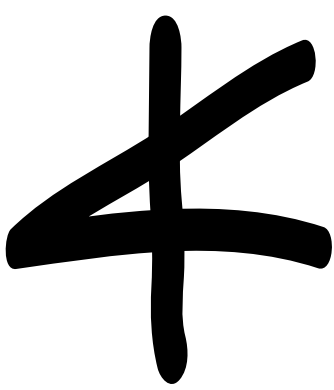


A (Very) Brief History of the Alphabet

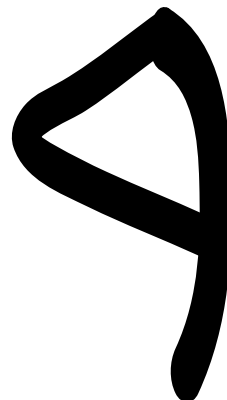
2000 BC: Pictographs: symbols that represented an *object*.

1500 BC: Ideographs: symbols that represented an *abstract idea*.

1200 BC: The Phoenicians, who were merchants, developed an alphabet as a way to record transactions. The first two letters were:



Aleph: Ox



Beth: House

These two letters are the source of our word “alphabet.” The Phoenicians were the first to use a symbol to represent a *spoken sound*, instead of a word, hence the word “phonics.” The alphabet contained only consonants.

800 BC: The Greeks adopt the Phoenician alphabet as a *way to preserve knowledge*, and add five vowels.

700 BC: The Romans adopt the Greek alphabet, revising some letters and adding F and Q.

113 AD: Trajan capital letters are carved into the base of Trajan’s Column. Trajan becomes the word’s first typeface.

TRAJAN PRO REGULAR
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ1234567890,./?;”

1100 – 1500 AD: Black letter typestyle is used in Middle Ages to hand letter books, which cost as much as a house.

Blackmoor
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN O PQRSTU VWXYZ1234567890,./?;”
abcdefghijklmno pqrstuvw xyz1234567890,./?;”

1450: Gutenberg invents the printing press, and the cost of printing a book becomes affordable.

1530: Claude Garamond opens first type foundry, developing and selling fonts to printers. The type is made of lead.

1722: First Caslon Old Style font developed, later used for the printing of the Declaration of Independence.

Adobe Caslon Pro
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890,./?;”

1760: The Industrial Revolution begins, setting the stage for advances in graphic design production.

1880: Machines could set type in hot metal as the typesetter typed.

1932: Stanley Morison oversees design of Times New Roman font, commissioned by the Times of London.

Times New Roman
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890,./?;”

1957: Max Miedinger designs Neue Haas Grotesk font, later renamed Helvetica. It becomes the most used typeface of the sixties and early seventies.

Helvetica
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890,./?;”

1965: Cold type is projected through a negative onto photosensitive paper. The paper is cut into sections with an xacto knife and pasted to an artboard using rubber cement or wax.

1988: Linotype machine enables digital publishing directly from the computer to the printer.

1995: Type for web: sans serifs are easier to read

2015: A resurgence in hand lettering surfaces, partially to avoid paying for fonts, which can cost as much as \$1000.