

materials you will need

timber

25 x 50 mm (or old 2" x 1") pine or maple (pine is cheaper) in lengths as follows (most pieces are around 22 mm x 45 mm which is fine):

- 8 pieces x 1000 mm
- 20 pieces x 650 mm
- 20 pieces x 600 mm
- 1 piece x 1200 mm

which can all be cut out of 19 pieces of 2.1 metre lengths.

must be exact lengths!

fabric

The amounts are based on fabric 1200 mm wide. The black fabric is slightly see-through 100 % cotton - if it proves too see-through, use two layers.

- 10 metres coloured
- 5 metres black

You may need extra black to line the inside if your coloured fabric is not thick enough.

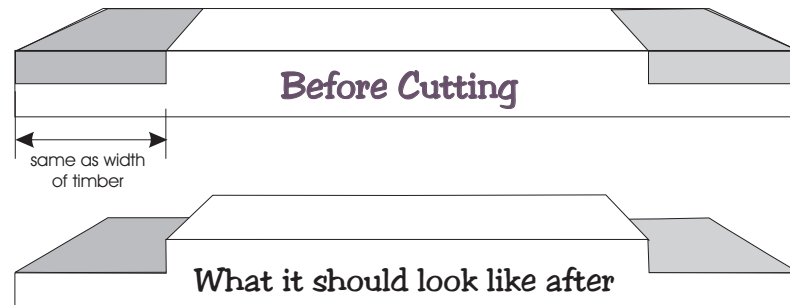
We suggest you use plain colour or colours for covering the theatre that doesn't detract from the puppets.. There is no need for expensive fabric, just make sure it is thick enough not to be see-through!

other stuff

- Staple gun & staples
- 18 butt hinges
- Hinge screws
- Don't have to be expensive hinges
- 20 cm velcro (2 sides)
- 10 x 8 mm dowels
- Make these 45 mm long
- A drill & 8mm drill bit
- PVA (or stronger) glue
- At least 4 G-clamps
- Screw driver & scissors

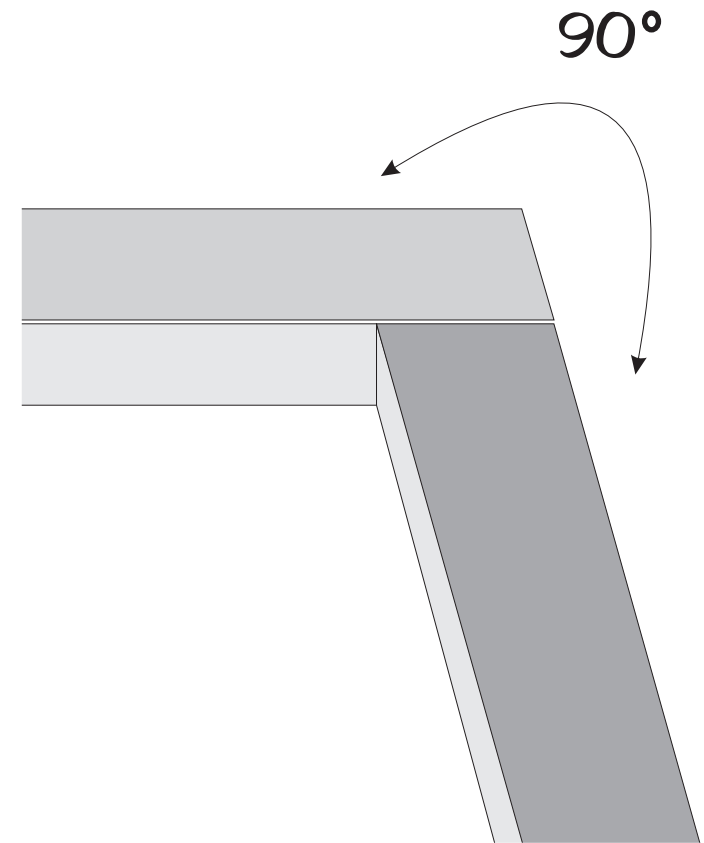
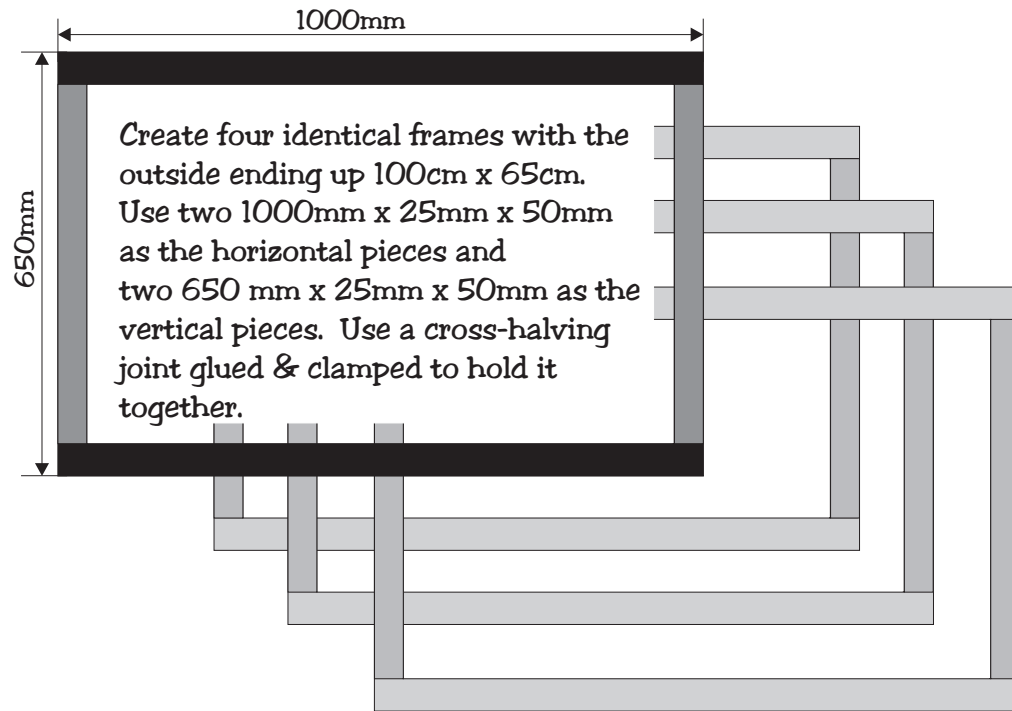
how to begin

