

MAKE A MINI BOOK



This activity demonstrates a pamphlet stitch, a simple technique used in book [conservation](#) at the Library of Congress.

Pamphlets feature soft paper covers with pages that are held together by simple sewing through the spine. Examples in the Library's collection include almanacs, historic children's books, and contemporary artists books. When these materials are damaged, our conservation staff will repair the objects using one of many pamphlet stitch techniques.

GET INSPIRED







 Watch the Library's conservators in action in these 3-minute videos:

- ~ [Conserving a 19th century photograph album](#) that includes a rare photograph of Harriet Tubman
- ~ [Conserving the autobiography of Omar Ibn Said](#), an enslaved African, written in Arabic. This short documentary was created by high school students in Washington, D.C.










GET READY

You'll need:

-  Paper for textblock (pages)
-  Decorative paper or other material for cover that is at least 2 in. longer than your textblock paper
-  Thread
-  Needle, a sturdy sewing needle can be used
-  Ruler or straight edge
-  [Optional: Bone folder](#)—but a ruler or straight edge will do

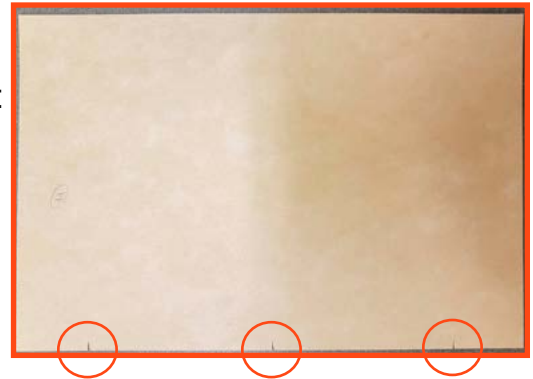
And be sure to review the glossary of terms:

-  **Textblock:** All of the pages in a book
-  **Bone folder:** A tool used to make folds and creases in materials
-  **Jig:** A guide for hole punching
-  **Head of the book:** The top edge of the book
-  **Tail of the book:** The bottom edge of the book
-  **Tail of the thread:** The end of the thread you leave when you start sewing that you later tie the other end of your thread to
-  **Square knot:** A knot used to attach two pieces of rope or thread. In this case, the knot used to connect the two ends of the thread once the sewing has been finished. To tie a square knot, take the right end over the left like you when you start tying your shoes, then put the left end over the right and pull it tight.

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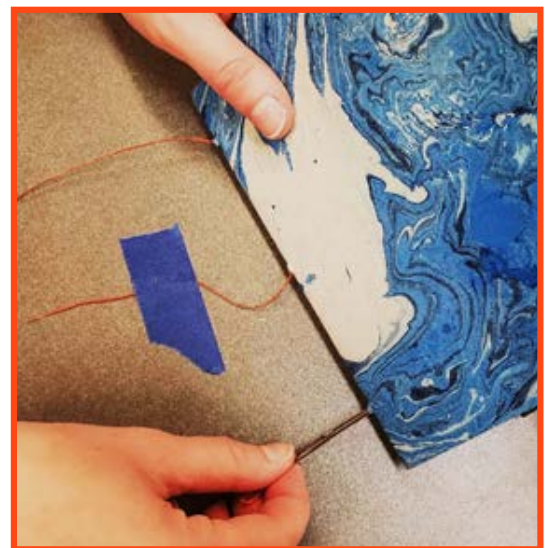
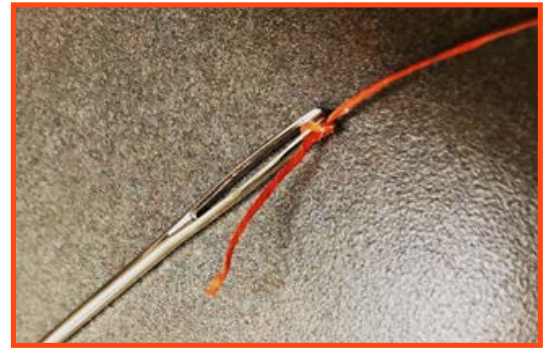
CREATE YOUR MINI-BOOK!

1. Take the sheets of paper you will use for your pages and fold them over to create your **textblock**. Create a strong crease using a **bone folder** or your finger.
2. Fold your cover page in half, as you did with your textblock.
3. Create a guide for punching holes in your cover and textblock (**jig**). Cut a piece of cardstock that is the same height as your textblock. Cut out small wedges a half inch from each end and at the very center.
4. Place the jig so that it meets the top edge (**head**) of the textblock, then use your needle to poke holes along the crease in your textblock at each of the wedges in your jig.
5. Use your jig and needle to poke holes in your cover along the crease, as you did to your textblock.
6. Put the cover around the textblock, lining up the holes. You can use a binder clip to help keep the cover attached to the textblock while you're sewing.



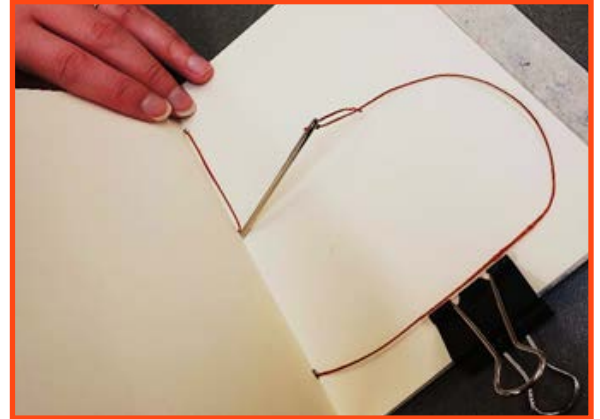
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7. Cut a piece of thread about three times as long as your textblock.
8. Thread your needle and tie the string off to secure it to the needle.
9. Start sewing by passing the needle through the center hole in the cover and textblock. Leave a few inches as the **tail of the thread**. You will use this to tie a knot later. You can tape the tail to a table to prevent it from moving.
10. Bring your needle back out of the hole at the top (**head**) of the book.
11. Pass the needle through the hole at the bottom edge (**tail**) of the book.



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12. Bring the needle out through the center hole.



13. Use the two ends of your thread to tie a **square knot** around the thread of the stitch that passes from the head of your book to the tail of your book.



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14. Put your ruler or straight edge between the textblock and your cover, lining it up just past the edge of your textblock. Use the bone folder or your fingers to crease the cover along the ruler. Remove the ruler and finish folding the edge of your cover under the textblock.





15. Repeat step 14 on the other side.



16. Trim the ends of your thread, **decorate** the cover of your book and write a story within!



EXPLORE MORE:

-  Download posters and bookmarks on how to “be kind to books!” on the Library’s [preservation page](#).
-  Explore the effects of sunlight on paper with this activity, [Preservation and the Power of Light](#), from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.