PAPER SCRAP GARLAND

A Colorful Recycled Classroom Craft That Brings Learning Spaces to Life

Paper Scrap Garlands are one of the easiest and most enjoyable recycled classroom projects. Instead of throwing away leftover construction paper, bulletin board trimmings, or craft scraps, students transform them into colorful decorative chains that brighten classrooms throughout the year while learning the value of reusing materials, creativity, and teamwork.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn the importance of recycling and reducing classroom waste.
- Strengthen fine motor skills through cutting, folding, and gluing.
- Practice creating repeating color and shape patterns.
- Express creativity while working independently or in groups.
- Help decorate the classroom using materials that would otherwise be discarded.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Leftover construction paper scraps
- Bulletin board trimmings
- Colored cardstock scraps
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue sticks or tape
- Stapler (teacher use recommended)
- Hole punch (optional)
- String or ribbon (optional)
- Display hooks or removable wall clips
- Decorative stickers (optional)

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1 GATHER PAPER SCRAPS

Collect leftover construction paper from previous projects. Encourage students to sort the paper by color, size, or pattern.

2 CUT PAPER STRIPS

Cut the paper into strips approximately 1 inch wide and 6 to 8 inches long.

3 BUILD THE GARLAND

Form the first strip into a loop and secure it. Slide the next strip through before connecting it.

Continue repeating the process until the chain reaches the desired length.

4 ADD DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

Personalize your garlands with paper shapes, stickers, or drawings.

Attach decorations between links or hang them from the chain for extra fun!

5 CONNECT MULTIPLE GARLANDS

Combine several student-made garlands into one long decorative chain.

Working together helps create an amazing classroom display!

6 DISPLAY AROUND THE CLASSROOM

Hang the finished garlands in many places to brighten your learning space!

- Bulletin boards
- Classroom doors
- Windows
- Hallways
- Reading corners
- Library displays
- Ceiling decorations
- Holiday celebrations
- School events

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

After completing the activity, ask students:

- Why is it important to reuse paper instead of throwing it away?
- What other classroom materials can be recycled?
- How do patterns help make our garlands interesting?
- Where else could we use recycled decorations around the school?

EXTENSION IDEAS

Create themed garlands throughout the year:

- Autumn leaves
- Winter snowflakes
- Spring flowers
- Patriotic red, white & blue chains
- Classroom celebration banners

Older students can also:

- Create repeating mathematical patterns
- Write spelling words on each link

Keep collecting paper scraps so fun projects are always within reach!

HELPFUL SUPPLIES

Paper Scraps, Construction Paper, Cardstock, Child-Safe Scissors, Glue Sticks, Tape, Stapler (Teacher Use), String or Ribbon, Display Hooks, Stickers

TEACHER TIP

Keep a dedicated "Paper Scrap Bin" in your classroom throughout the year. Instead of discarding leftover paper from art projects, invite students to place clean scraps into the bin for future crafts. By recycling these materials into colorful garlands and decorations, students learn that even the smallest scraps can become something beautiful while helping create a brighter, more sustainable classroom.

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