



Strings

The Lost History of Marionettes

Access prior knowledge with this cute film, *Colosse*, a nifty short feature about a giant robot marionette going for a stroll through the forest. Giant machines, they really know how to tug the heartstrings.

<https://io9.com/5909849/and-lo-a-cute-short-film-about-a-30+foot+tall-wooden-marionette-robot>

And/or, watch the "Lonely Goatherd" marionette production, sung by Julie Andrews as the wonderful Original Maria in the classic film, *The Sound of Music*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_PJPDMXHOW

Clearer version at: <http://vimeo.com/48335996>

The art of the marionette is almost a lost art, with a history that is truly lost. Where did this art really begin, and when? Who could say for certain? Up until the present date, and even after intensive research, there still is a lot of speculation and controversy. What is known is that marionettes have a rich and vibrant history that surpasses most other forms of puppetry. With roots in ancient Egypt and around the globe (India, Ancient Greece, and more), marionettes are one of the oldest forms of puppets. Some historians claim that they pre-date actors in theatre.

Today marionettes are seen by most people as solely for entertainment in small productions or on television shows, movies, or commercials. For example, marionettes are found in *Sesame Street*; "Pinocchio"-one of the most reimagined characters in all of children's literature, originally in *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by the Italian writer Carlo Collodi; Jim Henson Productions, "Howdy Doody," Thunderbirds, The Lonely Goatherd sequence from the classic film *The Sound of Music*, the 2004 fantasy film *Strings*, and even Diet Coke commercials.



However, this has not always been the case! From acting as go-betweens from common people to emperors to heralding the arrival of gods, marionettes have played an interesting part throughout human history. (And some robots today have their roots in marionettes!)

Marionettes are distinguished from regular puppets by the fact that they are controlled by strings that are manipulated from above. (Marionettes are sometimes referred to as "puppets", but the term "marionettes" is more precise, distinguishing them from other forms of puppetry, such as finger, glove, rod and shadow puppetry.) This allows them a freedom of movement that is unmatched by other forms of puppetry, and this type of movement demands a great deal of skill from the person who is pulling the strings. Let's take a look at the role that they have played in history, both for entertainment purposes and for deadly serious ones!

In Myanmar (a sovereign state in Southeast Asia bordered by China, Thailand, India, Laos and Bangladesh) which was once known as Burma, troupes of marionettes were commissioned and maintained by royalty. Though the stories told by the marionette troupes were no doubt fascinating and entertaining, they served a very real and very serious purpose.



They were a form of medium to tell country folk in far-flung villages the happenings in the Capital, like a living newspaper or news show. Back at home, the Burmese court was concerned with preserving the dignity of its members and marionettes were often used to preserve the esteem of a person who had erred. For instance, the emperor could reprimand his children or his wife in this way by asking the puppeteers to put on a parable correcting errant children or careless wives about their reckless ways. While the reprimand would be obvious to anyone who was "in the know" it would largely pass unheeded by the people looking on, something that had a great deal of value in a court that could, and did contain hundreds of people.

The Burmese marionettes also served as a conduit between the ruler and his subjects...many times, people would ask the puppeteers to mention, in a veiled fashion, a

Gary Busk, puppet historian, collector, and restorer is the proud owner of over 1000 marionettes. In this ANTIQUES ROADSHOW bonus footage Gary invites us into his workshop to discuss puppet construction and history.

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1868334517/>

current event or warning to the ruler. In this way, information could be transferred on without any disrespect. A marionette could say things that a human could never get away with, a live messenger would probably have had his head chopped off!

In many ways, the Burmese marionette troupes replaced the actors of the time. It was considered a beheading offense to put or have your head above royalty, a fact which made standing on a stage difficult to say the least. Similarly, the laws of Burma were such that an actor could not wear full costumes if they were playing figures like royalty or holy men. While both of these facts would hamper the movement and stylings of a human actor, marionettes were not bound by such things and thrived in the vacuum.

Because marionettes were not human and too small to be viewed with ease they were allowed to be on a raised dais with the puppeteers hidden behind a tautly-stretched white waist-high screen. There was an opening in the middle, usually hidden by a flap of cloth, where nobler puppets such as the Hermit or Celestial King could make their entrance and exit. Lesser puppets used the sides with the "good guys" using the right side and the "bad guys" using the left!

The marionettes were fashioned lovingly by the puppeteer himself in the old days, from a particular timber (usually Yamane but not teak as this type of wood was too heavy) and real human hair was implanted on the head. The joints were carefully strung and wrapped with lengths of soft rags.

Though there are quite a few books dedicated to the practice of puppetry, specific puppet making and manipulation skills are usually learned from the puppet masters through apprenticeship, and, even today, are usually not publicly available.

Dancing puppets had the most strings: the basic ones are the five attached to the "H"-shaped handlebar which is held in the palm of the left hand. Two are for the forehead, two for the shoulders and one for the spine; the others are looped over the fingers of the right hand of the puppeteer with one long string connecting each of the fingers, the elbows, the knees, the heels and the toes.

Needless to say the care and storage of the puppets is in accordance with ancient customs and rituals: for example small pillows are tied to their faces during storage so the paint doesn't chip.

To make these wooden dolls seem alive it isn't only the skill of the puppeteer that is at stake but the skills of the singer who is hidden behind the screen and the leader of the orchestra ranged in front: the three must share a close rapport which breathes life into their small charges. The marionettes are never referred to as "it" and puppeteers will never allow anyone to unravel the strings and handle them. As soon as the strings are unraveled the puppets must be handled expertly so that they seem to breathe - even off-stage. Special "nat" ceremonies are held to supplicate the goddess of the performing arts and breathe life into the marionettes (or "instill the butterfly" as it is known). With such care for their well-being by their doting handlers it is hardly surprising that the marionettes seem to come alive in their hands, almost smiling with satisfaction!

In Italian, a marionette is known as a fantoccino. Some believe the word “marionette” is itself derived from the Old French mariole, meaning “musical instrument.” The origin of the word may also be traceable to the Virgin Mary, often the principal character of puppet plays during the 1500s, either as a diminutive of “Maria,” or in its literal translation “little Marys,” from the French reference to the Virgin. In China, it is called “Xuan Si Mu Ou” (懸絲木偶) (roughly translates to: Hanging wire Puppet) or “Ti Xian Mu Ou” (提線木偶), which is a direct interpretation of how you operate the puppet.

In cultures with a tradition of marionette performance, interested people can learn the art of manipulating marionettes from skilled performers. It does take work to learn to operate a marionette properly; talented performers can create surprisingly lifelike performances with their puppets.

The first marionettes appear to have emerged around 2000 BCE in Ancient Egypt. Excavations of Egyptian tombs have revealed puppets crafted from a wide variety of materials. Some of these puppets were quite ornate, and they appear to have been used in staged performances. The art of puppetry spread to Greece and Rome as well; although few examples of Greek and Roman puppets exist, works of Ancient art depict marionettes in action, suggesting that many people were familiar with them. The classics of Western literature, the Iliad and the Odyssey, may very well have been performed using marionettes.

In Europe, Italy was commonly considered to be the birthplace of the marionette. These early puppets were used to present morality plays (bible stories, fables, and other stories which encouraged good behavior and showed punishments for bad) to a largely illiterate (unable to read) audience and were often presented in church courtyards. Of all the forms of puppet known at that time, it was precisely marionettes which, with their shape and style of animation most closely approximated the performance of a human actor and could to a certain degree replace him. Behaviors that would be considered lewd or inappropriate if undertaken by human actors were acceptable in marionettes. Comedy sneaked into the plays as time went by and ultimately, puppeteers responded by setting up stages outside cathedrals and became ever more ribald and slapstick.

The term “slapstick” even originated with a marionette show called Punch and Judy. Mr. Punch is an incorrigible (un-curable) villain who, generation after generation, evokes affection and delight in both adults and children. Their usual reaction to the cudgel (stick) wielding atrocities



(violence) of Mr. Punch is laughter. He is the embodiment (perfect example) of that peculiarly robust (forceful) form of humor known as Slapstick (think of Punch as a manifestation of the Lord of Misrule and Trickster figures of deep-rooted mythologies, carries a stick (called a slapstick) as large as himself, which he freely uses upon most of the other characters in the show.

Later on, the marionettes were used in epics like *The Song of Roland*, and during the eighteenth century, there was a trend of using marionettes to perform full-length operas, a tradition which is continued in some parts of Germany to this day. In modern Austria, the Salzburg Marionette Theatre continues this tradition

The New World might even have an older version of the marionette. The Hopi had a Great Serpent drama known as *Palu Lakonti* that was performed every year in March. Large snakes are depicted as rising from the ground and sweeping across the fields. These serpents are marionettes as they are manipulated by strings from above, as there the two Corn Maids who accompany them. This is a tradition that existed long before Europeans showed up on American shores and points to a history with marionettes and puppetry that is extremely ancient.

