

LOOK BACK. SEE FURTHER.

A TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

A IS FOR EVERYTHING:
HOW TYPOGRAPHY
SHAPES OUR
LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS



LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS

TEACHING *with* PRIMARY SOURCES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The University of the Arts, established in 1876, is one of the nation's only universities dedicated solely to educating students in visual arts, performing arts, design, and liberal studies. The University has developed an innovative approach to developing professional artists, designers, and writers. UArts acts as a catalyst for their creativity - to connect, collaborate, and create across disciplines and traditional boundaries. The Professional Institute for Educators + MEd Programs develops innovative and creative educational programming to serve the professional development needs of K-12 teachers through the arts.

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, offering access to the creative record of the United States—and extensive materials from around the world—both on-site and online. It is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. Explore collections, reference services and other programs and plan a visit at loc.gov; access the official site for U.S. federal legislative information at congress.gov; and register creative works of authorship at copyright.gov. www.loc.gov/item/prn-18-068/

The Free Library of Philadelphia advances literacy, guides learning, and inspires curiosity. With more than 6 million visits to its 54 locations, including the Rosenbach, and millions more online annually, the Free Library is one of Philadelphia's most widely used educational and cultural institutions. Its Print and Picture Collection (PIX) is home to diverse collections of fine art prints, photographs, drawings, and artists' books, as well as research collections of images, both historical and modern.

Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, **the Library Company of Philadelphia** is an independent research library specializing in American and global history and culture from the 17th through the early 20th centuries. Open to the public free of charge, the Library Company houses an extensive collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art. The mission of the Library Company is to foster scholarship in and increase public understanding of American and global history by preserving, interpreting, disseminating, and augmenting the valuable materials in its care, thus providing meaningful stewardship of Benjamin Franklin's legacy

The Philadelphia Museum of Art, which originated as the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, contains significant collections related to industry and design along with a world-class art collection. More than 125,000 items are available through their digital collections at www.philamuseum.org/collections/search.html and teacher resources are available at www.philamuseum.org/teacherresources.

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Look Back and See Further

by Erin Elman

*Dean of the Division of Continuing Studies at The University of the Arts and
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Typography is loosely defined as the general character or appearance of printed matter. Font choice and design of text visually and graphically provide clues for the reader about how to interpret the written word. Appropriate and well-designed text can tell a story in and of itself, it can evoke emotion, it can be a call to action. Typography is both an art and a science, which has evolved over the centuries and is tied to historical periods, cultural norms, and political perspectives. Researchers from the MIT study entitled *The Aesthetics of Reading* found evidence that high-quality typography has the power to induce a positive mood. They show that after reading a document in which good typography is used, people frown less and perform creative, cognitive tasks better, as compared to when they've read a document with poor typography.

Contemporary designer and author Stephen Coles has said, "You can't be a good typographer if you aren't a good reader." Reading, and interpreting what we have read, are vital skills for learners and are intrinsically linked to design and typography, whether through a poster, a book, a pamphlet, a map, a logo, or a t-shirt. The Library of Congress, the world's largest library, has over 16 million digitized primary sources, many of which utilize a vast array of designs and fonts to tell a story.

The arts teach us to think about relationships and movements, celebrate multiple perspectives, develop aural and visual literacy skills, and consider complex forms of problem solving. They enable us to have experiences we can get from no other sources. The arts provide a humanistic, sociological, and aesthetic connection to our nation as it evolves. Looking back through the lens of the arts connects students to the continuum of history and provides them with a glimpse of their possible roles in the making of history. Utilizing visual literacy skills to decipher encoded messages and discover new meanings can empower our students to be more discerning consumers of information and conveyors of messages. Teaching with primary sources through the arts allows students to study and investigate how individuals use creative activity to celebrate and explore their own cultural and national identity and history through their own experiences, as well as those of the witnesses of history.

At TPS-UArts, we are honored to be part of the Library of Congress' TPS consortium and to bring an artistic perspective to teachers, allowing them to look back and see farther. We hope that teachers find this guide to be a useful tool in their classrooms as they seek to guide their students through the typography of the past and of our own times. Please enjoy exploring the many ways that the use of design and typography enhances and enriches our understanding of the written word!

Working with Teachers

by Stormy Vogel

When teachers ask me to locate sources for them, my first thought is to search the Library of Congress's digital collection. Locating primary source material for teachers helps them bring students to a better understanding of the past. The Library of Congress holds a multitude of digitized primary source materials that are available on their website at www.loc.gov. The Library developed these digital resources to help people understand history by providing access to original artifacts

Using the Library of Congress's digitized images and this guide, teachers learn how to analyze and understand the meaning behind the sources and their significance in history. Visual literacy, the ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through visible actions or images is an important skill for students to develop. Visual learning experiences are extremely interesting and engaging and can be used with students of all ages. A great activity is to have students browse *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers* (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) to examine typography (words, images, fonts) and to investigate how advertising changes over time.

Teachers can explore the Library of Congress's classroom resources located on the Teachers page (www.loc.gov/teachers) as well as resources posted on the TPS-UArts website (tps.uarts.edu/teacher-resources). The Library's Teachers page is a starting point to gather resources such as lesson plans, themed resources, primary source sets, and interactive presentations. The Library also provides primary source-based professional development so educators can learn how to instruct other teachers about the vast resources available at the library (see www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment). These professional development opportunities include ready to present lessons (which can be used with students too), YouTube videos, webinars, and Summer Teacher Institutes. The Teaching with Primary Sources Blog (blogs.loc.gov/teachers), the Teaching Primary Sources Journal (www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal), and the LOC Twitter feed (@TeachingLC) are additional resources provided by the Library to engage learners and to help students apply critical thinking opportunities.

A is for Everything

by Kevin Mercer

“*Typography is what language looks like.*” —Ellen Lupton, from *Thinking With Type*

Picture in your mind, for a moment, the letter A. What does it look like? Is it bold? Ornate? Simple? Now picture your name. What do those letters look like? Do they look like your handwriting, or a printed type? Picture a word—Vote—what do those letters look like? How does the picture of that word make you feel?

Words matter. While we use our voices to add meaning, power, and nuance to spoken language, we use letters to convey those same qualities visually. Simply put: *Letters matter. Type matters.*

Over 500 years ago, Johann Gutenberg’s invention of movable type created an explosion of shared knowledge, history, and visual language that changed the world. Type and design continue to shape language and visual culture today—in print, on the web, and out in the observable world.

