a

Typography

Layout

a

ELLEN LUPTON

thinking
with

type

theory

practice

entertaining
economical
essential

how

why

A CRITICAL GUIDE
FOR DESIGNERS,
WRITERS, EDITORS,
& STUDENTS

2ND EDITION
REVISED & EXPANDED

MORE
PRINCIPLES
EXAMPLES
EXERCISES
TYPE CRIMES
FONTS
FACTOIDS
FUN

A DESIGN HANDBOOK

The Elements
of Typographic Style
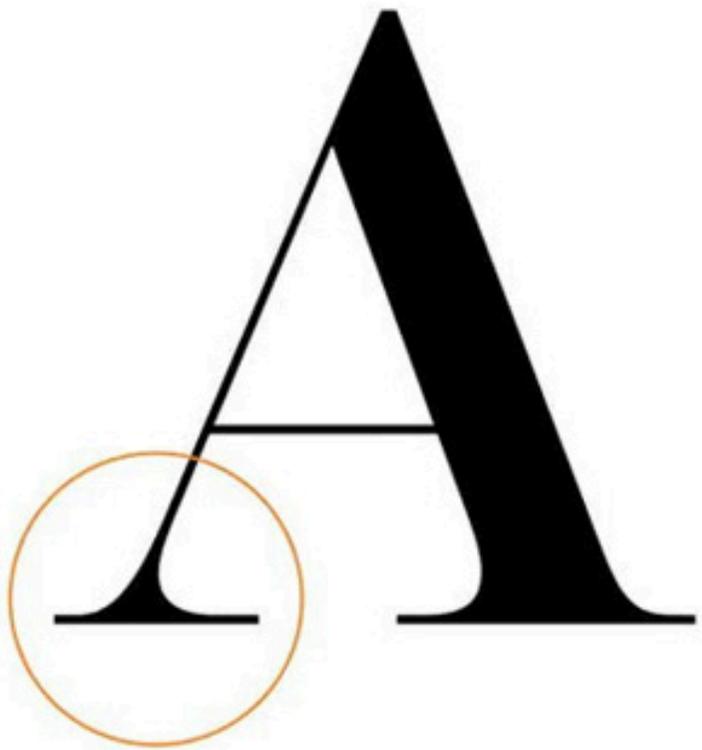
Fourth edition (version 4.2)
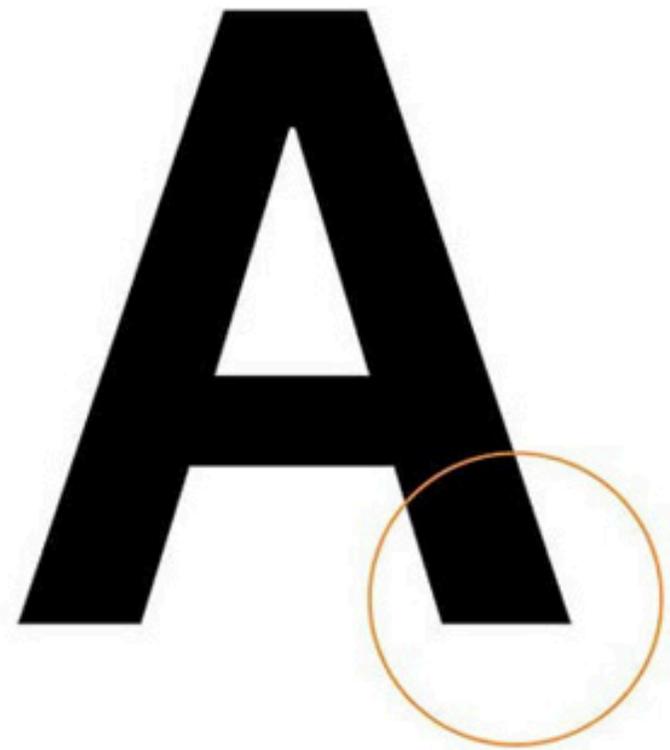
Robert Bringhurst

Choosing a Typeface

Serif   Sans-serif

SABON

Aa

HUMANIST OR OLD STYLE

The roman typefaces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries emulated classical calligraphy. Sabon was designed by Jan Tschichold in 1966, based on the sixteenth-century typefaces of Claude Garamond.

BASKERVILLE

Aa

TRANSITIONAL

These typefaces have sharper serifs and a more vertical axis than humanist letters. When the typefaces of John Baskerville were introduced in the mid-eighteenth century, their sharp forms and high contrast were considered shocking.

BODONI

Aa

MODERN

The typefaces designed by Giambattista Bodoni in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are radically abstract. Note the thin, straight serifs; vertical axis; and sharp contrast from thick to thin strokes.

CLARENDON

Aa

EGYPTIAN OR SLAB SERIF

Numerous bold and decorative typefaces were introduced in the nineteenth century for use in advertising. Egyptian typefaces have heavy, slablike serifs.

