

A waste of paper

**Playful artistic activities
for lockdown life**



#AWasteOfPaper

Layout and design

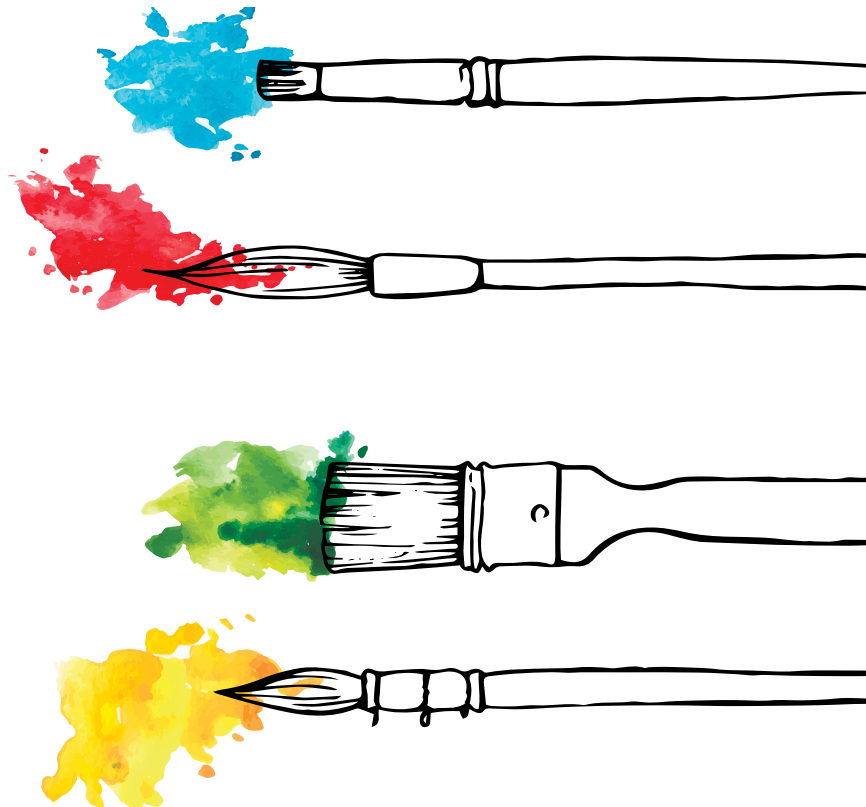
creativetriangle

Words and ideas

text wizard
IRRESISTIBLE WRITING

A picture's worth a thousand words

Well, maybe not a *thousand* words. But your creations can tell a story about who you are and what makes you tick. They also prove that you can have a bundle of fun with minimal materials and resources.



And you can keep on having fun because the ideas in your head are almost without limit. Your mind is like a bottomless well that you can dip into, day after day.

Even if you've never thought of yourself as artistic, creating is something you already do, usually without thinking about it. Choosing what to wear is a simple act of creativity, as is any game of make-believe and anything you make that doesn't have a set of instructions.

So this is a collection of simple creative activities for all ages and all abilities. Art-lover or art-leaver, you're sure to find something you like.

For most projects, all you need is pencil and paper, crayon, or marker. Although you can tackle most projects on your own, art is more fun if you have someone to create with. Which is great because you can do many of these activities together online with friends or relatives.

Share your ideas

To share your creations online, or see what other people are doing with their artworks, use the hashtag:

#AWasteOfPaper

Sources of creative activities

The internet is full projects and ideas to help you pass the time. For this collection we adapted, improved, and refined our personal favourites.

Many of these activities predate the digital era. Collage, for example, became part of mainstream art in the early 20th century, even though the technique goes back hundreds of years. And op art was a big thing in the 1960s.

What's new is your ability to capture your work on your phone and share it with friends.



Let's keep waste to a minimum

More than enough waste materials go to landfill already. Please don't let your creativity add to the world's mountains of waste. Reuse or recycle as much as you can of the materials you use when making your artworks.

For the most part, these projects involve paper or cardboard, both of which are easily recycled.

Freehand drawing



Freehand drawing is rarely as free-spirited as it should be: too much hard concentration on the page and the accuracy of your line. So here's a chance to let your drawing hand do its own thing.

A squiggly stare

» **Number of creators :**

» 1 or more

What you need :

» paper and pencil, crayon, pen, or marker; weights or masking tape to hold your paper down

Some people (or objects) are so gorgeous, you can't take your eyes off them ... or maybe not. But even if they're just a bit ordinary, there's still a drawing in there somewhere.

