



How To Build A Pop Bottle Lantern

It's possible to make a lantern out of a clear plastic pop bottle. They're sturdy, waterproof, cheap to make and hold up well in the hands of children or drunken adults. Use a clean, empty clear plastic pop bottle. A small-sized one makes a fine lantern for a child and will glow brightly lit by a single glow stick. Glow sticks are mildly toxic, so don't let the kids play with them too hard. Coloured glow sticks will affect the colours of your design, so keep that in mind when you choose them.

What you need:

- A clean plastic pop bottle. A small one can be used without removing the top. The 2-litre size is great, but may require more glow sticks for a brighter light.
- Scissors
- Craft knife
- Fine sandpaper or an emery board
- Tissue paper, assorted colours
- White glue (Elmer's or Bondfast)
- Small cup for the glue mix
- Small paintbrush
- Single-hole punch or awl
- Wire
- Wire snips to cut the wire.
- Waterproof, wipable table covering (vinyl is best - use an old tablecloth or shower curtain to cover the work surface. Newspapers will do in a pinch.)
- Glow sticks
- Sticks, dowels, or bamboo poles for carrying

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What to do:

Note: If you use a small size bottle, steps 3 to 6 can be skipped.

1. Cover your work area with newspaper or a tablecloth (vinyl protects best) and lay out your supplies.
2. Wash, rinse, and dry the bottle. It needs to be clean. It's best to use the kind of bottle where you can easily remove the label. Paper label residue is hard to get rid of.
3. Take your pop bottle and make a horizontal slit in the side of the bottle where it starts to curve towards the opening. Use the craft or utility knife. Make sure the slit is big enough so you can insert the blade of the scissors.
4. Using the scissors, insert the blade into the slit and cut off the top of the bottle. Throw it in the recycling.
5. Using the fine sandpaper or emery board, sand the cut edge of the plastic. This is optional, but might reduce the risk of scrapes when placing your light inside.
6. Take the punch or awl and punch two holes about 1/4 to 1/2 inch from the cut edge of the bottle. Make one hole on each side to attach the wire handle.
7. Choose your tissue paper. If you like to work from a sketch, fine. Some people like to improvise as they go along. Tear the tissue into smaller pieces. Don't worry about shapes too much - you'll be piecing things together and doing lots of overlapping, and everything will be stuck down with glue.
8. Take your glue cup. Fill it with a 50/50 mix of water and white glue. Stir the mixture until it's completely mixed into a thin, runny consistency.
9. Using the paintbrush, paint a little of the mixture onto the bottle. Lay the tissue on the glued part. Paint over the whole piece of tissue, going out onto the plastic on all sides.
10. Keep applying pieces of the tissue in whatever pattern you choose. Try overlapping colours to create new ones. Keep brushing the glue mixture over the surface so you don't have loose edges sticking out. Make a collage with the tissue paper. It may be easier to make stripes, for example, by applying several smaller pieces rather than one long one, depending on your skill level.
11. When you've covered the lantern as much as you want to, seal the entire papered surface with a coating of the glue mixture. White glue dries clear so it will be like a varnish.
12. When you've completed the lantern, let it dry overnight.
13. When the bottle is dry, cut a piece of wire for the glow stick hanger/lantern hanger. Bend it so there is a loop to hang the glow stick on and then twist it for an inch or two. Make another loop for hanging or

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carrying, and twist the free ends along the same area where you twisted before. Bend the two ends out to the sides and thread them through the holes in the lantern. Twist the loose ends onto themselves to secure them in the holes and keep the loose wire ends from poking anyone.

14. Crack a glow stick and shake it up. Hang it inside the lantern on the wire hook. Bend the hook a little so it doesn't come loose as you move the lantern around.

15. If you use the smaller sized bottle and don't remove the top, you can wrap a strip of paper, card, or even coloured tape around the top and bottom of the bottle for an extra finished look.

WARNING - DO NOT USE CANDLES FOR PLASTIC LANTERNS - THEY WILL BURN AND MELT. MELTED PLASTIC CAN CAUSE SERIOUS BURNS.

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