

MIXAM'S **BOOK** PRINTING **GUIDE**

A STEP-BY-STEP RESOURCE FOR CREATORS,
SELF-PUBLISHERS, AND BUSINESSES

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01

**BOOK
PRINTING
BASICS**

Welcome to Mixam's Book Printing Guide!

Whether you're new to printing or a seasoned pro, this guide will help you easily navigate the process and achieve the best results. From understanding book specifications to file preparation, we've got you covered every step of the way.

For more details, visit our [book printing](#) page to explore all available options.

1A: PRINT FILES SETUP ESSENTIALS



BLEED



Full Bleed	False Bleed: Mirror	False Bleed: Upscale	False Bleed: Stretch
A printed image or color that extends 0.125" to a page's edge on all four sides, minimizing the paper's natural color showing when trimmed.	The outer 0.125" of your artwork is duplicated and reflected in the bleed area. This bleed suits designs with repeated patterns or simple backgrounds.	An extension of artwork positioned 0.125" inside the bleed area, perfect for extending non-critical artwork elements.	Ideal for solid colors or gradients, it replicates the outer 0.2" of each page edge and stretches it to the bleed area.
			

Ensure your print files include bleed before uploading them to your order's Artwork tab.

Mixam's advanced software will automatically check your files for bleed and notify you of any issues that need correcting. If you need help adding bleed, our team can recommend and apply a false bleed for you. For more information, visit our [Bleed support page](#) and watch our [Bleed video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

QUIET AREA



The space inside the trim line, ensuring key design elements aren't trimmed or obscured by binding.

SAFE ZONE



The area that ensures your design stays within printing guidelines.

SPINE



The bound edge of a book where the binding holds the pages together. Your spine measurements are visible in your shopping cart and the order's Details tab.

TRIM LINE



The edge of a page when cut to the finished size. Watch our ['How To Set A Trim Box' video tutorial](#) on YouTube for a step-by-step guide.

BINDING LINE



Marks where a book will be bound.

HINGE AREA



The flexible sections on either side of the spine that connect it to the covers on hardcover books.

Manufacturing Variance

Manufacturing variance refers to slight differences in alignment, color, or position caused by machine calibration, paper type, or environmental conditions. We always aim to minimize these variations and ensure prints adhere to acceptable industry standards.

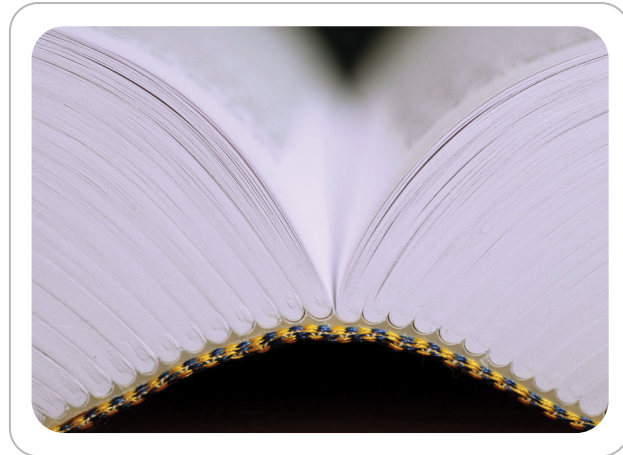
Similarly, tolerance movement refers to the allowable shifts or measurement variations during production. It's important to account for this during the design stage, as it can impact processes like trimming and binding. Mixam adheres to industry standards to ensure these movements are within acceptable limits, providing the highest quality prints.

1B: ANATOMY OF A BOOK



Book Block

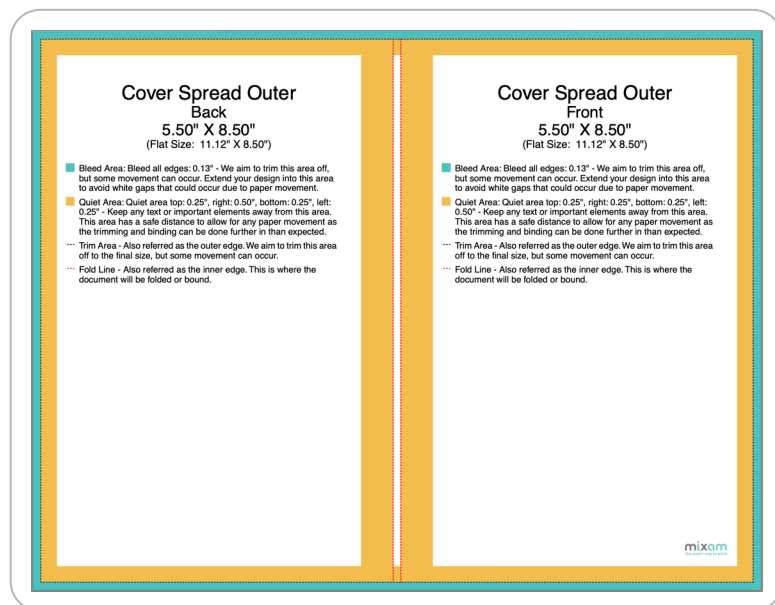
The interior pages of a book consist of printed and trimmed paper sheets called signatures, gathered to form a block.



Paperback (Softcover) Book

A book in which signatures are bound to the spine with adhesive and covered with slightly heavier covers, creating a rectangular spine using perfect binding. Perfect binding is typical for paperback books, making them affordable and portable.

Paperbacks with high page counts or paper weights use PUR (polyurethane reactive) binding, a strong, long-lasting adhesive so books can open flexibly without spine damage.



► Front Cover

- Displays the title, subtitle, author name, and cover design.

► Spine

- Includes the title, author name, and publisher logo (if applicable).

► Back Cover

- Features a summary, author bio, and optional barcode/ISBN for retail use.

► Inner Pages

- Contain the book's content, such as text, images, and illustrations.

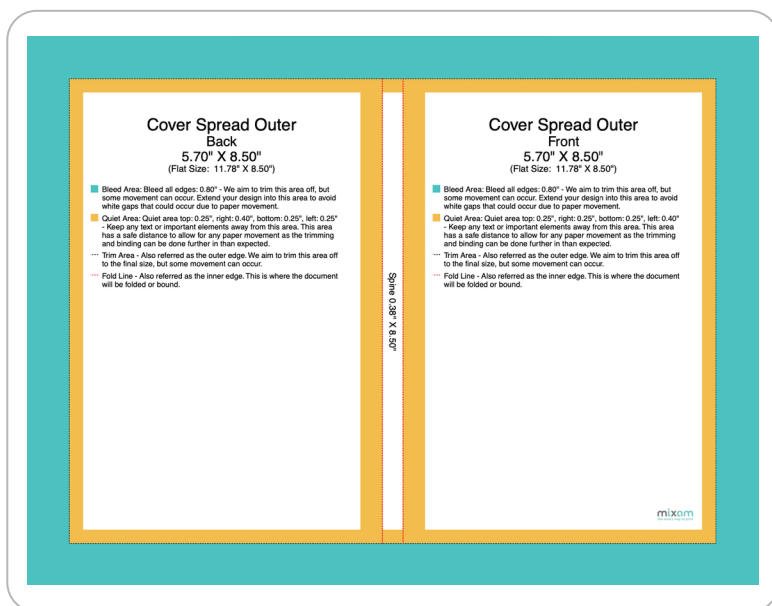
► Gutter Areas

- The space near the spine reserved for binding.

Hardcover (Casebound) Book

A book in which pages are bound to a spine with adhesive, reinforced with Smyth-sewn binding (optional) and encased in rigid cardboard covers wrapped in printed paper for excellent durability.

A typical hardcover book binds trimmed single pages to the spine, while a Smyth-sewn hardcover stitches folded signatures together with thread, strengthened with gauze, and attaches them to the spine with adhesive, ensuring greater flexibility. Endpapers are automatically included inside the front and back covers to protect the first and last inner pages.



▶ Endpapers

- Attach the book block to the cover and provide a decorative element.

▶ Dust Jacket (optional)

- A removable paper cover that offers protection and an additional design element.

▶ Head and Tail Bands (optional)

- Decorative cotton strips added to the top and bottom of the spine for reinforcement and visual appeal.

▶ Bookmark Ribbon (optional)

- A colored strip of ribbon bound into the binding for readers to mark their progress.

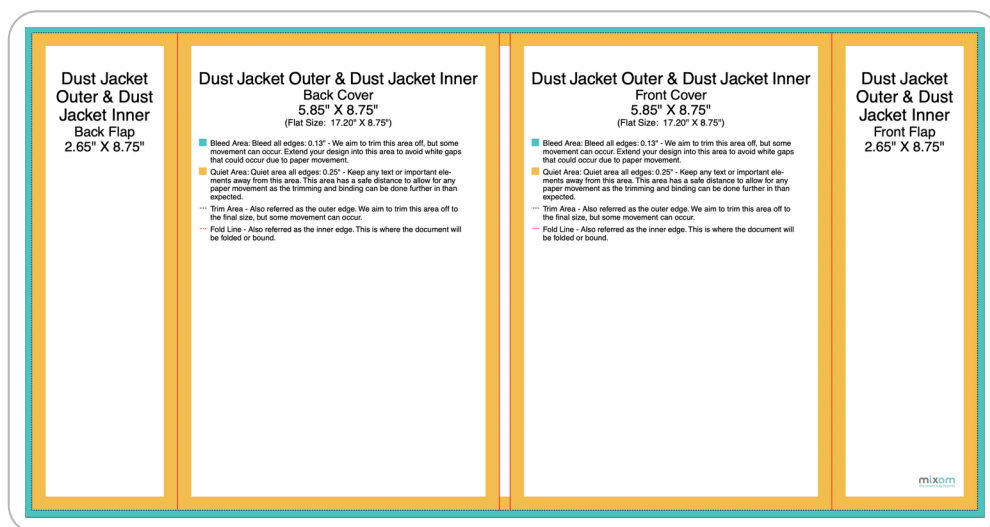
▶ Smyth Sewn Binding (optional)

- A durable binding method where binder thread joins folded signatures, forming a strong and flexible book block.

