

Create a Tunnel Book

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presented by Kate Bird, Fiber Artist, www.katebird.art

A tunnel book is three-dimensional layered book form that creates a view through the pages from the front to the back. These instructions create a 5" x 4.25" finished book.



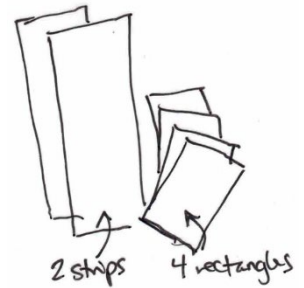
Materials

- Two sheets of letter-size paper (8.5" x 11"). Heavier paper or light cardstock stands up best.
- Glue stick. Elmer's Craft Bond is permanent, acid free and photo safe.
- Scissors, or an X-Acto knife and cutting mat
- Scrap paper to glue on, so glue stays off your book
- *Optional: bone folder or other flat tool for sharp creases*

Step 1: Cut the pieces

You'll end up with four pages, one long strip for the spines and one long strip of scrap paper.

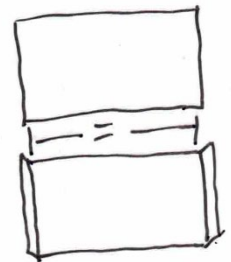
1. Cut each sheet in half the long way to make four strips, each 4.25" x 11".
2. Cut two of those strips in half crosswise. These four pieces, each 4.25" x 5.5", are the book pages.
3. Turn the pages sideways so they are wider than tall: 5.5" wide x 4.25" tall. Keep them this way for every step.
4. Keep one long strip for the spines. Keep the other as scrap for extra cut-out elements.



Step 2: Prepare the pages

All four pages need to end up 5" wide so they line up on the spines.

1. Two middle pages: fold a ¼" tab toward the back on the left and right edges. These tabs are where the glue goes.
2. Front and back pages: trim ½" off the width. They have no tabs; their edges glue directly to the spines.



Step 3: Fold the spines

One long strip makes both spines. You'll fold it into 16 equal panels, then cut it in half. Crease each fold firmly with a bone folder or your fingernail; sharp creases make the book stand straight.

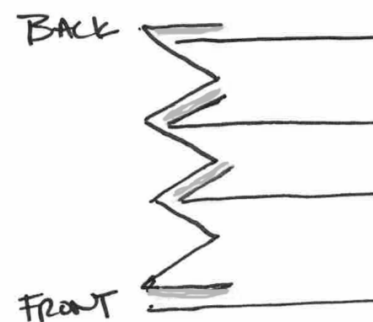
1. Fold the long strip in half, short end to short end. Crease and unfold.
2. Turn the strip over. Fold both ends in to meet the center crease. You now have 4 equal panels.
3. Fold each panel in half, alternating direction so the strip zigzags like a fan. You now have 8 panels.
4. Fold each panel in half again, still alternating. You now have 16 narrow panels.
5. Cut along the center fold to make two matching spines of 8 panels each.



Step 4: Assemble the book

Before glueing the pages in, cut windows into the front and middle pages. It is more difficult to cut a page once it's attached. Once the pages are ready, work over scrap paper to glue them in. Work from back to front, one spine on each side:

1. **Back page:** apply glue to the end panel of each spine. Line the page's side edges up with the first valley on each side and press.
2. **First middle page:** apply glue to its folded tabs. Line the tabs up with the second valley on each side and press.
3. **Second middle page:** repeat at the third valley.
4. **Front page:** glue the remaining spine ends. Line up the page edges and press.



Fold the book flat and press it under a heavy book for at least 20 minutes while the glue dries.

A Note on Designing Layers

Each page is a layer, from far away to close up. Think of a beach scene:

Page	Function	Beach example
Back	Stays whole. The background of the scene.	Sea and sky
Middle	Large cutouts allow a view of the layers behind.	Sand, shore birds, a beach umbrella
Front	A frame around the view.	A pair of palm trees and sand

Tips for depth

- Keep the front frame's border wider than the spine, so the spine stays hidden.
- Make openings larger toward the front, so the viewer see the interior pages.
- Overlap things: put a tree or figure partly in front of something on the layer behind.
- Let something break the frame. A tree that extends past the front opening pops forward.
- Glue on extra cut-out pieces to add layers without cutting into a page.

Learn More

Resources

- [UF Libraries Tunnel Books](#)
- Alisa Golden, Making Handmade Books (available through PPLC)

Artists to explore

- Andrea Dezső: andreadezso.com/artists-books
- Studio Agata: studio-agata.com/shop/p/tunnel-book
- Nicolas Codron: ncpaperworks