

Create Your Own Picasso Bug (Yes, that's a real thing!)



(From <https://lady.co.uk/beautiful-bugs>)

There's a wonderfully colorful insect found in many parts of Africa known as a Picasso bug. The Picasso bug is about a third of an inch long and sports a design of eleven ringed dots on a blue-green background. Like stink bugs, Picasso bugs smell bad when threatened.

The scientific name of this gorgeous bug is *Sphaerocoris annulus*. The Picasso bug is a species of shield-backed bugs of the family *Scutelleridae*. The family name comes from the Latin word *scutum*, which means shield.

Shield bugs are part of the order of **true bugs**. While we often use the word “bugs” to talk about insects in general, that is not correct! Ask a Biologist (<https://askabiologist.asu.edu/explore/true-bugs>) explains that in contrast to beetles or other insects, “true bugs have specialized mouth parts used to suck juices. True bugs mostly suck fluids from plants, but there are some true bugs, like bed bugs, that feed on animals.”

An insect's body is divided into three parts: **head**, **thorax**, and **abdomen**. Look at the picture at right to see the various parts of a shield bug.

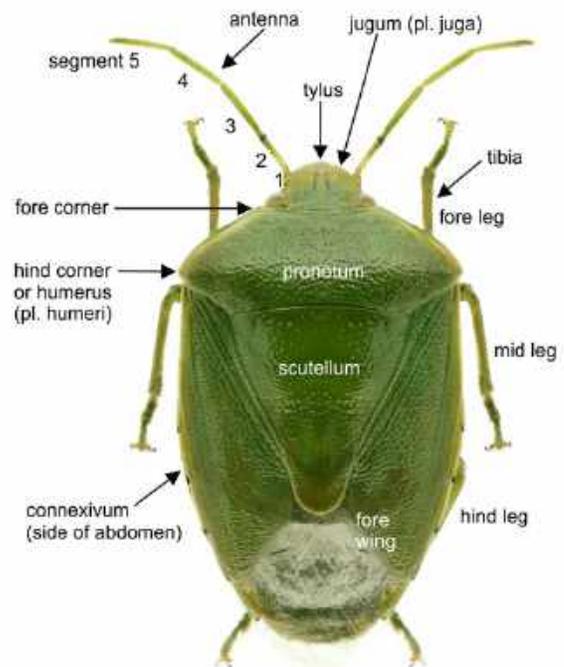
The head is tiny. Below is the **pronotum**, which covers the thorax (between the neck and the abdomen).

Below the pronotum is the **scutellum**—the shield-shaped back.

Insects have six legs. The bottom four point down and the top two point up.

They also have two **antennae** at the top of their heads.

We will use some of the bolded words in the directions to draw our own Picasso bug.



Before we start the drawing, let's look at a couple of paintings by Picasso. Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was born in Spain. He is one of the most famous artists of the 20th century. It is unknown who came up with the name "Picasso bug" for *Sphaerocoris annulus*, but they had a lot of imagination! Picasso worked in many styles and is famous for his abstract paintings. He also liked to make collages. Although we are going to give directions for using markers in today's project, you are welcome to collage your bug instead of coloring it after you cut it out.



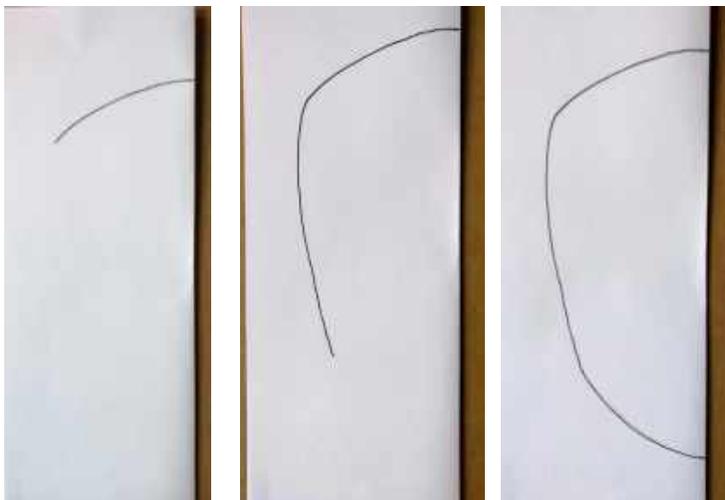
Pablo Picasso: *Cubist Composition*, 1910



