

Seed Mail

*Planting the Seed:
Gardens, Growing, and Agriculture in Art*



Objective:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Learn how to make paper from recyclable materials
- Draft a personal letter to a friend
- Learn about seeds and plant growth

Core Curriculum Ties:

- **K-6 Science Core Benchmarks:**
Life Science. Students will understand where plants come from and that plants require soil for growth (e.g., mineral nutrients, water). Students will gain an understanding of Life Science through the study of changes in organisms over time and the nature of living things.
- **K-6 Language Arts Core Benchmarks:**
Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing, researching, and reflecting on personal experiences. Write to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences and write in different forms and genres. Produce personal writing
- **K-6 Visual Art Core Benchmarks:**
Explore a variety of art materials while learning new techniques and processes. Students demonstrate how history, culture and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

Materials:

- Sponge
- Terry Cloth or microfiber towel
- Strainer
- Cup or bowl to set strainer in
- Blender
- Large spoon or spatula
- Flannel or felt
- Recyclable paper
 - Some good paper choices include: unprinted computer paper, newspaper, cardboard egg cartons, toilet paper, paper grocery bags, junk mail, tissue paper, napkins or paper towels, leftover pieces of construction paper or phone book pages.
- Flower seeds



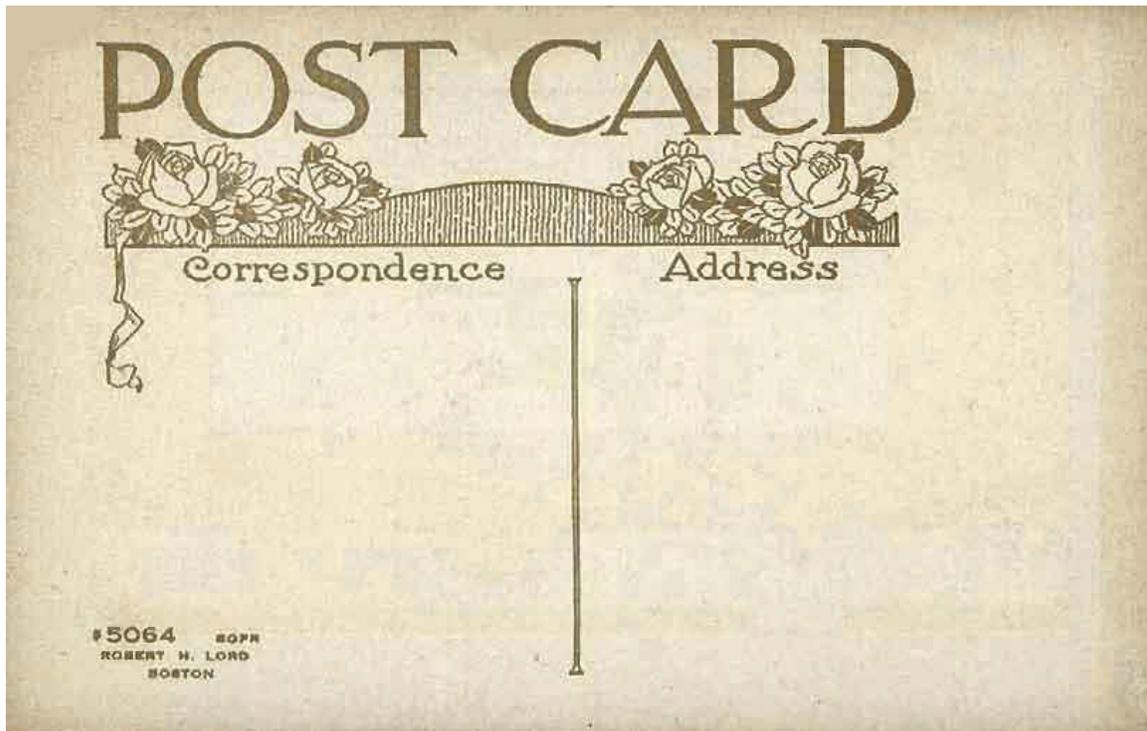
Time:

- Adaptable at the discretion of the teacher. Can be spread over several days in 15-30 minute increments where each new color is added in a long term process or can be a one-time 60 minute assignment.

Planting a Word, Planting a Seed

Writing a letter requires three different components. First, the beginning is a greeting that addresses the letter directly to a person or group. Second, the main body or middle of the letter offers information asks questions and communicates ideas. Third, the conclusion, or what is sometimes called a salutation, closes the letter and includes your name.

Similar to the three-part letter format, seeds also need three components. First, seeds need soil so that they can have access to minerals and nutrients that will help them grow. Second, seeds also need water, which they drink up through their roots. Finally, seeds also need sunlight to grow.



