

# Origami

**My aunt is very good at making lots of little objects from folded paper. Is there a name for that?**

Yes, the art of paper-folding is called *origami*.

**That doesn't sound like an English word! Where does *origami* come from?**

The word '*origami*' comes from two Japanese words: '*ori*', which means folding, and '*kami*', which means paper. In traditional *origami*, a single sheet of square paper, sometimes coloured on one side, is folded into an ornament without cutting, gluing or marking the paper.

**That's very interesting. Has *origami* been around for a long time?**

Paper was invented in China around the year 105 AD. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century, it was common at Chinese funerals for people to throw paper ornaments that they had made into a fire at the end of the funeral ceremony.

Paper was introduced in Japan in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Paper-folding was also used in some religious ceremonies in Japan. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, *origami* was a pastime and later became an art form. In traditional Japanese *origami*, ornaments depicting flowers, birds and animals are made using just one sheet of paper.

**Do you need special paper for *origami*?**

You can buy square *origami* paper in some craft shops but any paper that can be folded easily can be used.

***Origami* sounds great! Where can I learn how to do it?**

There are many books and online videos that will teach you how to fold paper to make various ornaments. To be good at *origami* you have to be neat, accurate and patient.

**Thanks, I can't wait to get started! ■**

## QUICK QUESTIONS

- 1 Where was paper first invented?
- 2 When was paper introduced in Japan?
- 3 What do the words '*ori*' and '*kami*' mean in Japanese?
- 4 Do you need special paper for *origami*?
- 5 Where can you learn *origami*?

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