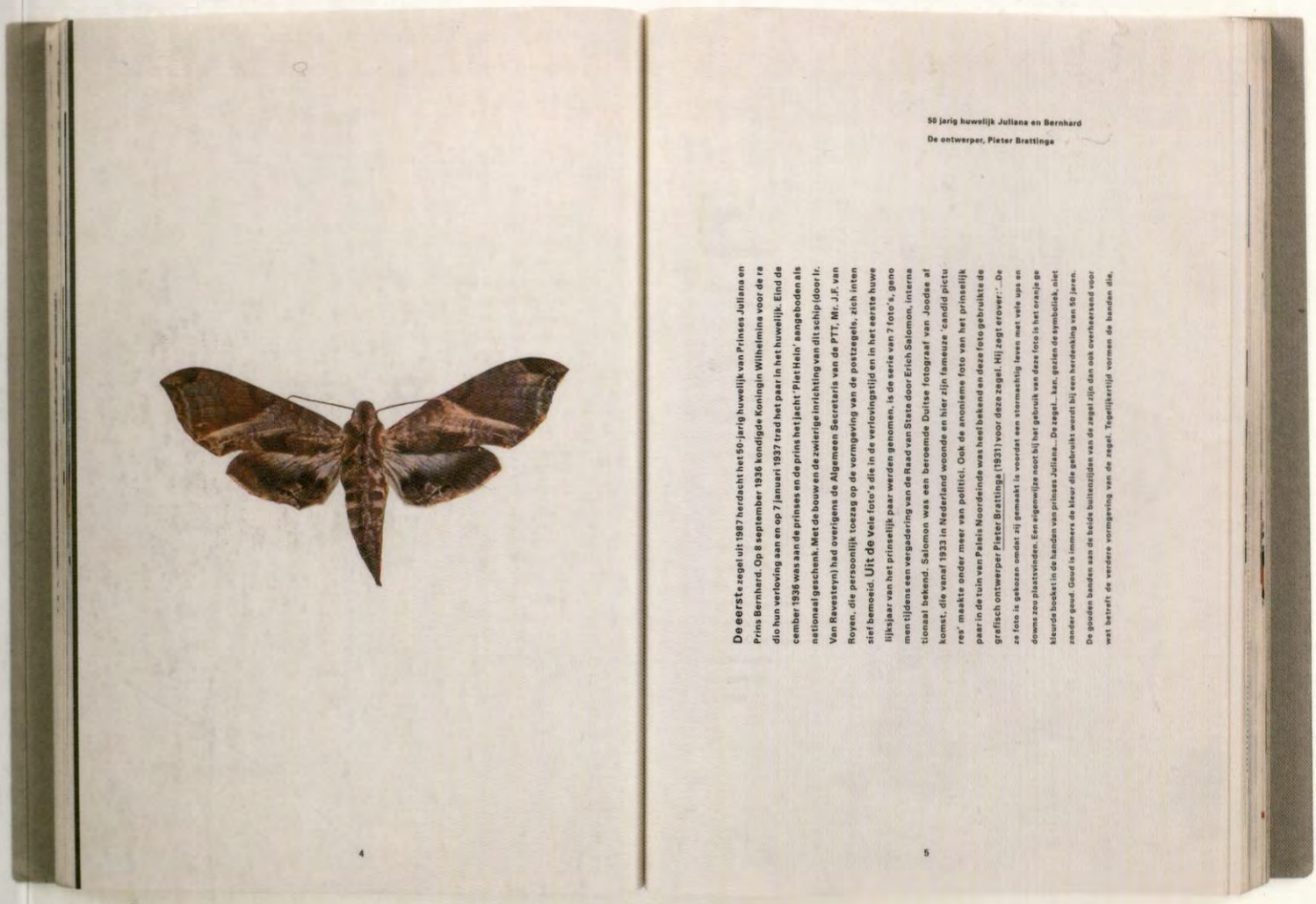
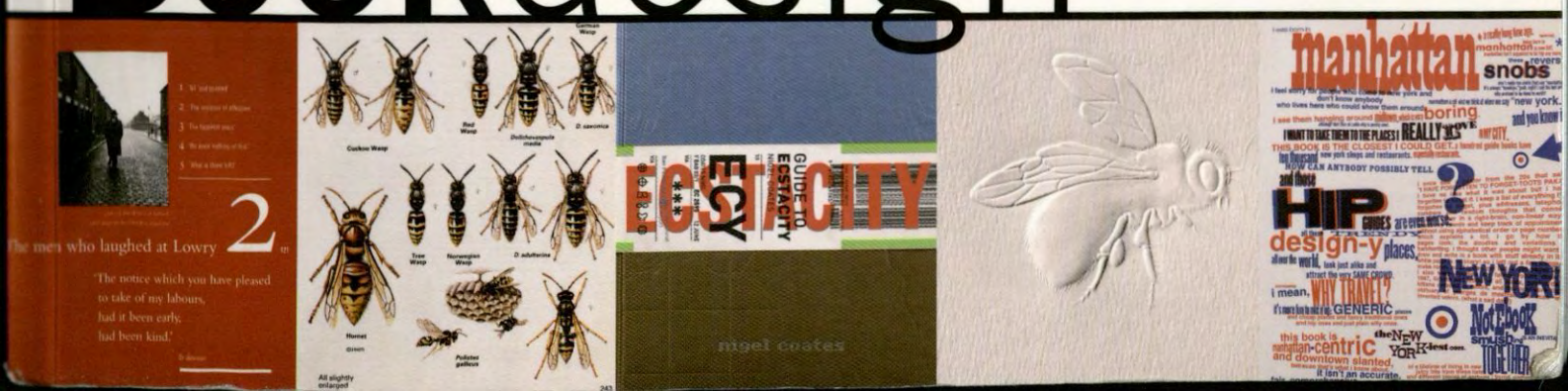
A comprehensive guide



Andrew Haslam

Bookdesign



abrams STUDIO

Book design and diagrams: Andrew Haslam

Haslam, Andrew
Book design / Andrew Haslam.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 13: 978-0-8109-9220-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)
ISBN 10: 0-8109-9220-5 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Book design—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Title.

Z116.A3H37 2006
686—dc22

2005035900

Copyright © Text and design 2006 Andrew Haslam
First published in 2006 by Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London
The moral right of the author has been asserted

Published in 2006 by Abrams, an imprint of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed and bound in China
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Front cover (main image): *Nederlands Postzegels* by Irma Boom
Front cover (left to right): *L.S. Lowry: A Biography* by Shelley Rohde, *The Collins Guide to Insects* by Michael Chinery, *Ecstacity* by Nigel Coates, The Society of Steel Engravers catalogue 2000, *New York Notebook* by Laurie Rosenwald
Frontispiece: *Blago* designed by Gordon Davey

The images shown in this book are generally reproduced at one of five sizes: 100%, 66%, 50%, 33%, and 25%. In cases where there are several images on the page, I have generally used a common scale so that the books can be compared effectively by the reader.

HNA
harry n. abrams, inc.
a subsidiary of La Martinière Groupe

115 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
www.hnabooks.com

What is a book? I

What is a book?

The book is the oldest form of documentation; it stores the world's knowledge, ideas, and beliefs. In this first part I will briefly examine the origins of the book; consider definitions of the book; examine how a book is created, identifying the various roles within the publishing industry; clarify some of the terms used to describe the physical components of the book; and finally, discuss a range of approaches to book design.

