

An explanation of the terms used in our online bookshop.

A Book Description is the language we rely on to convey to you, the buyer, an accurate picture of the book we have for sale. We take our book descriptions seriously as our online bookshop sales are completely dependant on customers buying what they expected from our catalogue. To this end, we offer the following explanations for your perusal:

Each book description begins with the same basic information:

1. Our database reference number
2. Author's surname
3. Author's first names or initials
4. Book Title

Some of our catalogues also include the following (but some are too long and would slow your browser loading speed. These have been kept short for quicker access).

5. Place of Publication
6. Publisher
7. Date of Publication. ("n/d" if date not known)
8. Edition
9. Approximate dimensions of the book in whole centimetres
10. Type of cover or binding
11. Overall condition of the book and the dust wrapper (if any), eg. "Fine / Very good"

Next follows a more detailed description of the boards , spine , spine title, dust jacket (whether clipped or unclipped), number of pages, illustrations or plates, text block condition and endpapers . There may also be a list of defects, such as ballpoint text or library and book dealers stamps, or any other obvious damage and details of any repairs or restoration completed. Sometimes the comparative rarity or scarcity of the book is mentioned. Lastly, there is often a short description of the contents of the book, often extracted from the inside front dust wrapper.

Each listing ends with the price of the book.

Glossary of terms used

Book Condition - terms used

READING COPY

A book in poor condition. It may be soiled, scuffed, stained or spotted, have loose joints, hinges, pages, but must have a complete, legible text.

POOR

describes a book that is sufficiently worn that its only merit is as a reading copy or for repair or restoration. Any missing maps or plates are still noted. This copy may be soiled, scuffed, stained, or spotted and may have loose hinges, pages, etc.

FAIR:

a worn book that has complete text pages (including maps or plates) but may lack endpapers, half-title, etc. (which are noted). Binding, jacket (if any) etc. may also be worn. All defects are noted.

GOOD: (g)

describes the average used and worn book that has all pages of leaves present. Any defect is noted.

GOOD PLUS: (g+)

better than average condition.

VERY GOOD MINUS: (Vg-)

possibly an ex-library copy, with a stamp or card pocket still attached. May have small imperfections caused by normal use or wear.

VERY GOOD: (Vg)

describes a used book that does show some small signs of wear, but no tears, on either binding or paper. Any defects are noted.

VERY GOOD PLUS: (Vg+)

high-quality book with perhaps just one or two extremely minor defects which detract from the overall appearance. Usually implies no faults in the binding.

NEAR FINE:

contains only the slightest of defects (perhaps a slight crease in a wrap or nick in covers) in an otherwise pristine book.

FINE:

approaches the condition of AS NEW, but without being crisp. For the use of the term FINE there must not be any defects, etc., and if the jacket has a small tear or other defect, or looks worn, this will be noted.

AS NEW:, mint

is used only when the book is in the same immaculate condition in which it was published. There can be no defects, no missing pages, no library stamps, etc., and the dust wrapper (if it was issued with one) must be perfect, without any tears.

Book terminology**ALL EDGES GILT (AEG):**

Having been cut smooth, the edges of the book have been burnished, usually with an imitation gold leaf called gilt.

ALUM-TAWED:

Leather that has been treated with both alum and some other agents to render it hard-surfaced and extremely durable.

ARMED:

Having an impression of an heraldic device on the cover of a book.

ARCHIVE TAPE

Special repair tape which is acid free and safe for long term use with books. Also includes safe heat-set repair tape used to close small tears.

BACKSTRIP :

The covering of a book's spine, usually of cloth or leather, and frequently lettered with the title of the book and other information, and decorated as well. The backstrip will often show signs of wear before the rest of the book, fading, fraying, becoming chipped or discoloured. Often **SPINE** is used to include the backstrip and spine together.

BACKSTRIP LABEL:

A label printed with the title of the book, sometimes also the name of the author, which is affixed to the backstrip. The label may be leather or paper. In either case, this type of label, which adds to the cost of manufacturing the book, is rarely used on modern books except as a special finishing touch on fine and limited editions.

