

Sassoon Sans

Rosemary Sassoon

A B C

D E F G

H I J K

L M N

Sonali Sitaram

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Rosemary Sassoon

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Figure 1 Photograph of typographer Rosemary Sassoon.



Type Description

ROSEMARY SASSOON was an English type designer who created typefaces strictly for learning and legibility purposes **Figure 1**. Her typeface, Sassoon Sans, is the most legible and neatly designed font for both print and computer use.¹ According to Maximilien Vox's, an art critic and type historian's type classification, Sassoon's font falls in the Lineals (Lineale) category. These fonts correspond to all sans serif typefaces. These typefaces exist without a serif, and can vary from traditional forms to geometric forms.²

¹ "Identifont - Rosemary Sassoon." Identifont. Accessed September 27, 2016. <http://www.identifont.com/show?3XF>.

² "Methods of Classifying Typography." Methods of Classifying Typography. Accessed October 4, 2016. http://www.designhistory.org/Type_milestones_pages/TypeClassifications.html.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
 Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
 Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
 Oo Pp Qq Rr
 Ss Tt Uu Vv
 Ww Xx Yy Zz
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Figure 2 Typeface Sassoon Sans,
 Designed by Rosemary Sassoon.

Curvatures in each letter vary slightly in line weight with vertical stress and descenders do not share the same curve or thickness. The tops of the stems in the lowercase forms curve out slightly to the left but do not go above the x-height while rounded forms slightly exceed the cap-height. Counters are rounded and straighten out when they are touching the stem. Ascenders share the same qualities, but differ when attached with its given shoulder in the letterform. Shoulders start slim, but differ as the arch extends to the midline and back down to the baseline. This differs from other modern typefaces, such as Futura, because it is not a geometric typeface. Futura has very bold lines and is based off of geometric shapes, such as the circle and the square. If you notice the counter of the 'o' in Futura, it is a perfect circle, but if you look at the counter of the 'o' in Sassoon Sans, it is an oval with a vertical stress. These details allow people, specifically children, the ability to read with more ease and see letter forms more clearly. This is especially important to those with learning disorders such as being able to recognize marks **Figure 2**.



The lowercase 'e' has a vertical stress, and a unique counter shape that differs from that of a geometric typeface. The counter is not symmetrical, and mimicks the curve of the letter.

Like the letter above, this 'o' has a vertical stress, and its counter is not a geometric shape. It is not a perfect circle, and therefore does not fall under typefaces of this category. Looking closely we also see that the curves flatten out.

The letter 'n' exhibits several unique factors within this typeface. The stem of the letter arches up at the top. The center bowl is not symmetrical, and leans to the right, although having a vertical stress. The shoulder of the letter is thinner in line weight, differentiating this letter from others, that join differently to the stem.



SANS SERIF TYPEFACE
SANS SERIF TYPEFACE

SANS SERIF TYPEFACE
SANS SERIF TYPEFACE

SANS SERIF TYPEFACE
SANS SERIF TYPEFACE

SCRIPT TYPEFACE
SCRIPT TYPEFACE

DISPLAY TYPEFACE
DISPLAY TYPEFACE

Every child and young adult struggles with reading at one point in their life, whether is just learning to read at a young age or while studying for an exam or writing a paper as they grow older. The process of learning how to read is even harder when an individual is diagnosed with a learning disorder. The Sassoon Sans typeface family was intended for readers to maintain clarity within the typeface, as well as avoiding the use of extra characteristics and strokes that come with a serif typeface. As we read, our eye catches the details at the top of the letter form rather than the bottom- this is how we distinguish various letterforms³ **Figure 3**. This typeface was designed strictly for legibility and computer use. Rosemary Sassoon gave each letter its own unique identity to enhance clarity and avoid reading complications.⁴

³ Carter, Rob, Ben Day, and Philip B. Meggs. *Typographic Design: Form and Communication* 4th Edition. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985. P. 72-75.

⁴ Adrian Williams. "Sassoon® Fonts." Sassoon® Fonts. Accessed September 27, 2016. <http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/aboutsassoon.html>

When printing first came around in the 15th century, the main focus was on craftsmanship and the attached business benefits. In 1755, an author by the name of John Smith pointed out that the overall shapes and structure of letters is made up other letters. For example, the *b - q*, *d - p*, and *n - u* can all be rotated 180 degrees to make the other letter **Figure 4**. An *e* without its center stroke can be a *c*, and a shortened ascender on a *h* can be a *n*.⁵



⁵ Sofie Beier. *Reading Letters: Designing for Legibility*. Amsterdam: BIS, 2012. P. 31-36.

