# print like a pro

Everything you need to turn a PDF into something worth sticking on the fridge, fighting over at game night, or framing in the hallway. *Keep this guide next to your printer. It gets lonely.*

## the 5-minute quick start ✦

1. **Unzip first.** Bundles arrive as a .zip. On a phone, open the Files app and tap it to unzip.
2. **Pick your size.** US Letter for the US, Canada and Mexico. A4 for everywhere else.
3. **Open it in a real PDF app** (Adobe Acrobat Reader, Preview, or your phone's Files app), not a browser tab.
4. **Print at 100% / Actual size**, with borderless off.
5. **Print one test page** before the whole stack. Yes, every time.

## which file do i pick?

**US Letter** is 8.5 × 11 in (216 × 279 mm).
**A4** is 210 × 297 mm (8.27 × 11.69 in).

Match the PDF to the paper in your tray. Only have the other size? Choose **Fit to page** instead of Actual size. It shrinks things by about 3%, which nobody on earth will notice.

**The golden rule:** print one page, check it, then print the rest. One test sheet saves a stack of cardstock, a lot of ink, and at least one dramatic sigh.

## in this guide ♥


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print · color · play · repeat



FREE GUIDE · FOR PERSONAL USE · PRINT AS MANY COPIES AS YOUR HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

# paper cheat sheet

The right paper does most of the work. Here is what to load for every kind of Pencil Riot printable.

| YOU'RE PRINTING | BEST PAPER | US WEIGHT | METRIC | FINISH |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Coloring pages** (pencils, gel pens) | Bright white premium paper or light cardstock | 32 – 65 lb | 120 – 176 gsm | Smooth matte |
| **Coloring pages** (markers) | Smooth heavy cardstock, one side only | 80 – 110 lb | 216 – 300 gsm | Smooth matte |
| **Puzzle pages** (word search, mazes, logic) | Everyday copy paper is totally fine | 20 – 24 lb | 75 – 90 gsm | Matte |
| **Game play sheets + score pads** | Copy or premium paper, or laminate one for keeps | 20 – 32 lb | 75 – 120 gsm | Matte |
| **Game boards, cards + rule sheets** | Cardstock, then laminate | 65 – 80 lb | 176 – 216 gsm | Matte |
| **Paper dice, tokens, tent cards** | Heavy cardstock | 100 – 110 lb | 270 – 300 gsm | Matte |
| **Party kit invites + name tags** | Cardstock | 80 – 110 lb | 216 – 300 gsm | Matte, or satin for a pop |
| **Mystery booklets + escape room clues** | Premium paper (clue cards on cardstock) | 28 – 80 lb | 105 – 216 gsm | Matte |

## paper weight decoder

US paper uses two different scales, which is why "65 lb" cardstock is heavier than "32 lb" paper. (We didn't make the rules.) Grams per square meter (gsm) is the honest number, so check it on the pack.

- **75 – 90 gsm** everyday copy paper
- **100 – 120 gsm** premium "presentation" paper
- **176 gsm** light cardstock (65 lb cover)
- **216 gsm** medium cardstock (80 lb cover)
- **270 – 300 gsm** heavy cardstock (100 – 110 lb cover)

## the starter stash

Buy only three packs and you can print every product in the shop:

- [ ] Bright white premium paper, ~120 gsm
- [ ] Smooth white cardstock, ~216 gsm (80 lb)
- [ ] Heavy white cardstock, ~270 gsm (100 lb)

**Check your printer's limit.** Search your model plus "max paper weight". Most home inkjets take light cardstock in the main tray and heavier stock one sheet at a time through the rear or manual feed.

# printer settings

Every printable already has safe margins built in, so the default "make it fit" tricks usually do more harm than good. Here is what to click.

| SETTING | CHOOSE | WHY |
|---|---|---|
| **Scale** | 100% / Actual size | Keeps cards, dice and cut lines at their true size. Use Fit to page only when the PDF and paper sizes don't match. |
| **Paper size** | Letter or A4, matching the tray | A mismatch is the #1 cause of cut-off edges. |
| **Borderless** | Off | Borderless zooms the page slightly and trims the edges. |
| **Paper type** | Matte / Cardstock / Heavy paper | Tells the printer to slow down and lay down less ink, so heavy paper doesn't smear. |
| **Quality** | High / Best for party kits and gifts. Standard for practice runs | Slower and thirstier, but the pinks look rich instead of streaky. |
| **Color** | Grayscale / Black ink only for coloring and puzzle pages | The line art is a single dark color, so you save your color cartridge for the fun stuff. |
| **Pages** | Type a range, like 3-5, 9 | Print just the pages you need tonight. |
| **Two-sided** | Flip on long edge (portrait pages) | See page 4 for booklets and puzzle books. |

### WINDOWS

Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat Reader and press **Ctrl + P**. Under Page Size & Handling choose **Actual size**. Click **Properties** for paper type, quality and color.

