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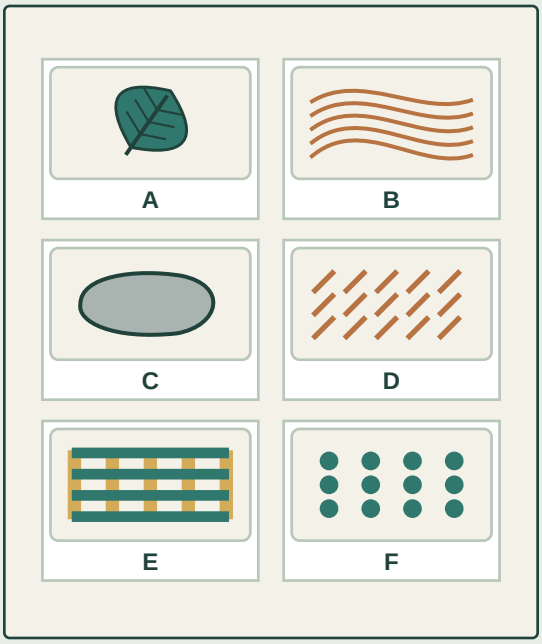
MAKE / BOTANICAL & NATURAL-MATERIAL CRAFTS

Make a Natural-Texture Mood Board for a Craft



SIX SAMPLES / THREE DESIGN CHOICES

14 practical steps · Observe · compare · compose

Original diagrams and two printable maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

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Before you start

A texture mood board is useful before buying supplies or committing to a finished craft. It separates observations from design choices: the ridges in a leaf, the smoothness of a pebble and the rhythm of woven fibres can suggest a direction without becoming parts of the finished object. This project makes six removable paper sample cards for one intended decorative craft. Use photographs or drawings for textures that are unsuitable to collect or attach.

Materials: one flat 210 by 297 mm support sheet, six firm paper sample cards, pencil, ruler, scissors, plain papers and known clean dry craft offcuts, your own photographs or sketches, and a compatible labelled paper adhesive for paper-to-paper assembly if needed. Keep fragile natural specimens separate; no sanding, scraping, peeling bark, crushing, casting or chemical treatment. Use only familiar appropriate materials from a permitted source. Avoid mould, pest-bearing material and unknown minerals, plants or coatings.

Plan the project

Use a portrait A4-sized board (210 by 297 mm). Arrange six removable cards of 85 by 75 mm in two columns and three rows. The two cards and a 10 mm horizontal gap use 180 mm, leaving 15 mm side margins. Three 75 mm cards and two 10 mm vertical gaps use 245 mm. Start the grid 25 mm below the upper edge, leaving 27 mm below. Coordinates from the top left: columns x = 15 and 110 mm; rows y = 25, 110 and 195 mm. Reserve the lower 15 mm of each card for a caption, leaving an 85 by 60 mm sample zone.

Use three pairs: structure (veins and grain), contrast (rough-looking and smooth-looking), and rhythm (woven and repeated marks). Choose a real craft decision, for example a paper-covered notebook with a quiet, matte repeat. All six cards may be drawings, rubbings on safe ordinary craft stock or original photos; a real natural fragment is not required. If using a dry paper or fabric swatch, mount only compatible material on its card. Keep actual loose stones or brittle specimens in a separate labelled tray; never rely on a paper board to hold heavy objects upright.

Steps 01–02

1. Name the craft decision

Write one intended craft at the top of Record 1: a card, paper cover, print, textile accent or another adult decorative item. Set two or three visual criteria such as muted colours, fine linear detail or a matte surface. Do not confuse a visually rough pattern with a requirement for abrasive material; the board is inspiration, not a materials safety approval.

2. Choose a responsible observation method

Use materials you already own, documented craft stock, or original photographs taken where permitted. Parks Canada prohibits removing natural objects in its protected places. Photograph a bark pattern instead of peeling bark, and leave unknown or protected items in place. Avoid transporting seeds, soil, insects or wood that might spread pests. Note a source and date for each sample.

Steps 03–04

3. Prepare the support sheet

Choose flat clean paperboard or a firm A4 sheet. Orient it portrait and write a short project title in the top margin. Draw the two-column, three-row positions on a separate sketch before marking the actual support. If using another board size, recalculate the edges and gaps rather than squeezing cards together. Keep the bottom margin free for the final design phrase.

