franklin
gothic

Type
Specimen
Book

Contents

Franklin Gothic

The Grandfather of American Gothics

Franklin Gothic is a typeface designed in 1902 by Morris Fuller Benton for the American Type Founders Company (ATF). It is a grotesque, sans-serif typeface, featuring little variation in stroke width, equal cap and ascender heights, and short descenders. Upon its release, Franklin Gothic was extremely successful commercially, and it has remained a popular choice to this day. The version of Franklin Gothic used in this book is Franklin Gothic URW, developed by the typeface foundry URW++.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
123456789?!

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
123456789?!

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
123456789?!

Key Characteristics

Cap and ascender heights are the same

Short ascenders
Tall x-height

Another

Example

Subtle contrast between thick and thin strokes

Strokes gradually thin at intersection of sraight and curved strokes

ATF Type Specimen Book

A Look at the Original Design

This sample from the American Type Founders 1912 type specimen shows the original font designed by Morris Fuller Benton. The variety of sizes in this spread showcases Franklin Gothics versatility as a typeface that displays well at large sizes but is still legible when used for small text.
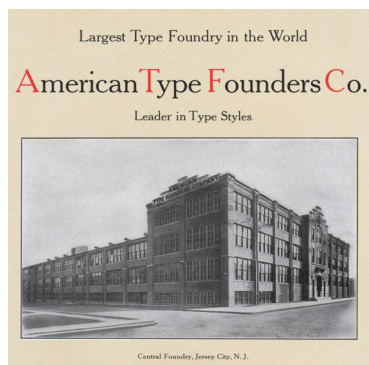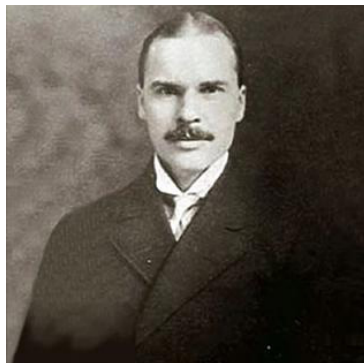

This spread showcases Franklin Gothic marketed as an advertising font. The typeface's many weights and widths as well as its legibility made it popular among advertisers and printers alike.

Morris Fuller Benton

Designer and Engineer

Morris Fuller Benton, the designer of Franklin Gothic, was born November 30, 1872 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His father, Linn Boyd Benton, was a printing technology inventor and a director of the American Type Founders Company. After graduating from Cornell University with a degree in mechanical engineering, Morris Fuller joined ATF in 1896 as assistant manager of the general manufacturing department. In 1903, he became the head of the type-designing department.

Largest Type Foundry in the World
American Type Founders Co.
Leader in Type Styles
Central Foundry, Jersey City, N.J.

During his 41 years at ATF, Morris Fuller had a hand in designing over 200 typefaces. Though he did not invent the idea, he is credited with popularizing the concept of the type family with his Cheltenham family developed from 1904 to 1914. Among his most popular works were his historic type revivals such as Bodoni and Garamond, Century Schoolbook — a typeface designed to be exceptionally legible for children's books — and, of course, Franklin Gothic.

Morris Fuller Benton designed Franklin Gothic in 1902, and it went on to become a great success for ATF as well as an enduringly popular typeface to this day. Franklin Gothic is named for Benjamin Franklin, who was himself a printer.

Weights and Variations

Franklin Gothic URW Light 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Book 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Medium 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Demi 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Heavy 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Light Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Book Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Medium Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Demi Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Heavy Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Light 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Book 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Medium 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Demi 12pt

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Franklin Gothic URW Demi Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Heavy Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Light 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Book 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Medium 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Demi 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Light Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Book Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Medium Italic 12pt

Franklin Gothic URW Cond Demi Italic 12pt

Letters to Look for
How to Spot Franklin Gothic

g g g g g

Double-story with swooping ear

r r r r r

Ear has vertical terminal and shoulder thins near stem

Q Q Q Q Q Q

Round tail that moves right as the face gets bolder

X X X X X

Slight variation in thickness of the two strokes

Common Pairings

Century Schoolbook

Designed by Morris Fuller Benton in 1920, Century Schoolbook features a tall x-height like Franklin Gothic and offers similar legibility at small font sizes. It is a popular choice for body text that provides an elegant balance to Franklin Gothic's heavy utility.

Alternate Gothic
# Alternate Gothic
Alternate Gothic

Designed (again by Morris Fuller Benton) specifically as a narrow bold for Franklin Gothic, Alternate Gothic works well for headlines and other large typographic elements that need to be bold and eye-catching but are confined to a limited space.