This information was intended for printers who reside far from typefounders, so that they could make up for their broken or missing pieces.⁶ These became easier with sans serif typefaces because serif letter forms had an extra characteristics that would not always match up or be symmetrical.⁷ During the 1700s, Pierre Simon Fournier began using the same counter punch which made letters more similar to each other.

Giving letter forms these distinct differences allows readers to recognize each individual letter form. Later type designers such as Didot and Bodoni began to apply this idea as well. It was officially established amongst type founders that this added to legibility, which is very important for users. This became a business tactic, for as the legibility increased, the less typefaces shared the same characteristics.⁸

⁶ Beier. *Reading Letters: Designing for Legibility*. P. 31-36.

⁷ Ibid, 31-36.

⁸ Ibid, 31-36.

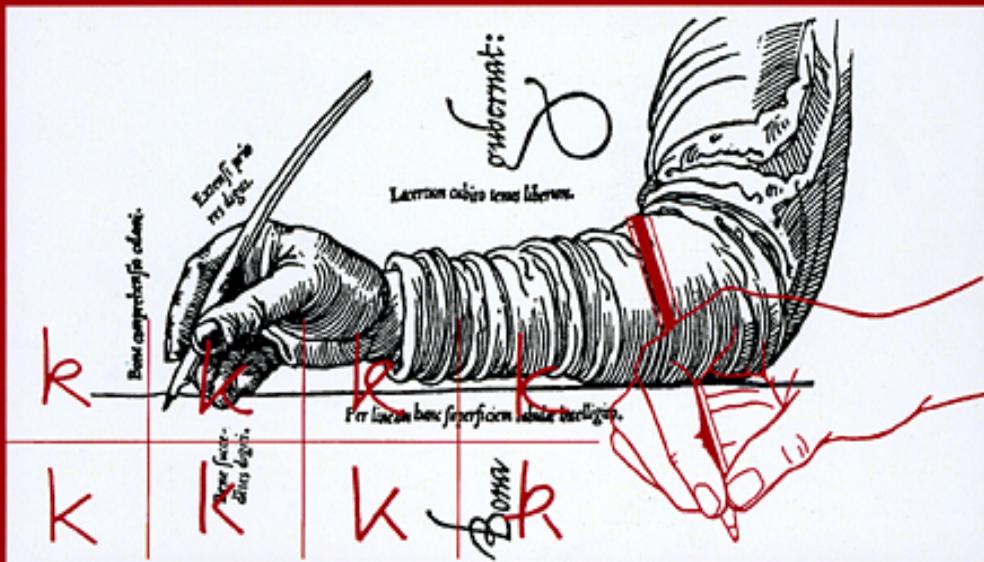
“ I also have given the corners rather a squarer cut, and this I have done to some of the lower-case as well, and removed a certain roundness which was observable at the junction of vertical and horizontal strokes... Separates the one from the other, and makes them more evidently distinct.”⁹

Figure 3 We recognize the tops of letter forms in various typefaces.

Figure 4 Letter forms share the same traits.

⁹ Ibid, 31-36.

The Art and Science of Handwriting



Rosemary Sassoon

intellect

Figure 5 *The Art and Science of Handwriting* by Rosemary Sassoon.

Type Designer Biography

SASSOON STUDIED at the University of Reading in England. In 1988 she earned her Ph.D. in Graphic Communication from the Department of Typography. While there, she conducted research on teaching methods and handwriting. Before she began her studies, she worked as a designer and scribe, and pursued her interest in calligraphy as an art. In 1985, she partnered with type designer Adrian Williams who developed her typefaces. During the 1970s, he began ‘converting’ typefaces, which lead to new original forms he created. As a result, he produced designs and custom fonts towards corporate identity and businesses for branding.¹⁰

