How to Draw a Notebook

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

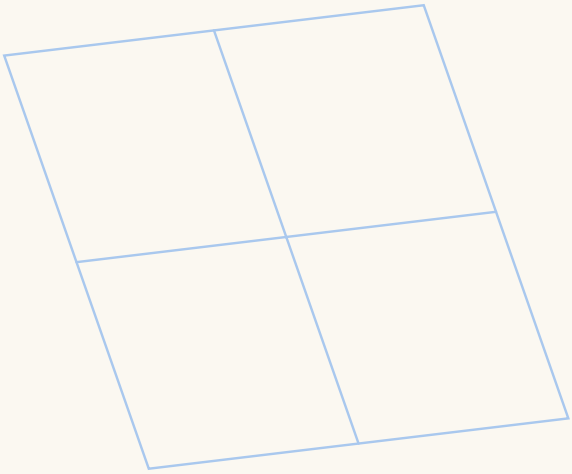
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A ruler
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Plain paper

How to use this guide

New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

Read the full tutorial online →

STEP 1 Draw a slanted box for the cover

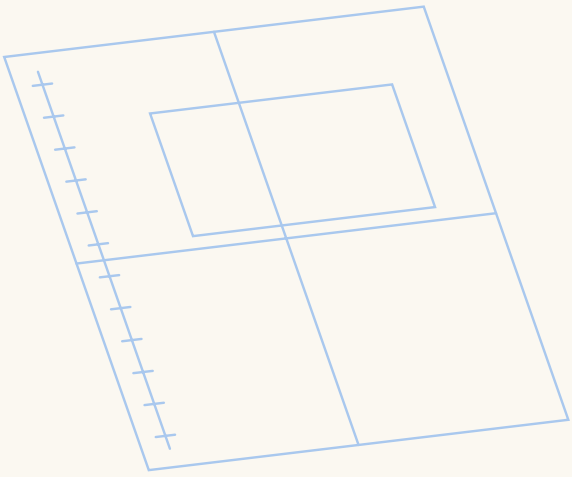


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Instead of a straight rectangle, draw a box that leans. The top edge rises a little to the right, and the two side edges tilt to the right as they go down. That lean is what makes the notebook look like it's lying on a desk and not standing up. Add one line down the middle and one across the middle to split the box into four parts.

💡 **Tip:** Keep opposite edges parallel. If the left and right sides lean by different amounts, the cover looks twisted.

STEP 2 Mark even spots for the spiral

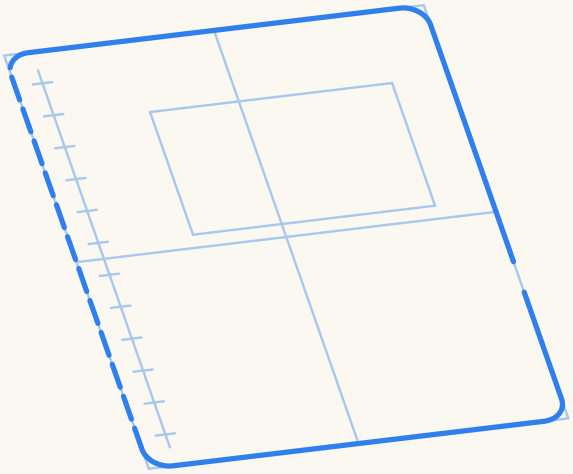


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Close to the left edge, draw a light line that runs the same direction as that edge. Put twelve short tick marks across it, from near the top to near the bottom. I place the first and last ticks, then the middle one, then fill each half. Sketch a smaller slanted box in the upper half for the label too.

💡 **Tip:** Measure with a ruler: if the line is 12 cm long, a tick every centimeter does the job.

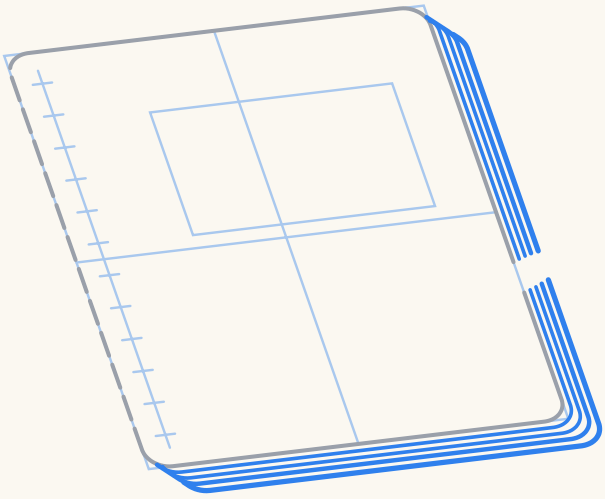
STEP 3 Outline the cover with rounded corners



Trace over the big box with a firmer line, rounding off all four corners. Real notebook covers are never sharp at the corners, and the soft curve makes it look like a real object. Along the left side, leave tiny gaps at each tick mark, where the rings will cross the edge.

💡 **Tip:** Draw each rounded corner as one smooth stroke instead of several short ones.

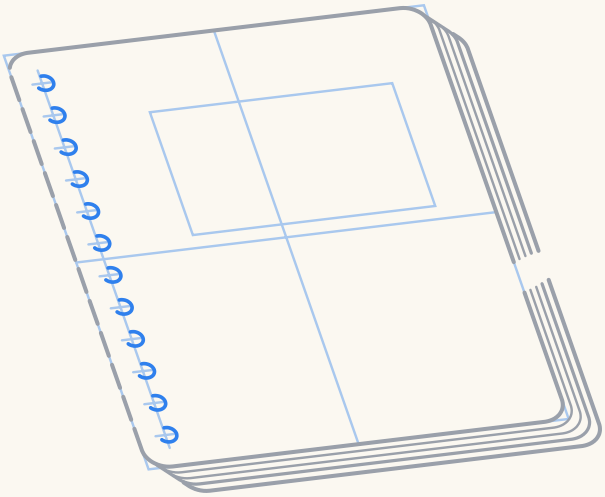
STEP 4 Add the page edges and back cover



Below the bottom edge and along the right side, draw a few lines that copy the cover's outline, each one a little lower and further right than the last. These are the stacked pages. The outermost line is the back cover. Stop the lines where the cover's left corner hides them, so they only peek out on two sides.

