

## Foam “Quillies”

A curly, swirly, colorful take on a traditional craft

Rug making is a historical craft spanning many centuries and most cultures. In pre-industrial times, clothing was never thrown out when it was too worn to wear. It was cut into pieces and made into quilts or rugs. A traditional rug making process, known as “standing” or “beaded” wool, takes strips of worn sweaters and blankets, rolls them together like sushi, then connects each roll by stitching. Most of the time, these rolls form circles, but some rug makers push and pinch the strips into squiggles, curls, waves, coils, etc. They can be very colorful, freeform, and whimsical and are often displayed as art more than carpets. Artists create small versions mixed with beads and buttons to create wearable art. Because the swirls and curls resemble the art of paper quilling, in modern times they have become known as “quillies.”

One of the beautiful things about fabric art is the ability to reuse and repurpose materials. In a classroom setting, however, gathering the needed materials is sometimes a challenge.

As an option, this lesson plan suggests an easy, colorful, and fun way for students to create quillies that doesn't require needles. Sheets of vivid foam can be cut into strips on a standard paper cutter — multiple sheets at a time. The sticky-backed strips have a relatively thick edge and are easy to roll, manipulate, and join together. The hard part knowing when to stop!

**GRADES 3-12** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed

### Preparation

1. Cut WonderFoam Peel & Stick into smaller pieces (if desired) to use as a background. As an example for this lesson, cut sheet into sixths: 4" x 4-1/2".
2. Cut remaining adhesive foam and standard non-adhesive WonderFoam into strips 1/2" wide. The fastest and easiest way to cut multiple sheets is to use a paper trimmer. However, strips can be cut with scissors or with a craft knife and straightedge.

### Process

1. Begin with the rectangular background piece. Fold back a corner to keep most of the adhesive covered and to work a small area at a time. Adhesive is very tacky and may grab inadvertently.
2. Take two strips, one adhesive and one not, and join them, flat, by peeling off the protective paper and pressing them together. Roll the strips up as tightly as possible and press one of the flat sides of the roll against the adhesive on the background. This is the first technique to use in a quillie design.



### Materials (required)

[Creativity Street WonderFoam Peel & Stick Sheets](#), 9" x 12", assorted color package of 20 (61731-1023); share two across class

[Creativity Street WonderFoam](#), 12" x 18" assorted color package of 10 (60947-1000); share one across class

[Creativity Street WonderFoam Peel & Stick Shapes](#), assorted color package of 720 (61731-1010); share one across class

[Westcott Soft Handle Scissors for Kids](#), 12-piece Teacher Pack (58477-1105); share two packs across class

[Aleene's Quick Dry Tacky Glue](#), 4 oz (23884-1104); share four to six bottles across class

Straight Pins

### Materials (optional):

[Creativity Street Large WonderFoam Shapes](#), 42-piece assortment (62192-1001)

[Creativity Street WonderFoam Jumbo Craft Sticks](#), package of 100 (65315-1001)





## Process, continued

More techniques to try:

- Place one end of a strip "standing up" and create a wave or zigzag pattern.
- Create loose curls and bends by securing one end and forming the strip as desired.
- "Fill" an area with color by zigzagging strips close together.



Combining non-adhesive strips with Peel & Stick strips is simply a cost-saving measure.

3. WonderFoam Peel & Stick has a strong adhesive; however, it will reach a limit. Inner shapes will put pressure on outer edges and they may undo at the seams. To remedy this, there are a few options:
  - Secure seam with a Wonder Foam Shape. This adds a fun decorative element as well.
  - Secure with a small straight pin, strategically placed to not interfere visually with the design.
  - Glue the ends down if they loosen using tacky glue. While the glue dries, hold the pieces together using a thumbtack or straight pin.
4. For best results, work from one corner of the background and peel the protective sheet away from the adhesive little by little as each quillie section is built. Do not begin in the middle and work out to the edges.
5. Continue until the background is filled. The design can extend past the edges and any excess background can be trimmed away with scissors.

## Options

- Incorporate WonderFoam shapes into the design.
- Display Foam Quillies as a collaboration by joining them with straight pins or arranging them together on a bulletin board with pins.



### National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

#### Creating

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.



**Step 1:** Cut Wonder Foam to use as a background and into strips. Peel back a corner to keep most of the adhesive covered.



**Step 2:** Create a "quillie" by rolling two strips together. Adhere to the background.



**Step 3:** Experiment with different ways to roll, bend, wave, and curl strips to form a design. Secure with straight pins or tacky glue, if needed.