

Mississippi River Flatboat

Supplies:

- A piece of cardboard about 18 x 18 inches
- Ruler
- Pen
- Scissors
- Duct Tape
- 8 Straws
- 2 large popsicle sticks
- A hot glue gun and glue



Steps:

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| | <p>Step 1: Draw a 7 x 10-inch rectangle on the cardboard and carefully cut it out.</p> |
| | <p>Step 2: Place the ruler so that its edge lines up with one of the edges of the rectangle. Draw a line across the top of the ruler.</p> |
| | <p>Step 3: Repeat Step 2 on the remaining sides of the rectangle.</p> |
| | <p>Step 4: Use scissors to cut out the small square at each corner of the rectangle.</p> |





Step 8: Lay the ruler down along one of the edges of the rectangle. Grasp the ruler and the cardboard with both hands. Still holding the ruler and the cardboard, bend them both upward so that the cardboard is folded over the ruler. Press firmly to create a crease.



Step 10: Use the ruler to fold up all the edges of the rectangle, forming the shape of the flatboat's base.



Step 11: Lay the cardboard down and begin covering the boat completely in duct tape, front and back. It helps to cover one side at a time with strips that reach the length of the cardboard. Wrap any overhanging tape around the sides of the cardboard.



Step 13: While wrapping the cardboard with tape, cut out the corners of the rectangle once again.



Step 16: Bend the creased edges upward to return the cardboard to its boat shape. Hold each corner together with one hand, and use a small piece of tape on the outside to secure the corners. Fold any extra tape from the corner over the edge and use it to reinforce the inside of the boat's corners.



Step 19: Line up a straw with one of the boat's shorter edges and cut it to match the length of that side.



Step 20: Carefully use the hot glue gun to apply glue to the short edge of the boat. Place the cut straw along the edge and press it into the glue. Repeat on the opposite side.



Step 22: Line up a straw along the longer side of the boat and cut it to match just over half the length of the side. Cut another straw to match the length of the straw that was just cut.



Step 24: Apply hot glue to just over half of the boat's long edge, and press one piece of straw into the glue. Do the same on the other side. The two straws should be directly across from each other.



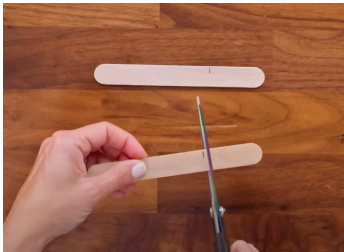
Step 26: Cut another length of straw to cover the rest of the long side, but this time, place a finger between the piece being cut and the piece already glued to the boat. This will create a small gap for the paddles.



Step 27: Cut out the shorter piece of straw and cut out a second short piece of straw to match the first one.



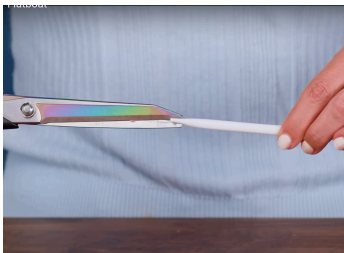
Step 29: Use hot glue to secure both pieces of straw along the remaining edges of the boat, being sure to leave a small gap in the middle.



Step 29: Use a pen to make a small mark about two inches from the ends of both popsicle sticks. Cut off the shorter end of each popsicle stick to use as the ends of the paddles.



Step 32: Prepare two straws for use as paddle handles. Cut about two inches off each straw (if using bendy straws, it helps to cut off the accordion end and discard it).



Step 33: Turn the scissors to line up with the end of each straw, and cut a tiny slit on one end. Repeat this step with the second straw.

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| | <p>Step 34: To assemble the paddles, line up the round ends of popsicle sticks with the slit end of the straws. Slide the popsicle paddles into the slits, securing them loosely.</p> |
| | <p>Step 37: Cover each paddle with tape. Starting at the point where the popsicle paddle meets the straw handle, begin wrapping the tape around the paddle. Wrap the tape in a spiral around the paddle, always moving towards the wooden end. Be sure to wrap it tightly. Once the tape is wrapped completely, fold over any extra tape from the end back onto the wooden part of the paddle. Repeat for both paddles.</p> |
| | <p>Step 41: Place the paddles in the gaps on the flatboat, with their handles toward the inside of the boat. Ta-dah! Your flatboat is now ready to float down the Mississippi River!</p> |

Why is the Mississippi River so important? The Mississippi River is one of the longest rivers in North America and spans about 2,350 miles through the United States. It flows north to south, from the state of Minnesota all the way to Louisiana. Without the Mississippi River and the trade and communities it helped create, America would not have grown into the great nation it is today.

Fun Facts:

- The Mississippi River has been important since ancient times. It was used for transportation and as a major trade route, first with Native American tribes who lived in the area for thousands of years, then by European settlers. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the United States gained control of the Mississippi River, and American explorers started heading west. The Lewis and Clark expedition used the river to travel and make discoveries. Many pioneers in the 1800s began their westward journeys in wagon trains, flatboats, and steamboats from the city of St. Louis, where the Mississippi River and the Missouri River meet.
- The Mississippi River has more than 260 species of fish, including the American Paddlefish, one of the largest freshwater fish in North America. The river's name comes from "misi ziibi," a word from the native Ojibwa tribe which means "great river." That is a fitting name for a river that is bordered by ten U.S. states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.