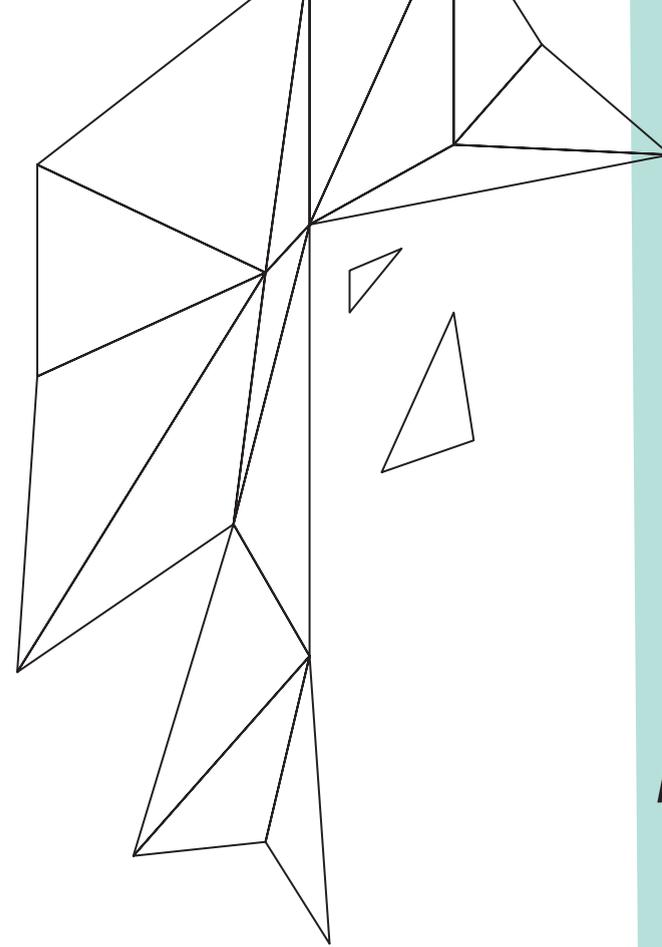


THE **39** RULES  
OF **TYPE**



## *Hello there,*

Type is an art. Each fragment creates the foundation for something greater and intricate. To make typography work for you and deliver clear messages to your audience, it's necessary to take advantage of the set of rules that will benefit any student, typographer or simply—type enthusiast! This brightly designed book will help you to go through all the rules with a handful of examples to illustrate the point even more. *Enjoy!*

## Using old style figures and all caps.

- ▶ Use old style figures when appropriate. Old style figures, also known as non-lining figures, do not line up on the baseline as do regular or lining numerals. Old style figures can be found in various fonts. If the body text has a lot of numbers, research a font family where old style figures are included. If non-lining numerals are not available use a slightly smaller point size for the lining numbers. Think of lining numbers as uppercase numbers and non-lining numbers as lowercase numbers.
- ▶ Never use all caps (capital letters) in a script or italicized font.

THANKS HOW SCRIPT TYPE  
LOOKS IN ALL CAPS.  
SEEMS FUN?

SORRY, I know you can't read  
that, but it was the point this  
time. Beware of edgy script  
typography!

## Always, always spellcheck.

- ▶ Once the design is complete, spellcheck all of the text. This is done two ways, and both must be used. First, in most software programs, there is spellcheck available. Use it, especially MS Word. Second, print the document and read through the text. The monitor and design of the document will make text look perfect when in actuality, it may not be. Even if it is text given to you by a client, spellcheck it. Never assume that it is correct. Keep a dictionary nearby and use it.

## Bold text and proper leading.

- ▶ Use bold text sparingly. Bold text stands out from body text and is meant to show emphasis. Bold text is better used in headlines, captions, logos, drop caps, or other special type treatments. Do not bold entire paragraphs of body text. Usually italics are a more subtle way to separate text from the rest of the body without drawing too much attention.
- ▶ Always tighten up the leading when using two or more lines of all caps.

Let's try and **not** use **bold text** to emphasize **every** little detail in the **text** that we are **writing!**  
However, emphasizing like *this* is the best way to do it!

## Number alignment and true small caps.

- ▶ Align numbers flush right or by the decimal point for a much cleaner look. Use the Command-\ to align multiple lines of text to the right of the numbers.
- ▶ Use true small caps. When setting text that contains acronyms, select a typeface with small caps as a family. Selecting small caps from the style menus is a poor choice because the computer reduces the overall size of the type by 80%. This changes the stroke weight and the feel of the font. Expert sets in the Adobe Type Library have small caps options. If you create your own large & small caps, a 5:4 ratio is best.

