

# Card Submission 101

for Greeting Card Universe

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Rev 03 . May 15th . 2013

The intention of this document is to provide a quick check list guide for 'self-review' of card submissions on Greeting Card Universe. Included in each section are links to other great tips and tutorials to further your knowledge.

Before uploading your image:

## Have you checked your image against the Submission Guidelines?

Doing this is **CRITICAL** and may bring typography issues, distracting backgrounds, crooked horizons, etc ... to your attention BEFORE it gets to the review team. After all, your image is the foundation of your greeting card's marketability and if it won't pass the guidelines there's no sense in moving forward.

[Submission Guidelines](#)

**URLs on IMAGES are NOT ALLOWED** - URLs are not allowed on images, in verses, in Artist notes, or in the Image Credits (no www or .com). The only URL allowed is one to your GCU store in your Artist Notes.

**Remember Maximum Image Reuse of 3x** - Identical to nearly identical images can be used up to 3 times as long as they are in different categories. This applies to variations – Examples: Color variations, Borders/Borderless and Orientation - Changing the image or card color, border or orientation are all considered to be essentially the same card, and all count in the 3-times rule. In addition to the above variations, name or similar text variations must be different. If in the same category only up to 3 are allowed. For example: Happy Birthday Buddy, Happy Birthday Friend, Happy Birthday Pal - These would all fall into the same subcategory Birthdays >> For Friend and thus would be limited to only 3 variations. **Different inside text alone does NOT make an identical image card unique.** It is still limited to 3 times and the cards need to be in different categories. Images are not considered identical if the text on the FRONT image of the card differentiates it from another using the same image. The differentiation needs to be strong, so having I Miss You as well as Missing you is not strong enough differentiation. Examples: The same image of flowers can be reused more than 3 times with COVER text of Happy Birthday Mom, Happy Birthday Sister, Thank You, Missing You, Baby Shower invitation, etc.

## Have you checked the [Tabu list for Intellectual Property](#) issues?

Many words, phrases, quotes, song titles, song lyrics, movie titles, and the like, can not be used as they are protected in one way or another.

Once an image is uploaded and you are brought to the Card Image Details Page ...

## 1 - Card Title

Card titles should be as descriptive as possible within the allowed space. Titles should be meaningful to shoppers without misleading the shopper. The card title provides valuable data to search engines.

- Does your card title include: “who the card is for”? - example: for Son, for Teacher ...
- Does your card title include: “the occasion”? - example: Father's Day, Wedding, Get Well ...
- Does your card title include: “subject/theme and/or color and medium”? - example Blue Dog, Funny, Photograph ...

**DO NOT include misleading effects** (such as; gold, embossed) in your Card Title instead use “gold-like”, “digitally embossed”, etc.

**DO NOT** use the ampersand (&) as it will not register properly

**NOTE:** Long card titles get truncated from view and differentiating terms should be at the beginning of the card title so they can be seen at a glance (typically the age, name, relation, occasion). You do not need to use 'card' or 'greeting card' in your title, these are already added by GCU

[Learn More About Creating Good Card Titles](#) and [More About Misleading Effects](#)

## 2 – Keywords

- **DO** use descriptive words about your card – example newborn, branches, leaves, baby ...
- **DO** use words to describe WHO the card is for – example: fathers, pet lovers, children ...
- **DO** identify colors, patterns, themes, medium, breeds – example: red, argyle, western, watercolor ...
- **DO** include the occasion the card is for – example: weddings, father's day ...

**DO NOT include what the card COULD BE only WHAT IT IS!** Only use keywords that apply. Including a list of relationships or occasions that are not specific to this card are misleading and will produce incorrect search results for shoppers, therefore they will be removed by the reviewer.

**DO NOT include misleading effects** (such as; gold, embossed) in your Keywords instead use “gold-like”, “digitally embossed”, etc.

[Learn More About Creating Good Keywords](#)

### 3 – Standard vs Custom

#### Custom vs Standard Card Type setting – **Choose the correct setting!**

Custom must have custom elements in the card front design which the customer can change using the Customization software.

**NOTE:** Check the Custom Box for cards with a place for the customer to add their Photo as well as cards where you have created placeholder text using the customization tools for the customer to add an Age, Name, Year or other message.

Standard cards are those where the customer can not make changes to the card front.

**DO NOT** check the Custom Type Setting just because you want the customer to know you'll do custom work, this IS NOT the purpose of this setting and will result in your cards being returned.

## 4 – Fast Track

Fast Track Review Check-box is **ONLY for Shopper Request where a card sale is imminent AND Expedited Concept Review**. Click this check-box to expedite the card review process for this card.

