

THE STORY OF Proxima Sera

Proxima Sera Family

- Proxima Sera Thin
- Proxima Sera Thin Italic*
- Proxima Sera Extralight
- Proxima Sera Extralight Italic*
- Proxima Sera Light
- Proxima Sera Light Italic*
- Proxima Sera Regular
- Proxima Sera Italic*
- Proxima Sera Medium
- Proxima Sera Medium Italic*
- Proxima Sera Semibold
- Proxima Sera Semibold Italic*
- Proxima Sera Bold
- Proxima Sera Bold Italic*
- Proxima Sera Extrabold
- Proxima Sera Extrabold Italic*
- Proxima Sera Black
- Proxima Sera Black Italic*

NOT LONG AFTER I released **Proxima Nova** in 2005, I started getting asked: “What *serif* typeface would you recommend to use with Proxima Nova?” In all the time I’d spent working on it (and its earlier incarnation, **Proxima Sans**), I had never really thought much about this. But I tried to think of what I would use myself, usually suggesting things like Century Schoolbook, Georgia, or maybe Rockwell. None of these suggestions seemed particularly satisfying to me, so I started thinking about a serif typeface *designed* to be used with Proxima Nova. ■ The first approach I tried was to do a *slab* serif version of Proxima Nova. This sort of thing had been done before (e.g., Helvetica → Helseif, Avant Garde → Lubalin Graph, Unifers → Serifa and Glypha), and it didn’t look bad, but it occurred to me that I couldn’t remember ever seeing any of these sans/slab pairs used together, so it felt like the wrong direction. My second approach was to increase the contrast of Proxima Nova and add smaller serifs, sort of along the lines of Candida, a rather obscure thick and thin slab serif face from the sixties. Somehow, it still didn’t seem to be the right answer. Trying to retain the underlying structure of Proxima Nova (i.e., its skeleton) seemed to be constraining me. ■ Finally, in 2020, I had an epiphany. I realized that what I *really* wanted was a serif typeface that would harmonize with Proxima Nova the way that Morris Fuller Benton’s Century Schoolbook and Century Expanded harmonized



“METROPOLIS” SKETCH, 1979.

with Franklin Gothic and News Gothic. These faces comprised a sort of *ad hoc* superfamily, held together by their shared proportions, not the structures of their letterforms. ■ I then remembered a serif typeface idea I’d had in 1979 (working name: “Metropolis”), not long before my earliest concepts for what would become Proxima Nova. Like the proto-Proxima Nova concept, “Metropolis” was a hybrid, combining elements of various popular serif typefaces: Times, Century, Baskerville, Plantin. I also wanted it to have proportions similar to Helvetica—something that was also part of the proto-Proxima Nova concept. It was exactly what I needed. ■ Starting from my 1979 drawings, I adapted “Metropolis” to match the proportions of Proxima Nova, changing some of the details to better harmonize with it, such as flattening the head serifs on the lowercase. This time, it worked. The result was Proxima Sera, *not* Proxima Nova with serifs, but a *companion* serif typeface. ■ Proxima Sera comes in nine weights (from **Thin** to **Black**) with matching italics. (The Thin style is recommend mainly for large sizes.) It also shares most of the character set and special features of Proxima Nova, such as true small caps, proportional and tabular figures in both lining and old style, fraction support, ordinals, case-sensitive forms, alternate characters, ligatures, and dingbats. Compared to Proxima Nova, its initial release is still missing condensed styles and support for Greek and Cyrillic, but those will come later, as well as a variable version. —Mark Simonson

Features

TRUE SMALL CAPS

TRUE SMALL CAPS

LINING & OLD STYLE FIGURES

1234567890 \$¢€£¥

1234567890 \$£¢€£¥

PROPORTIONAL AND TABULAR FIGURES

12345 → 12345

12345 → 12345

FRACTION SUPPORT

2/3, 1/8, 53/72...

→ ⅔ ⅛, 53⁄72...

ORDINAL SUPPORT

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th...

→ 1st, 2nd, 3rd 4th...

CASE-SENSITIVE CHARACTERS

(x-ray) → (X-RAY)

ALTERNATE CHARACTERS

gladly → gladly

01 → 01

LIGATURES

ff fi ffi fl ffi fb fh fj ff fk

DINGBATS

→ ← ↑ ↓ ◀ ▶ ▲ ▼ ★ ◆ ◻ ◻ ✓ ✂

EXTENDED LANGUAGE SUPPORT

ĐPŸĂĈĐĖŇĜĤĦĬĴĹŦŠ...

ĐPŸĂĈĐĖŇĜĤĦĬĴĹŦŠ...

đpŷăĉđėňğĥĭĵĺŧšŧ...

