

In professional typography, subscript and superscript characters are not simply ordinary characters reduced in size; to keep them visually consistent with the rest of the font, typeface designers make them slightly heavier (i.e. medium or bold typography) than a reduced-size character would be. The vertical distance that sub- or superscripted text is moved from the original baseline varies by typeface and by use.

In typesetting, such types are traditionally called "superior" and "inferior" letters, figures, etc., or just "superiors" and "inferiors". In English, most nontechnical use of superiors is archaic.[1] Superior and inferior figures on the baseline are used for fractions and most other purposes, while lowered inferior figures are needed for chemical and mathematical subscripts