

Build Your Own Paper Spitfire



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The History of the Spitfire

On 5 March 1936, the Spitfire took to the skies for the very first time. An icon of British resilience and defiance due to its role during World War II, today the Spitfire has become one of the best loved and most widely recognised British aircraft of all time.

The Spitfire is a British single-seat fighter aircraft that was used by the RAF during and after World War II. It was the only aircraft produced throughout the war.

The Spitfire was designed by RJ Mitchell, chief designer at Supermarine Aviation Works. Mitchell was responsible for the Spitfire's distinctive elliptical wing, which had the thinnest possible cross-section, helping the aircraft to reach faster speeds than its contemporary fighters. It had a top speed of between 350-370 miles per hour and could fly up to 32,000 feet.

In the early 1930s, Mitchell was sadly diagnosed with cancer. He continued to work on the aircraft despite increasing pain, tweaking the design up to the moment of his death in 1937. However in 1936, before Mitchell passed away, he had the chance to see his prototype fly when the Spitfire was taken on its maiden flight on 5 March from what is now Southampton Airport. Airborne for just eight minutes, test pilot Captain Joseph Mutt Summers is reported to have said 'don't touch anything' as his verdict on the new fighter plane.

After Mitchell's death, his colleague Joseph Smith took over as chief designer, overseeing the development of the Spitfire through its multitude of variants.

During World War II the Spitfire was instrumental, along with the Hawker Hurricane, in capturing the support of the British public during the Battle of Britain. Unlike the Hurricane, the Spitfire had an entirely metal body (the Hurricane was lighter being constructed from tubular steel with an Irish linen body).

During the Battle of Britain, from July to October 1940, the Spitfire was perceived by the public to be the main RAF fighter, though Hawker Hurricane shouldered a greater proportion of the burden against Nazi Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe. Spitfire units, however, had a higher victory-to-loss ratio than those flying Hurricanes because of its higher performance. Spitfires in general were tasked with engaging Luftwaffe fighters (aka the German air force) during the Battle – something they were well prepared for thanks to their involvement in Dunkirk.

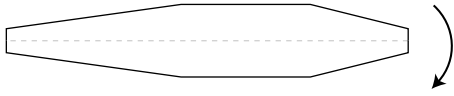
In the upcoming blockbuster movie of the summer, Dunkirk, you'll see that Spitfire pilots (one of which is played by actor Tom Hardy), quickly became acquainted with Luftwaffe tactics. During the evacuation of Dunkirk from 26 May to 4 June, 1940, Spitfire Squadrons were instructed to fly across the Channel to provide support. Considerable pressure was put upon the Head of Fighter Command to commit as many Spitfires as possible to defending France but, to his credit, he refused. Had he not done so, many of the squadrons would have been annihilated long before the Battle of Britain. Even though he stood firm, some 67 Spitfires were lost in the battle for France and the evacuation of Dunkirk. That said, valuable lessons were learned and they were better prepared for the Battle of Britain.

After the Battle of Britain, the Spitfire superseded the Hurricane to become the backbone of RAF Fighter Command. Much loved by its pilots, the Spitfire served in several roles, including interceptor, photo-reconnaissance, fighter-bomber and trainer, and it continued to serve in these roles until the 1950s.

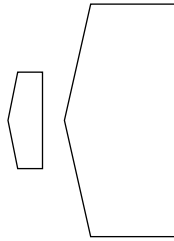
The Spitfire continued to be updated and improved with several reincarnations produced during its service until 1957. Today the aircraft continues to be popular among enthusiasts; about 54 remain airworthy, while many more are static exhibits in aviation museums throughout the United Kingdom and the world, including the Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum in Manston, Kent.

Paper Plane Instructions - Version 1

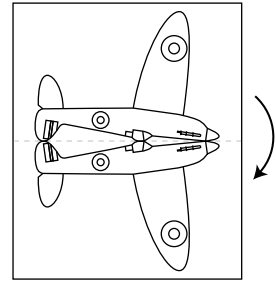
Print the paper plane Spitfire template on page 4. Then follow the instructions below.



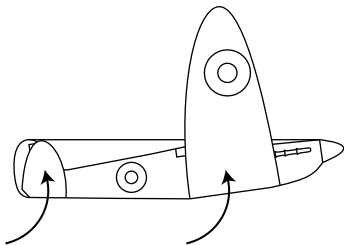
1. Cut out section 2. Fold along dotted line and cut out the shape. Glue the middle together and keep this for step 5.



