

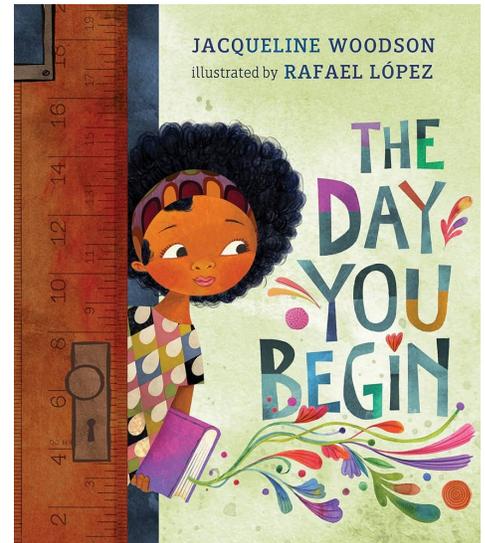


### The Day You Begin

by Jacqueline Woodson

The Day You Begin is a heartfelt story about finding the courage to connect when you feel different or left out. Through beautiful words and illustrations, Jacqueline Woodson reminds readers that even when our stories don't look or sound the same, sharing them helps us see the beauty in our differences and the things we share in common.

This powerful story helps students reflect on openness, empathy, and bravery as they learn that their voices and experiences matter.



### Discussion Questions

- Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in or weren't sure where you belonged?
  - Follow-up Prompt: How can you help someone else feel welcome when they feel different or left out?
  - Leadership Connection: Leaders show empathy by noticing when others feel left out and helping them feel included.
- Why is it brave to share something about yourself, especially when it feels hard or different?
  - Follow-up Prompt: What's a time you shared something that made you nervous but helped others understand you better?
  - Leadership Connection: Leaders show bravery when they open up and share their ideas or stories, even when it feels uncomfortable.
- What can we learn from people whose stories, traditions, or experiences are different from our own?
  - Follow-up Prompt: Why is it important to have friends who come from different backgrounds or have different experiences?
  - Leadership Connection: Leaders show openness by listening, learning, and celebrating what makes each person unique.



### Classroom Activities

#### “My Story Matters” Mini Book

- Each student folds a small booklet or uses a printable template to write or draw 4–5 pages about what makes them unique. They can include their family, culture, interests, or something they’re proud of.
- Title Page - My Story Matters by (name)
- Page 1 - About me
- Page 2 - Family
- Page 3 - Special traditions or culture
- Page 4 - Interests
- Page 5 - Something you’re proud of!
- Page 6 - Choice
- When finished, create a classroom “Story Shelf” or display wall where students can browse and read each other’s stories.

#### “Courage to Begin” Partner Interviews

- Pair students up to interview each other using simple prompts (e.g., “Something that makes me unique...,” “A time I felt left out...,” “Something I love about our school...”).
- Afterward, students introduce their partner to the class by sharing one special thing they learned about them.

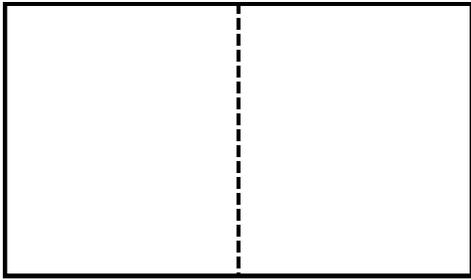
### Whole School Engagement Project

#### “Story Portraits” Wall

- Each student decorates a paper frame or Polaroid template with a small drawing or symbol of something important to them (their family, favorite place, sport, or value).
- Inside the frame: a short caption like “I am from...” or “Something that makes me proud is...”
- Display them in a collage or a long hallway gallery with a title “Every Story Belongs Here”

