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

Point size = 48

Serif

**Typeface (font) is Helvetica:**

Making Maps

 ascender

Point size = 48

Sans serif

X-height

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

2. **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).

3. **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