



The Simple Pamphlet (with Bonus Structure)

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Pamphlet Construction Overview

Introduction

The handout for this free-course is in minimal outline form. You can understand the process from the accompanying videos. Some diagrams have been provided to make it easy for you to have them at your side when working.

In the videos I explain that I like to use pamphlets for short trips, for special days of sketching, for notetaking, and in short, for just about anything where weight is a consideration. Pamphlets are particularly useful when you have a new paper discovery and you want to experiment with different media on it to see if it suits your working methods.

I created this course to introduce my drawing students to a fast way to make a sketchbook using the paper that they like to work on, in a size that they also find useful. Cover decoration and spine beading are not covered in this course. You can see examples of a variety of ways to decorate pamphlet covers in the first three images of the book arts gallery here:

<http://www.rozworks.com/bb1.html>

Scroll through the rest of the galleries for additional ideas, as pamphlets are sprinkled throughout.

I encourage you to think about using heavyweight papers suitable for mixed media. This allows you to paint on them. If the papers aren't water-media friendly try using acrylic paints that you dry brush or sponge on. The possibilities really are endless. If you would like to learn how I created the painted textures for my book covers I encourage you to sign up for my "Textures" class.

<https://rozwoundup.com/classes>

Pamphlets are also a great way to make an edition. You can print your text pages on a press or with an ink-jet printer or photocopier and bind up multiple copies. I encourage you to explore that as well.

To get you started with an edition check out my instructions for a single sheet, photocopier Journal Zine.

<https://rozwoundup.com/2011/03/making-a-single-sheet-eight-page-journal-zinefold-punch-sew-and-trim.html>

I also mention working in pamphlets and then gathering them together as a set. You could make a box or other case for them. For boxes I'll let you seek out box making instructions at the library or online.

If you would like to make a simple slipcase to enclose a set of pamphlets see this link.

<https://rozwoundup.com/2009/07/simple-cardstock-slipcase-part-one.html>

Instructions for making a simple cardstock case with a flap can be found here:

<https://rozwoundup.com/2011/03/making-a-case-for-your-journal-zine-swap-collection.html>

In my demonstration I show you how to tear down a sheet of 22 x 30 inch Fabriano Artistico 140 lb. Watercolor paper.

The underlined number in the paper's size description indicates the direction of the grain. (This is a standard notation I suggest you adopt. I couldn't use it in the video callouts because underscored letters weren't available.)

You can use any paper that you like to paint and sketch on for your pamphlet. Select a paper which folds well with the grain and doesn't crack. If a paper cracks when folded with the grain the broken fibers could break completely when used and pages could fall out.

Page curl is also dictated by grain direction. That's more significant in a hardbound book where curling can exert pressure on a cased in text block, but should still be considered for pamphlets.

If you would like to know some of my favorite papers you can find them on my blog here:

<https://rozwoundup.com/2008/12/paper-what-do-visual-journalers-want.html>

<https://rozwoundup.com/2008/12/paper-what-do-visual-journalers-wantpart-2.html>

The following post is about the change in Fabriano Artistico and contains grain direction diagrams showing that change. You might wish to familiarize yourself with that information as well. Remember that papers change!

<https://rozwoundup.com/tearing-down-fabriano-art>

And here is another blog post on creating books with sample papers and why it's a good idea.

<https://rozwoundup.com/2012/01/making-a-paper-sample-test-booklet-or-a-simple-pamphlet-visual-journal.html>

I hope you'll have fun making pamphlets!

The Videos

Part 1: Gather Supplies.

This course shows you how to make a simple pamphlet structure.

You will need the following supplies to create a pamphlet book:

Art Paper or text paper of your choice

Yardstick

18 x 24 inch cutting mat

Kneaded eraser
 2B Graphite Pencil (Sharp point)
 X-Acto Blade and FRESH blade
 Awl
 Hand towel
 Bone Folder
 Waxed Linen Thread (4-ply) (See additional options on page 6)
 Bookbinding needle (See additional info on page 6)
 Scissors
 Decorative heavyweight paper for the cover

Optional: Band-Aids to protect your fingers when tearing many sheets of paper in a work session.

