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sf

Why Sassoon®?

read

read

writing

reading

This descriptive guide for educators and publishers
has been created by Dr. Rosemary Sassoon
and Adrian Williams to promote good practices
among users of their Sassoon typefaces.

How it all started

A typeface for children's reading

The Sassoon Primary project started as research with children, asking them what features of letters and spacing they liked best and what was easiest for them to read. The findings are reported in *Computers and Typography (Sassoon 1993)* published by Intellect. Overall, mainstream and special needs children chose letters with a slight slant, plain (sans serif) tops and exit strokes on the baseline. These help to clump the letters together into words. The added features were clear, open counters and slightly lengthened ascenders and descenders to accentuate the word shape. The original Sassoon Primary Type, since renamed Sassoon Primary, was a typeface designed with children and for children to replace the type they read. This was in 1986 and computers were only just becoming available in schools, so to start with its main purpose was for educational publishers.

iltuyj hnmr bpk cadgqoe (k) vwxz sf

A typeface for handwriting

The features that children liked for reading corresponded in principle with the those that were being recommended for handwriting. Print script was being phased out and more flowing letters were being introduced — with *exit strokes*. Educational publishers were quick to recognise the usefulness of a typeface that could represent handwriting yet not be a strict model. The arches of all the Sassoon letters reflect the movement of handwritten forms so at last letter families could be easily illustrated showing the relationship between the letters. Then some people felt that a first teaching alphabet should be upright and so Sassoon Primary Infant, since renamed Sassoon Infant, was designed. This was the start of our policy of modifying the typefaces at customers request and then adding them to our range.

Typefaces specially designed for children's reading

Most modern typefaces have shortened ascenders and descenders to fit as much text as possible in a limited space. This is fine for fluent adult readers but what about young children? They need friendly, easily recognisable letters that produce a well defined word shape. The exit strokes that research with children pinpointed, have a part to play too. They clump the letters together along the baseline giving unity to words.

Sassoon® Primary

Sassoon® Primary Medium

Sassoon® Primary Bold

Exit strokes clump letters together.

These friendly letters were
researched with children

Standard letterforms in Primary fonts have the spiky k and q with no exit, ideal as typesetting letters for publishers

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Alternative letterforms in Primary fonts

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These are modified for older students and adults

Common sense suggested that what suited children could also, with slight modifications, benefit older students or adults. Exit strokes are omitted from the Sassoon Sans family of fonts, but all other legibility factors are retained. The principle of longer ascenders and descenders defining the word shape, long ignored by type designers when selecting suitable typefaces for children, has contributed considerably to legibility on computer screens and in print, especially in small sizes.

Sassoon® Sans
Sassoon® Sans Medium
Sassoon® Sans Bold

With long ascenders and descenders,
these letters are particularly
legible on screens

Sassoon® Sans Slope
Sassoon® Sans Slope Medium
Sassoon® Sans Slope Bold

A less juvenile style, without exit
strokes provides the legibility
for mature readers

Linking reading and writing

Infant developed to meet the demand by publishers for letters that can be used for teaching or representing handwriting. Their alternative characters allow for personal preferences and teachers can now print out consistent pupil material for reading, spelling and handwriting. These clear but elegant letterforms are gaining popularity in different media; in schools, screen fonts for interactive educational software and in television graphics, while the possibilities in advertising have yet to be more fully explored.

Sassoon® Infant
Sassoon® Infant Medium
Sassoon® Infant Bold

Teachers at last now have
a typeface that links the teaching of
reading and the teaching of handwriting

Standard letterforms in Infant fonts have the looped k and q with
exit stroke, essential preparation for later joining of letterforms

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Alternative letterforms in Infant fonts for educators

G I J & b f k q ɿ ɿ ſʒ 1 4 7 9

The choices to make for children

There is a choice with our family of typefaces between slanting or upright letters or even an italic. Alternative letters are provided within each set. The choice should depend on the age of the user, and the intended use, for reading or simulating handwriting, for instance, or for displaying on the computer screen or printing out text.

Sassoon typefaces are 'fonts' and as such can only represent joined handwriting. They are not to be confused with handwriting models, which are seldon legible when read as a body of text.

