Kaleidoscope Paper Ornament

Supplies and Tools You'll Need

- Kaleidoscope Kreator software
- Electronic cutting machine
- Cardstock
- Sewing machine

Instructions – Read These Through Before You Start

Step 1: Create a wedge to doodle in

The easiest way to create a wedge that matches one of the Kaleidoscope Kreator template shapes is to use Kaleidoscope Kreator to print them.

1. Start with a white JPEG image. You can create this using most drawing packages, like Microsoft Paint.

2. Start Kaleidoscope Kreator and open the white JPEG imag.

3. You will not be able to see the template shape over the white image. (Fig. 1). So you can see it, change the overlay color by going to Tools>Options. Then click on the Select button next to the Template Overlay Color. Choose any color other than white in the Select Color window that pops up (Fig. 2), then click OK, and OK again. You'll see the overlay color change once you hit the second OK. (Fig. 3)
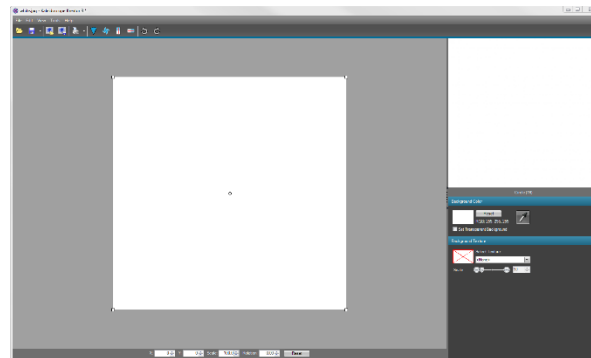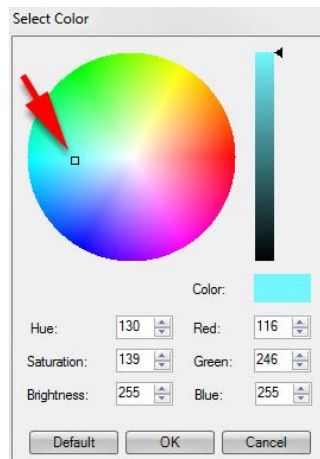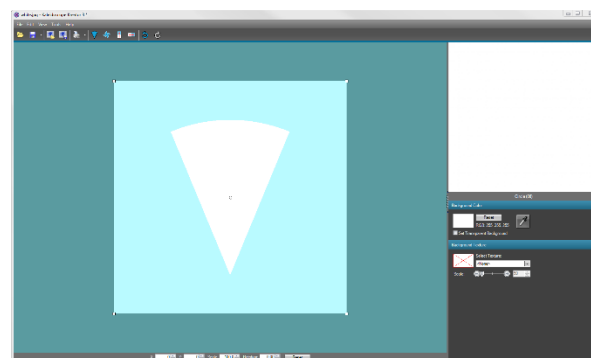
Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

4. Choose a Template Shape by clicking on the Select Kaleidoscope Shape button in the Toolbar. A circle is recommended, but you can choose a square if you want. You don't really want a fancy shape since you'll be creating the fancy design yourself. You just want something simple to doodle in. You can

decide how wide of a wedge you want to doodle in by choosing the number of segments. Circle (16) was used to to create the ornament above. (Fig. 4)
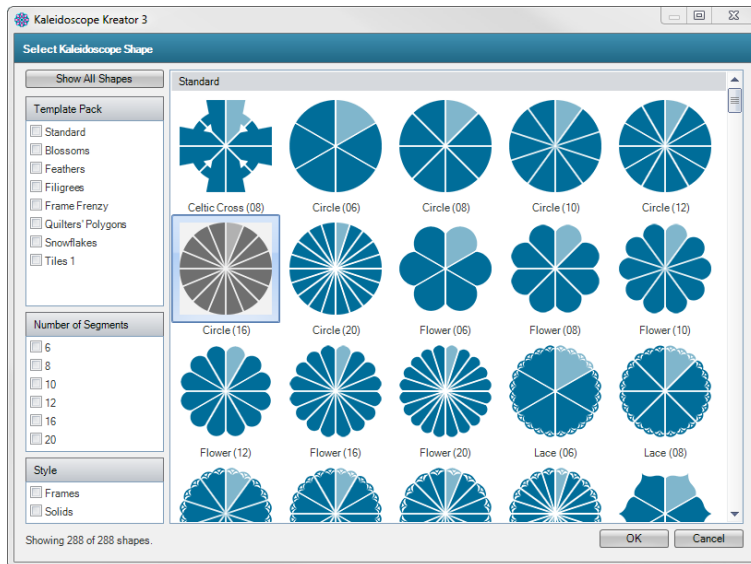

