

JM JM JM JM

Design a
Logo
of letters!



Continued ►

How to design a logo of letters

Are you known by your initials? Turn those letters into a terrific signature!



Jack in the Box
www.jackinthebox.com

Companies of every kind sign their names with linked letters called *ligatures*. Ligature means *to tie*. Ligatures make excellent business signatures. They're handsome, simple and compact. And they're fun, too—we all have initials! Some letters link in one typeface but not another. Others link in lowercase but not in upper. What follows are a variety of ways to get your letter pairs beautifully *together*.



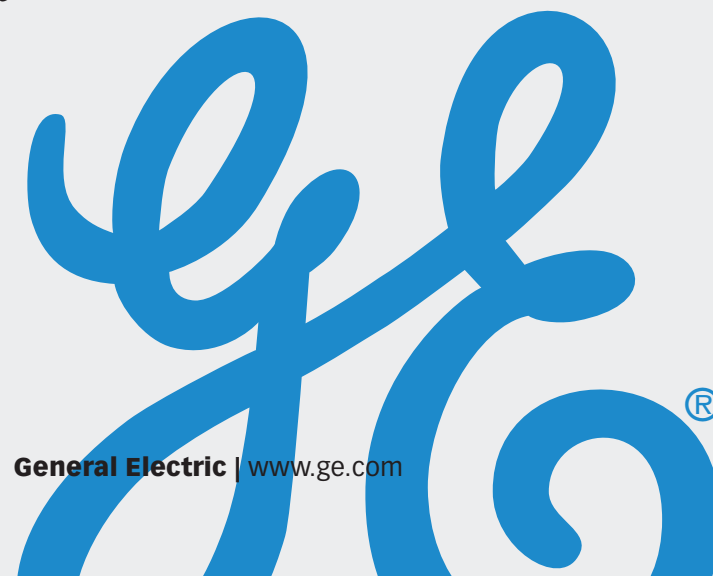
Cotton Incorporated
www.cottoninc.com



American Dental Association
www.ada.org



Cable News Network
www.cnn.com



General Electric | www.ge.com



Use shared strokes

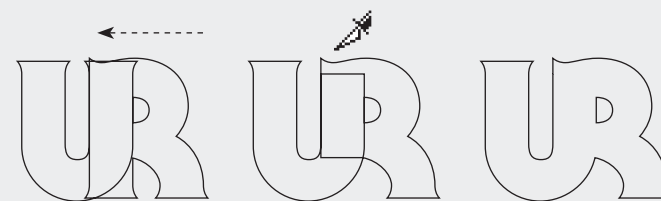
Many letter pairs form natural links; they have identical parts or complementary shapes that fit like hand in glove. Let's begin with the easiest letters to link—those that have identical adjacent strokes.



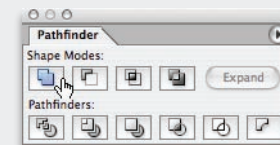
HK are an ideal pair; each letter is distinct from the other, but their adjacent stems are identical. Link by removing either stem and abutting the letters. Two colors put the emphasis on one letter or the other. This is a good way to handle an acronym in which the second letter is the more important.

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Pairs like UR share not-quite-identical strokes, yet often flow naturally together. To link neatly, you must usually sacrifice some parts; here, the R gave up a foot, the U a serif.



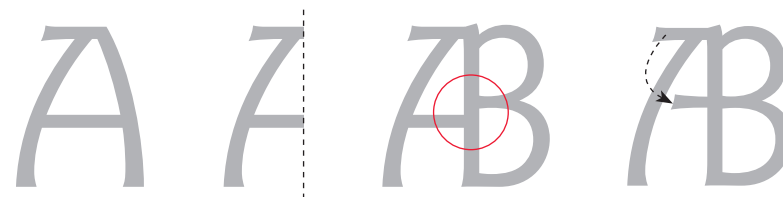
In Illustrator, set the letters, *Create Outlines*, and move together. Cut away the unneeded pieces, leaving the remainders overlapped, then in the Pathfinder dialog, select *Add to shape area* (below).





Angled to vertical

Angled strokes often link well to vertical strokes. The easiest technique is simply to cut the angled letter in half.



Halving the **A** joined it neatly to the **B**, but the crossbars did not align. Borrowing the flourish from atop the **A** was an easy and artful solution.

If your letterstrokes don't quite match . . .