EXTENDED CURRENCY SUPPORT

\$¢€£¥/F£ŁPP€TŁRđ¤α

Proxima Sera Display Sample Summary

PROXIMA SERA THIN

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA EXTRALIGHT

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA LIGHT

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA REGULAR

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA MEDIUM

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA SEMIBOLD

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA BOLD

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA EXTRABOLD

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA BLACK

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCURY
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

Proxima Sera Display Sample Summary

PROXIMA SERA THIN ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface of

PROXIMA SERA EXTRALIGHT ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface o

PROXIMA SERA LIGHT ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7.
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA MEDIUM ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN 7
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA SEMIBOLD ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surface

PROXIMA SERA BOLD ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surfac

PROXIMA SERA EXTRABOLD ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surfac

PROXIMA SERA BLACK ITALIC

1957 SPUTNIK 1958 EXPLORER 1961 VOSTOK 1962 MERCUR
1. MERCURY 2. VENUS 3. EARTH 4. MARS 5. JUPITER 6. SATURN
Vexed Buzz quietly watched Neil jumping to mark the surfac

Proxima Sera Language Support, OpenType & Usage Notes

LANGUAGES SUPPORTED

Afrikaans, Albanian, Asu, Azerbaijani, Basque, Bemba, Bena, Bosnian, Breton, Catalan, Cebuano, Chiga, Colognian, Cornish, Corsican, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Embu, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Faroese, Filipino, Finnish, French, Friulian, Galician, Ganda, German, Guarani, Gusii, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Icelandic, Ido, Inari Sami, Indonesian, Interlingua, Irish, Italian, Javanese, Jju, Jola-Fonyi, Kabuverdianu, Kalaallisut, Kalenjin, Kamba, Kikuyu, Kinyarwanda, Koyra Chiini, Koyraboro Senni, Kurdish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Lojban, Low German, Lower Sorbian, Luo, Luxembourgish, Luyia, Machame, Makhuwa-Meetto, Makonde, Malagasy, Malay, Maltese, Manx, Māori, Meru, Mohawk, Morisyen, Nigerian Pidgin, North Ndebele, Northern Sami, Northern Sotho, Norwegian Bokmål, Norwegian Nynorsk, Nyanja, Nyankole, Occitan, Oromo, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Romanian, Romansh, Rombo, Rundi, Rwa, Samburu, Sango, Sangu, Sardinian, Scottish Gaelic, Sena, Shambala, Shona, Slovak, Slovenian, Soga, Somali, South Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Spanish, Sundanese, Swahili, Swati, Swedish, Swiss German, Taita, Taroko, Tasawaq, Teso, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Turkmen, Tyap, Upper Sorbian, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Vunjo, Walloon, Walsler, Welsh, Western Frisian, Wolof, Xhosa, Zarma, Zulu

NOTE: Access to extended language features requires application and/or operating system Unicode or OpenType support.

OPENTYPE FEATURES SUPPORTED

Small Caps from Lowercase, All Small Caps, Standard Ligatures, Stylistic Alternates, Stylistic Sets (01-08), Case-Sensitive Forms, Class-Based Kerning, Proportional Lining Figures, Tabular Lining Figures, Proportional Oldstyle Figures, Tabular Oldstyle Figures, Slashed Zero, Fractions, Ordinals, Superscript, Scientific Inferior, Mark to Base, and Mark to Mark.

NOTE: Access to OpenType features requires application and/or operating system OpenType support.

ALTERNATE CHARACTER ACCESS

There are seven Stylistic Sets, providing access to alternate characters in Proxima Sera. These correspond with Proxima Nova where appropriate. In applications that support it, the name of the Stylistic Set is displayed (e.g., “Schoolbook Style”) instead of or in addition to the number:

Set	Name	Roman	Italic
1	Schoolbook Style	a g l y → α g l y	*
2	Simple “a” Style	a → α	*
4	Alternate Roman Lowercase a	a → α	*
5	Alternate Italic Lowercase g	g → g	*
6	Alternate Lowercase l	l → l	*
7	Alternate Lowercase y	y → y	*
8	Straight Quotes to Primes	' " → ' "	' " → ' "

* NO CHANGE

In programs that support Stylistic Sets, more than one Set may be applied at a time. For example, Stylistic Set 1 could be recreated by applying Sets 4, 5, 6, and 7 all at once.

Note that Stylistic Sets 1 through 7 affect roman only. There is no Stylistic Set 3 in Proxima Sera. In Proxima Nova Set 3 is the alternate capital G, which does not exist in Proxima Sera. Stylistic Set 5 in Proxima Sera differs from Set 5 in Proxima Nova, where it activates the alternate italic *a*. In Proxima Sera it activates the alternate *g*.

STYLISTIC MAPPING (PLAIN, ITALIC, BOLD, BOLD ITALIC)

In Microsoft Office and other Windows applications, Proxima Sera is broken into smaller “sub-families” that work with the *I* (italic) and *B* (bold) buttons on toolbars.

Only the first member of each group appears in the font listing in such applications and is the “plain” style within that group. The others are “italic,” “bold,” and “bold italic” respectively:

GROUP 1: Thin, Thin Italic

GROUP 2: Extralight, Extralight Italic

GROUP 3: Light, Light Italic

GROUP 4: Regular, Italic, Bold, Bold Italic

GROUP 5: Medium, Medium Italic

GROUP 6: Semibold, Semibold Italic

GROUP 7: Extrabold, Extrabold Italic

GROUP 8: Black, Black Italic

For example, to use Proxima Sera Bold Italic, choose Proxima Sera Regular from the font list and then click the *I* and *B* buttons on the toolbar (or use the keyboard shortcuts). Note: The “bold” button only works with the Regular style. The “italic” button works with all styles.

Not all applications support stylistic mapping. Use of stylistic mapping is optional and not necessarily recommended for some pre-press workflows.