

Chinese Paper Lantern

These paper lanterns are so easy and fun to make that they are quite popular to make for Chinese New Year or for learning about Chinese culture. We'll show you the basic steps plus some creative ideas to spice up this classic paper craft.



Materials

- Paper or cardstock
 - Scissors
 - Stapler or tape
 - Glue
 - Ruler
- Pencil
- Things to decorate your lantern with: gift wrap paper, ribbons, sequins, stickers, glitter glue, etc.

Steps



Start out with a letter size, or any rectangular sheet of paper or cardstock. Red and yellow are preferred colors for a Chinese-themed lantern.



Starting from the folded edge, cut a straight line about an inch from one short edge, all the way up to the horizontal line.



Cut a 1-inch wide strip off on one short side. Set this aside for the handle.



Continue to cut more straight lines about 1 inch apart until you reach the opposite short edge of the paper. Remember that the horizontal line marks the point where you stop cutting each straight line.



Fold the paper in half, lengthwise.



Unfold the paper. The paper will have several vertical slits along the middle. Erase any pencil marks or re-fold the crease the opposite way to hide the pencil marks at the back.



Draw a horizontal line one inch from the long edge opposite the fold.

*This line is just a guide for cutting and may not be necessary for older kids.



Add texture by gluing on materials like craft foam or felt shapes, small buttons, beads, sequins, ribbon, lace, etc. Do not glue on materials that are too heavy for your paper though.

Take note to leave at least a half-inch of undecorated area on one top corner. This space will allow you to connect the two edges of the paper to form a lantern.



Form the paper into a tube shape to transform it into a lantern. Overlap the long edges at least a half-inch. Staple or tape the top and bottom corners.



Glue or staple on the paper handle from Step 2. Decorate the handle if you like.

Once the glue dries, hang the paper lantern as a festive Chinese New Year decoration.

More Ideas



Instead of paper, you can use a length of ribbon, lace or fabric for the handle.



Besides the typical red and yellow Chinese lanterns, you can make them in your favorite colors or in hues that go with a particular occasion (e.g. orange and black for Halloween).



Cut strips of crepe paper and glue these along the inside of the lantern's bottom edge. These streamers will make the lanterns move gracefully with the wind.



Putting a yellow tube of paper inside your lantern adds stability and makes it look "lit."