



by Jenifer Juris

## Secrets of Terrific Type

### Lesson 05-06: Font Trios

In this bonus lesson, we're going to look at how to combine three fonts within one project. We're going to lean hard on the information we've already learned in the font pairing materials so if you haven't watched that yet, I would recommend you watch that first.

### Pairing Fonts Rules Reviewed

When it comes to font trios, the rules aren't that much different from font pairing. Let's do a quick review of the basic rules:

#### 1. Opposites Attract

**Opposites**  
Attract

#### 2. Sans with a Serif

**Serif**  
Sans Serif

#### 3. Script with a Serif or Sans

Script	Script
Sans Serif	Serif

#### 4. Don't combine fonts that are too similar.

SIMILAR  
SIMILAR

#### 5. Be careful with Handwritten and Decorative fonts.

Handwritten  
FONT PAIRING  
  
DECORATIVE  
FONT PAIRING

#### 6. Look online for font duos that are for sale for inspiration.

Font Duos  
FONT DUOS  
  
Font Duos  
FONT DUOS

#### Font Trio Rules:

With these rules in mind, let's consider what that means for font trios.

**Rule #1**, Opposites Attract, still works well with font trios. Using a bold, regular, and thin font together will compliment well. Even in this case, where I'm using the same font family for all three.

**Bold**  
Regular  
Thin

**Rule #2**, Sans w/ a Serif can still be done. But we'll have to add a third font to this. Often this will include a 2nd sans or a 2nd serif that is highly contrasting the first sans or serif. If you combine this rule w/ rule #1, you will have great success.

**Serif**  
Sans Serif  
**Sans Serif**

SANS SERIF  
**Serif**  
*Serif*

**Rule #3**, Script with a sans or serif. For a font trio, you could better say a Script font with a sans AND a serif font.

*Script*  
**Serif** SANS SERIF

**Rule #4**, still applies. Don't combine three fonts that look too similar to each other as it will look even worse than when it's two fonts.

SIMILAR  
SIMILAR  
SIMILAR

**Rule #5**, Be careful with handwritten or decorative fonts. This advice is still sound when using Font trios BUT, adding a handwritten PRINT font when combined with a Script and Sans or Serif can be a great way to complete a trio. Just remember, it's very easy to go overboard with the handwritten or decorative fonts so don't overuse them.

*Script*  
Handwritten  
FONT TRIO

**Rule #6,** Look online and see what you find for font trios for sale. This another great way to find inspiration for how to combine 3 fonts successfully.

Font Trios For Sale  
FONT TRIOS FOR SALE  
FONT TRIOS FOR SALE

## Font Trio Tips

Just like with font pairing, we need to keep in mind the idea of varying font size. Varying the size of the fonts used will help create balance and give your wordart a better visual appeal.

Large Size  
SMALL SIZE Small Size

And just like we've already talked about, vary the font weight or thickness. This creates that contrast that helps promote visual interest.

Thick or Bold  
THIN Regular

Use your Script fonts for the high impact parts of the wordart while allowing the other fonts to be used for the bulk of the words.

Script  
SCRIPT FONT SHOULD BE USED  
FOR HIGH IMPACT

Don't be afraid to use ALL caps or NO caps to help create contrast.

mix no caps  
WITH ALL CAPS  
FOR VISUAL INTEREST

## Font Trio Examples

1. Let's start with a Script font. Most people do. (Use fancy)

Then add Serif. (Classic)

Then add Sans.

This is probably the EASIEST combination to try.

BE THE  
**reason**  
SOMEONE  
*smiles*  
TODAY

2. Here I have three examples of using Script plus Handwriting plus Serif or Sans. Each one is unique by using the different font combinations. You can really have fun with font trios, just make sure you take time to balance out the fonts used with size and weight as talked about earlier.

BE THE  
**REASON**  
SOMEONE  
*smiles*  
TODAY

BE THE  
**REASON**  
SOMEONE  
*smiles*  
TODAY

BE THE  
**REASON**  
SOMEONE  
*smiles*  
TODAY

3. Here's an example of using two serif fonts with one sans serif font. Notice how the two serif fonts are high in contrast. One is very bold and one is thin. The Sans Serif font is also bold to contrast against the thin Serif.

BE THE  
**REASON**  
SOMEONE  
**SMILES**  
TODAY

One more thing to discuss is the matter of why the need for font trios. And the only real answer I can give is when you have a project that is mostly designed of type, sometimes two fonts isn't enough variety. Sometimes, three or more different fonts is necessary to keep the design interesting so use the rules we just discussed to help you navigate font choices when those times arise.

Now that you've seen a few examples, it's time to do our homework! We're going to recreate a sign that hangs in my home (it was a gift) using three fonts to our advantage!