Reimaginings: Twisting the Strings of History

For a fun introduction to this section, read a fun time travel twist story such as *Oh No! Not Again!: (Or How I Built a Time Machine to Save History) (Or at Least My History Grade)*. This fun book hilariously reveals what happens when you mess with history! Our young protagonist is crushed at her performance on the latest history quiz -- she got one question wrong. Her mere "A" grade cannot -- must not -- stand! So, obviously, she creates a time machine to set things right. Not to, you know, answer the test correctly, but to change history so that her incorrect answer will be right.



As you read, talk a little bit about each story's author. If there is information about the author on the book jacket, you might read it together. Help the students understand that the author created or adapted the story and made decisions about what should happen in it.

As you read, stop and ask the students to make predictions about what is going to happen next and why he or she thinks so. When you do this, you are encouraging him or her to think about how stories work and how readers understand stories – both important when writing a story of one's own, which they'll be doing soon!

While you are reading and when you are done, talk about the different parts of the story, asking questions such as:

- What is the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Who are the characters?
- What do you like about them?
- Where does the story take place?
- Is there a problem that occurs in the story? If so, how does it get resolved?
- What do you think about the ending? Is there a connection, either in words or pictures, between the ending and the beginning of the story?

The very best mysteries are locked within our histories! Sure kids are supposed to be learning history “as it really happened” rather than having their heads turned by fanciful versions complete with dragons, invading alien races, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, but truly how do we know what really happened? As we’ve seen with marionettes, sometimes pieces of history get left in the lost and found of human memory.

Didn’t someone say, “History is more often written with an eraser than with a pencil” (If not, they did now!) Napoleon really did say, “History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.” If so, how much of our real history is lost because it didn't fit someone's vision, and was erased? It's almost a human compulsion to ask what might have happened if events in the past had happened differently, and what the resulting world would look like, or wonder what really happened and if what we think we know is the true tale.

In fact, there's a growing amount of evidence suggesting that a lot of the familiar history of human exploration and "discovery" by our ancestors as we were taught it may be quite wrong. There is hard evidence of ancient civilizations making their mark in places where, according to traditionally accepted history, they just shouldn't be. Such as concrete evidence (ships, toys, coins, pottery, and writings) that Greeks and Romans and Egyptians and Hebrews were in the Americas long before Pilgrims, Columbus, or the Vikings ever got here; and concrete evidence that Japanese, Mongolians, and Chinese adventurers and settlers were on the West Coast (by California) and in Mexico, Alaska, and Ecuador.

Why Have I Never Heard of...

Here's a quick overview of some of the most remarkable and fascinating reported cases from the About.com article “History Mystery: Ancients in America” by Stephen Wagner.

http://paranormal.about.com/od/ancientanomalies/a/History-Mystery-Ancients-In-America_2.htm.

Pick a few of your favorites and share them with your students. What do students think? Are they true?

Greeks and Romans in the New World?

Coins:

- Roman coins have been found in Venezuela and Maine.

- Roman coins were found in Texas at the bottom of an Indian mound at Round Rock. The mound is dated at approximately 800 AD.
- In 1957 near Phenix City, Alabama, a small boy found a coin in a field from Syracuse on the island of Sicily, and dating from 490 B.C.
- In the town of Heavener, Oklahoma, another out-of-place coin was found in 1976. Experts identified it as a bronze tetra drachm originally struck in Antioch, Syria in 63 A.D. and bearing the profile of the emperor Nero.
- In 1882, a farmer in Cass County, Illinois picked up a bronze coin later identified as a coin of Antiochus IV, one of the kings of Syria who reigned from 175 B.C. to 164 B.C., and who is mentioned in the Bible.

Pottery:

- Roman pottery was unearthed in Mexico that, according to its style, has been dated to the second century A.D.

Inscriptions:

- In 1966, a man named Manfred Metcalf stumbled upon a stone in the state of Georgia that bears an inscription that is very similar to ancient writing from the island of Crete called "Cretan Linear A and B writing."
- In the early 1900s, Bernardo da Silva Ramos, a Brazilian rubber-tapper working in the Amazon jungle, found many large rocks on which was inscribed more than 2,000 ancient scripts about the "Old World."
- Near Rio de Janeiro, high on a vertical wall of rock - 3,000 feet up - is an inscription that reads: "Tyre, Phoenicia, Badezir, Firstborn of Jethbaal..." and dated to the middle of the ninth century B.C.
- Near Parahyba, Brazil, an inscription on Phoenician has been translated, in part, as: "We are sons of Canaan from Sidon, the city of the king. Commerce has cast us on this distant shore, a land of mountains. We set [sacrificed] a youth for the exalted gods and goddesses in the nineteenth year of Hiram, our mighty king. We embarked from Ezion-Geber into the Red Sea and voyaged with ten ships. We were at sea together for two years around the land belonging to Ham [Africa] but were separated by a storm [literally 'from the hand of Baal'], and we were no longer with our companions. So we have come here, twelve men and three women, on a... shore which I, the Admiral, control. But auspiciously may the gods and goddesses favor us!"
- The Kensington Rune stone, discovered in Kensington, Minnesota in 1898 contains an inscription describing an expedition of Norsemen into the interior of what is now North America. It's estimated that this expedition took place in the 1300s.
- In 1980, P.M. Leonard and J.L. Glenn, from the Hogle Zoological Gardens, Salt Lake City, visited a rock outcropping in Colorado that was reputed to be inscribed with "peculiar markings." Leonard and Glenn believe they are excellent examples of Consainne Ogam writing - a type ascribed to ancient Celts. One of the many inscriptions was translated as: "Route Guide: To the west is the frontier town with standing stones as boundary markers."

- A round, fist-sized stone was found during the early 1890s in a cemetery near Nashville, Tennessee. Its front was inscribed with symbols thought to be Libyan, pre-100 A.D. style. It translates as: "The colonists pledge to redeem."

Pictures:

- An experienced botanist has identified plants in an ancient fresco painting as a pineapple and a specific species of squash - both native to the Americas. Yet the fresco is in the Roman city of Pompeii.

Statues:

- In 1933, in a burial at Calixtlahuaca, Mexico, archaeologist José García Payón discovered a small with "foreign" features in an undisturbed burial site. It was later identified by anthropologist Robert Heine-Gilder as "unquestionably" from the Hellenistic-Roman school of art and suggested a date of "around AD 200."

Structures:

- Many stone chambers dot the New England countryside and most archaeologists insist they are all potato cellars built long ago by farmers. Others argue that they are too sophisticated for such a mundane application. One, is built into a hillside at Upton, Massachusetts, has sophisticated corbelling that follows the style of Irish and Iberic chambers. It's theorized that it was really built by Europeans around 700 AD - long before the Leif Eriksson voyage.

Ships:

- In 1886, the remains of a shipwreck were found in Galveston Bay, Texas. Its construction is typically Roman.

Toys:

- A doll made of wood and wax was found deep in a "Well of Sacrifice" at Chichén Itzá, Mexico, on which is written Roman script.

Tombs:

- In the Mayan ruins of Palenque, a stone sarcophagus was found that is very much in the style of the ancient Phoenicians.

The Far-Traveling Egyptians?

Statues:

- In 1914, archaeologist M.A. Gonzales was excavating some Mayan ruins in the city of Acajutla, Mexico when he was surprised by the discovery of two statuettes that were clearly Egyptian. One male and one female, the carvings bore ancient Egyptian dress and cartouches. They are thought to depict the Egyptian god Osiris and goddess Isis.

Inscriptions:

- Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs have been found in New South Wales, Australia. Located on a rock cliff in the National Park forest of the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, the enigmatic carvings have been known since the early 1900s. There are more than 250 carvings of familiar Egyptian

gods and symbols, including a life-sized engraving of the god Anubis. The hieroglyphs tell the story of explorers who were shipwrecked in a strange and hostile land, and the untimely death of their royal leader, "Lord Djes-eb." From this information, scholars have been able to date the voyage to somewhere between 1779 and 2748 BC.

Fossils:

- In 1982, archaeologists digging at Fayum, near the Siwa Oasis in Egypt uncovered fossils of kangaroos and other Australian marsupials.

Language:

- There are striking similarities between the languages of ancient Egypt and those of the Native Americans that inhabited the areas around Louisiana about the time of Christ. B. Fell, of the Epigraphic Society, has stated that the language of the Atakapas, and to a lesser extent those of the Tunica and Chitimacha tribes, have affinities with Nile Valley languages involving just those words one would associate with Egyptian trading communities of 2,000 years ago.

Artifacts:

- Near the Nepean River outside Penrith, New South Wales, a scarab beetle - a familiar Egyptian symbol - carved from onyx was unearthed. Another was found in Queensland, Australia.

