



# RIGHT NOW CRAFTS

30 Easy Creative Crafts for Kids & Grownups

Holly Czapski

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Introduction**

*How Right Now Crafts began, and why recycled crafting will make your life better*

## **Getting Started**

- Recycled materials, and why they are the best for crafting
- Tools and supplies from around the house
- Friendly reminder: You are a maker

## **Chapter 1: Houses and More**

*Easy ways to make a house out of an empty box, plus lots of ways to change them up, or even turn them into something else!*

- Three-Minute House *Turn any box into a house*
- Original Mac&Cheese House *A simple pattern to use with Kraft or Annie's-type macaroni & cheese boxes*
- Home Improvement *Easy ways to decorate and customize any house*
- Taco Stand *With classic awning and window*
- Light-Up House *Bright windows make a cozy glow*
- Cuckoo Clocks *Hang on a wall for instant smiles*
- Button Windmill *A clever button lets vanes really turn*
- Fairy House/Troll Hut *Houses play outside, too*
- Bird House *Plus a real branch to hang it on!*

## **Chapter 2: Creative Play -- Ticket to another world**

*Step out of the everyday and bring imagination to life.*

- Cereal Box Theater *Create shows and much more on a multi-featured stage*
- Castles *For every kind of adventure*
- Pretend Camera *See the world from a fresh point of view*
- "Where-To?" Suitcase *For imaginary travels*
- Robox *Box buddies with personality*

## **Chapter 3: Bigger Ideas -- Letters, Numbers, and Stories by You**

*Make a beautiful letter, a favorite word, a one-of-a-kind book, and a story told with things instead of words.*

- Big Box Letters *3D letters that stand or hang*
- Solar-Powered Letters *Put that name, word, or letter up in lights*

- BOOOOOOK *Book art in a cheese box*
- Day-By-Day Travel Journal *The best souvenir ever*
- InstaShelf *Tell a story using things with a gallery-on-a-wall*
- Book Nook *A literary hiding place*
- All-Purpose Letters *Traceable, displayable, collectible -- they do it all*

#### **Chapter 4: For Special Days and Everyday -- Creative ways to decorate and celebrate**

*Crafts to make any day special, and special days amazing.*

- Party Banners *Festive décor made from catalogs*
- Stained Glass Banners *Bright lights to hang anywhere*
- Outdoor Banners *Turn plastic trash into weatherproof treasure*
- Party Gram *Celebrate together by mail*
- Nicho *A frame for favorite things*
- Sun Dots *Colorful gems for windows*
- Catalog Stars *Fold, cut...and open something magical*
- Super-Card *A giftable, keepable, extra-special card*
- Greeting Card Banners *Turn clutter into a family keepsake*

#### **Chapter 5: Color and Decorate**

*Simple ways to add color, texture, and more*

- Using Markers
- Lines and Patterns
- Collage, aka Sticking Things On
- Fun With Leftovers

#### **Chapter 6: Design Your Own Right Now Craft!**

*Tips and tricks to get started, plus a place to keep ideas.*

- Finding the special features in materials
- Transformations: Easy ways to reshape materials
- Make, write, repeat: Getting the design down on paper

#### **Ideas For Group and Classroom Use**

#### **Index**

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Right Now Crafts!

You can make all the awesome crafts in this book with just the supplies and skills you have right now, even if you have never made anything before. If that sounds unlikely, let's talk for a minute about sandwiches.

Crafting really has two unrelated parts: the technical part that takes skills and practice and special tools, and the creative part, the coloring and inventing and imagining. Most of us, myself included, don't bake bread and whisk up our own mayonnaise before we create a sandwich; we let experts do that. What if experts and their machines did the technical parts of crafting? That is exactly what happens when we use recycled materials.



