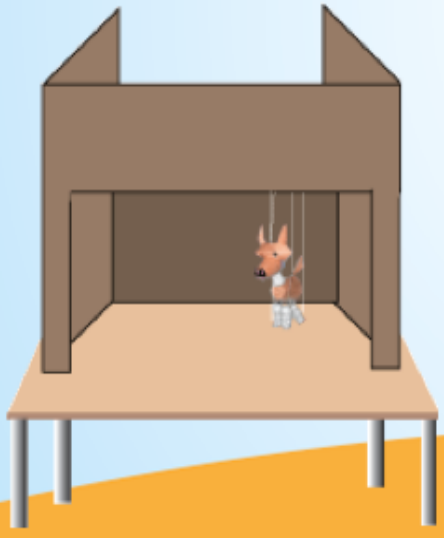
How to Make

Glove Puppets, Marionettes and Classroom Stages



Carolynn Rogers

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How to Make a Puppet Out of a Glove

What do you do with those orphaned gloves that inevitably show up without a mate?

Make Puppets!

A fast, fun way to make a variety of characters for your plays; these easy to make puppets can be as plain or as decorated as you wish.

- put on a glove
- two fingers for ears
- fold three fingers to make the shape of the face
- glue on some eyes and a nose
- give it a voice

or

- add extra features - teeth, ear colour, tongue, lips
- add material to make a body, wings, legs with rods attached for control

How to make a puppet into a different character .....

The four designs shown here were created to use with Aesop's fable scripts and show four different types of characters. However, there are undoubtedly many characters that can be made with a little imagination.

Materials

- gloves
- google eyes (or material to make your own)
- pipe cleaners
- craft foam (peel and stick works well)
- felt (any scraps of material)
- glue (water based contact cement) or double sided craft tape or velcro, masking tape
  (type of glue used depends on age of puppet makers)
- scissors

Sample Glove Puppets

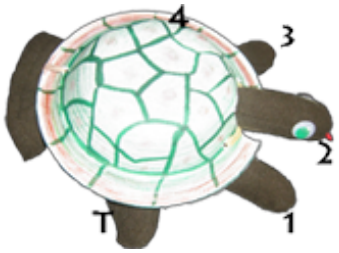
The hand at the right with numbered fingers can be used as a reference to determine the finger positions for each type of face.

Fox

- sew, glue or velcro glove fingers 2 and 3 together for the top of the snout
- pipe cleaners can be added to fingers 1 and 4 to help to keep the ears bent
- add details with tongue, teeth, eyelashes, ear, colour .....

Tortoise

- decorate a paper bowl for the shell
- cut into the edge to make a place for the head (helps the shell to sit down over the hand)
- poke holes in shell on either side of the head
- tie an elastic across the opening so that it sits under finger 2 to keep the head in place
- do the same at the back to hold the wrist of glove in place



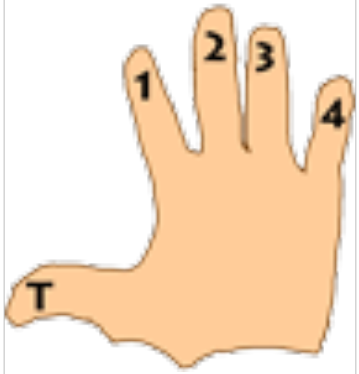
Sample Glove Puppets cont...

Crow

- fingers do not go all the way into the glove for this puppet
- wrap masking tape around glove fingers 1, 2 and 3 to bring to a point
- cut 2 triangular pieces (one smaller than the other) from cardboard, construction paper or craft foam for the beak
- glue or tape larger piece over taped fingers; smaller piece over thumb

Hare

- sew, glue or velcro glove fingers 3 and 4 together
- put glove on to determine best position for thumb and attach thumb behind fingers 3 and 4
- nose can be made with coiled pipe cleaner
- glue teeth to back of glove finger 4 so that a slight movement of this finger makes the puppet appear to talk



Animal Marionette

A variety of sizes of paper or plastic cups can be used depending on the size of puppet needed. String should be thin, white and strong. (fishing line works well but is difficult for younger children to use)

- length of string depends on the size of theatre used for the play
- long enough to hide the puppeteer's hand but short enough for good control

Assemble Structure

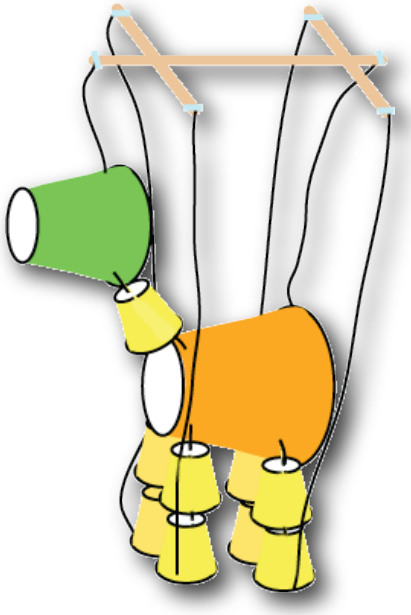
Holes can be made in the cups using a knitting needle, the point of a drawing compass, an awl or any small pointy instrument.

