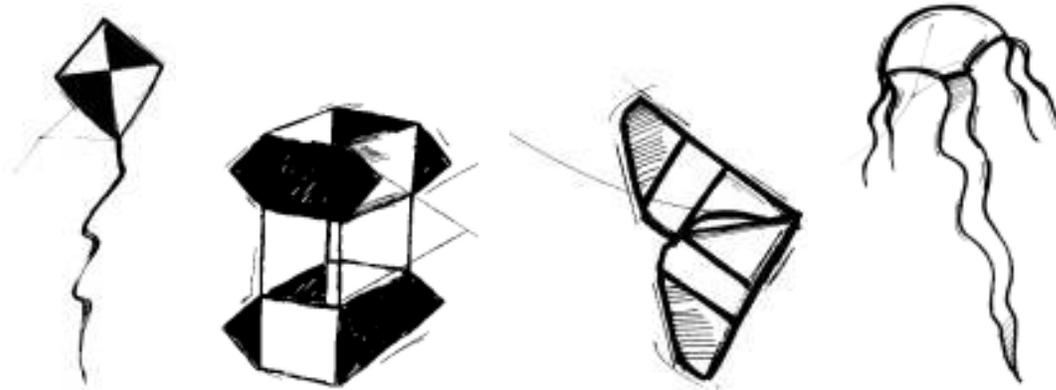


How to make kites

Kites for kids should be simple to make and easy to fly. They should also be cheap. Most of the best materials can be found in cupboards around the house.

Most kites have these basic parts:

- The Spars – the sticks that form the frame for the sail.
- The Spine – the vertical spar, which makes the backbone of the kite.
- The Sail/Skin – the paper, plastic, or fabric that covers the frame to make the kite.
- The Bridle – one or more strings attached to the kite, meeting at the towing point.
- The Towing Point – the point at which the flying line is attached.
- The Flying Line – the string running from the towing point to the handle.
- The Handle/Winder – the object you wind your flying line onto to fly the kite and keep the line from getting tangled.
- The Tail – lengths of paper or plastic or ribbon that help to balance the kite in flight. Not all kites need tails, but if you have one – make it spectacular!



One of the most common stories I hear from kids is that they made a kite but it did not fly. Often there are really obvious reasons why, so here are some tips:

- Use a lightweight material for the kite sail:
 - Supermarket plastic bags are the best kite material I know – it is very light and strong. Cellotape, masking tape or sticky labels can be used to hold the kite together. Crayons and vividis, or other permanent markers, can be used to decorate the kite.
 - Paper is OK, but often the air and ground are damp and the paper does not last long.
- Look in the kitchen for kite spars:
 - For thousands of years bamboo has been used for kite spars – Kebab skewers are great to use.
 - Ask the parents at your school if anyone has an old rattan blind stashed in the garage. You will get hundreds of kite spars out of one blind.
 - Another option is drinking straws. You can squash the end of one, push it into the end of another and tape this join to make longer spars.
- Make the proportions of the kite fit the spars you have – this is easier than trying to splice spars together to fit kite sails.