*Mac&Craft, my first recycled craft design.*

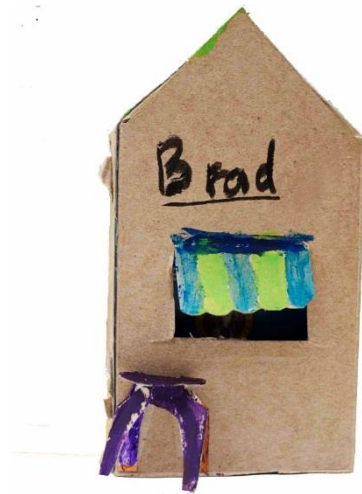


This was my big discovery in 2016 when I came up with a product called Mac&Craft. It was a pattern and simple directions that let anyone turn an empty macaroni & cheese box into a neat brown paper house, easily decorated or turned into something else. I designed Mac&Craft so that it reused all those technical, machine-made features of the box – the shape, the folds, the paperboard – and made the box do most of the work. It was real crafting that needed no technical skill or special anything.

Out of this grew the Right Now Crafts approach to crafting that's open-ended and truly creative, centered entirely on recycled materials. Here is a collection of original crafts you'll love having and playing with, better-than-bought things you can make in endless ways. Crafts that are perfect for making with kids because they are finished before anyone loses interest (or patience), that work even with wobbly cutting and lots of extra tape, and welcome a wide range of abilities and attention spans. It's crafting like you have never seen before. And all you'll need is scissors, tape, markers, a stapler. Sometimes string.

Because here's what I think: we are all creative, we all have skills, we already have enough to get started right now. Like mac&cheese boxes, we have so much good stuff built in, ready to turn into something new.

Let's get started!



Curious about how creativity and recycled crafting go together? Check out these snippets:

<b>The Beauty of Fast Crafting</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<b>Crafting with Less</b>	<b>p. 27</b>
<b>Creativity Can't Wait</b>	<b>p. 40</b>
<b>Made for Jumping Off</b>	<b>p. 47</b>
<b>Make vs. Buy</b>	<b>p. 60</b>
<b>Trash &amp; Creativity</b>	<b>p. 72</b>
<b>Trash &amp; Crafting</b>	<b>p. 93</b>



# 3-MINUTE HOUSE

Make a classic house out of an empty box. It's easy because the box does almost all the work! Houses are beautiful plain, easy to decorate with markers. And there are so many more things you can make with a house; see ideas starting on page 36.



1

You'll need:

- A box that's taller than it is wide, any size
- Scissors
- Tape
- A pencil or pen
- Optional: markers for decorating

2

Open up the bottom of the box.

Find the side seam and separate the two layers (tip: if the seam is hard to find, look for it on the inside). If the glue is stubborn try starting from the other end. It's okay if the paper peels.





This lightweight cardboard has another name: paperboard. Paperboard has a lot going on inside! It's actually made from layers of wood fibers, paper fibers, and recycled paper fibers.

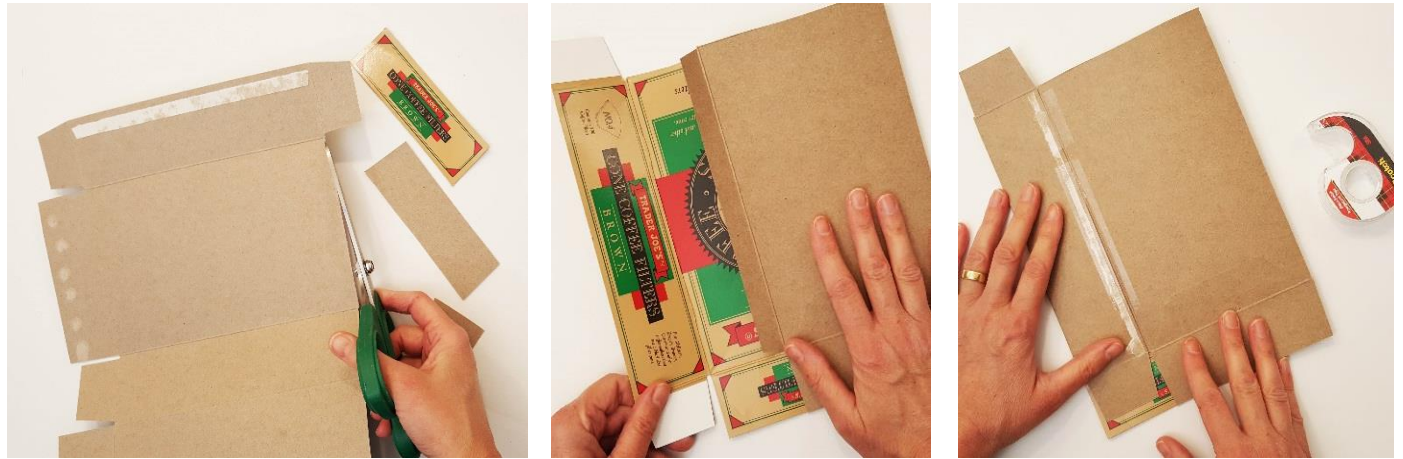
Different combinations of fiber layers make different weights and strengths of paperboard. The ability to customize makes paperboard super versatile. One type is perfect for cornflakes, and another is just right for heavy laundry detergent.

