



GEMARTS

CULTURAL THREADS

Creative arts activities to improve
mindfulness and wellbeing



Cultural Threads is an Arts, Health and Wellbeing programme produced and delivered by GemArts. Working with artists across diverse art forms and communities living in Gateshead and Newcastle, GemArts use creative engagement to reduce isolation and loneliness.

Celebrating creativity and diversity the programme enables people to develop new creative skills and interests, engage with others, build confidence and develop community networks to improve health and wellbeing.

GemArts has been working with four local artists who have created arts activities for this Cultural Threads booklet for you to try at home. For each of the activities you should be able to source these everyday materials around your home, or if needed you can buy them from local shops.

Online Tutorials

You can access online tutorials for these arts activities and others including Bollywood Dance and Dhol Drumming by visiting the Cultural Threads project page on GemArts website at www.gemarts.org

Share your work with GemArts

We would love to see what you have created. Please share your creations by sending them to GemArts via email; or on social media by tagging GemArts in and using the hashtag #CulturalThreads

Email: info@gemarts.org

Facebook: [@gemarts](https://www.facebook.com/gemarts)

Twitter: [@GemArtsuk](https://twitter.com/GemArtsuk)

Instagram: [@gemartsuk](https://www.instagram.com/gemartsuk)

Enjoy and have fun, and do get your family and friends creating too!



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DRAWING MANDALAS

with Sofia Barton

What is a Mandala?

Mandala is a Sanskrit word for circle. A mandala is a design, usually centred around a circle with repeating colours, shapes, and patterns. They can be geometric, symmetrical or free-flowing. In Hinduism and Buddhism, the mandala can be a spiritual symbol to represent the universe, the circle symbolising that life never ends and that everything is connected. It also represents a spiritual journey. Drawing Mandalas can be very therapeutic, great for relaxation, meditation and increasing self-awareness.

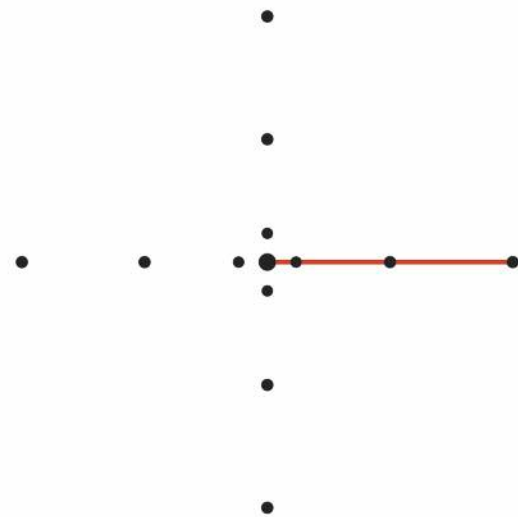
Here is what you will need...

- Colouring pens / pencils / paints.
- Ruler.
- Compass (or a bowl / circular object if you don't have a compass).



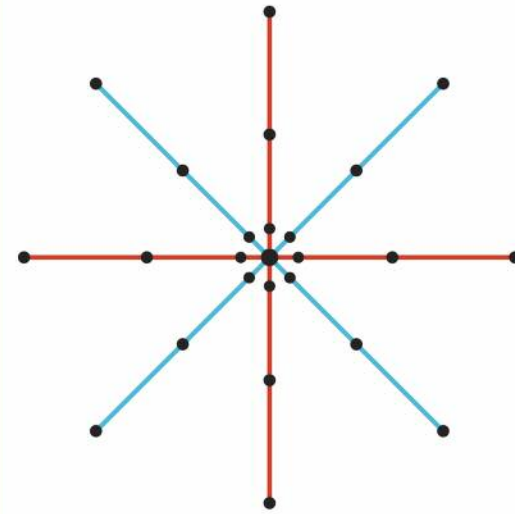
STEP 1.

Make a dot in the centre of your paper.
This will be your focal point/guide.



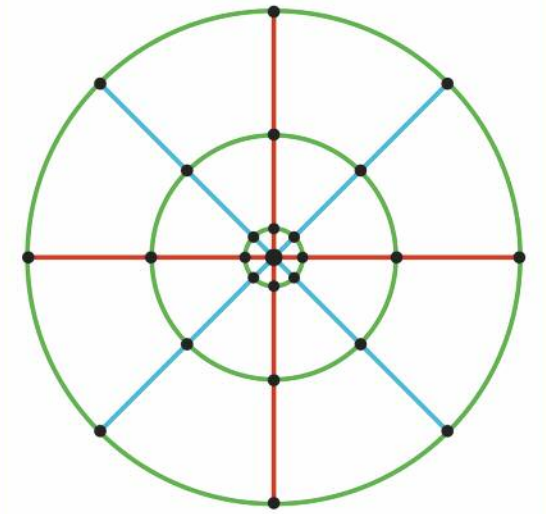
STEP 2.

Measuring in an even cross shape.
Using a ruler, trace light lines with a pencil.



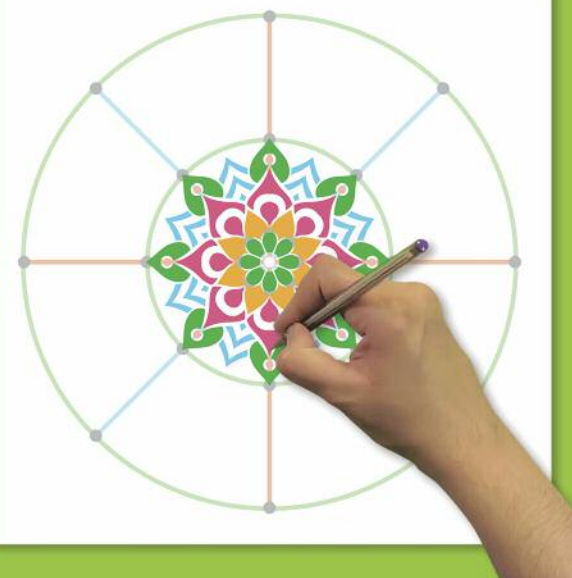
STEP 3.

Working diagonally.
Make diagonal lines with your pencil.



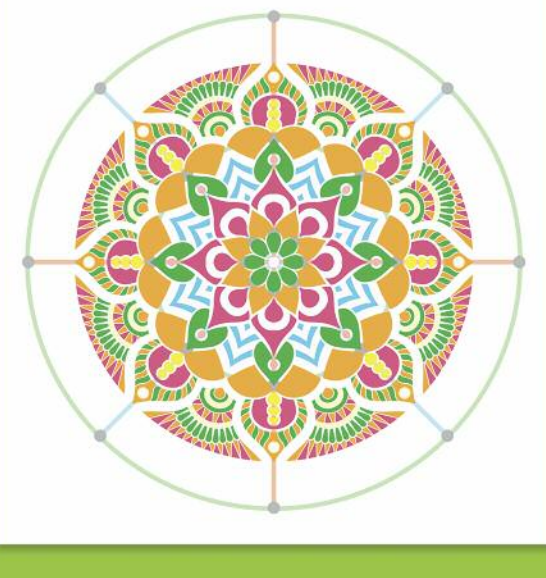
STEP 4.

