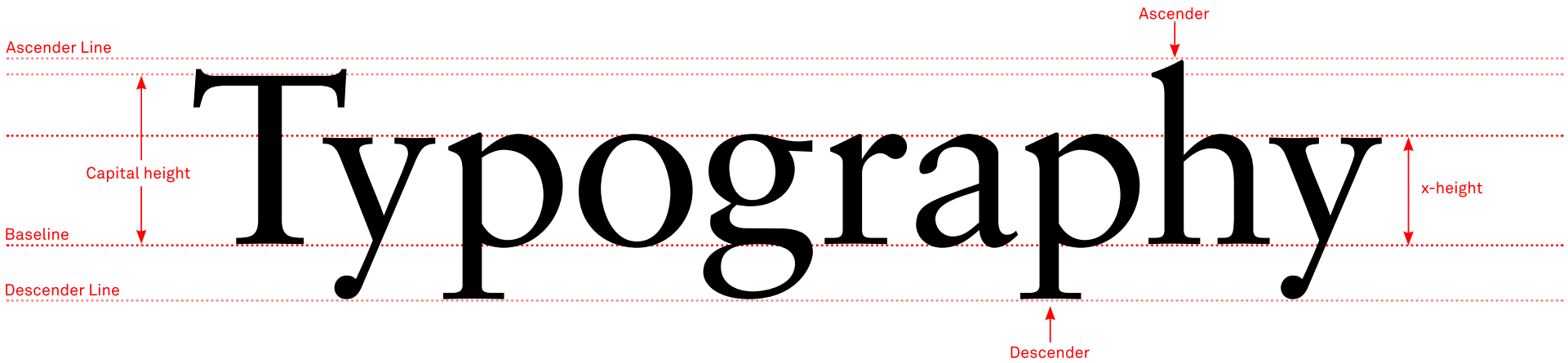
Baseline
The invisible line on which all characters sit.

Capital Height or Cap Height
The height of a capital letter.

x-height
Literally the height of a letter 'x'.

Ascender
An upward vertical stroke found on the part of lowercase letters that extends above the typeface's x-height.

Descender
The part of the letters that extends below the baseline.



Ascender height
Often slightly above the cap height.

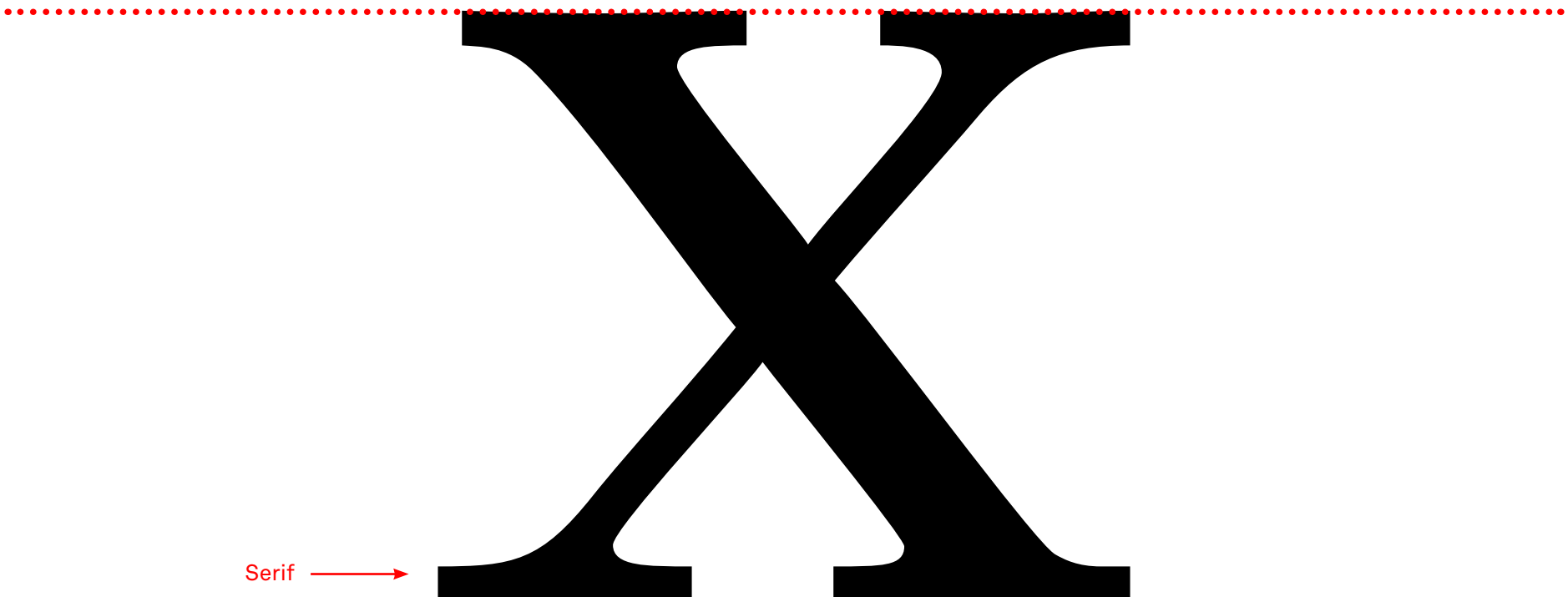
Descender line

Overhang
Curved characters such as o, e & s often hang slightly over the cap height, x-height or baseline.

Serif

Serif
A serif is the little extra stroke found at the end of main vertical and horizontal strokes of some letterforms. Serifs fall into various groups and can be generally described as hairline (hair), square (slab), or wedge.

Some special serif-like character parts are spurs and beaks.



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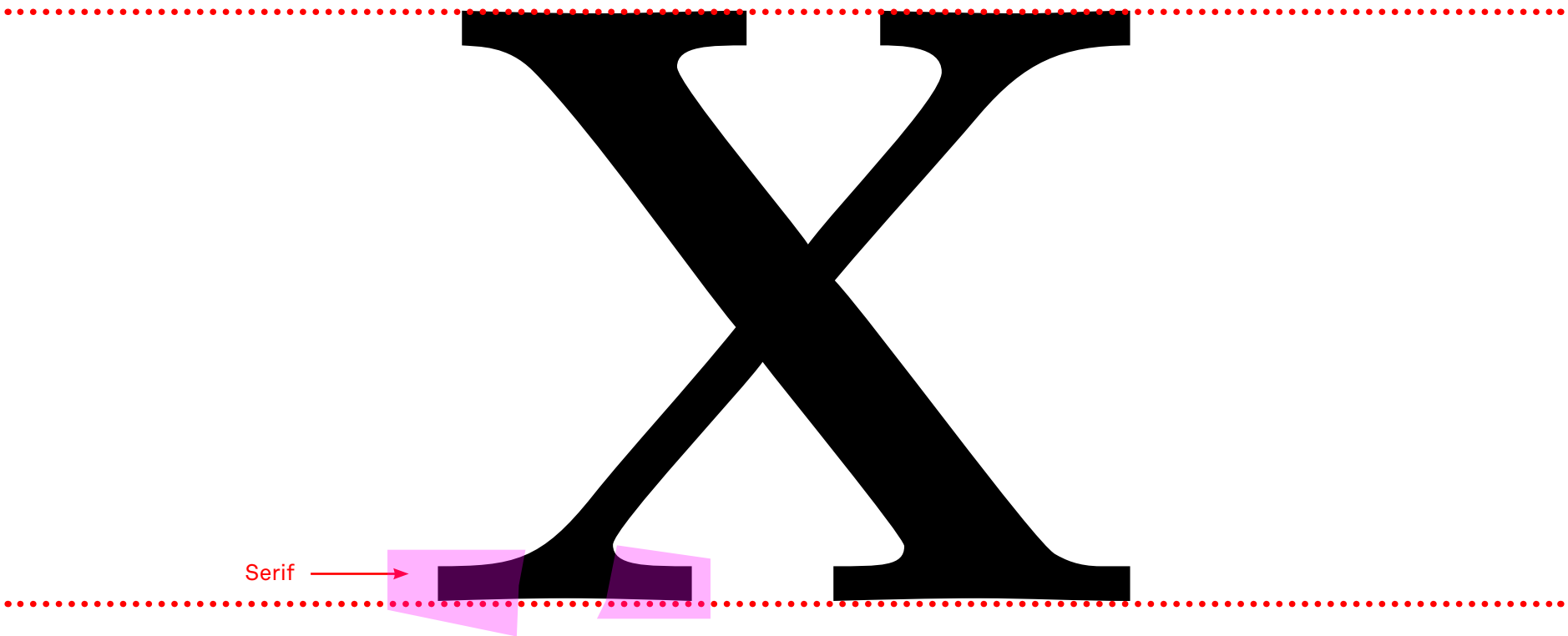


Serif types

Gothic

Transitional serif

Bracketed serif

Tuscan serif

Glyphic serif

Wedge serif

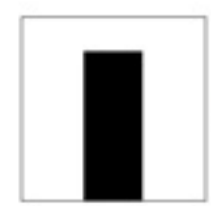
Slab serif (bracketed)

Cursive serif

Oldstyle serif

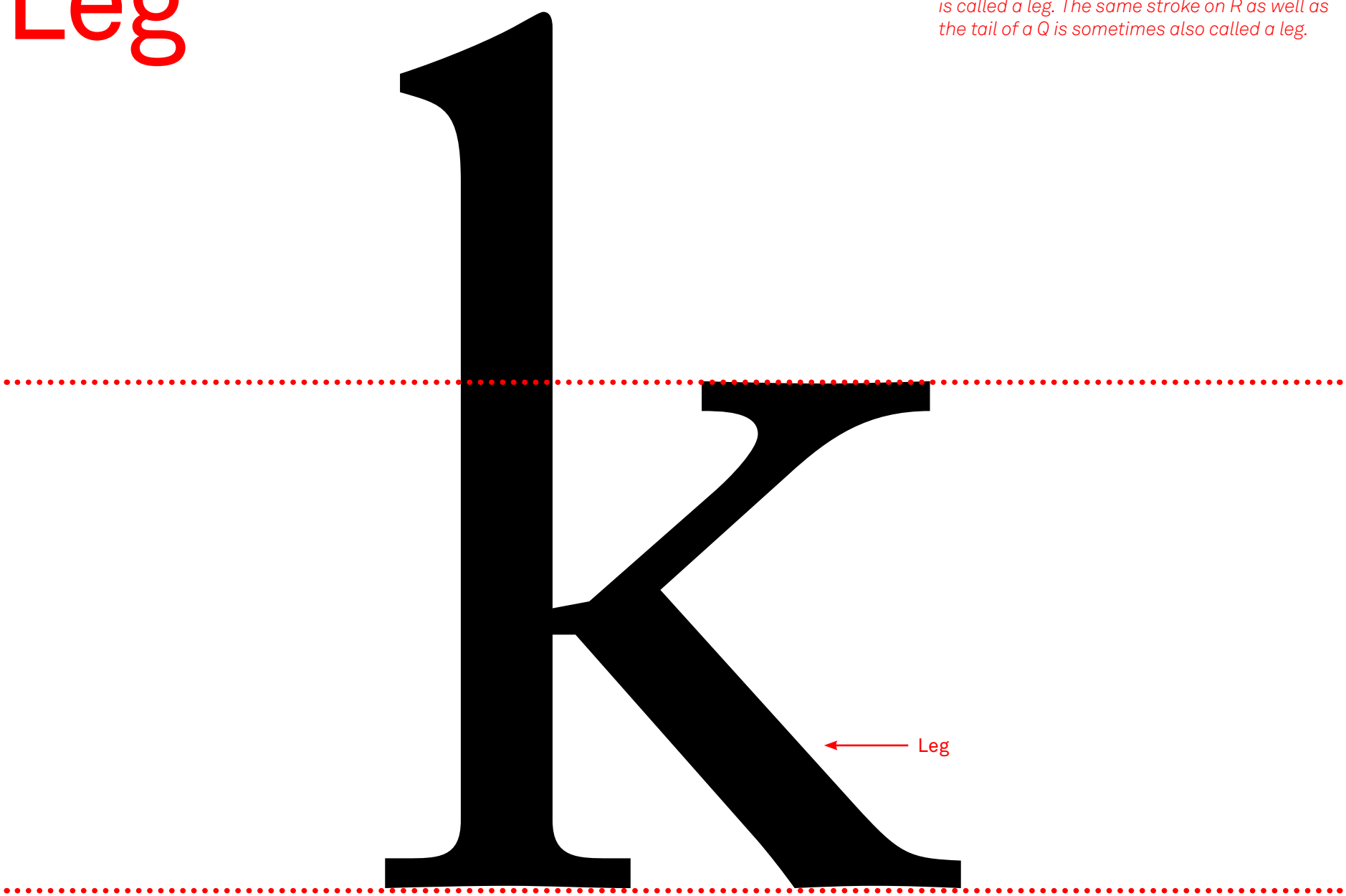
Hairline serif

Slab serif (unbracketed)


Sans serif

Leg

Leg
The lower, down sloping stroke of the K and k is called a leg. The same stroke on R as well as the tail of a Q is sometimes also called a leg.



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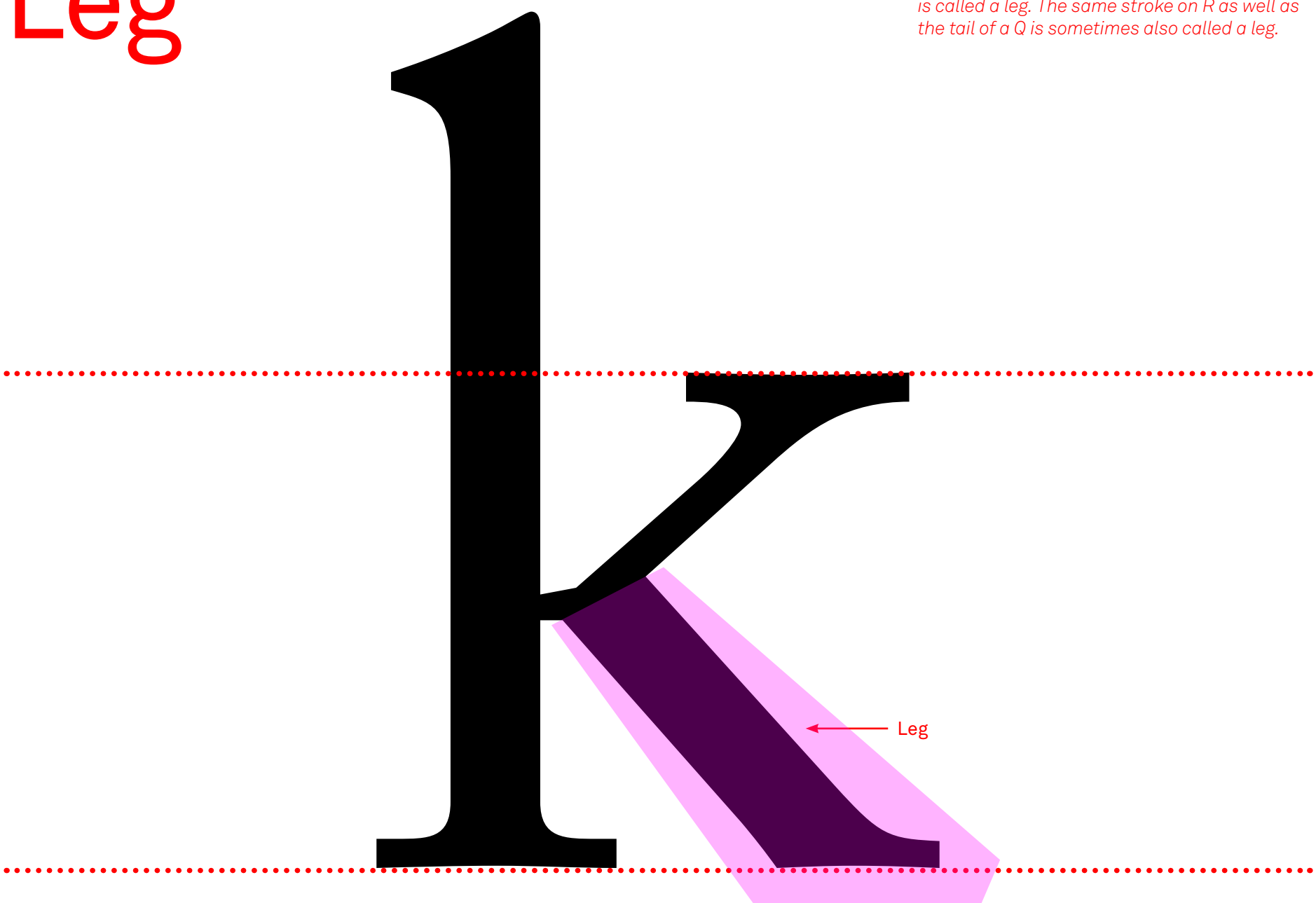

