Guidelines for Using Text in Multimedia

Multimedia applications can be flashy; they can bombard the viewer with colors, light, sound, and incredible tricks of animation. But while colors, animation, and other effects stimulate the imagination and catch the eye, it is usually the content that is the most important. Many uses of multimedia rely heavily on text to get their point across, even when that text is tightly integrated into an opulent visual package.

Text might be the simplest portion of a multimedia experience, but it is often the most important.

Typography

Typography is the process of selecting and arranging typefaces, sizes, and spacing requirements for a layout, be it for multimedia or the Web. Typography gives a page a certain personality (formal or informal, modern or classic, ornate or sturdy) and an overall feeling (dense or open, light or dramatic). *"Typographic arrangement should achieve for the reader what voice tone conveys to the listener."* (El Lissitzky)

Important elements to consider when arranging text are **type size** (**point size**), **typeface** (**type font**) and **line/letter spacing**.

Text is measured in *points*. *Point size* of the type is determined by measuring the height of the type body. The point size is found by measuring the distance from the uppermost limit of an upward-reaching letter (*ascender*), such as b, f, h, k, or l; to the lowermost limit of a downward-projecting letter (*descender*), such as g, j, p, or y.
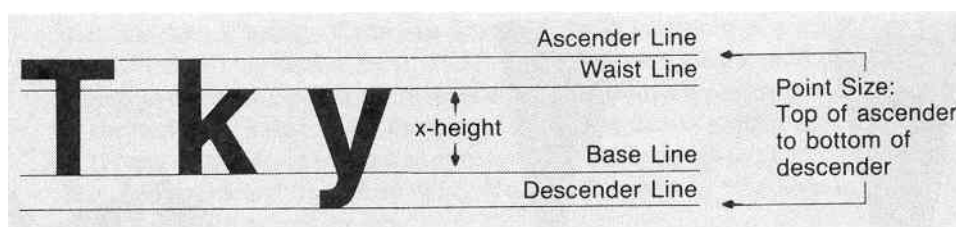
1 point equal 0.0138 inch and 72 points equals 1 inch. So a 72 point font will be 1 inch in height.
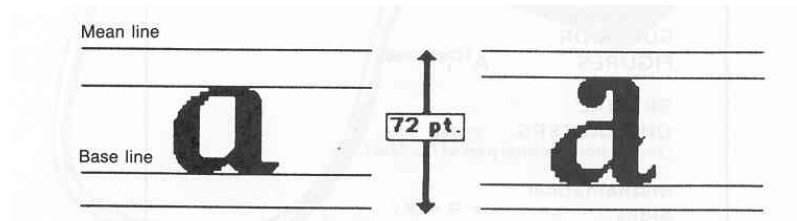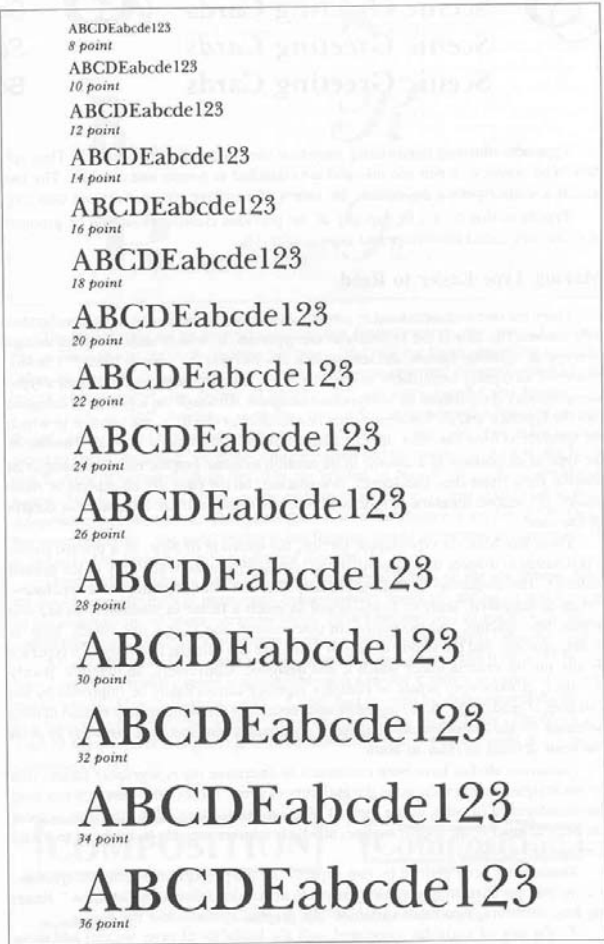

