Chapter 6

Making a Pop with Your Pop-up

*A*mazing but true, the very first pop-up books appeared more than 700 years ago. The first pop-ups were aimed at adults rather than children; they had moving wheels within wheels and were used to cast astrological charts. Instead of paper, they used *vellum,* which is a kind of leather that was specially treated to make a clean surface to write and draw on. Over the years, pop-up techniques have moved with the times.

Today's pop-up books are rather sophisticated, designed by artists to the delight of children as well as playful adults. Modern books often use paper or card, but you can use other materials to create unique effects. Pop-ups can pop up in a variety of ways. Some use a parallel pop-up mechanism, and some pop outward. Still others pop out with a single sheet of paper.

This chapter looks at the two main ways to pop your pop-up: parallel pop-ups and pop-out pop-ups. You need only a few basic tools and materials to make the simple pop-ups in this chapter: card, glue, scissors, a ruler, a cutting mat, and a sharp craft knife. You also need a little patience and bit of imagination. You can find details about the tools in Chapter 3 and about basic construction techniques in Chapter 4, but you have to look inside yourself for the imagination.

The Particulars of Parallel Pop-ups

The *parallel pop-up* is the classic pop-up: You open the page to reveal a scene with one or more layers in front of a background, giving the illusion of depth. Although simple, the parallel pop-up can be surprisingly effective, and the magic of seeing the apparently 3D scene appear from a flat greeting card is always a delight.

REMEMBER

A parallel pop-up has the following characteristics:

✔ **Like all pop-ups, a parallel pop-up is able to fold down flat.** You accomplish this by placing two pieces of card parallel to each other. You can do this in one of two basic ways: the *cut* way or the *glue* way, which I discuss in the upcoming subsections.

✔ **The greeting card or book pages open to form a 90° angle.** To see the image pop up, you open the page only halfway.

✔ **It has two surfaces that are always lined up with each other.** Figure 6-1 shows an example. With a parallel pop-up, you essentially create a collapsible box, gluing the

figure or character you want to pop up to the front face of that box. Here you can see that as the greeting card closes, the box collapses so that the back of the card and the character in front of the card area are always lined up, or parallel.
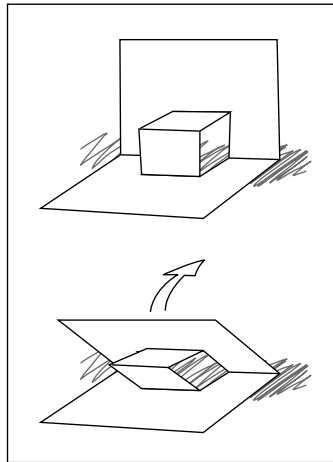

Figure 6-1:
A parallel pop-up has two surfaces that line up.

This section walks you through a couple of projects to help you create your own parallel pop-ups.

Cut it out: A simple, sunny pop-up card

The *cut* type of parallel pop-up is perhaps the simplest type of pop-up you can make. With this type of greeting card, as the card is closed, an open-sided box folds down flat and is tucked away inside the card. When the greeting card is opened, the box unfolds as well, appearing to magically pop up before your eyes. Figure 6-2 shows three examples of the *cut* type of parallel pop-up.
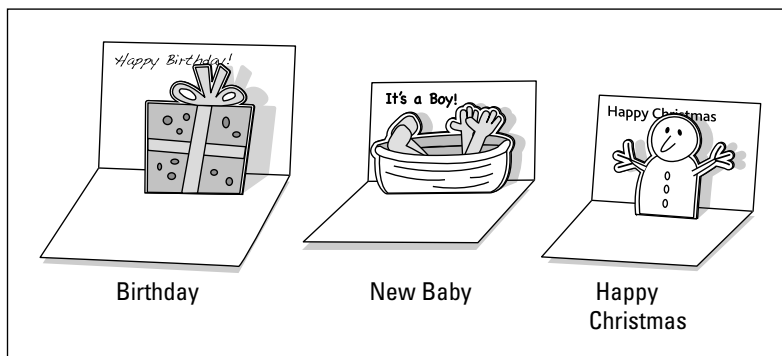

Figure 6-2:
Completed parallel pop-up greeting cards.

