



By Linda Sattgast

Picture Perfect Gift Books—Anatomy of a Gift Book

Lesson 02-01: Gift Book Example 1—Julie & Friends

Credits:

Cover paper from Give Thanks by Anna Aspnes

Fonts: Myriad Pro Semi-Bold, Letter Gothic Std Medium

In this video we'll take a deeper look at the book I made for my friend Julie. It was her birthday, so I decided to make a book featuring my favorite pictures of her. I didn't have a lot of time, so I had to keep it simple. I decided to use only pictures with Julie in them, either by herself or with me or with one of our mutual friends.

I used only my best photos. The purpose of the book was to remind both Julie and me of a wonderful time in our life shortly after college. I hoped it would make Julie smile when she looked through the book.

Since I was so short on time, I made the design drop dead simple:

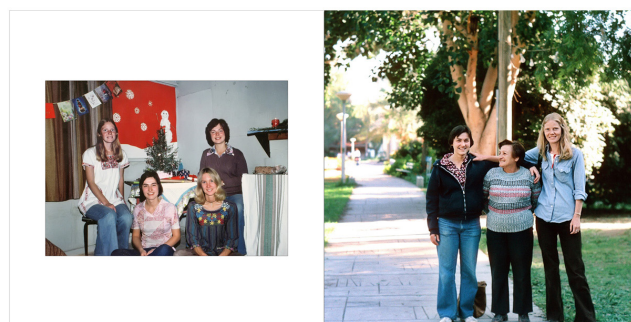
- One photo per page on a white background.
- Some photos were full bleed, meaning they filled the entire page.
- The rest of the photos were sized to 4x6 inches, either horizontal or vertical with a black stroke around the photo.
- I had several spreads with just a single photo on each page.
- I added no words or explanations on the pages until the very end where I put this quote from a birthday card Julie had given me the year before:

Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. —C.H. Spurgeon

The only real design I used was for the cover and title page.

- A colored, mostly plain paper for the background
- A favorite photo of the two of us
- Her name in stroke outline with one element—a flower instead of a dot for the letter i.
- A stroke outline around the photo and name
- The words “And Friends” in small type, breaking the outline
- I didn't even include my name as the author on the cover.

I transported this same design to the white title page, but made it a bit smaller. That looked great and saved me from having to design the title page!



On the back cover, I put a small photo of the two of us taken more recently.

The title and author is on the spine in white.

So does this fit my definition of a gift book?

- **Does it focus on the recipient?**

Yes. It's quite obviously focuses on Julie.

- **Does it make the recipient feel loved and affirmed?**

Yes. I took the time to gather the photos and put this little book together to celebrate Julie, and her response when she opened the gift was, "I love it! I don't just like it, I LOVE it!"



Part of the appeal of this book is that it highlights a time in both of our lives that was so much fun, and the photos bring back memories of our youth. That feeling is called nostalgia, and it's one of the positive feelings you can bring out with certain kinds of gift books. I, too, feel nostalgic and happy when I look at the pictures—that's why I made a copy for myself!

- **Is it a short book?**

Yes. I printed this at Shutterfly using the minimum number of pages, which is 20. That included the front matter.

- **Is it small?**

Yes. It's 8x8 inches—a really nice size for a gift book.

- **Is the design is simple and repetitive?**

You can't get much simpler than that! Just photos on a white background or photos that fill the entire page. And I repeated this simple design throughout the book.

- **Do the photos and words come across as more important than the design?**

Absolutely. I don't even put words on most of the pages. The title says it all: Julie & Friends. And then the quote on friends on the last page says it all. Also, part of what makes this book work is the nostalgia it creates.

- **Is it fast and easy to create?**

Yes, indeed. You can't get much easier than this. The longest part of this project was editing the photos!

So this book does fit our class description of a Gift Book.

Just a note here: I want you to know that you're perfectly free to make your own definition of a gift book. You do NOT have to use mine! You're the one who knows the recipient the best, so you have my permission to deviate from my simple definition.

