



# Sock it to 'em

*Use a quirky art project to recycle your class' odd socks*

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## Curriculum links:

NC: Art and design  
2a-b; 4a-b.



**Sock Garland by Susan Danis**

Selecting a material for the sixth and final part of this series was something of a challenge. In recent months, our rummaging through the recycling boxes has unearthed newspapers, cardboard, tin cans and a few old toys, all of which have inspired creative classroom projects. But, there's one item hidden away in huge quantities in every household across the country – overlooked, unloved and waiting to be transformed into art. Yes, for the final instalment of the 'Eco art' series, it's time to dig through your drawers and unearth those odd socks.

## Socks of inspiration

The studio of Californian artist, Susan Danis, must be a fascinating place to visit – though stay in one place too long and you might find yourself incorporated into one of her curious artworks! Danis uses a huge range of materials in her work, as you'll see at [www.susandanis.com](http://www.susandanis.com) (Note: Check suitability of artwork before showing it to your class). Follow the link to her portfolio and you'll easily find some images of her recent sock sculptures. Explain to the children that they, too, are going to create wonderful and whacky works of art using recycled socks.

## Activities

### You will need:

- odd socks
- newspaper – shredded if possible
- garden wire netting or fencing – plastic or metal
- wood strips (2.5cm x 2.5cm is ideal) cut to length for frame
- staple gun and staples
- scissors
- string cut to 20cm lengths
- sticky eyes (optional).



## 1 Creating a structure

- Explain to the children that they will be making a group or whole-class sculpture, and will need to start by building a solid structure to support the socks.
- A rectangle of strong plastic or metal netting will need to be stapled to some wooden strips cut to the same length as the sides of the rectangle. Depending on the age of the children in your class, this could be a task that they complete independently, though they'll need to be supervised when using any tools. The process should give them an opportunity to put into practice what they have learned about the perimeters of shapes.
- If you're teaching younger children, you might prefer to cut the frame and attach the wire netting yourself – it only takes a few minutes – or, if you prefer not to use a frame at all, check that there are no sharp edges to the wire netting.

## 2 Socks appeal

- In order to stock up on socks, send a letter home to parents requesting their cooperation and promising that their old socks will be put to good use. Ask for odd socks, though pairs that have been outgrown are equally welcome.
- Provide children with socks and newspapers and encourage them to work in pairs. Demonstrate how to scrunch the newspaper into the cavity of each sock, pushing it right down to the bottom to fill it. Talk to the children about how the volume of the sock is increasing with every handful of newspaper.

## 3 Stringing up socks

- Once you have a few filled socks, demonstrate how to pass a piece of string through a gap in the netting, loop it around the open end of a sock and tie it to the netting with a double knot. Children will need a little practice with this as the socks need to be tied fairly securely (tying them to each other also works well).
- Tie the socks fairly close together on the netting so that they support each other and encourage children to make decisions about how different colours, sizes and patterns could be juxtaposed. In the example shown (above, right), most of the larger socks were placed at the side and lower edges, with colourful socks in the middle.
- Once children get into the rhythm of stuffing, arranging and tying the socks, the sculpture will soon be completed.



Susan Danis' *Sock Garland* (above and left) was used to inspire the sock sculptures created by children



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Finally, the socks can be transformed into snake-like creatures by adding pairs of sticky eyes. We cheated and bought some – though by now your class will be so

committed to making art from recycled materials that they'll demand to make their own from whatever they can find! ■