Past, present, and future

Books have a long history, stretching back more than 4,000 years; this chapter will provide a brief glimpse into their early origins. By examining the words we use to describe books, we gain an insight into the past, as well as an understanding of books themselves.

The origins of the book

The English word "book" is derived from the Old English word *bok*, itself linked to the word for "beech tree." Beech boards were written on by Saxons and Germans, and a literal definition of the book is "a board for writing." The word *codex*, used to describe very early books such as manuscripts of the Bible or ancient literature, has a similarly woody origin: the Latin for "tree trunk" is *caudex*, planks of which were used as a writing surface. When we refer to the *leaves* of a book, the reference picks up on the organic material of the writing surface used by early Egyptian scholars. The broad, flat leaves of Egyptian palms were used for writing on, and later, papyrus stems were crushed, woven, and dried to make a writing surface suitable for ink.

The first book designers were Egyptian scribes, who wrote in columns and illustrated their scrolls with drawings. Egyptian writing was not bound in the form of a book but rolled: papyrus sheets were glued edge to edge and then rolled up into a scroll. Papyrus continued to be used throughout the ancient world as the principal writing material, although samples of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman writing have also been found on leather and dried animal skins. It was probably Eumenes II, the king of Pergamum in Asia Minor, who first investigated the use of animal skins as an alternative to papyrus. His scholars produced for him a two-sided animal skin that had been stretched on a frame, dried, whitened with chalk, and smoothed flat with a pumice stone. This material is what we now call *parchment*.

The origins of the bound parchment codex can be seen in the earlier Greek and Roman practices of fastening wax-filled wooden tablets together along one edge. The material properties of parchment played a crucial role in the development of the codex. Parchment was made in larger sizes than the brittle papyrus and could be folded without damage. The codex broke with the tradition of the scroll, in that the sheets were joined edge to edge and folded, then piled and bound along one side. Folding the large parchment sheets in half created two *folios* (the word we now use to number pages, deriving from the Latin word for "leaf"); by continuing to fold the sheet in half, four pages were created, known as a *quarto* or quaternion; folding in half again made eight

pages: an *octavo*. All three terms are used today to describe paper sizes derived from folded sheets. Roman and Greek scribes followed the principle of the Egyptian scroll for the codex by writing on each page in columns. The word *page*, describing one side of a book leaf, comes from the Latin *pagina*, meaning "something fastened," reflecting its bookbinding (rather than scroll) origins.

Paper, a word derived from "papyrus," was developed in China around 200 BC, although official Chinese history states that paper was discovered by Tsai Louen, director of the imperial workshops, in AD 104. Early Chinese paper was made from mulberry or bamboo bark pulped into fibers, spread over a woven cloth, and allowed to dry. By 751, papermaking had spread to the Islamic world, and by 1000, paper was being produced in Baghdad. The Moors transported their knowledge of papermaking to Spain, and the first European paper mill was founded at Capellades in Catalonia in 1238.

Johannes Gutenberg, a German from Mainz, produced the first European printed book using movable type in 1455. Gutenberg's Bible, which was printed in Latin, was the product of several diverse technologies. Gutenberg had a knowledge of metalwork and he was familiar with the presses that were used for crushing grapes in the wine-making process. He owned and read codex-

Above Johannes Gutenberg produced the first printed edition of the Bible in 1455. The Bible went on to become the most published work in history, disseminating throughout Europe and the rest of the world the beliefs on which both Jewish and Christian cultures were based.

bound books and was aware of paper. Gutenberg's unofficial status as "the father of printing" derives from a somewhat misleading and Europocentric view of history. Sand-cast movable type had been used in Korea as early as 1241; a Korean book of circa 1377 states that it was printed using movable type. The Chinese had used wood-block printing since the seventh century to produce playing cards and paper money, which were in circulation as early as AD 960, while in AD 868, the *Tripitaka*, a book of the Theravada Buddhist canon, was printed on paper in China, and involved the cutting of 130,000 woodblocks.

Despite academic arguments over the precise date of the invention of printing, the impact of the printed book on the development of western European history is less debatable. Since Roman times, a 22-letter Western alphabet had been used for handwriting, and each letter, word, and sentence of a handwritten book was created individually: one artisan, one artifact. Movable type and its offspring, the printed book, enabled a single printer, having set a text, to produce multiple copies. The early printers were responsible for setting the type and designing the layout of the pages, as well as for the text's reproduction. The printed book industrialized the production of language. Printing was faster than calligraphic copying, and as a consequence, words became inexpensive and widely available.

The search for a definition: what is a book?

Having established the origins of the words "book" and "codex" and some of the associated terms, I feel that a clear definition of a book would be helpful. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* presents two simple alternatives:

1 "Portable written or printed treatise filling a number of sheets fastened together."

2 "Literary composition that would fill a set of sheets."

These simple definitions identify two key elements: the physical description of a portable printed set of bound sheets, and a reference to writing and literature. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* offers:

3 "... a written (or printed) message of considerable length, meant for public circulation and recorded on materials that are light yet durable enough to afford comparatively easy portability."

4 "Instrument of communication."

These definitions introduce the ideas of readership and communication. In *The Encyclopedia of the Book* (1996), Geoffrey Ashall Glaister puts figures to the notions of expense and extent:

"For statistical purposes, the British book trade once assumed that a book was a publication costing sixpence or more."

