ScRaps

Origami Box

What do you do with all the beautiful greeting cards you receive? Many people display them, but when the season is over, most of the greetings are thrown in the trash. But you can give the cards new life and help save landfill space by recycling them to make origami-style boxes.

The ancient art of paperfolding originated in China in the first or second century A.D., and by the sixth century, it had reached Japan. At first, paperfolding was practiced only by the wealthy, because most people couldn't afford to buy paper. The material was scarce in those times, but by the 1300's, it was plentiful.

Materials List:

- Greeting cards
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Scissors
- T-square or triangle
- Paper cutter (optional)
- Glue stick

Paper became available to everyone, so more and more people began making what the Japanese called origami (ori means to fold, and gami means paper). At the same time the Japanese were practicing this art form, it was developed by the Moors, a Muslim people who lived in northern Africa. In the eighth century, they invaded Spain. Besides having a great influence on the country's architecture, the Moors introduced paperfolding to the native people. The Moors, who were able mathematicians and astronomers, emphasized the geometry of paperfolding. Today, origami combines the beauty and simplicity stressed by the Japanese and the mathematical correctness and elegance emphasized by the Moors.

How to: True origami does not make use of scissors or glue. This art form depends solely on paper cut into a square, a variety of folding techniques, patience, craftsmanship, and imagination. Still, the word "origami" seems to best describe this activity, so the following are instructions for making an origami-style box. With a few simple folds, and a cut here and there, you can make just the right box for small gifts or treasures. To begin, separate the front of the card from the back by cutting along the fold. Origami always begins with a square, so measure the shortest side of the front of the card, and make the other side the same length. For example, if your card measures 5"x7", make the square 5"x5". The front will become the top or lid of your box. To make the bottom, again use a square, but make it .25" smaller than the lid. In our example, the paper for the bottom will measure 4.75"x4.75".

PROJECT IDEAS
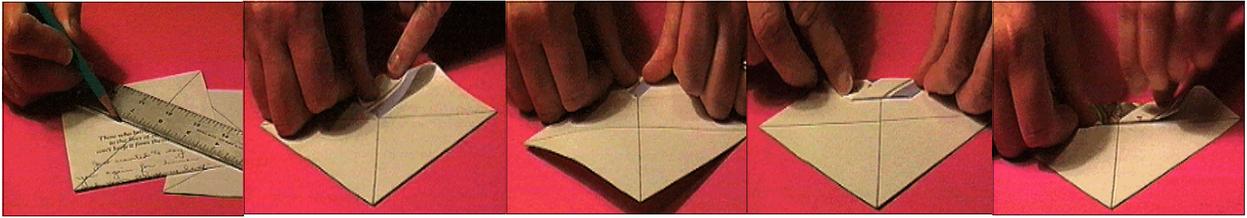
How To Continued: To make the lid, turn the front of the card face down. Place the ruler diagonally on opposite corners, and lightly draw a pencil line between them.
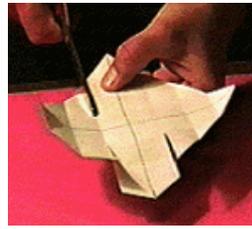
Repeat for the other two corners. An "x" will result from connecting opposite corners with the pencil. Fold one corner up to the center of the "x" and unfold. Being careful to keep the corner on the line, fold the same corner up to the resulting crease. Keeping the corner in this folded position, fold the card again. Fold it once more so that it touches the center line. Unfold and repeat this step for the other three corners. Using the scissors, make four cuts on the creases as shown. Fold the pointed tip of one "triangular-shaped" side down. Fold again. Fold the triangular tabs
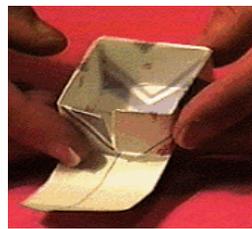
in, and stand the card up. Fold the legs in to make the side of the box. Repeat for the opposite side. To make the box shape, fold one of the other sides up and over the first two sides. Repeat for the other side. Use a glue stick to glue the tabs down inside the lid. To make the bottom of the box, repeat the above steps using the back of the card. Draw the guidelines on the inside of the card or the side with the greeting printed on it. Fold the box bottom as before, and cut in the same way. To assemble the bottom, fold and glue as we did for the box top. To make the

inside of the box neater, glue small squares of paper or felt over the inside of the box top and bottom.

Tips and Tricks: Make your box top more colorful with a little planning. Just make sure the most interesting part is in the center of the card before you do any measuring or cutting. You can make origami boxes out of any paper of cardstock weight. You can make much larger boxes, if you have old poster board or other lightweight paperboard available. When making origami, it's very important to work with squares of paper. If possible, use a paper cutter to make the squares, but have an adult do the cutting. If you don't have a paper cutter available, try using a t-square or a triangle to keep your corners square. It takes lots of practice to become proficient in origami. As you know, there are many pre-consumer and post-consumer waste papers with which you can practice. Try squares of newsprint, newspaper, phone book pages, and used copy and computer paper. For finished work, save small scraps of wrapping paper or used gift wrap. Check your school or public library if you're interested in seeing some of the many excellent books about origami which are available.