

3 TYPE TIPS
EVERY WEBSITE
SHOULD IMPLEMENT
RIGHT NOW

TO IMPROVE UX
& INCREASE
CONVERSIONS

DESIGN
— *for* —
GEEKS

1.

USE JUST ONE TYPEFACE

One of the most common type-related headaches that people come to me with is how to pair typefaces. There's a course in the making for that. But in the meantime, let me give you an immediate solution.

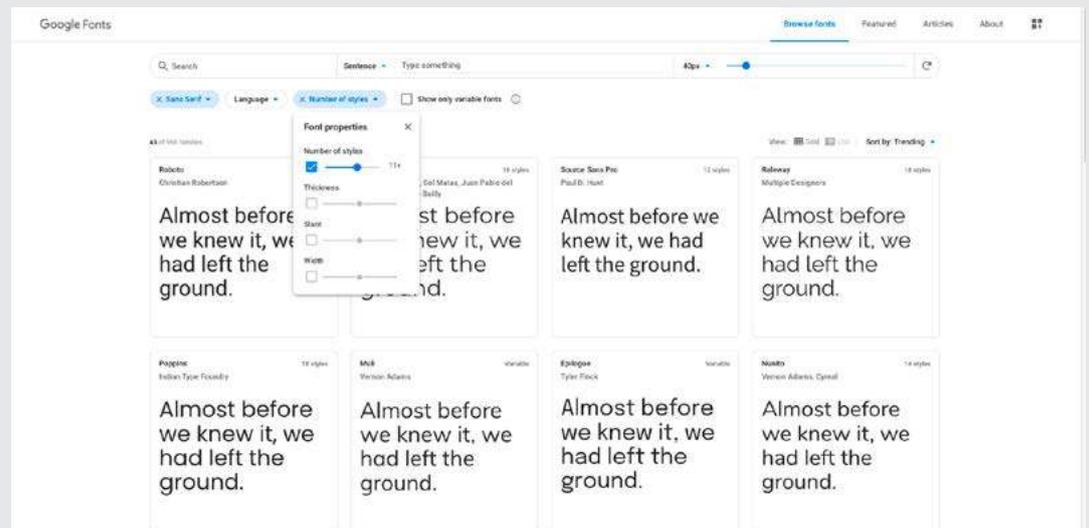
Don't pair. **Use just one typeface instead.**

Using just one typeface does not at all mean lower quality. In fact, it means **stronger branding**: and that's also another way you can sell the idea to your clients.

Create hierarchy and visual interest with styles, weights and colours instead. Your digital product **will load faster**, and your visitors' brains won't have to work so hard to understand too many different patterns.

HOW TO PICK JUST ONE TYPEFACE

The Google fonts interface allows you to select fonts based on classification, as well as number of styles



1. Pick a typeface with plenty of styles and weights. Google even has a filter for that.
2. Pick a typeface that has a serif version for the text, or a condensed/ extended version for the headings: this way you have a ready-made pairing, without any effort.
3. Pick a typeface that comes from a good designer or foundry. This will mean that all characters are well designed, proportional, they render well, and so on.
4. Pick a typeface with OpenType features. These are features such as small caps, ligatures, swashes, special characters for foreign languages, and so on.
5. Always check type anatomy: proportions, x-height, length of ascenders & descenders, & test a paragraph for line height.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Pick **ONE** typeface of great quality. Use colour & weights for hierarchy, visual interest & differentiation

1.

USE JUST ONE TYPEFACE

About

John Hansard Gallery, part of the University of Southampton, is one of the UK's leading contemporary art galleries.

We support, develop and present great art by outstanding artists from across the world and are proud to play a dynamic role in the cultural life of Southampton and the region.

Our vision is to create extraordinary encounters with great art that inspire people and communities to change the world for the better.

Our mission is to be a locally engaged and an internationally recognised contemporary art gallery in the heart of Southampton. To realise this, we create innovative and critically acclaimed contemporary art exhibitions, events, learning and research projects that excite, challenge, reflect and reach the widest possible public audience.

