



A to **Z** to !

AN EXHIBIT
ABOUT ALPHABETS,
LETTERS, & WRITING.

BY
MARTEN
STROMBERG

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library
at the University of Illinois



Published with the generous support of Elizabeth Rogers.

Copyright © 2011 by the Rare Book & Manuscript Library,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Designed by the Author

Printed on acid-free archival quality paper.

Cataloging-in-Publication Data

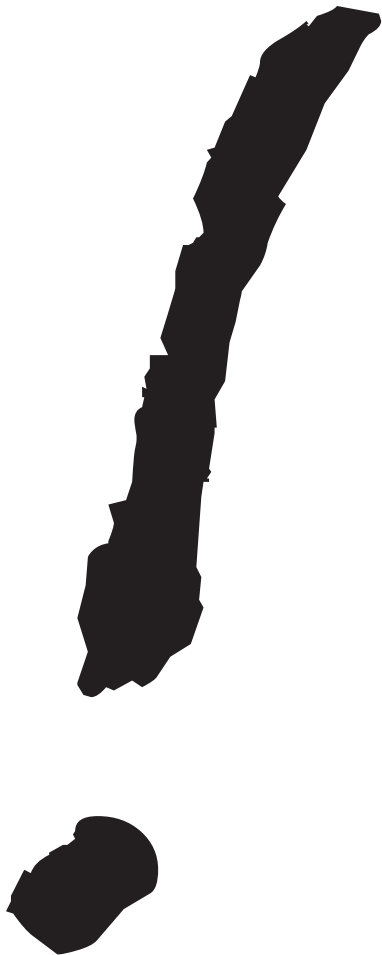
Stromberg, Marten.

A to Z to ! : An Exhibit about alphabets, letters, and writing / by Marten Stromberg. — Urbana, Ill. :
Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, c2011.

p. : col. ill. ; cm.

ISBN 978-0-9788134-9-9

A to **Z** to !



Forward

Although most people learn the alphabet, far fewer learn *about* the alphabet. This exhibit and catalog are designed to help you do just that. This catalog is an alphabetical presentation on alphabetical things. In it, each letter of the alphabet represents a topic related to writing, printing, or the alphabet.

The alphabet is closely related to memory. We use pictures and songs to help us memorize it when we are very young. After we've learned it, we use the alphabet to help us remember and organize things. In this exhibit and catalog, I have pulled memories and history—in the form of books—from the collection of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, here, at the University of Illinois. I hope you enjoy these selections and that you feel the same sense of wonder that I do when I think about our beloved ABC.

My heartfelt thanks and acknowledgement go out to Elizabeth Rogers. This catalog was made possible by her generous support. Special thanks are due to Dennis Sears, Valerie Hotchkiss, Donald W. Krummel, Steve Kostell and the Digital Content Creation team for all their help in preparing this alphabet exhibit and catalog.

Marten Stromberg

A

is for Acrostic

A is the first letter of the Alphabet and acrostics are all about first letters. I *could* tell you what an acrostic is, but it's easier to show you and then explain afterwards:

A code for you to read
Letters vertically aligned
Poems' hidden messages
Heed the leading sign
Aware, you see the pattern
Begins each line anew
Every piece together
This word you now can view

As you can see, to make an acrostic you take a word and put it tall-ways instead of long-ways and then write lines that start with each letter of that word—just like we did above with '**ALPHABET**'. Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, is one of the most famous people to use acrostics. The poem on the right is from the end of his book *Through the Looking Glass*. Here, he uses the full name of the real Alice to make his acrostic. Look closely and you'll see it. Here's a hint: her initials are A.P.L.

A BOAT, beneath a sunny sky,
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July—

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear—

Long has faded that sunny sky:
Echos fade and memories die :
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die.

Ever drifting down the stream—
Lingering in the golden gleam—
Life, what is it but a dream ?

THE END.

β

is for Beta

Do you know where the word alphabet comes from? Similar to how we call it the ABCs—after its first three letters—the ‘alphabet’ takes its name from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and beta. They look like this: α=alpha; β=beta. The alphabet we use is known as the Latin alphabet and it comes from the Greek alphabet. The Greek alphabet was the first alphabet to include letters that represented both vowels and consonants. It is based on the Phoenician alphabet. Although we don’t really give our letters names anymore, the Greeks (like the Phoenicians before them) had a name for each letter. Beta, for example, comes from a Phoenician word that means ‘house’ (‘bayt’). The picture of the Greek alphabet on the right comes from a book called “The Origin and Progress of Letters” by William Massey, written in 1763. It is in two parts. The first part is about the history and invention of the alphabet. The second part is about Calligraphy and the people who used to practice it. If you don’t know what Calligraphy is, just turn the page!

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ ς σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω

Cadmus's or the Ionic Alphabet, 1500 Years before Christ or the Phoenician inverted.

Simonides's or the Attic Alphabet, 500 Years before Christ

Αλφα	Α Α α	1	1	Ϝ Ϟ
Βητα	Β β	2	2	Ϛ ϛ
Γαμια	Γ γ ς	3	3	Ϝ ϝ
Δελτα	Δ δ δδ	4	4	Ϟ ϟ
Εϊ	Ε ε	5	5	Ϡ ϡ
Ϝαυ	Ϝ ϝ ϝυ	6	6	Ϣ ϣ
Ζητα	Ζ ζ	7	7	Ϥ ϥ
Ηηα	Η η χη	8	8	Ϧ ϧ
Θηα	Θ θ	9	9	Ϩ ϩ
Ιωτα	Ι ι	10	10	Ϫ ϫ
Καππα	Κ κ κκ	20	20	Ϭ ϭ
Λαμδα	Λ λ λλ	30	30	Ϯ ϯ
Μυ	Μ μ	40	40	ϰ ϱ
Νυ	Ν ξ π	50	50	ϲ ϳ
Ξίμια	Ξ ξ	60	60	ϵ ϶
Ου	Ο ο	70	70	Ϸ ϸ
Ρίηφι	Ρ ρ ρη	80	80	Ϲ Ϻ

Α Α Α Α	
Β Β	
Γ Γ	Γαμια Δ δελτα
Ε Ε	εψιλον
Ϝ Ϟ Ϟ Ϟ	Βαυ Ἐπιθήμιον or the mark for 6
Ζ	
Η	
Θ Θ	
Ι Ι	
Κ Κ	
Λ Λ	
Μ Μ	
Ν	
Ξ Ξ	
Ο	
Ρ ϭ ϭ	
Ϝ Ϟ Ϟ Ϟ	Καππα

