

A Crafty Collage of Crime

ANASTASIA'S COLLAGE CRAFTS

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Collage, which comes from the French *coller* and means to stick or glue, is the technique of gluing various two-dimensional materials to a surface to create a unique work of art. Paper, fabric, photographs, wallpaper, gift wrap, magazine pages, and newspaper clippings are some of the materials used in collage. The collage is then often embellished with text and paint and sometimes various 3-dimensional objects. In *A Crafty Collage of Crime*, a framed collage of wine labels hangs in the cottage where Anastasia and Zack are staying.

Collage has been around since the invention of paper in China around 200 BC. It was used by Japanese calligraphers in the 10th century and in medieval Europe as early as the 13th century. Victorians practiced the art of collage to create memorabilia. In the early 1900s cubist painters Pablo Picasso and George Braque coined the word “collage” when they began experimenting with the technique and incorporating it into their drawings and paintings.

The beauty of collage is that you don't have to be skilled in drawing or painting to create visually interesting works of art. All you need is a bit of imagination.

Collage is also an inexpensive craft. All it really requires are paper, scissors, and glue. Three-dimensional collages might also include beads, buttons, shells, ribbon, lace, feathers, wood, pottery shards, costume jewelry or various other found objects.

To create a collage, it's often best to start out with a theme. For instance, if you like flowers, you might want to create a floral collage, cutting out the simple shape of a vase from a patterned piece of paper and a variety of flowers in different sizes and colors from magazines. Arrange the images on a larger piece of solid color or patterned paper.

However, your theme doesn't have to be so literal. For instance, you can make an abstract collage by choosing a specific color or color palette as your theme and creating a composition of only elements of those colors.

Or choose a broader theme, such as birds, sunsets, or even food for a collage you'd hang in your kitchen.

You can also create visual texture by tearing the edges of some of your elements instead of cutting out all of them.

Once you're happy with the arrangement of the elements you've chosen, glue the images in place. Choose glue specifically made for paper. Such glues won't warp or buckle your paper or cause the inks to bleed.

After the glue is dry, you might want to embellish your design further. Using the flower vase collage as an example, with gem glue attach beads or buttons to the center of some of the flowers, decorate the vase with ribbon, highlight specific areas of the design with paint, or add a quote or inspirational saying using calligraphy or a rubber stamp alphabet.

The beauty of collage is that there's no right way or wrong way to create a collage. It's all about letting your imagination run wild and having fun.