Dust Jacket

A lightweight detachable outer cover with folded panels designed to protect a book and enhance its visual appeal.

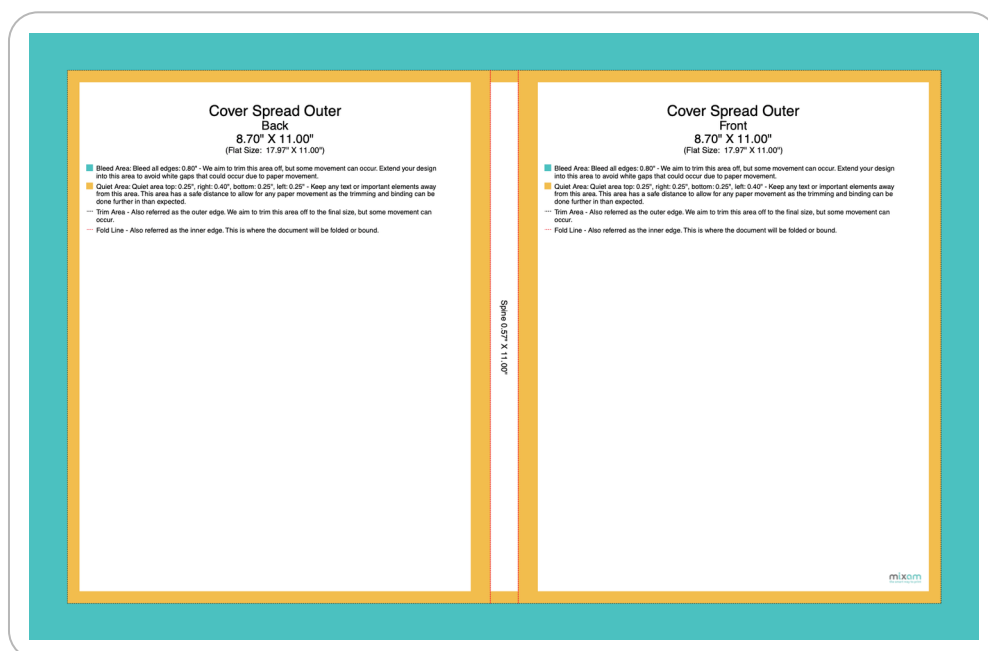
Available for hardcover books only.



Layflat Binding

A hardcover book type for printing seamless double-page spreads without visible binding.

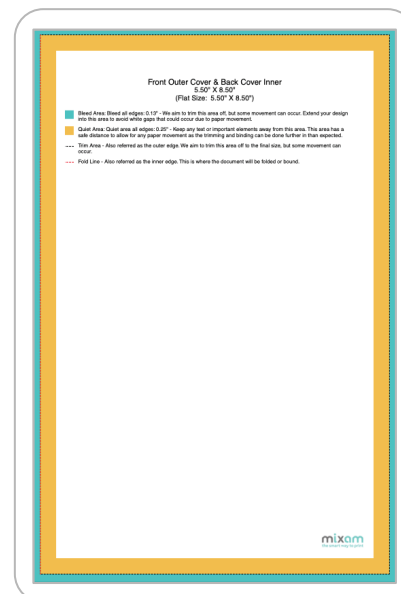
When opened, pages lie completely flat. Single-sided printed sheets are laminated one side, folded in half, glued to the blank side of the next sheet, and assembled into a block before being bound to the spine and covers.



Saddle-Stitch (Staple) Book

This method secures pages with two staples along the centerfold.

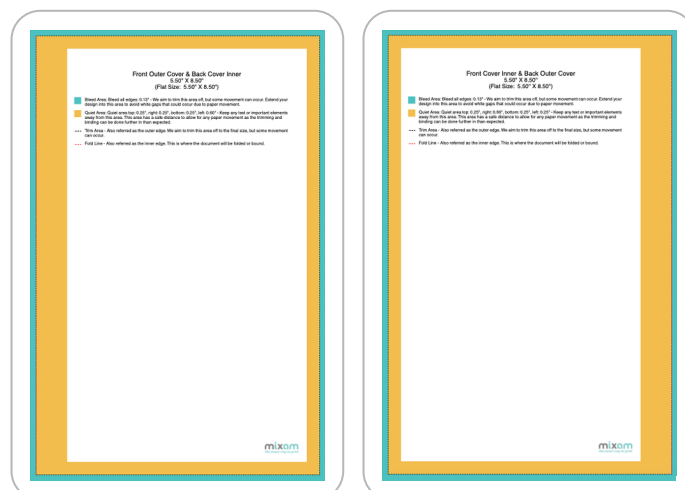
It's perfect for prints with low page counts and designs requiring uninterrupted graphics.



Wire-O Binding

This binding method involves securing trimmed, hole-punched pages with C-shaped wire loops.

It's suitable for both large and small page counts and works best for content where images don't span across facing pages.



Spiral (Coil) Binding

A binding method that threads a plastic coil through holes along the binding edge.

It allows pages to rotate 360 degrees and lay flat when opened, making it ideal for large and small page counts.



1C: BINDING TYPE BLEED GUIDELINES



Perfect Binding: Inner and Cover Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.5"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"



Popular Products:

- [Booklets](#)
- [Catalogs](#)
- [Comic Books](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [Paperback Book Printing](#)

Hardcover Binding: Inner Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.5"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

Hardcover Binding: Cover Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.8"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.5"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

- **Popular Products:**
- [Art Books](#)
 - [Casebound Books](#)
 - [Cookbooks](#)
 - [Children's Books](#)
 - [Photo Books](#)

Hardcover Layflat Binding: Inner Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"

Hardcover Layflat Binding: Cover Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.8"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

- **Popular Products:**
- [Layflat Books](#)

Staple Binding: Inner and Covers Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.25"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

▶ Popular Products:

- [Activity Books](#)
- [Graphic Novels](#)
- [Manga](#)
- [Zines](#)

Wire-O Binding: Inner and Covers Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.6"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

▶ Popular Products:

- [Manuals](#)
- [Workbooks](#)

Spiral Binding: Inner and Cover Pages

AREA	MEASUREMENT
Bleed	0.125"
Quiet area (binding edge)	0.8"
Quiet area (other edges)	0.25"

▶ Popular Products:

- [Coloring Books](#)
- [Journals](#)
- [Notebooks](#)
- [Yearbooks](#)

02

**DESIGN
AND FILE
PREPARATION**

2A: FILE DESIGN OPTIONS



You can create your own files by uploading photographs or scanned images, but most use graphic design programs because they are precise, scalable, flexible, and ensure high-quality results. Alternatively, Mixam's free design tools enable you to make print-ready files within a pending order.

Popular Tools and Programs

	Mixam's Design Tools	Adobe InDesign	Adobe Illustrator	Adobe Photoshop	Canva	Affinity Publisher
Set your own bleed and trim areas	Automatic	✓	✓		✓ *	✓
Export in CMYK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ **	✓
Export as PDFs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work in spreads	✓	✓	✓			✓
Work on single pages	Single and double	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create vectorized files	✓	✓	✓			✓

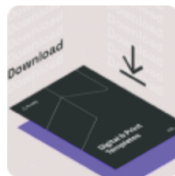
* You can only set a 0.125" bleed on Canva (free and paid Pro version)

** Canva doesn't have a choice of color profiles, but you can export in CMYK with Canva Pro (paid)

Downloadable Templates

If you create your own files, you can download free PDF templates on our Instant Quote Calculator for every product and specification, including custom sizes **(subject to availability)**.

Every template includes printing guidelines for inner pages, covers and spines if relevant. Use the template as an underlay to lay out your artwork, and once completed, remove the template and save your design before selecting **'Upload Own Artwork'** on the Calculator.



Print Template

Download the free PDF template we created for your specifications.

[Download your PDF](#)

Design Online Tool

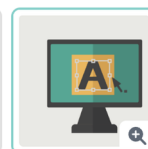
This free, time-saving tool allows you to create files with a range of pre-made layouts, typefaces, and graphics. You can insert your own images and text, and it's available for most products and specifications.

To access it, select the **'Design Online'** option on the Instant Quote Calculator or in a pending order's Artwork tab on the left-hand side of your screen.

Design Option



Upload Own
Artwork



Design Online

Design Online

You can create an entire design (Cover & body) or use the tool to design specific part(s):
Cover Only, Body Only, or Spine.

The tool will automatically generate the specifications you selected on the Calculator, such as size, page quantity and printing guidelines.

Selecting 'Expert' mode before you begin your design will also give you greater editing control.

