

## Ligatures

In writing and typography, a ligature occurs where two or more letterforms are written or printed as a unit. Generally, ligatures replace characters that occur next to each other when they share common components. Ligatures are a subset of a more general class of figures called “contextual forms”. Contextual forms describe the case where the particular shape of a letter depends on its context (surrounding letters, whether or not it’s at the end of a line, etc.).

One of the most common ligatures is “fi.” Since the dot above a lowercase “i” interferes with the loop on the lowercase “f,” when “f” and “i” are printed next to each other, they are combined into a single figure with the dot absorbed into the “f,” which appears as “fi”. Perhaps the most common ligature is the ampersand &: this was originally a ligature of ‘Et’, Latin for ‘and’.

Common ligatures are displayed to the right:

One font with which specializes in ligatures, is Requiem Italic Ligatures, which includes a font of 75 decorative ligatures, from the familiar (fi) to the exotic (ffff).

A sample of Requiem Italic Ligatures is:

*Theremin actress spokesperson*  
*Krafft risked mistflower octagon*  
*Gottfried outflanked satisfying*  
*Luskin refine bachelor ersatz*  
*Bakersfield jetty factfinding*  
*Nottingham surfboard kaftan*  
*Affects packing offices fjords*  
*Eastfield transforming quota*  
*Vestfjorden Sauerstoffflaschen*

fi → fi

fl → fl

AE → Æ

ij → ij

ae → æ

st → st

OE → Œ

ft → ft

oe → œ

et → et

ff → ff

fs → ß

fi → fi

ffi → ffi