

Vocabulary

- ascenders
- baseline
- body copy
- bold
- cap height
- capital letters
- centered
- column width
- condensed
- counter
- depth
- descender
- display faces
- em
- expanded
- flush left
- flush right
- italic
- justified
- kerning
- leading
- letterspacing, or tracking
- legibility
- ligature
- lower-case letter
- modern
- negative leading
- picas
- points
- punctuation
- readability
- roman
- sans serif
- script
- serif
- slab serifs
- small caps
- wordspacing
- x-height

You should know the meaning of the words on the left. A few helpful illustrations follow:

1. Leading is measured baseline
to baseline

T H I S I S T R A C K I N G

THIS IS WORDSPACING

THIS IS BAD KERNING

These are dingbats: ☆ ✂ ☆

12 points make a pica; 6 picas to an inch; 72 points to an inch

12/15 means 12 point type set with 3 points of extra leading (12 + 3 = 15)

8p6 can also be expressed as 8½ picas. 13p2 means 13 picas plus 2 points.



This type is italic.

This type is roman.

Display faces are for sizes larger than 14 points. Body copy is used for long passages of text. Many faces can be used for both display and text.

This type is condensed.

THIS TYPE IS EXPANDED.

This type is distorted

This type is 10/15, which is considered extremely open leading. It can have impact for short captions but a whole book set 10/15 would be tiring to read because the eye would have to move too far.

Computers usually default to leading that is 20% greater than the point size, meaning that 10/12 is very normal reading. But remember that not all eight-point faces look the same. Garamond has a much smaller x-height than Helvetica, and will look far more open set 10/12.

Negative leading was impossible with lead type because some of the letterforms overlap. This is set 10/8 and you can see some of the ascenders are overlapping the descenders on the line above.

Negative leading can look great in a short headline but is difficult to read in long passages.

San Serif faces usually have the same stroke weight both vertically and horizontally.

Serif faces usually have contrast between vertical and horizontal stroke weights.

While italic type may be used for emphasis, any type that is different will serve as an accent. This means that a word in regular weight will be emphasized if all other type is bold weight, and that a word in roman style will be emphasized if every other word is italic, and so on. Use Bold type, caps, italic, etc., selectively to create EMPHASIS: when you try to e m p h a s i z e everything, you emphasize nothing. Underlining impairs the legibility of the letters and should not be used unnecessarily.

Readability and legibility are not quite the same.