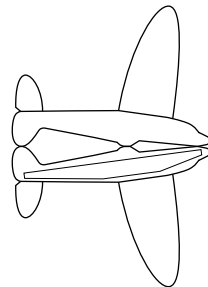
2. Cut out shapes A and B from section 1 and keep these for step 8.



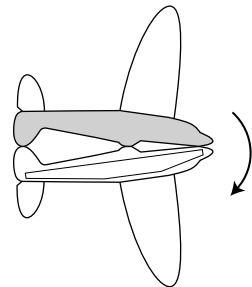
3. Fold along the dotted line on section 1. Keeping the paper folded, cut out the plane. Do not cut out the two sections in the middle labelled C.



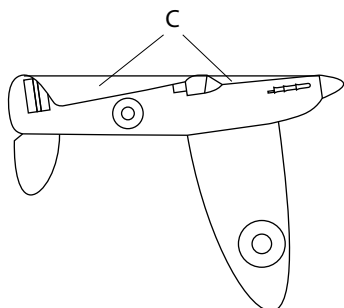
4. Push horizontal stabilisers upwards and crease along line. Push wings upwards and crease along line.



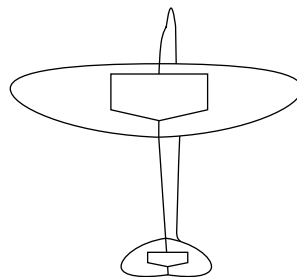
5. Open your plane with blank side facing up. Glue shape from step 1 to inside of plane as shown above.



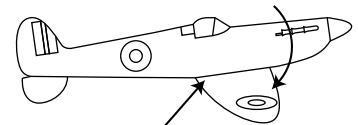
6. Glue along side of plane, as shown by grey shape in illustration above. Be careful not to glue the horizontal stabiliser or the wing. Then push middle of plane together.



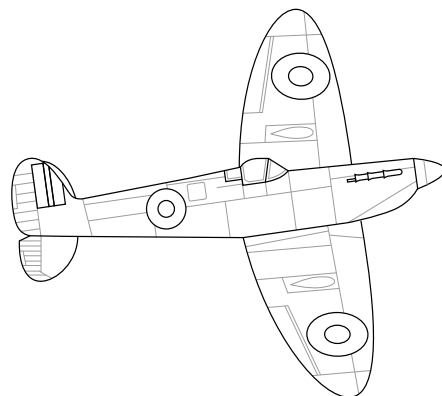
7. Cut out sections labelled C.