Head and rear body strings should be knotted several times on one end and drawn through the top holes of the body cup. Secure the knotted ends inside the cup with pieces of tape.

• thread head string through the holes in neck and head cups

• attach to front of the controller

• attach rear string to back of controller.



Leg cups can be more easily attached by using 2 long strings instead of 4. Cut strings longer than needed and trim the extra when done.

• thread string for front legs through the two holes at the bottom front of the body

• even up the length hanging out on each side

(knitting needle could be used to help push string through)

• slide one small leg cup onto string and tie a knot to keep it in place

• slide another cup onto string so that the first cup overlaps a little and tie a knot to keep it in place

• continue with each leg string until 4 legs are finished to the desired length

(size and type of cup used will determine whether 2, 3 or 4 cups are used for each leg)

• pull leg strings once more to check that legs are of equal length

• secure the leg strings inside body cup with tape

Animal Marionette

Controller

-Glue 3 Craft Sticks (wide, flat, 6" long) to make a controller
(2 if not using back leg strings)

• holes can be carefully drilled to draw strings through to be knotted

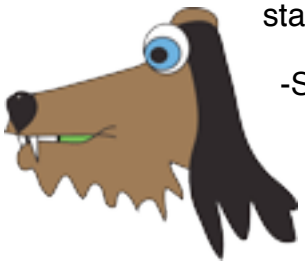
• for younger children strings can be left long enough to simply wrap around the ends of the sticks and secured with tape

NOTE:

This marionette works quite well with only the head and rear body strings attached to the controller. Strings can be used to add more movement to the front and/or rear legs.

Characters

Using separate cups the same size as the head cup, a variety of animal characters can share the same frame. Construction paper can be used to cover the "snout" and folded or "sculpted to make the upper part of the head. Younger children can cut out eyes and tape them on the side of the cup or make them stand up on the head with the ears..



-Simply slide the character heads on and off the frame head during the play. This also works well to show different emotional states of the same character- e.g. make the same head but change mouth to show fangs).

Body colours, tail shapes etc. can be changed by creating several wrap around coverings to temporarily tape onto the body cup.

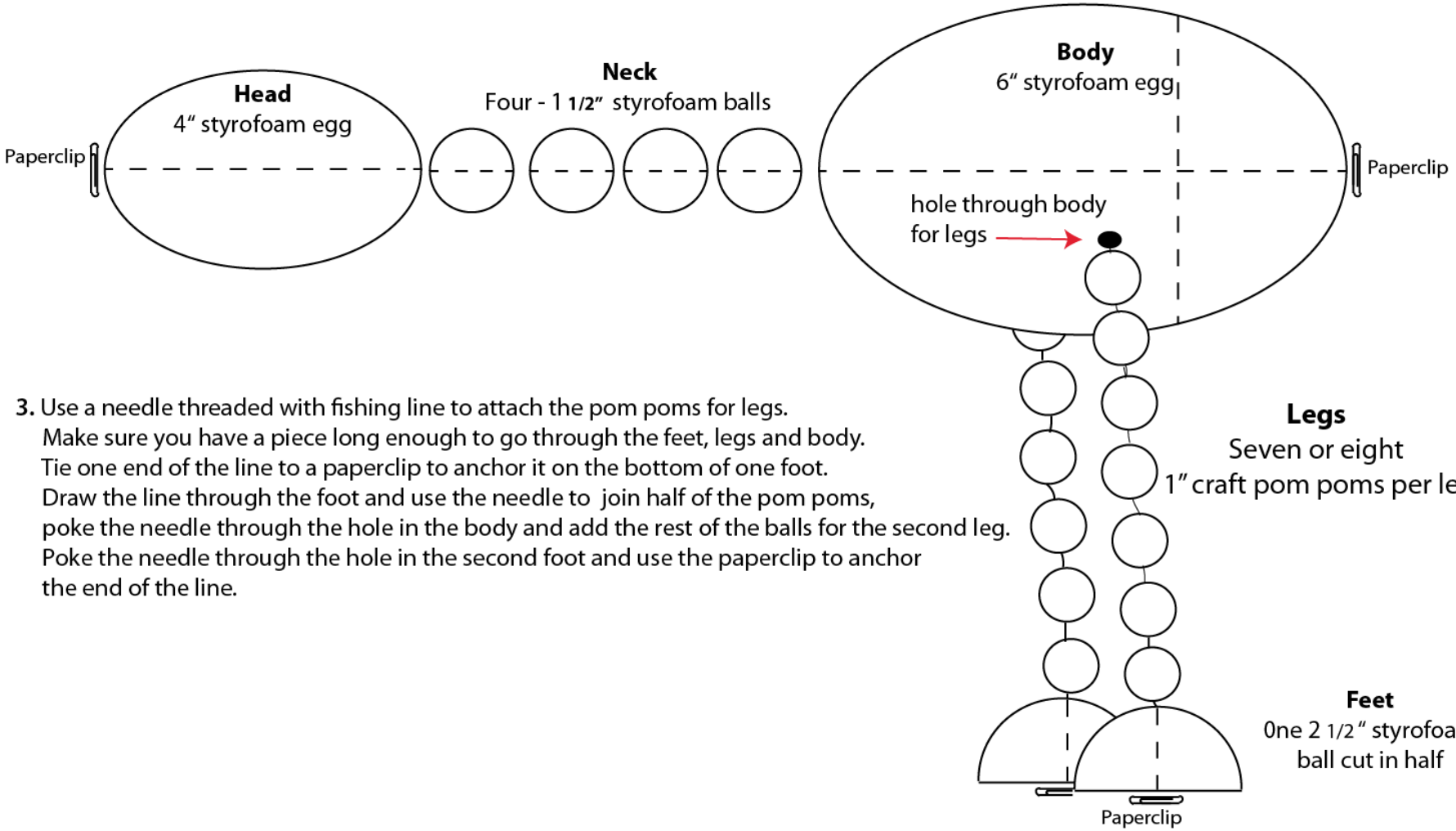
Since a tail can be an expressive part of an animal, a string could be attached to it for another control for the puppeteer, but make sure the tail is securely taped to the body. A braided wool tail works well for this.

