

Famous Artists Cartoon Course

Westport, Connecticut

Lettering

Lesson

18

Rube Goldberg

Milton Caniff

Al Capp

Harry Haenigsen

Willard Mullin

Gurney Williams

Dick Cavalli

Whitney Darrow, Jr.

Virgil Partch

Barney Tobey

BALLOON
LETTERING MUST
BE SHARP, CLEAN AND
EASY TO READ!

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Speedball A-5
Speedball B-3
Hunt Speedball C-0
abcdefg

ABC Dabcef

The Quick B

ABCDEF

ROUND BRUSH CUT SQUARE

San Francisco eats well, has fun after dark

Old Gold

Bat

ROUND

BALL POINT

Rigger brush

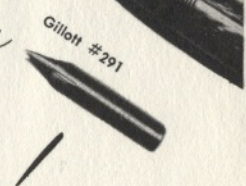
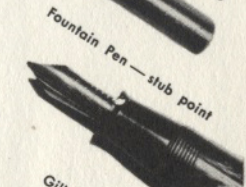
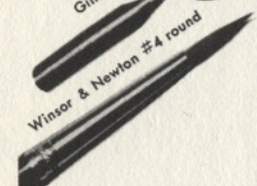
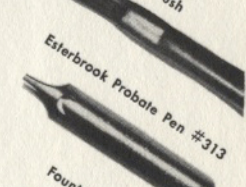
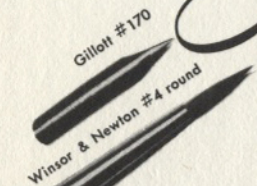
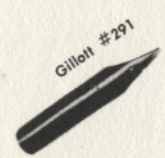
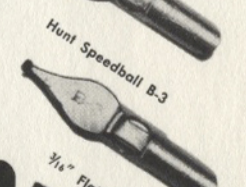
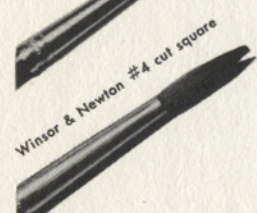
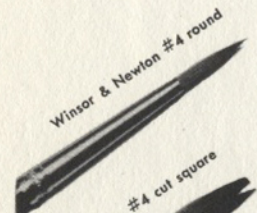
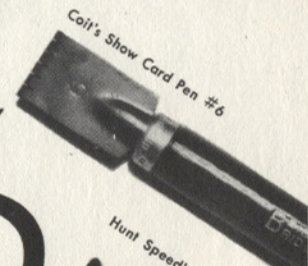
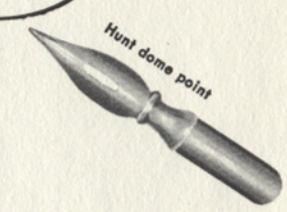
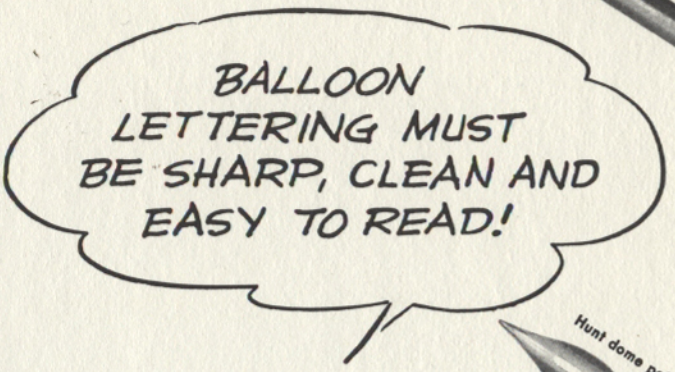
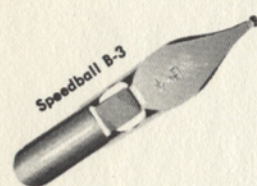
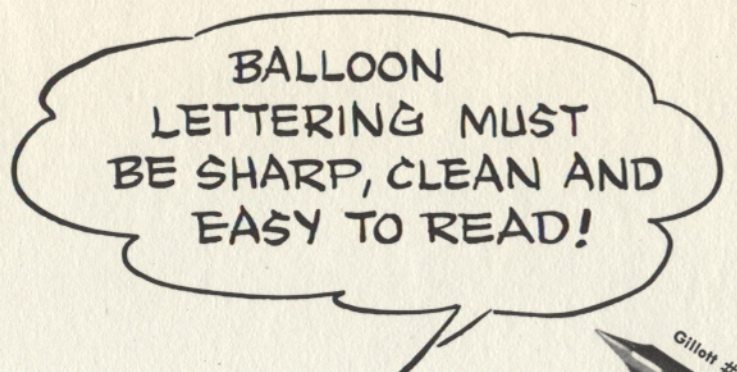
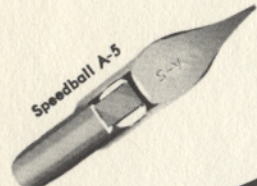
SQUARE STUB POINT FOR CARTOONS

Nearly 200 years of Blending Skill
applied to the World's Finest Tobaccos

More people smoke Camels than ever before!

Tools style letters

In order to draw a particular style of letter, you must know and choose the tool that most closely approximates the weight of the letter you wish to execute; don't try to make a tool do work that is outside its natural, physical limitations. When the above styles are drawn it will be found that a round tool will make an unvarying weight and that a flat tool will execute thick and thin strokes. Remember, the type of tool will "style" the letter



The importance of lettering

Lettering is important for you because it helps your cartoon tell its story, whether it is a humorous feature or a mailing piece for a local club. Look at the percentage of space in modern cartoons which is taken up by balloon and other kinds of lettering. Different kinds of lettering are used to tell different kinds of stories. It is important for you as a cartoonist to be able to choose and do the kind of lettering that will tell *your* story best.

For practical use by cartoonists, we have divided lettering into two categories: balloon lettering and display lettering. Balloon lettering is the kind used in most cartoons — easy to read, well-formed alphabets of capital letters. The other is display lettering. It simply means lettering used for any other purpose than balloon lettering. You will use these larger and more carefully formed letters for special parts of your cartoons, such as headings, signs on streets, gravestones, trucks, or for advertising headings, show cards, posters, and so on.

In balloon lettering speed and *clarity* are the most important elements. This lesson emphasizes the fact that *your* balloon lettering is going to be reduced in size *when* it is printed. Make it a habit to rule guide lines and *keep* your letters uniform and well spaced, so that they *are* easy on the reader's eye.

It's true that *most* successful comic strip men have an assistant to *do* their lettering. But, it is also true that each and every *one* of the men at the top is perfectly able to do his own lettering. The assistant merely saves him valuable time. If you are lucky enough to get a crack at being an established cartoonist's assistant, you *must* be able to letter as well as the boss, preferably better.

Like handwriting, your lettering style will develop naturally as you practice the standard alphabets — don't try to hurry it. Study the work of other cartoonists and you will see that their lettering has a definite tie-in with their style of drawing. Willard Mullin's lettering is perfect for his work, but good as it is, it wouldn't look right in the balloons of Harry Haenigsen's *Penny*. As you develop a style of drawing, you also develop an individual style of lettering. This is good, because your styles of drawing and lettering, like ham and eggs, should go together.

Naturally, the type of cartooning you are interested in will influence your lettering. However, for the sake of your bank balance it will never hurt you to learn to handle all types. There

is no quicker or easier way for a beginning cartoonist to pick up a few extra bucks than by doing display lettering. Most businesses use small signs in their displays. If you can letter *and* toss in a comic face or figure, it's that much easier to get the job.

Display lettering alphabets are generally modelled after established printers' type faces. "Type Face" means one of the many styles of cast metal alphabets which printers use in their work. We give you some good alphabets on the following pages and recommend that you pester your local printer for *some* of his old type-specimen books. Most printers are *glad* to help if they see you are truly interested in *learning* more about their beloved business. Also, both the Higgins Ink Co. and the Hunt Pen Co. publish excellent, *inexpensive* books which will help you with all *sorts* of special lettering styles.

On the opposite page you see some examples of display lettering done by experts. As a general rule, after using a large tool to form large letters for reproduction, you clean up the rough edges, fine lines and serifs with a finer pen or brush. These corrections, though subtle, add greatly to the finished appearance of the lettering. The Camel caption is an example of this way of working. The free letters were written quickly with a round brush with the concentration put on producing a pleasing design; then rough edges and bad weights were corrected with a fine pen. In styles such as this, where a certain freeness is desirable, much of the work's character would be lost if the lettering is traced down on another working surface. Another important tip for the beginner is to make sure that all the letters in the word belong to the same alphabet. Keep specimens of complete alphabets before you as you practice.

Any lettering can be corrected with a razor blade or Chinese white, but the less of this the better it will look. For clean work, get the good habit of wiping your pen regularly. Remember too, that old ink that has been left open for a time will gum up your pen point. If you have trouble making a clean pen line, try a new bottle of ink before you throw the pen point away.

