TITLED IN RALEWAY

CAPTIONED IN CORBEL

with text set in Bembo

For those who haven't noticed how
beautiful the ampersand can be.

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Foreword

When it comes to typography, I'm usually met with a lot of blank stares. To most laymen, the world of type resides inside the font banks of Microsoft Word, the prepackaged overused nightmares of Arial and Times New Roman and Comic Sans. When I start blabbing about those exotic names like Proxima Nova, or Quaver Sans, or Playfair Display, or when it came to that period of time when I hand-drew Valentina so much that I memorized every bone and hairline in its structure, it's not at all uncommon for strange looks to be made my way.

And I perfectly understand that. Squinting at the kerning between the letters "A" and "V" or spending an afternoon deciphering all the differences between Arial and Helvetica, or combing the Google Web Fonts database for a solid week, are just pastimes and passions that simply don't appeal to everyone.

Probably the biggest question that I get a lot is, "Why?" Why on Earth would anyone ever compile five hundred ampersands and pick out the prettiest ones for a huge poster? Why would anyone devote their life, their entire career, towards letters that have grown to be so ordinary in our lives? Why is there an entire industry circling around the concepts of fonts and layout, when so many people look at a book set in Goudy Old Style and remark that the font is Times New Roman?

As irrational as it may sound, typography has a very intricately set position in the modern culture, society, and media—not just in our age of swamps and troves of digital opportunities, but as it has been, in the past. In its rightly core, typefaces are the mediums upon which words and meaning and ideas are swiftly carried—from one mind to another. Since the earliest days of inscription and manual scribal copying, standard hands and scripts quickly developed, meant for different purposes as institutions grew more and more complex, and more occasions called for various fonts to present them. The Insular family, a calligraphic script that began in Ireland, was a whole family of hands with a hierarchy of importance that determined which occasion called for which specific hand. As much as those hands implied status or occasion all the way back in the first millennia, all the digital fonts that we see also convey so much information to our brains that discreetly run underneath our con-

scious workings, that we are affected by without really noticing anything out of the norm. Like writing advertisements and propaganda, typography is an art, a complex and serpentine craft form that lurks in the background.

It's been said before that good typography conveys its text in a justly manner, aligning itself with the text's purposes and goals, and allies with the text to sway the reader just to do that. Yet good typography does it all silently, without being obtuse about its presence. Only when an observer glances at a badly-made poster and makes a face in disgust—consciously realizing what's there—does the design require work.

What is the best font to use for highway signs, signs that are so important in guiding traveling drivers, many of whom may be foreigners or visitors unfamiliar with the territory? What font most clearly conveys what needs to be said in the most legible manner and form, which can be easily seen from great distances away, and is unaffected by rain, hail, snow, or wind? What about the best font that appeals on a book cover, to encourage sales? What if we wanted to target a specific audience? Would that font choice change? Apple a few years ago changed their OSX system font from Lucida Grande to Helvetica; there must be a reason for that. Similarly, Helvetica was just last year actually removed from the iOS system font; Apple made their own to replace it. Why?

Entirely new typefaces were created for the subway signs of London—Johnston, which echoes the Gill Sans that we have today, is now an invaluable part of London society. London's subway signs have become an almost iconic cultural icon, easily recognizable, embracing their font as an identity marker. All over the world, nations have their preferences—the Swiss clung to Helvetica, the Germans held onto the ancient Fraktur script. Think of what life would be like if everything was printed in the same bland Helvetica. Even if it was a font that wasn't bland, it soon would be. Life goes drab with too much constancy—if everything was communicated in the same language, the same text, wouldn't the sight before you be unseemly, boring?

Just take one walk around your usual commute route, and open your eyes to see all the different fonts that you might see. The differences may be difficult to tell at first, but if stand afar and look at the piece as a whole, you can spot that each font as a different feel, a different personality, a different aura. The textbooks of our AP Statistics and Calculus classes are set in Times New Roman, but the textbooks for middle school World History are in Book Antiqua. Or you could think about our AP World History textbooks—the fourth edition ones—that are set in Galliard. The font you're reading off of right now is called Bembo. Common fonts that you can see in tests are Calibri, Cambria, and Minion Pro; especially in the case of the College Board, they love to shift Minion to Times New Roman when the actual test comes to tell you that the real hell is about to begin. That poster on the wall could be printed in Gotham Black, but the subtitle for the newspaper here could be in Maven Pro. I've designed twenty-some issues for the school newspaper, and every issue I still get new fonts sent in by my fellow designers, who comb the internet meticulously to find exactly the right font to express the sentiments of their articles.

Fonts are alive. They breathe, like you and I. The thicks and thins of Didot and Bodoni are what stand out to them as much as what the steadfast, sturdiness of what Univers or Akzidenz-Grotesk brings. Take Montserrat—also a nice font when bolded and tracked, but with playful curls and spins on some of its characters—like the "W"—that help make it stand out from the likes of Raleway, for instance. There's the softly-speaking, light-faced Centaur, whose archaic expression stems from its structure resembling its classic calligraphic roots. And then there's the fat, in-your-face fonts that only demand attention: Bebas is a great one, along with the Black or Bold version of any typeface out there.

In this book you'll learn about the elements of typographic design, their bodies, their rhythms and harmonies. Maybe my fascination still can't really be understood, but that's okay. At least, perhaps, this book is here to shed light on the 26 characters of the alphabet that we've spent our whole lives with. Over the centuries they've been scrutinized, poked, prodded, and morphed into thousands of shapes and proportions; it's a science, it's an art, they follow laws and rules that designers usher them into, but can also burst free at times for momentary glory, much akin to the poetic creative license. For anyone—teachers making handouts, businessmen remaking their cards, or marketers selling their product—if negotiation and bartering is considered a crucial skill in communication, then typography ought to be its cousin in the visual sense. It barters with the brain silently under its owner's control, an effective tool that can be thunderously explosive when used properly. It's immensely difficult to wield it perfectly, but it's always awareness that leads to the first step—and the first step starts here.

