

**148
PAGES**
OF ESSENTIAL
ADVICE

201 PAPERCRAFT QUESTIONS

ANSWERED

Expert advice

Get the latest hints, tips and suggestions for making perfect projects from our team of papercraft professionals

Step-by-step

We guide you through the latest techniques for making fabulous 3D cards with simple steps and fantastic photographs

Easy-to-use index

It couldn't be easier to find the solution to all your papercraft problems with our handy alphabetical index

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MAKE BETTER CARDS WITH EXPERT HELP

**148
PAGES**
OF ESSENTIAL
ADVICE

201 PAPERCRAFT QUESTIONS

VOLUME 1 * NOVEMBER

ANSWERED



STAMPING



PAPER CUTTING



PUNCHING



DIE-CUTTING



COLOURING IN



EMBOSSING



**SPECIAL
OCCASIONS
CARDS**

INCLUDES ✓ Card inspiration ✓ Beginners advice
✓ Step-by-steps ✓ Handy glossary ✓ Top tips & tricks



Find solutions to your cardmaking problems - RIGHT HERE!



love is sweet



WELCOME

VOLUME 1 * NOVEMBER



MARIE PARRY
EDITOR

Whether you're new to papercrafting or are a seasoned pro, every crafter has questions that need answering. You might be learning a new technique, buying kit for your stash, trying the latest inks or attempting to master a fiddly trick that's been bugging you for ages.

Whatever your dilemma, our experts are here to solve all your crafty problems, with a wealth of experience that gives them the knowledge to provide you with just the right solutions! We think you'll find volume 1 of your complete compendium of Q&As indispensable for expanding your skills, planning new projects or solving those niggling papercraft problems.

Marie

P.S. Browse the mag at your leisure, or look up specific questions and answers in our easy-to-use index, which you can find on page 142



Master techniques such as paper mosaics, heat embossing and die-cutting



Learn how to get the best from your papercraft tools, and which ones to buy

201 PAPERCRAFT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

ASK OUR EXPERTS



BEV ROCHESTER is a craft addict who designs professionally for many leading craft companies.



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JANE GILL is an experienced designer and paper crafter who loves to experiment with new techniques.



STEPHANIE MAYNE is a talented designer who loves to share her expert advice with other keen cardmakers.



JO AUSTIN is passionate about all things stamping and can regularly be seen as a guest on Create and Craft TV.



KATINA KILLEY is passionate about designing beautiful cards and is an all-round crafting pro!



SHARON ARMSTRONG PURVIS is an expert designer, well-known for her original creations.

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PAPERCRAFT QUESTIONS

ANSWERED

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Learn how
IN OUR
STEP-BY-STEP
GUIDES



STAMPING

Whether you're trying a new technique or deciding what stamps to buy, follow our handy hints for stamping success

What is shadow stamping and how easy is it to master?

Shadow stamping is the technique of layering stamped images together. It's a fabulous way to add detail and depth to your designs. It's simple to do, and there are a few ways to achieve the effect. One is to use stamps that are made specifically for the purpose. They usually have a base image or background, for example large squares or circles, and smaller

designs that can be stamped on top. There are loads of designs around, so see what your favourite stamp companies offer. You can also get a similar look using just one stamp. Colour it in, then stamp onto card. Stamp again in a contrasting shade, slightly away from the original. You can see this technique here – the image was stamped first in black, then again in blue.



Practise shadow stamping on scrap paper first to find a combination of colours that you love



Q What's the best way to use a stamped greeting as a focal point?



Look for stamps with large-ish greetings in modern fonts. Stamp the greeting onto a die-cut shape and use an embossing folder to give added texture, like in the card pictured here. By keeping the design simple and working with a limited colour palette, you can ensure that the stamped greeting remains the focus of the card. This design will also work well for sentiments and sayings, making sure they are what the card is all about!

For a really modern design, make your stamped greeting or sentiment the focal point of your card

Q What's the best way to clean my rubber stamps after use?

If you're stamping lots of images in succession and are looking for a quick cleaning solution in between, I would suggest using alcohol-free baby wipes. However, once you have finished stamping, you should always give red rubber, cling mount and mounted stamps a more thorough clean using a purpose-made solution. A general rubber stamp cleaner will be sufficient for removing dye or pigment type inks, but for permanent inks you'll need something stronger, like StazOn

Ink Cleaner. As for acrylic stamps, simply use soap and water to remove unwanted ink, scrubbing the hard to reach areas with an old toothbrush.

TOP TIP

Store stamps out of sunlight which can damage the rubber



Q What's the best way to stamp onto acetate without my stamp slipping?

It's worth perfecting the art of stamping onto acetate, as it can give your cards such a luxurious and unique finish. For this technique try using white StazOn, which is an opaque ink. The ink pad comes dry, and you add the white ink to the pad. The ink is quite sticky and it dries pretty quickly, so make sure that you put the lid on as soon as you have finished using it.

When stamping onto acetate dust the surface with an anti-static bag first – this will give you a bit of grip on the acetate. Ink and stamp the design as normal. Because the surface is very glossy you will need to let it dry for 10 mins or so. If you don't have a white ink pad, you can create a dramatic effect using black ink. As long as the ink is permanent, it will stamp well onto acetate.



Stamp flourishes and patterns onto acetate to create really stylish and dramatic card designs

Q What's a good way to make a stamped card that will appeal to young children?



Children love being creative and a card that's interactive is sure to hold their attention. This colour-me-in card is a card and gift in one. Simply find a stamped image that is fairly simple to colour, stamp it onto a piece of white card and let the kids colour it in! Layer it onto a colourful background card, and attach a colouring pen or a couple of crayons to the bottom of this

Keep kids entertained with a stamped image that they can colour in, for a card that's double the fun!

panel by punching holes into the card and tying on the pen with twine. Attach the panel to your base card, add a printed greeting to the side and you have a really fab card that's easy to make and that children of all ages will love.

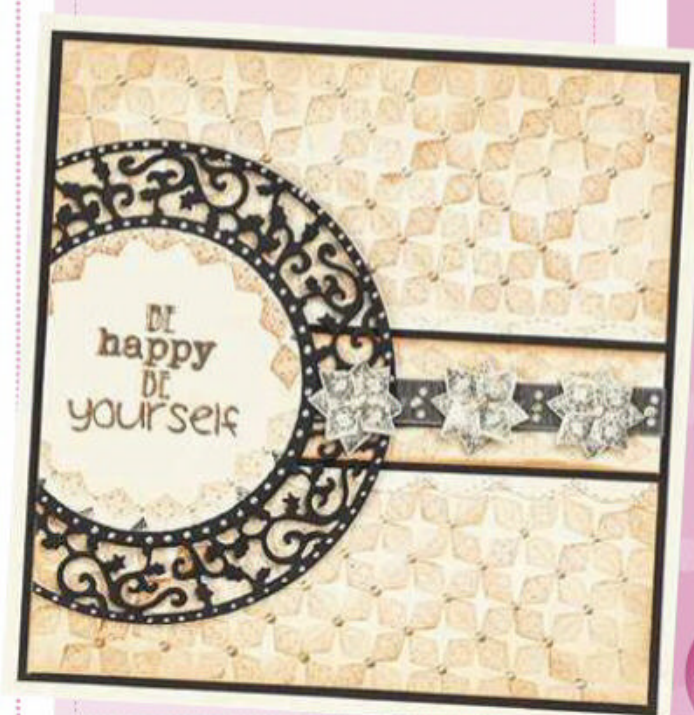
ASK THE EXPERT



JO AUSTIN is passionate about all things stamping and can regularly be seen as a guest on Create and Craft TV.

How do I use a small, fine border stamp?

Border stamps are one of the most versatile stamps you can buy, as often they can be divided up to create smaller individual stamps that can be used in all sorts of interesting and unusual ways. The background of the card pictured here was created using a small selection of the border and repeatedly stamping it across the front of the card in a pale ink shade. The same section of stamp was used to create the border around the greeting. The remainder of the border was used to create a central panel. The flowers were made in the same way as the background except that they were cut out and shaped for a 3D effect.



Q Is it possible to stamp neatly if you have unsteady hands?



To begin with, make sure you have a solid, flat surface to stamp on. When using wood-mounted stamps, place a few pieces of paper onto your craft mat to act as extra padding, as this will help get an even impression. If you're using unmounted stamps with a mounting block it might be worth investing in some rock-a-blocks. These mounting blocks are designed to be

If your hands are a bit shaky, then it's worth investing in special tools to help you stamp a neat and even image

used with a rocking action that gives even pressure to the applied ink so that the stamped images are perfect each time. They work with acrylic and rubber stamps and are available in different sizes. You can buy them online or at your local craft shop.

How do I use flock with rubber stamps without ending up in a sticky mess?

It depends on whether you want to fill in large areas of a stamped design or if you want to flock just the outlines. To fill in larger areas you could try using double-sided sticky paper. Just stamp your design onto the protective paper and cut out the sections that you'd like to flock. Then, stamp your image onto the base card and stick the sticky paper sections in place – like when you are paper piecing. Simply peel-off the top layer of the sticky paper and apply flock to the exposed area.

If you'd like to flock more detailed line images, try using heat and stick powder. Simply ink your stamp with VersaMark ink and stamp out. Sprinkle the heat and stick powder over the top and tap off the excess. Heat with a heat gun to turn the powder into a tacky line of glue, then sprinkle the flock over this glue line and press lightly with your finger. Lightly brush off the excess and return to the pot.



Is the masking technique as tricky as it looks?

Masking techniques are actually pretty easy – you just need to plan carefully before you start any stamping. Pick out a couple of stamps that you'd like to include together on the same card. On the card shown here we have chosen flowers and butterflies. We wanted the butterflies in the foreground with the flowers behind, so this time we're masking the butterflies.

Begin by stamping the butterflies onto the background, then stamp

them again onto spare paper. Cut out the spare paper butterflies and, using repositionable glue, stick over the top of the stamped outlines. You can now stamp the flowers over the top. Here, the flower heads have been inked in red and the leaves in green. Reveal your masked images by peeling off the paper butterflies, then you can colour them in with pens. Once you've tried masking your stamped designs you'll find it soon becomes addictive!



Use scrap paper and repositionable glue or post-it notes to make the masks that will protect your stamped images

What is paper piecing?

Paper piecing involves cutting out individual elements of the same stamp from different papers, which are then reassembled to create an interesting effect. It's different to découpage in that it lies flat and is glued in place, whereas découpage uses foam pads to add layers of height and a 3D effect.

To make the card here, stamp an image onto a white scalloped card circle using black ink. Then stamp the same image onto three different

patterned papers. Cut out the dress from one paper, the socks from another and the bow from another and glue each piece on top of the matching part of the image on the scalloped circle. Colour the rest of the image with markers, then layer the scalloped circle onto the same paper you used for the dress.

TOP TIP

Be precise with your cutting to ensure each piece is an exact fit



Get more from your stamps with paper piecing and your image can look different every time you stamp it!

Q How can I fix an image that didn't stamp correctly?



A mis-stamped image doesn't mean disaster – a few simple tricks can put the problem right

TOP TIP

A small stamped mistake can easily be hidden with a gem or sequin

The first thing you should do is check the stamp itself. Some will have a coating left on from the time of manufacture and this can prevent them from stamping perfectly. If this is the case, gently file the top edge of the stamp to remove the residue until you get a clear image. If residue isn't the problem, there are a number of other reasons why a design will not stamp correctly. The

easiest way to fix an incorrect image is to take a fine pen in the same colour as your ink and carefully draw in the missing detail. If using black ink, I recommend going over the whole image so that the corrected area doesn't stand out from the rest.

ASK THE EXPERT

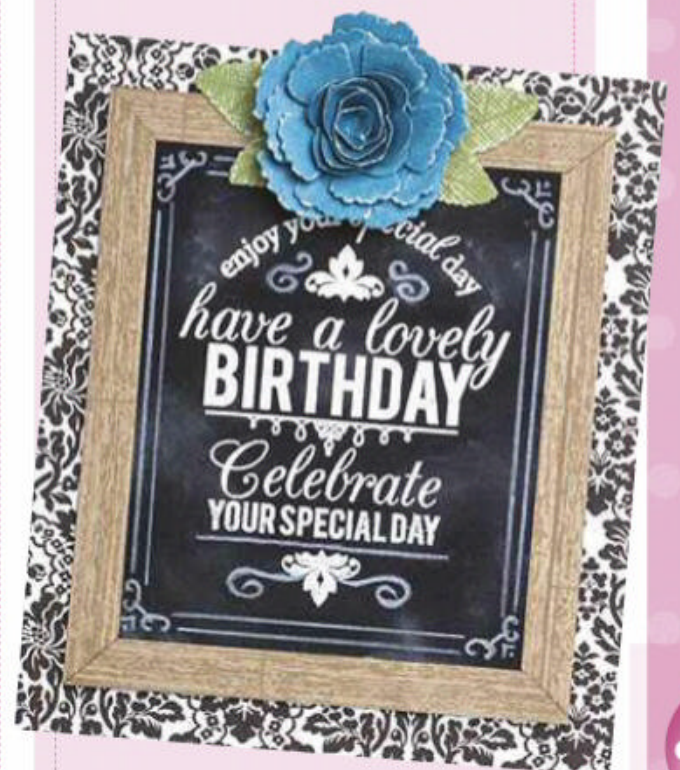


KATIE SKILTON has been an expert crafter for over 10 years, and is a regular guest on Create and Craft TV.

How do I get the right look when making chalkboard toppers?

The chalkboard technique is one of the hottest trends in cardmaking right now, and while it might look tricky to master, it's actually very easy.

Choose your stamp or stamps, then ink them using VersaMark ink and stamp onto a piece of black card. Cover with white embossing powder, tap off the excess and apply heat to the reverse of the card using a heat tool to avoid burning or discolouring the powder. Add detail with a white pencil, and then use a paper towel or sponge to dab and blend white ink over the design to look like chalk dust. It really is as simple as that!



Q How can I stop my pens from roughing up the paper when colouring stamped images?



It's best to buy card that's specially designed for stamping and colouring from craft shops, or choose a high-quality coated card available from most stationery stores. To get the best results, you need to use good pens too. Alcohol markers are ideal for colouring stamped images. They allow you to blend and shade, building up layers of colour without soaking the paper with ink. There are lots of pens, pencils and inks to choose from, and it's worth experimenting until you find the ones you are happy with.

Q Can I use an embossing folder if I don't have a die-cutting machine?

Yes, you can use it as a stamp instead and it's really easy to do. Simply ink the raised images on the bottom of the embossing folder (preferably with quite a slow-drying ink). Then place your card or paper face down onto this, close the embossing folder firmly and rub. You will need to rub fairly hard to make sure the ink transfers. Remove the card carefully, ensuring that you lift it upwards and not to the side as this will smudge the print. And there you have it – a lovely background made using your embossing folder.



Q What is spotlight stamping?



TOP TIP

Try angled spotlights on patterned images for a fun look

Spotlight stamping brings to life one area of your card by making it burst out of the design in colour!

Spotlight stamping is a brilliant technique that allows you to highlight certain areas of a stamped image. It's great if you need to make a card in a hurry as you only need to colour in part of a picture, plus it's really easy to get the hang of. Simply stamp your image twice onto white card. Mount one of the images onto your base card, then die-cut or punch an area from the

second image and colour this one in. Stick on top of the matching part of the original image on your base card using foam pads. You can spotlight several areas of an image, or just one, like on this card here.



What's the best type of block for mounting cling stamps onto?

There are lots of different mounting blocks available that are suitable for cling stamps, and it's a good idea to experiment to find the ones you like using the best. Clear acrylic blocks are a good choice and they come in lots of different sizes to fit all your stamps. Your stamps will stick to the block with no adhesive needed, so you can position them before inking and stamping onto your card.

Another advantage of acrylic blocks is that you can see through them when you are trying to line up your image on your card, allowing you to stamp exactly where you want first time. They are very easy to clean with just soap and water.

TOP TIP

If your stamp isn't clinging, wash with water to regain its stickiness



Cling stamps are great if you don't have much storage space – just get blocks in a few sizes to fit all your images

Q What's the best way to use metallic inks when stamping?



Metallic inks tend to be pigment based and contain glycerine, so they take longer to dry than other inks. Make sure you don't use them on shiny surfaces as you'll find they won't set. It's worth giving them a quick blast with a heat gun to set them, even when stamping onto regular card. Metallic inks are great to use with embossing powders, especially glitter powders, to create cool backgrounds and your own metallic papers.

Add some glitz and glamour to your images and backgrounds by stamping them in metallic inks

Q Are dye or pigment inks better for stamping and watercolouring?

Dye-based ink pads are not waterproof so will bleed, and although pigment ink is much thicker, it stays wet for longer so it's also not ideal for watercolouring (unless you heat emboss first). However, VersaFine ink is a good option for stamping images that will be watercoloured. It is a fast drying pigment ink, that doesn't bleed and cleans up with a wet wipe, so there's no staining of your stamps.

Choosing the right ink to stamp images that will be watercoloured is essential to achieving good results

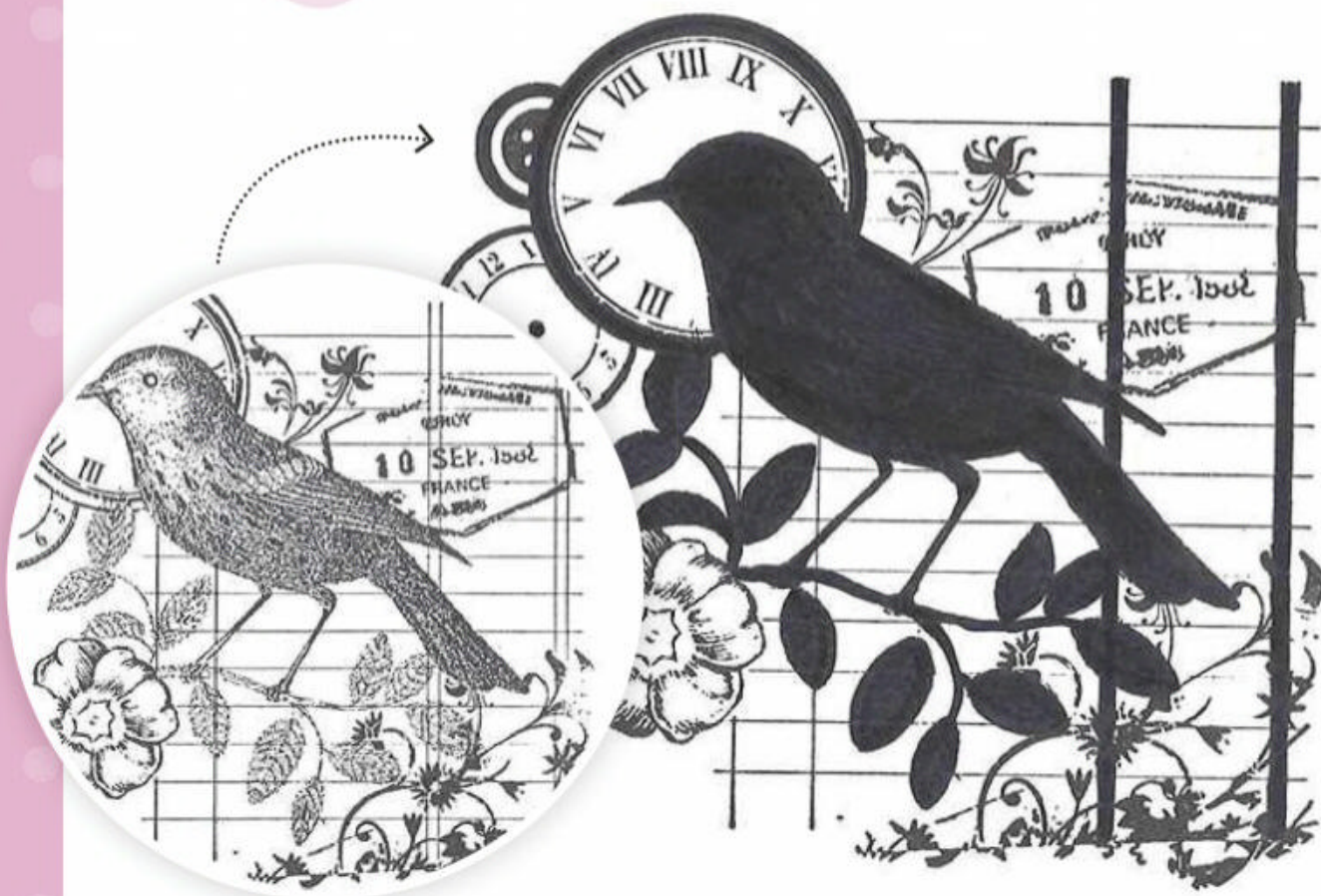


Q Is it true that you can make stamps from erasers?

Making your own eraser stamps is incredibly easy to do. To begin with you will need a lino cutting tool and an eraser. Decide on a shape, the simpler the better when starting out, and either draw this directly onto the eraser, or trace and transfer the image. Using the narrowest fitting for the lino tool, cut around the outline in smooth strokes. Now remove the eraser all around this area so that only the shape you want to stamp is left raised. Tap off the rubber shavings and then use with ink like any other stamp. The placecard here uses a heart which is ideal for wedding or valentine cards.



Q What's the quickest way to colour in a really detailed stamp?



If you love the stamp, but just don't have time to colour it in, then why not create a silhouette effect? It'll save you heaps of time and gives a striking finish. To do this, you'll need white card, a black ink pad and a black alcohol marker. Stamp your design in black ink and use the black marker to colour in the main image. You can also colour some of the surrounding images to coordinate with the main design. Try experimenting with other colours too – navy, turquoise, red and green will all give a sophisticated finish.

Q How can I get a watercolour effect on my stamped images?

Watercolours have always

been admired, but you don't have to be an artist to achieve the delicate effect of watercolouring at home. The card shown here is made with a technique that combines stamping with colour washing – using inks and water – to give a very similar finish. One way to create a wash is by colouring a marker pen onto an acrylic block, adding water and

applying with a paintbrush. Or, you can also use ink from ink pads.

To complement the colour wash here, marker pens were used to colour the stamp in multiple colours before spritzing with water to re-moisten and stamp. Overstamping (where you stamp over the top of an image with an identical image in a different colour) completes the look.

TOP TIP

When inking your stamp with markers, use the palest shade first



Cheat your way to a gorgeous watercolour effect with this clever colourwashing technique

What are digi stamps?

A digi stamp is an image you can buy, or sometimes download for free, from craft websites. Once you've bought your stamp, you can simply print it off and colour it in as you would with a traditional stamped image. Most digi stamps have been designed by crafters, for crafters – who understand what stampers like, so they tend to be designed to be fun to colour in or to create stunning effects.

Digi stamps are higher quality than traditional clip art to give you

sharper outlines and to allow you to resize without a loss in resolution (print quality). Sometimes you'll find the file name of a digi stamp ends in .png which means the background is 'transparent'. Look out for these if you want to print images onto coloured or patterned paper.

TOP TIP

For best results, print your digi stamps onto 120gsm paper



Digi stamps are like stamps without the stamping! Colour and embellish as you would with any other stamped image

Q How can I create a 'faux tile' effect on my cards?



First you need a large stamp – any large floral, landscape or animal stamp will do. Avoid character stamps. Take a piece of card and score 1mm wide lines horizontally and vertically at 25mm intervals. Stamp the image onto the card using blue ink, then colour with pencils, avoiding the detail that falls into the scored lines. Emboss with VersaMark ink and clear powder for a ceramic tile effect. Trim to size and then use as you wish.

Creating a ceramic tile effect in blue and white makes a really stylish card that's ideal for all occasions

Q How can I give my stamped images a distressed look?

The distressed look has been really fashionable in cardmaking over the last few years and it looks like it's a trend that's here to stay. The good news is that it's easy to create. There are a few things you can do to give your stamped panels a pre-loved feel. Try stamping your image using distress inks. The special formula of these inks is a little different to other dye inks and the ink beads on the surface of the stamp. This gives an instant distressed look to the image rather than creating a perfect stamped

impression. As the ink is a little wetter than other inks, ensure it has dried completely before colouring your image in. Another option is to ink the edges of your stamped panels to age them, or use a paper distressing tool or pair of scissors to distress the edge of your card. Simply open the scissors and gently run one of the sharp edges along the edge of your card to roughen it.

Distress your stamped images and panels to give your card designs an instant glamorous, vintage feel



Q How can I make my stamps work for more than one occasion?

When buying a new stamp, a general rule of thumb is that it has to work for at least three occasions. Look for stamps that have a celebratory feel, like the bear holding a bunch of flowers on this one. This could be used as a thank you, a birthday card, a get well or congratulations greeting. Versatility is key when building your stamp

collection. For greetings stamps, again look for words or sentiments that can apply to a number of occasions, such as 'congratulations', 'best wishes' or 'especially for you'. Another option if you are on a tight budget are digital stamps. These are much cheaper and can be downloaded instantly. Look online for a fab selection.



Make sure every stamp you buy can be used for at least three occasions to ensure you get value for money

Why do I keep getting splodges of ink on my cards and also on my stamp blocks?

It sounds like your ink pad is perhaps too wet – this would result in extra ink leaking onto your mounting block and splattering onto your cards. It's a common problem when using a brand new ink pad. The best thing to do when you buy a new ink pad is to do a few test stamps onto a piece of scrap paper to make sure you are happy with the result before stamping onto your card.

When inking up your stamps, you might find it more useful to turn the stamp over and pat the ink pad onto the stamp, rather than pressing the stamp into the pad, to get an even coverage. Take a look at the stamp's surface and make sure you have a shiny, smooth coverage with no ink beading up onto the stamp. Once this is done, you are ready to stamp your image without making a mess.



Q Is there an easy way to give my stamped images a vintage feel?

Stamp onto coloured paper and highlight with colour for a quick card



TOP TIP

Stamp just part of your main image to make a matching tag

Colouring your stamped

images with Distress Markers will give a soft, muted effect to your images to create a beautiful vintage feel. Team with patterned papers that really complement the detail in the stamp. A quick cheat is to stamp your image directly onto coloured paper, then add shading with Distress Markers. This gives a wonderful depth of colour and is

really quick and easy to do. The flowers on the card here were given depth of colour by using different shades of the same colour Distress Markers. Start on the outside of the area you want to colour with the lightest marker, and work towards the centre to the darkest shade. 🐰

Stamping SPOTLIGHT

Try this creative colouring technique to get a stylish black and white photograph-style finish to your stamped images

How can I create a professional-looking black and white stamped image, without it just looking like I haven't coloured it in?

To get a really good looking black and white image, then try shading your stamped image in greyscale. Use alcohol markers to get a stunning, yet understated effect. Greyscale colouring is achieved by using several shades of grey from the same colour family, and blending them to create a black and white photograph effect.

To create a realistic look, darker shades are used for the shadows and lighter shades for the skin tones and the centre of an image. The blender pen is a great tool for this technique, as it helps to create a softer, more natural look.

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ Letraset ProMarkers in Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4 and Cool Grey 5
- ✓ Black ink
- ✓ Stamp
- ✓ White card

From your local craft shop

1 Stamp the image onto white card. Shade a line around the face in Cool Grey 2. Use Cool Grey 1 to blend towards the centre, leaving the centre white. Add a line of Cool Grey 2 down the inside of each arm.

2 Use a blender pen to blend the colours together on the face, starting at the edges and working towards the centre. On each arm, work from the Cool Grey 2 line and colour the rest of the arm with Cool Grey 1.

3 Colour around the edges of the dress and the section of dress under the arms in Cool Grey 4. Add a line around the edge of the envelope in Cool Grey 1 and blend towards the middle of the envelope using the blender pen.

4 Now colour in from the Cool Grey 4, shading towards the middle of the dress, using the Cool Grey 3 marker. Leave the central areas white.



5 Using the Cool Grey 2 marker to blend, colour the whole of the dress, including the areas you have already coloured. Work from the outside towards the centre.

6 Colour the roots of the hair and the other darker areas of the hair, including the sections of hair above the shoulders and the bottom edge of the fringe in Cool Grey 5, as shown.

7 Working from dark to light, use Cool Grey 3 to colour over the Cool Grey 5 areas, moving in towards the white sections. Now go over all of the hair using Cool Grey 2.

8 Colour dark stripes on the tights in Cool Grey 5. Colour the edges of the light stripes in Cool Grey 3 and the rest in Cool Grey 2. Dot Cool Grey 1 along the dress frill and blend to finish.

STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE



STEP FOUR



STEP FIVE



STEP SIX



STEP SEVEN



STEP EIGHT



TOP TIP

When blending, always work from the darkest shade to the lightest

Mount your image on a vibrant coloured card for contrast, or a white card for a more stylish finish



EMBELLISHMENTS

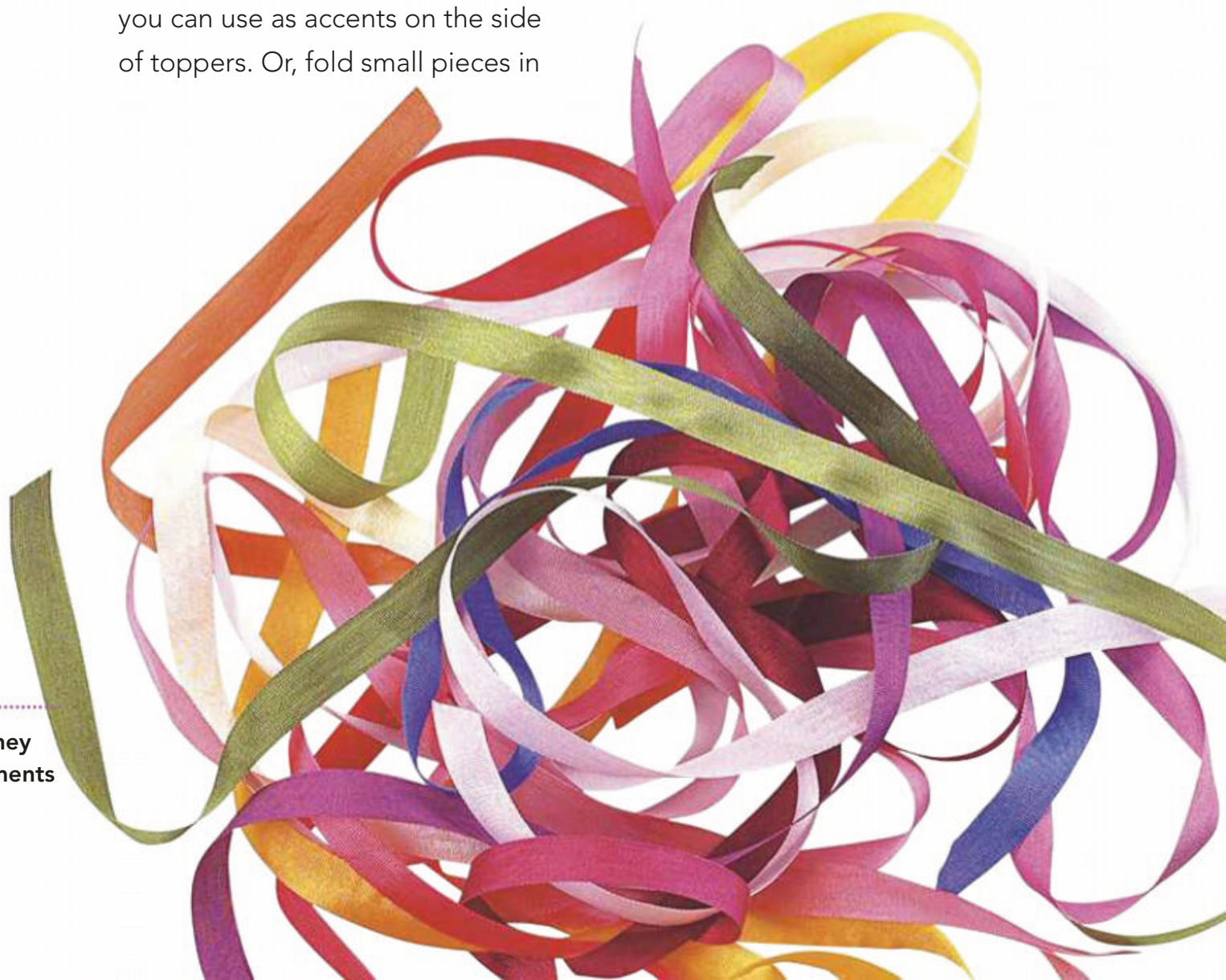
Make your projects stand out from the crowd with our top tips on the best ways to decorate your makes

Q What's the best way to use up all the oddments of ribbons I have collected in my stash?

Ribbons are always too beautiful to throw away, so can easily build up and eventually take over your craft box. There are so many different ways to use them on your cards, so be creative for great results. Try folding small oddments of ribbon in half to make tabs that you can use as accents on the side of toppers. Or, fold small pieces in

half over a length of twine, secure with glue and you have great looking mini-bunting. Another creative way to use them is to die-cut a shaped aperture in your card, for example a butterfly or heart, then back them with ribbon for a pretty patchwork effect.

Never throw away bits of ribbon! They can be upcycled into fab embellishments for your papercraft projects



Q What are the best ways to use shaped sequins on a card?



There are several ways shaped sequins can liven up a card or scrapbook project. On this card, butterfly and leaf-shaped sequins have been used to add interest to this floral print card. Another great way to use sequins is to die-cut an image out of card and create another layer of card covered in sequins. Attach the die-cut image over the sequinned panel, and there you have it – a very pretty design for your card that's easy to make. Or, you could try the ever-popular shaker card – great fun and people of all ages love receiving them!

Q Is there a less messy alternative to using glitter on my cards?

If you love adding sparkle to your cards, but can't cope with messy glitter, then why not try pre-glittered card? You can buy it in sheets which are brilliant for using with punches and dies and also for just trimming off strips to add to your projects. You could also try glitter glue, which is glue with glitter already added in, and it comes in lots of different colours. It's great for just adding a touch of sparkle here and there.

Glitter card comes in all sorts of different colours and is easy to turn into glitzy shapes and letters





Can you suggest an interesting way to use chipboard letters and shapes on my cards?

The card here shows a different technique used on each chipboard letter to demonstrate the different effects you can create. The 't' is covered with patterned paper. Simply apply glue to the top of your shape, then place upside down on the back of the paper. Use a craft knife to cut around each shape and sand the edges. The letter 'n' is coloured with a vibrant blue acrylic

paint, and the 'h' is coloured with crackle paint for a more textured effect. The 'k' is covered in Glossy Accents, then sprinkled with glitter while wet for a shiny, sparkly finish. The 'a' has a chevron pattern stamped onto it, while the 's' is covered in paper, with a design stamped onto it using VersaMark ink, sprinkled with embossing powder and then heated.



Here are six fab ways to decorate chipboard letters, and we're sure you can think of even more!

Q Are there any special techniques I need to know when using cork on my projects?



Cork is really easy to use in crafting, especially the self-adhesive kind that has a paper backing, as you can simply draw shapes on the reverse of it and cut them out. Cork is easy to cut with a punch, die-cutter or decorative scissors, but you may find that very tiny shapes can be tough to punch. Although cork is a mid-brown shade, it's actually very easy to colour with markers or

colouring pens. On the card shown here, the shapes were die-cut first, (paper side up to get the letters the right way round), then coloured in. It's advisable to try out different colours on scrap paper first so you can make sure you find a good match for the background paper. The cork is about 1mm thick, so you will get a better finish to your card if the edges are coloured in, too.

ASK THE EXPERT



STEPHANIE MAYNE is a talented designer who loves to share her expert advice with other keen card makers.

Are there any rules I should follow when adding embellishments to my card designs?

It's down to personal taste really, although I tend to work with odd numbers – so three or five brads or gems. Positioning often depends on what you are using – you may choose to use gems or buttons as flower centres – these are then positioned according to the design. If not, I always try to make a triangle when embellishing. You need to make the design pleasing to the eye. If you are unsure, just lay the embellishments on the card in different ways and see which looks best. If the first thing you see when you look at the card is an embellishment, then it's probably drawing the eye away from the main element, so you might want to move it (unless of course, it is meant to be the main focus!).



Q Is there a way that I can incorporate handmade paper straws into my papercrafting?



TOP TIP

Edge die-cut shapes with ink to help bring them to life!

Paper straws add such a fun and playful element to cards, and as you can make them or buy them in a variety of colours, you can match them to every season. Stripy straws are very popular at the moment, as they have a retro feel. On the card here, a straw was used as part of a mini sentiment sign. This works well when you are making cards in

advance that could be sent for lots of different occasions, as you can simply add the greeting to the straw when the occasion arises. You can also use paper straws to make borders, textured backgrounds and as part of character designs.

Is there a way I can still use small gems and beads on my cards even though I have arthritis in my hands and find them difficult to handle?

There are a number of different ways you can add small embellishments to your cards that might help. Many crafters use tweezers to add individual gems to their cards but an easier way is to use ready-made gem or pearl swirls, borders and frames. Self-adhesive gem alphabets are also easy to apply and look great. Just use a pokey tool to lift and drop them in place. You can apply individual beads using clear-drying glue; add dots of adhesive where you would like them to sit and then drop them onto the glue dots and allow to dry. Micro beads are a great choice too, as they work like glitter – just apply glue, pour on the beads, tap off the excess and leave to dry.



Q Can I make rosettes and flowers without using a die-cutting machine?

Absolutely! To make rosettes without a die-cutting machine all you need is a circular object to draw around. Cut out a different size circle for each layer. Fold the circles in half, open, then fold in half again, this time folding the other way. Open out again and repeat until each circle is divided into sixteenths. Cut along one of the fold lines of each circle, accordion fold, and then stick

the ends together to form a rosette. Layer as shown on the card here.

For the flowers, tear a rough circle from paper, then tear into a spiral. Roll the spiral, starting from the outside and working inwards, until you reach the middle, and then glue. Repeat to make as many blooms as you need.

TOP TIP

Use old buttons to make fab flower centres – just glue one on!



Handmade rosettes and paper flowers make pretty accessories for cards and can be made from bits in your stash

Q How do you make button toppers using scraps of fabric?

It's quite easy to make your own embellishments using metal or plastic self-cover buttons. These are made up of two parts: a dome shape to cover with fabric and a flat backing plate that slots in to hide all the raw edges. Some manufacturers suggest using a pin to hook the edge of a circle of fabric onto the teeth at the back of the dome, but you may find it quicker and easier to

sew a row of running stitch around the circle, then pull up the threads to gather. The card shown here is made with two buttons – the first is made from yellow spotty fabric and the second one was made using a piece of linen which was embroidered with a 'thank you' greeting before assembling. You can stick them to your base card with foam pads for a 3D finish.



It's easy to make fabric buttons to add texture to your cards. Use them as toppers, greetings or flower centres

Q Is there an easy way to stick ribbons to cards so they lie flat?

Follow our top sticking tips to ensure your ribbons sit neatly on the front of your cards



TOP TIP

Attach ribbon bows to your cards using a glue dot at the back

Use strong double-sided

tape to attach lengths of ribbon to your cards or papercraft projects. If you're sticking the ribbon to the card in a straight line, then it's far easier to lay the tape down first and then stick the ribbon on top – just make sure that you pull the ribbon slightly so that it is taut as you press it onto the tape. If you find this too fiddly, then try using self-adhesive

ribbons instead. You can buy these in all sorts of colours and patterns and they are very easy to cut to size. You can find a great selection online or nip into your local craft shop and see what they have to offer.

How do I make the motifs covered with tiny beads that are so popular at the moment?

The tiny beads are called accent beads – they're fun to work with and not half as fiddly as they look! They come in an assortment of colours and are specifically designed for sticking to card. Because the beads are lightweight, you'll find that they stick really well to hi-tack double-sided tape, which you can buy in your local craft shop. The card below demonstrates a great way to use accent beads – the cupcake and balloons toppers were die-cut from card, then circles and stars were punched out from inside the toppers. The holes were backed with double-sided tape, then the accent beads were poured on top. You can also create patterns and greetings using the beads with an extra-strong PVA glue pen. Make sure you shake off excess beads and leave the designs to dry completely overnight before putting in an envelope and posting.



Q Is there a subtle way to use glitter without making my card garish?



We love glitter, but understand that it can be a bit nerve-wracking if you're not sure about the effects you can create. The card shown here has iridescent glamour dust on the bottom half of the wedding dress and the veil to add a subtle glimmer. Although a lot of glitter was used on this card, because the colour of it ties in effortlessly with the other elements in the designs the final result is quite chic. It's a case of matching the glitter to your image to complement the look.

Cards don't need to be glitter-tastic to have sparkle – choose carefully where to place it for a super, subtle effect

Q Can I use staples to decorate my cards?

Go to your nearest large stationery store and you'll be amazed at the vast array of staples in all sorts of colours and sizes. They'd all work well with your papercrafting and are really handy for stapling sentiments, ribbon, lace, tags, papers and flat flowers to your designs. You can colour silver staples with markers if you want to start experimenting today.

You'll be amazed how everyday items, like staples, can be used to make fantastic embellishments for your cards



How do you use peel-off stickers as templates?

We love discovering new and exciting ways to use things in our craft stash, and this clever little technique will really help you get the most from your peel-off stickers.

Start by removing some of the adhesive from the back of your peel-off. To do this, stick it onto fabric (like your jeans) a couple of times to make it less sticky. Next, position it onto your base card or card panel. Now here's the magic! Take any type of chalk and dab it around your peel-off. Try one shade to begin with, then build up the colour to create a really vibrant look. Gently remove the peel-off to reveal your design. Repeat this process a number of times, moving it around the base card each time, to create a fabulous and unique background.

For a more dramatic finish, you could try this technique using spray inks to add colour around your peel-offs.



Q Is it possible to change the colour of peel-off stickers?



Yes, it is quite easy to colour your peel-offs to match the other elements or papers you are using – all you need is some permanent markers. The card here is made using a silver birdcage peel-off sticker, which is coloured with Sharpie Markers, but any alcohol-based markers such as ProMarkers or Copic Markers will do. The birdcage, bird outline and bird infill

Get creative with your peel-offs by changing the colours so that they work well with your papers and card

pieces were coloured in brown, black and turquoise markers while they were still in place on the backing sheets. The image was stuck on a panel of white card that is matted onto complementary layers before sticking to the base card.



Q How can I use craft wire to embellish my cards?

There are so many different ways you can use craft wire in your cardmaking. You can wrap it around embellishments to add a decorative finish, you can coil wire threaded with beads to make flower centres, you can make wire shapes such as hearts and stars to use as toppers, or use it as a background to accentuate a focal point. Try making decorative springs by wrapping a

length of wire around a pencil and then pulling gently to take it off. Wire words and greetings are also really popular, and you can make these yourself using a pair of round-nose pliers. On the card here, wire has been used to make a beaded flower centre, to wrap a greeting and to make a rolled background shape which is fixed under the flower with foam pads.



Wire embellishments add a lovely texture to your papercraft projects – it's easy to make your own

Q How can I use loose glitter without making a mess?



Applying loose glitter can be tricky, but there are ways you can minimise the mess. The first is to use an anti-static bag which prevents excess glitter from sticking to your project in unwanted areas. Just rub the bag over the surface before adding glue and glitter. When adding glitter to intricate designs, use a fine tip glue pen and glitter with a sprinkle top for a neat finish. Work over a piece of scrap paper, and pour any spare glitter back into the pot to prevent wastage. Always allow the glue under the glitter to set before giving your project a firm tap to remove any excess sparkle.

Q Why aren't my rub-ons coming off their sheet cleanly?

Some brands are more temperamental so test on scrap card first. Many rub-ons come with a lolly stick applicator but often their rounded ends can cause marks if you rub too hard. Try something flat, or wedge-shaped instead.

Always cut your design away from the rest of the sheet and rub down the whole image gently before concentrating on each area. You

will see a lightening of the top sheet as the transfer releases. Lift it gently from one corner and check everything is stuck as you go, re-rubbing if needed. If you have a stubborn sheet try gently warming it between your hands.



Rub-ons look great on plain or patterned papers – leave the backing on your rub-ons as long as possible for a neat finish

Q What interesting things can I do with sequin ribbon?



Using sequin ribbon on your cards is a great way to add some sparkle without the mess of glitter. You can simply add it as a border or use it to create a frame. A background created with contrasting strips of sequin ribbon will also look amazing. But if you want to try something different, try spelling out a word or creating some letters using the sequin ribbon. Write the letters in pencil first, then carefully fix the sequin ribbon to your card with clear craft glue. Why not combine your sequin sentiment with a stamped greeting, like on the card pictured here?

Q Can I use paper doilies that are leftover from a party on my cards or other projects?

There are lots of different ways to incorporate doilies into your papercrafting. Why not try using larger doilies as wraps around plain wrapping paper for dressing up a present? They also look great layered on top of kraft card, like on the birthday card shown here.

If you have lots of doilies hanging around, then you could create your own doily-themed bunting by simply folding each one in half over a length of ribbon or twine.

You can make your own doilies using plain white paper and dies or punches. Doilies look great teamed with pretty floral papers and polka dots, but can also look very striking with card in plain vibrant colours such as orange or pink for a modern look.



What's a good way to decorate wooden die-cut shapes?

Wooden die-cuts like these butterflies can be decorated in lots of different ways using materials from your stash. Sponge ink onto the surface to grade the colour out to the edges, then decorate with gems. Or, apply a thin layer of glue, sprinkle with fine glitter and embellish with small dots of a darker glitter. You could press Easy Metal onto a painted or inked surface while still tacky, then brush off the excess to create a distressed effect. Stamping works well too: create an all-over pattern and colour with fine-tipped pens, or use ultra thick embossing powder to create a layer that can be stamped into for a textured surface. If it's not too fiddly, why not try découpage papers too?



Can I use yarn leftover from knitting to embellish my papercraft projects?



Lots of knitters turn their hand to other crafty projects, and making embellishments from oddments of yarn is a great way to use up those leftovers. Try knitting or crocheting mini hats and gloves to make winter warmer cards, or wrap buttons with colourful wool to make funky toppers. Pom-poms are always popular and can be made in one colour, or combine different shades

You don't need to be a knitter to turn a ball of wool into something pretty – as our fun pom-pom tag proves!

of yarn for a multicoloured effect. You can stick a pom-pom to the top of a gift box, instead of making a ribbon bow, or make mini pom-poms to decorate gift tags. You can find lots of handy tutorials on how to make pom-poms online. ✂

Embellishments SPOTLIGHT

If you've never used shrink plastic before, but always wanted to try, then here's the perfect project to get you started!

How can I use shrink plastic on my cards?

Shrink plastic is a material you can stamp onto, colour in, cut into interesting shapes and then pop into your oven, or heat with a craft heat tool to make a mini version of the image you have just created. You can have a lot of fun making all sorts of interesting and unusual embellishments out of shrink plastic – here's a simple card to try that will be perfect for many occasions.

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ Shrink plastic in white
- ✓ Letraset ProMarkers in Caramel, Cocoa and Walnut
- ✓ Assorted PanPastels
- ✓ White and coloured card
- ✓ Black StazOn ink
- ✓ Stamp
- ✓ Hole punch
- ✓ Heat gun
- ✓ Fine-tip black pen
- ✓ Baker's twine

From your local craft shop

1 Use the template on page 145 to trace the tree trunk onto a 14x14cm piece of white card. Outline with a black fineliner. Colour in using Caramel, then Cocoa and Walnut ProMarkers to create shading.

2 For the three large buttons, draw three circles and cut from a sheet of white shrink plastic. Colour the circles with PanPastels, applied with a sponge.

3 Use a hole punch to create button holes at either side of each circle. Stamp images on top using black StazOn ink. Shrink using a heat gun. Once cool, thread twine through the holes and tie in a bow. Attach to the tree using silicone glue.

4 Stamp a large flower six times onto a piece of white shrink plastic using black StazOn ink. Cut out. Sponge Magenta PanPastel onto the edges of the petals. Shrink using a heat gun and mould into shape while still warm.



5 Create 10 medium sized buttons, 50 tiny buttons and two butterflies using a small circle punch, flower and butterfly stamps. Cut out, colour in and punch holes before shrinking, as per steps 2 and 3.

6 Assemble the top of the tree attaching the larger buttons first and filling in any gaps with the tiny buttons. Once dry, layer the panel, then attach to a 15x15cm base card. Add a greeting, as shown, to finish.



STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE



STEP FOUR



STEP FIVE



STEP SIX



TOP TIP

Use your die-cutter to cut more unusual shaped buttons

EXPERT TIPS



SHARON ARMSTRONG PURVIS shares her shrink plastic secrets to make these pretty embellishments...

1 When using PanPastels to colour in shrink plastic, after shrinking I like to fix mine in place by applying a couple of layers of crystal glaze which gives a high gloss finish.

2 You can use any stamps you like to make the buttons for this tree – try floral designs, textured patterns or simple lettering stamps.

3 You'll need to shape your buttons while the plastic is still warm and malleable, but you will need to allow it to cool a little first, otherwise you'll burn your fingers!

4 Give shrink plastic a rub with fine-grade sandpaper before use. This makes the surface easier for colours to grip to. Rub gently, not vigorously just to give it a quick once over.

Once shrunk, the colours intensify, so use a mix of pastels and strong tones for balance



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PAPER ENGINEERING

Find out how you can make fab three-dimensional cards with just a few clever cuts and folds!

What's the difference between pyramid découpage and standard découpage?

It's easy to get these techniques mixed up as both layer images together to create dimension. With standard découpage, individual elements of an image are cut out and layered, to create a finished 3D picture. This is a hugely popular technique and you can find a whole range of fabulous pre-cut découpage sheets to buy.

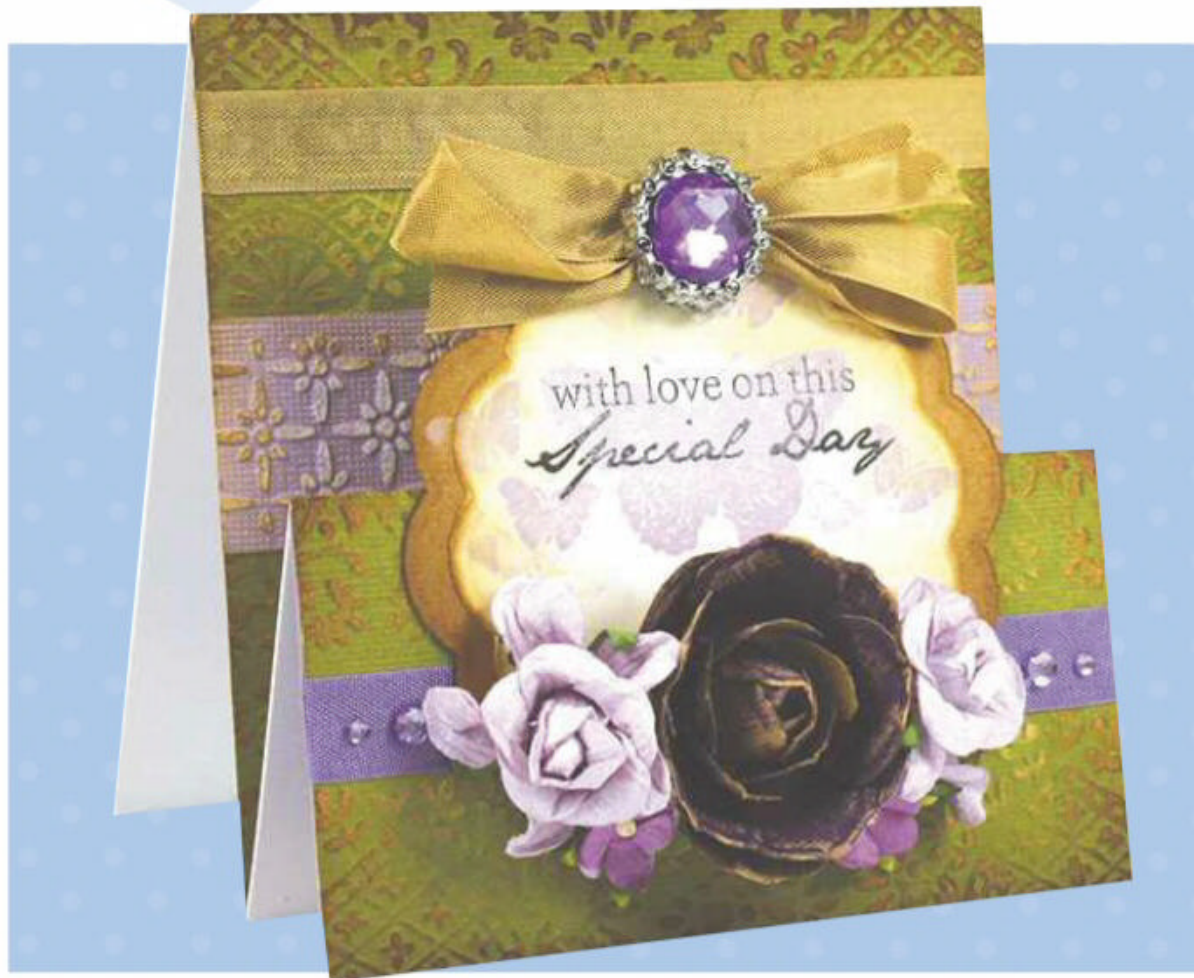
Pyramid découpage is slightly easier to master and involves

cutting and layering decreasing sizes of the same image together, to create a pyramid shape. Square and rectangular shaped images are typically used, although circles and other shapes can also work brilliantly. This technique is great for beginners, as all you need to get started is several identical images. Simply stick the base image in place, then trim each layer as you go, before layering over the top.



You can use foam pads or 3D glue to secure your découpage layers as you build them up from the base image

Q What is a stepper card and how would I go about making one?



Stepper cards are made up of a series of steps or folds and are a great way to add dimension to your creations. There are many variations but it's best to start off with something simple, like this card.

To make it, take a 36x12cm piece of card. Score and fold at 12cm, 24cm and 30cm, leaving the smallest fold at the front to create a stepper effect. Once you have created the base you can then decorate as you choose, adding patterned paper, die-cut labels etc. You can also make additional folds to create a triple stepper card, which would add a third step to this design.

Q Can I make gift pouches for homemade jewellery?

It's best to make a template first from white card, using this to perfect your design before transferring it onto either a thick patterned paper or thin card. The pouches shown here illustrate a simple flap and bar closing design for one pouch and a ribbon fastening for the other.

When designing your pouch you will also need to consider the thickness of your jewellery. If it is particularly bulky you may need to add a gusset to both sides and the bottom of your pouch, to allow enough room for it to fit inside.

Alternatively, you could create a tube from paper, then flatten and secure it at one end. Insert your jewellery, then flatten the other end and seal to finish.

TOP TIP

Add a greeting or the recipient's name to your pouch



Learn how
IN 3 EASY
STEPS

Is there a really unique shaped card I can make that's simple to put together?

If you're tired of square or rectangular cards, then try making one of these fab interlocking trees! They look really impressive, but are actually simple to make and will certainly stand out on the mantelpiece.

1 Draw around templates A and B on page 144 onto card or double-sided patterned paper. Cut out, then carefully cut slits where indicated on the template.

2 On a contrasting piece of card or paper, draw around tree trunk template 2 twice, and cut out. Repeat with template 1, then cut in half. Stick the tree trunks to the tree tops as shown.

3 Slot the two tree shapes together and ease along until the bottom of the trunks line up. Open out the sections so they all sit at right angles to one another.

Template
on pg 144



Decorate your tree with die-cut romper suits drying on a washing line for the perfect new baby greeting

STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE





What do you call the cards that have a central panel standing out, and how do I make them?

Centre-step cards look so intricate, but actually they are created from just a plain card rectangle with two cuts and seven small folds. The result is an engineered base, where two side panels sit neatly behind a centre panel.



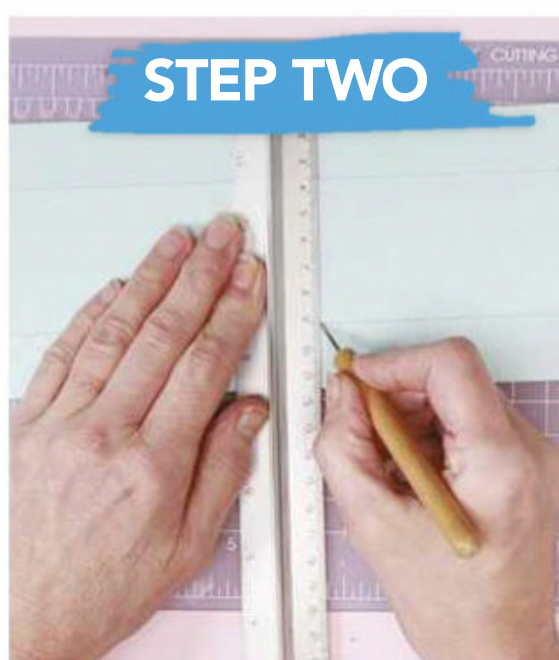
1 Cut a 29x10.5cm piece of card for your base. Use the diagram on page 144 to trace the cut and fold lines. Cut along the solid lines using a scalpel and metal ruler.

2 Turn the card 90 degrees and, following the template, score along the dotted lines. Rub out any pencil lines you have made.

3 Fold the card, as shown, and stand it up so it is portrait shape. The front face features the step, while the back is flat. Your card is now ready to embellish.



Impress your friends with your cardmaking skills when you present them with a 3D stepper card!



Q What is bargello – it sounds complicated?