### MAC

Open it in Preview, press **⌘ + P**, then **Show Details**. Set Scale to 100%. Open the **Media & Quality** dropdown for paper type and quality.

### IPHONE + IPAD

Open the PDF in the Files app, tap **Share**, then **Print**. Choose your printer, paper size and page range. Tap **Options** for black & white or two-sided if your printer offers them.

### ANDROID

Open the PDF in Files or Drive, tap ⋮ then **Print**. Tap the down arrow to set paper size, color, two-sided and pages. You may need your printer brand's free print plugin.

# double-sided + booklets

Puzzle books, rule booklets and mystery character packets feel like the real deal when they are printed on both sides. Three ways to pull it off:

EASIEST

## automatic two-sided

If your printer has a duplex setting, choose **Two-sided, Flip on long edge**. Done. Go make a snack.

Long edge is for portrait pages. Short edge is for landscape pages.

A LITTLE FIDDLY

## manual two-sided

1. Print odd pages only.
2. Put the stack back in the tray. Most trays want it printed side up, top edge in first.
3. Print even pages, often with "reverse order" on.

PRO MOVE

## booklet mode

Acrobat Reader's **Booklet** option puts two pages side by side on each sheet, in order. Fold the stack in half and staple the spine for an adorable half-size puzzle book. Best for 8 to 32 pages.

## test before you commit

Print the duplex test on page 12 first. If the back comes out upside down, switch between long edge and short edge. If it lands on the wrong side, flip the stack over in the tray.

Draw a tiny pencil arrow on the top edge of your stack before you reload it. Future you will send a thank-you card.

## when to print one side only

- Coloring pages for markers (they bleed through)
- Anything you'll cut out: cards, tokens, paper dice, name tags
- Game boards and pages you'll laminate or frame
- Escape room clues that get hidden around the room

**Puzzle book recipe:** print the cover on cardstock, the inside pages double-sided on 90 – 120 gsm paper, and a plain cardstock back. Bind it (page 8) and you have a puzzle book that survives road trips, waiting rooms and very long meetings.

# color without the bleed

Every coloring tool behaves differently on printed paper. Match the paper to the tool, and test on page 13 before you commit to the masterpiece.

| TOOL | BLEED RISK | PAPER | GOOD TO KNOW |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Colored pencils** | NONE | Any, 32 lb+ feels best | Wax and oil pencils both work. Layer light to dark and blend with a white pencil or colorless blender. |
| **Gel + glitter pens** | LOW | Any | Great for details and sparkle. Give them a minute to dry before resting your hand on them. |
| **Fineliners** | LOW | Any | Perfect for puzzles and score sheets. Water-based ink barely shows through 105 gsm paper. |
| **Water-based markers + brush pens** | MEDIUM | 65 – 80 lb cardstock | Color in small circles and don't scrub one spot, or the paper pills. |
| **Alcohol markers** | HIGH | 100 – 110 lb smooth cardstock, one side | They bleed through everything, including your table. Always slide a scrap sheet underneath. |
| **Highlighters** | MEDIUM | Any | Can smear fresh inkjet lines. Great for marking found words, once pages dry overnight. |
| **Watercolor + gouache** | HIGH | Inkjet-safe mixed media or watercolor paper | Regular paper buckles. Use a little water, and know inkjet lines may soften. |
| **Crayons** | NONE | Any | The original. Hand them to the tiny guests at a family party and win the afternoon. |

## alcohol marker survival kit

- **Laser prints are best.** Alcohol can reactivate inkjet ink and smudge the lines. A print shop laser copy fixes that.
- Printing on inkjet at home? Let pages dry 24 hours, and color up to the line instead of over it.
- Keep a blotter sheet under every page.
- Work fast and keep a wet edge to avoid streaks.

