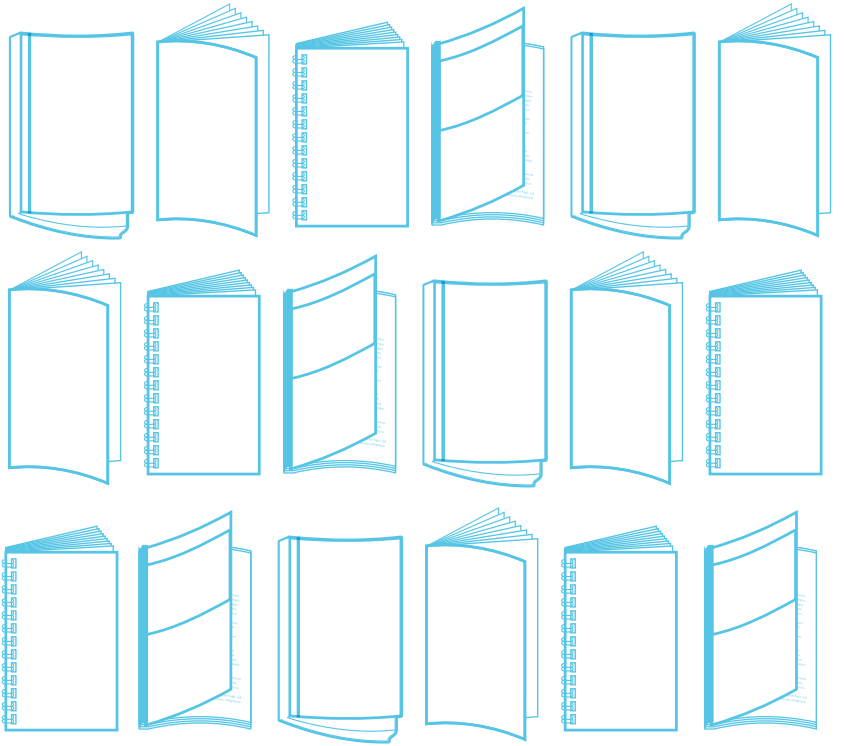


How Do I Make A Book?

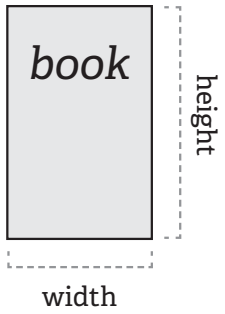


EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDIO 2026

Book Plan Checklist

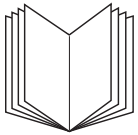
Dimensions

What is the width and height of the final, finished book?



Page Count

How many total pages?

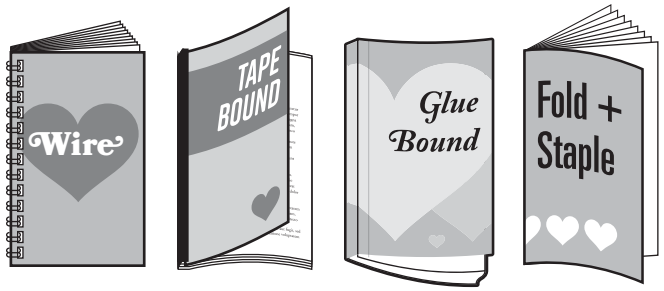


Include the covers if the book will all be printed together on the same paper.

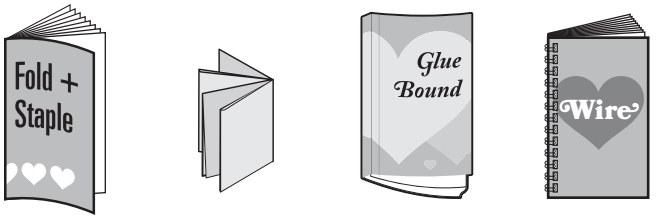
Count the cover separately if it's printed on different paper, or if the book is glue bound.

Printing, Binding & Finishing

- What type of binding will the book use?
- What type of paper?
- What type of printing?
- Where will it be printed and bound?
- Does the book design need any special or unusual materials or print finishing techniques?