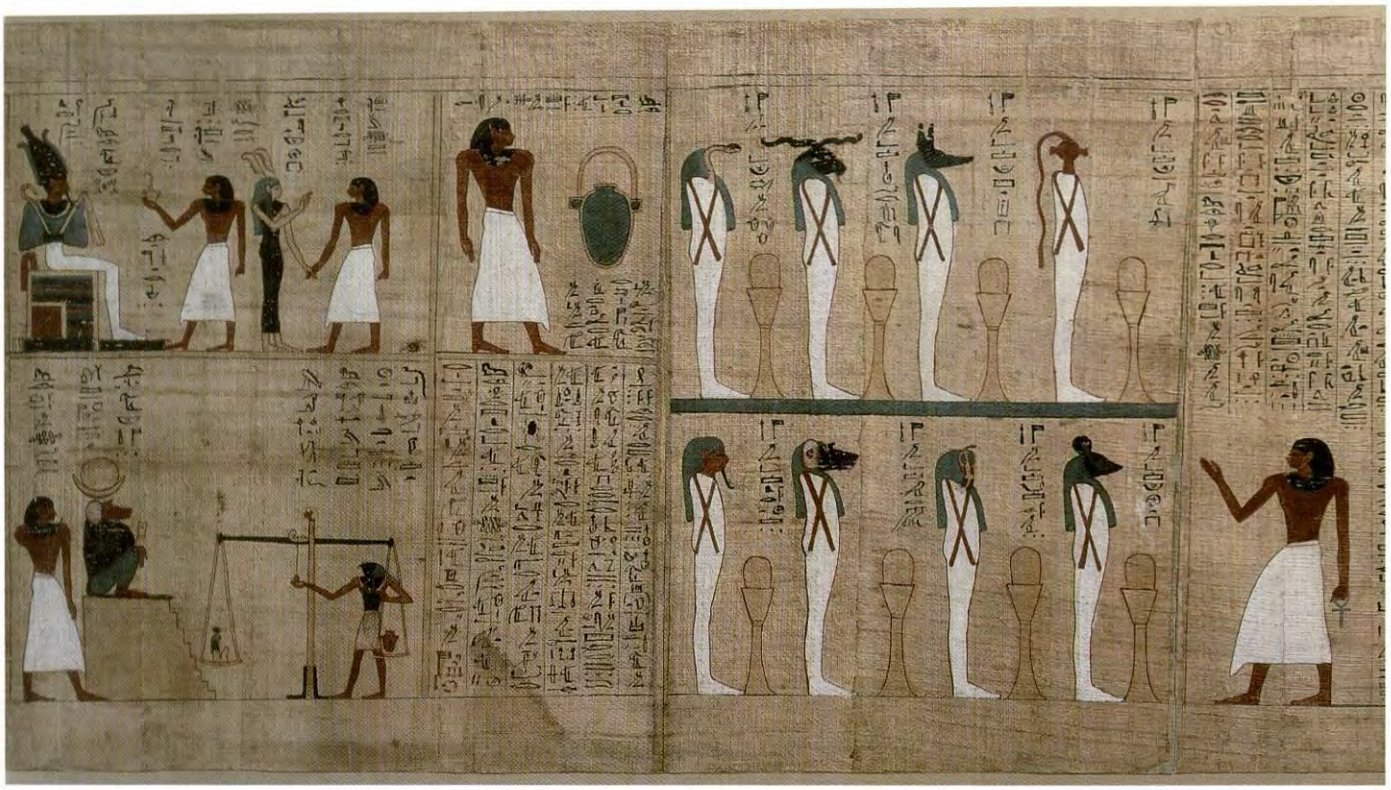
"Other countries define a book as containing a minimum number of pages; a UNESCO conference in 1950 defined a book as 'a non-periodical literary publication containing 49 or more pages, not counting the covers.'"

These definitions are clearly born out of legal concerns and tax regulations. While the physical descriptions of sheets and fastening may be accurate, none of the above definitions seems to capture the influence or power of a book. It may prompt further discussion if I put forward a definition of my own:

7 Book: A portable container consisting of a series of printed and bound pages that preserves, announces, expounds, and transmits knowledge to a literate readership across time and space.

Publishing as business: the commercial value of the book

Publishing today is an enormous business. The world's largest publisher in 1999 was Bertelsmann AG, whose German-based group made a profit of nearly 27 billion marks (more than 14 billion dollars)—more than the entire economy of many countries. The number of printed books published throughout the world increases annually, although this is an elusive figure to pin down since many publications do not use the ISBN system, the method of numbering (and thus tracking) books. No one knows how many books have been printed since 1455, or even the number of books currently held in the world's libraries, as many remain uncataloged. The Great Library of Alexandria, founded in the third century BC by the Egyptian king Ptolemy II, and destroyed by fire in 640 AD, held between 428,000 and 700,000 scrolls and was the most extensive library of the ancient world. Today, the United States Library of Congress catalog runs to 119 million items in 460 languages, while the British Library claims 150 million items in "most known languages." The acquisition rate for the British Library is 3,000,000 items per year. It keeps a copy of every book published in English and has huge international and specialist collections. The largest bookshop in the world is Barnes and Noble, 105 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, which contains 207,000 metres (679,134 feet) of shelving.

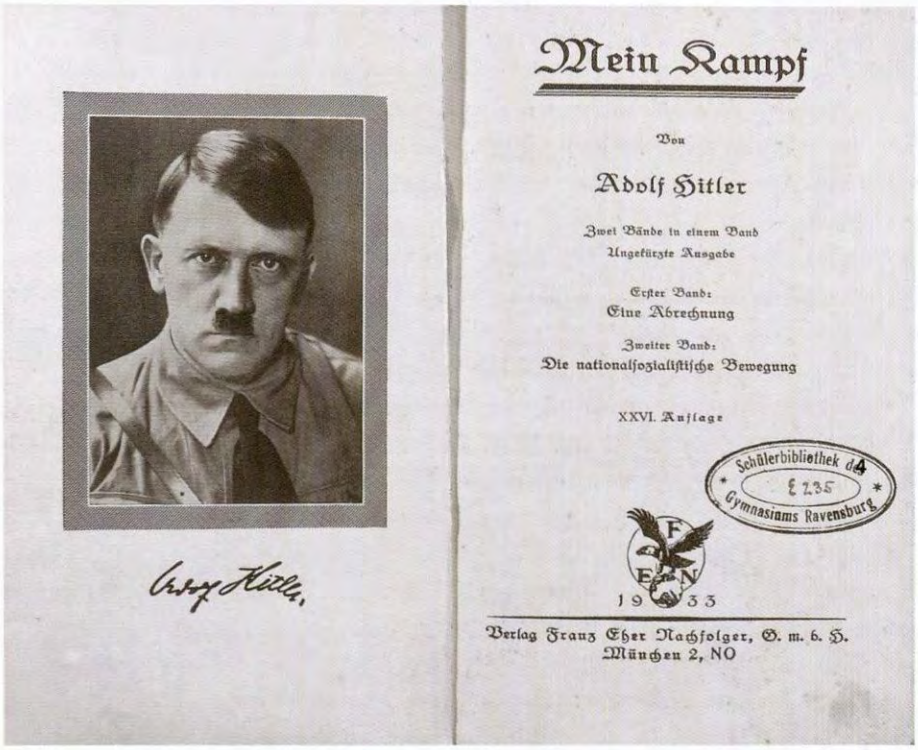


1

1 The Egyptian royal scribe Hunefer wrote the *Book of the Dead* in around 1300 BC when in the service of Seti, king of Egypt. The text runs vertically in narrow columns divided by rules. The imagery of the frieze breaks across the columns and is enlarged to illustrate the most important scenes. The books on this spread are not shown at a common scale.

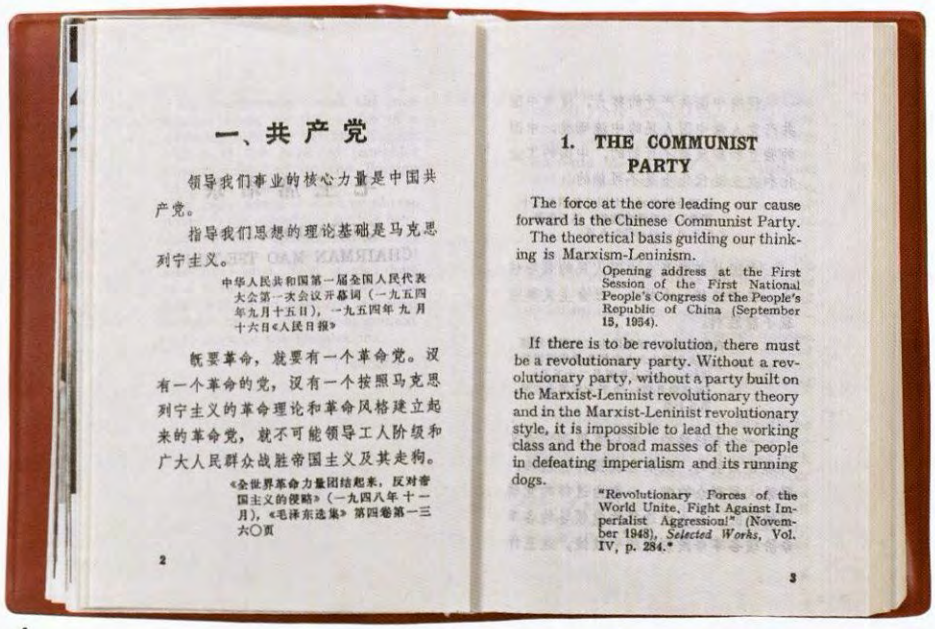
2

2 The *Diamond Sutra* is often cited as the world's oldest and most complete dated book; it is dated AD 868. For centuries it was hidden in a sealed cave in northwest China. The word *sutra* comes from Sanskrit, an ancient sacred language of India, and means "religious teaching" or "sermon." The text, written in Chinese, is considered one of the most important writings of the Buddhist faith. The text reads vertically and the illustrations were printed using wooden blocks.



