

Easy to make, fun to fly

Kite Making

Kites - although used today for play, were originally designed to celebrate a cultural tradition and belief. The kite has also played an important role in many significant historic and scientific events. Kites originated from China, but Japan, Korea and India have also a continuing tradition of skilful kite making and flying. In Korea and Malaysia, flying kites is considered a way of getting rid of all sorts of ailments and problems. Write the problem on the kite, fly it and cut the string. In some Asian countries, when a child is born, a father builds a kite which resembles the baby, and bears its name. The evil spirit will follow the kite when the string is cut. In 200BC the Chinese general Han Hsin defeated a heavily defended city with the help of a kite. When planning a tunnel, a kite was used to measure the distance to the walls of the city he wanted to

conquer, then the tunnel was dug. Chinese general Huan Theng caught in a siege, broke the siege by fitting a squadron of kites with wind harps and flutes in the middle of the night, terrifying the enemy who fled. In 1689 a besieging army forced a town in Siam to surrender because bombs were tied to kites. Marco Polo was the first European to see a kite. He noted that in some cases, a human being was tied to a kite. Benjamin Franklin flew a kite during a thunderstorm to prove that electricity in lightning was the same as electricity on earth. Marconi used a kite to pull up an aerial which received the first wireless communication between Europe and America. Meteorologists attached thermometers to kites. American journalists and meteorologist William Eddy used a Malayan kite for their observation.

On September 21, 1895 Gilbert Totten tied a camera to his kite and took an aerial photograph of the western hemisphere. In 1893 Lawrence Hargrave made a flight using a number of box kites joined together. This was an important discovery in aerodynamics.

During the Second World War box kites were used to harass planes. They were also used for advertising.

In 1903 Samuel Cody attached wings to the box kites originally designed by Hargrave, and did stunts e.g. he crossed the English Channel. He was commissioned to build war kites but after becoming disenchanted by this switched his energy to planes. In 1948 Francis Rogallo developed the Delta kite which was the beginning of a new sport - hang gliding.

Materials

Tyvek, Florists Tape
Markers, Cane,
Twine, Supertac glue

1. Use a sheet of carbon paper to transfer the design on to the Tyvek. Place the carbon paper in between the photocopied design and the Tyvek and trace over the design with a pencil. Use a permanent marker to outline the design on the tyvek, including the fold (broken) lines and hole circles.
2. Cut out the main shape, leaving a slight margin outside the outer edge line.
3. Fold the kite shape back at the centre line.
4. Fold the wings forward on the dashed lines, making sure each half meets exactly. The folds create a keel

5. Decorate or colour the kite flat with marker pens or paint.

6. Glue a short length of cane inside the keel along the centre line.

7. Glue the keel together around the cane

8. Place a Fairy Floss Stick across the wings centrally on the wing tabs, leaving about 20mm at each end.

9. Fold and glue down the tabs over the stick to keep it in place.

10. To create a tail use 3 metres of ribbon or strips of Crepe Paper, doubled to form two trailing lengths of 1.5m. Tape the tail in place.

11. Punch a hole where indicated (two circles just below the nose shape) and tie a line loop of Kite string.

12. Balloon stick or long line is suitable for this kite. A winder may be useful for longer lines.



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