

# How To Scrapbook

By Amanda Knoles

Scrap booking is a popular pastime for people of all ages. It's a fun way to preserve special memories and share your family's history with future generations. Best of all, it requires no special skills - just the ability to organize, cut, and paste.

If you have lots of photos hidden away in the closet, under the bed, or stuffed in a desk drawer, your first step should be sorting them into categories such as Wedding, Vacation, Children, etc. Once your photos are sorted, you can decide if you have enough to begin a scrapbook.

You can make your scrapbook a one-day project, weekend activity, or year long hobby. A scrapbook is more than just a photo album; it's a book where you can save mementos such as a rose from a favorite bouquet, a ticket stub from a special event, or a leaf from an inspiring walk in the woods. Instead of depicting just the big events in your life, a scrapbook can chronicle special memories, hopes and dreams, family traditions, and personal details that might never be reflected in a traditional photo album.

Visit local craft, art supply, and stationary stores and you'll find a plethora of binders and albums you can use for scrapbooks. Using a three-ring binder is probably the best choice because it allows you to add, remove and reorganize pages more easily. Choose a binder with a decorative cover or select a plain one and create a cover using fabric, lace, ribbons, or any other items you like. Many craft stores offer special scrap booking pages that you can add to your binder. You will also find scissors designed to cut paper in different shapes, stickers, sheet protectors, etc.

It's a good idea to use duplicates of photos for scrapbooks. If you have old family photos with no duplicates available, you can make copies on a scanner or go to a store that allows you to copy photos on the spot.

Establish a materials file for your scrapbook. Use a folder, box, or envelope-style organizer as a place to store photos, stickers, news clippings, fabric swatches, ribbons, greeting cards, and other items that you might want to put in your scrapbook later. When assembling materials be sure to use papers, adhesive, markers, and stickers that are acid-free to prevent photos from discoloring and disintegrating over time.

Choose a patterned or solid color paper for the background of your scrapbook page. Some papers help you carry out a theme such as florals for a wedding album, or balloons for a birthday party. Crop photos to trim away excess background. (You may want to cut them into oval, star or heart shapes). Glue the cropped photo onto a solid paper and cut around the edges of the paper with patterned scissors to add more interest. The solid paper acts as a mat for your photo and makes it easier to glue onto the page.

One of the fun things you can do in a scrapbook is make a collage. For example if you saved several items from your courtship you can paste them onto a page of the scrapbook along with photos from your dating days. To make the page even more personal you can write in journal-like entries detailing your thoughts and memories about a special day.

As you arrange photos on the page, you can add decorative stickers, handwritten or typed notes, souvenirs like ticket stubs, ribbons, dried flowers, etc, to help tell your story. Slide your completed page into a sheet protector and place in your binder. Sheet protectors prevent pages from being soiled by fingerprints and help preserve the elements that you have glued on the page.

Three-dimensional memorabilia such as medals, jewelry, and pins can also work well in scrapbook. Small items can be attached directly to the page while larger or bulky items may work better if you place them in a pocket or envelope. Newspaper clippings, historical photos of towns, and programs of special events are perfect for scrapbooks. Maps and postcards are a great way to add visual interest to a vacation-themed scrapbook. Combine them with photos from your trip and souvenirs such as seashells; drink stirrers, matchbooks, etc.

As you organize your scrapbook, be sure to include important information such as who, what, where, and when so there is a clear explanation of what is taking place in the photos.