

[ADAMVICAREL.COM/GOODTYPE](https://adamvicarel.com/goodtype)

Our Expectations

This class is about developing an understanding, re-establishing a perspective, and learning processes and techniques, not walking away with something beautiful.

—

How to SEE type differently. This alone will enable you to become a far better letterer—seeing a letter or word as a series of shapes, not the letters that these shapes create, will help you immensely.

Calligraphy

The art of producing decorative handwriting with a pen or brush. It is created or formed with one pass of the pen/brush.

Type Design

Creating a typeface or font. You need to consider every possible combination of letters and be sure everything works together.

Custom Typography

Speaks to the act of arranging type that has already been created.

Lettering

Crafting letterforms from scratch, drawing each letter/word individually with outlines as opposed to writing the letter.

Calligraphy

© Seb Lester

Type Design

© Joe Turek

Custom typography

Hand Lettering

© Tobias Saul



Key Terms

Rhythm

The flowing, smooth, repetitious movement throughout your lettering.

Optical Corrections

Adjusting the lettering to “appear” correct.

Balance

The evenly distributed visual weight of your lettering.

Negative Space

The space between your letters.

Baseline

The bottom line in which your letters sit.

X-height

The vertical height of your lowercase letters.

Cap-height

The height of your uppercase letters.

Key takeaways from this class

Rhythmic Balance

if you walk away with a
basic understanding of
these 'ideas' and how
they apply to lettering,
you will have absorbed
the most valuable
portion of this class.

Negative Space

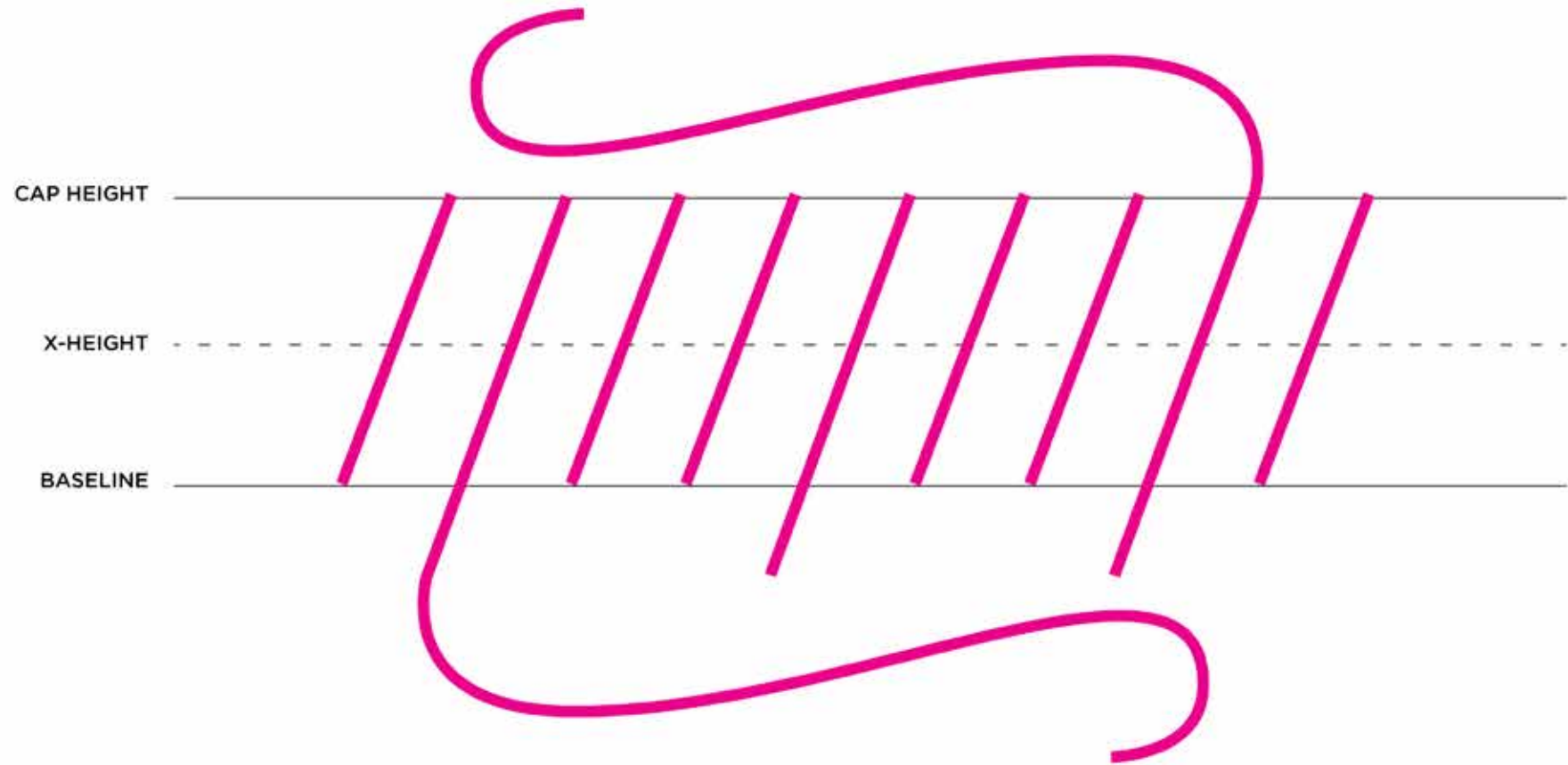
Simplify shapes (in your letters and words)

Identify similarities (in letter forms/weights)

Calligraphic influence (thicks/thins)

