Typeface Classification

- A basic system for classifying typefaces was devised in the nineteenth century, when printers sought to identify a heritage for their own craft analogous to that of art history.

- Humanist letterforms are closely connected to calligraphy and the movement of the hand.

- Transitional and Modern typefaces are more abstract and less organic.

  - These three main groups correspond roughly to the Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment periods in art and literature.

  - Designers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have continued to create new typefaces based on historic characteristics.

HUMANIST OR OLD STYLE

- The roman typefaces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries emulated classical calligraphy.

- Sabon was designed by Jan Tschichold in 1966, based on the sixteenth-century typefaces of Claude Garamond.

Aa

TRANSITIONAL

- These typefaces have sharper serifs and a more vertical axis than humanist letters.

- When the fonts of John Baskerville were introduced in the mid-eighteenth century, their sharp forms and high contrast were considered shocking.

Aa

MODERN

- The typefaces designed by Giambattista Bodoni in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are radically abstract.

- Note the thin, straight serifs; vertical axis; and sharp contrast from thick to thin strokes.

Aa

EGYPTIAN OR SLAB SERIF

- Numerous bold and decorative typefaces were introduced in the nineteenth century for use in advertising.

- Egyptian fonts have heavy, slab-like serifs.

Aa

HUMANIST SANS SERIF

- Sans-serif typefaces became common in the twentieth century.

- Gill Sans, designed by Eric Gill in 1928, has humanist characteristics.

- Note the small, lilting counter in the letter a , and the calligraphic variations in line weight.

Aa

TRANSITIONAL OR ANONYMOUS SANS SERIF

- Helvetica, designed by Max Miedinger in 1957, is one of the world's most widely used typefaces.

- Its uniform, upright character makes it similar to transitional serif letters.

- These fonts are also referred to as "anonymous sans serif."

Aa

GEOMETRIC SANS SERIF

- Some sans-serif types are built around geometric forms.

- In Futura, designed by Paul Renner in 1927, the Os are perfect circles, and the peaks of the A and M are sharp triangles.

Aa

Typeface Classification

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Humanist   Transitional   Modern   Egyptian

Aa Aa Aa

Humanist Sans   Transitional Sans   Geometric Sans

Old Style: Serifs, medium stroke contrast, ascenders extend above cap height (Garamond)

Transitional: Serifs, greater stroke contrast, high legibility (Times New Roman)

Modern: Flat Serifs, extreme stroke contrast (Bodoni)

Sans Serif (Gothic): no serifs, all strokes of nearly equal weight (Helvetica)

Script: flowing, handwriting, both joined and unjoined letters (Brush Script)

Special (Decorative/Novelty): Visually distinctive, but often difficult to read (Burton's Nightmare)

How to choose a typeface

- Function

- Audience

- Mood
  - Roman: dignity, austerity, grace
  - Modern/Egyptian: forceful, assertive, presence and persistence
  - Sans serif: modern, business-like, efficient, no-nonsense
  - Scripts: imitate handwriting

BASKERVILLE

Designed by *John Baskerkville*, 1757

....

BODONI

Designed by *Giambattista Bodoni*, 1790s

....

ADOBE CASLON

Designed by *Carol Twombly*, 1990, based on
types by *William Caslon*, 1734–70

....

CENTAUR

Designed by *Bruce Rogers*, 1912–14.
The italic, by *Frederic Warde*, is based on the
fifteeenth-century hand of *Ludovico degli Arrighi*.

CENTURY EXPANDED

Designed by *Morris Fuller Benton*, 1900

....

CLARENDON

Named for the **Clarendon Press**, Oxford,
who commissioned it in 1845

....

HTF DIDOT

Designed by *Jonathan Hoefler*, 1992,
based on types by *François Ambroise Didot*, 1784

....

FEDRA SANS

Designed by Peter Bilak, 2001, who was asked
to create a "de-Protestantized Univers"

FILOSOFIA

Designed by *Zuzana Licko*, 1996,
a revival of the types of *Bodoni*

FRUTIGER

Designed by **Adrian Frutiger**, 1976

FRANKLIN GOTHIC

Designed by **Morris Fuller Benton**, 1904

FUTURA

Designed by **Paul Renner**, 1927, who sought
an "honest expression of technical processes"

GEORGIA

Designed by *Matthew Carter*, 1996,
for display on screen

GILL SANS

Designed by **Eric Gill**, 1928.
It has been described as Britain's Helvetica.

ADOBE GARAMOND

Designed by *Robert Slimbach*, 1989,
based on pages printed by *Claude Garamond*
in the sixteenth century

HELVETICA

Designed by **Max Miedinger**, 1957

HOEFLER TEXT

Designed by *Jonathan Hoefler*, c. 1995

INTERSTATE

Designed by **Tobias Frere-Jones**, 1993,
inspired by U.S. highway signs

....

ADOBE JENSON

Designed by *Robert Slimbach,* 1995

....

META

Designed by Erik Spiekermann, 1991

....

MRS EAVES

Designed by *Zuzana Licko,* 1996,
inspired by pages printed by *John Baskerville*

....

NEUTRAFACE

Designed by **Christian Schwartz**, House Industries,
2002, based on lettering created by the architect
Richard Neutra in the 1940s and 50s

....

NOBEL

Designed by **Tobias Frere-Jones**, 1993,
based on 1929 types by the Dutch typographer
Sjoerd Henrik de Roos.
Frere-Jones describes Nobel as
"Futura cooked in a dirty pan."

....

NEWS GOTHIC

Designed by Morris Fuller Benton, 1908

....

QUADRAAT

Designed by *Fred Smeijers,* 1992

....

SABON

Designed by *Jan Tschichold,* 1966,
inspired by the sixteenth-century types of
Claude Garamond

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SCALA

Designed by *Martin Majoor*, 1991

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THESIS SERIF

Designed by **Lucas de Groot**, 1994

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TRADE GOTHIC

Designed by **Jackson Burke**, 1948–60,
inspired by nineteenth-century grotesques

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UNIVERS

Designed by Adrian Frutiger, 1957

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VERDANA

Designed by **Matthew Carter**, 1996,
for display on screen