Sometimes it is a good idea to let children choose which typeface to use on their computer—which one they can see best or just prefer. Teachers of children with special needs find this a particularly useful strategy.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Comparison of Arial, Sassoon and Times typefaces at the same point size. Although Sassoon typefaces have a smaller x-height, the letterforms are more legible for children and closer to the way they are taught handwriting.

Upright or Slanting?

As a rough guide; the upright typeface may be preferred when displayed on the screen because straight lines often show up more clearly. The slightly longer ascenders maximise the word shape where word recognition is more important than the fitting in of a lot of text. Therefore the Infant typeface may also work well when there are only a few words on a page, such as in printed material for very young children. When more text appears on the page, then the slightly slanted, Sassoon Primary Type as it's name suggests may be more appropriate. Research showed that most children preferred a slight slant when reading a body of text. In addition, ascending and descending strokes are slightly shorter than in the Infant typeface so that the lines of text can be spaced slightly closer together.

Typefaces designed for beginners

Remember, these letterforms are not meant as an exact handwriting model. It is more accurate to describe them as representations of hand-written letterforms. The arches reflect the movement of handwritten forms. Most important of all, they have exit strokes on the baseline. These exit strokes encourage spontaneous joins and also build in adequate space between letters, whether separate or joined.

iltuyj hnmr bpk cadgqoe (k)vwxz sf

Letters can be arranged in stroke-related sequences for handwriting exercises. Alternative k belongs in a different group than the loopped.

A large type size, such as 250 point, can be used for 'finger tracking' exercises. Starting points for letters can be indicated in colour and arrows added to show the direction of strokes. The letterforms can be reproduced larger and in outline for tracking exercises.

The larger dots show starting points. Where there is only one large dot, the fingers or pen don't leave the page until the letter is finished...

Letters up to A4 size can be printed to make a frieze for the wall. All this can easily be done on a computer enabling parents and teachers to develop their own professional-looking handwriting material to suit their chosen policy, either alphabetically or in stroke related families as above.
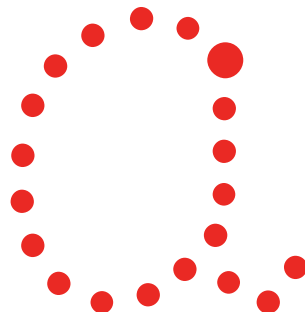
Worksheet material

Those who teach children to start reading and writing have different preferences for letters, so alternative letters are included in each of the fonts. At teachers' request we have created dotted, solid and outline fonts to provide a selection of ways to produce letters for tracking exercises.

My name is Mark (standard k)

Print the Sassoon Infant Regular typeface perhaps at 24 point and solid for reading. Use Sassoon Infant Dotted at 60 point if words are tracked in pencil. A coloured pen can be used to indicate the starting points of the dotted letters.

My hair is brown

Tracker is an outline letterform and coloured chevrons or arrows may be drawn in to show how the letter is formed. Using coloured pens or pencils to track is fun and also produces a very satisfying result.

My name is Mark (alternative k)

Sassoon Infant Bold in 50% black or in colour may be useful for emphasising consonants or vowels in a moveable alphabet on large pieces of card, say at a 200 points size or larger.

Towards joined up

Now that print script has been phased out and joining earlier has been encouraged, the Sassoon typefaces have become particularly useful. Their exit strokes at the base already help to clump the letters of a word together without actually joining them. In this way, not only is a link forged between reading and writing, the emphasis on exit strokes from the beginning should lead to spontaneous baseline joins and a smooth progression towards an efficient and mature joined-up handwriting.

ant

ant

Joining up is the practice of going from where one letter finishes to the start of the next. With Sassoon, the exit strokes build-in adequate letterspacing and train the hand in readiness for joining.

In this project, we have followed the principles of teaching handwriting that Rosemary Sassoon promotes. Some relevant published books:

Handwriting; The Way To Teach It *(Sage)*
Handwriting Problems in the Seconady School *(Sage)*
Handwriting of the Twentieth Century *(Intellect)*
The Practical Guide to Calligraphy *(Thames and Hudson)*
The Practical Guide to Lettering & Applied Calligraphy *(Thames and Hudson)*
Creating Letterforms *(Thames and Hudson)*
The Practical Guide to Children's Handwriting *(Hodder)*
Teach Yourself Better Handwriting *(Hodder)*
Computers and Typography *(Intellect)*
The Art and Science of Handwriting *(Intellect)*
The Aquisition of a Second Handwriting System *(Intellect)*
Signs Symbols and Icons (with Albert Gaur) *(Intellect)*
The Power of letterforms *(Unicorn Press)*

Sassoon Joiner

A mature 'joined-up' hand is the result of correct instruction from an early age. The Sassoon Joiner typefaces are a direct progression from the separate letters of Sassoon Primary and consist of several fonts which were specially created for teaching cursive handwriting in a flexible way.

