

Artificially Dating Paper

How do filmmakers readily obtain such 'archaic paper', without spending time waiting for paper to age? Find out how in this activity!



Caution

If you are going to use fire to artificially age the paper, make sure you do so with adult supervision!

Cover the table you are working on with the protective sheet (In the picture instructions below, we used the reverse side of an old poster, you can use a plastic sheet too).

Step 1

Add 5 teaspoons of instant coffee powder to the water and stir well.

Step 2

Dip the brush into the coffee solution and paint it all over the paper.

Step 3

Sprinkle some coffee powder on the stained paper and use the paint brush to dab the powder into the paper.

Do not attempt the following steps without adult supervision.

Step 4

Use a hair dryer to dry the paper till it no longer feels damp to the touch.

Step 5

Fix the candle to its holder and carefully light the candle in a well-ventilated space.

Step 6

Keeping your hands well away from the flame, move the edges of the paper back and forth over the flame. Do not hold the paper over the flame in the same position for too long, or you might set it on fire! (If that happens, stay calm and use the damp rag to smother the burning paper.)

Step 7

When you are done burning the edges, hold the underside of the stained paper just above the flame and move it back and forth (ensure the paper does not touch the flame). This will cause the heated portions of the paper to appear darker than the rest of the paper.

Step 8

When you think your paper looks sufficiently aged, blow out the candle and you are done!

Voilà!

Your 'aged masterpiece'

Feel free to try experiment with this on different types of paper.

Try writing or printing your desired information on the paper before artificially dating the paper OR writing on the paper after the dating process is complete.

Share with us your masterpieces!
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