Valenna
Stationery Print on Demand

EDITION · OCTOBER 2026

CUSTOM NOTEBOOK PRINTING · ARTWORK GUIDE

Print-Ready Notebook Design Guide

Set up your PDF so it prints, punches and binds exactly the way you designed it.



notebook.pdf
covers + pages · one file

- One PDF, print order
- Exact page size
- 10 mm safe zone
- Bleed & crop marks
- Solid writing areas



1 PDF
per design, every page in print order

A5 · A4
148 × 210 or 210 × 297 mm, every page

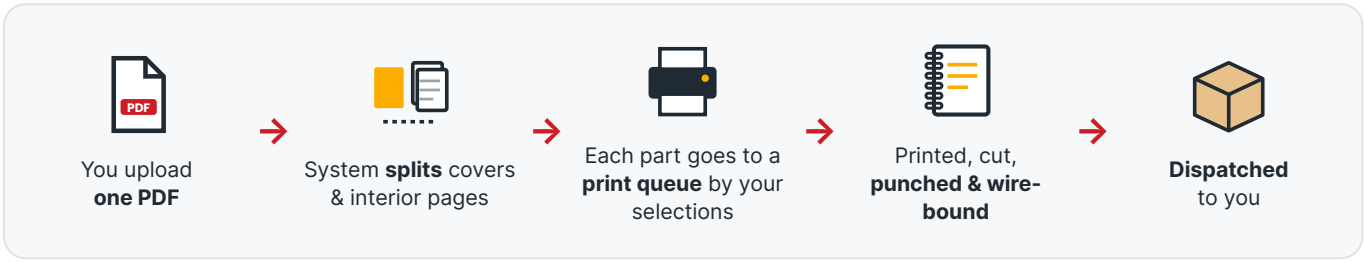
10 mm
safe zone on all four edges

0 mm
bleed, and no printer marks

For A5 & A4 wire-bound notebooks, journals, planners & diaries · valenna.co.za/product/custom-notebook-printing-services

We print exactly what you upload.

Our web-to-print system is fully automated. Your file goes straight from upload to the printers with **no human review at any stage**, so nobody checks, fixes, resizes or rearranges it.



Your selections on the product page (size, page count, cover sides, colour) tell the system how to split and print your PDF. If the file and the selections don't match, it still prints.

Mistakes print as-is
Spelling, page order, margins, page size and blank pages are printed exactly as supplied.

No file checks
No checks, no notifications, and no reprints for formatting errors. At upload you confirm you accept this.

Test with a sample
There's no minimum order. Print **one copy** first to check colour, margins, paper and page order.

In this guide

03 **Know your notebook** — Sizes, covers, paper and page limits

04 **Rule 1 · One PDF, in print order** — How your file is read, page by page

05 **Rule 2 · Covers: single or double sided** — What page 2 and the second-last page do

06 **Rule 3 · Left & right pages** — Odd, even and two-page spreads

07 **Rule 4 · One-sided pages** — Add a blank page behind them

08 **Rule 5 · Exact page size** — Every page, covers included

09 **Rule 6 · No bleed, no printer marks** — Why our covers don't need bleed

10 **Rule 7 · The 10 mm safe zone** — What must stay inside it

11–12 **Safe zone: worked examples** — Two layouts and a spread, checked

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16 **Worked example: a full notebook** — All 23 pages of one PDF, checked

17 **Exporting your PDF** — Canva, InDesign, Illustrator, Word & more

18 **Placing your order** — Match the order form to your file

19 **Final checklist** — Tick every box before you upload

How to read this guide

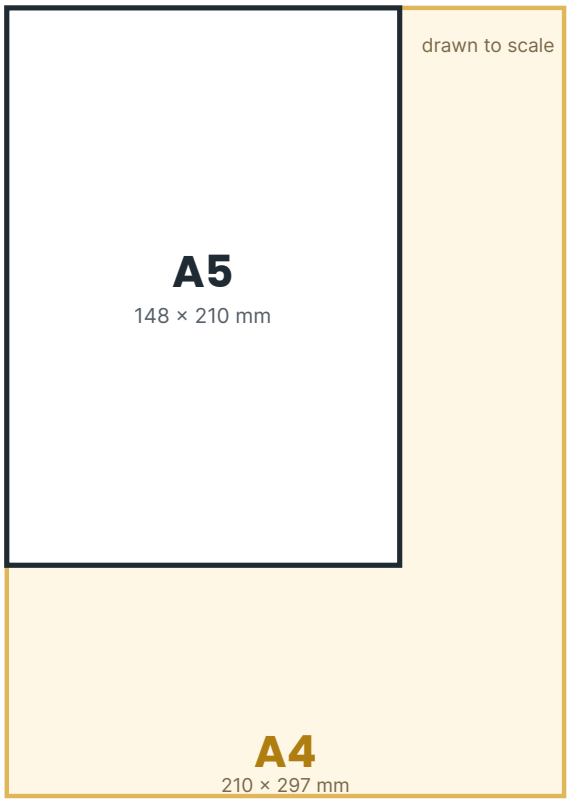
Ready to print **At risk** : fix before ordering **Will print wrong**

The rules are illustrated with pages from one example notebook PDF (23 pages, A4), built to show what works and what doesn't. The whole file is shown and checked on page 16. Shaded red borders mark the 10 mm safe zone.