3

3 Adolf Hitler in his 1925 *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) presented an alternative to the ideas of the Left in the form of extreme nationalism. This combination of unreliable autobiography, ill-considered political philosophy, and overt racism was bought by 9,000,000 Germans during Hitler's lifetime and was widely translated. It crudely laid out the principles of National Socialism and established the platform for Hitler's dictatorial fascism.



一、共产党

领导我们事业的核心力量是中国共产党。

指导我们思想的理论基础是马克思列宁主义。

中华人民共和国第一届全国人民代表大会第一次会议开幕词（一九五四年九月十五日），一九五四年九月十六日《人民日报》

既要革命，就要有一个革命党。没有一个革命的党，没有一个按照马克思列宁主义的革命理论和革命风格建立起来的革命党，就不可能领导工人阶级和广大人民群众战胜帝国主义及其走狗。

《全世界革命力量团结起来，反对帝国主义的侵略》（一九四八年十一月），《毛泽东选集》第四卷第一三六〇页

2

1. THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The force at the core leading our cause forward is the Chinese Communist Party.

The theoretical basis guiding our thinking is Marxism-Leninism.

Opening address at the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (September 15, 1954).

If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.

"Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!" (November 1948), *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 284."

3

4

4 The thoughts of Chairman Mao Zedong were brought together in his famous "Little Red Book" (*Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*). This collection of inspirational thoughts, moral guidance, and dictatorial precepts was distributed across China to all workers, regardless of their level of literacy. Mao sought to bond together a huge rural population with a sense of national pride, and extend the ideas of collective ownership, presenting a radical alternative to capitalism.

New technology: the future of the book

The sheer extent of knowledge preserved in libraries and the number of the publications produced annually make it impossible for us to imagine a world without books. Their influence and effect is immeasurable; in the year 2000, Gutenberg was voted the most significant individual of the last millennium by the readership of the British newspaper *The Times*. His invention of movable type, which led to the multiple production of printed books, created the first form of mass media. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new form of media arrived with the development of audio-based communication systems: the telephone, the radio, and sound-recording devices. Later, film and television combined sound and the moving image. But the printed book, together with its offspring (newspapers, periodicals, and magazines) remained the principal written form of mass communication.

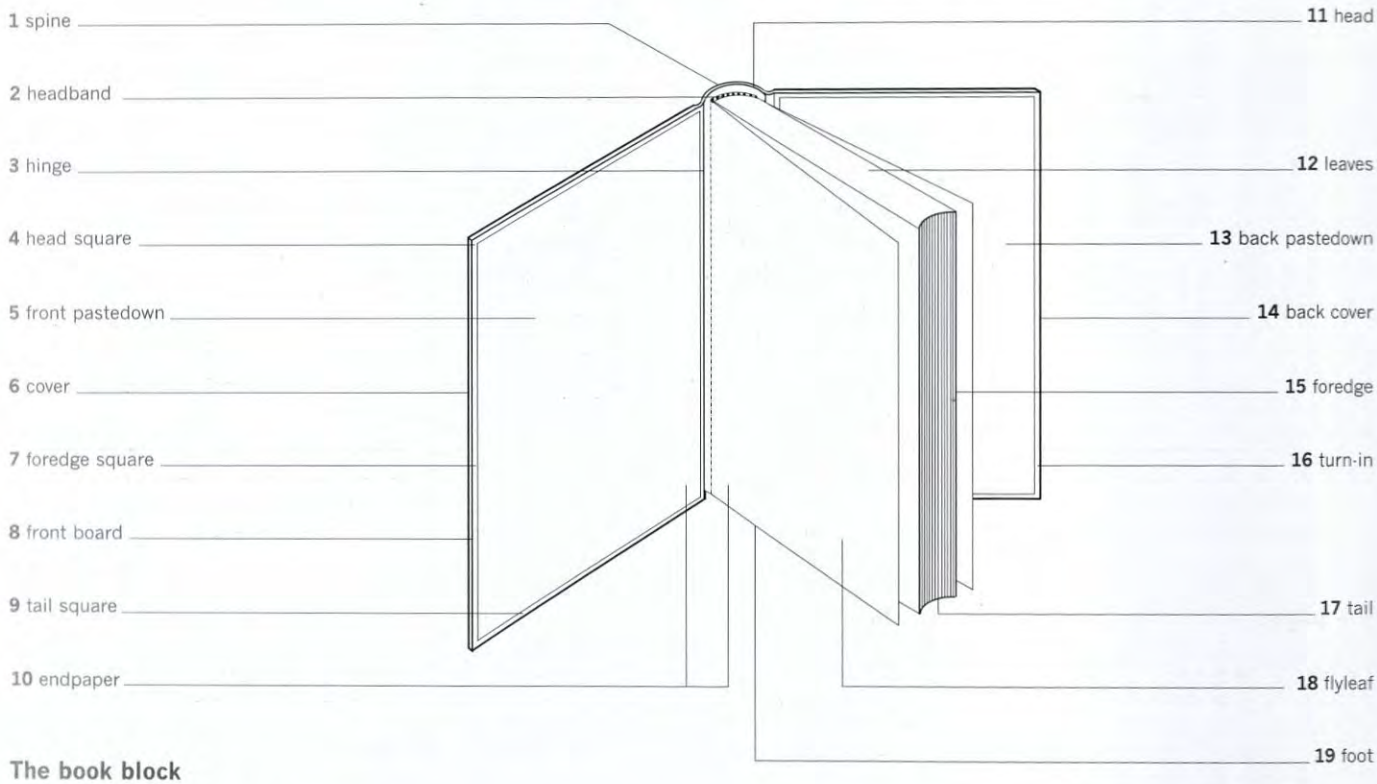
With the invention of digital technology and the creation of the Internet, the end of print was predicted and the death of the book was hailed as imminent. To date, digital technology has revolutionized the way we write, design, produce, and sell books, but the World Wide Web has not replaced them. The optimistic book-lover takes heart from the yearly increase in book sales since the advent of the Internet. By contrast, pessimists cite the gradual decline in newspaper sales, a decline that they predict will eventually be mirrored by book sales. Yet this is countered by the increase in the number of titles and overall sales of magazines and specialist periodicals. The market for information would seem to be ever-expanding, and the new reading technology of the Internet is at present augmenting rather than replacing its older cousin, the book. Reading off a computer monitor continues to be less pleasurable than reading from the printed page. However, as technology improves screen-reading, and new electronic papers offer the possibility of downloading books, it may be that the MP3 model of music distribution which has been so successful will become the future of the book.

