

Top Notch Typography

Know the rules and guidelines for setting type



Typographic Typos

120 pt. Gothic L Fee

120


Eliminate double word spaces between sentences

There is a typewriting convention that is no longer relevant.

The practice of putting two spaces between sentences

Nearly all computer fonts (except Courier) have proportional spacing, which means that the width of the characters and the spacing surrounding them are in proportion to each other.

- If you are using copy from an email, a PDF, or the web, make sure the punctuation is corrected before you copy and paste.
- Use your application's search-and-replace feature to replace double with single spaces.
- Double-check your work before it goes to the printer or is posted on the web.

A top-down view of a person's left hand typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The hand is wearing a silver watch with a black leather strap. To the right of the hand is a spiral-bound notebook with a white cover. The notebook page shows calligraphy that says "CREATIVITY IS CONTACT" in a small font, and "Passion" in a large, elegant script font. The background is a dark wooden desk.

*Since you are now
the typesetter
as well as the designer...*

*It's your responsibility
to make sure the final copy
is free of double spaces.*

Replace dumb quotes including apostrophes

Quotation marks, apostrophes, and primes (also known as inch and foot marks) are some of the most misunderstood and misused elements in typesetting.

The misuse of any of these glyphs is one of the most widespread of all type crimes in digital typography by amateurs

Be sure to proofread all final copy, and convert back any incorrect smart quotes to primes, or dumb, typewriter quotes.

“smart”	“smart”	“smart”
"dumb"	"dumb"	"dumb"
“smart”	“smart”	“smart”
"dumb"	"dumb"	"dumb"

Always check for the correct usage of quotes and measurement glyphs. The circled punctuation is incorrect.

My "new" office is 10' × 12'4"
My “new” office is 10' × 12'4"

The default glyph in front of any character will be the open single quote, but for omissions (such as *the '90* or *rock 'n roll*), the only correct glyph is the apostrophe, which is a closed, single quote:

Option / Shift / End Bracket }

Check carefully for these errors and change them back manually.

The more eyes that review final copy, the better.

“*Tis but a scratch!*
'*Tis but a scratch!*

rock ‘n’ roll
rock ’n’ roll

Keystrokes to memorize:

QUOTE MARKS

“

Option / Left Bracket [

”

Option / SHIFT / Left Bracket [

Keystrokes to memorize:

Apostrophe

‘

Option / Right Bracket]

’

Option / SHIFT / Right Bracket]

Keystrokes to memorize:



Find in the Glyph Menu:
Type / Glyph



Find in the Glyph Menu:
Type / Glyph

Inch + Foot Marks



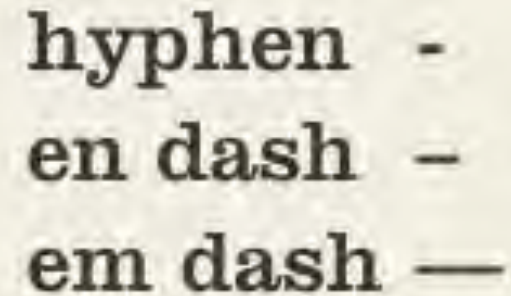
Too many creative professionals don't think it is their job to be concerned about this.

They are wrong, as every design job is a group effort, and any error reflects poorly on the entire team, and most especially, the client.

Use hyphens, en- and em- dashes properly

Hyphens, en and em dashes are three visually similar yet significantly different punctuation marks that commonly appear in text.

Their definition and purpose are frequently misunderstood by designers and writers alike, often leading to inaccurate and unprofessional typography.



hyphen -
en dash –
em dash —

Hyphen -

- A *hyphen* (-) is the shortest in width.
- It is used to hyphenate words that break at the end of a line
- It is used to connect compound words, such as mother-in-law, well-being, and merry-go-round
- It is also used for phone numbers.

The hyphen is easily found to the right of the zero on most keyboards.

en– dash

Monday–Friday

4 PM–6 PM

March 1–30

1892–1945

It is the most misunderstood of the three.

- An **en** dash (–) is wider than a hyphen and narrower than an **em** dash
- This dash is used to indicate a range:

Elements that are related by distance, including time, years, and dates:

3 pm–6 pm,
Monday–Friday,
March 2–7,
pages 20–55.

- An **en** dash is correct in any instance where a preposition such as the words “to” and “from” can be substituted

It is accessed by pressing: **Option / hyphen**

em— dash

The line had not yet been surveyed. When the Blackfeet were told that the Americans—Long Knives—owned the country to the south of the Hills, and the English—the Red Coats—the land north of them, they only laughed, and said: “That is a mistake. Neither the Red Coats nor the Long Knives own any of this country.”

One of the most common type crimes associated with this symbol is the use of two hyphens instead of an em dash.

- An **em dash** (—) is the longest of the three
- It is most commonly used to indicate a break in thought, or a thought within a thought or a sentence

It is accessed by pressing:
Option / Shift / hyphen



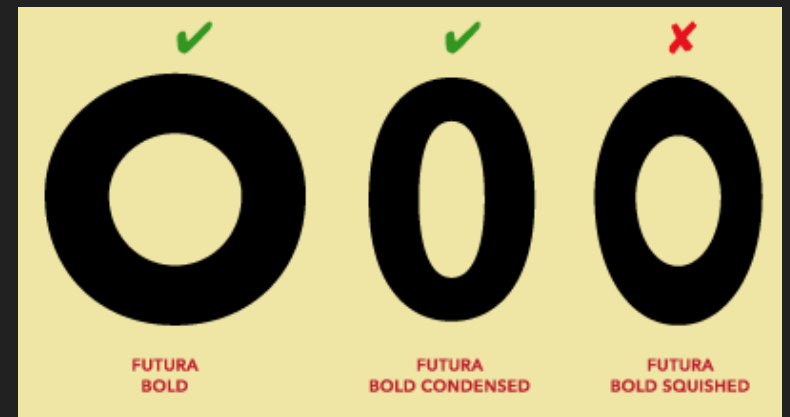
When the width of an em dash seems out of proportion to the typeface in use (for example, it may be too wide for use in a condensed typeface), or either dash appears too close to its neighboring characters, there is room for artistic, or “typographic” license to improve their appearance.

