Gavin Ambrose & Paul Harris

This book is a guide to the many and varied terms used frequently within typography. From Accents to X-height and Apex to Word shape, this book will prove an **invaluable resource** to anyone interested in typography and graphic design. Each term is **explained** and **contextualised**, giving the reader an enhanced understanding of typographic terminology. More than **250 common typography terms** are distilled and illustrated. From **practical terms** such as Baseline, Kerning and Serif to **movements and styles** such as De Stijl, Postmodernism and Utilitarian, this book contains both **modern terminology** and the **traditional terms** still in current usage.

The Visual Dictionary of Typography

ava academia

The Visual Dictionary of Typography

An AVA Book

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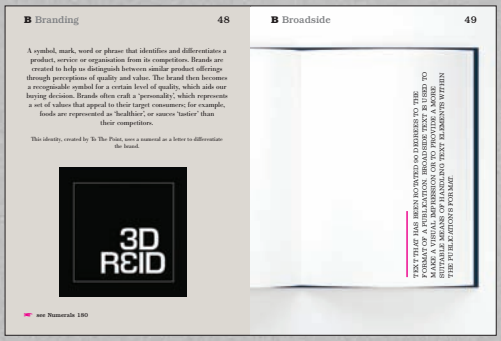
Gavin Ambrose & Paul Harris

The Visual Dictionary of Typography

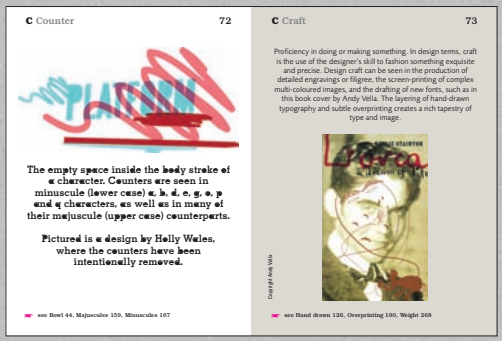
academia

This book is an easy-to-use reference to the key terms used in typography. Each entry comprises a brief textual definition along with an illustration or visual example of the point under discussion. Supplementary contextual information is also provided.



Key areas addressed in this book are those terms commonly used in reference to the study of typography.

Entries are presented in alphabetical order to provide an easy reference system.



A Apostrophe 30

A punctuation character used in many languages that use the Latin alphabet. It is used in the English language to indicate the omission of letters from a word, or the possessive case.

The apostrophe is also used in other languages to represent the omission of a sound in a word; to mark the point at which a word is divided into its root and its affixes; to represent palatisation (where certain vowels have an effect on nearby consonants) and to represent the glottal stop (the voiceless noise represented by the hyphen in the English word uh-oh).

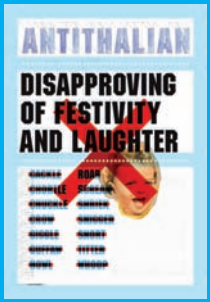
The prime symbol (′) is often confused with the apostrophe due to its similar appearance and the fact that many fonts offer one character for both purposes. However, a prime is a separate character that is used to designate various units, as well as mathematical and scientific expressions.

This is an apostrophe.

This is a prime.

☛ see Punctuation 207, Scientific characters 224

A Appropriation 31



The act of acquiring something, often without the permission of the owner. Designers may appropriate typography from other designs, the built environment or antique books.

This poster was created by Why Not Associates for The Art of Lost Words exhibition at the text/gallery, London. Organisers asked 47 participants to contribute original work that used a forgotten word from the English language. This design appropriates a poster style from the early twentieth century.

Each page contains a single entry and, where appropriate, a printer's hand symbol ☛ provides page references to other related and relevant entries.

276 277

1st Century BC
Etruscan
The development of the carved letterform began with the Etruscan, and later Roman, carvers working in marble. This period saw the development of stroke variation and changes in the vertical weight and proportion of characters.

1170–c.1250
Fibonacci numbers
The Fibonacci number sequence is named after *Leonardo of Pisa*, who was also known as Fibonacci. His number series is constructed with each number being the sum of the previous two. The sequence can be used to create a sense of harmony and proportion to a design. The sequence, starting at 0 is as follows:

0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144...

These numbers might be used when designing grids, or when selecting appropriate proportional relationships between type sizes, for example.

