

# Things I've Learned about PCS and Popup Cards

© 2014 Sandy McCauley, All Rights Reserved

## A. Designing in PCS

- Learn the navigations keys and practice them... a lot! Scrapydew's User Guide is in the Tutorials section of the class files.
- Watch videos and take notes: [susanbluerobot.com](http://susanbluerobot.com), [scrapydew.com](http://scrapydew.com), and the MTC Webinars (beginning 1/14/14).
- Back up your original file (containing the shapes you're planning to use) before you begin the process of designing the card. This may not be necessary after you become an expert, but as a beginner you may find yourself wanting to start over from the beginning numerous times! : )
- Biggest mistake will probably be forgetting to crop the tops and bottoms of your shapes so that they are horizontal. Another big oops is forgetting to watch for that upper boundary line. Any shapes above it will "stick out" when the card is folded.
- I choose slightly smaller dimensions than the ones which default in PCS so that I have a small border on the inside of my card. For example, I will use 4.75 x 6.75 instead of 5 x 7 for the popup, but the outside base card is still cut at 5 x 7.
- Change the screen colors, as needed, so that the dotted lines are easier to see for snapping. Try a gray or white background.
- Utilize **File>Print Preview** often, to make sure you see the red valley and blue mountain fold lines appearing.
- Remember that you can do final editing once you have the file imported into MTC.
- You can copy and paste between MTC and PCS. But to get your final card into MTC, use **File>Export>Project Rendering>As SVG File**. To transfer the horizontal layers, use **File >Export>Project Shapes**. (part of the 1.1 update)

## B. Cutting the Popup Card

- You have the option to cut from either PCS or MTC. If I need to edit the file in MTC, then I always cut from MTC.
- In PCS, use **File>Render Options** to specify if fold lines are to be cut dashed or solid. I use solid because I like using the embossing tool for scoring.
- To choose which lines are sent to the cutter, select once you are in the cutting window: **File>Export>Project Rendering>To Machine**. Thus, this is where I would turn off the Cut Lines while using the embosser and then turn on the Cut Lines (and turn off the other three Fold Line types) while using the blade.
- Test cut the card from scraps and fold it up to make sure everything is exactly as you need. Then cut from your "good cardstock".
- I recommend using a 65 lb or 80lb cardstock for cutting. If it's lighter, then tearing is more likely in intricate areas during folding. If it's heavier, then the overall card can become bulky, especially if you are adding more layers or decorating the outside.
- Cut the outside card larger than your planned finished project, if you have the available room to do so. For example, for a 5 x 7 card, I will cut two pieces that are 5.5 x 7.25 from an 8.5 x 11 piece. That way, after I glue the inside of the card to this outer base card, I can trim the excess so that the inside is perfectly centered and the base card is cut flush at the bottom or side.
- As always, do some test cuts to make sure you have the proper settings. If you are using an embosser for the fold lines, remember that you must cut in WYSIWYG mode versus Knife Point mode, so that the cut lines will properly align with the score lines.

### C. Folding the Popup Card

- 1) Have the right tools available! This will make a BIG difference in how long it takes to fold up the project. I recommend a long thin bone or plastic paper folder and a long thin artist's palette knife that has several sides. Refer to photos below.
- 2) Fold all score lines forward, regardless of whether or not they are mountain or valley folds. This will make the mountain folds easier to see on the back when you flip it over to fold those. You'll want to rotate the card 180 degrees, as needed, to get easier access.
- 3) Use the bone folder to weave behind a part or parts that need to fold towards you. Press the palette knife along the fold line so that as you fold forward, the palette knife reinforces the fold.
- 4) Once you flip the card to the back, use **File>Print Preview** in PCS to see which lines (blue ones) should now be folded forward (toward you) on that side. Then repeat step 3 but only on the folds needing to fold that direction. Again, rotate as needed for easier access.
- 5) On either side, where you can, pinch the folds with your fingers to reinforce them. Don't force any if you don't have easy access but you should be able to do those at the top and at the bottom of your project.
- 5) Flip the card to the front and begin folding the card in half. Important: Focus first on the two center folds for the card. Pinch those. Then begin gently "pushing" the card closed. Proceed slowly and you should start to see the popup take shape.
- 6) Reinforce folds that are obviously "going the right way." Look for any "problem areas" and push the folds the correct way before folding the card any tighter.
- 7) Once the card is folding the correct way, close completely and reinforce the folds with the bone paper folder so that the inside will be as flat as possible.



Paper Folder



Artist's Palette Knife

### D. Gluing the Popup Card

- I recommend using a dry adhesive, such as a glue stick or tape runner, versus a wet adhesive. A wet adhesive can cause wrinkling, if you use too much.
- Depending on the particular card design, you may want to adhere certain embellishments to the popup card itself. The same could be true of the base card, although I almost always do the front of the base card last because I will probably be trimming it after inserting the popup part.
- Glue the bottom first. Be sure to apply along all edges so that they will be firmly affixed. Important: Be sure the center edge is right at the center fold of the base card.
- As mentioned earlier, having a base card that's sized a bit bigger will make it easier to center the interior popup card.
- Once you have affixed the bottom, fold the card and press well. Immediately open to make sure no adhesive oozed out along the edges. Clean immediately if you see any excess glue.
- Now apply glue along all edges of the top of the popup and immediately close the card and press well. Again, immediately open to verify that there is no excess glue appearing. Clean as needed. Then close and press well again.
- Trim the base card, as needed. Finish embellishing!