

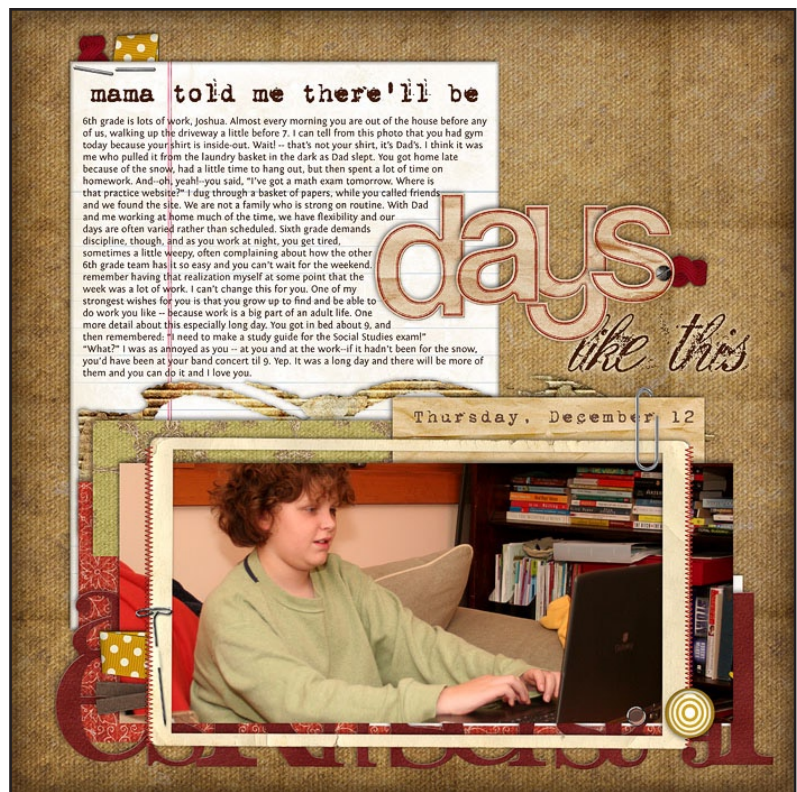
Lesson 11: Mind Your “L”s and “T”s

- The Design
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- Sketch
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THE DESIGN

Squares and rectangles are probably the most common geometric shapes you encounter. There’s a good chance your kitchen table, the books on your nightstand, and even the top of your nightstand are rectangular. Rectangles are comfortable, familiar, and even safe. Today, we’re going to take the building block of rectangles—the right angle—and use it as the basis for our designs.

Consider one right angle: this is the shape of the letter “L.” It’s the shape of a shelf bracketed to the wall. It’s the basis for a right triangle—which presents the opportunity to add that diagonal to finish the triangle and add some energy.



The elements on “Days Like This” are arranged along the arms of a backwards “L.” The journaling block and the layers backing it up make a long vertical arm, and the photo sits along the horizontal arm. The “stepped” arrangement of elements adds a diagonal line that adds energy to this stable composition.

DETAILS

Any time you're trying to fit several photos plus title, journaling, and embellishments onto a 12" x 12" canvas, you need to impose a sense of order or stability that will help your viewer navigate the page.

"Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" presents one focal photo on the horizontal arm of an "L" and several blocked photos on the vertical arm. The right angle is not complete, but the elements there will evoke the principle of closure and the viewer will complete that angle. Additionally, a large ring and layered papers back up the incomplete angle and give it stability.

"See Why" presents one focal photo on the horizontal arm of an "L" and a band of three photos on the vertical arm. Again, that right angle is implied rather than explicitly included. This "L" is backed up with a large rectangular canvas that provides journaling space. Thus, photos plus journaling rectangle define a rectangular canvas, with an "L" (and an implied right triangle) on top of it.



Slide the horizontal arm of your L up a bit and you've got a sideways "T" (and, now, two right angles).

