

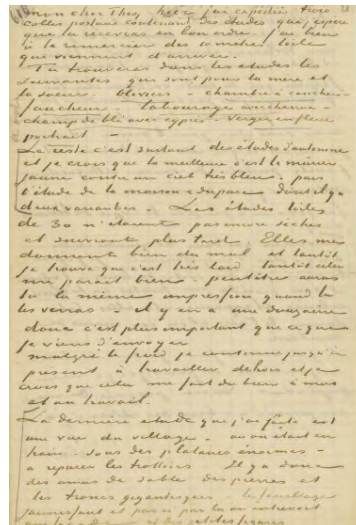
# Norton Simon Museum

## Art-Making Activity: Make a Sketchbook Journal

For ages 5 and up

Van Gogh wrote hundreds of letters to his friends and family that talked about his emotions, beliefs and the paintings that he was working on. Many letters also included sketches. He wrote to his brother and sister three times about [The Mulberry Tree](#), a painting he was particularly proud of.

Make a sketchbook journal and chronicle your days with writings and sketches for your future self. Use the prompts at the end of these instructions to help you get started.



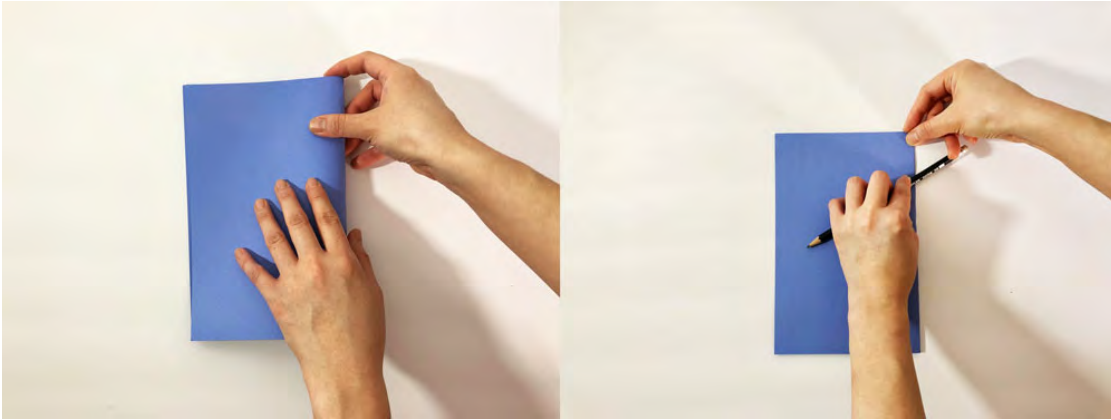
Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890): *The Mulberry Tree*, October 1889, oil on canvas, Norton Simon Art Foundation, Gift of Mr. Norton Simon; *Letter from Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh*, Saturday, 7 December 1889, pen and ink on paper, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

### Materials:

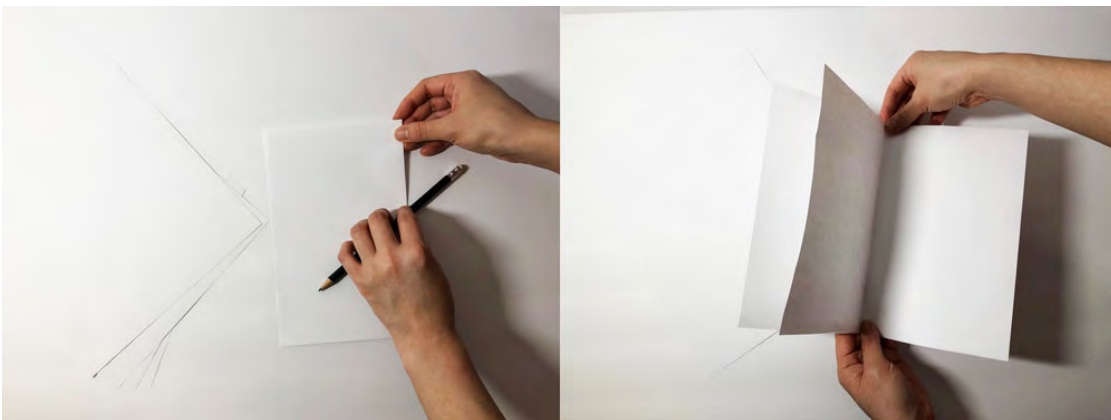


- Cardstock or thick paper (1 sheet of 9" x 12" trimmed to 8 ½" x 11 ½")
- White paper (3 pieces, 8 ½" x 11")
- Scissors
- Hole puncher
- Collage papers
- Stickers
- Glue
- Tape
- Pencil
- Yarn (17" long, double the length of your paper folded in half)