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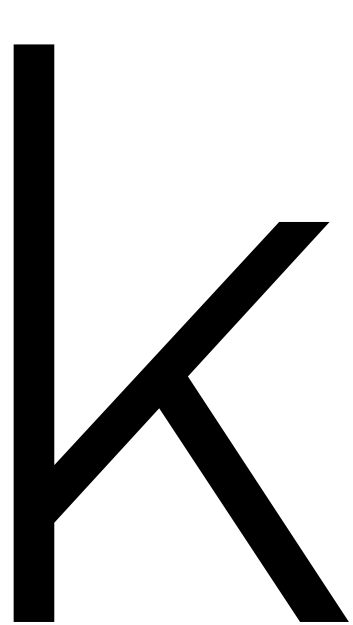
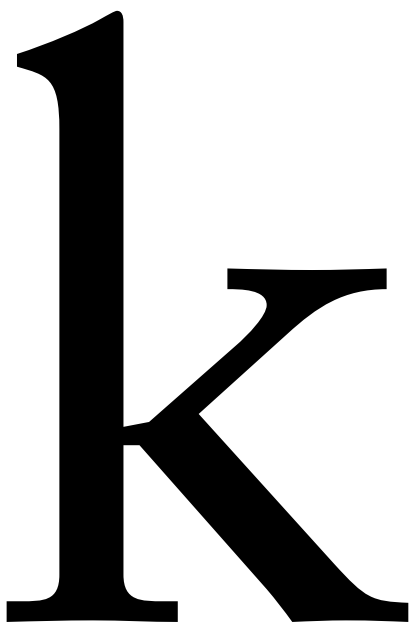
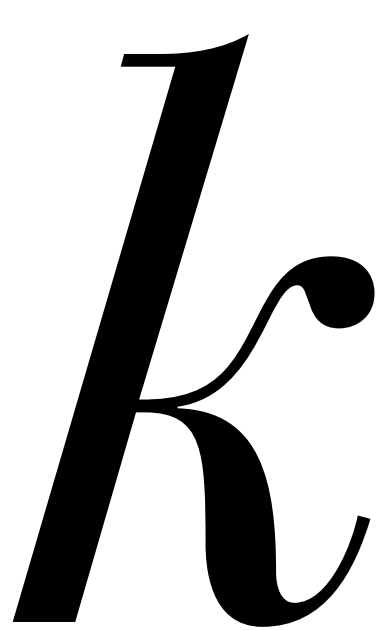


Akkurat Light

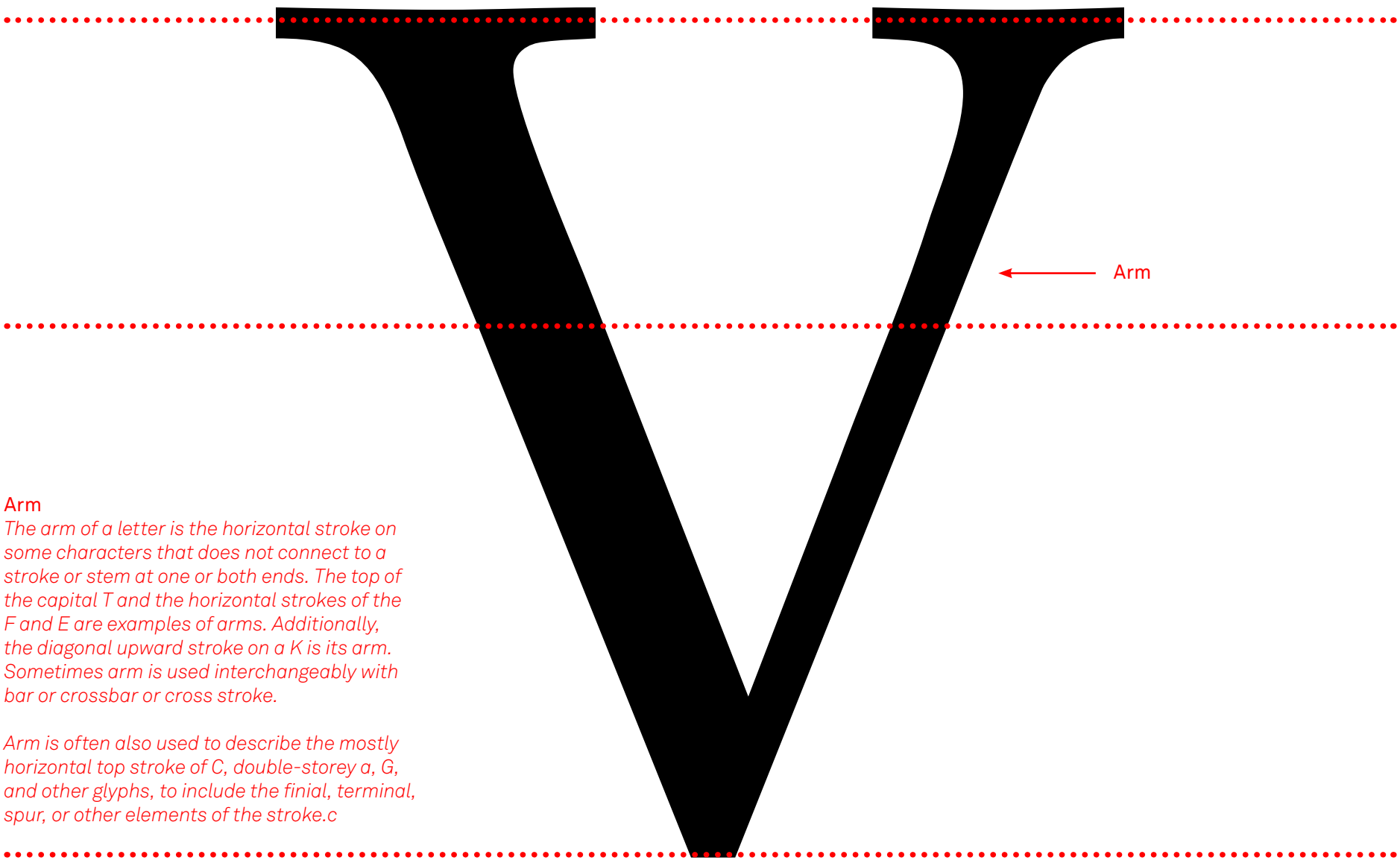


Sabon Roman



Bauer Bodoni Italic

Arm

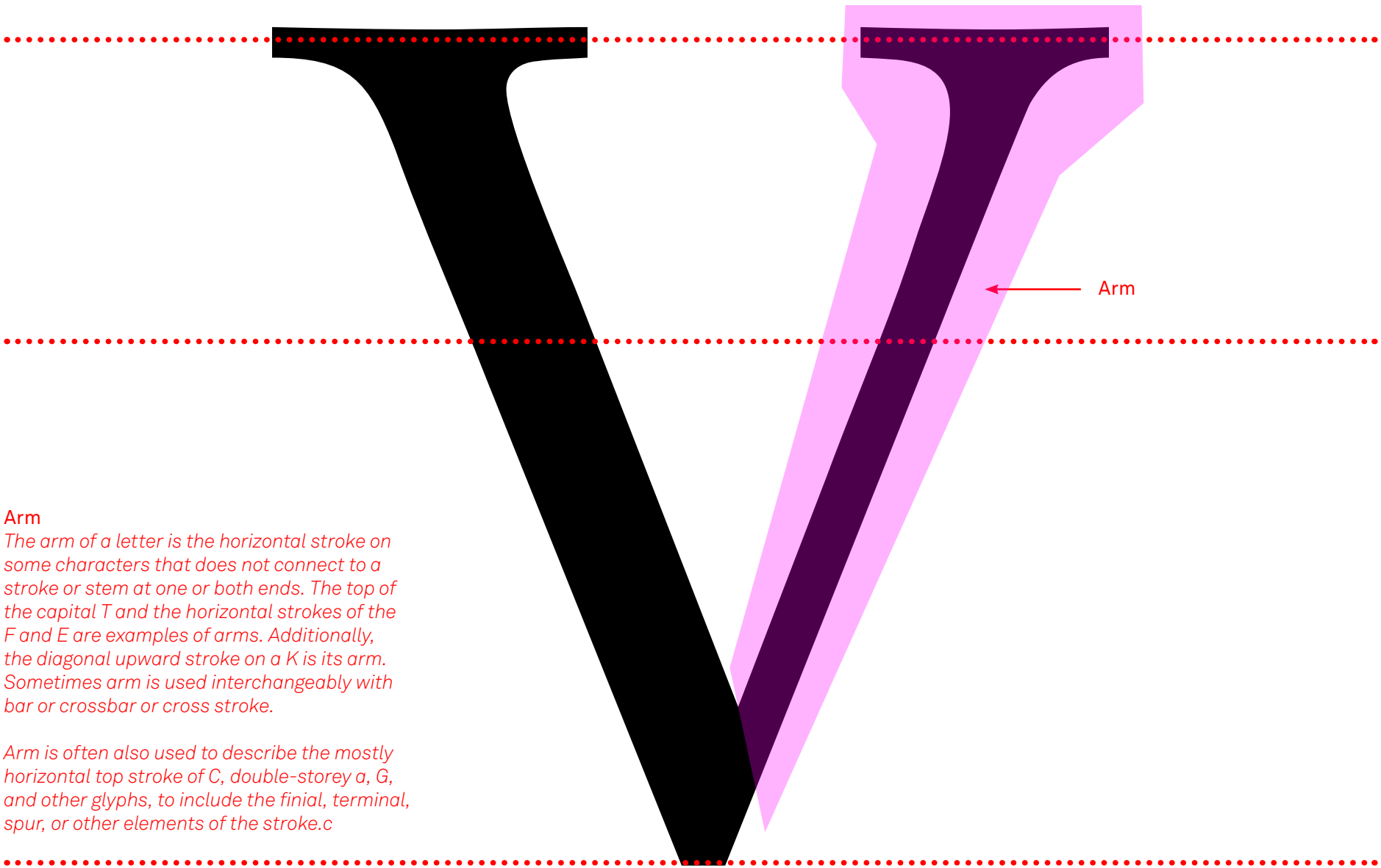


Arm

The arm of a letter is the horizontal stroke on some characters that does not connect to a stroke or stem at one or both ends. The top of the capital T and the horizontal strokes of the F and E are examples of arms. Additionally, the diagonal upward stroke on a K is its arm. Sometimes arm is used interchangeably with bar or crossbar or cross stroke.

Arm is often also used to describe the mostly horizontal top stroke of C, double-storey a, G, and other glyphs, to include the finial, terminal, spur, or other elements of the stroke.c

Arm



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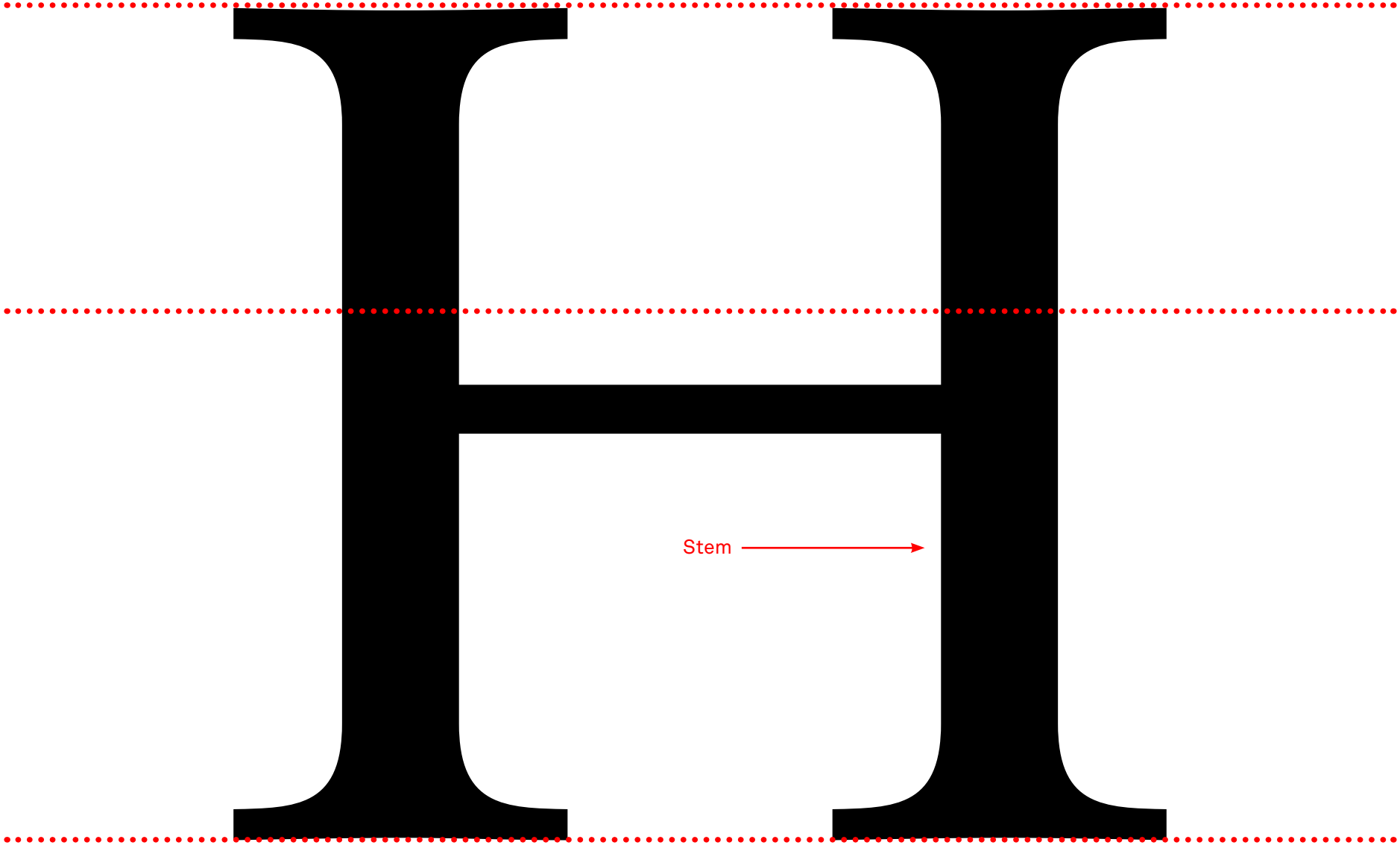
Vertical, full-length stroke in upright characters. Definition: The stem is the main, usually vertical stroke of a letterform.



