



How to Use Templates

A MailChimp Guide

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Hello.

If you're designing emails in MailChimp, you need to know how to work with a template—it's the backbone of every campaign. This guide will teach you how to use our template options and create that first layout.

Before you jump in and start adding content, play around with our template options. Try customizing our layouts to suit your needs. Change things around. Be creative.

If you aren't familiar with HTML, that's not a problem. If you're looking for quick options for creating simple and fast campaigns, we offer several pre-designed templates. Some are basic, like a doctor's appointment reminder or a coupon template. Others are fancy—paid customers can use our premium templates, which were created for MailChimp by some amazing designers. You can simply select one of these pre-designed templates to use as your own, add your campaign content and send the email.

If you want some structure with a lot of customization options, try our start-from-scratch templates. They offer 35 basic layouts that you can fully customize without knowing HTML. But if you *are* an HTML genius (or even if you just know enough to be dangerous), you can access the source of each section of the templates and make edits to the code.

MailChimp has a powerful yet simple template language that makes it easy for web designers to code their own HTML emails. Learn all about it at mailchimp.com/resources/email-template-language.

If you have any questions along the way, feel free to contact our support team at mailchimp.com/support. Now let's get started.

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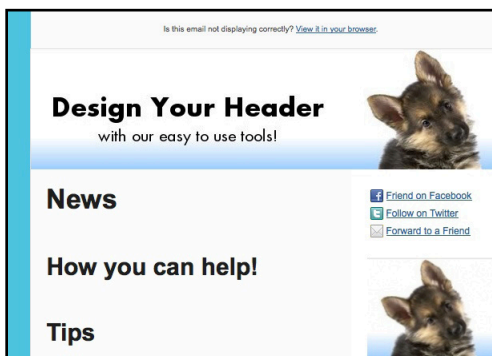
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How To Create And Work With Templates

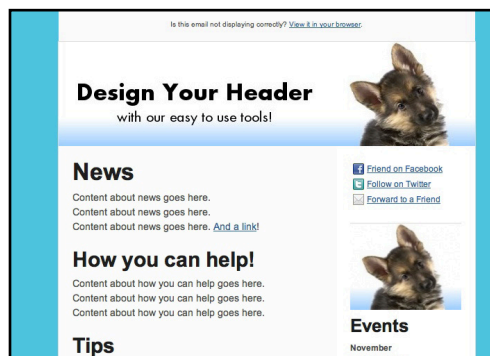
A little email-marketing vocabulary lesson before we get started: *Templates* are simply a preset layout for your campaign. *Campaigns* are the specific emails you send to your subscribers. The template is the backbone, and the content is campaign-specific.

You can set your logo, colors, styles and fonts in your template. This might include matching your email's colors and styles to your company's branding. You can even insert regularly used images or recurring content into your template. When you pull up a saved template in the Campaign Builder, you'll have a layout ready, where you can insert your campaign-specific content. Here's a simple example of a template vs. a campaign:

Template:



Campaign:



After you've added your content, you don't have to resave those changes as a template, since they're specific to that particular campaign. So when you go to use your template again in a new campaign, you'll just see the basic layout and won't have to worry about all the content you used in your last campaign. Now that you understand the difference between a template and a campaign, let's move on to the different types of templates we offer.

Template Types and Tips

We have several varieties of templates you can choose from to create beautiful emails—here are the template options, as well as some tips to help you use them.

Pre-designed

Our pre-designed templates make your job easy. Pick a template, add your content, tweak the colors, and you're all set.

Keep in mind that some of the images on the pre-designed templates are part of the background design and can't be changed. You'll see available controls if the image can be removed. If an image is located in a content block (highlighted with a red dotted line), you can click that content block and delete the image there.

Premium

Premium templates are extra-special and only available for paid accounts. Our premium designer templates were created for MailChimp by fantastic designers like Khoi Vinh and Jon Hicks.