Building guidelines and sections.
Using a compass / bowl / circular object, trace circles from the centre.



STEP 5.

Start drawing from the middle.
You can start drawing! Use coloured pencils / pens / paints and get creative.



STEP 6.

Slowly build patterns.
Take your time and see where your creativity takes you. Remember, any mistakes don't matter – it's all about having fun!

ORIGAMI HEARTS

with Michelle Wood

What is Origami?

Origami is the art of paper-folding and is very popular across the world. Its name comes from the Japanese words *ori* ("folding") and *kami* ("paper"). Traditional origami involves folding a single sheet of square paper (often with a coloured side) into a two or three dimensional sculpture without cutting, gluing, taping or marking. Origami is closely associated with Japan, but also has roots in China and Europe. Originally used for ceremonial or religious purposes, it later became used for recreation and as an art form.

Here is what you will need...

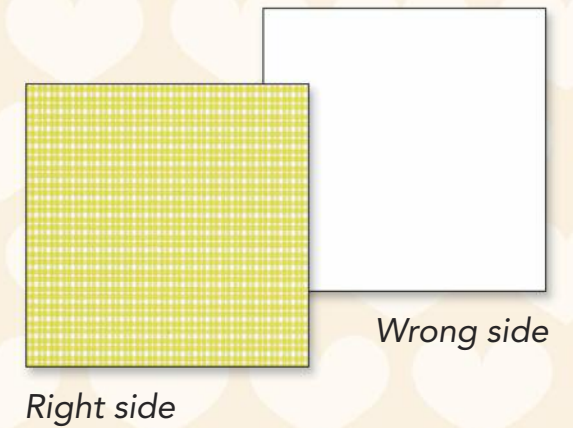
- Squares of thin paper e.g. origami, copier or recycled wrapping paper, magazine pages, newspaper, old maps etc. You can use any paper as long as it is thin.

- Optional
- Bulldog clips, paperclips or mini pegs.
 - String, thread or twine.
 - Blank greetings card and glue or tape.

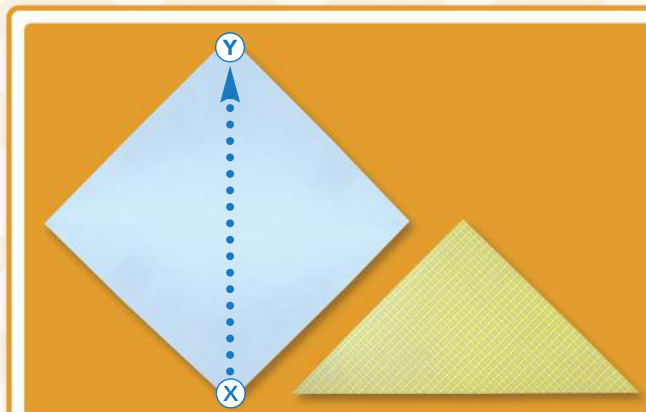
These origami hearts look beautiful and are simple to make from resources available in the home. You can use them for decoration, for a gift or on a greetings card.



The right side of the paper has a colour, pattern or print on it. The wrong side of the paper is usually blank.



Take your time when making your origami heart, and if you think you've made a mistake, don't worry! Just open up the paper and start again.



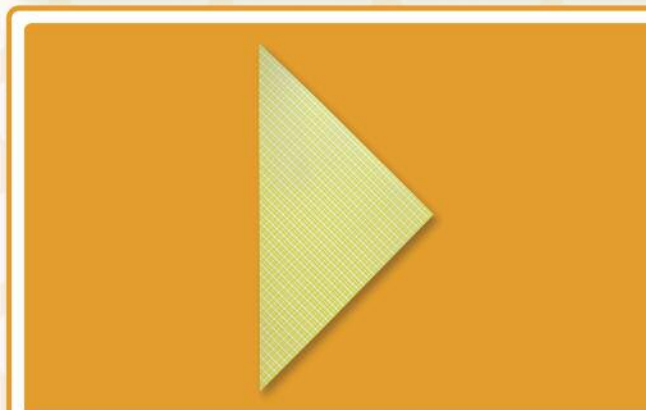
STEP 1.

Place the paper with the wrong side facing up. Make a diagonal fold by bringing opposite corners X and Y together.



STEP 2.

Open up the paper.



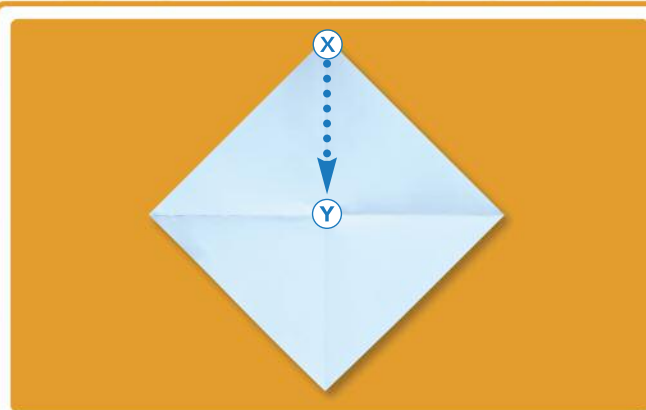
STEP 3.

Make a diagonal fold in the other direction.

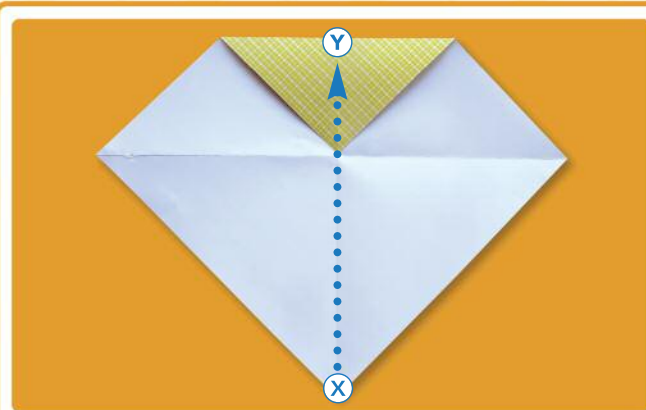


STEP 4.

Open up the paper.



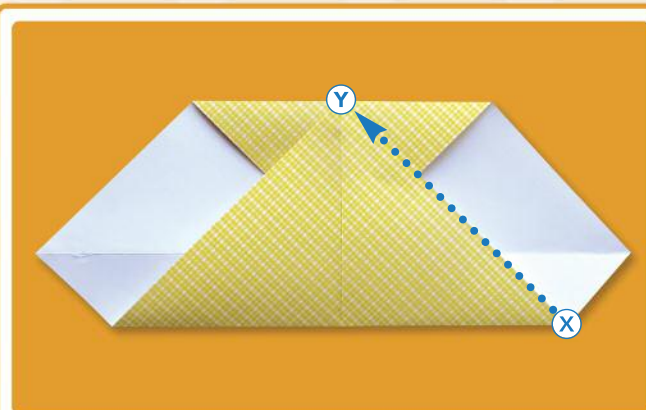
STEP 5.
Fold down the top corner X to meet the middle of the paper Y.