Template Type

Please select the type of design you would like to create



Cover & Body



Cover Only



Body Only

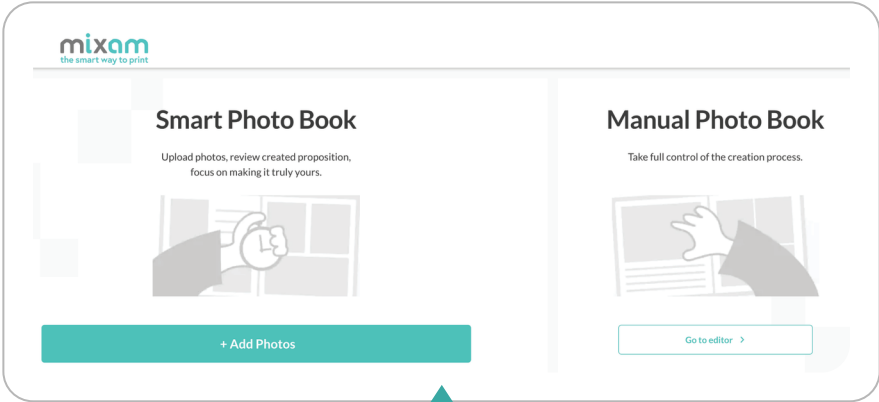
Cancel Ok

For more information and instructions, visit our [Design Online support page](#).

Mixam's Photo Book Editor

Like Design Online, this free and efficient tool is for photo-based **book printing**.

It accelerates the file creation process by offering a range of pre-made layouts, typefaces, graphics, and preset printing guidelines. You can either design your book manually by dragging and dropping your photos or use the Smart Photo Book option, which will intuitively generate a design using AI.



For more information and instructions, visit our **[Photo Book Editor support page](#)** and watch our **[Photo Book Editor video tutorial](#)** on YouTube.

2B: FILE BASICS



Accepted File Types

If your uploaded files are not already in PDF format, our system will convert them into high-quality PDFs.

PDF files preserve all formatting, style, and image information from your original file and can be scaled without affecting quality.

File Type Conversion			
DOC Files Types to PDF	Image File Formats to PDF	eBook File Formats to PDF	CAD File Formats to PDF
.csv, .djvu, .doc, .docx, .eml, .eps, .key, .key.zip, .mpp, .msg, .numbers, .numbers.zip, .odp, .ods, .odt, .pages, .pages.zip, .pps, .ppsx, .ppt, .pptx, .ps, .pub, .rtf, .txt, .vsd, .vsdx, .wks, .wpd, .wps, .xlr, .xls, .xlsx, .xps	.3fr, .ai, .arw, .bmp, .cdr, .cr2, .crw, .dng, .emf, .erf, .gif, .heic, .jpg, .jpeg, .mdi, .mef, .mrw, .nef, .odg, .orf, .pcx, .pef, .png, .ppm, .psd, .raf, .raw, .sr2, .svg, .tga, .tif, .tiff, .wbmp, .webp, .wmf, .x3f, .xcf	.azw, .azw3, .cbc, .cbr, .cbz, .chm, .epub, .fb2, .lit, .lrf, .mobi, .pdb, .pml, .prc, .rb, .tcr	.dwg, .dxf

Uploading Files

Before uploading files to a pending order's Artwork tab, label them clearly (e.g. cover_spread.pdf, page-1.pdf, etc.), so our system can arrange them chronologically.

If any page appears out of place once uploaded, simply drag it to the correct place. Alternatively, use the three-dotted button under the relevant page and enter the new page position.

Add a quote to your shopping cart and open a pending order. Once in the Artwork tab, you can either:

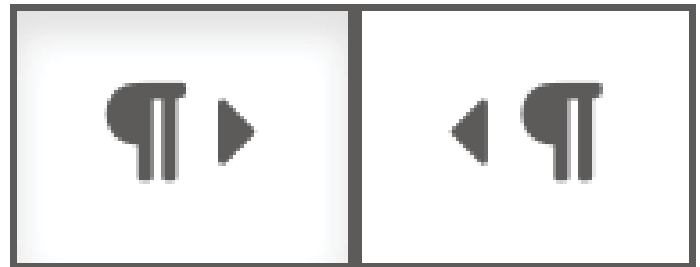
- Drag and drop files into thumbnail positions
- Upload files from your desktop
- Upload from cloud-based platforms like **Dropbox** and **WeTransfer**
- Upload from web URL

BINDING / PRODUCT TYPE	UPLOAD METHOD
Perfect, PUR, Hardcover	Inner Pages: Upload one multipage document, single-page files or double-page spreads.
	Cover Pages: Upload a single cover spread (front cover, spine and back cover) or single cover page files and a single spine file.
Dust Jacket	Upload it as a single spread containing front and back panels, cover pages, and spine design.
Staple, Layflat, Wire-O and Spiral	Inner Pages: Upload one multipage document, single-page files or double-page spreads.
	Cover Pages: Upload single cover files (front and back covers) or a single cover spread (no spine file necessary).

Left-to-Right Binding

Some products offer left-to-right binding. This option is suitable for books intended for left-handed writers and books in languages like Hebrew and Arabic.

Once you've uploaded your files to a pending order's Artwork tab, click the text direction icon, and you can switch your binding from the left side to the right.



RGB vs CMYK

RGB (Red, Green, and Blue)

is the color model used by digital screens like laptops. All on-screen colors are created by combining varying intensities of these three primary colors. For example, red and green light mixed equally produce yellow, while red and blue make magenta. When all three colors combine at full intensity, they produce white light. RGB's color range, or gamut, is broad and capable of producing bright, vivid tones, including neon-like hues.

CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black: Key)

is the preferred color model for print. Unlike RGB, which creates colors by mixing red, green, and blue light, CMYK relies on the interaction of ink and paper to produce visible colors. White paper reflects all light, but applying varying amounts of cyan, magenta, and yellow ink absorbs specific wavelengths, allowing others to reflect and create color. For example, cyan ink absorbs red light while reflecting green and blue, making it appear cyan to the human eye.

To reproduce specific printed colors in your designs, visit our [CMYK Color Charts and Values support page](#).



RGB



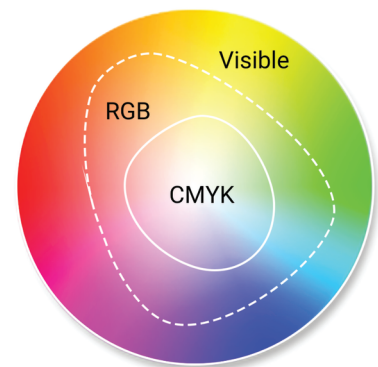
CMYK

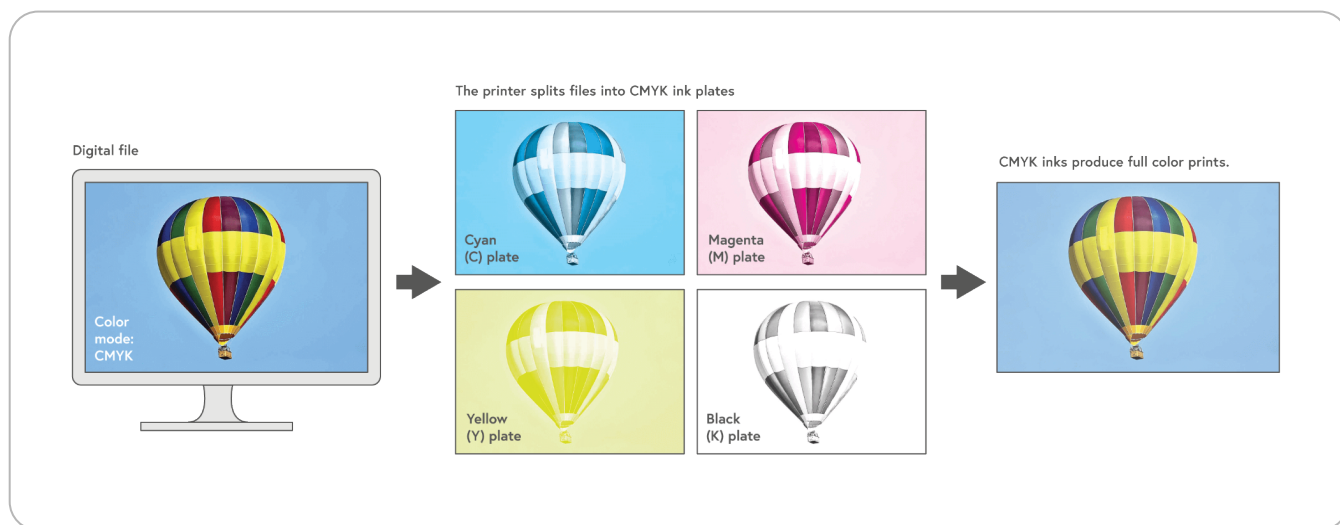
Converting RGB to CMYK

Many design programs, like Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign, allow you to easily switch from RGB to CMYK so colors remain within the printable range.

For a step-by-step guide, visit our [‘How to Convert RGB to CMYK’ support page](#).

Color Wheel Gamut





If you design your own files, **set your color profile to CMYK** from the start. It ensures that colors stay within the gamut and that your design translates accurately into print.

Color Variance

Color variance occurs due to paper type, ink absorption, and printing equipment. While our advanced technology maintains a high level of color reproduction, these differences do not affect the overall print quality.

It's important to note that colors may also vary between digital screens and printed materials. At Mixam, we adhere to strict color management procedures to ensure that your printed materials closely match your expectations. We keep color variance within an acceptable range based on industry standards.

