



TYPE

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TYPE

Serif

The serif is the cross-line or finishing shape at the end of a stroke. It dates from early Rome, the serif is possibly a result of using a brush to paint letters onto stone before cutting. Serifs provide anchor points for the eye and help it lead from one letter to the next, making serif faces easier to read. For this reason, serif faces have traditionally been used for large blocks of text.

Serif

Sans Serif

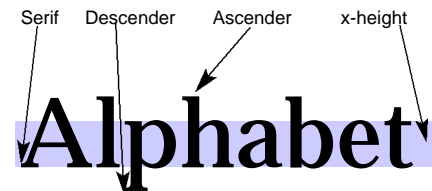
Type designs with no serifs are called sans serifs: the French word *sans* means *without*. They have their roots in the early 20th century. Sans serif faces are rarely used for long passages of text as their uniform line weight and letter shape make them less legible than serif faces. Traditionally they have been used as a contrast faces for headlines and captions.

Sans Serif

Terminology

X-height

The height of a lowercase 'x'. Different fonts have different x-heights.



Fonts

Just like people, one typeface can be part of a big family, here is an example of the different variations of Helvetica typeface.

Helvetica
Helvetica Bold
Helvetica Italic
Helvetica Bold Italic

Tracking

When setting headlines or cross-heads a little tracking goes along way towards improving legibility.

TRACKING
TRACKING
TRACKING

*Lines Have Been Tracked
With Values of -10, 0 and 15*

Kerning

Letter shapes fill up type body differently, sometimes leaving large gaps between letters that give rise to poor letterspacing. Kerning is the adjustment of spacing between two adjacent letters. It is especially critical in headlines, where poor spacing is most noticeable. Letter pairs that typically need attention are: AV, AW (diagonal shapes) and Ta, To (overhanging shapes). Modern DTP fonts have kerning tables, to improve letter pairs and legibility.

RAILWAY Unkerned
RAILWAY Kerned

LINE LENGTH

This line is too long!

Your eye doesn't actually read every word, one at a time, but scans the line, pausing to read groups of three or four words. Too long a line tires the eye and makes it difficult to find the beginning of the next line.

This line is too short!

On the other hand, lines that are too short disrupt sentence structure and require the eye to change lines too often.

This line is just right!

The ideal line length depends on the design of the typeface, point size and leading, amount of text and the final media the type is to be read in, such as print vs. on-screen.

Generally, a line should have 55 to 60 characters (10 or 11 words) for optimal readability.

Flush Left

Type that is set flush left, ragged right is often more evenly spaced throughout.

Flush Right

Although visually interesting, long passages of body text set flush right, ragged left is harder to read because the reader's eye must briefly 'hunt' for the beginning of the next line.

Centre

Large amounts of text should not be centred. Ideal for headings, cross-headings or captions.

Justify

If you justify a column of type, take care to avoid awkward gaps between letters and words which might create 'rivers' of white through the text.

F o r c e d J u s t i f y

All lines are forced to be justified to the column width. Tends to be used for small amounts of copy in advertisements. Traditionally not acceptable for a large quantity of copy because the last line is justified to the column width. The last line should remain short.

LEADING

Leading is the term used to describe the distance between lines of type. Leading (pronounced 'ledding' from the strips of lead inserted between lines of metal type) is the measurement from baseline to baseline in text. It can be written in several ways, the first figure is always the type size and the second the leading:

10/12 Helvetica: 10pt type size and 12pt leading
10 on 12 Helvetica: 10pt type size and 12pt leading

There are 2 methods of measuring leading:

(1) Word Processing Mode

Measure leading downward from the top of the **ascenders** of a line of text to the top of the ascenders of the next line of text. Word Processing mode changes the leading of text each time the typeface is changed. This change can be fairly substantial if, for example a change is made from Futura to Times, which vary in the size of the ascenders.

(2) Typesetting Mode

Measure leading from the **baseline** of one line of text to the baseline of the following line of text. This is the preferred mode for desktop publishing.

Auto Leading

The pre-set default auto leading value is 20%. This adds 20% to the type size:

10pt type size with auto leading
This would give a value of 12pts leading
20% of 10pt = 2pts
Therefore $10 + 2 = 12$ pts

Auto leading value can be imprecise, e.g 20 % of 9pt does not give a whole number! Also if different type sizes are mixed in a paragraph of text the auto leading value is used for the largest size. For this reason whenever it is possible, a positive leading value should be used instead of auto leading and the number should at least equal the type size. This would be a minimum value, but for better legibility the following would improve the appearance of text:

Type Size	Leading
8	9
10	12
12	14
14	18
18	24
24	30
30	36

Measure leading from the **baseline** of one line of text to the baseline of the following line of text. This is the preferred mode for desktop publishing.

This text has been typeset using 12pt Helvetica with auto leading

Measure leading from the **baseline** of one line of text to the baseline of the following line of text. This is the preferred mode for desktop publishing.

This text has been typeset in 12/14 Helvetica

If different type sizes are mixed in a paragraph of text the auto leading value is used for the **largest size**. For this reason whenever it is possible, a positive leading value should be used instead of auto leading and the number should at least equal the type size.

This text has been typeset in 12pt Helvetica with auto leading. 'Largest size' has been typeset in 18pt Helvetica with auto leading.

- Notice that the leading has been increased around 'largest size'

QUESTIONS ON TYPE

- (1) What are the 2 main styles of type ?
- (2) What style of typeface is used for large blocks of text ?
- (3) Describe the term 'x-height' ?
- (4) Give an example of a letter which has an ascender ?
- (5) Give an example of a letter which has a descender ?
- (6) Describe the term 'tracking' and 'kerning' ?
- (7) What is the ideal number of words or characters in a line ?
- (8) What is the centre command ideal for, when typesetting ?
- (9) Define the term 'leading' ?
- (10) When writing the type size and leading, which figure is the leading in the following example: 10/12pt Times New Roman
- (11) Which leading mode is preferred for desktop publishing ?
- (12) When using auto leading, how much is added to the type size ?
- (13) A leading value should be used that is at least _____ to the type size ?
- (14) When using 8pt type, what would be an ideal size for the leading ?