

PAPEL PICADO III

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The papel picado templates on the following pages are reproduced courtesy of these individuals:

- Bird Template (Tacoma Art Museum, <http://tacomaartmuseum.org>)
- Flower Template (Tacoma Art Museum, <http://tacomaartmuseum.org>)
- Sun Template (Tacoma Art Museum, <http://tacomaartmuseum.org>)
- Nada es imposible Template (Yreina Flores Ortiz, <http://www.aymujershop.com/>)

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE:

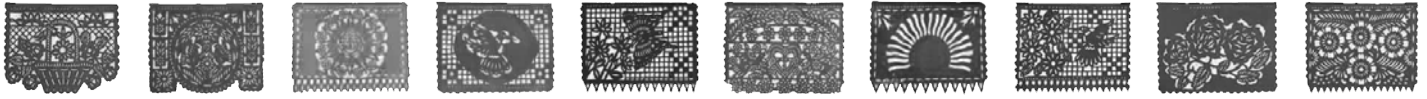
Students will learn about papel picado as contextualized by Día de los Muertos celebrations. In the process, they will produce their own papel picado art using the demonstrated techniques further developing their fine motor skills as they design and create more complex patterns applying knowledge of symmetry, lines, and negative and positive spaces.

BACKGROUND:

Papel picado, loosely translated as “perforated paper,” is a folk art technique practiced in Mexico. Colorful pieces of cut paper are strung to flutter in the wind during many holiday celebrations, including Día de los Muertos, Christmas, Easter, and personal ceremonies such as weddings and christenings. Specific color schemes are tied to each of these holidays. Pink, orange, and purple, for instance, often decorate ofrendas for Día de los Muertos, while red, white, and green (colors of the Mexican flag) are used in commemorating Independence Day or Mexico’s patroness, La Virgen de Guadalupe.

It consists of rectangular pieces of tissue paper which are cut away into intricate, repetitive designs. Simple versions can be constructed by folding and snipping with scissors; more elaborate versions require awls, chisels, and other special tools. The design emerges as the artist manipulates the negative space of the tissue paper. Experts in the craft will handle many layers of paper at once, generating extensive designs that often include motifs such as flowers, birds, skeletons, crosses, and historic figures, among others.

Papel picado decorations are ephemeral, existing only during the celebration. They are typically displayed outside, where their delicate construction will disintegrate naturally in the wind and rain. This transitory existence is repeated in many of the other elements of Día de los Muertos celebrations, such as the fresh food and flowers that adorn many ofrendas at this time.



RECOMMENDED GRADES:

High school.

ESTIMATED TIME:

60-90 minutes.

VOCABULARY:

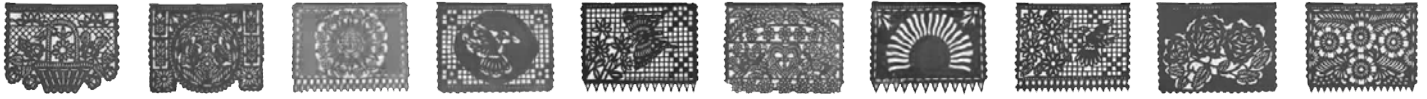
- Papel Picado
- Fold
- Cut
- Line of Symmetry
- Negative Space
- Positive Space
- Contrasting Color
- Color Value

MATERIALS:

- Multi-colored tissue paper or foil paper. Note: You may want to use double-sided paper with contrasting colors or madras tissue paper.
- Scissors
- String
- Glue Stick
- Papel Picado template (see following pages)
- X-Acto knife, blade #11 or #16
- Surface to cut on (the sides of recycled cardboard boxes work well)

PROCEDURE:

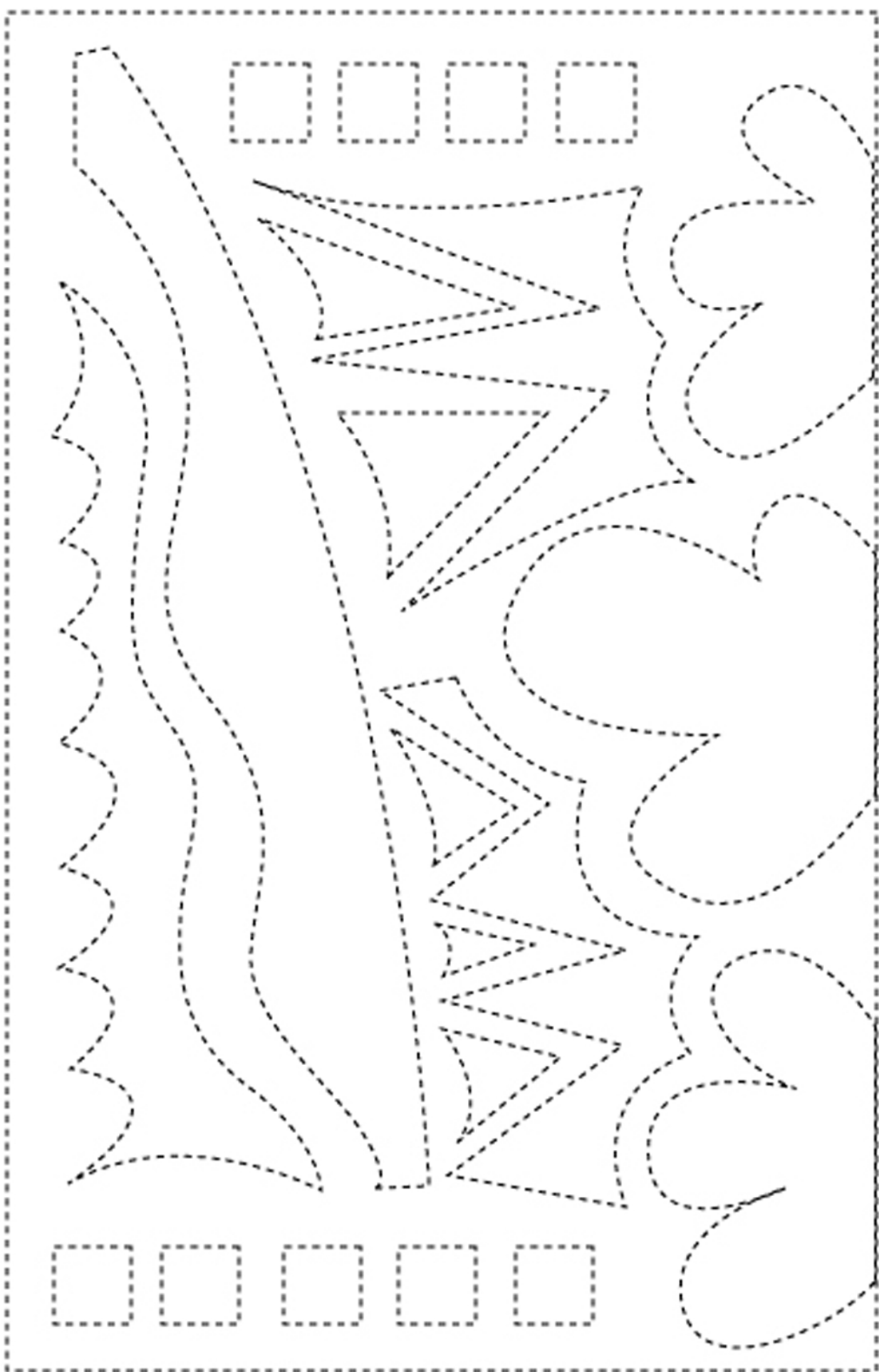
1. Prior to providing the materials to the student, assemble a packet of materials for each one. The packet will include 5 pages of tissue paper (sized approximately 8.5" x 11," or the size of a standard sheet of printing paper) layered on top of one another. The top sheet of the packet will be one of the templates provided in the following pages. Make sure that the template is placed approximately one inch below the top of the paper, so that you have room to fold and glue a string onto the top. Once the template and tissue paper stack is assembled, staple it at each of the four corners. Note that we have also includ-

