Design a Personal Bookmark Set

Three original printable bookmarks, each 48 × 145 mm, with room for your own reading habits.

STEADLEAF PRESS / MAKE / M03 Cards, Stationery & Mini-Books / STP-MAKE-F012

An everyday object you can design and use

A bookmark is small enough to finish in a quiet afternoon and useful enough to return to every day. This project makes a set of **three complementary bookmarks** from a printable A4 or US Letter page. Rather than supplying generic stock art, the template uses three original layouts: **The Next Page**, **One Good Sentence** and **Back Here Soon**. Each invites you to note a title, a personal reading observation or a return date. The designs coordinate through simple shapes and generous white space while allowing separate purposes.

The planned final size of each card is **48 mm wide by 145 mm high**, before any optional corner rounding. At that size the bookmarks fit inside many conventional books without covering much text. Actual fit depends on the book and paper. These are ordinary paper craft items — not waterproof page protectors, children’s toys or professional archival supports. The template is a design-and-cut plan; no printer or paper sample has been physically tested.

1. Gather the paper and choose a print method

Begin with one sheet of clean, smooth paper that your printer can reliably feed. A stiff matte paper may last longer than lightweight copier paper, but the precise weight must be compatible with your own printer. Follow the printer manual rather than forcing thick card through a feeder. For a first trial, ordinary copier paper is fine; you can evaluate a better stock after checking the layout. Avoid paper with flaking coatings, loose glitter or sticky surfaces that could transfer to book pages.

Have scissors, a ruler and a pencil. A cutting mat and craft knife are not required. If you use a craft knife anyway, follow its instructions and keep it away from children. An optional paper corner-rounder can soften the ends, but it changes the measured silhouette. You may add colored pencil or water-based markers once the printed ink is fully dry; check on a scrap so the color will not offset onto the book.

This guide does not assume a color printer. A monochrome print can work because the border, layout text and the three writing areas are visibly distinct. If you wish to decorate the blank areas, do so after cutting and verify that no wet or transferable medium touches a book.

2. Read the exact cut list and page layout

Each bookmark is a **48 × 145 mm rectangle**. The three units are arranged side by side on the printable page with **12 mm gaps** between them. Their combined width is **3 × 48 + 2 × 12 = 168 mm**. That fits inside the 210 mm width of A4 paper and the roughly 216 mm width of US Letter, leaving a margin. The template has fixed dimensions in PDF; a screenshot, browser image or screenshot-based print is not a full-size pattern.

Download the version for your paper size. In your print dialog, choose **Actual size / 100%**. Disable options called **Fit to page**, **Shrink oversized pages** or any similar scale adjustment. Once printed, measure the **50 mm calibration bar** along the bottom with a real ruler. If the bar is not 50 mm, do not cut from that printout. Correct

the printer setting or draw the original 48 × 145 mm rectangles directly with a ruler.

The template intentionally has a clear **outer cut line**. The small interior guides sit at least 5 mm from the cut edge; they are not extra trim lines. Do not add a bleed amount unless you are designing an entirely different print-ready file. The backgrounds are limited to light shapes that do not require borderless printing.

3. Decide what belongs on each bookmark

Bookmark A — The Next Page. A quiet bookmark for a book you read in short sessions. Write the book title and the page where you plan to resume. Use the printed dotted line only as a reminder; your handwriting can be small or large. This bookmark is deliberately minimal so a title and one page number do not feel cramped.

Bookmark B — One Good Sentence. A place to note a short phrase you wrote yourself about the reading, or a short personal reaction to a scene. To avoid reproducing someone else's book text unnecessarily, the sample fields ask what you noticed and why it matters to you, rather than asking you to copy a passage. You may also leave it empty. The bookmark should remain flexible enough to suit nonfiction, fiction or study.

Bookmark C — Back Here Soon. A marker for a book you plan to return to later. It provides small spaces for the date and next reading goal. A blank goal might be “Finish chapter 4” or “Read for ten minutes”, but neither is required. The design is a prompt, not a productivity scorecard or a tracking service.

The text and illustration geometry in these three templates are original. They are not reproductions of a publisher’s cover, commercial bookmark set or licensed artwork. The template gives a usable starting point without imposing a particular name, reading speed or book genre.

4. Print, check and make a first cut

Open the PDF directly in a normal PDF viewer and select the correct page size. Print a single draft sheet. Measure the calibration bar and one full bookmark width and height before touching the scissors. The line widths on a home printer can make the apparent outer edge a fraction of a millimeter thick; pick one consistent side of the line and record the result rather than claiming laboratory precision.

Start with the left bookmark. Cut along the two long sides with slow, controlled movements, then cut the short ends. Keep the paper supported and the scissor blades clear of your other hand. If a cut wanders inward and removes part of a text field, print again rather than claiming the intended 48 × 145 mm finished size. The two 12 mm gaps are waste space: no extra fold or glue tab is hiding there.

