

PARENT GUIDE

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

Curriculum Title: Lowrider Paper Model

Time: 90 minutes

Ages/Group: 8-13

Medium: Paper, markers/coloring pencils/crayons

GOALS/OBJECTIVES	To give students an appreciation of Lowrider cars as a cultural artform
How do these goals preserve, create, present or promote cultural arts of Mexican Americans or other Latin@ cultures?	This curriculum presents and promotes the Lowrider subculture, which originated in Chicana communities and is still heavily associated with Mexican Americans. It remains a thriving subculture in Austin.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worksheet (below) printed on plain paper in color. Alternatively you may like to just use the digital copy.</li> <li>• 1964 Impala Template (below) printed on plain white paper or cardstock</li> <li>• Coloring pencils and/or markers and/or crayons</li> <li>• Glue stick</li> <li>• Glitter pen (optional)</li> <li>• One plastic disposable fork</li> </ul>
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AGENDA

TIME

<p><u>Warm-Up/Introductory Activity:</u></p> <p><b>Worksheets</b> (1 per student)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read through and fill out the worksheet.</li> <li>• If your child has never not seen a lowrider in a video or in real life before, you can show the first 1 minute 30 seconds of this video from youtube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSj5nB-3SlS">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSj5nB-3SlS</a>. It shows lowriding in Austin. You might also like to ask your child:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “What did the lowrider look like?”</li> <li>○ “How was the outside painted?” “Did the car have any special designs?” “What color was it?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Activity 2</b> (Page 4): To make this matching exercise more fun, you can time your child to see how fast they match all four pictures.</li> </ul>	30 mins
<p><u>Core Activity:</u> Lowrider model</p> <p><u>Steps/Procedures:</u></p> <p><b>Paper Models</b> – There are two templates in the file <i>ESB MACC Lowrider Lesson Paper Model Templates 8-13 years.pdf</i> that you can print out. The 1964 Impala is simpler to make (better for younger children and those who have difficulty with fine motor skills or have less patience), the 1957 Bel Air is a bit more complex. Each comes in two variations (different types of wheels). To create the model:</p>	1 hour

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- Follow the steps shown in the pictures on the worksheet (page 4) and in the video. Your child may need help with the cutting and folding stages.
- **Optional step:** After the model has been completely glued, use glitter pens to go over the colored sections to give the effect of “flakes” (metal flaked paint used on some lowriders). Works best over markers.

Discussion Questions:

- How did you decorate your lowrider?
- What do you like about the colors you chose?

**Activity: Hittin’ Switches (Worksheet page 5)**

Students place a plastic fork underneath their lowrider with the ends of the prongs sticking out the back of the car. By pushing down the prongs, it should lift the front of the car off the ground. Instructions on worksheet and in video.

**Optional activity: Lowrider hopping contest**

Compete with your child to see who can hop the lowrider the highest off the ground without it flipping.

Extra Vocabulary:

**Suspension:** The system on a car that attaches the wheels to the body of the car that helps the car drive smoothly.

References

Chappell, B. (2012). Lowrider space: aesthetics and politics of Mexican American custom cars. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Supplemental Materials

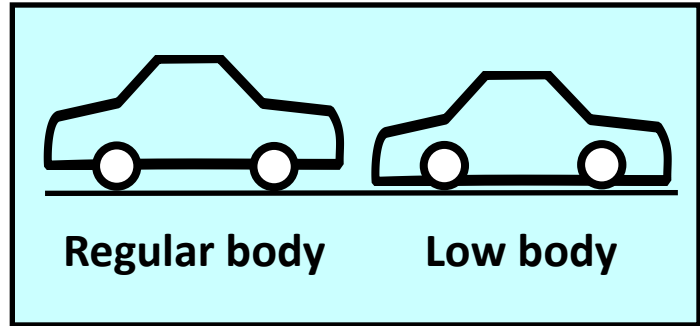
# LOWRIDERS

## Introduction

**Lowriders** are cars that have their **body lowered** so that they sit close to the ground. They are usually old, classic cars.

They can have:

- **Colorful paint;**
- **Smaller wheels;**
- **Hydraulic or Airbag suspension** that lets the driver raise or lower the sides of the car. They can even make it drive on three wheels!
- Other modifications (changes) to make the car look good, like **wheel skirts** (covers for the back wheels), or decorative (fancy) bumpers.



