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Recycled Crafts and Art Activities



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QUALITY STANDARD



Crafts and Activities

All the following activities involve the reuse of waste materials. Using these materials shows the children involved that just because something has been used once for one purpose, it has not necessarily become useless.

There are of course, many more activities than those listed here. The following activities are those that we have found work well in schools or at home and all are easy and cheap to do.

Grass Heads

Grass heads are fun and very easy to make and reuse old pairs of tights. You will need — Clean, old pairs of tights, grass seed, empty plastic pots e.g. yoghurt or stir in sauces, peat free compost, something to draw the faces with, e.g. paint

1. A section of tights is cut off and tied at one open end. This is not necessary if it is at a foot.
2. The section is stretched over an empty pot or any small round container.
3. Put a generous pinch of grass seed in the bottom. This will grow through the tights to make the hair.
4. Place a handful of peat free compost on top of the seeds.
5. Tie the bottom, turn it over and draw on a face. Remember that the seeds need to go to the top.
6. Keep the whole thing in the pot and keep it moist. In a week the grass will begin to grow, and later it can be cut or styled, just like real hair!
7. You can use stick on eyes and pipe cleaners to add features to the heads. You can also make much large Grass Heads using a larger pot e.g. a pot noodle pot.



Grass Heads with stick on eyes and glasses made from pipe cleaners. The nose is made using an elastic band.

Egg Heads

Eggheads are a similar idea to the grass heads, only using empty eggshells instead of tights.

You will need — Empty eggshells, kitchen towel/toilet paper, cress seeds, empty egg cartons, felt tip pens.

1. Fill the eggshell with kitchen paper or toilet roll.
2. Pour water into the shell to moisten the paper.
3. Sprinkle cress seeds on top of the paper.
4. Draw on a face using felt tip pens.
5. Cut out a section of egg carton to hold the egghead. Keep it moist and the cress will sprout in a few days, and once grown it can be cut and eaten.

Plastic Bottle Piggy Bank

Cute pink pig moneyboxes made from old plastic bottles!

You will need – Plastic bottles, pink paper, pink paint, pink pipe cleaners, P.V.A. glue, tape, scissors and markers.

1. Either cover the bottle with pink paper or paint it. If using ordinary water based paint, you will need to mix it with glue to adhere to the plastic.

2. Once dry, roll up a sheet of paper and stick it with tape. Cut it into four and these are used for legs. They are best attached to the body using more tape
3. Cut out ears and stick them onto the head of the pig. Pierce a whole in the bottom to attach the pipe cleaner to make the tail.
4. Eyes, nostrils etc. can be added using markers. If desired, a slot can be cut in the pig's back to allow it to be used as a piggy bank.



Plastic bottle piggy bank made using pink paper.

Collages

Pictures cut or torn from magazines make good collages, but of you can be as imaginative with materials used as you want.

You will need — Paper, magazines, glue, and scissors.

Get the children to cut or tear the pictures from the magazines and stick them onto the paper to make their pictures.

Even better, if you draw an outline on a large sheet of card and write on it what colour goes where, fantastic pieces of work can be produced. Colour paper available from Play Resource is great for these, as it would be quite expensive to buy the quantities of coloured paper needed.



This mosaic is 1.5m x 1.5m and made from card and waste paper from Play Resource Warehouse in Belfast. Members of the public and school children made it at a Recycling Fair.

Nature Faces

Materials collected on trips or outings can be used to make large nature faces.

You will need — Large pieces of card, glue, scissors, collected materials e.g. cones, leaves, twigs, pine needles.

Cut the card into large round shapes, and then use the materials to make faces. These look best when hung on the wall.

Glass Painting

You don't need expensive glass paints to make attractive painted glass items. Ordinary cheap water based ready mixed paint mixed with P.V.A. glue works really well. This is suitable for older groups and works best over several sessions. Glass paints are very effective, but are expensive for large groups.

You will need — Mixed water based paint, P.V.A. glue, brushes, empty glass jars, and yoghurt pots.

