

Sketchbooks are not just for artists, and not just for sketching. Sketchbooks, notebooks or journals are places where lots of different activities can take place, all of which can help you think, explore, record and reflect.

"When I work in a sketchbook it makes me think more. I kind of hold on to my thoughts and explore them more."

Why Keep a Sketchbook?

So which processes take place in a sketchbook?

There are a number of activities or ways of working which can take place in a sketchbook. We'll call these the *overt* activities, things like doodling, making notes, collecting, sticking, referencing, reflecting, writing, drawing, collaging, painting... The sketchbook is just a holder for these activities to take place.

The best bit though is that whilst those activities are taking place, another layer of activities is taking place which can really help you to enjoy, connect and deepen your learning. Whilst you are busy doodling, notemaking and sketching, you are also investing time in your interests, allowing your thinking to deepen, making connections, widening or intensifying your focus, playing with ideas and externalising what's inside your head.

So what do we mean by sketchbook?

Any book or collection of papers which is being used to collect or explore your thoughts. It's the processes that take place in a sketchbook which make them so valuable, not so much the format of the sketchbooks themselves.

But once you start a sketchbook, notebook or journal and get into the habit of using it regularly, you'll find that all your interests meet in one place, and take you new places, and that because you are externalising and exploring your ideas and thoughts then your interests will stay uppermost in your mind.

And because your sketchbook can fit into a pocket or a bag, you quite literally carry your enthusiasm with you.

Home made sketchbooks are wonderful, they are always individual, which encourages "ownership" of the books. Making the books makes you think creatively before you even start to draw in it

You can make a sketchbook from any kind of paper or card that you can find in your house :

Paper - all colours, all textures, all thicknesses - tracing paper, or other semi opaque papers like baking parchment, is ideal for creating layers of drawings - graph papers - all sizes - brown packaging paper - patterned paper - including paper from other books/magazines/old maps etc - tissue paper - again ideal for creating layers or collage sheets - paper which forms spaces: like envelopes/folders/paper bags/ - recycled paper - including letters and envelopes and bags, and cut it all to a similar size : you'll have quite a wad! - newspaper and blank newsprint - wallpaper.

For the cover find something a little stiffer like: corrugated cardboard boxes ,textured paper: sandpaper - mounting board - fabric - plastic wallets, acetate sheets/covers

Other materials: to tie and bind and wrap and decorate: - string, wool, ribbon, leather thread, cord, elastic bands, glue, cotton tape.



Decorate your cover with whatever materials you can find, experiment with layering, drawing into it . Have fun with it.

Elastic band sketchbooks are simple to make because the pages are only fixed in place using an elastic band down the spine of the book. These sketchbooks can be taken apart, pages removed, or pages added, making them very versatile. Select a variety of paper which should be torn or cut to twice the size of the finished sketchbook, and each sheet folded in half. Each folded sheet is then tucked inside the folded sheet before to make the book.

Then make a cover in a stiffer materials like card, fold in half and tuck the folded pages inside.

Decorate the cover in whatever way you like. Be creative.

Lastly hold the book together with an elastic band, staples or



Remember:

The joy of your sketchbook is that you can add new pages when ever you like or make new sketchbooks to build up a collection of your drawing practice. It's fun to draw on different surfaces (just check that you can use the paper with your adult first) and with all sorts of different tools, pens/pencils that you can find at home.

OR you could make a concertina book by joining pieces of paper together to make it long and then folding it forwards and backwards like making a fan.....



NOW WE'RE READY TO DRAW.....

Choose an object from your house that is not too big that you would like to draw.
It may be your favourite toy or something that you use every day but have never really looked closely at.
Spend a few minutes looking carefully at the object to see what kind of lines and shapes it is made up of.
Does it have smooth edges or rough, bumpy edges?
Run your fingers all over the object. How does it feel?

