

Imagined Worlds

Grades 6th thru 8th

Inspired by Leslie "Airplane" Payne and Vollis Simpson

Lesson Overview

For this activity, students make "Visionary Worlds" by recreating their favorite objects into three dimensional artworks, a diorama, and animation(optional).



Leslie "Airplane" Payne

Objectives

- Students interpret, analyze, and discuss artworks that express themes about imagined environments.
- Students make "Visionary Worlds" by recreating their favorite objects into three dimensional artworks, a diorama, and animation(optional).

Critical Questions

Is creating art a way to document one's life or express it?

How does an artist's choice of material convey their subject matter?

Vocabulary

6th thru 8th
Imagination Documentation Reclaim Visionary Diorama Design

Maryland State Standards

Anchor Standard 2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 7 Perceive and analyze artistic work

I:6-8:1: Evaluate objects, places and design to influence artistic utilization when creating.

E:6-8:1: Explain how a person's artistic choices are influenced by culture, values, and the environment.

Materials

- Glue
- Hot glue gun
- Foil
- Colored Pencils
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Fabric or felt
- Tissue paper
- Yarn
- Cardboard box or stock paper.

Classroom Activity

Note: The **Extension Activity** requires the use of technology such as computers, cellphones, and tablets. Students have the option to use [Stop Motion Studio](#), which is a free video making application. Please go over your class expectations and norms on how to use technology appropriately for this project, and in the classroom.

Step1: Warm-up- Ask and display the question on the board “ If one object could tell your life story, what does it express about you and why?” Instruct students to write silently for 5 minutes. Allow students to share out. Optional: select a few students to redraw their objects on the board and respond to the warm up prompt.

Next, display the artworks of Leslie Payne and Vollis Simpson, and ask, “What does this object say about this person?” Allow for share outs and record responses on the board.

Play: [The Whirligigs of Wilson, NC and Vollis Simpson: Outsider Artist](#)

Play: [The Idea of a Plane: Leslie J. Payne's Vision of Flight on Vimeo](#) start **0:00 min to 5:30 min**

Display/read biographies for each artist. Ask the class,

1. “ Why would these artists create these objects? Why at this scale?”
2. “ Why do you think these artists use reusable materials to represent their life, instead of drawing or painting?”
3. “ What type of worlds did these artists create?”

Step 2: Next, pass out the [“Visionary Worlds” worksheet](#). Display questions on the board “ If you could create an environment or world for this object, what would it look like?” Give students 10-15 minutes to complete their worksheets.

Step 3: Inform students that they will remake their favorite object and diorama out of mixed media materials. Pass out markers, tissue paper, glue, scissors, construction paper, colored pencils, and yarn. Students can use a shoe box or make a diorama out of construction paper. Use the How to [Make a Diorama](#) instructions. Or, If using construction paper, play the [How to make a cut paper diorama](#) tutorial.

Students work independently for 25 to 30 minutes (adjust time accordingly for your class). Do a check in to see if the class needs more time and or help.

Instruct students to curate their dioramas and do a gallery walk. Allow students to share the meaning of

their art object and diorama with the class.

Extension Activity: Inform students that they will turn their art objects and diorama into a stop motion animation. Instruct your class to download Stop Motion Studio App on their devices (laptop or cellphone).

Note: The **Extension Activity** requires the use of technology such as computers, cellphones, and tablets. Students have the option to use Stop Motion Studio, which is a free video making application. Please go over your class expectations and norms on how to use technology appropriately for this project, and in the classroom.

Next, instruct students to take their “favorite object” and animate it using the stop motion feature. First, demonstrate how to use the stop motion app and/or play [01 First Steps - Stop Motion Studio Tutorial](#). Instruct students to practice with their art objects first, then practice creating an animation inside of their dioramas. Set a timer for 5 minutes (adjust time accordingly for your class) for class to practice.

Students will work independently for 25 to 30 minutes (adjust time accordingly for your class). Do a check in to see if the class needs more time and or help.

Create a google folder or google slide for students to submit their animations. Present each group/individual's work. You can make the “share-out” moment a “screening party” before the reflection/ exit ticket questions.

Step 4: Display/ask students the reflection questions and write their responses on the board.