I

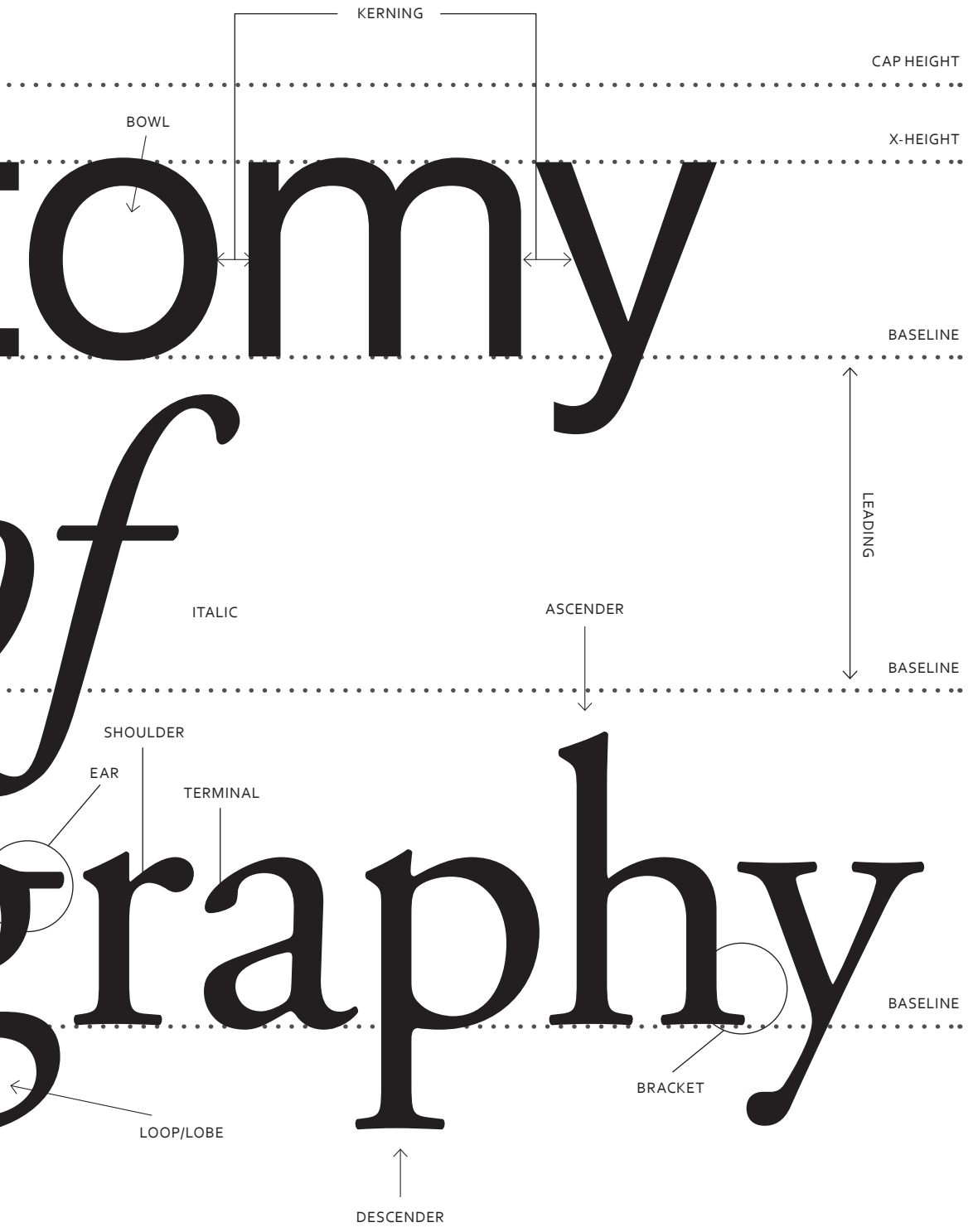
Type Anatomy

The diversity of our alphabet's letters can make it profoundly difficult to communicate in their language without some standardized terms of our own. Much like human anatomy, letters also have their own body, their own structure, their own limbs. Some of them share similar shapes: the bowls of the 'o' and 'd', for instance, resonate similarly. But the crossbar is shared only by two letters: the capitals 'A' and 'H'. There are dozens of names like these, from counters to stems to ascenders to shoulders.

While this is mainly jargon used not typically every day, even by many typographers, it's still important to recognize the key individual parts of letters, which can be immensely useful in remembering the unique characteristics of typefaces, or later to help you establish rhythm. Words that you should know are:

Kerning	the space between letters
Baseline	an imaginary bottom line most letters rest on
Leading	distance between two consecutive baselines
X-Height	the height of a lowercase x
Cap Height	the height of capitals
Serif	a slight projection or feet off of a stroke
Crossbar	the horizontal bar of "A" and "H"
Terminal	the ends of "a" or "t"
Ascender	strokes that rise above the x-height
Descender	strokes that sink below the x-height
Stem	a vertical stroke, typically thick for support
Bowl	a curved stroke that encloses a letter
Axis	an imaginary line on which letters are sloped
Link/Neck	where the bowl of the "g" meets the rest
Loop/Lobe	the bottom loop of the "g"
Ear	the little tail of the "g"
Counter	negative space inside a letter
Shoulder	the part of the "r" that branches out
Bracket	the wedge connection between stem/serif
Eye	the negative space of the "e"
Overshoot	the place where the strokes of the "v" meets


CROSSBAR
TERMINAL
SERIF
STEM
LINK/NECK
AXIS


KERNING
CAP HEIGHT
BOWL
X-HEIGHT
tomy
BASELINE
LEADING
of
ITALIC
ASCENDER
BASELINE
SHOULDER
EAR
TERMINAL
graphy
BASELINE
BRACKET
LOOP/LOBE
DESCENDER

2

Types of Fonts

You've probably heard of the terms "serif" and "sans serif" before—some of the more common jargon to float in everyday language, these words are two ways to broadly classify a category of fonts. "Serif" means fonts that have feet sticking out from them, such as the text of this book, and are generally considered as easier to read in a blocky chunk of text. "Sans serif" means fonts without feet, such as the cover of this book. They are simpler and deliver messages more cleanly, without anything attached. However, of course, usages can vary, and great typography sometimes does come from using fonts in new, imaginative ways.

When it comes to fonts, every typographer and every historian has a different way of categorizing them, or the eras that divide them. For instance, while the neogrotesque was the revival of the grotesque, and thus separated by time, are they different enough to warrant an entire strata to separate them visually as well? The following is my classification, loosely based off of a conglomerate of other typographers' classes: attempting to be broad, to cover the biggest aspects of change, placing visual contrast as a priority but still respecting the histories of the block. While some fonts in each category stretch across time, there are still archetypes that give each group identity.

What's covered here are serifs and sans serifs, which cover the vast majority of occasions where one would have to choose fonts. Serifs are letters with more pronounced contrast in line width, and feet at the end of their strokes. Sans serifs mean literally, "no serifs"—they are uniform throughout. The other forms of digital types would be handwriting (script, like Snell Roundhand, or casual, like Mistral), and decorative. These fonts tend to be much more free, and less prevalent in the burden of holding up our communicational world. While still important, it is much easier, in a playful circumstance, to select a fitting font. No one will argue much between the choices of Pea Ashley Grace or Luna Bar—let alone Wingdings 2 or Wingdings 3. In the world of the casual, or even cursive formality, there is significantly more leeway as these words don't appear frequently and for long periods of time. While still undeniably important, it is less pressing to categorize them into separate strata, as it is the "feel" that it evokes more important to match with the circumstance.

Centaur
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Goudy Old Style
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Galliard
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Palatino
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

OLD STYLE SERIFS

Adapted from the only texts available at the time, it's natural to think that these old style serifs are borne from calligraphic influence. These fonts are not as fluid—if you inspect their terminals, the flatness suggests as if the traditional broad-nib pen is still being used to write these letters. A good character to look at is the lower case letter 'a'. They are also characterized by little contrast between the thicknesses of the lines, and their angled letter forms. For instance, the letters 'o' are not symmetrical: they are tilted and tend to favor one side. The axis doesn't follow any 90° downwards rule: it seems to imitate handwriting instead. Emerging mostly from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, fonts of this style are more raw. They evoke a more archaic feel, though it can still be beautiful. Many of these have been recovered and revived in the last century as digital typefaces.

Times

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Georgia

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Century

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Bell

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

TRANSITIONAL SERIFS

This one is everything in between: typically characterized by John Baskerville in the eighteenth century, when he developed technologies to allow for finer precision in printing. This gave greater freedom to typographers to design subtler shapes while maintaining a precise type identity. His own font Baskerville would fall under this shift in typeface style: greater weight contrast, balance shifted towards the center, firmer and sturdier. The flat terminals are mostly replaced by rounded ends instead, less harsh to the eyes. By this age print has swept over much greater aspects of daily life, and this movement away from traditional handwriting is a signifier of that.

Bodoni
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Didot
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Playfair
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Elephant
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

MODERN SERIFS

Such fonts are the end points of the old style/transitional line: it is where weight contrast is much more pronounced, featuring many more hairlines. The rounded terminals are often exaggerated as circles of their own, another element connected by a line. The serifs that protrude from the main body are just connected perpendicularly now: nothing curved to help blend the stem to the brackets. Didot and Bodoni are the two rival fonts that pop in mind first. Beginning from the late eighteenth century, this style of modern serifs is regarded with elegance and style—Didot is used to brand the Vogue magazine, for instance. More contemporary iterations of these fonts have been made in the past few decades, with slight adjustments for web, for instance, but the personality of the modern serif remains unaltered.

Rockwell

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Courier

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Nilland

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

American Typewriter

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

SLAB SERIFS

Slab serifs are like the in-between of serifs and sans serifs: they feature brackets, but they are of the same line width as the main body. It is as if someone took a sans serif and just added on all the feet. These fonts grew popular in the nineteenth century, meant for posters and advertising, and today is a common choice for headline titles. They are a true epitome of "minimalist": stripping away all that makes a font fancy or complex, to make it simple and easy to the eyes. Although the construction of these fonts may still be a complicated task, the final look is clean.

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

Optima
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Myriad
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Calibri
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

HUMANIST SANS SERIFS

Wide, open, and easily read, it's been frequently said that humanist sans serifs are the most legible of sans serifs. They embody proportions from ancient Roman letters, the ancestor of Trajan. It's these fonts when overlaid with serifs that would match their bodies the best—wide open apertures, without brackets to distract, allow for lots of space but not enough to allow the eyes to wander. One thing to note about Sans Serifs is that their classifications aren't always chronological, but rather by influence or tracing various dynasties down the timeline. Optima, for instance, is a popular humanist sans serif, and although it looks upon Roman characters, was in fact made in 1952.

Helvetica
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Univers
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Roboto
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

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

GROTESQUE SANS SERIFS

The transitional of the sans serif, the grotesque sans serifs were actually amongst the first to be widely loved by the public. It is starting with this font that we also see a more pronounced shift from calligraphic influences to one's own sans serif identity. The second bowl of the lowercase 'g' is becoming lost—while still found sometimes, as a trend grotesque fonts tend to abandon them. These fonts are also more square, more folded up—the ends of the lowercase 'c', for instance, tends to go down instead of being left open, reducing the aperture of the font. Such fonts look less like they belong somewhere open and free, and more suitably built for running the world's operations.