GILL SANS

Aa

HUMANIST SANS SERIF

Sans-serif typefaces became common in the twentieth century. Gill Sans, designed by Eric Gill in 1928, has humanist characteristics. Note the small, lilting counter in the letter a, and the calligraphic variations in line weight.

HELVETICA

Aa

TRANSITIONAL SANS SERIF

Helvetica, designed by Max Miedinger in 1957, is one of the world's most widely used typefaces. Its uniform, upright character makes it similar to transitional serif letters. These fonts are also referred to as "anonymous sans serif."

FUTURA

Aa

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF

Some sans-serif types are built around geometric forms. In Futura, designed by Paul Renner in 1927, the Os are perfect circles, and the peaks of the A and M are sharp triangles.

CAP HEIGHT

X-HEIGHT

BASELINE

Fancy

STEM BOWL SERIF DESCENDER

LIGATURE ASCENDER TERMINAL ASCENDER

flesh fresh

FINIAL SPINE

UPPERCASE SMALL CAPITAL

Blood

CROSS BAR COUNTER LOWERCASE

Typeface Pairing

Do I **look fat** in this paragraph?

When two typefaces are set in the same point size, one often looks bigger than the other. Differences in x-height, line weight, and set width affect the letters' apparent scale.

Mrs Eaves rejects the twentieth-century appetite for supersized x-heights. This typeface, inspired by the eighteenth-century designs of Baskerville, is named after Sarah Eaves, Baskerville's mistress, housekeeper, and collaborator. The couple lived together for sixteen years before marrying in 1764.

Mr. Big versus *Mrs.* & Mr. Little

The x-height of a typeface affects its apparent size, its space efficiency, and its overall visual impact. Like hemlines and hair styles, x-heights go in and out of fashion. Bigger type bodies became popular in the mid-twentieth century, making letterforms look larger by maximizing the area within the overall point size.

12/14 HELVETICA

Because of its huge x-height, Helvetica can remain legible at small sizes. Set in 8 pts for a magazine caption, Helvetica can look quite elegant. The same typeface could look bulky and bland, however, standing 12 pts tall on a business card.

8/10 HELVETICA

The default type size in many software applications is 12 pts. Although this generally creates readable type on screen displays, 12-pt text type usually looks big and horsey in print. Sizes between 9 and 11 pts are common for printed text. This caption is 7.5 pts.

Typefaces with small x-heights, such as Mrs Eaves, use space less efficiently than those with big lower bodies. However, their delicate proportions have lyrical charm.

12/14 MRS EAVES

Like his lovely wife, **MR EAVES** has a low waist and a small body. His loose letterspacing also makes him work well with his mate.

12/14 MR EAVES

The size of a typeface is a matter of context. A line of text that looks tiny on a television screen may appear appropriately scaled in a page of printed text. Smaller proportions affect legibility as well as space consumption. A diminutive x-height is a luxury that requires sacrifice.

8/10 MRS AND MR EAVES

Creamy and **Extra Crunchy** | *Differences within a **single family***

UNIVERS 47 LIGHT CONDENSED AND UNIVERS 67 BOLD CONDENSED

Sweet Child of **MINE** | Differences within a **SUPERFAMILY**

QUADRAAT REGULAR AND ITALIC; QUADRAAT SANS BOLD

Noodles with Potato Sauce | *Bland and blander*

HELVETICA NEUE 56 MEDIUM AND HELVETICA NEUE 75 BOLD

TYPE CRIME
These typefaces are from the same family, but they are too close in weight to mix well.

MULTIPLE-FAMILY MIXES

Jack Sprat and his **voluptuous wife** | *Two-way* **contrast**

THESIS SERIF EXTRA LIGHT AND VAG ROUNDED BOLD

Sweet, SOUR, and **hot** | THREE-*way* **contrast**

BODONI ROMAN, THESIS SERIF EXTRA LIGHT SMALL CAPS, AND FUTURA BOLD

Mr. Potatohead and Mrs. Pearbutt | *Too close for comfort*

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO BOLD AND ADOBE JENSON PRO BOLD

TYPE CRIME
These two type styles are too similar to provide a counterpoint to each other.

Paragraphs

Tracking

LOVE LETTERS

CAPITALS: NORMAL TRACKING

LOVE LETTERS

CAPITALS: LOOSE TRACKING (+75)

LOVE LETTERS, LOVE LETTERS

SMALL CAPS: NORMAL VS. LOOSE TRACKING (+75)

love letters, *love letters*

LOWER CASE: NORMAL TRACKING

love letters, *love letters*

LOWER CASE: LOOSE TRACKING (+75)

TYPE CRIME: TRACKING LOWERCASE LETTERS

Loosely spaced lowercase letters—especially italics—look awkward because these characters are designed to sit closely together on a line.