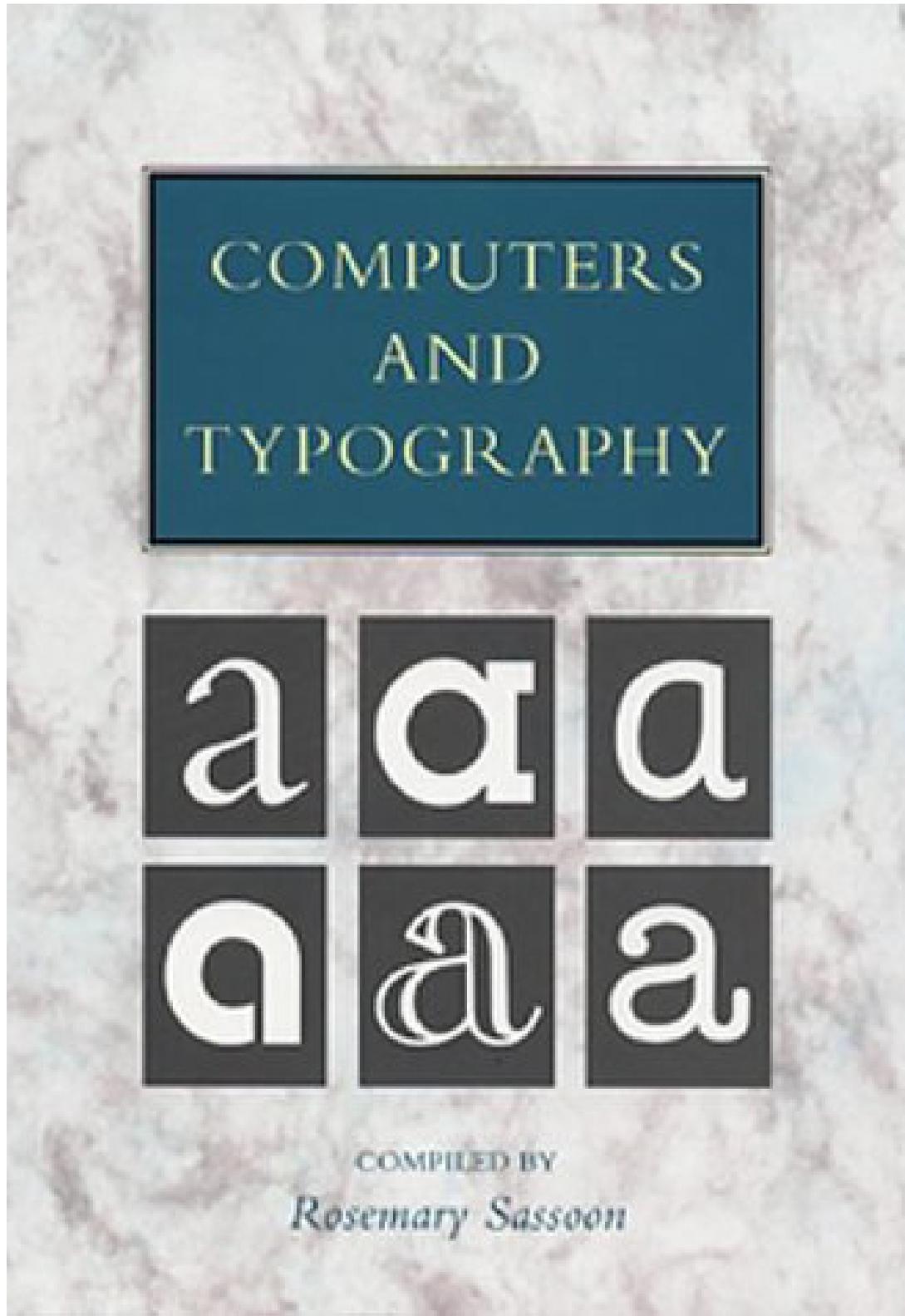
After she completed her studies, she moved towards working on research about legibility and handwriting **Figure 5**. These studies helped Sasson develop her Sassoon typefaces which were designed for legibility and clarity. The letters were designed based on how

easily they could be distinguished by young children. She also created a typeface called Sassoon Primary, a which was created based on research with children intended to develop skills to improve reading in schools.¹¹ She was one, if not the first well known designers who conducted reading tests with children, and took the results under heavy consideration on a regular basis. She developed more typefaces that serve as models to mold childrens handwriting. Her more recent works consist of designing learning softwares made for the computer screen and by creating fonts that are screen friendly.

Edward Johnston, the creator of Johnston Sans was a calligrapher during the later 1800s. He created the sans typeface Johnston Sans, used for the London Underground **Figure 7** in 1916. He believed that the stroke of typefaces should be based on the curvature

¹⁰ "Identifont - Rosemary Sassoon." Identifont. Accessed September 27, 2016. <http://www.identifont.com/show?3XF>.