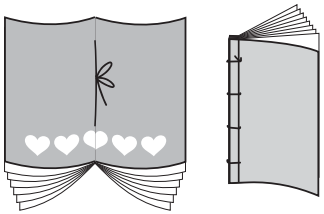


Common Types of Books

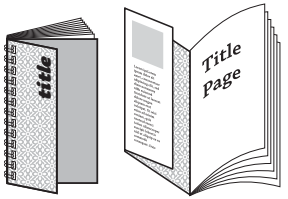


	Fold + Staple	1-Sheet Zine	Glue or Tape	Coil Bound
Get it made at the DOC?	✓	*printing only*	✓ *glue machine*	✓ *wire, spiral, or click*
Make in COMD studio?	✓	✓	*by hand only (no glue or heat machine)*	✓ *metal wire or plastic comb*
Maximum size	*about 48 pages*	*8 pages*	*at DOC: 1.6" thick*	*at ECU: about 1" thick*

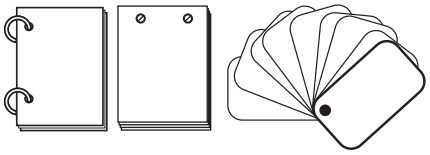
More Ideas



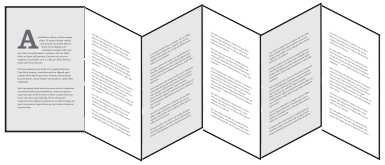
Sew with string or thread



Custom-sized insert pages or folding flaps



Rings, screw posts, or other fasteners



Long accordion book

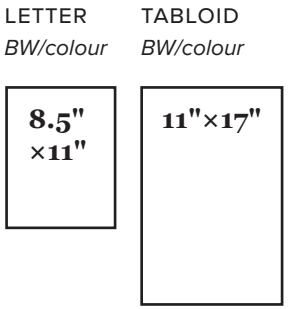
What about handmade hard covers, Coptic binding, or detailed sewing instructions? *Information about these traditional bookmaking methods isn't included here and has limited technical support and resources in Communication Design, but you may want to look into the ECU Print Media Studio's bindery area and bookmaking courses.*

Printing at School

Self-Serve Laser Printing

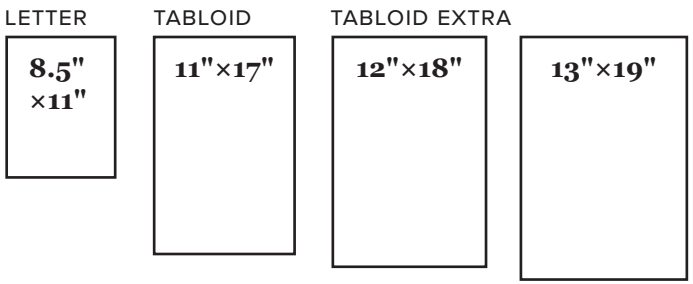
print.ecuad.ca

- Printers are located on every floor of the building. Send prints to "**Any BW Laser Printer on Campus**" or "**Any Colour Laser Printer on Campus**", and pick up at whichever printer you want.
- Pay with your OneCard, and load print credit at the Student Payments counter, or the self-serve kiosk in the Library, or online at **digitalwallet.ecuad.ca**



Digital Output Centre Laser Printing

C4230 (4th floor) // **doc@ecuad.ca**
Technicians provide full-service printing, and help with preparation. Various different papers available, including card and cover stock.



Sorry, No A4!



The school printers use the North American paper sizes Letter and Tabloid. We don't have the metric international A and B sized paper. An A4 sized design won't perfectly fit on Letter paper because it's a little bit longer.

Why laser printing?
Books that are digitally printed at school will usually be laser printed, because the large-format inkjet and toner printers don't print double-sided and are significantly more expensive. However, those printers could be used for single sided designs, covers, or inserts.

Printer Margins

None of the school printers can print all the way to the edge of the paper, and you can expect to lose around 0.25" (6mm) on each side...but not exactly the same on all 4 sides, or identical on each printer. This doesn't matter for book designs with a white (or paper-coloured) background, but it will affect designs where any artwork or colour extends to the page edges.

