

∴ Fish Kites ∴

Students make and fly a tissue paper fish kite celebrating the Japanese tradition.

Each year on May 5, Japanese families fly kites in celebration of *Kodomo-no-hi*, or Boys' Day. *Koinobori*, colorful carp-shaped streamers, are displayed outside family homes during this 500-year-old festival, which coincides with the beginning of summer on the lunar calendar. Although the festival has come to be known as the Children's Festival, contemporary Japanese people continue to recognize the day as a special celebration of boyhood. (Girls' Day, though not a national holiday, is celebrated in March.) Families celebrating *Kodomo-no-hi* also display samurai dolls inside their homes and prepare special foods for the festival. *Koinobori* are fashioned after the carp, a fish that symbolizes courage, power, and determination because it swims against the current. The carp represents the strength and courage children will need in their own lives.

Getting Started

In advance, photocopy each half of the fish kite template (pages 4–5). Enlarge each half to fit an 11- by 17-inch sheet of paper. Tape the two pages together so that both sides of the template line up. Cut out the template.

Point out Japan on a map and review the above information with students. Show them photographs of Japanese kites. Demonstrate the steps as students follow along.

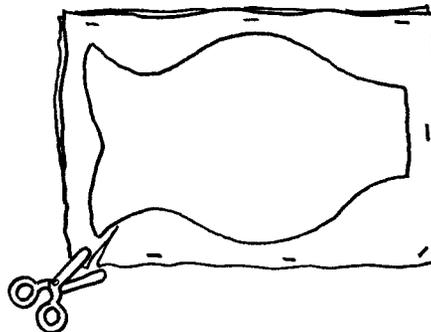


Materials

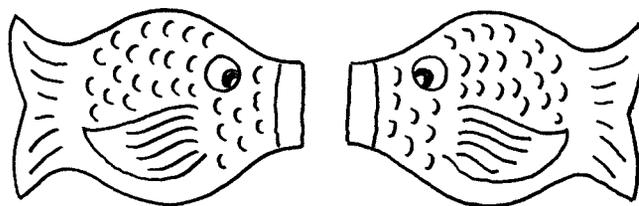
- ◆ photographs of Japanese kites and art
- ◆ fish kite template (pages 4–5)
- ◆ 14- by 20-inch colored tissue paper (2 sheets of the same color per student)
- ◆ stapler
- ◆ pencils
- ◆ scissors
- ◆ water-based markers
- ◆ 2- by 15-inch tissue paper strips (various colors)
- ◆ glue stick
- ◆ 1- by 9-inch oak tag strips
- ◆ hole punch
- ◆ 9-foot piece of lightweight string
- ◆ craft sticks

Directions

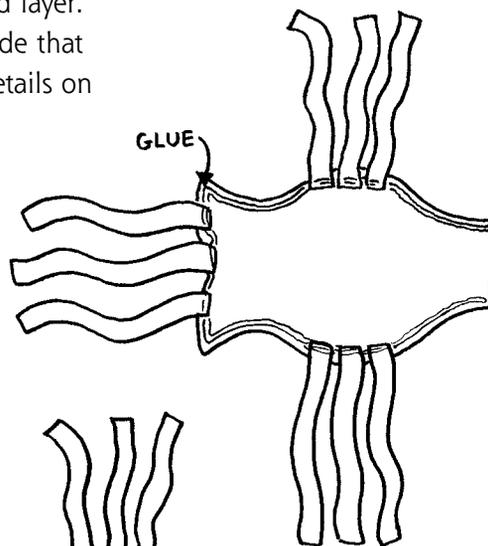
1 Staple together two pieces of tissue paper. Place the fish template on top of the tissue, and use a pencil to trace the template. Cut out the shape through both sheets so that you have two identical fish shapes.