¹¹ Adrian Williams. "Sassoon® Fonts." Sassoon® Fonts. Accessed September 27, 2016. <http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/aboutsassoon.html>



A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W
X Y Z

a b c d e f g h
i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w
x y z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



Figure 6 *Computers and Technology* by Rosemary Sassoon.

Figure 7 Present day London Underground logo.

Figure 8 Johnston Sans.

used while writing with a pen. Sassoon may have been influenced by his works, since in her typefaces she has small strokes outward, reflecting those used in calligraphy.

As part of her research, Rosemary Sassoon compiled works by typographic designers and developers into one book, *Computers and Typography*, **Figure 6** in 1993. This book focuses on the idea that the use of proper typography is just as important on screen as it is off screen. Desktop publishing has created new grounds for typographers. According to Alan Marshall, bodies of text were replaced with easy to use menus, and friendly usage of image and text.¹² Other research shows that majority of people lose focus when a line consists of more than sixty characters.¹³ People, especially adults, adjust to reading newspaper and magazines constructed with columns that have shorter line lengths which dates back to 15th century typographic habits. Johannes Gutenberg published his Guteberg Bible, **Figure 8** which consisted of two column pages. Other works and typographers that followed, such as Johannes Fust continued to use this layout. James Hartley discussed spacing and the benefits of airing out texts which includes how a body of text is justified and indented based on the specific typeface being used.¹⁴

Very little thought has been given into typefaces for individuals who are learning how to read, especially children while legibility should also be taken under heavy consideration. The relationship between how the reader views letterforms becomes more

of a psychological study.¹⁵ As children are learning to read, they are dependent on the material that is given to them by adults and teachers, who have no knowledge of reading techniques and methods of teaching because to them reading has already become second nature. In a study taken, after the age of seven 54% no longer acknowledged print styles, 39% agreed it should match handwriting, 11% acknowledged print size, 2% mentioned spacing, and 1% thought sans serif typefaces were beneficial.¹⁶ These number portray how little instructors know about what typeface to give children. Serifs have extra characteristics that have no beneficial meaning to a child who is still learning. Less spacing increases the chance of seeing ligatures (image to the right) while also making it more difficult to recognize individual letters and common words. Rosemary Sassoon states,

*“...there has been a trend for some aspects of lettering and layout to be designed for sales appeal rather than user appeal. The goal of sales appeal is often for print that is meant looked at rather than read”.*¹⁷

As a result, many types and fonts displayed today are intended for a fluent reader, to grab attention. Abandoned legible texts and handwriting skills lead to bigger gaps in reading and a loss for specific characteristics in typefaces.¹⁸

in die ire furoris sui. **Mem** De recesso misit ignem in ossibus meis: et erudiuit me. **Pe**spādit recte pedibus meis: conuertit me retro: sum. **Pos**uit me desolatam: tota die merore confectā. **Num** Vigilauit iugū iniquitatū mearū in manu eius: conuolute sunt et impositae collo meo. **Inf**irmata ē uirginea: dedit me dñs in manū de qua nō poterō surgere. **Samech** Abstulit omnes magnificos meos dñs de medio mei: uocauit aduersum me tēpus: ut cōtereret electos meos. **Toz**cular calcauit dñs uirgini filie iuda. **Ain** Adcirco ego plorans et oculus me⁹ deducens aquas: quia longe factus est a me cōsolator: cōuertens animā meā. **Fad**i sunt filij mei p̄diti: quoniam inualuit inimic⁹. **Fe** **Ep**spādit syon manus suas: non est qui consoletur eā. **Man**dauit dñs aduersum iacob: in circuitu ei⁹ h̄p̄tes ei⁹. **Fad**a est iherl̄m q̄si polluta meretricis inter eas. **Sade** **I**ustus est dñs: quia os eius ad iracundiam prouocauit. **Aud**ite obsecro uniuersi ppli: et uidete dolorem meū. **Vir**gines mee et iuuenes mei abiērūt in captiuitatem. **Coph** **V**ocauit amicos meos: et ipsi deceptūt me. **Sacer**dotes mei et senes mei in urbe cōsumpti sunt: quia quæserūt tibi sibi ut refocillarent animas suas. **Res** **V**ide dñe quoniam tribulor: tribulor est uenter me⁹. **Sub**uertum est cor meū in meum tēp̄a: quā amaritudine plena sum. **Sforis** **M**ercedem gladius: et domus mors similis ē. **Sen** **A**udierūt quia ingemisco ego: et non est qui cōsoletur me. **Om**nes inimici mei audierunt malū meū: letati sūt quā tu fecisti. **Addux**isti diē cōsolationis: et fiet spes mei. **Tau** **I**ngrediat omne malū eorū corā te: et de uindemia