1. “What does it mean to document yourself through objects?”
2. “Do you believe art imitates life? Why or why not?”
3. “What does a “Visionary World” mean to you?”

Additional Resources

[The Idea of a Plane: Leslie Payne's Vision of Flight](#)

[Leslie Payne](#)

[Vollis Simpson About the Artist](#)

<https://www.jmkac.org/artist/simpson-vollis/>

Videos

[The Idea of a Plane: Leslie J. Payne's Vision of Flight](#)

[The Whirligigs of Wilson, NC and Vollis Simpson: Outsider Artist](#)

[The Magical, Whimsical Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park | North Carolina Weekend | UNC-T](#)

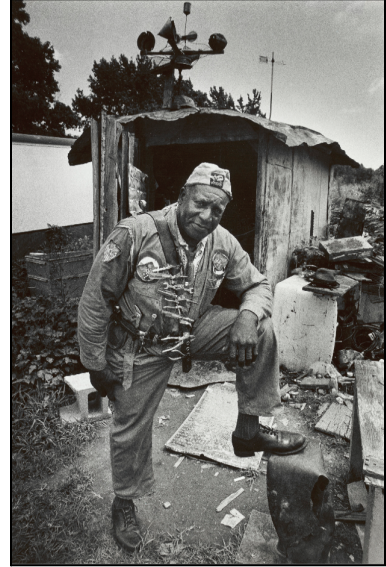
Diorama example

<https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/81324/diorama-inventing-illusion/>

Artist Biographies

Leslie “Airplane” Payne

Leslie “Airplane” Payne was born in Lillian, Virginia, on September 20, 1907, the third anniversary of the Wright Brothers’ first full flight. Seeing an air show at a young age ignited his imagination and ultimately shaped the rest of his life. Beginning in the 1960s, Payne began constructing what he called “imitation” planes, large enough for Payne and a passenger to sit in the cockpit. He ultimately built eight of them, two of which he actually attempted to fly. With the participation of young neighborhood women who dressed in their Sunday best to play stewardesses, Payne “flew” around the world, recording his imaginary adventures in a log book under the name Airplane Payne. The young women kept notes on each flight’s imaginary itinerary and included photographs, maps, and drawings of his trips. Using found materials, he transformed his small farm into an airfield, complete with an air tower, machine shop, and runways. His flight suit sported the emblem “Old Airplane Builder. Homemade.” Over the door of his machine shop was his motto: “Safety First Take No Chance.”



After Payne’s death in 1981, his airfield, planes, machine shop and towers were abandoned. In the late eighties, Jonathan Green, then the director of the California Museum of Photography, traveled to Lillian, Virginia, and with the permission of the family, retrieved and restored one of the planes, the machine shop, and the tower. In 1994, Green helped the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum, which documents and preserves communities’ memories, struggles, and successes, acquire Payne’s work as its permanent home.

Vollis Simpson

Vollis Simpson was born in 1919. Simpson’s first whirligig was built to power a washing machine while he was stationed on Saipan in the Marianas Islands in the Second World War. After the war, he designed and built heavy equipment for moving houses and opened a repair shop in a rural crossroads community in eastern North Carolina. Simpson continued to be interested in wind power and built several other large windmills, one of which powered a heating system in his house. Nearing retirement age, Simpson adapted his own workshop and began using heavy equipment to make gigantic whirligigs and wind machines on one corner of his brother’s farm in Lucama, North Carolina. His largest pieces are over fifty feet tall and weigh thousands of pounds, four of which were installed in downtown Atlanta during the 1996 Olympic games.



In 2010, a plan was announced to create the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park in Historic Downtown Wilson. With its grand opening in 2017, Whirligig Park now displays 30 whirligigs, some standing 50 feet tall or more. Simpson continued making his “whirligigs” seven days a week until about six months before he died in May of 2013 at the age of 94. “[I’ve been a] farmhouse mover, electric welder, carpenter, the list goes on. If you don’t try something, you don’t learn anything. Common sense. You come across a lot of these people that know so damn much, sometimes you find out they’re dumber than I am . . .”

