

Jazz Up Your Graphic Boxes
by Kelly Paul Merrill and Lynette M. Smith
WordPerfect Magazine

Want to add life to a graphics box containing a menu, a list or other text? With WordPerfect, you can gussy up those box borders with a word, a phrase or a headline (see Figure 1 below).

A new feature? No, the trick is to use four boxes, not one. The boxes are positioned so that they appear to form one box. The four boxes break down like this: box one has no visible borders and contains all the text; boxes two, three and four overlap the first box to create the illusion of the box border (see Figure 2 below). None of these last three boxes contain any text. This application can be done manually, but the process is a hundred times faster with a macro.

Creating the macro

The macro is included as GRPHTITL.WPM. Be sure to place it in the directory that contains your macros.

Using the macro

To create a box border as seen in Figure 1, from a blank screen press Macro (Alt-F10), type "grphtitl" and press (Enter). Type the measurement for the left margin, then press (Enter). Now enter the measurement for the right margin. The measurements you enter for the left and right page margins position the box horizontally on the page, as well as set the overall width of the border.

After you've chosen your border style, choose a font for the title of the box. The macro is designed to work best with a 22-point font. If you use a font that is much larger or smaller than 22 points, you'll need to make a small adjustment that will be explained later. Once the title is typed and you've selected a font for text in the box, you may fill the box with whatever you like.

The Exit (F7) key is normally used to leave this screen. However, to accommodate the use of columns and tables in your boxes, the Exit key has been temporarily changed to the (Esc) key. This allows you to use (F7) as you normally would while working with the Columns/Table features.

Note: If you use columns, be sure the last column is as long or longer than any of the other columns. The height of all the boxes are calculated from the length of the last column, so it must be at least equal in length to previous columns.

Once you press the (Esc) key, the macro takes over and finishes the application for you, leaving you in View Document. Press Exit (F7) when finished. You may need to reset your left and right margins before continuing on with the text of the document.

To edit the text you typed in the first box, press Graphics (Alt-F9), (4) User Box, (2) Edit. Type 1, then press (Enter). Once in the Definition screen, press (9) Edit, then make the necessary changes.

How the macro works

The first 9 lines of the macro gather information for later use. The boxes are designed to extend from the left to the right margin, so lines 2-4 set the margins. Lines 5 and 6 figure out the distance between

the margins. This information is used later on in the calculation for the width of box 4. The {CHAR} command on lines 8 and 9 is where you select the look of your box border.

The first box (line 12) is the most complex. This box contains all the text and formatting in the final product. The first step in each box is to set up the user box options code (lines 13-15, for example). This sets both the inside spacing between the text and the box, as well as the border options for the box.

The rest of label Box1 sets up the first box (line 16), tabs once (line 17), tells you to choose a font for the title of the box (line 19) and asks you to type the title (line 23). Next, it asks you to choose a font for the text of the box (line 27), then tells you to Type the box text, then press (Esc).

Most of these steps you see on-screen. What you don't see happens on lines 25 and 35. The {ASSIGN} command on line 25 figures out how wide the third box needs to be. The {ASSIGN} command on line 35 determines the height of the next three boxes. All the numbers being added or subtracted are in WordPerfect units (1200ths of an inch).

The second box (lines 37-41) is set up with top, left and bottom borders in the style of your choice. This box (like the two to follow) overlays the first box.

The third box (lines 42-45) has only the bottom border showing. This way the title of the text doesn't get covered up.

The fourth box (lines 46-52) displays the top, right and bottom borders. The width of this box takes some calculating (lines 50-51). The calculation really isn't hard – it's just the width of boxes 2 and 3 subtracted from the distance between the left and right margins. Once the box is finished, the last line of the macro takes you into View Document.

Possible adjustments

Because font size affects the line height, you'll sometimes need to adjust the position of the text in the box. The rule of thumb here is that the smaller the font used in making the title, the higher the text will appear in the final product. The larger the font used to create the title, the lower it will appear.

For example, if you created the menu item in Figure 1 with a 36-point font, you'd follow these steps to adjust the text so that the title is centered on the lines of the border:

From View Document, press Exit (F7) to return to the document screen. Turn on Reveal Codes (Alt-F3) and place your cursor on the [Usr Box:1;:] code.