BEVELLED BOARDS:

Covers of a book which have been angle-cut to create a sloped edge.

BLOCK:

The paper content of the book. All the pages gathered together. See **TEXT BLOCK**

BOARDS:

The hard covers of a book. Now usually cardboard covered with cloth or leather. Originally oak boards were used.

BOOKPLATE:

Label signifying ownership of a book, usually pasted to the inside front cover.

BRIGHT COPY:

A clean book where the paper usually retains its original crispness and glow.

BROWNEED :

Paper discoloured with age, to be expected, often starting at the outer margins of the page and working inward. Particularly noticeable in some Australian books printed during and soon after World War Two. Close to **YELLOWED** .

BUCKRAM (CLOTH):

A coarse and heavy fabric used for binding.

BUMPED:

Corners of a book are worn, wrinkled, dented or damaged. Occasionally applied to head and heel of spine.

CHIPPED:

With reference to the covers of a book: marred by light gouging or nicked. Leather is particularly susceptible. With reference to the DUST JACKET : small pieces along the edge missing.

CLIPPED

Refers to corners of DUST JACKET . Sometimes prices are clipped off one corner, or all corners are clipped off. A better jacket is UNCLIPPED, meaning it is as it was manufactured.

COCKED:

With reference to the spine of a book: permanently pushed forward, back or askew.

COCKLED:

In paper, having an uneven or blistered surface, possibly even curling at the edges.

CORNERS:

Not only the corners of a book in the usual sense (also known as tips), but the printing ornaments used to connect horizontal and vertical sections of a border.

COLOPHON:

A mark of identification - crowning piece, or finishing stroke - found in a book and furnishing information about the source of the book. In some of the earliest printed books, in which there might be no title page, the colophon was placed at the end of the book to perform somewhat the same function as a title page.

CRACKED:

Hinges are cracked when the spine of the book is starting to come apart and the cover is beginning to hang loose.

CROPPED:

An excessive cutting down of the margins at the bindery.

DAMP-STAINING:

Damage from water.

DECKLE EDGE:

In paper, the untrimmed feathery type of edge which occurs naturally in handmade papers, sometimes imitated by a machine.

DENTELLE:

Any fine scrollwork or lacy patterns which might be tooled into the leather covers of a book. However, the term is most usually encountered is "inner dentelle." This is the fold of leather turned in around the edges of the covers of a book, often decorated in gilt in a geometric design. The inner dentelle, in a fancy hand binding, may be the source for identifying the binder, who sometimes inserts his name in tiny letters along the inner dentelle at the bottom of the inside front cover.

DISBOUND :

The binding has come apart. Covers are detached and some or all SIGNATURES are loose. Can often be RE-BOUND. See also UNBOUND

DUST JACKET (D/J) : A removable paper cover placed by a publisher on a book, usually in hardcover, to protect the binding. This dust jacket is often used as a medium for advertising the book to potential buyers. Almost all Dust Jackets in our catalogue are PROTECTED .We used the term DUST WRAPPER (D/W) on some earlier listings.

DUST WRAPPER (D/W) Used in some of our earlier listings. Means a Dust Jacket.

EDITION :

Ed. Refers to all the copies of a book printed from the one setting of type. There may be more than one printing run, or IMPRESSION, of an edition. Where a later IMPRESSION is known it is clearly stated.

EDGES (PAGES):

The external (paper) surfaces of a book; the edges of the leaves. An edge which is left uneven is uncut. It may be termed deckled, or feathered. A smoothly cut (guillotined) edge is sometimes decorated with gilt, or printed in a marbled pattern. Edges are identified by top, fore and bottom.

EMBOSSSED:

The finish in a paper cover over boards which has a raised (as opposed to indented or blind-stamped) surface.

END PAPERS (EP):

The sheets of paper added, usually at the bindery, to connect the interior of the covers of a book to the TEXT BLOCK of the book. The end paper which is next to the cover is pasted to the inside cover, whereas the free end paper is that which is only pasted near its hinge. Most end papers are of sturdy and strong paper, and many are highly decorative.

