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Do-It-Yourself Greeting Cards



for fun and (probably no) profit!

Too often we have gone to the greeting card section of a store, and we couldn't find a card we liked, and the nearest Hallmark shop closed limiting our choices even more. You can find pre-made cards online and even have them mailed from the vendor. But those cards can be a little impersonal and pricey and usually not quite what you're looking for. So I started making my own cards, and I've had pretty good success.

Topics

- Printer
- Greeting card stock
- Applications and Fonts
- Internet searches
- How-to . . . Step-by-Step
- Alternatives to your own printing

Printers



Printers

My printer: Canon PIXMA MG6620

- MG6620 may not be produced any longer, but the PIXMA series is.
- \$120 in 2015, including 2-yr extended warranty
- Wireless printing
- Also a scanner



A Canon PIXMA has been a good choice for me. I bought mine in 2015, and I got the impression Canon does not make the MG6620 anymore, but they do still make the PIXMA series. I like the all-in-one features that include a scanner and wireless printing. I can even print from my iPhone.

Printers

Inkjet Cartridges

- Shop around!
- Check out Office Depot (coupons), Micro Center, or the manufacturer.
- Other sources?



The downside to inkjet printers is that the replacement cartridges tend to be expensive. A complete replacement set can cost about half as much as a new printer. I read about a man who sells his printer when the ink runs out and then buys a new one. He says it's more cost effective, and he may be right.

I check different sources for inkjet cartridges. Micro Center is often a good place to buy. Office Depot often has coupons with discounts. Sometimes I buy them directly from Canon.

There are cheap knock-off brands with various degrees of quality. Some places will even refill your cartridges, but the results aren't always satisfactory and can be messy.

Printers

Canon PIXMA Mega Tank Printers

- Larger ink tanks
- Refillable
- Lower cost in the long run



Canon has a new line of printers called PIXMA Mega Tank Printers. Compared to the ink cartridges for previous models, these cartridges, or “tanks,” are huge, and they are refillable. They are designed to last as long as 30 sets of ink cartridge. The cost of the printers is from \$150 to \$300. The cost of the refills is between \$12 and \$20. In the long run they are definitely cost effective.

Greeting Card Stock



You could print your greeting cards on ordinary printer paper, but the ink will probably bleed through, and the cards will look cheap.

Greeting Card Stock

Recommended: Avery 3378 or 3265

- 3378 costs &16.99 for 30 cards and envelopes
- 3265 costs \$18.69 for 20 cards and envelopes



Get a good quality greeting card stock. You can get card stock at Office Depot in the stationery section. I like Avery paper products. Avery's products are identified by a four-digit number. #3378 card stock is \$17 for a pack of 30; #3265 is a heavier and higher quality card and costs \$18.69 for a pack of 20. Envelopes are included.

Recommended: <https://www.avery.com/products/cards/type/greeting-cards>

Greeting Card Stock

Avery 3378 or 3265

- 8½ x 11 sheets
- Creased down the middle



Both the 3265 and 3378 come in 8½ x 11 sheets that you fold in half to make 8½ x 5½ greeting cards. Each sheet has a slight crease across the middle which makes it easy to fold.