Birthday   New Baby   Happy Christmas

Project 6-1: Rising Sun Card

The Rising Sun greeting card is a great introduction to cut-style parallel pop-ups. In addition to using yellow and white card, you add some color with a picture from a magazine. Allergy medicine advertisements are a great source for sky and other outdoor vistas for this project.

Tools and Materials

1 sheet of thin white card   *1 sheet of thin yellow card*

Pencil and eraser   *Drawing compass*

Ruler   *Scissors*

Sharp craft knife   *Magazine with a picture of the sky*

Cutting mat   *White school glue and glue spreader*

REMEMBER

1. **Using a pencil and ruler, mark the lines from the template in Figure 6-3 onto your card.**

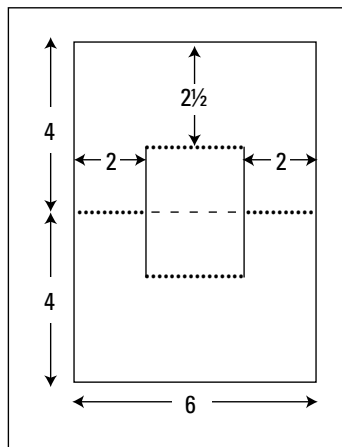   Be sure to mark fold lines as dotted or dashed and cut lines as solid.

Figure 6-3:
The Rising
Sun card
template.

2. **Cut the two solid vertical lines with your sharp craft knife.**

   Place the card on your cutting mat, line up your ruler, and run your knife along the edge of the ruler. Don't cut toward yourself.

3. **Score the dotted and dashed lines with the point of an open pair of scissors.**

   Scoring, running the point of a pair of scissors along a crease line to dent it, gives your folds a crisp, professional look. Don't skip the scoring step. Refer to Chapter 4 for how to score your card.

4. **Carefully fold the card in half while also pushing the center piece so that it folds in the opposite direction from the main fold.**

   Pushing on the center piece changes the valley fold into a hill fold, creating a collapsible box.

   The pop-up should now fold flat. Check your greeting card by opening it. The center should pop up as in Figure 6-1. If it doesn't, make sure you push in the center piece in as you close the greeting card.

5. **Draw and cut out the sun from the yellow card.**

   Extend the points of the compass so they're 2" apart and draw a 4" circle. Draw some sun rays. Using your scissors, cut along the line you just traced to get your sun. You

don't need the full circle, just the top $^3/_4$ as in Figure 6-4. Draw a line at about $^1/_4$ height and carefully cut along the line.
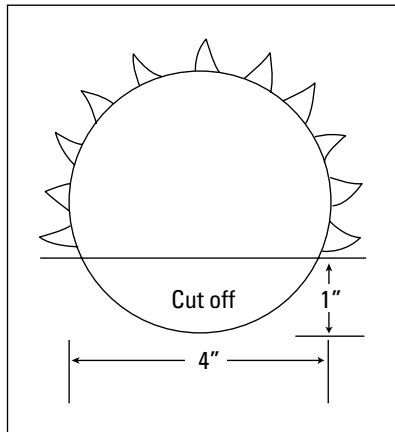
Figure 6-4:
Making the sun for your greeting card.

6. **Cut out a picture of the sky for the background and glue the sky piece to the top half of the open greeting card.**

   Look through some old magazines to find a picture with a large area of sky. Using Figure 6-5 as a template, cut out a background of sky.

