

Lesson Plan: Upcycled Messy Sketchbook

Grade Levels: 3rd grade and up

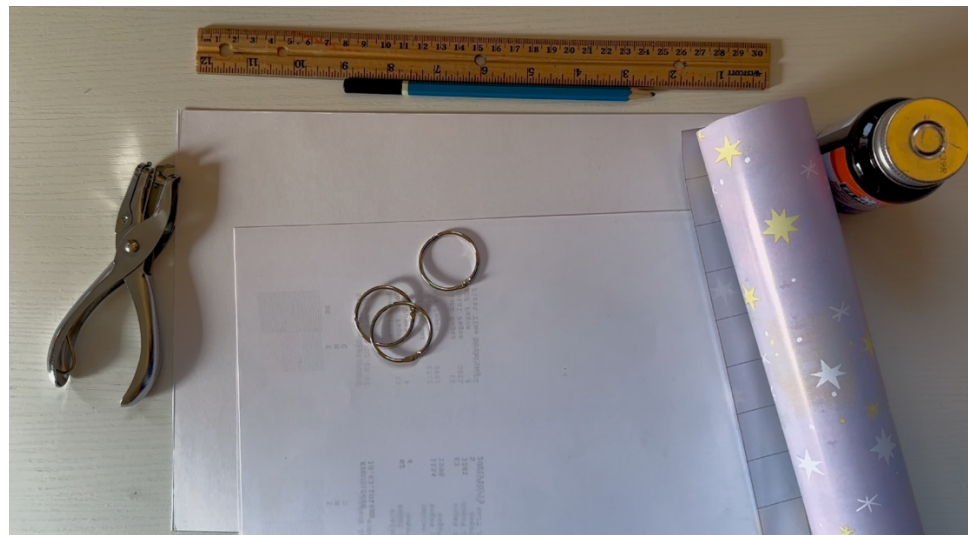
Duration: 1 class period (1-1.5 hours each)

Objective: Students will create a functional and creative sketchbook using leftover scrap paper and materials, learning about recycling and repurposing.



Materials Needed:

- Scrap paper (8.5x11 printer paper, with one side blank)
- Cardstock (for covers, e.g. watercolor pad cover, file folder, scrap cardstock)
- Scrap wrapping paper
- Hole punchers
- Rulers
- Pencils
- Binder rings
- Scissors (safety scissors for younger grades)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils (optional for decorating) or Glue sticks, liquid glue (for younger grades), OR glue and wrapping paper.



Learning Goals:

- Understand the importance of recycling and upcycling in reducing waste.
- Develop fine motor skills through measuring, cutting, and assembling materials.
- Practice creativity and self-expression by learning about the sketchbook process.

Vocabulary:

Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming waste materials, by-products, or unwanted products into new products or materials that are perceived to be of higher quality. Upcycling is an important part of reducing your carbon footprint and going green.

Messy Sketchbook, A "messy sketchbook" is your creative playground—a space to learn, explore, and experiment without worrying about perfection. Whether messy or neat, it's entirely yours, and there's no right or wrong way to use it. Sketchbooks aren't portfolios (unless you want them to be); they're tools for growth and a record of your artistic journey. Looking back on them can inspire and remind you how far you've come. Sometimes it's easier to play on scrap paper.

Preparation:

1. **Collect materials:** Gather 25-50 sheets of scrap paper and 2 sheets of cardstock, per student. Items can be collected over time in scrap paper baskets. Create excitement for collecting by showing students the final sketchbook.
2. **Pre-cutting for younger students:** Fold printer paper in half and use that as a template to trace the cover onto cardstock; Older students can fold, trace, and cut their own covers. Younger students will need assistance.
3. **Demonstration sample:** Prepare an example sketchbook to show the students.

Lesson Steps:

Introduction (10-15 minutes)

1. **Discuss Recycling and Upcycling**
 - Explain how recycling helps the environment and reduces waste. Show examples of how trash impacts both land and water.
 - Introduce the concept of upcycling and how they'll repurpose scrap materials to create a useful item.
2. **Show Example**
 - Display the finished upcycled sketchbook. Point out the covers, pages, and binder rings.

Activity Instructions (30-40 minutes)

Step 1: Gather Pages and Covers

- Students select 25-50 sheets of scrap paper for their notebook pages.
- Choose two pieces of scrap cardstock for the front and back covers.

Step 2: Fold Pages

- Fold 8.5x11 printer paper in half (final size will be 4.25x6.5 inches)
- Go over the fold twice to make sure the paper is flat

Step 3: Measure and Cut (if needed)

- Use one folded scrap paper and pencil to measure the hardcover onto the cardstock and then cut out the hardcover (final size will be 4.25x6.5 inches)
- Older students cut their own hardcovers, while younger ones use pre-cut hardcovers or receive help from an adult.

Step 4: Prep Cover

- If the cardstock had previous writing/branding on it, you will need 4 hardcover pieces to start. Hide the messaging by gluing the cardstock together so only the blank side is visible on the outside.
- You will not have to do the previous step if the cardstock is blank on both sides.

Step 5: Assemble the Pages

- Stack the scrap pages into a stack. Ensure all edges align and the folding is done properly.

Step 6: Create Punch Holes Template & Punch Holes

- On the open side of the scrap paper, find the center and use a ruler to mark $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge. Punch a hole in that spot. Then add two evenly spaced spots $\frac{1}{2}$ inch above and below the center whole.
- Now use this to trace circles on $\frac{1}{3}$ of your paper, this stenciled paper will be your guide.
- Take one stenciled paper and 2 sheets of scrap paper and punch along the stenciled lines. You can punch holes into 3 pages at a time with a regular hole puncher.
- Finally use the template to mark the punch hole spots on the cover. All the holes must be placed on the same spot on each sheet.

Step 7: Add Binder Rings

- Thread binder rings through the holes to bind the sketchbook together.

Step 8: Personalize the Cover

- Use markers, crayons, or other materials to decorate the front and back covers.
- Alternatively, you can wrap the cardstock with wrapping paper to give it an elevated look

Clean-Up (10 minutes)

- Gather leftover scraps for future projects or recycling.
- Ensure tools like scissors and hole punchers are returned to their places.

Reflection and Sharing (15 minutes)

1. Discussion Questions:

- What did you enjoy about making your sketchbook?
- How can you use this sketchbook at home?
- Why do you think upcycling is important?

Extensions (Optional):

- **Drawing Prompts:** Have students draw something in their sketchbook by sharing drawing prompts or creative drawing exercises
- **Themed Sketchbook:** Assign a theme like “Nature,” “My Family,” or “Favorite Memories” for added structure.

Assessment:

- Participation in the activity.
- Completed sketchbook with binder rings and decorated cover.
- Ability to articulate the importance of recycling and upcycling during reflection.

This lesson encourages creativity, sustainability, and practical crafting skills, leaving students with a unique, personalized keepsake!

This project was created by author-illustrator Natasha Khan Kazi. Learn more about her at www.natashakhankazi.com and follow her on social media @NatashaKhanKazi.