

# Booklet Layout: How to Arrange the Pages of a Saddle-Stitched Booklet

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Most booklets are created with the Saddle-Stitch binding method. This method uses printed sheets that are folded and nested one inside the other and then stapled through the fold line with wire staples. The staples pass through the folded crease from the outside and are clinched between the centermost pages. The result is a very simple yet professional looking document.

Despite its relative simplicity, saddle-stitch booklets often pose a challenge for someone new to graphic design. This is because the page set-up for saddle-stitched booklets requires a different approach than for other types of bound books.

## **Pages Must Be in Multiples of Four**

Saddle-stitched booklets are constructed of folded sheets. As such, each folded sheet joined within the finished booklet will form four pages of the booklet. This means the page count of every saddle-stitched booklet must always be a multiple of four (4). It is not possible to create a 7-page, 10-page, or 25-page saddle-stitched booklet.

All saddle-stitched booklets must contain 4 pages, 8 pages, 12 pages, 16 pages, 20 pages, 24 pages and so on. Even if a page in the booklet is blank, it still counts as a page.

So if you are printing a booklet from home:

Set the printer to booklet.

If you are printing a double sided booklet, you will print in this order:

1-16

17-32

33-48

And so on.

The number of pages, double sided, will be 4. Which is enough to make 1 signature.

If you are printing Single sided booklet:

1-8

9-16

17-24

And so on.

### What are Reader Spreads?

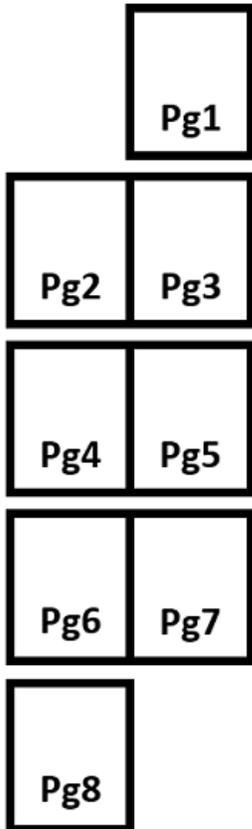
As its name suggests, **Reader Spreads** show the pages in the order they will appear to the **reader** of the saddle-stitched booklet. Hence, Reader Spreads position the booklet's pages in ascending numerical order. The main purpose of Reader Spreads is to help visualize how the page layout will look once the booklet is bound.

Illustration A shows how Reader Spreads will look for an 8-page saddle-stitched booklet. With the exception of the first page and the last page, notice that the Reader Spreads present two opposing pages side-by-side (such as how pages 2 and 3, pages 4 and 5, and pages 6 and 7 are shown in the illustration). However, submitting a file in this manner will likely cause a huge headache for your printer. This is because the

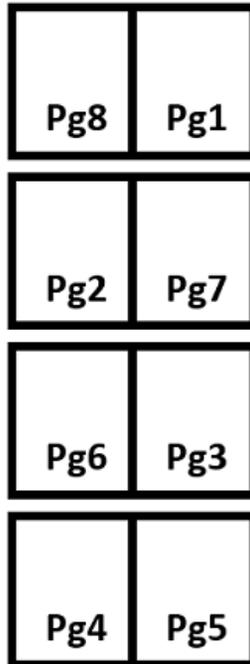
pages of a saddle-stitched booklet aren't actually printed in the arrangement shown in the Reader Spreads illustration.

For example, the illustration shows pages 2 and 3 right next to each other. However, 99% of the time pages 2 and 3 are not printed side-by-side. You can verify this by examining pages 2 and 3 of virtually any printed saddle-stitched booklet. These two pages will be on separate sheets. (The only exception is a 4-page saddle-stitched booklet, which will have pages 2 and 3 printed side by side).

**Illustration A:  
Reader Spreads**



**Illustration B:  
Printer Spreads**



**Illustration C:  
Pages One after Another**



## What are Printer Spreads?

**Printer Spreads** display the booklet's pages as they will actually **print** side-by-side on a sheet (see Illustration B).

Unlike Reader Spreads, the pages shown in Printer Spreads are not in numerical order. Instead, they are placed in an arrangement that will allow them to end up in correct numerical order once the pages are folded and bound into a saddle-stitched booklet.

You can prove this to yourself by creating a simple mock-up of an 8-page booklet. First, place one sheet of paper directly on top of another sheet. Keeping the two sheets together, fold them in half. The folded crease will form the booklet's spine.

Position the mock-up so that the booklet's spine is on your left and the open edges of the pages are on your right. Starting with the very first page, use a pen or pencil to sequentially number each page of the booklet from 1 to 8.

Now, separate the two sheets and examine them. You will see that page 8 is paired with page 1, page 2 is paired with page 7, page 6 is paired with page 3, and page 4 is paired with page 5...just like in the Printer Spreads illustration.