

Weaving with Paper

Making a paper weaving is a fun way to make a vibrantly colored artwork that teaches measuring with a ruler, pattern making and builds hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. This project is ideal for children aged 5 – 6, however, the project can also “grow” with kids: our instructions and examples are also suited for kids from 7 – 10. This is a really fun and versatile activity, and the repetition involved is comforting and stress-relieving!

Materials:

Paper (construction paper works great, or any paper of the same width and different colors)
Pencil
Ruler
Scissors

Step 1: Creating your Warp “strings”

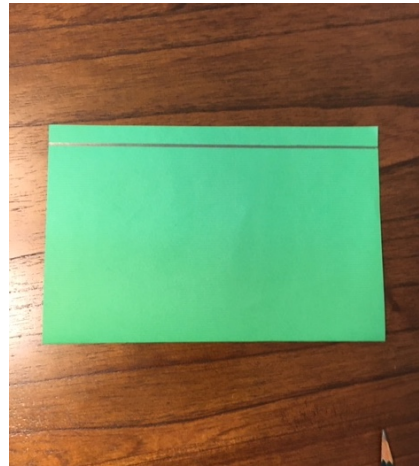
Choose one sheet of paper that will become your loom. This should be a color you really like, because it will be visible throughout the weaving. Fold the paper in half (hamburger).

Step 2:

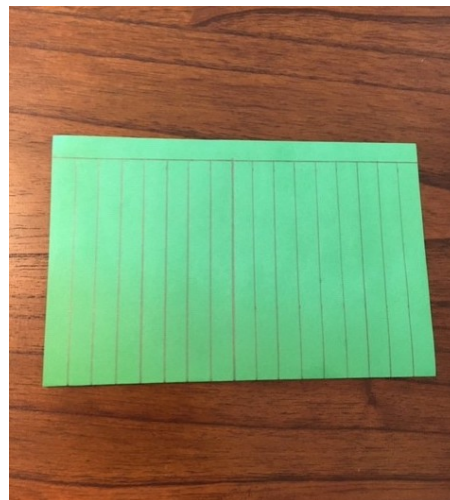
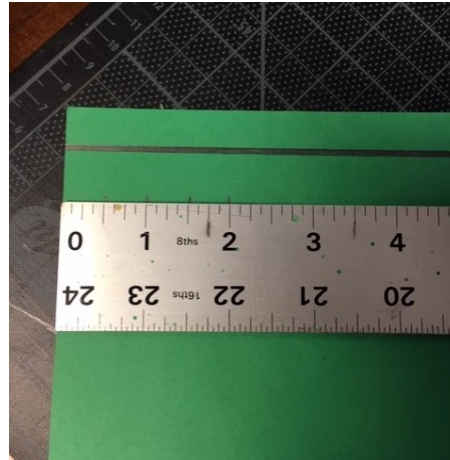
With the pencil and ruler, measure out 1 inch* and draw a straight line across the top of the OPEN end of the paper (not the fold). The line should be dark enough to see it, as this line will be the point where you STOP cutting. We will call this the BASE line for easy reference.

*In artmaking, it is encouraged that kids do as much of the project as possible, as they will not only learn more from it, but they will have a sense of pride and empowerment through their work.

Example of Step 2



Examples of Step 3



Therefore, precision is not as important as autonomy!

Step 3:

With the ruler lined up below the line, make a small mark every inch (older kids should try every $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, like our example). Repeat this step a bit further down towards the fold, marking the paper every inch or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, exactly as you did before. Draw lines perpendicular from your BASE line.

Step 4:

After double-checking that your lines are straight (or as straight as you can get them), cut along each line, starting at the fold and stopping when you reach the BASE line. When finished, carefully unfold the paper and lay flat. Put a heavy book or two on it to help flatten it while you do the next step.

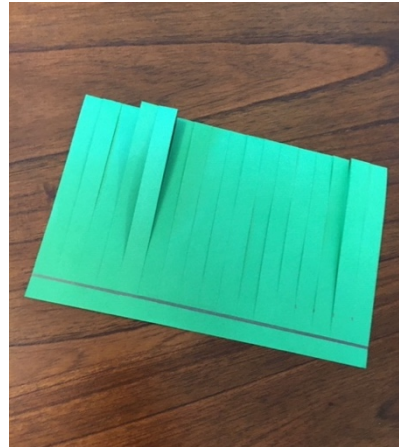
Step 5: Creating your Weft “strings”

Take a different color paper(s) than what you used for your Warp. Make sure they are the same width as the warp. (Our example is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, so we want the width of each paper to be $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches) Measure and draw lines as you did in step three, but this time they can continue from end to end. Cut out the strips of paper until you have several 1 inch or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch strips at the same width of your warp. These are your weft strips

