

Introduction/Summary of Lesson:

Kamishibai is a powerful, non-digital medium of communication that was invented in Japan. It combines aspects of Japanese theatrical and storytelling traditions with early cinematic media techniques from abroad. The first kamishibai was invented in the early 19th century and involved paper puppets, known as *tachi-e*, that could be flipped suddenly to look like they had moved. The animation of *tachi-e* puppets was inspired by early cinematic techniques of magic lanterns, which used a light source to project images of still or moveable glass slides onto a wall or screen. Magic lantern shows became popular around the globe and were precursors of reel-to-reel film. (For more information on Japanese magic lantern shows, or *utushi-e*, see Downloads and Links below.)



Figure 1-- A typical *tachi-e* puppet (*The Kamishibai Classroom*, p. 11)

This form of “kamishibai” (later called *tachi-e*, or “standing pictures”) became popular during the 19th century and was designed as a miniature version of the kabuki or *bunraku* theater. Many of the stories performed with these puppets were based on dramas audiences knew from these larger theater productions.

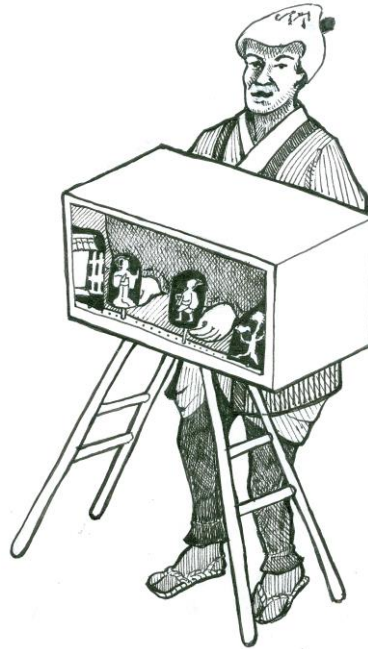


Figure 2--19th century *kamishibai-ya* (*The Kamishibai Classroom*, p. 4)

In 1929, three *kamishibai* (*tachi-e*) street performers got together and invented a new kind of *kamishibai*, inspired by the latest global medium, silent film. This *kamishibai* (called *hira-e* or “flat pictures”) is the card format that most people know as *kamishibai* today.

Silent films had entered Japan around 1910, but they were rarely silent because they almost always had a performer alongside, providing entertaining dialogue and cultural background in the case of foreign films (Dym, 2003). These movie narrators (called *benshi*) became celebrities, and the *kamishibai* street performers of the 1930s emulated their vocal styles, while the *kamishibai* artists copied the visual techniques of popular films, as well as the story lines. The new *kamishibai* was to film what the old *kamishibai* had been to popular forms of traditional theater.

Street performers (called *gaitō kamishibaiya*) typically traveled from one urban neighborhood to the next with stages strapped to the backs of their bicycles. They sold candy and other treats to audiences of children before the performances, and this was how they made their living. *Kamishibai* artists would create stories in episodes, and the performers would rent out a new episode each day. Some of the famous series, such as *Ogon batto* (the “Golden Bat”) continued for hundreds of episodes and was later adapted for television.

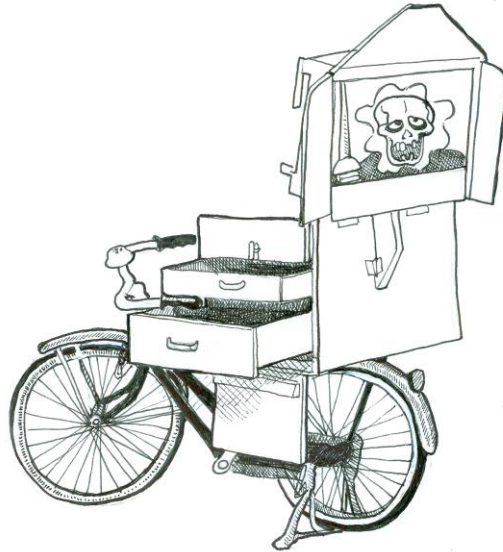


Figure 3--Street kamishibai in the 20th century (*The Kamishibai Classroom*, p. 6)

From the 1930s until the 1950s, kamishibai was the most popular form of entertainment for children, so much so that when television came to Japan in the 1950s, it was referred to as “*denki kamishibai*” (electric kamishibai).