Repeat for the other two cards. Check that you have three separate pieces and that each rectangular outline is visible. If the paper curls, lay it beneath a clean flat book for a short time, but avoid moistening it or applying uncontrolled heat. Do not laminate the bookmarks with an untested pouch or heat device as part of this beginner pattern. Lamination is a different operation with its own equipment and material limits.

5. Use the blank spaces without damaging your books

Fill one field with a normal ballpoint or pencil, then wait for the ink to set. Rub a clean scrap paper across the mark to check for transfer before placing the card inside a book. Do not place wet marker, acrylic paint, loose charcoal or glitter against book pages. The bookmark should lie flat, with no large knot, staple or raised decoration that could deform the pages.

Place the bookmark near the fore-edge of a closed book, not against a wet or dirty surface. Do not force a thick card into the spine. For a rare or valuable book, use a conservation-appropriate commercially available inert bookmark instead of assuming that any home-printed card is archival. The printed colors and adhesives used by home printers vary, so the project makes no preservation claim.

If you want to personalize the set as a gift, write the recipient’s first name on a separate envelope or small paper band rather than adding an oversized tag or ribbon to the bookmark. Keep the accessory flat. Do not promise a child-safe gift just because the item is made from paper; supervise cutting and discard sharp or loose scraps.

6. Explore a personal visual system

The three designs use a consistent width, height and margin but different central motifs: a rising half circle, a fine lined frame and a page-shaped panel. A coordinated set needs only one repeated element to feel connected. For this template that element is a small horizontal accent line near the bottom. You may reproduce the exercise in pencil: draw three 48 × 145 mm rectangles and place one repeated mark at the same distance from the lower edge of each.

Try a restrained palette such as soft green, warm gold and muted blue-gray. Or print black-and-white and shade the margins with colored pencil. The point is to create a family resemblance without making three identical cards. Keep any decorative writing within the inner margin so it cannot be lost when you cut. If the bookmark will be used inside a small paperback, make a plain-paper trial first to check that the design feels comfortable before buying special stock.

To resize later, maintain the aspect ratio if you want the same proportions. For example, a 40 mm width at the original ratio of 48:145 implies a height of **40 × 145 ÷ 48 ≈ 121 mm**. But resizing a PDF using a printer “Fit” setting does not produce a documented new design; write down the size you intended and check it with a ruler. If you need a different size, start with new rectangles and relocate the interior fields to preserve margins.

7. Troubleshoot the most common problems

The cards print too small. Reprint at Actual size and verify the 50 mm bar. The driver may default to border compensation or page fitting. Do not use a screenshot as a replacement for the PDF.

The printed borders are clipped. Confirm that you chose A4 for A4 paper or Letter for Letter paper. Both versions keep the rectangles well inside ordinary print margins; unusual printer settings can still shift content. Recheck before cutting.

The finished cards are not straight. Use a ruler to draw a light replacement cut line from two measured endpoints, or start again. Do not hide a noticeably tapered card by altering the recorded dimensions.

Ink rubs off on a page. Stop using the card until it is fully dry. Test on clean scrap paper. A paper or ink combination that keeps transferring is unsuitable for books.

The cards bend inside the book. Try a compatible stiffer paper if you wish, but avoid a card so thick that it dents book pages. This is a balance to assess with your actual books.

One design feels too busy. Leave the optional fields blank or use the plain outline as a base for your own text. Decorative simplicity is a valid finished choice.

8. Record the finished set

Paper brand / type and printer model: _____

Page-size version printed: A4 / US Letter

Print scale selected: _____ %; calibration bar measured: _____ mm

Actual first bookmark width × height: _____ × _____ mm

All three rectangles cut without losing fields? Yes / No

Ink fully dry and no transfer to scrap paper? Yes / No / Not checked

Book type used for first fit check: _____

Favorite layout and reason: _____

One adjustment for the next set: _____

Sources and editorial boundaries

All three visual layouts, wording, margin rules and cutting dimensions are original Steadleaf Press work. The shapes are newly drawn programmatically for this source. No publisher cover, protected illustration or commercial paper pattern is reproduced. No third-party citation is necessary for the measured original template; users should follow their specific printer, paper and cutting tool instructions.

The original template dimensions, margins and calibration bar were checked digitally. Printed sizes can vary with equipment and settings; verify the 50 mm check bar before cutting. The design makes no claim of archival permanence or protective performance.

THE NEXT PAGE

BOOK

PAGE

ONE GOOD SENTENCE

NOTICED

WHY

BACK HERE SOON

DATE

NEXT GOAL

CUT EACH OUTER BORDER — 48 × 145 mm, gap 12 mm

Check print scaling before cutting. No extra bleed or fold allowance.

50 mm calibration bar — measure with a ruler after printing

Use the three layouts your own way

THE NEXT PAGE

Book title and the page where you plan to resume

ONE GOOD SENTENCE

A short personal observation about your reading

BACK HERE SOON

A date and next reading goal, if useful

Print record

Page version (A4 / Letter): _____ Scale: _____ %

Measured check bar: _____ mm (must equal 50 mm)

First bookmark measured: _____ × _____ mm

Ink dry and not transferring? Yes / No / Not checked



50 mm calibration bar — measure with a ruler after printing