

Making a Photo Collage

Making a physical photo collage can be a fun, memorable, and inexpensive gift for all sorts of occasions. Collages can be appropriate for both friends and family, and can be extremely customizable and personal.

Before Starting

Decide on a theme, subject, and size of the collage before gathering materials and content. This is important for determining how large the cardstock or poster board should be, what photos and graphics to gather, and how many photos and graphics to gather.

Have any materials that need to be printed, such as photos and graphics, through a photo printing service. Visit a local arts and crafts store to find extra materials and get inspired.

Materials

Required Materials:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Cardstock or poster board
- Pencil
- Printed photos and graphics
- Paper towels

Optional Materials:

- Paper cutter
- Construction paper
- Other decorations
 - Stickers

- Letters
- Fabrics

Preparing the Base (Optional)

Before planning and arranging images onto the collage, we need to decide on the size and shape of our base. If you plan to use your cardstock or poster board as is, you can skip these steps.

Changing the color of the base

1. Apply glue to the construction paper.
2. Apply the side of construction paper with glue to the base. Press down with your hands until smooth.
3. Repeat until you are satisfied with the color and appearance of the base.

Changing the shape and size of the base

1. Use pencil to lightly outline the desired shape and size of your collage.
2. Use scissors to cut out the traced shape.

Preparing Photos and Graphics (Optional)

Cutting out specific graphics and photos in custom shapes can make the collage more unique, interesting, and detailed. For example, you may want to cut a person or object's outline from a photo instead of including an entirely rectangular photo.

1. Go through photos and graphics to find items that may benefit from being cut into specific shapes.
 - Some images and graphics may fit your collage's theme better by cutting away the background, or cutting into different shapes, such as circles or hearts.

2. Use scissors to roughly to do an initial, rougher cut around the photo.
3. Use scissors, or a paper cutter if available, to cut around the more detailed parts of the content, such as a person's hands, or petals on a flower.
 - It's okay to make some errors when cutting. When collaging, images and graphics can be layered in a way that hides flaws and imperfections.

Assembling the Collage

1. Arrange all of the prepared photos, graphics, and other materials and decorations on the base of the collage. Do not use glue yet.
 - When arranging the photos, graphics, and other materials, consider how dense or sparse you intend the collage to be, what images go well together, and which parts should be overlapped and layered.
 - Try using other materials such as fabric and stickers to cover gaps in between images.
2. Now that the images have been arranged, glue each image to the base.
 1. Turn the image so that the side unexposed in the collage is face up.
 2. Apply glue to this surface. Make sure the glue is applied to the borders.
 3. Place the glued side of the image onto the base.
 4. Press down on the image until flat, and use the paper towels to wipe off any extra glue as necessary.
3. Once all photos, content, and materials have been applied, let the collage sit flat while the glue dries.

Your collage is now complete. Now you are ready to try out different styles and techniques with your next collage.