

Matchbox Tales – Christmas Stories!

Family
Christmas
Workshop



Artist: Edward Richards

Matchboxes are brilliant storytelling devices. This workshop shows you how to build and tell a Christmas story using a matchbox. I encourage you to draw your own characters and settings, but in the steps below I have provided some examples of pictures and story titles you could make.



Materials

- A large matchbox (emptied)
- Pencil
- Pen
- A4 thick white paper (watercolour paper is good)
- Colouring Crayons / Watercolour paint / Acrylic paint / Felt tip pens (whatever you like!)
- A ruler
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Decorative paper / Glitter (optional extra decoration)

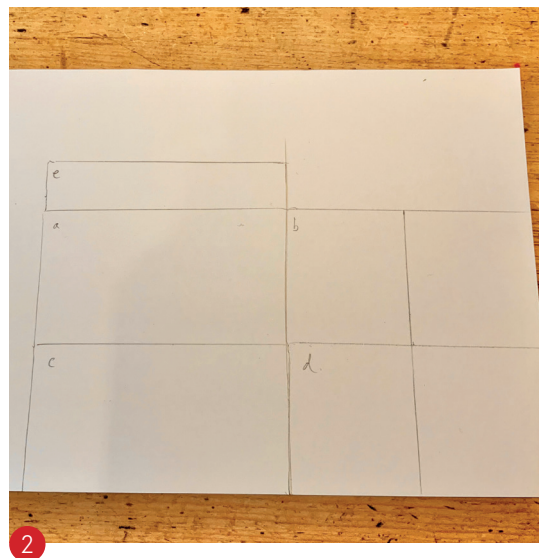
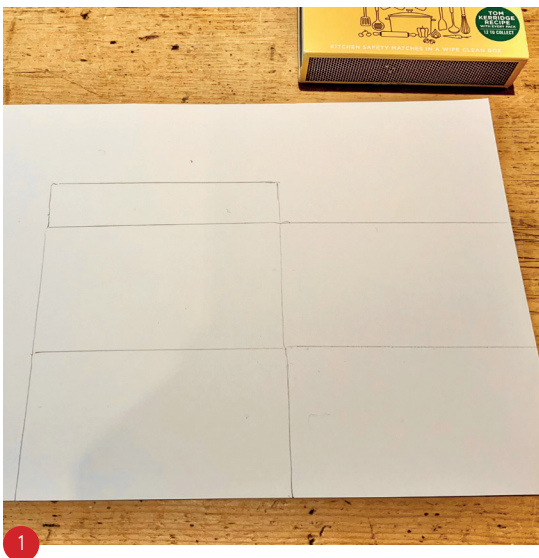
Instructions

Step 1. Drawing Boxes

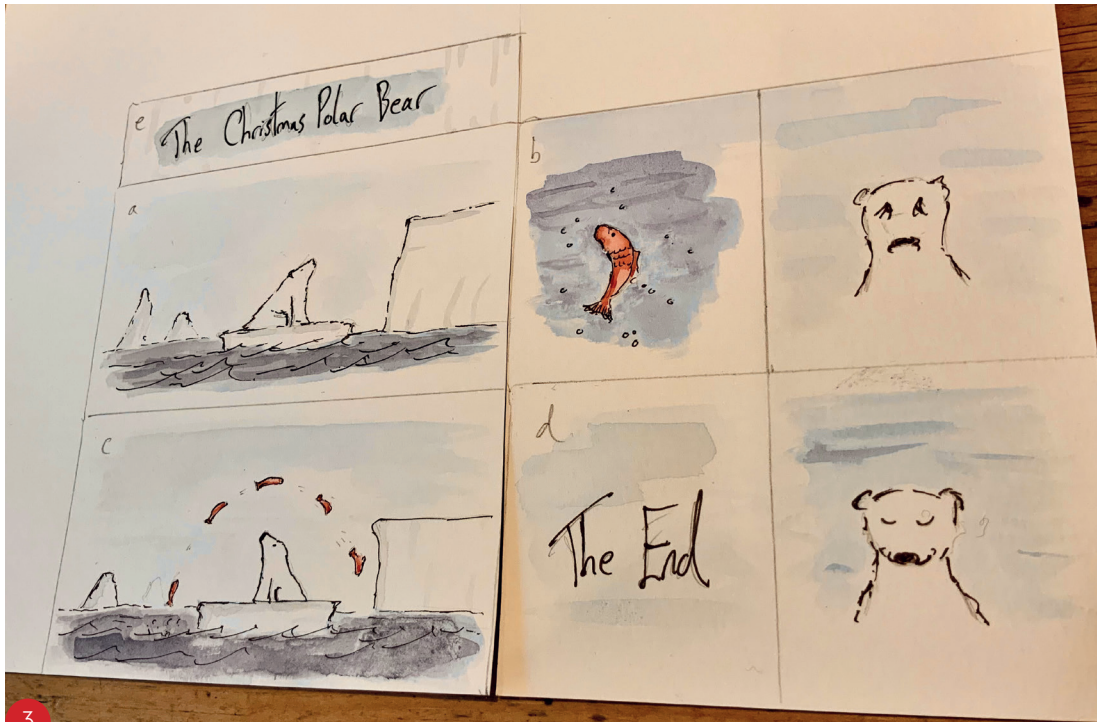
Place the matchbox on its back on the white paper and draw around it with a pencil. Repeat this step 3 more times, so you have 4 drawing boxes next to each other. Then place the matchbox on its long side and draw around it once. Try to draw the outlines next to each other so that you can make best use of the paper, and this will help you when cutting out.

