



Cadets' Mess: Making a Bilby Mask



Editor's Note: Once called the "Common Rabbit Bandicoot," the Bilby, a small marsupial resembling the American jackrabbit (a rabbit with hindquarters, rear footpads and ears larger than a regular rabbit's), is now near being classified as endangered and is restricted to a few small arid locations in remote Central and Northern Australia, and like rabbits, live in underground warrens. Rabbit trappers in the immediate vicinity of Adelaide once took more Bilbys from their traps than rabbits. Here, our Cadet Corps commandant, Lt. Commander Kirok, makes a special project for our Cadets – how to make a Bilby mask.

By the way, the diagram here has been reduced from the original A4-size. It's your option to enlarge it using a photocopier, or contact K and get a copy of the file.

Making a Bilby Mask

By Lt. Commander Kirok of L'Stok

Every parent has been in the same situation. Little Johnnie or Jennie comes up to you saying, "Daddy! I need a mask/costume for school tomorrow!" Klingons have been known to commit ritual... um, grounding of their offspring who do this, but thankfully, you're not Klingon.

So here's a little project you can do, and it's guaranteed your young one will have a truly unique costume to show off – a Bilby mask!

Material needed: Try to find a cereal box (my original was a 750g box, but a bigger box is even better), a pencil, a pen that doesn't work (no, that's not a typo), ruler, scissors, stapler and paint.

1. Carefully open the cereal box at the seams, being careful not to rip it (you don't know which bits you might need!). It will spread into two large panels (the front & back) with narrow side panels between them. The flaps that close in the top and bottom are pretty much waste for this project.

2. Lay out the box as it looks on the diagram, making sure to have a side panel at the bottom. Draw a line down the centre of the large lower panel which will be the centreline for the face. Assuming the dimensions of your cardboard is the same as in the diagram (otherwise adjust as necessary), measure 8, 12 & 3 centimetres from the left hand edge (remember you aren't using the flaps) and lightly draw vertical lines in as guides.

3. Draw a 3cm square in at the bottom of the face as the snout and then basically it is just a matter of "joining the dots" to mark in the cutting and folding lines. the thing to remember with any construction project, whether it is making a card model like this, building a house or repairing a spaceship, is to measure and cut carefully! But if you DO make any mistakes, you could say that your Bilby was dragged by the nose out of his burrow by a ferocious Tasmanian Tiger! ©

4. Carefully cut the shape out along the thick red lines (see diagram) with scissors - DON'T cut along the dotted lines! These are fold lines.

5. Once you have the face cut out (I told you to be careful with the scissors!) you need to make the folds. This is what you need the non-working ballpoint pen for. Using the edge of a ruler, run the pen over the dotted lines (this will give you a neat depression along the line). If you keep the ruler where it is, you will find that you can now easily fold the cardboard up along this line. That's a secret trick that only card-modelers know!



6. We're working to a deadline so, instead of using paste or glue, use staples from an ordinary desk stapler. The main thing to remember here is that you have to make sure that the sharp prongs of the staples are on the outside of the mask. If you make a mistake here, remove the staple with a staple remover or a butter knife, and do it the right way around. We don't want little Johnny looking like the Phantom of the Opera! You will use two staples at the back near the ears, and two through the snout joining the front and side flaps to close up the shape. If you've got it right you should get the bilby's trademark long nose and wide cheekbones.



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7. All you need now are ears! Measure out, draw in and cut out the two roughly triangular shapes in the top panel of the cereal box, then curve the two points on the base of the triangle inwards and staple them together. The direction of the staples is not critical here since it is unlikely these should come in contact with your little one. But, as always, take care in what you are doing.



8. The final step is to attach the ears to the face with some well placed staples ...
No, no, no!!! The mask! On the mask! (phew...)



9. The mask is made with the printed surface on the outside, so you'll need some pretty thick paint to cover it up. I used some thick light grey undercoat that I had left over which actually matches the colour of the Bilby. Use a darker shade (mix in some black to the paint) and put some shadows around the ears and the little button nose.

10. The final step is to carefully cut out the circles for the eyes. You can then use a hole punch to make little holes for an elastic strap to go behind the head. There you go! - for an afternoon's work, you've made a Bilby!

Unfortunately the real thing is an endangered animal - environment change and pressure from civilisation could make the Bilby a thing of the past. If you would like to know more about the Bilby and their plight - and perhaps donate to their survival, check out "The Save the Bilby Campaign" <<http://www.savethebilbyfund.com/>> which runs from the 4th to the 14th of September 2008.

You could even buy a chocolate Bilby! <http://www.dlea.com.au/?Community/Partnership/Save_the_Bilby> It doesn't have to be Easter to eat a chocolate bunny... I mean bilby!