Although street-performance kamishibai is the most frequently mentioned aspect of kamishibai history, from the early 1930s and onward educators and missionaries, who had already noticed the power of kamishibai to attract and hold children’s attention, began publishing educational and religious kamishibai. During World War II, kamishibai became as important as film, radio, and other mass media for spreading the militaristic government’s agenda and convincing people of all ages of the divinity of the Imperial lineage (Orbaugh, 2014). These “national policy,” or propaganda, kamishibai were designed for audiences of all ages and in all the languages of the occupied territories. Kamishibai was considered superior to film and radio in that it could be carried into even remote areas where electricity and airwaves might not reach.

An important lesson to take from this brief history of kamishibai is that kamishibai is *not* a genre of literature, even though in recent years in Japan folklore has become a particularly popular genre for published kamishibai. Kamishibai is a *format* for performance that can be adapted to any genre or content matter and for any audience or age group. In Japan today, one of the favorite genres of “handcrafted” (*tezukuri*) kamishibai is to tell personal stories and local histories. There are yearly kamishibai storytelling festivals held in Japan, where people of all ages gather to tell their own handcrafted kamishibai. Storytellers also frequently work with the elderly in senior centers to develop their memories into kamishibai stories to teach younger generations about the histories of their families and communities. There are currently efforts underway to make kamishibai of the experiences of survivors of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami of March 2011 in order to help rebuild and heal those communities through the sharing of stories.

There are really no limitations on the ways that kamishibai can be used in schools and communities, so I hope that teachers will feel free to experiment and to use these suggestions as jumping off points to begin their own creative journeys, across the curriculum, with this exciting, performance format!

Subject/Grade level:

I have taught kamishibai workshops for students from pre-school to college age. The basic visual storytelling techniques and what I call “the mechanics of kamishibai” remain the same, but the extent to which they may be developed and applied to a broader range of content areas (social studies and science) increases as students ascend the grade levels. Ideally, students will have a chance to master kamishibai storytelling techniques over several grade levels so that they can experience first-hand, their increasing sophistication with this format.

This curriculum is appropriate for grades K-12 with adaptations recommended for grades 6-12 provided in *italic*.

English Language Arts: Media Literacy: Visual and Performing Arts (K-5) *Media literacy, Visual and Performing Arts, History (6-12)*

Duration of lesson: Three-Eight (45-50 minute periods)

Common Core Curriculum Anchor Standards (K-12):*Speaking and Listening Standards:*

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate

Reading Standards:

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words

(Other reading standards could be addressed in the course of this curriculum, depending on the content area the teacher is using with the kamishibai format.)

Writing Standards:

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

CCRA.W.6 Use technology, including the Internet (or, in this case, kamishibai) to produce and publish (perform) writing and to interact and collaborate with others

CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism

Guiding questions/ Essential Questions:

- What differentiates kamishibai as a medium from other media?
- How can we apply our understanding of what is unique about the medium of kamishibai to improve students' communication and literacy skills in performance?
- As an extension, how do we apply what we have learned when performing or communicating with an audience about our knowledge in other content areas and of other genres?

Learning objectives: Being able to differentiate the “Mechanics of Kamishibai” from other media and demonstrate the ability to use visual and oral storytelling techniques effectively in the creation and performance of a kamishibai story.

Materials Needed:

- Downloadable PDF of my article “The Mechanics of Kamishibai through the Art of Eigorō Futamata” <http://www.kamishibai.com/resources>
- Allen Say (2005) *Kamishibai Man*
- Images of Street Performance kamishibai (from Eric Nash [2009] *Manga Kamishibai* or another source)
- Several published kamishibai: (recommendations, see end of lesson for video links of each)
 - “The Three Magic Charms” by Miyoko Matsutani, illustrated by Eigorō Futamata
 - “The Old Man and the Fox” by Naoko Masuda, illustrated by Eigorō Futamata
 - “Little One-Inch” by Jōji Tsubota, illustrated by Hisai Suzuki.
 - “Nya-on Kitten” by Tsuyako Tomaru, illustrated by Kyōko Watanabe
- Kamishibai stage
 - It is also possible to make stages [see appendices of *The Kamishibai Classroom* for instructions] or to perform without the stage, but the stage is well worth the investment.
- Large paper for mapping out stories (2 per story)
- 5 X 7 non-lined index cards for practicing movement ideas
 - It is also possible to have students make miniature stages [see appendices of *The Kamishibai Classroom* for instructions] and create their stories on 5 X 7 index cards, but the final performances are much more satisfying on the large, standard sized cards.
- 10 1/2 X 15 inch cards (matte poster board or oaktag) for finished cards—as many as required to create the story or stories
- Pencils, erasers, black markers for bold outlining, and colored pens or crayons. Avoid oil and chalk pastels that smudge and, when using watercolor or tempera, make sure to dry cards completely before putting them in the stage.

