Using PageMaker to Create School District Newsletters

by: Lynne Browne
Using PageMaker to Create School District Newsletters was created as a reference guide for anyone who has willingly volunteered or who has been “volunteered” as the editor of a school district newsletter.

I’ve taken the information I traditionally present in workshops and put as much as possible in this reference guide. PageMaker is a very useful tool to create newsletters, booklets, brochures and other print materials. This guide focuses on using PageMaker to create newsletters. After you work with the program, you will be able to use it for other publications.

Also included in each section are “Quick Tips.” They are tips that I have acquired from using PageMaker for more than 10 years. I want to share them with you to make your life easier.

Lynne Browne
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Gathering Your Materials

Before You Sit Down...
In this chapter you will learn:
• What questions you should ask before you begin your newsletter
• How to gather and prepare information for your newsletter

Asking the Right Questions
As editor of your school district newsletter, you need to ask the following questions before you start your newsletter. If you don’t have the answers, there are two people to ask: your superintendent, and the print shop supervisor. The superintendent will be able to give you direction as to quantity and distribution; the print shop supervisor will be able to tell you information about paper, ink, size, deadlines, photos, etc. Below is a list of general questions for you to ask. There is also a Newsletter Checklist for you to copy and use as needed. (See Appendix A.)

You should definitely ask (and get the answers to) these questions before you begin:
Who is the audience?
What information will be included in the newsletter?
Where will I get the information?
How many pages will the newsletter be?
Do I need to set up any deadlines?
How will the newsletter be printed?
What is the budget for the newsletter?
What does the print shop need from me?
How is this newsletter going to be distributed? (mail, sent home, bulk mail)
How many copies are needed?
The next step is to gather your materials such as articles, artwork and photographs. If you don’t have time to type all articles, have people submit their articles already typed, or find someone who is a quick typist. PageMaker can use Microsoft Word documents and other word processing documents. You may wish to have someone proof and edit the text before you put the articles into your newsletter. This will allow you to use articles that might be nearer to the correct length and more accurate.

When people write for a newsletter they use a different “voice.” It is important to read and edit articles so they all sound like they come from the same “voice” unless you give a by-line to the author of each article (“Girls Volleyball Team Undefeated” - by Liz Borden.) Most schools like to have the “voice” in third person... “The school district wishes...” If an article comes directly from the superintendent of schools, the “voice” might be in first person. “I would like to congratulate the valedictorian and the salutatorian...”

As the editor, it is your responsibility to read the articles and make sure the information is clear and accurate. If you have a list of students in your newsletter (Honor Rolls), make sure you have someone in each school’s office proof the names for accuracy. You will definitely get calls from mom, grandma and the next door neighbor if you incorrectly spelled their child’s name Cathy instead of Kathy.

This book takes you through the steps you need to set up a newsletter using PageMaker. You will create a basic newsletter that you can use as a template for your district newsletter.
Getting Started - PageMaker Basics

“OK, I’m Ready to Fire Up This Program!”

In this chapter you will learn:
• How to create a new file in PageMaker
• What each tool is used for in the toolbox

Creating a New Document

Open the PageMaker program. Once you have started the program, go to File and drag down to New. Click on New and a pop up menu called Document Setup appears. (Figure 2.1.) The most common Page Size to select is Letter. Check to make sure that Orientation: Tall is selected. Under Options, check the box Double-sided which indicates that your final project will be printed two sided. Checking the Facing Pages box allows you to see facing pages on the screen at the same time (page 2 and 3.) This is a personal preference. If you have a small monitor, you might not like to see both pages at the same time.

However, some people like to see both left and right pages when they are designing; it is easier for them move articles and artwork. Try it both ways and see what you prefer.

Figure 2.1

![Document Setup dialog box]
The next thing to choose is **Number of Pages**. Some school newsletters have a set number of pages every issue, some vary. For our purposes, I have selected 4 pages, but you may have 8, 12, 16, etc.

Now set up the **Margins**. I have selected .75 inches (3/4") on the top and sides of each page. I set the margin on the bottom as 1 inch. The larger margin on the bottom will give you extra space to add page numbers and not interfere with your copy. Your print shop needs a certain amount of white space in the outside margin area (edge of the page) as a “gripper.” The print shop may require less space than 3/4” but you should check with them first.

