

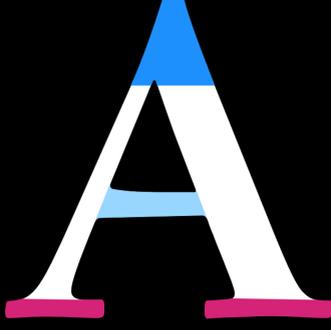
What's in a letterform?

Apex

A point at the top of a letterform where two strokes meet.

Serif

A short line or finishing stroke that crosses or projects from stems or strokes in a letterform.



Bar

The horizontal stroke in letterforms.

→ H, R, e



Ear

Typically found on the lower case 'g', an ear is a finishing stroke usually on the upper right side of the bowl.



Link

The small, usually curved, connecting stroke between the upper bowl and lower loop in the double-storey 'g'.



Loop

The enclosed or partially enclosed counter below the baseline that is connected to the bowl by a link.



Stress

In a curved letter, the angle of the contrast between thin and thick strokes of a bowl.



Contrast

The degree of difference between thick and thin strokes.



Bowl

The curved part of the letterform that encloses the circular or curved parts (counter) of some letters.

→ d, o, D, B



Counter

The enclosed or partially enclosed negative space (white space) of some letters.

→ d, o, s, N, E, A



Aperture

The opening into a partially-enclosed counter.

→ a, S, s, C, c



Spur

The small protruding part off a main stroke, often where a curve meets a straight stem.

→ G



Stroke

Any single linear element in a letterform.



Terminal

The end (straight or curved) of any stroke that doesn't include a serif.

Stem

Any vertical stroke in a letterform.

Shoulder

The curved part projecting downward from a stem.

→ h, n



Arm

An upper or lower horizontal stroke in a letterform that does not connect to a stem at one or both sides.



Leg

An upper or lower diagonal stroke in a letterform that does not connect to a stem at one or both sides.

→ R, K



Spine

The main curved stroke of the S.



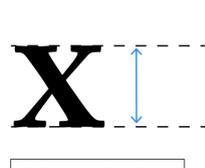
Tail

The descender of a Q or short diagonal stroke of an R.



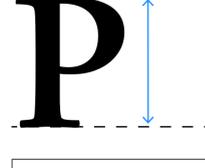
Baseline

The imaginary line upon which the letters in a font appear to rest.



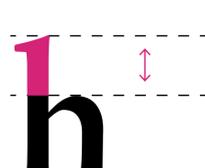
X-height

The height of lowercase letters, disregarding ascenders or descenders, typically exemplified by the letter x.



Cap height

The height from the baseline to the top of the uppercase letters (not including diacritics).



Ascender

Any part of a lowercase letter that extends above the x-height. Some types of ascenders have specific names.

→ b, d, f, k



Descender

Any part in a lowercase letter that extends below the baseline.

→ g, j, p, y

Swash

An elegant extension or addition to a letterform, derived from ornamented calligraphy.



Monotype.