

Size

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you'll learn to measure type. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

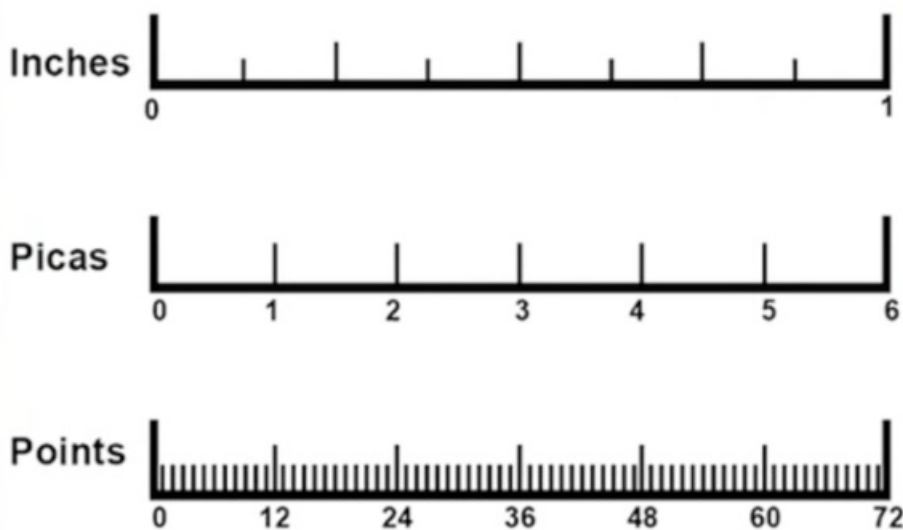
1. Current U.S. Digital Standards

Throughout this lesson, you will learn how to use current digital standards in the U.S. that are primarily meant for printed documents.

This is important to keep in mind because web design, sign making, and other industries and countries use different measuring systems.

2. Point, Picas, and Inches

Type is measured by **points**, **picas**, which can be converted into inches. Below is an example of what that looks like.



This image is not to scale, but it's large enough so that you can see the difference in measurements.

A pica is the unit used when measuring the length of a line-up type, and there are six picas in an inch. A point is the unit used when measuring letter forms, and a point measures $1/72$ of an inch.



TERMS TO KNOW

Point

The unit used when measuring letterforms; a point measures 1/72 of an inch. Type is measured vertically from the bottom of the descender to the top of the ascender.

Pica

The unit used when measuring the length of a line of type; there are six picas in an inch.

3. Ascender and Descender

Type is measured vertically from the bottom of the **descender** to the top of the **ascender**.

Ascender is the name for the part of the typographic character that extends above the mean line, or any character which has an ascender.



Looking at the image above, the red line is called a **baseline**, which is the implied horizontal line upon which the typographic character sits.

The black line you see is called the **mean line**, which, in a lowercase letter, is an implied horizontal line that falls across the top of the letter X. The areas above would be the ascenders. Were you to draw a dotted line, that would be your ascender line to which the ascender extends.

As you might have guessed, the descender is the opposite. Descender is the name for the part of the typographic character that extends below the baseline, or any character which has a descender.



TERMS TO KNOW

Ascender

The name for the part of a typographic character that extends above the mean line, or any character which has an ascender.

Descender

The name for the part of a typographic character that extends below the baseline, or any character which has a descender.

Baseline

The implied horizontal line upon which typographic characters sit.

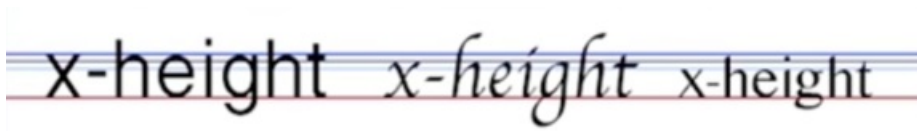
Mean Line

In a lower case letter, an implied horizontal line which falls across the top of the letter 'x.'

4. X-Height

Earlier in the lesson, you learned that the mean line is the implied horizontal line, which falls across the top of the letter X. This leads us to the **x-height**, which is the vertical distance from the baseline to the mean line in a lower case letter.

In the example below, you can see there are three different font types, but they're all the same point size, which in this case is 99.



There's a pretty drastic difference across some of these typefaces, and the x-height can be a significant distinguishing factor between them.



TERM TO KNOW

X-Height

In a lower case letter, the vertical distance from the baseline to the mean line.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you used **current U.S. digital standards** to measure type by looking at the measurement elements of **points, picas, and inches**. Additionally, you learned how to identify the **ascenders, descenders, and x-height** in a typeface.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: SOURCE: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ



TERMS TO KNOW

Ascender

The name for the part of a typographic character that extends above the mean line, or any character which has an ascender.

Baseline

The implied horizontal line upon which typographic characters sit.

Descender

The name for the part of a typographic character that extends below the baseline, or any character which has a descender.

Mean Line

In a lower case letter, an implied horizontal line which falls across the top of the letter 'x.'

Pica

The unit used when measuring the length of a line of type; there are six picas in an inch.

Point

The unit used when measuring letterforms; a point measures $\frac{1}{72}$ of an inch. Type is measured vertically from the bottom of the descender to the top of the ascender.

X-Height

In a lower case letter, the vertical distance from the baseline to the mean line.