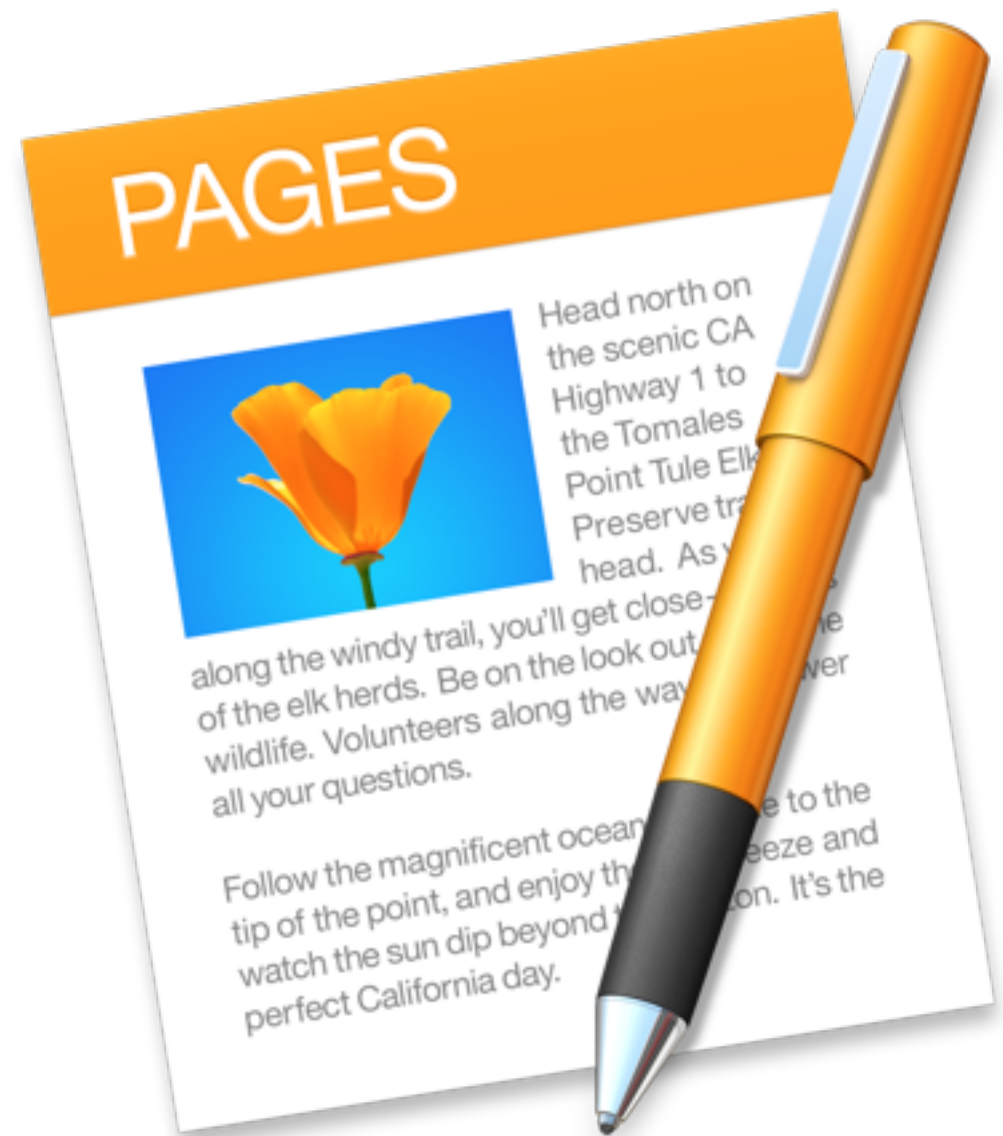
Applications & Fonts



Applications

Pages

- My favorite app
- Included on every Mac
- Easy to add and edit graphics and photos



Pages is my favorite app for a lot of things, including graphic layouts. It's already installed on every Mac as part of the iWork package of office applications. And it's very easy to add and resize graphics and photos.

Applications

Comic Life 3

- Great for lettering and comic book effects
- \$30 from the App Store



Another app I like is Comic Life. It's available from the App Store for \$30. I like to use it for humorous cards. The developers created Comic Life for people who like to write comics and graphic novels. Serious users of the app can use digital photos to portray a story and convert the photos to look like comic book art. For example, the pictures in this slide are all from digital photographs.

<http://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/>

Fonts

- Search for “free fonts for Mac”
- Your Mac will warn you if it encounters a problem with a download.

DARK CRYSTAL

Free for Personal Use

DOWNLOAD

Donate To Designer

Buy Commercial License

“Gothic” fonts from
1001 Free Fonts:

Germanica – Paul Lloyd

In : Gothic, Blackletter

Germanica

Free

DOWNLOAD

A Charming Font – Gem Fonts

In : Famous, Gothic, Halloween

A Charming Font

Free

DOWNLOAD

You do not need to buy another app if you don't want to. You can make some excellent greeting cards using only Pages, some free graphics, and some stylish fonts. There are thousands of fonts available for downloading. Try searching for “free fonts for Mac.”

A good web site is “1001 Free Fonts.” I clicked on the “Gothic” category and it alone listed 900+ fonts, so the “1001” isn't literal. Each font listed includes an example of what the typeface looks like. When you find a font you like, click on Download, and the files go into your Downloads folder. There will often be more than one file for each font, one each for regular, bold, italic, etc.

Recommended: <https://www.1001freefonts.com>

Font Book

- In the Applications folder
- Drag files from Downloads to Font Book
- Option: organize fonts into separate folders.



Open Font Book from your Applications folder, then drag the files from the Downloads folder into the All Fonts list in Font Book. Your Mac will warn you if there is a potential problem with a download (usually from compatibility with your operating system). From then on whenever you open an app in which you can add text, your newly added fonts will appear in the app's font list along with the default fonts already provided by Apple.

Fonts

HERALD SQUARE

C°PASETIC!

Deco Card

Jazz LET

NUTSHELL LIBRARY

NineteenOhFive

Currently some of my favorite fonts are from the Art Deco period in the 1920s. Here are a few examples I've added to my Font Book.

Internet Searches



From this point the design of your greeting card is all up to your imagination.

Internet Searches

Internet Search Engines

- You can search for *ANYTHING!*
- Look for speed and accuracy, but also privacy.



DuckDuckGo

Google



Firefox®

What is your favorite Search Engine? You can search for literally *anything* and you will get hits.

Google is the most widely used, but they track your searches and sell that information. I also learned recently how Google injects their political bias into search results. That's a reason why my current favorite search engine is DuckDuckGo which claims to not track your searches. I have [DuckDuckGo.com](https://duckduckgo.com) as my default home page.

Whatever your Search Engine of choice, try searching for something to use in your greeting card. For example, if your brother or sister is about to turn 50, search for "50th birthday." Start with a general description, then refine it with more details, such as "cake," or "humorous." Also, try adding the words "clip art" to your search and see how the results differ. Nearly all the hits you get are public domain.