eos sicut uindemiasti me p̄pter omnes iniquitates meas. **M**ulti enim genuit⁹ mei: et cor meū merces. **Alaph** **Q**uomodo obrexit caligine i furorē tuo dñs filiā syon. **Pro**iecit te celo in terram inditam israel: et nō est recordatus scabelli pedū suorū i die furoris sui. **Seth** **P**recipitauit dñs ne pepercit omnia speciosa iacob: destruxit in furore tuo munitiones uirginis iuda et deiecit in terram: polluit regnū et principes ei⁹. **Gymel** **C**onstregit in ira furoris sui omne cornu israel: auertit retrorsū de p̄terā suā a facie inimici: et succendit in iacob q̄si ignē flāme deuorantis i giro. **Delech** **T**erendit arcum suū quasi inimicus: firmavit de p̄teram suā quasi hostis: et occidit omne qd̄ pulcrum erat uisū. **In** tabernaculo filie syon effudit q̄si ignē indignationē suā. **He** **F**act⁹ ē dñs uelut inimicus: precipitauit israel. **P**recipitauit omnia mentia eius: dissipauit munitiones eius: et repleuit in filia iuda humiliacum et humiliatā. **Dau** **E**t dissipauit quasi ortum terroriū suū: demolitus est tabernaculū suū. **O**blivioni tradidit dñs in syon festiuitatē et sabbatū: et in obprobriū et in indignationē furoris sui regem et sacerdotes. **Say** **R**epulit dñs altare suū: maledixit sanctificationi sue: tradidit in manus inimici muros ierl̄m ei⁹. **V**ocem dederunt in domo dñi: sicut in die solemni. **Heth** **C**ogitauit dñs dissipare murū filie syon: tetendit funiculū suū et non auertit manū suā a p̄ditione. **I**uxitq; ante murale: et mur⁹ pariter dissipat⁹ est. **Teth** **D**efixe sūt i terra porte ei⁹: p̄didit et contriuit uertes eius: regem ei⁹ et principes eius in gemitibus. **Non** est leg: et p̄phete ei⁹ nō inuenerūt

12 Sassoon, Rosemary, James Hartley, Richard Southall, Ari Davidow, Elwyn Blacker, Michael Blacker, Roger Watt, Alan Marshall, Fernand Baudin, and Mike Daines. *Computers and Typography*. S.I.: Intellect, 1993. P. 13-16, 141.

13 Sassoon, Hartley, Southall, Davidow, Blacker, Blacker, Watt, Marshall, Baudin, and Daines. *Computers and Typography*. P. 13-16, 141.

14 Ibid, 13-16, 141.

15 Sassoon, Rosemary. "Through the Eyes of a Child: Perception and Type Design." *Graphic Typography*, 1993.

16 Ibid, 1993.

17 Ibid, 1993.

18 Mitchell, Michael, and Susan Wightman. *Book Typography: A Designer's Manual*. Marlborough, Wiltshire: Libanus Press, 2005. P. 62-66.



Figure 8 Gutenberg Bible printed by Johannes Gutenberg.

Figure 9 Depiction of words and letters 'spinning' on the page.

Challenges and Needs

DYSLEXIA IS A neurological processing disorder that hinders reading, writing, language, perceptual processing, and concentration skills. Children as well as adults can be affected by this learning disorder. Unfortunately, there is no medication or cure at this time. Individuals have difficulty processing what they see on a page and often see marks, moving lines, and spinning letters **Figure 9**. A common symptom is seeing letters out of order. For example, instead of reading *cat*, one would read *act* or *tac*.¹⁹ Another common trait is not being able to move one's eye across an entire page. The attention is given to various parts of the pages instead of the standard 'left to right' reading we are taught **Figure 10**. Therapy is strongly advised to learn how to cope with the stress of not understanding tasks and assignments and to teach new habits and methods to understand the information being given out.

