RIVER BIRCH BOOKS · FREE PRINTABLE

Shelf styling cheat sheet

Measure, pick colors, style.
riverbirchbooks.com/shelf-styling-cheat-sheet

1. Measure

Shelf inches × fill ÷ 12 = feet of books

LOOK	FILL	FEELS
Staging a listing	0.5	half full, calm and roomy
Everyday styled shelves	0.6	the most common look
Fuller, collected shelves	0.75	a library feel

Example: five 30-in. shelves = 150 in. × 0.6 ÷ 12 ≈ 7½ feet, so plan on about 8.

2. Quick reference

1 foot of books	about 10–12 books, standing upright
Shelf stack	5 books, about 6–9 in. tall stacked flat
Styled 30-in., five-shelf bookcase	about 6–8 feet in total
Pair of fireplace built-ins	about 15–20 feet
Mantel, coffee table or console	one five-book stack each

3. Pick colors: 60 / 30 / 10

About 60% main color, 30% supporting color and 10% accent. Pull colors from the sofa, rug or paint. Cream and tan suit almost any room; a little navy or charcoal adds depth.

ROOM	TRY
Living room	Dunes Cream & Ivory + Driftwood Tan & Soft Brown
Coastal home or rental	Sandbridge Navy & Cream + Tidewater Navy & Blue
Sunroom, bath or nursery	Sea Glass Aqua & Soft Blue-Green + Dunes Cream & Ivory
Home office	Storm Black & Charcoal + Tidewater Navy & Blue
Den, study or dining room	Autumn Oak Burgundy, Rust & Deep Brown + Driftwood Tan & Soft Brown
Kitchen or garden room	First Day of Spring Green + Dunes Cream & Ivory

4. Style in five steps

1. **Clear and dust.** Start with empty shelves. Wipe them down and dust the books.
2. **Place the big pieces first.** Set the largest objects (a vase, a basket, framed art) before any books.
3. **Alternate runs and stacks.** Mix upright runs of 8–12 books held with bookends and flat stacks of 3–5 books topped with one small object.
4. **Zigzag, don't repeat.** Shift each shelf's arrangement so the same shape doesn't sit directly above itself.
5. **Leave space, then edit.** Keep about a third of each shelf open. Step back, take a phone photo, and remove one thing.

5. Keep them looking good

- Keep books out of direct sun; light fading is cumulative.
- Keep shelved books upright and supported so they don't lean; use bookends.
- The Library of Congress suggests a cool (70°F or below), relatively dry (30–55% relative humidity) spot for most books, away from vents and radiators.

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Palette swatch card

Real hardcover books sorted by spine color.
riverbirchbooks.com/decorative-books

Swatches are approximate. Each palette is a range of related shades sorted by spine color.



Dunes

Cream & Ivory

Soft, sandy neutrals that make any shelf look calm and finished.

Pairs with: Driftwood, Tidewater, Sea Glass



Driftwood

Tan & Soft Brown

Warm, weathered neutrals with the patina of well-loved cloth bindings.

Pairs with: Dunes, Autumn Oak, First Day of Spring



Tidewater

Navy & Blue

Deep harbor blues with a crisp, nautical edge.

Pairs with: Dunes, Sandbridge, Storm



Sea Glass

Aqua & Soft Blue-Green

Washed aqua and soft blue-green, like glass worn smooth by the tide.

Pairs with: Dunes, Driftwood, Tidewater



First Day of Spring

Green

Fresh, leafy greens from sage to moss.

Pairs with: Driftwood, Dunes, Autumn Oak



Storm

Black & Charcoal

Moody, graphic darks for modern and dramatic shelves.

Pairs with: Dunes, Tidewater, Driftwood



Autumn Oak

Burgundy, Rust & Deep Brown

Rich, warm library tones for a cozy, collected look.

Pairs with: Driftwood, First Day of Spring, Storm



Sandbridge

Navy & Cream

A ready-made navy-and-cream mix, the classic coastal pairing.

Pairs with: Tidewater, Dunes, Sea Glass

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