Once you have filled out all the information in the **Document Setup** (Figure 2.2) pop up menu, read through it to double-check your choices and if all are correct, click **OK** in the upper right corner. A new, blank file will now open in PageMaker. Even though you don’t have any text in your new document, you should save the file. To do this, go to **File** and drag to **Save**. If you have already created a folder/directory with your typed information, find the folder and save your newsletter in your folder. (Make sure you give your newsletter a descriptive name, such as **September News 2001**.) If you have not created a file/directory, you can do so now. In the **Save** pop up menu is a folder icon, click on that icon and make a new folder, name it something appropriate and something that you will remember. Another key here is to remember where you put the folder. (You will be saving photos, artwork and articles in this folder.)

**Quick Tip**

In most cases, pages must be kept in multiples of 4 when creating newsletters. However, there are exceptions; check with your print shop!

![Figure 2.2](image)
A Brief Look at the Toolbox

Now that you’ve saved your newsletter (even though it is blank), we’ll have a brief overview of the toolbox. (Figure 2.3)

- **Pointer Tool**: Selects, moves and resizes text and graphic objects.
- **Rotating Tool**: Rotates selected text and graphic objects.
- **Line Tool**: Draws straight lines.
- **Rectangle Tool**: Draws rectangles and squares.
- **Ellipse Tool**: Draws ellipses and circles.
- **Polygon Tool**: Draws basic polygons, starts, and open-path polygons.
- **Hand Tool**: Drags the page horizontally or vertically.
- **Text Tool**: Creates, selects and edits text.
- **Cropping Tool**: Crops graphics.
- **Constrained-line Tool**: Draws straight lines at 45° increments.
- **Rectangle Frame Tool**: Draws rectangular and square frames.
- **Ellipse Frame Tool**: Draws elliptical and circular frames.
- **Polygon Frame Tool**: Draws polygonal frames.
- **Zoom Tool**: Magnifies or reduces an area of a page.

It is important to SAVE frequently. PageMaker does not have an automatic Save feature. If your computer crashes and you haven’t saved, you might lose a lot of your work. Get in the habit of saving your work often.

You should also make a copy of your file at the end of the day. Put the file in a folder called backups. If your file gets corrupted by the “ugly file corrupter fairy” at least you will have some of your newsletter and won’t have to start from scratch... Yes, it has happened to me.
Investigating the Menu Bar...

Take a look through the menu bar at the top of your screen (File, Edit, Layout, Type, Element, Utilities, View, Window and Help.) You won’t hurt anything by clicking on each heading and dragging down to see what’s there. You will learn more about each heading and what’s in each menu as you develop your newsletter. If the text is not black, it means that the option is not available to you at the current time. (Figure 2.4)
Chapter 3

Choosing Layout, Type Style and Graphic Elements

Too Many Decisions
In this chapter you will learn:
• How to define type styles
• How to define column guides and margins
• How to use the master pages for page numbering and graphic elements

Defining Type Styles
What’s really cool about PageMaker is that it gives you the ability to set up a font style palette and the program can remember what font styles and sizes you chose for future updates of your newsletter. For your sample newsletter you will use Times New Roman for your newsletter body copy and captions and Arial for your Headlines and Subheads.

Defining Your Newsletter’s Type!
If the next step seems like a lot of fuss... it is! But it does pay off in the long run. Did I just hear you ask, “how?” Well, let me tell you, if you have more than one person working on your newsletter, it is easier for anyone to open up the file and begin working. They don’t have to know what font type you are using, what size, etc. They can just sit down at your computer, highlight the text and change it, just by clicking on the correct font in the style sheet. (Figure 3.1.) Another time style sheets come in handy is when you don’t work on your newsletter for a couple of months. You don’t have to worry about remembering all that “difficult stuff.” You just sit down and highlight your text and choose body text in the style palette, and it “magically” changes. Spending a few minutes in the beginning of creating your newsletter is worth it, trust me.
Go to the menu bar and click on **Type**. Drag down to the bottom and highlight **Define Styles**. Once you click on **Define Styles** a pop up menu appears (*Figure 3.2*). In the left column, you see [Selection] Body text; Body Text 2, Caption, etc. You will edit Body text, Caption, Headline, Subhead 1 and Subhead 2. You will not use the other styles, just ignore them. Click on **Body text**, the **Edit** box on the right hand side is now highlighted. This means you can now edit the information for **Body text**. Click on **Edit**. (*Figure 3.3*) Click on **Char...** and a dialogue box will come up with **Character Specifications** as its title (*Figure 3.4.*) This is where you change the font type to Times New Roman. The example is already at 12 point so you don’t have to change the size. Click on **Para...** a dialogue box will come up with **Paragraph Specifications** as its title (*Figure 3.5.*) Look in the left column at **Indents**, change all indents so they are 0, then click **OK**. Now click on **Tabs...** you will see a ruler come up with **Indents/tabs** as its title. Click on the ruler just above the .25 or 1/4" mark. Now when you tab at the beginning of a paragraph each paragraph will tab in .25 or 1/4" (*Figure 3.6.*)

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**X Quick Tip**

**BORING...** Why did you just use Arial and Times New Roman? There are hundreds of fonts!

Generally you can classify fonts into two categories: **serif** and **sans serif**.

