

REYNOLDA

Stick or Skewer Books

Project

Create a simple book that needs neither glue nor sewing to bind the pages together.

Samples



Sample book with stick binding



Sample book with alternative binding, a spoon

Inspiration

Katharine Reynolds came from a family of readers, and her daughter Nancy carried on the tradition. While still only a teenager, Nancy collected first editions. Listen to a portion of an interview that Nancy gave in which she remembers a story about collecting a first edition (a book from the very first time it was printed) and her uncle Will, her guardian, having a question about the price. Find the oral history here: <https://reynolda.ocell.com/en/books-167138.html>

Vocabulary

Binding – the binding of the book is the way the pages are held together. Look at books at your home or in a library. How do the pages stay together? Are they glued into a cover? Have they been stitched together with thread and then glued into a cover?

Materials

- A stack of paper cut to the same size (one example uses index cards, another uses 8 1/2 x 11" paper cut in half)
- Cardboard or sturdy paper to make the front and back cover, cut to the same size as your pages (or just slightly larger if sturdy enough)

- A skewer, stick, or other straight and sturdy object, about the length of the edge of your book pages or just slightly longer (**Note:** it needs to be longer than the distance between the holes you make in step 5, but if it is too much longer than the edge of your book, you will need to cut it.)
- A rubber band (string, hemp, or yarn work as alternatives)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Scissors

Process

For video instructions, find this episode on [Reynolda's YouTube page](#).

1. Cut your book pages to the same size.
2. Cut your book covers to match the size of your book pages. You can do this by carefully measuring the dimensions of the page and then measuring and cutting the book cover to match. Alternatively, you can take one of your book pages and place it on the back of your cover paper as a guide. Then, make small, light marks with pencil onto the cover page around each corner of your book paper. Use a ruler to draw a line between these marks and create your cutting lines.
3. Cut out the covers.
4. To bind this book, you will need to punch two holes on one edge of the pages and covers. Start by stacking your book pages and placing your two covers on each side of the stack.
5. Tap the pages and cover together on their edge on a table or flat surface to line them up. If you have a three-hole punch, place the pages carefully into the three-hole punch so that **two** of the holes are centered along the left side edge, at an equal distance from the top and bottom edge of the book. (You don't want three holes on the edge of your book for this kind of binding.) If you only have a single-hole punch, measure where you want the holes to be, making them an even distance from each edge. Then, punch both holes in one page or the cover as a guide. Place the guide on top of each other page (one or two at a time) and carefully line up the edges. Then, place your hole punch over the already cut hole of your guide and punch.
6. Gather all pages and covers back together and line up the edges and the holes.
7. Fold a rubber band in half and feed one end from the back to the front of one hole in your book. Insert the stick or skewer through the loop that the rubber band made on the front side of the book. Then, push the other end of the rubber band through the second hole. Stretch the rubber band gently to reach over the other end of your skewer or stick.
8. Adjust and straighten the rubber band and stick as needed, so that the stick is centered over the two holes and the rubber band is not twisted.

Continue this activity: What kind of books can you make?

- **Recipes:** Use index cards to make a stick book of your favorite recipes. Just leave room on the side for the holes.
- **Postcard Journal:** If you are going on a trip, you can make drawings and descriptions of places you visit or things you do on each page, then you can bind them together later, or change the order of your pages if you need to add something.
- **Stories and poems:** If you write stories or poems, you can collect your creations in a book like this one!
- **Observation Journal or Sketchbook:** While people- or nature-watching, you can take just one page to write down or sketch your observations then add it to your stick book later.

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