## Repetitive words and lists.

- ▶ Avoid beginning three consecutive lines with the same word. Since software programs deal with line breaks automatically based upon a number of variables, it is possible to have paragraphs with consecutive lines beginning with the same word. When this happens simply adjust the text to avoid the problem.
- ▶ Items in a series do not use a comma before the word “and”.

**Shopping list done right:**  
Buy grapes, apples, milk and  
whipped cream.

**Shopping list done wrong:**  
Buy grapes, apples, milk, and  
whipped cream.

## The rules of hyphenation.

- ▶ Do not rely on software to judge where hyphens should be placed. At the end of lines, leave at least two characters behind and take at least three forward. Creating a non-breaking space before and after the name will ensure that the name will not break.
  - Avoid hyphenating the first line of text.
  - Avoid more than two consecutive hyphenated lines.
  - Avoid hyphenating or breaking proper names and titles.
  - Avoid leaving the stub end of a hyphenated word or any word shorter than four letters as the last line of a paragraph.

For example, if you hyphen “elegantly”, it’s acceptable to separate it this way” ele-gantly, but not like this: elegant-ly.



## The dollar sign and choosing text size.

- ▶ Align dollar amounts in a column listing by the \$ and the decimal. You only need to add the dollar sign \$ at the top of the column and the bottom.
- ▶ Choose appropriate body text size. You can probably set body text to a point size smaller than your original choice. Body text is usually set from 9–12 points. When you print text, it is usually larger than what it looked like on the screen. So, print out your text before finalizing your layout. Type studies will help you determine the proper size before you proceed with your layout.



## Emphasizing with italics and column widths.

- ▶ Try using italics rather than all caps when you want to emphasize a word. Also when pulling out certain words in a different color, make sure you emphasize the power word in the sentence or thought.
- ▶ Choose the ideal column width. For single-column pages, 4.25 inches is maximum—depending on the size of the type. For two-column width, columns can be as narrow as 2 inches (7 words). Turning on the hyphenation feature can improve word spacing.

## Widows, orphans and establishing hierarchy.

- ▶ A widow is either a single word alone on a line or a single sentence alone on a new page or column. Orphans are single lines of copy alone at the end or of a page (or the top of a new column).
- ▶ Establish clear hierarchy. Decide what to emphasize. Which elements will receive the most emphasis? Which one or two messages do you want to get attention? Play up these elements. Everything else is secondary to those pieces of information. Use white space to bring the elements closer together or to isolate the elements and draw attention to them.

*In this example we have an unwanted orphan that is all by itself.*

*But here you can see all the words fitting nicely in the column, without any of them left all alone in the last line!*

## Indents and specific kerning.

- ▶ Indent paragraphs or skip a space to indicate a new thought. You don't need to indent a first paragraph after a head or subhead since it's obvious it's a new thought.
- ▶ In continuous text, mark all paragraphs after the first with an indent of at least one "em" (page 16) which is 3 spaces.
- ▶ Kern the space between two particular letters to allow for consistent, even color.

## Take advantage of soft returns.

- ▶ Hang quotation marks outside in the margin and align the copy instead. The same goes for bullets. This can be done by inserting your cursor before the first letter of text and typing Command-\. All copy below will align at that point until you hit the next hard return. A soft return will not disturb the new alignment (return-rhif). Do this for bulleted listings too.

## Insert only a single space after all punctuation.

- ▶ Inserting two spaces after a period was common when typing on a typewriter. Monospace typefaces were designed to occupy the same amount of space no matter the width of the character. Therefore, two spaces were needed to identify the end of a sentence and the beginning of another sentence. With the introduction of the Mac and digital type, characters are designed proportionally which allows for the correct practice of using one space after all punctuation.

Avoid double spaces after punctuation. This doesn't look great. Does it?

And also be careful not to have spaces before punctuation marks. This look much better. I'm sure you agree!

## Know your dashes.

- ▶ An “em” is a unit of measure equal to the point size that you are using. An “em” dash is a type of punctuation used to offset clauses in a sentence or to indicate an abrupt change in thought. Set it without spaces before and after. You may kern small spaces before and after “en” and “em” dashes if you feel it is too tight. But do not give full spaces. An “en” dash is equal to half the length of an “em” dash. “En” dashes are used to denote duration. Hyphens are used for hyphenating words. Make sure the hyphenation is in the correct place.