Key Terms

Good Rhythm



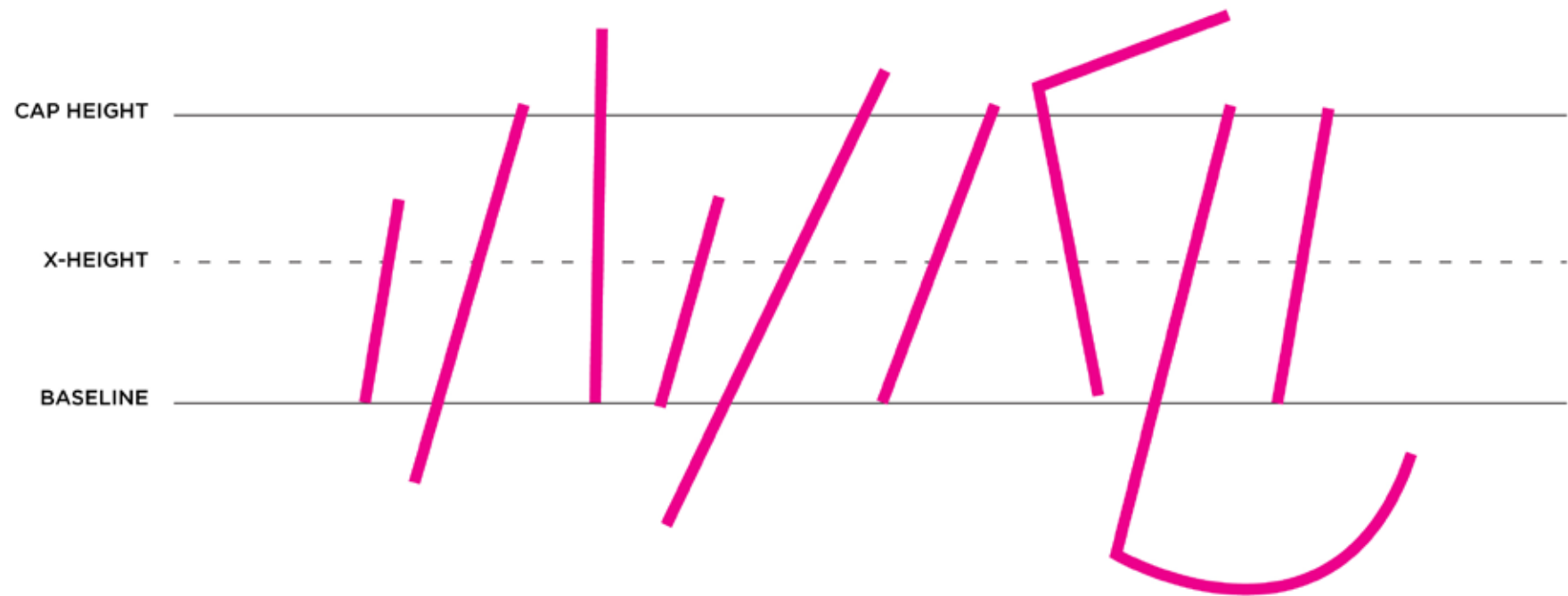
Good Rhythm

Colorado

Good Rhythm



Bad Rhythm



Bad Rhythm

Colorado

Bad Rhythm



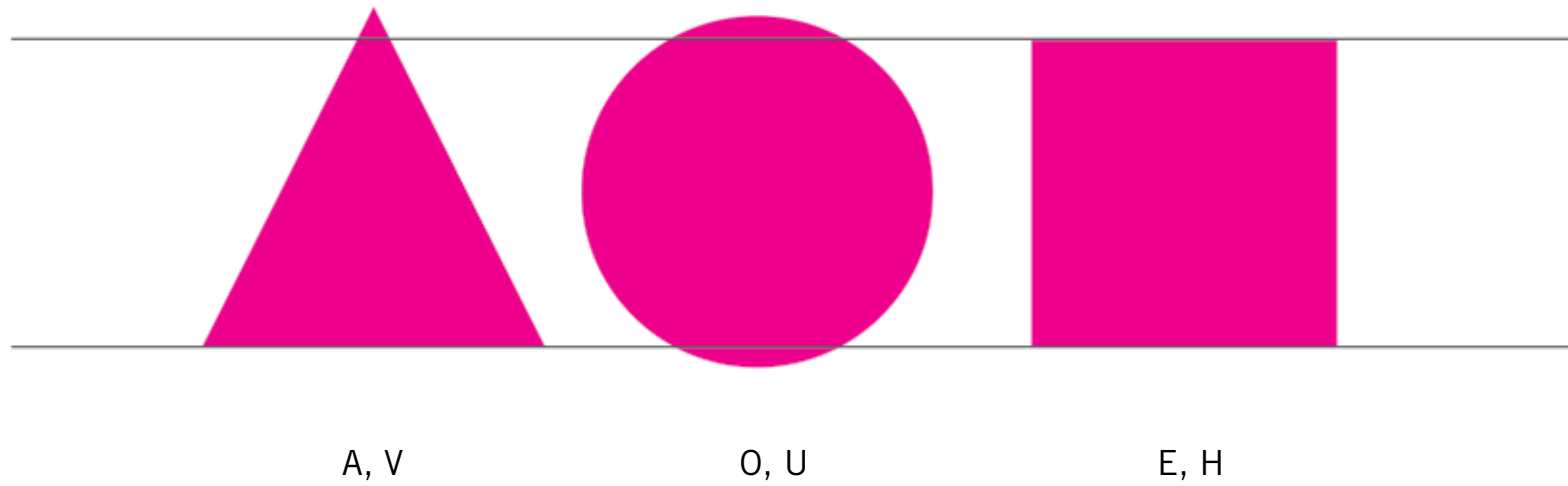
Rhythm Comparisons



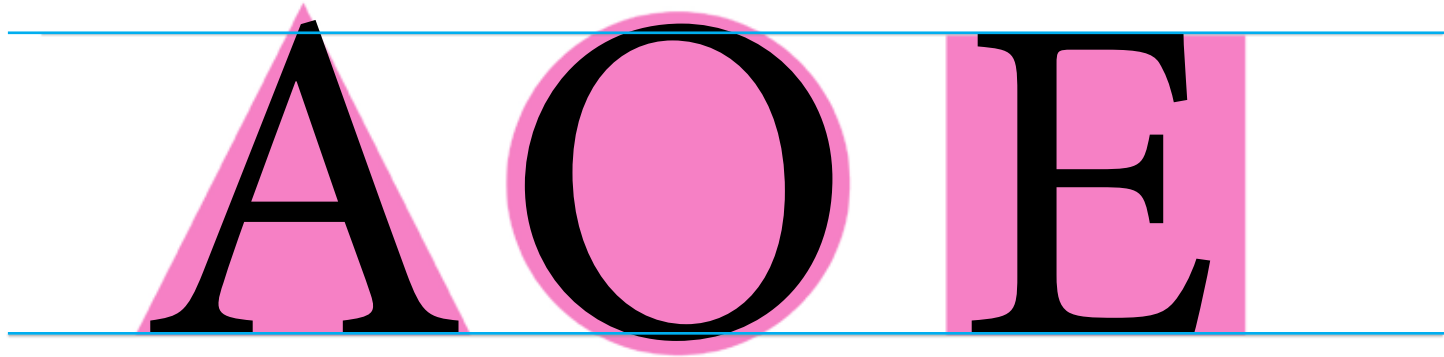
Colorado Colorado

The image displays two cursive renderings of the word "Colorado" side-by-side. The word on the left is written in a fluid, continuous cursive style with a single, sweeping underline that curves under the entire word. The word on the right is also in cursive but features a more pronounced, thick, and slightly wavy underline that sits below the baseline of the letters.

