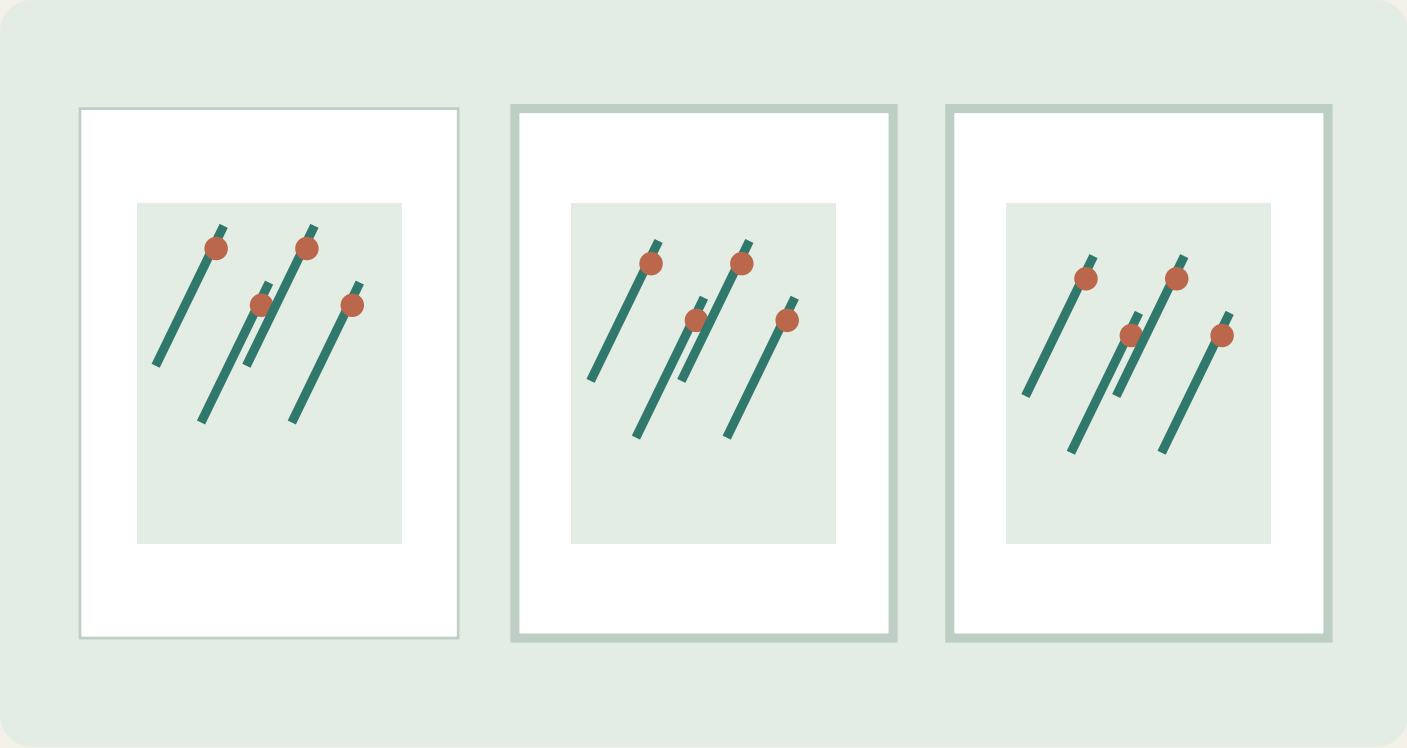
STEADLEAF PRESS
MAKE / PRINTING, STENCILS & COLOR

Turn Trial Prints into a Coordinated Card Set



THREE PRINTS / ONE CARD FAMILY

14 practical steps · Crop · mount · coordinate

Original diagrams and two printable maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

FREE GUIDE + PRINTABLES | STP-MAKE-F135

Before you start

A print that missed its original goal can still contain a beautiful small section. This guide turns three dry trial prints of your own into a coordinated set of blank note cards. Keep a consistent crop, border and paper choice rather than making all three images identical. Use only prints you own and are happy to cut; reproduce treasured originals instead.

