Typography

Typography in Action | The Language of Type | **Font Pairing and Hierarchy**

National Visual Art Standards

VA:Cr2.3.IIa: Design an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.

VA:Cr2.1.IIa: Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

Guiding Questions

- How does design communicate and preserve aspects of life?

- How does collaboration expand the creative process?

Objectives

Students will…

- Pair serif and sans serif typefaces;

- Use typography to enhance the meaning of poetry;

- Gain insights into meanings of artworks by engaging in the process of critique;

- Critically evaluate completed design.

Vocabulary

Font pairing: selecting two to three fonts to use in a design that complement each other in order to more clearly communicate the message of the design.

Hierarchy: is the organization of elements on the page to draw the reader's eye to the first, second, and third most important messages to be communicated.

Materials

- Book binding materials

- Drawing utensils

- Drawing paper

- Found typography or printed copies of complete font specimens

- Tracing paper

Figures

1. Example of type hierarchy in a web banner

2. Example of type hierarchy in a poster

3. Sutturah font by Rosetta Type Foundry

4. BMW set in Sutturah font

5. One page of *Handout 4D.1_Guide to Font Pairing.pdf*

Time Period: at least two classes, 45–60 minutes in length

Lesson Introduction

Now that students have some experience with typography, it is time to take on a bigger typographic challenge. But first, they need some background in font pairing and hierarchy. Choosing and matching typefaces that pair well together takes time and practice. Contrast between serif and sans serif, size, and weight, among other type technicalities, all play a part in font pairing.
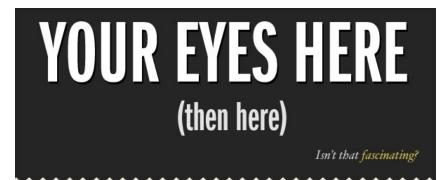

FIGURE 1: **Example of type hierarchy in a web banner,** coetail.com.

Hierarchy is the organization of elements on the page to draw the reader's eye to the first, second, third, etc. most important messages to be communicated (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). What graphic designers do is organize information so it can be easily understood and easily followed. The focal point grabs the eye first, then another contrasting element takes the reader's eye from the focal point to the second most important point. Follow that up with yet another element that perhaps gives even more detail than the first and second layers did. This is the beginning of a typographic design.

All of the principles of design can be used to create hierarchy. For example, by pairing serif and sans serif typefaces together, the text can better illustrate and reinforce the intended message. Size is also a factor. The largest typographic element on the page doesn't particularly have to be the focal point. There are ample additional ways to create emphasis, such as with the use of color and space.

Font pairing takes a lot of practice and patience. Comparing or using different typefaces together and deciding if they communicate the desired message is as much an art as a learned skill. There is a craft to it, with no two designers pairing fonts in exactly the same way. The beauty lies in the infinite ways type can be combined to enhance communication. Keep in mind, there are typefaces that just don't work together stylistically and/or would send the wrong message. For

Art Context, Cultural Connections and Relevancy

By raising student awareness of how fonts are paired in successful graphic design and communication, students will be better able to make their own voices heard through typography.

Handouts

• Handout 4D.1_Guide to Font Pairing.pdf

FIGURE 2: **Example of type hierarchy in a poster,** http://denielleemans.com/creating-hierarchy/. The viewer's eye is first drawn to the typographic event title, then to the date range, and last to the specific daily events. This doesn't even take into account the motion and energy of the text mixed with the imagery.

FIGURE 3: **Sutturah font by Rosetta Type Foundry,** Adobe Typekit.

example, the typeface Sutturah (see Figure 3), by Rosetta Type Foundry, may work for a small town family diner but may not be the best choice for a high end car manufacturer like BMW (see Figure 4). The capital letters of "B," "M," and "W" are difficult to comprehend together but also don't communicate the image BMW wants to send to their affluent customers. Now think about pairing another font with this one. Again, some may work while others will not.

FIGURE 4: **BMW set in Sutturah font.**

ACTIVITY PROCESS

Engagement (the hook–motivation and relevancy)

Increasing the power of self expression is a very powerful experience. Self expression through typography can help students make meaning out of the jumble of emotions they experience every day. Collaboration on a larger project is a sought-after skill in today's job market, and being a part of a larger typographic work can increase a student's sense of self as well as bing a part of something larger.