Know your notebook before you design

These choices on the product page change how your file must be built. Decide them first, then design to match.

Size — build every page at this size



Need a size between A5 and A4? It's trimmed from A4 and billed at the A4 rate. Put the finished size in the **Notes** field.

Page count = printed sides



front + back of **1 sheet** = 2 pages

A 100-page notebook is **50 sheets** printed on both sides. The page count you enter covers interior pages only, not the covers.

Cover board (printed directly, never wrapped)	
Card 385gsm	Soft, flexible card. It can bend. Economical for samples and events.
Board 700gsm	Firm, similar to a counter-book cover. The only cover that takes metal corner protectors.
Hard 1200gsm	Our thickest board. Premium and doesn't bend easily.

Interior paper	
Regular 80gsm	Everyday writing. Up to **400** printed pages.
Thicker 120gsm	Premium feel, less show-through. Up to **200** printed pages.

Printing options	
Covers	**Single side** (default) or **Double sided**. This changes what page 2 does. See Rule 2.
Interior	**Full colour** or **Black & White** (B&W costs less).
Finish	Glossy or matte covers. Optional lamination for extra protection.
Wire	Black or white. Bound on the long edge unless your Notes ask for the short edge.

THE RULE

Pick size, paper and cover sides before you design.

Your page size, maximum page count and page-2 setup all depend on them.

RULE 1

One PDF per design, pages in print order

We split your file automatically, so the order of the pages in the PDF is the order they're printed and bound.

EXAMPLE: A 23-PAGE NOTEBOOK PDF, AS THE SYSTEM READS IT



Front cover	Inside front cover	Interior p.1	Interior		Interior	Last interior	Inside back cover	Back cover
outside	blank if single-sided	first right-hand page					blank if single-sided	outside
Cover	Cover	Interior pages = your "No. of Interior Pages"					Cover	Cover

Interior pages = **Total PDF pages** − **4**

Example: **23 − 4 = 19** → enter **19** in "No. of Interior Pages". The 4 cover pages stay in the file even when they're blank.

Not accepted

- Split files (covers in one PDF, pages in another)
- PNG / JPG images, one per page
- Word, CorelDRAW or other design files
- Canva share links or WeTransfer links
- Two-page spreads on one PDF page
- Several designs combined in one PDF

Do this

- **One .pdf** holding every page, covers included
- Single pages only: one PDF page = one printed page
- Keep blank pages in the file where they belong
- Different designs? A separate PDF and order item for each
- Too big to upload? Use a **Google Drive** link (see p.17)

THE RULE

One PDF. Every page. In the order it's bound.

Front cover first, back cover last, and nothing removed in between.

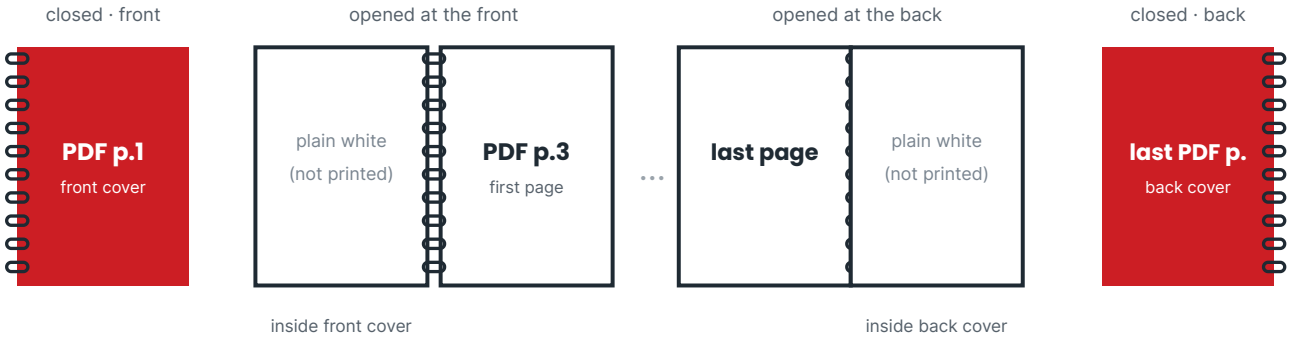
RULE 2

Covers: single-sided or double-sided?

Your PDF always starts and ends with two cover pages. The option you pick decides whether the inside of the covers is printed.