Futura
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Avenir
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Bauhaus
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

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

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIFS

The most obviously identifiable, geometric sans serifs are exactly what they sound like: influenced strongly by geometry to mold their letters. Varying contrasts of circles, trianges, and rectangles tend to make these less readable, but in small doses, can still be beautiful. Note the shapes of the letter 'o' or the capital 'G', the 'c' or bowls of 'b' or 'p'. Powerful geometric shapes can be found in many of these places—as such, these fonts tend to be spacier as well, to allow for the insides to bellow instead of the squashed feel of many grotesque fonts. In general—though this is a vague rule—these fonts tend to evoke the most modern feel. They have a distinct visual appeal, though of course it all comes down to the designer and context in question.

3
Making Type Choices

Now that you know a bit more about fonts and where they come from, as well as many of their differences, you can probably understand a bit more about the delicate art of typeface selection. Each one evokes a different mood, as previously mentioned before—and each one tends to swerve the text in one way, and what you need to do is to align that curve with what the message is trying to say. As what's been drilled into our heads since the very beginning of writing classes, we write for an audience and a purpose. And mirroring that, since typography is the vehicle for writing and communication, we also design for that audience and purpose—a second layer, a second dimension, that tends to be passed over so often because people opt to choose the standard Calibri or Times New Roman to do their task. Which is perfectly fine, in many respects; it's a defining trend, after all, and perfectly appropriate to use the fonts where most expect them to. But for finer, trickier purposes—advertising, poster-making, book-printing, logo-designing and so on—considering the typeface becomes one of the thousands of details that are now necessary to pay attention to—and arguably, one of the most important ones.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The Audience

Who is your audience? What generation are they from? Is there an arts style or movement that their cultural backgrounds align with? From their point of view, what "aura" would they love to see radiate from a page? A children's book, for instance, is obviously targeted towards children. This means you should go with something playful, casual, and friendly.

Legibility & Text Length

Poster and decorative fonts are fine, when given in small quantities. That's under the assumption that you'll only be using them a word or two at a time. Bebas, for

instance, is a great headline font. But what happens when you start using that in the extreme, for an entire paragraph? For readability purposes, that is not legible; the rows and rows of harsh black and white contrast are damning to the eyes, which soon cannot differentiate between letters anymore. Legibility is always the number one priority. Go fancy, but only if it still catches the reader's attention, instead of losing it in complicated swirls.

Identity

What do you want your final design to bind with? Do you want an eightieth birthday gathering to be an elegant banquet to commemorate one's eighth decade in this life, or do you want it to be a casual family celebration with jest and laughter? Remember that design conveys mood—as much as choice in words can convey connotations, fonts do the same. If the same occasion and the same information (e.g. place, time, RSVP details) are presented in two different frames, you'd need two different fonts to carry them. One can be the graceful Cinzel, or the other one could be something more lax, and less informal, like Franklin Gothic Book.

Family Size

The typefaces that we typically use come with a minimum of four different fonts—regular, bold, italic, and bold italic, which can be referred to a variety of ways but ultimately visually mean the same thing. Some fonts go out further and have thicks and thins, ballooning up to over a dozen styles, whereas some downloaded from the Web have none. If you pick one of the larger families, it is easy to establish a typographical hierarchy tree with it (later explained), but that would be much more difficult to achieve with a single font only, because there are much fewer elements you can vary to keep the composition fresh. Even more important is sometimes the absence of italics—for a poster font it's okay to only use decorative letters without italics, since there usually is no need for them. But for text fonts, it's much more important to consider for all conventions of writing and reading standards be satisfied with your typeface choice.

The "Fake Italics" pictured here demonstrate ones created only by sloping the regular typeface. They look a lot more forced and rigid than what italics are supposed to resemble.

(Goudy Old Style, Galiard, and Adobe Garamond.)

With that said, as hinted before, thinking about type choice typically falls into two different categories: display/headline, or text. Since these are intrinsically, drastically different in purpose, we will discuss more specific considerations in the following sections.

DISPLAY TEXT

This kind of headline purposes establishes a clear goal: suck in the reader's attention, while perhaps setting a mood for the details to follow. Poster titles, newspaper headlines, CD cover titles, or commercial packaging all utilize some sort of headline text. But each medium still has varying purposes from the rest—for instance, while they are all trying to grab the reader's attention, a newspaper will be doing it in silent guidance. The purpose of those headlines aren't clickbaits that beg to be read; it's to simply communicate to the reader where an article begins, and what it's about, and thus tend to be simpler, having a very quiet job to do that makes any unnecessary details intolerable. But for a poster advertising a rock band would require to capture the attention of people idyllically walking past whose attentions are currently preoccupied or not focused on the poster. These would require the font to stand out, pop out, and be unique in a way that at least gives warrant to minimal gazing.

Sans serifs are known to be great at headings—they have the added flexibility of boldness or blackness styles to increase weight to the headings, but if the nature is much quieter, like a book cover meant to be somber and melancholy, their weight

Pictured to the right: "Headline" in Bebas, Gotham Bold, Bodoni, and Georgia, using sans serif and serif all-caps and normal letter case. Examine their effects and what vibe they give out.

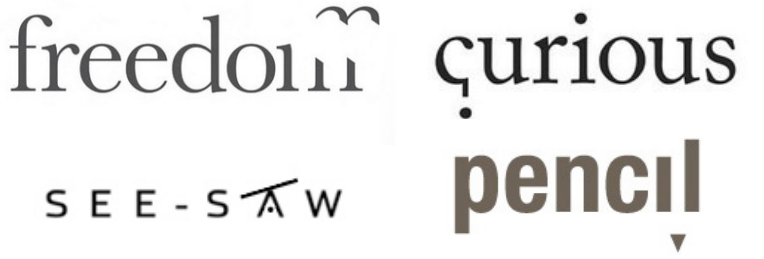
can also be easily lightened to the regular, light, or thin styles. They have the added benefit of looking great with additional tracking, or increased distance between letters. If you take advantage of this, however, be sure to make the text all caps.

Serifs are tougher to make decent headlines. For newspapers or magazine titles, especially on the web, certainly, it's great. Many book covers have been done with serifs as well. What's tricky about serifs is being able to distinguish between what looks great on a poster in large text, and what doesn't. If anything, it is the newer classes of serifs that function well for these purposes: Bodoni, Didot, Abril Fatface, Playfair, and so on. Their contrast between thin and thick lines as well as their rel-

atively freshness in the design meta help lend to their attractiveness. Furthermore, many of them were not meant to be read at a text size, so the proportion of their appearance has been largely confined to headline-printing as well—which adds to their credibility, in a sense, of being a headline font.

What's more dangerous to pick are the fonts that were never meant to be enlarged to a great size. A vast majority of our current digital Old Style Serifs and Transitional Serifs are simply revivals of the engraved letters used in the old-fashioned printing press from centuries ago. It wasn't as simple to enlarge a font as it is now when we just Select All and then change the point size. Up, down, you can do it a thousand times and your computer will do it all for you on the screen. But back when everything was handmade and hand-carved, there would be racks and racks of various letters at various sizes, and various styles. For fonts like Jensen or Bembo, which is the text of this book, they were never enlarged to the point where it is most definitely considered a headline size and not a large text size. There's a certain gray area in that, but just try to enlarge Bembo to a big size. Its lightness lends to a certain sturdiness when it brightly crawls along the page, but we can see its vulnerabilities and its thin frame at a much more cognizant lens when it's right in front of our eyes.

If you're looking into something more decorative, first consider why you're doing so. Is it a thematic choice? Are you using this textured graffitied text because your poster is very grunge-like and you're trying to appeal to audiences of that crowd, or is it simply because you think the font is cool? Sure, it can be. And sure, it can grab attention. But does it fit? Would it wind up as a splotch on a page that attracts too much attention to itself and doesn't lend its appearance to communicate the text?



Titles that don't rely on the uniqueness of their font, but rather the clever way to represent them, to stand out.

Recall once again that the number one purpose of graphic design is to convey. And after ensuring that the message will be conveyed perfectly—not just in terms of being able to read what it says, but also its tone, its intention, its purpose—can aesthetics follow. With that said, certain creative artistry can definitely lend appeal to the viewer crowd. Logo-making, for instance, is a delicate art that often succeeds by being clever or ingenious. Take the frequent exercise "Meaningful Words", where one is challenged to convey a word with a certain typographical style and style that best conveys the meaning of the word. You'd be surprised at some of the brilliant things

that people can come up with—and yes, that's immediately visible to the crowd. But it does so in a meaningful way that gives them the thought that this poster or body of text must be interesting, because the designer has done the tremendously difficult: stand out in a world overswamped by commercial media screaming this way and that way, each struggling to be unique in their own stand, that it challenges the livelihood of everything else around it.

