A Five-Minute Guide to Better Typography

Typography is the technique of arranging type for

Effective communication

and a bit of delight.

Type? I has them!

abcd abcd abcd

efgh efgh efgh

ijklm ijklm ijklm
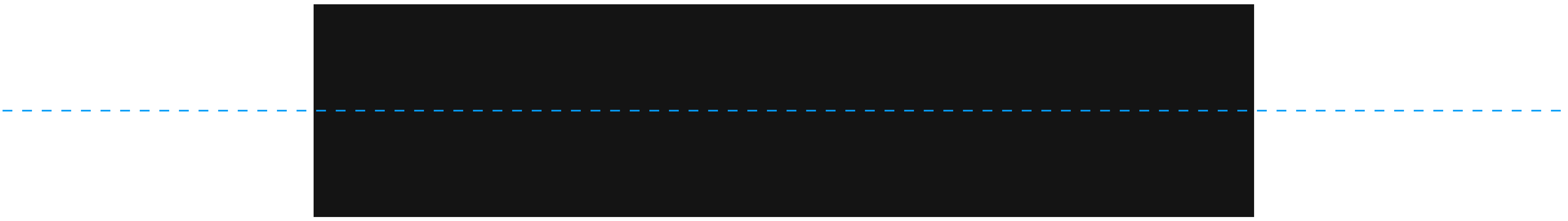
nopq nopq nopq

But,

Type is a beautiful group of letters, not a group of beautiful letters.

Think in blocks:

Type is a beautiful group of letters, not a group of beautiful letters.

Type is a beautiful group of letters, not a group of beautiful letters.

— Matthew Carter

Headless Body in Topless Bar

Headless Body in Topless Bar

(Headless Body
in Topless Bar)

Type is not an exact science.
It is aligned when it *feels* aligned.

Bonjour

Urnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga
endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi
amaranth water spinach avocado daikon
napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane
kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin
horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root
water spinach fennel kombu maize.

Bonjour

Urnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize.

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Realign if necessary:

←

Bonjour

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Start with one typeface;

Pick one that has lots of weights. Four at least.

Light
Regular
Medium
Bold

equals a typeface

Use contrast:

Do Not Read The Next Sentence.

You little rebel. I like you.

In doubt, skip a **weight**:

BOLD

Bonjour

MEDIUM

J'aime le fromage

LIGHT

Urnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize.

In doubt, multiply by **two**:

100pt # Bonjour

50pt ## J'aime le fromage

25pt Urnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize.

Pay attention to your line-spacing:

Turnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize bamboo shoot green bean swiss chard seakale pumpkin onion chickpea gram corn pea. Brussels sprout coriander water chestnut gourd swiss chard wakame kohlrabi beetroot carrot watercress. Corn amaranth salsify bunya nuts nori azuki bean chickweed potato bell pepper artichoke.

Naa...

Turnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize bamboo shoot green bean swiss chard seakale pumpkin onion chickpea gram corn pea. Brussels sprout coriander water chestnut gourd swiss chard wakame kohlrabi beetroot carrot watercress.

Noo...

In doubt, use a line-spacing of 1.2x to 1.5x the font size:

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Turnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel kombu maize bamboo shoot green bean swiss chard seakale pumpkin onion chickpea gram corn pea. Brussels sprout coriander water chestnut gourd swiss chard wakame kohlrabi beetroot carrot watercress. Corn amaranth salsify bunya nuts nori azuki bean chickweed potato bell pepper artichoke. Nori grape silver beet broccoli kombu beet greens fava bean potato quandong celery. Bunya nuts black-eyed pea.

x1.2

for a short paragraph

x1.5

for a long story

Tame the flow:

Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable, and appealing when displayed. The arrangement of type involves selecting typefaces, point sizes, line lengths, line-spacing (leading), and letter-spacing (tracking), and adjusting the space between pairs of letters (kerning[1]). The term typography is also applied to the style, arrangement, and appearance of the letters, numbers, and symbols created by the process. Type design is a closely related craft, sometimes considered part of typography; most typographers do not design typefaces, and some type designers do not consider themselves typographers.[2][3] Typography also may be used as a decorative device, unrelated to communication of information.

Typography is the work of typesetters (also known as compositors), typographers, graphic designers, art directors, manga artists, comic book artists, graffiti artists, and, now, anyone who arranges words, letters, numbers, and symbols for publication, display, or distribution, from clerical workers and newsletter writers to anyone self-publishing materials. Until the Digital Age, typography was a specialized occupation. Digitization opened up typography to new generations of previously unrelated designers and lay users, and David Jury, head of graphic design at Colchester Institute in England, states that "typography is now something everybody does."[4] As the capability to create typography has become ubiquitous, the application of principles and best practices developed over generations of skilled workers and professionals has diminished. So at a time when scientific techniques can support the proven traditions (e.g., greater legibility with the use of serifs, upper and lower case, contrast, etc.) through understanding the limitations of human vision, typography as often encountered may fail to achieve its principal objective: effective communication.

X_X

Turnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga
endive cauliflower sea lettuce kohlrabi
amaranth water spinach avocado daikon
napa cabbage asparagus winter
purslane kale. Celery potato scallion
desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot
soko. Lotus root water spinach fennel
kombu maize bamboo shoot green
bean swiss chard seakale pumpkin
onion chickpea gram corn pea. Brussels
sprout coriander water chestnut gourd
swiss chard wakame kohlrabi beetroot
carrot watercress. Corn amaranth
salsify bunya nuts nori azuki bean
chickweed potato bell pepper
artichoke. Nori grape silver beet
broccoli kombu beet greens fava bean
potato quandong celery.

