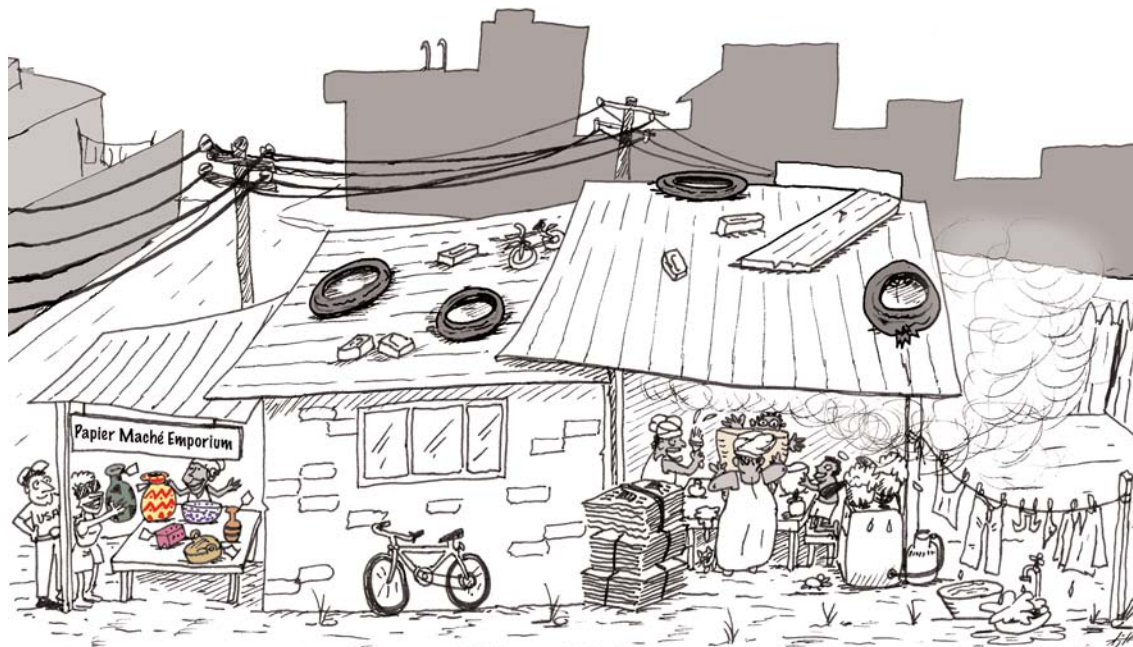


# PAPER MACHE

## What is this Action Sheet about?

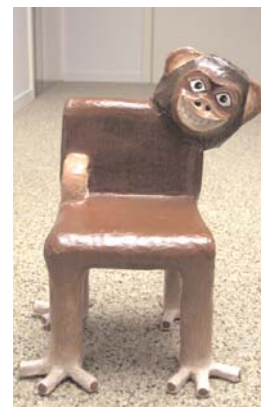
It's about using waste paper to make useful and beautiful things. Collect old newspaper, magazines, telephone directories – any old paper - and then have fun making papier mache products. Children enjoy it too! You could make wonderful gifts, or sell what you make to earn money!



## What can you make with papier mache?

Whatever you like! The only limit is your imagination.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ☀ Small tables    | ☀ Wall pictures    |
| ☀ Small chairs    | ☀ Plant pot covers |
| ☀ Fruit bowls     | ☀ Office tidy      |
| ☀ Biscuit bowls   | ☀ Pencil boxes     |
| ☀ Cheese platters | ☀ Paper files      |
| ☀ Tea trays       | ☀ Picture frames   |
| ☀ Mats            | ☀ Toys             |
| ☀ Hot-plates      |                    |



(Image: [www.papiermache-art.com](http://www.papiermache-art.com))

Decorate your products with traditional designs. Overseas tourists visiting your area will be excited and happy to pay money for your products! **TOURIST** products must be **flat, strong and easy to pack in a suitcase**.

## How do you make papier mache objects?

Papier mache is paper + glue. You apply this glue-y mixture to a frame in the shape of your final product. The frame can be left inside the product, or it can be removed at the end of making, like a mould. Finally, leave it to dry before decorating it with paint and varnish.

## What can you use as the glue?

### Flour and water

To make a flour and water glue follow these instructions:

Boil 5 cups of water in a saucepan.

In a bowl, mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sieved flour with a cup of cold water. Mix to a smooth consistency. When completely free of lumps, add the mixture to the water in the saucepan. Gently boil, stirring constantly for two or three minutes until the mixture thickens.

Allow to cool before using.

This will make a runny glue. If you prefer a very thick glue (or if you are in a hurry for it to dry) use this recipe instead:

#### *Thick flour and water glue*

Use 1 whole cup of flour to three cups of water. Make using the same method as above.

### Wallpaper paste

Make up a bowl according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use a little less water than recommended if preferred. Keep in an airtight container. It will keep for several days in a fridge or a cool place. Wallpaper paste has the advantage of containing a fungicide to prevent mould.

Note: It is not a good idea to let children use wallpaper paste in case they put their fingers in their mouths.

### White (PVA) glue

Slightly water down the glue in a bowl and use straight away.

## What can you use as a frame?

All kinds of throw away materials can be used as frames:

**Cardboard boxes** - Sides can be cut out to make flat panels. To add features such as handles or decoration, stick pieces of cardboard onto the model with tape or glue.

**Packaging** – Polystyrene chunks can be cut into the right shape, then glued or taped together.

**Wire netting** - This can be cut and bent into all sorts of shapes and then covered with papier mache. Watch the sharp edges!

**Bamboo canes** - These can be cut to length and used to hold a sculpture rigid.

**Old pieces of furniture** – These can be given new life with papier mache!

## What can you use as a mould?

To make paper bowls and plates, use plastic or ceramic bowls and plates as a mould. These will need to have a release agent applied first to stop the papier mache sticking to them. Use cooking oil, washing up liquid, or a layer of wet paper with no glue, then when the papier mache is dry, you can pull it away from the mould.

## How do you apply the papier mache?

There are two ways to apply papier mache to your frame or mould. Whichever you are going to use, the first step is to tear the newspaper into strips about an inch wide by 4 inches long. Tear the paper with the grain.

## Layering

- Use a paintbrush to cover your strips of paper with glue on both sides with a paintbrush
- Place your strips one at a time over the frame or mould, and smooth down to remove air bubbles. Cover with two to three layers at a time and then allow to dry. Don't put too many on at once or it will take too long to dry
- When it is completely dry, you can gradually build up as many layers as you require until you have the required thickness  
Cover the whole object in papier mache
- When your last layer is completely dry, paint over with two coats of paint to seal it and kill the newsprint before decorating and varnishing

## Pulping and sculpting

In this method, you make a clay-like mixture of paper and glue, and use it to sculpt your object.

To make a pulp, soak some torn up newspaper in water overnight. Drain, and then boil in some clean water for about 30 minutes, until the fibres start to break up. Sieve the pulp and throw away the water. Beat or whisk the pulp to break up the fibres. Mix the glue into the pulp until it forms a clay-like consistency.

### HAVE FUN!



*Image: (www.papiermache.co.uk)*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** This Action Sheet was compiled by Nancy Gladstone and is based on the So Afr Eco Training Manual on Papier Mache, and techniques described on the website: [www.papiermache.co.uk](http://www.papiermache.co.uk). Original cartoon by Alan Hesse.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### CONTACTS

So Afr Eco

#### WEBSITES

[www.papiermache.co.uk](http://www.papiermache.co.uk) has a recipe for hard papier mache, which could be useful for making furniture.