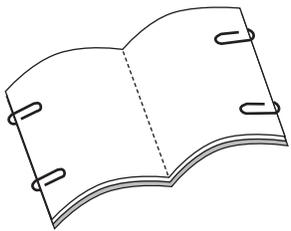


Commonplace Book

This book is modeled after the homemade “commonplace book” of the late 1700s and early 1800s. People sewed paper pages to covers made of fabric, leather, paper, or wood to make journals, calendars, collections of recipes and sayings, and even handwritten school books.

Suggested Supplies: 6 pieces of plain blank paper, 1 piece of larger heavier paper for the cover (about 1/2” taller and 1” wider than the other sheets), paperclips, pencil, thin string, large metal needle.



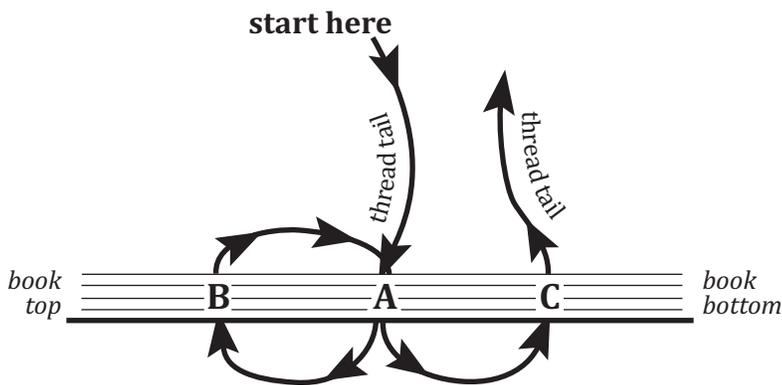
1. Fold the pieces of paper and the cover in half, crease the folds flat, and open the pages out again.

2. Stack the sheets, matching the fold lines. Put the cover on the bottom of the stack, making sure it sticks out above and below the regular pages. Clip the layers together as shown. This will keep the sheets from sliding around during steps 3 and 4.

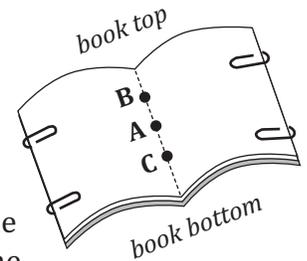


Teenager Martha Ryan, of Bertie County, used this commonplace book to record arithmetic schoolwork—and some of her patriotic feelings!

Martha Ryan Cipher Book, circa 1781,
Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.



3. Mark a dot at the center of the fold (A). Place dots at least 1” away on either side (B and C). Using the needle, poke holes through all of the layers at the dots. Leave the paperclips in place.



4. Measure enough string to wrap around the fold of the pages 1-1/2 times. Then thread the needle and use it to weave the string through the 3 holes—down through A, leaving a tail of thread; up through B; down through A again, up through C—as shown. Tie the two tails of thread together, and cut off any extra.

What will you use your commonplace book for?

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