Color Printing vs Grayscale

Color printing (4-color or full-color printing) uses Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black inks. Each color is applied using a separate printing plate, and the inks are layered and combined to produce a wide range of colors. This overprinting technique allows for vibrant and detailed visuals, making color printing ideal for graphic-heavy projects.

In contrast, grayscale printing (black-and-white printing) uses only Black (K) ink. This method is much simpler and relies on a single printing plate. It is a popular and economical choice for text-heavy projects.

Mixam's Color Profile

After setting your color profile to CMYK, you can calibrate your files to our preferred color profile, GRACoL2006_Coated1v2, to ensure they have high color accuracy and consistency.

[Download it here.](#)

.joboptions for Adobe Programs

After downloading Mixam's CMYK color profile, Adobe program users can optimize files using a custom preset file to define the properties of files for Mixam's presses, from color and fonts to transparency and bleed. You can download versions for single pages in color and grayscale, and they will automatically load into all installed Adobe programs.

For more information and setup instructions, visit the [.joboptions section in our Print File Setup Guide.](#)

Ink Saturation & Density

Ink saturation measures how much ink is applied to a page, while density describes how dark or intense ink appears on paper. The more ink you apply, the darker the color becomes.

Each pixel in your file can have an ink saturation level ranging from 0% to 100% for each of the four CMYK colors, with a maximum combined saturation of 400%. However, exceeding 250% total saturation can oversaturate the paper, leading to longer drying times and increased printing costs. We recommend keeping total saturation between 150% and 250% for optimal results. This range ensures your colors remain vibrant and sharp without appearing muddy.

Colors must have a minimum saturation of 10% to appear in print. Be mindful that colors that are close together with similar saturation levels that look distinct on a screen may blend in print, resulting in only one visible tone.

The type of paper you select will also impact ink saturation. For example, gloss paper tends to hold more ink, producing vibrant colors, while uncoated papers absorb ink more readily, resulting in softer, more subdued tones.

For more ink saturation and density guidance, visit our [Ink Saturation and Density support page.](#)

Resolution

Resolution refers to the extent to which the human eye can distinguish between an image's tiniest details. Although subjective, resolution is a combination of the image quality you upload (input) and the total number of dots that a printer can produce per inch (output). In print, we measure the level of detail in dots per inch (dpi). The higher the dpi, the sharper the image.

Ensure every file or image you upload has a 300 dpi resolution. We cannot print any file with a resolution smaller than 100 dpi, as your images will appear blurred and pixelated. You can print at a higher resolution, like 400 dpi, but it will only slow the upload process and add no visual benefit to the image quality.

For more information, visit our [Print Resolution support page](#).

Rich Black vs Standard Black

Type	Rich Black (C 30% M 30% Y 30% K 100%)	Standard (True) Black (100% K)	Registration Black (100% C, M, Y and K)
When to use	For rich and saturated black tones for large text, black areas or high-contrast details	For text-heavy designs and simple layouts with standard text (30 pt for text and 2pt for lines or outlines called vector strokes)	Do not use it; it's for printer marks only
When not to use	Small text, line art or fine details	For titles, headers and vector strokes	—

If you're an Adobe user, watch our [Rich Black Text to Standard Black conversion video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

03

PRINTING OPTIONS AND CUSTOMIZATION

Paper is at the heart of **book printing** and impacts your design's overall look and feel. Our Instant Quote Calculator will only display the most suitable options depending on your print specifications. Our professional paper types have been selected for their exceptional properties in brightness, color, texture, weight, opacity, and overall print quality.

3A: BOOK SIZING

A book's size is a subtle way of helping readers understand the kind of book you've created. Consider your book's genre, market expectations, cost per copy, design, and distribution strategy when choosing what size to print. Although there are some common sizes for each product, you can select from a wide range of specifications and choose custom sizing (subject to availability).

Popular Products	Common Sizes
Paperback & Hardcover Books	Letter (8.5" x 11") Square (8.5" x 8.5") US Trade (6" x 9") Digest (5.5 x 8.5)
Comic Books	US Trade (6" x 9")
Catalogs & Magazines	Digest Letter

3B: PAPER WEIGHT

Paper weight is measured in pounds (lb). The density and thickness of paper fibers influence a paper's weight. For example, an 80lb paper weight refers to the weight of the ream of paper in its uncut size before it's trimmed and ready for use. It's important to note that selecting heavier paper weights can increase shipping costs and a book's durability. However, they're ideal for books that will be frequently handled or require a high-end feel.

Text Paper vs Cover Paper

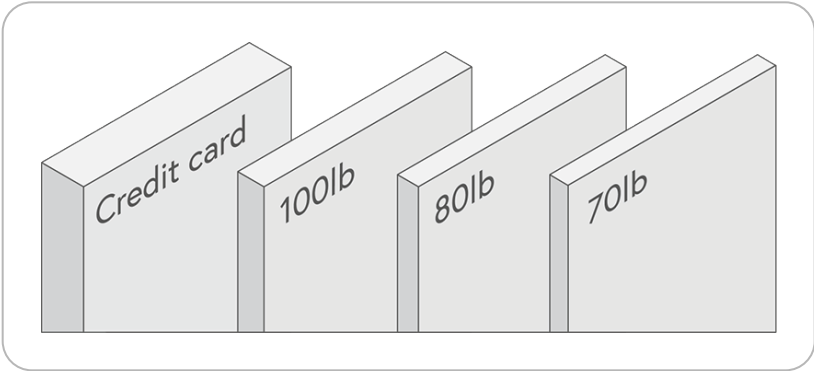
Text paper refers to the paper used to create inner pages, while cover paper refers to the paper used to make covers. You can choose your inner paper weight and cover paper weight on our Instant Quote Calculator by clicking the 'Add Cover (+ 4 Printed Pages)' option. Books, including staple or wire-o bound books, without a cover will have the same paper weight as the inner pages, known as a self-cover.

TEXT PAPER WEIGHTS

Weight	Description
70lb	Lightweight with some transparency
80lb	Moderate flexibility with minimal transparency
100lb	Sturdy and durable with minimal to no transparency

COVER PAPER WEIGHTS

Weight	Description
80lb	Lightweight yet firm with some transparency
100lb	Durable with some transparency
110lb	Thick with some bend resistance and transparency
130lb	Robust with low flexibility and no transparency



3C: PAPER TYPES



Type	Description	Uses
Satin	• Coating creates a smooth texture and subtle sheen • Enhances the brightness and clarity of printed colors • Ensures sharp, well-defined prints • Excellent for readability	For text and image-based content: • Booklets • Catalogs • Magazines
Gloss	• Ultra-smooth coated paper • High shine finish • Enhances the vividness of printed colors	For image-heavy and photographic work: • Art Books • Photo Books • Photography Books
Uncoated	• Soft-textured paper with no coating • Natural-looking and highly absorbent • Gives printed colors a muted, understated appearance	Items that prioritize texture, readability or intended to be written or drawn on: • Journals • Notebooks • Workbooks

Type	Description	Uses
Recycled Uncoated	- Eco-friendly option - High ink absorbency - Made from 100% recycled fibers - Offers a natural, organic look - High opacity with a white hue	Items that prioritize sustainability: Coloring Books Zines
Matte	- Smooth, non-reflective surface - Minimal surface glare - Perfect for readability - Gives printed colors a natural, subtle appearance.	For text and image-based content: Layflat Books
E-Photo	- Glossy and pearlescent appearance - Delivers vivid, high-definition prints - Excellent water and aging resistance - Mimics traditional photographic paper - Perfect for long-lasting, vibrant prints	For image-heavy and photographic work: Layflat Books

Note: Paper is a natural material supplied in batches and occasionally bought from different manufacturers, so its appearance and weight may vary slightly (up to 10lb, heavier or lighter).

3D: LAMINATIONS



A lamination is a clear plastic coating applied to a printed surface to protect the covers by minimizing the effects of general wear and tear, marking, ink transferral, smudging, creasing, fading, wrinkling, abrasion, and tearing. It differs from a finish, which refers to surface treatments like matte or gloss that enhance the appearance or texture of a printed item. Please note that we cannot add lamination to inner pages or covers made from uncoated and recycled paper stocks.

Type	Description	Uses
None	• Your covers will have no lamination • Selected for artistic or practical reasons (e.g. you want to achieve a rustic look, make the covers suitable for writing or drawing, or ensure they are recyclable)	• Coloring Books • Zines
Matte	• Offers a smooth, glare-free finish • Provides a soft, natural texture • Often paired with satin paper • Mutes printed colors slightly for an understated look • Provides a lower color contrast than gloss	• Booklets • Catalogs

Type	Description	Uses
Gloss	• Gives covers an ultra-smooth finish with a high shine • Enhances the vividness and contrast of printed colors • Perfect for graphic-heavy projects • If paired with gloss paper, colors become even brighter, with an intense, eye-catching sheen	• Magazines • Photo Books • Photography Books
Soft-Touch	• Creates a smooth and velvety texture • Offers a matte, shine-free finish • Mutes printed colors • Perfect for frequently handled items	• Paperback Books
Matte Anti-Scuff	• Provides a smooth, natural finish with extra durability • Mutes colors for a subtle, refined look • Offers a protective layer to guard against wear and tear	• Activity Books

Special Finishes

Type	Description	Uses
UV Matte	• Ultraviolet light cures a transparent liquid coating to the entire cover • It hardens to seal and protect covers from everyday wear • Creates a smooth finish with a satin-like appearance • Subtly mutes printed colors	• Coloring Books • Manuals
UV Gloss	• Ultraviolet light cures a transparent liquid coating to the entire cover • Gives covers a high shine • It enhances color depth and minimizes cover damage • The varnish hardens to seal and protect covers from everyday wear.	• Comic Books • Manga
*Matte Lamination & Spot UV	• Makes selected features stand out, contrasting the smooth surface with gloss highlights • Perfect for emphasizing key details like logos or brand names	• Booklets • Catalogs
*Foiling	• Reflective accents that mimic precious metals • Gives covers added elegance and shine • For precise detailing, keep foil designs minimal, use at least a 2 pt line width, and limit foil coverage to no more than 1".	• Paperback Books • Magazines

***Include a separate Spot UV or Foil layer in one PDF design file.**

04

**COMPARING
YOUR**

PRINT OPTIONS

4A: OFFSET VS DIGITAL PRINTING



Our Instant Quote Calculator automatically updates the printing method based on your specifications. It also displays the make and model of the press we'll use to produce your books.

