DrawAble: Creating a Book World by Rose Feather

By Rose Feather

Rose Feather is an illustrator based in Norwich. In her artwork, Rose explores people's life experiences and stories through illustration. As part of DrawAble, Rose shows children how to create their own story sculptures – or "book worlds".

You may also like to watch Rose's Let Me Inspire You video before you start this activity.

Living in My Book World

The world we live in changes all the time. Often these changes are small and happen slowly, but sometimes it feels like everything is suddenly very different. This is true for the whole world, but also for each of our personal worlds – the individual environments and situations that surround us. Where we live, eat, learn, and play changes how we do all these things, who we share them with and how we feel.

By the end of this activity you'll have a readable book-sculpture to share, filled with mini stories about your changing world and your ideas for the future.

This activity is split into the following stages:

1) First, we'll experiment with ways to make structures from paper, glue and tape.
2) Then, we'll pick up our pens and come up with our stories.
3) Next, we'll work out the perfect home for these ideas and get building.
4) Finally, we'll think through different ways of sharing our stories to keep them growing.

Notes for Teachers
What is the aim of this exercise?
This activity demonstrates how children can invent stories or convey personal experiences through creating "book worlds" – sculptures made from card, paper, and found materials. The activity combines storytelling and craft, and can be adapted for a particular theme.

What age can this exercise be used with?
This resource can be used with ages 6 and upwards, including teenagers. It is particularly well-suited for primary school age groups.

What materials will the learners need?
For this activity, the learners will need a range of paper and card (for example, cereal boxes, old book covers, scrap paper), glue, scissors, and any materials they can use to decorate their sculptures with, such as paint, markers, stickers, etc.

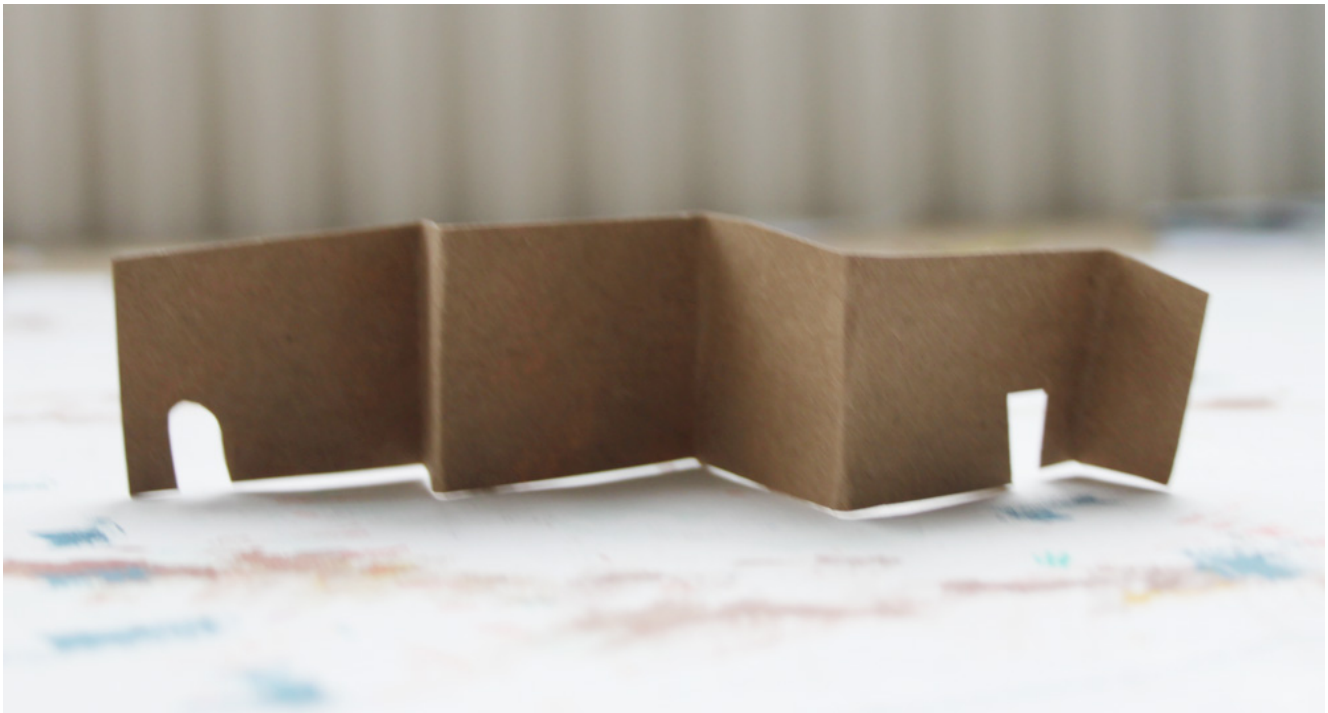
How long does this exercise take?
This activity may take from 2 to 5 hours, split

into several smaller sessions.

How do I measure success?
Success will be measured by the children’s enjoyment and involvement in the activity.

More able or engaged learners may demonstrate a more conscious approach to creating their book worlds, and invent more complex stories. They may be keen to use a wider range of materials in their artwork.

Encourage children to experiment with the materials that they have available for them. Prompt them to think about significant events, interests, or people that they may want to include in their book world (you can use the list of prompts provided in the post, or make up your own!).



What can we try after this exercise?
Building Stories by June Nelson artist and educator June Nelson shares how she used photography, collage and iPads to encourage looking, collaborating, and telling visual stories
Make mini-houses exploring space/structure and interior/exterior in Be an Architect! An Introduction to Architecture for Children
Experiment with creating a space with characters to tell a story in Shrinkle Spaces
Explore making and drawing in The Winter Tree Challenge: A Combined Sculpture and Drawing Project
Elenor Somerset shares a series of highly creative and imaginative sessions exploring experimental and elemental drawing culminating in the production of concertina sketchbooks for Illustrating 'The Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carroll
Try other DrawAble exercises and projects.

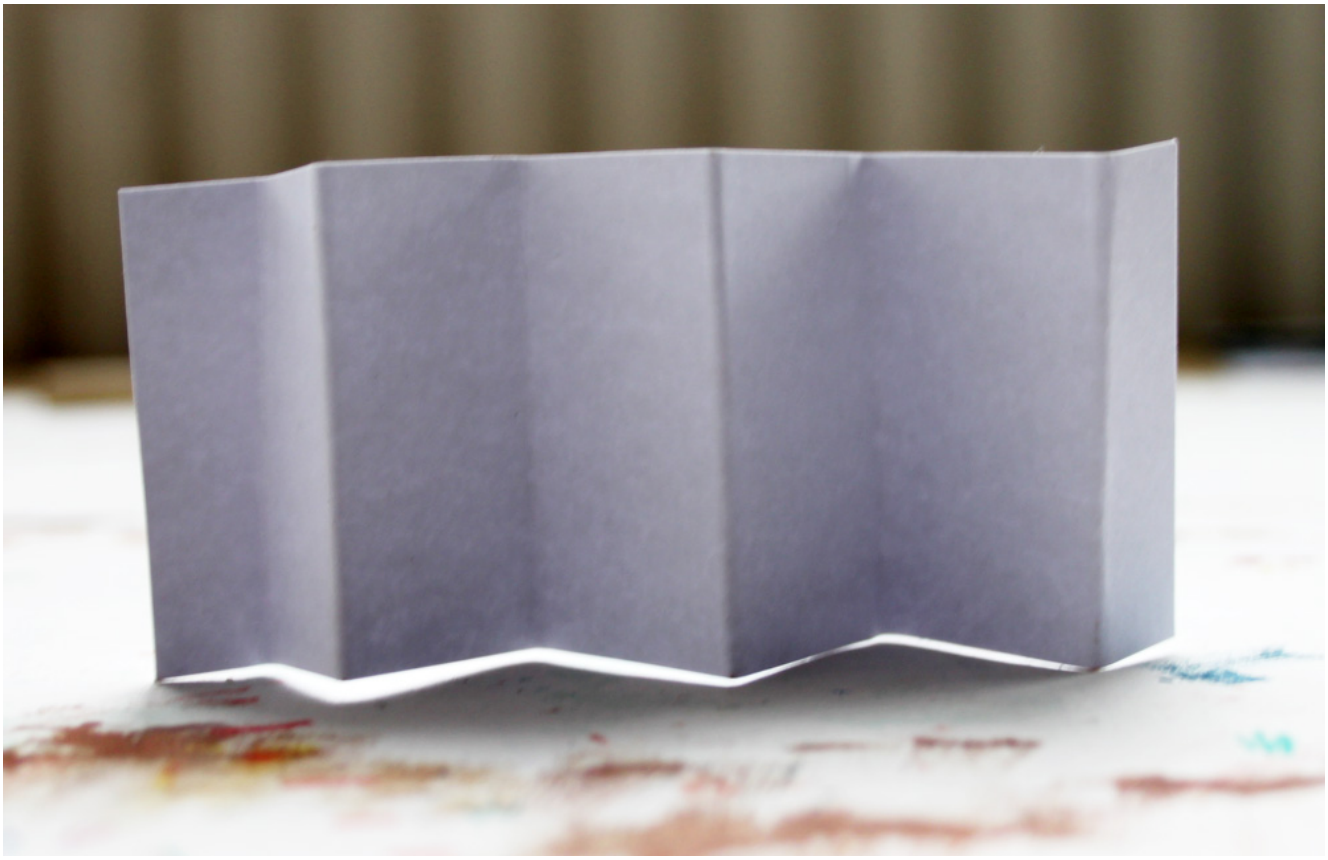
Which artists might we look at?

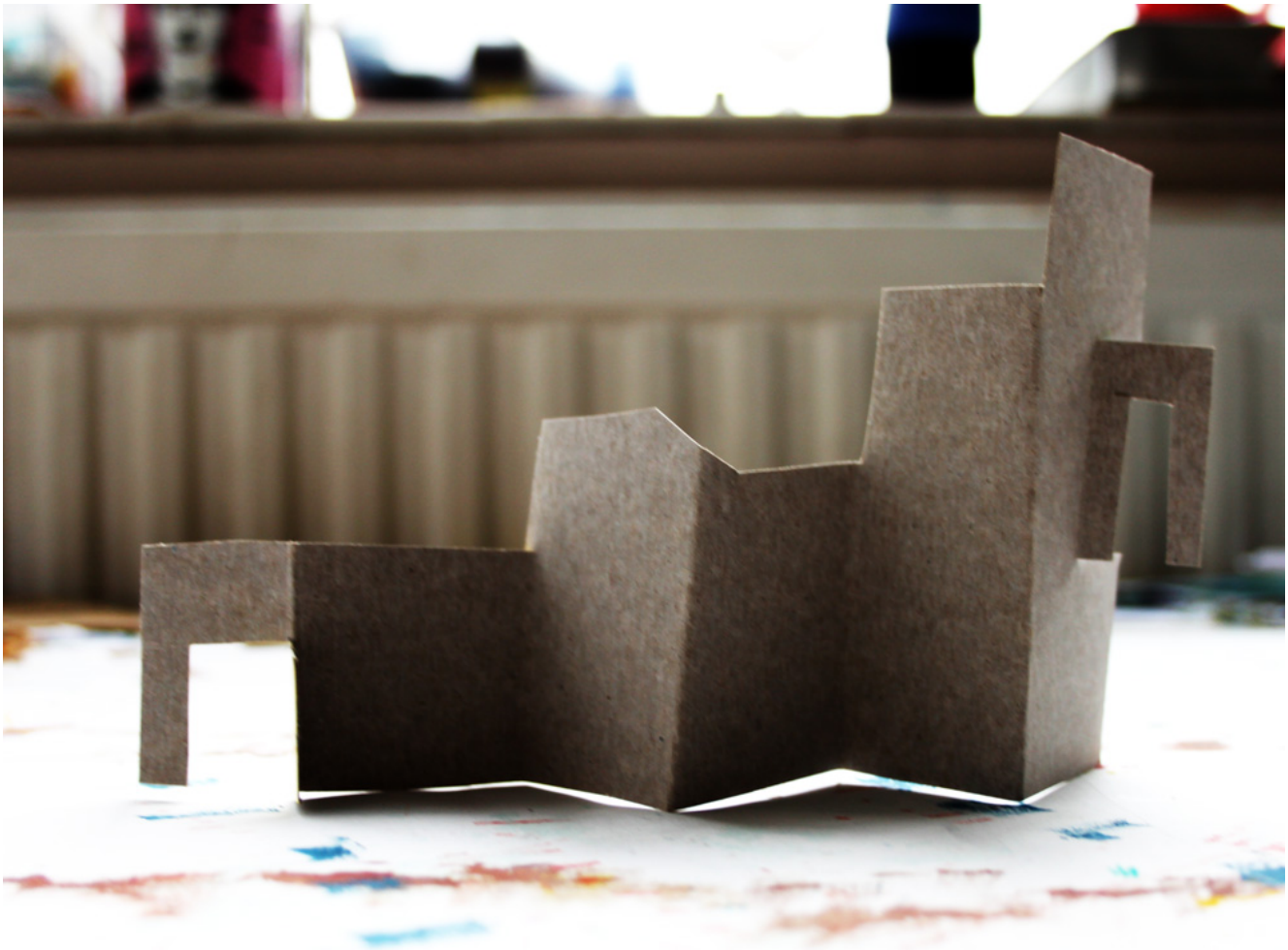
Book artist [Julie Chen]() has a wide ranging approach to the art of book construction
You may also want to look at [Rose's other projects]().

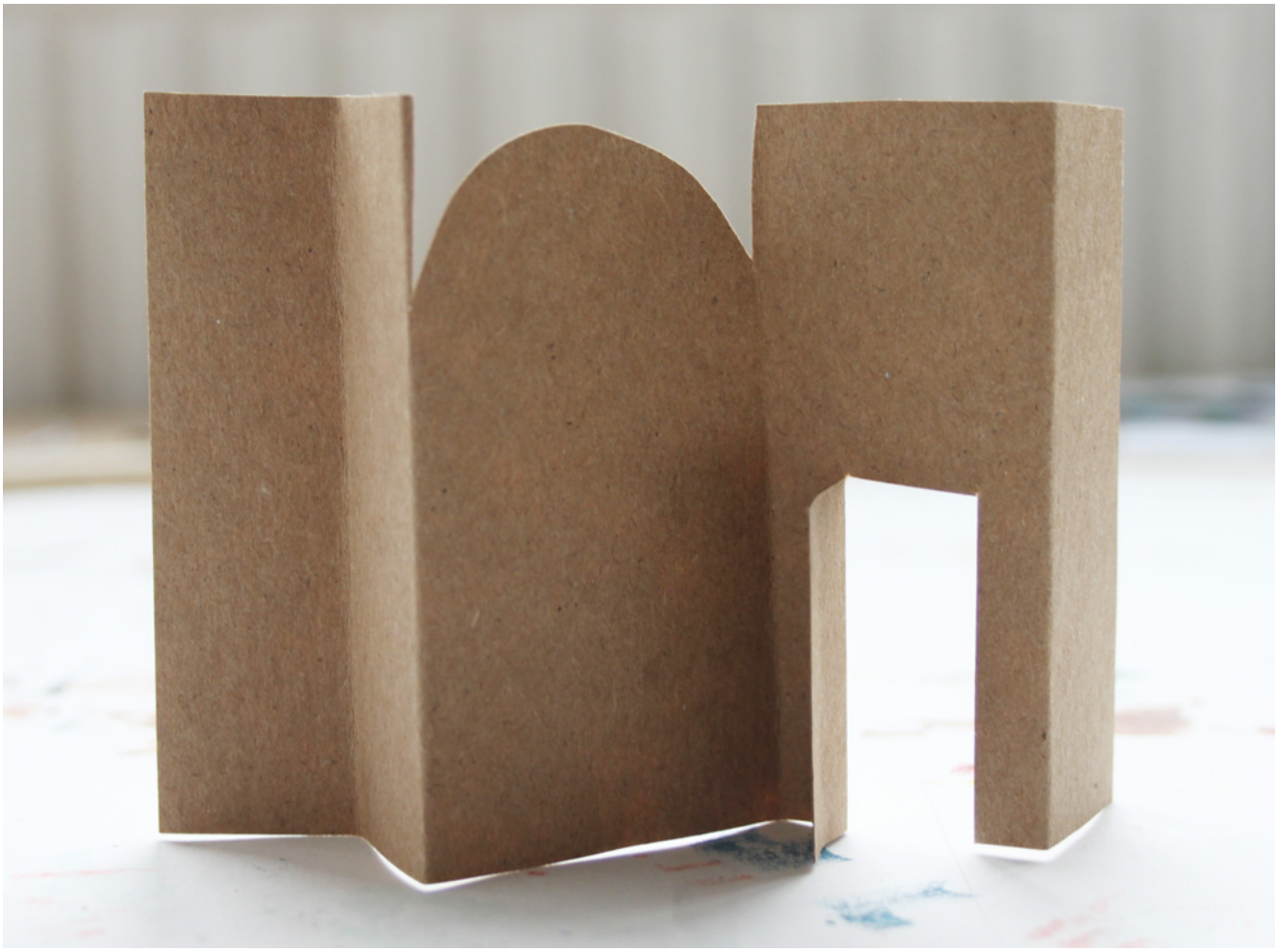
You will need things like this:

1. Start with the Making:
Let's begin with a strong shape which we can build up from. A concertina can be made by folding card in a zigzag. I like starting with this shape because it will be strong enough to stand up by itself and the folds give us helpful corners which mini books, flaps and staircases can slot in. It's also handy that it can all be folded down flat if needed.
Here are some examples of concertina bases, I've kept them quite small because they are testers. I've played with cut-outs, irregular zigzag folding and changing the size and scale.

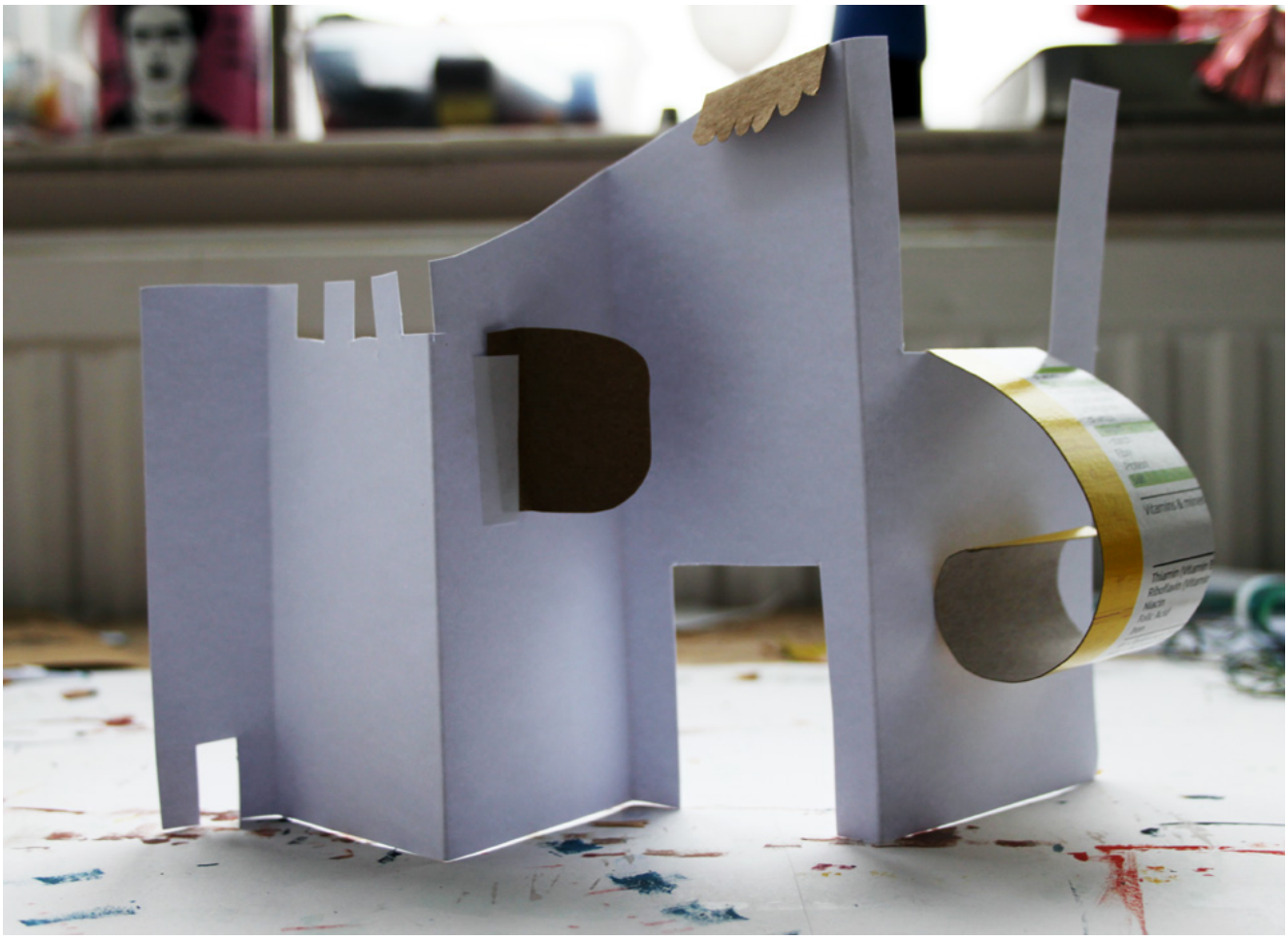
Before we get into detail about what your final book could look like, spend some time experimenting with different ways you can push the idea of a concertina to create different types of structures. Make a whole bunch of prototypes!

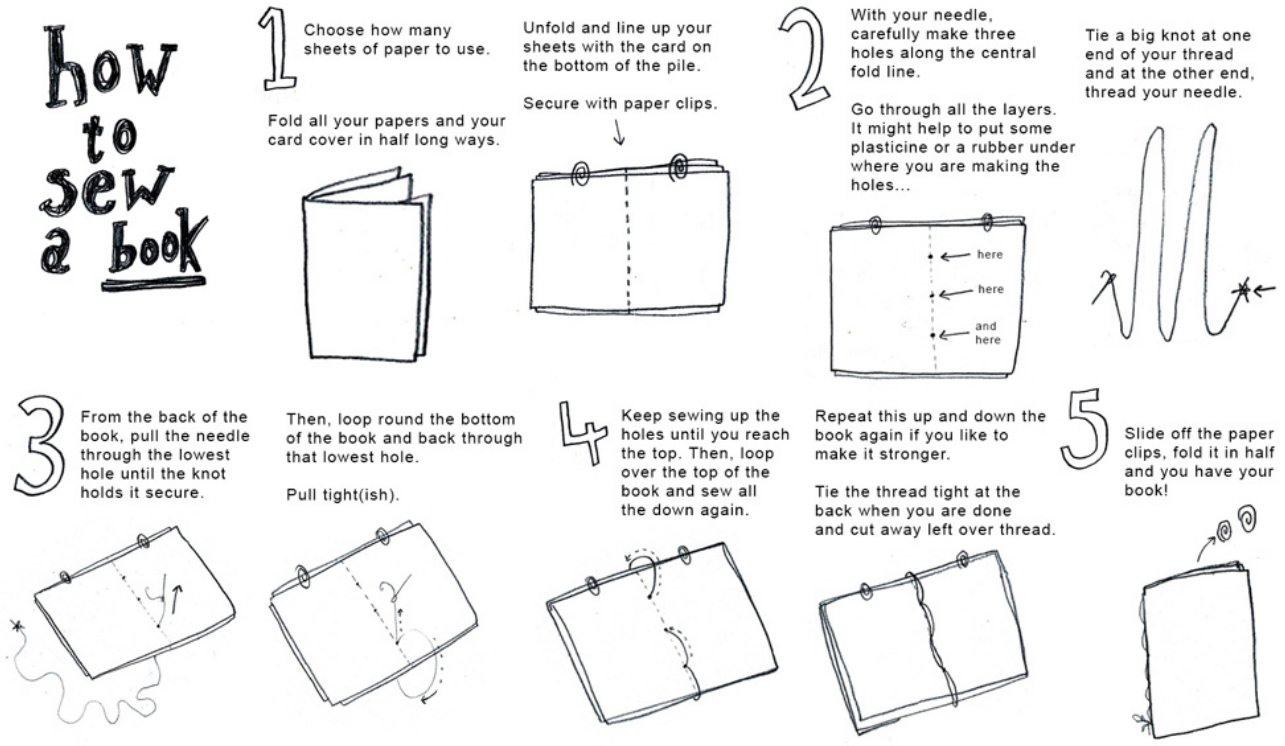






Here are some further constructing ideas: making fold-outs and flaps, a roof, a staircase, and sewing a mini-book. Have a play with making these and attaching them to your concertina experiments in interesting ways.





I'm sure you'll find lots more ways of manipulating paper and card into unusual shapes. Before we go any further, keep experimenting with book-building techniques to warm up your eyes, your brain and your fingers. It'll be exciting to see what emerges!

2. Shaping your Story:
Now we are all warmed up and have made some exciting prototypes, it's time to think through the stories your book world will tell.

Your stories don't have to be long, or even have a beginning, middle and end. The writing you fill your book with could be collections of words that all connect to something, or conversations between two people, or short descriptions of places. All these little snippets will come together to give

your reader a picture of what your world is like, and how it might transform again. Just write them in a notebook or on scraps of paper for now.

Here are some story starters and writing ideas:

- My view through the window
- The biggest thing that has recently changed in my world
- What I often hear first thing in the morning
- A funny conversation I had or overheard
- A moment I was really brave
- Something that has stayed the same in my world for a long time
- A dream I couldn’t get out of my head for ages
- My ultimate breakfast
- A list of things I’m looking forward to in the future

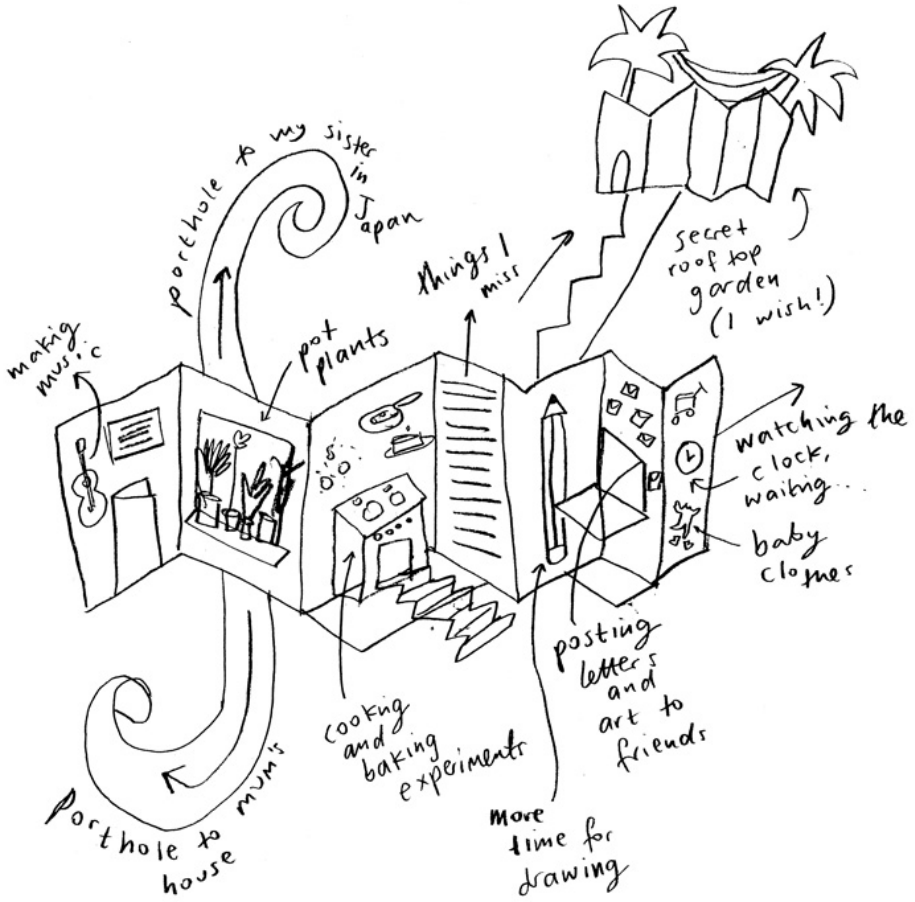
- The biggest surprise I've had

- A conversation between me now, and me in 10 years' time

Feel free to ignore all of these suggestions – you can write absolutely anything you like!

3. Building up your ideas:
Okay, now we have a bunch of prototype card structures and a handful of bits of writing, word lists and very short stories written in a notebook or on scraps of paper. Next, we need to put our making ideas together with our stories ideas to construct a book world where your stories can live.

I like to do a quick sketch before I jump in with making, but you might like to just grab your card and scissors and create your book world as you go along. Here is the doodle I made for my book world:



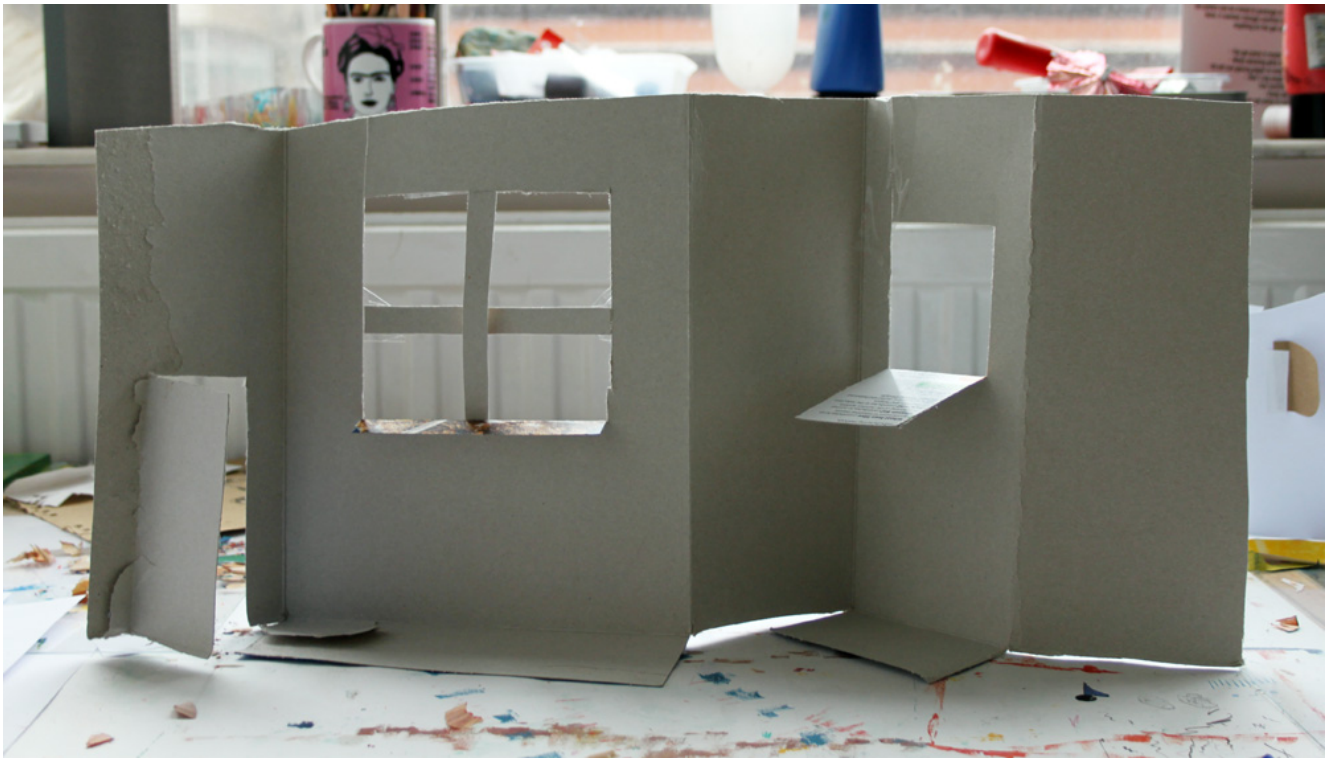
A big change in my life recently has been waiting for a baby to arrive. On the far right of my book world is a clock and a pram and some baby clothes. I might hide a little letter to my future baby in a flap behind the clock.

Something I've really missed recently is being able to hop on a train and see my mum who lives in a different city. I've added a magic porthole to her house which I might make out of a long curl of card. On the porthole, I'll write a made-up conversation between me and my mum as if we are sat at her kitchen table drinking tea.

One of my prototypes had a big zigzag coming off

the roof of the house. I might change that in my book-world to be coming out of an oven that I make out of flaps of card. The zigzag will have all the recipes I attempted this summer, each with a rating out of 5!

What else can you spot in my doodle?
Here’s some photos of the first stages of making my book world. I’m sure you’ll come up with lots of different ideas of how to squeeze stories into your sculpture.



4. Sharing your story:
Ta-daaa, you have made a book world! Although we can get lots of joy from making things for ourselves, a book world really comes to life when it is shared with other people.

When you show your book to someone else all the ideas, memories and experiences you poured in will mix with the ideas, memories and experiences that live in your reader's head. This can lead to interesting new interpretations ('oh, to me that looks like a diving board into a bowl full of jelly!') and spark collaborative new ideas (that reminds me of a pug I saw on the bus, let's make a double-decker to go in your book world!)

It takes some bravery to share your ideas and

stories with other people, but if you do your story has the opportunity to transform into something you could have never imagined on your own!

Here are some ways you could share your book world with someone else:

- Fold it down flat and pop it in the post to your great aunty
- Throw it over the fence to your neighbour
- Take photos of your book world or a video and email it to a friend or your teacher
- Present it to your family after dinner
- You could make lots of book worlds with friends and then add them together in interesting ways to make a book-universe!

This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.