We want to keep as true to the original designs as possible, so the premium templates are less customizable than our start-from-scratch templates. For instance, to follow the design flow some images can't be aligned other than the default setting, and inserting images that are too large or text that's too large may offset the template design. Why mess with a good thing?

Autoconnect

Autoconnect templates integrate with other systems to populate a campaign with content that already exists. You can autoconnect your campaign to Amazon, iTunes, eBay, Etsy, Yelp, Facebook and Twitter.

A few examples: If you're a local business and have great reviews on Yelp, you can choose the Yelp autoconnect template to pull in your business information and reviews directly to a campaign. If you're in a band, you can pull in all your songs or albums from iTunes and offer them directly from your campaigns. If you created an event on Facebook and want to share the event with your mailing list, you can use the Facebook Events template to automatically pull in your event details.

Start-from-Scratch

Our start-from-scratch templates are simple, yet powerful. We have 35 layouts that are further customizable with repeatable regions and lots of style settings. You can add and remove repeatable sections, or remove images and text from various regions to create super customized templates. The possibilities are endless.

If you hover over an image block, we'll tell you what size image is needed for that block. But here's a quick reference guide in case you want to upload an image into any other areas of your campaign:

Pre-header, 1 column, body (no sidebar), social bar, utility bar: 560px
Header: 600px
Body with sidebar: 350px
2 column: 260px
3 column, sidebar: 160px
4 column: 110px
Footer left: 370px
Footer right: 170px

Remember to leave room for padding if you're uploading an image in a non-image-specific field.

We're integrated with [Picnik](#), a free and easy online photo-editing tool for resizing your images and more. You can easily edit your photos with Picnik from within your MailChimp account.

Which Template Should I Use?

Our templates can be used for lots of different newsletter needs, but here are some of the most common requests and template options:

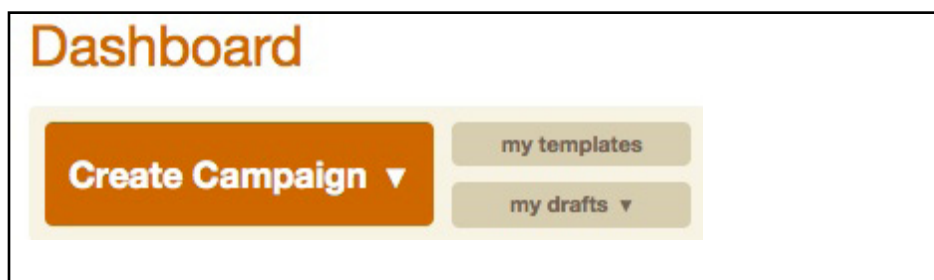
Request	Template options
I want to use my brand on my template.	Start-from-scratch > Automagical Email Designer (automatic when you start a new campaign)
I want a basic layout with a lot of control.	Start-from-scratch > Basic, Postcard, Left or right column; Pre-designed > Simple newsletter
I want a really fancy newsletter, but I don't know HTML.	Designer (paid accounts only)
I want repeatable sections, with multiple columns.	Start-from-scratch
I'm promoting an event.	Pre-designed > Eventbrite, Autoconnect > Facebook Event
I need to include a map.	Pre-designed > Eventbrite
I have a date-specific campaign that isn't an event.	Pre-designed > Sales, Anniversary, Birthday
I have products to sell.	Pre-designed > e-Commerce; Autoconnect > iTunes, Amazon; Start-from-scratch > Gallery; Designer > Products
I run a local business.	Autoconnect > Yelp, Pre-designed > Coupon, Retail postcard
I'm in a band.	Autoconnect > iTunes, Amazon
I want to send a flyer.	Start-from-scratch > Postcards
I want to send a holiday campaign.	Pre-designed > Holiday
I want a plain-text campaign with links and a logo.	Start-from-scratch > Rich text
I have a coupon.	Coupon template, Autoresponder (not a template), QR code for just about any template

Where Are All These Templates?

