

Explore & Describe:

Torn Paper collage

Timing

10-20 minutes to explore & describe

20 minutes (or more) for independent work

Space

Clear tables or desks pushed together into groups of 3 or more

Materials

An 9 x 12 sheet of color construction paper for each child, in a variety of colors at each table

.....
Additional sheets of construction paper in each color

.....
Optional glue sticks

Additional supports

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1. Experiment with strips & curls

Sample Script (3-5 minutes)

- **SET UP-** Today, we are going to see what we can do with this paper using just our hands! No scissors! it doesn't matter what color paper you have. We'll end up sharing all of the colors by the end. Let's hold our papers vertically, so that they look tall & skinny, like a skyscraper. Put both of your hands at the top of the paper.
- **EXPLORE-** What will happen if we rip the paper quickly from top to bottom? I see a lot of straight lines and some long skinny strips. What will happen if we rip one of our long, skinny strips into an even longer, skinnier strip? (Keep ripping skinnier strips until the paper curls!) When your paper curls, hold it up so we can see!
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What do these remind you of? Yes! Those (tight spirals or ringlets, loose loops, tiny curves) look like _____!
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** What could you make with these shapes? Do they give you any ideas for puppets, places or stories?

2. Experiment with diagonals & shapes

Sample Script (3-5 minutes)

- **SET UP-** Let's hold our biggest piece horizontally, like it's laying down to take a nap. Put both hands at the top of your paper.
- **EXPLORE-** What will happen if we rip the paper turned this way? Hold up your ripped piece, so that we can see all of the different kinds of shapes we made!
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What do these shapes remind you of? Yes! That (lumpy, jagged, swoopy, pointy, diagonal, triangle) shape does look like a _____. (Take a few ideas).
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** What could you make with these shapes? Do they give you any ideas for making puppets, places or stories?

Option to add an additional experiment here to support fine motor skill development or challenge students to notice deeply using all of their senses. See pg. 3-4 for ideas!

continue...

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3. Experiment with layering

Sample Script (3-5 minutes)

- **SET UP-**
 - 1) Rip one of your paper pieces into 10 tiny pieces.
 - 2) Mix the colors of paper by pushing them into the middle.
 - 3) Choose a **big** piece of paper in any color.
 - 4) Choose a **medium** piece in a different color and layer it on top of your big piece.
 - 5) Choose a **tiny** piece of paper in another color and layer it on top of your medium piece.
 - **EXPLORE-** Play around with how you can layer your pieces. Do you want to place your pieces in the middle, over to one side, on the top or the bottom of your big piece? Do you want to place your tiny piece on top of or beside your medium piece? Do you want them close together or far apart? Try out different ways! Layer more shapes if you like!
 - **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What do your layered pieces remind you of? Yes! The way you layered your pieces (on top of, next to, close together, far apart, on the edges, in the middle, bottom or top) looks like a _____.
 - **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** Did layering the pieces give you any ideas about what you would like to make next?
-

4. Independent exploration

Allow at least 20 minutes for independent work

While students work, teachers circulate to...

- Notice & describe the choices kids are making in their drawings. For support use the **Describing Tool: Torn Paper Collage**.
- Notice, observe & support how kids are choosing to work as artists. Use the **Observe & Support Tool: Visual Art**.
- Make art and play *with* the kids.
- At the end, collect and save the paper scraps to use next time to make puppets or story settings

Additional optional experiments...

Additional experiments to...

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We recommend assessing the needs of your class and adding one more experiment between ripping and layering if you have time. Another good option is to use what you learn about your students from doing the basic lesson plan in order to choose a few experiments to do in a second lesson!

To support fine motor skill development

Note: these work best when done one after the other so that kids can feel the different choices that they can make about how to use their muscles.

Experiment with using force (2 min)

- **SET UP-** Choose a big piece of paper.
- **EXPLORE-** What will happen if we use ALL of the muscles in our hand to crush this paper (crushing sound effects encouraged). Now, let's open our hand and see what we have made!
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What does your crushed paper remind you of? What have you made? Yes! Your (crumpled, crushed, smooshed, bumpy, 3-D) paper looks like (a) _____!
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** Does your crushed paper give you any ideas for making puppets or places or stories?

Then experiment with being gentle (3 min)

- **SET UP-** Choose another piece of paper
- **EXPLORE-** What will happen if we just use our fingertips to make a tiny rip. Try not to rip it all the way! Then make another tiny rip! See if you can make tiny rips all along the edge of this paper.
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What does this remind you of? What have you made? Yes! Your (fringed, fluffy, bumpy) paper looks like (a) _____!
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** Does This give you any ideas for making puppets or places or stories?

More additional experiments...

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To add fine motor skill challenge

Experiment with folding, rolling and/or twisting (3-5 min each)

- **SET UP-** Find a long piece and hold it using two hands.
 - **EXPLORE** What will happen if..
We fold our paper back and forth & back and forth over and over?
We roll or curl the paper? (Try rolling it around fingers or pencils)
We twist our paper? Hold either end of the paper and twist your hands in opposite directions!
 - **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What does paper remind you of? What have you made? Yes! Your (folded, creased, pointy, rolled, curved, spiral, twisted, gnarled) paper does look like (a) _____!
DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS- Does your paper give you any ideas for making puppets or places or stories?
-

Additional Option:

- Challenge kids to slowly & carefully rip shapes like circles & triangles
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To challenge kids to notice deeply

Notice sounds (3 min)

- **SET UP-** For this experiment we have to be absolutely quiet and use our ears to listen. (Wait for the room to be silent).
- **EXPLORE-** Listen to your paper! What sound does the paper make when we rip it slowly? Rip it quickly? Shake it? Crumple it?
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What do the sounds remind you of?
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** Do the sounds give you any ideas?

