

GLOSSARY OF CALLIGRAPHY TERMS



ascender	a stroke which rises above the waistline.
base line	writing line; see diagram.
counter	the open or white space within a letter.
descender	a stroke which drops below the writing line, or base line.
ductus	the prescribed number, order and direction of strokes to make each letter.
foot	the terminal, usually bent, portion of a leg or stem.
leg	the secondary or tertiary stroke of h, m, n, u.
ligature	a joining or fusion of two or more letters; the thin oblique stroke which joins cursive letters.
majuscule	a capital or uppercase letter.
minuscule	a small or lowercase letter.
pen angle	the angle of the pen edge to the writing line
pen width	the breadth of a pen edge; pen widths are used to measure the distance between base line and waistline, and between waistline and ascender and descender guidelines.
serif	an ornamental end or beginning of a stem or leg.
stem	the “backbone” of a letter; its central stroke.
swash	a flourished stroke.
waist line	upper guideline for minuscules; see diagram.
x-height	the height of minuscule letters without ascenders or descenders; in other words, the distance between the base line and the waist line.
weight	the boldness of the alphabet, measured in pen-widths.
white space	area not filled by ink – the spaces between letters and lines, including counters.