

64

quiet

LOUD

miss ng

add<sup>d</sup>ed

It's possible to find typographic equivalents for words. Simple choices in typeface, size, weight, and position on the page can strengthen representation of the concepts, objects, and actions that words describe. Here, we've stuck to one weight of one typeface, Akzidenz Grotesk Medium, but played with size and placement.

The examples above express some quality of the adjectives on display. 'Quiet' is small and lowercase, 'loud' large and uppercase. The second 'i' in 'missing' is, in fact, missing, and the second 'd' in 'added' is in the process of being added.

65

TRAIN<sup>IN</sup>

bird

NONCONFORMIST

shadow

The examples above all carry some quality of the nouns expressed. In 'train', for example, a Fibonacci sequence of type sizes (page 118), aligned at the cap height, creates the illusion of perspective—we can easily imagine a long train receding into the distance—or, for that matter, pulling into a station.

The dot on the 'i' in 'bird' flies above the rest of the letters; the 'f' in 'nonconformist' does not conform with the other letters; 'shadow' casts a shadow. The examples of contrast in type on pages 60–61 offer a number of possibilities for building on these simple changes.

**stand**

**u**

**j mp**

**hang**

**rise**

The meaning of the verbs on this page is reinforced through placement within the frame. Direction is implied by how we read (left-to-right = forward; top-to-bottom = down, and so forth).