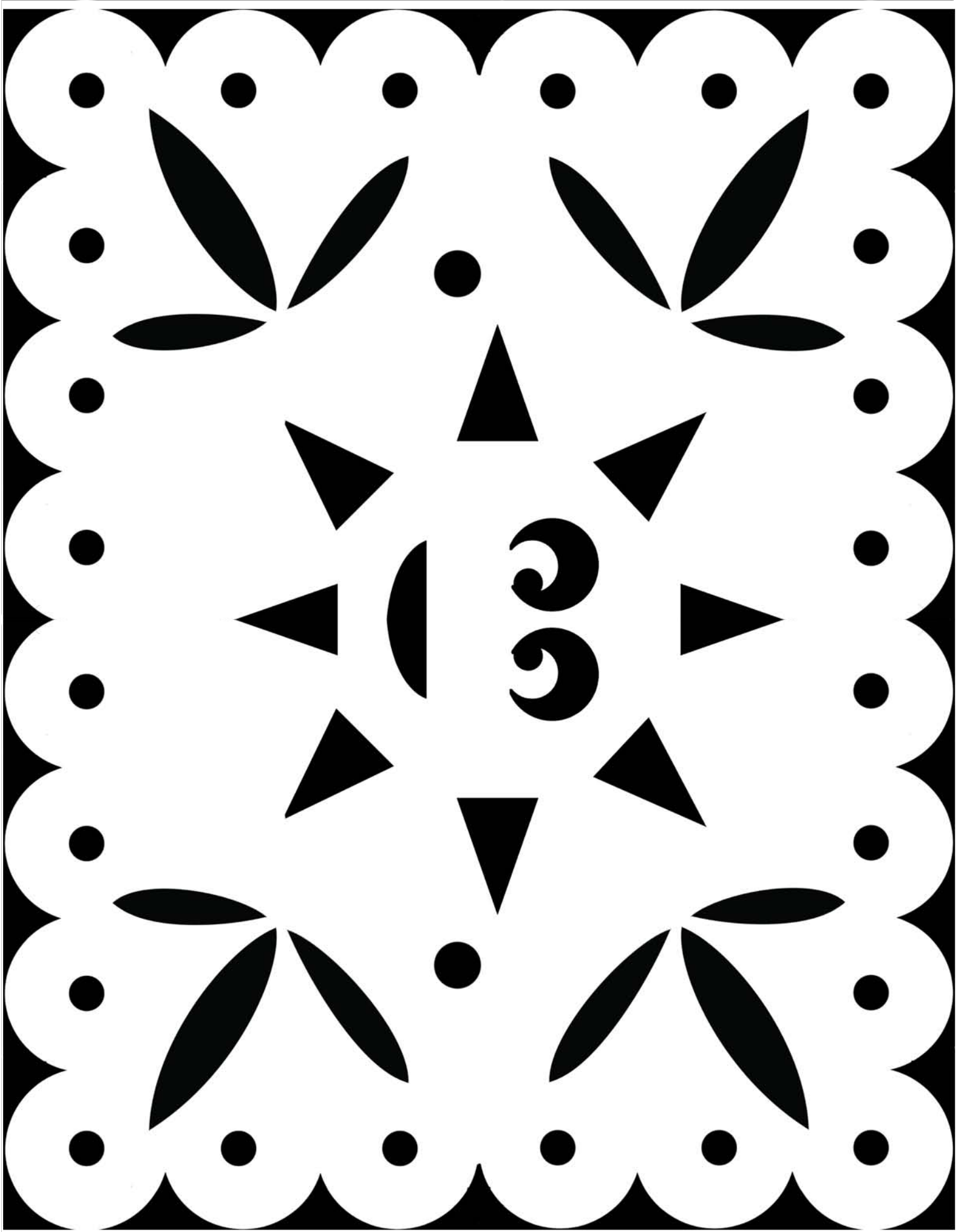


ed miniature templates on the last page, so you have the option of assembling smaller-sized tissue paper packets and thus smaller banners.

2. After the packet is assembled, provide one packet to each student along with an X-Acto knife. Place the tissue paper packet on top of the cardboard and, using the X-Acto knife, firmly and smoothly cut away all areas that are white. Encourage students to cut carefully, as the blades are quite sharp. Use the non-cutting hand to hold the paper in place.
3. After the design is completely cut away, cut away the edges of the design so that the tissue paper precisely conforms to the size of the template on the left, bottom, and right sides (the top should still have the extra inch of tissue paper).
4. The banners are now nearly complete. Remove the staples carefully before placing each tissue paper page side by side on a table. This is the basis of the banner.
5. Finally, fold the top edge down on each tissue paper page. Crease firmly. Unfold the flap and gently apply glue to the fold. Lay the string in the fold and press the flap closed. Press firmly against the closed flap to make sure that the string is glued to the tissue paper.
6. The banner is complete. Choose a space around the classroom in which to display the banners and hang. To most closely mimic their common placement in Día de los Muertos ceremonies, hang away from the wall so that the paper can flutter easily.









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