



ARTS PLUS

The Sunny Pages

At home art activities to brighten your day

“Shoebox Diorama”

This activity is appropriate for ages 7 – 12

Time from start to finish = 1 hour – 2 hours

You will need the following materials:

- A cardboard box (shoe boxes or Amazon cardboard boxes work great!)
- Thick paper, a little larger than the size of your box
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Acrylic or water color paint
- Paintbrushes
- Markers
- Glue or tape



Brief project description:

Create a diorama for your own character to live in using a recycled box!

Steps

- **#1:** Find an unused cardboard box and cut a piece of paper to fit in the bottom of the box. You should cut off any exterior ‘flaps’ on the box so that only the bottom of the box and the four sides remain. If you need to tape up the bottom of your box to stabilize it, do so. Any type of box can be used for this project, as long as you’re willing to sacrifice it to the artistic cause!
- **#2:** Paint the inside and outside four sides (or “walls”) of the box and allow to dry completely. While your box is drying, move on to step #3.
- **#3:** Using your pencil, draw a scene on your box-sized piece of paper. Keep in mind that this scene will become the back ‘wall’ of your diorama, so this drawing can depict anything that will be in the background of your scene. For my background image, I chose to draw a fancy bedroom and sitting room.

- **#4:** On another piece of paper, draw a character that will match your scene. Keep the size of the character in mind; it should be able to easily fit inside your diorama box. For my character, I chose to draw a mouse princess!
- **#5:** Once you have completed your pencil drawings of the background and the character, use your watercolor or watered-down acrylic paint to color them in. Mixing water in with acrylic paint thins the paint, making it more translucent and helping it to spread more easily. Let your character and scene paintings dry completely. Once dry, go over any lines and add details with markers.
- **#6:** Once your paper background painting and box are dry, use glue or tape to attach the scene to the back of the box. If you want your character to stand up by itself, cut a small slit in the bottom of the character paper and insert a small rectangle of thick paper in the slit. Use glue or tape to keep the small rectangle in place.



- **#7:** Now place your character in the diorama! You can use this same method to add decorations, furniture, or more characters to your scene!



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