So here's the tricky bit: if you can't take your eyes off the thing you're drawing, you can't look down at the paper. Which means you have to reproduce what you see by drawing a single unbroken line on the page – without peeping.

Yes, your line's going to go a bit squiggly, but that's half the fun.

Before you start, make sure your paper doesn't move while you draw. If you don't have anything to hold it down, use the hand that's not drawing to keep your paper still.

1. Decide what you want to draw – a person, a pet, your favourite pair of trainers. It can be anything you like. If it's a person, ask them to stay still.
2. Pick up your pencil (or marker or crayon – whatever you fancy). Place it on your paper at the point where you want to start your drawing. You can look down for this bit. Hold your pencil at the start point.
3. Look up at the thing you're about to draw. Keep staring at it. Now start to mark out the shape you see in front of you. Keep your pencil on the page so that you trace a single continuous line. No peeping, remember.
4. Sometimes it's easier to start with the outline, then to move in to the detail. Sometimes it's easier the other way round. There are no rules; whatever works for you.
5. Stop drawing when you think you've captured the main features. Or when you've completely lost where you are on the page. If that happens, just start again.



Variations

Try this with a friend. Sit opposite each other so that you can draw each other's faces. It's a very starey sort of thing to do, so the hardest part could be stopping yourselves laughing. Because that makes your line go extra squiggly.

The secret of the scribble

- » **Number of creators :**
» 2 or more

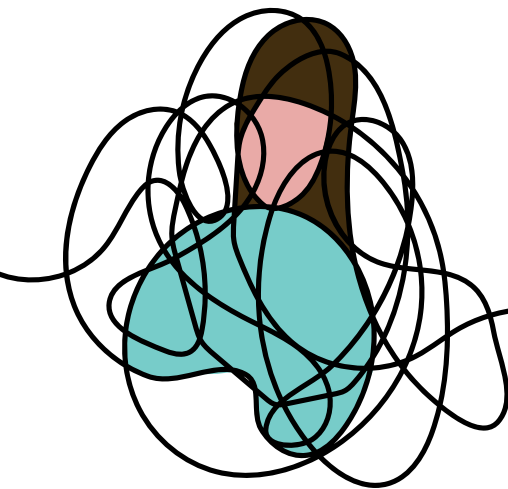
What you need :

- » paper and pencil plus a marker (if you don't have a marker, a pen or crayon will do)

We humans are brilliant at spotting shapes, faces, or creatures in the lines and curves of nature. But you don't have to go to the park to find those random outlines, you can create them at home by scribbling on a piece of paper. With your eyes shut.

In this game, you have to find something hidden in a random scrawl. It's as close as you can get to making art out of nothing.

1. Give your friend a pencil and a sheet of paper. Tell them to shut their eyes and then use the pencil to scribble on the paper. Don't let them go on for too long. What you need is a good pattern of random lines with plenty of open shapes between them.
2. Now it's your turn. Grab the marker – or anything that will clearly stand out from the pencil lines.
3. Study your friend's scribble to see if you can spot any shapes hidden in the jumble of curly lines. Use your imagination – the weirder the thing you discover, the better.
4. With your marker, highlight the lines that define your shape. For the most part you should follow the pencil lines of the scribble. But you can use your marker to add a few details of your own ... an eye ... a mouth ... a handle ... a switch. Limit your additions to the details that bring the shape to life.
5. If you fancy it, colour in your shape.
6. Take it in turns to be the scribbler and the discoverer of hidden art.



Variations

Can you find a specific object in a scribble? To play this game, you and your friend need to create a selection of scribbled pages, say five each. Mix them up and place them on the table face down. Decide what you're going to draw – a duck, a car, a musical instrument, an alien. Anything you fancy. Choose a sheet of paper each, turn it over and see who can discover and mark up the best (or weirdest) version of your chosen object.

A pattern of invention

There are patterns everywhere – in nature, in shadows, in the world of art, and in your head. You can follow these patterns precisely, you can distort them, or you can dip inside to create your own. One thing these patterns are not, is repetitive.



