

ARTE PARA TODOS

PAPEL PICADO



TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

THIS LESSON HAS BEEN WRITTEN FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH TEKS ALIGNED TO GRADES K-5. SUGGESTIONS ARE INCLUDED FOR SCAFFOLDING CONTENT TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENT NEEDS. TEACHERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ADAPT LESSONS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS AND TO FIT THEIR TEACHING OBJECTIVES.

Primary

Art: 117.102 - 117.303

- (1A)(1B)
- (2A) (2B) (2C)
- (3A)(3B)(3C)(3D)
- (4A)(4B)(4C)

Secondary

Art: 117.102 - 117.303

- (1A)(1B)
- (2A) (2B) (2C)
- (3A)(3B)(3C)(3D)
- (4A)(4B)(4C)



WHAT IS PAPEL PICADO? A DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS TRADITION



WHAT IS PAPEL PICADO?

Papel Picado, or “punched” paper, is a traditional folk art found throughout Mexico and the United States. These delicate strings of paper can be seen hanging as banners during Day of the Dead and many other festivals. During Dia de los Muertos, this ephemeral paper art is used as a metaphor for human life; it is impermanent and transitional.

The history of papel picado is rich and varied. Its origins can be dated back to paper making in pre-Columbian times. Its style has also been influenced by the cultures of other countries, including China and Spain.

Since its beginnings, Mexican cut paper has been associated with rituals that commemorate death and the afterlife and still continues to serve as traditional embellishment for celebratory occasions.



PRE-COLOMBIAN PAPER

Amate is a bark paper that has been used in Mexico since pre-Columbian times. Amate comes from the Nahuatl word *amatl* meaning paper. It is a surface upon which many of the famous Mesoamerican codices are painted.

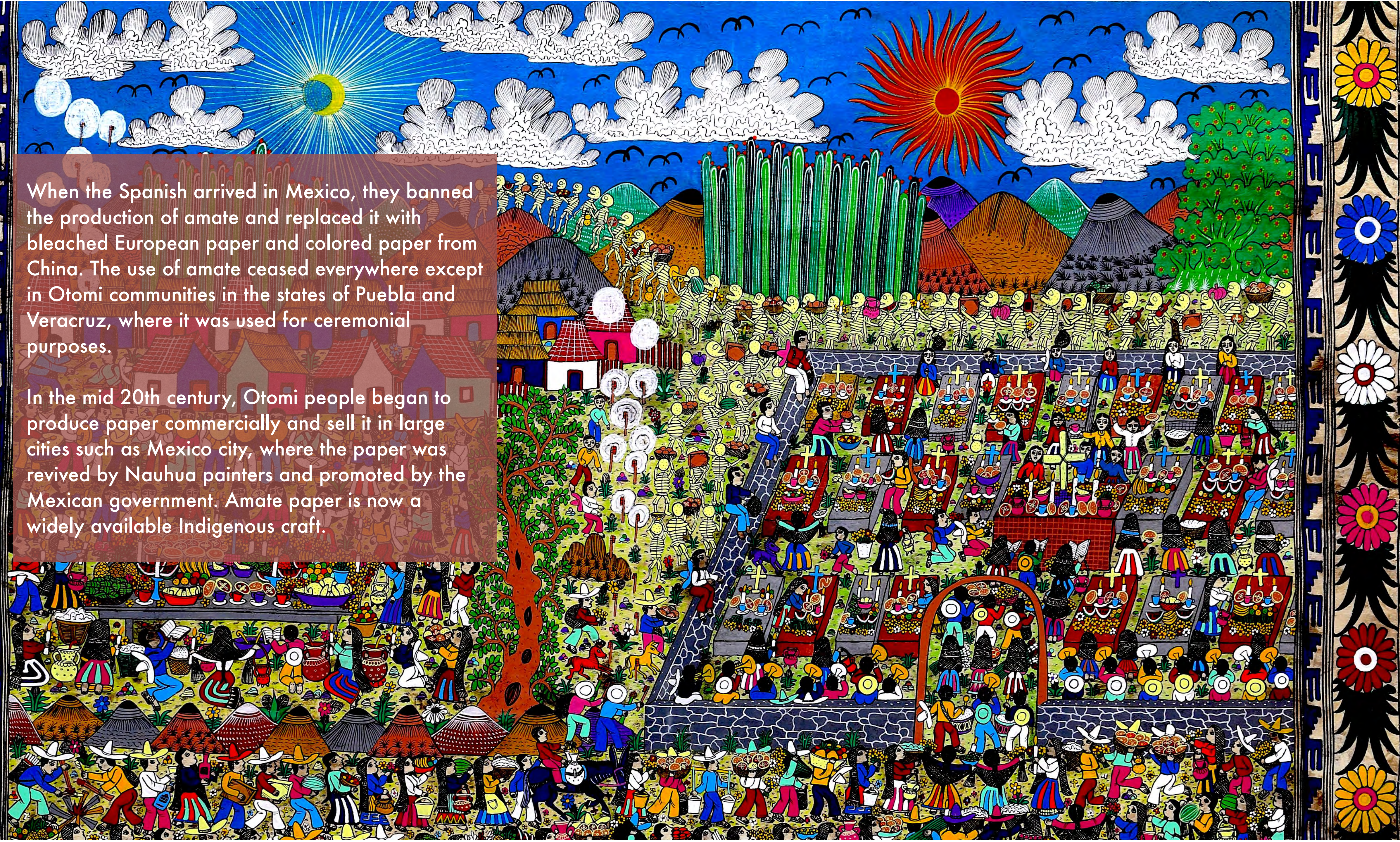
The paper is created from the pulp of fig and mulberry trees through a process of scraping, washing, and then boiling the bark with ashes. It is rinsed and beaten until the fibers wove together and is then laid out to dry in the sun.