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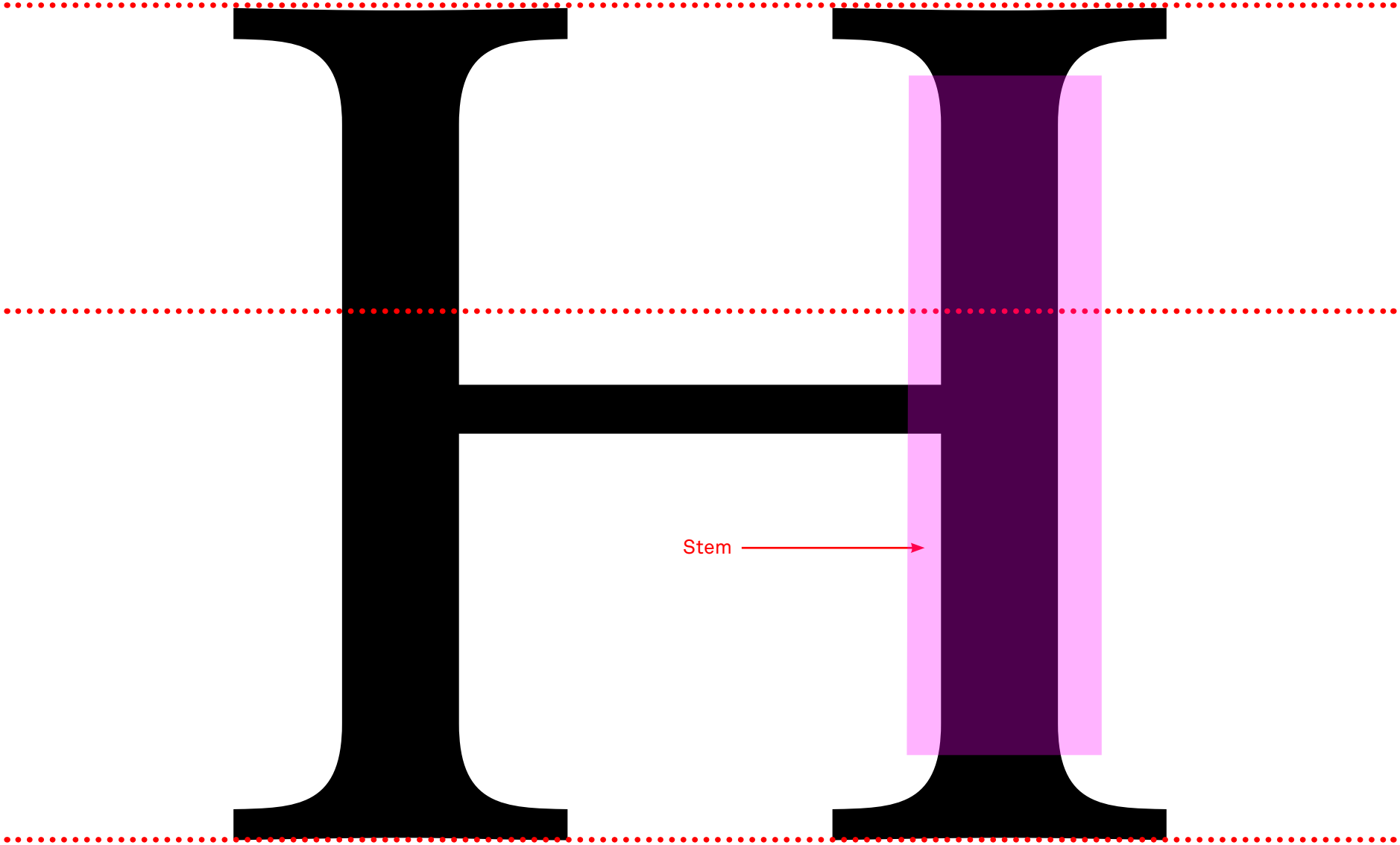

Bar

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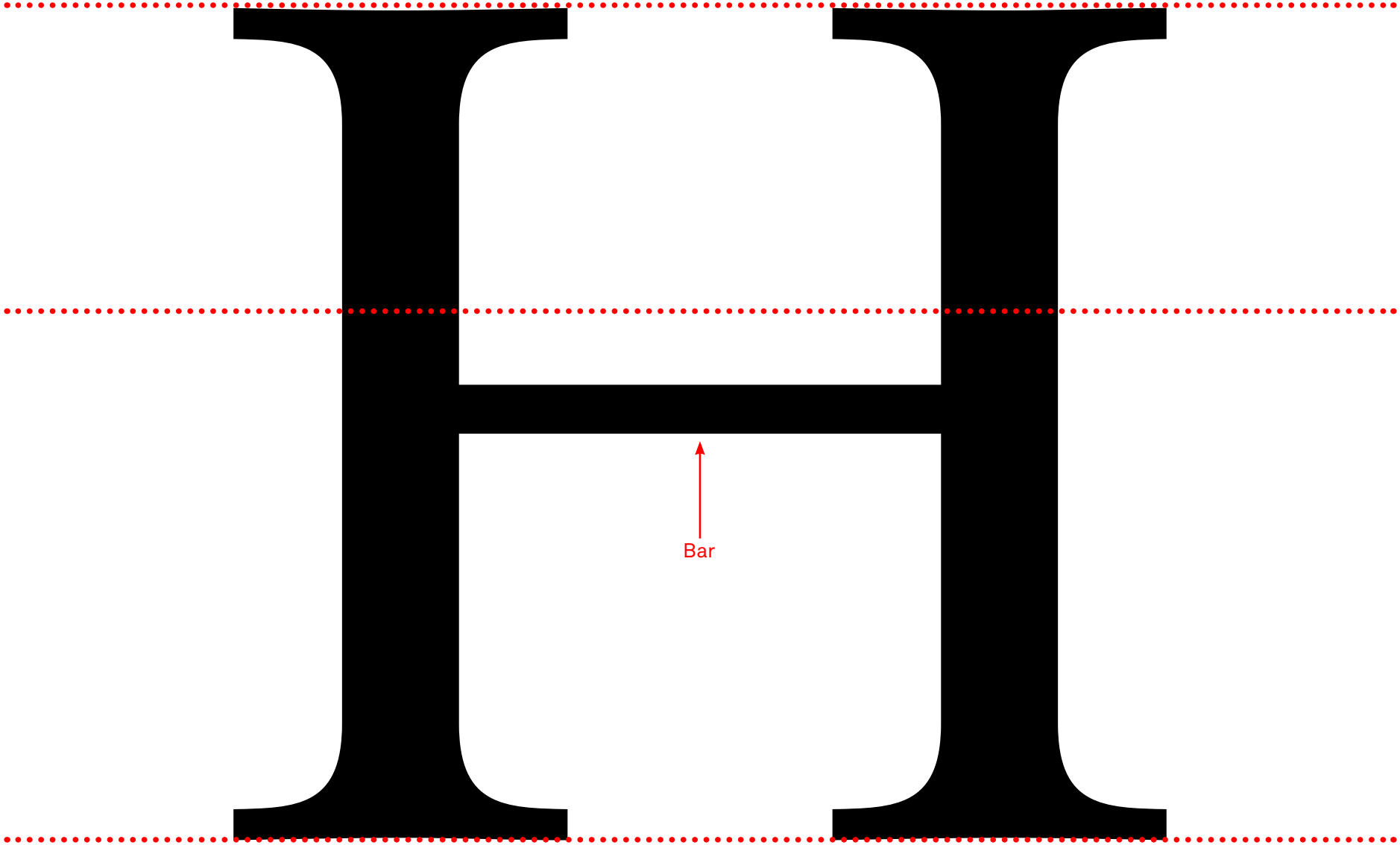

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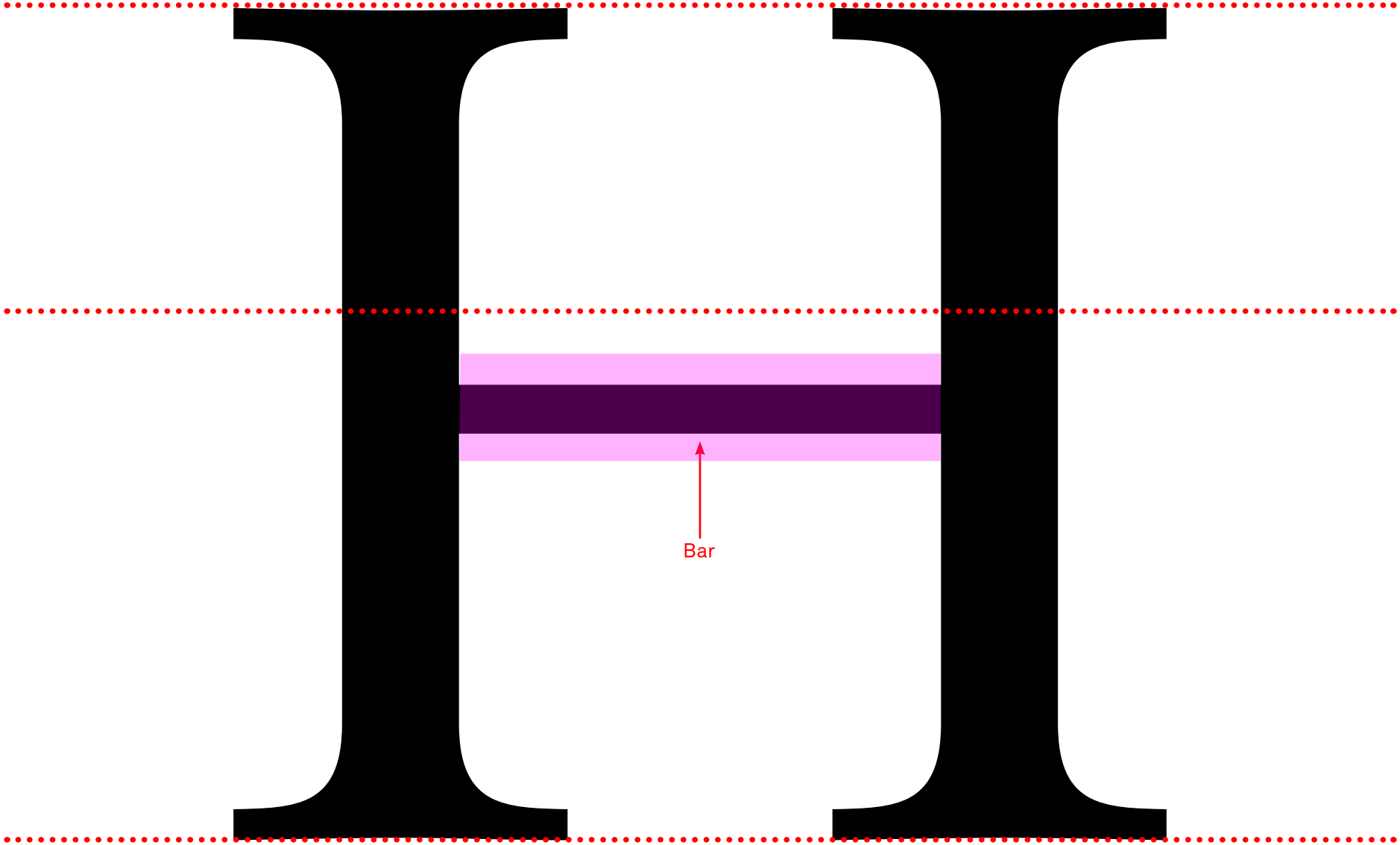

Counter

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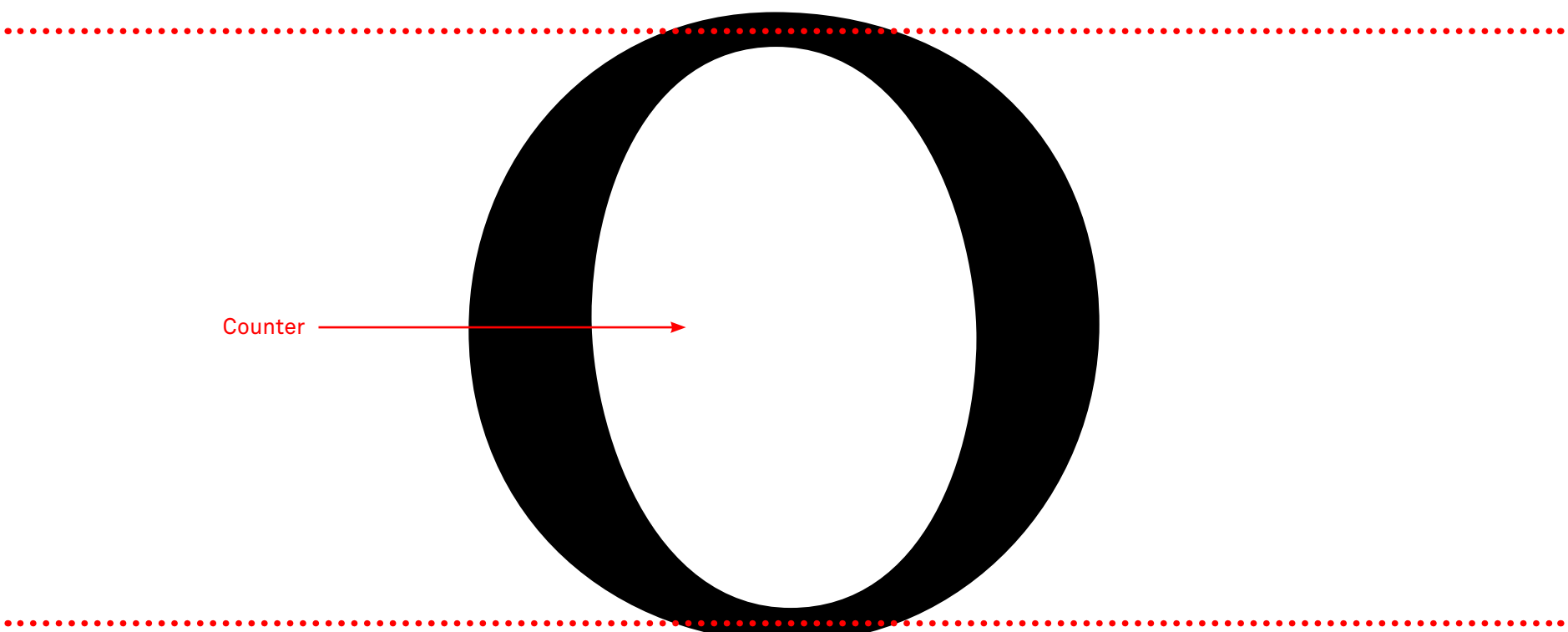
The enclosed or partially enclosed circular or curved negative space (white space) of some letters such as d, o, and s is the counter. The term counter may sometimes be used to refer only to closed space, while partially enclosed spaces in m, n, or h are the aperture.



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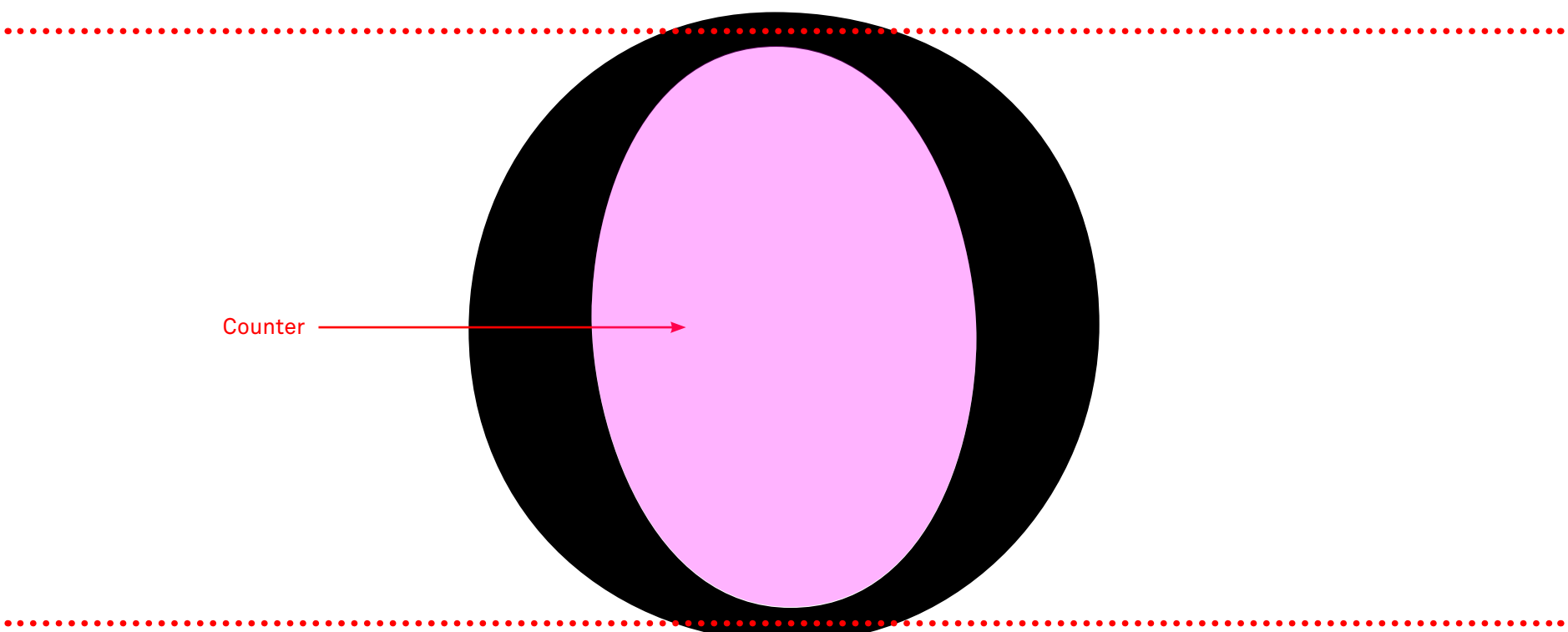
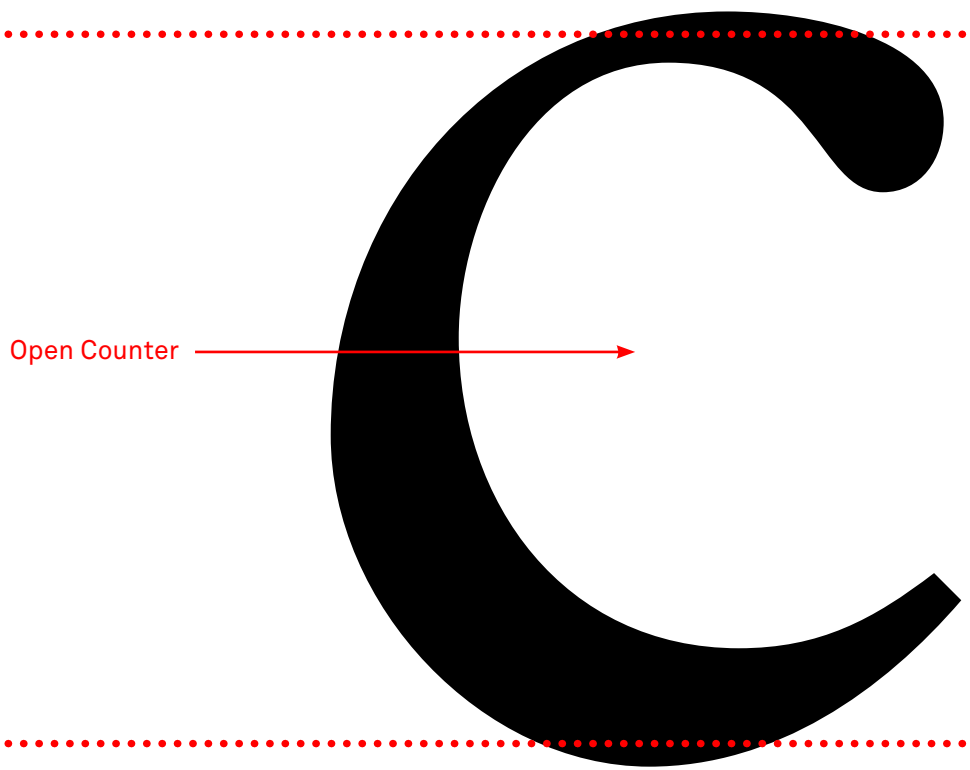


Open Counter

Open Counter
The partially open space within a character that is open on one end.



