

Changing Fonts in L^AT_EX

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Abstract

This document presents a very brief overview of the topic of fonts in L^AT_EX. A quick introduction to some of the terminology is given, and various ways are shown to change fonts and different aspects of them to one's liking.

This document is in no way, shape or form exhaustive; the topic of fonts can fill (and has filled) entire books. But it should suffice for most day-to-day usage.

1 Incomplete Summary For the Impatient

Switching to Default Document Font

```
\normalfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Switching Between Roman, Sans-Serif and Monospace Fonts

```
\textrm{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textsf{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\texttt{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Font Weights

```
\textbf{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textmd{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Font Shapes

```
\emph{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textit{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textsl{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textsc{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
\textup{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

2 Terminology: Font Families, Fonts and Glyphs

A *font family*, also referred to as a *typeface*, is a font or a set of fonts with common features and characteristics, comprising all the needed *glyphs*. A glyph, in this context, is a graphical representation of a character, which can be a letter, a logogram, a mathematical symbol or other things¹.

For example, the following are all different glyphs (called allographs) of the letter Q:

Font	T _E X Abbreviation	Glyph
Computer Modern (L ^A T _E X default)	<code>cmr</code>	Q
Latin Modern	<code>lmr</code>	Q
Johannes Kepler Roman	<code>jkp</code>	Q
Johannes Kepler Roman Light	<code>jkpl</code>	Q
Latin Modern Sans Serif	<code>lmss</code>	Q
Avant Garde	<code>pag</code>	Q
Computer Modern Typewriter	<code>cmtt</code>	Q
Zapf Chancery	<code>pzc</code>	Q

In general, font families which one tends to use in a reasonable document these days tend to be grouped into three main categories²:

Common Font Families

roman fonts (with serifs), for example Palatino
sans-serif fonts, for example Helvetica
monospace fonts, for example Courier

Often, font families provide fonts for roman, sans-serif and monospace fonts (also called typewriter fonts, particularly in the T_EX world). In those cases, the metrics and aesthetics of these different fonts in the same font family have been tuned to look pleasing when used together. It is therefore often tricky to mix and match fonts from different font families without the result looking odd³.

In L^AT_EX, there are three macros which contain the default fonts families for the three font groups:

Default Font Families in L^AT_EX

```
\rmdefault  
\sfdefault  
\ttdefault
```

¹Obviously typography is a vast and complex topic and there is no way I can do it true justice here. Even if I wanted to, I am most certainly no scholar on the topic. But for the purposes of this document this information shall suffice. The curious reader shall feel free to research the topic in more depth, if so desired.

²There are more, but these are unlikely to be useful in most practical applications these days. For more, see [1].

³Of course it can be done, but it is helpful to be aware of this general issue and to be careful when picking fonts from different families to be used together in the same document.

Furthermore, there is a command `\familydefault` which contains the currently configured default font family (one of the above three).

3 Selecting Fonts

There are various ways which can be used to change fonts at various places. Some of them will be described here.

3.1 Font Packages

The easiest way to change from the default Computer Modern to a different set of fonts is to use a corresponding package. Good places to peruse are CTAN [3] and the L^AT_EX font catalogue [5].

For example, if we wish to typeset our document in DejaVu, we can put `\usepackage{dejavu}` in the preamble. This will set `\rmdefault`, `\sfdefault` and `\ttdefault` to the corresponding values, while `\familydefault` will continue to point to the one of those three to which it was set previously (`\rmdefault` by default).

Not all font packages provide all kinds of font families, or all font families in all weights and shapes. Consult the documentation for the package which you're intending to use. In the cases where a package does only provide some type of font, the others will be left unchanged. For example, the **FiraSans** package, which is obviously a sans-serif typeface, does not provide a roman font. Therefore, the serif fonts are left untouched by loading that package.

The same goes for mathematics: Not all fonts provide the needed symbols for typesetting that either.

A personal favorite of mine is the Kp-Fonts family [4]. It has roman, sans-serif and typewriter font choices (although personally I prefer the Computer Modern typewriter font and usually keep that intact), along with mathematics and many symbols. This is the setup which has been chosen for this document. But this is a matter of personal preference; one's mileage may vary.

3.2 Global Font Selection For a Document

In the preamble, we can change the default document font from roman (which is the default) to sans-serif or typewriter with one of these commands:

Selecting Sans-Serif or Typewriter Default

```
\renewcommand{\familydefault}{\sfdefault}
\renewcommand{\familydefault}{\ttdefault}
```

Note that typewriter fonts differ in what kinds of adjustments T_EX usually makes when it comes to spacing in order to achieve a justified block of text. This is also why sometimes a monospaced piece of text can protrude outside the right textblock margin when you put it in normal text (see above with the dejavu example; that was not done on purpose). More on the topic can be found in [2].

Combining different font families can be done on the same principle. For example, selecting Palatino as the roman default font, Helvetica as the default sans-serif font and Latin Modern as the typewriter font could be done by putting these commands in the preamble:

Creating a Custom Set of Default Fonts

```
\renewcommand{\rmdefault}{ppl} % Palatino
\renewcommand{\sfdefault}{phv} % Helvetica
\renewcommand{\ttdefault}{lmtt} % Latin Modern
```

Changing math fonts is rather more complex. I recommend not doing that manually, but instead relying on font packages instead, as described in the previous section. See for example [6] and [7]).

