

# Futura

It's not a typo, it's a typeface  
Lindsay Walker

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South Bend, IN  
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# History

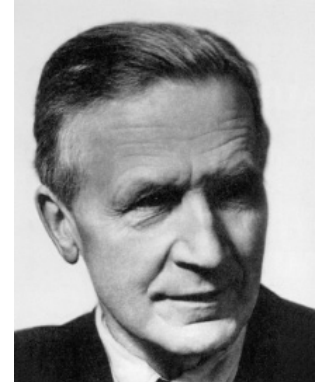
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Futura was developed by Paul Renner in Germany under a commission by the Bauer type foundry. The original styles of the Futura font family included Light, Medium, Bold, and Bold Oblique.

## Spotlight ● on Renner

Paul Renner, born in 1878, was a designer, typographer, painter, and teacher. He was not a member of the Bauhaus movement himself but Futura was very much a representation of Bauhaus ideals. He had been working on the font for several years prior to its commercial release in 1927.

He believed that a modern typeface should be completely new, rather than just a modification of a previous typeface.



# Meet the Family

1929 Futura black

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The Futura family contains a great variety of styles. There's also a wide range of digital formats and many companies use modified versions tailored to their needs.

1952 Bold Italic

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Book Font 1932

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Book Oblique 1939

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Extra Bold Italic 1955

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Futura Light  
*Futura Light Oblique*  
Futura Book  
*Futura Book Oblique*  
Futura Medium  
*Futura Medium Oblique*  
Futura Heavy  
*Futura Heavy Oblique*  
**Futura Bold**  
***Futura Bold Oblique***  
**Futura ExtraBold**  
***Futura ExtraBold Oblique***  
Futura Condensed Light  
*Futura Condensed Light Oblique*  
Futura Condensed  
*Futura Condensed Oblique*  
**Futura Condensed Bold**  
***Futura Condensed Bold Oblique***  
**Futura Condensed Extra Bold**  
***Futura Condensed Extra Bold Oblique***

## Family Secret? Long Lost Relative?

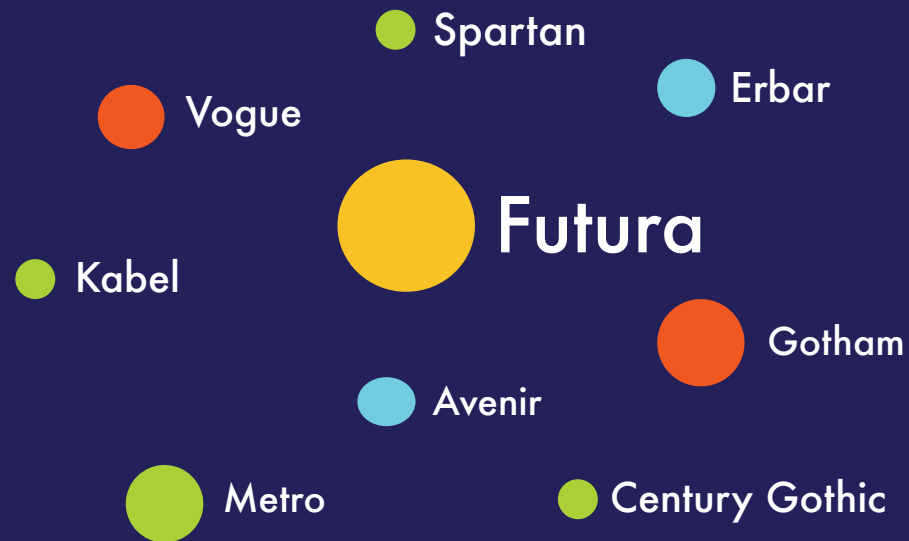
Even though it looks completely different, Futura Black is still part of the Futura type family. This alternate stencil version was released in 1929.

# A Font of the Futura

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At the time of its release, Futura was a radical development. In the early 20th century, convention was to use serif fonts, because of their easy readability. Futura lacked these serifs and also contained primarily geometric shapes, a completely new idea for mainstream type. Despite going against the typographical norm of society, Futura became the leader of the 'New Typography' movement. It became one of first widely used sans serifs and was a source of inspiration for many other geometric sans serif typefaces. It was also banned in Nazi Germany.

Futura may not be the center of the entire font universe but these fonts are in a nearby Futura-centric solar system:



Being a geometric typeface, Futura has some unique properties that are not immediately noticeable to the naked eye.