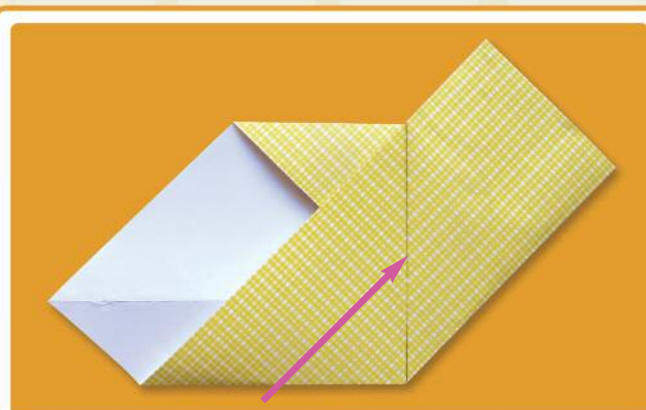
STEP 6.
Bring the bottom corner X up to the top edge Y.



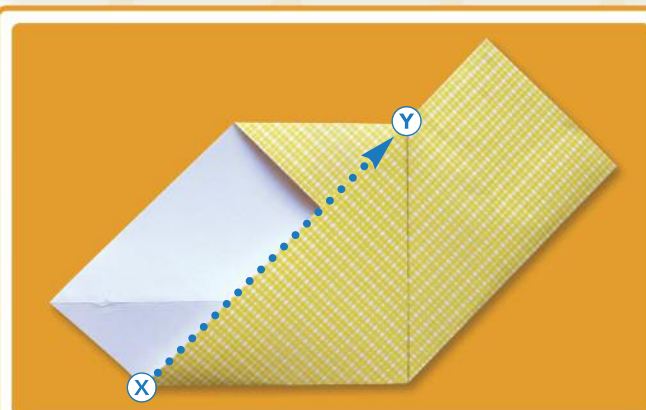
STEP 7.
Your folds should look like this.



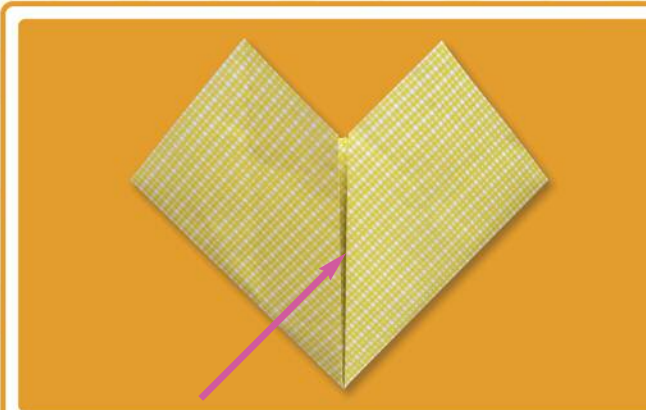
STEP 8.
Take the bottom righthand corner X to meet the top middle Y.



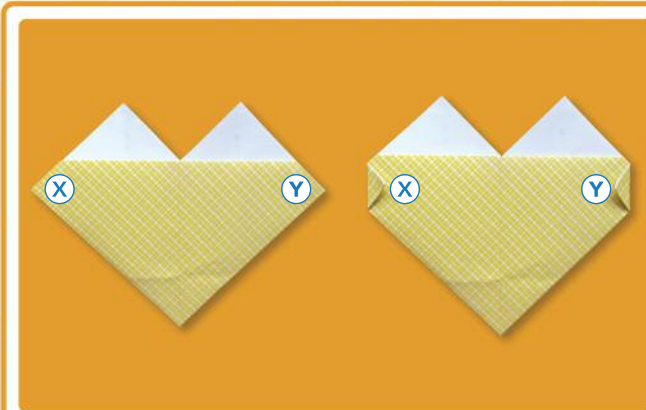
STEP 9.
Make sure the edge lies along the centre crease.



STEP 10.
Repeat for the other side of the heart, bring the bottom corner X up to the top middle point Y.



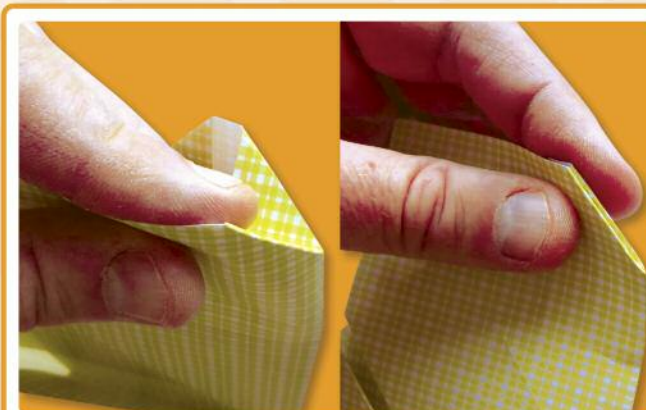
STEP 11.
Make sure the edge lies along the centre crease.



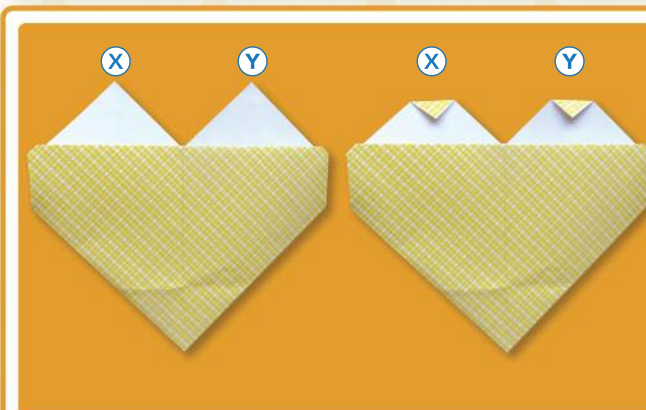
STEP 12.
Turn the heart over to show the back. Slightly fold over the corners X and Y.



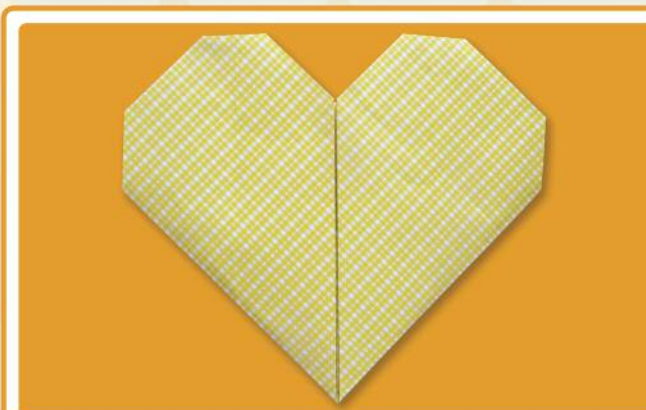
STEP 13.
To tuck in the corners, open up the heart slightly with your finger.



STEP 14.
Gently push the folded corner to tuck it inside and press it shut. Repeat for the other corner.



STEP 15.
Finally, slightly fold down the 2 corners X and Y to enhance the heart shape.



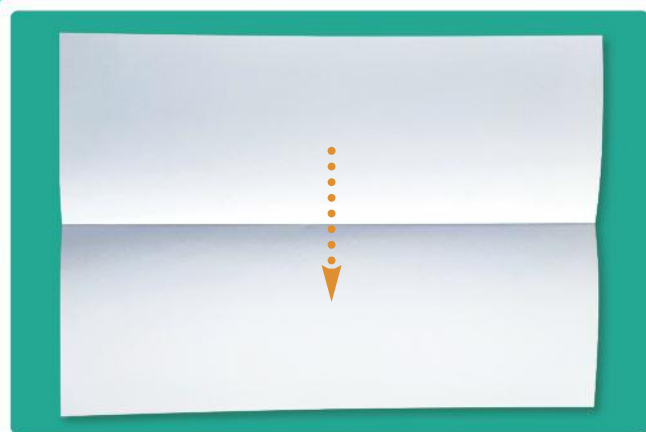
STEP 16.
Your completed origami heart!

ORIGAMI POPPER

with Pui Lee

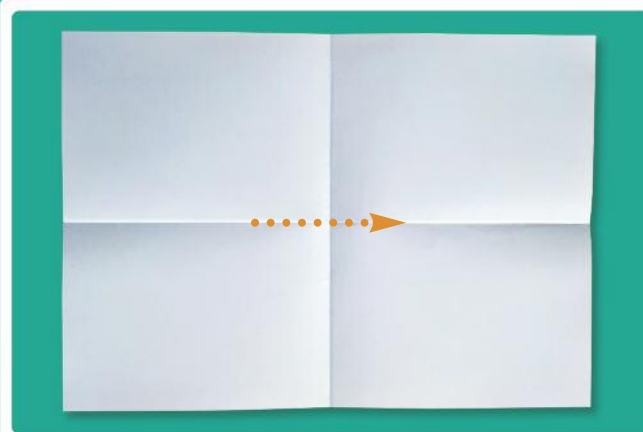
Here is what you will need...

- 1 sheet of A4 paper.
- Colouring pens/pencils (to decorate your popper if you wish).



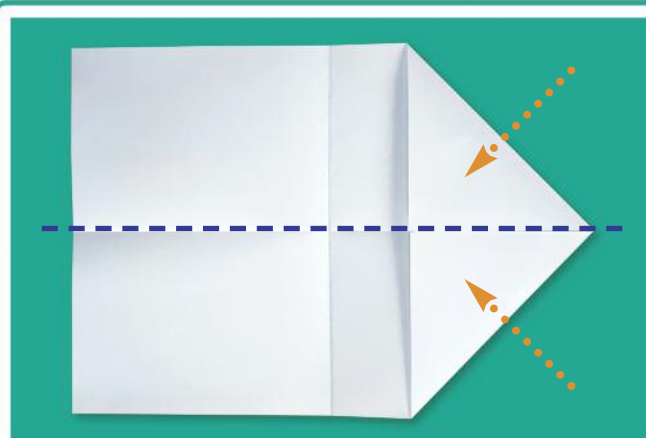
STEP 1.

Fold the sheet of paper in half by bringing the long edge to the opposite long edge. Then unfold.



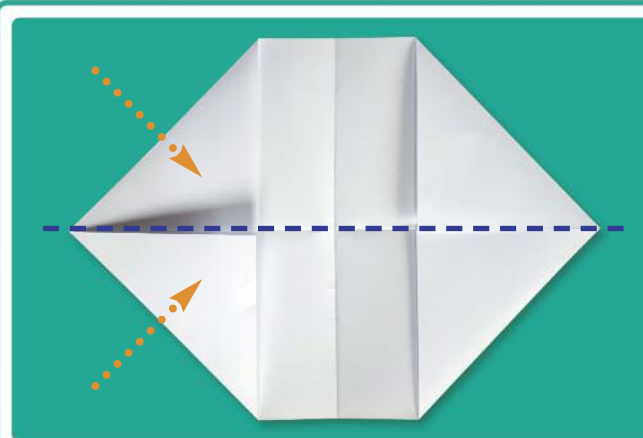
STEP 2.

Fold in half again but this time, by bringing the short edges together. Then unfold.



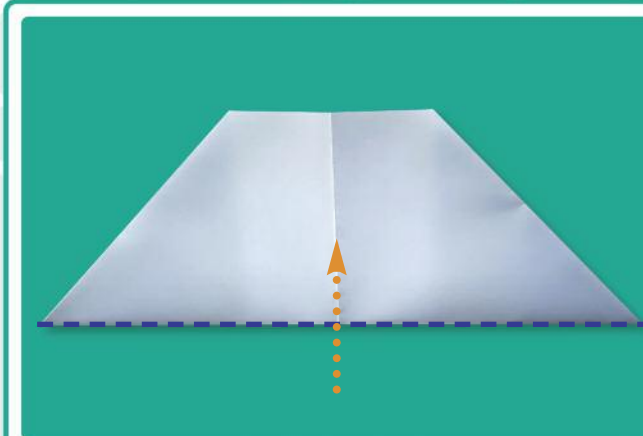
STEP 3.

Fold top right and bottom right corners to the horizontal centre line as shown.



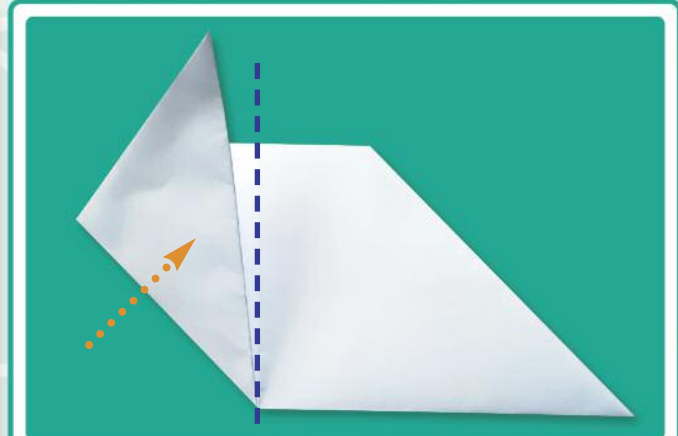
STEP 4.

Fold the top left and bottom left corners to the horizontal centre line as shown.



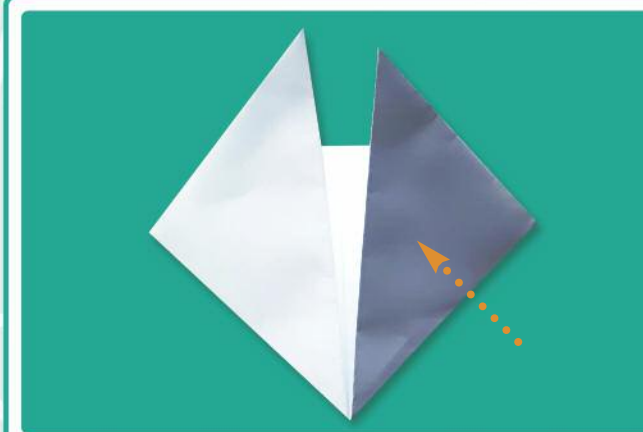
STEP 5.

Fold in half lengthways along the horizontal centre line.