What I AM saying, though, is that you don't need to be elaborate to create a book that someone will adore!

Lesson 02-02: Gift Book Example 2—Happy Birthday

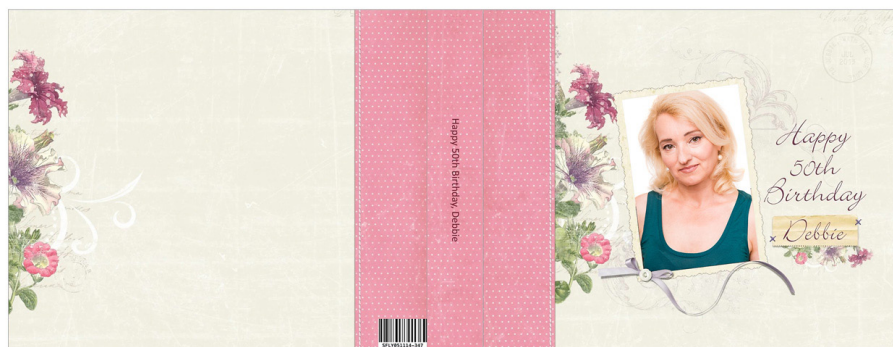
Gift Book by Susie Roberts

Credits:

Katie Pertiet - Designer Digitals
On the Edge Botanicals No 1, 2 and 3
Vintage Journal Spots No 3
Deckled Edge Photo Frames - Vintage
Flossy Cross Stiches
Follow Me Layered Template

One Little Bird and Paislee Press - Storyteller
Bow and button

Susie Roberts
All Stitched Up
Vintage Overlays - Say it in French
Travel Mates - Personalized Postmarks
Fonts: Bickley Script and Calibri



In this video we'll take a quick look at a gift book made by Susie Roberts. The book is simple in concept but has a design that's a little more elaborate:

Above we see the front and back cover and the spine. This book was presented to an employee on her 50th birthday.

The title page is a little unusual, but it works, since it's the president of the company expressing her appreciation for Debbie.

Everyone in the company wrote a note of appreciation to the birthday girl, one employee per page.

Notice the repetition. All but a few pages in the book are designed just like this with a few minor differences such as different flowers, though even these are repeated at intervals. This takes a huge burden off of you! You don't have to design every page. Hooray!

Let's see how this stacks up against our gift book definition:

- **Does the gift book focus on the recipient?** Wow! Does it ever! It's all about the birthday girl!
- **Does the book makes the recipient feel loved and affirmed?** If you could read all the words of affirmation given by her co-workers, you would know that Debbie will cherish this book for the rest of her life!
- **Is it a short book?** It's a little longer than 20 pages because of the number of employees, but it's a manageable size.
- **Is it a small book?** Check.
- **Is the design simple and repetitive?** Every page is the same, yet each page is interesting with the unique photo and loving words. How cool is that?!
- **Are the photos and words are more important than the design?** Absolutely. No question about it.
- **Is it fast and easy to create?** Again, yes. Susie mentioned she had a short deadline to finish the book, so using a repeating page design like this, kept her on schedule.

So there you have a second example of a gift book that rocks!



Lesson 02-03: Children's Picture Books

The Pumpkin Harvest Party Credits:

Fonts: P22 Morris Golden Regular

P22 Morris Ornaments Regular

In this video, let's take a look at a children's picture book. Now why would I include children's books in my definition of gift books? It's because they also follow the rules of a good gift book.

This one was printed online with a cloth cover with a cutout, so I don't have a cover page for you to see, but here's a sample spread from the book.

Let's read just a little bit of the story. . .

In the story each child in a family picks out a pumpkin in the fall. Caleb is the youngest and smallest child in the family, but he picks the biggest pumpkin, and so the story starts.

This book and other children's picture books follow our class definition of a gift book: They are small books with few pages that are made for one child or in this case an entire family of children, so it affirms the value of the family.

Do you think kids would love seeing themselves in the story? You bet! I even watched another child, a total stranger to this family, pick up this book and read it with interest.

