MB TYPE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

THE #1 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

I'm a Windows user. Contrary to your advice, I installed the OTF font files. But your fonts don't appear correctly in PDFs.

This is a known limitation of the PDF generator in WordPerfect and Word on Windows. Switching to the TTF font files will cure the problem. (That's the primary reason I recommend the TTF files for Windows users.)

INSTALLATION

What is this thing I downloaded from MB Type?

A zip file. Extract the files and you'll see a set of nested directories containing the font families you purchased. I recommend making a backup in case you need to install the fonts again (for instance, on another computer).

Which font format should I use—OTF or TTF or WOFF2?

Windows users should install the TTF fonts. Mac users should install the OTF fonts. The WOFF2 fonts are for websites.

Do I have to install all the subfamilies and styles?

No. You can just install the ones you need. If you're not sure which you need, install them all, and later you can delete the ones you don't use.

How do I install or remove your fonts in Windows?

Open one of the directories containing TTF font files. Select my fonts, then right-click the group and select *Install*. Or, from the Start menu, open *Control Panel* → *Appearance and Personalization* → *Fonts* and drag my fonts into this folder. To remove fonts, quit any running programs, and then delete my fonts from this folder. I've found that it's wise to restart after installing fonts, and before deleting. More detailed installation and removal instructions are found under those links.

How do I install or remove your fonts on MacOS?

Open one of the directories containing OTF font files. Alongside, open *Applications* → *Font Book*. Drag the font files onto the *All Fonts* in the left column. (To remove fonts, open Font Book again and delete them from the *All Fonts* listing.) More detailed installation and removal instructions.

How do I use your fonts in my documents?

Once installed, each family will show up in your Font menu under multiple subfamily names. (The exact number depends on the number of styles in the family.)

Where are the webfonts?

They're in the WOFF2 subfolder of each font family you downloaded.

How do I use the WOFF2 fonts on a website?

Put the WOFF2 files on your web server. Then use a @font-face rule in your CSS file to link each WOFF2 font to a CSS font family (and optionally, styling attributes). Then invoke this font family within your CSS styles. By the way, each WOFF2 directory has sample CSS & HTML files showing how this works.

Can I email you for technical help?

Yes—you can reach me at mb@mbtype.com. Please include whatever information I need to reproduce your problem. (including what OS and program you're using). A screen shot is usually helpful too.

I need to reinstall your fonts but I lost the zip file.

If you email me with your order number I can issue you a fresh download link. No charge, of course. Keep in mind, however, that you'll get the current versions of my fonts, which may differ from the ones you originally downloaded. If you foresee needing a backup of the original zip file you downloaded, that's your responsibility.

UPDATES

Do you issue updates for your fonts?

Yes, if I find a worthy bug, which is rare. (If you find one, tell me.) Beyond that, I avoid the "update everything constantly" credo of modern software development, and prefer the more old-fashioned "get it right before you ship it".

How should I install updated versions of your fonts?

For minor updates: following the instructions above, remove the old versions, and then install the new ones. On Windows, it's wise to restart before removing the old versions, and restart again after installing the new ones.

For major updates that change family names—the only one so far has been the spring 2021 revision—you don't have to remove the old versions, because the new families have different names and will not conflict. If you migrate to the new fonts and no longer need the old ones, you can remove them.

How do I use updated versions of your fonts?

Minor updates to existing families will be transparently used the next time you open a document. For major updates (where the family name changes) you'll have to update the document to use the new font. Meaning, if you've been using "Equity Text A", and install the new "Equity A", your documents will not automatically change to the new family.

That's annoying. Why not leave the family names the same?

In a major update, other aspects of the underlying font, especially OpenType features, have also changed. Because these new fonts are not drop-in replacements for the old ones, it makes sense to have different family names, so you can choose whether to use the new ones, and when.

LICENSE

Can I use your fonts in an e-book or app?

If your e-book or app format supports read-only embedding of fonts, yes—you don't need an additional license.

Can I use your fonts on my website, as webfonts?

Sure, subject to the limitations in the license.