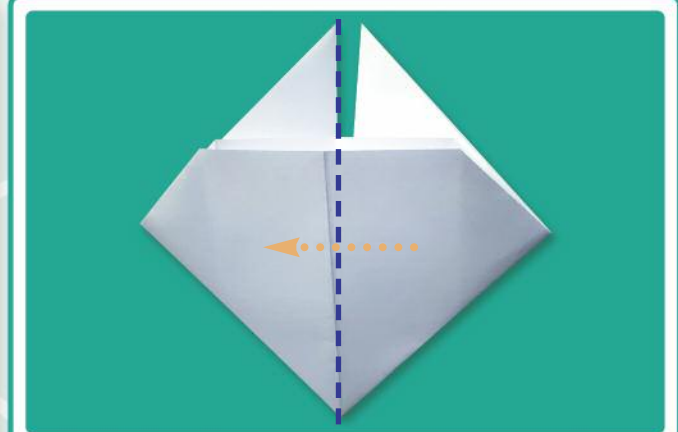
STEP 6.

Fold the bottom left hand side to meet the centre line as shown.



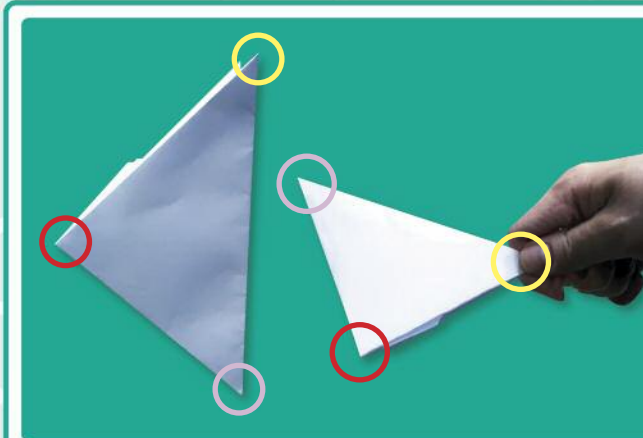
STEP 7.

Do the same with the bottom right hand side.



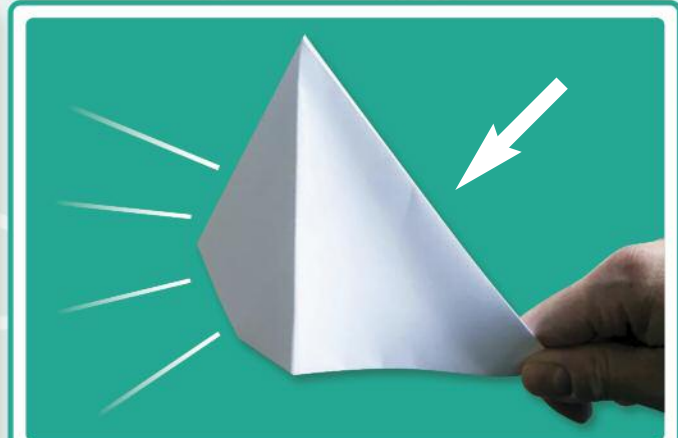
STEP 8.

Turn the whole thing over so it looks like this, and then fold in half along the centre line as shown.



STEP 9.

To make it POP, hold it as shown. Raise it over your head and swing down suddenly!



STEP 10.

A flap will pop out and make the sound! Just tuck the flap back and swing again to repeat the pop.

ORIGAMI BIRD

with Pui Lee

Here is what you will need...

- 1 sheet of A4 paper.
- Scissors.
- Colouring pens/pencils.
- Ruler (optional).



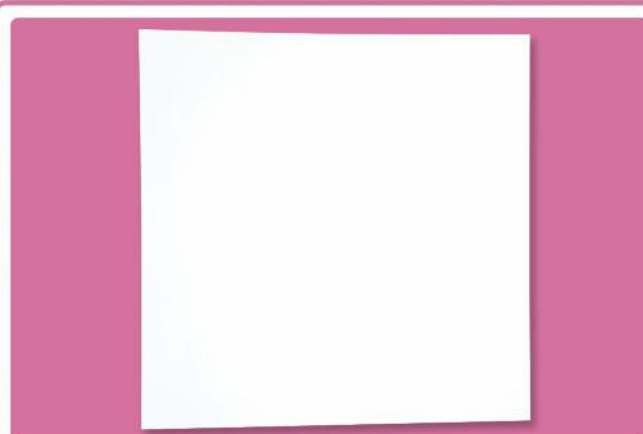
STEP 1.

Bring one corner of a sheet of A4 paper down to the long edge to form a right angle triangle.



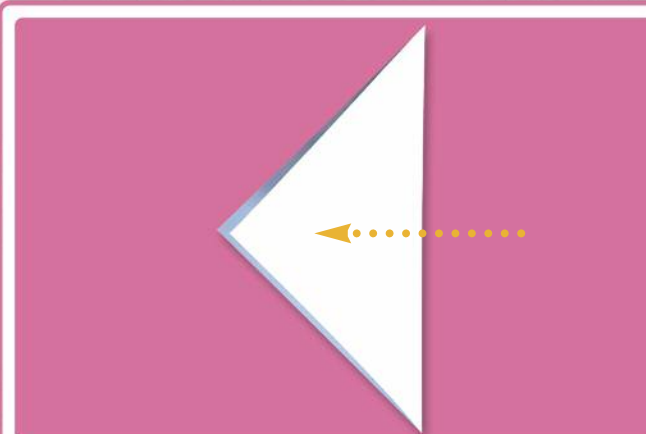
STEP 2.

Cut the rectangle off using scissors. You may wish to use ruler here!



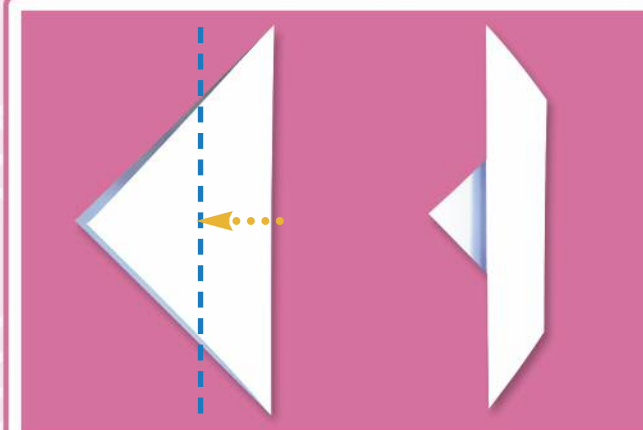
STEP 3.

Open up the triangle into a square.



STEP 4.

Fold in half by bringing corner to corner.



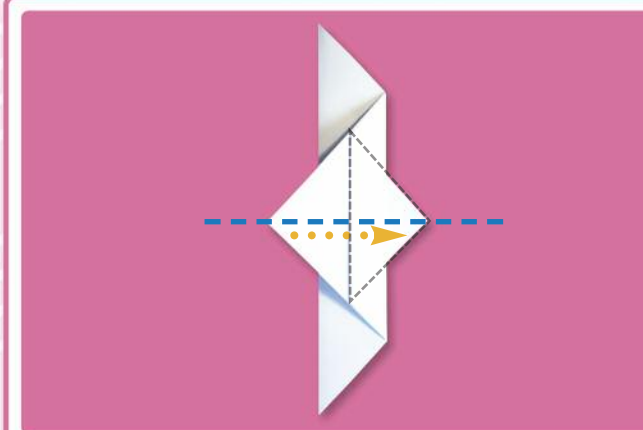
STEP 5.

