Activity sheet three: make a Chinese shadow puppet

You will need:

- light coloured card
- masking tape
- pens/pencils/crayons
- scissors
- bradawl
- paper hole reinforcers
- brass paper fasteners
- sticks (chopsticks, lolly sticks or garden canes).

1. Choosing one of the templates provided, copy the outlines onto a sheet of light coloured card. Colour in the puppet with pens, pencils or crayons if you wish.

2. Go over the outlines with a marker and cut out the pieces carefully.

3. Carefully make a hole at the points marked with an ‘X’ with a bradawl and strengthen each hole on the back with an adhesive paper hole reinforcer to prevent them from tearing.

4. Attach the moving parts to the main puppet using brass paper fasteners pushed through the reinforced holes from the front and opened out at the back.
Now make the hinged attachments to fix the sticks to the puppets. These will allow the sticks to be held at an angle to the puppets, so that the sticks and puppeteers’ hands will not show on the screen.

5. First stick a 10cm length of masking tape to the end of each stick, extending past the end and the sides, fold over a few times then flatten the tape to make a small spade-like end on the stick.

6. With a shorter piece of tape, stick the tape ‘spade’ (not the stick) to the back of the body of the puppet. Flip the stick upwards, and stick the underside of the ‘spade’ to the puppet as well. This creates a hinged handle.

7. Trim off any tape that shows from the front of the puppet.

8. Repeat the process for all the moving parts of the puppet, so each piece has its own hinged handle attached.

Use a lamp to shine on a light coloured cloth or wax paper screen.

Practise moving your puppets in front of the light to make the shadows move. Use the sticks to hold the puppets up close to the screen whilst your hands are further back. This will ensure they do not show up on the screen.
Cut out around solid lines. Crosses indicate where paper fasteners should be positioned.
Emperor template

Ox template

Cut out around solid lines.
Crosses indicate where paper fasteners should be positioned.
Dog template

Cut out around solid lines. Crosses indicate where paper fasteners should be positioned.

Cat template

Attach front legs behind head piece