Γ	
Δ Δ Δ	
Ε Ε Ε	
Ϝ Ϟ Ϟ Ϟ	διγαμιον
Ζ Ζ Ζ	
Η Η Η	
Θ Θ Θ Θ	
Ι Ι Ι	
Κ Κ	
Λ Λ Λ	
Μ Μ Μ	
Ν	
Ξ Ξ Ξ	
Ο Ϝ Ϝ Ϝ	
Π Π	
Ϝ Ϟ Ϟ Ϟ	Καππα
Ρ Ρ	
Σ Σ Σ Σ	
Τ Τ	

C

is for Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of writing beautifully. It's something that isn't easy to learn, but you can teach yourself. Many of the books in this catalog are called **copybooks**. To practice your handwriting, you would copy the examples from a copybook. The books sometimes show other useful things like how to make ink or how to make a pen. Writing teachers (also called writing masters) are very particular about how you sit when you write, the way you hold the pen, and even how fast you write. The writing master Henry P. Behrensmeyer, who wrote the example on the right, thought that the song Camptown Races was a good tempo and rhythm for writing. He would play it for his students on a hand-cranked record player in class while they practiced writing.

You could practice copying the example on the right, but you might need a calligraphy pen or a quill (see page **Q**) to make it look right. The wider pen helps to make those thick lines. If you really want to get into the spirit of H.P. Behrensmeyer, put on Camptown Races and write along with it.

No philosophy has ever improved upon

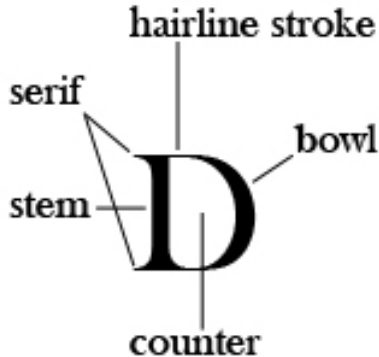
The Golden Rule,

and the most gorgeous tapestry of
trickery, no matter how intricately
woven, looks like a rag alongside
the simple beauties of a square deal.”

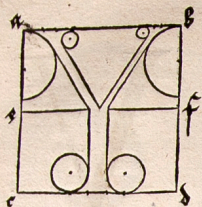
D

is for Design

How letters are designed depends on how they are produced. For example, letters produced by hand with a pen will be designed differently than letters carved into stone. If you look down at the diagram of some of the parts of a letter, you will see the **serifs** of the letter. Serifs are something that comes from the practice of carving letters in stone. Stone cutters would use them to make the ends of their letters look cleaner. For a long time, letters were designed mostly for writing, because people didn't know how to print yet. When people started making letters from metal type (see page **T**) they imitated the written alphabet and stone carvings, but later realized that they didn't have to.



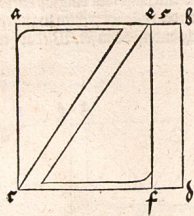
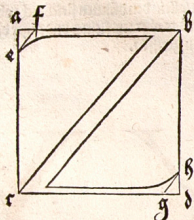
Albrecht Dürer, who wrote the book on the right, suggested that the design of letters should be geometric. He tried to set up rules based on geometry for what the right letter shapes should be. Some other people thought that letter shapes should be based on the proportions of the human body.



Y

Nach das. 3. also in seiner fierung/sey auf beiden linien vnder vnd neben dem Eck. a. zwen puncten. c. f. ein sechsen teyl weyt von der leng. a. b. also sey noch zwen gleich messig ander puncten. g. h. hir vnd ob dem Eck. d. vnd zeuch gerad. e. f. vnd. g. h. zusammen. Darnach zeuch den ersten dünnen zug vnder. a. b. von dem. f. hinderlich bis in den winkel. b. vonn dannen zeuch den prechten zug vber or bis in das. e. Darnach zeuch den dünnen zug auß dem. e. bis zum. g. Darnach schrey die zwen spit. e. h. von der hand auß.

Oder mach das. 3. also schneyd die fierung. a. b. c. d. mit einer aufrechten lini. e. f. ein fünf teyl ab/ vnd zeuch den bußtaben. 3. vnder daren wie vor/ aber also/ das die zwen zwerch strich oben forten vnd vnden henden mit den aufrechten. a. c. vnd. e. f. abgeschnitten werden. wie das hernach ist außgerissen.

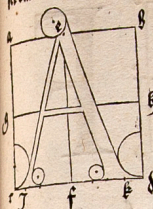


Z

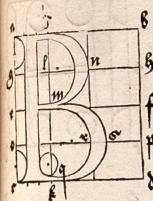
Z

Sem all diß vorgemachte bußtaben mag man von neun prechten hoch machen/ wie dann die for gemachten sechen prechten hoch sind/ vnd werden eben in irer maß von neun teylen in ir fierung. a. b. c. d. eyn geteilt wie die forderen durch sechen. Das deß baß zuuersten. hab ich hernach solliche bußtaben außgerissen.
Man macht auch die bußtaben fünf breyten höhe/ so man sie klein von der hand schreybet.

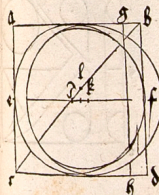
In dieser schrifft mache man die versal in verglicher maß vnd gestalt/ aber eyes dritzteyle groß/ sey dann die gemeyn zeyl der schrifft.



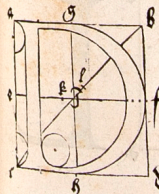
A A A



B B B



C C C



D D D



is for Excellency

As you have probably already learned, writing well takes a lot of time and practice (especially if you want anyone else to be able to read it). You might learn to write from your teacher or from a copybook (see page **L**), but either way, you'll have to keep practicing regularly if you want to stay good at it. These days, people spend a lot more time typing than they do writing, so it's harder to stay in practice. If you have trouble with writing neatly, these tips may help you out: Try to write with the muscles in your arm instead of your fingers. The fingers should just hold the pen and the arm should move it. Practice writing lines, circles and other shapes instead of just letters. If you keep it up, you will eventually get better.

The example on the right is from the book *The Pen's Excellency*. It is considered to be the first English copy book. Its author, Martin Billingsley, is believed to have been the writing instructor for King Charles I when he was a prince. Supposedly, the king learned his lessons well. Writing letters as fancy as Billingsley's would take a lot of practice. If you could write like that, people would certainly think that your writing was excellent!

