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# Captions

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## Captions

A picture may be worth a thousand words but, most of the time, it's likely to have a caption anyway. Not quite body text and not quite subheads, captions tend to be among the most-read portions of a textual document – on screen or in print. The thing is: not just any font will perform well for captions.

First, captions are, almost always, slightly smaller than the text copy. (They're important, but should not compete with the long-form text.) They don't have to be a lot smaller – just enough to be evident. Since captions are usually set smaller than the text copy, be sure that the characters have high levels of legibility. Look to designs that have an ample x-height, large counters, generous apertures and moderate contrast in character stroke thickness. This is especially important if the captions are to live in an interactive environment.

# Legibility

*Ample x-height, large counters, generous apertures and moderate contrast in character stroke thickness, improve caption legibility.*



Ideally, captions should harmonize with the typeface used for the textual information. An italic or bolder weight of the text face often works fine. Some typeface families, even have caption fonts as part of the offering. (More on that a little later.) If the text copy is a serif design, a sans serif typeface can be a good caption font. If the text copy is in a sans serif typeface, however, using a different sans serif typeface for captions almost never works. If they are set at a small size, it also helps if captions are set with slightly loose letterspacing.

Although they are somewhat scarce, some typeface families have caption fonts as part of their repertoire. [Jenson™](#), [Kepler™](#) and [Utopia™](#) by Adobe, [Fairfield®](#) from the Linotype foundry, and [WT Volkolak](#) by Wraith Types are a few.

Fairfield Caption  
Jenson Caption  
Kepler Caption  
Utopia Caption  
WT Volkolak Caption



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## Typefaces used in this article

[Fairfield®](#)

[Jenson™](#)

[Kepler™](#)

[Utopia™](#)

[WT Volkolak](#)