Learn and be inspired.

LetterMat: 141
Multiple Line Captions

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Debossed and pen letters can be small. Suddenly it is practical to include names, places, even sentences to help tell a picture's story.

In a previous course, there was a second line added under a caption to include a date as well as a place. The projects here are not more complicated than adding and arranging more and more LetterMat items in the design. The intention is to offer suggestions for sizes and settings, and to generate ideas for captions beyond just the normal abbreviated labels.

Project 1: Names, Places, and Dates

Each line of this caption is a separate LetterMat item. Each line's font, size, and spacing can be set independently.

Decide on the necessary information for the caption, then design each line.

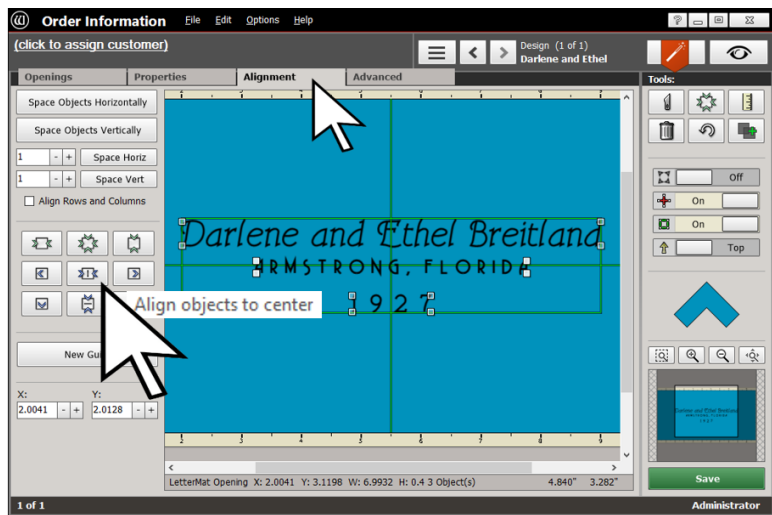*Note: The table below outlines the settings for each line.*

Alignment

The centers of these 3 captions are lined up in a classic symmetrical arrangement.

‣ Select all 3 lines and click the **Alignment** tab at the top.

‣ Click the **Align Objects to Center** button at the left.

Vertical spacing is an artistic choice.

‣ Use the arrow keys to move the lines of the caption.

Alignment Table

Top Line	Middle Line	Bottom Line
Font: Ariadne Pen	Font: Vienna Pen	Font: Bristol Pen
Height = 0.4 inch	Height = 0.21 inch	Height = 0.27 inch
Kerning = 0.05 inch	Kerning = 0.16 inch	Kerning = 0.25 inch
Tracking = 0.2 inch	Tracking = 0.14 inch	Tracking = 0.14 inch
Total Width = 7 inches	Total Width = 5.5 inches	Total Width = 1.25 inches

*Note: Glance ahead to the **Grouping** topic after the next project. The reasons for grouping explained there are also applicable to this caption as you continue designing the openings for the arrangement—or if you decide that it is necessary to adjust the overall size of the caption.*

Project 2: A Longer Caption on Multiple Lines

Separate a caption into several lines to fit a space as if it was a picture.

Imagine that this caption needs to be down the left side of a photo in an arrangement. To that end, the lines of letters are short, and all their right sides are in line.

Experiment, too, with slightly different heights for each line.

- The top lines for each sentence are 0.37 inch tall.

- The other lines are as small as 0.32 inch high.

- In all the lines, the **Kerning** is set to 0.07 inch and the **Tracking** is 0.15 inch.

- The entire block of type is 3.0316 x 4.3912 inches high.
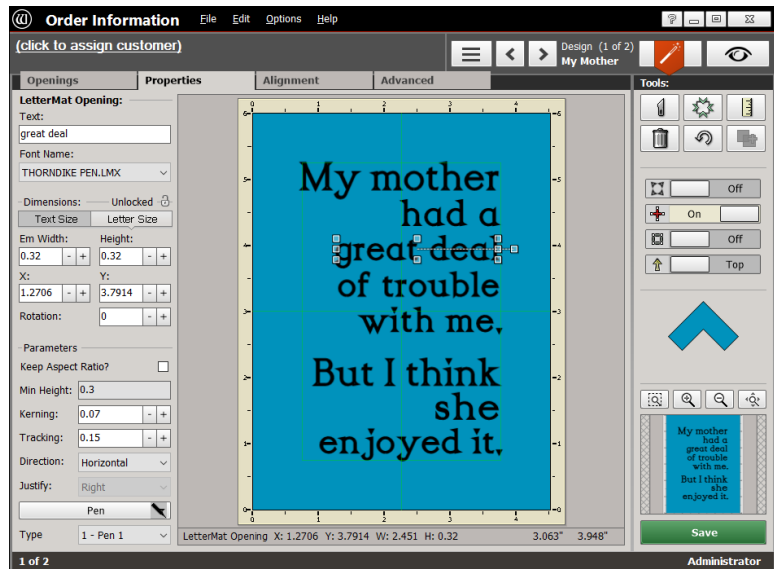
The vertical spacing between the lines started at 0.2 inch. However, there are several ascending and descending elements of the letters that create an illusion of uneven spacing. Minor vertical spacing corrections with the arrow keys make the spacing appear more even.

