Digital Image Specs
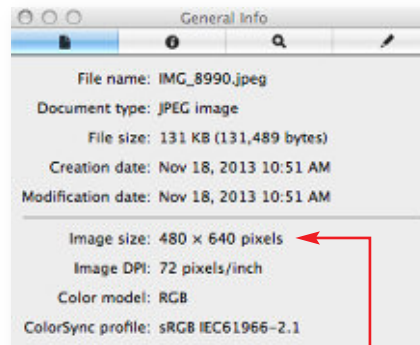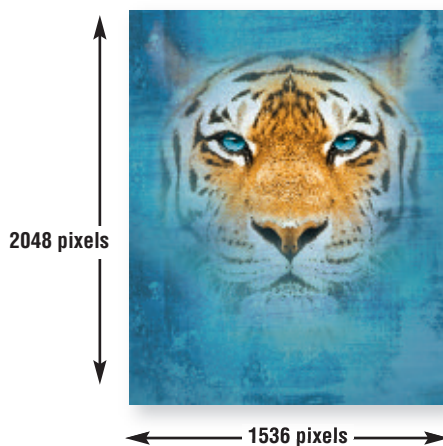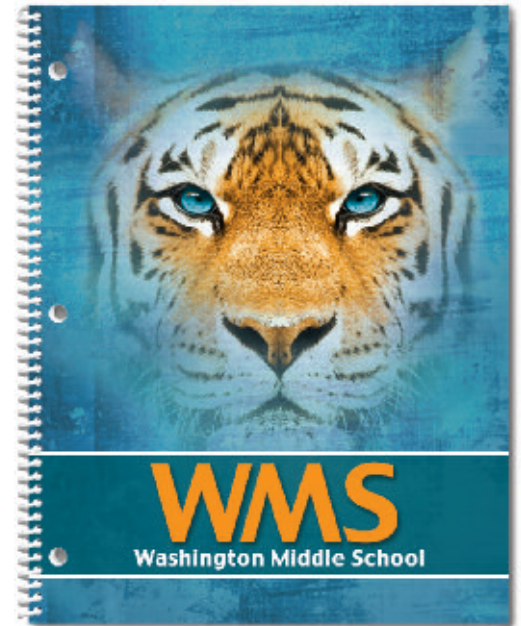
How to determine if photos, scans, or other digital files are acceptable for quality printing.

2048 pixels

1536 pixels

General Info

File name: IMG_8990.jpeg
Document type: JPEG image
File size: 131 KB (131,489 bytes)
Creation date: Nov 18, 2013 10:51 AM
Modification date: Nov 18, 2013 10:51 AM

Image size: 480 × 640 pixels
Image DPI: 72 pixels/inch
Color model: RGB
ColorSync profile: sRGB IEC61966-2.1

The "Get Info" pop-up window on a Mac will display your photo's pixels.

Maximum Print Size at 300 ppi
width = 1536 pixels ÷ 300 ppi = 5.12"
height = 2048 pixels ÷ 300 ppi = 6.83"

Resolution

An image that looks good on your computer's monitor may not necessarily print well. Resolution of a digital file, expressed in pixels per inch (ppi), determines the printing quality.

Divide each axis by 300 – the result is the largest size an image can be printed at *maximum* quality. We will accept files as low as 150 ppi. Images won't be as sharp as 300 ppi, but it is still of acceptable quality. In that case, divide each axis by 150.

Example of image at 1536 pixels x 2048 pixels:
300 ppi   1536 pixels x 2048 pixels (each axis ÷ 300 ppi)
highest quality   = 5.12" x 6.83" maximum print size

150 ppi   1536 pixels x 2048 pixels (each axis ÷ 150 ppi)
medium quality = 10.24" x 13.65" maximum print size

If you enlarge a 5.12" x 6.83" image to fit our larger planner size of 8.375" x 10.719", make sure you're maintaining at least 150 ppi. You cannot resave lower resolution files to 300 ppi.

Note: If you scan line art (black/white artwork with NO shading such as logos/mascots), scan at 600 dpi and save as a TIFF.

How many pixels are in my photo?

Photo-editing software can show how many pixels are in an image, in length by height. Otherwise, on a Mac, open the image file in Preview, then use keys "Command-I" to "Get Info" and a pop-up window will show the data. See above. On a PC, right click on the image file, look at "Properties," and then the "Summary" tab.

Camera Settings

Most digital cameras with 4 or more Megapixels, and even some cell phones, can take photos suitable for printing. Check your owner's manual to use the highest quality settings available. If possible, do not use any compression settings.

File Format

You may want to modify the brightness, contrast, and color in a photo-editing program. School Mate® cannot be responsible for photo quality since we do not make alterations or correct colors to images or files you upload.

Save digital images in one of these formats: **TIFF**, **EPS**, or **JPG**. Your file should be several megabytes in size if it's the correct resolution, although JPG files are generally smaller. You can also convert your file to a **PDF** with embedded fonts.