



Tunnel Books

STRACTION



Peepshow depicting the River Thames and tunnel, about 1843, Britain. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photograph: Dennis Crompton



Tunnel books, (sometimes also known as peep show books) were first used by the Victorians to mark the opening of grand historical events and significant engineering events. Usually pocket sized, these books show paper cut out scenes and expand to give an illusion of depth. The other book illustrated here, depicts the opening of the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The opening of the Thames Tunnel

The Thames Tunnel, was the first tunnel in the world to be built under a river. Work first started in 1824 on the tunnel to pass under the River Thames and connected Rotherhithe to Wapping. It was meant to transport goods under an already congested river but the project proved to be extremely difficult and hazardous. On its completion, Marc Brunel was knighted in recognition of his achievement however, due to lack of funds and issues with flooding, the tunnel could not at that time be used for the horse drawn transport it was intended. Instead, it was decided to open the tunnel to foot passengers and indeed the tunnel proved to be very popular. On opening day 50,000 people walked through it, and about half the population of London in 1843, visited during the first 10 weeks, all paying a penny each. Shops were set up in the cross arches and the Thames Tunnel book was created to mark the occasion. Train tracks were laid much later and the first steam train ran through it on 7th December 1869.

How are tunnel books made?

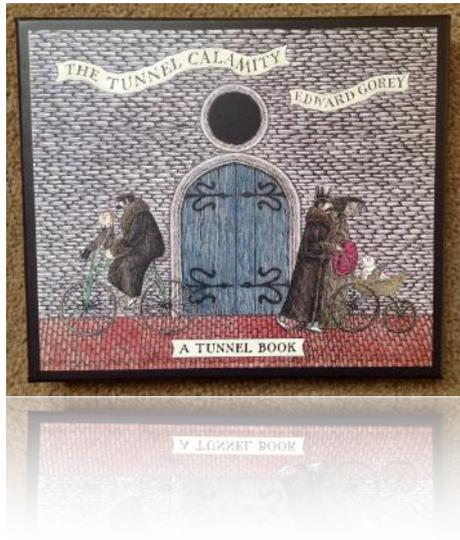
A type of moveable or pop-up book, tunnel books are a series of pages or slides, that are held together by folded strips of paper on each side. The overall effect creates an illusion of depth and perspective. The reader often 'peeps' through a hole in the front cover to see all the way through the various page cut-outs to reveal a three dimensional story.

Books may or may not contain written text and can range from the simple to the incredibly elaborate. During their time at Audley End Miniature Railway, children can be challenged to create their own books. Whether individually or in groups working together to create a class project.





Traditional Tunnel Books

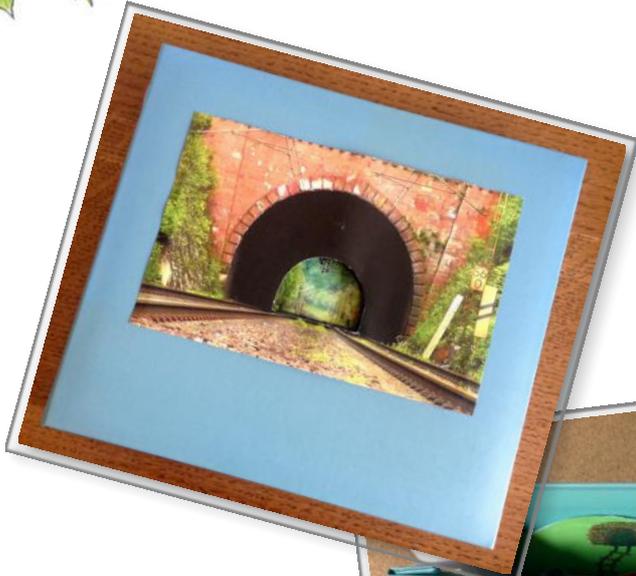


The Tunnel Calamity by Edward Gorey, illustrates a more original type of tunnel book. Made as a series of 'slides' held together by concertina sides, this book has no words but instead tells a story through the pictures it reveals as you expand the book.



A great whole class project. Children are able to emulate the victorian books of the past by making a tunnel book together. Working in groups to create various 'slides' based on their train ride, these slides can then be assembled to create the finished collaborative project.