Lettering is like all the rest of cartooning — you learn to letter by *lettering*. All we can do is show you how it is done. We can't practice for you. How good you will become will depend on the amount of time and care you spend on it.

Rr

Gothic

All elements of the letter are of equal width

Rr

Roman

Letter made up of thick and thin elements

Rr

Script

Letters thick and thin, based on handwriting



"Serifs" are the little spurs on the letters

Balloon lettering

Every cartoonist, regardless of his special field, must be able to do balloon lettering. At some time every professional will get jobs that call for his characters to speak in balloons. While individual styles in lettering may differ, the same basic rules apply to *all* balloon lettering.

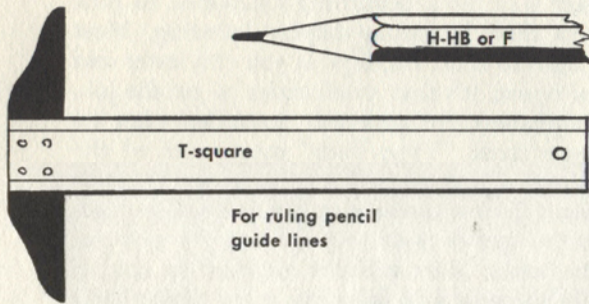
Most important, it must be easy to read *after* it is reduced and printed. Careless, uneven or badly spaced lettering will look even worse when it is reduced. Well spaced, neat lettering will take almost any amount of reduction and still be easy to read.

Remember, too, that your readers read *words*, not letters. Spacing and forming the letters into words is as important as

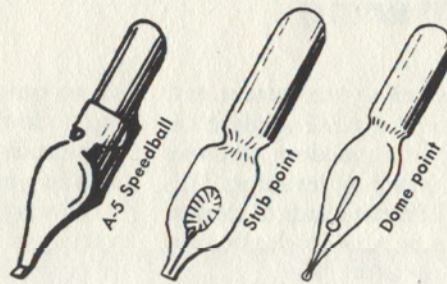
forming individual letters. Each word is a unit made up of individual letters — when it is properly designed it will be seen and easily read as a unit.

Evenly spaced guide lines are one of the greatest helps to the easy readability of your balloon lettering. First, the height of the letters in each line must be the same. Second, the spaces between those lines must be equal throughout the job. About $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the letters makes a good, clear space between lines of lettering. Keep your pencil lines light: remember you have to erase them when the job is done. Here you see a simple, effective method of spacing to keep your guide lines consistent.

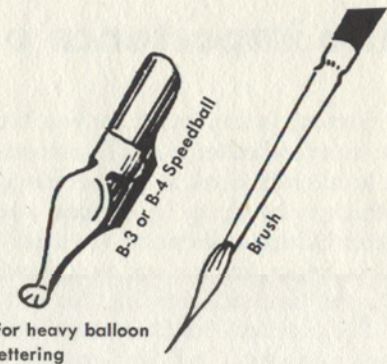
Tools



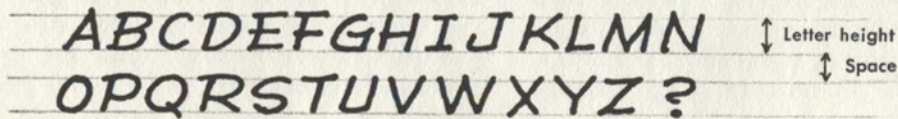
For ruling pencil guide lines



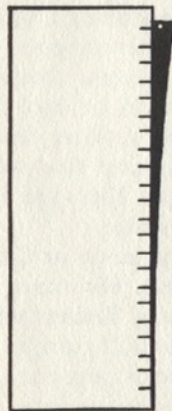
For regular balloon lettering



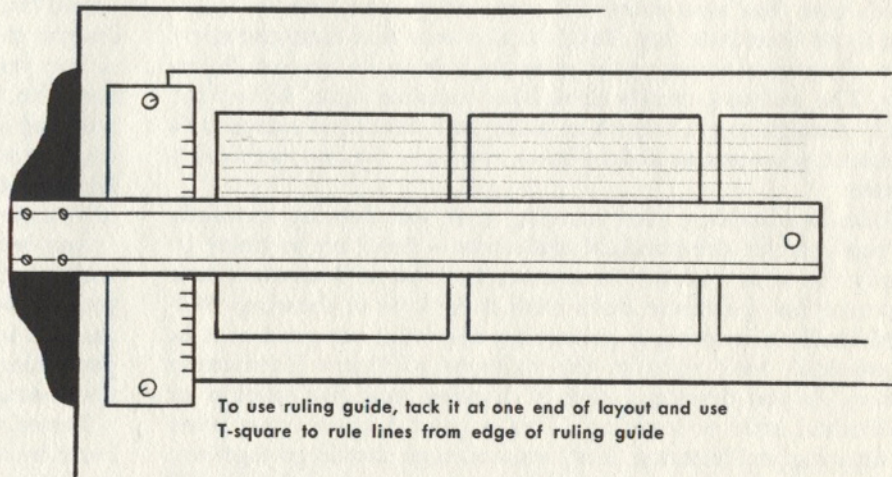
For heavy balloon lettering



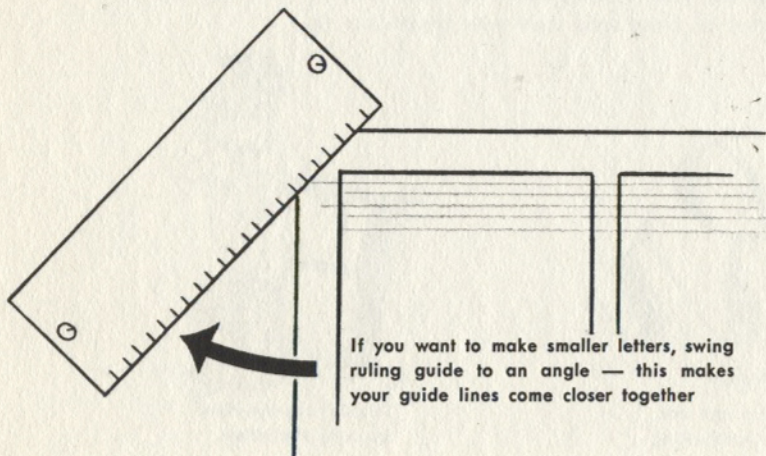
The space between lettering lines should be at least two-thirds of the letter height



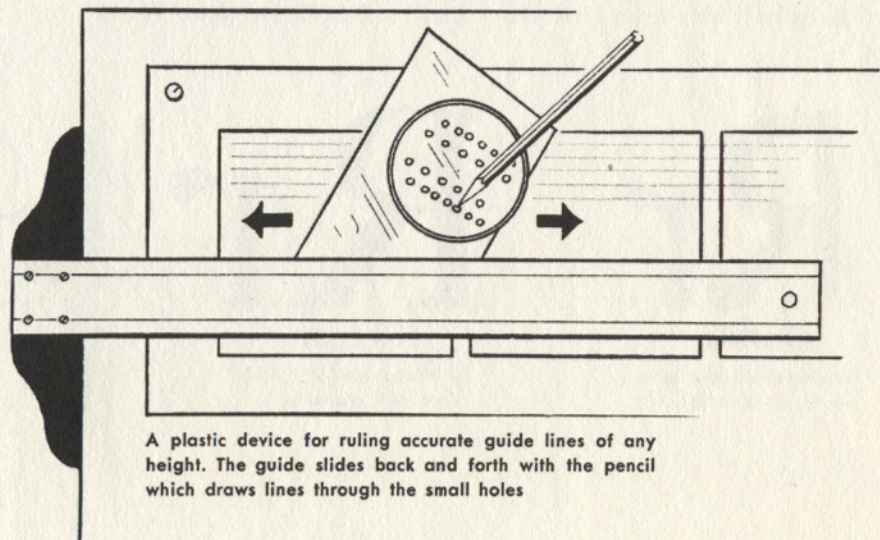
Make a ruling guide by inking correctly spaced guide lines along one edge of an oblong piece of Bristol board



To use ruling guide, tack it at one end of layout and use T-square to rule lines from edge of ruling guide



If you want to make smaller letters, swing ruling guide to an angle — this makes your guide lines come closer together



A plastic device for ruling accurate guide lines of any height. The guide slides back and forth with the pencil which draws lines through the small holes

Forming the letters

Balloon lettering is a single stroke alphabet: that is, each part of the letter is made with a single stroke of the pen. It is not outlined and then filled in. Some letters, like the *E* will require two or more strokes, while the letter *S* is completed with one continuous stroke. In the balloon alphabet on this page you can see the normal direction of the strokes used to complete each letter.

