

READING COMPREHENSION: AT THE PRINT SHOP

Read the dialogues, then answer the questionnaire.

Dialogue 1

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.

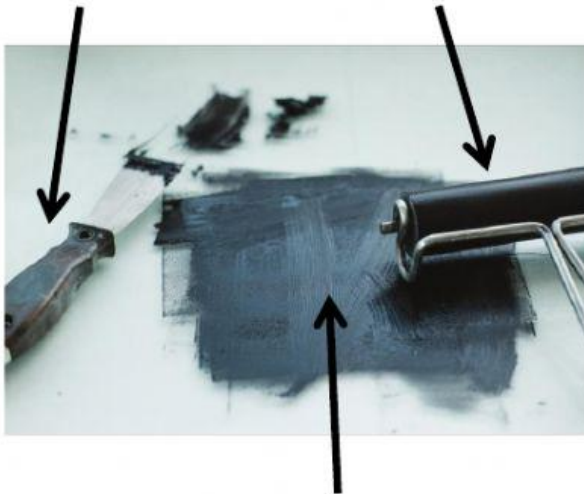
Ago, Letterpress, Relief, Sorts, Surface, Type

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

Embossing (relief printing)

Exacto knife

Ink

Ink roller

Ink spatula

Colour Bridge