**Activity: What are the differences between these cars?**



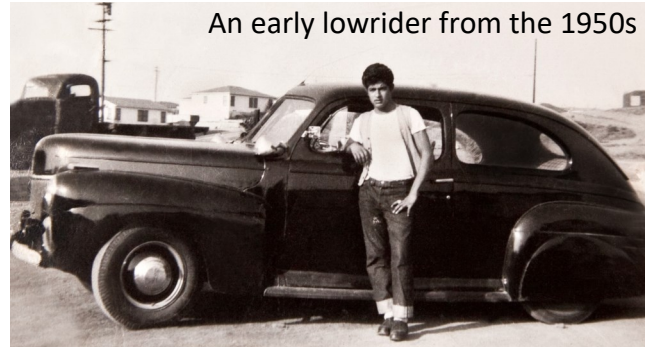
**Regular**



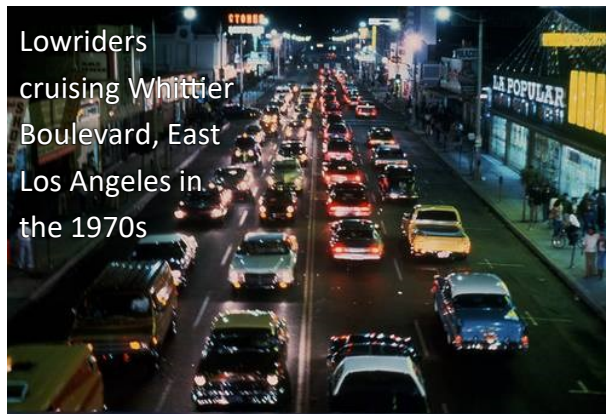
**Lowrider**

# LOWRIDERS *History*

The first **Lowriders** were created by **Chicanxs** that formed car clubs in Southern California in the 1940s and spread to other **Mexican-American** communities in Texas and the Southwest.



An early lowrider from the 1950s



Lowriders cruising Whittier Boulevard, East Los Angeles in the 1970s

While other groups changed their cars to make them faster, lowriders were made to drive “*bajito e despacito*” (low and slow) to show the beauty and style of the car when **cruising**.

Today, all kinds of people drive lowriders, but they are still strongly associated with Chicanx people and culture.

## Discussion:

Have you ever seen a lowrider before?

Where and when?

What did it look like?

How was it painted?



Austin Lowriders at the ESB-MACC during MexAmerican

## Vocabulary

- Chicanx/Xicanx:** Name used by many Americans of Mexican heritage to describe themselves, their identity and their culture. Also includes Chicano, Chicana, Xicano, Xicana.
- Cruising:** Driving around for fun, often on a strip of road that others also cruise on.
- Mexican-American:** An American of Mexican heritage and their culture.



# LOWRIDERS

## Paint jobs

Lowriders can be painted in different ways...



...in **one color**...

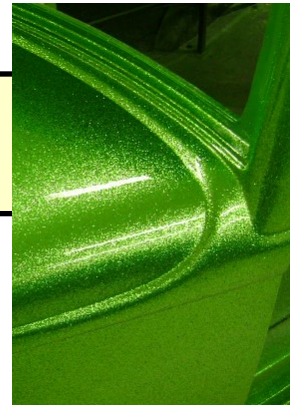


...in a **two-tone** that matches the curves of the car...



...with **candy or pearl** paint to make it super shiny...

...with **flakes** to make it sparkle...



...with **patterns**...



...and with **murals**.



Murals can be of anything, but often express the owner's **Mexican, Chicano/Mexican-American, or Aztec/Mexica** (indigenous/native people of Mexico) heritage.

## Vocabulary

- Candy Paint, Pearl Paint:** Paint that is applied in a special process to make it very shiny.
- Flakes:** Metal flakes in the paint that makes it look glittery.
- Mural:** An artwork that is painted on a wall or other large surface.
- Paint job:** The way a car is painted for decoration.
- Pattern:** Part of an image that repeats over and over.
- Two-tone:** Using two different shades of color, especially one light, one dark.

# LOWRIDERS

Cultural imagery

**Activity:** Match the cultural images on the left to their description in the middle and to the lowrider art on the right



## Emiliano Zapata

Leader in the Mexican Revolution that fought for the rights of poor rural (country) people.



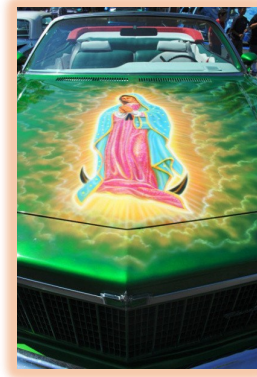
## Lowrider Culture

The way of life of people who turn their cars into lowriders and are part of the lowriding community.



## La Virgen de Guadalupe

Saint Mary, mother of Jesus, who is said to have appeared in Mexico, and became an important symbol for Mexican people.



## Aztec Sun Stone

Giant stone calendar created by indigenous (native) Aztec people over 500 years ago.



