

**Lesson:** Papermaking—New from Old**Grade:** 1**Objectives:**

Students will:

Learn that both the Egyptians and Chinese made paper from plant fibers

Learn the techniques used to make their own paper

Recycle old paper scraps, flowers, leaves, seeds into “new” paper

**Materials:** 4 blenders; 4 wooden frames (about 5x7” to 8x10”) with window screening stapled over the edges; 4 plastic tubs (large enough to dip frames in); large recycled plastic tubs; 4 pieces of felt or blotter paper (larger than frames); sponges; paper scraps, dryer lint, small flowers, leaves, pieces of foil, etc.; water; paper towels; book-[Paper by Kids](#) by Grummer; link for video on papermaking:<http://www.kidsgardening.com/growingideas/projects/nov02/pg1.html>**Presentation:** Talk with students about how people of ancient cultures had to write on clay tablets until paper was invented. The ancient Egyptians and Chinese figured out how to make paper out of plants and water, which was a lot easier to carry around than clay! Explain that we too are going to make our own paper, by recycling old scraps and plant materials. Ask students to look for paper that needs recycling. The best kinds for making paper: old envelopes, copy paper and junk mail. For added interest, kids may want to bring in small pieces of foil, colored construction paper, dried flower petals and small leaves, thread, and even dryer lint! Ask students to tear their scraps into 1” pieces. Soak the scraps in plastic containers overnight to soften the fibers.**Directions:**

1. Divide class into 4 groups and have them go to their stations, which will have a blender 1/2-3/4ths full of water, screens, felt or blotters, paper towels, newspaper, plastic tubs with 2-3 inches of water; and the torn paper scraps.
2. Add a handful of paper scraps to the blender and puree on medium speed.
3. Pour blender contents into the tub.
4. Carefully, angle the screen into the tub until it’s horizontal, and gently shake screen from side to side to distribute the pulp evenly on the screen.
5. Lift screen up, allowing water to drip back into the pan.
6. Lay paper towels over the paper and invert screen onto blotter or felt. Press with sponge to remove excess water. Slowly lift screen by pulling up on one edge of the frame. Add flowers or threads at this time. The new paper will stay on the paper towels.
6. Move paper to drying area and put a layer of newspaper, towel, or felt over it, pressing with your hands or a rolling pin. You can pile up layers as new papers are made, and lay books or boards on top to keep it flat.
7. Later, turn the paper every so often to let it dry.

**Time:** 75-90 minutes.