

# Smart Dummies 2018

## Planner/Workbook

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## Table of Contents

Title Page & Table of Contents	Page	1
Thank You	Page	2
Critique Group Guide	Page	3
Smart Dummies Schedule	Page	4
What is a Dummy, Story & Plan Your Pages	Page	5
Research & Copyright	Page	6
Doodling	Page	7
Start Your Characters!	Pages	8-9
Full Character Designs	Pages	10-11
Expressions	Pages	12-13
Extra Drawing Space	Pages	14-15
Thumbnails	Pages	16-17
Substrate	Page	18
Drafts, Dummy Drawings and a Final on Finals	Page	19
Layout	Pages	10-21
Planner Aug. - Sept.	Pages	22-39
Glossary of Terms	Page	40

# Thank You!

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And everyone who shares and participates in Smart Dummies  
THANK YOU!

# Critique Group Guide

Adapted from Leila Nabih's Guide

## When Starting:

**Introduce Yourself** and include your writing style, illustration level, target audience, genre and other works (published or unpublished). Let people know what you hope to achieve and a synopsis of your manuscript (50 words or less).

**Assign an Admin to the Group.** This person keeps everyone accountable. This is also to make sure everyone gets their work seen, and keeps the peace. It's helpful if they've had critique group experience.

**Determine the Critique Schedule** and decide what you will critique and how you will share your work.

## Remember:

- A good critique is constructive.
- The purpose of a critique group is to receive not only praise, but vital feedback.
- You don't have to take everyone's opinion.
- Don't try to change other people's story. This is not your work.
- If you can't say something nice, then say nothing.
- If someone is being rude, they should get one warning. The admin should remove them if they pursue bad behavior!
- You can leave a group if you don't feel like you fit in.

**This is an experience that's supposed to be instructive and fun!**

## Smart Dummies Regular

(September only) Referred to as **Reg.** on Planner

Aug. 25th: Last Day to Request a Critique Group!

Sept. 1: Plan Your Pages (page 4)

Sept. 2: Research Images and Doodle (pages 6-7)

Sept. 3-7: Start Your Characters! (pages 8-9)

Sept. 8-10: Full Character Designs for all characters (pages 10-11)

Sept. 11-13: Emotions and Poses (pages 12-13)

Sept. 14: Thumbnails (pages 16-17)

Sept. 13: Create loose drawings. (page 19)

Sept. 15-30: Finish an average of 2 drawings per day.

Sept. 24: Stepping Back (page 5)

Sept. 25: \*Optional\* Traditional artists: prepare substrate (page 18)

Sept. 25-30: \*Optional\* Create 1-2 finished spreads. (page 19)

Sept. 30: Scan in images if working traditionally.

## Smart Dummies Adjusted

(Adjusted for Aug.& Sept.) Referred to as **Adj.** on Planner

Aug.1: Plan Out Pages (page 4)

Aug. 2-4: Research Images (page 6)

Aug. 5-6: Doodle (page 7)

Aug.7-11: Start Your Characters! (pages 8-9)

Aug.12-18: Full Character Designs for all characters (pages 10-11)

Aug. 19-25: Emotions and Poses (pages 12-13)

Aug. 26-28: Thumbnails (pages 16-17)

Aug. 29-31: Research/photograph more images. (page 6)

Aug. 30-31.: Traditional artists prepare your substrate. (page 18)

Sept. 1-9: Create loose drawings. (page 19)

Sept.10-11: Stepping Back (page 5)

Sept.12-23: Finish an average of 2 drawings per day.

Sept.24: Take phone pictures and edit. (page 5)

Sept.25: \*Optional\* Transfer images onto substrates.

Sept. 25-30: \*Optional\* Create 1-2 finished spreads. (page 19)

Sept. 30: Scan in images if working traditionally.

These dates are guidelines -- if you are done sooner feel free to work ahead!

## What is a Dummy?

In the case of Smart Dummies a dummy is a sample of an illustrated draft of your book. Dummies for picture books generally have 24-28 illustrated pages. Of those, 2-4 of them (sometimes 6) are fully realized illustrations while the rest are loosely illustrated in pencil (or any B&W medium). To win Smart Dummies you need at least 24 images. You do not need to work on a Picture Book! Any kidlit (Board book - YA and Graphic Novels) is acceptable.

## Story:

You'll need a final draft of your story. You do NOT want to make edits or write while working on a dummy, as it will slow your progress!

