

MAKING BOOK COVERS

BY LINDEE GOODALL



Figure 1. Journal and book covers are quick and easy projects and are perfect for showing off your embroidery!

Journal and book covers are quick and easy projects and are perfect for showing off your embroidery! They also make great gifts and can be customized for almost anyone of any age.

PROJECT NOTES

For these samples, I used designs from [Victorian Crazy Patch in the Hoop](#). Related YouTube videos are available for stitching the designs and making the cover:

- [How to Sew a Journal Cover](#)
- [How to Stitch Victorian Crazy Piecing In-the-Hoop](#)

How to Make a Journal Cover



These links were correct at the time of this writing. If they don't work, please visit my YouTube channel to locate them: <https://www.youtube.com/lindeegvideos>

These covers were made for standard composition books but you can make them for just about any book by changing the measurements.

Mine are just basic covers with sleeves on the inside to secure the book covers. I've added a ribbon for a book mark, a narrow elastic to secure the book closed, and a wider elastic loop to hold a pen.

The inside sleeves offer more real estate for extra pockets and personalizing. Plan ahead for any extra embroidery because you may need to complete that before final cutting to size.



Figure 2. This cover has a red lining, denim sleeves to match the front, extra pockets on the front sleeve and a bit of personalizing on the back sleeve.

SUPPLIES

- Fabrics for project (you'll need to determine what you need based on how many fabrics you use and how large your book is)
- Cover

Duplication, reproduction or use of this project by any other instructors or groups is not permitted without prior written consent from [Lindee G Embroidery](https://www.lindeegembroidery.com).

How to Make a Journal Cover

- Lining
- Sleeves
- Pockets
- Interfacing. I just used Pellon ShirTailor for mine but you may want something stiffer.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide elastic (or a fabric loop) for the pen holder ($\sim 2\frac{1}{2}$ " or circumference of your pen plus $\frac{5}{8}$ ")
- $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide elastic to hold the journal closed (height of book + 1")
- Ribbon for book mark (about 3" longer than height of book)
- Optional: charm for bottom of ribbon
- Basic sewing supplies

START BY MEASURING

You'll need several measurements:

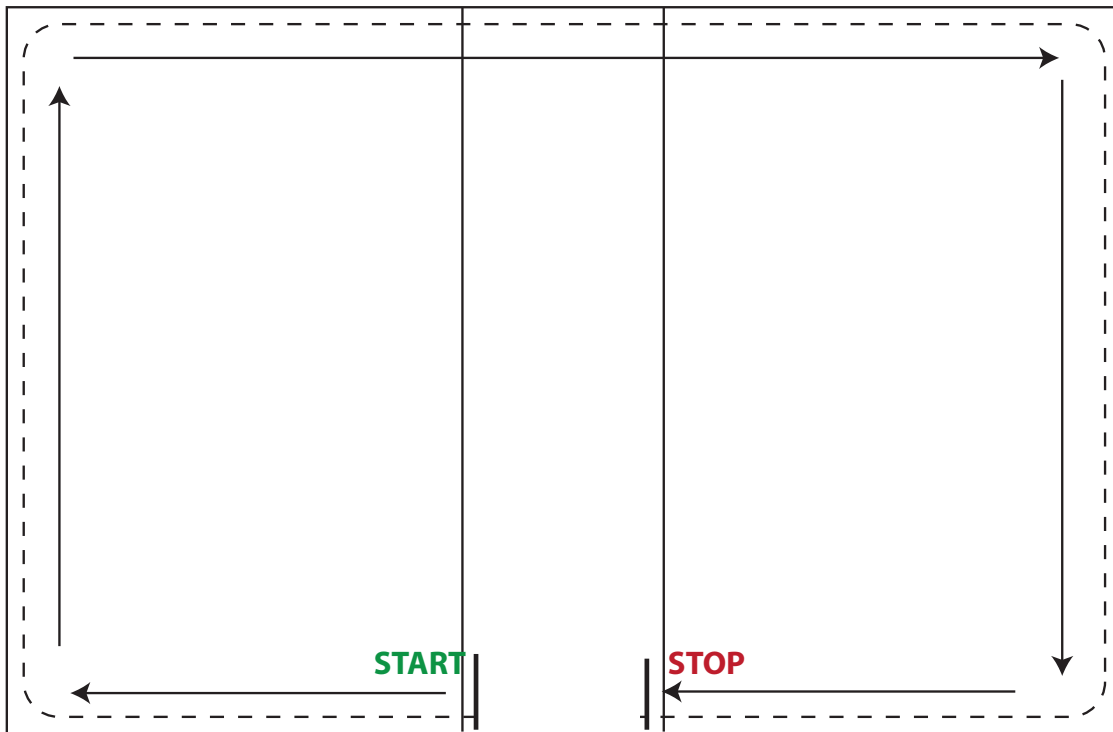
- Height of your book cover
- Width of book measured around the circumference of the closed book from front edge around the spine to the back edge (not a full circumference)



Figure 3. Measuring height and width. Width is measured around the closed book from front edge to back edge.