Try changing case

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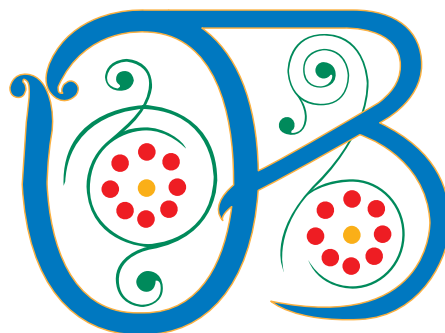
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Uppercase-lowercase

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Distance

Color

Style

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Crossbars link so obviously that in sans-serif typefaces they can appear to be merely tightly kerned. To avoid this impression, add a pattern (above) or an outline (left). Better is to use a serif typeface and share the serif (left).

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Many letters, such as ABE-FHPR, have mid-letter crossbars that can be connected with a little help—just cut the letter apart and s-t-r-e-t-c-h the bar!



Key to this technique is to keep the letterforms distinct. You can do this by separating the letters with two colors (above) or for a one-color ligature by making a gap in the intersecting stroke (left).



Remove a stroke

Here, a phantom stroke hints at what's not there! This is particularly effective with Modern typestyles such as Bodoni and Didi that have extremely thin strokes.



Remove one leg and move the letters together.

Remove part of a stroke

Letters with angled and overhanging arms—FKTVWXYZ—benefit from this technique, which is especially attractive in serif typestyles. The illusion is that of a stencil; the line is interrupted, yet our eyes “fill in” the missing part!



What's in the negative space?

Negative space is the area in and around your letters; it has shape and volume and always affects the viewer's perception. *Negative space is always present.* In the best design it plays an active role, as it does in the TP above. Watch your negative space!



Reverse the field

Put negative space to positive use! Add a same-color field behind your letter, then reverse the second letter out of the field. Especially effective with three-character acronyms.



Set tightly . . .



. . . add a field . . .



. . . color.

(Colors added for clarity)

Crop!

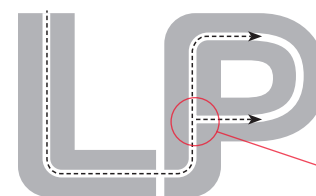
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Reversing the field (light on dark) modifies the look and often improves it. Always check!

**Follow the white line**

Create the *illusion* of attachment! Rather than abut letters, leave a gap, then make a flowing centerline that draws the eye smoothly around.



Don't close it! Doing so breaks the flow.

Disconnect and attach

An entertaining ligature unique to the T, disconnect one arm and attach it to its neighbor!

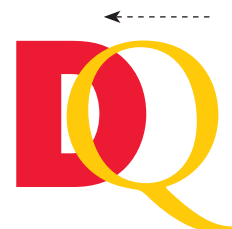


To maintain the form of both letters, keep the stroke widths the same.



Interlock

Circular letters flow most naturally into other circular letters. Interlocked here like wedding bands or Olympic rings, two complete letters function as one.



Set

In Illustrator, set the letters, *Create Outlines*, and move together.



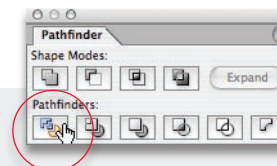
Divide

Select both letters, then in the Pathfinder dialog, click *Divide* (below).



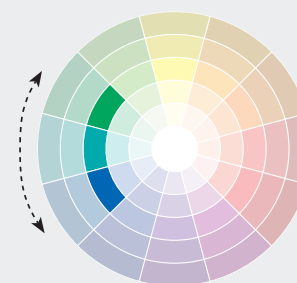
Cut

Use the Direct Selection Tool to click an intersection, then *Cut*.



Overlay

A simple alternative to interlocking is to lay one letter atop the other, then “link” with a common fill or stroke. Here, a colorful gradient turns two letters into one object.



What colors?

Easily create a pleasing gradient by using *analogous* colors (colors adjacent on the wheel), in this case green to blue. Analogous colors *always* work well together.



Build bridges

This technique works when nothing else will! Abut your letters, then conceal the junction with a decorative graphic, line or a series of lines and shapes. Easy, fun and always engaging.



Lay on top

Evenly spaced dots just lie on top.



Paste into

Diagonal lines are “pasted into” (InDesign).



Replace letter parts

Barely touching letters are brought together by playful shapes and colors.



Fill a space

The diamond does double duty—it links the letters and helps form the shape of the R!



Use transparency

Transparency *softens*. Create a gossamer effect on even the boldest ligature by lowering the opacity of one or more characters. Here, all three letters are set at 50%.



Do you like the overlap effect but need strong colors? Keep your colors at 100% opacity, but in the Blending mode dialog select Multiply, which adds the colors of an object to the ones beneath it.