Now you know all about MailChimp's template options, and you've decided which template you want to use. Here's where to find them:

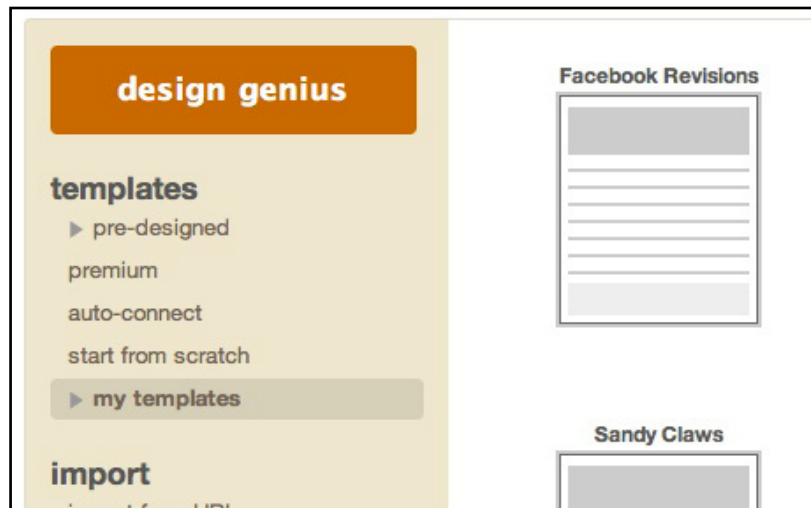
My Templates and Start from Scratch

In your MailChimp account you'll find a **My templates** button on your Dashboard, next to the **Create new campaign** button. There, you can access your saved templates and all of our start-from-scratch templates.



Designer, Pre-Designed, and Autoconnect

In order to select a designer template (for paid accounts), a pre-designed template, or to connect with one of our template integrations, you'll need to start a campaign first. Once you start your campaign you'll find the template options on Step 3 of the campaign builder (Step 4 for RSS-to-email and A/B split campaigns). You can customize these templates further and use the **Save to my templates** option to reuse your customized template in the future.



How To Switch Templates

If you've previously selected a template on a campaign in progress, you can click **Change template** to see what other templates are available.



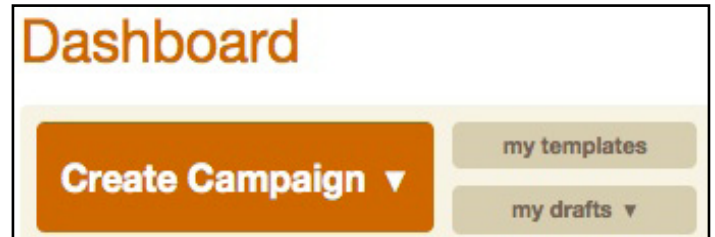
It's best to switch between similar layouts if you've already started adding content to your campaign. Going from a one-column template to a four-column wouldn't be a good idea. Also avoid switching between pre-designed and start-from-scratch if you've already created your content.

If you've started adding your campaign content and need to switch to a template that uses different regions than your original template, we provide a content recovery system. Once you switch templates, you may see a **Content** button on new regions. Click **Content > Use this** to pull up any orphaned content from the previous template into the region you've specified.



Accessing Saved Templates From The Dashboard

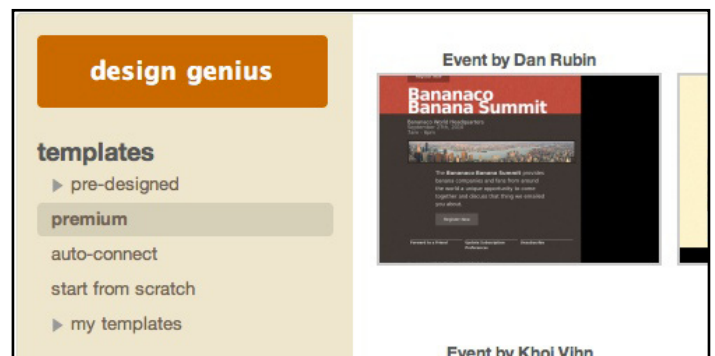
If you need to make changes to your template, all the templates you've designed and saved can be found under **My templates** from your MailChimp dashboard.