Part 2: Tearing Paper

1. Determine Grain direction—the pamphlet fold must fold with the grain.

Other ways to determine grain direction:

<https://rozwoundup.com/2010/03/determining-paper-grain-direction.html>

Here is a post that gives options for “fussy” tearing. Something to consider before you jump into tearing paper.

<https://rozwoundup.com/2012/02/more-on-tearing-paper-for-bookbinding.html>

I recommend that when you have selected your paper and determined the grain direction that you then do a tear diagram showing how you’ll break down the sheet into fold-able pieces. (Tear diagrams are in the first link of this section as well as in additional blog posts on my site.)

To do a tear diagram you will need to decide what size page you want to end up with. Then you will need to double the width of that page to get the size of the piece you need to fold in your signatures to get that page size. Next you will have to see how many widths of that size you can fit in the width of your paper, with the grain direction going the same direction as the fold. In the diagram at the right this means you are fitting item “C” as many times as possible across the width of the sheet, with the grain direction matching the fold line direction of item “C.” The height you want for your page will be the measurement you put parallel to that grain direction.

For instance, you want a 6 inch wide x 8 inch tall final page. You

will need to tear down to pieces that are 12 inches wide and 8 inches tall, with the grain direction going with the 8 inch height. If you were working with the Fabriano I’m working with in the tear diagram below then you would know you would use 24 inches of the width of your sheet, leaving 6 inches of scrap at the side. In the 22 inches of height like the Fabriano sheet you could get two panels of 8 inches of height, leaving a waste strip at the bottom of 6 inches. (I recommend you save your scraps for other projects or smaller books if possible.) See my blog for additional posts on tearing down paper and using a sheet usefully.

2. Tear your paper as demonstrated in the video, following your own tear diagram for your chosen paper.

Tip: Tear the waste pieces off your sheet before you start tearing your final panels. This way you have more uniformity in height and width, and also you can get to the point of folding in half and tearing more quickly in the process.

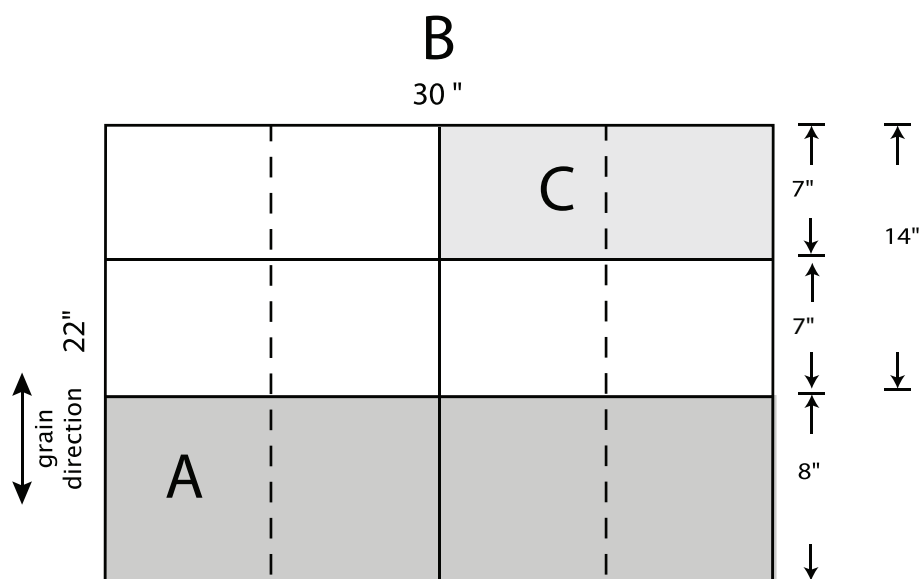
See more about tearing paper and holding a bone folder in this blog post:

Removed Link: This material is covered in the six-video part class on making pamphlets.

Remember it is vital that you arrange your torn pieces so you always know which surface of the paper is facing up. You want to be able to collate the pieces so that you have matching surfaces across each spread.

Note: I sometimes vary my process from that shown in the video, depending on how many waste strips and other considerations, but I always use the same variation throughout the tear of all sheets in a project. I have found over 30 years of teaching that the method shown in the video is the one students grasp most quickly.

Below is the tear diagram I used for my 2 sizes of books. “A” is the strip that is 8 inches tall and set aside for the final book. “B” is the large white panel that I used for the 7 inch tall book. “C” indicates one folded piece for that structure. Dashed lines indicate folds. Solid lines are tears.



