# How to make a magic wand (and a top hat) for a kids' magic show

Peabody blog · Games · updated 2026-10-31

How to make a magic wand from paper and a pencil in five minutes, and a top hat from card, with a free wand wrap to print and the safe way for little ones.

To make a magic wand, roll a sheet of black paper tightly round a pencil, tape it, and wrap a strip of white paper round each end. It takes five minutes, costs nothing, and has nothing sharp in it. A top hat takes about half an hour more: a tube of black card, a ring for the brim and a circle for the top. Both are below, step by step, with a wand wrap to print.

A wand matters more than it looks. It isn't decoration. It gives a child something to do with their hands, something to point at the magic moment, and a reason for everybody to look where the magician wants them to look, which is the whole idea of misdirection.

## The five-minute wand

You need: a sheet of black paper (or white paper and a black crayon), a pencil, tape, and a little white paper for the tips.

1. Lay the pencil across one corner of the black sheet and roll the paper round it, diagonally, as tightly as you can. Rolling from the corner makes a longer, stronger wand than rolling from the side.
2. Tape down the loose corner, then slide the pencil out, or leave it in for a heavier wand.
3. Trim the two ends straight with kid scissors. Cutting is a grown-up's job for the youngest.
4. Wrap a strip of white paper round each end, about as wide as a thumb, and tape it. Those are the tips.

Faster still: the magic show kit has four wand wraps on one page to print at Letter or A4. Colour the middle black, leave the ends white, cut it out and wrap it round a pencil or a chopstick with tape. Four wands means one for each helper.

## The top hat

You need: two sheets of black card, a piece of string, a pencil, kid scissors and tape. A bigger piece of card, such as the side of a cereal box painted or covered in black paper, makes the brim easier.

1. Measure. Wrap the string round your child's head where a hat sits, just above the ears, and add a finger's width so it isn't tight. That length is the tube.
2. The tube. Cut a strip of card as tall as you want the hat and as long as the string. If one sheet isn't long enough, tape two strips end to end. Roll it into a tube and tape the join on

the inside.

3. Tabs. Along the bottom edge of the tube, cut short slits all the way round, about as long as the top joint of a finger, and fold the tabs outwards.
4. The brim. Stand the tube on the second piece of card and draw round it. Draw a bigger circle around that one, about a hand's width out, and cut out the ring between them. Slide the ring down over the tube onto the tabs and tape the tabs underneath.
5. The top. Stand the tube on card again, draw round it, cut out the circle and tape it on top. A strip of coloured paper round the bottom of the tube makes the band.

A hat is also a prop. Several tricks in the shop end with something appearing, and a hat on the table is a fine place for a finale to come from. Keep the hat for the show itself; it is not for putting over anyone's face.

## What to do with them

A wand earns its place when your child uses it on the magic moment: a tap on the glass in The Water Vanish, a wave over the paper in Walk Through a Paper, a point at the deck before the card comes back. The tap is a signal to the audience, now, and it gives the hands a reason to move. The Magic School lesson on misdirection explains why that works: people look where you look, and where your wand points.

Then there are the words. A wand wants a magic word, and the shop's twenty magic words say where each one comes from, from hey presto to abracadabra. Your child can pick one, or make up their own.

For the rest of the show, the magic show kit also prints tickets for the family, a card with the running order on it and a sign for the door, and how to put on a magic show puts the tricks in the order magicians use.

## Questions grown-ups ask

## Is a stick or a dowel better than paper?

For a child under about seven, paper is better: nothing sharp and nothing to poke an eye with if the show gets lively. An older child can have a wooden dowel with the ends sanded smooth and covered in white tape, but the paper wand looks the same from the sofa.

## How long should a wand be?

About the length of your child's forearm, from the elbow to the wrist, is easy to hold and wave.

## Do we need to buy a magic kit for the props?

No. Every trick in the Magic Shop uses things already in the house, and the wand and hat above use paper, card and tape. If you are thinking of buying one anyway, the guide Which magic kit? says what to look for.

## Can the wand be part of a trick?

Yes. Practise with it from the start, so it feels like part of the hand, not something extra to hold. If it gets in the way on a trick that needs both hands, tuck it under your arm until the magic moment.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, and the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. What a child learns stays on their own device; nothing they tap is typed or sent. After the show, the library has a story to read together.

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Free at peabody.kids/blog/how-to-make-a-magic-wand