Figure 4

5. Choose black for a Background Color. Click on the white color swatch in the Background Color palette (Fig. 5) and choose black by sliding the right hand slider to the bottom. (Fig. 6) Click OK.
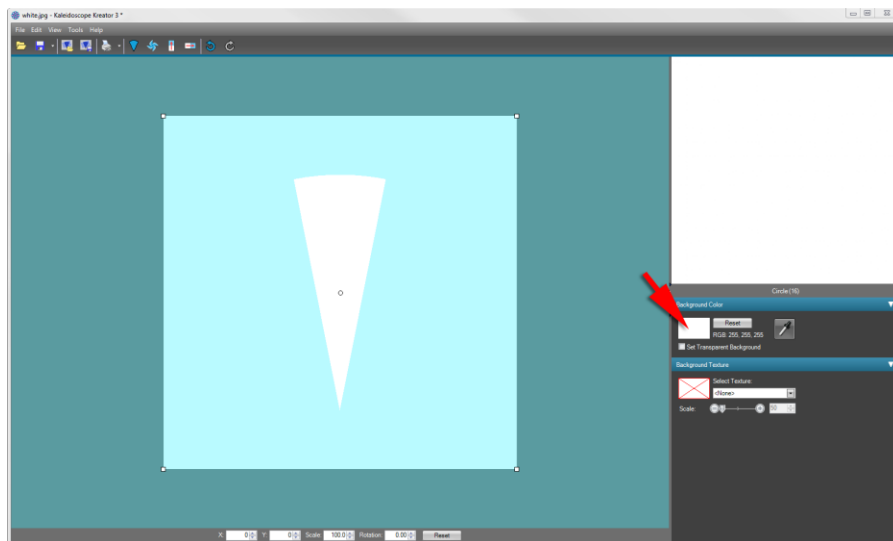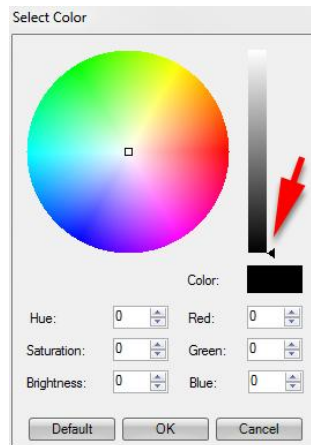

Figure 5

Figure 6

6. Print the wedges. File>Print Separate Wedges (or click on the little down arrow next to the printer icon in the Toolbar and choose Print Separate Wedges.) (Fig. 7)