Notice texture (3 min)

- **SET UP-** Find a paper that has one straight edge & one torn edge.
- **EXPLORE-** Feel the straight edge with your fingers. Feel the torn edge with your fingers.
- **IMAGINE & DESCRIBE-** What does the straight edge feel like? What does the ripped edge feel like? Yes! The (fluffy, bumpy, soft, sharp, straight, thin) edge does feel like (a)_____!
- **DISCOVERIES SPARK IDEAS-** What do the textures remind you of? What could you make with them? Do the sounds give you ideas?

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Frame the experiments in a playful way

Watch the tips video for some ideas!

Let kids take charge

You will begin by guiding the students through steps that repeat for each experiment. As you repeat the steps, the kids will start to jump ahead, call out & talk to each other about their discoveries without you! This is a sign that they have internalized this exploratory process. Ideally, you'll end up with a room full of artists experimenting & sharing discoveries.

Use student knowledge

Often, kids will be excited to share paper manipulation techniques that they already know. Make space for kids to teach the rest of the class what they know and what they discover!

Make a chart together

Add examples of each technique the class learns and invite kids to keep adding to it as they make more discoveries.

We are using (not wasting) paper

During independent art making time, kids will find and make the shapes they need from the papers that they tore during the lesson. However, they may need additional paper to execute specific ideas or to conduct additional experiments. Exploring and experimenting with material is not wasteful. Not every experiment leads to a product, and that's ok!

Notice, Describe & Ask

Use the Describing Tool for Torn Paper Collage for support.

Be flexible

During independent time kids may want to use glue or scissors or create puppets that they want to play with. Be prepared to follow their lead!

Use art making time to observe your students

For support, use the Observation Tool for Visual Arts.

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Prepare the materials

- **9 x 12 construction paper in a variety of colors.** Each child needs 1 sheet to start with. Make extra construction paper in all colors available for kids to use as needed during the explore & describe mini lesson and during independent art time.
- **Test your construction paper!** We recommend Tru-ray construction paper, but any brand will work. Most brands of construction paper will tear in long, straight lines vertically, and tear in diagonals when held horizontally. However, some brands are the reverse! Make sure you know which direction your brand of paper tears in, so that you can adjust the direction if needed.
- **Have a plan to save the paper scraps!** Once your students have explored this material, they can use their paper manipulating skills to collage puppet characters or settings! Having a bunch of already torn scraps will help them get started more quickly. Gather all of the scraps into one large bag or box, or into 2-gallon Ziplocs for each table at the end of the lesson to use next time.
- **Glue sticks (optional)** are good to have on hand in case your class becomes attached to what they make during the independent exploration time.

Prepare the art making space

- **Seat kids in groups of 3-8** at tables or desks that are pushed together so that they can share paper scraps.
- **Tables should be cleared.**
- **Hide the scissors!** We will be ripping paper, not using scissors. With this technique, imagining ways to use random shapes is just as important as having the fine motor skills needed to execute a meticulous plan, reducing anxiety kids may have about art making. Allow kids to use scissors during independent time if they want.
- **Hide the glue sticks!** We are exploring and learning skills today, not making a finished product! That said, if your class becomes attached to what they created, give them 5 minutes to glue it together at the very end, while you collect the scraps.

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Planning

How will you set up playful exploration? Consider inviting kids to laugh like an “Evil Scientist” whenever they discover something, or listen to the first ripping sound to hear the paper say “hello!”

Assess your class. Do you want to add additional experiments to support or challenge your students? If so, we recommend adding one more experiment (after ripping and before layering), or doing the lesson a second time with new experiments chosen based on what you learn about your kids the first time. See pg. 3 & 4 of this packet for scripts.

To support fine motor skill development:

- **Experiment with using force.** What will happen if we crush the paper using all of the muscles in our hand?
- **Experiment with being gentle.** What will happen if we use just our fingertips to make tiny rips?

To add motor skill challenge:

- **Experiment with folding.** What will happen if we fold and press our paper back and forth and back and forth over and over?
- **Experiment with rolling.** What will happen if we roll the paper? If we roll it around our finger or around our pencil?
- **Experiment with twisting.** What will happen if we hold the paper in two hands and twist them in opposite directions?

To challenge kids to notice deeply:

- **Experiment with sound.** What sound does the paper make when we rip it slowly, rip it quickly, crumple it?
- **Notice & Describe texture.** What does the straight edge vs. the torn edge feel like? How can you describe them? What do they remind you of? What could you make with them?

During Independent Art Making Time

- **Use the Describing Tool for Torn Paper Collage** to find specific words to describe kids’ choices.
- **Use the Observation Tool for Visual Arts** to notice how your kids are working as artists.