

terminology

Acid-free

Acid is used in paper manufacturing to break apart the wood fibers and the lignin that holds them together. If acid remains in the materials used for photo albums, the acid can react chemically with photographs and cause their deterioration. Acid-free products have a pH factor of 7.0 or above. It's imperative that all materials (glue, pens, paper, etc.) used in memory albums or scrapbooks be acid-free.

Acid migration

Acid migration is the transfer of acidity from one item to another through physical contact or acidic vapors. If a newspaper clipping is put into an album, the area it touches will eventually turn yellow or brown. A deacidification pH factor spray can be used on acidic papers, or they can be color photocopied onto acid-free papers.

Adhesive Foam

Use double-sided adhesive foam, dots, squares, and roll tape to secure items to your page and add dimension at the same time. They'll lift die cuts, letters, and cropped photos up to a 1/2-inch from the page surface.

Adhesive Tabs

White and transparent double-sided adhesive tabs come in roll form and in refillable dispensers. They're great for adhering both small and large items with minimal mess.

Archival quality

"Archival quality" is a term used to indicate materials which have undergone laboratory analysis to determine that their acidic and buffered content is within safe levels.

Brads

Similar in use to eyelets, these embellishments are also circular but without a hole in the middle. They have two prongs on the back to secure them to paper.

Buffered paper

During manufacture, a buffering agent such as calcium carbonate or magnesium bicarbonate can be added to paper to neutralize acid contaminant. Such papers have a pH of 8.5.

Colored Pencils

Available in hundreds of hues, colored pencils are a scrapbooker's staple, ideal for shading and adding highlights to lettering and creating embellishments. Use them with a blender -- a clear, colorless pencil or pen -- to smooth and soften your colors.

Crafts and Swivel Knives

Craft knives are perfect for making straight cuts on paper and card stock and for cropping photos. Swivel knives are similar to craft knives, but their rotating blade makes them better for cutting along curves or cutting out letters and template shapes. Use these sharp tools with a self-healing or glass cutting mat.

Die Cuts

These premade paper shapes are available at most scrapbook and crafts stores and come in many shapes, sizes and colors. For a fee, some stores will let you use their die-cutting machine with your own papers to create shapes that perfectly coordinate with your layout.

Double-sided tape and dots

Usually sold in plastic dispensers and available in both permanent and repositionable adhesives. Adhesive dots are great for adhering smaller items to layouts and also are available in permanent and repositionable forms.

Eyelets

Available in many shapes, sizes, and colors, these embellishments are circular with an opening in the middle. These have a variety of uses.

Felt-tip Markers

Besides giving you a range of color choices, felt-tip markers also come in several different tip styles. Here are the four most common tips you'll find:

Brush Point: This marker has a flexible paintbrush-style tip, which is useful for adding ink to rubber stamps and for filling in shapes and letters.

Chisel Point: This versatile marker has a tip with both broad and narrow edges and can produce distinctive decorative lettering and designs.

Monoline: These all-purpose pens have tips that range from very fine to thick (usually specified in millimeters). The round, tapered nibs can be used to create smooth lines for basic lettering techniques, captions, borders, line art, and illustrations, as well as to add details to letters made with other types of markers.

Scroll Point: This notched-tip marker produces a double line with just a single stroke. Use it to make basic block letters, design detailed borders, or draw straight double lines.

Fibers

These are threads in various colors, thickness, and styles that are used to accent your layouts.

Gel Pens

These medium-line pens are ideal for journaling or outlining letters and embellishments, and they come in just about every color imaginable.

Journaling

Journaling refers to text on a scrapbook page giving details about the photographs. It can be done in your own handwriting or with adhesive letters, rub-ons, and stencils. It is probably the most important part of memory albums.

Lignin

Lignin is the material that holds wood fibers together as a tree grows. If lignin remains in the final paper (as with newsprint), it will become yellow and brittle over time. Most paper other than newsprint is lignin-free.

Liquid Adhesives

These come in a bottle, stick, pen, and wand applicators, and with thick or thin tips. The adhesive itself may be permanent or repositionable and fast- or slow-drying. Liquid adhesives work best for attaching small items such as punches or die-cut letters, or for tacking down dimensional items such as beads and buttons.

Nail Heads

These once started out as strictly clothing embellishments but now are very popular with scrapbooking. They have 6-8 small prongs on the back. You simply pierce the nail head through the paper and bend the prongs back.

Paper Trimmers

This tool is handy for making square cuts and straight edges. The larger sizes are capable of handling oversize sheets of paper and card stock.

pH factor

The pH factor refers to the acidity of a paper. The pH scale is the standard for measurement of acidity and alkalinity. It runs from 0 to 14, each number representing a tenfold increase; neutral is 7. Acid-free products have a pH factor of 7 or above. Special pH tester pens are available to help you determine the acidity or alkalinity of products.

Photo corners and sleeves

Photo corners with a peel-away backing come in sheets and rolls and in a variety of colors. Photo sleeves are made of clear plastic and have adhesive backing; they simply slip over your photos. Corners are ideal for attaching photos directly to layouts; sleeves work best for displaying photos that you may want to change later.

Photo-safe

Photo-safe is a term similar to archival quality but more specific to materials used with photographs. Acid-free is the determining factor for a product to be labeled photo-safe.

Post-Bound Album

These albums are secured with screws that allow you to completely remove pages and reorganize the sequence. Pages also lay flat.

Punches

Available in a variety of shapes and sizes, decorative paper punches let you create custom accents by punching shapes from whatever papers complement your layout.

Rotary Cutters

Often used to cut fabric, rotary cutters are also handy for cutting large sheets of paper and card stock or trimming photos. Use these tools with self-healing or glass cutting mats.

Scissors

They come in straight- and decorative-edge styles. Long straight edge scissors are useful for cutting large sheets of card stock and paper for freehand cropping photos. Small scissors work best for cutting out detailed embellishments. Decorative-edge scissors are ideal for cutting photo mats or anything to which you'd like to give a dressier look.

Sheet protectors

These are made of plastic to slip over a finished album page. They can be side-loading or top-loading and fit 8-1/2 x 11-inch or 12 x 12-inch pages. It is important that they are acid-free. Polypropylene (vinyl), commonly available for office use, is not of archival quality and should not be included in albums.

Spiral-Bound Album

Albums with this type of wire binding have permanently attached pages and are ideal for one-topic and themed scrapbooks.

Spray Adhesives

Aerosol spray adhesives provide an even layer of glue that can cover large surfaces quickly. Sprays work well for adhering background papers or photo mats, and the dried adhesive won't show through transparent papers, such as vellum. Use spray adhesives only in well-ventilated areas and away from flames; never let children use them without adult supervision.

Stickers

Acid-free, photo-safe stickers come in thousands of different themes and sizes and are widely available in sheets and rolls.

Strap-style Album

Albums that use plastic straps allow the pages to be repositioned and to lie completely flat when the album is opened.

Templates

Take advantage of many shapes and sizes of plastic templates to crop your photos, create embellishments and do dry embossing. Lettering templates also come in a range of sizes and type styles.

Three-ring Album

These familiar favorites have rings that snap apart for easy page insertion and removal.