The exercises here are based on the actual pen strokes used to form the letters of the alphabet. Practice them until you can make the strokes easily and naturally. Work on ruled, spaced lines and keep your pen strokes within their limits.



Seven basic strokes

There are only seven basic pen strokes used in forming all of the letters of the balloon alphabet: 1. vertical, 2. horizontal, 3. slant to the right, 4. slant to the left, 5. curve to the right, 6. curve to the left, and 7. the double S curve which in balloon lettering is made with one stroke. Arrows indicate direction of stroke

Basic practice strokes (actual size)



Basic balloon alphabet (enlarged)



**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**

To familiarize yourself with the alphabet, rule guide lines and ink the complete alphabet two or three times. Make the strokes in the right directions and see how they combine to form letters

Do's and don't's (enlarged)

In the GOOD column we show you some acceptable variations on the type model. When the variations are stylized to the point of being hard to read they become BAD.

Type	Good	Bad
A	AAA	AAA
B	BBB	BBB
C	CCC	CGC
D	DDD	DDD
E	EEE	E E E
F	FFF	F F F
G	GGG	GGG
H	HHH	H H H
I	III	iI

Type	Good	Bad
J	JJJ	J J J
K	KKK	K K K
L	LLL	L L L
M	MMM	M M M
N	NNN	N N N
O	OOO	O O O
P	PPP	P P P
Q	QQQ	Q Q Q
R	RRR	R R R

Type	Good	Bad
S	SSS	S S S
T	TTT	T T T
U	UUU	U U U
V	VVV	V V V
W	WWW	W W W
X	XXX	X X X
Y	YYY	Y Y Y
Z	ZZZ	Z Z Z
I	Generally, most cartoonists put serifs on the letter "I" when it is a personal pronoun and omit them when it is part of a word	

Letter spacing and word spacing

After you have learned to form cartoon balloon letters, it is important to space them properly. There are just three things to think about when spacing your lettering:

1. The space between the individual letters.
2. The space between words.
3. The space between lines of lettering.

The spacing between letters varies because of the different basic shapes of the individual letters. Fitting them together pleasingly is a matter of judgment developed by practice.

The spacing between words should be enough to allow each word to be read separately and clearly as a *unit*.

Between lines of balloon lettering, allow a space of about $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the letters to keep the lines of lettering distinctly apart and easily legible.

THIS IS THE WRONG WAY

Rule pencil guide lines and keep your letters all the same height for ease of reading—stick to your guide lines!

THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY

Letter spacing (enlarged)

RE A D Y

Because of bad spacing, these five letters are not easily read as one word

READY

The same five letters pulled together form a word unit that is easy to read

Practice spacing letters this size

READY READY READY READY READY READY READY

Word spacing (enlarged)

READYTOEAT

These ten letters are well spaced as *letters* — but they mean nothing

READY TO EAT

The same ten letters with clear space between word units form an easy-to-read phrase

Practice spacing words this size

READY TO EAT READY TO EAT READY TO EAT

Check your lettering this way:

Here is a bad piece of lettering. Not only are the letters badly formed — in addition it breaks the three basic rules of having proper spacing between 1. Letters; 2 Word units and 3. Lines. Now see how we improve it, step-by-step

WHAT IS GOOD
LETTERING?

WHAT IS GOOD
LETTERING?

1. Here the letter forms are improved and on guide lines — but all spacing is bad.

WHAT IS GOOD
LETTERING?

2. The spacing of individual letters is good, but the words and lines run together.

WHAT IS GOOD
LETTERING?

3. Here the letters and word units are well spaced but the lines of lettering are too close.

THIS IS GOOD
LETTERING!

4. Now the letter forms and spacings of letters, word units and lines all help clear, easy reading

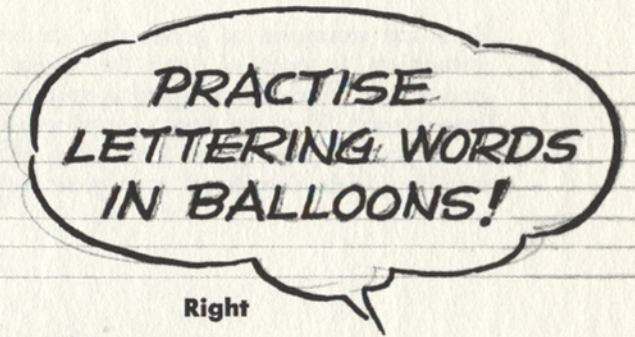
Procedure and practice

After you are familiar with the strokes and letter forms, you should practice by forming actual words and sentences. This is to train your hand to the forms and spacing of lettering at the same time. Set various limits of width and shape for your practice: when you letter a feature no two panels ever have the same space for balloons

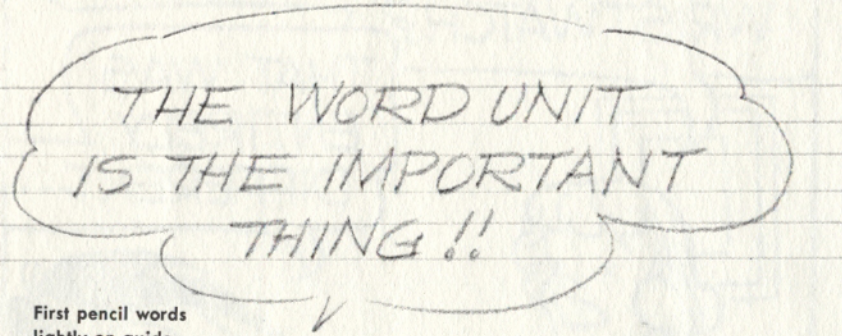
ABCDEFGHI
 JKLMNOPQ
 RSTUVWXY
 Z !!?? 1234

Wrong

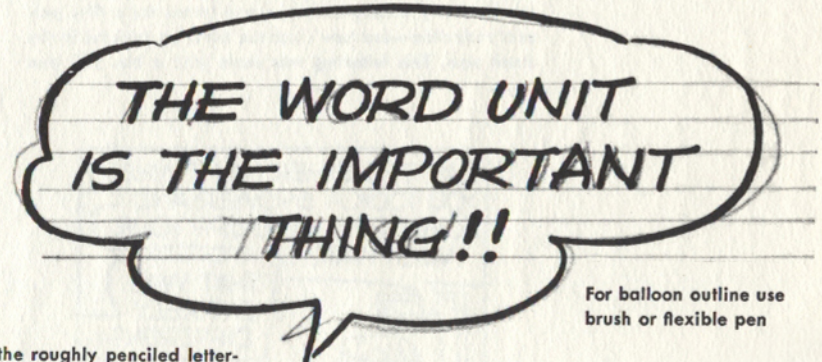
When practicing balloon lettering, don't just letter the alphabet — practice lettering and spacing actual words in your balloons



Right

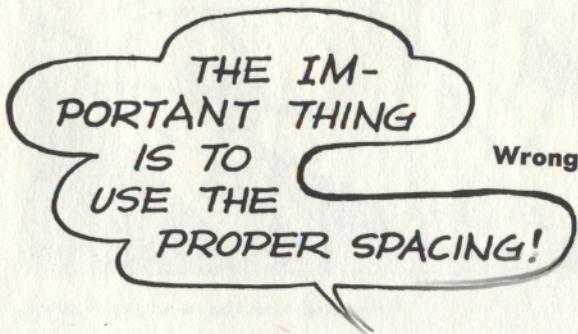


First pencil words lightly on guide lines



For balloon outline use brush or flexible pen

Now ink lettering. Remember the roughly penciled lettering is only there for a rough guide. In small balloon lettering you must learn to improve the pencil letter forms and spacing as you ink. Erase when finished



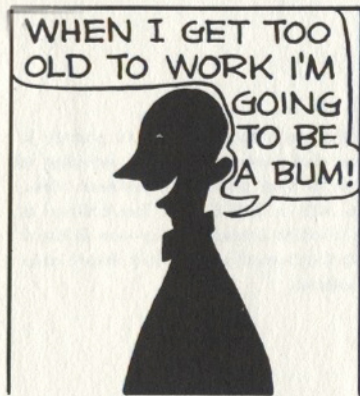
Wrong

Whenever possible, try to give balance and design to your balloons. Avoid weird shapes and splitting words—they will distract the reader's eye

