

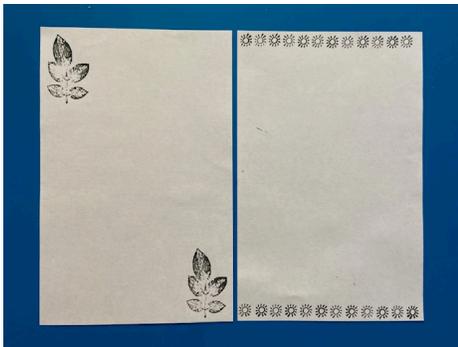
REYNOLDA

Mail Art: Stationery and Envelopes

Project

Design creative stationery and envelopes to send letters to family and friends.

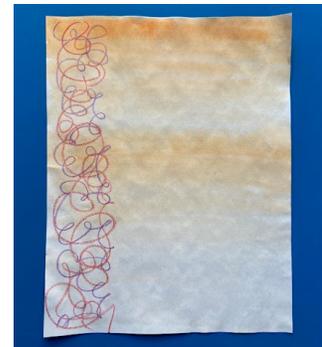
Samples



Stamped stationery



Marker-decorated border



Crayons and watercolor



Patterned-paper envelope (before label)



Illustrated envelope

Inspiration

In the middle of the twentieth century, some artists began using the mail as the way they made and shared art. Maybe they would design and send postcards, or decorate envelopes with collage, or, generally try to be creative with what they could send through the mail. This is called “mail art” or “correspondence art.” However, artists have been creative with mail before “mail art” became a thing.

Two of Reynolda’s artists, [Frederic Edwin Church](#) and [Martin Johnson Heade](#) were friends and sent letters to each other. Here’s a [letter](#) that Church wrote to Heade on March 7, 1870 in which he includes an illustration of his friend trying to find a mountain. Here’s another [letter](#) that Church wrote on March 1, 1871 letting his friend know that he’d be coming to the city and asking him to please hold his mail-- which he does with a little illustration.

Another Reynolda artist, [Carl Andre](#), created mail art when he sent mail artist John Held, Jr. this [postcard](#) in 1986. For his postcard, Andre created a cartoon about a [work of art](#) he had made that the Tate Gallery in London had recently collected.

The Reynolds Family Letters

When the Reynolds family lived at Reynolda, different members of the family would sometimes travel and be away. They would write letters to one another to stay in contact. You can find letters that Katharine and RJ Reynolds' children sent to them [here](#). In this digitized collection, you can find a [letter](#) that Nancy Reynolds wrote to her parents in 1917. Her older sister, Mary, sent [this letter](#) before the family had moved to Reynolda.

Vocabulary

Stationery: Stationery means cards, papers, envelopes and other office supplies that you would use to create a card or letter. Sometimes people will have personalized stationery printed and then use it to write notes to people.

Mail art: Mail art is also called *postal art* or *correspondence art*. It involves sending small scale works of art through the postal service, like an illustrated envelope or postcard

Materials for Stationery

- 8 1/2 x 11" paper (copy paper, construction paper, or any other paper you can write on; can also cut an 8 1/2 x 11" paper in half, making two 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inch pages)
- Drawing supplies
- *Potential options:* crayons; watercolor; crayons AND watercolor; markers; stamp with ink pad; colored pencils

Process for Stationery

For video instructions, find this episode on [Reynolda At Home](#) resources on our website.

1. Gather the paper that you want to decorate. If you want to write a shorter letter, or use more sheets, cut larger paper to the size you want your letter to be.
2. Decorate the paper with any mark-making supplies you have (markers, crayons, etc.). You can decorate the paper anywhere, just be sure to leave a space to write your letter.
3. When your stationery is done, write a letter to a friend or relative.
4. Create Mail Art Envelopes to go with your stationery. (Instructions below).

