

Building a Typeface

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Planning

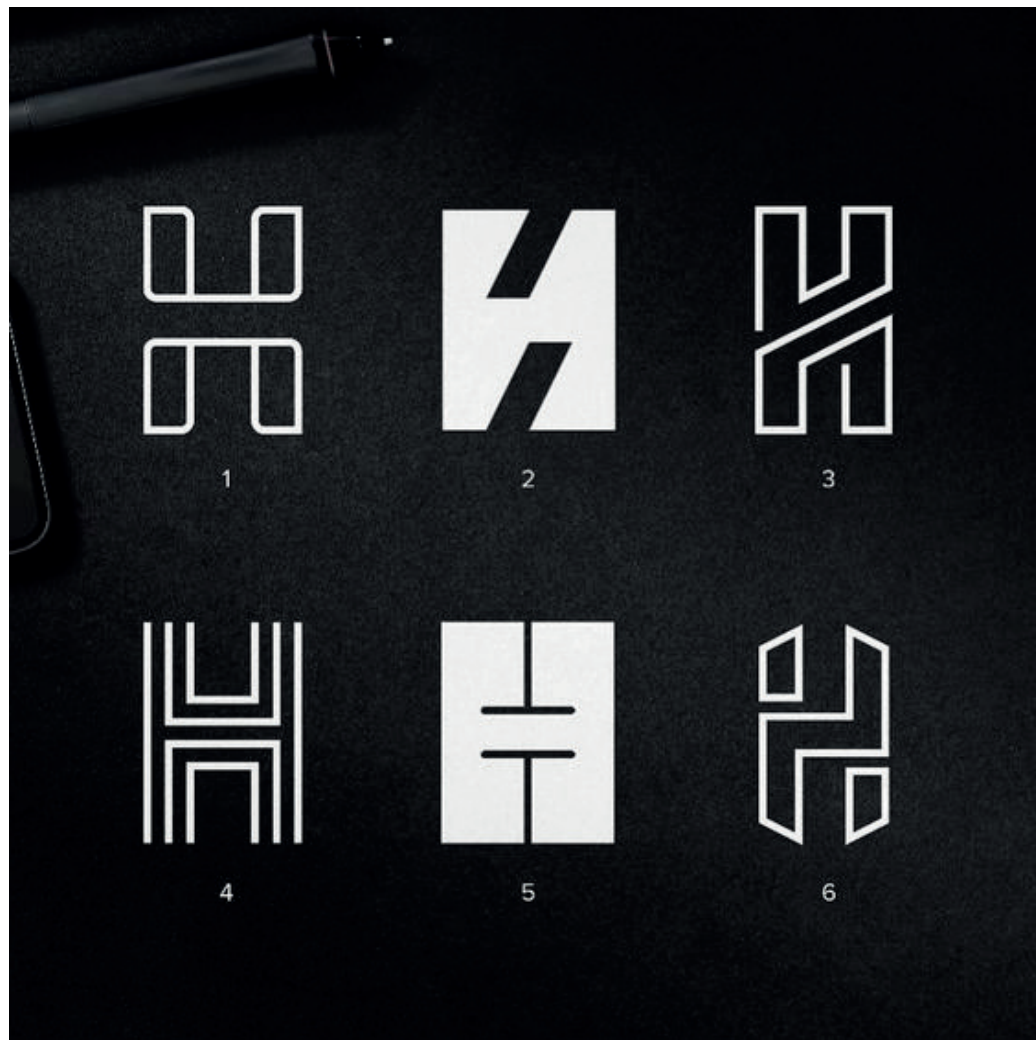
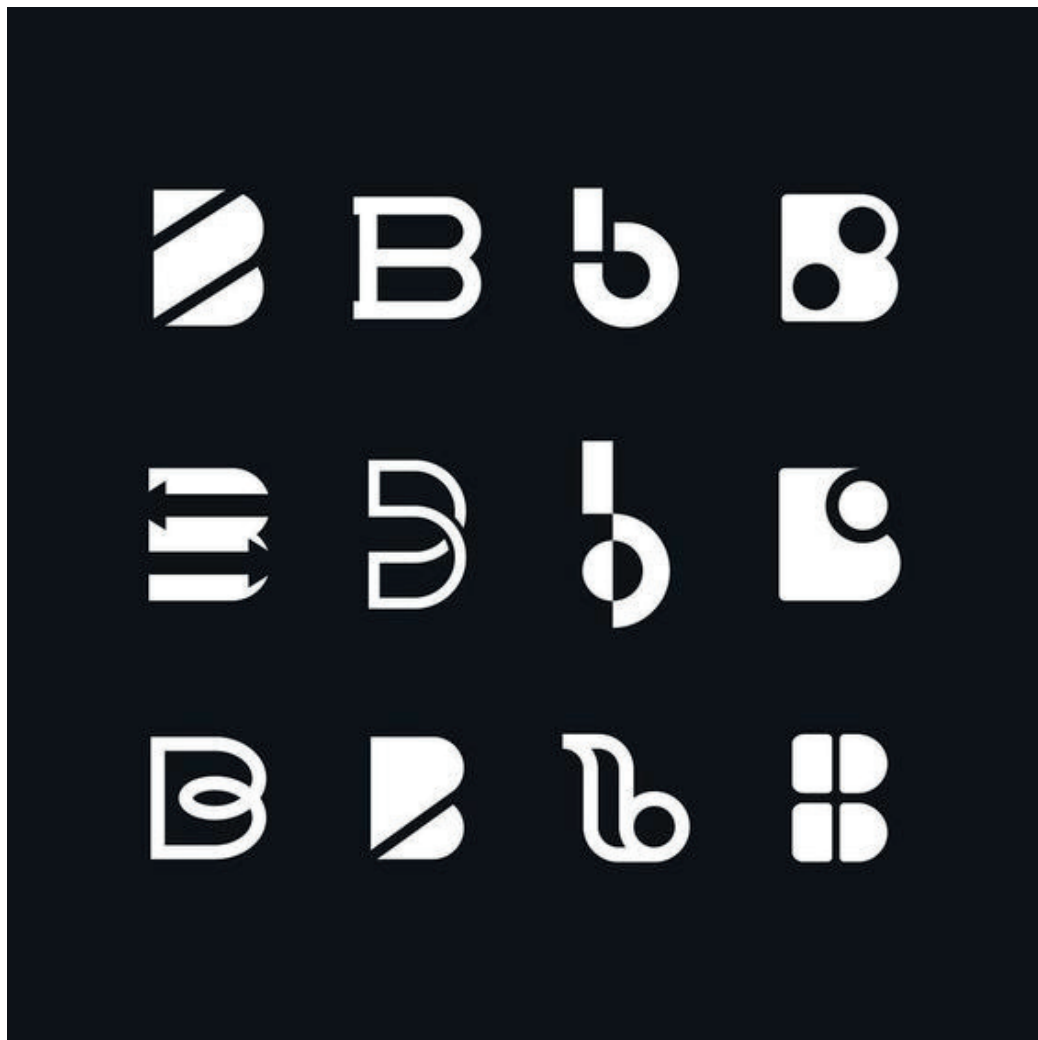


