

## Paper Worlds: Hands-on Assignment #1 (Option #1)

The following assignment introduced 3000-level literature students to hands-on making. The course, called Paper Worlds, was offered synchronously online. Hands-on making allowed students to better understand literary depictions of paper: of its scarcity, use, and re-use.

There were THREE options for this hands-on assignment. Students were invited to experiment with a trio of small and simple paper crafts (choose three: a ghost signature, a mousetrap card, paper dolls, silhouettes, or a thaumatrope); make a paper kite; or, make a zoetrope. Students then shared images of what they made and—importantly—a written reflection about their process and what they learned about the role of paper in Victorian middle-class leisure.

### Hands-On Assignment: TRIO OF PAPER CRAFTS

You've selected the Trio of Simple Paper Crafts Option for Hands-On Assignment #1. You'll make three paper crafts that were popular in the nineteenth century. You have five options to choose from. Here they are:



### Option 1 of 5: Ghost Signatures

Take some time to view the “Ghost Signatures Context File” on our learning platform THEN view the short Ghost Signatures tutorial video on the *Crafting Communities* website:

<https://www.craftingcommunities.net/victorian-scrapbooking>



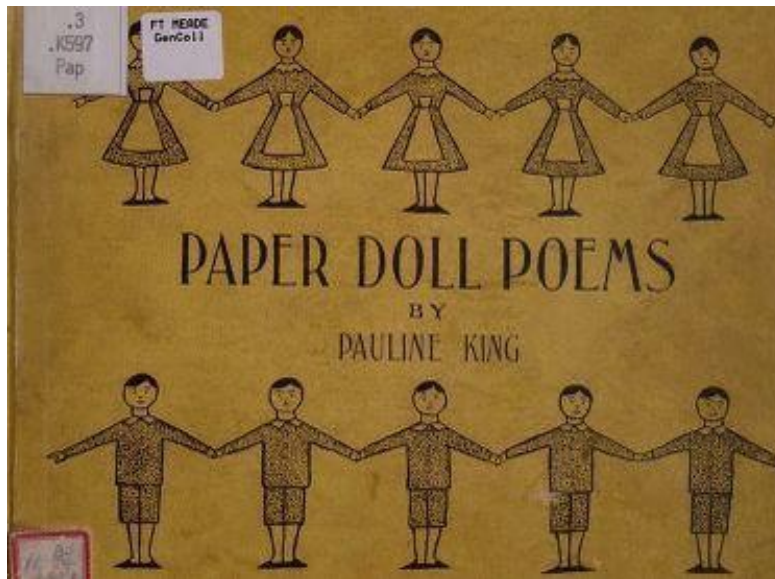
Gather your supplies:

- 3-5 rectangles of card stock or thick paper (ink might bleed through regular printer paper but feel free to experiment)
- India ink and a fine tip brush, OR a dip pen or fountain pen, OR a runny marker or watercolour pencil
- Paper towel



Maker's tips:

- If using a brush, dip your brush often but don't allow too much ink on the brush at once (notice the large blotch on one of the attempts above).
- Try out different writing implements you have at hand; text written with an old ballpoint pen or a marker slightly dampened with water could yield great results. Adopt a make-do attitude and use what you have at hand; perhaps you might borrow materials instead of buying.
- If the ink does not transfer completely the first time, trace over the parts of your signature that didn't transfer and fold it again. Repeat till you are happy with the transfer.
- Make multiple ghost signatures; they change each time. You need not use your own name or signature. Remember: exploration, not perfection, is the goal.



## Option 2 of 5: Paper Doll Chain

Take some time to browse the “Paper Dolls Context Documents” file on our learning platform then explore one or more of the following resources:

- A blog essay from Special Collections at Bryn Mawr College: <https://specialcollections.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2020/07/03/paper-dolls-and-how-to-make-them/>
- A digital exhibit from the University of Chicago Library: <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.PAPERDOLLS>
- A How-To from Coston’s Children’s Library, Princeton University: <https://blogs.princeton.edu/cotsen/tag/h-jannin-lithographer/>
- Watch this 3-minute video for a basic tutorial on how to fold and cut a paper doll chain: “How to Make a Paper Doll Chain”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xX5npCOOTQ>

Gather your supplies:

- Paper: crafting paper, printer paper, newspaper, etc. Feel free (always) to use recycled paper
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Templates or stencils you’ve sourced online (optional)



Maker's Tips and Variations:

Try different silhouettes and poses. Once the paper doll chain is cut, try ornamentation; perhaps you might pencil in detail, apply colour, or even create paper clothing. Look to historical resources for inspiration.

