

Pardon Me, While I Impose On You

When creating a multiple page document in InDesign, set it up in the page order in which it is read, beginning with page one, two, three, etc. This setup is called “reader spreads,” and is the easiest and most natural way to create and edit a file, as well as printing the file for the initial proofing process.

However, once you are ready to create a “bound” proof, printing in reader spreads will not produce the pages in a way that they can be properly folded and bound.

In order to print pages in the correct layout and order when they are bound, the files must be properly “imposed” into a second, new file in which the pages are reordered in the proper imposition and print on the correct size paper. The order and layout of the new publication is wholly dependent on the type of binding for the booklet. A file that employs “Printer spreads” reorders the pages so that after duplexing (printing on both sides of the sheet, or “signature”), folding and binding, all of the pages end up in the correct reading order.

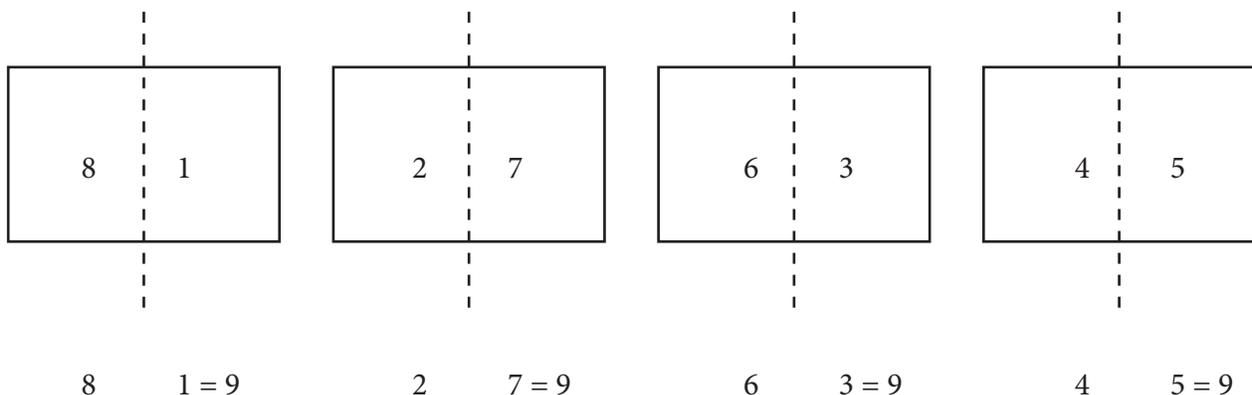
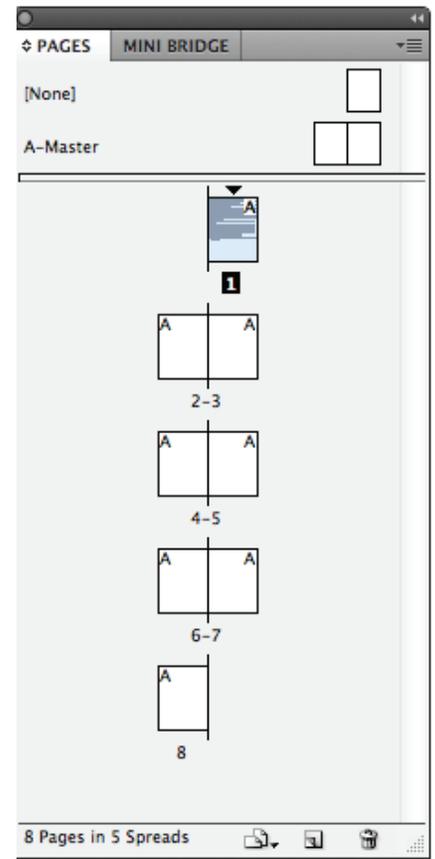
For the purposes of this discussion, we’ll narrow the categories of binding to two. Perfect binding (glued) or a wire or plastic coil binding, where a single page prints on the front and back of the signature, yielding two pages per signature; and saddle-stitch (stapled), where two non-sequential pages print on each side of the signature, yielding four pages per signature.

Confusion about layout typically occurs around saddle-stitched binding, so here are a few rules to help simplify the process.

First try the “Print Booklet” feature under the File Menu. Print Booklet enables you to create a temporary document that downloads directly to your printer to print the file in the correct printers impositions. I never print directly, but instead, print to the PDF driver, creating a standalone Acrobat PDF that can be sent to a remote printer.

