

Photo Matting

If you have ever put a photograph in a frame, then you understand the value of an attractive border around a picture. Matting a photo provides the same benefits – it separates the picture from its surroundings, provides focus, and compliments the picture content. Whether used on an album page, within a frame, or as a stand-alone craft project, photo matting will give your picture a “professional” look.

Matting is creating a “frame” around a picture using complimenting papers and colors. To mat a picture, simply place it on a piece of paper larger than the picture, then cut the paper 1/8” to 1/2” larger than the picture. The matted picture can then be glued onto a scrapbook page or placed within a standard picture frame. Here are some other tips to make beautiful mats:

- Don't glue original photos to a mat, use photo mounting corners instead. If you do want to glue a photo, use a copy.
- Follow the “Golden Rule” of matting, use a solid color mat against patterned paper. Likewise, if layering one or more mats with a picture, use a solid color paper against a patterned paper.
- In choosing a mat color, go for an accent color either in the picture or the background paper. For example, if the main color of your album page is green, with small amounts of yellow, chose a yellow paper for your mat. If you're not sure which color to use, go with an off-white. It goes well with most colors. For more help with choosing colors, read our article on [Color Schemes](#).
- For heritage albums, an interesting technique is to use a single mat color for each side of a family. This can simplify the heritage story for the album viewer and provide unity for each family.
- Lighten up a dark photo with light colored mats. Alternatively, a bright photo can be toned down with dark colored mats.
- Nested mats – that is, using two or more mats layered upon each other – are useful if you want the picture to be the main focus on a page. It also can give a 3-D effect of making the picture stand out against the background page. Remember to follow the “Golden Rule” when choosing paper for layered mats.

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- A paper saving technique, especially when matting large pictures, is to use strips of paper around the photo edge to create a border, rather than using one large piece of paper.
- Matting is also a great technique for items other than photos - use it to highlight your documents. For example, mat your wedding license or a newspaper article.

Matting your photos and documents gives them a polished look. Use it to draw attention to those special family memories you want to share with others. Be creative and have fun!

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