Borrowed from needlepoint,

bargello is a fantastic technique that uses patterned paper to create really interesting backgrounds. We used it to make this pretty patchwork-effect card. To start, cut out several 15x1.5cm pieces of paper. Stick the strips onto a piece of thin card or copy paper, then trim to 15x15cm. Cut the sheet into a number of strips of various widths.

Try bargello to make fantastic backgrounds and embellishments for all your craft projects

Arrange the strips onto a piece of card until you are happy with the finished pattern that's created. Experiment with how you arrange the strips to create a completely different look each time. Once you're happy, trim to size.

ASK THE EXPERT



DOROTHY WOOD is a teacher, expert cardmaker, published author and general guru of all things craft!

How do I do Spirelli?

Spirelli is a form of string art, where you wrap string or thread around points to create geometric patterns. In the 60s and 70s it was popular as a picture with nails hammered into wood, but these days it is an increasingly popular cardmaking technique.

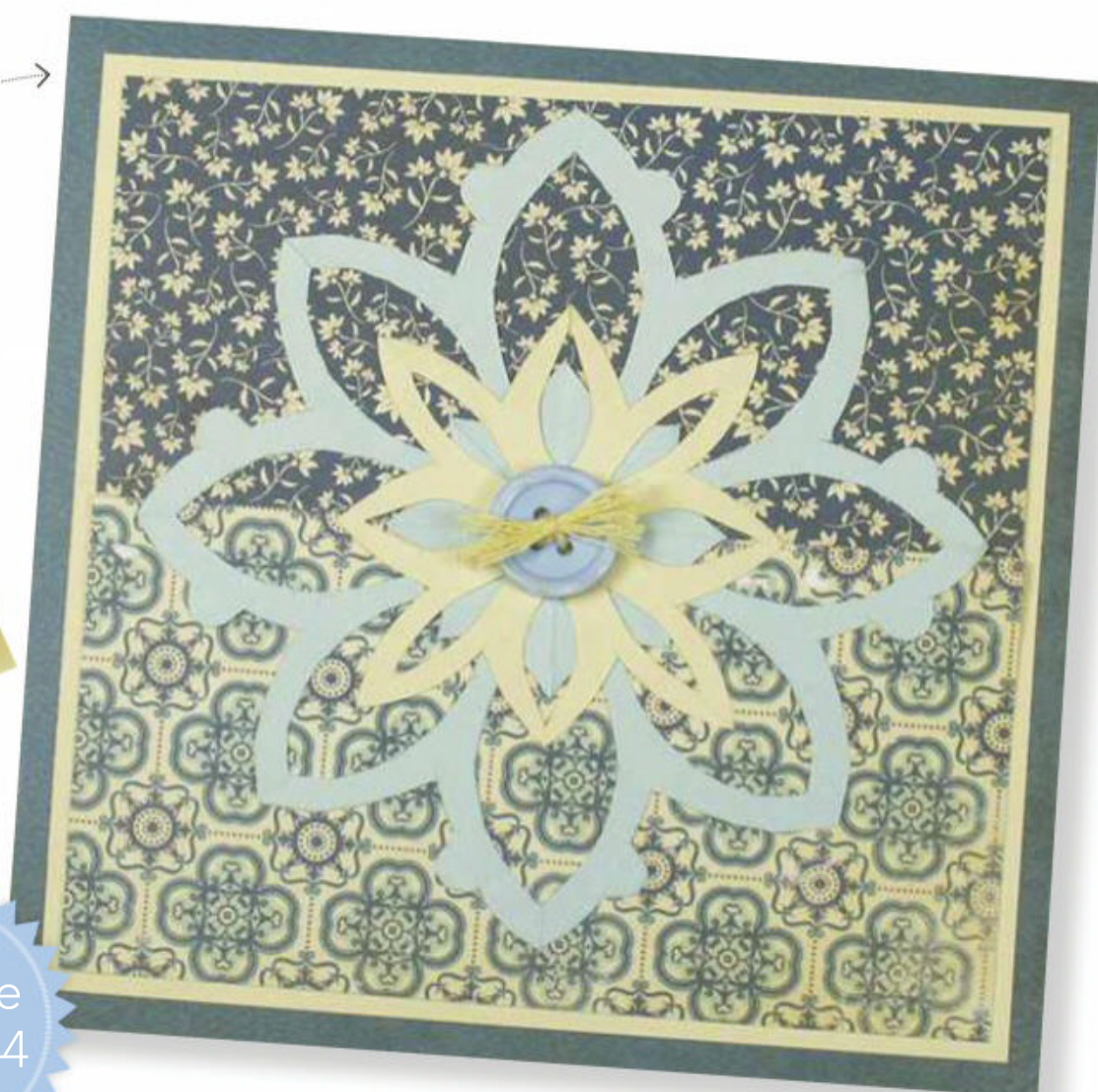
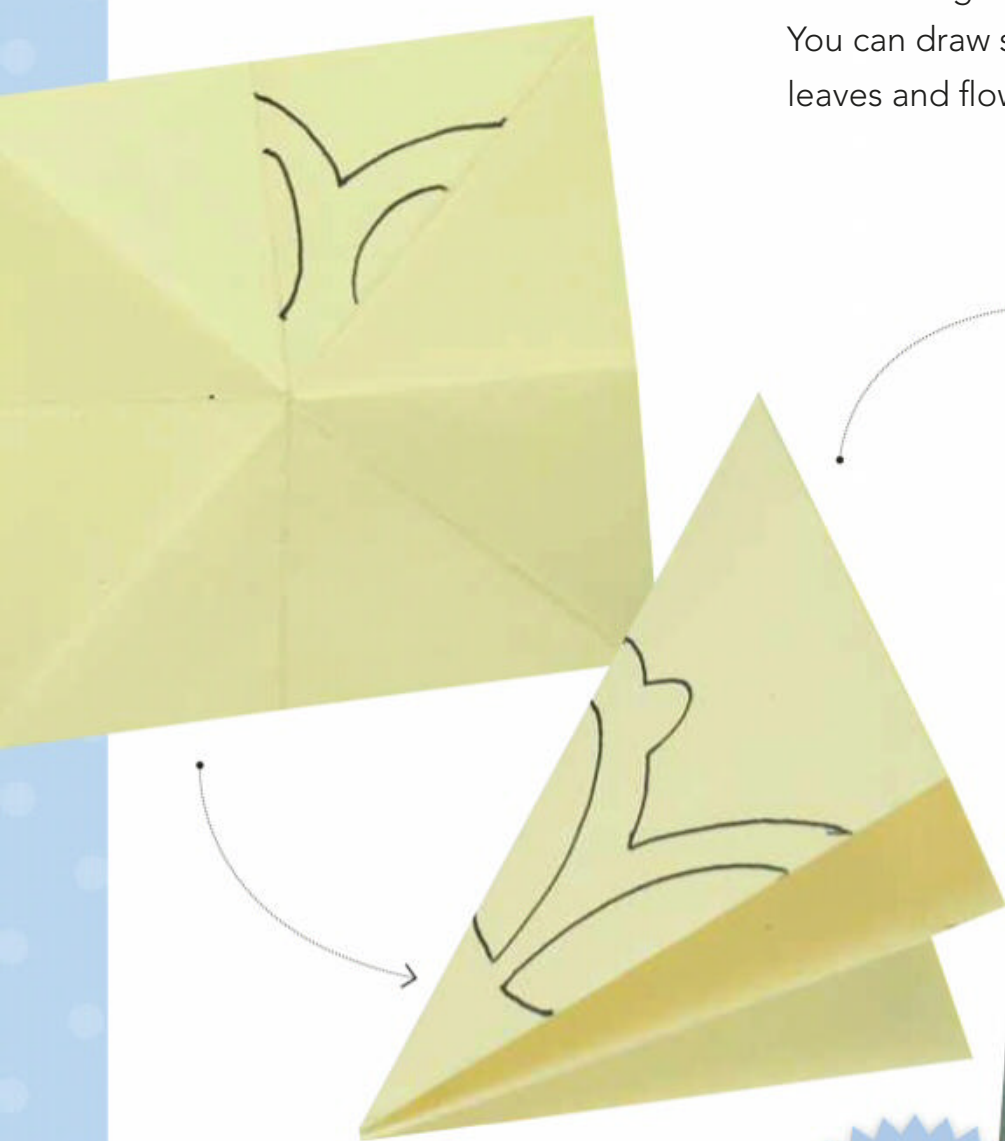
You don't need any specialist equipment other than the cards to wrap the thread around. You can buy Spirelli shapes in craft shops and online, or cut your own with scalloped or zig-zag decorative scissors or a die-cutting machine. You can get good results using petal shapes too. The key is to keep the thread taut as you wrap it around the frame and secure the loose ends on the back of the shape.



What is Kirigami, and how can I learn how to do it?

Kirigami is a variation of Origami (paper folding) that includes paper cutting. You fold paper a few times and cut out sections to create a pattern; then you unfold the paper to reveal the complete design. A strip of paper can be folded then cut, like the paper dolls that you used to make as a child. Alternatively, fold a square in quarters with right sides together, then fold again to form a triangle. You can draw simple motifs such as leaves and flowers in the triangle

so that some parts of the design touches both folded edges, or cut a more geometric pattern to create the lace effect shown on the card here. Spray adhesive is a good way to attach Kirigami to a card, or you can use them to decorate gift bags and boxes or even to accessorise lampshades and blinds. You'll find the template needed to make this card on page 145. Remember to use thin paper and fold the last layers in opposite directions to reduce the bulk when you cut it.



Template
on pg 144

If you like Origami, then you'll love making Kirigami toppers to decorate your cards!

Learn how
IN 3 EASY
STEPS

Q How do I make mini envelopes to hide secret messages in on my cards?

It's amazing what you can make from paper with a few cuts and folds. A mini envelope is really easy to make and is a striking topper for your cards and scrapbook pages. Follow the steps below to find out how to make them.

Template
on pg 144

1 Trace the mini envelope template on page 145 onto stiff card to make your template. Draw around this template onto your chosen card or paper, then cut out.

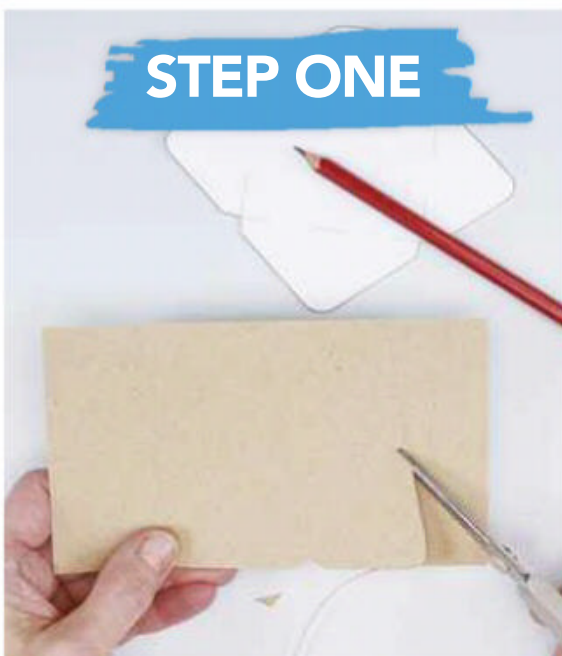
2 Using a ruler and a scoring tool, score between the triangles, along the dotted lines of the template, as shown. Use a bone folder to crease each fold.

3 Fold the two side flaps inwards, towards the centre. Add a strip of narrow double-sided tape to the edges of each one, as shown, then fold the bottom flap up and stick in place.



Use mini envelopes to hide secret messages on cards – they're great for surprise party invitations!

STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE





How do I make a door card?

Do I need any special equipment?

Door, or window cards are super-easy to make. All you need is a ruler, scoring tool and a piece of card. Follow our three simple steps on making a door card and you'll be up and running in no time.

1 Make a white base card measuring 15x10.5cm. Stamp, print or hand-draw a design featuring a door onto a piece of card measuring 11.5x8cm.

2 Using a ruler and a scoring tool, score down the left-hand side of the door. Using a ruler and a craft knife, cut out the other sides of the door.

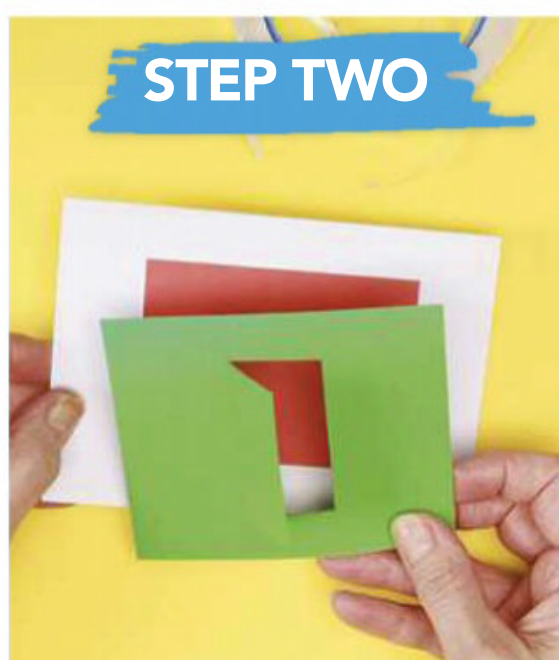
3 Cut an 11.5x8cm piece of contrasting card. Stick to the centre of the base card. Stick the door panel on top, keeping any glue away from the door.



Doors also work really well on scrapbook layouts. Hide a photo, greeting or stamped image behind the door



STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE

Q How do I make a mini photo album for a friend's wedding?



Mini photo albums are great fun to make, and your friends will be really impressed at your handiwork!

Start by cutting two pieces of card for the covers, then two pieces of paper that are 3cm wider and longer. Use strong glue to stick the paper to the cover, wrapping the excess paper over the edges to the back. Cut and glue a second piece of paper to the inside – overlapping

the paper wrapped from the front. Cut as many pages as you want in your book. This can be a mixture of paper and card and you could also include a few envelopes for storing keepsakes. These all need to be slightly smaller than the cover. Make holes in the covers and pages and fasten together with binding rings, ribbon or pretty shoe laces. Then you can have fun decorating it!

How can I incorporate a small gift into the design of my card?

Cards that include a small gift are always such a nice surprise for the recipient. A really useful gift that costs next to nothing to make is a bookmark – a fabulous gift for anyone who loves reading.

To make it, cut a piece of card 5cm wider than your base card. Score 5cm in from the right-hand edge using a perforating tool, then fold the panel inside your base card to make a detachable bookmark, like on the card pictured here.

Another good idea is to include a pocket on the front of your card and pop a gift card, cinema tickets or passes to a football match into it. Or, you could integrate a small piece of jewellery into the design of your card – a pretty necklace, bracelet or pair of earrings will all work well. The great thing about these cards is that the jewellery also doubles up as an embellishment making it a really fun and unusual greeting.



Q What's a good shaped card I can make for a baby shower invite, bearing in mind I'll be making quite a few?

As well as being cute and fun, baby shower invites need to be easy to make, as you'll be sending out a number of them. The super-sweet baby nappy here is ideal, and is sure to get your friends cooing! First, make a nappy template by drawing the shape onto stiff white card and cutting out. Next, find a coloured or patterned card that you like and trace around the template onto the reverse of this and cut out. Make a

slightly smaller nappy shape from white card to use as an insert; stamp or print a small poem on one side and the details of the baby shower on the other. Punch a hole at either side of the nappy and add ribbon, then tie it with a bow. Punch a hole in the top of the insert and loop some ribbon through it to make an easy pull tag.

TOP TIP

Store the template in a ringbinder so you can use it again



Measure your template to make sure it fits inside a standard envelope, otherwise you'll have to make your own

Learn how
IN 3 EASY
STEPS

How do you make telescoping cards?

Telescoping cards are real showstoppers! Die-cut, cut or punch three circles in various sizes, then attach on hinges using brads. Just add a ribbon pull to the top of the smallest circle, so you can hang up your finished card.

1 Die-cut circles measuring 9.5cm, 8.5cm and 6.5cm. Decorate each circle with stamped designs or punched shapes and patterned papers. Mount onto scalloped circles if you wish.

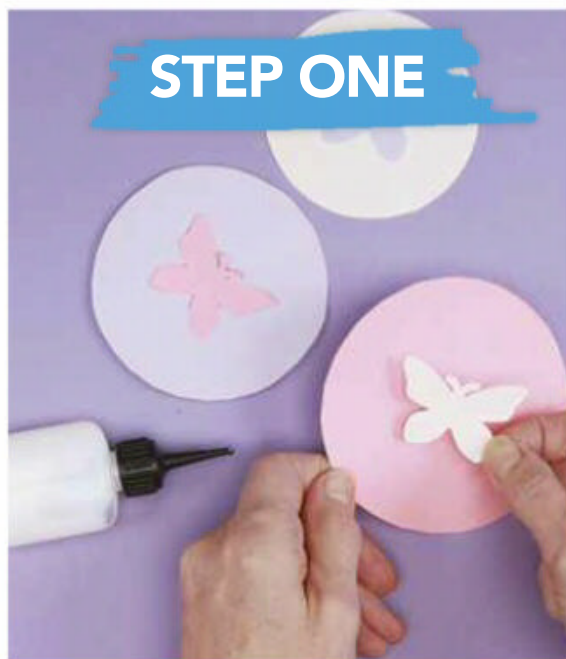
2 Place the largest circle facing upright on a foam mat. Turn the medium circle upside down and pierce a hole at the top, through both circles. Fix together using a brad.

3 Open up so both circles are facing upright. Turn the small circle upside down and pierce a hole at the top, through both circles. Fix together using a brad.

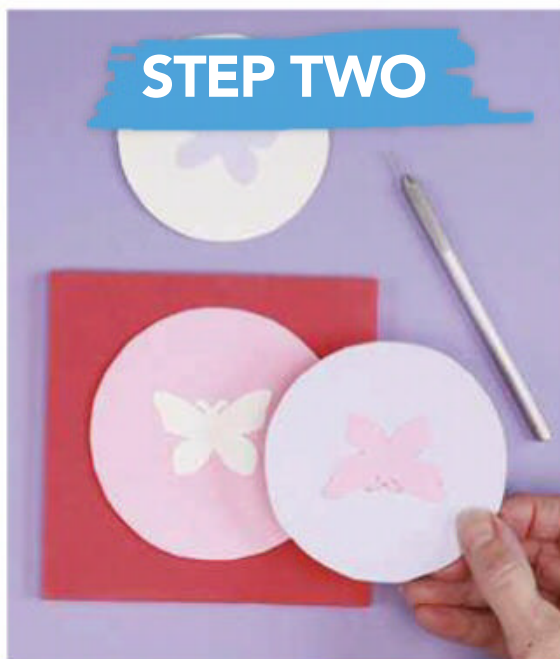


Your telescope card folds up into one circle but can be hung from a shelf or mantelpiece to show off all three

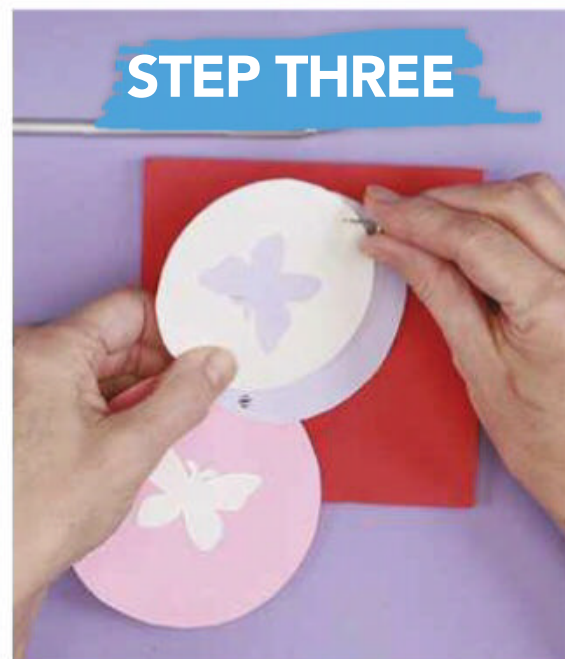
STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE





Q How can I make a card that rocks from side to side, and what are these called?

If you like cards with a bit of movement, then you'll absolutely love wobble cards. A curved bottom allows the card to stand upright, but give it a little nudge and your greeting will rock from side to side.

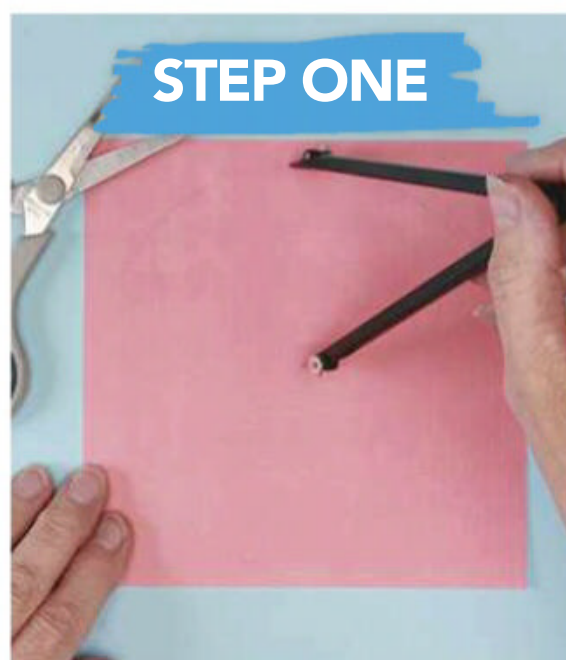
1 Using a compass or template, draw a circle measuring 15cm in the centre of a piece of coloured card. Cut out around the outline of the circle using scissors.

2 On a cutting mat, use a ruler and scoring tool to score down the middle of the circle. If you prefer, you can draw a line in pencil, then rub out once folded.

3 Carefully fold along the score line, then use a bone folder to sharpen the fold. This needs to be a good, sharp fold to make sure the wobble card stands up correctly. Now you can decorate!



Make sure you balance your embellishments evenly so your wobble card doesn't lean to one side



STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE

Q What's the best way to make wine tags for a wedding?

When you are making more than one of an item, then it's always best to keep things simple. Print a greeting using your computer, then use dies and punches to make pretty tag shapes. If the wedding you are creating them for has a colour scheme, follow that. Or, use neutral colours like cream and white and add pops of colour in blue or pink. Decorate your tags with punched shapes and gems or paper flowers as a nice finishing touch.

The long bottle tag shown here

has a hole punched in the top to slip over the neck of the bottle, or you can attach a tag with a piece of ribbon, as shown on the other bottle.

TOP TIP

Adapt these tags to make them for perfume bottles, too



Q What's the easiest way to make paper fortune cookies?



TOP TIP

Make Xmas themed fortune cookies instead of crackers

Paper fortune cookies are incredibly simple to make, yet very effective. Simply cut a 10cm circle from patterned paper. Fold in half, but only score a line about 2.5cm long in the centre of the fold. Turn the circle and fold in half, then using your index finger push the inner circle so that it bends to create the fortune cookie shape. Secure with a small dot of glue. Type out your quotes and trim into a thin strip. These can either be placed into the cookie after you have made it, or for longer quotes place the strip of paper into the circle before folding.



Q I want to move on from shaped window cards – how can I take my apertures to the next level?

Double frame cards are a good way to progress. If you have a die-cutting machine you can use any nesting dies you have to cut different shaped apertures, if not then cut out simple shapes with a template and craft knife.

1 Cut a 30.5x14cm piece of card. Working from left to right, score at 10cm and 20.5cm, and make a pencil mark at 23.5cm (top and bottom). Fold sides inwards.

2 Make a pencil mark at 7cm (halfway) along the short right edge. Draw lines to join up pencil marks to form a triangle. Trim, as shown, to create the front flap.

3 Cut a larger aperture in the front flap. Fold front flap over inner flap and use it to position a smaller aperture, then cut out. 🛠️



Expand your cardmaking skills by making an impressive double aperture design – it's easy when you know how!

STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE



Paper engineering SPOTLIGHT

Get creative with your cardmaking and make a fun shaker card. Follow our simple steps to find out how

How do I make a shaker card, and what type of things can I put inside the shaker?

Everyone loves a shaker card, and while at first glance they might look tricky to master, they're actually pretty easy to create. Just follow the steps over the page to find out how to make the card shown here. One of the great things about shaker cards is that they can be almost any combination of shapes, colours and styles. The shaker element can be created using glitter, beads, sequins, confetti, punched shapes or other small embellishments.

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ Patterned papers
- ✓ Stamp of your choice
- ✓ Die-cutter and scalloped circle die
- ✓ VersaMark ink
- ✓ Heat gun
- ✓ White and kraft card
- ✓ White embossed card
- ✓ Heat gun
- ✓ Black embossing powder
- ✓ Acetate
- ✓ Clear glass glitter

From your local craft shop

Learn how
**IN 8 EASY
STEPS**



STEP ONE



1 Die-cut or punch a scalloped frame from blue paper. Die-cut a piece of acetate and white card with a plain circle die that is slightly larger than the one used for inside the frame.

STEP TWO



2 Stamp an image onto the white card circle using VersaMark ink, positioned about 2.5cm from the bottom. Sprinkle with black embossing powder and heat using a heat gun.

STEP THREE



3 Colour in the stamped image using water-based marker pens and a paintbrush.

STEP SIX



6 Remove the backing tape from the sticky fixers, then line up the backing panel (with the image face down) with the circle frame. Stick firmly in place so that the glitter doesn't fall out.

STEP SEVEN



7 Layer an 11cm square of embossed white card onto kraft card and trim to leave a border. Repeat with patterned paper, then kraft card. Stick to the centre of your base card.

STEP EIGHT



8 Attach the shaker topper to the centre of the base card using sticky fixers. Mount a stamped or printed greeting onto patterned paper, then stick to the bottom of the base card to finish.

STEP FOUR



4 Stick the die-cut acetate to the back of the scalloped frame and add a line of sticky fixers around the edge, ensuring there are no gaps. Do not remove the backing from the sticky fixers yet.

STEP FIVE



5 Dust the inside of the acetate with an anti-static bag to prevent the glitter clinging, then carefully tip some clear glass glitter into the inside of the frame, as shown.



Glitter filled shaker cards make great Christmas greetings

EXPERT TIPS



CAROLYNE KNOTT is an expert paper crafter who is passionate about creating new things with card!

1 Dusting the inside of the acetate and sticky fixers with baby powder or an anti-static bag will stop the beads, glitter or other filler from sticking to the edges of the tape and to the inside of the acetate.

2 The beads need room to move about so avoid overfilling the shaker in order to get the best effect.

3 If you are using larger beads or embellishments inside your shaker, use deeper sticky fixers (or two layers of thinner fixers if you don't have any).

4 Sandwiching the acetate between two layers of scrap paper will help in getting a cleaner cut when die-cutting.

5 To get a sparkly effect without the glitter sticking to the acetate, try using a heavy-weight glass glitter.

Baby powder works just as well as an anti-static bag on acetate!



STITCHING & FABRIC

Discover the best ways to add texture to your papercraft projects with our expert help on using fabric and stitching in your designs

How can I use fabric to add interest to my cards?

You can create gorgeous effects with fabric on cards, and there are lots of different ways you can do this. Try die-cutting flowers, layering them up and sewing buttons to the centre. You can also sew shapes directly onto a base card and add wadding underneath for a 3D or quilted look. Or, glue fabric directly onto your card as a background, like on the design pictured here.

The stamped image on this card also contains fabric pieces – just stamp the image onto fabric as well as card; cut out some of the fabric elements and piece them onto the stamped image on the card for a contemporary topper. You can find fabric remnants in most fabric stores – they are really cheap to buy, and will give you lots of colours and patterns to play with.



Fray the edges of fabric squares to give them a whimsical look, and use smaller scraps for paper piecing



Q Can I use my normal paper punches on fabric or do I need to buy special ones?



It is tricky to use punches for cutting shapes from fabric and thin dies are not really deep enough to cut through the fibres, but big dies will do the job perfectly. Just lay the fabric onto the die, put cutting plates underneath and on top, then feed through your die-cutting machine. You might find it helpful to layer sheets of paper either side of the fabric to make sure it cuts

Fabric shapes make brilliant embellishments – cut them with a die-cutter to get the best results

cleanly, but on close woven fabric this isn't necessary.

Spray adhesive is ideal for sticking fabric, or you can attach with brads, stitching or staples. If you are really keen to try punching fabric you will need to stiffen the fabric first.

Can I use my sewing machine to stitch onto cards or do I have to hand sew?

You can do both! Use your sewing machine to create professional-looking effects on your cards and scrapbook papers. Try using different stitches – a straight stitch might make a nice border while a zig-zag stitch can be used to create fun flower stems as part of a floral design. You can also use your sewing machine without any thread in it, to get a paper pricking effect.

One of the key things to machine stitching on cards successfully is to check the tension setting on your machine, and the general rule of thumb is the lower the better. If the tension is too high, then the thread will pull really hard from one stitch to the next and will tear the paper as it goes. Every sewing machine is different, so practise your stitches on scrap paper first until you get a result you are happy with.



