

Type Classifications

Individual characteristics of a typeface's drawing are what distinguishes fonts.

Most characteristics are related to **historical differences**.

Classifying type helps designers grasp the differences in styles and to select a appropriate for a project.

The historical development of type is tied to the evolution of the technology used to make it and print it. Up to the 15th century, **type was drawn by hand or a brush, reed pen or chisel**. These methods influenced the aesthetics of type.

In the mid- 1500's casting letter in lead allowed for a new precision of form. As technology has changed type has become more finely drawn and flexible.

The classification system was devised in the 19th century, when printer sought to identify a heritage analogous to art history.

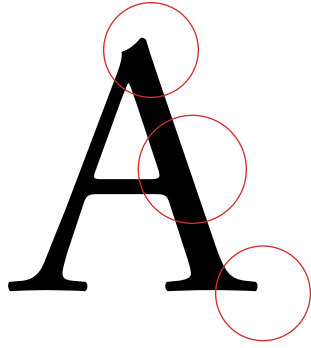
Humanist — Calligraphy and movement of the hand

Transitional and Modern — abstract and less organic

Humanist/Transitional/Modern correspond roughly to Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment periods of Art and Literature.

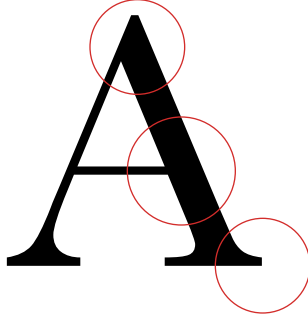
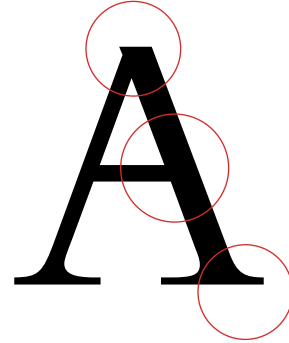
20th and 21st century typefaces continue to be based on historic characteristics.

Type Classifications

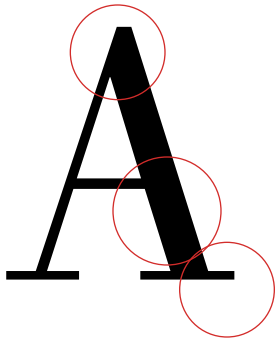


Humanistic - Old Style
fonts: Jensen, Centaur
Garamond Old Style /1615

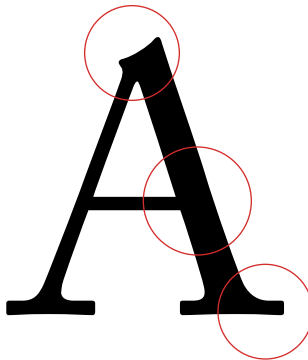
Old Style (1500's-1700's)
Garamond Old Style 1615



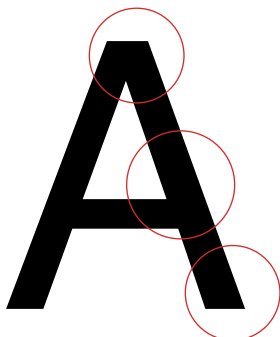
Transitional
Baskerville 1757



Modern
Bodoni 1788



Egyptian or Slab Serif
Century Expanded 1894



Sans Serif
Helvetica 1957

Type Classifications

Ae

Humanist (1460's-70's)

strong roots in calligraphy

Fonts Jenson, Kennerly, Centaur, Stempel Schneidler, Verona, Lutetia, Jersey, Lynton.

- Characteristics**
1. Sloping cross-bar on the lowercase “e”;
 2. Relatively small x-height;
 3. Low contrast between “thick” and “thin” strokes (little variation in the stroke width);
 4. Dark color (not a reference to color in the traditional sense, but the overall lightness or darkness of the page). To get a better impression of a page’s “color” SQUINT it through half-closed eyes.

Jensen

Centaur

*a humanist inspired type
designed by Bruce Rodgers
based on Nickolas Jensen
roman type*

Quidā eius libros nō ipsius esse sed Dionysii & Zophiri colophoniorū tradunt: qui iocādi causa cōscribentes ei ut difponere idoneo dederunt. Fuerunt autē Menippi sex. Prius qui de lydis scripsit: Xanthūq; breuiavit. Secūdus hic ipse. Tertius stratonicus sophista. Quartus sculptor. Quintus & sextus pictores: utroq; memorat apollodorus. Cynici autem uolumina tredecī sunt. Neniā: testamenta: epistolæ cōpositæ ex deorum psona ad phycos & mathematicos grāmaticosq; & epicuri fœtus: & eas quæ ab ipsis luntur imagines: & alia.

eius

Old Style (1500's-1700's)

AeO

Fonts Garamond, Bembo, Berling, Calisto, Goudy Old Style, Granjon, Janson, Palatino, Perpetua, Plantin, Sabon and Weiss

- Characteristics**
1. Greater contrast between thick and thin strokes, and are generally speaking, sharper in appearance, more refined. You can see this, perhaps most notably in the serifs: in Old Style types the serifs on the ascenders are more wedge shaped. X-heights continue to be small.
 2. More perpendicular (upright) position
 3. Horizontal crossbar