Look around and you’ll see type everywhere. Hundreds of typefaces are vying for your attention. You might see Helvetica dozens of times a day in the logos for JCPenney, Target, Jeep, American Airlines, Toyota, Crate&Barrel, Verizon,

and many more. Many of the books you read are designed with typefaces from the 1700s. Type has historical and cultural context, which informs its meaning and the way we receive it.

The open exploration of meaning and subject through type design offers a wealth of possibilities in the classroom. There are elements of history, art, technology, science, and cultural study to be explored through collaboration. I am thrilled to see where this may take us, as we find new ways to teach and learn about visual language and communication.

The More I Look, the More I See.

by Catherine Cooney

I remember the day I realized that I could look at a book as an object. I was turning the pages of Mark Catesby’s *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* while it was being digitized. I recall the feel of the paper, the texture of the impression of the type, and the slight sheen of the illustrations where they had been burnished. All of a sudden, I realized that the message of this book was delivered through more than the words on the page or even the illustrations in the plates. The message was delivered in part by the very shape of the letters and their arrangement across the plane of the page. The message was in the inks used in the pictures and the time taken to hand color each one. These elements are known as typography, which concerns the appearance of printed materials. When we study typography, we look at words not so much for what they say, but how they say it. We consider the choices made by the designers and printers of how the letters are formed and how the words are arranged on the page.

The Library of Congress includes a nearly unlimited supply of primary sources for the study of typography. It can be daunting to face the nearly 16 million choices in the Library’s digital archive. To simplify this task, teachers may start with the following collections:

- **Artist Posters:** www.loc.gov/collections/artists-posters/about-this-collection/. This series is especially helpful for understanding style from the 19th century to the present day. Nearly 3,000 of the posters are available online in high resolution.

- **WPA Posters:** www.loc.gov/collections/works-progress-administration-posters/about-this-collection/. All 907 posters in the collection are available as high-resolution images.
- **Printed Ephemera:** Three Centuries of Broad­sides and Other Printed Ephemera: www.loc.gov/collections/broad-sides-and-other-printed-ephemera/about-this-collection/. This collection has more than 10,000 images available online of printed material ranging from tickets, business cards, and menus to playbills, advertising posters, and propaganda. An extraordinarily rich resource for this history of printing from the 17th century to the present day.
- **Rare Book Selections:** www.loc.gov/collections/rare-book-selections/about-this-collection/. A selection of 1,283 digitized books representing some of the most interesting and important items in the Rare Book & Special Collections Division.

Visual literacy is the ability to make meaning of images through analysis and interpretation, to evaluate their sources, to use them effectively, and to know how to find them. When we study print as image, as well as for the meaning of the words, we build our visual literacy skills. Visual literacy does not stop with looking at the traditional arts of painting, drawing, or sculpture, but includes a vast world of images and objects. The Library of Congress provides an abundance of material to look at, as well as tools for teachers and students to make sense of what they see. I hope you find, as I did, that the more you look, the more you see.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Follow these steps to get started

1

Engage students with primary sources.

Draw on students' prior knowledge of the topic. Ask students to closely observe each item.

- Who created it?
- When was it created?

Help students see key details.

- Where does your eye go first?
- What colors and shapes are used?
- Are there images? How does the text connect to the image?

Encourage students to think about their personal response to the item.

- What feelings and thoughts does the item trigger in you?
- What do you wonder about it?

2

Promote student inquiry.

Encourage students to speculate about each piece, its creator, and its context

- What was happening during this time period?
- What was the designer's purpose in making this?
- What does the artist do to get her or his point across?
- Who was the audience?

Ask if this source agrees with other primary sources, or with what the students already know.

- Ask students to test their assumptions about the past.
- Ask students to find other primary or secondary sources that offer support or contradiction.

3

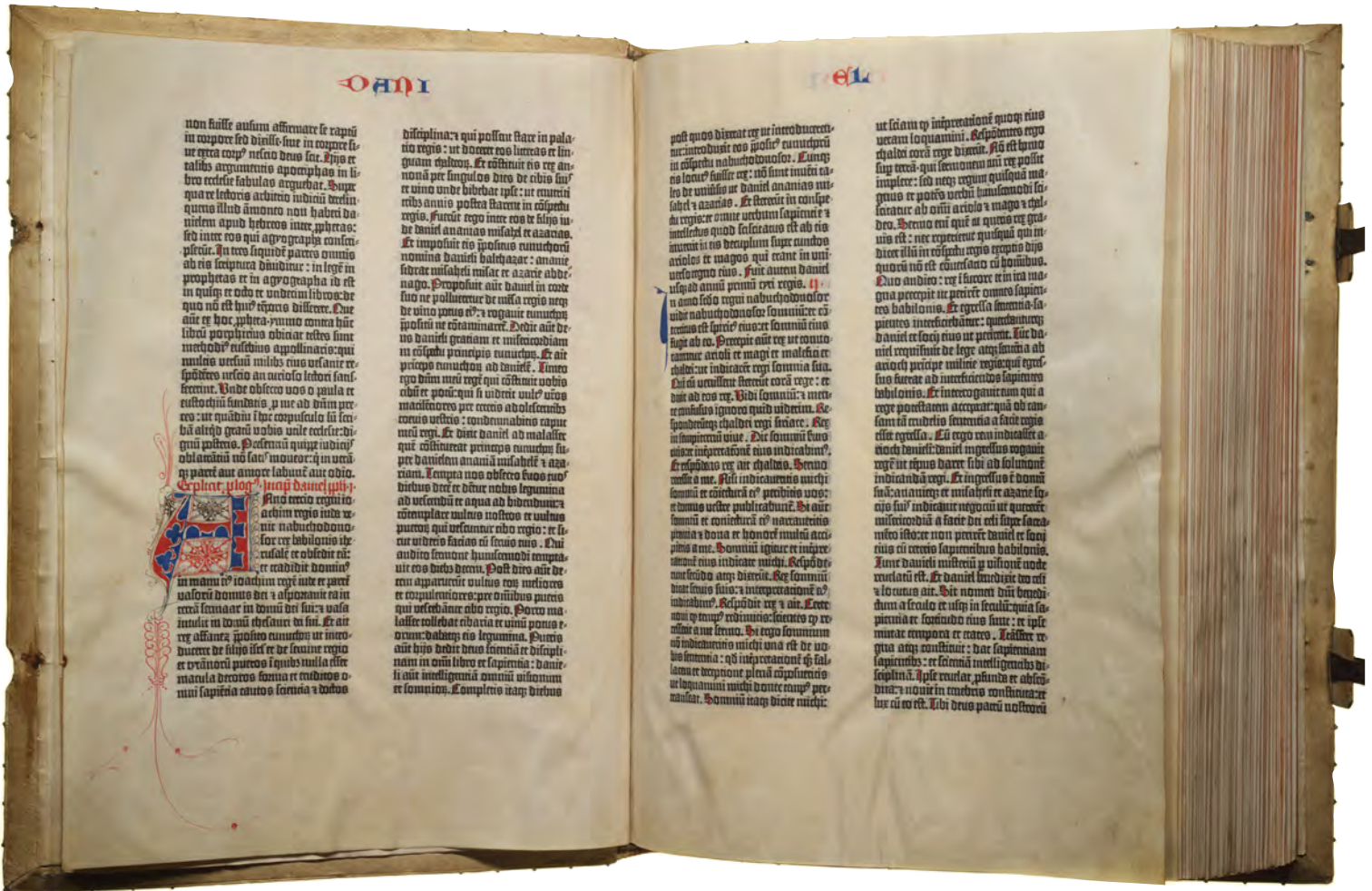
Assess how students apply critical thinking and analysis skills to typography.