Recommended: <https://duckduckgo.com>

How-to . . . Step-by-Step


Example: a “Retirement
Congratulations” card



Now I'll show the process I went through recently to make a particular greeting card. My wife's niece ran a daycare center in her home for many years, and in July she decided to retire and pursue other interests. The women in my wife's family had a "Girl's Weekend" to celebrate her retirement, so I made a card for my wife to give to her. Our niece often spoke about how some of the kids tended to cry a lot for no reason, so I first did a search for "whiny kids."

Step-by-Step

Search results for “whiny kids”



whiny kids

Web

Images

Videos


News

Maps

Shopping

Settings

All Regions Safe Search: Moderate All Sizes All Types All Layouts All Colors



1. Click on Images

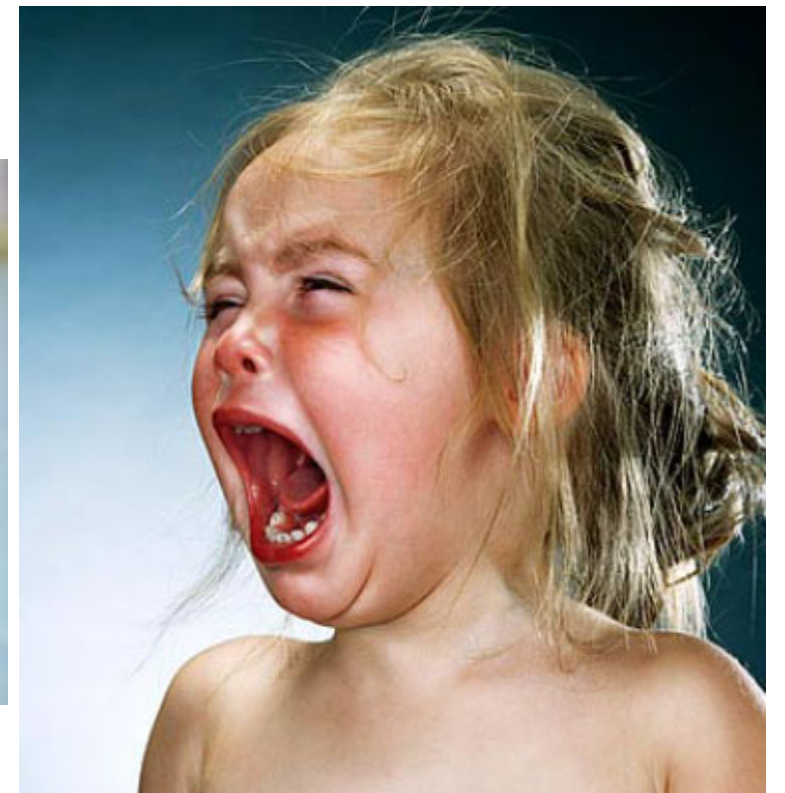
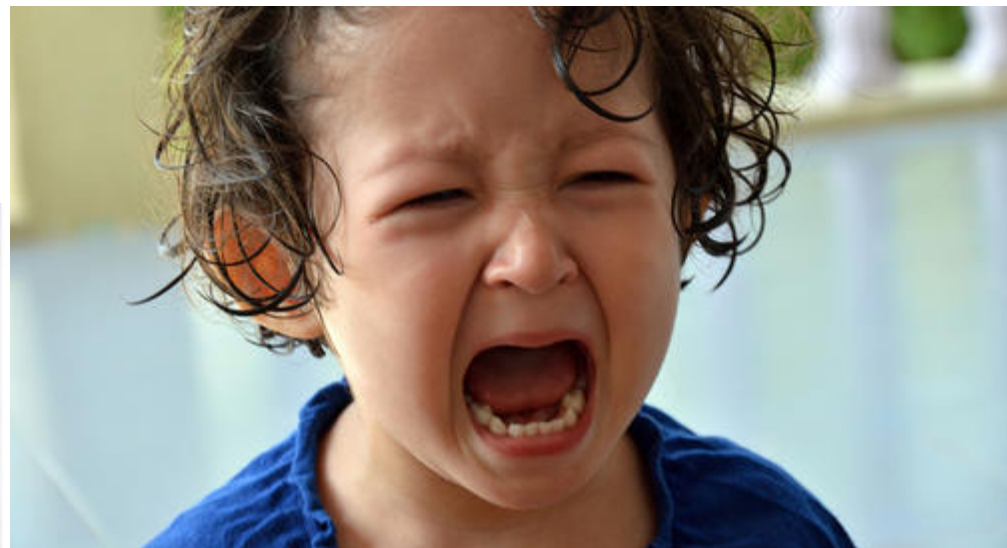
2. Click on the picture

3. Control+Click to save the file

“Whiny kids” got me dozens of hits. Click on “Images” to show the results. I went through them and found seven I thought were the best—kids pouting, having temper tantrums, and so on. I clicked on the picture to open it then used Control+Click to save the image to a folder I created just for this greeting card.

