PANTONE®
& TEXTILE SCREEN PRINTING



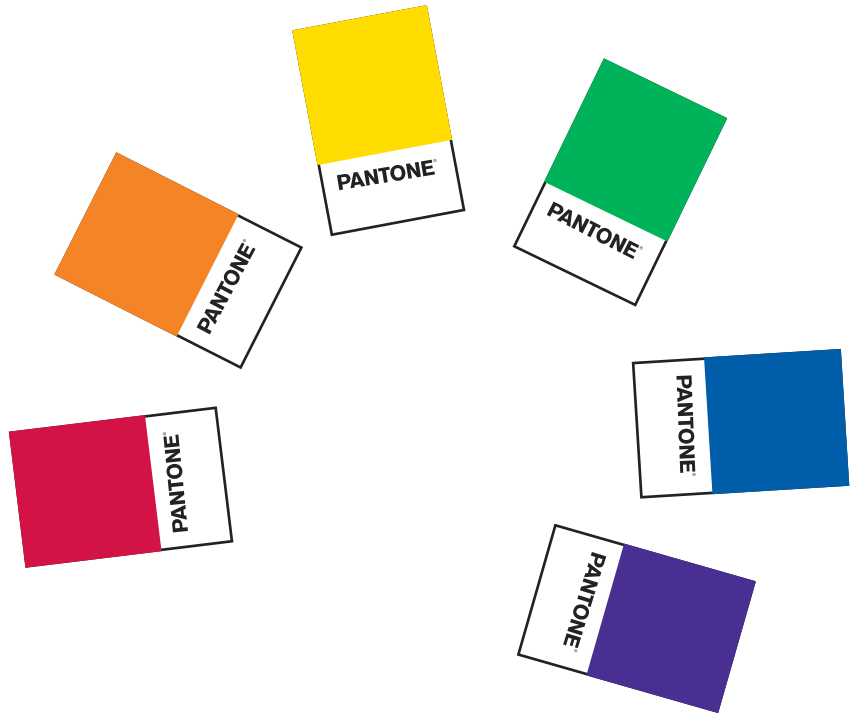
INK GUIDE

/for screen printing on apparel

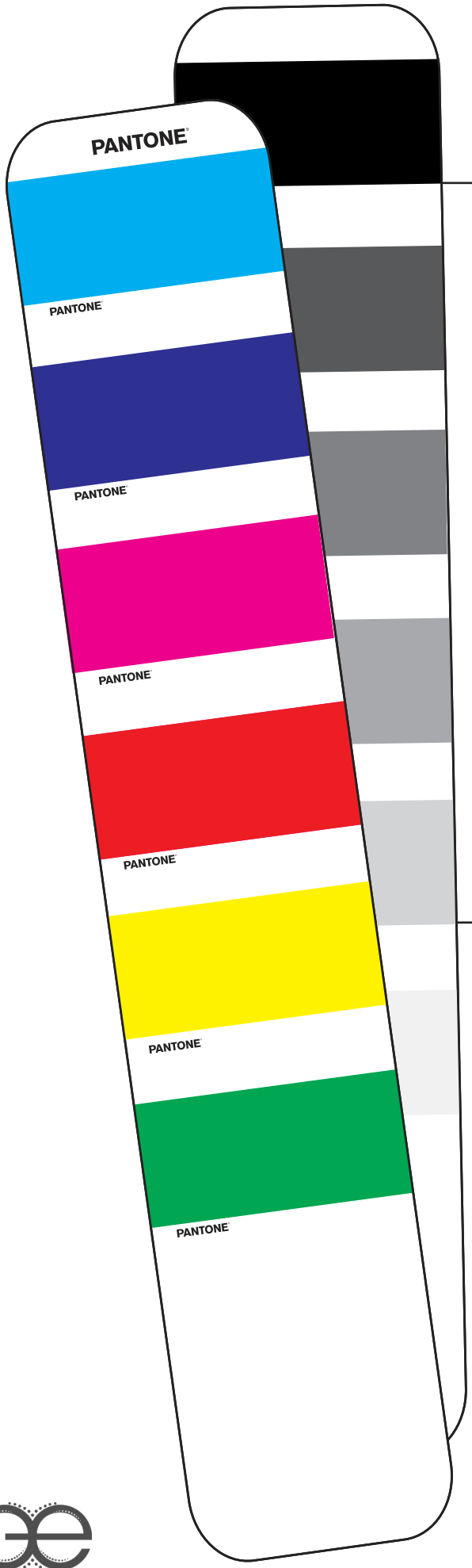


Contents

Introduction	3
Coated & Uncoated	4
The Under Base Effect	5
Transparent Screen Print Inks	6
Best Colors For Dark Garment Printing [Printable Cheat Sheet]	7
Conclusion	8



