

Which Paper Grade Should I Choose? A Quick Guide for Paper Calculator v4.1

If you're unsure which paper grade to select in the Paper Calculator, use this guide to learn more about each grade and its common product applications. Choosing the right grade can be technical, so if you're still uncertain, we recommend contacting your paper supplier for details about your specific paper, or reaching out to us at info@environmentalpaper.org with any questions.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Uncoated Freesheet	Uncoated printing and writing papers, typically bleached and made from kraft chemical pulp. This is the most common paper grade for everyday office and writing uses.	Copy paper	Copy paper, printer paper, letterhead, stationery, higher-end notebook and lined writing paper, envelopes, fine book papers, text and cover grades (often designer papers), report covers, sticky notes, brochures, invitations, business cards, menus, and thin Bible paper.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Coated Freesheet	Coated printing and writing papers made from kraft chemical pulp, with a smooth coating, typically kaolin clay, to enhance brightness and print quality. These papers are often chosen for high-quality images and premium print materials.	High-end catalog or brochure	High-end catalogs, magazines, luxury advertising, and marketing brochures
Uncoated Groundwood	Uncoated papers made from groundwood mechanical pulp. This grade is typically used for lower-cost printing where high brightness is not required.	Newsprint	Newspapers, directory papers such as phone books, inexpensive paperback books, and some lined writing papers.
Coated Groundwood	Coated papers made primarily from groundwood mechanical pulp with a smooth coating, typically kaolin clay, to improve print quality.	Mass-market catalogs, magazines	Mass-market catalogs and magazines, and mass-market advertising printed on coated paper.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Supercalendered	Supercalendered papers are smoothed through a high-pressure roller process after paper-making to produce a highly polished surface. This grade is often used for advertising inserts and other mass-distributed publications.	Newspaper inserts	Newspaper inserts, grocery and drug store advertising papers, some bulk mailbox advertisements, and some mass-market catalogs and magazines
Paperboard: Solid Bleached Sulfate (SBS)	Most bleached paperboard is coated with a thin layer of kaolin clay to improve the printing surface and may also be coated with polyethylene (PE) resin for wet strength. SBS is widely used in the United States for packaging, folding cartons, and set-up boxes. The inside is typically white.	Medicine and food packaging, beverage (milk/juice) cartons	Food packaging for perishables and some frozen foods, cartons for baked goods, ice cream, milk, and juice, as well as packaging for pharmaceuticals, candy, perfumes, cosmetics, and high-priced toys.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Paperboard: Coated Unbleached Kraft (CUK)	Most unbleached or natural kraft paperboard is coated with a thin layer of kaolin clay to improve the printing surface and may also be coated with polyethylene (PE) resin for wet strength. This grade is commonly used for beverage carriers and some types of packaging.	Beverage carriers for beer and soft drinks	Beverage carriers for beer and soft drinks, and some packaging for frozen foods or hardware
Paperboard: Coated Recycled Board (CRB)	This paperboard grade is made from 100% recycled fiber, including old container packaging, newspapers, box board clippings, and selected white papers. It is usually coated with a thin layer of kaolin clay to improve the printing surface. The inside is typically gray. CRB is commonly used for packaging dry food products.	Packaging for dry foods such as cereal and crackers.	Typically gray inside – packaging for dry foods such as cereal, pasta, rice, cookies, crackers, pet food. Made with 100% recycled fiber and coated

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Paperboard: Uncoated Bleached Kraft (UBK)	This paperboard grade is made from wood pulp or recycled fiber. Kraft pulp is naturally darker than other wood pulps but is bleached to produce very white pulp.	Shoe or gift box (bleached)	Boxes for paper goods such as envelopes and stationery, shoe boxes, gift boxes, and similar products.
Paperboard: Uncoated Unbleached Kraft (UUK)	This paperboard grade is made from wood pulp or recycled fiber. It is uncoated and unbleached, giving it a natural brown color. UUK is commonly used for sturdy packaging where a natural appearance is desired.	Shoe or gift box (unbleached)	Boxes for paper goods such as envelopes and stationery, shoe boxes, gift boxes, hardware, powdered laundry detergents
Paperboard: Uncoated Recycled Board	This paperboard grade is made from 100% recycled paperboard, including old containers, newspapers, box board clippings, and selected white papers. It is uncoated and is commonly known as chipboard. Uncoated recycled board is widely used for boxes and other packaging made from recovered paper.	Shoe or gift box made with 100% recycled fiber	Boxes for paper goods such as envelopes and stationery, candy, perfume, shoe boxes, gift boxes, and similar products.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Linerboard	Linerboard is a strong, coarse paper, usually brown, commonly used as the facing layers on corrugated containers. It can also be used for kraft wrapping paper, grocery bags, and other heavy-duty paper products.	Butcher paper, grocery bags	Butcher paper, kraft wrapping paper, grocery bags, gummed sealing tape, and multi-wall sacks.
Corrugated Container	Corrugated containers are boxes made from two types of paper: linerboard for the inside and outside facings, and corrugating medium, a fluted paper layer in between, for strength and durability. The Paper Calculator estimates environmental impacts based on the typical proportions of each type of paper used in corrugated containers.	Shipping boxes	Shipping boxes, bankers boxes, pizza boxes, boxes for large and/or heavy items such as computer and TV equipment or appliances, and cartons of multiple reams of paper
Napkins, Towels & Facial Tissue	This grade includes absorbent tissue paper products used for personal care and dining purposes.	Paper towels, napkins, facial tissues.	Hand paper towels, kitchen paper towels, facial tissues, table napkins.

Paper Grade	Description	Abbreviated Examples	Expanded Examples
Toilet Paper	Toilet paper is a single-use tissue paper designed for bathroom use. It is typically used in residential and commercial restrooms.	Toilet paper	Standard toilet paper rolls, jumbo bathroom rolls, coreless bathroom rolls.