Step-by-Step

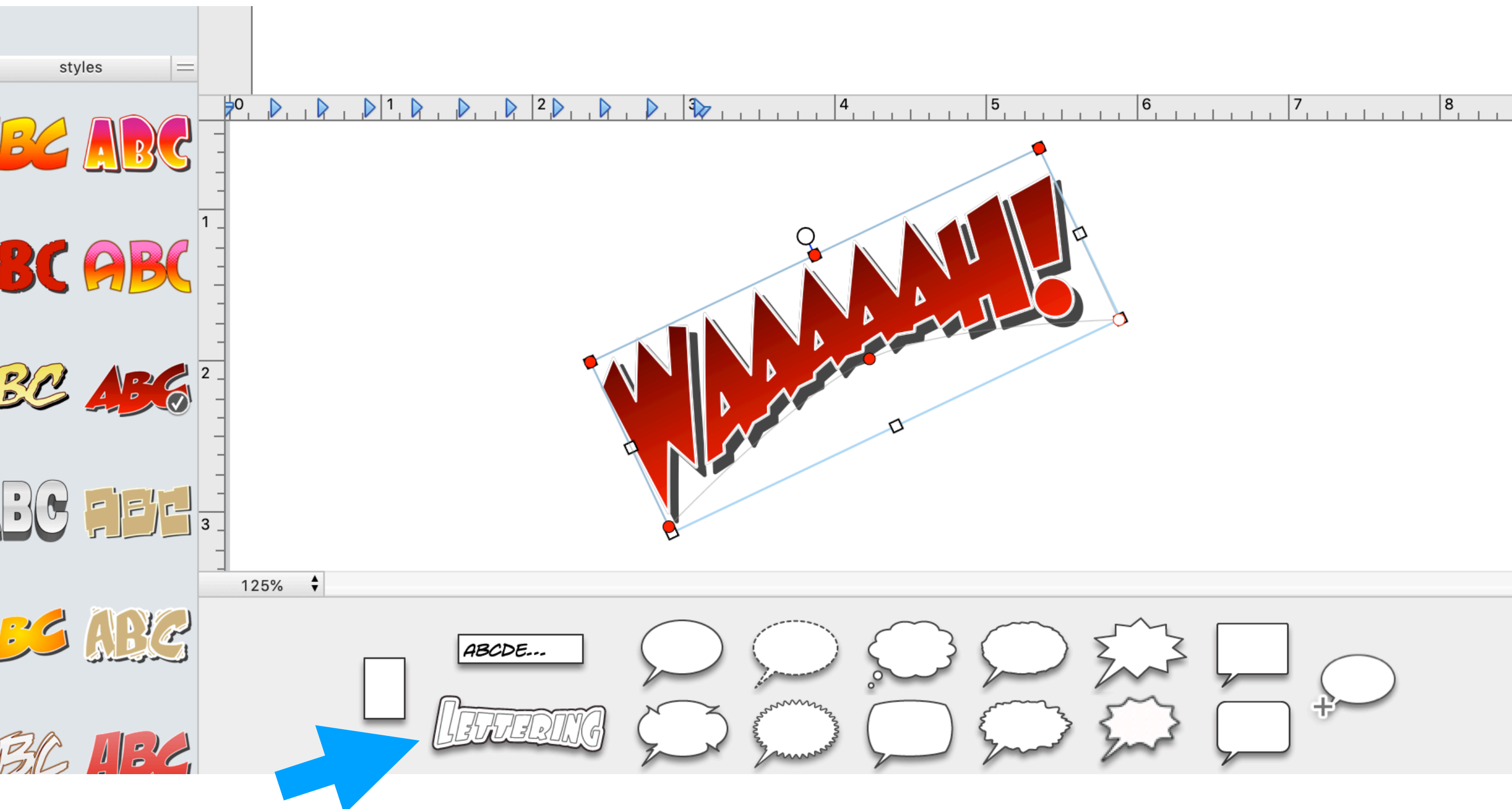
Selections



These were the seven images I selected. Each of the files was large and nearly covered the page. But the dimensions of the files don't matter because in Pages you can reduce, enlarge, crop, rotate, add borders and shadows, and so on.

