

Planning a Kite Making Workshop (Primary)

Who, What, When, Where and How - have you thought of everything?

Who

What year group, age, range of abilities are you working with and how many of them will be working together at any one time.

Will you have adult helpers or maybe some older pupils who have already done the workshop activity to come and help?

Will you bring in a kitemaker or artist to work with you or will you be leading?

Who can you cite as examples of people who have used kites in history or in the present day.

What

You need to choose an appropriate kite to make for the abilities of the group or to suit the purpose of your enquiry. Look at various kite designs online or contact Infinite Arts for a training session to help you with this

Where

If the kite you are making is about A3 in size, you can easily do your kite making in the classroom with everyone working at their own normal workspace. If you want to work with two classes together, then the hall is a good space with tables if possible but some children could work on the floor. (it tends to get unworkable if they all do).

When

Try to run the workshop when there is a good chance that you can get out the same day to fly the kites. If it's raining maybe try flying them in the hall – a few at a time running from one end to the other (not all together!!) and make a promise that you will go out and fly the kites together as soon as the weather breaks. (if they all take them home without flying together – you'll miss out on a great opportunity to share experience and take it further.)

How

You need the right materials, templates, equipment such as scissors (which are free from bits of glue and will cut plastic), stickytape dispensers. Read the Infinite Arts resource sheet on kite materials.

Why

Remember to think about why you are making the kites and to make use of the opportunities that this activity provides for learning. Don't pre-make too much, don't try to make it too easy. The sense of achievement is stronger when you really have made something yourself. Dedicate your time to supportive checking and helping to re-stick anything which looks like it wont fly.

Some things to think about.

Length of Workshop:

A typical kitemaking workshop will last one to two hours resulting in everyone in the group making a simple kite. Whole day or half day sessions can be arranged involving more complicated construction work.

The total time for a kite-making workshop will depend on a number of variables including the age and abilities of the children, the type and difficulty of the kite being made. There is a range of different kites to suit different age groups and also can make the same style of kite with different ages by providing ready cut elements for younger or less able children.

Try the kite out yourself and if possible get a child to make it with you so that you can pre-empt the problems.

Number of Students,

- One class of 30 working in the classroom is quite feasible
- two classes together working in the hall with several staff / parents involved as assistants works well too

Space required

- each student will need a few square feet of desk space - this can work in the classroom or in the hall.
- Pupils usually work better at tables – standing or sitting but can work on the floor.
- You need a space at the front to address the group from and to layout the materials you'll be using.
- Access to the outdoors to the biggest, clearest available space the school can offer will be needed in order to fly the kites once they are made. Check in advance that there are no powerlines close by and that you can avoid any trees. If it's raining, the kites can be test flown in the school hall by taking turns to run the length of the hall with the kite on a metre or so of line flying behind.

Typical kitemaking workshop timetable

Brief introduction to kites and kite making (maybe a slideshow)	15 mins
Kite making	45 mins
Decorative work on kite sail	15 mins
Discussion on safety	15 mins
Flying out of doors - testing flying mending	35 mins
Total time (being generous)	about 2 hrs.

Materials and equipment

- Sort out in advance what you need depending on which kite you have chosen. Plastic or paper for sails, sticks, lines and tails
- Gather together as many stickytape dispensers as possible. You'll need tables, pencils, biro type pens, good scissors and if possible Our aim is for each participant to end up with a kite that will fly at the end of the session.

Before you go out to fly

It's very important that you gather everyone together before they go out to fly and spend a few minutes talking about kite safety. There is a safety sheet which you can print out and distribute if you wish. In discussion make sure you cover the following:

What could go wrong when we are flying the kites?	We could trip over, bump into each other, knock someone else over, get tangled, let go, break the kite,
Where should we never fly – what would be a dangerous place to fly?	By the road, by a river, beside trees, Emphasise power lines as a problem
Why is it dangerous to fly near power lines?	The line will conduct electricity
Why is it dangerous to fly kites in a thunderstorm?	The kite may be the highest thing around and if it is struck by lightening, the line will conduct electricity down to the ground through you! Always wind your kite in and head home if you see dark grey thunder clouds coming.
How should we carry the kite before we fly?	Wind up the line and clip it into a slit cut at the top of the card so it cant roll away; double up the tails so you cant trip over them, don't put them round your neck!
How should we carry the kite when we take it home or to the park?	Its best to keep it in a carrier bag – bring one in then you can take it home. When you take it out of the bag to fly – you need to put the bag in your pocket so it doesn't blow away.

Talk about which of the problems are just annoying and which are dangerous. You can always mend a kite or even make another one now you know how.

Some tips on flying – when you get outside

- Find a good space...
- Find some wind - if there is wind there should be no need to run!
- Which way is the wind blowing? Keep your back to the wind and let your kite out bit by bit and it will be lifted up.
- Alternatively ask a friend to help you by holding your kite downwind of where you stand. Don't let them throw the kite upwards or it will only come down with a jolt – they just need to hold it lightly so that the line is fairly taut. Then when you feel the pull of the wind – you tug on the line and they release the kite and let it fly upwards by itself.
- You need to be careful not to let the line run quickly through your hands or fingers or get caught around your hand as it can cause permanent damage if the wind is strong. Don't wind the line around your hand – always use the card winder. Wool is good because if necessary you can snap it easily.

Happy flying