

CUT-OUT PHOTO FRAME

Great adventures, vacations, special places—this project shows you how to create a unique piece of art by gathering your best travel photos and cutting a customized mat (mount) for your frame. It's not just for adventurers: you could spell out children's names, feelings, or commemorate special dates (births, weddings, and so on) and show off a collection of treasured images at the same time for a fantastic personalized piece of wall art.

You will need

- Photo frame (mine measured 20 x 9 in./50 x 23 cm)
- Colored card stock (card)
- Plain white office paper
- Photos or copies
- Scissors or craft knife, metal rule, and cutting mat
- Pencil
- Printer
- Eraser
- Repositionable spray adhesive or glue stick

1 Take the frame apart and measure the height and width of the glass. Using a craft knife and metal rule on a cutting mat, cut a piece of colored card stock to the same size. Alternatively, use the glass as a template and draw around it on the colored card stock.

Letter size

For my frame, which was 9 in. (23 cm) tall, three letters approx. 6 in. (15 cm) tall were large enough to reveal enough of the photos but also small enough to leave a border around the edge; you may need to go smaller or use a wider frame for more letters.

2 Use word- or image-processing software to type a letter and/or symbol and scale it up to the required size. Select a font that is thick and/or use a bold font setting (I used Arial Black font in bold at 550 pts size). For shapes, look for "Clip-art" or "Insert Symbol" and adjust the size by increasing the number in the "Font Size" box. Use the rulers at the side of the document to gauge how big you're going. Print the letter/symbol on plain office paper (on a fast, low-quality setting to save ink—see page 14). I needed a heart and the letters N and Y, and used one sheet of paper for each one.

3 Using scissors or a craft knife and metal rule on a cutting mat, carefully cut around the letters.





4 With your colored card stock right side up, lay the letters out, taking care to space them evenly. Starting at one end, hold each letter still as you carefully draw around the outside with a pencil.

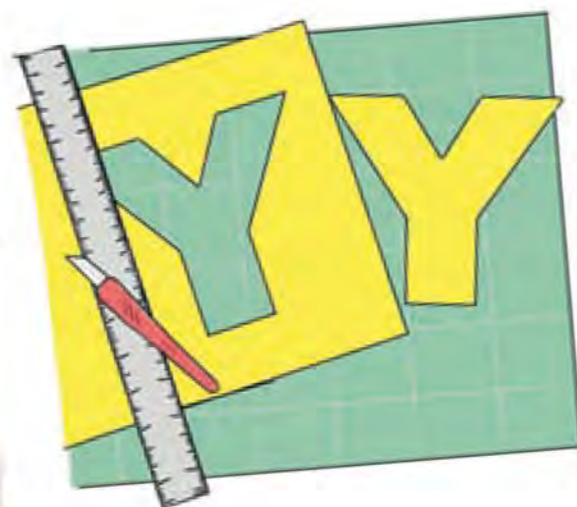


7 Now that your cut-out card is ready, it's time to add your photos. Cut another piece of card (or thick paper) to the size of the glass to use as a base. Place your cut-out card over the base card and lightly draw inside the letters with a pencil, then remove the cut-out card again. Now you can see where to place your images on the base card so that they appear through the cut-out letters. I used one image per letter, but you could create a collage.

8 Once you're happy with the arrangement, mark with pencil around the edges of the photos to create registration marks. Lightly glue the backs of the photos, realign them with the registration marks, and press them firmly into position. Leave to dry. If you have cut-out letter centers set aside, lay the photo card flat, right side up, and align the cut-out card over the top. Lightly glue the backs of the letter centers and press them into position on top of the photos. Leave to dry.



5 Using a craft knife on a cutting mat, carefully cut along the pencil marks on the card to create the apertures. Use a metal ruler to help you along any straight edges. Remember that you're discarding the letter shapes now and protecting the rest of the card, so place the ruler on the outside of the line so that, if you make an error, it will cut into the letter, which won't matter.



9 Re-assemble the frame, making sure it is clean and dust free first. Replace the glass or Perspex, cut-out card, photo backing card, and then the back of the frame. Clip shut. Now it's ready to hang!

FURTHER IDEAS

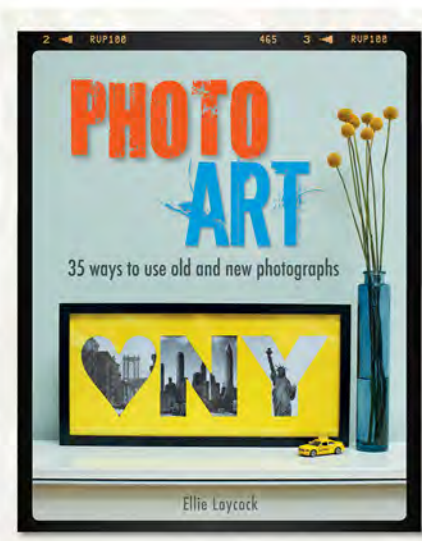
- Use colored card and/or colored photos for a striking look. I used yellow because it reminds me of New York taxis, but you can use anything you like.
- The letters can represent anything: places, people, first names, family names, relationships (auntie, grandpa etc.), hobbies, teams, feelings (love), or even a date of birth. Select your photos to complement the theme.
- Forget the frame and laminate your cards together to create personalized name place mats—great for kids!

Letter options

If you have a letter such as "A," which has a central section, you can either omit this part of the letter to show more of the photo or cut around that too and set it aside until step 8.

6 Gently rub out any remaining pencil marks with an eraser.

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This project is from Photo Art by Ellie Laycock
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