Materials needed to make tachi-e puppets (optional):

- Black cardstock or poster board cut into 5 x 6 in. rectangles
- Wooden disposable chopsticks
- Double-sided tape
- Stick glue
- Paper and pens for creating the images
- Scissors

Assemble puppets by sandwiching a chopstick between two pieces of black cardstock and using double-sided tape to connect the stick to the cards on both sides. The thinner end of the chopsticks should protrude out of the bottom of the puppet to form the handle. These may be created beforehand by the teacher or by the students themselves. Students then create two related pictures, cut the pictures out, and glue them to the black cardstock

on both sides of the stick. When they quickly flip the puppet back to front by turning the chopstick at the bottom, they will create the illusion of a transformation or movement.

Pre-Assessment:

No pre-assessment is necessary for this module. It is unlikely that students will have had prior experience with kamishibai, and their knowledge of other media will be tested through discussion and through working with this new medium.

Note to teachers about performing kamishibai:

There are different methods of performing kamishibai. Many performers (myself included) follow the street-performers' lead by not reading the backs of the cards but rather improvising the story orally while facing their audience. Understandably, not everyone feels comfortable performing this way, especially at the beginning because it takes some time and practice.

Today, scripts are available on the backs of the published cards so that they can be read, and stages are open in back so the performer can stand behind the stage and read the words. The downside to this performance style is that the performer no longer has direct eye contact with the audience.

One way to avoid completely disappearing behind the stage is to pull the card you will be reading out of the stage and to hold it behind the stage at an angle that allows you to look comfortably at the card and also keep an eye on the audience. (This method of performance was perfected by one of my first kamishibai teachers, the late Uté Kazuko, also a well-known voice-over artist in Japan.)

Uté Kazuko's method:

First, pull the last card out of the stage, holding it at an angle behind the stage so you can read it while keeping an eye on your audience. The audience will be looking at the front of the first card in the stage. When you have finished reading the text on the back of the last card, make sure to put the last card back into the back of the stage, while pulling out the first card. Remember, the last card is the last scene of your story!

The first card will have the text for the second card on the back, so you can hold the first card behind the stage in the same way, while you read the text on the back. It is not necessary to put this first card back in the stage, so you can lay it on the table behind the stage, while pulling out the second, and continue in this fashion until the end of the story.

Pulling the cards out in this way takes a little practice, but it can be less obvious than having to hide behind the stage to read. As you get better at it and learn the stories by heart, reading will become less necessary and you will feel freer to interact with your audience and focus on dramatic pacing and the pulling of the cards.

Lesson activities:**Day One: What is kamishibai?**

In this introductory lesson, we explore how kamishibai is different from a picture book. Read: “Kamishibai Man” by Allen Say and look closely at the pictures of the *gaitō kamishibaiya* on page 17. What are some of the differences that they can identify between the kamishibai performer and their teacher reading the picture book to them?

(A picture book does not have a stage, teacher has to look at the pages to read and then show the pictures, the teacher has to turn the pages and the kamishibai performer pulls the cards out of the stage, while facing the audience...They might notice that the children in the picture are standing outside, whereas they are sitting inside, either on the floor or at desks. All of these observations will get them to think about how kamishibai performance is different from a picture book read aloud.)

Next, show them a *tachi-e* puppet and explain to them that this was an early form of kamishibai. Show them how the figure on the puppet appears to move when you turn the puppet quickly. Explain that kamishibai is different from picture books because it involves animation or movement, and you want them to see if they can find that kind of movement in the kamishibai story you are about to perform for them.

--Perform the kamishibai, “**The Three Magic Charms**”

Ask them if they can identify where the *tachi-e* like movement occurs in this story. They should be able to connect it to the transformation scenes of the mountain witch turning first into a monster and then into a bean (Cards 11 and 12). This transformation fools the eye because of the speed at which the card is pulled out of the stage, which is achieved in *tachi-e* by the quick spinning of the puppet. It is similar to the visual illusion of movement achieved by a flipbook.