Name _____

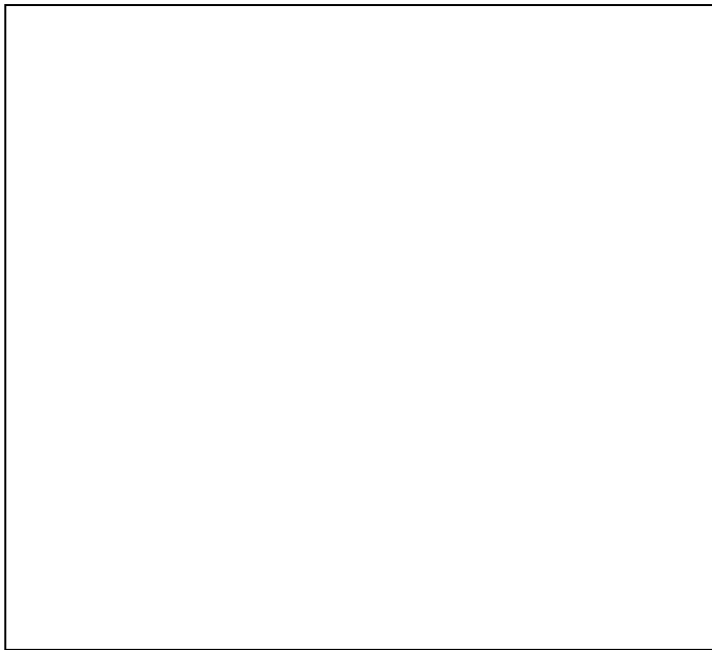
Date _____

Activity: Today you will create a “Visionary World” by recreating your favorite object into a three dimensional artwork and diorama. A **diorama** is a three dimensional scene in a box.

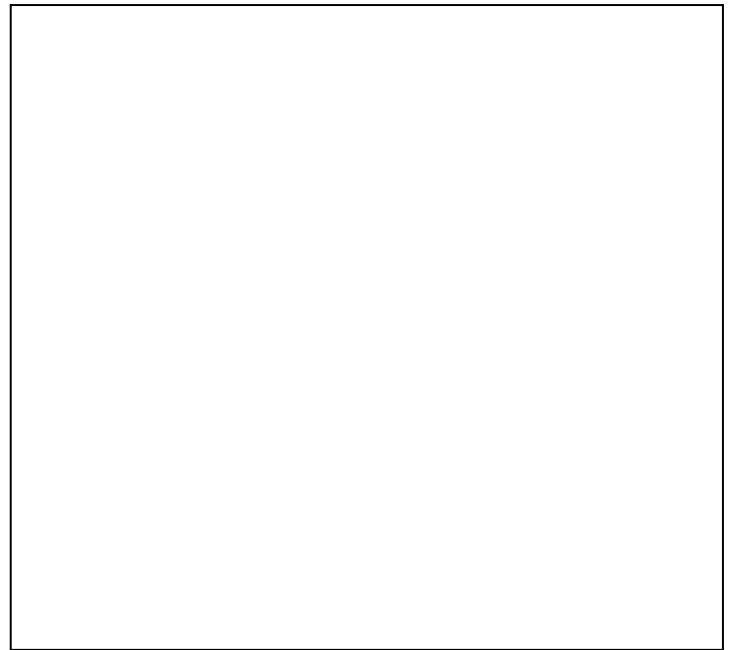
1. If one object could tell your life story, what does it express about you and why?

2. What does your object look like?

What is it made out of? Redraw your object in the box below.

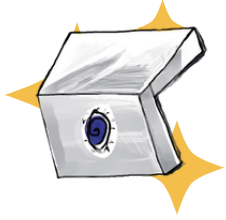


3. If you could create an environment or world for this object, what would it look like? Redraw your object and an environment in the box below.



4. Recreate a “Visionary World” by remaking your object by using different materials like markers, construction paper, glue, discarded or found items, yarn, and cardboard. After your object is complete, create an environment for your object by making a diorama. A **diorama** is a three dimensional scene in a box.

How to make a Diorama!