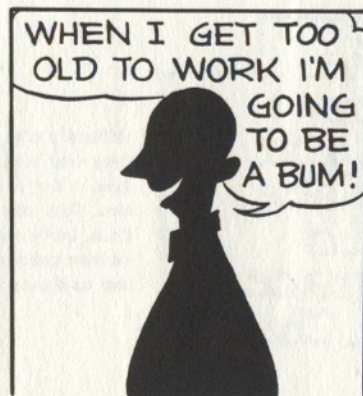


Right

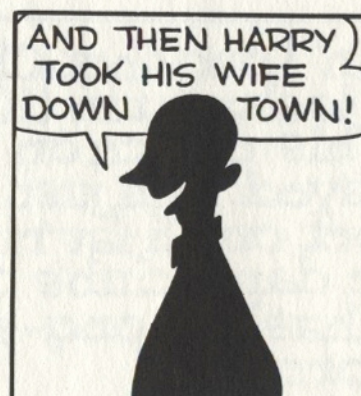
Balloons in panels



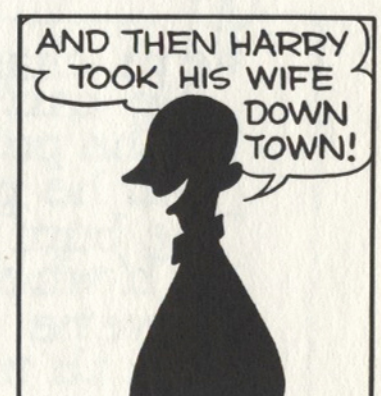
Don't squeeze your balloon outline up over heads in tight places



Do break outline—leave as much space as possible between head and letters



Don't split lettering like this—it makes your story hard to read



Do arrange it so your words follow each other without a break



Don't let your lettering dribble in small bits all over the panel



Do keep letters same height, but compress the width as you space them



Don't squeeze lettering into corners or put balloon outline too close when you have room



Do use your space to allow air around lettering—it's easier to read

Balloon letter in use

Here are examples of good, easy to read lettering by four cartoonists. In each of them the letters are well formed and spaced. The words are designed as units and the spacing between lines is good. They are easy to read when reduced and printed on rough newsprint paper. The styles, of course, differ, because each has been developed over years to fit naturally with a

particular style of drawing. Rube Goldberg's political cartoon was drawn about four times the size you see it here. In addition to the powerful letters "UN," the one word "Russia" stands out clear as a bell even after being so greatly reduced. *Think* about reduction when you do your balloon lettering.

Remember that the lettering as well as the drawing is reduced. Harry Haenigsen draws and letters for a fifty per cent reduction—see how clear the lettering remains in the small size. This lettering was done with a No. 170 pen

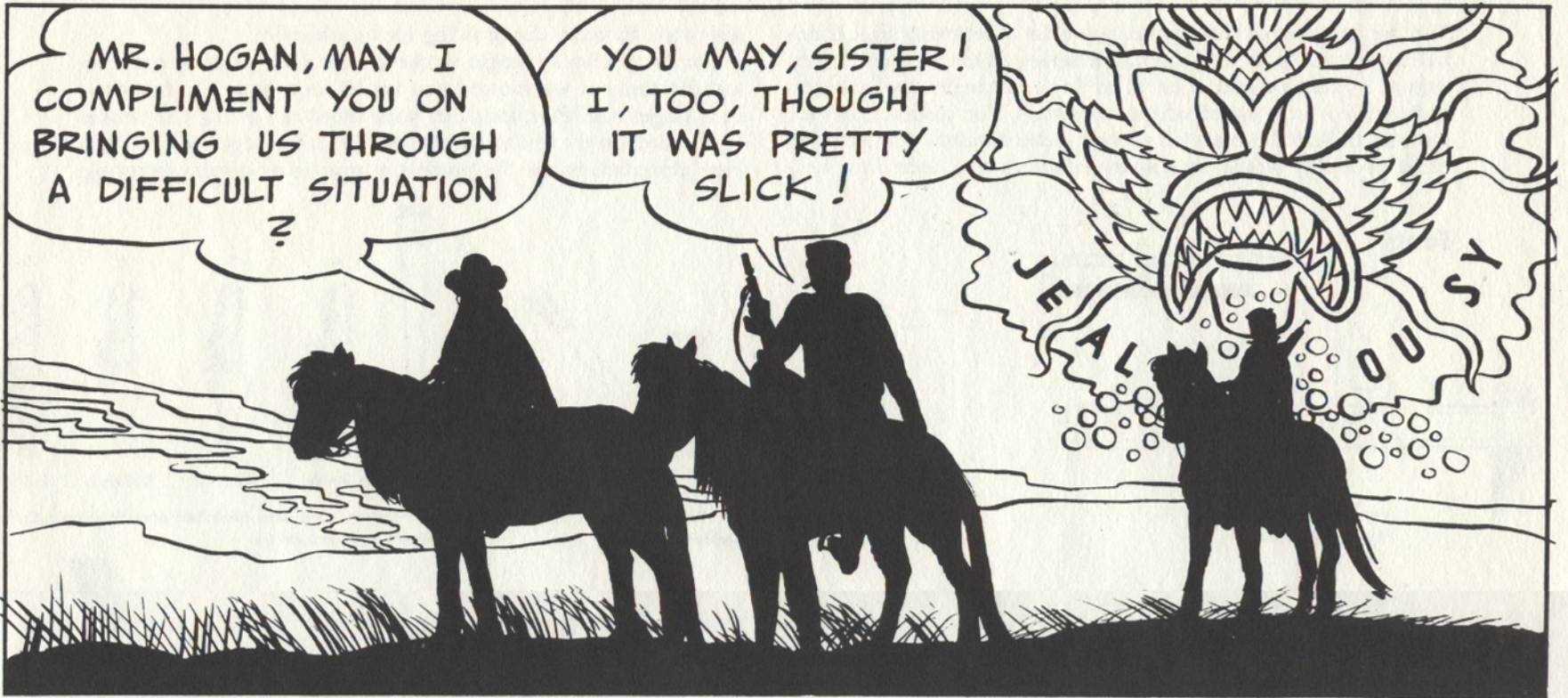


Reproduced same size as original drawing

⑦
 "We're chasin' Long-shot Charlie,
 He can't look you in th' face.
 For he put his deuce on Phalanx;
 An' he played him just to place.
 The bum bet on th' fav'rite, to
 Th' whole damn club's disgrace.
 O, we're chasin' Long-shot Charlie
 In th' mornin'!"

Willard Mullin did the main lettering of this parody in thick and thin, upper and lower case Roman lettering to give it the look of a printed page of traditional literature. This was done with a 290 Gillott. The balloon of Chas. looks just like what he intended it for—an informal cartoon grace-note to the over-all idea. This is shown same size as drawn and lettered

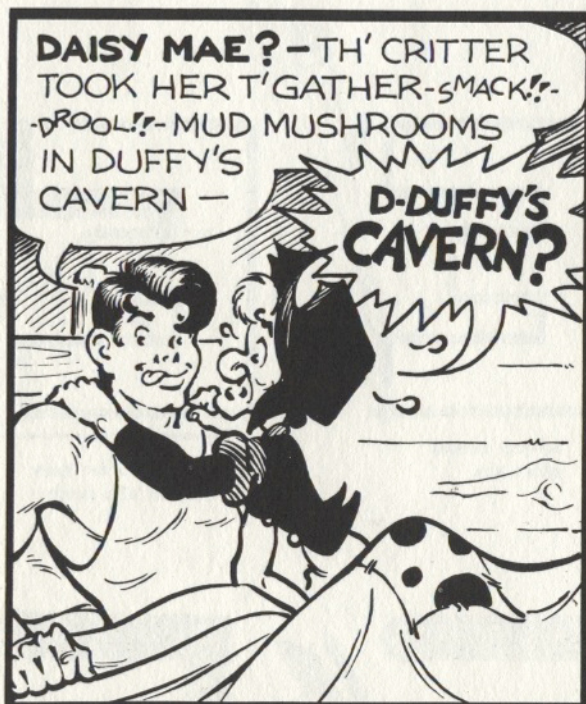




Reproduced same size as original drawing

The narrative adventure strip demands clear, easy-to-read lettering. Milton Caniff's guide lines leave plenty of space — about $\frac{1}{2}$ letter height — between the lines. Plenty of air between the lettering and the balloon outline also helps readability. The thought balloon above the last figure (right) took the form of the green-eyed dragon of jealousy. This was the last panel of a Sunday page, colored, and left the reader with a vivid idea

Wrecking Machine



Al Capp's interpolations of "Smack!" "Drool!" etc. are distinctly part of his individual style of getting an idea across to his readers. Notice that these words are done with "dancing" letters which are not ruled by the guide lines. The jagged outline of Mammy's balloon gives a crackling, explosive quality to the heavy letters



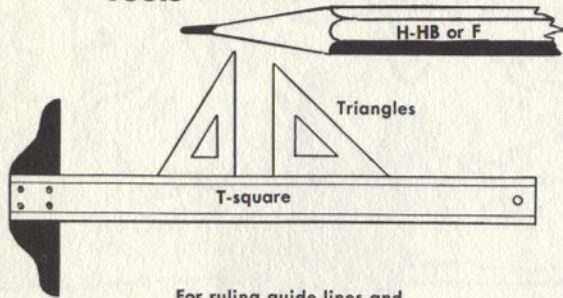
Rube Goldberg used these letters as a symbol to get his political idea across clearly. The perspective and shading on the letters makes them solidly three-dimensional, which adds to the power of the drawing

Display lettering

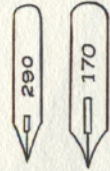
For the purposes of this course, any style of lettering that is not balloon lettering we call display lettering. This includes letters drawn in outline and then filled in, and single stroke letters done with a large speedball pen or brush. For instance, if your cartoon included a bank or grocery store window, the lettering on it probably would be display lettering and done in a suit-

able style to make the drawing look authentic.
• For large display single stroke letters your practice exercises are the same as we showed you for balloon lettering, but done in a larger size. Practice until your hand can swing the strokes easily and surely in the larger size. On later pages we give you type alphabets to use for models in practicing display lettering.

