

## CHAIN, CHAIN, CHAIN... CHAIN OF PAPER!

Okay, maybe you didn't get that reference to Aretha Franklin's hit song from 1967, "Chain of Fools". If not, do look it up sometime (there's a link at the end of this activity). It's a catchy tune.

A simple paper chain construction activity can be modified in various ways. Let's get to the basics first, then we'll expand on the concept.

*How to make a paper chain:* Grab a sheet (or more) of paper, scissors, tape and/or a stapler. Colored paper is pretty but not necessary. Plain white paper works just as well. If you can't find scissors, then tear the strips by hand. Measuring tape, a ruler or yard stick are handy to have, but no worries if you don't.

Cut out strips of paper, then start taping the ends together to make loops. Tape the two ends of your first loop together, then interlock the next paper loop to it and tape those ends together. Repeat the process until you get to your last strip of paper, and there you have a paper chain!



Now that you know how to make one, let's make things a little more interesting and STEAM-worthy with a few simple modifications to the basic activity.

*Just-one-sheet challenge* – Build the longest possible paper chain using only one sheet of paper, plus tape or staples to connect the loops. When you're finished, use a measuring tape or ruler to measure how long your chain is. Try a different version using narrower or wider strips of paper for your loops and see how that chain turns out.

It can also be fun to make this into a competition with parents, siblings, and/or friends. Measure to see whose chain is the longest, who used the most loops and who used the least loops to make their chain. Observe and discuss the differences between the different sizes of strips and techniques each person used. Set a time limit and see who finishes first.

*Chain snake* – Turn your paper chain into a snake by coloring with crayons or markers, adding a paper tongue, googly eyes, sequins and/or small buttons. Extra points: do some research on WCLS and find a cool snake. Learn some facts about the species and try to recreate the patterns, color and size with crayons or markers. Make your snake look silly with googly eyes or sequins. Add a paper tongue to make it look realistic.

*Countdown chain* - Kick off the countdown to a special day (holiday, birthday, etc.) by creating a paper chain. First, sketch out a shape that your chain will hang from and label it. If you are counting down to a birthday, then you could draw a cake or a balloon as your chain topper. For a holiday, like the Fourth of July, it could be a flag or firecracker. Then count how many days until your special day and cut out that many strips of paper for your chain.

For the last loop (which will really be your first loop at the top), cut a slit near the bottom of your paper chain topper and slide the last piece of paper into that slit. Then tape the two ends together. Now you're ready to count down to your special day!

*Art for art's sake* - If you have a selection of colored paper, make paper chains to use as garlands and decorate your room or other parts of your home. Alternate loops of different colors, use different color sequences to create pleasing patterns or just be totally random in your color selections. Be creative, have fun, and enjoy the results!

"Art for art's sake" is a slogan translated from the French "l'art pour l'art", which was coined in the early 19th century by the French philosopher Victor Cousin. The phrase expresses the belief held by many writers and artists, especially those associated with Aestheticism, that art needs no justification, that it need serve no political, didactic, or other end.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/art-for-arts-sake>

## MORE RESOURCES

Use the WorldBook link found on this page of the Washoe County Library website and sign in with your library card: <https://www.washoecountylibrary.us/resources/kids.php>

Snakes:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/nature/super-snakes/>

<https://www.dkfindout.com/us/animals-and-nature/reptiles/snakes/>

"Chain of Fools" sung by Aretha Franklin (one still photo with audio only – no video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrcUNChhOP0>