Color the negative spaces

Finally, some stubborn letters just won't link physically. So try linking the background! Put the letters in a box, and color the negatives spaces; you can get all kinds of energetic results!



No software stunts here. Just draw and color funny shapes behind the letters, then paste everything into a box.



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Adobe Garamond Bold](#)
- 2 [ITC Serif Gothic Heavy](#)
- 3 [ITC Goudy Sans Book](#)
- 4 [Futura Medium](#)
- 5 [Helvetica Neue Std Roman](#)
- 6 [Russell Square Roman](#)
- 7 [Spring](#)
- 8 [Avenir 55 Roman](#)
- 9 [Bodoni Roman](#)

Colors

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 10 | C100 M60 Y0 K50 |
| 11 | C70 M60 Y0 K10 |
| 12 | C0 M100 Y85 K30 |
| 13 | C0 M15 Y100 K0 |
| 14 | C0 M70 Y0 K30 |
| 15 | C26 M7 Y24 K3 |
| 16 | C73 M15 Y38 K6 |
| 17 | C37 M66 Y6 K3 |

Article revised on 07/18/11



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Clarendon Roman](#)
- 2 [Helvetica Neue Std Heavy Italic](#)
- 3 [Gill Sans Bold](#)
- 4 [Eurostile Extended #2](#) (Modified)
- 5 Didi
- 6 [Helvetica Neue Std Ultra Light](#)
- 7 [Century Old Style Std Regular](#)

Colors

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 8 | C26 M91 Y100 K35 |
| 9 | C46 M27 Y100 K35 |
| 10 | C43 M68 Y51 K70 |
| 11 | C40 M35 Y65 K25 |
| 12 | C89 M25 Y87 K23 |
| 13 | C0 M91 Y91 K0 |
| 14 | C20 M100 Y0 K0 |
| 15 | C7 M24 Y37 K0 |
| 16 | C20 M100 Y100 K15 |
| 17 | C100 M0 Y30 K5 |



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Futura Extra Bold](#)
- 2 [Bernhard Modern Roman](#)
- 3 [ITC Leawood Book](#)
- 4 [Helvetica Neue Std Black](#) (Modified)
- 5 [ITC Goudy Sans Bold Italic](#)
- 6 [Futura Bold Oblique](#)
- 7 [ITC Franklin Gothic Std Heavy](#)
- 8 [Adobe Garamond Regular](#)

Colors

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 9 | C0 M50 Y100 K0 |
| 10 | C33 M93 Y0 K0 |
| 11 | C0 M53 Y26 K0 |
| 12 | C72 M22 Y42 K0 |
| 13 | C100 M60 Y0 K10 |
| 14 | C100 M90 Y0 K0 |
| 15 | C29 M63 Y53 K8 |
| 16 | C11 M43 Y67 K8 |
| 17 | C0 M100 Y85 K0 |
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Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Futura Book](#)
- 2 [ITC Kabel Std Demi](#)
- 3 [ITC Goudy Sans Bold](#)
- 4 [Bauer Bodoni Roman](#)
- 5 [Gill Sans Ultra Bold](#)

Colors

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 6 | C100 M0 Y90 K30 |
| 7 | C100 M0 Y40 K0 |
| 8 | C100 M60 Y0 K0 |
| 9 | C0 M30 Y100 K0 |
| 10 | C40 M80 Y0 K0 |
| 11 | C60 M100 Y0 K0 |
| 12 | C80 M0 Y100 K0 |



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Vectora 95 Black](#)
- 2 [Sloop Script One](#)
- 3 [ITC Goudy Sans Bold](#)

Colors

- 4 C0 M100 Y100 K40
- 5 C40 M35 Y65 K25
- 6 C60 M30 Y10 K15
- 7 C19 M37 Y59 K0
- 8 C4 M6 Y4 K0
- 9 C20 M0 Y100 K19
- 10 C0 M53 Y100 K0
- 11 C40 M45 Y0 K0



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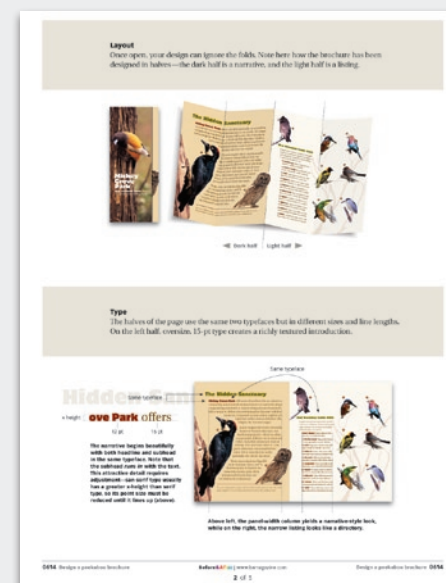