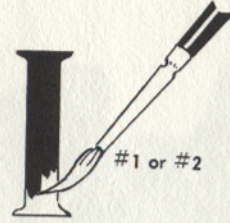
Tools



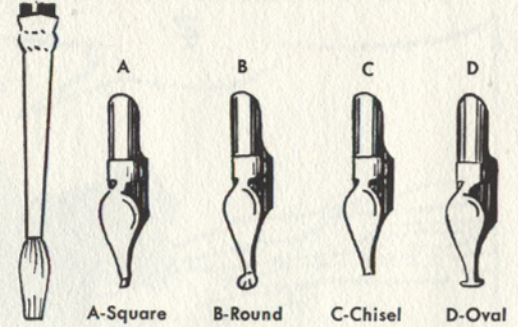
For ruling guide lines and laying out letters



Gillott
For outlining letters



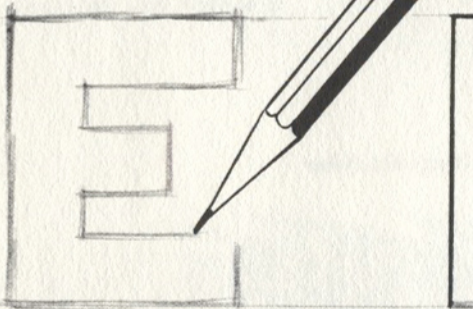
#1 or #2
For filling in outlined letters



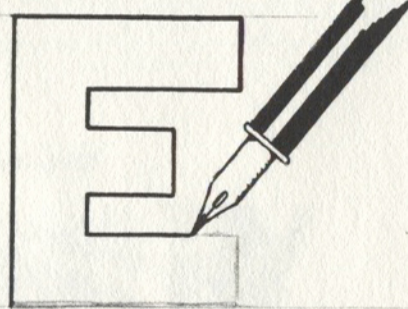
Flat lettering brush and speedball pens for single stroke and heavy outline letters

Procedure

Built-up solid letters



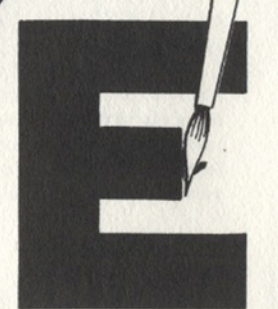
Lay out letter in pencil



Ink letter outline

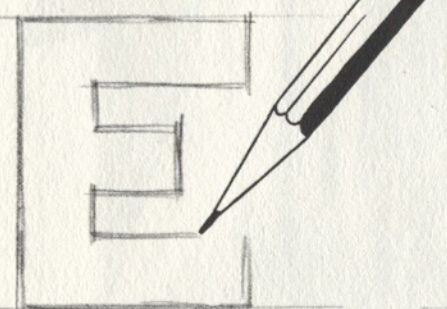


Fill in inked letter outline



Erase pencil and correct with China white if necessary

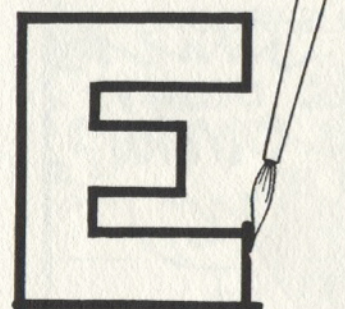
Built-up outline letters



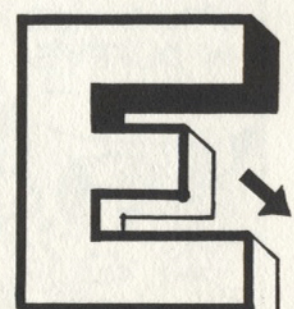
Lay out letter in pencil



Ink with Series B Speedball

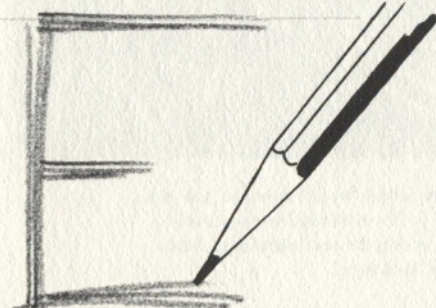


Square corners with white



Outline letters gain impact with shadow

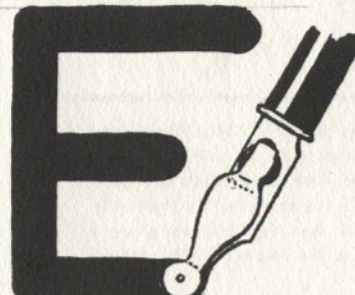
Single stroke letters



Roughly pencil in letter



Ink letter with single stroke of flat brush



Or... Use single strokes of large speedball pen to form letters



Correct mistakes and bad lines with China white

For easy reading the form of your letters is important — but *spacing* is equally important. You have only three kinds of spacing to consider: (1) space between letters, (2) space between words and (3) space between lines.

Spaces between individual letters vary. The basic forms of some letters fit together almost like a jigsaw puzzle, while some letters that oppose a curved side to a straight side have to be pulled together to kill white space. Only practice can give your eye the ability to space all letters pleasingly.

For the spaces between words, remember that your reader's

eye tends to read words as units: keep them well separated. If your words run too close together on the line, they blur together in the reader's eye and are hard to read.

Between lines of lettering, a space of about $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the letter makes a good, legible separation.

There can be no absolute, iron-clad rules about space to be left between letters and words. It is a matter of your own good optical judgment which only practice will develop. The illustrations will give you an idea of the importance of optical, as opposed to mechanical spacing.

Wrong — Mechanical spacing

SPACE WARNING

This is spaced mechanically — all the spaces between letters are the same, as shown by the gray strips

Right — Optical spacing

SPACE WARNING

The gray strips are the same width as above, but see how we have changed it by bringing some letters into the gray and leaving more space between others to make it look better

<p>The space left between letters is a matter of optical judgment. Because of differences in overall width of line and the shapes of the letters there can be no hard and fast rules about the distance to be left between letters. Correct spacing is the result of instinct developed by practice</p>	<p>W A Wrong</p>	<p>WA Right</p> <p>Some letters like W and A fit together neatly like a jigsaw puzzle. Other examples: R and Q, T and G</p>
<p>A R Wrong</p> <p>AR Right</p> <p>To kill excess white space, push bottom of slant letter A toward upright of R</p>	<p>A C Wrong</p> <p>AC Right</p> <p>Push slanted A under curve of letter C</p>	
<p>P A Wrong</p> <p>PA Right</p> <p>Shove the letter P close to the letter A to take care of excess white space</p>	<p>IN Wrong</p> <p>IN Right</p> <p>Get air between the straight letters</p>	
<p>NG Wrong</p> <p>NG Right</p> <p>Take up space between straight N and curve of G</p>	<p>SPACE WARNING Wrong</p> <p>SPACE WARNING Right</p> <p>Be sure to keep enough space between the words</p>	

Using type faces for models

When choosing a model alphabet to copy, get the best. For display lettering, actual printing type faces are the best models to use. Ever since type was invented, craftsmen have been refining the proportions and relations of each individual letter to the other letters of each type face. Their aim has been to make letters easier to read when made into words. When you copy these letters, you are getting the benefit of all this careful study and improvement in legibility.

Remember that the master letters for each type face were originally drawings — made by the hands of master artists. Today we still imitate the forms and styles of the past, even though we use new tools to shape our letters.

Space does not permit us to show you all the type alphabets now in use. For those students who wish to go deeper into this large subject of lettering, there are good, inexpensive books available at all art supply stores.