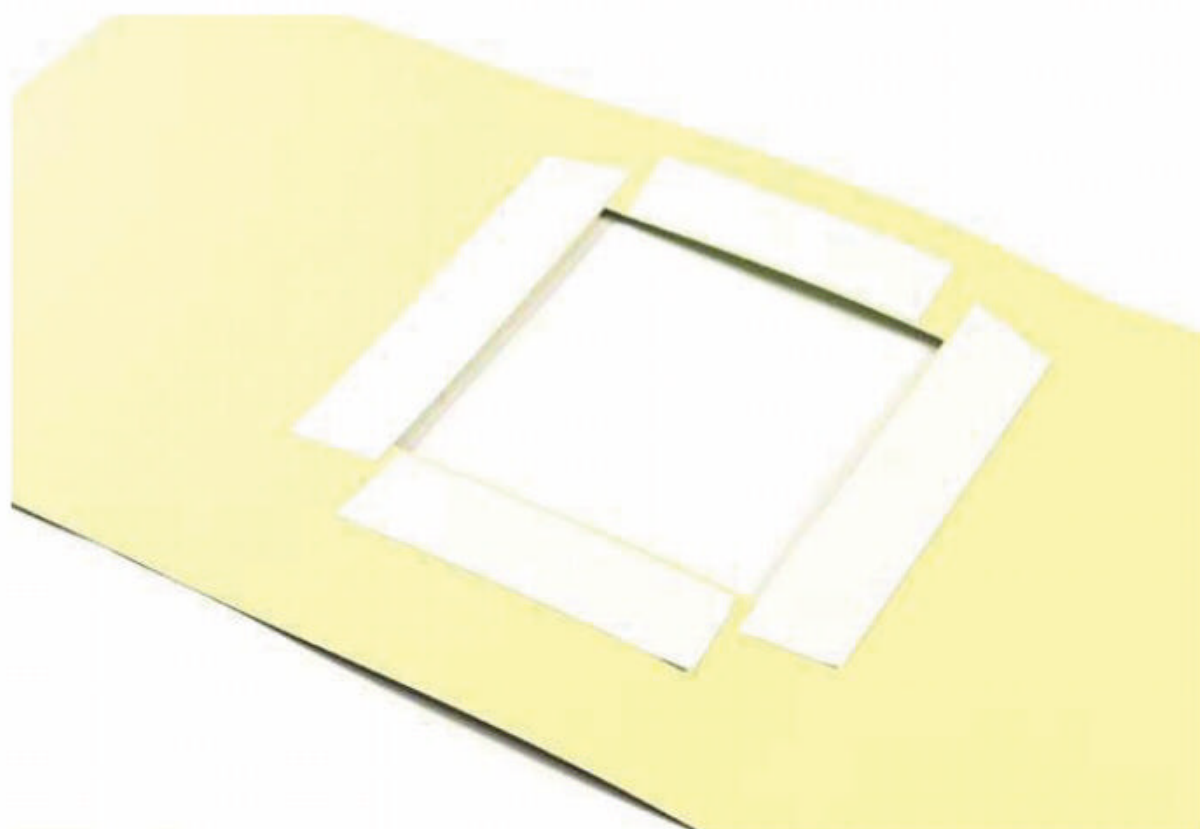
Q How can I get a Scandinavian style to my papercraft projects?



Scandi style is a huge winter trend that keeps resurfacing year after year, particularly around Christmas. You can easily get the look on your Christmas cards, tree decorations and other seasonal papercraft projects with some basic hand stitching. Simple cross stitch and running stitch borders are great ways to add texture and a homespun feel to your cards, without having to get the sewing machine out. Just combine with felt, kraft card and wood for a classic feel. Pick a red and white, lilac and white or blue and white colour scheme for an authentic feel.

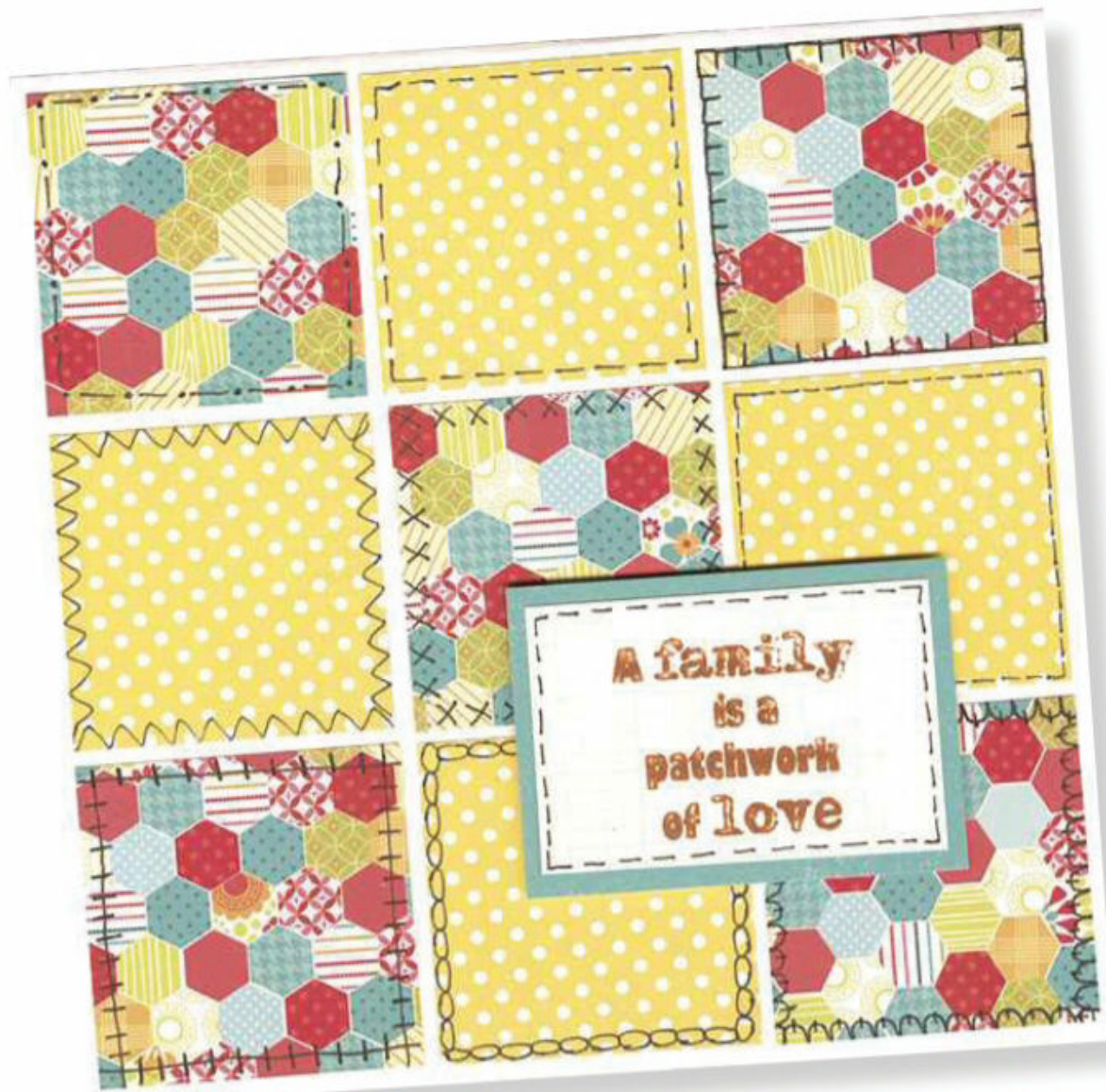
Q What is the best way to attach a stitched image to a card?

The best way to attach a stitched piece to a base card is with double-sided tape. This will allow the stitched piece to lie flat and remain securely in place without spoiling the design. If you use liquid adhesives, you may find that they are absorbed by the fabric or leak around the edges of your image, resulting in a messy finish, so avoid these if at all possible.



Attach double-sided tape neatly around the edge of the aperture to stick your stitching in place

Q How do I achieve a stitched effect on my cards without using a sewing machine?



There are a few different ways to achieve a stitched look without using a sewing machine. Faux stitching with a fineliner pen creates thin 'stitches' similar to cotton. For proper stitching, you can pierce holes or patterns of holes through papers and follow through with a needle and thread. You could also find images of stitches online and doodle them onto your papers, like on the card shown here.

Create a pretty stitched-effect border by doodling different types of stitches using a fineliner pen

TOP TIP

Make doodle stitches realistic by copying real stitches

ASK THE EXPERT



ANDREA WILLIS is a papercraft expert who loves using fabric and stitching to create textured papercraft projects.



How can I get a clean cut when trimming fabric for cardmaking to size?

Invest in a good quality pair of fabric scissors, rather than using your sticky cardmaking ones when cutting fabric for your cards. New scissors will give your shapes clean, crisp lines, and will also give you more control when cutting intricate designs. Keep your fabric scissors separate from your cardmaking scissors to ensure they stay nice and sharp, and clean.

You can buy special fabric scissors from any haberdashery department



Q What's the best way to display cross stitch designs in my cards?

Including your cross stitch work in a card is a great way to show off your efforts, and it looks gorgeous too! The best way to display a cross stitch motif is to attach it to an aperture card, like the one here. You can either buy these pre-cut, or create your own. To make one, score down an A4 piece of card twice to create three panels of equal size. Die-cut an aperture into the first panel, then stick your stitching to the card, so the design shows

through to the front. Once in place, stick the aperture panel to the back of the second panel, so that the back of the cross stitch is covered. You can then decorate the base card with embellishments or a greeting, as you wish. ✂

TOP TIP

Add wadding behind your stitching for a 3D effect



Display your cross stitch designs in aperture cards – try and match the card colour to one of the threads

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PAPERS, VELLUM & ACETATE

Get the low-down on the best ways to use different papers, vellum and acetate in your papercrafting projects

What's the best way to use crepe paper on my papercraft projects?

You can make really cute flowers from crepe paper by cutting circles and layering them on top of each other, then fastening them together with a brad. Simply pull each layer upwards, scrunching it up a little as you go. The more layers you use,

the more full your flower will be. Making each layer a different colour also adds interest. You could also try making little bows or rosettes, or you can stitch strips of crepe paper onto your cards to create a textured background or edge.

Crepe paper is an excellent way to add colour and texture to your cards

Q What's the best way to stick embellishments to glitter card without them falling off?



Sticking anything to a textured surface can be tricky, and glitter card is especially difficult. Using a glue gun works best – this is a hand held tool into which you feed a solid glue stick. Basically, a heating element in the gun melts the glue, and the adhesive flows out of a cone-shaped tip. It really is that easy to use! And you can even buy glue sticks that contain glitter if you want to add more sparkle to your glitter card. You can buy a glue gun from most craft stores from around £10.

Q How do I stop vellum from tearing on an embossing board?

Strangely enough, the way to prevent vellum tearing is by making it slightly damp. Spritz your vellum sheet with a fine mist of water or wipe a damp sponge over the surface. But be sparing with the water, as if you add too much then your vellum may warp – if this happens, just pop the vellum under a medium-weight book for a while so that it dries flat.

You can create beautiful effects when you emboss onto vellum – spritz with water first to stop it from tearing



Q What is paper piercing and how easy is it to learn how to do?

TOP TIP

You can use either the flat or raised side of a paper pierced design

Paper piercing is a simple, but very effective technique, and it's surprisingly simple to master. As the name suggests, it involves piercing your paper or card with small holes, to make patterns and shapes. The pierced pattern can be left plain or used as a template to add stitching. There are many templates available to buy that you can use with your piercing tool to create intricate designs. Simply place a piece of card onto a piercing mat, lay the template over the top, then using the piercing tool, puncture the pattern onto the card. You can buy all the materials at your craft shop.

Q What's the most effective way to use vellum on my cards?

Vellum is really coming into its own with cardmakers and you can see it being used in all sorts of interesting ways. One of the most popular things to do is to emboss onto it, but you can also use it alone or with other card or paper as an overlay. Stamp on it, print on it, die-cut it, try making a mini envelope filled with confetti for a wedding card, or use it as an overlay to soften a photo or a bold paper. Stamping an image on vellum, then heat embossing using white powder gives a lovely romantic look.



Q What's the best way to attach tissue paper to my cards without it tearing?



Tissue paper is notoriously difficult to work with as any wet glue will make it wrinkle, and it easily tears. On the card here, tissue paper has been used with double-sided tape in two ways. First, to make the ruffles cut strips of tissue paper and stick them to the base card using narrow double-sided tape. Secondly, on the image panel, a pink matting layer made from tissue paper was

A gentle hand is needed when using tissue paper in your projects as it can tear and wrinkle easily

added. To do this, cut a piece of white card and add double-sided tape to the reverse. Cut the tissue paper 1cm larger than the white card all the way around. Fold it over the white card so it is smooth and even and secure it on the reverse.

ASK THE EXPERT



KATINA KILLEY is passionate about designing beautiful cards and is an all-round crafting pro!

How do you make paper mosaics to use on cards – they look quite fiddly?

Mosaic-making is an ancient technique that is ideal for using up paper scraps to create really eye-catching cards. Paper mosaic cards are incredibly easy to make, and once you've mastered the most basic form you can move on to more difficult designs. To make the card here, cut a piece of floral paper measuring 10x10cm, then cut into 25 squares (you may find it helps to lightly draw out a grid on the reverse). Reassemble the paper by sticking the squares to a piece of white card, leaving 1mm gaps between each square. Trim the card to leave a border and your mosaic square is complete!



Q Is there a good way to use all the strips of paper that get trimmed away when I'm matting?



It seems a shame to throw away your leftovers, but luckily creative crafters can find a use for most things, especially gorgeous patterned papers! How about lining up five strips of paper across the top of a white base card. Cut each paper strip to a slightly different length, and attach an embellishment to the bottom of each one to make a pretty hanging effect, like on

Waste not want not; get creative with your paper scraps to make gorgeous (and free!) embellishments for your cards

the card shown here. You can also punch shapes from paper scraps to make toppers for your cards, or if you have very thin strips, then use them to create a pretty border around your card, or to frame stamped images or greetings.

What's the best way to stick glitter onto acetate?

A really quick and easy way to use glitter on acetate is to use a double-sided adhesive sheet. You can buy these A4 sheets at most craft shops and they can be trimmed to the size you want them. Once trimmed, attach the adhesive sheet to your acetate. Remove the backing and sprinkle with glitter. Give it a quick rub to ensure that it is completely stuck, then shake off any excess glitter. Alternatively, you can use clear PVA glue – follow the same process, but don't rub the glitter in as you'll make a mess. You can create all sorts of gradient effects with acetate and glitter, see the sheets pictured below.



Q Is iris folding as difficult to do as it looks?



Iris folding looks impressive, but is actually fairly easy to get the hang of. It's also really versatile, as any type of thin paper or even ribbon can be used to create truly stunning designs. It's a bit like painting with numbers, but with strips of folded paper instead of paint!

To start with, a numbered paper pattern is placed underneath a card aperture to show you where to

secure the paper strips. There are lots of free patterns online – to use them, simply print the design and cut out the correct aperture from the front of your base card.

An easier option is to buy an iris folding card kit, which come complete with papers to cut and fold and a pre-cut aperture. Look in your local craft shop or online for a great selection of kits.

You can use papers, ribbons or even fabric scraps in iris folding, to create beautiful spiralled designs

Q Can I emboss straight onto acetate?

Yes you can. It is now possible to buy heat-resistant acetate which is for embossing on or using in laser printers. But you can also emboss on ordinary acetate if you are careful not to hold your heat gun too close, or for too long, in one area otherwise the acetate will buckle. It's a good idea to wipe an anti-static bag across the acetate before stamping as this will stop stray specs

of powder clinging to the acetate. Stamp your image with VersaMark ink and cover with embossing powder. Apply heat to melt, holding the gun slightly further away than usual and keeping it moving across the whole area to avoid warping the acetate. Leave to cool, then colour the back of the acetate with alcohol markers. Add to a white base card for the best effect.



You can buy special heat resistant acetate that's ideal for embossing onto from your local craft shop

Q How can I incorporate acetate into my cardmaking?



Acetate is a versatile product and you can achieve so many different looks on your cards with it. Try folding a sheet to make a card blank and mount toppers on the front for a floating effect. Make sure you hide any adhesive that shows on the inside of the card with another panel of paper. You can also use it to back apertures and create fun windows, or punch shapes from it to hang

There are so many ways to use acetate in cardmaking – try a few of our suggestions to get you started

from the front of a card for a 3D effect. You can also make acetate more interesting by stamping onto it with VersaMark ink. Or, try running acetate panels through an embossing folder to create stunning backgrounds.

How do you use acetate that already has a pattern printed onto it?

Acetate is such a beautiful material, as it really lets the light shine through. It also adds a completely different texture to your creations. You can use printed acetate in many of the same ways you would clear acetate. In fact, it's actually easier to use, as adhesive can be hidden behind the pattern.

Why not create a unique base card using just acetate? Simply add a rub-on sentiment to the front and stick a square of card on the inside panel for your greeting, like on the design here. You can also mount it behind an aperture in your base card to make a window. Another great idea is to stick a number of different coloured panels of card to the back of the acetate. This will create a funky rainbow effect on the front that the pattern will show through. You can also use patterned acetate to create really eye-catching embellishments by die-cutting different shapes from it.



Can I do paper piercing on vellum sheets?

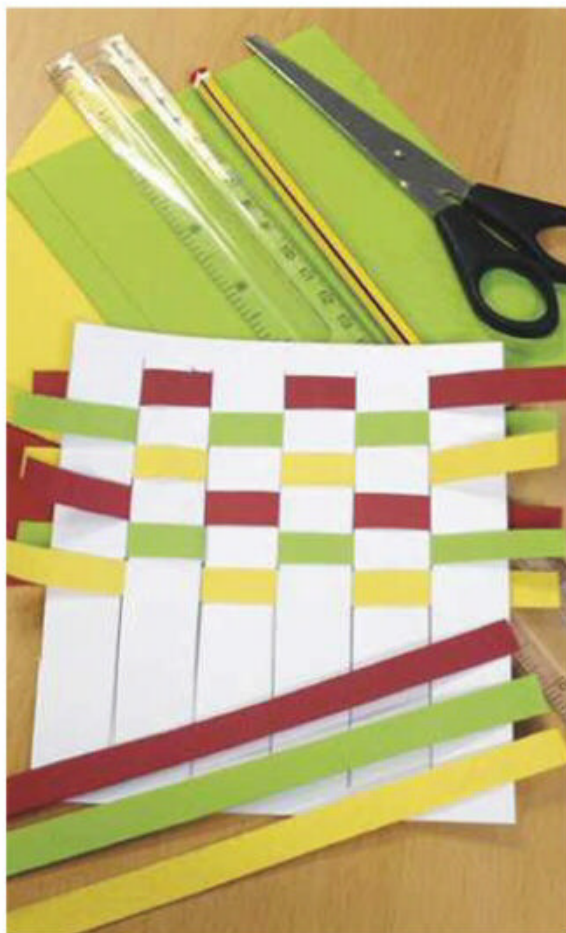
Most papers can be pierced but vellum is probably a bit too thin and fragile, especially if you are going to emboss the paper, too. Parchment paper will give you a similar effect, and is thicker and has more stretch, so is less likely to tear. Paper piercing uses simple tools and materials that you might have in your stash. You can use a large needle and a mouse mat for your first attempt, but a paper piercing tool and a foam mat will make

the job much easier. To make the card below, die-cut a butterfly as a template, then emboss some areas on it and prick holes through others. Prick the holes so they are about 1mm apart all the way around, then carefully tear the excess paper away to get the irregular edge. The embossing shapes the wings attractively. Make sure you attach the butterfly to your card by the body only, and add feelers made from coiled craft wire.



Parchment is a great alternative to vellum for paper piercing and will hold up well for this technique

Q I want to try paper weaving, but don't know where to start!



Paper weaving is a fantastic way to use up leftover pieces of paper. The easiest way to begin is with a square of paper (6x6in is a good size), and fold it in half. Next, draw vertical lines to use as guides to cut evenly spaced slits, starting from the folded edge, up to about 1.5cm from the opposite edge. Open up the square. Cut strips of contrasting paper about 1cm wide and longer than the length of the square's side. Take a strip of paper and weave it

Try paper weaving to create beautiful backgrounds and embellishments for your projects using leftover paper strips

TOP TIP

Try cutting wavy strips of paper to weave for a funky look

horizontally across the slits, going over and under the slits. Push the woven strip to the top and weave another one. The second strip should be woven in the opposite direction to the first. Repeat the process until your paper weave is full, then flip the whole thing over and glue the ends in place.

Q What else can I use patterned papers for other than layering?

Patterned papers have so many uses in crafting and are one of the most versatile materials you can have in your stash. Use them for paper piecing stamped designs, for découpage and for lining envelopes to create an elegant finish. You can also cut out motifs from papers to use as toppers, punch shapes from them, use them as backgrounds behind aperture windows – the only limit is your imagination!

Create an instant theme or feel to your projects using patterned papers – they're an essential piece of crafting kit!



Q How can I print good quality greetings onto pearlised paper without jamming my printer?

You can get beautiful effects by printing onto pearlised paper. However, if you are using an inkjet printer, then the colours will look more muted than when printing onto plain paper. This is lovely for background papers and for creating a vintage or distressed look cards, but for a sharper finish for text or greetings, a laser printer works much better. Just feed the paper in one sheet at a time, remove the printed sheets as soon as they come

out, and leave to dry. For the best results set your paper settings to 'heavyweight' and 'glossy'— this will lay down less ink and is therefore less likely to smudge.

TOP TIP

Print on the envelope setting when using thicker papers

Patience is required when printing onto pearlised papers as you'll need to feed them into your printer one at a time



Q Can I stamp neatly onto acetate?

A steady hand and a quick drying ink are the essential ingredients for stamping on acetate



TOP TIP

Stamp in white ink for a gentle effect or black for a dramatic look

You certainly can – stamping onto acetate is a lovely way to create a distinctive focal point on your designs. Some inks work better than others, so it's worth buying the right one to achieve a crisp result every time. StazOn is a great ink for stamping onto acetate, as it dries quickly and produces a professional finish. You can also use a pigment ink to stamp onto acetate.

These will need to be heat set to avoid smearing, so should be used with heat-resistant acetate. Hold the stamp steady, as it can easily slip on acetate, and once stamped, hold the heat gun over the image to set it. You can also emboss your stamped images to give them a shiny, three-dimensional finish.

Is it easy to make your own coloured paper – can I liven up white textured paper?

An easy and inexpensive way to do this is to use ordinary food colouring and water. This method usually produces good results with textured paper as it tends to be thicker than smooth paper. Simply put some water into a container that's slightly bigger than the paper you want to dye, and add some drops of food colouring. Next, lay your paper flat in the dye and leave until you have the tint you want (try a minute or two for a light tint and longer for a darker tint). Remove the paper and lay flat on paper towels to dry. You can experiment with different colours and tints and even try multicoloured paper.



Q What's the best way to use papers with big bold patterns on them?



Often the focal point of a card is the centrepiece, but this can easily be overshadowed if you use a big and bold patterned paper that grabs all the attention. However, bold papers can make great backgrounds, you just need to remember to keep the centrepiece uncomplicated. The card shown here has a simple sentiment in the middle. The matching colours tie everything together and the ribbon adds a nice texture and interest. If you try this and still feel that your paper is too bold, then you can easily soften it by adding a layer of sheer vellum over the top.

Q Can I really download free papers and are they good enough to use?



There are lots of free papers you can download for your papercrafting, and they are as good as the paper you print them onto! You'll find fantastic free papers at www.cardmakingandpapercraft.com that you can use for a whole range of occasions. We recommend printing onto paper that is at least 120gsm, but experiment and see which you like best. You can also find free papers included in many papercraft magazines, and these are ready to use – just tear them out and get started straight away.

Q What sort of papers can I use for iris folding?

Try to use thin, lightweight papers for iris folding. Thicker papers won't fold as well and can make the design look too bulky for your card (and impossible to fit in a standard envelope). Iris folding is a fantastic way to use up all those scraps of paper that are too small for other projects – paper scraps featuring small, delicate patterns will work best. It's best to cut and fold all your paper strips **before** you assemble the design, and use a bone folder

to make crisp folds that enable the paper to lie flat, giving a more professional look to your designs.

TOP TIP

Iris folding is a great technique to use for special framed pics



When choosing papers for iris folding, go for small and delicate patterns to create a really stylish effect

Q What's the best way to use clashing papers to make professional-looking cards?

Clashing colours can be used to great effect to make really stand-out cards with a modern or retro vibe.

The golden rule to remember when using bold colours or busy patterns is that less is definitely more. The card shown here features a very bright and busy background paper. A clashing paper has been used to create interesting panels, and these are mounted onto plain card that allows them to stand out in their own right. Keep your designs

simple and don't overdo it with embellishments. It's also a good idea to use papers from a scrapbook paper stack, as the papers in these are designed to be used with each other for projects that look designed not thrown together.

TOP TIP

Pair large patterns with small patterns for a balanced look



A very simple greeting or sentiment panel gives cards made with clashing papers the perfect finish

How do I use a paper crimper to create embellishments for my projects?

Paper crimpers are so easy to use; they're also really versatile and produce super-quick results for your projects.

To crimp paper, feed it through the middle of the two wheels on the crimper, then turn the handle to push the paper through. Kraft card looks great crimped as it already has a fashionable look and textured finish. You can also crimp borders to give them a funky look. Another great trick is to crimp four 1x7cm strips of paper. Turn each piece of paper on its side, then arrange them onto a piece of card in the shape of a heart. Stick them in place for a stylish 3D embellishment for cards, scrapbooks, framed pictures and more. You can also crimp card letters to create an eye-catching personal greeting.



Q How can I use fabric papers?

Fabric papers are so easy to use – just peel away the backing paper and stick them in position on your projects



TOP TIP

Punch or die-cut shapes from fabric paper to make fab toppers

Self-adhesive fabric papers

are fantastic for adding texture to your cards. They are so easy to use and give a lovely vintage effect that helps make your cards look stylish and professional.

The card shown here uses self-adhesive fabric paper to create the background. Or, you can use them to add layers for mounting images on, or cut flowers from the paper

for embellishments. By inking the edges of the fabric paper it helps it stand out from the page and adds to the vintage look.

As the fabric paper is self-adhesive it is very easy to create a clean, smooth surface, just play around with the positioning before you remove the backing to make sure you are happy with how it will look before sticking it in place. ✂

EMBOSSING

Learn all you need to know about heat embossing and add a whole new dimension to your stamped images

What is the resist technique?

The resist technique is a fun yet simple way to create bespoke papers, backgrounds and images through heat embossing and inks. To make the butterfly design shown here, stamp the image onto white card using VersaMark ink and then heat emboss it using a clear embossing powder. Once it is dry, rub over the image with a

dye-based ink pad and a sponge applicator. Next, wipe over the image with a clean tissue to remove any ink. This technique enables the ink to cling to the background but not the embossed image, allowing the butterfly design to really stand out. To finish, mount the butterfly onto contrasting card and patterned paper panels for a modern greeting.



Get to grips with the resist technique for a clever way to make your embossed images really stand out

Q Is embossing a different technique to heat embossing?



Heat embossing is a different technique to embossing, but they are both different methods of creating raised images. With heat embossing you add a 3D effect to stamped images. With embossing, you use an embossing tool and a stencil to push lines into materials such as card, acetate or foil, and you can use the indented or raised side to create an embellishment.

Embossing can be done by hand or with a die-cutting machine, and is a different technique to heat embossing

TOP TIP

Don't cut the lines of an embossed image as the powder will flake

ASK THE EXPERT

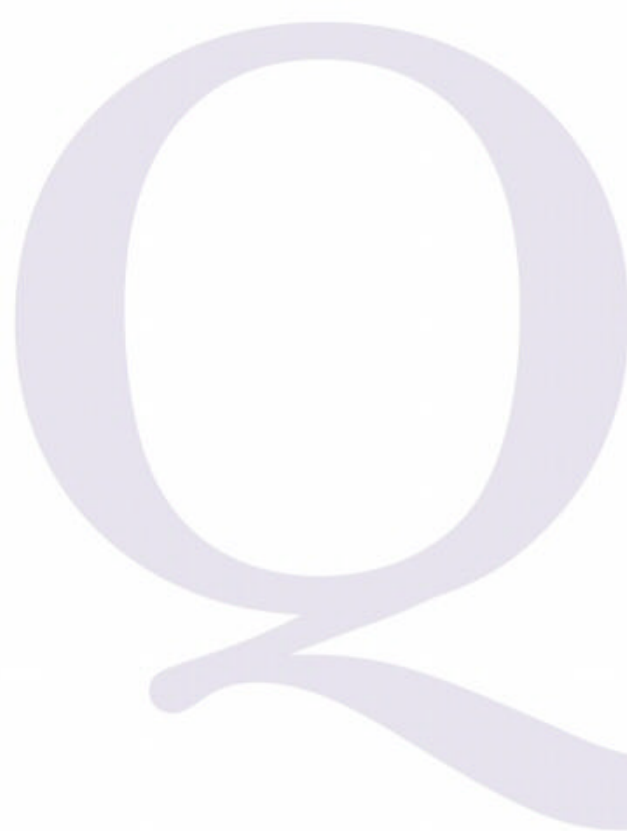


JANE GILL is an experienced designer and paper crafter who loves to experiment with new techniques.