A. a. B. b. C. c. D. d. E. e.
F. f. G. g. H. h. I. i. K. k.
L. l. M. m. N. n. O. o. P. p.
Q. q. R. r. S. s. T. t. U. u.
V. v. W. w. X. x. Y. y. Z. z.



is for Fables

Although you could learn to write just by copying the alphabet many times, that would probably be extremely boring. Copybooks would often have moral sayings or lessons to copy, instead of just alphabets, but people might be more interested in copying stories than copying sayings about how you should behave. In the book pictured on the right, the author, George Bickham, tried something a little different: in *Fables, and other short poems*, he had his readers copy short fables. This way he could keep his readers entertained and teach them a moral lesson while they learned to write. To make his book even more appealing to young readers (and anyone who likes pictures), he included illustrations above each of the fables. The popularity of Aesop's *Fables*, which was first published for kids in 1722, probably inspired Bickham to write this book fifteen years later. Just in case you were curious about the fable on the right, I've copied it down here for you to read.

*A lightfoot rang'd the forest round
By chance a Wolf's retreat he found.
Then said how can that rav'nous mind
Attack our sheep a harmless kind
Friend, says the Wolf, the matter weigh.
Nature design'd us beasts of prey;
A wolf eats sheep but now and then,
Ten thousands are devour'd by men.
An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse*

FABLE X.



The Shepherd's DOG & the WOLF. ☉

*As Lightfoot rang'd the forest round,
 By chance a Wolf's retreat he found.
 Then said; how can that rav'nous mind*



is for Gothic

The book on the right is an example of a Gothic script. The letters in Gothic writing tend to be narrower. This allows the scribes who used it to fit more letters on the page. Paper and parchment (see page **W**) were both very expensive, so saving space was important. The tops of the letters of Gothic scripts are usually pointier than other styles. They are often said to look like a picket fence.

This page from a bible would have been copied by a scribe working in a monastery. Before there was print, monasteries and copy shops had monks and professional scribes copy books by hand so they could sell them or trade them. For the monk's, copying religious books was an act of meditation and prayer, as well as a way to spread their religion. Things that are written by hand—as opposed to being printed—are called **manuscripts**.

urgent et non sepelientur in carceribus
suis super faciem terre exiunt. et diligunt
magis mortem quam vitam. oes
qui res hominum sunt deo gratias habent
peccata in vitiis locis que delicta
sunt ad que erant eos. dicit dominus
expectaui. Et dices ad eos. et dicit
dominus. Numquid qui cadet non resurgit
et qui auctus est non irascitur. et
ergo auctus est populus iste in re
austione odentis. Apphenderunt
mendaciam et nolunt auertere. accendi
et ascalantur. Nemo quod totum est lo
quitur. Nullus est qui agat pen
tentiam super peccato suo dicens.
quid feci. Similes conuulsi sunt ad
cursum suum. quasi equus in impetu
bens ad prelium. ad altum in celo co
gnouit tempus suum. turtur et
hyrundo et cytonia custodierunt
tempus aduentus sui. populus
autem meus non cognouit iudicium
domini. Quomodo dicitur sapientes
nos sumus. et lex domini in obsequio
est. Vere mendaciam operatus est ter
tus mendax scribam. Confusi sunt
sapientes. perierunt et capti sunt.
Abiit dominus enim preceperunt. et

et ceteris que pregressa sunt. Dixit
sedamur. Conuenite et ingrediamur
civitatem iherusalem et scilicet nos scilicet.
quia dominus in silere nos fecit.
et potum dedit nobis aquam felis.
Peccatum enim domini. expecta
uimus pacem. et non erat totum.
tempus in ede et ecce fornicatio. aut
auditus est fremitus equorum
eius. ante hyruntium et pigra
totum eius commotus est omnis terra.
et uenerunt. et deuotum terram.
et plenitudinem eius. uerem et hinc
totus eius. Quia ecce ego mittam
uobis serpentes pestimos quibus
non est in uita. et mordebunt
uos ait dominus. dolor meus se
dolorum. et in cor meum merens
Ecce uox clamantis filie populi mei in
terra longinqua. Numquid non do
minus est in syon. aut rex eius non
est in ea. Quare ergo me ad iudicium
dum conuenite in supercilibus suis
et in altitudinibus. Aietus Transiit
mellis finita est estas. inos salua
ti non sumus. Super contrarium
populi mei confusus sum et confusus
superior. obtinuit me. quod restitua

Am. 2.

H

is for Horn Book

A horn book is a kind of alphabet book made especially for young children. They are called 'horn books' because they had a protective, see-through covering over the paper that was made from animal horn. We don't use animal horn for much anymore, but years ago, they would use it for all sorts of things, even for making windows. Usually, these books would be attached to wood or some other material and would often have handles to make them easier to hold. The picture on the right is an example of an unmounted hornbook. Some mounted hornbooks are pictured below:

picture of a horn book

* A b c d e f g h i k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z z z ?

Est. Amen.

A B C D E F G H I K L
M N O P Q R S T U
W X Y Z.

A B C D E F G H
I K L M N O P Q
R S T U X.

* A a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z & est Amen.

A B C D E F G H I K L M N
O P Q R S T V X.

In the name of the father &
son / & the holy ghost, Ame.

C The seven peticyons of
the Pater noster.



Our father whiche
arte in heuyn / ha,
lowed be thy na
me. Thy kyngde
dome come.

Thy wyll be done in erth / as
it is in heuen.

Geue vs this daye our dayly
bred. And forgyue vs our
trespasses as we forgyue the
that trespasse agaynst vs.

And let vs not be led into tem
tacyon. But delpyer vs from
euyll, Amen.



is for Ink

If you're going to write something down, you will definitely need something to write with. Even if you already have a pen, you are going to need some ink in that pen to put some letters down on the page. Today when you get a pen it usually has ink in it already and when it runs out you get a new pen. Some pens can be refilled with ink that you buy at the store. Writing masters used a lot of ink and so did people who were learning to write. Instead of going to the store to buy ink, they would make it themselves. If you went to a school to learn to write the writing master would probably show you how to make ink. If you wanted to learn to write from a copybook (like the ones in this catalog) and you didn't how to make ink, then you might not be able to practice writing at all. To help out their readers, the writing masters would often include recipes for ink that would tell you exactly how to make it. Different writing masters had different recipes and some would even tell you how to make special kinds of ink.