If you are not a writer then choose a Public Domain book, poem or song that's in the public domain (not copyrighted). Try to come up with a fresh angle on an old story (eg: Steam Punk Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood underwater).

## Plan Your Pages:

Here's where you mark up your manuscript. Separate your story into 24-28 illustrated pages. This should be a mix of single pages, spreads, full page illustrations and spot illustrations. Create a mock-up to make sure your story flows correctly. If you have ideas for illustrations make notes (or drawings) directly on your manuscript. The descriptions or the pictures you create will help you in the next steps. Picture books generally start between pages 3 & 6.

## Stepping Back:

Analyze your drawings from a few feet away. Use this time to plan your next steps. Taking phone pictures helps but shouldn't be your only way to check your work!

## Research:

This is not a one and done situation. You may find yourself coming back to this step several times before you are done. Start with on-line reference before thumbnails and take pictures after thumbnails are done.

Collect images that will be useful when drawing. Take photos of places and things you want in your book. It can be difficult to find reference for certain poses/places online so if possible take pictures of children you know (only children you have permission to photograph).

It may help you to have a model release form where the signer gives you permission to use their likeness. Many friends and family members may jump at the chance of having a likeness of their child in a book. Even so, it helps to ask before taking pictures.

Take lots of pictures! Most people have decent cameras on their phones. If not, borrow a friend's camera to take pictures. Remember that photographers take more pictures than they need so they can get that perfect image. You don't need everything in focus, but you may need to take 100 photos to get 10 that you can use.

## The Copyright Issue:

You may not use other people's photos (or illustrations) as direct reference. You can't take a photo someone else made, paint over it and call it yours. This is stealing. Not only that, but you can get blacklisted by editors for using images that aren't yours. If you are using photo references from other people you need to combine at least 3 images (and preferably more) to create an original image.

If you are drawing a child, take facial features from several different children. If you are creating scenery, then take ideas from different scenes. Images can be copyrighted but poses can not be (in most cases). If you aren't sure if you are breaking copyright, then ask someone! Better to be safe than sorry.

## Doodling:

This is a space where you can just have fun. Draw from your research or draw from your imagination. You can only fail if you don't put lines on the page! (Even then you can't fail.)

# Start Your Characters!

Character designs should be simple so you can draw the image over and over. Play around with the sizes & shapes of the body, head and features. If possible use simple shapes. Use this space to draw some character ideas!



# Emotions and Poses

Be sure to try out different expression on you characters. Know how they look when they are happy, angry, sad, bored, ect. Make sure that both big and subtle expressions are clearly defined. Draw these characters in different poses, angles and sizes.

