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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.

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 mideighteenth century, their sharp forms and high contrast were considered shocking.

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

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.



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.

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.

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."

Ad

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.

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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

Baskerville

14 PT

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BASKERVILLE 9/12

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materials are employed by the architect.

BODONI BOOK 9.5/12

Bodoni

14 PT

Clarendon

I4 PT

Gill Sans

14 PT

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Helvetica

14 PT

Futura

I4 PT

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CLARENDON LIGHT 8/12

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GILL SANS REGULAR 9/12

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HELVETICA REGULAR 8/12

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FUTURA BOOK 8.5/12

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

7/9

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

7/9

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

7.5/9

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

6/9

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6/9

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LETTER | 47

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In the sixteeenth 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. 04059004161aa2e3e291ce30550511

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

TYPE CRIME:

PSEUDO ITALICS

The wide, ungainly
forms of these
mechanically skewed
letters look forced

and unnatural.

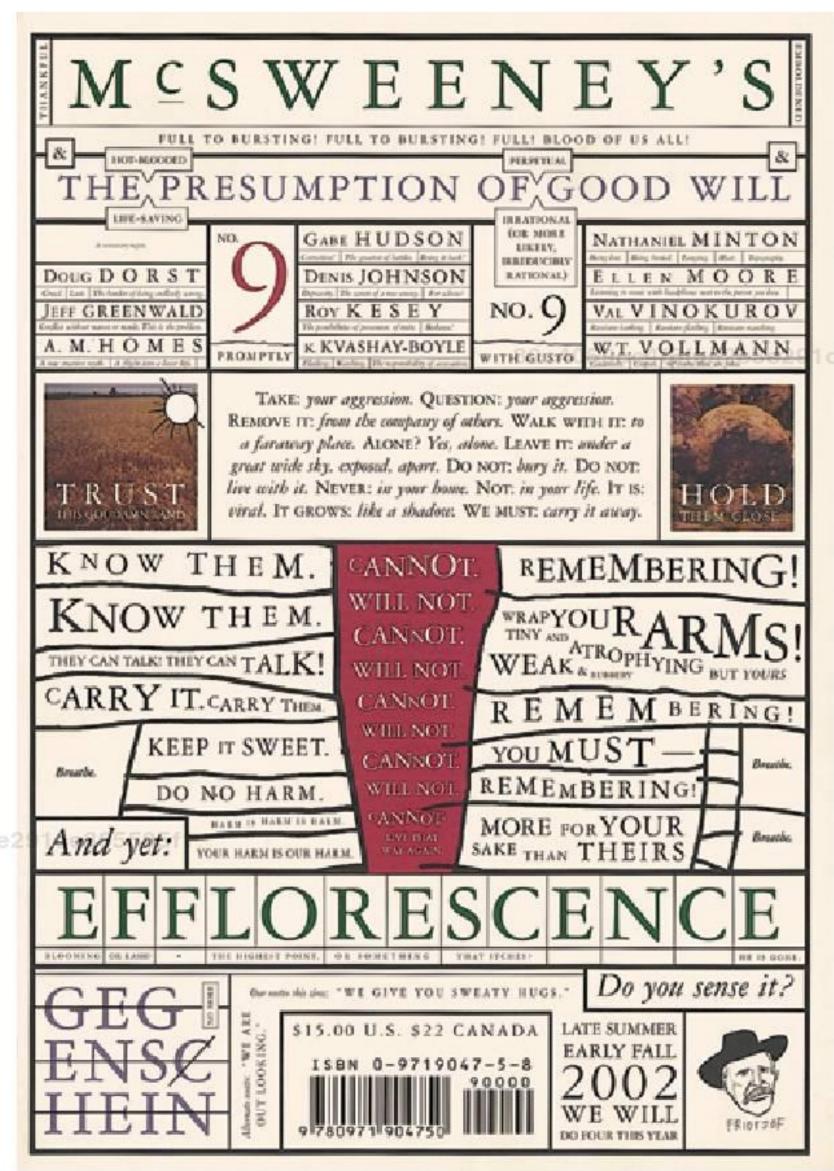
Some italics aren't slanted at all. In the type family Quadraat, the italic form is upright.