**Any abuse of Fast Track may result in your cards being held and your discontinued use of the Fast Track process.**

**DO** offer a link in the Note to Review section of either the Wanted Cards Forum Thread or with your Custom Request ID from your Manage Custom Requests Page as your authorization to use Fast Track.

Example: *“This card is to fulfill the wanted card thread here <http://www.greetingcarduniverse.com/forum/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1357765733>”* or *“This card is Request ID: 4387”*

### **Expedited Concept Review: Introduced April 2013**

*To facilitate artists creating like/near identical image series of cards (age, relationship specific, etc.) we are allowing an expedited process for Concept Review. This will allow the first card (concept card) to be submitted via FastTrack and reviewed before the artist proceeds with creating and submitting derivative cards. This should save time and anguish for both the reviewers and artists.*

**DO** Submit your ONE concept card in the series as FastTrack and be sure to note in Notes to Reviewer field why. *Example “sample of proposed series of like images for age specific birthday collection, please review and let me know if I can proceed”.*

If the concept card is returned for edits, make your edits and resubmit as usual. If it is declined, go back to the drawing board taking into account the decline reason(s) shared by the reviewer.

If/once your concept card is approved, you have the green light to create and submit the balance of your series.

**DO** be sure to reference the original concept card's PID in the Note to Reviewers field (*example “this card is based on approved concept card #12345”*) when you submit any of the like image series as regular submissions - **NOT FastTrack**. FastTrack is permitted for the concept card of the series (1st card only) and not the balance of the series.

Please also note that this is not a blanket approval for all derivative submissions but for the basic image and concept. All other standards still apply to each submission.



Element credit small and unobtrusive

No URL allowed + Use Print Margin Tool  
Double check spelling/grammar.

#### Artist's Notes: ?

What could be more precious than a newborn in the arms of their Daddy? In the arms of a father love grows, the growth is represented by beautiful green leaves budding with the color of new growth. Design by Doreen Erhardt©2012 - Photo courtesy of Vera Kratochvil.

Char. left: (max. 300) 37

About the design + Credit for elements used including quotes, poems, verses by others

#### Note To Reviewer: ?

Photo TOU and model release info here:

<http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=19220&picture=newborn-baby-on-an-arm>

Non-Editable Field After you hit the Next Button!

Let the reviewer know if the image is yours + offer URL links to TOU for elements used and/or links to poems, verses and quotes.  
If Fast Tracked = explain why

☐ I submit that I have the rights to use this image in this manner. ?

#### Title: ?

for Son on Father's Day - Newborn Baby Black White Photograph

Who the Card is For

Occasion

Subject / Theme

Color / Medium

#### Keywords: ?

(separate keywords with a comma)

father, dad, daddy,

Who the Card is For

father's day, fathers day, father's day cards

Occasion keywords

baby, newborn, growth, branches, leaves

Descriptive Keywords

black and white photography

Colors and/or Medium keywords

Char. left: (max. 250) -5

#### Image By: ?

©Doreen Erhardt

#### Card Finish: ?

☐ Matte ☒ Glossy

#### Card Front: ?

☒ Standard ☐ Custom (photo or text)

#### Private Card: ?

☐ Make available in Private Gallery only

☐ Waive Review - I Agree to these Terms and am responsible for this card's content and quality.

#### Category: ? Two Categories are allowed, but two are not required

(you can select up to 2 categories)

☒ Holidays >> Father's Day >> For Son

Occasion + Relation Specific

☒ Collections >> Photography

Subject matter or medium, usually under Collections

#### Fast Track Review: ?

(for shopper requested cards ONLY)

☐ Card requested by a shopper, please review A.S.A.P.

READ ABOVE: Expedited Concept Review Introduced April 2013

Submit your ONE concept card in a new series as FastTrack and be sure to comment in Notes to Reviewer field why.

READ previous page for HOW TO

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## 5 – Categories

Most cards can be placed in 2 categories. This is to increase the card's exposure to card buyers. The **exception are name, date/year, relationship specific type cards, etc.** Card buyers come to GCU sometimes for very specific cards, so categories like *Occasions>>Miss You* need to actually have the words *Miss You* in some form on the front or inside of the card.

**Relation/Age/Year Categories** – Cards for these categories **ONLY** go in the Relation/Age/Year specific category. **They CAN NOT also be put in a general category.**

**Specific & General Categories** - **Cards CANNOT be both in a specific and general subcategory for the same category.** For example: *Birthday >> For Her* and *Birthday >> General*. If the card is feminine then it goes in *For Her* only. If the card is general it goes in *General*. One exception is with subcategories that are characteristics like Humor, Vintage, Animals, Sports, etc. A card CAN be in both a General and a characteristic category (*Birthday >> Humor AND Birthday >> General*)

**Relationship cards are specific cards** - If the card is designed for a specific relative, then it is specific and can only go in the relationship category under the occasion/holiday. If the card is not aimed at a specific relative, but still offers text/verse for the occasion/holiday, then the card is considered general and can only go in the general categories.