Materials for Envelopes

- Magazines, old wall calendars, scrapbook paper, or any other sturdy paper that would make an interesting envelope.
- *Optional:* Plain cardstock, construction paper, or drawing paper for making illustrated envelopes
- Printed envelope template (Medium- and small-sized envelope templates below--the small one is too small to mail by itself, but can be placed inside a larger envelope)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue stick or tiny amounts of liquid glue or double-sided tape (to create the envelope)
- Clear tape (to seal the envelope and apply an address label, if needed)
- *Optional:* a white mailing label for the address and return address; alternatively, a white piece of paper taped down will work too
- Postage (for a normal weight letter in this size envelope, the regular first class rate will be sufficient. With mail art, however, it never hurts to apply extra postage!)

Process for Mail Art Envelopes

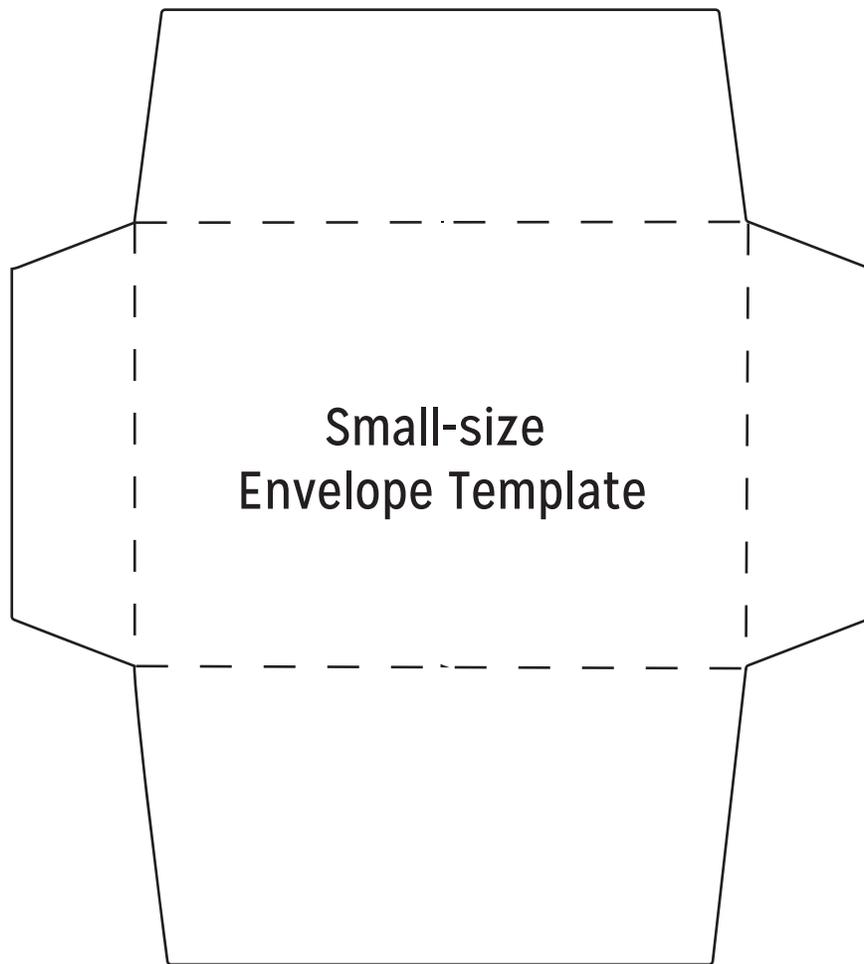
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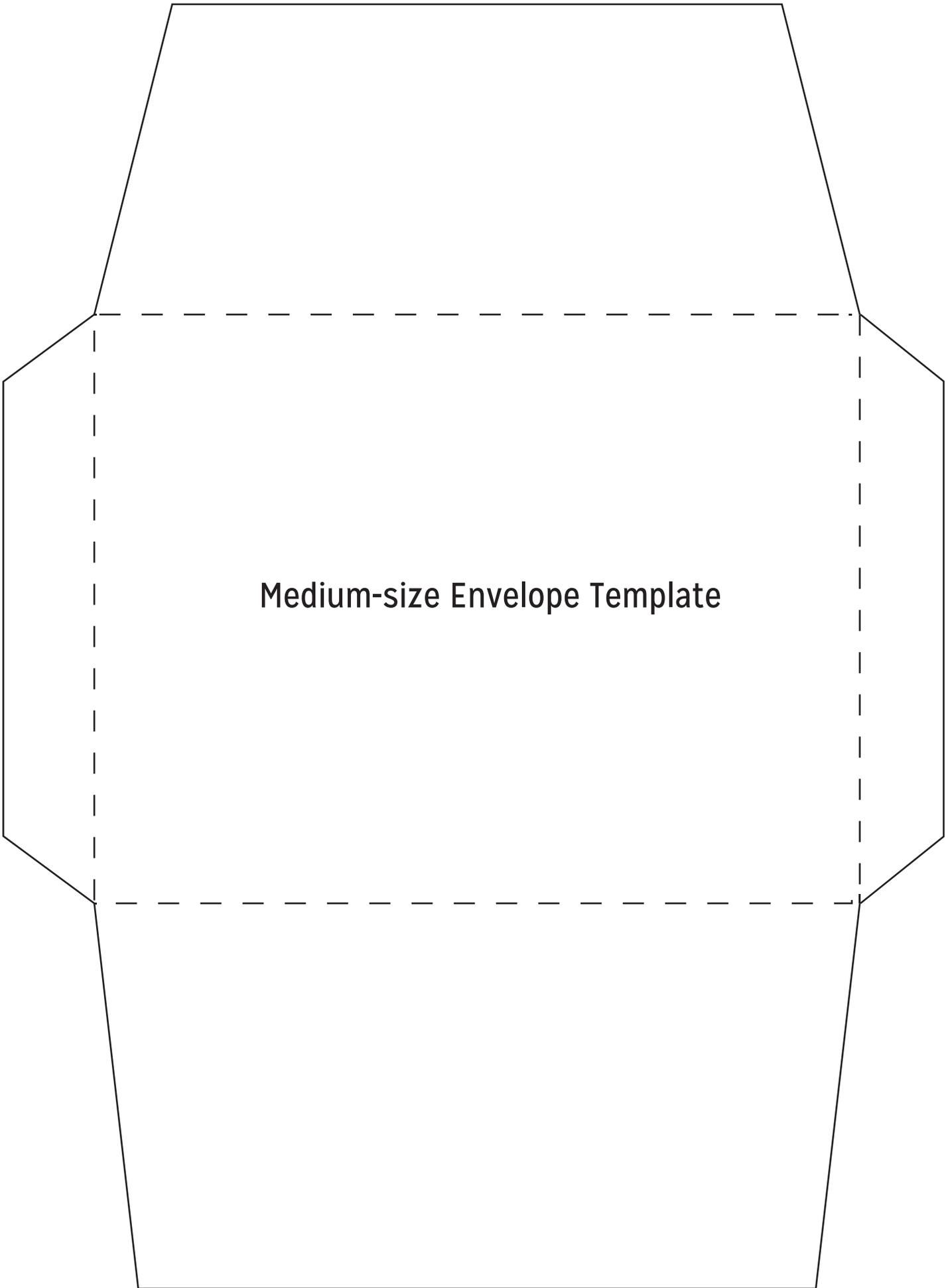
1. Gather magazines and decorative papers at least 10" x 7 1/2 inches in size.
2. Cut out the envelope template.
3. Lay the envelope template on top of your envelope paper, trace with a pencil, then cut out.
4. Fold the envelope edges in. Glue the bottom flap to the side flaps.
5. Place your letter in the envelope and tape it closed.
6. Add an address label or piece of white paper with the address written on it to the front center of the envelope.
7. Add a return address to the back of the envelope in the same way.
8. Stick a stamp onto the top right corner of the front of the envelope and put in the mailbox to send!

To design your own envelope, trace the template onto a plain piece of drawing paper, construction paper, or cardstock. Then, fold the edges in, then unfold to lay flat. Turn the envelope so that the larger flap is at the bottom, then draw your design on the envelope. Your drawing can go outside the rectangle, but remember that the small tabs on the side will be covered up later. Write the TO and FROM addresses on the envelope, add a stamp, and stick it in the mail!

Share your creations on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram with **#ReynoldaatHome**

REYNOLDA





Medium-size Envelope Template