The Ancient Artist's Quiz

The graphic design world of the 1960s, '70s, and early '80s—the years leading up to the advent of digital design and publishing—was a very different place.

Design in that era was as much a craft as it was a skill and talent. We used pens, tape, rubylith, knives, tracing paper, waxers, illustration board, vellum, markers, and ink—not to mention a long list of specialized equipment for typesetting and graphic arts cameras big enough to fill a room. Today, we accomplish nearly all the same tasks, at a fraction of the price, with nothing more than a computer and a mouse.

Following are 30 questions that designers under 55 might find challenging. Answer them all correctly, and I owe you lunch.
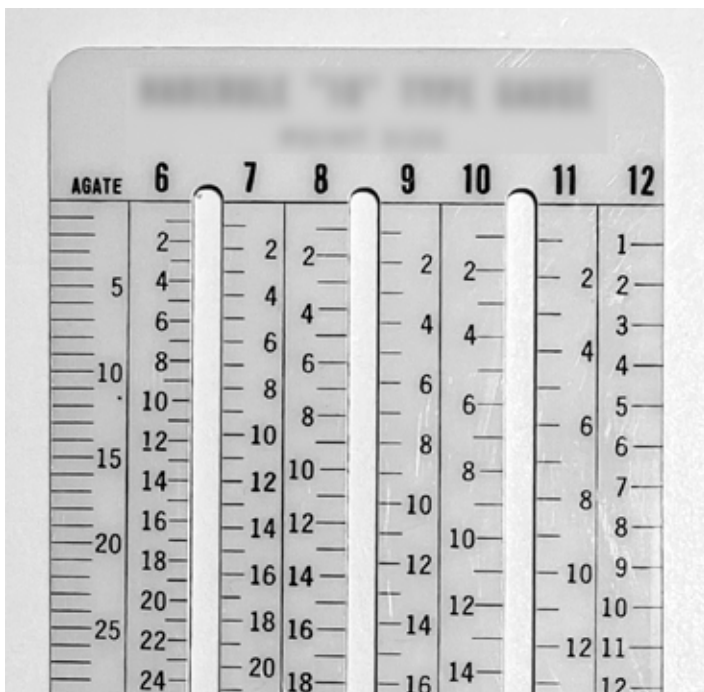
1. In proofreading, what does "stet" mean?

2. Name this tool:

3. What is this and what was it used for?

4. Who is this and what was his significance to a 1980s graphic designer?

5. What is this for and who manufactured it?

6. What was the pre-digital title for the person responsible for physically assembling elements of a printed page including: Text blocks (printed columns of type); headlines (set separately in a different font and size); photos and illustrations (cropped, scaled, and positioned); borders, rules, and so on?

7. What is this and what was it used for?

8. What is a "comprehensive layout"?

9. Name the production handbook published by International Paper (21 editions between 1934 and 2013). It was a staple for designers, printers, and production professionals, covering printing processes, typography, paper specifications, color reproduction, and more.

10. What are "crop marks" and "bleeds"?

11. What is this and what was it used for?

12. What is a "saddle stitch"?

13. A column of text set so both the right an left margins of the text align perfectly is referred to as?

14. What is this and what was it used for?

15. What do the letters CMYK stand for?

16. What is this and what was it used for?

17. What are the names of these three different types of "hyphens"?


A   B   C

18. What are these and what were they used for?

19. In the days prior to digital proofs and PDFs, printers would provide a proof made from the final film used to make the plates for the offset printing press. These one-color prints were used to check the layout, positioning, and pagination of the printed piece before the final plates were made. What was the common name of that proof?

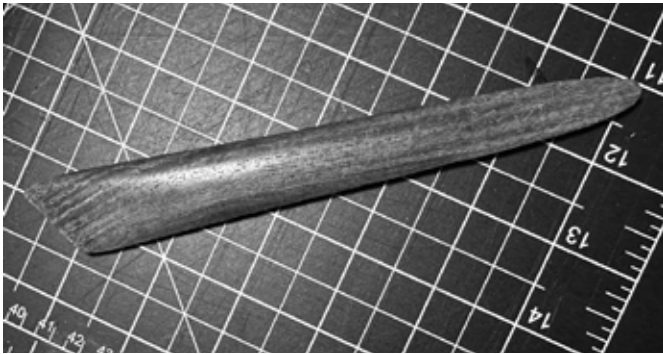20. What is the meaning of "Letraset"?

