First steps towards professional type

Before the desktop publishing revolution of the late '80s, Designers worked with trade typographers, who did nothing but set type. Typesetting equipment was so expensive and hard to use that only copanies that had an enormous volume of work (like a newspaper) or who specialized in setting type could justify the cost and bother. For the designer, this had obvious disadvantages: type was costly and slow. However, there were several advantages. Good typesetting firms employed dedicated Markup staff, typesetters and proofreaders—a small army of type pros who ensured that type was not only set as specified, but also that editorial and typographical errors were reduced or eliminated. Today, much of what was done by a team of professionals falls to a single designer and his or her client.

It is the responsibility of every designer who works with words to gain the knowledge and skill to create type that is technically correct and aesthetically pleasing. This learning process will not end with this class, but you can can take four important steps towards mastering type by learning how to use **quotes**, **apostraphies**, **dashes** and **spaces**.

Quote Marks

Dedicated typesetting keyboards were configured differently than modern desktop computers, making some knowledge of typesetting conventions necessary to use one. The Macintosh, meant to be usable by a typist or student, hides its powerful typesetting features under a typewriter-like layout. As result, merely typing on a Macintosh produces text laden with what a typographer would consider mistakes. The most frequent of these are the typewriter-like hatchmarks the computer produces in place of quote marks:

"Hogwash," she said.

Real quotes curve to indicate the beginning and end of the quote. Also, unlike the straight up and down kind, they were designed to go specifically with the font you are using. Note that punctuation marks always go inside the mark (although some stylebooks make an exception for question marks.) The open quote is created by typing **Option** + **[**, The close quote is created by typing **Option** + **Shift** + **[**

"Hogwash," she said.

Single quotes are used for a quote within a quote:

"I've never heard Mark say 'hogwash,' before," she said.

Single quotes are created the same way as double quotes, but using the **]** key. **Option** + **]**, opens; the close quote is created by typing **Option** + **Shift** +**]**. When both the inner and outer quote end up next to each other, it usually looks best to put a little extra space (15 units, or so) between them.

"She said 'Hogwash.'"

Do "fake" quote marks have a purpose in serious typography?

Yes, they can be used as inch and foot marks. They usually look best if you make them italic:

12' × 9"

Note that punctuation never goes inside an inch or foot mark. (The multiplication symbol—better than an "x" for indicating dimensions—is part of the symbol font, achieved by typing **Option** + **Shift** + **Y.**)

The trouble with "smart" quotes
Many programs, including QuarkXpress, InDesign and Word have a "smart quote" option. Smart quotes decide to curl your quote in or out based on whether you have typed a space or a character before the quote mark. This works for many purposes, but not for all. These are all typical smart quote errors:

The Spirit of '76;   Rock 'n' Roll;   6' × 42"

Smart quotes often do poorly with apostrophes, and can't know when you want to use an inch or a foot mark. I always advise students to turn off the smart quote option, and take control over their text.

Apostrophes
Apostrophes are used for two purposes, to indicate a possessive and to indicate one or more missing letters. Apostrophe are **always** bent the same way as a close quote, therefore corrected type for the above two examples would appear as:

The Spirit of '76;   Rock 'n' Roll

As always, there are pitfalls in asking the computer to be responsible for getting the type right, or for that matter, asking a spell checker to proofread. These tools can help, but for now, people do it better.

Hyphens, Dashes
There are three kind of dashes, the hyphen (-), The en-dash (–), and the em-dash (—). You already know how the hyphen is used—to break a word from one line to the next, or to link words together, i.e. boy-next-door. However, the hyphen should not be used to fill the role of the other two dashes.

En-dash
Created by typing **Option + -,** the en-dashes' most common use is to replace the word "to" when indicating a range.

- – From 1853–1902;   The Bears won 27–21

Em-dash
Created by typing **Option + Shift + -,** the em-dash is used to indicate a pause, or as an alternative to a parenthetical. Typists often replace the em-dash with two hyphens--or with a space-hyphen-space - but it's bad typographical practice. Always use a real em-dash without spaces when typesetting.

The hamburger was big—really big.

What is an en and em, anyway?
Get used to hearing about em's and en's. Unlike most units of measurement, ens and ems go up and down with the size of the type. For example, if you are setting 12 point type, an em is 12 points. if you are setting 264 point type, an em 264 points, etc. etc. What's an en? half an em. What's a "thin" space? half an en. You can set an en space (or en quad) by typing **Option + Space**. Want an em? Do it twice.

One last (but very important) note.
When setting type, put only one space between sentences.