

Notebooks: Old-School vs New-School

Talk to most people about a notebook, and they think you're talking about a small computer. And whilst, I appreciate the ideal of a super slim, super small laptop, to me they will never be notebooks. The time has come to reclaim the word notebook from the technology fiends, and return it to its rightful place as something with paper that you write in with a pen. I know it's old fashioned, but I like pen and paper, in particular, I like notebooks. I have a large collection of notebooks, some full, some empty, some half used – the ratio is pretty even. My favourite notebooks feel substantial in the hand, and have blank shiny paper – the sort of paper the pen glides across like a figure skater performing perfect pirouettes. Being a writer, people seem to think notebooks are a perfect gift for me, and I've been given some beautiful ones over the years. However, I've never had the heart to tell anyone that I'd rather choose my own. Whilst shorter ones may only last a couple of months, larger ones are a six month minimum, and that's a big commitment. My relationship with my notebook is a personal one. I am quick to leave if I don't feel things are working early on. I've tried having a bit of stamina, but I find it stunts me creatively. If I don't want to use the book, I don't write. Sadly, it really is that simple. Different notebooks perform different functions. I have one overall, general book. This is usually small enough to fit in most bags and contains everything from shopping lists, to blog entries, music I've liked and short stories. It's the fall back notebook for all eventualities. Then I have a planning notebook where I work through ideas. This is bigger and has to have blank pages to enable me to draw diagrams and write at funny angles. However, I am allowed to write whatever I wish in this book, apart from to-do lists which have to go in the general notebook. I also have a diary/journal. I'm not sure why I have this as I normally write any relevant entries in either the general or planning books. This is a logistical problem. It is supposed to be a mood diary, so I've kept it by the bed, in the theory I can update it every evening. However, this is not the time I generally want to write journal entries, so I end up using the books I do have with me. Additionally, there are the sporadic notebooks. The ones started when I suddenly have a great idea warranting its own notebook, but rarely maintained for longer than a couple of months. For example, I have a dream book which I haven't updated for several years. Is it just me? Hopefully not. Hopefully there's a band of people out there willing to stand and be counted, ready to reclaim notebooks for the humble pen and paper. But I have to admit that I wrote the final version of this article on a laptop/notebook. Maybe it's the mix of old fashioned writing ideas down by hand and the fast word processing qualities of a [notebook](#) that make my writing an all-round enjoyable experience.

About the Author

Sarah Maple used [dealtime.co.uk](#) and [uk.shopping.com](#) to find the best prices for a notebook.

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