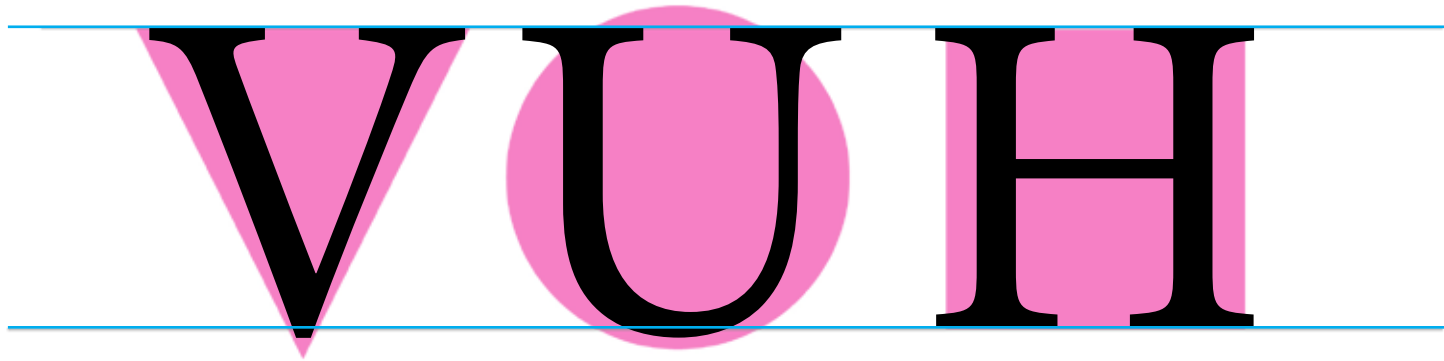
Optical Correction



Optical Correction



Optical Correction



Negative Space



daytime

daytime

Identify Similarities

Lapis
& Oak

EST. 2017

SPA
&
SALT
—
LOUNGE

Identify Similarities



Identify Similarities



Identify (find) Similarities

find
similarities

Identify (find) Similarities

c l . r | v

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similarities

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find
similarities

Calligraphic Influence

Calligraphy, the art of handwriting, is the basis for all things type-related. It has been around for thousands of years, and the elements and principles that define calligraphy are those that should to be considered and applied when hand lettering

Calligraphic Influence

aloha

Calligraphic Influence

Calligraphic Influence

 Thin Up
(less pen pressure)

 Thick Down
(more pen pressure)

aloha

aloha

Most type
follows these rules.

Serif, Sans serif, Script

SERIF

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

SANS SERIF

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

BRUSH SCRIPT

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

SCRIPT

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Serif, Sans serif, Script

SERIF



SANS SERIF



BRUSH SCRIPT



SCRIPT



Calligraphic Influence

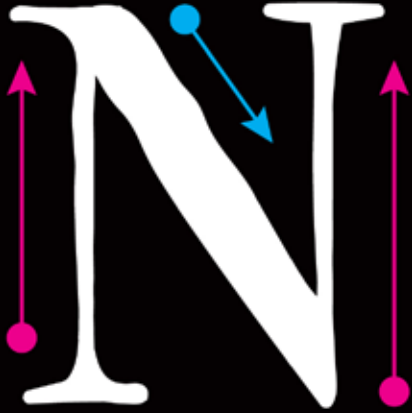
N N

Calligraphic Influence

N

~~N~~

Calligraphic Influence



Correct



Calligraphic Influence



Incorrect

Calligraphic Influence

E

E

Calligraphic Influence

E

~~E~~

Calligraphic Influence



Correct



Calligraphic Influence



Incorrect

Creating a successful lettering composition heavily relies on your ability to correctly apply the rules and terms explained on the previous pages.

Although, lettering is about making things look and “feel” right. Bend or break the rules when you feel it is necessary; however, just be sure that you’re do so intentionally!

Lettering has
ENDLESS possibilities

Brush Lettering

—

BOB EWING

The logo for Creative South is written in a white, cursive script font. The word "Creative" is on the top line and "South" is on the bottom line. The letters are thick and have a soft, rounded appearance. The entire logo is set against a solid teal background.The logo features the word "Believe" in a large, white, cursive script font with a thick black outline. Below the word is a black circle containing the lowercase letters "saa" in white.

Turn a
Negative
into a
Positive

A hand-drawn typography sketch of the phrase "the ripple effect". The word "the" is written in a small, simple sans-serif font at the top. Below it, "ripple" is written in a large, bold, rounded script font. At the bottom, "effect" is written in a very large, stylized, almost calligraphic font where the letters are interconnected. Red handwritten notes and arrows provide feedback: "THICKER" points to the top of the 't' in "the"; "THIN UP RIBBLE" points to the first 'r'; "SHORTEN OUT" points to the first 'r' in "ripple"; "THIN UP" points to the first 'e' in "effect"; "SHOULD NOT TOUCH?" points to the space between "ripple" and "effect"; "MAKE 'P' COMPACT" points to the 'p' in "effect"; and "UPPER CASE" points to the 'E' in "effect". A red pen lies on the surface to the right.

Fancy/Decorative

—

JESSICA HISCHE

Design
is
Everything
is
Design

Jessica
Sische

Ann
Endrix

2008 • 6:04 am • 22 1/4 inches • 10 pounds
Designed by John, Andrea & Jack

Books
of the Year
2010

Grunge

—

JON CONTINO

WORDSMITH
OF THE WORLD
THE WIDE WEB

THE SELECTED *of*
WORKS
JON CONTINO
NEW YORK, N.Y.

A LIFE-TIME OF
GIVING
IS A LIFE
WORTH
LIVING

YARDSALE

FINE GOODS
SOLD BY
FINE FOLKS

"HAGGLING WILL
GET YOU
EVERYWHERE"

AVAILABLE ACROSS AMERICA

WHIMSICAL

—

MARY KATE MCDEVITT



Oh the possibilities...



