

Understanding Paper Basis Weight

What is Basis Weight?

Paper manufacturers make paper to a weight standard called basis weight. But what exactly does that mean?



Basis Weight Indicators

Common Basis Weights



20 lb. papers:

- Most common and economical
- Great for everyday home and office printing

IDEAL FOR:

- › Emails
- › Internal documents
- › Drafts
- › Spreadsheets



24 lb., 28 lb. and 32 lb. papers:

- Sturdier to withstand handling and repeated use
- Thicker to minimize show-through when printing double-sided
- Great way to add a professional feel to your documents

IDEAL FOR:

- › Presentations
- › Proposals
- › Newsletters
- › Premium color copies



60 lb. to 110 lb. cover or card stock:

- Heavier and stiffer than text weights
- Great for things that will be handled or hung

IDEAL FOR:

- › Posters
- › Report covers
- › Mailers
- › Brochures

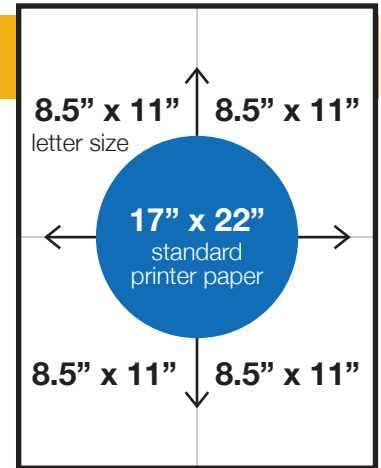
Understanding Basis Weight cont.

Calculating Basis Weight

The industry defines basis weight as the weight, in pounds, of a ream (500 sheets) of a paper cut to a given standard size (basic sheet size).

Each major paper grade, like cover, bond or offset has its own basic sheet size, which determines its basis weight.

For example, the basic sheet size for copy (bond) paper is 17" x 22" for 500 sheets; therefore 500 sheets of 20 lb. copy paper in 17" x 22" will weigh 20 lbs.



Equivalent Basis Weight

The chart on the right shows the equivalent basis weights for various grades, with the common weights for each shown in bold.



US Basis Weights (lbs.)				Metric
BOND (17" x 22")	TEXT (25" x 38")	COVER (20" x 26")	INDEX (25.5" x 30.5")	GSM
20	50	28	42	75
24	60	33	50	90
28	70	40	58	105
32	80	44	67	120
43	110	60	90	163
53	134	74	110	199
58	146	80	120	216
72	183	100	150	270
86	219	120	179	325

Additional Paper Definitions

Bond	Durable, strong writing paper originally used for bonds, now used for letterhead and other stationary.
Text	A general term applied to various grades of high-quality printing papers in a variety of surfaces and colors, ideal for high-end marketing collateral, invitations, announcements and brochures.
Cover	Also referred to as card stock; a heavyweight paper designed for booklets, magazine covers or brochures.
Index	A heavyweight card stock typically used for folders and cards.
GSM	The metric unit of measurement for paper weight (grams per square meter).