



# The Evolution of Type

An infinite variety of styles has been designed since the invention of movable type. These styles were greatly influenced by the social and artistic trends of the period, the printing technology of the day, and the widening distribution and changing applications of printed materials. For instance, during the industrial revolution as printed materials became more ubiquitous and literacy increased, many typefaces were designed especially for use in printed advertisements. These faces were designed to grab a reader's attention and be more legible at a glance.

# Old Style

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*The letterforms are open  
and round, making the face  
extremely readable.*

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Old Style typefaces, having little contrast between thick and thins, heavily bracketed serifs, and oblique stress. The letterforms are open and round, making the face extremely readable. The capital letters are shorter than the ascenders of the lowercase letters.

Garamond is a quintessential old style serif typeface. Claude Garamond, who died in 1561, was originally credited with the design of this elegant French typeface; however, it has recently been discovered

that the face was designed by Jean Jannon in 1615. Many present day versions of this typeface are based on Jannon's designs, although they are all called Garamond.

This is a typical Old Style face, having little contrast between thick and thins, heavily bracketed serifs, and oblique stress. The letterforms are open and round, making the face extremely readable. The capital letters are shorter than the ascenders of the lower-case letters.

# Transitional

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Transitional typefaces are so called because they form a bridge between the Old Style and the Modern faces. Compared to the Old Style, Baskerville shows a greater contrast between the thicks and thins, serifs are less heavily bracketed, and the stress is almost vertical.

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*Transitional typefaces make  
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and readable fonts.*

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Baskerville, designed by the English John Baskerville in 1757, is an excellent example of a Transitional typeface. The letters, wide for their x-height, closely fitted, and of excellent proportion, make for one of the most pleasant and readable fonts.

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# Modern

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*Because of the strong vertical stress, accentuated by its heavy thicks and hairline thins, the horizontal flow necessary for comfortable reading is impaired.*

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At the end of the eighteenth century, a fashion grew for faces with a stronger contrast between thick and thins, unbracketed serifs, and strong vertical stress. These were called Modern faces. All the older faces became known as Old Style, while the more recent faces – just

prior to the change – were referred to as Transitional. Bodoni is a Modern typeface, designed in the late 1700's by the Italian typographer, Giambattista Bodoni. Although Bodoni has a small x-height, it appears very wide and black. Because of the strong vertical stress, accentuated by its

heavy thicks and hairline thins, the horizontal flow necessary for comfortable reading is impaired. Bodoni, therefore, must be well-leaded.

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# Slab Serifs

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*Members of the Egyptian family of typefaces, make good display type because of their boldness.*

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After Bodoni, the type designers began to search for new forms of typographic expression. Around 1815 a type style appeared that was characterized by thick slab serifs and thick main strokes with little contrast between thicks and thins. This style was called Egyptian.

Century Expanded is an excellent example of a refined Egyptian typeface. It is based on a type called Century, designed in 1894 by L.B. Benton and T.L. Devinne for the Century Magazine. Century Expanded has a large x-height and

should be leaded. The large letters and simple letterforms combine to make it very legible and especially popular for children's books. Like most members of the Egyptian family of Typefaces, Century Expanded makes a good display type because of its boldness.

# Sans Serifs

Although typefaces without serifs were used in the nineteenth century, it was not until the twentieth century that they became widely used. Sans serif types in general have relatively little stress and the strokes are optically equal. Because there is no serif to aid horizontal flow that we have seen is so necessary to comfortable reading, sans serif type should always be leaded.

Helvetica was introduced in 1957 by the Haas type foundry and was first presented in the United States in the early 1960's. Helvetica is a contempo-

rary font of Swiss origin. Although Helvetica has a large x-height and narrow letters, its clean design makes it very readable.

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*Sans serif types in general have relatively little stress and the strokes are optically equal.*

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