



Smithsonian

The Art of Shadow Puppets



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In the Shadows

Most things can have shadows. Shadows are made when people or things block light.



This tree causes a shadow by blocking the sunlight.

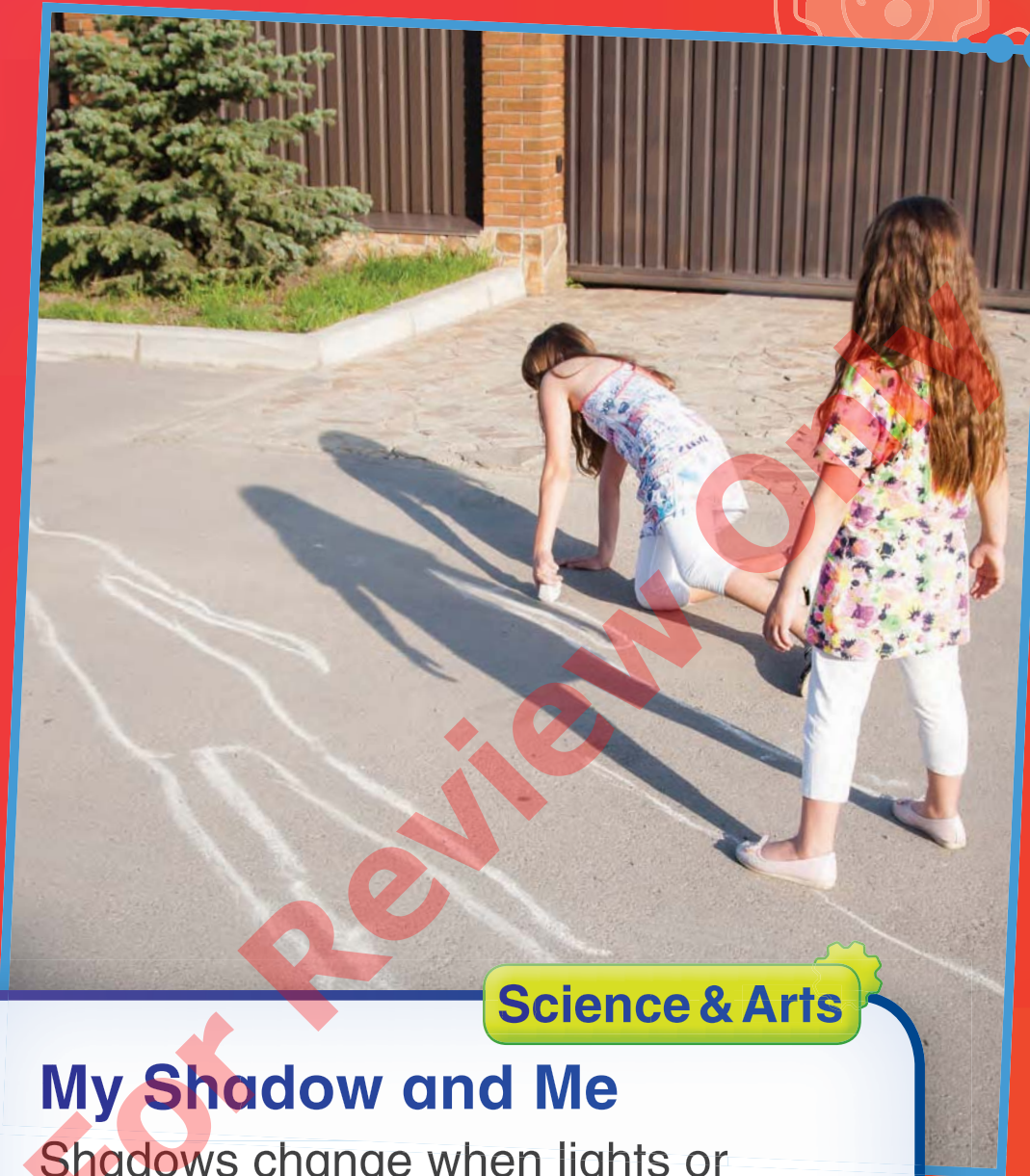
This toy causes a shadow by blocking the phone's light.



Shadow Puppets

Shadow puppets are used to tell stories. They can move with music. They can dance too. They are fun.



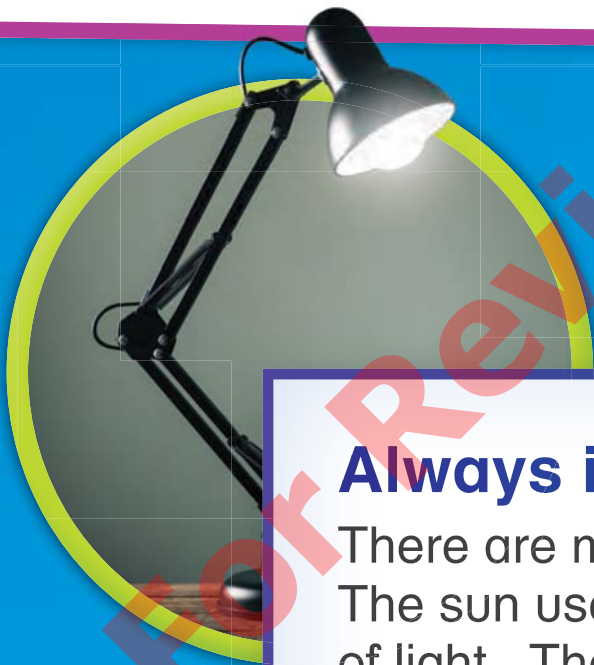


Science & Arts

My Shadow and Me

Shadows change when lights or objects move. Have a friend trace your shadow outside. Later, stand in the same place. The sun has moved, so your shadow will change too!

Shadow puppets are a very old art form. People in Asia were the first to make them. They made them from paper or **leather**. They moved them to tell stories.



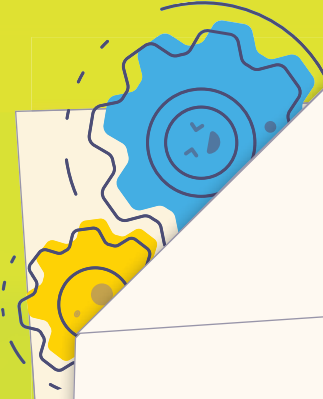
Technology

Always in the Light

There are many types of lights. The sun used to be the only source of light. Then came fire. Now, we can have light when we want it.



This man in China shows his shadow puppets.



STEAM CHALLENGE

The Problem

A group of shadow puppeteers was on its way to your school. But they got lost! Your teacher wants your class to fill in for them. Can you make shadow puppets to tell the story of “The Three Little Pigs”?

The Goals

- Design shadow puppets to tell the story.
- Design a theater and a screen for your show.
- Design where you will place lights based on how you want your shadows to look.





Research and Brainstorm

What do you need to create shadows?
How close to the screen should you hold the puppets? What about the light?



Design and Build

Draw your plan. How will it work?
What materials will you use? Build your model!



Test and Improve

Perform your show. Can the audience see it? Are you blocking any shadows? Can you make it better? Try again.



Reflect and Share

How well did you show and tell your story? What if you used the shadows of real people instead of puppets? What would happen if you moved the lights?