

The Paper Square Challenge



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How many ways can you alter a simple scrap of paper?

Start with a stack of small squares of paper and be prepared to cut more. The challenge is finding as many ways as possible to add dimension and texture to each square—without using drawing materials.

Armed with only a glue stick, scissors, and perhaps a tool or two, students can fold, cut, pierce, punch, crumple, curl, bend, shred, roll, twist, weave, tear, layer, emboss, and deboss one square after another—just to list a few techniques. Each altered square is arranged in a grid-like pattern, creating a colorful paper sculpture that grows larger and more complex.

Within each technique are countless variations. For instance, folds can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Pieces can be folded once, twice, or multiple times. Folds can rise up or go down. There's accordion folds, symmetrical folds, and asymmetrical folds. Once folding techniques are thoroughly explored, the wide realm of CUT and fold techniques can be stepped into.

We've provided a gallery of ideas, but it's only a place to get started. This challenge is a great way to start a collaboration and create a profusion of paper squares for display.

Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut paper into squares. Size is dependant on desired overall size of the finished piece: generally, 2" to 4" squares.

Process

1. Alter each paper square, following suggestions on following pages and also



Materials (required)

Colorful, foldable paper. Recommend:

[Hygloss Bright Sheets](#), 11" x 17", pkg of 46 (12906-1009); share one pkg across class

[Fadeless 2-Color Duet Paper](#), 12" x 18", pkg of 30 sheets (12908-1006); share one pkg across class

[Neenah Astrobrights Spectrum Paper](#), 8.5" x 11", pkg of 150 sheets (11346-1015)

[Fiskars Big Kids Scissors](#), 6" (86022-1006); one per student

[Blick Glue Stick](#), White, 1.41 oz (23895-1048); one per student

[Pacon Card Stock](#), Black, 8.5" x 11", pkg of 100 sheets, 65-lb (11319-2021); share one pkg across class

[Westcott Flexible Ruler](#), 6" (55693-1006)

Optional Materials

[Fiskars Hand Punches](#), assorted styles (58923-)

[Aitoh Bamboo Paper Folding Tool](#) (12654-)

[Marvy Uchida Corru-Gator Paper Crimpers](#), assorted patterns (62951-)

[Armada Paper Shapers](#), assorted styles (57056-)

Ready to order materials?

Go to www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plan/the-paper-square-challenge to access a product bundle for your convenience.

Folding:

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|-------------|--|--|----------------|--|--|
| Horizontal | | | Folded up | | | Folded corners | | |
| Vertical | | | Folded down | | | Complex folds | | |
| Diagonal folds | | | | | | Accordion fold | | |

Cutting combined with folding:

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---------------|--|--|----------|--|--|
| Cut and fold | | | Cut from fold | | | Cut outs | | |
| Tab cuts | | | Cut Strips | | | | | |

Curving

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--|--|---------|--|--|---------|--|--|
| Rolled | | | Arched | | | Quilled | | |
| Curled | | | Twisted | | | | | |

Cutting

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|-----------------|--|--|-----------------|--|--|
| Cut shapes | | | Cut and layered | | | Decorative cuts | | |
| Spiral Cuts | | | | | | | | |

Tearing

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|-------------|--|--|-----------|--|--|
| Torn edges | | | Torn Shapes | | | Shredding | | |
|------------|--|--|-------------|--|--|-----------|--|--|

Other

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|----------|--|--|-----------|--|--|
| Embossing | | | Weaving | | | Crumpling | | |
| Debossing | | | Punching | | | | | |

2. Glue altered squares in rows and columns to make a quilt like grid.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.



Step 1: Cut brightly colored paper into 2" squares.



Step 2: Using just a glue stick and scissors, find as many ways to alter the square as possible.

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Step 3: Glue the altered squares in a quilt-like pattern for display