Can I upgrade my license to cover more people?

Yes, by paying the difference in price between licenses. Email me at mb@mbtype.com and I'll send you an upgrade link.

Can I use your fonts in an open-source project?

No, because my font license is not compatible with any open-source license. Investigate free fonts instead.

Why can't I store your fonts in a public source repository?

Because on sites like GitHub, people assume everything in a public repository can be freely copied, even if the license says otherwise. It's a major vector of unlicensed font usage. (Storing my fonts in a private repository is fine, however.)

I want to buy a two-person license but my employer needs you to fill out this vendor paperwork with your social-security number and home address and—

Sorry to interrupt. I'm afraid I must decline. The costs of these chores would far exceed the price of the font license. Furthermore, much as I love my customers, my personal information is not part of our transaction.

My tech startup needs a font, but we have some special requirements …

Tech startups who open with this question tend to conclude that they're better off with free fonts. Because unlike my fonts, they have almost no license restrictions, and they cost nothing.

FONTS IN USE

I used your fonts in my project. Do you want to see it?

Sure, I always enjoy seeing my fonts in use. If you made a book or other printed item, you're welcome to send a copy to 1920 Hillhurst Ave. #406, LA CA 90027.

Can you give me design advice or a template?

No. As a teacher of typography, my prime directive is not to interrupt the natural progress of others. Your struggle is healthy and normal. Embrace it.

LANGUAGES

What languages do your fonts support?

Afrikaans, Albanian, Basque, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Filipino, Finnish, French, Gaelic, Galician, German, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Scots Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Turkish, and Welsh.

TYPOGRAPHY

Why do only certain weights have bold versions?

Only the lighter weights of each family are linked to bold weights. That way, when you're using one of those weights in your typesetting program, you can apply bold formatting and get the right result. But the heavier weights are already bold, so they can't be further emboldened.

How do I get small caps?

Switch to the Caps style and use the lowercase characters. More on small caps. Or switch to the OT family and invoke the small-cap OpenType feature.

What are the Caps styles?

The standard styles are for body text, and have the usual upper- and lowercase character set. Each Caps style has the same uppercase characters, but with small caps in the lowercase positions. The Caps styles also have wider default spacing.

If I'm setting all caps, should I use the standard styles or Caps styles?

You can use either. The uppercase letters look the same, but they have more letterspacing in Caps, which can be convenient. If your typesetting program supports OpenType features, I also recommend activating the OpenType uppercase-forms feature, which turns on the caps-optimized punctuation.

What are the Tab variants?

The Tab variants are identical to the standard styles, but have their tabular figures in the default positions, rather than proportionally spaced figures. They're provided primarily for programs like Microsoft Excel that need tabular figures but don't support the OpenType features. But you can use them in any program. You can also have them installed alongside the standard fonts—they won't conflict with each other. They appear separately in your Font menu, with "Tab" appended to the subfamily name.

What is the OT family?

The OT family incorporates all the styles into one megafamily. While convenient for page layout or web usage, you should not use the OT family in Microsoft Word. It will explode from the exertion.

Why doesn't the OT family have related Caps styles or Tab variants?

They're superfluous, because in the OT families, the small caps and tabular figures are implemented as OpenType features.

How do I convert both uppercase and lowercase to small caps?

Switch to the Caps style and activate the OpenType all-small-caps feature. This will also activate the small-caps optimized punctuation. This feature is duplicated in stylistic set 10. Or, if you're using the OT family, just invoke the 'c2sc' feature.

Can I add letterspacing when I'm using a Caps style?

Sure. It's not mandatory—consistent with my letterspacing recommendations, my Caps styles already have about 8% more letterspacing than the Text styles. But if you want to, go ahead.

Do your fonts have fractions?

Yes, my fonts have the standard single-digit fractions. All these fractions are accessible in programs that support the OpenType fractions feature.

Do your fonts have tabular figures?

The default figures in my fonts are proportional lining figures (*proportional* = different widths; *lining* = same heights). Tabular figures—i.e., figures that are the same width—are available through the OpenType tabular-figures feature. If you need tabular figures in a program that doesn't support OpenType tabular figures (e.g., Microsoft Excel) just use the Tab versions of my fonts. More on alternate figures.

Do your fonts have oldstyle (non-lining) figures?

Yes. They're available through the OpenType oldstyle-figures feature. If you also activate the OpenType tabular-figures feature, you'll get tabular oldstyle figures. (Exception: Advocate has no oldstyle figures, because it's an all-caps family.)

Do your fonts have ligatures?

Those that need them because of character collisions (e.g., Equity) have them. Fonts that don't have character collisions (e.g., Concourse), don't have ligatures, because they're unnecessary. More on ligatures.

How do I access the long s forms?

The long s is only available in fonts with lowercase characters. Use the `hist` OpenType feature, or OpenType stylistic set 9 (`ss09`). The feature automatically inserts the long-s forms in a contextually sensible way based on the rules described here. Depending on what particular era of long-s typesetting you're trying to emulate, however, you may need to make some manual adjustments.

How do I access the numero symbol?

Type it directly, or use the `ordn` feature and type `No`.

How do I access the ratio symbol?

Type it directly, or use the `calt` feature, which will automatically convert a colon between two digits to a ratio symbol.

Where can I see the OpenType features of each family?

Visit mbtype.com—each family has a "Features" page that lists the available OpenType features and lets you demo them in the browser. Bear in mind that to use a certain OpenType feature, your typesetting app also needs to support it.

INTROSPECTIONS

How was this FAQ made?

With Typst, which lets you author your document in a source-code-like markup language. Typst then computes the layout and converts it to PDF. As an automated typesetter, Typst has similar goals to my own long-gestating Quad software project. But I may yield to the superior Typst.

MICROSOFT WORD

Why are people so mean to Microsoft Word?

Microsoft Word has been a ubiquitous typesetting product for more than 30 years. Its greatest strength is the stability of its document format: a file made decades ago will probably look exactly the same on today's version.

Its greatest weakness, however, is the same: its typesetting engine doesn't evolve, so flaws in its design tend to persist indefinitely. This necessitates workarounds that, over time, diverge increasingly from best practice elsewhere.

Still, Word's popularity means there's no point raging against this particular machine. I've used Word for a long time. For that reason, as a type designer I've put more effort into Word compatibility than most.

INSTALLATION

Which font files should I install?

On Windows, use the TTF files. On MacOS, use the OTF files. Beyond that, if you like your numerals to be the same width by default (i.e., tabular figures), install the Tab variants rather than the standard families.

How about the OT family? That looks cool.

It is cool. But you can't use it in Word, because Word's support for OpenType features is insufficient.

MAKING PDFS

How do I make a PDF on Windows?

My best current recommendation is available here.

What about the Adobe PDF print driver on Windows?

I used to recommend this method. But the Adobe software has deteriorated. These days, Microsoft's PDF maker is more reliable.

How do I make a PDF on MacOS?

Use the "Save as PDF" option that's always available in the lower-left corner of the Print dialog. Or open the document in Word for Windows (say, with Parallels or VMware) and generate a PDF using the instructions above.

SMALL CAPS

How do I get small caps in Word?

Switch to the Caps style of the font family, which has small caps in the lowercase positions.

What about that box in Word for small-cap formatting? Should I click that?

Please don't—it's evil. It does not invoke the small caps I made. Rather, it creates awful synthetic small caps by scaling the uppercase characters. Pretend it doesn't exist.

But if it's evil, why is it there?

Like many parts of Word, it's held over from the Jurassic Period of digital typography, before most fonts had real small caps. But all of mine do.

What if I use the Caps style and also click the small-cap box?

Don't. That leads to the same bad result.

WORD CAN (THOUGH PERHAPS WITH DIFFICULTY)

How do I activate OpenType features in Word, like ligatures, alternate figures, and stylistic sets?

Follow these instructions.

If I use your fonts to make a draft document in Word, and then share it, how do I ensure the recipients see your fonts?

