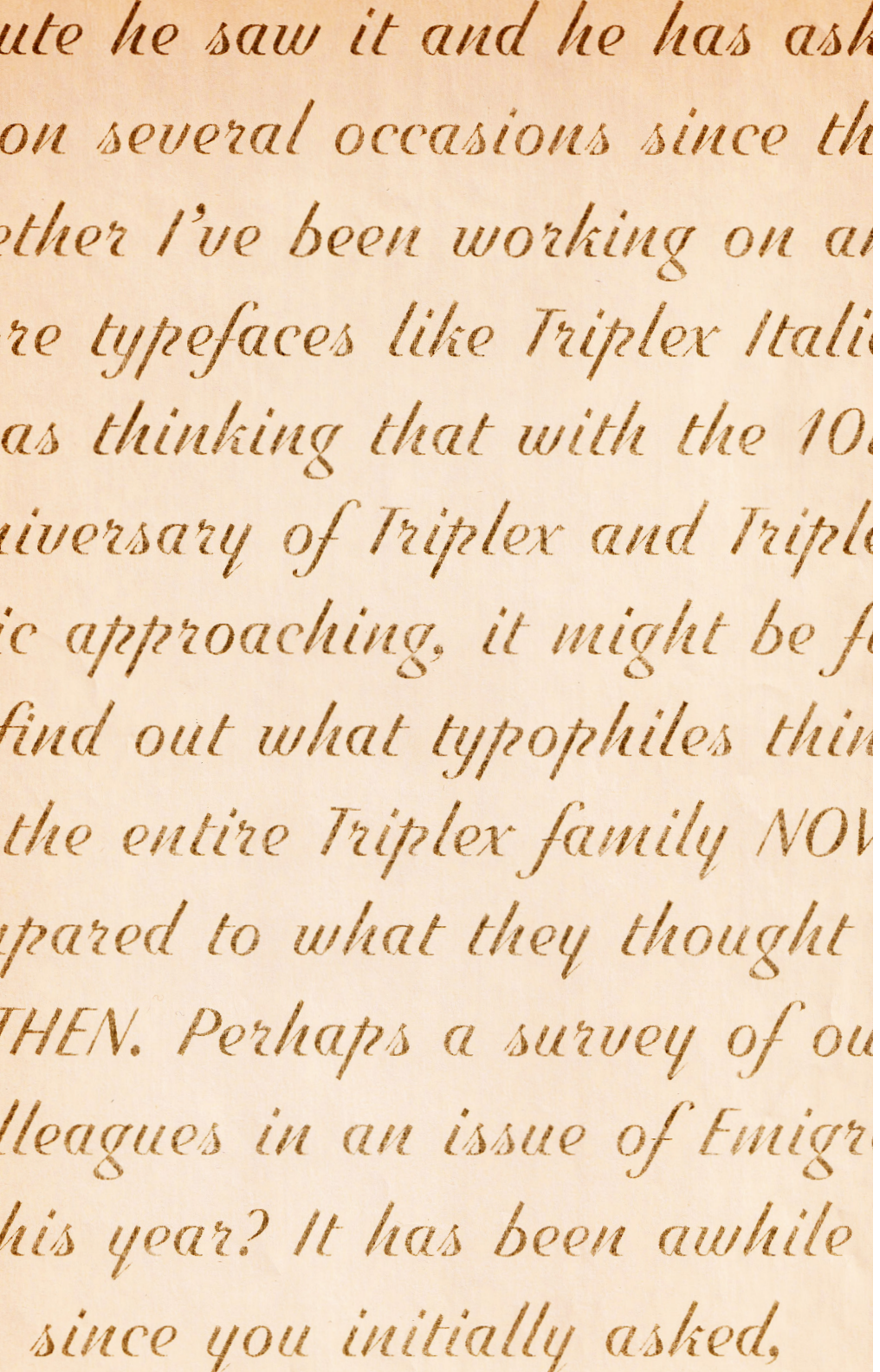
*Let's Parler Franglais Avec Emigre.**



EMIGRE

Franglais

DESIGNED BY

John Downer

Italic 80 pt, Roman 21 pt, Roman 42 pt

EMIGRE

Franglais

THE WORD FRANGLAIS* is a portmanteau of "Français" and "Anglais" that describes the blending of French and English languages, often referring to English words used in French, or poorly spoken French by anglophones. The phenomenon is a result of the long, often competitive, historical relationship between the two languages. While some see Franglais as a natural part of linguistic evolution, others, including institutions like the Académie française, view it as a threat to the purity of the French language.