Here is the ink recipe from the writing master Edward Cocker, who wrote many copybooks in the 1600s. This one is from his book *Arts Glory*. He includes instructions on how to write with gold.

7. The tails of all Letters of the same hand, must be of the same depth.
8. All Compass-Letters, in all hands, must be of equal proportion one with another.
9. The Bodies of the Capital Text must be finished, before they are flourished.
10. The form of an *Oval* must be observed as much as possible in all *Italian* Letters.

To make Ink.

TAKE about as many Galls as will fill an half-pint measure ; every one of which, being cut in pieces, put into an Earthen pot, into which pour a quart of Beer, neither too strong nor too small, so let them stand ten hours ; into which (being strained from the Galls) put two Ounces of Vitriol, to which put a third part of Gum-Arubic, and set your Vessel on a moderate Fire, to warm, not permitting it to seeth, and then put it into an Earthen Pitcher, well glaz'd within, or a thick Glass-Bottle, for your use.

To Write with Gold.

PROcure a Shell, or Shells, which are sold for about six shillings the dozen, (each containing as much Gold as can be expected for that quantity of Silver) which with less than half a Spoonful of Spring-water, having a small quantity of Gum-Arubic dissolved therein, you may temper, with a little Pensil which is clean, nor being used with any thing else, and when it appears to be about the thickness of free Ink, dip a new Pen therein, alwaies stirring it about with the Pensil when you take a Pen-ful, wherewith having written on good Paper, or rather Vellam, as with ordinary Ink, let your writing be thoroughly dry, then with the Tooth of a Mastiff Dog, or rather a Woolfs Tooth, laying your Paper on an even Plate, or very smooth Board, you must polish or burnish every Letter ; but you need not scruple to rub your Tooth (in so doing) *all over* your Paper or Parchment.

*And thus you may behold
Your Writing shine in Gold.*

F I N I S.

is for 'I'!?

Here's something interesting that you may not have known, the alphabet didn't always have 26 letters. You probably learned from a very young age that **I** and **J** are different letters, but people didn't used to think so. People used to spell words like 'James' as 'Iames' and 'Jolly' as 'Iolly'. If that surprises you, you'll be even more surprised when you find out that **V** and **U** also used to be the same. People would spell 'dove' as 'doue' and 'unusual' as 'vnusual'. Typically, a **V** or **U** would be represented with a **V** if it was a capital letter or the first letter of a word, and **U** (**u**) if it was after the first letter of a word or lower case. Our letter **Y** is still like this, it has different sounds depending on where it is in the word.

In this book from 1529, the author Giovanni Giorgio Trissino is the first one to argue that these different sounds should each have their own letter. He also tries to get different letters for different kinds of O and E sounds for the Italian language, which never catches on. His recommended changes for **I**, **J**, **U**, and **V** are eventually put into practice long after his death in 1550.

DIALOGO DEL TRISSINO
INTITOLATO IL CASTELLANO,
NEL QUALE SI TRATTA DE
LA LINGUA ITALIANA.





is for Knots

As you know, Calligraphy is the art of writing beautifully, but some see beauty in simplicity and others in elaboration. Knots are a style of decoration that is used in calligraphy and other art. They are called knots because they resemble pieces of rope or string that are wrapped around each other. They can be found in some Celtic, Islamic, and Buddhist art.

This book by Giovanni Antonio Tagliente is one of the first books on writing made by woodcut printing (see page **X**). Printing is usually done with black lines on a white background, but these letters were made as white lines on a black background. The majority of the book is printed normally: with black lines on a white background. The Latin on the bottom right reads: “In via virtuti nulla est via”. This translates as: “To virtue, no way is impassable.”

F B O

O E N

S M I

H L O

I O I

O R S

T N I

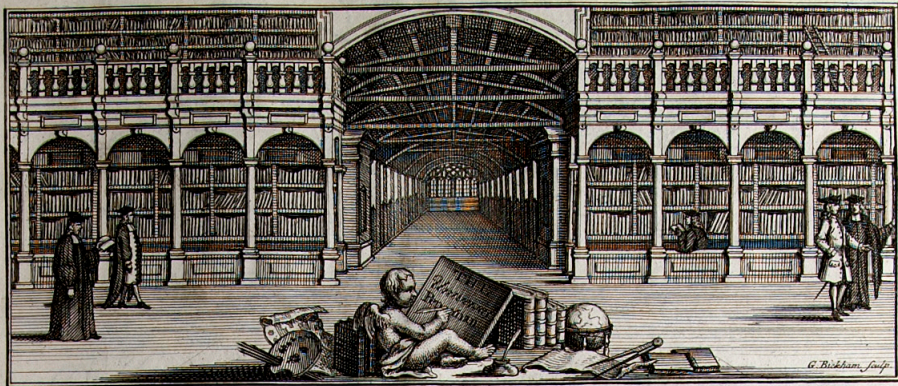
In via virtuti nulla
est via

L

is for Learning

Most of the writing masters who wrote these books were also teachers. They designed them to help students learn to write and, also, to advertise their skill in calligraphy. Most copybooks showed examples of several different **hands**. A “hand” is a style of writing. The pen strokes in each hand would be written in a set order and manner that was different from each other hand. Altogether the rules for how to write a particular letter are called the **ductus**. For example, whether you start a letter **M** by moving a pen up or down would be determined by the ductus of the hand you were writing. Even the speed at which the pen strokes are made is considered part of the ductus.

The book pictured on the right is called the *Universal Penman*; it was collected and engraved by George Bickham. It included 212 different engravings from examples by 25 different writing masters. It had samples of contracts, bills and other documents that a clerk might have to write up in their work. It is the most comprehensive copy book of English handwriting and calligraphy ever published. Most of the examples have an illustration by Bickham at the top.



LEARNING.

The Design of Learning, is either to render a Man an agreeable Companion to himself, and teach him to support Solitude with Pleasuze; or, if he is not born to an Estate, to supply that Defect, and furnish him with the Means of getting one.



is for Moon Alphabet

The Moon Alphabet is a kind of tactile alphabet, like braille, that you can read by touching it. In order to make this kind of “feel-able” alphabet on paper, printers use a process that is called **embossing** where they heat up the paper and press it between two metal plates. This particular tactile alphabet, invented in 1843, is named after its creator Dr. William Moon. The Moon letters are more similar to our alphabet than those in a system like braille, which uses small round bumps. This makes it easier to learn for people who knew the alphabet before they went blind. William Moon also made tactile maps and pictures with the same method of embossing.