Sans

● Slight contrast of stroke weight

● Roman style capitals

Ascenders go past capital height

Serif

● Many letters based on circles

● Sharp angles and flat edges

Use me for Headlines!  
I've lost some weight!  
Now I'm squished.  
**Bold is beautiful!**  
**Changin' up my look.**

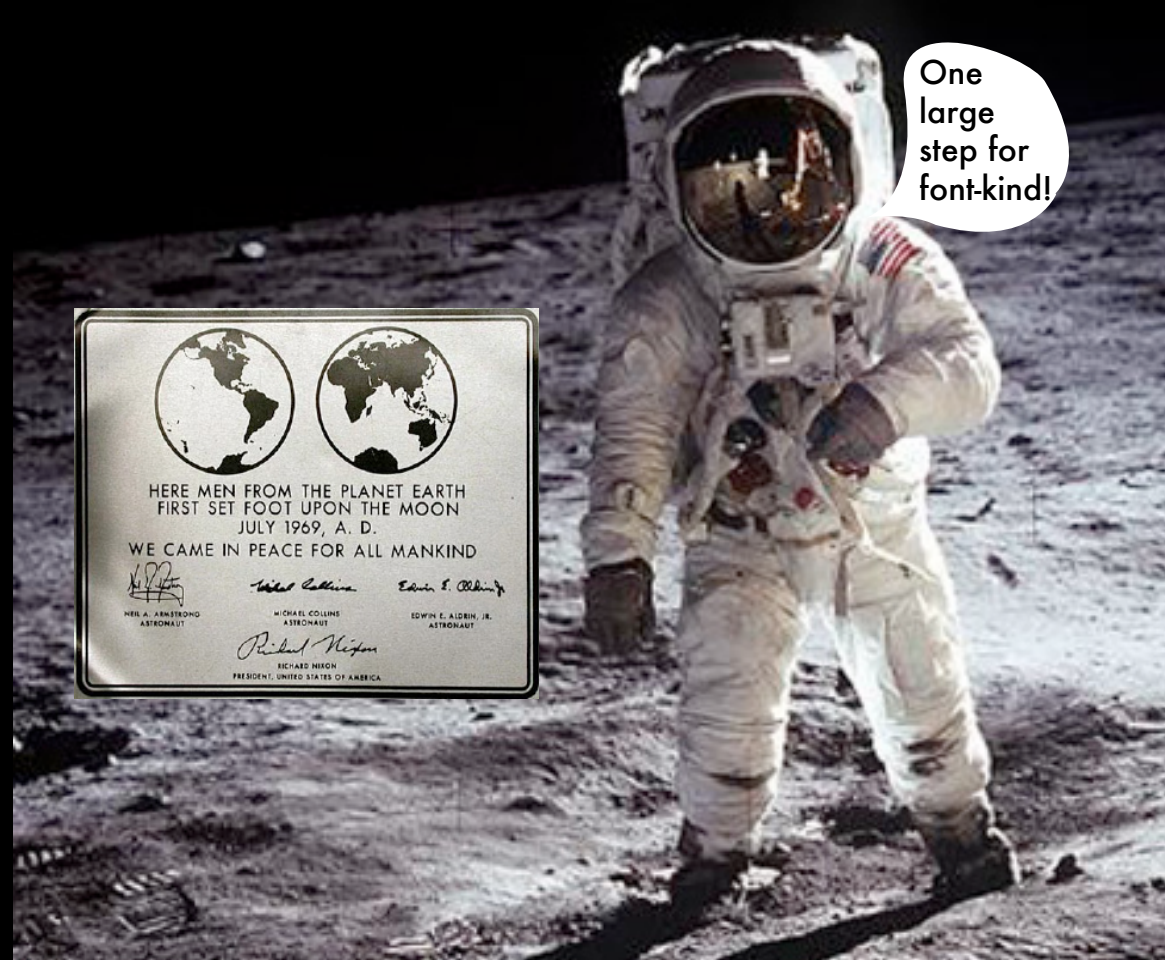
## ● Best of Both Worlds

Futura is a worthwhile addition to any designer's font folder. Originally it was used as a headline font for German stores and advertising but it's also very readable, making it acceptable for body type. Futura is simplistic and utilitarian, suggesting efficiency and forwardness. Because of the wide variety of styles, it is quite versatile.