   Spread the white school glue thinly, using as little glue as possible so that the sky doesn't wrinkle when you glue it down. Leave the greeting card open while the glue dries so that it doesn't all stick together. It should be dry after only a few minutes.
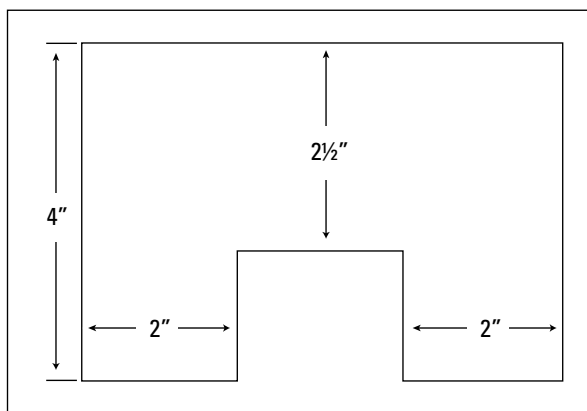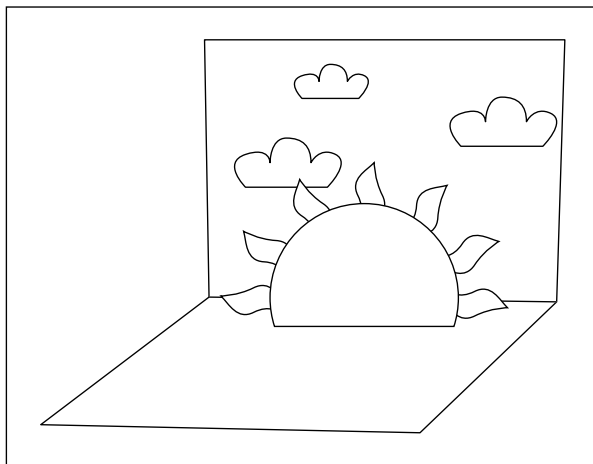
Figure 6-5:
The sky template.

7. **Glue your yellow sun into place on the front face of the collapsible box you created in Step 4.**

   The sun should be centered on the greeting card and lined up with the crease at the bottom of the box (see Figure 6-6).

8. **Make sure the greeting card opens and closes freely.**

   If bits are stuck down that shouldn't be, free them carefully with your sharp craft knife. You now have a pop-up sunrise. Simple to make but really rather effective, don't you think?

Figure 6-6:
Completing your pop-up card.

The goodness of glue: A pop-up surprise

You can make parallel pop-ups without a knife, and I refer to them as *glue* type pop-ups. In this case, the picture you want to pop up and the back of your card sort of form the front and back of a collapsible box. A *picture tab* that goes along the bottom of your picture and a separate *top tab* that goes behind your picture form the bottom and top of that box. The sides of the box stay open.

The advantage of making your pop-up this way is that when the pop-up is closed, no signs give away that this is a pop-up; it just looks like a plain old folded greeting card. The disadvantage is that lining up your parts correctly is harder. Sometimes there's beauty in imperfection, but in this case, it can make it impossible to shut your pop-up, so measure carefully.

Project 6-2: Standing Castle Pop-Up

This design features a castle that stands up using a glue-style parallel pop-up. Keep your eyes open for other interesting subjects to make into pop-ups — maybe views around your district or simple shapes. Perhaps flowers or people you know. The possibilities are endless.

Tools and Materials

3 sheets of thin white card   *Scissors*

Ruler   *White school glue and glue spreader*
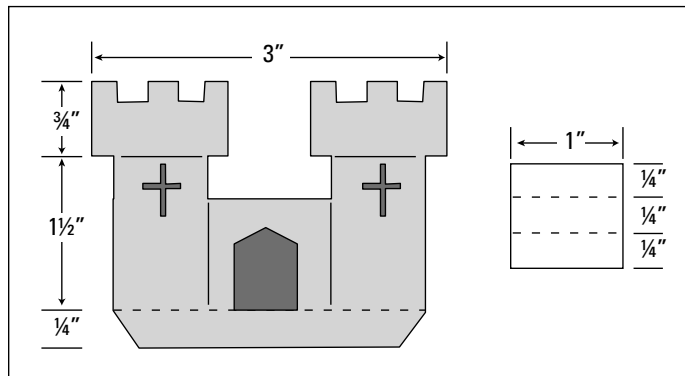
Pencil and eraser

1. **Mark out a sheet of white card with a castle and top tab (as Figure 6-7 shows).**

   The picture tab at the bottom of the castle and the center section of the top tab are both $1/4$" wide.

