

# How to make pop-up theatres



## You will need:

2 sheets of A3 card (30cm x 40cm) - 1 black or white and 1 coloured  
a smaller sheet of card or some scrap bits  
two 20cm sticks (thin garden canes are good)  
a pipecleaner  
glue: gluesticks are OK but a bottle of white PVA would be stronger  
stapler  
double-sided tape and masking tape  
scissors (and maybe a craft knife)  
coloured pencils  
ruler

## Introduction

With the Footsteps project within the bigger Enlightenment initiative, we were finding ways of encouraging people to use some of the Museum's collections of prints and postcards of the Peak District.

Pop-up theatres were popular Victorian entertainments for children so using some of those 18th and 19th century prints to make theatres like families might have played with seemed like a good way of working with some of the material

We used images from Dove, Monsall and Wye Dales mostly, to make our theatres and built stories that then belonged to those landscapes...

Now, we're presenting two worksheets:

1. Making your own pop-up theatres (this sheet)
2. Building stories for your theatre

## Pictures to work with

You can always draw your own landscapes and people - or cut pictures out of magazine - but when we have made theatres as part of the Footsteps project, we've printed out pictures from the Museum collection. These have given us 18th and 19th century landscapes of the Peak district to work with

Find these at: <http://enlightenmentderbyshire.wordpress.com/> Look at Pictures in the Landscape

You will need at least two pictures printed on A4 paper

## What to do

1. Take your white (or black) card and **fold it in half**. This gives a BACK and a FLOOR to your theatre



2. Glue your first landscape picture onto the folded card to give the **BACKDROP**. If you have used our black-and-white prints, you can always colour them in



3. **Choose several pieces of scenery** from your other picture. Cut these out and stick them onto scrap card (again colour if you want to). If they start to bend, try giving them a thin painting of glue on the front PVA glue should dry colourless)



4. **Fold some card strips** to make the pop-up sections. 'X' needs to be the same length as your scenery and 'Y' will determine how far out from the Backdrop the scenery stands



5. **Fix pop-up sections and scenery onto your background.** You could finish your pop-up here and colour the floor of the theatre to carry the background outwards



*a pop-up without a "stage" round it. The 'pool' at the front also opens up into an even smaller pop-up scene*



6. **Measure and cut the front of your theatre.** Be careful here.

Measure:

- A:** the distance from the top of the card to the edge of your backdrop -
- B:** how deep you want the 'stage' to be - from front to back
- C:** how tall you want the front of the theatre to be ('A' also affects this)



**Draw a box** onto section C and carefully cut it out. If you want to decorate the front of the stage it is easiest to do this now. (We've put several different suggestions on the same theatre)

Fold carefully along the lines, using a ruler: notice the different forwards and reverse folds

**7. Fit the front.** Double-sided tape is easiest here although you could use glue or a stapler: stick the top of the theatre on first, then stand the whole thing up and work out just where the front needs to sit on the floor. Peel off the tape backing and fix the front to the floor



**8. Gently fold everything flat** (the folds often change a bit now - don't worry). With the sizes we have used here, the top of the stage tends to stick out from the original white card. Use this as a place to write a title. If you want a theatre that doesn't do this, you need to work with smaller pictures and a smaller stage within a starting A3 card

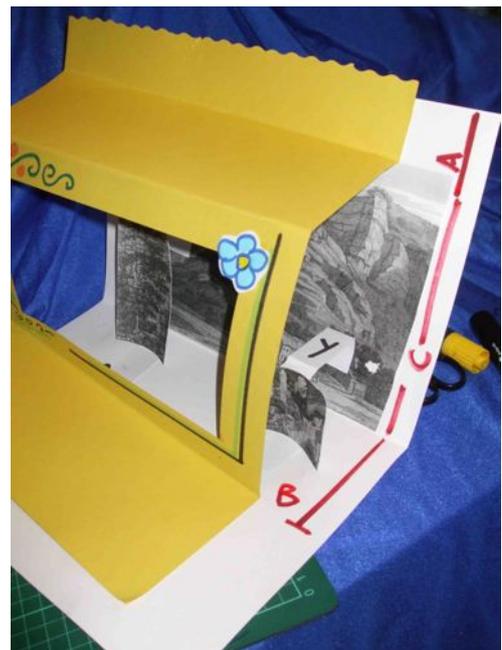
**9. Open up and you should have your theatre!**

## Characters

There isn't a lot of room in your theatre for lots of actors so start with just two or three characters. Working on some left-over card, draw and colour them to suit your story and landscape - with the theatre sizes we've used here, 3 or 4 cm tall is a good size.

Or you could find historic characters in the costume pages of books or on-line

Puppet-rods can be made by taping half a pipecleaner onto the end of a stick and stapling the pipecleaner onto the back of your character. The pipecleaner lets you change angles or even swap which side of the theatre the character enters from





## Scripts

What to say and do? Often a story takes shape as we make the theatres but some ideas for scripts will come in the next **Pop-up Theatre** instalment!

