✦ keep this next to your printer

print it pretty

everything you need to turn a PDF into happy mail you're proud to hand over, tuck in a lunchbox or drop in the post.

free guide ♡

the 5-minute quick start

1. **unzip first.** kits arrive as a .zip. on a phone, tap it in the files app to unzip.
2. **pick your size.** US letter for the US, canada + mexico. A4 everywhere else.
3. **open in a real PDF app** (adobe acrobat reader, preview, or your phone's files app), not a browser tab.
4. **print at 100% / actual size**, borderless off.
5. **print one test page** before the whole stack.

which file do i pick?

US letter is 8.5 × 11 in (216 × 279 mm).
A4 is 210 × 297 mm (8.27 × 11.69 in).

match the PDF to the paper in your tray. only have the other size? choose **fit to page**. it shrinks things about 3%, which nobody will notice.

golden rule: print one page, check it, then print the rest. one test sheet saves a stack of cardstock and a lot of ink.

what's inside

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print · write · seal · send ♡

paper cheat sheet

the right paper does most of the work. here's what to load for each kind of little note.

YOU'RE PRINTING	BEST PAPER	US WEIGHT	METRIC	FINISH
letter pages + stationery	bright white premium paper	28 – 32 lb	105 – 120 gsm	smooth matte
note cards + open when cards	light cardstock	65 – 80 lb	176 – 216 gsm	matte
fold-up envelopes	premium paper (folds crisp, no cracking)	24 – 32 lb	90 – 120 gsm	matte
faux stamps + seals	matte sticker paper, or cardstock + glue stick	—	—	matte
lunchbox + pocket notes	light cardstock, so they survive a bag	65 lb	176 gsm	matte
tags, labels + bookmarks	heavy cardstock	100 – 110 lb	270 – 300 gsm	matte
journals + letters to future you	premium paper so both sides take ink	28 – 32 lb	105 – 120 gsm	matte
practice drafts + trackers	everyday copy paper is fine	20 – 24 lb	75 – 90 gsm	matte

paper weight decoder

US paper uses two scales, which is why "65 lb" cardstock is heavier than "32 lb" paper. grams per square meter (gsm) is the honest number, so check it on the pack.

- ♡ 75 – 90 gsm: everyday copy paper
- ♡ 100 – 120 gsm: premium “presentation” paper
- ♡ 176 gsm: light cardstock (65 lb cover)
- ♡ 216 gsm: medium cardstock (80 lb cover)
- ♡ 270 – 300 gsm: heavy cardstock (100 – 110 lb)

the starter stash

buy just these three packs and you can print every kit in the shop:

- [ ] bright white premium paper, ~120 gsm
- [ ] smooth white cardstock, ~216 gsm (80 lb)
- [ ] matte sticker paper for stamps + seals

check your printer’s limit. search your model + "max paper weight". most home inkjets feed heavier stock one sheet at a time through the rear or manual tray.

good paper = happy mail ✉

printer settings

every little sparrow printable already has safe margins built in, so the usual "make it fit" tricks do more harm than good.

100% actual size

SETTING	CHOOSE	WHY
scale	100% / actual size	keeps cards, envelopes and cut lines at their true size. use fit to page only when the PDF and paper sizes don't match.
paper size	letter or A4, matching the tray	a mismatch is the #1 cause of cut-off edges.
borderless	off	borderless zooms the page slightly and trims the edges.
paper type	matte / cardstock / heavy paper	tells the printer to slow down and use less ink, so heavy paper doesn't smear.
quality	high / best for gifts. standard for drafts	best is slower, but the pinks and blues look rich instead of streaky.
color	grayscale for practice drafts	write a rough draft on a cheap black + white copy, then print the pretty one.
pages	type a range, like 3-5, 9	print just the letters you need tonight.
two-sided	flip on long edge (portrait pages)	see page 4 for journals and booklets.

DESKTOP

windows

open the PDF in adobe acrobat reader and press **ctrl + P**. under page size & handling choose **actual size**. click properties for paper type, quality and color.

DESKTOP

mac

open in preview, press **⌘ + P**, then show details. set scale to **100%**. open the media & quality menu for paper type and quality.

PHONE

iphone + ipad

open the PDF in the files app, tap **share**, then **print**. pick your printer, paper size and page range. tap options for black & white or two-sided.

PHONE

android

open the PDF in files or drive, tap ⋮ then **print**. tap the down arrow for paper size, color, two-sided and pages. you may need your printer brand's free print plugin.