Tombs:

- The April 5, 1909 edition of *The Phoenix Gazette* carried a front-page article about the discovery and excavation of an Egyptian tomb in the Grand Canyon by none other than the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian has since denied knowledge of any such discovery. There are no records of Kincaid or Professor Jordon within the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology, and none of their "artifacts" ever saw the light of day. According to conspiracy theorists, the Smithsonian institute destroyed all artifacts and filled in the tunnels, possibly to maintain the current picture of human history. **What do students think might be true?**

The Scattered Tribes of Israel?

Inscriptions:

- An abridged version of the Ten Commandments was found carved into the flat face of a large boulder resting on the side of Hidden Mountain near Los Lunas, New Mexico. Known as The Los Lunas Inscription, its language is Hebrew, and the script is the Old Hebrew alphabet with a few Greek letters mixed in.

Artifacts:

- In June, 1860, David Wyrick found an artifact on the general shape of a keystone near Newark, Ohio that is covered in four ancient Hebrew inscriptions translated as: "Holy of Holies," "King of the Earth," "The Law of God" and "The Word of God."
- In November of that same year, Wyrick found an inscribed stone in a burial mound about 10 miles south of Newark, Ohio. The stone is inscribed on all sides with a condensed version of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, in a peculiar form of post-Exilic square Hebrew letters. A robed and bearded figure on the front is identified as Moses in letters fanning over his head.

Asians on the West Coast?

While it is a subject of ferocious debate, numerous scholars and historians have embraced the idea that the Chinese not only visited the New World but maintained regular contact with it. We have long known that, given the advanced state of shipbuilding and navigation in ancient China, the Chinese were capable of launching expeditions across the Pacific. The real question is, did they?

Stories:

- Indian traditions tell of many "houses" seen on Pacific waters. Could they have been ships from Asia?
- Chinese history tells a charming account of voyages to the land of "Fusang" where there was a colony.
 - East of the Eastern Ocean lie
 - The shores of the Land of Fusang.
 - If, after landing there, you travel
 - East for 10,000 li
 - You will come to another ocean, blue,
 - Vast, huge, boundless.
 - Eighteenth century mapmakers placed it in North America, usually near what is today Washington or Vancouver. Though many scholars agree that the Fusang tale does have some element of truth, few agree on where it may have been. Some point to Peru (Hui Shen describes the leader of Fusang as the "Inki"), others to Mexico (Fusang = Maguey), and still others to British Columbia (most likely arrival point sailing east from Kamchatka with the easterly North Pacific Current). **(Map out these locations with your students.)**
- Old Spanish documents describe oriental ships off the Mexican coast in 1576.

Coins:

- In the summer of 1882, a miner in British Columbia found 30 Chinese coins 25 feet below the surface. The examined coins of this style were invented by the Emperor Huangt around 2637 B.C.

Artifacts:

- Japanese explorers and traders left steel blades in Alaska and their distinctive pottery in Ecuador.
- Underwater explorations off the California coast have yielded stone artifacts that seem to be anchors and line weights. The style and type of stone point to Chinese origins.
- Ancient Chinese coins, ship anchors (James R. Moriarty of the University of San Diego), and other relics have been discovered along the American coast – some dating back as much as 2,000 years!

Structures:

- California's East Bay Walls, ancient low rock walls east of San Francisco Bay, have long been a mystery. No one knows who built them or why. In 1904, Dr. John Fryer, professor of Oriental

languages at U.C. Berkeley, declared: "This is undoubtedly the work of Mongolians... the Chinese would naturally wall themselves in, as they do in all of their towns in China."

Necessary Tropes: Essential Strings

Now, in honor of the eraser, and the mysteries in our often lost history, we're going to take up the threads of the past, tangle things up a bit, find out some facts, and reimagine that very first Thanksgiving. We're embarking on the genre of alternate history stories, which consist of having an event already known unfold in a different way (possibly as a rip-snorting adventure!)

As a genre Alternate History is amazingly fluid but What If? is essential to this genre. It's the fundamental question that you're asking in the text; what if this happened differently? What if it really happened this (insert your ideas here) way?

Warped Threads

For Want of a Nail (A story in which one small change has a ripple effect, resulting in massive changes) is also quite important. Humans seem to enjoy imagining that drastic, world-spanning changes in history can result from tiny, seemingly insignificant events.

For example, in the Saturday Night Live Timecrowave sketch (Timecrowave: the only microwave equipped with time travel capabilities) big changes happen based on the push of a button! Just pop in the dish of your choice and send it back in time to the exact moment you wanted to eat it. But as Gramp Pampton (Alec Baldwin) and two-time Miss Indiana runner-up Penny Shmear (Kristen Wiig) find out, if you don't do it correctly you might cause small (or big) changes in history (Nazis, giant cats, danger to the space time continuum) but it's totally worth it for a meal heated by the power of time travel. Maybe. **Have the kids watch the video at: <http://vdownload.eu/watch/328801-timecrowave.html>. Discuss what changes they noticed based on the tiny act of microwaving dinner. Note: Video should NOT be flashing quickly. If you have viewing issues try watching it in 360p.**

We can also see examples of this idea in many stories! Have students ever read a book where something tiny was changed in history and had a big effect? For example, one like *Oh No! Not Again!: (Or How I Built a Time Machine to save History) (Or at Least My History Grade)*.

The term, "for want of a nail" derives from a proverb-turned-poem which traces its origins as far back as the 14th century (making this older than print itself).

In 1485, Richard III was on the English throne. It was a time of instability, and Richard had to defend his crown more than once. But he was an experienced military veteran, a bold and shrewd warrior who had an army of between 8,000 and 10,000 men.

That same year, a pretender to the English throne, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, challenged and confronted Richard in a place that gave the battle its name: Bosworth Field. Henry, unlike Richard, had little combat experience, and his forces numbered only 5,000. But at his side he had good advisers—

noblemen who had taken part in similar battles, including some against Richard. The morning of the battle arrived, and everything suggested that Richard would be victorious.

A famous dramatic legend summarizes the events of August 22, 1485. That morning, King Richard and his men prepared to face Henry's army. The winner of the battle would be the ruler of England. Shortly before the battle, Richard sent a groom to see if his favorite horse was ready.

"Shoe him quickly," the groom ordered the blacksmith. "The king wishes to ride at the head of his troops."

The blacksmith answered that he would have to wait. "I've shod the king's whole army the last few days," he said, "and now I've got to go get more iron."

The impatient groom said he couldn't wait. "The king's enemies are advancing right now, and we must meet them on the field," he said. "Make do with what you have."

As ordered, the blacksmith did the best he could, making four horseshoes from a bar of iron. After hammering out the shoes, he nailed three of them on the horse. When attempting to fasten the fourth shoe, however, he realized he did not have enough nails.

"I need one or two more nails, and it will take some time to hammer them out," he told the groom.

The groom, however, could wait no longer. "I hear the trumpets now," he declared. "Can't you just use what you've got?"

The blacksmith replied that he would do his best but that he couldn't guarantee that the fourth horseshoe would hold.

"Just nail it on," the groom ordered. "And hurry or King Richard will be angry with us both."

The battle soon commenced. To rally his men, Richard rode up and down the field, fighting and urging them with the call, "Press forward! Press forward!"

As Richard looked across the field, however, he saw some of his men falling back. Fearing that his other soldiers might also begin retreating, he galloped toward the broken line to spur them on. But before Richard could reach them, his horse stumbled and fell, throwing the king to the ground. One of the horse's shoes, just as the blacksmith feared, had flown off during the king's desperate gallop.

Richard jumped from the ground as his horse rose and galloped off. As Henry's army advanced, Richard waved his sword high in the air, shouting, "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!"

But it was too late. By then, Richard's men were fleeing in fear of Henry's advancing army, and the battle was lost. Since that time people have uttered variations on the following proverb:

For want of a nail, a shoe was lost,

For want of a shoe, a horse was lost,

For want of a horse, a battle was lost,
For want of a battle, a kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a
horseshoe nail.

As we think of this story, we
can reflect on how something
as simple as a poorly fastened
horseshoe nail led to such a
dramatic turn of events.
Another well-known version
appeared in Benjamin
Franklin's Poor Richard's
Almanac:



For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of a horse, the rider was lost;
For want of a rider, the message was lost;
For want of the message, the battle was lost;
For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

In any variation, an entire kingdom falls because of one tiny event or change: a horseshoe isn't nailed in properly. Thinking of this allows us, the reader, to imagine that no matter how small our actions seem, they ultimately make a difference in determining how history is formed.

We all know (now) that in an Alternate History, tiny changes ("For Want of a Nail, the shoe was lost...") can lead to massive changes, where everything is different.

If you want to do an alternate history, you really have to sit down and re-write history. Meaning you have to know what people believe to have happened, and where your version of events deviates from it, so anything that existed before then gets to stay the same, everything that happened after that is called into question.