do not do anything to this 1200 mm piece



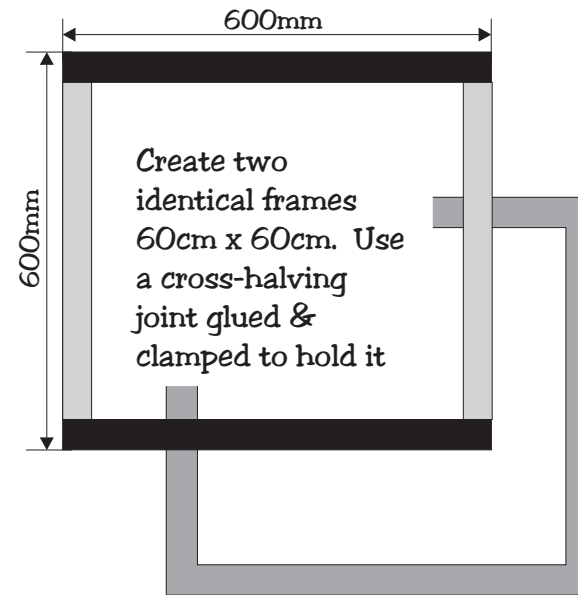
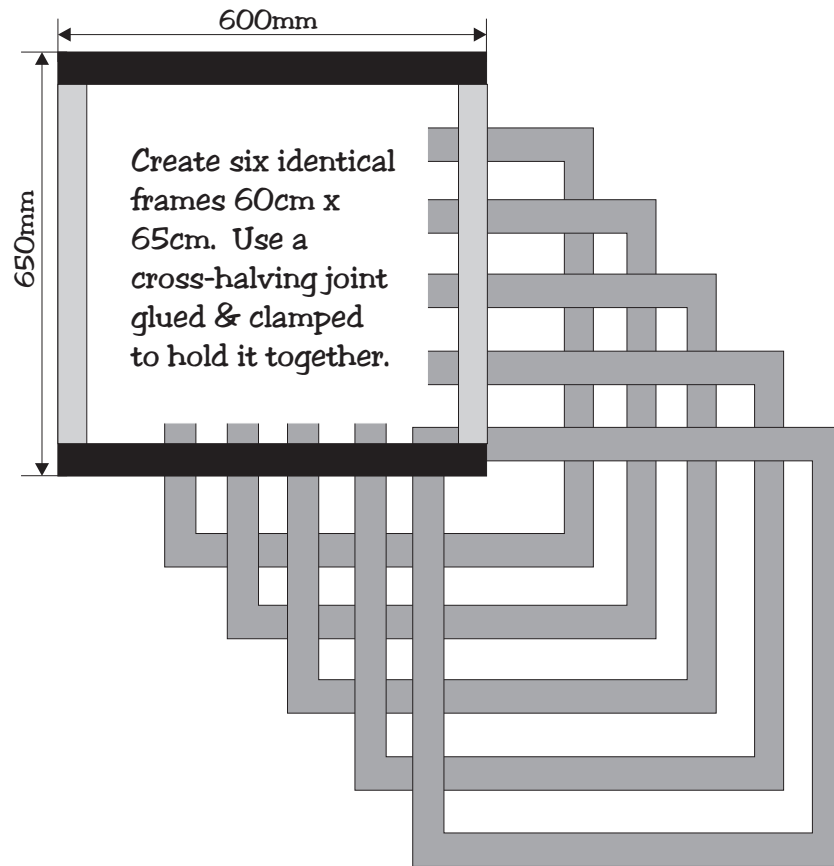
You will need to create a "halving" joint on each end of every piece, except the 1200mm piece. This is generally done with a small saw and a chisel. If you have a router, you can clamp several pieces together and route the joints more accurately.

next bit



bit after the "next bit"