Now ask them: how are the images different between the picture book and the kamishibai cards?

Look again at the change in style that Allen Say uses in his book when he goes from the past to the present. His images of the main character as a younger man in the past (pp. 15-25) are actually done in a kamishibai style of illustration—bold outlines, few details, backgrounds toned down—while the present-day images are more realistic with all the store signs and details clearly defined.

(You may want to bring in a few other picture books to compare, especially ones that have a lot of detail and very little outlining.)

These are the points that you will also want them to notice:

- Boldness of outline—kamishibai cards are designed to be viewed from a distance.
- Lack of small details—kamishibai cards are designed to be viewed for short periods of time, whereas many picture books are designed for readers to spend as much time as they like on each double-page spread
- Centrality of characters and action—picture books are divided down the middle by a gutter, so illustrators strive to avoid the gutter. Not so, with kamishibai. In fact, with kamishibai, it is just the opposite because you want the audience’s eyes to focus on the central image and central action. Also, picture book artists have to make room for text. With kamishibai, the text (if there is any) is on the backs of the cards and invisible to the audience. This is an important point to stress because many students are tempted at first to add thought or speech bubbles to kamishibai cards.

- Finally, there is a difference between turning and pulling the cards, so they have to pay attention to DIRECTION. What direction are the characters facing so that it looks like they are running out of the stage? What movements of the cards add to the illusion that they are running?
(Pulling the cards incrementally out of the stage with a little up and down movement adds to the illusion that the characters are running.)
- Note again that the visual illusion of the transformations of the mountain witch at the end only work visually if the whole card is quickly pulled out of the stage. This illusion is lost if the card is pulled out slowly.

At this point, there are two possible directions that your follow-up activities could take.

1) You could hand out two 5 x 7 index cards to have students experiment with making an object or character appear to move from one card to the next. I usually have them come up with some dialogue or sound effect for their movement when they perform it for the class or each other.

OR

2) You could have them make *tachi-e* puppets. This also requires them to think in terms of movement from one side of the black card background to the other, but it can be a more entertaining and certainly more historical approach for the first day.

This activity takes a little more time and preparation, but it also allows students to experiment in the same session with the differences among the mechanics of page turning, card pulling, and card spinning to achieve different visual effects.

Adaptations for grades 6-12: In addition to picture books, you could bring in graphic novels or manga or other visual media they enjoy. Have them discuss in groups how and why these media are different and then have them share their insights with the class as a whole. There are so many different kinds of multimodal media in material and virtual formats for students to compare, and all of them are configured differently for different audiences, practices, and contexts.

Students could also research the history of magic-lantern shows, which were popular in Europe and America, as well as in Japan (see links suggested below). How does tachi-e draw upon techniques from this format and how and why are they different? (The innovation with tachi-e is that the inventor wanted to find a way to perform magic-lantern shows outside in broad daylight, rather than in a dark room. He simulated the dark room by using a dark cloth as a backdrop and then coloring in the background of the cards to make them “disappear” against it [see Fig. 3 above]. Again, this is an example of a medium evolving out of a need to use it in a different context and with a different audience.)

Day Two: How Kamishibai is like a miniature film

Remind students of how kamishibai is different from picture books and then explain that today, they will be thinking about what medium kamishibai resembles.

--Perform the kamishibai, **“The Old Man and the Fox.”**

At the end of the story, have them look at how Futamata (the artist) designs the cards so that he comes in on the story at different camera angles. How does it feel different for the audience if we are facing the old man at a distance as in card 12, or if we are behind him, looking over his shoulder, as in card 4?

(When we are behind the old man, we become one with him and his point of view, whereas, we have a more objective view of him when facing him from a distance. The artist can vary camera angles to manipulate the audiences' point-of-view.)

Have them look again at cards 8-10. What is Futamata doing across these three cards? He is zooming in. Where have they seen this before?

(Movies or television)

What effect does this have on the audience?

(It brings them closer, into the action.)

Why would Futamata want to bring the audience into the action in scenes 8-10? (Because it is the climax or the most exciting/scary part of the story. Again, the audience is being manipulated by being pulled right into the midst of the action!)

This would be a good time to read Allen Say's Foreword to "Kamishibai Man," where he talks about cliffhangers. What is a cliffhanger and what would happen to the audience if the performer of "Old Man and the Fox" stopped at card 10 and said, "To be continued..."