* In French, Franglais is pronounced as frahn-gleh. In English, it is pronounced as Fron-glay.

*Let's Parler Franglais.

THE TITLE OF THIS TYPE SPECIMEN was inspired by the British humorist and journalist Miles Kington who wrote the famous "Let's Parler Franglais" column. It began in the 1970s in the satirical magazine *Punch* and later in newspapers like *The Times* and *The Independent*. The column featured comedic short sketches that presented a satirical language course, mashing up French and English into a humorous, fictionalized hybrid language.

Italic 62 pt, Informal 14/18 pt, Italic 22 pt, Roman 10/12 pt

A FINE EXAMPLE OF FRANGLAIS: The 19th-century American writer Mark Twain, in his book *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), included the following letter to a Parisian landlord:

PARIS, LE 7 JUILLET.

Monsieur le Landlord—Sir: Pourquoi don't you mettez some savon in your bed-chambers? Est-ce que vous pensez I will steal it? La nuit passée you charged me pour deux chandelles when I only had one; hier vous avez charged me avec glace when I had none at all; tout les jours you are coming some fresh game or other on me, mais vous ne pouvez pas play this savon dodge on me twice. Savon is a necessary de la vie to any body but a Frenchman, et je l'aurai hors de cet hotel or make trouble. You hear me. Allons. BLUCHER.

Roman 10/12 pt, Italic 22/26 pt

L'histoire de font.

¶ *Emigre's interest in the typeface Franglais stretches back* more than two decades. In 2003, while revisiting archival materials, we rediscovered an old fax from John Downer dated February 10, 2000 (see inside cover). The letter addressed Triplex Italic, but what immediately captured our attention was the unfamiliar italic typeface in which the fax was set, topped with the wry headline "The Marriage Won't Last!" In hindsight, it remains a mystery why we did not pursue it at once; upon rediscovery, its personality and distinction were unmistakable. We soon contacted John to explore the possibility of releasing the design through Emigre, and ideally to expand it as a paired Roman and Italic family.

¶ *Originally conceived by Downer as a standalone italic*—what he later described as a "cultural waif"—*Franglais* carried such a strong and idiosyncratic voice that we thought it invited expansion. John encouraged Emigre to explore additional styles, and in early 2003, Zuzana Licko, working under his guidance, began developing two upright companions—Roman and Informal—which were subsequently fine-tuned by Downer. CONTINUED ON PAGE 11.

Informal 24 pt, Italic & Roman 14/18 pt

A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h
i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! ? & $ { } [ ]

Italic 48 pt

A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h
i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! ? & $ { } [ ]

Informal 48 pt

A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h
i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! ? & $ { } [ ]

Roman 48 pt

C'est Un Bon Job!

Italic 141/105 pt

¶ *Franglais Roman is the most normalized expression* of the family, while Informal functions as an upright italic, maintaining the design's characteristic tension and movement. Both retain distinctive traits of the original italic, including the unconventional ĸ and the expressive overhooks and underhooks of the C and S. CONTINUED ON PAGE 12.

