Make Your Own Shiny Bookmark

For this activity you will need:

- a bucket or tub
- water
- paper towels
- black strips of paper (we used heavyweight black Bristol paper)
- clear nail polish

Video instructions can be found here:
https://tinyurl.com/y2rmkvsm

Directions:

1. Fill the bucket halfway or until the water level is about three inches up the side of the bucket.
2. Put one drop of clear nail polish onto the surface of the water. It should spread out and turn different colors, almost like an oil slick or a bubble.
3. Using both hands, hold the ends of the strip of black paper and dip it below the surface of the water. Start at the side of the bucket that is farthest from you. Then move the strip of black paper through the water and lift it up carefully through the layer of nail polish. The nail polish should stick to the paper.

4. Place the strip of paper on the paper towel to dry.
5. Clean up any remaining nail polish from the surface of the water. You can use your fingers to grab the nail polish film and wipe it off on a paper towel.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 to make more shiny bookmarks. You might want to experiment with different shapes or colors of paper. You can use your shiny paper to make a greeting card or as part of a collage.

What’s happening?

The shiny-ness you see on the bookmark is called iridescence. The English word iridescence comes from a Greek word that means rainbow.

You can also see iridescence on bubbles, peacock feathers and some works of art at the Corning Museum of Glass.

All of these things have very thin layers of material on their surface, which causes light to reflect off of them in a special way that makes them iridescent.