

# On Paper



By Constance J. Sidles

## Coming to terms

**Choice is good**, but when it comes to paper there can be too much of a good thing. I checked out a paper manufacturer's catalog recently and found I could buy five different grades of paper with three different finishes in five different basis weights. And that was just one kind of web paper. I could also buy bond, book, cover, and board papers.

The problem was, I only wanted to buy one kind of paper for one job. My choices were made more bewildering by the fact that different kinds of paper are graded and classified, even weighed, with different systems. That's because paper manufacturers are historically *very* conservative. They never throw away a term. If a paper was once manufactured a certain way, then

it is forever referred to in that way.

The result makes comparing apples to oranges seem like child's play. Let's say you're looking for a sheet of medium weight and middling grade. You decide to compare bond papers with book papers. You've heard that 20-pound bond is a nice weight for your job, but you want to see what a similar book paper would look like and cost. You learn that 20-pound bond paper is not the same as 20-pound book paper. Not even close. So, you ask, what is the equivalent of 20-pound bond? The rough answer is 50-pound book. Different basis of measurement.

Trying to find equivalent papers across different grades may make you feel like the tourist who asked an Irishman how to

drive from Cork to Dublin. He was told, "You can't get there from here." In other words, you can't really compare equivalent paper sheets because there is no equivalence: the characteristics are too different.

What you can do is learn the purpose for which each paper is formulated. Then, by looking at printed samples and matching characteristics to needs, you can select the paper that's right for each job. Below are a glossary and a table that might help clear up some confusion. Look at the table first, then check out the terms in the glossary.

Be aware that in each category, papers are made at different levels of quality having to do with weight, opacity, smoothness, strength, finish, and runnability.

When you choose a paper, make sure

Paper types	Other names	Common finishes	Common weights	Formulated for
Bond	Writing paper, business paper, photocopy or laser paper	Laid, linen, parchment, wove, cockle	9, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28	Stationery, letterhead, photocopy, laser printing, newsletters
Text		Antique, felt, laid, linen, vellum	70, 75, 80, 100	Annual reports, announcements, posters, brochures, high-quality jobs that need a custom look and soft texture; good for foils and embossing
Uncoated book	Offset paper, publication paper	Antique, smooth, vellum, wove	30, 32, 35, 40, 45, 50, 60, 70, 80	Books, brochures, fliers, newsletters, catalogs, direct mail
Coated book	Coated offset, web/sheet-fed	Cast-coated, gloss, dull, matte	40, 45, 50, 60, 70, 80, 100	Magazines, catalogs, annual reports, books, calendars, direct mail, posters, inserts
Cover	Bristol, text cover	Antique, felt, laid, linen, smooth, wove, vellum, cast-coated, gloss, dull, matte	65, 80, 100, 7-point, 8-point, 9-point, 10-point, 12-point, 15-point	Reply cards, covers, business cards, greeting cards, menus, postcards, calendars, posters
Board	Bristol, card, tag, index	Coated, plate, vellum	67, 90, 100, 110, 125, 140, 150, 175; 4-ply, 6-ply, 8-ply, 10-ply, 14-ply	Reply cards, covers, displays, folders, boxes

## Glossary of paper types and finishes

**Antique finish:** Paper surface made with a slightly rough texture.

**Basis weight:** Manufacturers' system for classifying papers by thickness and weight. To figure the basis weight of a paper, manufacturers determine a standard-size sheet of paper (which varies, depending on what type of paper it is), stack up 500 sheets, and then weigh the total. Five hundred sheets of 50-pound book paper cut to 25 by 38 inches, for example, would weigh 50 pounds.

**Board:** Extremely heavy paper used for cards, covers, and boxes. Also called *index paper* or *tag*.

**Bond paper:** Type of paper stock designed to be used for business stationery and photocopying. It comes with different finishes and in different colors, with matching envelopes. It is formulated to withstand folding and stapling, as well as heat (as it passes through a laser printer or copier).

**Book paper:** Type of paper stock designed to be used as a general offset paper. It is sometimes called *offset paper*. It comes coated or uncoated. Uncoated book papers are available with different textures of finish, including antique and wove. Coated book papers are available with three basic degrees of glossiness: dull, matte, and gloss.

**Bristol:** A kind of thick, stiff paper measuring 6 points thick or more. Sometimes called *index*.

**C1S:** Stands for "coated one side." Some papers, notably cover stock, can be coated on one side and uncoated on the other side. Such papers are usually cheaper than those coated on both sides. Generally, the coated

side is the side that's printed; the uncoated side is usually left blank. Paperback book covers, for example, are often printed with C1S papers.