FIG. 29. The typographic lines of reference determine the relative sizes of uppercase and lowercase letters.

Text sizes usually used for reading matter and/or body copy is **9- to 12-points**. **Display sizes** usually used for headlines (heads), titles, and subheadlines (subheads) is **14 points and larger.**

Type Font is the collection of all the letters, figures, symbols, punctuation, and special characters of a **particular typeface** in a **certain point size**.

uppercase or CAPITAL	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUV WXYZ
lower case	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
SMALL CAPITALS	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
F LIGATURES	ff fi fl ffi ffl
FIGURES	1234567890
FRACTIONS	⅓ ⅓ ½ ¾ ¼
POINTS, OR THE MARKS OF PUNCTUATION	.,"!;:-!)([]&?
MARKS OF REFERENCE	¶ §†‡
COMMERCIAL AND MONETARY SIGNS	$#%
SUPERIOR FIGURES	A¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷⁸⁹⁰
SPECIAL CHARACTERS (sorts – not a normal part of the font)	© ®•
Mathematical Signs	÷ = + ×/

A **Family** of type consists of **all variations** of a **single typeface** and includes the different weights, width, slants, and styles, such as italic, boldface, lightface, condensed, expanded versions, thin, ultra light, heavy and compressed.


Helvetica Thin	Helvetica Ultra Compressed
Helvetica Light	Helvetica Extra Compressed
Helvetica	Helvetica Compressed
Helvetica Medium	Helvetica Regular Extended
Helvetica Medium Flair	
Helvetica Bold	Helvetica Bold Extended
Helvetica Ultra Black	
Helvetica Light Italic	**Helvetica Extra-bold Extended**
Helvetica Italic	Helvetica Medium Outline
Helvetica Medium Italic	
Helvetica Bold Italic	Helvetica Bold Outline
Helvetica Regular Condensed	*Helvetica Italic Outline*
Helvetica Bold Condensed	Helvetica Bold Condensed Outline
Helvetica Extrabold Condensed	Helvetica Extrabold Condensed Outline

Typeface is an **entire family of letters of a particular design**. Typefaces have a profound effect on the design of your work. Each has a personality of its own. A typeface either has or does not have *serifs*. *Serifs* are the ending strokes on the arms, stems, and tails of some typeface designs. If a typeface has serifs it is termed a *roman* typeface. Mostly used for body text because they are more readable than the

other font types. Examples of serif fonts include but are not limited to **Times New Roman**, Palatino, Courier, Times, and Garamond.
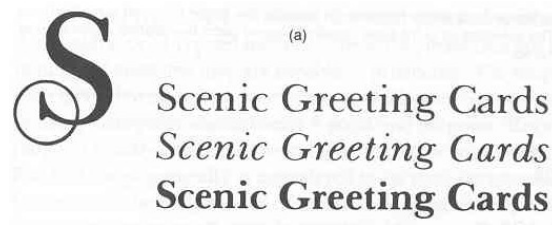
Sans serif (without serifs) fonts do not contain the ending strokes. They are easier to read at very large and especially at very small sizes and are good for captions, very small text (6 points and smaller), and for titles and subheads (14 point and larger) to contrast body text. Examples of sans serif fonts include but are not limited to **Helvetica**, Universe, and Futura.
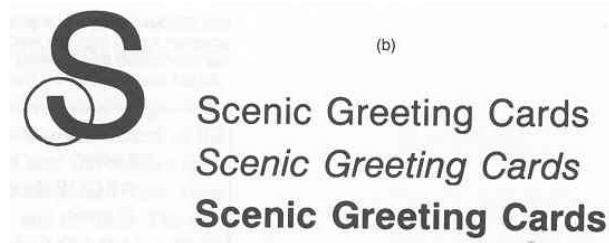
Script and *Cursives* typefaces imitate handwriting that appear to be drawn with pen and ink. The **letters** of a **script** typeface are **joined,** whereas the letters of a **cursive** typeface are **not**. They are typically used to indicate **quality** or importance. Examples of script and cursive fonts include but are not limited to Brush Script, Zaph Chancery, Smell Roundhand, and Shelley Allegro.