Show them a diagram of story structure, such as this one:

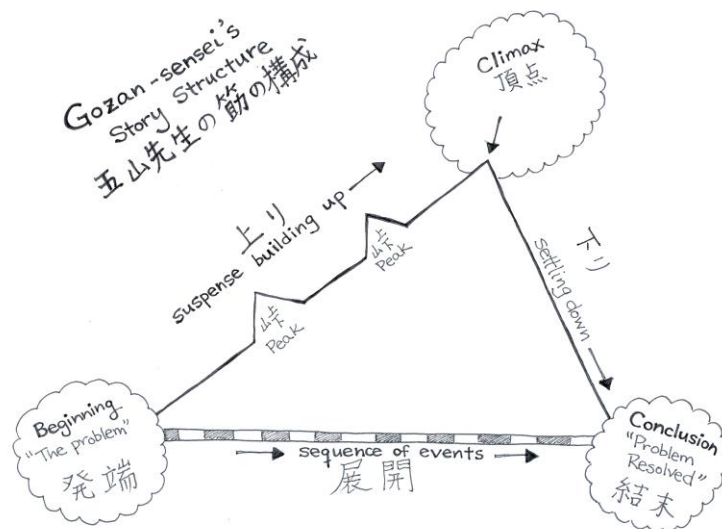


Figure 4—Diagram of Story Structure (From *The Kamishibai Classroom*, p. 32)

(You could also note in the afterword to "Kamishibai Man," I mention that when television came to Japan it was called *denki-kamishibai*, electric kamishibai. The replacement of kamishibai with television is an important theme in Allen Say's book. How is kamishibai like television? How is it different?)

If there is time, they could take the index cards or drawings they developed in the previous session and try zooming in on that scene over 3 cards. This can be a challenge for students who think they need to fit a whole figure or object into the scene. Have them take one distant scene and ask them to zoom in on one part of it over at least two index cards.

Adaptation for grades 6-12:

Students could research the history of silent films and learn more about movie narration. Jeffrey Dym, who has written about the history of benshi (see resources), mentions that this practice was not limited to Japan. There were movie narrators in America, too, but the practice did not take off in America. Why? Because America was much more culturally diverse. It was easier to offer silent cinema for such linguistically diverse audiences rather than trying to translate the movie into all the different languages that would be required. In Japan, which was much more homogeneous, the practice of story “explaining” alongside the films took off like nowhere else!

Students could also view some old films and study cinematic visual storytelling techniques so that they could apply this knowledge to their kamishibai stories.

Day Three: Partial card pulls for building suspense.

Begin by showing them the diagram of story structure (Fig. 4) again:

Point out to them the peeks along the way up to the climax (or cliff-hanger). How can we build suspense in our story to lead up to the climax?

--Ask them to think about this as you perform the kamishibai, “**Little One Inch.**”

This story has exceptional examples of the half-card pull technique. You may also want to review with them the way this was used in “The Three Magic Charms” in the transition from Card 4-5.

What happens when you do not stop at exactly the right point and pull the card out swiftly? What happens if you pull the card all the way out, slowly? You lose the sense of surprise (i.e., suspense). Partial card pulls are just one of the ways that kamishibai artists can build suspense into their stories, and it is different from both films and picture books because it is an effect that can only be created by the pulling of the cards.

After this story, it would be good to review all the visual storytelling techniques that have been covered thus far so that they will be ready to start mapping out their own stories, keeping these techniques and the story structure in mind.

Mapping out their story.

--If possible, perform the kamishibai “**Nya-on Kitten**”

(Even without the kamishibai cards, the story is pretty self-explanatory, so it is still possible to use the mapping out of the story below to show students how to vary camera angles. Divide a big piece of paper into eight sections and number each section so that students can get a sense of their entire story at a glance. Most stories will be more than 8 cards long, so it is important to have another sheet of big paper to have on hand.)

This kamishibai is beautifully designed to reinforce the ideas of how to build suspense up to a climax (zooming in), and it also illustrates how to use different camera angles to maintain the visual interest of the story and also to develop empathy between the audience and the main character. (Notice that the climax of the story happens around card nine for a 12 card long story.) I often use it to demonstrate how to map out a story.

