



Print Speak

What do those terms mean anyway?

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

Accordion Fold	Folding paper by bending each fold in the opposite direction of the previous fold creating a pleated or accordion effect.
Acid-free Paper	A paper containing no acidity or acid producing chemicals that degrades less over time than acidic papers.
Against the Grain	Running a sheet of paper through a printing device at right angles to the grain direction of the paper, as opposed to with the grain. This is usually suboptimal for both press operation and registration of the 4 color process inks. Sometimes called "cross grain".
Anti-aliasing	The process of averaging between pixels of different colors. This results in a smoother, more blended transition between the edge of two areas rather than a distinctly jagged appearance.
Aqueous Coating	This clear coating is used to protect your printed pieces. It provides a high-gloss surface that deters dirt and fingerprints.
Artwork	The original physical materials, including photos, graphic images, text and other components needed to produce a printed piece. Can also now refer to the electronic or digital components needed for preparing a printed piece for production on a press or copier.

B

Back Up	How an image on one side of a printed sheet aligns with the image on the other side.
Base Line	The imaginary horizontal line upon which stand capitals, lower case letters, and punctuation points, etc.
Basis Weight	Basis or basic weight refers to the weight, in pounds, of a ream (500 sheets) of paper cut to a given standard size for that particular paper grade.
Blanket	The rubberized surfaced material secured onto a cylinder onto which the ink is transferred from the plate and then to the paper.
Bleed	Any element that extends up to or past the edge of the printed page.
Blind Emboss	A design or bas-relief impression that is made without using inks or metal foils.
Blocking	When ink or coating causes printed sheets of paper in a pile to stick together, causing damage when they are separated. This is normally caused by not enough anti-offset powder or too much ink, and usually ruins the printed piece.
Bond	A grade of durable writing, printing and typing paper that is erasable and somewhat rigid.
Book Paper	Types of paper usually used for printing books. Book paper text weight is divided into uncoated/offset paper, and coated (matte or gloss) paper.
Bounce	Inconsistent positioning of the printed image on the sheets of paper as they travel through a printing press.
Bulk	A term given to paper to describe its thickness relative to its weight.



Print Speak

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C

C1S & C2S	Acronyms for Coated One Side and Coated Two Sides paper stock. A cover stock with a glossy finish on one side and uncoated on the other, usually between 8pt (.008") and 18pt (.018") in thickness.
Caliper	The measurement of the thickness of paper measured in thousandths of an inch or mils.
Case Binding	Books bound using hard board (case) covers.
Carbonless Paper	Paper that is chemically treated to transfer the impression from the first page to the subsequent pages.
Cast Coated	A paper that is coated and then pressure dried using a polished roller that imparts an enamel like hard gloss finish.
Center Spread	The two pages that face each other in the center of a book or publication.
Clip Art	Graphic images, designs, and artwork in digital form that can be used in a digital document.
CMYK	Acronym for cyan, magenta, yellow and black. CMYK is a color model in which all colors are described as a mixture of these four process colors. It is the standard color model used in offset printing for full-color documents. Because such printing uses inks of these four basic colors, it is often called four-color printing.
Coated Stock	Any paper that has a mineral coating applied after the paper is made, giving the paper a smoother finish.
Coil Binding	Where a metal or plastic wire is spiraled through holes punched along the side of a stack of paper. Documents bound with coil have the ability to lay flat and can rotate 360 degrees. Also called spiral binding.
Cold Color	Any color that is toward the blue side of the color spectrum.
Collate	To gather sheets or printed signatures together in their correct order.
Color Balance	The relative amounts of process colors used to reproduce an image, either digitally or when printed on a press.
Color Bars	A color test strip that is printed on the website portion of a press sheet. It assists the press operator to monitor and control the quality of the printed material relative to ink density, registration and dot gain. It can also include a Star Target, which is designed to detect inking and press problems.
Color Cast	Unwanted color tone or overall color shading distorting the normal color balance of a photographic image.
Color Correction	Using a computer to adjust, change or manipulate a color image, such as retouching, adjusting color balance, color saturation, contrast, etc.
Color Separating	The processes of separating the primary color components (CMYK) for printing
Color Sequence	The order in which process inks are printed on a printing press. Also called the color rotation or laydown sequence.
Color Transparency	Transparent film containing a positive photographic color image.
Contrast	The degree of the tonal separation or gradation in the range from black to white.
Coverage	The extent to which printing ink covers the surface of a printed sheet. Ink coverage is frequently expressed as light, medium or heavy.



