

# Upstream Battle Marine Litter Art Competition

## Climate Change: The Plastic Age Weaving Activity

### Description:

This activity describes how to make and use a cardboard loom, to create a weaving of reused materials. A weaving loom is a traditional technique, originally used to make clothing. The activity is inspired by our live lesson with Gail McGregor, where she shared her experience of creating a sculpture made from plastics collected from her local beaches on Skye. It promotes reusing materials to create artwork and supports pupils in developing ideas for their entry into the Upstream Battle Marine Litter Art Competition.

### Materials:

- Cardboard
- Cotton string or strong yarn
- Scissors
- Ruler and pencil
- Masking tape
- Weaving materials (reused coloured fabric, soft plastics and packaging etc)
- Double-sided Sellotape or glue (optional)

### Method:

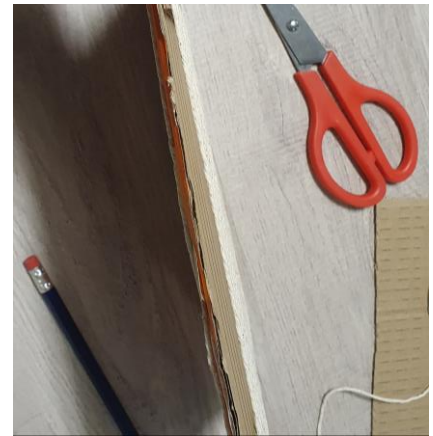
**Step 1: Make the loom base.** Cut a rectangle of cardboard (thicker cardboard, such as a packaging box works best). This can be any size you like, but 20cm x 15cm works well for small individual looms.

**Step 2: Fit the spacer.** Cut two strips from the cardboard. If you're using the measurements above, they need to be about 2cm wide. Fit them to the base, 2cm away from either end. You can fix them in place with glue or double-sided tape or slide them into place after you have warped the loom (step 4) for a completely plastic-free variation.



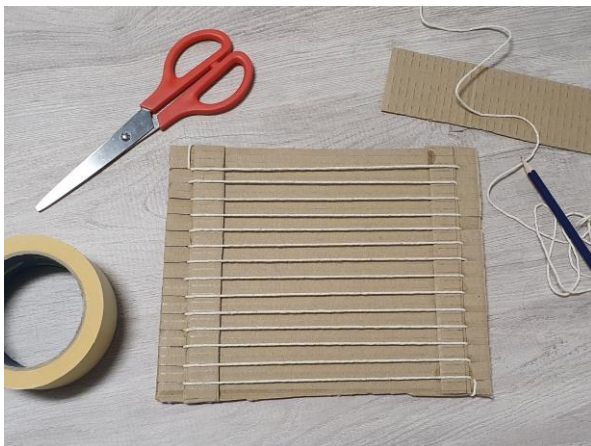
**Step 3: Cut slits for the string.** Draw lines at either end of the loom base up to the spacer, 1cm apart. Cut slits along the lines.

**Step 4: Warp the loom.** Your loom is done! Now you need to add the string that you will weave your materials through. This process is called warping your loom. Put the string through the first slit and secure it to the back of the base with masking tape. Turn the loom so the front is facing up, bring the string down and slide it into the matching slit at the bottom. Wrapping the string around the back again, repeat the process until the string is through all the slits.



The thin cardboard strips on the loom create a gap between the warp string and the base of the loom. This makes it easier to weave materials over and under the warp strings.

**Step 5: Weave in your materials.** Start weaving! The materials you add now are called the weft and they go in the opposite direction to the warp. Starting at the bottom of the loom, weave your materials over and under the warp string. When you get to the other side, go back the other way, continuing to go over and under the warp.



**Step 6: Remove your weaving.** Cut all the warp threads a few centimeters away from the bottom of your finished weaving. If your weaving reaches the bottom of your loom you will need to cut the strings on the back of the loom in order to get loose ends of warp threads below your final row of weaving.

**Step 7: Tie off the warp strings**

Turn your loom over and cut the warp strings about halfway down the back. Turn your loom back over face up, then carefully remove the warp strings from the slits. In pairs, tie the ends of your warp strings at the top and bottom.



**Step 8: Add a hanger**  
(optional)

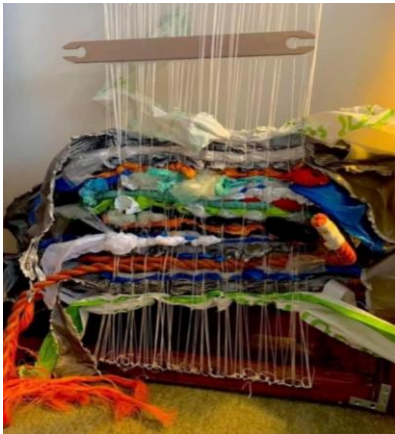
To finish your weaving and display it you can add a hanger across the top. Use a relatively straight stick or even a piece of driftwood, that is a few centimeters longer than the width of your weaving. Lay it across the top of your weaving and tie each pair of warp strings around the hanger to secure it.



Examples from Gail McGregor's work:



**Left:** A miniature weave made from soft plastics and fishing nets found on the beaches around Gail's home on Skye. Gail created this to consider how the colours and textures of the beach litter would look once arranged in the weave.



**Left:** The beginning of one of the skirt panels of Climate Change The Plastic Age. Gail salvaged the loom out of a local tip.



**Left:** A finished tapestry-style panel depicting the view from Gail's studio on Skye

**Below:** One of the maquettes (scale model or rough draft of an unfinished sculpture) Gail created for Climate Change: The Plastic Age



### Share your creations

We hope the pupils enjoyed creating their weave, please take a photo and tag @KSBSScotland and #UpstreamBattle on social media or email it to [ecoschools@keepsotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:ecoschools@keepsotlandbeautiful.org)