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PRE-VENETIAN OR ANCIENT

HUMANIST OR VENETIAN

TRANSITIONAL

DIDONE

SLAB SERIFS

1400

1500

1700

1800

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Ee

Ee

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HUMANIST SANS SERIF

TRANSITIONAL SANS SERIF

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF

DISPLAY TYPEFACES

1900

2000

TYPE CLASSIFICATION



FETTE FRACTUR

PRE-VENETIAN OR ANCIENT (*Before 1400*)

Includes typefaces (inspired by historical forms) from before the 15th century many include the Incised and Blackletter styles.

INCISED: Typefaces modeled after or inspired by letters carved in stone.

Albertus

BLACKLETTER: A script style of calligraphy made with a broad-nibbed pen using vertical, curved and angled strokes. Popular from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance.

Fette Fraktur

TYPE CLASSIFICATION



ADOBE GARAMOND

Severe Axis

HUMANIST OR VENETIAN (1400-1500)

Venetian typefaces have the clearest relationship to pen-formed writing; the oblique axis is severe, the contrast is low and the letter components (*serifs, bowls, etc.*) display the abrupt modeling of the broad-edge pen.

CONTRAST: Refers to the thick/thin distribution of weight in the design of a letterform.

STRESS: The term stress refers to the diagonal distribution of contrast in a typeface. The evolution of stress is in direct relationship to the transition from hand-lettered calligraphy to moveable type. If you have ever done calligraphy you are familiar with the broad nibbed pens used in this medium. As most calligraphers are right handed the drawing of a letter results in thin and thick lines (determined by the width of the nib) and the movement of the arm and wrist (lean of the stroke).

TYPE CLASSIFICATION



NEW BASKERVILLE

Medium Axis

TRANSITIONAL (1700)

The transitional period is so named for its chronological position of development, which falls between the Venetian and Didone categories. Transitional typefaces were influenced by rationalist philosophy and Neoclassicism; these movements visually manifest themselves in the types that have a vertical (or near vertical) axis, systematic construction and high stroke contrast. These typefaces have sharper serifs and a more vertical axis than Humanist letters.

TYPE CLASSIFICATION



BODONI

Vertical Axis

DIDONE (1700-1800)

The Didone classification partially overlaps the Transitional category. However unlike the analytical Transitional period, Didones reflect expressive ideals of Romanticism. The Didone style exaggerates key features of the earlier Transitionals: letters are drawn with vertical axis, uniform widths and extreme contrast.

These typefaces have thin, straight serifs; vertical axis; and a sharp contrast in the strokes.

TYPE CLASSIFICATION

B **e**

CLARENDON

SLAB SERIFS (1800-1900)

Prior to the 19th century, typeface design was almost exclusively oriented toward the production of books. The Industrial Revolution dramatically enlarged the typographic scene; printers and advertisers demanded bigger, bolder and more flamboyant typefaces for advertising and display. Eventually, designers turned to alternative vernacular models of type and developed two forms of Slab Serifs: the earlier unbracketed versions known as Egyptians and the later, bracketed versions known as Clarendons.



TYPE CLASSIFICATION



GILL SANS

Severe Axis

HUMANIST SANS SERIF (1900)

The earliest humanist sans serifs (*sans serifs influenced by calligraphic writing and classical models**) had capitals with classical proportions, and lower case letters with calligraphic structures (*particularly the a, g, and t*). Contemporary humanist sans serifs also have humanist structure, but the capital letters are more often modern in proportion for efficiency of text. In general, a sans serif may be considered humanist when the letters have classic structures, wide apertures, angled stroke endings and/or asymmetric bowl weights.

**see type proportions section.*

TYPE CLASSIFICATION

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HELVETICA

TRANSITIONAL SANS SERIF (1900)

Also called Neo-Grotesque, Transitional sans serifs have a uniform, upright character making them similar to transitional serif letters. The first sans serif designs appeared in the early 1800s; they were literally called 'grotesque' for their shocking, unadorned appearance. The rise of modernism in the 1920s brought the previously rejected Sans Serif types into greater use. Modernists favored sans serif typefaces for their streamlined simplicity and perceived alliance with 'machine age.' In pursuit of purity, many designers adapted the original Grotesques (which were basically serif faces with the serifs cut off) into Neo-Grotesques of even more systematic construction. The emphasis on unity and rationality naturally led to the development of a geometrically constructed typestyle.

