

Paper Coil Baskets

(art + social studies)

This project transforms traditional basketry into a contemporary fine craft. Paper Coiling Core is easily anchored to an adhesive base then shaped and glued in layers as the basket “grows” upward. Limitless shapes are possible by manipulating coil placement and applying pressure to create contours. Vibrant and fluid Blick Liquid Watercolors can replicate patterns from the Papago, Navajo, and Apache cultures of Native America and Northern Mexico or be used in contemporary, abstract or representational styles.

Grade Levels 5-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Each basket requires at least 10-ft of 1/4" diameter paper coil. This will make a bowl about 4" to 5" high. Cut longer lengths for taller pieces. The coil will remain naturally curled.
2. Cut 9" x 12" Printfoam sheets into nine 3" x 4" pieces. Each student will need one piece to use as the basket base. Larger baskets need larger bases for balance. Trim pieces into a simple round or oval shape at least 2" in diameter—a good size base for a bowl or tall basket.

Process

1. Begin by experimenting with the coiling process. Without exposing the adhesive yet, hold the end of the coil in the center of the Printfoam base and wind it around itself. Layer it to gain height and width. Vary the shape by tightening or expanding the coil placement and altering opening diameter.
2. Each basket will be a version of a rounded shape. Variations and imperfections in the coil process



Materials

Paper Coiling Core, 1/4" x 180-ft (60962-1325); share two coils across class

Inovart® Adhesive-Back Printfoam, pkg of 12, 9" x 12", (40408-0000); share one package across class

Blick® Liquid Watercolor, set of 10 asst. colors, 8-oz (00369-1109); share across class

Weldbond® Universal Adhesive, 8-oz (23819-1105); share eight bottles across class

Dynasty® Ruby Synthetic Brush Canister, 72-piece asst. (05198-0729); share one set across class

Krylon® Low-Odor Spray Finish, 11-oz can Clear Matte (23710-2001); need two cans for each class

Alvin® Utility Knife (57459-0000); need one

Optional Materials Recommended for Embellishment:

Twisteez Colored Wire, pkg of 50 asst. colors, 30" (33407-1050)

Rexlace® 100-yd spool, asst. colors (60921-)

Hygloss™ Assorted Plastic Beads, 12-oz (60716-1005)

Assorted Metallized Beads, 1-lb (60776-1001)

Trait-Tex® Econ-O-Yarn Assortment, 10-lbs (65216-1009)

Creativity Street® Embroidery Floss, asst. 24-skeins, (63100-1009)

Raffia, 6-oz, Natural (60908-1375) or Mixed Colors (60908-1005)

Process, continued

distort the form slightly and make it more organic. The coil is kept intact and will not be cut again until the basket is completely formed.

3. When a shape has been decided upon, peel away the release paper to expose the adhesive on the Printfoam base. Begin by placing the coil in the center and coil it around itself, pressing firmly until the base is covered.
4. Flip the base over so that the coiled side becomes the bottom of the basket. Work with the base flat on the outer table. Gather the remaining length of the paper coil material in a natural loop to keep it organized.
5. Place a line of glue on the paper coil base edge and add a layer of coil. Repeat, placing more glue on the coil itself and building up a second layer. The glue and paper will adhere well; for best results, however, press firmly together. Continue building up the walls of the basket.
6. Gently alter and control the direction of the basket by making the coil tighter or widening it out as it is applied. For a narrow opening, grip the piece firmly pressing the coils together. The upward direction builds stability as the piece grows.
7. When the desired shape has been reached, trim the coil at an angle with a utility knife or a pair of scissors.

8. Use extra glue to seal the cut edge of the coil and any open areas in the body of the basket. If necessary use rubber bands to hold any areas together while glue dries.
9. Paint the basket with liquid watercolor. This can be done even before the glue is completely dry. Allow to dry, then spray with a clear finish. Caution — follow safety instructions on spray can carefully and do not use with children present.
10. Embellish with a variety of yarns, wire, beads, raffia, etc. Create fringe and tassels. Attach embellishments with glue or with embroidery floss and needle.

Options

1. Use 1/2" or 3/4" coiling core to make larger baskets.
2. Use acrylic paint instead of watercolor. Acrylics will provide greater coverage and opacity, as well as sealing the paper coil, so a clear finish would not be required.
3. Apply yarn to the form between the coils working it all the way up the shape.
4. Make Paper Coil Baskets around plastic or glass containers; leave the container in place and the basket can be used to hold liquids.
5. Make a coiled lid to fit the basket opening.



National Standards

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions

5-8 Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

9-12 Students evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions

Content Standard #4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

5-8 Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places