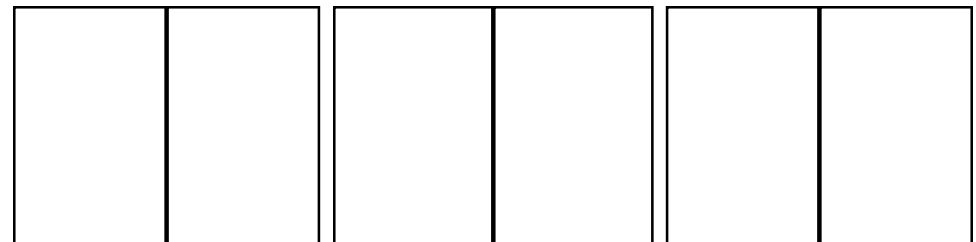
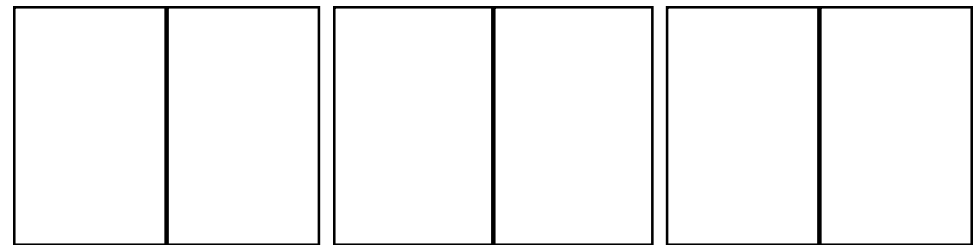
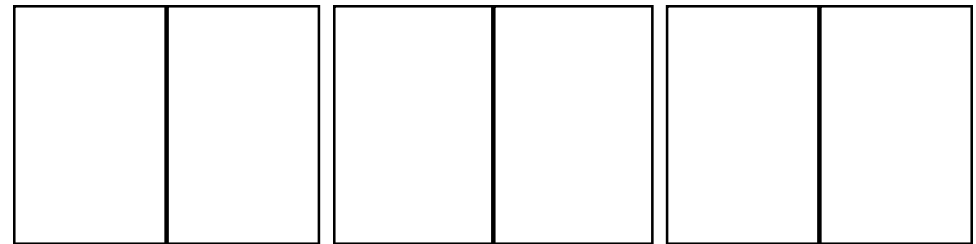
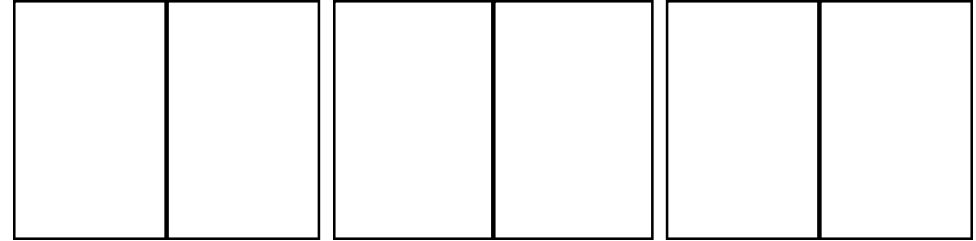
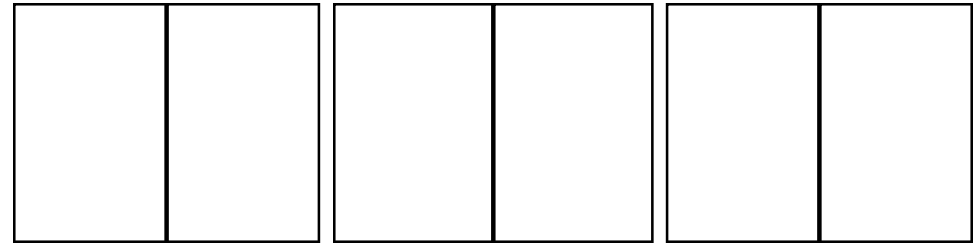
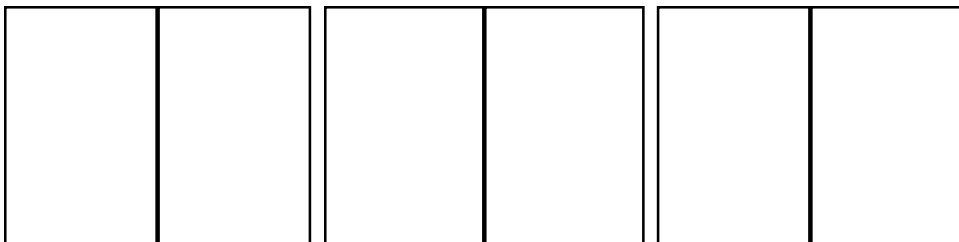
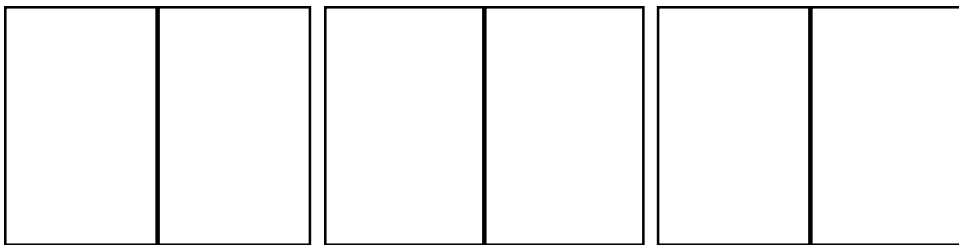
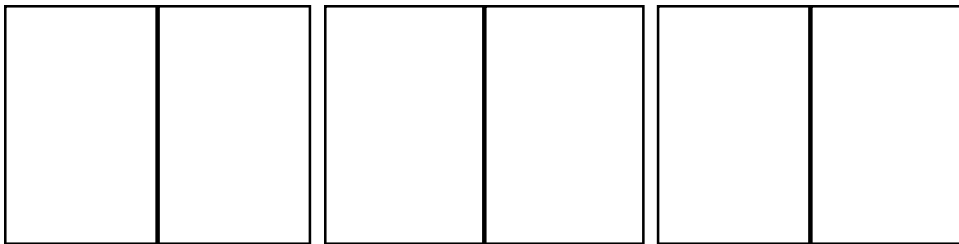
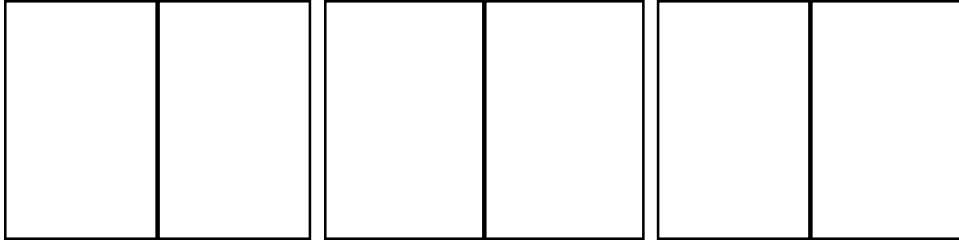
# Extra Drawing Space