Single Side

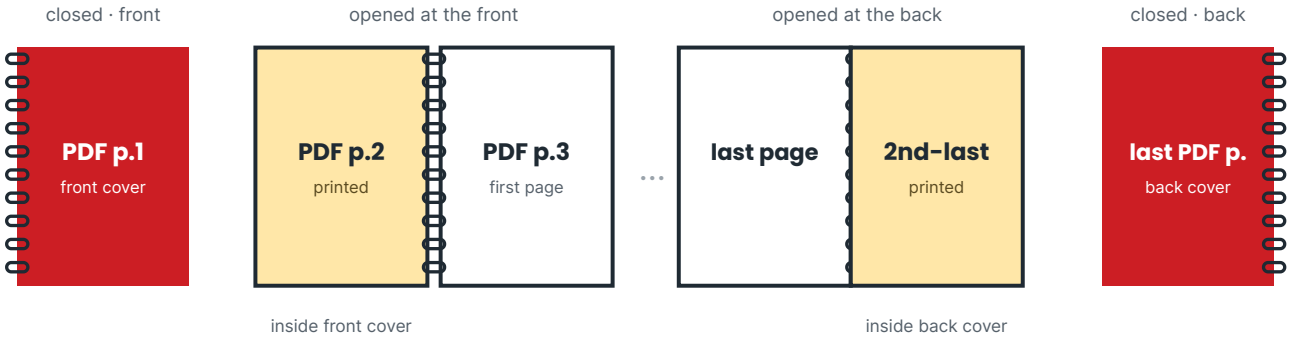
default



- Page 2 and the second-last page must be **blank pages**. They stand in for the inside covers.
- Don't put designs or background colours on them, and **don't delete them**.

Double Sided

small extra charge



- Page 2 prints on the **back of the front cover**, and the second-last page prints on the inside of the back cover.
- Both cover sides are printed directly on the board, so they follow the same size and 10 mm rules.

The most common cover mistake

Your PDF

cover | deleted | page A | page B | page C → **What gets printed (single-sided)**: cover | page A (lost (p.2)) | page B (now right) | page C (now left)

Delete the blank page 2 and your first interior page is used up as the unprinted inside cover.
Every page after it lands on the wrong side, and planner spreads split apart.

THE RULE

Always 4 cover pages: p.1, p.2, second-last, last.

Single-sided? Keep p.2 and the second-last page in the file as blank pages.

RULE 3

Even pages on the left, odd pages on the right

When the notebook lies open, the wire sits between an even page and the next odd page. Plan two-page layouts around that.

EXAMPLE: A MONTHLY PLANNER SPREAD ACROSS PDF P.8 AND P.9



PDF p.8 · **EVEN** · left

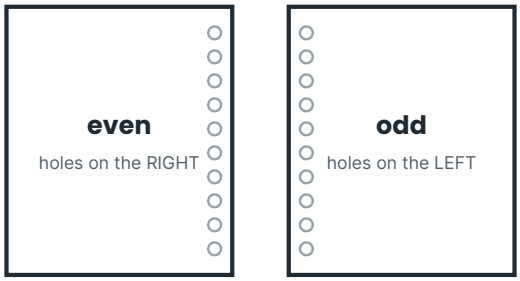
PDF p.9 · **ODD** · right

How pages pair up

inside cover	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	...	...

PDF p.3 is always the **first right-hand page**. If a spread lands on the wrong side, add one blank page before it.

The wire edge swaps sides



That's why the 10 mm safe zone applies to **all four edges** of every page (Rule 7).

THE RULE

Design single pages. Put the left half of a spread on an even page.

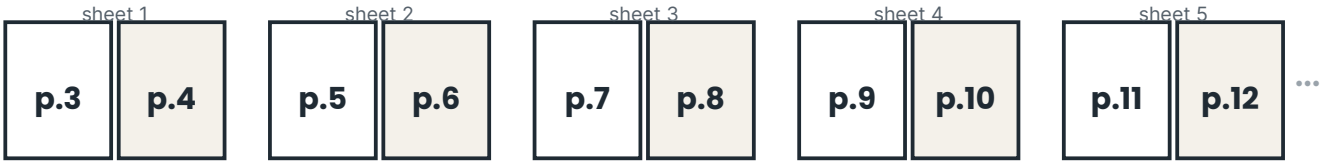
Never place two pages side by side on one PDF page.

RULE 4

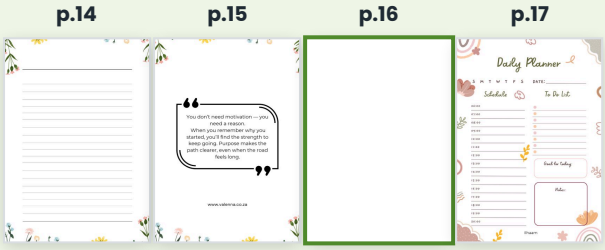
One-sided pages need a blank page behind them

Interior pages print on both sides of every sheet: an odd PDF page on the front, the next even page on the back. A side only stays empty if your PDF has a blank page there.

HOW INTERIOR PAGES SHARE SHEETS · FRONT + BACK



With a blank page added



HOW THE QUOTE SHEET PRINTS



front · quote | **back** · blank

The quote stands alone, and the planner starts cleanly on the next sheet.

Without the blank page



HOW THE QUOTE SHEET PRINTS



front · quote | **back · planner**

The planner prints on the back of the quote, and every page after it moves to the other side of the book.

Pages that are usually one-sided

- Title and dedication pages
- Section dividers and quote pages
- Pages meant to be cut out or framed

Adding a blank shifts pages

Every page after it moves one side over. Check that two-page spreads still start on an **even** page (Rule 3).

Blank pages still count

They're interior pages: include them in "No. of Interior Pages". They're priced like printed pages. An odd total leaves the back of the last sheet blank.

THE RULE

Two sides per sheet. Keep a side empty with a blank page.