## Steps:



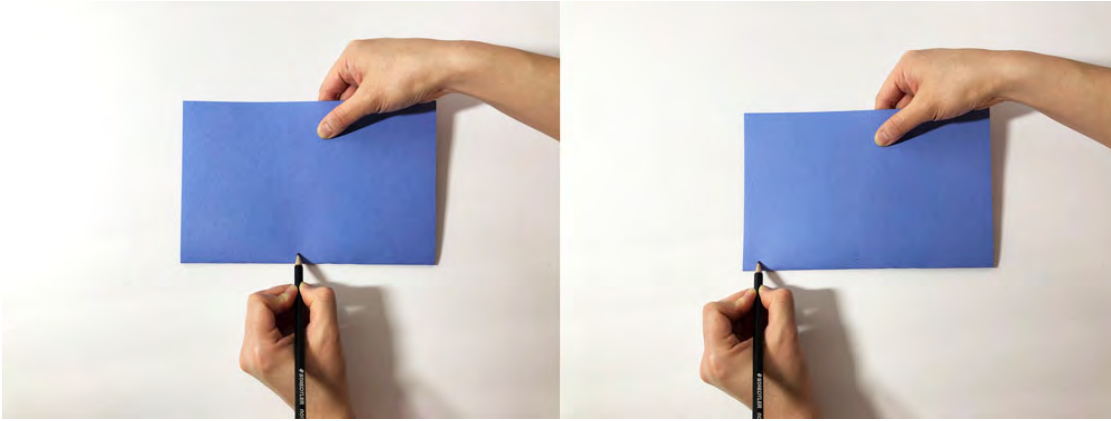
Fold your cardstock in half to make the cover of your sketchbook journal. You can use a pencil to sharpen the crease.



Fold your white pieces of paper in half, one at a time. Nest each folded piece into the other to make the pages of your sketchbook journal.



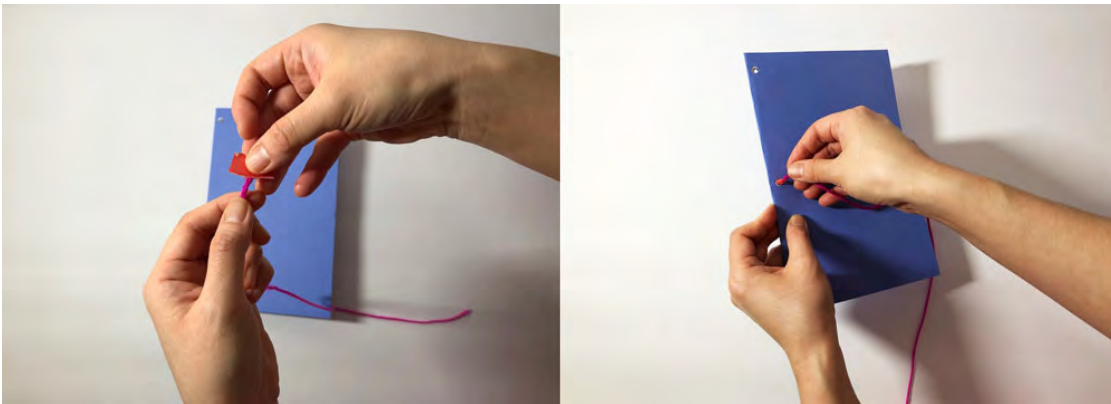
Unfold your cover and center your pages inside the cover.



Close your cover and pages, and using a pencil, make a dot in the middle of the folded cover about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch from the folded edge (it doesn't have to be exact, but it shouldn't be right on the edge of the fold). Make a similar dot about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch from the top, and one more dot about a  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch from the bottom.



Using a hole puncher, punch a hole through the cover and pages where you marked with the dots (middle, top and bottom).



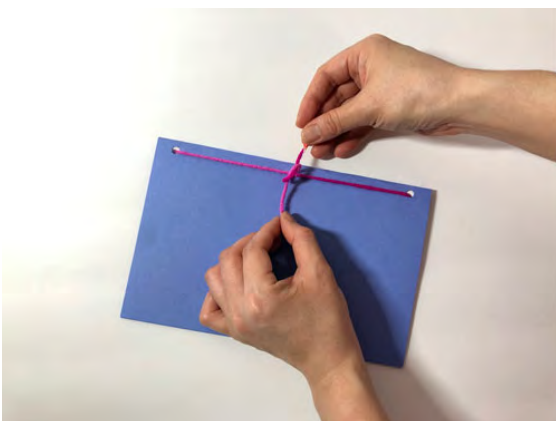
Wrap a piece of tape around the tip of one end of your yarn (so that the edge doesn't fray and it's easier to thread through the hole) and string the yarn through the middle hole leaving a few inches of string out.



Take the taped end of yarn and string it through the bottom hole of the front cover.



Then string all the way through the top hole of the back cover, and string the yarn back through the middle hole.



Tie the two ends together, making sure the yarn is taut and make another knot.



Flip your sketchbook journal over and start personalizing your cover with collage, stickers and more!

**Below are prompts that can help you get started on your journal. Write and/or sketch your thoughts.**

- What is the most memorable thing that happened today?
- What are you feeling right now?
- What is something that you are looking forward to?
- What makes you happy?
- What are some things that you are grateful for?
- Describe a person that inspires you and why.
- Describe a time when someone complimented you. How did it feel?
- Describe your favorite story.
- Describe a place that makes you feel happy and safe.
- Describe your perfect day. Be specific.
- Finish this sentence and keep going: I am...
- Finish this sentence and keep going: We are...
- Share some of these prompts with a friend and exchange thoughts as a way to better understand each other.