Step-by-Step

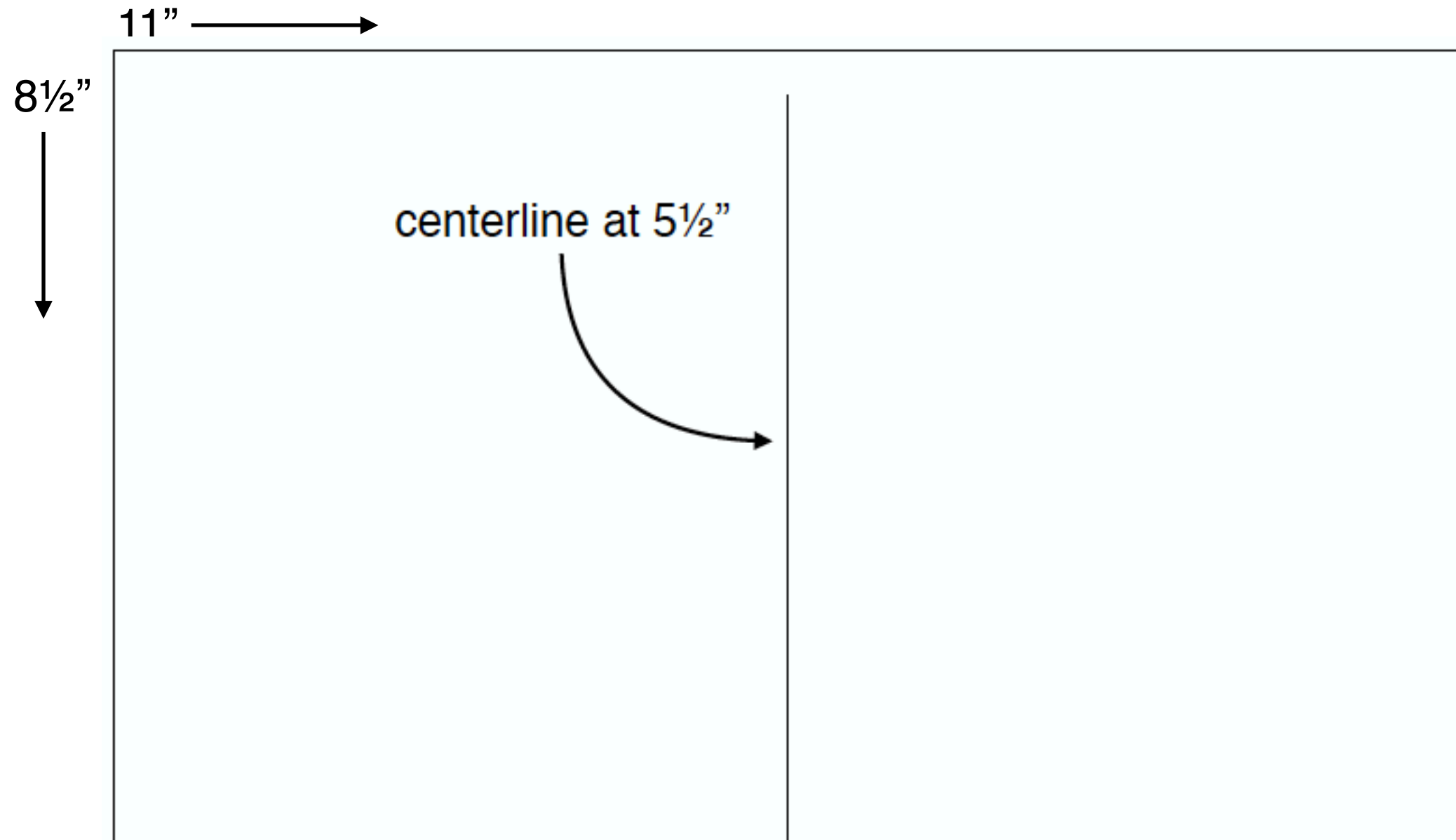
Comic Life



Next I used Comic Life to create some stylized text to suggest the kids were letting out a long wail of discontent. I used the Lettering tool to create a text box, typed in the text, selected a font style, then rotated and warped it for effect.