If you want to make changes to a template that's already attached to a campaign you're working on, bringing up the campaign again will not bring up the changes you just made to a template. To use the template with the new changes, you'll have to either start a new campaign or choose **Change template**, and re-choose that template. Written content does stay in place when you re-choose the same template.

Accessing Saved Templates Through The Campaign Builder

On Step 3 of the campaign builder (step 4 for A/B split and RSS to email campaigns) choose **My templates** from the options on the left side, and you'll have access to all your saved templates.

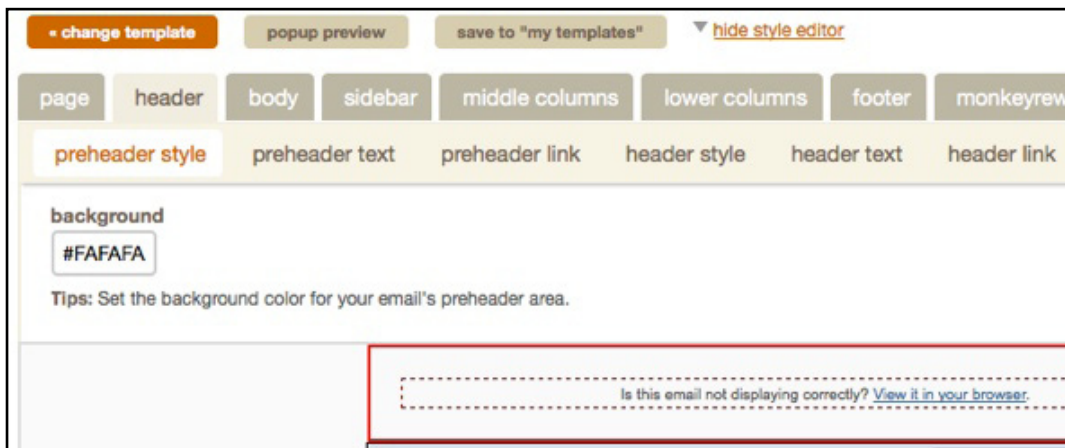


How To Style Your Template

MailChimp offers lots of options for customizing your templates. Here are some universal controls and tips that will help you get your template just right.

Show Style Editor

In the style editor you'll see all the color, style and font customization options for each section of your template. Every time you click a tab and then a subheading, we'll highlight in red the area of your template that will be affected by changes to the settings on that tab. Here we're working on the **Header** tab in the subheading **Preheader style**.



If you make a change in the style editor but you don't see any corresponding changes in your template, there may not be an example of that style in the section you're styling. For instance, if I change the link color, but I don't have a link in the section, nothing changes. But we'll note the style in the background in case you do add a link down the road.

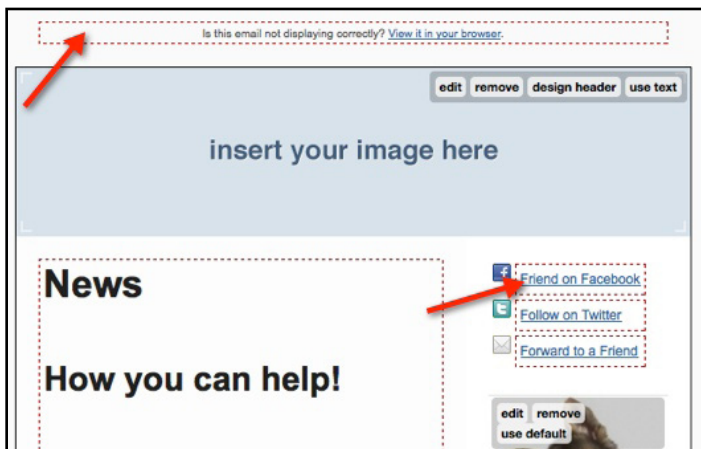
Borders

You can jazz up your template using the settings under **Page > borders**. Our most popular border is Rounded, which creates rounded corners. Just set your pixel width, choose Rounded, set a color, and we'll do the rest.



