

Glossary of Printing Terms

Printing Terms

This glossary of printing terms was created by people working in today's printing industry. It has been revised and edited to help the desktop publisher understand the printing trade by TentMaker Publishing. We have rewritten some technical descriptions in every day language to help the non technical person. Any suggestions that you may have on how we can improve this glossary will be carefully considered. Please send your comments and any new printing definitions to [Martin at PrintUSA.com](mailto:Martin@PrintUSA.com).

Accordion fold: Bindery term, two or more parallel folds which open like an accordion.

Against the grain: At right angles to direction of paper grain.

Alteration: Change in copy of specifications after production has begun.

Artboard: Alternate term for mechanical art.

Author's corrections: Also know as "AC's". Changed and additions in copy after it has been typeset.

Back up: Printing the second side of a sheet already printed on one side.

Banding: Method of packaging printed pieces of paper using rubber or paper bands.

Basis weight: Weight in pounds of a ream of paper cut to the basic size for its grade.

Bind: To fasten sheets or signatures with wire, thread, glue. or by other means.

Bindery: The finishing department of a print shop or firm specializing in finishing printed products.

Blanket: The thick rubber mat on a printing press that transfers ink from the plate to paper.

Bleed: Printing that goes to the edge of the sheet after trimming.

Blind embossing: An image pressed into a sheet without ink or foil.

Blueline: A blue photographic proof used to check position of all image elements.

Board: Alternate term for mechanical.

Bond & carbon: Business form with paper and carbon paper.

Bond paper: Strong durable paper grade used for letterheads and business forms.

Break for color: Also known as a color break. To separate mechanically or by software the parts to be printed in different colors.

Brightness: The brilliance or reflectance of paper.

Bulk: Thickness of paper stock in thousandths of an inch or number of pages per inch.

Bulk pack: Boxing printed product without wrapping or banding.

Burn: Exposing a printing plate to high intensity light or placing an image on a printing plate by light.

Butt: Joining images without overlapping.

Butt fit: Printed colors that overlap one row of dots so they appear to butt.

Carbonless: Pressure sensitive writing paper that does not use carbon.

Caliper: Paper thickness in thousandths of an inch.

Camera-ready copy: Print ready mechanical art.

Carload: A truck load of paper weighing 40000 pounds.

Case bind: A type of binding used in making hard cover books using glue.

Cast coated: Coated paper with a high gloss reflective finish.

Chrome: A term for a transparency.

Coated paper: A clay coated printing paper with a smooth finish.

Collate: A finishing term for gathering paper in a precise order.

Color bar: A quality control term regarding the spots of ink color on the tail of a sheet.

Color correction: Methods of improving color separations.

Color filter: Filters uses in making color separations, red, blue, green.

Color key: Color proofs in layers of acetate:

Color matching system: A system of formulated ink colors used for communicating color.

Color separations: The process of preparing artwork, photographs, transparencies, or computer generated art for printing by separating into the four primary printing colors.

Comb bind: To plastic comb bind by inserting the comb into punched holes.

Composite film: Combining two or more images on one or more pieces of film.

Continuous-tone copy: Illustrations, photographs or computer files that contain gradient tones from black to white or light to dark.

Contrast: The tonal change in color from light to dark.

Copy: All furnished material or disc used in the production of a printed product.

Cover paper: A heavy printing paper used to cover books, make presentation folders, etc.

Crash number: Numbering paper by pressing an image on the first sheet which is transferred to all parts of the printed set.

Crimping: Puncture marks holding business forms together.

Cromalin: Trade name for DuPont color proofs.

Crop: To cut off parts of a picture or image.

Crop marks: Printed lines showing where to trim a printed sheet.

Crossover: Printing across the gutter or from one page to the facing page of a publication.

Cyan: One of four standard process colors. The blue color.

Densitometer: A quality control device to measure the density of printing ink.

Density: The degree of color or darkness of an image or photograph.

