



## How To Paper A Lantern Frame

When making lanterns, paper is the material that most often comes to mind, and for good reason. It's lightweight, can be translucent (and can be made more so, treated properly) and come in lots of colours. It can be cut and pasted easily, and if chosen carefully can be fairly strong and even a bit water-resistant.

To adhere paper to your frame, mix a starch-based paste such as Yamato Rice Paste, or wheat-starch paste by Lineco, with PVA or ordinary white glue. The white glue allows the paste mix to dry a little faster and stronger, and the paste slows down the drying time of the white glue (increases the "open time") so you can slide the paper around a little to place it properly or stretch it a little tauter on the frame.

This longer open time means that you will need to use something to hold your paper in place as you work your way around the frame. Wooden spring clothespins are just the ticket.

### What you need:

- White glue - Bondfast, Weldbond, or Elmer's will do. It needs to dry clear to look best.
- Starch-based paste - Yamato rice paste, Lineco starch paste (comes as a powder, you'll have to cook it up). You could also experiment with non-toxic school paste for lanterns that are not meant to last for a long time.
- A small dish or cup to mix your paste and glue.
- A small container of water.
- A stir stick or two. Wooden coffee stirrers are fine.
- Brushes to apply the mixture. Choose a narrow brush for applying adhesive mix on a narrow frame, or a wider brush for layering paper on the surface. Either one should be a soft bristle brush, which is just springy enough to spread the adhesive well.
- Scrap paper for pasting out pieces of paper - newspapers or an old phone book are fine for this.
- A roll of paper towel for cleanup.
- Your paper.
- Your frame.

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*continued*

## What to do:

1. Cut a piece of paper a bit larger than the size of the area you want to cover. You'll be trimming it down later, and the extra allows you some leeway to move the paper around a bit and to wrap the edges around the frame. If you make the pieces about two inches bigger in each direction you'll end up with a one-inch border, which should be plenty.
2. Take the paste and white glue. Put the paste in first and then about half that amount of white glue in your dish.
3. Mix the paste and white glue thoroughly. The mixture should be thick and smooth, about like toothpaste. If the paste mix does not spread into a thin layer, add a tiny bit of water. You don't want it to be drippy and messy though.
4. Using a small bristle brush, brush the paste mix onto the frame in the area where you want to apply the paper. Apply it all around the frame, so you can wrap the edge of the paper around the reed or bamboo if that's what you're using. If the frame surface is flat, it isn't necessary to wrap the paper around it, since you will have more surface area for the glue.
5. Take your piece of paper and put one edge on the pasted frame. Smooth it down with your finger and make sure it sits in the right place on all four sides of the frame. Since your paste will not dry immediately, you have a chance to slide it around a little to make adjustments. Make sure there is a little bit of paper sticking out on all sides.
6. Working section by section, make sure there is a thin coating of paste on all sides of the reed, curl your paper around the reed and stick it down.
7. If necessary, use wooden clothespins to hold the paper in position. Try not to get glue on them or it might be tricky getting them off again!
8. Once you have one section of frame covered, you will not be able to wrap the paper around the reed on all sides - that's OK. You will just be pasting along the edge of the papered area to add new pieces. Just make sure you have a pasted area of about 1/4 of an inch on each surface that supports the paper.
9. If you plan to use a candle for light, make sure you leave open space directly above the candle flame to let out heat. If you use glow sticks or battery-powered lights, you will just need to allow access to replace the glow stick or operate the switch.
10. Once you have the basic paper cover applied, you can decorate the paper with translucent paint, inks or paper applique. Use a wider brush to paste out the paper pieces to stick to the surface and then place them on the appropriate area. Smooth down carefully with your fingers or a clean brush.

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