

Bringing the Museum Home: Lovely Lanterns

Lots of cultures around the world celebrate light at special times of the year. In China, people decorate the streets and their homes with lanterns for Chinese New Year.

Chinese lanterns are usually round in shape, symbolizing harmony and the hope that life will run smoothly. Traditionally, lanterns were made with a bamboo frame covered with silk or paper, two materials that were invented in China. The lanterns are usually red, the colour of good luck in Chinese culture. They were decorated with Chinese characters or pictures and tassels.

You can make your own Chinese lantern. Here's how.



1. Take a piece of A4 paper and cut off a strip from the top lengthways. Decorate one side any way you like with coloured pens or paper.



2. Fold the paper in half lengthways and with a ruler, draw lines about 1cm apart from the centre fold to 2cm away from the edge. Carefully cut along each line with scissors.



3. Unfold the paper and add more decoration. You could add sequins, pieces of coloured paper or whatever you have to hand.



4. Carefully bend the paper into a cylinder shape and secure in place with tape.



5. Using tape, attach the strip you cut off as a handle at the top. You can add some tissue paper tassels along the bottom edge too.



A red Chinese lantern