Diazo: A light sensitive coating used on printing plates.

Die: Metal rule or imaged block used to cut or place an image on paper in the finishing process.

Die cutting: Curing images in or out of paper.

Ding bats: Often used to curse in print or to hi-lite a point.

Dot: An element of halftones. Using a loupe you will see that printed pictures are made many dots.

Dot gain or spread: A term used to explain the difference in size between the dot on film v paper.

Double burn: Exposing a plate to multiple images.

Draw-down: A sample of ink and paper used to evaluate ink colors.

Drop-out: Portions of artwork that do not print.

Dummy: A rough layout of a printed piece showing position and finished size.

Duotone: A halftone picture made up of two printed colors.

Dylux: Photographic paper made by DuPont and used for bluelines.

Emboss: Pressing an image into paper so that it will create a raised relief.

Emulsion: Light sensitive coating found on printing plates and film.

Eurobind: A patented method of binding perfect bound books so they will open and lay flatter.

Facsimile transmission: The process of converting graphic images into electronic signals.

Film rip: See Rip film.

Flat: An assembly of negatives taped to masking materials for platemaking.

Flood: To cover a printed page with ink, varnish, or plastic coating.

Flop: The reverse side of an image.

Foil: A metallic or pigmented coating on plastic sheets or rolls used in foil stamping and foil embossing.

Foil emboss: Foil stamping and embossing a image on paper with a die.

Foil stamping: Using a die to place a metallic or pigmented image on paper.

4-color-process: The process of combining four basic colors to create a printed color picture or colors composed from the basic four colors.

French fold: Two folds at right angles to each other.

Galley proof: Text copy before it is put into a mechanical layout or desktop layout.

Gang: Getting the most out of a printing press by using the maximum sheet size to print multiple images or jobs on the same sheet. A way to save money.

Generation: Stages of reproduction from original copy. A first generation reproduction yields the best quality.

Ghost bars: A quality control method used to reduce ghosted image created by heat or chemical contamination.

Ghosting: A faint printed image that appears on a printed sheet where it was not intended. More often than not this problem is a function of graphical design. It is hard to tell when or where ghosting will occur. Sometimes you can see the problem developing immediately after printing the sheet, other times the problem occurs while drying. However the problem occurs it is costly to fix, if it can be fixed. Occasionally it can be eliminated by changing the color sequence, the inks, the paper, changing to a press with a drier, printing the problem area in a separate pass through the press or changing the racking (reducing the number of sheets on the drying racks). Since it is a function of graphical design, the buyer pays for the increased cost.

Gloss: A shiny look reflecting light.

Grain: The direction in which the paper fiber lie.

Grippers: The metal fingers on a printing press that hold the paper as it passes through the press.

Hairline: A very thin line or gap about the width of a hair or 1/100 inch.

Halftone: Converting a continuous tone to dots for printing.

Hard copy: The output of a computer printer, or typed text sent for typesetting.

Hickey: Reoccurring unplanned spots that appear in the printed image from dust, lint, dried ink.

High-bulk paper: A paper made thicker than its standard basis weight.

Highlight: The lightest areas in a picture or halftone.

Image area: Portion of paper on which ink can appear.

Imposition: Positioning printed pages so they will fold in the proper order.

Impression: Putting an image on paper.

Imprint: Adding copy to a previously printed page.

Indicia: Postal information place on a printed product.

Ink fountain: The reservoir on a printing press that hold the ink.

Keylines: Lines on mechanical art that show position of photographs or illustrations.

Kiss die cut: To cut the top layer of a pressure sensitive sheet and not the backing.

Knock out: To mask out an image.

Laid finish: Simulating the surface of handmade paper.

Laminate: To cover with film, to bond or glue one surface to another.

Layflat: See Eurobind.

Line copy: High contrast copy not requiring a halftone.

Lines per inch: The number of rows of dots per inch in a halftone.

Loupe: A magnifying glass used to review a printed image, plate and position film.

Magenta: Process red, one of the basic colors in process color.

Makeready: All the activities required to prepare a press for printing.

Marginal words: Call outs for directions on various parts of a business form.

Mask: Blocking light from reaching parts of a printing plate.

Matchprint: Trade name for 3M integral color proof.

Matte finish: Dull paper or ink finish.

Mechanical: Camera ready art all contained on one board.

Mechanical separation: Mechanical art overlay for each color to be printed.

Micrometer: Instrument used to measure the thickness of different papers.

Middle tones: The tones in a photograph that are approximately half as dark as the shadow area.

Moire: Occurs when screen angles are wrong causing odd patterns in photographs.

Negative: The image on film that makes the white areas of originals black and black areas white.

Non-reproducing blue: A blue color the camera cannot see. Used in marking up artwork.

Offsetting: Using an intermediate surface used to transfer ink. Also, an unpleasant happening when the images of freshly printed sheets transfer images to each other.

Offset paper: Term for uncoated book paper.

Ok sheet: Final approved color inking sheet before production begins.

Opacity: The amount of show-through on a printed sheet. The more opacity or the thicker the

paper the less show-through. (The thicker/heavier the paper the higher the cost.)

Outline halftone: Removing the background of a picture or silhouetting an image in a picture.

Overlay: The transparent cover sheet on artwork often used for instructions.

Overrun or overs: Copies printed in excess of the specified quantity. (Printing trade terms allow for + - 10 % to represent a completed order.)

Page count: Total number of pages in a book including blanks.

Pattern carbon: Special carbon paper used in business forms that only transfers in certain areas.

Perfect bind: A type of binding that glues the edge of sheets to a cover like a telephone book, Microsoft software manual, or Country Living Magazine.

Perfecting press: A sheet fed printing press that prints both sides of a sheet in one pass.

Pica: Unit of measure in typesetting. One pica = 1/6 inch.

Picking: Printers nightmare that occurs as the surface of a sheet lifts off during printing. Generally a paper manufactures quality control problem.

Pin register: A standard used to fit film to film and film to plates and plates to press to assure the proper registration of printer colors.

Plate gap: Gripper space. The area where the grippers hold the sheet as it passes through the press.

PMS: The abbreviated name of the Pantone Color Matching System.

PMT: Abbreviated name for photomechanical transfer. Often used to make position prints.

Point: For paper, a unit of thickness equaling 1/1000 inch. for typesetting, a unit of height equaling 1/72 inch.

PostScript: The computer language most recognized by printing devices.

Press number: A method of numbering manufacturing business forms or tickets.

Printing Bids: A printing bid is based on planned specifications, normally good for 30 days, may be subject to review and revision upon receipt.

Printing Estimates: Printing estimates are also known as spec bids or budgeting bids or budgeting estimates.

Printing Estimates: A printing estimate is based on planned, but not firm, specifications that shall be subject to change and requote prior to submission to the printer.

Printing Quotes: A firm printing price based on final art or digital files, price good for 10 days, and shall be subject to review thereafter.

Pressure-sensitive paper: Paper material with self-sticking adhesive covered by a backing sheet.

Process blue: The blue or cyan color in process printing.

Process colors: Cyan (blue), magenta (process red), yellow (process yellow), black (process black).

Ragged left: Type that is justified to the right margin and the line lengths vary on the left.

Ragged right: Type that is justified to the left margin and the line lengths vary on the right.

Ream: Five hundred sheets of paper.

Recto: Right-hand page of an open book.

Reflective copy: Copy that is not transparent.

Register: To position print in the proper position in relation to the edge of the sheet and to other printing on the same sheet.

Register marks: Cross-hair lines or marks on film, plates, and paper that guide strippers, platemakers, pressmen, and bindery personnel in processing a print order from start to finish.