¹⁹ FAAP, David Perlstein MD MBA. "Dyslexia Symptoms, Treatment, Causes - What Should Parents or Caregivers Do If They Suspect a Child Has the Signs and Symptoms of Dyslexia? - MedicineNet." MedicineNet. Accessed October 12, 2016. <http://www.medicinenet.com/dyslexia/page4.htm>.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, is also a common disorder found in children and adults. This makes it difficult for somebody to concentrate and focus on the given subject they are viewing. Even though there is medication, a diagnosis that is not understood correctly can cause children to become more distracted.²⁰

I myself can support these facts because I was diagnosed with Dyslexia my sophomore year of high school. In primary school, I remember seeing a Speech/Language specialist and was consistently pulled out of class for extra help because I was not able to express thoughts during class discussion and could not speak due to a heavy stutter. I always spent more time working on writing and reading assignment which showed when I would get my grades back. Grasping new grammatically and literary concepts was difficult and reading comprehension was very difficult. Not being able to keep up in tasks others would be able to easily do led to bullying, which lowered my confidence to

do well. Reading and writing are two of the most basic skills we need to learn for everyday life. If they are not mastered, it becomes even more difficult to build upon them as one grows older which created larger gaps in knowledge. While I was in highschool it became very clear that my comprehension and discussion skills were not at the same level as others so I was tested for Dyslexia. Learning that this was a processing disorder shed light that there were gaps in my learning that had to be filled, instead of ignoring the problems and working around them. Seventy percent of dyslexics have a Speech/Language issue as well, and I went back to therapy for a year to better understand learning methods that I was not able to fully comprehend when I was a child.

Technology

A VERY LARGE PERCENTAGE of students go through school with Dyslexia unnoticed. This is due to the unawareness of teachers and educational specialists because many have not been trained to spot symptoms immediately Figure 10. One of the strategies taught to students in therapy is to is read on a computer using a friendly font. However, due to Educational Acts in the United States,

Dyslexia is not recognised as a disorder for special programs or extra resources in public schools.²¹ This creates a problem for those students who have extra difficulty reading because they are not able to receive the extra attention needed to complete a task on time. Like Sassoon's research states, legibility should be a primary focus for material given to students. I know in school, when beginning to use a computer for assignments in primary and secondary school, we were instructed to use Times New Roman. Though this is not entirely difficult to read, it is a serif face, which can be confusing to students who struggle to recognise letter forms.

Times New Roman
22 points, Regular

Verdana
22 points, Regular

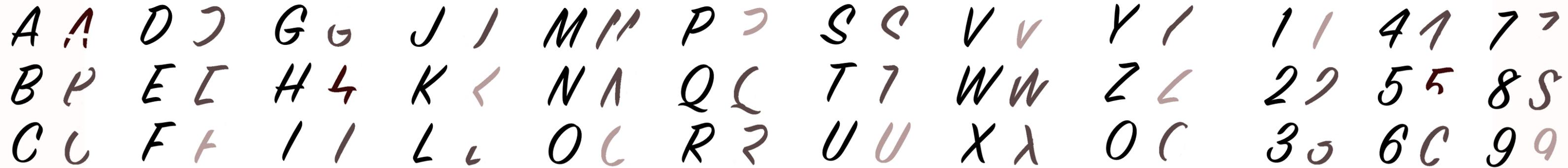
Chalkboard
22 points, Regular

Courier
22 points, Regular

Arial
22 points, Regular

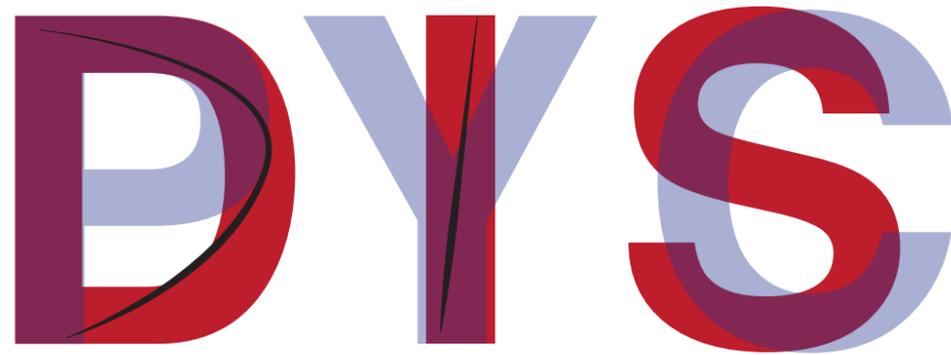
Helvetica
22 points, Regular

Garamond
22 points, Regular



20 FAAP, David Perlestein MD MBA. "Dyslexia Symptoms, Treatment, Causes - What Should Parents or Caregivers Do If They Suspect a Child Has the Signs and Symptoms of Dyslexia? - MedicineNet." MedicineNet. Accessed October 12, 2016. <http://www.medicinenet.com/dyslexia/page4.htm>.

