

ART / ENGLISH · Y1–Y4

Shadow Puppet Theatre

Templates, instructions & storytelling guide

You will need

Materials list

- Cardboard (or thick black paper)
- Scissors or craft knife (teacher use)
- Wooden skewers or pencils
- Masking tape or sticky tape
- A large cardboard box (for the theatre)
- White tissue paper or tracing paper (for the screen)
- A torch or phone torch
- Optional: tissue paper for coloured shadow effects

How to make the shadow theatre

1. Use a large cardboard box (a shoe box works for small groups, a bigger box for the class).
2. Cut a large rectangular hole in one side — this is the SCREEN.
3. Tape white tissue paper or tracing paper across the hole.
4. Cut a small hole in the opposite side — this is where the torch goes.
5. Puppets go between the torch and the screen — against the screen = sharper shadow.
6. The audience watches from the OUTSIDE (the screen side) in a darkened room.



Shadow tip: the closer the puppet to the screen, the crisper and darker the shadow.

How to make a puppet

1. Print the template OR draw your own character shape on thick black card.
2. Cut out carefully — the more detailed the outline, the more interesting the shadow.
3. Use a pencil or skewer as the control rod: tape it to the back of the puppet.
4. For moving parts (a jaw, a wing) — cut the piece separately and attach with a paper fastener (split pin). Add a second rod to control it.
5. Test your puppet: hold it between a torch and a white wall in a dark room.

Story challenge

1. Use at least 3 puppets to tell a story with a beginning, problem, and resolution.
2. Can you make your puppets move in a way that tells us about their character (fearful, brave, funny)?
3. Perform your puppet play for another group without speaking — just movement and sound effects.

