



The Logotype Checklist

This document outlines the examination process for critiquing existing logotypes, creating evolutionary logotype designs, and examining quality of work. Use the questions under each section throughout to guide your self-critique and help you improve your work.



Big Picture

Overall Look and Feel

What feelings does it communicate? What does it remind you of?

Does it communicate a subtle theme or message?

Who do you foresee being drawn to it?

Who do you foresee being turned off by it?

Who is the intended audience?

Sensitivity Gut Check

Are there any subtle or overt points of misinterpretation?

Is the mark overtly stereotypical in a way that could offend?

Type Hierarchy

Are the most important words being emphasized?

How can we optimize hierarchy for the quickest read?

Shape

What is the overall shape of the logotype?

Will this shape be easy or difficult to work with in various layouts?

Will the logo work easily as an avatar on social media?

Basic Legibility

Could any letter forms be misinterpreted?

Does the logotype contain any letter forms or letter form features that consistently prove problematic in terms of legibility?

Examples would be open loops forming vertical strokes, certain forms of script letter forms, open counters in letters that would traditionally have closed counters, etc.

Scale

What is the smallest size the logo will be used? Do adjustments need to be made to improve legibility at small sizes?

What is the largest size the logo will be used? Do adjustments need to be made to make the logotype feel more elegant and less heavy-handed at large sizes?



Letterform Drafting

Jessica examines the consistency of the following. If inconsistencies are found, she asks if they seem intentional enough so as to not feel like mistakes. In tech terms: “Is it a feature or a bug?”

Letter Style

Do all the letter forms appear to be from the same alphabet?

Is serif and terminal treatment consistent (if applicable)?

Baseline

Do all the letter forms follow a consistent baseline? Be it straight, angled, wavy, arced, etc.

If the letters deviate from a consistent baseline for stylistic purposes, do those deviations threaten legibility?

Spacing

Is the overall letter-spacing too tight or too loose in a way that affects legibility?

Is the spacing between individual letters optically (rather than mathematically) consistent?

Letter Width

Do the letter forms follow the same basic width structure, allowing for adjustments based on optical perception?

Do the letter forms follow a classical width structure?

Letter Height

Do all the lowercase letter forms (aside from those with ascenders) terminate at the same x-height?

Do all uppercase letter forms terminate at a consistent cap-height?

Have optical adjustments been made, such as the inclusion of overshoot for rounded letter forms?

Weight

Do all of the thin strokes have a consistent weight?

Do all of the thick strokes have a consistent weight?

Have adjustments been made to rounded letter forms to create optical consistency with straight-sided letter forms?

Have connection points at ligatures been adjusted to create optically consistent weight?

Stroke Angle

Do all vertical strokes follow the same angle?

Have optical adjustments been made to the stroke angle of long ascenders and descenders?

Do the axis of each letter follow a consistent angle?

Pen Influence

If the logotype is influenced by a calligraphic instrument, such as a pointed pen, broad pen, or brush, are the letter forms created in a way that follows the natural behaviors of the instrument?



Ascenders / Descenders

Will the length or shape of ascenders and descenders affect logo use in certain layouts?

Ligatures

If there are existing ligatures, do they occur naturally or follow traditional typographic models?

Are there additional opportunities for ligatures that feel natural and do not negatively affect legibility?

Swashes

If swashes are integrated with the letter forms, do they feel natural or forced? Are they applied in a way that negatively affects legibility?

Are there opportunities to integrate swashes in a way that feels natural, does not negatively affect legibility, and does not deviate from the overall look-and-feel goals of the logotype?

Serifs

If the logotype has serifs, are they applied appropriately according to traditional typographic models?

Ornaments & Icons

If there are ornaments, decorative elements, or icons, are the styles of those elements consistent with that of the logotype?

Are additional elements necessary? Do they add to or subtract from the visual experience of the logo?

Type Decoration

Do additional decorative motifs to the exterior or interior of letter forms (such as textures, hatch lines, in-lining, drop shadows/shades etc.) add to or subtract from the visual experience of the logo?

Vector Drafting Tips

Minimal points necessary (point occurs where a path changes direction), with points on extrema of curves when possible

No “kinks” in path.

No extreme angles culminating in overly sharp points inside or outside the letter.

Bezier handles working evenly and not “crossing streams.”

Not “obviously vector” (the medium is not louder than the art).

Stroke terminal angle is considered.