Have students summarize what they have learned.

- Ask for reasons and specific evidence to support their conclusions.
- Help students identify questions for further investigation, and develop strategies for how they might answer them.

Adapted from Using Primary Sources, Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/

GUTENBERG BIBLE



A CLOSER LOOK

Spend some time examining this page spread. Describe what you see. What do you notice first? How is color used?

Consider the typeface. What do you notice about the shape of the letters? What are some differences between handwriting and type?

What do you wonder about Gutenberg's choice of typeface? What evidence do you see of how it was made? How are the letters similar to or different from other books you have seen?

Biblia Latina.**Between 1454 and 1455, Mainz, Johann Gutenberg**

Library of Congress

www.loc.gov/item/52002339/

Johann Gutenberg's 1439 invention of movable type was a world-changing invention that set forth a wave of social, religious, and educational change that continues through today. The Gutenberg Bible was the first mass-produced volume using this new method of printing. The book proved that Gutenberg's invention had incredible value, made more impressive by the fine quality of the materials used, the design, and the construction of the volumes.

The Gutenberg Bible is printed using a black letter type style, the same style as the handwriting commonly used in manuscripts from Germany and Central Europe ever since the 13th century. Gutenberg did not have other printed books to use as models for his new invention. Instead, he relied on illuminated manuscripts, modeling not only the type, but also the page layout on these handwritten books. The page design uses a two-column type block with generous margins that were chosen to be in proportion to the golden ratio. Space was kept for further rubrication:

headings or initial letters written in red, and illumination—painting or embellishments that decorate or illustrate the text—just as it would have been in a medieval illuminated manuscript.

While Gutenberg's printing method is not used to produce books today, the path he set forth has continued. His invention of movable type created new industries: skilled printers, punch-cutters, typesetters and compositors, binders, and related trades. Book production grew so quickly that it is estimated that nearly a billion new books were made in just a few centuries. Access to books grew, and with it, so did literacy. Gutenberg did not live to see the extent of his press's influence, but his invention fanned the flames of the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution. Pick up any book and the format is largely unchanged from the 15th century. The language may be different, the type and design choices may reflect modern sensibilities, but the potential for new discovery remains in every printed volume. This is Gutenberg's legacy.

Religious Text

August 19, 1801

The Reverend Georg Geistweit, American, active. c. 1790 - 1820,
Philadelphia Museum of Art: Titus C. Geesey Collection, 1954

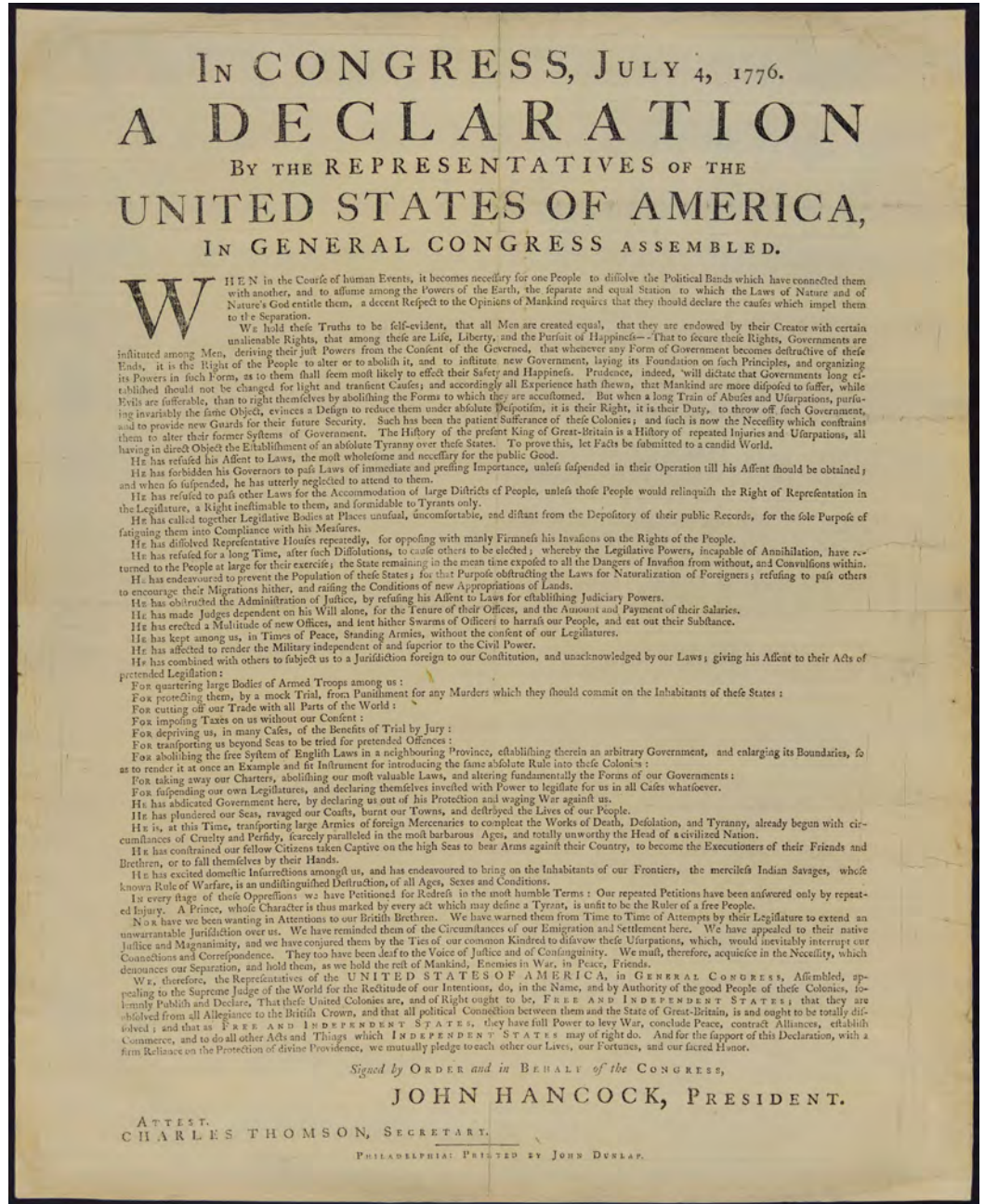
www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/54764.html?mulR=1293358077|28