John Hansard Gallery is funded by the University of Southampton, its governing body. We are proud to be part of a world-leading University and one of a trio of outstanding arts organisations connected to the University of Southampton, alongside [Turner Sims](#) and [NST, Nuffield Southampton Theatres](#). We are also hugely grateful for the support of Arts Council England, who have funded John Hansard Gallery since its inception. Our exhibitions and educational activities are further

The [John Hansard Gallery](#) website achieves beautiful design, strong branding, and very clear hierarchy and info display using just one typeface ([Suisse](#), an improved version of Helvetica that has also serif & other versions).

Speed is also an added bonus when using just one typeface.



Design legend Massimo Vignelli declared many times that he only worked with a handful of typefaces. Vignelli managed to create iconic, timeless brands using just one typeface. If he could, so can you.

2.

ALWAYS USE GOOD ALIGNMENT

Straight lines don't exist in nature: that's why alignment creates a sense of human-made order, while aiding organisation, visual hierarchy and comprehension.

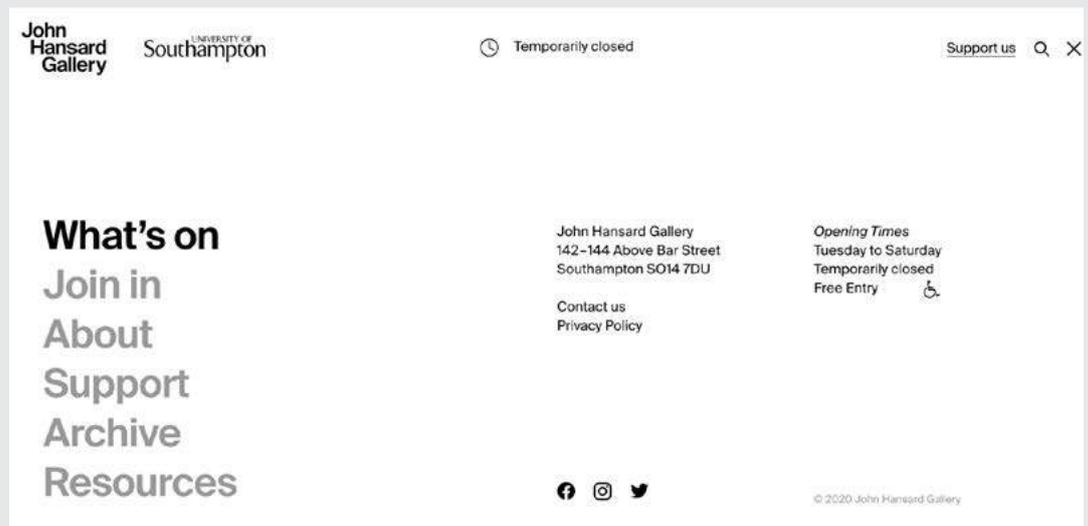
If the language you are using goes from left to right, then **left alignment is the best** for longer chunks of text. **Right alignment** is ok for short pieces of information.

Justified alignment is to be avoided on the web: browsers aren't able to render the text correctly without gaps between words.

Centred alignment often means no alignment. It's ok for short titles. Otherwise, simply avoid: without a left anchor, the eye has to jump from line to line and it's harder for the brain to extract the meaning quickly.

HOW TO USE GOOD ALIGNMENT

The John Hansard Gallery website creates a strong sense of hierarchy and order by using a grid, correct type hierarchy and left alignment. No need of lines or arrows to direct the eye: the alignment is enough.



1. If the language you are using goes from left to right, your main text should be **left-aligned**. Put the most important info on the left: that's the 1st place the eye goes to.
2. Use **right alignment** only for short bits of text.
3. **Centred alignment** is acceptable only for short titles. The ragged lines are hard to read. Plus, some people (me) see shapes in blocks of centred text.
4. **Justified alignment** is good in print but not on the web.
5. Make sure your text blocks **share points of alignment**: it keeps the layout ordered.
6. **Avoid mixing alignments**: don't use a centred title if everything else is left-aligned.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Use alignment to lead the eye & help the brain work less to interpret the information. Avoid centred alignment: it's not aligned

2.