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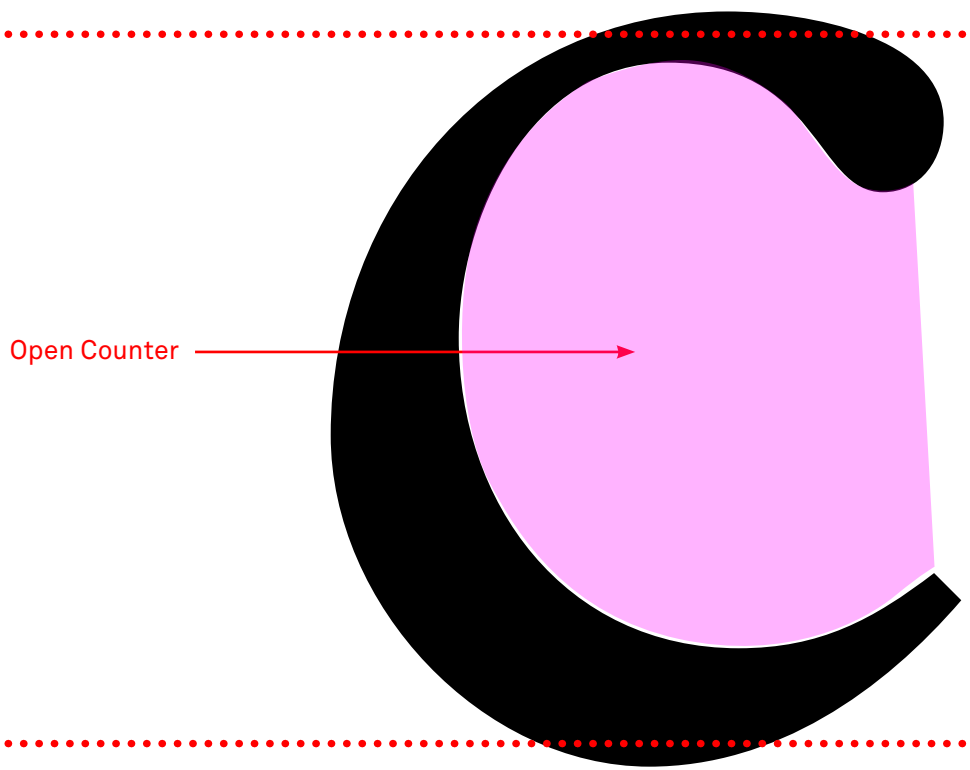

C

Sabon

C

Clarendon

C

Futura

C

Mrs Eaves

C

TheMix

C

Mr Eaves

C

Adobe Caslon

C

Courier

C

Frutiger

C

Clarendon

C

Rockwell

C

Helvetica

Aperture

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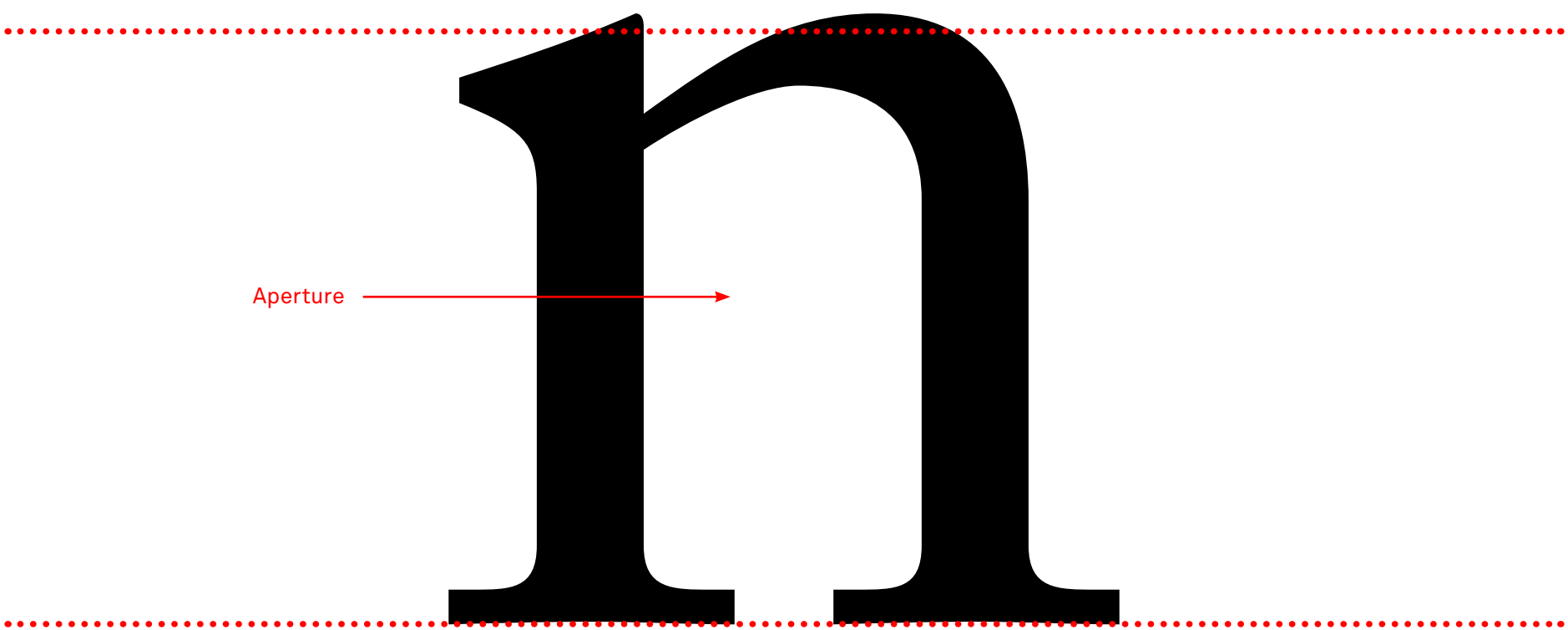
The partially enclosed, somewhat rounded negative space in some characters such as n, C, S, the lower part of e, or the upper part of a double-storey a. (a.k.a open counter or counter)



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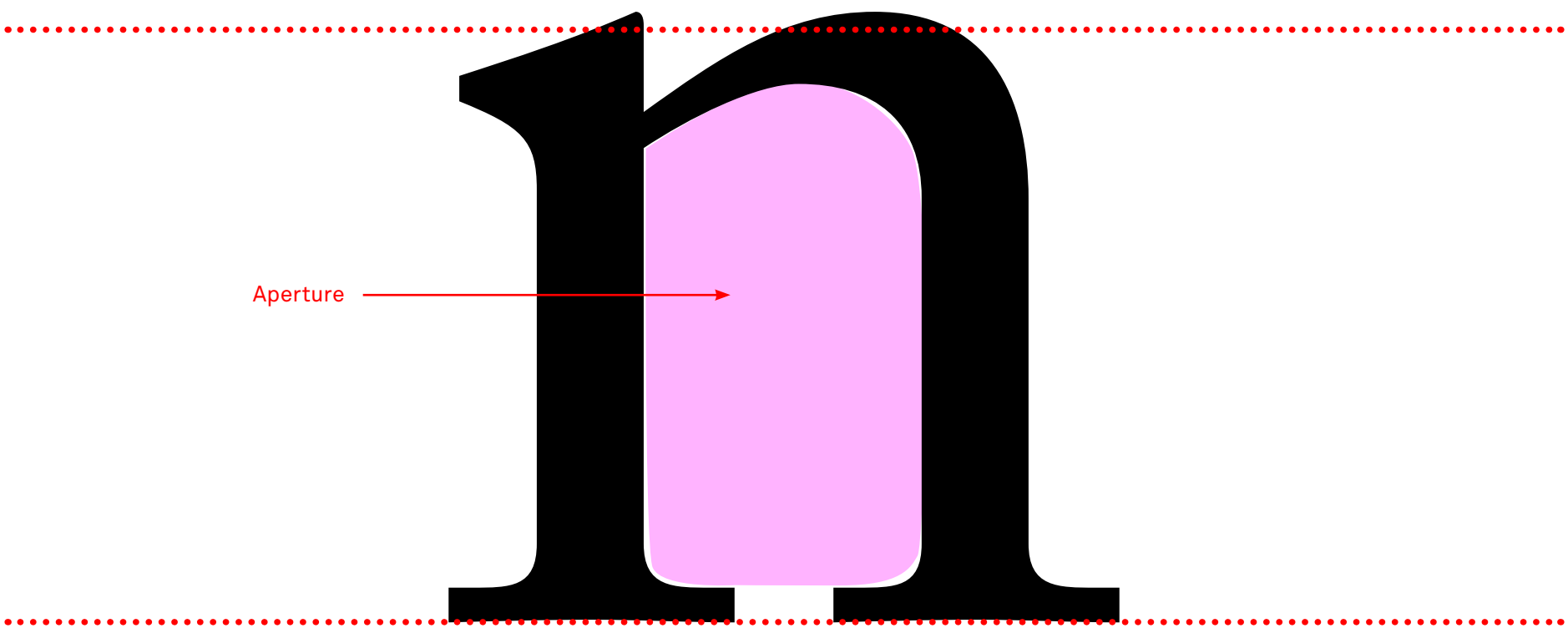

m

Sabon

m

Clarendon

m

Futura

m

Mrs Eaves

m

TheSansMono

m

Mr Eaves

m

Adobe Caslon

m

Courier

m

Frutiger

m

Clarendon

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Rockwell

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Helvetica

Bowl

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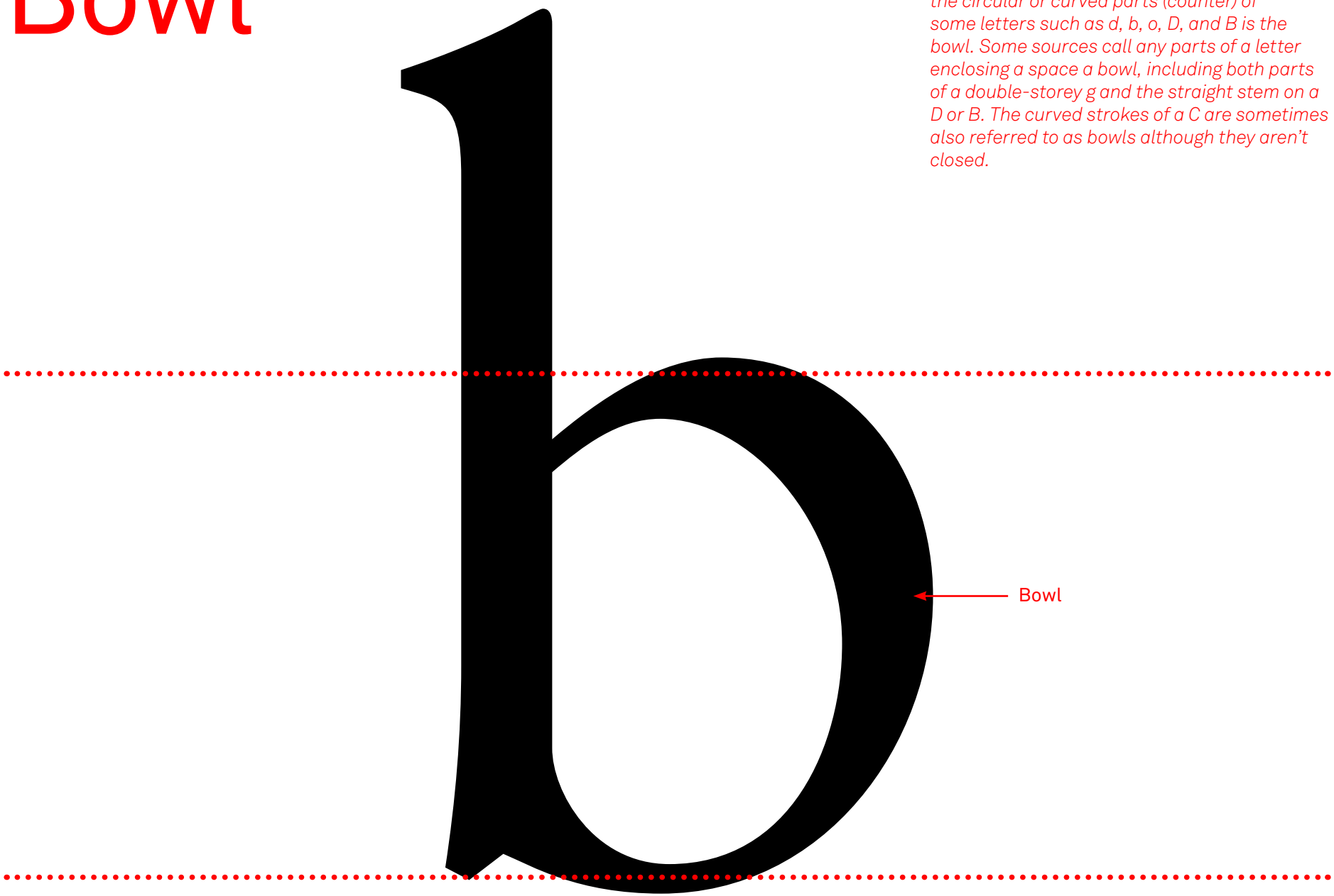
The curved part of the character that encloses the circular or curved parts (counter) of some letters such as d, b, o, D, and B is the bowl. Some sources call any parts of a letter enclosing a space a bowl, including both parts of a double-storey g and the straight stem on a D or B. The curved strokes of a C are sometimes also referred to as bowls although they aren't closed.