4. Cut six matching removable cards

Prepare six 85 by 75 mm paper cards, marked A through F on the back. Reserve the lower 15 mm for captions and keep each image or thin swatch inside the upper 85 by 60 mm zone. Check the layout with all six blank cards on the board. The cards may lie loose for rearranging; no permanent mounting to the board is needed.

Steps 05–06

5. Observe fine structure for card A

Choose an identified leaf or a photograph of its visible veins. Record the direction of its main line and the branching spacing. Draw a small section from your own observation, enlarging the detail rather than inventing a species label. If the actual leaf is fragile or damp, do not rub or flatten it; use an original sketch or photo instead.

6. Observe grain for card B

Study the directional lines of clean dry paper, safe purchased wood-grain imagery or another familiar craft material. Draw the line variation and note whether it is regular or irregular. Do not sand wood or remove bark for this board. Place A and B side by side and write which direction would suit the intended craft edge or surface.

Steps 07–08

7. Compare smooth and rough-looking surfaces

For cards C and D, compare an original photo or sketch of a rounded pebble with a coarse-looking pattern such as a dry craft-paper texture. Photograph rather than attach stones or thick pieces. Label observed appearance separately from touch; only touch known suitable ordinary craft stock. Do not infer strength, softness or skin safety from an image.

8. Observe rhythm for cards E and F

Use a thin sample of familiar woven craft fibre or draw its alternating crossings for E. For F, use an original repeated-mark sketch or a patterned scrap of your own making. Describe the spacing and scale. If a sample has a pronounced physical thickness, keep it separate and draw it instead. Avoid loose fibres or unknown dyes in contact with food or skin.

Steps 09–10

9. Make the captions specific

Under each sample write a short description of what is actually visible, such as fine branching lines, irregular horizontal bands, or open repeated gaps. Add the source code and date on the back. Keep observations separate from aesthetic judgements. For example, quiet is a design judgement, while three parallel lines is an observation. Do not attribute unverified material properties.

10. Mount thin samples only if suitable

For paper-to-paper or compatible thin craft-stock mounting, consult the actual adhesive instructions and try an offcut first. Keep adhesive away from any original specimen or important keepsake. Allow full stated drying or cure while flat. If the card buckles, stains or remains tacky, substitute a drawing or photograph. Keep all six cards removable from the support.

Steps 11–12

11. Arrange the board and compare alternatives

Place cards A and B in row 1, C and D in row 2, and E and F in row 3. Observe the overall rhythm and compare a swapped pair without gluing the cards down. Try reading the board from a normal working distance rather than magnifying every detail. Photograph the arrangement you prefer and note any sample that visually dominates.

12. Convert observations into three choices

Write three specific choices for the proposed craft: one line direction or scale, one contrast between areas, and one repeated element. For a notebook cover, an example is diagonal branching, a broad blank margin and a small repeating motif. Draw a miniature thumbnail using these choices; do not simply copy all six textures into one busy design.

Steps 13–14

13. Keep a reference and plan a material trial

Select a compatible actual craft material and make a separate small practice sample before the finished object. A photograph or paper swatch does not establish adhesion, colourfastness, durability or safety. Record any issue to check against the material maker’s directions. Leave uncertain material off the craft. Store the mood board flat and dry away from food, children and pets.

14. Record the final design direction

Complete Record 2 with the chosen card order, source references, three design choices and the next small material trial. Mark DESIGN READY, REVISE or HOLD; this describes the planning result only. Revisit the board if the intended craft or material changes. Keep photos instead of deteriorating natural specimens. Dispose of suspect material according to applicable local guidance without dispersing pests or seeds.

Fix, care and preserve

Cards crowd the edge. Recalculate margins or reduce card size; preserve captions.

Textures are too similar. Compare scale or directional contrast instead of adding more materials.

A specimen crumbles. Remove it and use an original photograph or sketch.

Card curls. Change the mounting method on scrap or use a drawing.

A design choice is vague. Write a specific direction, spacing or contrast and sketch a thumbnail.

Source & evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, calculations, vector artwork, diagrams and maker records. The following sources provide factual context, not certification of this design. Follow actual component instructions and local collection, disposal and plant-movement rules.

