

TYPOGRAPHY



Serif / Sans Serif

Serifs are the small endcaps on letters. Sans means without in French. Therefore, sans serif is without serifs. Serifs can aid in reading large areas of copy, especially in print. However, small serifs can look poor on low-resolution applications such as a web site, so a serif with thicker serifs like Georgia is better than Times.

Examples of Serif and Sans Serif

The paragraphs to the right gives a sense of how different typefaces can look very different and have a different appeal. The serif face on the top would be great for a book where the type should be quiet. The sans serif type on the bottom might work better in a how-to document

KERNING: The space between individual letters.

Kerning is the space between individual letters. Back in the days of metal type, a square of metal held each letterform which means they could not overlap like they do in digital typesetting. High-quality fonts come with built in kerning pairs such as "Te" that will automatically tighten the space whenever that type combination is used. Careful typesetting may involve manually kerning between letters. High-quality kerning can only be accomplished using the right software.

TRACKING: TRACKING IS THE ADDING OF SPACE BETWEEN A LARGER GROUP OF TYPE. NOT INDIVIDUALLY LIKE KERNING. WHEN SETTING SOMETHING IN ALL CAPS IT IS BEST TO TRACK OUT THE TYPE SO IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE LETTERS ARE CRASHING TOGETHER.

LEGIBILITY vs READABILITY

Legible is one thing, but readability is quite another. Legibility refers to letter-by-letter recognizability. Readability refers to how quickly and easily a larger paragraph of type can be read. Does it hurt your eyes, or is it a pleasant experience? If you are struggling, the type-face (or the type styling) are not a good choice.

This typeface is awkwardly wide and is also very heavy. It would need a lot of manual kerning to look good. Highly readable fonts have a quiet balance to them, and no excess thick or thin areas.

Some typefaces can have their readability improved by increasing the leading, increasing the type size, or judicious use of kerning. But sometimes that is not an option, for example if you need to fit a certain amount of content in a given area, or need to run a lot of text.

Flush left, rag right

This type is set flush left. Flush left, rag right means the type is lined up on the left edge, but the right edge moves in or out depending on the words in the text. Because flush left text does not have to be adjusted to fill a line solidly, it can have a better look and be more readable than justified type.

Justified, no hyphens

This type is left justified. With justified type, small adjustments to the letter spacing and word spacing need to be made so that each line of type fills out the column. Because of that, you usually have more hyphenated words. If you choose to limit the number of hyphens it is likely you'll end up with what is called "rivers". Rivers are white spaces that flow through the words, and can be distracting. In this column, I have turned off the hyphenation, so that you can see how gaps can occur.

Fun Learning Site: <http://type.method.ac> ; <http://ilovetypography.com/ffontgame/> ; <http://shape.method.ac/> ; <http://cheeseorfont.com/>

Create Your Own Font: <http://fontstruct.com/> ; <http://2ttf.com/>

Inspiration: <http://www.typetheory.com/> ; <http://www.slanted.de/> ; <http://typesites.com/helveticaicons/> ; <http://www.typophile.com/>

Design or selection of letter forms to be organized into words and sentences and printed or displayed electronically. Typography originated after the invention of printing from movable type in the mid 15th century. The three major type families in the history of Western printing are roman, italic, and black letter (Gothic). All had their origin in the scripts of the calligraphers whose work was ultimately replaced by printing. In the succeeding centuries typographers have created some 10,000 typefaces (a complete set of letter forms of a particular design). Depending on the style of their letters, typefaces are categorized as old style, transitional, and modern. Commonly used typefaces include Caslon, Baskerville, Bodoni, Garamond, and Times New Roman.

This sample text is set with the serif type face called Minion. It is set in eleven points in size on a leading of fifteen points. Minion Pro is inspired by classical, old style typefaces of the late Renaissance, yielding unprecedented flexibility and typographic control.

This sample text is set with the sans serif type face called Helvetica Neue. It is set in eleven points in size on a leading of fifteen points. Helvetica Neue is a classic, well-proportioned, high-quality sans serif typeface ideal for a wide-range of applications.

Kerning
Kerning
TRACKING

no-kerning
kerned

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Leading

Leading is the space between lines of type. It was given its name because of the metal lead that used to be put between the horizontal lines of type to spread it out. Therefore, it is pronounced to rhyme with bedding, rather than reading.

This type is set in 10 point with a leading of 15 point. Leading measurement is from the bottom of one line to the bottom of the next, so is therefore always larger than the point size of the type.

15 points