21 Richardson, Jamie Anne. "It's Called Dyslexia." The Huffington Post. Accessed October 6, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jmie-anne-richardson/its-called-dyslexia_b_4074199.html.



Today, we have fonts such as Chalkboard and Calibri, which are friendly typefaces that are easy to read on and off the screen **Figure 11**. Like Sassoon Sans, they have a vertical stress, and have subtle details when the stem meets the shoulder. Line weight on the arch varies throughout the stroke. However unlike Sassoon Sans, their counters and line strokes are very similar, and almost look the same. These letter forms also fall more under the Geometric category, and are based off shapes, rather than line weight and stroke.²²



When we are younger we quickly learn that reading and writing are the basic building blocks in school. We are taught to learn our 'ABC's', count our numbers, recognize common words, and eventually write them out. Young students learn best by copying what is given to them whether it is auditory or visually. However, if not taught in an effective manner, as in studies previously discussed, information will not be clear to those who are being taught. If children learn to read using a computer, with today's available typefaces and learning programs, students may have an easier time learning by being exposed to clear letter forms and readable type. Though this is not anywhere near to how things are traditionally done, it could be beneficial in the long run. At a young age children will be exposed to friendly typefaces and they will be able to recognize letters by their unique characteristics **Figure 12**.



²² Flask, Dominic. "Type Classification : Design Is History." Type Classification: Design Is History. Accessed September 22, 2016. <http://designishistory.com/1450/type-classification>.

Figure 10 How Dyslexics might view letters.

Figure 11 Common typefaces used with students in schools.

Figure 11 How basic typefaces can be viewed by a dyslexic.

Usage

SASSOON PRIMARY has been tested with children and tests have shown that this method is effective.²³ It has been developed and used in children's books. This typeface keeps the length of ascenders and descenders to help differentiate the letters and help children read. The slight stress helps with the visual look in bodies of text and allows for a less standardized look and feel. Sassoon felt that this was an alternative to Comic Sans and Chalkboard which are fonts commonly used in elementary schools today. There is little stress, but this also curves the ascenders and descenders as they extend past the baseline and above the cap height. Sassoon Infant Starter (seen in the image to the above), is an upright typeface which is designed for learning handwriting. The gaps and dots allow the student to attempt to recognize the letter and complete the form with their own hand.

²³ Adrian Williams. "Sassoon® Fonts." Sassoon® Fonts. Accessed September 27, 2016. <http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/aboutsassoon.html>

These typeface are starting to become more widely used and programed on computers in various schools and universities. The development of Sassoon Sans filled a large gap that arose for maximum legibility on and off the computer screen. She published other works, such as *The Art and Science Of Handwriting*, *Creating Letter Forms*, and various other publications. She gave her input on many programs and written works that studied this topic. This gave light to the fact that type designers creating typefaces for the computer must meet a different criteria in order to be accessible and legible. These fonts must be able to be read and understood worldwide and be multi-media friendly; in other words these fonts must be able to be read big or small on any occasion. Sassoon Sans has been proven to be the neatest and most legible. Being Sassoon font, it is naturally designed to read well in any media. Having it be a sans serif, excludes extra strokes and typographic characteristics that come with a serif typeface.



Tested with children. **For clear display typefaces.** Easy to read when condensed. For learning the structure of letters. *Legible Italics.* To further enhance knowledge of letter forms.

A clear typeface, on and off screen.

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Conclusion

SASSOON AND HER way of thinking helped to open up ideas on teaching methods and schooling. New ways to give information made it more efficient for children overall, and therefore would make it easier for students with learning disorders such as Dyslexia. In my case, if I was consistently given text that was easier to read, I most likely would have learned basic reading skills sooner and I would have been able to recognise letters at a faster pace. Sassoon Sans and its subtle differences between letter forms make this font both unified and effective. Developing typefaces around children's needs allows for clear legibility through young adults eyes as well.

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O P Q

R S T U

V W

X Y Z