## Letterspacing & alingning with numbers.

- ▶ Add letterspacing to capitalized text and small caps if needed. Letterspacing is the amount of space between characters in a word. Some software programs call letterspacing tracking. Use positive number values to open up the letterspacing for capitalized text and small caps to about 2 or 3.
- ▶ Align copy to the right of the numbers.

*Do not solely rely on the software.*

- Em dash.*
- En dash.*
- Hyphen.*

## The use of justification.

- ▶ Justification can be appropriate in certain places. However, justification can create problems such as rivers and word spacing gaps which are unacceptable. Some solutions may work but they need to fit into whatever guidelines the design of the page requires. Adjusting the size of your margins, decreasing the size of your text, rewriting copy, turning on auto-hyphenate and manually hyphenating the text are all examples of solutions. If none of those solutions work, then change the alignment.

Here's an example of justified text that has problems with appropriate word spacing.

We definitely want our text to look more like this, than have all those gaps!

## Aligning the text properly.

- ▶ Choose the alignment that best suits the text. Left-aligned text is easier to read and easier to set. Justified text is more difficult to set without the inevitable word spacing problems. Right-aligned and centered are generally not used for body text due to hampered legibility. With every alignment, the designer's determination of rag is an important factor in typography. Always go back in and manually adjust rags to soften them when they're extreme. With any alignment you want to work with your H&Js. The H&J setting are in both Adobe InDesign and in QuarkXpress.

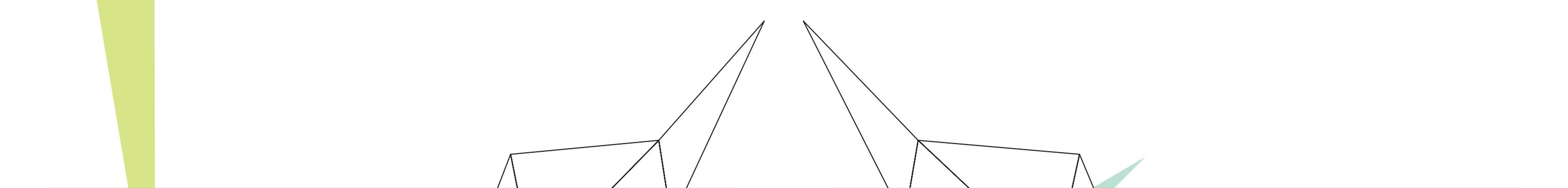
## Quoting and decorative lines of text.

- ▶ Use true quotation marks and apostrophes instead of using inch marks and feet marks. Think 6 and 9 shapes. Make sure you use proper quotation marks. Place all punctuation marks, except colons and semi-colons inside the quotation marks. Check smart quotes in your application preferences.
- ▶ Try to break decorative lines of copy, i.e. quotes and subheads by natural phrasing

## Sans & serif; hyphenating proper nouns.

- ▶ Sans serif typefaces are often less legible than serif fonts. In the western world, we learn to recognize shapes as opposed to words. Therefore, serifs help link the shapes making type easier to read. Sans serif typefaces work well for headlines and for text that is aligned to vertical/horizontal lines.
- ▶ Never hyphenate a proper noun. Try to keep multiple words on the same line.

*'This ' is not proper quotation.  
However, "this" is just what we  
need to quote beautifully.*



## Characters per line and kerning adjustments.

- ▶ Decrease line length and increase margins. Line length is the measure of text on one line. Any measure between 45 and 75 characters is comfortable for single column widths (7–2 words). The ideal measure for body text length is 66 characters (counting both letters, punctuation and spaces). For multiple columns, a measure between 40 to 50 characters is ideal.
- ▶ Adjust kerning letter-by-letter in headlines, and logos, for perfectly even color. It may help you see gaps and tightness if you rotate the word upside down or reflect the word so you can't read it and are forced.

## Altering typefaces with caution.

- ▶ Don't alter the widths, weight, or shapes of the characters. Type design is an art. Each character has been carefully designed taking into consideration the width, weight and the shape of each character (stress, stroke and serif). Graphic software allows us to destroy/alter the original design. Inexperienced designers use this option to “force” type to fit. Select typefaces with large families if you need the flexibility in widths and weights. Note: some typographers do believe it's okay to modify a typeface width up to 2%. You decide for yourself.