**General categories** - Some main categories have subcategories like flowers, pets, humor, vintage/nostalgic in addition to General. These are all considered General categories, so feel free to pick the ones that best suit your card and will give it the most exposure.

**Exceptions** - With the above in mind some Relation/Age/Year specific cards can find places under the Collections category as well, such as Outdoors, Photography, and Sports. Take advantage of these to give some of your specific cards potentially more exposure.

**DUAL Age/Year & Relation Specific Cards** - When a card has two specifics (age/year and relationship typically) then it goes in the relationship category only. We are adding an Age Specific subcategory under many relationship categories. For example: *Birthday>>Family Relation Specific>>Mom>>Age Specific*.

**Photo Cards** must have at least 1 of the categories a Photo Card / Your Photo Here category.

**Custom Cards** now have new categories **Customize for Any Age/Year/Name, etc.** Please note that **only 1 like image** can be put in these categories, as they are considered “samples” for the customer to then customize with their Age, Year, Name, etc.

**NOTE:** If you don't find a specific category you are looking for consider using “Other” vs a category that is not a likely fit. It is always a better choice and the reviewers will let you know if there was a better suited category for future submissions; or if they requested one be created for you.

[Learn More About Creating for Categories](#) and [Learn More About Choosing Categories](#)



## 6 – Artist Notes AKA Card Description

- **DO** include a description of your card in your Artist's Notes
- **DO** include credit based on the TOU (terms of use) of any elements used in your design or if you used a poem, verse or quote written by someone else. *Example - "photo courtesy of Vonda Dickerson" "quote by Vonda Dickerson" (no external URL is allowed in this field)*
- **DO** clarify **misleading effects** (such as; gold, embossed) in your Artist Notes with statements like:  
*"This card has an Embossed-like look (there is no indication of embossing to the touch)."*
- **DO** add Foreign language translation in your Artist Notes, such as; *"Spanish translation: I Love You"*

[Learn More About Writing a Good Card Description](#)

## 7 – Note to Reviewer

- DO** include links to TOU for any elements you use in your design that isn't yours
- DO** include a link to the Wanted Cards forum post or include a reason for using Fast Track
- DO** include a question for the reviewer about your category choice or request a new category if either is appropriate
- DO** inform the reviewer that it's your painting/photograph/illustration
- DO** inform the reviewer if you've used this design on previously approved cards by offering the PID
- DO** inform the reviewer if you have a Model release of subject matter (person) with their permission to use their photo in this manner
- DO** inform the reviewer that you intent to create a like image series/collection based on this first submission
- DO** inform the reviewer of the details of how you've modified vintage works to create a new composition
- DO** inform the reviewer where the foreign language came from; i.e., *"I am fluent in Spanish"*, or *"I paid a translator"* ... keep in mind that **free translation tools on the internet are rarely accurate and we don't suggest they be used to create foreign language cards.**

[Learn More About Making Effective Use of the Notes to Reviewer Section](#)

## 8 - INSIDE TEXT/VERSE

**BEFORE submitting your card to the Review Queue check for common grammar, punctuation and spelling errors, as well as GCU accepted spellings of holidays: [GCU Grammar and Spelling Check List](#)**

- Does your text (front and/or inside) speak clearly to your category?
- Is your inside text/verse different from that on the front?  
*Example having Happy Father's Day on the card front and then nothing but Happy Father's Day on the inside, will get your card returned – so be creative.*
- Have you checked and rechecked your spelling, grammar and punctuation on your card front and inside text?
- If your card is an Announcement or Invitation, have you included placeholder text?  
*Example: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ or Date .....*
- Does your card image and verse match (is it appropriate for) the age, sex and/or relationship of the category?  
*Example: a pink floral is not appropriate for men or boys, but would be a good choice for mature women*
- Does your Ellipsis meet the GCU Standard? The word is they allow both spaces . . . and no spaces ... between the marks just as long as there are a) only three marks and b) there is a preceding space when coming after a word ... OR trailing space when coming before a word.

**DO NOT** use “your text here” as a placeholder

**DO NOT** use poems, quotes and verses that you don't have the right to use, even when using something in the public domain; credit the originator to protect yourself and GCU.

[More About Creating Verses](#)


[Inside Verse Nuts & Bolts](#)



## Card Inside Text

**BEFORE submitting check this GCU link for common errors and approved Holiday spellings**  
<http://www.gcuwiki.com/spelling.html>

Make your changes on the sections below and click " Return to My Cards " to finish.

