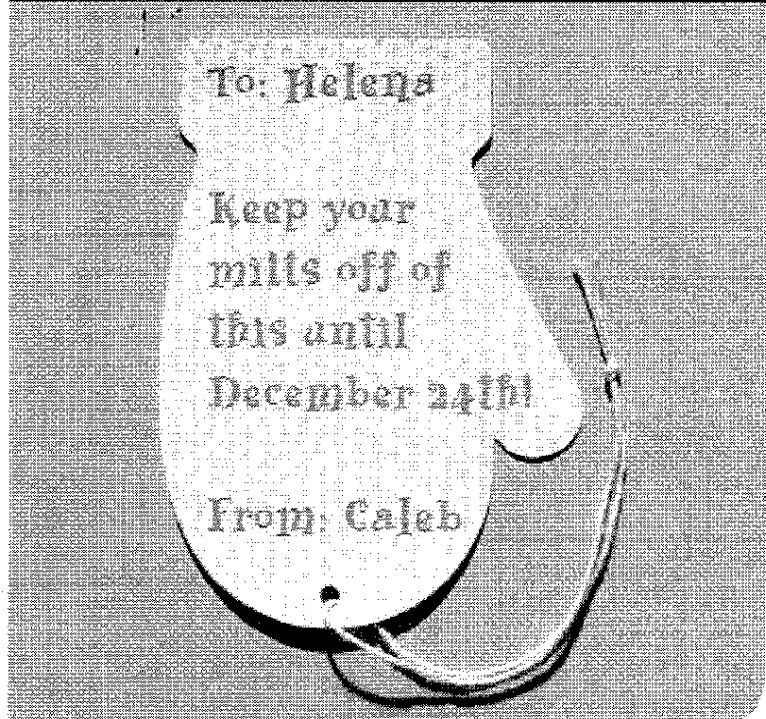


WHAT YOU NEED

Removable tape (3M Post-It Correction & Cover Up Tape preferred)

Simple die-cut paper shapes

22. Die-Cut Gift Tags



RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Creative publishing suite

Desktop publishing

Drawing

Word processing

Print your design onto pre-cut paper shapes using a handy “piggyback” technique.

CAUTION: This can be a risky project, especially with front-loading printers where the paper must make a 180° turn: the tape may come loose or an edge may catch. Please use extreme care, taking into account the idiosyncrasies of your printer.

WHAT TO DO

1. Lay out your design on the die-cut shape, keeping in mind the shape's dimensions and the fact that you will need an unprinted margin of about 3/16 inch along the leading edges (those entering the printer first) so you can tape them down later. (See Figure 1.)

TIP: The larger and less complicated the die-cut shapes, the easier it will be to print on them. Hearts, balloons, and mittens are some examples of good shapes to start out with.

2. Print a proof on plain paper in draft mode and make sure all the printing fits inside the die-cut shape with adequate room for taping. (Hold the paper and die-cut shape front of a window or other light source for better visibility.) Adjust the design as necessary.

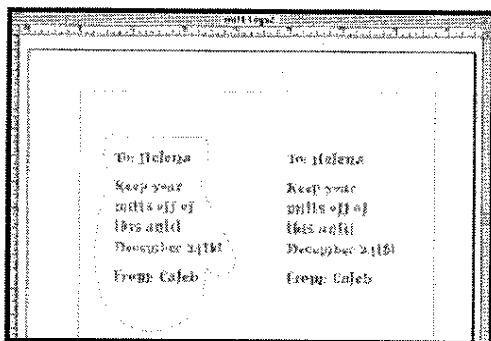


Figure 1. The scanned outline of the mitten cutout serves as a non-printing guide to help lay out the text.

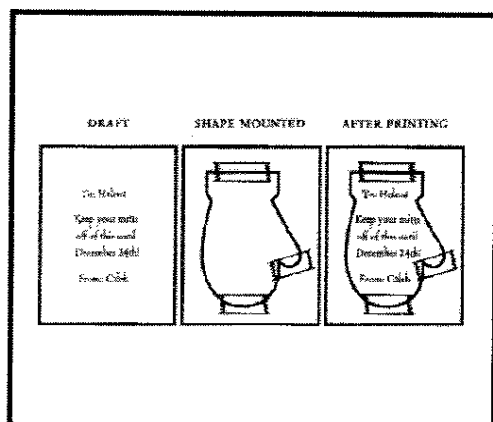


Figure 2. Design must fit onto die-cut shape.

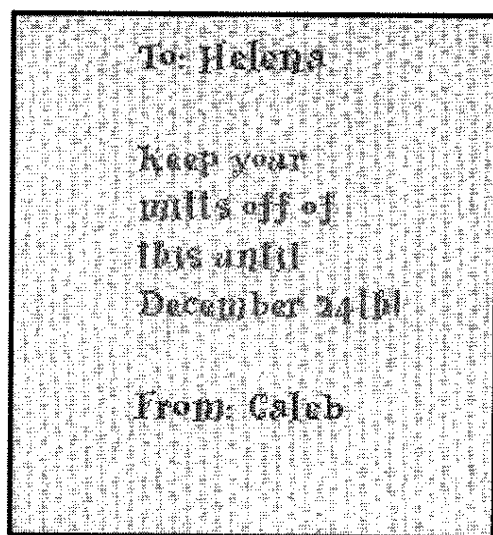


Figure 3. The sweater's knit background is large enough to cover the entire shape.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE

When working with heavier die-cuts (such as light card-stock ones), you can attach the shapes to the carrier page with rubber cement instead of tape. This allows you to print over the entire surface of the shape and to include *full-bleed* designs (designs that run right to, or past, the edge of the paper). Follow the instructions on the container to bond the shape temporarily to the carrier. When the rubber cement has dried thoroughly, remove any excess with a clean finger or eraser before loading the page into the printer. After the page has printed and the ink is dry, carefully peel the shape away from the carrier and remove any remaining adhesive from the back.

3. Print a copy of the final design on plain paper in draft mode to use as a "carrier" sheet.
4. Carefully position the die-cut shape over the printed design on the carrier sheet and tape the shape in place with removable tape. This will ensure that the printing falls properly on the die-cut shape as shown in Figure 2. Make sure the die-cut shape is attached securely and that all leading or curled edges that might jam the printer are taped down.
5. Load the prepared page into your printer and print your design using the highest quality setting available.
6. When the ink is dry, carefully remove the tape, and the tag is ready to attach to a package with string or tape.

TIP: This same procedure works nicely for printing on store-bought sticky notes (such as 3M Post-Its). If you position the note so that the adhesive edge enters the printer first, you may not need to tape the note to the "carrier" sheet.

ABOUT THE SAMPLE (COLOR PLATE 22)

A scanned sweater provides the background for these holiday gift tags (see Figure 3) printed on light card-stock shapes ready-made for rubber stamping. Rubber cement (see "Alternative Procedure" sidebar) was used instead of tape so we could print all the way to the edge on all sides.