

MICHELLE WARD designs

How to Make Your No-Glue Box Lantern

A lock-together paper lantern from Michelle Ward Designs

Materials

- Two 8.5" × 11" sheets of cardstock. 65# is the lightest I'd go; heavier makes a sturdier lantern.
- Optional, for the window inserts: one or two letter-size sheets of vellum. You get five 3.5" squares — one per window, but they don't all fit on one sheet in a cutting machine — hand-cutting takes one sheet, machine cutting takes two. Vellum tears and crumples easily, so I'd cut them by hand.
- If you want opaque sides for a gift box, use cardstock for the window inserts instead of vellum — but keep it to 65# or lighter. Heavier stock takes up more room inside the lantern, and that extra bulk can push the corners out of square.
- Your cutting machine — Silhouette, Cricut, or similar
- A weeding tool, letter opener, or anything with a fine tip
- Optional: double-sided tape, if you're adding window inserts
- Optional: a bone folder or scoring tool for crisp creases
- A battery-operated LED tealight or a short string of fairy lights, if you're using it as a lantern

Finished size: approximately 3.75" cube.

What's in Your Download

- The lantern template, in two versions — Dash-Line and Score-Line — each in its own folder. Both come as an SVG and a DXF: the same template, just two file types, so use whichever your software opens. Dash-Line is one file with everything in it, Window Inserts included. Score-Line is split into three — Lid Panel, Body Panel, and Window Inserts.
- PNG images of the Lid Panel and the Body Panel, in their own folder — handy if you'd rather cut by hand or import a PNG. They show the fold lines faintly, but a cutting machine can't act on a fold line in a PNG — use the SVG or DXF if you want yours cut or scored.
- Read Me — how to open your files, plus where to find me
- Personal Use License Agreement — this design is licensed for your personal use

- These instructions

Which File Do I Use?

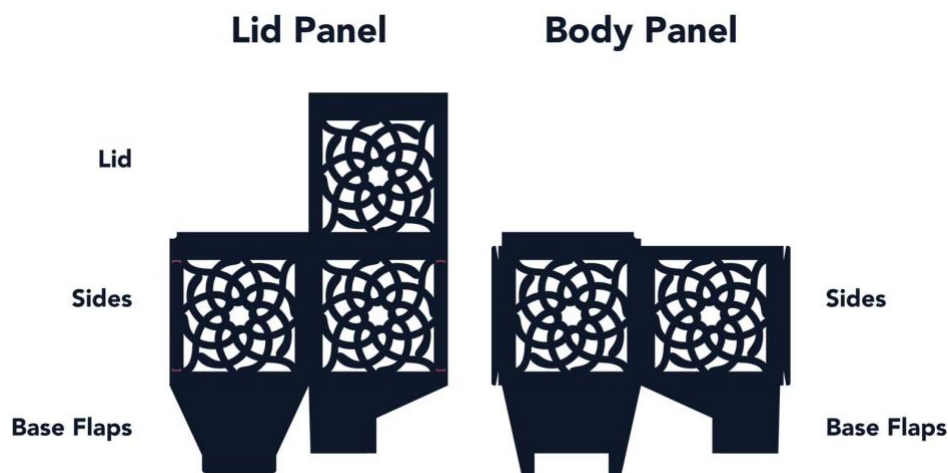
If your software opens SVGs, use the SVG. If it doesn't — like the free version of Silhouette Studio — use the DXF instead. They're the same template.

Dash-Line vs. Score-Line. You get two versions. In the Dash-Line files, the fold lines are dashed and cut as part of the shape. In the Score-Line files, they're solid lines kept separate from the rest of the design, so you can tell your machine to score them instead of cutting them. On a Cricut you can assign those lines as scoring, and on a Silhouette you can do the same depending on which tools your machine takes.

Group the score lines with their shape as soon as you open the file. They are grouped in the SVG, but some software, Silhouette Studio included, drops the grouping as it opens the file. That's why the Score-Line version comes as separate files, one per piece: open a file, select everything on the page, and group it before you move anything. If they do come ungrouped and drift apart, fix it before you cut, or your machine will score in the wrong spot. Realigning them won't work — these lines aren't centered on the shape the way a print-and-cut outline is, so centering won't put them back. Undo until they're grouped again or close without saving and reopen. If you've already saved, re-download the original file.

