

# Typesetting

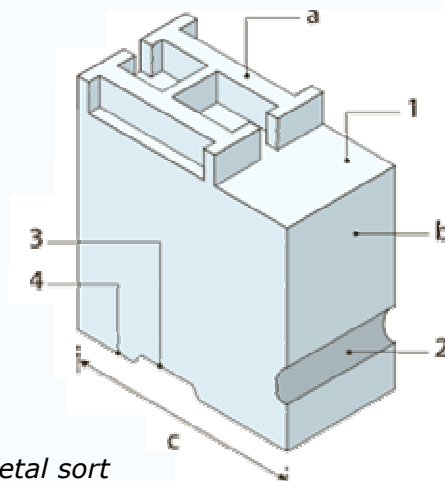


*Movable metal type*

**Typesetting** involves the presentation of textual material in an aesthetic form on paper or some other medium. Before the advent of desktop publishing, typesetting of printed material was produced in print shops by **compositors** working by hand, and later with machines.

After centuries of innovation the basic principle of typesetting remains the same: the *composition* of glyphs into lines to form body matter, headings, captions and other pieces of text to make up a page image, and the printing or transfer of the page image onto paper and other media. The two disciplines are closely related. For example, in letterpress printing, ink spreads under the pressure of the press, and typesetters take this dynamic factor into account to achieve clean and legible results.

## Letterpress era



*Diagram of a cast metal sort*

During the letterpress era, with the invention of moveable type in Europe circa 1450, individual printing characters were made of blocks of type metal, and called sorts, assembled by hand for each page. In the diagram at right, the main parts: a face, b body or shank, c point size, 1 shoulder, 2 nick, 3 groove, 4 foot. Wooden printing sorts had been in use for centuries and were combined with metal type.

Hand compositing was rendered obsolete by continuous casting or hot-metal typesetting machines such as the Linotype machine and Monotype at the end of the 19th century. The Linotype, invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler, enabled one machine operator to do the work of ten hand compositors.