

History at Home Activity: Paper Quilling

Purpose:

In these difficult times, simple activities can help keep children occupied and distract them from what is happening in the world. This activity gives children the opportunity to learn about a creative craft that dates back to Colonial times and have a little fun.



Quilled artwork made out of canvas strips, produced by artists, Stephen Stum and Jason Hallman

Info for Parents or Guardians:

You could share a little or a lot of the historical information that follows with children depending on their ages before you start the activity. This activity is geared towards children ages 8 and up. If the children are younger, speak in more general terms and provide a greater amount of help with the activity. These activities are designed to allow you to utilize materials that you probably already have at home. Feel free to substitute other materials. For example, almost any kind of paper, including wrapping paper, would work for this activity.

Vocabulary:

1. **paper quilling:** a decorative art that involves curling and/or shaping strips of paper into coils or other shapes that are then arranged on a flat background to form a picture or design.

History of Paper Quilling:

Paper quilling is an old decorative art form that involves curling or shaping strips of paper into coils or other shapes and arranging the shapes on a flat background to form a design or picture. The background can be a sheet of paper. Glue is then used to secure the paper strips into place on the background paper. This art form is commonly used to decorate things like greeting cards and boxes.

Paper quilling can trace its origins to around the 15th century. The name is believed to have come from a quill pen: it is thought that people wrapped the paper tightly around a quill to create the small coils. In the 15th century, French and Italian nuns and monks used quilling to decorate book covers and religious items.



Tea Caddy with paper quilling details, late 1700s, Olveston Historic Home in Dunedin, New Zealand



Artwork by Portuguese artist, Sena Runa

Paper quilling was also popular in England during the 1700s. It was considered a “proper pastime” for young women and was taught in boarding schools. The art form spread to North America during and was popular there in the 1700s also. Quilling was used to decorate cabinets, game boards, purses, work baskets, and tea caddies, and was also used as framed art for the home. Today, quilling is becoming popular with people who like to do crafts. It is sometimes used for decorating wedding invitations, greeting cards, scrapbook pages, and boxes. There are even artists who make large scale quilling art for galleries.

Now you are going to try paper quilling and make your own work of art. Don't worry if your artwork doesn't look perfect. You will get better at this art form by practicing and trying it more than once.

Materials required:

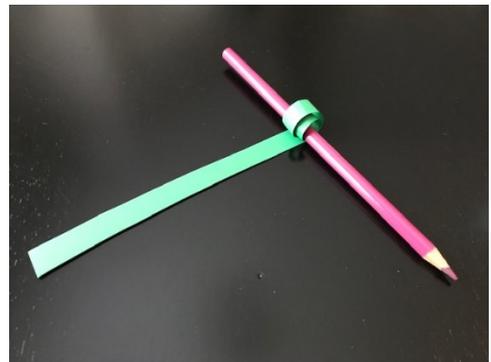
A pencil, pen or marker to roll paper strips around, sheets of construction paper or any other type of colored paper (you could even use white copy paper if no colored paper available) school glue or craft glue, scissors.

Activity Directions:

1. Cut construction paper or any paper on hand into thin strips – about 1/2" wide. They do not have to be perfect. If children are older, they may be able to do this step on their own.



2. Give child(ren) some of the paper strips and let them practice making them into tight rolls around a pencil, pen, marker, etc. Two strips of paper can be glued together at the end in order to make a larger coil.



3. Put a dot of glue on the end of the coil and attach it to itself to hold the shape.



4. Hold the glued end in place for a few seconds to a minute until the glue starts to dry.



5. Press the round roll at either end to make flower petal or leaf shapes. You can make other shapes by pinching the roll in different areas.



6. Put the shapes on the background and glue them down with small amounts of glue. You don't want to use a lot or you will see it on the picture after it dries.



To make the flower seen in the photo: make 6 yellow petal shapes, 1 yellow round coil, 2 green leaf shapes and 1 stem shape. Leaf shapes are just petal shapes made even flatter. Make 1 stem shape by folding a strip of green in half and then fold it again. If you enjoyed this activity, be creative and make another picture or design of your own.

Here is a link to the North American Quilling Guild's official Shape Chart which shows many of the different ways strips of paper can be shaped. Please note that some of these are rather complicated and are not necessary for this activity.

<https://www.naqq.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Shape-Chart-2019.pdf>