Trickster bulges

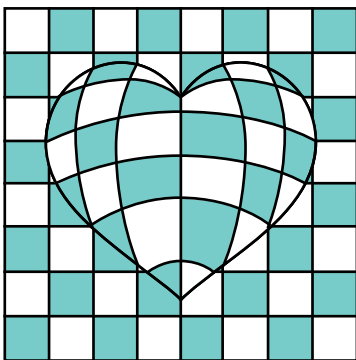
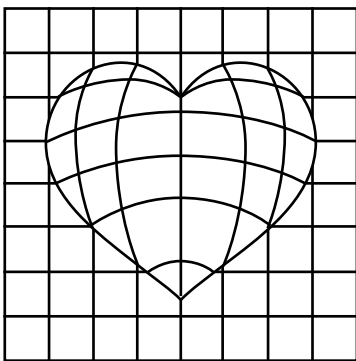
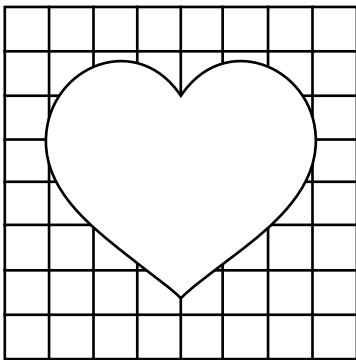
- » **Number of creators :**
» 1 or more

What you need :

- » paper, ruler, and pencil,
crayon, pen, or marker

Wanna create like a 1960s hipster? Here's a way to practise an artistic technique known as 'op art' that was popular at the time. Op art is short for optical art. The technique involves using geometric patterns to create illusions.

In this case you're going to create a shape that bulges as if it was in 3D.



1. Think of a simple shape – a circle, an oval, or a heart, perhaps. Draw it on your sheet of paper.
2. Now draw a grid pattern in the area outside your shape. If you want your grid to be super-neat, use a ruler. Or you can draw a series of horizontal and vertical lines freehand; it'll still work fine. This grid pattern creates the flat background from which your shape bulges.
3. It's time to start work inside your shape. Use a straight line to join one vertical and one horizontal grid line. Choose the lines that are closest to the middle of your shape.
4. To join all the other grid lines – horizontal to horizontal, vertical to vertical – you need to draw curves that bend or bulge away from your two centre lines. Make the lines near the centre of your shape more curved or bulgy than the ones near the edge.
5. Use a crayon or marker to fill in alternate squares of the outer grid – a bit like a chessboard. Extend the chessboard pattern to the irregular shapes inside your shape. If you've joined every line, the pattern should fit exactly.
6. The result looks like your shape is in 3D. But is it bulging out of the page or bulging into it? If you look hard you can see both effects.
7. One way to fix the bulge is to add some shadowing to the inside of your shape. If you shadow close to the lower edge, your shape bulges out; if you shadow close to the upper edge, it bulges in. It's an artistic trick that fools your brain into seeing something that isn't really there.

Variations

You can use this technique to create all sorts of bizarre illusions. What happens if you don't draw any vertical lines on your page? What if your grid pattern is made of curved lines instead of straight ones? And what effects can you create if your grid lines (curved or straight) get closer and closer together?

Picasso by numbers

» **Number of creators :**

» 1 or more

What you need :

» dice, paper and pencil,
crayon, pen, or marker

Pablo Picasso was famous for his wonky faces that seem to point in several directions at once. It was an original way of throwing life and movement into his characters.


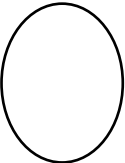






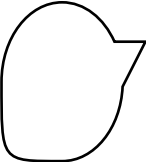






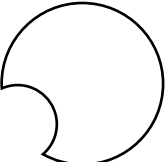













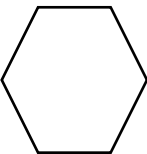






So we've drawn a set of Picasso-like facial components that you can put together to create your own wonky-faced Picasso – see the table on the next page. The roll of a dice decides which components you use.

1. Take a sheet of paper, your pencil, and the dice. Roll the dice to determine your head shape. Draw your head outline on the paper.
2. Roll again for the eyes. Whichever eye style comes up, you'll need two of them for your face. You don't have to place the eyes next to each other, nor do they have to be pointing in the same direction. You don't even have to put both eyes inside your facial outline. Picasso's eyes never matched, but somehow they still made a crazy kind of sense.
3. Roll again for the nose. Place it wherever a Picasso nose might go.
4. Roll again for the mouth. Place it wherever a Picasso mouth might go.
5. Final roll for the ears. Place them wherever Picasso ears might go.
6. For the finishing touches, you can add details such as a hat, hair, eyebrows, earrings, cigarette, or pipe. It's your very own wonky Picasso masterpiece.