Step 6: Weaving

Choose one strip and starting from either the left or right, weave the strip (this is the weft) between the warp strips. You should see the color alternate (in our example, we see green, pink, green, pink...) When the weft strip is totally woven into the warp, gently push the weft into the BASE line of the warp. Choose a new strip of paper (we chose blue) and weave through the warp

Examples of Step 4



Example of Step 5



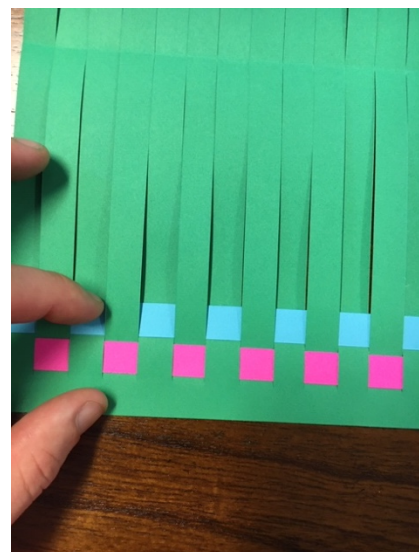
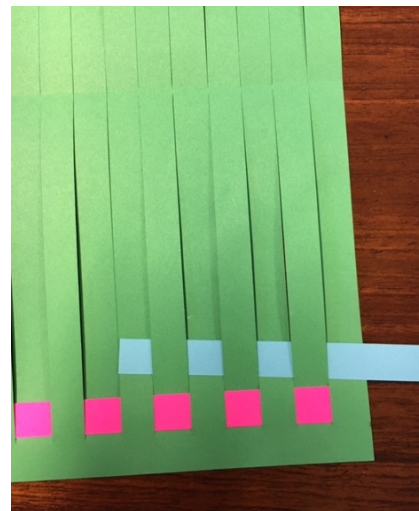
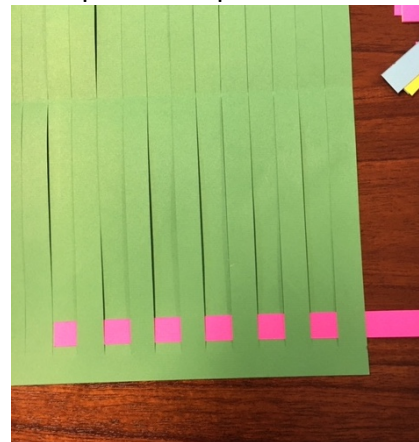
starting with the opposite strip. (In the example, the first line was green, pink, green, pink. The second line is blue, green, pink, blue, green, the green in both cases is the warp.) Gently push down the strip of paper against the preceding strip.

Repeat this process of weaving strips of paper through the warp and gently pushing them against the bottom until you reach the top (or as close to the top as you can get). If there is still space at the top when you are finished, you can put a small piece of tape on the BACK of the weaving at the top strip. This will hold everything in place.

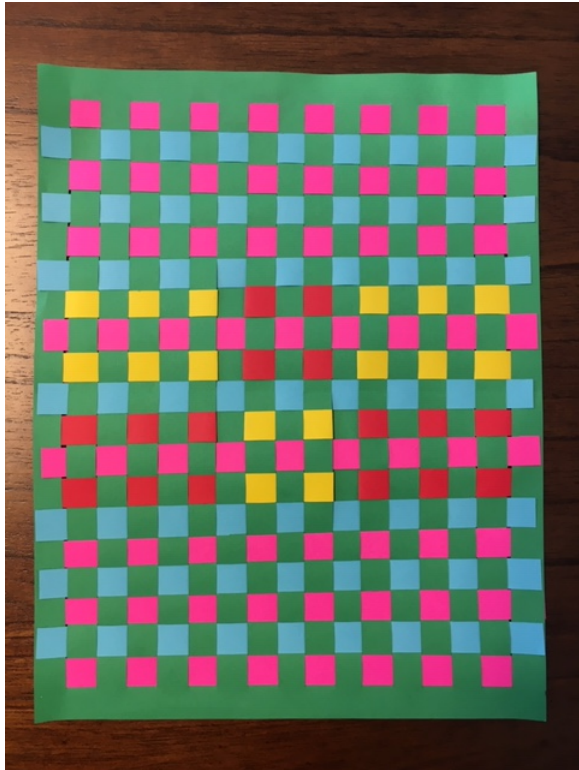
Tips:

- The warp will want to guide your strip the same way as the one preceding it, so try to start the next strip a few inches up and then push it down when you have gone all the way through – the weaving will go faster.
- Try to keep the side of the paper with the pencil marks on the back.
- Don't get frustrated if you make a mistake – it happens but is very easy to fix!

Examples of Step 6



Weaving completed!



Go further:

How did we get the red and yellow sections in the middle to alternate like that? We took a few yellow strips and red strips and cut them in half, then wove them the same way as a long strip but folded the ends over in the back. When the weaving was finished, and all the strips had been tightly pushed down, we taped the backs of the folded strips with a few small pieces of tape. What other designs could you make with this idea?