Sabon e

Garamond e

Palatino e

Goudy e

Handgloves bembo



wedge shaped serif



more upright stress



unslanted crossbar

Type Classifications

Transitional (17th Century France)

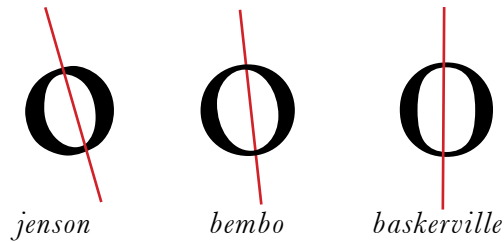
AeO

Fonts

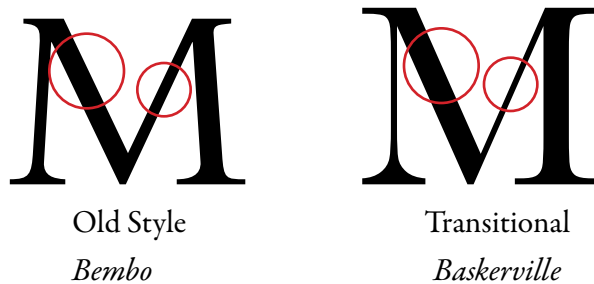
Baskerville (many flavours), Bookman (Linotype), Cheltenham (ITC), Clearface (ITC), Fournier, Slimbach (ITC), Times New Roman

Characteristics

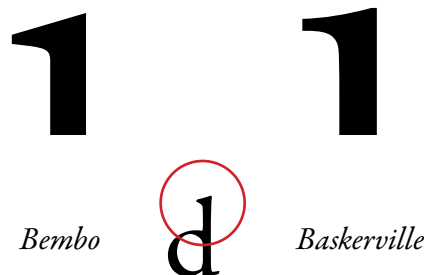
1. Vertical or almost vertical stress in the bowls of lowercase letters.



2. greater contrast between thick and thin (sub-) strokes:



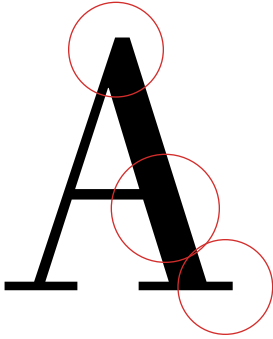
3. Head serifs generally more horizontal:



Baskerville
Bookman
Times New
Roman

It's worth noting that the characteristics are guides only. Modern-day revivals of these types vary in their 'authenticity'.

Modern (Bodoni 1788)

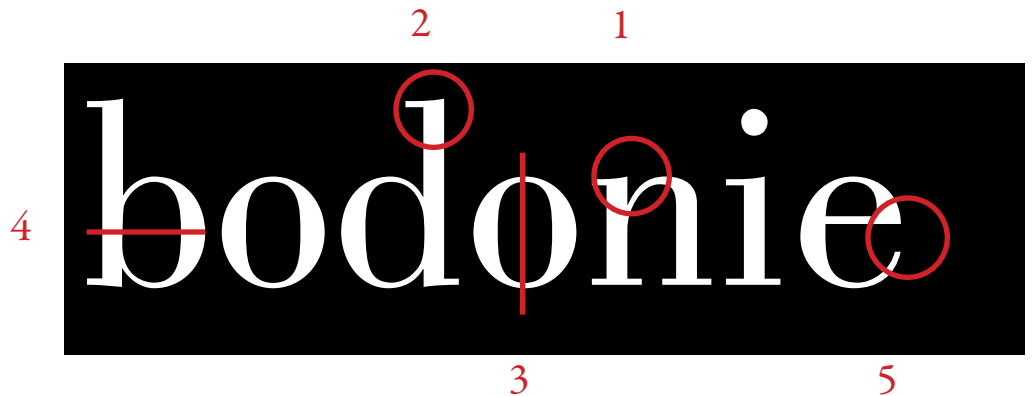


Fonts ITC Bodoni, Didot, ITC Fenice, ITC Zapf Book, Adobe New Caledonia, ITC Bodoni, Berthold, Walbaum

- Characteristics**
1. High and abrupt contrast between thick and thin strokes;
 2. Abrupt (unbracketed) hairline (thin) serifs
 3. Vertical axis
 4. Horizontal stress
 5. Small aperture

Baskerville's types, compared with their Old Style (or Galalde) predecessors, are marked by high contrast between thick and thin strokes,

The Moderns or Didones take this contrast to further extremes. The first Modern typeface is attributed to Frenchman Firmin Didot (son of François-Ambroise Didot), and first graced the printed page in 1784. His types were soon followed by the archetypal Didone from Bodoni. The Italian type designer, punchcutter and printer Giambattista Bodoni (what a great name! [1740-1813]) drew his influence from the Romains du Roi (with its flat, unbracketed serifs) and the types of John Baskerville (high contrast), for whom he showed great admiration.



