

Bookmaking with Kids



This captivating structure has multi-fold pages that open and close like doors, revealing or concealing illustrations, poetry, photos, collages and more. It offers kids a wealth of artistic and literary choices. And once assembled, it delights and mystifies.

A basic French-door unit consists of two sheets of paper (not including a cover), folded and nested together. One sheet gets a C-fold in which the two sides are folded in toward the center. (Viewed from the top, the folded sheet looks like the letter C.) The other sheet gets a Z-fold, made by reversing the left fold in a C-fold sheet. (Viewed from the top, the folded sheet looks like the letter Z.) The Z-fold sheet is then nested inside the C-fold.

This unit can easily accommodate more pages. It can be nested into a half-fold sheet. Another option is to nest a half-fold sheet inside the French-door unit. Or, half-fold sheets can be used both around and inside the unit.

I first encountered this page-folding technique in *Other Worlds: Journey to the Moon*, an artist's book produced by The Foolscap Press. You can see photos at <http://www.foolscappress.com/journey.php>

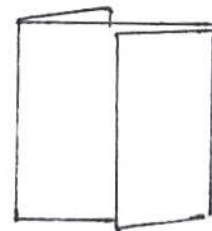
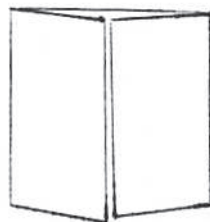
Materials & Tools

- **For pages:** Plain letter-size paper. For practice, I like to start with two colors, one for the C-folds, the other the Z-folds. This makes it easy for kids tell the two elements apart and to get them nested correctly.
- **For covers:** Decorative paper, cut to letter-size,; fairly sturdy but easy to fold.
- Scissors, paperclips, needles, thread, awls.
- Writing and drawing supplies.

Step by Step

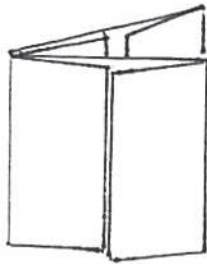
1 Make several C-fold pages by folding each side of an 8½x11 sheet (landscape orientation) into the middle. Kids can estimate the center point where the two sides meet. Or to be precise, they can make the first fold 2¾ inches in from one edge, then fold the other edge in to meet.

2 Take a few C-fold pages and convert them to Z-folds by reversing the left fold.

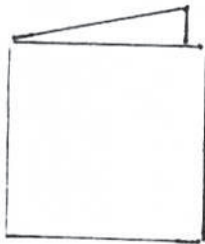


A sewn binding is a great finishing touch for a French-door book but kids can also staple their books through all layers along the center fold with a long-reach stapler.

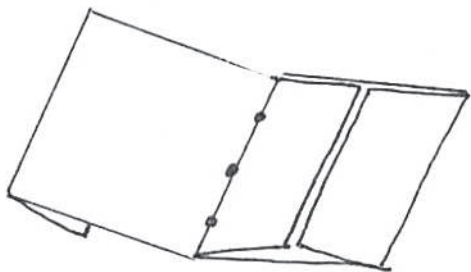
- 3 Stand a C-fold sheet to the left of a Z-fold sheet and tuck the Z-fold into the left-side fold of the C-fold sheet. This produces the basic French-door unit.



- 4 At this point, kids can add a cover made by folding an 8½x11 decorative sheet in half.



- 5 To bind the booklet, open it to the centermost fold; there will be two doors on the right side of the fold, see below. Paperclip the pages in place at the top and bottom, on both sides of the fold. Then staple into the fold through all thickness, in 2-3 places. Or pierce and sew a three-hole pamphlet stitch. (See sewn booklet instruction sheet.)



Variations

Interleaving one or more plain half-fold sheets (pictured in Step 4) into a French-door unit can expand space for artwork or text. Encourage kids to experiment with the placement of half-fold sheets, using one or more of the following approaches:

- Nest one half-fold sheet in the center of the French-door unit.
- Nest two or more half-fold sheets together, and then place them in the center of the French-door unit.
- Wrap one half-fold sheet around the French-door unit.
- Nest two or more half-fold sheets together, and then wrap them around the French-door unit.

It's also intriguing to add more French-door units to the book. These can be placed in the center of the first French-door unit or nested into half-fold sheets (in any of the locations above).