WritingCenter *Talk about writing*
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Typography

Anatomy of Typography

Crossbar · Sans Serif · Serif · Type Size · Stem · Leading · Bowl · Axis · Link or Neck · Terminal · Ear · Loop or Lobe · Kerning · Italic · Terminal · Counter · Descender · Baseline · Ascender · Shoulder · Bracket · X Height

What is typography?

Typography concerns the art of selecting and arranging typefaces or fonts. Though typically thought of as purely functional, typography is a critical element of the design process which can greatly affect a document's overall appearance. With a little help, anyone can become a good typographer or someone who uses fonts deliberately and effectively to create visually interesting and aesthetically appealing designs.

The Purpose of Effective Typography

In order to create an effectively designed, visually appealing product, a typographer should pay careful attention to several important principles when arranging and selecting fonts; three of the most important concerns typographers should consider include **consistency, hierarchy and alignment.**
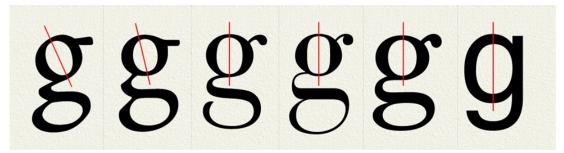
- **Consistency**: Typography should use fonts in deliberate and consistent way to create the appearance of unification and harmony. Using too many different fonts can produce an overwhelming and cluttered effect detracting from overall the document's readability.
- **Hierarchy**: Typography should create an apparent hierarchy which guides the reader through the content.
- **Alignment**: Typographers should, as with other elements of design, align the text in a way that looks clean and deliberate, and allows the text to be easily read.

Font Families

Most fonts may be categorized into one of six groups or families: Oldstyle, Modern, Slab Serif, Sans Serif, Script, and Decorative.

Draw a line through the two thinnest parts of the letter to determine the angle of the "stress" or downward stroke. Different fonts have different angles of stress.

- **Old style**: Old style fonts imitate the hand lettering of scribes. These fonts feature slanted serifs or little tails.

- **Modern**: Modern fonts replicate the appearance of lettering created by early printing presses. Features shared by this font family include thin horizontal serifs, or small tab like strokes.

- **Slab serif**: Slab serifs tend to be bold and thick with no thick to thin transition. The letters are mono-weight, meaning that all the letter strokes are equally thick. As the family name indicates, members of the slab serif group feature thin straight serifs.

- **Sans serif**: Sans serifs, unlike the previous fonts, feature no serifs. They are very readable, mono-weight typefaces which tend to be great for both titles and body content.

- *Script*: Script fonts appear to be hand lettered with a calligraphy brush or pen. Having a highly elegant and cursive-like look, these typefaces should be used sparingly as they can be difficult to read.

- **Decorative**: Fun, distinctive and easy to recognize, Decorative fonts encompass a large variety of typefaces. Generally, these fonts should not be used for body or content. However, they add character to writing and design and make good titles or logos.

Typographical Relationships

A relationship between fonts is created anytime more than one font appears on a typed page. There are three types of relationships which occur when using typefaces; They are **concordant, conflicting, and contrasting.**

- **Concordant** : A concordant relationship between fonts occurs when a typographer or designer uses only one type of font or multiple fonts from the same family with little or no variety in style, size, weight or other types of emphasis. Typically, concordant fonts appear sedate and should be avoided under most circumstances. This text represents a *concordant* relationship.
- **Conflicting**: A conflicting relationship between fonts occurs when a typographer or designer combines different typefaces that are similar but not the same. Conflicting fonts generally produce a confusing effect, undesirable for design purposes.
- **Contrasting**: A contrasting relationship between fonts occurs when clearly distinctive typefaces are combined to create a dynamic visual appearance to engage readers!

Fun Fact! Typography may be used to create images or art such as the Batman featured to the left!

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis   University Library, or call 815-836-5427.

Resources Consulted: The Purdue Owl, The Non-Designer's Design Book, 3rd ed. By Robin Williams