

# Make Your Own Book

Books, like the ones in the Cambridge University Library Special Collections, were handmade and handwritten.

Follow this step by step tutorial to make your own handmade notebook.





# Make your own book

## Things you will need:

- Paper
- Postcards, or Card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Sticky Tape
- Washi Tape, Fabric, or pens to decorate
- Optional: Needle and Thread (used under adult supervision).





## Step 1 Prepare your paper.

Decide how big you want your book to be. Your paper will need to be twice the size of your notebook. So, if you would like an A5 notebook, you will need A4 paper. I will be working with A5 (or A4 cut in half) paper to make an A6 notebook.

Decide how many pages you would like to have. My notebook will have 16 pages, so I have 8 sheets of A5 paper.

## Step 2 Fold the paper.

Do this carefully, and fold each page in half individually. This way you will have less work with straightening the edges later.

Now arrange the folded paper in 4s together, one inside the other.



Four sheets of paper, folded in half, one inside the other, form 8 leaves, or a quire.

This method of grouping sheets of paper was very common in medieval times.

The image below shows a medieval quire.

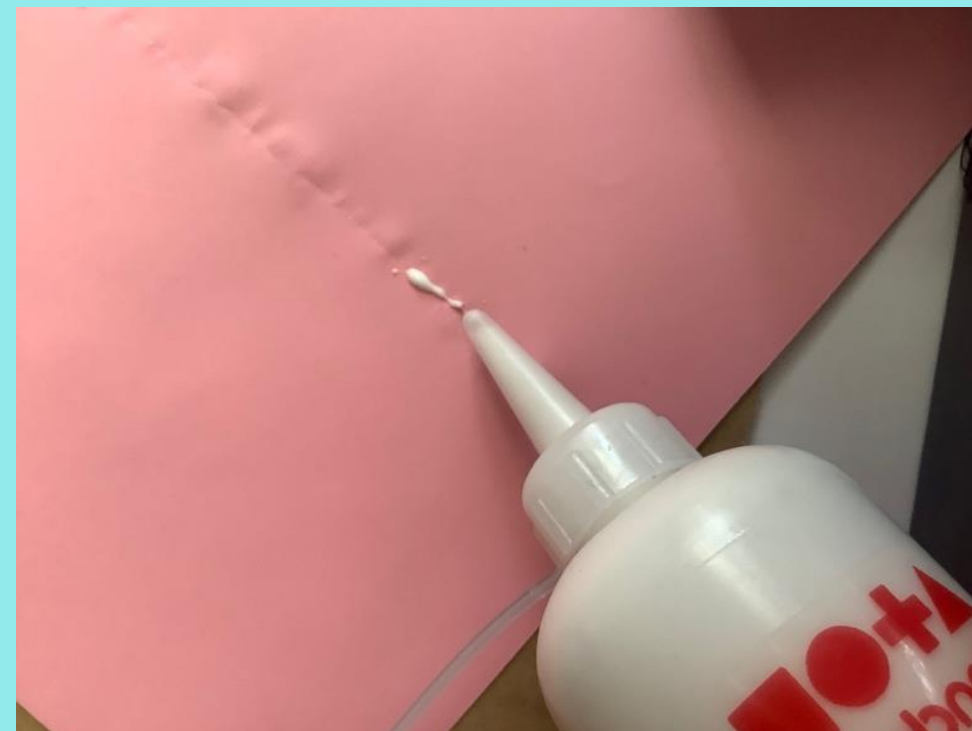


## Step 3 Make Quires

Attach your folded 4 pages together, either by sewing through the fold or by gluing them together.

If **sewing**, thread the needle, tie the thread at the end, and sew through the paper at the fold. Make two separate stitches, each one about 1cm wide. One at the top, and one at the bottom. Tie the thread.

