

The Right Font for the Job

Type Selection: Beyond the Look of the Letter





TYPE SELECTION
*Beyond the Look of
the Letter*

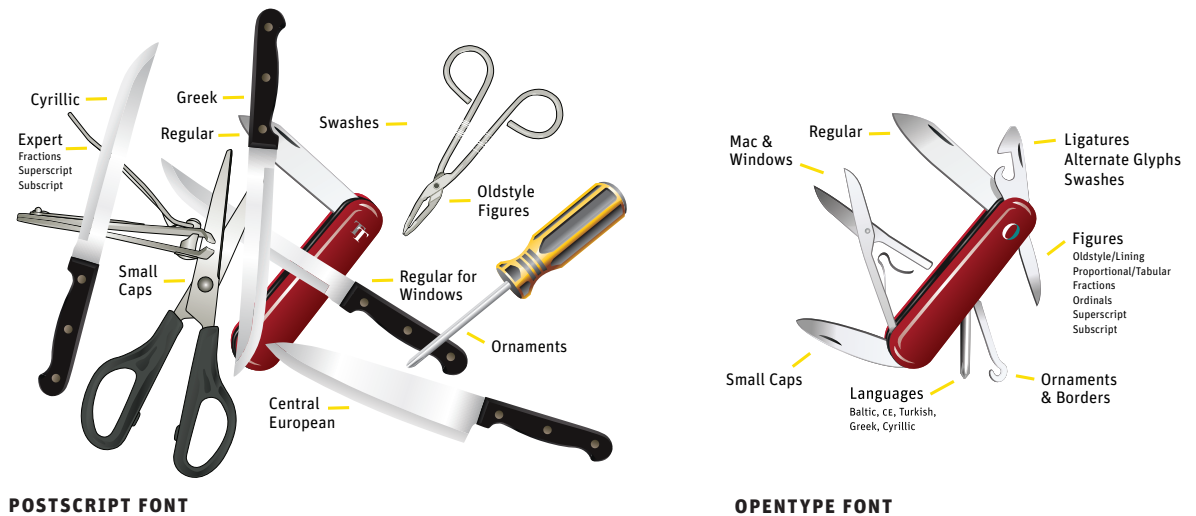
How do I know which font is right for the job?

Why do some fonts cost more than others? Why are there so many versions of the same typeface? These are good questions. Fortunately, we have answers. Introducing the first edition of FontShop Fundamentals, an educational series dedicated to type tips and design ideas. Let's go beyond form and dig into font function. Below are four main ways fonts can differ, even if most of their letters look the same. Save, bookmark, or print this document and ask yourself these questions the next time you're choosing type.

1. The font has the right form. What about the function?

A few years ago, you had to make a decision between TrueType or PostScript and Mac or Windows. Today, the choice is usually fairly simple: OpenType is the most convenient and full-featured font format, compatible with all modern screen and print workflows.

All the extras that are commonly spread across multiple PostScript or TrueType files can live in one OpenType file. Best of all, OpenType is a truly cross-platform format. You can use the same font on Mac or Windows machines without converting the font or fearing reflow.



OpenType is the best choice for graphic designers working in updated versions of Adobe® CS and QuarkXPress®. It's often the best choice for non-designers as well, such as users in the corporate environment who want cross-platform compatibility or who set type in Greek, Russian, or other Eastern European languages.

If you use applications like Microsoft® Office® and QuarkXPress® 6.5 (or older) which don't support OpenType's advanced features, and you need access to extras like small caps and alternate glyphs, you may need to stick with legacy formats for now. Or check out Office FontFonts which are OpenType fonts created specifically for MS Office.

2. Does it include all the features I need?

Most fonts contain the basic characters you need for setting a line of text, but often it's *the extras* that set one version of a typeface apart from the others. Additional glyphs have the power to save you time, or make your work look great, and read well. Here's how.

Whilst during the lunar eclipse of 1928 one of these *solar flames* grew in height 123 KM to more than 348 KM above the star's surface.