Instead of a string on the tail, a thin piece of wire placed inside the tail gives the opportunity to bend it into different shapes.

Bird Marionette

1. Use a knitting needle or hanger wire to poke holes through the middle of each styrofoam ball as shown by the dotted lines.

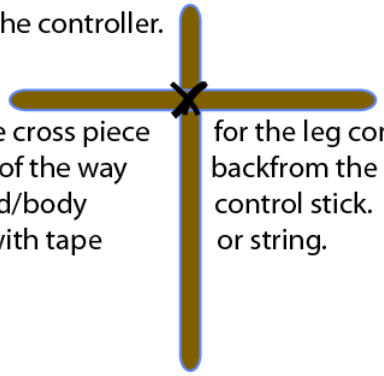
2. Use fishing line or elastic string to thread through the head, neck and body.
Tie one end to a small paperclip or button to anchor the string at the nose of the head and once the string is all the way through to the back of the body, tie it off with another paperclip or button. Leave a little extra length between the balls of the neck so that they have room to move freely.



3. Use a needle threaded with fishing line to attach the pom poms for legs.
Make sure you have a piece long enough to go through the feet, legs and body.
Tie one end of the line to a paperclip to anchor it on the bottom of one foot.
Draw the line through the foot and use the needle to join half of the pom poms, poke the needle through the hole in the body and add the rest of the balls for the second leg.
Poke the needle through the hole in the second foot and use the paperclip to anchor the end of the line.

