

# Make Your Own Paper

You can easily make your own paper with a few materials from the hardware store and your own kitchen. And since this project uses old newspapers, your papermaking is actually paper recycling. Making your own paper is a great way to celebrate Earth Day, and is a fun art project, too!

## What You Need:

- Stack of old newspapers
- Large soup pot
- Picture frame small enough to fit inside the pot
- Thumbtacks
- Wooden spoon
- Old blanket or piece of felt
- Plywood board
- Piece of netting or window screen bigger than the picture frame



## What You Do:

1. Place a stack of old newspapers in the large soup pot and fill the pot with cool water. Allow the newspapers to soak for about 5 minutes; then pour off the water. This removes the loose printing ink.
2. Shred the wet newspaper in the pot. The fineness of your paper will depend on the size of your shredded pieces, with smaller pieces making a smoother and stronger paper.
3. Add water to the pot so that the paper is completely covered.
4. Allow the paper to soak overnight.
5. Ask for an adult's help for this step. Boil the newspaper and water until the newspaper dissolves into a kind of thick oatmeal. At this point, you can add some food coloring, or pieces of dried flowers to customize your paper. Professional papermakers would add bleach to whiten the paper.
6. Allow the mixture to cool for several hours. A smooth and even layer of paper pulp will begin to form at the surface.
7. Stretch the piece of screen or netting over the picture frame and tack it around the edges.
8. On a flat surface, open the blanket (or piece of felt) and place the plywood board close to it.
9. Carefully dip the picture frame into the soup pot, and lift it out flat so that the mushy pulp forms a sheet on the screen. If you see holes in the sheet, spoon some pulp over them.
10. Let the water drain away. Then move to the blanket and quickly turn the frame over so that the sheet falls onto the blanket.
11. Fold the blanket over the sheet; then place the plywood board over the folded blanket.
12. Press down on the plywood to squeeze excess water from the paper.
13. Lift the board and unfold the blanket. Let the paper dry overnight.
14. When dry, carefully peel your paper from the blanket, and trim away the rough edges.

Your homemade paper is great for greeting cards or artwork. It may not fold without breaking, though, so test some of the paper before using it for cards or letters.

**Did You Know?** This project actually recycles old newspapers. Paper consists mostly of wood pulp or *lignum*. When soaked, the pulp breaks apart into tiny fibers that can be mixed around in a kind of paper "soup," but they lock together again when the water is removed. Professional papermakers add other ingredients such as clays and starches to strengthen the locking of fibers. These binding agents make

the paper stronger, more flexible, and easier to fold without crumbling.

### Recommended Reading:



[100 Amazing First-Prize Science Fair...](#)

Glen Vecchione



[Privacy Information](#)

© Copyright 2006-2012 Education.com All Rights Reserved.