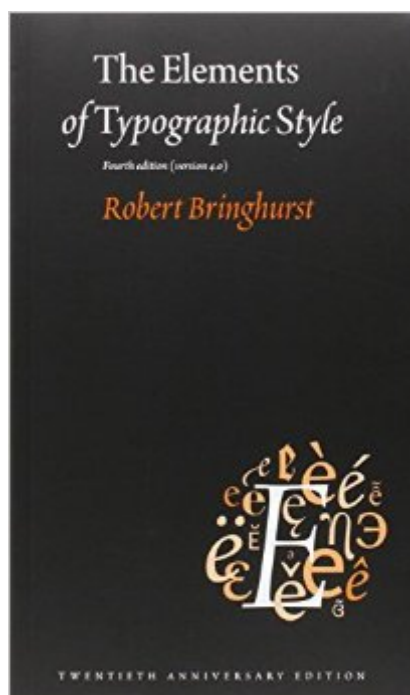


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The Elements Of Typographic Style: Version 4.0: 20th Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

Renowned typographer and poet Robert Bringhurst brings clarity to the art of typography with this masterful style guide. Combining the practical, theoretical, and historical, this edition is completely updated, with a thorough revision and updating of the longest chapter, "Prowling the Specimen Books," and many other small but important updates based on things that are continually changing in the field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Elements of Typographic Style (version 3.1) is certainly a very well written book that contains not only a great deal of useful information but also interesting insights of a more subjective nature. However, it is not as perfect as practically every other review posted here suggests, and I would like to point out a few aspects in which it could be improved. Little more than half of the 382-page book is filled with what I would call the actual "core" of the work. The other half is dedicated to analyses of the author's favourite typefaces (about 80 pages) and several appendices. There is nothing inherently bad about this distribution, but unfortunately some of the core parts were only given a cursory mention, when in my opinion they deserved more in-depth discussions. So, for example: (a) In chapter 8, Shaping the Page, the author lists countless page and textblock proportions and provides a large number of geometric figures representing page formats, but does little more than give each proportion a name ("Full Cross Octagon page", "Turned Hexagon" etc). He then gives a few examples, but not nearly enough, and leaves the reader wanting for more details on which proportions or formats would, in the author's analysis, be more appropriate for this or that type of

text. And most of the numbers and diagrams merely take up space in the book, since just knowing about their existence does not help much.(b) Two diagrams on page 6 (just before the table of contents) are supposed to show the reader how the author came up with the proportions for the book's pages and textblocks.

If you were allowed only one book on typography, it should be this one. Bringhurst is a poet. He loves language, written language, and all its parts. That love comes through in the text and the visual presentation of every page. Bringhurst advocates a subdued typographic style. This makes good sense in the vast majority of cases, since typography is the servant of the text that it carries. Like any good servant, it should be unobtrusive, well dressed, and competent to handle every task it is given, quietly and promptly. Bringhurst demonstrates nearly everything he says, starting first with this book itself. The book is a beautiful artifact, with an elegant and informative page layout. Body text, side- and foot-notes, references, running titles, and more - they all fit together well on the page. Each kind of information is set off only slightly, but clearly and predictably. The content is well organized: prose in the early chapters, reference material in the later chapters and appendices, and all the intermediates in the middle of the book. Diagrams and tables are minimalist and communicative. The text spans centuries, from ancient Egyptian page layouts to the rationale behind Unicode. Bringhurst is passionate about typography's history, and insists that it inform every modern decision about print and printing. He embraces the new just as much, and is careful to note the strengths and weaknesses of each typographic technology. Bringhurst discusses far too many topics to touch on here. In every case, though, he brings his poet's sense to all of the writing, using witty, descriptive language for even the most mundane of technical issues. The one weakness I saw was in the geometry of page layouts. I like his mathematical rigor and esthetic practicality.

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