Press Format (Shift-F8), (4) Other, (1) Advance, (1) Up and enter 0.1", followed by Exit (F7).

Press (Right Arrow) to move the cursor past the first user box. Press Format (Shift-F8), (4) Other, (1) Advance, (2) Down and enter 0.1", followed by Exit (F7). This second advance code moves the three remaining boxes down to their original positions.

Now you can view the results by pressing Print (Shift-F7), (6) View Document. The text should now be more appropriately centered in the box. Press Exit (F7) when done.

Suggested Uses

The macro works great for creating coupons, menus, recipe cards, overheads for presentations or to set off text in a letter or paper. This macro can also be used to create a short index or table of contents.

If you produce newsletters, you can announce upcoming events or list names of those responsible for your wonderful publication.

Never again do you need to worry about having to present a boring box. Now you can mix and match your boxes, creating even more professional-looking layouts.

Advanced use of the macro

If you're up to a challenge, you can use the macro to creatively title a table, as shown in the second example in Figure 1. This takes a number of manual adjustments and some trial and error, but it sure looks nice.

Here are a couple of hints: Make sure the table fills the box and set all outside table lines to none. You'll also need to adjust the inside border space in the first user options code. Then, set the height of boxes 2, 3 and 4 so that they touch the edges of the table. This will take a number of trips into View Document (and possibly a few printouts) to get just right.

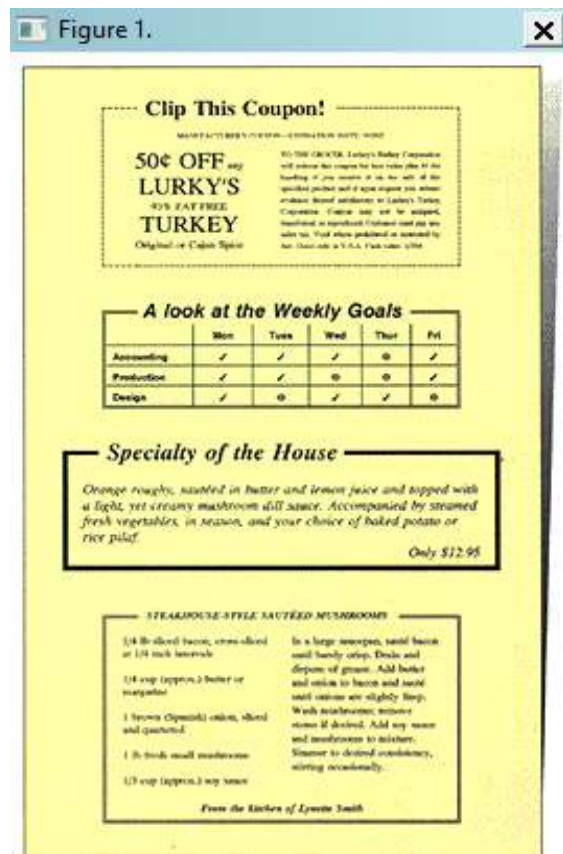


Figure 1. Some examples of interrupted box borders, using INTERRUPT.WPM.

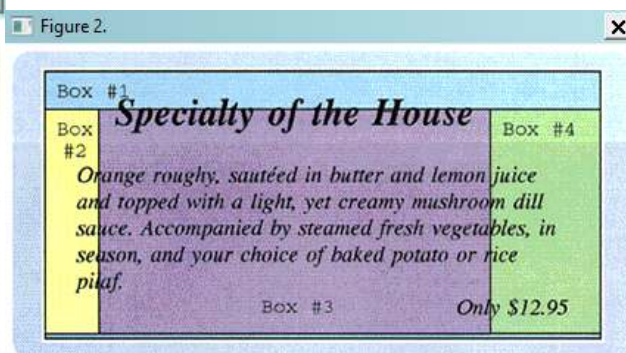


Figure 2. This figure shows how boxes 2-4 overlay box 1 (in light blue). box 2 is yellow, box 3 is lavender and box 4 is green.