

Paper Terms

Acid-free Paper

Paper made from pulp containing little or no acid so it resists deterioration from age. Also called alkaline paper, archival paper, neutral pH paper, permanent paper and thesis paper.

A4 Paper

ISO paper size 210 x 297mm used for Letterhead.

Against the Grain

At right angles to the grain direction of the paper being used, as compared to with the grain. Also called across the grain and cross grain. See also Grain Direction.

Antique Paper

Roughest finish offered on offset paper.

Basic Size

The standard size of sheets of paper used to calculate basis weight in the United States and Canada.

Basis Weight

In the United States and Canada, the weight, in pounds, of a ream (500 sheets) of paper cut to the basic size. Also called ream weight and substance weight (sub weight). In countries using ISO paper sizes, the weight, in grams, of one square meter of paper. Also called grammage and ream weight.

Board Paper

General term for paper over 110# index, 80# cover or 200 gsm that is commonly used for products such as file folders, displays and post cards. Also called paperboard.

Bond paper

Category of paper commonly used for writing, printing and photocopying. Also called business paper, communication paper, correspondence paper and writing paper.

Book Paper

Category of paper suitable for books, magazines, catalogs, advertising and general printing needs. Book paper is divided into uncoated paper (also called offset paper), coated paper (also called art paper, enamel paper, gloss paper and slick paper) and text paper.

C1S and C2S

Abbreviations for coated one side and coated two sides.

Calender

To make the surface of paper smooth by pressing it between rollers during manufacturing.

Caliper

(1) Thickness of paper or other substrate expressed in thousandths of an inch (mils or points), pages per inch (ppi), thousandths of a millimeter (microns) or pages per centimeter (ppc). (2) Device on a sheetfed press that detects double sheets or on a binding machine that detects missing signatures or inserts.

Carload

Selling unit of paper that may weigh anywhere from 20,000 to 100,000 pounds (9,090 to 45,454 kilos), depending on which mill or merchant uses the term. Abbreviated CL.

Carton

Selling unit of paper weighing approximately 150 pounds (60 kilos). A carton can contain anywhere from 500 to 5,000 sheets, depending on the size of sheets and their basis weight.

Coated Paper

Paper with a coating of clay and other substances that improves reflectivity and ink holdout. Mills produce coated paper in the four major categories cast, gloss, dull and matte.

Condition

To keep paper in the pressroom for a few hours or days before printing so that its moisture level and temperature equal that in the pressroom. Also called cure, mature and season.

Cut Sizes

Paper sizes used with office machines and small presses.

Deckle Edge

Edge of paper left ragged as it comes from the papermaking machine instead of being cleanly cut. Also called feather edge.

Felt Finish

Soft woven pattern in text paper.

Felt Side

Side of the paper that was not in contact with the Fourdrinier wire during papermaking, as compared to wire side.

Finish

(1) Surface characteristics of paper. (2) General term for trimming, folding, binding and all other post press operations.

Grade

General term used to distinguish between or among printing papers, but whose specific meaning depends on context. Grade can refer to the category, class, rating, finish or brand of paper.

Grain Direction

Predominant direction in which fibers in paper become aligned during manufacturing. Also called machine direction.

Grain Long Paper

Paper whose fibers run parallel to the long dimension of the sheet. Also called long grain paper and narrow web paper.

Grain Short Paper

Paper whose fibers run parallel to the short dimension of the sheet. Also called short grain paper and wide web paper.

Grammage

Basis weight of paper in grams per square meter (gsm).

GSM

The unit of measurement for paper weight (grams per square meter).

Ink Holdout

Characteristic of paper that prevents it from absorbing ink, thus allowing ink to dry on the surface of the paper. Also called holdout.

Kraft Paper

Strong paper used for wrapping and to make grocery bags and large envelopes.

Laid Finish

Finish on bond or text paper on which grids of parallel lines simulate the surface of handmade paper. Laid lines are close together and run against the grain; chain lines are farther apart and run with the grain.

Letter Paper

In North America, 8 1/2' x 11' sheets. In Europe, A4 sheets.

Lightweight Paper

Book paper with basis weight less than 40# (60 gsm).

Lignin

Substance in trees that holds cellulose fibers together. Free sheet has most lignin removed; groundwood paper contains lignin.

Linen Finish

Embossed finish on text paper that simulates the pattern of linen cloth.

Metallic Paper

Paper coated with a thin film of plastic or pigment whose color and gloss simulate metal.

Monarch

Paper size (7' x 10') and envelope shape often used for personal stationery.

M Weight

Weight of 1,000 sheets of paper in any specific size.

Natural Color

Very light brown color of paper. May also be called antique, cream, ivory, off-white or mellow white.

Opacity

(1) Characteristic of paper or other substrate that prevents printing on one side from showing through the other side. (2) Characteristic of ink that prevents the substrate from showing through.

Parent Sheet

Any sheet larger than 11' x 17' or A3.

Point

(1) Regarding paper, a unit of thickness equating 1/1000 inch. (2) Regarding type, a unit of measure equaling 1/12 pica and .013875 inch (.351mm).

Rag Paper

Stationery or other forms of stock having a strong percentage content of "cotton rags."

Ream

500 sheets of paper.

Recycled Paper

New paper made entirely or in part from old paper.

Stocking Paper

Popular sizes, weights and colors of papers available for prompt delivery from a merchant's warehouse.

Supercalendered Paper

Paper calendered using alternating chrome and fiber rollers to produce a smooth, thin sheet. Abbreviated SC paper.

Tabloid

Using a broadsheet as a measure, one half of a broadsheet.

Tag

Grade of dense, strong paper used for products such as badges and file folders.

Text Paper

Designation for printing papers with textured surfaces such as laid or linen. Some mills also use "text" to refer to any paper they consider top-of-the-line, whether or not its surface has a texture.

Uncoated Paper

Paper that has not been coated with clay. Also called offset paper.

Vellum Finish

Somewhat rough, toothy finish.

Virgin Paper

Paper made exclusively of pulp from trees or cotton, as compared to recycled paper.

Watermark

Translucent logo in paper created during manufacturing by slight embossing from a dandy roll while paper is still approximately 90 percent water.

Wire Side

Side of the paper that rests against The Fourdrinier wire during papermaking, as compared to felt side.

With the Grain

Parallel to the grain direction of the paper being used, as compared to against the grain. See also Grain Direction.

Woodfree Paper

Made with chemical pulp only. Paper usually classified as calendered or supercalendered.

Wove

Paper manufactured without visible wire marks, usually a fine textured paper.