

How to Make a Myriorama

A myriorama is a series of cards that can be put together in any order to form panoramic scenes – an “endless landscape.” They were a popular amusement in the early 1800s. They are fun and easy to make yourself – and like writing haiku or playing word games, they are a little bit addicting. A minimum set is three cards, but you may find it hard to stop!



You will need

- 3 or more small cards (blank business cards work well)
- 1 sheet of paper
- pen or pencil *and* colored pencils, paint, pastels, or crayons
- ruler

Invent a Scene

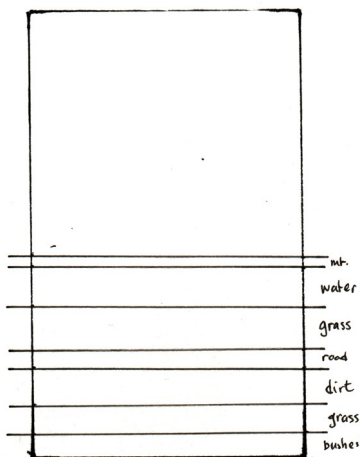
An ideal myriorama scene has several horizontal bands that continue from card to card. This is what allows the myriorama to line up correctly no matter in what order you arrange the cards.

Imagine your scene with at least one distinct foreground band, middle band and a distant horizon. Put in as many as you can, but remember every card has to include all of them. The more horizontal bands you have the more fun your myriorama will be to draw because you will be able to place elements in the different bands.

Outdoor scenes in a rural setting allow a lot of depth to the horizon, but indoor scenes and urban scenes are fun, too. Experiment to see what you like best.

Create a Template

On a sheet of paper, trace around one of your cards. On one edge of the traced rectangle, mark the points of your scene where the horizontal band meets the edge of the card. Measure the points and copy to the other side of the rectangle. Use your ruler to mark horizontal lines all the way across the outline and beyond. If you like, label the sections so you don't forget which is which.



Draw the Cards

Place a card on top of the template. Draw a picture using the template to guide placement of the horizontal bands. The edges of your drawing must line up with all the marks on your template, but in the middle of the card anything goes.

Horizontal Band Template

Make your scenes lively by adding elements like people, animals, plants, vehicles, buildings, and other objects. Do not allow your elements to exit the sides of the card. Only the horizontal bands should touch the edges of the card. But you can get really close to the edge...

Color the Cards

Each horizontal band should be the same color on all your cards. If you have a country scene with a grassy band, the grass should be the same color on all the cards (at least at the edges of the card).