Content Editor

Once you've set up your styles in the style editor the next step is to add your recurring text or images. You can add text and images to any area where you see red dotted lines. Just click inside the area to bring up the content editor.

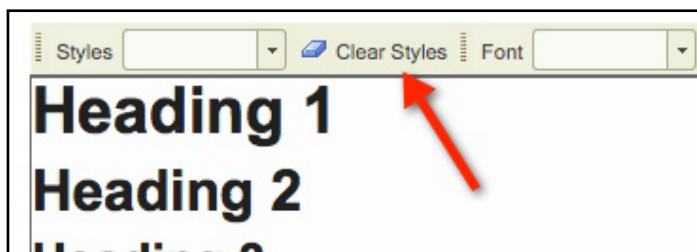


The best way to add content to these blocks is to enter all your content first, or paste your plain-text content from a simple text editor, and then select your styling. For example, if you always use the heading "News" in your emails, you'd just type the word "News" into your template, then highlight "News" and select a style from the **Styles** dropdown menu.

If you don't have any recurring content or headlines, skip the content editor for now and revisit it when you start adding your campaign-specific content.

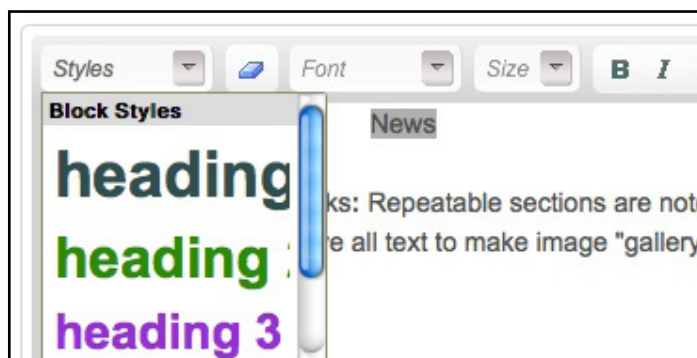
Clear Styles Button

If you've started styling your text content on your template and realize, "Whoops! That's not what I was going for," you're going to love the **Clear styles** button. Find it in the content-editor toolbar next to the **Styles** dropdown menu.



To use the **Clear styles** button properly, simply highlight the text you want to reformat and click the button. This will remove all the code we've added and leave the text for you to reformat. Now you can select a new style from the **Styles** dropdown menu.

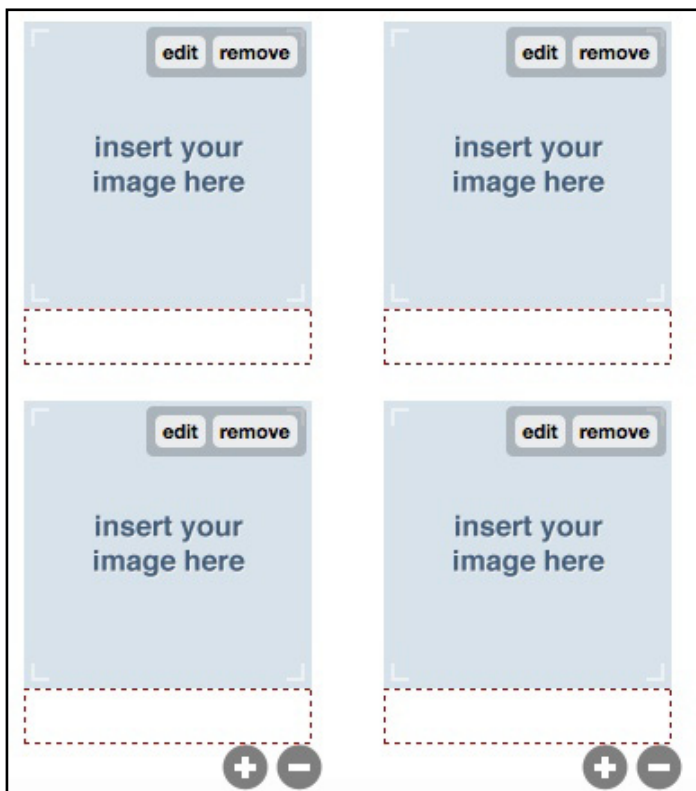
This is also a great tool if you're ever in the content editor and can't seem to select a style on a string of text you've highlighted. There's probably some code surrounding the text already, so just use the **Clear styles** button to reset the text, and then you can go back and style as you please.



