CARDS, STATIONERY & MINI-BOOKS

Make Simple Handmade Gift Tags

Three original templates. Cut, fold and write your message.



A
FLAT

B
FOLD-OVER

C
BOOKLET

Included inside

Full-size cut-and-fold sheet (A4 and US Letter)
A practical checklist for one finished tag

Original illustrated editorial templates; not a report of physical folding tests.

Steadleaf Press · MAKE · M03 Cards, Stationery & Mini-Books · STP-MAKE-F005

Three original cut-and-fold patterns, one accurate print-size template sheet, and a small finishing checklist.

A gift tag is a small object with a surprisingly demanding job. It must survive handling, stay attached, tell the recipient enough, and still look like you meant to make it. A hurried rectangle cut from thin copier paper may be adequate for a note slipped into a parcel, but it may crease at the hole when tied to a handle. More decoration is not necessarily the answer. Better paper, a sensible attachment point, and a fold that serves a purpose can do more.

This guide produces three deliberately different tags. **A, the flat tag**, gives you a simple writing face. **B, the fold-over tag**, keeps a private message inside a small two-panel card. **C, the side-fold booklet tag**, offers a taller inside message with room for a recipient name outside. The printable pattern sheet supplies all three at their stated dimensions on A4 and US Letter. The designs, measurements and teaching diagrams are original to Steadleaf Press. They have been drawn and checked digitally; they have **not** been validated by a physical cutting or wear test.

1. Choose the job before the paper

For a jar, envelope or small wrapped box, a flat tag may be enough. For a gift with a message that should not be read at a glance, make a folded tag. For a handwritten two-line dedication, the booklet shape is often easier to use than shrinking your handwriting to fit a decorative square.

Design	Finished footprint	Useful feature	What to check
A · Flat corner tag	72 × 45 mm	One clearly visible face	Space around a punched hole
B · Fold-over tag	72 × 47 mm	Short private note inside	Both folded layers line up
C · Side-fold booklet	54 × 70 mm	Taller note and neat front	Fold line and hole near spine

These are **editorial template dimensions**, not standard product sizes or a promise that they fit every gift. Make the tag smaller by drawing a new pattern from scratch only after checking whether the writing area and hole margins remain useful. Do not scale the supplied sheet casually: a visually plausible print may no longer match the measurements.

2. Make a safe, modest work area

Gather one sheet of moderately firm clean paper or light card, a ruler, a pencil, a stable work surface, a pair of scissors appropriate to your skill, an ordinary paper hole punch if available, and a short piece of ribbon or twine. For the folded designs, add a clean blunt scoring implement if your paper needs a crease guide. Use a purpose-made paper scorer or an empty ballpoint pen against a ruler, with a light touch on scrap first. You can often make a good fold on thinner paper without scoring. Avoid sharp knives, needles or improvised blades merely to complete these patterns.

A soft, loose piece of tissue paper may tear at the attachment point; a very thick piece of card may resist folding and crack. Try a small scrap before committing the pattern. Material weight alone does not describe stiffness, coatings or whether the surface accepts your pen. If you are using reclaimed packaging, choose clean material with a known, appropriate history. This is not a method for using a food-soiled box, an unidentified treated surface, or brittle historic paper.

Health Canada advises reading craft-product labels, maintaining a clean and ventilated workspace, and keeping scissors, glues and other supplies out of children's reach when not in use [1]. This project needs no aerosol adhesive, solvent, hot glue or chemical finish. Keep food and drinks away from the cutting area, close scissors when set down, and clear scraps from the table after use. If a child is involved, the adult should select age-appropriate scissors and tools and supervise closely; adults should handle punches or sharp tools the child cannot use safely. **Gift tags, punched-out circles, ribbons and twine are not toys.** Keep small pieces and loose cords out of reach of young children and pets, do not form long loops, and never place a tag cord around a child or attach one to a child’s toy.