1. Cut out diorama.



2. Fold line.

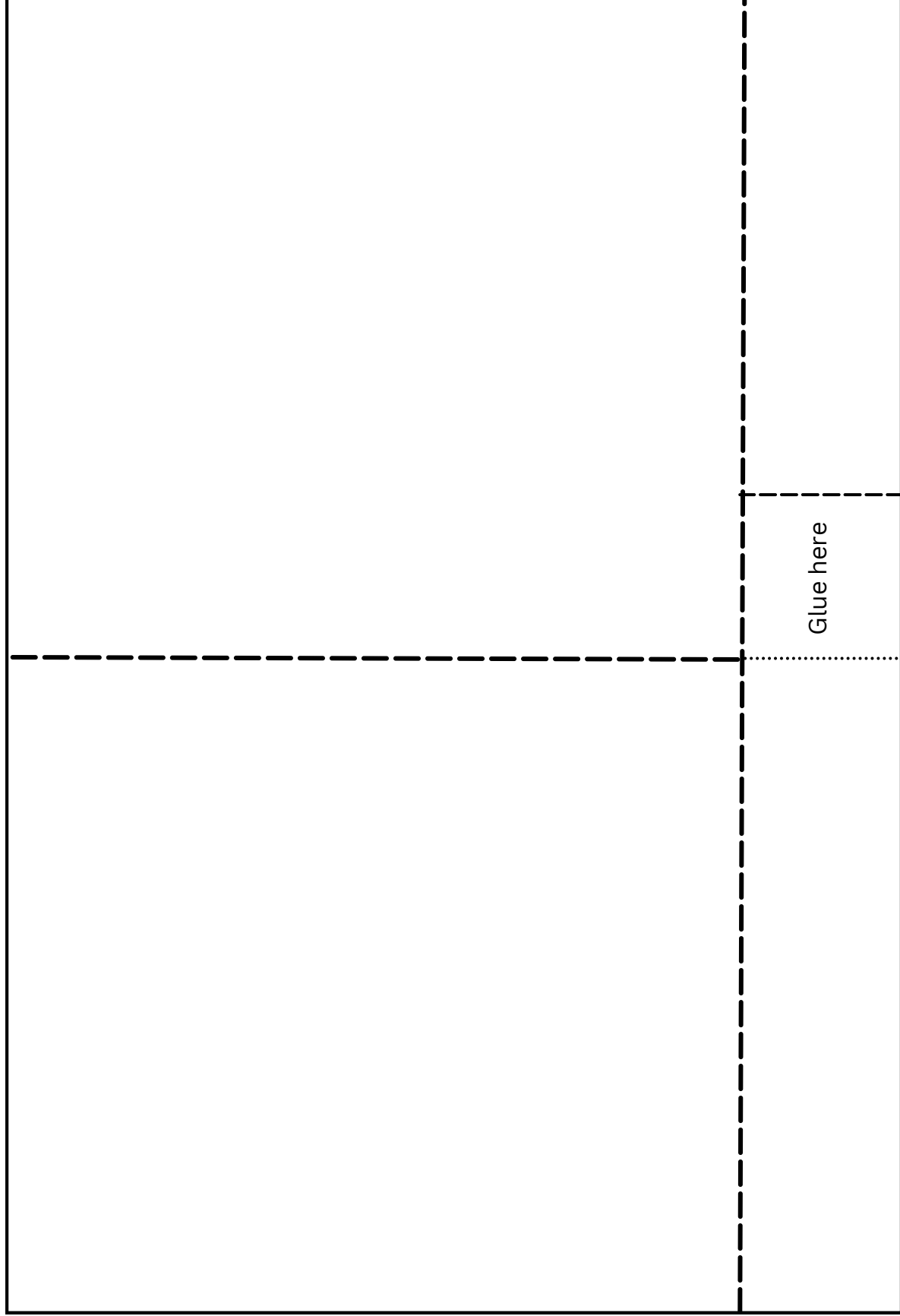


3. Cut line.

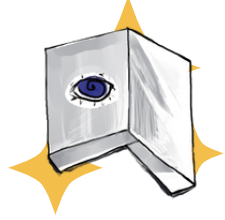


4. Fold and glue the base.

5. Color and create a
"Visionary World" in your diorama!



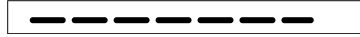
How to make a Diorama!



