

# Bushcow Mask

Among the Bua and Nuna peoples of Burkina Faso, masks make spiritual forces visible. The Bushcow, personifying a forest spirit, performs at funerals to release the deceased's soul from the village. The rectangular design of four triangles is a common motif symbolizing femaleness, maleness, and families.

As on most African masks traditions and symbols are represented in the design. For the sake of variety or creativity you may want to add more color or more decorative elements.

The mask sits like a cap on top of the head, with a raffia fringe concealing the wearer's identity.



The basic mask is made from two pieces of 11 x 17-inch card stock, but other pieces can be added for strength or as decorative elements. Card stock is light, strong, and will run through the Xerox machine.

Cut on the solid lines and fold on the dotted lines. Scoring the folds with a ruler and a ballpoint pen first makes folding easier.

It would probably be best to decorate the mask before assembling it.

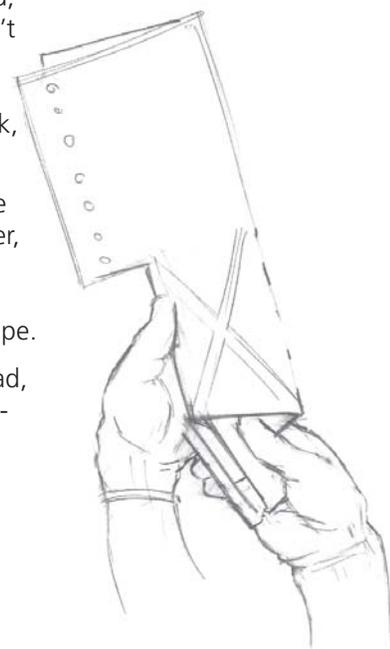
At the end what will become a triangular snout is a half-inch edge that should be folded in to give the snout dimension. Cutting the little notches out allows these small folded pieces to fit in the tight corners.

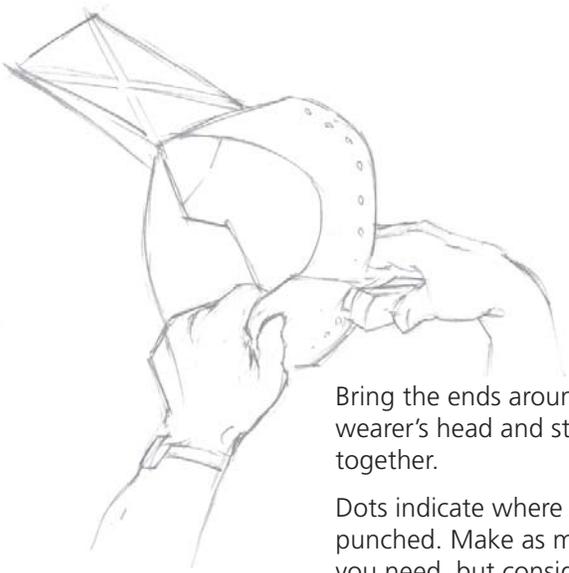
Behind the snout is the part of the mask that wraps around the head.

There are two locations labeled, "guide lines, do not cut." Don't color or decorate these parts, because this is where you will attach the top part of the mask, the eyes and the horns.

Decorative details can be made with colored construction paper, markers, crayons, etc. Join the bottom part of the snout together with glue, staples, or tape.

Although this mask fits my head, you may need to add an extension if the wearer has a lot of hair.





Bring the ends around the wearer's head and staple them together.

Dots indicate where holes can be punched. Make as many holes as you need, but consider the strength of the card stock and don't put them too close to each other, or to the edge.

Once you've decorated the top part of the mask you can assemble it and attach it to the base. (Cut on solid lines, fold on dotted lines.) The two little triangles under the eyes straddle the mussel or snout. Line up the curve by one eye with the guideline on the lower part of the mask. Check the location of the two triangles by the snout. All lined up? Staple or glue this side together. Then do the other side. The material between the horns and

tucked into the head opening, topping that off and adding strength and tension to the horns. Fold the ears out, add some raffia or yarn to the edge, and you're done.