Print Speak

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Crop	To reduce the size of an image.
Crop Marks	Small printed lines around the edges of a printed piece indicating where it is to be cut out of the sheet. Sometimes referred to as "cut marks".
Crossover	An image, rule or line art on one printed page that carries over to an adjacent page of a bound or folded piece.
Cyan	A shade of blue used in four-color process printing. The "C" in CMYK. Also referred to as "process blue".
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D	
Dampening	An essential part of the offset printing process whereby rollers distribute a solution to the plate that covers the non-printing area of the plate, repelling ink in those areas.
Deboss	To press an image into paper with a die so it extends below the surface. The opposite of emboss where the image is raised above the paper surface.
Deckle Edge	The rough or feathered edge of paper when left untrimmed.
Densitometer	An optical device used by printers and photographers to measure and control the density of ink or color.
Density densitometer.	The degree of tone, weight of darkness or color within a photo or reproduction measured by a densitometer.
Die Cutting	The process of cutting paper in a shape or design by the use of a wooden die or block positioned on steel rules in the shape of the desired pattern.
Digital Proof	Color separation data is digitally stored and then exposed to color photographic paper, creating a picture of the final product before it is actually printed with ink.
Dithering	The process of averaging between pixels of different colors. This results in a smoother, blended transition between the edge of two areas rather than a jagged, "stair-step" appearance. Also a method used on ink jet printers where colors are produced by mixing colored dots in a randomized pattern.
Dot	The smallest individual element of a halftone.
Dot Gain	A term used to describe when dots are printing larger than they should.
Drill	The drilling of holes into paper for ring or comb binding.
Drop Shadow	A shadow image placed offset behind an image to create the effect of the image lifting off the page.
Dull Finish	A semi-gloss finish on paper that is less glossy than gloss and more than matte paper.
Duotone	A two-color halftone reproduction generated from a one color photo,
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E	
Electronic Proof	A process of generating a prepress proof in which paper is electronically exposed to the color separation negatives and passed through electrically charged pigmented toners, which adhere electrostatically, resulting in the finished proof.
Embossing	The molding and reshaping of paper by the use of special metal dies and heat, counter dies and pressure, to produce a raised image on the paper surface.
Enamel	Another term for gloss coated paper.



Print Speak

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EPS	Encapsulated Post Script. A standard file format used to transfer postscript formatting information between applications.
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F	
Felt Side	The smoother side of a sheet of paper. The wire side is the rougher side of the paper. The difference happens in the papermaking process. The differences are eliminated when papers are gloss or matte coated.
Finish	The surface quality of paper.
Fit	The registration of the different colors on a printed sheet.
Foil	The metal sheet that is applied to paper using the foil stamping process. Frequently gold colored, but available in many colors.
Foil Embossing	Stamping a thin sheet of metallic foil onto a sheet of paper and then embossing a pattern under it, creating a three dimensional raised area, usually text or an image.
Foil Stamping	Impressing metallic foil onto paper with a heated die.
Font	The characters which make up a complete typeface and size.
For Position Only (FPO)	Low resolution or mockup images used to indicate placement and size in a design, but not intended for final production.
Free Sheet	Any paper free from wood pulp impurities.
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G	
Ganging	The combining of two or more different printing projects on the same sheet of paper.
Gate Fold	A three or four panel fold where the two outside panels fold inward to meet in the center. In an open gate fold, there are three panels, the bottom of which is twice the size of the folded panels. In a closed gatefold, there are four panels of roughly equal size where the outer panels are folded inward together.
Gathering	Assembling sheets of paper and signatures into the proper sequence.
Ghosting	Also known as gloss ghosting. A condition occurring during the printing process when vapors from drying ink on one side of a press sheet interact chemically with dry ink or blank paper on sheets in contact with or on the reverse side of the sheet, creating a unintended faint image.
Grain	Paper fibers lie in a similar direction in a sheet of paper. This direction is called the grain. Printing is usually done so that if folding is required, the fold is done parallel to the grain.
Gravure	A printing process using recessed areas on a metal cylinder that hold the ink.
Gripper	A series of metal fingers that hold each sheet of paper as it passes through a printing press.
Gripper Edge	The side of a piece of paper held by the gripper fingers as it passes through the printing press. Nothing can be printed in this area.
Gutter	A blank space or margin between components on a printed piece or press sheet.
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H	
Halftone	Using small dots to produce the impression of a continuous-tone image. The effect is achieved by varying the dot size and the number of dots per square inch.
Halftone Screen	A sheet of film or glass containing ruled right-angled lines, used to translate the full tone of a photo to the halftone dot image required for printing.