Amate paper was created as a means to express and communicate, but it also had sacred use in religious or ceremonial rituals.



When the Spanish arrived in Mexico, they banned the production of amate and replaced it with bleached European paper and colored paper from China. The use of amate ceased everywhere except in Otomi communities in the states of Puebla and Veracruz, where it was used for ceremonial purposes.

In the mid 20th century, Otomi people began to produce paper commercially and sell it in large cities such as Mexico city, where the paper was revived by Nahuatl painters and promoted by the Mexican government. Amate paper is now a widely available Indigenous craft.



CULTURAL INFLUENCES

CHINA

The Chinese art of paper cutting dates as far back as 200 CE, when paper was invented in China. Paper-cutting became one of the most important types of Chinese folk art.

In the mid nineteenth century, Indigenous people of Mexico were forced to buy products from Spanish haciendas, which was where they first encountered Chinese paper.

Some similarity between Mexican and Chinese motifs may have begun with paper stencils imported to Mexico directly from China. Stencils were used by Chinese artisans as an aid in wood carving, textile dying, or ceramic painting. During Spanish colonization, Chinese paper stencils were plentiful and inexpensive throughout Mexico, and the local artisans excelled in all of these trades.



CULTURAL INFLUENCES

SPAIN

The Moors, a Muslim culture from North Africa, occupied Spain from 714 to 1492, bringing new products with them, such as paper from China. Their introduction of paper-making techniques spread throughout the Middle East and Spain. Eventually, the first colored papers reached Mexico in the 17th or 18th century.

Chinese art was also translated by Moorish then passed on to Spanish artisans. After colonization, the design influences ultimately were carried into Mexico.

In the city of Puebla, reproductions of Chinese and Spanish works were created by Mexican artisans. Talavera, now largely associated with Mexico, was influenced by Chinese pottery and medieval Islamic patterns and aesthetic. The Spanish City of Talavera de la Reina produced the majority of tile and pottery in the 16th-17th centuries. After the arrival of the colonizers, Puebla eventually became the center of Talavera ceramics as well as papel picado.



GENERATIONAL FOLK ART

Papel picado is a form of folk art, which means that it is a popular traditional art form handed down from generation to generation.

Artisans create an intricate design on paper first. In order to create multiples, 50 to 100 layers of tissue paper are stacked. Made with a chisel that can cut through several layers of tissue paper at a time, artisans punch intricate designs into the paper. The stack is then separated and each sheet is identical. The papel picado sheets are then hung on a string.

The Mexican state of Puebla is known as the center of papel picado. The large community of artisans still create intricate papel picado that are chiseled by hand.



Papel picado are an integral part of the Dia de los Muertos ofrenda, or altar. The fluttering tissue-paper cut-outs move with the slightest breeze, representing the element of air or wind.

