

A SHORT COURSE IN TYPOGRAPHY

Traditionally, space in typewritten pages is measured in **picas** and **points**. There are 2.4 picas per centimeter (6p/inch) and 12 points per pica, so there are 28.8 points per cm (72pt/inch).

Typefaces have a built-in amount of space between lines (the **shoulder**, see right). Changing this by adding or removing space is referred to as **leading** (because originally, thin strips of lead were added between the lines of letters). Increasing leading gives the eye more room to follow the letters, leading to better legibility. Decreasing allows more lines of type in the same space.

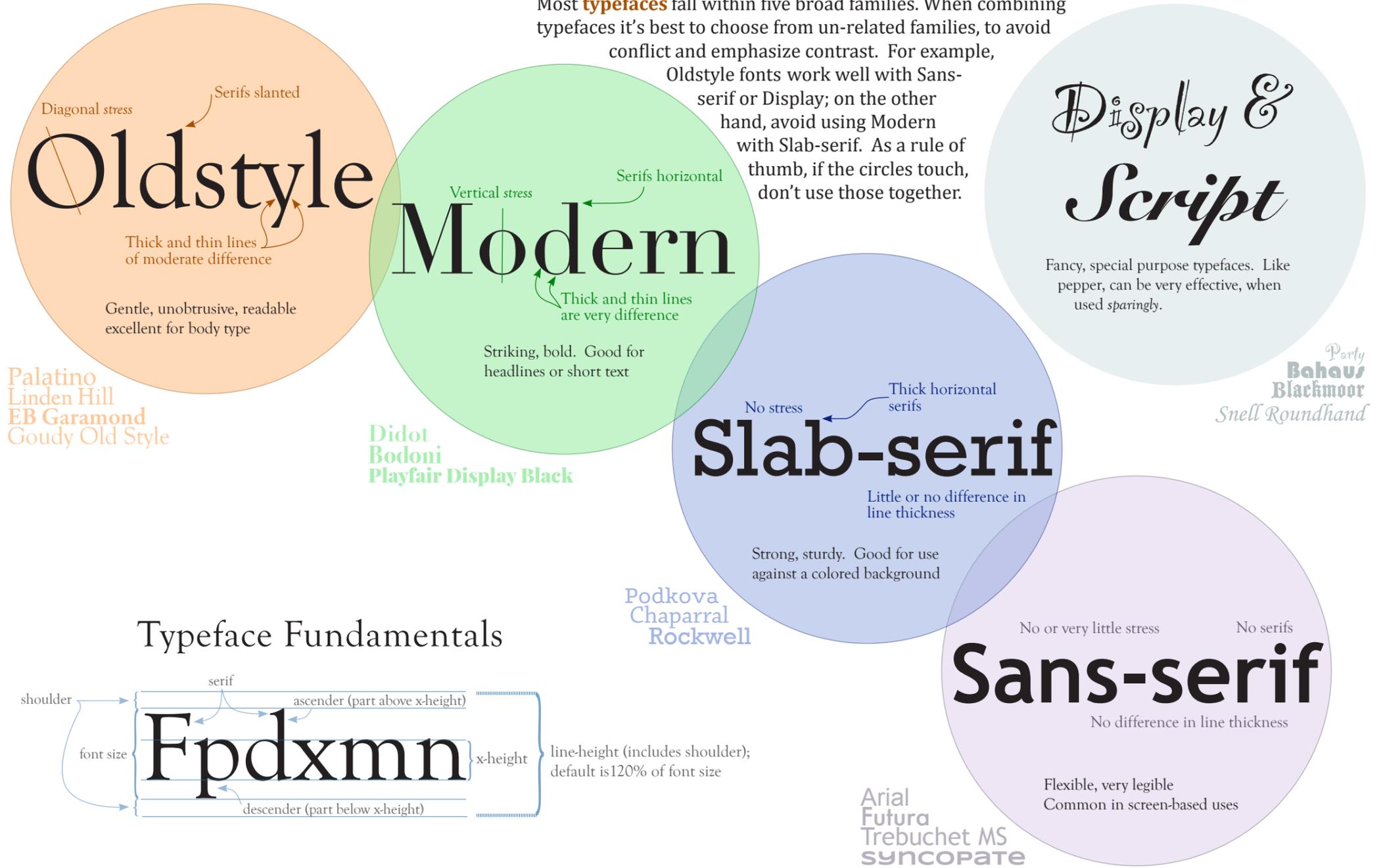
“Typography has one plain duty before it and that is to convey information in writing. No argument or consideration can absolve...
-Emil Ruder (12pt type/24pt leading)

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“Typography has one plain duty before it and that is to convey information in writing. No argument or consideration can absolve typography from this duty.
-Emil Ruder (default, 12pt/14.4pt)

“Typography has one plain duty before it and that is to convey information in writing. No argument or consideration can absolve typography from this duty. A printed work which cannot be read becomes a product without a purpose.”
-Emil Ruder (12pt/12pt)

VERTICAL SPACE



H O R I Z O N T A L S P A C E

In most typefaces the letters are **proportional**, meaning that letters take a different amount of space. ‘M,’ for example, takes much more space than ‘i.’ Numbers, though, are usually **monospaced**, meaning they each take the same amount of space. This allows numbers to line up in columns, making sums easier to read. The exception to this are fully monospaced fonts, such as Courier, that mimic typewriters, terminals, and so on.

Middle
proportional font, ‘M’ and ‘i’ take different amounts of space

Middle
monospaced font, ‘M’ and ‘i’ take identical amounts of space

2497 numbers
6218 so they line up vertically

LOVE
with no kerning, there is too much space around the ‘O’ and ‘V’

LOVE
kerning makes the between-letter spacing even & pleasing

Each letter in a font has a certain amount of space around it. When set in a headline or large size, the standard amount of space can look a bit strange because the gap around overhanging letters—such as ‘A’ and ‘v’ or capital ‘T’—makes too much space appear. Adjusting letter spacing is called **kerning**.

Justification determines the side(s) of a block of text on which the letters line up. Left-justified is the most common; centered looks fairly formal; right-justified is hardest for us to read; full-justification means to align both left and right sides. Avoid full-justification unless you have enough words to fill the space well, to avoid this problem.