There is also an interesting alphabet for people who are deaf and blind, in which the letters of the alphabet correspond to different parts of the hand (the finger joints, finger tips, etc.). This way you can spell things out by touching the different parts of your hand. This demonstrates the power of the alphabet: it can help people communicate despite their difficulties, even when it isn't written down.

D^r. Moon's Alphabet for the Blind.

Note. THE DOTTED MARKS OF THE LETTERS PRINTED OVER THE ALPHABET FOR THE BLIND SHOW WHAT PORTIONS OF THE COMMON LETTER ARE OMITTED IN ORDER TO LAY THE CHARACTERS OPEN AND CLEAR TO THE TOUCH.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
 O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &
 TH ING MENT TION NESS DIVISION ? !
 OF VERSES

SHORT STOP ;
 FULL STOP .

EVEN NUMERALS ODD NUMERALS

2 6 3 7 PARENTHESIS ()
 4 8 5 9

INSTRUCTIONS, THE FIRST LINE OF READING IS READ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, AND THE SECOND FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, TO PREVENT THE READER LOSING HIS PLACE. THE BRACKETS GUIDE THE FINGER FROM LINE TO LINE. WORDS ENDING IN ING, MENT, TION, AND NESS, HAVE THE LAST LETTER PUT FOR THE WHOLE SYLLABLE AS G FOR ING, T FOR MENT, & C. TWO DOTS ONE ABOVE THE OTHER GIVING NOTICE OF THE CONTRACTION. THE FIRST LETTERS OF LORD, COD, JESUS, AND CHRIST, STAND FOR THESE HOLY NAMES. TWO DOTS SIDE BY SIDE, ARE USED FOR A FULL STOP, A SINGLE DOT FOR ANY SHORTER STOP. VERSES ARE DIVIDED BY TWO SHORT LINES ONE ABOVE THE OTHER. THE NOTE OF INTERROGATION IS PLACED AT THE BEGINNING OF A SENTENCE NOT AT THE END

N

is for Numerals

Both the Greeks and the Romans used letters to represent their numbers. Greek numerals are still used for some things in Greece and we use Roman Numerals on clocks, for dates, and for chapter numbers. On the right you can see a chart for the values of Roman Numerals. It's in Latin, so you can look at the chart in English below. In the numbers IV and IX, the “I” to the left of the number means that it is one less.

I = 1

II = 2

III = 3

IV = 4

V = 5

VI = 6

VII = 7

VIII = 8

IX = 9

X = 10

XX = 20

L = 50

C = 100

D = 500

M = 1000

You can figure out the numbers by adding them up from left to right. So XXII is 22 and MD is 1500. Try to figure out these dates: MDXII, MDCLXI, and MDCCCI.

The number system we use today was invented in India and passed along to the Arabs. We adopted it from them, which is why we call our numbers “arabic” numerals. They aren’t based on an alphabet; they are a system of their own.

mme huic inscriptioni, CCVI.
 nos ante perpetuam Cæsaris di-
 curam incisa, his utebantur no-
 pro centum C. pro quingen-
 D. pro mille M. pro centum
 libus, quæ summa erat, Plinio
 e, apud eos supputatio, (C). Ex
 us credibili, perspicua, & vera
 iectura ducor, quinque millia
 modo significasse D, externo
 e semicirculo rectæ lineæ con-
 to, interno nulli adhærescen-
 decem millia sic (C), & sic D
 genta millia, internis, exter-
 semicirculis eodem, quo in
 riore nota, modo ductis. Hoc
 ianus etiam haud obscure in-
 eo tamen discrimine, quod is
 nū semicirculum, quem apo-
 hum vocat, cum recta linea,
 quam

lat, cum nota, non litera sit, non
 coniungat, sed hoc modo notet,
 I). (I).

iam verò ut notas omnes, apud
 veteres in usu positas, quisq; possit
 statim animo concipere, sic ob
 oculos ponendas duco.

I. vnus	1
V. quinque	5
X. decem	10
L. quinquaginta	50
C. centum	100
D. quingenta	500
M. mille	1000
D. quinque millia	5000
(C). decem millia	10000
D. quingenta millia	50000
(C). centum millia	100000

Qua quidem in re illud mo-
 neo, a prima nota I. vnum signi-

D 4 fican-



is for Ornamental Penmanship

Some calligraphers have taken their style of fancy writing and applied it to illustration. This is called **ornamental penmanship**. You can often find these kinds of illustrations in copybooks. They are made by using the different strokes, loops, and other characteristics of writing. On the right is an example from a book by Richard Daniel that is filled with pictures like this. Here you can see various different animals, but Daniel drew all sorts of interesting pictures in this way: people, angels, mythical creatures, bells, the sun, the moon, and the stars. H.P. Behrensmeyer—whose calligraphy we saw under letter **C**—is best known for his many ornamental birds. Not all writing masters approved of the fantastical diversion of ornamental penmanship and would rather focus on the useful rather than the creative aspects of fine writing.



is for Phonetic Alphabet

A phonetic alphabet is one where the characters (letters) represent different sounds. In some other writing systems (like Chinese), the characters also represent ideas or things instead of just sounds. With a phonetic alphabet you use the different sounds to build words. Because different languages have different and sometimes unique sounds, the alphabet that we use doesn't always have the sounds we need to write other languages. That's why we use something called the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Here is an example of a word represented in the characters of the IPA: phonetic = fə'neɪk. The International Phonetic alphabet has more than 150 characters.

The picture on the right is from a book by Honorat Rambaud. In it, he argued to expand the alphabet to a whopping 52 letters for the French language. He hoped that by representing each sound with its own unique letter, it would make reading and writing easier. He thought that this alphabet would help to narrow the knowledge gap between the rich and poor. In southern France where he lived, many people could only speak their native Provençal, not French. His suggestion was never adopted.

Ã Б Ć Đ Ē F Ğ Ĥ I^J K Ł ů NJ Ŏ þ Ŗ Š T U V ð Ū Ÿ Ÿ Ž Œ Ÿ Ÿ



ALPHABET,

nouvellement corrigé, augmenté, & enrichi de lettres. Moyennant lequel chacun pourra nayement représenter les paroles: ce que iamais homme n'a fait, à cause qu'auions si peu de lettres, questions contraints abuser d'icelles, & par consequent mal escrire, & mettre en peine ceux qui enseignent, & ceux qui veulent apprendre.

