



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

Section No. 203

TYPE SUBCATEGORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

There are six major classifications of typographic glyphs which we have discussed in class. Additionally we can further sub-categorize types by three other definitions, Font, Family and Series. This handout will show examples of these subcategories and also delve deeper into the meaning of ascenders, x-height, and other typographic nuances..

It has been said that typography is the true "art" in graphic arts.

While some may debate this point, it is true that good typographic practices will enhance the value of any graphic project.

It is also true that typographic design is a purely subjective matter. The letter sizes, without regard to point size, is entirely in the hands of the creative designer.

All of the elements which comprise the "look" of a given typeface are arbitrary. There are no hard and dependable rules which must be followed in designing any type face.

It is known that the single most important part of any type design is the x-height, that distance between the base and the top of the lower case x. This is traditionally the first letter which many designers create whenever they begin a type design project.

Its height and relative position between the ascender line and the descender line determines, in large measure, the readability of the design.

Generally, body types such as used for books, magazines and newspapers will have an

x-height which is approximately one third of the total distance between the ascender and descender lines, and it will be positioned near the middle of this space.

Types which deviate too significantly from this broad formula tend to be less readable and often stray into the fringe areas occupied by specialty faces such as those found in the Display or Novelty classification.

Additional consideration must be given to the stroke weights, the openness of the closed and open spaces, etc.

All of these, and more, must be carefully considered whenever developing a truly friendly and readable type.

On the next pages you will see examples of the six major classifications of type which are utilized in this class. You will get to see what characters typically comprise an average type font.

You will see what a type family and series look like and be able to identify the differences between each category.

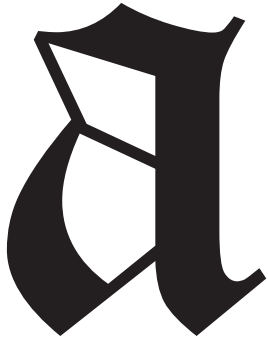
Additionally, there are examples of same-size types where you can compare the relative differences between stroke weights, x-height, set

size and other characteristics.

The last page consists of a single line example of the letter "X", in both majuscule and minuscule form, and a side by side comparison of some radically different type face treatments of this simple letter.

SIX TYPE CLASSIFICATIONS

(Miniscules)



*GOTHIC, TEXT OR BLACK
LETTER
(Old English type face)*



*SERIF
(Times Roman type face)*



*SANS SERIF
(Eras Bold type face)*



*SQUARE SERIF
(Rockwell Extra Bold type face)*



*SCRIPT
(Edwardian Script type face)*



*OCCASIONAL OR NOVELTY
(Cow Spots type face)*

SIX TYPE CLASSIFICATIONS

(Majuscules)



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(Old English Type face)



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SCRIPT
(Edwardian Script type face)



OCCASIONAL, DECORATIVE, NOVELTY OR DISPLAY
(Cow Spots type face)

A TYPE FAMILY

(All of the face variants of a particular type face)

Franklin Gothic

Franklin Gothic Italic

Franklin Gothic Demi

Franklin Gothic Medium

Franklin Gothic Medium Condensed

Franklin Gothic Heavy

Franklin Gothic Demi Condensed

Franklin Gothic Black Italic

THE IMPACT OF ASCENDERS AND DESCENDERS (descenders only)























THE IMPACT OF ASCENDERS
AND DESCENDERS
(Ascenders only)

official

THE IMPACT OF ASCENDERS
AND DESCENDERS
(Complete letters)

official

THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF LETTER FORMS

<i>EGYPTIAN HIERATIC</i>	<i>SEMITIC PHOENICIAN</i>	<i>HALLENIC EARLY GREEK</i>	<i>ROMAN EARLY LATIN</i>	<i>CURRENT ALPHABET</i>
				
				
				
				
<i>2500 BC</i>	<i>900-1000 BC</i>	<i>400-700 BC</i>	<i>200-300 AD</i>	<i>CURRENT ALPHABET</i>

