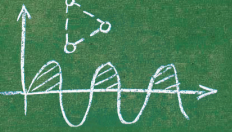


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PUPPETS

Puppetry is an ancient form of theater that uses doll-like, movable figures to entertain or tell a story. Puppets come in all sizes — as big as a person or as small as your little finger. Puppets are fun to watch and fun to make.



"Howdy Doody" was a popular TV show that ran from 1947 until 1960. Howdy Doody was a wooden puppet. Each episode opened with the question, "Say, kids, what time is it?"

Types of puppets

Hand puppets are the most common type of puppets. Sitting on a puppeteer's hand, the figurine is manipulated with finger, thumb and wrist action. Many hand puppets have movable mouths to speak, sing and express emotions. Some have arms and hands to make gestures or pick up objects. Most hand puppets do not have legs or feet.

Marionettes are the most intricate figures of the puppet world. Multijointed and controlled by strings, they can walk, run, sit, jump, carry objects and open doors.

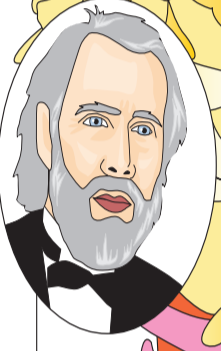
The stringed marionettes we know today were developed during the 16th century. By the late 1570s, puppets were so lifelike that some puppeteers were suspected of witchcraft. Marionette operas were so popular in the late 1600s that rival theater and opera guilds tried to close them down. In contemporary puppetry, the marionette remains the most delicate and difficult medium of the puppeteer's art.

Rod puppets are manipulated by the puppeteer with long sticks. These puppets can be as simple as a figure on a single stick, or more complex, with many rods moving several puppet parts. Some Muppet-type puppets use a combination of handwork and rods.

Shadow puppetry has been popular in Asia since ancient times. Flat rod puppets throw a silhouette or shadow onto an illuminated screen, which is viewed by the audience from the other side. Light, color and animation bring the characters to life.



Big Bird from the TV show "Sesame Street"



Jim Henson 1936-1990



Cookie Monster

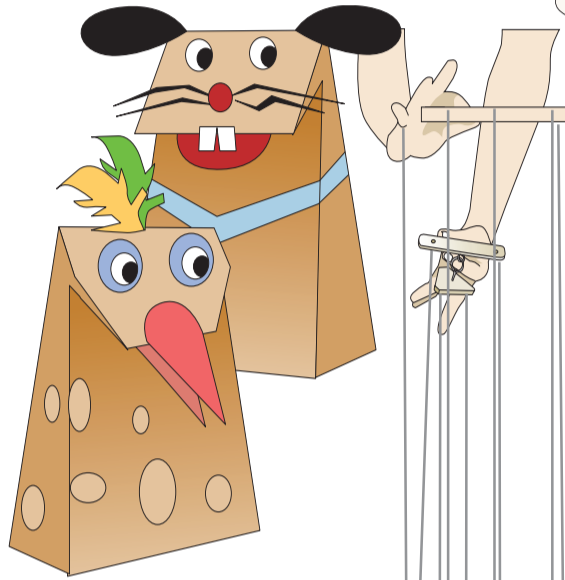
The Muppets

Puppeteer Jim Henson created the **Muppets** — a famous gang of puppet characters who appear on the children's television show "Sesame Street." Muppets tend to have big eyes, big mouths and big personalities. Most are made of foam rubber or other soft material, with rods attached to their arms. A Muppet is operated by a Muppeteer, who is usually hidden from view.

Bunraku is a Japanese form of puppetry. Large, beautifully painted and carved wood puppets are controlled by puppeteers dressed in black.



Punch is a hunchback dressed as a jester. He carries a long stick, which he uses often. Characters that resemble Punch were popular in many European countries.



Paper-bag puppets

It's easy to make puppets from small paper lunch bags. You can create all kinds of characters — from people and animals to fairies and monsters.

Supplies needed

Paper bags, construction paper, glue, scissors, markers or crayons

Paper-bag puppets

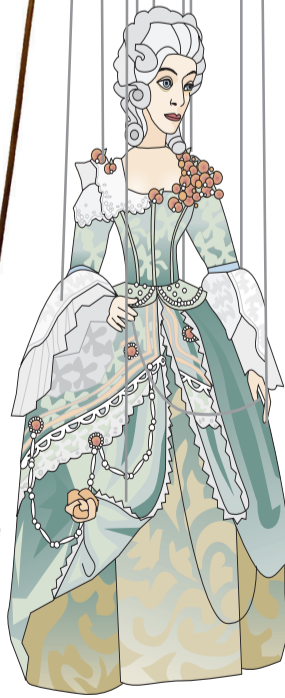
1. Draw and color face and costume.
2. Cut out ears and other features from construction paper, and glue onto bag.



Cambodian shadow puppet

Cutout figures perform behind a brightly lit screen.

The Salzburg Marionette Theatre has been performing plays, operas and ballets with stringed puppets since 1913.



In a word

The word **puppet** comes from the Latin *pupa*, meaning "doll."

A bit of history

It is not known when the first puppets came into use, but evidence suggests they have existed in almost all cultures for thousands of years. Puppet-like figures from ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and China have been discovered.

Puppeteers

A person who controls and manipulates a puppet is called a **puppeteer**. A group of puppeteers is called a **troupe**. A puppeteer troupe will often travel to different locations, performing shows. Puppeteers are usually hidden, creating the illusion that the puppets are alive.

Punch and Judy

Possibly the most famous of all puppet theater, the exploits of Punch and Judy (his wife) began in England in 1662. Traditionally, one puppeteer brought both hand puppets to life.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; The Salzburg Marionette Theatre; https://en.wikipedia.org ; The Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College in New York City; "Puppetry: A World History" by Eileen Blumenthal

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