



by Jenifer Juris

Secrets of Terrific Type

Lesson 04-10: Readability

We're so close to our final lesson. But before we get there, we need to spend a little time talking some more about readability. It's going to be a great way to quickly review some of what we have learned so far.

So, when you hear the word readability, what do you think that means? Readability is, in it's most basic form, the ability to be read or how legible something is.

So, as you can imagine, when it comes to type, readability is almost always important. If you spend time typing up a title, sub-title, and some journaling, you want people to be able to read it, right?

So, when you consider readability, I want you to think back to all of the type do's and don'ts we've talked about so far.

With Leading, we talked about how if the Leading is too small, the lines begin to overlap and that makes your type hard to read. And if it's too large, the type will feel disconnected and that affects readability, too.

**Leading set too
small can be
difficult to read.**

Leading set too

large can be

distracting.

For Tracking, we talked about the following:

1. Don't change the tracking of script fonts.

*Don't change the tracking
of script fonts as it makes
it harder to read.*

2. Don't make the tracking too small. If the letters are too close together, it makes things difficult to read.

**Don't make the tracking too small or the
letters will overlap and become hard to read.**

For Glyphs, we talked about not using alternate characters for every letter in a word. The reason was because if you do, the word will often be very difficult to read.

X *Jenifer Juris*
✓ *Jenifer Juris*

We also talked about readability in the last lesson on Color. Color plays an important part in whether something will be easily legible or not.

X *Type color matters.*
✓ *Type color matters.*

So, while you maybe didn't realize it, readability has played a BIG part in our class so far. It is the driving force behind many of the rules we've talked about.

But, even if we follow all of the rules, sometimes, readability can still be low. The biggest factor, in this case, is the font itself.

Some fonts are designed with readability in mind.

**Some fonts are designed with
readability in mind.**

Other fonts are designed with a certain look in mind. And while it's not wrong to use a font that isn't as easy to read, I want to suggest that using a font that is harder to read will only be successful if you use it right. Let's look at some examples.

*Other fonts are designed
with a certain look in mind.*

If I use this Aura Blue font on an artsy style page, already my font fits the overall design.

Aura Blue font

But, if I make the title too small or too light, I find myself squinting in order to try to make sense of the word. This means it has poor readability.



If I make a few small changes, now the word is much more readable while still keeping the artsy style font in use. This is a much more desirable effect.



So, when you're dealing with a font that has lower readability to being with, due to it's style or design, remember that

Size, Color, and placement can all majorly affect the readability of that font.

If you're going through the trouble of adding the title or sub-title to your digital designs, make sure it's something people can easily read without having to zoom way in. Titles or sub-titles should be easily read, at first glance, without having to squint or do a double take.

But, now, let's talk about times when readability doesn't matter. Can you think of ways type can be used when its readability isn't important?

The first thing that comes to my mind is decorative type. Decorative type is often used as an accent. It's usually a script font, sometimes written in a different language, and can be used to create a subtle background or a grounding element behind a photo. In this case, what the type says is less important than how the type looks. And that's why I refer to it as decorative type.

*Demain, dès l'aube Demain, dès l'aube, à l'heure où
blanchit la campagne. Je partirai. Vois-tu, je sais que
tu m'attends. J'irai par la forêt, j'irai par la montagne. Je
ne puis demeurer loin de toi plus longtemps. Je
marcherai les yeux fixés sur mes pensées. Sans rien voir
au dehors, sans entendre aucun bruit. Seul, inconnu, le*

So, for the homework, we're going to spend some time creating a few decorative type pieces, where readability is less important and we're also going to create a few pieces of wordart where readability is very important. It's going to be a fun project so I hope you're excited to get started!