Tight

EROS

EST 2003
CRUET&WHISK.COM

CRUET *&* WHISK

422 2ND STREET
HUDSON, WISC
55016

Leading

The distance from the baseline of one line of type to another is called *line spacing*. It is also called *leading*, in reference to the strips of lead used to separate lines of metal type. The default setting in most layout and imaging software is 120 percent of the type size. Thus 10-pt type is set with 12 pts of line spacing. Designers play with line spacing in order to create distinctive layouts. Reducing the standard distance creates a denser typographic color—while risking collisions between ascenders and descenders.

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6/6 SCALA PRO
(6 pt type with 6 pts line spacing, or "set solid")

6/7.2 SCALA PRO
(Auto spacing; 6 pt type with 7.2 pts line spacing)

6/8 SCALA PRO
(6 pt type with 8 pts line spacing)

6/12 SCALA PRO
(6 pt type with 12 pts line spacing)

Alignment

Centered text is symmetrical,

like the facade of a classical building.

Centered type often appears on

invitations, title pages, certificates, and tomb stones.

The edges of a centered column

are often dramatically uneven.

Centered lines should be broken to emphasize a key phrase

(such as the name of the bride

or the date of her wedding)

or to allow a new thought to begin on its own line.

Breaking lines in this manner is called

breaking for sense.

Justified text, which has even edges on both the left and right sides of the column, has been the norm since the invention of printing with movable type, which enabled the creation of page after page of straight-edged columns. In metal type setting, the printer justifies each line by hand, using small metal spacers to alter the spaces between words and letters and thus make all the lines the same length. Digital typesetting performs the same labor automatically. Justified type makes efficient use of space. It also creates a clean, compact shape on the page. Ugly gaps can occur, however, when the line length is too short in relation to the size of type used. Hyphenation breaks up long words and helps keep the lines of text tightly packed. Designers often use negative tracking to fit additional characters on a line, or positive tracking to even out a line of type that looks too loose.

CENTERED
Lines of ueven length on a central axis

Centered text is formal and classical. It invites the designer to break a text for sense and create elegant, organic shapes. Centering is often the simplest and most intuitive way to place a typographic element. Used without care, centered text can look staid and mournful, like a tombstone.

JUSTIFIED
Left and right edges are both even

Justified text makes a clean shape on the page. Its efficient use of space makes it the norm for newspapers and books. Ugly gaps can occur, however, as text is forced into lines of even measure. Avoid this by using a line length that is long enough in relation to the size of type. As type gets smaller, more words will fit on each line.

THIS DREARY SHAPE HAS RANDOM LINE BREAKS THAT DON'T RESPOND TO THE RHYTHM OF THE WRITTEN TEXT.

TYPE CRIME
POORLY SHAPED TEXT BLOCK *In most uses, centered text should be broken into phrases with a variety of long and short lines.*

Ugly gaps appear when the designer has made the line length too short, or the author has selected words that are too long.

TYPE CRIME
FULL OF HOLES
A column that is too narrow is full of gaps.

In *flush left/ragged right* text, the left edge is hard and the right edge soft. Word spaces do not fluctuate, so there are never big holes inside the lines of text. This format, which was used primarily for setting poetry before the twentieth century, respects the flow of language rather than submitting to the law of the box. Despite its advantages, however, the flush left format is fraught with danger. Above all, the designer must work hard to control the appearance of the *rag* that forms along the right edge. A good rag looks pleasantly uneven, with no lines that are excessively long or short, and with hyphenation kept to a minimum. A rag is considered "bad" when it looks too even (or too uneven), or when it begins to form regular shapes, like wedges, moons, or diving boards.

Flush right/ragged left is a variant of the more familiar flush left setting. It is common wisdom among typographers that flush right text is hard to read, because it forces the reader's eye to find a new position at the start of each line. This could be true, or it could be an urban legend. That being said, the flush right setting is rarely employed for long bodies of text. Used in smaller blocks, however, flush right text forms effective marginal notes, sidebars, pull quotes, or other passages that comment on a main body or image. A flush or ragged edge can suggest attraction (or repulsion) between chunks of information.

FLUSH LEFT/RAGGED RIGHT
Left edge is hard; right edge is soft

Flush left text respects the organic flow of language and avoids the uneven spacing that plagues justified type. A bad rag can ruin the relaxed, organic appearance of a flush left column. Designers must strive vigilantly to create the illusion of a random, natural edge without resorting to excessive hyphenation.

FLUSH RIGHT/RAGGED LEFT
Right edge is hard; left edge is soft

Flush right text can be a welcome departure from the familiar. Used for captions, side bars, and other marginalia, it can suggest affinities among elements. Because flush right text is unusual, it can annoy cautious readers. Bad rags threaten flush right text just as they afflict flush left, and punctuation can weaken the hard right edge.

