

Oak Meadow Craft

Make a Crankie Movie

Materials:

long scroll of paper (You can also tape several pieces together to make one long piece.)

cardboard box (The size of the box should match the size of your paper roll. Or cut the paper to fit.)

markers

paints and brushes

colored paper (optional)

glue or tape (optional)

scissors or box cutter

screwdriver

two dowels (These need to be longer than the box is high when placed flat on its long side.)

clothespin (or other item for crank handle)

duct tape

A "crankie" is a hand-cranked movie made from a paper scroll and a simple viewing box. It's like a paper movie or a moving story with images scrolling past. You make the paper move by rolling dowels attached to the scroll.

Crankies were originally used as storytelling devices. Sometimes there are words on the paper, and sometimes you tell a story based on the pictures. You could also sing a song that accompanies the pictures. Crankies are also fun at group sing-alongs – the crankie shows the lyrics so everyone can sing.

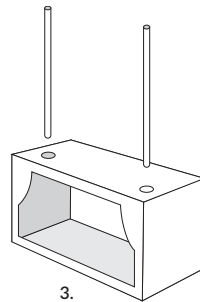
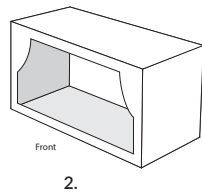
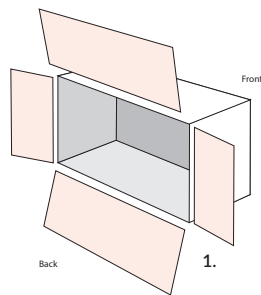
This is an excellent group project for any type of gathering, especially one of mixed ages. Try creating a favorite story at your next get-together with family and friends.

Crankies can be made using any size and type of box: matchboxes, tea boxes, shoeboxes, apple crates, or anything else you have on hand. Experiment and have fun cranking out your own story!

Instructions

Before you begin, you might want to do an internet search for images related to "how to build a crankie." This will give you a good idea of what you're aiming for!

1. Cut the flaps off the cardboard box. Stand the box on its long edge, which is the way you want your "theatre" to stand. The open side is now the back of your crankie box, and the large panel is the front stage or screen.
2. Cut a square or rectangular hole in the front panel. Make this hole just a little smaller than your paper – you don't want spaces showing around the edges. Consider shaping the top or sides of the opening like fancy stage drapes.
3. Use a screwdriver to make a hole near each outer end of the top and bottom of your box. You want matching sets of holes on the right and left so that you can insert the dowels vertically. (You will attach your scroll to these dowels.) Make sure your dowels fit into the holes. The dowels should stick out of the top far enough to grip them easily.



4. At this point, your crankie box is complete! Paint it or cover it with colored paper.

Here's a photo that shows what the box looks like from the back. (This one already has the crankie scroll attached.)



Photo credit: Paris family

5. One of your dowels will need a crank on top. Use duct tape to attach a clothespin or other sturdy object to the top of one dowel so that it forms a T.

6. Now it's time to make your crankie. Lay out the paper on the floor and draw your story. Leave some blank space at the beginning, so you can roll a bit onto the dowel before the "title screen." You can have a flowing picture that is all connected, or you can draw your story frame by frame. (Each frame is the size of the opening in your crankie box.) You might want to draw a basic outline of the pictures in pencil first, and then color in the story pictures.

7. Once the story scroll is complete, tape the end of it (the part that is "The End") onto the dowel without the crank handle. Carefully roll it up so the entire movie scroll is on one dowel.

8. Before you tape the beginning of the scroll onto the second dowel (the one with the handle), you have to thread the dowel through the holes in the box. If you are facing your crankie "stage," you want this empty dowel on the left side. Once it is in place, tape the beginning of the scroll onto the dowel.

9. Gently fit the other dowel (the one with the full movie scroll rolled up on it) into the top and bottom holes on the other side of the box. Now your crankie is ready to roll! You might need two people to hold onto the sides of the crankie box and help it turn smoothly.

10. If you are giving a nighttime show, try this: Dim the lights, and shine a flashlight behind the crankie to illuminate it like a movie in a theatre.