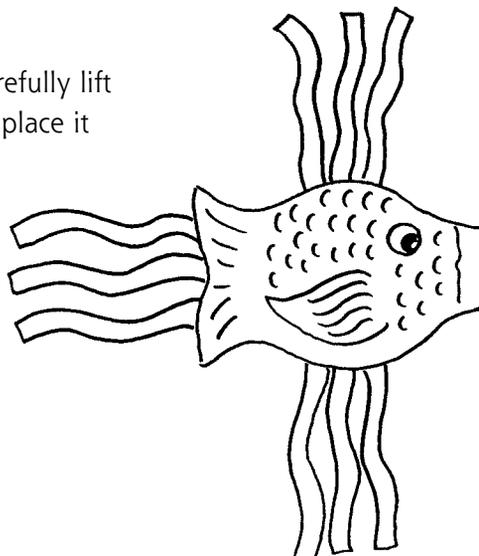
2 Place newspaper on the table. Using markers, draw scales, gills, an eye, and a tail on the tissue paper. Some water-based markers will bleed through the second layer. This makes it easier to create a backside that matches the front. Otherwise, draw details on both sides.



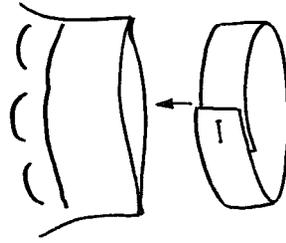
3 Place one fish with the blank side facing up. Glue around the edges of the fish, making sure not to glue the mouth area. Gently place several streamers on top of the glued area. Place glue on top of the streamers.



4 With a partner, carefully lift the other fish and place it directly on top of the glued fish. Press to seal around all the edges except the mouth. (This is to avoid having air escape from the kite.)



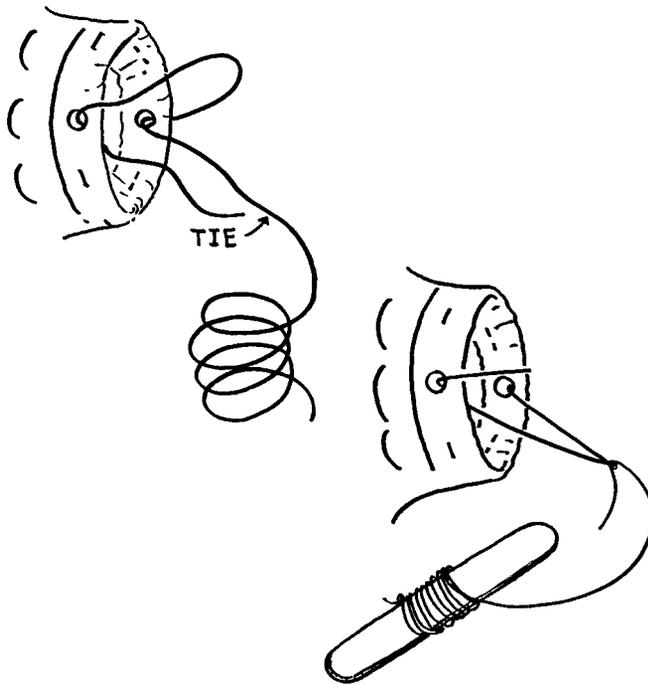
5 Hold the fish kite by the mouth opening. Place the oak tag strip inside the mouth. Cut so that it fits as a circle inside the mouth. Staple the ends of the strip together.



6 Fold the top edge of the tissue paper mouth over the oak tag. Staple securely, using eight to ten staples.

7 Use a hole punch to punch two holes opposite each other on the mouth.

8 Tie a piece of string through each hole. Tie the two pieces together as shown. Wrap the extra string around a craft stick for a handle. (Note: The tissue paper forms a kind of wind sock that fills out when the wind blows through it.)



Resources

For Teachers

Kites by David Pelham (Overlook, 2000). A guide to making and flying various types of kites.

For Students

Asian Kites by Wayne Hosking (Tuttle, 2005). Includes background information about kite making in Asia and 15 easy-to-make kites (seven of which are from Japan).

More Ideas

- ◆ Fly the kite on a dry day so that the tissue paper does not get wet.
- ◆ Have students learn about and make other kinds of kites. Then compare how the different kites fly.

Fish Kite Template

