

LESSON PLAN 52: DESIGN YOUR OWN FONT

Objective: Learn how to use font-building tool FontStruct

Age range: 10-14

INTRODUCING FONTSTRUCT

Ever thought it would be fun to design your own font? Well, now you can thanks to free font-building tool FontStruct (fontstruct.fontshop.com). You don't need any design or typesetting skills, as the font creating software (the 'FontStructor') is quick to learn and easy to use.

YOU WILL NEED

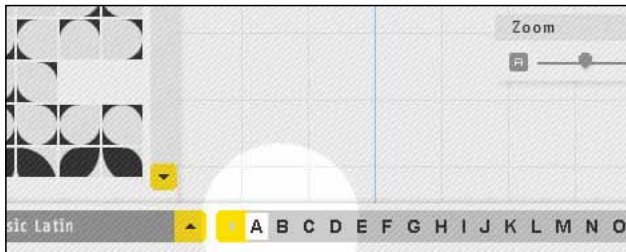
Computer, Internet access, Web browser

DEVELOPING SKILLS

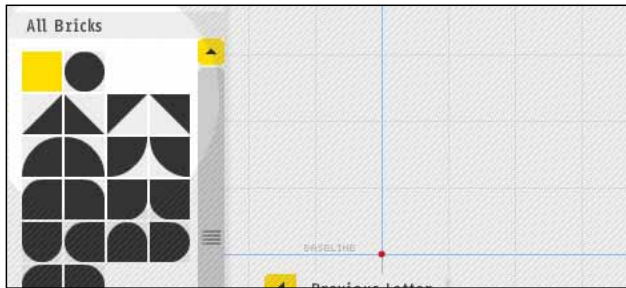
Design, presentation, computer usage

METHOD

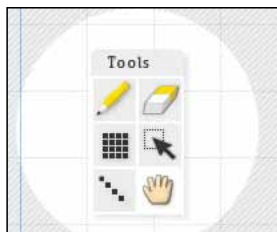
1. Create an account.



2. Once you've started the FontStructor editor, you must choose the letter to start designing. When you start the FontStructor for the first time, the letter 'A' will be active (above). You can choose a different letter by clicking on a different character, or you can select a completely different set of characters from the list in the bottom left of the screen.

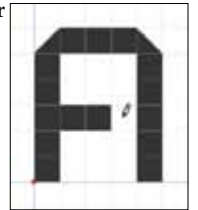


3. Having chosen a character, you need a shape to build with. On the left-hand side of the screen you will find the 'All Bricks' panel, a collection of shapes – or 'bricks' – that you can use.



4. Once you've chosen your character, and your brick, you need a drawing tool. There are a number available.

5. Now you can start designing by clicking anywhere on the squared canvas. Note that the horizontal, blue guideline marked 'BASELINE' is the baseline for your letters, so they should usually sit on this line. The vertical, blue guideline marks the left-side of your letters. So, most of your letters will probably be built upwards and to the right of the red dot, which marks the origin of your design.

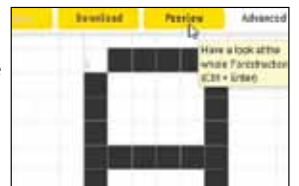


6. Once you've built a few letters, you may want to look at them together, and try typing with them. To do this, click on the 'Preview' button at the top of the screen:

In the top half of the screen you can type in any letters you have created. In the bottom half of the screen you can see all your letters. You can use the slider controls to change the size of your letters. Press the 'Go Back' button to return to the editor.



7. Remember to save your work regularly using the 'Save' button at the top of the edit screen. Once you've finished, FontStruct generates high-quality TrueType fonts, ready to use in any Mac or Windows application. Click the 'Download' button to download a .zip archive file containing your finished font file and licensing information. You can keep your creations to yourself or share with others.



MORE ADVANCED FEATURES

Once you get the hang of things, there are a number of advanced features on the site, including:

- Keyboard shortcuts
- Mixing pixel fonts
- Rotating and flipping
- Composite bricks

USES IN THE CLASSROOM

Beyond basic design principals and the simple functions of using this great little program, you can use it as the basis for other work within your classroom.

- **English** – ask your class to create a font that reflects the 'meaning' or 'mood' of a word;
- **History** – creating fonts could help to bring to life the story of printing, or the publishing of books and newspapers;
- **Maths** – you may find the grid layout and geometric shapes useful for teaching geometry or fractions; and
- **Art** – create original designs and fonts.

WATCH THE BASICS OF FONTSTRUCT

Check out our website for a screencast that will guide you through the basics of the application.



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