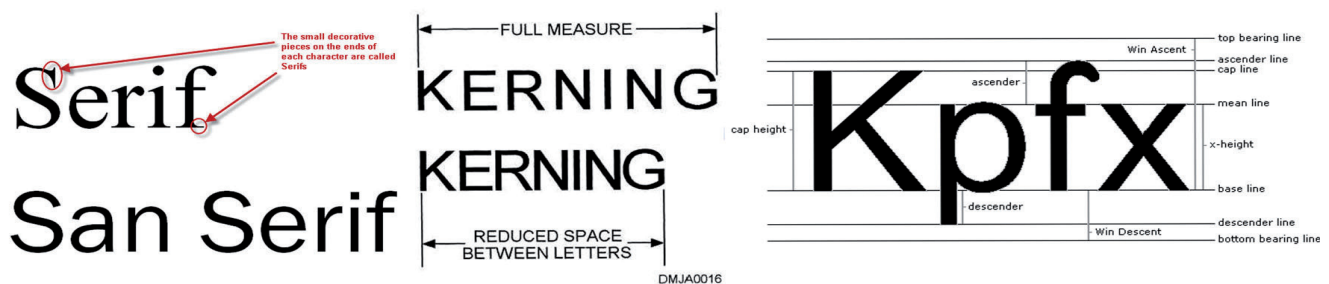


Fonts

Nowadays **font** is frequently used synonymously with the term “typeface”, although before the advent of digital typography and desktop publishing, “font” referred to a single size and “typeface” referred to a set of otherwise identical fonts of different sizes. There are serif fonts and sans serif fonts. **Serif** fonts are characterized by the extensions, or **strokes**, on the **tips** of some letters. The term comes from the French word *sans*, meaning “without”.



Cursive fonts resemble hand-written pen or **brush** strokes often connected together and are more difficult to read. The **default** cursive fonts on most computers is **Comic Sans**, which is **widely** available and more legible than most other fonts of the family. Fantasy fonts are not easily read either, so they are not used as the main font for long passages of text. Monospace fonts are so-called because each letter **takes up** the same **width** of space.

Clever graphic designers like to use typography to explore the interaction between the **look** of type and what type actually says. In communicating a message, a balance has to be **achieved** between the visual and the verbal aspects of a design.

to achieve: raggiungere, ottenere
 to account for: spiegare
 affect: influenzare
 although: sebbene
 awareness: consapevolezza
 background: retroterra, bagaglio culturale
 brand: marca
 brush: pennello
 clever: brillante, intelligente
 to convey: conferire
 default: opzione automatica
 to do all the talking: dire tutto ciò che c'è da dire
 draw: attrazione
 effort: tentativo
 however: tuttavia
 look: (qui) aspetto
 nowadays: oggi
 otherwise: altrimenti
 regardless: indipendentemente
 serif: grazia
 stroke: tratto
 to take up: (qui) occupare
 tip: (qui) estremità
 unpredictable: imprevedibile
 viewer: spettatore
 widely: ampiamente
 width: ampiezza

Sometimes, **however**, designers explore the visual aspect of type to a much greater extent than the verbal one. In these cases, the visual language **does all the talking**. Cal Swann, author of *Language and Typography*, makes this point well when he says, “These two distinct areas often come together in practice as there is clearly a very strong relationship between the conception of the words as a message and their transmission in visible form.” Thanks to the choice of type, the same message can be presented in a number of ways **to convey** and encourage a diversity of responses.

We all have different cultural **backgrounds** and experiences that **affect** our perception of type one way or another. So, **regardless** of the designer’s skill and **effort**, a number of uncontrollable aspects remain, including the **viewer’s** perception, expectations, knowledge, experiences and preferences. And while **accounting for** all such **unpredictable** responses to type is impossible, **awareness** is critical.

Let’s look at an interesting piece from an ad campaign by Greenpeace:

In this ad, you are confronted with the familiar name style of one of the world's favourite chocolate bars, the Kit Kat. The type style and letterform proportions and certainly the colour, shape and angle all create an instantly recognizable connection with the Kit Kat brand – so much that you would be forgiven for seeing the name Kit Kat before reading and taking in the actual written message. Your familiarity with the brand is an instant draw and to appreciate the change of the message you may need a second look.



1a Decide if the following sentences are true or false and correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Designers evaluate the message and the audience for type-based design. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Good graphic design does not communicate by means of the written word but just by drawing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The width of alphabetical characters and the spaces between them are very important. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The x-height does not represent the body of the type. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. We all have different cultural backgrounds and experiences that affect our perception of type. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The intended audience of the Greenpeace ad are politicians. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1b Now correct the false sentences.

2 Two graphic designers are deciding what typeface to use on their website. Complete their sentences with the words listed below.

though • choosing • font • agree • designers • right • sizes (2) • body copy • readable

- A: I know that many (a) hate using Helvetica, because it is wildly overused, but I don't (b) on this: people overuse Helvetica because it's just so damn good! It fits right in with virtually every design imaginable, it works well in small, as well as huge (c)
- B: In Michael Beaumont's words: "If it looks (d), it is right." But we aren't on the same page here. No pun intended! If it works, then go for it; it isn't exactly my idea of innovation.
- A: Your (e) is arguably the part of your design that needs to be most (f), so if you make sure you pick a (g) that works well in small (h), the trick's done (i) fonts is really a gut instinct, and my instinct says Helvetica.
- B: Well, mine doesn't (j)