<i>Height in Kilometers</i>	1928	1929
SOLAR FLAMES	348	427
SOLAR ICE-FIGURES	0	0
LUNAR FLAMES	12	6
LUNAR ICE-FIGURES	987	645

ARNHEM

Typographic Features. Some fonts come with one style of capitals and one kind of figure set (numbers). That will work fine for most headlines and display work. But if you're setting body copy or columns of data you may need small caps and appropriate figures such as oldstyle figures for text, tabular figures for tables, and proper fractions. Most professional fonts have all these extras.

Written by Seamus Smith

BERRANGER SCRIPT

Natural Ligatures



Avoids duplicate letterforms



Written by Seamus Smith

SUOMI HAND SCRIPT



Authentic letter connections

Ligatures and Contextual Alternates. Sometimes you can get by with a basic handwriting font, but to truly replicate the natural flow and variation of a pen on paper, an advanced script employs ligatures and glyphs that change according to their position in a word.

Versatile glyphs
Versatile glyphs

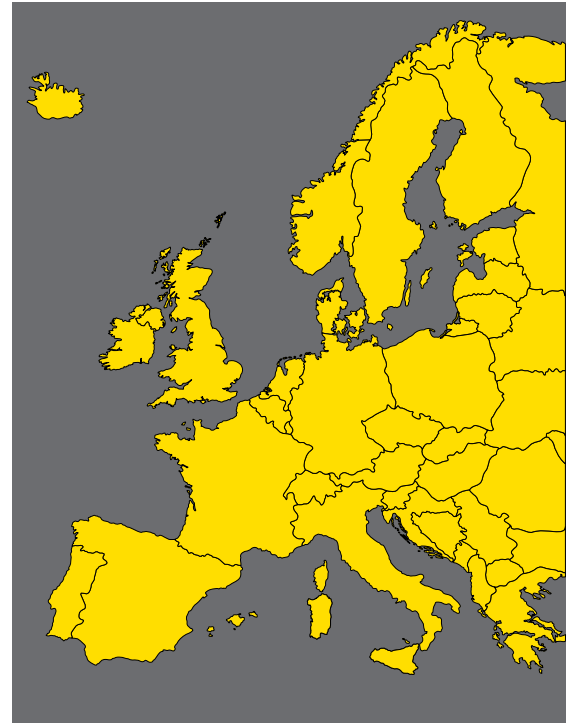
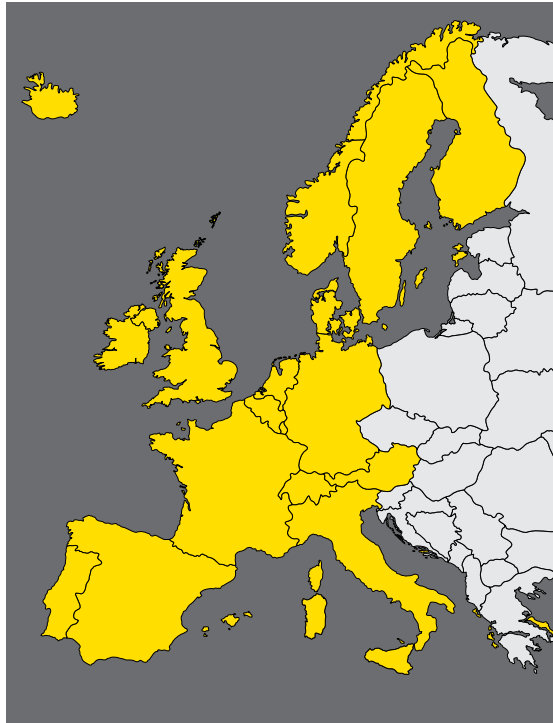
FF UNIT

Stylistic Alternates. A single typeface can take on a completely different flavor simply by using alternate letterforms. When you buy a font like FF Unit that has a large set of alts it's almost like you're getting several typefaces in one.

3. Does it speak my language?

Nearly every commercial font contains all the characters you need for Western European languages, such as English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and those of Scandinavia. Fonts that support Central (CE) and

Eastern European languages like Czech, Polish, Hungarian and sometimes Russian and Greek are often called “Pro” fonts and can cost a bit more for the benefit of reaching a broader audience.



