

Matching the Font to Your Messages

Typography focuses on the characteristics of a typeface, the shape of the characters and the overall aesthetics of a particular font. By following some basic design guidelines, it will help you to work effectively with your graphic design source. The objective of font selection is to strike a harmonious blend of what's readable and what's visually appealing. Keep the following in mind:

- Use standard fonts for primary content. Contrary to popular theory, "Plain Janes" **are** easier on the eyes - when it comes to fonts for body copy. Creating an effective document whether it's a flyer, newsletter or direct mailer, means it has to deliver the key messages to the intended audience. And standard fonts say it best.
- Use decorative fonts sparingly. To add a touch of flair and visual appeal, decorative fonts can be effective for headlines or used in the absence of art or graphic elements. Using a decorative font for the body copy on a long document is, however, a no-no. Don't make your reader work so hard.
- Know and understand the difference between serif and non-serif fonts. Serif fonts are fonts with little hooks on the ends of the font. The serifs usually help make the font more readable. But because of the fine detail, serif fonts can be harder to read in small point sizes or in low resolution documents. Sans serif fonts are fonts without serifs. They have a more stark appearance and are often used for headlines.
- Add contrast to add interest. Add visual contrast to your documents by using white space, typography and type size. Setting headlines, for example, in a noticeable different typeface and size will stimulate your reader's eyes.
- Use bold, italics and underlining sparingly. One way to create contrast or provide emphasis is through bold or italic type. Beware of going overboard.
- Don't use all caps. YOU'RE SHOUTING. (And it's hard to read.)
- Be conscious of feminine and masculine fonts. Gorillas don't look good in dresses. Best not to use a thin, or curly or curvy font in, say, an industrial parts brochure. Matching your brand identity and image with the right font is a careful selection process.