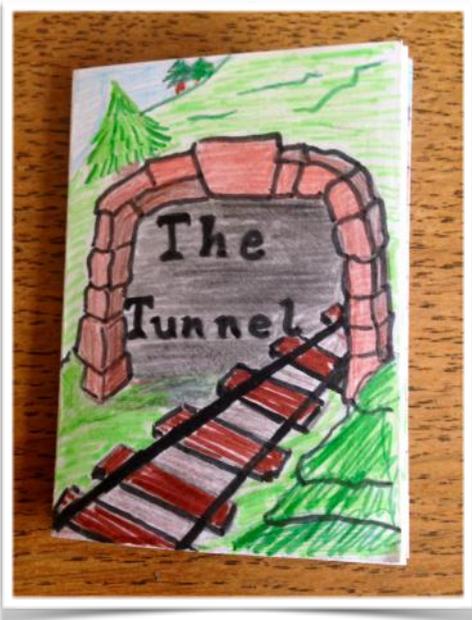




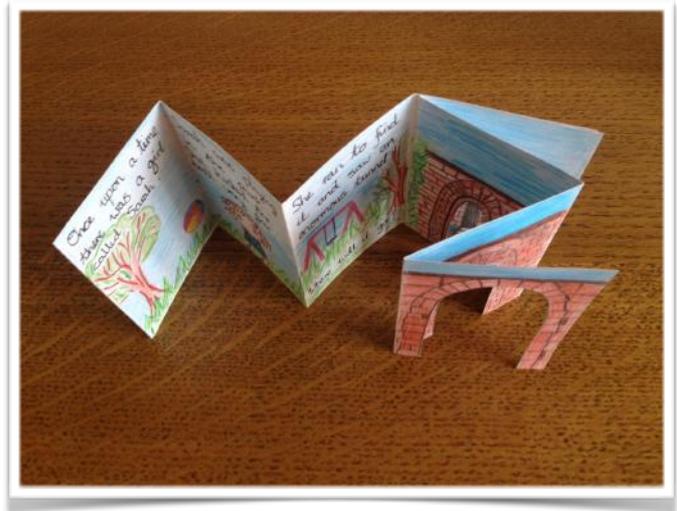
In this example, children are able to see the depth of perception that can be gained through this type of book. Simple additions of geographical features such as ponds, rivers and forests can be added and this ties in well with the map work children will already have completed.

STEAMINATION





This alternative type of tunnel book allows children to appreciate depth through a simple concertina design.

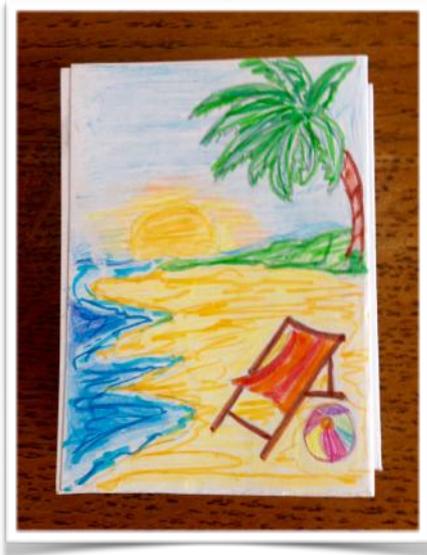
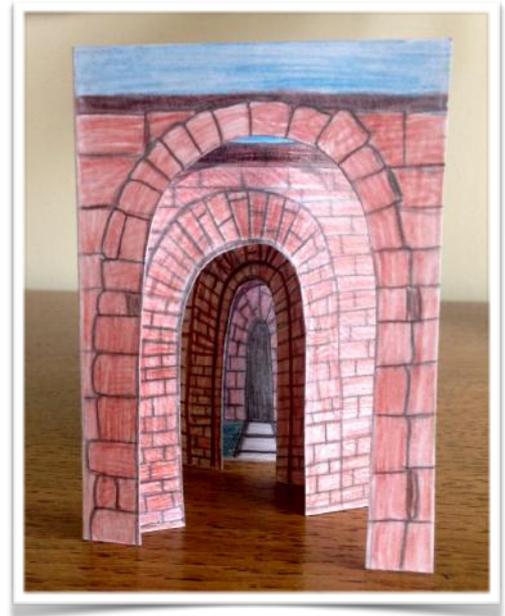


Using one sheet of paper, simple folding a template can easily be followed for children to create a stunning book of their own.





Discussion around how children might describe a journey through a tunnel will draw out great descriptive vocabulary.



Where they choose as their final destination can be constrained or be left completely open ended. Perhaps a tropical island, a jungle or even Grandma's house!

Template example for tunnel book

