

# Understanding InDesign's Balance Ragged Lines feature

The purpose of InDesign's *Balance Ragged Lines* feature (located in the Control panel menu and the Paragraph panel menu) is often misunderstood. The feature is intended to be used to break short (2–3 line) paragraphs early to achieve an even rag. This would best be done by a human being who understands the context of the paragraphs, and how they should flow, but the Balance Ragged Lines feature can be extremely valuable for large projects such as directories where you don't have the time to break each paragraph by hand.

In the example below:

## **Alliance Tarp Supply Company of PA.**

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

I'd much prefer to have the company name break early, as follows:

## **Alliance Tarp Supply Company of PA.**

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

The Balance Ragged Lines feature makes this automatic. The problem is, the Balance Ragged Lines feature tends to favor making the first line longer, and the second line shorter, resulting in a "Vee shape". See page 3 for an example of Balance Ragged Lines off, and see page 4 for an example of Balance Ragged Lines on, with the resulting Vee shape for many of the paragraphs.

Turning on Balance Ragged Lines won't ALWAYS result in a Vee shape, since InDesign is only allowed to break lines between words, or, if hyphenation is turned on, at a valid hyphenation point. So Balance Ragged Lines TENDS TO FAVOR a Vee shape where the first line is longer than the second, but this will not always be the result.

NOTE: The paragraph composer must be set to "Adobe Paragraph Composer" for the Balance Ragged Lines command to work.

In real life, I would never hyphenate the company names as I have in these examples, but I've done so here to make the resulting paragraph shapes more consistent.

# How to use the BalanceRaggedLines scripts

Coded into InDesign since CS3 is the ability to control the algorithm that balances ragged lines — but only through scripting. This is a hidden feature that has no user interface.

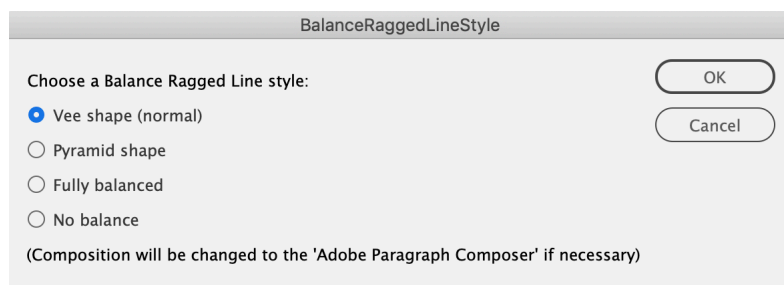
Adobe built in three different Balance Ragged Lines “styles”: the default “Vee shape”, a “Pyramid” shape (the opposite of the Vee shape, see page 5 for an example), and a “Fully Balanced” style that tries to make all lines the same length (see page 6 for an example).

As with the default Vee shape, the Pyramid shape TENDS TO FAVOR a pyramid shape where the first line is shorter than the second line, but this won’t always be the result. Likewise, the Fully Balanced style TENDS TO FAVOR making all the lines the same length.

## The *BalanceRaggedLines-Specify* script

Select some text, and double-click on the script in the Scripts panel (*Window > Utilities > Scripts*). You will see the dialog box at right.

Choose the style you want for the ragged lines, and click the *OK* button. The Balance Ragged Line style you chose will be applied to the selected text.



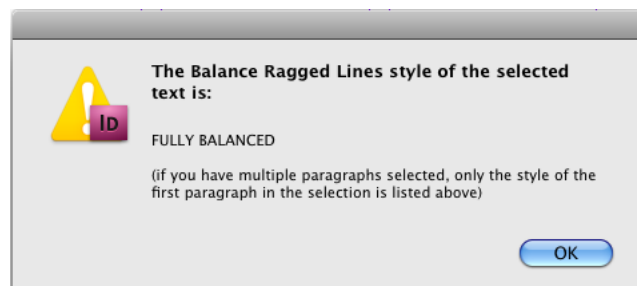
### Using the script with Paragraph Styles

Balance Ragged Lines is a paragraph attribute, so it can be “memorized” with a paragraph style. Here are the general steps on how to do so:

1. Create a Paragraph Style and apply it to your paragraphs.
2. Select one of the paragraphs, and run the *BalanceRaggedLines-Specify* script.
3. Choose your desired Balance Ragged Line style, and click the *OK* button to leave the dialog box.
4. In the Paragraph Styles panel, you will see a small plus sign (+) to the right of the Paragraph Style you created in Step 1. Choose *Redefine Style* from the Paragraph Styles panel menu.
5. All the paragraphs that you assign this Paragraph Style to will now have the Balance Ragged Lines attributes that you specified in step 3.