RULE 5

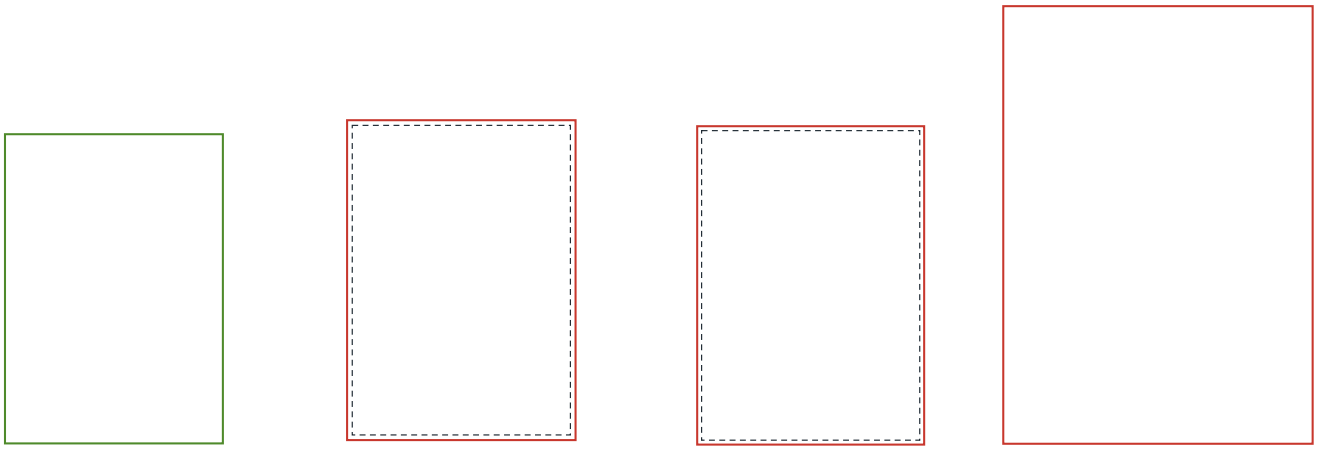
Every page matches the size you order

We print at the size supplied and don't resize. Every page in the PDF, covers included, must be exactly the finished size.

A5 **148 × 210 mm** 14.8 × 21 cm · portrait

A4 **210 × 297 mm** 21 × 29.7 cm · portrait

ORDERING A5? HERE'S WHAT EACH PAGE OF THE PDF SHOULD LOOK LIKE



✓ **148 × 210 mm**
Every page, front cover to back cover

✗ **Cover made bigger**
e.g. 155 × 217 mm "so it sits proud". We print on cut board, so it won't

✗ **Bleed added**
e.g. 154 × 216 mm. Not needed. See Rule 6

✗ **A4 / Letter pages**
Wrong size for an A5 order, and mixed sizes too

Check your page size

- **Adobe Acrobat Reader:** File › Properties › Description › *Page Size*
- **Mac Preview:** Tools › Show Inspector › *Page Size*
- Check the **first, a middle and the last** page, because mixed sizes are common when files are merged.

A4 file on an A5 order?

It is **not** scaled down to fit. The example pages in this guide are built at **210 × 297 mm**, so that notebook must be ordered as **A4**.

THE RULE

One size, every page: exactly 148 × 210 mm (A5) or 210 × 297 mm (A4).

No larger covers, no bleed allowance, no mixed sizes.

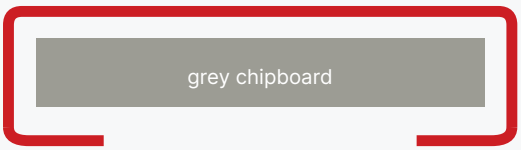
RULE 6

No bleed, no crop marks, no printer marks

Many printers ask for 3 mm bleed. We don't. Supply the page at its exact finished size, with nothing outside it.

Wrapped hard cover (elsewhere)

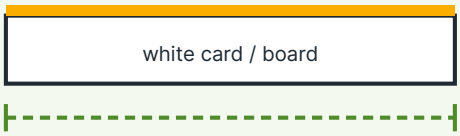
printed sheet glued on top...



...and folded round the edges, so it needs bleed

Valenna cover

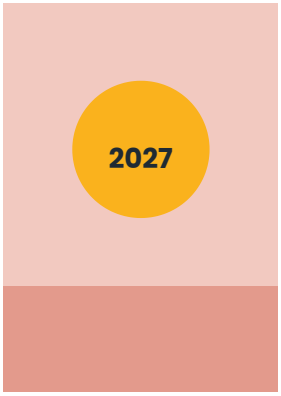
printed directly onto the board...



...cut to the finished size. Nothing to wrap.

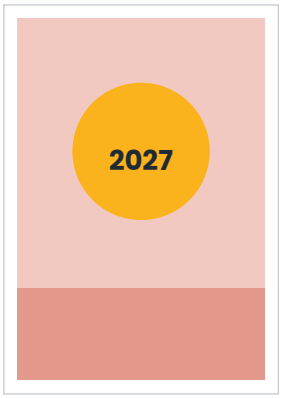
All three cover options (385, 700 and 1200gsm) are printed directly onto white board, so there's no grey edge to hide.

