

# BASKERVILLE

## A short intro on Baskerville typeface

Baskerville is a serif typeface designed in the 1750s by John Baskerville (1706–1775) in Birmingham, England, and cut into metal by punchcutter John Handy. Baskerville is classified as a transitional typeface, intended as a refinement of what are now called old-style typefaces of the period, especially those of his most eminent contemporary, William Caslon.

Key features of Baskerville are its E where the bottom arm projects further than the upper, a W with no centre serif, and in the lower-case g where the bottom loop is open. Some fonts cut for Baskerville have an 'R' with a straight leg; in others it is curved. Many characters have clear ball terminals, in contrast to the more wedge-shaped serifs of earlier fonts. Most distinctive is the italic, in which the J has a centre-bar and many other italic capitals have flourishes, the 'p' has a tail pointing downwards and to the left (similar to the entrance stroke that would be made with a pen) and the w has a clear centre loop and swash on the left. In general, Baskerville's type has been described as 'rounder, more sharply cut' than its predecessors. (Some of these distinctive features are discarded in many revivals, as seen below.) Baskerville's type featured text figures or lower-case numbers, the only form which was used at the time (Roman numerals would be used to align with the capitals). The capitals are very bold, and (like Caslon's) have been criticised for being unbalanced to the lower-case at large sizes.