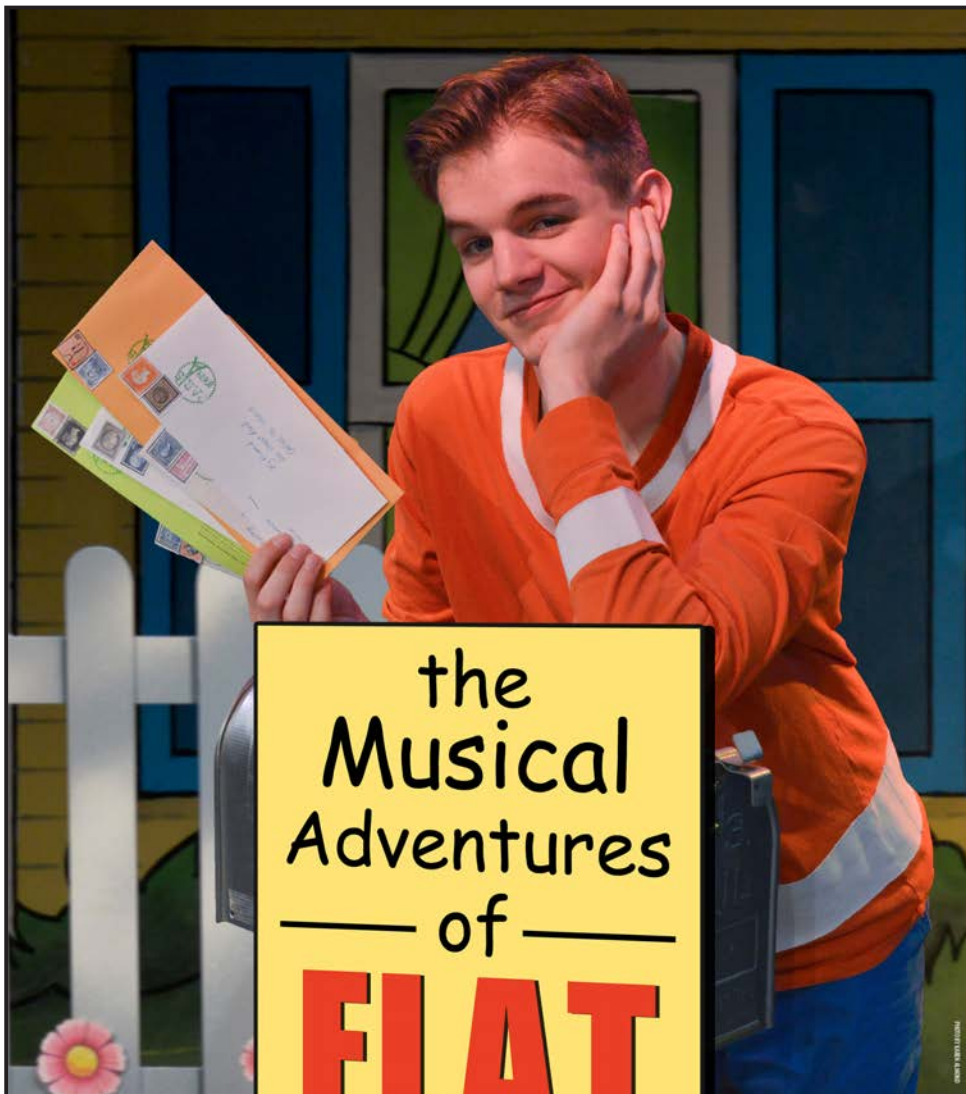


# DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER On Tour

Astonishing kids & families with the fun of Broadway-like plays & a lot more!

## BEHIND THE CURTAIN A CREATIVE & THEATRICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



The image shows a young man with short brown hair, wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt with white trim on the sleeves and blue pants. He is smiling and looking towards the camera, with his left hand resting on his cheek. He is holding a stack of envelopes in his right hand. In front of him is a large yellow sign with black text that reads "the Musical Adventures of FLAT STANLEY TYA". The sign is set against a red background. The background of the photo shows a stylized set with blue and green panels and a white fence.

