



Shadow Play

Grade Level: TK-12

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Creative challenge for students

Students will collaborate to perform a shadow play using shadow puppets and scenery they have designed and constructed.

Lesson Overview

Students will create shadow puppets and scenery that represent characters and settings from a selected text, as part of a shadow play production. They will use stiff paper such as tagboard, paper fasteners, skewers and colored plastic wrap.

The content of the shadow play will be inspired, informed and integrated with core curriculum subjects. See [Shadow Play Integration Ideas](#)

Vocabulary - Performing Art	Vocabulary - Visual Art
Action Articulated Blocking/staging Breath Character Gesture Manipulation Narration Projection Profile Scenery/Setting Silhouette Sound effect Storyboard Voice	Color - primary, secondary Opaque Overlap Profile Scale and proportion Shape Silhouette Space - positive/negative Translucent Transparent

Preparation/Resources	Materials
- Establish group work norms - Review the Shadow Play slide presentation and make a copy to edit - Create puppet prototypes (examples) - Collect art and other materials - Build or find shadow screen with light source - (see note under "Materials") - Laptop and digital projector	☐ Butcher paper - poster size sheet ☐ Mark-making tools: crayons, colored markers and pencils ☐ Drawing paper 1-2 sheet/student ☐ Pencils 1/student ☐ Erasers 1/student ☐ Rulers ☐ File folders; and/or cardboard sheets and/or poster board

• Research and collect visual resources: Books on shadow puppets Actual shadow puppets Websites • Create storyboards - poster size sheets of butcher paper (# dependent upon the amount of scenes); or • Print storyboard template (# dependent upon the number of scenes)	❑ Scissors ❑ X-acto knives and blades and/or snap-off box cutters* ❑ Cutting mats and/or cutting boards* ❑ Hole punches (office and decorative) ❑ Paper fasteners (AKA brads) and/or snaps ❑ Transparent tape and masking tape ❑ Glue stick ❑ Colored gel for theater lights and/or colored plastic wrap ❑ Bamboo skewers and/or wooden craft sticks and/or wooden dowels ❑ Transparency sheets ❑ Permanent markers - color ❑ Permanent markers - black ❑ Shadow screen - ArtSEL set up, or butcher paper stapled to a frame, or a flat bed sheet tacked to a door frame ❑ Light source- clamp light, flashlight, or overhead projector. ❑ Extension cord (if necessary) *Grades 3-12
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Lesson Sequence
Step 1: Building a Creative Community
Introduce (or reintroduce) students to warm up exercise
1. Begin (every class/day) by having students circle up and participate in an activity that will help to build collaboration skills. This can be “Signing the Contract” from Focus Five, or an exercise students learned through the mask performance workshop such as “Zip, Zap, Zop”. 2. Discuss expectations for student behavior.
Step 2: Shadow Play - History and “How To”
Preparation: • Have the “Shadow Play” slide presentation ready to project. Procedure: Slide 1 - <i>“Do you remember the performance of “The Littles” we attended? Today we are going to learn more about the ‘shadow play’ that we saw in the performance.”</i>

Slide 2 – *“Have you ever used your hands to play with shadows on the wall?” “Have you ever noticed how your shadow can be really long on the sidewalk?” “Are shadows sometimes fun or scary?”* Students usually have experienced making shadows with their hands and this is a good hook into this project. Ask students to hold their hands up in positions that create their favorite shadow character.

Slide 3 - Hand Shadow Play: *“Some performers use just their hands to create shadow plays.” “Others use puppets....”*

Slide 4 - Introduction to Shadow Puppets

Slide 5 - What are Shadow Puppets?: *“Shadow puppets are made combining cut-out shapes to create forms that are usually recognizable as the characters and scenery in a play or performance. They can be realistic or stylized. The shapes can have holes cut into them (called “negative space”) to let the light shine through.” “You can even put colored film over the cut out sections so the holes or spaces are colored.”*

Slide 6 - How do Shadow Puppets Work?: *“The cut-out figure is positioned between a light source and a flat surface to produce a shadow of the figure. The figure is manipulated to create the illusion of movement, similar to what you demonstrated with your hands.”*

Slide 7 - Slide 6 - They are used all over the world and are created out of many different materials. These are from the country of Indonesia and made from leather. They can also be made from paper, wood, or other thin, right material.

