

Term 2 Project: Shoebox Diorama

Assignment:

Students will be responsible for creating a shoebox diorama depicting a scene that might have emerged from the chapters studied during term 2. The biggest point of a shoebox diorama is to show a natural habitat of something. In the process of drawing and cutting out the various objects you are learning about the atmosphere and surroundings. You can take it to new levels with a little thought and a little creativity.

- *Freezing a moment in time - A diorama is a moment in time and you can focus on this. Some good examples are you can have a meteor streaking across the sky of a dinosaur diorama; this explains a theory of extinction. Or you can show a large predator fish about to eat a smaller fish as it is eating something even smaller. This dramatic moment in time is a good display of the food chain.*
- *Interactions in a habitat - The focus of a diorama is often to correctly identify and place the right objects for an event or scene. Showing how the objects within the diorama interact with the environment they are in is important.*
- *Adding a Fact Sheet - This is a great tool that should be added to every diorama. You should make a fact sheet that can be glued to poster board, stood up near the diorama, or simply typed on a sheet of paper. The sheet explains the basic facts of what the diorama is about.*

Themes and Ideas:

Research the chapters and choose an event or scene that you want to portray from the appropriate class:

- *Period 1 – Freshman American History – Chapters 20, 21, or 22*
- *Period 2 – Sophomore American History – Chapters 29, 30, or 31*

→No 2 students can do the same topic or scene. Yours must be unique to only you!

Due Dates and Instructions:

1. *Choose an event or scene:* December 5, 2008
2. *Pass in your shoebox diorama:* January 9, 2009
3. *Last day of the term:* January 16, 2009

The Arts and Crafts of Shoebox Dioramas

There are a lot of common ways to make a shoebox diorama and they include tape, glue, construction paper and all the regular assortment of arts and crafts stuff but there are a few things you can do to make a diorama just a little bit special. Here is a list of ideas:

- If you are doing an underwater scene you can cover the front of the box with Saran Wrap or thin plastic. This gives the diorama an underwater feel*
- Use string to utilize the full three dimensions inside the box; suspend objects from strings or tie strings from side to side and top to bottom and attach objects to the strings. This works well for flying objects like bird, pterodactyls or even clouds and stars.*
- Cut slots in the back and top of the box and use this to insert objects that you can move across the diorama. Make a bird, boat, comet or some other type of moving object then attach a tab to the back of it. Insert this tab in the slot then you can grab the tab from the back and slide the object across the diorama. This adds a nice little interactive element. This works well with all kinds of things from a rising sun, flying bird, erupting volcano or just about anything else that would move.*
- Think outside the shoebox! There is no need to run out and buy a new pair of shoes if you don't have a shoebox. A more than adequate box can be made from scraps of cardboard or even a few cereal boxes cut and taped together. And there is no need to make a typical shoebox shape. Be creative in the shape you make. It adds a dimension of interest to the project. Half round, amphitheatre shapes are commonly used for dioramas and look great.*
- Achieving Depth - The most common trait of an average shoebox diorama is that it has a decorated background and objects placed on the bottom surface. You can add an attractive touch by decorating a strip of paper that is about two inches wide with a foliage pattern then attach this to the inside bottom of the diorama about an inch from the back wall - it reaches all the way from the left side to the right side. This adds a lot of depth and makes it look much more interesting.*
- Using alternate materials - You don't have to use cardboard or boxes. As an example, if you are doing a polar bear or penguin diorama you could use white packing Styrofoam. If you are doing a desert scene you can apply glue to the bottom of the diorama and sprinkle real sand on it.*