A typeface is the overall design of lettering; the design can include variations, such as extra bold, bold, regular, light, italic, condensed, extended, etc. Each of these variations of the typeface is a font.

There are thousands of different typefaces in existence, with new ones being developed constantly.

The art and craft of designing typefaces is called type design. Designers of typefaces are called type designers and are often employed by type foundries. In digital typography, type designers are sometimes also called font developers or font designers.

Every typeface is a collection of glyphs, each of which represents an individual letter, number, punctuation mark, or other symbol. The same glyph may be used for characters from different scripts, e.g. Roman uppercase A looks the same as Cyrillic uppercase A and Greek uppercase alpha. There are typefaces tailored for special applications, such as map-making or astrology and mathematics.

The term typeface is frequently confused with the term font. Before the advent of digital typography and desktop publishing, the two terms had more clearly understood meanings.

In metal typesetting, a font was a particular size, weight and style of a typeface. Each font was a matched set of type, one piece (called a "sort") for each glyph, and a typeface consisting of a range of fonts that shared an overall design.

In modern usage, with the advent of digital typography, "font" is frequently synonymous with "typeface". Each style is in a separate "font file"-for instance, the typeface "Bulmer" may include the fonts "Bulmer roman", "Bulmer", "Bulmer bold" and "Bulmer extended"-but the term "font" might be applied either to one of these alone or to the whole typeface.

In both traditional typesetting and modern usage, the word "font" refers to the delivery mechanism of the typeface design. In traditional typesetting, the font would be made from metal or wood. Today, the font is a digital file.

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