

## Valentine Box An 'Explosion' of Valentine Memories

By Karen Leahy

Learn how to make a little box, filled with all sorts of memories, as a perfect gift for family and friends. Looking just like a small decorated box, lifting the lid reveals an 'exploding' treasure filled with pictures and memories. The box comes with a warning – they are addictive .... Beware.

When I saw my first 'exploding' box I was intrigued. I had had a sewing box' filled with needles and buttons' when I was younger which worked in the same way and I was fascinated by a photo album version which would clearly make a great gift. They looked so complicated to make, but in fact, as this article shows, they are simplicity themselves.

### What do you need?

Let's start with the basic supplies first. You will need four sheets of cardstock, either all the same colour or in coordinating colours. Three of the sheets will be used for the box and one of the sheets will be used for the lid. They do not all have to be 12 x 12. The lid and the smallest of the squares can be made from smaller sheets of card if preferred. You will also need at least two sheets of patterned paper. You can use more paper if you wish to give greater variety and it is also a great time to use up all those scraps. You know, the pieces you keep saving and never actually get around to using! In addition to this you need a maximum of 20 small photographs and whatever ribbons and embellishments you choose to use. You don't have to use photographs on every face of the box, in fact you could make a box with no photos at all. Imagine how cute a quotation box with lots of inspirational quotes would be.

### To Make the box

Making up the box is very simple, but you do need to be careful with your measuring and scoring. The more accurate you are with the measurements, the neater the overall effect of the box will be.

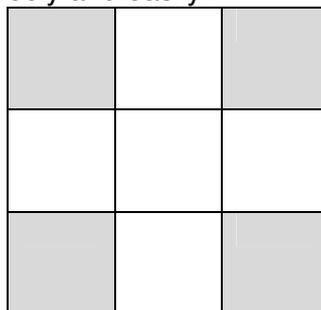
### Step one

#### Cutting and scoring the box

You need to cut the squares as detailed in the instructions above, making sure they are three graduated sizes, and then score them using either a trimmer with a scoring blade or a scoring tool. TIP – an old biro that has run out makes a perfect scoring tool

Cut one square of cardstock measuring 9" x 9"

Score at 3" intervals to make 9 squares and then fold the score lines backwards and forwards so they move quite freely and easily.



Cut one square 8 1/2 " x 8 1/2 " and score at slightly over 2 3/4 " to make 9 squares.  
Cut one square at 8" x 8", score at approx 2 5/8 "

The box does not need to be cut to these exact sizes. You can cut the squares any size you want, simple ensuring that you have a small, a medium and a large and that they are square. When you do the scoring just measure whatever size you have and divide the total by three.

You could make really tiny boxes and you could also make more than three layers to your box, adding a fourth and even a fifth smaller square inside. Remember though, you are going to add pictures and card and embellishments so don't get too carried away with layers!

### **Step two**

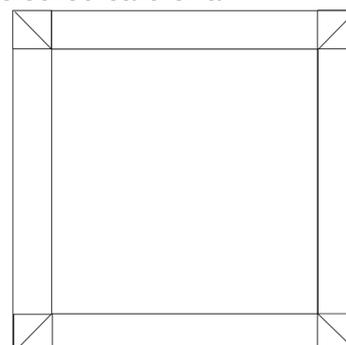
Remove the 4 corner squares from each of the scored sections (the light grey squares in the diagram) and keep to one side to use as photo mounts  
This will give you 12 small leftover squares. Round the corners of each side of the box

### **Step three** **To cover the inserts**

Cut rectangles from patterned papers and then stick the inserts to all of the flaps of the box. You could cut and score the patterned paper and stick the whole thing as one piece onto the cardstock, but personally I think it is much nicer to see a little of the original box colour around all the edges and you get a smoother finish doing each piece separately. I also like to ink my pieces of patterned paper before sticking them on to give a little more definition. I tend to vary the papers on each level to make the box more interesting.

### **Step four** **To make the lid**

Cut a square of just over 5" for the lid using either the same coloured card or a coordinating cardstock. Remember, the more exact you make the centre the tighter the fit of the lid will be. I tend to make sure that centre square is at least  $3 \frac{1}{16}$  ", almost  $3 \frac{1}{8}$  " so the lid fits smoothly. I score the edges each just over  $\frac{7}{8}$  "



Score only the corners of the lid, pinch the corners and using a strong double sided tape adhere them together and then over onto the lip of the box.

This is the only really fiddly bit, but once you get into the swing of it even this is easy.  
NB – if you are covering the box lid all over do this first before making up the corners.  
I didn't cover my lid – I just embellished it with papers and ribbons.

### **Step five – adding the pictures**

Add the pictures or journaling to the box, rounding corners and mounting, and add any embellishments to the pictures. Putting embellishments on foam squares makes them really 'pop'

### **Step six**

Decorate the lid with scraps of paper and ribbons and a centrepiece to finish the box off and add a centrepiece to the inside of the box.

### **To make up the box**

Stick the smallest centre square onto the medium central square using a strong double sided tape.

Stick the two squares onto the large central square using double sided tape.

For the Valentine's box I used red cardstock for the lid and all three layers. I used red and black papers from the HOTP Cardmakers collection and from Carolees Creations. I used lots of love stickers, hearts and embellishments and a mixture of black rik rak, red and black primas and Angel kisses and red brads. I printed all of the pictures in black and white so that the whole box coordinated. I also added lots of stickers on top of the photos raised up on foam pads to give added dimension to the box.

The box can be completed to suit so many different themes and you can use fewer photographs, opting for journaling blocks and embellishments on some of the sides. You could make a box capturing a one off special event such as a birthday party or anniversary, a box showing how a child has changed and grown over the years, a pet box – and yes of course I have course I have made one of those – or a box celebrating a holiday or visit. They make a wonderful gift, if you can bear to give them away, are quick and fun to complete and look so pretty displayed when they are closed. Have a go – you'll be addicted in no time.