Use the search engine on my blog to find many additional posts on tearing, collating, matching surfaces, adventures in bookbinding, new book batch, etc.

Part 3: Cutting the Cover Sheet and Punching Your Sewing Holes.

In general I like to use 140 lb. Cold Press Watercolor paper that I've preprinted for my pamphlet covers. I use Fabriano Artistico as it folds so well. That's the main consideration.

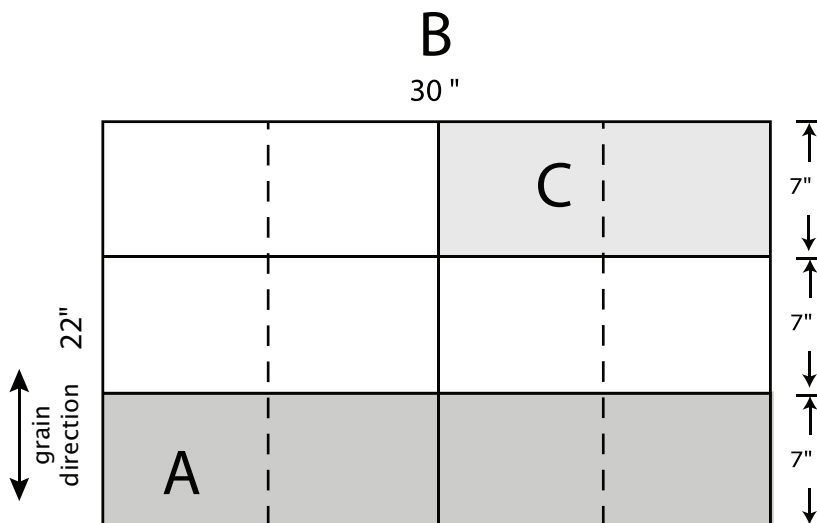
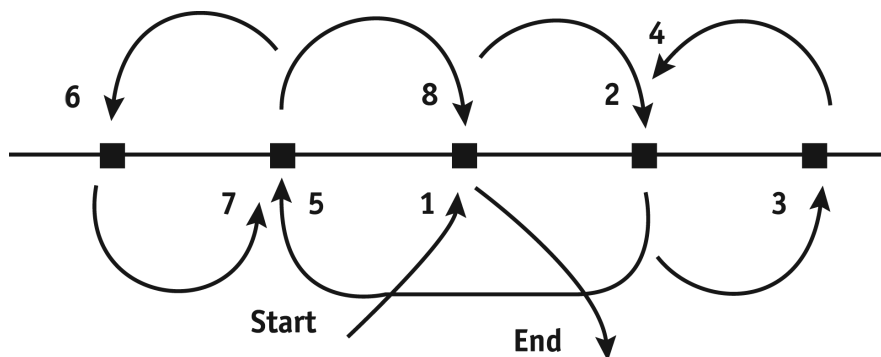
If you would like to find out more about my methods for creating textures and decorative papers I hope you'll check out my class "Textures."

<https://rozwoundup.com/classes>

Any heavyweight paper or cardstock which folds well with the grain direction of the paper can be used for a pamphlet cover. If you can't find a paper that is thick enough consider finding one that is wide enough to enable you to have a full flap on the front and back covers for extra stiffness. Most art supply stores, however, should have a variety of papers suitable for this usage.

Remember to find the grain direction before you cut into your cover paper sheet!

1. Determine grain direction of your cover paper.
2. Measure signature width and height.
3. Decide how you'll cut from the cover material sheet. Transfer height of signature to the sheet. (I tend to transfer height only and cut the full width of the sheet in one continuous strip, worrying about width only at the flap folding or trimming point in the process.)
4. Be sure to allow OVERHANG for your head and tail if you want to protect your pages a little more. I think that 3/16 inch at the head and tail is more than enough. In my example I added 1/8 inch at the head and 1/8 inch at the tail for a combined extra 1/4 inch of height.