Amazing stuff, and great for crafting, yet you won't find paperboard for sale in stores. The only way to get it is to reuse it!

# 3

At the top of the box, leave one short flap attached, and cut off the other short flap and both long flaps. Leave all the flaps on the bottom of the box attached.

Refold the box inside out and bring the side seam together again, with the narrow glue flap underneath. Tape up the side seam.

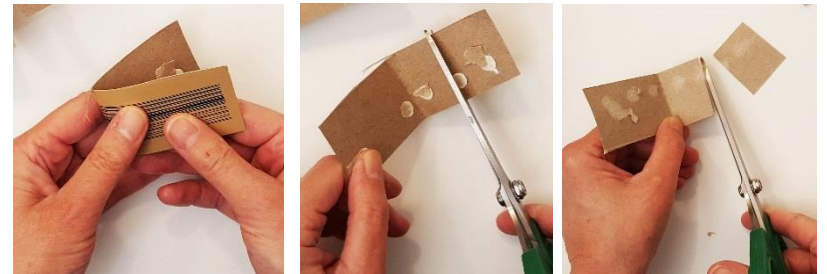


# 4

Take one of the long flaps you cut off.

Fold it in half. Cut off half of one half. It doesn't have to be exact.

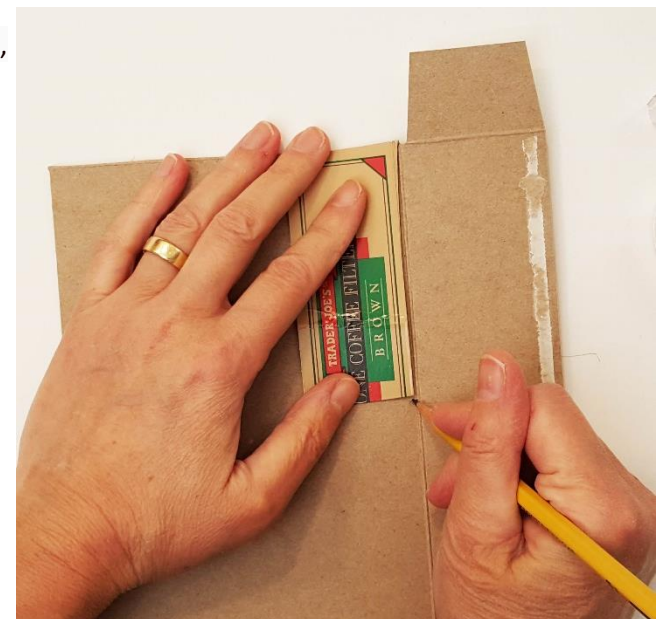
This little measuring strip figures out the rest of the house for you!



Lay your strip along one of the folded lines of your box, with the top of the strip even with the top of the box.

Where the strip ends make a pencil mark, right on the raised fold line.

Measure and mark the other three fold lines the same way.



# 5

On the front and back of the box, starting about 1/2" from the corner, cut to a mark on the fold line. Make four cuts like this in all, two on the front and two on the back of the box. This creates two roof sections with flaps.