ENGRAVING:

The process of cutting a surface for the purpose of producing a print. In the old-book trade, the term engraving generally refers to line engraving, whereas engraving from a wood block is called wood-engraving. Most fine engravings made before 1830 are copper line engravings.

ERRATA:

From the Latin word for "mistakes". On a book's errata slip, which is often TIPPED IN , may be listed those mistakes which were caught before the book was released, but too late for corrections to be made in the printed text.

EX-LIBRARY (EX-LIB):

Once part of a library, and often showing the signs of wear common to such use-- perhaps a blind-stamp on the title page, a label on the spine, or a pocket affixed to one of the inside covers.

FALSE BANDS:

Decorative bands attached to the spine of a book, primarily for the visual effect. Such bands usually have the effect of making a book look more rugged than it actually is. False bands are sometimes also used to impart an antique look to a modern binding. See **RAISED BANDS** .

FOXING:

A discolouration of the paper in a book, consisting of light brown spots believed to be caused by iron deposits or fungus. Does not necessarily diminish the value of the book as it occurs in a wide range of papers and may be present in **ALL** copies of a particular work. Quite common on pages next to **PLATES** or **DUST JACKETS** .

FRAYED:

Unravelled at the edges, mainly on a cloth binding.

FRONTISPIECE:

An illustration which faces the title page of a book. It is sometimes the only illustration in a book and frequently the most important one. Many times, this illustration is a portrait of the author.

GILT:

Made golden in colour, particularly with regard to the edges of books or decorative bindings and spine titles. Gold leaf, or more commonly, imitation gold, usually applied by the application of heat and pressure.

GLOSSY PAPER:

Polished, lustrous, smooth and slick. Often used for art books.

GUTTER:

The blank space between the printed text and the binding of a book. In other words, the inner margin of the page.

HALF-TITLE:

The first printed page of a book after the front end papers. Also, any one of the front pages on which there is printed an abbreviated version of the title which appears in full on the title page.

HINGE (INTERIOR):

The interior junction of the spine and the sides of a book. Can also describe the stub (in a bound book) which permits the free movement of a bound-in map, illustration, or other insert made into the binding of a book.

IMPRESSION :

A print run without altering the type setting. Thus you can have a **FIRST EDITION**, third impression, meaning the third time the book has been printed using the original type setting. If the type setting is changed, the next print run becomes a **SECOND EDITION**, and so on.

INSCRIBED :

Signed by the author with a personal message.

INSECT DAMAGE:

Cloth binding where insect paths are visible on covers. Sometimes holes in cloth, sometimes raised patches.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

(Illust.) Any picture, portrait or non-text item included in a book.

JOINT (EXTERIOR):

The exterior junction of the spine and the sides of a book.

LABELS:

Small strips of paper or leather affixed to the covers of a book, usually with the title printed on them.

LAID-IN:

Inserted into a book, but not attached to the book in any way.

LEAF (LL):

The bibliographer's term for what is commonly considered a single "page" in a book. A leaf consists of two pages numbers odd on the recto, even on the verso. The leaf's recto is its top when the book is lying open; the underside is the verso. Leaf is abbreviated l, and leaves ll.

LIBRARY BINDING:

A type of **QUARTER BINDING** for books that will receive hard wear in circulation.

LIMITED EDITION

A book whose publication is restricted in number. Limited editions are typically signed and numbered by the author and have a colophon indicating the total number of books printed. Limited editions whose print runs are short (1,000 or less) are considered more desirable and lower numbered volumes of a limited run are generally more desirable than their higher numbered volumes.

LIMP:

A leather binding which is not based on boards. See also **SOFTCOVER** .

LOOSE:

When the hinges become loose. A loose book will wobble in the hand as it is moved gently forward and back.

MARbled EDGES:

Cut edges of a book that have been decorated with a marbled pattern in colours, often to match boards and/or endpapers.

MOTTLED:

Spotted or speckled because of excessive dampness or mildew.

OFFSETTING:

When a page of a book bears the print of the page opposite, common with illustrated books without tissue guards.

PASTEDOWN:

The outer endpaper at the front and rear that is pasted to the interior of the cover.