What To Do:

BEST PLANNING

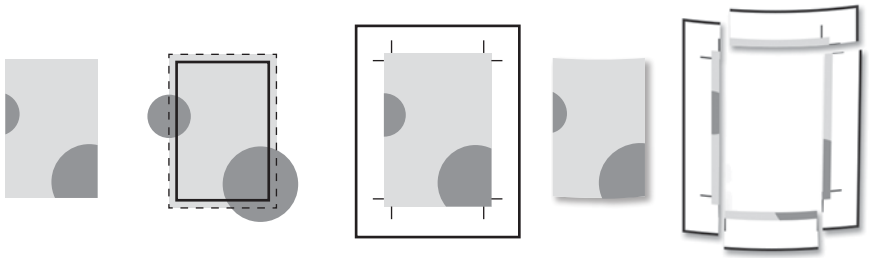
A. Design it at a small enough size to fit on the paper with room for printer margin, bleed, and crop marks (a book/spread at least 1 inch smaller than the paper size in both width and height is safe)
or
B. Upgrade to print on bigger paper. 11x17" is the biggest in the self-serve printers, so anything that needs to trim down to 11x17 needs to go to the DOC and print on 12x18" or 13x19"

NOT AS GOOD

C. Scale to less than 100% size when printing, to fit on the paper with room for bleed and marks
or
D. Accept a white border around the edge of the design. Any artwork that should have appeared in that border space will be gone, and trying to trim it off perfectly without bleed, without losing too much of your artwork, is difficult.

Bleed

Bleed means printing a little extra beyond the edge of the page, so it can be trimmed off. This makes sure there aren't slivers of white paper visible on the edges, and allows room for error making the cut. Art that touches an outer page edge must extend to the bleed line (the red line outside InDesign pages)



Original Design

File with bleed

Printed and ready to trim

Trimmed and finished
The bleed is visible on the paper scraps.

Basic InDesign Setup For Books

Sample Document Setup

Width: 5 in
Units: Inches
Height: 7 in
Orientation
Pages: 16
Facing Pages: ☑
Start#: 1
Primary Text Frame: ☐
Columns: 1
Column Gutter: 0.25 in
Margins
Top: 0.5 in
Bottom: 0.5 in
Left: 0.5 in
Right: 0.5 in
Bleed and Slug
Bleed
Top: 0.125 in
Bottom: 0.125 in
Inside: 0.125 in
Outside: 0.125 in

Design the book file so that pages are in the intended reading order.

WIDTH & HEIGHT: Final size of ONE page, not a double spread.

UNITS: Using **inches** is easiest to match North American paper sizes

FACING PAGES: On

PAGES: Should be a multiple of 4 for a fold/staple book, and an even number for other books. Count the cover only if it's all printed together on the same paper.

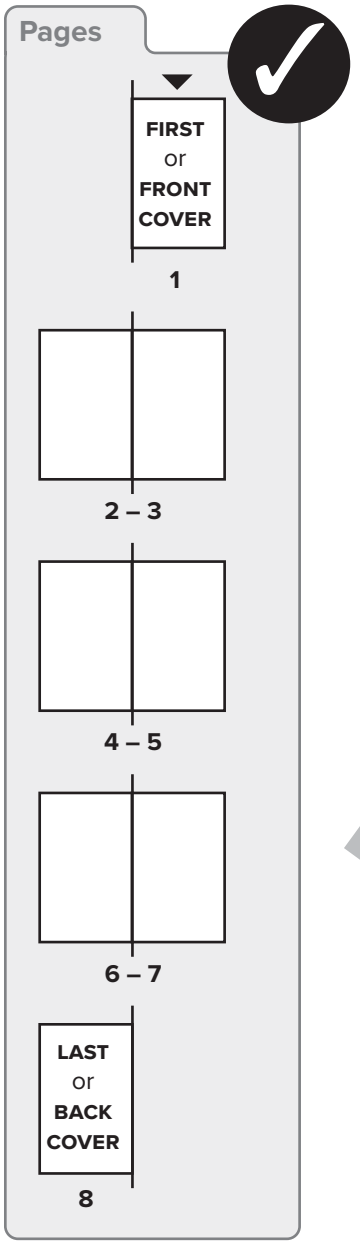
COLUMNS, GUTTERS, MARGINS: These are guides to help with your layout, and by default they don't print.

BLEED: 0.125" on all sides if you'll need to trim the book, and 0 if you don't.