Print Speak

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Hickey	The effect that occurs when a speck of dust or debris (frequently dried ink) adheres to the printing plate and creates a spot or imperfection in the printing.
Highlights	The lightest tones of a photo, printed halftone or illustration. In the finished halftone, these highlights are represented by the finest dots.
House Sheet	This is a term that refers to a paper that a printer keeps on hand in their shop.
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I	
Image Area	That portion of a printing plate that carries ink and prints on paper.
Imposition	The correct sequential arrangement of pages that are to be printed, along with all the margins in proper alignment, before producing the plates for printing.
Indicia	An image and/or text pre-printed on mailing envelopes in place of a stamp.
Ink Dry Back	When printed ink colors become lighter or less dense after they have dried on the paper.
Insert	A piece of printed material that is inserted into another piece of printed material, such as a magazine or catalog.
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J	
Jacket	Or dust jacket – the paper cover of a hardbound book.
Jog	To vibrate a stack of finished pages so that they are tightly aligned for final trimming or binding.
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K	
Kerning	The narrowing of space between two letters so they become closer and take up less space on the page.
Kraft	A coarse, unbleached paper used for printing and industrial products.
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L	
Laid Finish	A parallel lined paper that has a handmade look.
Lamination	Applying thin transparent plastic sheets to both sides of a sheet of paper, providing scuff resistance, waterproofing and extended use.
Landscape	A document layout where the width is greater than the height (opposite of portrait).
Layout	A rendition that shows the placement of all the elements, images, thumbnails, etc., of a final printed piece.
Letterpress	Printing that utilizes inked raised surfaces, usually type, to create the image.
Linen	A paper that emulates the look and texture of linen cloth.
Lithography	The process of printing utilizing flat or cured inked surfaces to create the printed images.
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M	
M weight	The actual weight of 1000 sheets of any given size of paper.
Magenta	One of the four process colors, or CMYK – the “M” is for magenta. Magenta is a predominately red color with some blue.
Magnetic Black	Black ink containing iron oxides, used for magnetic ink character recognition used for check printing.



Print Speak

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Make-ready	Paper used in the press set-up process before the printing run actually starts. Or the process of setting up press or bindery equipment to produce a specific product, including setting paper size, ink density, image alignment, fold sizes, etc., in preparation for the actual production run.
Matte Finish	A coated paper finish that goes through minimal calendaring.
Metallic Ink	Ink that looks metallic when printed. Made with powdered metal or pigments that look metallic. The most common colors used are gold and silver.
Moiré	An undesirable halftone pattern produced by the incorrect angles of overprinting halftone screens.
Mottle	A term used to describe spotty or uneven ink absorption.

N

Natural	A term to describe papers having a color similar to that of wood, also called cream, off-white or ivory.
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O

Offset	An erroneous variation of the word "setoff". Ink that is unintentionally transferred from a printed sheet to the back of the sheet above it as the pieces are stacked in a pile when printed.
Offset Printing	The most commonly used printing method, where the printed material does not receive ink directly from a printing plate but from an intermediary blanket that receives the ink from the plate and then transfers it to the paper.
Offset Paper	A term sometimes used for uncoated book paper.
Opacity	Quality of papers that defines its opaqueness or ability to prevent two-sided printing from showing through.
Opaque Ink	Ink that completely covers any ink under itself.
Overlay Proof	A process of proof-making whereby the color separations are individually exposed to light sensitive film. This film is then set in registration with a piece of white paper in the background.
Overprinting	Any printing that is done on an area that has already been printed.
Overrun	Quantities of sheets printed over the requested number of copies.

P

Pagination	The numbering of individual pages in a multi-page document.
Parchment	A hard finished paper that emulates animal skin used for documents, such as awards, that require writing by hand.
Parent Sheet	A sheet that is larger than the cut stock of the same paper.
Perfect Binding	A binding process where the signatures of a book are held together by a flexible adhesive.
Perfecting Press	A printing press that prints on both sides of a sheet in a single pass through the press.
Picking	An occurrence in printing whereby the tack of ink pulls fibers or coating off the paper surface, leaving spots on the printed surface.
Plastic Comb	A method of binding books whereby holes are drilled on the spine, and a plastic grasping device is inserted to hold the pages together.
PMS	The abbreviation of the Pantone Color Matching System.



Print Speak

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Portrait	A document layout in which the height is greater than the width. (The opposite of Landscape)
Premium	Any paper that is considered better than grade #1 by its manufacturer.
Press Check	When a client visits a printing company to view actual printed sheets of their project before a full production press run is started.
Pressure-sensitive	Self-adhesive paper covered by a backing sheet.
Process printing	A system where a color image is separated into different color values (cyan, magenta, yellow and black or CMYK) by the use of filters and screens or digitally with a software program and then transferred to printing plates and printed on a printing press, reproducing the original color image.
Progressive proofs	Any proofs made from the separate color of a multi-color printing project.

Q

Quote or Quotation	A price estimate to produce a specific printed piece.
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R

Rag paper	Papers with a complete or partial content of cotton fibers.
Ream	500 sheets of paper.
Register	The arrangement of two or more printed images in exact alignment with each other.
Register marks	Any cross marks or other symbols used on a press sheet to insure proper registration.
RGB	The color space of Red, Green and Blue. These are the primary colors of light, which computers use to display images on your screen. An RGB computer file must be translated into the CMYK (the primary colors of pigment) color space in order to be printed on a printing press.
Right angle fold	A term that denotes folds that are 90 degrees to each other.