This handwritten and decorated bible quotation was created by a member of the Pennsylvania Dutch community. It is a type of hand-lettered document known as Fraktur, and it features the black letter style of writing seen in German manuscripts as well as in printed works like the Gutenberg Bible. These letter forms were created with a wide metal pen nib that inspired the earliest type punches made by Gutenberg for his press. Typeface design has long been inspired by the tools of lettering, from pen nibs like those seen here, to stone cutting or brush-made forms.

The lettered quote from Psalm 34 states "I will bless the Lord at all times." It features elaborate border illustrations with stylized images of men, animals and other design motifs. Images like this were created for purposes such as house blessings, marriage and birth certificates, book plates, and as writing samples for school instruction. While Gutenberg's invention meant books could be produced in larger quantities, the manuscript tradition lived on for special documents such as these.

Declaration of Independence



A CLOSER LOOK

Where does your eye go first when you look at this document? Which words seem most important? Why? How does the printer direct your eye?

Look closely at the typeface. Notice the serifs, the small marks or “feet” at the end of a stroke.

Why might letters have serifs? Describe the letters. Are the lines thick, thin or both? What makes this document look old to you?

Notice how the paragraphs are set out. What makes a page easy or hard to read? Imagine you are a printer: What would you do to make a document look important or official?

Dunlap Declaration of Independence 1776, Printed by John Dunlap

Library of Congress

www.loc.gov/item/2003576546

Philadelphia, July 4, 1776—A few blocks from the Pennsylvania State House, printer John Dunlap kept his letterpress shop, and was visited late that evening with the task of printing the first copies of the Declaration of Independence. He set upon his work, hand setting metal type to be printed on a large broadside and distributed throughout the colonies. At this moment Dunlap had in mind two important facts—it was treasonous to be caught printing this document in the British colonies, and yet everyone in the colonies must see it.

It appears that the Dunlap Broadside was printed hastily without much regard to the quality of the design. Broadside is a general term for a sheet of paper, printed on just one side. They were historically used for proclamations, notices, posters, and advertisements, materials that could be produced and communicate quickly. The printing trade at this time was capable of high quality and clear design. However, his single large sheet is crowded with text, the long lines are hard to read, and the

single-color design is void of decoration, all of which signal that this document was printed quickly as an urgent announcement. Each version of the Declaration printed around 1776 differs in some way, and these variations continued into the 18th and 19th centuries. While the parchment copy is the original, the Dunlap Broadside persists in popular imagination.

Typefaces carry with them not just a particular kind of visual style, but also emotional or cultural attributes. Feelings are created by the way that we see the type in our world. Caslon, the typeface used for the Dunlap Broadside, was created in the 1700s and over the centuries has seeped into our visual consciousness. It feels weighty because it comes from deep history, but is often used to elicit a feeling of refined quality. This balance of visual attributes and cultural history makes typefaces adaptable to many design situations, and Caslon remains relevant as one of the most used typefaces in the world today.

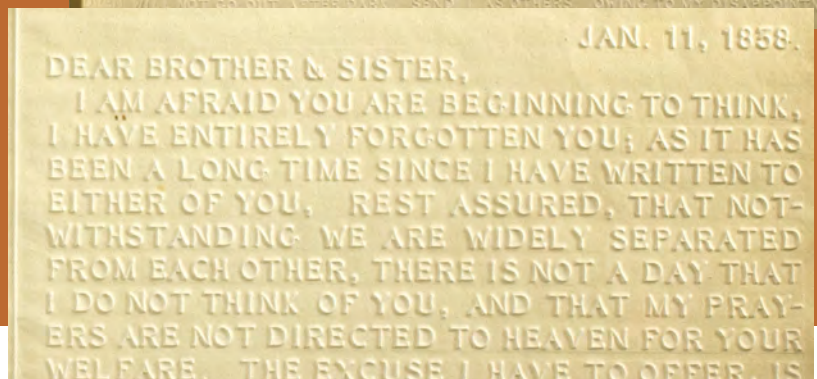
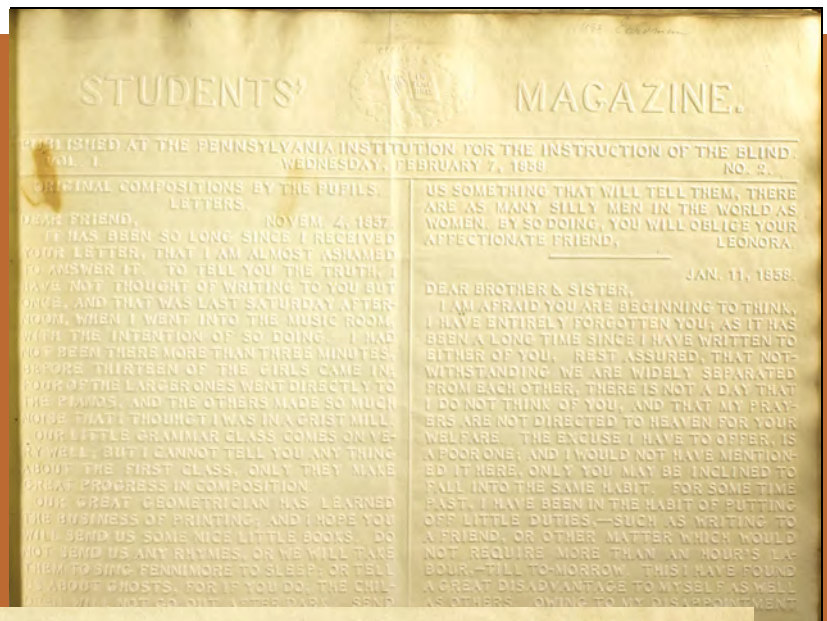
The Students' Magazine

