

Type on Maps

Type is subtle but important, shaping the look and effectiveness of a map. The meaning of words on maps is complemented by the *look* of the word: variations in *type style, size, weight, form,* and the *placement* of type on maps imparts additional information. The effective use of type on maps requires some understanding of the anatomy of type.

Typeface and font: a typeface is a collection of letters and numbers with a unique design. A font is a subset of a typeface, and includes all letters and numbers of a specific size. **Font** is often used to mean typeface. Helvetica is a different typeface (font) from Times Roman.

Serifs: finishing strokes added to the ends of letter: Helvetica has no serifs (sans serif font); Times Roman does (serif font).

Typeface (font) is Times Roman:

Making
Maps

X-height
descender
Point size = 48
Serif

Typeface (font) is Helvetica:

Point size = 48
Sans serif

ascender
X-height

Making
Maps

X-height is the height of the most compact letters in a type face, such as an a, o, or e. Type with a greater X-height is typically easier to read. An **ascender** is the portion of certain letters that rises above the X-height, such as in the letters d or f. A **descender** is the portion of certain letters that falls below the X-height, such as in the letters g or p.

Point size: type size is measured in points, where 72 points = 1 inch. Type size is determined by the height of the original lead foundry block, and is not the same as the height of the letter: 8 point Times Roman is smaller than 8 point Georgia.

The use of type on a map has **two** facets:

1

What the type looks like: type as a graphic symbol

- type variables:

Type *Style* **Type Weight**
Type size *Type Form*

- use graphic variations in type to communicate something!

● Larger City
● Smaller City

Type on maps can be used to differentiate...

Qualitative data

- ex) types of trees
- ex) religious denominations

- ✓ type **style**.
- ✓ type **form** (spacing, italics, color hue).

Quantitative data:

- ex) size of population
- ex) amount of traffic

- ✓ type **size**.
- ✓ type **weight**.
- ✓ type **form** (case, color value).

2

Type placement: the arrangement of type on a map

- carefully consider how type is positioned in terms of the object or symbol it refers to:

Rome ●

Romeo? **No!** Rome: ● Rome