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!
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
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

Bonjour

Bonjour

Realign if necessary:
Bonjour

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.
Start with one typeface;
Pick one that has lots of weights. Four at least.
Light
Regular
Medium
Bold
equals a typeface
Use contrast:
You little rebel. I like you.
In doubt, skip a weight:
Bonjour

J’aime le fromage

In doubt, multiply by two:
Bonjour

J’aime le fromage

Pay attention to your line-spacing:

Naa...


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

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). 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. 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.
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.
Bunya nuts black-eyed pea prairie turnip leek lentil.
In doubt, align left.
Now for some nerdy stuff:
The *hyphen* is used for compound terms:

- - -
check-in
money-back
pull-up
Did you know? Hyphenated words are new words in the making:
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:
Awa
Awai
Await
Await
Await
Await
18,150
keming. (kěm-ĭng).

n. The Result of improper kerning.
I SEE BAD KERNING

I SEE BAD KERNING EVERYWHERE.
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