

Pairing Typefaces

Art & Design

Choosing two faces that work together, and the reason most pairings fail.

Two faces is usually enough. A third needs a reason.

1

Choose the text face first

It carries the reading. Everything else is chosen to fit it.

2

Look for contrast

Two faces that nearly match read as a mistake rather than a choice.

3

Match x-height and colour

Set both at one size; the grey of the two settings should agree.

4

Check awkward characters

Numerals, ampersands, question marks and the italic lowercase a.

5

Try a superfamily

A serif and sans designed together already share their proportions.

One face with a real range of weights beats a bad pairing. The number of typefaces is not a measure of effort.