

Why make a sketchbook?

For a long time AccessArt has been a great supporter of sketchbooks.

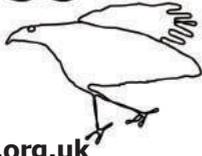
We see sketchbooks as a vital tool to help develop creative ownership, motivation and inspiration. And whatever your age, there is no better way to kick start these processes than by making a sketchbook.

Bought sketchbooks can be beautiful, the paper excellent and their consistency means you can rely on them as you build your collection.

However home made sketchbooks can have many advantages over bought sketchbooks:

- They are cheap
- They are flexible
- They are always individual, which encourages "ownership" of the books
- Making the books nurtures creative thought and action from the outset
- You can avoid the "blank page terror" which can be off-putting when working in brand new, blank, bought sketchbooks.

In this PDF we have outlined five simple ways to make sketchbooks, together with lots of tips and ideas to help you expand and develop your sketchbook approach.



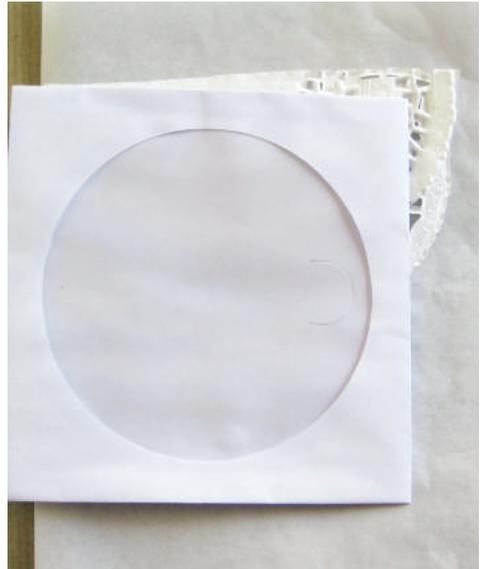
Materials

As with many of our workshops, activity is inspired by the materials. Start collecting paper, and in addition to good quality cartridge paper, start collecting ALL KINDS of sheets, of all kinds of quality. The variety will help add charm to your sketchbooks and no two sketchbooks will be alike. Here's a list - by no means definitive:

- plain paper - all colours, all textures, all thicknesses
- tracing paper, or other semi opaque papers like baking parchment, is ideal for creating layers of drawings
- graph papers - all sizes
- brown packaging paper
- patterned paper - including paper from other books/magazines/old maps etc
- tissue paper - again ideal for creating layers or collage sheets
- paper which forms spaces: like envelops/folders/paper bags/
- recycled paper - try collecting all the paper which comes your way for a week, including letters and envelopes and bags, and cut it all to a similar size : you'll have quite a wad!
- newspaper and blank newsprint
- wallpaper
- corrugated cardboard boxes (for covers and/or pages)
- textured paper: braille pads or sandpaper
- mounting board
- fabric
- plastics such as bubble wrap, plastic wallets, acetate sheets/covers

Other materials: to tie and bind and wrap and decorate:

- string, wool, ribbon, leather thread, cord, elastic bands, glue, cotton and needles, tape.





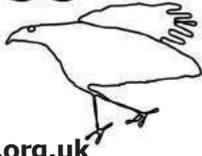
Idea 1: Simple elastic band

Elastic band sketchbooks are simple to make, very flexible and very cheap. Because the pages are only fixed in place using an elastic band these sketchbooks can be taken apart, pages removed, or pages added, making them very versatile.

Reaction to the elastic band sketchbooks is always very positive. Because of their nature (slightly scruffy, very hand made, very tactile) children and young people especially seem to really warm to them and want to carry them about and use them!

Select a variety of paper which should be torn or cut to twice the size of the finished sketchbook, and each sheet folded in half. Each folded sheet is then tucked inside the folded sheet before to make the book.





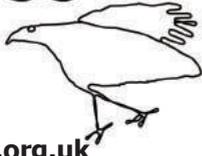
When assembled the elastic band puts pressure on the pages which can then curl if the cover isn't sturdy enough, so for that reason elastic band sketchbooks work best with a stiff cardboard cover.

The cover is made in the same way as the pages - one piece, twice the size of the finished book, folded along the spine. Hard cardboard can "crack" along the spine - this can be solved by scoring it slightly before you fold it, with a blunt pencil and a ruler, or, better still use corrugated cardboard instead. Corrugated cardboard has the advantage that it folds more cleanly if folded parallel to the corrugations. Elastic band sketchbooks made with corrugated card covers can then, if desired, be "rolled" to fit into pockets or bags.

The cover too can be personalised - decorated with fabric or paper.

Arrange the folded pages one inside another. Open out the folded cover and lie the pages on to it. Pull an elastic band over the pages and the cover so that the band secures all the pages together.