Materials: three fully dry original paper trial prints with usable 70 x 90 mm areas, three 200 x 140 mm card blanks (or pre-folded 100 x 140 mm cards), matching scrap, a pencil and metric ruler, scissors suitable for paper or a pre-cut service, a 70 x 90 mm paper viewfinder, compatible paper adhesive, protective waste sheets, and envelopes that actually fit the folded cards. Follow adhesive instructions; avoid wet or tacky paint, unstable coatings, brittle valuable paper or heavy layered decoration.

Plan the project

Each blank is 200 mm wide by 140 mm high, folded at x = 100 mm to produce a portrait 100 x 140 mm card. The front-facing panel is 70 x 90 mm centred on the folded front: left/right margins (100−70)/2 = 15 mm, top/bottom margins (140−90)/2 = 25 mm. Place the panel's upper-left corner at (15,25) relative to the folded front. Choose a similar colour relationship or mark rhythm across three prints, not necessarily identical compositions.

Make a 70 x 90 mm viewfinder by drawing its outline on a scrap and cutting a window using a suitable supported method, or use four loose strips to frame the rectangle without interior cutting. Keep the front panel thin, dry and fully supported. Select envelope size by actual internal dimensions and finished card thickness: an advertised size is not necessarily the usable space. Trial the adhesive and one fold on scrap before attaching any selected panel.

Steps 01–02

1. Gather three candidate prints

Choose fully dry prints that you made or have permission to adapt. Examine them for tackiness, loose paint, tears and unknown coatings. Do not cut valuable artwork or a borrowed print. If an original matters to you, use an appropriately licensed reproduction of your own work. Select several potential areas so no print has to be forced into a crop.

2. Define the shared visual thread

Choose a unifying feature such as a blue-green palette, diagonal movement or repeated small marks. Write it in Record 1. The three cards may have different compositions; the fixed panel size and margins provide a common structure. Lay candidate prints side by side in similar light and avoid relying on colours that look different only because one print is still wet.

Steps 03–04

3. Prepare a crop viewfinder

Use four scrap strips arranged around a 70 x 90 mm opening, or prepare a suitable paper window with safe cutting support. Measure the inner opening rather than the outside frame. Keep the viewfinder edges clean so they do not mark the print. Use it to compare portrait crops without cutting first; a photo of each option can help preserve the choice.

4. Choose the three crop positions

Move the viewfinder over each print and choose an area that has enough visual breathing room. Avoid folding creases, weak or peeling marks and conspicuous stains unless intentionally part of the image. Check that the whole 70 x 90 rectangle is available, including its corners. Mark the selected outline lightly on the reverse if possible, using a corresponding reference without scratching the painted face.

Steps 05–06

5. Prepare the card blanks

Use three sound 200 x 140 mm blanks or manufactured pre-folded 100 x 140 mm cards. Check that each paper’s grain and thickness permit folding without cracking; try a matching offcut and use a suitable scoring or folding tool only as directed. Do not force a rigid board to fold. If necessary, select pre-folded blanks. Record the actual front dimensions.

6. Fold and orient the cards

For the flat blank, mark the 100 mm centre line along its 140 mm height. Fold so the two 100 mm halves align, with a clean fold on the left when the card is displayed portrait. Keep the front orientation consistent. Inspect the fold and corners; replace a cracked blank rather than hiding a damaged fold under an image.

Steps 07–08

7. Check the common front margins

On a folded front sketch mark x = 15 mm and y = 25 mm from its upper-left corner. A 70 x 90 mm panel then leaves 15 mm at the right and 25 mm below. Make a removable placement guide or small reference marks outside the painted area. If using a different card size, recompute both margins rather than scaling the original artwork without permission.