The power of print: the influence of books

The printed book has been one of the most powerful means of disseminating ideas that have changed the course of intellectual, cultural, and economic development. An insight into the influence of all printed books can be gained by considering the power of only a handful: the Bible, the Koran, *The Communist Manifesto*, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* (the famous "Little Red Book"), and Hitler's *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)* (*see* page 11). If it is impossible to quantify the collective influence of these books on the lives of millions of people throughout history, it is clear that they laid down many of the religious and political foundations of much of the modern world. A similar shortlist of books could be compiled to represent the foundations of medicine, science, psychology, literature, drama, and so on—in fact, for every intellectual discipline. Such books are known globally, both their ideas and their authors revered or derided, but without the work of the largely forgotten book designer and printer, the influence of the ideas they contain would have been transient.

The components of a book

The various parts of a book have specific technical names that are used throughout publishing. Familiarity with some of these basic terms will support a better understanding of the chapters that follow. Other terms will be introduced and explained in the context of the design process, while a helpful glossary can be found on page 251. I have organized the basic components of the book into three groups: the book block, the page, and the grid.



The book block

1 spine section of book cover that covers the bound edge.

2 headband narrow band of thread tied to the sections that is often colored to complement the cover binding.

3 hinge fold in endpaper between pastedown and fly leaf.

4 head square small protective flange at the top of the book created by the cover and back boards being larger than the book leaves.

5 front pastedown endpaper pasted down to the inside of the front board.

6 cover thick paper or board that attaches to and protects the book block.

7 foredge square small protective flange at the foredge of the book created by the cover and back.

8 front board cover board at the front of the book.

9 tail square small protective flange at the bottom of the book created by the cover and back boards being larger than the book leaves.

10 endpaper leaves of thick paper used to cover the inside of the cover board and support the hinge. The outer leaf is the pastedown or board paper; the turning page is the flyleaf.

11 head top of book.

12 leaves individual bound paper or vellum sheets of two sides or pages recto and verso.

13 back pastedown endpaper pasted down to the inside of the back board.

14 back cover cover board at the back.

15 foredge front edge of the book.

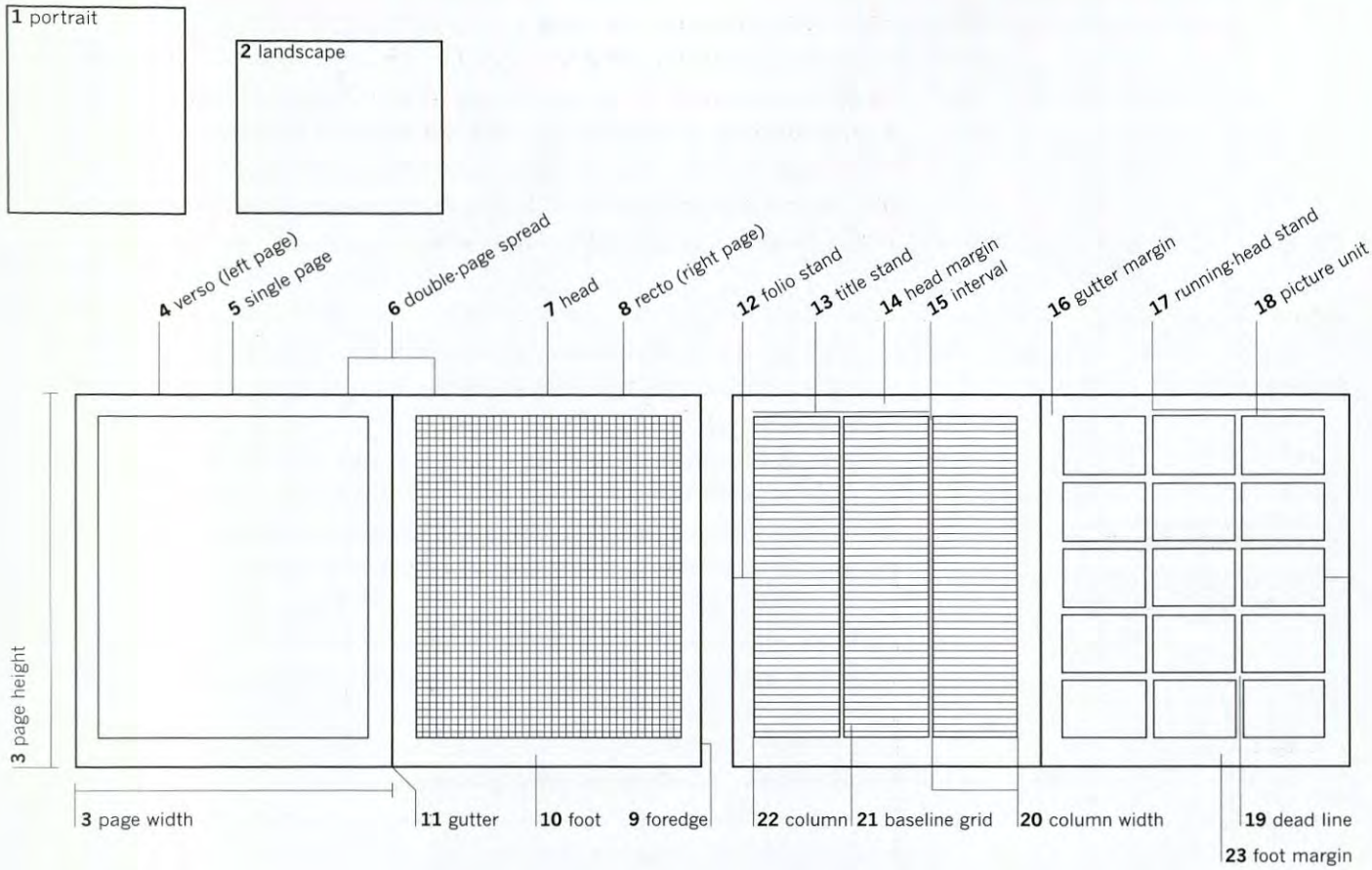
16 turn-in paper or cloth edge that is folded from the outside to the inside of the covers.

17 tail bottom of the book.

18 fly leaf turning page of endpaper.

19 foot bottom of the page.

signature (*not illustrated*) folded sheet of printed paper bound in sequence to form the book block.



The page

1 portrait format in which the height of the page is greater than the width.

2 landscape format in which the height of the page is less than the width.

3 page height and width size of the page.

4 verso left-hand page of a book, usually identified with even folio numbers.

5 single page single leaf bound on the left.

6 double-page spread two facing pages in which the material continues across the gutter, designed as if they were a single page.

7 head top of the book.

8 recto right-hand page of a book, usually identified with odd folio numbers.

9 foredge front edge of the book.

10 foot bottom of the book.

11 gutter white space formed by the adjoining inside margins of two facing pages.

The grid

12 folio stand line that defines the position of the folio number.

13 title stand line that defines the grid position of the title.

14 head margin margin at the top of the page.

15 interval/column gutter vertical space that divides columns from one another.

16 gutter margin/binding margin inner margin of the page closest to the binding.