It's also not wrong—and it's very good sometimes—to use a headline font that's from the same family as the body font. More information will be addressed on this later in Chapter 4.

BODY TEXT

Where the headline is meant to catch attention, oftentimes indeed to its artistry, the body text is invisible. It's the most extreme of the vary nature of graphic design, except at its cleverest moments: where for headlines exceptions can be made, for body text there is absolutely no reason.

We don't have to think so much about the specific content of the text, but rather just more of what tone it's supposed to carry. Formal, and thus authority? Or casual? Is it meant to be classy? Or is it supposed to sound antique? Is it a text from a specific historical era?

From top to bottom: Bernard Condensed, Lithos, Ritalin, and Pea HelloTwoAM

The number one consideration is, as always, legibility. Some fonts tend to have their quirks, which make them great for headline fonts, but not necessarily for reading long passages of text, where the rhythms can be thrown off because you're too distracted noticing how the tail of a "y" slants down, or how square an "o" is. In general you also don't want something that's too tight; the spacings and apertures should be generous, yet still able to the support the structures of the text.

But there are hundreds of text fonts out there that have long surpassed this test and are considered golden for readability. The vast majority of fonts that are packaged with your word processor or operating system are legible, along with the texts that dot our books and our newspapers (many of which require licenses to be used.) So from then on, where do we go?

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.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

A series of alphabets presented here: each one has a distinct "feel" to it, a distinct color, a distinct mood. From top to bottom: Sabon, Centaur, Bell, Chaparral, Mate, Helvetica, Raleway, Roboto, Cabin, Titillium.

Serifs are traditionally preferred, because their feet make it more pleasant to read in the long term. However, if you're going for a "newer" look, sans serifs are on the rise as a body text form, especially for captions. They're seen as simpler, more straight to the point, which make them favorable if you have a small body of text that doesn't stretch on. However, on a book page with pure sans serifs, it's easy to get lost in the lines that don't necessarily try to physically separate one letter from the next. Individual characters aren't as locked in as serifs help them do, which don't always make them ideal.

Are you going for an old look, like museum plaques or a historical poster about some ancient civilization? Go for the Old Style Serifs, which still mimic calligraphic techniques like Centaur, especially. Even some Transitional Serifs still evoke a kind of old inconsistency between the thicknesses of some letters, like Bell. Thinking about more friendly book alternatives that are still professional but more casual? Sabon is a pleasant reading face, as is Adobe Garamond Pro, or Minion. Going down the line to what's more modern? Hint: the answer is not Didot or Bodoni—or largely pictured, Modern Serifs. Recall that we want a smooth reading, not something jarring and bumpy that moderns tend to bring to the text, because of their drastic changes from one thickness to another. Slab serifs, however, offer a good compro-

mise between the rigidness of many serifs, the modernity of sans serifs, and still feet to provide legibility at small text sizes for continuous reading. Fonts that are even slab-serif resembling like Chaparral or Charter tend to be blacker and heavier, so there should be a tad more spacing to compensate for this added color. Note that slab serifs are typically only used on the web; they're a great screen font for short to medium length articles, but can be a pain to read when extended for so long, partly because they're more peculiar.

All in all, change a block of text to your new font, squint, stare at it from far away, and look at how it holds up. Ordinarily you can immediately get a "feel" for how it looks, if its texture fits your purpose, how a reader can react to it. You don't have to be dead-on accurate all the time; if you don't feel like going experimental, but want to make your text stand out a least a little bit from the likes of the rest, here are some permanent "safe" choices to opt for: Minion, Adobe Garamond, Baskerville, Sabon, Proxima Nova (pick your weight carefully!) or Roboto.

And with that said, we all know that Times New Roman is pretty much the most favored font of all Humanities teachers; its historical use in official US government documents, including the law system, has elevated it into the superlative of "Most Formal Font... Ever." Of course, there's also the reason that it saves paper, and is one of the most condensed text faces possible, making it very favorable for the Times newspaper that it was designed for. But that doesn't necessarily justify that every single textbook or every single document or essay or test must be written in Times New Roman. It's simply a task that's been burdened for it that's been passed down, and these days more and more people are using Calibri or Adobe Garamond or Minion in its stead.

The moral of the story is: don't restrict yourself. Don't go wild, but don't think "I can only use this and this font because they're the only ones in the mainstream." Sure, if it's something deadly serious and official, going Times New Roman can't possibly hurt. But for most purposes if you're just making a poster for school or a handout or something, it's always okay to break that barrier of thought where the only font you can ever use for academia is Times New Roman.

4
Developing a Hierarchy

So we've established that there's a display font, and there's a text font. And sometimes they can overlap. We've addressed each of them individually, but not together: oftentimes you won't be using the same character style for both display and body text—meaning we also have to consider the two harmoniously together. This is known as "pairing", or in more complex cases, even tripling or quadrupling. But for all intents and purposes, it's basically considered as developing a hierarchy of fonts that work together to bring the reader around the page.

THIS IS A SUBTITLE

This is the second subtitle

And this is the body text, the lowest down in this book's hierarchy. (Note that this is unindented; as the first paragraph of a new section, this is common conventional practice for most designers.)

In this book, the hierarchy is developed using purely one font family: Bembo. Subtitle 1 is set in small caps, and tracked. The capitalizing functions as if it was yelling at you, like how we communicate volume in digital communication. It serves as an emphasis, but because Bembo is a quiet font, light and in the background, it serves that bold screaming doesn't fit its personality. This is why it is also tracked, with letter spacing: this dilutes the effect of the capitals, and gives it more room to breathe so it does not appear angry, but its presence is still solid. Furthermore it's important to address that this is not mere capitalizing, but lower case small caps. The difference is that you're using the same thickness but reducing the letter size by a certain ratio, making the text look more condensed. This may seem like it adds color and thus even more weight than what's necessary, but it actually reduces the effect of all caps. Especially on serifs they look far flung and loud, not meant for their fine skeletons. But when compressed they look sturdier, yet quieter, and especially with the added tracking, more elegant in a nondescript way.

Subtitle 2 is italics, and the same size as the body text. This makes it a bridge between the first subtitle and the text, which is exactly what it's meant to do. Alignment wise it's also the same as Subtitle 1, the element that stays the same. The fact that it has a single line to itself, and the fact that it has an italic (but soft) emphasis, lends to its prominence as an authoritative line, yet still transitions smoothly into the first paragraph below.

Altogether this hierarchy system promotes unity: nothing flashy, just subtle steps that fade from one to the other. This is altogether suiting for Bembo, which is just a font that sits and does its job well. From the first subtitle, the basic form and composition remains, but only the style of the character is changed: from small caps to normal text, italicized, and made a tad smaller. This is an intuitive process from higher on the hierarchy to lower down. And to the main body text, it is just one more tiny leap: unitalicize. However, the separate line of the subtitle helps isolate it. Nonetheless, this is a prominent example of a soft hierarchy that is clear and clean, yet not distracting.

But of course, sometimes we want to make an impact. Especially if it's not in a book form, but more in something like a web article, we'd want to pair two fonts together that complement each other, yet also stand out altogether instead of fading to the background. For this kind of purpose, it's the heavy bold sans serif that is usually favored as a text, with either the same family or a serif accompanying it.

What's most important, however, is that you want to create different levels of gray. You want a spectrum that goes from the blackest to the lightest—or when they're similar levels, the reader can deduce which one is higher by size. But nonetheless, squint and look at your design from afar, and you should immediately be able to tell which one is the "darker" one.

In this simple hierarchy, it is incredibly easy to tell which element is heavier than the rest, and thus should draw more attention.

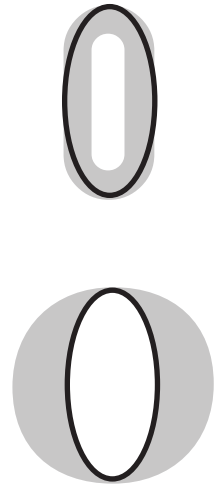
Pairing fonts is an art, and a delicate one. Sometimes there's no telling how two fonts can fit together before you try—and even sometimes there are rules. Garamond italics, for instance, should be used as sparingly as possible, but it can look nice with

the likes of Akzidenz-Grotesk Bold. With that said, here are a few things to think about when selecting some fonts to develop a hierarchy for.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Rhythm

You want something to repeat, however small this something is. Even if the viewer can't see that conscious decision, it'll repeat in their visual receptors and evoke a pleasant, harmonious thought. For instance, consider the narrow 'O' of Bebas. When paired with Playfair as its accompanying instrument, this visually can work because the inside of Playfair's 'O' is also thin, reminiscent of Bebas. Another example can be playing with the x-heights: the entire height of the body text can be equivalent to the x-height of its caption, which is a rhythm that repeats in length. The two can even have the same x-height, but the cap heights can be different—and that difference in length is what helps define the hierarchy. Even when you have two fonts that seem they have nothing to do with each other, the way they are printed on to the page, perhaps the crispness of their lines, or a concordant aura that they elicit, also helps tie things together. These repetitions are links between the upper and lower floors. You absolutely need rhythm in all cases of hierarchy.



