Glossary of Print Terms

A-sized paper
The most familiar system of paper sizes is the ISO standard, which includes the common A4 sheet. The ratio of all A-sized paper is 1:1.414, which means that, if you cut the sheet exactly in half, you are left with two sheets which retain the original ratio hence if you cut an A4 sheet in half, you get two A5 sheets.
See also:
B-sized paper, C-sized paper

Artwork
All the files we need before going to print, including text and image files. Artwork is commonly in the form of a PDF on a memory stick, hard drive, DVD, CD, FTP, remote proofing software or by email.
See also:
PDF

Against the Grain
Folding at right angles to the grain direction of the paper being used, as opposed to with the grain. This can cause cracking on heavier papers unless the paper is scored or creased.

B-sized paper
Size that sit between the A-sizes.
See also: A-sized paper, C-sized paper

Binding
The physical binding together of leaves of paper or board. There are various types of binding available – for example, saddle stitch, perfect, PUR, wiro, comb.
See also:
Burst binding
Perfect binding
PUR binding
Spiral binding
Comb binding
Wiro binding
Saddle-stitch
Thread sewn

Bleed
Area of print that is trimmed off when the job is finished. Always supply your artwork with 3mm bleed to allow for finishing tolerances & adjustments.
See also:
Trimming

Blind Embossing
The process of stamping an image into the paper to produce a depressed effecton the paper surface, without the use of inks.

Block
Used to impress or stamp a design. The design can be blocked in coloured inks, or metal foil, including special effects such as holographic.

Board
Heavier paper (normally over 200gsm) which is usually used for products such as book covers and business cards. Generally, what most people might refer to as 'card'.

Bulk
The thickness of a paper, normally measured in microns. 'Bulky' paper can be useful, for example, for making publications appear larger without making them heavier.
See also:
GSM
Paper
Microns

Burst binding
A type of 'perfect' binding, where the leaves are held in place by glue. In burst binding, the glue is forced into notches along the spine of the paper, making the binding stronger than perfect binding because more surface area is covered.
See also:
Binding
Perfect binding

CMYK
The four colours used to make "four colour process" printing– cyan, magenta, yellow and black (black is known as the "key" colour hence the K).
See also:
Four-colour printing
RGB

Capacity
Two creases close together to create a pocket or spine allowing the folder to take extra items such as leaflets or brochure. Normally between 3.5mm and 5mm.

Coated paper
Paper is coated in clay to produce the two main finishes matt and gloss.
See also:
Gloss paper
Matt paper
Silk paper
Uncoated paper

Colour Separation
In photographic reproduction, the process of separating colour originals into the primary printing colour components.

C-sized paper
Commonly used for envelope sizes, slightly larger than equivalent A-size. For example, a C4 envelope is slightly larger than an A4 sheet, which allows it to hold an A4 sheet. Another common envelope size is DL, which holds an A4 sheet folded in three.

Comb binding
Method of binding leaves of paper by inserting the teeth of a plastic comb through punched holes. Comb binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs, and training manuals.
See also:
Burst binding
Perfect binding
PUR binding
Spiral binding
Wiro binding
Saddle-stitch
Thread sewn

Concertina fold
Folding each panel of a leaflet in alternate directions, so that when opened out the finished product is folded in a zigzag fashion.

Crease
An indented line pressed into the substrate to reduce resistance and allow folding without cracking or splitting.

Densitometer
A device for measuring the colour density at a specific location on film or printed product either by reflected or transmitted light.

De-bossing
Process of creating a 3D sunken image in paper.
See also:
embossing

Die cutting
Cutting or trimming irregular paper shapes using a custom made 'die'. For example, pocket folders or if you need an irregular shape. A die would need to be made to suit the correct shape, which could then be cut around.

Digital printing
Printing directly from electronic data, and without the need for plates. Digital print is ideal for short-run printing and quick turnarounds.
See also:
Litho

DPI/dots per inch
Measurement of resolution, often abbreviated to DPI. 'High resolution' artwork is needed for good quality printing (for example, 300dpi), whereas 'low resolution' (72 dpi) artwork is ideal for computer screens or the internet.

Drawn-on Cover   A paper book cover which is attached to the sewn book by gluing the spine.

Drilling   What most people call hole punching, i.e., making holes in paper for use in a ring binder. The big difference is that commercial drilling can punch holes through hundreds of sheets of paper at a time.
See also:
Finishing

Dummy   Mock up of an intended product to give you an idea and feel for the finished item. A dummy will be made with the correct paper and materials. Fuller-Davies is more than happy to put together dummies if required.
See also:
Proof

Eco lamination   Biodegradable film lamination. More expensive than normal film lamination.
See also:
Lamination
UV varnish

Embossing   Process of creating a 3D raised image in paper.
See also de-bossing

Finishing   Where the printed materials get put into their final format. Examples of finishing include guillotining, folding, binding, drilling, and numbering
See also:
Binding
Drilling
Laminating
UV varnishing

Fit   Printers' terminology for the accurate positioning of one colour with another on a printed sheet. Also known as register or registration.

