Designing for Readability: A Guide to Web Typography

Choose clear and recognizable letterforms

Letterforms that are too repetitive can make text illegible, so each letter should have a distinctive shape.

**Distinctive Letters**

SERAVEK TAHOMA CERA PRO GILL SANS TIMES BODONI IMPACT OPTIMA

Open Forms

Letters that are airy and open are less likely to blur into closed shapes.

**Open Forms**

HOEFLER TEXT MYRIAD PRO ROBOTO CONDENSED SUPER CLARENDON PROXIMA NOVA HELVETICA COURIER BRANDON

Choose clear and recognizable letterforms

Text is most legible when the eye can easily distinguish between letters. Some typefaces are designed to simply be slick and rhythmic—pleasing to the eye. Legible typefaces have far more nuance among the letters.

Format text for the highest level of legibility

After a typeface is chosen, formatting it for onscreen reading is just as important. Decisions like color and size always contribute to the reading experience.

Clear Terminals

Distinguishable beginnings and endings of letters help the eye recognize individual forms.

**Clear Terminals**

PT SERIFBASKERVILLE HELVETICA

Letterform Contrast

Body text requires some contrast within letterform stroke width, but shouldn't go too far where certain strokes begin to disappear.

**Letterform Contrast**

Body Text Size

Type size depends on the distance at which a reader is positioned from the screen. General rules apply, but testing a design on all screen types is essential to ensuring a pleasant and legible reading experience.

Leading

The space between lines of text depends heavily on the chosen typeface. Follow the general rule:

The smaller the typeface, the tighter the leading.

**Leading**


Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce auctor, mi at lectus justo maximus.

Line Length

The number of letters on a line can contribute to reader’s fatigue, so keep the line length to 45–75 characters per line.

**Line Length**


Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce auctor, mi at lectus justo maximus.

Color Contrast

To ensure body text is legible for all types of screen readers, choose colors that provide a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

**Color Contrast**


Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Fusce auctor, mi at lectus justo maximus.

CHARACTER COUNT 45 75