Step-by-Step

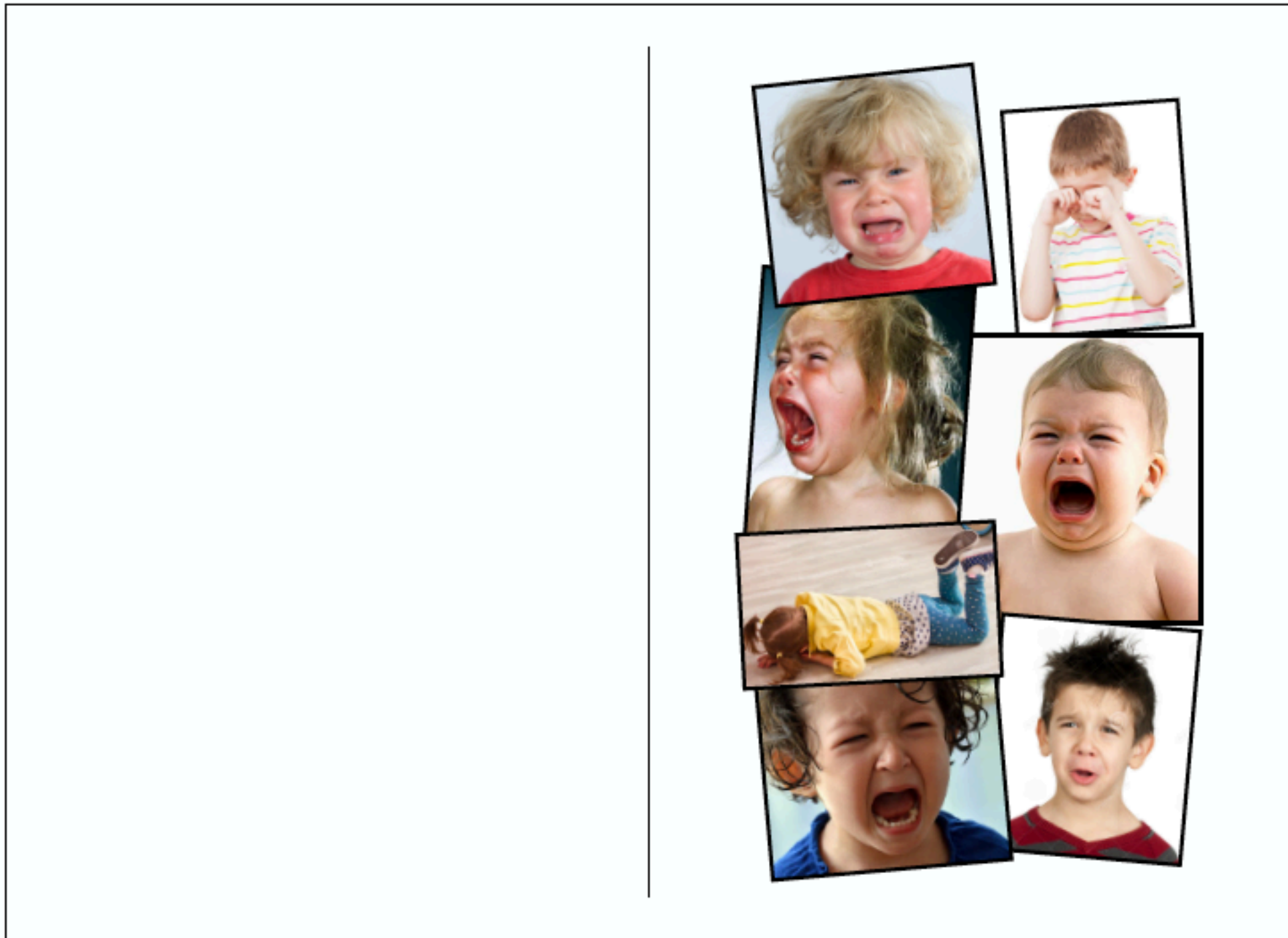
Layout on a blank Pages document



For the actual layout of the card I created a blank document in Pages. Since the greeting card will be in “Portrait” mode, I will print in “Landscape” mode and only on the right half of each side of the card. Before adding any text or graphics, I like to create a centerline where the fold will be. The line is not required, but it’s helpful for centering and will be deleted later.

Step-by-Step

Front of card



Then I started dragging and dropping the images of the whiny kids onto what will be the front of the card. I positioned each picture, gave each one a border, and randomly rotated each one a few degrees to suggest a little chaos.