1. Mix the glue and paint in the yoghurt pots. You only need to colour the glue with the paint. In the first session, use black or another dark colour to paint the outline on the jar, then leave to dry.
2. In the next session mix the colours and fill in the designs.

3. The brushers need to be well cleaned or the glue will ruin them.



This jar was painted using glass paints, but the paint and PVA mix achieves a similar result. This is used as a night light holder.

Paper Making with Plastic Bottles

This is a great activity, and works well in the classroom and at home. You do need to assemble quite a lot of equipment for a large group, but it is worth it.

This activity has the advantage that the steps in the process are exactly the same as those taken in a paper-recycling mill.

You will need - Plastic drinks bottles with tops, one per person. 500ml bottles work well, hot and cold water, paper making frame*, newspaper (two sheets of newspaper per person), cloths, sponges, a washing-up bowl and a rolling pin.

1. Each person is given a full sheet of newspaper, tabloid size works well. Tear the newspaper into small pieces roughly 1cm square. If the paper is too large it takes a longer time to breakdown sufficiently. Put all the pieces of paper into the plastic bottle.
2. Half fill the bottle with **hot** water. Put the on top tightly and shake the bottle **vigorously**. Shaking the paper in hot water melts the starchy

glue holding the fibres of the paper together. The paper is pulped when it looks like lumpy grey porridge. This will take approx five minutes, but it depends on how hard you shake the bottle, how small the pieces you started out with where and how hot the water is.

3. Now fill the bottle to the top with **cold** water. Put the top back on again and shake again a few times to mix the pulp and the cold water.
4. Over washing-up bowl or basin, pour out the paper/water mixture evenly into a paper making frame or sieve. Place a cloth on top of the paper, then using a sponge, press down quite firmly to squeeze out some of the excess water, making sure you put one hand under the sieve to avoid tearing the mesh.
5. On a new piece of newspaper, flip the frame over on top of the newspaper so the piece of recycled paper falls off the frame onto it. Cover the recycled paper with a cloth and roll with a rolling pin. This helps to squeeze out more water and makes the paper flatter and thinner.
6. Remove the cloth and leave the paper somewhere safe to dry. Drying will take several days depending on how thick the recycled paper is.
7. For more decorative paper, you can use coloured paper, add glitter to the pulp etc.

*You can buy papermaking frames, but you can use an ordinary sieve or make your own. You can also use a wooden frame with aluminium mesh bought from a car bodyworks shop attached using a DIY stapler.



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The finished recycled paper. Although it looks very dark in colour, it gets much lighter as it dries and ends up the same colour as egg boxes. This isn't surprising as egg boxes are made from recycled newspapers!

Paper Mache Castle

Think of the old medieval European castles with turrets & ones from fairy tales like Rapunzel. Walt Disney & Hogwarts.

You will need - a thick piece of cardboard for the base, roughly one square foot or a little larger (the side of a box is ideal), toilet & kitchen roll tubes, pringle tubes, drinking chocolate tubs etc, thin cardboard, scissors, masking tape, glue, paintbrush, bowl or basin, newspaper ripped into small strips, poster paints, clear plastic.

1. Get your thickest tube, e.g. drinking chocolate or Pringles one, and with the masking tape, stick it to the thick cardboard base. This is the main turret.
2. Use 2 toilet roll tubes (or a kitchen roll tube cut in half), and cut 2 semi circles from the cereal box. Tape them to make a cone shape. This is the roof of your smaller turrets, stick each to the top of the tubes with glue. Cut a larger semi circle to make the roof of the main turret.
3. Using the masking tape, attach each roll to the main tube, so approx half the tube is attached to the main tube & the other half is sitting above it.
4. Mix approx one half glue with one half water in the bowl. Dip the newspaper strips into it & then cover the entire castle in paper mache.

5. Leave to dry. Approx 1 day in a warm room.
6. Using the paints, decorate your castle. Try painting in windows & tiles on the roof. Maybe even some ivy growing up the side. You could even glue on some real moss. Paint the base blue. This is the moat. Glue on the plastic to give the effect of water. You can even glue on some tiny pebbles for boulders & twigs for trees.