As a class, or having the students work in small groups or individually, have students research the first Thanksgiving and the experiences of the Pilgrims and Wampanoags. Good places to start are:

National Geographic Kids: The First Thanksgiving

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/stories/history/first-thanksgiving/>

What Really Happened at the First Thanksgiving? The Wampanoag Side of the Tale and What's Done Today –Indian Country Today Article by Gale Courey Toensing

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/article/what-really-happened-first-thanksgiving-wampanoag-side-tale-and-what%E2%80%99s-done-today-145807>

Native American Perspective: Fast Turtle, Wampanoag Tribe Member-Scholastic

Experience the events of 1621 through the eyes of a Wampanoag warrior counselor. <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/native-american-perspective-fast-turtle-wampanoag-tribe-member>

The First Thanksgiving: Virtual Field Trips from Scholastic

http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/webcast.htm

Bring the real story of Thanksgiving to life with Virtual Field Trips to Plimoth Plantation!

- **Mayflower:** Students can virtually step aboard and explore an exact replica of the *Mayflower*, anchored at Plimoth Plantation. Hear from 17th-century Pilgrim interpreters about the voyage, as well as the current day Master of the Ship, in this **20-minute Virtual Field Trip**.
- **Pilgrim Village:** Students get a behind-the-scenes look at the simple but arduous life of the Pilgrims in this **18-minute video**.
- **Wampanoag Homesite:** Students can witness the day-to-day life of the indigenous people who were part of the Wampanoag Nation in this **17-minute video**.
- **Plimoth Plantation:** Join the Pilgrims and Wampanoag as they discuss their lives, their collaboration, and the first Thanksgiving in this **30-minute video**.
- **Interviews with Miles Standish and other Pilgrims:** Listen as historical interpreters from Plimoth Plantation describe their life in the New World in these short video interviews. Explore the 10 videos by scrolling in the video player on the site.

Plimoth Plantation: Slideshow Tour (http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/webcast.htm)

Tour the fields and homes of the Pilgrims and watch the Wampanoag at work in this slideshow tour of the Pilgrim Village and Wampanoag Homesite.

Choosing What String to Pull

Now that we know what history *says* happened, what do you think might have happened a little differently? It doesn't matter what kind of point of divergence (split from reality) one chooses, but it must be remembered that Alternate History should be about following that point of divergence *realistically*. The point of divergence can make no sense (ex. maybe you say alien space bats invaded during the first Thanksgiving dinner), but if the repercussions that follow are in line with what such an event would cause in relation to reality, the story is probably on the right track.

When you're creating new events, it can sometimes be helpful to model real world events. It's easier to make events seem plausible when they are similar to real things that have happened, but with a fun twist. No one can say, "that would never happen", if actually did or almost did, or probably could have.

It's not all serious stuff. As they rewrite the Thanksgiving tale encourage students to take and enjoy the chance to use their imaginations and be just plain silly.

Have the students think of the stories you've read and the video(s) you've watched, talk about how those stories were changed. What are some details you might change in what we've learned about the Pilgrims and Wampanoag? By changing essential elements in three familiar tales, children can enrich their understanding of story setting, point of view, and plot. Prompt them to think about changes to six story elements: main characters, setting, time period, point of view, main problem, and ending.

To better understand the importance of the six story elements, suggest that children begin by thinking about just one of them. This will help them get a better understanding of how a single change can affect the entire story. For instance, if Little Red Riding Hood or a Pilgrim girl were living in modern times, would she go into the woods without her cell phone?

Encourage children to experiment with point of view. As background, check out stories that do this well—such as *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka, told from the wolf's point of view. Looking at point of view shows how people can experience the same event and come away with very different impressions.

Thanks for Giving Us History!

Believe it or not, the settlers didn't have silver buckles on their shoes. Nor did they wear somber, black clothing. Their attire was actually bright and cheerful. Many portrayals of the Thanksgiving harvest celebration also show the Native Americans wearing woven blankets on their shoulders and large, feathered headdresses, which is not true. The Englishmen didn't even call themselves Pilgrims.

The peace between the Native Americans and settlers lasted for only a generation. The Wampanoag people do not share in the popular reverence for the traditional New England Thanksgiving. For them, the holiday is a reminder of betrayal and bloodshed. Since 1970, many native people have gathered at the statue of Massasoit in Plymouth, Massachusetts each Thanksgiving Day to remember their ancestors and the strength of the Wampanoag.

Examples: See what element students think the change is to in the following examples.

- What if it wasn't "Pilgrims" that first Thanksgiving what if it was really Vikings that were there setting up a colony instead? (change to character)
- What if the story was told from an animal's perspective? (change to point of view)
- What if the Pilgrims got caught in a hurricane and ended up setting up a colony in Antarctica? (change to setting)
- What if the Pilgrims struggled with weather, low amounts of food, and the last of the dinosaurs? (change to main problem)
- What if the Pilgrims had all gotten sick with something that made all their teeth fall out?
- What if the Native Americans had developed the jet pack?
- What if the Wampanoag tribe was telling the story?
- What if instead of Native Americans the Pilgrims had found giant intelligent talking turkeys?
- What if the Pilgrims had wings?
- What if the Pilgrims didn't sail in a boat, but in a starship?
- What if the Pilgrims fell asleep after eating so much turkey and woke up in modern times?
- Zombies, werewolves, and vampires are popular twists to history by modern storytellers.
 - What if the Pilgrims had found a tribe of Native Americans who were werewolves or vampires?
 - What if the Pilgrims were zombies trying to escape persecution in England? Or the Native Americans might be zombies. What might that change? (Ex. Due to a food shortage, for Thanksgiving, the zombies are captured and eaten by the living.)

Use the questions you have asked earlier as a guide to help the students plan their group's story. For example, you might ask the students what will happen at the beginning, middle, and end of their story or where the story will take place.

If you find that the stories you read aren't serving as inspiration, you might look for some story starters, which are scenarios or statements that someone else has already come up with. Some example story starters might be:

- "The chief was following a treasure map at the picnic."
- "The cook furtively flapped her wet apron over the kettle, sending a secret code with the smoke of the cook-fire."
- Soaring in the warm currents of air, the giant eagle flexed her wings enjoying the early morning as the sun began to rise and the earth warmed below her. Idly swooping lower, she spotted a flicker of movement among the trees below. Folding her wings, she plummeted. As the ground rose up to meet her and gravity pulled harder she stretched and turned, deadly talons extended. What was it that she had spied only seconds ago?
- "Base to Captain SkyFighter, Base to Captain SkyFighter. Come in Captain SkyFighter."
"Captain SkyFighter. Come in Captain SkyFighter. Where are you?"

"Captain SkyFighter. This is an urgent message. We are tracking an unidentified object and it is heading straight for you. You need to leave immediately. Hurry!"

Captain Skyfighter is fast asleep; dreaming of dinner, unaware of what is fast approaching his ship.

You might also suggest three unrelated things—for example, cranberries, a spaceship, and a dinosaur—and encourage the students to write a story that includes all of them.

Once the students have chosen the basic premise of their story, have them create a storyboard. These help writers put the events of a story in order using pictures. They work kind of like a comic strip.

They can make a storyboard by drawing a series of pictures of the main events in the story on sticky notes and then arranging the pictures in order. Talk about the order and whether it makes sense – since they are using sticky notes, the student can move them around.

1. Once the group has picked a final order for the story ask them to write several sentences or even a paragraph for each picture that tells that part of the story.
2. Ask a member of the group to read you/the class the story. Stop to ask the same questions you asked while reading stories earlier. Encourage the students to fill in any missing information or detail that might make the story funnier or more interesting in order to answer the questions the audience might have and details they want to know more about.
3. If they're working with a storyboard, have the group add connections between the different parts of the story, for example showing how the characters move from one place to another or how much time has passed between one event and another.
4. After the group has had a chance to read the story aloud and make some changes to it, have them write a "final" version of the story

Tying it All Together

Now that we have a tale to tell that's really swell, it's time to put on a show! We need some actors! And you know who we're going to use to string our stories along? Marionettes!

The art of making a marionette is almost a lost art. But it is a very old art that has survived and students can partake of it by making a marionette out of simple around the house materials like newspaper, tape and string. In this tutorial from StormtheCastle (<http://www.stormthecastle.com/how-to-make-a/how-to-make-a-marionette.htm> All Rights Reserved.) we'll show you how to make a nice little marionette.

For inspiration have students look at galleries of marionettes, such as those made by the Ruzicka brothers in the Czech Republic at http://www.marionetisti.cz/marrionettes/mar_1_en.html.

As we know, a marionette is a puppet that is controlled by strings. This is a picture of the marionette made in this tutorial. It is a



practice, bring a character like this to life.

But, as they are working more with them have them keep in mind that they can create all kinds of different characters and creatures.



knight, but this method can be used to make any kind of marionette. Students can either do a simple stringing on this marionette, just a three string setup which is easy for beginners to control, or the more complex one that follows this tutorial which gives more control and more realistic motion. In the simple, three-string, variation one string goes to the head and one string goes to each of the arms. There are lots of different ways to string up a marionette and directions for a more effective and more expressive eleven string set up follow these instructions.

