

Make your own books

Creating mini fact books capitalizes on children's curiosity and makes research, writing, and learning fun! **BY THERESE NG**

Here's a great classroom activity or take-home assignment that allows children to make something with their own hands while tapping multiple skills—research, writing, art—as well as guaranteeing they'll learn something new. For this project, they'll turn into researchers, writers, illustrators, and book publishers to create their own mini fact books.



What's a factbook?

It's an informational book on a particular topic, such as a country, person, hobby, animal, or even an interesting object. A fact book, as its name implies, contains interesting facts about the topic, the way an atlas contains important information about the world.

What topics?

Make sure your students choose a topic that they're truly curious about. This will make the research, learning, and creative process a lot more enjoyable. If you have too many students in a class, ask them to make their fact books in pairs or small groups, choosing a topic among themselves. Do guide them, of course, and make sure that they'll actually have resource material for their research. Some ideas: dinosaurs, snakes, basketball, a Philippine hero, a candidate in the recent elections, a place they'd like to visit, airplanes, a certain food, computers.

What format?

It might be intimidating for students to have so many options and so much info to digest. Narrow it down for them by telling them that their fact book only needs to answer one particular question. For example: how to bake a cake; what snakes eat; how a seed turns into a plant; what nurses do; how basketball is played. Another way students can approach this is to simply gather all the facts they can about their topic and to list down all the facts in the book, following a "Did you know?" format. This might be a good format to use with people and places.



Where to research

Hold your class in your library. Depending on their chosen topic, they can get material from encyclopedias, almanacs, maps, atlases, newspapers, magazines, even textbooks and storybooks. Get the school librarian involved so she can point your students in the right direction. This will also help them learn to use the library properly.

Making the book

The easiest way to construct a book is to get a few sheets of same-sized paper (the size of half a sheet of bond is good), stack them on top of each other, fold the stack in half, and staple the sheets in the middle. You know have a bound book ready to be filled! Your students can then create the cover with drawings or cut-outs from magazines. The title should be prominently written, as well as their names as the authors. They can now write down an important fact they've learned about the topic on each page and decorate it with drawings or cut-outs of pictures that are relevant to the written text. The back cover can be reserved for the "About the Author/Illustrator" section, where students can write freely about themselves. They may even want to paste or draw a picture.

Decorating fun

Creative students who want a bit of a challenge can add more bells and whistles to their books. They might devise a pop-up in one of the pages (like in greeting cards), or add windows and flaps that can be lifted to reveal a drawing underneath. Books can also be decorated with ribbons, colored paper, foil, leaves...let the kids' imagination run wild.



What next?

An activity like this is almost sure to leave your kids with an immense feeling of satisfaction and pride in themselves. You can take this further by holding a display of your students' books, donating them to the library where other students can learn from them, or even holding another class session where students read a book made by their classmate, and then share what they learned from it. If you have a school event lined up that requires presentations from each class, your students can even read their own books aloud to wow their schoolmates and proud parents!



do things better

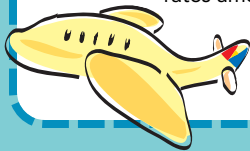
Useful news and tips from all over

CHECK OVERSEAS REMITTANCES for hidden fees

Do you have relatives working overseas who remit money regularly? Recipients may be losing out on a larger remittance because of hidden costs tacked on by money transfer organizations. According to a report from Inq7.com, "lack of willingness to shop around for the best rates or refusal to understand the process ... eats into the incomes overseas Filipino workers remit to their families."

How does this happen? Filipinos tend to remit money often and in small amounts. Since each remittance has a fee, this amount adds up to a considerable sum. Also, the remittance is converted from foreign currency to pesos usually at a rate lower than the prevailing market rate (for example, if the market rate were P55 to \$1, they would convert at P54 to \$1 instead). This means a smaller amount for the recipient.

Tell your relatives overseas to canvass for the best rates among reputable banks and wire transfer organizations. OFWs should also remit larger amounts less often to save on hidden fees.



DIVORCE & SEPARATION at record levels in Asia



Time Magazine reports that the number of divorce and separation cases in Asia has soared to an all-time high, as women are gaining independence and becoming more assertive. In the Philippines, there are now more grounds for annulment and laws are being created to speed up the process.

John Gottman, a clinical psychologist, says conflict is a natural part of any relationship, and that "only 31% of conflicts get resolved over the course of a marriage. The other 69% are perpetual, unsolvable problems." However, he adds: "In relationships that [are] working, even during conflict, there [is] a rich climate of positive things, such as love, affection, interest in one another, humor and support." The most common negative factors in an unstable relationship, according to Gottman, are criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling (or pretending there's no problem).

FOLIC ACID DECREASES chances of birth defects

US researchers have proven that folic acid prevents birth defects such as spina bifida, a deformation of the spine that causes childhood paralysis, and anencephaly, the absence of much of the brain in spinal cord in fetuses, which results in miscarriage or stillbirth. Since the US Food and Drug Administration mandated that folic acid be included in enriched bread, pasta, and cereal, the incidence of such birth defects has dropped by about 70 percent.

Women of childbearing age should increase their intake of folic acid by eating leafy dark green vegetables, dried beans and peas, and citrus fruits and juices. You can also take a multivitamin supplement that has folic acid.



PREPARE YOUR HOMES for rain



Is your house ready to weather typhoon season? *Good Housekeeping Philippines* recommends that you check the following before the rains begin:

- **Roof:** are there parts that depress when stepped on? These are probable sources of leaks. Also look for rusty areas with little holes in them and make sure they're repaired.
- **Gutters and downspouts:** are there areas blocked by leaves and other debris? Remove this and hose down the gutter or downspout. If the downspout can't be removed from the wall, try pouring drain cleaner down the roof. Also repair holes with sealant appropriate for your gutter.
- **Electricals:** see that trees and shrubs don't touch electrical lines. Make sure your connections aren't overloaded with too many appliances, and check your main electrical panel for rust or water stains. If you suspect that moisture has penetrated, call an electrician.