

# Continuation

... leads the eye along a path.

## GESTALT THEORY | Part two of eight

**A**RE THERE RULES FOR DESIGN? Early last century, psychologists in Austria and Germany developed a school of psychology called Gestalt, which attempts to explain human behavior in terms of pattern seeking. Gestalt theory explains how the eye organizes visual experiences and how the brain interprets them. Gestalt is not design, but knowing the visual principles of Gestalt will give you a valuable design toolbox.

*Continued* ►





## Continuation leads the eye along a path

*Continuation* is the eye's instinctive tendency to follow a path. The path can be imagined or literal. For example . . .



### The Big Dipper is an imaginary path.

Although stars above are scattered and distant, our eye tends to connect those which appear to be on a path.

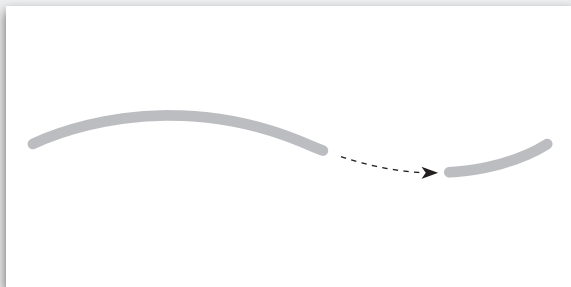


### A road is a literal path.

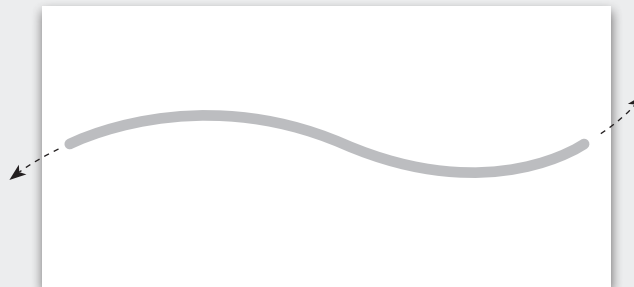
It doesn't matter that most of the road is hidden; our eye sees the path and follows it.



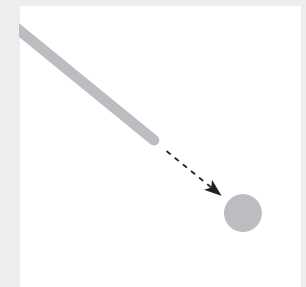
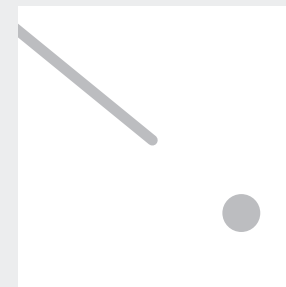
## Continuation connects objects



Whether it's a physical or phantom line, the Gestalt principle of Continuation states that your eye will fill in gaps . . .



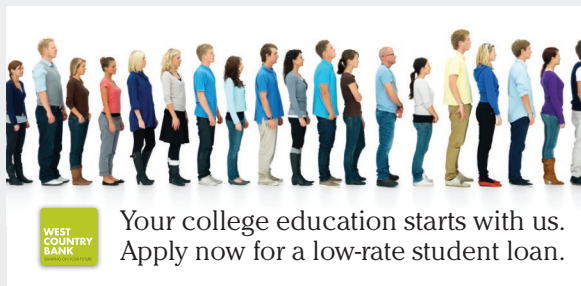
. . . as well as follow a path beyond its endpoints.



Continuation also applies to unrelated objects—here, invisibly bridging line and circle.

## A broken line is a point of tension

Use Continuation to create tension—and attention.

