Type and Design

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Table_{of}Contents

TypeClassification

Serif: Old style

Serif: Transitional

Serif: Modern

Serif: Slab

Sans Serif

Contemporary

Garamond

Goudy Old Style

Adobe Jenson

Old style typefaces have been traced back to 1465 Italy, as a result of the invention of the movable type printing press. Italian typefounders wanted to break away from the blackletter printing characteristic of Johannes Gutenberg. Typefaces that belong in this classification are popular for use as body text because of their high degree of readability, especially when printed on rougher grades of paper.

Characterizations of Old style typefaces include little variation of line weight and a leftward leaning diagonal stress. Most serifs are bracketed, with head serifs often being offset at an angle.

Garamond is a good example of an Old style serif typeface.

Serif: Transitional

Transitional typefaces, alternatively called Baroque typefaces, became common in the mid to late 1700's and the classification represent typefaces that are between Old style and Modern in characteristics. Since the classification is for an intermediate style between two styles, it is harder to define, and it can be difficult to clearly identify fonts that belong to it.

These characteristic include a medium variance of line weight and a vertical stress. In addition, Transitional typefaces often have curled tails on the capital R and the italic lowercase h will often open out at the bottom right corner. Transitional typefaces often have serifs that end in ball terminals as well.

Baskerville is a good example of a Transitional typeface.

Baskerville
Times New Roman
Georgia

Bodoni
Didot
Elephant

Modern typefaces, also called Didone typefaces, debuted in the late 1700s. The classification was created by Firmin Didot, Giambattista Bodoni, and Justus Erich Walbaum for the purpose of making more elegant and precise typefaces. Modern typefaces are more commonly used for titles and headlines, as they are less readable than Old style or Transitional typefaces. The thin parts of the letters make these typefaces harder to print on rougher paper, so they tend to be printed on glossy magazine covers where they can retain their crisp detail.

Characteristics of Modern typefaces include an extremely high contrast in variance of line weight and a vertical stress. The serifs are thin with no variation in line weight and minimal, if any, bracketing.

Bodoni is a good example of a Modern typeface.

Serif: Slab

Slab serif typefaces can be dated back to around 1817, and they were mainly used for posters and advertisements as they are very good at grabbing the viewers attention. These typefaces are very bold and clear, so they are often used for posters and small print.

Characteristics of this classification vary widely, but all usually include very thick and heavy serifs. Some typefaces have minimal variation in line weight, similar to many sans serif typefaces, while others appear similar to other serif typeface classification but with much thicker serifs. Many early slab serif typefaces only came in a bold style with only uppercase letters.

Century Expand is a good example of a Slab Serif typeface.

Century Exp.

Rockwell

Serifa

Helvetica

Futura

Myriad Pro

Sans serif typefaces, previously called gothic typefaces, lack the serifs that the previous type classifications displayed. They are most often used for headings instead of body text when in print and represent minimalism and modernity, despite letters without serifs appearing across history. Sans serif typefaces are the most common typefaces used for text that is displayed on digital monitors.

Classifications of sans serif typefaces include the lack of serifs and minimal variation of line weight. There are multiple subclassifications for sans serif typefaces, and they include: grotesque, neo-grotesque, geometric, and humanist.

Helvetica is a good example of a Sans Serif typeface.

Contemporary

Contemporary, or Display, typefaces are used for just that, for decorative and titles. They became popular during the 1800s. They are mainly used for advertisements and posters to draw attention; readability is less of a concern for this classification than the other classifications I've mentioned.