A. Decide what size you want your design to be and enter that for the Finished Size. The Personal Die Cutters on the market today have a cutting area that is 12" wide, so you probably don't want to specify anything larger than that. (Choosing a size here does **not** limit you to cutting only that size! However, if you work in the size that you plan on cutting, you'll have a better idea of how thick or thin the lines in your cut design will be.)
B. Make sure Print Margins is checks and enter 0.03 inches for the Margin Size.
C. I usually print off a full page of wedges, but if you only want a couple, then specify that in the "Wedges" section.
D. In the Print Range section, specify Pages: 1.
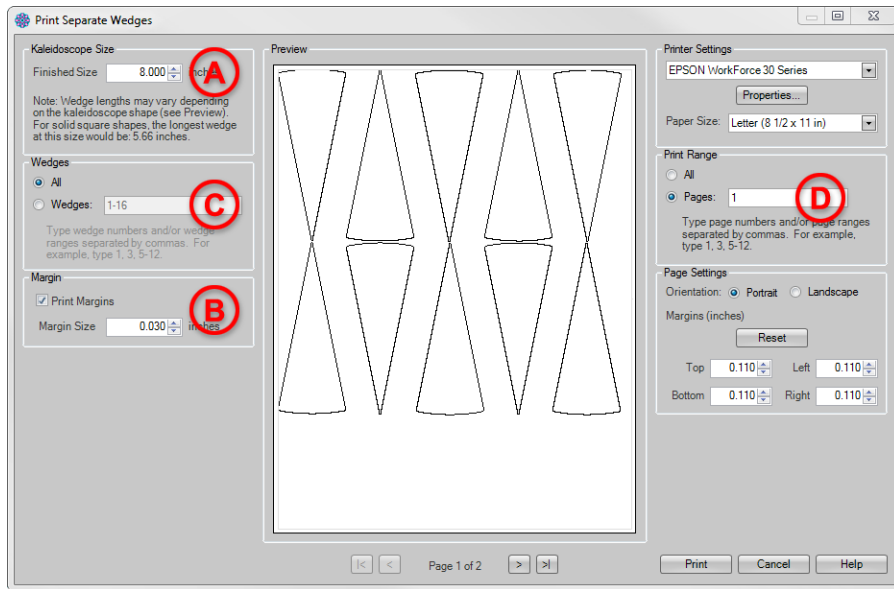E. Click the Print button to print a page of wedges for you to doodle in.

Figure 7

Step 2: Start doodling!

There are two ways to think about this. One way is to imagine that you're cutting out a snowflake. In other words, think about the parts of the wedge you want to *remove*. You're not limited to just cutting in from the edges of the wedge. You can draw any size and shape hole that you can dream up for the cutter to cut out!

I start drawing with a pencil so that I can make modifications to the design as I'm working on it. Then I'll go over it with a black marker and fill in the part of the design that I want to keep, i.e. **not** the holes – the holes will remain white. My first attempts at this were not quite as elegant as I had envisioned. Of course, it helps to have the right tools. I tried using a Sharpie marker at first, but my designs became more refined when I switched to a Micron pen. (Fig. 8)

Sharpie marker   Pigma Micron pen

Figure 8

Tip: Run the image through KK before you color it in to see if you even like the design. If not, don't waste time filling it in! Just move on to the next wedge and draw something else. (Fig. 9)
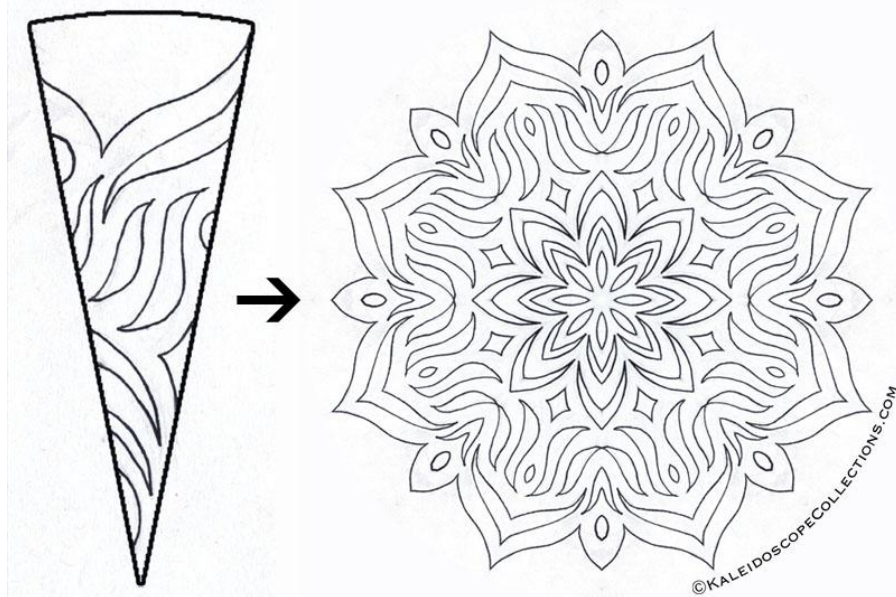
Figure 9

So how do you run the wedge design through KK? You'll need to get it into digital format. You'll get the best image if you scan it in, but you can also take a picture of it. It's important for the image to be in focus in order for the electronic cutter to create the best cutting file. The scanner pretty much guarantees the image will be in focus, but if you have enough light taking a picture should be OK too.