You can use the "Embed fonts" option in Word. Keep in mind that Microsoft's implementation of this feature comes with significant limitations. But if it makes you happy, go for it. My license allows you to share such a document with up to 20 people (whether they are licensed to use my fonts or not).

Is there a more reliable workaround?

Yes—use a comparable system font for the draft document, and switch to my fonts for the final output. For instance, Times New Roman can be a temporary stand-in for Equity, because they fit nearly the same words per page.

How do I use fractions?

Word doesn't support OpenType fractions, so use the *Insert → Symbol* option to put fractions in your document.

How do I use the long s?

You can't use the historical-forms OpenType feature, because Word doesn't support it. But it's also available through stylistic set 9. You can also insert the long s directly by typing its character code, which is 0383.

WORD CAN'T

How do I activate multiple OpenType stylistic sets in Word?

You can't. It should be possible. But it never has been. And probably never will.

ADVOCATE

Where's the lowercase?

Advocate is a caps-only font designed for headlines, titles, logos, and other display uses. There is no lowercase.

Will you ever make a lowercase?

Probably not. I've tried. It just looks bad.

What do the style numbers mean?

The first digit denotes the width (1, 3, or 5, corresponding to condensed, narrow, and wide) and the second digit denotes the weight (4, 5, or 6, corresponding to regular, medium, and bold).

What's the difference between Advocate and Advocate Slab?

Just the presence of slab serifs on certain characters. The other characters are identical between the two styles.

How do I choose which style to use for my project?

Use whatever you like best. Experiment. Have fun! The styles are designed to harmonize with each other. You can mix weights, width, and cases.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- alternate K (`ss01`)
- alternate R (`ss02`)
- alternate ampersand (`ss03`)
- alternate question mark (`ss04`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- removed rounded corners
- Condensed styles are narrower & crisper
- raised small-cap height of Narrow & Condensed styles
- removed Mid variants and stylistic sets
- removed small-size alternates
- moved alternate glyphs into separate stylistic sets
- renamed all styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- reversed the digits in the family names
- added OT family

November 2015

- original release

CENTURY SUPRA

How do I choose between grades A and B?

Grade B is slightly lighter than grade A, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both A and B to see which looks best on your printer. If you're preparing a document for professional printing, you probably want grade A.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- knockout arrows (`ss08`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- stroke contrast of bold & bold italic have been increased (= more traditional, less Clarendon-like)
- section symbol, question mark, at sign redesigned
- renamed all styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- added OT family

August 2018

- original release

CONCOURSE

How do I choose between weights 3 and 4?

Weight 3 is slightly lighter than weight 4, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both 3 and 4 to see which looks best on your printer.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- alternate E (`ss01`)
- alternate G (`ss02`)
- alternate M (`ss03`)
- alternate M (2nd style) (`ss04`)
- alternate Q (`ss05`)
- alternate R (`ss06`)
- alternate W (`ss07`)
- alternate a (`ss11`)
- alternate f (`ss12`)
- alternate g (`ss13`)
- alternate j (`ss14`)
- alternate l (`ss15`)
- alternate t (`ss16`)
- alternate u (`ss17`)
- alternate ampersand (`ss18`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- reorganized stylistic sets to control one character each
- renamed all styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- added OT family

December 2013

- original release

EQUITY

How do I choose between grades A and B?

Grade B is slightly lighter than grade A, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both A and B to see which looks best on your printer. If you're preparing a document for professional printing, you probably want grade A.

You say that Equity occupies roughly the same space on the page as Times New Roman. But when I switch from TNR to Equity, my document gets longer.

