Paper Textures & Finishes

Paper is often something we take for granted. It's just 'there.' Sometimes we have no choice about the type of paper on which our designs are printed. Normally we can't dictate the paper used for ads in newspapers or magazines. Even when we do have a choice, we're limited by budget, printing requirements, or other factors. However, paper can be an important textural element in our desktop published documents.

Some papers just 'feel' better than others. Grab up some paper from around you. Get a newspaper, a magazine, some paper from your printer, and a few different samples. Close your eyes and touch the different surfaces. Can you identify the general type of paper (newsprint, etc.) simply by touch? Probably so. But also consider how they feel to your touch — smooth, rough, slightly patterned, fuzzy, bumpy, slick, shiny, dull, warm or cold.

Familiarize yourself with some of the various surfaces and finishes used in paper. Explore each of these paper terms related to the surface characteristics and appearance of paper. Some may be familiar to you already. Others will be new.

- Antique Finish
- Dull Finish
- Eggshell Finish
- Embossed Finish
- Felt Finish
- Glazed Finish
- Granite Finish
- Linen Finish
- Machine Finish
- Machine Glazed
- Matte Finish
- Mottled Finish
- Natural Finish
- Onionskin Paper
- Parchment Paper
- Vellum Finish
- Wove Finish

Design Concept & Texture
Varying paper surfaces can dramatically or subtly alter the mood you want your designs to convey.

Imagine a photograph of a well-preserved vintage automobile printed on extremely smooth, glossy paper or printed on a rough, pebbly surface. Neither one is necessarily better or worse. It depends on the mood you want to convey. Increased contrast between the image (and it's visual texture) and the actual surface of the paper can create interest in your design.

When selecting paper, choose a texture that is related to the concept of your design and doesn’t overwhelm or get in the way of the message. While you can make a bold statement with texture, sometimes a subtle texture that stays 'in the background' is most appropriate. Make sure that your texture works with your choice of type and images so that text does not become unreadable or images unrecognizable. It may be necessary to use a bolder typeface if your paper is rough or strongly patterned.
Texture Exercise

1. See the five paper samples that range from the very smooth to the very rough. Choose one, decide what the purpose and focus of a design could be. In your notebook record:
   a. What type of mood could be suggested each textured paper.
   b. What type of product would benefit from the use of the textured paper.
   c. What type of service advertisement would benefit from the use of the textured paper.

2. Find an example of an ad that uses texture. In your notebook, write a phrase that describes the use and feeling of the texture and how it affects the overall design and message of the ad.