Step-by-Step

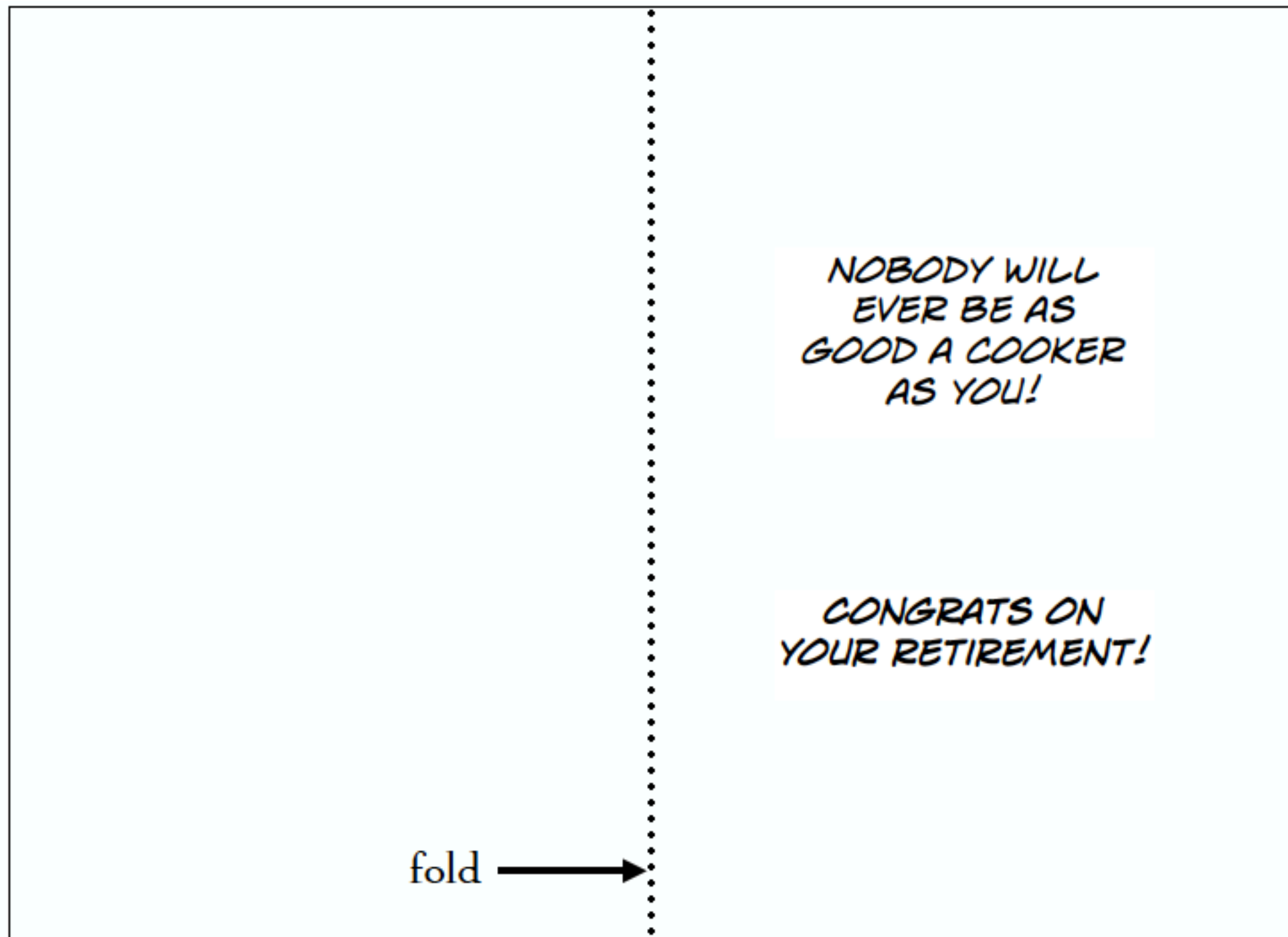
Add lettering from Comic Life



Then I went back into Comic Life, selected the lettering I created, and used Copy and Paste to superimpose it over the pictures. When the layout looked the way I wanted I deleted the centerline.

Step-by-Step

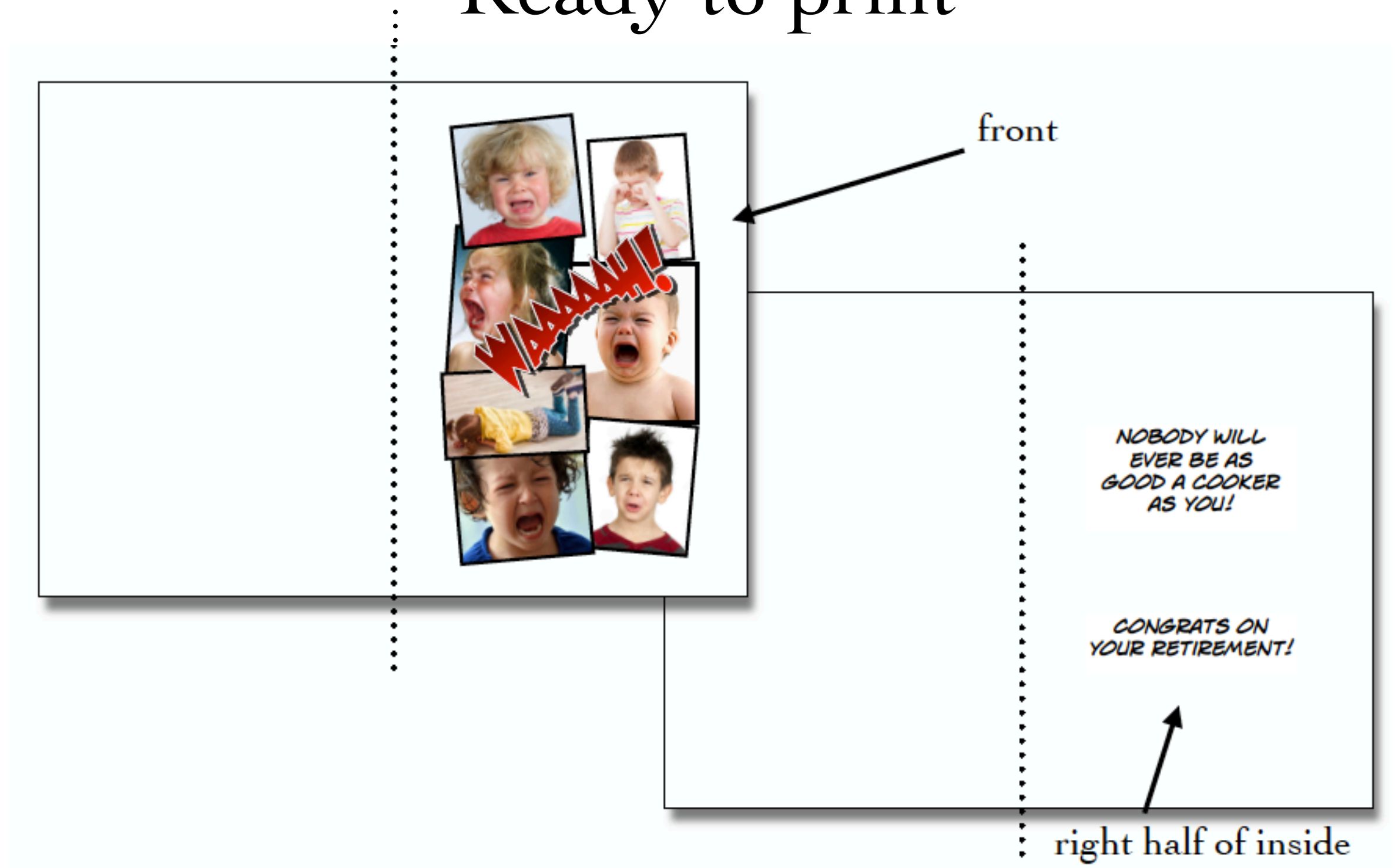
Inside message



Our niece enjoys cooking, and she provided an excellent lunch for the children everyday. The kids often told her what “a good cooker” she is. That line became a running joke in the family, so I decided to use it as the punchline for the card. I created a text box in Pages, typed in the wording, and selected a font. I positioned the text on the right side of the page, deleted the centerline, and the card was ready to print.