**C2S:** Stands for "coated two sides."

**Calender:** To make a paper smooth by running it through highly polished rollers during manufacture. Calendered papers have some of the printing characteristics of coated papers but are much cheaper.

**Cast-coated:** High-quality, very glossy paper made by pressing the coating against a polished drum while the coating is still wet. Cast-coated papers have the best ink holdout of any papers.

**Coating:** A layer of clay and chemicals applied to paper during manufacture. Coatings smooth out the surface of paper, allowing the paper to reflect light better and more evenly, which makes the ink colors stand out more.

**Cockle:** A finish on bond paper that creates a puckered surface.

**Cover:** A high-quality, heavy paper often used for covers. It can be coated on one or both sides, or totally uncoated.

**Dual-purpose paper:** Abbreviated DP, this is a bond paper formulated to accept either toner or ink.

**Dull:** A nonglossy finish supplied by coating; smoother than matte finish. (For instance, this magazine is printed on dull paper.)

**Felt:** A textured finish that appears slightly woven.

**Finish:** The surface characteristics of paper. Finishes can be created by running the paper over different kinds of rollers, which can smooth and polish the paper or apply different textures before the paper fully dries. Finishes can also be applied by adding coating.

**Gloss:** A shiny finish, usually supplied by coating.

**Index:** A heavy card-stock paper; same as *bristol* or *board* paper.

**Laid:** A finish with grids of parallel lines pressed into the paper.

**Linen:** A finish with crossing lines, simulating cloth.

**Matte:** A dull finish, supplied by coating. With matte papers, the buyer gets the improved runnability of coating without the shine of gloss finish, which can be hard on the eyes.

**Parchment:** A hard finish on paper, intended to simulate real parchment (which is made from thin, scraped animal skin).

**Plate:** Very smooth kind of finish.

**Point:** Unit of measure for caliper the thickness of paper. One point equals .001 inch. (Note that this is different from the point that is a unit of measure in graphic design, which equals  $\frac{1}{72}$  inch.)

**Text:** A high-quality, soft-textured paper.

**Vellum:** A rough, almost pebbly finish.

**Wove:** A smooth finish with a light pattern.

you always ask to see printed samples. If you're going to print on both sides of the paper, ask to see two-sided printed samples. Check how the ink appears on the paper. Is it absorbed or does it stay more on the paper surface? Do the colors look vibrant? Are details easily discerned? Is the paper surface adequate for the effect you're trying to create?

Also ask about the strength characteristics you may need. Can the paper be folded without cracking? Will it withstand staples or other binding? Can it be mailed without damage?

Make sure you discuss with your supplier exactly how you plan to use the paper. Then listen to the supplier's recommendations, check other paper mills, and make your choice. ■

*Constance J. Sidles is a production consultant and writer who lives in Seattle. Her column "On Paper" appears in every issue of Adobe Magazine.*



Contents of this file and the entire contents of this CD © 1996 Adobe Systems Incorporated, all rights reserved.

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Acrobat, Acrobat Capture, Acrobat Catalog, Acrobat Exchange, the Acrobat logo, Acrobat Reader, Acrobat Search, Adobe Caslon, Adobe Dimensions, Adobe Font Folio, Adobe Garamond, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Jenson, Adobe Magazine, Adobe Originals, Adobe Premiere, Adobe Table, Adobe Type Manager, Adobe Wood Type, After Effects, Aldus, Aldus Magazine, Art Explorer, ATM, Birch, Blackoak, Caflich Script, Charlemagne, Checklist, Classroom in a Book, Classroom in a Box, CoSA, Cottonwood, CustomerFirst, Distiller, Ex Ponto, FaxYI, Frame, FrameMaker, FrameViewer, Galahad, Gallery Effects, Giddyap, Giddyap Thangs, HomePublisher, Ironwood, Jimbo, Lithos, Madrone, Mesquite, Mezz, Minion, Myriad, Nueva, PageMaker, PageMill, Penumbra, Persuasion, PhotoDeluxe, Photoshop, Poetica, Ponderosa, Poplar, PostScript, PSpriinter, Sanvito, ScreenReady, SiteMill, Streamline, SuperATM, SuperPaint, Tekton, TextureMaker, TIFF, Trajan, TypeAlign, Type On Call, Type Reunion, Type Twister, Viva, and WildType are trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated or its subsidiaries and may be registered in certain jurisdictions. InfoPublisher is a registered trademark of Page Ahead Software, licensed to Adobe. Macintosh and Power Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer Inc. Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Other products and corporate names may be trademarks of other companies, and are used only for explanation and to the owners' benefit, without intent to infringe.

All product pricing and offers represented in *Adobe Magazine* are applicable in the U.S. and Canada only. Prices and availability outside this area may vary; residents of other countries should check with their distributors regarding offers available to them.

**browse**