

# Bookmaking with Kids

## Four-Panel Books

It's simply magic what you can do with a single sheet of paper. A few folds, a snip or two with scissors, and voilà: you've got a little book!

Here are two booklets made from single sheets, one horizontal in format with no cutting necessary, the other vertical in orientation, with a single cut. Both lend themselves to a hundred and one kinds of writing projects.

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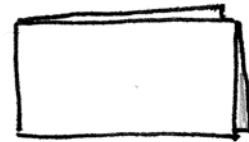
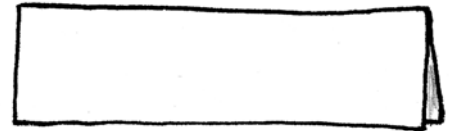
### Materials & Tools

- Plain paper, any size. Larger sizes, like legal (8-1/2 x 14 inches) or tabloid (11 x 17 inches), yield bigger books with more space for children's handwriting. *Source:* You can get inexpensive reams of paper at SCRAP, [www.scrap-sf.org/](http://www.scrap-sf.org/), or RAFT, [www.raft.net](http://www.raft.net).
- Scissors
- Writing & drawing supplies

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### Horizontal Format—Step By Step

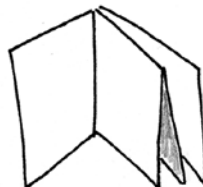
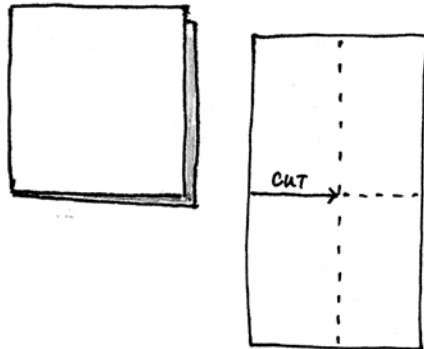
- Fold paper in half lengthwise (a *hotdog* fold) so the paper is long and skinny.
- With paper still folded, fold in half again (a *hamburger* fold).
- Add decorative touches appropriate to content. Start writing and illustrating.



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### Vertical Format—Step By Step

- Fold paper in half lengthwise (a *hotdog* fold) so the paper is long and skinny.
- Open paper and fold in half again in the opposite direction (a *hamburger* fold).
- Open paper and cut halfway along fold line, from the edge to the center.
- Refold *hotdog* with cut panels on top. Turn paper to vertical orientation and fold at center crease. One cut panel will form the title page, the other the back cover.



Making a book unlocks something amazing in kids—creativity, enthusiasm, a zest for learning, concentration, patience, imagination and lots of talent.

## Tips for Starting Out

- Before kids start writing and drawing, make sure their books are oriented correctly, spine to the left, fold(s) at the top.
- Have children number their pages before doing anything else. It's easy for books in progress to get turned sideways and/or upside down, and seeing page numbers helps remind kids which way is up!

## Ideas for the Horizontal Booklet

- Back-to-school books, using the school logo and student photos as decorative elements. Alternatively, toward the end of the year, you could make mini-yearbooks.
- Kids at my table
- Classroom rules
- Dates to remember
- Around-the-city books, using cut-outs from a local map to show a child's neighborhood, favorite park, school, important landmarks, etc.

## Ideas for the Vertical Booklet

- All-About-Me
- Favorites
- Friends
- Family
- Summer adventures

Goofy design elements—like ornate picture frames or extra-large exclamation points or speech balloons—often act as a catalyst for kids' writing. Try preprinting funky clip art and see how your kids respond. You could also give kids a choice of stickers. *Source:* RAFT, [www.raft.net](http://www.raft.net), usually has a good supply of Mrs. Goodman's stickers at a reasonable price.

## CRYSTAL-CLEAR DIAGRAMS

Want more diagrams and explanations for mastering single-sheet books? Here are my favorite resources for clear instructions and easy-to-understand line art:

[Simply Bound](#),  
By Cheryl Mootte  
[www.moottepoints.com](http://www.moottepoints.com)

[A Book of Own's Own](#),  
By Paul Johnson (Heinemann)

[Cover to Cover: Creative Techniques for Making Beautiful Books](#),  
By Shereen LaPlantz  
(Lark Books)