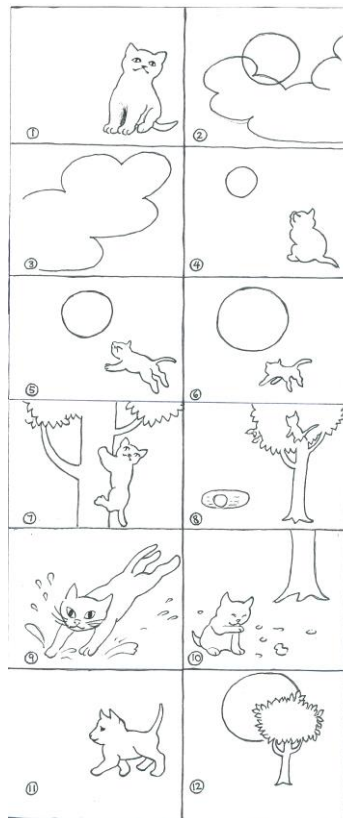


Figure 5-- Mapping out a kamishibai story (*The Kamishibai Classroom*, p.19)

Day Four through Nine:

Now that students have used some of the basic visual storytelling techniques unique to kamishibai, it is time for them to map out their own stories, and there are many options for how to proceed from this point.

Kamishibai offers in a “single rich task,” a chance for educators to touch on many of the common core curriculum standards, while also incorporating learning from almost any of the content areas. The Common Core Curriculum standards I provided at the outset are for literature, but extending kamishibai performance into other content areas draws upon many of the standards listed for Informational Text, as well. If students are creating a biographical or historical story, for example, they will need to do the research necessary by reading informational text. They will also need to translate the language of the written text into an entertaining oral presentation, which will help them to avoid plagiarism by putting their research into their own words.

Although I have typically worked with students to create their own individual stories out of their imaginations and experiences, it is also possible to have students work in groups or even as a whole class to create one kamishibai and to determine beforehand as a class (or group) what the theme or genre they want their story to be. Published kamishibai are often created by several people, who all take on different roles in the process. There could be students who research the content of the story, others who take on the role of the artists, yet others who work together on the script, and they could take turns performing the story individually or as a group with sound effects (possibly music) and dialogue with different characters’ voices. Kamishibai can be used to

perform and deepen student knowledge of almost any content area, so what follows are just some suggestions to be used by individual teachers in any way that best suits their needs and curriculum.

Kamishibai stories do not have to relate to Japan at all, of course, but because this curriculum is part of a series of modules about Japan and Japanese literature, I will focus on ways that kamishibai can be used to teach and learn about Japan. The kamishibai module could be implemented as a stand-alone project or it could complement any of the other literature modules.

Folktales, Manga, Novels, Newspaper Articles, and Haiku:

Folktales are obviously a very popular genre for published kamishibai, as is apparent from the first three published kamishibai I recommend here. If you introduce kamishibai after you have done the module on Japanese folktales, students would be prepared to adapt a favorite folktale to kamishibai performance, and this would be particularly appropriate for grades K-5.

Manga and kamishibai are closely related and, in fact, manga was a popular genre of street performance kamishibai, generally designed to appeal to the younger members of the audience. Artists differentiated between cartoon-style illustrations and the realistic illustrations they would make to resemble action films, a little like the style shift in Allen Say’s kamishibai man. Just as in the early days of film, animated cartoons were typically shown before the feature film, kamishibai performers used manga-style kamishibai for comic relief alongside the more serious genres of action-hero adventures and sentimental tearjerkers.

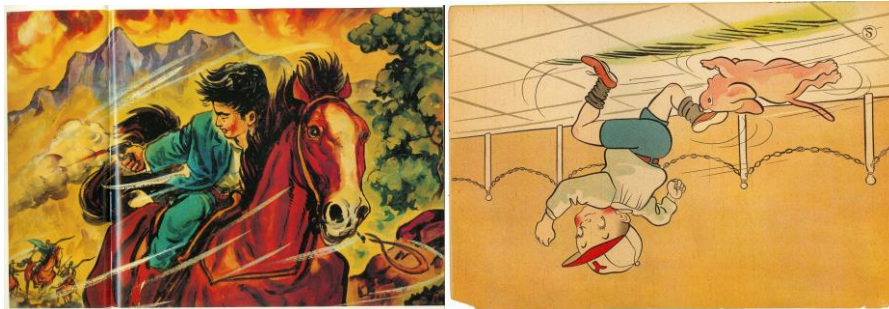


Figure 6--Realistic and Figure 7--manga-style kamishibai
(From *Manga Kamishibai*, pp. 88-89 and p. 251).

