

The Anatomy of a Book

2. Activity



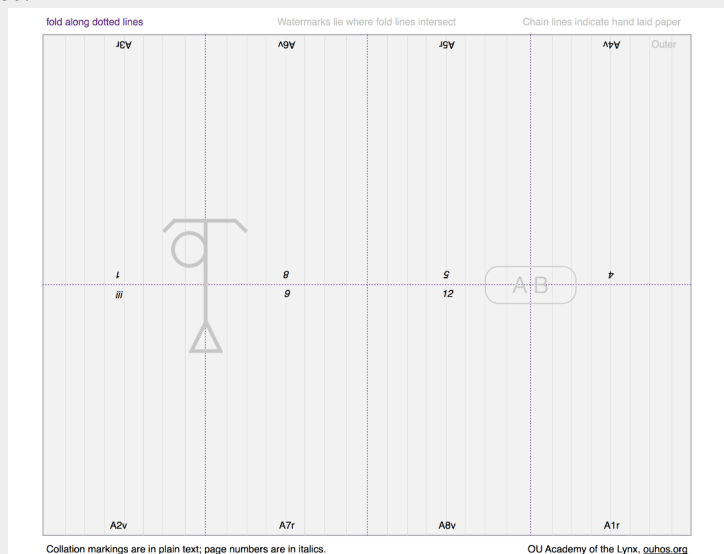
Scenario:

You are applying for a job at the printer's workshop. Your first job will be to fold sheets of *laid paper* as they come off the printing press. After you fold them, they will comprise a *gathering*, and be ready for the binder to sew together in proper sequence to make the *text block*. Follow these steps:

Obtain the *Anatomy of a Book handout*, which represents an original *sheet* of printed paper. Type for printing text and woodblocks for printing illustrations are omitted for clarity. Examine how this sheet will be folded along the purple dotted fold lines. *Watermarks* lie where some of the fold lines intersect. *Chain lines* run parallel to the short side of the original printed sheet.

- How many *leaves* will this sheet make?
- How many *pages*?
- Is this sheet for a book of *octavo* format?
- Do the *chain lines* run horizontally or vertically on each printed page?

Examine the key terms explained in the *Anatomy of a Book Introduction*.



Anatomy of a Book handout

In the 1545 Sacrobosco on display, pages are missing from the front matter. Other books have misnumbered pages. Others have page numbers that are missing or that restart from 1 in different sections. To sort all of this out, it helps to have a little understanding of the anatomy of an early book.



Sacrobosco, *De sphaera* (Wittenberg, 1545))

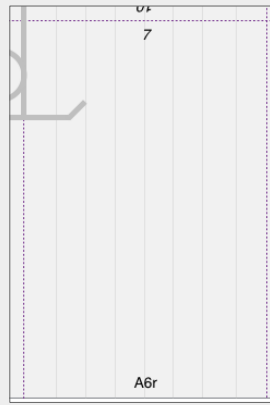
1. Examine the collation marks (“A6r”) which specify the gathering, leaf and side of any page.

Gathering: In this example, “A” represents the gathering.

Leaf: Within the A gathering, leaves are numbered from 1 to 8.

Side: The front side of each leaf is the “**recto**” page (r). The back side is the “**verso**” page (v).

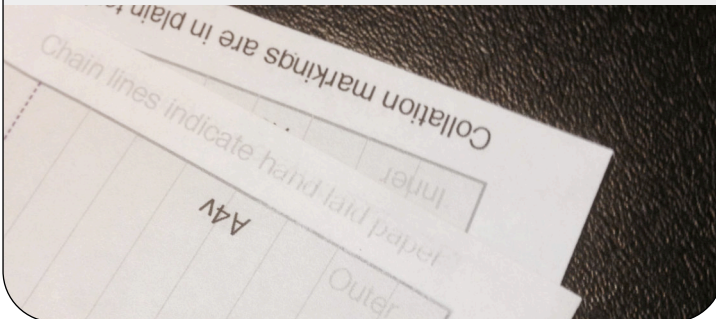
Once the sheet is folded, **A1r** will be at the front. **A8v** will be the last page. **A3v** will become the back side of the 3rd leaf of the A gathering, and so on.



Examine your “book”:

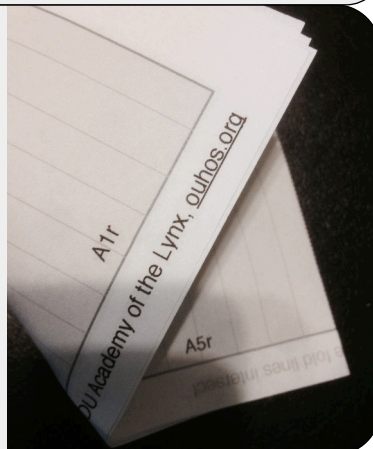
- How many times did this sheet need to be folded to make the A gathering of the book?
- When this gathering is sewn into the book, will the pages need to be trimmed on the top or on the bottom?
- Will some of the pages need to be trimmed on the fore edge of the text block?
- Will the watermarks be easy to identify in the bound book?
- Are the collation marks in order?
- Are the page numbers (shown in italics) in order?
- Does every page in this gathering have a page number?
- Why might collation marks be a more reliable indicator of the original anatomy of a book than page numbers?

2. Fold the paper along the purple dotted lines. For the initial fold, make the corner marked “Inner” fall on the inside, and the corner marked “Outer” fall on the outside.



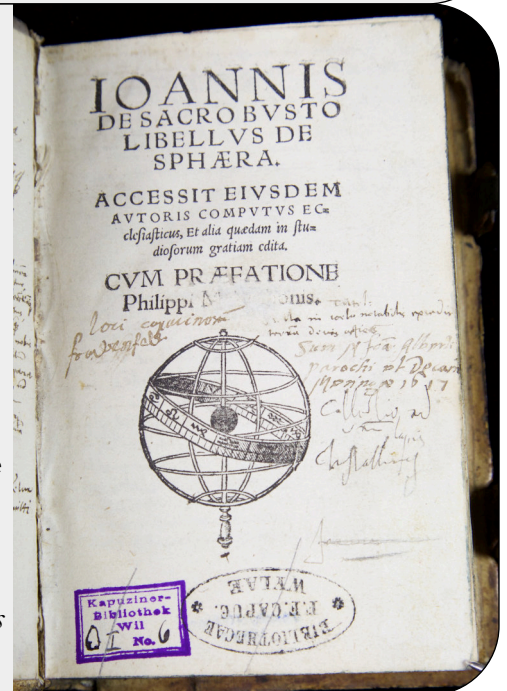
3. For the next folds, keep the “A1r” page in view so that it will end up as the first page of the gathering.

4. For the final fold, “A8v” should be the last page.



How many missing?

The Preface for this Sacrobosco has been torn out in its entirety. The first leaf of the A gathering remains. The next intact page is the first leaf of the B gathering. *How many pages are missing?*



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