What is heat embossing and why do you do it?

Heat embossing is fun to do and adds a professional finish to your stamped greetings. You can use it to create fab focal points or fascinating backgrounds for your cards. On these cards, I have heat embossed with clear powder over colourful stamped images to give them a sheer finish. I have also heat embossed with white powder on VersaMark ink to act as an ink-resistant layer. By colouring the background, the image pops out in white.



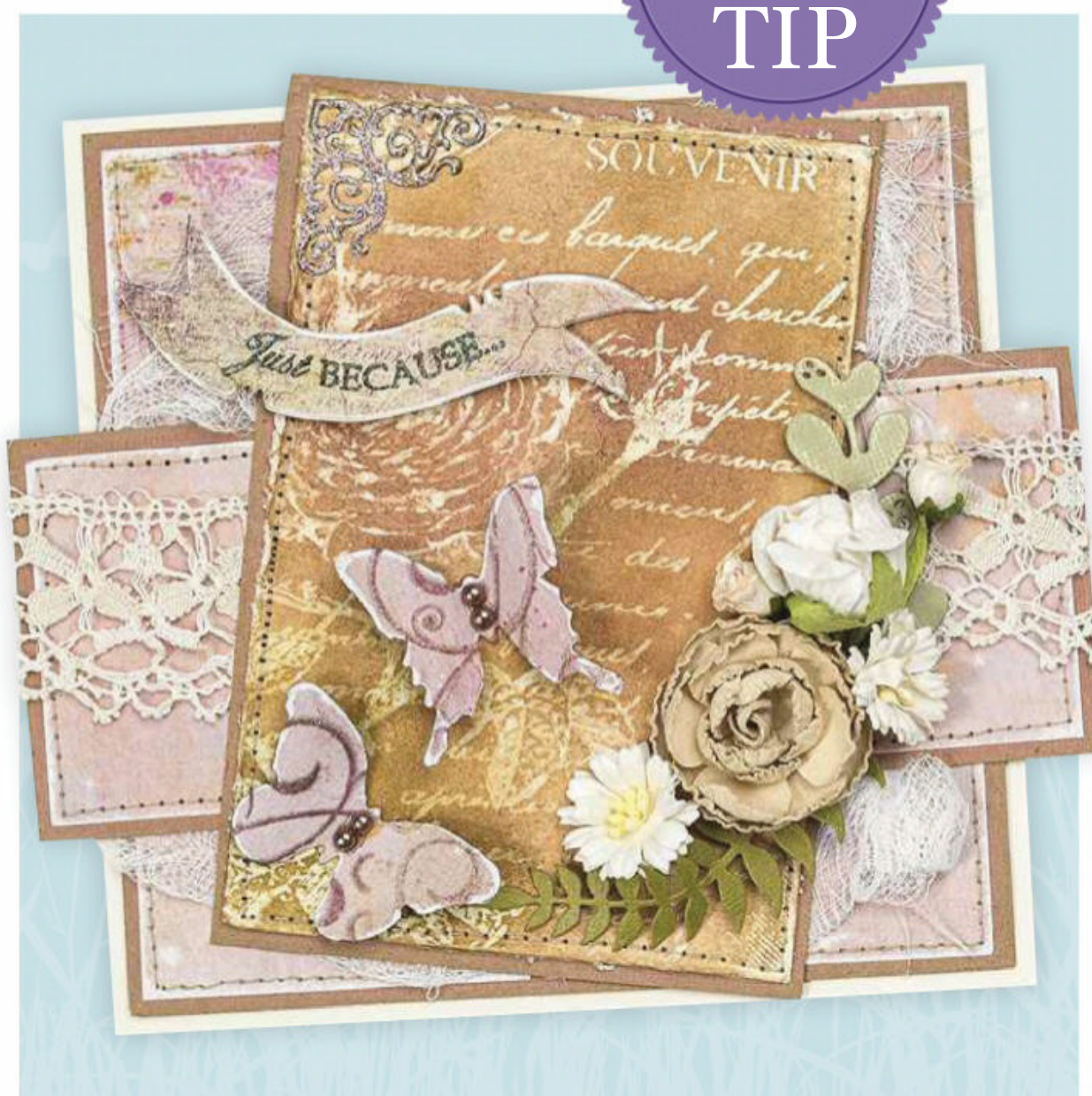


Do I need to buy a heat resistant mat when using a craft heat tool?

Ideally you need to use a heat-resistant craft mat or a glass cutting mat, both of which are available from most craft shops. But you can also use glass, heat-resistant chopping mats that are intended for kitchen use. When heating, remember that some heat tools can take up to 30 seconds to warm up so you may need to run yours for a while before using it.

Hold the tool about 5cm away from the image to apply an even coverage. For the card here, the

image was stamped in VersaMark ink and then embossed with sparkly embossing powder. Then the embossed image was sponged gently with distress ink to emphasise the design. The corner embellishment is a die-cut that was covered in VersaMark ink and then Frantage, which produces a metallic effect once heated.



Invest in a heat-resistant mat for easier embossing – it's a good craft box addition that you'll use again and again

Q How can I prevent my image from burning when I heat it?



As long as you don't hold your heat gun in the same area for too long when you are embossing an image, then this really shouldn't happen. If you're finding that you are burning the image, then a top tip is to try heating from the reverse side of the design by holding your heat gun under the card. This allows the powder to be heated more slowly and gently and therefore eliminates any chance of it overheating or burning.

Embossing powders melt at around 200 degrees, so keep your heat gun moving evenly over the card to avoid burning

Q How can I make white embossed images really stand out?

When stamping and

embossing in white onto a coloured background it's good to remember that the darker the background colour, the more the stamped image will pop out. If you're creating a design with a repeat background, then it's best to choose softer shades to stamp onto, but for a focal panel, then darker, bolder colours will give your design impact.

The white embossed images on the backing card here really stand out against a background of vibrant pink



Q What is triple embossing?



Triple embossing is where you build up layers of embossing powder and stamp into them. To do this, cover white card with VersaMark ink and apply embossing powder. Melt using a heat tool and, while still hot, apply more powder and heat again. Repeat a third time.

If the powder doesn't stick the second and third times, tap your ink pad over the card again, then add the powder. After the third layer, while the embossing is still hot, stamp into it. This will give your

TOP TIP

Use a different colour embossing powder for each layer

images extra dimension.

To create a marbled effect, sprinkle on two or more colours of embossing powder. Do this after the second layer by dabbing with the ink pad, then adding the new colour in strips. Tap off the excess, then add a third colour in the gaps if desired, then heat to melt.

How can I prevent bubbles appearing in my heat embossed images?

When using embossing

powder it is important to keep the card as clean as possible. Handle the surface you intend to stamp on as little as possible to eliminate fingerprints that can attract the powder. Wipe with an anti-static bag before stamping with a VersaMark ink pad. Pour on the embossing powder, then tip off the excess giving a sharp tap on the back of the card to remove any powder that has stuck. If necessary, use a very thin paintbrush to clean any stubborn stray specks. Next, heat gently with a heat gun until the powder melts, and as soon as it does move on to a different section as it is possible to overheat the powder. This causes excess bubbling and can dull the finish of the embossing.



Q Can I use normal card and stamps when triple embossing?

You'll need to use either a good quality chipboard or wooden shapes when triple embossing. Standard card isn't strong enough to withstand the amount of heat required to melt the ultra thick embossing enamel multiple times. You'll also need to use rubber stamps rather than acrylic stamps as not all acrylic stamps can withstand the heat of being stamped into the molten UTEE and could end up getting damaged. ✂

TOP TIP

Extra thick clear powder will give a solid, glossy appearance

You use a lot of heat when triple embossing, so make your embellishments from hardy materials



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BEGINNERS

From choosing what card to use to building your stash, our expert advice covers everything you need to get started

Where do I start when it comes to buying card?

When you buy card or paper you will notice it comes in a size indicated by gsm – this means grams per square metre. Generally, the higher the number, the thicker the card. For cardmaking, choose a good weight of card, around 250-300gsm. This will ensure your base cards are sturdy and will be able to stand up if you shape them in a certain way or

if you use lots of embellishments.

When it comes to colouring images, it's best to match your card with whatever you use to colour.

For example, use watercolour card if you're using watercolour pencils, and a good quality smooth card for alcohol pens like ProMarkers.



Stock up on good quality card to transform your projects into professional-looking pieces

Q How can I add height to my layers without using foam pads?



The beauty of foam pads is that they give instant dimension to your projects, but if you don't like using them, then try 3D glue. You can buy a kit with a syringe that allows you to add blobs of glue to the back of the layer you want to add dimension to, or just buy a tube of the glue and apply it using a cocktail stick. It dries clear and has no smell, but it doesn't dry instantly, so you will have to put your project to one side for a while and let it dry completely.

3D glue is a great alternative to foam pads if you find them too fiddly to use; buy it from your local craft shop

Q I've been given tweezers for my card making, but what do I do with them?

We'd be lost without our tweezers when making cards! They are perfect for removing foam pads from their backing sheet and positioning them on your latest make. You can also use them to remove the backing from double-sided tape and for picking up and positioning pearls, gems and buttons accurately.

Tweezers are also invaluable when positioning découpage layers. Ordinary eyebrow tweezers work

very well, but you can now buy tweezers that are specially designed for cardmaking and papercrafting.

TOP TIP

Try reverse grip tweezers for easy handling of tiny embellishments





Can I make my own base cards or do I have to buy them?

It's easy to make your own cards and doing so will save you money. Maybe buy shaped and aperture cards until you have got to grips with the basics, and feel ready to make your own. Follow our steps to make a basic base card.

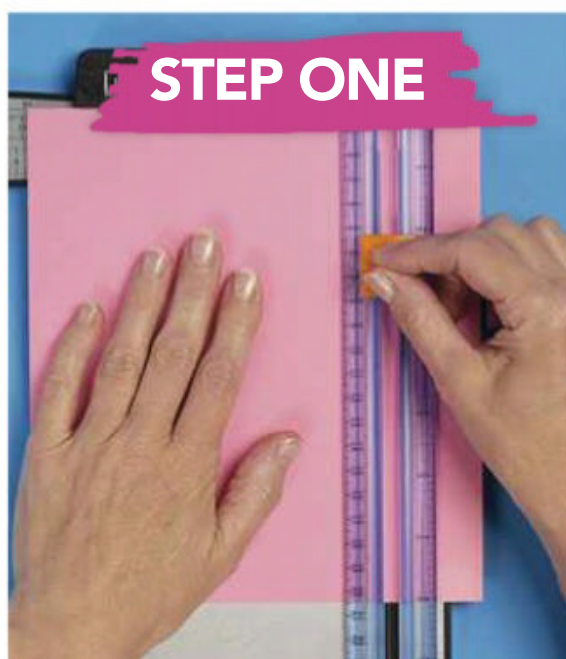
1 Cut your card to size using a paper trimmer or guillotine. Most cardmaking projects will tell you what size your cards need to be to make that particular design.

2 Measure your card to find the middle, then draw a line down the centre of the card. Use a ruler and a bone folder to score along the pencil line to make it easier to fold your card.

3 Rub off your pencil line with a soft eraser. Fold your card in half along the scored line and smooth the fold with a bone folder to give a crisp finish.



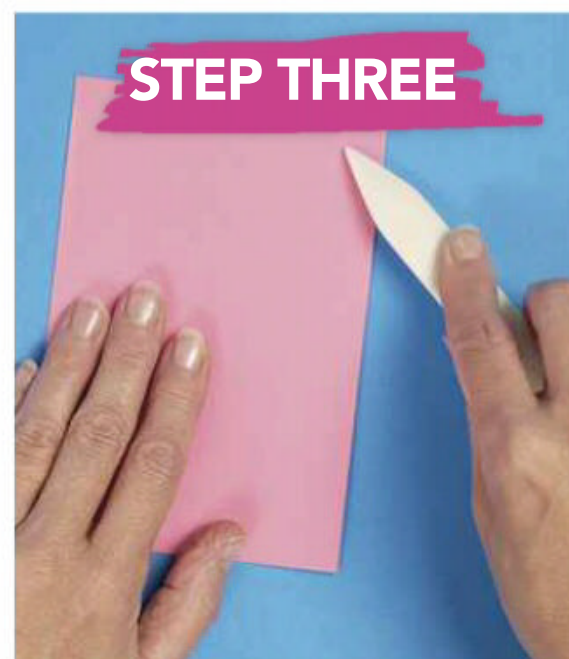
Once you've got the hang of making base cards, then you will be able to do them without drawing the pencil line



STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE

Q Do I really need to go out and spend a fortune on a starter kit? I'm new to cardmaking – what do I actually need?

You'll need to be able to cut and fold card neatly and to stick different layers of paper and card together. A paper trimmer with scoring blade is perfect for cutting card to size and then scoring down the middle to make base cards. You can also use it to trim background papers to size and to cut apertures in cards, so it's a handy tool with lots of uses. Other essentials include double-sided tape (4-6mm wide) and paper

glue with a precision nozzle – you'll need this to stick intricate shapes and delicate items onto your cards. You can make many cards with just these items and, once you're feeling more confident, invest in toppers, chipboard shapes, stamps and ink. Your stash will quickly grow as you try new designs.

TOP TIP

Keep separate ribbon scissors for a sharp cut every time



You don't need much to get started, but as cardmaking is so addictive, you'll soon find your stash getting larger!

Q How do I go about making cards for a children's charity – do I need to hold my own event, or will the charity sell them for me?



Making cards for charity is a fulfilling use of your hobby, and there are a few ways you can do it. You can sell your cards at fairs, markets or online and donate the proceeds, or you can donate the cards to the charity to sell. Either way, your best bet is to contact your chosen charity and they will

Invest in a display unit when making cards to sell and stick to simple designs that are reasonably quick to make

advise you on how to go about fundraising. Charities have regulations to follow and, once approved, you may need to sign an agreement that outlines the details.

I keep coming across the term 'angel policy'. What does it mean?

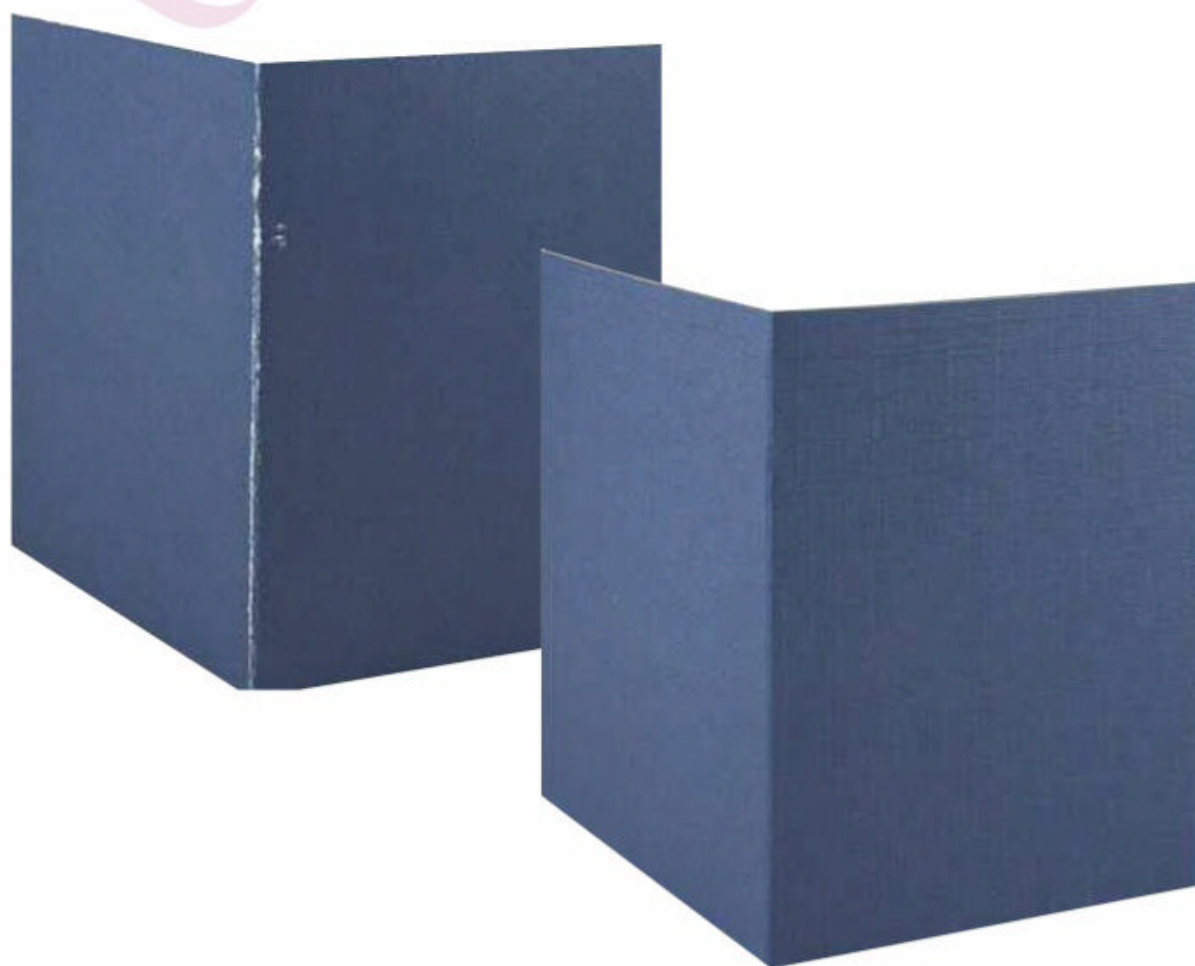
An angel policy is a company's written terms of use for their product. For rubber stamp companies it usually states that the images can't be reproduced electronically (scanned, printed etc), and that they must not be shared or sold. Digital images can be resized and printed off numerous times, but permission must be acquired before the images are altered in any way or merged with another. Again, they should not be shared or sold.

As each company's angel policies vary so much, it's important to familiarise yourself with them, especially if you sell your cards. Some companies are quite happy for you to sell items that you make using their products, while others will have restrictions on how many or where you sell. Some do not allow the sale of items made with their products at all.

Many people wrongly believe that once they have bought a stamp, paper or design that they can do whatever they like with it, but this is not the case. If in doubt, always check with the company first.



Q How can I fold dark card without the white core showing through?



When scoring a piece of card you need to take into consideration its weight or thickness. You will need to apply more pressure to card than paper to prepare it for folding. To get great results, always use a scoring tool or a bone folder. There are also paper trimmers that have interchangeable scoring blades, making scoring easy and giving you professional results every time. Every paper or card is different, so if in doubt, practise first.

Take time to score and fold cardstock correctly to make sure it doesn't split and reveal the inner white core

Q What are the best tools to use for découpage?

Sharp scissors! They need to be small with a fine tip to cut out those tiny pieces. You can buy curved scissors and little snips for intricate designs too. A craft knife is also useful for cutting out within a design, and tweezers are handy for placing and layering. For adhesive, sticky fixers are best for larger areas or 3D foam tape (cut to size). For smaller areas apply silicone glue with a cocktail stick.



TOP TIP

Keep découpage layers in order by numbering them on the back

What is VersaMark ink and how do I use it?

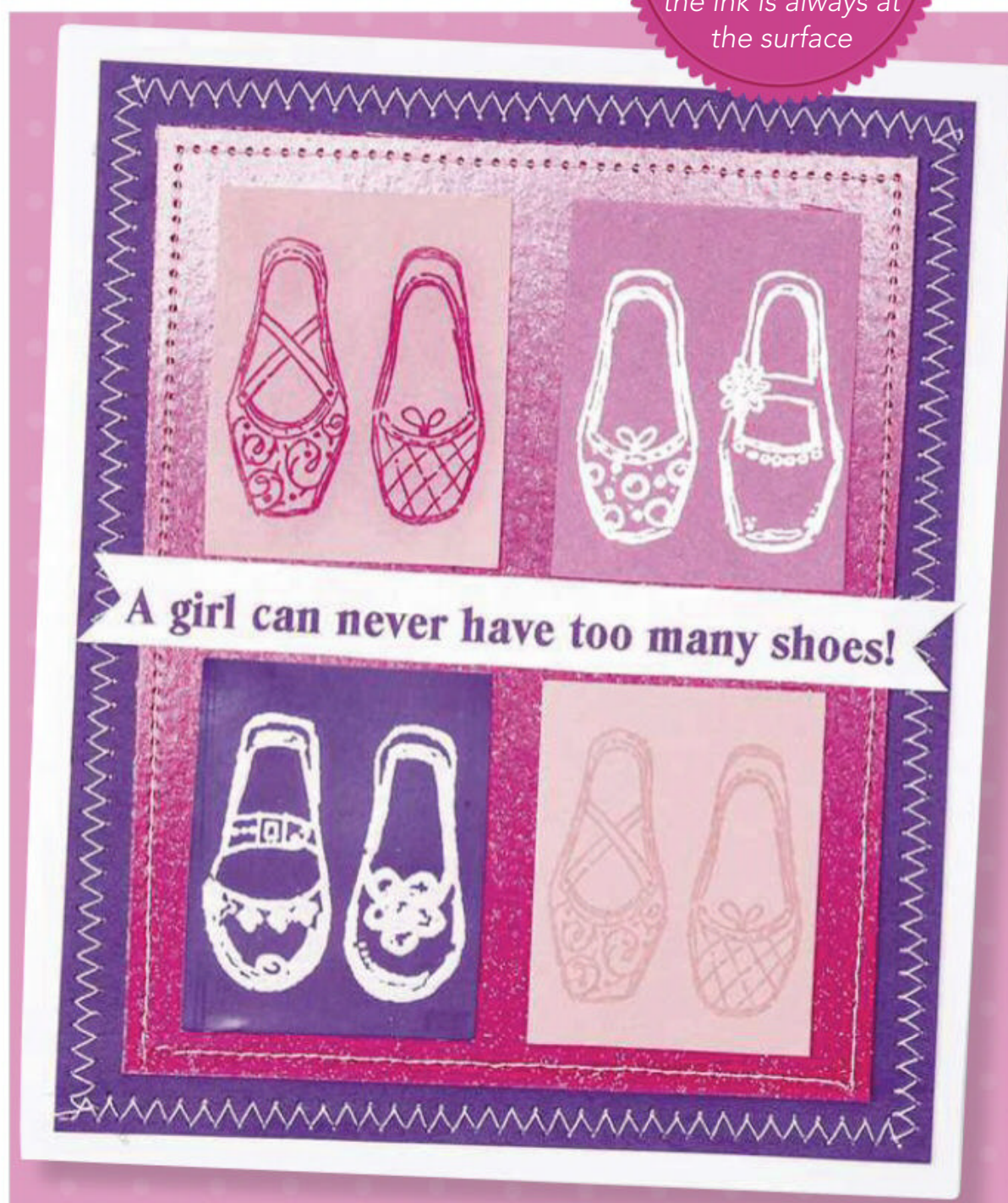
The card here shows how VersaMark can be used in four different ways. VersaMark is a thick, clear, slow-drying pigment ink. It is known as a watermark ink as it creates a slightly darker impression than the tone of the card you are stamping onto (see pale pink shoes). This allows you to create beautiful, subtle stamped backgrounds.

VersaMark ink is also used as a 'glue' to fix embossing powder before heating (see white shoes on

pink background). It can also be used to fix chalks or mica powders (see hot pink shoes). Lastly, it can be used as a 'resist' pad, where an image stamped in VersaMark ink on glossy card acts as a barrier to a dye ink applied over the top (see white shoes on purple background).

TOP TIP

Store ink pads upside down so the ink is always at the surface



VersaMark ink is so versatile – this card demonstrates four different effects you can get from it

Q Where do I begin making a card – the choices overwhelm me?

It's best first to decide on a stamp and then choose your colour theme and other elements from there. Find a sketch (a card layout) that you like to help you plan the design. You'll find lots online or you could try drawing your own. Look at your stamp and see if it has any themes you could use to enhance or embellish your card.

The two cards below use the same image and layout but look quite

different due to the colours, papers and embellishments used. The pink card has a girly theme, and has been accessorised accordingly. The other card draws on the star in the stamped image as inspiration for the backing paper and the punched star embellishments.

TOP TIP

Use shaped cards to easily change the feel of the same design



Use sketches to design a basic layout that can be embellished in so many different ways

Q How can I get even borders and a professional-looking finish when matting and layering on my cards?



There are a few different ways to get the correct positioning when matting and layering. Some crafters cut each layer on a guillotine and layer them all up afterwards, and some use a guillotine or paper trimmer to trim each border by eye – this is probably the most popular method. Other crafters stick the image or top layer onto an oversized backing and then trim

However you assemble your layers, use a guillotine or ruler and craft knife to make sure you cut neat, even edges

the excess away using a craft knife and a plastic ruler that has a grid printed onto it and a metal edge to cut against. Just keep one of the gridlines square to the edge of the layer you are matting and cut the oversized layer to make a border.

How can I save time when making multiple cards for wedding invitations or Christmas?

The best tip is to keep your cards as clean and simple as possible. Use one design for wedding cards, and for Christmas use one design for most people and make more detailed, personal versions for close friends or family members.

Cards that include punched or die-cut elements are quick and easy to make, and a change of patterned paper will make each card look different, even if the design is the same. To make the card here, mount a square of white card onto mirri card. Die-cut a snowflake in the centre and mount onto patterned paper. Stick to the base card. A greeting, gem and glitter finish off this design perfectly.

Another tip is to make a batch of cards, cutting out all the elements you need for all the cards in one go. Cut and assemble in a production-line fashion and you'll speed through the lot in no time.



Q How can I contain my out-of-control cardmaking stash when I don't have space for a craft room?

This is a common dilemma for crafters. When you don't have space for a craft room, the key is to keep your storage compact and aesthetically pleasing. Fortunately, there are lots of solutions to the problem and it's really only a matter of choosing one to suit your budget.

If you're working on a shoestring budget and actually want to spend your money on stash and not storage, have a look around your house for potential containers and boxes. Suitcases are ideal for larger items such as die-cutting machines, 12x12 papers and heat guns, while emptying jam jars, decorative bowls and Tupperware boxes are great for storing buttons, gems and other small supplies.

There are also many compact storage units on the market which are full of shelves and drawers and can be stored neatly in the corner of a room, tucked underneath a desk or placed on a shelf for a modern storage solution.

TOP TIP

Store card scraps for punching by colour in a ring binder



There are so many storage boxes available to buy, or upcycle items around the house to create your own

Q What is a sketch and how does it help with designing a card?



A sketch is a term used to describe a basic card layout. It's there to provide you with an idea of how to start and build up your card. From this you can introduce your own ideas by following the layout using your choice of papers and embellishments. To start, it's a good idea to find a card design you really like and work out a sketch for that design. Then experiment to see how you can play with the design, building it up to add different layers for different effects. See how the sketch here is used here to create a gorgeous Easter card.

Q How do I use floral outlines and motif templates to make cards?

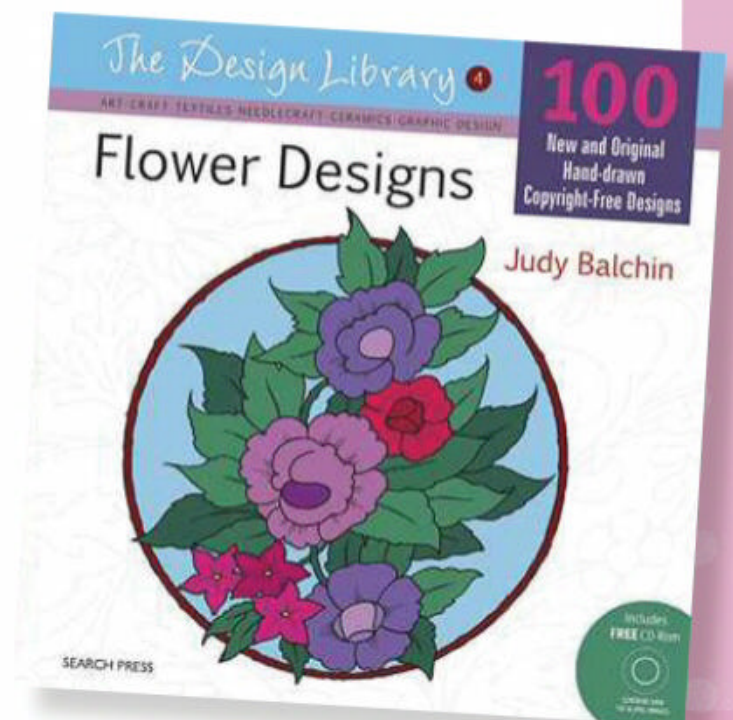
These often come in big books of motifs and are great as you can use them over and over again. The easiest way to use them is simply to transfer them onto your cards using tracing paper. You can then treat them in much the same way as a stamped image, colouring them using chalks or markers.

