

Big Ideas for Small Spaces

SOME HANDY WEBSITES

Dafont.com

Great font website, you're bound to find the font you want on here and probably more than you'll ever need! No sign-up required.

Sxc.hu (stock.xchng)

Excellent stock photo website if you're looking for backgrounds or objects. Do need to sign up but it's free. Be aware that some photographers like to be notified if you're using their work (I tend to just skip these and find something else). Some keywords I've used to find backgrounds for displays and to make fonts are grunge (my favourite), texture and background.

Pixlr.com

Awesome website if you haven't got Photoshop or want to edit an image really quickly. No sign-up or download required. Has three options:

- 'Pixlr editor' which is the most like Photoshop
- 'Pixlr Efficient' for quick adjustments (add a border, fix up a photo etc)
- 'Pixlr Playful' where you can change the tone of your photo but that's about it

Pinterest.com

I tend to just browse here every-now and then (you could literally spend hours on here). There are a number of boards for school library displays but don't limit yourself to just these for ideas, you might get a brainwave from a craft or art!

Daysoftheyear.com

I don't use it all the time but when I'm stuck for an idea it's always handy to have a look and see if there are any 'days' I could build a display around.

For example coming up in August there is Book Lovers Day on the 9th and Bad Poetry Day on the 18th. July also had Chocolate Day and Cow Appreciation Day!

MY TIPS

(Just as with rules sometimes these are meant to be broken!)

Keep a record

This one's at the top for a reason! Snap a quick photo of each display you do and store it somewhere safe (on the computer or in print). If you ever think about repeating a display you can refer back to it to know how you did it. (Or in my case if you needed a photo for a presentation you won't get the dreaded realisation you never took one!)

Make things interactive

I've found children (and sometimes teens!) love being involved in a display. Making a display interactive often means they'll take more notice of it (since they've been a part of it) and point it out to others. Doing this occasionally also means less work for you!

Keep it simple

A tip that's ok to break, but one to always keep in the back of your mind. Try not to overload the display with every great idea you have, stick to one theme and run with that. Bits that stick out, sparkle, move and dangle things if used all at once become a bit too much. Sometimes simple is best (and easier!)

Have a plan

Having a plan follows on from the last tip. Quickly doodling out your ideas means you know what you'll need for the display so you can get it all together. It also indicates whether you're planning on doing too much. It's at this point that you can decide how big you want things or if the words (if there are any!) should be in the middle, side or upside down. I try to always have at least a quick doodle on a scrap piece of paper, sometimes I find the fantastic ideas in my head don't always work but I didn't realise until I tried to draw it!

It also pays to keep a plan of what displays are going up when. If you know you want to do something around Talk Like a Pirate Day or The Very Hungry caterpillar Day, make a special calendar for your displays and mark them on it. When it comes time to change out your display you'll know what special events are coming up and you can prepare for them in advance.

Time put in = time it's up

Pretty straight forward, don't spend weeks agonising over a display when it's only going to be up for a few days or a week. Put your effort into displays they will be up longer (maybe for a whole school term). Displays up for a few days can have a lot of impact (think about keeping them simple!) I try to put a bit more work into my displays that will be up for a month while the ones only up for a week or so I keep a bit simpler and often try something new with, because if it fails at least I tried and it will only be up for a week!

YOUR KIT

A lot of what you need for displays are things you'll already have (I'd be worried if you didn't have scissors!), but here are a few things you'll need to make a basic display.

- Scissors – A craft knife is pretty handy too, for cutting out letters
- Something to draw with - Pens, pencils, crayons, anything goes. If you're doing an interactive display make sure it's something you're happy children are using in the library, so probably no paint!
- Paper - Plain, coloured, recycled etc. This is pretty much the base for all my displays, it can be a background, letters, folded, scrunched, ripped, drawn on. You'd be surprised how much you could do with just some newspaper.
- Something sticky - Anything that will stick your display together and keep it there, we have pin boards so I can use a staple gun and pins as well as double sided tape but this will depend on what you're sticking everything to!
- Computer – I would definitely suggest looking at the websites mentioned above, have a bit of fun with Pixlr and browse the other websites.
- JUNK! – If you have some old junk lying around think about how you could turn it into a display. Boxes can become just about anything (a car! A treehouse!) Old Christmas lights could become stars, you might find something lying around that will become your next display.

If you're feeling stuck or have more questions feel free to contact me on my work email 😊

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