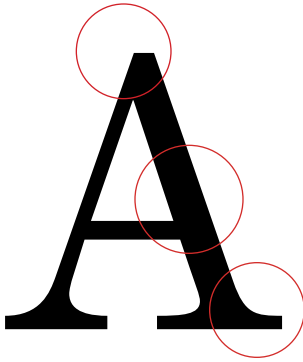
baskerville_(oldstyle)

bodoni_(modern)

Type Classifications

Egyptian or Slab Serif (1880's)

Century Expanded 1894



Fonts

Rockwell, ITC American Typewriter, Clarendon, Officina Serif, Courier, Archer, Century Expanded, Memphis

Characteristics

Unbracketed serifs
(an abrupt serif that meets the stem at a 90° angle)



To confuse things, the Slab Serif types were initially called Antique; now—Sans Serifs are referred to as Antique

Inspired by mechanization and large scale advertising. Until this time, type was designed to serve one purpose—for books (long stretches of texts). The display face developed as type for use at large sizes, for short bursts of copy.

Posters were a riot of big type, often a half-dozen different styles on a single page. The early Slab Serifs weren't discreet. They were designed to be noticed.

Subsets of the Slab Serif developed:

Fat Face: thicker strokes/ more weight/ triangulate serifs (Poster Bodoni)

Clarendons: reigned in fat face characteristics making them usable for text reduced contrast and thinned serifs enlarged x heights

The Geometric is a twentieth-century action against the Antique. Informed by the same kind of rationalist thinking that inspired the great sans serifs of the Bauhaus, Geometrics abandon traditional forms in favor of mathematical strategies.

Typewriter

Century Expanded

Rockwell

FAT FACE

(slab serif / rockwell)



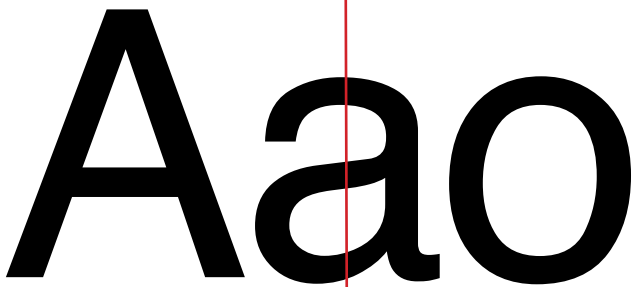
Aaoo

A large, bold, black sans-serif font sample showing the letters 'A', 'a', and 'o'. A thin red vertical line is positioned between the lowercase 'a' and the first 'o'.

Humanist San Serif

Gill Sans - 1928 (Eric Gill)
Scala Sans

small tilting counter
calligraphic variations in line weight



Aaoo

A large, bold, black sans-serif font sample showing the letters 'A', 'a', and 'o'. A thin red vertical line is positioned between the lowercase 'a' and the first 'o'.

Transitional San Serif

Helvetica - 1957 (Max Miedinger)
uniform upright character



Aaoo

A large, bold, black sans-serif font sample showing the letters 'A', 'a', and 'o'. A thin red vertical line is positioned between the lowercase 'a' and the first 'o'. A thin red circle is drawn around the top peak of the uppercase 'A'.

Geometric San Serif

Futura - 1927 (Paul Renner)
“o”s are perfect circles
peaks are sharp triangles

Other Categories

Scripts *Brush*

Snell Roundhand

Zapfino

Apple Chauncery

Party Let

Mistral

Sante Fe Let

handwriting

dakota

Type Classifications

Other Categories

Ornamentals

ECCENTRIC STD

DESDEMONNA

Giddyup Std

MESQUITE

Web

Arial

Verdana

Georgia

Other Categories

Bitmap

SB Liquid Open

SINT OCCA
OCCæcat

OCR One

Viewing

Waterfall

CONSECTE
Adipisici

Type Classifications

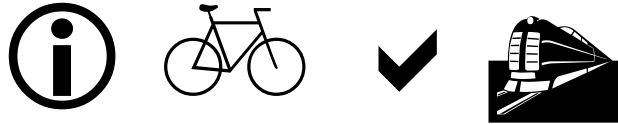
Other Categories

Dingbats /Symbols

we love nature



webdings



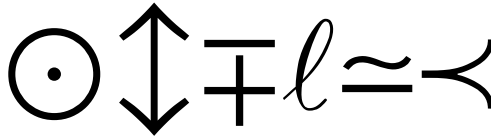
dingbats 2



bookshelf symbol 7



MT Extra

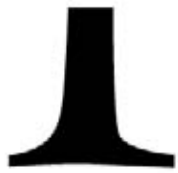


bodoni ornaments



Type Classifications

Serifs



Old Style



Transitional



Modern



Slab Serif



Sans Serif

Serif Structures

The diagram illustrates three types of serif structures: Bracketed Serif, Hairline Serif, and Slab Serif. A detailed view of a serif structure is shown on the right, with labels for Terminal, Fillet, Stem, and Bracket.

Being able to recognize tiny differences between the forms helps designers understand what makes letters act a certain way. Sharper serifs lend different texture to lines of text than do slab serifs. At larger sizes, the smallest details in a letter are exaggerated.