



# Kamishibai

## Japanese Story Telling

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### **Background Information**

Kamishibai is a form of Japanese storytelling dating back to the 1920's. It was a form of street storytelling where the storyteller(s) traveled by bicycle carrying their miniature theatre, storycards and candy. Upon entering the neighborhood he would strike together two wooden clappers to draw the attention of the children. The Kamishibai storyteller would tell 2-3 short stories using the stage and storycards. Upon completion of the episodes the storyteller would sell candy to the children. In the traditional Kamishibai the storytellers would often leave the story with an exciting ending (like the modern day "cliff hanger" often used at the end of a television series season) that would be returned to when the storytellers returned to the village on another day; this strategy kept the children excited to come and hear the Kamishibai storytellers over and over again.

### **Rationale**

Exposing children to Kamishibai will enable teachers to expose children to new concepts in the language arts while also providing them with a meaningful opportunity to explore a different culture. How a teacher chooses to use the Kamishibai in the classroom will determine which language arts standards will be addressed. One advantage of using the Kamishibai to explore language arts is that the activity allows children at many different developmental levels to be successful using the materials.

# Lesson Plan

## Making a Kamishibai Stage



**Lesson Plan:** Making a Kamishibai stage

**Grade Level:** K-3

**Subject Area:** Language Arts and Art

**Lesson Objective(s):** Students will be able to recreate a Kamishibai stage in order to perform their stories using their storycards.

**Big Idea:** Students will produce this stage in order to engage in a culturally diverse storytelling technique.

### **State Standards Addressed:**

- 1.2C Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.
- 1.4A Write narrative pieces.
- 2.3E Use estimation skills to arrive at conclusions.
- 2.3G Estimate and verify measurements.
- 2.4B Use measurements in everyday situations.
- 2.5A Use appropriate problem solving strategies.

## Planning for Teaching

### **Materials:**

- ◆ 18 cereal boxes/one for each child (have families contribute)

- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Rulers
- ◆ Pencils
- ◆ Paint, construction paper, scrap fabric (decoration materials)
- ◆ Glue sticks

**Grouping:** Children will work individually and in pairs.

## **Lesson Opening**

**Introduction:** Attend an authentic production of a Kamishibai. This may be accomplished by visiting your local library or accessing resources at a local university such as the Asian Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Time:** 45 minutes

## **During the Lesson**

### **Sequence of Lesson Events:**

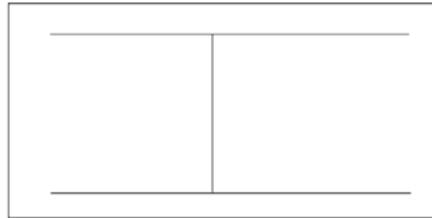
#### **Day #1**

- ◆ Watch a Kamishibai performance.

#### **Day #2**

- Explain to the children that they will be recreating their own Kamishibai stage to use with storycards that they will design.
  1. Distribute one cereal box to each child.
  2. Have children stand the box on its narrowest side with the longest edge touching the tabletop. This is how the stage will stand when the child is performing their story.
  3. Instruct children in marking where the stage will have openings on the front panel so the audience can see the storycards. The opening should be oriented in a landscape format and the dimensions of the opening should be 9" tall by 11" long.
  4. Emphasize that the children do not want to remove this piece of the box. The children are to cut door-shaped pieces that will open and shut, revealing the cards behind them. To

accomplish this the children should only cut along both the upper and lower edges of the 9" x 11" area and then cut vertically along the center of this area as to create the two doors. See diagram below.



5. Next instruct the children in creating the slots along the 2 sides of the stage where the storycards will slide in and out. The students should use the sides of the cereal box that were originally the top and bottom of the box. The students should mark a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" rectangle in pencil and then cut out this area. Students should do this on both ends of the box.
6. On the back side of the box students should cut out a rectangle 9"x11" that will serve as a window through which they will be able to read the text that will be written to correspond with the storycards.
7. Allow students to decorate the outside of the stage as they like.

# Lesson Plan

## Making Story Cards

**Lesson Plan:** Making Story Cards

**Grade Level:** K-3

**Subject Area:** Language Arts and Art

**Lesson Objective(s):** Students will be able to express themselves creatively after participating in a meaningful experience.

**Big Idea:** Students will be engaged in creating a story using the basic components while developing appreciation for cultural diversity.

### **State Standards Addressed:**

- 1.2C Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.
- 1.1D Read text using self-monitoring comprehension strategies (e.g. predict, revise predictions, reread, use headings, use organization of text, graphics, charts, organization of text, adjust reading rate).
- 1.1E Acquire a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using words. Use a dictionary when appropriate.
- 1.1F Understand the meaning of and use correctly new vocabulary learned in various subject areas.
- 1.4A Write narrative pieces.
- 1.5B Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- 1.5F Edit writing using the conventions of language.

