

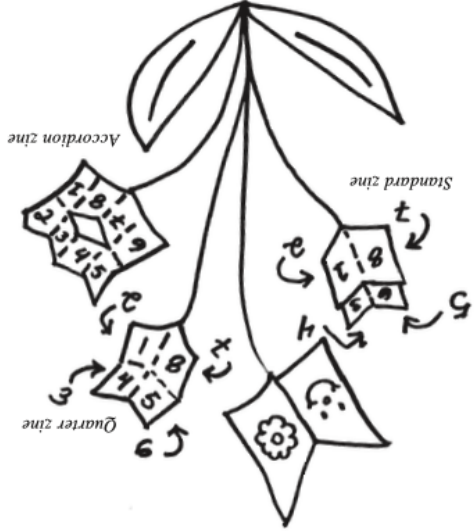
How to plan a zine project

introduction

A zine is an independently made publication that follows a do-it-yourself philosophy emphasizing expression and connection over exploitation and alienation. Zines have no strict rules or aesthetics, and can feature a variety of content, from radical political writings and personal stories to experimental art.

Sometimes it's hard to get a zine project started. The best way to make a zine is to simply start one! This zine guides you through what to consider when starting a zine by splitting it into eight manageable sections: concept, distribution, aesthetics, content, sources, format, materials, and budget.

Compiled by Neta Bomani in collaboration with Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines at the Brooklyn Museum from November 17, 2023 to March 31, 2024.



Concept

AUDIENCE

Who are you making the zine for? What communities are important to you?

STYLE & TONE

How do you want to affect your audience? What jargon or colloquialisms do you want to use or avoid? What feelings do you want to express? Does it make sense to use your sense of humor to express yourself? What politics are important to you? Are you protesting something or someone?

distribution

COPIES

How many copies of your zine do you want to distribute? Zine print runs can start as low as 10 copies and go as high as 1000 copies. Pick a number that is sustainable for you. Save documents so you have the option to print more copies as needed.

ACCESSIBILITY

How do you want to make your zine accessible to other people? Where can people find your zine? Do you want to make an analog zine, digital zine, or both?

Analog options: postal mail, book stores, distros, libraries, community centers, zine fairs, shows, etc.

Digital options: e-mail, PDF file, web zine, video zine, digital zine (formatted for platforms like Substack, Issuu or itch.io)

aesthetics

While zines have no strict rules or aesthetics, they are still a visual medium that requires intentional thought and planning to make them artful and tasteful by your own standards.

TEXT

How do you want to generate text? Handwritten or illustrated, screen printed, letterpressed, stenciled, typewritten, cut-and-pasted, text generated from word editing software, or perhaps programmatically or procedurally generated... or maybe there's no text at all, only graphics.

GRAPHICS

Original or found photography, artwork, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, collage, stencils, silhouettes, or other appropriated ephemera...

LAYOUT

Do you want your zine to be well-organized with hierarchy or subversive and chaotic? Color schemes, fonts, lines, and spatial organization can help you achieve your goals.

Content

Zines can be about anything and feature a variety of content. Here's an expansive (not exhaustive) and chronological list of things to consider for zine content:

- * Title
- * Front and back cover
- * Table of contents
- * Introduction

Go to: anyzine.com. If the link is unavailable, find it on the Wayback Machine at archive.org/web.

Most zines are bound together with staples, thread

BINDING MATERIALS, FASTENERS & ADHESIVES

paper trimmer, blade or utility knife, scissors, ruler, and/or heavy-duty

Most zine projects involve cutting paper and other materials down to size. You'll need a cutting mat, snap-off

CUTTING INSTRUMENTS

recycled paper, patterned paper, wash tape, stickers, glitter, etc.

How can you add some extra flair or decoration to your zine project? Try photographs, magazines, newspapers,

EMBELLISHMENTS

Produce writing, marks and textures with markers, crayons, pencils, fountain pens, (archival) ink, stamps,

MARKING INSTRUMENTS

There are many ways to make prints: photocopier, scanner, risograph, mimeograph, stencil duplicator,

PRINTMAKING

Free: Scribus, Spectroile, Electric Zine Maker, Amy Zine

Microsoft Publisher

- * Author bio(s), letter to readers
- * Advice columns
- * Comic strips
- * How-tos or tutorials
- * Essays or articles
- * Fan fiction
- * Interviews
- * Journal/diary entries or rants
- * Manifestos or political ideologies
- * Poetry
- * Recipes
- * Reviews (zine, book, film, music, etc.)
- * Short stories or narratives
- * Contact information (unless you want to remain anonymous)
- * Credits, acknowledgments, works cited, or bibliography
- * (Anti-)copyright statement

SOURCES

Do you need to do research to make the content for your zine? Are you going to appropriate texts and images following a cut-and-paste method? Or are you going to follow copyright guidelines? Think especially critically about this decision. Appropriating texts and images from a commercial source with significant funding and support isn't the same as appropriating images from an underground or independent source.

BINDING

Thread, staples, hole punch — almost anything can be used to bind paper together! How can you think creatively about binding? Alternative-

publishing software available:

of software to lay out your zine. Below are examples of main reference zine and its copies, you'll need the help and scanning and/or photocopying it to produce the

Unless you plan on making your entire zine by hand

SOFTWARE

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Most printers require PDF print files with high-resolution images and text (300 DPI) formatted in CMYK or

grayscale color. Check with the printer if there are other specific formatting requirements.

DIGITAL FORMATTING

Most if not all zines involve some amount of laying out content in addition to cutting, collating, folding, and

binding paper. Add something extra to your zine with inserts, origami constructions, pop-ups, or pockets.

CONSTRUCTION

marbling and other printmaking techniques.

paper or adding textures on top of plain paper through

tures — or take it to the next level by making your own page. Try different types, colors, weights, and texture

difference in how even the most common inks sit on paper really shine! A good paper source can make a real

Paper is a key area where experimentation and variation really shine!

Which free or low-cost resources do you have access to? Which discounts (student, teacher, artist, low-income, etc.) apply to you? Local print/copy shops are usually cheaper than commercial places.

Format

Three common zine sizes:

* Standard: 5.5 x 8.5 in (half the size of letter-size paper)

* Quarter: 4.25 x 5.5 in (a letter-size paper folded into four sections)

* Accordion: 2.5 in x 4.25 in (a letter-size paper folded into eight sections with a cut in the middle two pages)

budget

You can also try other binding materials: tape, double sided tape, prong fasteners, binder rings, round head fasteners or brads, rubber bands, paper clips, binder

clips, velcro, pipe cleaners, screws, etc.

What constraints do you have? How much total money do you have to spend? How much do you need to sell the zine to cover the costs of making it? Generally, the

sale price should be double the unit price (the cost to produce one zine) inclusive of labor, materials, or shipping costs.

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