

HOW TO CHOOSE FONTS FOR YOUR YEARBOOK PAGES



Some of the most significant decisions the staff makes regarding the look of the yearbook revolve around the fonts that will be used (and how those typefaces are used on the pages).

Your selections can make your book look planned or chaotic, fresh or dated, creative or boring. Your type should help define the tone or personality of the book. It makes the various sections distinctive and attracts the readers to the spread.

There's no one formula for success in working with type; many schools choose a serif font (with feet) and a sans serif (without feet), others choose a single font with lots of variety in weight. Both can be successful.

Let's look at some examples from yearbooks.

HAYFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOL - ALEXANDRIA, VA

Adding a couple of points of extra leading (space between lines of type) is one way to achieve a more contemporary look for body copy and captions. Here, each kind of copy (main story, captions, profile) is in the same serif font but has a distinct look based on the size of the type, the amount of leading and the alignment pattern. There are some modifications from section to section, but the overall type scheme is maintained throughout the book.





DEERLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL - TALLAHASSEE, FL

This book makes use of a pair of display fonts with sans serif body copy and captions throughout. While the handwritten appearance of the font AHJ Sharpie Print makes the pages look contemporary but less formal, its consistency maintains the book's quality. The colors for the type were selected as "pick-up colors" to echo the content of the photos.



OAK HALL SCHOOL - GAINESVILLE, FL

Combining type as art with well-designed traditional displays provides an updated look. In addition to changing the size of type, the staff justified the body copy and left the captions ragged to identify them as distinctly different. The combination of the screened sans serif main headline and the overlapping secondary head in a much more casual font provides nice contrast in the headline package. And the bar created of colored type adds extra visual interest.





HARVEST PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL - PLEASANTON, CA

Usually the negative spacing in headline type is vertical, but this staff used it horizontally as well. After they decreased the leading to the point where the two lines of the main headline literally sat on top of each other, they set about to remove horizontal space between the letters. By creating outlined type and adjusting the tracking or kerning, the staff was able to achieve this contemporary look.



BRENTWOOD SCHOOL - LOS ANGELES, CA

Two things make the type in this book stand out: great use of contrast and the consistency with which they use the design decisions they consciously made. By changing the weight, capitalization pattern and position of the first and second lines of each main headline package, they presented an attractive headline that's high in impact. After the design decisions were made, the only change was in size. Using the same treatment in decreasing sizes made it clear where the designer wanted the readers to go first, what they should read second and which piece of coverage came third in the spread's hierarchy.



ARAPAHOE HIGH SCHOOL - CENTENNIAL, CO

A perfect example of a message that's equally strong visually and verbally, the opening covers two spreads. The first, headlined "like always" features a clean font, a fairly traditional photo package, fully justified captions and a conventional block of body copy.



The second spread, LIKE NEVER BEFORE, showcases an array of type and graphic treatments that are anything but typical. From the colorful background that fills the part of the page that was previously white to the type that's been set sentence by sentence at different angles, the contrast is obvious. Add in the shift in capitalization and the group caption text wrapped around a silhouetted dominant and the impact is even more significant. Each divider and the closing also utilized the pair of contrasting spreads to drive the point home.