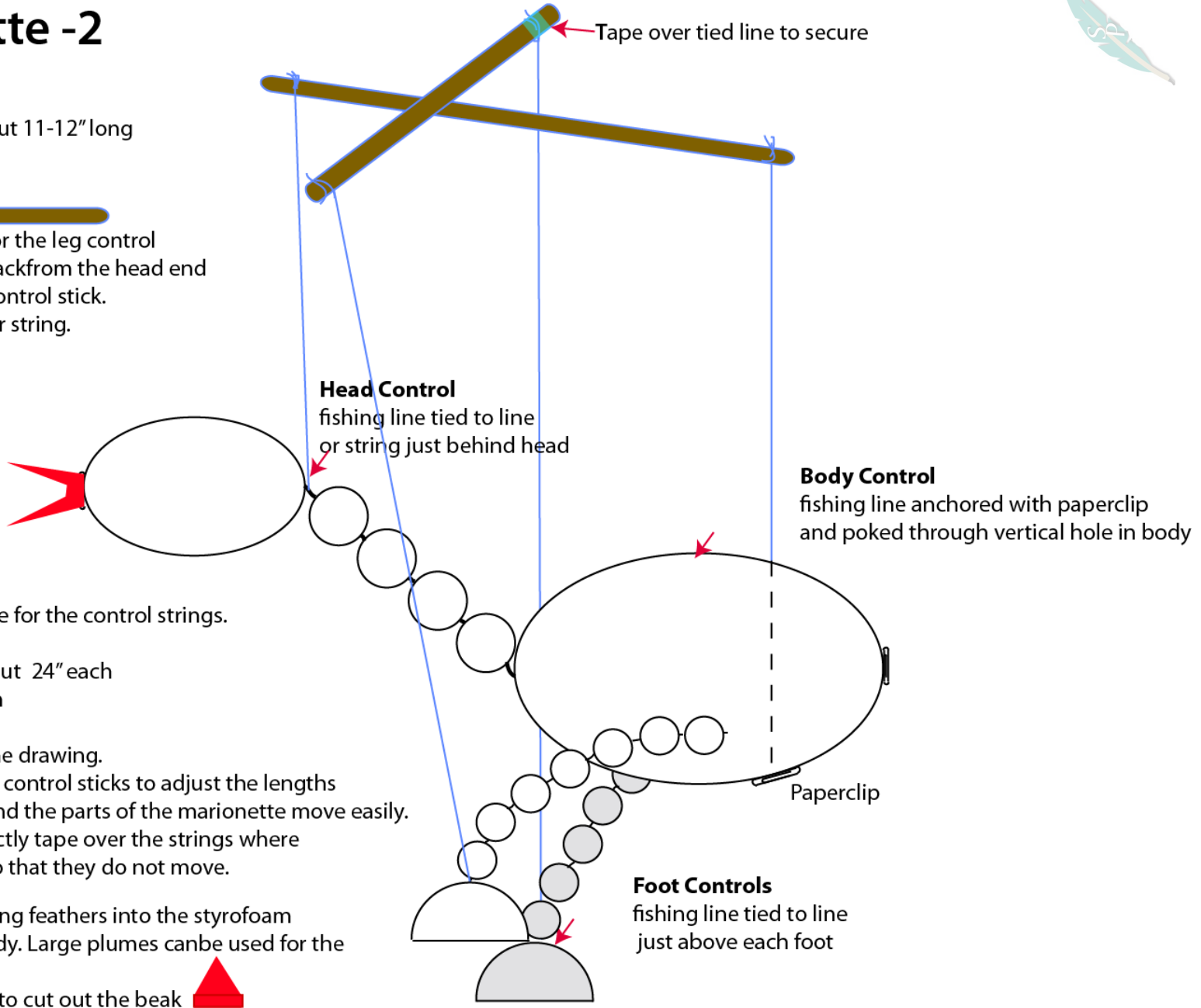
Bird Marionette -2

4. Use 2 rulers or flat sticks about 11-12" long to make the controller.



Attach the cross piece about 1/3 of the way of the head/body Secure it with tape

for the leg control backfrom the head end control stick. or string.



5. Cut 4 pieces of fishing line for the control strings.

Head and Body lines - about 24" each
Foot lines - about 30" each

Attach lines as shown in the drawing.
Wrap each line around the control sticks to adjust the lengths so that the lines are taut and the parts of the marionette move easily.
When it is balanced corrrectly tape over the strings where they are tied to the stick so that they do not move.

6. Decorate the bird by poking feathers into the styrofoam on the head, neck and body. Large plumes canbe used for the wings and tail.
Felt or paper can be used to cut out the beak and eyes and then glued on.
Purchased Google eyes are also fun to add interest.

Need a Puppet Stage?

Permanent? ... Temporary? ... Large? ... Small?

Making a useful puppet stage can be as simple as looking around for items already available in the room or as detailed as drawing up a plan and buying the materials to assemble a custom made theatre. In a classroom, for example there are usually pieces of furniture available for a quick, on the spot performance.

- flip over a couple of desks or a table if the students are small enough to sit or kneel behind and be hidden
- hang a blanket or sheet over a rolling coat rack, free - standing chalk or white board or between two chairs
- sit behind a short free standing bookshelf
- have no puppet stage - interact with a puppet right out in front of your audience

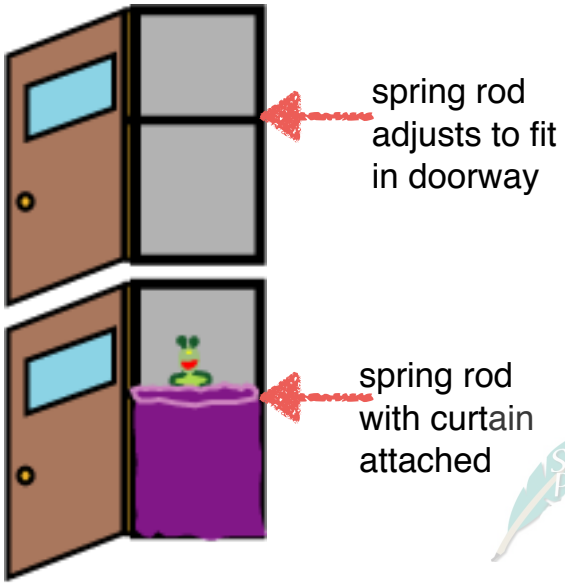
  (Take advantage of our capacity for suspension of belief.)