**Brainstorm:** How would you paint *your* lowrider?



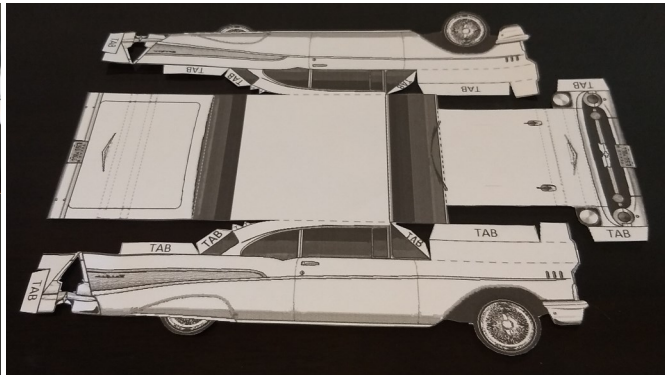


# LOWRIDERS

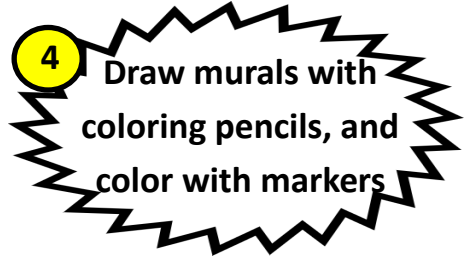
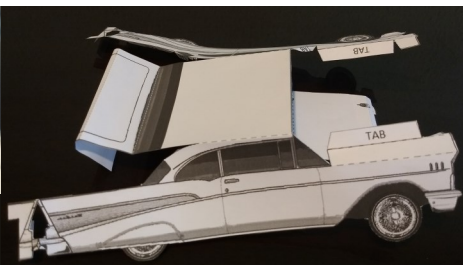
## Paper Model



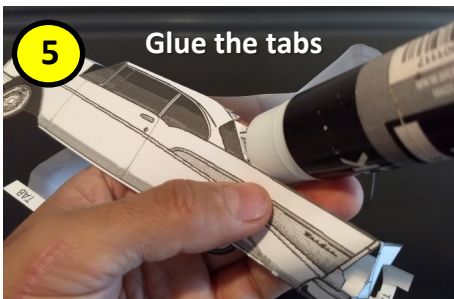
Cut out the model, including sections marked "cut out"



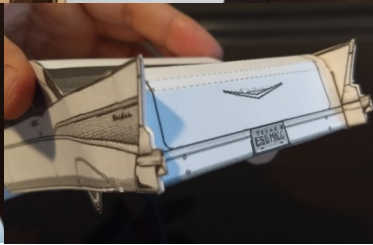
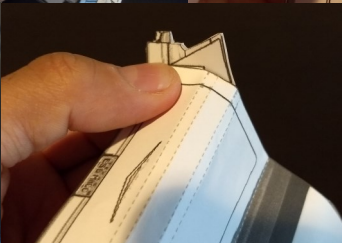
Fold along the dotted lines



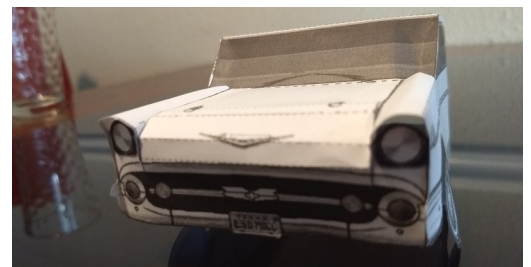
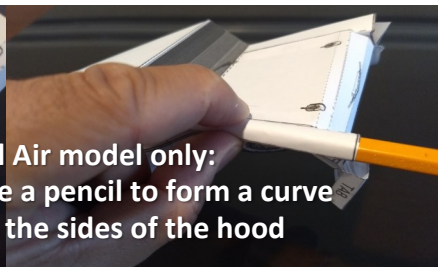
4 Draw murals with coloring pencils, and color with markers



Glue the tabs



Bel Air model only:  
Use a pencil to form a curve on the sides of the hood



7 Optional: add "flakes" with a glitter pen



Now you have your lowrider!



# LOWRIDERS

## Hittin' Switches

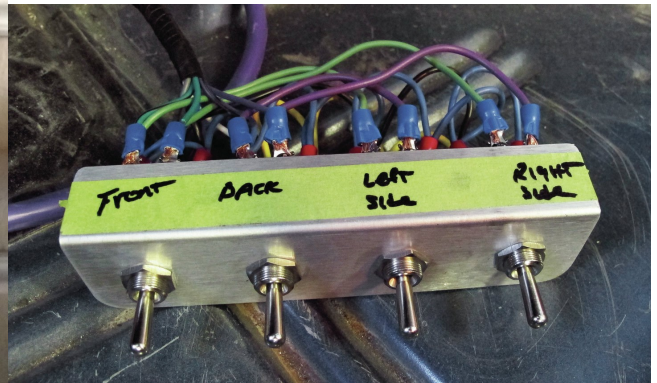
Lowriders with hydraulics have switches the driver can use to raise or lower the car in different ways. This is called “**hittin' switches**” and can make the car dance or bounce. They even have contests to see who can make their car hop the highest!



### Activity:

- 1 Place your lowrider on top of a fork (your “switch”).
- 2 Push the end of the fork prongs to make the front hop off the ground like a real lowrider.

How high can you make it hop without flipping over?