3. Print the original-size pattern correctly

The companion **Cut-and-Fold Template Pack** is a two-page PDF available separately in A4 and US Letter sizes. Page 1 contains the full-size patterns; page 2 is a finishing checklist. Select the file matching the paper in your printer. In the print dialogue choose **Actual size / 100%**, turn off *Fit to page*, *Shrink oversized pages* and similar scaling options, and print on ordinary paper for a first proof. If the printer warns that margins would clip anything, do not tell it to shrink the design silently; use the correct page size and inspect the resulting page first.

Find the calibration line at the foot of the sheet. Measure it with an independent ruler. It is designed to measure **50 mm between its end marks**. If it does not measure 50 mm on your print, stop. Correct the print settings before treating the shapes as full-size templates. Use a ruler marked in millimetres for this check; without one, treat the print as an unverified guide and do not claim dimensional accuracy. Do not interchange the A4 and US Letter template files or select automatic page fitting. A home printer's unverified output should not become a claim of exact dimensions.

The template marks mean:

- **Solid outline — CUT:** trim around the outer boundary of each design. Use scissors and protect the table.
- **Dashed line — FOLD:** bring the panels together at the dashed line; a light score may help on card stock.
- **Dotted circle — PUNCH AFTER FOLDING:** position a punch so it passes through the flat tag or both folded layers. The circles are location guides, not holes already cut by the printer.

You can cut directly from a printed sheet or trace the shapes onto your chosen card. When tracing, mark the same outside dimensions and fold line; then erase any marks that should not appear on the finished gift. Paper grain can affect the feel of a fold. Cornell's preservation tutorial notes that machine-made paper often folds more smoothly with the grain than against it [2]. If your card cracks on a test fold, try a lighter sheet or rotate a **newly redrawn** pattern to suit the grain instead of forcing the crease.

4. Pattern A — a flat tag that stays legible

The flat tag is **72 mm wide and 45 mm tall**, with a small diagonal cut at the two upper corners. Its printed punch mark sits near the left end, away from the trim line. The chamfers give a simple shape and do not improve strength by themselves.

1. Print and check the scale, then cut slowly around the solid outside line. Keep the scissors moving forward; turn the paper rather than twisting the blade into a tight corner.
2. Inspect the finished edge. If a clipped corner has torn into the writing area, use the other pattern or recut from clean paper instead of disguising the tear with tape.
3. Place the tag on scrap card and punch at the dotted mark, keeping a clear buffer of paper around the hole. A standard handheld punch may have a limited reach. Before cutting a finished design, use scrap paper to check the distance from the punch opening to its cutting centre and make sure it can reach the marked dot without crumpling the tag. If it cannot reach safely and accurately, **omit the hole** and attach the tag with a removable paper band or place it inside the wrapping.
4. Write the recipient's name after punching, so the pen line cannot vanish beneath the hole. If the tag is for a damp or chilled gift, check the material and ink separately; this guide does not make ordinary stationery waterproof.
5. Thread a short length of ribbon through the hole and secure it to the gift without crushing or obstructing a handle, clasp or opening. Tug gently while holding the gift safely; if the hole begins to split, stop and choose a different attachment method.

Useful outcome: a neat name card, not a tag that depends on glue or extra decoration to survive one lift. It can also become a place card if you omit the hole entirely.

5. Pattern B — a fold-over tag with an inside message

B starts as a **72 × 94 mm rectangle**. A horizontal fold divides it into two 72 × 47 mm panels. The finished footprint is 72 × 47 mm. The marked hole is positioned on one panel near the folded edge; punch **through both layers after folding** so the holes align. This arrangement joins the two leaves while the tie is in place, so the recipient may need to untie it to open the note. That is intentional, not an unnoticed flaw.

1. Cut the rectangle and locate the dashed fold line at its midpoint. Lightly crease scrap card first if you are uncertain which pressure will make a clean fold. Never score through the sheet.
2. Fold the **lower panel up behind the upper panel**, aligning the outside edges. The printed hole location should remain visible on the outside face.
3. Hold the folded tag still and use a paper punch through both layers at the indicated location, 12 mm from the left edge and 10 mm above the fold. Mark the same point lightly on the outside of the folded tag if the printed dot is hidden. Check the punch's reach and thickness capacity on scrap first; do not force thick card or crush the fold. If the layers shift, open and realign before retrying.
4. Open the tag to write the inside message. Let ink dry before closing. Keep important lettering away from the punched area and the crease, where it may become difficult to read.
5. Close it and pass a short ribbon through both holes. A single small removable knot is enough for many lightweight gifts; do not glue the whole tag shut just to hide a misaligned edge.

