

# Make-it & Take-it Activity – Paper Bead Making

## Background

Making paper beads is a traditional craft that originated in England and goes back as far as the Victorian age. Young ladies would gather socially in their dining rooms, making handmade paper beads from scraps of wallpaper rolled on knitting needles. They would then polish the beads with bees wax and string them on to long pieces of yarn. They would then be used to make door curtains to divide rooms.

This practice was then revived in the 1920s and 30s for paper bead jewelry making. More recently, artist-made paper beads have been made in cooperatives as part of development projects in countries such as Uganda. This sees a move away from charitable aid towards business enterprises that provide sustainable income and development opportunities.

## Materials

- Magazine pages or other paper scraps (e.g., wrapping paper)
- Cord or yarn to string beads onto
- BBQ skewers or cocktail straws to wrap paper (leaving a hole large enough for your cord)
- Paper glue like Elmer's or Mod Podge
- Scissors or craft knife
- Small paint brush

## Directions

Watch the video to see the process: <https://amesburycarriagemuseum.org/makeitactivities>

1. Cut a piece of cord or yarn long enough to tie it when you are finished and to allow it to fit over your head.
2. Cut out strips of paper that taper into a very long triangle – approximately 10 to 12” long and ¾” wide at the widest end.
3. Place the ¾” wide end of the triangle onto the skewer and wrap around until you reach 1” away from the end.
4. Brush on glue to the exposed end and then continue wrapping.
5. Slide the bead off of the skewer and string it onto your cord.
6. Continue wrapping beads and stringing them until you have enough – you can make. Your necklace with as few as five beads, or continue until you have beaded the whole cord. Tie in a knot to close the necklace