

Ellen Lupton:
Size + Scale

32-PT SCALA PRO

32-PT INTERSTATE REGULAR

32-PT BODONI

32-PT MRS EAVES

Do I look fat in this paragraph?

When two typefaces are set in the same point size, one often looks bigger than the other. Differences in x-height, line weight, and set width affect the letters' apparent scale.

Mrs Eaves rejects the twentieth-century appetite for supersized x-heights. This typeface, inspired by the eighteenth-century designs of Baskerville, is named after Sarah Eaves, Baskerville's mistress, housekeeper, and collaborator. The couple lived together for sixteen years before marrying in 1764.

Mr. Big versus *Mrs.* & Mr. Little

32-PT HELVETICA

32-PT MRS EAVES

32-PT MRS EAVES

The x-height of a typeface affects its apparent size, its space efficiency, and its overall visual impact. Like hemlines and hair styles, x-heights go in and out of fashion. Bigger type bodies became popular in the mid-twentieth century, making letterforms look larger by maximizing the area within the overall point size.

12/14 HELVETICA

Typefaces with small x-heights, such as MRS EAVES, use space less efficiently than those with big lower bodies. However, their delicate proportions have lyrical charm.

12/14 MRS EAVES

Like his lovely wife, **MR EAVES** has a low waist and a small body. His loose letterspacing also makes him work well with his mate.

12/14 MR EAVES

These texts are set in the same point size, but their perceived scale is completely different.

THE WORLD IS FLAT

TYPE CRIME

Minimal differences in type size make this design look tentative and arbitrary.

THE WORLD IS FLAT

SCALE CONTRAST

The strong contrast between type sizes gives this design dynamism, decisiveness, and depth.



SCALE



UNITED NATIONS' OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

Maps, 2009. Design: Harry Pearce and Jason Ching/ Pentagram. *This series of posters for the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime uses typographic scale to compare drug treatment programs, HIV incidence, and other data worldwide. The designers built simple world maps from country abbreviation codes (GBR, USA, RUS, etc.). Note Russia's high incidence of HIV and low availability of addiction rehabilitation programs.*