# How to make a mini book

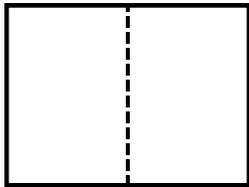
1. Fold the paper in half



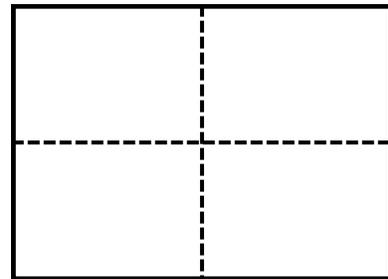
2. Fold the paper in half again



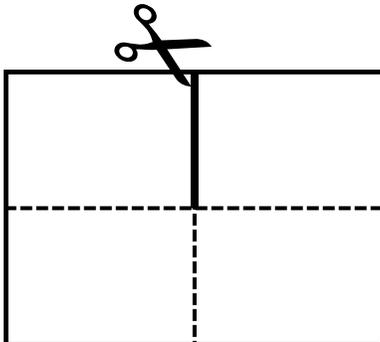
3. Fold the paper in half one more time



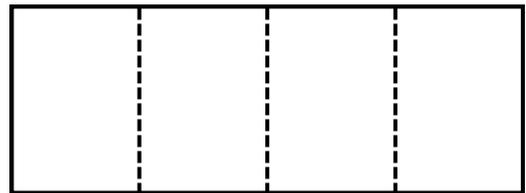
4. Unfold the paper two times until you see 4 rectangles



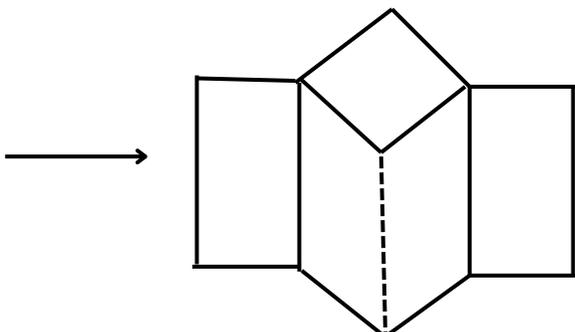
4. On the side that is folded, cut to the center of the paper



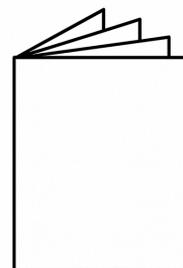
4. Unfold the paper all the way and then fold it in half to look like this