Fill this space with whatever doesn't fit anywhere else!



# Thumbnails

Thumbnails are small drawings around the size of the tip of a thumb. The average thumbnail is usually no bigger than 1"x1.5" drawings (these are a bit smaller). They are to give you an idea of what your scene will look like. The scenes in your story should be action scenes. Catch your character doing something. The best illustrations show what happens just before or after the text. You only need 12-14 spreads, but here are extras!



## Substrate:

A substrate, in art, is the surface you work on to create your art. In this case it's the substrates for your final images you are preparing. This is particularly important in traditional art. If you are creating an 8x10" book you will need a 20 x 14" substrate if you are working on paper. (Pages 18 & 19 cover the layout in detail.)

Stretched canvas paintings and digital images don't need masking areas or crop marks in most cases. You may choose to mask off your paintings if you like, however you may consider how your work will be framed/look on the canvas after you are finished. In most cases you would not consider this, but those that work on canvas generally keep and display their work on the wooden frame.

**Digital images** should have the bleeds included. So if you are creating a spread for an 8x10" book, your image should be 16.5 x 10.5 and 300 DPI. (Always make your images 300 PPI+.) You may want to make the image even larger for printing at a larger size.

In most cases you need 2 final spreads (sometimes 3). It usually depends on the editor or agent to how much work they want to see. You should do at least one full spread. The other images should be a mix of full, half and spot illustrations.

Prepare more substrates than you need. There is always a chance you will make a mistake. The worst that's going to happen is you already have extra paper/canvases prepped for work.

## Practice:

Practice drawing things at different sizes/angles. Remember movies you've seen and the camera angles they use. Characters can be filmed close up, far away, above, below etc. Your characters shouldn't be lined up in a row. Characters can appear bigger or smaller depending on where they are placed in a scene.

# Stop!

This is the most you can do before September 1st!

## Loose Drawings:

This may be one step before your "final" dummy illustration. There are many different ways to create drawings. I end up with several drafts of my work before I even think of taking them into finals. These will be bigger than your thumbnails but can be just as loose (whatever works for you). I've known people who suggest using note cards for your drawings to keep the looseness of your thumbnails but at a bigger size!

## Dummy Drawings:

Dummy drawings are typically loose drawings. The images must be recognizable, but they can be sketchy. Search online for "picture book dummy art" so you can see a range of work. This applies to all genres!

## Final on Finals:

Use a medium and substrate you are comfortable with when you are in a time crunch. Switching to something you're uncomfortable with may make it very difficult for you to finish. If you do make a mistake (that you don't think you can fix) set aside your final and come back to it later. Sometimes something "un-fixable" can be fixed with a good night's sleep or a little time to think!

# Layout

Here is a sample of how you would lay out a spread for an 8x10" book. The canvas size is 14"x20" and the actual image area is 10.5" x 16.5". The image to the right is on it's side. All marks (except Crop Marks should be done in pencil).

If you are creating an image digitally the image must be at least 300ppi. You can up the ppi if you want to create larger than actual size prints of your image.

The areas that are gray and white will be filled with your image.

**Masking area** - This is about 2" around your image so handlers (typically the printer) avoid getting your work smudgy. Mask this area off with masking tape. I recommend using tissue paper on anything the tape doesn't cover (including the back).

**Bleed** - This overlaps 1/4" into your 2" border. Your image needs to go out into this area. The bleed will be trimmed off your final book. You need the bleed on this (and anything you are printing) so that your image goes to the edge of the pages. Keep anything important 1/4" away from the bleeds and gutter.

