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# Recycled Art Projects

Have fun with your classroom creating reusable art while teaching students about waste reduction. Incorporate these art projects into seasonal activities or integrate them with curriculum units.

## Why make recycled art? Because...

- More than half of what is at the landfill is recyclable or reusable.
- Reusing is a simple way to save natural resources before recycling.
- The more use we get out of a piece of paper, a plastic container, a milk carton, the less we need to buy.

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# Cereal Box Folder

Reuse colorful cereal boxes to make folders students can use to stay organized at school and at home.



## Materials

- Two cereal boxes of the same size (have students bring their favorite boxes from home)
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Packing tape



### Classroom Connection

Make cereal box folders in September to help students keep their desks organized and to kick off a green school year!

## How To

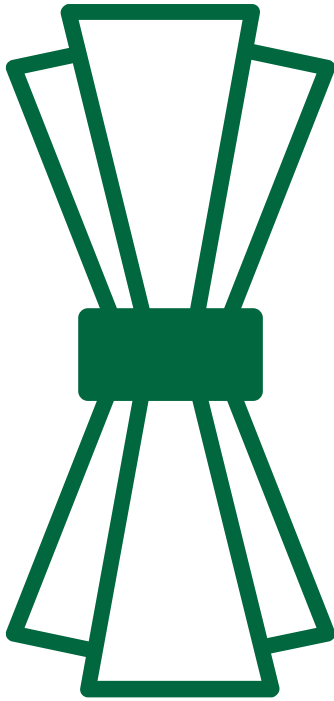
1. Open a cereal box. Slide your finger through the glued flaps to separate them.
2. Lay the box flat on the table.
3. Cut 2 inches off the bottom and top of the cereal box. Remove the top and bottom flaps.
4. Remove one of the flaps from the left or right side of the cereal box.
5. Fold the cereal box in half at the center. The box now resembles a folder without pockets.
6. Cut the front off of another cereal box. Cut the front in half horizontally.
7. Layer one half of the cereal box front along the interior of one side of the folded cereal box. Trim the cereal box front vertically to fit within the folded box. Do the same for the other side.
8. Line the cereal box front up with the bottom and open side edge of the folded box. Do the same for the other side.
9. Use clear packing tape to secure the cereal box halves to the folded box.



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# Napkin Ring Holders

Decorate your Thanksgiving table with these earth-friendly napkin ring holders.



## Materials

- Toilet paper or paper towel tubes (get teachers to collect their tubes for a month or have students each bring one or two from home)
- Scissors
- Scrap paper, old magazines and calendars
- Markers and crayons
- Glue



### Seasonal Connection

Make these around Thanksgiving for students to take home and use at their Thanksgiving dinner.

## How To

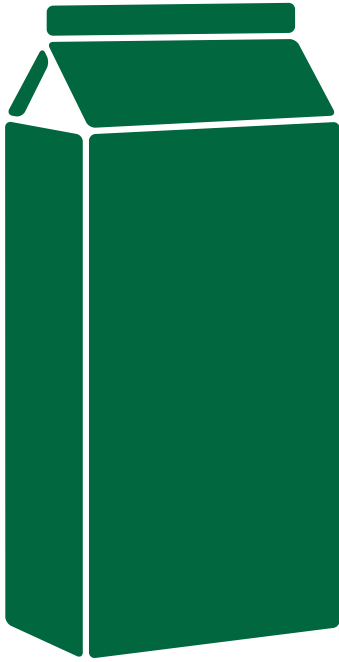
1. Have students cut their 1-inch sections out of their cardboard rolls.
2. If students would like to have a turkey theme for their napkin holders, have them trace their hand on a piece of colored scrap paper to make a hand-turkey. They can decorate their turkey then attach it to the napkin ring with glue.
3. If students would like to decorate their napkin holders with something other than a turkey, use old magazines and calendars to find small photos to glue onto their napkin ring holder.
4. Add additional decoration with the markers and crayons.



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# Milk Carton Pen Pot

Reuse milk cartons to make a pot for storing pens and pencils on your desk.