Turnip greens yarrow ricebean rutabaga endive cauliflower sea
lettuce kohlrabi amaranth water spinach avocado daikon napa
cabbage asparagus winter purslane kale. Celery potato scallion
desert raisin horseradish spinach carrot soko. Lotus root water
spinach fennel kombu maize bamboo shoot green bean swiss
chard seakale pumpkin onion chickpea gram corn pea.
Brussels sprout coriander water chestnut gourd swiss chard
wakame kohlrabi beetroot carrot watercress. Corn amaranth
salsify bunya nuts nori azuki bean chickweed potato bell
pepper artichoke. Nori grape silver beet broccoli kombu beet
greens fava bean potato quandong celery.

Use between **40**...   ...and **70** characters per line.

12px size is too small

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14-25px size is better

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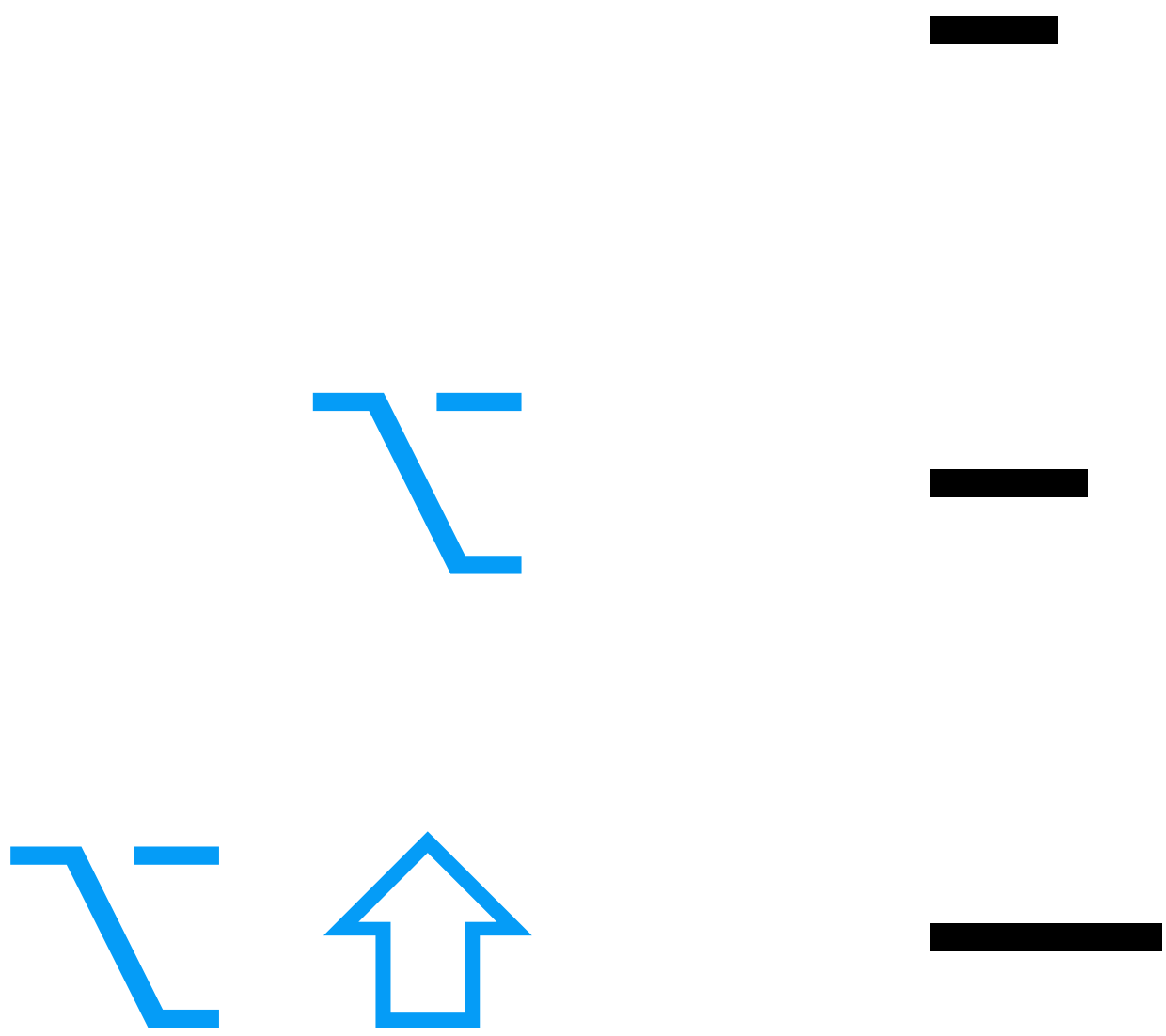
In doubt, align left.

Now for some nerdy stuff:

Hyphen   En Dash   Em Dash

The hyphen is used for compound terms:

- - —

check-in

money-back

pull-up

Did you know? Hyphenated words
are new words in the making:

full moon   time-out   breakfast

→

language darwinism

The en dash is used to represent a range or a connection:

- – —

1926–2017

Pages 37–61

Paris–Shanghai

The em dash can beautifully replace commas, parentheses, or colons:

‐ – —

The em dash is underused
in typography—such a waste.

Finally, pay attention to kerning:

A|

Aw

Awa

Awai|

Await|

Await

Await

Await

1

18

18,

18,1

18,15

18,150

18,150

18,150

18,150

keming. (kĕm-ĭng).
n. The Result of
improper kerning.

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in Berlin alone, the Meermann Group is the partner of choice for
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SPREE

STOP

TRAVEL

Wrap-up:

Don't nerd over typefaces, just pick one / Think type as blocks / Align with your eyes / Hierarchy first / Use contrast / Fine-tune with spacing. And voilà.

Thank you

Pierrick Calvez / pierrickcalvez.com