KEEP CALM AND KERN

Some of the do's and don'ts of Typography by Fran Pimblett

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Smart Quotes

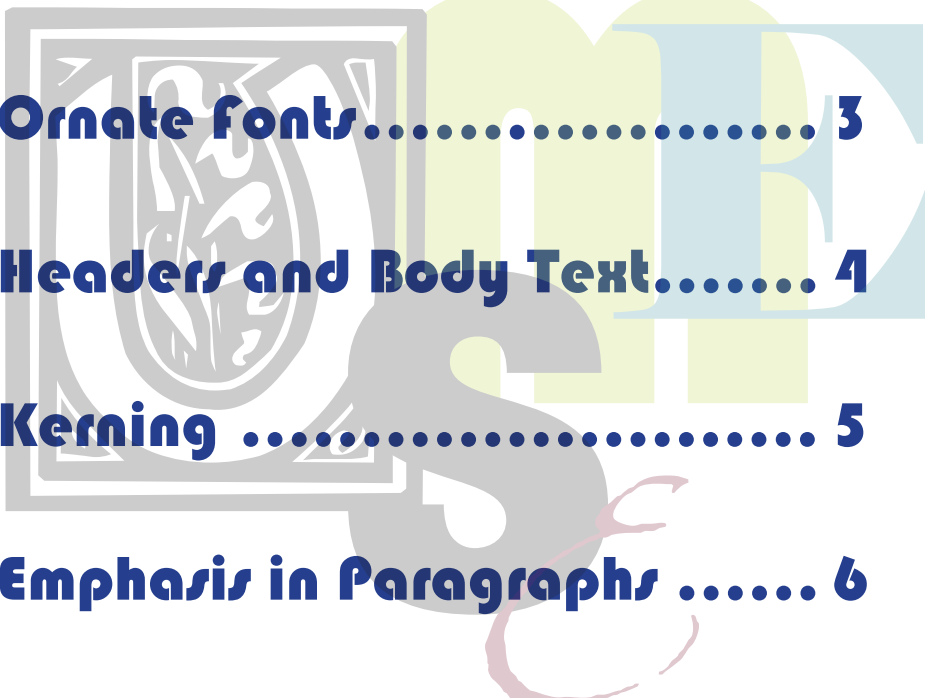I t might surprise you to know that the quotation marks, ellipsis and apostrophe that are commonly used are not actually appropriate for type. They are mathematical measurement symbols for feet and minutes and for inches and seconds. To use the correct quotation marks here's how

For curly single quotes (apostrophes etc.)
For Windows use Alt 0145 (left/open) and Alt 0146 (right/closed)
For Mac use Option+] (left/open) and Shift+Option+] (right/closed)

For curly double quotes (quotation marks etc.)
For Windows use Alt 0147 (left/open) and Alt 0148 (right/closed)
For Mac use Option+[(left/open) and Shift+Option+[(right/closed)

For ellipsis (implying text omission, hesitation or interruption) where full stops are commonly used as an inferior alternative.
For Windows use Alt 0133
For Mac use Option + semicolon

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Ornate Fonts

USE Carefully

Don't use ornate fonts for body copy because they tend to be difficult to read. Do use them for headers and drop caps where their individuality allows them to shine.

HOW HARD IS THIS TO READ ?

There might be thousands of interesting fonts available out there but learning when to use them in your work and how to be selective and discrete will give your work the professional polished look that every designer aims for.

Headers and Body Text

Do Use a different Header to your body text. This makes your work a lot easier to read. Make sure that the header and body text have enough contrast to make them clearly different to each other.

Don't use fonts that are very similar as that has the same effect as using the same typeface. The best combination for large sections of text is to use Sans Serif headers and serif body text for ease of readability.

You may be able to get away with using fonts from the same family so long as you make sure that there is enough contrast between the two.

Same header as body text

Here we see an example of how using the same font for the header of this paragraph has made the header look like it is part of the paragraph. It doesn't stand out enough and it appears to blend into the body text confusing the reader in the process.

This is a better choice

When a different font is chosen for the header and a clearly different font is chosen for the body text, it gives the reader a much clearer area of dividion between the header and the body text and adds more interest to the paragraph

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Kerning

Do kern manually, don't use automatic kerning Kerning is adjusting the spacing between a pair of letters to equalise the amount of white space between them. Kerning is something that you have to practice to get right and it's more a matter of adjusting until it looks right than any particular formula.

Tracking is adjusting the spacing between all the letters in a selection of text/word and tends to be used in conjunction with kerning.

KERNING

TYPEFACE

TRACKING

Automatic kerning tends not to give the best results but is a good place to start from and you can then manually adjust from there. The letters to watch are slanting letters like "A" and "W" and problems that occur when pairing capital letters with lower case letters, especially the letters "T" and "Y".

Use Kerning particularly on headers to ensure that they look their best. Your reader is more likely to notice spacing problems in your headers than in body text that they tend to skim over as words rather than individual letters

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Emphasis in Paragraphs

Be careful not to overuse "quotation marks", Exclamation marks!, Bold, italic and underlining and especially using all capital letters to form words. Aside from making your text look incredibly busy and messy, it confuses the reader and makes it difficult for them to work out what you actually want to emphasise in the first place.

If you rely on using an overabundance of **bold text**, <u>underlined text</u>, CAPITALISATION, *italics*, "quotation marks" and using exclamation marks! In order to ram home your point you run the risk of losing your message in the process and making it very difficult for your reader to ascertain where you actually want to draw their attention to. It also makes your paragraphs look messy and unprofessional. Use your words to direct the flow of your paragraphs.

Bold CAPITALS
! *Italics* " "
Underlined

Find other ways to make your point

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Sentence Length

I t is easy to cram your sentences too full by using semicolons, commas and linking words like "but" however it's also easy to make your sentences fragmented by leaving out a subject, a verb or an object. The ideal sentence length is between 30 and 40 words. Enough to keep your reader interested but not enough to start labouring the point.

This sentence is far too long

Once upon a time there was a man who decided that he was going to leave the rat race behind and he stopped what he was doing and just started to walk away from it all with an ever increasing spring in his step as he got further and further away from his old life and closer and closer to the great unknown where he knew that he would be able to find himself in the possibilities that lay ahead of him and lose his old life in the process.

This sentence is the right length

A man decided that his life was no longer what he wanted so he decided to leave it behind, head out and find himself in the possibilities of a new life.

You won't lose your readers interest and they will want to keep reading if you keep your sentence length between 30 and 40 words.

Learning to write good sentences is the basis of writing good prose. If you are prone to writing long sentences look for your main point and give each point their own smaller sentence and then make sure that everything flows well and fits together seamlessly

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