## Materials

- One empty milk carton per child (collect from the lunchroom)
- Scissors
- Scrap paper, old magazines and calendars
- Glue



### Classroom Connection

Use milk cartons to make fun storage containers for the whole classroom. Store paper clips, beads, extra pencils, or other small items in milk carton pots.

## How To

1. Cut off the angled top of each milk carton.
2. Students can decorate their pen pot with colored scrap paper, old calendars and magazines.
3. Put pencils and pens in the container and place on desk.



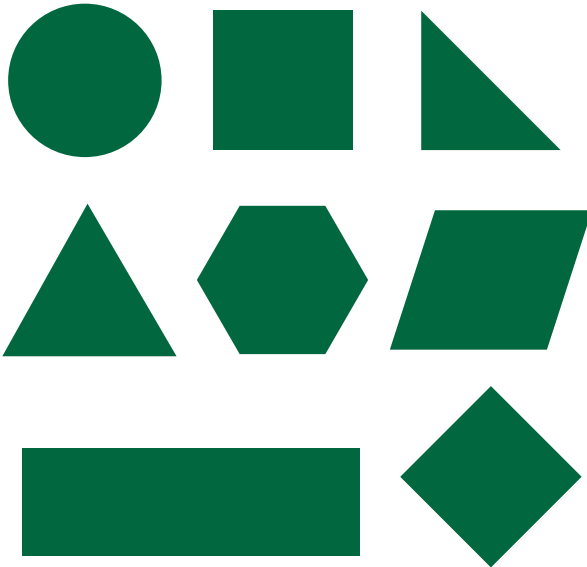
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# Patchwork Geometry

Reuse scrap paper to learn about geometry and make gift or greeting cards.

## Materials

- Scraps of construction paper, old magazines or calendars, wrapping paper or any colorful paper
- Scissors
- Glue



### Curriculum Connection

Students learn about shapes, measurements, angles and other shape-related math activities.

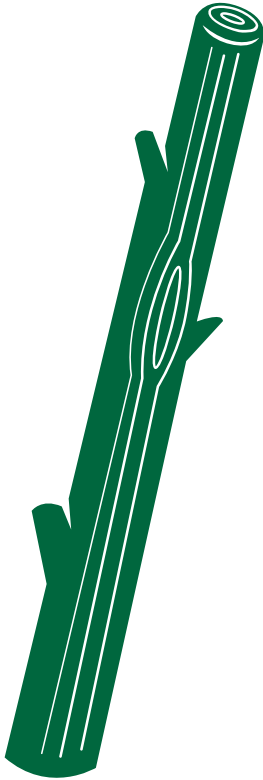
## How To

1. Have students outline triangles, squares, rectangles, pentagons, or other geometric shapes on their paper of choice.
2. Have students cut them out.
3. Glue the shapes in patchwork designs on a gift or greeting card.

**Extension:** Use another sheet or page to make an envelope for the card.



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## Twig Journal

No need to use new paper for journals, lists, and notes. Use scrap paper to make eye-catching booklets and pads.

### Materials

- Paper used on one side
- Old magazines, calendars, maps, posters, paper bags, construction paper, wrapping paper or any colorful paper (send email to parents and/or teachers to collect any old magazines or calendars. Ask teachers to save larger pieces of scrap construction paper)
- Hole punch
- Twig (1 per journal - have students collect outside)
- Rubber band (1 per student - reuse rubber bands from vegetables from the grocery store, newspapers, etc.)



#### Curriculum Connection

This journal can be used as part of a writing unit or a science unit. Students can use it to record information.

### How To

1. Use last year's calendar to make a sturdy cover for the booklet.
2. Insert paper used on one side to make the pages of the journal.
3. Make two holes at the left-hand side of the journal, slightly shorter than the length of the twig.
4. Insert the ends of the rubberband through the holes.
5. Slide the twig into the loops at each end of the rubber band to hold it all together.



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## Envelopes

Make an envelope from old calendars. Students select a picture of their choice and use an envelope template to trace out their envelope.