	OFFSET	DIGITAL
Description	Images are inked onto a metal plate, transferred to a rubber blanket, and applied to paper. Offset refers to an image being transferred indirectly via the rubber blanket rather than directly from plate to paper.	Images are printed directly from a digital file.
Quality	Produces high-quality prints with sharp detailing	Produces high-quality prints
Setup	Custom metal plates for each design add to the setup time and upfront costs	Fast setup due to minimal printer calibration time and upfront costs
Cost	High setup costs, and the cost per unit decreases as quantity increases	Affordable for small orders of up to 250 copies. Costs are consistent per unit but can be less cost-effective for large print volumes
When to use	Best for large print volumes	Best for small print runs and personalized projects

4B: READING BOOK VS PHOTO-QUALITY BOOK PRINTING



	READING BOOK	PHOTO-QUALITY BOOK PRINTING
Description	For text-based publications containing few or no graphics.	For detailed, image-heavy content like photographs and graphics that require rich, vibrant colors.
Pros	• Cost-efficient due to their low material and setup costs • Lightweight when bound as a paperback • Off-white paper stocks available for easy readability • Suitable for some graphic work like grayscale illustrations and simple line drawings	• Produces vivid printed colors • Wide range of print specifications • Versatile for a variety of print projects
Cons	• Unsuitable for colorful, image-heavy work due to low color fidelity • Unsuitable for work with high ink coverage due to potential ink transfer • Limited range of print options	• Less cost-effective process due to material and setup costs • Hardcover binding can increase shipping costs as books will weigh more • Turnaround times may be slightly longer, especially for work with high ink coverage or a special finish
When to use	Ideal for text-heavy books: • Novels • Textbooks	Ideal for graphic-heavy and photo-based projects: • Art Books • Photography Books

4C: BULK PRINTING VS PRINT ON DEMAND



	BULK PRINTING	<u>PRINT ON DEMAND</u>
Description	Books are printed in large quantities and shipped to the author, who handles storage and distribution.	Books are printed upon order placement and shipped directly to customers.
Pros	• Lower cost per unit for large quantities • Best for large print runs • Complete control over inventory and shipping • A variety of customization options are available	• No upfront costs • No inventory management • No risk of unsold stock • No ISBN or barcode requirement • No minimum order quantity • Automatic order fulfillment • Eco-friendly print option
Cons	• Storage space required • Higher upfront costs • Labor-intensive packaging and shipping • Risk of unsold stock	• Higher cost per unit • Less intervention in the handling and monitoring of products • Limited products and specifications available
Use	For those with predictable demand who can manage storage and logistics.	For those who want to monetize their books, prefer a hands-off approach, no inventory management or want to test the market with new products

4D: MIXAM'S PRINT-ON-DEMAND SERVICE: PrintLink



PrintLink is where your book ideas become a reality. Every book you create with PrintLink generates a personalized, shareable link to embed into your website, Shopify store, Linktree, or anywhere online. You can also include an interactive book preview and adjust your pricing anytime to maximize earnings.

You can either set up your PrintLink from a previous order in your Mixam account or start a new one by uploading your own files or creating them with our free Design Online tool. Our Instant Quote Calculator has a range of quality print options to suit your budget and vision. Once you've filled out your publication and payment details and linked your bank account, a print expert will review and approve your files.

For more information, visit our [Self-Publishing page](#) and view this [Printlink publication](#) example. You can also watch our [PrintLink video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

4E: OUR PRINTERS AND CAPABILITIES



	Offset	Digital (Inkjet)	Digital (Liquid Ink)	Digital (Toner Ink)	Digital (Reel)
Press Types	Heidelberg, Ryobi	Canon iX	HP Indigo	Fuji, Konica, Ricoh, Kodak	Canon ColorStream, HP Pagewide
Technology	A traditional printing method that transfers ink from a metal plate to a rubber blanket before applying it to paper, ensuring precise and consistent results	Uses ultra-fine nozzles to apply water-based inks directly onto paper, producing sharp and vibrant prints with precise detail	It uses HP ElectroInk technology, where tiny pigmented particles are suspended in liquid and precisely placed with electrical fields for sharp, detailed prints	They use electrically charged toner particles to create images on paper using static electricity	Uses web-fed inkjet technology, providing high-quality, long-run printing, similar to the Canon PRO-Stream device and iX system
Color Output	Consistent, high-quality printing and can reproduce Pantone colors	High-quality printing similar to Offset and Digital (Liquid Ink)	High-quality printing similar to Offset and Digital (Inkjet)	Delivers consistent color output, and tints and solid colors may appear differently on uncoated papers	Fast and efficient digital printing, ideal for black-and-white imagery.
Best Use	For products with high page counts and high-volume orders (typically over 500 copies)	Ideal for photo-quality prints in small to medium quantities	Ideal for photo-quality prints in small to medium quantities	For general color printing, but not detailed photos	Perfect for reading books

05

**PREPARING
FOR**

PRINT

5A: FILE CHECKLIST



Ensure you have checked the following before uploading your files to a pending order:

- Do all files include bleed?
- Are all files in CMYK color mode?
- Are all files the correct size?
- Do all files have the correct orientation? (i.e. portrait vs landscape)
- Does your page quantity match the number of files you've created? (i.e., if your book contains 48 pages, do you have 48 files to fill the pages?)
- Have you embedded all fonts?
- Have you designed files according to the binding?
- Is important content positioned away from the trim edges and binding line?
- If your files include page numbers, do they appear in the same position and in the correct order?
- If applicable, have you created a spine file?
- If applicable, have you created a separate layer in your cover PDF file for spot UV or foil and set it to 'Overprint' before uploading?
- If applicable, have you created a separate PDF file for a dust jacket?

5B: NSFW CONTENT



At Mixam, we welcome a wide range of creative content, including most NSFW material. We'll only reject your order if the material is deemed hateful, unlawful, threatening, or defamatory. While some of our print facilities may have their own restrictions, we'll do our best to fulfill your order at an alternative location if necessary. Please note that you are responsible for ensuring you own the rights to the content you print, and Mixam cannot be held liable for any copyright or legal issues that may arise.

5C: FILE PREPARATION (SPOT UV AND FOIL)



Upload one PDF design file with a separate spot UV or foil layer to your pending order's Artwork tab.

Spot UV

In your design program, create a new layer and label it 'Spot UV'. For visibility, set the spot UV color to 100% magenta and set it to 'Overprint'. Overprint ensures that the spot UV finish is applied directly on top of your printed artwork.

For more information and setup instructions, visit our ['How To Apply a Spot UV' support page](#) and watch our [InDesign Spot UV video tutorial](#) and [Illustrator Spot UV video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

Foil

First, remove the artwork elements intended for foiling from your artwork file. This step ensures the foil adheres directly to the paper. Place the elements in a new layer and label it 'Foil'. Set the foil color to 100% magenta for visibility. Supply your foil layer as a vector graphic (shape) with a 2 pt line width and no more than 1" of foil coverage for optimal results.

For more information and setup instructions, visit our ['How To Apply Foiling to Prints' support page](#) and watch our [InDesign Foiling video tutorial](#) and [Illustrator Foiling video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

5D: PROOFING YOUR FILES



Mixam's advanced software will automatically check your files upon upload, but it's also important to manually check them. Here's how to proof your files:

- Large screen viewing: Review your files on the largest screen available so you can see your work clearly.
- Scale your files: Make sure your on-screen dimensions match those in print by scaling them to 100%.
- Calibrate your monitor: Adjust your screen settings for color clarity and to minimize screen-to-print color discrepancies.
- Avoid excessive brightness: High brightness can make colors appear more vibrant than they will in print.

Adobe Acrobat Reader

This free tool allows you to view and share PDF files. It's useful for viewing your downloadable proof because it accurately represents how files will look when printed, preserving fonts, colors, and layout as intended. It's also a reliable way to catch potential issues and make last-minute changes. [Download it here.](#)

Switching on Overprint Preview by default will also help to prevent color loss and mixed transparencies (overlapping colors or images of varying opacities that cause blending issues) if you include a spot color (used to specify and highlight individual page elements). Here's how to turn on Overprint Preview:

On a PC: Go to Edit > Preferences > Select Page Display > Under Page Content and Information, the Use Overprint Preview dropdown menu, confirm or change to be set to Always.

On a Mac: Go to Acrobat > Preferences > Page Display > Under Page Content and Information, the Use Overprint Preview dropdown menu, confirm or change it to Always.