## make pastels glow

Start with the lightest shade everywhere, then add a darker one only in the shadows. Leave a tiny white highlight on cherries, sprinkles and eyes. It reads as shine, and it makes people ask "wait, you colored that?"

**pencils + gel pens on copy paper = zero stress, all cute ♥**

# cutting + finishing

Clean cuts make a home print look shop-bought. These tools range from "already in your junk drawer" to "treat yourself, you earned it".

### paper trimmer

The fastest way to straight edges. A small rotary or guillotine trimmer handles cardstock and pays for itself after one game night.

### craft knife + ruler

Use a metal ruler and a self-healing mat. Make two light passes instead of one hard one, and change blades often.

### sharp scissors

Totally fine. Move the paper, not the scissors, on curves, and keep the blade deep in the cut.

### corner rounder

A cheap punch that rounds the corners on game cards, clue cards and tags. Instantly more polished.

### hole punch + ribbon

A 1/8 in or 1/4 in punch for name tags, gift tags, favor labels and card rings.

### scoring tool

A bone folder or a dead ballpoint pen run along a ruler gives crisp folds on tent cards, paper dice and folded invites.

### how to cut on the line

1. Trim the outer white margin off first, so pieces are easier to handle.
2. Cut just inside the cut line so no line peeks out.
3. Cut long straight edges before short ones.
4. Stack 2 sheets at most in a trimmer for accuracy.

### envelope sizes

- 5 × 7 in invite (2 per Letter sheet) → **A7** envelope
- 4.25 × 5.5 in card (4 per Letter sheet) → **A2** envelope
- A6 card (4 per A4 sheet) → **C6** envelope

**Paper dice tip:** score every fold line first, fold all the tabs the same way, then glue one tab at a time. A glue stick or double-sided tape won't warp the paper the way liquid glue does.

# laminate + reuse

Laminate a game sheet once and play it every week for a year. This is the single best way to stretch a printable (and to look extremely organized).

## thermal laminator, step by step

1. Let inkjet prints dry for a few hours so the ink doesn't bubble.
2. Warm up the laminator until the ready light comes on.
3. Cut pieces out first, then place them in the pouch with 1/4 in (6 mm) of space between them.
4. Feed the sealed edge first, nice and straight.
5. Let it cool flat under a book, then trim, leaving a 1/8 in (3 mm) clear border so the seal holds.

## pouch thickness

- **3 mil (75 micron):** flexible. Puzzle pages, checklists, score sheets.
- **5 mil (125 micron):** stiff and tough. Game boards, cards, name tags, clue cards.

## no laminator? no problem

- Self-seal laminating sheets: peel, press, trim. No heat.
- Clear sheet protectors: slide the page in and it's dry-erase ready.
- Clear packing tape over small cards works in a pinch.
- Many print shops laminate per sheet while you wait.

## which marker for reuse?

- **Dry-erase:** wipes off with a tissue. Best for game sheets, mazes and bingo.
- **Wet-erase:** won't smudge until you wipe it with a damp cloth. Best for trackers you update all month.
- **Ghosting?** Scribble over it with dry-erase and wipe, or use a little rubbing alcohol.

## worth laminating ✦

GAME BOARDS · PLAY SHEETS · SCORE PADS · BINGO CARDS · MAZES · WORD SEARCHES · CLUE CARDS · NAME TAGS · RULE SHEETS · ROLL TABLES · PARTY MENUS · HOSTING CHECKLIST

**Game piece swap:** skip the dabbers. Use mini candies, buttons, flat glass gems or tiny stickers on laminated sheets, then wipe clean for the rematch.

# binding + storing

Turn a pile of pages into a coloring book, a puzzle book or a party host binder you will actually reach for.

| METHOD | YOU NEED | BEST FOR | ADD PAGES LATER? |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3-ring binder** | 3-hole punch (2-hole on A4), 1 in binder, sheet protectors | Party host binders, game collections | Yes, easily |
| **Disc binding** | Disc-bound punch, discs, poly covers | Coloring books, puzzle books you keep adding to | Yes, pages pop in and out |
| **Spiral or coil** | A print shop (a few dollars) | Coloring books, big puzzle collections | No |
| **Saddle stitch (staple)** | Booklet printing + a long-reach stapler | Mini puzzle books, rule booklets, 8 – 32 pages | No |
| **Binder clip or ring** | Big binder clip, or a 1 in book ring and a hole punch | Game cards, clue cards, a party's worth of pages | Yes |
| **Clipboard** | A cute clipboard (non-negotiable) | Coloring on the couch, game night score sheets | Yes |

## make it feel like a real book

- Print the cover on heavy cardstock and add a clear plastic front and a cardstock or poly back.
- Leave room on the left for holes. Our pages have a generous margin, so a standard punch won't bite the design.
- Add tab dividers between themes or sections.
- Clip a pencil loop to the cover. Obviously.

