

Alphabet Quotations

Yale-Read

Choose 2 and use together:

The whole duty of typography, as of calligraphy, is to communicate to the imagination, without loss by the way, the thought or image intended to be communicated by the author.

Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson

Typography, like the other arts, is characterized by disciplines and freedoms. Typography was born out of the need to communicate. It is a form that expresses something other than itself.

Printed things are created to communicate a thought to people. Language, in printing, is made of type—a small number of symbols which acquire meaning of infinite combinations with others.

Henry Wolf

Whence did the wondrous mystic art arise
Of painting speech and speaking to the eyes?
That we, by tracing magic lines
Are taught how to embody and to color thoughts.

William Massey

When one considers the immense power of man's spirit, it is amazing to think that it could not have developed without the alphabet. How clearly we are heirs to this process . . . the links in a chain.

Friedrich Neugebauer

More powerful than all poetry, more pervasive than all science, more profound than all philosophy are the letters of the alphabet, twenty-six pillars of strength upon which our culture rests.

Anonymous

In a state of nature no arts, no letters, no society: and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death: and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Thomas Hobbes

Or choose 1 and use singly:

We use the letters of our alphabet every day with the utmost ease and unconcern, taking them almost as much for granted as the air we breathe. We do not realize that each of these letters is at our service today as the result of a long and laboriously slow process of evolution in the age-old art of writing.

Douglas C. McMurtrie

Civilization and letters are two homogeneous, inseparable concepts: just as the development of civilization is unthinkable without the medium of letters, so it was the progress of civilization which gave the letter its full value as the bearer of thought, and raised it to universal importance.

Max Cafilisch

The graphic signs called letters are so completely blended with the stream of written thought that their presence therein is as unperceived as the ticking of a clock in the measurement of time. Only by an effort of attention does the laymen discover that they exist at all . . .

William Addison Dwiggins

In all the alphabets yet created there lies a wealth, an abundance, of possible creative interpretations which we only perceive as we give them more intensive study. The letter was formed, and to form implies creation. This is a divine process, even when it takes place with the four walls of a humble workshop . . .

Alfred J. Ludwig

Letters—these seemingly commonplace little signs, taken for granted by so many, belong to the most momentous products of creative power. These forms, which we take in with our eyes a million times each day, embody the highest skill within their small compass. They are abstract refinements of the creative imagination, full of clarity, movement and subtlety . . .

Gustav Barthel

The making of letters in every form is for me the purest and the greatest pleasure, and at many stages of my life it was to me what a song is to the singer, a picture to the painter, a shout to the elated, ore a sign to the oppressed. It was and is for me the most happy and perfect expression of my life.

Rudolf Koch

Writing is a system of human communication that works through the use of visible signs. The beginnings of writing are inseparably connected to those of art, and one must never treat them as different entities. All letters are signs, and all signs began as pictures. The alphabet is the source.

Friedrich Neugebauer

Calligraphy is the most direct form of all artistic expression. Just as each movement of the dancer is absolute, so every gesture of the calligrapher is essential. It is not the meaning of the character but the writing—the movement of execution and the action itself—that is important.

Tseng Yu-ho Ecke

The Greeks had a word for it “Kalligraphia,” meaning “beautiful writing.” The Chinese used two words for it “Shu fa” meaning “the system of method of writing.” Calligraphy in its abstract nature, represents perception. Its fast execution depends on intuitive awareness.

Heather Child