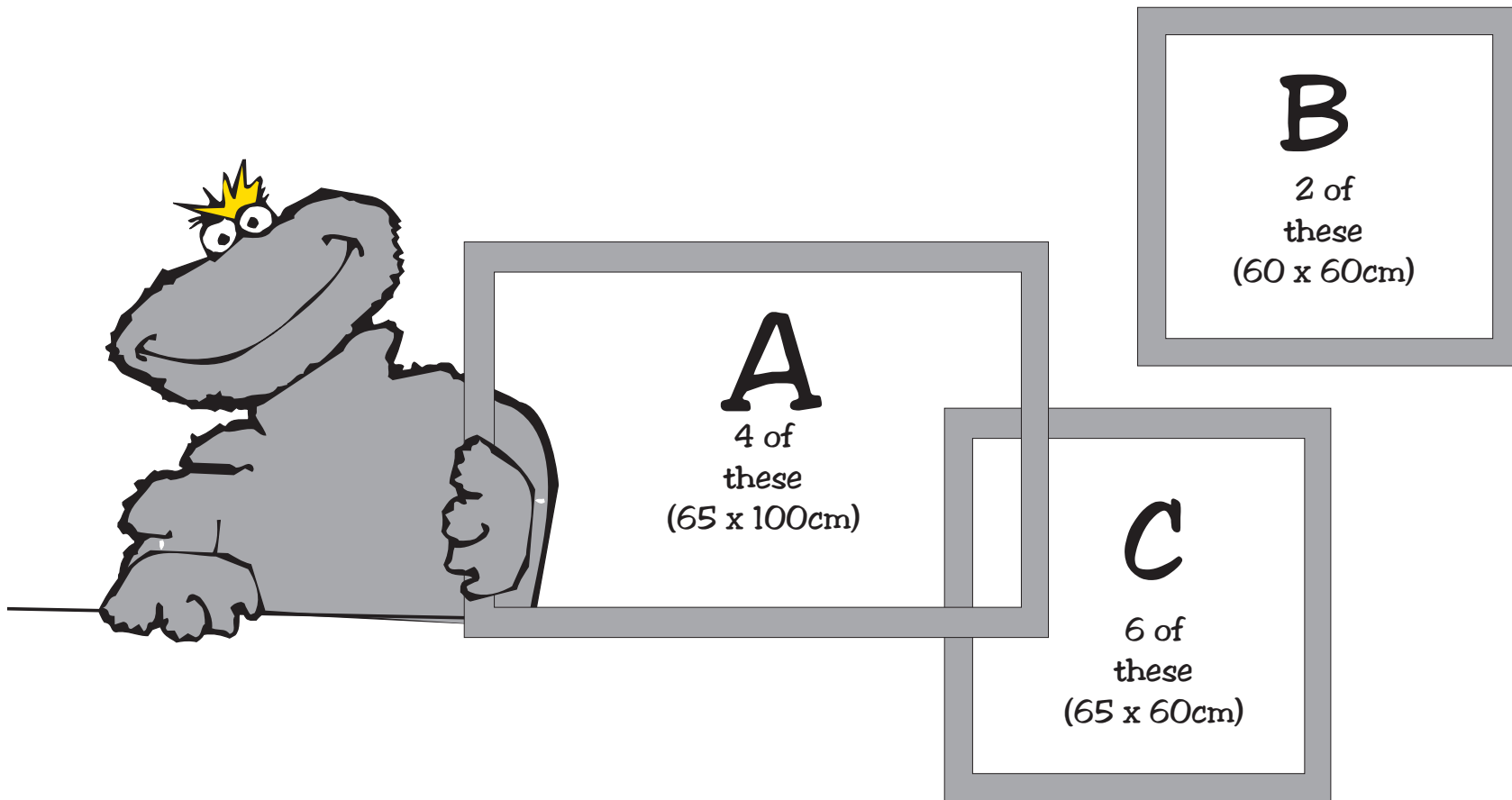
Repeat the construction on the previous page, but this time make the following frames:



adding some colour

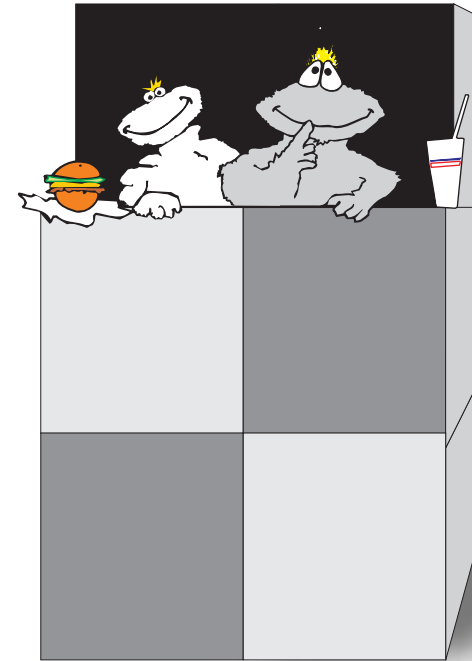
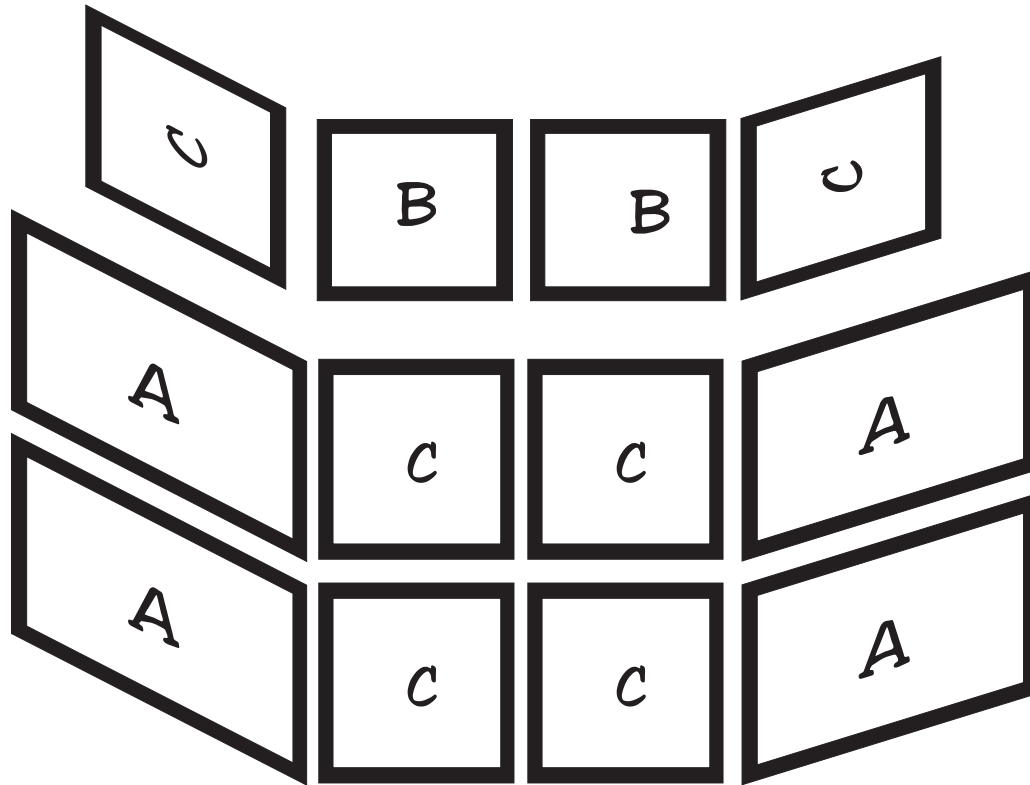
By now you should have created the following frames. Make sure the glue is completely dry. You should leave the glue to dry overnight. Once you have completed the frames, you might like to give the edges a quick sand to smooth any rough bits. If you are really keen you could paint or laquer the wood!

I will call them from now on by the letters A, B or C as shown below.



adding some colour 2

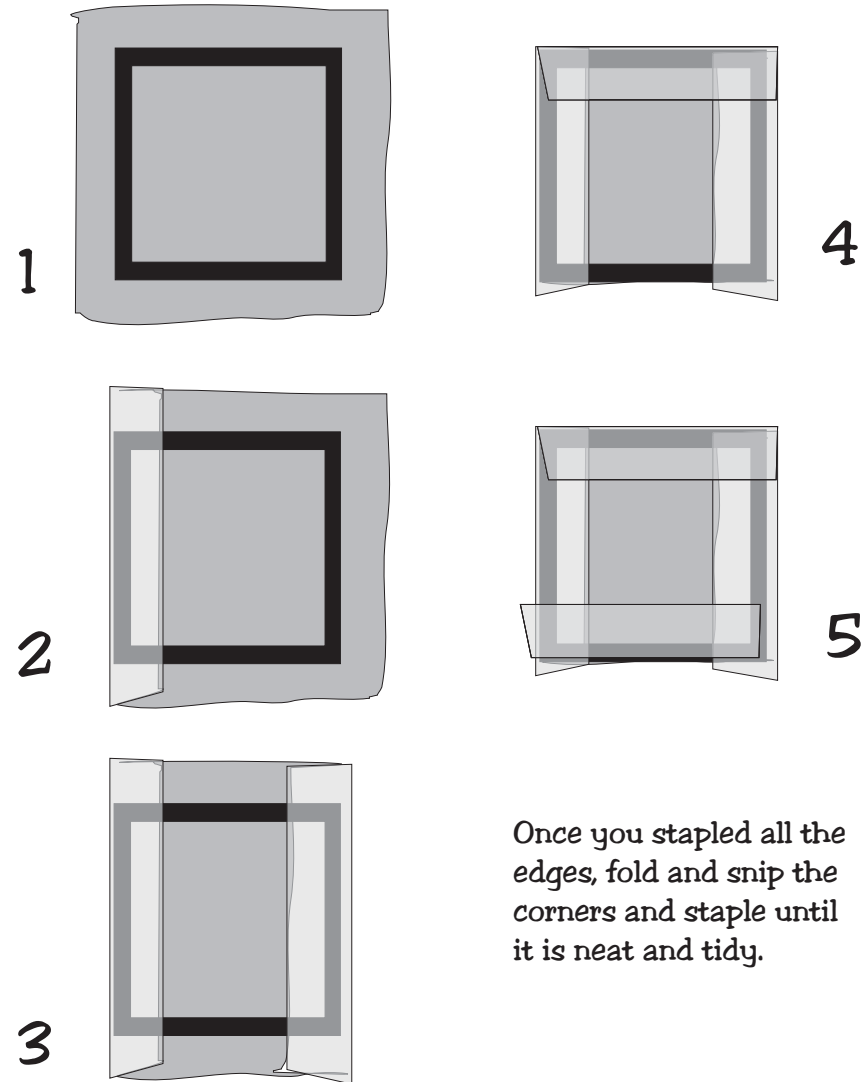
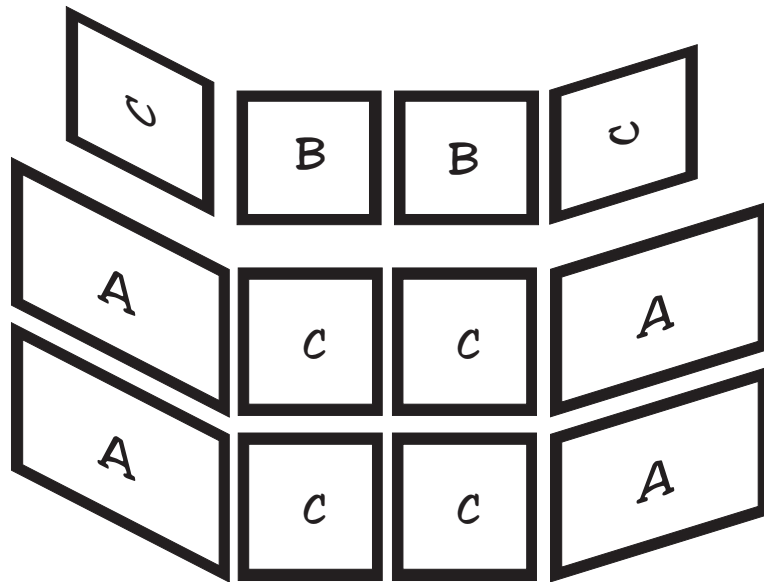
We are now going to cover the theatre with the coloured fabric. If you are wanting to use have multi-coloured theatre, the diagram below shows what order the various panels are going to go. I'll leave your colour combination up to your imagination ...



