Font features

What are they
Substitution
Positioning
Related
Pitfalls
Examples
■ built in substitution that is often optional like ligatures but for some languages mandate

■ built in positioning that is assumed to be applied like kerning, mark anchoring cursive

■ external properties like coloring, spacing, fallback combinations

■ engine related tricks like expansion and protrusion

■ tracing options

■ whatever you like . . . so let me know

■ so in CONTEXT we have font features (driven by font) and pseudo features (driven by additional needs)

What are they
- single: replace one by another
- alternate: replace one by one of a set
- multiple: replace one by multiple others
- ligature: replace multiple by one shape
- contextual lookups and replacements with look back and look ahead
- single: repositioning a glyph (with optional marks), this includes traditional kerning
- pairwise: repositioning two adjacent glyphs (with optional marks)
- anchoring: often used for marks to base glyphs, ligatures and other marks
- attachment: often used for cursive scripts, pasting glyphs in a word together
- contextual lookups and positioning with look back and look ahead
- **analyze**: needed for dealing with features that need information about initial, medial, final and isolated properties

- **reordering**: needed for script like devanagari

- **spacing**: deals with for positioning glyphs and spaces
solutions for similar tasks can be quite different which makes tracing or checking sometimes hard (many ways to make ligatures)

order matters and demands careful font design but it is hard to predict all cases

a sloppy font design can result in a performance hit or huge fonts

features can be bugged and fonts vendors seldom have an update policy

shapers can differ due to assumptions, heuristics, interpreting specifications, bugs, …
all kind of substitutions: 2017-features-substitutiontest.tex

simple inter character kerns: 2017-features-kerntest.tex

single character positioning: 2017-features-singletest.tex

pairwise character positioning: 2017-features-pairtest.tex

contextual positioning: 2017-features-contexttest.tex

kerning with space (glue): 2017-features-spacetest.tex