

# Do Try This At Home | Shadow Puppet Theatre

*Make your own shadow puppet theatre using items from around the house.*

## You will need

- Lots of **cardboard**
- Some **scissors** for cutting out your puppets and theatre
- Something to hold the puppets together. We used **pipe cleaners**, but you could use **split pins** or even **string**
- Some **sticky tape** or a **glue stick**
- Some **tissue paper** for your theatre's screen. You could also use thin **fabric**
- A torch to create **shadows!**

## Shadow Puppets

Shadow puppets can be dated all the way back to China in the 7th Century, that's over 1400 years ago! In Britain puppetry is believed to have started in the 1600s which is a lot later than in China. Over the years shadow puppets have been made from many materials including paper, leather and even donkey skin!

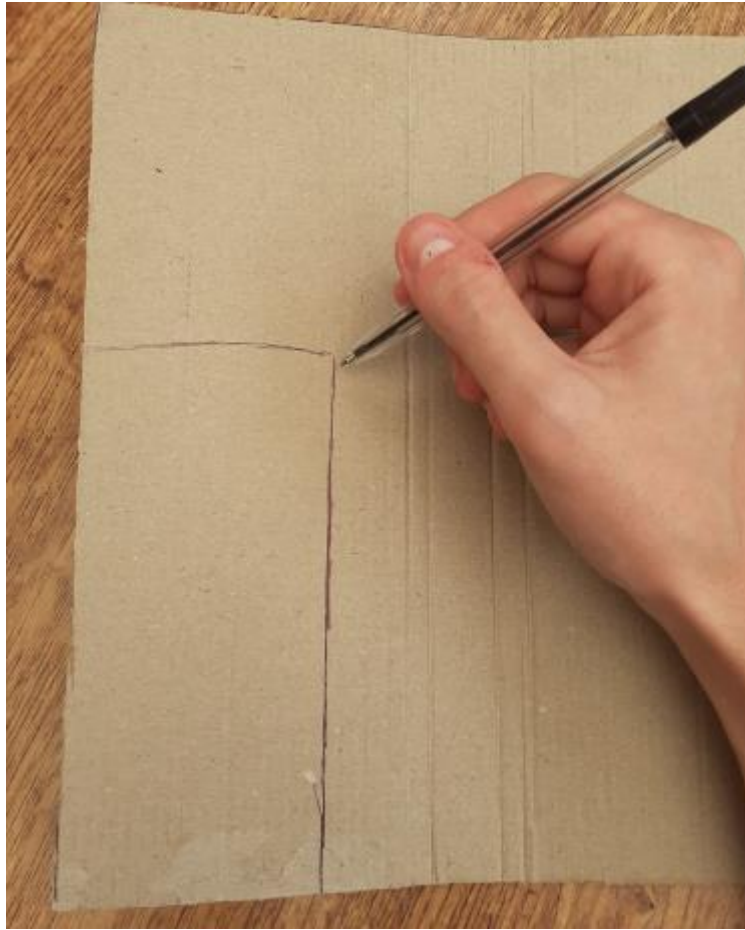
Shadow puppetry in China was often linked to politics, with Chinese Emperors deciding which stories could be told.



## Shadow Theatre Storytelling

In traditional shadow theatres there was a group of 5 people telling the story. One person would operate all the puppets, another would play a horn, one played a fiddle, someone else was in charge of percussion instruments (bells and drums) and the final member of the group would sing. The singer would also help play other instruments for the group. Sounds tricky doesn't it?!

## Make Your Own Shadow Theatre



1. Get a large, square piece of cardboard and draw your theatre's frame onto it. Cut out the frame.



2. Make decorations for your frame by cutting out other cardboard shapes.



3. Paint your theatre and decorations.

We've made ours look like traditional, velvet red theatre curtains. How can you decorate yours to look like a real theatre?



4. Draw and cut out your puppets.

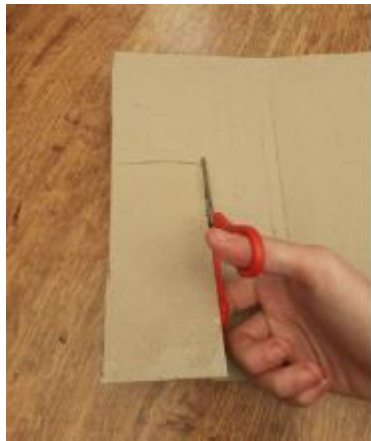
If you want their arms and legs to move, remember to draw and cut them out separately.



5. Use pipe-cleaners or split pins to attach your puppets' arms and legs, and make joints.



6. Make rods out of pipe cleaners, so you can puppeteer your characters.  
Attach them to all the body parts you want to move (their hands, feet, knees and head).



7. Cut out cardboard braces and tape them to the back of your theatre to help it stand up.



8. Tape your big piece of tissue paper to the back of your frame.



9. Place your torch behind the screen, sit behind it and put on a show.

## Questions

Some questions for you to think about:

How can you change the size and shape of your shadows?

What happens to your shadows if you change the light source?

What story could you tell with your shadow puppets?

Our theatres may still be in lockdown, but you can put on your own show if you create your very own Shadow Puppets.

Show us on Dojo.