adding some colour 3

Using your staplegun, cover all the "A" & "C" frames with coloured fabric. Cover the "B" frames with black fabric.

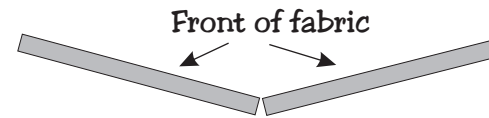
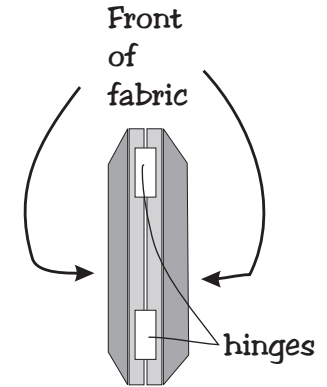
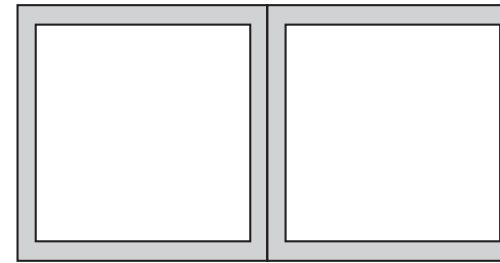
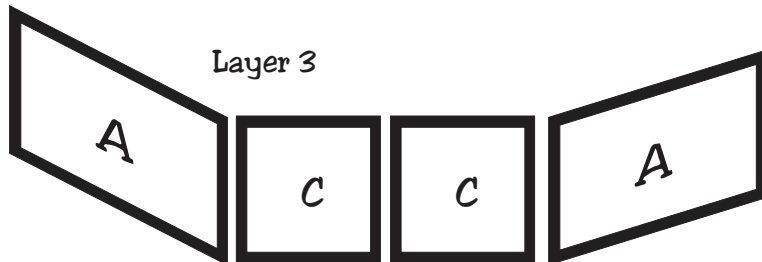
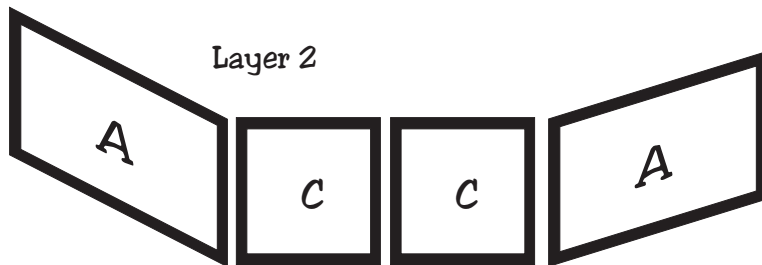
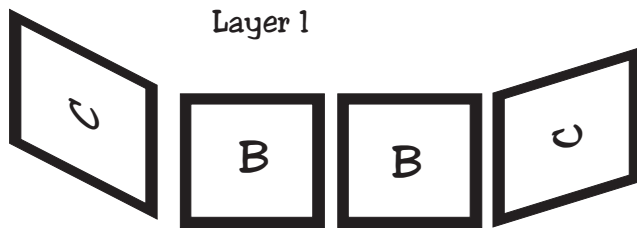
When you are covering the frames. Lay the fabric underneath and staple in the middle of the edge on one side. Then staple opposite. Then go to the middle of another side and then go opposite. Then continue to move around so that the corners are the last part you do. Each time you staple, make sure the fabric is pulled tight.