Book by Timothy Allen McDonald  
Lyrics by Timothy Allen McDonald, and Jonathan K. Waller  
Music by David Weinstein, Jonathan K. Waller, Timothy Allen McDonald, and Stephen Gabriel  
Based on the book by Jeff Brown

As part of DCT's mission to integrate the arts into classroom academics, the ***Behind the Curtain Resource Guide*** is intended to provide helpful information for the teacher and student to use before and after attending a performance. The activities presented in this guide are suggested to stimulate lively responses and multi-sensory explorations of concepts in order to use the theatrical event as a vehicle for cross-cultural and language arts learning.

**Please use our suggestions as springboards to lead your students into meaningful, dynamic learning; extending the dramatic experience of the play.**

Dallas Children's Theater on Tour

# BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Creative & Theatrical Resource Guide for Teachers

DCT Executive Artistic Director .....Robyn Flatt  
DCT On Tour Producer.....Sally Fiorello

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Play .....THE MUSICAL ADVENTURES OF FLAT STANLEY  
Based on the book by .....JEFF BROWN  
Book by .....TIMOTHY ALLEN MCDONALD  
Lyrics by .....TIMOTHY ALLEN MCDONALD, JONATHAN K. WALLER  
Music by.....DAVID WEINSTEIN, JONATHAN K. WALLER,  
TIMOTHY ALLEN MCDONALD & STEPHEN GABRIEL

Director of Production.....Michael Serrecchia

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DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER, one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people from 100 zip codes, 40 cities and 12 counties each year through its eleven main stage productions, touring, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has existed to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

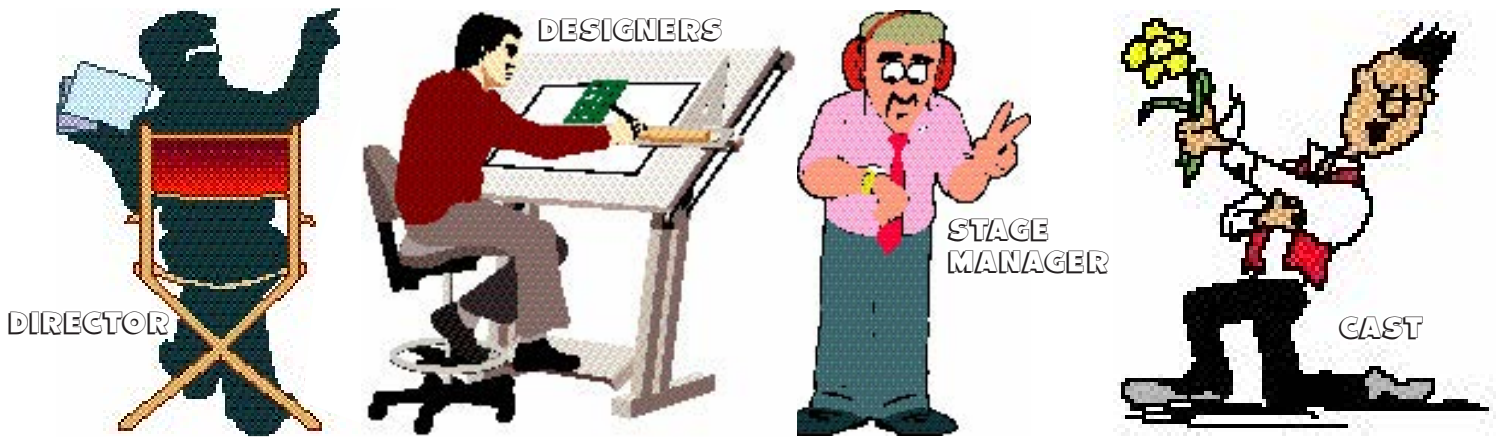
DCT is committed to the integration of creative arts into the teaching strategies of academic core curriculum and educating through the arts. Techniques utilized by DCT artist/teachers are based upon the approach developed in Making Sense with Five Senses, by Paul Baker, Ph.D.

DCT founder and Executive Artistic Director, Robyn Flatt defines the artistic mission and oversees the operations of the organization, consisting of twenty-five full time staff members and more than 200 actors, designers, theater artists and educators.

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# CURTAINS UP ON PUTTING TOGETHER A PERFORMANCE

Every DCT performance you see is the result of many people working together to create a play. You see the cast perform on stage, but there are people that you do not see who help before, during, and after every production.