Useful outcome: a private note that travels with the gift. It is not a miniature sealed envelope and is not meant to keep sensitive information confidential.

6. Pattern C — a side-fold miniature booklet

C begins as a **108 × 70 mm rectangle**. The vertical centre fold creates two pages, each **54 × 70 mm**. The dotted hole is located on the front panel, **9 mm from the centre fold and 10 mm below the top edge**. After folding the right panel over the left, the printed dot may be hidden on the inside, so transfer that position lightly onto the outside of the folded piece with a ruler. Punch both layers only if your punch can reach the position safely. The hole gives the tie an attachment point while keeping the writing areas largely free. The tie can restrict opening: leave it loose enough to remove without tearing.

1. Cut the rectangle and find the vertical dashed line. Fold the right panel over the left to make a small booklet, taking care to align the top and bottom edges.
2. Decide which face is the front before you write. Open the booklet and pencil a recipient name outside and a short note inside. Keep text away from the fold so it will not disappear into the spine.
3. Close and check the transferred dot near the upper portion of the spine: 9 mm in from the fold and 10 mm down from the top. On scrap, check that the punch's cutting centre reaches this position without forcing or buckling the paper, then punch through both folded layers. If it cannot reach safely, skip the hole and use a removable paper band around the folded booklet.
4. Add one small, high-contrast visual element: a line, initial, stamped motif or colour block. Avoid covering the entire writing area with a dark decoration unless your pen can still be read.
5. Attach the tag, then open and close it once after removal. If the booklet springs open or the fold cracks, recut on a more suitable sheet. Do not insist on a heavyweight paper that fights the design.

Useful outcome: a small personal message with room for a recipient's name. Its fold is functional, not an instruction to create a multi-page booklet with additional binding.

7. Make three tags that look related, not identical

A set of three looks considered when it shares a few consistent choices. Use the same card stock or colour family, repeat one simple mark near the bottom, and use a single handwriting style. Vary the tag type according to the gift's message rather than forcing every gift into the same shape. A bold recipient name with a small date can be enough. Extra lace, buttons and plastic charms are not necessary for the result.

If you want a colour accent, choose a modest paper marker or pen compatible with the card and allow it to dry. Avoid sprays, solvent markers and unfamiliar finishing chemicals. Health Canada's craft guidance recommends safer materials and manufacturer directions over improvisation [1]. Keep decoration away from the hole and fold, where it can make a tag bulky or fragile.

The **matching check** on the companion planning sheet asks only three things: Can the recipient read it? Can it be attached and removed without damage? Does the fold perform the job you wanted? These are small, observable checks, not laboratory durability tests.

8. Common errors, and what to change

The printed pattern measures wrong. Reprint at actual size and confirm the 50 mm calibration bar. If your printer forces scaling, use the published dimensions to redraw with a metric ruler instead of claiming an unverified print is full size. If you cannot measure the 50 mm bar, do not label the cutout a verified full-size copy.

The edge looks ragged. Try a clean pair of appropriate scissors on scrap. Hold the paper securely and use longer controlled cuts. Do not solve a slight wobble by switching to an unfamiliar craft knife.

The fold cracks or puckers. Lighten the paper, change a future pattern's orientation relative to paper grain, or try a careful blunt score on scrap. Do not press so hard that you cut the surface. The grain observation is consistent with paper-conservation guidance [2], but no particular card has been physically tested for this guide.

The hole tears. Stop pulling. Recut with a sound margin, use lighter twine, or abandon the hole in favour of a paper band or placement inside the wrapping. Reinforcement stickers are optional, but they are not a guarantee of strength.

The folded tag cannot be opened easily. Both B and C intentionally use a through-both-layer attachment hole. Untie the ribbon to open the message. If frequent opening is essential, choose an unpunched fold-over tag held under a removable gift band instead.