The Thorndike Font

The font in this example is not a single line font, but it is designed to be used with the pen and the debossing cartridges. The letter forms are outlined. The widths of the strokes are quite thin in places, then they taper to become wider in other places to echo a traditional Roman typeface.

When the letters are small, the sides of the strokes will be very close and letter shapes will appear to be a single stroke, with some thinner and some wider.

If this is an appealing effect, experiment with captions using TrueType fonts—the fonts in the Windows font directory. Under the **Openings** tab, click the **Add TrueType Font** button instead of the **Add LetterMat** button. All of them will be rendered as outlines of the letter shapes. There is an endless variety of TrueType fonts, and many will work beautifully for captions.

Grouping

Once you are happy with the caption, select all the lines of letters and click the **Group Selection** button at the upper right to lock them together.

Moving the caption into place against the openings will be much easier, and none of the lines will be nudged out of alignment.

Changing the Size

Grouping also makes it possible to change the size of the entire caption, if necessary. All the relative sizes and positions of the letters and lines remain constant as the size is changed.

Compare the appearance of this caption with the previous illustration. The new size here is 2.75 x 4.125 inches—a bit smaller, but the larger letters are still larger and the wider spaces are still wider.

Note: There is no way to lock the proportions of a grouped item.

Use the round letters as indicators.

‣ Adjust the dimensions so that their shapes are circles rather than ovals to keep the letters roughly in proportion.

Project 3: A Tidy Block of Type

The crown jewel of typography is a page with every line of type equal length and evenly spaced. Though it is not always necessary in picture frame design, it is instructive to know the options of the process.

Beginning

Decide on the shape for the block of type. Should it be vertical or horizontal? Pick a font and decide how small the letters should be.

‣ Look under **Dimensions** at the left and make sure that **Letter Size** is clicked.

‣ Divide the copy into lines and begin entering the LetterMat openings.

‣ Make each line approximately equal in length. This will probably require moving words from line to line.

‣ Start with all the lines' **Height**, **Kerning**, and **Tracking** the same.

‣ Make sure that **Keep Aspect Ratio** is checked. In this example, the **Height** is 0.26 inch, **Kerning** is 0.06 inch, and **Tracking** is 0.14 inch.
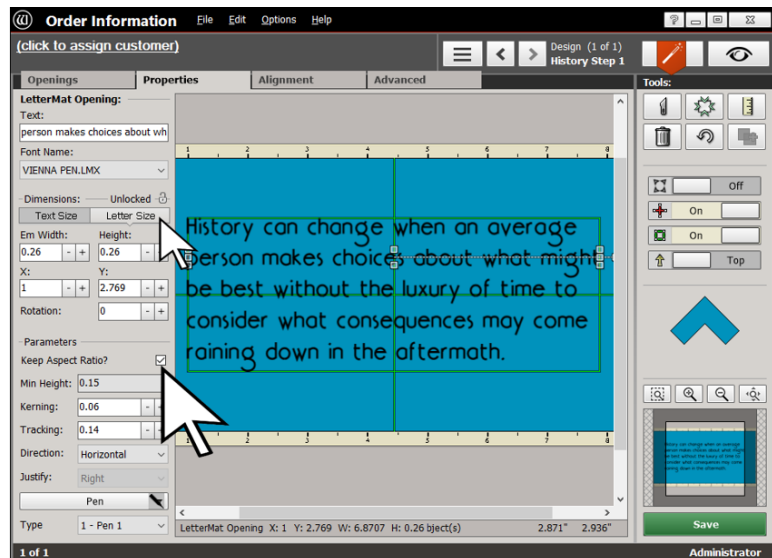
Manipulating the Lines' Lengths

‣ Look for the longest lines. In the previous illustration, the second line was 6.870 inches wide and the fourth line was 6.652 inches wide.

‣ Experiment with shortening them by reducing the **Kerning** and **Tracking** 0.01 or 0.015 inch. Make sure the copy still looks good and it is easy to read.