150 BC
Paper
Paper was invented in China in 150 BC and is considered one of the *Four Great Inventions of Ancient China*, along with the compass, gunpowder and printing. Paper was a cheap alternative to silk and allowed for the production of printed items. Consequently, it also meant that China could export more silk (as it wasn't being used for a writing surface) and this lead to increased wealth and prosperity. Around this time, the use of paper was widespread in China and Japan, and the use of paper spread around the world (although it didn't reach Europe for nearly 900 years).

1150–1500
Black letter
Black letter is a form of script in common usage throughout Europe (though most notably in Germany where it was in use for over 300 years). Also called Textura, relating to the woven appearance it made on a page, Black letter has several variants. Rotunda is a more open character variety common in Southern Europe. Bastarda, a mix of Black letter and Rotunda was popular in England, France and parts of Northern Europe. Although we now perceive it as hard to read, it was in its day considered perfectly legible.

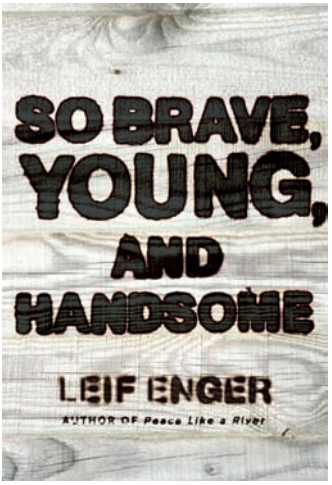
c.1398–1468
Johannes Gutenberg
A printer who is credited with developing the first practical movable type and moveable type system. Although it is known that other nations and printers had done similar exercises, it was his persistence that led to the widespread use of printing in Europe. His system used a 'casting' of individual letterforms that could be reused. He also created an ink with sufficient 'tack' to stick effectively to these metal forms.

1436
Movable type
A system of printing that used individually, when formed characters to create lines, pages and columns of text. The characters could be set, used, dismantled and reused, leading to a cost-effective way of printing en mass. This form of printing was extensively used well into the twentieth century. Many printing terms in use today are a relevance to this system, such as 'type', leading, a term used today to describe the space between lines of type, which, in moveable type, was formed of thin slithers of metal.

A timeline helps to provide historical context for selected key moments in the development and evolution of typography.

Welcome to *The Visual Dictionary of Typography*, a book that provides textual definitions and visual explanations for common terms found in typography and related disciplines.

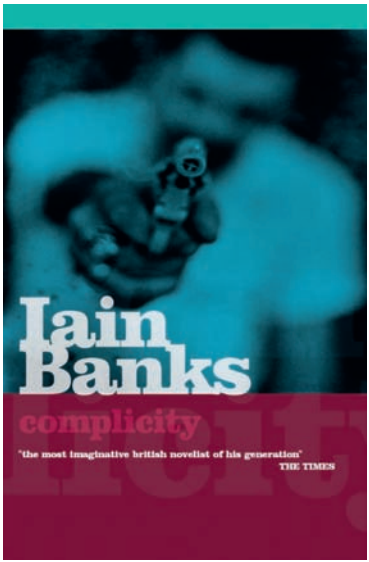
This book aims to provide a clear understanding of the many terms used within typography and graphic design. As you might expect, visual explanations and examples from key graphic design studios are given, from the traditional and the classic to the contemporary and experimental.

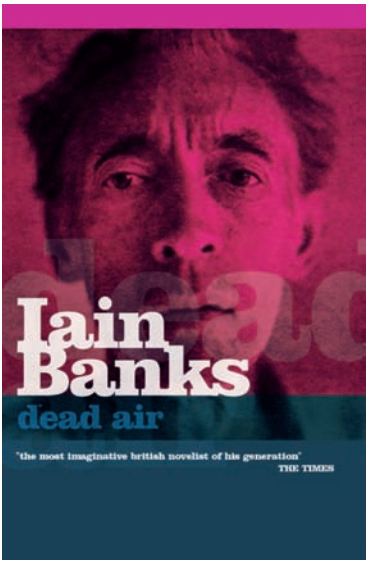


Left: This book cover was created by Andy Vella and features sans serif typography to create a youthful visual impression. The text is styled to appear as though it has been burnt into the wood, which adds a rawness that is in keeping with the subject matter. Image copyright Andy Vella.