Continued »

Picasso by numbers

| | Head | Eyes | Nose | Mouth | Ears | Details |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Artist's choice | | | | | |

Shadowplay

» **Number of creators :**

- » 2 or more (3 or more works best)

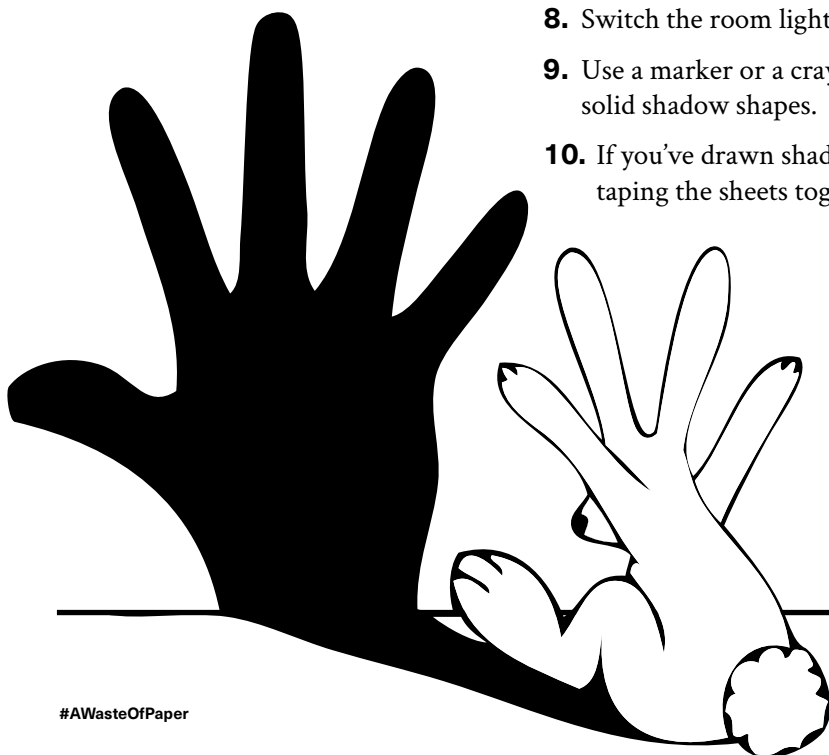
What you need :

- » paper and pencil, crayon, pen, or marker; torch and a selection of small figurines and other objects (to cast shadows)

This project works best after dark. If you're lucky, you may be able to do it during the day with the curtains drawn.

The idea is to create scenes or stories by throwing shadows – and shadow patterns – on to sheets of paper, and then drawing round the outline of the shadows.

1. Lay a sheet of paper on a table – or on a hard floor or on a tray on a carpeted floor.
2. Choose some objects to cast a shadow. Small toy animals or people work really well.
3. Switch on your torch and shine it downwards on to the paper. Dim or switch off the room light.
4. Now try holding your object or toy in the torch beam so that it casts a shadow on the sheet of paper. Move the object nearer to, or further from, the torch to get the size of shadow you want. You'll need a steady hand to keep the shadow still.
5. Use a pencil to trace the outline of the shadow on the paper. This is where extra hands really do help: one to hold the torch and one or two more to hold the objects that cast the shadows.
6. Repeat using different objects, animals, or figures, and by casting shadows of different sizes. Aim to create a scene or a story on one or several sheets of paper. Your shadows can overlap if that helps tell the story.
7. Also try casting shadow patterns by shining your torch through a kitchen colander or an oven rack. Angle them to distort the pattern or to layer one pattern over one you've already traced.
8. Switch the room light back on and switch off your torch.
9. Use a marker or a crayon to fill in your outlines. Turn them from lines into solid shadow shapes.
10. If you've drawn shadow shapes on separate sheets of paper, you could try taping the sheets together to create a much bigger scene.



Create your own artistic community



Art can be a solitary activity, but not necessarily a lonely one. If you're so deeply involved in your work, you don't notice there's no one else to create with. But when there is someone else, it's great fun to create together and to help each other out – or to be a tiny little bit competitive.



Flip, flop, flap

» Number of creators :

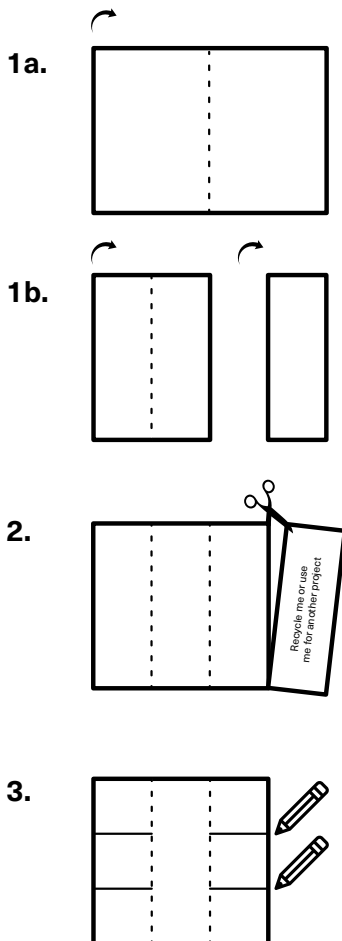
- » 1 or more (three or more is really good)

What you need :

- » paper and pencil, crayon, pen, or marker; scissors or kraft knife

Sometimes you've no idea what you're going to create till you see the finished piece.

