Typefaces get ‘personality’ from the characteristics designed into them. Type is classified based on anatomy.
Type Personality

‘Stress’ placed on the bowls, cross strokes and serifs of some letters affects appearance.
Key Identifiers

Axis

Vertical axis (Times)
Oblique axis (Garamond)
Pen-formed terminal (Arno)
Modeled terminal (Garamond)
Lachrymal terminal (Didot)
Rounded terminal (Century)
Sharply modeled (Lino Letter)

Terminals

Q Q Q Q Q
r r r r r

Serifs

Bracketed serif (Bookman)
Modeled or adnate (Caslon)
Thin or hairline (Didot)
Square or slab (Rockwell)
Sans serif (Helvetcia)

Stroke

a a a a a

Modulated, moderate contrast (Optima)
Lineal, little contrast (Trade Gothic)
x-height: is the distance from the baseline of a typeface to meanline; it is the height of a typeface without ascenders or descenders.

x-height

Garamond  Bookman Old Style

x-height is important because it contributes to a typeface’s personality, and it affects legibility and readability. A typeface with a large x-height will look larger on the page than a typeface of the same size but smaller x-height. But the descenders and ascenders will be shorter, affecting word shapes.
Key Identifiers

We read word shapes, not individual letters. The length of the ascenders and descenders affects the shapes of the words, especially the tops, where we take most of our visual cues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifying type: Serif</th>
<th>Old Style</th>
<th>Humanist: Palatino</th>
<th>Garalde: Garamond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>Rotis Serif</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>New Century Schoolbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern, or Didone</td>
<td>Bodoni</td>
<td>Didot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanistic or Slab serif</td>
<td>Lino Letter</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>Rockwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td>Handglove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classifying type: Sans Serif, Script, Graphic

Sans Serif
- Neo-grot sans serif: Helvetica
- Geometric sans serif: Gill Sans

Lineal
- Handglove

Humanist
- Optima
- Rotis Sans Serif

Script
- Bickham Script
- Bradley Hand

Graphic
- Mistral
- Bauhaus
Old Style, not old fashioned

Humanist: Palatino

- Contrast of thick and thin strokes points to an origin in handwriting.
- Light in weight with bracketed serifs and an oblique stress to bowls and counters.
- Pen-formed terminals.

Garalde: Garamond

- Garalde: contraction of ‘Garamond’ and ‘Aldus.’
- Oblique stress is maintained, as are pen-formed terminals.
- Serifs are more modeled, especially at the tops of ascenders.
Transitional

Axis of the curves such as bowl of the ‘o’ have become almost vertical.

Bracketed, slanted serifs.

Lachrymal terminals

The shape of each letter is determined by a mathematical formula based on ideal proportions.

x-heights are somewhat larger than Old Style
Modern, or didone

High degree of contrast between thick and thin strokes.
Axis of bowls and counters completely vertical.
Serifs are horizontal, hairline, unbracketed.
Called ‘modern,’ but Giambattista Bodoni (1740–1813) designed the first of these typefaces 200 years ago.
‘Didone’ is contracted from ‘Didot’ and ‘Bodoni.’
Mechanistic, or Slab Serif

Lino Letter

Handglove

Rockwell

Handglove

- Heavy, square, unbracketed serifs.
- Many of these typefaces have ‘lineal’ strokes, meaning the strokes are uniform in weight.
- These typefaces reflect their heritage in stamping machines and typewriters.
- Although Slab Serif typefaces such as City or Rockwell are limited to display use, some such as Lino Letter work well as body type.
The original sans serif fonts from the 19th Century were called ‘grotesques.’

Helvetica, introduced in 1958, reflects its origin in the Bauhaus and in Swiss modernism.

‘Lineal’ means these typefaces have nearly uniform strokes; they’re more rounded and open than the original grotesques.

Some follow precise geometric shapes, such as circles, squares, triangles.
Greater contrast between thick and thin strokes gives these sans typefaces a less severe personality. Some, such as Optima, hit and serifs with ‘chiseled’ terminals. Optima has a special place in type history. It is the font used by Maya Lin on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. John McCain’s presidential campaign adopted Optima; read more from the New York Times.
Script, graphic typefaces

Bickham Script

Bradley Hand

Bauhaus

Mistral

These fonts were designed for specialized use; each has an extravagant personality.

Script and graphic typefaces, along with other specialty styles such as ‘grunge,’ are most useful in advertising and other display layouts.

They often become clichés. Read Design Observer about Comic Sans, and visit bancomicsans.com.
Type family

A type family (Arno Pro, Myriad) is a set of related typefaces in coordinated weights and styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arno</th>
<th>Myriad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman or regular</td>
<td>Handgloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold, or demibold</td>
<td>Handgloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italic, or oblique</td>
<td>Handgloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold italic or bold oblique</td>
<td>Handgloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy (for display purposes)</td>
<td>Handgloves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the characters, symbols and numerals in one weight and style.

Times Roman
Font
In the days of hand-set and hot-metal typesetting, all type had to be bought by size. A font referred to all the characters of one size. In computer typesetting, typeface and font are synonymous.

Series or scale
In document design, a good practice is to set up stylesheets in stepped sizes to ensure contrast from one style to the next.
Rule 1

Read the text before you design a document.

TIP I
1. Insert only a single space after all punctuation.
2. Use proper em and en dashes where appropriate.

Tip II
3. Use true quote marks and apostrophes.

