

Book Artist

“Books are containers. They hold things: pictures, words, information. What will your book contain?”

—Esther K. Smith,
author and book artist

For centuries, humans have been developing methods to create and bind paper in order to share ideas, knowledge, and inspiration with each other and with future generations. The craft of creating books has evolved over time, but the basic human need to share words and pictures has stayed the same. In this badge, try gluing, stitching, and folding your way to shaping your own book artistry style—you’ll create some spectacular gifts and keepsakes.

Steps

1. Explore the art of bookbinding
2. Get familiar with the insides of a book
3. Try out book artist techniques
4. Focus on function
5. Focus on style

Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll know how to make different kinds of books.

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

STEP

1 Explore the art of bookbinding

Since they were scratching figures into clay with sticks, humans have been creating and preserving documents. The invention of paper made the possibilities seemingly endless, and today artists make book covers by recycling everything from bottle caps and cereal boxes to leather clothes and license plates. Dive into the art of bookbinding!

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Survey a book collection.** Find five different sizes and styles of books that you like at a library, bookstore, or in your own collection. Then figure out the binding and printing methods used to create each one. (Books and websites about book arts will help you get familiar with the parts of a book. Check out the sidebar on page 3 for some great terms to understand.)

FOR MORE FUN: Share one or two examples of books you find particularly beautiful with your Cadette group.

OR

- Interview or visit a book artist or bookbinder.** Many colleges offer courses in book arts, and the teachers may share some knowledge with you. Librarians and antique booksellers may also be able to point you to a book artist. Ask the artist how they got involved in book arts, why they love making books, and what kinds of books they make. If you can, visit their studio. What kinds of tools and materials do they use? Can they point you to resources in the community that can help you with the rest of your steps?

OR

- Tour a book arts center or art museum.** If there's a book arts center or museum with a book arts collection near you, go for a visit. When there, find five examples of the bookbinding craft that you like.

FOR MORE FUN: Read a book about bookbinding before you go so you'll have some questions in mind and can search for the kinds of books you might like to make.

Colophon Hunt

Publishing houses often have many different divisions, called imprints. (Usually, imprints were once separate companies.) Each imprint has its own logo, called a colophon.

The colophon is printed on the bottom of the book's spine, and it can often give you some clues about what's inside.

That's because imprints have their own personalities—they often focus on certain genres—like fantasy, romance, or young adult fiction—or try to publish authors who have similar writing styles or similar messages. Scan the spines of your favorite books at home, at the library, or at a bookstore—are there any common imprints?

More to Explore



Pretend you're a Girl Scout in 1940. As girls did to earn their Typography badge:

- Be familiar with well-known typefaces such as Bodoni, Caslon, Garamond, Baskerville, and Goudy, which were named after famous type designers.
- Know the meaning of terms relating to type, such as font, roman, italic, lower and upper case, sans serif, leading, space, em, rule, flower or ornament, pica, and point.

STEP

2 Get familiar with the insides of a book

Before you start creating your own books, take a look inside to see how they're made. In the process, learn how to mend books so you can help keep your collection—and the collections of others—in great shape. Get started with these choices.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Mend an old book.** Visit a nearby library, and, if possible, tour the repair or conservation area. Understand the basic process of repairing a paperback book, and try your hand at it—either help at the library you're visiting, or ask for the librarian's assistance in repairing an old book of yours or one from a used bookstore.

OR

- Take an old book apart.** Find a discarded book from a library or an old book from your collection, a used bookstore, or a yard sale. Name the parts of the binding and interior. Then carefully take the book apart to find out how it was made.

TIP: Keep the pages, and recycle them into new crafts or pages of books you make in this badge.

FOR MORE FUN: Find out what it would take to put the book back together, and, if possible, go for it!

OR

- Visit an antique or rare bookseller.** Repairing very old books is a delicate process. Ask someone skilled in this area to explain how it's done and to show you some examples.

FOR MORE FUN: Find out what makes a book rare and why an old book is not necessarily a rare and valuable book.

