Printable Guidelines: Adjustable Ruled Writing Line Spacing

Complete worked example / separate answer key

A planned guideline page has a measured writing height of 150 mm. The top margin is 12 mm and the bottom margin is 12 mm. The chosen hypothetical line gap is 9 mm. How many full lines fit, and what total height do they use?

Answer: The available writing height is 150 - 12 - 12 = 126 mm. Dividing by 9 mm gives 14 full lines. The lines use 14 x 9 = 126 mm, and the total with margins is 126 + 12 + 12 = 150 mm. The spacing reference header should state 9 mm and 14 lines.

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Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A planned page has a writing height of 100 mm, top margin 10 mm, bottom margin 10 mm, and a hypothetical gap of 8 mm. How many full lines fit?

Answer: 10 full lines.

Reason: Available height is 100 - 10 - 10 = 80 mm. Dividing 80 by 8 gives 10 full lines. The total used is 10 x 8 = 80 mm, plus margins equals 100 mm.

Check: Multiply 10 lines by 8 mm and add 10 mm and 10 mm; the result should be 100 mm.

Task 2

A writer measures a baseline-to-midline distance of 6 mm. The printed gap is 10 mm. Is the gap likely too wide, too narrow, or suitable? Explain using the x-height convention.

Answer: The gap is likely too wide for that x-height, but letter style may affect the choice.

Reason: The x-height is 6 mm, while the gap is 10 mm. The extra 4 mm may leave the midline far above the letters. However, letter styles vary, so a writer with tall ascenders or descenders may still prefer the wider gap.

Check: Compare the measured 6 mm x-height with the 10 mm gap and write a short sample to see whether descenders clear the next baseline.

Task 3

A planned wider-spacing page has a writing height of 180 mm, top margin 15 mm, bottom margin 15 mm, and a hypothetical gap of 12 mm. How many full lines fit, and how much height is unused?

Answer: 12 full lines fit, and 6 mm is unused.

Reason: Available height is 180 - 15 - 15 = 150 mm. Dividing 150 by 12 gives 12 full lines with a remainder of 6 mm. The lines use 12 x 12 = 144 mm. Total used with margins is 144 + 15 + 15 = 174 mm, so 180 - 174 = 6 mm is unused.

Check: Multiply 12 by 12 to get 144 mm, add 15 mm and 15 mm to get 174 mm, and subtract from 180 mm to get 6 mm unused.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A user wants to compare page one and page two. Page one has a hypothetical gap of 8 mm and page two has 12 mm. The measured writing height is 120 mm with 10 mm top and bottom margins. How many lines fit on each page?

Answer: Page one fits 12 lines; page two fits 8 lines.

Reason: Available height is 120 - 10 - 10 = 100 mm. For page one, 100 divided by 8 gives 12 full lines with 4 mm unused. For page two, 100 divided by 12 gives 8 full lines with 4 mm unused.

Check: Check page one: 12 x 8 = 96 mm, plus 20 mm margins equals 116 mm, leaving 4 mm. Check page two: 8 x 12 = 96 mm, plus 20 mm margins equals 116 mm, leaving 4 mm.

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Worked example, Task 1, Task 2, Task 3, Task 4 / Separate answer plan: worked example, four exercises, rubric

All numerical values are hypothetical examples until actual equipment is measured.

Worked example: available height 150 - 12 - 12 = 126 mm; 126 / 9 = 14 full lines; 14 x 9 = 126 mm; total 126 + 12 + 12 = 150 mm. Header states 9 mm and 14 lines.

Exercise 1: 100 - 10 - 10 = 80 mm; 80 / 8 = 10 full lines; 10 x 8 = 80 mm; total 100 mm.

Exercise 2: x-height 6 mm vs gap 10 mm; gap likely too wide, but letter style may affect the choice.

Exercise 3: 180 - 15 - 15 = 150 mm; 150 / 12 = 12 full lines remainder 6 mm; 12 x 12 = 144 mm; total 144 + 15 + 15 = 174 mm; unused 6 mm.

Exercise 4: 120 - 10 - 10 = 100 mm; page one 100 / 8 = 12 lines remainder 4 mm; page two 100 / 12 = 8 lines remainder 4 mm.

Rubric: evenly spaced horizontal guidelines and spacing reference header; excludes three-line ruling and slant guides; x-height stated as baseline to midline; letter styles may vary; consistent millimetres; hypothetical values labelled; arithmetic checkable; page one standard and page two wider clearly distinguished.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The sheet uses evenly spaced horizontal guidelines and a spacing reference header.
- [ ] The sheet excludes three-line handwriting ruling and calligraphy slant guides.
- [ ] The x-height convention is stated as baseline to midline.
- [ ] Letter styles are allowed to vary; no single universal letter shape is required.
- [ ] All measurements use consistent units, preferably millimetres.
- [ ] Chosen numerical values are labelled as hypothetical examples.
- [ ] The arithmetic for line count and total height is checkable and correct.
- [ ] Page one and page two are clearly distinguished as standard and wider spacing.

Reflection: What did you check, what did you change, and what will you try next?