### Materials

- Old magazines, calendars, maps, posters, paper bags, construction paper, wrapping paper or any colorful paper (Send email to parents and/or teachers to collect any old magazines or calendars. Ask teachers to save larger pieces of scrap construction paper.)
- Envelope template
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Stapler
- Large paper clip
- Glue stick
- Hole punch



#### Curriculum Connection

Use envelopes to hold student thank you letters or letter writing assignments

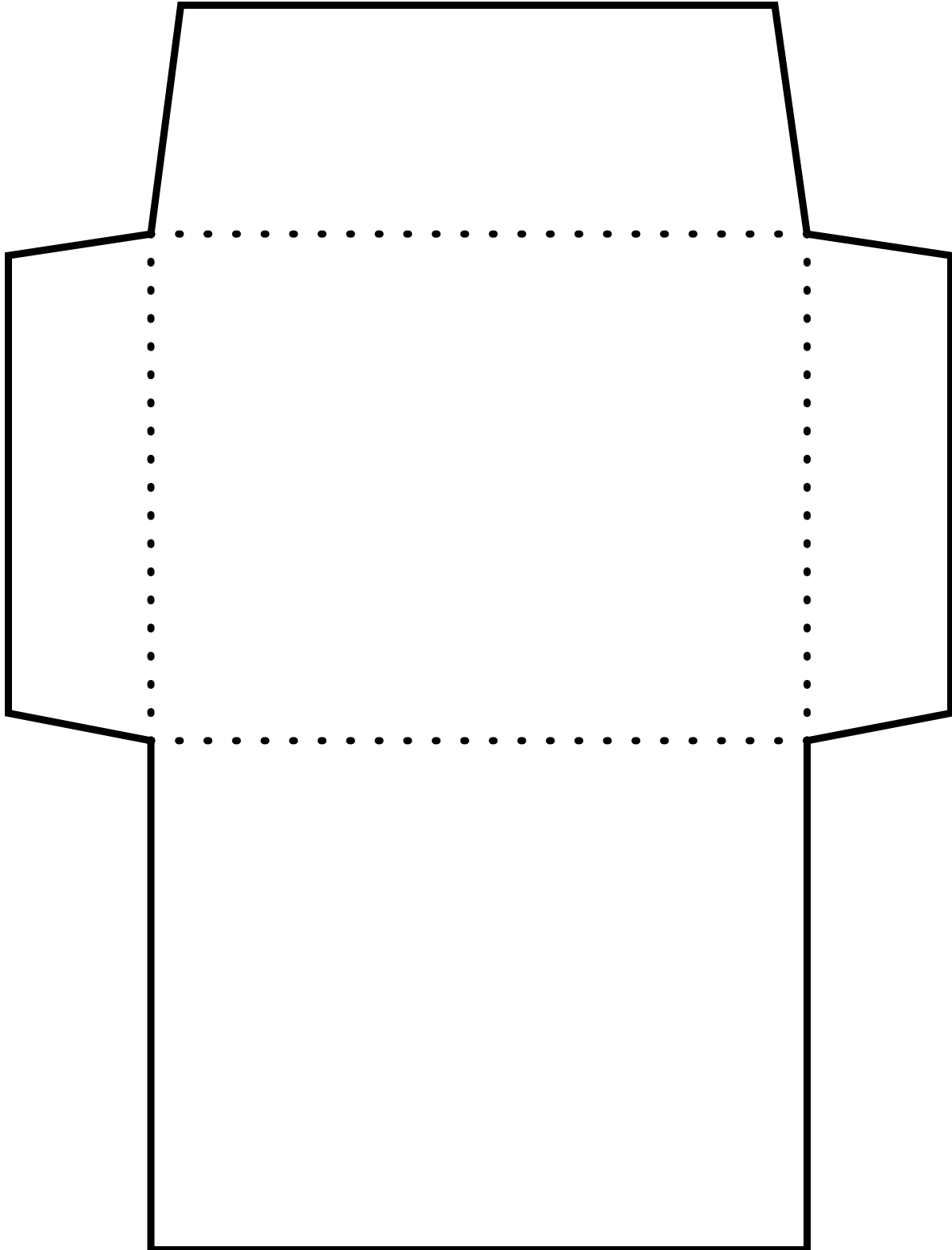
### How To

1. Trace the envelope template (on the following page) outline onto the paper for the envelope.
2. With a ruler and a large paper clip, score and fold the dotted lines.
3. Decide if the top or bottom will be the envelope flap.
4. If the front of the envelope is dark or busy, glue on a "mailing label" made from a torn piece of light-colored paper.