That's how this art project works. You're going to create a series of figures with three interchangeable sections: head, torso, and legs. The more people who join in, the weirder it gets.

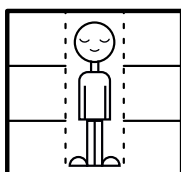


1. Take one sheet of paper for everyone who's taking part. Fold each sheet in half across the short side, and then in half again so that your second fold is parallel to the first.
2. When you open up the sheet it should have three parallel folds. Two of them fold in the same direction, one of them folds in the opposite direction. Use your scissors to cut* along the one fold that goes in the opposite direction. That leaves you with a piece of paper with two flaps that fold down over the middle section.
3. Lightly draw two pencil lines across the middle section to split it roughly into thirds.
4. Fold down one of the flaps and draw two pencil lines on its upper face. Draw the lines to match the two you've already drawn on the middle section. Fold down the second flap and draw another two matching lines on its upper face. The three pairs of lines should all be in roughly the same position – the closer the better.
5. The three sections you have created are for different parts of the body:
 - **top** for head and neck
 - **middle** for torso from shoulders to waist, plus arms and hands
 - **bottom** for legs from waist downwards
6. When all the sheets have folds and lines, you can start drawing your characters.

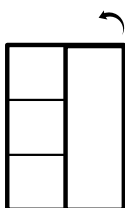
Continued »

Flip, flop, flap

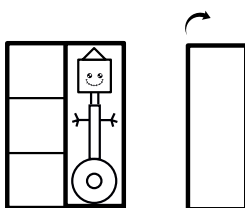
7.



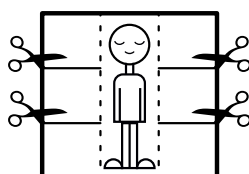
8.



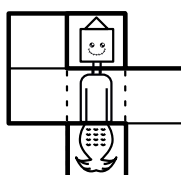
9.



11.



12.



7. Everyone now takes one sheet of paper and opens it to the middle section. Draw a person or a creature on that middle section, making sure that your character's body parts fit the sections marked in point 5 above. Decide among yourselves whether you're just going to draw outlines or colour everything in. Everyone should work to the same scheme.
8. Don't let anyone see what you've drawn. When you're finished, fold over the right flap to completely cover your drawing. When everyone has folded in their right flaps to cover their drawing, they pass their sheet of paper to someone else. It helps if you're all working in a rough circle, in which case you can all pass on your paper in the same direction.
9. When you have a fresh sheet, draw another character on the right flap, taking care once more to fit the body parts within the lines. When you're done, fold over the left flap to cover your work.
10. Pass the sheets on again for the next person to draw the final character on the left flap.
11. When you're finished, use scissors to cut both side flaps along the pencil lines only. Don't cut the middle section. You'll end up with a middle section with three small flaps on either side.
12. Now it's time to play. By flipping, flopping, and flapping, you can create a series of weird and wonderful characters.

* Don't waste the bit you cut off. If you can, use it for other artworks; if not, make sure it goes in your paper recycling bin.

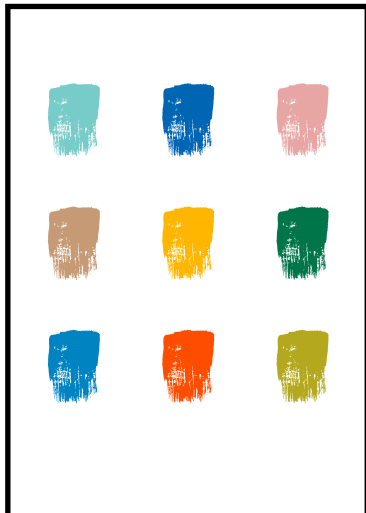
Scavenging for colour

» **Number of creators :**

- » 1 or more (the more scavengers, the better)

What you need :

- » paper and a selection of coloured crayons or markers; small bag, box, or basket (a clipboard is helpful, but not essential)



The world is full of colour, but can you find the colour you need at the right time?