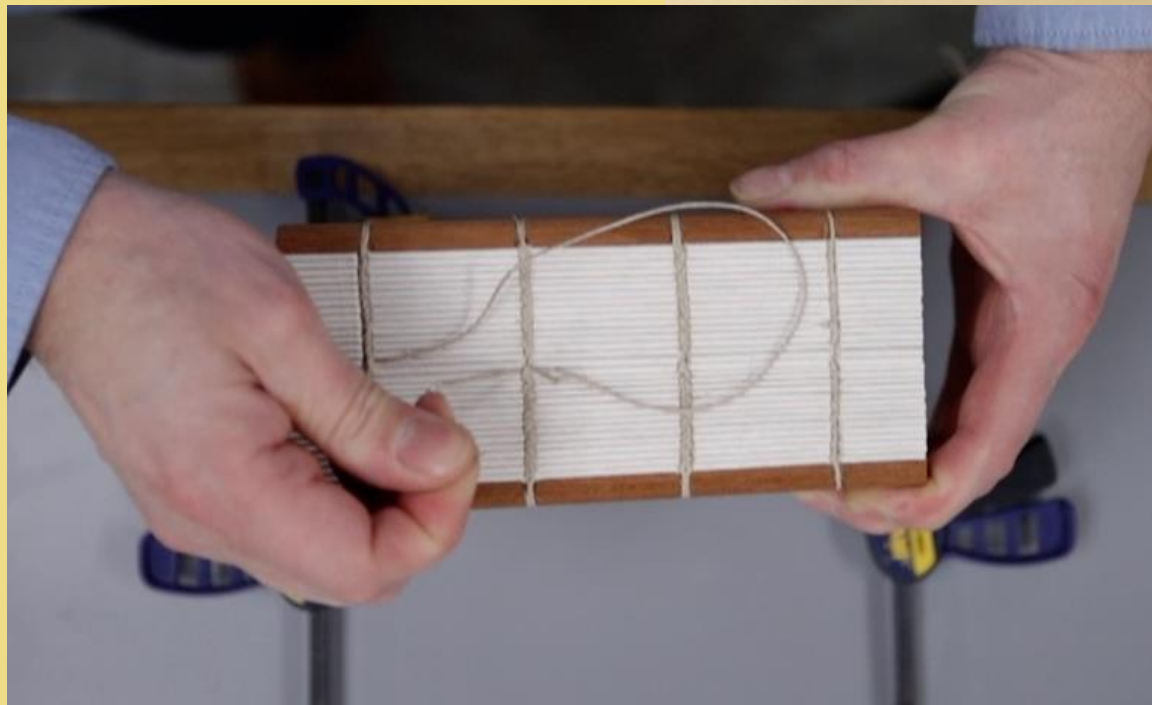
If **gluing**, put glue where the paper is folded, on each sheet, and put them together. Be careful not to use too much glue. Push together and leave to dry.





## Step 4 Attach the quires together.

This step is simple. Either tie the threads together using more thread if you sewed your quires. Or use tape or more glue to put them together.



## Step 5 Attach front and end leaves.

Once your book covers are ready, they need to be attached to the paper. Take two sheets of paper that are twice the size of your notebook. Fold it one of them in half. Using glue, stick one side to the first page of your book. Take the 2nd sheet, fold it in half, and stick it to the last page just as you did with your first.



## Step 6 Prepare Book Covers.

I used two postcards. You can use blank thick paper that you decorate with a title and your name, or use wrapping paper stuck to some thicker paper or cardboard to make the front and back cover.

These can be a bit bigger than your paper, and can be trimmed later.



## Step 7 Attach Covers.

You should have two leaves of paper at each end of the book. Carefully place your front cover on the front leaf. Clip it in place, and make sure you are happy with where it is.