PERFECT BOUND :

The pages of the book are usually single sheet and held in place with a hot-melt glue. Most softcover novels are perfect bound. Not as durable as traditional binding but much cheaper to produce.

PICTORIAL BOARDS:

The cover of a hard-bound book with a decorative scene.

PLATES :

In a book, a plate is often a full-page illustration, such as a frontispiece portrait, but it need not be full-page.

PORTRAIT:

A picture of a person, often used as a frontispiece in a book. Abbreviated port.

PROTECTED :

Refers to removable archivally safe Polypropylene cover added to protect DUST JACKETS from damage. Almost all First Edition dust wrappers in our catalogue are Protected.

QUARTER BINDING :

A binding where only the spine and the corners are covered in a special covering (often leather or buckram). The remainder is usually covered in cloth. See a Quarter Binding from our Bindery.

RAISED BANDS :

Horizontal bands across the back (spine) of a book. Such bands were once the result of the method of binding using cords; today they are sometimes added for decorative effect.

RARE :

A book which an active dealer might expect to see only once in a lifetime. Harder to find than "scarce."

REBACKED:

The book's spine has been newly recovered.

RE-BOUND :

A new binding has been completed, often incorporating as much of the old material as possible. A book is often referred to as REPAIRED or RESTORED, depending on which re-binding method the binder took.

RECTO:

With book laid open, the right-hand page.

REPAIRED :

Damage and defects have been made good, often using new materials. Library books are commonly repaired to keep them in circulation.

RESTORED :

Damage and defects are made good using, as near as possible, like material as the original and pieces from the original. Antiquarian books are sometimes restored to slow any further deterioration. They are then commonly placed in storage.

RUBBED:

Damaged by friction, usually refers to a book's covers.

SCARCE :

A book that might take some time to find, but not as limited as "rare."

SCUFFED:

Damaged by friction, heavily rubbed.

SHAKEN:

A book that is loose within its covers and moves fairly freely when moved back and forth within the hands.

SIGNATURE

Several sheets of paper folded together to make a section of a book.

SIGNED:

Believed to be the Author's signature, but with no accompanying INSCRIPTION

SLIP CASE:

A box open at one end and usually covered with paper, leather, or cloth, possibly linen, into which a book may be neatly slipped, leaving the SPINE exposed.

SOFTCOVER :

Flexible book covers made from paper, light cardboard, unbacked leatherette or plastisized material. Most novels are released in softcover and are PERFECT BOUND

SPINE :

Sometimes called the backbone of a book. That part which performs the function of connecting front and back covers and gives some rigidity to a book. Used here to include the BACKSTRIP

SPLIT:

A book and cover that are starting to part company.

SPRUNG:

A book that is separated from its binding, follows "starting," "cracking," and "split."

STAMP:

- a) Decorative impression on leather bindings,
- b) Ink or blind impressions on pages or edges of an ex-library book.

STARTING:

The binding book is weakened.

TEXT:

The main content of a book, usually beginning with Chapter One. The text does not include the preface, if there is one, or the foreword, introduction, table of contents, or the index.

TEXT BLOCK :

The paper content of the book - all the pages gathered together - the part that is sewn or glued together to make up the SIGNATURES of the book.

TIGHT:

Book hinges are holding firm.

TIPPED-IN :

Attached lightly to a page of the book. Pasted lightly along one edge.

TITLE PAGE (TP):

The title page is "the face of the book." It usually provides the essential details of the book's production, including author, complete title and subtitles and the date, place and agent of publication.

TOOLING:

Designs and lettering on a leather binding.

UNBOUND :

Never been bound. See also DISBOUND

UNCLIPPED

Refers to Dust Wrappers. This is as the d/w was manufactured and is its best state. See also CLIPPED .

VERSO:

With book laid open, the left-hand page.

WRAPS:

The covers of a book, made from heavy stiff paper rather than from boards. Such wrappers are often employed to cover small books or pamphlets. A dust jacket is not a wrap since it is not a permanent part of the book. (A DUST WRAPPER is also a different item)

YELLOWED :

Discoloration of paper, usually due to excessive ultra violet light or poor paper quality, or both. Similar to **BROWNEED** .