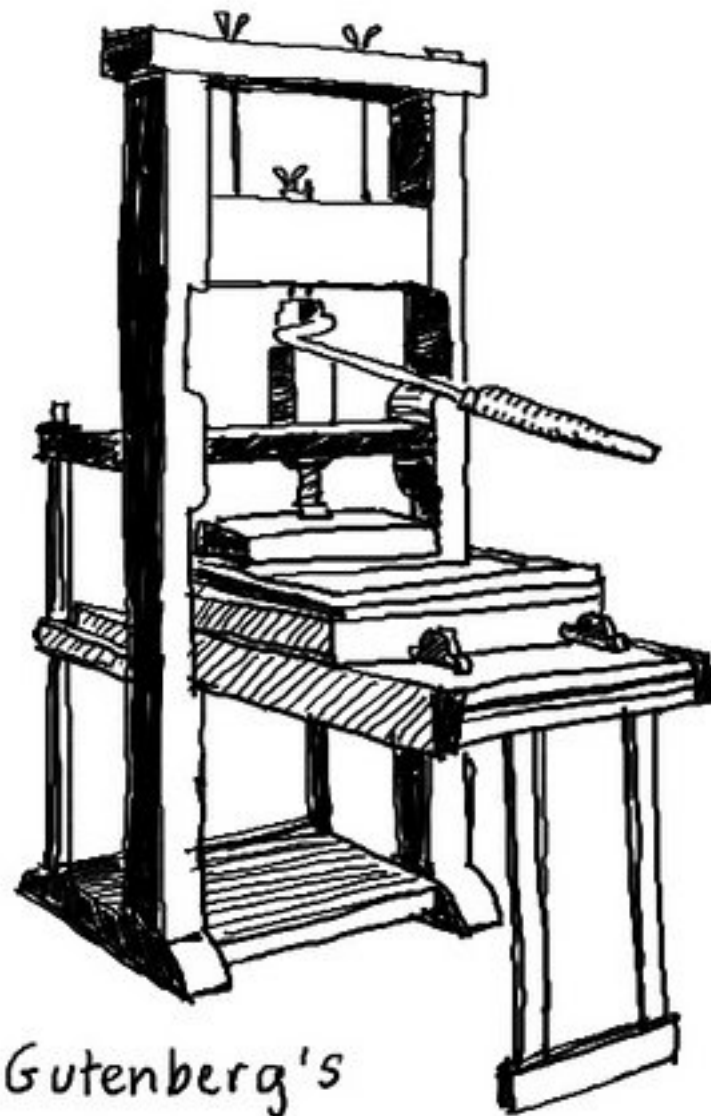
Step-by-Step

Ready to print



My printer is capable of duplex printing, but when I make greeting cards I print one side at a time. Otherwise the inside text and graphics may be printed in the wrong area.

After I print the first page, I'm careful to put the card stock back in the feeder tray with the proper side up so it prints the second page with the correct orientation. Until you get used to double-sided printing you may waste a few cards and some ink.



Gutenberg's
Press

Alternatives to your own printing

If you don't want to use your own printer, there are plenty of options. Just be sure your layout looks the way you want it because you won't want to pay for reprinting.

Alternatives to your own printing



**Office
DEPOT®**

OfficeMax

- bring your JPEG or PDF on a flash drive
OR file can be uploaded to web site
- duplex color printing for \$1.44/card

In the St. Louis area, Office Depot/Office Max are the office supply stores you see most. In 2013 the two companies merged, so you may see either name on a store. Each store has its own printing department. After you've finished your layout, save the file to a flash drive and take it to the store. Office Depot's web site also lets you upload your file and place your order on line.

The last time I checked prices, it would cost about \$1.44 each to print this example card.

web site: <https://www.officedepot.com/configurator/pod/#/product/saddleStapledBook>

Alternatives to your own printing



- online photo printing service
- 4x6 color prints for as low as 18¢ each

Cards don't necessarily have to be the kind that fold. Many people like to make single-sided cards on photo quality paper like a picture postcards. My favorite online source for photo printing is Shutterfly. 4x6 color prints are as low as 18¢ each. 5x7 and 8x10 prints are also available.

web site: <https://www.shutterfly.com>

A few greeting cards from the Internet . . .

Just for fun, here are a few examples of homemade greeting cards on the Internet that caught my eye.

From the Internet



From the Internet



MERRY CHRISTMAS 2013

From the Internet



From the Internet





HAVE FUN!

I've made holiday cards, birthday cards, anniversary cards, graduation cards, housewarming cards, sympathy cards, get well cards, and so on. The cost is usually lower than buying a mass-produced greeting card from a store, and the recipients appreciate the personal touch.