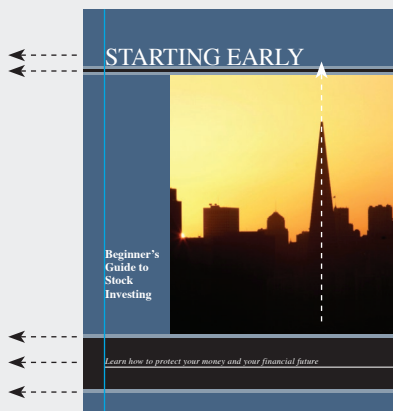


**Interrupt the line** (Above, left) It looks good—a strong, horizontal line of students is reinforced by a strong, horizontal line of text. The similarity yields a simple, clear, easy-to-read presentation. Problem is, imagine yourself in that queue—it’s just a long, tedious, wait, wait, wait line. (Above, right) To solve that, put Continuation to work by breaking the line. Continuation assures that instead of two groups, we still see only one, but not only is there now relief from the long queue, your message appears directly at the point of tension—and therefore gets greater attention. Better.

## Continuation is why pointers work

Any strong line can be used to create a focal point.

### Before



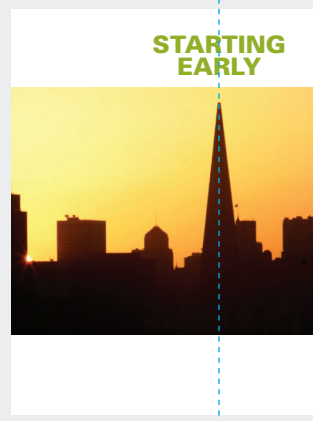
### Uncoordinated photo and layout

Here, a strong photo sits on a generic, template-based layout, which disregards the powerful, pointy Transamerica building and aligns the copy weakly to the left. Dull blue deadens the vibrant colors, and horizontal stripes neutralize the pyramid's vertical line.



### Start with the photo

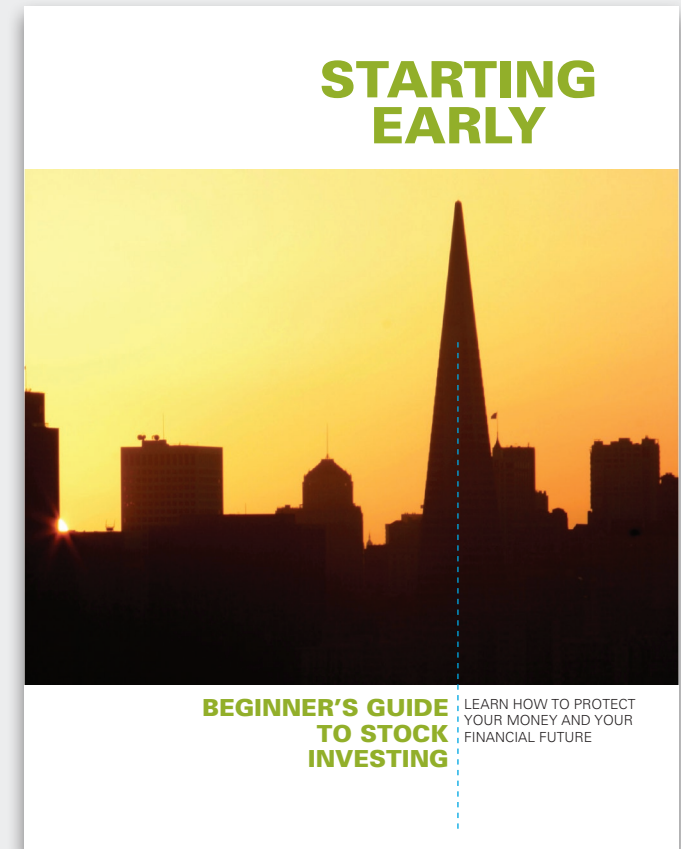
You'll get better results by using the photo's natural pointer. In this case, start by scaling it edge to edge, which makes the skyline more expansive and the pyramid more prominent.



### Mark the phantom line

and center the headline. Because of Continuation, the pointing effect of the pyramid turns the headline into a focal point.

