

The Dancing Paper Ghost

Time: About 10 minutes • Mess: A few paper scraps.

Quick setup

Work together at a stable, covered table, with a grown-up alongside throughout. Check labels for age guidance and ingredient sensitivities; use only the listed materials. Keep food separate and materials away from mouths and eyes. Children who still taste materials can choose colors and watch while you handle the supplies. Wash hands afterward.

What You Need

- Very thin white tissue paper
- A plastic ruler
- A dry fleece or wool cloth
- A pencil
- Scissors for the grown-up
- A small piece of tape

Your child's part

Choose the ghost's expression, help rub the ruler, and investigate how close it needs to be.

The grown-up's part

Cut out a small, simple ghost from a single thin layer of tissue paper, about 1-2 inches tall. Gather the scraps and handle the scissors and tape.

SAFETY WARNING • Before you try it

Keep the tissue, tape, and scraps away from mouths, and put the scissors away once preparation is finished.

Try It Together

- 1 Make your ghost.** Draw two light pencil eyes on the ghost. Lay it flat on a dry table and tape just its bottom edge down, leaving the rest free to lift.
- 2 Try the ruler first.** Bring the ruler close before rubbing it. Does anything happen?
- 3 Rub the ruler.** Rub the ruler back and forth against the cloth for about 10-15 seconds.
- 4 Look for movement.** Slowly bring it close above the ghost's head without touching the paper. Watch for the tissue to lift or flutter toward the ruler.

Ghost staying still? Try thinner tissue, a smaller shape, or a different cloth and plastic ruler. Static experiments can be less effective in humid conditions.

Cleanup

Collect the ghost, tape, and paper scraps, then put away the ruler and cloth.