Baskerville

Typefaces that feature high contrast between thick and thin strokes like printer and type designer John Baskerville's Baskerville provide a stark contrast against the almost-uniform strokes of Franklin Gothic. These typefaces work well as expressive titles above more reserved subtitle or body text set in Franklin Gothic.

Franklin Gothic and MoMA
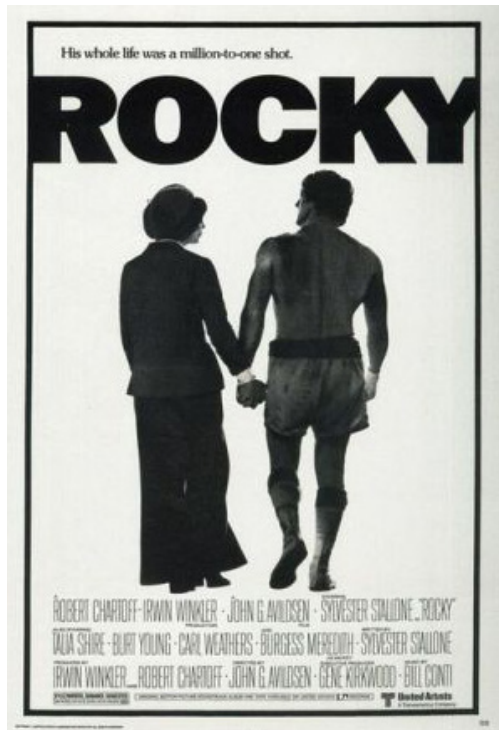## *A Typeface for Modern Art*
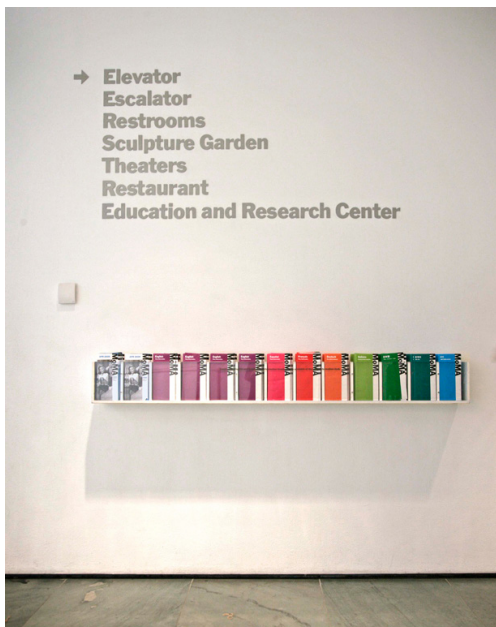
In 1964, the Museum of Modern Art chose Franklin Gothic as the typeface for its new logo. Ivan Chermayeff, the designer who made the selection, said of the decision "Quite simply, it's a face that's modern, with roots... It has some character, and therefore some warmth about it, and some sense of the hand — i.e., the artist. All of which seemed to me to make a lot of sense for the Museum of Modern Art, which is not only looking to the future but also looking to the past." In 2004, the museum's digital version of Franklin Gothic was updated by designer Matthew Carter based on eight trays of ATF Franklin Gothic No. 2 held by the museum. Franklin Gothic remains a major component of MoMA's visual identity, used in everything from advertising to wayfinding signs in the museum itself.

Usage
Where to Find Franklin Gothic

Franklin Gothic has been a popular choice of typeface since its release in 1902 and has thus appeared in countless settings such as in print headlines and titles in *Time Magazine* and *The New York Times*, in logos such as those pictured for The Bank of America and Showtime Networks, in films such as the title for *Rocky*, and in television graphics for networks such as CBS and ESPN. Because of its weight, Franklin Gothic is traditionally used for large text such as headlines while its lighter variant, News Gothic, is preferred for body text.

His whole life was a million-to-one shot.

ROCKY

ROBERT CHARTOFF · IRWIN WINKLER · JOHN G. AVILDSEN · SYLVESTER STALLONE "ROCKY"
TALIA SHIRE · BURT YOUNG · CARL WEATHERS · BURGESS MEREDITH · SYLVESTER STALLONE
IRWIN WINKLER... ROBERT CHARTOFF · JOHN G. AVILDSEN · GENE KIRKWOOD · BILL CONTI

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New York Times, Weeken Arts II, 1 Dec. 2017

Franklin Gothic:
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Designed by Jeff Klouda
VCD 2 Fall 2017
University of Notre Dame

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