

Students' Type Study Leaflets. 1 Letter Forms

These are Roman Letters

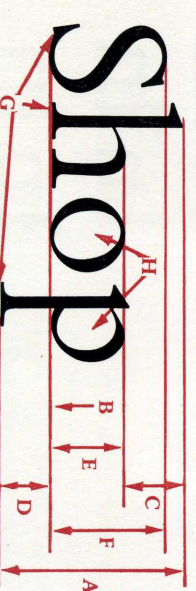
ABCDEFGHI
JKLMNOP
OPQRST
UVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
lmnopqrstu
vwxyz

This is the upper-case or capital alphabet. (You may also find it referred to as majuscule.)

Its letter forms evolved mainly as inscriptional letters cut in stone. The letters on Hadrian's Trajan column in Rome A.D. 113 and similar inscriptions show how long before the invention of printing the forms of the letters were established.

This is the lower-case or minuscule alphabet. The letter forms grew up later than the capitals and derive largely from calligraphic (pen-written) lettering.

The type face in which the alphabets are shown is Bembo.



- A Point or body size
- B Base Line
- C Ascender
- D Descender
- E x-height
- F Capital height
- G Serifs
- H Counters

Students' Type Study Leaflets. 3 The Metal Type

The Metal

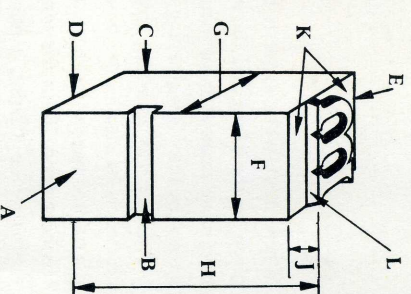
A printing type is made of metal alloy – lead, tin and antimony. Lead is the main ingredient: it is relatively cheap and has a low melting point. Tin is added to give toughness to the type and to make the molten metal flow more freely into the fine lines of the matrix and so give a more accurate casting. Antimony also improves the accuracy of the casting by reducing the shrinkage of the molten metal on cooling as well as increasing the hardness of the metal.

The type: measurements and parts

The type is cast in a mould which is fixed point-wise ↓ so that every type in a fount has the same measurement from top to bottom (e.g. 8 point, like the type you are now reading) but adjustable set-wise ↔ to allow for wide M and narrow l, etc. The drawing on the right shows one "sort" of type. Its printing surface was formed as the molten metal solidified in the matrix which sealed the top of the mould orifice.

These are the parts and measurements of a printing type: A the front (of body) identifiable by B the nick; C the back; D the foot; E the head; F the width (this set-wise measurement differs from one character to another throughout the fount); G the body or point size (this is the same throughout one fount of type); H height to paper (this is standard for founts of any English point size, though on the continent, where Didot point measurements are used, the height to paper is also different); J the beard, composed of K the shoulder or flat non-printing surface of the type and L the bevel or steeply sloping surface between printing surface and shoulder.

In a *tilting* fount there are no lower-case letters, and the characters can therefore occupy the whole depth of the body and there is scarcely any beard. (Tilting letters are useful for such things as drop initials at the beginnings of chapters, because their lack of beard makes it possible to fit the text type closely round them.)



Bembo Tilting and Bembo are both shown in 36 point below. The tilting appears larger as no space has had to be allowed for descending characters.

MMMy