This is an art game for natural hunter-gatherers. You can play it indoors, in your garden if you have one, or maybe in a nearby park.

The idea is to return to base with a bagful of lucky finds that match a given set of colours.

1. You need one sheet of paper for everyone who's going scavenging. Grab a bundle of crayons or markers of different colours – nine colours is a good number to work with. Now mark a block of each colour on every sheet. You should end up with a set of sheets, each containing nine clear blocks of colour.
2. Hand out a colour sheet to each scavenger, together with a bag, box, or basket to hold their collection of found samples. This is where clipboards can be handy to stop colour sheets flapping around, but they're not essential.
3. Set the scavengers free to find real-life samples that match the colours on their colour sheets. Just one sample for each colour.
4. If you're one of those scavengers, you now have to root out nine objects (could be toys, badges, magazines, packaging, flowers, leaves, pebbles – absolutely anything), and put them in your collecting bag.
5. The winner isn't the first one to find nine coloured objects. The challenge is to match the colours as closely as you can. When everyone's found nine objects (or maybe after half an hour of scavenging), all scavengers return to base to compare finds.
6. Empty your bag out on to a table and place each found object on top of its matching colour block on your colour sheet. Compare your finds to everyone else's. Who managed the best match?
7. When you're finished – or before you stop to eat – don't forget to wash your hands. If you've been scrabbling around for stones and leaves, your hands will be dirty.

Variations

You don't have to physically gather stuff for this game, you could catch it on your phone instead. This is a great way to play the game when you're out on a walk in town, in the park, or in the countryside. Just snap any object that's a good match for your colour swatches. Then compare colours and pictures when you get home.

The art of the everyday



Even the dullest object can have some artistic value if you put your imagination into it. That's what art is: an expression of your ideas. By seeing things differently, you turn a simple household object into a vital component of your own original work.



Washing-bag art

» **Number of creators :**

» 1 or more

What you need :

» a washing bag full of coloured clothing

This is art you can roll out, snap on your phone, then pack away again afterwards. No mess, no wastage.

The starting point is a photograph of a famous painting, a famous place, or a famous object. The game is more fun if this initial starting image is something that people recognise. They'll be far more impressed by your recreation.



Check with a parent before you dive into the laundry basket to retrieve a bundle of dirty clothes. You could use clean ones, but they'll get crumpled and grubby before you wear them. And that won't go down well with whoever did the washing and ironing.

1. Choose an iconic starting image to recreate. Something with lots of areas of flat colour is easier to reproduce.
2. Root around in the laundry basket for clothes that match the colours of your image. Then, one-by-one, lay them out to mimic the shapes in the image.
3. Some clothes work best when laid out flat. Others need to be scrunched up to recreate the right effect. Socks, gloves, or scarves are always good for small areas of detail.
4. Finish with buttons or badges or other small objects for the tiniest details such as eyes or mouths.
5. Step back to admire your work. Make any last-minute adjustments to match the original image, then snap your laundry art on your phone.
6. Put everything back where you found it.
7. Show the world your before and after – original and recreation – images. If you achieved a good match, the world will applaud.



Cartoon super-heroes tackle real life

» **Number of creators :**

» 1 or more

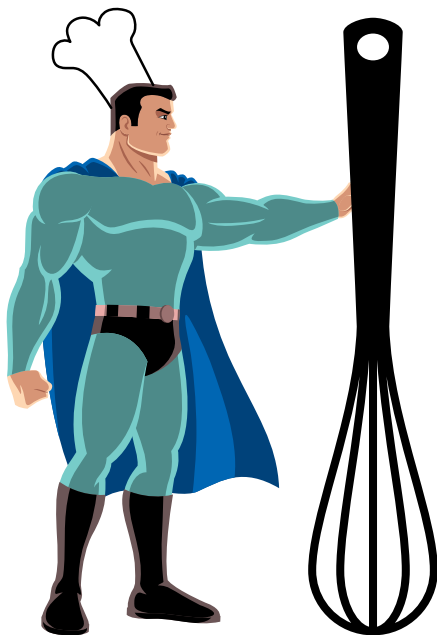
What you need :

» paper and pencil, crayon, pen, or markers; ideas for cartoon characters, small everyday household objects

Ever noticed that cartoon characters only do wild and wacky things? They don't spend much time peeling potatoes, brushing their teeth, or wielding a pencil.

You're going to put that right. Bring them down to earth.

If you're good at drawing, you can produce your own cartoons. If not, you should be able to find some suitable characters online.



