

## What Type of Paper Should I Use for My Book?

It's a tough question to answer, and one I hear all the time: Which paper stock should I choose for my book? And although it's a tough question, it is an important one because the paper you choose will tell your potential buyer what kind of book this is. Go too cheap, you might lose some buyers to a different title. Go too expensive, you just wasted your money.

Let's start by clearing up a point of confusion among many looking to print their first book: the difference between bond and offset paper weights. When you purchase paper for your copy machine or home printer, you'll note paper is listed as something like 20# bond. What that means is that when the paper is manufactured at 17 x 22", 500 sheets of that paper weighs 20 pounds. However, offset paper for printing plants is manufactured in 25 x 38" sheets, which is 2.5 times larger than bond paper. So 500 sheets of that same paper stock now weigh 50 pounds. Thus, 20# bond is the same as 50# offset.

That 50# offset paper proves to be fine for many books. If your book has no or few images and no color inside, there is little reason to print on a much thicker paper. Save your money. You may want to check the pricing for 60# offset, but I usually don't recommend printing on paper much thicker than that for most novels, etc.

No matter what, be sure to ask your printer to send you paper samples. There is no substitute for feeling the paper in your hand to make sure your book has the feel you want it to have.

Children's books or coffee table books that are printed in full color need a different paper stock than black & white books. You'll want to think about whether to bump up to a glossy stock to make your pictures really shine on the paper. If you don't like the glare of a glossy sheet, ask your printer if they have any matte coated stocks that would bring out the color of your images without the extra sheen.

Also, if your book is full color, a thicker paper may be necessary to make your book have a nicer feel to it and justify your sale price. If printing in the U.S., I usually recommend no lighter than a 70# or 80# gloss. If printing overseas, don't go lighter than 120 gsm.

Again -- always get samples before making your decision!

When it comes to cover stock, for a paperback book a 10 pt. C1S cover is standard. However, it is usually very inexpensive to upgrade to a 12 pt. C1S cover. People do judge a book by its cover, so this might be a cost-effective upgrade.

## About the Author

Josh Prizer has helped hundreds of people print their books. He is a [book printing](#) authority. To pick his brain on [childrens book publishing](#), request his Free 7-Part Mini-Course.

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