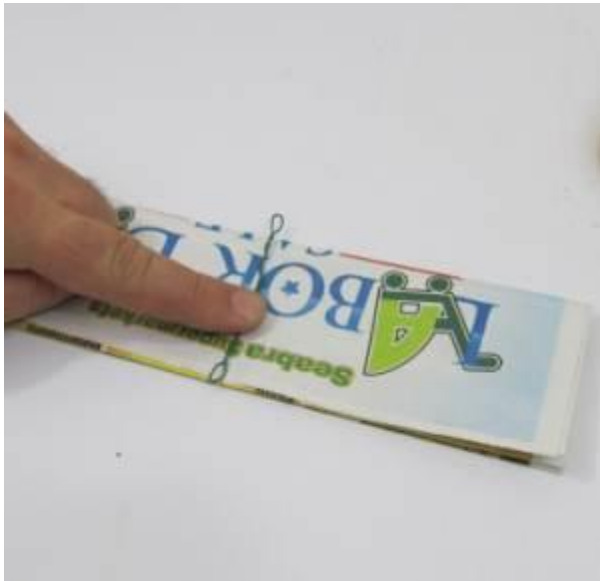
This picture gives you a good idea of how the marionette is made. It's simply constructed of rolled up strips of newspaper then wrapped in masking tape. Making a humanoid character is a great way to start out with marionettes. Students can, just with a little bit of

Let's Build the Marionette

This picture shows the basic segment of the marionette. This is the upper thigh. It is simply rolled up newspaper with a wire in the middle. In the case of this particular image, the body part is also coated it with paper mâché which is optional.



Students can create a segment like this by forming a piece of wire so it has loops on each end then putting it on a strip of newspaper. (This is actually several strips of newspaper). Then you roll up the newspaper and tape it so it holds its cylindrical shape.



Simple as that! You can make two upper legs, two lower legs, two upper arms and two lower arms.

After that you crumple newspaper and wrap it in tape to make the head and the torso.

Now that each limb segment has a wire in it you can assemble these limbs together with a small piece of wire or even twist tie. It should be nice and loose so the various segments move freely.



Here is a large picture to show you where the various joints are. The red dots are the connected joints. And there is one more extra loop on the top of the head so you can run a string to that.

There are a lot of options you can do with this. For instance, in the sample image the marionette has hands that are jointed to the forearms. But students could make their marionette a little simpler by just making the hands part of the forearms as is shown in the example with the feet and lower legs.

Pulling Strings

Once you have painted your marionette and make any accessories like the sword then you can string it up. You do this by creating a cross of wood (large craft sticks or small dowel rods would work well). One string goes to the head and one string goes to each of the wrists.

When you string up the marionette you have to get the string lengths about right so the head is upright and the arms are by the figures side. So adjust and cut the strings accordingly before you attach secure them to the wooden cross you made.



This picture shows a dragon marionette during a performance.

String Theory: Advanced Marionettes

<http://www.stormthecastle.com/how-to-make-a/marionette/advanced-marionette-making-techniques.htm>

Here are some techniques and tricks for making better marionettes. There are a wide variety of materials you can use in order to get great looking marionettes.

One of the best things you can do to improve your marionettes is to do a more robust and expressive stringing system. A standard way to do this is with a two-hand and eleven string method. The art of the marionette is all about controlling the figures in a way that is interesting and realistic. The eleven string system is a great way to achieve remarkable life like motions with a humanoid marionette.

In the previous tutorial on how to make an easy marionette we simply rolled up or crumpled up newspaper then wrapped it in masking tape. But there are lots of materials you can use to get a great looking marionette.

Clothing and Dressing

One great way to get a spectacular looking marionette is in clothing it. This lends itself to all kinds of fun stuff and



*A marionette made from this tutorial.
Constructed by Evan.*



fun looking marionettes. Students can custom make clothing or color or paint it on.

Let's Face It!

The head and face of the marionette is arguably the most important part and there are a lot of ways you can get expressive and interesting looking heads and faces such as paper mache or Celluclay-which requires no paste or newspaper strips (sample images below).

Photo Finish

One easy and fun way to make faces is to have the students select a face from a magazine or photo

image, cut out the parts they want to use or use an entire face and glue it to their marionette. Students can also use pictures from magazines to create clothing and accessories (as a fabric they can tape on).
Tip: Create hair using tape and yarn by starting at the neck, creating a layer and tape it on, move up higher on the head and repeat.



Porcelain Complexion

You can also make a great looking head with clay or cold porcelain.

This clay can produce very durable results, has a smooth matte finish, is very soft to work with and can be easily colored. And the best thing about it is that students (with help) can make it themselves, it is easy to make and the ingredients are cheap.

At the following link is a short introduction to this clay and if you scroll down a video on how to go through the process. The text is hard to see for some people, so please click CC if you need captions.

<http://puffylittlethings.blogspot.com/2012/12/homemade-cold-porcelain-clay.html> All Rights Reserved

Lisa of PuffyLittleThings also has kindly created a great tutorial which lays out how to create the clay which is easy to follow. *** Please scroll down to see trouble shooting and FAQ on her site if you are having troubles making this clay***

Image Credits and Copyright: <http://puffylittlethings.blogspot.com/2012/12/homemade-cold-porcelain-clay.html>. All Rights Reserved! For non-commercial and educational use ONLY!

Materials:

Important: please stick closely to these ingredients, no substitution and you must use the amount it is required per batch

- 1 cup of cornstarch/corn flour
- 1 cup of PVA glue (school grade white glue, any brand would do)
- 2 tablespoons of vinegar/ lemon juice/ lime juice
- 2 tablespoons of baby oil/ cooking oil
- Lotion



First prepare a microwave safe bowl and put in all the **wet** ingredients.



Add the corn flour/corn starch.



Mix till a gooey texture.



Pop in the microwave for 15s. You'll do this three times. Between these intervals take it out and mix it. The cooking time depends on the power, so start with a short duration for the first time. The sample batch was made with a 1100W microwave.



You will start to see the top turn into a matte finish, and the clay is getting hard.



This is after the third interval, the clay starts to form lumps.



Prepare a plastic wrap sheet with lotion, this will prevent the clay sticking to your hands and the work surface. **Be careful, the clay is very hot!**



Keep kneading till it's cooled down and forms into a shape.



Don't overcook, the clay is perfect when it has a peak when you pull it apart. If the clay breaks when you pull, it means you have overcooked it. (Don't throw it away, this can be mixed with clay that's just right and it will even out.)



Wrap it up and store in the fridge (Normally it is left overnight).

Get Your Head on Straight!: Materials and Making Marionette Heads

This 'basic cute head' tutorial was originally published in a Portuguese magazine and Mary at New Clay News has translated the instructions into English for those that cannot read the Portuguese. <http://newclaynews.blogspot.com/2010/08/how-to-create-dolls-head-with-cold.html>. All Rights reserved.

Materials needed are some cold porcelain paste (or other soft air-dry-clay) and a Styrofoam ball or ball made out of paper and tape, and wire. Tools used are students' fingers, a cutting tool, a crochet hook and a ball-end tool. One option is to tint your clay/cold porcelain a peach tone or other flesh tone unless you prefer the porcelain color or tinting or painting after it has cured.



First, make sure your wire is in place, either in the Styrofoam ball or paper and tape ball, like in the original tutorial, so that the strings can be attached to the head and the head can be attached to the body. Next, wrap the Styrofoam or paper & tape ball in clay or cold porcelain (CP). Select enough CP

paste to completely cover the foam ball (approximately 2" ball shown here). Press the foam ball into the CP and shape the CP around it



Close any gaps that appear as you wrap the CP so that you completely enclose the foam ball inside. Avoid trapping any air.

With the palms of your hands, smooth and shape the CP into an egg shape. Using your thumbs, enhance the curvature of the nose and forehead.



Refine the shape of the head and add a neck. (Make sure the wire loop still sticks out on each end for later. During the whole process, always make sure the wire loops stick out.)



With a crochet hook, push the CP paste from the bottom up and then form the nose with your fingers



...leaving a pointed nose shape.



Strengthen the shape around the area of the eye with your thumb. Add nostrils.



5 Para marcar a boca, imagine uma cruz entre o nariz e o pescoço, e de uma bochecha a outra, insira a esteca reta.

To mark the mouth, envision an imaginary line that creates a cross between the nose and neck and from one cheek to the other cheek. Where the imaginary line crosses, insert the tool straight in to form a mouth.

(Note: The numbering of photos in original tutorial skipped #4...it's not missing)



6 Com agulha de crochê, faça uma marca diagonal em cada canto da boca.

With the end of a crochet hook, create a diagonal mark in each corner of mouth.