Tip III
4. Use a smaller point size for all-uppercase text.
5. Add letter spacing to capitalized text and small caps.

Tip IV
6. Use oldstyle figures when available and where appropriate.
7. Use a slightly smaller point size for numbers (when Oldstyle numerals are not available).

Tip V
8. Using boldface text sparingly.
9. Avoid using underlined text.

Tip VI
10. Using boldface text sparingly.
11. Avoid using underlined text.

Tip VII
12. Decrease the size of the ballot boxes.
13. Consider using other characters beside bullets.

Tip VII
14. Increase line spacing to improve readability in body text.
15. Sans serif typefaces are often less legible than serif typefaces.
16. You can probably set body text to a point size smaller than you think.
**Rule I**

Read the text before you design a document. Discover the inner logic of a text and exploit the outer logic of type.

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<tr>
<th>Tip I</th>
<th>Tip V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Insert only a single space after all punctuation.</td>
<td>8. Using boldface text sparingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use proper em and en dashes where appropriate.</td>
<td>9. Avoid using underlined text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip II</th>
<th>Tip VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Use true quote marks and apostrophes.</td>
<td>10. Using boldface text sparingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Avoid using underlined text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tip III</th>
<th>Tip VII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Use a smaller point size for all-uppercase text.</td>
<td>12. Decrease the size of the ballot boxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Add letterspacing to capitalized text and small caps.</td>
<td>13. Consider using other characters beside bullets.</td>
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Choose a typeface or family of typefaces that will bring out the character of the text.

Beowulf
An excerpt translated by Seamus Heaney
Beowulf’s name was known through the north. And a young prince must be prudent like that, giving freely while his father lives so that afterwards in age when fighting starts steadfast companions will stand by him and hold the line. Behaviour that’s admired is the path to power among people everywhere.
Rule 2
Choose a typeface or family of typefaces that will bring out the character of the text. Letter forms have tone, timber, character, just as words and sentences do.

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and hold the line. Behaviour that’s admired
is the path to power among people everywhere.
Rule 3

Start out with only one type family. Using two serif families (or two sans serif families, won’t provide contrast but will muddy type personality.

Didot & Times

Styling Life: A Declaration

One of the revelations in the studio has been that life doesn’t simply happen to us, we produce it. That’s what style is. It’s producing life. It’s inverting the energy flow. Rather than accepting that life is something that we passively receive, accept, or endure, I believe that life is something we generate. We use our capacities. And that all boils down to style. Style may be presented as theory, serendipity, or happenstance. It may be presented as all these different things. But, for the most part, style is a decision about how we will live. Style is not superficial. It is a philosophical project of the deepest order.

Times alone

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Rule 4

Before using bold, italics or especially bold italics, ask if you really need it. Bold and italics are tiring to read in large blocks.

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Rule 5

Give full typographic attention to even small details — or especially small details!

Notes on the Bauhaus

In 1919 Walter Gropius (1883-1969) was appointed to head a new institution called the Bauhaus in Weimar, the German capital. Germany had been crushed in the war and humiliated at Versailles. The economy was collapsing. Mobs of unemployed men roamed the streets waiting for a Soviet-style revolution to erupt.

Against this background Gropius, chairman of the Working Council for Art, sought to bring all of the arts together under the wings of a great architecture. The Bauhaus style of architecture would proceed from certain assumptions:

(1) The new architecture was to be created for the workers,
(2) The new architecture was to reject all things bourgeois; and
(3) The new architecture would return to the original Classical principles of Western architecture.

New architectural materials dominate the building. The walls — almost entirely glass — are divided by slender brick piers. The lightness of the building is enhanced through cantilevering and by the elimination of structural supports at the corners.

The Bauhaus, dedicated to utopian collectivism, chose Expressionism as its form of communism, not Marxism, and the idea of art as a quasi-religion was dominant. Buildings soon became theories constructed in the form of concrete, steel, wood, stucco, and glass. A building must have a flat roof and a sheer façade, with neither cornices nor eaves. As color was considered bourgeois, buildings were white, gray, beige, or black.
On the next three pages, you’ll see headline sets in six typefaces. Look at them closely, then rank them 1 (most appropriate) to 6 (least appropriate).
1. Man kills wife, then self
2. Man kills wife, then self
3. Man kills wife, then self
4. Man kills wife, then self
5. Man kills wife, then self
6. Man kills wife, then self
1. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie

2. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie

3. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie

4. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie

5. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie

6. Wedding bells ring out in Skokie
1. Expect more snow this weekend

2. Expect more snow this weekend

3. Expect more snow this weekend

4. Expect more snow this weekend

5. Expect more snow this weekend

6. Expect more snow this weekend
This experiment is similar to one performed years ago by Miles Tinker. He found that readers did find certain typefaces significantly more appropriate for some news categories than for others.

For ‘Man kills wife, then self,’ 1. Times Roman and 3. News Gothic Bold come out as most appropriate, with 5. Mistral and 6. Bernhard Modern in last place.


For ‘Expect more snow this weekend,’ no clear choice emerges between 1, 2 and 4. News Gothic Regular, but 3, 5 and 6 are usually deemed inappropriate.

This exercise teaches us that:

1. Typeface must fit the subject matter.
2. Typefaces with unusual designs can’t serve a wide variety of information such as that found in a daily newspaper.
3. Type families with straightforward designs in several weights and styles provide the most flexibility.

Note in the example at right how each font alters the meaning of the word ‘tragedy.’ Sometimes you’ll choose a typeface for that meaning.