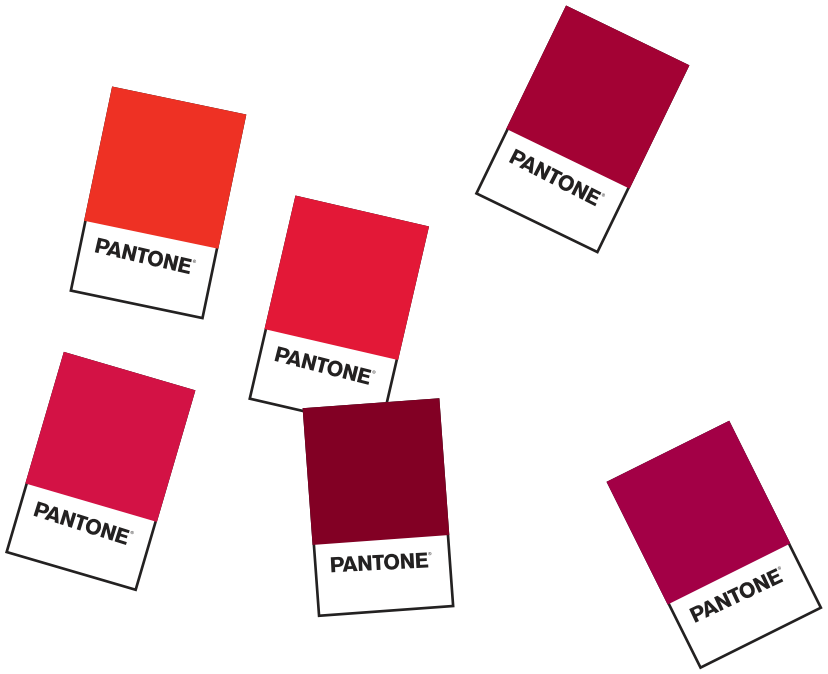
3E prints
A 3E LOVE PROJECT

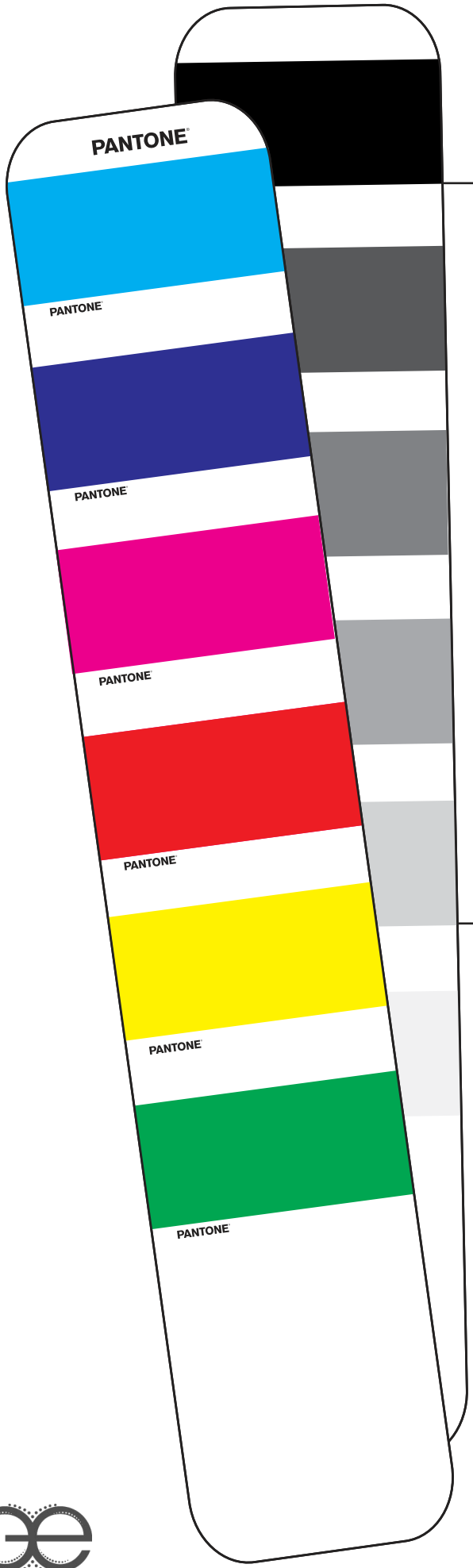


Introduction

When you say red, you could mean any number of a gazillion shades. When you say red 485c, you mean one very specific shade. Pantone® colors are used to select and accurately communicate color in a variety of industries.

Every good screen print company uses an ink mixing system that corresponds with the Pantone® Matching System. However, despite the exact nature of Pantone® colors, what you see is not always what you will get when it comes to textile screen printing. This guide covers the best practices for selecting Pantone® colors for use in apparel screen printing, and what you can expect from printed inks. No more surprises when you crack open that box of tees hot off the press.

