



# 20 Ways To Reuse A Paper Grocery Bag

**It's** amazing how many uses there are for paper grocery bags. At home, work and play, the paper grocery bag is important to our daily lives. Here are 20 ways to use and reuse a paper bag. Can you think of at least 5 others?

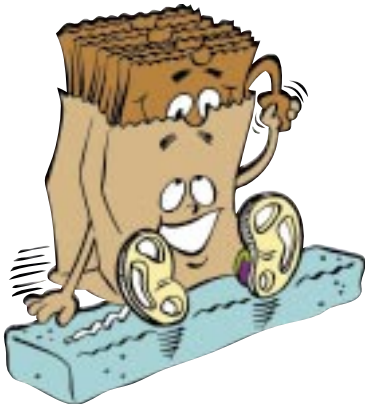


1. Reuse it 3 or more times for groceries.

2. Ripen a peach, plum, or green tomato in it.

3. Pack your pajamas in it for a sleepover.

4. Store other paper grocery bags in it for recycling.



5. Wrap a present in it.

6. Carry it as a Trick-or-Treat bag (use a handled bag).



7. Make a vest by cutting a straight line up the back of a paper grocery bag and a hole in the bottom (small enough so it doesn't touch the edges, but big enough to fit your neck). Cut square holes in the sides for your arms and fringe or scallop the bottom. Then decorate it.



homeless shelter.

14. Cut and fold it to make a book cover.

15. Make paper maché art.



compost heap with old coffee grounds and vegetable peels.)

19. Write a letter to your Congressman, Mayor or local Recycling Coordinator on it.

16. Shred it, mix it with water, and press it on a screen to make your own recycled paper.

8. Make a hat out of it.

9. Store ice cream in it in the freezer.

10. Fill it with newspapers or other recyclables for recycling.



11. Hide things in it—like a surprise for your mom or dad.

12. Pack your lunch in it.

13. Fill it with canned foods for a

17. Explore the Japanese art of origami (folding paper to create bird or animal forms).

18. Compost! (Tear up the bag and put it in your

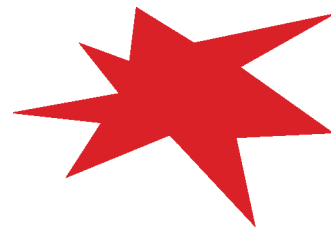


20. Ask your teacher or parent to help you borrow a supply of paper grocery bags from a local grocer. Decorate them with environmental messages, then return them to the grocer. On Earth Day, customers receive their groceries in these special Earth Day bags. For more information, check out the Earth Day Groceries Project website at:

[www.halcyon.com/arborhts/earthday.html](http://www.halcyon.com/arborhts/earthday.html)

After you've reused your paper grocery bag again and again, remember to recycle it.

# You Can Make Recycled Paper!



**H**ave you ever wondered how the newspapers, paper grocery bags and other paper items you recycle actually get recycled by paper mills into new paper products? **Paper mills** shred the used paper and mix it with water to form a mixture called pulp. The pulp fibers are then pressed, dried and rolled to **make new paper** products. Here's how you can turn a paper grocery bag into a new piece of paper, too.

## What you'll need:

- Paper to be recycled** (one paper grocery bag)
- A big pan** or tub to hold water
- An electric blender**
- A piece of fine wire mesh screen** — like the kind in a window (or a framed screen from an art supply store)
- Three pieces of white blotting paper** (a thick, spongy paper you can buy at an art supply store)
- A rolling pin**
- Assistance from an adult**

## STEP 1:

Tear  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your paper bag into pieces about the size of a quarter and put them into the blender. Add two cups of water. Put the top on the **blender** and turn the blender on high for about 30 seconds.



## STEP 2:

Your blender now contains a watery mush called pulp. Put the **wire screen** into the tub, just under the water, and pour your pulp over it. Remove any big lumps of paper that might be in the screen.



## STEP 3:

Move the pulp around with your fingers until it evenly covers the screen. If you want to **decorate** your paper, now is the time to add colored tissue paper, flower pedals, string or a few drops of food coloring.



## STEP 4:

Carefully lift the screen out of the water and let any extra water **drip** out from your screen into the tub.



## STEP 5:

Set the screen on top of a piece of **blotting paper**. Carefully place another piece of blotting paper on top of the screen. Turn the screen upside down and tap the screen so that the sheet falls out onto the bottom piece of blotting paper. Remove the screen. You'll see your wet sheet of paper! Put another piece of dry blotting paper on top of the sheet and roll it a few times with a **rolling pin**—to help squeeze out any excess water.



## STEP 6:

Now let your paper **dry** overnight. Or, if you have the help of an adult, you can speed the process along by **"ironing"** your paper. Put the iron on a medium setting (do not use the "steam" setting). Gently iron your sheet, while it is still between the two pieces of blotting paper. Simply pat the iron on top of the blotting paper. **DO NOT** move the iron from side to side or your new paper will tear. When the sheet seems dry, gently peel it from the blotting paper. Be careful—it may be **hot!** Your hand-made recycled paper is now ready to be turned into a greeting card or stationery.



By making your own recycled paper, you've just discovered how a paper mill recycles used paper to make new paper! Be sure to do your part to help save landfill space and conserve natural resources—by recycling at home and school.

American Forest & Paper Association

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