

A 1900S KINDERGARTEN SKILL

Believe it or not, this modern-looking bookmark (see right) is the result of a paper-folding course taught in kindergarten around 1900. It was likely made by Miss Elsie May Doescher of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who proudly displayed it in a “mounting book” filled with her other classroom artwork: elaborate paper weavings, intricate sewing and pin-pricking designs, and examples of precise paper folding. The skills learned from such courses were based on the goals and philosophy of German educator Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852), creator of the revolutionary educational program called kindergarten. Starting in the 1830s, Fröbel introduced a system of teaching art, design, mathematics, and natural history to young children, using these kinds of creative visual materials.

Now, let’s see how sharp your kindergarten skills are! Can you make a similar awesome-looking bookmark using the two patterns below that are based on designs found at The Huntington?

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cut out the paper strips. Glue parts A to A, B to B and C to C. This will become the piece you will weave and fold around your bookmark.
2. Here’s the hard part. Fold the red dotted lines into “mountain folds” and the blue dotted lines into “valley folds.” You are creating the points and weaves in the example on the right. Use the edges of the strip to help you line up your folds. The edges should touch.
3. Now it’s time to weave the bookmark piece into your folded strip. Place the top edges of the bookmark over the folded strip. Wrap the strip around the bookmark, twisting the paper around as needed.