While not perfectly the same, the square structure of Bebas can still rhyme with the inside of Playfair's roundness. Their *proportions* are the same: the same ellipse is used for both letters, and both the height and width are the same.

For the text in this book, the reoccurrence of the Bembo typeface is enough to be a very obvious and strong link between the different levels. However, when you want it to be more eye-popping htat, there absolutely needs to be a link that still connects the two typefaces together, rather than letting them loose and hoping the audience picks them up.

Contrast

Contrast is important, but it's also important to know where to put that contrast. The less contrast, as in this book, the more subtle your hierarchy will be. Which is fine in book cases, but as mentioned before, for poster-making or websites, it's not the best.

Picking a bold headline is great, whether it's a serif or a sans serif. Balance that with something thinner and more consistent for the body text. We might as well as say that the general rule of thumb is to contrast the eye-popping headline with what is the exact opposite: plain, simple, and removed. The more decorative or complex one font is, the more bland its accompanying body text font should be.

Recall that while you want contrast, you want to have rhythm as well. Don't pick

something absurdly different; at least stick with the same mood. Some things should still stay the same, though it doesn't have to be immediately visual. If you can observe and notice some of the specifics that usually run under the eyes of the casual observer, those are the elements you should target. What you can even do is to have rhythm through the same type of contrast that's always being produced. If you're going to contrast between thicks and thins, for instance, if you continue revisiting that theme throughout your design piece, it could function as a suitable pair.

Conflict

There's subtle changes to a text that defines low contrast, and then there's the huge changes that define high contrast, and then there's bad contrast. We've said previously that either case is perfectly fine and it all depends on the situation, so what's bad contrast?

It's when you're trying to make similar fonts look different, or they look obviously different yet so similar that they clash together. No, that's not low contrast—it's awkward contrast. As in, they disagree with one another over just how similar they really are. You might think they have similar form or weight? Well, maybe their axes of alignment is different. Maybe the lines that define its direction aren't actually parallel, and thus conflict.

Pictured right: Clarendon Light, and American Typewriter. They have a similar color, and are visually similar (elaborate serifs).

These two fonts conflict with each other

If you're trying to have a subtle shift, consider using only one type family with lots of styles. It's this choice that can make or break your design; it's much safer to have them be harmonious with one another than try to present a little bit of variance that may actually bring a ton of chaos to your final piece.

Conversely, this hierarchy has similar color density, but they differ by the type of font, and size. It's still easy to follow this hierarchy.

CINZEL REGULAR

CONSTANTIA REGULAR

Constantia Regular

Use Only What's Necessary

Part of good typography is knowing when to stop. You don't need a different font for every subtitle, even if they have the rhythm and repetition. Sometimes it's too overbearing and it can easily rip apart any connection you've established, however carefully you've done it.

Think about why you're using more fonts: because they look nice? Bookmark

them, save them for later, for another project. For the most basic of hierarchies, you only really need two typeface families, and if they're diverse enough, you can choose more within them for the more complex hierarchies.

Now if you're trying to imitate the diversity of the sixties—the wild wild west, the Gatsby periods—or something akin to that, by all means, go ahead, because it's the overall theme that locks them all in. (And while not discussed in this book, colors are also great at locking in a design.) But to design whimsically without making conscious choices is one of the first forbidden sins of graphic design. As Antoine de Saint-Exupery once said, "A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

GREAT EXAMPLES

Displayed on the following pages are great examples of font pairings to use, gathered from resources around the web and through skimming over historical favorites. Beyond these, however, if you wish to venture further, a great resource to use is Google Web Fonts. Completely free to use and mostly great quality, each font has its own tabs of which other Google Web Font it works well with. It's an Internet gold mine of great resource that any designer should bookmark, no matter their skill level.

ROBOTO BLACK

ROBOTO CONDENSED

Roboto Regular

Playfair Display Black

Playfair Display Italics

Playfair Display

Lavanderia S

OPEN SANS BOLD

Open Sans Light

MYRIAD BO

Minion Pro Italic

Minion Pro

BARON NE

PROXIMA NOVA LIGHT

DIDOT

AVENIR LIGHT

turdy

OLD

EDE

Lavanderia Regular

OSTRICH SANS ROUNDED

Akzidenz-G

Adobe Garamond Pro Italic

Porcelain

ENGRAVERS MT

Bodoni Bold

FUTURA MEDIUM

AMATIC REGULAR

RALEWAY REGULAR

rotesk Bold

PROXIMA NOVA BOLD

Minion Pro Italic

LEAGUE GOTHIC

Athelas Regular

5
Layout & Gridding

Now that you know something about picking fonts and how to choose them, the question that follows is: where do we put them? Along with the rest of the text? Although this book is mostly about typography, this still involves the basic graphic designs skills of two-dimensional layout and awareness. This chapter discusses ways to organize the page and to place things in an aesthetic way, which can be surprisingly easily done with a grid.

TERMINOLOGY

Before beginning, it's important to go through some of the key terms that we use when we talk about the construction of grids. There are numerous different ways to make one in the end, but they all require the basic vocabulary that functions the same way as learning type anatomy for typography.

Margins

A term that any average layman must have heard before, margins are the negative space on the page. While they may be interrupted briefly by footers, headers, or page numbers, when glancing at the page from far away it still appears that it is the large rectangular blank space on the outside of the main content of the page. It is typically discouraged to have margins on all four sides be the same space; while it certainly works, it is extremely standard and drab. There are still mathematical ways to calculate margin lengths that fit; this is discussed later in the Golden Section.

Having large margins makes it extremely easy for the viewer to find the main content of the page, whereas having smaller margins, even on one side of the page, adds a certain tension to that side. When used purposely this can be effective, but generally it can lend a bit of awkwardness to the page. Elements need to have space to breathe, and especially if you're making a standalone page such as a poster, having

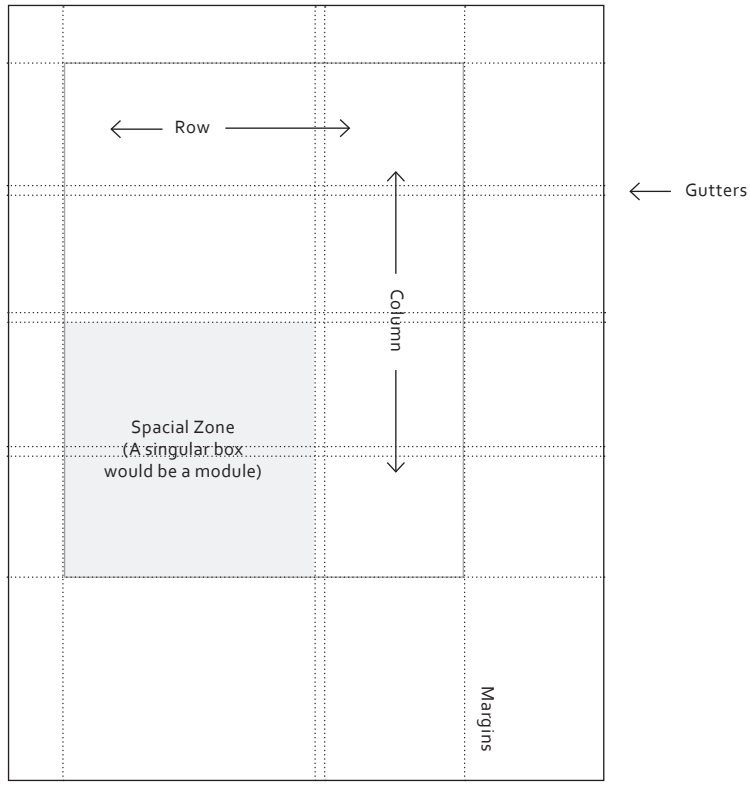
generous margins can be extremely beneficial to draw the reader in directly to the main content.

When making books, we think of pages in a spread. Margin space can be mirrored, or symmetrical, however they can also be asymmetrical and have the larger margin space always be on the left side, for instance. It's up to you to decide which looks better, but layout programs typically assume symmetry as the conventional way to go.

Flowlines

These are the guidelines that flood from the left side of the page to the right side. They are essentially horizontal guides that help define rows, which will be mentioned next. One of the great uses of flowlines is to use them to establish a baseline: these are horizontal lines that are equally spaced throughout the top to the bottom of the page, aligned with the bottom of a row of text. A paragraph of text would fit perfectly onto such baselines, and can be used to establish vertical rhythm in a design. For instance, while headlines can be a bigger size than the main body text, you can still know where to place them so they also align to the baseline.