Now a days many of these fonts are also referred to as "*anonymous sans serif.*"

TYPE CLASSIFICATION

E e

FUTURA

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF (1900)

Throughout the 20th century sans serif typefaces whose designs have taken advantage of the repetition of simple geometric shapes became known as Geometric. Many of these studies began with a dissemination of the Latin alphabet while seeking its purest (or *simplest*) forms in the creation of a typeface. Many geometric typefaces are reminiscent of European design from the 1920s, like Herbert Bayer's letterforms from the Bauhaus. Typefaces in this classification often have their elements boiled down to simple forms such as: circles or other rounded forms, and straight lines.

TYPE CLASSIFICATION

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MATRIX

DISPLAY (Late 1900–2000)

Because of the onset of digital technologies there are many contemporary typefaces that cannot be classified into these categories or may be a mixture of more than one.

Most of these post modernistic results of typeface designed are referred to as Display types, they can include:

GLYPHIC (ALSO CALLED WEDGE SERIF)

Matrix

SCRIPTS

Bickham Script

TYPEWRITER/MONOSPACED

Courier

DECORATIVE

ROSEWOOD

CONTEMPORARY

ΑΓΩΖΔC

SERIF CLASSIFICATION

Adobe Garamond

Adobe Jenson

Didot

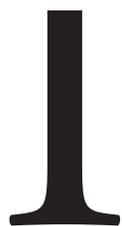
Times New Roman

Matrix

Archer

Clarendon

Mesquite



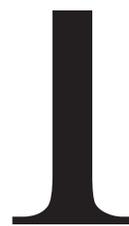
CUPPED SERIF



ROUNDED SERIF



HAIRLINE SERIF



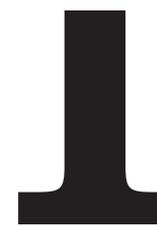
BRACKETED SERIF



WEDGE SERIF



SLAB SERIF

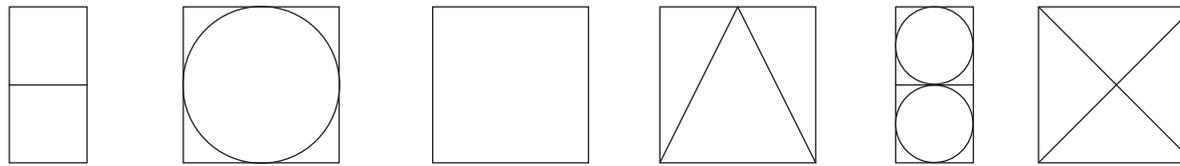


BRACKETED
SLAB SERIF



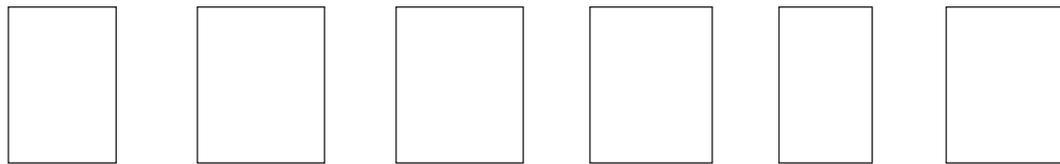
TUSCAN

TYPE PROPORTIONS



E O N A S X

TRAJAN



E O N A S X

BAUER BODONI

Throughout history of typography there have been two upper case proportional systems: **CLASSIC** (also called *Oldstyle*) and **MODERN**. Classic proportions are historical in origin; they are based on Roman inscription models. For both aesthetic and practical reasons, the ancients used divisions of a geometric square for the widths of the capital letters. In theory, the dimensions are as follows: fourteen letters (A, C, D, G, H, K, N, O, Q, T, V, X, Y and Z) are the width of a full square and seven letters (B, E, F, L, P, R and S) are the width of a half square. There are a few exceptional letters with odd widths: the I is narrow, while the M is wide. (The letters U, J, and W were later additions to the original Roman alphabet and therefore have no inscription model).

The disadvantages of the classic system led to the creation of the new, 'modern' system at the time of Transitional and Didone development. Modern proportions are based on an objective of achieving even color; each letter is designed to contain the same amount of negative space. For example, the H is slightly narrower than the O, since its square counters are physically larger. Without the constraint of a specific shape, modern proportions are quite flexible and can be used for normal, expanded or condensed types.