

## Japanese Culture: One Thousand Paper Cranes

### Time Needed

- 15- 30 minutes depending on skill level

### Skill/Grade Level

- The intention of this lesson is to be utilized for any grade level with modifications based on the needs of the audience.

### Core Area

- Leadership & Citizenship
- Communication & Expressive Arts

### Life Skills

- Giving  
Responsible Citizens
- Working  
Marketable Skills
- Being  
Self- Responsibility
- Relating  
Accepting Differences  
Social Skills
- Caring  
Sharing  
Empathy  
Concern for Others

### Educational Standards

- National 4-H Mission Mandates

### Core Curriculum

- Kentucky 4-H Leadership & International Programs

### Objectives

Through the Kentucky 4-H International Program participants will:

- **Experience** different cultures through geography, history, symbols, language, government, economy, agriculture, customs, religion, arts, food, and fun facts.
- **Share** about their culture while exploring different cultures.
- **Process** connections between different cultures.
- **Generalize** interdependencies of different cultures.
- **Apply** knowledge to work cooperatively with others from different cultures.

### Introduction to Content

According to the U.S. Department of Education International Strategy Report (2012-2016), in order for youth to succeed in the 21st century workplace, they must develop knowledge and understanding of other countries, cultures, languages and perspectives. The overall mission of 4-H is to provide opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within the use of three primary content areas, or mission mandates, - citizenship, healthy living, and science. The 4-H Citizenship Mandate places emphasis on young people being engaged and active members of their community, country, and world. Citizenship is the foundation needed to help youth gain a broader understanding of life.

### Curriculum

4-Hers will increase their global competencies by:

- Identifying their role in the global society,
- Investigating the interdependences of cultures,
- Appreciating the accomplishments of other cultures,
- Cooperatively work with others from varying cultures.

### Materials Needed

- Scissors
- Paper (3 inches by 3 inches, 6 inches by 6 inches, 10 inches by 10 inches)
- Ruler to Measure Paper and Flatten Folds (if needed)
- Writing Utensil
- 1000 Paper Cranes Worksheet

Learn more at [www.kentucky4h.org](http://www.kentucky4h.org) or contact your county extension office.



# One Thousand Paper Cranes



## Introduction

- What country is known for origami?
  - Japan
- What is origami?
  - Origami has a rich and complex history that spans culture, class and geography, composed of the Japanese words *oru* (to fold) and *kami* (paper) (PBS, 2017).
  - Paper was first invented in China around 105 AD and was brought to Japan by monks in the sixth century. Handmade paper was a luxury item only available to a few, and paper folding in ancient Japan was strictly for ceremonial purposes, often religious in nature (PBS, 2017).
  - Traditional origami is characterized by open-access folding patterns and sequences passed down orally or anonymously from generation to generation. Modern origami often features models created by designers (PBS, 2017).

## Background Information

- In Japan, the crane is a mystical creature and is believed to live for a thousand years (JCC Origami Crane Project, 2011).
- As a result, in the Japanese, Chinese and Korean culture, the crane represents good fortune and longevity (JCC Origami Crane Project, 2011).
- The Japanese refer to the crane as the “bird of happiness.” The wings of the crane were believed to carry souls up to paradise and they are believed to symbolize hope and healing during challenging times (JCC Origami Crane Project, 2011). Many Japanese give this as a symbol of friendship and hope for good fortune.
- Mothers who pray for the protection of the crane’s wings for their children will recite the prayer: “O flock of heavenly cranes, cover my child with your wings” (JCC Origami Crane Project, 2011).
- According to Japanese tradition, folding 1,000 paper cranes gives a person a chance to make one special wish come true (Brinn, 2020).
- According to the tradition, anyone with the patience and commitment to fold 1,000 paper cranes will be granted their most desired wish because they have presented the cranes' loyalty and refashioned their beauty (Brinn, 2020).

## Instructions

Instructions were developed by Chrissy PK (2020):

- 1) Start by making your piece of paper square (use ruler and scissors to measure the size you would like: 3 inches by 3 inches, 6 inches by 6 inches or 10 inches by 10 inches).
- 2) On either side of the paper write a wish to the individual you will gift the crane, or if you plan to keep the crane write a wish!
- 3) Fold the paper in half diagonally.
- 4) Unfold. There should now be a crease in the paper from the diagonal fold.
- 5) Now fold the paper in half diagonally in the other direction.
- 6) Unfold the paper. Your square should now have two diagonal creases, forming an "X."
- 7) Flip the paper over to the other side.
- 8) Fold the paper in half horizontally.
- 9) Unfold to reveal the new crease from the previous fold.
- 10) Fold the paper in half vertically.
- 11) Unfold to reveal the new crease.