Parks Canada, Visitor guidelines
https://parks.canada.ca/voyage-travel/regles-rules

Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Stop the spread and help keep invasive species out of Canada
https://inspection.canada.ca/en/plant-health/invasive-pests-and-plants/stop-spread

Canadian Conservation Institute, Caring for paper objects
https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paper-objects.html

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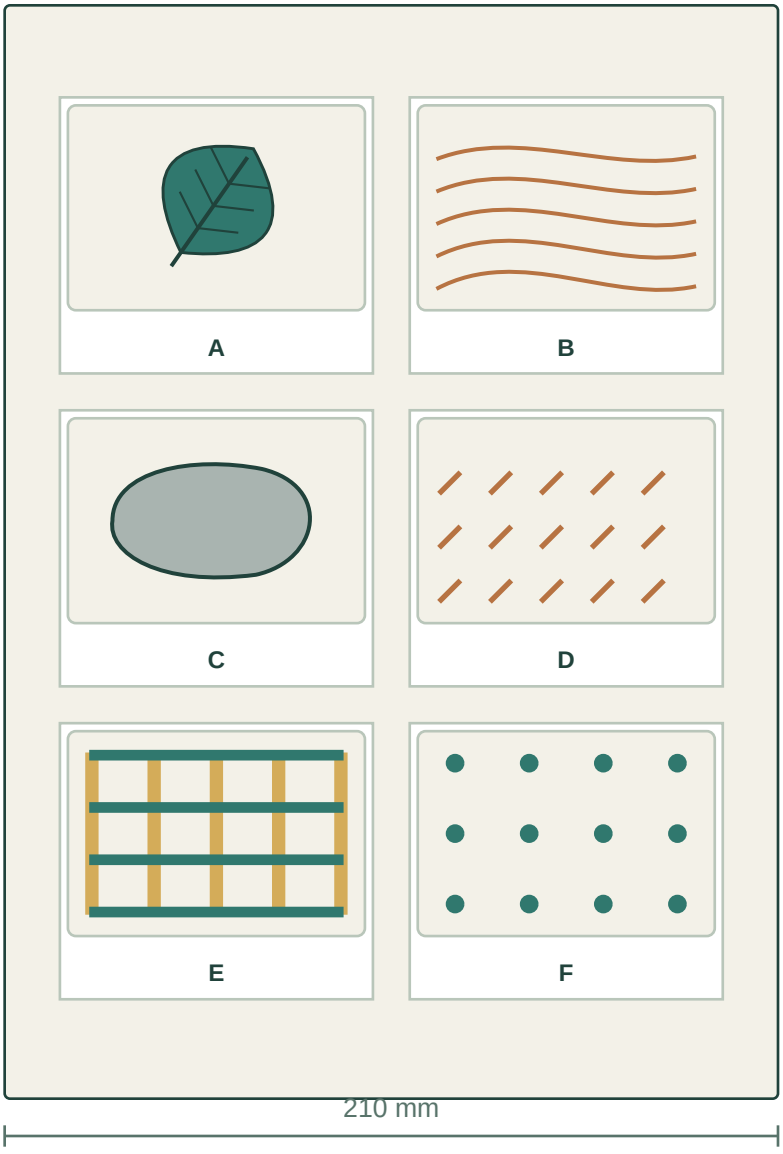
Six-cell sample board

Illustrative 210 x 297 mm portrait board; six 85 x 75 mm cards, 10 mm gaps, 15 mm side margins, 25 mm top and 27 mm bottom margins. Each caption zone is 15 mm deep.