Since Display typefaces are meant to be decorative, they can vary widely in style; typefaces that are anywhere from script and blackletter to geometric and symbolic may fit into this category. And because the classification is so broad and varied, there aren't really any strict characteristics; a lot of Display typefaces only include an uppercase font, but that's kind of it.
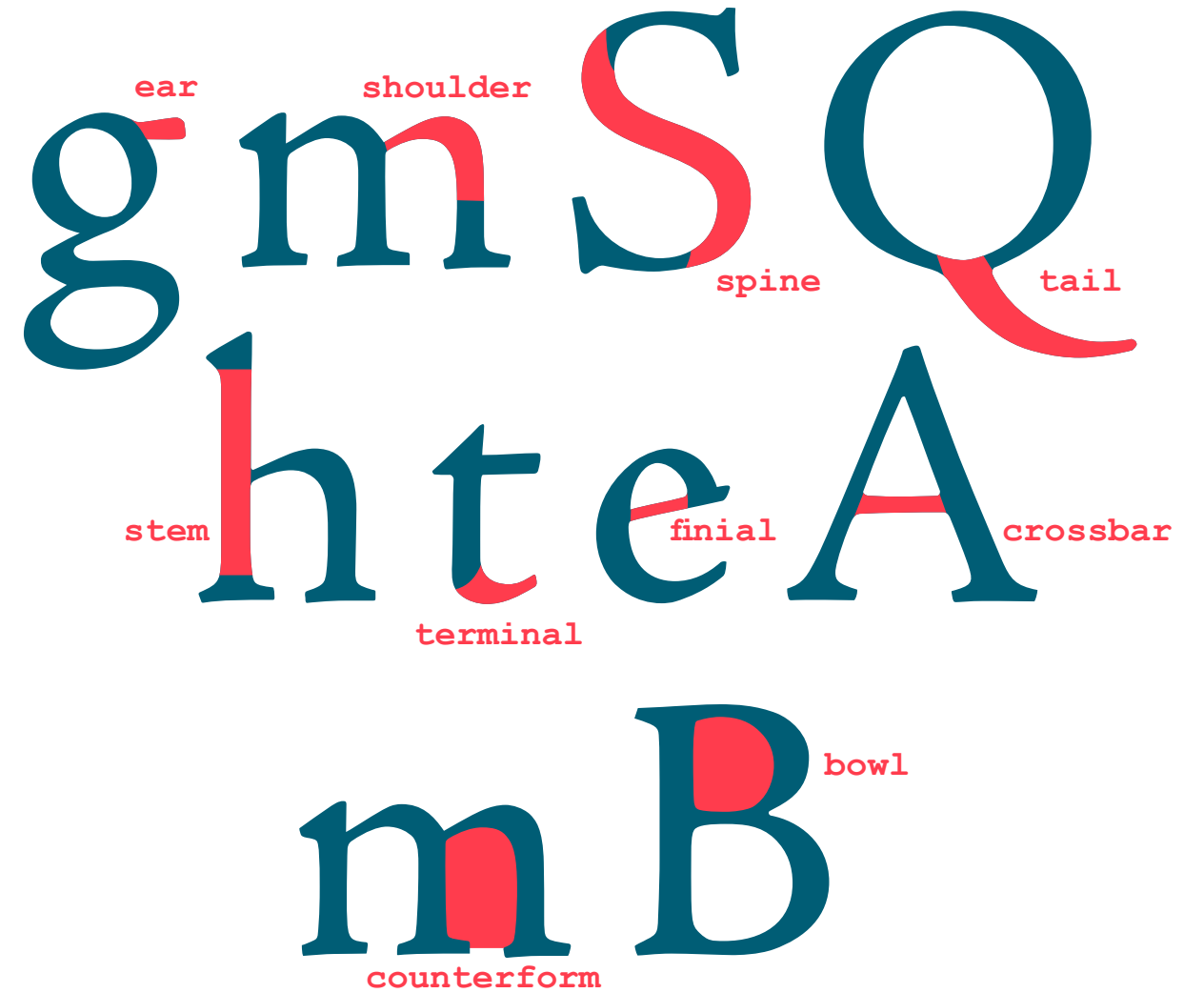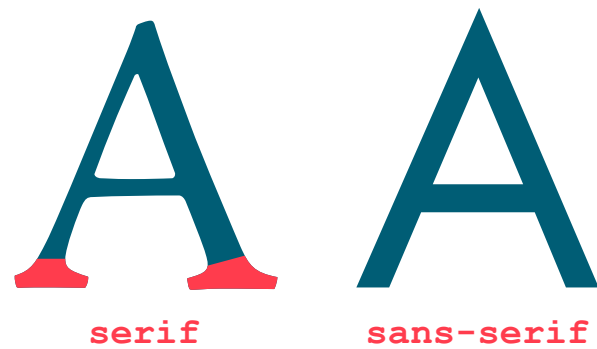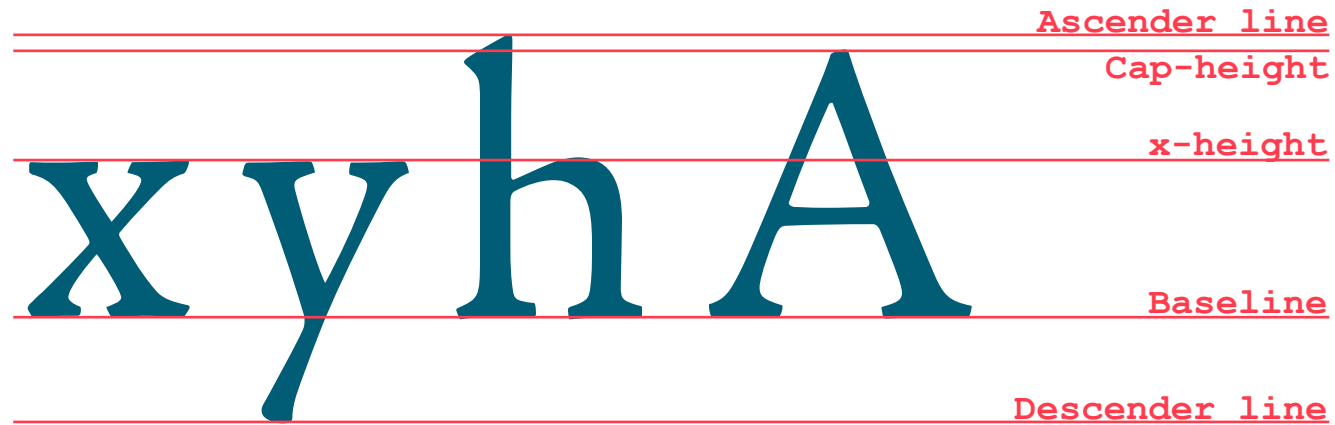
Yhpargillac is a good example of a Contemporary typeface.

