



## Lesson: Accordion Books

Ages: 5-15

Projected time: 1 hour

**Supplies needed:** Paper (the bigger the better but any will work), Glue Sticks, Scissors, Pencils, Markers, colored paper or cereal box cardboard for covers.

**Project Intro:** An accordion book is a book made of one long piece of folded paper. This style of book has been made all over the world for a long time. The oldest known example is from China in the Tang Dynasty from around 900 AD, and in Japan this style was developed around 700 AD and called Orihon. The Mayan people also made folded books, like accordion books, around 1200 AD, called codices about astrology and astronomy. Artists around the world still use this form of book art today. Books often have a story structure... your book may have a story in it. Or it might be one long image. It might be a map of your favorite place or a comic book, or a picture of a snake or whale. What do you want to write a book about? You can also watch a tutorial here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNsrnBovC5Q>

**Artist or Medium Reference:** The Mayan people of Southern Mexico and Central America, also used this style of book to make folded Codices. Only a few of these books still exist as they were burned by Europeans intent on destroying Mayan cultural heritage. The few that remain are now named after the European cities they were ended up in. Image 1, at the end of this lesson, is part of the Mayan 'Dresden Codex' (1200-1250 CE) about the movement of planets. Image 2 is part of the Madrid Codex (from the Western Yucatan), about 'rain bringing snakes'. They include information about astrology and astronomy, and other things. You can find some more information about them here (but I recommend further research too, super interesting): <http://www.famsi.org/mayawriting/codices/dresden.html>  
<http://www.library.arizona.edu/exhibits/mexcodex/maya.htm>.

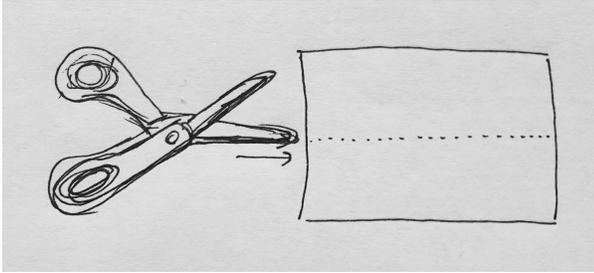
**Vocabulary:** An *Accordion Book* is a long book that folds up, all of the images and writing are on one side so the page separations are the folds (sort of how an accordion's bellows look). A Mayan *codex* or plural *codices* are old forms of folded books.



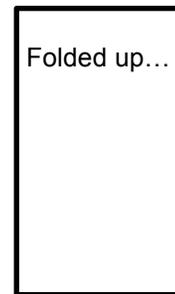
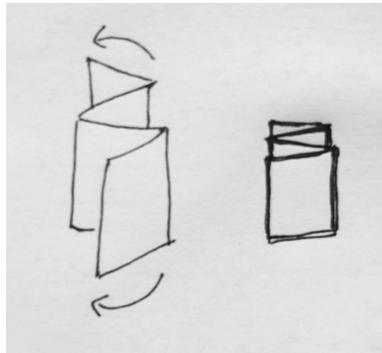
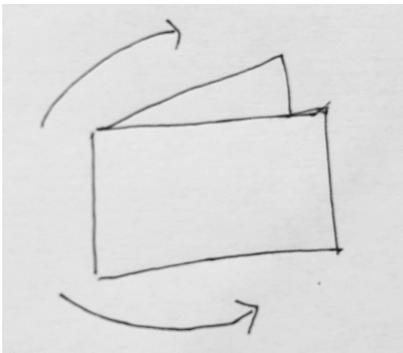
A musician playing an *accordion*... a cool musical instrument!

## Project steps:

**Step 1.** Fold a piece of paper in half longways, then cut down the middle. Use the biggest piece of paper you can find at home. This will give you two long pieces of paper!

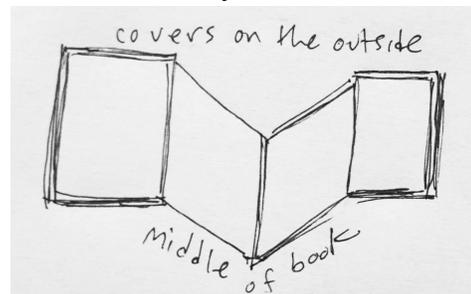
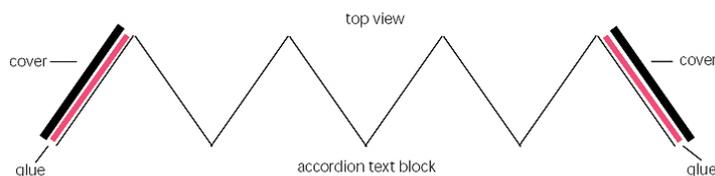


**Step 2.** Fold this long piece of paper once in the middle. Next fold those two halves in half backwards. You will have 4 pages that look like an M or W. Close your book so you know where to glue the covers.



**Step 3:** Chose your cover paper. You can use any type of paper for book covers. The inside of a cereal box works great! Or construction paper, magazine paper, really anything. Trace around the outside of your book with a pencil, onto your chosen cover paper. Then cut along the pencil lines. You'll need to do this twice, as you'll need two covers.

**Step 4:** Use glue stick to attach the covers carefully to the outside of the book. When your book is closed you're all set up to glue the covers on. It's easy to get confused about gluing when the book is open though, so make sure to keep it closed while you attach the covers.



**Step 5:** You will have a long space in the middle of your book, between the covers. Think about each of the 4 pages that make up the middle of your book. Books often have a story structure... what are elements of a story? Beginning, middle and end. You can use these elements as part of your map... where does the map begin? At school? At home? What is it a map to? Or is it a map of where everything is in your life?

**Step 6:** Don't forget a title for your book (on the front), the date, and your name.



Image 1. A small part of the 'Dresden Codex' (1200-1250 AD)



Image 2: A small part of the 'Madrid Codex' (from the Western Yucatan, 1250-1450 AD), under protective glass.