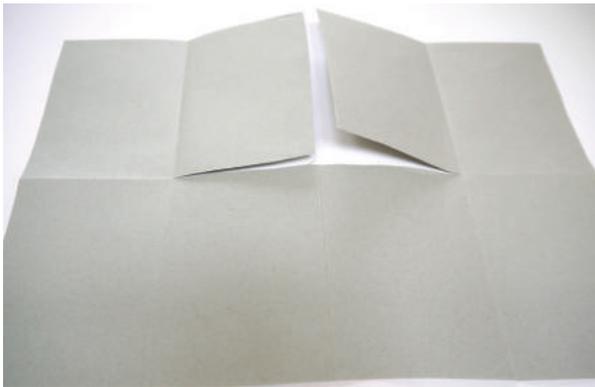




Idea 2: Simple folded

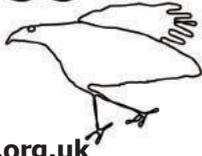
Here are three versions of a simple folded sketchbook, each made using a single sheet of paper. The beauty of these books is that they can be made very quickly, requiring no fixing, are very flexible and can be made in series around specific drawing exercises, themes or projects. Additionally these simple folded books can be made to fit into

pockets or envelopes in existing, larger sketchbooks, providing projects books within books.



Method 1: "T" cut

Fold the sheet as shown in the photo, then cut lines along a "T" shape as shown. Fold the sheet in any way you like to make a booklet.



Method 2: Map fold

This method is slightly more complex but delivers more pages.

Fold the sheet as shown in the photo and cut three lines as shown. Fold concertina style to make a booklet.

Method 3: Concertina

The concertina sketchbook couldn't be simpler. Make it a hard backed cover if you want to give it more longevity, or add it to an existing sketchbook to help change the dimensions of that book.





Idea 3: Simple stapled

The simple stapled sketchbook is loved by children as it provides an easy way to make a relatively competent book.

Start by choosing papers for pages and this time cut or tear them to the size of a single page (no folding required in this one). Assemble about 20 sheets, and then choose paper for a cover - brown paper or wallpaper is ideal - strong but flexible. Cut or tear the cover as for the pages - two single sheets, one for the front, one for the back.

Line the sheets up and then staple through all the pages, including the covers, approx. 5mm from the spine edge.



Idea 4: Hole punch

Hole punch sketchbooks are an excellent way to use up old papers.

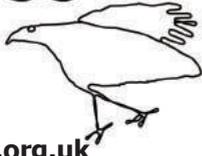
Select a variety of papers for sheets and tear or cut them to a single page size. Select paper, thin card or acetate for the cover.



Assemble no more than 10 sheets (depending upon the size of your hole punch) and punch two holes neatly in the pile of sheets.

Lace together with string, wool or ribbon. When you tie the string to secure the pages, make sure the string is loose enough to allow the pages to fall flat when the sketchbook is open.





Idea 5: Simple Sewn

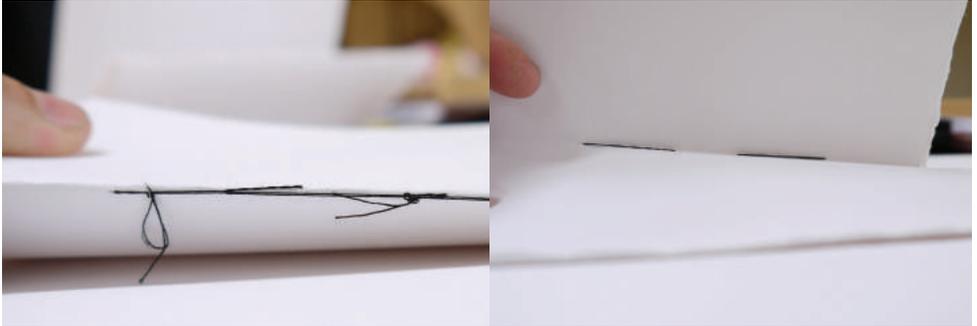
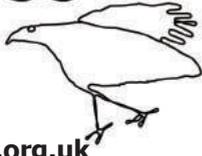
Sewn sketchbooks take more time to make, and are more permanent, but they provide an excellent, low tech introduction to book binding resulting in a solid, attractive sketchbook.

Select sheets of paper and cut or tear them to twice the finished sketchbook size, folding them in half. Assemble the pages by gathering 5 to 10 folded sheets and inserting them one inside another to make each signature.

Take a length of thread and a needle and sew the pages together. This is best achieved by doubling the thread, tying a knot in the end. Working from the outside of each signature, insert the needle into the spine fold, and pulling through the needle so the knot remains on the outside of the fold. Take the needle back through the fold approximately 4 cm along from the original needle hole, this time working from inside the signature to the outside. Secure the stitch by passing the needle through the knotted end of the thread.