The pen bleeds through. Test on the same card stock before writing the final message. For a folded tag, use a dry-running pen or write on only one interior panel. If the paper is coated, check whether the ink smears before handing it over.

9. Finish with a record you can reuse

Make one tag first, not a dozen. Record the sheet you used, the design letter and whether the print measured correctly. State what worked: accurate dimensions, legible writing, comfortable folding or a sound attachment. If something failed, note the cause you observed rather than declaring the entire method bad. The next tag is where that information becomes useful.

Fictional example — not a real craft trial. Mira prints the B pattern but finds its bar measures 48 mm. She chooses the correct print setting, gets a 50 mm reading, and makes a fresh cutout. Her card is too thick for the punch she owns, so she leaves it unpunched and slides the closed tag beneath a paper band around the present. The result is useful without claiming the original plan was tested or that the punch was safe to force.

Fictional example — not a real craft trial. Theo needs a recipient name, not a private note. He chooses A, writes the name in large lettering, and threads ribbon through the hole. On a gentle check the first card starts to split, so he stops and recuts on stronger paper instead of applying more pull. He records the material change for the next gift.

The printed template sheet and checklist are an original editorial design aid. They are not sold as certified die-cutting patterns, structural attachments, conservation-grade stationery or child-safe toys. A handwritten gift tag is useful when it reads clearly and survives the ordinary handling you actually intend.

DESIGN AT A GLANCE

A / FLAT

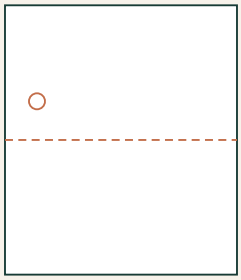
72 × 45 mm



One visible name
Punch optional
No fold needed

B / FOLD-OVER

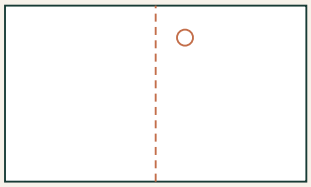
72 × 47 mm folded



Fold at middle
Open for a note
Punch both layers

C / BOOKLET

54 × 70 mm folded



Fold side to side
Taller inside note
Punch both layers

The separate A4/Letter PDF contains full-size patterns. These diagrams are NOT to scale.

Sources, rights and boundaries

[1] Health Canada, **Arts and crafts safety**, accessed November 20, 2026. Material labels, safe workspace, cutting and adhesive hazards, child/pet precautions, and water-based versus solvent-based alternatives. https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-garden-safety/use-arts-crafts-materials-safely.html

[2] Cornell University Library, **Paper — Library Preservation and Conservation Tutorial**, accessed November 20, 2026. Machine-made paper grain, bending tests and fold behaviour. https://chinapreservationtutorial.library.cornell.edu/content/paper/

[3] Library of Congress, **Care, Handling and Storage of Works on Paper**, accessed November 20, 2026. Clean handling and preservation limits. The Library's advice concerns valuable works on paper and is **not** an instruction to glue, tape, fold or alter archival objects for this craft. https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/paper.html

All three printed tag shapes, fold indications, calibration marks, diagrams, scenarios and checklist prompts are original Steadleaf Press editorial content. In the templates, the flat-tag dot is 11 mm from the left edge, the B dot is 12 mm from the left edge and 10 mm from the fold, and the C dot is 9 mm from the fold and 10 mm from the top edge; these locations are drawing coordinates, not validated attachment-strength margins. No third-party images, trademarks, photographs or measured test results have been incorporated. Dimensions and the 50 mm bar are generated as exact vector drawing coordinates in the template PDFs, but **actual print accuracy must be checked by the reader**. Physical folding, paper compatibility, punch capacity and tie resistance have not been tested. The project is intended for ordinary gift stationery, not food contact, child toys, valuables requiring archival care or any safety-critical attachment.