Card Inside	Front
<div><div></div><div><p><i>We are so proud of the father you've become!</i></p><p><i>Happy Father's Day Son!</i></p><p>» Click here to edit the bottom message</p></div><div></div></div> <p>(Top message not editable)</p> <p>(Closing not editable)</p> <p> Large View</p>	

- \* Does your verse speak to the specifics of the category?
- \* Is the inside text different from the card front text?  
(i.e., Happy Father's Day both on the card front and the inner verse - be creative)
- \* Is your card free from spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors?
- \* If your card is an Announcement or Invitation, have you included proper placeholder text?  
such as; Date: \_\_\_\_\_ or Date: .....

**Additional Tips can be found Here:** <http://gcucommunity.com/2011/06/19/nuts-and-bolts-inside-verse/>  
**here:** <http://gcucommunity.com/2012/05/29/dash-of-inspiration-whats-in-a-verse/> and  
**here:** <http://gcucommunity.com/2013/01/08/tips-and-tricks-card-designer-checklist/>

[Return to My Cards](#)

## 9 – Photo / Custom Cards

**DO** keep your Custom Text Boxes within the safety margin (Print Margin Preview Tool)

**DO** keep your Custom Text Boxes from touching one another.

**DO** make your Custom Text Boxes large enough to not only hold the placeholder text, but to allow room for letters such as; 'j', or 'y' (for example) to define the descender line, therefore making sure the text box will fit all letters the customer enters.

**DO** make sure your Custom Text Boxes align such that text will be properly justified, i.e. Centered, Right or Left. Alignment is manually created by you for the text boxes, so place them carefully and use the Alignment tool within the font choice area to choose a justification that will allow the customer's text to automatically line up as you intended for the design.

**DO** check your spelling, punctuation and grammar within your Custom Text Boxes

**DO** use the Preview Function before a final Save of your Photo Card design. Text boxes which are not quite long enough or tall enough will only be visible using the preview tool, by showing your text scattered rather than placed where you intended.

**DO NOT let your Photo Placeholder Boxes overlap each other**

**NOTE:** Photo Cards must have at least 1 of the categories a Photo Card / Your Photo Here category

[Learn More About Creating Custom Cards](#)

[Designer Tips for Photo Cards](#)

[GCU University Video on Custom Front Cards](#)

## 10 – Last but not Least

Before you leave your submission sitting in the 'pending' line for the reviewers, be sure to go preview your card with the **Print Margin Tool**. Make sure all visual imagery and text elements that are important to the design are within the yellow safety line. This includes borders, **if you choose to use borders BE SURE that when you check the Print Margins they won't be cut off 3 of 4 sides leaving a lopsided design** which will get sent to the customer.

## Print Preview

**Margin Allowances:** This tool shows the margin allowance lines (2) beyond which any details critical to the design of the card should not reside. The outermost line is the Trim Line (1/8 inch) which is where the card will be cut. The innermost line is what we call the Safety Zone (1/4 inch) which is where details critical to the design of the card, particularly text, should not reside to allow for variances in trimming and printing.

**Transparent Zones:** This tool will also show the transparent zone(s), when applicable. The transparent zone(s) shows the outline of the customizable regions on the card where a shopper can insert an image or photo and/or customize the text on the cover image of the card. This is most common but not limited to Photo Cards.

### Card Information:

Product Id:

Cover: ☒ Yes

Inside: ☐ Yes

Trim Line: ☒ Yes

Color:  [Change Color](#)

Safety Zone: ☒ Yes

Color:  [Change Color](#)

Transparent Zone: ☒ Yes

Color:  [Change Color](#)

Placeholder Images: ☐ Yes

Color:  [Change Color](#)

Text Zone: ☒ Yes

Color:  [Change Color](#)

Create Preview

### Outside Image for 3100.896479



Are All Custom Text Boxes  
INSIDE the Safety Zone?

BEFORE card is left in queue, have you used the Print Margin Tool?

Custom text boxes CAN NOT TOUCH each other

Text within a Custom Text Box should not be cutoff; example: the bottom of the 'g' in Angelina should not touch the bottom of the box.

Photo Card Placement Boxes  
should be slightly larger than  
the opening to ensure  
complete coverage.

Additional Tips can be found Here: <http://gcucommunity.com/2012/06/14/nuts-and-bolts-photo-cards/>  
here: <http://gcucommunity.com/2011/12/27/blast-from-the-past-designers-tips-for-photo-cards/> - here: <http://gcucommunity.com/2012/10/22/dash-of-inspiration-custom-front-card-tips/>  
and here: Creating Custom Front Cards GCU University Tutorial: <http://www.gcuwiki.com/gcuu.html>