TAYLOR ONDEMAND

Paper Types Guide

Types of Paper

Knowing how the coating of the paper you are printing on reacts with the ink will help in choosing the right paper for your project. There are all kinds of papers out there for you to choose, from uncoated text stock to coated cover stock, textured, and more.

Coated Paper

This paper has been coated with a surface sealant, typically clay, to impart certain qualities to the paper, including weight, surface gloss, smoothness, or reduced ink absorbency. The coating on the paper reduces dot gain by not allowing the ink to absorb into the paper. This allows for cleaner crisper printing, especially in photos, blends and fine details. Coated papers come in numerous options: gloss, satin, matte, and dull finish.

Paper Finishes Explained

Gloss — Paper with a high sheen. Gloss papers have less bulk and opacity and are typically less expensive than dull & matte paper of equal thickness. Gloss coatings reduce ink absorption, which gives the sheet an excellent color definition.

Satin — A less shiny coated finish. It has a lower gloss level than gloss finish, yet a higher gloss level than matte finish. Colors are sharp and vivid.

Matte — A non-glossy, flat looking paper with very little sheen. Matte papers are more opaque, contain greater bulk, and are higher in cost. The coating still keeps much of the ink from being absorbed by the paper, which produces excellent, vibrant color.

Dull — A smooth surface paper that is low in gloss. Dull coated paper can fall between matte and glossy paper depending on the manufacturer.

Uncoated Paper

Paper that has not been coated with a surface sealant is classified as uncoated. Since inks dry by absorbing into the paper, colors can appear muted.

Uncoated papers comprise a vast number of paper types and are available in a variety of surfaces, both smooth and textured. Some of the common types are wove, smooth, laid, linen, and eggshell.

Wove or Smooth — This is a non-textured smooth surface.

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Laid — Created with textured lines on its surface. This finish is used mostly for business stationery elements, like letterhead, envelopes and business cards.

Linen — Similar to a laid finish, this paper has textured lines on the surface of the sheet, but they are finer and more regular than those that appear on a laid finish stock. This paper is also used frequently for business stationery.

Eggshell — A paper that has a slight tooth or texture, when looked upon closely you'll see tiny peaks and valleys on the paper, like on an eggshell.

Coated One Side and Coated Two Sides

Coated one side, commonly referred to as C1S, is a paper that has a coating applied to only one side of the paper. Coated two sides, C2S, paper has a coating applied to both sides of the paper.

Tip: Use C1S for when you need to keep at least one side uncoated if the item will be written on, example, holiday cards.

Cotton Paper

Also known as rag paper or rag stock paper, is made using cotton linters (fine fibers which stick to the cotton seeds after processing) or cotton from used cloth (rags) as the primary material. As a more environmental option, cotton paper is more durable for important documents. Cotton paper is typically graded as 25%, 50%, or 100% cotton.

Characteristics

Opacity — A paper's opacity is determined by its weight, ingredients and absorbency. A paper's opacity determines how much printing will show through on the reverse side of a sheet. Opacity is expressed in terms of its percentage of reflection. Complete opacity is 100% and complete transparency is 0%.

Finish/Smoothness — Paper smoothness refers to the amount of evenness the surface of the paper possesses. Factors that play into how smooth the finished paper is include the type of material used to make the paper and the surface, or finishing treatment it receives in the later phases of production. Finish or smoothness affects ink receptivity and ink holdout. The smoothness of paper is measured on the Sheffield scale, the higher the value, the rougher the sheet.

Brightness — The brightness of a sheet of paper measures the percentage of a wavelength of blue light it reflects. The brightness of a piece of paper is typically expressed on a scale of 1 to 100 with 100 being the brightest. The brightness of a paper affects readability, the perception of ink color and the contrast between light and dark hues.

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