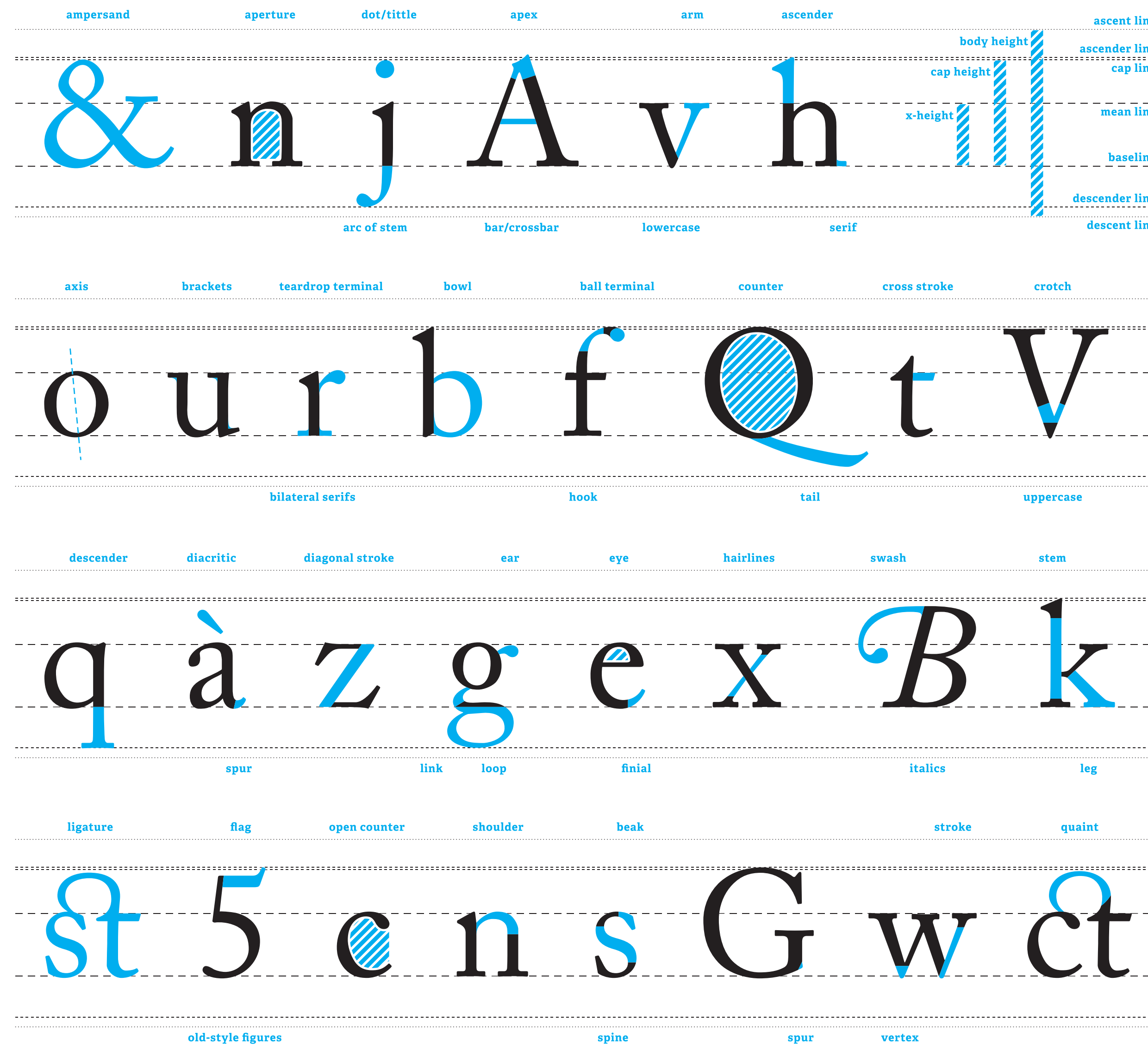


TYPOGRAPHY DECONSTRUCTED

A comprehensive guide to the anatomy of type.