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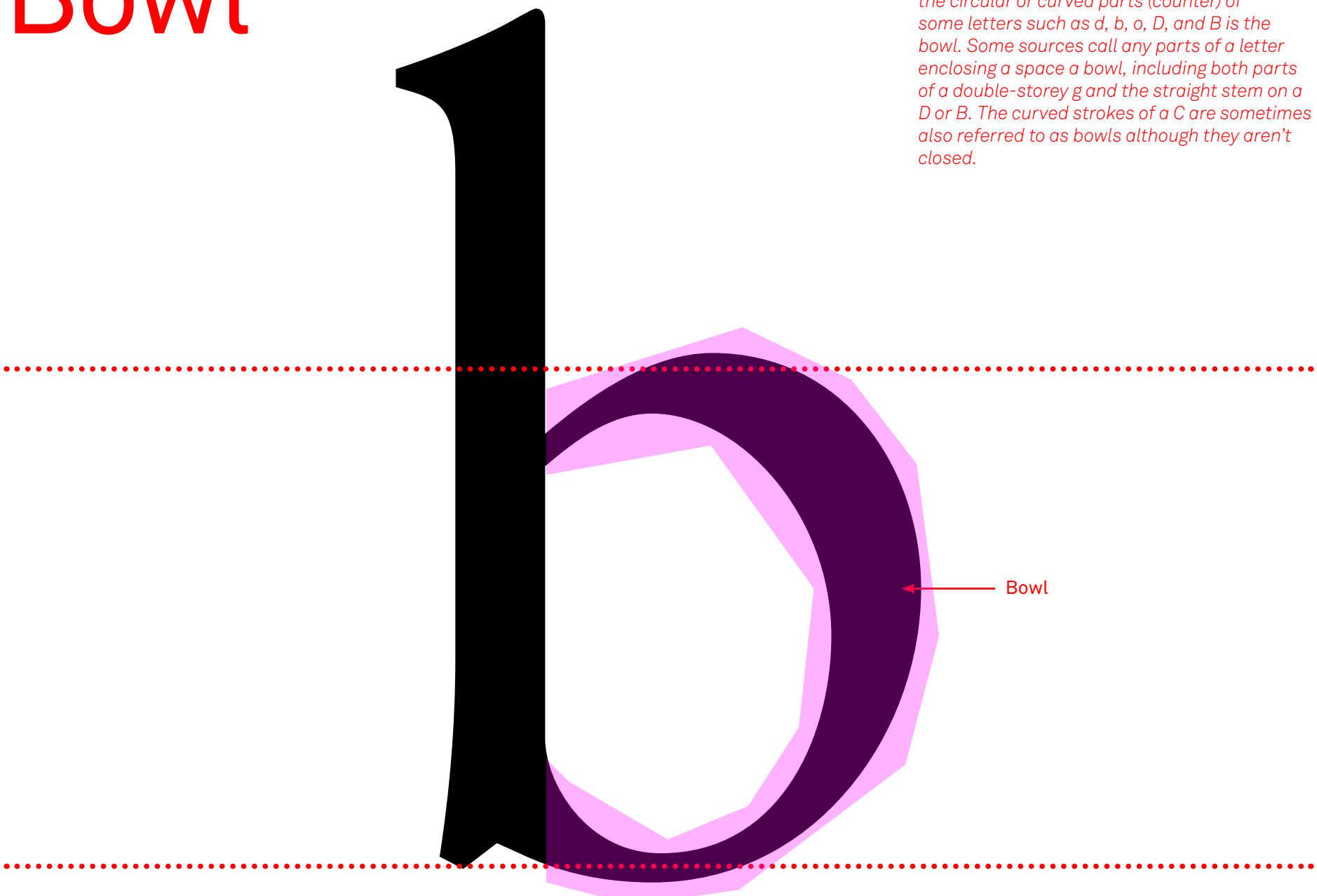
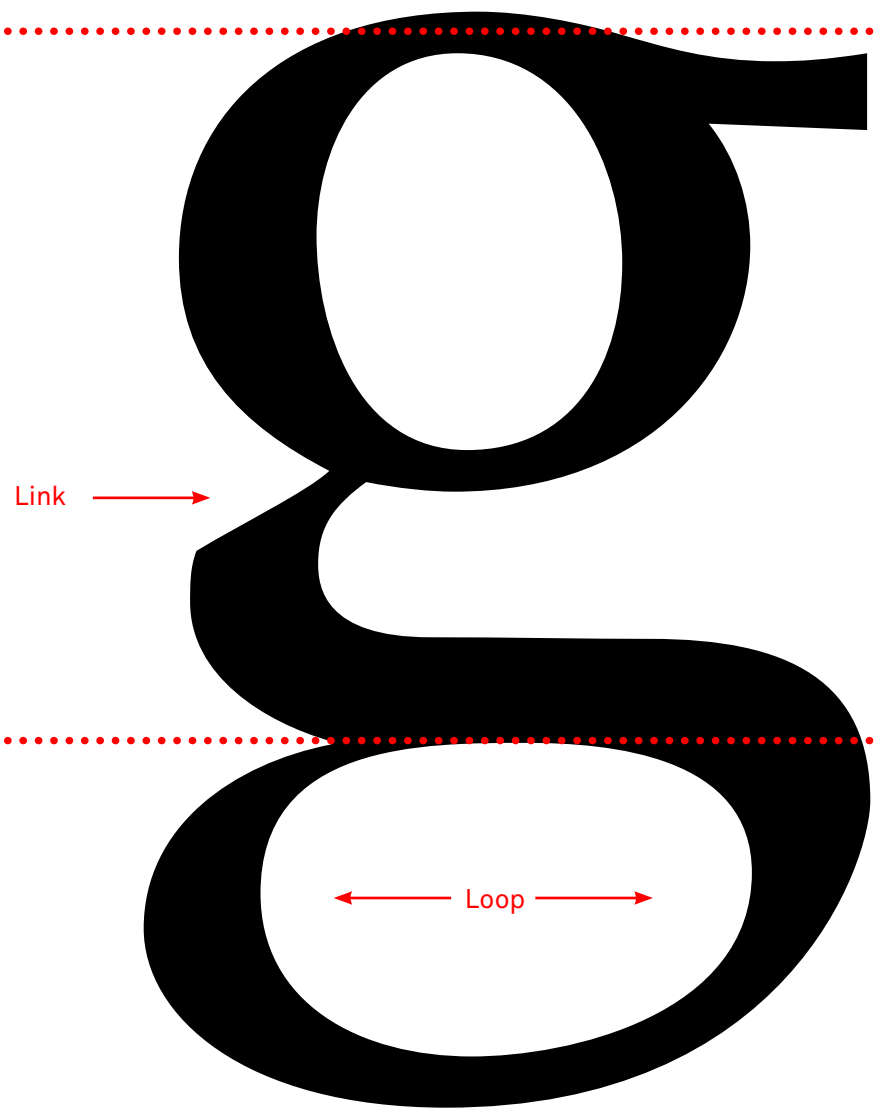


Loop & Link

Loop
In a double-storey g, the loop is the enclosed or partially enclosed counter below the baseline that is connected to the bowl by a link. The enclosed or partially enclosed extenders on cursive p, b, l, and similiar letters are also called loops.



Link a.k.a neck
The link is that small, usually curved stroke that connects the bowl and loop of a double-storey g.

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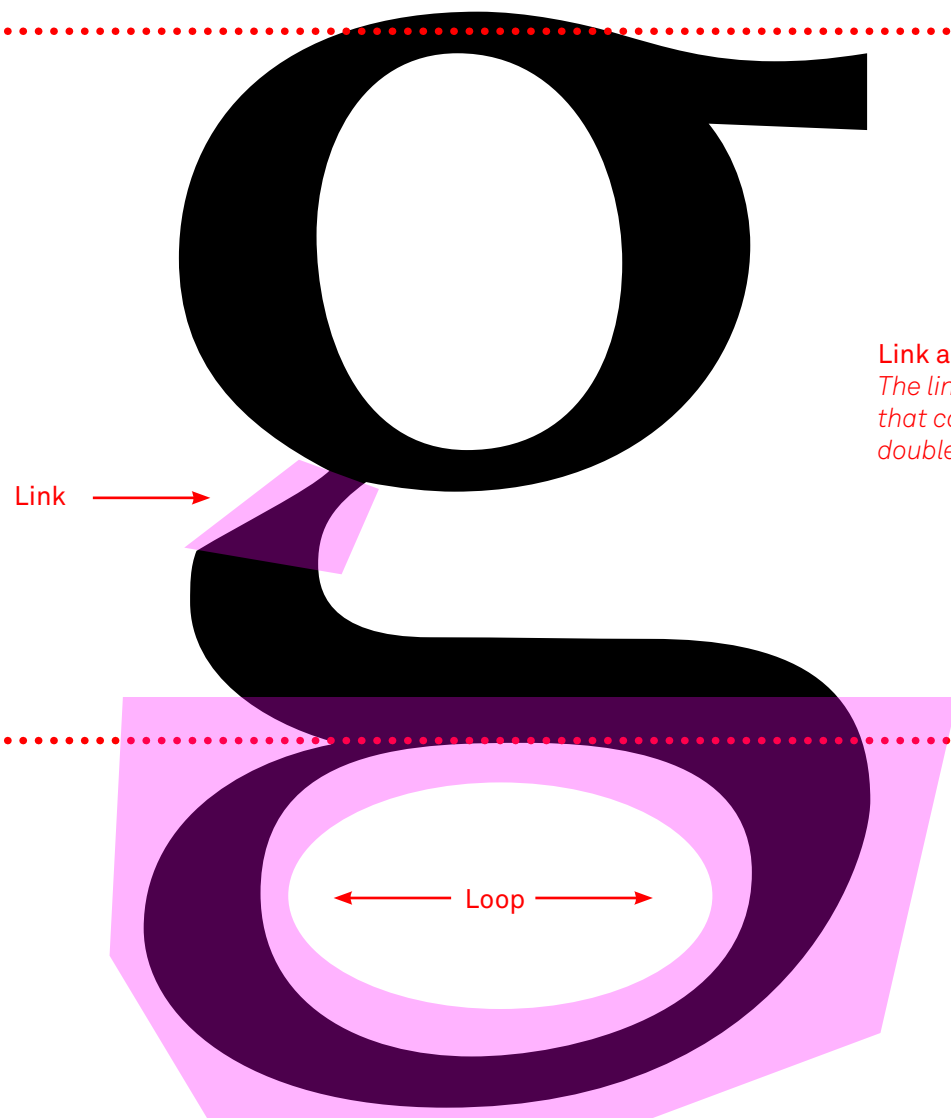

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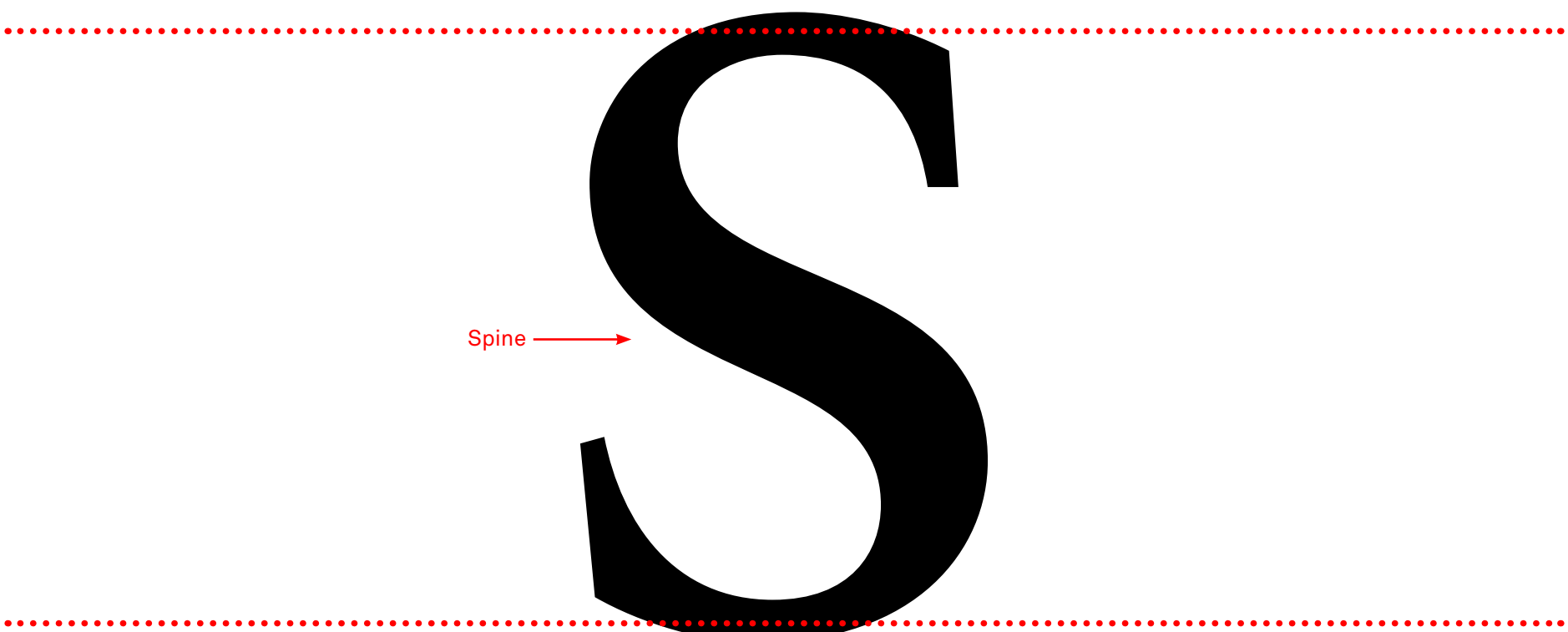
Spine

Spine
The main curved stroke of a lowercase or capital S.

The spine may be almost vertical or mostly horizontal, depending on the typeface.



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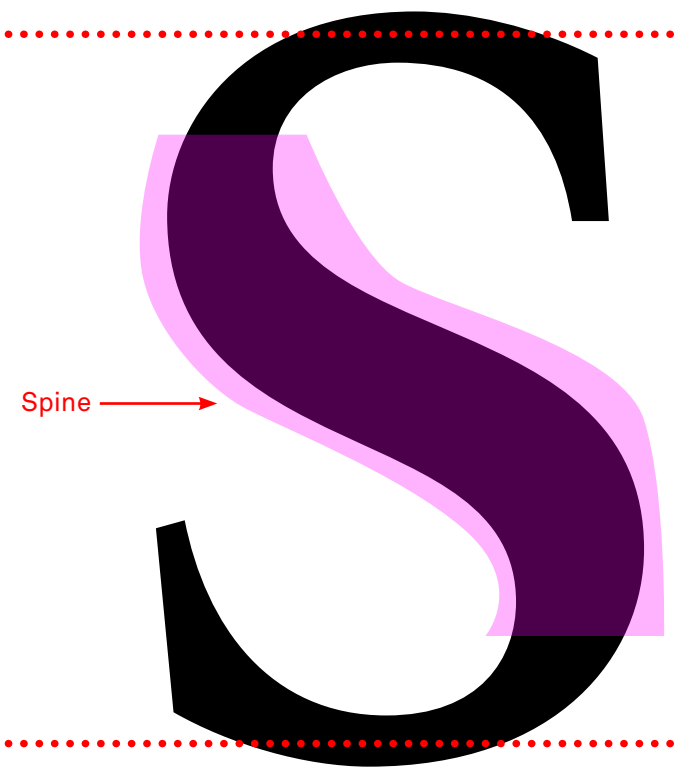

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Spur

Spur
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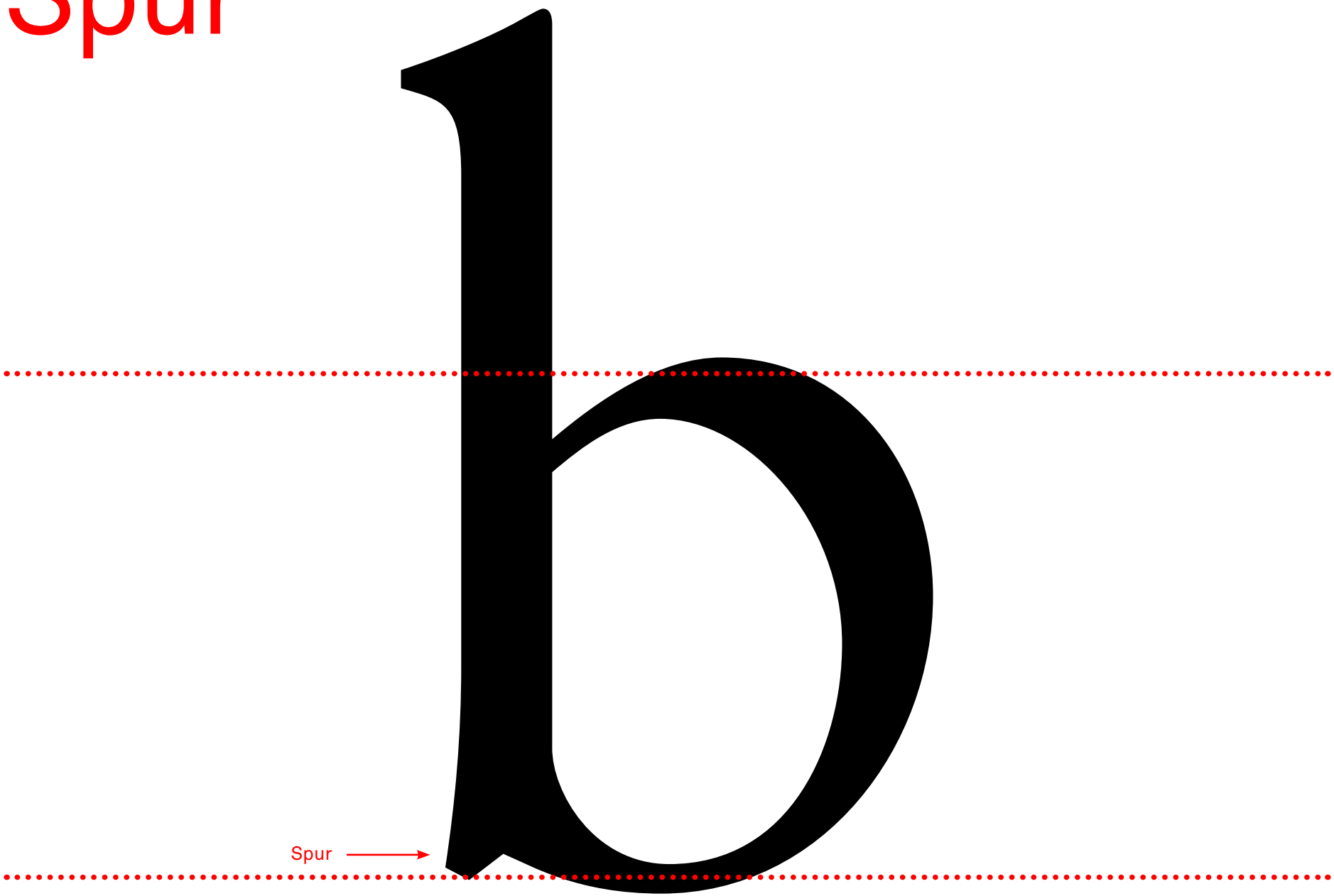