Slide 8 - Video: *“Here is an example of a shadow play from the country of England. The shadow puppets and scenery are made from paper, similar to what we will be creating.”*

Play a minute or so of this video and stop occasionally to ask, “How did they do that?” *For example, why are their hands so large? (overhead projector) How did they make the house gray and the people black?, (the house is farther from the screen or made from a different material).*

1. Describe the overview of the project. Explain that over the next few classes students will:
 - Decide on an idea or a story and produce a shadow play
 - Create a storyboard
 - Decide what puppet and/or scenery they would like to create
 - Sketch their puppets and scenery on drawing paper
 - Cut out their sketches
 - Transfer their drawings to file folders by outlining
 - Cut out the outline and other areas (ex. eyes)
 - Add color to the cut out areas using colored plastic wrap and tape
 - Assemble their puppet using paper fasteners
 - Attach rods with masking tape and bamboo skewers
 - Optional – Decorate (colored pencil or paint which is not seen in the shadow)
 - Rig scenery (attach to shadow screen)
 - Rehearse and perform their shadow play

3. The Storyboard

Preparation:

- Choose a story, or an idea for the shadow play.
- Create the [storyboards](#) (poster size sheets of white craft paper)
- Display the storyboards in a location within the classroom where they can be written on, and be easily seen by all students; **or**,
- Print out and copy the [storyboard template](#) and project the template with a document camera or other resource.
- Set up a supply table where students can access materials. For this lesson: pencils, erasers, mark making tools such as colored crayons, pencils and markers.

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Read the story out loud, or explain the idea to students. Check for understanding of the sequence. For example, ask “What happened at the beginning/middle/end of the story?”
3. Lead the whole class through the completion of the [storyboards](#) using the large sheets or the [storyboard template](#). Ask students what the action, characters and settings for each ‘scene’ are and record. Student volunteers can assist with recording the information.
4. Introduce or review expectations for student behavior while working collaboratively. See [group work norms](#).
5. Break students into groups to complete drawings for the storyboards.
6. Decide who will create the individual characters (puppets) and settings (scenery).
7. Completed storyboards are presented.

4. Studio Time - Day 1

Preparation:

- Construct a sample shadow puppet.
- Set up the shadow screen and light source.
- Set up the demonstration. For this lesson: visual resource materials, pencil, eraser, drawing paper, file folder, transparency sheet, permanent markers.
- Create a place to store puppets and scenery so that they remain flat. Use a large folder of some kind, or a group of file folders for storing.
- Set up a supply table where students can access materials. For this lesson: pencils, erasers, visual resource materials, mark making tools such as colored crayons, pencils and markers, drawing paper, file folders, transparency sheets, permanent markers and puppets, scenery, containers for paper scraps (these can be used for puppet parts.).

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Explain that the materials needed for the project are all located on a supply table. Students will be expected to safely and carefully pick up and return materials from the table every class. Establish a clean up routine that includes returning materials, and cleaning up their work, and surrounding floor space. Show students how (flat, in folders) and where puppets and scenery will be stored.
3. Explain that you will be demonstrating how to draw and assemble a shadow puppet as well as how to draw shadow scenery.

4. Show students the visual resource materials they can use to draw their puppets. See **Preparation/Resources**.
5. Demonstrate on drawing paper how to sketch their puppets(s) and scenery; explain that the sketches will serve as patterns for the final product.
Option 1: Show how a full sized puppet sketch will have edges that touch, or are close to, three sides of the paper. (Smaller characters like mice don't need to be full sized but this 'three sides' rule helps ensure that puppets are sufficiently large enough to be seen on the shadow screen.)
Option 2: Demonstrate on drawing paper how to sketch a puppet using the 'shape based' drawing technique which also ensures sufficient puppet size. (See slide presentation.)
6. Explain that if students want individual parts of the puppet to move, (i.e., arms and legs), they will need to draw those parts separately. Demonstrate a shadow puppet on the screen with a moving part like an arm or a leg.
7. Demonstrate how to create scenery (stable areas on the shadow screen that indicates the setting) with file folders and/or transparency sheets and permanent markers.
8. Students get materials.
9. Students draw puppets and scenery..
10. Students trace puppets and scenery onto a file folder.
11. Store puppets and scenery, return materials, clean work and floor space.

5. Studio Time - Day 2

Preparation:

- Set up the shadow screen and light source.
- Set up the demonstration. For this lesson: pencil, eraser, drawing paper, file folder, transparency sheet, permanent markers, scissors, hole punch, paper fasteners, skewers, masking tape.
 For grades 3-12 also include a cutting mat, X-acto knife/blade or snap off box cutter.
- Set out the puppets and scenery.
- Set up the supply table. For this lesson and all grades: pencils, erasers, visual resource materials, mark making tools such as colored crayons, pencils and markers, drawing paper, file folders, transparency sheets, permanent markers, scissors, paper fasteners, skewers, masking tape.
 - For **Grades TK-2:** hole punches, scissors.
 - For **Grades 3-12:** hole punches, scissors, cutting mats, X-acto knives and blades, or snap off box cutters.

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Remind students about the established routine for picking up and returning materials, etc.
3. Demonstrate how to use cutting tools and materials safely. *Optional: demonstrate the "bubble cut".*
4. Students get materials.
5. Students cut out their puppets.
6. Students make additional cut outs (ex. eyes, patterns, etc.)
7. Students assemble their puppets.
8. Students add sticks using skewers and masking tape.
9. Store puppets and scenery, return materials, clean work and floor space.