1. Draw (or find) a cartoon character or superhero. Ideally they should be striking an unusual pose or doing something with their hands. You don't need loads of detail; a simple outline will do.
2. Study the picture. What could your character be doing? What everyday household object could you lay on top of your sheet of paper to make it look like your character's doing something that ordinary people do?
3. Hunt around for a selection of household objects – a toothbrush, fork, corkscrew, comb, screwdriver, torch.
4. Which object best fits the picture? Move it around till you get the best pose.
5. Finally, could you use a pencil or marker to add something that would bring the story to life? For example, if your cartoon character is holding a kitchen whisk, could you draw a chef's hat on their head?
6. Snap a picture with your phone. Your friends need to see this marvel of homemade cartoonery.

Everyday alphabets

- » **Number of creators :**
» 1 or more

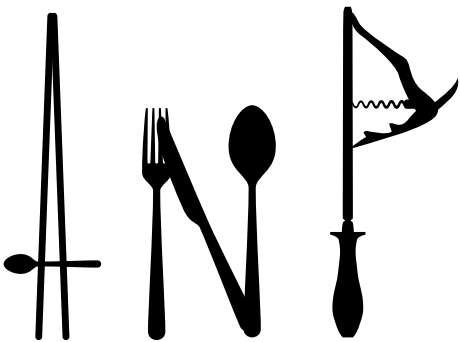
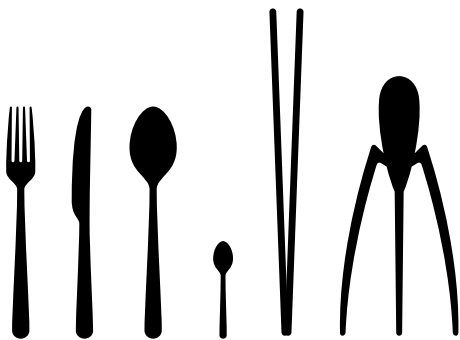
What you need :

- » white paper and a wide selection of small household objects

What exactly is a letter? If you look at the letter A in a variety of fonts, they're all slightly different, but all instantly recognisable. Your brain sees the basic shape – the two angled uprights and the central cross-piece – and knows that it's an A. The rest is just ornament.

So maybe you could create your own letter A if you can find two uprights and a cross-piece. And maybe the entire alphabet if you have enough straights and curves, dots and dashes.

Someone who creates their own alphabet is a typographer. You can be one too.



1. Set off on a hunting mission round your home. Look for as many small items as you can find that could form parts of a letter. Remember where they came from because you'll have to put them back at the end.
2. When you've got a decent bundle, spread them out on a table.
3. Look through your collection to see what you could use to make the letter A. You could do it simply with two pencils and a short crayon, or more imaginatively with a screwdriver, a toothbrush, and a teaspoon. You don't have to limit yourself to three items. A line of small coins or dried beans could form one of the uprights. As always, it's up to you. The more imaginatively you put your letters together, the better.
4. When you're happy with your letter A, arrange it on a sheet of white paper and snap it on your phone.
5. Now work your way through the rest of the alphabet. You can reuse components from other letters or make every letter unique. Your choice. Don't forget to snap a picture of each one before you take it apart.
6. When you've finished all 26 letters, you could have a go at a few other characters – a comma, a stop, a question mark, a pound sign, or a hashtag.
7. What next? Well you can do just about anything you like with your own homemade alphabet.

- If you print out the right letters, you can cut them out and line them up to spell out jokes or messages.
- If you know how to manipulate images digitally, you can cut and paste your letters on your computer to send messages to friends.
- Or you could reduce each letter image so that you can fit loads on a single sheet of paper. If you print out several sheets and cut them up into individual letters, you'll have enough to spell out a much longer piece. Could you submit a simple item of school homework in your own personal font? That's how printers used to work in the early days of printing: they'd have a big tray of metal letters from which they'd pick letters out, one by one, to make up each page of a book.

Variations

If 26 letters sound like too much work, try something simpler. Just make up enough letters to spell out your name. Or the name of your pet or your best friend.

Sticking to your ideas



People have been sticking things down for as long as there's been glue. If you're sticking stuff down to create an artwork, it's called 'collage', which is always pronounced in a Frenchified sort of way. Let's get gluing.



Sticky pics

Number of creators :

» 1 or more

What you need :

» newspapers, magazines, scissors or kraft knife, paper, and glue

This is collage at its fundamental best: cut out pictures or words or areas of flat colour, and stick them down, layer upon layer, to make your own original image.