Another idea is to trace your chosen image onto vellum using a VersaMark marker, then sprinkle with black embossing powder and emboss with a heat gun. Allow to cool, then use pens to colour the

reverse side to create a beautiful stained glass effect. Attach the vellum to your base card for a chic look! Or, you could create a découpage effect – layer the shapes together for a really unique card.

TOP TIP

You can easily make your own templates on a computer



A book of templates is a great investment, as you'll have lots of designs you can use as many times as you like



How can I make a stylish birthday greeting on a small budget?

There are loads of free papers you can download from the internet or that come packaged as gifts with cardmaking magazines. Check out www.cardmakingandpapercraft.com for a great selection of patterned papers suitable for all occasions. The gorgeous card pictured here was made using free papers. To recreate it, simply die-cut a scalloped edge into a white base card. If you don't have a die-cutter then use a border punch. Mount a colourful paper onto your base card

and attach a strip of contrasting paper across the centre of this. Choose a complimentary paper that has pictures on it, like the butterflies and flowers here, and cut into a square panel. Cut matching butterflies and flowers from another piece of paper and stick to the panel using foam pads for a 3D effect. Stick the panel to the base card at an angle, then attach a stamped or printed greeting. Embellish the card with gems for some extra birthday sparkle. ✂



Save cash by using free papers for backgrounds and toppers – there are so many great designs online

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PUNCHING

Follow our essential advice to get the best from your paper punches and create fabulous shapes, apertures and borders



How can I make a really special design using a heart punch that I have been given?

Hearts are a great shape to work with – why not use one to make a statement piece of art for the front of your card? Use a pencil to draw a faint outline of a heart on the front of your card, either freehand or using a template to make it easier. Now fill this heart with smaller

hearts that have been punched from different brightly coloured papers in varying sizes. Create flower petals by folding the larger hearts in half, then carefully erase the pencil line when you have finished. Add a greeting to the bottom right corner for the perfect finish.



There are so many ways you can use a single punch. Just play with the shapes to see what effects you can create

Q How do I line up a border punch correctly?



Look closely at your border punch and you will see a lip for you to butt the edge of your paper up against and a printed image of the punch pattern on the base. Make your first punch in the centre of your paper and slide your work to the side to see the punched area you have just created. Keep the edge of your paper butted up to the lip and position your paper until it corresponds with the printed image on the base. You need to see the printed sections through the holes before punching again. If it isn't lined up correctly, then your pattern won't punch correctly.

Q What are the best punches to invest in for newcomers to punching?

Although they appear to be expensive, punches are one of the most cost-effective products for card making as you can use them time and time again for lots of different card designs. There are all sorts of punches to create individual motifs, borders or corners at the edge of the paper. Most craft shops will have a good range to choose from, or look online for special offers.

You can buy punches in so many shapes and patterns so consider which you'll get the most use from when starting out



TOP TIP

Sharpen your punch by punching through foil or sandpaper



Which punches and dies do I really need?

Start simple and go for quality over quantity. They'll last longer and give you a better finish. You can build up your collection as you find your own style.

A good start would be to invest in a set of nesting circle dies and a border punch. Both are extremely versatile and can be used for all kinds of styles. Over time you can add more fancy designs to your collection such as flourishes and

tags, and if you're able to, why not add some flower and butterfly punches too? You can use these items over and over again to create pretty cards like this one.

TOP TIP

If your punch is sticking, then clean it with a camera brush



A border punch, butterfly punch, hole punch and nesting circle dies were used to make this stylish textured card

Q How can I use a patterned border punch as a main design feature on my card?



Border punches have so many more uses than simply creating fancy borders. You can experiment with different types of papers, including tissue paper, vellum and acetate, make flowers or fold them to add texture. For a really simple but effective design, use your border punch to make a striking background for your card, like the one shown here. Use strips of card in

Not just for making decorative edges, use your border punch to create strong features and focal points on your cards

contrasting colours that have been punched along one long edge. Layer these onto a panel at jaunty angles in a fun zig-zag design, then trim to fit the panel. Embellish with a greeting, then stick the panel to the centre of your base card.

ASK THE EXPERT



NIKKI BOWMAN is a papercraft expert who has a wealth of experience of working with Washi tapes.

Is it possible to punch into Washi tape and if so, how do I do it?

The trick here is not to try and punch into the tape, rather to punch into card that's covered in Washi tape. Washi tape is a type of decorative masking tape that has become hugely popular with cardmakers in recent years. There are oodles of different colours and designs to experiment with, and it's very cheap and easy to use. You can make fantastic punched shapes using Washi tape. Simply cover a piece of white card with the tapes of your choice, then punch your shape from the card. Attach to a base card using foam pads or silicone glue to give your card dimension.

Make a card that packs a punch when you cut pretty butterflies from Washi tape



Q What can I do with the leftover bits of card that my shapes are punched out of?



When you punch a shape, you are left with a waste shape in the piece of card that you punched into. This creates a negative-type of effect that you can use in lots of interesting ways to create gorgeous cards. The design shown here is made by attaching strips of Washi tape that has been folded in half to a panel of card in a mock iris folding style. The butterfly waste shape is

Waste not want not! Put the negative shapes created when you punch to good use with fab designs like this one

layered on top using foam pads, so it becomes an aperture for the colourful design. You can draw in details, like the butterfly's antennae and a doodle border for a nice finish. This would also work well with ribbon scraps behind the aperture.

Is it possible to make my flower punch work at Christmas time?

It certainly is! Use your flower punch with traditional Christmas colours like red and green. Simply punch two flowers from each colour, layer them onto your base card, then add a bead or Christmas brad to the centre. Some punched leaves tucked in at the base of the flower provide the ideal finishing touch.

Another idea is to cut a punched scalloped flower into quarters and rearrange it to make a Christmas tree. When it comes to Christmas though, if you want to create a festive look, you can't go wrong with glitter! Punch flowers from different colours of glitter card and scatter them on your base card for a magical frosty look, perfect for winter.

A flower punch is so versatile it can even be used at Christmas



Learn how
IN 3 EASY
STEPS

How do I make a punched gatefold card?

Punching apertures into cards is where you can get really creative. Square and rectangle shapes are ideal for this, but circles, ovals and even heart shapes work really well too. Follow our steps to find out how.

1 Cut a piece of card measuring 30x10cm. Place the card landscape onto your scoreboard and score at 5cm and 10cm for the left fold and then at 20cm and 25cm for the right fold.

2 Fold the 5cm score line and insert the doubled card into a punch. When the fold line of the card is in the centre of the punch, then lightly mark it with a pencil and punch out the shape.

3 Repeat on the folded 25cm score line. Use the punched out shape from step 2 as a guide by drawing a light pencil mark around it so that you can make sure the punched shapes are equal and line up on each side. 🐰



Use your punches to cut apertures in gatefold cards in an assortment of shapes and sizes for different effects

STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE



DIE-CUTTING

Whether you want to add die-cutting to your craft repertoire or hone your technique our expert advice is sure to help

Can you use die-cut shapes as stencils?

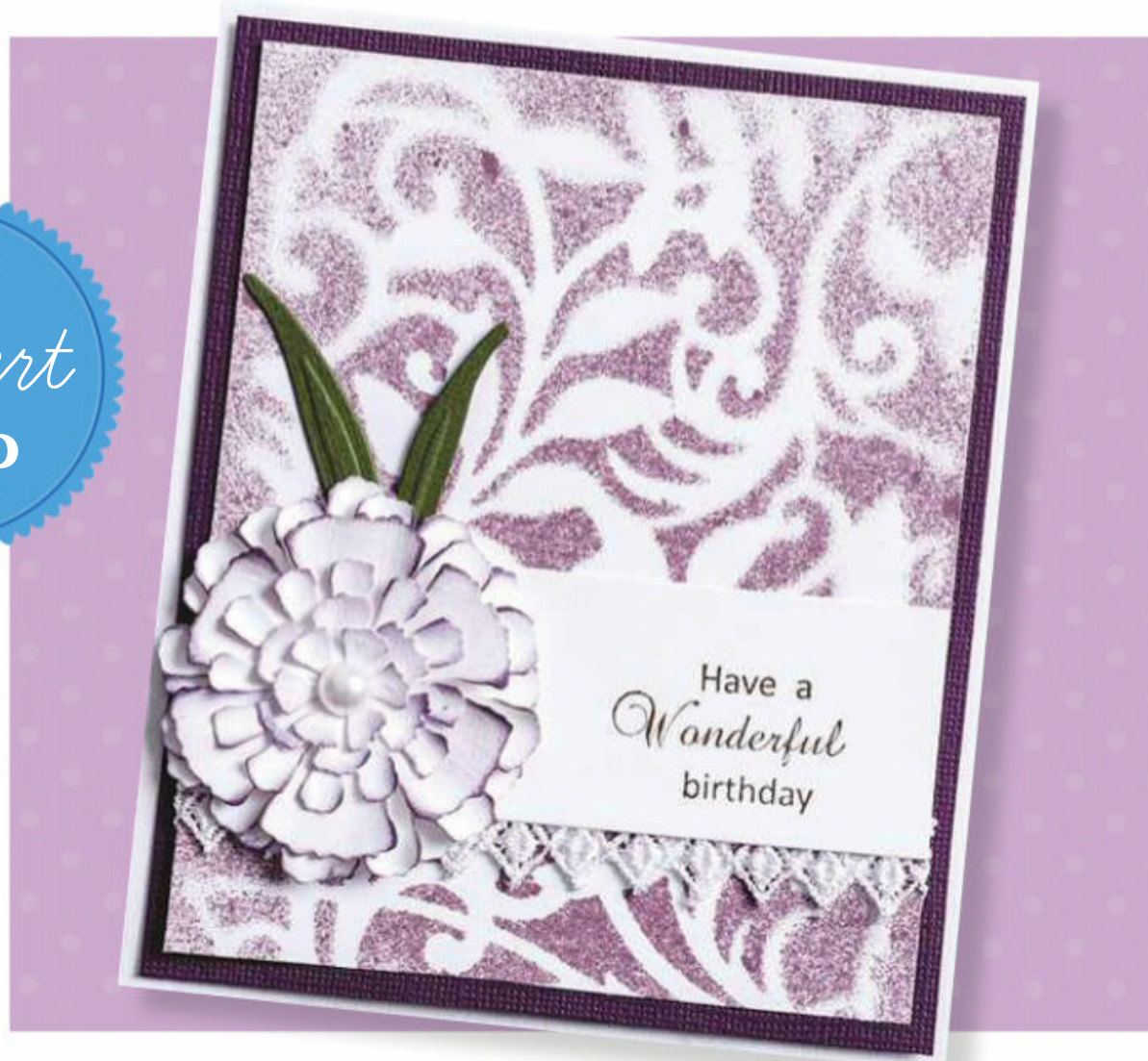
Most definitely! There are a number of different ways you can do this, but here are some ideas to get you started. Die-cut your chosen design from thick card. Keep the background for your stencil and place the die-cut shape to one side (this can be used later to add a second colour to your design, or used as a separate stencil). Using a foam applicator, brush ink

across the surface of the stencil and then remove to leave a striking decorative background.

Another method is to use your stencil with mist ink, like on the card here, to create a stippled-effect background. Die-cut your shape, place onto plain card, then spritz with an ink mister or glimmer mist. Wait until the ink is dry, then remove the stencil to reveal this fab effect.



You can make impressive background papers for your projects by using your dies as stencils



Q What is a die-cutting machine?

TOP TIP

Try out a few die-cutters before deciding which one to buy



Die-cutting machines

transform the time-consuming task of cutting shapes from paper or card by hand. The machine sandwiches metal dies (templates) over your card, which is fed through a roller by turning a handle on the machine, giving fast, professional results and crisp, precise cuts.

Some die-cutting machines can also emboss and texturise paper

Die-cutters make light work of cutting intricate shapes from card, paper and many other materials

and card, as well as other materials such as fabric, shrink plastic and felt. Many can be used with all the different makes of dies, not just the ones for that particular brand, making them budget-friendly.

Which die-cutting machine should I buy, and how much do they cost?

There's a die-cutting

machine to suit most budgets: entry level die-cutters like the Cuttlebug are perfect for novice crafters – prices start at just over £50. Mid-range, there are models such as the Sizzix Big Shot, at around £79, while top of the range digital die-cutting machines like the Cricut Imagine sell upwards of £400. All have varying functions so consider what you want to make with it.

There's a die-cutter for you whatever your budget or crafting needs



Q How can I prevent cutting through my paper when using embossing folders in my die-cutter?

This is a common problem when using embossing folders, particularly when working with vellum and lightweight paper and card. There are a couple of things you can do to get a better finish. Firstly, try playing around with the order of the embossing sandwich for your machine. Don't worry too much about experimenting; just remember not to force a sandwich

through your machine if it resists, or you could damage the machine. Alternatively, try placing your embossing folder between two pieces of card, paper or chipboard as this will help relieve some of the pressure on the folder as it passes through the machine. Again, don't be afraid to experiment with different combinations until you get the effect you want.



It's easy to get great results when embossing images and patterns with your die-cutting machine

Q Why should I use a die-cutting machine rather than cutting shapes by hand?

Intricate shapes like these layered scalloped hearts would be difficult to cut by hand



TOP TIP

Always ensure the dies you buy are compatible with your machine

There are many benefits to die-cutting over cutting out shapes by hand. First, the shapes you produce with a die-cutting machine will be neater and more uniform in shape and size. You can very easily cut out as many shapes, greetings and embellishments as you need, and it is much quicker to use dies and a die-cutter than a pair of scissors, especially when creating

intricate shapes. Die-cutters are particularly useful and really come into their own when you have lots of cards to make, say for wedding or christening invitations, thank you cards or Christmas greetings. Cutting out shapes by hand for these kinds of projects would take a long time, whereas with a die-cutter you can make really professional-looking cards in no time.

ASK THE EXPERT



DOROTHY WOOD is a teacher, expert cardmaker, published author and general guru of all things craft!

What's the best way to create a shadow effect using die-cut shapes?

Die-cut shapes can look very flat when they are first cut, but it's easy to give them more impact. Try shading the edges of the die-cut shapes with ink and a blending tool – a quick technique that gives a nice 3D finish. Shade on just one side to create a faux-shadow effect. This works well on shapes with detailed edges, like a tree.

If you want more impact, create the shadow with dark-coloured paper. Die-cut the shape (or letter, as in the card here) twice, once in patterned paper and once in dark grey paper. Layer with the darker piece underneath and positioned so it's just peeping out on one side. Remember to keep the shadow on the same side of each letter and to keep them all the same width.



Q What's the best way to colour the backgrounds of die-cut shapes?



You can colour die-cut shapes in the same way that you'd colour any other card or background. Just choose a method that will tie-in well with the rest of your card. A really effective way to colour die-cut shapes that are going to have an image stamped onto them is to sponge ink onto them. Chalk ink pads work best for this, and the older the pad the better as new ink pads tend to be a little too juicy and cause excess inking.

Colour your die-cut shapes as you would any other piece of card to add interest to your designs

Q Can I die-cut foiled acetate?

Yes, you can definitely die-cut foiled acetate to make striking embellishments for your papercraft projects. You may need to pass it through your die-cutting machine several times to get a clean cut, as the material is thicker and less giving than card, but persevere as it is definitely possible. Choose a medium-weight acetate to ensure you get the best finish.

Shimmer your way to stunning embellishments when you die-cut fab shapes from foiled acetate



Q How can I use my flower dies differently? I'm bored of the same old look, but don't want to spend out on new ones

Flower dies are so versatile. By cutting into these pretty die-cut paper shapes you can give them a whole new lease of life. Try snipping into the petals to create different shapes and then curling them to add dimension. You could also cut them into spirals and roll them up from the outside edge securing at the bottom with glue for great

3D roses. Or, why don't you try using them to cut felt, then layer them up to make brooches or card embellishments? You could also try cutting several layers of tissue paper with your flower die, then secure in the centre with a brad and scrunch them up, then shape the layers to make fabulous, fluffy flowers that girly girls will love!



Be creative and use your dies in lots of different ways to make sure you get great value for money

Q Can I die-cut photographs?

Yes, your die-cutting machine will cut through photographs easily just be careful with the positioning so that you don't ruin your pics. If it's an old photo, have a copy made so it's not wrecked if you make a mistake. But for digital pics, just print them onto photo paper. One fun way to use them is to make a spinning photo card. Make a base card with three panels, and die-cut an aperture into the first and

second panels. Die-cut your photos into slightly smaller circles than your aperture, then glue a piece of string onto the back of one photo, then stick the other photo behind so they are back-to-back. Place the string between the first and second panel, positioning the photo in the aperture and tape in place. Glue the left flap over the middle, hiding the string inside, then decorate the front of the card as you wish.



A die-cut photograph hanging in an aperture card makes a great personalised birthday greeting

Q How can I prevent front-heavy die-cut cards from toppling over?



If the design on the front of your card is very three-dimensional or if it just has lots of die-cut shapes attached onto it, then there is always the danger that it won't be able to stand up as the front panel will be too heavy to support it. Don't panic if you find yourself in this situation as there's an easy fix – just make a layered panel to stick to the inside back flap of the base card to act as a counter balance.

Balance embellishments evenly and add extra support to the reverse of your card to make sure it stands proud

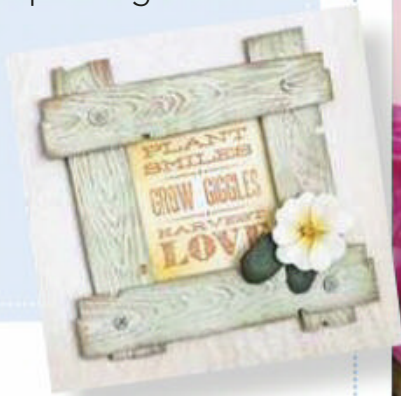
Q Can I use my die-cutting machine to make backgrounds for cards?

As well as cutting out shapes, you can use an embossing folder in your die-cutting machine to make exciting backgrounds for your cards. There are so many beautiful embossing folders available to buy that you really are spoilt for choice, and they're very easy to use. Just place your card into the folder, run through your die-cutting machine and that's it! You can then colour and embellish your background a whole host of ways to make interesting textured cards.



How do you create a woodgrain effect on die-cut shapes?

The best way to get a woody effect on your card is to use a woodgrain embossing folder. Once you have embossed your card, you can apply ink or paint to enhance the pattern. Distress inks are perfect for building up the colour contrast and dry-brushed acrylic paints give the illusion of old painted wood.



What's the best way to attach die-cut shapes to my cards?

It's entirely dependent on the effect you are trying to create. If you want to attach your shape flat to the card, then use PVA glue or double-sided tape. Die-cut shapes are brilliant for making 3D cards though, and by using foam pads or adhesive dots you can bring your cards to life. Die-cut shapes make lovely découpage, or you can hang them from apertures to make window cards and even die-cut the shape of base card!



Q How can I use the waste card that is leftover from die-cutting?



Every shape you cut can create two cards when you use the waste too!

TOP TIP

Use the correct cutting plates for your machine to avoid damage

When you die-cut a shape or greeting you are often presented with the opportunity to make two cards or embellishments. You can make really beautiful cards using the waste shapes created from die-cutting. Try mounting the waste shape onto coloured or patterned paper for an attractive silhouette; do this with foam pads to make it three

dimensional, like the card shown here. You can also use the waste shape as a stencil that you can colour using chalks or spray paint for a lovely effect. Try putting acetate behind a waste shape and colour in with glass paints. ✂

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

You'll never be stuck for ideas again once you've read our advice on making just the right cards for every occasion

Q Where do I start with making wedding stationery for a family member's big day?

The trick to creating successful wedding stationery is to keep it simple, as you have so many of each item to make. Start with a colour scheme. Find out from the bride what colours are being used for bridesmaids' dresses, flowers and decorations, then look for beautiful and complementary embellishments

for your stationery. A plain, printed piece of white card accessorised with a single rose or gem, coloured card and coordinating ribbon will look stylish and effective. What's more, it's easy to make and can be repeated on table plans, menus, place cards and favours.

TOP TIP

Buy good quality cardstock to give your invites a luxury feel



Take the stress out of making wedding stationery by choosing a gorgeous but simple design to repeat across the range

Q How can I make a traditional-style card for a Hindu wedding?

TOP TIP

Make a much smaller version of the invite as an RSVP



Traditional Hindu wedding

cards often feature the Hindu deity Ganesha, who is a figure with an elephant head and four hands. It's believed that he brings prosperity and happiness to the marrying couple and their family. You'll also find peacock feathers as this is associated with the Hindu deity Lakshmi who represents benevolence, patience, kindness, compassion and good luck. As for

We love this red and gold colour combination for a really striking Hindu wedding card or invitation

colours, red is a great choice. It's the most traditional Hindu wedding hue and looks amazing when paired with lots of gold.

The majority of Hindu wedding cards are fairly simple and do not include a greeting, but you could easily add one if you wish.

How can I make my own St Patrick's Day card?

Why not use a nesting heart die or punch to make a St Patrick's Day card, like the one pictured below? This eye-catching design is really simple to create and is ideal as you can make it using equipment you already have in your stash, rather than having to buy something new that is themed for the occasion.

Start by layering patterned paper onto kraft card. Next, die-cut four hearts from green card, emboss each shape then stick to the base card with sticky fixers, arranging them in a shamrock formation. Cut a thin strip of green card for the stem and attach below the shamrock. Add a computer generated St Patrick's Day greeting, and finish by adding a brown button tied with green twine in the centre.

Look for creative ways to use items that you already have in your craft stash



Q What can I use to make a card for a fifth wedding anniversary?



A fifth wedding anniversary is associated with wooden gifts, so use this as a starting point for your card. You could use woodgrain paper for the background of a design, like on the card shown here. You could also use a wood grain embossing folder or rubber stamp to create a focal point or background. You can use wooden embellishments to continue the theme and add a fun finishing touch – see what your local craft shop has in stock.

A quick search online will tell you the theme for each wedding anniversary, providing a starting point for your cards

Q What's the best way to make a nostalgic card for a grandparent's big birthday?

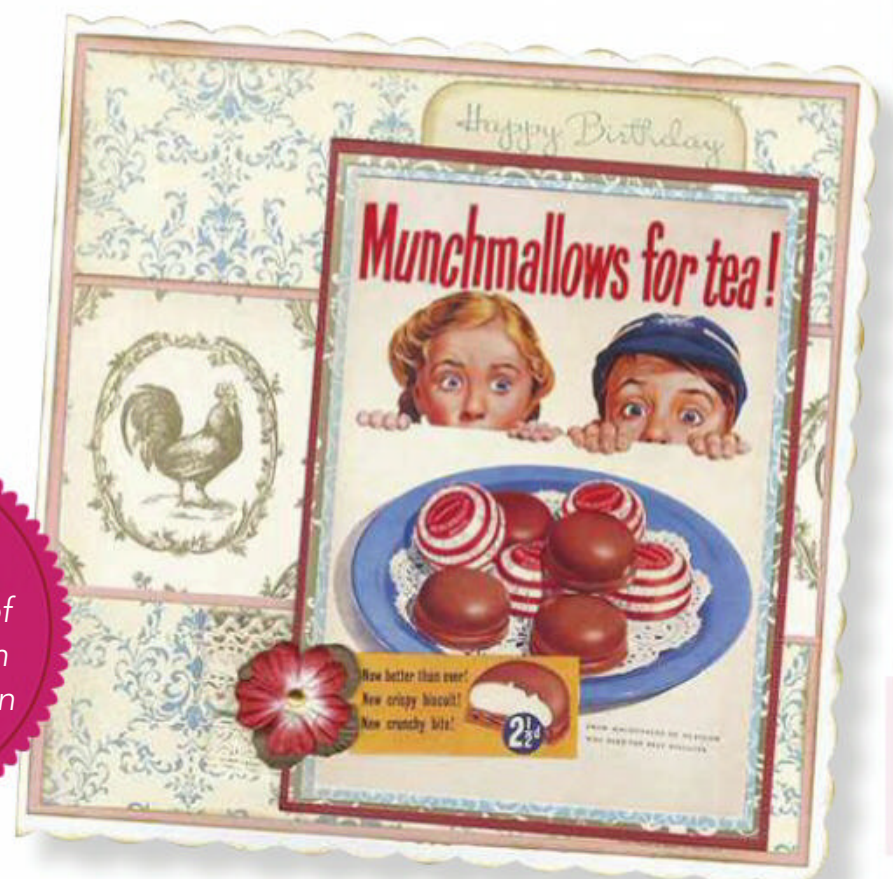
Try creating a card using something from the past to make the recipient smile? This card is made using a vintage print postcard that is sure to prompt a trip down memory lane. It will make a lovely card and keepsake too. You can buy vintage print postcards from gift shops and nostalgia websites – try a search engine for heaps of ideas.

To continue the nostalgic theme, we picked vintage style paper for the background and distressed the

edges with brown ink to get the right look. Add touches of lace for a retro feel.

TOP TIP

Run the edges of the card through the ink pad for an easy aged look



Q Is there a fun Valentine's Day design that is suitable for kids to make for their friends? Something that doesn't cost too much!

How about this fun 'love bug' design? All you need to do is print a Mason jar image (there are plenty online that are free) onto kraft card and cut it out. Grab yourself a pack of bug-themed buttons to stick in the centre and you're done! For a personal touch, get your children to write or stamp a greeting at the top of the jar. Or, if you want to make

a simple square card, punch a few hearts from coloured card, arrange them around a stamped, printed or handwritten 'Bee mine' sentiment, and finish with a bee shaped button.

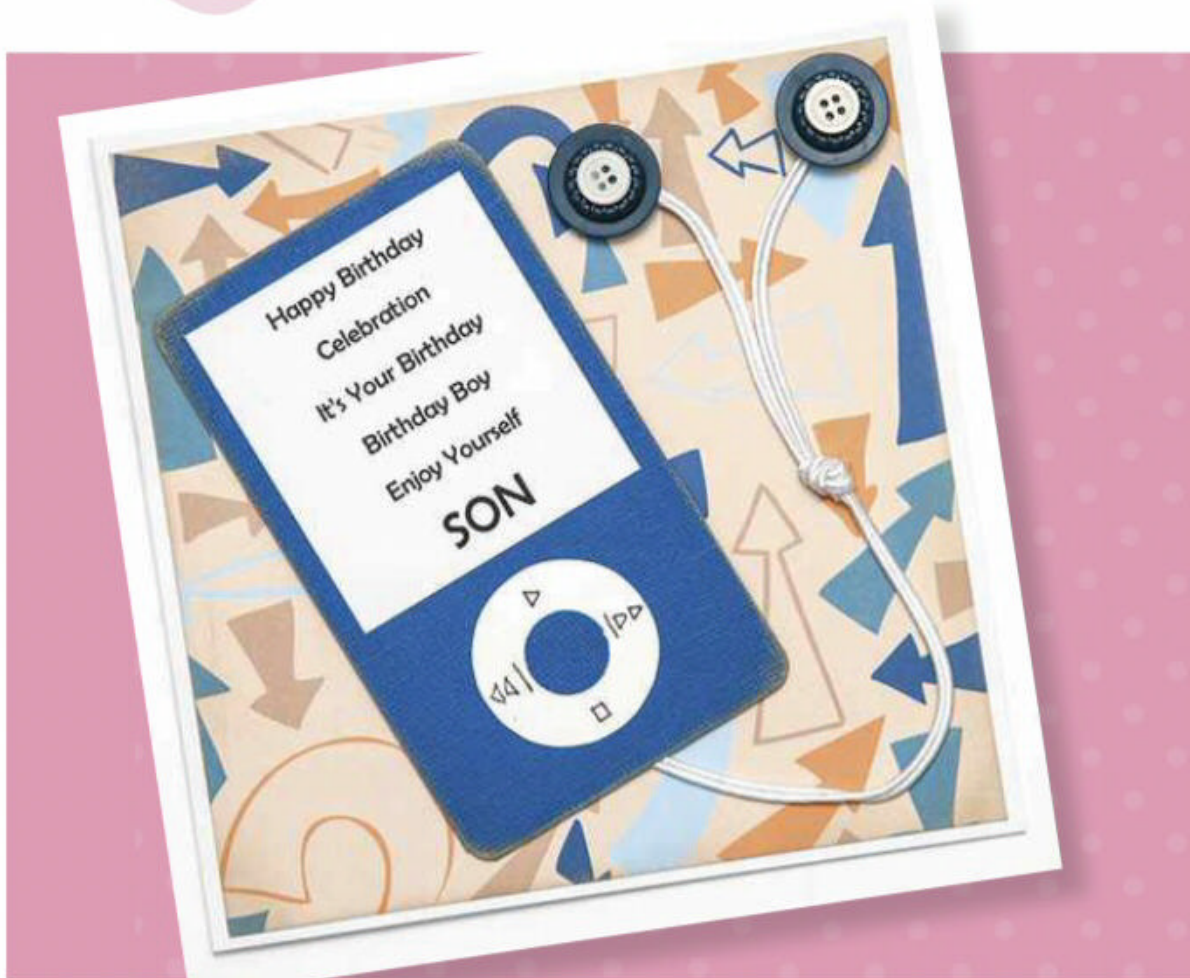
TOP TIP

If your kids are very young try fingerprint painting instead



Opt for very simple but fun designs that children can make quickly and easily, before they lose concentration!