More to Explore

Pretend you're a Girl Scout in 1940. As girls did to earn their Bibliophile badge, describe with examples the work of your favorite illustrator, and tell why you like their work. (Today, most illustrators have websites with samples of their work.)



The Parts of a Book

The binding, covers, paper, and design elements used to create and print a book all have special names. Find the definitions of these terms for a basic introduction to book arts:

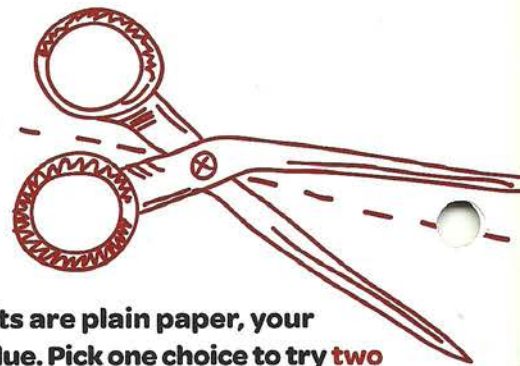
- Spine
- Joint
- Board
- Hinge
- Digest size
- Paper stock
- Gutter
- Folio
- Endpaper
- Jacket
- Flap
- Signature
- Headbands
- Gilt edge
- Deckle edge
- Chain stitch
- Saddle stitch
- Octavo
- Case cover (cloth or three-piece)
- Extent
- Perfect binding
- Coptic binding

Once upon a font

"I decided to take a calligraphy class. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture. . . . and we designed it all into the [first Macintosh computer]. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them."

—Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computers, in his 2005 commencement address at Stanford University

STEP 3 Try out book artist techniques



All you need to get started in book crafts are plain paper, your fingers for folding, regular thread, and glue. Pick one choice to try **two** of these classic bookbinding methods. You'll make finished books in steps 4 and 5, so use this step to get familiar with your materials and how to use them. Look for specific directions in a book or online; you might also ask an expert or attend a course for guidance.

TECHNIQUES:

Fold-and-cut. Try making a star book or accordion book with this method, which requires few tools.

Glue binding. Gluing allows you to place many pages into a spine and to add beautiful covers to basic books.

Stitch. Make a simple sewn book—you could try a simple saddle stitch or the more advanced chain stitch method.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

Fold method *and* glue method

OR

Fold method *and* stitch method

OR

Glue method *and* stitch method

Cover & Endpaper Ideas



THE COVER of a book wraps around it and protects it. Try using fabric, decorative papers, rubber, linoleum, or recycled materials like old cereal boxes or license plates. You could also make your own cover with paint and paper.



ENDPAPERS are folded sheets of paper with one leaf pasted to the inside of a book's front or back cover and the other pasted to the first or last page.

Sometimes endpapers are decorated or printed with information related to a book's text, such as a map. You could create some jazzy endpapers with block printing, marbling, starch printing, or stenciling.

STEP

4

Focus on function

Now that you've taken a close look at books, it's time to make your own! Consider what kinds of materials will work best with the contents of the book you choose to make.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Make an organizational book.** This might be a personal date book, planner, or calendar book. Some computer programs offer templates with calendar pages you can bind into your book.

OR

- Make a scrapbook, memory book, or personal journal.** This could be an album for your photos; a journal for thoughts, dreams, or favorite quotes; or a book with heavy paper for pasting in memories from a Girl Scout trip or a family vacation.

OR

- Make a gift book.** This could be an appreciation book, in which friends can write something cool about the girl you're giving it to. It could be a sketch journal for an artist friend. Or it could be a bound manuscript or book of poems for a friend who's a novelist or poet (you could even design a book jacket!).

More to Explore

Pretend you're a Cadette in 1963.

As girls did to earn their Creative Writer badge, write a children's story, letter it, and, with a friend, illustrate the pages and bind them into a book.



