

No. 52094

# Set the Scene Diorama Box

Bring fantasy worlds, historical scenes and real-world models to life with economically-designed diorama boxes! Combine dimension and creativity to construct amazing scenes. Start by decorating the interior of the diorama before assembly. The sturdy card frame is easy to assemble with scored lines and pre-cut tabs. Simply fold along the lines and secure the flaps. Cut out paper figurines and scenery props and glue in place. Perfect for science, history or social science projects!

Lay the diorama frame flat with the diorama window facing up. There are three large side flaps; two on the sides, and one on the top. Grab both side flaps and lift so that the top flap is facing up. The diorama will now sit on its base.

Turn the diorama to the side and locate the 1" (2.5 cm) tabs on the top and bottom edges. Fold the tabs in along the score lines.

Now turn the diorama back to the front and gently bend one of the large side flaps into the interior of the diorama. Make sure all the side tabs are folded on the inside of the large flaps. Tip: Put strips of tape along the edges to hold securely in place.

The opening on the other side of the diorama will allow access to decorate the back wall of each diorama. Use crayons to color in a background for the diorama display, or, color a background onto a separate sheet of paper, cut out then glue onto the diorama back wall.

Lift out the diorama window flap. There are two score lines for folding. Fold along these lines to make a raised tab, then push the entire window flap into the diorama. If desired, glue the tab to the back wall. Adjust the height of the flap for a slope, or press down to the base to form a flat floor area.

There is a hole in the top panel which can be popped out to let more light in.

Decorate dioramas according to a variety of theme or subject guidelines!

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Construct diorama projects with a range of materials in one compact display box
- Exercise fine motor skills with coloring and crafts
- Implement research skills for diorama displays
- Encourage hands-on visual development
- Enhance students' observation, projection and implementation strategies with projects
- Learn about scale and spatial relationships
- Learn about historical Tatebanko dioramas

Diorama is a combination of two Greek words. Di- means "through" and -orama means "sight" which combines to mean "seeing into." When one looks at a diorama, one is literally seeing into a specific scene.

Dioramas can be thought of as miniature museum displays! In fact, the first wide scale use of the diorama began in

museums with exhibit displays. **Taxidermists** in the 1800s began collecting information on wildlife and different environments for conservation awareness. They made large scale displays of various wildlife specimens. People were able to get a close-up look at these specimens and learn facts about them.

Taxidermists are people who use the real skins of dead animals to make lifelike displays. They use meticulous methods of preservation, such as freezing, tanning (or soaking the animal hides in a special chemical called tannin that dries the skin to preserve it), scraping the hair off and/or salting. While the skin is being prepared, taxidermists make molds of the skeleton. The duplicated skeleton is made from plaster so that it stays intact longer. The pose can be manipulated before the plaster sets, so that the body looks more interesting in the display.

Once the plaster has set, any additional parts of the body—such as antlers, tusks, or fangs—are then propped up and glued in precise ways to complete the look. The finished skin is then lain over top of the skeleton and left to dry. Colors, eyes, hooves, claws and hair are then added on as finishing touches.

Dioramas were soon developed for displaying historical scenes, such as famous land, ship and air battles. Small scale models of ships, cannons, cars, planes, tanks, soldiers, citizens, wildlife and landscapes allowed for people to visually picture the magnitude of certain historical events. The models are easy to manipulate and can present a wide range of viewing angles without the need for too much space, which is why dioramas are still in use today.

Use paper dioramas for the following projects:

Children can research various calendar holidays to find out which historical events marked these dates as important. For instance, Remembrance Day commemorates all the fallen soldiers and army personnel from World War 1 onwards. Children can either cut out figurines to illustrate a scene, or glue poppies and Remembrance Day memorabilia to the diorama.

Research facts can be printed out and pasted to the sides of the box, or can be drawn onto the diorama background. This will help children connect calendar dates and simultaneously visualize important historical events.

Instead of writing book reports, represent favorite scenes through diorama models with as much detail included from the book as possible. Book diorama scenes are perfect for encouraging children to first envision then produce an imagined scene according to certain attributes. Draw and cut out characters or scenery props, then paste to the interior of the diorama.

Create favorite scenes from TV shows and movies!

Represent a local ecosystem. Take a classroom trip to a conservation area or a nearby pond or park trail. Guide students to safely explore certain areas. Explain important ecological relationships of animals, plants and the

environment.

Ask students to identify animals within the local ecosystem, such as birds, fish, lizards, bugs, squirrels, chipmunks and others. How do all these animals help each other within the ecosystem? Talk about the food chain and life cycles of some of these animals. For instance, butterflies are an important part of local ecosystems. As caterpillars, they feed on plants to gain nourishment for their transformation. Once they become butterflies, these bugs feed from the nectar of a variety of flowers, however, by traveling from flower to flower, butterflies actually lift up **pollinating** grains and carry them to other flowers. Pollen allows for flowers and plants to reproduce, and as the insect travels to these flowers, new flowers are created.

Showing this cycle in a diorama is easy! Color and cut out two flowers and paste the bases of both stems to the diorama floor. Use a pom-pom ball or Styrofoam ball as the body of the bee. Color with yellow and black stripes. Cut out wings and glue to the sides of the ball. Tip: Use Roylco's **R24560 Bouquet Paper** and **R2450 Bug Bodies**.