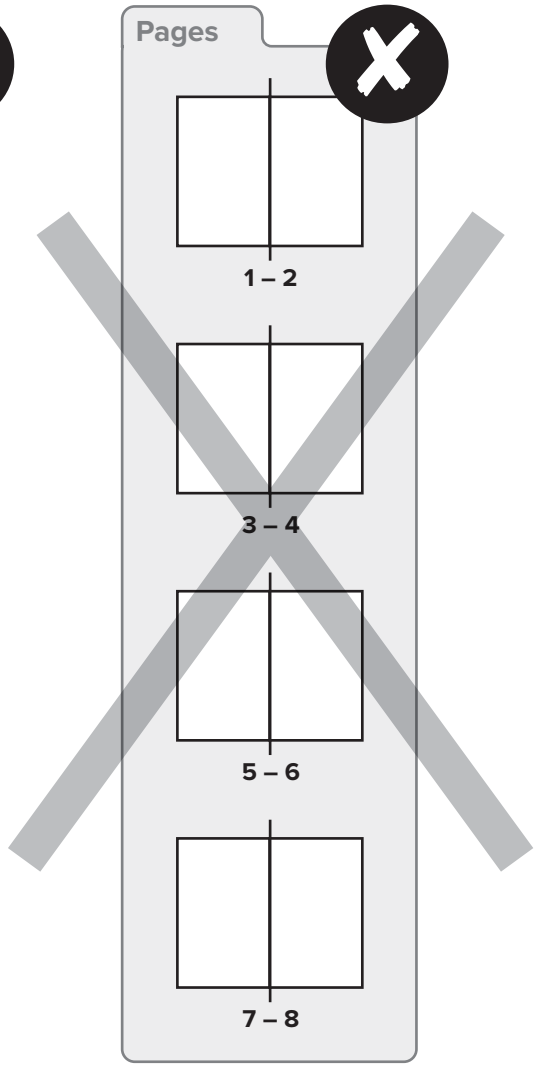
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*When you move or send an InDesign file to another computer, use **File > Package** instead of just Save or Save As. This makes a folder that collects the files it needs. Saving an .indd file won't automatically bring along fonts and images!*

Most book files in InDesign should look like this:



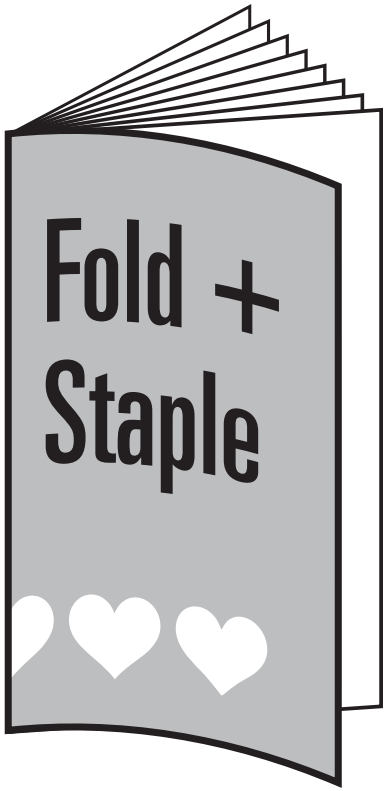
...and not like this!



BE CAREFUL CUSTOMIZING...

- Numbering: avoid duplicates, like two different "**1**" pages in the same file
- Left/right order for odd/even numbers

These changes can complicate printing, folding, and binding.



Fold + Staple

also called Saddle Stitch, or Saddle Staple

- Two pages are printed on each side of each sheet of paper, and then folded in half and stapled.
- The book is designed in the order that it's meant to be read, and then printed in a folding order so that it folds together correctly.
- The page order can be done automatically printing from InDesign (or from Acrobat, with some limitations.)
- It's possible to do this without software that can do it automatically: plan ahead, figure out which pages should be side by side and front to back, and set up a file for print with that order.
- It's even possible to make these books without a printer or even a computer, especially if you have access to a photocopy machine.



A two page spread for folding, printed with bleed and crop marks.

The page count is a multiple of 4.