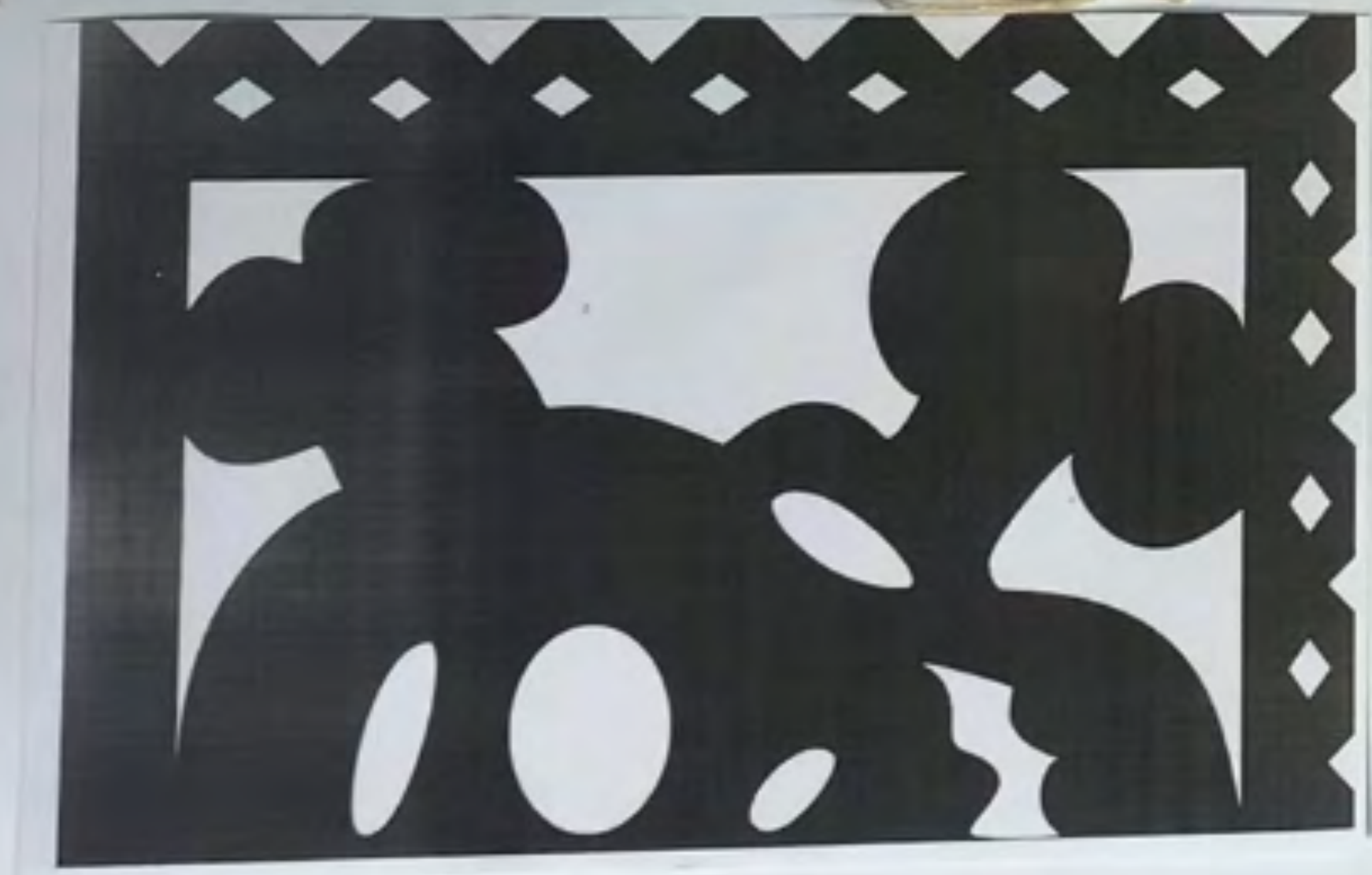
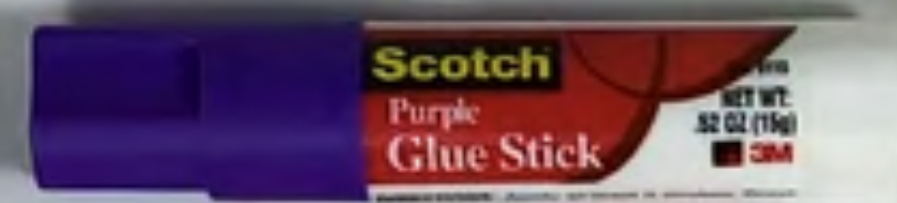
They are hung on the altar to remind the viewer of the impermanence of life, highlighting the fragility of the tissue paper, which will eventually disintegrate with time.

Continue the tradition of papel picado and create your own!



MATERIALS

- Three 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of colored tissue paper (or more if making a longer banner)
- Scissors
- A yard of string
- Glue stick
- Straight pins



STEP 1

Begin with pattern printed on half the sheet paper or have students design their own pattern. Students will only need to draw half of the design, as the tissue paper will be folded in half and cut symmetrically. Cut three sheets of tissue paper to 8 1/2" x 11". Fold the three sheets of tissue paper in half.