BACKGROUNDS: RUN THEM TO THE PAGE EDGE, NOT PAST IT



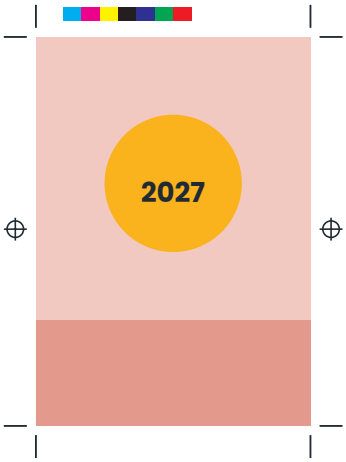
Colour fills the page

Backgrounds and decorative art run right to the edge of the 148 × 210 / 210 × 297 page.



Background stops short

A thin white frame prints around the edge. Extend the colour to the page edge.



Marks & bleed added

Crop marks, bleed, registration targets and colour bars all print on the page.

When you export

Turn **off** "crop marks and bleed", "printer's marks" and "colour bars", and set bleed to **0 mm**. There's a step-by-step for each design app on page 17.

THE RULE

Exact page size. Backgrounds to the edge. Zero bleed. Zero marks.

RULE 7

Keep important content 10 mm from every edge

Pages are cut to size and punched for the wire. Both steps have small tolerances, so anything near the edge risks being trimmed or punched through.



A5 right-hand page, actual proportions · trim edge = solid line

Keep inside the safe zone

- All text: titles, prompts, quotes
- Ruled lines, grids and dot grids
- Tables, boxes and calendars
- Dates, weekdays and page numbers
- Logos, names and QR codes
- Anything someone needs to read or write in

Allowed to reach the edge

- Background colours and textures
- Decorative illustrations (flowers, shapes)
- Patterns and photo backgrounds

...as long as nothing important depends on them, because the outer few millimetres may be trimmed or punched.

All four edges, every page

The wire edge alternates between left and right pages (Rule 3), and covers are cut and punched too.

Set up guides before you design

Add 10 mm margins or ruler guides on all four sides in your design app first: **InDesign / Affinity** margins 10 mm · **Canva** add ruler guides 10 mm in from each edge · **Word** margins 1 cm. Design inside them, and let only background art run past.

THE RULE

10 mm on all four edges, every page, covers included.

The dashed guides here are for illustration only. Don't put them in your file.

Safe zone check: same planner, two layouts

The same daily-planner page laid out two ways, shown with the 10 mm zone shaded. The second version was enlarged to “fill the page”.



Example p.17: ready to print

- Schedule, to-do list and boxes sit about **20 mm** from the edges.
- Only decorations enter the shaded zone, and they can be trimmed safely.