- **Serif**: Look at the letter T. A serif font has a little “tag” at the end of the top bar of the T. A sans serif font doesn’t.
- A few choices of serif fonts include: Times New Roman, Bookman, New Century Schoolbook, Adobe Garamond and Palatino. A few sans serif fonts include: Arial, Helvetica and Verdana.

Sure you can use ALL UPPERCASE, UNDERLINED, FANCY FONTS, BUT CAN YOU READ WHAT YOU’VE WRITTEN?
The Caption text (text used below a photo to describe what is taking place in the photo) will base itself on the body copy. You can look at it and see if it’ll be too big or too small for your taste. If it is not to your liking, use the same steps you used for changing the font size in Body text to change the size. (I generally keep the caption font style the same as the body text, but one or two point sizes smaller.)

Follow the same steps to change the Headline font to Arial. (Go to the menu bar and click on Type. Drag down to the bottom and highlight Define Styles. In the left column click on Headline, the Edit box on the right hand side is now highlighted. This means you can now edit the information for Headline. Click on Edit. Click on Char... and a pop up menu appears with Character Specifications as its title. This is where you change the font type to Arial. Check the default size. It might be 30 points, if so, change it to 24 points (or to a size of your liking.) Double check to make sure that bold is checked at the bottom of the box.

Subhead 1 and Subhead 2 will base their font style on the headline. If you’d like, follow the Define Styles steps to see what size and style each one has. Don’t worry about writing the sizes and type styles down, I will show you how easy it is to use them when you start to lay out your newsletter.

**Headline - 24 pt. Arial Bold**

**Subhead 1 - 18 pt. Arial Bold**

**Subhead 2 - 14 pt. Arial Bold**

Body text is 12 point Times Roman, aligned left, with an indent of .25 or 1/4". You should use bold to highlight important words. You should not use an underline to highlight your text.

Another option for your text is to set the body copy Justified instead of aligned left. Most daily newspapers use this format. Justified means that both left and right edges of the text are flush.
Creating Column Guidelines for Your Newsletter

Before you begin this task, take a few minutes to look at some newsletters or magazines you have around the office. What do they look like? How many columns do the newsletters you like have? Do they leave white (blank) space as a design element? For your newsletter, you will use a 3-column format. Text flows nicely in a 3-column format and it is a pretty flexible design.

Let’s Begin...

In the bottom left hand corner of your screen there is an L and an R that look like pages. The L and R indicate Master Pages (information you put on these pages show up on all pages throughout the newsletter.) Click on the L or the R. They are both highlighted.

Now go to the Layout menu and drag down to Column Guides, click on Column Guides. A dialogue box appears. (Figure 3.7.) Type 3 in the Number of columns box and .25 (1/4”) in the Space between columns box. Click OK.
Using Master Guides to Add Page Numbers

Since you are still in Master Pages, you can add page numbers while you’re at it.

To make it easier when adding page numbers, you need to view these pages at actual size. Go to View and drag to Actual Size. You might be confused at where you are on the page. There are scroll bars on the right side of the page and the bottom. Push the right scroll bar button down some (until you see the bottom of the page) and the bottom scroll bar button to the left until you see the left edge of the page. It does get confusing, just keep moving the buttons slowly until you get to the left, bottom corner.

Now you get to use a tool from the toolbox (a drawing of the toolbox is on page 5.) Click on the Text Tool (it looks like a T.) Now click down at the bottom of the page inside the left column. With your Control and Alt keys held down at the same time, type the letter P. You will see a LM (left page marker) show up on the screen. Highlight the LM with your text tool (select it) and click on Body text in the Define Style box. (Your page numbers will take on the appearance of the Body text.) If you prefer, choose Subhead 2, or change the font of the page numbers at this time. After you have selected a font for your page numbers, click on the arrow tool in the toolbox. Don’t worry about where the LM is at this time, you will move the LM to the correct spot on the page soon!