Drop Shadow



Bevel



Inline



Lines



Shading



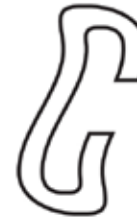
Texture



Perspective



Lined Drop Shadow



Distorted



Decorative



Layering



Outline



Inline and Shadow



Minimal



Illustration

Hand Lettering Process

—

“Human Anatomy”

“Human Anatomy” Lettering Process

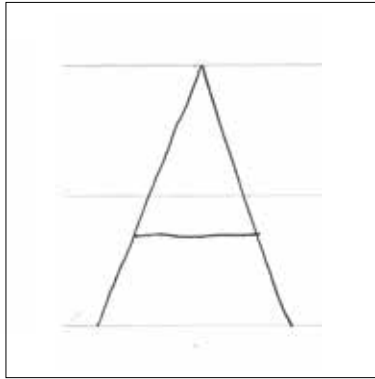


Step 1–Sketch

Crank out some fast and dirty sketches! Draw quickly and do as many variations as you can. Alter the baseline, change the shape, try various lettering styles, etc. Consider which words are the most important and what you want the focal point to be. If your composition is just one word, consider if you want a particular portion of your wordmark to be the focal point.

Main considerations at this point:

- Don't worry about perfection/details
- Try multiple styles
- Letter connection exploration (ligatures, filigrees, shifts in baseline, x-height, etc)
- Scale shifts/changes
- Composition studies

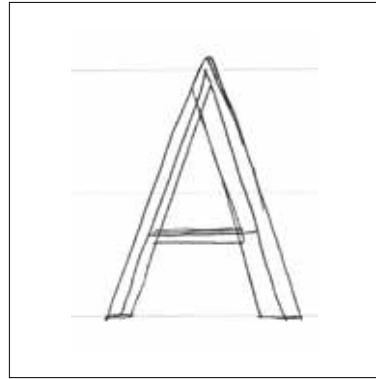


Step 2–Skeleton

Draw your baseline, x-height and cap-height lines, and use your sketch as a reference for the skeleton. Redraw your sketch at about 4–7" wide. Keep things very loose and light. Consider placing a piece of tracing paper on top of your skeleton and experiment with styling, contrast, varying width, etc., with various pens/markers. Don't get too locked into your drawing too early. Continue to experiment and explore the potential of your piece!

Main considerations at this point:

- Allow for a lot of mistakes, erases, redraws, and changes.
- This step is a long one. Get things settled into the right place before moving forward.

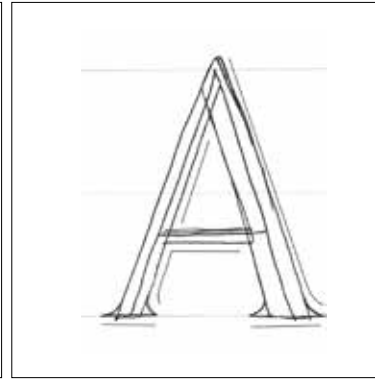


Step 3–Body

Add the body to your letterforms. Slowly add an outline to your skeleton. Similar to the skeleton step, be open to constant drawing, erasing, and reworking of your letterforms in this step. Consider lightly filling in your sketch with pencil as this allows you to better understand the visual weight of your letterforms (this is difficult to do with just an outline)

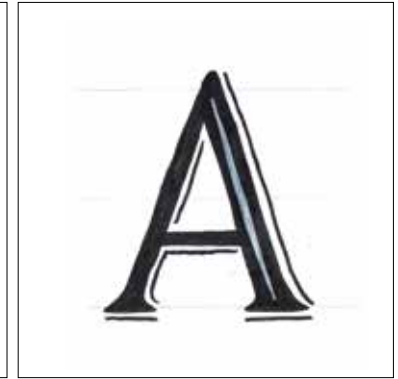
Main considerations at this point:

- Composition and balance
- Rhythm—symmetrical lines, similar baseline/cap-height/x-height
- Negative space—Space between letters and letterforms



Step 4–Clothes

Once you feel that your lettering is in a good (almost final) place, begin to add your clothes—flourishes, serifs, drop shadows, inlines etc. These are your finishing touches and details that can take your lettering to the next level as well as help further balance your piece.



Step 5–Ink

5.1: Outline your letterforms with your thinnest Micron pen.

-It is important to stay steady, slow, and smooth. Always remember that you can add more weight later. Err on the side of thinner rather than thicker, especially at the intersections of strokes.

