

"The very next day, Maria sent me a **layout that achieved the goals** I wanted, way below budget!"

Roger C. Parker

www.designtosellonline.com

AT A GLANCE

What typeface should I use?

Choosing what type to use in your document is a subjective thing. It should match your content and reflect (and connect with) your audience. Its goal is to set the mood and overall look of your piece.

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How to put your best typeface forward

Make sure your typeface works with your copy; not against it.

The first question designers always ask themselves when they sit down to design is: "*what typeface should I use?*"

There are so many choices available to us—now more than ever. There are literally thousands of fonts for us to use in our designs. How do we make sure that we are using the best one for our publication?

Type selection is purely a subjective choice and is left up to the designer. Experiment: try some type combinations and don't forget to print them! Ask yourself: *do they work together?* Is the type hierarchy observed? Does it speak to your viewers and lead them through the copy? But, most importantly, *does it "look good"?*

Let's examine the role of typography in your design and what you should take into consideration when choosing the best typeface for your design.



Type considerations: making sure your type works for you

The goals of type selection are: ease of readability, it should always match your content and connects emotionally with your audience. Some considerations:

THE DESIGN

1. What look are you going for?

You can classify the look into five different categories:

1. **Age** (kids, teens, adult)
2. **Image** (professional, casual)
3. **Mood** (comical, sporty)
4. **Era** ('60's, disco, renaissance)
5. **Culture** (Italian, Chinese).

2. Keep your typefaces distinctive

The cardinal rule in type says that you should start by selecting one sans serif and a serif font face. Always remember that the typefaces shouldn't look similar but look very different: either by weight, contrast, stroke, or style.

Any type treatment you use should always be to **enhance the copy** and not distract from it. They should not compete!

BONUS

When in doubt...

When in doubt, you can never go wrong choosing a typeface that have both families of sans serifs and serifs typefaces.

ITC Stone has both a Serif and a Sans Serif Font and they work nicely together.

ITC Stone Sans Serif
ITC Stone Serif

TIP

Use text and paragraph styles to maintain consistency

Keep in mind that **connecting with readers** on an emotional level is through type selection.

3. Use display fonts sparingly

Display fonts can be used when needed, but used in moderation. They should be used sparingly, making them more effective and adding punch to a design.

4. Consistency

Use the same size, font treatment and paragraph spacing throughout your document. Consistency is always key.

THE COPY

5. Create a visual hierarchy

Type hierarchy and layout hierarchy need to be observed and followed.

Achieving type hierarchy is very easy: it's done through type weight, which reflects and leads your reader through the different levels in your copy.

6. Establish content & purpose

Is the content formal or informal? Serious or comical? A typeface should always be a reflection of the copy.

What is your goal? To inform, entertain or sell something?

7. How much text is there?

Is the copy something that has to quickly be glanced over? Or have its entirety read? For instance, catalog copy is very short which is perfectly suitable for a sans serif font.

THE FINAL

8. Format it will be viewed in

Will the publication be a professionally printed brochure, a catalog, a fax, or viewed on the web? The format is also a deciding factor in type choice.

If it's to be professionally printed you can afford to use a more detailed serif font that has delicate strokes. Is it on the web? Sans serif fonts are always easiest to read.

9. Final resolution

At what resolution will this be printed? If it's a fax (considered low-resolution), you may opt for a stronger typeface that can afford the loss of detail that happens on copiers or fax machines.

TYPE COMBINATIONS

The point here is to mix it up!

Classic or professional look

- You can use the font Helvetica for the headlines, Garamond for text.
- Use only Times or Baskerville. Then use different weights to establish hierarchy.

Modern look

Avant Garde used for the headlines and subheads, and Palatino or Trooper for body text.

Informal or casual look

The Stone family, Comic Sans, Cronos, Dom Casual, and Sanvito all work for a more informal look.

To learn more

Good design is all about the details: no matter how small. To find out more on how I can provide you with a fresh perspective on your design challenges and get more done in less time, visit my website www.mygraphicsnotebook.com or call me at 514 256-0134.