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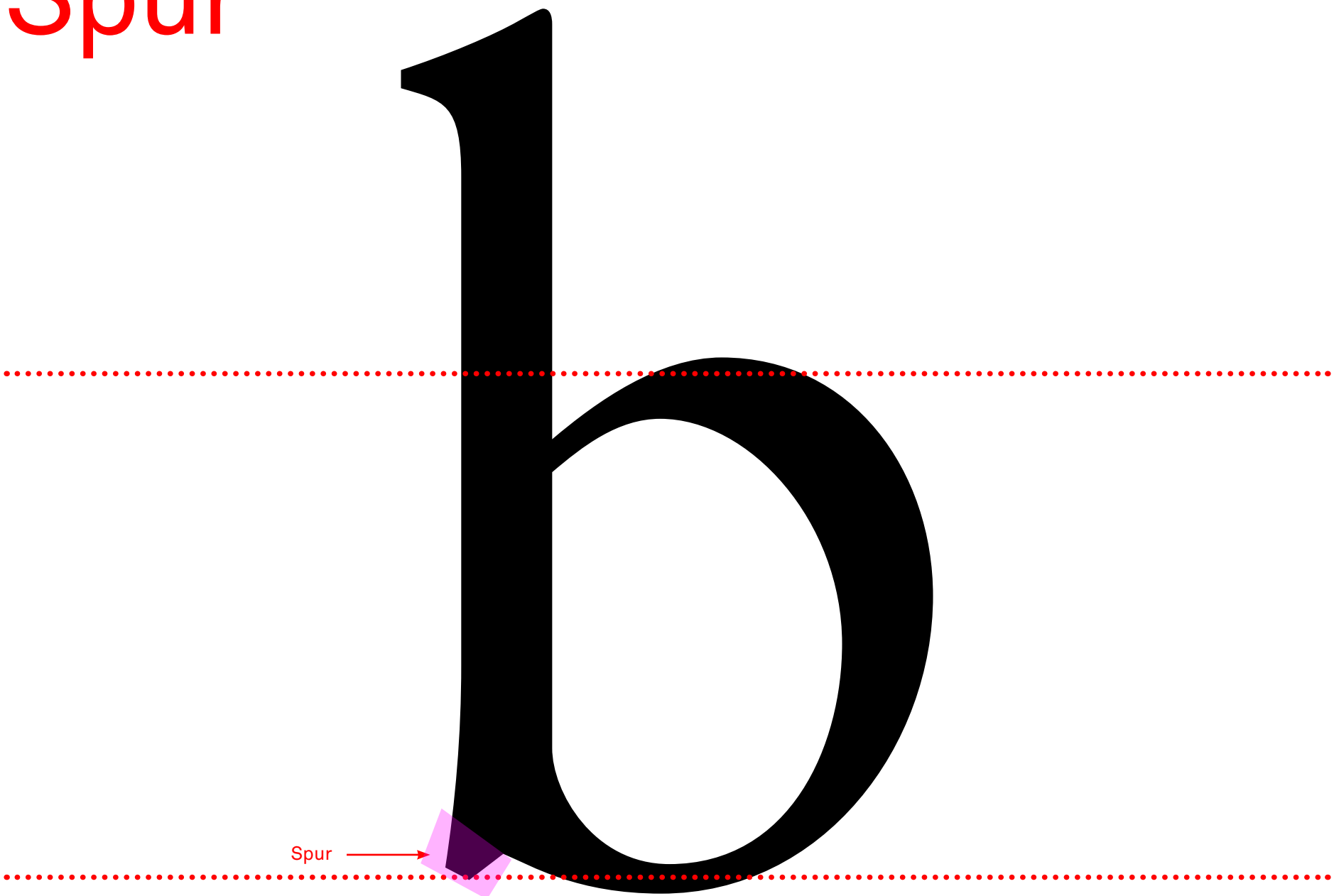
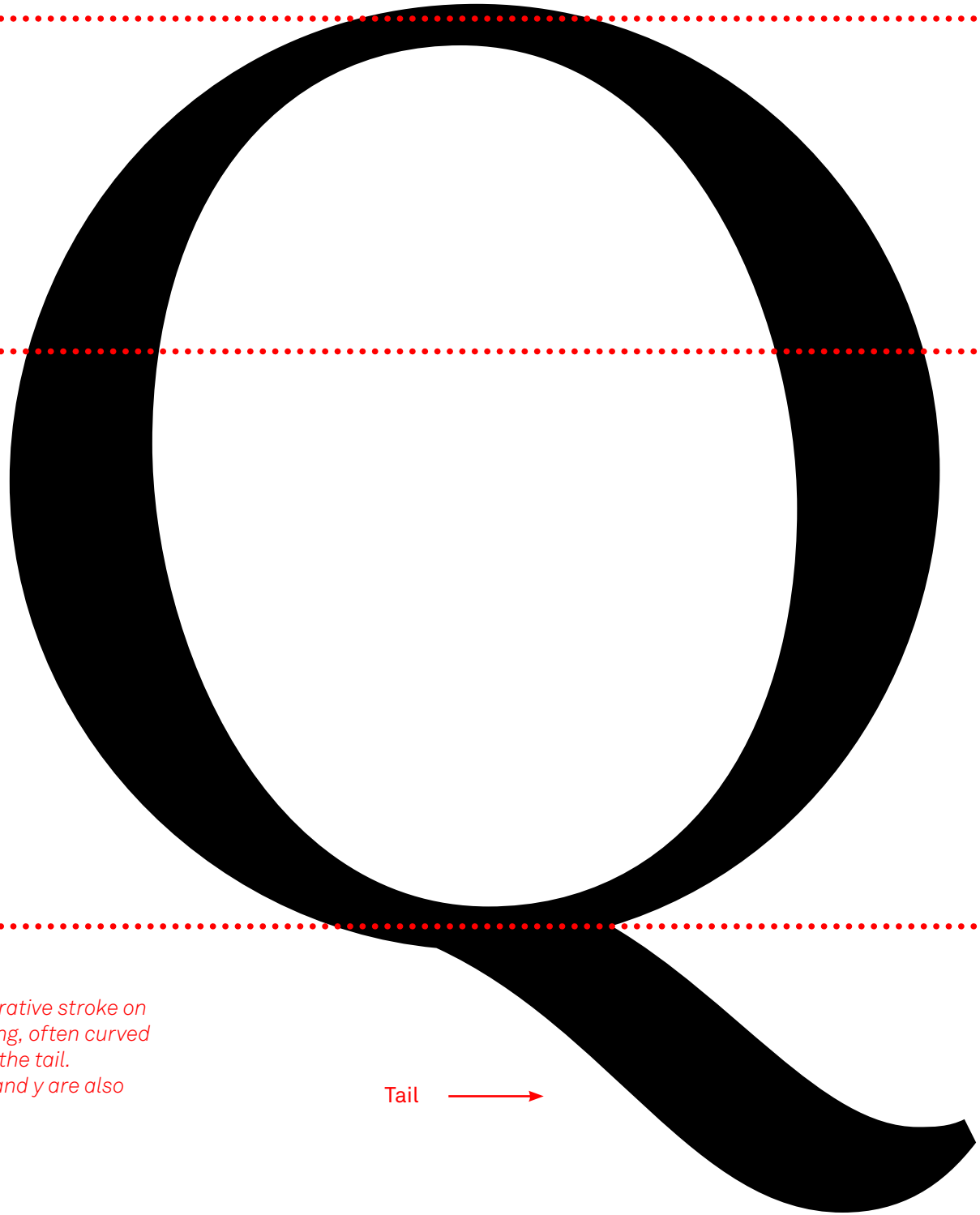
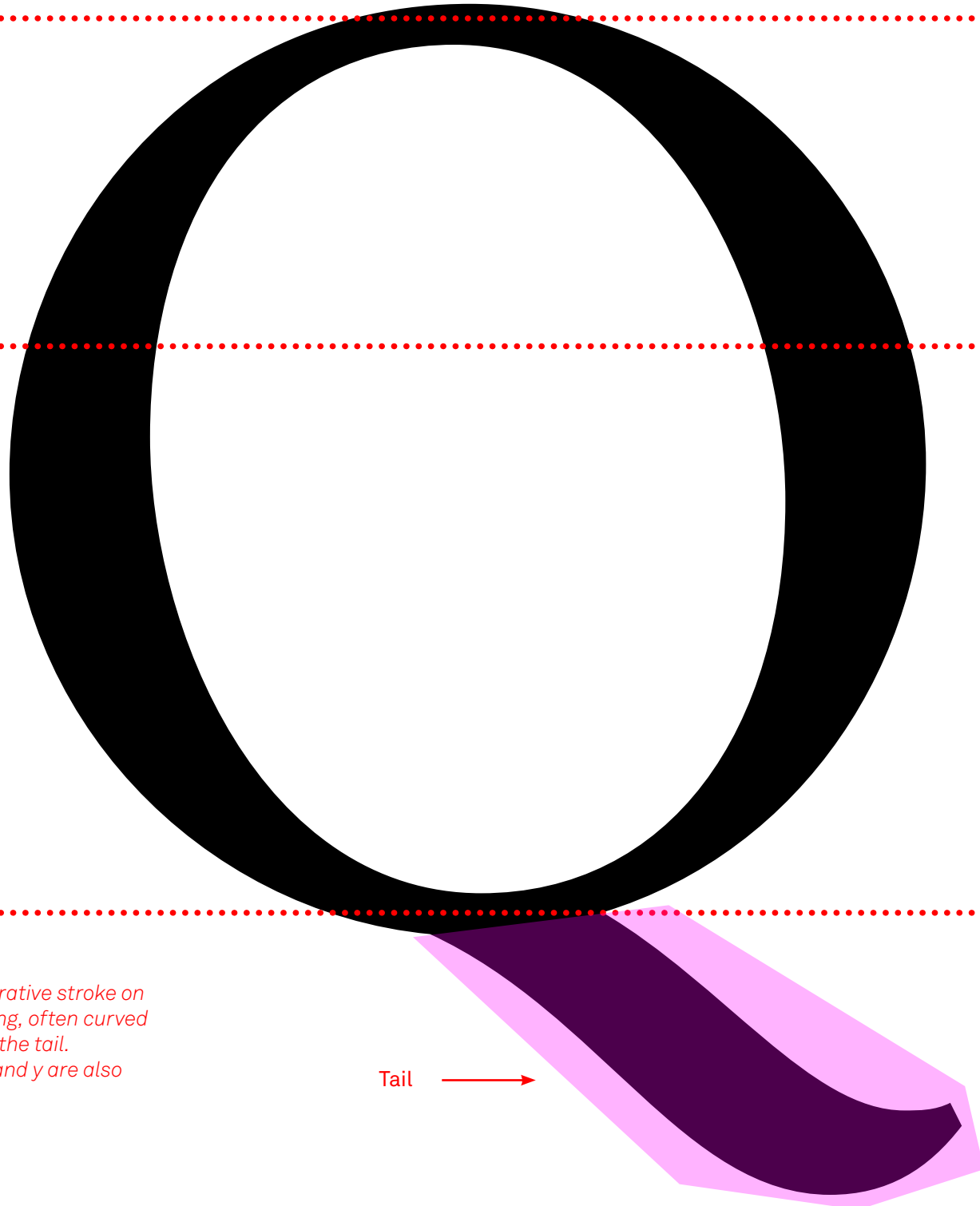


Tail



Tail
The descending, often decorative stroke on the letter Q or the descending, often curved diagonal stroke on K or R is the tail.
The descender on g, j, p, q, and y are also called tails.

Tail



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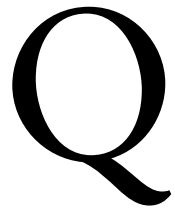
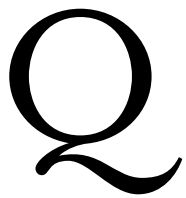


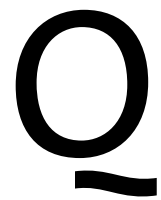
Sabon

Clarendon

Futura

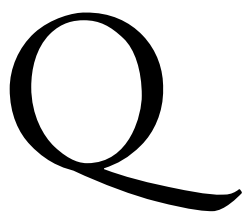


Mrs Eaves



TheMix

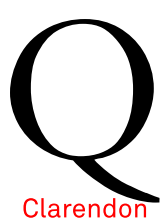
Mr Eaves



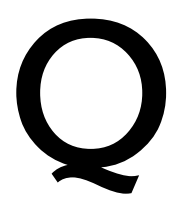
Adobe Caslon

Courier

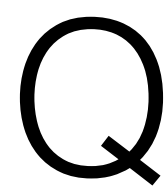
Frutiger



Clarendon



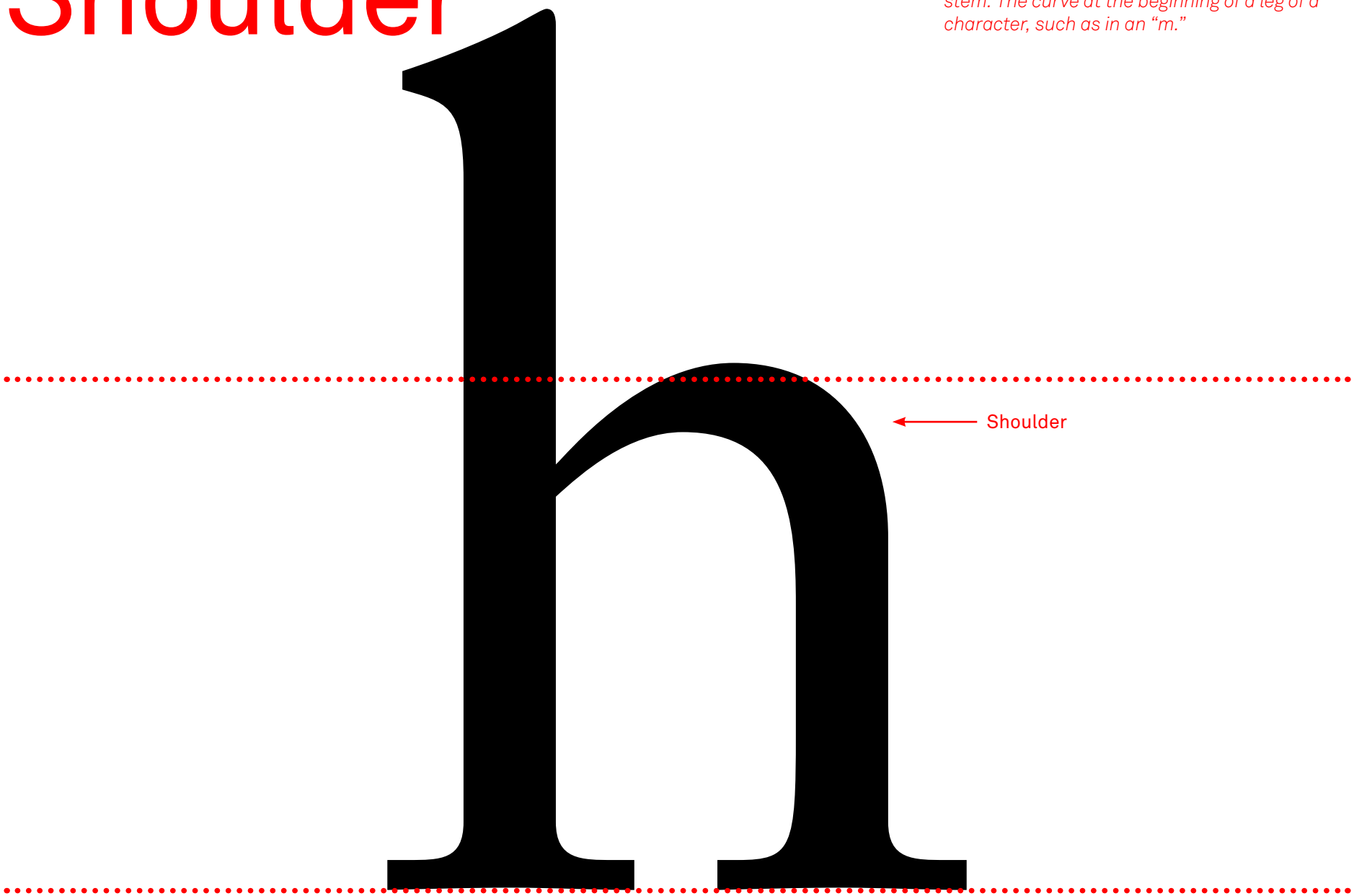
Rockwell



Helvetica

Shoulder

Shoulder
The curved stroke aiming downward from a stem. The curve at the beginning of a leg of a character, such as in an “m.”