This book is $9\frac{3}{4}$ " tall by $15\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. Add 1" to both the height and width for your cutting size. Cut one piece for the cover and a second one for the lining.

How to Make a Journal Cover



You may want to make a pattern for planning your project. I used a piece of cutaway and drew out my guidelines for the inside on one side and the outside on the other. Notice I've marked off the spine area so that I can determine where the actual center front is (between the spine edge and the seam allowance).

How to Make a Journal Cover

Although we'll only be using $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams, we'll need a little extra room for ease. When cutting the front cover fabric, I added a 2" extension to the right side for hooping and an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ " on the other sides for squaring up after stitching.



Figure 4. My design fits a 5x7" hoop when oriented in landscape mode but my fabric won't be able to be hooped if I only use the measurements for the cutting size. If you want your design centered on the front, be sure to use only the front cover width for measuring.

- Inside sleeve depth, which will depend somewhat on how wide your book can open and how thick your book is. The wider your sleeves, the more difficult it will be to get the cover on your book. Also, you need **at least** a 3" space between the sleeves along the spine to turn the project right side out. (More if your fabrics are thick or heavily interfaced.)

I cut my sleeves to 14" wide by 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall. Fold each sleeve in half, wrong sides together for a 7" x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " size, then edge stitch along the folded edge.

INTERFACING

While not strictly required, interfacing will make your project look more professional by adding structure and will help it wear longer.

Fusible interfacings are easy to use. Be sure to follow the pressing directions included with your project.

I interfaced the outer cover with Pellon ShirTailor, which is a medium light interfacing, before embroidering. I also interfaced the lining piece and one side of each sleeve. I didn't interface any of my pockets.

How to Make a Journal Cover

The striped pocket was cut 10" wide and folded just like the sleeve and top stitched along the edge. The top pocket is narrower and was stitched to the striped pocket to form several smaller pockets. (Pockets weren't interfaced.)

Stitch from edge to
folded edge to form
extra slots

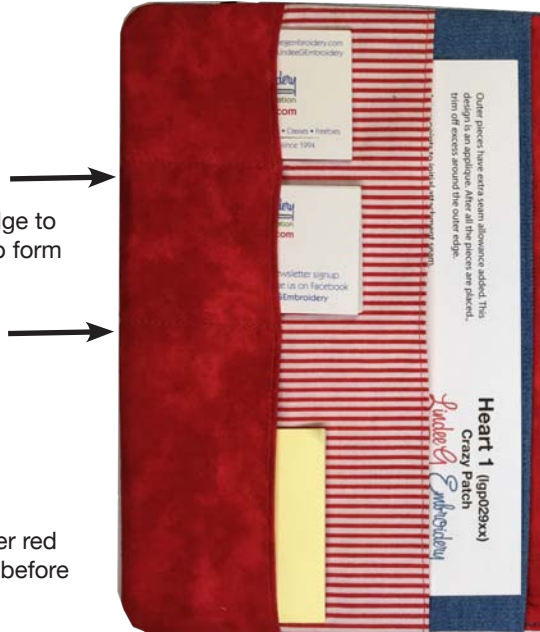


Figure 5. Stitch the smaller red pocket to the striped one before laying for stitching.

On other journal covers, I've just placed one small pocket for business cards. Consider making a larger, clear vinyl pocket for an ID pocket if you're making a cover for a student.



Figure 6. This cover only has one small patch pocket for business cards. The black elastic strip will hold the book closed or a page open.

How to Make a Journal Cover

PREPARING TO SEW

Cut all your pieces to size, interfacing as desired. As mentioned earlier, you'll want to complete any embroidery before cutting to make sure you have enough fabric for proper hooping. Also, embroidery can distort your fabric so having extra fabric to square up is a good idea.

Sleeves and long pockets are folded in half right sides together and edge stitched along fold. Attach any pockets to the sleeve panels.

Patch pockets are edge stitched in place. Pockets that extend into the seam allowances can be stay-stitched into place.

If you want curved corners, use your book to trace the corners in place. Remember to trace them on the seam line and not just around the book itself.



Figure 7. For curved corners, use your book as a guide and trace the curve onto the seam line.

ASSEMBLING

When I took these step-by-step photos, I was working from the front cover. However, in the video, you'll see me working from the lining side.

Working from the lining side seems a little easier because you are layering all the elements face up with only the outer cover face down. Plus, you can do all the stay stitching in just one pass. It really makes no difference to the final project which way you work.

STAY STITCHING

Stay stitching is another thing the pros do to reinforce various areas that are likely to get more abuse, such as the bookmark ribbon, elastics and pockets.

Duplication, reproduction or use of this project by any other instructors or groups is not permitted without prior written consent from [Lindee G Embroidery](http://lindeegembroidery.com).