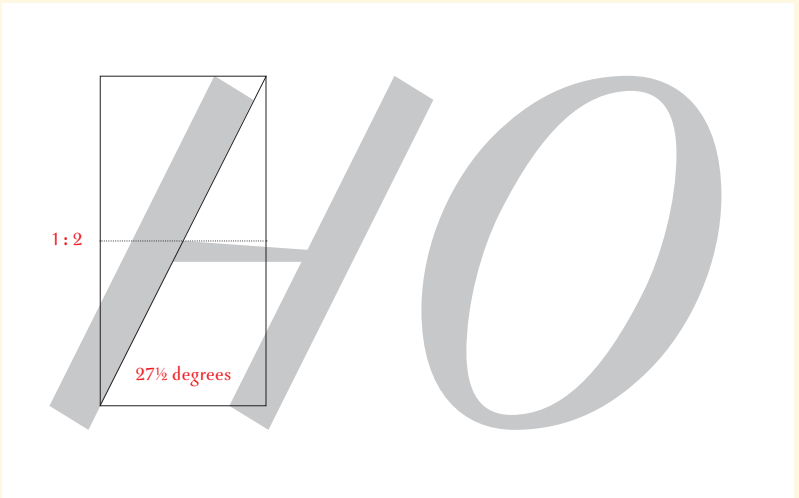


Italic & Informal 100 pt

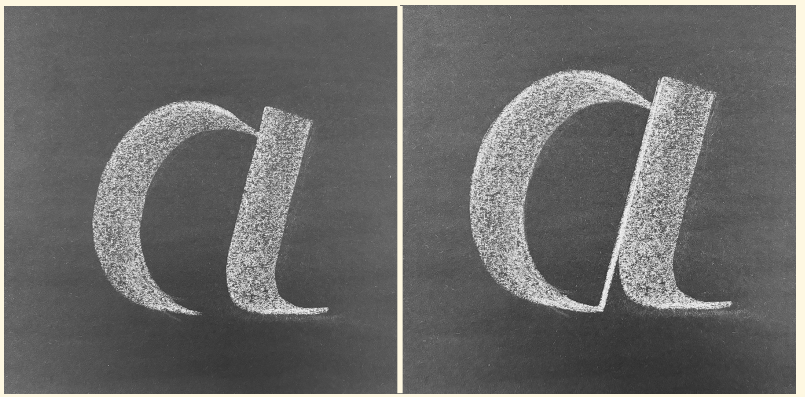
The Informal and Roman styles of Franglais were created by back-slanting the original Italic and then making slight adjustments to simplify the letterforms.

Italic & Roman 14/18 pt, Roman 10/12 pt

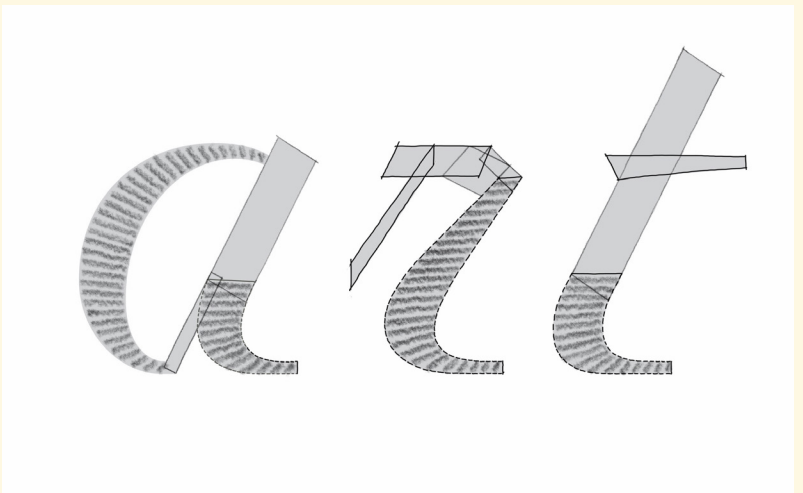
¶ *Integral to Franglais is a deliberate constructional idea:* an italic whose slant suggests rotation rather than mechanical skewing. This approach gives the letterforms a sense of physical motion and handmade vitality. The concept draws on a rich tradition of brush lettering and sign painting—territory in which John Downer, a master lettering artist, is entirely at home. CONTINUED ON PAGE 18.



Downer's thinking behind the Italic can be partly explained by this diagram. If you rotate an upright stroke, the ends of the stroke are no longer horizontal. If you skew that same upright stroke, and the stroke has a foot serif, the serif remains level. Many lowercase characters in Franglais Italic appear to be a combination of rotating and obliquing.



The chalk studies shown above were done as "reverse engineering" exercises. Sometimes, Downer needed to take a step backwards to remember how he made the transition from analog to digital. These illustrations also show the basic structural gestures behind Franglais.



Je vais checker mes emails.

Je vais faire mon footing.

Italic 96/76 pt, Informal 38 pt

C'EST TROP LE FUN!

Voilà

Italic 134/105 pt, Italic 54 pt

FRANGLAIS

Franglais

Quel Design!

SUPER!

Italic 165 pt, Informal 92 pt, Italic 56 pt

Italic 165 pt, Informal 92 pt

¶ *Reflecting on the origins of Franglais, Downer describes* it as lettering devised for imaginary signage inspired by a hybrid of postwar metal type and vernacular chalk-written menu boards. Elements of "ruler writing"—in which a ruler is used to keep the baseline straight—are evident throughout.

