



Handicraft Lesson

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For our handicraft lesson, we will create a simple quilling piece using thin strips of paper. Quilling kits are inexpensive, however, if you have a paper cutter, you may prefer to cut your own strips rather than purchasing pre-cut paper. If you choose to do so, we recommend using a heavier weight of paper (28-32 lb.), and cutting the strips to either $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3mm) or $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (5mm) wide.

This craft is both relaxing and rewarding, making it a wonderful way for students to develop patience, fine motor skills, and an appreciation for detailed handiwork.

We have included a "Quilling Shape Chart" if your students want to create their own designs. For more kid-friendly designs, check out [Red Ted Art](#). If your teens prefer more intricate designs, check out [The Papery Craftery](#).

"I've filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him skill and know-how and expertise in every kind of craft to create designs ... he's an all-around craftsman."

~ Exodus 31:3-5

Quilling



A Brief History of Quilling

Quilling, or paper filigree, is a decorative art form that involves rolling, shaping, and arranging thin strips of paper into intricate designs. Though it may seem like a modern craft, its origins go back several centuries.

The practice is believed to have begun in Europe during the late 16th or early 17th century, possibly among nuns and monks. They used narrow strips of paper—often trimmed from the gilded edges of books—and rolled them around bird feathers, or “quills,” which is where the craft gets its name. These early designs were used to decorate religious objects and were meant to imitate the look of expensive metal filigree.

By the 18th century, during the Age of Enlightenment, quilling reached its height of popularity. It became a fashionable pastime among upper- and middle-class women, especially in England. At a time when education for girls often included accomplishments such as needlework, drawing, and music, quilling was considered both a refined and appropriate activity. It required patience, precision, and a careful eye for design, all of which aligned with the Enlightenment's emphasis on order, discipline, and beauty.

Quilled designs were used to decorate a variety of household items, including tea caddies, jewelry boxes, cabinets, and picture frames. The patterns often featured scrolls, flowers, and symmetrical arrangements, reflecting the period's love of balance and structure. Because the materials were relatively inexpensive, quilling allowed people to create objects that looked elegant and intricate without the cost of metalwork or carving.

As the 19th century progressed, quilling gradually declined in popularity. Changing tastes, along with the rise of industrial manufacturing, meant that fewer people spent time on detailed crafts like this. However, the art form never disappeared entirely. It was preserved in certain communities and later experienced revivals, especially in the 20th century, when interest in traditional crafts began to grow again.

Supplies Needed:

- Quilling paper strips
- Quilling tool
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Cardstock
- Damp paper towel
- Old paintbrush
- Toothpick
- Quilling pattern
- Frame (optional)



Instructions:

1. Lightly transfer, sketch, or simply print the design of your choice on cardstock paper to form a sturdy background for your work. If you're using a frame, make sure to print and cut to size.
2. Insert the end of one strip of quilling paper into the slot of your quilling tool and roll the paper tightly around the tool to make a coil.

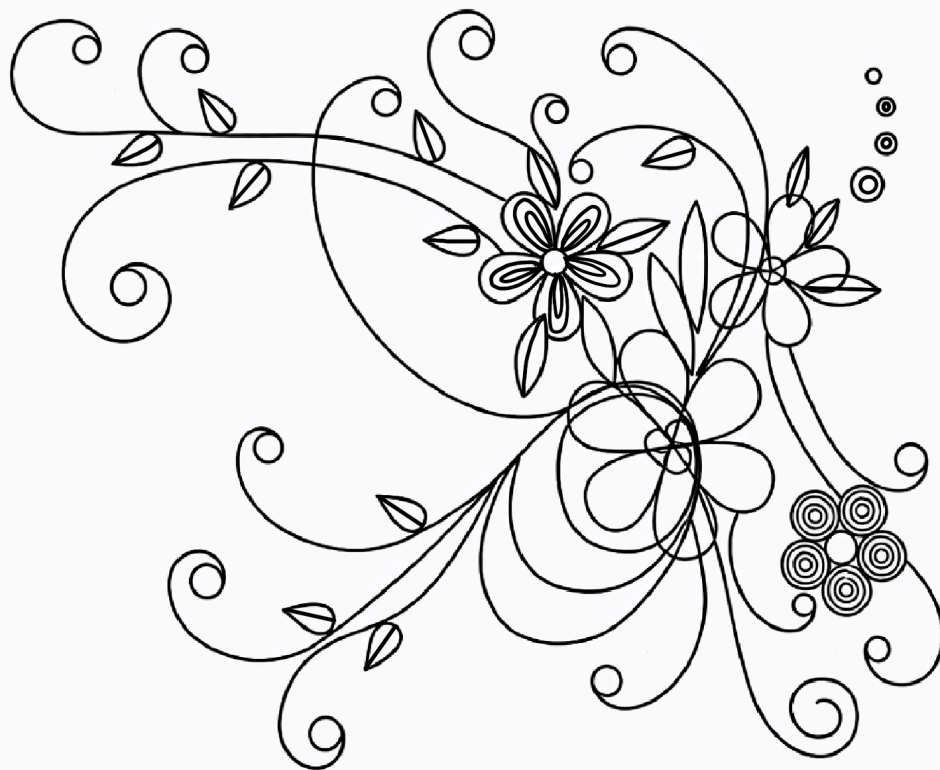


3. Slide the coil off the tool carefully, leaving it tight for a tight circle, or loosening slightly for a loose circle. Glue the end of the strip in place to hold the coil together.
4. Pinch one or both sides of the coil, and bend strips gently to make the shape your pattern calls for (see Quilling Shape Chart for various designs).



5. Beginning with the main outline or largest shapes in your pattern, lay your pieces on the cardstock without glue first to see how the design will fit.
6. Add glue sparingly along the edge of each strip or shape (a toothpick works well for this). Then use tweezers to carefully place each piece onto the cardstock. If needed, wipe up excess glue with an old paintbrush.
7. Continue building the design one piece at a time, adding smaller coils and shapes to fill the inside areas. Check that all pieces are positioned the way you want before the glue dries. Let the finished project dry completely.
8. Once dry, display your quilling design flat, or frame it carefully to protect the raised paper shapes.





Quilling Shape Chart

Most quilling shapes begin by rolling narrow strips of paper into coils with a quilling tool (or toothpick) and gently pinching them into the desired forms. A tiny dab of glue secures each coil in place. Pointed or bent-nose tweezers are especially helpful for placing the finished shapes on their edges to build your design.

The final size of each coil will vary based on the length of the strip, the weight of the paper, and how tightly it is rolled.