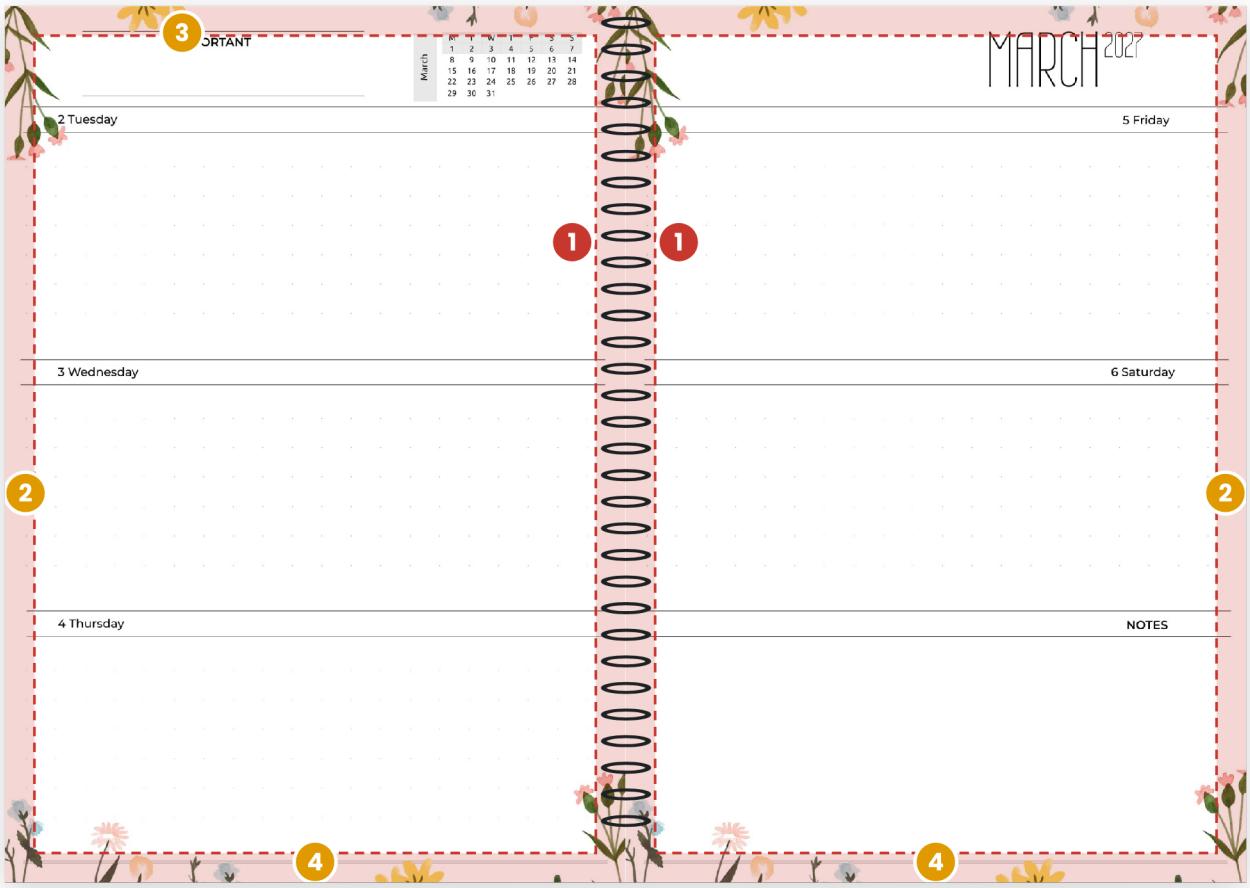
Example p.18: will be cut

1. **Bottom:** the “20:00” line and Notes box are about **1 mm** from the edge. They will be trimmed off.
2. **Right:** to-do lines and both boxes end about **7–9 mm** from the edge. This is an even (left-hand) page, so the right edge is the **wire edge**, and they’ll be punched through.
3. **Left:** the schedule column starts right on the 10 mm line, which leaves no room for error.

Fix: don’t stretch a layout to the paper edge. Scale it to fit inside the 10 mm guides, then let only background art run to the edge.

Lines that run to the edge

A weekly-planner spread (PDF p.10 and p.11). The layout is neat, but its ruled lines extend into the 10 mm zone on every side.

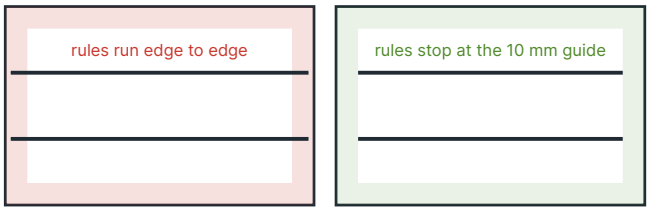


PDF p.10 · left page · wire on its **right**

PDF p.11 · right page · wire on its **left**

1. **Wire edge** ⊗: day dividers run to about **6 mm** from the binding edge, right where the holes are punched. The lines will look chopped.
2. **Outer edge** ⚠: the same lines stop about 6 mm from the outside edge, so any uneven trim shows.
3. **Top** ⚠: the "IMPORTANT" box rule and mini calendar sit about 8–9 mm from the top.
4. **Bottom** ⚠: the footer double-rule sits about **7 mm** from the bottom edge.

THE FIX



Lines are content. Start and end every rule, divider and box on the 10 mm guide. The floral corners can stay because they're decoration.

RULE 8

No solid backgrounds on writing areas

We print with toner powder, not liquid ink. Solid or heavily filled areas leave the paper glossy and slippery, and difficult to write on.



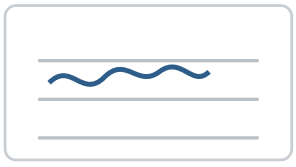
Example p.19: filled boxes

1. Grey fill behind “Goal for today”
2. Hot-pink fill behind “Notes”. This is the biggest writing area on the page, and it turns slippery.



Example p.17: outlines only

- Same layout with coloured **outlines** and white inside.
- Colour stays in headings, icons and corner art, away from where people write.



matt paper: ink grips



solid toner: glossy, pen skips

Where colour is fine

- **Covers:** full colour, solid backgrounds, photos
- Headings, small icons, borders and corner decorations
- Interior pages that nobody writes on (dividers, title pages)

THE RULE

Writing areas stay white. Use outlines, not fills.

RULE 9

Sharp images, print colours, embedded fonts

Your PDF is printed exactly as it is, so the quality has to be in the file.

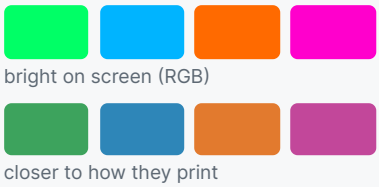
Resolution: 300 DPI



300 DPI enlarged web image

- Full-page A5 image: about **1748 × 2480 px**
- Full-page A4 image: about **2480 × 3508 px**
- Changing the DPI number doesn't add detail. Start from a large original.
- Logos: use a vector file (SVG, AI or PDF) where you can.

Colour: CMYK



bright on screen (RGB)

closer to how they print

- Export in **CMYK** where your software allows it.
- Neon and very bright RGB colours print duller.
- The same colour can look slightly different on cover board and on interior paper.
- Brand-critical colour? Order **one sample** first.

Fonts & effects

Your font embedded ✓

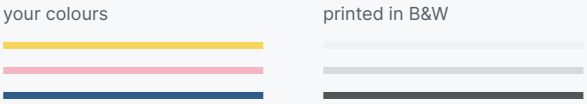
`Your font` missing → swapped ×

- **Embed all fonts** or convert text to outlines when you export.
- **Flatten** transparency, shadows and effects.
- Keep an editable copy for yourself. Send only the flattened PDF.

