

## An online glossary of typographic terms by Janie Kliever

Boris Veytsman

While movable type appeared only several centuries ago, lettering — whether using chisel, or pen, or brush, or stylus, or . . . — is much older. The craft of putting together beautiful letters to express a thought is ancient. Its terminology developed over a long time, and may confuse or intimidate a novice. Take an individual letter, for example. Like a strange animal, a letter can have an *arm*, a *leg*, a *foot*, an *eye*, *joints*, a *chin*, an *ear*, a *tail*, a *shoulder* or even a *crotch*. Like a plant, it can have a *stem*. Like a bus system, it has *terminals*. And like a London bus, it can be *single-story* or *double-story*.

The advent of computers led to a democratization of typography: now anybody can create pages without spending years learning calligraphy or considerable money buying a letterpress. Thus some amount of typographic literacy is needed for many people, if only to be able to talk to a web designer while setting up a personal or corporate site. While there are many books explaining the basics of typography to novices, a free online dictionary is always welcome.

A *glossary of typographic terms* by Janie Kliever, published online at <https://designschool.canva.com/blog/typography-terms/> by Canva, tries to provide such dictionary. It has 34 short entries, with a minimal amount of text. Instead, the author uses tastefully designed drawings, like the ones on Figures 1–4.

The dictionary is intended for novices. One of the comments on the site says,

Oh my God. I'm obsessed with typography but have no idea there are terms for it. I love this.

Nevertheless, the field of typography may have surprises for everybody, like *gadzook* meaning a part of a ligature which does not belong to constituting letters (Figure 4).

Janie Kliever has created a useful and beautiful site, which deserves to be among typophiles' bookmarks.

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Figure 1: Slanted and italic



Figure 2: Swash



Figure 3: X-height



Figure 4: Ligature

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