A brief history of written and printed communication, the function of typography in graphic design and the essential typographic terminology.
Earliest known attempts to communicate with imagery was around 25,000 B.C.

This was primarily pictorial forms (i.e. cave drawings)

Early humans used symbols to communicate ideas
Pictographs

Systems of symbols that represent concepts in a consistent manner.

Simplified drawings represent objects.

Example is Egyptian system of hieroglyphics.

Advantage of this system is the ability to communicate universally (no language barriers).

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Image Source: http://bit.ly/6gAvue
The Phoenicians developed an alphabet of 22 symbols around 1000 B.C.

Symbols related to the sounds in the language

Consonants only; no vowels

Eliminated the need for people to memorize thousands of symbols

The term “Phonetics” comes from this concept.
Greeks expanded on Phoenician alphabet

Added vowels and named each character

First system for reading left to right and top to bottom
Romans developed the Greek alphabet further

Modern alphabet that we now use

Added lowercase versions to letters, condensed forms of text and cursive writing that flowed more naturally by hand
Books were **hand-produced** for hundreds of years

Primarily **religious** (illuminated manuscripts)

Due to the painstaking effort (often years) to create a single volume, books were considered very **valuable treasures**
German metal carver Johannes Gutenberg, invented the printing press in mid 15th century

Letters carved onto a small metal plate, “punch”

Letters arranged to form blocks of text. Molten metal poured over the top to make a mold

Used to print books in larger quantities than had previously been possible

This invention changed the world, allowing rapid production and distribution of printed ideas

The Bible was first complete book ever printed
What Role Does Typography Play in Graphic Design?

Helps clarify a message that the designer sends to an audience.

The properly selected font has a huge impact on getting a message across to an intended audience.

A poorly chosen font or bad typographic layout can detract from or even block the message all together.
What Role Does Typography Play in Graphic Design?

Poor typography will prevent a reader from connecting with a design, and at worst may make your message illegible!
Typography can provide an element of expression to accompany a message.

A carefully crafted typography increases emotional impact of a message much more than just plain type by itself, adding another dimension to a message.

A well-conceived typographic composition allows the designer to connect with the reader.
Letters and numbers can be arranged in a clever way that strengthens the message.
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Photo Source: Design Basics, David Lauer and Stephen Pentak
Of course, some of the most innovative and creative typography breaks all of the established rules!
Typographic Terms

ABCDEFGHijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890
!@#$%^&*()_:; ‘ , . ? / < >

**Typeface:** Refers to the upper and lowercase letters and numbers of a specific design/ font.

**Examples:** Helvetica, Times, etc.

**Characters:** The individual letters, numbers and punctuation used when setting type

**Uppercase:** The capital letters of the alphabet

**Lowercase:** The small letters of the alphabet
**Typographic Terms**

**Baseline:** An imaginary line on which the characters seem to be standing

**Meanline:** The imaginary line that runs along the top of most lowercase letters, such as i, c, e, m, n, u, v, w and x

**X-Height:** The height of the body or main element of the lowercase letterform, which falls between the meanline and the baseline

**Cap Height:** The imaginary line that runs across the top of capital letters and ascenders in a line of type
Serif vs. San Serif Letterforms

**Serif:** Letters with finishing strokes, or brackets, that project from letters
Gives letters “finished” appearance
Letters flow together, making serif typefaces easy to read
Often used in books, magazines and newspapers

**San Serif:** Type with no serif
Also has no variation in the width of its strokes; computer generated look
Useful for signs and large-scale text meant to be seen from a distance
Text is harder for a reader’s eye to follow in large blocks of text
Script fonts are decorative and suggest a hand written appearance. Often used to suggest formality. Difficult to read in large bodies of text; most effective when used as headings or sub headings in a layout. *Ex: Porcelain*
Decorative and Novelty

General term used to describe fonts that can’t be easily categorized. This includes dingbats and contemporary specialty fonts.

Dingbats used most effectively as a decorative element within a layout or a heading/sub heading to separate information on a page.
Typestyles

Roman: Upright letterforms; represents the majority of typeset copy

Italic: Slanting version of a typeface; meant to accompany Roman style letters
Usually slants at a 12–15 degree angle

Oblique: Type that is simply slanted to the right
Regular: The standard weight of a typeface (also called “normal”)

Light: A thinner/lighter version of the regular typeface. Also called “thin”

Bold: A thicker, heavier version of the regular typeface
**Condensed:** A narrower version of the regular typeface to fit letters into small space; also called “compressed”

**Extended:** A wider version of the regular typeface; also called “expanded”

**Type families:** A combination of all typestyles (roman, bold, italic, etc) of a font. Typestyles share common characteristics (design, x-height, etc)
Two basic units of measurement used to describe type:

**Points**: Very small units used to measure both type sizes and the spaces in between the lines of type.

**Picas**: Larger unit of measurement. 12 points = 1 Pica (6 picas in 1 inch)

72 point type = 1 inch
Typographic Measurements

**Text Type:** Refers to smaller sizes of type, usually between 5 and 14 points. Used to print books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

**Display Type:** Refers to the larger sizes of type used to call attention, such as newspaper headlines or posters; usually 16-72 point type or larger.