Repeatable Blocks

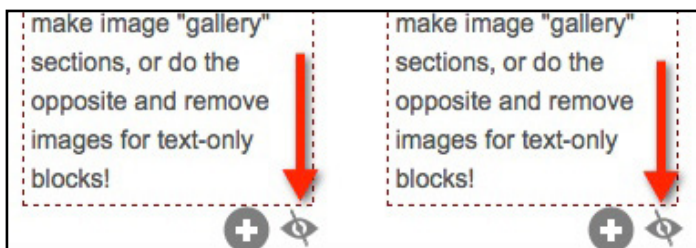
Repeatable controls are always below or toward the bottom of each repeatable section, and are indicated by plus or minus signs. When you repeat a section, we'll repeat the default text and placeholder image each time. Customized images and content won't be replicated. If you delete a repeatable section, whatever content you entered into that section will be erased.

Note that when repeatable sections are added, the parent element can't be removed. The parent element can only be removed when you want to eliminate the entire region through the hideable controls.



Hideable Blocks

If you want to hide an entire region on a template—for instance a sidebar, use the **Remove** icon to remove that specific region. If you change your mind, you'll have the option to add the region back to your template.

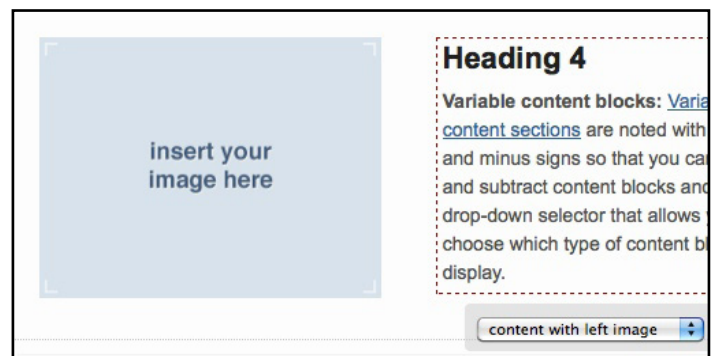


All templates that include a sidebar will also include a Social links section. If you don't have a Twitter or Facebook page, you can remove each individually from your template.



Variable Content Blocks

On the Variable start-from-scratch template, you'll see options for **Content with left image** and **Content with right image**. You can choose which side of the template element you'd like your image to live on and repeat either one of these options through the repeatable controls.



Template Controls

Some templates were made by specific designers with specific designs in mind, so controls on designer templates are limited. You'll find the most control in the start-from-scratch templates and some control in most of the pre-designed templates.

Resources

Thanks for taking the time to learn about MailChimp's template options and find the right fit for your newsletters. If you have questions that weren't addressed in this guide, feel free to chat with our support team at mailchimp.com/support. Here are some other helpful MailChimp resources:

More guides

We've got guides for users at every experience level, from total beginners to IT directors.

MailChimp blog

Our blog is update often with tips, tricks, how-tos, and lots of fascinating stats.

Online training

Got 45 minutes? Our free online training sessions are especially helpful for new MailChimp users.

MailChimp Academy videos

Our video tutorials cover a variety of topics and specific features.