“Realistic” and manga styles actually form a continuum, so it is best to start with some extreme examples before exploring the nuances.

Adaptation for grades 6-12: *Students in the upper grades will have a more sophisticated grasp of the difference between cartoons and realistic styles of drawing. Japan’s most well known cartoonist, Tezuka Osamu famously argued that the stylized conventions of cartooning made it more akin to writing than drawing. (Scott McCloud makes the same point in Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art, p. 131) Grade 6-12 students could experiment with these different styles and decide what would be most appropriate for the stories they are planning to tell.*

Kamishibai have been created based on novels, short stories, newspaper articles, and films. It is not difficult to imagine a kamishibai about a haiku poet or group of poets that would offer students opportunities to perform not only their haiku, but also the process that went into making it! History, biography, science and even mathematics have been topics for kamishibai over the years. Teachers can include as many core curriculum skills as possible when having their students do the research necessary to create a kamishibai performance about a topic of their choosing.

If students are learning about the history of Japan or an aspect of the culture, for example, they could do the research necessary to adapt that topic into a kamishibai story. As an example, a high school history teacher who had taken my kamishibai workshop, later contacted me to say that he had used kamishibai successfully with his students to tell the story of the life of the Buddha, thus combining the history of religion and learning about an important aspect of Japanese culture at the same time. There are many published kamishibai today specifically created to instruct Japanese young people about their own traditional festivals because the younger generation today no longer grow up knowing the history or significance of the various implements and rituals involved.

Whatever topic or genre a teacher or class chooses for making and performing kamishibai, however, there are certain considerations to keep in mind when making that decision:

- 1) As a form of drama, kamishibai is ACTION-oriented. Stories where little or no action occurs will not make an interesting kamishibai performance. If a story is all dialogue and very little action, it might be better to consider doing reader's theater or other kinds of dramatization.
- 2) Like film, kamishibai stories need to KEEP MOVING at a pace and rhythm that maintains audience interest. Students should not spend more than a minute narrating one card. As one filmmaker told me, audiences' eyes tire long before their ears do. This means that students will need to keep their oral narration—whether narrative voice, sound effects, or dialogue—simple and streamlined and edit out any extraneous information.
- 3) Although this may seem obvious, kamishibai is VISUAL. To keep a story visually interesting, students need to consider how to incorporate some of the animation techniques outlined above and make sure to vary their camera angles from one scene to the next. As the students discuss the story, they will be looking for places to create suspense, building up to a climax through the partial card-pulling techniques or through zooming in and panning out at appropriate moments.
- 4) Kamishibai is INTERACTIVE and comes to life through performance in front of a live audience. Through performance in front of a variety of audiences, students learn to consider their audience's age and interests in a concrete way that they can carry with them into the more abstract consideration of audience when writing. Also, they will learn to keep the story lively through sound effects, dialogue, limited narration, and, where possible, audience participation.
- 5) Most importantly, kamishibai is MULTIMODAL and involves the smooth and timely coordination of the various modes involved. Students will need to practice performing so that they can create an oral soundtrack for what the audience is actually seeing on the cards as the story unfolds.

If, for example, a card shows a bomb exploding, the performer needs to make the sound effect of the explosion as soon as, or even a moment before, the audience sees it. If a performer pulls back the card to reveal the explosion and then spend a few minutes describing what is happening or explaining the history behind the bombing before finally making the sound effect, the timing will be off. For the audience, this creates an experience similar to watching a movie that has been dubbed badly.

Note about drawing as a way of researching and learning about the world:

Many teachers fear that they or their students will not be capable of drawing historical or factual details, but this overlooks the fact that drawing is itself an important way of learning about the world. Being able to reproduce a scene or characters from a different time and place involves careful research and close observation. Allen Say's "Kamishibai Man" provides a perfect example of how an artist meticulously researches his topic before creating believable scenes of the streets of Tokyo, past and present. Collecting photographs and reference images to work from, as well as reading primary and secondary materials, deepens students' knowledge of their topic and challenges them to translate, or transmediate, this knowledge into a visual format. The perfection of the end result is far less important than giving students the opportunity to experience the discipline involved in this learning process.