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# Envelope Template







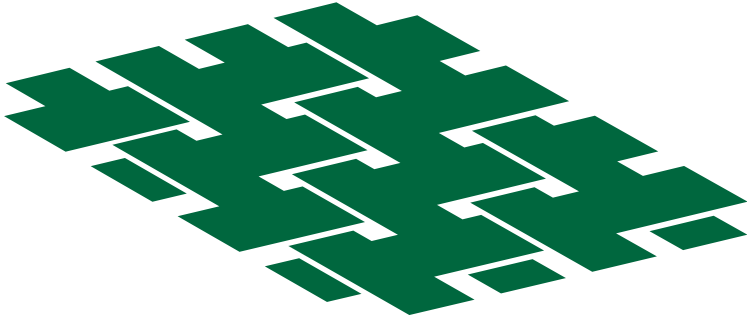
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## Party Placemats

Cut clean orange juice and milk cartons or cereal boxes into strips, and students can weave these into colorful place mats to keep their desks clean during class parties.

### Materials

- Clean juice or milk cartons or cereal boxes (beverage cartons are more water resistant and can easily be wiped clean)
- Glue or dental floss



### How To

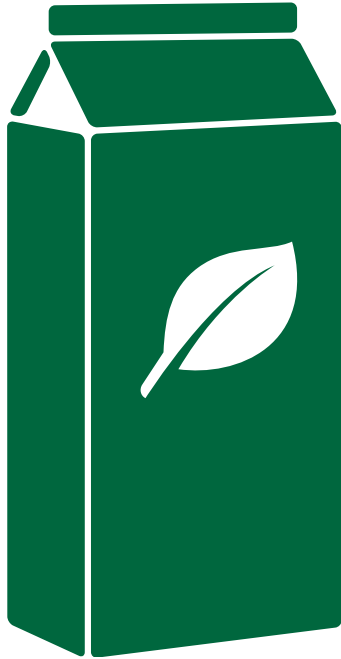
1. Cut juice or milk cartons or cereal boxes into 1/2-inch strips.
2. Have students weave them into the size of a placemat.
3. Glue the ends to keep it together or weave dental floss around the edges to keep strips secure.



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# Milk Carton Planters

Use milk cartons to grow flowers with your students! Make a milk carton pot, fill it with soil, plant a seed and watch it grow.



## Materials

- One milk carton per student (have students save from lunchroom)
- Soil
- Seeds (free flower seeds can be found on the web or through local nurseries or garden clubs)



### Curriculum Connection

Students learn what a plant needs to grow, stages of plant growth and plant parts.

## How To

1. Cut slanted parts of the top off milk carton so you are left with a square, straight-sided pot.
2. Have students write their name on the side of their plant pot.
3. Fill the milk carton 3/4 full with soil.
4. Sprinkle a few seeds of choice on top of the soil.
5. Add a small handful of soil to cover the seeds.
6. Place plant pot where it will receive sunshine.
7. Water regularly.
8. Watch your plant grow!

**Extension:** Have students record their observations in their journals as they watch their plant grow.

## Have more cartons? Make a bird feeder!

Attach a scrap of string to the top, cut out the middle segment creating a hole big enough for a small, backyard bird to get at the seeds in the base. Keep a journal nearby to take notes on the different wildlife your feeder attracts.





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## Earth Day Grocery Bags

Celebrate Earth Day by decorating and reusing paper grocery bags with messages to reuse and save paper.



