

The puzzle purse (similar to the paper fortune teller today) was a piece of paper folded several times over to conceal and then reveal a message from one person to the other. The first example of a puzzle purse dates all the way back to the 1700s. These paper puzzles were most often used to send personal messages for Valentine's Day. On each folded section, the sender would write a message that the receiver could then read by opening the puzzle purse fold by fold.

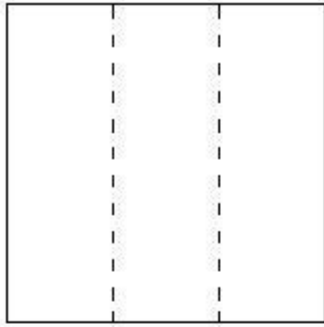


Anonymous. "Valentine: Puzzle Purse". 1826.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

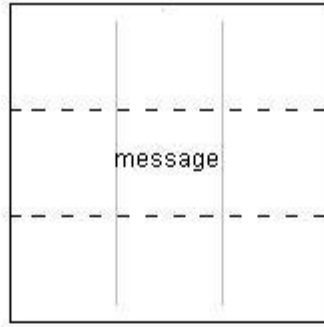
Have a message to send? Why not have some fun with it, and make your own puzzle!

1. Take a piece of paper, and cut enough off the bottom or top to make a square shape. Fold the paper into thirds. Unfold.
2. Fold the paper into thirds again, in the opposite orientation. Unfold. You should now have the outlines of 9 small squares. You can write part of your message in the middle square.
3. Fold the paper diagonally from one corner to the other both ways.
4. Flip the paper over and fold section 'A' over 'B' to create a diagonal crease in the small box.
5. Repeat this step on the remaining three sides of the paper.
6. Flip the paper back over, and begin to twist the folds into a pinwheel.
7. Reinforce the creases around the central square, and as the four sides rise up use their creases to twist the paper into a pinwheel. You should have a small square in the middle with four triangles sticking out from the four sides.
8. You can write another message on each of the four triangles. Then fold the triangles in starting with 'M1' in a counter-clockwise fashion. Tuck the final triangle (M2) under 'M1' to secure the puzzle.
9. Draw a picture, or write a brief message on the front, and be sure to indicate which triangle to pull out first. See if the reader can put it back together again!

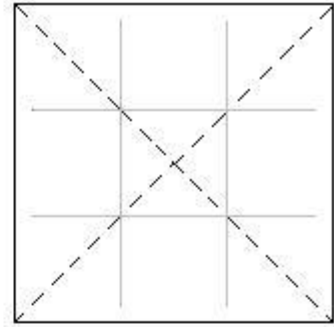
VICTORIAN PUZZLE PURSE



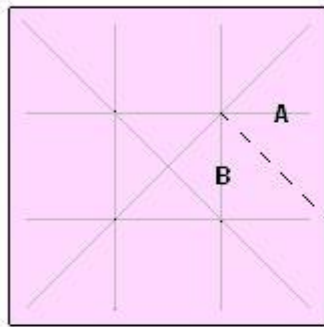
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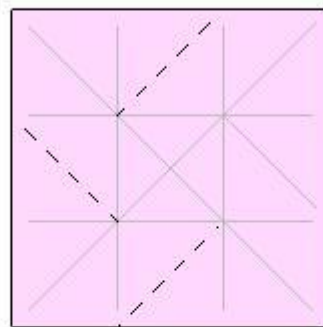
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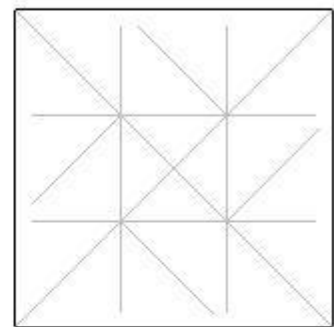
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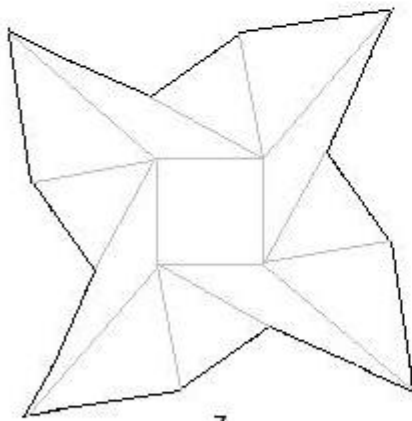
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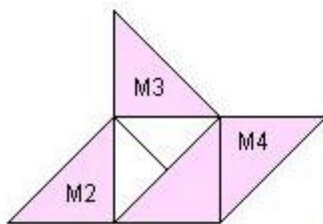
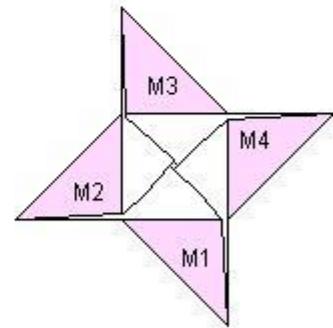
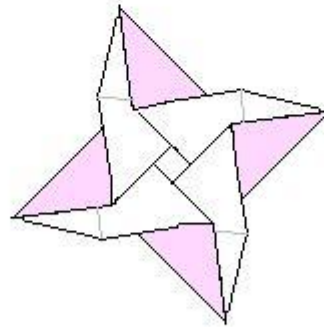
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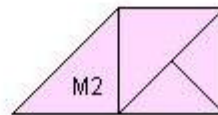
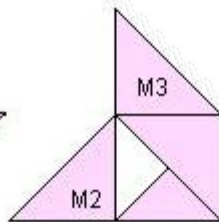
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