How to Make a Journal Cover

Stay stitching is done within the seam allowance. On the ribbon and elastics, I stitched forward, back and then forward again for extra security. On the pockets I just stitched them down once. Stay stitching in this manner has the added benefit of holding everything in place when you have so many layers to stitch through.



Place your ribbon pretty side face down if applying to the front, face up if working from the lining side.



Figure 8. Stay stitch and reinforce the ribbon and elastics into place, staying within the seam allowance. The ribbon end is pinned up to keep it from getting sewn in.



Figure 9. Layer on the sleeves and pockets, placing them right side down on the front piece. I stay stitched the pocket layers to the sleeve beforehand.

Duplication, reproduction or use of this project by any other instructors or groups is not permitted without prior written consent from [Lindee G Embroidery](http://lindeegembroidery.com).

How to Make a Journal Cover



I only inserted one piece of elastic to hold the book closed. However, you could add a second to the back and then use the elastics to hold the book open to a specific page.

Finally, layer on the lining, face down and then stitch around the outside edge using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance, leaving an opening on the bottom edge between the sleeves for turning.

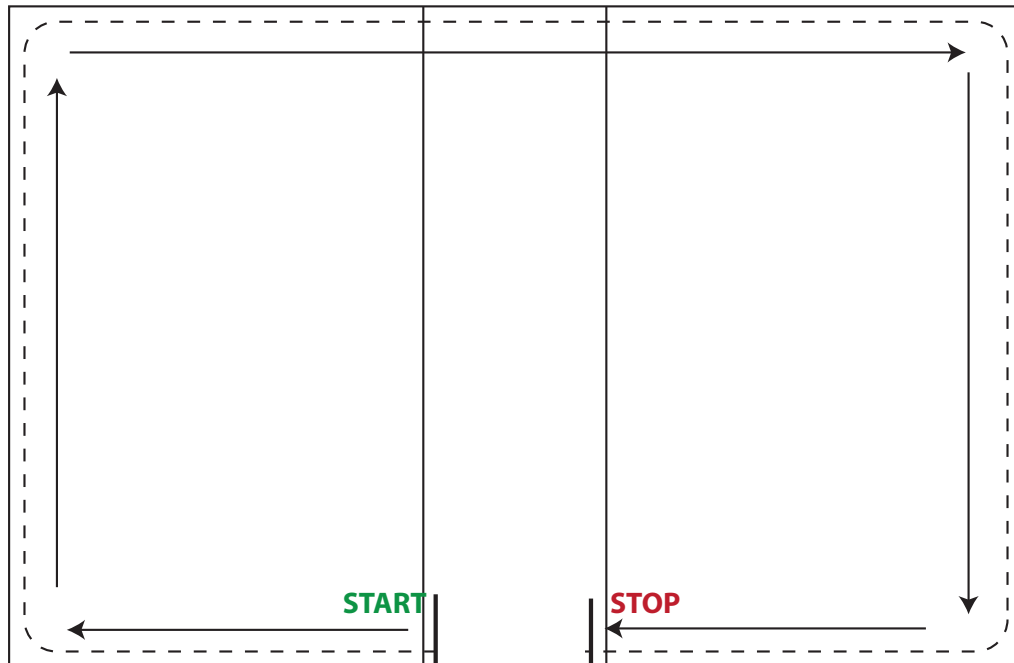


Figure 10. Starting just before the sleeve, back tack, sew around to just off the other sleeve and back tack, leaving an opening large enough to turn the project right side out.

Trim the corner seam allowances to reduce bulk. Turn right side out through the opening, taking care to push out the corners smoothly. Press well, tucking in the seam allowances at the opening; edge stitch closed.

WHOOPS!

Did your sleeves or pockets end up on the outside instead of the inside? Don't panic! This can happen during turning. Simply flip them over to the inside.

OPTIONAL

Add a small charm or bead or just tie a knot at the end of the ribbon.

How to Make a Journal Cover

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH!

Now all we need to do is dress our book. Fold back the covers and slide them into the sleeves, then pull on the cover.



Figure 11. Dress your book by sliding the covers into the sleeves.



Figure 12. Back of book cover showing closure elastic, pen loop, and ribbon bookmark with charm attached.

How to Make a Journal Cover

NOW THAT YOU'VE MADE ONE, MAKE ANOTHER!

Once you've got your measurements worked out, making multiples for books of the same size is pretty speedy.

Having an embroidery machine along with some basic sewing skills makes it easy to make a gift stash so that you always have some little something on hand. Finger tip towels, kitchen towels, and journal covers are perfect for stocking that stash because they're small, quick and easy to make, and can appeal to a wide range of people without having to deal with sizes!

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MACHINE EMBROIDERY?

Check out my website at LindeeGEmbroidery.com for new projects, blog posts, and of course, designs! You can also find a growing library of videos on my [YouTube channel](#).

Look for more projects and designs at:

