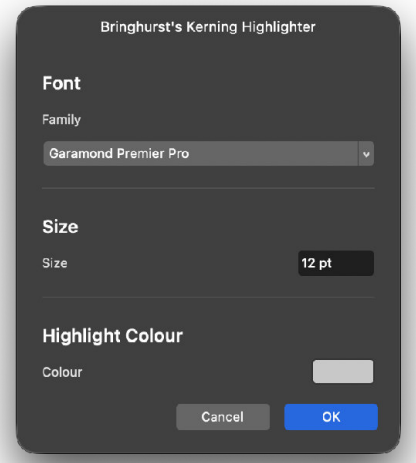
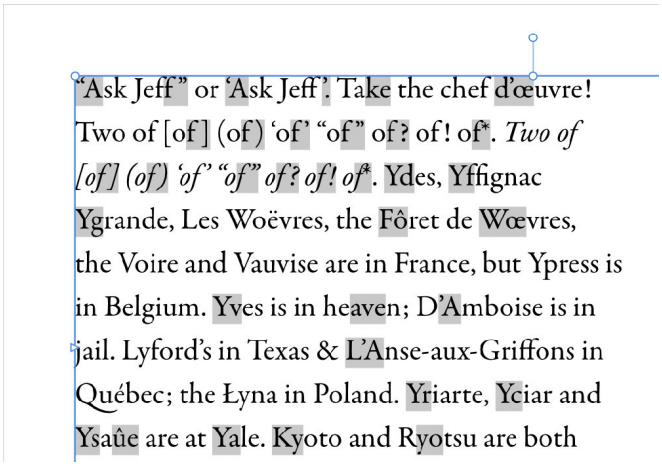
bringhurst-kerning-highlighter

Recreates the kerning test page from Bringhurst's The Elements of Typographic Style (4th ed.) as a proofing specimen with kern-lapse pairs highlighted.





Installation

1. Download the zip file and unzip it.
2. Run the script in one of two ways: a) Run directly — Open the Script Editor panel (Window > Scripting > Script Editor), paste the contents of `bringhurst-kerning-highlighter.js` into the editor, and press Run. b) Save to Script Library first — Follow step (a) above, then click Save As... to save the script to the Script Library. Open the Script Library panel (Window > Scripting > Script Library) and click the saved script once to run it.

Purpose

Builds a dedicated proofing page from Bringhurst's classic kerning test text so an unfamiliar font can be judged before any kerning table is tuned. The script places a text frame on the current spread, sets the test passage in the chosen font, highlights each kern-lapse pair, and italicises the runs that are italic in the source. It changes nothing in the existing document text — it only adds the specimen frame.

Companion scripts: `apply-kerning-pairs.js` (and the per-style variant `apply-kerning-pairs-styles.js`) fix kerning from a data table, and `kerning-pairs-preview.js` highlights what the applier would touch in your own document. This script is the step before all of that: proof the font from scratch on Bringhurst's page.

Note that this is only a specimen, not a diagnosis. The highlighted pairs are candidate kern-lapse positions — a well-kerned font may show correct spacing on them, and that clean result is itself the verdict. It is the typesetter's eye, not the highlight, that decides whether a given font needs any kerning applied.

How it works

The test text (`TEST_TEXT` in the script) is Bringhurst's passage — "Ask Jeff", the `of` series, place names (Ydes, Yffignac, Kyoto, Tlalpan, Xochimilco…), and the closing date-and-time line (`1510–1620, 11:00 pm, and the 1980s are over`).

1. The dialog collects the font, size, and highlight colour.
2. A text frame is created on the first spread, inset 10 mm on every side (`MARGIN_MM`). Page and frame sizes are logged to the Console in mm.
3. The passage is set via `StoryBuilder` and placed with `AddChildNodesCommandBuilder`.
4. One italic run is applied (`ITALIC_RANGES`, currently a single run at story indices 89–126 covering the `Two of … of*` lines).
5. Each entry in `KERNING_PAIRS` highlights a 2-character range at that story index via `DocumentCommand.createFormatText` with a highlight fill in the chosen colour. The result and the applied font/size are logged to the Console.

Dialog

- Family — font picker, required. The run aborts with an alert if no family is chosen.
- Size — point-size picker, range 4–144 pt, default 10 pt.
- Highlight Colour — colour picker, default mid grey (`RGBA 200, 200, 200`). One colour for every highlighted pair.

Cancelling the dialog aborts cleanly and logs `cancelled` to the Console.

Usage tips

- Proof at the size you will actually set, and re-run the specimen on every change of font size: the same pair can look fine at 10 pt and fail at display sizes, so each size needs its own verdict.
- Recommended order: run this specimen first, tune the kerning table, check with `kerning-pairs-preview.js`, then apply with `apply-kerning-pairs-styles.js`.
- Re-run the specimen in a different family to compare two candidate fonts side by side on identical text.

Requirements

- Affinity by Canva 3.3 (per script header).
- An open document — the script alerts and stops if none is open.
- The proofing font installed and selectable in the font picker.

Known limitations

- Highlight positions are fixed story indices into the embedded test text (see the `KERNING_PAIRS` comment: "To be updated once highlights are re-applied"). Editing `TEST_TEXT` without updating the table misplaces the highlights.
- The frame always goes on the first spread; there is no spread picker.
- One highlight colour for all pairs — problem classes (opening, closing, figures) are not colour-coded.
- Frame creation, italic formatting, and highlighting run as separate commands, so reverting takes more than one undo step (unlike the single-undo applier scripts).

Changelog

1.1.0 - Renamed from `kerning-highlighter.js` (no behavior change)

1.0.1 - Maintenance release (script header, 19/09/2026)

1.0.0 - Initial version