

# Origami

## What is it?

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding. In modern usage, the word "origami" is often used as an inclusive term for all folding practices, regardless of their culture of origin. The goal is to transform a flat square sheet of paper into a finished sculpture through folding and sculpting techniques.

## Why do it?

Think of origami as an exercise for your brain! It requires **hand-eye coordination**, develops **fine-motor skills** and supports **mental concentration** - all of which stimulate the brain. When we follow instructions through the paper-folding challenges, both the motor and visual areas of our brains are activated.

# Chess

## What is it?

Chess is an abstract strategy board game with two players. It involves no hidden information with the object of the game to checkmate the opponent's king. Chess is one of the world's most popular games.

## Why do it?

Chess has many benefits.

It can raise your **IQ**. It exercises both sides of your **brain**. It increases **creativity**. It improves your **memory**. It increases **problem-solving** skills. It improves **reading skills**. It teaches planning and foresight. It grows **dendrites** (the tree-like branches that conduct signals from other neural cells into the neuron they're attached to.)

# Poetry

## What is it?

Poetry is literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.

## Why read or write it?

Poetry can **provide comfort** and **boost mood** during periods of stress, trauma and grief. It's powerful combination of words, metaphor and meter help us better **express ourselves** and **make sense** of the world and our place in it.

Writing poetry improves language skills, sparks creativity, creates self-awareness, acts as therapy, and expands our world view.

# Puzzles

## What are they?

Puzzles are games, problems, or toys that test a person's ingenuity or knowledge. There are different genres of puzzles, such as jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, word-search puzzles, number puzzles, relational puzzles, and logic puzzles.

## Why put one together?

Studies have shown that jigsaw puzzles help improve **visual-spatial reasoning**, **short-term memory**, and **problem-solving** skills. There are also mental health benefits to puzzling. It helps us **relax** our mind and enter a state of meditation and can **ease stress**, lower blood pressure and provide a sense of peace and tranquility.

# Coloring

## What is it?

Coloring is the act of apply colors. It's producing something with color or color effects by applying and/or combining color.

## Why should I color?

Coloring has the ability to relax the fear center of your brain, the amygdala. It induces the same state as meditating by reducing the thoughts of a restless mind. Coloring is a healthy way to **relieve stress**. It **calms the brain** and helps your body relax. This can **improve sleep and fatigue** while decreasing body aches, heart rate, respiration, and feelings of depression and anxiety.

# Reading

## What is it?

Reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When we read, we use our eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and we use our brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to us.

## Why should I read?

Reading **exercises the brain**. It's a free form of **entertainment**. It improves **concentration** and the ability to focus. It improves literacy and sleep, **increases** general **knowledge** and **motivation**, and reduces stress.

Reading is the key to success.



# STEM

## What is it?

STEM is an educational program developed to prepare primary and secondary students for college, graduate study and careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

## Why should I engage in STEM activities?

STEM activities fosters **creativity**, promotes real-world applications, builds **resilience**, teaches **collaboration**, encourages **independent exploration of subject matter**, develops **critical thinking**, and incorporates hands-on learning.

# Knots

## What are they?

Knots are the interlacement of the parts of one or more flexible bodies forming a lump or knob (as for fastening or tying together)

## Why tie knots?

Five important reasons to learn to tie knots:

Hand-Eye Coordination

Wilderness Survival Skills

Building Forts, Tents, and other Shelter

Problem-Solving Skills

Make Your Brain Think in a New Way



# Writing

## What is it?

Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form.

## Why write?

The benefits of writing:

Helps you clear your mind

Help you recover memories

Put life events into perspective

Improve your verbal and written skills

Provide a sense of accomplishment

Serves as a great mental exercise

Increases your gratitude and ability to communicate with others

# Calligraphy

## What is it?

Calligraphy is a visual art related to writing and is the design and execution of lettering with a pen, ink brush, or other writing instrument.

## Why learn calligraphy?

Regular practice of calligraphy can have numerous benefits for the physical and mental well-being of the individual.

Calligraphy is known to improve cognitive function in seniors, as well as help in increasing **patience and focus of mind**. It improves focus, fine-motor skills, and spiritual well-being. It's also very inexpensive to start!

# Monthly Contests

## What are they?

Each month we host contests to give you an opportunity to get involved, have fun, and compete to win prizes. We have Book Spine Poetry, Website Contest, Art Contest, Short Story Contest, Drama Competition, Geography Bee, and Poetry Reading and Contest.

## Why participate?

First, we want you to have fun! You can also win prizes. The prizes include free dress day, a prize bag, gift card or cash, lunch for you and a friend, recognition on social media and at the awards day in May.

# College & Career

## What is it?

Our College and Career Station is filled with information for exploring your next move after high school. Pick up free booklets to take home and read or browse the information on colleges, the military, various trades, and careers.

## Why visit this station?

It's never too soon to start planning for your future. You may have years before you finish high school or you may only have a few months. Either way, it's worth your time to visit the station and find the inspiration you need to get your plans in place for that next step for you. Remember, if your dreams don't scare you, they aren't big enough!