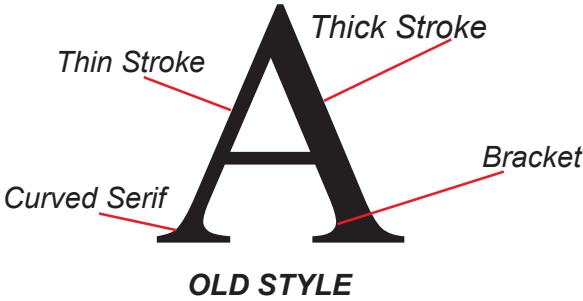
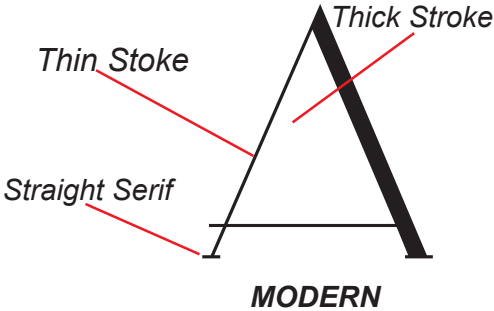
ASCENDERS EXTEND ABOVE THE X-HEIGHT, DESCENDERS BELOW

ASCENDER

BbdfGgjpQ x

DESCENDER

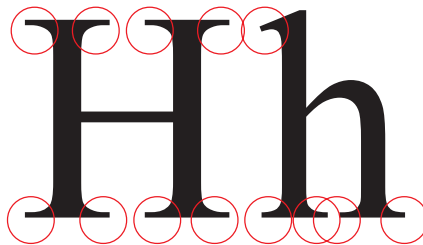
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DISTINGUISH MODERN FROM OLDSTYLE FORMS



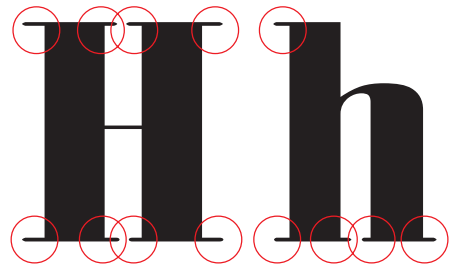
SERIF TREATMENTS VARY WITH TYPE STYLES

The image shows the letters 'H' and 'h' in a sans-serif font. The 'H' has two vertical stems and a horizontal crossbar, all with clean, straight edges. The 'h' has a vertical stem and a curved bowl, also with clean, straight edges.

Sans (without) Serif
(Example: Franklin Gothic)

The image shows the letters 'H' and 'h' in a bracketed serif font. The 'H' has a horizontal crossbar with a slight curve at the ends. The 'h' has a vertical stem and a bowl with a curved top. Red circles are drawn around the top and bottom edges of the letters, highlighting the bracketed serifs.

Bracketed serifs
(Example: Times New Roman)

The image shows the letters 'H' and 'h' in a flat (modern) serif font. The 'H' has a horizontal crossbar with a flat top and bottom. The 'h' has a vertical stem and a bowl with a flat top and bottom. Red circles are drawn around the top and bottom edges of the letters, highlighting the flat serifs.

Flat (Modern) Serifs
(Example: Onyx)

A COMPLETE STANDARD FONT

(Note the absence of special accent letters, etc.)

LETTERS

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V
W X Y Z

NUMBERS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

FIGURES, SYMBOLS & PUNCTUATION

~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & * _ + (: ; . , - = " ')
{ } [] · ® © ™ ... ÷ ¢ £ œ æ ‡ † ¥ ¢ Ç § ¨ ¬ • ° ^
¯ ¶ µ ï

A TYPE SERIES OF A SPECIFIC TYPE FACE

(all of the available sizes)

Point Size

6 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

8 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

9 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

10 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

12 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

14 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

18 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

24 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

30 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

36 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

48 abcdefghijklmnopq

60 abcdefghijklmn

72 abcdefghijk

X-HEIGHT IS A CRITICAL MEASUREMENT IN LETTER DESIGN



SPECIFIED TYPE SIZE DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN SAME SIZE

All samples are 18 points in size:

FACE NAME

LETTER EXAMPLES

Times New Roman:

AaBbCcDdEeGgQqMmSsXxZz

Agency:

AaBbCcDdEeGgQqMmSsXxZz

Carmina Black:

AaBbCcDdEeGgQqMmSsXxZz

Rockwell:

AaBbCcDdEeGgQqMmSsXxZz

Vivaldi:

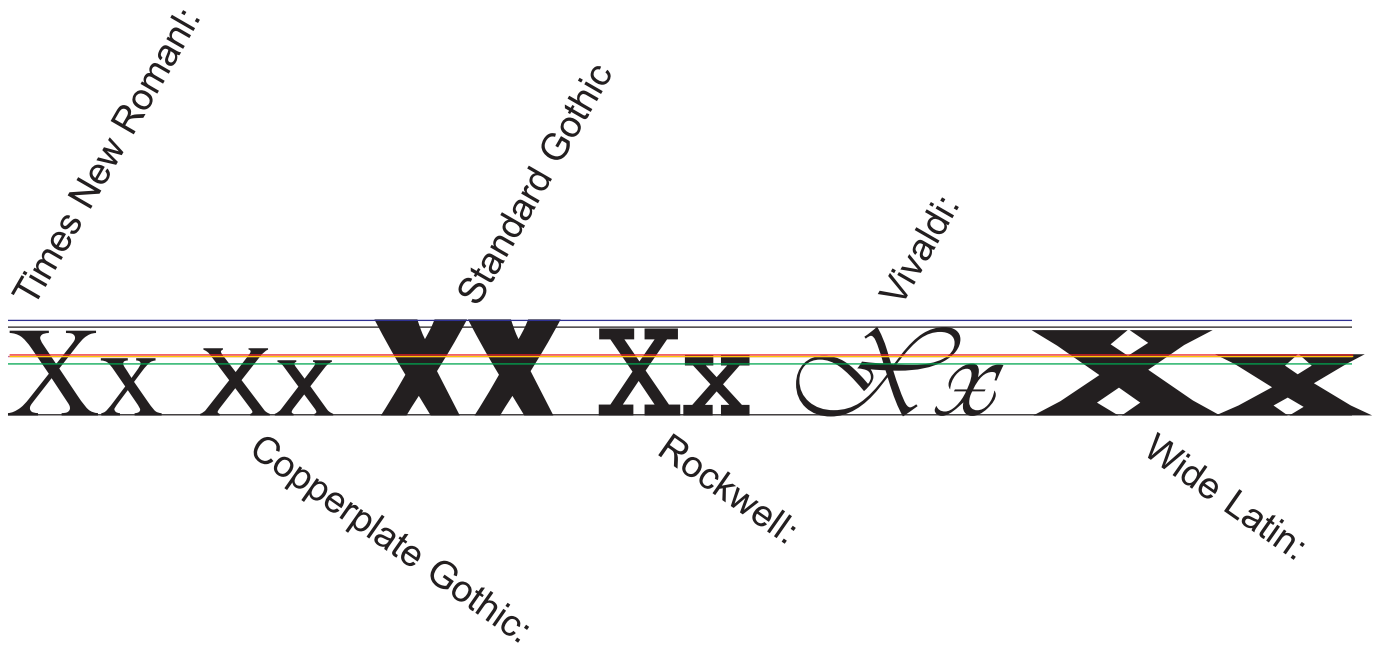
AaBbCcDdEeGgQqMmSsXxZz

Wide Latin:

AaBbDdGgQqMmSsXx

"x" HEIGHT VARIES WITH THE FACE AND AT THE WHIM OF THE DESIGNER

(All type examples are 48 points in size)



Note that there can be significant variation in the x-height of different type faces, all of which are the same point size — In this case, the x-height of one example (Rabbit Ears) is less than half of the largest examples. Also note how the ascender line is variable between the different examples.

x-height size, position and proportional relationships between it and ascender and descender lengths, etc. are entirely in the hands of the designer. There are no firm rules which must be followed. When specifying type, it is wise to examine the x-height of a proposed face as a major determiner of size requirements or readability. The x-height characters comprise the largest part of the letters and the part which most affects visual awareness when reading.