1838

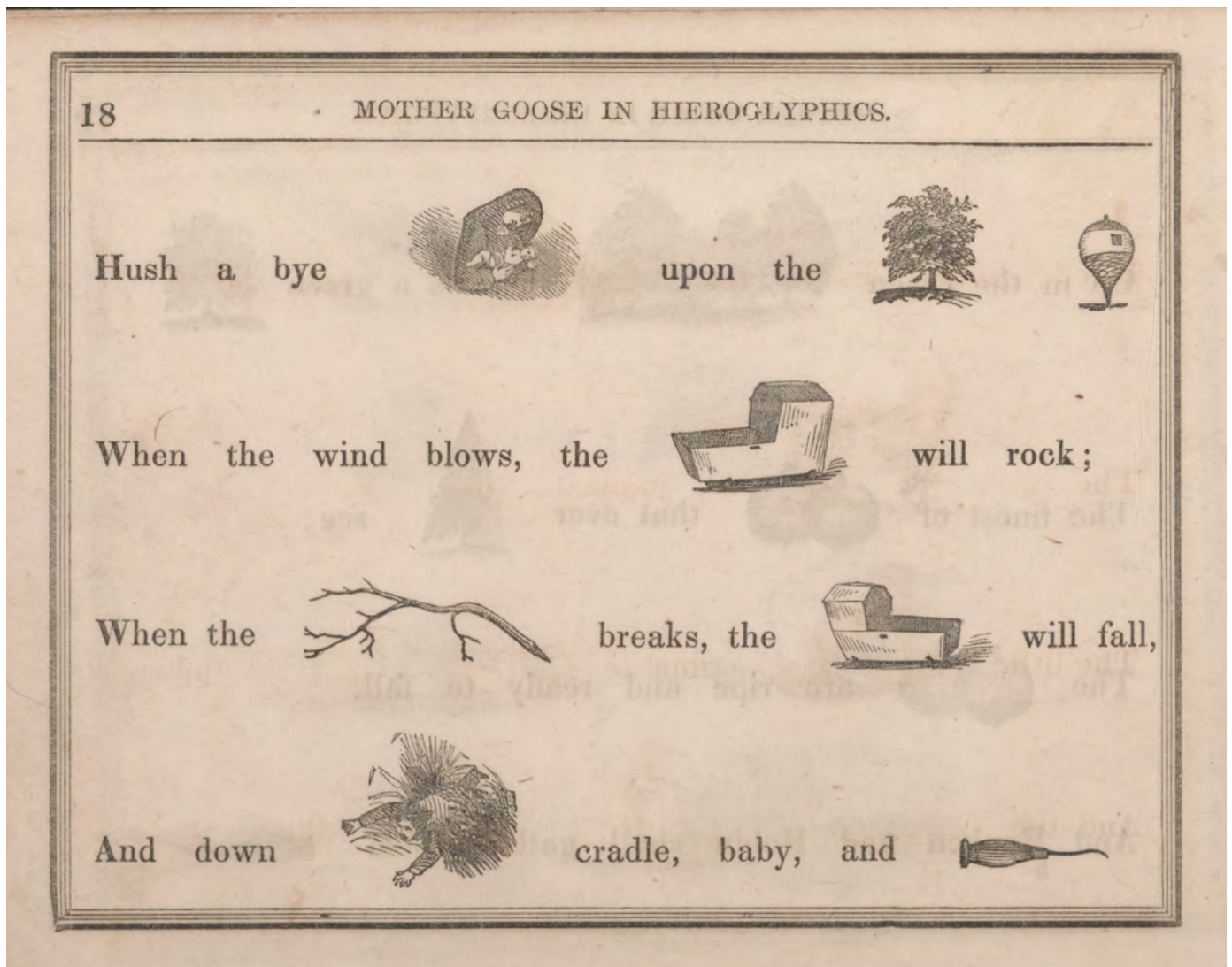
M. Snider, printer.

Library Company of Philadelphia

Before braille alphabets became the standard for printed books for the blind, several “raised alphaner” systems were used in 19th-century schools. Samuel Howe developed the Boston Line Type, shown here. The style adapted roman letterforms into more angular shapes that could be more easily read by both blind and sighted people and was the prevalent system of embossed printing for the blind until it was overtaken by the Braille system in the early 1900s.



Mother Goose in Hieroglyphics



A CLOSER LOOK

Examine the page and see if you can read it. Why do you think these words were chosen to be replaced with pictures?

Examine the pictures and identify the objects. What do you wonder about the objects pictured? What do you think they could tell us about children and their lives in the mid-19th century?

Can you imagine other words you would replace? Describe or draw the pictures you would use for them.

Mother Goose in Hieroglyphs
 1855, Published by Sherman & Co.
 Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2015juv84723/?sp=20

This book of nursery rhymes dates back to 1855 and is an example of a clever teaching tool, replacing key words in the text with representative images to keep children occupied and engaged in reading. The concept of a word as a signifier for an image is turned backward in this case, with the small wood engravings acting as literal pictures of the language being expressed on the page.

After the introduction of movable type, print culture began to grow and literacy increased as a result of the wider availability of books, the representation of more languages, and declining

costs. All this led to a deeper interest in and importance placed on learning.

Children's books are often the first place where young minds are exposed to the printed word. In the example here we see clear and simple illustrations that help move the reader easily through the story, with the complete text printed at the bottom to reinforce the message. These pictures of words may be helpful to visual learners who call upon pictures as a mnemonic device to improve memory and comprehension.

Hyde Fisher, inventor and patentee of the Fi...

