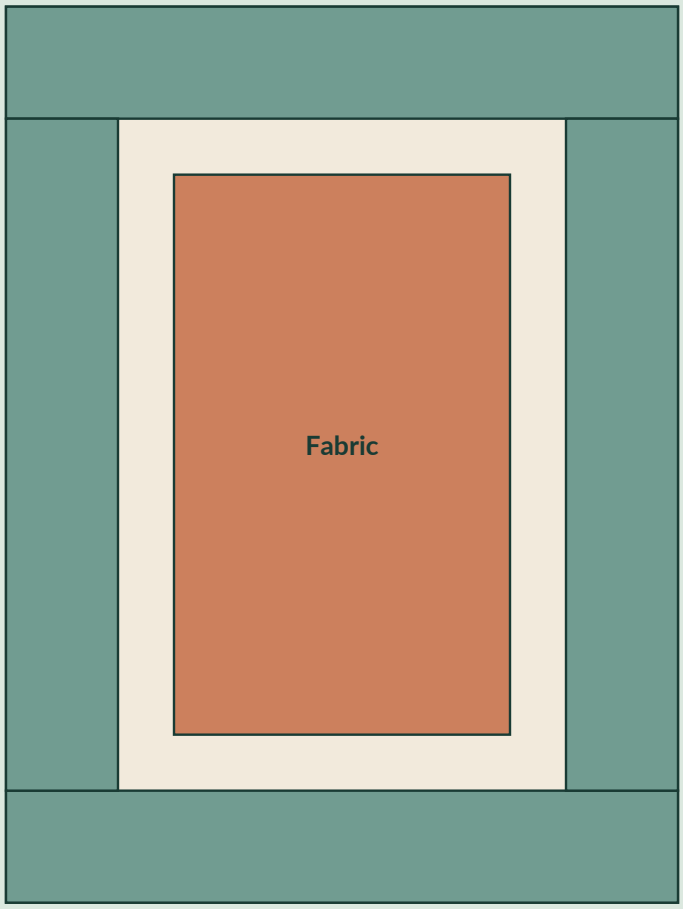
STEADLEAF PRESS
MAKE / OFFCUTS & CREATIVE REUSE

Design a Project from Three Leftover Material Types



120 x 160 mm card base

80 x 120 mm opening / 10 mm card channels

Use card, fabric and paper offcuts to plan and assemble a small layered display tile.

14 practical steps • Original diagrams and maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

Before you start

The constraint is the design: use three leftover material types rather than buying new decorative material. The example produces a flat 120 x 160 mm display tile with a card base, a paper frame and a fabric centre. Adhesive is a joining supply, not a fourth decorative material. This is an indoor decorative object, not a coaster, food-contact surface or structural part.

Materials

Clean dry stiff card offcut at least 120 x 160 mm, sound coloured paper offcuts for four border strips, a stable fabric scrap at least 60 x 100 mm, compatible craft adhesive labelled for the materials, scissors, ruler, pencil, spare samples and a protective mat. Use glue according to label directions and ventilation needs. Exclude oily, mouldy, sharp, food-soiled or unknown coated packaging. Keep sharp tools and adhesive away from children and pets.

Plan the project

Cut a card base 120 mm wide by 160 mm high. Cut paper top and bottom strips 120 x 20 mm each and two side strips 20 x 120 mm each. With the horizontal strips spanning the full width, the vertical strips fit between them without overlap: 20 + 120 + 20 = 160 mm. The open interior measures 80 x 120 mm. Centre a 60 x 100 mm fabric rectangle in it, leaving a 10 mm visible card channel on all four sides. Fabric coordinates measured from the upper left: x 30 to 90, y 30 to 130 mm. The design requires three clean material types, not three individual pieces. The printable worksheet also lets you choose an alternative three-material design if you can specify compatible joining methods.

Steps 1–2

1. Inventory the materials

List the card, paper and fabric you already own. Describe thickness, condition and known composition. Reject anything with grease, moisture, sharp edges, odour of uncertain origin or residue. An attractive leftover is not automatically suitable.

2. Define the use

Write a one-sentence use: flat indoor decorative display tile. Choose a dry location where it will not be touched often. Do not plan a product that must withstand weight, heat, water or food contact without appropriate materials and evidence.

Steps 3–4

3. Assign material roles

Assign the card to structure, paper to frame and fabric to the central texture. The roles are different even if the colours are close. If a material is too small, revise the overall dimensions consistently before cutting rather than patching a weak structural base.

