This is a typographic puzzle. Which typeface do you think fits which shoe? The answers are on the next page, but don't look now – that would be cheating. Remember which letter from the boxes on this page goes with which number from the opposite page, then turn the page and check against our personal favorites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooper Black</td>
<td>MESQUITE</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>c</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Böcklin</td>
<td>CAMPUS</td>
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<th>e</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tekton</td>
<td>Snell Roundhand</td>
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In some cases it is very easy to spot a typographic faux pas.
No one would use the same shoes to go dancing, run a mile, climb the north face of the Eiger, and walk to the office—not many people, anyway. While your feet may pretty much stay the same shape, they need different types of support, protection or, indeed, enhancement to perform all the above tasks and many others besides.

This also applies to type. Sometimes the letters have to work hard to get across straight facts or numbers, or they may need to dress up the words a little to make them seem more pleasant, more comfortable, or simply prettier.

Some shoes fit your feet better than others, and you get to like them so much that you just want to keep buying the same kind over and over. Your friends, however, might begin to give you a rough time over your taste in footwear, so why not buy a few pairs of the same model but in different colors? Now you have more choices at the same comfort level.

Where’s the analogy with type? Well, you can print it in different colors, on different backgrounds, dark on light or light on dark. It will always appear as if you are actually using more than one typeface.

Your personal choice of typefaces to match the shoes will probably be quite different from the ones shown here. With more fonts to choose from than there are shoes in your typical shoe store, the task is daunting.

Luckily, the intended typographic purpose narrows the choice down as much as where you will be wearing your shoes. Fortunately for the fashion-conscious designer, there are many options, even for similar design applications.

Cooper Black—see opposite page—is a very popular typeface, and was even more so thirty-five years ago. It has its advantages: nice and cuddly, heavy, and relatively unusual. But if you think it’s been used a little too often, you can try Goudy Heavyface, ITC Souvenir Bold, Stempel Schneider Black, or ITC Cheltenham Ultra. Compare them with each other and you will see they’re all quite different, but might do the same job just as effectively.

Not all of us want to be seen wearing the same shoes as everybody else.
So type has its practical uses— it can walk, run, skip, jump, climb, and dance. Can it also express emotions? Of course. If you look closely at a letter, you can see personality expressed in its physical characteristics: light or heavy, round or square, slim or squat. Letters can stand at attention next to each other like soldiers or they can dance gracefully on the line. Just as some words sound better than others, some words look nicer than others. That may be because we don’t like the meaning of the word, but often we’ve formed an opinion before we’ve even read it. Isn’t it nice that the o imitates the way we make our lips round to pronounce it? And how could the i stand for anything but the pointed sound it has in “pick”? 

Dark emotions call for a black typeface with sharp edges; pleasant feelings are best evoked by informal, light characters. Or are they? The trouble is that as soon as you select a typeface that looks appropriate, put it on a page, surround it with space and perhaps other elements, it can take on a totally different look. So for the moment, we’ll stick to choosing appropriate typefaces.

Doubt?

Runic Condensed

Doubt? Doubt?

Bodega Sans Light

Doubt?

Block Extra Condensed

Doubt?

Harlem Slang

Doubt?

Bureau Empire

Runic Condensed is slightly awkward and definitely not suited for long passages. Its spiky serifs and exaggerated letterforms do not agree with classic ideals of beauty and fine proportion. If unusual letterforms express uneasy feelings, these other condensed types might be a good choice.

Bodega Sans adopts ideas from the high period of Art Deco. It was designed by Greg Thompson in 1990; its serifed companion followed in 1992.

Block is a family of typefaces originally designed by H. Hoffmann in 1908, with many subsequent versions released through 1926. Block simplified the setting of justified display lines with a system of capital and lowercase letters of varying widths that allowed the compositor to use the more extended alternate characters to fill out short lines. Block was the staple jobbing font for German printers well into the 1960s, when phototypesetting replaced hot metal. The irregular “mealy” outlines appeal to a modern audience, who like that recycled, used-before look.

Neville Brody designed the movie titles for A Rage in Harlem. In 1996, he was persuaded to turn that design into a full family of typefaces. The informal weight is aptly named Harlem Slang.

In 1937 Morris Fuller Benton designed Empire for Vogue magazine. David Berlow revived it in 1989, adding an italic and a lowercase, both unavailable in the original.
Some words are much more fun to find an appropriate typographic equivalent for than others. (Surprise, surprise.) It may be fairly difficult to find a majority agreement on the right typeface to spell "doubt," but this one shouldn't cause any problems.

What's more unexpected, more surprising, than someone's handwriting? The best casual typefaces have always managed to carry some of the spontaneity of handwritten letters into the mechanical restrictions of typesetting. Even the names of some typefaces make you want to choose them. How about this one: Mistral—a cool wind blowing from the north into southern France. And indeed, in the south of France it seems to have become the standard typeface for every shopfront and delivery van.

In case you don't agree that Mistral suggests surprise, here are some alternatives.
The more characters in a word, the more chances there are to find the right letterforms to express its meaning. This word doesn’t give us many choices; just three characters: joy or JOY. Seeing that the lowercase j and y look so similar, an all-capital setting will work better with this one. All three typefaces here have a generous feel to them—open forms with confident strokes and a sense of movement.

The original Kabel, designed by Rudolf Koch in 1927, has distinct Art Deco overtones, whereas International Typeface Corporation’s 1976 version has a very generous x-height and is more regular and less quirky.

Syntax has the proportions of ancient Roman letters, but no serifs, making it both contemporary and classic looking. It was designed by Hans-Eduard Meier in 1968. A completely redesigned and expanded version was released by Linotype in 2001.

Lithos is Carol Twombly’s 1989 rendering of Greek inscriptions—just as elegant as Roman capitals, but less restrained. This face became an instant success (graphic designers still use it for all sorts of trendy purposes), which goes to show that a classic can also be cheerful and modern.

It is nice to see words typeset so their own explanations are carried in the letters. These free and easy shapes certainly make you think of a joyful person with arms in the air.
Anger, like doubt, can be described as a dark feeling that calls for a black, heavy typeface. Anger is not as narrow as doubt. It needs room to expand, sometimes to shout out loud.

It helps if the letters are not perfectly worked out and closed in on themselves, but rather a little irregular, leaving room for our imagination. A well-balanced Univers or Helvetica would not do.

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