Know Your Pieces

Your lantern cuts as two flat pieces:

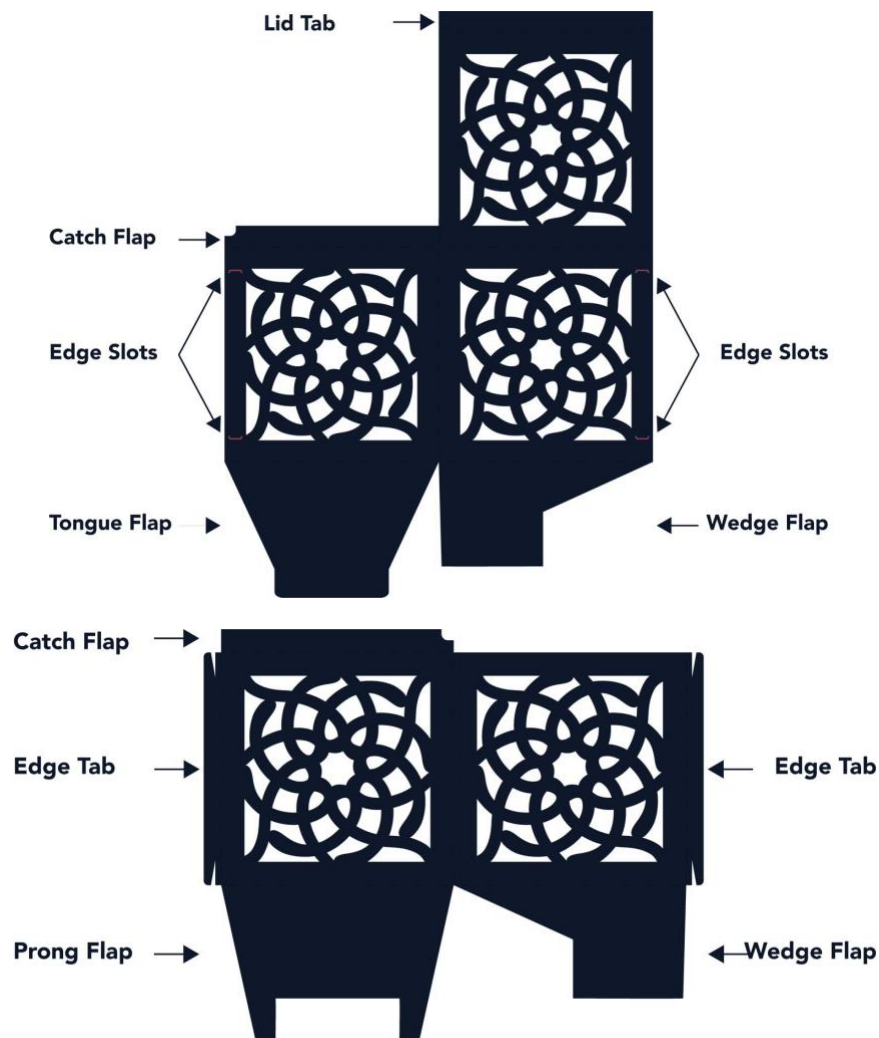


- Lid Panel — two sides, plus the lid on top. It's part of the body too, but the lid is what sets it apart.
- Body Panel — the other two sides.

Three locks hold it together, and none of them need glue:

- Edge Lock (×2) — one Edge Tab on either side of the Body Panel. Each tab has a small end top and bottom that seat into matching Edge Slots on the Lid Panel.
- Tuck Lock — the base. One Prong Flap, two Wedge Flaps, and one Tongue Flap that slips underneath to lock it all down.
- Click Lock — the lid. There's one Catch Flap on each panel, and once the panels are joined, they sit across the lid from each other. The lid folds down over them and the Lid Tab slides underneath.

Here's where every one of those parts sits on the flat panels:



One more name worth knowing before you start, because it comes up below:

- Edge Strip — the narrow sliver of paper at each end of an Edge Tab, between the notch and the edge of the panel. There are two per tab, top and bottom. They're

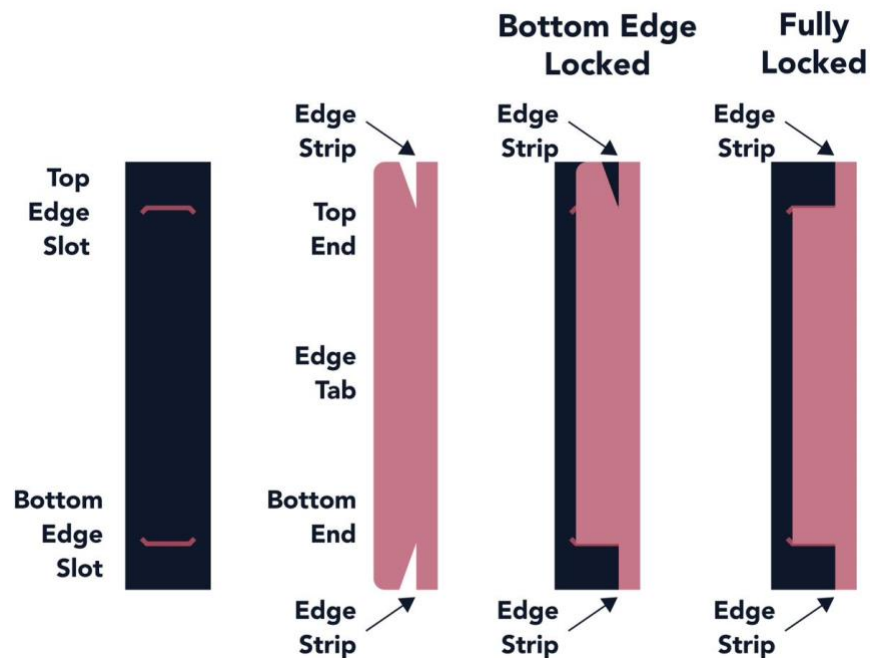
the most fragile part of the whole design, and they're also what reinforces each corner.