For instance, when the em (—) dash seems too wide, many typographically-savvy designers will substitute an en (–) dash, which is an accepted practice in fine typography.

Avoid fake scaling, bolding and slanting

Distorting type in any way, whether it be stretching, squeezing (AKA squishing), or slanting, is a type crime of the highest degree.

- It distorts the proportions in a way that destroys the integrity of the letter shapes.
- It can also reduce legibility by creating a fun-house effect.



A way to avoid these requests for artificial distortions is to pick a typeface or type family that contains legitimate, true-drawn width variants.

Avoid poor justification

Justified type can look clean, classy, and elegant when set appropriately; when carelessly or inappropriately set, it can result in text with gaping holes, loosely spaced lines, and rivers of white space — *all considered amateurish and in poor typographic taste.*

You might need to tweak your text to get it to look its best.

You can:

- Make manual line-breaks to fix lines that are too open or too tight
- Make minor changes in the point size and/or line length
- Change the default justification settings to get a better result
- Make minor edits to the copy
- If none of the above work, don't justify it!

Make sure kerning is even and tasteful

Kerning is the adjustment of space between two specific characters. While there usually are hundreds of kern pairs built into a font, sometimes you have to make manual kern adjustments — mostly to display type — to balance out the negative spaces between some letter combinations.

- You can train your eye to see spacing more acutely by observing character shapes and their spacing all around you — subway posters, magazines, book covers, packaging, menus, logos, etc.
- Just as musicians practice their instruments, or athletes practice their sport, looking at your surroundings with a critical eye will help you to see spatial relationships that you have trouble seeing now, which in turn will help you to properly kern your typography.

Apply hung punctuation / optical margin alignment

The term *hanging punctuation* might not be familiar to some, as the related terminology in digital typesetting is *optical margin alignment*.

- *Hung punctuation* refers to the practice of extending lines beginning or ending with certain punctuation, such as quotations marks, hyphens and dashes, periods, commas, asterisks, and any character that does not have a lot of vertical mass, into the margin of a flush edge of text to create the appearance of a more visually, or optically aligned edge.

— “We have so asserted our station, both in the old time and in the modern time also,” said the nephew, gloomily, “that I believe our name to be more detested than any name in France.”

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Check for proper vertical and horizontal alignment

Alignment


- It helps to use guidelines or a grid when developing layouts.
- Check alignment of images to text boxes that flank them.
- Make sure that baselines are aligned from column to column
- Adjust any leading on headlines that include capital letters that can visually make the spacing look unbalanced.
- Check spacing above and below text that is set within bars, most of the time you need to visually align them as the center feature factors in the entire text box.

Use tracking appropriately, as necessary

The term 'tracking' is relatively new, being a product of the digital age and refers to a feature of today's design software related to letterspacing. It specifically pertains to the uniform opening or closing of the horizontal space between a range (more than two) of characters, whether it be a headline, caption, or an entire text setting.

Tracking

- Can achieve subtle gradual refinements to create more balanced and readable text
- Tracking can also be used to create an airy, spread-out effect.
- The ability to change the overall letterspacing of type is important when using digital fonts. This is because even though the overall space between glyphs in a digital font is predetermined by the typeface designer or foundry, their 'one-size-fits-all' scalable outlines and fixed spacing does not work for all sizes.



The responsibility of making the type look good an every size now falls to the designer or production artist, rather than a highly trained typographer.

This is a skill taught that you can learn (if you're lucky) from someone knowledgeable and experienced with these typographic refinements.

Check word spacing and adjust as necessary

The word spacing for text settings is important because it affects readability. Appropriate text word spacing should not be so small that the words start to run into each other; nor should it be so large that the text is sprinkled with oversized spaces between words which can be distracting (even if this is unconscious) and interrupt the rhythm of reading.

- *Word spacing should neither be so narrow that the words start to run into each other (upper left), nor so large that it interrupts readability (upper right). The third setting (lower) is the most balanced and readable.*

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Adjust bad rags and avoid hyphens in a row

Hyphenated words are a necessary evil in most typesetting, especially in narrow columns in print. The downside is that they can reduce readability, in particular if there are many consecutive hyphens.

- *Narrow columns with no hyphenation can cause unsightly deep indents (left). A few well-placed hyphens can even out the rag (right).*

In that quarter of the town, however, scarcely any shortcoming in dress would have created surprise. Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise.

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Avoid widows and orphans

Because the appearance — and disappearance — of widows and orphans is contingent on how lines end, be aware that any change to the text in a laid-out page may create new problems in the remaining text.

- A *widow* is a short last line of a paragraph. It becomes a problem when it's so short that it creates the visual impression of a blank line between paragraphs.
- Your only tool — short of editing the text — is to tweak tracking slightly. This will sometimes cause a paragraph to re-rag, creating new line endings to either add to the widow (by loosening tracking) or draw it up into the previous line (by tightening it).



Sources:

<https://creativepro.com/typographic-checklist-for-top-notch-typography/>

<https://www.fonts.com/content/learning/fyti/typefaces/typographic-checklist>

There are more detailed instructions and examples on these websites with specific info on how to make adjustments in In-Design & Illustrator.