Opposite: This staff booklet, by To The Point for Moneycorp, demonstrates the clarity of a simple, enforced hierarchy. Hierarchy is discussed on page 130.

5
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?
Outstanding career
A rock solid
A fun
1
A NEW BEGINNING
It has been almost 30 years since the first ITI branch opened for business on Oxford Street. As Geoffrey Chaucer wrote in 1374, "mighty oaks from little acorns grow" and such has been the case for ITI Moneypoint, with the business experiencing amazing growth thanks to the hard work and dedication of all who work here.
My warmest thanks to each and every one of you!
Bassam
Bassam Shlewet, Chairman
"mighty oaks from little acorns grow"
7
A BRAND FOR THE FUTURE





Above:
These book covers created by Andy Vella feature negative leading and slab serifs to produce a solid-looking block of type. Leading is discussed on page 149. Image copyright Andy Vella.

Left:
This brochure created by Unthink features a headline with negative leading overprinting a dramatic image. Headlines are discussed on page 178, and overprinting on page 190.

Right:
This CD artwork was created by Frost Design for Sheesham and Lotus. It features a tapestry of letterpress typography sizes and typefaces to represent the oldtime, ragtime and folk music the record contains. Letterpress is discussed on page 153.

Typography communicates through a range of visual devices, from words constructed by a chain of letters to messages formed by the visual appearance of letters on a page.

A clear understanding of the key terms and concepts used in typography will enable you to better articulate and formalise ideas, and will ensure greater accuracy in your communication of those ideas to others.

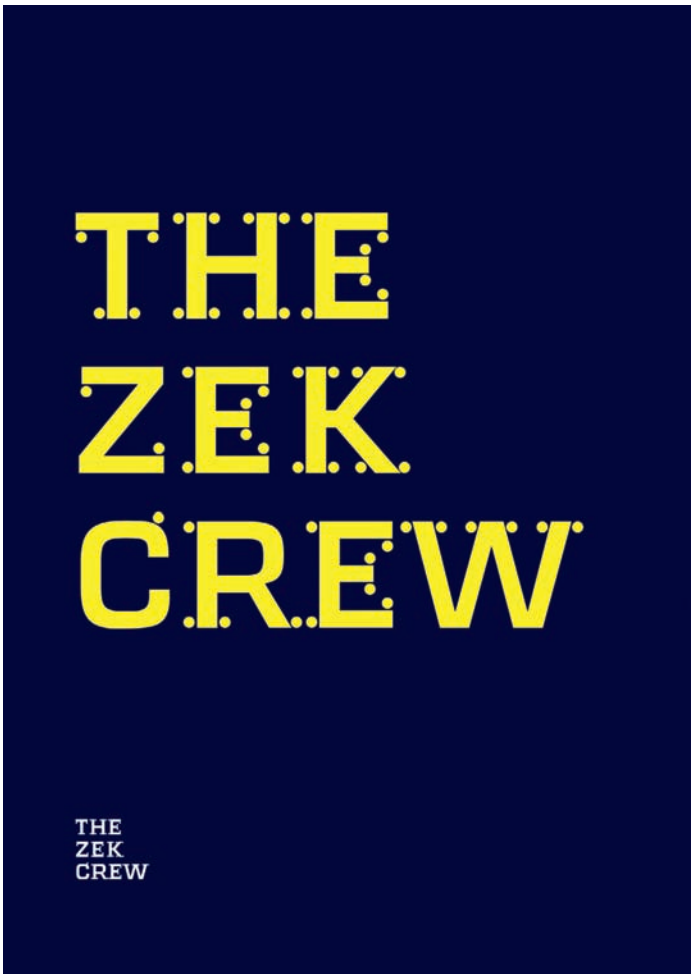
With the benefit of technological developments, the field of typography is flourishing and represents a powerful, vibrant and constantly evolving and expanding applied visual form. It is a media with a long history and noble heritage, but it is also a vital, dynamic and contemporary means of expression, interpretation and communication, which conveys ideas and messages with compelling form in any media.

The following text provides thought-provoking, compact and basic definitions, and instructive insights into important fundamental principles, methods, materials, equipment, technical advances, techniques and movements in typography and art and design.