Section 1: Folding

1. **Get the Base Flaps oriented before you fold anything.** This is the one step where a mistake costs you a re-fold, so it's worth ten seconds up front. You can fold the panels toward you or away from you, so long as the Base Flaps end up arranged correctly. Going around the base they alternate: Tongue, Wedge, Prong, Wedge. The two Wedge Flaps sit opposite each other and mirror one another, and the Prong Flap sits opposite the Tongue Flap. What you don't want is the two Wedge Flaps side by side, with the Prong Flap and Tongue Flap next to each other.
2. **Crease every fold line.** Run over each one firmly so it holds a sharp edge.
3. **Support the paper as you fold.** The pattern is cut away from the panels, so there's much less paper holding a fold line together than there would be on a solid sheet. Everywhere you fold — between two panels, and where an Edge Tab folds away from its panel — lay a finger along the fold line so the paper bends along the line instead of tearing beside it.
4. **The Edge Strips need the most care of all.** They're the narrowest paper on the whole design, so support each one as you fold it over rather than letting it bend on its own. Once it's folded, go back and set the crease properly — enough to hold its shape, but stay gentle with it.

Section 2: Locking the Sides

Edge Lock: Outside View



5. **Open all four Edge Slots first.** Slide the tip of a weeding tool or letter opener into each one and wiggle it just enough to loosen it. You're not making the slot bigger and you're definitely not tearing anything — you're giving the tab somewhere to go. This is the difference between "slides right in" and "why won't this go in."
6. **Lay the two panels down inside-down**, so the outsides are facing up, with the Edge Tab of the Body Panel sitting on top of the Edge Slots on the Lid Panel.
7. **At an angle, slide the bottom end of the Edge Tab into the bottom Edge Slot.** As you do it, check that the Edge Strip comes out on the outside. What you don't want is for it to slip down between the two panels — between the panel with the Edge Slot and the panel the Edge Tab is attached to. It can tear in there, and then it isn't reinforcing the corner.
8. **Hold the bottom end in place, gently pull the top of the Body Panel toward you, and slip the top end of the Edge Tab into the top Edge Slot.** Your two panels are now joined.
9. **Flip the joined panels over so the inside faces up.** Fold the unlocked sides in so the loose Edge Tab is sitting on top of the unused Edge Slots. Smooth it so it lies flat and doesn't bow up anywhere.

10. **Slide the bottom end of that Edge Tab into the bottom Edge Slot**, then gently pull the top of the panel toward you and slip the top end into the top Edge Slot. Check the Edge Strip again — same rule, it comes out on the outside.
11. **Smooth it down again, then open it out into the box shape.** Take a look at the Base Flaps while it's open. They should be sitting the way Section 1 described, ready to fold in. If they aren't, now is the moment to find out.

If you're adding vellum or cardstock, carry on to Section 3. If you're not, skip ahead to Section 4 and close the bottom.

Section 3: Adding Vellum or Cardstock (Optional)

If you like the open look and don't want to use any adhesive at all, skip over this section. If you want your lantern to have a frosted-glass look, use vellum. If you want to use it as a gift box with opaque sides, use cardstock. Either way, this section is for you.