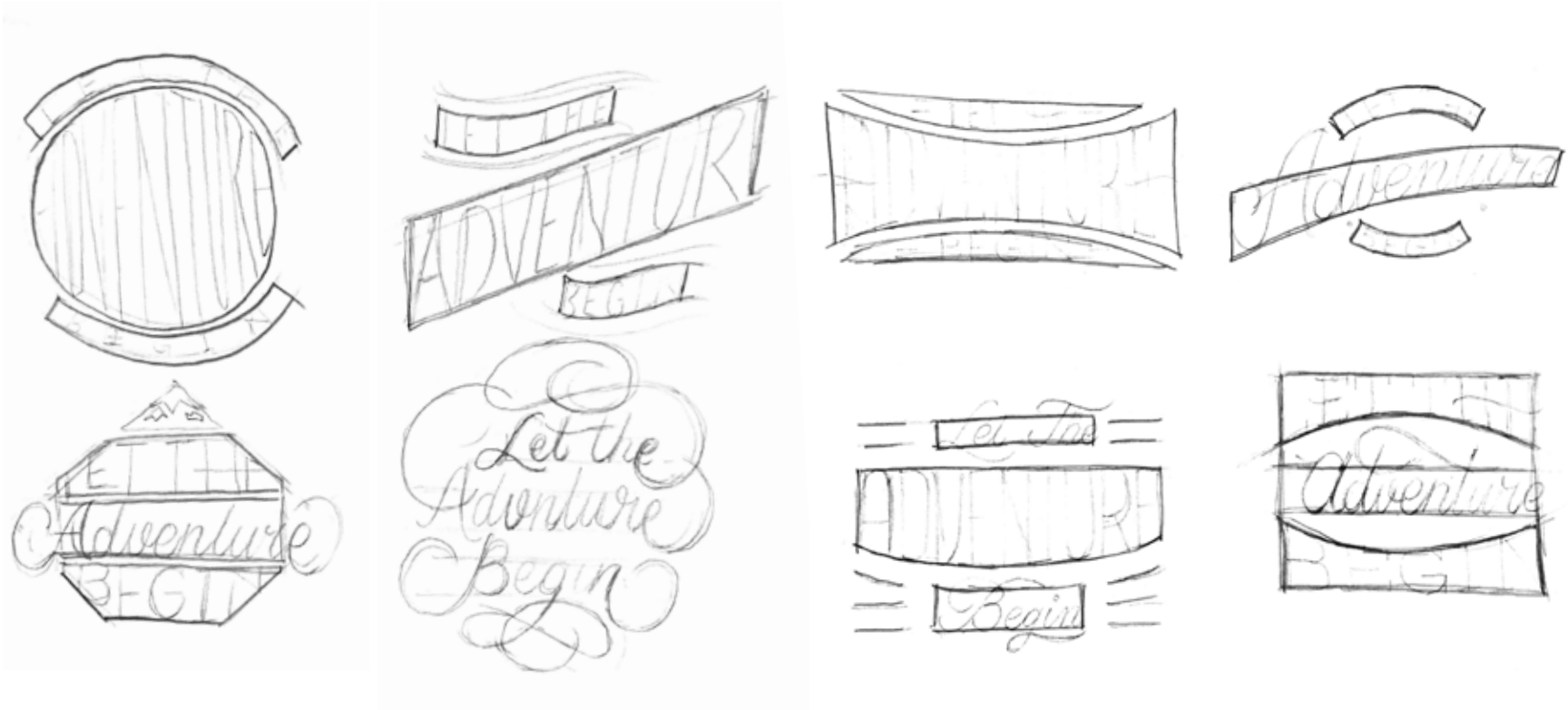
5.2: Erase pencil lines

5.3: Fill with thicker pen—be aware of bleeding

Note that everyone has a different process and technique. This is by no means the “best” or most efficient process for every lettering project. Every piece is different and therefore potentially illicit a need for a different technique or process. Take this process and skew it to your liking—do what feels right for you and your lettering piece.

The Importance of Sketching

Explore compositions and discover letter relationships



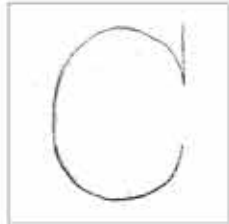
LET THE
Adventure
BEGIN

Hand Lettering

© Tobias Saul

C Practice

Draw the letter C—Start with the Skeleton, and then add the Body and Clothes.



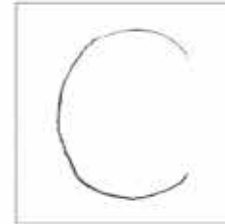
Skeleton



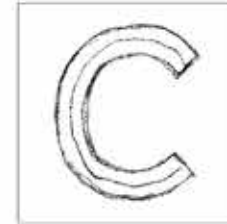
Body



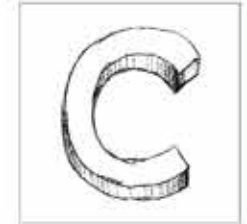
Clothes



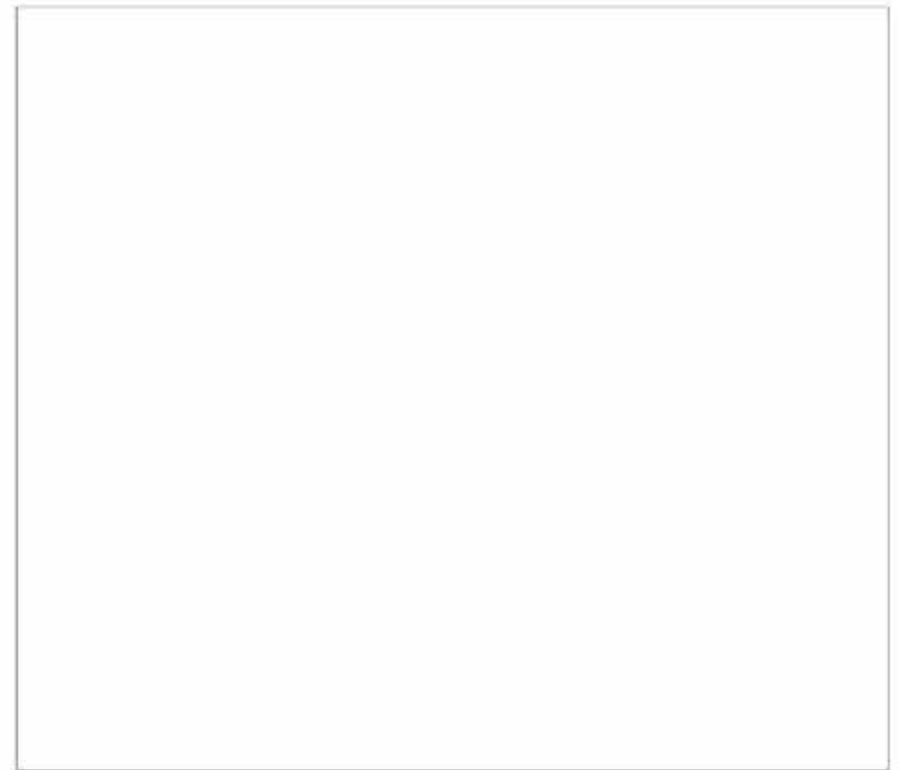
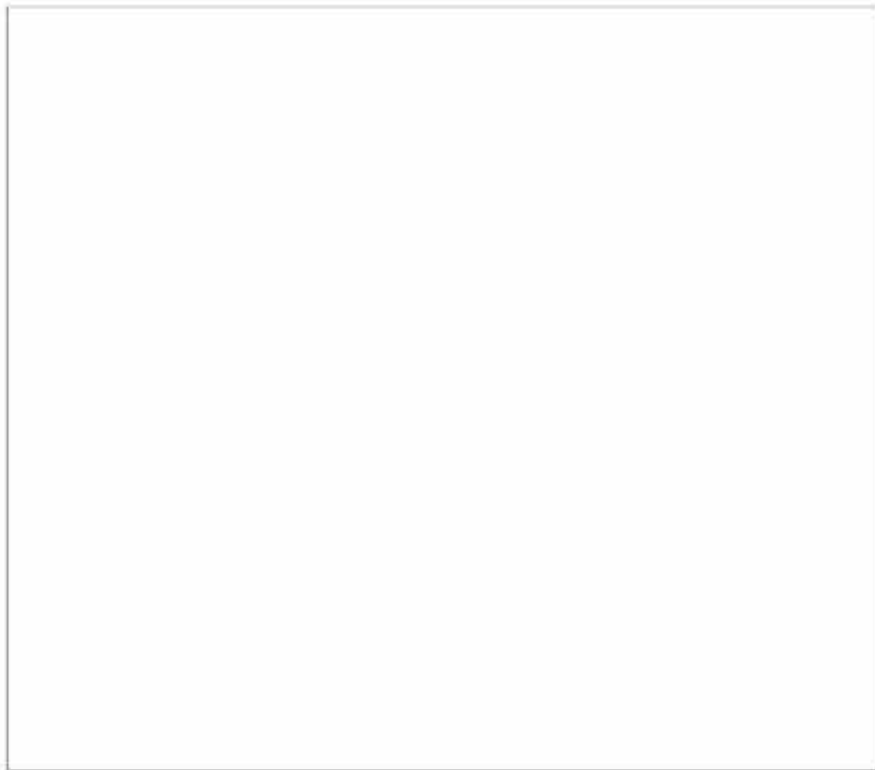
Skeleton



Body



Clothes



“R” Practice

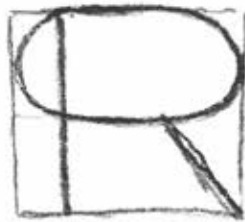
See below the Human Anatomy process (minus Step 1: Sketching) broken down to show how a single letter “R” is drawn.