## Director

- Determines the overall “look” of the performance
- Guides the actors in stage movement and character interpretation
- Works with designers to plan the lights and sound, scenery, costumes and make-up, and stage actions

## Designers

- Plan the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound, and actions to help bring the director’s vision to life
- There are also designers who work to create the posters, advertisements, programs and other media for the performance.

## Stage Manager

- Before the performance, creates a cuesheet to guide the crew in getting things on and off the stage during the performances.
- During the performance, the stage manager uses this cuesheet to direct people and things on and off the stage at the proper times.

## Crew

- Build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, and light and sound during the performances.

## Cast

- Includes all of the performers who present the story on stage.

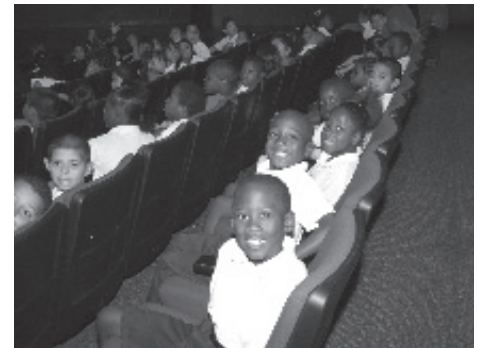
## Audience

- That’s right! There can be no performance without you, the audience. The role of the audience is unique because you experience the entertainment with the performers and backstage crew. You are a collaborator in the performance and it is important to learn your role so you can join all the people who work to create this DCT production.

# CURTAINS UP ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Watching a play is different from watching television or a sporting event. When you watch T.V. you may leave the room or talk. At a sporting event you might cheer and shout and discuss what you're seeing. Your role as a member of the audience in a play means you must watch and listen carefully because-

- You need to concentrate on what the actors are saying.
- The actors are affected by your behavior because they share the room with you. Talking and moving around can make it difficult for them to concentrate on their roles.
- Extra noises and movement can distract other audience members.



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

## Are you ready for your role in this performance?

Check the box next to the statements that describe proper etiquette for an audience member.

- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun.
- Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you.
- Wave and call out to the actors on stage.
- Sit on your knees or stand near your seat.
- Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show.
- Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show.
- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything or disturb other audience members while you are being seated.
- Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance.

## CURTAINS UP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Attending a play is an experience unlike any other entertainment experience. Because a play is presented live, it provides a unique opportunity to experience a story “as it happens”. Dallas Children’s Theater brings to life stories through its performances. Many people are involved in the process. Writers adapt the stories you read in order to bring them off the page and on to the stage. Designers and technicians create lighting effects so that you can feel the mood of a scene. Carpenters build scenery and make the “place” of the story become a real place, while costumers and make-up designers can turn actors into the characters you meet in the stories. Directors help actors bring the story to life and make it happen before your very eyes. All of these things make seeing a play very different from television, videos, computer games, or CDs and tapes of stories.

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance. Ask students the following questions and allow them to write or draw pictures of their experience at DCT.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theater? What did you notice first on the stage?
2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?
3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?
4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designers had to consider before creating the costumes?
5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?
6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you feel caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

- Draw a picture of what the audience might look light from the stage. Consider your work from the viewpoint of the actors on stage. How might things look from where they stand?
- Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about the character.
- Write how you think it might feel to be one of the actors. Are the actors aware of the audience? How might they feel about the reactions of the audience today? How would you feel before the play began? What about after the show ends?
- Which job would you like to try? Acting, Directing, Lighting and Sounds, Stage Manager, Set designer, Costume designer or another role? What skills might you need to complete your job?
- Choose a favorite story and draw or use the computer to create a program cover design for a theatrical adaptation of your story.



# CURTAINS UP ON THEATER VOCABULARY

ACTOR	any theatrical performer whose job it is to portray a character
CAST	group of actors in a play
CENTER STAGE	the middle of the stage
CHARACTER	any person portrayed by an actor onstage. Characters may often be people, animals, and sometimes things.
CHOREOGRAPHER	the designer and teacher of the dances in a production
COSTUME DESIGNER	the person who creates what the actors wear in the performance
DIRECTOR	the person in charge of the entire production
DOWNSTAGE	the area at the front of the stage; closest to the audience
HOUSE	where the audience sits in the theater
LIGHTING DESIGNER	the person who creates the lighting for a play to simulate the time of day and the location
ONSTAGE	the part of the stage the audience can see
OFFSTAGE	the part of the stage the audience cannot see
PLOT	the story line
PROSCENIUM	the opening framing the stage
PROJECT	to speak loudly
PROP	an object used by an actor in a scene
SET	the background or scenery for a play
SETTING	the time and place of the story
SOUND DESIGNER	the person who provides special effects like thunder, ringing phone, or crickets chirping
STAGE CREW	the people who change the scenery during a performance
STAGE MANAGER	the person who helps the director during the rehearsal and coordinates all crew during the performance
UPSTAGE	the area at the back of the stage; furthest from the audience