Reverse: The opposite of what you see. Printing the background of an image. For example; type your name on a piece of paper. The reverse of this would be a black piece of paper with a white name.

Rip film: A method of making printing negatives from PostScript files created by desktop

publishing.

Saddle stitch: Binding a booklet or magazine with staples in the seam where it folds.

Scanner: Device used to make color separations, halftones, duo tones and tri tones. Also a device used to scan art, pictures or drawings in desktop publishing.

Score: A crease put on paper to help it fold better.

Screen angles: Frequently a desktop publishers nightmare. The angles at which halftone, duo tones, tri tones, and color separation printing films are placed to make them look right.

Self-cover: Using the same paper as the text for the cover.

Shadow: The darkest areas of a photograph.

Show-through: Printing on one side of a sheet that can be seen on the other side of the sheet.

Side guide: The mechanical register unit on a printing press that positions a sheet from the side.

Side stitch: Binding by stapling along one side of a sheet.

Signature: A sheet of printed pages which when folded become a part of a book or publication.

Silhouette halftone: A term used for an outline halftone.

Skid: A pallet used for a pile of cut sheets.

Specifications: A precise description of a print order.

Spine: The binding edge of a book or publication.

Split fountain: Putting more than one ink in a printing fountain to achieve special color affects.

Spoilage: Planned paper waste for all printing operations.

Spot varnish: Varnish used to hilight a specific part of the printed sheet.

Stamping: Term for foil stamping.

Stat: Term for inexpensive print of line copy or halftone.

Step-and-repeat: A procedure for placing the same image on plates in multiple places.

Stet: A proof mark meaning let the original copy stand.

Stock: The material to be printed.

Stripping: The positioning of film on a flat prior to platemaking.

Substance weight: A term of basis weight when referring to bond papers.

Substrate: Any surface on which printing is done.

Text paper: Grades of uncoated paper with textured surfaces.

Tints: A shade of a single color or combined colors.

Tissue overlay: Usually a thin transparent paper placed over artwork for protection uses for marking color breaks and other printer instructions.

Transfer tape: A peel and stick tape used in business forms.

Transparency: A positive photographic slide on film allowing light to pass through.

Transparent copy: A film that light must pass through for it to be seen or reproduced.

Transparent ink: A printing ink that does not conceal the color under it.

Trapping: The ability to print one ink over the other.

Trim marks: Similar to crop or register marks. These marks show where to trim the printed sheet.

Trim size: The final size of one printed image after the last trim is made.

Under-run: Production of fewer copies than ordered. See over run.

Up: Printing two or three up means printing multiple copies of the same image on the same sheet.

UV coating: Liquid laminate bonded and cured with ultraviolet light. Environmentally friendly.

Varnish: A clear liquid applied to printed surfaces for looks and protection. (UV coating looks better.)

Verso: The left hand page of an open book.

Vignette halftone: A halftone whose background gradually fades to white.

Washup: Removing printing ink from a press, washing the rollers and blanket. Certain ink colors require multiple washups to avoid ink and chemical contamination.

Waste: A term for planned spoilage.

Watermark: A distinctive design created in paper at the time of manufacture that can be easily seen by holding the paper up to a light.

Web: A roll of printing paper.

Web press: The name of a type of presses that print from rolls of paper.

Wire O: A bindery trade name for mechanical binding using double loops of wire through a hole.

Wire-O binding: A method of wire binding books along the binding edge that will allow the book to lay flat using double loops. See Wire O.

With the grain: Folding or feeding paper into the press or folder parallel to the grain of the paper.

Work and tumble: Printing one side of a sheet and turning it over from the gripper to the tail to print the second side using the same side guide and plate for the second side.

Work and turn: Printing one side of a sheet and turning it over from left to right using the same side guides and plate for the second side.

Wove paper: A paper having a uniform unlined surface with a smooth finish.

Most recent update: Sunday, January 08, 2006