8. Cut the selected panels

Support each expendable print on a clean table and cut the marked rectangle with appropriate scissors or a suitable pre-cut service. If a print needs a tool you cannot control, choose another print or service. Keep fingers away from blades and do not cut through flaking paint. Check each resulting panel measures 70 x 90 mm before mounting; store offcuts for a future collage.

Steps 09–10

9. Trial the adhesive on offcuts

Read the adhesive label and confirm compatibility with both the print paper and card stock. On matching spare materials try the intended thin application method and let it dry or cure fully as directed. Check for staining, curling, transfer or poor adhesion. Do not apply adhesive to the printed face or use a valuable print to discover compatibility problems.

10. Mount the first panel

With the card flat and front facing up, place the dry panel at the intended (15,25) position using the guide. Apply the compatible adhesive to the back by the supported method, keeping the edges free of squeeze-out. Lower the panel once without sliding over the card. Support it as directed while drying, without pressing fragile paint or placing a valuable book on wet adhesive.

Steps 11–12

11. Mount the other two panels

Repeat the same margin and adhesive method for cards two and three. Keep a clean separate protective sheet for each so residue does not transfer. Compare all three from normal reading distance before the adhesive becomes fixed only if the product allows safe repositioning. Otherwise leave a slightly imperfect position or remake with a new blank. Allow complete cure before stacking or folding further.

12. Compare the set after drying

Once the adhesive and paint are ready for ordinary handling, inspect panel edges, the fold, any tackiness and card flatness. Measure the actual left, right, top and bottom margins. They need not be mechanically identical; note differences that are noticeable. If a panel lifts or the card warps, hold it and revise the mounting method on scrap, not by adding adhesive to the visible print.

Steps 13–14

13. Check envelopes and write care

Slip each dry card into its own suitable envelope without forcing it, considering actual thickness and internal dimensions. Choose a larger envelope if any edge catches. For mailing, consult the postal service for size, thickness and other requirements; this guide gives no postage guarantee. Keep the inside blank for a note, protect the dry cards from strong light and moisture, and avoid food-contact use.

14. Record the completed card family

Complete Record 2 with panel IDs, actual margins, blank sizes, adhesive and cure, envelope fit and any card held back. Mark SET READY, CHANGE/REMAKE or HOLD. Retain a photo of the three fronts and the crop plan. Store dry cards flat in a suitable folder. No archival, adhesive-strength or postal compliance certification is implied.

Fix, care and preserve

Crop is too small. Choose a new area or recalculate a consistent smaller panel for all three cards.

Fold cracks. Use a suitable pre-folded blank or different card stock.

Adhesive shows through. Hold the card; revise on matching sacrificial materials.

Panel is off-centre. Use the measured placement guide for a fresh card.

Envelope catches. Choose a larger suitable envelope, rather than forcing a card.

Source & evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, calculations, vector artwork, diagrams and maker records. The following sources provide factual context, not certification of this design. Follow actual product instructions and local disposal guidance.

Health Canada, Arts and crafts safety

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-garden-safety/use-arts-crafts-materials-safely.html

Canadian Conservation Institute, Caring for paper objects

https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paper-objects.html

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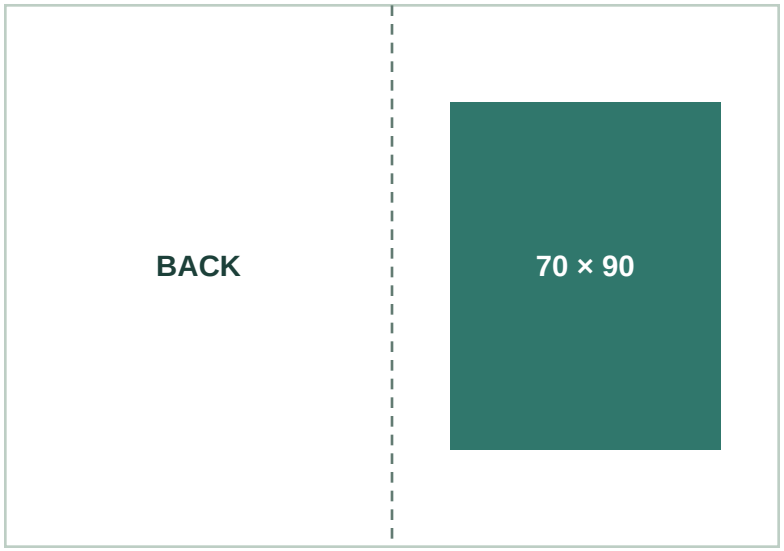
Folded blank and crop plan