Portrait of Dora Maar, 1939

Supplies: White paper, pencil, eraser, scissors, markers, glue stick, construction paper

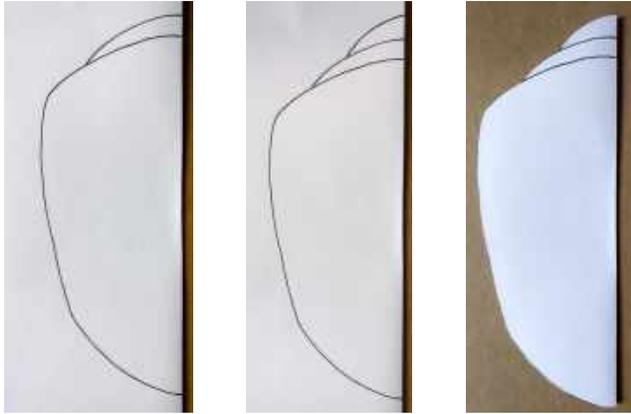
Procedure: Fold a piece of white paper longitudinally (hot dog fold) and turn it so that it is vertical. Place it with the folded part to your right.



Start about 1/4 of the way down from the top on the folded side of the paper and draw a left-curving diagonal that goes about 3/4 of the way across the paper towards the unfolded side.

Curve down from this point and draw a straight diagonal that points slightly back in the direction of the fold. Stop when you get about 2/3 of the way down your paper.

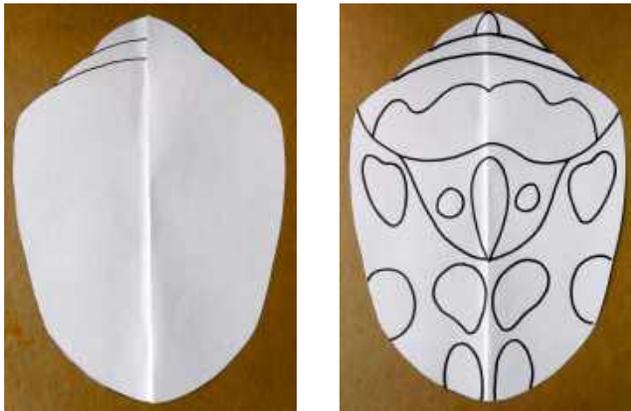
Curve back over to the fold.



Add the pronotum by creating a curving line that starts about 1" in from the left-hand side of the bug

Add the head by creating a curving line that starts about 1" in from the previous line

Keeping your paper folded, cut out the entire bug on the **outside** line. Be careful not to cut the head or neck off!



Open up your bug and extend the lines of the pronotum and scutellum on the other side.

If you want to make a symmetrical design (meaning that one side is the mirror image of the other), draw one shape on the left and then one on the right and repeat until you have completed the design. This is much easier than trying to copy a complete design!



Color in your design carefully. Don't make scratchy lines.

Here's how to color for success: Outline a shape with a thick line and then color it in slowly. For large shapes, make a series of smaller shapes inside and color in each one separately. These techniques help you stay focused by breaking down the coloring work into manageable bits.

Glue your bug onto a piece of construction paper. Make sure you leave room for the legs and antennae.



Use your pencil to draw the legs and antennae. Remember that insects have six legs. The bottom four point down and the top two point up.

Go over your pencil lines with marker.

Keep in mind that you don't have to make a symmetrical bug. You can make any kind of design you like!