4. Plan the dimensions

Draw a 120 x 160 mm rectangle and the inner 80 x 120 mm window. Draw the 60 x 100 mm fabric centre, with 10 mm clear card channels. Check the four border strips meet at butt joints, not overlapping bulky corners.

Steps 5–6

5. Choose the palette

Compare one neutral card colour, one or two paper colours and one fabric pattern. Use a limited palette to make the texture visible. The sample can be adapted to a monochrome arrangement if the three material roles are still visually clear.

6. Check the joining supplies

Read the adhesive instructions for both porous and fabric surfaces. Use only a product whose stated uses fit the intended materials. Observe a small spare offcut bond for staining, buckling or seepage; follow label cure time and avoid unlabelled solvent products.

Steps 7–8

7. Cut the card base

Mark the dimensions on sound card and cut the rectangle with suitable scissors, working on a table. If the card is too thick to cut comfortably, choose thinner sound card rather than forcing the tool. Check the corners and remove loose fibres.

8. Cut the frame strips

Cut two 120 x 20 mm horizontal strips and two 20 x 120 mm vertical strips. Mark their backs T, B, L and R. Dry fit them on the base; the ends of each vertical strip meet the horizontal strips without overlap.

Steps 9–10

9. Prepare the fabric centre

Cut one 60 x 100 mm rectangle without stretching. Use stable fabric that retains a sound edge, or finish the edge and trim to the target visible dimensions. Avoid heavy seams or loose threads that interfere with flat attachment.

10. Dry fit the whole tile

Set the four paper strips and fabric rectangle on the card. Check the 80 x 120 mm window and the 10 mm channels. Write down any changes before adhesive is used. Lift off pieces in order so their positions are easy to recover.

Steps 11–12

11. Attach the paper frame

Apply the compatible adhesive as directed, sparingly enough to avoid unnecessary wetting. Place the top and bottom strips first, then the sides. Allow the bond to set as instructed on the product label, keeping the card supported.

12. Attach the fabric

After the frame is stable, position the fabric on the marked centre coordinates. Apply compatible adhesive according to its instructions and avoid excess that could show through. Smooth gently without stretching. Leave flat while the adhesive cures fully.

Steps 13–14

13. Inspect and display

Look for lifting corners, warping, loose threads or adhesive on the face. Hold any defective tile out of use until repaired or remade. Display in a shallow stand intended for the tile size, or mount flat with suitable non-damaging supports.

14. Complete the constraints record

Record the three material types, exact dimensions, adhesive, cure instructions and observed finish. Mark READY FOR DECORATIVE DISPLAY, CHANGE or HOLD. For a different design, use the same roles-and-constraints worksheet rather than copying the dimensions blindly.

Fix, care and preserve

Paper strip overlaps

Dry fit first; adjust vertical length to the actual space between horizontal strips.

Glue stains fabric

Choose a compatible alternative after observing offcut behaviour.

Card curls

Avoid excess adhesive; if the base remains warped after curing, remake on sound suitable card.

Missing material

Revise the design to fit the smallest usable piece rather than introducing an unplanned fourth decorative material.