Note: Step 1 (the sketching phase) is skipped in the lesson because I have already established what it is that we are drawing.



Skeleton

Basic, bare-bones shape and structure of letter.



Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



Ink

Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.



“R” Practice



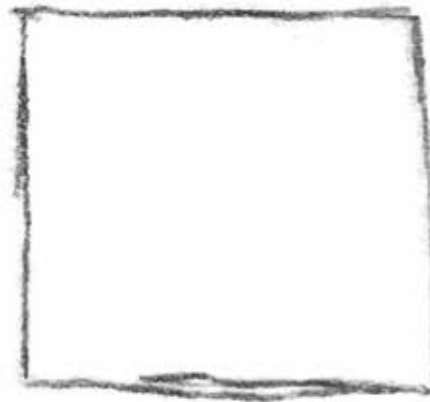
Step 1: Sketch

Because we already know exactly what we’re trying to draw (the “R” above) we will skip Step 1 and move directly to Step 2, the Skeleton.

“R” Practice

R

Step 2: Skeleton



Basic perimeter shape of
your letter.



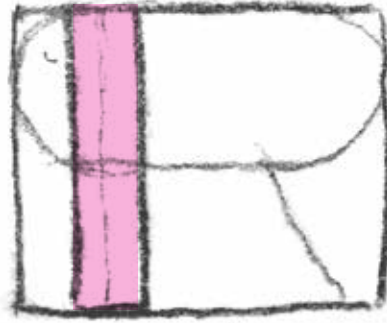
Basic, bare-bones shape
and structure of letter.

“R” Practice

R

Step 3: Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



2.1



2.2



2.3



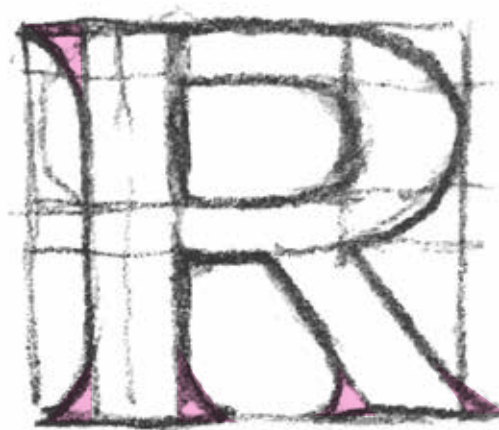
2.4

“R” Practice



Step 4: Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



“R” Practice

A final, highly decorative capital letter 'R' in a blackletter style, featuring a thick vertical stem, a curved shoulder, and a small loop at the top.

Step 5: Ink

Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.



4.1: Outline



4.2: Fill



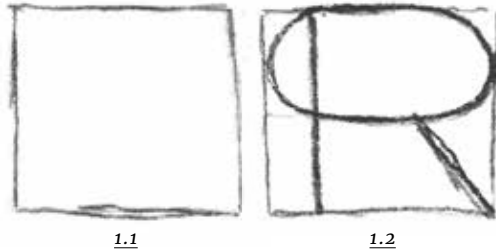
4.3: Decoration

“R” Practice

See below the Human Anatomy process (minus Step 1: Sketching) broken down into steps and sub-steps as well to show how a single letter “R” is drawn.

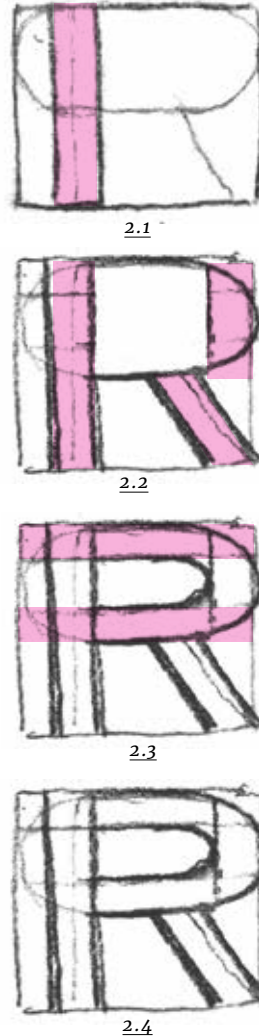
Skeleton

Basic perimeter shape of letter and basic, bare-bones shape and structure of letter.



Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



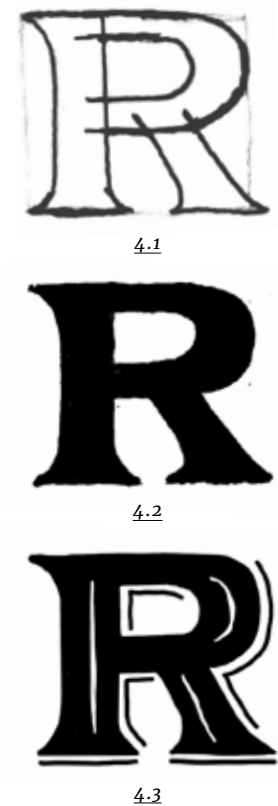
Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