100% is the magic number ✦

double-sided + journals

letters to future you, a year of letters and journal pages feel like a real book when they're printed on both sides. three ways to do it.

EASIEST

automatic two-sided

if your printer has a duplex setting, choose **two-sided, flip on long edge**. that's it.

long edge is for portrait pages. short edge is for landscape pages.

A LITTLE FIDDLY

manual two-sided

1. print **odd pages** only.
2. put the stack back in the tray. most trays want it printed side up, top edge in first.
3. print **even pages**, often with "reverse order" on.

PRO MOVE

booklet mode

acrobat reader's **booklet** option puts two pages side by side on each sheet, in order.

fold the stack in half and staple the spine for a sweet half-size mini journal. best for 8 – 32 pages.

test before you commit

print the test page (page 12) two-sided first. back upside down? switch between long edge and short edge. landed on the wrong side? flip the stack over in the tray.

pencil an arrow on the top edge of your stack before you reload it. future you will thank you.

print one side only for...

- note cards + open when cards you'll fold
- anything you'll cut out: stamps, tags, labels
- fold-up envelopes
- letters you'll mail flat in an envelope

journal recipe: print the cover on cardstock, the inside pages double-sided on 105 – 120 gsm premium paper, and add a plain cardstock back. bind it (page 8) and you've got a keepsake that lasts all year.

pencil an arrow. thank us later ♡

pens that won't bleed

every pen behaves differently on printed paper. match the paper to the pen, and test new ones on page 13 first.

PEN	BLEED RISK	PAPER	GOOD TO KNOW
ballpoint	none	any	the trusty classic. smooth and never smudges.
gel pens	low	any	lovely for letters. give them a minute to dry before you fold or rest your hand.
fineliners	low	any	perfect for journals and trackers. barely shows through 105 gsm paper.
fountain pens	medium	120 gsm premium paper	fine nibs feather less. let the page dry flat before folding.
brush pens + water-based markers	medium	65 – 80 lb cardstock	great for doodles and lettering. don't scrub one spot or the paper pills.
highlighters	medium	any	can smear fresh inkjet lines. let pages dry overnight first.
alcohol markers	high	100 lb+ smooth cardstock	they bleed through nearly everything. slide a scrap sheet underneath.
colored pencils + crayons	none	any	zero stress. perfect for little pen pals decorating their own mail.

no-smudge letter writing

- ♡ let inkjet prints dry an hour before writing over printed prompts.
- ♡ lefties: gel or quick-dry ink, and write with the page tilted.
- ♡ keep a scrap sheet under your hand while you write.
- ♡ wait for the ink to dry before you fold + seal.

make it look extra

doodle a tiny heart, star or sparrow next to the sign-off. add a little washi strip to a corner. color the faux stamp with one bright pen.

pencils + gel pens on copy paper = zero stress, all cute ♡

dry ink, happy hands ✎

cutting + folding

clean cuts and crisp folds make a home print look shop-bought. these tools go from "already in your drawer" to "treat yourself".

snip snip ✂

paper trimmer

the fastest way to straight edges. a small rotary or guillotine trimmer handles cardstock and pays for itself fast.

craft knife + ruler

use a metal ruler and a self-healing mat. two light passes beat one hard one. change blades often.

sharp scissors

totally fine. on curves, move the paper, not the scissors, and keep the blade deep in the cut.

corner rounder

a cheap punch that rounds corners on cards, tags and stamps. instantly more polished.

scoring tool

a bone folder or an empty ballpoint pen run along a ruler gives crisp folds on cards and envelopes.

glue stick + washi

glue sticks and double-sided tape won't warp paper like liquid glue. washi seals envelopes the cute way.

fold-up envelopes, step by step

1. cut on the outer line only.
2. score every dotted fold line with a ruler first.
3. fold the sides in, then the bottom up.
4. glue the bottom flap to the side flaps.
5. slip your note in, then seal the top with a sticker or washi.

envelope sizes

4.25 × 5.5 in card (4 per letter sheet)	A2
5 × 7 in card (2 per letter sheet)	A7
A6 card (4 per A4 sheet)	C6
a letter page folded in thirds	#10 / DL

finishing touch: glue a note card onto a slightly bigger rectangle of colored cardstock for an instant border.

measure twice, snip once ✂

seal + send

the best part: your happy mail actually leaves the house. a few tips so it arrives looking as sweet as it left.

