

# Teaching typography

## JOIN THE FOLLOWING GROUPS.

**Society of News Design,**  
129 Dyer Street,  
Providence, RI  
02903-3904 USA

**AJMC Visual Communication Division,** LeConte College, Room 121, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208-0251

## ASK THE FOLLOWING GROUPS TO GET ON THEIR MAILING LIST.

**The Poynter Institute,** 801 Third Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**Print Books,**  
3200 Tower Oaks Boulevard,  
Rockville, MD  
20852-9789

**Graphic Design Book Club,**  
PO Box 12526,  
Cincinnati, OH  
45212-0526

**Mac Professionals' Book Club,**  
3000 Cindel Drive, Delran, NJ  
08075-1185

**Peachpit Press,**  
1249 Eighth Street,  
Berkeley, CA  
94710

## OBJECTIVES

After completing the unit on typography, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize the seven groups of type.
2. List characteristics of each of the seven groups of type.
3. Exhibit an understanding of readability as it relates to type choices.
4. Name and explain rules of typography.
5. Effectively break a rule of typography for a specific reason or purpose.
6. Select type for specific design purposes, using the correct size, style and type group for printed documents and other types of delivery systems.
7. Design headlines with primary and secondary components, copy areas, captions and secondary coverage units using either "family harmony" or "blending harmony."
8. Maintain typographical style rules throughout a publication.
9. Create eye-catching headline designs, logos, nameplates, and other printed materials through creative choices of typography.

## TIPS FOR TEACHING TYPOGRAPHY

1. Shoot slides of each of the seven groups of type. Show them to the students and discuss the characteristics of each. Have the students use their hands to "cover up" the bottom halves of the letters for oldstyle roman and sans serif types to see which group is easier to "skim" across the tops of the letters. Obviously, it will be the oldstyle roman group, as each letter has its own distinguishing shape, thus making each letter easier for the eye to see at a glance.
2. Collect examples of "cool type designs" and shoot slides of those, too. Continue to add to your type collection, updating it each year. Ask your students to bring examples of good designs as well as poorly designed materials to add to your collection. Discuss these with your students.
3. When teaching typography, always explain how the type creates a mood or personality for each piece. Discuss the readability factor. When viewing something that is difficult to read, ask the students to explain why it's difficult to read. Remember that sometimes pieces are purposely designed to be difficult to read so that the reader will actually spend more time with them. Was this the reason for this particular design? Did the designer do a good job, or was it so difficult to read that the communication value was lost?

4. It's important to remind students that just because something is designed by a professional, it doesn't make it "right." After learning about typography and its appropriate uses in designs, it's a good idea to ask students to critique the work of professionals, pointing out good and bad points and justifying their opinions based upon their newfound knowledge in this area.
5. Have students experiment with type designs. It's always a good idea to sketch their ideas on paper first and then take them to the computer. With so many design and graphics programs out, it's amazing to see the designs they create with type, color and graphics.
6. Always emphasize the "verbal-visual" connection that is so important in using type to create designs. Help students select appropriate type faces for each project they undertake.
7. In addition, remind them that no matter how great the design may look, the design will fail if the copy is not well-written and carefully edited.
8. If possible, join a graphic designers organization or book club to access teaching materials for your students. Several of these organizations are listed below.

## READ MORE ABOUT TYPOGRAPHY IN THE FOLLOWING BOOKS.

- *The Complete Typographer* by Christopher Perfect and Jeremy Austen, Prentice Hall, ISBN 0-13-045667-5
- *Graphic Communications Today* by Theodore E. Conover, West Publishing Company, ISBN 0-314-04424-8
- *A Blip in the Continuum* by Robin Williams, Peachpit Press, 1-56609-188-8
- *The Graphics of Communication* by Russell N. Baird, Arthur T. Turnbull, Ronald H. Pittman and Duncan McDonald, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, ISBN 0-03-074977-8