



Figure 8.4 Type and its parts

What is a font?

A font is a single design of type, usually available in a range of different styles. This family of type often means that a type from the same font can be in roman, bold, italic, bold italic, condensed, extended, lower case, small capitals, capitals and so on. This means that even if you have decided to only use one font in your designs, there is still plenty of opportunity to adjust the way the type presents. A bold heading will look very different to a light (or roman) heading even in the same font. Choosing to present it in italic or extended can also make a huge difference.

Measuring type

Type in the UK and US is measured in point sizes (the European continent uses the didot system where the points are known as Ciceros). The point system is a measuring system in its own right so comparisons with other measuring systems are just that, but there are approximately 72 points to the inch (28.34 to the centimetre). It needs to be remembered that the type measurement system was developed for use with metal type that you could actually see and measure. Since this type was cast in metal, the actual printing face was mounted on top of a metal block and it was this block (or body) that gave type its size, not the actual size of the letters. This means that it is very difficult to measure the size of type once it is printed on the page as it is the space in which the type lives that we actually measure, not the symbol printed on the page. Added to this, publications shrink slightly after printing. So that what was set as 60pt might only be 57.6pt after printing. Figure 8.5 shows the variety of type size.

Figure 8.5 (opposite) Type is measured in *points*

8pt type - as the type gets smaller, so more words will fit on the line. This 8pt will be used for body type.

10pt type - as the type gets smaller, so more words will fit on the line. This 10pt will l

12pt type - as the type gets smaller, so more words will fit on the line.

14pt type - as the type gets smaller, so more words will fit on

18pt type - as the type gets smaller, so more words

24pt type - as the type gets smaller,

30pt type - as the type gets

36pt type - as the type

48pt type - as the

60pt type - as

72pt type -