## Line spacing for readability.

- ▶ Increase line spacing to improve readability in body text. Line spacing or leading refers to the space between lines of text. It is important for the purpose of readability and appearance. Leading is measured from baseline to baseline. As a rule of thumb, allow leading that equals 120% of point size. For sans serif, you may need 135%. Leading should be increased proportionally as line length increases. When setting headlines, negative or solid leading may be appropriate. Solid leading means that the leading equals the point size.

## The ellipsis and underlined text.

- ▶ Use the ellipsis character when appropriate. Use the ellipsis (...) character and not three periods (...). You can access the ellipsis character on a mac by pressing option + colon (:). Allow a small amount of space before or after, not a full space. If the ellipsis character doesn't seem to be crowding the text, leave no space at all.
- ▶ Avoid underlined text. Back in the typewriter days, underlining was the only way to draw attention to the text. Now, with digital type and their families, you have the options of using bolds, italics, or obliques.

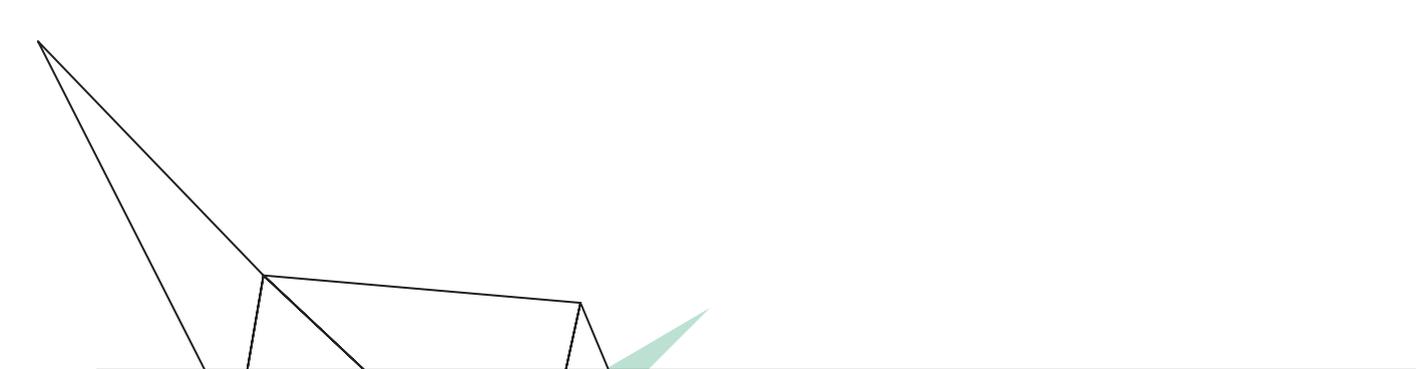
*This little paragraph of text is not one that we'd call as easy to read. There's barely any air!*

*This is much better, I'm sure you agree. Takes less time to read through as well. Take note of this rule and use thoroughly!*