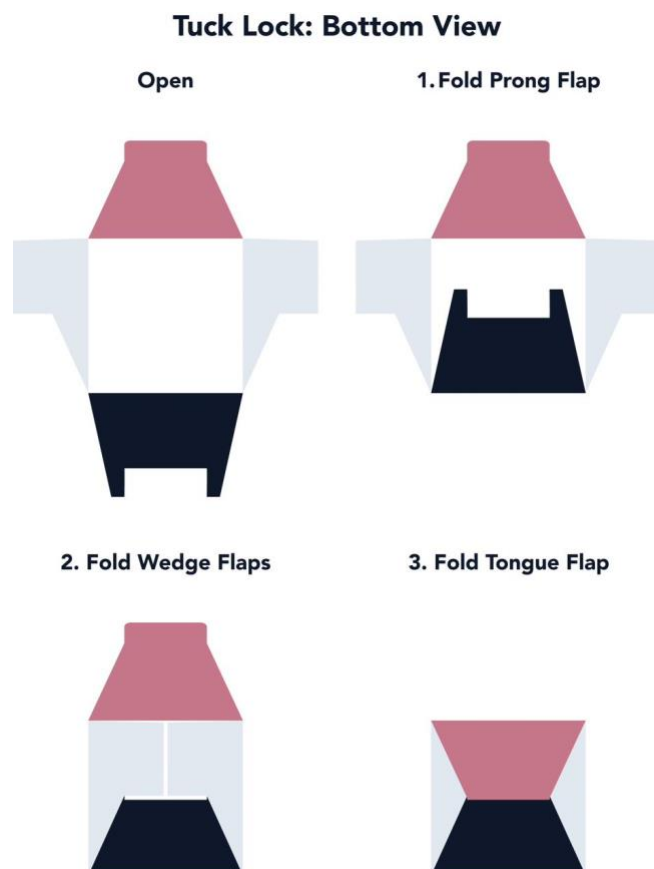
You get five 3.5" squares — one per window. As noted up in Materials, cutting them by hand is what gets all five out of a single sheet.

12. **Lay the lantern back down the way it sat when you closed the second Edge Lock, then open that lock.** The inside is now facing up. I know, I know — you just put it together and now I want you to take it apart. That was to make sure you had the panels oriented correctly and didn't end up sticking the window inserts to the outside of the lantern and having to start all over again. Trust me, it happens.
13. **Now you've got a flat run of four sides to work on**, with one Edge Lock still closed. You'll do one panel at a time, working along the run.
14. **Tape the inside face of the first panel.** Run tape around the edge of the design — and across the design itself if you like. On the Lid Panel there's one thing to avoid: keep the tape off the Edge Slots, and clear of the space directly above and below them. Tape there would block insertion of the Edge Tabs when you close it back up.
15. **Lay a window insert onto the tape, lined up with the bottom edge of the panel.** Line up the bottom rather than centering it. That keeps the top of the insert clear of the Click Lock, so the Lid Tab still has room to slide under later.
16. **Smooth it down from the middle outward.** Press it onto the tape with no bubbles or lifted corners. If a corner won't sit, lift it back off before the tape grabs and reset it — vellum creases permanently once it folds.

17. **Do the other three sides the same way.** Tape, lay the insert down against the bottom edge, smooth it flat. One panel at a time.
18. **Do the lid last.** Tape it the same way and keep the insert clear of the Click Lock, so the Lid Tab doesn't catch on it as it slides into place.
19. **Close the Edge Lock back up** and carry on to the bottom.

If you'd rather use thin removable glue dots, you can — they hold well and they come off cleanly. Two things make them behave: burnish each dot with a bone folder before you peel it off the sheet, or it balls up instead of transferring, and cut them to size while they're still on the backing sheet, never after you've removed one. The trade-off is that dots hold at points rather than along an edge, so expect the window insert to lift a little between them.

Section 4: Closing the Bottom



20. **Fold the Prong Flap down first.**
21. **Fold the two Wedge Flaps in on top of it.**

22. **Slip the Tongue Flap under the Prong Flap.** It tucks into that narrower section and locks the base.
23. **Reach inside and flatten it from within.** Push down until the bottom sits square. Sometimes it takes a whole hand in the middle of the box to get it there.

Section 5: Closing the Lid

24. **Fold the Catch Flaps in and fold the lid down over them.** Slide one end of the Lid Tab under a Catch Flap, then slide the other end under its Catch Flap.
25. **It'll feel too long to fit. It isn't.** Keep going. The very ends of the Lid Tab don't fold down with the rest of it — they stay in line with the lid and rest against the Catch Flaps, which is what holds it shut. A slight step along that edge is the lock working, not the lid sitting crooked.
26. **To open it, work the Lid Tab back out one side at a time, the same way it went in.** Free one end from its Catch Flap, then the other, rather than pulling the whole tab straight out at once.

That's it. Drop in an LED tealight or a string of fairy lights and you've got a lantern. Leave it empty and you've got a gift box.

Storing It Flat

Because there's no glue holding it together, this folds away without coming apart. Undo the Tuck Lock at the base and the whole lantern collapses flat with both Edge Locks still done up — you don't need to take the sides apart at all. When you want it back, open it out, close the base again, and you're done.

Safety Note

Use battery-operated LED tealights or fairy lights only. Never put a real candle inside a paper lantern.

Happy crafting!

Michelle