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Secrets of Terrific Type

Lesson 03-02: Glyphs How-To—Photoshop Elements

In this lesson, we're going to learn how to access glyphs that come with OpenType fonts. I'm so excited to show you how to use alternate characters to create beautiful type.

First things first, let's cover why we would want to use glyphs.

The first reason any of us might want to use glyphs is because they are pretty. Many alternate characters come with swashes or flourishes that make an individual letter look more special than the standard letter. Here's an example. The standard capital letter A vs the Alternate capital letter A's.

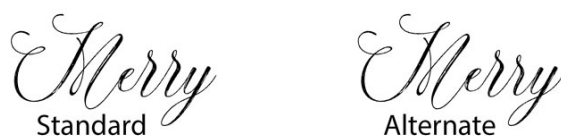


Here's one more example. Here's a small standard y along with all the alternate y's available.



The second reason I use glyphs on a regular basis is repetition. When I'm creating a piece of word art or big title and I'm using a font that's either handwritten or script, the type looks more natural if a repeated letter isn't an exact copy of itself.

For instance, here is the word Merry in standard form. And I've added a version where an alternate r was used. The difference isn't massive but it definitely looks more natural than the standard one where both r's look identical.



Here's another example. Let's say I want to create a title for my digital project and that title is *Those eyes though*. There isn't a double letter situation but there are a lot of small e's and h's. This is the standard version.

Standard *Those eyes though*

And for comparison, here is the version where some alternates are used.

Alternate *Those eyes though*

Another reason you might want to use Glyphs is to fill space. Remember our homework from Lesson 4 when we made a postcard using Scale to our advantage. Under the word nothing, we filled some empty space with a set of doodles and it turned out cute. But we could also use an alternate small g to help fill that space instead.



So now that we've covered some of the reasons why we'll want to use glyphs, we need to discuss a few things about accessing glyphs before we go over to PSE and get started there.

Here's the deal, not all OTF fonts are created equally. Because PSE doesn't have Glyph access built into the program like PSCC does, we have to do things a little differently.

While there are some software programs out there that promise you access to OTF glyphs, you don't need them. Using the Character Map in Windows or the Font Book Repertoire View on a Mac, you can access all of the glyphs that come with an OTF in those respective places.

And so how you access the glyphs is by copying them from either Character Map or Font Book and then pasting them into PSE.

But, not all OTF fonts are encoded so that PSE will be able to paste glyphs properly.

When you are font shopping for OTF fonts with Glyphs, you will want to make sure the font is labeled as "PUA Encoded". PUA stands for Private Use Areas which is where the extra glyphs are put in OTF fonts.

To make things easier, I've included a small list of free CU fonts from fontbundles.net in the downloads for this lesson. I've listed each font with a direct link to access them for downloading. The file name is Free-Glyph-Fonts.pdf. I will be using these fonts throughout the remainder of this class so that both PSE and PS users will be able to create the same type.

If the font is not stated to be PUA Encoded, there is a good chance that even though you can see the extra characters, they won't copy and paste correctly into PSE.

Let's head over to PSE and take a look at how all of this works.

I've already created a new document that is 12 inches by 12 inches at 300ppi with a white background.

Press the letter D to reset the color chips.

So, get the Horizontal Type tool. In the Tool Options, click on the Tool Options Menu icon and choose Reset Tool.

Now, I'm going to show you what happens when you try to use a font that is NOT PUA Encoded.

So, in the Tool Options, I'm setting the Font to Allegretto Script, the Size to 72 pts, and I'm using Center Alignment.

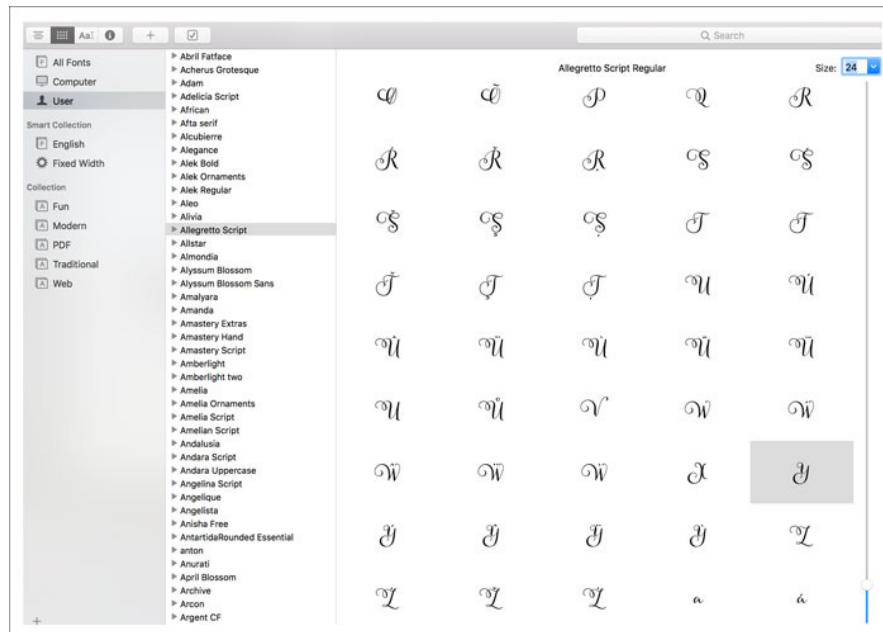
On the document, click once and type the words You Matter. Click the checkmark to commit.