## The *BalanceRaggedLines-View* Script

Click a text insertion point inside a paragraph, and double-click on the script in the Scripts panel (*Window > Automation > Scripts*). You will see the dialog box at right that will display the Balance Ragged Lines style of the paragraph containing your text cursor.



# Balance Ragged Lines OFF for company names

---

## 303 Products Incorporated of Palo Cedro

PO Box 966  
Palo Cedro, CA 96073-0966  
United States

---

## A and A International Limited (B)

544 Central Dr., Ste. 110  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5245  
United States

---

## Abbott Industries Incorporated (B)

2299 S Grand Ave  
Santa Ana, CA 92705-5237  
United States

---

## abc Sun Control Limited Liability Company (A)

7241 Ethel Ave.  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
United States

---

## Accent Awning Company Incorporated (AA)

1600 E. Gertrude Pl.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705  
United States

---

## Action Upholstery Supply Incorporated (A)

2227 72nd Ave E  
Sarasota, FL 34243-3966  
United States

---

## Active Foam Products Incorporated (C)

6210 W Douglas Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53218-1549  
United States

---

## Advance Canvas Industries Pte. Limited (C)

53 Genting Rd.  
Singapore, 349492  
Singapore

---

## Aero Upholstery (C)

P.O. Box 326  
Long Lake, MN 55356  
United States

---

## Air and Sun Shade Products Incorporated Limited Liability Company (C)

2462 N Park Ave  
Tucson, AZ 85719-3035  
United States

---

## Air Dimensional Design Incorporated (Air DD) (B)

14141 Covello St Bldg 1  
Van Nuys, CA 91405-1491  
United States

---

## Air Structures American Technologies Incorporated (AA)

211 S Ridge St  
Rye Brook, NY 10573-3433  
United States

---

## Airborne Structures Incorporated (C)

522 Parke Ct Ste 101  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439-1552  
United States

---

## Airlette Manufacturing Corporation

P.O. Box 3494  
Lantana, FL 33465-3494  
United States

---

## Alberta Tent and Awning Company Ltd. (C)

Bay 11  
3500 27th St NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 5E2  
Canada