ALWAYS USE GOOD ALIGNMENT



The [Frans Hals Museum](#) website has lots of lovely elements about it.

However, the blocks of visitor information centred within different columns make it quite hard for me to work out the complex data. My eye has to jump from one line to the next without any anchors.



Aligning everything to the left immediately makes my job easier. Now I can work out the opening hours without the unpredictable jumps from one line to the next, and without seeing weird shapes formed by the block of centred text. Anyone with autism or dyslexia will thank you for using aligned text.

3.

BE READABLE AND LEGIBLE

Readability means that your text as a whole is easy to read; while legibility refers to the ease of telling individual letters apart. Needless to say, good typography needs both.

We saw earlier how the wrong alignment can compromise comprehension: there are also other factors, such as type design, the use of a busy background, or the use of all caps, that can be seriously detrimental to a good, legible and readable type experience for your users.

Good readability and legibility are all about pattern recognition. Some fancy typefaces feature shapes that can be very confusing because they look like something else. Avoid making style choices that worsen the UX.

FACTORS IN READABILITY AND LEGIBILITY

The combination of type design, colour contrast, tight line height and centred alignment make this text virtually unreadable. Never choose style over accessibility: make sure your choices are always legible and readable.

IN THIS TYPEFACE, SOME OF THE
LETTERS LOOK LIKE ANOTHER
SYMBOL, SO THAT A DOUBLE
INTERPRETATION IS POSSIBLE.
CENTRED ALIGNMENT MAKES IT
EVEN HARDER TO READ, AND THE
LINES ARE WAY TOO TIGHT. PLUS,
THE COLOUR & BACKGROUND
CONTRAST IS DEFINITELY NOT
ACCESSIBLE

1. Typeface design is an essential factor. Chose typefaces that are unambiguous.
2. Sans serifs can be less legible because their letters look like simple shapes: for instance, the 'l' is a simple line and can look like an '1'
3. White space is a big factor that can affect both readability and legibility. Use it wisely: check your padding, margins, line height, tracking, and so on.
4. Colour blindness issues and background colour contrast greatly influence the ease of reading. Always check with a colour contrast tool such as [Contrast Checker](#).
5. Last but by no means least, good alignment is essential. Avoid centred alignment and justification if you want to ensure the best readability for your users.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Readability and legibility are essential factors in good type UX.
Being understandable is more important than looking cool

3.

BE READABLE AND LEGIBLE

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS

PUSHOUT: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS IS A FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY WHICH TAKES A CLOSE LOOK AT THE EDUCATIONAL, JUDICIAL AND SOCIETAL DISPARITIES FACING BLACK GIRLS. INSPIRED BY THE GROUNDBREAKING BOOK OF THE SAME NAME BY RENOWNED SCHOLAR, MONIQUE W. MORRIS, ED.D. THE DOCUMENTARY CONFRONTS THE WAYS IN WHICH THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF BLACK GIRLHOOD HAS LED TO EXCESSIVE PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE WHICH IN TURN DISRUPTS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THEIR LIVES, THEIR EDUCATION.



WATCH THE TRAILER

BLACK GIRLS IN HIGH SCHOOL ARE*

6X

MORE LIKELY THAN THEIR
WHITE GIRLS TO BE SUSPENDED.

3X

MORE LIKELY TO RECEIVE 1 OR
MORE IN-SCHOOL
SUSPENSIONS THAN WHITE
FEMALE STUDENTS.

3X

MORE LIKELY TO BE
RESTRAINED THAN WHITE
FEMALE STUDENTS.

This website for a [harrowing documentary](#) compromises readability and legibility because of 3 factors: the typeface design (mixed caps /lowercase), the line length & alignment, and the high contrast between text colour and vibrant background.

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS

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WATCH THE TRAILER

BLACK GIRLS IN HIGH SCHOOL ARE*

6X

more likely than their
white girls to be
suspended.

3X

more likely to receive 1
or more in-school
suspensions than white
female students.

3X

more likely to be
restrained than white
female students.

Changing the odd typeface to a normal sans serif, while aligning to the left and changing the background colour makes this an accessible page: the [contrast checking tool](#) gives a full pass to the combination, and the text is now legible.