5. Push in on both ends



5. Fold the pages together for a mini book!



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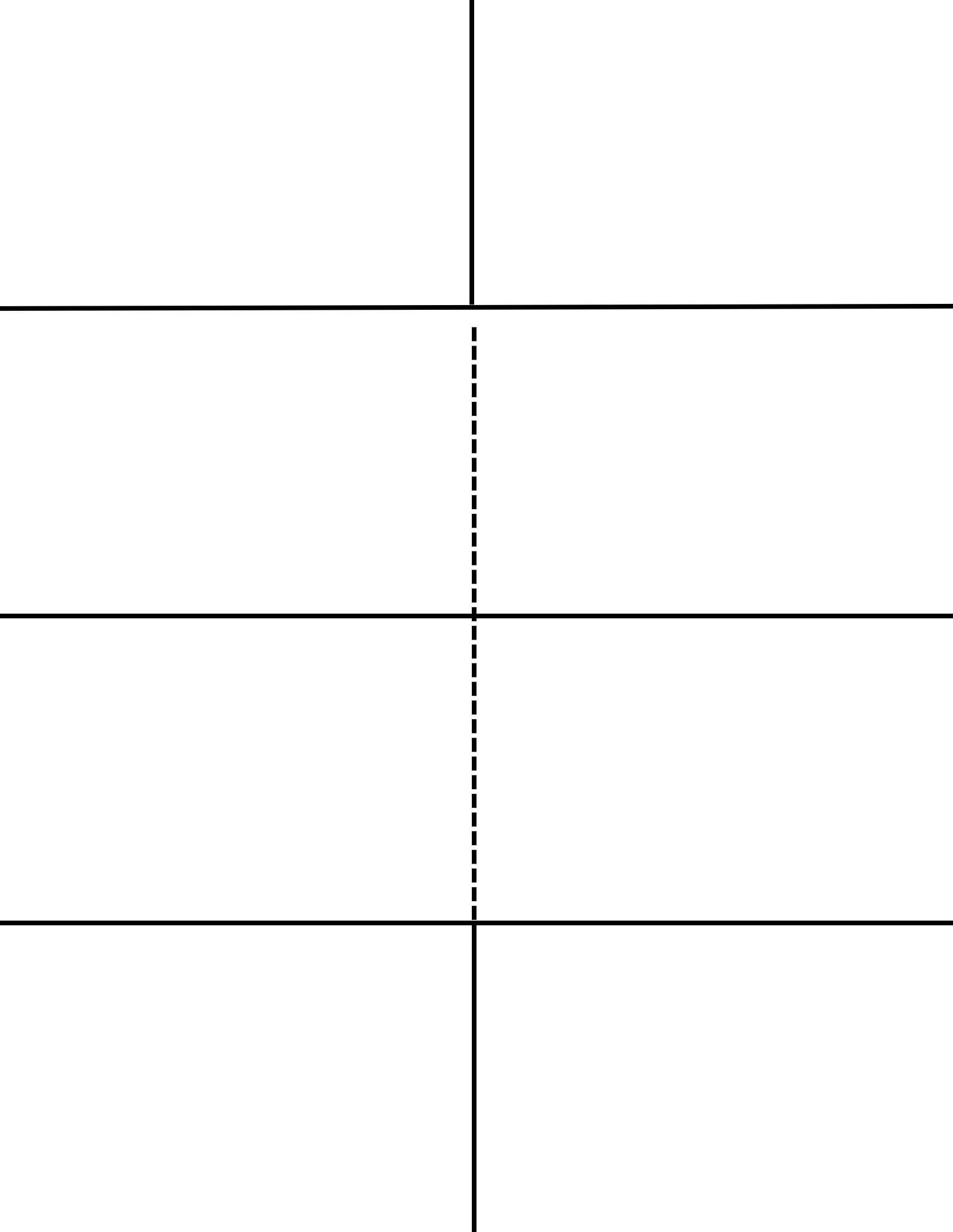
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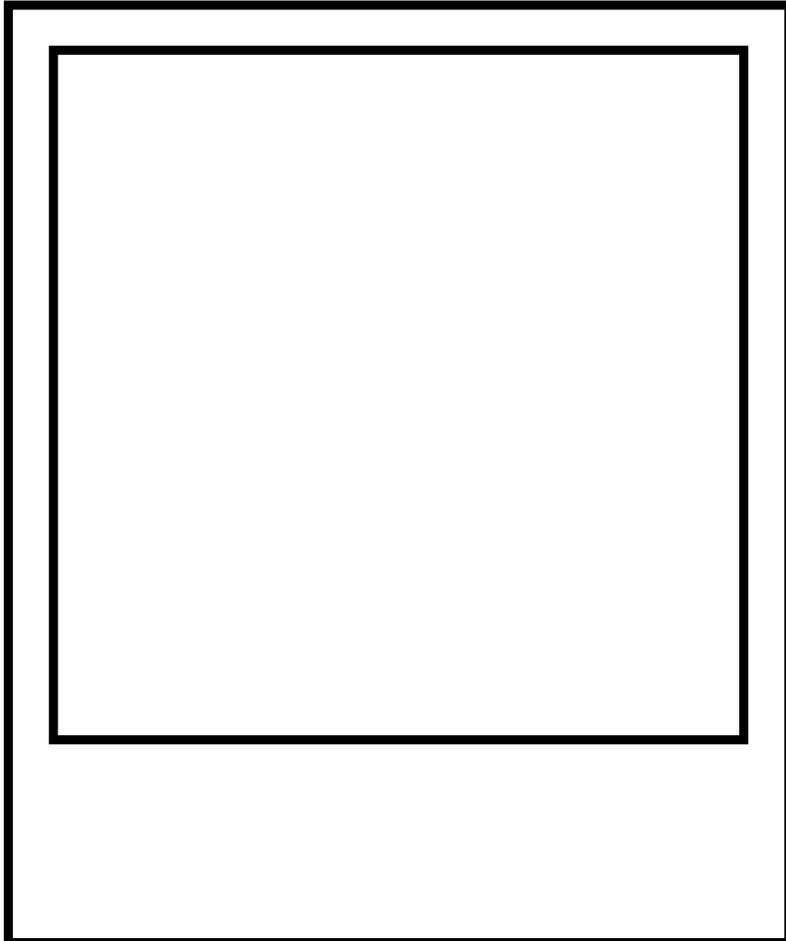
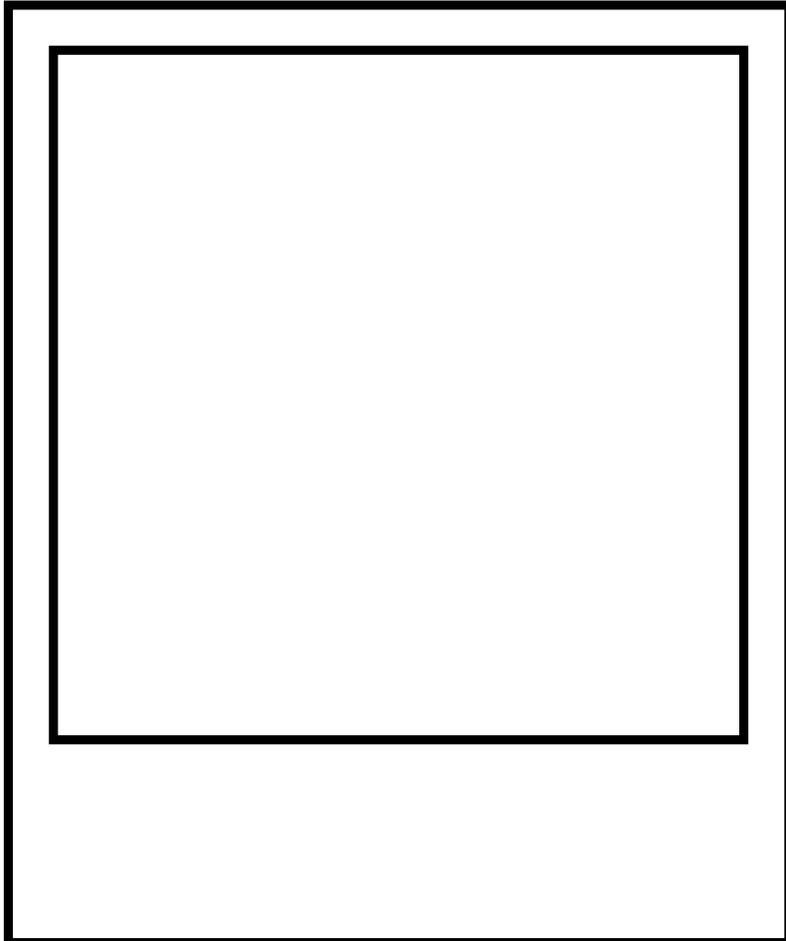