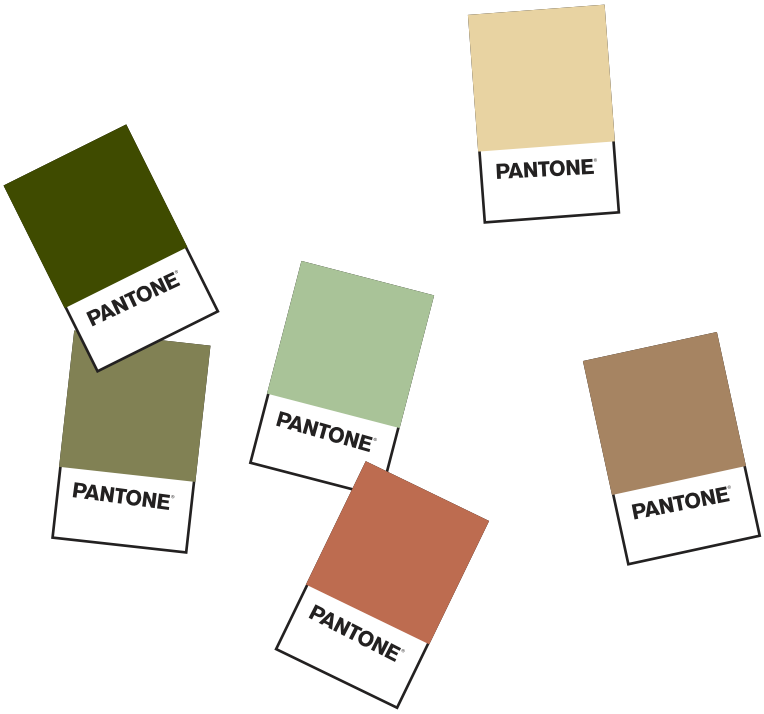


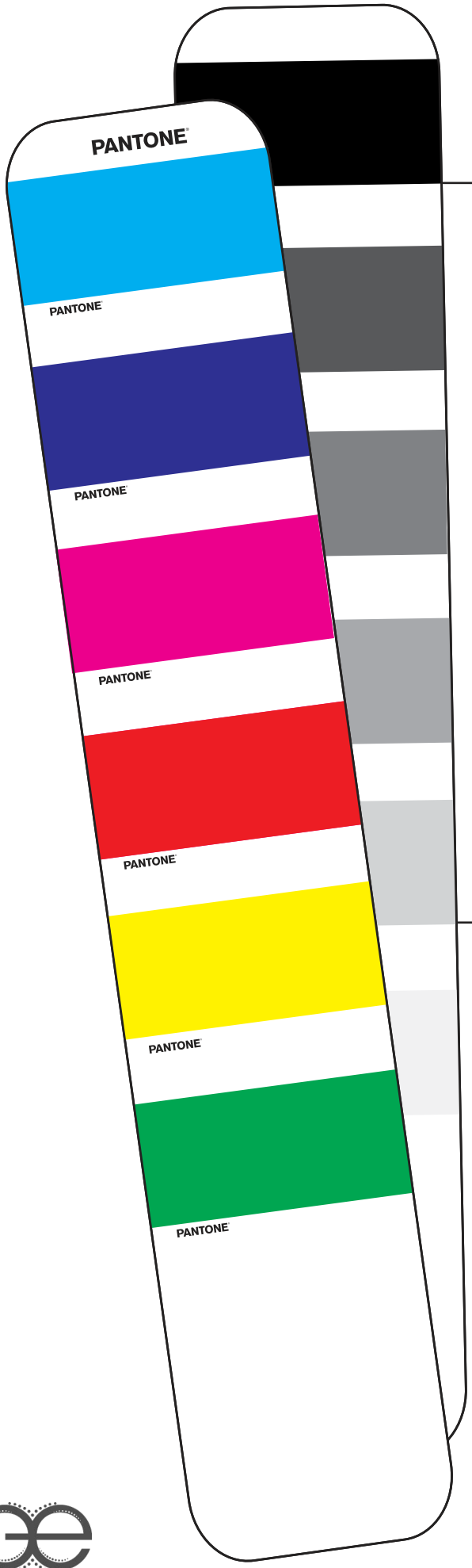


Coated & Uncoated

Pantone® books for graphics come in coated and uncoated versions. These books show the ink formulas as printed on paper coated with a gloss type finish or uncoated, no finish. Textiles and t-shirts don't come in coated and uncoated versions as paper does, so what does this mean for screen print ink colors?

In general, C or coated colors are the best pick for screen printing. Standard plastisol screen print ink has a little shine by nature and tends to reflect the look of the coated Pantone® fan book. That being said, there are formulas for the uncoated Pantone® colors as well. The uncoated formulas tend to be more dull and more opaque than the coated colors when printed, although not quite as flat looking as the uncoated Pantone® fan book.