### After



**Tab the remaining copy** left and right from the phantom line. The result is a visual relationship between image and words. Better.

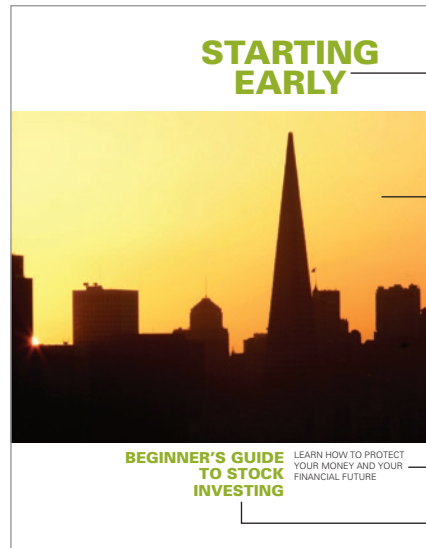
## Article resources



4



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1a

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1b



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### Typefaces

1 (a-b) [Univers Black](#) | a) 47/43 pt  
b) 22/24 pt

2 [Univers Light](#) | 13/15.5 pt

3 [Cheltenham Light](#) | 21.5/23 pt

### Images

Images: iStockphoto

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5 ([5939112](#))

6 ([2665293](#))

7 ([9641445](#))

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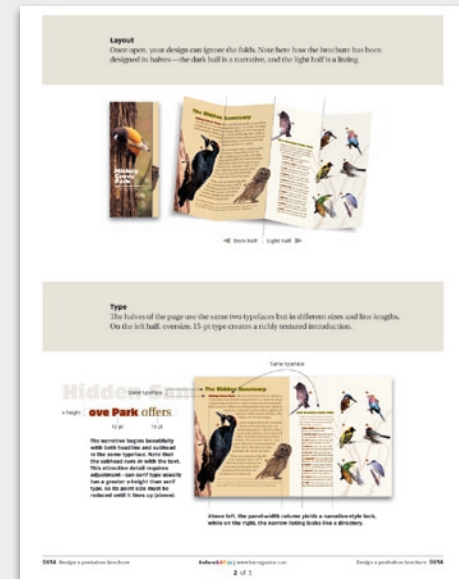
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# Continuation