Additional Resources:

FICTION

- Janet Ahlberg , *The Jolly Postman*, 1986
- Stan & Jan Berenstain, *The Berenstain Bears Grow-it*, 1996
- Eric Carle, *The Tiny Seed*, 2009
- Allan Eitzen and Don Freeman, *Corduroy Writes a Letter* (Easy-to-Read Series), 2004
- Lois Ehlert, *Planting a Rainbow*, 1995

NON-FICTION

- Vijaya Bodach, *Seeds*, 2007
- John Farndon, *Seeds*, 2006
- Loreen Leedy, *Messages in the Mailbox: How to Write a Letter*, 1994
- Claire Llewellyn, *Exploring Plants*, 2009
- Nancy Loewen and Christopher Lyles, *Sincerely Yours: Writing Your Own Letter*, 2009

Conversations:

How does seeing flowers make you feel?

How do you feel when you get a letter in the mail from a friend?

Can you think about ways that letters and flowers are similar?

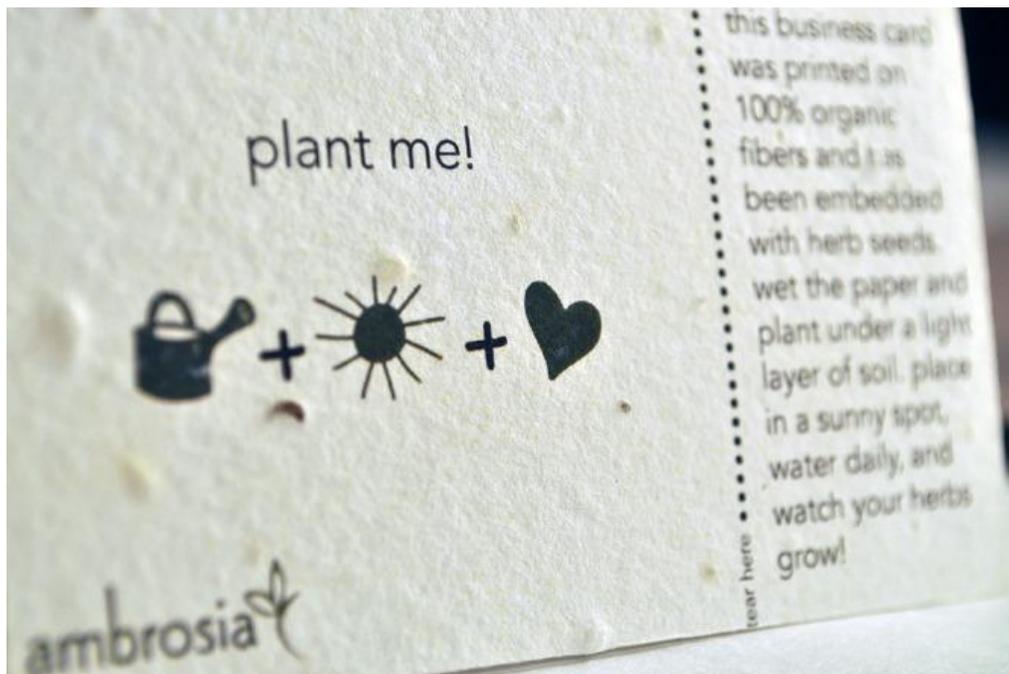
What is a better gift, a flower or a letter?



Activity:

1. Collect a large pile of recyclable paper and tear it into very small pieces. Place the pieces in the blender jar. Fill the blender jar one-half to one-third full.
2. Pour warm water into the blender jar over the pieces of paper. Fill the blender to the top line with warm water. Turn the blender on low for about 10 seconds. Increase the speed (or use the "Blend" button) for about 30 seconds or until no visible paper flakes remain.
3. Sprinkle one-half to a teaspoon of flower seeds into the mixture and stir well (do not blend). Set the strainer on the cup or bowl and pour the mixture into the strainer. Use the spoon or spatula to press the mixture against the strainer and squeeze out more water.
4. Lay the piece of flannel or felt onto a flat surface and dump the mixture onto the fabric. Use the spoon or spatula to spread it out on the fabric into the shape you want. Spread it as thin as you can so that it will dry quicker.

5. Use the sponge to flatten the mixture and absorb more of the water from the paper mixture. Press firmly with the terry cloth or microfiber towel to absorb still more water.
6. Allow the paper to dry on the top and then turn it over. Allow the other side to dry completely.
7. Use the paper to make a note card or postcard.
8. Include instructions for your recipient, letting them know that they should soak the paper overnight, then plant it in light soil directly into the ground.



Assessment:

- Students will demonstrate that they can relate subject matter to a visual representation of that idea.