

Typography Briefs

Definition:

In typography, a typeface is a set of characters that share common design features, and usually comprises an alphabet of upper and lower case letters, a set of numerals and a set of punctuation marks.

There are thousands of different typefaces in existence, with new ones being developed constantly. The art and craft of designing typefaces is called type design.

Every typeface is a collection of glyphs, each of which represents an individual letter, number, punctuation mark, or other symbol. The same glyph may be used for characters from different scripts, e.g. Roman uppercase A looks the same as Cyrillic uppercase A and Greek uppercase alpha. There are typefaces tailored for special applications, such as map-making or astrology and mathematics.

<http://www.ask.com/wiki/Typeface>

Font or Typeface?

Fonts are the digital representations of typefaces. Font is the variation and implementation of particular point size and style such as 12 point Times New Roman or 10 point Helvetica. A font is like a software program that instructs the computer or printer on how to present or print the typeface. Adobe's type glossary lists a font as "one weight, width and style of a typeface."

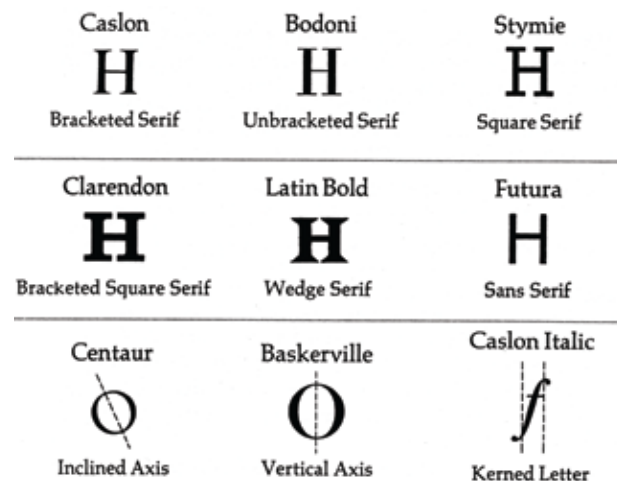
The 4 Typeface Categories

Within each of these categories, most individual typefaces contain various weights, referring to the thickness of stroke; italics in each weight, and a variety of characters.

Serif: Tend to have finishing strokes, flared or tapering ends, or have actual serified endings (including slab serifs). Serif fonts are typically proportionately-spaced. They often display a greater variation between thick and thin strokes than fonts from the 'sans-serif' generic font family. Common serif typefaces include Times Roman, Bodoni and Garamond.



Various types of serifs:



San serif: Tends to have stroke endings that are plain -- with little or no flaring, cross stroke, or other ornamentation. Sans-serif fonts are typically proportionately-spaced. They often have little variation between thick and thin strokes, compared to fonts from the 'serif' group. Some common sans serif typefaces are Helvetica, Avant Garde, Arial, Univers, Futura,

E G T

Script/cursive: Generally have either joining strokes or other cursive characteristics beyond those of italic typefaces. The glyphs are partially or completely connected, and the result looks more like handwritten pen or brush writing than printed letterwork. Fonts include Chancery, Brush, Swing and Script are also used in font names.

The Word

Decorative: Primarily decorative while still containing representations of characters as opposed to Picture fonts, which do not represent characters. The decorative typefaces shown in order are Cloister Black, Jokerman and Westwood.



Since pic fonts are not strictly typefaces, as you cannot combine them into words or sentences, I do not include them in these categories.

Quick Tips for Combining Fonts

These are a few basic rules to know, they aren't absolutes but merely some guidelines.

- **Use Font Families.** First of all, when possible, check out the various fonts within a single family. These fonts have meticulously been designed to work together and are therefore the safest method of varying your font without creating visual discord.
- **Contrast is King.** Next, when combining two fonts, go for contrast. Try pairing a bold slab with a light sans-serif. If you mix two fonts that are fairly similar, the lack of contrast makes it look more like

something is slightly off.

- **Go Easy.** Two is best, three at most. In all but the most experienced hands, lots of different fonts wreak havoc on the cohesiveness of a design.
- **Be Appropriate.** Let the message and audience play a big role in your font choice. If the content is modern and professional, stick to fonts that suggest these qualities.

Websites

Make Your Own Handwriting
<http://www.yourfonts.com/>

Identifont offers several options for searches
<http://www.identifont.com/>

My Fonts offers What the font. You upload a sample of a typeface you have seen in use and they give you a list of similar fonts in their database.
<http://www.myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/>

Linotype offers a different way to search for a specific typeface by asking a series of questions.
<http://www.linotype.com/fontidentifier.html>

Similar tools: IdentifyFonts, and FontTrainer.
WhatFontIs

Free font sites:

There are pages of offerings for free fonts on the internet, but a word of warning. Be diligent, before you download anything, check other sources to verify that others have used the site with no problems (ie free stuff is often not 'free'). There are also many sites that sell typefaces in a wide range of qualities... i.e. often you get what you pay for.

A few good ones:

- <http://www.dafont.com/>
also has instructions on how to load into your computer
- <http://www.fontsquirrel.com/>
- <http://www.1001fonts.com/>