"Will converting 300+ pages to PDF lose quality?"

Not if you export at **high or print quality** with images at 300 DPI. A PDF keeps the quality of your page images, and it's the only format our system can split and print. If your pages are PNG or JPG files, place each one at 100 % on a correctly sized page and export them all as **one** PDF.

Ordering a Black & White interior?



Colours print as shades of grey. Pale yellows, pinks and light greys can fade to almost nothing, so check that lines and text still show up in greyscale.

THE RULE

300 DPI images · CMYK · fonts embedded · effects flattened.

RULE 10

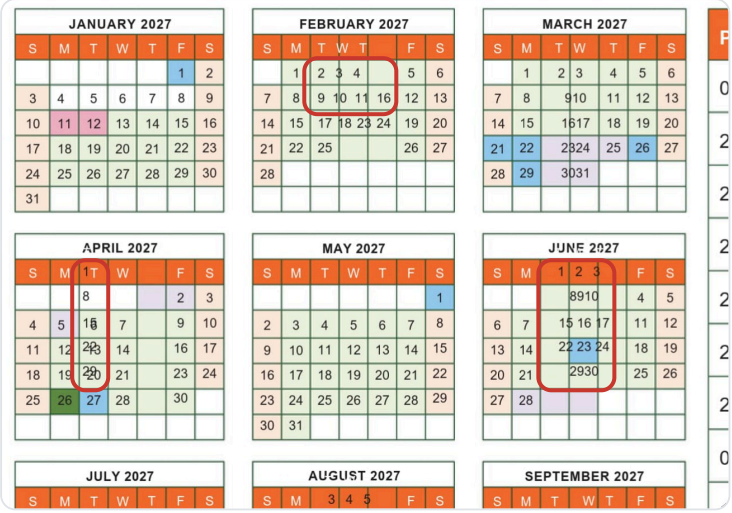
Proofread the exported PDF, not your design file

Exporting can shift text, swap fonts or reflow tables. Whatever is in the final PDF is what gets printed.



⚠ Example p.4 · year calendar

"27" has wrapped onto two lines in September. It will print exactly like this.



✕ Example p.6 · holiday calendar

Dates overlap and drift out of their cells ("8910" in June, stacked dates in April). The page will print exactly like this.

Read every page for…

- [ ] Spelling, names and contact details
- [ ] Dates and weekdays that match the year
- [ ] Text that wraps, overflows or overlaps
- [ ] Page numbers and running headers
- [ ] Nothing missing: check text and images, including white text on dark backgrounds

…then check the whole file

- [ ] Page order from p.1 to the last page
- [ ] Blank pages only where you want them
- [ ] Orientation: no sideways or upside-down pages
- [ ] Spreads land on even | odd (Rule 3)
- [ ] A blank page behind every one-sided page (Rule 4)
- [ ] Total pages − 4 = the page count you'll order

Tip: open the exported PDF, zoom to 100 % or more, and page through it on a big screen. For a new design, print one copy before you order a large run.

Worked example: one notebook PDF, checked

Every page of the 23-page example notebook used in this guide, checked against the rules. Run the same check on your own file before you upload.

Ready · At risk: fix before ordering · Will print wrong



What's right

- One A4 PDF, 23 pages, in print order
- p.2 and p.22 blank for single-sided covers
- p.16 blank, so the quote on p.15 is one-sided
- Spreads land even | odd (p.8–9, p.10–11)
- Decorations run to the edges

Fix before ordering

- p.10–13: pull ruled lines in to 10 mm
- p.4: fix the wrapped date

Must fix

- p.6: rebuild the holiday calendar
- p.18: shrink the layout inside 10 mm
- p.19: remove the solid box fills

How this file is ordered: Size **A4** · No. of Interior Pages **19** (23 − 4) · Covers **Single Side** · Interior **Full Colour**

Exporting your PDF, app by app

Set the page size before you start designing. When you export, choose print quality, no marks and no bleed. Menu names can vary a little between versions.

Canva

1. Create the design with **Custom size** in **mm**: 148 × 210 (A5) or 210 × 297 (A4)
2. **Share › Download**
3. File type: **PDF Print**
4. Leave **"Crop marks and bleed"** unticked
5. Select **all pages** › Download

Upload the downloaded PDF. Canva share links aren't accepted.

Adobe InDesign

1. New document: A5 or A4, any number of pages (facing pages is fine)
2. **File › Export › Adobe PDF (Print)**
3. General: choose **Pages**, **not Spreads**
4. Marks and Bleeds: untick all marks and set bleed to **0 mm**
5. Output: convert to CMYK if your workflow allows

Adobe Illustrator

1. One **artboard per page**, each exactly A5 or A4, in print order
2. **File › Save As › Adobe PDF**
3. Marks and Bleeds: no marks, bleed **0 mm**
4. Check all artboards are included

Affinity / CorelDRAW

1. Page size A5 or A4 for every page
2. Export / **Publish to PDF** at print or press quality
3. Turn off crop marks, registration marks and bleed
4. Export **all pages** into one file

Send the PDF only. CorelDRAW (.cdr) files can't be printed.