LANGUAGE SUPPORT comparison between FF DIN OT and FF DIN PRO

Plan ahead: select fonts that support all the languages you might want to speak to in the future. If there’s ever any question about whether a font has the characters you need, you can always check its glyph set in the Specimen tab found on every Single Font page at FontShop.com. Western European characters are always on the first page with other character sets represented in the pages that follow.

Sample Text Sample Character Set

Features Hover over a feature to learn more. Click a feature to view its glyphs.

Characters	Access All Alternates	Case-Sensitive F
Classical Greek	Kerning	Standard Ligatures
Color Features	Numerators	Oldstyle Figures
Currencies	Stylistic Alternates	Stylistic Set 1

All Glyphs (255 of 411 glyphs)

B	C	D	E	F
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FONTSHOP.COM CHARACTER SET VIEWER

4. Is it all in the family?

For some uses, a basic set of weights (regular, italic, bold, bold italic) is all you need. For more intensive work, such as a publication or corporate identity, investing in a comprehensive family or suite of related typefaces makes sense both stylistically and logistically.

	Light	Book	News	Medium	Bold	Black	Ultra
Compressed	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Condensed	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Narrow	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Regular	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Wide	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Extended	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

FF CLAN

Weights and Widths

A font family with a wide range of weights and widths gives you extra flexibility for setting type in any kind of situation – whether it’s a twenty-foot billboard or a tiny footnote – while maintaining a consistent style throughout.

Hamburgerfontsi

FF NEXUS SERIF

Hamburgerfontsi

FF NEXUS SANS

Hamburgerfontsi

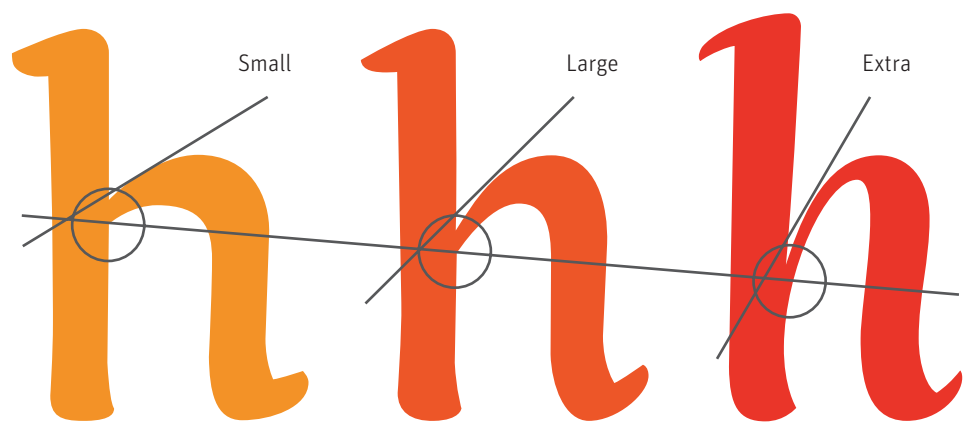
FF NEXUS MIX

Hamburgerfont

FF NEXUS TYPEWRITER

Superfamilies and Suites

Families with complementary serif, sans, and/or slab versions extend a typographic palette even wider and answer the age-old question, “what typeface works well with this one?” Many sans/serif companions are available as a single package for a reduced price. It’s a one-time investment that can pay dividends for years down the line.



RUMBA

Optical Size Variants

A type family with Optical Sizes offers sturdy, readable cuts for text, and showy titling styles for the big stuff, yet all recognizable as a single, cohesive type design.



FontShop Education

Without training the best typefaces can only go so far. That's why FontShop is more than a shop that sells fonts — we want to help you do great work too. Get more typography tips and tutorials at fontshop.com/education.

About FontShop

Founded by Erik Spiekermann and Neville Brody in 1989, FontShop is the original independent retailer of digital type. We offer more than 100,000 fonts from dozens of expert-selected foundries, including our house brand: FontFont.

Colophon

This document is set in FF Meta Headline for titles, FF Meta Serif for text, and FF Unit for captions.

Further Reading

- **FontShop Fundamentals 2**
Alternatives to Helvetica
- **Erik Spiekermann's**
Typo Tips
- **Type Glossary**
- **Type Anatomy**

Online Resources

- **FontShop.com**
- **FontFeed.com**
- **Spiekermann.com**

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