

Lotus Floats

Origami blossoms
made with waterproof paper

(art + social studies)

Loy Krathong, the Festival of the Floating Lotus, is an annual event that is celebrated throughout Thailand, Laos, and Burma in mid-November. The Krathong is a bouyant lotus-shaped basket bearing flowers, candles, incense, and other decoration. Thousands are placed on the water and in larger cities there are parades, fireworks, and paper sky lanterns. In many cultures, the lotus flower represents new beginnings.

Similar festivals in Japan and Hawaii are focused on remembering loved ones and honoring the deceased.

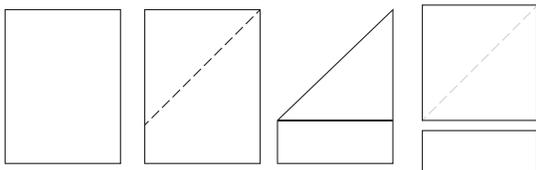
Origami flowers that are created with a waterproof sheet of paper can be set on the water with candles and messages in a Western version of Loy Krathong. Mineral paper is created from calcium carbonate and a small amount of plastic — not trees. The paper folds and floats beautifully.

The paper can be decorated first with markers, colored pencils, or paint. It can be ink-jet printed with photos or messages and sent adrift with a candle. As a memorial or floating artwork, the origami lotus can be temporary or long-lasting and creates a lovely, reflective vision floating in fountains, ponds, pools, or natural bodies of water.

GRADES 2-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut 9" x 9" squares of mineral paper. To create an easy square from a rectangle, fold a corner of the paper to the opposite edge and crease. Trim away the excess rectangle.



Process

1. Design the mineral paper square on both sides with drawings, patterns, or written messages. If the float will be temporary — intended to drift away or incinerate — then non-waterproof media can be used. If the float is intended to be long-lasting, use permanent media such as markers, inks, or acrylic paints.
- The side of the mineral paper facing upward as the folding process begins will actually be the bottom side of the lotus — the side that comes in contact with the water.



Materials (required)

Yasutomo® Mineral Paper, 9" x 12" pad of 20 sheets (13829-1023); need one sheet per student

Options for embellishing paper:

Sharpie® Fine Point Markers, assorted colors (21316-)

Blick® Studio Brush Markers, assorted colors (24532-)

Blick® Studio Artists' Colored Pencils, assorted colors (22063-)

Niji® Oil Pastels (21911-)

Blickrylic® Student Acrylics, assorted colors (00711-)

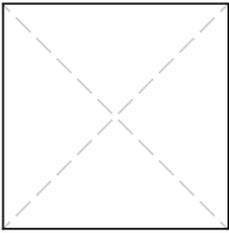
Optional Materials

Yasutomo® Mineral Origami Paper, package of 8 sheets, assorted colors (63297-1010)

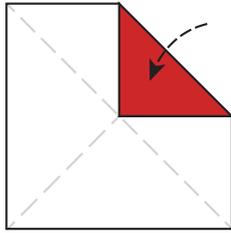


Process - continued

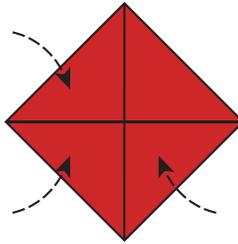
Let's Start! The first few steps of the process are easy and repetitive:



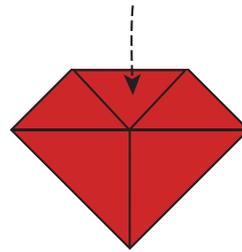
1. Fold diagonally both directions and open so paper is flat.



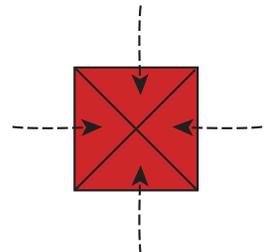
2. Fold one corner in to the center point.



3. Fold remaining corners in to the center point.



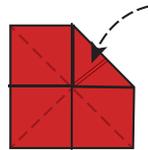
4. Fold one corner down to the center point.



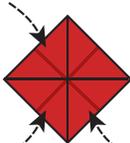
5. Fold remaining corners to center point (you're repeating the first set of folds).



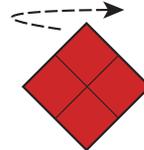
6. Turn paper over.



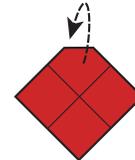
7. Fold one corner down to the center point.



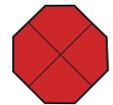
8. Fold other corners to the center point (repeating again the first set of folds).



9. Turn paper over.



10. Fold end of corner to the back.



11. Fold end of remaining corners to the back (it will look like a stop sign).

Look closely! The last few steps of the process are best shown in photos:



12: Use a finger to hold the corner folded in step 10 and lift the petal up and around to the other side of the paper, folding it "inside out."



14: Pull last layer of petals up, between the first set of petals.



15: The mineral paper is strong, yet very flexible. Adjust shapes of petals by pushing and pulling — it won't tear!

16: Use leftover mineral paper to design a lotus leaf or lily pad, if desired. Place votive candle in the center and set afloat.

Caution: Mineral paper is flammable and it is not biodegradable. Take care when using an open flame candle and do not allow Lotus Floats to pollute bodies of water.

Option

Create smaller lotus flowers from 6" x 6" pieces of Mineral Origami Paper and layer it inside the first lotus flower.



National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Presenting

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.