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Linked Line with outline links and baseline

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Linked with outlined links

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Joined Line shows continuous joins on a baseline

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Joined shows continuous joins

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Pen Line is a more mature typeface with baseline

a logical handwriting style

Sassoon Pen is a more mature typeface

a logical handwriting style

Any letters can be unjoined at will in all fonts to illustrate pen lifts

Emphasis with any Sassoon typeface

Italic typefaces are designed to provide emphasis when used with any of the other Sassoon typefaces. However, they must be used sparingly for relevant words or short passages.

The italic typeface was designed to be used with any of the **Infant** or **Primary** fonts to provide a emphasis for juvenile typefaces.

Sassoon Infant with Sassoon Italic

The italic typeface was designed to be used with any of the *Infant* or *Primary* fonts to provide a emphasis for juvenile typefaces.

Sassoon Primary Medium with Sassoon Medium Italic.
Medium typefaces work particularly well when reversed out of a solid colour.

With the Sans typefaces, adults can also use *Book Italic for emphasis* when reading.

Sassoon Sans with Sassoon Book Italic

This Italic typeface was designed to be used with the Book typeface *as a more contrasting emphasis* is desirable.

Sassoon Book with Sassoon Book Italic.

Spacing

There are many factors that affect legibility. The fashion today in typography is for large x height with short ascenders and descenders. The word spacing is generally tight.

He was right out of the water and away from the waves and he lay still. He rolled on to his back and lay very still. He lay there for a long time. He blew and puffed and lay there on the sand. As he lay there, the wind blew more softly and the clouds began to blow away.

The example above shows a comfortable reading size of 18 point type. Line spacing is also a little more generous than that used for adult use at 25 points *(40% more than type size)*. This combination promotes easy legibility, keeping the same line space ratio at different type sizes. If your software allows, a global 'tracking' should be used at the smaller sizes to better preserve the 'colour' of type on the page, as in the example below, which prevents every letter becoming too close.

He was right out of the water and away from the waves and he lay still. He rolled on to his back and lay very still. He lay there for a long time. He blew and puffed and lay there on the sand. As he lay there, the wind blew more softly and the clouds began to blow away.

Smaller type sizes require a similar ratio of line space to type size. Here, Sassoon Primary is 10/14pt. Tracking is +1%.

Book typefaces

There has long been demand for a slightly more formal Sassoon® typeface in books and amongst children's book publishers. We developed a partially seriffed 'Book' font with a companion 'Italic'.

Chapter One

As Tom lay on the grass in the cool evening air, he knew it would soon be time to leave for home. But then, there was a loud bang across the field and a voice shouting *"Hey, you lads, get off my land!"*

Tom jumped up suddenly and ran towards the tree where Peter was hanging from a small branch, his pockets were full of conkers. *"Come on Peter"* said Tom, *"...lets get away before the farmer catches us".*

Strategically placed serifs and weight have been used to meet publishers' requests for an alternative full-serif typeface retaining the same properties of Sassoon types with more pronounced word shapes. The italic produces good emphasis and contrasts strongly with the roman letters.

Books for children are often chosen and bought by adults, but these child-orientated typefaces are spreading fast around the world and it is to be hoped that the benefits of typefaces designed specifically to meet childrens' needs will increasingly be recognised.

Advice for Book Designers

Those who design books for young children should consider the different needs of their readers. When laying out pages for young readers, particular care should be taken over word spacing. Don't forget that justifying short lines disrupts spacing. Justification should be used only when absolutely necessary. In the research undertaken with young readers the importance of consistent spacing was clear. It also appeared that the poorer readers profitted from wider word spacing, while spacing that suited the poorest readers – positively annoyed the better readers. These typefaces have built-in letter-spacing because of their exit strokes, they also have friendliness as well as extra clarity designed into them.