7 Com o polegar levante a bochecha e marque o queixo, descendo o polegar para o pescoço.

Using the diagonal mark as a guide, use your thumb to lift the cheek and indent the chin, smoothing down toward the neck.



8 Com o boleador pequeno defina o lábio inferior, rodando de um lado a outro.

With the small end of a ball-end tool, shape the lower lip....running tool from one side to another.



9 Faça o lábio superior com o mesmo boleador com movimentos suaves.

Shape the upper lip with the same tool, using gentle movements.



10 Defina os cantos da boca com o boleador grande.

Define the corners of the mouth by dimpling with large end of ball-end tool.



11 Com o boleador pequeno marque em cima do lábio superior.

With smaller end of ball-end tool, create small mark on top of the upper lip.



12 Orelhas – Repita os passos das orelhas da Joaquina e cole na cabeça da boneca.

Ears ... create 2 ears and glue onto the head of the doll. Shape 2 equal amounts of CP into 2 small ovals. Roll between fingers to indent slightly. Attach an ear to each side of head using round-end tool to apply pressure to center of ear.

After CP has dried and cured, flesh color can be painted (if you didn't pre-tint) and eye decals can be glued on or eyes painted on. Hair can be molded from additional CP paste or various types of doll hair material can be glued on.

Note: If they want, students can also adjust this process to make hands and other body parts. Don't forget the wire!

It's Really Stringy!

On the next page is an illustration of how to string up a more realistic eleven string marionette. This takes two hands to operate and with some practice you can get this marionette to move in a very realistic manner. Note that the string lengths shown in the illustration are not to scale. You should string up your marionette with appropriate lengths of string.

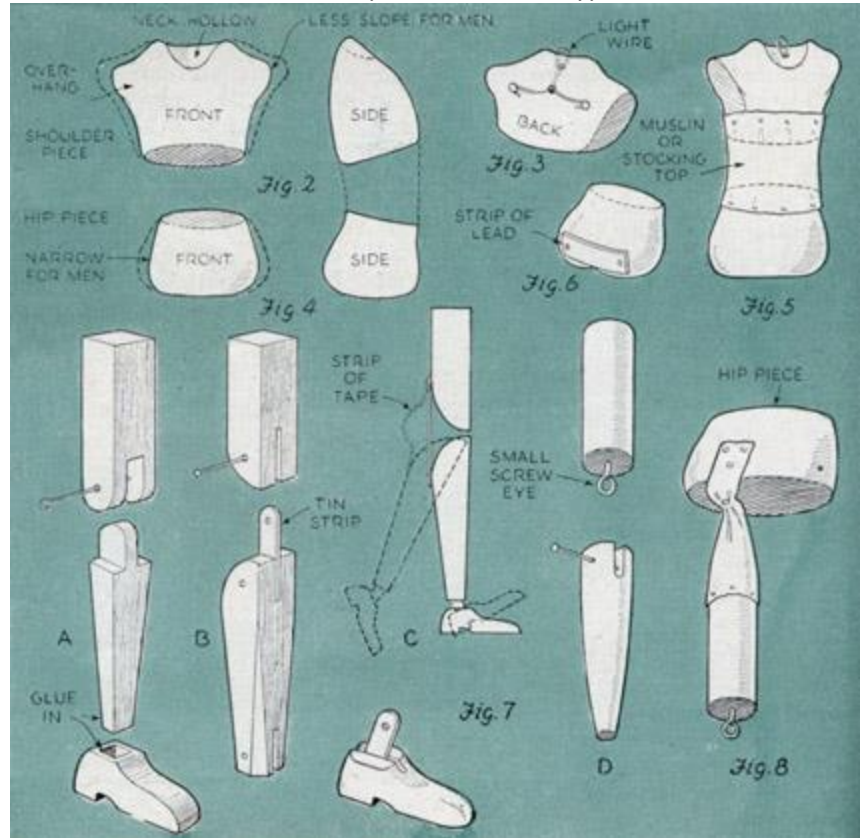
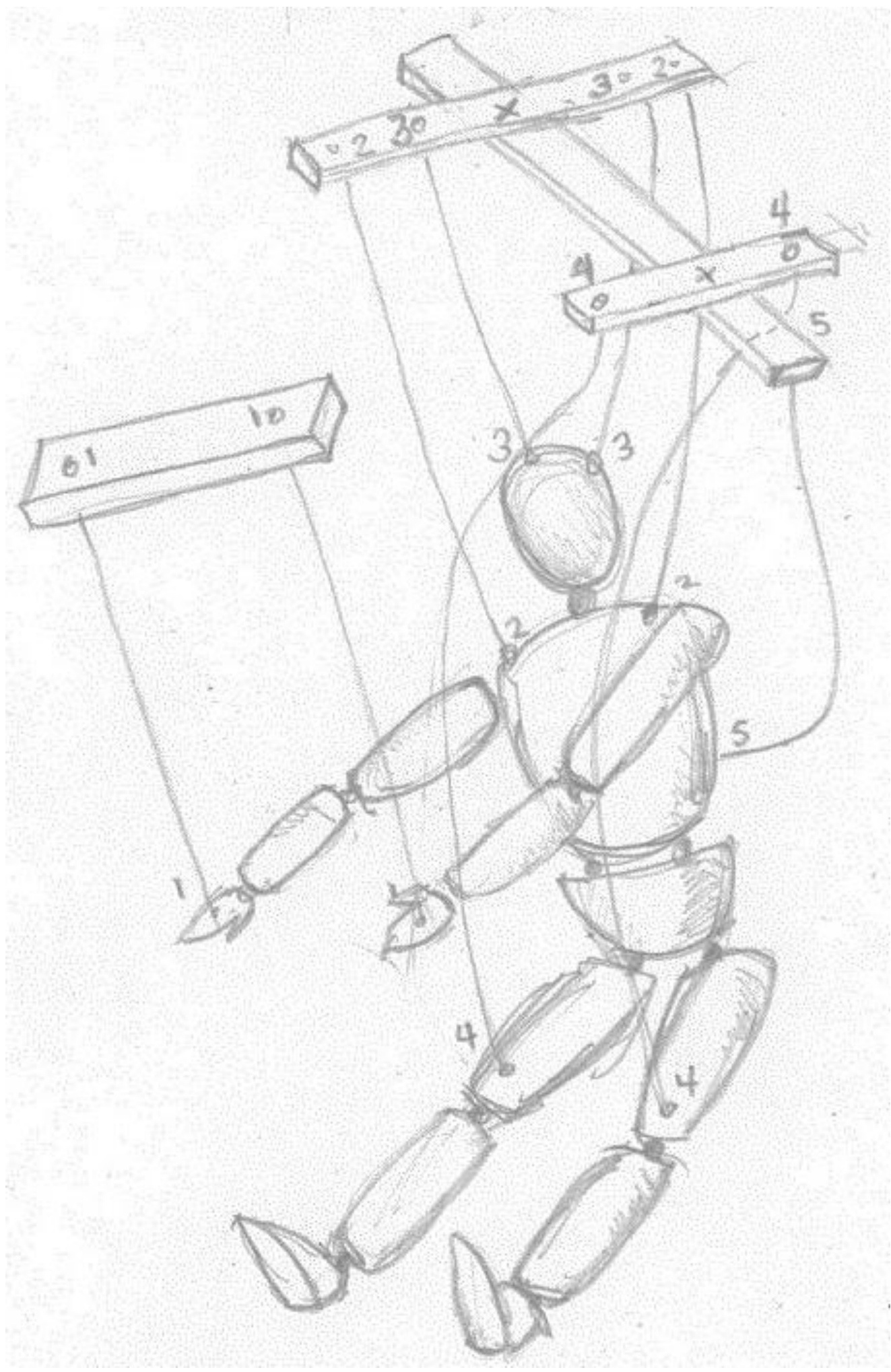


Image Credit: <http://blog.modernmechanix.com/the-art-of-making-lifelike-marionette-bodies/>



Staging Our Production

OK! We have written a tale, made our marionettes, and now we are almost ready to put on a show! But wait...where are we going to perform it?

It's time to take center stage! Oops, it's time for the stage to take center stage!

Materials (depend on the style of stage, sets, and props you want to make)

- Fabric
- Paint/markers/crayons
- Cardboard
- Big box!
- Scissors
- Craft knife (used under adult supervision or by adults only)
- Glue
- Dowel Rod
- Stamps
- Grommets
- Props

Since we're making a stage, have students look at the included idea pages and/or online for inspiration.

The basics are: Use a pretty big cardboard box, sort of moving box size, tape the edges and folds together, glue them down with a glue gun, leave or cut a hole up in the "roof" (for the actors) and measure and draw out the details in pencil. When they are happy, cut it out!

They can choose whether or not they want make some curtains, which can make changing scenery easier. If so, they'll need something to hold the curtains up.

Have students choose a dowel, measure the inside of the box, measure the dowel and cut it to size. Then students can either add some extra grommets (plastic rings) to or holes in the side of the box so the dowel can be removed or it can be glued in.

