

The Difference Between Inks

Stamp pads can contain several different kinds of ink. The five main types are: dye based, pigment based, permanent, embossing and fabric ink. Each ink serves a different purpose.

Dye Based Ink

Dye inks are an inexpensive fast-drying ink that are water based that essentially leave a stain on the paper. Sponging and DTP are most easily accomplished with dye ink. An added bonus to dye ink is the ability to use it for watercoloring. Many dye inks, though easier to use, are not fade-resistant, will run if they get wet and are not permanent; but most are acid-free. On the plus side, they dry quickly and leave a very crisp image so they are good for highly detailed stamps.

If working on a glossy surface paper, using a heat tool will shorten the drying time. Don't use dye ink for embossing, as it dries too quickly, and don't use non-permanent dye ink with markers and watercolors because it may smear.

Pigment Based Ink

Pigment based inks are also water based but, unlike dye inks, they contain little particles of color. Because of this, they leave an impression that is more vibrant and more resistant to water (once dry) than their dye based counterparts. They also stay wetter longer so they are suitable for embossing. On the negative side, they can't be used on gloss stock - they smear. A stamp inked with pigment ink can usually be cleaned with a wet paper towel but the darker colors may require the use of a stamp cleaning solution.

When you need brighter colors, waterproof ink, embossability, or sparkle, pigment ink comes in handy. This permanent ink is typically longer-lasting than dye ink, and it takes longer to dry. Many finishes are available. Try the TAC™ chalk pads for a pastel-like finish. For the best bet on dark papers, or for metallic or pearlescent ink, try Brilliance pigment inkpads for a wonderful effect. Brilliance inks are also great for vellum, wood, clay, unglazed tile and more.

This type of ink is thicker than dye ink and it's slow-drying which makes it great for embossing with. Pigment ink colors are vivid and fade-resistant, and many are made especially for stamping on surfaces like glass, wood, or fabric.

Craft Ink

When you're stamping on plastic, wood, fabric or leather, you might consider a craft ink. All Purpose ink comes in a jar for application with a brush. This is great for Krystal Kraft projects. Fabrico pads and markers are wonderful for fabric crafts, and can be heat-set in the dryer. StazOn solvent ink is a great product for all stamped items. This ink dries quickly on plastics, paper and even glass!

Permanent Ink

Permanent ink is water and bleed resistant and dries quickly. It's great for stamping on unusual surfaces such as glass, wood, plastic and acetate. Most of the time, you will have to use a stamp cleaning solution to get all the ink off of the stamp.

Fabric Ink

Fabric ink is semi-permanent and, logically enough, is used primarily on fabric. Some fabric inks set automatically but some need to be heat set so, once the ink has dried, it is best to run an iron over fabric that has been stamped with fabric ink - just to be on the safe side. Stamps inked with fabric ink are also best cleaned with a stamp cleaning solution.

Embossing Ink

Embossing ink stays wet for very long time and is used only if you intend to emboss the image. It comes in a variety of colors like the other inks but it is also available in a clear variety. Embossing ink is relatively sticky and should be removed with stamp cleaning solution.

When you want a clear base for your embossed image, I recommend the use of an embossing ink. This super-slow drying ink gives you plenty of time to apply your embossing powder. VersaMark is also a great ink for embossing. In addition, you can use it alone (without heat-setting or embossing powder) to create watermark images, and it's available in a marker as well as an inkpad.

Solvent Ink

Solvent, or permanent ink is opaque and quick-drying. It works great on slick surfaces like plastic. It's also great for home decor stamping, including surfaces like walls, furniture, or glass. Permanent ink will stain clothing.

Choosing which ink to use for your stamping projects is very important. There are big differences between pigment inks and dye inks, and here is a cheat sheet to help you decide which type of ink is right for your projects.