Gothic

Rr

Capital Lower case

The Gothic styles are sans-serif with all strokes of the same weight. These letters are good for heavy balloon lettering, posters and show cards. There are many type faces in this style including the "Franklin" and "Alternate" Gothics. Below we give you an entire Futura alphabet

Futura

Franklin

Alternate

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

YZ&

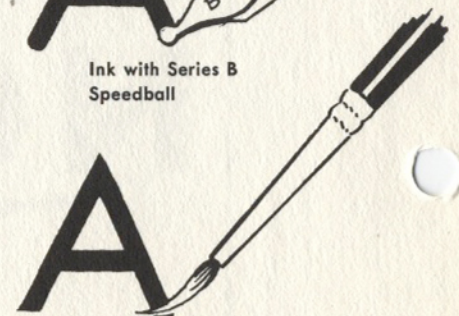
abcdefghijklmnop

qrstuvwxyz

1234567890\$



Ink with Series B Speedball



Square off corners with white

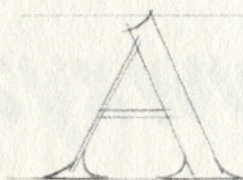
Roman

Rr
Capital Lower case

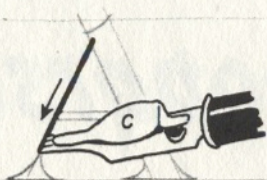
The Roman styles developed from the proportions and weights of the ancient, stone-carved letters of "classic" Rome. The graceful thicks and thins make it a little more decorative for special cartoon uses. Roman types are mostly used in printing books, magazines and newspapers. Below you see the Caslon alphabet

Caslon
Bodoni
Century

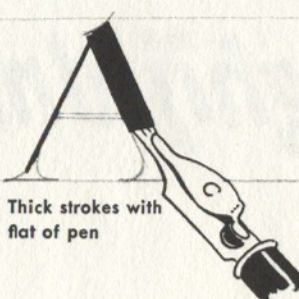
ABCDEFGHIJ
KLMNOPQRS
TUVWXYZ &
abcdefghijklmn
opqrstuvwxyz
1234567890 \$



Pencil complete letter



Ink thin strokes of letter with side of pen



Thick strokes with flat of pen



Outline and ink serifs with #170 pen



Square corners with white

Type alphabets

Here are some type alphabets for practice and reference. There are many more and we repeat: a type specimen book is a very handy item in your morgue. Everything, including lettering, that adds to the authenticity of a cartoon helps. Get the habit of noticing the kinds of letters that are used on store fronts, monuments, traffic signs and so on. Use the right style in the right place when your idea calls for display lettering.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890\$

Beton Open

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
XYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz**

Othello

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
YZ 1234567890\$**

Shadow

Pencil complete
letter — ink
shadow only

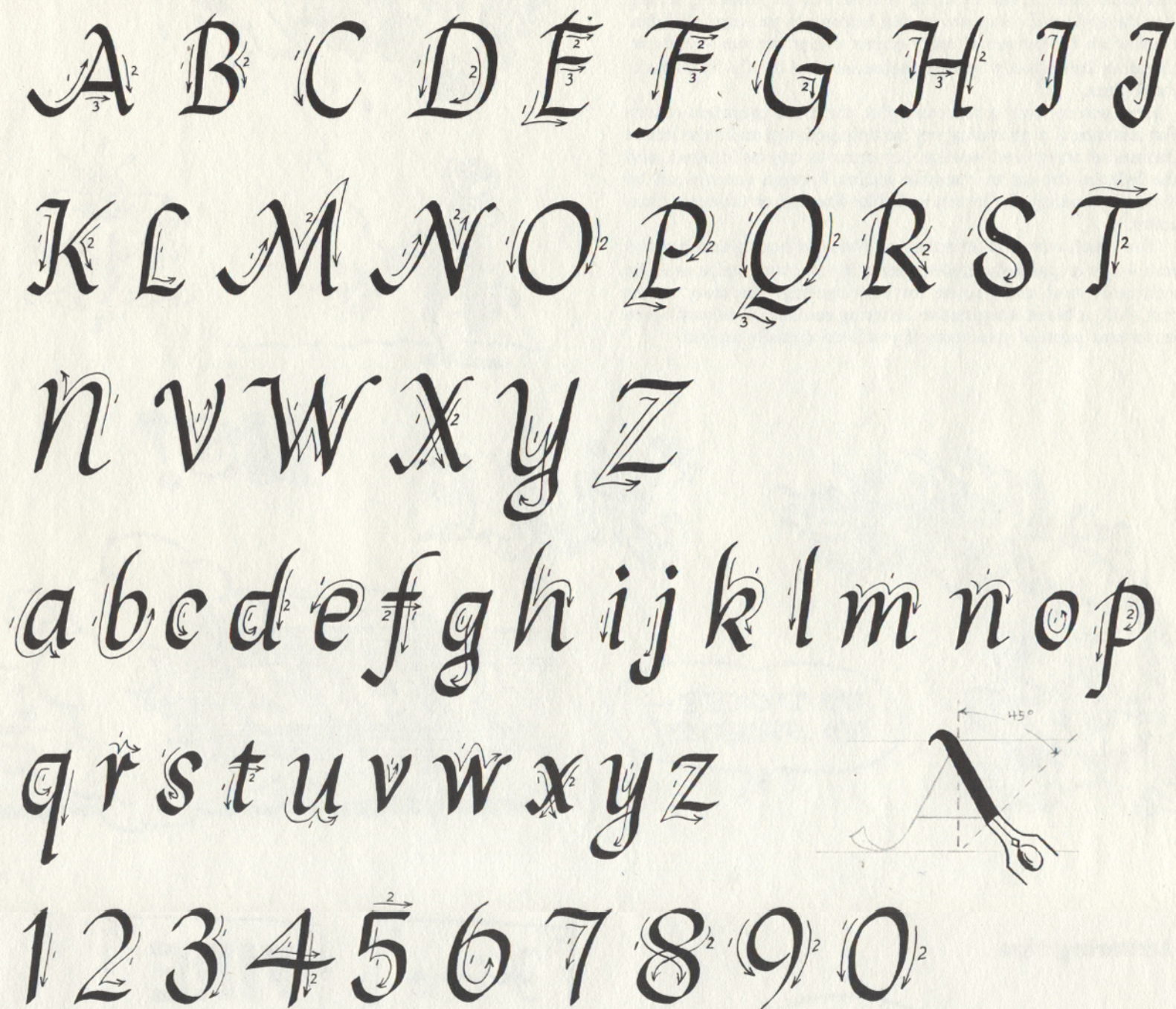
**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X
Y Z abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890\$**

Old English

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
YZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz**

Flash

A useful script alphabet



You will often be commissioned to do jobs that call for display lettering as well as cartoons. For such jobs you will find it useful to master an alphabet like the one on this page. It is easily read and easily lettered.

The first step is to rule three light pencil lines. The bottom line is the one on which all letters rest, the middle one determines the height of the small or lower case letters, and the top one the height of the capitals. The tall part of the letters b, d, f, h, k, and l are called ascenders and are generally drawn a little taller than the capital letters. In the alphabet shown, the lower case letters are five times as high as the thickness of the nib of the lettering pen and the capitals are eight nibs high.

Lightly pencil in the letters, then ink them in with a flat nibbed lettering pen and black ink. These letters were drawn with a Hunt pen #2 the same size as reproduced. By using a wider or thinner pen the letters can be made heavier or lighter. Hunt pens come in sizes ranging from #1, the heaviest, to #6,

the lightest. Speedball pens series C and lettering brushes can also be used in the same way. By using different size pens or brushes and drawing the guide lines different distances apart, you can create a great variety of sizes and weights to fit almost any kind of job.

There are two kinds of alphabets. One is "italics," the alphabet you see here. The other, called "roman," is straight up and down. To help you slant all your italic letters at the same angle, draw light pencil guide lines about one-quarter inch apart up and down on your paper with a T-square at the angle you want. Do not slant the letters too much or they will be hard to read.

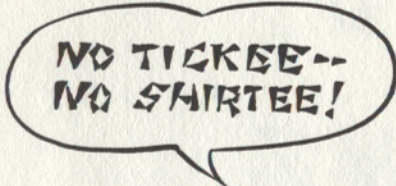
The secret of drawing this alphabet is always to hold the pen at an angle of 45 degrees as shown in the drawing. As you draw the letters, the pen automatically makes the thick and thin strokes. After you have mastered this alphabet, experiment with variations of these letter forms until you can find one that suits your needs.

Gimmick Lettering

In a true cartoon, the lettering is a part of the drawing, fitting into the style and composition and helping to put over the idea. Letters can be formed of every object under the sun — the cartoonist is limited only by his imagination and his ability to make them clear.

Here you see only a few examples, there are countless others. For instance, if a quavering cry for help goes up, make the letters themselves waver and wobble. Icy remarks can be lettered, and the balloon drawn, to resemble icicles. Foreign accents can be shown by making the letters look like Russian or Oriental characters.

Too much screwball lettering can become boring and hard to read — use it sparingly. Balloon lettering in comic strips must be uniformly neat and precise for easy reading: the story comes first. Still, a bit of imaginative lettering can add a real wallop to important parts of your story if you keep it easily legible.