Snip off the outer corners of the flaps.

Why flaps? They make the roof stronger and neater. Snipping the corners off makes the roof fit together better.



# 6

Push one roof section all the way inside the box, fold it down to form a crease, then pull it back out.

Do the same with the other section.

Now bring the two roof sections together to form the roof, tucking that one top flap inside.

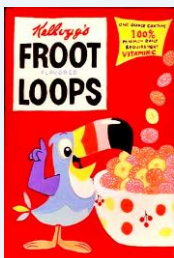
Tape the roof together at the top.

Almost done!



*"I pore over every word on the cereal box at breakfast, often more than once. You can ask me anything about shredded wheat."*

-- Chris Van Allsburg



How do box makers print bright colors onto brown boxes? They print a layer of white pigment first to cover the brown. Then the colored inks printed on top can really pop!



**7** Hold the box up near the roof and cut away the extra box, front and back, following the roof edge.

Push the bottom flaps up inside the house for a neat finish.



That's it! Your Three-Minute House is finished and ready to play with, decorate, or put on a shelf and admire.

Hop to page 19 to see some ideas for decorating, and page 21 for some great things to make out of your house.





## THE BEAUTY OF FAST CRAFTING

You may have noticed the words “quick”, “fast”, and “in minutes” show up a lot in this book. Why am I so obsessed with time? One reason: speedy crafts are easier to take creative risks with. When you know that you can make another house or Nicho in just a few minutes, it’s a lot less scary to try whatever creative idea occurs to you in the moment. Making and trying new things is fun. It’s creativity at work.

Here’s another reason. A craft that is finished and in your hands while you are still excited about making it is energizing. It feels amazing ! And that feeling gives you a reason to do it again. Creating is a cycle. Fast crafting helps it to become a habit.



# CUCKOO CLOCKS

With all the fun -- and none of the noise -- these cuckoo clocks are even better than the real thing.

Start with a house then add extra trimmings. Simple or way-out, everything just magically looks good on a cuckoo clock!



- 1** You'll need:
- A plain Original Mac&Cheese House or 3-Minute House, any size
  - Any empty box, or scraps of boxes
  - Old greeting cards, etc. (optional)
  - Markers
  - Glue stick
  - Tape
  - A pushpin

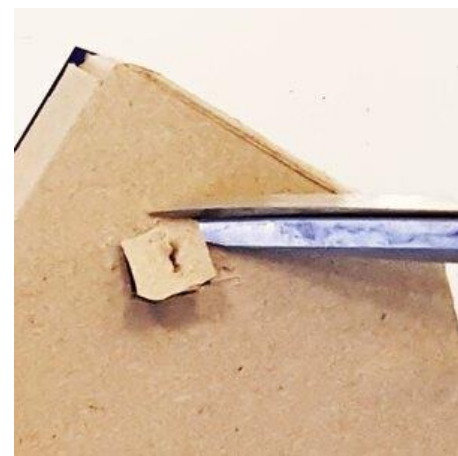
Your house will be the body of the clock. You'll make the decorations, clock face, and pendulums on the next page.



- 2** Cut off the bottom flaps. This makes it easy to attach the pendulums later.

To make a hanging hole on the back of the clock, poke a hole with the pin near the peak of the roof. Wiggle the tip of your scissors into it and snip out a hole big enough to fit over the pin.

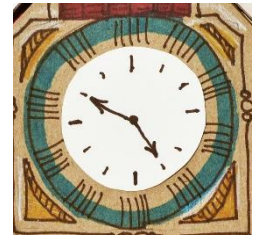
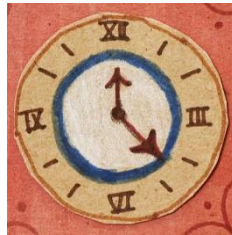
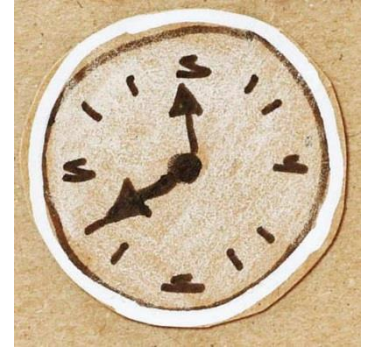
Now you're ready to make a clock face and the other fun parts of the cuckoo clock.