The **Color** of type refers to the overall tone, or texture, of the type; the lightness or darkness, which varies from one typeface and style to another; and also the evenness of the type as determined by the spacing.

A large rose-tree stood near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners at it, busily painting them red. Alice thought this a very curious thing, and she went nearer to…
—Garamond

A large rose-tree stood near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners at it, busily painting them red. Alice thought this a very curious thing…
—Avant Garde

A large rose-tree stood near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners at it, busily painting them red. Alice thought this a very curious thing…
—Univers

A large rose-tree stood near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners at it, busily painting them red. Alice thought this a very curious thing, and she went nearer…
—Franklin Gothic Demi

The **Personality** of a typeface refers to a look that makes it more or less suited for a particular type of job. Confident, elegant, casual, bold, novel, romantic, friendly, stylish, nostalgic, classic, delicate, modern, crisp, etc.

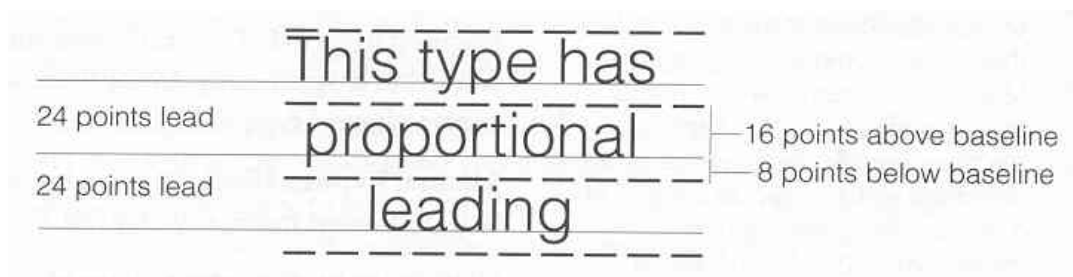## If the need is to be DRAMATIC AND SOPHISTICATED AT THE SAME TIME

then look no further than the Bodoni family. It is very urban, with a touch of the theatrical. This is especially true with Bodoni Poster, used above. This text is in Bodoni Bold.

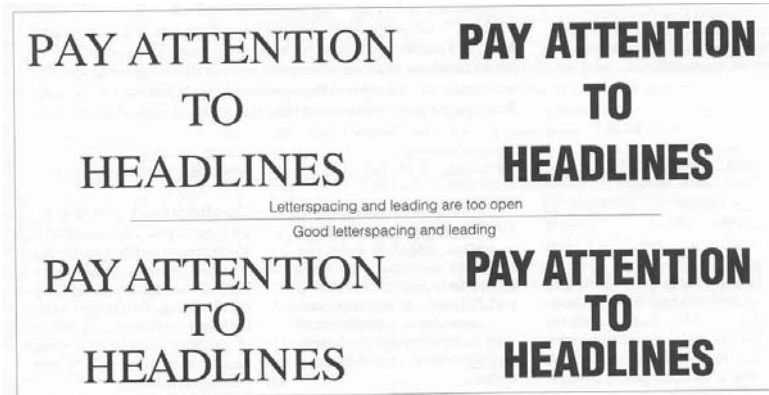## THE ANNUAL MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES

might well be set in Garamond. It's an extremely graceful, refined, and legible face that suggests the confidence that comes from success. The italic face is highly legible (many italic faces are not), as you can see from these few lines set in Garamond Light Italic.