A finished, fully painted castle. Note use of cling film for the water in the moat.

Musical Shakers

These are quick & fun to make.

You will need - yoghurt tubs (2 per child), masking tape, glue, paintbrush
scrap paper, tissue paper, magazines, etc, old buttons or metal clips or even dried beans.

1. Put a small handful of buttons (or equivalent noise maker) into a tub. With the masking tape, stick on the second tub, both open ends stuck together.
2. Glue on various paper shapes or pictures to decorate.

Tribal Masks

Think of African tribal masks. Try to get some pictures for inspiration & ideas.

You will need - large brown cardboard boxes, scissors, glue, paintbrush, dried grass, garden sticks, sellotape

1. Cut a large oval from the cardboard. Using the scissors carefully cut 2 eye holes.
2. Cut small shapes, (triangles, circles, etc) and stick these onto your mask to decorate it. Think about how you could build up the cheeks, nose & mouth in an interesting way. Glue on the dried grass either as hair or a beard.
3. Attach the garden stick to the back of the mask with tape. You can hold this in front of your face while doing a tribal dance!

Robots

Use your imagination to create some wonderful robots.

You will need - cereal box, scissors, glue paintbrush, paints, and collection of 'junk' for the details. Use what you can find lying around. Some ideas are plastic bottle tops, pastry/pie foil containers, match boxes, buttons, margarine tubs, toilet roll holders, etc.

The cereal box is the main body of your robot. Some ideas would be to stick on a margarine tub for the head, use plastic bottle tops as eyes, the buttons & matchboxes for robotic controls, toilet roll holders for arms & legs. Let your imagination run wild! Use the paints to decorate your creation when complete.

Hanging koi (Japanese fish)

You will need - Scrap A4 paper, magazines, coloured paper scraps, sweet wrappers etc, foil scraps, glue, scissors, stapler, markers or crayons, hole punch, crepe or tissue paper, string or wool.

1. Cut out 2 identical fish shapes from the scrap A4 paper (other scrap paper is fine too).
2. Cut out lots of colourful circles from the scrap magazines, colour paper & foil. Stick these onto one side of each fish shape, in an overlapping pattern to make scales.
3. Colour in the head & fins with markers.

4. Cut strips (approx 3-5 inches long) from the crepe or tissue paper. Staple both sides of the fish together so the scales are on the outside and sandwich the cut strips between the tails before stapling together.
5. Using the paper punch, punch 2 holes in the head, thread through the string and hang up. It will move in the wind & the paper hanging from the tail will move too like the fish is swimming upwards!



A finished fish!

Space Mobile

This is a fun and easy moon & stars mobile to make.

You will need - cardboard, old pie/pastry foils, string or wool, sellotape, paint, paintbrushes.

1. Cut a crescent moon shape from the cardboard.
2. Paint the moon white or yellow and use the black to paint craters. (Or you could also cut up an egg box and use these as space mountains).
3. When dry, attach string to the inside crescent of the moon to hang up.
4. Cut 3 star shapes from the pie/pastry foil.
5. Tape approx 8 inches of string to the back of each star and to the back of the moon, so the 3 stars hang down from the bottom of the moon.
6. You can add old tinsel to the bottom of the stars too!

Foam Printmaking

You will need - foam trays from frozen pizza/meat trays, cardboard, ballpoint pen, glue, plain paper, thick tempera or acrylic paint or ink, a brayer or foam roller brush.

1. Glue your foam tray onto the cardboard to add strength.
2. Draw a pattern or picture onto the foam tray with the ballpoint pen, lean firmly to make a good impression in the surface. Draw flowers, an abstract pattern, anything! If you draw letters or numbers, they must be backwards as what you print will be a mirror image of what you draw.
3. Use the brayer or foam roller brush to roll a thin layer of ink or paint onto the foam. Cover the surface, but not the lines you have drawn into the foam. The lines should stay clean and have no ink or paint in them, so don't press too hard or use too much paint.
4. Place a sheet of plain paper on top of the foam and press gently but firmly to transfer the ink onto the paper. You can make lots of prints from the one piece of foam.