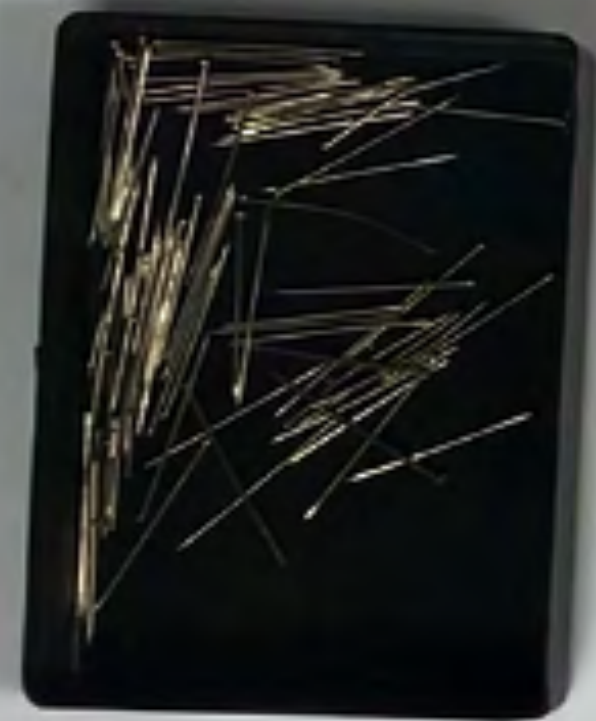
STEP 2

Stack the folded sheets of tissue paper.
Pin the pattern on top of the folded sheets of tissue paper.



STEP 3

Carefully cut out your design. Make sure to leave a little space (about an inch) on the top of your design so that you can attach a string there.



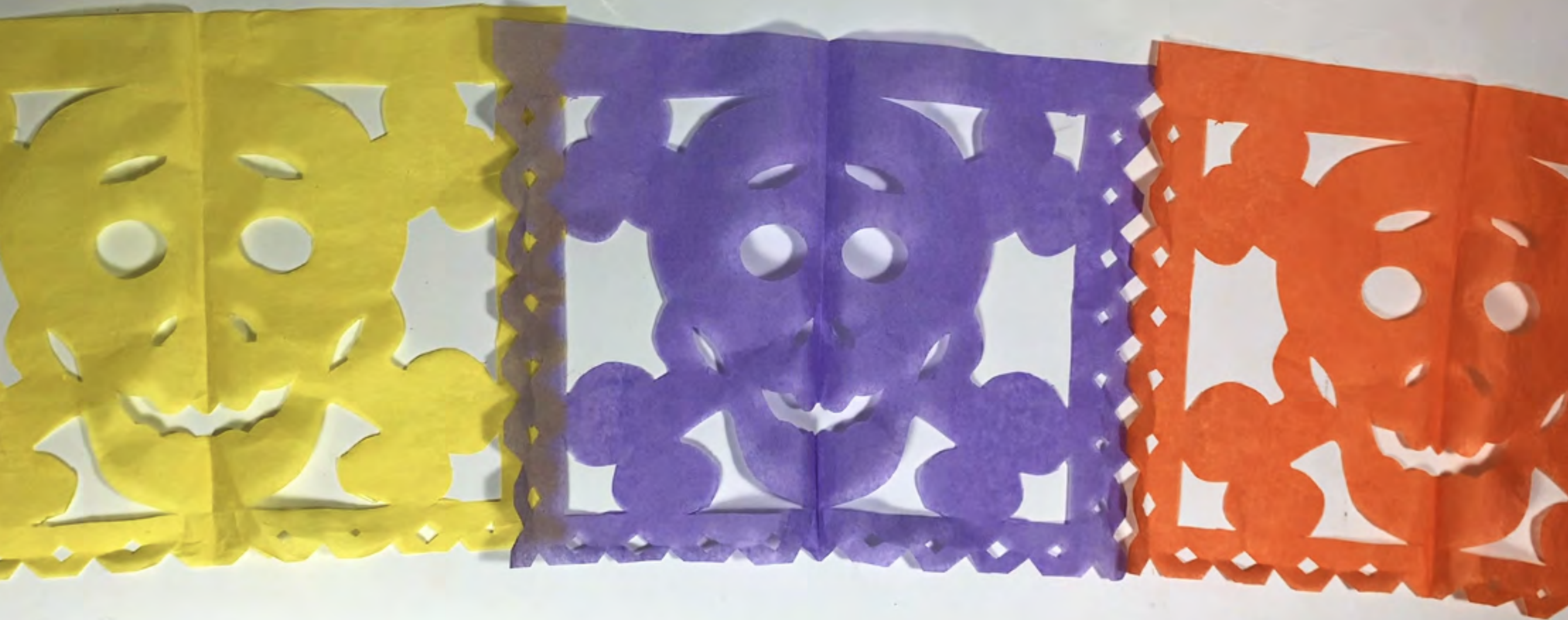
STEP 4

Now remove the pins and unfold your paper.



