

Although type can come in virtually any shape, fonts fall into certain classes, depending on their characteristics. To talk intelligently about typefaces, you need to know what these general classifications are.

## *Monospace or proportional typefaces*

*Monospace*—or *fixed-width*—characters occupy the exact same horizontal space, and the space between each letter does not vary. Alternatively, *proportional*—or *variable-width*—fonts occupy as much horizontal space as is needed to display the glyph, as set by the typographer, and the amount of space between glyphs will vary as needed for optimal legibility.



Monospace fonts were originally developed for typewriters, which required consistency between each letter. They are often used to display computer code, where consistent type sizes are helpful for debugging. However, monospaced types are less legible than proportional types are for body copy, and even less legible at larger sizes.