S

Saddle stitch	The binding of booklets or other printed materials by stapling the pages on the folded spine.
Safety paper	A paper that shows signs of erasure so that it cannot be altered or tampered with easily.
Scoring	To crease paper with a metal rule for the purpose of making folding easier.
Screen angles	The placement of halftone screens to avoid unwanted moiré patterns. Frequently used angles are black 45°, magenta 75°, yellow 90°, and cyan 105°.
Screen ruling	A measurement equaling the number of lines or dots per inch on a halftone screen.
Scum	Unwanted deposits of ink in the non-image area of a printed piece.
Self-cover	A cover that is the same paper stock as the internal sheets.
Sheetwise	The printing of two different images on two different sides of a sheet of paper by turning the sheet over after the first side is printed and using the same gripper and side guides.
Show through	When the printing on one side of a sheet is seen from the other side, a frequent problem with thin papers.
Side guide	The guides on the sides of a printing press that consistently positions the sheet sideways as it is fed through the press.
Side stitch	The stapling of sheets or signatures on the side closest to the spine.



Print Speak

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Signature	A printed sheet with multiple pages on it that is folded so that the pages are in their proper numbered sequence, as in a book.
Smoothness	That quality of paper defined by its levelness that allows for pressure consistency in printing, assuring uniformity of print.
Soy Inks	Inks made with soy oils instead of petroleum as the base. They are considered to be more environmentally friendly, a standard component of green printing.
Spiral bind	A type of binding where a metal or plastic wire is spiraled through holes drilled along the binding side of a document.
Stock	A term for unprinted paper. (See paper type descriptions.)
Super calendaring	A machine procedure that produced a very smooth paper surface that is exceptional for printing.
Synthetic papers	Any non-wood or cloth paper, usually petroleum (plastic) based.

T

Text paper	A high quality light weight printing paper.
Thermography	A printing process whereby slow drying ink is applied to paper and, while the ink is still wet, is lightly dusted with a resinous powder. The paper then passes through a heat chamber where the powder melts and fuses with the ink to produce a raised surface.
Tint	A halftone screen that contains all the same sized dots.
Trapping	The overlapping of one color over a different, adjacent color to ensure that no white space is visible where the two colors meet, especially when there are slight variations in the registration of the two colors during the printing process. Or the process of printing wet ink over dry previously printed ink.
Trim marks	Marks placed on the printed sheet to indicate where cuts should be made.
Tri-fold, head-in	
Tri-fold, head-out	

U

Under color removal	The removing of cyan, magenta, or yellow from a heavily colored image to limit the amount of ink being applied to that image to avoid potential production problems.
Up	A term used to describe how many similar pieces can be printed on a larger sheet; two up, four up, etc.
UV Coating	A very shiny and durable high gloss coating applied to printed material. Applied as a liquid then cured with ultraviolet light.

V

Variable Data Printing	Is a form of on-demand printing in which elements (such as text, graphics, photographs, etc.) can be changed from one printed piece to the next, without stopping or slowing down the press, using information from a database. For example, a set of personalized letters, each with the same basic layout, can be printed with a different name and address on each letter.
Varnish	A clear coating added to printed material as a protective layer for improved scuff resistance and usually higher gloss.



Print Speak

What do those terms mean anyway?

Vellum	A finish of paper that is somewhat bulky and slightly rough.
Vignette	A photo or illustration, in which the tones fade gradually away until they blend with the background they are printed on.
VOCs	Abbreviation of volatile organic compounds. Petroleum based chemicals used in some printing inks and coatings whose high vapor pressure allows easy evaporation into the air.
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W	
Warm color	A color with a reddish tone rather than a blue tone. Brown, oranges, reds, and yellows are generally considered to be "warm" colors.
Wash-up	The procedure of cleaning a particular ink from the unit of a printing press.
Watermark	A translucent mark or image that is embossed during the papermaking process, or printed onto paper, which is visible when the paper is held up to the light.
Web press	A printing press that prints on rolls of paper passed through the press in one continuous piece, as opposed to individual sheets of paper.
Work and Turn	A printing production format that has the front and back of a printed piece on one side of the paper, that is printed the same on the back side, producing two copies of the piece.
Wove	A smooth paper with a gentle patterned finish.
Writing paper	Another name for bond paper.
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Y	
Yellow	One of the four process colors of ink, or CMYK. The Y is for yellow.
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Z	
Zip file	Zipping a file compresses one or more files into a smaller archive. It takes up less hard drive space and less time to transfer across the network or the internet.



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