Q How can I make a cool card for a teenager without it being naff?



Think about your teen's hobbies and interests, then try and depict a favourite one on your card. The card here was for a teenage boy who is obsessed with his iPod. The iPod is made from a rectangle of card; the corners rounded with a punch and the screen is a printed panel of white card. The greeting is made up of birthday song titles, printed from a computer. The headphones are created from buttons glued together and a length of white cord for the cable. The controls are made from punched circles with doodles on them. Adapt it for a teenage girl by using different colours.

Q Is it OK to send a card for someone getting divorced – I want to show support but am unsure of the etiquette?

Divorce cards can be tricky, as you can easily offend or upset someone who is going through a difficult time, so perhaps send a friendship card instead, just to let the person know that you are thinking of them. Very feminine papers, like those featured on the card here, are a lovely idea, and you can find plenty of them in the shops for all occasions. Try using a sentiments stamp with a message such as 'thinking of you', 'you've

been on my mind' or a friendship saying. It doesn't have to be too sentimental. Alternatively, if your friend has a good sense of humour and is over the worst of it, then you could send a card with a more jokey greeting, inviting them out to celebrate their new freedom.

Making a friendship card is a great way to let someone know that you are thinking of them



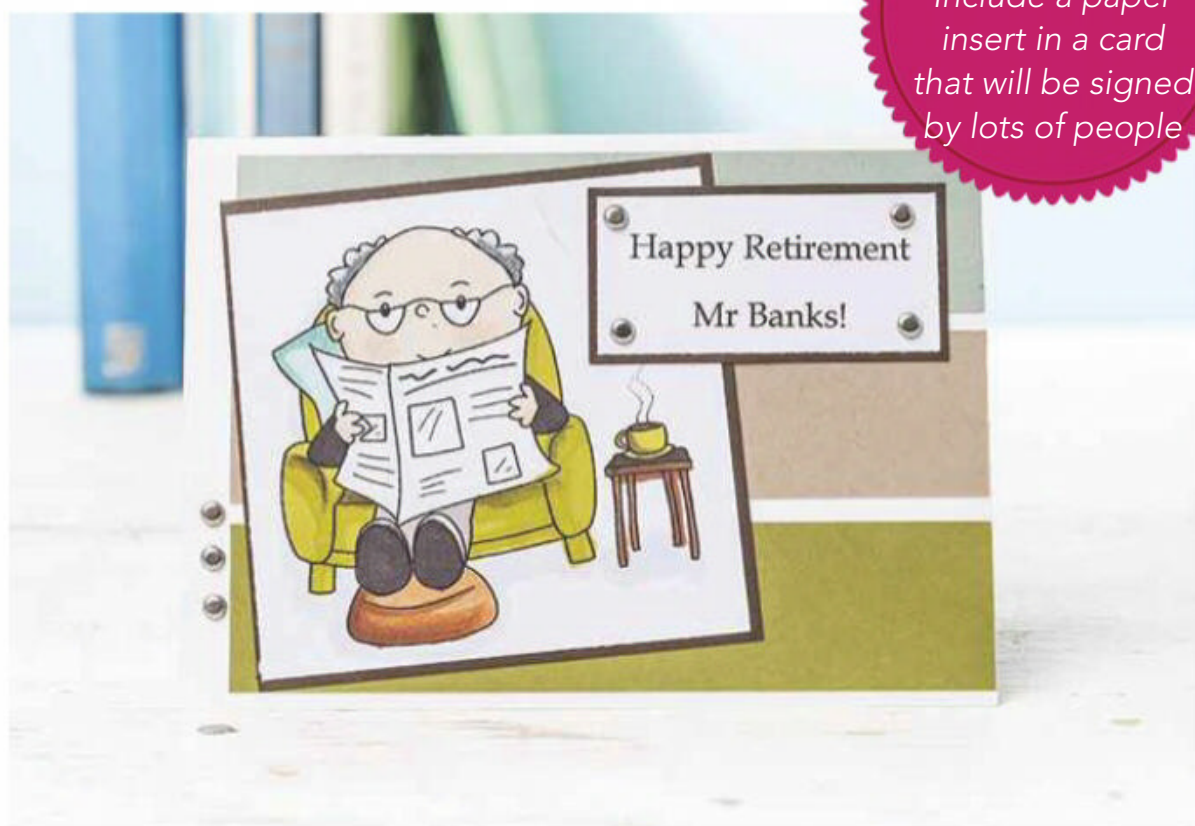
Q What sort of things should I include on a graduation card?



There are some great graduation papers available that make it easy to create bespoke cards. When making graduation cards it's good to focus on either a mortarboard and gown theme or a scroll. You could personalise your card by adding details such as the recipient's name and date of graduation, and even the university name and the course studied. You can simply print these details from your computer using your printer at home and layer them onto your card. The card here has a tassel added to the mortarboard to make it an interesting focal-point.

Q What should I include on a retirement card?

If the person who is retiring has a hobby or interest, then you could make the card with this in mind. There are lots of stamps, papers and downloads to cover a variety of interests, such as sports, fishing, shopping or holidaying. The card here uses a download of someone putting their feet up and relaxing. Add a personalised message to make the card that little bit extra-special – include the person's name and the retirement date, which can easily be printed out or stamped and mounted as a panel.



TOP TIP

Include a paper insert in a card that will be signed by lots of people

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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providing you various content:
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fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

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Brand new content

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We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>

Q Do I really need to buy new stash for St Patrick's Day cards? Is there any way of using what's already in my stash?

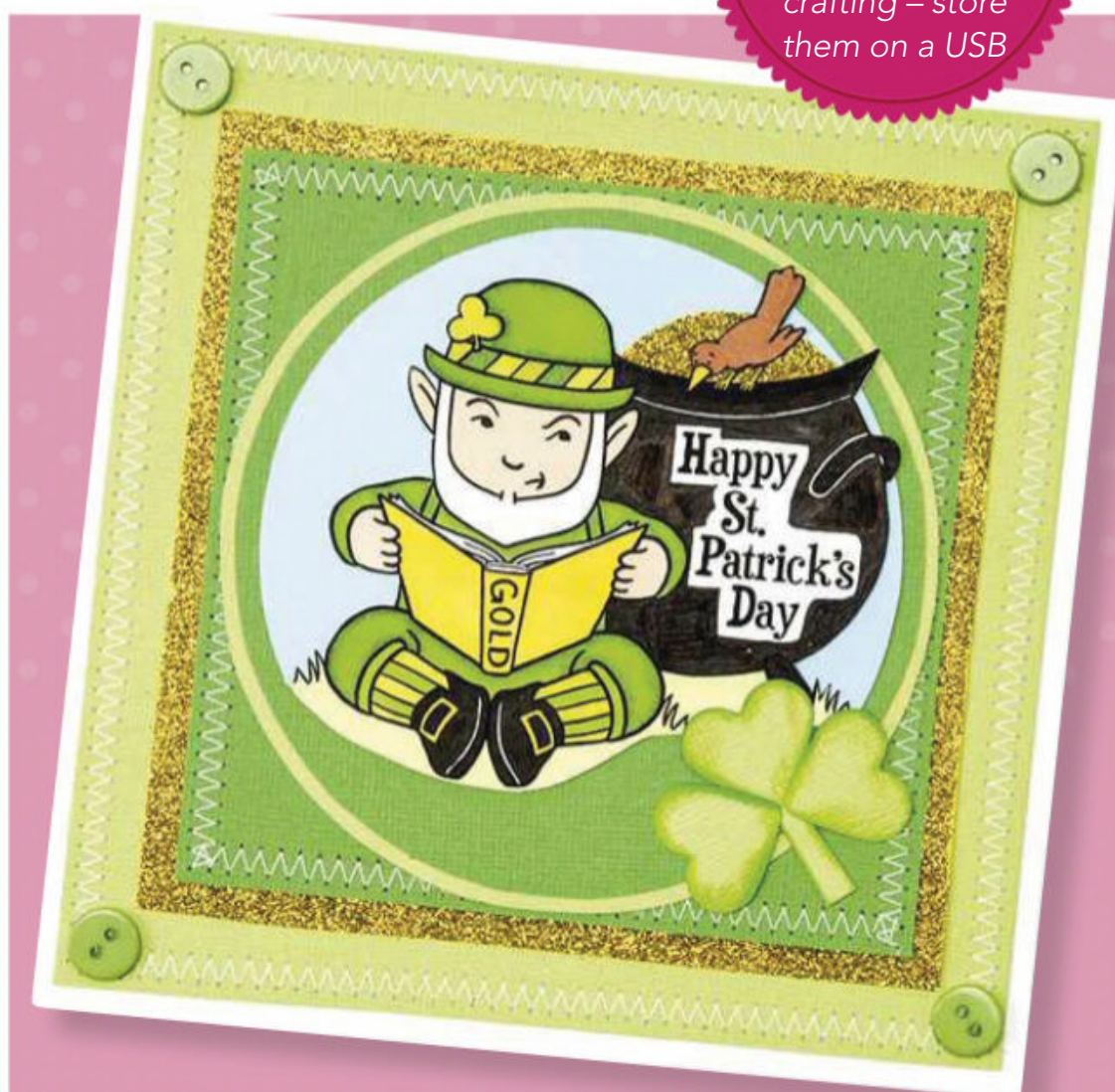
St Patrick's Day on March 17th celebrates the patron saint of Ireland, and is traditionally associated with the shamrock, a type of clover. According to legend, the three-leaved plant was used by Patrick to explain the Holy Trinity to the Irish people.

A three-leaved shamrock is really easy to construct using a heart punch, and can make a great embellishment for your cards. Simply punch three hearts from

green card, ink the edges, then position in a clover shape, with the tips of the three hearts touching. Cut a simple stalk from matching card, then stick them all in place. You can also find loads of digital images for St Patrick's Day, which don't cost much to buy.

TOP TIP

Digi stamps are great for portable crafting – store them on a USB



Themed digital downloads are a great option when making one-off cards for special occasions

Q How can I theme an Independence Day card for an American friend without buying products from the USA?

It's surprisingly easy to find papers and embellishments specially made for key American events, as many of our favourite cardmaking suppliers are actually based across the pond. If your local craft shop doesn't stock any, then look online and you'll find plenty of products to choose from.

Americans are very patriotic and they love their national celebrations and the 4th July is no exception.

The card here is loud and proud to really get into the spirit! The concertina base allows you to pack lots of elements onto this card without it looking overloaded. American-themed papers and stickers in red, white and blue are perfect for this design. And don't hold back with the sentiment – our US friends are upfront about their thoughts and feelings, so spell out the occasion with large greetings!



Themed scrapbook pads are great when making cards for American celebrations

Q How can I make a simple Easter design that will appeal to teens and tweens?

TOP TIP

Spring pastels are the ideal colour choice for Easter makes



If you have a lot of cards to make this year, then the Easter egg design shown here is perfect as it's really quick and easy to make.

Begin with the Easter egg shape – you can draw your own template freehand, or download the one used to make this card from the free downloads area at www.cardmakingandpapercraft.com. Then, choose bright spotty, stripy

and checked patterned papers and cut out your backgrounds and egg shapes. Your cards will work best if you stick to two main coordinating colours. Now layer up the backgrounds and egg shapes, adding accents of colour with a paper flower, a length of ribbon, some pretty buttons and a bow. Add a stamped or printed greeting if you wish, or leave it as it is.

What's the best way to go about making gift tags, bearing in mind I have lots to make?

A gift tag is the perfect finishing touch to a present and can be as basic or as elaborate as you like. If you're making lots of tags, for Christmas for example, then it's best to keep your design simple. Your tags will still look really professional if you match the design of them to your card. You can do this easily by using the same stamps or backing papers. For a quick and easy gift tag, stamp onto white card, cut out and mount onto patterned paper, then stick to a piece of contrasting paper, like the tags shown here. To finish, simply punch a hole at the top, thread a length of ribbon through and add some sparkle with glitter glue.



Q What can I make as a special keepsake to celebrate a new baby being born?

Everyone appreciates a beautiful handcrafted greeting, but for a really special occasion, like celebrating the birth of a child, something with a little more pizzazz is required! A lovely idea is to combine the card and gift in one. A framed piece of art can be cherished forever by both mother and child, and can be combined with photos and other keepsakes for a personal touch. Here, a lovely picture has been created with die-

cut images and greetings, mounted on pastel patterned papers and displayed in a lovely white frame. Include baby's name and date of birth to make it personal, and if you have room include details such as place of birth and parents names.

TOP TIP

Use good quality card and materials on makes that will be kept



Celebrate a new addition to the family with a keepsake framed picture that will look perfect in the new nursery

Q How can I create a modern and fresh-looking wedding card?



The key to the modern look is keeping your designs clean and fuss free, and your colour scheme simple and striking. Heat embossing is a good way to add some slight texture and sheen to your card, without going overboard. The card here features a simple stamp on plain white card which has had the corners rounded with a punch for a sleek and stylish look. It's mounted onto black card and embellished with silver ribbon and baker's twine.

Rounded edges are a quick and easy way to give your cards a stylish and professional-looking finish

Q What's a good design to make as an invite for a charity bake-off?

Baking is such a popular trend in craft right now, that you'll have no problem creating beautiful invites for any event. There's been a real upsurge in charities asking people to host tea parties, bake-offs and cake sales, as it's a fantastically fun way to raise cash for a good cause.

To make a card with wow-factor, try a gatefold card like the one pictured here. It has cupcake images printed from a CD-Rom, but you can find loads of bake-themed stamps, dies, papers, toppers and other embellishments to decorate your

cards. If you're hosting a small tea party, then really go to town to make your invite super appealing. But if you're hosting a bigger event and have lots of invites to make, perhaps a postcard style would be better.

TOP TIP

A charity event is a fab opportunity to sell cards and raise more funds



You can be sure the RSVPs will come in by the sackload when you make mouthwatering designs like this one!



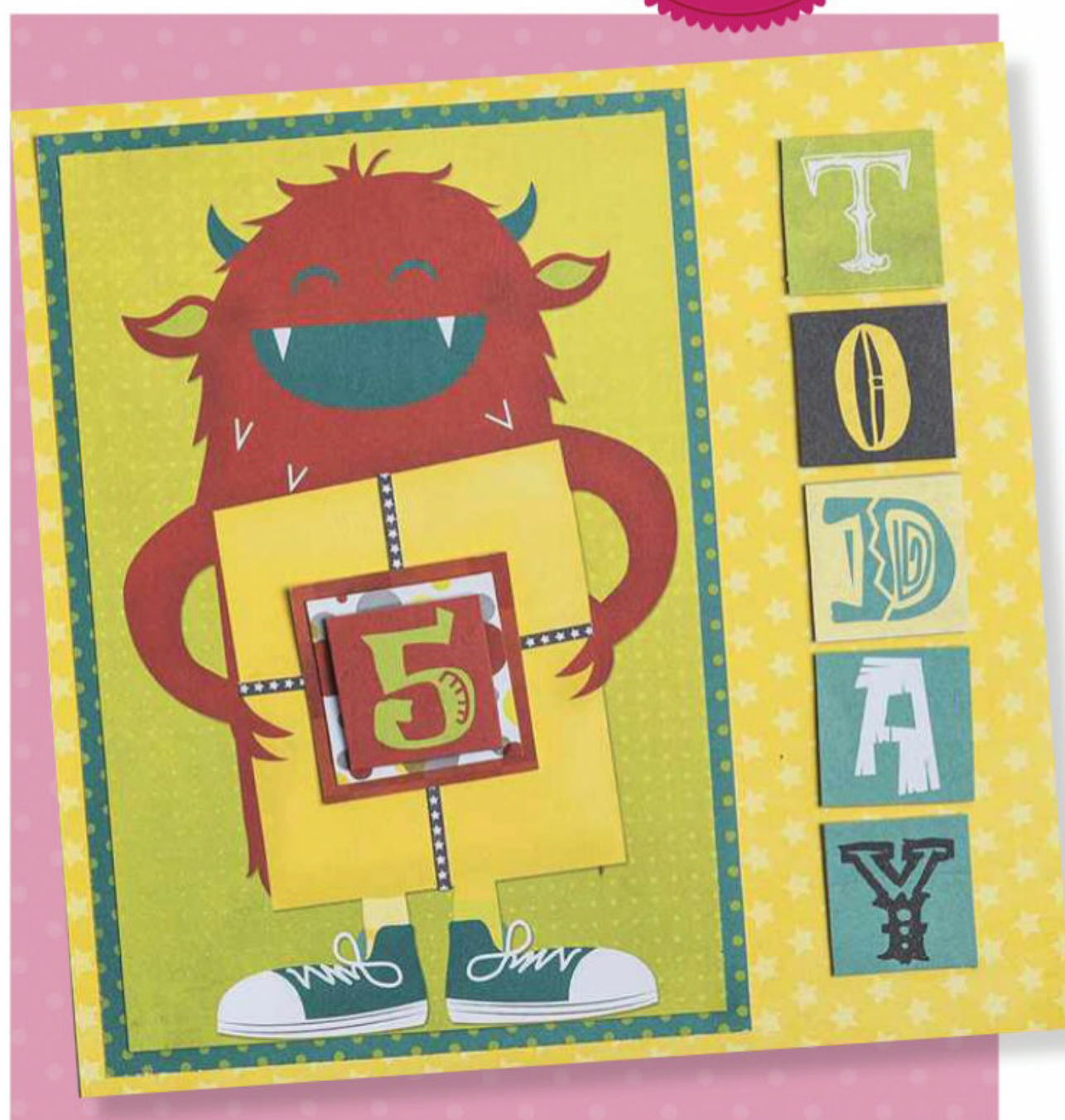
I need a fun idea for a little boy's birthday card. What can I make?

All five year olds like simple characters and bright colours, like on the monster card shown here. Keep the front of the card fairly simple – here a monster is cut out from patterned paper and embellished by layering up the parcel he is holding, finishing it with a number 5 that is also cut from a patterned paper. Cut out letters to complete a simple greeting. For a fun surprise, why not create a

pop-up element inside? Cut out a roaring monster and mount it onto a wobble spring inside the card. When your grandson opens the card, the monster will bounce out and jiggle on the end of the spring! ✂

TOP TIP

Kids love primary colours so pick bold shades for max impact



Our monster pop-up card is sure to be a big hit with the birthday boy on his special day

COLOURING IN

If you don't know your chinks from your markers and shading gets you in a fix, then our useful advice will get you on track!

What materials do I need to buy to get started with glass painting?

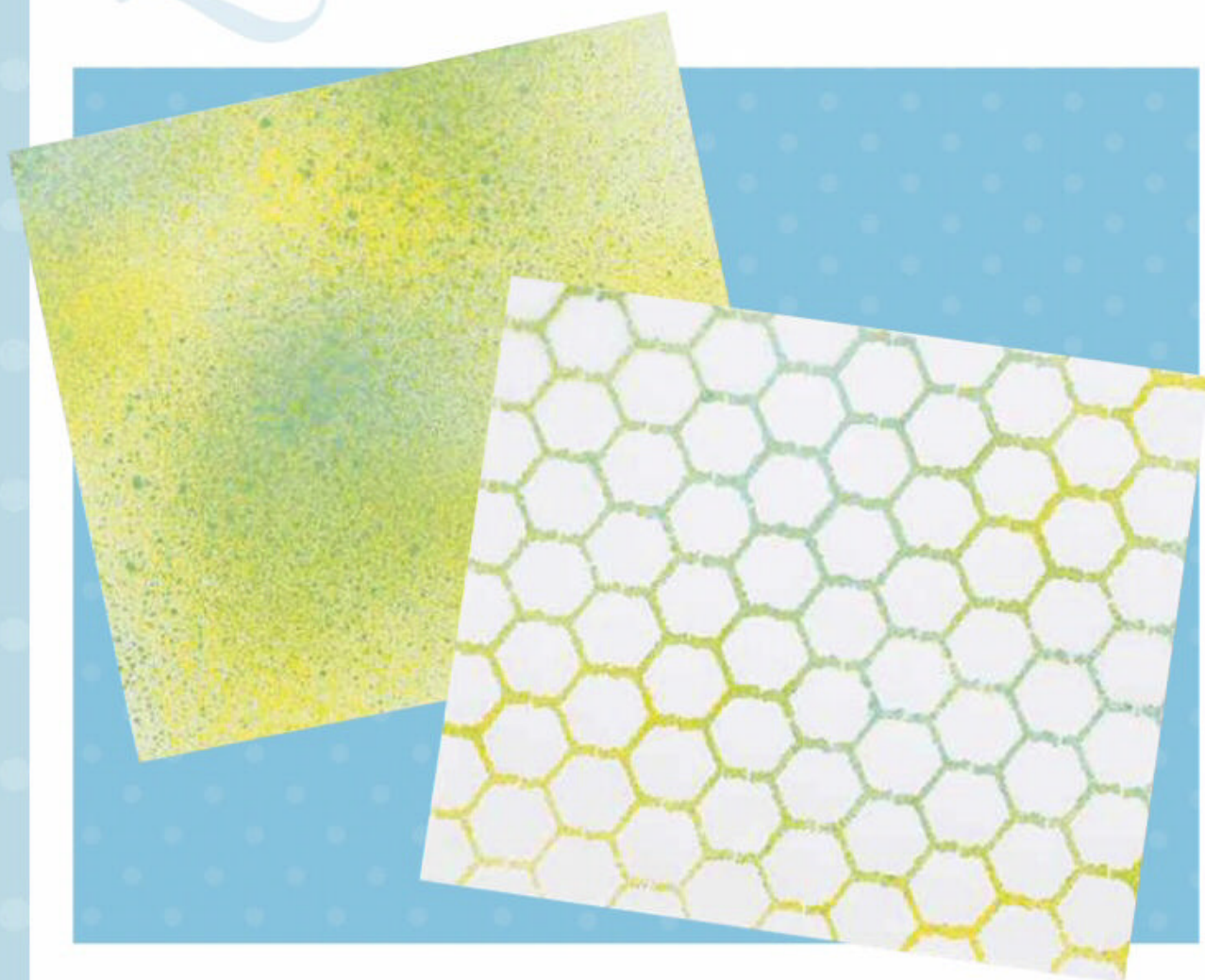
Glass painting is a very effective technique for producing stunning images for your cards. For a quick and easy way to get started you just need a black peel-off outline sticker, acetate, glass paints and a paintbrush (or glass paint pens). Stick the peel-off to the acetate and paint inside the peel-off lines to colour the design. The raised

black lines of the sticker will keep the paint in place and won't be affected by the paint colours. If you use pale or metallic coloured peel-offs, then take care to keep the paint within the outline. You can also paint onto smaller pieces of acetate or clear plastic to make unique embellishments.



Create simply stunning designs for your cardmaking and papercraft projects by glass painting onto acetate

Q Can I make my own spray inks and glimmer mists?



Absolutely! First you need a bottle with a pump to produce a fine mist. You also need a dye (acrylic paint, ink, mica powders or food dye), a carrier (water) and a binding agent (gum arabic or PVA glue). Unscrew the spray bottle, add a small amount of dye and a few drops of binding agent, then fill to just under half way with water. Shake well and spray onto scrap paper to test. It's not an exact science, so if your colour is too light, add more dye and shake again. The paper here is made with yellow and blue spray inks. One was sprayed directly and the other through a stencil.

Q Which alcohol markers should I buy for colouring stamps?

All three of the most popular brands of alcohol markers will give excellent colour and are good for blending. Copic markers are refillable and the nibs can also be replaced. Spectrum Noir are also refillable. Letraset ProMarkers aren't (although the Tria markers are).

TOP TIP

Alcohol markers are acid-free, so are ideal for scrapbooking

Alcohol markers are fade resistant, so allow you to colour images with great subtlety with long-lasting effects



Q Is there an easy way to do glass painting for a suncatcher card?

Suncatchers are fun to make and, as they are detachable from your cards, they double up as great gifts for friends. The decorative pieces of glass look fabulous when they are hung in a window and the sun is shining through, highlighting the pretty designs. Suncatchers can be made on glass or acetate, and traditionally you'd get the effect by using special glass paints and cerne relief. However, this design has been made using Sakura pens: Souffle to create the raised outline and Glaze pens to colour in. This

makes them super-easy and quick to do! You can colour the shapes on the right side between the lines, or on their reverse side, depending on the effect you would like. The pens work equally well on glass and acetate and are particularly good for handwriting words onto your design. Wash the acetate with a drop of washing up liquid and dry with a dust-free cloth before colouring in, and don't press too hard on the pens, as the ink will flow with a gentle pressure. All you need now is some sunshine!



You can now buy pens that give a glass painted effect for an easy way to achieve the look for suncatcher cards

How do I use my chalk set to colour stamps?

You can achieve so many different effects with chalk – it's just a case of trying some out and seeing what you like. To make this card, stamp the background image onto white card using VersaMark ink, then dot chalks onto the image using cotton wool. Add different hues to create a blended background, then make areas of darker colour by rubbing them with smaller and tighter balls of cotton wool. For the topper, use one main colour of chalk and then dust around the edges with a tight ball of cotton wool and a contrasting colour to create a distressed look.

Not all chalks will rub easily into your cotton wool ball to begin with, so you may need to turn over the chalk block and try again. When you have finished chalking your images, resist common advice to set with hair spray. This can give a mottled look to the design and may ruin your hard work! All you need to do is take a couple of new cotton wool balls and give the card a good rub over to remove the excess powder.

TOP TIP

Most chalks come with an applicator but cotton wool works just as well



Use pastel coloured chalks with VersaMark ink to get this gorgeous variegated colour effect

Q How can I achieve a realistic finish when colouring in white things like snow or clouds with my markers?



The key to colouring anything white is all about learning how to add shadow. Using a very light blue or grey pen, highlight the edges of your image, for example the rounded parts of a cloud. For snow, think about the light sources in the image, such as lanterns or candles, as this will determine where the shadow will go. If there are none, then picture it in the top right corner

of the image and colour a shadow under the lower left side of the main image. A general outline of the main image is all that's needed for a striking finish. When colouring something like a daisy, add a small amount of light blue pen to one side of each petal for a much more realistic look. Try it out, and you'll find that with just a little practise you'll be a colouring pro in no time!

ASK THE EXPERT



SHARON ARMSTRONG PURVIS is an expert designer, well-known for her original creations.

What is masking fluid and how do I use it?

Masking fluid is used to block out areas of watercolours or water-based inks while you paint. It comes in liquid form and is applied with a paintbrush. This technique lends itself perfectly to adding highlights to your work and can be removed once you've finished by simply rubbing with your finger. However, it can be tricky to remove all the masking fluid from your paintbrush, so use an old one. This technique works beautifully with stamping. Use with water-based inks to create fab effects. Some will take a little longer to dry than the watercolours, but by making areas you don't want coloured you can create great effects.



Q Can you get refillable marker pens instead of buying new ones?



Some brands have refillable pens, while others don't. Buying refills is much more economical than buying replacement pens every time they run out, so perhaps consider buying refillable pens for the colours you use most. You can buy special tools to refill your markers, or you can just remove the chisel nib and drip the ink into the marker barrel (10 drips at a time) until the brush nib is shiny with ink.

Save money with refillable pens – they're currently available for Copic markers, Spectrum Noirs and Touch Twin markers

Q Which pens are best for doodles and faux stitching on glossy card?

Faux stitching and doodles are ideal for adding interest and artificial texture to your card designs. For glossy card, I would recommend using permanent ink pens, such as Archival, which are available in lots of different colours and widths. This card is made using a mixture of faux running stitches, cross stitches and dots all doodled on with a fineliner permanent ink pen.

Be careful not to smudge your doodles with the side of your hand, and leave to dry for an hour or so before handling



Q What kind of effects can you create when colouring with chalks?

Chalks add subtle colour to an image. Many come with their own applicators, otherwise you can use cotton wool balls for large areas and cotton buds or eye make-up applicators for smaller areas.