Lettering tips

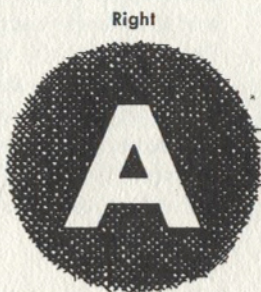
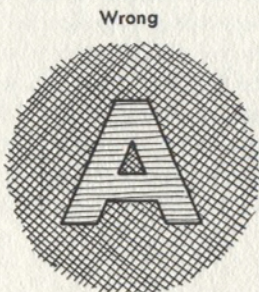


For heavy, emphasized words in balloons use a speedball B-3 or B-4



When you letter something like a sign — which is supposed to be easy to read — do it in the right style for the job

Single stroke brush letters give action to single heavy words in a balloon

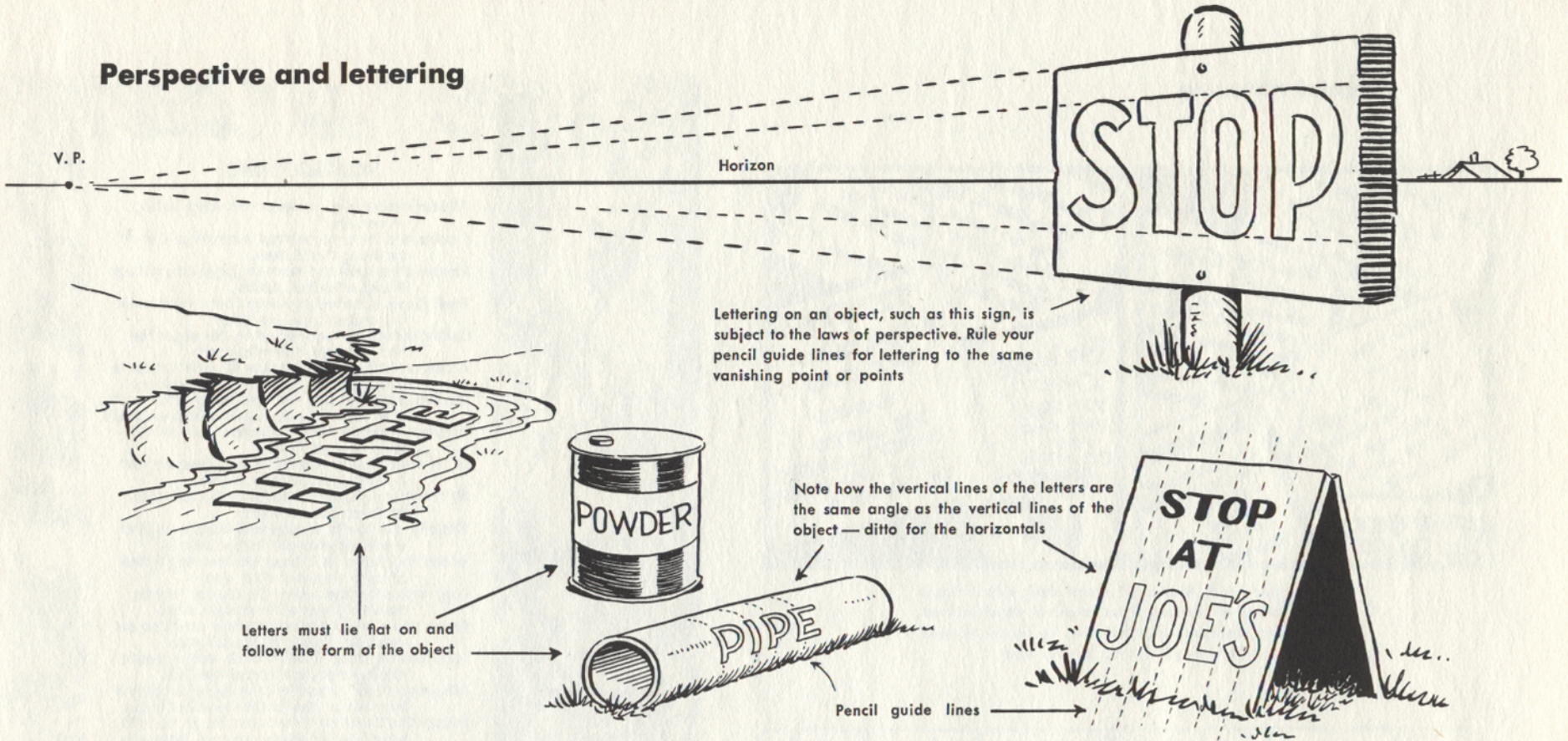


When shading on or behind letters, remember to make the contrast clear. Remember — if it's hard to read it's no good

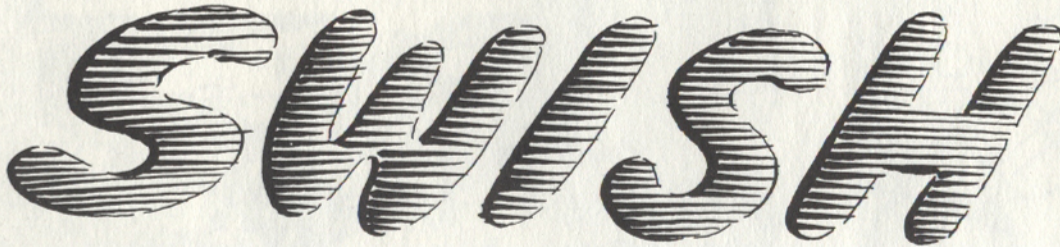


When working for color reproduction you can make initial letters stand out by having a form behind them to take color. The letters themselves can also be designed for areas of color

Perspective and lettering



Shading letters and shadows



The shading here helps give the feel of the action



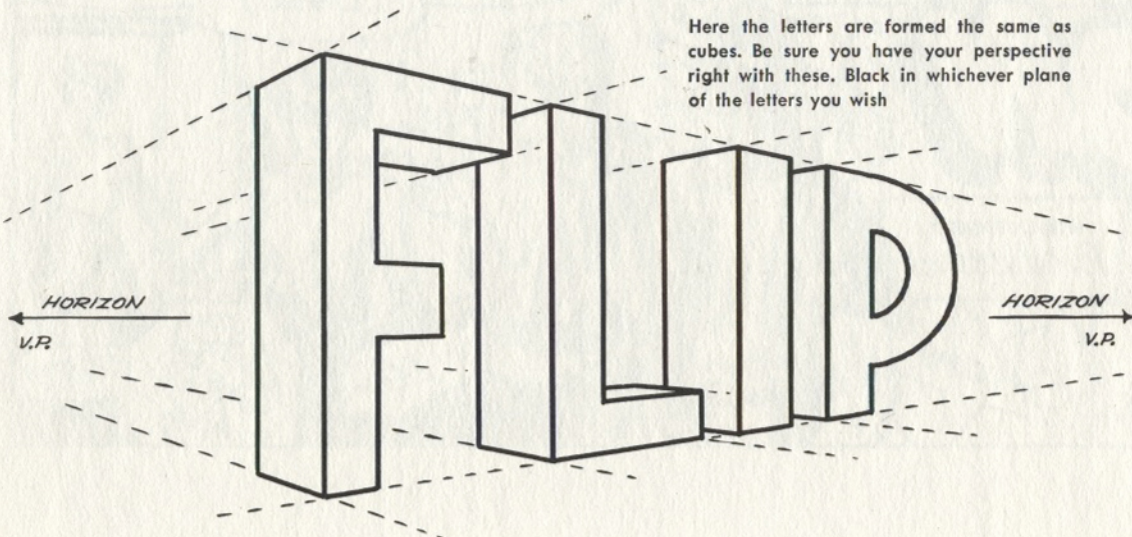
To make a letter stand up—treat the shadow as you would with any other object

Light

When shading letters be careful to keep the light source the same on all letters

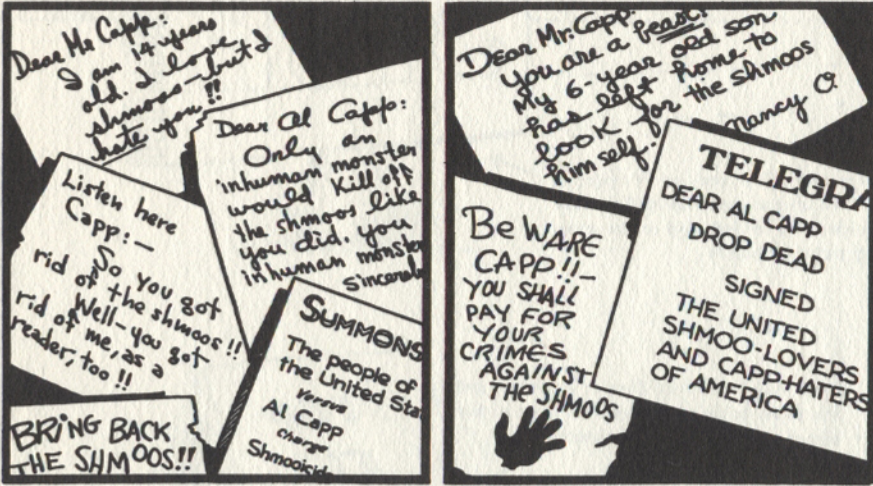
This type of shading is easy to do if you think of the shadow as being the same as the letter but shifted over