Qu'il faut bien user des graces qu'il a pleus à Dieu nous donner, & qu'il nous en demandera compte.

CHAP. I.

Le mode est vne vigne, en laquelle faut trauailler, & non pas demeurer oisif.



AR la parabole de l'euangile pouuons entendre, que ce monde est vne vigne, en laquelle Dieu nous a mis



v j. φ v. q é t,

40ye. 1e. s. v. g. t. 10. s. z. g. e. v. s. f. s. v. g. t. e. c
 v. g. z. s. z. v. j. t. s. l. s. z. e. v. g. t. 1e. 1e. j.
 s. v. 1. s. z. p. s. g. v. 4. v. z. e. s. v. g. t. s. z. v. g. t. e. s.
 7e. s. p. v. g. o. 7. e. s. : s. e. 1. g. v. s. e. s. v. o. s. z. e. v.
 p. e. t. v. 1. v. d. z. e. 1. v. y. z. d. y. s. s. z. p. v. j. t. s.
 1. t. z. d. y. s. 1. s. v. j. e. z. y. t. s. v. q. z. e. z. y. z. s. e. t. s.
 e. p. v. z. 1. s. z. f. 1. v. g. t. s. v. j. e. j. z. s. z. e. c. s.
 j. z. v. z. p. e. z. y. e. s. z. v. 1. z. v. z. y. e. g. t. c.
 s. z. s. 1. z. v. s. t. e. g. t. v. p. v. z. y. z. l.
 1. z. j. p. v. s. t. q. z. e. z. v. z. e. z. v. e. s. y. v. s. z. 1. z. v.
 p. v. v. v. z. d. y. s. v. s. v. s. h. e. z. e. s. c. 1. z. j. y. s. v. z.
 v. s. v. z. v. e. s. v. 1. o. y. t. z. l. s. v. p. z. j. z. v. i.

v. z. j. v. p. v. s. v. q. o. z. j. z. v. j. t. e.
 y. v. z. s. z. j. z. p. s. y. s. v. z. y. z. e.
 p. v. z. y. z. e. 1. s. e. s. z. s. z. v. z. e.
 e. t. z. y. z. y. z. y. z. v. z. j. v. z. e.
 1. e. j. z. e. v. z. d. y. s. v.



is for Quill

Before there were metal and plastic pens, people wrote with Quills. A quill is made from a bird's feather—usually from a Goose or a Swan. It is specially cut to make it the right shape for writing. Feathers are hollow on the inside, so when you dip the end of your quill into your ink, the ink fills up into the feather. That means you don't have to dip your quill in the ink every time you need to make a mark on the page. Instead, ink in the feather will flow from the inside of the quill onto the page as you write. The picture on the right is from a German copy book titled *A useful and well founded formula for many beautiful scripts*, by Wolfgang Fugger. It shows the proper way to hold a quill. As you can see, the barbs, or “feathery parts” of the feather, have been trimmed off.

The pen-knife is used to cut the quill tip to the right shape. A quill tip can be cut to different widths and in a square or round shape. Another penman, Giovanni Tagliente, lists all the tools needed for writing: “quills, penknife, straight-edge, dividers, lead stylus, set-square, pounce (if you want to write with it), shears, and good ink.”



Ein güte fassung vnd fue-
ring der federn sampt ein-
er güten auffstreckung vnd
rechter zusammenhaltung
der finger 7





is for Rubric

The word **rubric** comes from the Latin word for the red chalk that is used to make red ink. To “rubricate” something means to color it **red**. When scribes wanted to emphasize certain letters or words, they would write them or decorate over them in red ink. This made them stand out from the other text that was written in black ink. This practice was started when everything was done by hand, and later, when they started to print books, they would sometimes have someone decorate letters by hand in red ink after they printed them. Eventually, the word “rubricated” referred to decorated letters in general, red or not.

This example is from a printed book that was bound in a leaf of parchment (see page **W**). The parchment leaf has black ink writing and rubrics. Bookbinders often bind books with old handwritten parchment leaves because they look nice. This book is called the *Alphabetum Divini Amoris*, or the *Alphabet of Divine Love*. It is an alphabetically arranged collection of works of Christian mysticism from the beginning of Christianity to the 15th century.

ufficiat in nobis dñe
sua sacramēta qđ
etinet: vt que nūc spe-
ritur. verū verita-
tem capiamus. Per dñm.

Dñica xvii. Introitus.

Qua pacē dñe sustinetib?
te. vt prophete tui fide-
les inuermatur. exaudi pces
serui tui. et plebis tue isra-
el. **ps** Letatus sum in hys
que dicta sūt michi. ī domū
domini ibimus. **Collea**
omnipotens sēpitne
deus misericordiā
tuā ostende supplicibus.
vt qui de meritoꝝ quali-
tate diffidimus nō iudi-

dñi nr̄i ih̄u xpi. Qui r̄c
firmabit vos vsq; ī fine
sine crimie: in die aduet
dñi nr̄i ih̄u xpi. **Ex.**

etatus sum in hys que du-
ta sunt michi. in domū domū
ibimus. **v** fiat pax in virtute
tua. et habūdātia ī turribus
tuis. **Allā. v** Dilexi quoniam
exaudiet dñs vocē meam.

Scđm matheū xxi.

in illo tpe: Cōuenert
pharisei in vnū: et in-
terrogauit ih̄esū vn̄ ex eis
legis doctor temptās eū.
Magister: qđ ē mādatū
magnū in lege: Aut illi
ibūs. Diliges dñm deū

S

is for Secretary

Inventions, such as the typewriter and the computer, have gradually moved us away from relying on writing for our communication. Business that used to be done with written documents is now done with printed ones, and people seem to type far more than they write. Before these inventions, however, businessmen relied heavily on people who could write trade and legal documents. They were called clerks. As trade and business grew, more clerks were needed to prepare important documents. The style of handwriting widely used in renaissance England was called English Secretary. It would be absolutely necessary to know how to write it in order to get a job as a clerk. The English Secretary hand is a mixture between Gothic and Roman style writing. It has some of the round characteristics of Roman and the pointed characteristics of Gothic.