Unwind a paperclip so that one of the curved loops is pointing straight out. Poke the straight end into the top of the Styrofoam bee. Attach string from the looped end. Poke a hole through the top of the diorama and knot the other end of the string. Decorate the ground with green for grass and the walls as the sky or a forested background. Paste on cotton balls for clouds. When showing the diorama, the bee can be swung back and forth to show it flying between the two flowers! Tip: Use real leaves, twigs and moss to decorate diorama interiors.

Research ecosystems of harsh climates such as a desert or the Arctic. Illustrate the environment as well as the animals that live in that environment and their habitats.

Illustrate the seasons! Measure and divide the diorama into four sections. Use pencil to mark dividing lines along the floor and up the background wall. Each section will represent one season.

Color each section with appropriate color schemes, such as bright pink, yellow and green for spring and summer, red and brown for autumn and grey for winter. Color and cut out flowers for spring, grass for summer, leaves for autumn and a snowman for winter and paste into their sections. Tip: Children can write the months within each season along the diorama border.

Make "All About Me" dioramas—Color the interior of the diorama to look like a child's room. Children can decorate their "rooms" to reflect their personalities with favorite things such as friends, toys, clothes, pets and more. Cut these out from construction paper or card paper and glue inside the diorama. Don't forget bedroom furniture such as a bed, desk or night table.

Cut out each child's school photo and paste onto the faces of **Roylco R75305 Domanos**. Glue each Domano to the center of the room. Tip: Write details about each child such as age, birthday, height, color of eyes and color of hair around the sides of the diorama.

Make dioramas for social sciences and geography projects! Research a particular country and construct a miniature model of a famous landmark, building, street scene or daily practice (such as fishing, dancing or playing sports) that is unique to that country.

Children will learn to work out an appropriate scale for their projects. As they research the various elements of their diorama projects, ask them to note down the heights of various buildings and landmarks. Once children have their measurements, they

can make a scale to create a proportionate model. For instance, create a scale that signifies 1"=200' (or adjust for the metric equivalent: 4 cm = 100 m). Hint: If the Eiffel Tower is around 1000 feet (300 m), then children would make a paper Eiffel Tower that is 5" tall (12 cm).

Use dioramas for stop motion animation projects. Decorate the diorama background with crayon or marker. Make characters by forming a wireframe body from pipe cleaners and putting plasticine over top. Cut out two 3" (8 cm) pipe cleaners and wrap the centers around together to make the body. Curve the two top arms and bend the ends of the two bottom legs to make feet.

Attach one end of a 1½" (4 cm) pipe cleaner from the body to make a neck and head. Wrap sections of plasticine around the wireframe body. Shape the plasticine to make hands, feet, and a face with details. Use the same methods to make animals or more people. With a digital camera, take photos of the wireframe people in various poses. **Stop-motion** is a special animation process that requires taking several photographs of gradual motion. Each photograph shows a minimal change in movement. But when viewed as a reel or slide-show of photographs, the gradual change in motion results in speedy action!

Make Tatebanko dioramas! Tatebanko is an obscure style of Japanese art that emerged in the early 17th century until the 20th century. Soon after the paper diorama art style disappeared. Only recently have these dioramas been revived with the modern exploration of different art forms.

These dioramas were constructed from paper, and decorated with paper print cutouts. Each illustration formed an element of the whole picture. The illustrations were then glued to the sides of the box and at a distance from each other to give the illusion of dimension between two-dimensional images.

For example, a famous Edo-era print called the "Great Wave off Kanagawa" by Hokusai is often reprinted as featured artwork for modern Tatebanko diorama kits. The illustration is broken up into several different parts. Each wave is one part. Each part is glued in layers to create intriguing dimensional scenery.

To make a Tatebanko diorama, first color the inside of the diorama with a sunrise or sunset inspired sky. Visualize the image you want to create. Tip: Draw out all the elements of the diorama as a scene. Next, identify all the parts that will be within the scene. Note: Generally, if there are certain parts that form a landscape or background, such as several houses or several trees, these can all be drawn on one strip of paper and attached to the back part of the diorama. Locate all the individual elements—such as people, animals or objects—that will be placed towards the front of the diorama.

Illustrate each element onto cardstock. Color with marker, pencil crayon or crayon. Use a black marker to bold the outlines of each illustration. Hint: Before cutting out the illustration, make sure to outline small tabs on the underside. When folded, these tabs can be used as anchors to glue the piece to the diorama. Cut a border around each illustration leaving room at the bottom for tabs.

For landscape or background elements, measure a strip of card paper that is 11" (28 cm) across. Draw a straight line to signify the bottom of the background piece, then draw three tabs. Draw one tab on the bottom of the background piece and one on either side. This will help secure the piece to the

diorama. Illustrate grass, trees, hills, mountains, skyscrapers and other buildings on the background element. Outline these in black marker. Cut a border around the entire landscape piece.

Once all the pieces are created, assemble the Tatebanko diorama! Arrange and layer all the pieces on a flat surface so that it's easier to see the order of the pieces. Start with the largest, or furthest back landscape piece. Fold in the tabs and apply glue to the tabs. Press the tabs to the diorama, adjusting the entire piece to fit in place. Repeat the process with the next piece until all the pieces are ordered and secured.

Encourage children to think about the balance and distribution of space within their diorama projects as they create them.