# Make Your Own Notebook

## Instructions for Basic Bookbinding
## &
## Some Book History

# Bookbinding Basics:
# Materials for a Simple Notebook

Making your own notebook is a fun and easy project that requires just a few basic materials:

**Paper:** Any kind will do! Ordinary 8.5 x 11 inch printer paper works well for the inside pages. Four sheets of paper, which will give you sixteen pages to write on, is a good manageable number to start with. A sturdier, but not too thick, paper is nice for the outside cover. Remember that your finished book will be half the size of whatever paper you choose.

**Needle:** You will be sewing the pages of your book together with needle and thread. Since you'll be poking holes in the pages before stitching, you will want a needle with a sharp point. Needles for crewel embroidery, which also have large eyes, are good for bookbinding.
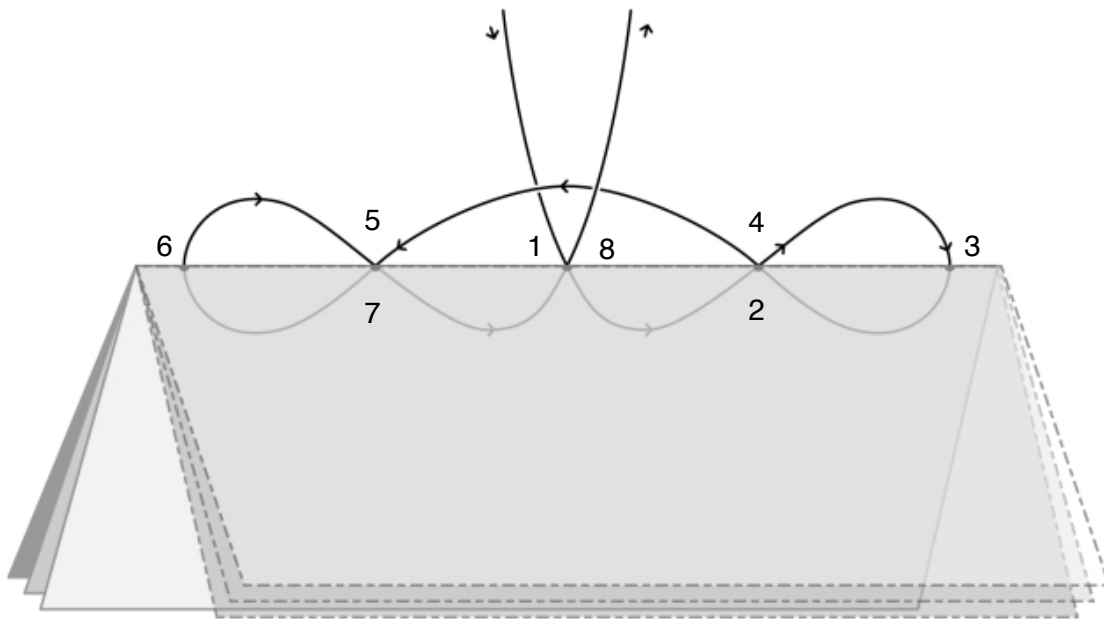
**Thread**: Six-strand embroidery floss, or thread of a similar thickness, works very nicely here. If you only have ordinary sewing thread, use two or three strands together.

Once you've assembled your materials (plus a ruler and pencil to mark your sewing holes) you'll be ready to learn the five-hole pamphlet stitch!

# Bookbinding Basics:
# The Five-Hole Pamphlet Stitch

This stitch is a good basic method of binding a set of pages (or **signature**). The cover of your booklet is stitched on at the same time the pages are being sewn.

1. Fold your pages and cover in half.
2. Mark a dot in the center of the crease, then mark two equally spaced dots above the center, and two below.
3. Use a needle or awl to pierce holes through all the pages and the cover.
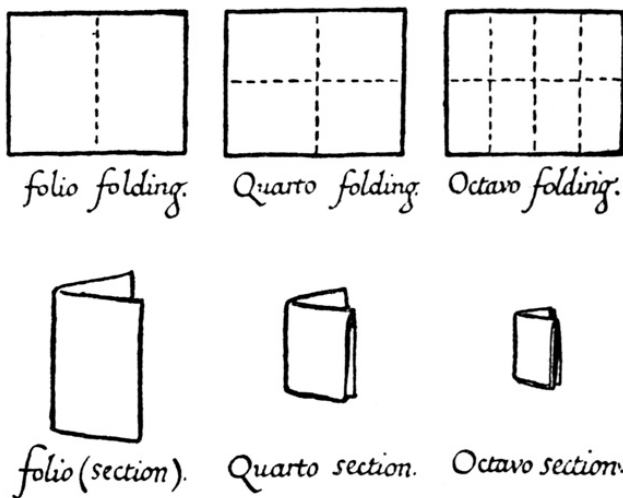
4. Begin stitching by going through the center hole from the outside in. Leave about 3-4 inches of thread on the outside.
5. Follow the diagram to continue stitching until you have returned to the center hole from the inside out. Cut the thread and tie a knot.

