

Screen Prints

Activity Sheet 7 'How to make'

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How to make...a screen printed bag or T-shirt

You will need the following materials:

- Screen printing frame or wooden embroidery hoop** (*an old flat fronted picture frame will also work*)
- Fine mesh fabric like voile or organza** (*you could also upcycle old fine mesh net curtains*)
- Acrylic paint or screen printing ink** (*you can mix an [acrylic printing medium](#) with acrylic paint to stop it drying out too fast making it easier to work with*)
- Staple gun**
- Masking tape**
- Cardboard**
- Squeegee** (*you can find these online & in art shops but a tiling squeegee from a DIY store will work too*)
- Something to print onto** (*T-shirts and canvas bags work well*)
- Line and pegs** for drying and an iron for fixing
- Printer paper, scissors and spray mount** for creating a stencil **or...**
- Freezer Paper** (*available online or at Hobbycraft*) **or...**
- A pencil, PVA glue and brush** **or...**
- A ready made stencil**



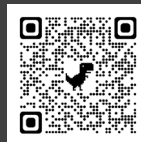
Choose your frame depending on the item you are printing

- Stretch and fix the fine mesh fabric onto your frame using a staple gun, it can be easier if you have help stretching while you staple **Tip:** *I like to staple the fabric round the sides or pull it round the front, leaving the back of the screen flat!*
- If you are using an embroidery hoop, secure the fabric inside the hoop (there is an inner and outer hoop and a tightening screw) **make sure it is taught.**
- The **back** is where the fabric is **flat to the frame/hoop** (this is the side the stencil or mask will go on), the **front** is where the **frame/hoop forms a lip** (this side up when printing!)

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Choose how you are going to create your stencil or mask

- However you choose to do this remember, **it is the 'cut-out' or 'non-masked' areas that will print!** Your design should be smaller than your screen (*I usually leave a border of 20mm – 40mm*).
- **Paper stencil method:** Choose a good quality printer/copier paper. Draw out or print out your design and cut out the areas you wish to print carefully using a craft knife or scissors **Note: be very careful if using a craft knife and ask for help if necessary! Use a cutting mat or card underneath to protect your table.** Lay your design on the **back** of your screen (you can apply a fine mist of spray mount to hold it in place).
- **Freezer Paper method:** I have also had great results using Freezer Paper. This is an American product also available in the UK. Draw and cut the stencil in the same way as in the paper method and once ready it can be ironed on (**Waxy side onto the screen**) to the back of the fabric. **Tip: Don't over iron as it can make the paper hard to remove!**
- **PVA mask method:** Draw your design straight onto the back of the screen and paint a PVA fabric or decoupage glue over the areas you want to mask. Make sure there are no gaps in the mask and set aside to dry.
- You can also use a **premade stencil** (*available online and in art & craft shops*).
- **Finally**, whichever method you have chosen you now need to **mask off the edges of your design front and back**, this ensures the paint/ink doesn't bleed through around the design (*I usually create a masked border of about 20mm to 40mm depending on the size of the frame*). **Tip: If using a round embroidery hoop, it can help to mask straight sides to your design.**

Choose the item you want to print, natural fabrics like cotton, cotton canvas and linen work well

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Making a print!

- Carefully squeeze (or use a spatula to place) a thick line of paint/ink along the width of the top of the screen above the design **on the masked area**.
- It is a good idea to do a test print! Place your screen onto a piece of card or paper and **ask someone to hold the frame in position**. Pull the ink firmly down the screen with the squeegee.
- Once you are happy with your print, carefully place the item to be printed onto **cardboard to protect your table** and, if your item has a double layer like a bag or T-shirt, place cardboard inside too to protect the back.
- Position your screen so that the design will be where you want it **Tip: It can help to mark out where the corners of the screen go on your item with masking tape, do this before you do the test print!**
- Make sure you have enough ink at the top of the screen and ask someone to **hold it tight**. Use the **squeegee** to pull the ink **firmly** down the screen, once should be enough but, as long as the screen hasn't moved and if you want to be sure, you can pull it across twice.
- Remove the screen/hoop and let the paint/ink dry. Finally, when dry **with a sheet of paper over the top**, iron the design to **fix it**.



Experiment - Find items in charity shops to print and customise! You can also screen print onto paper to create your own wrapping paper or cards.

Research - Find out how to screen print with more than one colour or how professional screens are made using photo emulsion.