17 running-head stand line that defines the grid position of the running head.

18 picture unit modernist division of a grid column divisible by the baseline and separated by a dead or unused line.

19 dead line the line space between picture units

20 column width/measure width of the column determining the length of individual lines.

21 baseline line on which the type sits. The base of the x rests upon it; descenders hang from it.

22 column rectangular space on a grid used to arrange type. Columns within a grid may vary in width but are taller than they are wide.

23 foot margin margin at the foot of the page.

shoulder/foredge *(not illustrated)* margin on the foredge of the page.

column depth *(not illustrated)* height of the column defined in points, millimeters, inches, or by the number of lines.

characters per line *(not illustrated)* average number of characters set in a point size to a specific measure.

gatefold/throwout *(not illustrated)* bound page with additional width that is folded into the book, usually along the foredge.

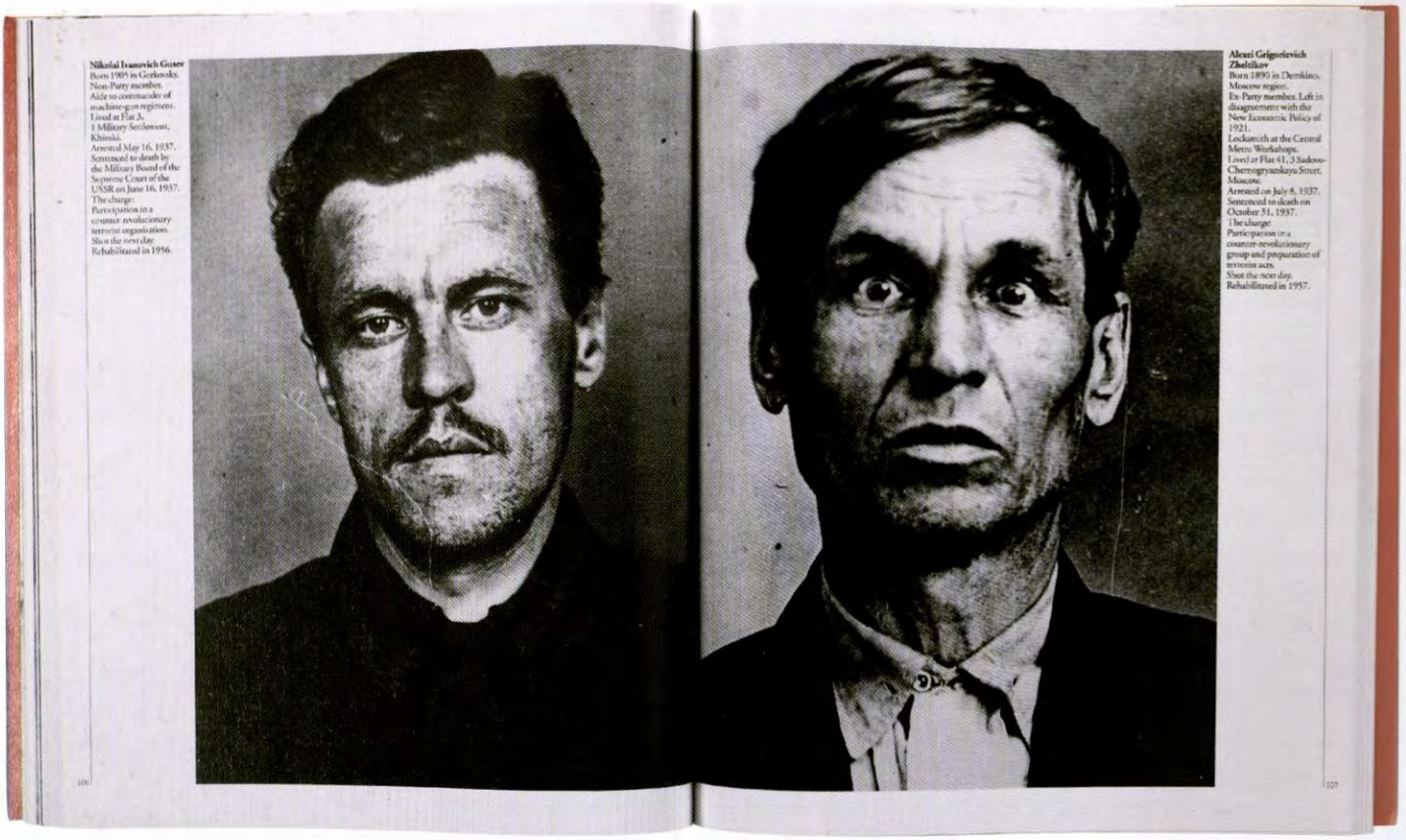
Approaching the design

This chapter will examine the early stages of a book project in three sections, first looking at broad approaches to design, then at the design brief, and finally identifying the nature and components of the content. The chapter will explore the ways in which a designer may approach a text or book, his or her first thoughts, what he or she should be looking for when faced with the material, and how to consider the best way to translate it into a book—with the readership and market in mind.

Experienced designers develop a range of approaches to book design. These approaches are common to graphic design and can be broken down simply into four broad categories: documentation, analysis, concept, and expression. These categories are not mutually exclusive; it is unlikely that a single design job can be based entirely on one approach. Most design work includes an element of each approach, though not necessarily in equal measure. In addition, there is a part of the design process that is personal to the individual designer and is less easily defined by practical analysis. Design is a mixture of rational, conscious decisions that can be analyzed, and subconscious ones that are less easily defined, stemming as they do from an individual designer's experience and creativity. For this reason, some designers are slightly embarrassed and evasive when questioned about their working process, suggesting that any detailed examination restricts their creativity. Phrases such as "personal expression" and views about individuality are put forward, along with a desire "not to be closed down by systems," or the idea that "it is important to preserve the mystery." Like many creative activities, design has an undefinable "X-factor," and to examine it too closely is to risk its destruction. The subconscious clearly has an influence on the layout of a page and we often position elements out of our experience or instinct rather than as a result of a conscious decision. The subconscious element of design becomes part of our visual and kinetic memory in the manner of walking or riding a bike. These are skills honed through practice that have become so ingrained that we are hardly aware of them as part of the process. By examining these four rational starting points, however, I hope to provide an insight into features of the design process which can be examined, and which, through practice, can be implemented.