**fly**

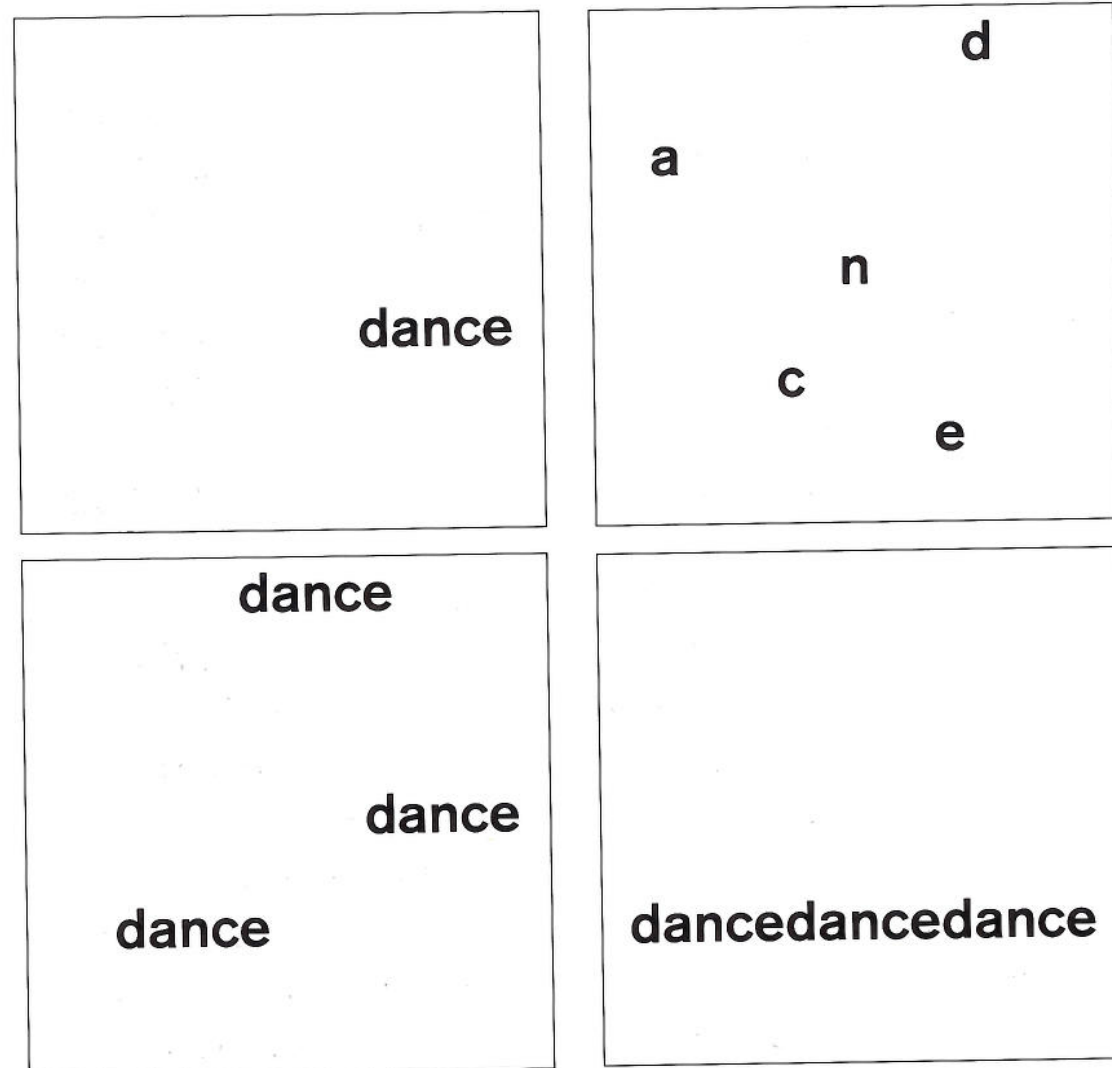
**crash**

**float**

**SinL**

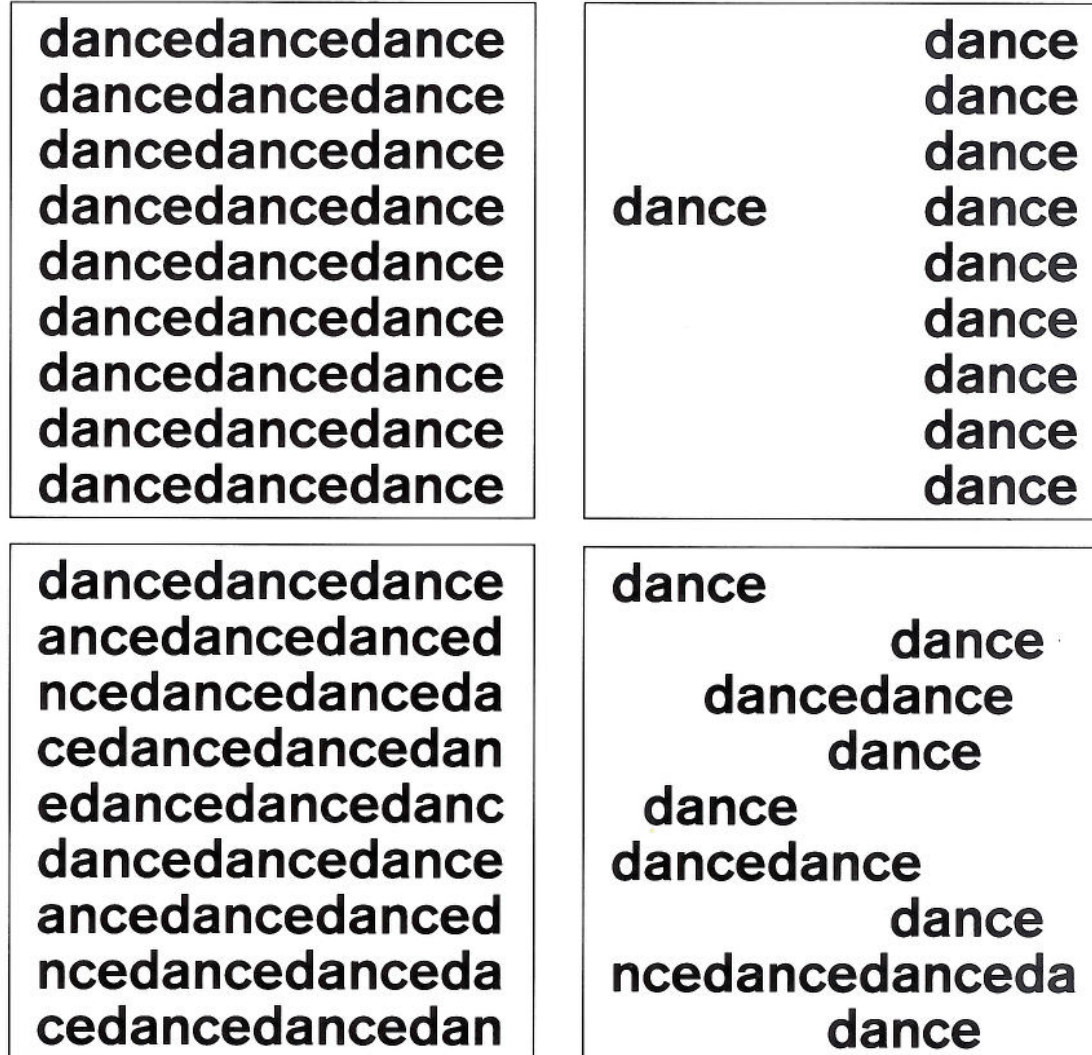
In the second row on this page, meaning is further enhanced by covering up some portion of the word (and, in the case of 'sink,' by tilting the type slightly downward). Imagine taking a bite out of 'eat'.

