



CHAPTER 7 —Pioneer Projects...

Paper Quilt Making, Block and Quilt Designs

Background: In pioneer times, women gathered together for quilting parties. During these parties, they constructed quilts from strips of bedding and clothing that were no longer useful. Crazy quilts were made from odd pieces of fabric and ribbon and had no repeating pattern like quilts today. The women pieced together the scraps by hand, added material so that the quilt would keep someone warm, and stitched together the layers—the top, stuffing, and bottom—or tied them together with pieces of yarn.

Making quilts was as much a social gathering as it was a necessity for surviving in a harsh environment.

The students will make paper quilts from geometric pieces of colored and patterned paper.

Materials

- Graph paper. Select the size of the graph paper based on what you want the size of a finished block of quilt to be.
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Scraps of paper, such as gift wrapping paper or colored construction paper
- Something on which to attach all the finished blocks of quilt—fabric, paper, or a wall.

Planning

- Gather pictures or examples of quilts. Some resources are quilting magazines, fabric stores, books of instruction, and art books displaying quilts. Also available are home décor catalogs such as Linen Source, L.L. Bean, and Lands' End that feature quilts among their other wares.
- Plan to have each student make one block of a quilt. The blocks will be put together to make one quilt.
- Estimate what size paper, piece of fabric, or wall you'll need on which to paste all the blocks and have a border around them.

Procedure

Initial preparation

Set up all the supplies the students will need in one central location, such as on a long table or a couple desks in the classroom.

Carry out the exercise

Tell the students to

- Choose a design for their quilt blocks. Look at the quilts in the pictures and copy a pattern or create one of their own.
- Stay within the bounds of the graph paper that you've selected for them.

- Cut out the shapes they'll use in their design from the colored paper.
- Practice laying out the shapes and colors on the graph paper until they find the arrangement they like best.
- Glue the design to the graph paper.

Put the quilt together

- Show the students where and how the individual blocks will be assembled into a quilt.
- Tell the students to
 - Arrange their blocks on the piece of paper, staying within the border, until they find an arrangement they like. One of the pictures of quilts can be used as guide.
 - Attach the blocks to the material.

Extensions

Display the quilt designs in the classroom or hallway.

Put all the different designs together to make a whole paper quilt and display it on a wall.

Make a quilt block from fabric.

Invite someone who quilts to demonstrate piecing together fabric and other steps in quilt making.

Invite someone to exhibit antique and modern quilts in the classroom or organize a field trip to an exhibit.