Doorway Puppet Theatre

With a couple of small purchases you can turn your doorway into a theatre.

- a curtain with a rod pocket (whatever length you need to hide the puppeteers)
- a spring-loaded rod long enough to fit snugly between to door frame

Simply slide the curtain onto the rod and prop it into the doorway. This is also great entertainment for people passing in the hall outside. They get a reverse view of the action!

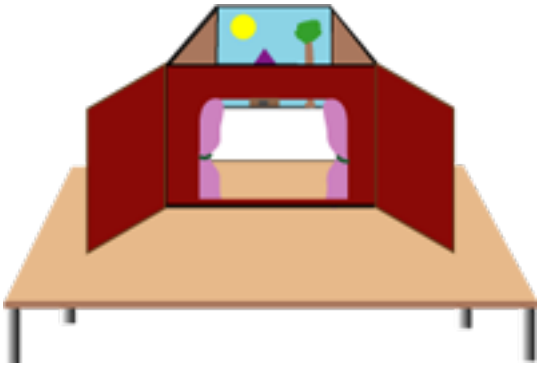


Here are two designs that can easily be constructed with cardboard boxes.

Table Top Stage for Small Hand or Finger Puppets

Materials:

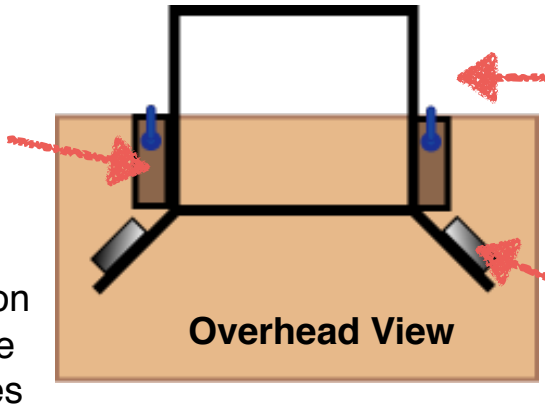
• 1 sturdy cardboard box (size depends on your table)
• 2 sturdy pieces of cardboard for the wings
• 2 clamps or heavy tape
• 2 library type book ends



Optional:
• material for small curtains
• string or dowel to hang them on

• cut flaps off box leaving half of each side flap as shown to be clamped or taped to the table

• scenery can be drawn on paper and attached to the back and wing pieces with clips for easy scene changes



• box overhangs table for access from below (puppeteers sit on floor)

• L-shaped library book ends taped to back of cardboard wings and table help to secure the stage

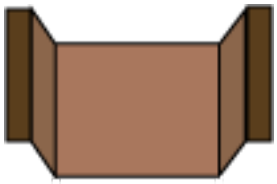
Floor Stage for Hand or Rod Puppets

2-level Puppet Stage

Materials:

• 1 very large sturdy cardboard appliance box (tall enough for your puppeteers to stand behind)
• 1 smaller appliance box (tall enough for your puppeteers to sit or kneel behind)
The back of the large box can be used for the lower section, but it can be difficult to fold evenly.

Lower Level



• lower section showing flaps left from back of box

Hints:

• leave the bottom flaps on the sides and front of each box - these can be taped to the floor to secure the sides of the box at the correct angle

• use the smaller box as a template to cut out the hole in the front of the larger box - remember that the width of the hole must be a little wider than the smaller box in order to have some angle on the sides of the lower level

• before cutting off the back of the smaller box, measure in 5-8 cm (2"-3") from the sides, keep this much of the back and cut out the rest