Downloadable Proof

This proof is the most accurate representation of how your files will appear in print. It will highlight issues that may not be immediately apparent and is available for download once every thumbnail in your Artwork tab has a file uploaded.

You can download this proof by either:

- Clicking the 'Proof' button > Wait for the checkmark to appear > Click again to open the Proof > Click the Download button.
- Right-click the Proof button and use the 'Save As' option to save your PDF file.

You can then view the proof in **Adobe Acrobat Reader**.

Professional Proof

This free proof type is a digital PDF that undergoes a detailed analysis called preflight to prepare files for print. It's available for orders over \$5,700; additional proofs are available on request at an extra cost.

We'll email you to confirm when your professional proof is ready for review. You can edit it, and it will enter production once approved. If you reject it, contact us to explain, and we'll help you prepare your proof for production and provide a new estimated shipping date.

Thumbnails

These are not strictly proofs but are small, low-resolution depictions of your files. They're ideal for checking your page sequence, layout and orientation. One thumbnail is equivalent to one page in your book. They will display bleed, trim and gutter guidelines, which you can turn on and off by clicking the 'Show guidelines and legend' box.



Virtual Preview

Upon upload, our system will generate a 3D virtual representation of your book in a flipbook format. It depicts your work in lifelike quality for viewing purposes only. This preview helps ensure that your page files are present and in the correct sequence. You can also share your virtual preview by clicking the Share button at the top of your screen.



5E: AVOIDING COMMON FILE ISSUES

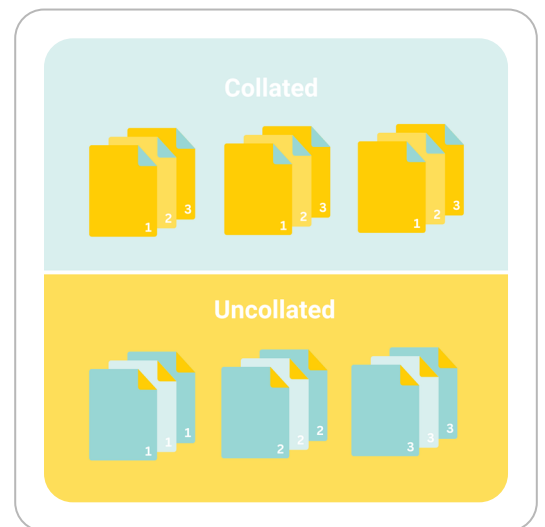


Collation

Collation means printed pages are arranged sequentially and ready for binding. Collation speeds up the printing process and streamlines assembly. Without collation, pages would be printed in bulk, with all copies of page 1 grouped together, followed by all copies of page 2, and so on.

Here's how to make sure you collate your files correctly:

- Check your settings: Confirm that collation is enabled in your design software before you start designing.
- Label files clearly: Use simple, sequential names like 'page1.pdf' to keep your files organized.
- Move pages manually: Once you've uploaded your files to the Artwork tab, you can rearrange them using the drag-and-drop function or by entering the correct page number using the three-dotted button.
- Use Design Online: Mixam's free tool will automatically collate your book.



Spine Design

A spine is the edge of a book where the outer covers and interior pages are bound, as seen on paperback and hardcover books. When placed upright on shelves, spines face outwards and typically feature artwork, the publication title, and the author's name.

Here are some spine design tips:

- Centralize your spine: When creating a spread, use guidelines to center it and ensure the text is legible and fits within the spine width.
- Position text correctly: You could create a vertical spine design so it's readable from top to bottom. It will ensure your design won't appear upside down if placed on a shelf or be illegible if laid on its side.
- Design within your dimensions: Designing your spine according to your specifications minimizes content loss. We'll only print a spine if you upload a file. Otherwise, it will remain blank.

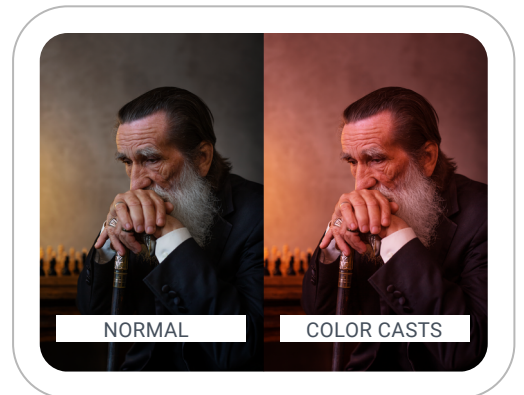
For more information and setup instructions, watch our [InDesign cover spread and spine video tutorial](#) on YouTube.

Color Casts

A color cast occurs when one color dominates, giving an image an unintended hue. This issue occurs in photographic prints, primarily black-and-white images printed in CMYK color mode. Although rare, color casts can sometimes happen due to incorrect file setup or image editing methods.

Here's how to avoid color casts and a high level of color reproduction:

- Convert images to CMYK: Ensure all images are in CMYK color mode before upload, as RGB files may produce unexpected results when printed.
- Check grayscale images: If you print black-and-white photos, ensure they're grayscale to prevent unintended color tints.
- Avoid over-saturation: Avoid oversaturating colors during editing, as this can exaggerate color dominance.

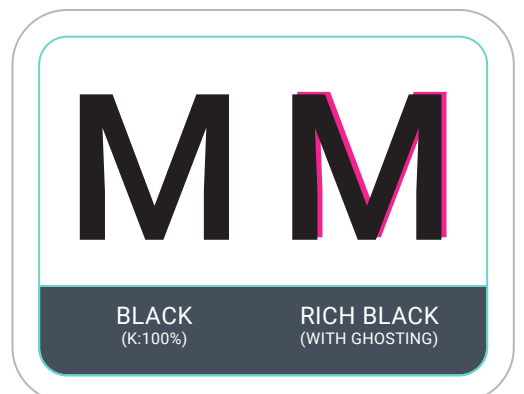


Ghosting

Ghosting occurs when faint, blurry remnants of printed colors appear around the edges of text or fine details. This issue typically happens when using rich black for small text or line art. Because rich black requires all four ink plates to align perfectly, slight misalignment can cause ghosting.

Here's how to avoid ghosting:

- Use standard black for text: Set small text, line art, or detailed graphics to 100% black (K) or grayscale instead of rich black (CMYK).
- Avoid rich black for fine details: Reserve rich black for large areas like backgrounds or bold design elements.



Upsampling

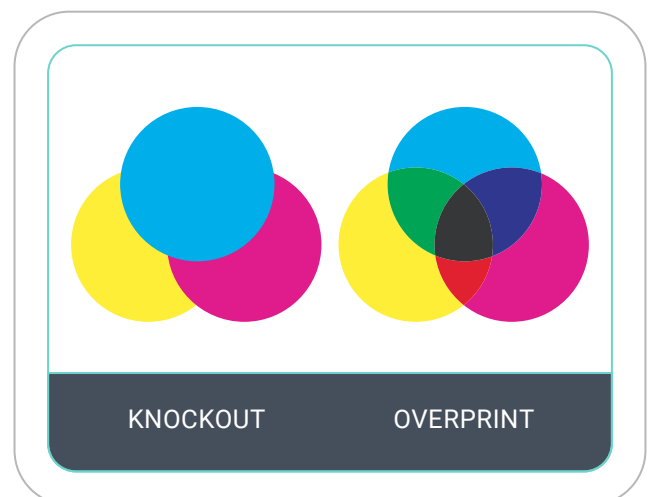
Upsampling means artificially increasing an image's resolution. While it might seem like a quick fix for images 100 dpi or under, upsampling doesn't add detail or quality. Instead, it enlarges pixel size, giving printed images a pixelated appearance. The best approach is to always start with a high-resolution image (ideally 300 dpi) to maintain quality and ensure your prints look sharp and professional.

Overprinting

Overprinting refers to printing one color directly over another, causing them to mix. While some use overprinting intentionally to achieve layered or overlapping effects, it can lead to unexpected results if left unchecked. For example, black text or design elements set to overprint on a light background can appear as intended, but when placed on a darker or colored background, the underlying color may show through.

Here's how to avoid overprinting issues:

- Enable 'Overprint Preview': Set it to 'Always' in your design program to see how colors will interact before printing.
- Double-check file settings: Review all text and design elements to ensure overprinting is only applied where needed.
- Avoid overprinting for small text and fine details: Use '**Knockout**' for high-grade color reproduction. Knockout means an underlying color is removed or 'punched out' to prevent it from mixing with the overlaid color so the final colors remain distinct (e.g., yellow text over a blue background without appearing green in print).
- Set black text to overprint: Overprinting is helpful for black text, but ensure it's applied intentionally.



Fonts

Choosing the right fonts is key to ensuring text appears sharp and clear in print.

Here are some tips to help avoid font-related issues:

- Choose print-compatible fonts: Avoid web fonts (optimized for digital screens). These fonts may not print correctly and can cause issues that are not visible during proofing.
- Embed fonts: Always embed any fonts you use to ensure they print as intended.
- Convert fonts to outlines: If you use a custom or web font, convert them to outlines or shapes so the text remains consistent. Save a copy of your original file before converting your fonts to outlines, as the font will no longer be editable once converted.
- Avoid rasterizing text: Rasterizing fonts (turning them into pixelated images) can cause them to lose sharpness and clarity in print. Keep text in vector format for the best results.

Kerning

Kerning refers to the spacing between individual characters in a word. Proper kerning ensures evenly-spaced letters. If the spacing is too tight or loose, it can make your text look uneven or illegible in print.