2. **Score the crease lines on the top tab and the picture tab with the point of an open pair of scissors; then cut out the pieces.**

Figure 6-7:
The picture tab and the top tab should have equal widths.

3. **Fold a full sheet of white card in half, creating the main part of your greeting card.**

4. **Glue the picture tab down so that it touches the crease in the center of the open greeting card (see Figure 6-8).**
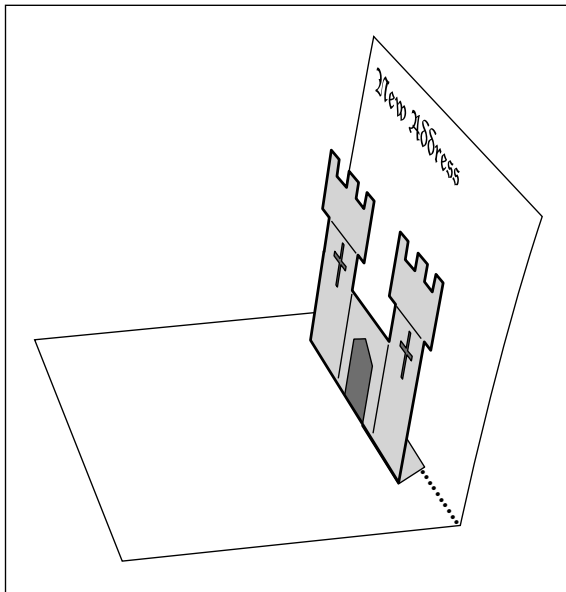

Figure 6-8:
Fitting the picture to your pop-up.

5. **Glue the top tab onto the back of the picture but not onto the greeting card.**

6. **Apply a little white school glue to the free end of the top tab and fold the greeting card so that it's closed with the tab stretched out toward the center of the pop-up.**

Help make the glue stick by pressing down on the back of the pop-up where the glue on the tab is. Everything should now be nicely lined up. Figure 6-10 shows the proper placement of the top tab.
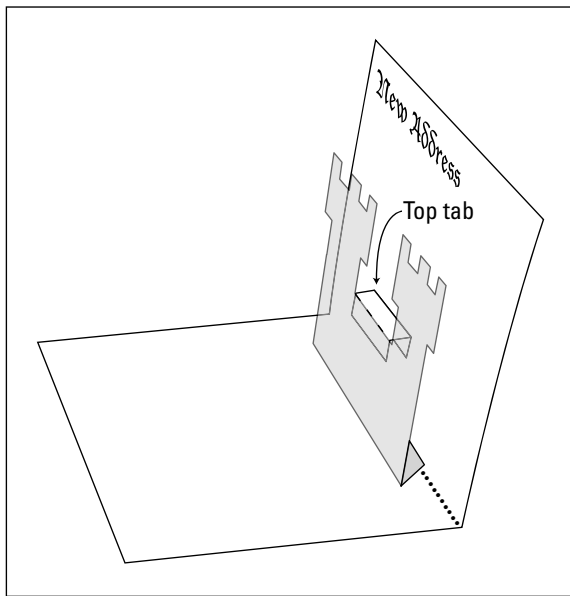
Figure 6-9:
Gluing down
the top tab.

7. **Open and close the greeting card to check whether you've made it correctly.**

Making your pop-up multilayered with photos

Your pop-up card doesn't need to have just a single layer. You can add lots of layers to give your greeting card a more complex look. Figure 6-10 shows a good example. This pop-up card has three layers, four if you count the greeting card itself. As the greeting card opens, it reveals the hills, a house, and a bear to complete the scene.