A / SIX REMOVABLE CARDS



25 mm top

85 x 75 mm cards

10 mm gaps

15 mm side margins

15 mm caption zone

27 mm bottom

A/B: structure

C/D: contrast

E/F: rhythm

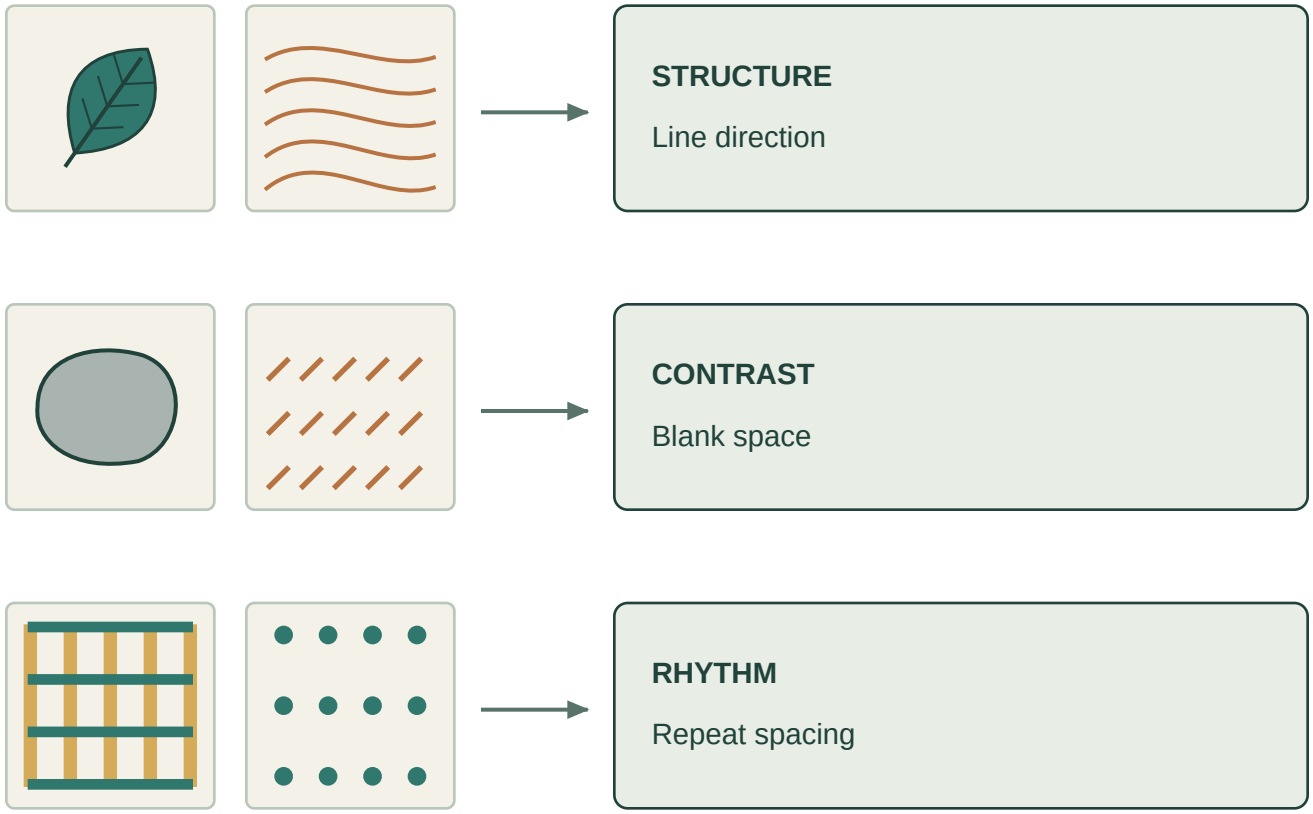
297 mm tall

Schematic; transfer dimensions to the actual board.

From observation to a design decision

Compare three pairs: fine structure, surface contrast and rhythm. Translate them into a specific line direction, contrast and repeat on a small craft thumbnail.

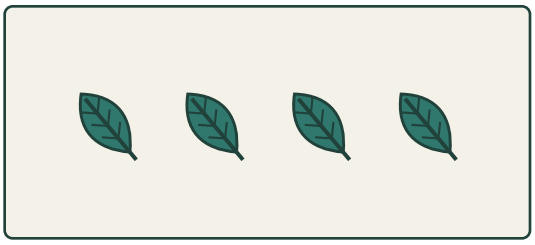
A / COMPARE THREE PAIRS



B / ONE DESIGN THUMBNAIL

Choose a direction,
a contrast and a repeat.

Keep the design simple.



Texture inventory

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or preservation certificate.

Intended craft / two or three criteria

A and B / observed structure / source

C and D / observed contrast / source

E and F / observed rhythm / source

Actual card sizes / grid spacing

Photo, sketch or thin sample method

Adhesive trial / condition / if applicable

Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Design direction

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or preservation certificate.

Preferred order of cards / photo reference

Chosen line direction / scale

Chosen contrast / blank space

Chosen repeat / spacing

Thumbnail reference / intended materials

Next material-specific trial / uncertainty

Disposition: DESIGN READY / REVISE / HOLD

Date / source and care notes