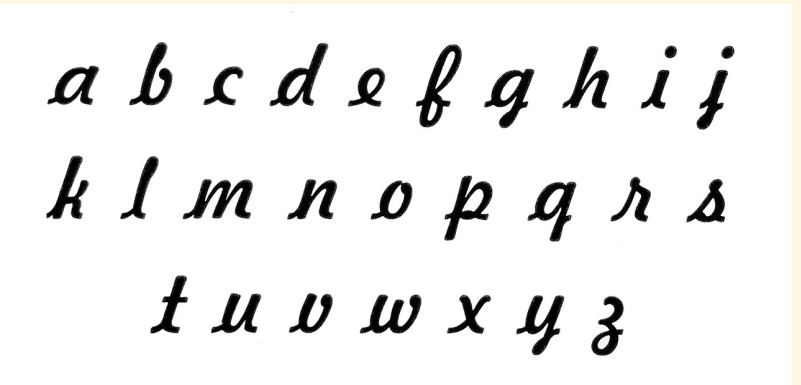
¶ *While Franglais firmly inhabits a post–World War II* visual landscape, it resists being purely French in character. Instead, it embraces a knowingly impure blend of French and Anglo-American signage conventions, complete with their cultural contradictions and visual humor.

¶ *Downer has likened Franglais to the lettering one might* have encountered in Paris shortly after the city's liberation in 1944, when American influence began subtly—and not always delicately—to seep into French visual and linguistic culture. Whether admired for its historical resonance or its playful irreverence, Franglais occupies a space that is both referential and refreshingly out of step with contemporary typographic trends. Its lineage aligns more closely with the expressive, idea-driven sensibility of the Ludlow Typograph Company under R. Hunter Middleton than with the prevailing aesthetics of recent digital type design. CONTINUED ON PAGE 22.

Italic & Roman 14/18 pt



Exit strokes of many lowercase letters are horizontal, and follow the baseline, as can be seen in "ruler-written" minuscules. The popular typeface Park Avenue, designed by Robert Smith in 1933 for American Type Founders Company, is a well-known example of this style.



It was Bob Middleton's Mandate typeface that first inspired John Downer to create Franglais. Mandate is a connecting script with entry and exit strokes at the bottom. And while the minuscules in Franglais do not connect, the engineering philosophy of Mandate, shown in the 1936 type specimen of the Ludlow Typograph Company, affected Downer's thinking when he started designing Franglais.

Roman 10/12 pt

Le Snack-Bar

Ça fait un super look.

C'EST UN WALK-OVER

Informal 29 pt, Italic 76/67 pt, Roman 56/51 pt

Il faut brainstormer sur le nouveau branding.

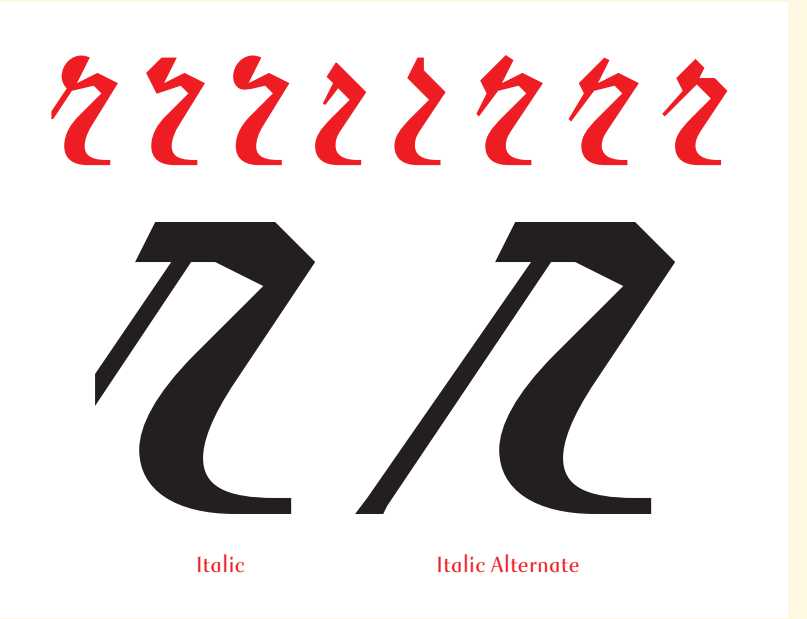
Une peine dans le neck.

