

## Be Informed

*The more you know and the more questions you ask is what will determine if you are supplying safe long lasting products to your customers. Ask your suppliers the hard questions and expect an answer. Your reputation and your customers satisfaction are depending on the answers.*



## SCRAPBOOK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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**PRESERVATION IS  
A  
PARTNERSHIP**

**Q**UICK GUIDE TO  
COMMONLY  
USED TERMS

## SCRAPBOOK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

### Mission -

The SPS mission is to collect, review, organize, and distribute science based preservation information to the scrapbook community through the publication of preservation guidelines, informational articles, and technical papers, and through the presentation of educational programs.

[ScrapbookPreservationSociety.com](http://ScrapbookPreservationSociety.com)

## Explanations Of Common Terms

**Acid-Free** – a material tested to have a pH of 7 or above indicating that the material contains no mobile or available acid ions for chemical reactions.

Scrapbook Implications: Acid containing papers have been shown to have shorter life spans than those papers that are acid-free. The term acid-free, which came from the paper industry, has begun to be used for a wide variety of other materials including items such as adhesives, films, inks, etc. It has been implied that acid-free indicates that these materials are also long aging, non-damaging, and photo-safe simply due to being acid-free. This is not necessarily the case. Simply because a material is acid-free does not mean it is photo-safe or that it is long aging.

**Archival** – the dictionary defines the term “archival” to mean that a material or article is kept in or for use in a special area for long term retention (as in an archive). Today the definition has become blurred, especially in the arts and crafts areas. Many companies place “archival” on products to imply permanence, durability, or chemical stability, indicating it could safely be used for preservation purposes. Scrapbook implications: Currently, the various organizations that produce, sell, or use archival materials have not agreed to one standard definition or a quantifiable method for verifying a material’s archival properties. This is especially true with the wide range of different materials being produced for the scrapbooking industry. Although some standards do exist for the paper industry.

**Buffered** –the addition of an alkaline (base) reserve to a material to control the pH over an extended time. The term is commonly used in the paper industry to identify that alkaline filler has been added during the papermaking process to offset any acid that is present or that

it may come in contact with later. Common buffers for papers are magnesium carbonate and calcium carbonate. In addition to paper s, buffering is sometimes used in adhesives and other materials where the manufacturer wants to control the pH.

**Dye** – A soluble, colored substance that is added to ink, paper, and textiles. Generally speaking, dye colors are less stable over the long-term than pigment colors but usually allow a greater color variety.

**Fade Proof / Resistant** – A color that does not fade over time when stored in the dark.

**Fading** – The gradual loss or change of a color. Fading can occur when an item is exposed to light or by a variety of other environmental factors.

**Ink** – A fluid, semi-fluid, gel or paste material that contains coloring matter and used in pens, brushes, and pads for drawing, writing, stamping, and printing. Inks for each of these purposes differ from one another in their composition and physical properties.

**Lignin** – The binding material in plants that gives them their strength and rigidity. Paper that contains lignin, such as newsprint, will turn yellow quickly when exposed to light, heat, and humidity. Lignin will degrade paper (causing discoloration and brittleness) and photographs (causing staining, fading mirroring and spotting).

**Lignin-free** – To be considered lignin-free, paper can contain a maximum of 1% lignin.

**pH** – A measurement that indicates the degree of acidity or basicity of a material. On a scale from 0-14, pH 7.0 is neutral, above 7.0 is basic (acid-free or base), and below 7.0 is acidic. The scale is a logarithmic progression, meaning 6.0 is 10 times more acidic than 7.0. pH can only be measured on water-soluble materials.

**pH Neutral** – The center reading of 7.0 on the pH scale of 0-14. It is neither acidic nor basic. Pure water has a pH of 7 and is considered pH neutral.

**Photographic Activity Test (PAT)** – The most common and reliable test used to predict harmful chemical interactions between scrapbooking materials and photographic images.

Scrapbook Implications: This is one of several tests used to determine if a material is safe for use with photographs. A pass result in the PAT is not necessarily an indication that material is completely photo-safe. PAT does not equal “archival”. Other tests, such as pH, may be needed.

**Photo-safe** – Although a photographic activity test exists, it only takes into account some of the possible chemical interactions that can occur with photographic materials. There is currently no standard definition or set of test methods that fully encompass this term. It is often used in advertising to imply a product’s non-reactivity with photographic images; however, the basis for such a claim is unclear.

**Pigment** – A non-water soluble substance used to color ink, paper, and textiles. Pigments are generally more stable than dyes, but they produce a narrower color selection.

**Plastic** – Complex organic compounds produced by polymerization with the ability to be formed into sheets, shapes, and filaments for a variety of uses including clothing, furniture, toys, etc. Scrapbook Implications: The most common plastics considered safe for scrapbooking include polyethylene, polypropylene, and polyester in their pure forms. Caution should be used in case coatings or additives such as plasticizers have been used in their manufacture which could result in damage to photos and other memorabilia.

**Plasticizer** – A material used in the production of plastics to make them more flexible and less brittle. They are considered unsuitable for being in contact or even close proximity to photographs and many other materials used in scrapbooking.