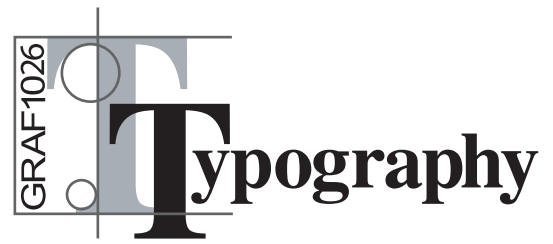


Lecture 5

Syntax and Typographic Communications



Over the years designers have developed thousands of type faces. Why?

Syntax & Communication

Syntax is the connecting of typographic elements to form words and sentences on the page

The elements we have available to use are:

- The individual letter
- The word
- The line of type
- The column
- The margin and negative space

These elements are made into a cohesive communicating whole by the use of:

- Typographic spacing
- Visual hierarchy
- Contrast
- Grid systems

In grammar, syntax is the manner in which words are combined to form phrases, clauses or sentences. Typographic syntax is the process of arranging elements into a cohesive whole.

What this means is...

We as designers use type as a graphic tool to help communicate meaning
Over and above the use of just straight type

- The Letter
- All letters are different
- The Word

As soon as letters are joined together to make a word they take on meaning expressing an idea, object or event.

But, also by using typographic design their meaning can be further revealed or amplified.

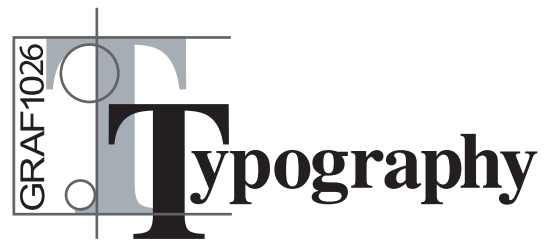
- The Line of Type
- Words are connected to make lines of type.

The way in which these lines of type are configured (ie. choice of typeface, point size, weight, & kerning) all effect the way that line of type looks and feels.

Lines of type may be arranged as single lines, or blocks of lines, which may be either symmetrically placed or asymmetrically placed.

Always pay attention to the relationship between the positive area of the line, or lines of type and the negative surrounding space. (white space)

Even the very smallest change in the choice of typeface, point size, weight, tracking, leading, word and letterspacing, has a distinct effect on the appearance of line of type.



It is the designers job to select and balance these options to best achieve a desired result.

Lines of type can be set up in numerous ways:

- Flush left, ragged right
- Centered
- Flush right, ragged left
- Justified (ie. lined up both left and right)

Ruled Lines

Ruled lines & punctuation used in conjunction with type lines can also serve to separate or emphasize specific elements.

Column & Margin

Multiple lines of type may be arranged into columns of type.

Factors effecting the balance and feel of these columns are:

- The width of the column in relation to its height
- The mass tone of the column (ie how light or dark the whole block appears)
- The white (negative) space surrounding the column

Typographic communication can be manipulated by the way in which the...

- Letters
- Words
- Lines

Columns and their related white space (margins) are configured and placed on the page.

Using this manipulation the designer can group information according to its role of importance in the design and so direct the reader to take in the information in a specific desired order.

This process of directing the reader from the most important information to the least important information is known as establishing a:

VISUAL HIERARCHY

To Sum Up

The exact way in which we use letters, words, lines, columns and negative space has great impact on how well the meaning of a subject is conveyed to the reader. All designs call for a Visual Hierarchy

Typographical Rules

An excerpt taken from Robin William's
"The Mac is Not a Typewriter"



- Use only one space between sentences.
- Use real "quotation" marks.
- Use real, apostrophes.
- Make sure the apostrophes are where they belong.
- Use en and em dashes where appropriate. option - (–), and shift + option - (—)
- Use the special characters whenever necessary, including super and subscript.
- Spend the time to create nice fractions. Option Shift 1 makes a proper fraction bar.
- If a correctly-spelled word needs an accent mark, use it. For example – é.
- Don't underline.
- Never use all caps in body text; rarely use it in headlines.
- Kern all headlines where necessary.
- If printing to a postscript printer never use a city-named font.
- Never use the space bar to align text.
- Use a one-em first-line indent on all indented paragraphs.
- Use a decimal or right-aligned tab for the numbers in numbered paragraphs.
- Leave no widows or orphans.
- Never have more than two hyphenations in a row.
- Avoid too many hyphenations in any paragraph. Edit your H+J's.
- On every line of text in the document, watch all line breaks carefully. Be sensible.
- Keep the line spacing consistent.
- Adjust the spacing between paragraphs; rarely use a full line of space between paragraphs in body text.
- Either indent the first line of paragraph or add extra space between them —not both.
- Never justify the text on a short line.
- Hang the punctuation off the aligned edge.
- Use serif type for body text unless you are going to compensate for the lower read ability of sans serif.
- Never combine two serif fonts on one page.
- Never combine more than two typefaces on one page (unless you've studied typography). So the gist is: if you're going to use more than one face, use one serif and one sans serif.
- Use italic and bold sparingly.
- Use proper punctuation with parentheses.
- Align the first baselines of juxtaposed columns (columns beside one another).
- Encourage white space.
- Don't crowd text inside a box – let it breathe.
- Be consistent.
- Use some sort of bullet when listing items, not a hyphen.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Use small caps for 3 A.M. and 6 P.M. space once after the number, and use periods.
- Reduce the size of the punctuation marks in headlines.
- Set the space before an *italic* word also in italic.