

A 'PERIODIC TABLE' OF TYPES

The purpose of this chart is to aid in the selection of appropriate typefaces and give a general sense of how typefaces work together. Evaluating and categorizing typefaces is an extraordinarily subjective exercise. There are over a half dozen accepted classification schemes for over 20,000 typefaces in commercial use so there will, no doubt, be contrary examples to the ones given.

In the case of music or art, selections that are very similar, but not quite the same, will cause dissonance. Similarly, two different sans serif designs in the same document will clash. Conversely, selections which are too dissimilar will also become dissonant.

The color key above each serif classification refers to the color-coded sans serif classifications. For example, a contemporary humanist type design (green) is well-suited for pairing with most serifed typefaces. The geometric sans serif fonts are more likely to complement slab serifs and clarendon serif designs.

All types are set at 36pt so there is a natural variation in apparent size in each sample.

This poster was designed by Steve Matteson (RIT 1988), Type Director for Ascender Corporation and printed at Rochester Institute of Technology in 2007.



ITALIAN OLD STYLE

hamburgetfonstiv Centaur

hamburgetfonstiv Adobe Jenson

hamburgetfonstiv Traverse

hamburgetfonstiv Della Robbia

hamburgetfonstiv Berkley Old Style

hamburgetfonstiv Italia

Types which have the characteristics of those developed during the Italian Renaissance. Attributes may include:

- slanted crossbar on e
- low contrast of thick/thin
- concave serif shape
- wedge serifs on ascenders
- extreme angled stress on round shapes



FRENCH OLD STYLE

hamburgetfonstiv Adobe Garamond

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Galliard

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Garamond

hamburgetfonstiv Hoefler Text

hamburgetfonstiv Cochin

hamburgetfonstiv Palatino

hamburgetfonstiv Bembo

hamburgetfonstiv Minion

Types which have the characteristics of those developed in France after the Italian Renaissance. Attributes may include:

- flat crossbar on e
- increased thick/thin contrast
- thin bracketed serifs
- concave serif shape
- wedge serifs on ascenders
- some angled stress on round shapes
- small counters on a and e



DUTCH OLD STYLE

hamburgetfonstiv Janson

hamburgetfonstiv Adobe Caslon

hamburgetfonstiv Caslon 540

hamburgetfonstiv Trump

Types which have the characteristics of those developed in England & Holland after the Italian Renaissance. Attributes may include:

- flat, slightly bracketed serifs
- increased thick/thin contrast
- nearly vertical stress on round shapes
- wedged serifs on ascenders



TRANSITIONAL

hamburgetfonstiv Times New Roman

hamburgetfonstiv Goudy Modern

hamburgetfonstiv Monotype Baskerville

hamburgetfonstiv Hyperius

hamburgetfonstiv Balmer

hamburgetfonstiv Georgia

hamburgetfonstiv Caldeimia

hamburgetfonstiv Lucida Bright

Types that have the characteristics which bridge the gap between Old Style and Modern. Attributes may include:

- flat, thin and bracketed serifs
- increased thick/thin contrast
- mostly vertical stress on round shapes
- nearly flat serifs on ascenders



MODERN

hamburgetfonstiv Didot

hamburgetfonstiv Bauer Bodoni

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Penke

Types having the characteristics of those developed by Bodoni and his contemporaries. Attributes may include:

- flat, thin un-bracketed serifs
- extreme thick/thin contrast
- extreme vertical stress on round shapes
- mostly flat serifs on ascenders

GEOMETRIC

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Avant Garde

hamburgetfonstiv Avenir 55 Roman

hamburgetfonstiv Futura Medium

hamburgetfonstiv Twentieth Century Medium

GROTESQUE

hamburgetfonstiv Interstate

hamburgetfonstiv Arial Medium

hamburgetfonstiv Helvetica Neuen

hamburgetfonstiv Monotype Grotesque

hamburgetfonstiv News Gothic

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Frankin Gothic

CONTEMPORARY HUMANIST

hamburgetfonstiv Verdana

hamburgetfonstiv Fruiger

hamburgetfonstiv Myriad Regular

hamburgetfonstiv Thesis

hamburgetfonstiv Gil Sans Regular

hamburgetfonstiv Mundo Sans Regular

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Legacy Sans

hamburgetfonstiv Syntax

hamburgetfonstiv Optima

GEOMETRIC
Types which are deconstructed to their simplest geometric forms. Attributes include:

- adherence to geometric shapes
- little or no modulation in stroke weight

GROTESQUE
Types designed with a sense of industrial utility. Attributes include:

- little or no modulation in stroke weight
- terminals tend to be long and nearly close off counters
- little variation in horizontal proportion
- large x-height
- square dots and punctuation



CLARENDON SERIF

hamburgetfonstiv Century Schoolbook

hamburgetfonstiv Cheltenham

hamburgetfonstiv Century Old Style

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Bookman

hamburgetfonstiv Cambria

Having the characteristics of types developed for legibility or for newspapers. Attributes may include:

- thick bracketed serifs
- relatively low thick/thin contrast
- extreme vertical stress on round shapes
- mostly flat serifs on ascenders
- large x-height

CONTEMPORARY HUMANIST SANS
Types which begin to mix characteristics of Grotesque and Humanist types. Attributes include:

- open counters with shortened terminals
- increased contrast in stroke weight
- increased variation in proportion
- round dots and punctuation

HUMANIST SANS
Types which begin to approximate the calligrapher's humanist bookhand. Attributes include:

- increased contrast in stroke weight
- flared stems evoke the swelling of a broad pen nib
- terminals are short and counters are open
- increased variation in horizontal proportion
- less emphasis on vertical axis



SLAB SERIF

hamburgetfonstiv ITC Lubalin

hamburgetfonstiv Serifa

hamburgetfonstiv Candida

hamburgetfonstiv Chaparral

hamburgetfonstiv Electra

Having the characteristics of types with unbracketed serifs. Attributes may include:

- thick serifs with no transition or 'bracket'.
- relatively low thick/thin contrast
- extreme vertical stress on round shapes
- mostly flat serifs on ascenders
- large x-height