Folio   Technical printers' term for the page number.

FSC   FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) is an international non-profit organisation founded in 1993 as a mechanism for ensuring that the world's forests are managed in an environmentally responsible, socially acceptable and economically viable manner.
See also:
PEFC

Four-colour process printing

Process of combining four basic colours to produce a full-colour final product. A plate is created for each of the four colours in a full-colour job (cyan, magenta, yellow and black (key). The colours are then printed one at a time using lithography and combine to produce the full variety of colours that we see on the finished product
See also:
CMYK
Lithography

Fulfilment

Managing the project from start to finish includes taking the order, packing, warehousing, distribution and processing the financial transaction.

Gloss paper

A reflective, shiny coat on coated paper, for example, glossy magazines.
See also:
Coated paper
Matt paper
Silk paper
Uncoated paper

GSM

The weight of paper or board, measured in grams per square metre. For example, office copier paper is normally 80gsm, whereas the cover of a book might be 300-350gsm.
See also:
Bulk
Paper
Microns

Impression

In printing, the pressure of the plate or blanket as it comes in contact with paper.

Imposition

Arrangement of pages in a sequence, which will read consecutively when the printed sheet is folded.

Inline

Process done at the same time as the printing. Inline varnish for example.

Kiss-Cut

Light cut into the peel-able surface of a self-adhesive sheet, leaving the backing sheet intact.

Lamination

Plastic film coating which protects the surface of printed paper, and can provide a glossy matt or silk finish. Normal film lamination is not biodegradable.
See also:
Eco lamination
UV varnish

Landscape	Orientation of the sheet or end-product where the horizontal dimension is greater than the vertical.
Litho/lithography	Printing using plates, some areas of which attract ink, and some which repel. Ideal for longer print runs and a higher quality of print, colour or paper. Litho print is likely to be used for jobs such as letterheads, brochures, leaflets, business cards, label printing and magazines. See also: Digital print Four-colour process print
Loop stitching	Printing terminology for 'stapling' with a loop shape in order to insert into a ring binder. See also: Binding Saddle stitching Stab stitching
Make ready	Preparation of a printing press or finishing equipment. In years gone by it was a significant part of the lead-time. But is much faster now due to better technology.
Matt paper	Dull coat on paper, the opposite of glossy. See also: Coated paper Uncoated paper Gloss paper Silk paper
Microns	Measurement in thickness rather than weight of papers & boards. See also: Bulk Paper GSM
Moiré	Screen pattern caused by a clash of screen angles in litho reproduction.
Offset Lithography	Litho print, but where the printing plates do not actually come into contact withthe paper. Instead, the ink is transferred from the plate onto a blanket and then onto the paper. See also: Litho
Outsert	A printed element which is usually stitched to the outside of a magazine cover.

Overs   The number of surplus copies printed. Almost inevitable using litho, and could be a significant number if using a web press.

Overprinting   Printing onto a sheet which has been previously printed.

Pages   (pp – printed pages) Normally one side of a leaf in a publication – for example an A4 sheet folded in half to create an A5 leaflet would have four 'pages'.
                   See also:
                   Folio

Pantone   Standard range of colours denoted by a number. Using pantone inks (as opposed to four-colour process) provides a greater variety and more accurate colour when matching spot colours across products. If your brand requires a very specific colour, then you may wish to use a pantone colour (spot colour) in addition to CMYK.
                   See also:
                   CMYK
                   Four-colour process printing
                   Spot colour

Paper   There is a huge variety of paper available, including different weights, bulk, finishes and environmental rating. It is important that you choose the paper that is right for your product. Fuller-Davies are happy to help with this and to provide samples and dummies where appropriate.
                   See also:
                   A-sized paper
                   C-sized paper
                   B-sized paper
                   Bulk
                   Coated paper
                   GSM
                   Micron
                   Uncoated paper

PDF   Abbreviated form of "portable document format". The PDF format was developed by Adobe and uses the postscript language, it gives publishers the ability to set a design "in stone". Printers will frequently ask for artwork to be submitted in PDF format. Fuller-Davies are happy to provide PDF advice for clients.
                   See also:
                   Postscript

PEFC

(Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) Sustainable Forest Management is based on environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests for present and future generations. The PEFC Council, an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, promotes the independent certification of forests managed in this way.
See also:
FSC

Perfect binding

Gluing leaves of paper to the spine of a cover. Perfect binding is the most common form of binding books, and magazines where there is a spine.
See also:
Binding
Burst binding
PUR binding

Plates

See litho.