Adding a Guideline

You are now going to add a guideline to line up your page numbers. Go to the top of the page and click on the ruler. Keep your left mouse button pressed down and drag down at the same time. You will see a blue line moving down the screen. This is a guideline. Move the guideline all the way to the bottom and line up at 10 1/8”) You can tell where your guideline is by looking at the ruler on the left side. You want this guide to be 1/8” below the bottom margin (outside the margin area.) Remember, you set the bottom margin to 1” – to leave room for the page numbers and not go beyond the 3/4” margin. Let go of the mouse once the line is in place. (Figure 3.8.)

![Figure 3.8](image-url)
The next step is to move the **LM** down so the top of the **LM** handle lines up with the guideline. With your arrow tool, click in the middle of the **LM** (a window shade appears on the top and bottom of the **LM** (you use this to position text in PageMaker.) Click in the middle of the **LM** and drag the **LM** down until the top bar of the window shade lines up with guideline. It will turn from green to red when lined up correctly. Look to see if the left side of the page number is lined up with the left margin, if it isn’t, move the page number to the left or right to align at the 3/4” margin. (Figure 3.9.) Once the **LM** is lined up correctly, go to **File**, drag down and click on **Save**.

![Figure 3.9](image)

OK, it’s time to add the right side page number marker (**RM**.) Make sure your arrow tool is still highlighted. If so, click on the **LM**, don’t move it, don’t keep the mouse button held down, just click! While the **LM** is highlighted, go to **Edit** in the menu bar and drag down to **Copy**. Once you have copied the file. Go to **Edit** and drag down to **Paste**. Another **LM** will appear on your screen. (Figure 3.10)

With your arrow tool still selected, click in the middle of the new **LM** and keep your left mouse button held down. Slowly drag the new **LM** (in a straight line to the right) over to the right edge of your newsletter. (You can’t see the **LM** – it looks like an empty box when it is moving.) When you reach the

![Figure 3.10](image)
right edge of the screen, the page will start to move. Don’t worry, you want that to happen. Keep watching the page move until you see the right edge of your newsletter. Move your mouse to the left slightly so the page stops moving. Let go of your left mouse button. The **LM** has now changed to **RM**. With the arrow tool still selected, move the **RM** down until the top of the **RM** window shade (in green) lines up with the guideline (blue). When this happens the line turns to red.

Because the number was aligned left on the left page we need to change it to a right alignment for the right page. Go to the toolbox and click on the text tool. Highlight the **RM** and then go up to **Type** in the menu bar and drag down to **Alignment**. Choose **Align Right**. The **RM** will move over to the right. Double check to make sure the right side of the page number lines up with the right margin. *(Figure 3.11.)*

**Save** again!

![Figure 3.11](image)

Check out your handy work. Click on the at the bottom left of the screen. This will take you to page 1 in your newsletter. You should see a number 1 (your page number) at the bottom right of your screen. Click on the other pages at the bottom of the screen. You will see all the pages are numbered consecutively.

The **Master Pages** are also handy to use when you want a graphic (such as a line above the page number) to create a “visual break” between the text of your newsletter and the page numbers. You’ll learn how to add graphics in the next chapter.

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**Quick Tip**

Once you create page number markers (**LM** and **RM**) on the master pages, you can add and delete pages anywhere in the document without having to renumber the pages. PageMaker automatically renumbers the pages for you.

It’s a nice feature when working on a large newsletter or with people who change their minds frequently ;-)
Placing Headlines, Articles, Photos and Graphics

Why a Polaroid Picture of 30 Kids Sitting in a Hallway Doesn't Work

In this chapter you will learn:
• How to draw lines and boxes
• How to work with text including headlines and articles
• How to crop photos and graphics

Drawing Lines and Boxes

The first thing to learn in PageMaker is that PageMaker calls lines by two different names. When clicking in the toolbox, PageMaker calls the tools a “line tool,” however, when changing the appearance of a line, PageMaker calls the line a “stroke.” I will use the word “line” except when showing you how to change the appearance of a line.

Let’s add a line to the Master Pages to create a “visual break” between the text of your newsletter and the page numbers. Click on either the L or R at the bottom left of the screen.

Move the page around on your screen using your scroll bars until you can see the entire bottom part of either the right or left page. This will make it easier to create your lines.
PageMaker calls the tools in the boxes shown line tools. When you are changing the appearance of a line, PageMaker calls the line a “stroke.”