**Gutter** - Unlike the bleed, this 1/2" area will not be cut from your work. Do not put anything important in this area! In a picture book this area will likely not be seen (or seen well) because the inside of the picture is bound here.

**Crop Marks** - This is where the printer will cut your image. This will be marked in black ink when you send out your final images.

Measure your image carefully when laying out your image. A #2 mechanical pencil works well for layout work. Draw your lines lightly. The image on the next page shows more clearly where you need to make your pencil marks. Crop marks are traditionally created in ink though often are made digitally after scanning artwork.

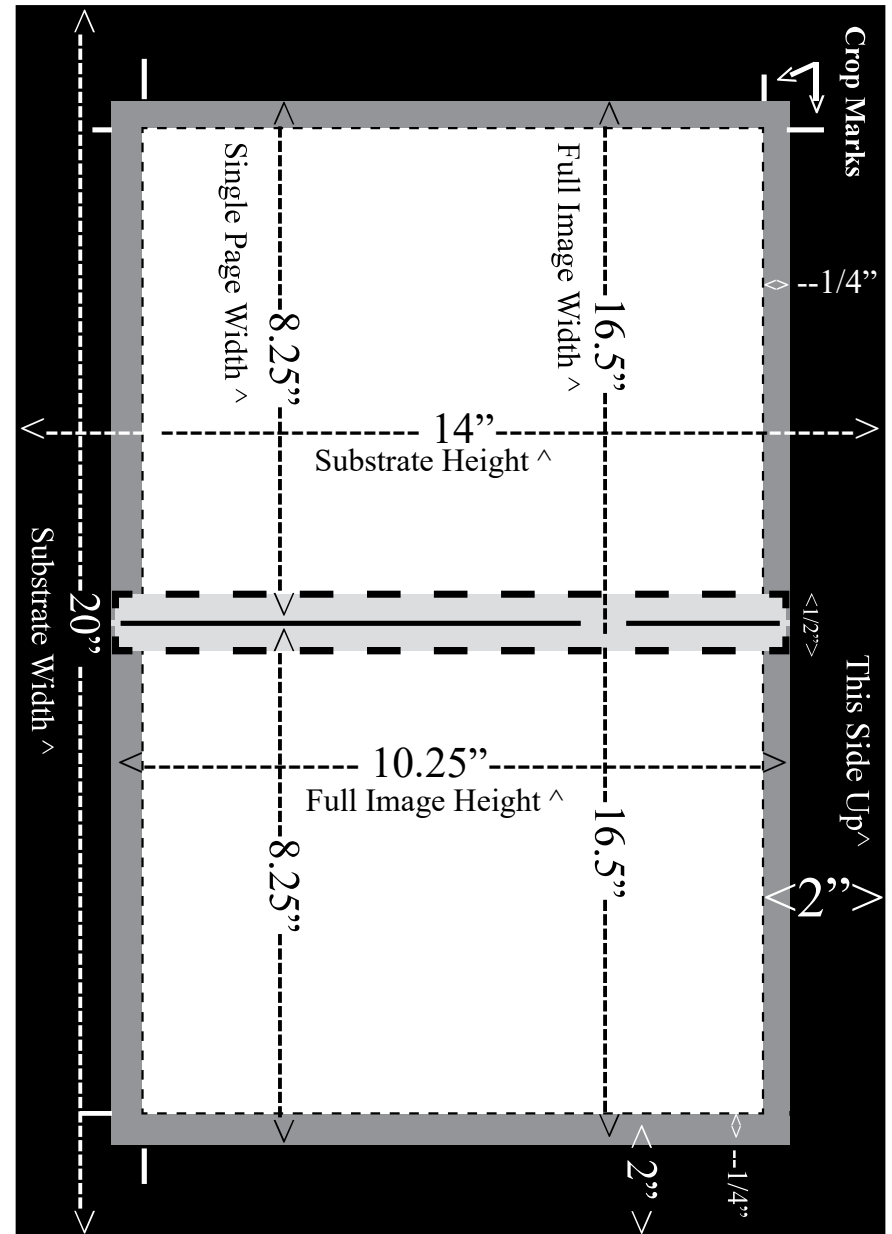
Layout for an 8x10" Book

Black ■ = Handling Area

Dark Gray ■ = Bleed

Light Gray ■ = Gutter

Diagram is not to scale.



See Glossary on page 40 for more terms.