You Matter

Now, I'd like to try to use an alternate for the Capital Y. To do so, I have to go to either the Character Map (if I'm using Windows) or Font Book (if I'm using a Mac).

For Windows 10, go to Windows System > Control Panel > Appearance and Personalization > Fonts. Scroll through the fonts. Click on Find a Character to access the Character Map to see all the characters that come with that font.

Since I'm working on a Mac, I'll open Font Book and choose the Repertoire View. I'll go to Allegretto Script and scroll down until I see an alternate capital Y.



Now I can press Ctrl C (Mac: Cmd C) to copy the glyph I've highlighted.

I will go back to PSE and click and drag to select the capital Y in my phrase You Matter.

Then press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste the glyph.

☒ou Matter

And as you can see, I get this horrible box with an x through it. Huge bummer! There is no way around this. If the font designer does not encode the extra characters so that they are PUA Encoded, there will be no way for me to be able to use them in PSE as of now. Maybe someday, there will be a workaround but as of today, there is no way to get around this.

Now, let's try this again with a font we know is PUA Encoded.

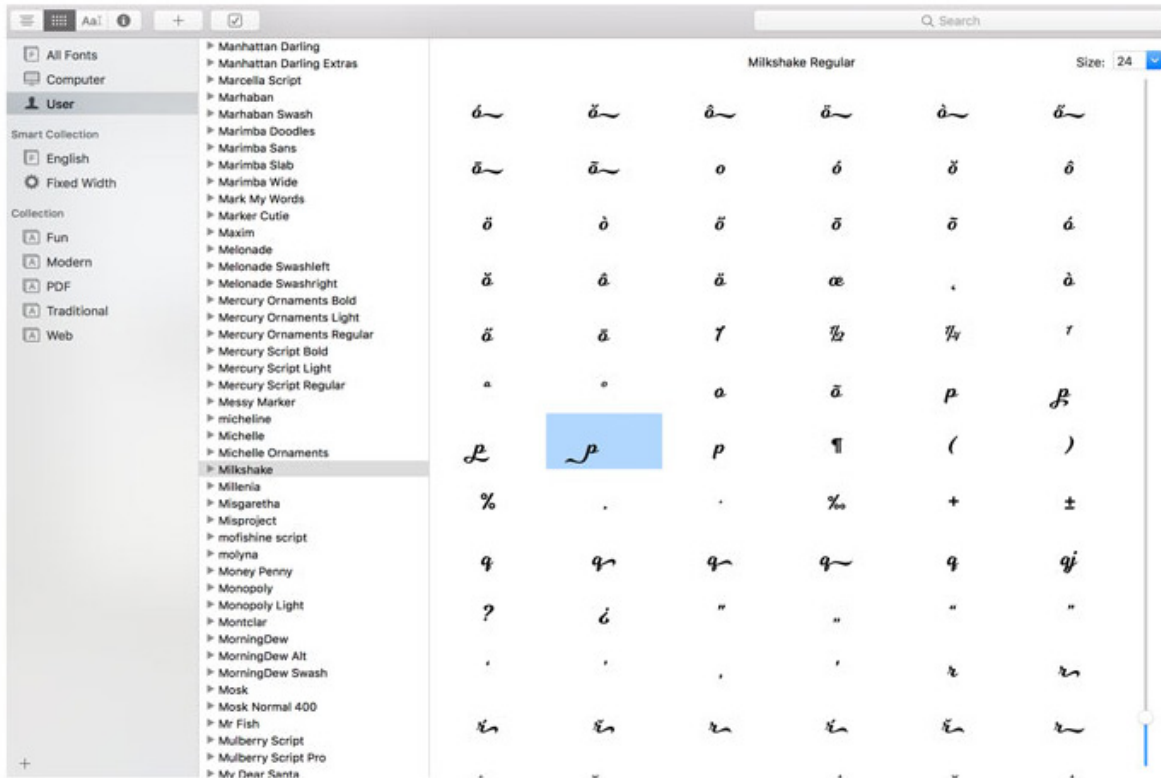
Now get the Horizontal Type tool. In the Tool Options, set the Font to Milkshake, set the size to 60 pts, and use Center Alignment.

On the document, click once and type Happy Birthday. Click the checkmark to commit.

Happy Birthday

I want to change one of the small p's in the word Happy so I'm going to go to Font Book and look and see what my options are for alternates.

Here are the small p options I have for this font. I'm going to select this one and press Ctrl C (Mac: Cmd C) to copy this glyph.