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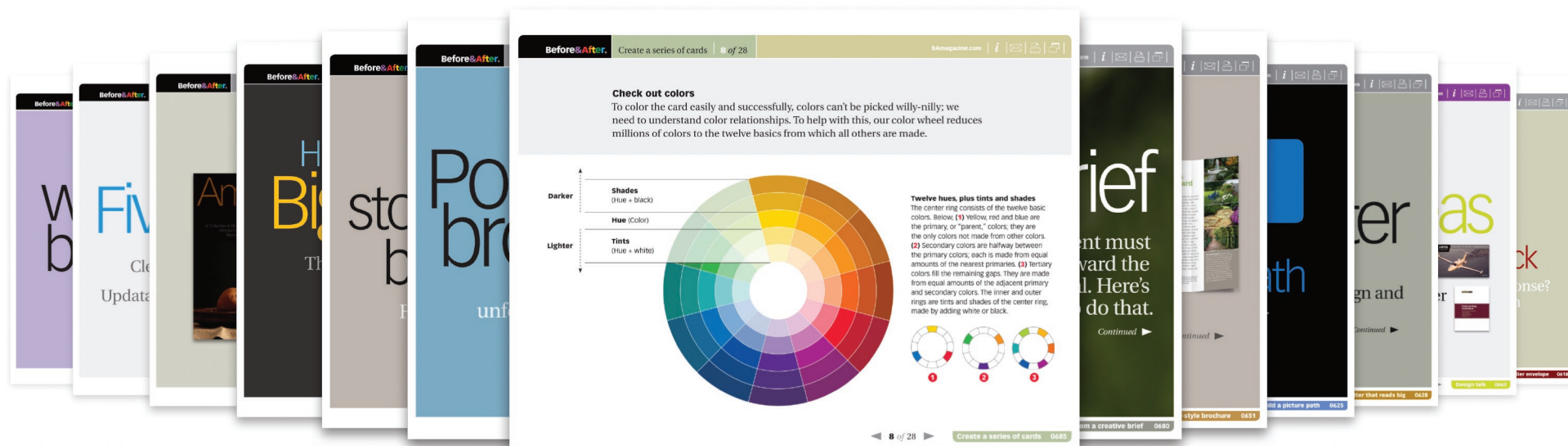
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AN

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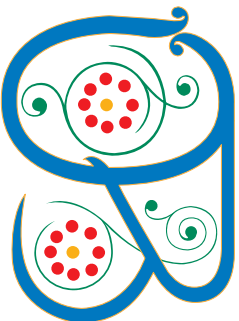
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Crossbars link so obviously that in sans-serif typefaces they can appear to be merely tightly kerned. To avoid this impression, add a pattern (above) or an outline (left). Better is to use a serif typeface and share the serif (left!).

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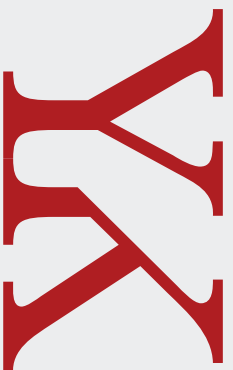
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Reverse the field

Put negative space to positive use! Add a same-color field behind your letter, then reverse the second letter out of the field. Especially effective with three-character acronyms.



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... add a field ...

(Colors added for clarity)

... color:

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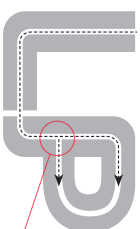
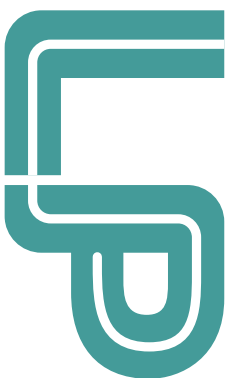
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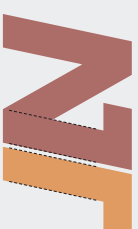
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An entertaining ligature unique to the T, disconnect one arm and attach it to its neighbor!



To maintain the form of both letters, keep the stroke widths the same.

Interlock

Circular letters flow most naturally into other circular letters. Interlocked here like wedding bands or Olympic rings, two complete letters function as one.



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In Illustrator, set the letters, *Create Outlines*, and move together.

Divide
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Cut
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Overlay

A simple alternative to interlocking is to lay one letter atop the other, then "link" with a common fill or stroke. Here, a colorful gradient turns two letters into one object.