Hmm, curtains don't stay to the side on their own. Well you can't have a marionette show with closed curtains! It's time to add a curtain tie back.

Now...have students add some color, *texture*, and details!

At the back add an opening where we can hang scenery the kids create to go with their stories, ex. paintings of several scenarios, a castle, a forest, a village, a river, a room... The puppet master of the group can then change between scenarios.

Your class stage needs a lighting system, but you don't want anything that needs to be plugged in. You need something basic like a flashlight. You cut a hole on the top or side of your theater for the flash light to have a moving spotlight to highlight your characters!

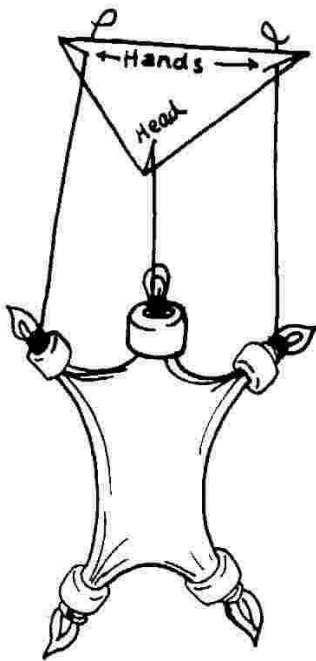
Have each group create their individual sets and collect any needed props.

Basic decisions for groups:

- What type of stage will be needed? (The class may have one central stage all groups use to present their plays)
- What special effects? Have students compile a list of twenty different special effects that might be used in puppet shows, ex. a storm or fire. Invent a simple way to achieve each special effect.
- What type of scenery?
- What props?
- Any other technical elements to be added? (ex. Specialty lighting by putting a colored filter over the flashlight?)
- Any specialty characters? Ex. Ghosts. (Scarf Marionettes work well for specialty flowing characters, or elements, like the wind)

A Scarf Marionette

Making a Marionette out of a scarf



A scarf marionette is a very elegant puppet that can walk, sit, crawl, and even fly. You can make a simple one in probably less than 45 minutes, or you can get "fancy" and add details and decorations. Start with the simple one and see how you like it!

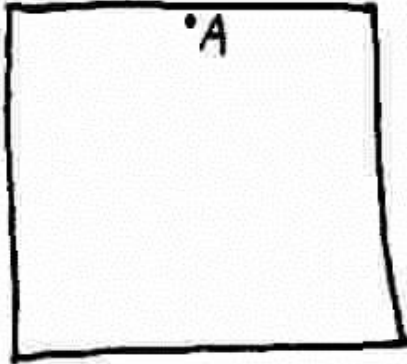
Materials

- 1 scarf, the big, silky kind works best. (If you don't have a scarf you can cut a square of slinky, silky type fabric, about 1 yard (or 1 meter) square.
- 1 triangle piece of stiff cardboard, about 8-12 inches on a side
- 5 wooden beads with holes big enough to pull the corners of the scarf through. One inch diameter beads are good.
- String (like kite string) or thread, to string your puppet

- Tools
- Needle (Optional, to sew the thread onto the puppet...if you don't want to sew, you can just tie the thread on...it will work just as well.)
- Scissors

LET'S GET STARTED!

Lay out the scarf and find the center of the top edge of the scarf (point "A" in the drawing below.) HINT: To find center-point A easily, you can measure with a ruler, or just fold in half with the two top corners together; the fold will be right in the center!

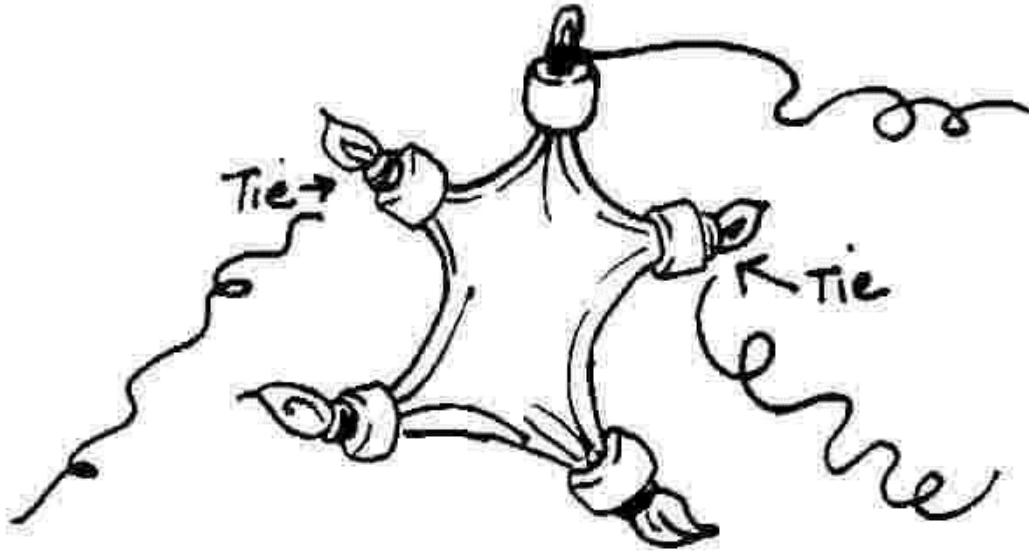


Take the cloth at point A, and pinch it together so you can push it through the hole in one of the wooden beads (this will be the head, so if you have a bigger bead you can use it here if you wish, but any size will do.) Tie a simple overhand knot in the fabric above the bead so the bead will not slip off of the scarf. (See the next drawing, below.)



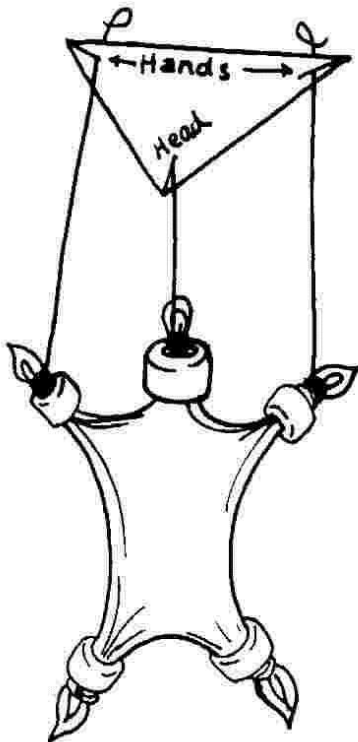
Then you can tie your first string or thread to the knot above the wooden bead. This will be your head string for your puppet. HINT: Make the head string about 3 feet long for now, you can always shorten it later.

Now you are ready to put beads with knots on all four corners of the scarf, like in the drawing below.



Next you can tie on strings to each hand like you did on the head (but don't tie them on the feet. You won't need them there).

Now your scarf marionette is ready for the controller. Take your triangle of cardboard and cut a small slit in each corner. Slide the string into the slits as shown in the drawing below. The head string should go in the center corner of the triangle that faces back (towards the back of the puppet.) The slits should hold the string but allow you to adjust the length of the strings until you have them just the way you like them.



Adjusting your controller strings: The cardboard triangle should be more or less parallel to the floor when you work your puppet. You should adjust the length of the strings by sliding them up

or down in the slits in the cardboard until you can hold the cardboard triangle controller at a comfortable height when your puppets feet are on the floor. Adjust the head string length first, and then adjust the arm strings so they are of equal length to each other. Practice a bit with your puppet before attaching the strings permanently (wrap the strings a few times through the slits when you like the length and then tape them so they won't come out--that way if your strings get tangled, you can undo them from the cardboard easily to untangle them.)

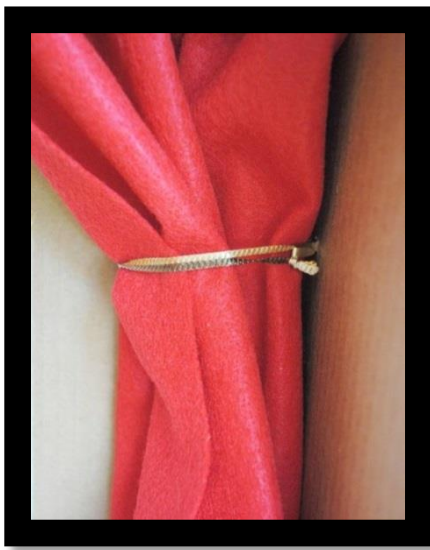
Practicing With Your Puppet

Now students are ready to make their puppet walk! "Wait!" you say. "How can I make my puppet walk when there are no strings to control its legs?" The answer is very easy. Are you holding your puppet with the triangle parallel to the ground? Is the point attached to the head pointing back? Good. Now, I want you to tip the controller to the side so that the left arm rises up in the air. Did you notice that the left leg lifted up too? (If it didn't, try adjusting the length of the arm strings so that it will.) With the leg lifted up, move the puppet slightly forward, then lower the left arm and leg and lift the right. Move the puppet slightly forward again. This is how you walk your puppet, moving it forward while you rock it back and forth.

