

Making a Solander box



Solander boxes are named after the Swedish naturalist Daniel Solander, who worked at the British Museum and travelled with Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks on the *Endeavor's* voyage to the Pacific Ocean. While traveling around Aotearoa, he collected many botanical specimens for research, and wrote a detailed manuscript about them. He developed the box, also known as a clamshell box, in order to more carefully store and preserve what he collected. These are now used in museums

worldwide. The main feature of a Solander box is the special flat folding spine, meaning it can be opened up and the contents examined with minimal handling and damage. If you follow the simple principle of ensuring that the base of the box is slightly smaller in its measurements in order to fit snugly beneath the lid, you will make a successful box. Always take into account the thickness of the cardboard you are using and subtract a few millimetres in your calculations to be sure.

These instructions are guidelines and can be adjusted to suit - you can experiment with different sizes, materials etc, as long as you understand the main principle of how the box works.

You will need:

1. Two reasonably sturdy cardboard rectangles, big enough to form the base/lid and sides of your box, with the desired height of the box marked out to be folded and two corners cut as in the example picture below. Remember to make one of the pieces a few millimetres smaller than the other.



x 2!! (One slightly smaller than the other)

2. Two pieces of card to form the protective outer cover of the box. These should be larger than the box 'footprint' by at least 1cm on three sides for an approximately A4 size box - adjust this size when necessary.
3. One piece to form the spine of the box - the same measurement lengthwise as the cover pieces, but matching the height measurement of the box in width.

4. One piece of fabric to cover the box and hold everything together, a couple of centimetres larger than the total of your two covers and spine when laid out side by side together. Make this as colourful and patterned as you like, or use a plainer cover to be decorated at the end!
5. Two lengths of ribbon to tie your box closed when finished.
6. PVA glue and a paintbrush.
7. Paper clips or binder clips to help hold things in place while the glue dries.

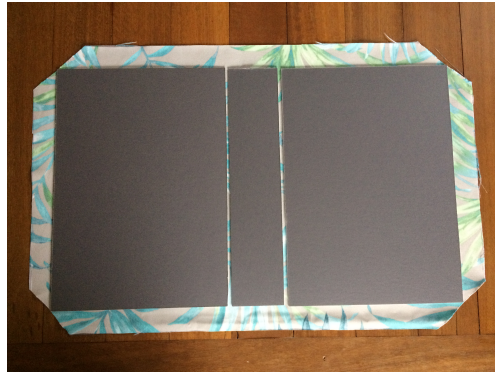


Instructions:

1. Fold upwards along the measured sides of both your base and lid pieces, including the triangular corners, to form a box shape and glue the triangles to the inner adjacent walls. You may need to temporarily hold the pieces together with a clip while they dry.

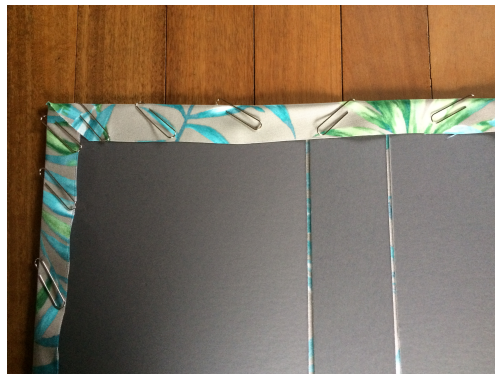


2. Lay your fabric out and position your two cover pieces with the spine lying in the middle, a couple of millimetres gap between them. Cut the fabric diagonally across its four corners, just as far as the cover pieces will allow.



3. Glue each piece to the fabric exactly as they are currently positioned.

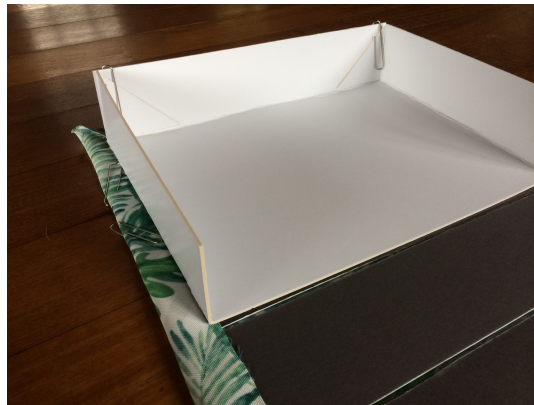
4. Fold the edges of fabric up and around the cardboard and glue them down - you will likely need to use some paper clips to keep it in place for a while.



6. Now is a good time to glue your two strips of ribbon halfway down the outer side of each cover, leaving enough free ribbon on each to tie in a bow together once completed.



7. Glue your smaller box onto the right hand cover, with the sideless edge positioned directly along the inner cover edge closest to the spine.



8. Fit your larger box neatly over the smaller one, so that each of the three sides close against each other, and there is an opening at the right angle to the spine.

9. Paste the now-upside-down box with glue and carefully lift the covered card up and over like closing a book, pressing down gently to ensure the two surfaces stick.



10. Once everything is dried, you can place your taonga carefully inside - wrapped in tissue paper for extra protection if you like. You can easily show people your collection whenever and wherever you want to, and know that it is safely looked after in this special box.

