Over recent decades, scrapbooks have become very popular as a creative way to display photographs and a fun hobby. But long before craft stores were selling pretty papers and silly stickers, scrapbooks were used as a way of organizing important information and recording memories and personal experiences.

In the 15th century, people were in the habit of carrying commonplace books with them. Commonplace books were blank books that could be filled with bits of knowledge and information such as units of measurement, prayers and scripture, poems, quotes, and even recipes. Scholars and writers often used them as a means of remembering important details and information. Since commonplace books were filled with blank pages, each book was unique to its owner, holding their particular interests and thoughts.

This practice was carried on through the years and in the 19th century we see the first recorded use of the word scrapbook. The 19th century saw the development of photography and the introduction of mass-produced printed materials, such as business trade cards. Soon people began including these paper objects to their poems and recipes along with other “scraps” of memories. Eventually, in the mid-1800s leather bound “scrapbooks” were being sold containing spaces for photographs and designated pages for watercolors and drawings.
Why Make a Scrapbook?

Scrapbooks are a way of preserving memories and detailing experiences. It’s almost like creating a small museum exhibit that you can carry in a book! It’s a collection of items that tell a story — even if that story is simply things that you like or memories of a vacation. When someone looks at a scrapbook, they get an idea of what life was like for the person who created it, what they were seeing, what they were thinking or feeling.
Let’s Make a Covid-19 Scrapbook!

Make a scrapbook of your experience during the Covid-19 stay-at-home orders. Not only creating memories, but preserving history. By collecting small bits of your experience, future generations will be able to learn and understand what this time was like for us.

What you need:

- a “scrapbook” – this can be anything you have on hand, a notebook, journal, you can make the pages individually and collect them later in a binder. You can even use an old book that has already been used (maybe a filled coloring book, or an old notebook, even a magazine!)
- paper
- adhesive (tape, glue)
- pens, markers, crayons
- “scraps” - Scrapbooks are a mix of things — images, words, articles cut from newspapers or magazines, even candy wrappers, leaves, and stickers — so most of the materials that end up in your scrapbook will be completely up to you!

But here are a few suggestions:
- photographs
- poems
- song lyrics
- drawings
- stickers
- something you received in the mail
- pressed leaves/flowers
- take-out menus
- coloring pages

Need help getting started?

Here are instructions to make the first page of your Covid Chronicles scrapbook!

Materials:
- scrapbook
- 2 or 3 Sheets of Paper (colored cardstock or construction paper)
- writing utensil (pens, crayons, markers)
- tape or glue
- scissors
- paper item of your choice
Instructions:

1. Cut one sheet of paper into strips. If you have two different color papers, you can cut one strip from each.

2. Write “My Covid” on one strip and “Chronicles” on another. Make sure the words will fit on your scrapbook page. Trim any extra ends and set aside.

3. On another sheet of paper draw a picture of yourself. Cut out your drawing and set it aside with the paper strips.

4. Take your paper item, strips, and drawing and arrange them on the first page of your scrapbook. Make sure everything fits on the page and is organized the way you like it.

5. Glue or tape everything to the scrapbook page.

6. Write your name and the date somewhere on the page so that future historians know who it belonged to!

* For my paper item I chose palm trees printed in a clothing ad I received in the mail. The trees made me think of a tropical vacation spot rather than staying home all the time. I also thought they made a nice background.

Remember, scrapbooks are meant to preserve your memories and experiences. Just as every day is a little different, each page of your scrapbook will look different too! So don’t forget to add to your scrapbook regularly in order to document your time while staying home and staying safe.