

Identifying Sans Serifs

Characteristics of design of sans serif faces

Metro	g a e f j t A E G J M
Linotype	g a e f j t A E G J M
Bernhard Gothic	g a e f j t A E G J M
American	g a e f j t A E G J M
Futura—Intertype and Bauer	g a e f j t A E G J M
Spartan—American and Linotype	g a e f j t A E G J M
Twentieth Century—Monotype	g a e f j t A E G J M
Airport—Baltimore	g a e f j t A E G J M
Vogue	g a e f j t A E G J M
Intertype	g a e f j t A E G J M
Tempo	g a e f j t A E G J M
Ludlow	g a e f j t A E G J M
Kabel—Continental	g a e f j t A E G J M
Sans Serif—Monotype	g a e f t A E G M

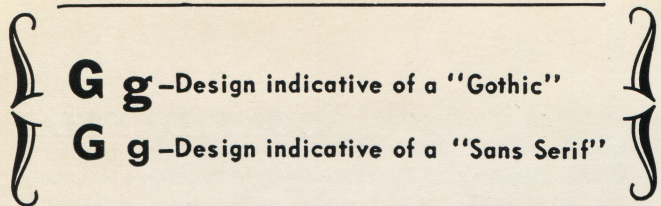
NOTE—the illustrations for this unit are two steps removed, by successive zinc etchings, from the original printed type characters—hence their imperfections.

THE MATERIAL in this unit has been reproduced from a trade paper article for its obvious usefulness in dealing with type faces. It broadens the comparisons made in the *Spartan Family* unit which deal with the immediate competitor face, Futura. The specimen lines and notes on their identification cover all the more popular sans serif faces in current use, both machine- and hand-set.

If all the so-called “gothics” (most of which have no serifs) are classified as sans serif types, the total of

sans serifs currently offered in machine and foundry faces is nearly 400. In the *Spartan Family* unit comparisons of design traits are made, using the Metro, Erbar, Gothic 16 and Gothic 38 among Linotype faces. But every salesman has encountered the problems of a customer’s need to identify such a face. Often the printer or trade typographer is asked to duplicate a sample of printing and he expects the Linotype representative to know all the answers.

KEY TO THE SYMBOLS



G g—Design indicative of a "Gothic"

G g—Design indicative of a "Sans Serif"

Amer—American Type Founders.
 Balt—Baltimore Type & Com-
 position Co.
 Bauer—Bauer Alphabets, Inc.
 Cont—Continental Type Found-
 ers Assn.

Inter—Intertype Corp.
 Lino—Mergenthaler Linotype Co
 Lud—Ludlow Typograph Co.
 Mono—Lanston Monotype Ma-
 chine Co.
 *Hand-set. †Line slug.

Vogue
 Inter
 6-60; 6-24

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Vogue Bold
 Inter
 6-60; 6-30

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Vogue Extra Bold
 Inter
 6-60; 6-30

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Vogue Inter
 Condensed 18-36

G E d e t a g

Vogue Bold Inter
 Condensed 8-60

G E d e t a g

Vogue Medium Inter
 Condensed 18-36

G E d e t a g

Vogue Bold Inter
 Extra Cond. 30-48

G E d e t a g

Vogue Extra
 Bold Cond.
 Inter
 8-60; 14

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Phenix
 Amer 24-72

G E d e t a g

Tourist
 Extra Cond. Balt
 24-72

G E d e t a g

Tempo Light
 Lud
 6-72; 10-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Tempo Medium
 Lud
 6-72; 8-48

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Tempo Bold
 Lud
 6-72; 12-48

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Tempo Black
 Lud 18-72

G E d e t a g

Tempo Heavy
 Lud
 6-72; 12-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Tempo Medium Lud
 Condensed 30-96

G E d e t a g

Tempo Bold Lud
 Condensed 6-72

G E d e t a g

Tempo Heavy
 Condensed
 Lud
 10-96; 14-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Kabel
 Cont
 6-84; 6-48

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Sans Serif
 Light
 Mono 329
 6-84; 6-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Sans Serif Mono 331
 Medium 6-72

G E d e t a g

Kabel Bold
 Cont
 6-96

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Sans Serif
 Bold
 Mono 330
 6-84; 6-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Sans Serif
 Extrabold
 Mono 332
 8-72

G E d e t a g
 G E d e t a g

Kabel Black
 Cont 6-72

G E d e t a g

Sans Serif Mono 333
 Extra Bold Cond. 14-84

G E d e t a g

Sans Serif Mono 354
 Medium Cond. 14-72

G E d e t a g

Sans Serif Mono 357
 Light Cond. 14-72

G E d e t a g

NOTE—the illustrations for this unit are two steps removed, by successive zin

Futura Demibold Bauer 8-84

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Century 8-72 Ultrabold Mono 609

