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Optical Illusion

Floating Letters

Templates for 26 capital letters that you can draw
in perspective

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PRINT SETTINGS

Please use Acrobat Reader to print and make sure that the settings 'Actual size' and 'Auto portrait/landscape' are selected.

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SAVE PAPER & TONER

Only print out the pages you need.

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INTRODUCTION

About Floating Letters

Playing with spatial illusion is a fascinating opportunity to produce optical tricks. And it gets really exciting when you start to deal with complex forms like letters.

Letters can be represented in many ways. When we write or print letters, they are formed of straight and curved, horizontal and vertical lines.



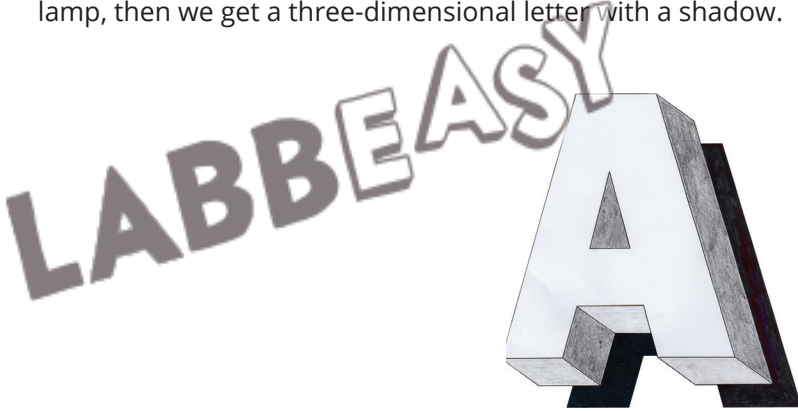
If we cut the same letter out of paper, we get a two-dimensional letter.



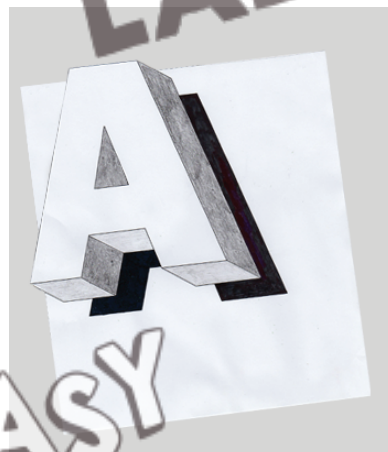
If we stick this two-dimensional letter onto a thick board and then cut it out, we get a three-dimensional letter.



If we hold this cut-out, three-dimensional letter up a bit and shine a light on it from above with a lamp, then we get a three-dimensional letter with a shadow.



If we put a second background beneath this projected shadow, a fascinating optical illusion occurs: The letter actually seems to float.



Optical illusions occur because our visual impressions arise from an interplay between our sight system and our brain. Only a tiny part of our retina is responsible for focused sight. The eyes have to therefore make a huge number of involuntary movements to bring an object into focus. The brain assesses the information it receives in light of previous experience. It tries to establish connections to recognizable objects in order to construct a spatial image. In the process, the brain can make mistakes because it puts together an image as we would expect it to be. And this subjective image is then the one that we take to be true.

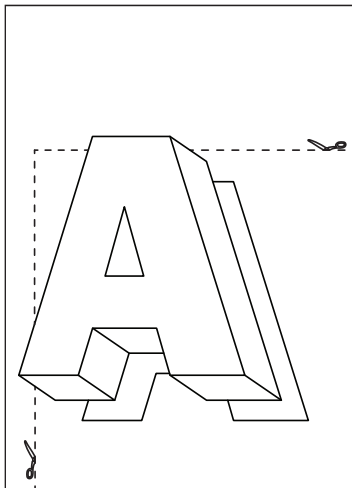
Micha Labbé

HOW TO DO IT

Floating Letters

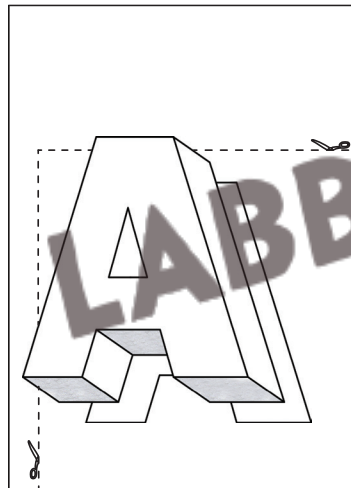
For this optical illusion you'll need the shade tones white, pale grey, grey, and black as well as a piece of medium grey paper. You can of course also do these floating letters in color. In that case, you'll have to do a little bit of experimenting because of the different color values.

1



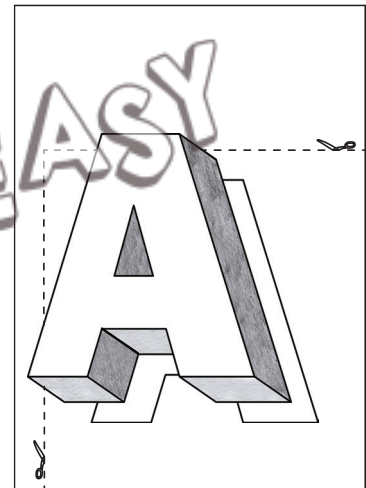
Select and print out the desired letter templates on white paper.

2



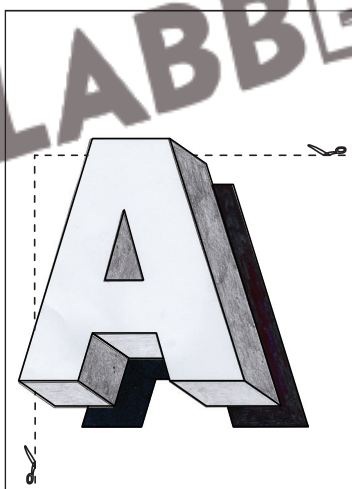
Shade all the underside surfaces with a pale grey pencil.

3



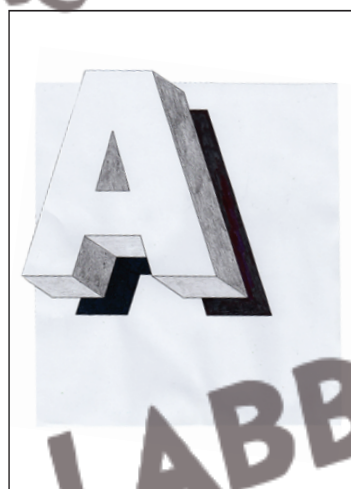
Shade all the right-hand surfaces with a darker grey pencil.

4



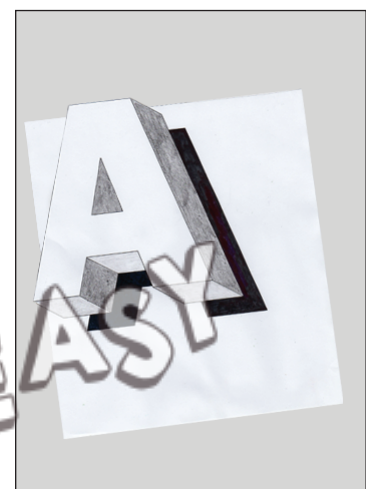
Color the shadowed area with a black pen or pencil.

5



Cut out the letter and its background along the dotted lines...

6



... and stick it to a medium grey or colored piece of paper.