

# REPORT: KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT – FONTS AND PAPER STOCKS

**Fonts shape your words . . . and paper or board is what the words are printed on. Read on to learn how to best manage both.**

Provided by AUSTRALIAN PRINT AUDITING

## How To Use Fonts

A fundamental part of any written piece is the font that is used.

OK. So what is a 'font'? Put simply, a font is the style of the letters that you use on your written document. Is your font big and bold, or crisp and clean, italicised or underlined, or black & white or coloured? Are the letters properly spaced? Can it be read (some people use fonts that are so small they cannot be read)?

When properly used, a font or font mix accomplishes four things:

- Fonts focus the reader's attention,
- Fonts enhance the document's readability,
- Fonts set a tone, and
- Fonts project an image.

Here are some tips on how to use fonts.

### 1. WATCH YOUR CASE

Try to avoid using UPPER CASE THE WHOLE TIME, AS IT IS DIFFICULT TO READ AND CAN FRUSTRATE THE READER.

Traditionally, the upper and lower case is used throughout the document, as the case assists with the readability. For example, each sentence starts with a capital letter, as do proper nouns.

With headings and titles, use the upper case sparingly. Each word in a heading may or may not be capitalised, but keep ALL UPPER CASE HEADINGS AND TITLES to a minimum – they are considered the same as yelling.

### 2. FONT SIZE IS VERY IMPORTANT

Please be aware that a document, whether it is read on the Internet or is on a page, must be capable of being read. If it is too small then it cannot be read and your message will not get across to the reader.

As a general rule the main text should be between 10 or 12 points in size. However, you should consider your audience; if your readers will be the more mature members of our community, then they might need 14- or 16-point font, or even 18- or 20-point font.

Headings are normally somewhere between 14 and 48 points in size, and each sub-heading is about half the size of the heading before it.

**Warning:** the font on your computer screen is very likely to appear larger than it will appear on a printed sheet. So, print out your document and have a read of it. If it appears small on the printed document, then increase the size, regardless of how it might appear on your screen.

Also, if you are not too sure about the size, then make it bigger; it is easy to read text that seems a bit big, whereas your message will get completely lost if the text is too small.

### 3. SIMPLE FONTS ARE BETTER

Keep your fonts and font mixes simple.

The font you choose is meant to enhance your message, not interfere with it. Unless you have a very good reason, please use simple and inconspicuous fonts such as: Palatino, Garamond, Times New Roman or Arial.

There is another advantage in using these font: they are 'true type' fonts, so they appear on your screen exactly as they will on your printed page.

### 4. BE CONSISTENT

Never use three or four or seven different fonts in the one document; it is too hard to read. Always restrict yourself to a maximum of two fonts in the one piece. Your readers will thank you, and you will improve your chances of getting your message across to them.

### 5. USE VARIETY, BUT BE SPARING

Whilst font use should be consistent throughout a document, variety can break the monotony. For instance, italicised, bold, or underlined text can assist in emphasising the important parts of your message. However, use them sparingly or do not use them at all.

The rule of thumb is: unless you have a very good reason for using a variety of fonts, then you should use just one or two.

### 6. YOUR FONT SHOULD MATCH YOUR

## AUDIENCE

There is not one 'best' font. Rather, the traits of your particular assignment will determine which font is 'the best' font. If you are addressing the young, then the page must be 'exciting' and 'active'. If you are addressing a business, then they tend to value information over 'excitement'. If you are addressing the mature community, then they have to be able to easily read it.

So, what is written above is not the 'unquestionable truth'; what we have written are guidelines. So:

If your text must be in UPPERCASE, then use it (but really think about it before you actually use it);

If you need coloured sentences, then create them (but really think about it before you create them);

If you need small text, then use small text (but be careful that your message is not lost);

If the whole document must be italicised, then italicise it (but you must have really thought about it before you do it).

Ultimately, your aim is to have your document match your audience, and hopefully you will ensure that it does.

## Choosing the Right Paper

Bond stocks are the most economical stocks. They are suitable whenever price is the major concern. They may be used for books and booklets (especially black and white publications), and for inexpensive flyers.

Uncoated stocks are easy to write on, are not reflective, are the whitest stocks on offer, and have a very smooth finish. They are suitable for books, booklets, office stationery and, in heavier weights, business cards.

Satin and gloss stocks are suitable for a variety of products, as listed below. Satin is a smooth dull finish with a classical, sophisticated, understated and very elegant look. Gloss is a much shinier, more reflective 'get up and go' stock. Both are suitable for text and images. Satin is a better choice if reflections from light sources might be a problem.

Here is a detailed description of the various paper most commonly available, along with recommendations for their use.

### 80 GSM BOND

A white smooth bond stock especially suitable for books, saddle stitched booklets and inexpensive flyers. This is the standard 'bond' stock you will be familiar with as it is most

commonly used in office printers. Do not use this paper if you want high quality punchy colour reproduction — for instance art reproduction or quality photography — use 115gsm or 130gsm satin or gloss.