Documentation

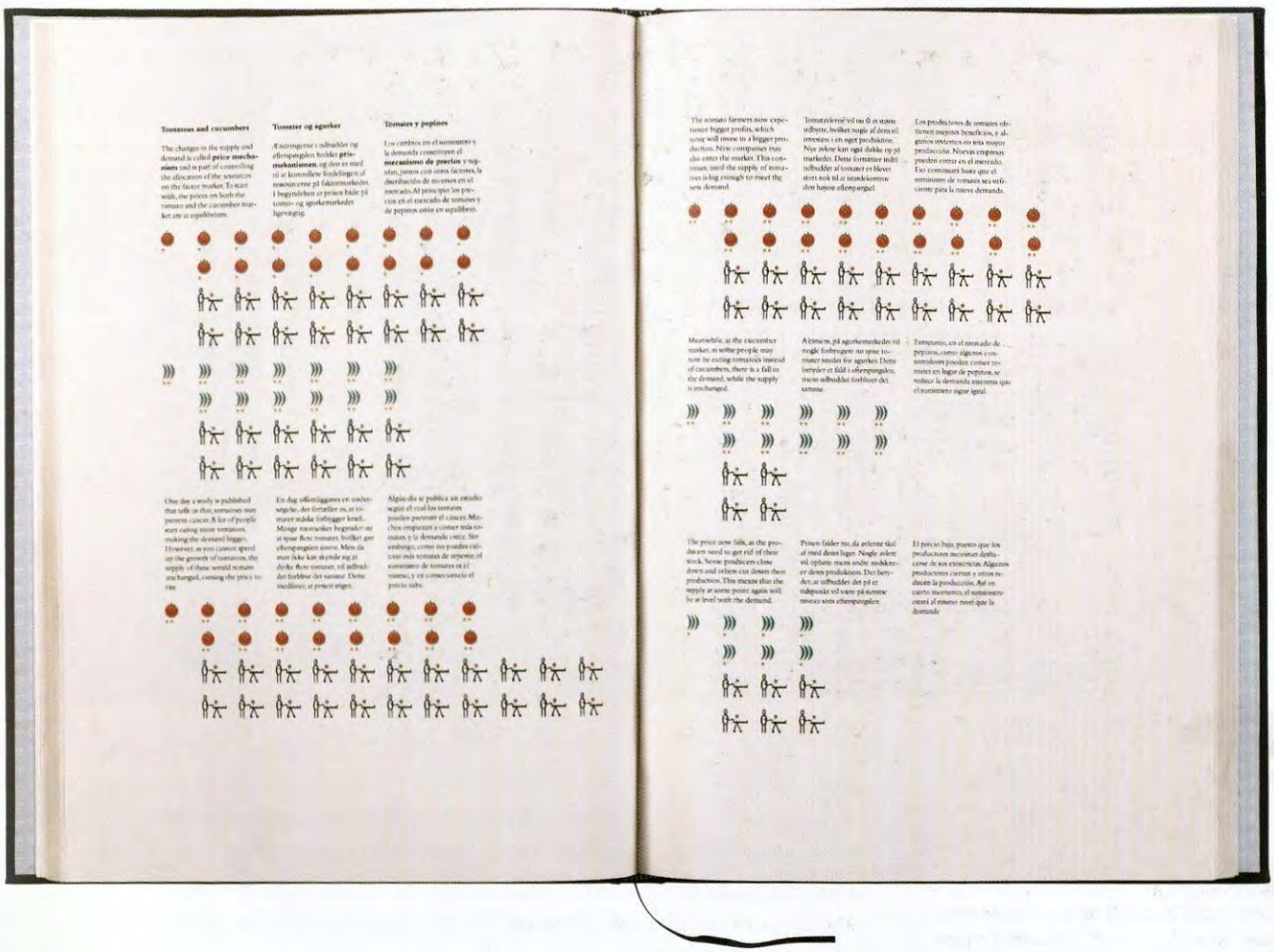
All graphic design involves working with documentation. Documentation records and preserves information through text and image, though it may take many forms: a brief, a manuscript, a listing, a set of figures, a photograph, a map, a sound recording, a video. Documentation is at the root of writing and image. It is fundamental to typography, illustration, graphic design, cartography, graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, photography—in fact, all the components of a book. Without documentation there is no graphic design. There are no books, magazines, newspapers, posters, street signs, packaging, websites. There is no preserved visual language. There is merely gesture.



Above David King's book *Ordinary Citizen, the Victims of Stalin* (2003) uses documentary photographs of victims of the Soviet regime. The premise of the book was to record the portraits of those who were killed.

Documentation is fundamental to the modern world; it preserves ideas and allows them to live long beyond human memory and speech. Documents give an external form to internalized thought. They can be reproduced and published, allowing the author's ideas to transcend time, unrestricted by life span and geography, and be presented simultaneously across the world years or even centuries after the author's death.

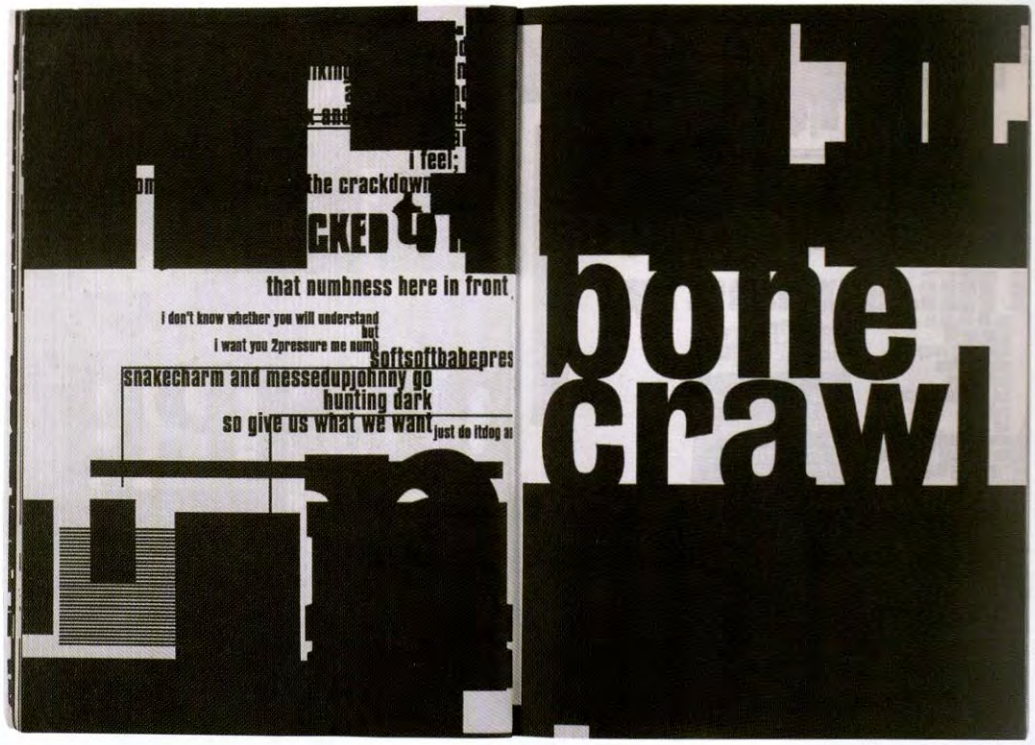
Documentation is the starting point for a book. In its raw state, it is the manuscript that is to be manipulated, organized, and arranged. Documentation can also be used as the principal editorial and design approach within book design. A collection of reportage photographs, for example, documents an event, situation or group of people: the photographs are visual documents that a designer orchestrates within a book.



Analysis

Analytical thinking is involved in all book design. The books that rely most heavily on this approach are those that deal with complex factual information. Books that have maps, charts, diagrams, tabular matter, complex indexing, or cross-referencing are designed to allow the reader to compare and contrast elements of data. An analytical approach seeks to find structure within content, data, or documentation. Where this is not possible it imposes a structure upon the data so that it is more intelligible. Analysis is born of rationalism: it is the search for a discernible pattern within a mass of information. This approach is much championed by modernists. Designers operating in an analytical way seek either to break the totality of the content into many smaller units, or, by examining the many parts, seek to understand the whole. Either way, the designer is attempting to find a pattern with which to classify the various elements. Having made segregated groups of information, the designer seeks to prioritize and order the groups to give the content structure, sequence, and hierarchy. This process may involve working closely with an author and editor. When a book has been through this form of editorial analysis, the designer looks to reinforce the editorial structure visually through sequence and hierarchy.

