



Anatomy of a Book

Edges: The three outer edges of the leaves of a book. They can be decorated in a number of ways.

Edition binding: A binding issued by the publisher of a book. Until the invention of machine-produced bindings, the cost of binding a book was usually paid for by the customer. A publisher's binding is a single edition of a book issued in identical bindings, with the cost of the binding being incorporated into the price of the book.

Endband: Bands made up of coloured threads fastened to the top and bottom of the spine of a book. Endbands originally had a structural function when they were sewn to the spine edge but later they became purely decorative and were attached with glue.

Endpaper: The leaves added at the front and back of a book by the binder which are not part of the textblock. Usually, the outer endpaper is glued to the board and is called a pastedown. The loose endpapers are called free endpapers or flyleaves.

Fillet: A binder's tool used to make lines on a binding. The tool is a revolving wheel that is rolled along the skin.

Finishing: The addition of decorative lettering to a book cover. This includes the techniques of blind-tooling, gold-tooling, stamping, onlaying and inlaying.

Fore-edge painting: Painted decoration on the fore-edge of the leaves of a book. The painting can usually only be seen when the edges are slightly fanned out so that the painting is hidden when the book is closed.

Forwarding: The process of binding a book up to the stage when decoration is applied to the covers. Forwarding involves adding endpapers, decorating the edges and can include some leather techniques.

Furniture: Anything attached to the outside of book such as metal clasps, bosses and cornerpieces. Their original function was to protect the cover but in many early books they form much of the outer decoration.



Raised band the sewn supports on the spine which once covered, stand out from the rest of the spine. In some modern bindings false bands are placed on the spine to make the book look older.

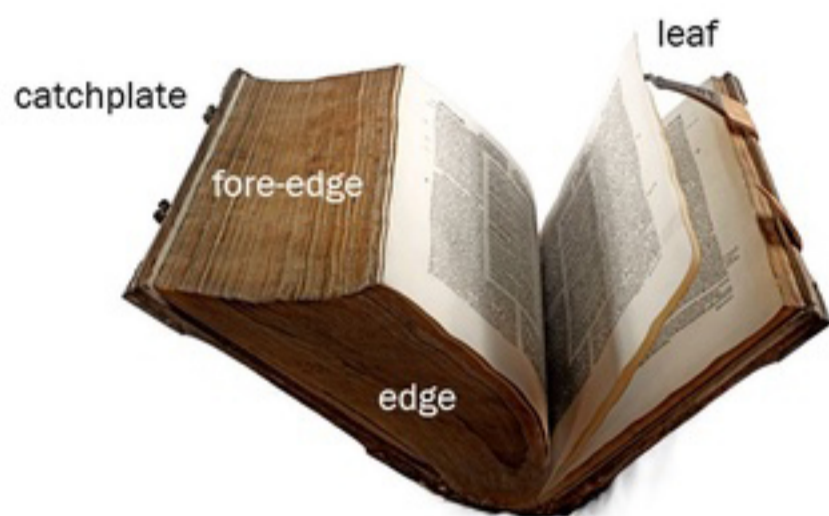
Spine the back of the book which is today visible when books are stored on a shelf.

Support cords or bands onto which the gatherings are sewn. They are usually made from hemp or any other strong fibre, or tawed leather.

Textblock block printed leaves and gatherings that make up the body of the book.

Tooled decoration impressed on a binding by a tool or stamp. Plain tooling is called blind-tooling. Gold or metal leaf applied with the tooling is called gold-tooling.

Waste unwanted printed or manuscript sheets. Print shops had surplus or incorrect sheets of printed text which were used by binders in the production of boards or as temporary covers and endpapers. Manuscript waste came directly from the workshop or from discarded manuscripts. Printed waste could come from the printing house or from booksellers discarding unwanted books.



Gatherings: A group of leaves formed when a printed sheet is folded to the size of a book. Other terms used for gatherings are sections, quires or signatures.

Gaufered edges: Edges decorated by the impression of heated metal tools.

Joint: The outer junction of the covers and spine of a book. The inside is called a hinge. Together, hinge and joint allow the cover to open and close. It is the area that is most weakened by regular use.

Kettle stitch: A chain stitch that links one gathering to another but not to a support. Located at the top and bottom edges of the spine, this is also where the endbands are attached.

Leaf: Two single pages of paper or parchment which form the basic unit of a book

Limp binding: A binding which does not use boards.

Pastedown: The endpaper that is pasted to the board. In early bindings there may not be a pastedown at all and all the endpapers are free but over time and in modern bindings, the first endpaper is attached to the inside of the board which gives extra support to the binding.

Publisher's cloth this was covering material used for machine-produced books and bindings from around 1830 onwards. It was woven from cotton or linen, filled with starch sizing to make it durable, then pressed under heat.

Anatomy of a Book



Some bookbinding terms explained

Blocking: Using an engraved metal tool to decorate the covers of a book. The term applies to hand-bound books as well as machine-made covers where a block is used in a press called a blocking or arming press.

Boards: The protective hard sheets used to sandwich the textblock. They are called upper and lower boards and can be made from wood, paper pulp or a mixture of paper and fibre.

Bookblock: All the leaves in a book, including the printed matter and the endleaves.

Boss: A metal stud originally used on a binding to protect the leather but often incorporated as a decorative feature.

Doubleure: A pastedown or inside lining of a covers that is not paper. Usually decorated skin or fabric. The term is derived from the French word for lining.