6. Studio Time - Day 3

Preparation:

- Set up the demonstration. For this lesson: pencil, eraser, drawing paper, file folder, transparency sheet, permanent markers, scissors, hole punch, masking tape, transparent tape, colored plastic wrap, glue stick.
For grades 3-12 also include a cutting mat, X-acto knife/blade or snap off box cutter.
- Set out the puppets and scenery.
- Set up the supply table. For this lesson and all grades: pencils, erasers, visual resource materials, mark making tools such as colored crayons, pencils and markers, drawing paper, file folders, transparency sheets, permanent markers, scissors, paper fasteners, skewers, masking tape, transparent tape, , glue.
 - For **Grades TK-2:** hole punches, scissors.
 - For **Grades 3-12:** hole punches, scissors, cutting mats, X-acto knives and blades, or snap off box cutters.

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Demonstrate how to add color. Explain that the primary colors blue, red and yellow can be combined to create secondary colors. Explaining that the tape should not cover any part of the cut out areas or it will show.
3. Students get materials.
4. Students add color using colored plastic wrap and tape and/or glue.
5. While working, students can use the shadow screen to see how their puppets look. This is the time when adjustments to color, etc. can be made.
6. Store puppets and scenery, return materials to the supply table, clean work and floor space.

7. Screen Time

Preparation:

- Set up the shadow screen and light source.
- Set out the puppets and scenery.

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Explain that students will have time to work with their puppets, using the shadow screen. Students can come up individually, or two to three at a time, while the remaining students act as an audience.
3. Discuss [expectations for student behavior](#) in front of, and behind the shadow screen.
4. Instruct students in basic shadow puppet performance techniques such as: the puppet 'breathing' as the puppeteer breathes; slower, mindful movements are more effective than rapid, jerky movements; the closer the puppet is to the screen, the more defined and smaller its silhouette will be and the further away, larger and blurry.

8. Rehearse

Preparation:

- Write up, or have student(s) write up a simple script based on the story or idea
- Select a student, or students, to narrate the play
- Set up the shadow screen and light source
- Set out the puppets and scenery

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Review [expectations for student behavior](#).
3. Rehearse the play, scene by scene. Remind students about shadow puppet performance techniques (see step 4 under 'Screen Time'.
4. The narrator(s) will read the majority of lines. Puppet actors can provide supportive dialogue where appropriate and add sound effects.
5. If possible, record at least one rehearsal, and then play for students so that they can see the performance from the front of the screen.

5. Perform**Preparation:**

- Set up the shadow screen and light source.
- Set out the puppets and scenery.
- Make a program
- Make a flyer to send out to potential audience (other classes, family, community)

Procedure:

1. Circle activity.
2. Check technical support - light.

5. Reflect**Part 1: Individual Written Reflection**

Provide students with the following prompts:

Creative Process:

- What was your favorite part of creating your shadow puppet or scenery?
- What challenges did you face in making your puppet or scenery, and how did you overcome them?
- If you could change or add one thing to your puppet or scenery, what would it be and why?

Performance and Storytelling:

- How did your shadow puppet or scenery help tell the story?
- What part of the shadow play performance are you most proud of?
- Was there a moment during the performance that surprised you?

Teamwork and Collaboration:

- What role did you play in your group?
- How did you contribute to your group's success?
- What did you learn about working as a team?

Part 2: Peer Performance Feedback

Ask students to share their reflections in small groups, focusing on:

- A puppet or scenery element that stood out and why.
- What they appreciated most about their classmates' contributions to the performance.

Part 3: Class Discussion

Facilitate a whole-class discussion with guiding questions:

- How did the shadow play help us better understand the subject we were studying?
- What did we learn about storytelling through shadow puppetry?
- How can we improve our next shadow play production?

Lesson extensions:

NATIONAL CORE ART ANCHOR STANDARDS, COMMON CORE STANDARDS, SEL Standards

National Core Art Anchor Standards (simplified)

Students...

- ☒ brainstorm multiple ideas for the artwork
- ☒ organize their thinking and further develop their ideas
- ☒ make final revisions to the artwork
- ☒ present the artwork in a way that conveys meaning (displaying explanation or reflection as appropriate)
- ☐ read and respond to artwork
- ☐ interpret intent or meaning in artwork
- ☐ apply criteria to evaluate artwork
- ☒ make artwork that is personally meaningful

Next Generation Science Standards:

ETS1.C: Optimizing The Design Solution - Different solutions need to be tested in order to determine which of them best solves the problem, given the criteria and the constraints.

ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions - At whatever stage, communicating with peers about proposed solutions is an important part of the design process, and shared ideas can lead to improved designs.

Science and Engineering Practices

1. Asking questions and defining problems
2. Developing and using models
6. Constructing explanations and designing solutions
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

CASEL Framework SEL Standards:

- ☒ Self-Awareness
- ☒ Self-Management
- ☒ Social Awareness
- ☒ Relationship Skills
- ☒ Responsible Decision-Making

