

Create a Secret Storage Book!

What child doesn't love to have a secret hiding place? And what better hiding place than an old book? Hollowed books provide the perfect secret space to keep a small stash of money, candy, or toys. Here's an activity that'll show you and your child how to construct your own secret storage book.

For this project, you'll need a book. Many libraries or yard sales offer old hardback books that can be a great starting place for this project. Ideally, you'll want to choose a book title that people think is worth reading, but one they won't be tempted to pick up and flip through themselves. That way the book blends in, and no one will know the hidden treasures it contains!



What You Need:

- A medium to large hardcover book
- Old newspapers or magazines
- A small disposable container such as a film canister or clean yogurt cup
- A medium sized paintbrush
- White craft glue or wood glue
- Box cutter, or utility knife
- Pencil
- Ruler
- A large twist tie or rubber band that fits around the book's cover
- Optional: Sandpaper (150 grit), available at any hardware store
- Optional: A small magnet, and a washer or other small, flat metal piece

Set-Up:

1. Set down newspaper or old magazine pages to protect your table or workspace.
2. Choose which pages you want to hang loosely at the front of the book. These pages will cover the hollowed-out part of the book.
3. Flip these pages over to the front cover. Since you will need to make markings on where to cut up the book, flip one more page over so that it stays clean, and you can mark up a page that will be hidden later on.
4. Wrap the front cover and these first pages with newspaper or magazine pages, and secure them with a rubber band or twist tie. This is to protect them while you glue and cut the other part of the book.
5. Next, mix the glue you'll use to hold the pages together. Fill the film canister (or yogurt cup) about a quarter full with glue, then another quarter full with water. Mix them together carefully, using a plastic knife or the end of your paintbrush. You want the glue to be thin, but not drippy, so that it will seep into the pages and fasten them together.

What You Do:

1. Once your materials are prepared, get ready to start gluing your book. Flip the protected cover out of the way, and hold the rest of the pages together. Brush your glue mixture around the outside pages of the book.
2. Set some glossy (non-sticky) magazine pages between the cover and the glued part of the book, and shut the book. Put something heavy on top as a weight to hold it tightly shut while it dries.
3. Set it to dry for at least 20 minutes.

4. Save your left-over glue solution by covering your container. Then wash the glue out of your paint brush with cold water so the brush bristles don't stick.
5. Once the book is dry, check to see how secure the pages are. If there are gaps, add another coat of glue and set it to dry once more. You may need to glue it up to three times.
6. Once your pages are secured together, you are ready to begin hollowing out the book. Start by measuring three quarters of an inch ($3/4$ ") from all sides, and draw lines where you will be cutting.
7. Use your utility knife to begin cutting pages out of the book. Go slowly to make sure that you cut neatly. This will get more difficult the deeper you go in the book.
8. As you cut, consider whether you wish to leave a few pages at the bottom of the book, or cut all the way to the back cover. As you near the end, cut carefully so you do not cut through the bottom.
9. When you are done cutting, go back and even out the walls of your box (the pages you have cut through). You can also use the sandpaper to smooth out the edges of the book.
10. If you want to add a magnet to hold the box closed, cut out a small section at the right hand margin of the pages, just the size of the magnet. Glue the magnet in place. Then glue a washer or other metal piece to the inside of the front cover, so that it aligns with the magnet and keeps the book closed.
11. Brush glue into the inside pages of the box to seal them shut.
12. Now, you'll want to glue the neat, clean page over the rest of the pages and over the magnet. Carefully apply glue and turn the whole page over to be glued down. You will be covering the hollowed part of your box with the page, but don't worry, you will be cutting it out later.
13. Leave your work to dry. Again, put a heavy weight on the book to hold the pages in place. Wash your brushes carefully.
14. Once the glue is dry, use your knife to cut the page you just glued down, so that the hollowed portion of the box can open. If the inside of the hollow portion is still sticky, leave it open to dry a little longer.

Once it's dry, you're done. Put your treasures inside, and hide them in your bookshelf!

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