Above Annegeret Mølhave's book *For Sale: an Explanation of the Market Economy* (2003) is an explanation of how free-market economics work. The book is produced in three languages—Danish, English, and Spanish—and is illustrated throughout by symbols. The approach to the book is a combination of documentation and very precise analytical thinking.

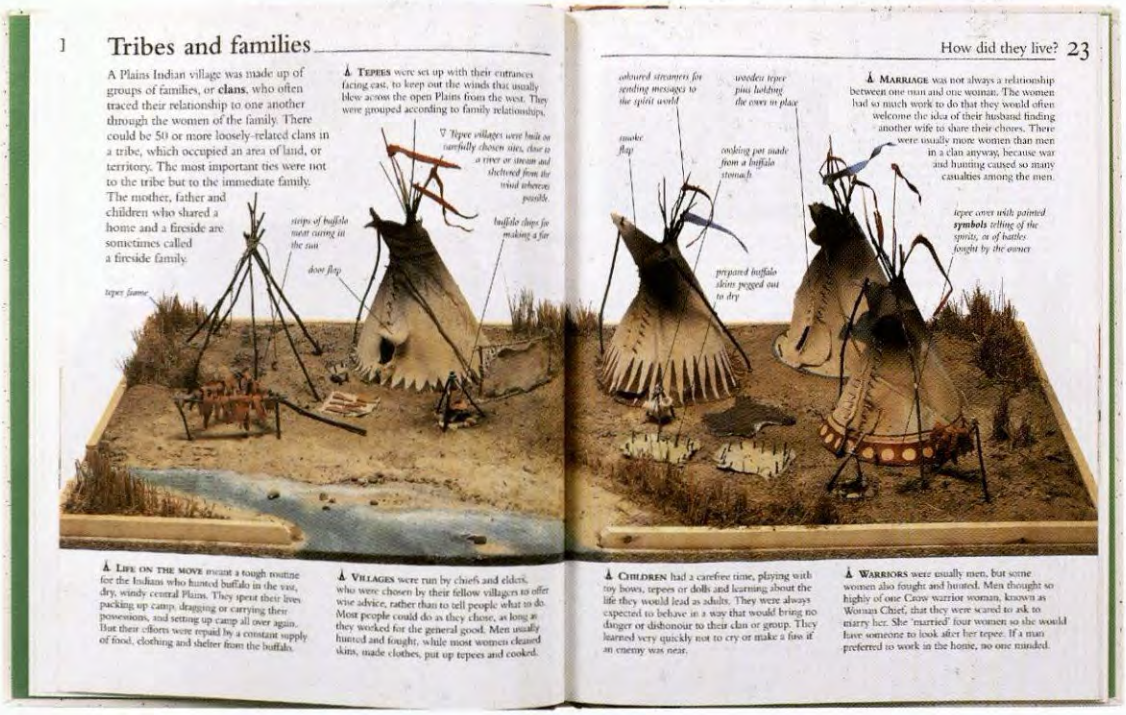


Above Designed by Tomato, *Mmm...Skyscraper I Love You: A Typographic Journal of New York* takes an expressive approach in which the content of the words and the form of their typographic presentation combine to evoke the emotional heart of poetry about New York.

Expression

An expressive approach to design is motivated by visualizing the emotional position of the author or the designer. It is driven by the heart or in some cases, the gut; it is visceral and passionate. It strives through color, mark-making, and symbolism to emotionally "reposition" the reader. The reader picks up on the emotional position within the design while absorbing the content. Expressive design is rarely definitive or entirely rational. It is often lyrical, not intended to deliver meaning to the mind, but instead asking questions and inviting reflections. This approach views content as a starting point from which an interpretation is to be made. It parallels the relationship in music between composer and performer, casting the writer as composer and the designer as performer: the designer brings to the piece his or her own personal interpretation. For some designers, this approach is suspect, since it lacks objectivity and can be prone to self-indulgence.

A tension exists between the need to honor the author's original text and the designer's individual ideas; consequently, many designers who enjoy this approach have become authors themselves in order to control both the content and the form of the book.



Concept

A conceptual approach to graphic design seeks out the "big idea"—the underpinning concept that encapsulates the message. Within advertising, cartoons, promotion, and branding, conceptual thinking forms the basis of communication. The approach is often referred to as "ideas graphics" and is defined by reductive rather than expansive thinking: complex ideas are distilled into succinct, pithy visuals, often working in relation to clever titles, straplines, or marketing premises. A conceptual approach frequently uses two or more ideas to throw light on a third. It makes use of pun, paradox, cliché, metaphor, and allegory. It is often clever, witty, and entertaining, but it has to be delivered with precision because it relies on designer and target audience sharing a subtle understanding of image and wordplay.

The term "conceptual" can also be used to describe a more expansive approach than that of ideas graphics when an art director is responsible for the visual appearance of a series of books or even the output of the whole publisher. A series of books may be linked by a common concept, which defines an approach to the nature and use of text, photography, and illustration, the number of elements on the page, the extent and form of the books, and so on. The art director working with an editor may create strategies of explanation that form the guidelines for the series writers and designers.

Above I devised three series of nonfiction children's books based on a conceptual premise. The *Make it Work!* science, history, and geography series was based on the idea that children could understand the world around them through making and experimenting. The concept of learning through active engagement with a book's subject, as opposed to merely reading about an experiment, historical event, or geographic feature, encouraged children who were less excited by reading to learn through making. Here, a spread from *Make it Work! North American Indians* shows a model Plains Indian camp. This very time-consuming conceptual approach required me to make thousands of models over the course of a decade for 27 books, but the series was very well received: the books were published in 14 languages and sold in 22 countries.

The design brief

The designer should try to gain an overview of a book's content at the editorial briefing meeting, seeking an insight into the author's, the editor's, and the publisher's vision. The designer needs to establish the relationship between text and image, but it is unnecessary for him or her to be an expert in a book's content—a certain objective distance is often helpful when searching for structure within a manuscript. Some briefings are delivered with great clarity and the designer is aware of the publisher's intentions for a specific audience; other briefings are consultations in which opinions are sought, reviewed, and contemplated. Some initial meetings are exploratory and open-ended, working on the basis that if able minds come together with an embryonic book they will bounce ideas off one another, resulting in an approach that would not have been conceived by a single person. If the brief is vague and ill-informed, the designer may need to turn interrogator, peppering the commissioner with questions in search of the book's essence. Is the book organized in separate chapters, or as a single, unbroken text? Has the author written to a specific brief? Is the text intended to be illustrated? Are the illustrations marked within the main body of text, or will they be found in a separate appendix? Has the author written extensive captions that need to be integrated with the text? Are some extended captions sufficiently large to be presented as separate side stories? Is the organizational structure alphabetical, chronological, or thematic? Are the images or is the text leading the reader? What is the extent? What is the intended retail price? What are the production values?

The designer usually leaves the initial briefing meeting with many questions that require more extensive answers, but also with sufficient information to gain an overview of the project. A period of reflection is helpful, allowing contemplation of the book's external form in relation to its internal structure.