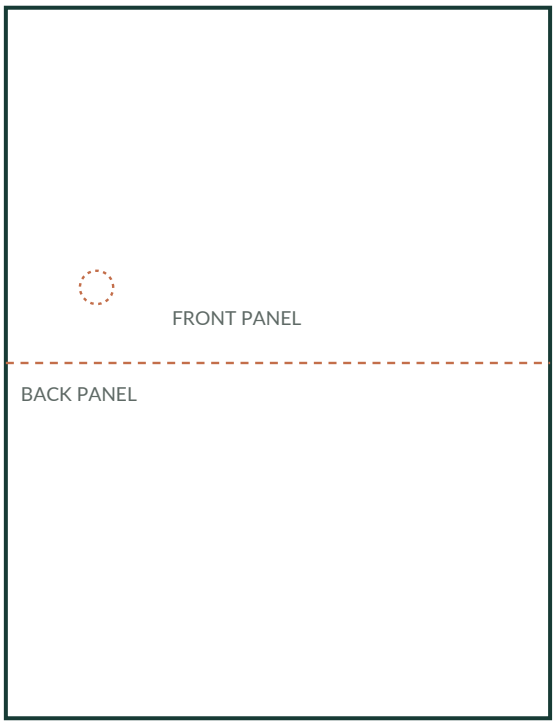
CUT + FOLD TEMPLATE SHEET

Print at Actual Size (100%). Check the 50 mm calibration bar below.

A / FLAT TAG / 72 × 45 mm

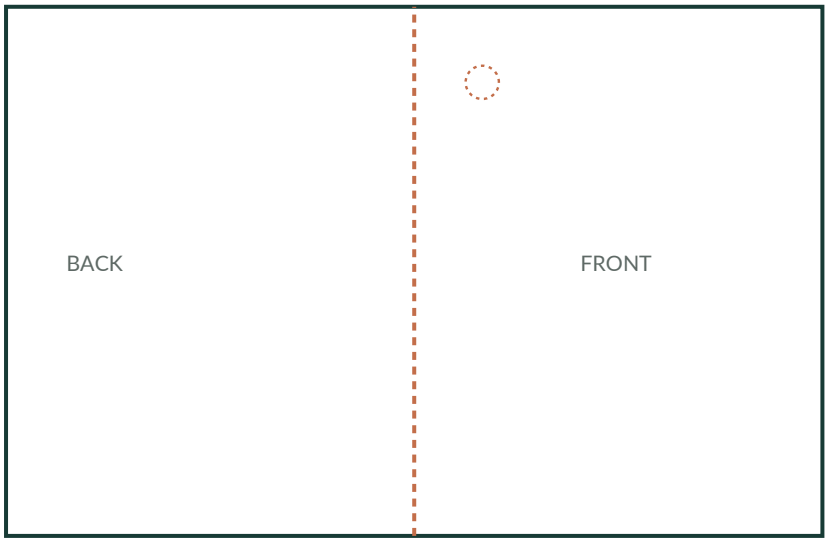


B / FOLD-OVER



Cut 72 × 94 mm; fold into 72 × 47 mm.

C / SIDE-FOLD BOOKLET / 108 × 70 mm



Fold at centre to finish 54 × 70 mm. Punch after folding.



SOLID: CUT - - - DASH: FOLD o DOTTED: PUNCH LATER

If the bar is not 50 mm, adjust print settings before cutting.

Keep scissors, small scraps and cords out of reach of children and pets.

ONE TAG, ONE USEFUL CHECK

Fill this in as you make the first tag. Blank answers are allowed.

Recipient / gift

_____

Pattern selected

A Flat / B Fold-over / C Booklet

Paper or card used

_____

Printer page size

A4 / US Letter

50 mm bar measured

_____ mm Actual Size / 100% confirmed? Yes / No

Tools checked

Scissors / Ruler / Pencil / Punch, if suitable

Hole or alternate

Punched through all needed layers / Removable paper band

Message legible

Yes / No Notes: _____

Edges / fold sound

Yes / No Notes: _____

Attachment checked

No visible splitting / Changed attachment / Not applicable

ONE CHANGE FOR NEXT TIME

Use ordinary stationery; not for toys, valuable archival originals, or load-bearing ties.