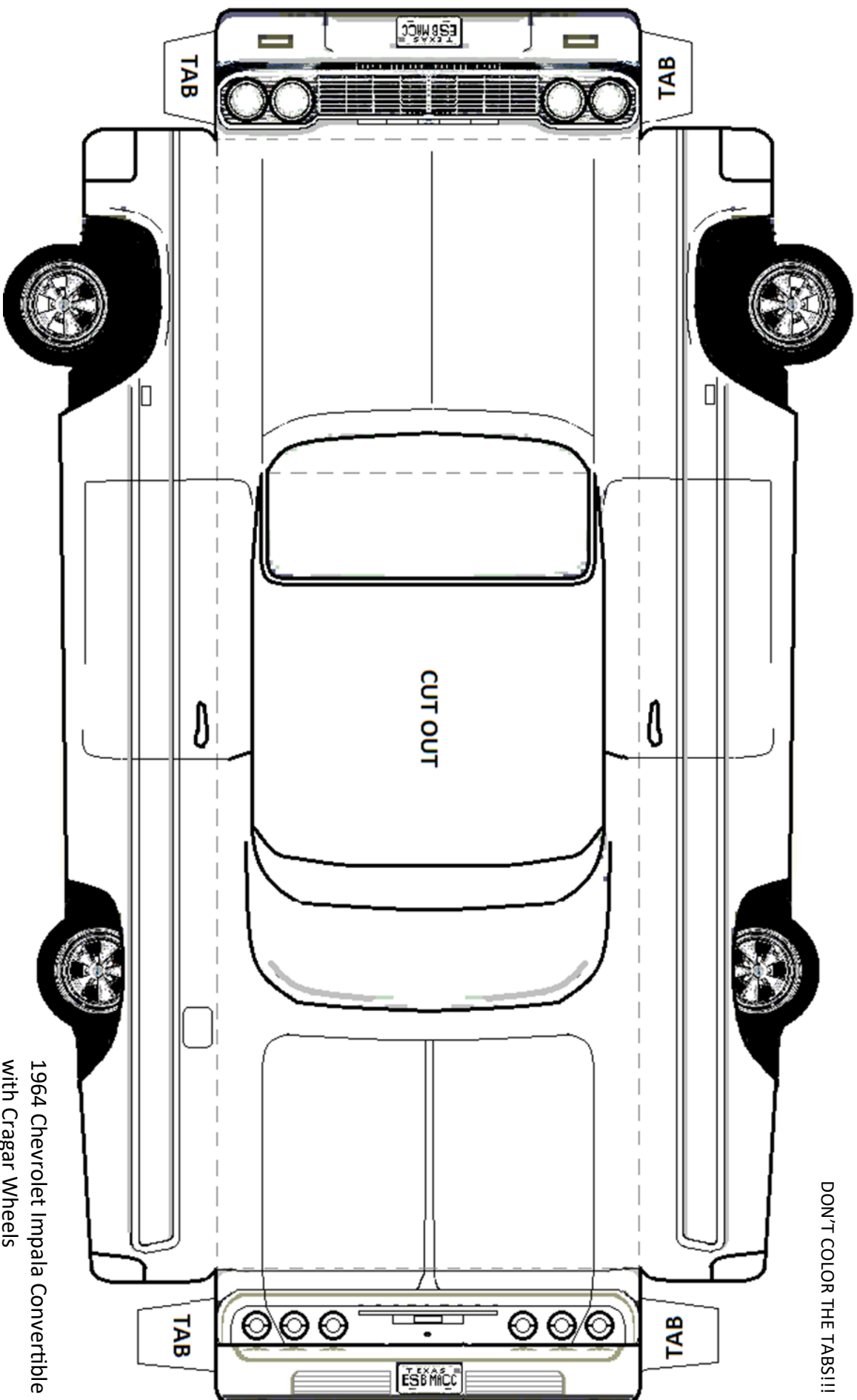
#### References:

Chappell, B. (2012). *Lowrider space: aesthetics and politics of Mexican American custom cars*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.



- Pg 1:** 1963 Chevrolet Impala Z11, Mecum Auctions  
<https://www.mecum.com/lots/DA0912-140138/>  
Lowrider Freetoedit - Lowrider Transparent, artist unknown  
[https://www.pngkit.com/view/u2w7a9e6i1r5e6w7\\_lowrider-freetoedit-lowrider-transparent/](https://www.pngkit.com/view/u2w7a9e6i1r5e6w7_lowrider-freetoedit-lowrider-transparent/)
- Pg 2:** 1950s lowrider from “Everything Comes from the Streets” documentary  
<https://remezcla.com/lists/culture/bajito-y-suavecito-a-look-back-at-lowrider-history/>  
Lowriders Cruising by Aurelio Jose Barrera in The Eastsider  
[https://www.theeastsiderla.com/eastsider\\_on\\_the\\_go/arts\\_and\\_culture/lowriders-return-to-whittier-boulevard-for-a-saturday-night-of-cruising/article\\_bcc62538-822d-5b63-a37a-e055e8fa7ac9.html](https://www.theeastsiderla.com/eastsider_on_the_go/arts_and_culture/lowriders-return-to-whittier-boulevard-for-a-saturday-night-of-cruising/article_bcc62538-822d-5b63-a37a-e055e8fa7ac9.html)  
Austin lowriders at the ESB-MACC during MexAmeriCon  
<http://www.mexamericon.com/gallery.html>
- Pg 3:** Black Buick Regal, Lowrider.com  
<https://www.lowrider.com/features/1984-buick-regal-its-all-relative/>  
Two tone Chevy 1500, photograph by Patrick Rall  
<https://chevroletforum.com/articles/lowrider-1988-chevy-1500-flawless-show-truck/>  
Candy paint, photograph uploaded by user, “Winning Agent”  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/millionairecarclub/8686678798>  
Metal flake paint, uploaded by user erikj62ss  
<https://erikj62ss.tumblr.com/post/30995497946/speedemon666-old-school-flake-015-lime-green>  
Gypsy rose side panel, photograph by the Historic Vehicle Association  
<https://www.historicvehicle.org/low-slow-gypsy-rose/>  
Lincoln Town Car panel patterns, lowrider.com  
<https://www.lowrider.com/rides/cars/2000-lincoln-town-car-turning-the-turtle-into-a-favorite/attachment/2000-lincoln-town-car-driver-side-rear-quarter-panel-patterns/>  
Chavez, Zoot Suits, Pancho Villa paint job, photograph by Chris Nelson  
<https://chrisnelson.ca/photos/2005/04/0504/DSCF1977>
- Pg 4:** Aztec Sun Stone, photograph by Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztec\\_sun\\_stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztec_sun_stone)  
La Virgen de Guadalupe, Public Domain  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Virgen\\_de\\_guadalupe1.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Virgen_de_guadalupe1.jpg)  
Emiliano Zapata, Granger Historical Picture Archive/Alamy Stock Photo/Alamy Stock Photo  
Lowrider Culture—“Fiestas Patrias Parade, South Park, Seattle, 2015 - 358 - lowriders”, photograph by Joe Mabel  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fiestas\\_Patrias\\_Parade,\\_South\\_Park,\\_Seattle,\\_2015\\_-\\_358\\_-\\_lowriders\\_\(21403531350\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fiestas_Patrias_Parade,_South_Park,_Seattle,_2015_-_358_-_lowriders_(21403531350).jpg)  
Lowrider painted with images of lowriders, photograph by Dani Matias  
<https://www.kut.org/post/austin-car-clubs-give-community-lift>  
Aztec-themed trunk mural, Lowrider.com  
<https://www.lowrider.com/rides/cars/1953-chevy-210-high-school-sweetheart/>  
La Virgen de Guadalupe hood mural, photo by Theresa Cisneros  
<https://www.ocreger.com/2011/09/19/car-show-highlights-fiestas-patrias-weekend/>  
Emiliano Zapata visor mural, photograph by Sal Rojas  
<http://photopost.brownpride.com/showphoto.php?photo=28623&title=zapata-lowrider-mural&cat=502>
- Pg 6:** Lowrider hopping, photograph by Nathanael Turner  
<https://www.businessinsider.com/nathanael-turners-photos-of-the-los-angeles-lowrider-convention-photos-2014-4>  
Lowrider switch panel, lowrider.com  
<https://www.lowrider.com/how-to-tech/chassis-suspension/1110-lrmp-black-magic-hydraulics-set-up/>
- All other images by Futa ‘Ofamo’oni

DON'T COLOR THE TABS!!!



1964 Chevrolet Impala Convertible  
with Cragar Wheels

**Instructions:**

Cut out Template, including the middle section labelled "CUT OUT"

Fold along the dotted lines to form into a box

Color and draw on any patterns or murals, making sure not to color the sections marked "TAB"

Re-fold dotted lines, then fold the Tabs so that they sit underneath the closest side

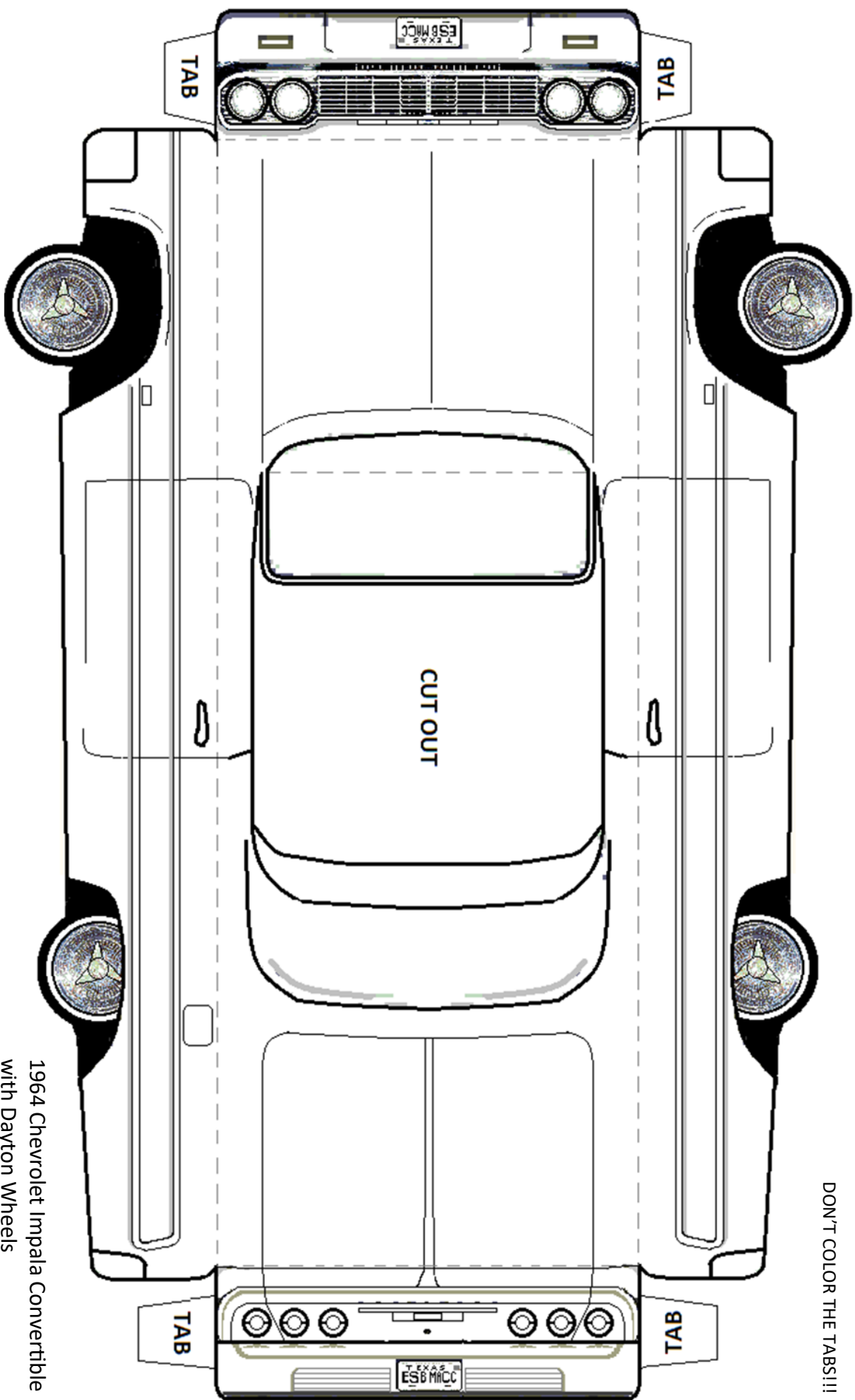
Apply glue to the top of the sections marked "TAB" and glue behind the closest side of the model

Fold up the windshield piece

Difficulty: Easy



DON'T COLOR THE TABS!!!



1964 Chevrolet Impala Convertible  
with Dayton Wheels

**Instructions:**

Cut out Template, including the middle section labelled "CUT OUT"

Fold along the dotted lines to form into a box

Color and draw on any patterns or murals, making sure not to color the sections marked "TAB"

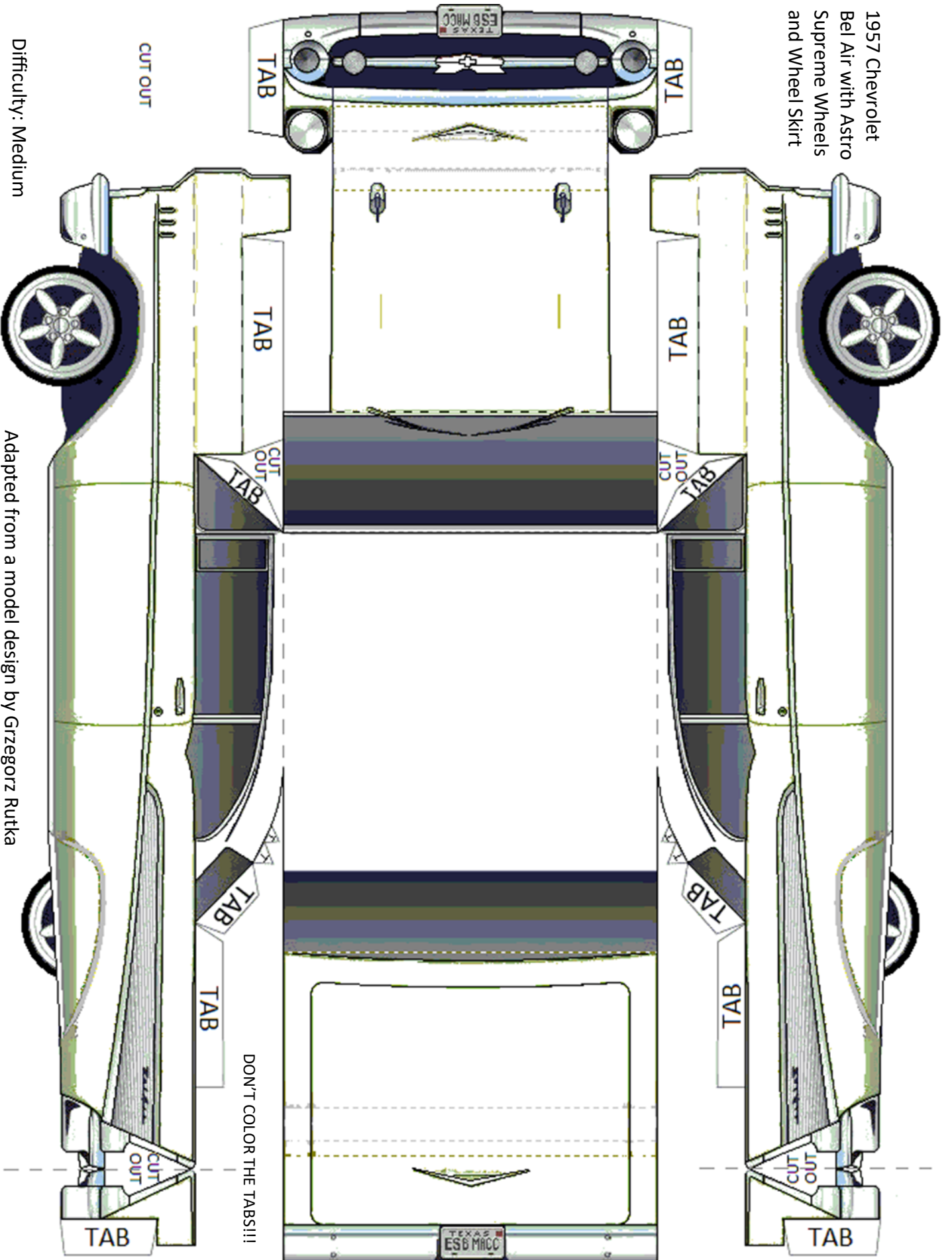
Re-fold dotted lines, then fold the Tabs so that they sit underneath the closest side

Apply glue to the top of the sections marked "TAB" and glue behind the closest side of the model

Fold up the windshield piece

Difficulty: Easy

1957 Chevrolet  
Bel Air with Astro  
Supreme Wheels  
and Wheel Skirt

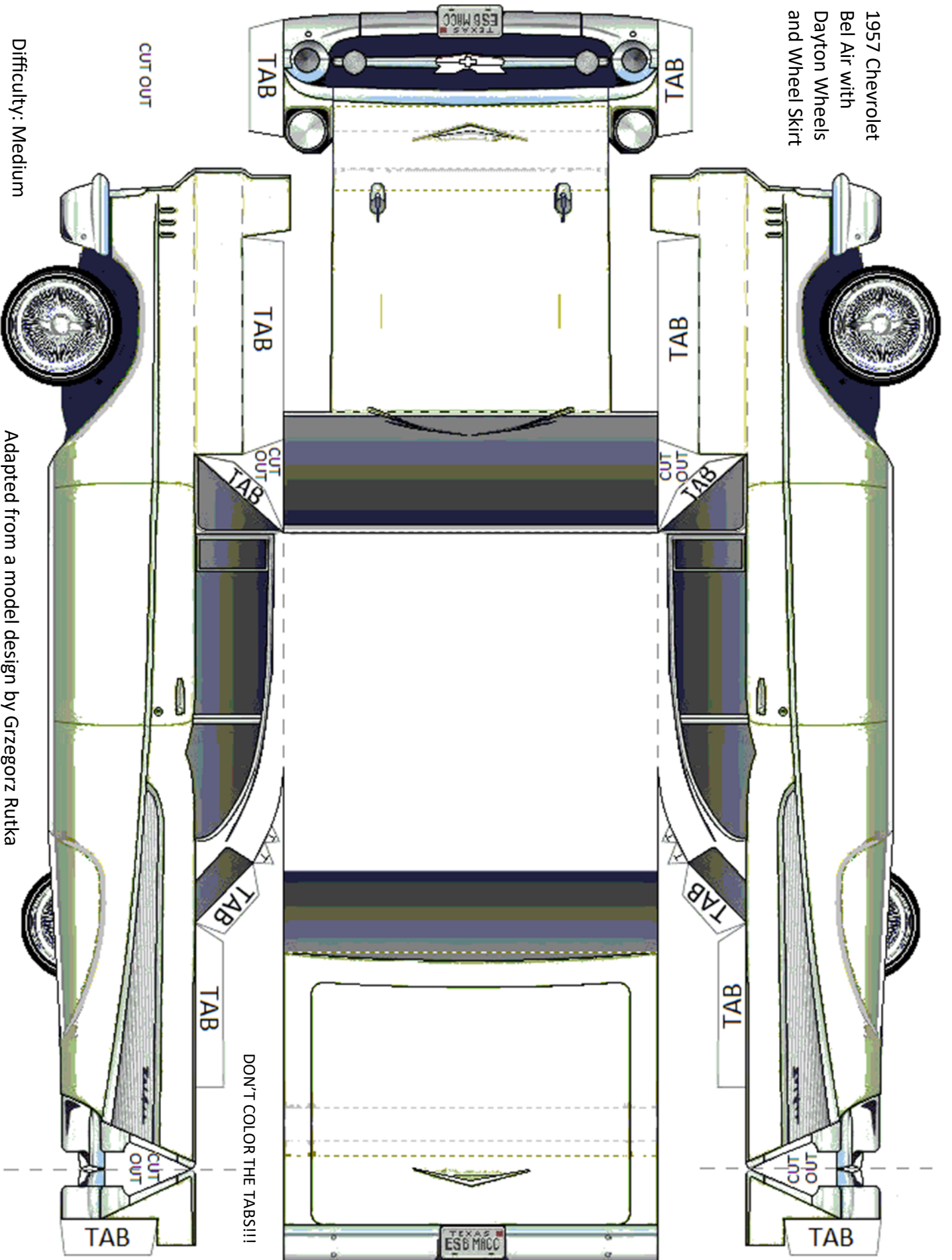


Difficulty: Medium

Adapted from a model design by Grzegorz Rutka

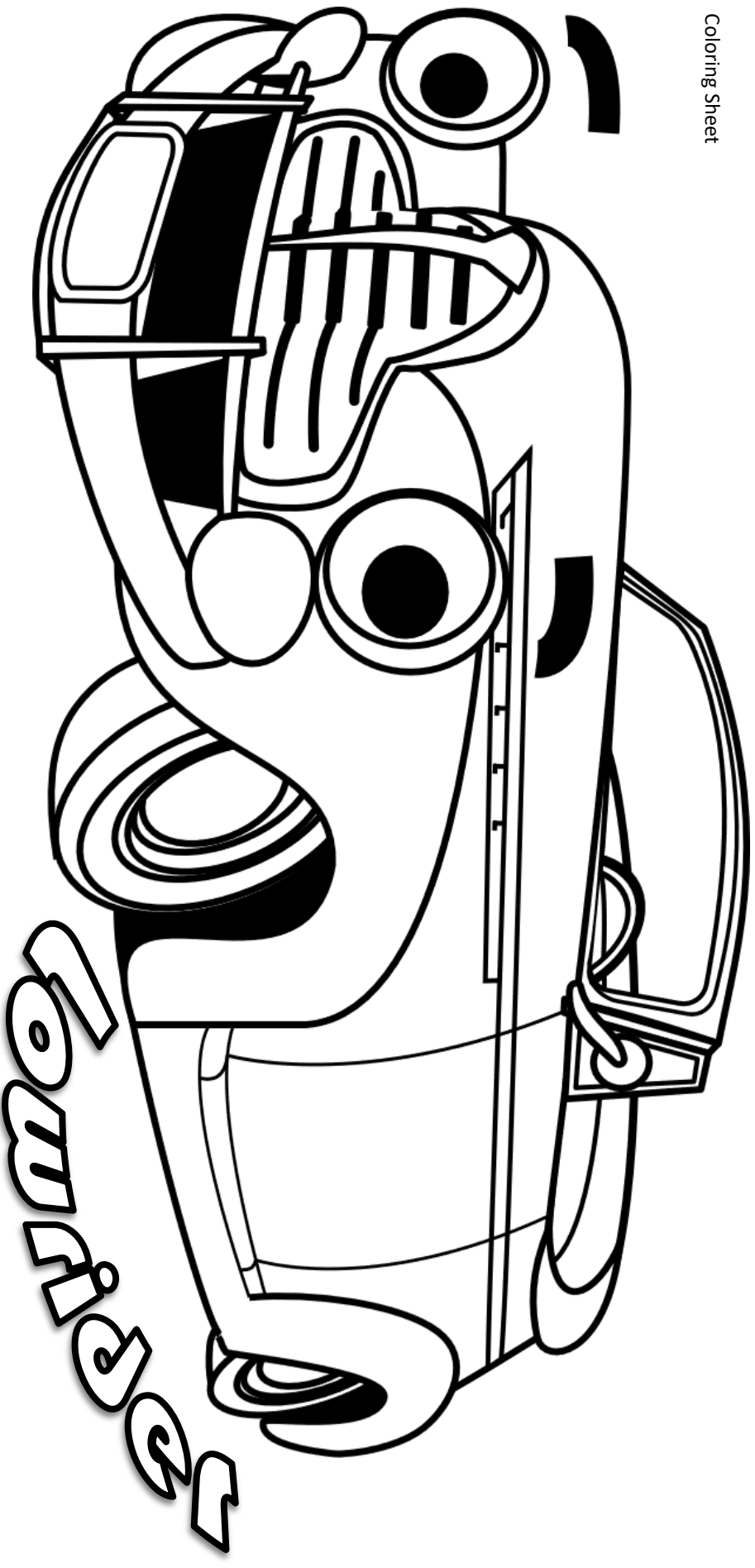


1957 Chevrolet  
Bel Air with  
Dayton Wheels  
and Wheel Skirt



Difficulty: Medium

Adapted from a model design by Grzegorz Rutka



**Lowriders** are cars with **lowered bodies** that may have all kinds of cool modifications, like **fancy wheels**, **custom paint**, and **switches** that can make the car bounce, hop, dance, or drive on three wheels! They were first created by **Chicanxs** in **California** and later **Texas** and the **Southwest**.

**What colors, patterns, or pictures will you put on yours?**