YHPARGILLAC

GOUDY STOUT

Bauhaus

Anatomy of Type

Ascender line

Cap-height

x-height

x y h A

Baseline

Descender line

A A

serif   sans-serif

ear   shoulder

g m S Q

spine   tail

stem   h t e A   crossbar

finial

terminal

bowl

m B

counterform

The History of Typography

1150
Blackletter
Western Europe

1420
Roman Typeface
Nicolas Jenson
France

1510
Grecs du Roi
Claude Garamond
France

1707
Baskerville
John Baskerville
England

1400
Printing Press
Johannes Gutenberg
Germany

1449
Italics
Aldus Pius Manutius
Italy

1692
Caslon
William Caslon I
England

1764
Didot
Firmin Didot
France

1740
Bodoni
Giambattista Bodoni
Italy

1865
Goudy
Frederic Goudy
United States

1878
Univers
Adrian Frutiger
Switzerland

1918
ITC Avant Garde
Herb Lubalin
United States

1794
Clarendon
Robert Besley
England

1878
Futura
Paul Renner
Germany

1910
Helvetica
Max Miedinger
Switzerland

1999
Yhpargillac
Sara Lessans
United States

19

20

CarolTwombly

Carol Twombly is an American designer, mainly known for her type design work at Adobe Systems from 1988 to 1999.

Her most notable typefaces include Trajan, Myriad, and Lithos. She closely studied historical scripts for inspiration for her fonts, especially for the designing of Trajan. Trajan is directly based off of the roman inscriptions on Trajan's column. Another typeface of hers, Charlemagne, was based off of Carolingian decorative capital letters; while Lithos was based off of ancient Greek inscriptions. Myriad was the first completely original typeface she created.

Typefaces by Carol Twombly

Adobe Caslon
Californian FB
Chaparral
Charlemagne
Lithos
Mirarae
Myriad
Nueva
Trajan
Viva

Myriad
LITHOS
TRAJAN
CHARLEMAGNE