PIGMENT BASED

- slow drying
- great for embossing
- permanent once heat set
- softer look
- color sits on top of the paper so the colors stay truer
- will show up on dark colored paper
- wide range of metallic colors and white
- wider range of colors
- stamp pad doesn't dry out (store upside-down for optimum use)

DYE BASED

- fast drying
- cannot emboss with
- inks tend to bleed
- takes on the paper's color
- most are not light fast...the color will change over time
- won't show up much on dark colored paper
- cannot get metallic colors and white
- stamp pad can dry out
- great for quick, easy, multiple prints

Brands of Ink.....

- **ADIRONDACK Ink Pads, Reinkers, ADIRONDACK PIGMENT Ink Pens**
*Ranger calls Adirondack colors earth tones. They are really sophisticated color blends that create sophisticated, rich tones. The Adirondack ink pens use an water based pigment ink. **The pigment**, rather than dye in the pen provides thick solid coverage, but the fact that it is water based rather than glycerin based allows the color to dry on plastic, vellum and glossy paper. Coordinated Adirondack embossing powders are also available.*

- **ADIRONDACK Alcohol Inks**

Unlike the Adirondack reinkers, alcohol inks are permanent and great for use on plastic dominos, microscope slides or glossy papers. They are fast drying and acid-free. Each set contains three 1/2 oz bottles with precision tip applicators.

Alcohol inks are so different from regular inks because they don't tend to blend. If you cover a glossy surface with one color, you can drop other colors onto it and it will push the original color out of the way. This is one of the reasons that it needs to be used on glossy surfaces such as coated paper, glass or plastic. On mat paper the alcohol ink is absorbed and can't be displaced so it just looks muddy.



- **ADIRONDACK EMBOSSING POWDER**

This embossing powder coordinates with the Adirondack dye ink pads and pigment pens. It is a color coated white powder so when you emboss with it you get a solid color but if you stamp into the melted powder the stamped image will show up white along the edges. Embossing powders is fantastic Adirondack colors. These special colored powders change colors when you stamp into heated, liquid powder. You'll see white where you stamp your image.

- **ANTIQUITIES Ink Pads & Reinkers**

This is a faster drying pigment ink designed to look like softly colored sand stone.. Ranger Antiquities ink can be used on Vellum and heat set on plastic, metal and other smooth surfaces. It shows up great on dark card stock because it is a pigment rather than dye ink. It also has color coordinated embossing powder.

- **ARCHIVAL Ink Pads and Reinkers**

Acid-free, Permanent, dye ink, great for using with watercolors or markers. Bright Colors great for resist on coated paper.

- **BRILLIANCE Fast Drying Pigment Ink Pads & Reinkers**

Non-Toxic, Archival and Acid Free. Brilliance ink is the only pigment ink that dries naturally on vellum and glossy paper. It dries quickly so it's not great for embossing. It works great on leather, polymer clay, mica, and acetate. The only surface I've had troubles with is Metal. I recommend StazOn ink or Palette Ink for stamping on metal. Brilliance colors are mostly shimmery metallic or pearl looking. There are a few matte colors.

- **DISTRESS Dye Ink Pads & Reinkers**

These are slow drying inks which can be spritzed or wiped with water after inking an image or wiping the ink pad directly on paper to create an aged look.

- **FLUID CHALK Ink Pads & Reinkers**

ColorBox Chalk ink is a new kind of dye ink in a skin-foam ink pad. Many stampers have enjoyed watercoloring with the reinkers. Click [here](#) for comparisons of different chalk inks.

- **KALEIDACOLOR Dye Ink Pads**

Rainbow Dye Ink Pads with sliding mechanism to keep colors from bleeding when not in use. There are about 20 color combinations.

- **MARKERS**

Using markers, apply ink directly to the stamp. Breathe (huff) on stamp to remoisten ink, then stamp on paper. Markers allow you to create a personalized, multicolored image.

- **OPALITE Pigment Ink Pads & Reinkers**

These pigment ink pads come in interference colors and have a reflective nature. They are striking on black or dark card stock. It can be used on paper, leather, wood, shrink plastic, polymer clay and more! This ink is acid-free, non-toxic and archival.