Figure 6-10:
A multilay-
ered pop-up
card.

Project 6-3: Bursting onto the Scenery Pop-up

This project, which features magazine photos, is a glue-style parallel pop-up card that attaches three layers to the greeting card: hills, a building, and a person.

Of course, you don't even have to use photographs from magazines for this kind of project; you can use your own photos. Pop-up cards with your own photographs can be great fun. In these days of digital photography and high-quality home printers, you can easily create a pop-up with your friends and family of your holiday, special occasion, or party. Make individual pop-up invitations or thank-you cards. Let your imagination run wild.

Tools and Materials

3 or 4 sheets of thin white card   *Ruler*

Magazines for photographs   *Pencil and eraser*

Scissors   *Sharp craft knife*

White school glue and glue spreader   *Cutting mat*

Glue stick

1. **Fold a full sheet of card in half to make the main part of your greeting card.**

2. **Look through your magazines to find photos that can make a background for the greeting card, as well as the layers that pop up from it.**

   Find a hill that's as wide as the greeting card (approximately $8^1/_2$") and about half as high. Find a building that's taller but not as wide as the hill. Find a person measuring between $4^3/_4$" and $5^7/_8$" tall.

   Make the parts at the front shorter and/or narrower than those at the back so they don't block the view.

3. **Add a $^1/_4$"-wide picture tab to the bottom of the hill, building, and person; carefully cut out the shapes.**

   For complicated shapes, first cut close to the line you're aiming at — perhaps $^3/_8$" away from it; then cut carefully on the correct line. Cutting out the picture is much easier if you're cutting near the edge.

   If your pictures are a little flimsy, try gluing them to a sheet of card with a glue stick before cutting them out along their edges.
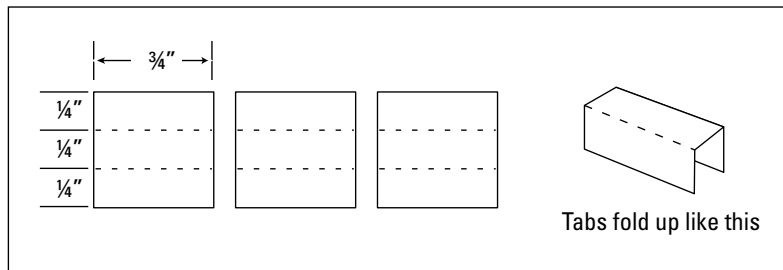
4. **Create the top tabs.**

   1. On a piece of card, draw four 4"-long parallel lines $^1/_4$" apart.

   2. Score the middle two and cut the outer two lines.

   3. Cut pieces from this card to make your top tabs (see Figure 6-11). You need three or four of them for this project.

   The tabs are what hold everything in your pop-up card together. Don't make the tabs too long — $^3/_4$" should be fine. If they're too long, the parts of the pop-up will spill out of the closed greeting card.

Figure 6-11:
Tabs for
the pop-up
card.

Tabs fold up like this

5. **Before gluing, place your hill, building, and person where you want them to be in the final project.**

6. **Using white school glue, glue down the picture tabs.**

   Line up each picture tab with the crease of the greeting card or with the layer before it. Be sure to space the magazine photos $1/4$" apart to match with the $1/4$" tabs. Glue the hill to the greeting card, then glue the building into place on the card, and lastly glue the person into place on the card.

7. **Glue in the top tabs and let your pop-up card dry.**

   Glue a tab behind each picture, connecting it to the layer behind it. Open and close the pop-up card to make sure it works. Keep your greeting card open when the glue is drying.

Now you're well equipped to do some experimenting on your own. You can have all sorts of fun with multilayered pop-up cards. Don't forget that you're not limited to one item per layer. One idea is to have a layer with two characters in front of a hill on each side of the pop-up card, as in Figure 6-12.

Figure 6-12:
A multilayer
pop-up
card.