Fold by bringing the right hand edge to the dashed line as shown.



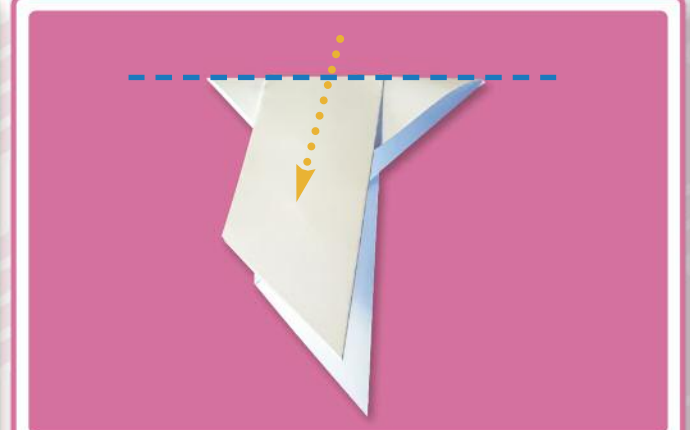
STEP 6.

Turn the paper over to see the above.



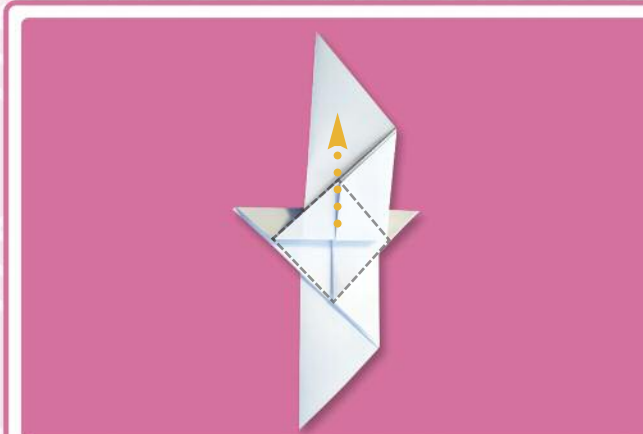
STEP 7.

Take the left corner of the top layer of the triangle and fold it to the right, as shown.



STEP 8.

Then fold in half horizontally as shown. Make sure the wings match up.



STEP 9.

Then fold that same flap back upwards like this to make the wings.

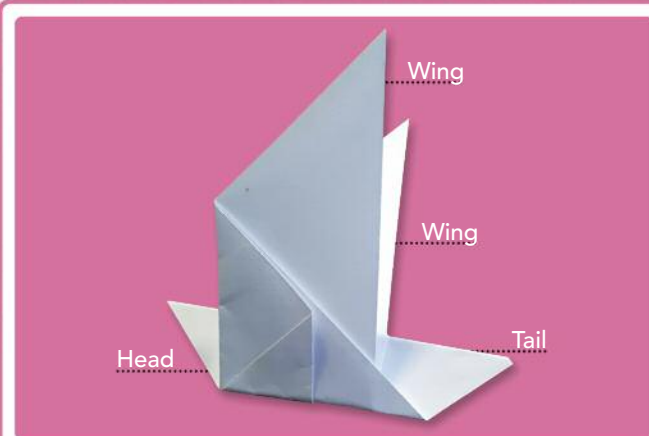


STEP 10.

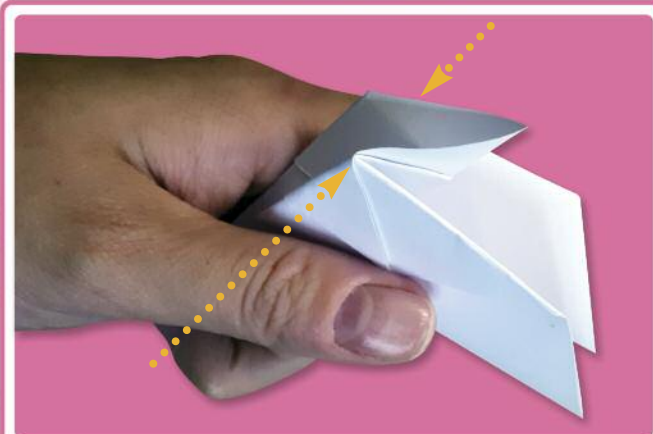
Fold the other wing backwards, so that the wings are in line.



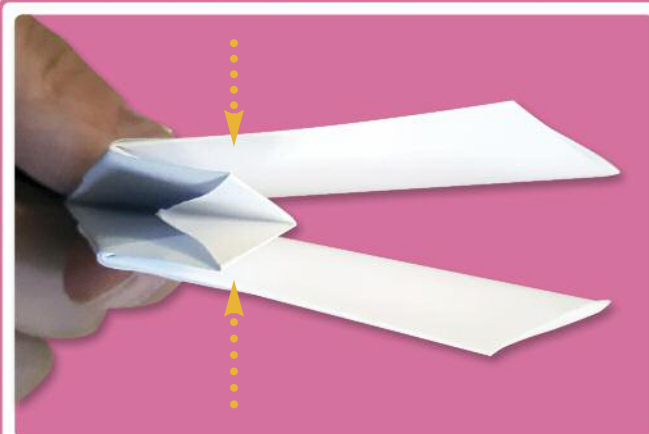
STEP 11.
You should now have this.



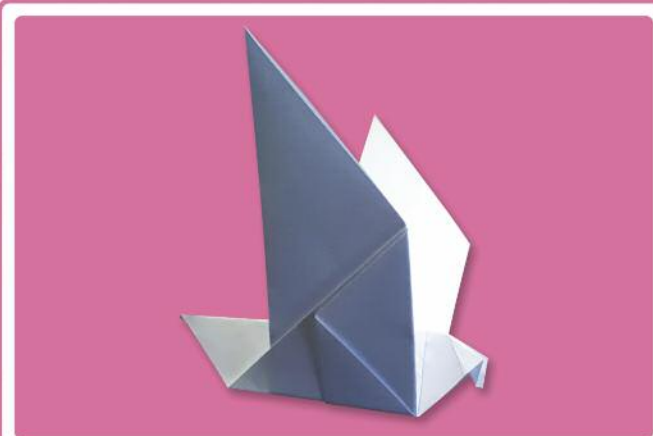
STEP 12.
Turn it over. See above.



STEP 13.
Push the centre of the head in on itself...



STEP 14.
...and flatten.



STEP 15.
...Hooray! You now have a bird!



STEP 16.
You can now decorate your bird with pens by drawing in the eyes and colouring in the beak!

CHINESE BLOCK PRINTING

with Pui Lee

What is Printmaking?

Printmaking is the technique for printing text, image or pattern onto another surface like paper or fabric. It is just one way an artist can create a really cool artwork to be proud of! Printmaking is definitely lots of fun and the best thing about it, is that you can make repeat copies easily too. Chinese block-printing traditionally involves carving an image in reverse onto a piece of wood. The woodblock is then inked and printed onto paper or fabric. In this booklet we show you how to create a print block using a polystyrene block.