QUADRAAT, designed by Fred Smeijers, 1992.

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48 THINKING WITH TYPE



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MCSWEENEY'S Magazine cover, 2002. Design: Dave Eggers. This magazine cover uses the Garamond 3 typeface family in various sizes. Although the typeface is classical and conservative, the obsessive, slightly deranged layout is distinctly contemporary.

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LETTER 49

A traditional roman book face typically has a small family—an intimate group consisting of roman, italic, small caps, and possibly bold and semibold (each with an italic variant) styles. Sansserif families often come in many more weights and sizes, such as thin, light, black, compressed, and condensed. A *superfamily* consists of dozens of related fonts in multiple weights and/or widths, often with both sans-serif and serif versions. Small capitals and non-lining numerals (once found only in serif fonts) are included in the sans-serif versions of Thesis, Scala Pro, and many other contemporary superfamilies.

ANATOMY OF A SUPERFAMILY

nnppp

Scala

Scala Italic

SCALA CAPS

Scala Bold

Martin Majoor, includes
Scala (1991) and Scala Sans
(1993). The serif and sansserif forms have a common
spine. Scala Pro (OpenType
format) was released in 2005.

Scala Sans Light

Scala Sans

Scala Sans Condensed

Scala Sans Cond Bold

Scala Sans Bold 305505f1

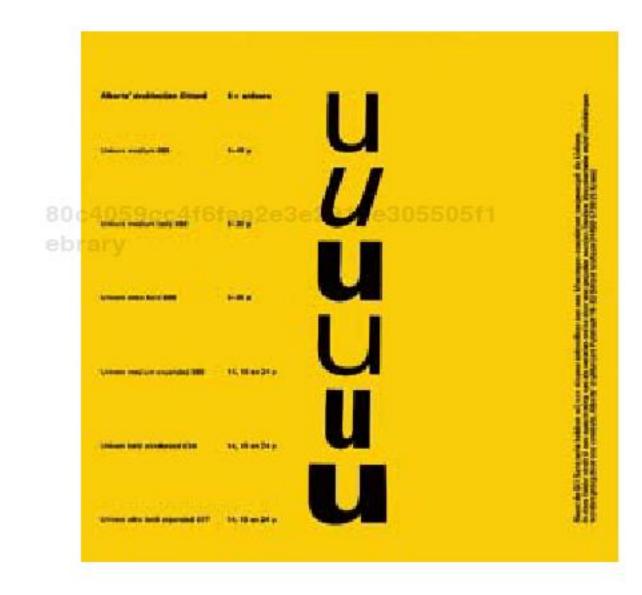
Scala Sans Black

SCALA JEWEL CRYSTAL

SCALA JEWEL DIAMOND

SCALA JEWEL PEARL

SCALA JEWEL SAPHYR



UNIVERS was designed by the Swiss typographer Adrian Frutiger in 1957. He designed twenty-one versions of Univers, in five weights and five widths. Whereas some type families grow over time, Univers was conceived as a total system from its inception.

Ticket of Admittance,

WITHIN THE ENCLOSURE,
TO VIEW THE

CEREMONY

One Shilling)

ne Money raised by these Tickets will be applied to defr the expences of the Day.

W. Pratt, Printer, Stokesley

TRILOGY, a superfamily designed by Jeremy Tankard in 2009, is inspired by three nineteenth-century type styles: sans serif, Egyptian, and fat face. The inclusion of the fat face style, with its wafer-thin serifs and ultrawide verticals, gives this family an unusual twist.

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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

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

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

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Selecting type with wit and wisdom

THE SERIF SEMI LIGHT

requires knowledge of how and why

letterforms have evolved. The history

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

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

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

books had previously been written by

hand, printing with type mobilized all

of the techniques of mass production.

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

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Civital