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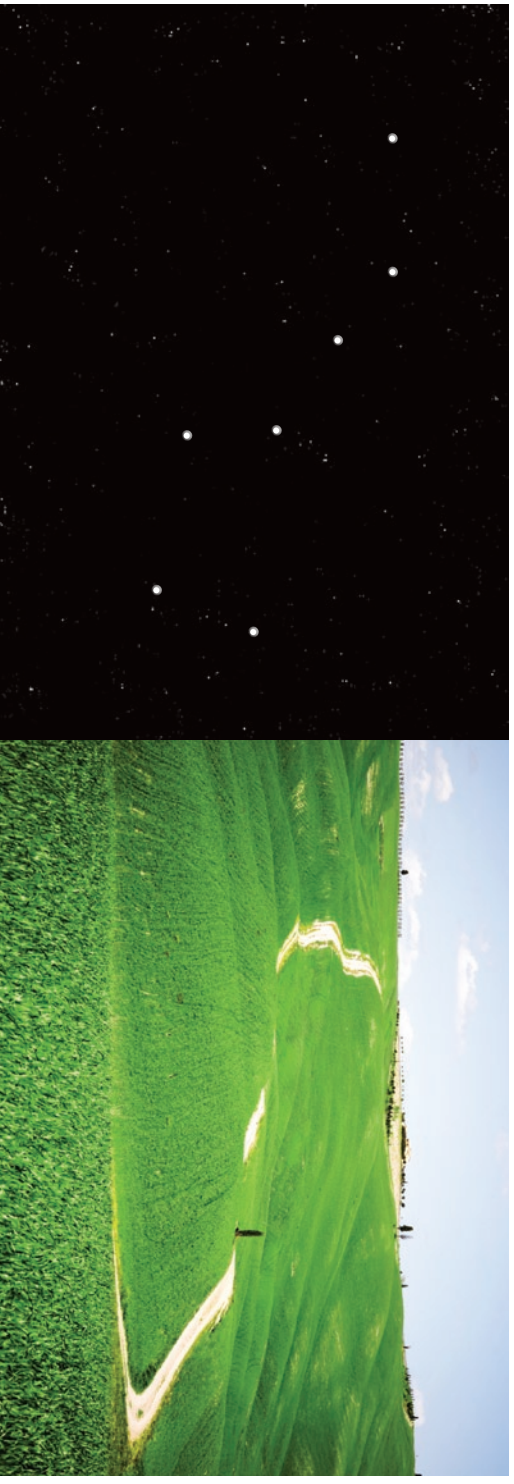
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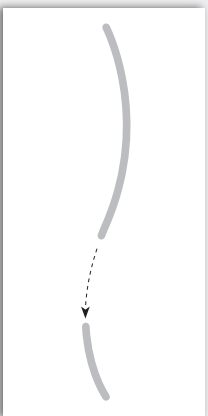
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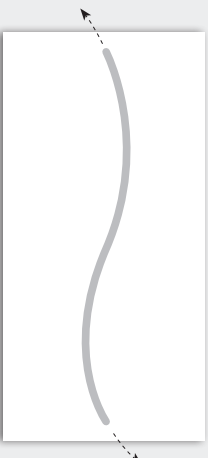
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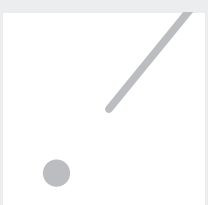
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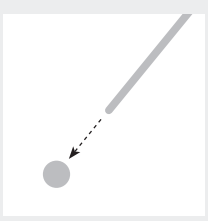