Above is the tear diagram you could use with Fabriano Artistico if you wanted to begin to tear 3 panels of equal height. The 7 inch measurement is approximate as there is one inch in height that is distributed in thirds between the panels. I use a measuring strip for these types of measurements and double check that each panel is marked the same height before tearing. I then keep Panel "A" to use for a measuring panel if I am tearing any additional sheets in the same fashion. "B" shows the white panel you would tear down exactly as demonstrated in the videos. Then you would tear "A" in half and fold the two portions so that all portions matched "C." Dashed lines indicate folds. Solid lines are tears.

Equation for finding cover width:

$$(2 \times \text{Signature width}) + (2 \times \text{Fore Edge Overhang}) = \text{Cover width}$$

If you want to have **fold in flaps** then this is your equation:

$$(2 \times \text{Signature width}) + (2 \times \text{flap width}) + (4 \times \text{Fore Edge Overhang}) = \text{width}$$

You have 4 times the fore edge overhang because you have one at the front and one at the back of the book cover, and the overhang is on the cover and the flap for each cover piece because of the fore edge fold.

When thinking about measurements you can choose to fold in the fore edge overhang into the flap measurement, however, it seems errors could be introduced and this is the clearest way to call it out.

In the video I talk about having 3 x the cover width to have flaps that will fold in about 1/2 way. If I have a sheet that is wide enough

Left is a diagram of the five-hole pamphlet stitch viewed from the side. Above the line is the inside of the signature, below the line is the outside of the cover (or vice versa). Start at the center hole on the side you want to end off and knot.

I like to aim for 4 x Signature width and then just fold at the center, working out for width, overhang, and flap. If you have that much width you'll have enough for your overhang at the fore edge, and enough to fold in and go past the halfway mark I mention.

Equation for finding cover height:

Signature Height + (2 x Overhang desired) = Cover Height

You have 2 times the overhang because you have to have the same overhang at the head and the tail.

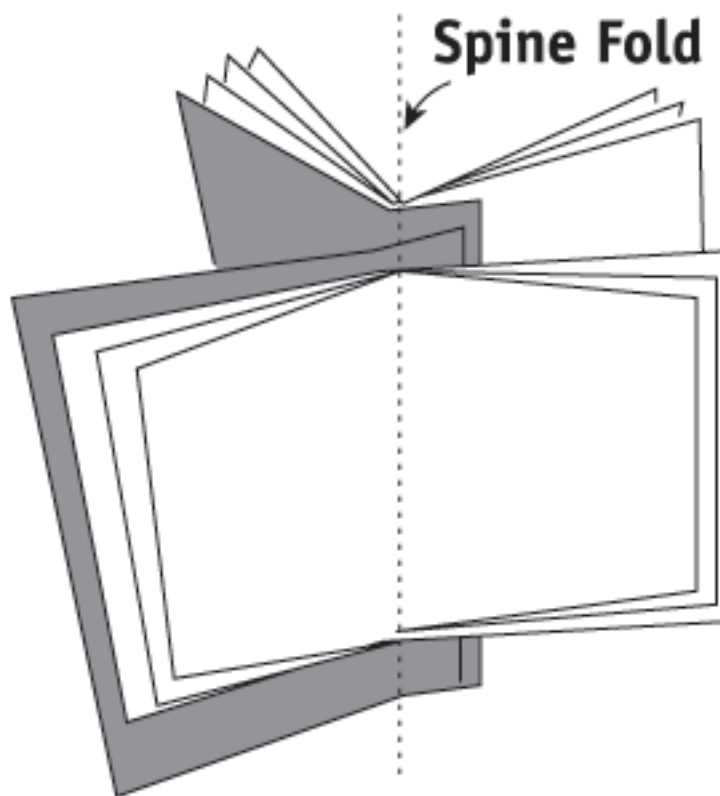
5. Cut as shown in the demo.

6. Knock up the signature alone so your pages align at their base.

7. Insert the signature into the cover so its HEIGHT is centered on the cover height, i.e., at the head and the tail you'll have equal overhang.

8. Punch and sew your holes as shown and discussed starting at about minute 6 of this video.

9. Cut your thread and sew as shown in the video starting at about 10:17 minutes. *I have placed a sewing diagram on the bottom of page 3 of this handout.*



Above is a diagram showing how to stack your covers and signatures for the Japanese Split Cover Pamphlet. Note that you stack things exactly the same when you use a single cover. You can see the split falls to the right of the spine line. In a single-piece cover those two pieces would be joined with a fold at that point. Note that dashed line of the spine fold is where all the spine folds of all your parts align. You will stitch down this line. In a Japanese Double pamphlet you will begin and end your sewing in the center of the same signature in which you start—it's your choice to start inside signature one or two.