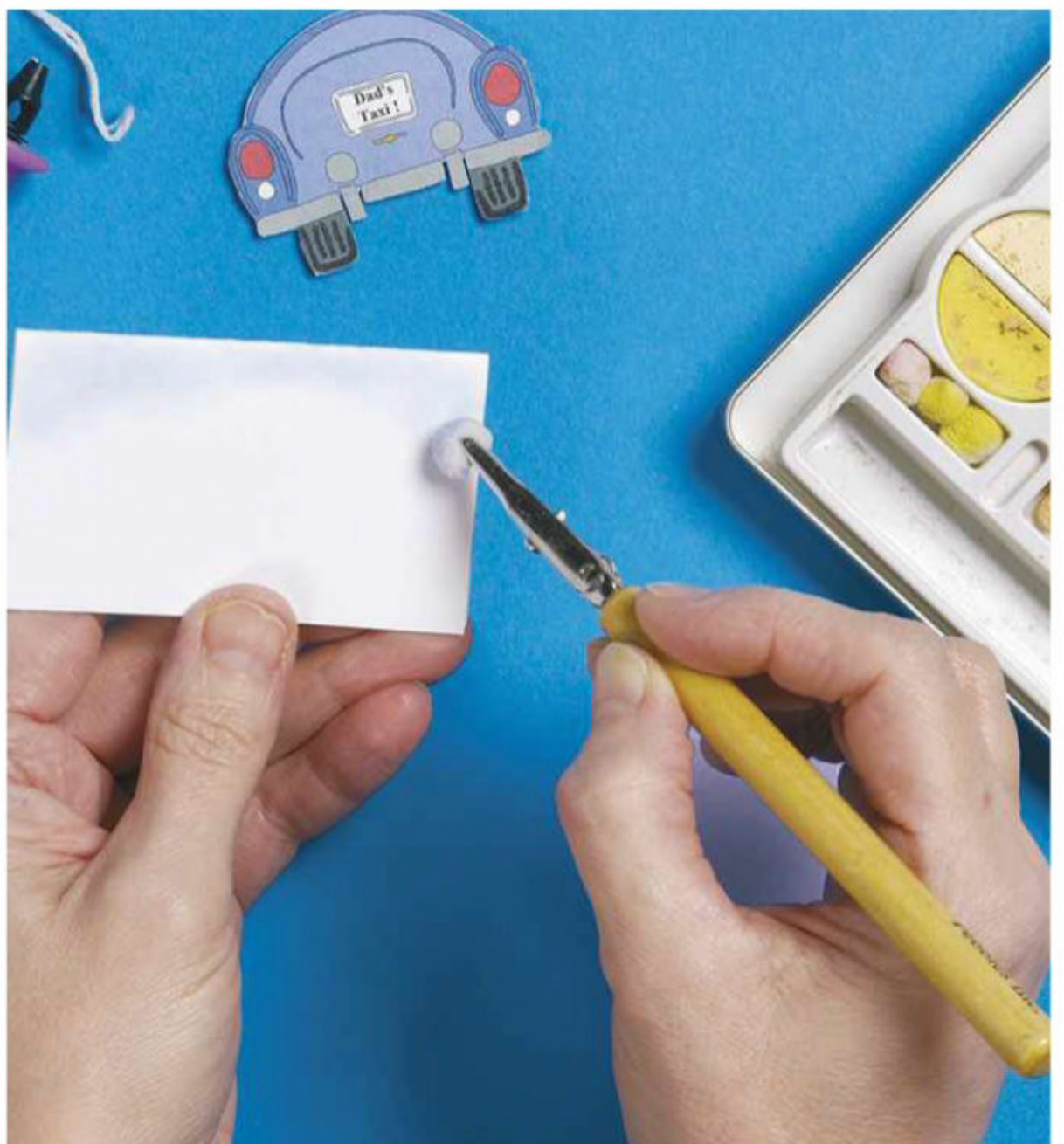
Build up colour gradually and don't expect perfection – it's difficult to stay within the lines but if you choose the right images the smudgy effect is perfect.

To create a border or background using chalks, stamp your chosen

image using VersaMark ink, then dab with your chalk colours using a cotton wool ball. When the ink has dried, gently rub off excess powder. Spray with a fixative to avoid smudging.

TOP TIP

If you don't have any chalks, then old eye-shadow will do the job!



Colour your stamped images with chalks when you want to create a hazy, romantic effect

Q How do I make background papers using sponge painting?

Sponge painting is a great way to make custom made papers for use in your papercraft projects. It's a really easy technique to learn and well worth a try as you can create all sorts of interesting and unusual effects, and with a limitless range of colour possibilities, you can create a totally new paper every time.

Sponges come in all different textures so you can create lots of random patterns. Cosmetic sponges have fine, evenly spaced holes, whereas natural sponges

tend to have much larger, random-sized holes. A kitchen sponge will produce a lacy texture.

Pour a small amount of paint into a container or plate. Dampen your sponge first, then dab it into the paint. Test out on scrap paper first – the paint should be very light on the first dab, then grow darker as you dab more. Sponge the paint either sparingly or densely over your card to get the desired effect. The paint should dry quickly – if it doesn't, then your sponge is too damp.



Use thick card and paper to sponge onto, as the wetness of the paint mixture will make thin papers warp

ASK THE EXPERT



BEV ROCHESTER is a craft addict who designs professionally for many leading craft companies

Are alcohol markers really worth the expense?

Although starting off with alcohol markers can be a costly exercise, I truly believe it is an investment that is well worth it, especially if you purchase markers that are refillable. With time and practise alcohol markers can give a beautiful and professional finish to your cards. There are lots of video tutorials online to get you started – look using a search engine and you'll find plenty.

For really good results there are two golden rules to stick to. Firstly, always use card created especially for alcohol markers. Secondly, do not use solvent-based inks as they will bleed. Choose a dye-based ink pad to use with them instead.



Q What are Perfect Pearls and what do you use them for?



Perfect Pearls are brilliant products that can be used to add exciting and unique finishes to your cards. They are basically powdered pigment inks that can be used dry on your cards and set with a fixative, or painted on wet and set with a heat gun. Use them to create captivating backgrounds or eye-catching embellishments – either way you'll be giving your cards a

TOP TIP

You can use Perfect Pearls on card, wood, stone and clay!

subtle shimmer that's sure to get them noticed. Apply Perfect Pearls to your cards using a soft paintbrush and paint in a circular motion to get the best effects. ✂

Pens & colouring SPOTLIGHT

We show you how to take your colouring to the next level when you create stunning shading using PanPastels

What are PanPastels and how would I use them to add colour to my cards?

PanPastels are an ultra-soft artist quality pastel that works like a fluid paint. They contain pigments that have been refined over and over again to produce a really fine-grade product. They are manufactured in a pan format instead of a stick, so they can be mixed and applied just like paint. We love how you can mix and layer colours and create different tones and shades with very little effort.

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ PanPastels in Violet, Magenta & Permanent Red Tint
- ✓ Sofft Knives and No.3 Oval (ref 65003)
- ✓ JudiKins Mini Bollio – Japan stamp (ref 69001)
- ✓ VersaMark ink
- ✓ Small flower punch
- ✓ Ribbon
- ✓ Decorative pin
- ✓ Gems

From your local craft shop

1 Use a VersaMark ink pad to stamp your image onto white card. To create the finished panel for your card, you will need to make 10 stamped strips each measuring 11x2.5cm.

2 Using an oval Sofft Knife and cover, apply the pale pink, Magenta and Violet shades of PanPastels over the stamped images, starting with the lightest shade first and progressing to the darkest colours.

3 Once your colours have been applied over the stamped image, gently clean the sponge with a piece of kitchen towel and sweep over the top of your strip to blend the colours together.

4 Now you can begin to assemble the frame of your paper weaving panel. Create a right angle by sticking two corners together and then weave each paper strip under and over alternate strips, as shown.



5 Once the panel is complete, then secure the strips in place by taping on the reverse. Use a sewing machine to stitch around the edges as decoration, alternatively use a fineliner to draw faux stitching.

6 Punch flower shapes from white card and use the oval Sofft Knife to add colour with the PanPastels for a co-ordinated look. Attach to the panel. Attach the panel to a decorated base card, to finish.



STEP ONE



STEP TWO



STEP THREE



STEP FOUR



STEP FIVE



STEP SIX



TOP TIP

Make a background colour and stamp onto it for a dramatic look

EXPERT TIPS



SHARON ARMSTRONG PURVIS is renowned for her innovative papercraft designs.

1 Buy a palette tray to store all your PanPastels – they will secure the pans, making them easily transportable.

2 Use PanPastels like paint and always colour light to dark.

3 If you can't get the exact shade you're looking for, mix colours together using your Sofft tools. This can be done on the card or in the pans.

4 PanPastels are erasable which is handy if you get a mark or smudge somewhere it shouldn't be. It's also a brilliant way to make an interesting background pattern.

PanPastels are available in 80 different colours, including pure colours, tints and shades



GLOSSARY

If you don't know your die-cutting from your decoupage, then you'll love our handy glossary with all the essential lingo

Accordion folding A mountain and valley style folding technique which creates a concertina-style fold.

Acetate Acetate is available in clear or coloured transparent sheets. Use for making shaker cards, behind apertures, or as an overlay.

Bone Folder A tool used to make a neat, sharp crease in paper or card.

Brads This is the American name for paper fasteners, with split pins that go through paper then pull apart and flatten on the reverse to secure.

Chipboard Used to make chunky shaped embellishments. Buy it plain or ready-decorated.

Die-cutting A die-cutting machine cuts out shapes from paper or card. The machine sandwiches metal dies (templates) over your chosen card, which is then fed through a roller by turning a handle on the machine.

Digi papers This is where you save (downloaded) backing papers from a website onto your computer. You can then print as many times as you like. You can do the same with images. Visit www.cardmakingandpapercraft.com for a great range of free papers.

Découpage There are two very different découpage techniques. The first is the art of creating a 3D image from paper layers. The

smaller parts of a repeated image are cut out and layered on top of the original image with sticky fixers. The second is when pieces of specialist découpage paper are used to cover an object to decorate it, usually using watered down PVA glue or Mod Podge.

Distress Markers These are water-based marker pens made by Ranger. Make sure you stamp your image using a permanent ink before colouring with these to ensure your outlines don't bleed.

Embossing This adds a raised shape, such as a pattern or greeting. It's traditionally done by hand, using a stencil or board with an embossing tool.

Embossing folder These plastic folders have a raised design on one side and indented design on the other. You put card in between and roll through a die-cutting machine to emboss.

Embossing powder These grainy powders melt when heated with a heat gun to create a shiny, raised effect on your cards.

Heat embossing This gives stamped images a glossy, raised finish. Add embossing powder to images stamped with pigment ink and melt the powder with a heat gun.

Kraft card This is light brown, usually recycled, card that is used for layering with backing papers.

Get the best from
your die-cuts with
our top tips





Give shrink plastic a whirl to make gorgeous cards like these

Liquid Pearls These are a brand of specialised paints that have a pearlescent finish. They are often used to add finishing touches to cards and even fabric. They are available to buy in 30 different colours.

Pigment ink This is a sticky, slow-drying ink that is recommended for use when heat embossing.

ProMarkers These are another brand of popular alcohol-based pens and come in a range of 148 colours.

Quilling This technique involves rolling strips of paper into a variety of shapes to make various patterns.

Punches These are used to quickly punch out shapes to decorate cards. There are a huge variety available, including border punches and nesting punches.

Sticky fixers These are tiny, sticky foam pads which are used to give a 3D effect when attaching panels to a base card, or between layers of découpage.

StazOn ink This permanent solvent-based ink will stamp on almost any surface without smearing or rubbing off, making it perfect for use on acetate and glossy card.

Triple embossing This simply means building up layers of embossing powder. To achieve a glossy tile effect: stamp image, colour as usual, then use a clear ink pad and clear embossing powder over the top. Apply heat and repeat.

VersaMark ink This clear pigment ink creates a 'watermark' version of the stamped image when stamped onto coloured card. It's ideal for heat embossed designs.

201 PAPERCRAFT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MEET THE TEAM

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It's easy to find the solutions to all your crafting problems with our handy index

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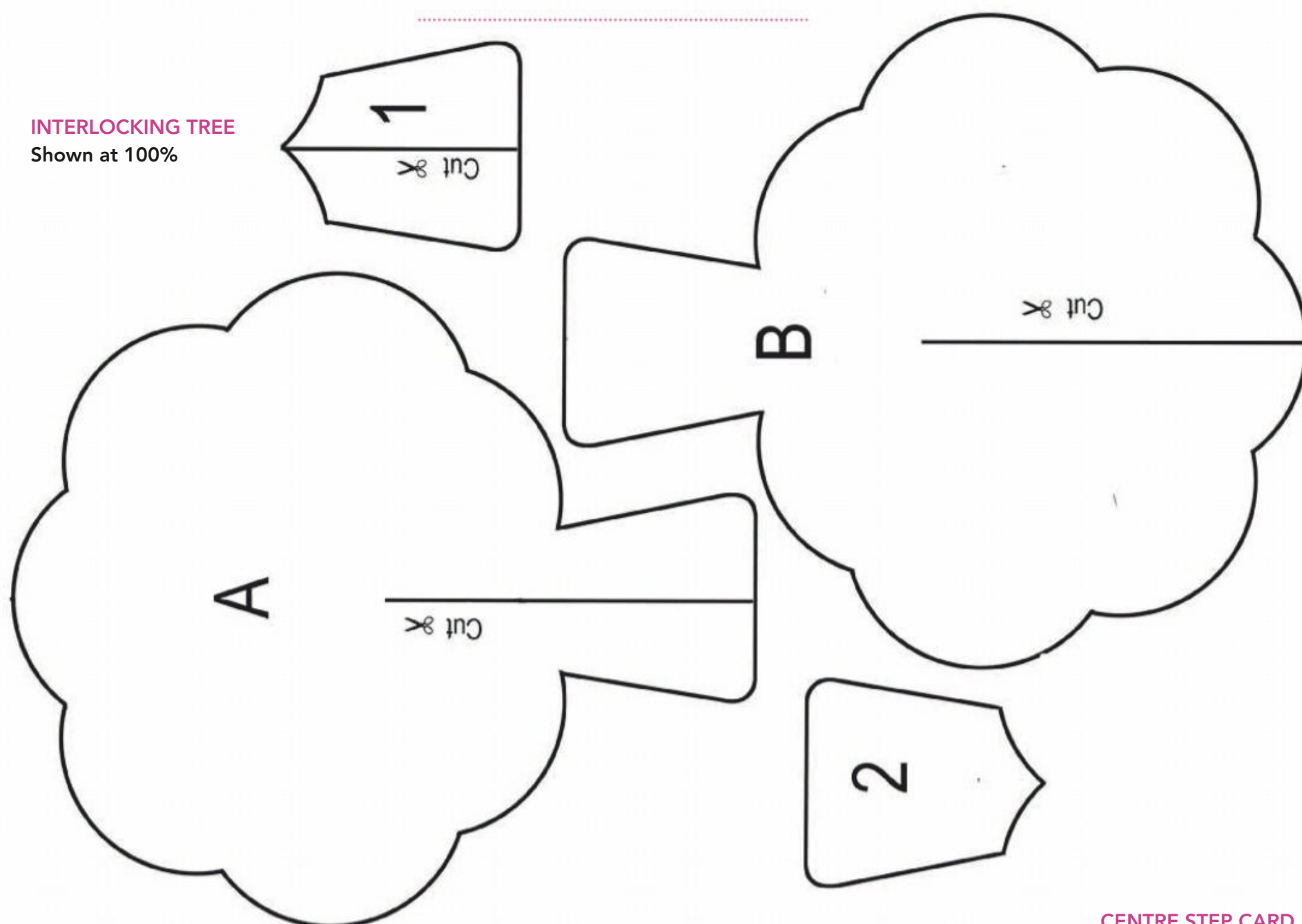
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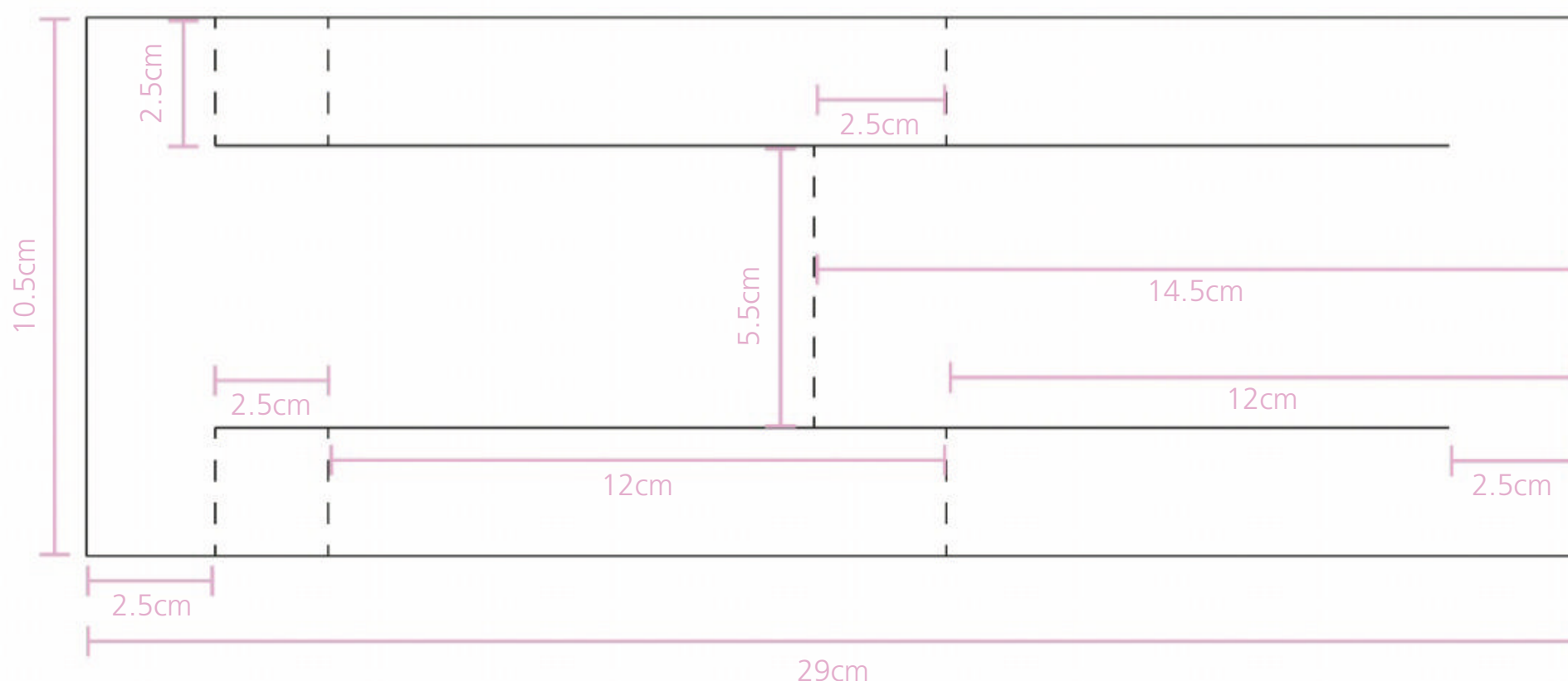
Use our handy templates to help make your cards. They're easy to use – just trace onto tracing paper and transfer to your cards

INTERLOCKING TREE

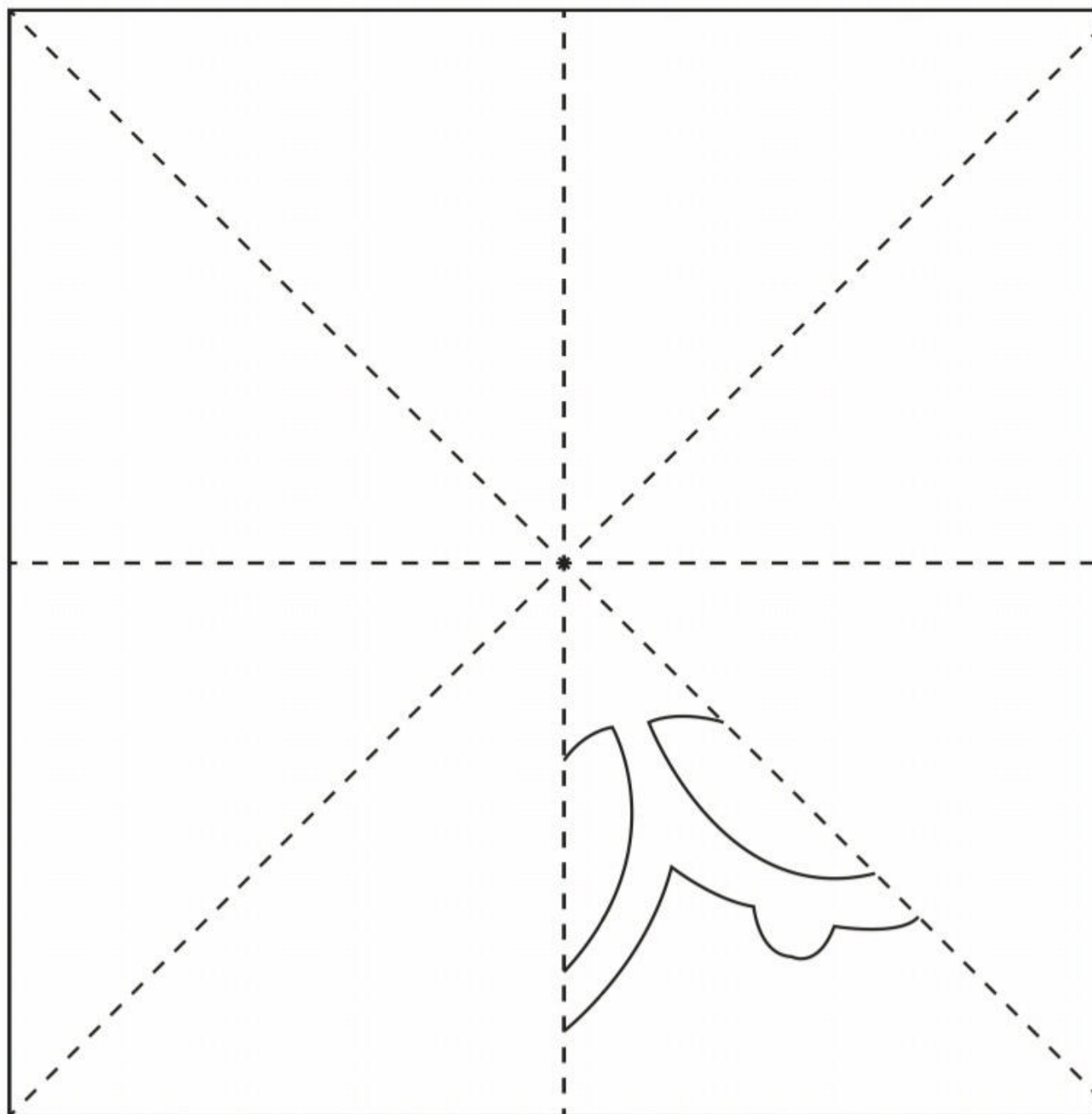
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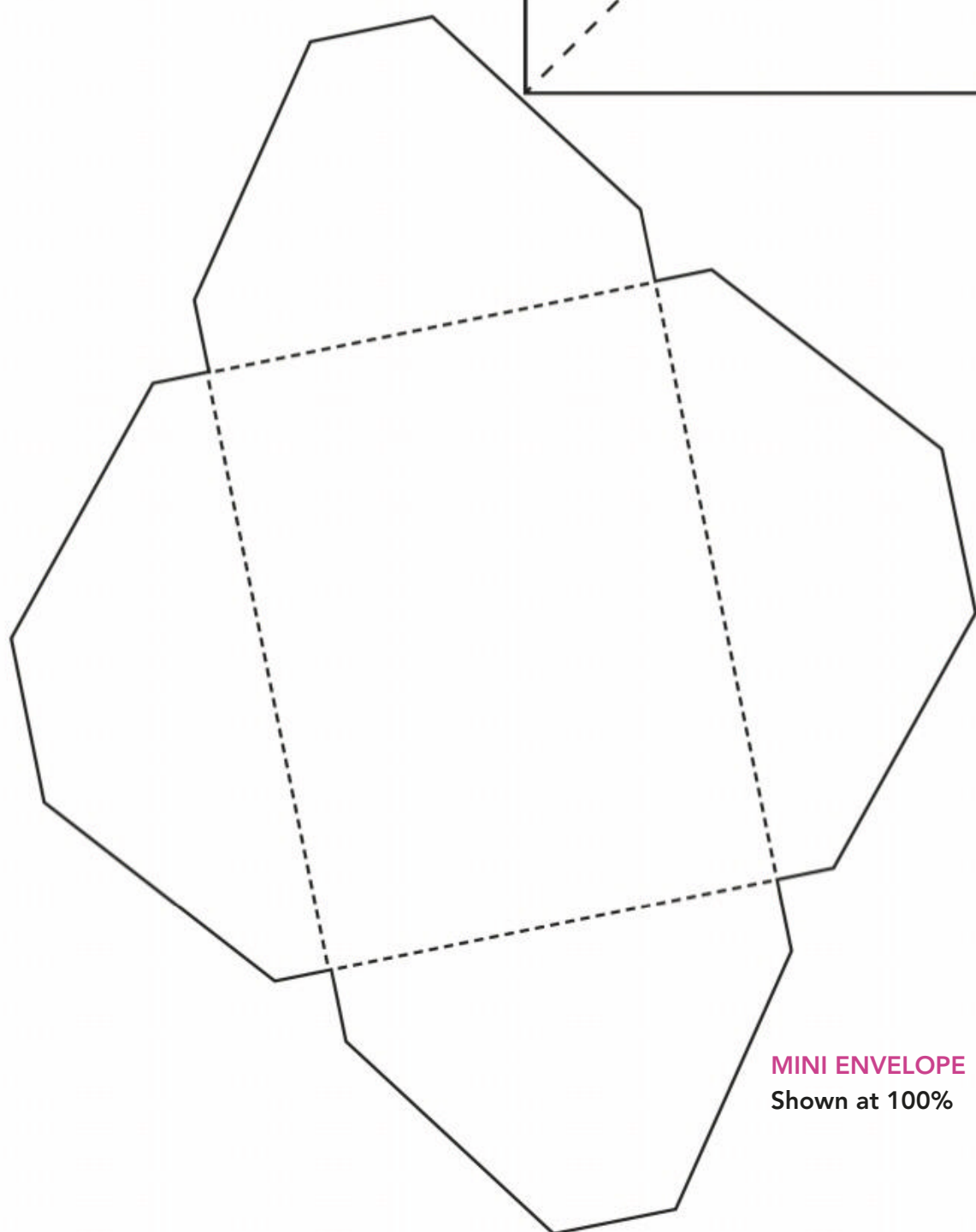
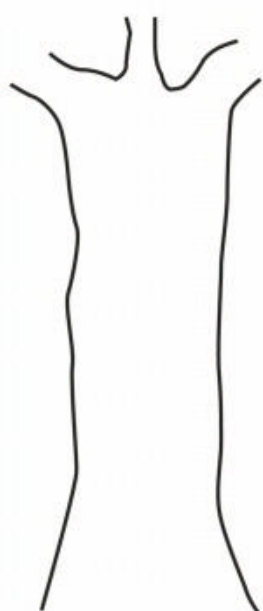
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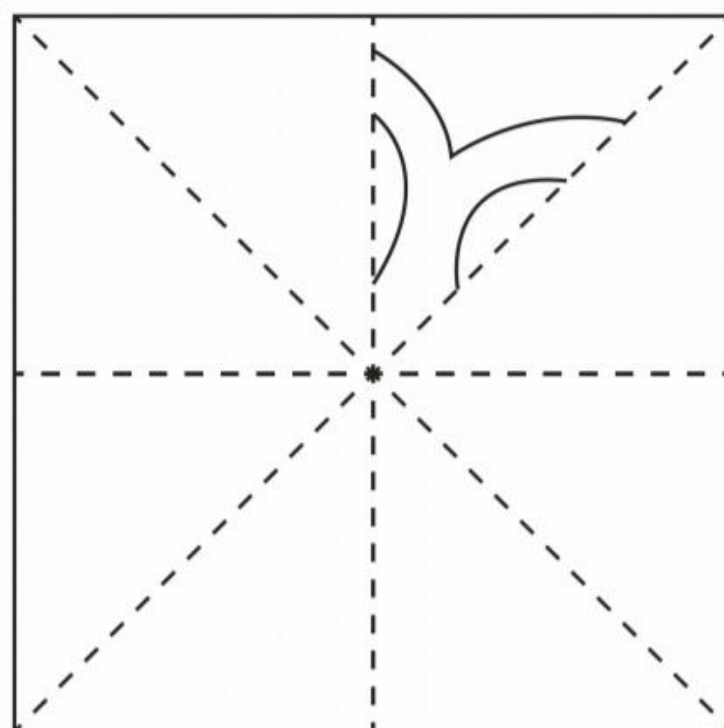
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Anniversary