Ink

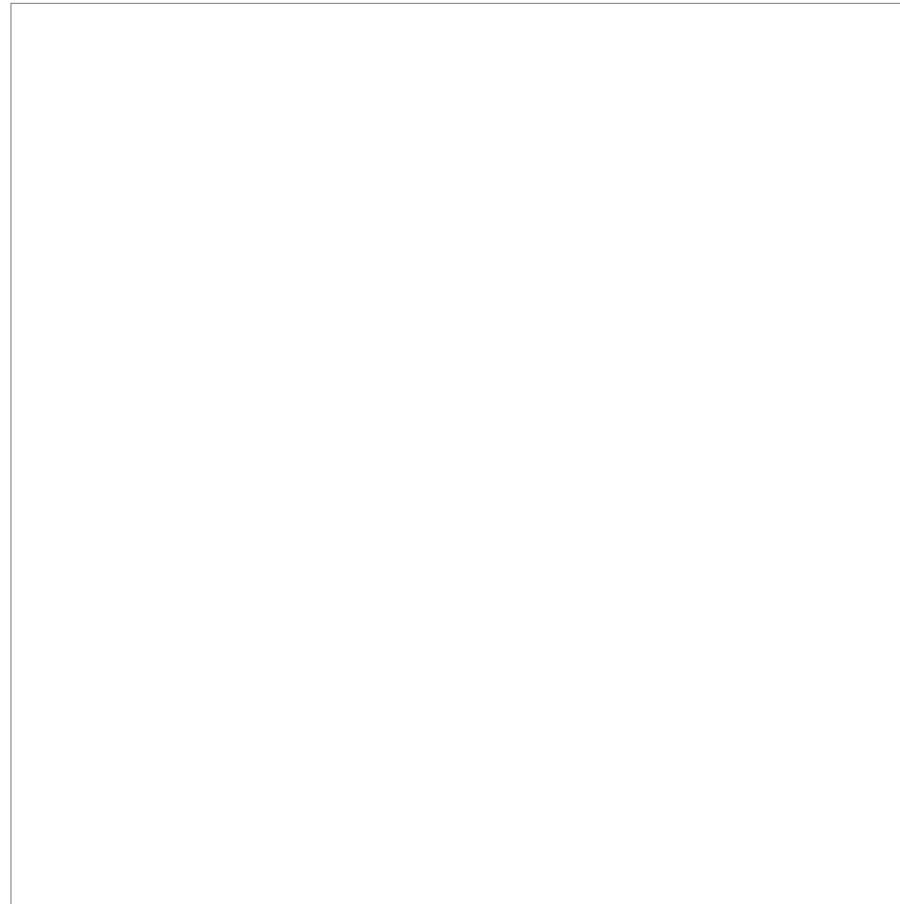
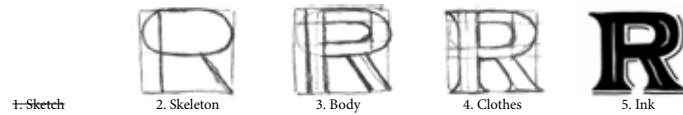
Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.



“R” Practice

Practice by following the steps on the previous pages to draw your own “R”

Note: Step 1 (the sketching phase) is skipped in the lesson because I have already established what it is that we are drawing.



1. Skeleton – 2. Body – 3. Clothes – 4. Ink (if you have time)

Take your time. Use your straight edge to get straight lines. Start by drawing LIGHTLY. Build up value with pencil pressure as you progress towards the final stages.

“HEY” Practice



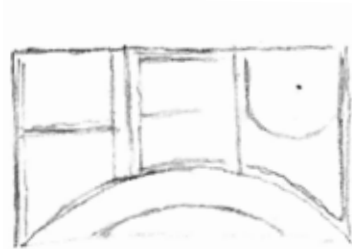
“HEY” Practice

See below, the “Human Anatomy” process (minus Step 1: Sketching) to create a word.

Note: Step 1 (the sketching phase) is skipped in the lesson because I have already established what it is that we are drawing.

Skeleton

Simple shapes to layout the composition and divide the shape into ‘letter sections.’ Then, sketch in the basic, bare-bones structure of your letters.



Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



Ink

Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.

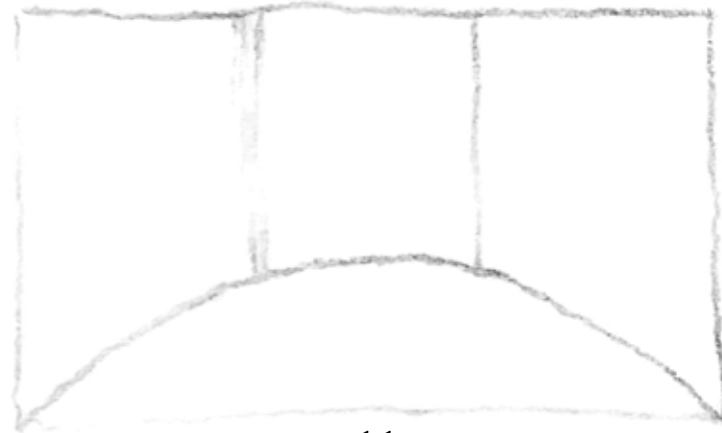


“HEY” Practice

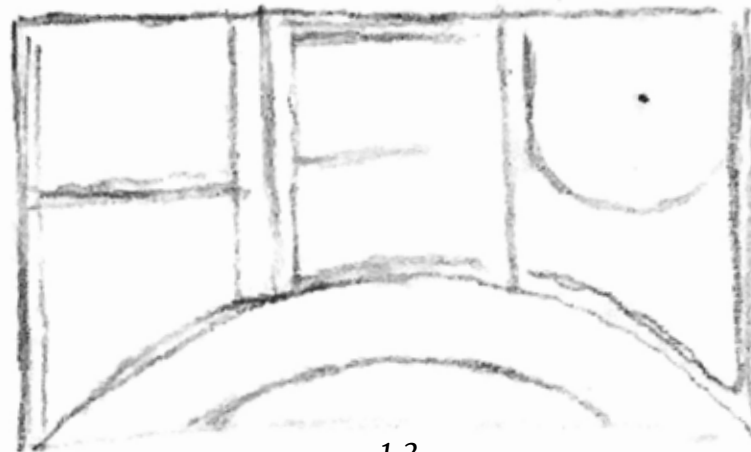


Skeleton

Simple shapes to layout the composition and divide the shape into ‘letter sections.’ Then, sketch in the basic, bare-bones structure of your letters.



1.1



1.2

“HEY” Practice

A stylized, bold, black and white logo of the word "HEY". The letters are thick and blocky, with a curved underline beneath the "Y".

Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



“HEY” Practice

A stylized, bold, black logo for the word "HEY". The letters are thick and blocky, with a decorative underline that curves under the word.

Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



“HEY” Practice



Ink

Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.



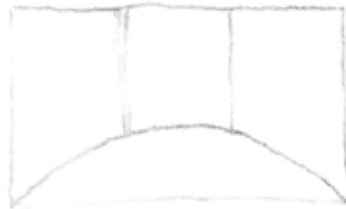
“HEY” Practice

See below, the “Human Anatomy” process (minus Step 1: Sketching) to create a word.

Note: Step 1 (the sketching phase) is skipped in the lesson because I have already established what it is that we are drawing: the design shown in the “Ink” phase.

Skeleton

Simple shapes to layout the composition and divide the shape into ‘letter sections.’ Then, sketch in the basic, bare-bones structure of your letters.