Step 2. Label the big rectangles A, B, C & D. These are your story boxes. Then label the long, thin rectangle E. This is your title strip. Draw a line half way down story boxes B and D.

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Step 3: Create Your Drawings
Now it is time to do your drawings inside the drawing boxes! You can use any materials you like. I enjoy using pen and watercolour and adding a final colour texture with crayon. There are no rules, but below are some ideas.



Box A: it might be nice to draw the setting of your story, with your main character in it. For my story, I have drawn a polar bear on an ice shelf in the North Pole.

Box B: this is a drawing box which is going to fit inside your matchbox. So you can do a different drawing on each half, as you won't see both at the same time. Character faces work really well for these little drawing boxes, as they are a nice surprise to see when you pull out the matchbox tray. I have drawn the polar bear's face in one half and his friendly fish friend in the other half.

Box C: this is an opportunity to move your story along. What happens to your characters in the story? Do they change appearance? Do they travel somewhere? This box is a great place to show us this! In my story, the fish gathers all their friends together to put on a Christmas display for the lonely polar bear!

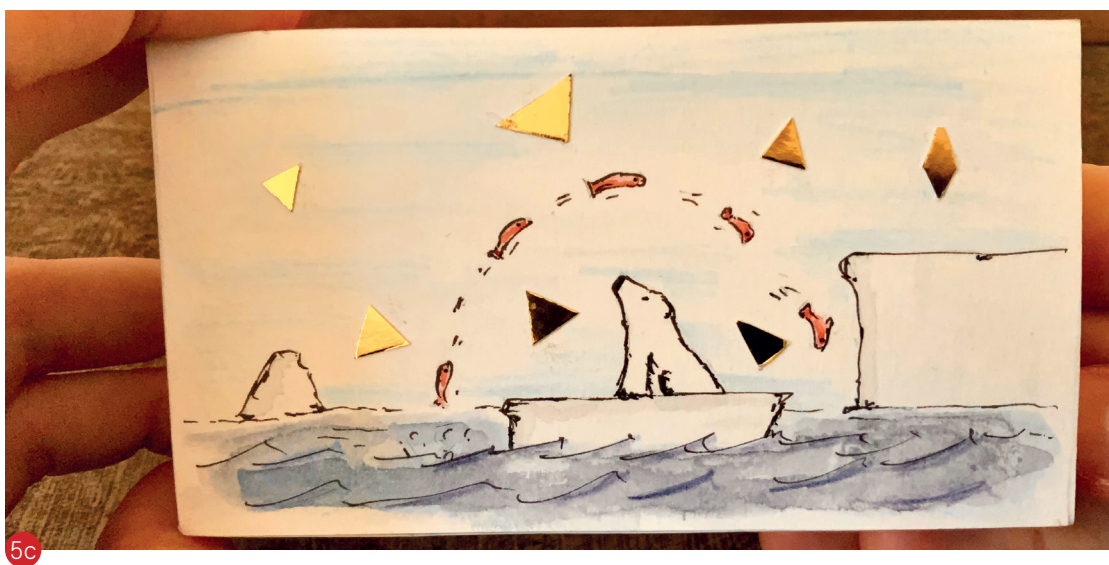
Box D: this is your last drawing box. Like box B, it will go inside your matchbox tray, so you have an opportunity to make two smaller drawings. You can use these story boxes to wrap up your Christmas story. How does the story end? What happens to your character(s)? Where do they end up? In my story, the Polar Bear has changed from being lonely on his ice shelf to being very happy in the company of the fish. I used the other half of the drawing box to draw a final title page, but you can use it to make another scene for your story.

Box E: You can write the title of your story on this strip. You could also do some small illustrations on this strip, to give the audience a hint about what the story will be about!



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Step 4: Cut out your five drawing boxes. Be careful not to cut down the lines within boxes B and D!

Step 5: Build Your Story Box

5a. Now it is time to stick your drawing boxes to the matchbox, and see your story come to life! First, apply some pritt-stick to the back of drawing box A and stick it to the front of the matchbox.

5b. Slide drawing Box B into the draw of the matchbox. You might need to trim this box a bit for it to fit. No glue is required for this drawing box.

5c. Stick drawing box C to the backside of the matchbox.

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5d. And stick drawing box D to the back of the matchbox tray.

5e. Finally, stick your drawing strip E to one of the lighting strips of the matchbox.

Step 6: Final touches

Take a look at your story box and add some final touches. You might like to rub out any pencil markings you don't want anymore, and add some extra decorations. I decorated each drawing with small cut out pieces of gold card, to create a magical arctic sky and to give continuity to my story.

Tell your stories!

You have made your matchbox device, but it needs *your voice*! What tales can you dream up using the drawings you have made? What voices can you come up with for your characters? You can change the story if you like each time you tell it, coming up with new ways to interpret the drawings you have made. You can change the order in which you present your drawings to make a different story out of the same story box. Or you can make new drawings, and stick them over the top of the ones you have already done.

I hope you enjoy making up lots of festive stories this Christmas!