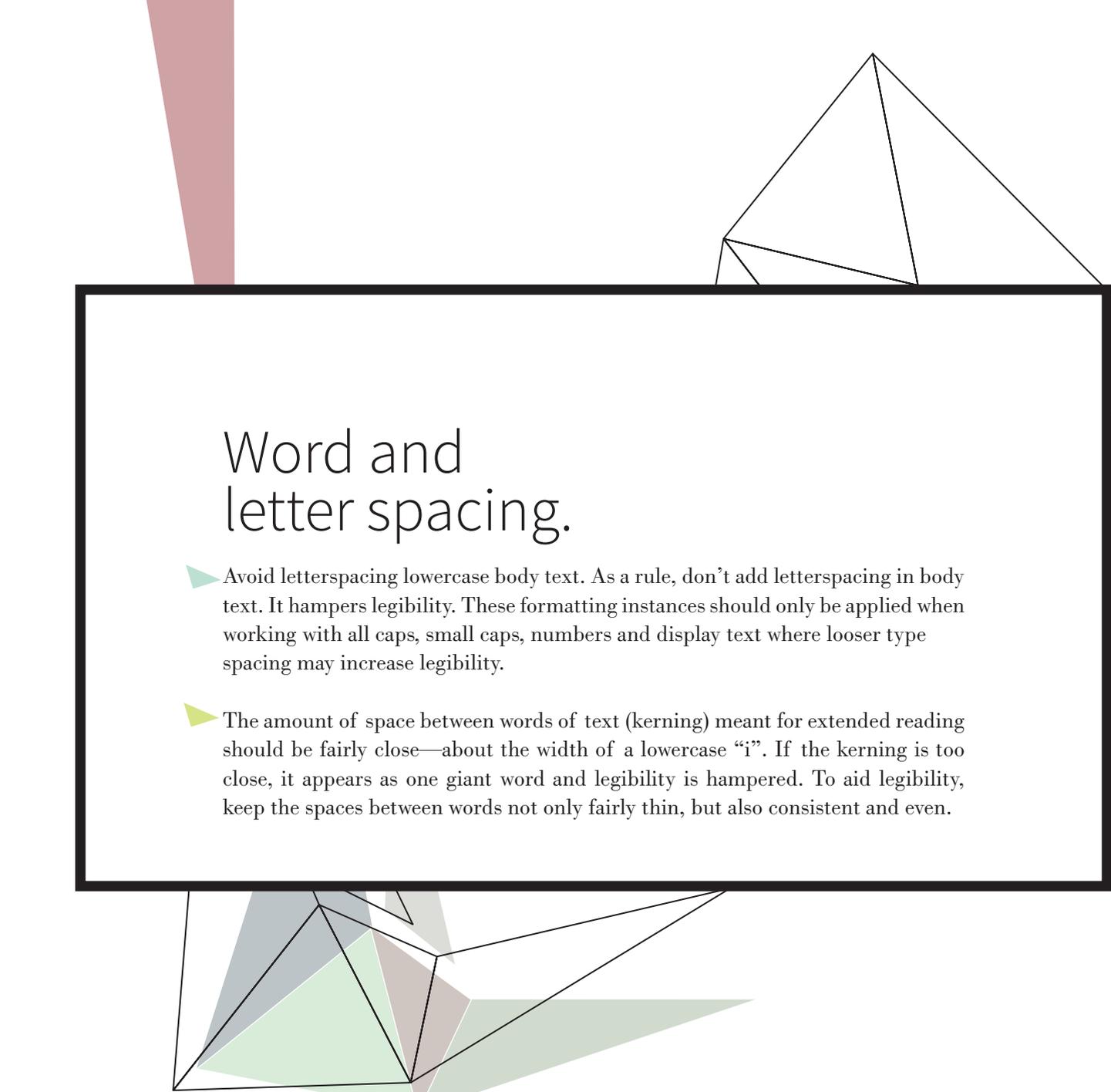
## Using proper symbols.

- ▶ The copyright (©), register (®) and trademark (™) characters should be reduced to work with body copy. Depending on the typeface, you may want to reduce the mark between 50% and 70%. The goal is to go smaller than the x-height. The © symbol should be approximately 70% of the surrounding text. Again, set the size of the symbol to the x-height. Unlike the (™) symbol, the (©) symbol should not be superscripted. It should remain on the baseline. The (™) and (®) symbols are usually superscripted. If you choose to superscript (®), make sure you reduce it to 60% of the size of the x-height.



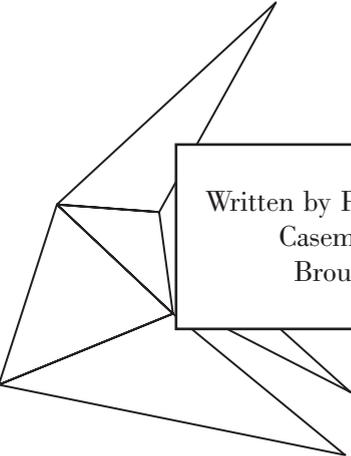
## Capital letters and their use.

- ▶ Use capital letters very rarely. With the options given by type families such as bold, larger point sizes, etc.; you will seldom need to use all caps to draw attention to your text. When type is set in all caps, readers have to read each individual letter rather than recognizing groups of letters. This slows the reader and the amount of information they are retrieving. Also, not all typefaces are readable when set in all caps. This is especially true about script typefaces and the most decorative typefaces. Short headlines may be one exception to this rule.



## Word and letter spacing.

- ▶ Avoid letterspacing lowercase body text. As a rule, don't add letterspacing in body text. It hampers legibility. These formatting instances should only be applied when working with all caps, small caps, numbers and display text where looser type spacing may increase legibility.
- ▶ The amount of space between words of text (kerning) meant for extended reading should be fairly close—about the width of a lowercase “i”. If the kerning is too close, it appears as one giant word and legibility is hampered. To aid legibility, keep the spaces between words not only fairly thin, but also consistent and even.



Written by Professors Chercy Lott, Mary Ann Casem and Trudy Abadie-Mendia.  
Brought to life by Arta Teivane.

