

Make a Shadow Puppet Theatre



Durham University
Library and Collections

You will need:

- A box (a cereal box or a shoe box would work)
- Scissors*
- Tape
- Thin white paper or tracing paper
- Straws or lollipop sticks
- A desk lamp is good for the light source

This is a shadow puppet from Durham University's Oriental Museum. It is about 100 years old. The puppet is a lady wearing a crown tied under her chin and a fabulous red cloak. Can you see the sticks that are attached to her so she can be made to move in the show?



1. Tape the box up so that it is sturdy and closed.

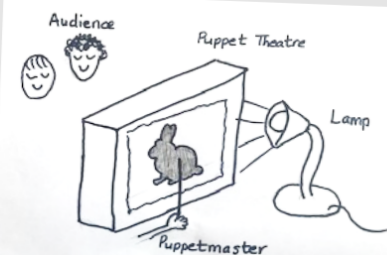


2. Draw a rectangle 2-3cm away from the edges of the large faces of the box on both sides and cut them both out*.

3. Tape the piece of white paper or tracing paper over **one** of the rectangles. The other side is where the puppet master will work their magic!

4. Decide which story you would like to tell in your show and make the puppets you will need by drawing and cutting* simple cardboard shapes and taping a straw or lollipop stick to the back.

5. Set your room up as shown here - the audience on one side of the theatre, the lamp on the other side. You need to be between the lamp and the theatre but not block the light!



Don't forget to turn the room lights out for the show!



Puppet Master Side



Audience Side

Legend has it that more than 2000 years ago, Emperor Wu's favourite wife died. The Emperor was very sad and nothing could be done to make him happy again. One day one of the Emperor's ministers saw some children playing outside and saw their clear shadows on the ground. It gave him an idea! He made a puppet to look like the Emperor's wife and invited the Emperor to watch a puppet show. This made the Emperor happy again for the first time in a very long time. Since then shadow puppet shows have been used to entertain people.

*Always ask for an adult's help when using scissors

We would love to see your puppet theatres. If your parents are happy with this, please ask them to email us any photographs to 4Schools@durham.ac.uk or they can post them on Twitter tagging [@dulearning](https://twitter.com/dulearning).