- On 6" (152 mm) squares, create ten panels showing reinforcement of meaning. Keep in mind that your solutions should feel typographic; the letterforms should not be altered to the point where they become drawings or representations of the word.



Here, simple placement of the word 'dance' in the square suggests the activity in a place, possibly a stage. Breaking the letters apart suggests a dancer moving.

Repetition of the word (this page and opposite) suggests different kinds of rhythm and, in fact, different kinds of dancing.



70

It is better to fail in originality than to  
succeed in imitation.

It is better to fail  
in originality  
  
than to succeed  
  
in imitation.

It is better to fail  
in originality

than to  
succeed in

imitation.

One way to make sentences (or sentence fragments) more expressive is to reinforce the sense of the words through type play. The three examples shown here (pages 70–72) attempt to make the speaker's voice visible to the reader by manipulating size and position of the words.

The example here starts by organizing the sentence under the word 'fail'. Scale is then introduced to reinforce the author's meaning.

71

You have to be an intellectual to believe  
such nonsense. No ordinary man could  
be such a fool.

You have to be an intellectual  
to believe such nonsense. No  
ordinary man could be such  
a fool.

You have to  
be an intellectual to believe  
such nonsense. No  
ordinary man could be such

a  
fool.

The example on this page begins by enlarging key words, then lining them up on the page.



If you can't make it good,  
make it

# Big.

If you can't make it big,  
make it

red.

Here, simple contrasts of scale and color are used to dramatic effect. (For other examples of contrast see pages 60–61.)

A characteristic of type design is that the letterforms themselves have evolved as a response to hand-writing—the marks we make as we scrawl across a page. One of the identifiable features of those marks is that we make them as part of a horizontal flow, from left to right. This is something we all take for granted, as natural a part of written language as the use of upper and lower case.

Not all languages are written this way. Hebrew and Arabic, for instance, read right to left, and books in those languages begin at what we would consider the back. Look how illegible English would be if we encountered it set from right to left:

eb dluow hsilgnE elbigelli woh kool  
thgir morf tes ti deretnuocne ew fi  
:tfel ot

Letterforms in typefaces have any number of attributes intended to reinforce the left-to-right flow of the written language: ascenders, descenders, consistent x-height, counters in lowercase forms typically appearing to the right. All these contribute to the sense of a line of text. And from the moment when we first learn to read, our brain assimilates these characteristics as essential for readable type.

Now to the point: written Chinese is not based on an alphabet like English; rather it is written in a series of characters called pictographs—forms that express an entire word or idea without necessarily indicating how to pronounce it.

Until recently, Chinese characters were typically read top to bottom, right to left, like this:

趙大年每作山水卷  
人稱謂是上陵四郎  
宋時宗室有遠志之  
紫微也余此苗在上  
陵四日因識之  
甲子重九後三日  
書

The simple fact that all Chinese characters are drawn to the same width makes this reading very simple. You can see in the example above that the characters descending the page make natural and obvious columns.

Occasionally, you will come across English type that has been set like Chinese characters:

W O R S E N I N G  
w o r s e n i n g

As you can see, English letterforms are not all drawn to the same width. In left-to-right reading, the difference in widths presents no problem to readability; in fact, it adds to variety and color on the page. In vertical reading all the type can do is create a shape. (Look at the profiles created by the difference between the wide W and the less-wide O, or between the N and the I.) When you consider that the primary purpose of type is to convey information with as little intrusion as possible, and that letterforms exist as a response to the lateral gestures of handwriting, then it should be clear that setting type vertically is inherently anti-typographic.

When the composition calls for vertical type, be mindful of the properties of the letterforms themselves, and set the type accordingly.

## Improving

While you're at it, keep in mind how the baseline of the vertical type can, or cannot, relate to the vertical axes suggested by the rest of your type (in this instance, the left margin of the text).