

A Cut Above



You will need

- Paper
- Scissors
- Pencil and Eraser
- Fine Wool or Cotton
- Felt Square

Before you begin

Choose the paper to use to cut your pattern. Bear in mind that the thinner paper will be easier to cut and thicker paper or card will be hard to cut but the end result will be less flimsy.

Have a go

1. Select a piece of paper and fold it in half either once or twice. For complex designs, you may wish to fold the paper three or four times. Bear in mind that this will make the paper harder to cut.
2. On the folded paper, sketch out a design. Have a look at the pictured examples for inspiration. Traditional paper-cuttings feature everything from geometric patterns to plants and animals. Be creative and try to think of something you might display at a celebration.
3. If you have any symbols that mean a lot to you, include them. Jewish paper-cuttings, for example, will often feature symbols like the lion (symbolising strength and bravery), fish (symbolising fertility) and a snake eating its own tail (symbolising infinity).
4. When cutting out shapes, shade these areas in, so that you know which bits to cut.
5. Make sure you take your time and cut with care. If you have a particularly delicate pattern you could consider using a craft knife and cutting board.
6. When finished, unfold the paper. The design should be replicated on the folded-over side or sides.



Additional Information

You could hang your completed paper-cutting up in a window by putting two tiny holes in the top corners and using some fine wool or cotton. The light will shine through and create a reflection of the pattern in your room.

You could also cut a pattern into felt fabric to make a coaster.



Reflection

Many cultures from different corners of the world practice paper cutting as an art form.

During the activity you have seen an example of a papel picado, which is thought to have originated with the Aztecs, while Chinese Jinzhi dates all the way back to the 6th century.

- What do you think attracted people from all over the world to this activity?
- How did they share their knowledge about this art form?

Safety

Take care when using scissors or ask for help from an adult.

All Activities are taken from the Scout Association's Great IN Doors programme.