1.1



1.2

Body

Simple shapes to add weight to letter. (thicks and thins)



Clothes

Serifs, decoration, etc—make it unique. Make it yours.



Ink

Outline. Fill. Extra Decoration.



“HEY” Practice

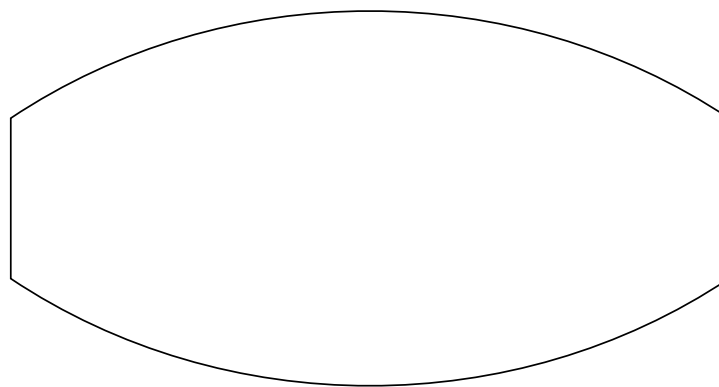
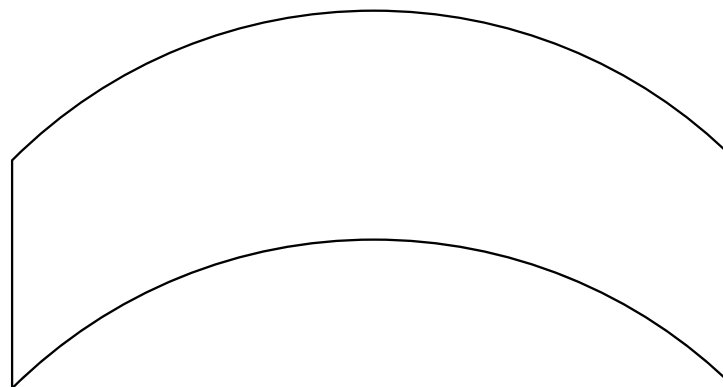
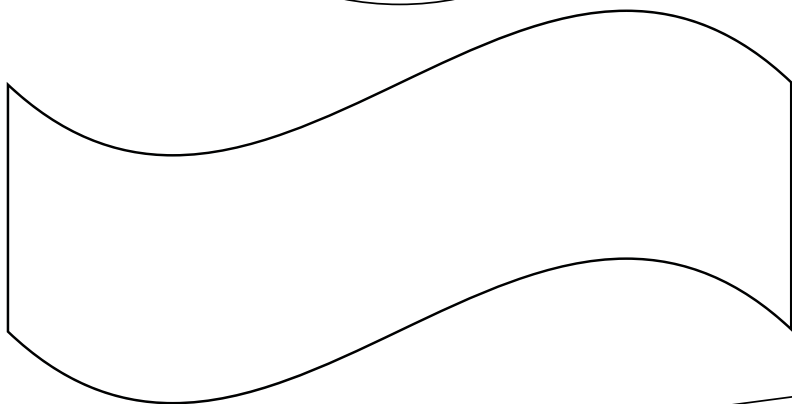
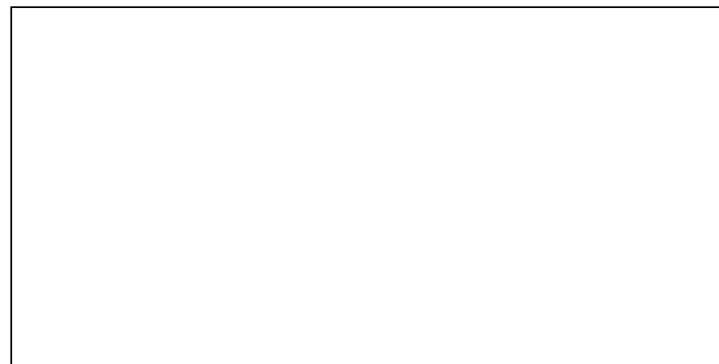
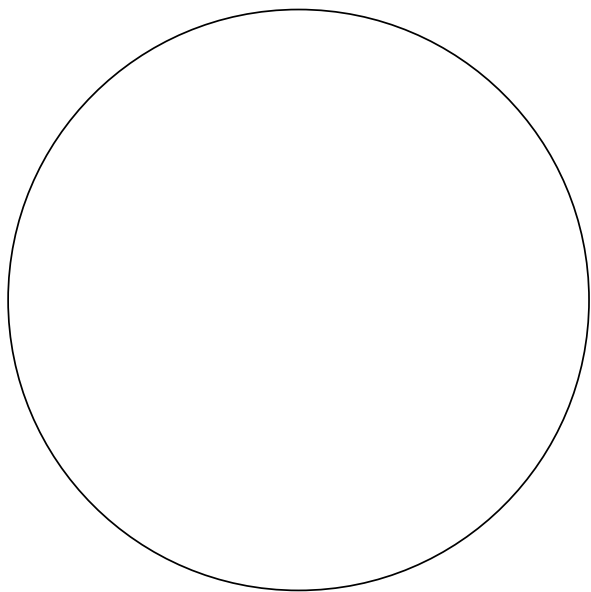
Practice by following the steps on the previous pages to draw your own “HEY”



1. Skeleton – 2. Body – 3. Clothes – 4. Ink (if you have time)

Take your time. Use your straight edge to get straight lines. Start by drawing LIGHTLY. Build up value with pencil pressure as you progress towards the final stages.

Type in Shapes



Type in Shapes

HEY
DUDE

Adam

BROOKE

SHUT

SW

SORRY

Takeaways and Reminders

Lettering is an evolutionary process. Slowly build up your lettering as loose, light sketches—do not try to make your lettering piece “perfect” too early on.

Learn how to breakdown your letters, words and compositions into simple shapes.

Learn to identify similarities in your letterforms, words and compositions.

Follow calligraphic principles as general guidelines. Remember, thin upstrokes and thick down-strokes help keep things visually balanced.

Rhythm, balance, and optical correction are key. Ultimately, the best lettering compositions are pieces that look and “feel” right, not necessarily ones that “follow the rules” .

Practice makes perfect. This is an art, and you must practice regularly to see results.

Always consider your lettering piece as a whole when drawing. Do not get too hung up on individual letters and how they interact with each other, forgetting to consider the entire composition.

Negative space—space between letters—is equally as important as positive space—the letters themselves.

As you begin to get more comfortable with lettering, try pairing different lettering styles and various sized words in order to achieve different results and visual hierarchy.

Thank You!

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X

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