8. Turn the plane over to show its underneath. Glue shape A to horizontal stabilisers. Glue shape B to wings.



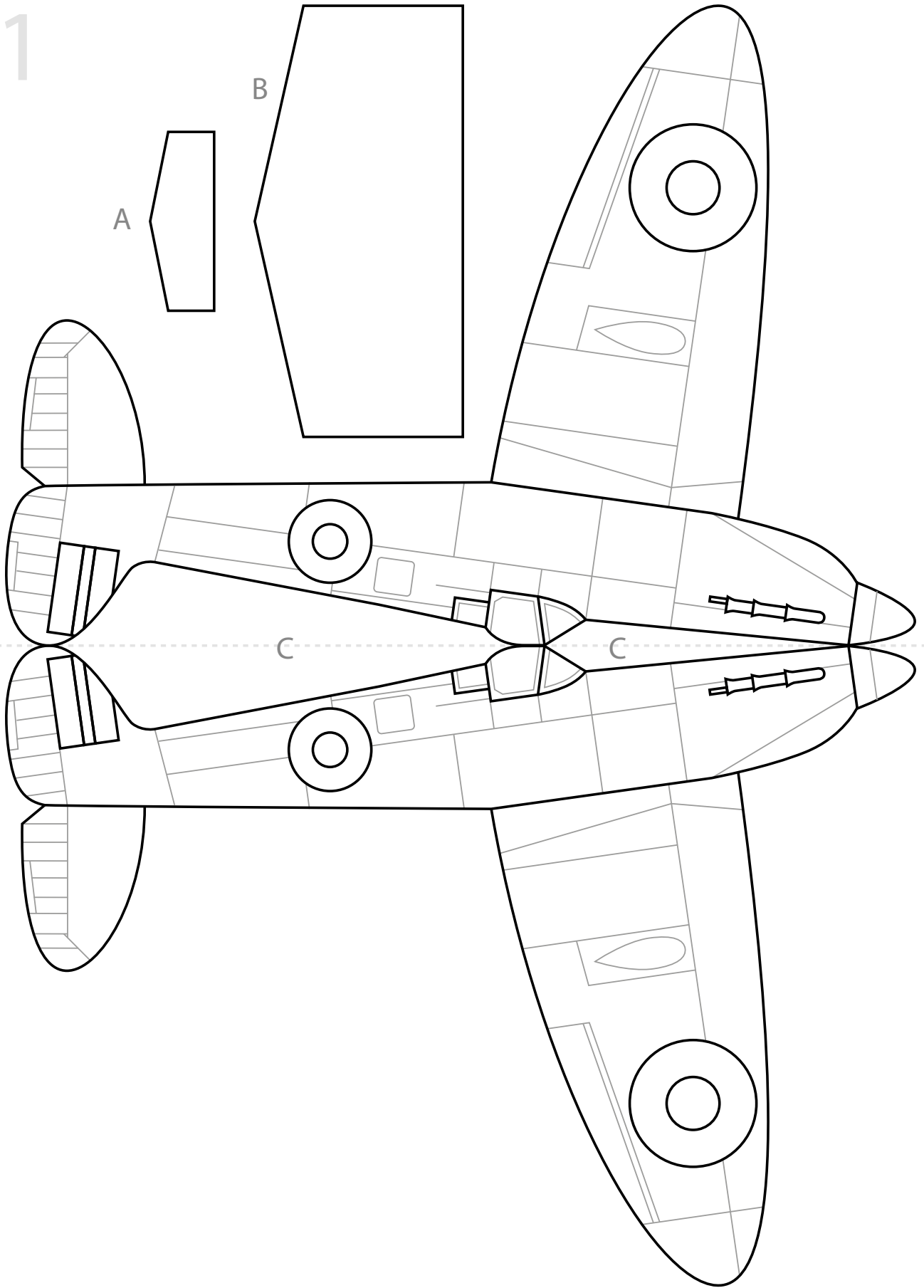
9. To give a slight curve to the wings, pinch the back of them and push down gently on top of wings.



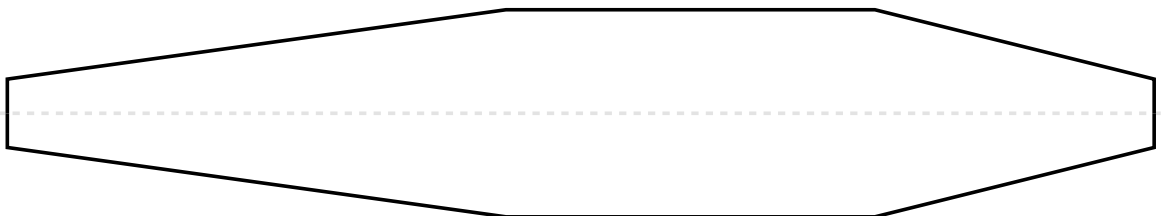
10. This is how your finished plane should look.

How do you want to decorate your plane? Maybe write a message to those in today's Air Force, add a camouflage pattern, or perhaps colour it in red, white and blue.

1

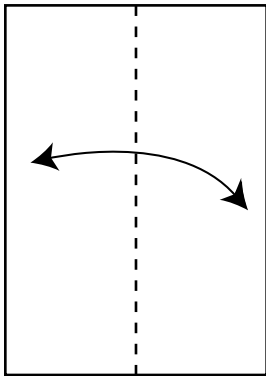


2

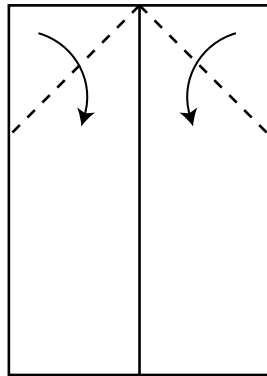


Paper Plane Instructions - Version 2

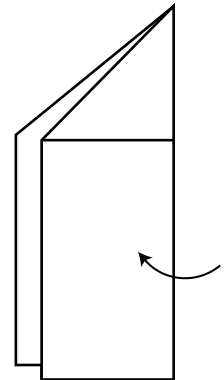
Print the paper plane template on page 6. Then follow the instructions below.