## store it so you use it

- One folder per party kit. A clear zip envelope holds the invites, booklets and clues for one night.
- Keep a master copy of each page unmarked, so you can copy it again.
- Save every PDF in a "printables" folder in your cloud drive, named by theme.
- Store cardstock flat, in its box, away from damp.

**Host binder hack:** keep one 3-ring binder for game night with laminated play sheets in sheet protectors, a score log for bragging rights, and this guide tucked in the back.

# at the print shop

No printer, low on ink, or printing 12 invitations on fancy cardstock? A print shop is often cheaper than a new cartridge, and they can laminate and bind too.

**IN THE US**

Staples, Office Depot / OfficeMax and FedEx Office all take PDF uploads online for same-day pickup, or print from a USB stick in store.

**EVERYWHERE ELSE**

Local copy shops, stationery stores and university print centers do the same. Search "same day printing near me".

**THE LIBRARY**

Many public libraries have cheap self-service color printing. Bring the PDF on your phone or a USB stick.

## copy + paste this order

```
Please print [file name], pages [__],
[__] copies.
Paper: [US Letter / A4], [__] lb /
[__] gsm [cardstock / premium paper].
Color, at 100% / actual size, no scaling.
[Single-sided / Double-sided, flip on long
edge].
Extras: [laminate 5 mil] [coil bind]
[cut on the lines]
```

## save money

- Print only the color pages at the shop and the black and white ones at home.
- Ask for a proof of one page before the full run.
- Laser prints are perfect for alcohol markers.
- Watch for paper sales around back-to-school.

## "is this copyrighted?"

Shops sometimes ask about professional-looking files. Your purchase lets you print for your own personal use, your household and your own party. Show your order email if they ask.

**Upload tip:** send the PDF, not a screenshot or a photo of the page. The PDF keeps every line crisp at full size.

# go digital

Every PDF works on a tablet or e-ink notebook too. Color, solve and keep score with a stylus, then print the pages you love.

## goodnotes + notability (ipad)

1. Save the PDF to Files (unzip first).
2. In GoodNotes tap + → **Import** and pick the PDF. In Notability, use Import or share it from Files.
3. Long-press a page to duplicate it. Endless score sheets and rematches.
4. Use the highlighter at low opacity for marker-style coloring.

## kindle scribe + e-ink

1. Use **Send to Kindle** (the app, website or email) to send the PDF.
2. Open it on the Scribe and write right on the page with the pen.
3. reMarkable, Kobo Elipsa and Boox take PDFs through their own apps or a USB cable.

E-ink is grayscale, so pastel pages turn into soft grays. Puzzles and game sheets look fantastic.

## android + windows

Samsung Notes, Xodo, Flexcil and OneNote all open PDFs for stylus writing.

## coloring apps

For real painting, import a coloring page as an image into Procreate or Ibis Paint, set it to **Multiply**, and color on a layer underneath.

## backups

Export your filled pages as a PDF every month or so. Your work stays safe if the app or device changes its mind.

**Best of both:** solve and play on your tablet, then print a fresh copy of the pages you want to color by hand or frame. Same file, two ways to use it.



DIGITAL USE IS PERSONAL USE: PLEASE DON'T SHARE THE FILE

# troubleshooting

Most print problems come down to scale, paper size or paper type. Find yours below, take a deep breath, and try again.