3.3 Local Font Selection Within a Document

Besides global font selection, one might wish to select fonts manually somewhere in a document (as opposed to global settings in the preamble). This is done by selecting the desired font family and then using the `\selectfont` command. For example, if we wish to switch to Helvetica:

Changing Fonts Until They Are Changed Again

```
\fontfamily{phv}\selectfont
```

And now we should have Helvetica for this text. The font family will stay switched until it is switched back with one of these two commands:

```
\fontfamily{\familydefault}\selectfont
\normalfont
```

And now we're back to Kp-Fonts serif.

In order to keep the font change local, we can enclose a portion of text in a group:

Selecting Fonts Locally

```
{\fontfamily{phv}\selectfont This text is in Helvetica!}
While this text is not!
```

This text is in Helvetica! While this text is not!

Locally switching to a different style among `\sfdefault`, `\rmdefault` and `\ttdefault` can be done either via:

Locally Switching Fonts Among Default Families

```
{\rmfamily This is roman text!}  
{\sffamily This is sans-serif text!}  
{\ttfamily This is sans-serif text!}
```

This is roman text! This is sans-serif text! This is typewriter text!

Or alternatively:

Locally Switching Fonts Among Default Families (Preferred)

```
\textrm{This is roman text!}  
\textsf{This is sans-serif text!}  
\texttt{This is typewriter text!}
```

Leaving out the braces in the first version results in the font being changed until it is switched to something else, as the astute reader might already have guessed. The second version is usually recommended for local changes.

4 Font Properties

We will now look at changing various properties for a font: Its size, its series (weight) and its shape. For a nice explanation of this, see [9].

4.1 Font Sizes

By default, \LaTeX offers the following font sizes, which, depending on the global document font size set in the preamble (for example, with `\documentclass[11pt]{article}`), vary in the size which they will have on the page:

SIZE	STANDARD CLASSES AND BEAMER			AMS CLASSES AND MEMOIR		
<code>\tiny</code>	5	6	6	6	7	8
<code>\scriptsize</code>	7	8	8	7	8	9
<code>\footnotesize</code>	8	9	10	8	9	10
<code>\small</code>	9	10	10.95	9	10	10.95
<code>\normalsize</code>	10	10.95	12	10	10.95	12
<code>\large</code>	12	12	14.4	10.95	12	14.4
<code>\Large</code>	14.4	14.4	17.28	12	14.4	17.28
<code>\LARGE</code>	17.28	17.28	20.74	14.4	17.28	20.74
<code>\huge</code>	20.74	20.74	24.88	17.28	20.74	24.88
<code>\Huge</code>	24.88	24.88	24.88	20.74	24.88	24.88

The table has been copied from [10].

Yet again, these commands change the font size within the current scope, so should usually be enclosed in braces:

Locally Changing Font Sizes

```
{\LARGE This is a piece of large text.} And this is of normal size again.
```

This is a piece of large text. And this is of normal size again.

4.2 Font Series

Changing font weights can be done either via a `\fontseries{<argument>}` command, followed by `\selectfont`, or via `\bfseries`, `\mdseries` and `\lfseries`, respectively. A font may offer more than three weights, in which case one might need to resort to the `\fontseries` command for changing fonts.

Furthermore, depending on which option is loaded if one is using a font package such as Kp-Fonts, the default font weight and all others will be changed accordingly among `\bfseries` and its friends. For example, this happens when one selects the `\light` option for Kp-Fonts package. For specifics, consult the documentation for the package you're using.

Lastly, note that not all options might be supported by all fonts (for example, Kp-Fonts with a `light` option shows vehement displeasure at being instructed to execute `\lfseries`). With Kp-Fonts in the configuration for this document, these are the options available:

Locally Changing Font Weight

```
{\fontseries{l}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
{\fontseries{m}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
{\fontseries{sb}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
{\fontseries{b}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
{\fontseries{bx}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

```
{\mdseries\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}\\
{\bfseries\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}\\
```

```
\textbf{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
\textmd{The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Locally Changing Font Weight (cont)

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

4.3 Font Shapes

Again, the number of font shapes, and possible combinations thereof, will vary depending on which font is being used. Kp-Fonts supports these options:

Locally Changing Font Shapes

```
{\fontshape{sc}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}  
{\fontshape{scsl}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}  
{\fontshape{it}\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}  
{\otherscshape\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}  
{\otherscslshape\selectfont The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.

4.4 Combinations

The commands presented above can be combined in various ways, depending, again, on the font families being used. Some fonts will support different combinations than others.

Combining Different Font Styles

```
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.\  
{\fontshape{sc}\fontseries{b}\selectfont  
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}\  
{\fontshape{it}\fontseries{b}\selectfont  
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.}
```

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG.
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

4.5 Emphasis

The `\emph` command is a context-aware way to highlight text. It will select an appropriate font version automatically to achieve this goal. Usually, `\emph` uses italics, but when it is placed inside italic text, it will switch to an upright font shape.

Emphasis

```
{\fontshape{u}\selectfont This sentence \emph{emphasizes} a word of itself.}\n{\fontshape{it}\selectfont This sentence \emph{emphasizes} a word of itself.}\nHere, again, there exists an {\em alternative} version.}\n{\itshape Here, again, there exists an {\em alternative} version.}
```

This sentence *emphasizes* a word of itself.

This sentence emphasizes a word of itself.

Here, again, there exists an *alternative* version.

Here, again, there exists an alternative version.

References

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