Here the shadow is at an angle from the letter, tapering down to the bottom

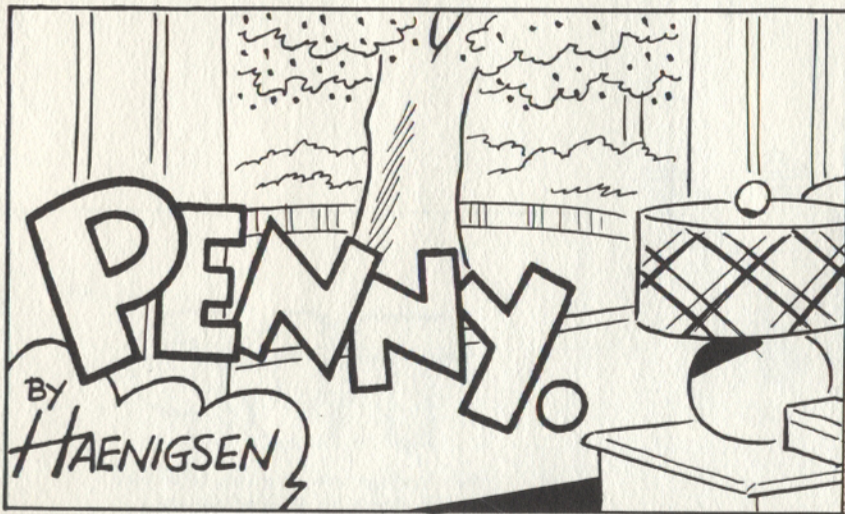


Here the letters are formed the same as cubes. Be sure you have your perspective right with these. Black in whichever plane of the letters you wish

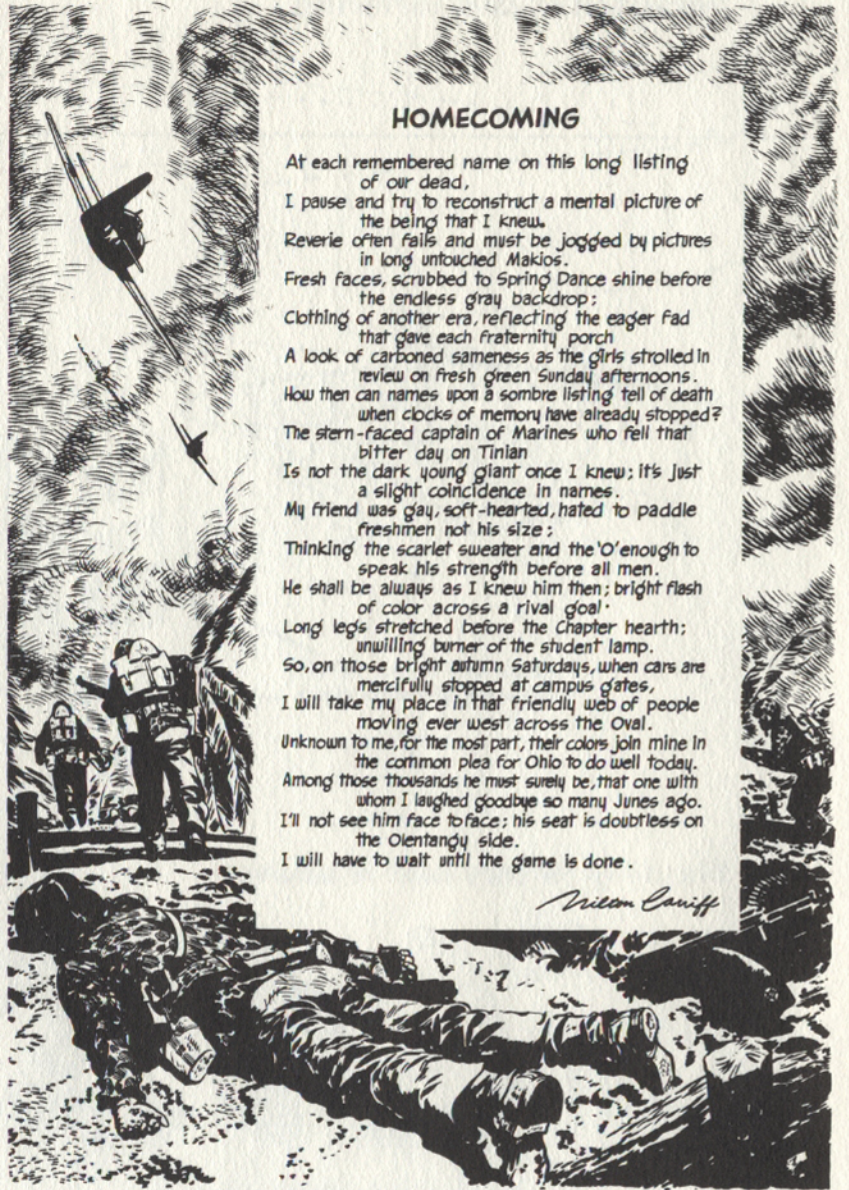
Special lettering



In these two panels from a Li'l Abner daily strip Al Capp uses a variety of lettering styles to create visual interest. When using longhand script lettering, be careful to make sure that it will be legible after it is reduced



The name of the feature is usually hand-lettered in its creator's distinctive style with a large signature in the first panel of a Sunday comic page



In this serious drawing on a serious subject for the Ohio State Alumni Magazine Milton Caniff deliberately uses a rather plain upper and lower case alphabet to put the message across simply and with good taste

Knowledge of type is put to work here. Film companies' names set the stage in the first panel of this Sunday page



FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE
Student Work
Lesson 18

To study and practice

In this lesson you learn the rules and procedure for doing balloon and display lettering. Good lettering is important for all cartoonists. It is a trademark of the real professional.

Anyone can learn to do good balloon lettering -- all it takes is enough careful practice. Practice by drawing and lettering balloons on bond typewriter paper. Frequently review your lesson and check your lettering for:

1. Form of the letters - page 5
2. Letter spacing - pages 6 and 11
3. Word spacing - page 6
4. Design and placement of balloons - page 7

You have an opportunity to practice and improve your lettering every time you write a letter. Carefully letter the name and address on each piece of mail you send out. Don't just scribble your ideas or captions under your drawings -- letter them with professional care. Poor lettering can spoil an otherwise excellent cartoon.

In criticizing your lettering we are going to consider the forms of your letters, the letter spacing, the word spacing and the shape and logical placement of the balloon.

The assignment you are to mail to the School for criticism

On the reverse side of this sheet is a diagram layout -- for an ad in your local newspaper. Your drawing can be the same size as in this layout (or scaled up if you wish to work larger). Do not draw it smaller in scale. Follow the general layout or, if you feel you have a better approach, create your own. Pages 7, 8 and 9 of the Introduction to the Course show you good examples of advertising layouts containing cartoons.

Your local hardware dealer wants a cartoon with hand-lettered copy to run as a two-column newspaper advertisement for his store. His message is simple -- "Clean up, paint up, fix up" -- and to get it across to possible customers he wants a cartoon which will illustrate this theme in a humorous, interesting and attention-getting manner. In the layout for this ad, A represents the general area the cartoon is to occupy, together with the balloon and dialogue spoken by the cartoon character. The words in the balloon should read "_____ (name of store) has everything you need." B represents the space in which you are to letter the following copy: "CLEAN UP -- PAINT UP -- FIX UP," and space C is for the name and address of the firm, real or invented, which you are to letter also.

Your ad should be drawn on an 11 x 14-inch sheet of drawing paper in ink, using either brush or pen.

Present your assignment in the same clean, professional manner you would use if you were submitting it to the cartoon buyer of a publication. Letter your name, address and student number carefully in the lower left-hand corner of the page. In the lower right corner, place the Lesson Number. Mail to:

FAMOUS ARTISTS CARTOON COURSE
Westport, Connecticut

(over)

To study and practice

In this lesson you learn the rules and procedure for doing balloon and display lettering. Good lettering is important for all cartoonists. It is a trademark of the real professional.

Anyone can learn to do good balloon lettering -- all it takes is enough careful practice. Practice by drawing and lettering balloons on bond typewriter paper. Frequently review your lesson and check your lettering for:

Balloon lettering →

Cartoon → (A)

Headline → (B) CLEAN UP!
PAINT UP!
FIX UP!

Name and address of firm → (C) Name and address of firm

(over)