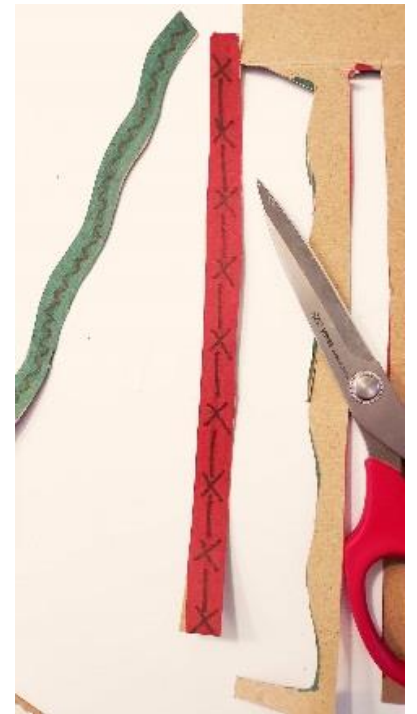
## CLOCK FACES

- Cut a round shape from another box or some white paper. About 2" across is a good size to start with – make a few, bigger or smaller, and see how they look on your box. Add numbers all around, or put dots, dashes, or squiggles. Put a dot in the middle and add the hands.
- For a different look, layer your clock face over a bigger circle. For the bigger circle use the colorful printed side of a box scrap, an old greeting card, or decorate a plain box circle with markers.
- Add more color or designs around the outside.



## DECORATIONS

- Cut strips from empty boxes or scraps. Make the edges straight, wavy, or however you want..
- You can use the printed side if you like the colors. Or use the brown side, plain or colored with markers.
- Add lines, dots, or dashes
- Make triangles, hearts or other shapes.
- Make plenty – it's fun to try different things as you put your cuckoo clock together. You can also trade, share, or save extras for next time.



## PENDULUMS

- For pretend pine cones cut ovals for pine cones out of box scraps. Try drawing line or dashes for scales. Then color the whole shape a lighter color or leave it natural.
- Make pendulums that are round, heart-shaped, or any shape
- Leave about a 6" stem attached to pendulum shapes or cut them out separately and tape stems and shapes together.
- Use found objects. Tie small lightweight pine cones, dry oak leaves, yarn pompoms, etc. onto pieces of twine for stems.



## CUCKOOS

- A small window makes a great cuckoo. Try the World's Easiest Window on page 37.
- Cut out and decorate one or two flat shutter shapes with markers.
- Use any cut out shape, a small drawing, or a sticker, by itself or combined with a window.









**3** Gather all your clock parts and decorations. Lay them out on your clock and play around to find an arrangement you like.

Try everything! Criss-cross your strips, turn parts upside down, put things sticking way off the edges, try different sizes of clock faces.

You can add color anywhere or everywhere with markers – solid, stripes, dots, or squiggles. Even on the sides and roof if you want.

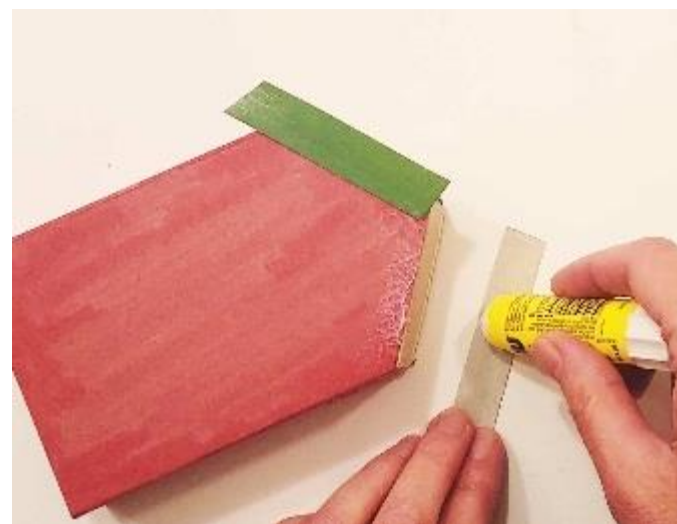
**4** When you are ready, attach the parts with glue stick.