The book also includes a timeline charting the evolution of and developments in the field of typography and covers work by such notable figures as William Caxton, Johannes Gutenberg, Giambattista Bodoni and John Baskerville.

Left:
Texture can add to the visual impact of typography. Texture is discussed on page 250.

Opposite:
This experimental design by The Zek Crew features a re-invention of the serif, with dots used rather than glyphs. Serifs are discussed on page 226 and glyphs on page 117.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The Dictionary

Abbreviations are formed by omitting the end of a word or words. Contractions (formed by omitting the middle of a word or words) and acronyms (formed from the initial letters of words) are also forms of abbreviation.

Abbreviations present a typographical challenge in terms of achieving consistency, conveying the required, unequivocal meaning and producing a clean design. Rules regarding the use of upper-/lower-case letters and full points vary widely so in terms of typography, consistency and convenience are the most important factors. Variations in UK English include:

A.M. vs am (a contraction of antemeridian)
Prof. vs Prof (an abbreviation of Professor)

Acronyms never carry full points. For example: NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

☞ **see Acronyms 21, Minuscules 167**

A CONCEPT OR IDEA THAT IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ANYTHING SPECIFIC. PEOPLE GIVE MEANING TO ABSTRACT DESIGNS BY COGNITIVELY APPLYING WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED FROM THE IMPLIED AND LITERAL MEANINGS OF OTHER THINGS.

THIS DESIGN BY FUTRO FEATURES TYPOGRAPHY THAT HAS BEEN ABSTRACTED THROUGH THE USE OF FILLED COUNTERS, ZERO TRACKING AND LETTER SPACING. THIS ABSTRACTION MAKES THE WORDS MORE DIFFICULT TO READ, BUT CREATES A STRONG, ABSTRACT VISUAL STATEMENT.

☞ see Counter 72, Denotive and cognitive meaning 79

Various diacritical marks indicate how the sound of a letter is modified when pronounced. Accents are rarely used in English but are relatively common in other languages. Pictured below are the main accents used in European languages, together with their common names in English. They are available for lower case, upper case and small capitals. Standard fonts include some letters that have accents already positioned above them, but it may sometimes be necessary to construct these manually. To do this, position the accent (a glyph) after the letter and kern it back until it is correctly positioned.

é	É	Acute	č	Č	Háček
ő	Ő	Double acute	ā	Ā	Macron
è	È	Grave	ç	Ç	Cedilla
ê	Ê	Circumflex	ą	Ą	Ogonek
ë	Ë	Umlaut / diaeresis	å	Å	Ring
ă	Ă	Breve	ä	Ä	Umlaut
ñ	Ñ	Tilde	ȧ	Ȧ	Dot / Overdot

☞ **see Glyphs 117, Kerning 143, Overdot 189, Small capitals 235**

An abbreviation formed using the initial letters of a phrase or name. Acronyms are pronounced as words themselves. For example:

NASA, NATO, UEFA, Aga, Fiat, scuba, laser

Acronyms do not take full points and may be set in small capitals as shown below:

The U.S. government plans to send a manned spacecraft to the moon. The NASA is tasked with making this happen.

(1) Small caps generated by layout software – notice the lighter small capitals

The U.S. government plans to send a manned spacecraft to the moon. The NASA is tasked with making this happen.

(2) Specific small caps cut of the original font – notice the matched font weights

☞ **see Abbreviations 18, Small capitals 235**

The horizontal position of type within a text block.

Centred
Centred aligns each line horizontally in the centre to form a symmetrical shape on the page. Line beginnings and endings are ragged. Raggedness can be controlled to a certain extent by adjusting line endings.

Justified
Justified text sees each line extend from the left to right margin by varying the space between words and breaking them. This can allow the appearance of rivers of white space and plagues of hyphenation to appear.

Range right
Flush right, ragged left alignment sees the text aligned to the right. This arrangement is less common as it is more difficult to read, but is sometimes used for picture captions and other accompanying texts as it is clearly distinct from body copy.