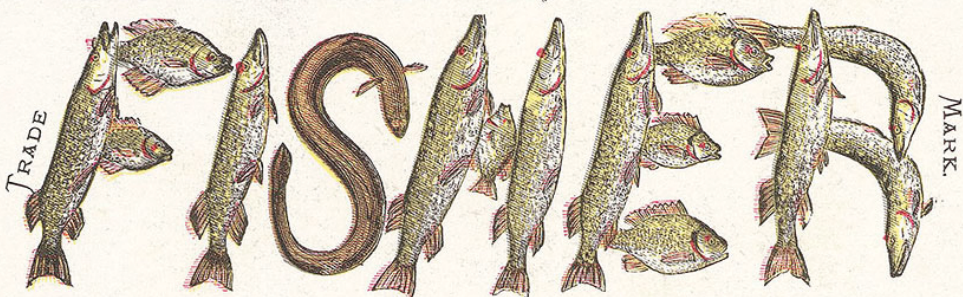
1876

Free Library of Philadelphia

libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/2222

This trade card for a refrigeration company was one of many made for the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, celebrating 100 years of America. The enormous event took place in Philadelphia and featured exhibitors from around the globe showing off their wares, inventions, cultural exchanges and various forms of entertainment. Fisher's trade card features, well, a collection of fish spelling out the word Fisher. While not the most clever advertising gimmick, the resulting design is memorable. The ad goes on to state the bona fides of the product and the company, using a number of letterpress typefaces to enliven the design.

J. HYDE FISHER, Inventor and Patentee of the



SYSTEM OF COOLING AS APPLIED TO
Ice Boxes and Refrigerators for Families, Grocers,
Restaurants, Hotels, Markets, Packers, Brewers,
Fruit Houses, Steamboats, Railroad Cars, Etc., Etc.

Patented August 1st, 1865. Re-issued January 31st, 1871. New Patent November 19th, 1872. They work on Natural Principles, Scientifically applied. Are as Cold as Ice can make them, and have a

PURE DRY AIR THAT I CHALLENGE THE WORLD TO EQUAL.

All orders will receive prompt attention. *State, County and Individual Rights for Sale.*

ADDRESS: J. HYDE FISHER, P. O. BOX 170, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
 [OVER]

Gymnacyclidium


A CLOSER LOOK

The printing technique for this advertisement is the same as for the Gutenberg Bible, but the typeface is quite different. How many styles of type do you see used here? What do you wonder about why the designer used that many?

What do you think the goal was of this advertisement? How did the designer use type to meet that goal? Notice the image. How do the words and images relate?

Imagine you need to create a poster for an event. How would you get people excited about what was offered? What typefaces would you choose? Would you use many or few? Why?

**THE FIRST
GYMNA CYCLIDIUM
FOR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**



COPYRIGHT SECURED BY PEARSALL BROS. J. HARRY & PEILLET LITH.

**OPENING EXHIBITION AND HOP AT THE
GRAND VELOCIPEDE ACADEMY**

Or Gymnaeyclidium, containing over 8,000 square feet for Riding, with Gallery and Seats
for about 1,500 people, by the

PEARSALL BROTHERS!
Originators of Velocipede Schools in this Country, at the

APOLLO BUILDING,
CORNER BROADWAY & 28th STREET,
Main entrance on 28th Street.

On MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 5th, 1869,
Commencing at 8 o'clock.
MUSIC BY DODWORTH'S BAND.

The First Gymnacyclidium for Ladies and Gentlemen...
 New York, 1869, Pearsall Brothers,
 Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.34101800/?sp=1

This leaflet for the opening of what could best be described as a “bicycle rink” is an example of print advertising typical of the mid-19th century. In 1869, when this was printed, bicycling was a new entertainment, quickly gaining in popularity, with the technology changing rapidly from the velocipede pictured here, to the high-wheeled styles and safety bikes, similar to what we use today. Just so, the technology of type was changing rapidly in the 19th century, and advances in printing allowed for a proliferation of wood types, and an abundance of styles and forms were available to advertisers.

This advertisement was produced via letterpress printing, where individual metal or wooden letters are set, inked, and pressed on paper. Print shops housed large collections of type for use in

various applications, from books to business cards to single-sided, single-sheet “broadside” posters. Typefaces contain characteristics that are designed for a specific purpose. In the case of text or paragraph type, the goal is quiet readability on the page or on screen. For display or headline type, the goal is to be noticed, to stand out.

Any typeface you see evokes a feeling, mood, or impression. In this poster, readability is less important than the impact of many different typestyles. The letter shapes and printed illustration would have communicated a message of movement, excitement, and novelty. The dynamic image of the cyclists paired with the bold and splashy typesetting sets the stage for an exciting evening on two wheels.

The Celebrated Compound Oxygenated Bitters

c. 1846-1847

Artist/maker unknown

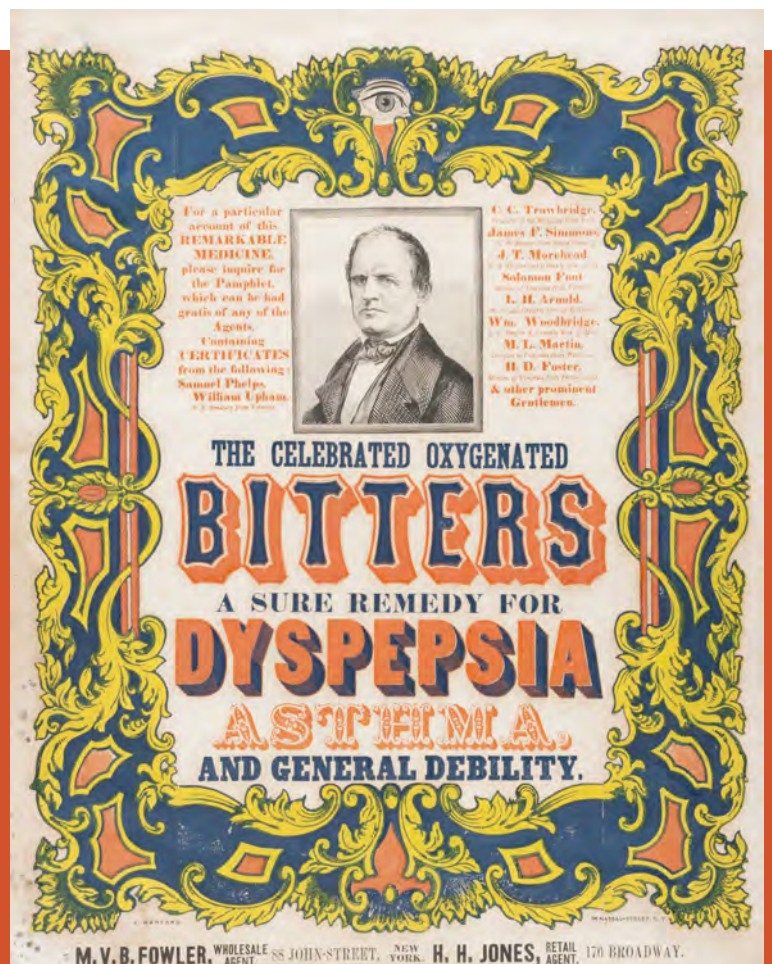
Philadelphia Museum of Art:

The William H. Helfand Collection, 1991

www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/86498.html

Bitters are typically alcoholic drinks that are now used mostly to flavor cocktails, but were once advertised as a remedy for various unrelated ailments. This “Remarkable Medicine” in particular contained no alcohol, but claimed to be a remedy for indigestion, asthma, and physical weakness. It bears endorsements from notable citizens including five senators and four congressmen.

The print is an example of early American advertising of considerable technical quality. The whole piece would have been printed on a letterpress, using a mix of smaller metal type, a multi-color woodcut frame, and “chromatic” wood type that creates a multi-colored dimensional effect by first printing a layer of embellishment like outlines or a shadow, then printing the main letterform on top.



Club Moderne



A CLOSER LOOK

Examine the Club Moderne sign. Describe the lettering. It can be helpful to think of it in terms of either or, such as formal or informal, jagged or smooth, curved or angular.

What kind of club would you expect to enter after seeing this sign? How does the sign set your expectation? What do you notice about the interaction of the sign with the building? How does the style of the sign relate to the style of the building?

This is a neon sign. What do you wonder about the technology? How do you think the material itself might affect the style of the lettering?

Anaconda Historic District, Club Moderne, 801 East Park Avenue,
 Anaconda, Deer Lodge County, MT,
 Documentation compiled after 1933, Historic American Buildings Survey,
 Jet Lowe, photographer
www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.mt0104.photos/?sp=1

On a street corner in Anaconda, Montana stands local landmark and watering hole, Club Moderne. The club opened in 1937. It remains in place today, despite a devastating fire that required a full restoration of the building in 2016. The building was significant enough to its community to be included in the National Register of Historic places, and remains as an artifact of a particular moment of American design. This moment is reflected in the lettering style of the club's neon sign.

Recognizable from its nautical motifs, such as the porthole window in the front door, new industrial materials like the gleaming pigmented structural glass and chrome of the façade, Streamline Moderne style architecture stood out in rural

Montana. The neon-lettered signage is emblematic of both the style of the design and its place as a beacon in the community.

The Club Moderne sign says everything you need to know about the club. The lettering style looks smart enough to match the building design, while remaining laid back and inviting enough to resonate with the tiny mountain community. Neon signs like that at the Club Moderne are hand made by skilled workers. Similarly, hand lettered signs tell a story of craftsmanship and quality that stands the test of time. Visit any downtown and you will find examples of lettering that tell all kinds of stories, from roadside barbeque shacks and hot dog carts to baseball field banners and local businesses. Type and lettering can teach us about people, place and cultural history.

Hagar & Campbell's Dime Museum

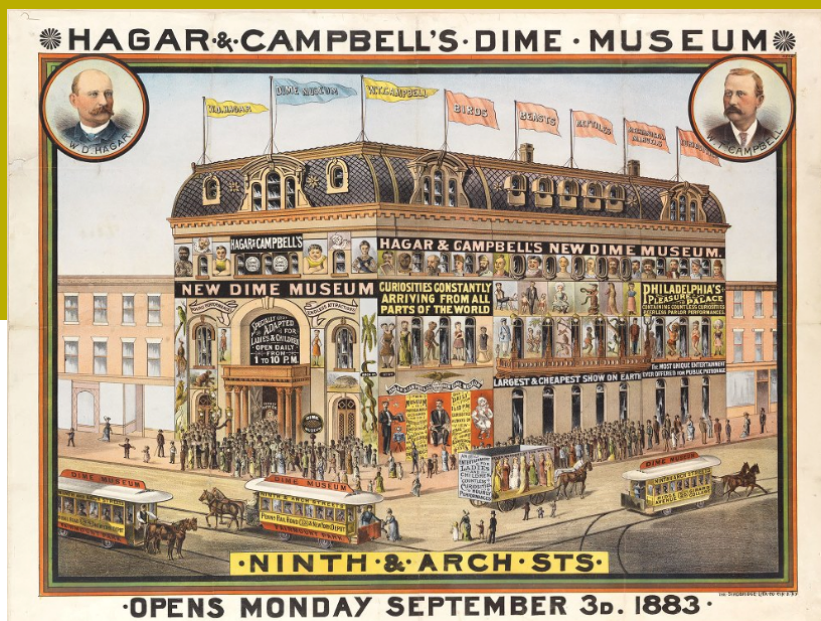
1883

Strobridge Lithographing Company, printer.
 Library Company of Philadelphia

[digital.librarycompany.org
 /islandora/object/digitool:127100?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=1512bceb6e7d324ddb-5f&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=1](http://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/digitool:127100?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=1512bceb6e7d324ddb-5f&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=1)

W. D. Hagar and W. T. Campbell operated this lively cabinet of curiosities from 1883-85 in downtown Philadelphia. Boasting the “Largest and Cheapest Show On Earth” on an elaborately designed building facade, the image of the building and the large chromolithograph print itself are artifacts of a time when much signage and advertising designs were hand lettered by skilled craftsmen. The print was produced by the Strobridge Lithography Company, who were known for their similar circus posters for Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey.

This print showcases a broad spectrum of typographic style and quality of American advertising design of the period. Bold brush lettered black type shows its human hand through eccentric styling of letterforms, odd spacing and sometimes wobbly curves. Meanwhile, the building signage maintains the quality and delicate hand of the drawn image, showing letter styles inspired by both wood letterpress type and master sign painters.



Understanding Letterforms Through Drawing

by Kevin Mercer

Letters can be made using three methods: writing, lettering, and type. Written letters are made with simple tools like a pen or pencil for quick communication. Lettering involves artful design of letterforms, such as ornate signage, graffiti, or monograms. Type is a reproducible system of identical letters, like the ones you are reading right now.