You don't even have to start with white paper. A base of plain cardboard or coloured card (or a single big photograph) is just as good a starting point.

1. Flick through a bundle of newspapers and magazines looking for suitable images to cut out. But check with other members of your household before you start cutting up a magazine they haven't yet read.
 2. Keep cutting till you've got a decent pile of images to work with. They don't have to be whole objects; try cutting out details such as eyes, lips, wheels, and chimney pots.
 3. Lay your cut-out images on your base to see what works and what doesn't. Don't be limited by what you see at first glance.
 - If you've cut out a walking stick, could you use it as the antenna of an insect?
 - Could the roof of a house be laid at an angle to represent an Egyptian pyramid?
 - Or could a pyramid become the roof of a weird-looking house?
 - Move things around, turn them upside down, or experiment by stacking pictures in layers – whatever works for you.
 4. When you've found a pleasing (or spookily unsettling) arrangement, stick the pieces down permanently.
 5. At any stage you can add your own lines or drawings with a crayon, pen, or marker.
-

Variations

Anything can be part of a collage ... strands of wool for hair ... a piece of green carpet for a field of grass ... a pencil for the mast of a sailing ship. Collage really does set your imagination free.

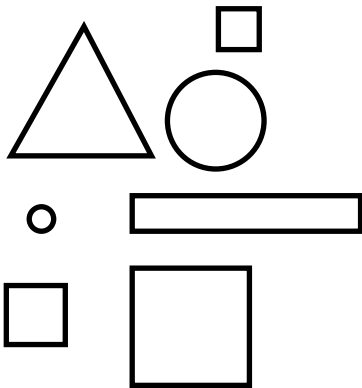


The robots are coming

- » **Number of creators :**
» 1 or more

What you need :

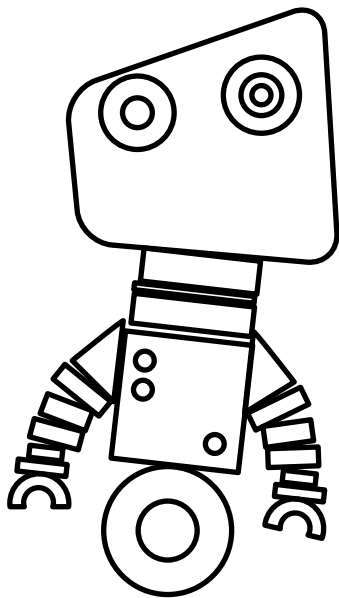
- » cardboard, kraft knife, safety ruler, and glue
optional: paper, crayons, kitchen foil



In our imagination, robots tend to be kind of squarish, or at least made up from lots of little square elements. It's all that hard-edged, clanking metal.

That makes a collage robot easy to create. You just have to cut out loads of cardboard squares and rectangles, and glue them together.

1. Use a kraft knife and a safety ruler (a straight-edge cutting guide that protects your fingers from any blade that runs along its edge) to cut a sheet of cardboard into lots of squares and rectangles of varying sizes, including a few tiny ones for buttons and eyes. Or get an adult to do the cutting for you.
2. If you think your robot would look better with some other shapes – circles or triangles, perhaps – cut a few of them out too.
3. Use the pieces to build up a collage robot in layers. Use bigger pieces for the main body, and smaller pieces for the details. The more layers you create, the more three-dimensional your finished robot will look.
4. When you're happy with your construction, glue the pieces together. Leave to dry.
5. When your robot's dry, take some photographs. Prop it up against various household objects, then get in close to take your picture. See if you can make your robot look life-size, or perhaps larger than life.
6. Post the pictures online of your incredible robot invasion.



Variations

You can make your robot a lot more metallic by wrapping each square and rectangle in kitchen foil before you glue them together. That makes for a much more convincing robot invasion. Or you could take a rubbing from your robot. Lay it flat on the table and cover with a sheet of white paper. Hold the robot and paper still, then gently rub a crayon backwards and forwards across all the shapes, edges, and joins. An imprinted image of your robot gradually appears on the paper.

**‘Being an artist means ceasing
to take seriously that very
serious person we are when
we are not an artist.’**

José Ortega y Gasset, philosopher

#AWasteOfPaper

Layout and design

creativetriangle

creativetriangle.co.uk

hello@creativetriangle.co.uk

0116 402 6700



@creativetriangle



@creativetriangle

Words and ideas

text wizard
IRRESISTIBLE WRITING

textwizard.com

chas@textwizard.com

0117 204 7334



@text_wizard



@textwizard



@TextWizard