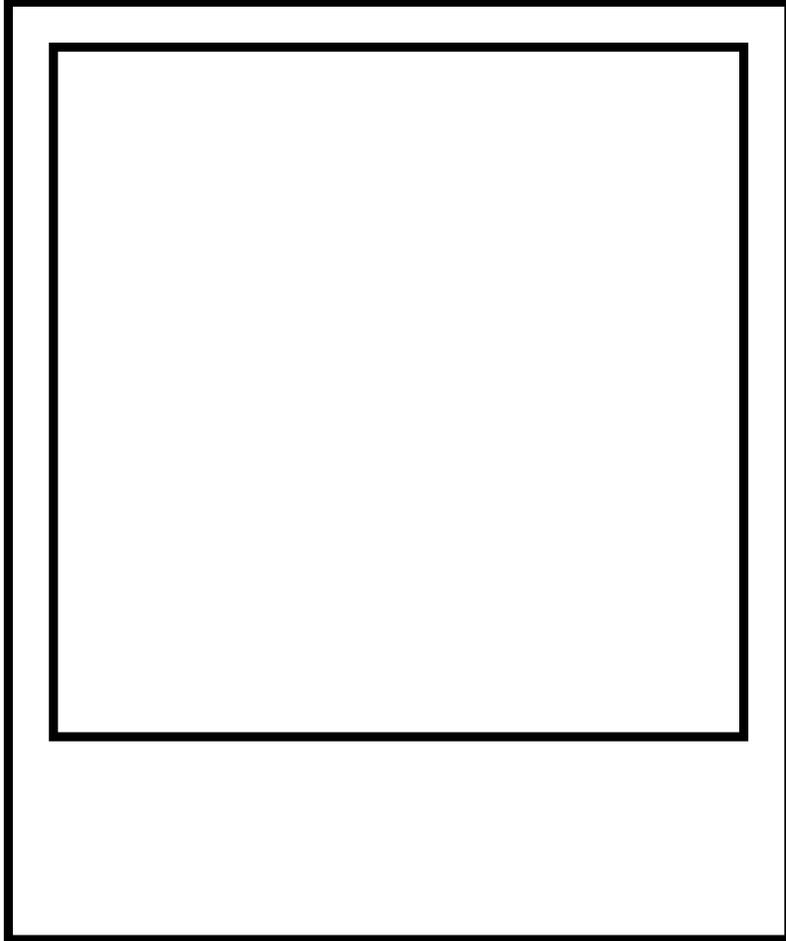
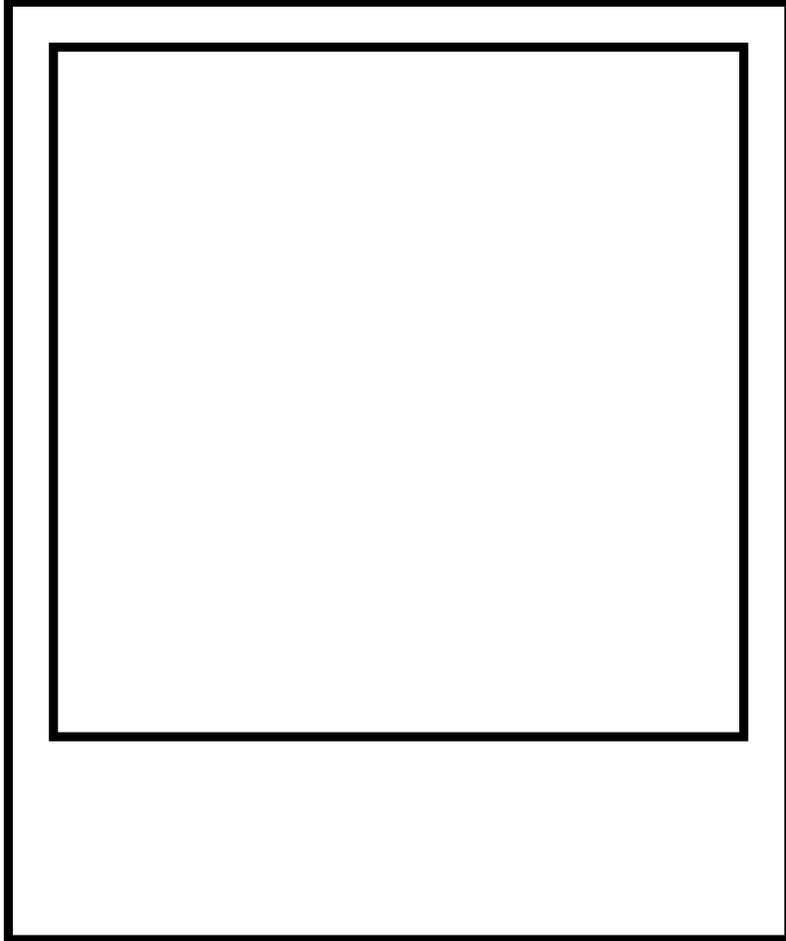
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