addressing it

1. recipient's address goes in the middle, written clearly in dark ink.
2. your return address goes top left.
3. the real stamp goes top right. keep that corner clear.
4. decorate everywhere else: faux stamps, doodles, washi, stickers.

```
from: you
your street                                   real
                                              stamp
                                              here

                    to: your person
                    their street
                    their town

♡ faux stamps + doodles anywhere else
```

faux stamps are for fun

our printable stamps and postmarks are decoration only. **always add real postage** before you mail anything.

keep faux stamps away from the top-right corner so the post office doesn't mistake one for the real thing.

will it need extra postage?

square envelopes, lumpy wax seals, chunky stickers, rigid cards and thick bundles can cost more to mail (in the US this is the "nonmachinable" surcharge).

not sure? **weigh it at the counter** before you send.

make it last

- ♡ hand-delivering? a ribbon + gift tag is all you need.
- ♡ lunchbox notes: slip them into a small zip bag to dodge spills.
- ♡ laminate or use a sheet protector for notes you'll reuse with a dry-erase pen.
- ♡ print two copies of letters you want to keep a record of.

mail day tip: snap a photo of your envelope before you post it and tag **@littlesparrowpaper**. we love seeing your happy mail ♡

little notes. big feelings. ♡

keeping + storing

turn a pile of pages into a journal you'll reach for, and give the letters you get back a cozy home.

METHOD	YOU NEED	BEST FOR	ADD PAGES LATER?
3-ring binder	3-hole punch (2-hole on A4), binder, sheet protectors	letter kit collections, a year of letters	yes, easily
disc binding	disc-bound punch, discs, poly covers	journals, letters to future you	yes, pop in + out
spiral or coil	a print shop (a few dollars)	year-long journals	no
saddle stitch	booklet printing + a long-reach stapler	mini journals, 8 – 32 pages	no
ring or binder clip	a book ring and a hole punch	prompt cards, open when cards	yes
keepsake box	a pretty box + dividers	letters you've received ♡	always

make it feel like a real book

- ♡ print the cover on heavy cardstock and add a clear front + cardstock back.
- ♡ our pages have a wide margin, so a standard punch won't touch the design.
- ♡ add tab dividers between months or people.
- ♡ tie a ribbon bookmark to the spine.

store it so you use it

- ♡ one envelope or folder per kit, so the cards, envelopes and stamps stay together.
- ♡ keep one unmarked master copy of every page.
- ♡ save every PDF in a "happy mail" folder in your cloud drive.
- ♡ store cardstock flat, in its box, away from damp.

happy mail box: keep blank cards, envelopes, stamps and a good pen in one box by the door. when the mood strikes, a little note takes 10 minutes.

keep every letter ✉

at the print shop

no printer, low on ink, or printing a stack of cards on fancy cardstock? a print shop is often cheaper than a new cartridge.

no ink? no problem

in the us

staples, office depot / officemax and fedex office take PDF uploads online for same-day pickup, or print from a USB stick in store.

everywhere else

local copy shops, stationery stores and university print centers do the same. search "same day printing near me".

the library

many public libraries have cheap self-service color printing. bring the PDF on your phone or a USB stick.

copy + paste this order

```
please print [file name], pages [__], [__] copies.
paper: [US letter / A4], [__] lb / [__] gsm
[cardstock / premium paper].
color, at 100% / actual size, no scaling.
[single-sided / double-sided, flip on long edge].
extras: [cut on the lines] [coil bind] [laminate]
```

save money

- print color pages at the shop and black + white drafts at home.
- ask for a proof of one page before the full run.
- watch for paper sales around back-to-school.

"is this copyrighted?"

shops sometimes ask about professional-looking files. your purchase lets you print for your own personal use. show your order email if they ask.

upload tip

send the PDF itself, not a screenshot or a photo of the page. the PDF keeps every line crisp at full size.

send the PDF, not a photo ✦

ipad + goodnotes

our digital desk planners and journals live on your tablet. write with a stylus, tap the tabs, and print the pages you love.

goodnotes (ipad)

1. save the PDF to files (unzip first).
2. in goodnotes tap **+** → **import** and pick the PDF.
3. import it as a **new notebook**, so the tabs and links keep working.
4. long-press a page to duplicate it for endless lists and logs.
5. use the highlighter at low opacity for marker-style color.

notability + other apps

1. notability: import, or share it from files.
2. samsung notes, xodo, flexcil and onenote all open PDFs for stylus writing.
3. kindle scribe, remarkable, kobo and boox take PDFs through their own apps. e-ink shows our colors in soft grays.

tappable tabs

tabs and buttons only work in **read mode** in goodnotes. tap the pen icon to switch between writing and tapping.

stickers + extras

drop sticker PNGs into your goodnotes elements or photos, then drag them onto any page.

backups

export your filled journal as a PDF every month or so. your notes stay safe if the app or device changes.

best of both: journal on your ipad, then print a fresh copy of the pages you want to frame, gift or mail. same file, two ways to use it.

same file, two ways to use it ♡

digital use is personal use: please don't share the file

troubleshooting

most print problems come down to scale, paper size or paper type. find yours below.