## CURTAINS UP ON ADAPTATION

An adaptation is a change made in something so that it can fit a new use. This performance of *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley* is an adaptation of a book, which is meant to be read, into a play, which is meant to be performed and viewed. Timothy A. McDonald took the story written by Jeff Brown and adapted it so that it could be performed for an audience on stage.

Consider these questions for discussion before you attend the DCT production:

- What kinds of things did the authors have to consider in writing a script of the story?
- What kinds of things would Jeff Brown be concerned about in having someone make a musical adaptation of their story?
- Do you think the performance will be shorter or longer than the book?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match their illustrations? What differences can you expect?
- What about the story? What changes might you expect in adapting it for the stage? Why would these changes be necessary?

After the performance, consider these questions:

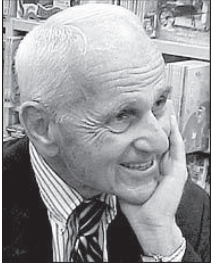
- Were there any characters or events that were in the book but not in the play? Why do you think these choices were made?
- Did the changes make the story stronger or was it weaker because of them?
- What do you think the set and costume designers need to consider when bringing the book to the stage?
- What things helped to tell the story on stage?



**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

Make a copy of Flat Stanley for each of your students to decorate and cut out. Encourage them to bring Flat Stanley with them to the Dallas Children's Theater. Take a picture at school, on the bus, or at the theater getting ready for the show and mail it to DCT at: Dallas Children's Theater, 5938 Skillman, Dallas, Texas 75231.

## CURTAINS UP ON THE AUTHOR



Jeff Brown was born in New York City in 1925 and died in 2003. In addition to having a successful career as a children's book author, he was a story editor and assistant film producer in Hollywood. Mr. Brown also worked as a short-story writer and editor for *The New Yorker* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. His Flat Stanley series has sold nearly one million copies in the U.S. Here is what the author says about how he came up with the idea for the Flat Stanley books:

"More than thirty years ago, I was saying goodnight to my now grown-up sons, J.C. and Tony and J.C. stalling for my chat time, asked me not to leave the bedroom. He was scared, he claimed, and when I asked him what he was afraid of he couldn't think of anything. As I started out again, he had an inspiration. "I'm afraid my big bulletin board will fall on me," he said. I told that that was ridiculous; the big board on the wall above his bed

had been securely mounted by me, and even if it got loose it would do so so slowly that he wouldn't even notice it, just go off to sleep, and by the time it rested fully upon him he'd be sound asleep and wouldn't wake, so the board would just lie there all night. Then I thought of a small joke and said "of course, when you wake up in the morning, you'll probably be flat." Both boys thought that was a hoot and many evenings after that one, we'd make up stories about adventures you could have if you were flat. Best idea I ever had, and I didn't even know I'd had it. Not for many months, until a friend in the kid-book business, who knew about the flat stories, suggested I make them into a book."

## CURTAINS UP ON DISCUSSING

Use the following questions to encourage a discussion of the story with students before and after attending DCT's performance.

Have you ever read the Flat Stanley books by Jeff Brown? Tell about the story.

What can you tell about the play you will see from the title; *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*? What do you expect to happen in the show?

How might you react if you woke up in the morning and were flat?

What would you do if you were flat? What things can Stanley do that might be fun?

How would you handle the 'cool kids' if they asked you to turn your friend into a kite and fly him? What should you do if someone pressures you into doing something you know is wrong?

Stanley visits many places around the world. Where is the most interesting place you've ever traveled? Where would you mail yourself if you could? Why?

In the show, an actor will portray Stanley both before and after he is flat. Actors will also portray other flat objects he meets on his adventures. How do you think the designers might represent these on stage? What things would change if you were flattened? How can an actor "change" his character to appear flat?