A great way to learn about letterforms is through drawing. Early in our education we learn to draw the basic shapes and lines that form a system of letters. This learning practice teaches fine motor skills and the ability to derive meaning from abstract symbols. Along the way, the drawing of letters becomes writing, where we master reproducing letters in the same style, shape, and proportion. Later, we learn to type on a computer, and we are introduced to typefaces that have been designed and developed over many years.

Drawing letters allows us to explore meaning, expression, and personal voice through our letters. While I may enjoy drawing bold sturdy letters with slab serifs, you might enjoy the light, airy approach of script letters. Room exists for all kinds of expression through these forms. This assignment asks students to experiment with writing a page of a single letter. After spending some time playing with various lettering styles, the students get a reference sheet, like the one pictured here, which shows a variety of letterforms. They are asked to examine the reference sheet, notice details, and reflect on the ways different details might affect meaning. After discussing the reference sheet, students are asked to repeat the assignment of drawing a page of a single letter and to reflect on the changes they made.

When I give an assignment like this, I ask the students to start with a basic letterform, just simple lines. This establishes the width and height of the letter, a skeleton on which we can build all kinds of cool styles and forms. From there we add the weight, the thickness of the strokes throughout the letter. This is the body, the flesh that helps establish rhythm and readability to alphabets. If we wish, we can go ahead and add some “clothes” or stylistic embellishments to the letter. Serifs, outlines, shadows, or any number of extra bits add flavor to the letter.

The great thing about this assignment is that it moves quickly. Students can make whole pages of letter exploration in a short time. Based on the exploration I ask students to go out and look for further inspiration and reference. I don't ask for this initially because I enjoy seeing the free expression and style that students dream up before they get too enamored with a particular style.

I used a pen to make all examples shown, but you can explore any media that is available, from markers, brushes, and cut paper to found objects. Exploring what makes a letter, as well as what letter or style best represents the student, can be a discussion starter. Pairing an image with the letter is a further exploration that can yield results in the form of narratives or symbolic pictures.

Resources related to this guide are available at tps.uarts.edu/teacher-resources

Writing, LETTERING, & Type. WORKSHOP

What's the Difference?

WRITING

characterized by informal, continuous strokes;
uses simple tools for quick communication

LETTERING

uses multiple strokes, often involving multiple tools;
focus on technique, visual appeal and context.

TYPE

reproducible letters, including anything from
metal and wood type, transfer letters,
stamps, stencils, and digital fonts

Learn by Drawing!

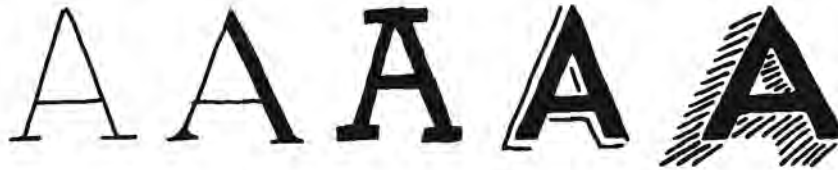
- 1. SKELETON**
Create the basic
shape and proportion
of the letter



- 2. BODY**
Add desired
thickness to
strokes



- 3. CLOTHES**
Add serifs, script
elements, outlines,
shadows, etc.



4. Draw Your Favorite Letter!

Look around you. Type is everywhere. Don't rely on the internet for all of your typographic inspiration. Explore books, movies, museums, signs, magazines, ads, posters, and most of all—your own sketchbook. Draw your favorite letter based on your collected inspiration!

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

The Library of Congress provides teacher's guides that help to analyze primary sources. Helping students analyze primary sources can guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills. The Library provides a variety of these guides based on primary source material. On the Library of Congress website one can find a variety of these tools, which help to analyze photographs and prints, books and other printed text, manuscripts, maps, political cartoons, motion pictures, sheet music and song sheets, oral

histories, and sound recordings. Each analysis tool asks questions to help students construct knowledge as they form reasonable conclusions based on the evidence they see, hear, or read. Then students can connect primary sources to the context in which they were created. When viewing a poster, students should be able to answer these probing questions.

The analysis tools are not linear; teachers should encourage students to go back and forth between the columns to answer the questions.

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.**

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions: What do you notice first? Find something small but interesting. What do you notice that you didn't expect? What do you notice that you can't explain? What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Where do you think this came from? Why do you think somebody made this? What do you think was happening when this was made? Who do you think was the audience for this item? What tool was used to create this? Why do you think this item is important? If someone made this today, what would be different? What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about.
who? what? when? where? why? how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

- Beginning**
Have students compare two related primary source items.
- Intermediate**
Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.
- Advanced**
Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to <http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Extension ideas are available for each analysis guide www.loc.gov/teachers.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

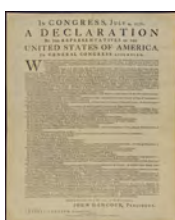
IMAGE FROM THE
LIBRARY OF CONGRESSCOMMON CORE STATE
STANDARD – GRADE 6**Gutenberg Bible**

Mainz, Printer of the 42-line Bible (Johann Gutenberg) between 1454 and 1455?, not after 1456

www.loc.gov/item/52002339/

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

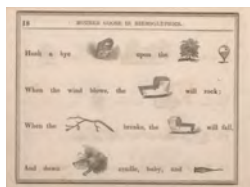
**Dunlap Declaration of Independence**

in Congress, July 4, 1776, a declaration by the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled. J. Dunlap

www.loc.gov/item/2003576546

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**Mother [Goose] in hieroglyphics.**

Published by Sherman & Co.

www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2015juv84723/?sp=20

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information. (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

**Gymnacyclidium**

The first gymnacyclidium for ladies and gentlemen: opening exhibition and hop at the grand velocipede academy, or gymnacyclidium, containing over 8,000 square feet for riding, with gallery and seats for about 1,500 people.

Pearsall Brothers

www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.34101800/?sp=1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text. (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

**Club Moderne**

Anaconda Historic District, Club Moderne, 801 East Park Avenue, Anaconda, Deer Lodge County, MT

www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.mt0104.photos/?sp=1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.



This undated image shows Hamilton Hall at the University of the Arts when the school was known as the Philadelphia College of Art. The building was originally part of the Pennsylvania Institution of the Deaf and Dumb.

Photo credit: South (front) elevation – Pennsylvania Institution of the Deaf and Dumb, 320 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA.

www.loc.gov/item/pa1043/



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS



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