

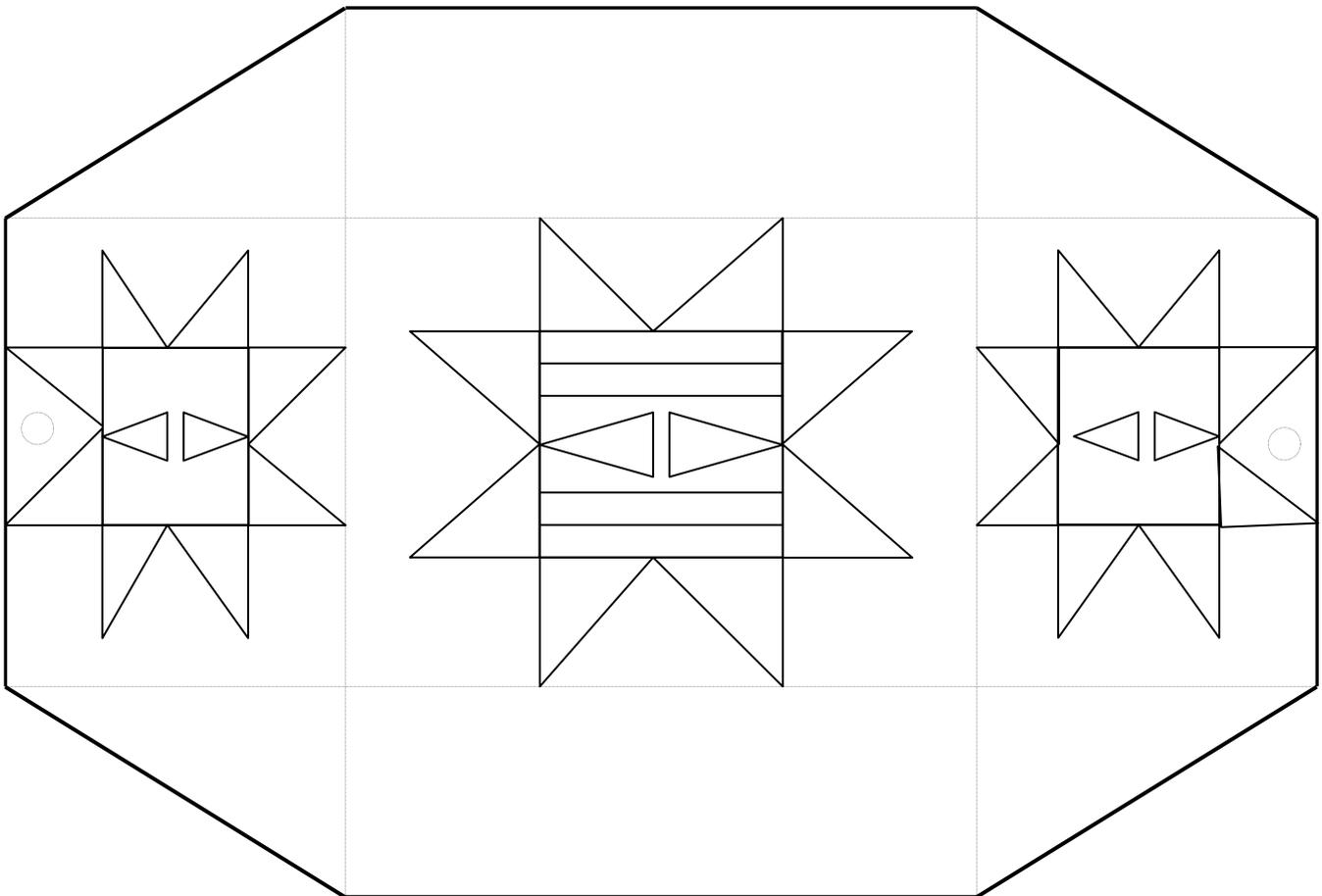
Color Your Own Parfleche

Native Americans from the Columbia Plateau and the Plains stored, transported and shared foods and materials in parfleches. (“**Parfleche**” is French, from “*parer*,” meaning “to deflect,” and “*fleche*,” meaning “arrow.”) They could be easily carried on horseback. Parfleches have several forms, but the most common one looks like a large envelope (like the one below). Often, the most valued items were kept in parfleches, or given to friends, relatives, or those in need. Women made parfleches from rawhide and decorated them with mostly geometric designs reflecting their lifestyle and beliefs.