Spring Flowers

This is a simple fun project to make colourful flowers for the classroom.

You will need - scraps of card, old wallpaper sample books are ideal, cardboard egg boxes, paint, paintbrushes, glue.

1. Daffodil: Cut yellow card, or plain card which can be painted yellow, into 5 petal shapes, but keep them connected at the middle. Cut out each of the egg holders from the egg carton and paint orange. Leave to dry & stick to middle of petals.
2. Other flowers: Cut out large flower shapes from the wallpaper sample books. (e.g. 5/6 petal leaf flowers), cut out slightly smaller but similar flower petal shapes. Do this twice more so you have 1 large flower shape, 1 medium sized flower shape, & 1 small flower shape. Glue the medium onto the large, and the small onto the medium. This makes a lovely display, especially many together.

Decoupage Paperweights

A very inexpensive way to use up scraps of paper.

You will need - small (child's fist sized) smooth pebbles or smooth shells, scraps of interesting pictures; try gardening magazines, wrapping paper or old children's books, paintbrush, clear varnish, glue, scissors.

1. Cut out the shape & glue it onto your pebble or shell. Leave to dry.

2. Coat with several coats of varnish, making sure you leave drying time between each coat.

Recycled Carton Plant Pot

This is an easy & fun way to reuse a juice or milk carton. Younger children will need the preparation work done for them.

You will need - 'Tetrapak' carton (long-life fruit juice, UHT milk cartons), scissors, white paint, paintbrush, felt tip pens, acrylic varnish.

1. Cut away one of the 3 long sides of the carton. Make a few holes in the opposite side, for the drainage holes, which will be the base of the pot.
2. Paint the pot with white paint and leave to dry. Decorate with felt pens. Draw on anything you like, flowers, moons, stars, dinosaurs, let your imagination run wild!
3. If using outdoors, paint on water proofing varnish, otherwise it will last nicely on an indoor windowsill.

Paper Bag Kites

A good way to reuse brown paper bags & old art scraps.

You will need - brown paper bag, scissors, glue, paintbrush, paint, string, hole punch, art paper scraps (paper, tissue/crepe paper, ribbon, glitter-although nothing too heavy), 4 paper reinforcement rings (the kind you use on paper in binders from any stationary shop. You could also substitute masking tape).

- 1 With the hole punch, make 4 holes at the open end of the paper bag - one in each of the corners. Add paper ring reinforcements to the holes, or put a small piece of masking tape over the hole and poke through with a pencil. This is important so the holes don't tear completely.
- 2 Cut 2 lengths of string, approx 30". Tie each end of each piece of string to a hole. You should be left with 2 loops.
- 3 Next, cut another piece of string again around 30". Loop this through the two loops you created and tie in a knot. This piece of string will become the handle of your kite.
- 4 Now decorate the paper bag kite using paint & paper scraps. You can paint designs on the kite or turn the kite into a fish by adding eyes, gills and fins, let your imagination run wild!. You can glue different items to the kite but be sure not to load the kite down with heavy items or it will have a hard time staying up in the air.



- 5 You can make your own streamers by cutting scrap tissue or crepe paper into strips. Alternatively take plastic bags and cut them into strips.
- 6 Hold on tightly to the string handle and run so that the wind catches the kite. When the bag fills with air it will float and flutter behind you.

Milk Carton Pen Pot

You will need - empty 1 pint milk carton (cardboard/tetrapak), ruler, pencil, glue paintbrush, scissors, magazines.

- 1 Using the ruler, carefully mark a straight lines all around the top of the carton. Cut the top from the milk carton.
- 2 Cut out interesting shapes, pictures from the magazines & glue them all around the sides of the carton.
- 3 Leave to dry. You now have a handy pen holder.



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