

Make Your Own Kamishibai

1. Print out the kamishibai cards, preferably on a printer with full color and 2-sided printing capacities. If not available, print the odd pages, then the even pages on the back of the odd pages.
2. To tell the story, slide the cards from the front of the stack to the back. A suggested dialogue is printed on the back of the previous card where it can be easily read.



Title Card
Front
and
Back

Note: The title card, George's Journey, is on top; the information about that card is on the bottom of the stack — on the back of card #15. On the back of the title card is the information for Card #2, the next card the children will see when you slide the title card to the back.

What is *kamishibai*? *Kamishibai* (paper drama) is a traditional form of Japanese storytelling that uses 12 to 16 large color pictures to tell a story.

What is its history? Reaching its peak in the 1950s, the *kamishibai* man rode his bicycle into neighborhoods announcing his arrival by sounding wooden clappers. As children gathered, he sold candy giving his customers the best viewing spots. With the wooden stage mounted on the back of his bike, he proceeded to tell/act out the story pulling the story cards out one at a time. It was not uncommon for the storyteller to stop at an exciting part and announce to his audience that the story would be concluded the next day! The popularity of *kamishibai* declined in 1953 with the introduction of television in Japan.

Some Recommendations *There are many websites filled with ideas of utilizing kamishibai in the classroom. My favorites are:*

[Kamishibai Man](#) by Allen Say *a beautiful picture book that tells the story of the kamishibai man*

[The Kamishibai Classroom, Engaging Multiple Literacies Through the Art of "Paper Theater"](#) by Tara McGowan

Kids' Web Japan (web-japan.org/kidsweb) *a great website loaded with information for elementary students*