
Everything you need to know about typography.

Dave Whitehead's anatomy of type: the names of the parts of a letter,
one sentence at a time.

Typography is known
for two-dimensional
architecture & requires
extra zeal within
every job.

The lines every letter
sits on.

ASCENDER

CAP HEIGHT

MIDLINE

BASELINE

DESCENDER

Typography

The **x-height** is the height of a lowercase x: the distance from the baseline to the midline. Ascenders rise above it, descenders drop below the baseline, and capitals stop at the cap height.

The anatomy of a letter.

Part one.



Arm

A horizontal stroke that is free at one or both ends, like the top of a T.



Ear

The small stroke that sticks out from the top of a lowercase g.



Crotch

The inside angle where two strokes meet.



Leg

The lower, downward-sloping stroke of a k or R.



Spine

The main curved stroke of an S.



Foot

The part of a stem that rests on the baseline.



Joint

The point where the arm and leg meet the stem.



Beak

The sharp, serif-like end of an arm or curve, as on an s.

The anatomy of a letter.

Part two.

r

Teardrop terminal

A teardrop-shaped end to a stroke, as on r, a and c.

n

Shoulder

The curved stroke that leaves the stem of an n, h or m.

x

Hairline

The thinnest stroke in a typeface.

e

Eye

The enclosed space at the top of a lowercase e.

y

Tail

The descending stroke of a y, j or Q.

h

Ascender

The part of a lowercase letter that rises above the x-height.

q

Descender

The part of a letter that drops below the baseline.

d

Stem

The main vertical stroke of a letter.

The anatomy of a letter.

Part three.



Arch

The curved stroke that springs from the stem.



Arc

A curved stroke, or the curve that continues from a straight stem.



Bowl

The curved stroke that encloses a counter.



Counter

The enclosed, or partly enclosed, space inside a letter.



Link

The stroke joining the top and bottom of a two-storey g.



Taper

The gradual thinning of a stroke towards its end.



Ball terminal

A round, ball-shaped end to a stroke.



Apex

The point where two strokes meet at the top of a letter.

The anatomy of a letter.

Part four.



Spur

A small projection off a main stroke.



Finial

A tapered or curved end to a stroke, as on an e or c.



Swash

A decorative flourish added to a letter.



Strokes

The straight and curved lines that make up a letter.



Ligature

Two or more letters joined into a single shape, like ct, fi or fl.



Serifs

The small strokes at the ends of a letter's main strokes.



Dot

The dot over a lowercase i.



Tittle

The proper name for the dot over an i or j.



The gadzook.

The decorative stroke that joins the c and the t in a ligature is called a gadzook.

The name comes from the old oath "gadzooks", a polite way of saying "God's hooks": the nails of the cross.

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Did you learn something?

I hope the answer is yes. This presentation is based on Dave Whitehead's anatomy of type.

I'm a student of marketing, branding, communication and the profitable delivery of products and services. No one has all the answers, and I constantly seek valuable insights from others to learn from and share. In business today, information is cheap but action is critical.

I believe that everyone can improve their business through strategic, consistent marketing, and I want to work with people who are willing to put their skills, resources and energy to work and enjoy the benefits of doing so.

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