

Fun at home activity

Toy theatre and puppets

Inspiration: Make a toy theatre and puppets, inspired by the [toy theatre](#) from our Everitt and George family collection. This theatre is on show in the [Journeys](#) gallery at the National Museum of Australia.



Every object in the National Museum has a story to tell and the Museum brings these stories to life.

Children at our 'Play with plays' April 2015 Discovery Space made a toy theatre and puppets using materials such as modelling clay, cardboard, foam, paper, felt, wool, crayons and paint. Children at home can script their own story and stage a play using everyday materials.

Time and difficulty: This activity takes about one hour and is easy.

Video: Check out the video instructions on our website for more inspiration and hints.

Hint: Ask an adult if it is okay to use materials from around the home. You might also need to ask for help with cutting out and constructing the theatre.

What you need:

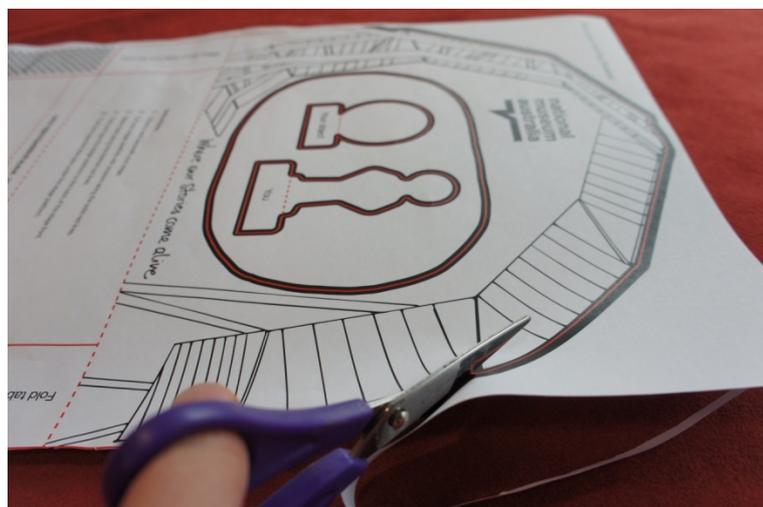
- A3 toy theatre template. We suggest you print this template onto cardboard. If you are using paper, you could reinforce it with cardboard uprights or a cardboard stage. If you do not have a printer, you could make your theatre out of an old cereal box or other cardboard.
- A4 storyboard template to help plan out your play (optional)
- wooden sticks (from an ice cream, fairy floss or similar)
- scissors (remember, these can be sharp, so ask an adult for help)
- glue, blu tack or sticky tape
- paints, crayons, coloured or patterned paper, wool, cotton, felt or fabric for decorating your toy theatre and puppets.

Steps:

1. Come up with an idea for your play. Explore your collection of treasures at home, or look at the [Museum's Collection Explorer](#) website for ideas. Are there any good stories? Are there interesting characters? What themes are explored? What materials will you use to create your puppets?

You might like to use our A4 storyboard template (PDF 92kb) to capture your ideas and plan the flow of your play. Draw a picture of each scene in a box and describe the words (dialogue) and action for each scene in the text box underneath.

2. Print out the A3 toy theatre template (PDF 31kb) from our website. With the help of an adult if you need it, cut out the theatre and puppets. You can also make your own puppets, without the template.



3. Gather your materials together. What colours or textures will you use to make your character and object puppets? Will you sculpt, collage, or draw and colour your puppets?

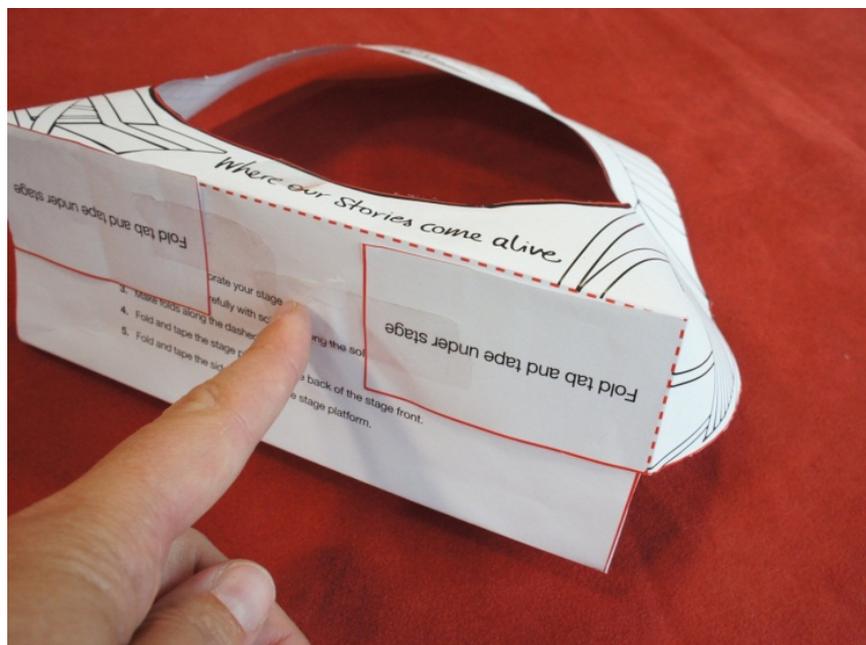


4. Design and decorate your puppets and theatre using the materials you have gathered. Experiment with different materials. How elaborate will you make your puppet? What works with your story? We were inspired by the story of champion racing driver [Joan Richmond](#).



5. Once you have decorated your theatre and puppets, follow the instructions on the template to fold and stick the theatre together with tape. You may also want to attach a stick to the bottom of your character and object puppets, to move them on the stage, from the left or right side.





6. Practice performing your play, using your storyboard as a guide. Then invite your friends and family to a show! Perform your play and ask your audience to join in and create their own story.



Share your creation! Try making a few different puppets and experiment with your storylines. Share your creation with us by sending a photo or video to: schoolholidays@nma.gov.au. We will add this to the [National Museum's Flickr stream](#), where you can see other craft creations from our Discovery Space. [More fun at home activities, videos and games on the Museum's website](#)