Headline News

Sassoon® Primary Medium Condensed   58 point headline

Sassoon® Primary Medium Condensed is a compact style for headlines combining the right amount of weight, yet in a compact style. When used at large sizes the friendliness of Sassoon types really shines. We used the Medium Condensed for the headings throughout this leaflet. You can find other ways to use this friendly typeface. Ideal perhaps for the masthead of a magazine?

The Sassoon Primary typefaces mix well on a page with traditional typefaces, bringing informality to certain passages of text when required. They work well in speech bubbles and provide an inexpensive alternative to the hand lettering often used in comic strip formats. The current range of typefaces caters for Infant, Primary, Secondary and Adult uses, whether on-screen or in print.

Accessing alternative letters

To make things easier for the user, typefaces have our recommended letterforms on the standard keys. We could not, of course hope to choose the correct combination for everyone. Therefore, Users can choose alternative letterforms in their OpenType font compatible software.

For example, Sassoon Infant font has a one-stroke looped k in the standard keyboard position, because we think that's what makes most sense for handwriting tution. The alternative, sometimes called two-stroke 'spiky' or 'kicking' k is available as alternative. However, Sassoon Primary font has this k in the standard position, because when producing typeset material for reading, the looped letterform may be inappropriate. If you disagree with any of our decisions, you may use its alternative.

Sassoon® fonts are made for use by teachers. However, if children themselves use these fonts and alternatives are awkward to access, fonts can be custom re-made with letters placed in key positions of your choice to suit your particular handwriting policy.

'Default' letters accessed directly from the keyboard have alternatives which are provided for the different letterforms teachers prefer.

Here are a few examples of how to access the alternatives in applications:

Microsoft® **Word**
Right-click a passage of text, select Font > Advanced
Turn ON the option for 'Contextual Alternates' for any joining fonts.
Choose 'Stylistic Set' from the dropdown menu. Your selections can be saved as the default letterforms by creating a Template document.

Apple TextEdit (Mac)
Select text. Press Command T for font list. Click Font Panels 'Actions' (cogwheel icon) > Typography... Choose from all available OpenType features; Stylistic Sets, Ligatures etc., listed in the pop-up panel.

Adobe InDesign
Select Type > Character.
Click the flyout menu > OpenType > Stylistic Sets.
Select one set form 1 to 16.

Alternatives offered in the separate letter (non-joining) fonts.

Sassoon Infant default and alternative letters

Default:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 1:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqɿstuvwxyzfʒ1234567890
Set 2:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzfʒ1234567890
Set 3:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 4:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 5:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 6:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 7:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 8:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 9:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 10:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 11:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 12:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 13:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 14:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 15:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 16:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890

Sassoon Primary default and alternative letters

Default:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 1:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqɿstuvwxyzfʒ1234567890
Set 2:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzfʒ1234567890
Set 3:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 4:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 5:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 6:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 7:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 8:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 9:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 10:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 11:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 12:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 13:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 14:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 15:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890
Set 16:	GIJ&abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzß1234567890

Font names

These names comprise the current range of OpenType fonts offered. Many other custom variants, not listed, have also been created for educational software manufacurers' needs.

Sassoon Infant Dotted
Sassoon Infant Dotted B
Sassoon Infant   Sassoon Infant Pro
Sassoon Infant Line
Sassoon Infant Medium
Sassoon Infant Bold   Sassoon Infant Pro Bold
Sassoon Infant Tracker
Sassoon Infant Tracker B
Sassoon Primary
Sassoon Primary Medium
Sassoon Primary Bold
Sassoon Sans
Sassoon Sans Medium
Sassoon Sans Bold
Sassoon Sans Slope
Sassoon Sans Slope Medium
Sassoon Sans Slope Bold
Sassoon Italic
Sassoon Italic Medium
Sassoon Italic Bold
Sassoon Book
Sassoon Book Italic
Sassoon Felt
Sassoon Felt Bold
Sassoon Montessori
Sassoon Montessori Medium
Sassoon Montessori Dotted
Sassoon Montessori Tracker
Sassoon Sans Jolly Digraphs
Sassoon Sans Jolly Digraphs Semibold
Sassoon Linked
Sassoon Linked Line
Sassoon Joined   Sassoon Joined Nordic
Sassoon Joined Line
Sassoon Pen
Sassoon Pen Line
Sassoon Write
Sassoon Write Line
Sassoon Write Slanted
Sassoon Write Line Slanted

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