

# A new typography




Nowadays there are a number of different types of file formats for graphics. Each type stores graphics data in a different way. Bitmap, vector and metafile formats are by far the most commonly used formats. However, there are other types of formats as well as scene, animation, multimedia, hybrid, hypertext, hypermedia, 3D, virtual modelling reality language (VMRL), audio, font and page description language (PDL).

As we have seen above, before the digital era, types were two particular styles of lettering: serif faces (those with terminal **strokes**) and sans serifs (those without terminal strokes). Functional and geometric, sans serif letterforms were **pioneered** by **Bauhaus designers** in the 1930s and **labelled** “new typography”. The

**Bauhaus era** was one of the most influential in terms of modern design and architecture.

**The Bauhaus** was founded in 1919 in the city of Weimar by German architect **Walter Gropius** (1883-1969). Its **core** objective was a radical concept: to re-imagine the material world to reflect the unity of all arts. Gropius explained this vision of **a union of art and design** in the **Proclamation of the Bauhaus** (1919), a neologism meant to describe a utopian **craft guild** combining architecture, sculpture and painting in a single creative expression. Gropius developed a **craft-based curriculum** that would **turn out** artisans and designers capable of creating useful and beautiful objects appropriate to this new system of living. As head of the print department at the Bauhaus, Herbert Bayer produced this **alphabet**:

His **simple, geometric Universal alphabet** also suspended the use of capital letters. Taking inspiration from Bayer’s Universal face, for the first time Paul Renner used the revolutionary approach of a completely **even** stroke throughout the alphabet. The **typeface** is derived from simple geometric forms (near-perfect circles, triangles and squares) and is based on **strokes** of near-even **weight**, which are **low** in contrast. Even if the letterforms are based on squares and circles, the crossbar of the “E” and “F” is positioned above the centre. These designs are now **issued** in digital form as Bayer Universal.

**1**  After reading the passage above, take turns in asking and answering these questions. Then give a short talk on the topic the passage deals with.

1. Who pioneered sans serif letterforms in the 1930s?
2. What was the neologism ‘Bauhaus’ meant to describe?
3. Did Gropius establish an educational institution?
4. What was the main innovation introduced by Bayer?
5. What does VMRL mean?

**craft-based curriculum:** *curricolo di studi basato su attività laboratoriali*

**core:** *nucleo fondante*

**craft-guild:** *associazione che promuoveva le arti applicate*

**to label:** *etichettare*

**low:** *basso*

**even:** *piatto*


**to issue:** *pubblicare*

**to pioneer:** *sperimentare*

**stroke:** *tratto*

**to turn out:** *diventare*


**weight:** *peso*

- 2  Now give a short talk on the topic the passage deals with.



- 3  Complete the following text with the missing words.

The choice of the (1) ..... used in any text, title, (2) ....., name or logotype, as far as style or quality are concerned, is called lettering. This choice is one of the fundamental items in the graphic (3) ..... 's job. A good designer should know typography as well as having practical skills that will provide an appreciation of the value of craftsmanship, patience and the importance of attention to detail. A historical perspective on typography and (4) ..... is essential.

- 4  You are going to attend a workshop on hand-lettering for graphic design. Here is the list of what you need. Rearrange the letters to find out what you are supposed to bring with you.

- a. No 2 of *Isicnep*: .....
- b. Pencil *nereprahs*: .....
- c. *Resare*: .....
- d. Pad of tracing *perpa*: .....
- e. Fine and extra fine *kersram*: .....
- f. Adhesive *etap* for posting *etchesks*: .....