A bad rag will fall into weird shapes along the right edge, instead of looking random.

TYPE CRIME
BAD RAG
An ugly wedge shape spoils the ragged edge.

Lots of punctuation (at the ends of lines) will attack, threaten, and generally weaken the flush right edge.

TYPE CRIME
PUNCTUATION EATS THE EDGE *Excessive punctuation weakens the right edge.*

Paragraph(s)

How to organize
blocks of type

The table is covered with a table cloth which itself is protected by a plastic table cloth. Drapes and double drapes are at the windows. We have carpets, slipcovers, coasters, wainscoting, lampshades. Each trinket sits on a doily, each flower in its pot, and each pot in its saucer.

　Everything is protected and surrounded. Even in the garden, each cluster is encircled with wire netting, each path is outlined by bricks, mosaics, or flagstones.

　This could be analyzed as an anxious sequestration, as an obsessional symbolism: the obsession of the cottage owner and small capitalist not only to possess, but to underline what he possesses two or three times. There, as other places, the unconscious speaks in the redundancy of signs, in their connotations and overworking.

— *Jean Baudrillard, 1969*

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Hierarchy

**The way we organize
levels of importance**

Try to avoid "hats on a hat"
(at most 2 to 3 emphasis methods)

BOLD,
ITALIC,
UNDERLINED
CAPS!

TYPE CRIME

TOO MANY SIGNALS

_Emphasis can be created
with just one shift._

Column 1

I Division of angels
  A. Angel
  B. Archangel
  C. Cherubim
  D. Seraphim

II Ruling body of clergy
  A. Pope
  B. Cardinal
  C. Archbishop
  D. Bishop

III Parts of a text
  A. Work
  B. Chapter
  C. Section
  D. Subsection

SYMBOLS, INDENTS, AND LINE BREAKS

Column 2

Division of angels
  Angel
  Archangel
  Cherubim
  Seraphim

Ruling body of clergy
  Pope
  Cardinal
  Archbishop
  Bishop

Parts of a text
  Work
  Chapter
  Section
  Subsection

INDENTS AND LINE BREAKS ONLY

Column 3

DIVISION OF ANGELS
  Angel
  Archangel
  Cherubim
  Seraphim

RULING BODY OF CLERGY
  Pope
  Cardinal
  Archbishop
  Bishop

PARTS OF A TEXT
  Work
  Chapter
  Section
  Subsection

FONT CHANGE, INDENTS, AND LINE BREAKS

Column 4

	angel
DIVISION	*archangel*
OF ANGELS	*cherubim*
	seraphim
	pope
RULING BODY	*cardinal*
OF CLERGY	*archbishop*
	bishop
	work
PARTS OF	*chapter*
A TEXT	*section*
	subsection

ALIGNMENT, FONT CHANGE, AND LINE BREAKS

COMMON TYPOGRAPHIC DISEASES

Various forms of dysfunction appear among populations exposed to typography for long periods of time. Listed here are a number of frequently observed afflictions.

TYPOPHILIA An excessive attachment to and fascination with the shape of letters, often to the exclusion of other interests and object choices. Typophiliacs usually die penniless and alone.

TYPOPHOBIA The irrational dislike of letterforms, often marked by a preference for icons, dingbats, and—in fatal cases—bullets and daggers. The fears of the typophobe can often be quieted (but not cured) by steady doses of Helvetica and Times Roman.

TYPOCHONDRIA A persistent anxiety that one has selected the wrong typeface. This condition is often paired with OKD (optical kerning disorder), the need to constantly adjust and readjust the spaces between letters.

TYPOTHERMIA The promiscuous refusal to make a lifelong commitment to a single typeface—or even to five or six, as some doctors recommend. The *typothermiac* is constantly tempted to test drive "hot" new fonts, often without a proper license.

There are endless ways to express the hierarchy of a document.

COMMON TYPOGRAPHIC DISEASES

Various forms of dysfunction appear among populations exposed to typography for long periods of time. Listed here are a number of frequently observed afflictions.

Typophilia An excessive attachment to and fascination with the shape of letters, often to the exclusion of other interests and object choices. Typophiliacs usually die penniless and alone.

Typophobia The irrational dislike of letterforms, often marked by a preference for icons, dingbats, and—in fatal cases—bullets and daggers. The fears of the typophobe can often be quieted (but not cured) by steady doses of Helvetica and Times Roman.

Typochondria A persistent anxiety that one has selected the wrong typeface. This condition is often paired with OKD (optical kerning disorder), the need to constantly adjust and readjust the spaces between letters.

Typothermia The promiscuous refusal to make a lifelong commitment to a single typeface—or even to five or six, as some doctors recommend. The *typothermiac* is constantly tempted to test drive "hot" new fonts, often without a proper license.