

How to Make Papel Picado

Printable classroom craft guide • Día de los Muertos education

Papel picado means “punched” or “perforated paper.” This classroom version uses folded tissue paper and scissors.

MATERIALS

- Colorful tissue paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Ruler (optional)
- String or ribbon
- Tape or glue

1

Prepare the Paper

Cut several tissue-paper sheets to the same rectangle and stack them neatly.

2

Fold the Stack

Fold the stacked paper carefully. A simple half-fold creates an easy symmetrical design.

3

Draw a Pattern

Sketch flowers, hearts, leaves or geometric shapes. Leave paper bridges connecting the design.

4

Cut the Shapes

Cut small shapes from the folded paper. Use safety scissors and adult supervision for young students.

5

Unfold Carefully

Open the tissue paper slowly to reveal the repeated perforated pattern. Tissue tears easily.

6

Create a Banner

Attach finished sheets to string or ribbon with tape or glue, then hang the banner for display.

DESIGN TIP

Start with larger cutouts and simple patterns. Keep a solid outside border and small connecting bridges so the finished papel picado does not fall apart.

Papel Picado: Visual Steps

Fold • draw • cut • unfold • hang



TRADITION & MEANING

Professional papel picado artisans traditionally chisel detailed patterns into stacks of thin tissue paper. During Día de los Muertos, papel picado adds color and movement to ofrendas; the tissue paper is also commonly interpreted as a reminder of life's fragility.