

# Gift tags

Carve a block and make Alynn Guerra's holiday gift tag project.

## Supplies

- Scrap paper
- 5B pencil (sold in art supply stores)
- Ruler
- Exacto knife
- Speedy Cut printing block (3 inches by 4 inches)
- Spoon
- Linoleum cutters (sold in art supply stores)
- Shipping tags (sold in office supply stores)
- Ribbon
- Ink pad

## Instructions

**Step 1:** Cut the printing block to the desired size with the Exacto knife.

**Step 2:** Trace the outline of the block onto the scrap paper, and cut paper to the exact size of your block.

**Step 3:** Draw your design on the scrap paper using the 5B pencil. (NOTE: If you decide to draw more lines directly onto the block, be sure to use a dull pencil so you don't damage the surface of the block.)

**Step 4:** Place your design face-down on the printing block and hold it in place while you transfer your design to the block by rubbing the back of the paper with the spoon.

**Step 5:** Carve the block using the linoleum cutters. "V" shapes make fine lines and "U" shapes do wider lines. Remember, if you are incorporating text into your design, the letters should appear backward on the printing block. (NOTE: Everything you carve away will be white, so imagine you are drawing with a white pencil when you carve. Everything you don't carve will be the color of the ink.)



**Step 6:** After you finish carving, ink your block and stamp it onto scrap paper to test it. You can carve more away and repeat the test print process as often as needed. Once you're happy with the image, stamp it onto the tags. You can make your own gift wrap by stamping onto newspaper or any other recycled paper. You also can use this process to make bookmarks and cards.

## Project tips

-- It's helpful to carve the outlines first and then just "clean out" the negative spaces. When cleaning the negative areas remember, those little marks you leave when cutting away the block will show up when you print, and that's OK. That's how you can tell it is a block print. Try to use rhythms and patterns when you clean out your block, these can be more interesting than your design.

-- To take this project to the next level, buy printmaking ink and a brayer (a small hand roller). Squirt some ink onto a piece of plastic glass, roll it out with the brayer, then apply to the block with the brayer and print away.