### Materials

- Paper grocery bags (have each student bring one from home or ask teachers to bring in a few from home)
- Crayons, markers and stamps

### How To

1. Have students brainstorm ways that they can be earth-friendly.
2. Students can illustrate earth-friendly ideas and actions onto their grocery bags.
3. Use bags to decorate the classroom/school, have students take them home to reuse or use them to transport or store items at school.

Many grocery stores encourage students to decorate bags and return them to the store to share with the community. Have a contest to see how many times you can use a bag before it falls apart! Get more information or send your results to the grocery bag project at [earthdaybags.org](http://earthdaybags.org).



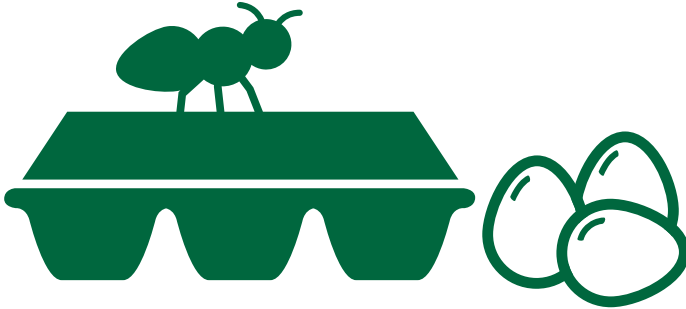
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# Egg Carton Bugs

Take old egg cartons and turn them into bugs!  
Have students accurately replicate the bug/  
insect/spider of their choice.

## Materials

- Egg cartons (have students bring them in from home or have teachers collect from home)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Twigs and/or paper clips



### Curriculum Connection

Students learn about bugs,  
insects or arachnids  
and their body parts.

## How To

1. Have students cut out their insects body segments from the egg carton slots (e.g., if insect has 3 body segments, cut out a string of 3 egg holders). Students can also cut out individual sections and use twigs or paper clips to attach them together.
2. Next, students should add the appropriate body parts to their egg carton insect. Use twigs and markers or crayons to add legs, eyes, antennae and other body parts.

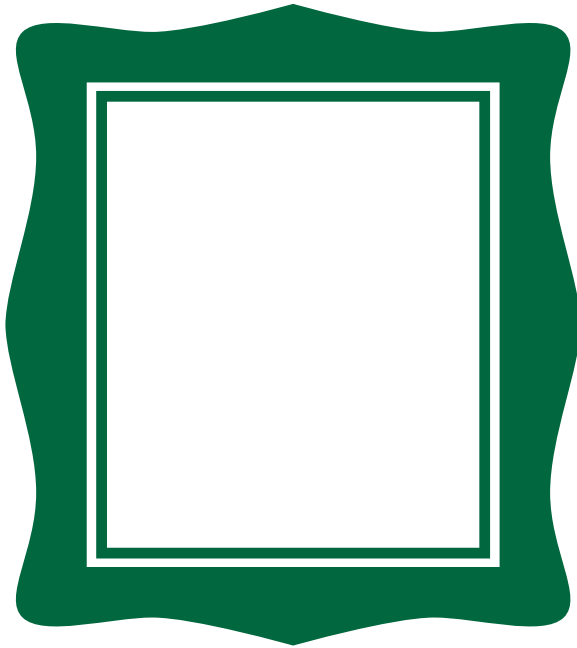
**Extension:** Have students make one insect and one arachnid to explore the differences between the two.



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## Picture Frames

Reuse shoe and other cardboard boxes to create imaginative frames for your photos of family, classmates or friends!



### Materials

- Scrap cardboard (collect old shoe boxes or mailing boxes from students' or teachers' homes)
- Old magazines, calendars, wrapping paper or other scrap paper
- Glue
- Scissors

### How To

1. Cut out a picture frame for each student with a 2-inch width (for a 4x6 photo, cut out a 6x8 piece of cardboard and cut out a 4x6 section from the middle).
2. Cut out a frame back for each student (same size as original frame - 6x8 for a 4x6 photo).
3. Give students old magazines, calendars, wrapping paper and other scrap paper for decorating their frame.
4. Put glue on 3 sides of the frame and attach to the frame back. The 4th side is where photos can be put in and taken out of frame.