After a few changes, the second line is now 6.510 inches wide and the fourth line is 6.462 inches wide.
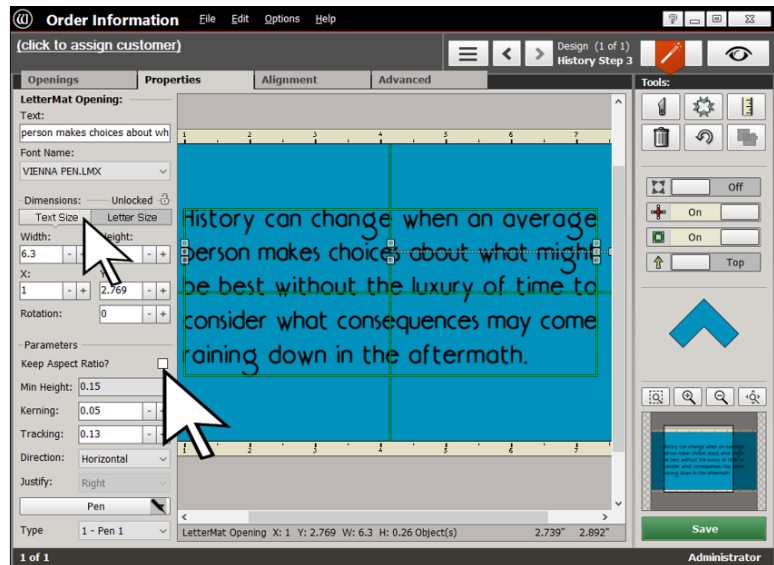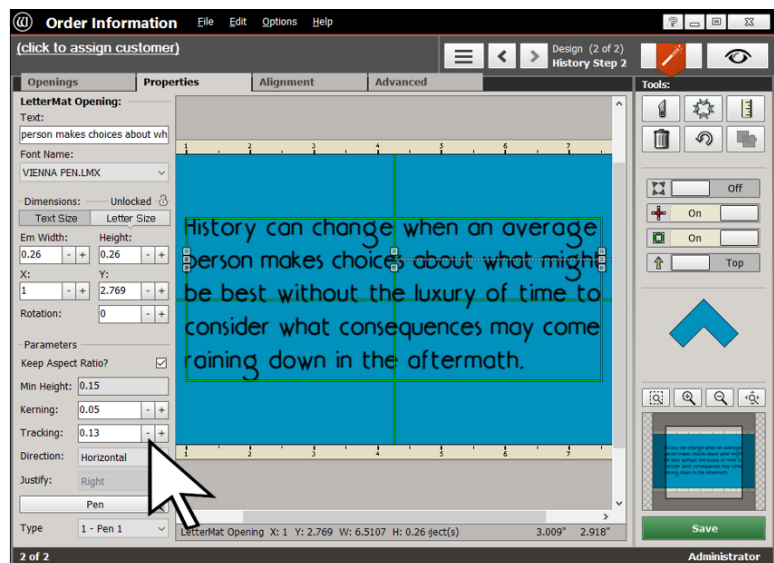

Setting the Final Line Lengths

‣ Once all the lines are approximately the same length, click **Text Size**.

‣ Look at the **Width** of all the lines and decide on a new width that will be entered for all the lines.

Note: Ignore the bottom line. It is customary for the last line to be noticeably shorter.

A sensible **Width** in this example seems to be 6.3 inches.

Options

‣ Select a line.

Before you enter 6.3 in the **Width** field, though, there are options to be evaluated when **Text Size** is clicked.

1. If **Keep Aspect Ratio** is *checked*, the letters will remain in their original proportions. The **Kerning** will be recalculated by the program to adjust the length of the line of letters.

2. If **Keep Aspect Ratio** is *unchecked*, the **Kerning** will remain as specified. The letters will be expanded or condensed to adjust the length of the line of letters.

In both cases, the **Tracking** remains unchanged.

Final Settings in this Example

In the first 3 lines, the spacing was very pleasing, so **Keep Aspect Ratio** was unchecked. The letters' widths were slightly changed.

In the fourth line, **Keep Aspect Ratio** was checked. The **Kerning** was changed, and the letters' widths were unchanged.

In the last line, the **Tracking** was reduced to 0.13 inch. This makes the spacing of this line look more like the other lines.

Things to Remember

★ The technical aspects of multiple line captions are surprisingly simple: Keep adding and editing independent LetterMat items. Then position them using the arrow keys and the alignment tools as if they were any other openings.

★ Remember that in longer captions, the minimum size and original proportions are not so critical for debossed and pen letters. The Wizard will draw smaller and more condensed letters just fine, but test and verify that they still look nice and that the caption remains readable.

★ Grouping locks together the lines of a caption. It will be easier to move the caption into place among the openings—and none of its elements will be accidentally nudged out of place.