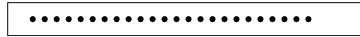
1. Cut out diorama.



2. Fold line.

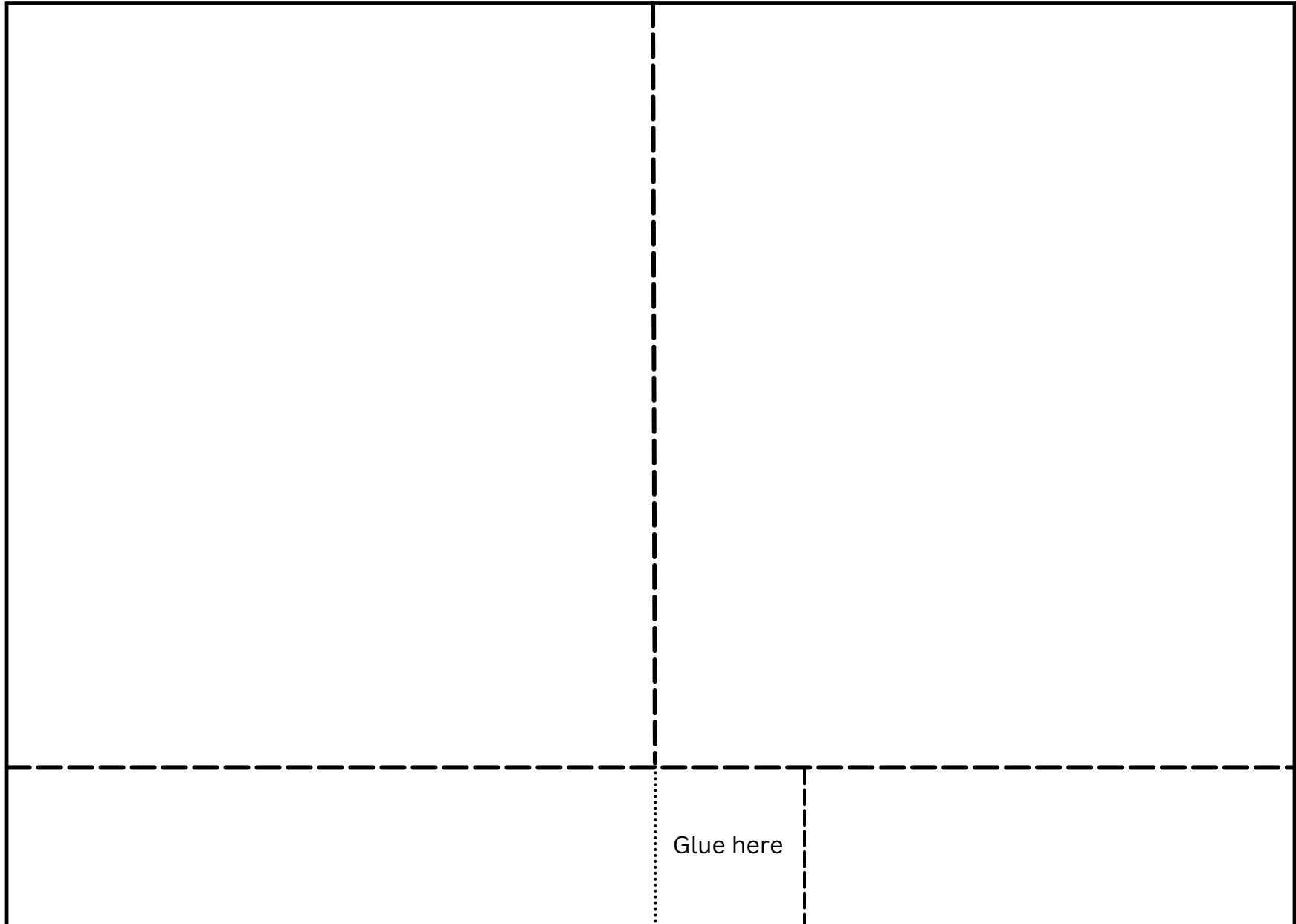


3. Cut line.



4. Fold and glue the base.

5. Color and create a
"Visionary World" in your diorama!



Glue here