

Lesson Title: *Papel Picado* I (For Early Elementary)

Age Level: Early elementary
(Kindergarten through Third Grade)

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes for each version or 1 to 1.5 hours for entire lesson. Can be broken up into a two day lesson with two separate activities

PAPEL PICADO

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS:

National Standards for Arts Education, Visual Arts Content Standards 1 -5
New Mexico Standards for Visual Arts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

MATERIALS

Multi-colored tissue or Foil paper or double-sided contrasting colored or madras tissue paper
Scissors
String
Glue Stick

GOAL

To teach students about *Día de los Muertos* through the art of *papel picado*.

STUDENT LEARNING

Students will produce their own *papel picado* art using the demonstrated techniques, developing fine motor skills related to cutting and folding while learning concepts of lines, color contrast and value.

PROCEDURE Version I (Easiest)

1. Give each student a piece of tissue paper (square or rectangular).
2. Modeling for the students first, demonstrate how to fold the tissue paper like a fan or an accordion. Fold the paper back and forth (about 2-3 inches each time) until you have folded the entire piece of paper and are left with a long, narrow rectangle. Discuss what contrasting colors are if you are using contrasting paper.
3. Have students fold their paper as you have just demonstrated.

VOCABULARY

Papel Picado
Fold
Cut
Line
Shapes
Over
Under
Contrasting color
Color Value

- 4.** Modeling first, demonstrate how to cut down the long edges of the rectangle (you will not cut the short edges). You can cut waves, miniature triangles, squares, half circles, etc. You want to be sure to have a firm grasp on the paper, because as you cut you are eliminating the edges that keep the paper held together. You will end up with a stack of strips of tissue paper.
- 5.** Have students cut their tissue paper, creating any design around the edges that they would like. Encourage them to use a different design and shapes on the two sides.
- 6.** Folding the strips: Modeling first, taking one strip at a time, fold the strip in half so that the two short edges meet. While continuing to hold the edges of the first strip together, take the next strip and fold its edges together, then, put it next to your first strip, now holding four edges together. Continue to do this until you have folded all of the strips of paper and are now holding all of the folded edges together. Then, staple the edges together to hold all the paper strips in place.
- 7.** Have students fold the paper as you have demonstrated, circulating around the room to help them as needed.
- 8.** Now, you make create a garland by punching a hole where the strips are stapled together and stringing them together. You may also want to have students repeat the activity so that they have two that they can staple together to make a flower shape.

Version II (Basic Garland)

- 1.** Give each student a piece of tissue paper (square or rectangular). You may want to use the madras colored tissue paper for this activity
- 2.** Modeling first, demonstrate how to fold the tissue paper like a fan or an accordion. Fold the paper back and forth (about 2-3 inches each time) until you have folded the entire piece of paper and are left with a long, narrow rectangle. Discuss what contrasting colors are if you are using contrasting paper.
- 3.** Have students fold their paper as you have just demonstrated.
- 4.** As a class, fold the rectangles in half from left to right. You now have two short edges (right and left) and two long edges (top and bottom).
- 5.** Model this step before you have your students do it. You are going to make two stair case like shapes at the top of the not folded, short side of the rectangle (if you folded to the right, you'll be cutting the short, right edge or if you folded to the left, the left short edge). The staircases meet at the center of this short not folded side. On the top edge, start about an inch from the short, not folded side, start cutting a stair case, stopping at the center of the short edge. Do the same thing along the bottom edge, the two staircases meet in the center of the short edge.

6. Now, cut designs into the long edges (bottom and top) of the rectangle. Students can cut various shapes (triangles, rectangles, half circles) into these edges.
7. Unfold the short edge of the rectangle so that you now have a long narrow rectangle. First unfold, the top long rectangle. Do not glue this strip down in the next step. This is the string fold and will be glued around the hanging string in the last step.
8. You are going to glue the sides of the fan together along that center fold line. You will need to glue all of the rectangles together in one direction, then flip the tissue paper over and glue each rectangle together on that side—always along that center fold line.
9. Take the bottom rectangle and put glue all of the way across it from left to right, then glue the two halves of that bottom rectangle together. You should now have a shape that resembles a fan.
10. Take two chairs somewhat far apart. The chairs are going to support the string or ribbon that will create the garland of fans. Tie or tape on end of the string to one chair and the other end of string to the other chair. The chairs should be apart enough that the string is taut.
11. Take the string fold (the top rectangle that you did not glue down). Place glue on the back of this rectangle, then fold it over the hanging string and press it down onto the top edge of the fan so that the fan is now hanging from the string or ribbon.

Another fabulous resource for papel picado exercises is:

Lomas Garza, Carmen. *Making Magic Windows: Creating Papel Picado/Cut Paper Art*
San Francisco: Children's Book Press/Libros Para Niños, 1999.

SUGGESTED FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Observe student work

Artwork produced by students