Once you have the doodle in digital format, open it in KK. Then resize to fit the wedge. If you can see the lines of the printed wedge itself, then either move, rotate or make the image larger until they disappear from the kaleidoscope preview. (Fig. 10)
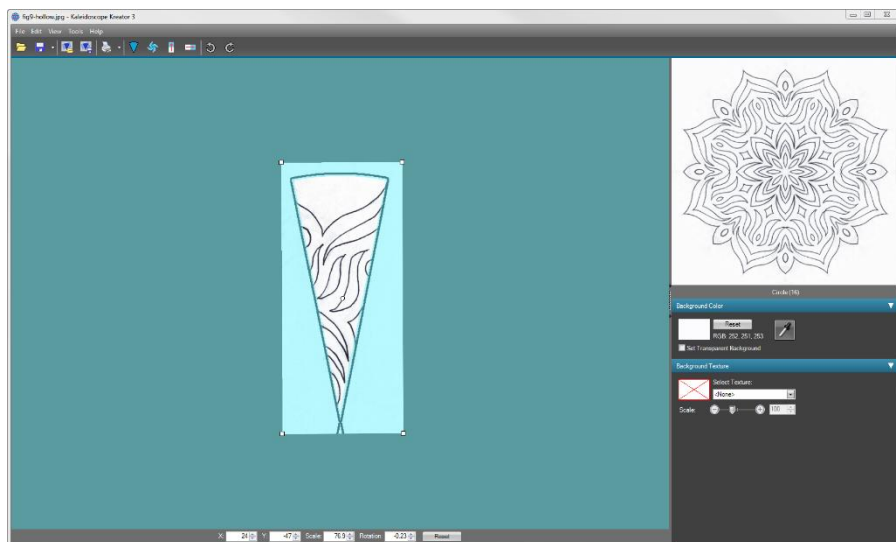
Figure 10

The more I practiced, the better my designs got. (Translation: Don't be discouraged if you're not happy with your results at first. Keep making more and soon you'll find elements that you like and can recreate.) One thing that I discovered is that I prefer to draw the "outer edge" design first, i.e. the design that is drawn at the widest part of the wedge. This is the design that determines the overall shape of the kaleidoscope. (Fig. 11)
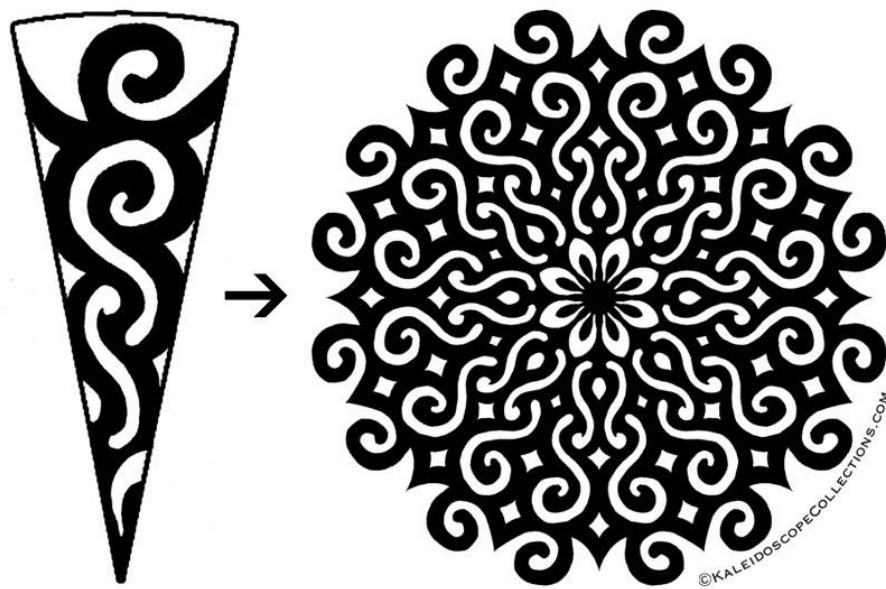

Figure 11

You might be wondering at this point how I created the design for the ornament, since none of the designs so far match that one. Remember I mentioned that there are two ways to think about your doodling? We just discussed the process of removing parts of the wedge like cutting out a snowflake. The other way to think about the design is to think of the wedge as empty to start with and drawing a design within it. In this case, you'll want to make sure the design touches each edge of the wedge at least once and all elements are connected to make sure it cuts out as one piece.

