a printed copy.

First and foremost remember that the **spellchecker** should have eliminated simple spelling errors. However, words that seem correct may not have been eradicated.

What are the **most common errors** students make when writing in English?

**Forgetting that final 's'** – English conjugation is not that complicated compared to other languages, but probably because the plural 's' is not pronounced in French, students often forget the 's' in plurals and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present tense verbs.

**Subject-verb agreement** – don't mix singular verbs with a plural pronoun (or vice versa).

**Coherent tenses** – if you find a mixture of tenses in a paragraph, and especially within a single sentence, make sure you're not mixing up past and present.

**Parasitical agreements** – in French adjectives agree with the nouns they modify, but in English they are ALWAYS INVARIABLE.

**Articles** – think carefully about the use of articles; general vs. specific, first mention vs. further mentions etc. a/an/the/Ø – make sure the choice is right.

**Those darn irregular verbs** – after all the hours you spent learning them... what a shame to have forgotten them already!

**Check the tense choice** – often the adverbs (such as ago, since etc.) will dictate which tense you need.

**Punctuation** – errors here can lead to logical incoherence.

Besides the more common errors, people also tend to have their own **personal grammar bugbears**. If you spot one type of error in the text, it is highly likely that the same error can be found elsewhere too.

**Fresh eyes** – Several people re-reading a text is the best option for eliminating the greatest possible number of errors. Several re-readings after a 15 minute break would be a good second best.

**GOT A QUESTION? – ASK**



## MAGAZINE WORKSHOP



### Final considerations

Here is a list of some of the most common errors in the magazines from previous years:

**Absence of an advertorial:** remember, each group has to produce two advertisements they have written themselves, one of each type (see session 9)

**Authors unidentifiable:** Each article should have a proper byline indicating the real name of the author. You can also put the names on the contents page if you wish.

**Collage style:** If you use a background image, or gradient, elements placed above can look as though they are stuck on and don't really belong to the page. Use transparency.

**Lists in body text:** If you've started writing a list, bulleted or numbered, then you should either rewrite as proper body text, or remove the information and use it in a complementary information box. Similarly a paragraph with lots of figures in it might be better expressed as an information box.

**More WP document than magazine layout:** Look carefully at the elements you find on the pages of a magazine. It's never just two columns of text and pictures. There are visual cues; shapes, dates at the bottom of the page, lines, etc. which feature in the graphical design of the publication.

**Photographs distorted:** Sometimes squashed, sometimes stretched - All rescaling should be proportional.

**Poor alignment and spacing:** text and images should be aligned and evenly spaced.

**Margin woes:** If you use boxes, remember to leave space between the edges of the box and the text.

**Sources of illustrations not cited:** this is a breach of copyright. You should use creative commons illustrations whenever possible and attribute them to their authors.

**Underlined text and/or titles:** Contrast should be created via bold type or larger characters, or a different font for titles. Underlining is never used in professional publications.

**Un-magazine-like cover:** Don't forget to include the common elements (see session 8)

**Use of a non-standard font for the body of the text:** You should choose a serif or sans serif font, and not something that is classified as fancy or gothic or script. You can use these for titles but not for the article text. The choice of serif and sans-serif is vast enough, so it doesn't have to be Times or Arial.

**Use of different fonts and/or a different layout for each article :** A magazine has a house style, so make sure the group agrees on it, otherwise you end up with a bunch of articles that do not look as though they belong together.