Graphic design

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Typography tips for graphic design students

Designer Ben Terrett of Noisy Decent Graphics asked his readers what typographic advice they'd give a third year design student. Here are a few of the most useful answers from the comment thread.

"Don't underestimate its importance. The best ideas, the most beautiful imagery, the most harmonious colour combinations will be blighted by inferior typography. So work at it, study it.

"Look at all those great names in graphic design history; Tschichold, Schleger, Rand, Fletcher, Aicher, Muller-Brockmann; and look at their beautiful type. They understood the need to understand it."

— Richard Weston of Ace Jet 170

"Picking up copy of Type and Typography can be immensely helpful. It's got a particularly useful section about the styling of details within text."

— Alistair Hall of We Made This

"As always, make sure you play with silly ideas on paper too, they get the creative juice flowing."

— Fernando Lins

I agree. Using a pen and paper has been a huge help with my projects.

"Look at historical design masters, don't dismiss them because they are old or because you have seen it all before. Richard Hollis' book on Swiss Graphic Design is great because it covers so many

masters and shows you so many examples of work.

"I second the suggestion of getting a boring book about rules. The details are what I look at. If you haven't got them down then they will stand out, but that's just me: a dusty old fogey. If I see an en dash used properly I appreciate it. Robert Bringhurt's book, The Elements of Typographic Style, is great for this."

— Jaypeg

There's a quote from a Russian graphic designer that struck a chord, shown in a comment by Alicia.

"The black space can never be beautiful until the white space is beautiful."

Other recommended typography books are Stop Stealing Sheep and Find Out How Type Works, by Erik Spiekermann, and Thinking with Type, by Ellen Lupton. And Michael Bierut wrote a nice piece titled, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Typeface.

What typographic advice would you offer a student?