## CURTAINS UP ON WRITING

Use what you know about writing letters to send Stanley somewhere new and interesting.

You will need:

Writing paper

Pencils or pens

Envelopes

Stamps

Flat Stanley-one per student (print out on page 14)

Crayons, markers or colored pencils

Make one copy of Flat Stanley for each student using the Blackline Master.

Provide students with materials and encourage students to color Stanley.

Use the world map and whiteboard or chart paper and help students brainstorm interesting places to which they can send Stanley.

Encourage them to consider family members, friends, performing arts centers, museums or other landmarks around the world.

Mail Stanley, along with a letter describing the activity, to your chosen location. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope so Stanley can return home.

Use the following sample letter for student use.

Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for agreeing to host my good friend Flat Stanley. You should know that Stanley is a big fan of the arts so visits to a play, concert, dance or museum are favorite activities for him. I hope you can take some pictures with him. Please send them to me so I can see what he did and my class can mark his travels on our map.

Thank you very much,

## CURTAINS UP ON ART

A Change in Structure: Create a sculpture in the style of Dale Chihuly.

You will need:

Coffee Filters

Sharpie

Markers

Liquid Starch

Spray Bottle

Aluminum Foil-students should have several pieces they can make into balls.

String or Yarn

1. Provide students with three to five coffee filters. Write their names along the scalloped edge with a Sharpie so they are easily identified after they've been decorated.
2. Encourage students to color their filters giving consideration to the fact that colors will blend in the next step of the process.
3. Spray the filters with liquid starch. Place foil balls in the centers of the filters and carefully lift the edges and tie with string.
4. Allow the filters to dry then nestle them inside each other to form a sculpture in the style of Dale Chihuly's blown glass flowers.

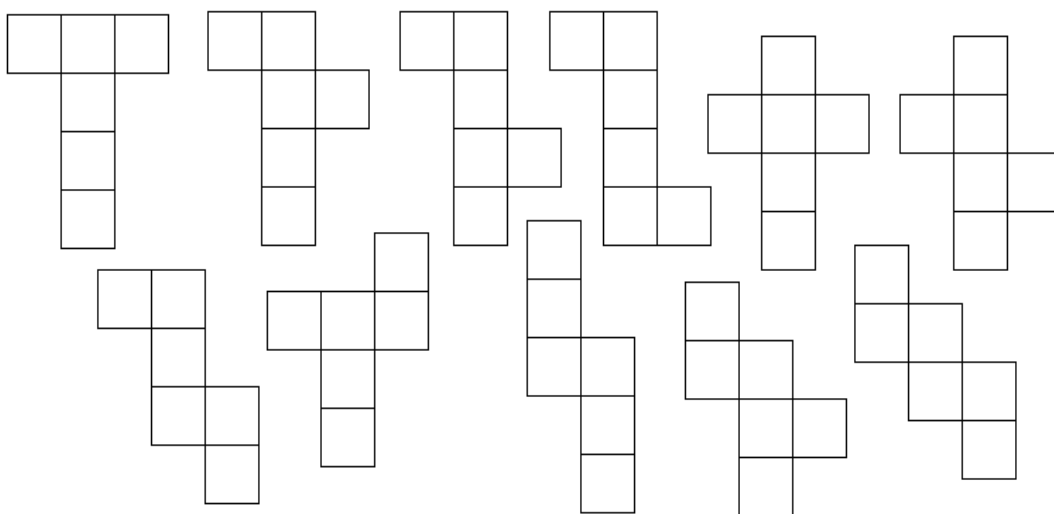
## CURTAINS UP ON SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

### Two- and Three-Dimensional Shapes

Provide students with shape models and household items, such as cans and boxes. Allow students to describe the shapes based on their characteristics, including sides (edges), angles and faces. Have students look at three-dimensional models and find the two-dimensional shapes from which they are constructed. Allow students to construct their own shapes using paper nets -- two-dimensional models that can be cut out and taped to form three-dimensional figures.

A geometry net is a 2-dimensional shape that can be folded to form a 3-dimensional shape or a solid. Or a net is a pattern made when the surface of a three-dimensional figure is laid out flat showing each face of the figure. A solid may have different nets.

There are altogether 11 possible nets for a cube as shown in the following figures.