| WHAT HAPPENED | TRY THIS |
|---|---|
| **Edges or text are cut off** | Set scale to Actual size and borderless off, and check that the paper size matches the PDF. |
| **Everything prints a little small** | "Fit to page" or "Shrink oversized pages" is on. Switch to Actual size / 100%. |
| **Cards or dice are the wrong size** | Print page 12 and measure the ruler. If it's off, the scale setting is the culprit. |
| **Colors look dull or streaky** | Choose High / Best quality, set paper type to matte or cardstock, and run a nozzle check or head cleaning from your printer's maintenance menu. |
| **Pinks print orange or brown** | A color cartridge is low or clogged. Replace it, or print color pages at a shop. |
| **Ink smears or stays wet** | Set the paper type to cardstock or heavy paper, and let pages dry before stacking. |
| **Cardstock jams** | Feed one sheet at a time through the rear or manual tray, and check the printer's max paper weight. |
| **The back side is upside down** | Switch between flip on long edge and short edge. See page 4. |
| **Markers bleed through** | Use 100 lb+ smooth cardstock, print one side only, and keep a scrap sheet underneath. |
| **Lines smudge when I color** | Inkjet ink reactivates under markers. Let pages dry 24 hours, or use a laser print. |
| **The download won't open on my phone** | Bundles are .zip files. Open the Files app, tap the zip to unzip, then open the PDF. |
| **The PDF opens in my browser and prints oddly** | Download it and open it in Adobe Acrobat Reader or Preview instead. |
| **My laminated page has bubbles** | Let the ink dry longer, feed the sealed edge first, or switch to a thinner pouch. |
| **I lost my download link** | Search your inbox for your Pencil Riot order email, or reply to it and we'll help. |

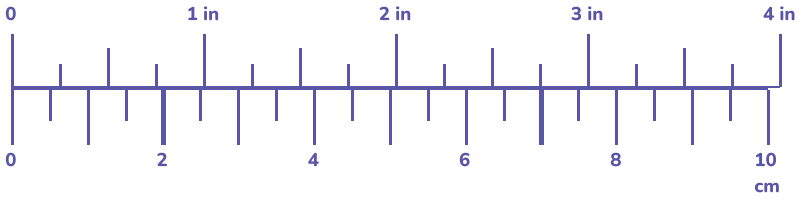
**still stuck? reply to your order email and we'll sort it out ♥**

# printer test page

Print this page at Actual size before any big print job. It checks scale, color, fine lines and two-sided printing in one sheet. Very efficient. Very smug.

## 1 · scale check

The top ruler should measure exactly **4 inches** and the bottom one exactly **10 cm**. Shorter? Turn off "Fit to page".




## 2 · color check

All eight squares should look clean and even, with no stripes. Streaks mean it's nozzle-check time.

## 3 · gray + line check

You should see ten separate steps and five lines, thinnest to thickest. Missing thin lines? Choose a higher quality setting.

## front ↑

Print this page two-sided with any other page. Hold it up to a window: the back should read the same way up.

## 4 · edge check

All four pink corner marks should be visible. If one is missing, your printer's margin is bigger than usual, so use Fit to page for designs that run close to the edge.

# swatch tester

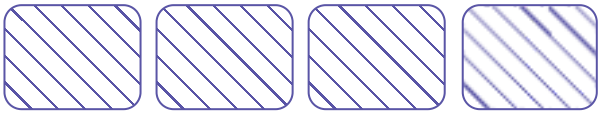
Print this on the paper you plan to color on. Swatch each pen, write its name on the line, then flip the page over to see what bled through.

## blend test

Color a light shade, then overlap a darker one. Smooth blend, or streaky?

## line test

Color over these printed lines and see if they smudge.



## my verdicts ✦

| PEN / MARKER | PAPER | BLEED? | VERDICT |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# supplies + print log

Tick what you have, circle what you want, and keep a record of what worked so the next game night is even easier.

## paper

- [ ] Copy paper 75 – 90 gsm
- [ ] Premium paper 120 gsm
- [ ] Cardstock 216 gsm / 80 lb
- [ ] Cardstock 270 gsm / 100 lb
- [ ] Colored cardstock
- [ ] Envelopes (A7 / A2 / C6)

## coloring

- [ ] Colored pencils
- [ ] Colorless blender
- [ ] Gel + glitter pens
- [ ] Fineliners
- [ ] Brush pens
- [ ] Alcohol markers
- [ ] Blotter sheets

## finishing

- [ ] Paper trimmer
- [ ] Corner rounder
- [ ] Hole punch + ribbon
- [ ] Laminator + pouches
- [ ] Sheet protectors
- [ ] Dry-erase markers
- [ ] Binder / disc set

## print log

| PRINTABLE | PAPER | SETTINGS | NOTES FOR NEXT TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

✦ ready for more? ✦

Coloring packs, puzzle packs, games and party kits, all printable tonight at **pencilriot.com**