Introduction

There are tens of thousands of typefaces available to designers. In many cases, the differences between them are small and subtle. Yet, in addition to color, type is an aspect of design about which designers are almost obsessive. They find type catalogs every bit as fascinating as stock photo books. If you learn to recognize a dozen or so fonts throughout the remainder of this class, you'll begin to notice them in your everyday life—in ads, on signs and all around you.

In this unit, you'll learn more about the visual aspects as well as some of the technical nuances of type setting. The most important—and hardest—thing to learn is to see type as a visual entity. A specific letter set in a particular typeface is not just a representative of a sound, but also a shape and a symbol with visual meaning apart from its verbal function.