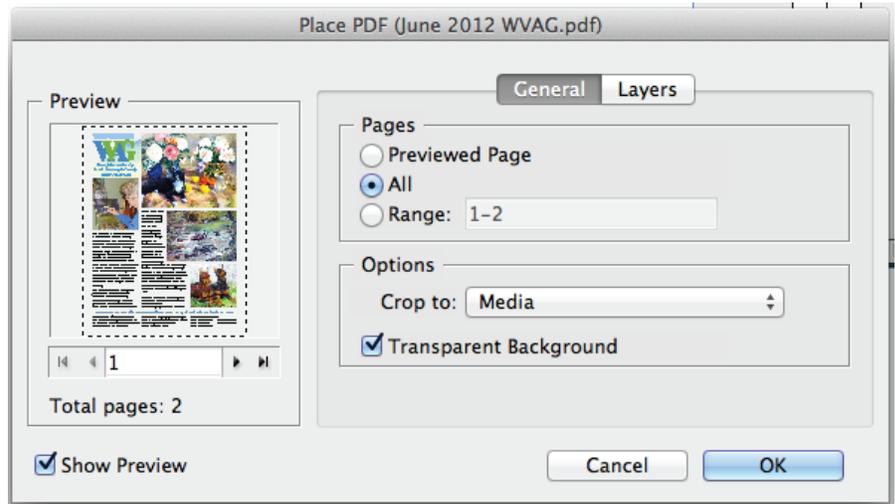
But beyond using the automated features included with the software, it is important to understand the logic behind how the imposed document is assembled. To do that, remember these rules:

1. Total number of pages in the original document must be divisible by four
2. Evens on the left
3. Odds on the right
4. Add the page numbers on each side of the signature together and they must equal the total number of pages in the document + 1.



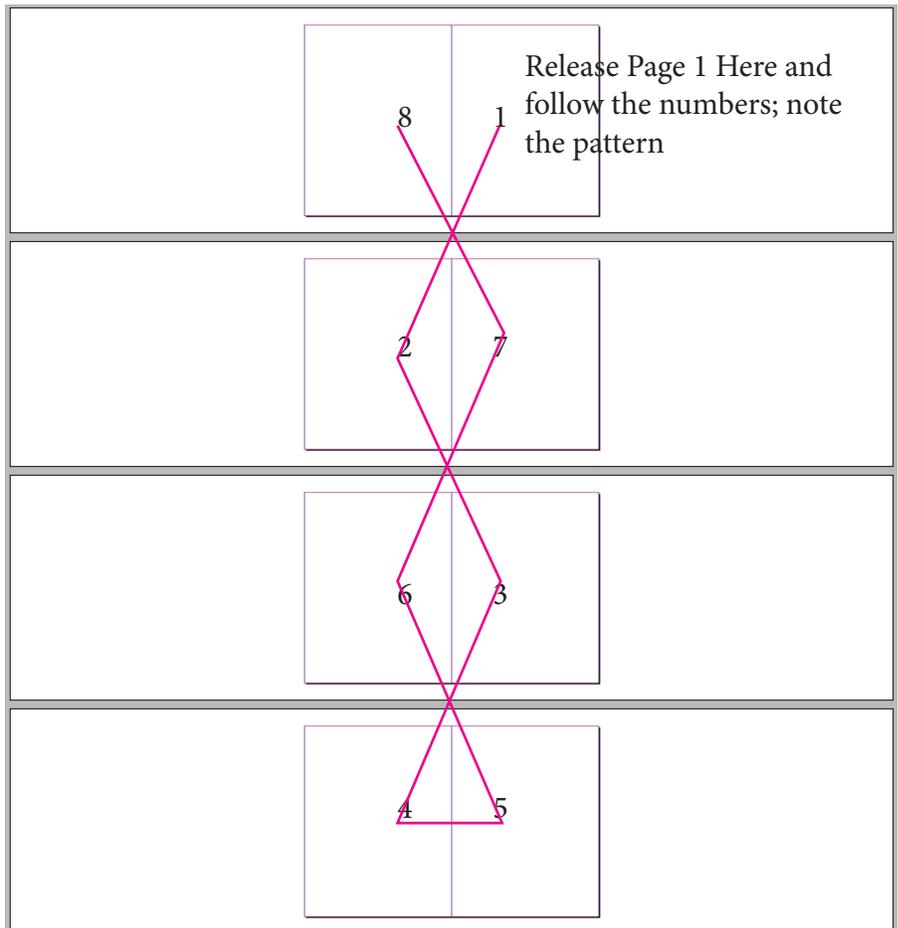
To circumvent the automated process within InDesign, create a “Press Quality” PDF from the original Reader Spreads file. Next, “Place” the PDF file. Make sure that you check, “Show Import Options,” and turn off “Replace Selected Item” in the “Place” dialog.

By showing the import options, you can choose to Place “All” of the pages. By choosing this option, your cursor will reload with a new page, as you release each into its proper position within the document.



Should you choose to manually place the pages in the pdf file, you can follow the diagram below. For a shorter or longer document, just follow the same pattern but shorten or extend to fit.

1. Create a new document that is twice the width, but the same length as the original file. An 8.5" x 11" file would impose onto an 11"x17" sheet, so set up the file as a Tabloid (11"x17").
2. Place the PDF with the settings shown above creating half the number of pages in the original file, and place all of the pages. Follow the zig-zag pattern shown here.
3. When you reach the halfway point, the next page faces the last in the “center spread.” On this signature, since the pages in the center spread prints on the same sheet, publications tend to use it for an oversize image. At this point in the new publication, turn your direction and head back for the first sheet, one sheet at a time.



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