Put glue stick on both surfaces for a stronger bond.

**5** Attach the pendulums to the front of the clock, from the inside, using tape.

That's it! Your cuckoo clock is ready to hang. Stick a pushpin into the wall and fit the hanging hole over it.

Cuckoo clocks look spectacular in groups, which is good news because it's hard to make just one.



# AND TRY THIS:

Here at Right Now Crafts we love the mistakes and surprises that happen when we're making things. In fact some of the ideas in this book started out as mistakes. Something else good that happened by mistake: boxes! Paperboard boxes used to be handmade and costly, for luxury items only. Then in 1879 a printing press accidentally pressed too hard. The metal printing plate cut right through the paperboard it was supposed to print on.



That mistake showed that a press could cut out and fold boxes as well as print them – a brand-new idea at the time. Suddenly everyday products could be packaged in economical machine-made boxes.

The moral of the story is surprises are part of creating, and they can show us new ideas to try that we might never have thought of!



## ALL-IN-ONE CLOCK

Draw some, or all, of the clock parts and decorations directly onto the clock.

Sketch first with a pencil if you like. And if you need a do-over, you can always glue a new part on later!



## THEME CLOCK

Make a clock that's all about a favorite color, person, animal, season, anything -- even a holiday, like this valentine clock.

If you know someone else's favorite thing, a special clock would make a great present.



## NO-PENDULUM CLOCK

Leave off the pendulums and you have a clock that can sit on a shelf *or* hang on the wall.



A photograph of an outdoor garden scene. A metal frame structure is visible, with several string lights hanging from it. The lights are unlit and have a warm glow. In the foreground, there are several colorful banners made from plastic bags, hanging from the frame. The banners feature various images and text, including "BEANS", "Blueberries", "CORN", and "BROCCOLI". The background is filled with lush green foliage and a wooden fence. The overall scene is bright and festive.

# OUTDOOR BANNERS

Plastic bags are tough, waterproof, and colorful -- the perfect material for these better-than-bought Outdoor Banners. They're an instant garden party! The dancing shapes and colors will turn any porch, patio, or patch of asphalt with dandelions into your new favorite place.



1

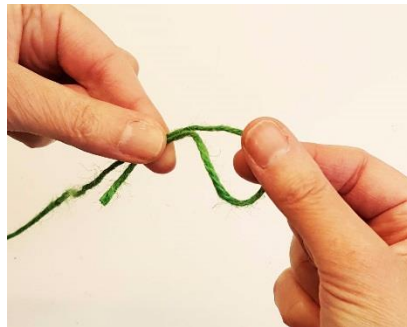
You'll need:

- A sturdy plastic bag (see sidebar on page 22)
- Scissors
- String or twine
- Stapler
- Ball point pen
- Outdoor Banners pattern on page 55



2

Cut about a 6-foot length of twine and tie a loop at each end.



3

Put the pattern on the bag with the top of the pattern on a side seam of the bag. This way when you cut out the banner it will have two layers joined at the top. The twine will get sandwiched between them.

Trace around the pattern with the ball point pen. Keep placing and tracing the pattern along the sides of the bag until you run out of room.





Any sturdy, non-crinkly bag can be used for banners, such as:

- Frozen food bags
- Sturdy shopping bags that can't be reused
- Shipping envelopes
- Orange bags. The mesh part adds a fun texture.
- Bulk bags from birdseed, pet foods, garden supplies, etc. Rinse if needed.

4

Cut each banner out, leaving the two layers connected. Cut slowly if the plastic tries to slide around. If your scissors have trouble, try a different pair. The cutting does not have to be perfect for these banners to look good!