Here is what you will need...

- Paper.
- Pencil.
- Sharpener.
- Polystyrene Block
(if you don't want to buy any, see if you can find any amongst unwanted packaging).
- Printmaking ink
(if you don't have any, use paint).
- Palette
(or any smooth, flat surface).
- Roller for inking
(if you don't have any, you can use a paintbrush very carefully to apply the ink).
- Protective gloves if you have particular skin allergies.
- Roller for pressing print down
(if you don't have any, you can use the back of a spoon or just your hands).

TIP: You might want to wear old clothes and an apron for this activity – printmaking can get a bit messy!



STEP 1.

What will you create?

First plan a design of your choice on a piece of paper. It can be anything you like – an animal, an object, text – be creative!

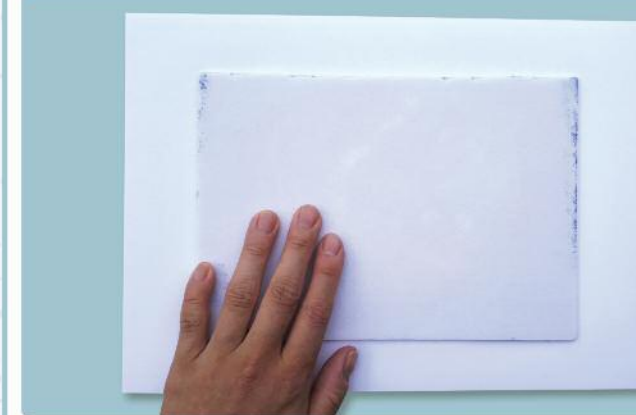
TIP: Remember your design will print in reverse – so any text will also need to be drawn in reverse so that it print the correct way around.



STEP 2.

Then draw out your design onto the polystyrene block using a slightly blunted pencil. Press enough to create a groove into the surface of the block but be careful not to press too hard and go right through it.

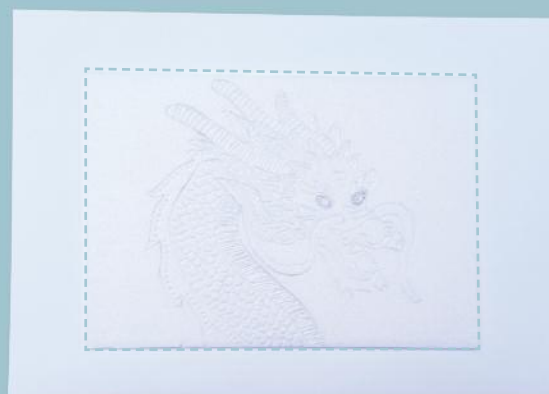
TIP: Remember the areas that you press into the polystyrene will not print. So this will show as the colour of your paper.



STEP 6.

Carefully hold onto your block by the edges and place your block with inky side down onto your piece of paper where you have marked up earlier.

TIP: Once your block touches the paper, the ink will have transferred onto the surface. If you have placed it incorrectly, you will need to carefully lift it off and start again from Step 5. You may need to ink up again.



STEP 3.

For your print, take a new piece of paper and draw lightly in pencil around your polystyrene printing block to mark where your design will be printed.



STEP 7.

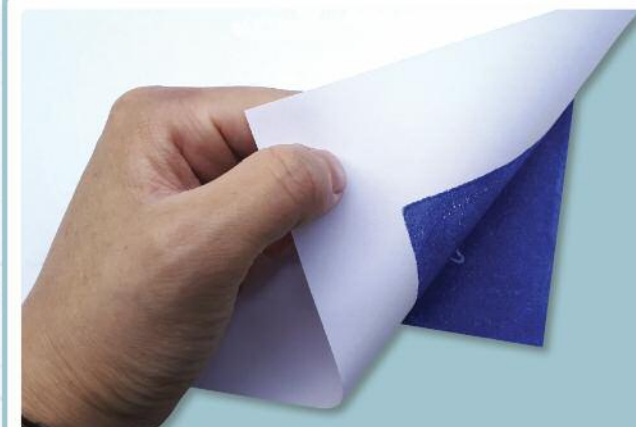
Turn the whole thing over and use a clean roller to roll over the piece of paper. Press down firmly to apply lots of pressure. You should be able to feel the block underneath.

TIP: If you don't have a roller, you can use the back of a spoon and press down firmly, whilst moving it across the paper. Make sure you reach all areas where the block is in contact with the paper.



STEP 4.

Squirt out some ink onto a flat surface. You then need to use a roller and spread the ink out by rolling forwards and backwards in all directions.



STEP 8.

Hold down the corner of the piece of paper with one hand and gently peel it off the block with your other hand to reveal your very own hand-made print!

TIP: You can then sign and date your print. Then put it into a nice frame once dried!



STEP 5.

Now carefully roll the ink over your design on the polystyrene block.

TIP: Make sure you don't miss the edges of the block!



STEP 9.

Now you know how to create your own block print, you can now make many more! Simply wash the ink out of the block with warm soapy water and you can use it again and again by following the instructions earlier.

The possibilities are endless! For example, you can experiment with different ink colours, different papers, different shaped blocks etc.

KATHPUTLI PUPPETS

with Sofia Barton

What are Kathputli Puppets?

Kathputli is an ancient performing art form from Rajasthan, India. It is one of the most popular forms of Indian puppetry. The word Kathputli comes from the Rajasthani words 'Kath' meaning wood and 'Putli' meaning doll, the puppets are usually made from wood, cloth and wire. Putliwallahs (the puppeteers) and their families would travel and tell stories of family histories of important people in the villages and towns they came from, and events in the lives of ancestors.

Here is what you will need...

- Puppet templates (included in the booklet). Further templates can be downloaded at: <https://gemarts.org/projects/138/cultural-threads-programme>
- Fabric / Felt quarters.
- Scissors.
- Needle and thread or fabric glue.
- Wool.
- Optional: ribbon, sequins, pompoms, stickers, googly eyes for decoration.



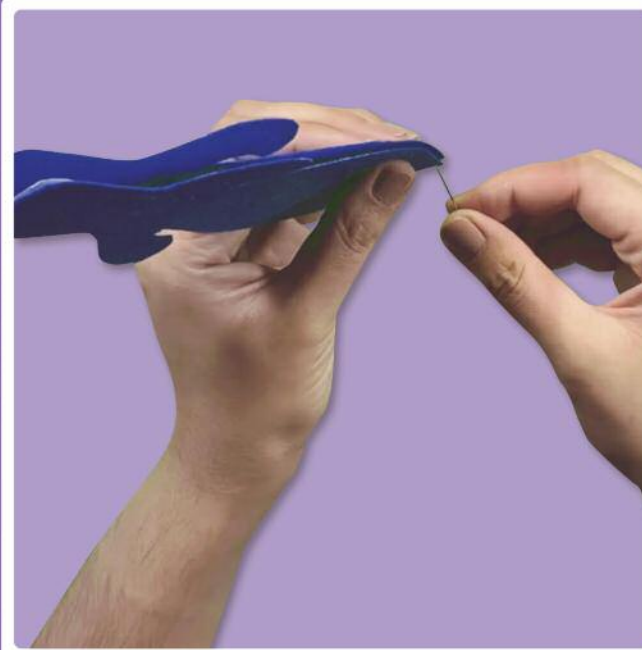
STEP 1.