# One Thousand Paper Cranes



## Instructions Continued

- 12) Bring the top point down to the bottom, while also folding the left and right corners down into the center.
- 13) You should now have a diamond shape, with a vertical crease running down the center—this is an origami square base.
- 14) Starting with your square base, make sure the open end is at the bottom. Fold the right lower edge to the central crease.
- 15) Now follow suit with the left side; fold the left lower edge to the central crease.
- 16) Fold the top section down.
- 17) Now unfold the previous three folds.
- 18) Pull one layer up from the bottom, along the creases you just made.
- 19) Push the left and right edges inwards. This is called a squash fold—you can see the wing is fully "squashed" into place.
- 20) Flip the model over to the other side.
- 21) Repeat the same steps of the squash fold on this side, starting with the lower right fold to the central crease.
- 22) Now fold the left side to the central crease.
- 23) Fold the top section down (the smaller triangle) to meet the two folds you just made.
- 24) Unfold the last three folds you just made.
- 25) Pull one layer up from the bottom, along the creases you just made.
- 26) Push the left and right edges inwards to complete the second squash fold.
- 27) Fold the lower right edge to the central crease.
- 28) Fold the bottom left corner in the same way, to the crease.
- 29) Flip the model over.
- 30) Now fold the entire right lower corner to meet the central crease.
- 31) Fold the left lower corner to meet the central crease.
- 32) Fold the lower right flap up, under, and out to the right.
- 33) Do the same with the left side (the tail).
- 34) Create a head by flattening the flap, and inside reverse folding a little section down at the top.
- 35) Hold the model out and inspect your work. Adjust as necessary.
- 36) Step by Step Instructions (with photos):  
[http://www.jccc.on.ca/origami-cranes/pdf/Curriculum\\_Package.pdf](http://www.jccc.on.ca/origami-cranes/pdf/Curriculum_Package.pdf)
- 37) Video Instructions with Closed Captioning:  
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/why-i-make-japanese-origami-cranes>

## Reflect and Apply

- 1) Think about your own culture, what are ways you show friendship or hope?
- 2) What are ways you could use this lesson to bring hope to others?
- 3) What is something you learned about the Japanese culture through this activity?
- 4) What does this lesson make you wonder about the Japanese culture?

## Extended Learning

- Research more about Japanese culture and traditions.

## Civic Engagement

- Make paper cranes and send them to friends and family members.
- Research more about relationships between the US and Japanese government.

## Communications

- Organize a pen pal program with the help of the 4-H International Program.
- Give a demonstration on how to make an origami crane in the 4-H Communications Program.

## Future Readiness

- Join the Kentucky 4-H International Program to expand your understanding of your role in the global marketplace.

## Volunteering

- Ask your family to host an international delegate through Kentucky 4-H.

## Junior Mentor/Teen

- Plan and conduct a workshop with younger members where you show them how to make a crane.

# One Thousand Paper Cranes



## Supporting Projects or Events

Kentucky 4-H International Program provides various experiences for youth and families to open their home to the world:

- International Summer Short Term Program (Inbound to USA)
- International Summer Short Term Program (Outbound from USA)
- Academic Year Program (Inbound to USA)
- Kentucky 4-H International Service Learning Program

## Expand Your Experience

- Read more about the history of origami at PBS:  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/between-the-folds/history.html>
- Read: *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr

## References

Brinn, J. (2020). Why I make Japanese origami cranes. Michigan State University. 4-H Cultural and Global Education. Retrieved: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/why-i-make-japanese-origami-cranes>

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Public Broadcasting Service (2017). Kentucky Education Television. Between the folds. Retrieved: <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/between-the-folds/history.html>

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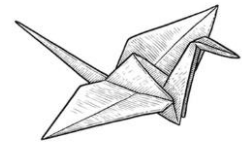
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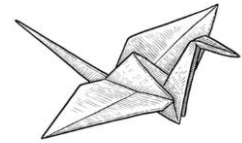
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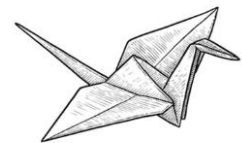
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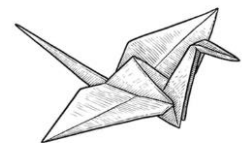
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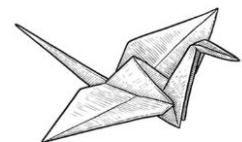
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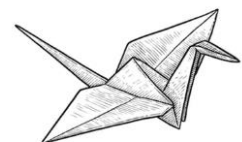
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# Kentucky 4-H International Program



## Japanese Culture: 1000 Paper Cranes

### WHAT IS ORIGAMI?

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- Paper was first invented in China around 105 AD and was brought to Japan by monks in the sixth century. Handmade paper was a luxury item only available to a few, and paper folding in ancient Japan was strictly for ceremonial purposes, often religious in nature (PBS, 2017).
- Traditional origami is characterized by open-access folding patterns and sequences passed down orally or anonymously from generation to generation. Modern origami often features models created by designers (PBS, 2017).

### EXPAND YOUR EXPERIENCE

- You can read more about the history of origami on PBS *Between the Folds*.
- Read the inspiring story of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr
- Encourage your 4-H Club to take on the 1,000 Paper Cranes Project!
- Ask your 4-H Agent how to get involved in the 4-H International Program!



University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

### DID YOU KNOW?

- In Japan, the crane is a mystical creature and is believed to live for a thousand years (JCC Origami Crane Project, 2011).
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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# Kentucky 4-H International Program

## Make Your Own Origami Crane

Instructions were developed by Chrissy PK (2020):

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O flock of heavenly cranes, cover my child with your wings. - Japanese Prayer