---

## All-Fab Tarpaulin Company Limited (D)

16651 113th Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T5M 2X2  
Canada

---

## Alliance Thread and Supply Incorporated

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

---

## Allied Materials and Equipment (B)

1400 Kansas Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
United States

---

## Alpha Canvas and Awning Company Incorporated (B)

411 E. 13th St.  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
United States

---

## Alpha Productions Incorporated

5800 W Jefferson Blvd Ste 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90016-3109  
United States

---

## Alutex Incorporated

236 Margaret King Ave  
Ringwood, NJ 07456-1408  
United States

---

## American and Efird Canada Incorporated

8301, Ray Lawson Blvd.  
Ville d'Anjou  
Montreal, PQ H1J 1X9  
Canada

---

## American and Efird Incorporated

24 American St  
P.O. Box 507  
Mount Holly, NC 28120-2150  
United States

---

## American Awning Incorporated (C)

1237 N Robin St  
Nixa, MO 65714-8097  
United States

---

## American Cord and Webbing Company Incorporated

88 Century Dr  
Woonsocket, RI 02895-6161  
United States

---

## American Holtzkraft Incorporated (C)

9242 Route 35  
Mount Pleasant Mills, PA 17853-8400  
United States

---

## American Home and Habitat (B)

Rte. 4, Box 86  
Squires, MO 65755  
United States

---

## American Keder Incorporated

22 Perkins Rd  
P.O. Box 204  
Rindge, NH 03461-5494  
United States

# Balance Ragged Lines ON (Vee Shape) for company names

---

## 303 Products Incorporated of Palo Cedro

PO Box 966  
Palo Cedro, CA 96073-0966  
United States

---

## A and A International Limited (B)

544 Central Dr., Ste. 110  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5245  
United States

---

## Abbott Industries Incorporated (B)

2299 S Grand Ave  
Santa Ana, CA 92705-5237  
United States

---

## abc Sun Control Limited Liability Company (A)

7241 Ethel Ave.  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
United States

---

## Accent Awning Company Incorporated (AA)

1600 E. Gertrude Pl.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705  
United States

---

## Action Upholstery Supply Incorporated (A)

2227 72nd Ave E  
Sarasota, FL 34243-3966  
United States

---

## Active Foam Products Incorporated (C)

6210 W Douglas Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53218-1549  
United States

---

## Advance Canvas Industries Pte. Limited (C)

53 Genting Rd.  
Singapore, 349492  
Singapore

---

## Aero Upholstery (C)

P.O. Box 326  
Long Lake, MN 55356  
United States

---

## Air and Sun Shade Products Incorporated Limited Liability Company (C)

2462 N Park Ave  
Tucson, AZ 85719-3035  
United States

---

## Air Dimensional Design Incorporated (Air DD) (B)

14141 Covello St Bldg 1  
Van Nuys, CA 91405-1491  
United States

---

## Air Structures American Technologies Incorporated (AA)

211 S Ridge St  
Rye Brook, NY 10573-3433  
United States

---

## Airborne Structures Incorporated (C)

522 Parke Ct Ste 101  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439-1552  
United States

---

## Airlette Manufacturing Corporation

P.O. Box 3494  
Lantana, FL 33465-3494  
United States

---

## Alberta Tent and Awning Company Ltd. (C)

Bay 11  
3500 27th St NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 5E2  
Canada

---

## All-Fab Tarpaulin Company Limited (D)

16651 113th Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T5M 2X2  
Canada

---

## Alliance Thread and Supply Incorporated

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

---

## Allied Materials and Equipment (B)

1400 Kansas Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
United States

---

## Alpha Canvas and Awning Company Incorporated (B)

411 E. 13th St.  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
United States

---

## Alpha Productions Incorporated

5800 W Jefferson Blvd Ste 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90016-3109  
United States

---

## Alutex Incorporated

236 Margaret King Ave  
Ringwood, NJ 07456-1408  
United States

---

## American and Efird Canada Incorporated

8301, Ray Lawson Blvd.  
Ville d'Anjou  
Montreal, PQ H1J 1X9  
Canada

---

## American and Efird Incorporated

24 American St  
P.O. Box 507  
Mount Holly, NC 28120-2150  
United States

---

## American Awning Incorporated (C)

1237 N Robin St  
Nixa, MO 65714-8097  
United States

---

## American Cord and Webbing Company Incorporated

88 Century Dr  
Woonsocket, RI 02895-6161  
United States

---

## American Holtzkraft Incorporated (C)

9242 Route 35  
Mount Pleasant Mills, PA 17853-8400  
United States

---

## American Home and Habitat (B)

Rte. 4, Box 86  
Squires, MO 65755  
United States

---

## American Keder Incorporated

22 Perkins Rd  
P.O. Box 204  
Rindge, NH 03461-5494  
United States

# Balance Ragged Lines ON (Pyramid Shape) for company names

---

## 303 Products Incorporated of Palo Cedro

PO Box 966  
Palo Cedro, CA 96073-0966  
United States

---

## A and A International Limited (B)

544 Central Dr., Ste. 110  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5245  
United States

---

## Abbott Industries Incorporated (B)

2299 S Grand Ave  
Santa Ana, CA 92705-5237  
United States

---

## abc Sun Control Limited Liability Company (A)

7241 Ethel Ave.  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
United States

---

## Accent Awning Company Incorporated (AA)

1600 E. Gertrude Pl.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705  
United States

---

## Action Upholstery Supply Incorporated (A)

2227 72nd Ave E  
Sarasota, FL 34243-3966  
United States

---

## Active Foam Products Incorporated (C)

6210 W Douglas Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53218-1549  
United States

---

## Advance Canvas Industries Pte. Limited (C)

53 Genting Rd.  
Singapore, 349492  
Singapore

---

## Aero Upholstery (C)

P.O. Box 326  
Long Lake, MN 55356  
United States

---

## Air and Sun Shade Products Incorporated Limited Liability Company (C)

2462 N Park Ave  
Tucson, AZ 85719-3035  
United States

---

## Air Dimensional Design Incorporated (Air DD) (B)

14141 Covello St Bldg 1  
Van Nuys, CA 91405-1491  
United States

---

## Air Structures American Technologies Incorporated (AA)

211 S Ridge St  
Rye Brook, NY 10573-3433  
United States

---

## Airborne Structures Incorporated (C)

522 Parke Ct Ste 101  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439-1552  
United States

---

## Airlette Manufacturing Corporation

P.O. Box 3494  
Lantana, FL 33465-3494  
United States

---

## Alberta Tent and Awning Company Ltd. (C)

Bay 11  
3500 27th St NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 5E2  
Canada