I will admit to using Adobe Illustrator to make the design I used in the ornament, but you could create it with doodling just as easily. I started by making a "spine" to provide the structure for the rest of the design. First I drew a simple line (Fig. 12A) and then I filled it out, i.e. widened it. (Fig. 12B) Next I drew lines that branched off of the spine and widened those. (Fig. 12C) Finally, I drew in some decorative curly cues. (Fig. 12D)
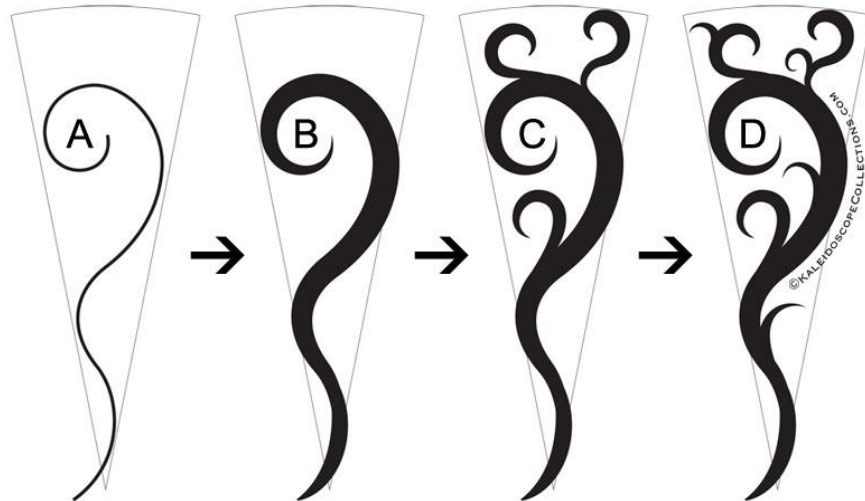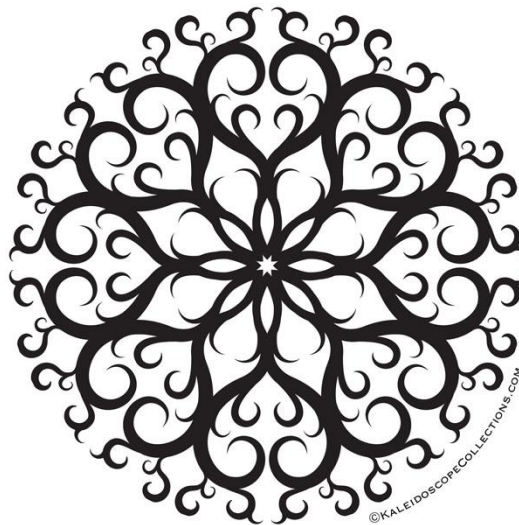
Figure 12

Remember, the lines that you draw need to be wide enough to cut out. If you will be cutting the design out of fabric, you probably want your lines to be at least 1/8" thick. You can get away with finer lines if cutting out of paper or cardstock, but you'll need to experiment.

Once I was happy with the design in the wedge, I ran it through Kaleidoscope Kreator to get this:

Step 3: Cutting out the design

Save the kaleidoscope design to a file and open the file in the software that came with your machine. You should then be able to tell the software to automatically create a cutting file from the kaleidoscope image.

To make the ornament above, I cut out three of these kaleidoscope designs out of cardstock, layered them one on top of the other and then sewed down the center spine. (Fig. 13)

Figure 13

Important: In order to give myself enough area to sew on, I removed the "holes" along the vertical line in the center of the design. (Fig. 14) For most cutting machines, you should be able to remove those elements of the cutting file before cutting it out.

Note: Images and instructions used with permission from Kaleidoscope Collections. Visit their blog post at http://kaleidoscopecollections.com/blog/2013/12/cutting-machines/ for more information.