Making Your Own Paper

Jim and Leona Meeks

Grade Level: Preschool and Elementary

Purpose: Students will gain an understanding of a major component of culture: language/writing.

Materials: Newspaper
Scissors
Plastic wash pans
Stirring spoon
Bleach
Strawberries or blueberries
Small mixing bowls
Ladle
Spatula
Water
10 by 10 inch square frame
12 by 12 inch piece of screen
Staple gun with staples

Procedures:
1. With an adult, make a wooden 10 by 10 inch frame. Or you might buy one at a hobby and craft store.
2. With an adult, lay the piece of screen on top of the frame so that equal amounts of the screen are overlapping the frame on all sides.
3. With an adult, use a staple gun to staple the screen in place on all four sides.
4. With scissors, cut long and narrow strips of paper from the newspapers. A good size is six inches long and one-half inch wide.
5. Put about three inches of water in the plastic wash pans.
6. Lay your newspaper strips into the wash pans. Make sure they are covered with water.
7. Let the newspaper soak for 2 to 4 days until it becomes like a paste texture. Stir the paper mixture every day.
8. If you want to make different colors of paper, put a few strawberries or blueberries in a small mixing bowl. Smash the berries with a fork and spoon until they are like a sauce. With the fork, lift out and pitch the skins and meaty parts so all you have left is the red or blue juice.
9. Pour the juice of the berries into a mixing bowl. Add a few ladles of the newspaper paste. Mix together well.
10. If you want to make whiter paper, put a little clothes bleach into a mixing bowl. Add a few ladles of the newspaper paste. Mix together well.
11. Place the wooden frame into a wash pan to collect the excess water that will drip off of the newspaper paste mix.
12. Ladle some newspaper paste onto the top of the screen area of the wooden frame. (Do one color at a time!) Use your hands or a spatula to smooth out the paste evenly across the surface of the screen.

13. Leave the frame and the paste alone for a few days until things dry out and you have paper! You can hurry things along by having a fan blow onto the screen.

14. Carefully strip off the piece of paper you have made. You can clean things up and do another piece of paper that you have dyed.

15. You can write a poem or letter or draw a picture on your paper!

**What is happening?**

Paper is made from shavings and “pulp” of a tree. What you did was to recycle newspaper into drawing or letter writing paper. You can have fun making many different textures of paper using different sources like construction paper, paper towel, newsprint, etc. You can make imprints and pictures by ladling on different dyed pastes onto the screen in particular designs and shapes.

**Benchmarks:**

SS.A.2.2.1- Knows the significant and technological achievements of various societies.

**GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 10:** The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics.