

Bookmaking with Kids

Scenic Concertinas

The *Scenic Concertina* uses three simple ingredients: imagination, folded paper and collage materials.

A *concertina* is a book made from paper folded accordion fashion. Usually, the pleated pages stand upright. But in this playful variation, the pleats are positioned horizontally and help create the illusion of depth for a child's artwork. One large fold forms a prop-up easel and another provides space for text.

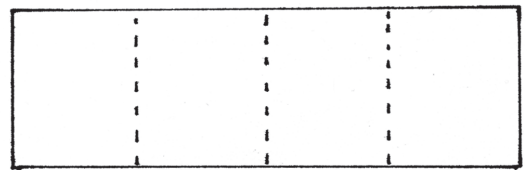
The *Scenic Concertina* is great for creative writing, retelling a story that students are reading, or creating a nonfiction presentation about a topic in social studies, science or other areas of the curriculum.

Materials & Tools

- 11 x 17-inch paper, heavier than text weight but not as heavy as card stock. Our favorite is Exact Vellum Bristol, 57 lb., available at Kelly Paper. You'll need one sheet for every two students.
- A PDF template, showing the fold lines for this structure, to print on the tabloid sheets.
- Text weight paper, 5½ x 8½ inches, blank or preprinted with lines. Fold two or three sheets in half as a group, so you have a little booklet measuring 5½ x 4¼
- Ruler, bone folder, scissors, glue sticks, paper clips, long-reach stapler.
- Collage materials. Photo stock books and scenic calendars have *lots* of suitable images. *Source:* SCRAP, www.scrap-sf.org/.
- Writing & drawing supplies.

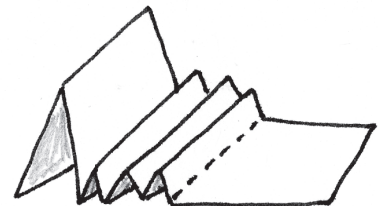
Step By Step

- Print the template onto the tabloid sheets. Cut each sheet in half lengthwise. Each student gets one cut sheet.
- With the printing face up, fold the sheet in half, then into quarters.
- Working with Panel #3, place your ruler on a printed line and score and bone a fold; repeat with remaining four lines.
- Fold the scored lines into an accordion. Lines marked with a letter M will be your mountain folds.
- Adjust the folds on your concertina so that Panels #1 and #2 form a tent, as in the diagram. Panel #4 should lie flat on your



desk. And in between is the accordion-fold Panel #3.

- Open your little booklet and staple it through the fold to the valley fold between Panels #3 and #4.



Bookmaking gives kids an engaging way to practice, master and extend their writing and reading skills and at the same time explore their artistic sides.

Planning Your Artwork

- Show some completed models that you've made and explain that kids will be creating 2–3 characters and a background and writing about what their characters are doing together in that setting.
- Before students glue their characters on the concertina pleats, discuss perspective and how objects that are nearby appear big while those at a distance look smaller. Also suggest students consider how the importance of the different characters might affect their placement.
- Budget time for kids to create original artwork and/or use collage materials for the backdrop and characters.

Learning Concepts

- This project provides plenty of space for writing and implicitly reinforces the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, editing, revising).
- The structure also lends itself beautifully to an art lesson in perspective, background-foreground-middle ground. Kids learn how to layer images to create the illusion of depth.
- The *Scenic Concertina* also makes a great introduction to the art of collage.

FOR INSPIRATION

Visit www.artistbooks.com for some inspiration from book artist and educator Ed Hutchins. In his section on book arts in the classroom, you'll find "Why Make Books," a fabulous short article—a manifesto, really—on the power of book arts for kids.

Here's just one quotation: "The book arts are at the intersection where writing, illustration, discovery, creativity and sharing come together to support the classroom curriculum."

You can read the whole article at www.artistbooks.com/bookarts.shtml.

Ideas for Scenic Concertinas

Ideal for creative writing, the *Scenic Concertina* is also an appealing format for short social-studies or science reports:

- Stories starring animal characters are favorites for the *Scenic Concertina* format. Consider nonfiction about animals and habitats that you've been studying. Or try silly stories featuring animals in a setting far from home: jungle animals on vacation at the beach ... arctic animals that wake up one morning in Yosemite.
- Take your cue from calendars you find. A second-grade class that had been studying Japan used a calendar of Hokusai woodcuts as backdrops for stories featuring a dragon and a traditionally dressed Japanese elder (both reproduced from Dover books).
- Allow students to combine factual, fictional and/or autobiographical elements in a *Scenic Concertina* project. The setting might be real place—a city or region or landmark or biome that they're studying—where kids could give themselves a starring role.
- If you're studying geography or the flora and fauna in different regions, consider having students use cut-up maps as a backdrop.