- **PALETTE HYBRID Ink Pads** By Stewart Superior Ink Pads

Acid free, archival, non-fading. Hybrid ink dries fast on glossy and smooth surfaces, unlike pigment inks, with thicker color coverage than most dye based inks.

The new Palette Hybrid ink pad represents the latest innovation in stamping ink technology. It eliminates all the confusion over which ink to use for what surface - because it works on everything and is a non-solvent ink. So that means it doesn't smell bad and it's nonflammable and it won't immediately dry out. It dries instantly on paper and porous surfaces but requires a heat-set on glossy surfaces and fabrics. It does dry too quickly to be a good embossing ink.

- **PALETTE HYBRID Metallics** - 16 colors

Palette Hybrid Metallics are fast drying, permanent metallic, and iridescent ink for detailed shimmering images. They create stunning results on light or dark surfaces and acid free, archival and non-fading. They work on virtually all surfaces - some surfaces may require heat setting. Lid snaps into base creating handle for easy inking. Palette Hybrid Metallics are waterproof and embossable. Colors can be layered for dual tone and faux finishes. A light spritz with water will refresh inkpads.

- **PEARL EX Ink Pads & PINATA Alcohol Inks**

Pearl-Ex stamp pads are permanent ink pads that come in gold-tone duos, metallics, interference, and basic colors.

- **PIGMENT PETAL POINTS**

ColorBox Pigment Petal Points are collections of pigment ink mini-pads which can be removed and used individually. Because they are pigment inks, they are perfect for embossing. Petal Points can be used to make a [marbled background](#) using direct to paper (DTP) technique. You can also Petal Points with a brayer to create great [modernist backgrounds](#).

- **Piñata Alcohol Inks**

These can be used like the Adirondack Alcohol inks but come in more vibrant colors and are available individually. Alcohol inks come in 1/2 ounce bottles. The clean-up solution and extender come in 1 ounce bottles. Use Piñata on paper, glass, plastic and metal just to name a few surfaces. Highly adaptable, these colors can also be mixed with a variety of other products to produce unique color blending. Piñata Colors are one of those wonderful art products that will cross all art and craft media lines!

Piñata is currently available in 17 vibrant colors. It has its own special Clean-Up solution and Claro Extender. Colorless, Claro is ideal for transparentizing and extending the colorant. The Clean-up contains a brush moisturizer to keep brushes soft and pliable.

- **RANGER ARCHIVAL INK PADS**

These permanent dye based ink pads are acid free. Archival Inks do not deteriorate paper or precious photos. They will not bleed when painted or brayered over with watercolors, colored pencils, water-based inks and markers or pearl pigments. Archival Brights create a colorful resist when you stamp onto coated paper and overprint with water-based dye inks.

- **RANGER CLEAR RESIST Ink & Reinker 2" x 3" pad**

Acid Free, Non-Toxic, Clear Resist is not as juicy as VersaMark but actually resists ink a little better and provides clearer images. It doesn't work as an embossing ink as well as VersaMark.

- **SEA SHELLS Dye Ink Pads & Reinkers**

Non-toxic, fast drying ink, great for shadow stamping.

- **STAZON Ink Pads & Reinkers**

Acid-free, Archival, Fast drying solvent. Designed especially for use on plastic, metal, glass, ceramic, laminated or, coated paper and leather. Dries in 3-5 minutes on non-porous surfaces like plastic. StazOn is Acid-free, archival, fast drying solvent ink. It is Appropriate for all surfaces. Designed especially for use on plastic, metal, glass, ceramic, laminated paper, coated paper and leather. Not recommended for fabric. If you've never used StazOn or Brilliance Ink pads, they don't clean easily off your rubber stamp with standard stamp cleaners. A special cleaner is sold for these ink pads and we recommend buying it if you're buying StazOn Ink.

- **TOP BOSS Embossing Stamp Pads & Reinkers**

This is a very good embossing ink. Use tinted for colored embossing powders and untinted for clear embossing powder. Emboss with untinted/clear and you create a resist on any paper, not just glossy or coated.

