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The Definitive Guide To Printing Paper

For every printing need, there is a specific type of paper that will suit the job perfectly.

However, with so many different types and sizes of paper available on the market, it can be difficult to determine which ones can be used with your printer and which ones are right for a particular job.

Even when you've got to grips with the range of paper types and sizes, there are also different coatings and weights to choose from.

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Printing paper comes in many different types, each with different uses and

benefits. Here are some of the most popular types of printing paper:

Inkjet Printer Paper

This type of paper is designed for specific use with inkjet printers. There are

different forms of inkjet paper which work well with inkjet ink, including

photo, glossy, business card, and greeting card variants.

Laser Printer Paper

Laser paper is best used with a laser printer. This is used more in business

environments for tasks such as printing documents, cheques, and mailing

labels.

Matte

This paper is one of the most frequently used, as it is suitable for all

everyday printing tasks. Matte paper is finished with a white coating which

helps the ink to dry faster than on other paper types and means it is suitable

for a document that is needed quickly.

Bright White

Bright white paper sheets are much smoother and are non-textured, which

makes them ideal for high-quality, presentable double-sided printing. The

brightness of the paper ensures that both sides can be printed on without

the ink showing through on the other side.

Glossy

This paper type is traditionally used when printing images or photographs

rather than text, as it has the ability to produce brilliant colours and sharp

images. The glossy surface absorbs the ink, creating much higher clarity

images than you could expect from matte paper.

Card Stock

This strong, sturdy paper type is most often used for scrapbooking or to

print business cards and postcards. As it is significantly thicker than other

types of printer paper, it is much more durable and can be carried and

passed around without becoming tattered.

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other important documents, to indicate that printed information is of high

importance.

Guide to paper sizes
A size

Most printer users are probably already aware of 'A size' paper. These are

the most widely used, and easily distinguishable paper sizes. These paper

sizes are simple to understand, as they increase and decrease in

successive order, with A1 being the biggest paper size and A10 the

smallest.

Paper Size	Width x Height (mm)	Width x height (inches)
A1	594 x 841 mm	23.4 x 33.1 in
A2	420 x 594 mm	16.5 x 23.4 in
A3	297 x 420 mm	11.7 x 16.5 in
A4	210 x 297 mm	8.3 x 11.7 in
A5	148 x 210 mm	5.8 x 8.3 in

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A10	26 x 37 mm	1.0 x 1.5 in

A4

A4 paper is the most commonly-used for printing and measures 210mm x 297mm. This paper comes in many different weights and with several different coatings, meaning there is an A4 paper that is suitable for any printing job. This paper size is not only suitable for everyday tasks but can usually fit special purposes too.

A3

A3 paper sizes measures 297mm x 420mm, which is twice the size of A4 paper. This larger sheet allows you to print documents that need to make more of a visual impact, including large graphic pieces or high-resolution images. Large format A3 printers are extremely versatile as they have the ability to print in both A3 and A4, along with having faster print engines.

Other A sizes

Smaller A sizes such as A5 and A6 are also available, which are great paper options for printing flyers or other small media. There are also larger options like A2 and A1 which allow you to print posters and banners.

SRA

The SRA paper, or the 'supplementary raw format A' range is produced slightly more oversized than A size paper. Due to this it's mainly used for commercial printing, as it allows room for bleeding, gripping and trimming. The most common size in this range is SRA3 paper, which can be used in many digital print machines.

C size

C size paper is a range of paper used exclusively for envelopes. The sizes vary from C1 to C10, and mainly correspond to their similar sizes in the A range of paper, although by design they are slightly bigger. This marginal difference in size allows the similar A size sheet to fit inside the envelope.

Size	Width x Height (mm)	Width x Height (in)

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C4	229 x 324 mm	9.0 x 12.8 in
C5	162 x 229 mm	6.4 x 9.0 in
C6	114 x 162 mm	4.5 x 6.4 in
C7	81 x 114 mm	3.2 x 4.5 in
C8	57 x 81 mm	2.2 x 3.2 in
C9	40 x 57 mm	1.6 x 2.2 in
C10	28 x 40 mm	1.1 x 1.6 in

Guide to paper weights

Image Credit: iStockPhoto.com / johnnyscriv (Via Custard Online Marketing)

As well as a range of paper sizes, there are various weights available for different uses.

Paper weight is generally measured in GSM. This stands for 'Grams per Square Metre' and is a measurement of paper thickness or density, which directly relates to the quality of the media.

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Therefore, different paper weights have different uses, with thicker paper being used for more industrial purposes.

Common printer paper weights

300GSM+	Good quality business card, or heavy card media
180GSM – 250GSM	Middle market magazine cover
130GSM – 170GSM	Promotional posters
80GSM	Standard issue day-to-day office matte white paper
35GSM – 55GSM	Most everyday newspapers

Guide to paper coating types

Printing paper can also be found with many different coatings, which will give the sheet a specific finish and thereby determine its suitability for a certain job.

Some of the most common paper coatings are as follows:

Varnish

These coatings can be found in either gloss, satin or dull finishes, and can be tinted in certain colours.

They are an incredibly affordable choice of coating, but have a lower level of protection compared to other laminates. Varnish coatings are useful for adding a gloss to a photo, giving a professional appearance.

UV

This coating offers a much higher level of protection to printed sheets and will enhance the printed colours.

It is applied as a liquid before being hardened under ultraviolet light, and can therefore vary in thickness. This coating can be applied either matte or gloss, along with specialised glitter or tinted finishes.

Aqueous

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options.

Guide to paper opacity

Another thing to consider when purchasing printer paper is the opacity of the sheets. This refers to how transparent or opaque they are, or how much light they let through.

The weight of paper generally influences the opacity of the paper, with heavier paper usually being more opaque.

The opacity of a sheet of paper is measured on a scale of 0 to 100. A sheet which measures as 0 is a transparent sheet, while 100 would be a completely opaque sheet.

Different opacities will have different uses, for example, extremely transparent sheets can be used for tracing paper.

There you have it, a definitive, in-depth look at the different types of paper available on the market. This guide should clear up any questions or hesitations you have about which paper you need for your print job.

However, if you need any more assistance or have further questions regarding your printer, feel free to contact our team of experts who will be more than happy to help.

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