Here's how to avoid kerning issues:

- Check for uneven spacing: Look closely at the spacing between characters, especially in larger text or headers and edit accordingly.
- Use auto-kerning: Most design programs offer automatic kerning tools to adjust characters' spacing.
- Manually adjust kerning: Consider changing the kerning yourself, especially when working with custom fonts.
- Avoid tight spacing: Be especially careful with characters like 'A', 'V', or 'T' as they may need more room to look properly spaced out in print.



06

**ORDERING
WITH**

MIXAM

6A: KEY STEPS FOR PLACING AN ORDER



Bulk Ordering

1. Open a [Mixam account](#) to securely access and manage all your orders and more in one place.
2. Once logged in, go to the Instant Quote Calculator to select your specifications. The calculator is on the home page or the product pages in the menu at the top of our website. When you adjust your specifications, the calculator automatically updates to show you only the best quotes and estimated shipping dates. You can also choose whether to upload your own files or design them using our free tool.
3. Add the item to your shopping cart when satisfied with your quote and estimated shipping date. An order summary will then appear so you can review the details. You can repeat this process if you want to create a multi-part order. Visit our ['Multiple Artworks' support page](#) for more information.
4. Clicking 'Continue' in your order summary will open a pending order. We recommend filling in the Details and Payment tabs first to indicate where you want us to deliver your prints and your preferred payment method. Payment will not be processed until your order is confirmed and in production.
5. Finally, you can upload your files. Our system will alert you to file issues, and you can contact our team of print experts for support and advice. Once you've resolved outstanding file issues and thoroughly proofed your files, confirm your order at the top of your order page. A print expert will conduct a final quality check before sending your files to production.

Print on Demand

1. Open a [Mixam account](#) to securely access and manage all your orders and more in one place.
2. Once logged in, click 'Create Your Book' on the PrintLink banner on our home page or the Self-Publish category on the menu at the top of your screen and select 'Print on Demand'.
3. Scroll down to the Instant Quote Calculator and enter your book specifications. A free quote for a single copy will appear automatically.
4. Click 'Create Publication' when satisfied with your specifications and quote. A pending PrintLink order will open.
5. Upload your files to the Artwork tab. Our system will alert you to file issues, and you can contact our team of print experts for support and advice.
6. Once you've resolved outstanding file issues and thoroughly proofed your files, click the PrintLink tab and fill out your publication details. You can also decide whether to show a virtual flipbook preview of your book or only show a limited number of pages.

7. Next, ensure you set up a Stripe Connect account in the Admin section of your account to sell and earn commissions (PrintLink > Bank Details). Then, you can choose your pricing strategy: Sell at Production Cost, Fixed Markup, Percentage Markup or Fixed Retail. Click 'Save Publication' at the bottom of your PrintLink tab.

8. We recommend enabling your publication link after a print expert has conducted a final quality check and approved your PrintLink. Then, you can share or embed it.

Order Status Terminology

Pending: An unpaid, unconfirmed order.

Confirmed: A paid order that has been proofed and is ready to be printed.

Paused: A paid and confirmed order, but our team has temporarily stopped it from entering production due to potential print issues. A print expert will contact you with recommended changes to ensure high-quality printing. You can make the recommended changes and reconfirm or inform us you'll proceed without making amendments and reconfirm. Please note your estimated shipping date may be affected.

In Production: A paid and confirmed order that is in the process of being printed. Once an order's status updates to 'In Production', you cannot make additional changes to your order.

6B: REORDERING PRINTS IN BULK



Mixam account holders can reorder prints simply by logging in, locating the relevant order in the Order History tab, and clicking the Reorder button. You can amend the quantity and other details before confirming. If you placed an order but don't have an account, contact our print experts and provide your order number so we can arrange a reorder.

6C: CUSTOM QUOTE REQUEST: BULK PRINTING



[Email Mixam](#) and add 'Custom Quote Request' or similar to the email subject line field.

Specify the following print specifications:

- Quantity
- Color or Grayscale printing
- Size
- Page quantity
- Inner paper type and weight
- Binding
- Cover paper type and weight
- Lamination

You can also attach sample print files and example artwork for finishes like spot UV or foil.

A print expert will email you a price breakdown. You can then respond and state whether you'd like to proceed. We'll open and share a pending order with you and provide an estimated shipping date. Alternatively, you can request a new quote if you want to change your specifications. Every quote is valid for two weeks.

6D: PRODUCTION OVERVIEW; HOW MIXAM PRINTS BOOKS



1. **Pre-flight:** Our file preparation process ensures your PDFs comply with our printers by applying key fixes like CMYK conversion, transparency flattening, and font embedding. After checking for low-resolution images and small text risks, we impose the final files with trim marks and correct geometry boxes, creating a print-ready proof.
2. **Printing:** We print multiple copies of the inner pages and covers on large paper sheets to minimize waste and energy consumption.
3. **Cover Lamination:** We'll apply a thin plastic coating to your cover pages with pressurized heated rollers.
4. **Trimming:** An industry-grade guillotine cuts stacked sheets to the finished size.
5. **Binding:** Your inner pages are bound and attached to the outer cover. If your binding is adhesive or sewn-bound, your prints will need time to bind and dry.
6. **Final Quality Check:** We'll review your prints before packaging them securely and getting them ready for shipping.

For a demonstration of our printing process, watch this [short book printing video](#) on YouTube.

07

**PROMOTING
YOUR BOOK**

WITH MIXAM

Mixam is active on social media and attracts a diverse, creative global audience. Sharing your print projects is a powerful way to showcase your creativity, passion, and hard work. It also allows you to connect with and inspire fellow creators. Plus, a repost by Mixam could lead to higher print sales and greater online visibility!

When sharing your photos and videos online, **tag us @mixamprint** in all content, captions, and stories, and use the **hashtag #mixam**. Capture your prints in well-lit conditions, high resolution, and without filters. Your content should feel natural and authentic, aligning with your social media style. If adding music, ensure it is royalty-free, preferably instrumental.

Please note that we'll always credit a creator when reposting content and ensure we have permission to share it. However, we will not consider content that includes profanity, nudity, negative sentiment, illegal content, or anything deemed inappropriate.

	<u>Product Photos</u>	<u>Unboxing Video</u>	<u>How-To Video</u>	<u>Comparison Video</u>
Description	Capture your cover, inner pages, and binding in a clean, well-lit setting, showcasing your print's details, colors, and lamination.	Unbox your prints on camera and share your first impressions, highlighting any stand out features.	Create a step-by-step video showing how you made your prints, highlighting key features and offering helpful tips.	Create a balanced, side-by-side comparison video of our prints versus another print company, highlighting key differences.
Prompts	• What inspired you to create this project? • What is your print's theme or message? • Is this a passion project or a professional one? • If your prints are available for purchase, where can your followers buy them?	• Tell your viewers what you're unboxing. Why are you excited about it? • Once open, describe what you see. How do the prints look and feel? • Explain the print specifications you chose. Why did you select them, and do they meet your expectations?	• Film a time-lapse of you creating your design • Take viewers behind the scenes and walk them through your creative process • Film yourself preparing your files on Mixam's website, showing key steps.	• Introduce the two print products you're comparing. What are the key differences you'll focus on? • Show both prints side by side. What are the key differences? • Sum up your findings. What stands out and why?

08

ADDITIONAL

NOTES

8A: MIXAM'S API



Mixam Public API (Application Programming Interface) seamlessly integrates our printing service into your applications. Whether you're building an e-commerce platform, a design application, or a service requiring professional printing, our API offers a fully integrated print solution.

Key functionalities include:

- **Retrievable Products:** Get a complete list of all available Mixam print products.
- **Access a Range of Print Options:** Customize your prints with our range of paper types, weights, binding types, and laminations.
- **Fast Order Placement:** Submit print orders directly through the API.
- **Simple Order Management:** Retrieve detailed information about your orders in real time, including progress updates.

You must have a Mixam account to access the API. [Contact us](#) so we can guide you through the registration and approval process.

8B: ISBNs



An ISBN (International Standard Book Number) is a unique numeric identifier. You don't have to include an ISBN when you print with Mixam, but you must add them to your publications if you intend to sell them with online retailers or bookstores.

You'll own every ISBN you purchase, and they cannot be republished. If you print your book in multiple formats, like hardcover and paperback, they'll each need their own ISBN. You'll also need to purchase an ISBN if your publication is an updated version of a previous edition.

You can purchase [ISBNs from Bowker](#) and copyright your work with the [U.S. Copyright Office](#).

For more information, visit our ['What is an ISBN?' support page](#).

8C: VARIANT AND SKETCH COVERS



Variant covers are alternate designs for the same comic book or graphic novel. While the interior pages remain unchanged, the covers are often printed in limited quantities to attract collectors and encourage multiple purchases. They are particularly popular for special collectable editions, retailer exclusives, and crowdfunding campaigns where they serve as exclusive rewards. It's important to note that variant covers are only available for larger offset print runs and are unavailable for smaller digital print runs.

Sketch covers are special edition comic book covers designed for readers to create original artwork. These covers are typically left blank or feature minimal design elements and are printed on uncoated paper to provide the perfect surface for drawing. You can add sketch covers to the front or back of a comic while still including the original cover artwork inside, either as one of the first few pages or as a pin-up later in the book. Note that sketch covers are printed on uncoated paper for the entire cover and cannot include a lamination.