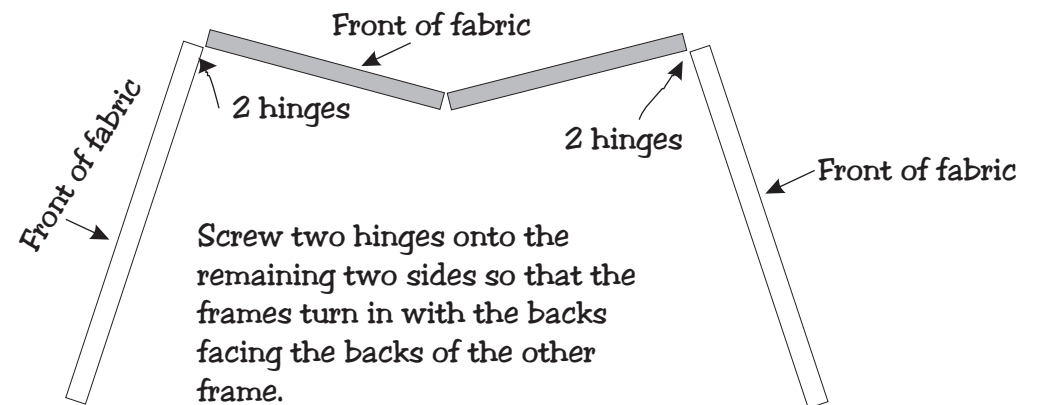
Once you stapled all the edges, fold and snip the corners and staple until it is neat and tidy.

hinging the frames

We are now going to treat the pieces below (called layers) as separate sections that will be hinged together. All three sections are going to be hinged the same. So repeat the following steps for each of the three layers.



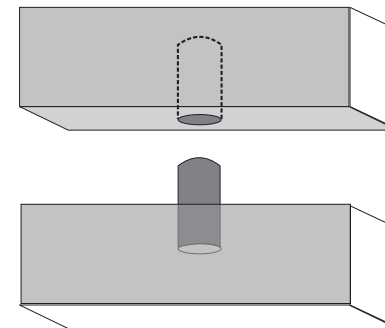
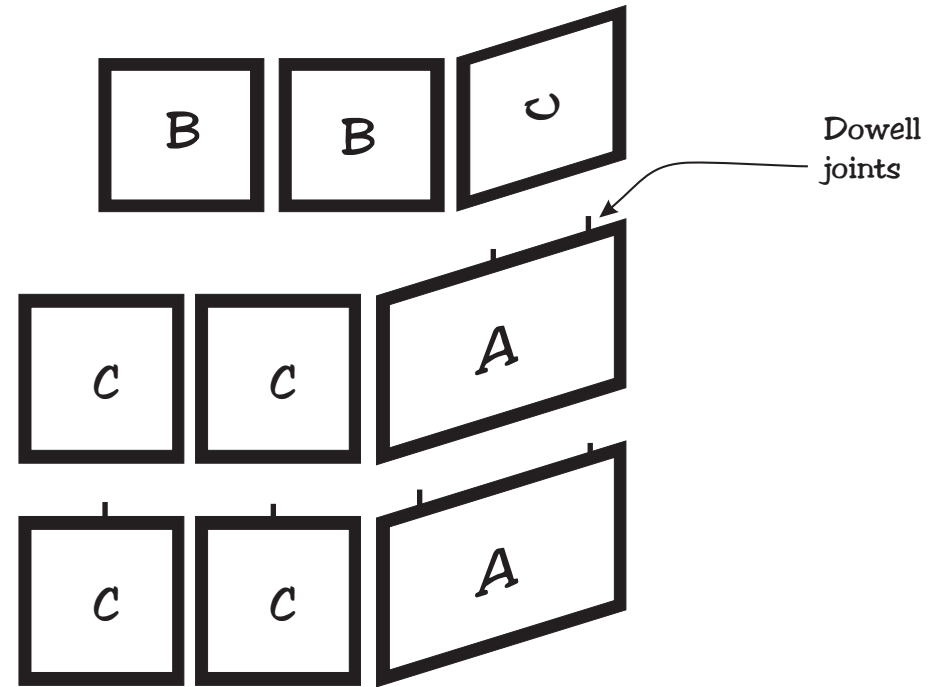
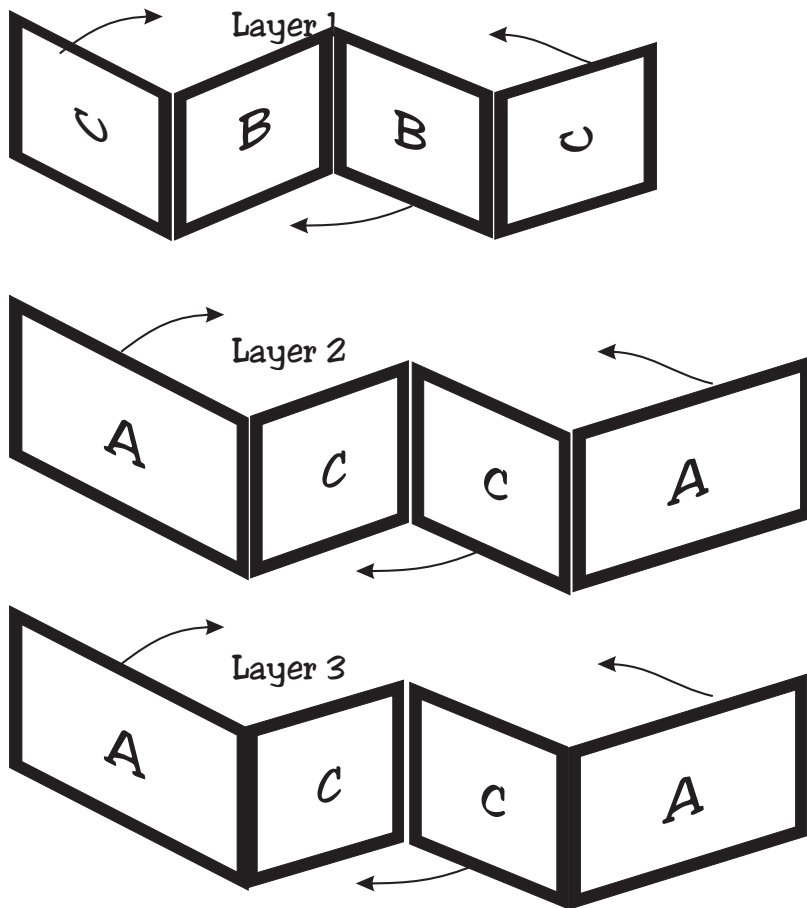
Screw two hinges onto the edge of the frame so that the two frames fold in on themselves with the front of the fabric of one frame facing the front of the fabric on the other.