WHAT HAPPENED	TRY THIS
edges or text are cut off	set scale to actual size and borderless off, and check that the paper size matches the PDF.
everything prints a little small	“fit to page” or “shrink oversized pages” is on. switch to actual size / 100%.
cards or envelopes are the wrong size	print page 12 and measure the ruler. if it's off, the scale setting is the culprit.
colors look dull or streaky	choose high / best quality, set paper type to matte or cardstock, and run a nozzle check from your printer's maintenance menu.
pinks print orange or brown	a color cartridge is low or clogged. replace it, or print color pages at a shop.
ink smears or stays wet	set paper type to cardstock or heavy paper, and let pages dry before stacking.
cardstock jams	feed one sheet at a time through the rear or manual tray, and check the printer's max paper weight.
back side is upside down	switch between flip on long edge and short edge. see page 4.
envelope folds crack	score the fold lines first, and use premium paper instead of heavy cardstock.
my pen bleeds through	use a gel pen or fineliner, or move to 120 gsm premium paper. see page 5.
the download won't open on my phone	kits are .zip files. open the files app, tap the zip to unzip, then open the PDF.
the PDF opens in my browser and prints oddly	download it and open it in adobe acrobat reader or preview instead.
goodnotes tabs don't work	switch to read mode (tap the pen icon), and import as a new notebook, not into an existing one.

still stuck? message us on instagram @littlesparrowpaper ♡

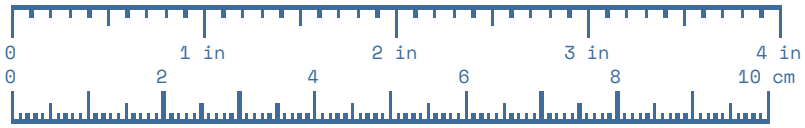
restart the printer. seriously. ✦

printer test page

print this at actual size before any big print job. it checks scale, color, fine lines and two-sided printing on one sheet.

1 · scale check

this ruler should measure exactly **4 inches** on the top marks and **10 cm** on the bottom marks. shorter? turn off "fit to page".



2 · color check

all eight squares should look clean and even, with no stripes. streaks mean it's time for a nozzle check.

3 · gray + line check

you should see ten separate steps and five lines, thinnest to thickest. missing thin lines? choose a higher quality setting.

front ↑

front ↑

print this page two-sided with any other page. hold it to a window: the back should read the same way up.

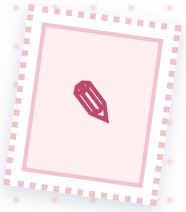
4 · edge check

all four pink corner marks should be visible. if one is missing, your printer's margin is bigger than usual, so use fit to page for designs that run close to the edge.

tape it inside your printer lid ✦

pen tester

print this on the paper you plan to write on. swatch each pen, write its name on the line, then flip the page to see what bled through.



pen:

pen:

pen:

pen:

pen:

pen:

pen:

pen:

blend test

color a light shade, then overlap a darker one. does it blend smoothly, or streak?

line test

write over these printed lines. does the black smudge or feather?

my verdicts

PEN	PAPER	BLEED?	VERDICT

find your favorite pen ✎



supplies + print log

tick what you have, circle what you want, and keep a record of what worked so the next batch of happy mail is easier.

paper

- [ ] copy paper 75 – 90 gsm
- [ ] premium paper 120 gsm
- [ ] cardstock 176 gsm / 65 lb
- [ ] cardstock 216 gsm / 80 lb
- [ ] matte sticker paper
- [ ] colored cardstock
- [ ] envelopes (A2 / A7 / C6)

writing

- [ ] ballpoint pen
- [ ] gel pens
- [ ] fineliners
- [ ] brush pens
- [ ] colored pencils
- [ ] a scrap sheet
- [ ] real stamps ✉

finishing

- [ ] paper trimmer
- [ ] corner rounder
- [ ] bone folder
- [ ] glue stick
- [ ] washi tape
- [ ] stickers + seals
- [ ] ribbon + tags

print log

PRINTABLE	PAPER	SETTINGS	NOTES FOR NEXT TIME

little notes. big feelings. ♡