ampersand
A stylized character of the Latin et used to represent the word and.

aperture
The partially enclosed, somewhat rounded, negative space in some characters.

apex
A point at the top of a character where two strokes meet.

arc of stem
A curved stroke that is continuous with a straight stem.

arm
A horizontal, or upward, sloping stroke that does not connect to a stroke or stem on one or both ends.

ascender
The part of a letter that extends above the x-height.

ascender line
The invisible line marking the height of ascenders within a font.

ascent line
The invisible line marking the farthest distance between the baseline and the top of the glyph.

axis
An imaginary line drawn from top to bottom of a glyph, bisecting the upper and lower strokes.

ball terminal
A circular form at the end of the arm in letters.

bar/crossbar
The horizontal stroke in letters.

baseline
The invisible line where all characters sit.

beak
A sharp spur, found particularly at the top of letters in some 20th century Romans.

bilateral serifs
A serif extending to both sides of a main stroke.

body height
The complete area covered by all of the characters in a font.

bowl
The fully closed, rounded part of a letter.

bracket
A curved or wedge-like connection between the stem and serif of some fonts. Not all serifs are bracketed serifs.

cap height
The height of a capital letter measured from the baseline.

cap line
A line marking the height of uppercase letters within a font.

counter
The open space in a fully or partially closed area within a letter.

cross stroke
A horizontal stroke that intersects the stem of a lowercase 't' or 'f'.

crotch
An acute, inside angle where two strokes meet.

descender
The part of a letter that extends below the baseline.

descender line
The invisible line marking the lowest point of the descenders within a font.

descent line
The invisible line marking the farthest distance between the baseline and the bottom of the glyph.

diacritic
An ancillary mark or sign added to a letter.

diagonal stroke
An angled stroke.

dot/tittle
A small distinguishing mark, such as an diacritic on a lowercase 'i' or 'j'.

ear
A small stroke extending from the upper-right side of the bowl of lowercase 'g'; also appears in the angled or curved lowercase 'r'.

eye
Much like a counter, the eye refers specifically to the enclosed space in a lowercase 'e'.

finial
A tapered or curved end.

flag
The horizontal stroke present on the numeral 5.

hairline
A thin stroke usually common to serif typefaces.

hook
A curved, protruding stroke in a terminal. Usually found on a lowercase 'f'.

italics
A cursive alphabet which is matched with a roman font and used chiefly for emphasis.

mean line
An imaginary line running along the top of non-ascending, lowercase letters.

leg
The short, descending portion of a letter.

ligature
Two or more letters are joined together to form one glyph or character.

link
A stroke that connects the top and bottom bowls of a lowercase double-story 'g'.

lobe
A rounded projecting stroke attached to the main structure of a letter.

loop
The enclosed or partially enclosed counter below the baseline of a double-story 'g'.

lowercase
The smaller form of letters in a typeface.

old-style figures
Numbers with varying heights, some aligning to the baseline and some below.

open counter
The partially open space within a character that is open on one end.

overshoot
Ascenders extending into the space of a following character.

quaint
An antiquated sort or glyph, used to recreate the typographic flavor of a bygone age.

serif
A stroke added as a stop to the beginning and end of the main strokes of a character.

shoulder
The curved stroke aiming downward from a stem.

spine
The main curved stroke of a lowercase or capital 'S'.

spur
A small projection off a main stroke.

stem
A vertical, full-length stroke in upright characters.

stroke
A straight or curved diagonal line.

swash
A flourish addition replacing a terminal or serif.

tail
A descending stroke, often decorative.

teardrop terminal
The teardropped ends of strokes in letters of some typefaces.

terminal
The end of a stroke that does not include a serif.

uppercase
A letter or group of letters of the size and form generally used to begin sentences and proper nouns. Also known as "capital letters".

vertex
The outside point at the top or bottom of a character where two strokes meet.

x-height
The height of lowercase letters based on the height of lowercase 'x'; does not include ascenders or descenders.