21. What is this and what was it used for?
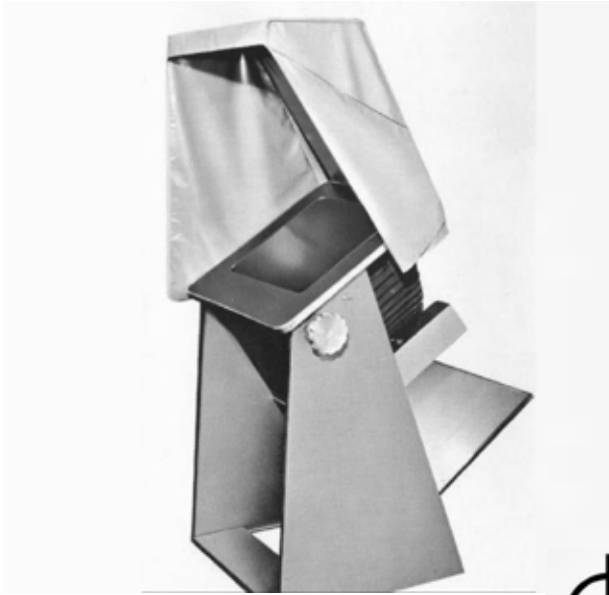
22. What is a registration mark?

23. What is this and what was it used for?

24. What is this and what was it used for?

25. What was U&lc?

26. What was duotone printing?

27. Which of these is not a type of paper fold?

    a. Z-Fold
    b. Labyrinth Fold
    c. Gate Fold
    d. French Fold
    e. Roll Fold

26. Who designed this logo?

29. What term for the optical illustion used to reproduce continuous tone images in print by converting them into grids of dots?

30. Which dweeb designed the news graphics at WTTG in Washington, D.C. in the 1970s?

THE ANSWERS

Clearly, commercial art and graphic design have always been a multifaceted profession. These questions merely reflect my experiences so the quiz isn't really fair. That said, I and others will be curious about how you did. Have something to add? Willing to share a bit about your career? Comment at the bottom of this page: https://www.ideabook.com/the-ancient-artists-quiz

1. In proofreading, what does "stet" mean?

"Stet" is a Latin term meaning "let it stand." It is used to indicate that a previously marked correction should be ignored, and the original text should remain as it is.

2. Name this tool:

T-square

3. What is this and what was it used for?

A "Haberule" (brand name) or a "type gauge" or a "line gauge." These rulers were used for "spec'ing" type (short for "specifying" type) to determine how much text, set in a particular typeface, at a given size, would fit in a particular space on the page(s).

4. Who is this and what was his significance to a 1980s graphic designer?

Aldus Manutius was a 15th-century Venetian printer. The first mainstream desktop publishing program, Aldus PageMaker, was released in 1985. This was its logo.

5. What was this for and who manufactured it?

An IBM Selectric typing element (typeball, golfball) was used with an IBM Selectric electric typewriter. The high-end version, the IBM Selectric Composer, was designed for professional typesetting, allowing for proportional spacing and justification, making it useful for newsletters, books, and advertisements. Each typeface and point size required a separate element.

6. What was the pre-digital title for the person responsible for physically assembling elements of a printed page including: Text blocks (printed columns of type); Headlines (set separately in a different font and size); Photos and illustrations (cropped, scaled, and positioned); Borders, rules, and so on?

Paste-up artist

7. What is this and what was it used for?

An airbrush was used to create illustrations and "retouch" existing images (to make precise edits to enhance or correct details, often to improve the image's overall appearance).

8. What is a "comprehensive layout"?

A comprehensive layout is a prototype of a print project that shows those involved the overall look and feel of the print piece. More refined than a "rough layout" it is produced using pens, colored pencils, and/or felt tip markers) in the actual size of the proposed piece.

9. Name the production handbook published by International Paper (21 editions between 1934 and 2013). It was a staple for designers, printers, and production professionals, covering printing processes, typography, paper specifications, color reproduction, and more.

Pocket Pal. Each edition was updated to reflect advances in technology, workflows, and industry trends.

10. What are "crop marks" and "bleeds"?

"Crop marks" are thin lines placed at the corners of a printed document to indicate where the paper should be trimmed. A "bleed" is the extra area beyond the final trim edge of a document used to intentionally extend artwork and images off the edge of the page and accommodate slight cutting misalignments.

11. What is this and what was it used for?

The Visual Graphics Photo Typositor was used to create headlines used with "paste-ups" or "mechanicals" of print materials. Producing words with the kerning specified by a designer required a skilled operator. In the 1970s, a 10 letter word might take roughly 5 minutes to produce and cost $2 or more.

12. What is a "saddle stitch"?

A saddle stitch is a print binding method where folded sheets are stapled along the spine. Commonly used for booklets, magazines, and brochures.

13. A column of text set so both the right an
left margins of the text align perfectly is referred to as?

Justified

14. What is this and what was it used for?

A dispenser for the rubber cement used in the pasteup process. The cone-shaped lid kept the container tightly sealed. Exposure to air would cause the rubber cement to thicken and become difficult to spread. If the rubber cement dried out, artists sometimes used a small amount of solvent (often acetone) to restore its consistency, though this was a bit of a balancing act to avoid making it too runny or smelly.