200 x 140 mm blank, fold at x = 100. Finished 100 x 140 mm front, centred 70 x 90 mm panel, 15 mm side and 25 mm top/bottom margins.

FOLD THE 200 × 140 mm BLANK

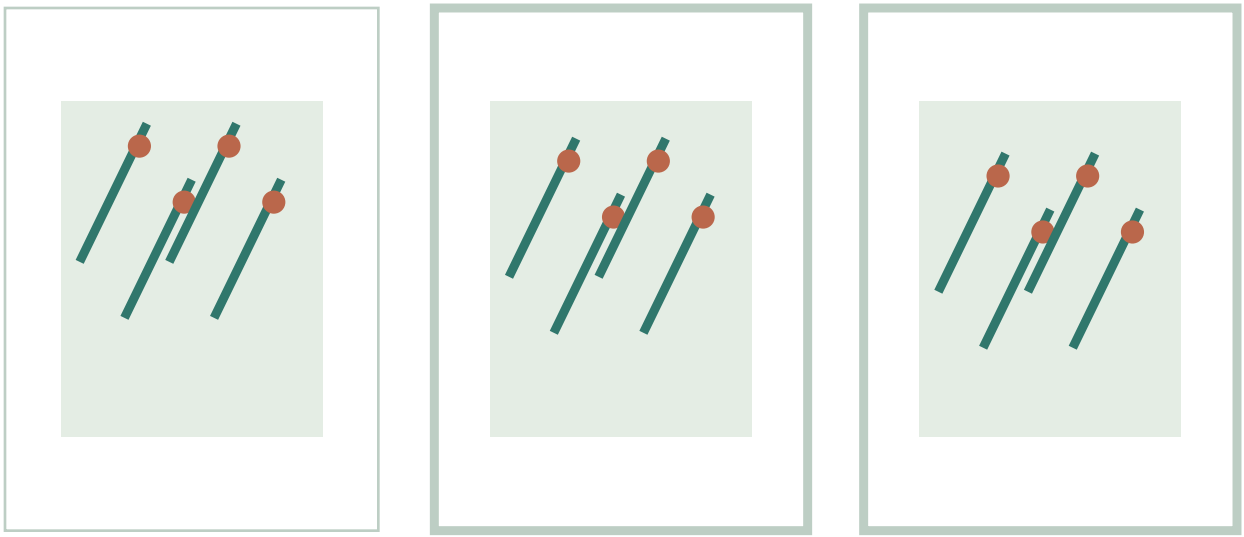


Fold at 100 mm • front margins 15 mm / 25 mm

Three-card family layout

Three equal front panels, different original print crops. Keep a shared palette or visual rhythm and verify actual envelope fit after complete drying.

THREE COORDINATED FRONTS / SAME CROP SIZE



CARD 1 **CARD 2** **CARD 3**

100 × 140 mm folded cards • 70 × 90 mm panels

Crop and mounting plan

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or performance certificate.

Original print IDs / rights

Shared visual theme

Candidate crop A / B / C

Actual panel and front dimensions

Fold observation / blank stock

Adhesive / trial / cure directions

Placement guide / calculated margins

Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Card set and envelope

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or performance certificate.

Card A / actual margins / condition

Card B / actual margins / condition

Card C / actual margins / condition

Actual adhesive cure / date

Envelope internal fit / thickness

Disposition: SET READY / CHANGE-REMAKE / HOLD

Storage and mailing notes

Unresolved issue / date