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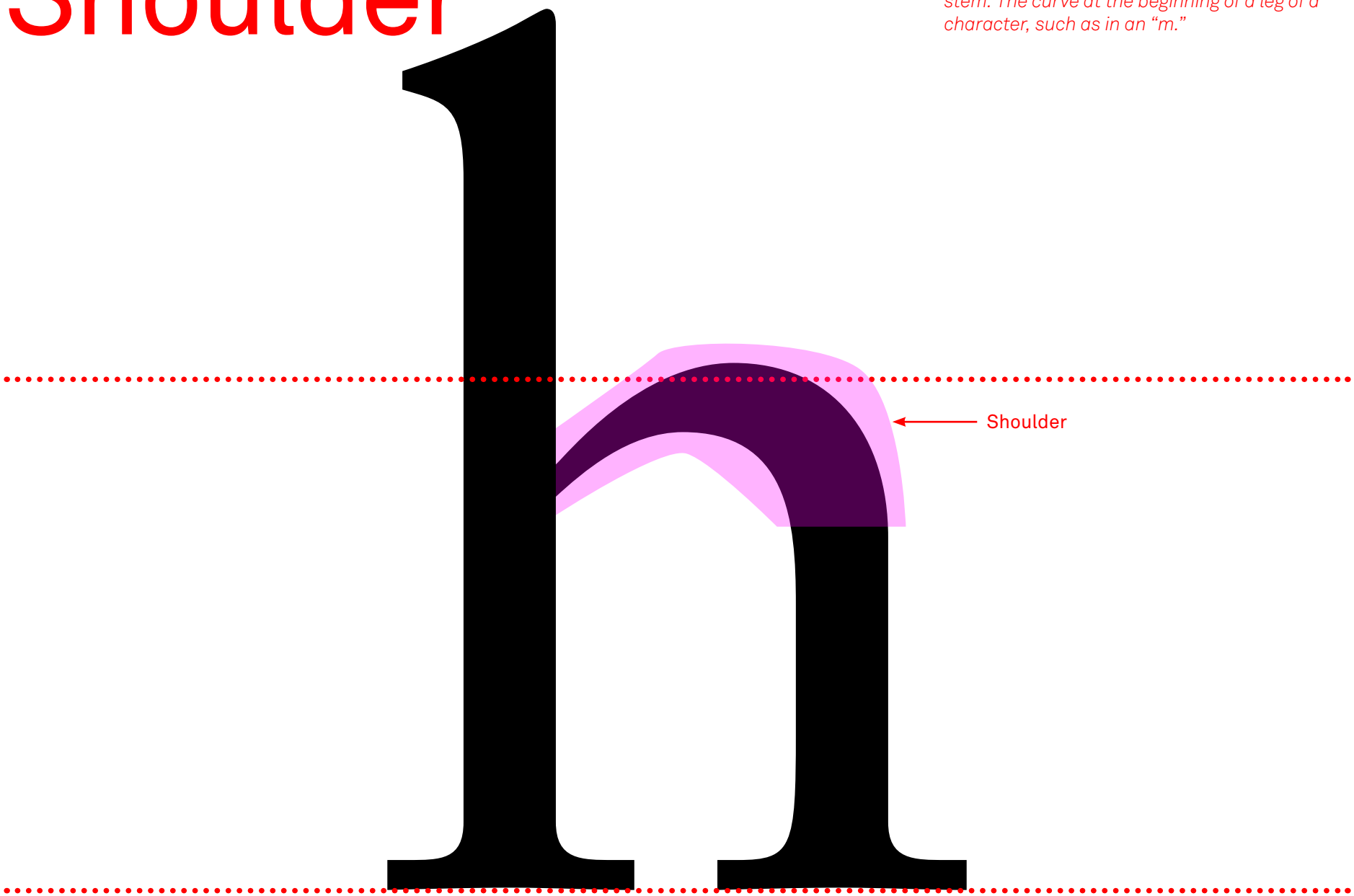

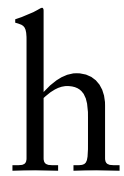

Sabon

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Futura

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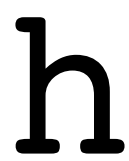
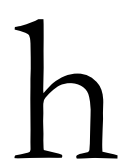
Mr Eaves

Adobe Caslon

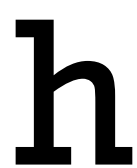


Courier

Frutiger



Clarendon

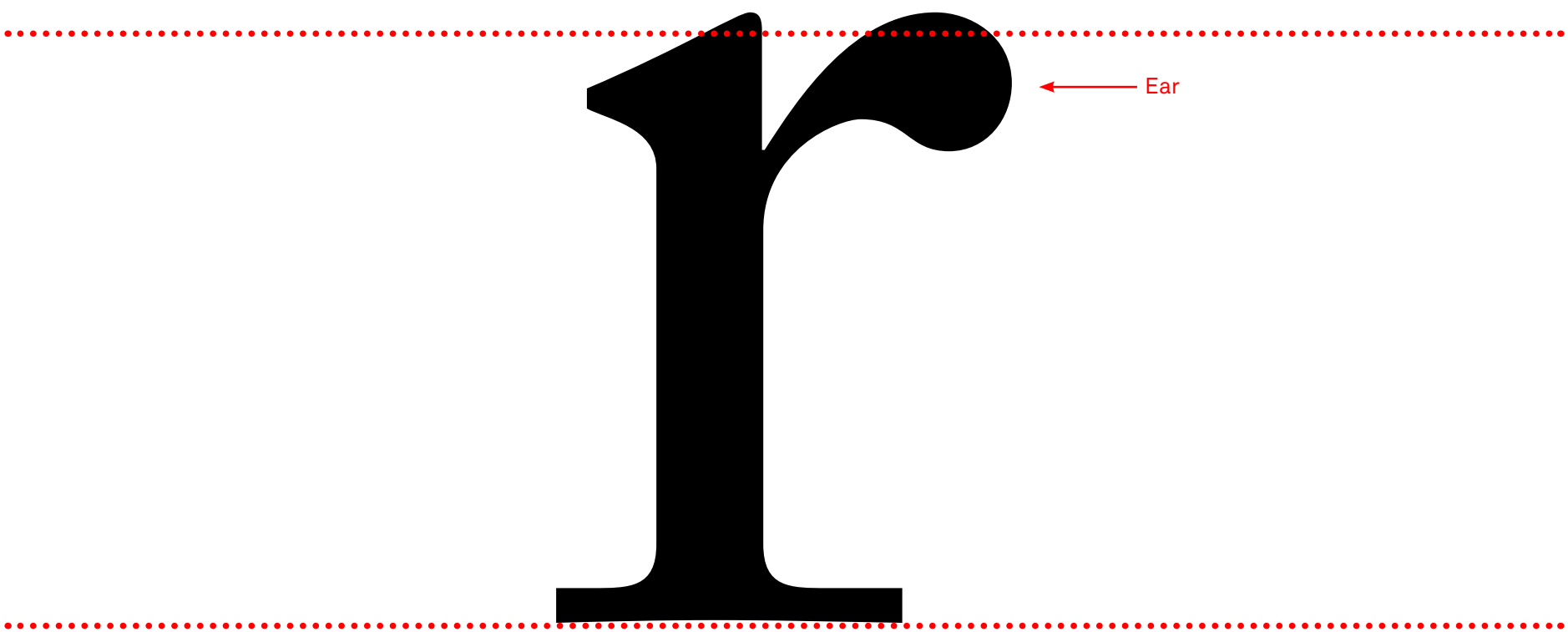


Rockwell

Helvetica

Ear

Ear
Typically found on the lower case g, an ear is a decorative flourish usually on the upper right side of the bowl. Similar to a serif, the ear can be a distinctive, identifying element of some typefaces



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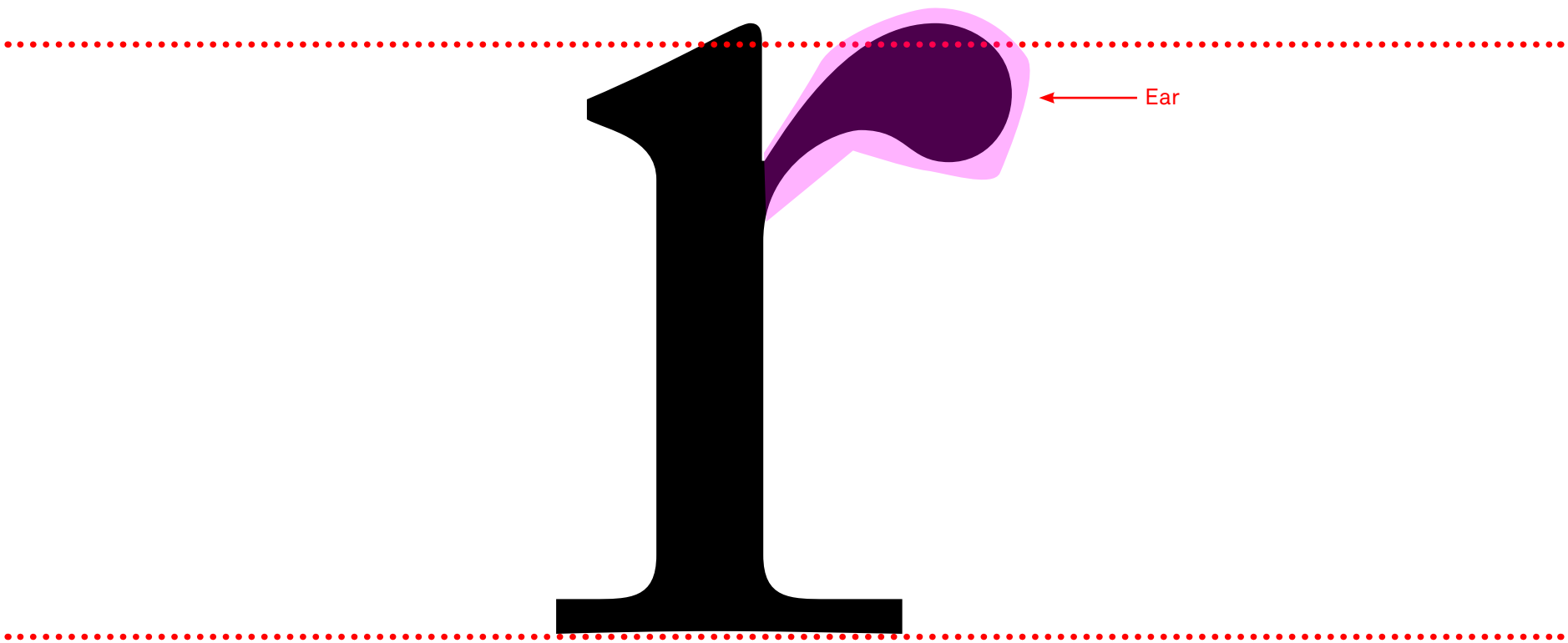


r

Sabon

r

Clarendon

r

Futura

r

Mrs Eaves

r

TheMix

r

Mr Eaves

r

Adobe Caslon

r

Courier

r

Frutiger

r

Clarendon

r

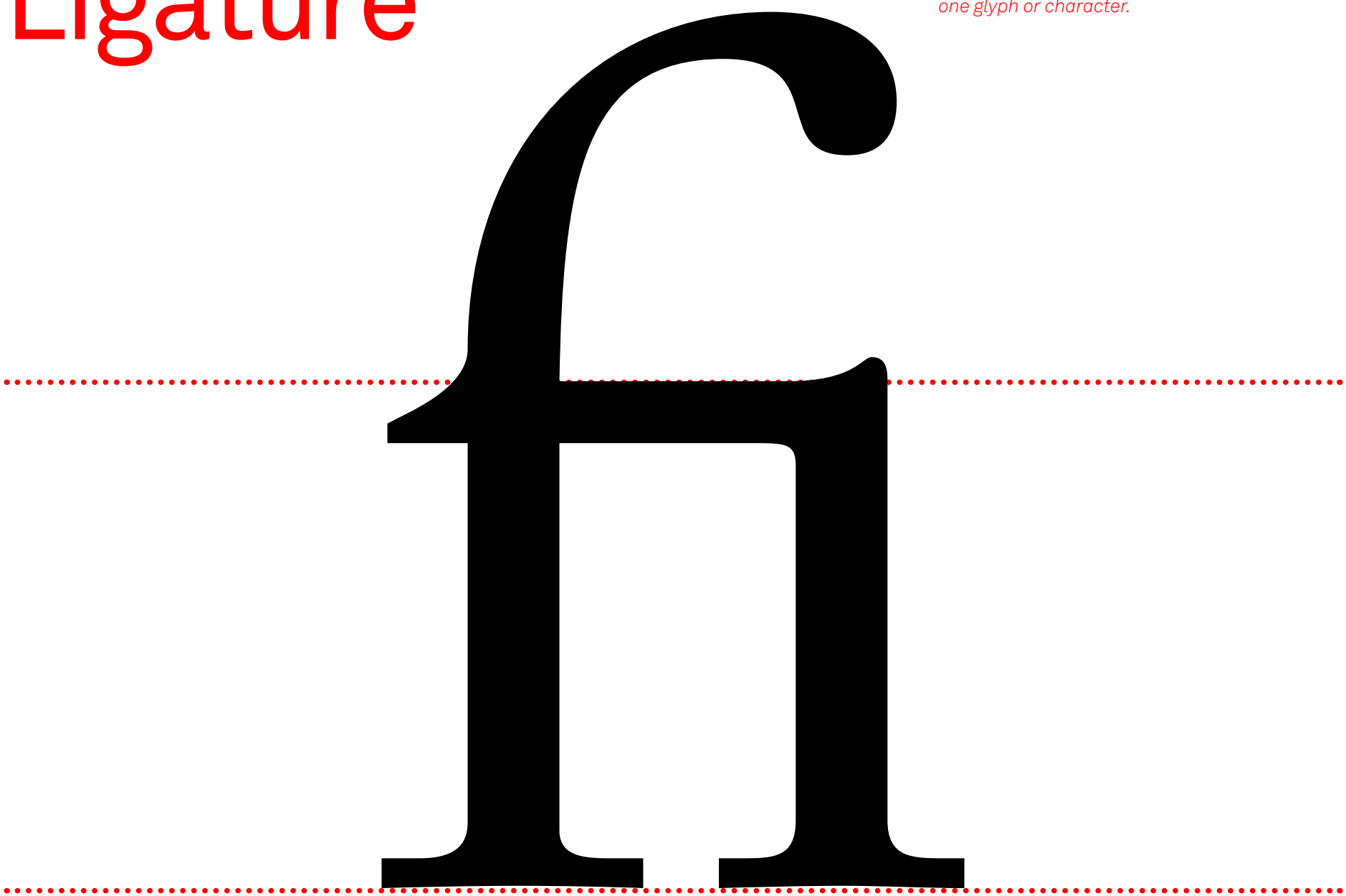
Rockwell

r

Helvetica

Ligature

Ligature
Two or more letters are joined together to form one glyph or character.