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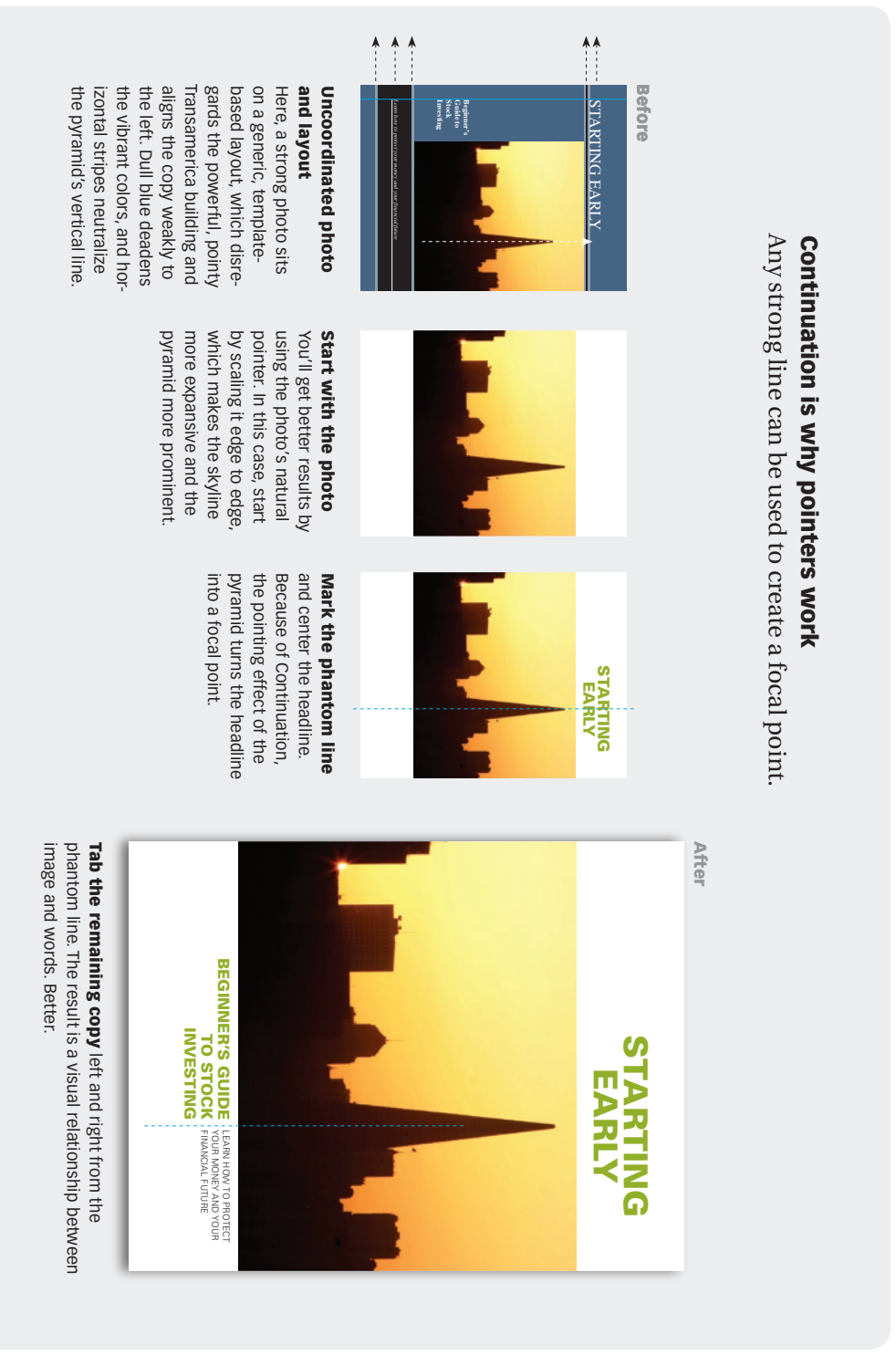
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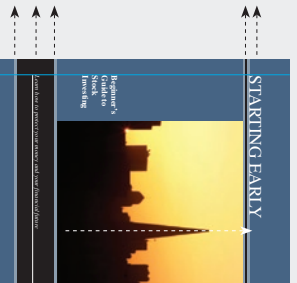
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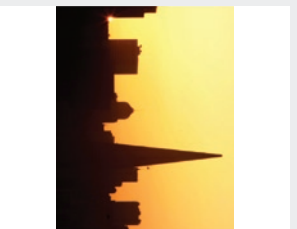


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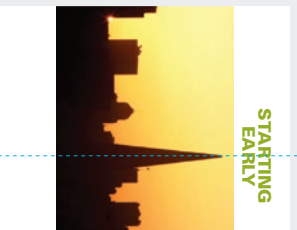
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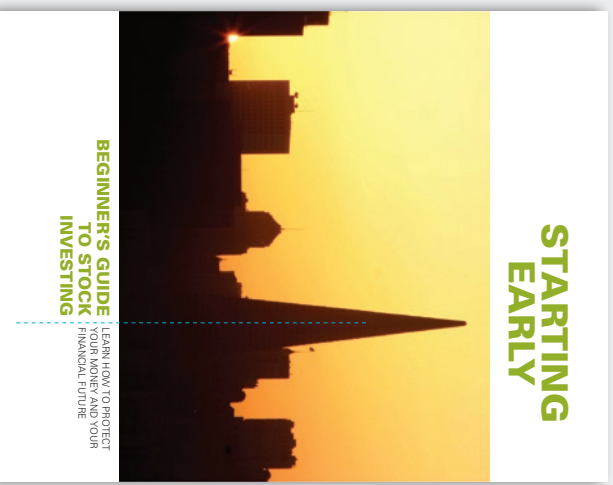


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