Screw two hinges onto the remaining two sides so that the frames turn in with the backs facing the backs of the other frame.

hinging the frames (etc)

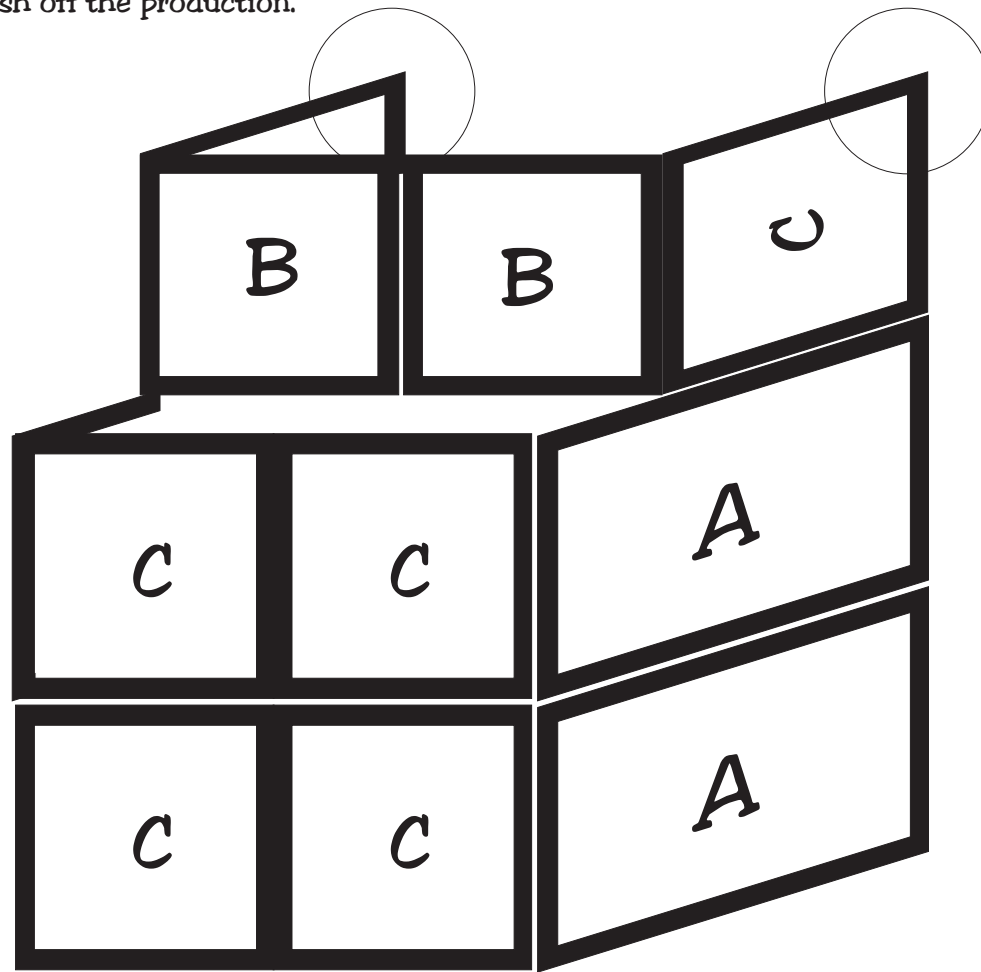
If you hinge all three layers like the previous page, you should end up with something like the following ...



