

# User guide: paper quality

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## *What is GSM?*

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When choosing your printed product, it's important to know about paper quality, as it will play a big part in the look and feel of the final result. The right paper can help create that crucial first impression before your customer even starts to read.

Paper quality is measured in grams per square metre (GSM). As a rule of thumb the higher the GSM, the heavier and thicker the paper.

But it would be wrong to dismiss lower GSM values as low grade or inferior paper. Rather you should think that paper with a lighter weight is best suited for specific applications, while thicker, heavier paper is better for others.

Knowing the ideal GSM for your paper product can help you make a good decision regarding design and the way it will be used.

**Here's an example:** Business cards are small but contain important information. They're often saved or even passed around between contacts, business partners, and potential customers. As such, they need to be thicker, stiffer, and more durable than your average piece of paper.

On the other hand, flyers announcing a sale or an event have a temporary use. They communicate information to whoever receives them, and then they're usually thrown away. As such, these are often printed on paper with a lighter GSM.

### **Paper weight (GSM) guide:**

- **18-21 GSM:** feels like average toilet paper (we are using it, but just not for printing)
- **22-34 GSM:** has a feel of paper towels, tissues (can be found in our kitchen, but not in our printing machines)
- **35-54 GSM:** super lightweight paper, also known as scritta paper, which can be slightly opaque, is commonly used in Bibles and in books which have many pages, such as a dictionaries.
- **55-69 GSM:** standard newspaper quality
- **70-79 GSM:** this weight of paper is commonly used in sketchpads or notebooks. It's thick enough to draw on with pencil, but heavy ink or marker may bleed through.
- **80-99 GSM:** standard office and household printer paper – ideal for everyday printing, photocopying or faxing. Also used in mid-market magazine inner pages, standard reports, training documents, forms, letters, handouts, dissertations, and thesis.

**Our product range:** digital printing (A4, A4, A5); inner pages of wiro, soft and hardbound books, Academic Diaries and Monographs

- **100-119 GSM:** this paper is slightly heavier stock than standard and carries a more professional look and feel for your business stationery. It is often used for letters, compliment slips, forms and surveys etc.

**Our products:** letterheads, complement slips, and continuation letters

- **120-139 GSM:** the weight of your average promotional poster. Think movie posters hanging on a teenager's bedroom walls or product posters hanging in store windows.
- **140-159 GSM:** heavier, more durable paper usually used for good quality posters, reports, leaflets, flyers and the inner pages of a brochure.
- **160-169 GSM:** it is specific to digital printing which means colour reproduction is bright and eye catching with a slight sheen to it. It is a thicker paper option offering extra durability used for mid-range brochures and quality posters and flyers.

**Our product range:** digital printing (A4, A4, A5); saddle stitched brochures & booklets; Posters & Flyers (bond)

- **170-199 GSM:** we reached the midway point between paper and card. A lot of lithographic print utilises this finish as it produces a delicate and lighter image when printed on. It is great when used for more high-end calendars, placemats, or quality double sided flyers.

**Our products:** saddle stitched brochures & booklets; calendars; Flyers (silk)

- **200-249 GSM:** the starting point of heavier card (board), it is stiffer but still bendable and can add a higher quality finish to a cover for documents and paperbacks.
- **250-299 GSM:** this thicker type is commonly used for some higher-quality magazine covers. It is perfect for standard business cards, loyalty cards, greetings cards, invitations, and bookmarks. This is also the weight of most paper used for watercolors or painting.

**Our product range:** table tent cards

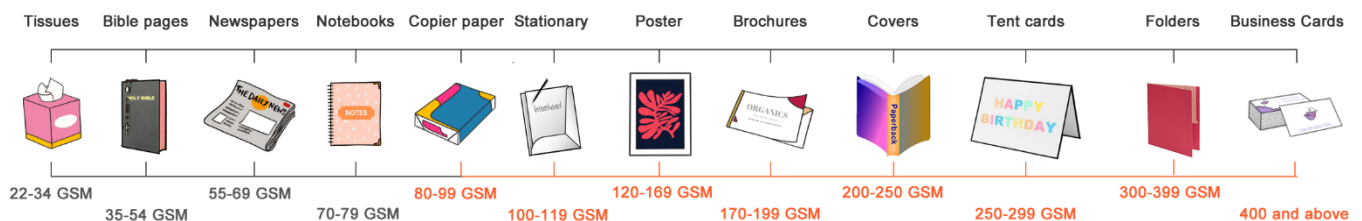
- **300 – 399 GSM:** now we are in the board category and this is usually the weight for mid-range business cards. This board can be is also used as a cover for presentation folder for a durable and sturdy folder for carrying documents, but also for heavy brochures covers.

**Our product range:** cover of Academic Diary & Monographs; information cards (for instance about about WiFi log-ins)

- **400 GSM and above:** this thickness provides a luxury finish and definitely gives a feeling of quality. Business cards would be considered thick and very good quality from 400gsm.

**Our product range:** Business Cards (single & double sided)

### Paper Weight Guide (GSM)



**Our Product Range**