To change the appearance of a line in PageMaker, highlight the line, go to the Element menu and drag down to Stroke. You are now able to change the appearance of the line. Remember, you must have the line selected (click on the line with the arrow tool, boxes on each end of the line appear.)

With your arrow tool selected, click on the guideline that you created to line up the top of your page number markers (LM and RM.) Move the guideline up 1/16” (use the ruler on the left side of the page to measure the correct placement of the guideline.)

Click on the line tool in the toolbox. A crossbar will appear when you move your mouse off the toolbox. Align the crossbar at the left margin inside of the newsletter area (you will move the line later.) Click and hold the left mouse button down, drag the mouse to the right until you reach the right margin. Go slow, if you go too fast the page will move and you will have a line going off your page. If this happens, don’t panic, just let go of the mouse button. Two boxes will appear on each end of the line, while it is selected, hit your Backspace key and the line will be deleted. Try again by lining up the bottom of the page using your scroll bars, and choosing the line tool in the toolbox. (Figure 4.1.)

Once you have finished drawing your line, you need to deselect it (click anywhere on the screen). The line will be in the lower, middle part of the page. Click on your arrow tool in the toolbox. Once you have the arrow tool highlighted, position your mouse on the line and click the line. If you have clicked on the line correctly, a small box will appear on each end of the line. (Figure 4.2.)
Click and hold down the left mouse button in the center of the line and begin to drag the line down until the line is right on top of the blue guideline that is outside the margin area. Let go of the mouse button and deselect the line. *(Figure 4.3.)*

*Figure 4.3*

After you have the line on one page, the other page is easy. Click on the line you have just positioned over the guideline. If you have a difficult time selected it, hold down the ALT button on your keyboard and then click on the line with your left mouse button. You will see the little boxes show up on the ends of the line if you have selected it. Go to Edit and drag down to Copy. Go back up to Edit and drag down to Paste. You will now have another line the same length as the existing line. Click in the center of the new line and start to move your mouse to the page that does not have the line on it. Move the line over and position it in the correct spot between the left and right margins and on top of the blue guideline.

You now have a line on each page separating the body text and the page numbers. Go back to the guideline and click on the guideline. Drag your mouse down so the guideline goes off the screen, the guideline will disappear. You will be able to see the lines you drew on the master pages and on all the pages in the newsletter. Click on the page 1 box at the bottom left of the screen to check it out! *(Figure 4.4.)*

It would be a good time to Save again.

*Figure 4.4*
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You should definitely ask (and get the answers to) these questions before you begin:

Who is the audience?_____________________________________________________________

What information will be included in the newsletter?
______________________________________________________________

Where will I get the information?______________________________________________

How many pages will the newsletter be?__________________________________________

Deadline dates: ________________________________________________________________

How and where will the newsletter be printed? _______________________________________

Who is the print shop contact person? ____________________________________________

Phone number/e-mail: __________________________________________________________

What is the budget for the newsletter?____________________________________________

What does the print shop need from me (photos, type of printout, etc.?)
______________________________________________________________

How is the newsletter going to be distributed? (mail, sent home, bulk mail)
Contact: _______________________________________________________________________

How many copies are needed?_____________________________________________________

Other: _________________________________________________________________________
**Toolbox**

- **Pointer Tool**
  Selects, moves and resizes text and graphic objects.

- **Rotating Tool**
  Rotates selected text and graphic objects.

- **Line Tool**
  Draws straight lines.

- **Rectangle Tool**
  Draws rectangles and squares.

- **Ellipse Tool**
  Draws ellipses and circles.

- **Polygon Tool**
  Draws basic polygons, starts, and open-path polygons.

- **Hand Tool**
  Drags the page horizontally or vertically.

- **Text Tool**
  Creates, selects and edits text.

- **Cropping Tool**
  Crops graphics.

- **Constrained-line Tool**
  Draws straight lines at 45° increments.

- **Rectangle Frame Tool**
  Draws rectangular and square frames.

- **Ellipse Frame Tool**
  Draws elliptical and circular frames.

- **Polygon Frame Tool**
  Draws polygonal frames.

- **Zoom Tool**
  Magnifies or reduces an area of a page.

**Style Palette**

- **Body text**
- **Caption**
- **Hanging indent**
- **Headline**
- **Subhead 1**
- **Subhead 2**

**Color Palette**

- **[Black]**
- **[Registration]**
- **[Cyan]**
- **[Magenta]**
- **[Red]**
- **[Yellow]**

**Control Palette**

- **Times New Roman**
- **12**
- **No Track**
- **14.4**
- **100%**
- **0 in**