

What do you hope to find on the other side of the bridge? Watch out – is someone hiding underneath it? The versatile Play Bridge is ideal for retelling familiar stories, as well as inspiring new ones. In small world play, children can recreate the simple joy of going over or under a bridge, as well as develop positional language. The bridge can also link two contrasting worlds, opening up all kinds of new adventures!

## A bridge to your imagination

Add the Play Bridge to the following small world play scenes to inspire children’s imagination and enhance their language development.

### Fairy tales

- Traditional fairy tale characters and magical creatures, such as *Little Lands – Fantasy Figures*
- Water under the bridge – blue fabric, paper or glass pebbles
- Natural sensory materials – bark, sticks, real or artificial foliage, pine cones, acorns or moss
- Other magical props such as toadstools, rainbows, stars from *Scenery Stones – Fairy Tale Play*, lanterns or treasure.



### Riverbank play

- River, made from blue fabric or paper
- Animals that live in or near a river, such as fish, birds, frogs and insects
- Human figures to cross the bridge, such as *Little People – Sensory Play Set*
- A boat for the figures to go under the bridge in – *Rustic Pourers* make ideal vessels!
- Natural materials, such as stones, plants, sticks, and lily pads (created from green paper).

### Billy Goats Gruff

- Three goats and a troll – such as the *Billy Goats Gruff Wooden Characters*
- Grass on either side of the bridge – you could use two different shades of green fabric or paper to reflect the juicier grass on the far side!
- River – blue fabric or paper.



### Castle bridge

- Simple castle built from wooden blocks, cardboard boxes or cut out of card
- Royal figures, knights, horses and maybe a baddie or two, such as a giant or goblin – *Little Lands – Fantasy Figures* and *Enchanted World* offer useful additions
- River – blue fabric, blue glass stones or blue paper
- Path of stones on either side of the bridge and leading to the castle.

## Road bridge

- Vehicles to drive over the bridge – such as *Little Lands – Vehicles*
- Sand on either side and stones to mark a road
- River – blue fabric or real water
- Alternatively, you could include *Little Lands – Houses* and other buildings to create an urban environment.



## Bridge to another world

Many children's stories involve characters journeying to an unfamiliar place. You can echo this and inspire many new stories by using the bridge to link two contrasting small world scenes – such as in two separate trays. Possible combinations could include:



- Land of the dinosaurs and the modern world
- Built-up environment and woodland
- Forest and sea
- Earth and the moon
- Animal habitat (such as rainforest or ocean) and a place inhabited by people (such as a town with houses)
- Fairy tale world and a modern family home or garden.

## Playful prepositions

The Play Bridge is ideal to develop positional language in a playful way. Model language by asking the children who is hiding under/on top of/beside the bridge. Children can also play together telling each other where to place different characters to create a scene.

### *Get talking – useful words*

Over, under, across, beside, next to, on top of, underneath, up, down, curved, smooth, rough, steep, stony, patter, clip-clop, clatter, scurry, skip, trot, plod, stomp, crawl.

## Books about bridges

*A Book of Bridges: Here to There and Me to You* by Cheryl Keely

*Rosa's Big Bridge Experiment* by Jessica Spanyol

*Come Alive Stories: The Billy Goats Gruff* by Debbie Pullinger