Cut out your paper puppet template.
Stack 2 pieces of same sized, square fabric on top of each other, place the cut out puppet template onto the fabric diagonally.



STEP 2.

Using fabric glue, stick the puppet template to the top piece of fabric. Once dry, cut around the template, holding both pieces of fabric together.



STEP 3.

Glue or stitch around the edges of the cut out fabric character. If you want to make the character 3D you can add stuffing before you stitch or glue the bottom.



STEP 4.

Using the shapes from the template as a guide, cut out felt hands, face, hair and colourful clothing and stick on using fabric glue.



STEP 5.

You can add on more detail such as sticking on a fabric crown, googly eyes or pompoms/sequins for decoration.
Leave overnight to dry.



STEP 6.

Turn your puppet over and add a length of wool using a stitch to secure on each hand.
All done!... now it's time to enjoy your very own Kathputli Puppets.

MINI ZINE MAKING

with Mani Kambo

What is a Zine?

A zine is like a mini magazine or little book that you can create as a way to express yourself and share your passions and interests with others. In it you can include sketches, drawings, mini-comics, mix words with images and textures, print lines of poetry and create stories. What you include in a zine is only limited by your imagination.

Here is what you will need...

- Paper.
- Scissors.
- Pens / Pencils / Crayons.
- Magazines and any crafty materials around you might have around the house.
- Glue stick.
- Stampers.

Once you have completed folding your mini zine, the order of pages when opened flat will be as follows:

7	9	5	4
8 BACK	1 FRONT	2	3



STEP 1.

Fold a sheet of A4 paper in half lengthways then open it up.



STEP 2.

Then fold the paper in half widthways.



STEP 3.

And fold the paper in half again widthways.



STEP 4.

Open up the last fold you made.



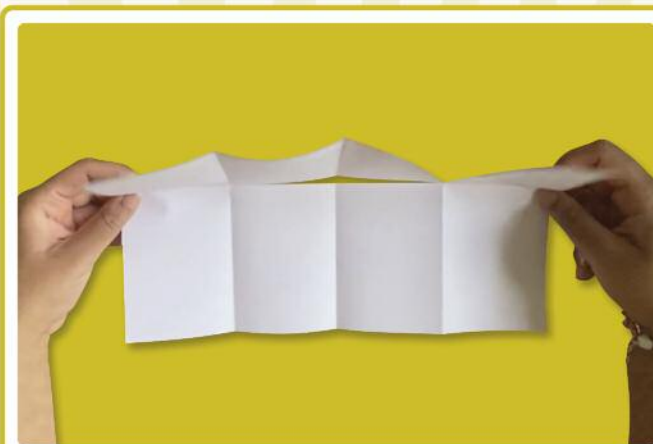
STEP 5.

From the folded edge cut to the centre of the piece of paper.

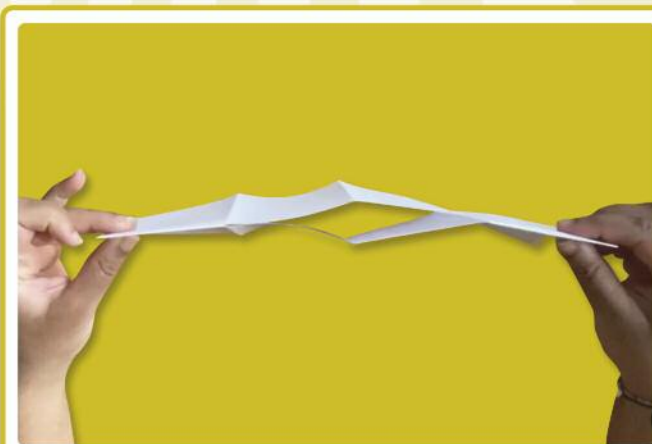


STEP 6.

Now open the paper up.



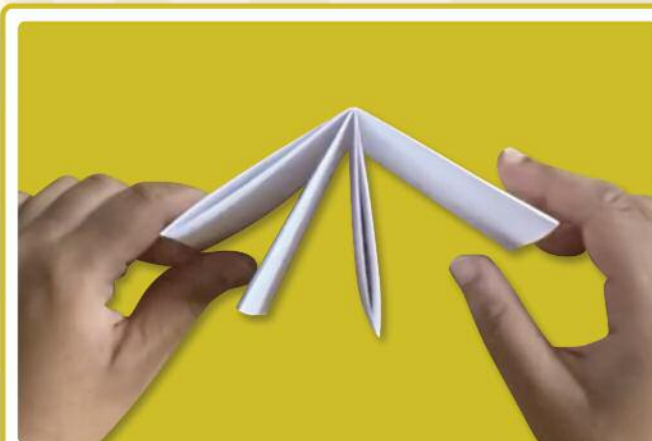
STEP 7.
Fold the paper lengthways (along the crease that has the slit). Hold the paper at either end.



STEP 8.
Fold the paper lengthways (along the crease that has the slit). Hold the paper at either end.



STEP 9.
Push the ends in towards each other. The sections should fold into each other.



STEP 10.
Your mini zine folding is now complete... Time to get creative and fill up your mini book with your own images, text, drawings, anything you like.



MEET OUR ARTISTS



Sofia Barton

Sofia Barton is a multidisciplinary artist from North East England. Her work is a collection of Anglo-Indian fusion, of bright, whimsical design inspired by nature and folklore. The landscape and beauty the North East, is beautifully captured in many of Sofia's paintings.

www.sofiabarton.co.uk



Michelle Wood

Michelle Wood of Sea Tern Print, is an artist based in Whitley Bay on the North East coast of England. Michelle's work is inspired by the coast, natural forms & colour, and combines her fascination with place with her love of printmaking. Michelle offers creative print sessions and kits to help enhance people's wellbeing. She also makes her own prints, artists books and unusual items like printed paper teacups.

www.seatern.co.uk



Pui Lee

Based in Gateshead, Pui Lee is a British-born Chinese artist and arts educator, working throughout the UK. Trained in a wide range of disciplines, she works using an interdisciplinary approach across both traditional and contemporary 2D and 3D art-forms including: drawing, printmaking, craft, sculpture / installation, parade art and more. Outside of the studio, Pui Lee is also a dedicated martial artist, training in Kung Fu and Taekwon-Do.

www.puilee.co.uk



Mani Kambo

Mani Kambo is a Moving Image and Print artist based in Newcastle upon Tyne where she grew up surrounded by Sikh tradition and ritual. Kambo is drawn to everyday rituals and precautionary actions taken from superstitions.

www.manikambo.co.uk



GemArts is an award winning arts organisation based in the North East of England. A nationally recognised leader in the South Asian and diversity arts sector, GemArts creates and programmes high quality concerts, events, festivals, workshops and commissions with regional, national and international artists across all art forms.

Our Vision: We believe the arts enrich the lives of individuals and communities through celebrating our shared cultural diversity – Raising aspirations, building stronger communities and breaking down barriers.

Our Mission: To increase equality of opportunity for everyone to engage with culturally diverse arts – as artists, producers, participants and audiences.

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