Traditional Bookbinding Tools

Once you're ready to start bookbinding, you'll need a few basic tools. You can find them in craft-supply stores or online. Here are some of the things you might need:

Bone folder—used to crease, score, and fold paper (or small butter knife)

Utility knife—used to cut and scrape

Ruler—for measuring and to use as a straightedge

Awl—(or sharp sewing needle) to punch holes in paper

Brushes—nonshedding painter's types for applying glue

Adhesives—adhesive spray, bookbinding plastic glue or polyvinyl acetate, or rubber cement

Bindings—thread or cord made of hemp, linen, or nylon, elastic banding, or ribbon

Binding board—various types of cardboards

Specialty papers—painted, marbled, rice paper, foil paper, tissue paper—your choice

Divider—for measuring

Hammer—for rounding and evening boards and signatures



TIP: If you create a folded accordion book, you can make a horizontal fold

one-third of the way up the paper. This creates pockets on

each page that you can use for keepsakes, business cards, tickets,

or other items. It looks pretty with a ribbon tie, too!

Careers to Explore

- Bookbinder
- Printer
- Craft artist
- Stationery designer
- Papermaker
- Antique or rare bookseller
- Librarian
- Archivist
- Historical-document preservationist
- Letterpress artist
- Calligrapher
- Paper-recycling expert
- Book designer
- Book-production expert
- Electronic-book developer
- Book app developer

STEP 5 Focus on style

Books can be interesting for more than just their content—they can be beautiful works of art. Concentrate on the look and style of the book you create in one of the choices below.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Make a book from something unexpected.** Use grocery bags, maps, menus, magazine or newspaper pages, or any other kind of creative material as a cover, endpapers, or pages for your book.
OR
- Try a different binding technique or alter a book.** Other bindings might include buttonhole binding or coptic binding. An “altered” book is one that might otherwise be discarded—instead, you add paint, collage, pop-ups, scrapbook elements, messages, or anything else you’d like to give the book a new life as an art piece.
OR
- Get creative with the definition of “book.”** Use your bookbinding skills to make a pop-up book, old-fashioned scroll, artist’s portfolio case, or cloth baby book!

Incredible Paper Engineering

Pop-up books are three-dimensional—they have pages that often literally pop up when you turn them. They may also have flaps that can be lifted or scenes that change by pulling a tab. These sophisticated books are made through a process called paper engineering. Famous craftspeople like Robert Sabuda not only create the artwork, but also design the books and do their own paper engineering. Unlike most books, pop-ups must be put together by hand. It can take as many as 60 people to assemble one book!

More to Explore

Make your own pop-ups.
If you're inspired by the beauty and creativity of paper engineering, practice by making a simple skyscraper. Then add pop-ups to a book!

Paper-Painting

Here are a few simple techniques that turn ordinary paper into extraordinary artwork just right for a book cover.

Marbleized Paper

You'll need:

1/2 tsp alum
(found in the spice/
baking section)

Low shallow pan (the starch
should fill the pan 1 to 2 inches deep)

2 cups liquid starch

Liquid acrylic paints

Long wooden skewer

Eyedropper
or straw



Foam Stamping

Trace a design onto a piece of artist's foam, and then carve it out **carefully** using a utility knife. Stamp it onto an inkpad, and use it to create stamped designs and patterns on your paper.

Shaving Cream Swirl Paper

Spray shaving cream onto a cookie sheet, and spread it out using a spatula or, better yet, a small squeegee. Drip any kind of paint or food coloring in drops onto the cream, and then use a thin brush or a toothpick to make swirl designs. Carefully press a piece of card stock onto your design. Use the spatula or squeegee to scrape the shaving cream off the card.

Marbling Technique

Stir alum into starch.

Pour that mixture into pan.

Add a little water to each paint—use light and dark colors. Gently drop paint onto the surface of the starch using eyedropper (or drop it in from the tip of a straw with a finger closing one end). Some paint will sink to the bottom. However, if the paint really doesn't stay on the surface, add a little more water to the paint.

Drag a wooden skewer through the paint on the starch to make designs. Experiment making designs with a comb or a fork as well.

Lay paper on top of the starch. Let it sit for a few seconds. Lift paper from pan by one corner and let starch drip off. Gently rinse paper under running water to remove any extra starch.

Lay paper to dry on a paper towel. The edges will curl as it dries. When the paper is dry, ask an adult to help you iron it flat.