A children's book can be about a child's toys or it can be an imaginary story, but its purpose is to delight, affirm, and entertain the child, so it's all about the child.

Picture books also have few words and the design is usually very simple and repeats page after page.

Are you starting to get the picture? Has the light bulb turned on? These are gift books, and they're not hard to make!

Lesson 02-04: Parts of a Book

Credits:

I appear to have lost the original PSD files of this book, so I can't tell you which paper I used and desaturated.

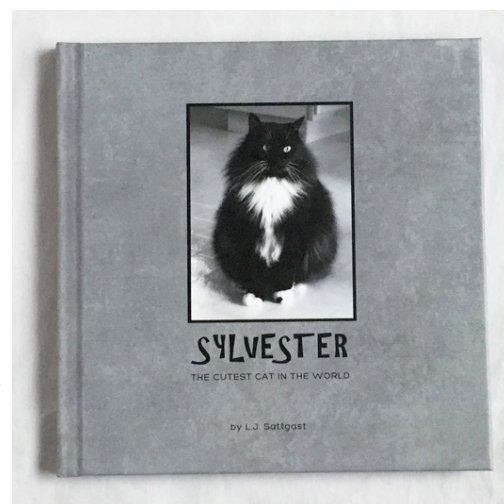
Fonts: Gilligan's Island Regular and Florencesans Regular

In this video we'll go over the parts of a book. I'm going to use a book I made about our beloved cat, Sylvester.

The Cover

The first thing you have is the cover. This has the title, and perhaps a subtitle, and some kind of photo or design, and it usually has the name of the author as well. Covers don't have to be complicated, and to help you out, I have a number of cover examples and templates to make it easy for you.

This is the one place where color is important. It's rare to see a white cover for a gift book, though sometimes that works, but most of the time I use a piece of solid, slightly textured digital paper. It can be any color as long as it matches the feeling of the book and the cover art.



I started out with a colored paper for this book, but it just didn't fit, so I desaturated the paper and turned it to grayscale. That's because Sylvester was a black and white cat, and I decided to make all the photos black and white. So a gray cover seemed appropriate.

Page 1: The first real page is on the right side. Some book publishers, like Shutterfly, will attach a non printable page at the beginning, which is nice. The non printable page on the left is a piece of white textured paper.

You can certainly put the title page on the right on the first page of the book, especially if it has one of those non printable beginning pages, but I prefer to keep the first printable page blank, like I did here, or just have a small photo or vignette. This makes the book feel richer and more elegant, and it's one less page you have to design!

Page 2 and 3: The next page is the start of a double spread. For this book, I left the left page blank and put the Title page on the right. The Title page always goes on the right.

Most title pages I've seen are white with no art or with a small photo or vignette. It should be kept simple so it doesn't compete with the cover. If you have a photo or graphic on the Title Page, it's often the same as the cover.

For my mother's history album, I put a photo of her on the first page and a dedication on the second page. I've also seen credits put here, or a photo, even a full page photo.

These beginning pages are called the Front Matter. So the front matter will usually be anywhere from one to three pages long.

Next come all the pages of your book. The left and right pages make up one spread with the gutter in the middle—the part where the book goes down into the spine. Some photo book publishers make books that don't have a gutter. The pages lie flat. So you'll need to take into account what type of book you're making when you plan your pages.

Pages can be full bleed pages, where the photo covers the entire page all the way to the edge. If you use digital paper for the background of your page, then that would be considered a full bleed page, even though the paper may be light colored. These pages have no paper behind the photos—I simply left the background white.

Pages that are not full bleed have white around the edges.

For either kind of page, make sure any important information or type is at least a half an inch away from the edge. I prefer to leave an inch margin. You don't need to number the pages, especially for a gift book.

The last page of the book is on the left in most books. It's the most important page in your book. You want to leave the reader with a good feeling or a smile, a sense of whimsy, or a nostalgic feel—some kind of feeling. Here I put one of the last photos I took of Sylvester, looking up at me as I snapped the photo. It's a photo that tugs at the heart.

