



YOUR GUIDE TO

The Book of
Shadows

Should you keep your Book of Shadows public or private?

Whether you choose to keep your Book of Shadows private or public is up to you.

What many witches do is keep multiple Books of Shadows: a private and a public one, or multiple versions containing different sections.

The wisdom in keeping multiple Books of Shadows is that it would be easier to find the information you need, when you need them. And of course, if you are a part of a coven, you share one public Book of Shadows, where the laws, ethics, herbal and healing lore, spells, divination methods, chants, and so on are kept.

PUBLIC BOS

In a coven, a Book of Shadows is made public and is passed from initiator to initiate. It was customary to have the new witch hand-copy the copy of the High Priest or High Priestess, but nowadays, securing a digital copy is not unheard of.

This is the system in covens that's proved to be necessary to pass down the tradition of Wicca to the newcomers and serve as a point of learning and understanding.

There are also Books of Shadows that have been acquired and passed on from one generation to the next, like *High Magic's Aid* (1949) by Gerald B. Gardner and *Ardia, Gospel of the Witches* (1899) by Charles Godfrey Leland.

PRIVATE BOS

For those who practice solitary, the Book of Shadows is highly personal and private. A solitary's Book of Shadows is kind of like a diary or a journal. So sharing it is out of the question, or you may share it but it's akin to undressing before someone.

Still similar in most functions to the public Book of Shadows, it serves as a point of learning and understanding. Traditionally, a person's Book of Shadows is burned upon his or her death, but some are kept as remembrances or for historical significance.



CREATING YOUR OWN BOOK OF SHADOWS

Your Book of Shadows can either be physical or digital. Opting for the digital type can make you miss out on the strong connection you can make to an actual and handwritten Book of Shadows.

If you are interested in the physical type and don't know how to start, I will teach you the basic things that you should include in your Book of Shadows:

- 1. Begin with a blank notebook.** You can opt for the binder type and even buy sheet protectors to prevent candle drippings from damaging the pages.
- 2. First and foremost, write down your name** in your title page. Fancy lettering or block lettering, it depends on you.
- 3. Lay down a statement of your beliefs:** what do you believe in? Who are your gods and goddesses? What laws to do follow? Do you believe in casting spells or just practice ritualistic worship?
- 4. If you do cast spells, write down those you have created** and make sure to put the date when you created them.
- 5. Write down the rituals** you perform. If you do them under specific moon phases, then state that too.
- 6. Write down all Sabbats** that you celebrate and the rituals you use.
- 7. Next, write down your incantations,** chants, stories, and reflections that you can make use of and look back on.
- 8. You should also put in your correspondences like gemstones, colors, herbs etc.** This will serve as your reference until that time comes when you have learned them by heart.
- 9. Finally, make a table of contents** to help you reach pages quickly. It is very important. This book will be your companion and should make things easier for you. Do everything you can to fulfil that need.

Remember that your Book of Shadows is a sacred tool, along with the other tools on your altar. This means it should be cleansed and consecrated as well.

In making your Book of Shadows, choose the method which best suits you. This is yours to keep and to share as you please.



How To Structure Your Book of Shadows

Your Book of Shadows is an invaluable resource you will be returning to during those times when your memory fails you. Writing down your insights, realizations, and experience and being able to go back to them from time to time is good breeding ground for deep insight into your spiritual revolution.

Keeping a very organized Book of Shadows will go a long way in helping you out in your Wicca learning.

One tip is to make a Table of Contents or using colored tabs to mark sections in your book.

Here are some of the information that you should include in your Book of Shadows:

The first page of your Book of Shadows should be kept blank.

Rules to live by:

This can mean The Wiccan Rede, The Seven Hermetic Principles, and The Delphic Maxims.

Holy Days and Rites of Passage:

This can mean the Sabbats, monthly passages, and moon phases that you celebrate. This is where you write down their significance to you and the rituals you perform to celebrate them.



Correspondences:

Keeping a table of correspondence for colors, gems, or herbs will provide a quick reference point which will be very helpful to you in your spell casting or other magickal workings.

Spells:

This is where you write down the spells before you perform them, and where you go back when you need to perform them again. It is going to be very challenging to remember all spells perfectly, so writing them down is a very wise decision.

Recipes:

This is where you write down the food recipes and herbal concoctions used in celebrating special occasions. For example, ritual wines, pumpkin soup and cakes.

Crafts:

Many witches like to make their own candles, soaps, scents, parchment paper, and other magickal tools. If you're one of them, then writing down their instructions will help you a great deal.

Chants:

It is nearly impossible to memorize all chants in all spells we perform. So you should have your very own section for chants, and it should state where and when you should use them.

Reading Material:

Here you will chart all the reading materials you used in your learning. Write down special lessons each has taught you for when you want to go back to them in the future.

Or maybe something about what the author said struck a chord with you and the time has not yet come for you to fully understand the meaning of it. You can research and do further reading about it. This is how deep learning happens.

Dreams:

Though not everyone needs to have this in their Book of Shadows. Many keep a separate dream journal. Keeping record of recurring dreams and even disturbing ones will be really helpful when you try to string together what they're trying to tell you. Sometimes the answers just come to you at some point in the future.

When your Book of Shadows are in its last few blank pages, don't be afraid to start with a new one. Now that you have the basics down pat, you can move seamlessly from one Book of Shadows to another, building a collection of your learning, experiences, insight, and ultimately your magickal evolution.

