BOOK BINDING WITH A STICK

This is a fun and fairly easy way for students to bind a book without using glue or a needle and thread. The finished product looks very spiffy, and students are very proud of their work. While there are many variations of this book binding activity, we delight in sharing our favorites with you.

MATERIALS

20-25 sheets 8.5x11 plain white paper
1 sheet 8.5x11 colored paper or scrapbooking paper
1 sheet heavy cardstock or scrapbooking cardstock
1 10.5” long dowel rod, 3/8” diameter or a similar-sized stick
1 sturdy thick rubber band (must have good stretch!)
1 Sharpie marker
Two-hole paper punch

Optional Materials we have used include:
- scrapbooking scissors, trimmers, and punches
- glue sticks
- colored pencils
- markers

PREPARATIONS

1. Count off 20-25 pieces of plain white paper. Using a paper cutter, cut sheets of paper so they measure 5.25-5.5” x 8.5” each. (We like 5.25” so the covers have a natural overhang like an old fashioned book. After cutting the pages, use a two-hole punch to cut holes in your paper stack. Be sure to center the holes as much as possible.
2. Cut your heavy cardstock and your colored paper/scrapbook paper the same way as you cut the plain white sheets. Hole punch them.
3. Stack the sheets of cut paper and cardstock so that the white paper is sandwiched between the colored sheets and cardstock just like you want them to be when you bind them.
4. If you are going to use scrapbooking scissors to trim the unbound long edge of the cardstock, be careful not to trim too much. Make sure that your plain white and color paper are not poking out. If that happens, it is like getting a bad haircut where you have to keep trimming until it looks right.
5. If you are going to use pattern punches on your covers or inside pages, now is the time to complete those tasks.
6. Cut a piece of dowel rod 11” long or find a fairly straight stick that length. If you are going to decorate the rod/stick, do it now.
7. Repeat until you have the desired number of book sets prepared.

ASSEMBLY

1. Check your stack of papers and make sure they are in this order:
   - Top = cardstock cover (pattern facing up/away from stack)
   - Inside leaf of colored paper
   - All white paper
   - Inside leaf of colored paper
   - Bottom = cardstock cover (pattern facing out/away from stack)
2. Tamp stack so that all the punched holes line up.
3. Stretch your thick rubber band. From the bottom of your paper stack, insert and end of the rubber band through the punched holes. Pull the rubber band through so that at least ¼” is poking up.
4. Insert an end of the dowel rod through the loop. Push the dowel rod to the edge of the papers. Tug on the rubber band from the bottom to make a snug fit.
5. Standing book pages on their long narrow edge, carefully bend the book and poke the other end of the rubber band through the open holes so that it pokes through. Make sure the rubber band lies flat on the back of the book; untwist the band before poking it through the hole. You may have to use a dull pencil to get the band to poke through the hole. Hang onto the loop!
6. Gently straighten your book and slip the free end of the dowel rod through the rubber band loop. Be careful to evenly distribute the tension of the band around the stick so book opens and closes evenly.
7. Very carefully test your book. Flip through about ten pages and open the book. It should open wide or even lay flat. An extra rubber band has been provided in case the band snaps.
8. Decorate your book covers if you have not already done so.
9. If you have not used permanent inks, you may want to use cheap canned hairspray to mist the colors so they do not run amuck later. (Pump bottles do not work).
10. Make sure your name is on your book.

ADVANTAGES TO THIS DESIGN:
- Pages can be added or removed.
- If someone makes a mistake, it is easy to remedy.
- Students and parents can duplicate the binding process and make books on their own.
- Students take ownership of their books because they made them.
- Students take pride in the drawings and writing they choose to put in their books.
- Scrap paper is repurposed, and leftover art materials are used to create something useful.

DISADVANTAGES TO THIS DESIGN:
- Inappropriate use of extra rubber band you provide
- Youngest students may need more assistance. (Hint: Train older students in your building how to assemble books if you do not have aides or parents to assist you.)

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