Alignment

Left | Centered | Right | Justified

Left

Left alignment is the easiest to read, probably because we read from left to right. Left alignment is your "go to," your "workhorse." You want to watch your line endings with left alignment, though. Ideally there isn't a lot of difference from one line ending to the next. This is called a rag, as in *flush left, ragged right*. If you do have a line that is way shorter than the others, you can add or take away tracking, the space between the words and letters, to even things out. For example, the first line of this paragraph is a bit shorter than it could be, and 5 points of tracking on that line would make it blend in with the others.

You can delineate your paragraphs by indenting the first line, or with space before or space after each paragraph.

Justified

Justified text is used when there are a lot of words to read, like in newspapers, magazines, or books. Justified text is aligned on both the left and the right, which makes organized columns of text, but can sometimes result in a lot of space between words, as in the first three lines of this paragraph.

Justified type is useful in organizing a page with a lot of content that is mainly text, and in combination with the other methods of alignment, can make a lot of information easily readable.

Right

Right alignment can be used in arty situations, like posters, poems, or to create a look that is edgy and different than the norm.

Use it sparingly, though, because it is harder to read than left aligned type.

Centered

Centered type is used when you want to create an illusion of stability, say, in an ad for a bank, or formality, like in an invitation. It's hard to read, so use it when you don't have much text. An invitation is the perfect excuse to use a script font, slowing the reader down to comprehend the information presented.

Alignment Assignment:
This photo of the sports page of the Minneapolis-based Star Tribune contains examples of all four alignment styles.

Circle and label each, and comment on why you think the designer chose that style of alignment, and if it makes the page better organized and easy to skim.