2 pages printed per side
\+ 2 sides of each sheet
= **4 pages per sheet of paper**

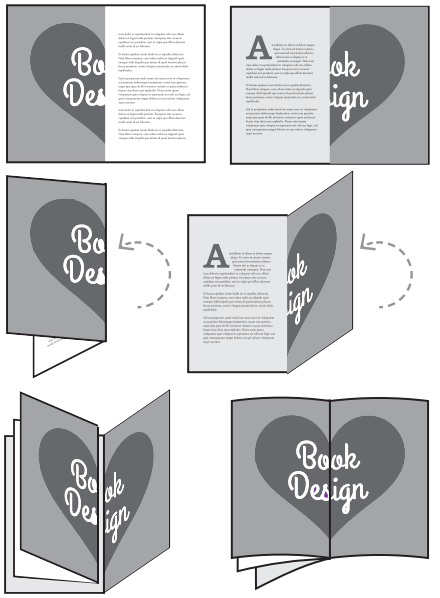
The COMD studio also has booklets with full printing instructions for this format, titled LET'S MAKE A FOLD + STAPLE BOOK

How Does a Fold + Staple Book Work?

The book pages are printed in a mixed-up folding order and folded in half...and when the sheets fold together, the matching page spreads line up. The book should now be in the correct reading order.

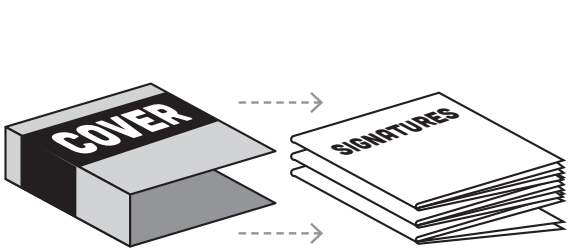
The pages are usually held together with staples, but it's also possible to:

- Use other methods to bind a folded spine together (for example, sewing it with thread or string), or
- Design a folding publication that either doesn't need anything holding it together, or intentionally splits into loose pieces.



Maximum Size, Creep, and Signatures





If a folded book has too many pages, it won't lie flat, it might be too thick to staple, and the outer edge will be uneven unless you trim it off. This is called "creep."

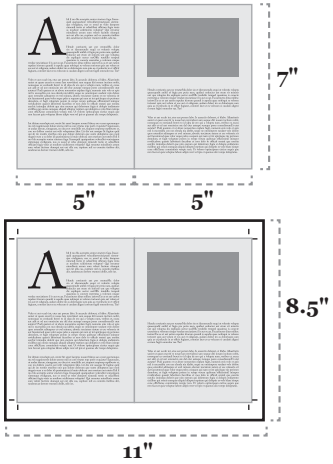
Stacking up multiple folded sections ("signatures") avoids this problem for thick books. The signatures can be joined with glue and/or sewing with thread to make a square-edged flat spine that can have a wrap-around cover attached. A publication printed in signature order can also be designed as a loose set of small books that go together.

Planning For Paper

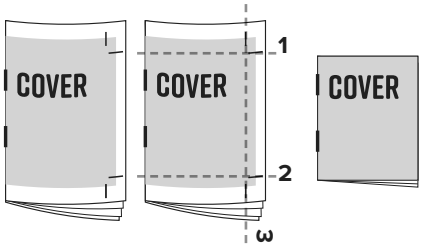
A folding book needs to be printed on sheets of paper big enough for:

- **2** times the page width
- Room for printer margins, bleed + crop marks if necessary

Example: This book design fits on letter size paper for printing:



THE SECRET FOR GETTING PERFECTLY TRIMMED BOOKS:
Fold and bind *first*, before cutting!



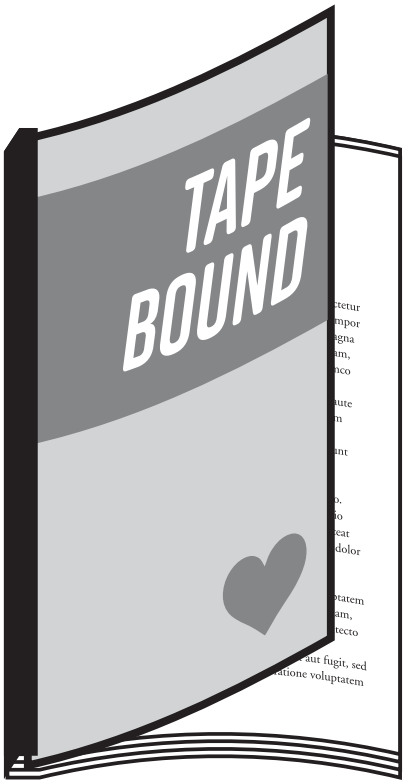
Three cuts to finish a folded book: top, bottom, outer face edge. For thin books, you can use a manual paper cutter. For thick books, ask COMD, DOC, or PRNT techs about stack cutting.