---

## All-Fab Tarpaulin Company Limited (D)

16651 113th Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T5M 2X2  
Canada

---

## Alliance Thread and Supply Incorporated

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

---

## Allied Materials and Equipment (B)

1400 Kansas Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
United States

---

## Alpha Canvas and Awning Company Incorporated (B)

411 E. 13th St.  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
United States

---

## Alpha Productions Incorporated

5800 W Jefferson Blvd Ste 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90016-3109  
United States

---

## Alutex Incorporated

236 Margaret King Ave  
Ringwood, NJ 07456-1408  
United States

---

## American and Efird Canada Incorporated

8301, Ray Lawson Blvd.  
Ville d'Anjou  
Montreal, PQ H1J 1X9  
Canada

---

## American and Efird Incorporated

24 American St  
P.O. Box 507  
Mount Holly, NC 28120-2150  
United States

---

## American Awning Incorporated (C)

1237 N Robin St  
Nixa, MO 65714-8097  
United States

---

## American Cord and Webbing Company Incorporated

88 Century Dr  
Woonsocket, RI 02895-6161  
United States

---

## American Holtz-kraft Incorporated (C)

9242 Route 35  
Mount Pleasant Mills, PA 17853-8400  
United States

---

## American Home and Habitat (B)

Rte. 4, Box 86  
Squires, MO 65755  
United States

---

## American Keder Incorporated

22 Perkins Rd  
P.O. Box 204  
Rindge, NH 03461-5494  
United States

# Balance Ragged Lines ON (Fully balanced) for company names

---

## 303 Products Incorporated of Palo Cedro

PO Box 966  
Palo Cedro, CA 96073-0966  
United States

---

## A and A International Limited (B)

544 Central Dr., Ste. 110  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5245  
United States

---

## Abbott Industries Incorporated (B)

2299 S Grand Ave  
Santa Ana, CA 92705-5237  
United States

---

## abc Sun Control Limited Liability Company (A)

7241 Ethel Ave.  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
United States

---

## Accent Awning Company Incorporated (AA)

1600 E. Gertrude Pl.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705  
United States

---

## Action Upholstery Supply Incorporated (A)

2227 72nd Ave E  
Sarasota, FL 34243-3966  
United States

---

## Active Foam Products Incorporated (C)

6210 W Douglas Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53218-1549  
United States

---

## Advance Canvas Industries Pte. Limited (C)

53 Genting Rd.  
Singapore, 349492  
Singapore

---

## Aero Upholstery (C)

P.O. Box 326  
Long Lake, MN 55356  
United States

---

## Air and Sun Shade Products Incorporated Limited Liability Company (C)

2462 N Park Ave  
Tucson, AZ 85719-3035  
United States

---

## Air Dimensional Design Incorporated (Air DD) (B)

14141 Covello St Bldg 1  
Van Nuys, CA 91405-1491  
United States

---

## Air Structures American Technologies Incorporated (AA)

211 S Ridge St  
Rye Brook, NY 10573-3433  
United States

---

## Airborne Structures Incorporated (C)

522 Parke Ct Ste 101  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439-1552  
United States

---

## Airlette Manufacturing Corporation

P.O. Box 3494  
Lantana, FL 33465-3494  
United States

---

## Alberta Tent and Awning Company Ltd. (C)

Bay 11  
3500 27th St NE  
Calgary, AB T1Y 5E2  
Canada

---

## All-Fab Tarpaulin Company Limited (D)

16651 113th Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T5M 2X2  
Canada

---

## Alliance Thread and Supply Incorporated

33 Bon Air Dr  
Warminster, PA 18974-4811  
United States

---

## Allied Materials and Equipment (B)

1400 Kansas Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
United States

---

## Alpha Canvas and Awning Company Incorporated (B)

411 E. 13th St.  
Charlotte, NC 28206  
United States

---

## Alpha Productions Incorporated

5800 W Jefferson Blvd Ste 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90016-3109  
United States

---

## Alutex Incorporated

236 Margaret King Ave  
Ringwood, NJ 07456-1408  
United States

---

## American and Efird Canada Incorporated

8301, Ray Lawson Blvd.  
Ville d'Anjou  
Montreal, PQ H1J 1X9  
Canada

---

## American and Efird Incorporated

24 American St  
P.O. Box 507  
Mount Holly, NC 28120-2150  
United States

---

## American Awning Incorporated (C)

1237 N Robin St  
Nixa, MO 65714-8097  
United States

---

## American Cord and Webbing Company Incorporated

88 Century Dr  
Woonsocket, RI 02895-6161  
United States

---

## American Holtz-kraft Incorporated (C)

9242 Route 35  
Mount Pleasant Mills, PA 17853-8400  
United States

---

## American Home and Habitat (B)

Rte. 4, Box 86  
Squires, MO 65755  
United States

---

## American Keder Incorporated

22 Perkins Rd  
P.O. Box 204  
Rindge, NH 03461-5494  
United States