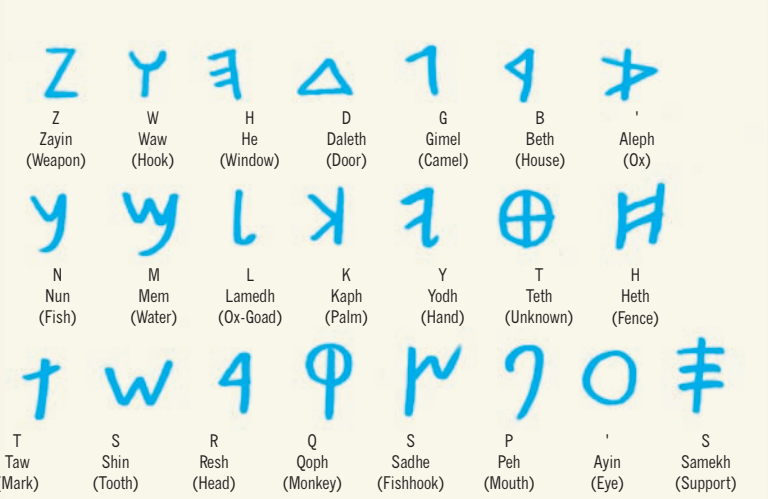
Range left
Flush left, ragged right alignment follows the principle of handwriting, with text tight and aligned to the left margin and ending ragged on the right.

F o r c e d
Forced alignment is similar to justified but each line is forced to extend fully between the right and left margins, even short lines of text. Forced is rarely used but can sometimes be seen in newspaper copy.

☞ **see Rivers 217, Text blocks 246**

A set of letters, characters or symbols used to write or represent a language. Most alphabets represent consonant and vowel sounds. However, in some systems, symbols are used to represent whole words. Egyptian hieroglyphs are an example of these non-alphabetic representations. Most modern-day European alphabets are derived from the modern Latin alphabet (a descendant of the Phoenician alphabet). The modern Latin alphabet consists of 52 upper-case and lower-case letters, with ten numerals and a variety of other symbols. However, different languages use various combinations of these.

The Phoenician alphabet is derived from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and some of the symbols are shown here. Each letter's name begins with the letter itself, and in many cases, the symbols represent the objects they are named after.



see Arabic 32

Lack of clarity or definition. Ambiguity exists where it is unclear how to interpret or identify different letters in a text block.

Put simply, some fonts are easier to read than others. But equally you can argue that readability is related to context. The font below, for example, would be hard to read set as small body copy, but would be perfectly legible in a heading or fairground signage.

It is worth considering the priorities of a piece of typography. Whether it needs to be engaging, or readable, or distinct, will inform the typographical outcome.

☞ see Font/Typeface 106, Legibility 151, Readability 210

A ligature of the letters of the Latin word *et*, which means ‘and’.

The earliest usage of the ampersand symbol dates back to the first century AD and it is now found in many languages that use the Latin alphabet. The provenance of the ampersand can be clearly seen in some typefaces where the E and T can be distinguished.

The ampersand is presented in all manner of ways in different typefaces, as the above examples show.

☞ **see Punctuation 207**

The different strokes that form typographical characters. Each letter can be thought of as a body comprised of various constituent parts, and the study and identification of these parts likened to anatomy.

Various non-alphabetic typographic characters. Ancillary characters are used to communicate different ideas or concepts and add further understanding to text. Such characters include punctuation marks, symbols, pictograms and modified letterforms. Ancillary alphabetic characters can be classified into the following general groups:

Single stroke symbols, punctuation and diacritical marks made with a single mark or stroke:

° ^ – . [|

Double stroke symbols, punctuation and diacritical marks made with two marks or strokes:

« “ : ; + =

Multiple stroke symbols, punctuation and mathematical characters:

… % ± ÷ §

Pictograms symbols, punctuation and decorative elements:

‡ *

Modified letterforms ligatures, signs and other punctuation with historical letterform origins:

§ & £ Æ Ø Œ

A sequence of images that are displayed one after the other in quick succession to give the appearance of movement. Animation has become popular in graphic design due to an extension of the media that designers work with, and the innovations of web and digital communications. Working in the digital sphere and using programs such as Flash allows text and images to be animated. Animating text helps to draw user attention and can augment and reflect the personality of a brand in the way that it moves. Animation is also used to produce opening titles and idents in TV and film production.

The stills shown here are from an animation created by Social Design for Universal Music's Sam King. The animation features an 'o' in the form of an exploding CD.

☞ see Moving image 172