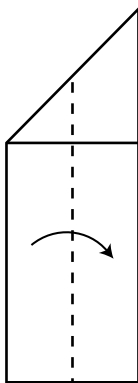
1. Fold an A4 sheet of paper down the middle, then unfold.



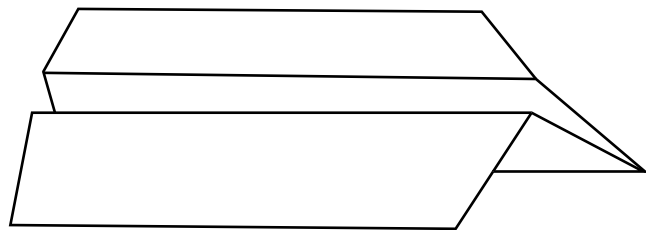
2. Fold down the corners as indicated.



3. Fold the paper in half again so it looks like above.



4. To create the wings fold the edges down to meet the bottom of the body.

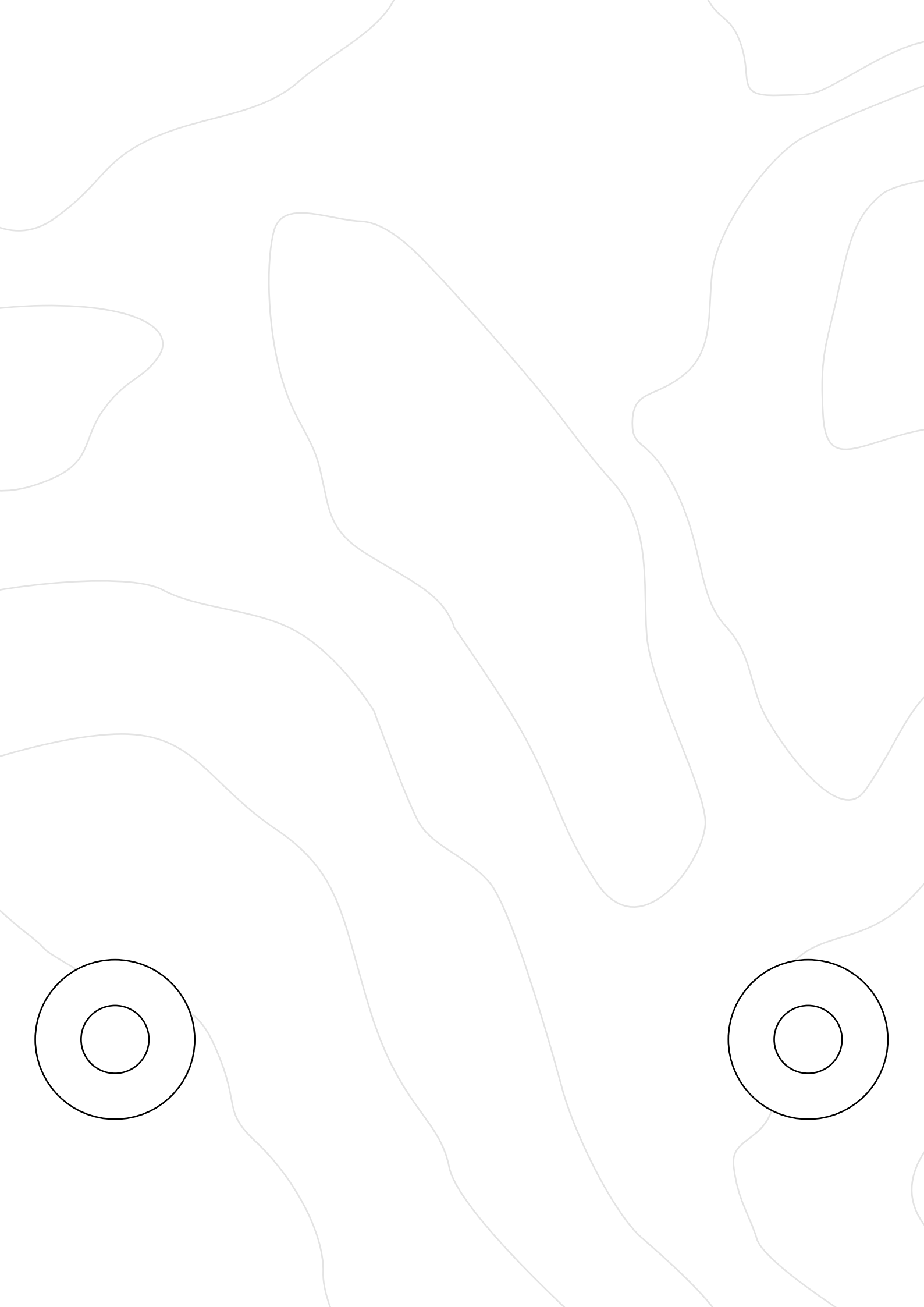


5. Your plane should look like this.

How do you want to decorate your plane? Maybe write a message to those in today's Air Force, or perhaps colour the camouflage pattern in red, white and blue.

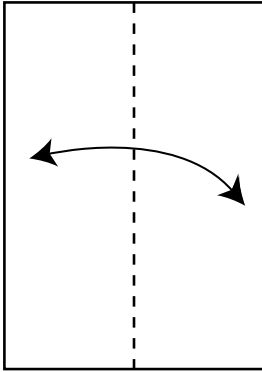
TIP

IF USING OUR TEMPLATE YOU SHOULD PRINT IT BORDERLESS AND START FOLDING WITH THE DESIGN FACING DOWNWARD.

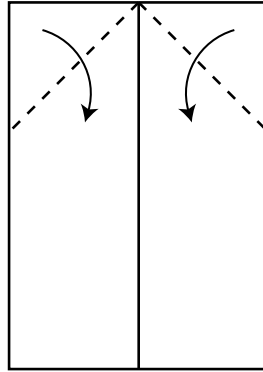


Paper Plane Instructions - Version 3