Now I'll go back to PSE and select the second p in the word Happy.

Press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste the glyph in. Click the checkmark to commit.

Happy Birthday

And just for fun, let's change the small y at the end of the word Birthday.

I'll go back to Font Book and copy one of the alternate y's.

Then let's go back to PSE and select the y.

Now press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste the glyph.

Click the checkmark to commit.

Happy Birthday

Other Fonts with Extra Characters

Now that we've looked at how to use Font Book or Character Map to insert glyphs, let's look at two more fonts that use extra characters in a different way.

The first font I'm going to show you is Melonde. This is a super cute font that gives you alternate characters in a different way. Instead of coding the extra characters for the font as alternate glyphs attached to the main font, they decided to give us the extra characters in two separate font files.

Let me show you how that works.

Get the Horizontal Type tool.

In the Tool Options, set the font to Melonade and the size to 100 pts.

On the document, click once and type a word. I'll type the word lovely.



Now, before committing the type, let's do the following:

Go to the first lowercase L in the word, lovely and select it.

Now, in the Tool Options, change the font to Melonade Swashleft.



Then, select the lower case Y and in the Tool Options, change the font to Melonade Swashright.



Now you can click the checkmark to commit.

Feel free to delete this layer and start fresh for this next example.

Another font that is a good example to look at is Forestelly. This is a font that isn't listed on the Free Font List I gave you for this class, but it's a good font to look at because you may come across another font like this and I want you to know how this works.

With Forestelly, there is a main font, and then there are just swashes as a separate font. This can sometimes be difficult to work with because it can be hard to tell if the swashes are for the left or right side of a word.

So with the Type tool active, in the Tool Options, set the font to Forestelly Bold and keep the size at 100 pts.

On the document, click once and type the word lovely.



Before you commit the type, do the following:

Place your cursor at the beginning of the word.

Now, in the Tool Options, change the font to Forestellyswashes Bold.

I've found that with this Forestellyswashes font, the left swashes are with the upper case letters and the right swashes are with the lower case letters. But there isn't any way to know this just by looking at the font name. I had to play around with it.

So, you could do what I did, and experiment by adding different letters until you find the swash you like. In this case, you could add an upper case A in front of the word lovely.



Or, you could go to this font in Character Map or Font Book and find the swash you want to use there. So I'll delete the swash I just added and do that.

Go to Font Book or Character Map and pull up the Forestellyswashes font.

Look for a swash you want to use. In this case, I'm using Glyph #: 4.

Once you locate it, click to select the glyph and press Ctrl C (Mac: Cmd C) to copy it.

Go back to PSE.

Activate the type and place your cursor at the beginning of the word lovely.

At this point, you have to go to the Tool Options and change the font back to Forestellyswashes.

Then press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste.



Now, place your cursor at the end of the word. I really liked that swash so I want to use it again at the end of the word. So to do that, I have to once again, change the font back to Forestellyswashes then I can press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V).



But now that I've pasted it, I can see it's not working. This swash I just pasted is only for the left side of letters. So I have to back to Font Book and look for it's matching swash that works with the right side of letters.

So go back to Font Book or Character Map to locate the matching swash that's been flipped for the right side.

Locate Glyph #: 27 and select it. Now press Ctrl C (Mac: Cmd C) to copy it.

Go back to PSE.

Activate the type layer and place your cursor at the end of the word lovely.

In the Tool Options, change the font back to Forestellyswashes.

Press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste.

Now click the checkmark to commit.



So I hope these two examples help you when you come across fonts like this.

For the class members who have a Windows computer, I have a quick and important update to give you. After this class went live, we discovered that a good handful of those using Windows were having a hard time getting Character Map to cooperate. This made completing the homework for this Lesson difficult.

In the downloads for this section, I've added a worksheet that will include different things you can try as well as Character Map alternatives (that are free of cost). Many of the windows users have found the alternatives to be much better to work with so make sure you check out this Character Map Worksheet if you run into any struggles.

Glyphs Dos and Don'ts

So, now that you've seen HOW to use Glyphs, let's talk about some do's and don'ts.

#1. Don't make every single character special.

When you do, it makes it look awful and hard to read.



#2. Do focus on the ends of words.

The first letter and the last letter can be an opportunity for a swash or fancy alternate.



#3. Do focus on the tails.

Letters like p, q, g, or t, b, d can also be opportunities for something fun. Just make sure it works with the whole word and doesn't give you a messy look in the process.



#4. And as we talked about in the beginning, do focus on repeated letters.

When it's an option with a handwritten or script font, it's always a good idea to change double letters or repeated letters used within a short amount of words. So here the double L looks more natural and the 3 small s's do, too because I varied them.

smell the roses

Again, as with many of our other type designs, moderation is key. Using alternates can really give your word art a special edge, as long as you don't over do it.

So, get ready! The homework for this lesson is going to be so much fun! We're going to create a small pack of word art that you can use on so many different projects.