Color your design, using 2-4 of the colors below. **Colors** to be used are colors found from the Earth: Primaries (red, yellow, blue), green; orange and pink were used sparingly by some tribes; black or dark brown may be used to outline shapes. Keep the background white to represent deer hide, or color it brown to represent buffalo or elk hide. All colors should be flat areas of color (no variation of tone or texture).

Fold your parfleche along the dotted lines – first along the long, horizontal lines, folding backwards, and then fold backwards along the vertical lines.

If you want a more authentic parfleche, **punch** a hole at the dotted circles in the middle of each “door” and tie with raffia, synthetic sinew, rawhide, yarn or string.



Make Your Own Parfleche

Native Americans from the Columbia Plateau and the Plains stored, transported and shared foods and materials in parfleches. (“**Parfleche**” is French, from “*parer*,” meaning “to deflect,” and “*fleche*,” meaning “arrow.”) They could be easily carried on horseback. Parfleches have several forms, but the most common one looks like a large envelope (like the one below). Often, the most valued items were kept in parfleches, or given to friends, relatives, or those in need. Women made parfleches from rawhide and decorated them with mostly geometric designs reflecting their lifestyle and beliefs.

To make your own parfleche, you will need: an oblong piece of paper or cardstock (half an 8½” x 11” sheet works nicely); scissors, ruler, hole punch (optional), raffia or other tying material (optional) and colored pencils, crayons or paint. Before attempting to design your parfleche, **research** traditional designs, either at your library, or use an Internet search engine to search for “parfleche + images” to see a variety of designs from various tribes.

- 1) **Fold** the paper or cardstock. First, fold the top and bottom along the horizontal dotted lines (Figure A); then fold the two sides along the vertical dotted lines (Figure B). Unfold and **cut** the four corners diagonally (Figure C).
- 2) Parfleches have a **symmetrical** composition. (Looking at the folded parfleche, the design should be the same on both “doors.”) The design on the back side should either be a larger version of one “door” panel, or a repetition of the “two-door” side. The gray area in Figure 3 is the only area that should be decorated.
- 3) **Shapes** are all geometrical, usually triangles, squares, rectangles, and chevrons. Within these strict rules, there can be much individual variation.
- 4) **Color** your design, using 2-4 of the colors below. (Unfold parfleche before coloring.)

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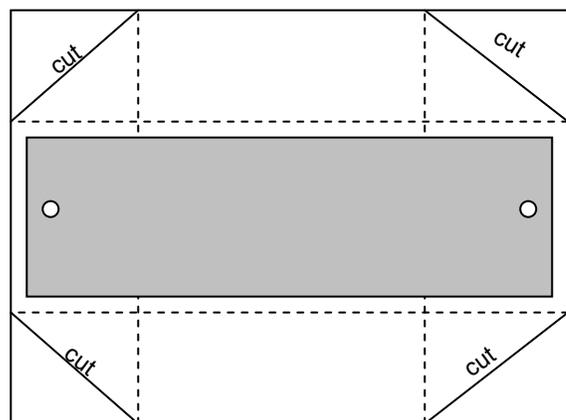
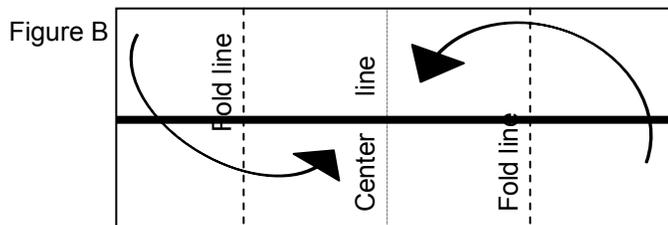
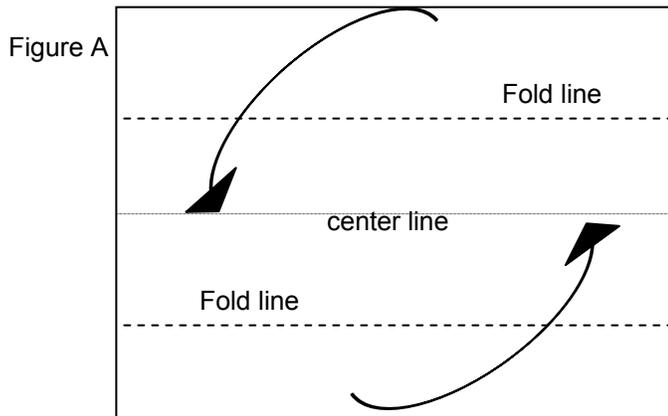


Figure C