

# READING COMPREHENSION: AT THE PRINT SHOP

Read the dialogues, then answer the questionnaire.

## Dialogue I

**Helen:** Mr Wallace? I'm Helen Wright. Mr Blake asked me to give you this.

**Albert:** Hello, Helen. It's for the wedding invitations, isn't it?

**Helen:** Yes, it's the photopolymer plate with the text.

**Albert:** Perfect. I've got the letterpress ready and some invitation cards without text. We can use them.

**Helen:** Really?

**Albert:** They have embossed patterns, and some have colour embellishments.

**Helen:** What colour are they?

**Albert:** The embellishments are a shade of pink. The text will be dark grey. Embossing counts as white colour, too.

**Helen:** Are they spot colours?

**Albert:** Yes, they are. We need one print plate for each colour, and we print them separately.

**Helen:** Do you mix the ink by hand?

**Albert:** It depends on the design. We use the Colour bridge as a guide to ensure that spot colours match the design specifications.

**Helen:** Can I see the cards?

**Albert:** Yes, of course. And you can watch while I print the text.

**Helen:** Thank you!

## Dialogue 2:

**Albert:** This is our letterpress. It is almost a century old. We have vintage type and graphics, but I prefer to use photopolymer and magnesium printing plates.

**Helen:** Why?

**Albert:** With vintage type and graphics, we must use a steel frame, the chase, and fill the gaps with leading, 'furniture', and more things.

**Helen:** Furniture?

**Albert:** Yes, small pieces of wood. The chase looks like a puzzle. The steel frame and metal wedges keep everything in place.

If we use a photopolymer plate, we can use a flat surface, the chase-base. It's easier.

Look... These are the cards I've prepared.

**Helen:** They are very stylish.

**Albert:** This is cotton paper. It is soft and it has a nice texture. However, we must be careful when we print. If we put too much pressure, we'll damage the paper.

## Dialogue 3:

**Albert:** Well, the letterpress is clean, oiled, it works properly and it is safe to use. We can print now.

First, we put the printing plate on the chase-base. We use removable adhesive.

Be careful there are no bubbles between the printing plate and the chase-base, or we'll have uneven inking.

**Helen:** What do we do if there are bubbles?

**Albert:** We push them with our finger or we prick them with an exacto knife and push the air out from the hole we've just made.

Now we feed a sheet of paper and make an uninked impression of the printing plate. This will help attach the printing plate to the base.

**Helen:** I see.

**Albert:** Let's prepare the ink. This is the colour swatch. I'll mix rubber-based inks, black and white. We can use oil-based inks, too.

**Helen:** It's a very small quantity. Will it be enough?

**Albert:** You only need a very thin layer of ink on the ink plate. It's that disk. We use the rollers to distribute the ink. We can adjust the roller height, if necessary.

**Helen:** What's next?

**Albert:** We check the guides and the gauge pins that hold the paper in place. They should be OK as they are. It's the same card size, we'll just print a different colour. And we check the packing, too.

**Helen:** What's the packing?

**Albert:** It's padding we put under the paper we want to print. The indentation will be more or less deep depending on it.

#### Dialogue 4:

**Helen:** Is it ready now?

**Albert:** Yes, we can begin printing. We feed the sheets of paper individually. Every time we pull the handle down, the paper presses against the inked type and it leaves an impression.

It's a slow printing process, but it makes elegant prints. Very nice to the touch.

**Helen:** And, combined with digital technology, it could print sophisticated bespoke designs.

**Albert:** That's true, although there are some limitations.

Now... When we finish printing, we remove the printing plate from the chase-base. We can reuse it or recycle it.

We also remove the guides, the gauge pins and the packing before cleaning the press.

The rubber rollers are stored on a rack. It's important that they are kept in good condition. They deteriorate when exposed to extremes of temperatures, high humidity and sunlight.

**Helen:** Thank you Mr Wallace for teaching me about the letterpress process.

**Albert:** It's a dying Art, but I love it. These are the invitation cards. Give them to James, will you?

**Helen:** Yes, of course. Goodbye!

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Activity 1.** Say if the sentences are True or False.

- a)** Albert Wallace works at a bookshop.
  - True
  - False
- b)** He is printing invitations for a Birthday celebration.
  - True
  - False
- c)** The invitations are printed on cotton paper.
  - True
  - False
- d)** The colours are obtained with the CMYK halftone process.
  - True
  - False
- e)** He is using an old letterpress and vintage metal type and graphics.
  - True
  - False
- f)** Albert likes this printing technique, despite it is time-consuming.
  - True
  - False
- g)** With this technique, you can print elegant designs.
  - True
  - False

**Activity 2.** Fill in the gaps with the words below.

### **Ago, Letterpress, Relief, Sorts, Surface, Type**

The \_\_\_\_\_ printing technique is very old; it was invented more than five hundred years \_\_\_\_\_. It uses metal movable \_\_\_\_\_ (also known as \_\_\_\_\_) and \_\_\_\_\_ to leave a mark on the printing \_\_\_\_\_. It is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ printing.

**Activity 3.** Match the words with the definitions

**Bespoke design**

a) It's when you press into paper or card stock from underneath; the finished design stands out from the paper, giving it a 3D effect.

**Colour bridge**

b) It's a method of specifying and printing colors in which each colour is printed with its own ink. It becomes very expensive if more than 3 colours are used.

**Colour swatch**

c) It is a professional colour reference system. Designers use it to identify their desired colour with a number; when they give it to the manufacturer or printer, they can reproduce the colour consistently and accurately.

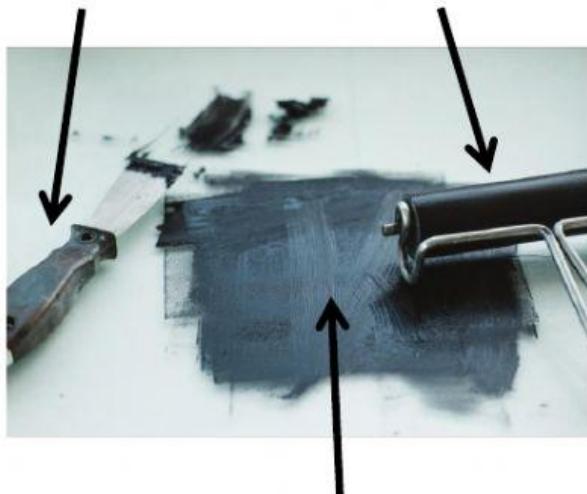
**Embossing**

d) A small piece of material with the name and identification number for a specific colour on it. In painting, it is a sample of colour designed to show the actual dried result of applying certain paint(s).

**Spot colour**

e) It's a product or service that has been specially made or designed for a particular person or type of customer.

**Activity 4.** Drag and drop: match the names with the pictures.



**Colour swatch**

**Ink**

**Embossing (relief printing)**

**Ink roller**

**Exacto knife**

**Ink spatula**

**Colour Bridge**