

How to make a story box

Story boxes can create particular opportunities to *revisit and develop* the themes and storylines of a particular story. Typically they consist of a shoebox containing an assortment of small toys and inspirational objects that children can play with to make up a story. The box itself can be turned into a setting for the small toys using paint or/and a variety of collage materials. Cut the sides so that two or three of them remain upright or so that they fold down completely flat. This will offer the children lots of scope for their play.

Storyboxes are most effective when they don't represent a known story but rather create an environment for a group of small toys. Children are then not restricted to recreating a known story with maybe all the difficulties that can result from children searching to 'get it right' but are set free to follow a story wherever it leads them.

Provide a variety of shoeboxes to cater for children's individual tastes and interests.

Here are some ideas to support some of the themes from Bookpower1.

- A selection of small space toys-alien, space people, rockets or spaceships. Decorate the sides of the box with glow-in-the-dark stars, and use mod-roc inside the box to create space craters and the surface of the moon.
- A collection of superhero toys. Collage the inside of the box to depict the skyscrapers and urban landscape of a city like New York.
- An assortment of mini beasts and play people. Paint the box to represent a garden. You might include a small mirror to make a pond and add some interesting natural objects such as a pine cone or white shiny stones.

An example of a story box to support *The Leopard's Drum* (Jessica Souhami)