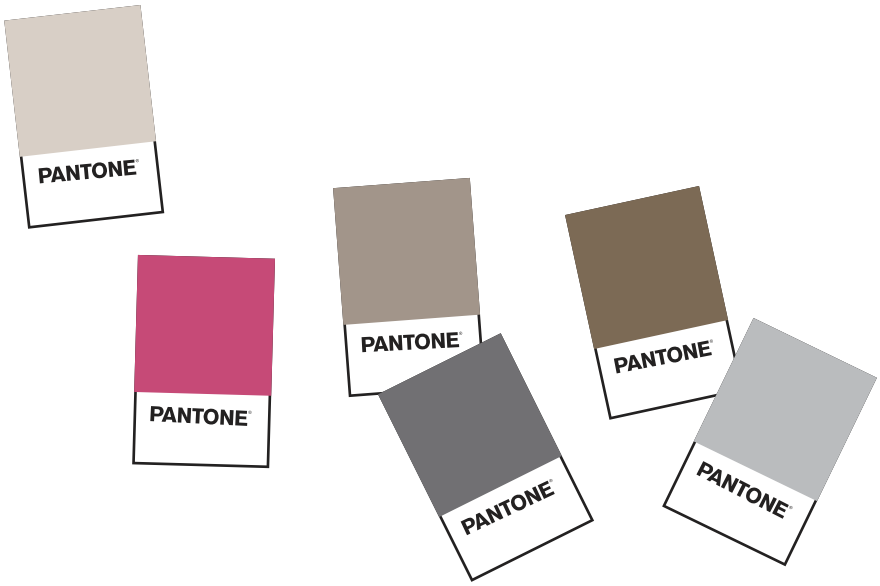


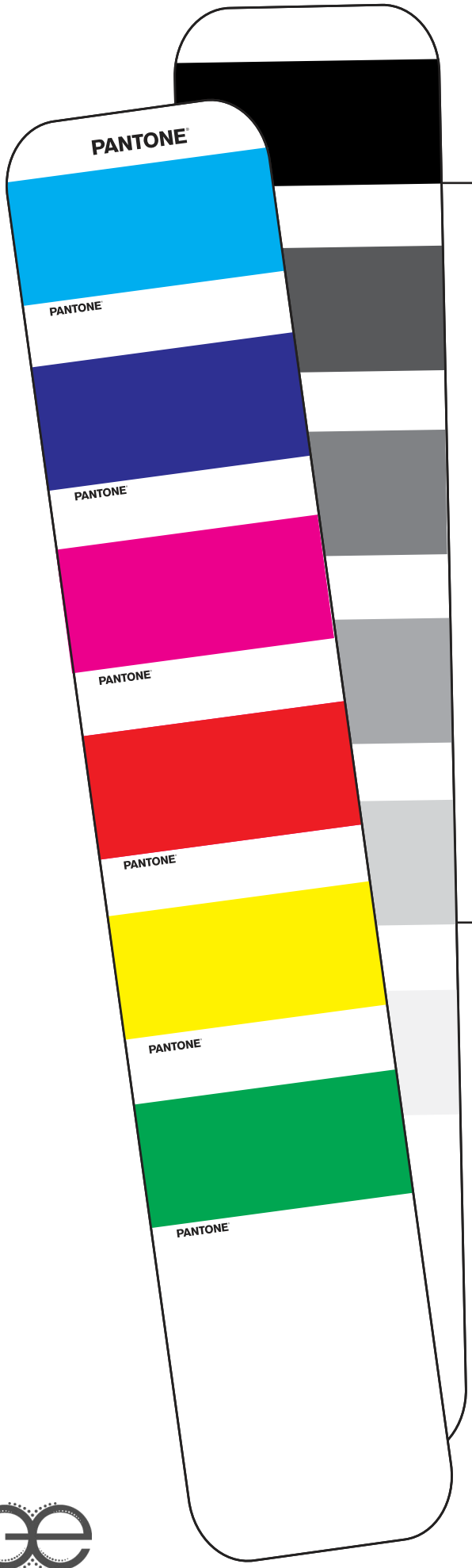
The Under Base Effect

Screen printing on dark or colored garments requires an under base so the ink can be seen. An under base is a layer of white ink printed before the design colors are printed. Without an under base, ink colors are absorbed by the garment or noticeably altered by the garment color.

Some Pantone® colors can be printed with no under base. Depending on the color of the garment and the ink color, the Pantone® may remain true. In most cases, however, the garment color will affect the ink color.

All screen printing inks have a degree of transparency. A white under base has a tendency to lighten the ink printed over it. The more transparent an ink color is, the more it will lighten on an under base.