💡 **Tip:** Three or four page lines are plenty. More than that turns into a gray smudge once you ink it.

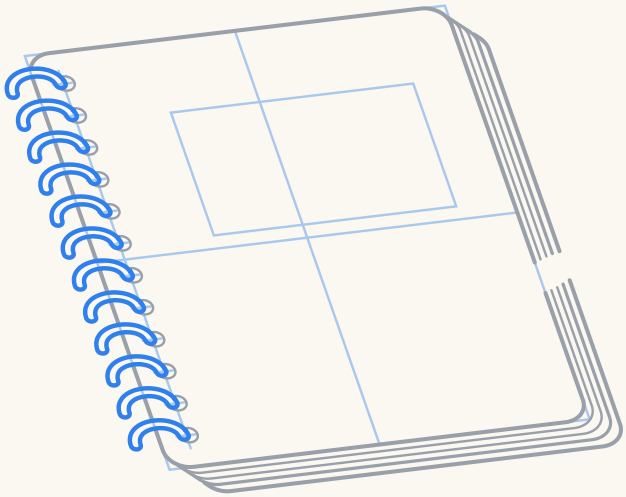
STEP 5 Draw a row of punched holes



On each tick mark, draw a small circle just to the right of the guide line. These are the holes the wire goes through. Keep every hole the same size, since an odd one is easy to spot later.

💡 **Tip:** Tiny circles are easier if you turn the paper so you draw them with a comfortable wrist motion.

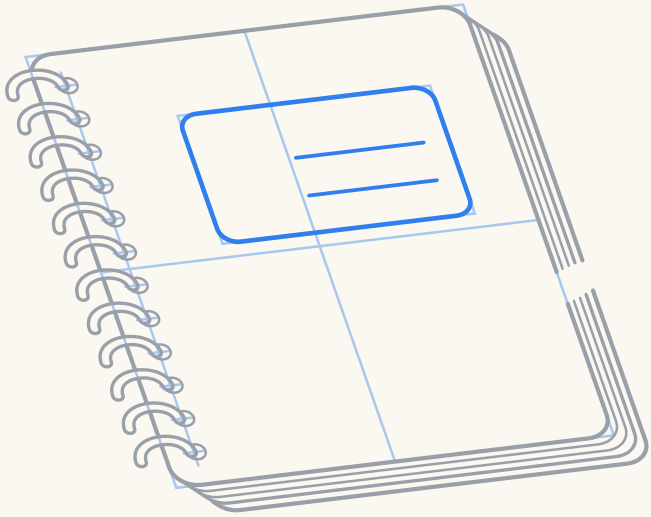
STEP 6 Draw the evenly spaced spiral rings



From each hole, draw a thick curved loop that arches up and over the left edge of the cover, like a little upside-down letter C lying on its side. Each ring is two curved lines a pencil width apart, joined round at the ends. Copy the very same curve twelve times, using the tick marks so the gaps between rings stay equal.

💡 **Tip:** Draw all the outer curves first, then go back for the inner ones. Repeating one motion keeps the rings matching.

STEP 7 Add a label to the cover



Inside the small guide box, draw a rectangle with rounded corners, leaning the same way as the cover. Place two straight lines in its right half for writing a name or a subject. The label should sit in the upper part of the cover, which leaves the lower part open for the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Check that the label's top edge is parallel to the notebook's top edge before you go on.

STEP 8 Doodle a star and a heart



In the empty left part of the label, draw a five-point star and a small heart under it. They're the kind of doodles kids put on their own notebooks. A smiley face or your initials work just as well.

💡 **Tip:** For the star, draw it in one continuous line without lifting the pencil, then tidy the points.

STEP 9 Draw the pencil body and eraser



Lay a light guide line diagonally across the lower right of the cover, rising toward the right and running past the edge. Draw two long parallel lines along it for the pencil's body. At the lower end, add a short band with two little lines across it for the metal part, and a rounded pink eraser beyond it. A thin line down the body shows one of the pencil's flat sides.

💡 **Tip:** Let the pencil hang over the notebook's edge. It looks more natural than a pencil that fits perfectly inside.

STEP 10 Sharpen the pencil tip



At the upper end, taper the body into a cone of bare wood, with a slightly wavy line where the paint stops. Finish it with a small dark triangle for the lead. A long thin tip looks more like a needle, so keep the cone short.

💡 **Tip:** Make the cone about twice as long as the pencil is wide.

STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with a black marker. I start with the rings while my hand is steady, then the cover, page edges, label and pencil. Skip the light guide box, the cross lines and the tick marks. When the ink is fully dry, erase all the pencil so only the clean outline stays.

💡 **Tip:** Wait a minute before erasing. Fresh marker smears and drags across the cover.

STEP 12 Color your notebook



Fill the cover with turquoise and use a darker turquoise for the thin back cover strip. Color the pages and the label cream. The spiral rings and the pencil's metal band are gray, and the holes are black. Give the pencil a yellow body, a tan wooden tip, a black lead and a pink eraser. Finish with yellow on the star and pink on the heart.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a narrow white strip along the top of each ring to make the metal look shiny.