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Build bridges

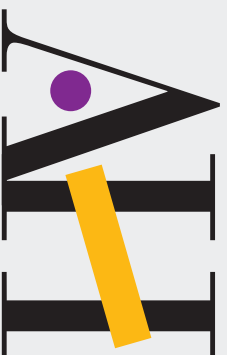
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1 10 2 11 12 13

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- 3 [ITC Goudy Sans Book](#)
- 4 [Futura Medium](#)
- 5 [Helvetica Neue Std Roman](#)
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- 7 [Spring](#)
- 8 [Avenir 55 Roman](#)
- 9 [Bodoni Roman](#)

3 14 4 5 6

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| | |
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| 11 | C70 M60 Y0 K10 |
| 12 | C0 M100 Y85 K30 |
| 13 | C0 M15 Y100 K0 |
| 14 | C0 M70 Y0 K30 |
| 15 | C26 M7 Y24 K3 |
| 16 | C73 M15 Y38 K6 |
| 17 | C37 M66 Y6 K3 |

8 15

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1 8 9 10 11

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- 4 [Eurostile Extended #2 \(Modified\)](#)
- 5 [Didi](#)
- 6 [Helvetica Neue Std Ultra Light](#)
- 7 [Century Old Style Std Regular](#)

3 12 4 13 14

Colors

| | |
|----|-------------------|
| 8 | C26 M91 Y100 K35 |
| 9 | C46 M27 Y100 K35 |
| 10 | C43 M68 Y51 K70 |
| 11 | C40 M35 Y65 K25 |
| 12 | C89 M25 Y87 K23 |
| 13 | C0 M91 Y91 K0 |
| 14 | C20 M100 Y0 K0 |
| 15 | C7 M24 Y37 K0 |
| 16 | C20 M100 Y100 K15 |
| 17 | C100 M0 Y30 K5 |

5 15 6 7 16

7 17

Article resources

Typefaces

- 1 Futura Extra Bold
- 2 Bernhard Modern Roman
- 3 ITC Leawood Book
- 4 Helvetica Neue Std Black (Modified)
- 5 ITC Goudy Sans Bold Italic
- 6 Futura Bold Oblique
- 7 ITC Franklin Gothic Std Heavy
- 8 Adobe Garamond Regular

Colors

- 9 C0 M50 Y100 K0
- 10 C33 M93 Y0 K0
- 11 C0 M53 Y26 K0
- 12 C72 M22 Y42 K0
- 13 C100 M60 Y0 K10
- 14 C100 M90 Y0 K0
- 15 C29 M63 Y53 K8
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- 17 C0 M100 Y85 K0
- 18 C0 M20 Y100 K0

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Colors

- 6 C100 M0 Y90 K30
- 7 C100 M0 Y40 K0
- 8 C100 M60 Y0 K0
- 9 C0 M30 Y100 K0
- 10 C40 M80 Y0 K0
- 11 C60 M100 Y0 K0
- 12 C80 M0 Y100 K0

Typefaces

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- 3 ITC Goudy Sans Bold
- 4 Bauer Bodoni Roman
- 5 Gill Sans Ultra Bold

Colors

- 9 C0 M30 Y100 K0
- 10 C40 M80 Y0 K0
- 11 C60 M100 Y0 K0
- 12 C80 M0 Y100 K0

Article resources

Typefaces

- 1 Futura Book
- 2 ITC Kabel Std Demi
- 3 ITC Goudy Sans Bold
- 4 Bauer Bodoni Roman
- 5 Gill Sans Ultra Bold

Colors

- 6 C100 M0 Y90 K30
- 7 C100 M0 Y40 K0
- 8 C100 M60 Y0 K0
- 9 C0 M30 Y100 K0
- 10 C40 M80 Y0 K0
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- 10 C40 M80 Y0 K0
- 11 C60 M100 Y0 K0
- 12 C80 M0 Y100 K0



Typefaces

- 1 [Vectora 95 Black](#)
- 2 [Sloop Script One](#)
- 3 [ITC Goudy Sans Bold](#)

Colors

- | | |
|----|------------------|
| 4 | C0 M100 Y100 K40 |
| 5 | C40 M35 Y65 K25 |
| 6 | C60 M30 Y10 K15 |
| 7 | C19 M37 Y59 K0 |
| 8 | C4 M6 Y4 K0 |
| 9 | C20 M0 Y100 K19 |
| 10 | C0 M53 Y100 K0 |
| 11 | C40 M45 Y0 K0 |

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