Well, you could add more. I've included a band above the horns that could be attached to the front to completely encircle the mask with raffia. Finished raffia is easier to use than the rough stuff. Fold the raffia or some yarn in half, insert a loop through the hole, bring the loop down to where you can insert the two loose ends, and pull it up gently to the bottom edge of mask. Or, instead of raffia and yarn, you could shred paper and glue the pieces to the edge.

Hope you have fun with this project. Let us know how the masks turn out.



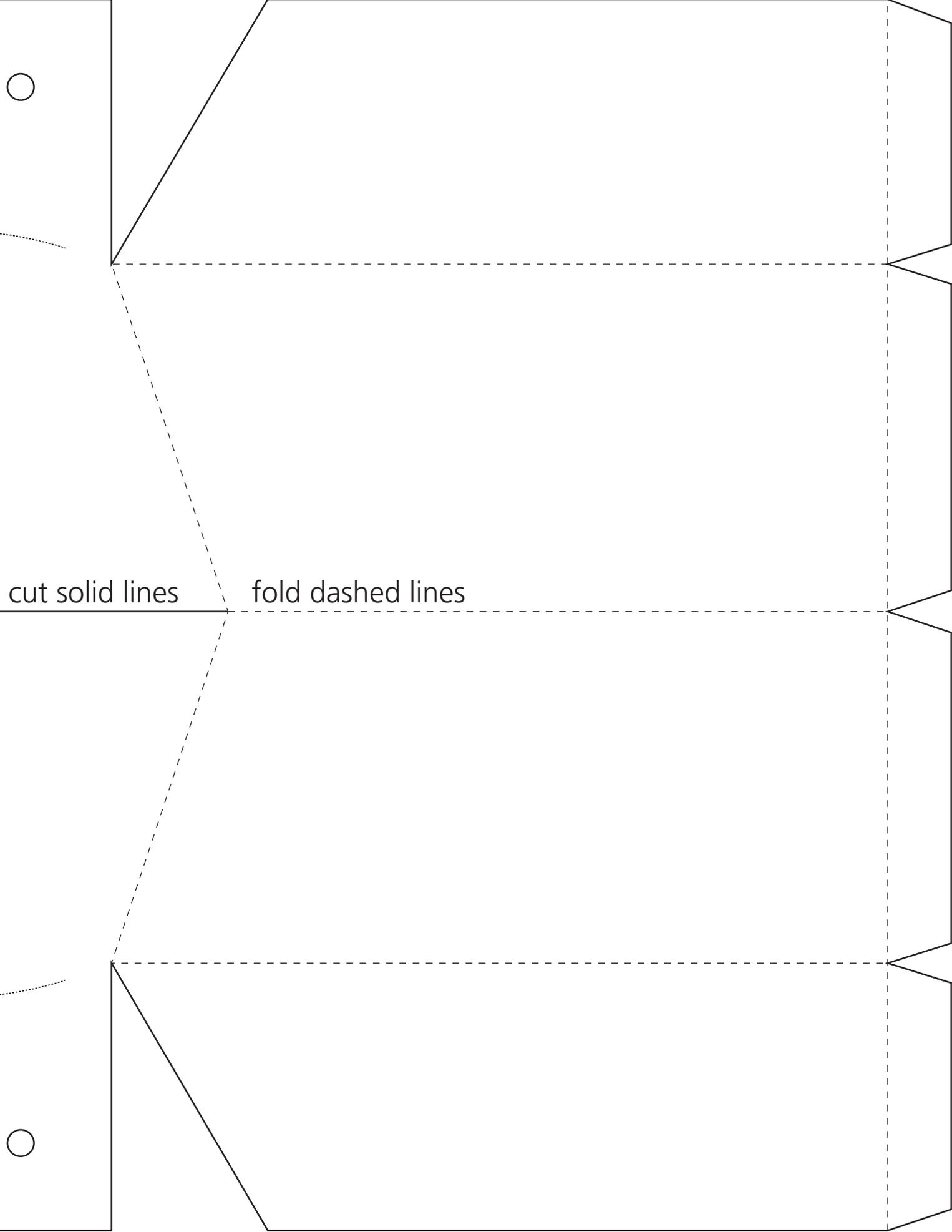


**Guideline do not cut!**

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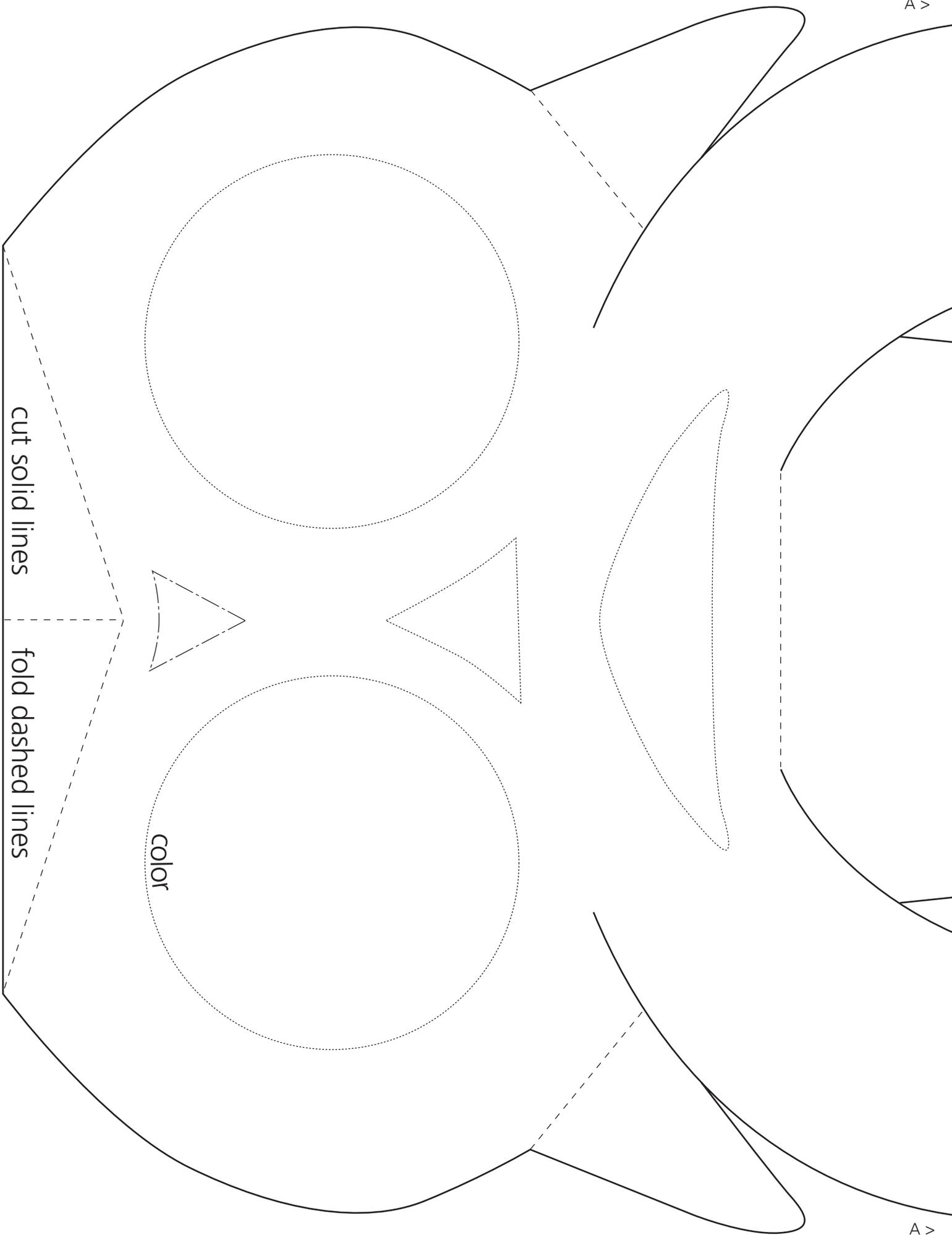
< B



cut solid lines

fold dashed lines

< B



cut solid lines

fold dashed lines

color

A >

A >