15. What do the letters CMYK stand for?

CMYK stands for the four primary colors used in color printing. Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Key (black). The "key plate," more often than not, holds the most detailed image information, is typically printed in black ink, and serves as the reference for aligning the other color plates during the printing process.

16. What is this and what was it used for?

A proportional scale calculates the percentage by which an image must be reduced or enlarged to fit a particular area. For example, to reduce a 9 inch wide image to 3 1/2 inches wide, you would reduce it by 39 percent.

17. What are the names of these three different types of "hyphens"?

A. Hyphen (-): Used to join words or break a word at the end of a line.

B: En Dash (–): Used to represent a range of values, connections, or relationships between things; Ranges: E.g., "The meeting is scheduled from 10:00–12:00"; Connections: E.g., "The New York–London flight"; Contrast or conflict: E.g., "The liberal–conservative debate."

C: Em Dash (—): Used to create a strong break in a sentence. Can replace commas, parentheses, or colons.

18. What are these and what were they used for?

A technical pen or "rapidograph." "Rapidograph" is actually a brand name of Koh-I-Noor but was so widely used in the mid-20th century and beyond it became what "Kleenex" is to "facial tissue." Technical pens, in large part, replaced ruling pens, an invention of the 17th century. All of the above were hell to use and clean.

19. In the days prior to digital proofs and PDFs, printers would provide a proof made from the final film used to make the plates for the offset printing press. These one color prints were used to check layout, positioning, and pagination before final printing. What was the common name of that proof?

A Blueline.

20. What is the meaning of "Letraset"?

Letraset is the brand name of the dry transfer lettering or "rub down" sheets that first appeared In 1961. The sheets allowed graphic designers to quickly and accurately apply type to layouts, letter by letter, versus the use of more costly and time consuming traditional typesetting.

21. What is this and what was it used for?

This is a commercial art projector, sometimes referred to as a lucigraph (camera lucida), manufactured by the Goodkin Corporation. It allowed designers and artists to project a reference image (often a photograph or drawing) onto a glass surface, where a sheet of tracing paper could be placed to accurately trace and scale the image. It was especially useful for creating illustrations, comps, and storyboards.

22. What is a registration mark?

When placing an overlay on a mechanical/pasteup, the designer would align the registration marks on the overlay with those on the mechanical beneath. This precise alignment ensured that each separate layer of the design would be exactly positioned relative to the others. This process is critical for maintaining the integrity of multi-color prints and complex compositions.

23. What is this and what was it used for?

Commercial artists in the pre-digital era used a "burnisher" to firmly adhere and smooth down elements to the mechanical or pasteup board. The elements might include dry transfer lettering, strips of body or headline text, images, illustrations, and/or other pre-made art components—many of which had been prepared by applying wax or rubber cement to their rear surface.

24. What is this and what was it used for?

This is a compact "repro" or "stat" camera (in this case a VGC PosOne). It was advertised as a camera and processor that demanded a minimum of technical knowledge. A daylight-operating unit used to produce fast, economical stats, screened prints (veloxes), film negatives or positives, special effects, and so on. Larger versions required a skilled operator and a full darkroom for processing.

25. What was U&LC?

The U&lc (Upper & Lower Case) newsletter was a seminal publication in the world of typography and design, edited by the influential typographer Herb Lubalin. It began circulation in 1973 and was published by the International Typeface Corporation (ITC). U&lc was not only a showcase for ITC's extensive typeface library but also served as a platform for exploring the boundaries of typographic art and design. The newsletter featured a wide array of content, from experimental layouts and unique typeface uses to articles on design theory and practice. Its visually rich pages made it a favorite among graphic designers, typesetters, and typographers, significantly impacting design trends and education during its 26 year run.

26. What is duotone printing?

Duotone printing was a popular process in the pre-digital age. It employs two ink colors (generally black and another solid color) to create a richer, more dimensional image than standard single-color printing. Duotones are aesthetically pleasing and, at least the pre-digital version, cost significantly less than the full-color processes.

27. Which of these is not a type of paper fold?

b. Labyrinth Fold

28. Who designed this logo?

The 1967 version of the International Business Machines (IBM) logo was designed by Paul Rand (as was the 1956 version). Rand is widely regarded as one of the greatest graphic designers of the twentieth century. He designed iconic logos such as the IBM, ABC, and UPS logos, many of which are celebrated for their simplicity and effectiveness.

29. What term describes the optical illusion used to reproduce continuous tone images in print by converting them into a grid of dots?

A halftone. This process allows for the printing of photographs, illustrations, and other imagery using a limited number of ink colors, typically in monochrome for black and white or CMYK for color printing.

30. Which dweeb designed the graphics for the *Ten O'Clock News* at WTTG in Washington, D.C., in the 1970s?

Chuck Green, my first job as a commercial artist.

Your two cents.

Have something to add? Willing to share a bit about your career? Comment at the bottom of this page: https://www.ideabook.com/the-ancient-artists-quiz