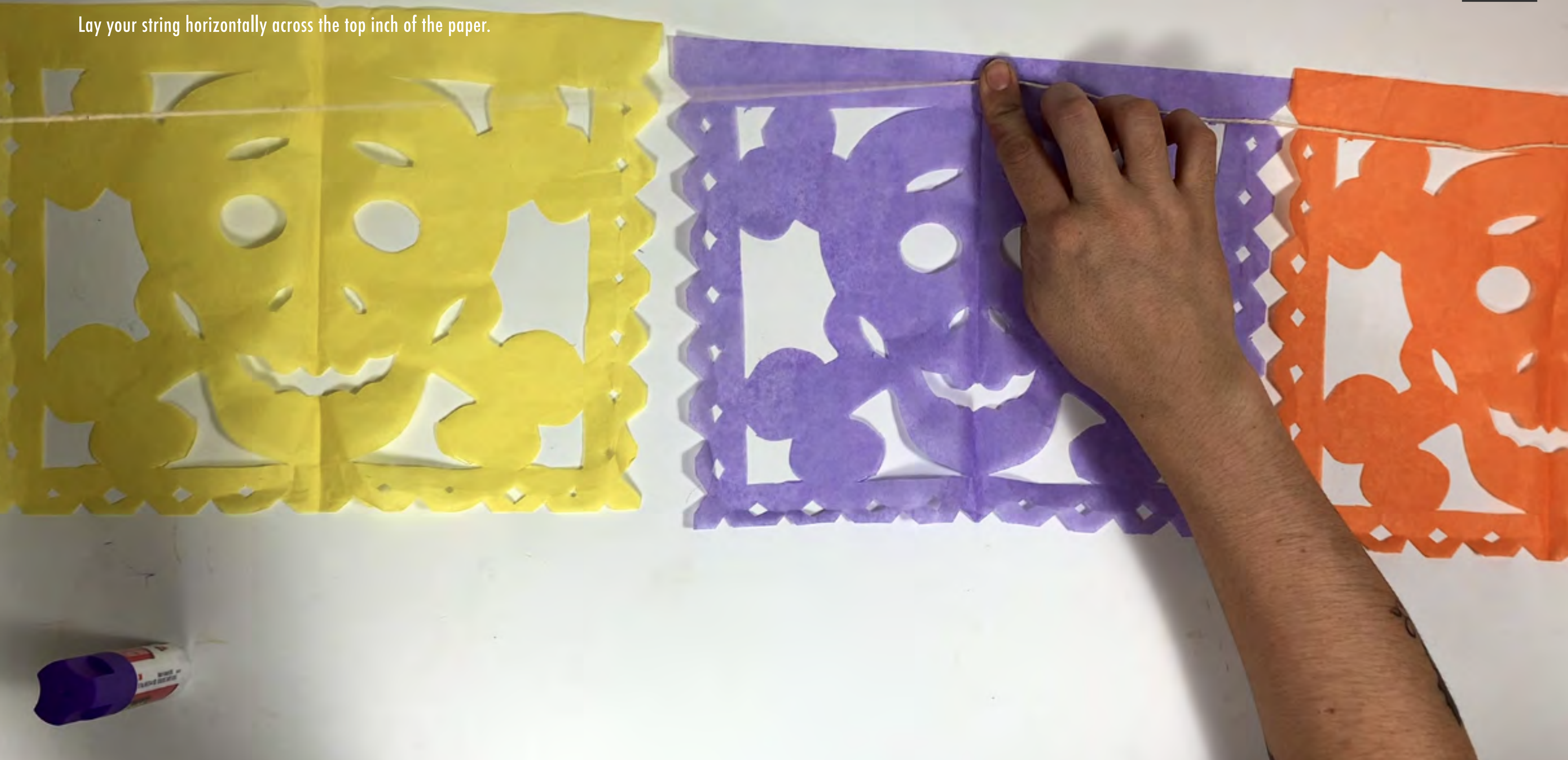
STEP 5

Carefully open each piece and lay the tissue paper out horizontally side by side.



STEP 6

Lay your string horizontally across the top inch of the paper.



STEP 7

Fold the top of the paper over the string and glue it down so that it stays.



STEP 8

Lift up your banner by either end of the string and find a place to hang it.

