
Publication Design ②

Making a Signature

What is a signature?

When a document comes off a web press (a press that prints from a roll) it is usually folded into a 16-page signature. (Larger documents are often multiples of 16 pages.) When the edges are trimmed off and the spine is stapled, you are left with a 16 page book.

Make a signature

1. Fold an 11x17 sheet from left to right.
2. Fold the top down
3. Fold in half from left to right again.
4. Number the pages from one to sixteen. You will have to “sneak” inside some of the folds to get a page number on all 16 surfaces.
5. Open the dummy. Label the front side A and the back side B.
6. Create a 16-page signature in InDesign. Make a two-page, 11x17 document. On the master page, separate the 11x17 area into eight equal “pages”. Allow room for bleed.
7. Following your dummy, label the front cover, back cover and inside-front cover and inside-back cover. Populate each “page” with the text from the “Signature Lesson” folder from the server. Some of the pages will need to be rotated 180°.
8. Print the signature front-and-back on one 11x17 sheet of paper.
9. Fold the printout following the dummy.
10. Staple the spine.
11. Trim 0.25 inches off the top, bottom and outside edges.
12. Page through it to see if the pages are all in order.

This is how a 16 page book is made on a web press, except the press goes through all the pain for you. But now your life will be richer because you know how it works.