Challenge older students to draw their own geometry map of a cube, cylinder, or cone. Below are the steps to determine whether a net forms a solid:



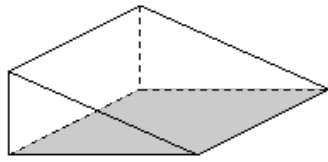
**GIVE IT  
A TRY!**

1. Make sure that the solid and the net have the same number of faces and that the shapes of the faces of the solid match the shapes of the corresponding faces in the net.
2. Visualize how the net is to be folded to form the solid and make sure that all the sides fit together properly.

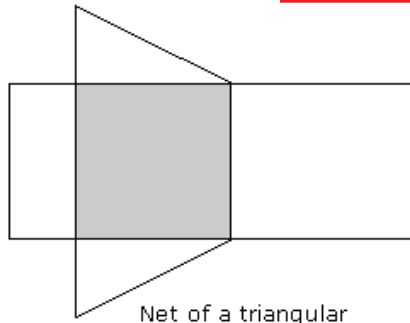
### Use what you know:

Nets of Prisms, Pyramids, Cylinders and Cones

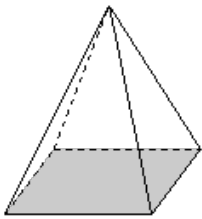
Use the examples of geometry nets on the next page to create your own 3D shapes from 2D shapes.