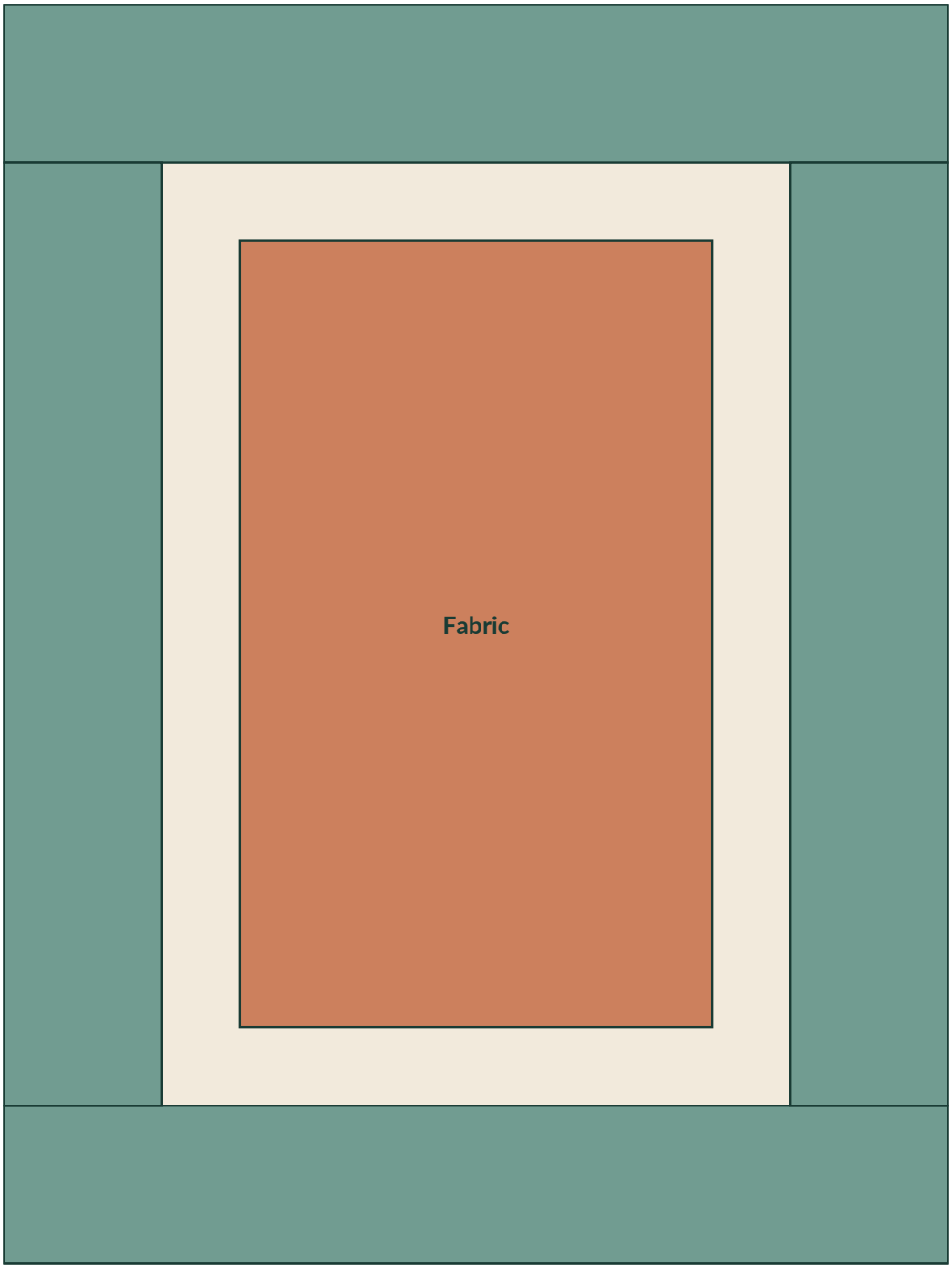
Originality and evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, design, dimensions, artwork, diagrams and maker records. Follow actual material and tool instructions. No physical construction, cutting, sewing, adhesion, washing, durability or safety testing was performed by the publisher. Adult decorative craft only; no safety or archival certification.

Print the following pages separately if desired. For any actual-size template, disable fit-to-page scaling and check the printed calibration bar. Measured schematics are not full-size cutting patterns.

Pattern 1

Tile map: base 120 x 160 mm; top/bottom paper strips 120 x 20 mm; side strips 20 x 120 mm; opening 80 x 120 mm; fabric 60 x 100 mm centred with 10 mm channels. Measured schematic.



120 x 160 mm card base

80 x 120 mm opening / 10 mm card channels

Pattern 2

Constraint planner: structural card, framing paper, focal fabric. Start with material, role, required size and joining method; reject any combination that cannot be joined reliably for a flat decorative display.

STRUCTURE
Card | 120 x 160 mm

FRAME
Paper | 2 x 120 x 20 + 2 x 20 x 120 mm

FOCUS
Fabric | 60 x 100 mm

Join only compatible materials; dry fit before adhering.

Record 1 — Materials and plan

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Intended object / display location

Material 1 / role / available size

Material 2 / role / available size

Material 3 / role / available size

Tools and compatible joining supplies

Proposed dimensions and dry-fit result

Rejected material and reason

Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Record 2 — Finish and display

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Actual base and border sizes

Fabric size and position

Adhesive product and cure directions

Offcut bond observation

Observed flatness / corner condition

Display method and limitations

Disposition: DECORATIVE READY / CHANGE / HOLD

Date / next adaptation