Create dowel joints at all the points marked by drilling two 40mm long holes the same width as your dowel and gluing an 80mm piece of dowel in the bottom hole. Also on other tow "A" frames.

finishing off

Your theatre should look something like this (we hope!) Next are a few fiddly bits to finish off the production.

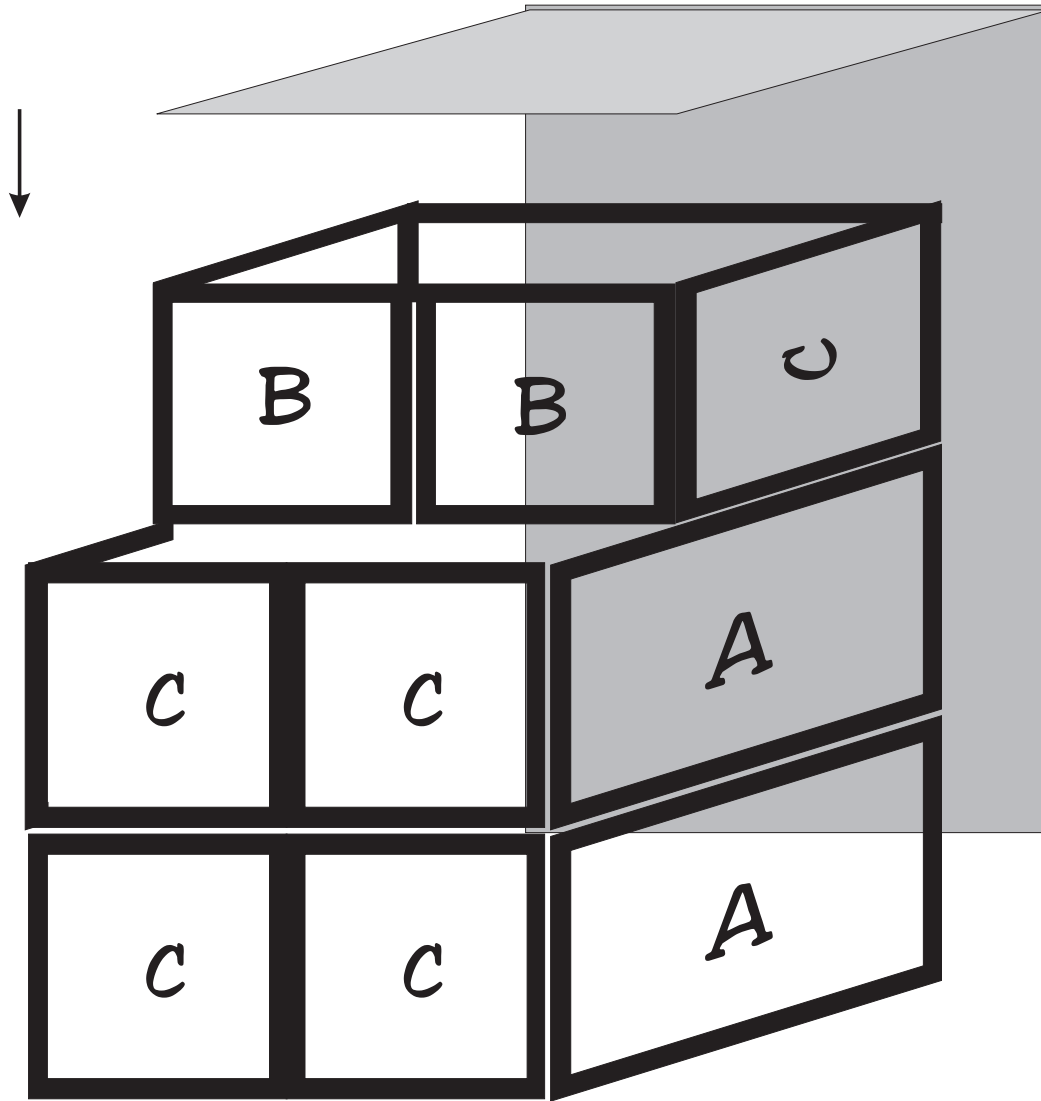


1200mm piece

Glue and staple some velcro on the inside back-corner of the top piece as shown on both sides of the theatre. Glue the opposite velcro to each end of the 1200mm piece of timber. This will allow the wood to stay up at the back.

Trim any messy bits of fabric on the theatre. If there are gaps where the hinges are, you should staple a strip of black fabric down the inside to stop the audience seeing inside. Make sure the hinge is not restricted by this strip.

finishing off



Use the remaining black material to line the top and back of the puppet theatre. Have the 1200mm back piece in place and staple along the top front edge of the theatre. You may need to stand on a chair to reach. Proceed down each side-top edge. Be sure not to staple to the 1200mm back piece. Staple down the back edges only on the top level.

Once this is complete, your theatre is ready to use. Double check that the audience can't see in. If they can, add an extra layer of black in those places. It is a good idea to line the whole top layer with black material, as that is the most crucial part for the audience not to see.