- **TRANSFER INK SPRAY**

Transfer Ink!TM will transfer stamped or standard inkjet printed images to most types of paper, and many other porous surfaces. Creates an immediate vintage appearance. Soft and dreamy images are immediately created on cards, journals, scrapbooks, canvas, tag art, dolls and many other porous surfaces. Easy, fun and quick to use. Non-hazardous ASTM- D4236 Approved Acid Free.

DIRECTIONS: Stamp an image using India Ink BlackTM, MemoriesTM Black or the new Palette HybridTM Noir or use a standard inkjet printout on standard paper. Position the image face down on the surface you are transferring onto. Secure it in place and spritz with the Transfer Ink!TM Wet the back of the image evenly. Using a brayer, a cosmetic sponge or cottonball gently rub and dab the back of the image with even pressure. Lift up a corner to see if the image has transferred satisfactorily. Add more fluid and rub if needed. Remove the master which can be used for another transfer. Allow the transfer to dry and then color may be added if desired.

- **VERSACOLOR PIGMENT Ink Pads** by Tsukineko

Non-Toxic, Archival and Acid Free. VersaColor is a good, high quality, pigment ink, with rich colors. It works great for embossing with embossing powders, or embossing with sticky powder and covering with clear tiny glass marbles. This ink contains glycerine, making it very slow drying and pigment coloring, making it opaque rather than semi transparent, like a dye ink. For stamping on vellum, glossy paper or other smooth surfaces, we recommend Brilliance, StazOn or Palettes ink pads, rather than pigment ink.

- **VERSACRAFT Ink Pads**

Formerly named Fabrico - are archival and acid free, making them great for scrapbooking. They are designed for stamping on fabric and wood and also work great for leather, shrink plastic, polymer clay and porcelain. Click on the image for for information. VersaCraft Ink pads are unlike other pigment ink pads. Most pigment ink pads are glycerine based, and slow drying, which makes them good for embossing with but not good for stamping on fabric, wood or polymer clay. These ink pads are designed for such projects and become permanent when heat set, which can be ironing, or heating with an embossing gun. They are pigment based so you get the same full rich coverage as with glycerine based pigment pads and less bleeding than with dye based inks.

- **VERSAFINE Ink Pads**

This natural oil-based pigment ink dries instantly on matte cardstock, providing incredibly fine detail. You are able to watercolor or marker over stamped images and it won't bleed. No inkers needed, inkpad lasts 3-5 times longer than regular inks.

- **VERSAMARK**

Is a watermark ink. Which is good for colored cardstock, when stamped on, It makes the image a darker color than the paper like a watermark.

Powdered pigments such as Pearl Ex are great to use on a Versamark stamped image. You can also use chalks. Just rub in different colors onto different parts of your stamped image with a q-tip. After done, wipe with a cotton ball to remove the excess powder and here is your image done.

VersaMark does not stamp quite as crisply as Ranger Clear Resist because it is a juicier ink. It also does not resist ink quite as strongly.

- **WALNUT Ink Crystals**

Acid-free natural walnut ink crystals. Mix with water to create paint or ink pad dye or use with a spray bottle to spritz onto matte paper for aged backgrounds. Use this product to create wonderfully aged looking artwork.

Cleaners

- **CLEANSIT**

This rubber stamp cleaner cleans dye based, water soluble, solvent based, pigment inks including Brilliance, StazOn and Fabrico. This works best when used with a rubit-scrubit pad. Non-Toxic.

- **STAZ-ON Cleaner**

Specially created for StazOn and works great with Brilliance.

- **KISS-OFF Stain Remover Stick**

Stampers love this product for cleaning rubber stamps that got Brilliance or StazOn ink stuck in the crevices. It is also handy for cleaning stray ink marks off tools and acrylic mounts. It is slightly abrasive and may leave small scratches on acrylic and metal if you scrub with it. Rub Kiss-Off stain stick over stamp and into crevices. Use a tooth brush to scrub the stamp and it only takes a few seconds before you see a big difference.