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Measuring Inkjet Photo Yield

For all Photosmart inkjet printers and many Deskjet and Officejet inkjet printers sold after July 2005, HP publishes photo yields based on an HP developed standard.

For a variety of reasons, the testing used in this standard may not reflect what you experience in every day use. Photo yields therefore should be used only as a starting point for comparison purposes, and not to predict the actual yield you will get from your HP printer and cartridge. Actual yield varies considerably based on the content of photos, frequency of printing, ink used in printer set-up, mode of printing and other factors, as discussed below.

Different manufacturers use different yield measurement methodologies, making it difficult to compare photo print cartridge yield across manufacturers' printing systems. There is no industry standard for photo yield although the International Standards Organization (ISO) has begun work to develop one. In the meantime, HP has developed a testing methodology for measuring photo print cartridge yield based on its digital photo printing expertise.

Many factors affect yield, some unique to photo printing. During the HP photo testing, a set of 10 4x6 inch (10 x 15 cm) photos (HP photo suite) shown below are printed continuously until the cartridge reaches end-of-life. These testing conditions may not reflect what you experience in every day use. The selection of paper, the selection of cartridges, the content of the photos, and the frequency of printing, among other factors, have significant effects on yield. For more information see [How ink is used](#).



Photo sample with high use of magenta

Most HP printing systems offer many choices of photo print modes. The print mode is the combination of the paper type selected and the print quality selected. The print quality typically ranges from "fast draft" to "best". HP offers a variety of paper types to match the user needs for longevity and quality. Each paper type has a default print quality setting. When a paper type is selected by the user, the printer will select a default print quality setting. The user has the choice to override the quality setting and set the print quality to one that better meets their specific needs. Many HP photo printers have the ability to sense the type of paper being used and will adjust automatically to the default quality mode for that paper type. The combination of the print quality and the paper type will impact the amount of ink used per photo.



Color photos

The HP photo yield test uses the default photo mode for the printer with "HP Premium Plus" photo paper, unless another type of paper is indicated where photo yields are published at www.hp.com/go/learnaboutsupplies. The HP photo suite is printed with a white border. Borderless printing will generally cause lower yields than printing on the same size paper with a border. In addition, actual yield will vary depending upon the content of the photos. Photos that use primarily one colour such as the example below could cause lower yields for that color, and higher yields for colours not heavily used.



Black and white photos

Measuring Photo Yield

Printing during the HP photo yield test is near continuous, with normal breaks for changing paper. Some inkjet users print a few photos at a time, and hours, and sometimes days, pass between print jobs. With this kind of start/stop printing, inkjet printers use additional ink to

keep print nozzles clear and ink flowing smoothly. This is critical to maintain the health of your printer, and ensure that you continue to experience the same great print quality that your printer delivered when it was new. However, it can cause your yields to be lower than if you printed the same content continuously. For more information see [How ink is used](#).

HP's Photo Yield Testing Methodology

HP's photo print cartridge yield testing methodology is based on the following:

- Tests are conducted using the default quality setting for printing on the selected photo paper. HP Premium Plus Photo Paper is used for Photo yield testing unless otherwise specified.¹
- Typically, three printers of each model are used for each test.
- Typically, nine cartridges per cartridge model are tested for each of the color, photo, and gray cartridge yield tests.
- The print job size is one 4x6 photo printed on an 8.5x11/A4 page.²
- Temperature and humidity are controlled to reflect ambient home or office conditions.
- Printing during tests is near continuous, with normal breaks for changing paper.
- Clearly defined criteria are also used for determining when a cartridge reaches end of life, a critical component for accurately calculating yield. For some printers, an on-screen message indicates that it is time to replace the cartridge. For all other printers, a visual inspection is conducted for the discoloration typical when inkjet cartridges are running out of ink.
- Photo yields vary depending on the cartridges used. HP photo yields indicate which combination of cartridges was used in the test. See the sidebar at the right for more information.

Printing photos: Cartridge options for desired image quality

HP incorporates ink, photo paper and printer technologies into a broad range of photo printing systems with the features and capabilities needed to meet a wide range of consumer needs and preferences. Some printing systems offer only one cartridge configuration. Other printers offer the option of several different cartridge configurations, enabling the consumer to select the image quality for a wide variety of needs. A typical option for two cartridge systems is 3 ink color or 6 ink color photo printing.

- **3-ink color photos:** This is typically the tri-color cartridge and black cartridge normally used for text and graphics printing.
- **6-ink color photos:** The black cartridge is replaced with a photo cartridge containing light cyan, light magenta, and photo black inks.
- **3-ink black photos:** The black cartridge is replaced with a photo cartridge with 3 levels of gray

For 6-ink photo printing the yield of both the tri-color and photo cartridge is published; for 3-ink photos, only the tri-color cartridge yield is relevant. Typically the tri-color cartridge will have a higher yield when used for 6 ink color photo printing than when used for 3 ink color photo printing, since ink is being used from two cartridges rather than just one.

Some HP printers have individual ink cartridges for each color. For these systems all cartridge must be installed to print photos.

HP Recommends

HP recommends that consumers select a photo printing system based on their particular photo printing needs. Yield data can be a good starting point in selecting the right photo printing system. Overall, however, cartridge yield is only one among many factors to consider for the best photo printing experience.

1. Yields may vary when different types of paper are used.
2. For appliance printers that print only 4x6 photos, photos are printed on 4x6 photo paper.

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