Advanced movement with your puppet: There are so many things you can do with your puppet that you can discover on your own, but these few hints might help get you started. Make your puppet "walk" with its hands on the floor; now it is crawling! Now, imagine where your puppet's bottom is. Hold your foot out and make the puppet back up to your foot and sit its bottom down on your foot. Pretty good! And now for the fantastic part (don't try this yourself!) Swing your puppet gently through the air; it's flying!

Your puppet is just great the way it is, but if you want to decorate it or put a face (or hands) on it you can. Remember not to glue or sew too much to the scarf. You don't want it to get too stiff or heavy. Part of the charm of these puppets is their light elegance and flowing movement.

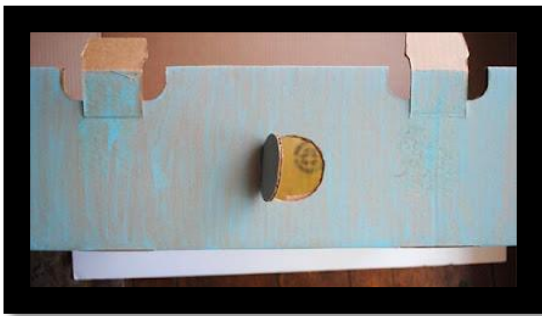
Hint: When you go to store your puppet, you can store it hanging from the controller to keep it from getting tangled, or you can carefully wrap the string around the controller, then carefully unwrap it when you are ready to use it again.



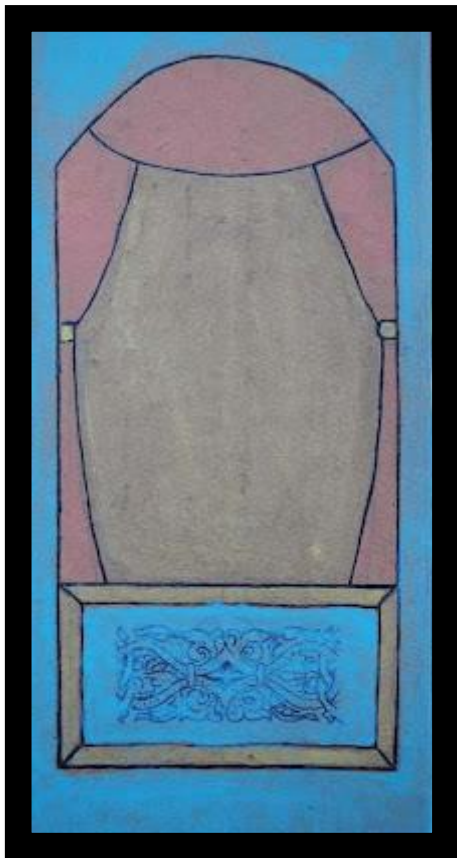
Curtain Tie-back



Back side of theater.



Hole for Flashlight/Spotlight



Details

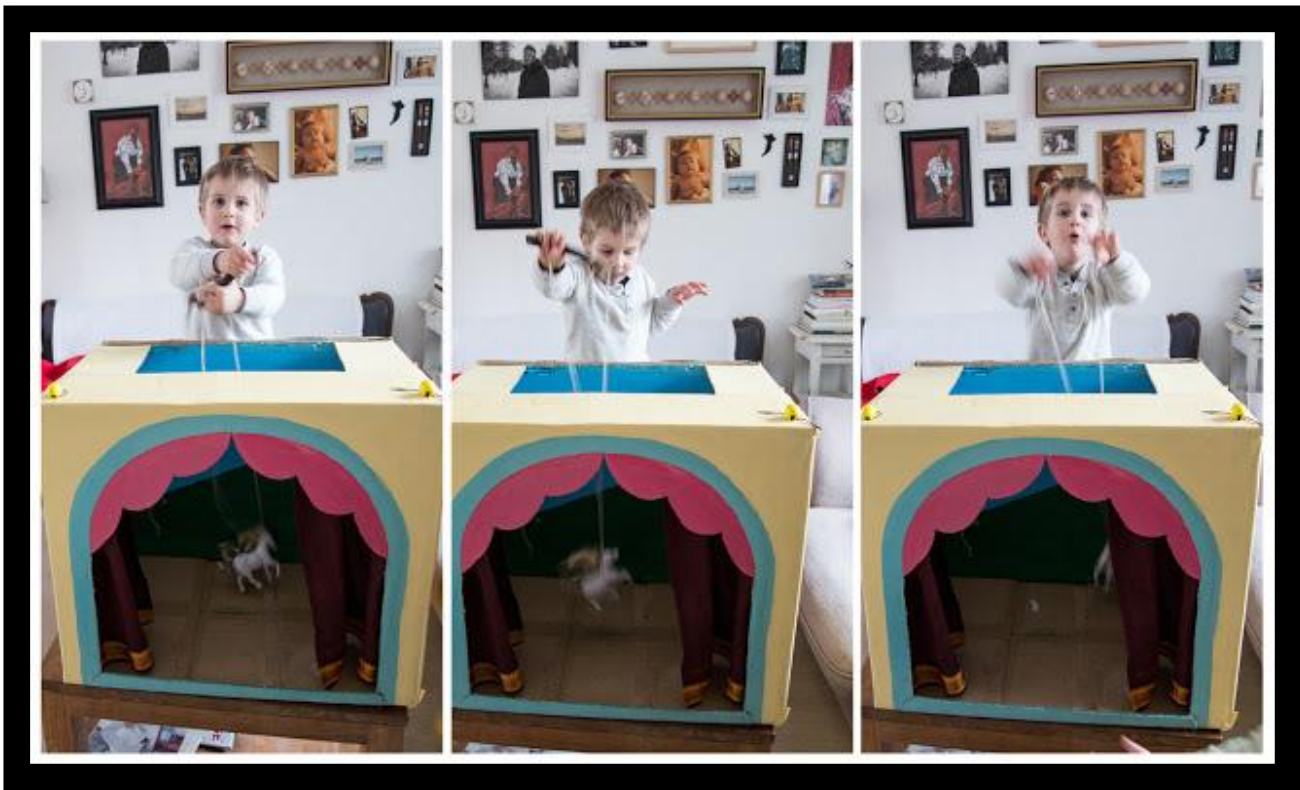


Front of theater

Image Credits: Zakkalife. <http://zakkalife.blogspot.com/2012/04/craft-cardboard-puppet-theater.html> Check out the blog for more fun ideas and amazing crafts! Copyright 2013. All Rights Reserved!



Cutting out the Front of the stage



Construction style idea.

Image Credits: Raori <http://raori.blogspot.com/2012/12/diy-cardboard-marionette-theatre.html> Check out the blog for more fun ideas and amazing crafts! Copyright 2013. All Rights Reserved!



Construction style idea.

Image Credit: Emmy's Crafty Blog

<http://emyscraftyblog.blogspot.com/2012/04/cardboard-box-theatre.html>. Copyright 2013. All Rights Reserved.

Putting Strings in Motion: Telling Our Tangled Tales

Puppets become life-like when human actors use their imagination to create movements and gestures. Characterization is enhanced by puppet manipulation, creative voices, and the relationships between characters. Have students practice with their marionettes by leading students through some guided improvisation with puppets focusing on manipulation.

Puppet Manipulation and Characterization

- 1. Discuss basic puppet manipulation for each type of marionette**
- 2. Have students animate a marionette character completing movement exercises. Flexing your hand over and over can be a little taxing, so there is a muscle building aspect to this as well!**
- 3. Experiment with marionette's voice using vocal variety.**
- 4. Experiment with puppet improvisation.**

Tips:

Lower learners should make a list of three important movements they will incorporate into their original puppet show.

Have each student practice using puppet voice in front of partner.

To practice their skills, have students create a one-minute monologue for puppet character incorporating movement and vocalization.

Producing a Marionette Show

- 1. Work with each group to produce a puppet show.**
- 2. Use technical elements to enhance the puppet production.**
- 3. Keep rehearsal log.**

Students will need to:

Decide essential elements of performance and rehearsal timeline.

Begin rehearsal process. This can be done without the stage if other groups are using it.

Determine roles of group members, ex. Remember the roles of the kids and Maria in the Lonely Goat marionette show? What did Marta & Gretel do during the play? What about Maria? Casting a play with puppets allows multiple students to divide up one role (there is one dragon puppet, but five different students can perform with it). Every single student has the opportunity to memorize, rehearse, and perform in scenes.

Add technical aspects and stage directions to original script. Ex. when puppets leave and enter, who does what and from what direction, etc.

Follow rehearsal timeline developed by class in order to be ready for final performance.

Have each group perform (as you record their play) in front of the group! Note: Scenes can be videotaped and edited together. In the end the class should produce a play with 100% participation which can be viewed again and again.