*Alice T. Miner Museum*

# Folios, Quartos, and Octavos, Oh My!

Before the invention of the mechanical printing press, books were made by printing text on both sides of a full sheet of paper and then folding the paper one or more times into a group of leaves (called a *gathering* or a *signature).*

Books made by printing two pages of text on each side of a sheet of paper, which is then folded once to form two leaves or four pages, are referred to as *folios* (from the Latin word for leaf). Those made by printing four text pages on each side of a sheet of paper and folding the paper twice to form a gathering containing four leaves or eight pages are called *quartos* (fourths). Similarly, books made by printing eight pages of text on each side of a sheet, which was then folded three times to form gatherings of eight leaves or sixteen pages each, are called *octavos* (eighths).



*folio folding.*  *Quarto folding.*  *Octavo folding.*

*folio (section).*  *Quarto section.*  *Octavo section.*

From *Writing & Illuminating, & Lettering,*
by Edward Johnston
http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/47089

Of course, the final size of the book depends upon the size of the paper used. The size of paper has differed over the years and localities, so the sizes of books of the same format will also differ. A typical octavo printed in Italy or France in the 16th century thus is roughly the size of a modern mass market paperback book, but an English 18th-century octavo is noticeably larger, more like a modern trade paperback or hardcover novel.
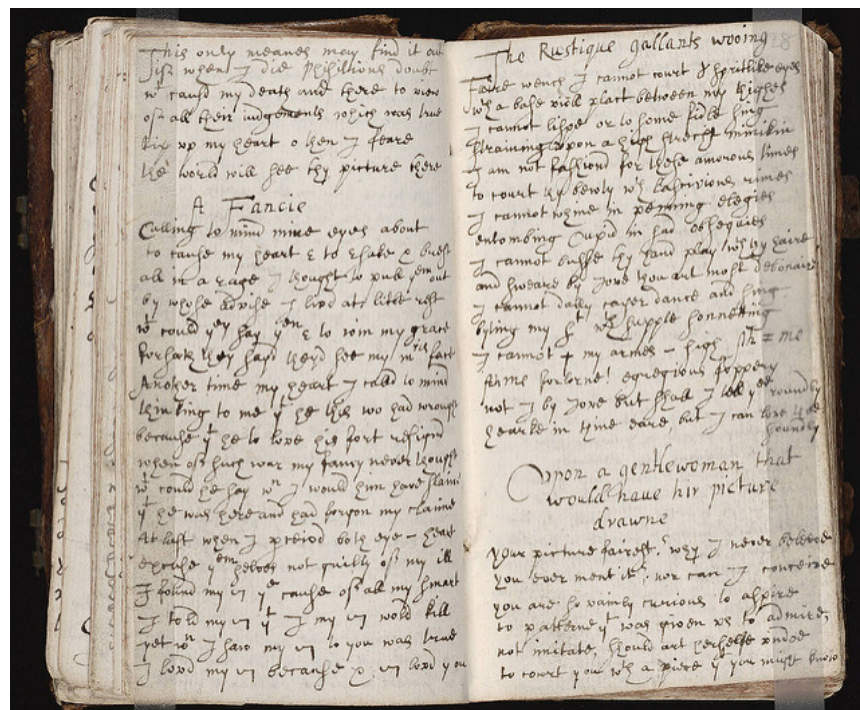
Folio, quarto, and octavo are the most common sizes for books, but they can be made much larger or smaller, from the giant *double elephant folio* (50 inches tall) down to the tiny 2-inch *sexagesimo-quarto.*

text adapted from Wikipedia, "Book Size"
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_size

# The Commonplace Book:
# A Solution to Information Overload

From the 16th through the 19th centuries, many people used *commonplace books* to record and organize information. Men and women would copy poems, quotations, recipes, songs, letters, sermons, or anything else that they thought was important to remember into their commonplace books. It was a way of creating their own personal reference books that they could go back to when they needed to.

Just as we today sometimes feel overwhelmed by the amount of information available on the internet, so too did people living in the period when large numbers of printed books were becoming available. Commonplace books were one of the ways people came up with to help make sense of this flood of information.



*A 17th-century commonplace book*
https://www.flickr.com/photos/brbl/albums/

*Alice T. Miner Museum*