"Each typeface, like a human face, has a subtle character all its own." (Roger Black)

Leading is the term used to refer to the vertical spacing between lines of type (Line Spacing). It is measured in points from the baseline of one line to the baseline of the next line. The amount of leading can add to or detract from how well the text looks.

This type has proportional leading

24 points lead
24 points lead

16 points above baseline
8 points below baseline

Letterspacing refers to the amount of space between individual characters. It can degrade the word shapes and make them harder to read.

PAY ATTENTION TO HEADLINES	PAY ATTENTION TO HEADLINES

Letterspacing and leading are too open

Good letterspacing and leading

PAY ATTENTION TO HEADLINES	PAY ATTENTION TO HEADLINES

Kerning is the process of subtracting minute increments of space from between certain character pairs in order to improve their fit and therefore make them more eye-appealing.

The unTrivial Pursuit of Excellence

The unTrivial Pursuit of Excellence
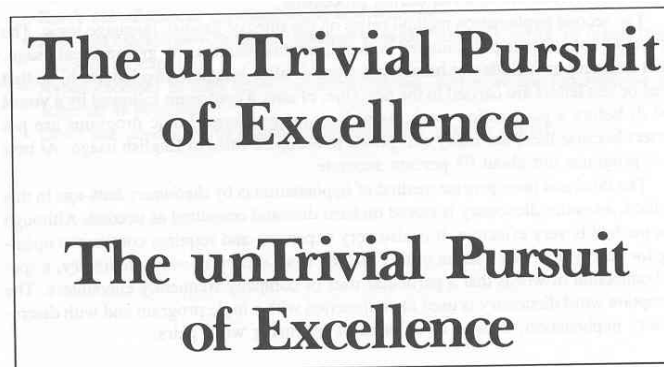
Tracking is a character-spacing option that permits the user to specify a small increment of space that is to be uniformly removed from between all characters.

No Track (default setting)	Endless Typographic Details
Very Loose	Endless Typographic Details
Loose	Endless Typographic Details
Normal	Endless Typographic Details
Tight	Endless Typographic Details
Very Tight	Endless Typographic Details
Tight Track with 1/100 of an em space added across the entire text block	Endless Typographic Details

Font Issues

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when dealing with text is that fonts vary from computer to computer. While operating systems like Windows and Mac OS each come with a "core" set of fonts, those sets can be very limited. Furthermore, the included fonts are often very simple, so if you find yourself using a fancy font while designing your multimedia presentation or Web site, there is a good chance that many viewers will not have the font.

You may have seen Web sites that have a message on their home page saying "This site looks best with the _____ font – Click here to download it." These Webmasters are relying on the audience to take the time to download and install the font. Some people will, but many people surely will not. Programs like Adobe Acrobat allow you to create PDF files. The Portable Document Format (PDF) was developed so that documents could be transported and viewed without the requirement that the users viewing the documents own or have access to the software with which the document was created. For this to work, users instead need a reader that enables them to view the document in its original layout with all of the proper fonts and graphics included. Because PDF files require PDF readers in order to be displayed, these files always look as they were designed to look. They handle any font, any layout and can be viewed from any type of computer. This makes this file format extremely versatile.

Accuracy

It is important to make sure that your term papers and homework all contain proper grammar and good spelling. It is just as important that the text in your multimedia is written and spelled correctly. Many multimedia applications contain built-in spelling checkers. If yours does not, consider writing and revising the text in a word processing program first, check the spelling and grammar, then copy and paste into the other application. Remember to review your final document carefully because spelling checkers may not catch all errors.

Sources

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