You should for today all have a good idea of the sort of typeface you're looking to design. You will have used your research, and sketching process to decide on various characteristics in relation to the presentation on type anatomy last week.

Please note, that if you are not quite there yet, you will have to do this work first. DO NOT jump straight onto the machines for this - the planning work is vital.



www.36daysoftype.com



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FR Kraken Slab—Typeface Design
Béla Frank, Budapest, Hungary

The Type Directors Club run annual competitions in typeface design.

Its definitely worth checking out the past submissions on their website for inspiration. You can follow the entries to their designers, and many have write-ups about their process.

www.tdc.org

Sketches



Your sketches are not required to be polished and 100% accurate, they are simply for you to start to assign stylistic elements in a consistent way.

You may well have assigned:

- A consistent x-height

- The shape of a serif

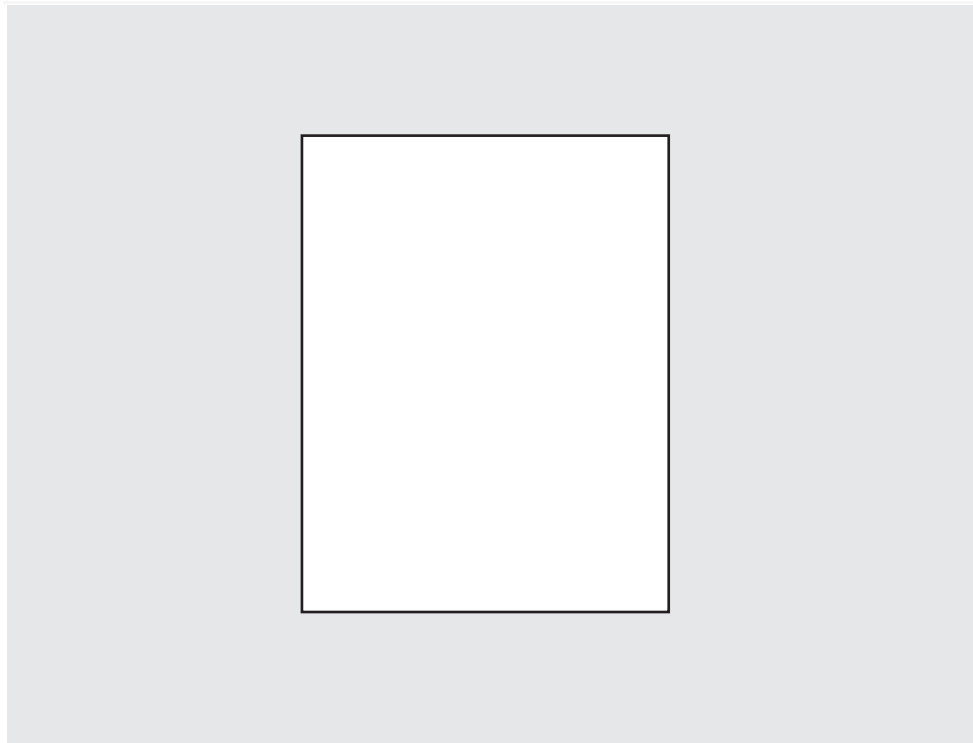
- The length of your ascenders or descenders

- The weight of your strokes

- ...etc

Today, we will use these sketches as a basis for our digital work. The sketches will also have helped you decide which case you are going to choose to build digitally.