G E d e t a g

Futura Demibold Inter 6-30

G E d e t a g

Airport Black Balt 14-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Airport Medium Cond. Balt 14-72

G E d e t a g

Futura Bold Bauer 8-84; 8-60

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Cent. Mono Medium Cond. 14-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Nobel Condensed Amer 6-72

G E d e t a g

Futura Bold Inter 6-30

G E d e t a g

Futura Medium Cond. Inter 8-30

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Futura Medium Condensed Bauer 8-84

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Century Bold Mono 604 6-72

G E d e t a g

Futura Bold Condensed Bauer 8-84

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Futura Bold Condensed Inter 6-24

G E d e t a g

Spartan Heavy 8-120; 8-72 Amer

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Century Extra Bold Condensed Mono 607 14-84; 14-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Spartan Heavy Lino 6-30

G E d e t a g

Nobel Bold Condensed Amer 6-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Spartan Black Cond. Lino 10-36; 10-24

G E d e t a g

Airport Semibold Balt 6-72; 6-48

G E d e t a g

Airport Bold Condensed Balt 16-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Nobel Bold Amer Amster 6-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Century Extra Bold Mono 603 6-72

G E d e t a g

Twentieth Cent. Mono Ultrabold Cond. 8-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Airport Condensed Extrabold Balt 14-72

G E d e t a g

Spartan Black Amer 8-120; 8-72

G E d e t a g

Airport Black Cond. Balt 18-24

G E D T A

G E d e t a g

Stellar Lud 8-72

G E d e t a g

Spartan Black Lino 6-36

G E d e t a g

Stellar Bold Lud 8-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Futura Display Bauer 14-84

G E d e t a g

Airport Bold Balt 6-72

G E d e t a g

Airport Tourist Balt 14-72

G E d e t a g

G E d e t a g

Othello Amer 18-72

G E d e t a g

etchings, from the original printed type characters—hence their imperfections.

The illustration on page 1 shows some of the type characters which have details that help in identification, while the facing center pages carry two capital and five lower-case letters that serve this purpose, with each specimen labelled as to source.

As a general trait of design the gothics can be separated from the sans serifs by comparing the lower-case g's. Modern type designers, in their effort to stream-line the anatomy of roman letter forms, have simplified the g, as shown in the upper corner of page 2. This doesn't always apply to the gothics since the Linotype Gothic 13 has the simpler g—and the first version of the Metro was designed by Dwiggin with the roman style of g. But, broadly speaking, if the unknown face has the roman style of g, it is probably one of the gothics and thus of earlier vintage.

In comparing the specimen lines we find differences in the g design to be the more pronounced—it is the first clue. We look for the design of the loop—only in the Ludlow Stellar is it actually closed (as it was in the first or now alternative version of the Metro). The bowl of the g and the nature of the upper spur are distinctive features.

When we find a face in which the g designs seem to be identical, then check the letters a, t, e, d, E and G. There are details of variation which help to complete the identification.

Exact sizes are often hard to spot—if the specimen is a newspaper clipping the factor of shrinkage may be present. Or, in an offset reproduction, the type may have been photographically enlarged or reduced from the original composition.

Having made the identification, the Linotype sales problem may then be to meet the immediate need with a Linotype face. Thus we must be ready to point out the similarities in design, weight, alphabet length, etc. which should permit the printer to use our proposed Linotype face. Let's note some of these general comparisons.

The Spartan versus Futura details are fully covered in the *Spartan* unit, and Spartan is duplicated in design (as we have noted, with MLCo. permission) in the ATF Spartan. We can always promote Spartan against the Monotype Twentieth Century.

The Ludlow Tempo family has more of the traits of Linotype Metro, though the designs are not identical. But, in any case, when the Tempo may be used in quantity for logical keyboard sizes, then Metro of the corresponding weight may be safely promoted.

Kabel, a European foundry type imported by Continental Type Founders, was one of the earlier sans serif faces to gain favor. Against it we would try to sell Spartan as a more modern design, less marked by mannerisms that hurt readability.

That distinction also covers the Intertype Vogue which was brought out early in the sans serif era of type developments in this country.

As between the Linotype Spartan and Linotype Metro families, with the Erbar featuring condensed versions for head-letter needs, we need not fear any of the sans serif problems. Exact duplication, sometimes demanded by a printing buyer who hasn't true type taste, can usually be outweighed by the sound design merits of our Linotype faces.