

TYPOGRAPHY

Typography uses typefaces and the whitespace around and through them to create a whole design.

Elements of Typography

Typefaces and Fonts: Typefaces are a family of fonts (such as Helvetica Regular, Helvetica Italic, Helvetica Black, and Helvetica Bold). Fonts are one weight or style within that family (such as Helvetica Bold).

Typeface Classifications: These are sometimes called "font families". They are large groupings of typefaces based on generic classifications. On Web pages, there are six types:

- serif
- sans-serif
- monospaced
- cursive
- fantasy
- script

Typeface Anatomy: Each typeface is made up of different elements that distinguish it from other typefaces. Unless you are going to go into type design, Web designers don't generally need to know the specifics of typeface anatomy. But if you're interested, there is a great article on typeface anatomy on the About.com desktop publishing site. The elements you should be aware of are:

- Cap and x-height: This is the height of the capital letters in the typeface and the height of the letter x. It tells you how tall the largest letters will be, and how big most lowercase letters will be.
- Descenders and ascenders: These are the portions of letters that go below and above the x-height line. These typically refer to lowercase letters.

Spacing Around Letters

There are several adjustments that can be made between and around letters that affect typography.

- kerning - space between individual letters
- tracking - space between groups of letters
- leading - space between lines of type
- measure - the length of lines of text
- alignment - placing text to the left, right, centered or justified
- ligatures - letters moved close together so that their anatomies are combined