### 90 GSM UNCOATED

A white smooth economy bond stock especially suitable for books, saddle stitched booklets and office stationery. The paper is light and thin, but being thicker than standard 80gsm bond, 'see through' is limited. The light weight of the paper is suitable for catalogues destined for mailing. Do not use this paper if you want high quality punchy colour reproduction — for instance art reproduction or quality photography — use 115gsm or 130gsm satin or gloss.

### 100 GSM UNCOATED

A high quality high white very smooth stock especially suitable for books, saddle stitched booklets and office stationery. The paper is light and thin, but being high quality, limits 'see through'. It is easy to write on.

### 115 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

This is a very light coated stock. We recommend it for books with a large number of pages, or booklets when postage weight is important.

### 130 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

This is the print industry's most commonly used stock. It is particularly suitable where a job needs to be folded. It is usually the best choice for

- small (A4 and A3) posters,
- all flyers,
- booklet text,
- booklet covers if the booklet is self covered (does not have a separate heavier cover), and
- book text provided the book does not have too many pages.

### 150 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

This is a slightly heavier stock, and therefore has more luxurious quality feel about it. It can be used for much the same things as 130gsm stock.

- all posters,
- all flyers,
- booklet text for booklets up to about 48 pages,
- booklet covers if the booklet is self covered (does not have a separate heavier cover), and
- book text provided the book does not have too many pages.

## 170 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

This is a heavier stock again.

- all posters,
- all flyers,
- booklet text for booklets up to about 36 pages,
- booklet covers, and
- book text provided the book does not have too many pages.

## 200 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

- A2 posters which often need some 'body',
- all flyers, and
- booklet covers.

## 250 GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

- A2 posters which often need some 'body',
- all flyers, and
- booklet covers.

## 300+ GSM SATIN AND GLOSS

These are heavy board type stocks.

- book covers,
- business cards,
- A2 posters which may require some rigidity where they are displayed,
- document folders which need the heavier weight to resist damage,
- bookmarks when longevity of the job isn't so important, and
- greeting cards.

## 310 GSM UNCOATED

A high white, high quality smooth board stock very suitable for business cards. Very good if you plan to write on your business cards.

## 310 GSM SINGLE SIDED SUPER GLOSS (OFTEN CALLED CAST COATED)

This stock is ultra shiny on one side, and uncoated (very dull) on the reverse. It is ideal for greeting cards which have photographs or drawings on the outside, and black and white text on the inside. It is ideal if you want to write on the inside of the card. For the same reasons it makes a good choice for postcards. You can also choose this stock for bookmarks. Printing on the uncoated side should be limited to text and lines — no graphic elements.

## 310 GSM PEARL ARTBOARD

A heavy artboard with a degree of 'glossiness' about half way between gloss and satin. We highly recommend this stock. It has a good 'flick' factor, it is easy to print on, and produces quality results.

## GENERAL NOTES ABOUT PAPER

Standard stocks have three possible finishes:

- **Uncoated**, which has a finish feeling very slightly smoother than standard photocopy paper
- **Matt** (also called Satin) coated, which is smoother but with a dull, or barely shiny finish
- **Gloss coated**, which is smooth and with a glossy finish, not unlike the text of a glossy magazine

Uncoated stocks are easy to write on, and are generally what you'd select for stationery. The lighter weights of 90 - 100 gsm are budget stocks, and are usually what's used for the text pages of booklets and similar. Heavier weights of 120 - 300 gsm are designed especially for our digital printer, and have excellent colour reproduction and writeability.

Coated stocks are smoother, and if they are being conventionally printed show richer, more vibrant colour because the ink sits on the surface coating and doesn't sink into the paper fibre.

This vibrancy is offset by the fact that it's more easily scuffed or damaged by handling, and so jobs printed like this often have a varnish, generally of the same sheen as the base stock, either matte or gloss, applied to protect the surface.

Digital printing uses toner that melts into the surface of the paper, so people choose coated stock not for the vibrancy of colour but for the feel and look of the stock for their job.

Digital toner always dries glossy, regardless of the gloss or otherwise of the underlying stock. It's also substantially more hardwearing than conventional ink, so it would be unusual for a digital job to require a varnish to protect it.

Our paper weights range from 90 - 300 gsm (grams per square metre). As a comparison standard uncoated laserprinter paper is generally 80gsm.

## HANDY GENERAL USAGE GUIDE

- **90 to 100 gsm:** - used for stationery, text for magazines and booklets, flyers and brochures.
- **120 to 170 gsm:** - used for text for booklets, flyers and brochures. The heavier the weight, the more "upmarket" the feel.
- **200 to 250 gsm** is used for magazine and booklet covers. It is robust enough to give some body and stiffness when used in a publication, but not quite heavy enough to be used on its own for cards etc.
- **280 to 300+ gsm** is used for cards of all sorts and book and booklet covers.