BINDING BOOKS BY HAND
A guide from the Tucson High Magnet School Literary Magazine folks

You don’t need to have thousands of dollars or a printing press to produce a publication. Here is one type of hand bookbinding that we use at Tucson High to produce small runs of student publications in-house:

PAMPHLET BINDING
This binding method works best for very short publications (about 10 sheets of paper or fewer). Books produced in this style are often stapled at the copy shop, but sewing a pamphlet book by hand is super simple and inexpensive to do yourself. Cover variations and good design will help your pamphlet-bound books look impressive.

Things you need: printed book block; printed covers; end sheet pages (optional); binder’s needles or tapestry needles; heavy thread that doesn’t stretch (we use linen binding thread); an awl or pushpins; ruler; old phonebooks; craft knives; bone folders or wooden spoons.

Process:
1. Fold your covers in half, and crease with a bone folder or a wooden spoon.
2. Stack and fold your printed text pages. Remember that the pages must be printed so that when they are folded they will be in order. Optional: add special paper as end sheets (the paper just inside the cover).
3. Nestle the book block (inside pages) into the cover. Make sure they are right-side up and forewards.
4. Open the book to the middle and align the folded edge with the crease in an open phone book (this is your cradle for piercing the holes). Punch three holes using a push pin or awl. Depending on the size of your book, the top and bottom holes should be at least 1/2” - 1” away from the edges of the book once it is trimmed.
5. Follow the diagram below to guide your threaded needle through the middle, top, bottom, and middle hole again. If you start from the inside of the book, the thread tails will be inside the book; if you start from the outside, the tails will be on the spine.
6. Pull the thread tight enough to be taut as a guitar string, but not so tight that the paper buckles. Tie the thread to its tail with a double knot.
7. Trim your thread to 1” or longer.
8. Trim the edges of the book with the craft knife and a ruler, et voilà!

Cover Options:
To spice things up, you may choose to add some snazzy end sheets, as mentioned above, or you could create an amazing cover.
• Use the heaviest paper your copy machine can take. Print the whole cover, front and back, using student artwork or a thoughtful text design. Use color if you can – students can even hand-color a black-and-white print.
• Print the cover several inches longer than you need, and fold in the edges like a dust jacket – very fancy, and your readers have a built-in bookmark.
• Use special paper: color cardstock, art papers, or reclaimed materials like file folders.
• Print the covers with a custom stamp, like a student’designed linoleum block.
A FEW RESOURCES:

- Bookbinding books:

- Printing and binding supplies:
  - In Tucson:
    - Kelly Paper - 232 W. Grant Rd. - Paper; chipboard cut to size
    - Sarnoff Art & Writing - 2504 N. Campbell Avenue - Thread, needles, specialty paper, bone folders
    - Posner’s Art Store - 944 E. University Blvd. - Thread, needles, specialty paper, bone folders
  - Online:
    - French Paper Company - www.frenchpaper.com - Beautiful quality papers and cover stock in all sizes and colors; made in Chicago
    - John Neal Books - www.johnnealbooks.com - Bookbinding supplies of all kinds, including bulk spools of Irish linen thread