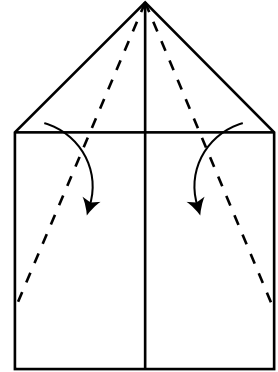
To build your paper plane, follow the instructions below.



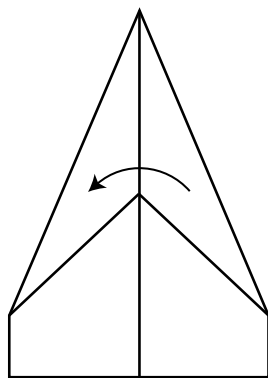
1. Fold an A4 sheet of paper down the middle, then unfold.



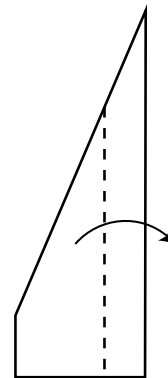
2. Fold the top corners inwards as indicated.



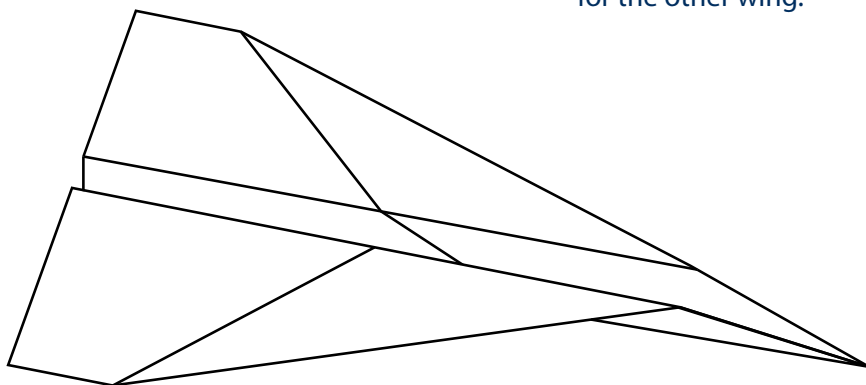
3. Fold the corners in again so they meet in the middle crease.



4. To create the wings fold paper in half again along the middle crease.



5. Fold the wing down. The crease will be parallel to the bottom edge of the plane. Repeat for the other wing.



6. Your plane should look like this.

How do you want to decorate your plane? Maybe write a message to those in today's Air Force, or perhaps add a camouflage pattern and colour it in red, white and blue.