Part 4: Trimming the Cover

Remember that you need to allow overhang at the fore edge of both the front and back covers.

Follow the video for instructions on how to mark the fold/or the trimming mark on your cover's fore edge.

Fold in flaps should stay at least 3/4 inch away from the spine when folded into place.

See the equations listed under Part 3 above for how to work out your cover width flap/cut point.

Note that when you are trimming or scoring your cover flaps you can use a triangle. Measure one width at the head or tail of your cover and then use the triangle to drop a perpendicular from the top, or raise one from the bottom. It cuts down on tool handling and saves time.

Part 5: Using Your Scraps for Another Book

This video shows you how I end up using that 8 inch strip I ended up with from each of the two sheets of watercolor paper I tore down. (Remember I got 3 books from two sheets of watercolor paper.)

Revisit Video Part 2 if you need a refresher on folding and collating to match surfaces across a spread.

At the end of this video I also suggest uses for pamphlets.

Part 6: Making a Japanese Double Pamphlet

Pamphlets are limited in page count by their paper thickness. There comes a point, different for each paper, when adding another folded piece (4 pages) swells the spine so thickly that it doesn't fold flat, it bulges up, and actually becomes difficult to hold and use. (*Swell like this would also effect the width of your covers so you need to allow for it in your cover measurements if you have it.*)

That's when it's useful to have something like a Japanese Double Pamphlet.

When I'm using thick art paper like 140 lb. watercolor paper I keep to 16-page signatures. A Japanese double pamphlet then gives me 32 pages. That's a great length for a weekend or long-day trip.

If you're using lighter weight paper you can up your page count in either structure but I tend not to push the pamphlet past 24 pages of lightweight paper. Because of the sewing of the Japanese Double Pamphlet I tend to keep it at 32 to 40 pages maximum regardless of paper weight. After you make a couple you will have a feel for what you like.



Prepare your pages/signatures just as you did for a simple pamphlet. Be sure to tear and collate to have matches surfaces across the spine.

Then use the information below for sizing your cover material for the Japanese Pamphlet (whole or split cover options.)

Equations for Measuring the Width of the Cover for the Japanese Pamphlet

Single cover strip with no cover flaps:

$$(2 \times \text{Signature width}) + (2 \times \text{fore edge overhang}) + (2 \times \text{spine fold tab width}) = \text{cover width}$$

(I like to use 3/4 to 1 inch for the fold on either side of the spine fold for my spine fold tab width.)

Single cover strip with cover flaps:

$$(2 \times \text{Flap width}) + (2 \times \text{Signature width}) + (4 \times \text{fore edge overhang}) + (2 \times \text{spine fold tab width}) = \text{cover width}$$

Split Cover with no cover flaps, cut 2 of the following:

$$(1 \times \text{spine fold tab width}) + (1 \times \text{signature width}) + (1 \times \text{fore edge overhang}) = \text{front or back cover width (cut 2)}$$

Split Cover with a flap use this equation—cut 2 cover strips:

$$(1 \times \text{spine fold width}) + (2 \times \text{signature width}) + (2 \times \text{fore edge overhang}) = \text{front or back cover width (cut 2)}$$

That will give you a whole signature's width of cover paper that you can trim down to the width of the flap you want when you reach that point of construction.

For a split cover with very thin paper think about this: Cut a strip that is two times the width of one of your normal split covers, and fold it in half. That fold becomes your

Above you see to centers of the Japanese Pamphlet. The top, green-blue center is a continuous cover with a center fold. The bottom, light green paper with flecks example has wide center tabs. This is an example of a Split cover with wide spine fold tabs. This cover material was lightweight. By folding it at the fore edge of the book the cover material is doubled! This adds strength to the cover. By making the tabs wider than the 3/4 to 1 inch width suggested for general use in continuous or split covers you now have 4 additional "pages" that you can collage upon or otherwise use.