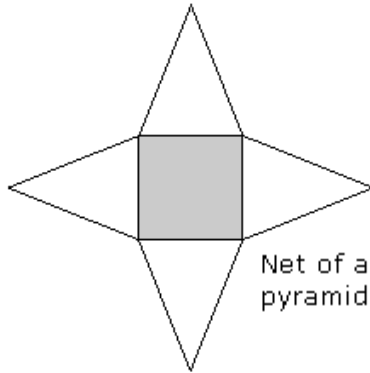
Triangular prism



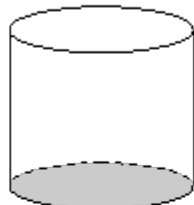
Net of a triangular prism



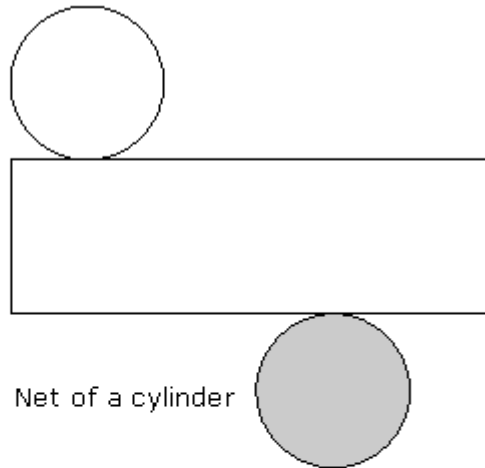
Rectangular pyramid



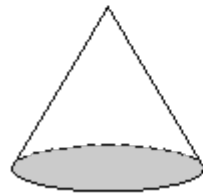
Net of a rectangular pyramid



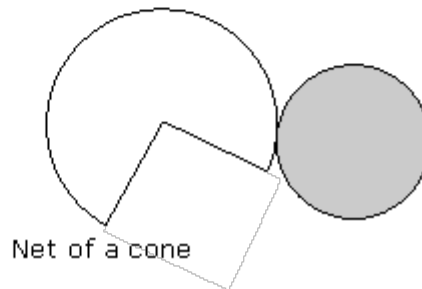
Cylinder



Net of a cylinder



Cone



Net of a cone

# CURTAINS UP ON GEOGRAPHY

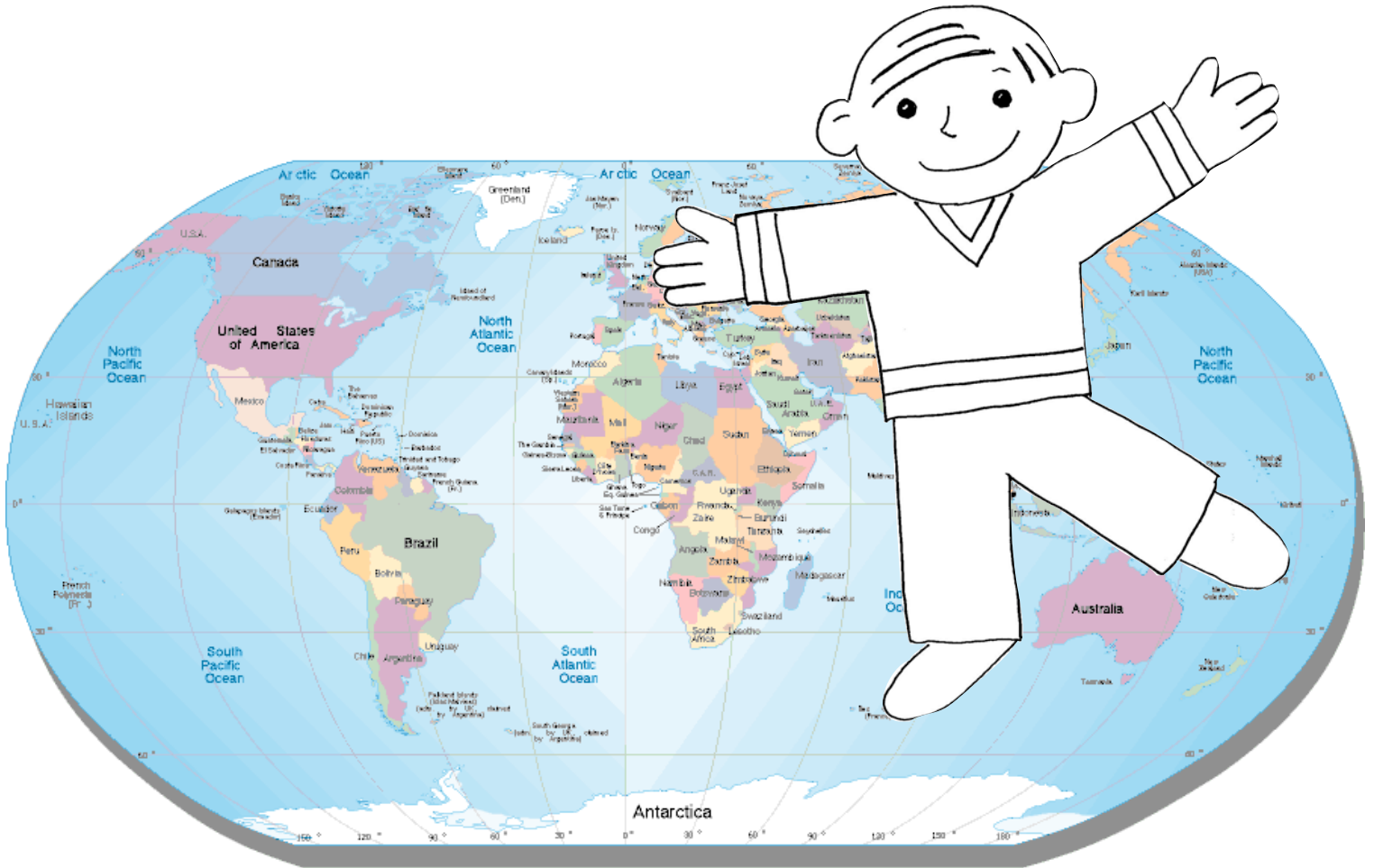
You will need:

Map of the world

Map pins

Once Stanley has returned home, chart the locations he visited on the map with map pins. You can display the letters and pictures you receive in the classroom or hallway of your school.

Use the letters you receive to map the places your Stanley visits. Where in the world????? Is Stanley?



# **CURTAINS UP ON READING MORE!**

## **Books:**

By Jeff Brown:

Flat Stanley

Flat Stanley in Space

Invisible Stanley

Stanley, Flat Again!

The Journey of the One and Only Declaration of Independence by Judith St. George

Mailing May by Michael O. Tunnell, illustrated by Ted Rand

## **On the internet:**

[www.flatstanley.com](http://www.flatstanley.com) the official site of the Flat Stanley Project.

[www.harpercollinschildrens.com/HarperChildrens/kids](http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/HarperChildrens/kids) this site has information on Jeff Brown and Flat Stanley for kids, parents, teachers and librarians.

<http://www.chihuly.com>- This site offers a wide variety of information about artist Dale Chihuly and his work.

**FLAT STANLEY**  
**BLACKLINE MASTER**