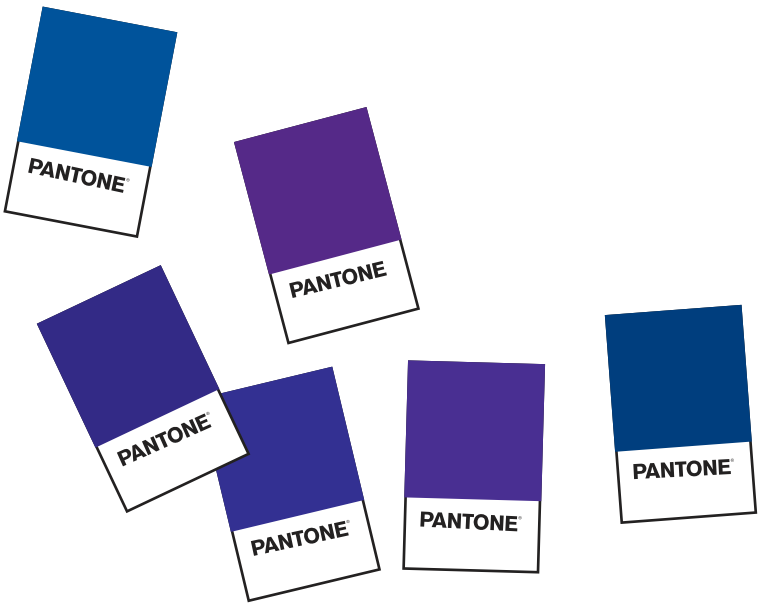




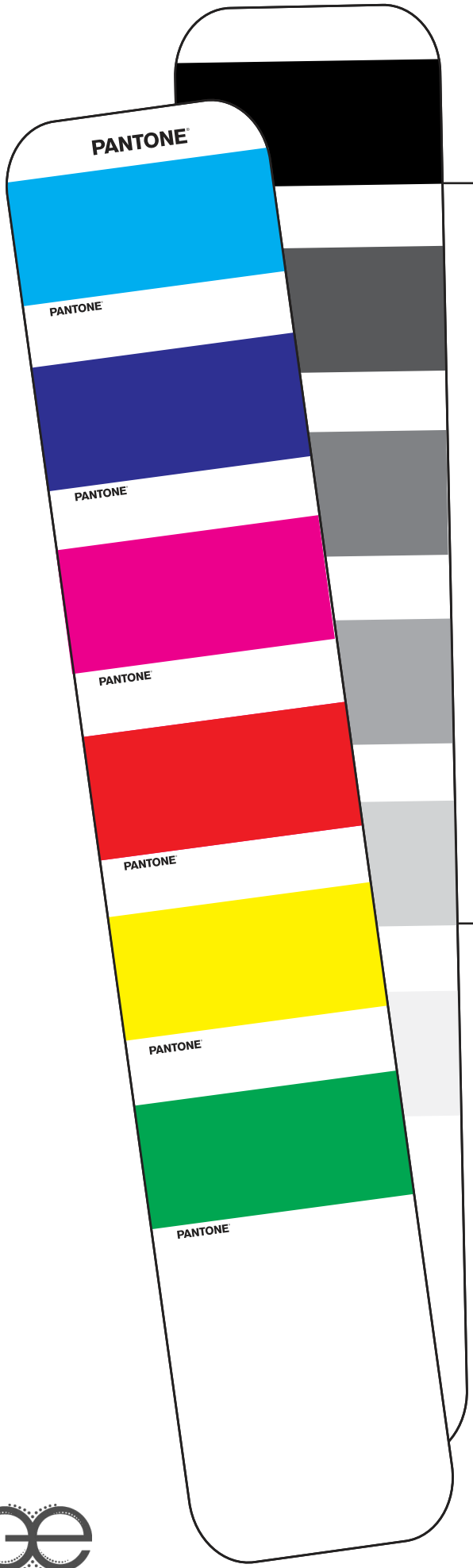
Transparent Screen Printing Inks

Middle to dark blues and purples are particularly transparent. Process colors and fluorescent colors are also very transparent. These inks can lighten up to a full shade from the target Pantone® colors. If at all possible avoid these colors in the design. In some cases, you can select a shade darker and it will lighten up to near the target shade.

If these very transparent colors are part of a logo or brand identity, you will want to work with your screen printer to create a match shade for under base printing. This involves some research and development along with a series of swatching. Once the color is approved for under base printing, the ink department can record the modified formula and/or keep the ink on the shelf for you.



UNDER BASE SAFE INKS
/ recommended for printing on dark garments
PANTONE
PANTONE 195C MAROON
PANTONE 186C RED
PANTONE 151C ORANGE
PANTONE 123C GOLD
PANTONE 109C YELLOW
PANTONE 281C NAVY
PANTONE 432C CHARC
PANTONE 466C KHAK
PANTONE SO ROYAL*
PANTONE 211C PINK
PANTONE 291C LT.BLUE
PANTONE 267C PURPLE
PANTONE 348C GREEN
PANTONE 3435C FOREST
PANTONE 371C OLIVE
PANTONE
PANTONE
PANTONE
*SO (Super Opaque) Royal is a unique ink formula developed for printing on under bases. The hue of the printed ink is between 285c and 286c in your Pantone® book.



Conclusion

This guide is meant to give you an understanding of how screen printing inks relate to Pantone® colors. You can use this guide to help select colors for the best print possible when designing art for textile printing.

Many times, the art can work on a shirt or other garment even if there's a little variation. If this is not the case and the Pantone® colors must match exactly, be sure to discuss this with the screen print artist at your print shop.