Page count

Standard fold + staple books have 4 pages on each sheet of paper (2 on the front, and 2 on the back).

Maximum page count depends on the weight of the paper, but 48 pages is usually around the thickest that can be stapled.

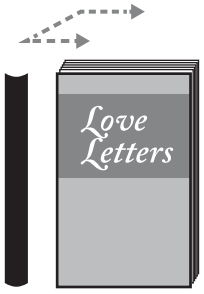
BOOK PAGES	FOLDED SHEETS
8	2
12	3
16	4
20	5
24	6
28	7
32	8
36	9
40	10
44	11
48	12



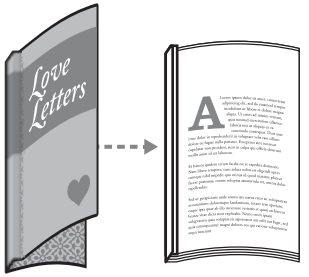
Tape Binding

Available at the Digital Output Centre (DOC)

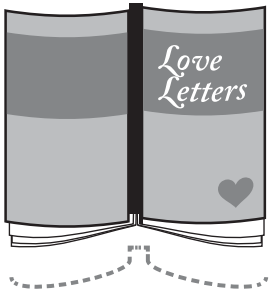
- Book is held together with a strip of adhesive tape that wraps around the spine. It can be either a visible fabric tape, or a double-sided tape attached to a wraparound cover.
- Does not open flat
- Uncoated stock only
- Cover can be a different paper stock
- Tape strips are **11"** long, and multi-strip binding is possible up to **14"**
- Choice of black or white tape
- Minimum 24 pages
- Number of pages must be divisible by 2



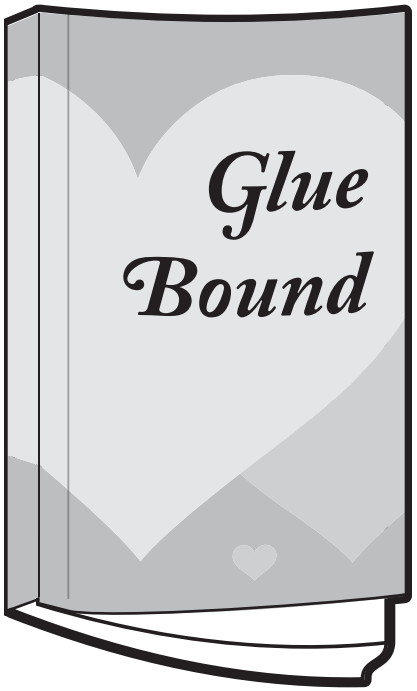
Visible tape spine



Or, tape under a wrap-around cover



Book does not lay flat



Glue Binding

also called
*Perfect Binding**

Available at the Digital Output Centre (DOC)

- Glued at the spine.
- Doesn't open entirely flat
- Maximum book thickness: **1.6"**
- Minimum spine length: **4"**
- Page count must be an even number (divisible by 2)

** All "perfect bound" books are glued at the spine, but mass-produced commercial softcover books are usually made with slightly different equipment and processes than the ECU DOC's glue binding machine.*

Glue It Yourself

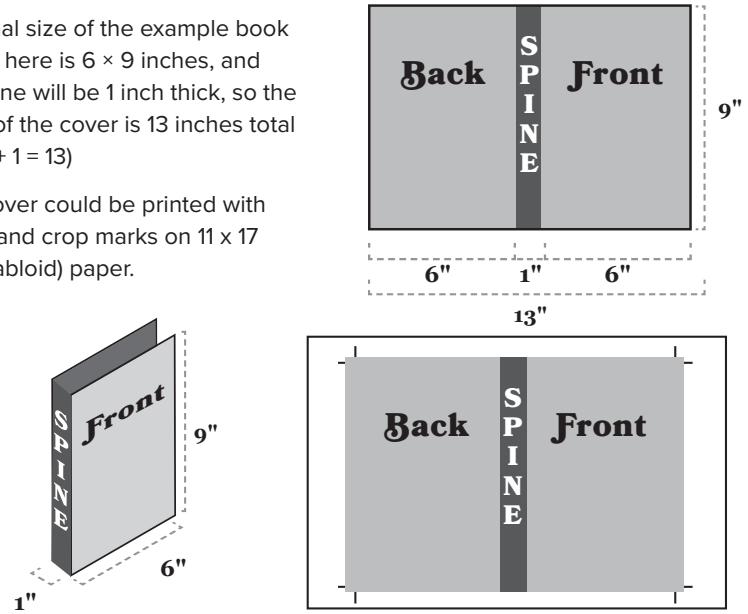
Gluing by hand can take some practice to get a nice result, and the process can be slow – but many people enjoy it, and there are good tutorials to find online! Please note that hand-glued books are often not as sturdy or uniform-looking as machine-made books. You'll need:

» A neat, even stack of pages
» A brush (a small, cheap paint-brush works), and some liquid glue (a specific book glue is best, but other types of glue can also work for this.)
» Something to clamp and hold the pages tightly together while you brush glue along the spine. There are book presses for this purpose, but other creative solutions are possible.

Glue or tape bound books with wraparound covers need the cover prepared as a separate file, where the width includes the front, back, AND spine:

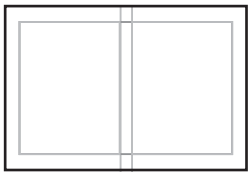
The final size of the example book shown here is 6 × 9 inches, and the spine will be 1 inch thick, so the width of the cover is 13 inches total (6 + 6 + 1 = 13)

This cover could be printed with bleed and crop marks on 11 x 17 inch (tabloid) paper.



InDesign setup for cover files:

The easiest method: set up one wide page (book height and total cover width) with 2 columns, and set the column gutter to the spine width. Those settings are in **Layout > Margins and Columns**.



If there will be printing on the inside cover, that can be Page 2 of a cover file. There shouldn't be any important artwork or text across the inside spine area, since that's where the glue will go.

Figuring out the spine width:

- **If you are printing with the DOC at school:** Glue bound books take 2 appointments. The inside pages will be printed first, and measured. Don't rely on your own calculations: the DOC's glue binding process can affect the book's thickness!
- If you're working with a printing company outside school, they should be able to provide these numbers
- You can also estimate it yourself by: measuring a blank stack of the same paper, using an online book spine calculator, or looking up the specific paper's ***caliper*** (thickness per sheet)



Wire, Coil + Spiral

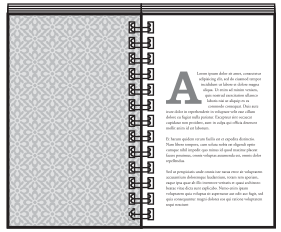
- A machine punches a series of holes along the edges of a stack of paper, and a matching metal or plastic spine is fit through the holes and closed shut.
- Can combine any paper types
- Opens flat
- Page count must be divisible by 2
- No minimum number of pages
- The different types available (metal wire, reusable plastic combs, twisting spirals, etc) are ***not*** interchangeable.
- Book designs need to plan for the holes, and make sure nothing important, especially text, is close enough to the inside edges to get lost when it's punched and bound.

At the Digital Output Centre (DOC)

Choice of:
  - » **Metal wire**
  - » **Spiral**
  - » **Click binding** (A reusable plastic spine that can open and close to take pages in and out.)
- Technician does the binding
- Holes are punched approximately **⅜"** or **9.5mm** from the page edge
- Spines are maximum **11"** long (the long side of a letter size sheet, or the short side of a tabloid sheet)
- Maximum book thickness:
  ⅞" (22mm) for wire
  11⁄16" (17.5mm) for spiral
  ⅜" (9.5mm) for click

In Communication Design

Choice of:
  - » **Metal wire binding machines**
  - » **Plastic comb binding machine** (these are reusable)
- Spines are maximum **11"** long (the long side of a letter size sheet, or the short side of a tabloid sheet)
- Smallest wire spines available for purchase are **¼" (6mm),** largest are **1¼" (32mm)**
- You buy the wire from COMD Studio and do the binding yourself. Please speak to the technician for help and to purchase supplies.



A wire bound book can open flat.

Common Binding Hole Punch Patterns (actual size)

small metal wire and click binding: 3 holes per inch (3:1)

large metal wire: 2 holes per inch (2:1)

plastic comb: 19 holes per 11 inch spine

plastic spiral: 4 holes per inch (4:1)