# July/August

Adj. Plan out Pages, Research *Read through page 6*

Aug./Sept. = **Adj.** for Adjusted Sept. only = **Reg.** for Regular

Sunday July 29

Thursday 2 **Adj. Research**

Monday 30

Friday 3

Tuesday 31

Saturday 4

Wednesday 1 **Pre-Smart Dummies Starts Today!**

**Adj. Plan out Pages**

Notes:

# August

Adj. Doodle, Start Your Characters *work on page 7-9*

Sunday 5

Adj. Doodle

Thursday 9

Monday 6

Friday 10

Tuesday 7

Adj. Start Your Characters

Saturday 11

Wednesday 8

Notes:

# August

Adj. All Week: Full Character Designs *work on pages 10 - 11*

Sunday 12

Adj. Full Character Designs

Thursday 16

Monday 13

Friday 17

Tuesday 14

Saturday 18

Wednesday 15

Notes:

# August

Adj. All week: Emotions and Poses *work on pages 12 - 13*

Sunday 19

Adj. Emotions and Poses

Thursday 23

Monday 20

Friday 24

Tuesday 21

Saturday 25

Wednesday 22

Notes:

# August/September

**Reg.** Plan out your Pages, *Read and do work through page 5*  
**Adj:** Thumbnails, Research, \*Optional\* Prepare Substrate & Loose Drawings *pages 16-19*

Sunday 26

**Adj.** Thumbnails

Thursday 30

**Adj.** Substrates

Monday 27

Friday 31

Tuesday 28

Saturday 1 **Smart Dummies 2018 starts today!**

**Reg.** Plan Your Pages | **Adj.** Loose Drawings

Wednesday 29

**Adj.** Extra Research/Photos

Notes:



# September

**Reg.** Research, Start Your Characters! and Start Full Character Designs *Read and do work through page 11*

**Adj:** Continue Loose Drawings see *page 19*

Sunday 2

**Reg:** Research

**Adj.** Loose Drawings

Thursday 6

Monday 3

**Reg:** Start Your Characters

Friday 7

Tuesday 4

Saturday 8

**Reg.** Full Character Designs

Wednesday 5

Notes:

# September

**Reg.** Emotions and Poses, Thumbnails and start Loose Drawings  
*Read and do work through page 19*

**Adj:** Stepping Back see page 5

**Both:** Dummy Drawings *finish 2 images a day, see Page 19*

Sunday 9

Thursday 13

**Reg.** Thumbnails

Monday 10

**Adj.** Stepping Back

Friday 14

**Reg.** Loose Drawings

Tuesday 11

**Reg.** Emotions/Poses

Saturday 15

**Reg.** Dummy Drawings

Wednesday 12

**Adj.** Finish Dummy Drawings

Notes:

# September

Both: All week: Continue Making Final Dummy Drawings

Sunday 16

Thursday 20

Monday 17

Friday 21

Tuesday 18

Saturday 22

Wednesday 19

Notes:

# September

**Reg.** \*Optional\* Substrates if needed. *Read and do work through page 11.*

**Both:** Stepping Back see *page 5.* \*Optional Final Illustrations\* Scan artwork *page 19.*

Sunday 23

Thursday 27

Monday 24

**Both:** Stepping Back/Take Photos

Friday 28

Tuesday 25

**Both:** \*Optional\* Final Illustrations

Saturday 29

**Reg:** Substrates

Wednesday 26

Sunday 30

**Both:** Scan Artwork

# Glossary of Terms:

Spread: A spread is two pages that face each other in a book.

Full Spread: A spread that has a single illustration that covers two facing pages.

Full-Page Illustration: An illustration that covers a full page.

Half-Page Illustration: An illustration that covers only half a page.

Spot Illustration: An illustration that floats in the center of the page (they do not touch any of the edges of the page. They may or may not have much background. Usually these are very small and often circular/elliptical in shape.

Full-Bleed Image: Your image goes to the edge and bleeds 1/4" over the edge of the page. Think of it as actual blood. Blood does not stay in the wound, nor does your full bleed images!

No Bleed image: Your images are at least 1/4" away from the edges of the pages.

Crop: The size an image is cut to from it's original size.

PPI: Pixels Per Inch. Term used instead of DPI (Dots Per Inch) when the document size is not specified.

## **Thank you for being a part of Smart Dummies in 2018!**

Please do not edit any part of this booklet, or distribute it in full or part, for any reason without written permission by Dani Duck. This booklet is meant only for use for the Smart Dummies Challenge and is free to those wanting to create their dummy for this event.