

Print Your Library Cards with Alexandria

Tip for: 02.20.18

There's a newer version of this tip here: [Summer tip: how to print library cards](#)

Did you know you could print library cards using an Alexandria report?

Here's an overview of

1. what paper to buy,
2. how to set up the report,
3. how to print, and
4. how to laminate the cards.

What paper to buy

We recommend [Business Cards 250 count: Avery 5371, 2" x 3 1/2"](#). These are standard card stock business cards. The report is designed for these. You can also use [Mailing labels 250 count: Avery 8163, 2" x 4"](#). These are stickers, if you want to place the library cards on a blank card or student book. There will be a little extra margin space on these.

How to set up the report in v7:

1. In Reports, go to **Patrons > Forms >** and choose the **Library Cards (2x5)** report.
2. Make **Selections** for which patrons you want to print library cards for (e.g. select by Homeroom).
3. Go to the **Options** tab to customize the cards.
4. Choose a library card format with or without the patron picture.
5. Select a field on the card and choose which **Data** you want displayed.
6. For each point of data (except images) you can change:
 - Size—1 or 2 rows
 - Justification—usually centered
 - Color—if you are printing from a colored printer
 - Bold—to make the text stand out

Don't forget to click **Create Saved Report** to save this report and all your settings for later use!

How to set up the report in v6:

1. In Reports, go to **Patrons > Forms >** and choose the **Patron Cards** report.
2. Make **Selections** for which patrons you want to print library cards for (e.g. select by Homeroom).
3. You can also choose to:
 - Include Patron Pictures on the cards
 - Show Patron's Birthday on the cards
 - Hide barcode Number on the cards (the barcode image will still show for scanning)

Don't forget to click **Create New Saved Report** to save this report and all your settings for later use!

How to print:

1. Run the report in Alexandria, then go to Operation Management to download the PDF.
2. Open the PDF in your browser or native application (e.g. Adobe Reader, Preview).
3. Hold your card paper up to the screen to get an idea of how the card is going to look. Then you can make any adjustments in the Report and run it again. (Note you will want the view set to 'Actual Size'.)
4. Follow the instructions on your Avery card package to determine which side of the paper is the front.
5. According to your printer, place the paper in the paper tray. (Usually, you want the 'front' of the labels 'down' in the tray, but this varies.)
6. ...Make sure no one else is about to print on your printer...
7. Back in the PDF, choose a print option. Make sure the **scaling** is set to 100%!
8. We recommend printing a single page to start with. Verify that the cards have printed correctly, and on the correct side.
9. Put in more card paper and print the rest of your library cards!

How to laminate:

- Do you have a laminator? You can purchase laminating machines inexpensively through an office store or [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) (such as this [Scotch Laminator](#) or [Apache Laminator](#)).
 - Laminate the entire sheet of cards, following the instructions of your laminator.
 - Cut them out with a cutter (or scissors).
- Another option is to buy self-sealing laminating pouches, such as these [Scotch Self-Sealing pouches](#).

Tip: Use a hole-punch on the laminated cards so your patrons can wear them around their necks!

Does it work?

Just like with the hand-made ebooks ([see Totw 021717](#)), it all sounds good on the page, but when you go to try it out, things change. So I ran through this experiment for you so I can make the best recommendations.

I confirmed the following:

- It's easy and fast (especially with a cutter, instead of scissors). (If you have hundreds to do, you may want to show someone else how to do the cutting and have them help.)
- If you are on v7 and right-justify your data (with the picture on the left) there is space in the middle to punch a hole. (Although you might run into problems if the patron has a really long name.)
- The cards turn out better when you laminate the whole sheet, then cut them out on the already-marked lines, vs. popping them out and then laminating them (it was more work and they didn't turn out the same size).
- It actually looks pretty good on a black and white printer. ...But I imagine it would look even better with some color!

Here are pictures from my process.

Saved Report Setup (v7)

The screenshot shows a web-based report configuration tool. On the left is a 'Categories' sidebar with options like 'All Reports', 'Patrons', 'Information', 'Account', 'Labels', 'Forms', 'Reviews', 'Usage', 'Lexile', 'Legacy', 'Email', 'Titles', 'Copies', 'Inventory', 'Collection Analysis', 'Circulation', 'Statistics', 'Periodicals', and 'System'. The 'Patrons' category is expanded, showing 'Information', 'Account', 'Labels', and 'Forms'. The 'Forms' category is selected.

The main area is titled 'Reports' and shows 'Library Cards (2x5)'. Below this are tabs for 'Overview', 'Selections', 'Options', 'Schedule', 'Notification', and 'FTP'. The 'Options' tab is active.

Under the 'Options' tab, there are settings for 'Sort by' (Last Name) and 'Format' (With Picture). Below these is a preview of the report card. The card is 3 1/2" wide and 2" high. It features a placeholder for a 'Barcode Image' (a silhouette of a person with a question mark) and text fields for 'First Last Name', 'Barcode Number', 'Site (Name)', and 'Card Issued: 01/24/2018'. To the right of the preview are settings for 'Data' (First Last Name), 'Size' (Large (2 Rows)), 'Justification' (Right), 'Color' (black), and 'Bold' (checked).

At the bottom right of the main area is a 'Run' button.

Printer setup (Mac)

Using this paper

The image's data is missing.

The printed cards

The image's data is missing.

The laminator at work

Your browser does not support the HTML5 video element

Laminated sheet

The image's data is missing.

V1 cards

The image's data is missing.

Here's the PDF

Cards in the laminator sheet

The image's data is missing.

Cutting out the (v2) cards

The image's data is missing.

V2 cards with hole punch

The image's data is missing.

Did you try it?

Tell us about it! I want to see what you came up with, and hear what tips you might have—and I'm sure everyone else would too. Send a message and pictures to tipoftheweek@goalexandria.com to share!