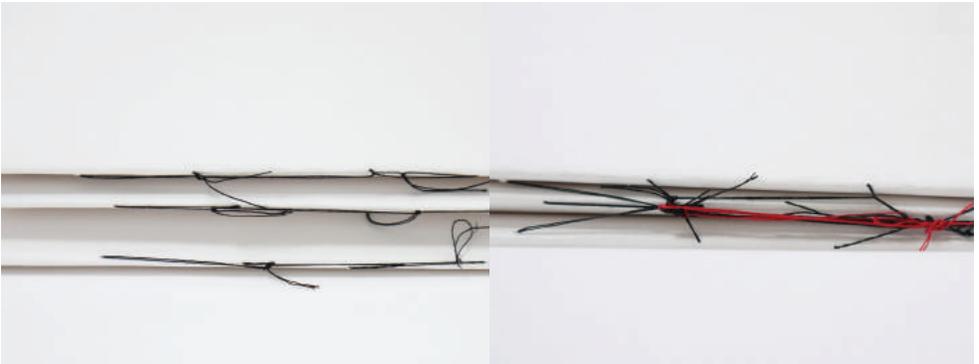
Repeat this stitch further along the spine. For most books of a modest size, two stitches per signature is fine - a larger fold maybe require three.





Once all the signatures have been independently secured with the stitches, you can then join the signatures together.

This is again done by sewing.

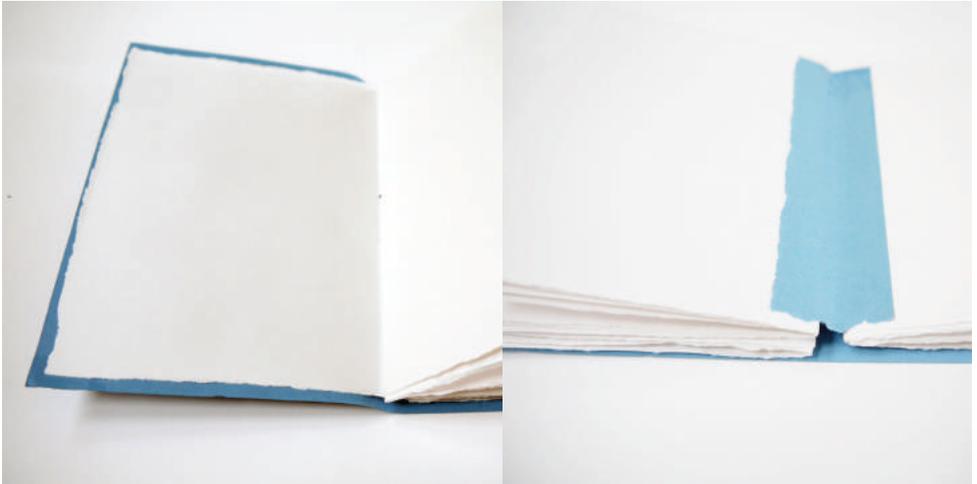


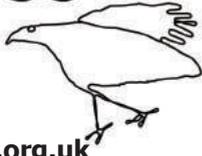
Line the signatures together, and "sew" them together by sewing through the stitches on the outer folds, as shown above in red thread. Keep working the needle through the stitches and securing with knots.



To make the cover, choose thin card, paper, or fabric and fold a sheet to cover the front and the back of the book. The easiest way to secure the cover is to take the first and last interior page of the sketchbook and glue it to the outer cover.

The signatures can also be further strengthened by glueing fabric or paper strips across the joins where two signatures meet (see below).

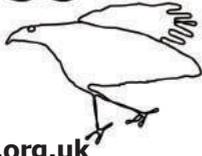




Extension ideas and approaches

On our sketchbook making workshops we start by introducing the concept, followed by the materials, followed by a few simple techniques, just as we have in this PDF. In every case, whether by children, teenagers or adults, the sketchbooks which are produced are highly individual and incredibly creative.

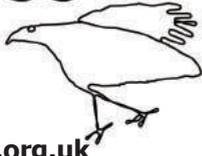




We talk about two main themes: ownership and spaces. We stress that whoever is making a sketchbook, they should feel as if the sketchbook belongs to the maker - and that they are free to express themselves in any way they want, with little restriction - only help and guidance. When the maker feels as if they own the sketchbook right from the start, they are more likely to then want to fill the sketchbook and allow it to become an extension of themselves.



When we talk about the types of spaces a sketchbook can contain, we mean both physical and metaphorical. We want to encourage the notion that sketchbooks are a place to contain all kinds of thoughts, reflections, ideas, connections and collections, and we believe that by creating a variety of physical spaces within the sketchbook we can encourage a wealth and richness of exploration. For this reason we encourage students to create spaces such as pockets, fold-out extensions, and layers.



What next?

Please send us your photos of sketchbooks made as a result of this PDF. Upload them online into our Flickr gallery at <http://www.accessart.org.uk/>

