

SPECIAL TERMINOLOGY RE LETTERING



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fi_garamond_sort_001.png

Basic Terminology

type	in the original days of “letterpress” printing with “moveable type,” type comprised the individual pieces of metal with raised surfaces for printing letters. Above is a piece of type (Garamond) for the ligature ‘fi’ (‘f’ with ‘i’ set in close).
font	an entire ‘source’ of type defined by three parameters:
type face	1. the overall design of the lettering
type style	2. the character of the lettering: regular (Roman), Italic, or bold, demi-bold, capital, etc.
type size	3. the size of the lettering, in points (72.1pts = 1 inch)
lower case	traditionally, a font is stored in several “cases,” open trays divided into compartments for each letter. Compositors keep the case of commonly used

letters in front of them, in a “lower case,” with less frequently used letters (generally capitals, etc.) in an “upper case,” set up on a rack in front of them. In this respect, “capital” refers to a particular type style, not to the size; compositors distinguish instead between UPPER-CASE CAPS and LOWER-CASE CAPS.

FAMILIES OF TYPE FACES

serif	with little bars (serifs) at the ends of strokes, as on Times Roman, Palatino (this document), etc., intended to support easy reading by blending the letters together to emphasize the shapes of words
sans serif	without those little bars, as on Helvetica or Arial (this paragraph), permitting letters to be more compact, and designed in the twentieth century for display text
black letter	heavy typefaces, often very angular and broken, as used in the medieval era (and therefore often inappropriately called “gothic” typefaces); in German, called <i>fraktur</i> .
gothic	a particular family of sans serif type faces, with wide letters, common in nineteenth-century USA.

MORE ON TYPE SIZE

The size of type in points does not relate directly to the actual size of the printed letters. Rather, it refers to the height of the stem of each piece of type; the actual letter — the raised, printing portion of each piece of type — can be any size. Specific type faces are therefore distinguished as variously “small” or “large” “on the body” of the type.

Garamond tends to be large on the body (although this digital variant seems rather small!).

Palatino is also large on the body.

Times Roman is small on the body, and so narrower, so more text fits on one page than for other serif type faces of the same point size.