Microsoft Word

1. **Layout › Size › More Paper Sizes**: 14.8 × 21 cm (A5) or 21 × 29.7 cm (A4)
2. Keep text inside 1 cm margins
3. **File › Save As › PDF**
4. Open the PDF and check the page size

Upload the PDF only. Word files aren't accepted.

Pages saved as images

1. Make each PNG/JPG at the exact page size, 300 DPI
2. Place them in order in a PDF tool or design app at 100 %
3. Export **one** PDF with every page, covers included
4. Check nothing was scaled or cropped

File too big to upload?

Upload the PDF to **Google Drive**, set General access to **"Anyone with the link"** (public), and paste the link into the order's **Notes** field. Google Drive is the only link we accept. WeTransfer, OneDrive and Canva links aren't accepted. Use the same method if you have several designs.

EXPORT SETTINGS AT A GLANCE

Format PDF at print / high quality	**Pages** Single pages, **not spreads**; all pages in one file	**Page size** Exactly A5 or A4, every page
Bleed **0 mm**	**Marks** None: no crop, bleed or registration marks, no colour bars	**Images** 300 DPI at final size
Colour CMYK where available	**Fonts** Embedded (or text converted to outlines)	**Effects** Transparency, shadows and effects flattened

Placing your order: match the form to your file

The choices you make here tell our system how to split and print your PDF. Each one has to agree with the file you upload.

1 Size

A5 | A4

Must equal the page size of **every** page in your PDF (Rule 5).

2 Cover thickness · Finish · Paper thickness

Card 385gsm | Board 700gsm | Hard 1200gsm | Glossy | Matte | 80gsm | 120gsm

Paper sets the maximum page count: **400** (80gsm) or **200** (120gsm).

3 No. of Interior Pages

19 Total printed sides

Total PDF pages – 4. Don't include the 4 cover pages. Blank interior pages count.

4 Your Notebook (.pdf)

Choose File one PDF per design

Too large? Leave this empty and put a public **Google Drive** link in Notes (step 8).

5 Covers: Back-to-Back or Single Side

Single Side | Double Sided

Single: p.2 and the second-last page are **blank**. Double: they print on the inside covers (Rule 2).

6 Interior pages: Color or B&W

Full Color | Black & White

Interior pages are the pages people write on. B&W costs less.

7 Wire binding colour

Black | White

Choose to suit your cover design.

8 Notes

Drive link · finished trim size · bind on short edge...

For anything special: Google Drive link, a custom trim size, or short-edge binding.

9 Important design requirements

☑ 10 mm edge margin ☑ No cut / bleed marks ☑ Page size matches ☑ Single PDF ☑ Drive links only ☑ No solid backgrounds ☑ Printed as uploaded

You must confirm all 7 before **Add to cart**. Ticking them means you accept the file will be printed as-is.

Bulk discounts

The price drops automatically from 15 copies, with bigger savings at 25, 60 and 100+. The exact price shows once all options are selected.

Spotted a mistake after ordering?

Contact us straight away with your order number and corrected PDF. A file can only be replaced if the order hasn't gone too far into production.

Final check before you upload

Print this page or keep it open next to your PDF. If every box is ticked, your file is print-ready.

The file

- [ ] One PDF for this design, nothing else (no images, Word, Corel or links)
- [ ] Single pages, not spreads
- [ ] Pages in print order: front cover › inside front › interior › inside back › back cover

Size & margins

- [ ] Every page exactly 148 × 210 mm (A5) or 210 × 297 mm (A4), covers included
- [ ] No bleed added, no crop, bleed or registration marks, no colour bars
- [ ] Text, lines, tables, logos and dates at least 10 mm from every edge
- [ ] Backgrounds run right to the page edge, with no white frame

Covers & pages

- [ ] Single-sided covers: p.2 and the second-last page are blank
- [ ] Double-sided covers: p.2 and the second-last page hold the inside-cover designs
- [ ] Two-page spreads start on an even page
- [ ] A blank page follows every page that must be one-sided
- [ ] Interior page count (total − 4) is within 400 (80gsm) or 200 (120gsm)

Artwork

- [ ] Writing areas are white: outlines, not solid fills
- [ ] Images 300 DPI at print size, CMYK where possible
- [ ] Fonts embedded or outlined, effects flattened
- [ ] Exported PDF proofread page by page at 100 % zoom

Order form

- [ ] Size on the order matches the PDF
- [ ] No. of Interior Pages = total PDF pages − 4
- [ ] Cover option (single / double) matches how p.2 is set up
- [ ] Large file? Public Google Drive link pasted in Notes

REMEMBER

Your file is printed exactly as uploaded.

No file checks, no notifications, no reprints for formatting errors. Not sure about a design? Print one copy first.

Valenna
Stationery Print on Demand

Questions before you order?

We can explain any of the rules in this guide before you upload. We print files as supplied and don't offer a design or file-correction service, so we can't check or fix your file for you.

EMAIL	**support@valenna.co.za**
WHATSAPP	**061 500 4106**
ORDER ONLINE	**valenna.co.za/product/custom-notebook-printing-services**

Include your size, page count, cover choice and quantity so we can answer in one reply.