Illustrator

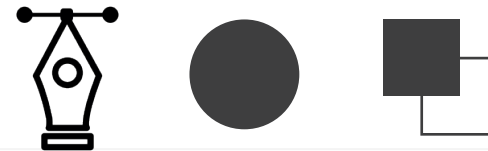


For this we will need to use Adobe illustrator.

So we can start by scanning in our sketches using the scanners around the room. There are also more next door in open access.

Once we have our sketches, import them into an illustrator document, and place them onto your pasteboard. This will ensure you can easily refer back and forth to them.

We will predominantly be using:



The letter 'h'

Whether you have chosen to design an upper, or lower case typeface, it is recommended that you start your digital work with the letter 'h'.

The reason for this is that you are able to draw a huge amount of properties for other letters from this one character.

From your 'h', you can draw your baseline, set your x-height and ascender line, as well as dictate the stroke weights and serifs.

These guides can then be drawn using the rulers, and locked in place.



Foundations

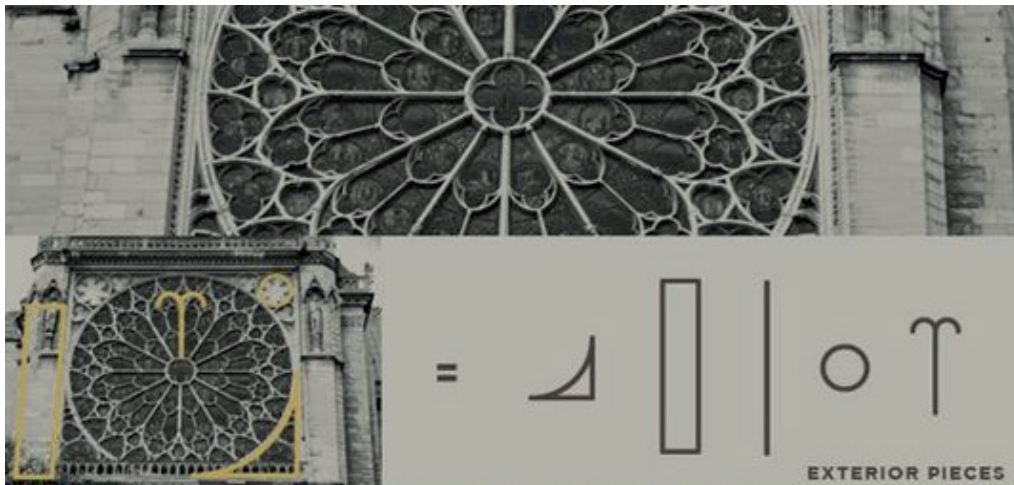


h n l m

Taking these properties forward, you can then go on to build many of these other characters.

Remember that 'copy and paste' is your friend - it ensures consistency, and limits room for error.

SOUTH ROSE



Pathfinder



n
m

With just a few shapes, you will be able to draw out a large chunk of your typeface. You will however need to keep track of how these shapes are assembled.

To get from an 'n' to an 'm', you will simply need to duplicate the arm section. Remember that you will need to then unite these two shapes using the pathfinder tool.

This will leave you with a single unified shape, which can be converted from outline to fill without uncovering any mistakes.

Check

An outline of a lowercase letter 'm' in a serif font. The letter is slightly irregular, with some uneven spacing between the strokes, giving it a hand-drawn or 'untidy' appearance.

Untidy

An outline of a lowercase letter 'm' in a serif font. This version is perfectly symmetrical and clean, representing a 'tidy' or computer-generated version of the letter.

Tidy

Today

Scan your sketches

Import them all into the pasteboard area of an illustrator file (A3)

Assemble 'h', and from that, draw out your guides

Use your 'h' to inform other characters

Constantly refer back to sketches

Building

This brief does not require you to build your typeface digitally, however it is something you may wish to give a go - you'll have done the hard bit!

There are many different ways of doing this, and a range of websites offer help.

One i'd recommend is 'Calligraphr' - you get to create one font for free, and download it as a working file, that you can then install and use.



www.calligraphr.com

Calligraphr

1. Download the Template

First you need to download the PDF template from the 'TEMPLATES' window. You can select which letters you wish to include, as well as optional punctuation, numbers, etc.

2. Open In Illustrator

Download this PDF, and open it in illustrator.

3. Insert Vectors

Working with the guides that are included, copy over your vectors, and align as best you can.

4. Save & Upload

Save that PDF and upload it back to the website using the 'UPLOAD TEMPLATE' option on the 'Fonts' page.

5. Create Font File

Click 'BUILD FONT'. This will then scan your file, assemble you font, and create a .ttf file that you can download and use.

Feedback

Feedback on Computer Arts/Progressive Layouts
will be between 10-12 on Thursday.

Drop-in session, no need to book.