

Norton Simon Museum

Art-Making Activity Create a Frame

Frames are often overlooked but serve important roles. Not only do they protect and hang artwork on the wall, but they also complement a work's themes, subject matter and color palette. For example, a joyous and elaborate frame accompanies *Fête Champêtre or Garden Party* painted by Jean Baptiste Pater in 1730. *Garden Party* depicts finely dressed French aristocrats enjoying life's pleasures in a lush environment. The painting is protected by a typical 18th-century French frame. Its gilded, or golden, surface reminds viewers of luxury and status. It is ornamented by motifs (or designs) modeled after nature. Together, *Garden Party* and its frame celebrate bountiful nature and friendly company.

Jean-Baptiste Pater (French, 1695–1736), *Fête Champêtre*, c. 1730, oil on canvas, The Norton Simon Foundation



Here, a sturdy, no-nonsense frame complements a similarly serious subject. *The Aldrovandi Dog*, painted by Guercino in 1625, stands alert, guarding his family's castle. Protecting this protector is a strong frame with straight lines and sharp corners. In between the gold borders is a ribbon-like path that alternates between areas of red and black. Gold is again used to signify wealth and status. Black is seen on the frame and can be found in the dog's shiny nose and in his collar. *The Aldrovandi Dog* and its frame make an impressive pair, telling a story of strength and honor.

Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri) (Italian, 1591–1666), *The Aldrovandi Dog*, c. 1625, oil on canvas, The Norton Simon Foundation





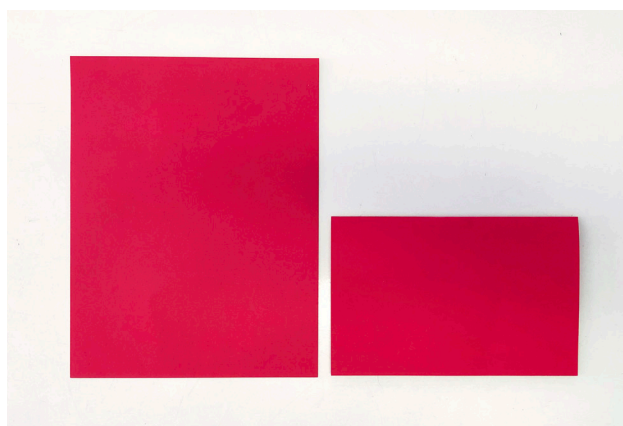
Materials

- 2 pieces of 8 ½ x 11" heavy cardstock
- Glue
- Scissors
- Transparency paper
- Materials to decorate the frame can include tissue paper, foam shapes, puff balls, popsicle sticks, paint, coloring supplies, glitter, aluminum foil, uncooked pasta and seeds.

Steps

1

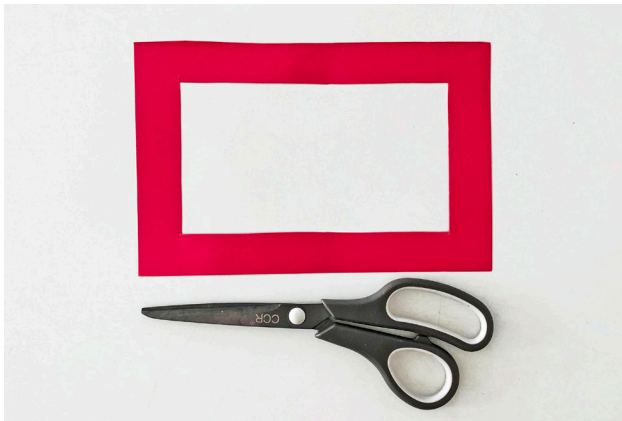
Begin with the two pieces of heavy cardstock paper. Hold each piece in portrait position and fold in half horizontally. Take one of the folded pieces of paper and cut it down the horizontal fold. This will be your frame base.



2

Draw a big circular or rectangular shape on a large sheet of paper. You will be drawing your composition inside this shape. Then, choose 3–5 things from your list to illustrate, and divide your shape according to the number of things you wish to draw.





3

Next, hold the piece of clear transparency paper in portrait position. Cut it in half horizontally. This will be like the glass that protects the artwork.



4

Glue the transparency sheet to the back of the frame. Set aside and allow time to dry.



5

Then glue the three outer edges of your paper frame (the one that has a rectangular cutout) to the folded full sheet of paper. This will create a pocket in which you can slip a photograph or original artwork. Make sure to leave one side without glue. Think about the type of picture you will put in your frame. If you want to use a portrait, then leave one of the shorter sides without glue. If you want to use a landscape, then leave one of the longer sides without glue.

6

Finally, decorate your frame. As you decorate, think about the impact of the materials on the art in the frame. What textures will you use? What shapes and colors will you use? Can you add dimension to your frame by layering materials? Your frame is a work of art.



**Write a message in the fold of your paper.
You can give the frame to someone as a gift
to show you are thinking about them!**