### Option 3 of 5: A Mousetrap (or Cobweb) Card



Take some time to browse the “Mousetrap Card Context Documents” plus the following resource:

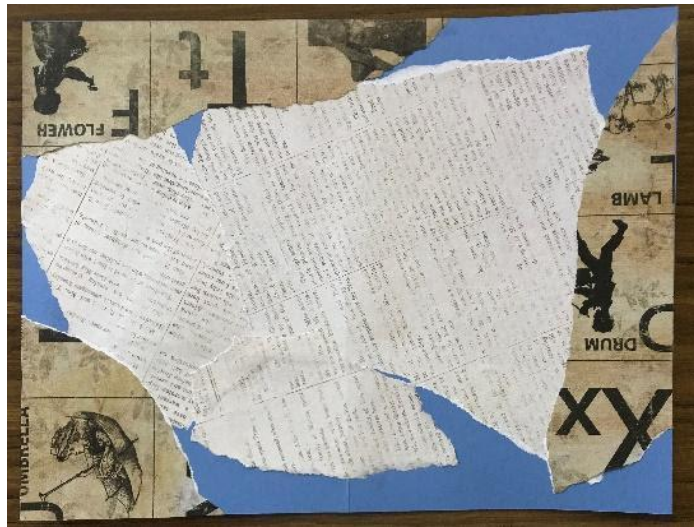
- An illustrated essay from the Met Museum: <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2017/valentines-day-romance-of-cobwebs>

Then view this tutorial by the *Litchfield Historical Society*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbjSmyFwm00>



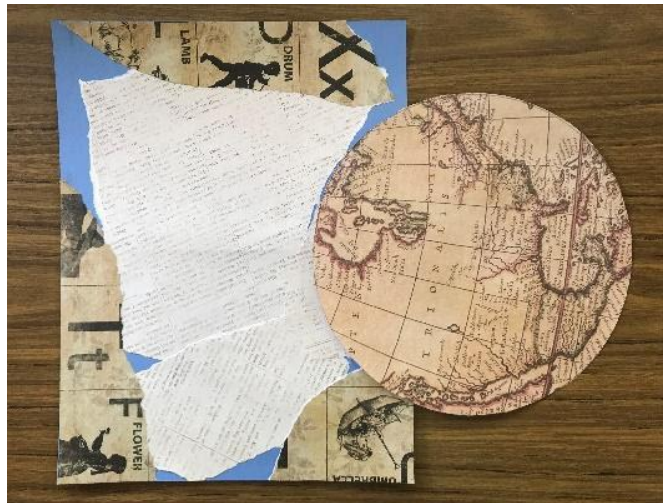
Gather your supplies:

Scissors, various types of paper [recycle what you have at hand, ie. crafting paper, wrapping paper, plain printer paper, card stock], a glue stick, a pencil, a needle and thread; a drafting compass, or other means to draw a circle (such as a cup or plate you could trace).



Process:

- Use one piece of cardstock as your base. The size of the base will determine the circumference of your cobweb/ mousetrap. An 8.5 x 11 piece works well. You might embellish this as you see fit. This example is collaged using glue and ripped pieces of different patterned craft paper; one might also use paper doilies or lace.
- Choose a piece of paper no thicker than standard printer paper to construct your trap/web. Trace a circle onto it and cut out the circle. The diameter of the circle must not be larger than the width of your base. The larger the circle, the larger your trap/web will be.



- It is time to fold your circle. If you are using patterned paper, fold the circle so the pattern stays on the outside of the folds. Fold the circle in half, then fold it in half again, and then fold it in half once more. This pie shape is now cut in the pattern shown in the picture below. Make sure not to cut all the way across! The closer together your cuts are, the more intricate the final trap or web will appear. When you're done cutting, carefully unfold the circle. This is your trap/web.



- Now for what will hang inside. This might be as simple as a heart or a more detailed image like a mouse or bird. Draw this image or print one. If you want to, make this object double-sided so it can be seen from all sides within your cage. I chose an image of a bird I found online. I copied it, flipped the image, printed both copies, and cut each out.



- Thread your needle and cut a length of approximately one foot of thread. Tie a knot at the end to keep the ends together. Glue both sides of the bird together around the end of the thread.



