

# Die-cutting

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## Definition

Die-cutting is the mechanical process of cutting paper by pressing a die constructed of knife-edge blades into the paper. Die-cutting highlights the physical nature of paper, and has the ability to create additional dimensions without necessarily printing the material. For this reason, a die-cut is more effective on a creative paper: it brings out the paper's texture, touch, colour, character; the cut highlights the paper and vice-versa.

## Dos

- Do use good quality paper, as it will be more likely to cut cleanly, rather than tear.
- Do always bear in mind functionality, as die-cut shapes could get bent or snagged when manipulating the printed piece.
- Do keep tags to a minimum on strong paper: to cut out shapes, e.g. a disc, you need "tags" that prevent the shape from falling out during the die-cutting process. The tags are then broken later. When you use a strong paper - such as Curious Collection Cosmic - you need to make these tags as few and as small as possible, to prevent any risk of tearing.
- Do keep your paper perfectly flat. Protect it after printing so it does not warp before cutting.
- Do keep plenty of bleed, to allow for less-than-perfect registration.
- Do keep a 5mm safety margin between your cuts and your edges, to prevent any risk of tearing.
- Do provide the printer with a file indicating cut and score outlines, as well as a file showing how the die lines will be placed on the printed material.

## Don'ts

- Don't die-cut lightweight paper (under 160g) without extra precaution.
- Don't die-cut paper which had been fully printed with colour, since the white edge will show. Use coloured paper instead.
- Don't forget creasing and paper thickness when planning a die-cut. Otherwise, you will apply too much pressure and blunt the cutting rule.
- Don't use die-cut for extremely precise and complex designs such as a lace pattern, where laser-cut is recommended.
- Don't refrain from using Arjowiggins papers for die-cut projects: Conqueror, Keaycolour, Pop'Set... the majority of Arjowiggins Creative Papers can be cut without any issues.
- Don't avoid trickier papers, but remain cautious. In particular, Curious Collection Transluents papers are very dense, so some precautions are in order: the cutting tools must be sharp, and few, small tags will be needed in order to make snapping out the shapes easier.

