

SABON

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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.

A basic system for classifying typefaces was devised in the nineteenth century, when printers sought to identify a heritage for their own craft analogous to that of art history. *Humanist* letterforms are closely connected to calligraphy and the movement of the hand. *Transitional* and *modern* typefaces are more abstract and less organic. These three main groups correspond roughly to the Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment periods in art and literature. Historians and critics of typography have since proposed more finely grained schemes that attempt to better capture the diversity of letterforms. Designers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have continued to create new typefaces based on historic characteristics.

CLARENDON

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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

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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, tilting counter in the letter a, and the calligraphic variations in line weight.

HELVETICA

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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

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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.

CLASSIC TYPEFACES

Sabon

14 PT

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and other materials are employed by the architect.

SABON 9/12

Selecting type with wit and wisdom requires knowledge of how and why letterforms evolved.

7/9

Baskerville

14 PT

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BASKERVILLE 9/12

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Bodoni

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BODONI BOOK 9.5/12

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7.5/9

Clarendon

14 PT

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CLARENDON LIGHT 8/12

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6/9

Gill Sans

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GILL SANS REGULAR 9/12

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Helvetica

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HELVETICA REGULAR 8/12

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Futura

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FUTURA BOOK 8.5/12

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6.5/9

In the sixteenth century, printers began organizing roman and italic typefaces into matched families. The concept was formalized in the early twentieth century.

ANATOMY OF A TYPE FAMILY

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO, designed by Robert Slimbach, 1988

The roman form is the core or spine from which a family of typefaces derives.

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO REGULAR

The roman form, also called plain or regular, is the standard, upright version of a typeface. It is typically conceived as the parent of a larger family.

Italic letters, which are based on cursive writing, have forms distinct from roman.

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO ITALIC

The italic form is used to create emphasis. Especially among serif faces, it often employs shapes and strokes distinct from its roman counterpart. Note the differences between the roman and italic a.

SMALL CAPS HAVE A HEIGHT THAT IS SIMILAR TO the lowercase x-HEIGHT.

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO REGULAR (ALL SMALL CAPS)

Small caps (capitals) are designed to integrate with a line of text, where full-size capitals would stand out awkwardly. Small capitals are slightly taller than the x-height of lowercase letters.

Bold (and semibold) typefaces are used for emphasis within a hierarchy.

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO BOLD AND SEMIBOLD

Bold versions of traditional text fonts were added in the twentieth century to meet the need for emphatic forms. Sans-serif families often include a broad range of weights (thin, bold, black, etc.).

Bold (and semibold) typefaces each need to include an italic version, too.

ADOBE GARAMOND PRO BOLD AND SEMIBOLD ITALIC

The typeface designer tries to make the two bold versions feel similar in comparison to the roman, without making the overall form too heavy. The counters need to stay clear and open at small sizes. Many designers prefer not to use bold and semi-bold versions of traditional typefaces such as Garamond, because these weights are alien to the historic families.

Italics are not *slanted* letters.

TRUE
ITALIC

TYPE CRIME:
PSEUDO ITALICS
The wide, ungainly forms of these mechanically skewed letters look forced and unnatural.

Some italics aren't slanted at all. In the type family Quadraat, the italic form is upright.

QUADRAAT, designed by Fred Smeijers, 1992.

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ANATOMY OF A SUPERFAMILY

This is not a book about fonts. It is a book about how to use them. Typefaces

THE SERIF MEDIUM ROMAN

are essential resources for the graphic designer, just as glass, stone, steel, and

THE SERIF MEDIUM ITALIC

OTHER MATERIALS ARE EMPLOYED BY THE ARCHITECT. SOME DESIGNERS CREATE

THE SERIF MEDIUM SMALL CAPS

their own custom fonts. But most

THE SERIF BLACK ROMAN

graphic designers will tap the vast

THE SERIF EXTRA BOLD ROMAN

store of already existing typefaces,

THE SERIF BOLD ROMAN

choosing and combining each with

THE SERIF SEMI BOLD ROMAN

regard to the audience or situation.

THE SERIF MEDIUM ROMAN

Selecting type with wit and wisdom

THE SERIF SEMI LIGHT

requires knowledge of how and why

THE SERIF LIGHT ROMAN

letterforms have evolved. The history

THE SERIF EXTRA LIGHT ROMAN

of typography reflects a continual tension between the hand and machine, the

THE SANS MEDIUM ROMAN

organic and geometric, the human body and the abstract system. These tensions

THE SANS MEDIUM ITALIC

MARKED THE BIRTH OF PRINTED LETTERS FIVE CENTURIES AGO, AND THEY CONTINUE TO

THE SANS MEDIUM SMALL CAPS

energize typography today. Writing

THE SANS BLACK ROMAN

in the West was revolutionized early

THE SANS EXTRA BOLD ROMAN

in the Renaissance, when Johannes

THE SANS BOLD ROMAN

Gutenberg introduced moveable type

THE SANS SEMI BOLD ROMAN

in Germany. Whereas documents and

THE SANS MEDIUM ROMAN

books had previously been written by

THE SANS SEMI LIGHT ROMAN

hand, printing with type mobilized all

THE SANS LIGHT ROMAN

of the techniques of mass production.

THE SANS EXTRA LIGHT ROMAN

THESIS, designed by Lu(cas) de Groot, 1994

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