Post-Assessment:

The best judges of a student or group performance and its effectiveness will be the students themselves. Whenever I work with students to create and perform kamishibai stories, I always have them develop a rubric along with me of elements that we will be looking for in an excellent kamishibai performance. Some of these elements might include:

Illustration strategies: Do the illustrations have...?

- Bold outlines/ image centered
- Effective direction of movement
- Camera angles vary meaningfully from one card to the next
- Effective use of zooming in and panning out
- Effective use of card pulling strategies
 - Use of sudden transformations
 - Slow transitions (e.g., Meanwhile...Three weeks later...)
 - Half card or partial card pulling technique
- Well developed story structure
 - Suspense building to climax
 - Strong beginning and ending

Oral storytelling strategies: Does the performer use...?

- Narrative voice
- Dialogue between/among characters in different voices
- Use of interior monologue (Giving the audience the characters' thoughts)
- Effective use of sound effects
- Voice projection
- Good posture and no extraneous movement (such as playing with the stage or otherwise fidgeting). Is gesture and body language part of the storytelling performance or a distraction from it?

Building in time for students to constructively critique each other after every practice and performance will help them to improve their peers performances, as well as to reflect productively on their own.

Extension activities/ Extending the lesson:

Extension activities are the most important part of any kamishibai curriculum because kamishibai cards only come to life through performance. Once the cards (and stages) have been made, multiple opportunities for the students to perform for a variety of audiences—peers, younger students, parents, the community—will continue to improve their storytelling skills and also deepen their knowledge of their stories and the content they have mastered. Performance provides unrivaled opportunities for students to feel pride in what they have accomplished and to build confidence. Telling their stories to younger audiences and to older audiences also gives them opportunities to adjust their telling for different listeners and to become effective educators in their turn.

Downloads and links:

- [Discover Kamishibai](#)—Website created by Margaret Eisenstadt and Donna Tamaki, where you can purchase kamishibai stages and published storycards and also find many useful articles about kamishibai.
- “The Mechanics of Kamishibai through the Art of Eigorō Futamata” by Tara McGowan, www.kamishibai.com/resources
- “Creating and Using Kamishibai” by Cathy Spagnoli
<http://www.kamishibai.com/PDF/CreatingUsingKamishibai.pdf>
- “Integrating Kamishibai Performance across the Curriculum” by Tara McGowan
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/content.cfm/integrating-kamishibai-performance-across-the-curriculum>
- “The Many Faces of Kamishibai: Past, Present, and Future” by Tara McGowan
<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/content.cfm/the-many-faces-of-kamishibai>
- David Battino and Hazuki Kataoka also offer tips for creating kamishibai at www.storycardtheater.com

Videos:

- [What is Kamishibai](#)—An Introduction to kamishibai by Jeffrey Dym
- [Kamishibai Master Yassan](#)—Short excerpt of a performance by the late kamishibai street performer and educator, Yassan, performing a biographical story about the famous cartoonist Tezuka Osamu.
- [Storytelling – Lessons from Kamishibai](#)—Jean-François Chénier uses kamishibai as a way to discuss creating better power point presentations

In the workshop, “**Kamishibai Storytelling: Engaging Visual and Oral Literacies in the Classroom and Connecting to the Common Core Literacy Standards.**” held at The Ohio State University for teachers, storyteller and literacy scholar, Tara McGowan demonstrates how to perform kamishibai without using the stage, but she prefers to perform with the stage and recommends its use whenever possible. Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxfMljCA-LY07Ok384XYbUqFc8pq9aI9Y>

- Tara McGowan: "[A Child Trapped Within](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: "[A day in the life of Strutio](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: "[Nya on - Kitten](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: Student Kamishibai "[The Ghost](#)"
- Tara McGowan: Informational Kamishibai Example - [Kabutomushi](#):
- Tara McGowan: "[The Great Snake Mistake](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: "[The Old Man And The Fox](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: "[The One Inch Boy](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: "[The Three Magic Charms](#)" Kamishibai
- Tara McGowan: [Brief History of Kamishibai](#)
- Tara McGowan: "[Dinosaurs](#)" Kamishibai

For more information on Japanese magic lantern shows (*utushi-e*), see:

http://www.f.waseda.jp/kusahara/Utsushi-e/Welcome_to_Utsushi-e.html

<http://www.magiclanternsociety.org/about-magic-lanterns/the-magic-lantern-in-japan/>

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