## Planning for Teaching

### **Materials:**

- ◆ 10" x 20" tag board (enough for each student to have at least six cards)
- ◆ Markers
- ◆ Pictionary or dictionary

- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Computer and printer
- ◆ Glue sticks

**Grouping:** Children will work individually and in pairs.

## Lesson Opening

**Introduction:** Attend an authentic production of a Kamishibai. This may be accomplished by visiting your local library or accessing resources at a local university such as the Asian Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Time:** 45 minutes



## During the Lesson

### Sequence of Lesson Events:

#### Day #1

- ◆ Watch a Kamishibai performance.

#### Day #2

- Complete the Kamishibai stage

#### Day #3

- ◆ Discuss Japan, locate it on a map, and point out cultural similarities and differences.
- ◆ Discuss the cards used to tell the story during the performance, highlighting the techniques used by the artist.
- ◆ Demonstrate how to create cards:

1. Guide children in identifying a story line that they would like to tell using a set of story cards.
2. Give each child a sheet of paper to plan their ideas including the amount of cards needed, the sequence of events, the characters, and the story line. Give children approximately five to ten minutes to plan, adjusting this time period as necessary.
3. Designate an area for work materials and instruct children to access the needed materials when completed with their plan.
4. Guide children in illustrating their cards first, and then instruct children to dictate the storyline to a partner who will type the dictation. When children are performing this step, make sure they type the words for each card on one page and add a page number (also, make sure the computer is set up to print landscape). We recommend the font Comic Sans MS in a slightly larger font size to make it easier for children to read the text while performing the Kamishibai. After one child is completed telling their story, have the children switch roles.
5. Instruct the children to glue their words onto the back of their story cards. This process may be confusing and careful instruction is necessary because the words that are being read correspond to the card that is being shown in the Kamishibai window, but are not glued on that particular card. Start by gluing the text of page number two onto illustrated card number one. The rest will go as follows: text #3 onto card #2, text #4 onto card #3, text #5 onto card #4, text #6 onto card #5 and text #1 onto card #6.
6. Then have the children order their cards in sequence with card #1 on top of the pile with illustration side facing up; behind the top card the remainder of the cards should be in order as follows: #2, #3, #4, #5 and #6. Have students pick up the pile of cards and insert them into the side of the Kamishibai stage.
7. Have students each take turns telling their story to the class. Each student will read the text that appears in the back window of the stage. After reading the text on the back card, the student then slides the first card out of the stage window and puts it at the back of the pile. The text for the next illustrated storycard will appear at the back window and the

student proceeds with this same process until their story is told in its entirety.

## Extension Ideas

### Story Example

*The One Inch Boy* is a story about a very small boy who faces challenges due to his small size. After growing up this tiny size, the child has to face a huge obstacle that is challenging due to his stature. In the end, the boy defeats the antagonist by outwitting him.

### Possible Learning Extensions

#### *Art*

- Many of the storycards that can be obtained for use with the Kamishibai stage are illustrated using traditional Japanese art techniques. An in-depth study of the Japanese artistic style would be appropriate. Children could be encouraged to explore different mediums and processes using Japanese art for inspiration.

#### *Math*

- During a Kamishibai performance, the audience pays the peddler with Japanese money for the snack that is consumed after the performance. This would be a perfect opportunity to investigate monies used in other cultures.



- Begin a study of measurement (this topic would be sparked by the title of the story *The One Inch Boy*).
- Look for similar ideas for extending learning into math concepts and skills depending upon the topic and content of the Kamishibai story your class attended.

### ***Social Studies***

- Begin an in-depth study of the Japanese culture.
- At our school, we adhere to a nutritious meal plan. When our students attended the production, we prepared a nutritious snack in lieu of a candy treat traditionally offered at the conclusion of the performance. The fact that Kamishibai involves food encourages a study of traditional and contemporary Japanese dishes.



### ***Music***

- The use of the wooden clappers could inspire a study of other traditional and possibly contemporary Japanese instruments.

## **Resources**

### ***Otaku World!***

This website provides the viewer with a brief background on Kamishibai.

[www.otakuworld.com/shibai/](http://www.otakuworld.com/shibai/)

### ***Kamishibai for Kids***

This website discusses the background of Kamishibai, provides ideas for teachers to use, and has a catalog to order stories and stages.

[www.kamishibai.com](http://www.kamishibai.com)

*Japan for 6 to 10 Year Old Children*

This website allows the children to see examples of Japanese food, schools, houses and other familiar sites to children.

[www.sover.net/~johnd/categories.html](http://www.sover.net/~johnd/categories.html)

*Japan-Guide.Com*

This website discusses the location, population, and climate of Japan. It also provides the user with links to sites for more information on subtopics.

[www.japan-guide.com](http://www.japan-guide.com)