# Houston...

In 1969 Futura was used where no other font had been before, the Moon. The Apollo 11 crew that landed on the Moon left behind a commemorative plaque that had been set in Futura. There was no better font to represent the future of space travel.

## We used Futura.







# Futuristic Futura

Despite being first used in 1927, Futura remains a font that's prevalent in futuristic entertainment. A few such examples include usage in Stanley Kubrik's 2001 A Space Odyssey, the Sci Fi Channel, and V for Vendetta.



Check out that geometric S!



There are many current recognizable Earthly uses of Futura and some companies have altered the font slightly to create unique logos. Let's take a look!

# **Futura in Action**

Open to enter  
the wonderful  
world of Futura!

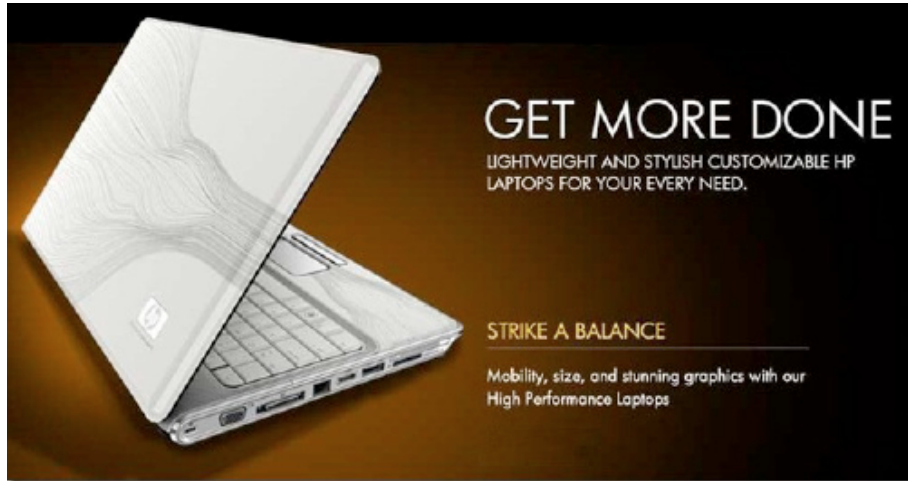




Futura. Pizza. Enough Said.



Stylish designer: Stylish font



The HP laptop is not the only part of this ad that is stylish and utilitarian.

# IKEA, we want Futura back!

For the longest time the chain store IKEA had used a form of Futura for their print campaigns. However, in 2010 they decided to change their typeface preference to Verdana. Avid IKEA shoppers and type enthusiasts alike were confused and outraged by this change. Futura had become part of their brand and the change was recognized all around the world.



Notice the difference?

## Survey Says:

"Horrific," lamented Christian Hughes in Dublin.

"Ikea, stop the Verdana madness!" pleaded Tokyo's Oliver Reichenstein on Twitter.

"Words can't describe my disgust," spat Ben Cristensen of Melbourne.

"It's a sad day." was the headline on the Typophile forum.

Well, that's all folks. I was just so disgusted by that IKEA debacle that I had to end the book. If you still have a burning desire to learn more about Futura check out these resources. I guarantee you will now see Futura everywhere.

Abend, Lisa. "The Font War: Ikea Fans Fume over Switch to Verdana - TIME." TIME.com. Web. Oct.-Nov. 2010. <<http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1919127,00.html>>.

Eskilson, Stephen. Graphic Design: a New History. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007. 241-46. Print.

"Futura | Typophile." Typographic Collaboration : Typophile. MyFonts. Web. Oct.-Nov. 2010. <<http://typophile.com/node/12494>>.

"Futura (typeface)." World Lingo. 2010. Web. Oct.-Nov. 2010. <[http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Futura\\_\(typeface\)](http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Futura_(typeface))>.

## Colophon

This type specimen book is one of a series of 27 books designed under the direction of instructor Ingrid Hess by the students of Graphic Design II at the University of Notre Dame during the fall semester of 2010.

This volume explores the use and origins of the Futura typeface created by Paul Renner in 1927. This book has been researched, designed, and edited by Lindsay Walker.

# Futura Futura Futura

You know you've seen it. It's one of the most widely used sans serif fonts. Whether your extent of typeface knowledge is limited to the default on Microsoft Word (what's kerning?) or if you were angry when IKEA switched from Futura to Verdana (bad rag may cause nightmares) , you'll be sure to find something in this book for you. At the least you'll walk away knowing that Dominos Pizza uses Futura on their box.

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