You can order variant covers and [comics with sketch covers](#) on our website. If you want to include a sketch cover in your pending order, select uncoated paper for the cover on the Instant Quote Calculator

8D: SUSTAINABLE PRINTING



At Mixam, you can make environmentally friendly choices without compromising on quality. Here are a few eco-friendly benefits of printing with us:

Recycled Papers

Printing on recycled paper stocks helps conserve natural resources and reduce energy consumption. Most papers are made from 100% post-consumer waste. As these papers are not dyed or bleached, slight color variations may occur between batches, but the lack of harmful chemicals makes them an eco-friendly option.

Paper Waste

Our state-of-the-art printers produce copies of your design on large sheets of paper, ensuring we only use the necessary amount to fulfill each order. After printing, we trim stacked printed sheets to minimize energy consumption and waste. Any paper scraps are recycled, further reducing energy and water consumption.

Eco-Friendly Packaging

Most of Mixam's print facilities use recyclable, biodegradable, and reusable packaging to help minimize landfill waste. Cardboard packaging, in particular, is a sustainable option that reduces environmental strain. Additionally, using fewer raw packaging materials lowers shipping costs.

09

**SUPPORT
AND**

RESOURCES



Absorbency

The ability of a material, such as paper, to absorb liquids. In printing, ink absorbency refers to how much ink penetrates the paper's surface, affecting drying time, color vibrancy, and print sharpness.

Book Block

The interior pages of a book consisting of folded, printed sheets called signatures. These pages are gathered, stacked, and securely bound before being attached to the cover.

Binding

A process involving the assembly and attachment of printed sheets.

Bleed

The area of an image or background color that extends beyond the final trim size to ensure a clean, edge-to-edge print, preventing unwanted white borders from appearing due to slight variations in the trimming process.

Brightness

The measure of how much light paper reflects and affects the vibrancy and contrast of printed colors.

Bulk Printing

A printing method that produces large quantities of a single book design.

Color Cast

A print error when one color dominates an image, leading to an unintended overall hue.

Color Variance

A process that refers to slight color differences that can occur due to factors like paper type, ink absorption, and the printing equipment used.

CMYK

Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black is the color model used for printing. Colors are created by mixing these four inks on paper, relying on the absorption and reflection of light by the ink to produce visible colors.

Ink Density

A measurement of the darkness or intensity of ink on paper, determined by the amount of ink absorbed and reflected by the surface. Higher density means the ink appears darker, absorbing more light and reflecting less, while lower density results in lighter, less intense colors.

DPI

Dots Per Inch measures the resolution of an image, indicating how many individual dots of color fit within one inch—a higher DPI results in sharper, more detailed images.

Digital Printing

A process where images are printed directly from a digital file. This printing technique transfers images directly to paper without traditional print plates, allowing for fast and efficient production.

Dust Jacket

A printed detachable paper cover that wraps around a hardcover book and serves both a protective and aesthetic purpose. They protect the cover and provide additional information, such as the book's title, author, and promotional material.

Foiling

A printing technique that applies metallic foil to a surface, typically using heat and pressure, adding a shiny, decorative and high-end touch to book covers.

Grayscale

A printing technique also known as black-and-white printing that uses only Black (K) ink, relying on a single printing plate to produce varying shades of gray.

Ghosting

A print issue where faint, blurry ink remnants appear around text or fine details. It occurs when excess ink or improper drying causes unwanted impressions, affecting a print's sharpness and clarity.

Hardcover

A bookbinding method that features pages bound to a spine with adhesive and encased in durable, rigid cardboard covers. These covers are typically wrapped in printed paper, giving books strength, longevity, and aesthetic appeal.

Hinge Area

A feature in hardcover bookbinding that refers to the flexible sections on either side of the spine that connect the pages to the cover. Essential for durability and functionality, they ensure the covers move independently of the pages without causing damage.

Inkjet Printing

A digital printing method where microscopic nozzles spray tiny ink droplets onto paper. This technique allows for high-quality color printing and produces detailed images and graphics.

ISBN

A unique identifier for books required for selling through online retailers or bookstores. Every book format and updated edition needs its own ISBN.

Lamination

The application of a transparent plastic coating to a printed surface to enhance durability and minimize damage. It differs from a finish, which typically refers to surface treatments like matte or gloss that improve the appearance or texture of a printed page.

Layflat Binding

A bookbinding method where pages lie flat when opened. This results in seamless double-page spreads. It eliminates visible binding and ensures that pages stay open without a noticeable crease.

Kerning

A typographic issue that refers to the adjustment of space between individual characters in a word to ensure even spacing. Proper kerning improves text legibility and appearance, while improper kerning can make text crowded or too spaced out, making it harder to read.

Manufacturing Variance

A part of the print process referring to slight differences in alignment, color, or positioning caused by factors like machine calibration, paper type, or environmental conditions.

Opacity

A characteristic of paper, indicating how much light can pass through it. It determines whether content from one page is visible on the other. The higher the opacity, the lower the visibility and vice versa.

Offset Printing

A printing process where images are not applied directly from plate to paper. Instead, they're inked onto a metal plate, transferred to a rubber blanket, and then applied to paper.

Overprint

A technique that refers to printing one color directly over another. It is often used intentionally to create layered effects and can cause colors to mix if unchecked, such as underlying colors showing through.

Paperback Book

This book type has pages bound to the spine using adhesive and attached to a flexible, slightly thicker paper cover. Also known as a softcover, perfect binding creates a rectangular spine, making these books affordable, lightweight, and portable.

Paper Weight

A measurement of a paper's density and thickness. A high paper weight means thicker, sturdier, and less flexible paper, while a lower weight indicates thinner, more flexible paper.

PDF

The Portable Document Format ensures that files appear the same across all devices and platforms. It preserves fonts, images, and layout.

Perfect Binding

A bookbinding method where glued pages are attached to a spine before they're joined to a flexible outer cover.

Preflight

A detailed analysis and preparation of files before printing. This process checks for potential issues such as missing fonts, incorrect color settings, image resolution, or formatting problems to ensure files are print-ready and meet a printing press specification, preventing costly errors and delays.

Print on Demand (POD)

A printing method where books are printed upon order placement and sent directly to customers. This efficient and flexible approach reduces inventory costs and waste, allowing self-publishers and creators to monetize their work.

Proof

A physical sample or digital preview of a print file created to show how the final version will appear. It allows for review and adjustments before production, helping to catch any color, layout, and text issues before printing.

PUR Binding

A bookbinding method using polyurethane reactive (PUR) adhesive. It's ideal for books with thicker paper or higher page counts. The strong and durable adhesive ensures flexibility, allowing a book to open fully without spine damage.

Resolution

The number of dots a printer can produce per inch (dpi) determines the level of detail an image holds. The higher the dpi, the sharper and more detailed the printed image.

RGB

Red, Green and Blue is the color model used by digital screens, where varying intensities of these three colors combine to create all on-screen colors.

Rich Black

A tone that mixes Black ink (K) with Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow inks. It enhances the depth and saturation of dark areas in print, especially for large black areas, text, or high-contrast details.

Saddle-Stitch Binding

A binding method (also known as staple binding) where pages are folded and secured with two staples at the centerfold. It's ideal for multi-page items with a low page count and designs that require uninterrupted graphics.

Safe Zone

The area within a design file that keeps important content within the printable boundaries, minimizing the likelihood of being cut off during trimming.

Saturation

A characteristic that refers to a color's intensity. Higher saturation means the color is more vibrant. In ink saturation, it measures how much ink is on a page. More ink creates richer, deeper colors, while less ink produces lighter, less intense hues.

Self-Cover

A bookbinding type where the cover is made from the same paper stock as the inner pages, meaning there is no separate cover material.

Sewn Binding

A hardcover binding method where a thread stitches pages together. In Smyth-sewn binding, the thread passes through the signature folds at the spine, strengthening the book block. This process ensures flexibility and durability without spine damage when reinforced with adhesive.

Signatures

A part of the bookbinding process in which folded, printed sheets form the inner pages of a book. Each signature contains multiple pages, arranged in sequence and stacked to create the book's interior before being bound.

Spine

A book's bound edge where the pages are bound together.

Spiral Binding

A bookbinding method (also known as coil binding) that uses a plastic coil threaded through holes along the binding edge. It allows the pages to rotate 360 degrees and lay flat when opened.

Spot Color

A pre-mixed ink applied separately to prints. It specifies and highlights individual page elements, such as logos or text, with vibrant color.

Spot UV

A printing technique that applies a glossy, transparent coating to specific areas of a print, creating contrast against the matte or uncoated surface. This effect enhances visual appeal by making selected elements, such as logos or text, stand out with a reflective shine.

Standard Black

An ink setting for standard text and simple layouts, ensuring crisp and legible prints. It's ideal for titles, headers, and larger vector strokes (outline or path of a shape or line), providing a sharp contrast without excess ink coverage.

Trim Line

A printing guideline indicating the final edge where a printed page is cut to its intended size.

Tolerance Movement

The acceptable range of variation in measurements or alignment during the printing and binding process.

Quiet Area

A printing guideline that keeps important text and design elements away from a page's edge to prevent them from being cut off during trimming.

Upsampling

The process of artificially increasing an image's resolution by adding pixels. Starting with a high-resolution image (300 dpi) is best for sharp, high-quality prints.

Wire-O Binding

A binding method where pages are punched with holes and secured with C-shaped wire loops. It allows pages to lie flat and rotate 360 degrees.

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