



Fun Flowers With a Twist

Sculpting eye-catching
flowers out of paper

By Tina Whiteley

Every so often I get the urge to make cards so that I've always got a stock of them for every occasion, ready to be posted or handed over in person, in time for the special day. What I love doing the most is making the 3D embellishments that sit on top of the cards. Working on embellishments involves a whole range of different activities from paper cutting and folding, to painting, stencilling and glittering, all of which open up endless possibilities for creating.

You will need

- Paper (slightly heavier than photocopy paper – ideally white, but coloured or patterned Designer Series Paper is fine.)
- Glue (PVA or similar)
- Small container of water
- Selection of glitter, buttons, flower stamens, stick on jewels and pearls
- Colouring media (e.g. stamping inks or watercolour paints)
- Old towel for soaking up excess water
- Flat surface (e.g. plastic or glass board) that's easily wiped clean, to work on for colouring petals
- Paint brush, or paper shaping tools, such as stylus, tweezers, awl or sharp point,
- Foam mat or soft foam surface for shaping
- Hair dryer and heat proof container

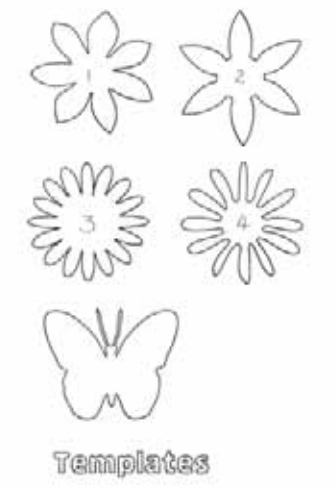
Here are a few ideas to make some realistic looking flowers, using plain white paper, inks and a few shaping tools.

In this tutorial I'll be showing you how to make daisy and frangipani type flowers which, depending on the colours and sizes of your petals will enable you to create the look of sunflowers, gerberas, orchids and lilies and maybe some fantasy flowers too.

The look of the flowers will depend on how you decorate the petals; whether you use inks, watercolours or other media and also how you shape them. If you don't want to colour them yourself, you can also use Designer Series Paper.

You won't need much in the way of expensive equipment, but a stylus, foam mat and tweezers are useful to give you more shaping options. However, a simple paint brush handle can suffice for most things.

Before you get started



- If you have a flower punch, die cutting machine or paper cutting machine you can use any similar petal shapes available in your collection.
- If you have a Brother Scan N Cut machine and would like the FCM cutting file attached, please email me and I will forward the file to you.
- For manual cutting, please use the templates attached in the Fun Flowers Template PDF and there is also a bonus butterfly shape for you to cut out and use if you wish.
- Draw the shapes onto cardboard or template plastic and cut them out so you can trace around them on your chosen papers. They will take a little bit longer to cut by hand, but you can save some time, by cutting several layers at once. If you want to vary the sizes of your petals, you can photocopy them larger or smaller, as required.

For the Daisies / Sunflowers

Step 1 – Making the daisy / sunflower centre

- Cut a piece of yellow or brown coloured card approximately 20 cm long and 2 cm wide. Fold it in half and cut from the folded edge upwards about 0.75 cm, leaving the edges uncut, to create a fringe effect. Make as many as you need in the relevant colours and set aside for later.



Step 2 – Cutting out the shapes



- Use flower shapes #3 & 4 and cut out three or four rounds mixing and matching, depending on how full you want your flower to be.

Step 3 – Colouring the petals



- For the daisies, leave the petals white.
- For the sunflowers, colour yellow to orange, as shown, with ink or other medium. Using a wet wipe can help to blend and spread the colours over the flower.

Step 4 – Wetting the petals

- Fold each round of white daisy petals into quarters and dip them in the container of water to get them slightly wet, but make sure they're still firm enough to work with. If they are left for too long they will disintegrate when you start to manipulate them.
- The sunflower coloured petals will be damp from the ink, so you can just fold them into quarters without dipping into the water.
- With the petals in quarters, gently roll them between your fingers into a small sausage shape and then pop them in the cardboard box or heat proof container, so that you can dry them. Make enough for several flowers so you can dry them all together.

Step 5 – Drying the petals



- Don't rush this process, as this is what strengthens the paper. Gradually the petals will start to unfold as they dry and you can help them along by opening them up a little bit as they start to stiffen. If bits start to tear as you unroll them, place them back in the box and keep drying them until they are strong enough to be opened out more fully. Ultimately, you want them all to be dry and opened out completely, so you can start to work on shaping the petals. You will notice that the paper is now much stiffer and more crinkled than before. It will give your flower more structure and texture and it will be easier to manipulate, giving you more life-like petals.

Step 6 – Shaping the petals

- There are a number of ways you can shape

the petals; with your fingers, with a stylus, or with tweezers.



- Here are some suggestions: Carefully score or fold a crease line along the length of each petal and open it out again.



- Give the petals a slight curl upwards by using your stylus or the end of a thin paintbrush to pull the top edge of the petal towards the centre. Don't press too hard, or you will tear the paper.
- A ball ended stylus is useful too. Move it round in circles in the centre to make the petal shapes rounded. Depending on whether you pull the petals up or down, you will get a slightly different look.





- You can also curl some of the petal ends with tweezers, twisting them up slightly, or rolling them around a paintbrush or pencil. Try a combination of shaping techniques to get a variation of daisy or sunflower shapes.



Step 7 – Glueing the petals together

- When you're happy with the shaping, put glue in the centre of one set of petals and place another set on top with a slight offset and leave to dry. Add the rest of the layers in the same way and leave the glue to set for a few minutes.