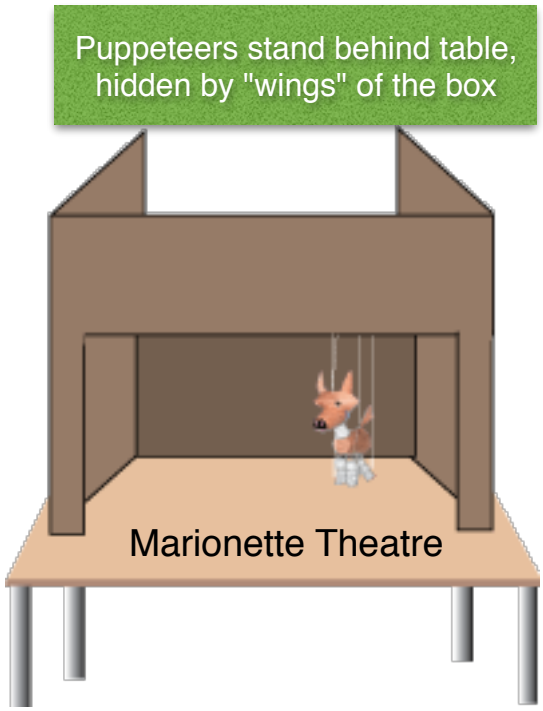
• fold out these back pieces to make flaps that will tape to the inside of the larger box and secure the lower section

Make a simple marionette stage from a cardboard box.

This is a simple plan for making a marionette puppet stage from a large box. Marionettes or string puppets require a different stage layout to that of hand puppets since the puppeteers must stand behind the opening instead of below it. There are few actual dimensions given with the plans because measurements would depend on the size of the puppeteers, the marionettes and the placement of the stage (desk, table etc.).

Materials needed:

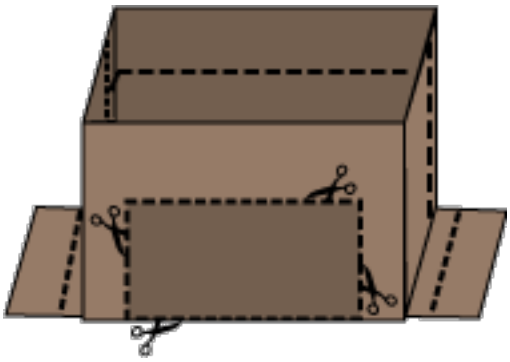
- large heavy duty cardboard box
- scissors or utility knife
- ruler or measuring tape
- wide duct tape (masking tape may work) or clamps to attach box temporarily to table
- desk or table
- material or paper to cover front of desk or table
- construction paper and markers, paint ....



Basic Structure

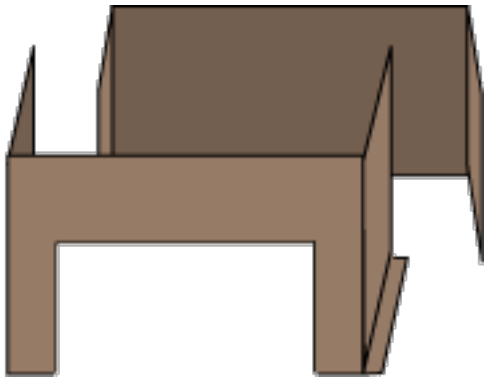
Before selecting and cutting the box determine the height of the puppeteers and the height of the table that will hold the stage. The combined height of the box and table must be enough to hide the heads and hands of the puppeteers while still allowing them to hold the puppets over the screen at the back (darker area behind the puppet in the picture).

Step 1
remove flaps from the top of the box as well as the front and back of the bottom



side flaps at the bottom will be used to anchor the stage on the table and could be trimmed to 3-4" (7-10cm)

cut a "window" in the front of the box
- determine dimensions according to size of the smaller box



• remove the back of the box by cutting down the sides of box - cut in about 2" (5cm) from the edge

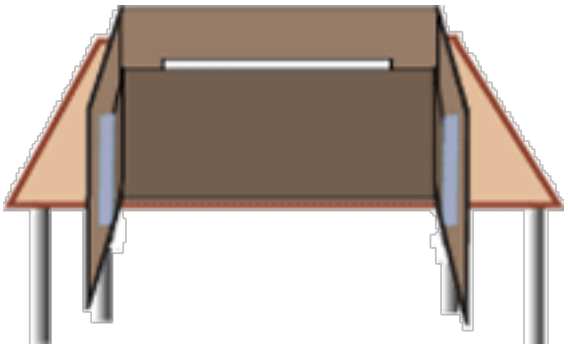
• trim the back so that it is slightly taller than the opening (window) cut in the front of the box

•
The back becomes the screen for the back of the stage.