Flowlines that act as baselines.



Modules

These are units of space that are divided by the guidelines—like a grid, hence the name gridding. These modules can be grouped together into spatial zones, which are allocated to specific elements of your body content. While largely irrelevant when making conventional books for print—which, after all, only utilize one large chunk in the middle of the page—modules are incredibly useful for posters and infographics and anything else with messier elements thrown around the page.

Gutters

This is the space in between guidelines, which helps divide up the modules. After all, we don't want elements to be brushing up on each other, without giving the space that each paragraph or image needs to shine. Typically you can use the default gutter measurements, which work well. The distance between columns are separated by gutters; they also function as the space between rows. Respect your gutters, and the page will respect the reader.

Rows

As we know from tables, rows are a horizontal series of modules. Most of the time, rows are used largely only for horizontal alignment, but text tends to accumulate downwards and leave a ragged bottom. You don't need to align everything to the row; on posters or magazines, it's fine to let columns of text run downwards until they're complete, and the raggedness can leave an organic feeling behind.

Columns

The vertical version of rows, these are modules that run downwards. Columns can vary in width, though many designers certainly prefer to have them be evenly spaced. You can have as many columns as you want, depending on how complex your page is. However, too many—upwards of five or six—can be difficult to work with. It's simple enough to start with three or four columns.

When using columns it's also important to consider the fact that you don't need to respect every single column guideline you run into. As mentioned before, block out the spatial space for each of your elements—they can certainly run across column guides and spill into the next module.

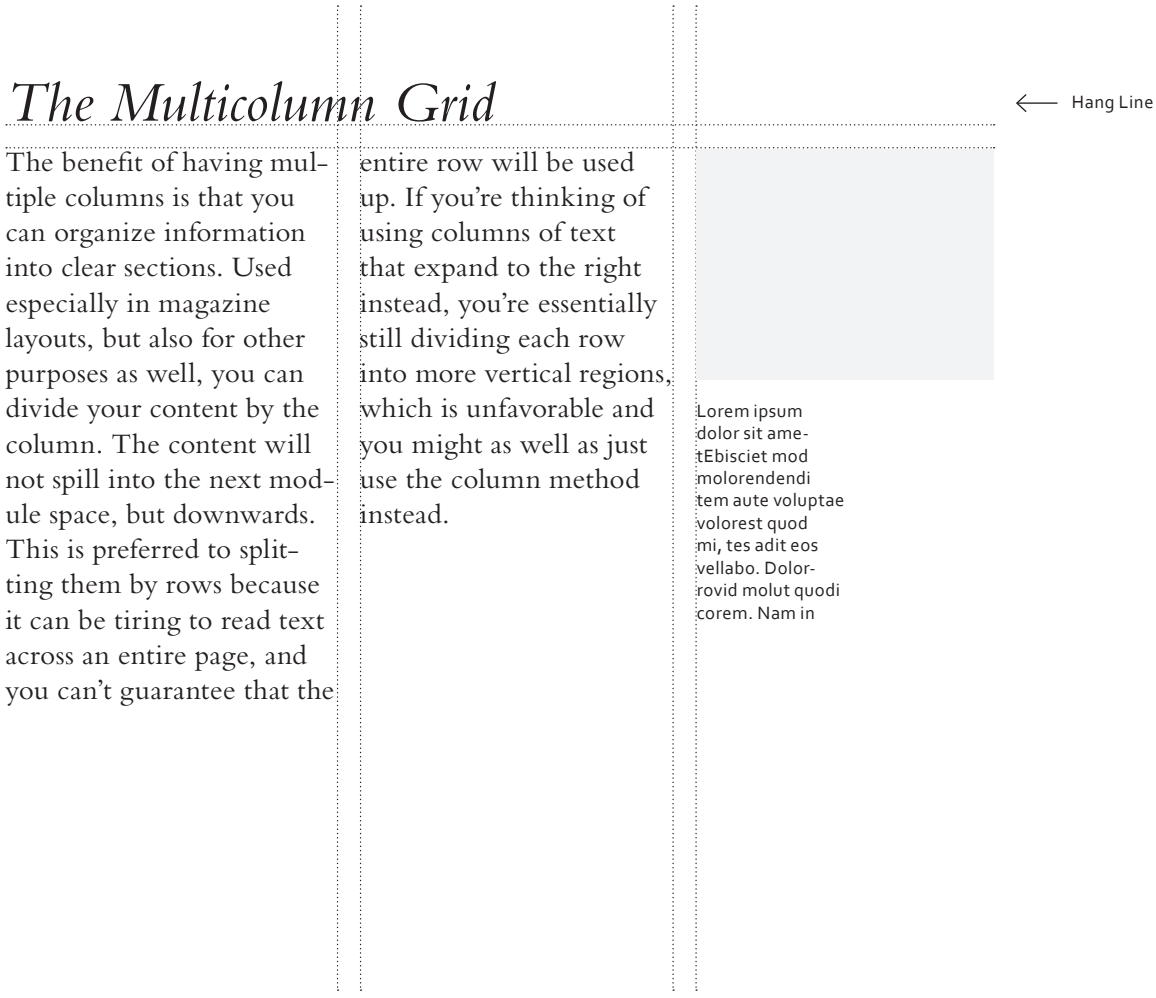
Other Elements

Running headers, running footers, markers, and page numbers: these are additional text scattered around the page, and used mainly in book page layouts. They are usually consistent on every spread, and do not disrupt the rhythm of the margins. However, they should be clear and crisp enough to be easy to find, and the reader should acknowledge their presence. For this reason, they are typically made to be smaller than the print text, and the consistency of their appearance will lend credibility to their presence to the reader.

THE GRID

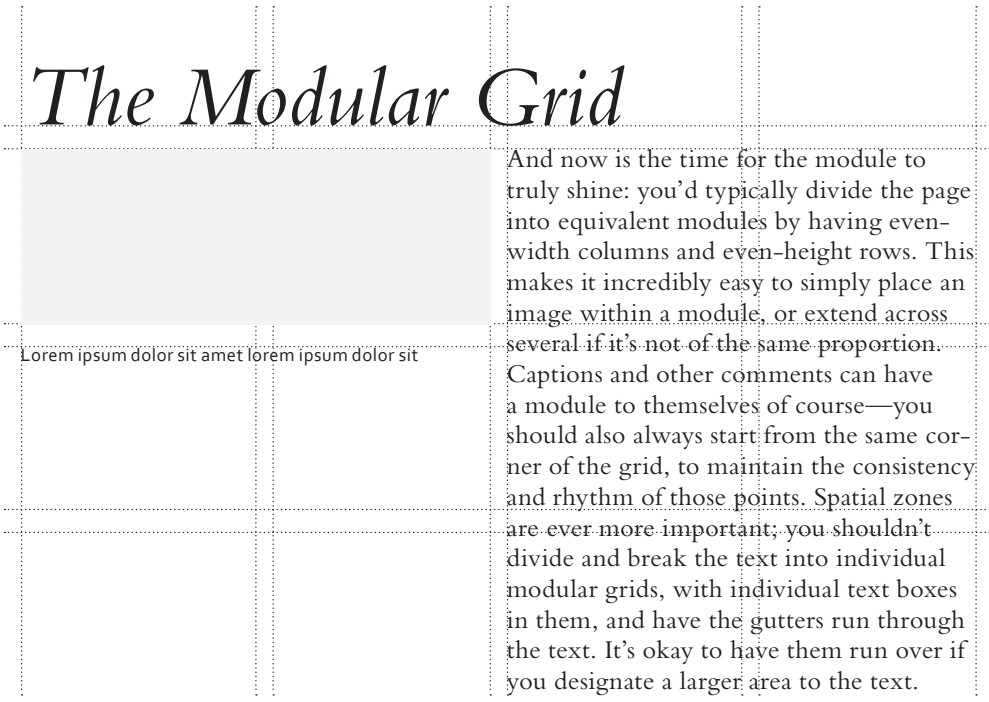
Grids are beyond simply making things look pretty: they're a way of organizing, and for establishing a hierarchy, helping the font choices you've made before stand out even more. Leaving a clear spatial zone for headlines or subtitles, for instance, can greatly reduce confusion and chaos on the page.

One of the things to remember as we move forwards is that not every space has to be filled. Grids are guidelines, and that's all. There's no point in cramming information that's wholly unnecessary to begin with.