Step 8 – Attaching the centres

- While the glue is drying, take the fringe strip of coloured card that you cut earlier and roll it up carefully, folded edge upwards, glueing as you go, to hold it in place.



- You may need to adjust the size according to the gap in the centre of your petals, but you can cut the fringe down, or make it longer, accordingly.



- Leave it to dry for a few minutes. When dry, carefully tease out the folded edges so they splay out into a slightly convex circular shape. Glue the raw edges underneath and secure to the centre of the flower petals. Press firmly and leave to dry and then you have your daisy or sunflower.



Variations

- You can also make gerberas in the same way, varying the colours of your petals and adding the appropriate coloured stamen centres, by using the fringe technique as above, or you can add a button, bead or jewel in the centre, as preferred.



- For flat petalled white daisies, simply score the centre of the petals and slightly curve them upwards, but don't wet them or do any more sculpting to them.



For the frangipani crinkled flowers

Step 1 – Cutting the flowers

- Use PDF template petal shapes #1 or #2 or a combination of both, as preferred. Three rounds of petals are ideal. If you have other similar flower shapes, five, six or seven petal variations are fine too.



Step 2 – Folding the flowers

- Take the dry petal shapes and fold them in half and then on top of each other, concertina style, as shown above. If there is an odd petal fold it in half and then fold it on top of the others.

Step 3 – Colouring your flowers

- If you wish to colour your paper, do so while the petals are dry. I like to dip around all the edges in a stamping ink pad, so that when they are dipped in water, the colours bleed slightly to give a more organic effect, but you can colour them however you wish, partially or completely. Alternatively, you can use pre-coloured paper.



Step 4 – Wetting your petals

- Now dip those petals into the water, mist them, or rub over them with a wet wipe to make them moist, but make sure they still retain their firmness. In water, they will have a tendency to unravel, so carefully remove them before they get too wet.



- With some of the dampened petal shapes, open them out slowly so they stay intact. Blot them flat on an old towel to soak up the excess moisture. With the rest of the petal shapes, leave them folded and also blot them to remove excess moisture.



Step 5 – Shaping your petals

Method 1

- Take one of the flat, unfolded flower rounds and picking up each petal in turn, carefully roll it around a paintbrush or pencil. Hold the rolled petal firm around the pencil with one hand and gently scrunch it up in the centre with the nails of your forefinger/middle finger and thumb of the other hand, whatever is most comfortable.

- Repeat for each petal and then place in the heat proof container to dry them.

Method 2

- Take one of the damp folded petal shapes, placing them between your thumb and forefinger of each hand. Push the sides in towards each other making a little crease in the centre.



- To add more texture you can also roll them in your hands (as with the sunflowers), but don't press too hard or they will start to disintegrate. Repeat for each round of folded petals

Step 6 – Drying your petals

- Place all the scrunched and folded petals in a cardboard box or heat-proof container to dry them, (as you did for the sunflowers). Gradually open out the rounds, making sure the paper is completely dry before you do more shaping and assembly. Keep drying if the folded paper is not completely dry, before totally unfolding.



- When completely dry and unfurled, remove the petal rounds and add some extra twists on the tops of some of the petals with tweezers. As with the sunflowers, the paper is now stronger, having been made wet and then dried. It can withstand more manipulation than in its original state and you can do more sculpting with it if you choose to.



Step 7 – Assembling your petals

- When you're happy with the shapes of the petals in each round (you can mix and match with methods 1 and 2), glue them together in the centres and let them dry.



- The image above shows how the crumpled petals appear when dry
- If you have a stylus with a ball tip or a round bottomed pen, you can use it to press down in the centre of the petals to give you a more dimensional flower, pushing the petals upwards, as shown in the next image.

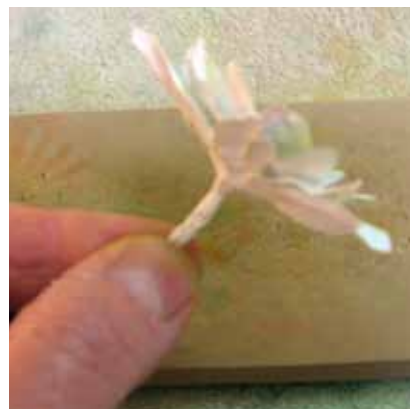


Step 8 – Adding the flower centres

- For the flower centres, you can use flower stamens, poked through a small hole in the middle of the petals, using an awl or darning needle.



- Take about 3 sets of stamens, fold them in half and poke through the centre hole so that the coloured stamens protrude from the front of the flower and the stalks can be taped or glued in place at the back of the flower.



- Alternatively, you can use buttons, jewels, pearls or glitter as centres, if you prefer. Try also experimenting with mark-making techniques, using Copic or alcohol ink marker pens.



- If you make the butterfly smaller, you might lose his antennae when you cut him out, but don't despair, glue or tape some wire underneath or even a pair of flower stamens when you pop him on your card and he'll be just fine!
- When the flowers and butterflies are completely dry they will be quite firm and can then be used for your cards or paper-crafting projects. As they are quite dimensional, you will need to take care with posting, or you can deliver them to that special person by hand.
- I hope you have as much fun as I did making these flowers and here are a few examples of cards I have used them on. As always, if you have any queries on this project, please don't hesitate to contact me for help or advice.

Bonus Template

- I have also given you a butterfly template that can be used in a similar way, in that the paper can be coloured and then moistened, scrunched and dried to give a 3D effect. If you're into bling, they do look lovely glittered.