This copybook, printed in 1622, shows an example of the English Secretary hand. It is written in English, but it may be difficult to read. The letters and spelling are somewhat different from what we are used to today. In this book, the instructions for how to write Secretary were printed and the examples were written in by professional clerks.

it to consist whollie of its owne associates. The Exemple of this Canon, may bee scene in this sentence, at length :



Be it knowne unto all men
 by these presents, That I confesse me to
 be addebted unto every man the debt of
 loue &c. And therefore I obliſh me to
 be paying the ſame daylie according to
 my power, and to make compleot ſatis-
 faction thereof at my laſt day at the





is for Typography

In printing from moveable type, you combine small metal letters together to make words and sentences. You then put ink on these letters and push paper down on them with a **press**. The ink transfers to the paper and makes a printed page. The Chinese and Koreans created moveable type before Johannes Gutenberg did so in Germany. However, the process works better with our alphabet than it does with eastern languages, because our alphabet only has 26 characters and the Chinese language, for example, has over 40,000. It is much easier to design 26 metal letters than to design 40,000.

Printing with moveable type is generally called **letterpress printing**. The art of arranging the metal letters for printing is called typography. For hundreds of years, this was the most common way that books were printed. Nowadays, we use computers to do most of our design, but the word typography is still used to describe arranging letters on the computer. There are still letterpress printing shops today.

On the right, there is a poem about a mouse by Lewis Carroll. The letters on the page have been arranged to look like a mouse's tail and the poem is called *The Mouse's Tale*. This is an example of **shaped poetry**.

The Mouse's Tale *from* Alice's Adventures In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll (England, 1865).

"Mine is a long and a sad tale!" said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing. "It is a long tail, certainly," said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; "but why do you call it sad?" And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this: —

"Fury said to
a mouse, That
he met
in the
house,
'Let us
both go
to law:
I will
prosecute
you. —
Come, I'll
take no
denial;
We must
have a
trial:
For
really
this
morning
I've
nothing
to do,
Said the
mouse to
the cur:
'Such a
trial,
dear sir,
With no
jury or
judge,
would be
wasting
our time.
I'll be
judge,
I'll be
jury,
and
you'll be
quitting
out of my
tail, and
the whole
of me!"



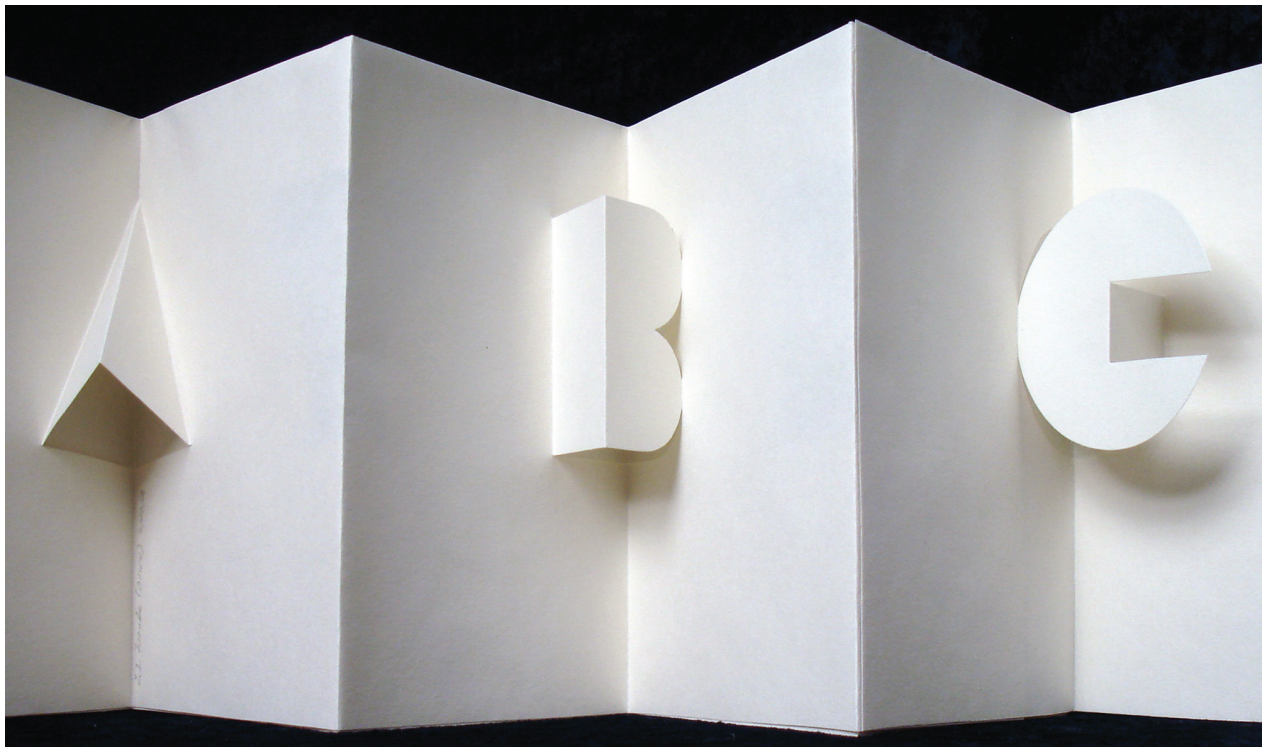
U

is for Unfolding Alphabets

The book shown here is an example of an **accordion fold**. It is made by folding paper over itself in a zigzag to make the accordion shape. The accordion fold is an old style of book folding. Originally, Chinese documents were rolled up into scrolls, but eventually they started folding them accordion style to make them easier to flip through. When they began to bind books, they would sew one side of the accordion fold shut. This made it more like a book and less like an accordion.

In this book, the letters of the alphabet are cut out of the accordion folds. It is similar to a style of pop-up known as **origamic architecture** that uses the Japanese arts of **origami** (paperfolding) and **kirigami**, to make pop-ups from one sheet of paper.

Illustration of accordion and sewn shut accordion





is for Visual Alphabet

The visual alphabet is used to help people who are learning the alphabet remember the shapes and sounds of the letters. In the first kind of visual alphabet, objects that look like letters are used to help people remember their shapes. See the ladder that looks like the letter A? Or the horn that looks like the letter C? In another kind of visual alphabet, the picture would help people remember the sound of the letter. You've probably seen this kind of visual alphabet, where it shows the letter C and then a picture of a cat. Some visual alphabets combine both of these strategies.