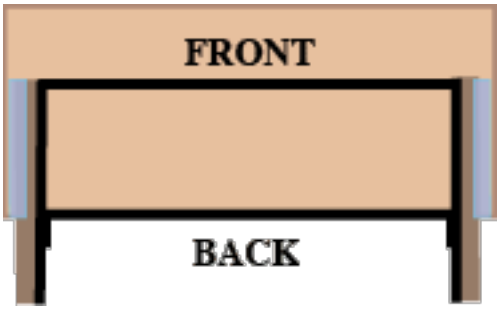
Step 2

• turn the back piece around so that the tape will not be seen from the front

• tape it into place leaving enough space on the stage for the marionettes to move around freely



Overhead view



Step 3

• cover the front of the table with material or paper to hide the feet of the puppeteers

• use construction paper or cardboard to decorate the front of your theatre - make it taller than the front of the box if more height is needed

• scenery can be drawn on paper and attached to the back screen - this makes it easy to change for different performances

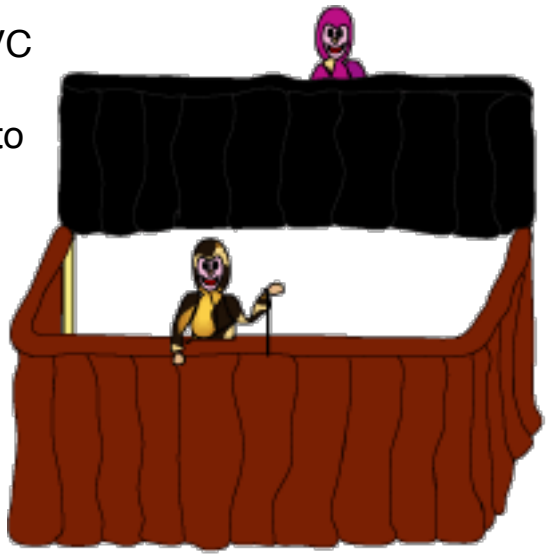
Step 4

Add a Simple Curtain

cut holes in the sides of the theatre just above the front opening
slide a dowel longer than the width of the theatre through the holes
tape a piece of material to the dowel
turn the dowel to raise and lower the curtain

Build Your Own PVC Pipe Puppet Stage

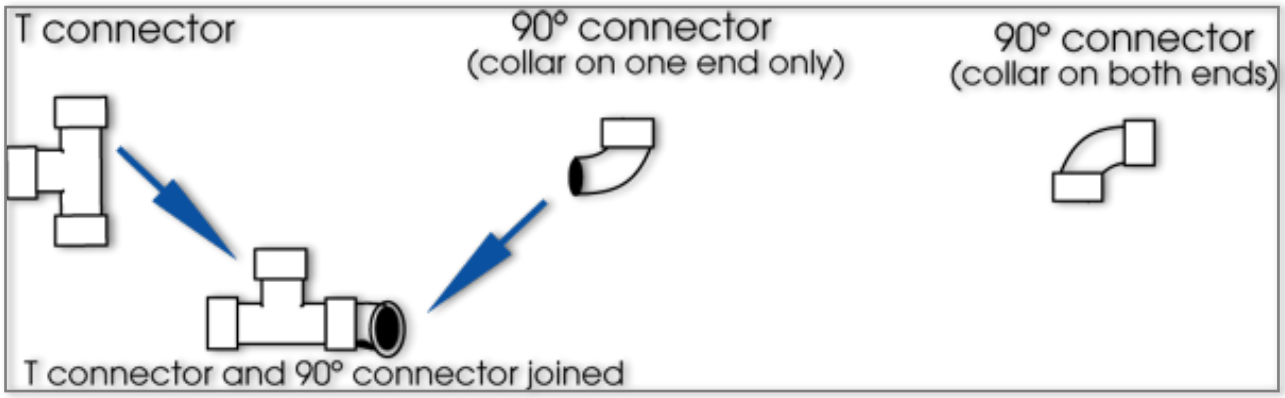
For Puppet Clubs or Puppet Ministries the PVC pipe puppet stage is very easy to construct. It is durable, customizable and can easily be assembled and disassembled for travel and storage.



This is one design for making your own PVC pipe puppet stage. This type of theatre is relatively inexpensive to build and is easy to disassemble and pack up for storage or travel.

PVC pipe or plumbing pipe is found in most hardware or home building supply stores. No dimensions are given with these plans, because the size (including height) will depend on the size of the puppeteers and how much space is required for movement inside the theatre. So before purchasing the lengths of pipe, you will need to determine the size of stage you need and then do a little math to figure out how many feet of pipe to buy.

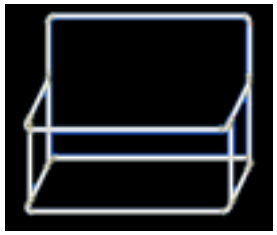
The pipe comes in different diameters. The smallest size works well for smaller productions and makes a very light, portable stage, but I prefer the medium diameter for greater stability because I often attach a variety of props, scenery and flood lights to the frame.



