

# Thaumatrope



Spin it fast. What do you see! This optical illusion tricks our mind into seeing something that is not there.

## What you need:

- Thaumatrope x 1 (bird on one side)
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Rubber bands x 2
- Colouring pens/pencils (optional)

## What to do?

- Colour and cut out your thaumatrope along the solid lines.
- Fold your thaumatrope in half along the dotted line with the pictures on the outside, and tape it together.
- Punch a hole in the 2 small circles.
- Insert a rubber band into each hole and loop back through itself, so the band is threaded tight.
- Stretch the rubber bands slightly and twist them by rubbing the bands between your thumb and first finger.
- What happens to the bird and cage?

## What's going on?

As you spin the thaumatrope you will see the bird inside the cage. When you see the first image (bird or cage), the image stays on the back of your eye (retina) for a fraction of a second after the picture has spun out of sight. As the second images spins into view, this second image is seen on top of the first image. As you spin the thaumatrope your brain keeps seeing these two images on top of each other and thinks that you are seeing the one picture.

## Explore more

- Take a blank template and draw in your own pictures. Remember one image has to be upside down and when spun, the two images need to fit with each other. Try a spider in a web or a person on a bike.