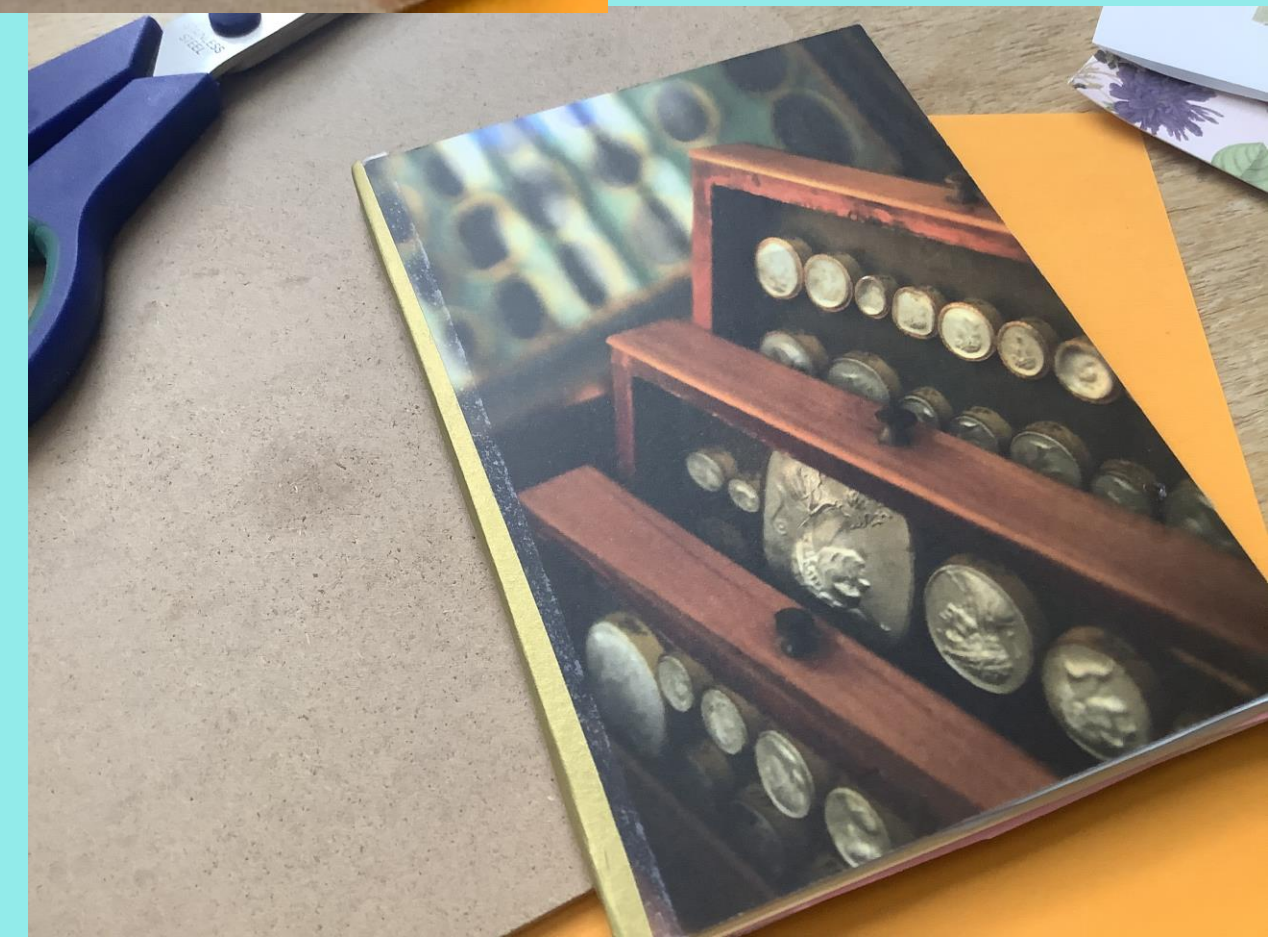
Using glue, carefully attach the cover to the paper. Leave for 5 minutes to let it dry. Do the same with the back cover.



## Step 8 Make the Spine

Use washi tape, sticky tape, a strip of fabric or a strip of paper (if using those you will also need glue). Whichever you use, it needs to be wider than whatever is the thickness of your book.

I used sticky tape. Place a long strip of tape on the front cover, make sure it is stuck, and then carefully fold it over the spine and stick to the back cover. I then covered it with a bit of washi tape for decoration.





# Well Done!

Your book has covers and a spine and is ready to use!

Have a look at some of [our manuscripts online](#) for inspiration on decorating the pages of your book.

Have you enjoyed making this? Why not experiment by trying out different page sizes or types of cover?