- Thread your needle, with your hanging object attached, through the centre of your trap/web. Flip the circle over (to what will be the inside of the trap) and secure the string to the centre of the circle with either a knot or a small piece of tape. The length of thread from your ornament to the centre of the circle should be slightly shorter than half the diameter of your circle to allow the hanging object to hover within

the paper trap. On the other side of the circle (what will be the outside of your trap), cut the thread from the needle and tie a knot or slip knot to make a pull to raise your trap.

- Now it's time to glue the trap to the base. Using a glue stick, dab the circumference of the circle, making sure to glue on the inside of the trap. Then flip the circle over and, making sure the hanging ornament is out of the way and in the centre of the cage; press the outer sticky edge of the circle on to the base. Allow the glue to dry before pulling on the string.



#### **Option 4 of 5: A Silhouette**





Take some time to browse the “Silhouette Context Documents” file on our learning platform and to explore one or more of the following three resources:

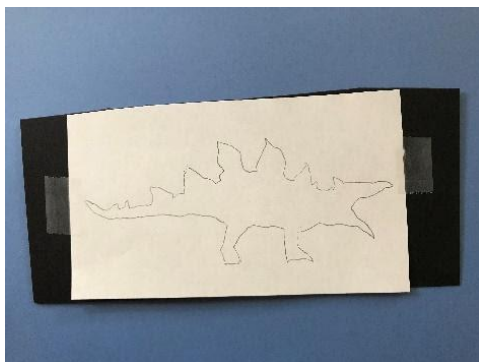
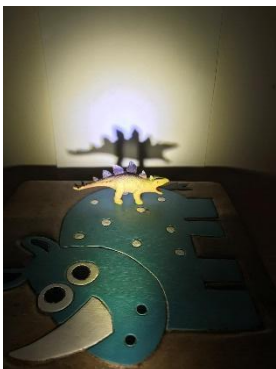
- A How-To from the Royal Collection Trust: <https://www.rct.uk/resources/activity-challenge-make-your-own-silhouette>
- A How-To from The Rosenbach, <https://rosenbach.org/blog/silhouettes/>
- A video tutorial by British silhouette artist Alison Russell on how to trace a silhouette from a digital image: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPMxLxVzEow>

Supplies:

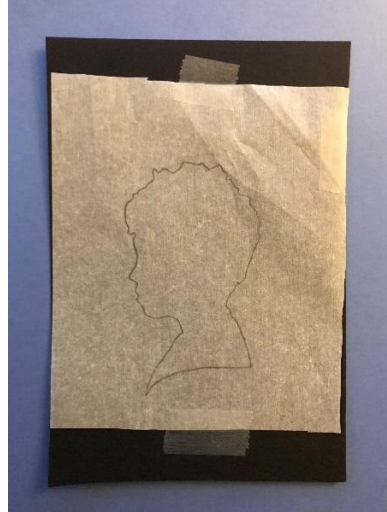
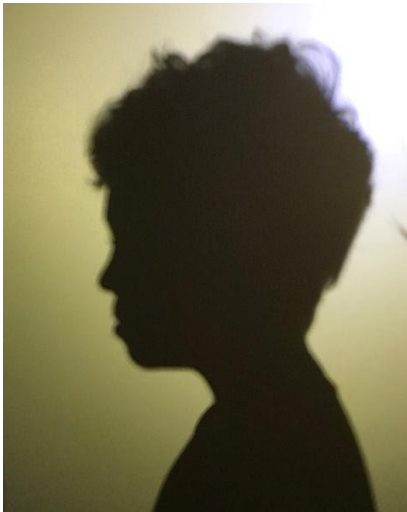
- White paper, black paper, a pencil, scissors, a glue stick, a flashlight, tape, and a digital image or a model; a frame is an optional addition to this list. Whenever possible, use what you have on hand.
- If using Russell’s method, you will also need tracing paper or kitchen parchment.

Process:

- Be guided by the resources in the links shared above.
- The light/shadow method results in a silhouette that can only ever be as small as the object itself (ie. the actual size of your model’s head), so the result is a large profile silhouette. This method works better when the object you are tracing is small, such as a toy or figurine.



- Russell’s digital process is very malleable and very accessible. It requires less space than the light and shadow method, which can be temperamental, and does not require a model. It also allows you to create a silhouette of yourself from a selfie.
- Combining both methods, I took a digital image of my model’s shadow (which I thought might be easier to trace than simply a picture of his profile) and then traced it from my phone using parchment paper. The result was a small and delicate silhouette. Using very sharp scissors or a craft knife will help you achieve sharp lines on the finished silhouette.