Portrait

Orientation of a sheet or end-product where the vertical dimension is greater than the horizontal.

Postscript

Page description language developed by Adobe, which is generated by graphics packages and output by printing devices.
See also:
PDF

Pre-flight

Checks that your artwork must go through to make sure it is suitable to print.

Pre-flight report

Adobe report generated about your artwork once we have RIPped it.

Pre-press (or prepress)

Preparation carried out by the printer's studio before printing, such as making sure artwork is print-ready and preparing printing plates. Fuller-Davies has a full pre-press studio.

Proof

Proof of how the finished page will look, usually printed on a laser, high resolution printer or a PDF via email or the web. Fuller-Davies will always ask you to approve a 'proof' before going to print.
See also:
Dummy
Soft proof

PUR binding

Method of perfect binding with flexible glue to improve strength and is used when the product will be in use for a long time. More expensive than perfect or burst binding. Allow 24 hours for the glue to cure after binding.

Ream

500 sheets of paper. Office copier paper is usually supplied by the 'ream'.
See also:
Paper

Register Marks

Cross-hair lines on mechanicals, films and plates used for positioning pages or images to enable accurate register on press.

Resolution

See DPI.

RGB

The three colours, red, green and blue, which make up colours which you see on a computer screen. Printing usually uses four colours – cyan, magenta, yellow and black.
See also:
CMYK
Four-colour process print

RIP

Acronym for Raster Image Processor, which generates a bitmap to send to the printing device (platesetter or digital press). The input data is either a file written in a page description language such as PDF or another bitmap. In the latter case, the RIP applies either smoothing or interpolation algorithms to the input bitmap to generate the output bitmap.

Run-on

The estimated cost of printing extra copies. The setup and make ready costs of getting ready to print, particularly for litho, may form a significant chunk of the overall cost, therefore printing as many copies as possible is often an economical option. It's important to note that the run-on price only applies if you order the extra copies in the same print run.

Saddle-stitch

Printing terminology for 'stapling'. Booklets and newsletters are often 'saddle-stitched'.
See also:
Binding
Loop stitching
Stab stitching

Screen printing

Method of printing where ink is forced through a fine mesh and a stencil. Screen printing is particularly suitable for large display posters or for printing onto unusual surfaces such as T-shirts.

Sealer	Neutral ink often applied inline when printing CMYK to prevent rubbing and marking of the job. Generally used when printing on silk papers. See also: Inline
Sheet-fed press	Printing press, which prints on to sheets of paper, as opposed to a web press, which prints onto rolls of paper.
Show through	The degree to which a printed image is visible through the paper due to the lack of opacity of the paper.
Silk paper	Somewhere between matt and gloss paper – smoother finish than matt, and more reflective. See also: Coated paper Gloss paper Matt paper Uncoated paper
Soft proof	PDF proof sent via email, FTP or remote proofing software online.
Spine	The binding edge of a publication.
Spiral binding	Method of binding using a single, continuous spiral of plastic or wire looped through holes and around the spine. Spiral binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs and training manuals. See also: Binding
Spot colour	Single ink of a specific colour used for printing, often a pantone colour. See also: Four-colour process printing Pantone
Spot varnish	Varnish applied to a specific section of the printed area. See also: Varnish Sealer

Stab stitching

Hand stitching method similar to the office staple in finish used on pads & voucher books.
See also:
Binding
Saddle stitching
Loop stitching

Stock

The material that is actually printed on e.g. the paper or board.

Thread sewn

Method of binding using thread .
See also:
Burst binding
Perfect binding
PUR binding
Spiral binding
Comb binding
Wiro binding
Saddle-stitch

Trim marks

In printing, marks placed on the copy to indicate where the paper should be trimmed.

Trim size

The final size of the paper after it has been 'trimmed' e.g. A4. Printers usually print on oversized paper, and then trim the paper down to the finished size after printing. This allows for greater flexibility of sizes, and makes it possible to print right up to the edge of the finished page.
See also:
Bleed

Uncoated paper

Paper which has not been coated with clay, commonly used for books, newspapers, etc. Absorbs the ink more than coated paper, which means that colours will display differently (beware of this). Available in a wide range of weights and finishes.
See also:
Coated paper
Gloss paper
Silk paper
Matt paper

Varnish (machine)

Inline machine varnish available in gloss & matt finishes.
See also:
Spot varnish
Sealer

UV varnish   Alternative to lamination. The printed area is covered with a liquid, then dried using UV light. Produces a glossy, laminated effect, and can be applied to specific areas to produce special effects. Can be more economical than laminating.
See also:
Lamination
Eco lamination

Web press   See sheet-fed press.

Wiro binding   Method of binding where wire is looped through drilled holes and bound around the spine, which allows the final publication to lie flat when open. Spiral binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs and training manuals.
See also:
Binding