FORE EDGE. At the spine where you have your tabs you will have two flaps from each of your covers. If you make the flaps a little wider (they are lightweight so it won't be much thickness) you can have wider tabs in the book's center. Use those tabs to add extra collage or journaling.

Thoughts on Supplies and Substitutions

Additional Options for Sewing Thread

If you don't already have bookbinding supplies at home you might not have Waxed Irish Linen Thread in various thicknesses on hand.

I like 4-ply for pamphlets. It's thick enough to be substantial and hold the book securely, while not so thick as to enlarge the holes when the thread passes multiple times through a hole.

I like to get my Waxed Irish Linen Thread from Royal Wood Ltd. They sell weaving supplies and many people,

myself included, use this thread for weaving baskets. I find that they have great prices. Shops selling bookbinding supplies will also have this type of thread but they will not have the color or thickness selection.

Can you use other threads? Yes. For years I used cotton carpet weaving cords for pamphlet classes when working with grade schools. As an artist-in-residence I usually had a very slight budget and had to use what was available. I could purchase large spools, in many colors so the students had choices for thread color. I preferred to use the budget to buy the best paper possible so that students would have a great drawing experience and want to make more books.

So what might you use instead? You can use the thicker non-waxed Irish Linen threads used for multiple signature bindings. I recommend that you wax those threads by running them across a piece of bees-wax before use. This will help keep them from knotting up while you sew.

Thick embroidery threads, thick cottons, certain yarns, various craft cords—they can all be used for this process. How do you decide?

First you want something that doesn't have stretch—that's too hard to sew and maintain good tension.

Next you want something that is sturdy but flexible, i.e., it can bend easily but friction from rubbing against something (as in your pack or purse) doesn't fray it. Raffia would not be a good solution because it is both fragile when rubbed against and difficult to bend easily to make the necessary turns in the thread pass.

Additionally you need something that is not so thick that it tears your holes out into larger holes with each thread pass. Large holes weaken your structure. Your pages will start to jiggle, and then it's just a matter of time before they tear out.

Another material not suitable for binding would be any "thread" or cord that is harder than the paper. Plastic cording of the type used to braid lanyards would be an example of this type of material. It will distress your holes and you'll end up in the same situation you have if you had used thick cords that tore out your holes.

Thin, weak threads of the type used in a sewing machine aren't suitable because they don't have the fabric protecting them over a short expanse—they are exposed and will quickly break. Why bother using something you have to replace almost immediately?

Some students have told me that they have used dental floss. While this type of "thread" has some durability I think it's a bit "hard" for our art papers. I also don't like the minty smell while I'm sketching. But I mention it because you need to be adaptable, wherever you find yourself needing to make a book.

Needles

Do not use embroidery needles with large holes. The eyes on those needles will enlarge your sewing holes as you work, compromising the integrity of your book structure.

It is best to invest in quality bookbinding needles. Companies like Talas-online have a variety available.

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Paper Choices

On page one of this handout I provide blog post links where I list my favorite art papers.

I believe that your daily drawing habit is best supported when you work with paper that you love, that works with the media you love using.

I encourage you to think about what materials you want to use on your pages and then choose papers accordingly.

But in the process realize something—just because a paper isn't made for wet-media doesn't mean that you can't paint on it. I have painted on hundreds of printmaking papers, thicker drawing papers (even some thin ones), and writing papers (look at my blog posts on working in a Japanese Lined Journal—it's one of my favorite things to do).

Finding a paper that really works for you and your methods is part of the essential fun of having a visual journaling habit. Embrace the experimentation and fun of testing papers. It will lead you to new methods and new papers.

NOTE ON EMBEDDED LINKS

Some of the links in this PDF may no longer work. The first decade plus of my blog RozWoundUp has been archived for technical issues.

If you click on a link in this PDF and receive an "archived post" notice that means I didn't judge that information as essential to this document, or the information in that archived post is more completely covered in the video class this document supports.

*Additionally, if you follow one of the links in this document to a RWU post, **expect to be able to read that post (if no archive note appears) but realize that any links in that blog post may be archived.***

It's a complicated issue of cross references over 15 years. I'm confident that the class videos and the links which do work will provide you with the information you need to succeed in the pamphlet binding process. I'd rather you have this information in a usable and timely fashion than hold the class videos and handout back until it can be all unknotted.

Happy Binding!