



Fused Plastic

Best for Ages

6+

Workspace

Flat indoor surface

Is electricity required?

Yes

Adult Supervision Required

Description

What if you could make your own clothing...from trash? That's right! In this activity we're going to use recycled plastics to make substitute fabric for clothing, pouches, and much more!

Materials

• Plastic Materials

Plastic Bags (Recycled-any color)

[Plastic Tablecloths](#)

Plastic Packaging

- [Iron](#)
- [Ironing Board or Mat](#)
- [Parchment Paper](#)
- [Scissors](#)
- [Heat Safety Gloves \(optional\)](#)

Concepts Explored

- Reusing Materials
- Fusing

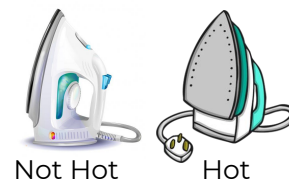
What to Do

1. Gather your materials! With your adult, make sure to find a space that is safe for ironing. Lay down your ironing board or pad to ensure that your space is safe.
2. Plug your iron in and make sure it's on the low/medium setting.
3. **IMPORTANT:** While it's heating up, talk about ironing safety. The metal part of the iron is **HOT** and can burn you. The plastic part is **NOT HOT** and is safe to touch. Be sure to iron carefully and slowly, being sure that you are **watching** the iron while you're ironing. Keep fingers out of the way and be sure to **set the iron up** when you are finished ironing your project!

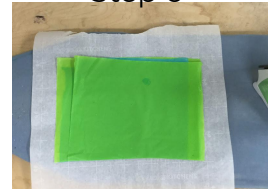
Note: If you are concerned about burns, please wear heat safety gloves like the ones listed in the materials section.

4. Now let's get to our activity! Take a look at your plastic materials. To make a thick enough fabric, you need at least 3 pieces of plastic. Which colors or designs inspire you?
5. Cut your 3+ plastic pieces so that they are all the same size. We recommend a 6" square or larger.
6. Set the 3+ pieces of fabric atop one another until you find the color combination or design you prefer.
7. **IMPORTANT: Create a parchment paper sandwich!** Place a piece of parchment paper on your ironing board. Then place your plastic stack on the parchment paper and put a piece of parchment paper on top of your stack of plastic pieces. So the plastic is sandwiched between two pieces of parchment paper. This will prevent the plastic from melting onto the iron. Be sure the plastic is completely covered with parchment paper.
8. Carefully iron your plastic on top of your parchment paper. Make sure to do small, slow circles. Set your iron up when finished.
9. Have an adult help you check your plastic. Peel off the parchment paper to see if your plastic stack is fused together. If it's not, that's okay! Just replace your parchment paper and keep ironing.
10. Once it's fused it's ready for making! What can you create with your fused plastic?

Step 1



Step 6



Step 7



Step 9



Fused Plastic

Troubleshooting Tips

- **My plastic isn't fusing.** With adult supervision, kick up the heat on your iron a bit. But be careful, if it's too hot, the plastic will shrivel.
- **My fused plastic shrunk.** This happens! When plastic gets hot, it shrinks in on itself. Try again but cut much larger pieces of plastic. When it fuses, it will shrink but to the proper size.



What are other plastics you could fuse?

How could you add your name or a design in plastic to your fused plastic?

What other materials could you add to fused plastic to make a creation?

What is Happening?

- In this activity, we **reuse materials** that are traditionally designed for only one use. Most plastic bags are used only to carry the items you buy from the store to your home and then they are placed in the trash. By making our plastic bags into pouches, rugs, or clothing, we give new life to a one-use material, creating more sustainability of the Earth's resources.
- When the plastic is heated by the iron, it **fuses** together. Fusing is when multiple items are joined together to form one single thing. What else can you think of that is fused together?

Taking it Forward

- **Create!** Try your hand at sewing using fused plastic! Just like fabric, you can bind fused plastic in place with a needle and thread!
- **If you like this activity, you'll also like these [Amazeum You](#) activities:**
 - Simple Sewing
 - Cardboard Wearables
- **Check out these resources at your local library to learn more:**
 - The Plastic Problem* by Rachel Salt
 - One Plastic Bag* by Miranda Paul