The back cover can be plain, or it can have a single photo, or it can have a photo and some text. I like to use a single photo. Only an insider would know that this is a picture of Sylvester on the back of my Sylvester book. He's not visible in the photo, but he used to sit behind the couch looking outside through the blinds, so we could always tell where he was if the blinds were open like they are in the photo.

And finally, The spine is where you put the title of the book and the author.



So those are the parts of a book. The book that inspired me to make my Sylvester book is a book about a cat called Ernie. If you're a cat lover, you need this book. I borrowed Ernie's cover design for my book about Sylvester.

You can find the Ernie book at Chronicle Books: <http://www.chroniclebooks.com/titles/ernie.html>

For the Front Matter, there's a non-printable page on the left and a single offset word on the right, so that's another thing you can do with the first blank page.

The Title page has a photo on the left. This book has two additional Front Matter pages, the publisher's credits and a Foreword. Then the book finally starts.

So those are the parts of a book that you'll need to address when you make your book.

Lesson 02-05: Gift Book Sizes

Before you can start on your book, you need to decide what size it will be. It also helps to decide where you plan to print it as well, because different publishers use different templates.

I'm going to feature the sizes available from the two publishers I personally use and recommend:

Shutterfly and Adoramapix, but there are other very good online printers, so if you've used one before and are happy with your result, feel free to stick with them.

We'll be talking more about publishers in the section on Printing Your Book, and we'll include information for places outside the United States, so for now we'll simply discuss some sizes available, since many printers use similar sizes.

Think small for most gift books. A small book is cheaper and faster to make. A 12x12 inch book is overkill for most gift books unless you have a lot of photos or text...in which case it's probably outside the class definition of a gift book.

Gift Book Sizes

Shutterfly Book Sizes:

Soft cover only

5x7

7x9

Many Cover Options

8x8

8x11

10x10

12x12

11x14

Cover Options at Shutterfly:

With size 8x8 and up you can choose from a variety of covers:

- Soft photo cover
- Hard photo cover
- Cloth cover with die cut window
- Linen cover with die cut window
- Leather cover with die cut window
- Hard photo cover with layflat pages
- Crushed silk cover with layflat pages
- Genuine leather cover with layflat pages

Shutterfly has several good sizes for teen and adult gift books:

Soft Cover Only (you get to design the cover)

5x7

7x9

The first size with more cover options is 8x8. 10x10 might also be a good size. With either of these the cover can have die cut windows, some are leather, but cheapest cover is the hard cover that you design yourself.

Shutterfly also has some flat page options.

AdoramaPix Book Sizes

Landscape:	Portrait:	Square:	Long:
6x7.5	6x4.5	6x6	6x12
6x9	8x6	8x8	
8x10	10x8	10x10	
8x12	12x6	12x12	
10x12.5	12x9		

All the books at AdoramaPix have lay flat bindings. Their books are ideal for children's picture books, since the pages are a bit thicker than the average photo book.

Any of the smaller sizes are great for gift books, up to 10x10.

My Favorite Book Size

If I had to choose just one size that works in the majority of cases, it would be 8x8. It's a great little size for a gift book!

If you want more information about printing companies in the United States and other parts of the world, check out the class section called [Printing Your Book](#).

An actual book you can hold in your hands is always very special, but it's also a little pricey, especially when you add shipping and handling. I recommend signing up to receive emails from any company you're interested in. That way you can go online and get your book ready so you can take advantage of a good sale. I'm most experienced with Shutterfly, and they have sales all the time—but you have to be ready, because the sale may not last long.

If you're new to Photoshop or Photoshop Elements and don't feel comfortable using it yet, I have good news for you. You can create your book totally online, and I have some training on how to do that using only the book company's online editor.

I'm also going to talk about how to create a purely digital book in PDF format that can be viewed on a device like an iPad or Kindle. Which means you and others can still enjoy your photo books, even if creating a hard bound book isn't affordable.

But before you can do anything, you have to know what size you want for your book!