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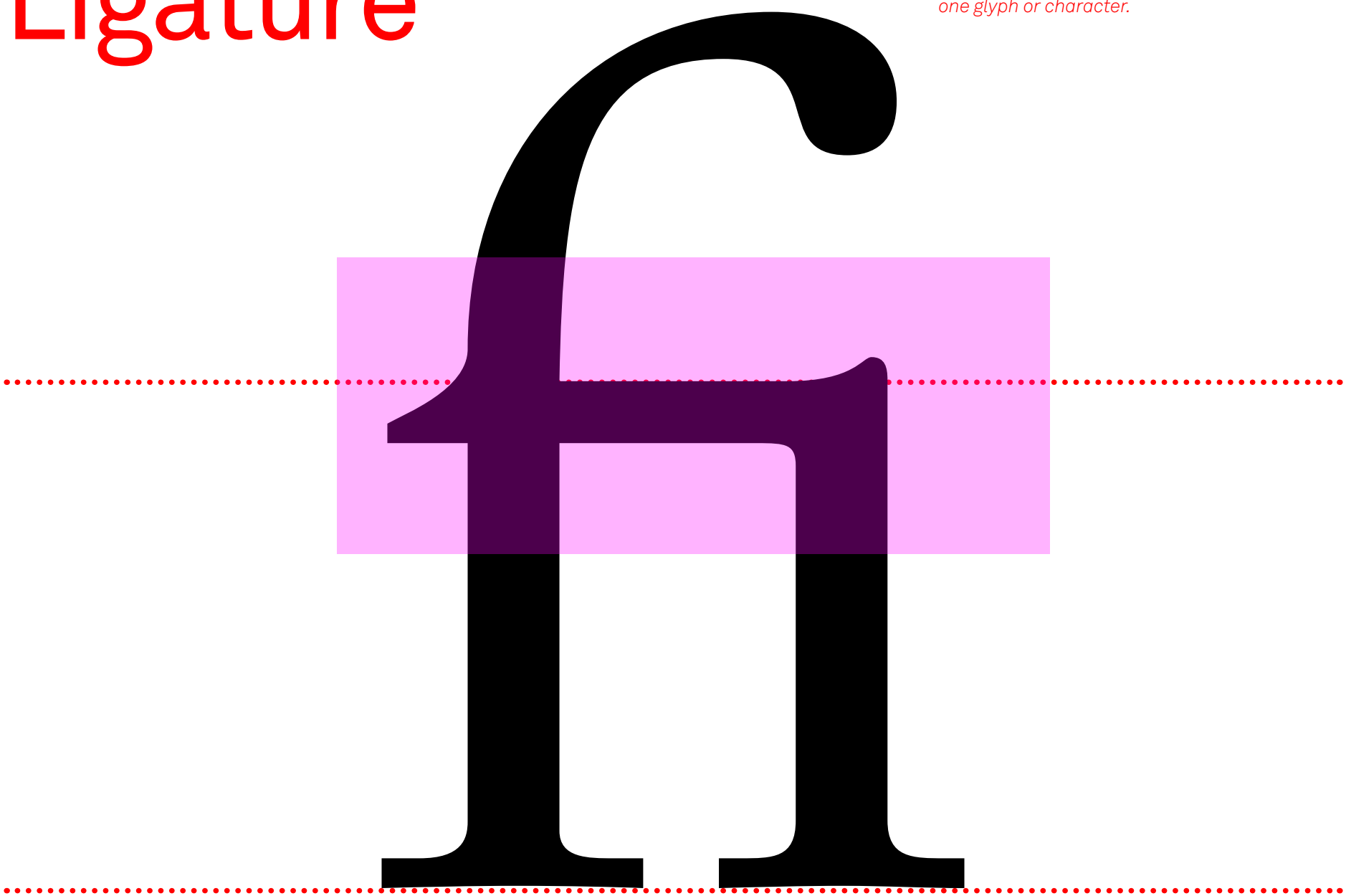
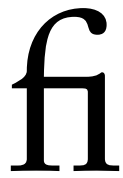
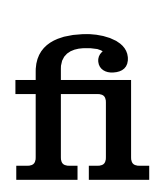
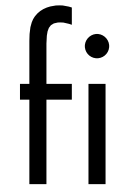




Sabon

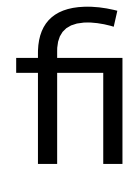


Clarendon



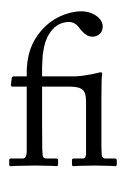
Futura

Mrs Eaves



TheMix

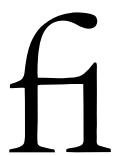
Mr Eaves



Adobe Caslon

Courier

Frutiger



Clarendon

Rockwell

Helvetica

gloat

Sabon

gloat

Clarendon

gloat

Futura

gloat

Mrs Eaves

gloat

TheMix

gloat

Mr Eaves

gloat

Adobe Caslon

gloat

Courier

gloat

Frutiger

gloat

Clarendon

gloat

Rockwell

gloat

Helvetica

Type Classification

1450 1475 1500 1525 1700 1725

BLACKLETTER

OLDSTYLE

GLOAT
gloat

Blackletter, 1455
Johann Gutenberg, German

GLOAT
gloat

Jenson, 1471 (Venetian)
Nicholas Jenson, French

GLOAT
gloat

Bembo, 1495 (Venetian)
Francesco Griffo, Italian

gloat

First italic, 1501 (no upper case)
Francesco Griffo, Italian

GLOAT
gloat

Garamond, c. 1530
Claude Garamond, French

GLOAT
gloat

First italic designed to match roman, c. 1540

GLOAT
gloat

Janson Text (Dutch), 1690
Nicholas Kis, Hungarian

GLOAT
gloat

Caslon, 1720
William Caslon, English

Type Classification

1750 TRANSITIONAL

1800 MODERN

1825 SQUARE SERIF

1900 SANS SERIF

1925

1950

2000 SERIF / SANS SERIF

GLOAT
gloat
Baskerville, 1750
John Baskerville, English

GLOAT
gloat
Bodoni, 1789
Giambattista Bodoni, Italian

GLOAT
gloat
Didot, 1783
Firmin Didot, French

GLOAT
gloat
Clarendon, 1845
Robert Besley, English

GLOAT
gloat
Akzidenz Grotesk, 1896
German

GLOAT
gloat
Helvetica, 1957
M. Meidinger, E. Hofmann, Swiss

GLOAT
gloat
Univers, 1957
Adrian Frutiger, Swiss/French

GLOAT
gloat
Rotis Sans Serif, 1989
Otl Aicher, German

GLOAT
gloat
Rotis Serif, 1989
Otl Aicher, German

GLOAT
gloat
Rotis Semi Sans, 1989
Otl Aicher, German

GLOAT
gloat
Rotis Semi Serif, 1989
Otl Aicher, German

GLOAT
gloat
Memphis, 1929
Rudolph Wolf, German

GEOMETRIC MODEL

GLOAT
gloat
Futura, 1927
Paul Renner, German

GLOAT
gloat
Gill Sans, 1928
Eric Gill, English

HUMANIST MODEL

GLOAT
gloat
Meta, 1990
Erik Spiekermann, German

Type Classification 2.0

Classic

Condensed

Decorative

Exclusive

Expanded

Experimental

Grunge

Handdrawn

Headline

Random

Retro

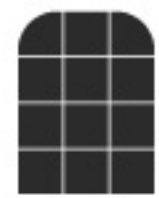
Sans-serif

Script

Serif

Slab

Stencil


Techno

Text

Glossary

Typeface
The overall design of a type family
Gill Sans, Univers & Georgia are all typefaces.

Font
Referring back to when type was cast in molten metal using a mould, or font. A font is how a typeface is delivered. So you can have both a metal handmade font and a digital font file of the same typeface, e.g Times or Futura.

Serif
Short strokes at the ends of horizontal and vertical strokes of characters. Generally considered to be easier to read for large quantities of text, and often, but not always, associated with more traditional and older themes.

Sans-Serif
Taken from the French word sans, meaning 'without', sans serif simply means without serifs. Generally, but not always, considered to be associated with modern themes.

Slab Serif
A typeface with weightier, 'slab-like' serifs.

Uppercase
CAPITAL LETTERS

Lowercase
non-capital letters

Mixed-case
A mix of the two above, that conforms to the standard rules of a normal sentence. Sometimes called sentence-case.

Title-case
Capitalising all of the major words in a sentence. There are various schools of thought as to what defines a 'major' word, but it tends to looks neater when connecting words like and, the, to, but, is & my remain lowercase.

Display font
A typeface or font designed to be used at larger sizes, like headers or on title pages. Usually too intricate or too bold to be legible at small sizes.

Body font
A typeface or font designed to be used for greater amounts of text (often called 'body copy' or 'body text'). Readable at smaller sizes.

Leading
The space set above and below lines of text. This text is 9pt in size, with 11pt leading.

Kerning
The adjustment of the space between individual characters. Good typographers hand-adjust kerning by eye for perfectly balanced spacing.

Tracking
The adjustment of the overall spacing between characters, usually for larger amounts of text.

Taken from: Basic typographic principles: A guide by The Typographic Circle

Kerning

Kerning
The reduction of white space between two characters (inter-character space)

Avenue

Kerning

Kerning
The reduction of white space between two characters (inter-character space)

Takes two

SCALA, WITH KERNING SUPPRESSED
Spacing appears uneven, with gaps around the T *and* w.

Takes two

SCALA, WITH KERNING
Spacing seems more even.

nearly touch

SCALA ITALIC, WITH KERNING SUPPRESSED
A gap appears between the l *and* y.

nearly touch

SCALA ITALIC, WITH KERNING
The intimacy of italic requires kerning.

LOVE LETTERS

The VE *and* TT *combinations make the whole word look mismatched.*

LOVE LETTERS

Kerning has been manually adjusted for a more even appearance.

rub my back

TYPE CRIME:
TOO MUCH SPACE
Mind the gap, especially at larger sizes

Kerning

Kerning
The reduction of white space between two characters (inter-character space)

Leading

Leading
The white space inserted between lines of type to give more readable and attractive appearance. The term is derived from the thin strips of non-printing lead that are used to separate lines of hot metal type.

Designed 52pt

A Big Title with Big Leading

60pt (default)

A Big Title with Big Leading

21pt

FontFont

The Foundry

Hoefler & Frere-Jones

House 33

Hype for Type

Klim Type Foundry

Lineto

Optimo

16pt

FontFont
The Foundry
Hoefler & Frere-Jones
House 33
Hype for Type
Klim Type Foundry
Lineto
Optimo

12pt (default)

FontFont
The Foundry
Hoefler & Frere-Jones
House 33
Hype for Type
Klim Type Foundry
Lineto
Optimo

Letter Spacing

Letter Spacing a.k.a tracking
The insertion of additional white space (inter-character space) between characters in a line or body of text to improve the overall appearance of a setting.

Default letter spacing

A Big Title with Lots of Space

default spacing

FontFont
The Foundry
Hoefler & Frere-Jones
House 33
Hype for Type
Klim Type Foundry
Lineto
Optimo

Increased letter spacing

A Big Title with Lots of Space

increased spacing

FontFont
The Foundry
Hoefler & Frere-Jones
House 33
Hype for Type
Klim Type Foundry
Lineto
Optimo

Punctuation

Hanging quotes

Urgh.

“The first rule of Fight Club is: You do not talk about Fight Club.”

Above is an example of 'un-hung' quote marks. Hanging quotes simply means to ensure that any quote marks 'hang' over the straight edge of your type. The negative space created when we don't do this is ugly and creates an uneven looking edge.

Better.

“The second rule of Fight Club is: You do not talk about Fight Club.”

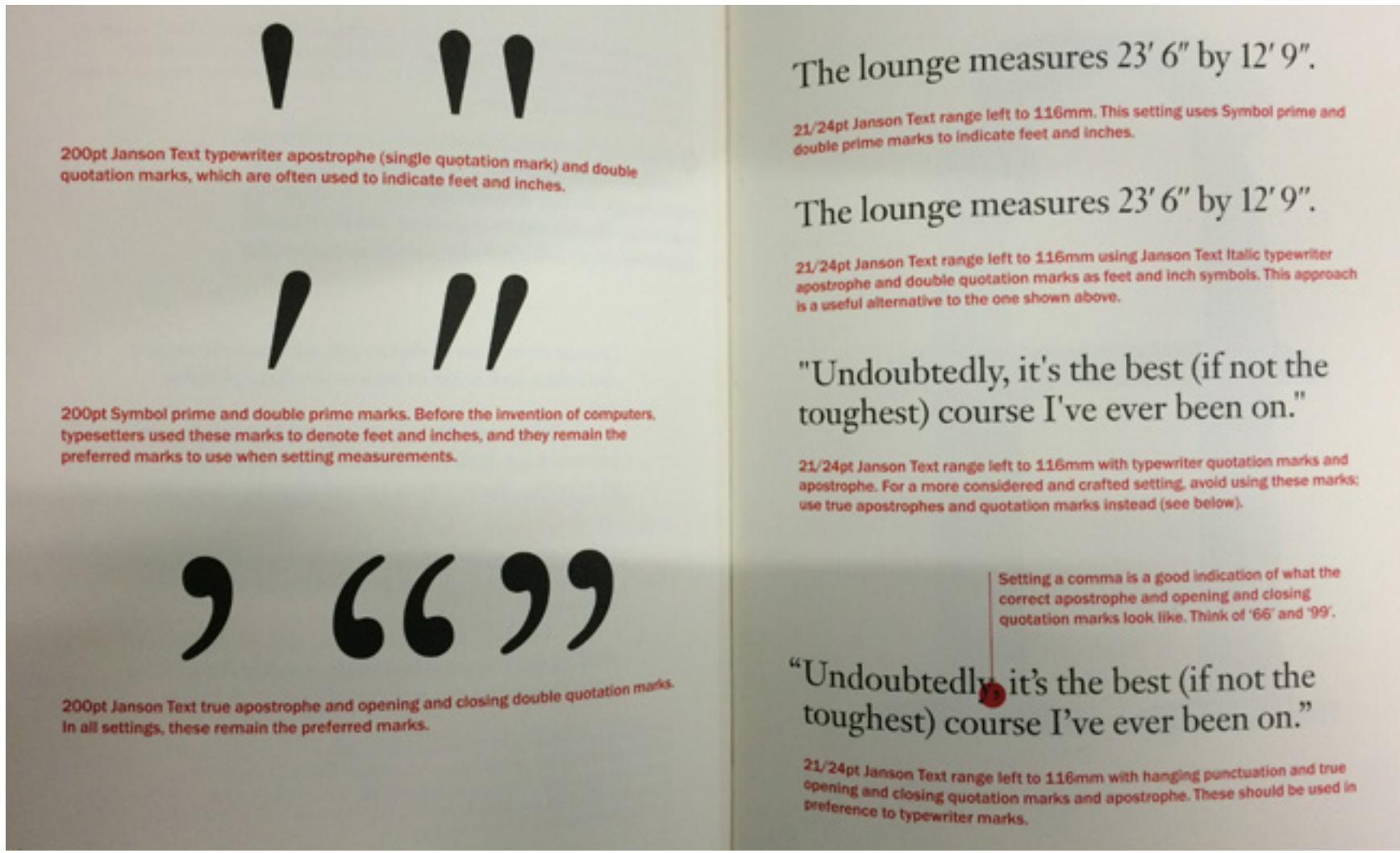
By hanging our quote marks over the edge – we give ourselves a cleaner, straighter vertical line, which looks much more elegant and considered.

The same rule applies to longer copy

“Fight Club is a 1999 American film based on the 1996 novel of the same name by Chuck Palahniuk. The film was directed by David Fincher and stars Edward Norton, Brad Pitt, and Helena Bonham Carter. Ed Norton plays the unnamed protagonist, “an everyman” who is discontented with his white-collar job. He forms a “fight club” with soap maker Tyler Durden, played by Pitt, and becomes embroiled in a relationship with him and a dissolute woman, Marla Singer, played by Bonham Carter”.

Typeface (above) = Trade Gothic Bold Condensed

Punctuation



Punctuation

It's about the hands-on experience of setting metal type.

Hyphens link words or indicate a break in a word at the end of a line.

The Edinburgh–London train is ready to depart.

The Picasso exhibition is open 16–30 October.

The en dash (approximately the width of a lowercase 'n') indicates a range of values or a connection between two things of almost any kind: numbers, people or places.

I wish you'd—oh, never mind.

The em dash (approximately the width of a capital 'M') marks an abrupt change of thought or a transition within a sentence.

En dash

Em dash

To avoid confusion, because 'en' and 'em' sound similar, they are also referred to as a 'nut dash' and a 'mutton dash' respectively.

Type Families

ONE TYPEFACE
many weights
and many different sizes
A LOT TO CHOOSE FROM
and to experiment
with before you introduce
ANOTHER

Books & online resources

BOOKS

Type Matters!; Jim Williams
Thinking with Type; Ellen Lupton
Stop Stealing Sheep; Erik Spiekermann
Grid Systems; Josef Muller-Brockmann
A Type Primer;John Kane
Herb Lubalin; Unit Editions
An Essay on Typography; Eric Gill
Scripts; Steven Heller
Swiss Graphic Design; Richard Hollis

ONLINE

http://www.papress.com/thinkingwithtype/
http://ilovetypography.com
http://www.thetypographyworkshop.com/
http://typocircle.com
http://www.istd.org.uk
http://welovetypography.com
http://typographica.org

TYPE FOUNDRIES

A2_Type
Commercial Type
Colophon
Dalton Maag
FontFont
The Foundry
Hoefler & Frere-Jones
House 33
Hype for Type
Klim Type Foundry
Lineto
Optimo
Process Type Foundry
Typekit
Vllg

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