Informal 62/71 pt, Italic 36 pt

¶ *Work on Franglais paused in early 2004, a casualty* of the many complex decisions involved in shaping and commercially releasing a coherent type family. Nearly twenty years later, in early 2025, Downer resumed the project, having finally resolved one of its most elusive elements: the lowercase *r* in the italic style, a character that had gone through dozens of iterations since 2004 before finding its final form. “It had always been a problem child,” said Downer, “but now it’s playing well with the rest of the characters.”

¶ *Seen anew, the completed family reaffirmed everything* that first drew us to the design. This time, we moved quickly to bring Franglais to release, with additional production support from Gen Ramírez of Dual Type, who also handled the Central European character set.

EMIGRE, BERKELEY, 2026



Italic Italic Alternate



The final character to be resolved after years of pondering was the lowercase italic r. Downer had tried to adapt assorted kinds of French r to fit the character set, but the ascending ear repeatedly rebelled. He ultimately found the answer in American show card writing from 1953—an earless r which is flat and level on the top.

C’est le friforâll!

LE BEST OF

On va faire du shopping ce week-end?

Informal 100/90 pt, Roman 35 pt, Italic 38/34 pt

Je suis en plein rush, j’ai une deadline ASAP.

Italic 72/77 pt

LE
DESIGN
ÉTAIT
TOP

Le top du top.

Roman 103/90 pt, Italic 64 pt

une affaire steamy.

une affaire steamy.

ch ck fi NN gg pp rr nn

Franglais has numerous ligatures and alternative characters, some featuring lead-in serifs. You can access these characters in the Contextual Alternates and Discretionary Ligatures OpenType features or the Glyphs panel in InDesign.

Italic 62/54 pt, Italic 32 pt, Roman 10/12 pt

FAIRE DU STOP

J'ai liké.

Roman 120/100 pt, Italic 70 pt

Toucher base.

Votre column est spot on, monsieur.

UN RELOOKING



Informal 36 pt, Italic 65/58 pt, Roman 34 pt, Informal 90 pt



Italic 140, 50, 113, 75 pt

P. 1. Let's parler Franglais avec Emigre.
Let's speak Franglais with Emigre.

10. C'est un bon job!
It's a good job!

14. Je vais checker mes emails.
I'm going to check my email.

14. Je vais faire mon footing.
I'm going for a jog.

15. C'est trop le fun!
It's so much fun!

16. Quel Design!
What a design!

20. Ça fait un super look.
It creates a great look.

20. C'est un walk-over.
It's a walkover.

21. Il faut brainstormer sur le nouveau branding.
We need to brainstorm the new branding.

21. Une peine dans le neck.
A pain in the neck.

24. C'est le friforâll!
It's a free-for-all!

24. On va faire du shopping ce week-end?
Are we going shopping this weekend?

25. Je suis en plein rush, j'ai une deadline ASAP.
I'm in a huge rush, I have an ASAP deadline.

26. Le design était top.
The design was great.

27. Une affaire steamy.
A steamy affair.

28. Faire du stop.
To hitchhike.

28. J'ai liké.
I 'liked' it.

29. Toucher base.
To touch base.

29. Votre column est spot on, monsieur.
Your column is spot on, sir.

29. Un relooking.
A makeover.

P. 5. PARIS, LE 7 JUILLET.
Monsieur le Landlord—Sir: Pourquoi don't you mettez some savon in your bed-chambers? Est-ce que vous pensez I will steal it? La nuit passée you charged me pour deux chandelles when I only had one; hier vous avez charged me avec glace when I had none at all; tout les jours you are coming some fresh game or other on me, mais vous ne pouvez pas play this savon dodge on me twice. Savon is a necessary de la vie to any body but a Frenchman, et je l'aurai hors de cet hotel or make trouble. You hear me. Allons. BLUCHER.

PARIS, JULY 7.
Dear Landlord—Sir: Why don't you put some soap in your bedrooms? Do you think I will steal it? Last night you charged me for two candles when I had only one; yesterday you charged me for ice when I had none at all; every day you are trying to pull some fresh trick or other on me, but you cannot play this soap dodge on me twice. Soap is a necessity of life to anyone but a Frenchman, and I will have it out of this hotel or make trouble. You hear me. Come on. BLUCHER.

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