Again, this is a design with stability and the ability to support several photos. It's a great design for presenting one strong focal point photo and using several others (cropped to the same width) as supporting photos.

Composing a "T" design is all about balance. You'll need to compose the arms of your "T" such that it feels like it will stand fine, without tipping over.

You can do this with:

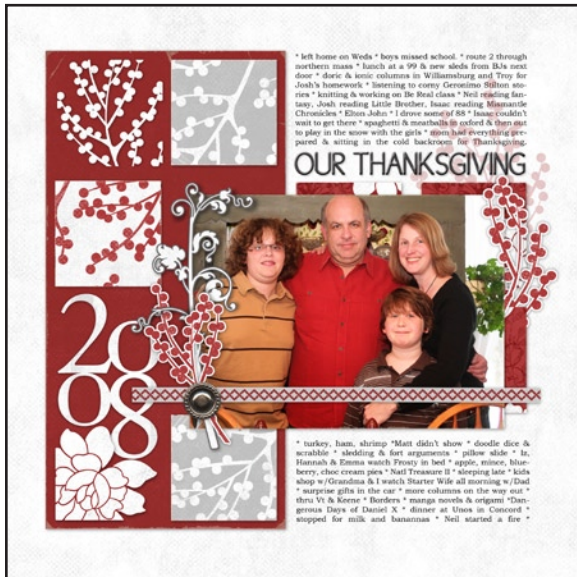
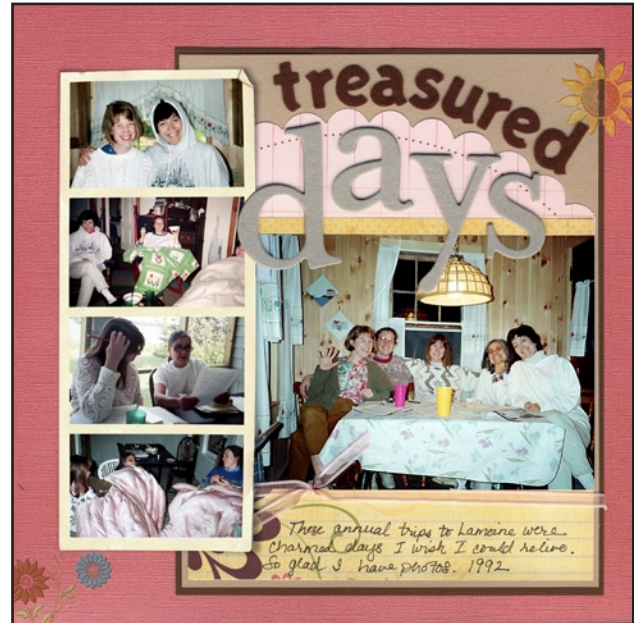
- proportional element sizes that make sense;
- positioning of the horizontal arm along the vertical arm for balance; and
- backup elements.

The horizontal arm on "It Feels Good" is wide and even extends out the other side of the vertical arm—like a construction brace. This gives the page balance. The horizontal arm on "Allen Wrench" is proportionally a bit small that it should be to support the "T" on it's own. Backing up the "T" with a journaling spot adds the needed stability.



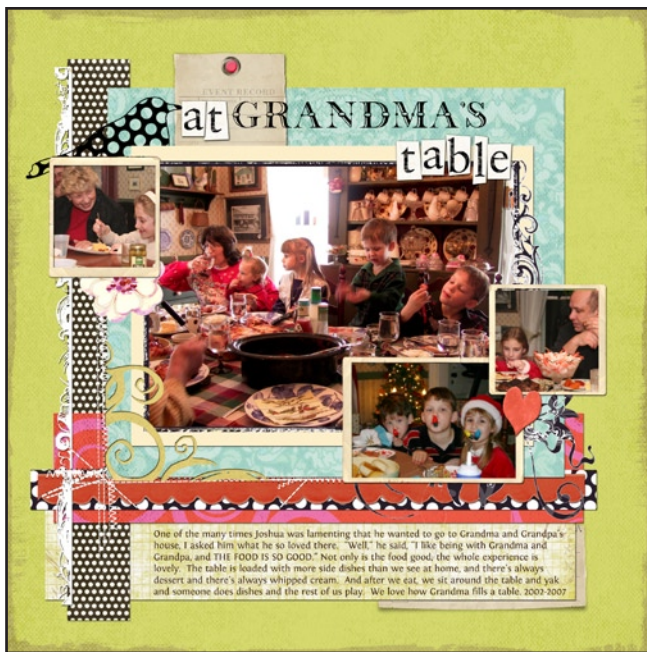
Here are three more layouts with a "T" shape. As you take a look at each of them, look at:

- what elements are on the horizontal arm and what elements are on the vertical arm;
- the proportions of the two arms to one another;
- the positioning of the horizontal arm along the vertical arm;
- what is used as "backup" for these elements.



"Treasured Days" and "Tectonic Plates are a Theory" both use the practical approach of including a focal point photo plus supporting photos. "Our Thanksgiving," however, uses the vertical arm decoratively.

These layouts take a different approach to constructing the "L" that defines their composition. The arms of the "L" that defines their composition on previous pages are chunky and hold important page elements (like photos and journaling blocks). Here, an "L" is defined by narrow strips (and even titling). The result is a safe right angle into which layers are cozily arranged.

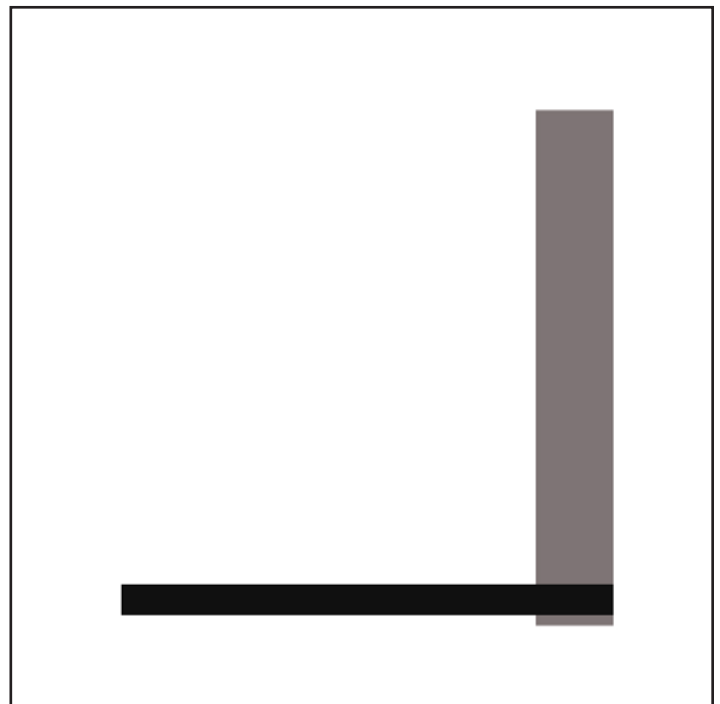
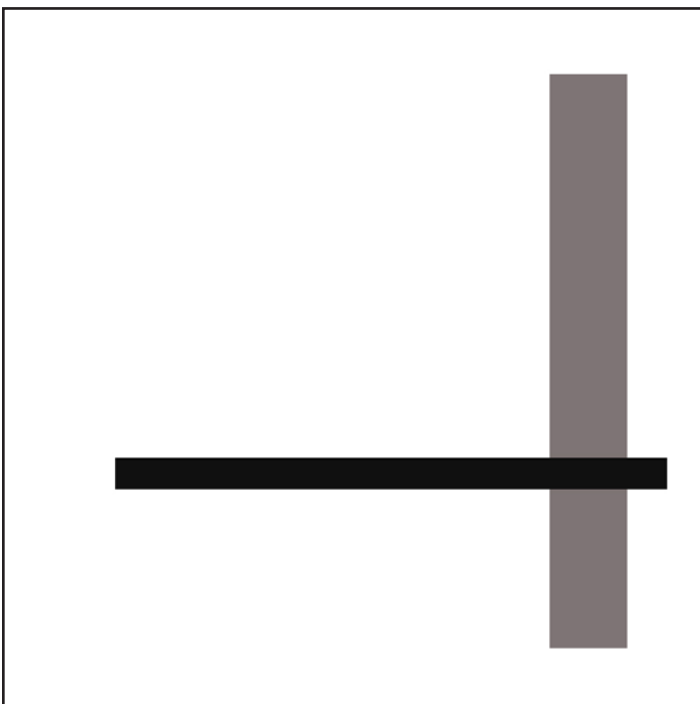
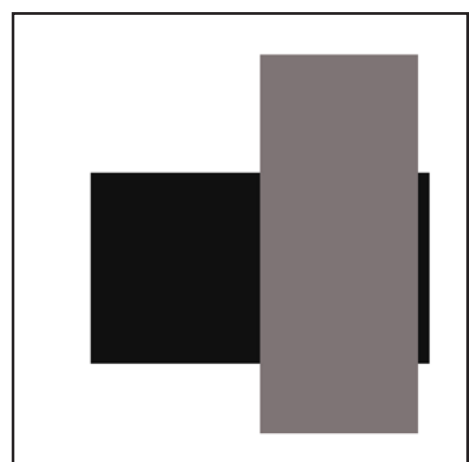
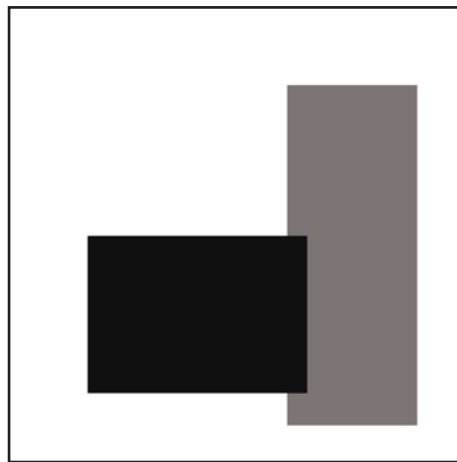
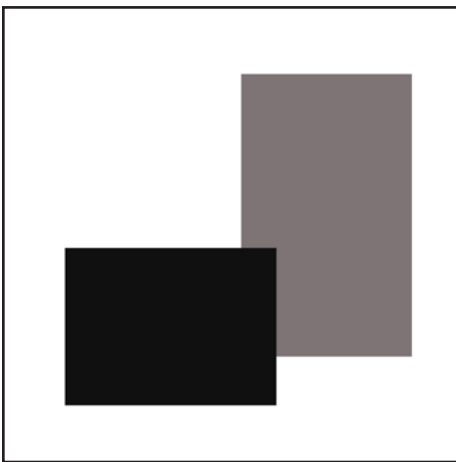


The arms of "Merry and Bright" are the glittery strip along the bottom and the vertical titling on the right. Elements are placed in a stepped-down arrangement that adds a great diagonal line to the composition.

VARIATIONS

Here are several starting points for using an "L" or "T" structure on your pages. The top row shows "L"s and "T"s in which the arms are created with photos and/or other large and key elements. The designs on the the bottom, use narrow strips to define an area into which you can situate your elements.

These are safe compositions. With the top 3, you can usually build them quickly and get several photos onto the page.



SKETCH

This sketch just makes me happy. It's not new and funky, but it's stable and clear and offers lots of opportunities for embellishment and customization. This is the basis for "Tectonic Plates are a Theory" on page 4. [Download layered psd file.](#)



YOUR TURN

Use one of the starters on page 6 to build a page with an inherent "L" or "T." Ideally, you'd make a page that uses a shape inspired by the variations in the top row (chunky arms) AND another page that uses narrow elements to define an angle into which you can situate your elements.