Images can be used to help you remember the alphabet, but the alphabet can also help you remember visual things, like the colors of the rainbow. I'm sure you've heard of the acronym ROY G. BIV, which helps you remember that the colors of the rainbow are Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet.

This picture is the first printed visual alphabet, from 1485. It is from a book on the art of public speaking and memory.



W

is for Writing Material

Writing material is the surface on which you write. Today, we mostly write on paper, but there was a time when **parchment** was the most common writing surface. Parchment looks like paper, but is made from stretched animal skin. Before there was parchment, people would write on **papyrus**, which is made by hammering together overlapping strips of plant material. Even earlier, people would write on wax, clay, stone, wood, bones, and other surfaces.

Paper was invented around 105 A.D. by a Chinese man named T'sai Lun. Paper is made by mixing plant fibers (called **pulp**) into a vat of water. Once they are stirred up in the water, the papermaker uses a wire screen to pull out an even sheet of plant fibers and lets the water drain through the screen. When the sheet of fibers is pulled off of the screen, pressed, and dried, you have a sheet of paper. The example on the right is made from a special papermaking process. The "W" is not drawn on the paper. It has been made into the paper itself by using different colored **pulps** and a letter-shaped wire.





is for Xylographic

Xylography is ‘writing from wood’. It is a kind of printing done with carved wooden blocks. If you were to take a flat square wooden block, cover it in ink with a roller, and push a piece of paper down on it, you would get a big black square on your paper. If you cut out a piece of the wooden block with a knife, there would be a notch where the roller wouldn’t touch with ink. The paper that was lying on the mostly flat wooden block wouldn’t touch it either. So, to make a picture by woodcutting, you cut out all the “negative” space, or the space that you don’t want to print. Wherever you make your cuts, it will appear white on the page and the uncut parts will still be flat so they will print black. This is also called **woodcut printing**. Any kind of printing where you put ink on a raised flat surface to print is called **relief printing**. The image on the right was made with an inked woodcut block. Below are some examples:

pictures here

Donatus cum vul
gari expositione



z
p
cu
us
no
li
tr
z
m
et
m
ge
be
ga
la
E
ni
E
ac

at
m
lle
m
; d
E
et
ut
tē
b.
ic

Y

is for “Thorn”!?

There was a time when English was written with a different alphabet, known as runic. There are several different kinds of runic alphabet. The one used for English is called ‘futhorc’. It gets its name from the first six letters of the runic alphabet (𐌺 𐌚 𐌛 𐌜 𐌝 𐌞). When people started to use our modern alphabet they kept a few runic letters for a while. One of these letters is ‘thorn’. It looks like this: 𐛀, and it represents the sound ‘th’. So if you wanted to write ‘the’ or ‘that’, it would look like this: ‘𐛀e’ and ‘𐛀at’. So ‘The Old Bookshop’ would be ‘𐛀e Old Bookshop’.

There was a point when the letter 𐛀 looked a lot like the letter Y. When printers wanted to print the letter 𐛀, they would just use a Y instead, because they didn’t have a 𐛀. So instead of ‘The Old Bookshop’ they would print ‘Ye Old Bookshop’. Even though it looks like a Y, it’s really a ‘thorn’ and it should be pronounced ‘th’.

𐌺 𐌚 𐌛 𐌜 𐌝 𐌞 𐌟 𐌠 𐌡 𐌢 𐌣 𐌤 𐌥 𐌦 𐌧 𐌨 𐌩 𐌰 𐌱 𐌲 𐌳 𐌴 𐌵 𐌶 𐌷 𐌸 𐌹 𐌺

Fig. 1. n. 127. fol.



Fig. 2. n. 129. fol. Tab. I.



Fig. 3. n. 152.

ΠΤΥΜΗΤΡΥΠΠΠΠΠΠΠΠ
 ΠΥΡΡΑΚΚΗΥ*ΠΥΠΠΠΥ
 ΠΡΠΥΠΡΡΥΠΡΠΠΠΠΚ
 ΠΑΡΤΗΥ.

Fig. 4. n. 153.



Fig. 5. n. 191.



N^o. 6. n. 127. ubi nota.

Ρ. Νι. Ρυρ. ϑο. Ρα. ΡΥοs. *ρ. ϑο. Ια
 ϑϑο. ϑs. Ισ. Βσ. Γ. Ψ. Δα. Γ. Ζ. Φ.

N^o. 7. n. 157.

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ο Ρ Ο.
 Ρ. Σ. Τ. Υ. Χ. Υ. Ζ.

Z

is for Zapf

Hermann Zapf is a calligrapher and type designer who created some of most commonly used fonts. One of his most well-known achievements was the design of a font that didn't have any letters, it's called Zapf Dingbats (look below). He was one of the earliest people to argue that type design should be done on computers. Zapf was also hired as a calligrapher to write the Preamble to the United Nations Charter in 1960.

This image, designed by Zapf, is the so-called “California job case”. It is a case that holds all the metal letters that you would use for printing (see page **T**). This picture of the case will help you remember where all the letters are. Anyone who arranged type would want to memorize the layout of this case so they could do their job quickly.



STANDARD LAY OF THE CASE

*The alphabet is a system and series of symbols representing collectively the elements of written language.
Letters are the individual signs that compose the alphabet signifying primarily but one thing, what letter it is—its name.*

ffi	fl	5-to-em	4-to-em	quotes	k	e		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	\$	%	bullet	/ slash	asterisk*	[brackets	(paren)						
j	b	c	d		e		i		s		f	g	ff	9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G							
?	m		n		h		o		y	p	w	,	en quads	em quads	H	I	K	L	M	N	O							
!	l	n		h		o		y		p	w	,	en quads	em quads	H	I	K	L	M	N	O							
z	m		n		h		o		y	p	w	,	en quads	em quads	H	I	K	L	M	N	O							
x	v	u	t	3-to-em spaces		a	r	period.	semi-colon	colon	hyphen	2-em quads	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W									
q	u		t	3-to-em spaces		a	r	period.	semi-colon	colon	hyphen	2-em quads	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W									
																						X	Y	Z	J	U	&	ffi

Designed by Hermann Zapf, The Apostrophe Press

A letter is a symbol with a definite shape and significance, indicating a single sound or combination of sounds and providing a means, through grouping, for the visible impression of words, that is, of thoughts.
Frederic W. Goudy (1865-1947)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A S P H A B E T S T K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z