Because you're using the "Double" line-spacing option in Microsoft Word. For reasons known only to Microsoft, this option produces line spacing that varies depending on the font. Thus, when you switch from TNR to Equity, the line heights change, making the document longer. But if you set a block of Equity and TNR with the same point size and line spacing as TNR, you'll see that the layout is essentially identical.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- small quotation marks (`ss01`)
- tall figures (`ss02`)
- alternate italic f (`ss03`)
- alternate italic h (`ss04`)
- alternate italic k (`ss05`)
- alternate italic v and w (`ss06`)
- alternate italic y (`ss07`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)
- historical forms (`ss09`)
- small-cap forms (`ss10`)
- alternate italic J (`ss11`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- bold tabular figures are same width as regular tabular figures
- redesigned italic N
- renamed all styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- added OT family

Fall 2011

- original release

HELIOTROPE

How do I choose between weights 3 and 4?

Weight 3 is slightly lighter than weight 4, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both 3 and 4 to see which looks best on your printer.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- alternate M (`ss01`)
- alternate amperand (`ss02`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)

CHANGELOG

June 2021

- original release

HERMES MAIA

How do I choose between weights 3 and 4?

Weight 3 is slightly lighter than weight 4, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both 3 and 4 to see which looks best on your printer.

Is this the same as the Hermes you designed for that other font reseller?

No. The design is similar, but I've substantially revised it—especially the character spacing and the numerals.

Why?

A lot of people liked the original Hermes. But when I looked at it, I saw a lot of things that could be improved. So I did.

Can I get the original Hermes?

Yes, I still offer it as Hermes Classic. But I really think you'll be happier with this one.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- alternate M (`ss01`)
- alternate Q (`ss02`)
- alternate W (`ss03`)
- alternate a (`ss11`)
- alternate f (`ss12`)
- alternate g (`ss13`)
- alternate ampersand (`ss18`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)
- historical forms (`ss09`)
- small-cap forms (`ss10`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- alternate f with more traditional form
- taller quotation marks
- removed deco-style alternates
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- added OT family

January 2018

- original release

TRIPLICATE

How do I choose between grades A and B?

Grade A is similar to the weight of the Courier system font. Grade B is lighter, and more similar to the weight of the Courier New system font. Use whichever you prefer. The bold weights are the same between grades.

What are the Poly alternates, and how do I use them?

The Poly alternates depart from strict monospacing and allow certain characters to be a little narrower (like i and l) or wider (like M and W) to produce a more even color in text. To use the Poly alternates, select stylistic set 1, or use the separate Poly fonts, which have the Poly alternates as the default.

What are the Code alternates, and how do I use them?

The Code alternates make certain characters more distinct, for use in programming and terminal programs. To use the Code alternates, select stylistic set 2, or use the separate Code fonts, which have the Code alternates as the default.

Why are there no tabular figures or Tab variants for Triplicate?

It's a monospaced font, so the figures are already set on a uniform width.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- Poly set of alternates (`ss01`)
- Code set of alternates (`ss02`)
- low italic forms (`ss03`)
- sharp italic forms (`ss04`)
- swash italic forms (`ss05`)
- knockout arrows (`ss08`)
- historical forms (`ss09`)
- small-cap forms (`ss10`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- accented characters redesigned
- 1 and 0 redesigned in Code styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- removed Short variants
- added OT family

June 2017

- original release

VALKYRIE

How do I choose between grades A and B?

Grade B is slightly lighter than grade A, to account for office printers that tend to produce darker text. I recommend printing some test documents in both A and B to see which looks best on your printer. If you're preparing a document for professional printing, you probably want grade A.

OPENTYPE FEATURES

- ligatures (`liga`)
- single-digit fractions (`frac`)
- numerator figures (`numr`)
- denominator figures (`dnom`)
- subscript figures (`subs`)
- superscript figures (`sups`)
- scientific inferiors (`sinf`)
- ordinals (`ordn`)
- oldstyle figures (`onum`)
- tabular figures (`tnum`)
- uppercase forms (`case`)
- small-cap forms (`c2sc` or `ss10`)
- historical forms (`hist` or `ss09`)

OPENTYPE STYLISTIC SETS

- knockout arrows (`ss08`)
- historical forms (`ss09`)
- small-cap forms (`ss10`)

CHANGELOG

April 2021

- stroke contrast of bold italic has been increased
- renamed all styles
- size & spacing of underlining improved
- added OT family

August 2018

- original release