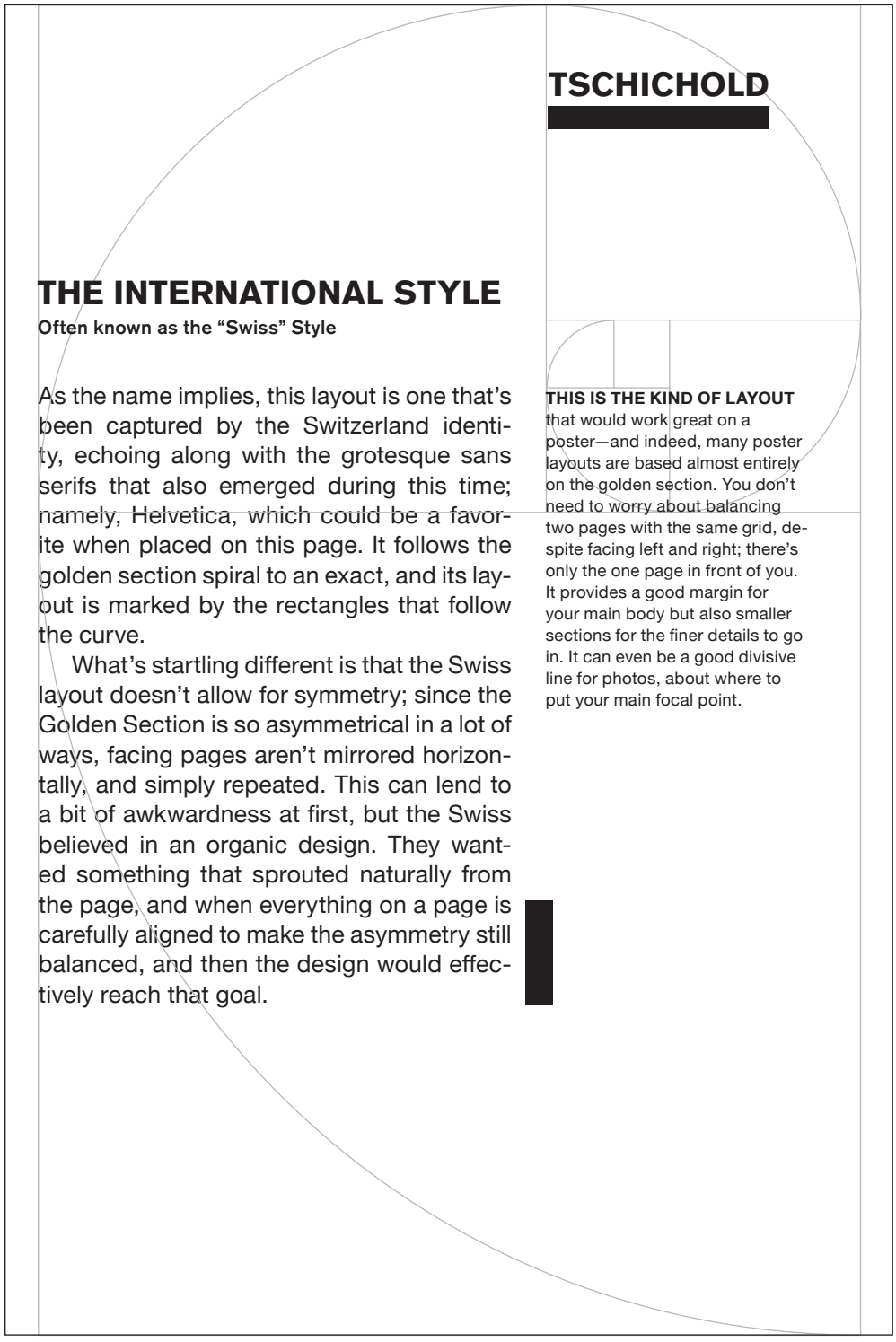
The Hang Line

Reserving and spacing out a section at the top of the page for images or headlines can be a way to establish hierarchy. The body text will never emerge above this hang line, though this technique is only effective when you have multiple pages in series like this, and there is an image to use for most of the pages, or else it can get awkward. You can still reap in the benefit of multiple columns along with the hang line to also add comments to the side, in one of the columns, leaving a smaller spatial zone for actual text to reduce weariness while reading.



THE GOLDEN SECTION

Where pi and *e* are the favorites of mathematicians, and G or perhaps *k* be the favorite of scientists, it is the golden ratio that's the favorite of designers. Reoccurring throughout nature in plants and animals, and even in basic geometry, it's the ratio 1.618 that marks a brilliant proportion to use in our own human artificial design as well. (It's also the number that defines the ratio of our bus cards, credit cards, and identification cards.) There are two general page layouts that you can use with the golden section, which are introduced next.



TSCHICHOLD

THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Often known as the "Swiss" Style

As the name implies, this layout is one that's been captured by the Switzerland identity, echoing along with the grotesque sans serifs that also emerged during this time; namely, Helvetica, which could be a favorite when placed on this page. It follows the golden section spiral to an exact, and its layout is marked by the rectangles that follow the curve.

What's startling different is that the Swiss layout doesn't allow for symmetry; since the Golden Section is so asymmetrical in a lot of ways, facing pages aren't mirrored horizontally, and simply repeated. This can lend to a bit of awkwardness at first, but the Swiss believed in an organic design. They wanted something that sprouted naturally from the page, and when everything on a page is carefully aligned to make the asymmetry still balanced, and then the design would effectively reach that goal.

THIS IS THE KIND OF LAYOUT that would work great on a poster—and indeed, many poster layouts are based almost entirely on the golden section. You don't need to worry about balancing two pages with the same grid, despite facing left and right; there's only the one page in front of you. It provides a good margin for your main body but also smaller sections for the finer details to go in. It can even be a good divisive line for photos, about where to put your main focal point.

Referenced from Jan Tschichold's "The New Typography"

Golden Ratio Layout

Where the Swiss layout may give more exact guides on specific divisive sections, this one only gives where the margins should go. It's a lot more thoughtful in terms of bookprinting, leaving generous space at the bottom of the reader's thumbs to go, but still incorporates the Golden Ratio, albeit more subtly. It gives the box where the main body text should go, clearing out the empty space for miscellaneous information for small headings or page numbers to be added in.

The margins of this page is a perfect mirror of the shaded box on the following page; it was not included on the left here for readability purposes.

It is the golden ratio layout that this book was designed in, and the guides for this creation have been marked into this page; it is based on a geometric design, a series of lines, and their intersections. First are the pair of diagonals that extend across the corners of the page, and then the half-diagonal that goes from the bottom corners to the midpoint of the top line (when looking at the pages from a spread perspective). It is the intersection of lines on the left page that extend up to where the mirrored intersection on the right page meets the top line. And it's the final intersection that's made on the right page where the corner of the main body text starts. The rectangle extends to the right until it meets the entire-spread diagonal, and goes down until it meets its first line, and intersects there.

Of course, this can be further divided up if needed; so long as the empty margin space stays the same, this layout holds. Columns can be added and the whole shebang. This is a tad more flexible than the Swiss layout, though this opinion can change with the designer.

6
Common Mistakes

It's really difficult to say what you should do in typography, or what's the magic mathematical formula that will spit out the best way to put something on a page. Certainly efforts to strive towards these goals have been made, though much of layout depends on factors like content and even the image the designer is going to use, that can be hard to quantify. It's also hard to target each kind of purpose and exact circumstance because there are so many of them—and some rules of thumb will work for those, but not always.

However, what can be much easier done is to state what you shouldn't do. By learning from mistakes of others, it can be easier to incorporate that kind of mindset to your own work. After all, when you work with typography and design, you'd typically be erasing dozens and dozens of failed tries and stopping only when you have something that's good. By being more aware of what's considered as "faulty" design, or what can be improved, you continue correcting your layout and make it even better before you stop. There's no such thing as the "perfect" design, and much of that is subjective to the individual viewer's eyes, but that kind of status is only reached after lots of iterations. For the average design work, there's always something that can be changed.

Not Enough Leading

Leading is the space in between lines: a lot of word processors or even Adobe InDesign are imperfect in their leading calculations. Having too much leading makes your text less colorful and more blank, but having not enough will make it look black. There's not an exact math to this as the color of your text will change also based on your typeface—Centaur for instance is a light text, but fonts that are heavier like Helvetica need to be more spaced out because of their bulkiness.

Fonts can vary in point size, the height of their letterforms. It's not a perfectly standardized system, and leading will often need to be manually adjusted. Step back from your screen momentarily and look at it from afar: is the leading enough to keep the lines of text together, without being lost in all the space in between? The "right"

amount of leading is usually not too far off from InDesign's calculated one, so there's no need to go nuts, but especially if the text is feeling too cramped, then something needs to change.

Lines Are Too Long

The preferred length of a line of text—or the measure—is about 50-60 characters long. While this can go a bit up or down, it's important to not stretch this guideline too much because otherwise, you risk causing fatigue to the reader's eyes. Ever read a huge line of text that went on for so long that you forgot which line you were reading when you swapped back, and had to restart? That's what you need to avoid.