Here are two samples of the flow in other witches' Book of Shadows:

BOS SAMPLE 1

1. Dedication
2. Protection Spell
3. Blessing
4. Table of Contents
5. Glossary of Terms
6. Honored Traditions
7. Rules and Ethics to Live By
8. Belief System
9. Herbalism
10. Correspondence Chart
11. Crafts
12. List of Books and Sacred Texts
13. Divination Studies
14. Sabbats
15. Rituals
16. Spells
17. Invocations, Prayers, Blessings
18. Healing Studies

BOS SAMPLE 2

1. Book Title and Date
2. Blessing
3. General Index
4. Sections:
5. Rules and Principles
6. Goals and Aspirations
7. Dreams
8. Divination
9. Research
10. Experiences
11. Spells and Prayers
12. Rituals and Ceremonies
13. Herbal Remedies and Potions
14. Closing

How To Cleanse And Consecrate Your Book of Shadows



Before using your Book of Shadows, it is very important to cleanse it first.

You need to get rid of the past mundane and negative energies it has gathered from the places it had been in, and people who've held it before.

The best time to cleanse your Book of Shadows is on the night of the New Moon. There are two ways to go about cleansing your Book of Shadows:

Using A Smudge Stick

Place a purple cloth on your altar and a representation of each of the four elements at each of the four directions. A pentacle should sit in the middle of it all.

You may use incense to represent the element of Air, a candle to represent the element of Fire, a bowl to represent the element of Water, and sea salt to represent the element of Earth. You are also going to make use of a smudge stick in this ritual.

Stand before your altar. Relax your mind and body by taking deep breaths. Focus on the purpose of your ritual. Then, cast a circle of protection around you. Light the smudge stick and place it in the center of your altar and hold the Book of Shadows over it.

Let the book pass through the smoke wafting from the smudge stick. Visualize the book being cleansed of past energies by every passing of the smoke.

Once you start feeling the book become lighter, place the book right in the pentacle. **Repeat the process for every day of the week.**

Using Sea Salt

Spread out a cloth in front of you. Light a candle to represent the Divine. Take some chunky sea salt and sprinkle it on your Book of Shadows, front and back. Let the cloth catch the excess.

Say the following:

*“By the power of the Earth and the living waters of the Goddess, let this book be cleansed
By the blood of the Mother Creatrix, let this book be sanctified
Blessed Be!”*

You can even use your own words as long as you retain the meaning of the words. When the purification is complete, say thanks to the Divine after performing this cleansing ritual.

Consecration

Consecrating your Book of Shadows means charging it with your own personal energy, as well as the energy of the four elements and the deities you worship.

This way, your Book of Shadows can only be accessed by you and those who are of your blood-line and make use of the rituals, spells, potions, and magickal knowledge.

On the night of the Full Moon is the right time to consecrate your Book of Shadows. You are going to need sea salt, rainwater, your choice of incense and essential oil, a red candle, and white candles. Cast a circle of protection around you.

Create a hollow circle of salt around your Book of Shadows.

Say the following:

*“Element of Earth, I call upon you now,
Bless this book with your sacred power.
May this Book of Shadows be blessed
in your name,
and charged with the gift of the body.”*

Light the red candle of Fire and place it close enough to your Book of Shadows that it illuminates it.

Say:

*“Element of Air, I call upon you now,
Bless this book with your sacred power.
May this Book of Shadows be blessed
in your name,
and be charged with the gift of the mind.”*

Sprinkle rainwater around the Book of Shadows and put three drops on the cover.

Say the following:

*“Element of Water, I call upon you now,
Bless this book with your sacred power.
May this Book of Shadows be blessed
in your name,
and charged with the gift of emotions.”*

Light the white candles on your altar.

This will illuminate the book some more, to make way for the next action, which is writing the title page of your Book of Shadows.

Once you are done writing the title page, light the incense and let the smoke touch every part of the book, from the cover to the pages inside. Then, anoint the cover using the essential oil. Trace with it the image of a pentacle.

Finally, open your Book of Shadows and affix your magickal name.

Press the book against your chest and let yourself be overcome with your thoughts and feelings.

Kiss the cover of your Book of Shadows.



History Of The Book Of Shadows

The Book Of Shadows, also referred to as the “Book Of Magick” is a very sacred object to a witch. Just hearing it conjures up images of Wicca and witchcraft.

This is where she or he writes down and records all personal notes, spells, potions, incantations, rituals, thoughts, dreams, aspirations, interpretations, and reflections. It is like a diary of sorts.

There is really no hard rule as to what to place in your Book of Shadows.

Just as in Wicca, there is no right or wrong. It is very personal in that way that no one can dictate what you put in it. You can use it as your daily diary, or you can store just specific information in it.

History

There is a constant debate as to when witches began using books of shadows. Some say they had been around since the Middle Ages, in the form of runic alphabets; while some say their use started in the 14th or 15th century.

Two of the most well known mythical Books of Shadows are the Golden Grimoire, owned by Merlin the Magician; and the Golden Grimoire, owned by the world’s very first witch.

In the 1800s, the term “Book of Light and Shadows” became a popular term, pertaining to the spiritual information contained within.

Today, the most commonly used term is “Book of Shadows.”



Your Own Book of Shadows

Just as personal as what you write in it, is what can become your Book of Shadows. It can be a spiral notebook, a non-spiral notebook, a journal, a

binder, or a beautifully handcrafted piece of leather bound notebook.

There are notebooks specifically designed for the purpose of being a Book of Shadows. There are just so many options out there. Plus, there is the option of making your own Book of Shadows.



• YOUR ONE STOP WICCAN SHOP •