5

Open one of your banners and place the string inside the fold. Close the banner.

Staple the banner twice near the top, avoiding the string. This will let you move the banners as you fill up the string.

Add and staple more banners until you decide your string is full. Adjust the spacing of the banners so they look good to you.



# 6

Staple each banner once more at the top, this time stapling through the string inside. This will lock the banners in place.

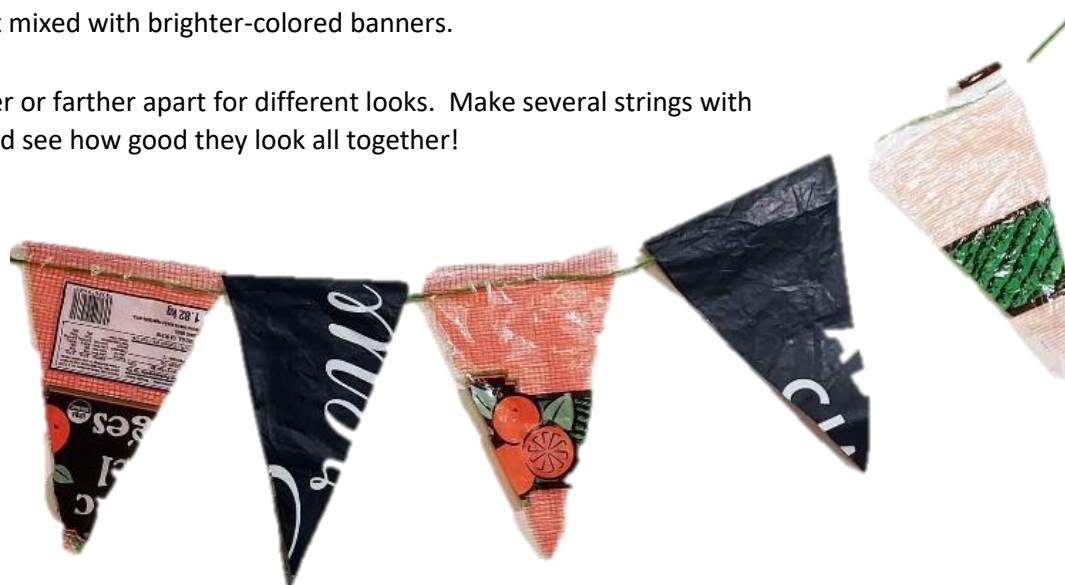
Your Outdoor Banners are ready to hang! Use pushpins, or unbend a paperclip to use as a hook – great for hanging in trees.



Hang your banners from tree branches, on a porch, or inside the house. Since they are waterproof you can put them in places you might not think of decorating, even over a bathtub!

## AND TRY THIS:

- If you have a few different colored bags to work with, you can create a pattern as you put the banners on the string. Alternate colors, or put groups of the same color together. Randomly mixing colors also looks great.
- Got boring bags? Drab or dark colored bags make dramatic modern-looking banners. They also look great mixed with brighter-colored banners.
- Space banners closer or farther apart for different looks. Make several strings with different spacing and see how good they look all together!
- 



*“Some people look for a beautiful place. Others make a place beautiful.”*  
– Hazrat Inayat Khan





## STEP-BY-STEP CRAFTING FOR EVERYONE!

What if you could make amazing, fun, creative crafts using just the skills and stuff you have right now? And what if you could make them with kids, in minutes, without a lot of mess or stress? Well you can, starting right now. Right Now Crafts shows you how to make dozens of better-than-bought things you will love having and love playing with. The secret is in your blue bin. Using recyclables the *right* way makes crafting easier, quicker, and come out better than conventional crafting. Designer Holly Czapski shares her original approach, lots of encouragement, and over thirty creative craft designs in this one-of-a-kind book kids and grownups will love.

Crafts like the Cereal Box Theater, Solar Powered Letters, Taco Stands, Outdoor Banners; books, party decorations, and so much more. All made using things you already have.

**Creative crafting that's easier,  
faster, and way more fun –  
that's Right Now Crafts!**