Having Too Much

As mentioned previously, this cannot seriously be stressed more. Don't pair more than two fonts, or three if you absolutely have to in a complex hierarchy (and only use the third sparingly, for captions or margin notes!) Most of the time, you're thinking you need a bigger hierarchy than you actually need. And that's not necessary. Also remember that you're not going to change the elements of the text entirely from one floor to another—change the weight, or the typeface but keep the color—just remember that something needs to stay the same.

Overusing Centered Text

Sometimes centering gives symmetry, and that's fine. But you don't need to center your headline, as well as your body text, and all the captions. It might look weird at first on a poster, but if one centered headline and one left-aligned body text doesn't work, it's altogether fine to get rid of centered text entirely. They're overrated and overused, and you can always make use of grids to align your text to axes other than the central.

Not Scaling Proportionally

Anytime you're scaling an image, resizing, or rotating it, make sure that you're holding down the shift key as you do so. Otherwise, the image comes out flat or too stretched, which is of course a disgust to the eyes at first sight.

Not Linking

If you're using InDesign and you're adding in an image from your local computer, remember that it doesn't actually save the image with the file! What InDesign does is to "link" it instead, to reduce the file size: it saves a reference of where your image is, and only a cache thumbnail image of what it actually looks like. Unfortunately, what sometimes happens is that when you send the file off to someone else, the images aren't linked with it, and thus the original full-size image isn't saved with it. At smaller sizes you may be able to get away with it, but especially for full-spread background pictures or something to that effect, the final .pdf file can look extremely pixellized

This short line would be an example of a widow.

and not clear at all.

Using Fake Small Caps

Good fonts come with embedded small caps ligatures of their own, but if you're using a web font, the designer may not have had the foresight or consideration to add small caps ligatures. But what does "fake" small caps mean?

When you enable the small caps feature for a font without those ligatures, your program will typically just make the lower case smaller, and use the capitalized version of those to stand in instead. While it can be similar, it's not the same because as you reduce the size of a character, the thickness of the lines also change. It's a bit jarring to the eye because you're essentially typing at two sizes.

If you're set on using small caps for your subtitles, make sure that you're using a font that comes embedded with the ligatures.

Orphans and Widows

These are nearly interchangeable terms by now, but they're basically used to refer to awkward bits of text hanging from a paragraph. Oftentimes if you have a single word that constitutes the last line of a paragraph, in contrast it can look stubby and quite empty. This should be changed by hyphenating previous lines to make space for this word, or swapping out some words for longer ones to push more words down the line.

This line here would be an example of an orphan.

Other things to consider are paragraphs that start on the bottom of a page, leaving only one line before having to flip the page for the rest. While this can be certainly unavoidable in long pages of text, in shorter pieces it's still important to be mindful of them. By the same perspective you should also think about paragraphs that end on the first line of a new page, which, like a hanging word, is also awkward to look at.

Running Rivers

As you continue your design you may notice that the spaces in between words tend to align down the lines of text. Called "running rivers", this basically refers to empty spaces that keep aligning. This can also be done by breaking up some words into hyphenated halves—though be careful to not hyphenate too much. Usually, three lines in a row is too much.

Not Using Text Numbers

Did you know that numbers have a case? Typically the numbers we're used to seeing go all the way up to the cap height, the same height as the uppercase letters. However, they can be quite disruptive to the quite rhythm of the x-height down the line. These are called "uppercase numbers", like so: 12345678.

Lowercase numbers, then, are numbers that are more like this: 12345678. These alternative themselves and sometimes dip down below the baseline, but that's fine. (After all, letters like 'g' and 'y' do that as well.) They are more letterform-like and

thus more comfortable to look at on a page. Otherwise, any appearance of numbers, from measurements to dates to simple declarations of time, would look awkward and noisy in an otherwise undisrupted line of text.

By the same respect, capitalized letters, especially initials, should also be set in LOWERCASE SMALL CAPS. This makes them less jarring to look at.

Not Enough White Space

As we've said before, margins are a form of negative space, or "white space". But, that doesn't necessarily mean that white space is only limited to the margins. Within your design, especially modular ones, it's perfectly fine to leave a bunch of them blank to let the other elements breathe. You do not have to fill up the entire page.

Words Over Images

Certainly, it's fine a lot of the times to put white text over an image. There are examples all over the Internet, from brilliant photography posters to inspirational quotes to even headlines on some web newspapers like Politico. But you shouldn't pick any text, any color, and slap it on any picture.

The first point to make is that you should pick a color that's drastically different than your overall image color: white and black are, of course, the most popular ones. Your image shouldn't be too white at any point in its image if you want to use white text, as demonstrated below. The same goes for anything else.

Try not to use super colorful letters—there are cases where they can work, especially when you follow thematic colors like the images shown. But it's incredibly easy to make colors clash or conflict if you're just picking cyan or magenta and slapping it on something that's of the same vibrance. Color-pairing is another intricate art that requires so much experience that the scope of it couldn't possibly be published in this book, so for all intents and purposes, go with something neutral like black, white, or beige.

A tip to use is, when you can't see your words, pick something bolder. When you still can't read it, add a bit of a drop shadow or an outer black glow. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, it can be very faint, just to give your letters a bit of an edge. (Remember to set the glow onto Multiply—this way it still interacts with its background and blends in better.) However, this trick should only be used for bold headlines. Do not ever ever ever attempt to add a black shadow outline to even regular text that's meant to be a caption to an image or something. If you wish to put a caption over the corner of an image, make a black box and set it on around 90-97% Multiply, and place white text over that. This allows you to still be able to see most of the image (even a bit of what's behind the box) and read the caption at the same time. This box should be the same opacity throughout your design—don't change it depending on the picture!

Tracking Lowercase Letters

Tracking can be very effective aesthetically to space out letters, but make sure that they're all in capitals. Lowercase letters were meant to be kept together, and adding too much space tends to disrupt their rhythm. Unless if your tracking is meant to loosen up a font that's too tight in the body, purposeful headline tracking should only be done to all capitals. Sans serifs tend to look better with added tracking, though there are certainly some exceptions to this rule.

Using Any of These Fonts

For the love of all things typographical, do not use any of these fonts outside of their very limited scopes: Comic Sans, Bradley Hand, Papyrus, Arial, and *Brush Script*. On a children's party invitation, sure, Comic Sans could be well rounded and perfect to its audience in that respect. But for the most part, these fonts are hated because they're seen everywhere, for the most ridiculous of purposes, like on funeral invitations. Arial is just a knockoff of Helvetica, its well-shaped counterpart, albeit still in an overused hype right now.

When you're deciding fonts, venture outside of what's been seen thousands and thousands of times already. When you're going for something simple and modern, Helvetica could do the trick, but part of modernity is refreshing-ness at not seeing the same stuff over and over again. What about Helvetica Condensed Medium, which is what National Geographic uses on its covers? What about Bebas or Mensch or Raleway or Montserrat, which "feel" a bit different and you can more safely and flexibly use them for headlines? (Once again for body text, it's fine to stay a bit more reserved if you don't feel confident enough.)

APPENDIX

For Fonts Resource & Inspiration

Many of these fonts can be found for free online, the rest can be "found for free" if you know where to look.

For a great, actual free resource to dive into, look into the Google Web Fonts directory, or FontSquirrel.com.

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

SABON

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

GALLIARD

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

PLAYFAIR

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

ALEGREYA

MATE

ADOBE CASLON PRO

ALEO

ATHELAS

THE
QUICK
brown fox jumps
over the
lazy dog.

QUAVER SANS

THE QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

ROBOTO

THE
QUICK
BROWN FOX
JUMPS
OVER THE
LAZY DOG.

BASICTITLEFONT

THE
QUICK
BROWN FOX
JUMPS
OVER THE
LAZY DOG.

BEBAS

PHANTOM

MANIFESTO

CABIN

RALEWAY

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

BURST MY BUBBLE

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

SATELLITE

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

PRINT CLEARLY

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

MAVEN PRO

THE
QUICK
BROWN FOX
JUMPS
OVER THE
LAZY DOG.

CINZEL

THE QUICK brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

GOTHAM

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

EB GARAMOND

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

NEUTRA TEXT

THE
QUICK
BROWN FOX
JUMPS
OVER THE
LAZY DOG.

AMATIC SC

THE QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

GLAMOR

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

VALENTINA

the
quick
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

das reicht gut regular

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

KINGTHINGS PETROCK LIGHT

THE QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

IMPERATOR

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

CAVIAR DREAMS

THE
QUICK
brown fox
jumps
over the
lazy dog.

PROXIMA NOVA

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT
BY JULIE WANG