DAYS 1 & 2

Introduction

This assignment involves the whole class. Each student will contribute to a book of typographic poetry that can be printed or posted on a class website (if available). The big concept is to demonstrate the power of words by finding intriguing poems, and to increase the poem's expressive power and meaning by treating the text typographically. This assignment is the culmination of all of the learning that has taken place in this unit. Students will draw on all of their skills to artfully typeset their selected poems on the page.

Assignment 6–Font Pairing Poetry Book

OBJECTIVE: Students will typeset poems, designing a visual hierarchy and pairing different fonts until they come up with a scheme that they are happy with. The entire class will contribute to the creation of a book of favorite poems.

PROCESS:

1. Students will research poems until they find five poems that hold special meaning to them.

2. As a class, decide how the final book will be created and presented. This could be done using traditional book binding methods or completely digital (see Step 5). Either way, create a book where all the students poems are bound together and can be presented to not only the class but an outside audience. Emphasize a connection between the cover, binding, inside pages, and the poems themselves.

3. Students will then sketch out on paper how they will lay out the poems, striving to lead the viewer's eye with a well composed hierarchy, and using fonts that increase the meaning of the poem.

4. Below are some online font pairing resources available to help students get started:

   · https://designschool.canva.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-font-pairing/

   · http://www.typography.com/techniques/

   · http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2016/04/this-graphic-shows-how-to-pair-multiple-fonts-together-for-better-designs/

   Students can also search and share their own found examples of font pairing.

   Print out several copies of *Handout 4D.1_Guide to Font Pairing.pdf* from http://www.kimberlygeswein.com/?s=font+pairing&submit.x=0&submit.y=0&submit=Search.

FIGURE 5: **One page of** *Handout 4D.1_Guide to Font Pairing.pdf*

Have students test out font combinations from the *Handout 4D.1_Guide to Font Pairing.pdf* for inspiration. Provide printouts of the complete font sets for students to cut out and use with their poems. If technology is available, this assignment may be done digitally. Fonts can be downloaded for free from Kimberly Geswein's site. Ask students to try the following combinations of font styles with parts of their poems:

· All caps with a script

· Skinny & chunky

· Fancy & simple

· Pair the lower case with the capitals of the same font

· Different but similar styles

· Wide & narrow

· Tall & short

5. Either by hand or using a computer, students will typeset their chosen poems. Students may select a combination of serif and sans serif fonts to set the text. Remind students to focus on enhancing the meaning of the poems. Decorative and script fonts may be used in moderation. Students are limited to a maximum of three fonts per poem, with one poem per page. Focal point, unity, positive and negative space, rhythm, repetition and tension can all be used. Encourage students to try many different ways of designing their poem before they decide on their final version. Have students critically evaluate their own work in progress and then revise it to arrive at a better solution. Remember to emphasize the elements and principles of 2D design discussed in Unit 2 and the design process discussed in Unit 3. Students should be proactive in requesting and giving feedback. Encourage them to do so, if necessary.

6. Make the final book.

Adaptations and Accommodations

This could be done in pairs or groups of three, and the number of poems to be designed can be adjusted to suit the class.

If computers aren't available, students could search typefaces and hand letter the assignment.

Extensions

CRITIQUE: Have students look at the poems they have created, and select the one they think is best. They can ask for feedback from you or other students if they need help selecting the one that "works" or "has legs." Then they can put their best poems on the wall and, as a class, make notes of which poems are the most expressive and evoke the feeling the author intended, and make suggestions on how to improve each other's work.

Students will use the feedback they gained in the critique to revise their poems and take them to the next level. Practice and revision are two surefire ways to improve as a designer.

Interested students could create typographic art for the cover of the book, design the table of contents, and decide the order of the poems in the book.

Homework or Independent Work

If students want to do more, they could use typography to design a greeting card or series of cards that are either hand lettered or done on the computer.

Closure

After the critique, ask students what they have learned of value in this typography unit. How has their thinking about typography changed since they started this unit? What other activities would they like to do with regard to typography?

Checks For Understanding

As students work on their poetry, ask them to try a few versions of each poem and choose the one they think is best for the final submission. Note their font pairings, and give feedback on their choices.

Lesson Assessment Based On Objectives

Students should be assessed on their ability to demonstrate an awareness and proper use of font pairing and hierarchy in their own work and the work of other artists and designers. The correct use of unit vocabulary in class dialog and in written reflection should be accurate and appropriate to the work they make and see. All work produced in and out of class—as well as student writing—should be collected and analyzed. (See *Unit 4D Rubric.docx* for assessment and rubric ideas. Customize to meet class specific assessment needs.)