### Option 5 of 5: A Thaumatrope



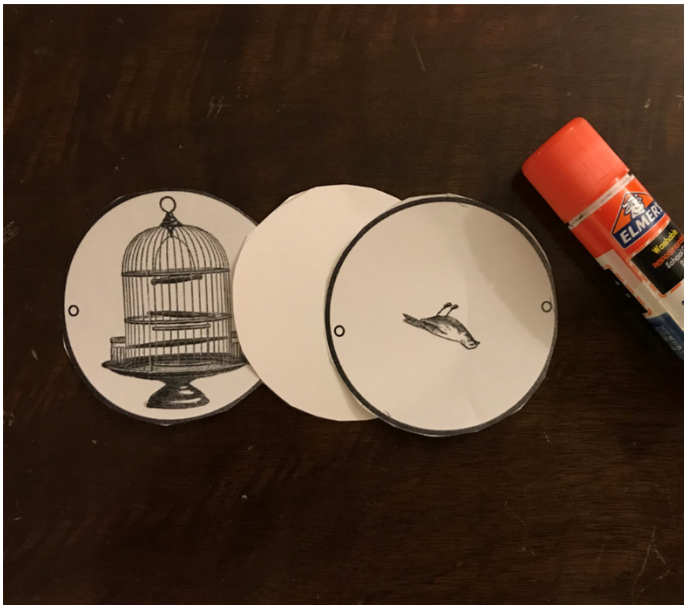
Take some time to browse the “Thaumatrope Context Documents” file on our platform plus one or more of the following resources:

- *The Richard Balzer Collection’s* 19<sup>th</sup>-century optical toy gallery: <https://www.dickbalzer.com/Thaumatrope.602.0.html>
- The History of Science Museum’s Short video chips of a thaumatrope in action: <http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/exhibits/fancy-names-and-fun-toys/thaumatropevideos/>
- A tutorial by maker Zoe G. Stronyk: <http://bricolageforest.blogspot.com/2015/07/thaumatrope.html>.



### Supplies:

- Print out of one of the thaumatrope templates provided on UMLearn OR design your own
- String, cardstock, scissors, a glue stick, a sharp pencil, 3-ring notebook (for poking holes) OR mini hole punch; add drawing/colouring supplies if you feel artistic.



### Process:

- Print and cut out a template.
- Using the cut-out template as a guide, trace and cut a circular piece of cardstock, which you will glue as backing for your templates.
- If you are creating your own thaumatrope images, use a compass or circle stencil (cups work great) to trace out two circles on plain paper and one circle onto cardstock. You can then draw the two sides of your design onto the paper circles. I made my circles 3.5 inches in diameter.

- Glue images onto the cardstock. Make sure the images line up bottom to top (so that when you flip the cardstock each image appears the right way up)
- Placing the thaumatrope on the hole of a 3-ring notebook, using a sharp pencil, gently poke a small hole through each hole mark. If you have a mini hole punch handy, that works. You could use a sewing needle with a large eye to pierce the cardboard and thread your string.
- Thread a length of string through each hole. You can knot the ends of each loop together. You are now ready to spin! Now... how to share your creations and a reflection on them? See below for guidance!



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR WRITTEN REFLECTION AND THE SUBMISSION PROCESS...

You have completed your trio of crafts! Hurrah! What's next....

If you made a moving object, make a short video. Name the file “[Your last name] [your first name] Video” and upload it to Folder for *Hands-On Assignment #1*. Take photos of all three of your crafts; you will add those photos to your reflection piece.

Regarding the reflection piece, take some time to think about what you've read, viewed and made.

Write a reflection (300 to 400 words) in which you share your experience of making a nineteenth-century paper object (or objects or all three objects). Submit your reflection (double-spaced; pdf; with your last name in the file name) to the folder for Hands-On Assignment #1. There is a sample reflection piece in the Paper Kite folder for you to check out if you'd like some guidance. If you're unsure what to share in your reflection, use the following prompts as a starting point. You do NOT have to answer all of these questions. These are just to get you thinking.

- What stands out for you about this object/s, its/their creation and its/their use?
- What does making or playing with this object/objects reveal about nineteenth-century makers and users?
- What properties of paper—physical or cultural—were highlighted for you by making your object(s)?

- Did anything in the suggested resources or the context documents folders stand out for you? What was it and why? AND
- What did your crafted paper objects reveal to you OR suggest to you about the role of paper in middle-class leisure in the nineteenth century?

I look forward to reading your reflection and to seeing your creations.

**\*\* Research Assistant Natalie LoVetri contributed significantly to the development of these materials for our class. Thanks go to Natalie and to the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba) \*\***