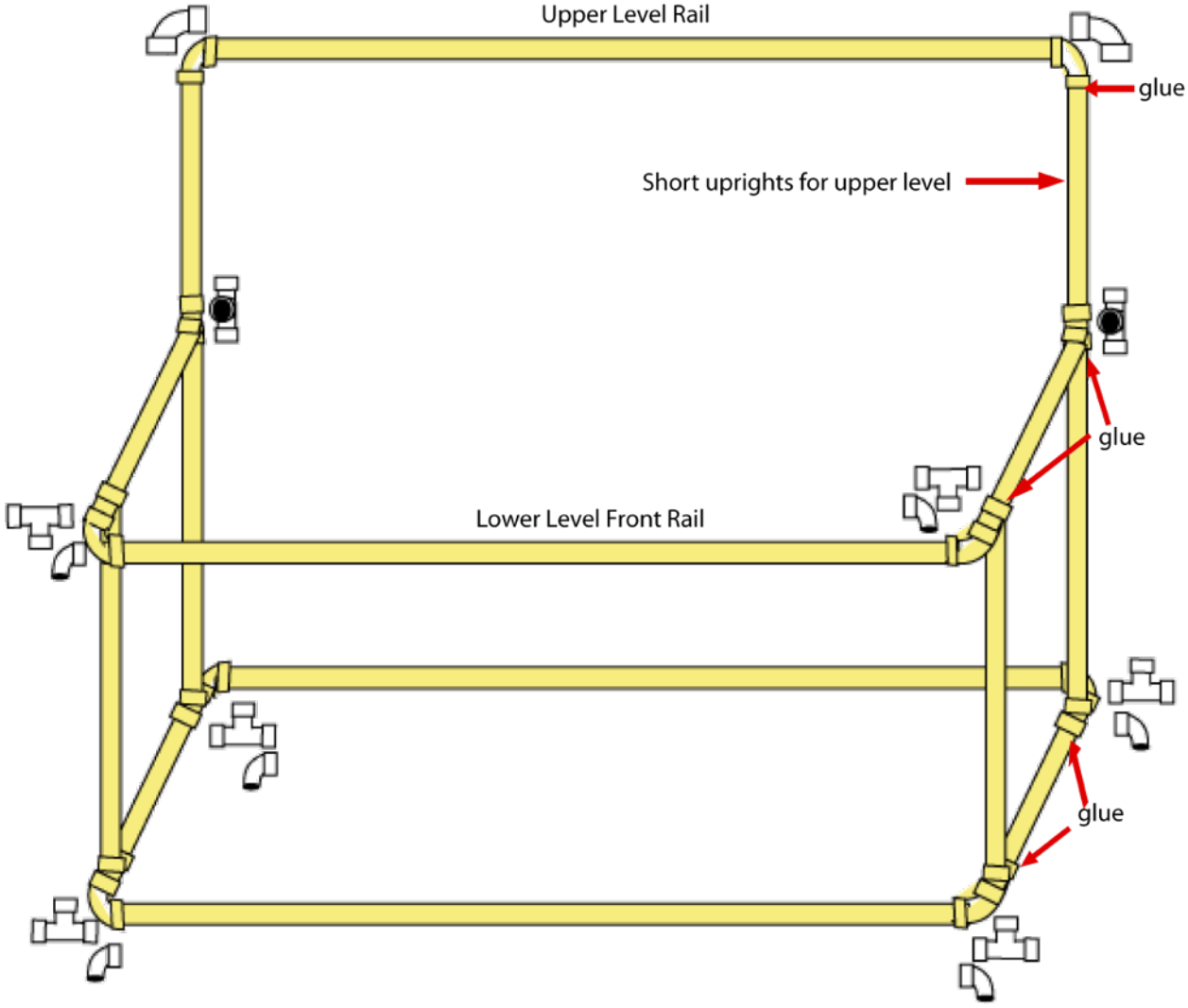
PVC Pipe Fittings

On your shopping list you will need:

- 8 T connectors
- 6 90º connectors with single collar
- 2 90º connectors with double collars
- enough pipe to build the size of pipe
- hack saw to cut pipe
- pvc cement for permanent connections
- duct tape for securing temporary



The illustration below shows larger drawings of the connectors beside each joint so that you can more easily see where each goes.



The 90º elbow and T connectors can be permanently glued together using the pvc cement. These could then be glued to the side rails so that these connections are secure. The 90º elbows could also be glued to the short uprights for the upper level. The 2 T connectors could be glued to the bottom rear uprights. Do the same for both sides of the stage. All other connectors are attached when the stage is set up and can be reinforced with duct tape.

Just add curtains and you're ready to go!
The easiest way to add curtains is to slide pocket curtains over the front, side and 2nd level pipes. Don't forget to put the curtains on before assembling the top rails.