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Typography

Typography

A good rule of thumb when designing your Web site is to use no more than two different typefaces per page. Typically this means that you select 1 bold typeface for titles or other eye-catching pieces of text, and a neutral typeface for large blocks or the body text of your page.

There is no official taxonomy of fonts, and not all browsers support all fonts, so it can be difficult to get your font looking exactly the way you want on all platforms. While you're starting out, it's best to stick to the most popular and commonly used fonts. Here is a good list of fonts for English pages and the appropriate fall-backs to get you started. On the Web, you can find other lists of available system fonts for non-Latin scripts, such as this one.

As you get more comfortable, you can branch out to more exotic fonts. Remember that, when you are building your font-family set, you will want to always include a Web safe font alternative for an exotic font in case the user's device doesn't support it.

```
1. body {
2.    font-family: "Segoe UI", Helvetica, sans-serif;
3. }
```

When choosing your font, probably the biggest choice you'll make is what category of font to use. There are 5 basic categories of font:

- **sans-serif** - These are the most popular fonts for Web pages. This means the letters do not have added flourishes, so the typefaces are simpler. Their simplicity makes them easier to display on computer screens as their resolution is much lower than a printed document. It is often suggested you choose a sans-serif font for large blocks of digital text.

  - *Examples*: Helvetica, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma

- **serif** - These fonts are the second most popular typefaces. "Serif" refers to the small flourish lines at the edges of letters and symbols. "Serifs" make each character more distinct, making text easier to read in print. This is why these fonts might remind you of a text from a typewriter, or of the fonts you see in printed books, newspapers or magazines. These typefaces can often be used effectively for titles or emphasis.

  - *Examples*: Times New Roman, Book Antiqua, Georgia

- **monospace** - These fonts guarantee that all letters have the same fixed width. This is similar to a manual typewriter, or how computer code appears in editors. These fonts were designed for the ease of the technology, not humans, so they should be used sparingly. The most effective time to use these is when showing snippets of code.

- *Example*: `Courier New`

- **cursive** - These fonts mimic human handwriting often by joining letters or having an italic slant. For some languages, these fonts are extra effective such as Arabic. Other than for specific languages, these fonts in English can be rather complex so they are best use extremely sparingly.

  - *Example*: Comic Sans MS

- **fantasy** - This is the most diverse category of fonts and includes all of those that are particularly decorative. These can make really great top headers as they can give your Web page a very distinct visual identity. Rarely will you want to use these for anything other than titles. It is also good to note that few of these are widely supported, so to use these you'll probably want to download them from a font service to make them available for your user.

  - *Example*: **Impact**

External resource

- Here is the W3C documentation for all of CSS's font properties: [CSS Fonts Module Level 3](#).

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