

the ultimate sock puppet book



**Clever Tips, Tricks,
and Techniques for Creating
Imaginative Sock Puppets**

**TIGER KANDEL
HEATHER SCHLOSS**

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DEDICATION

To Morley Schloss for his unwavering encouragement and support.



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Introduction

IN TODAY'S WORLD of accelerated technology and “cookie cutter” crafts, our inner creative selves are often overlooked. Art making and imaginative play encourage individuality, independence, hope, and ambition. As communal activities, they reinforce the bonds of family and friendship and open lines of communication. Sock puppets are a fun, fabulous, three-dimensional medium whereby anyone can create wonderfully playful, original artwork regardless of their age, experience, or ability.

Over the past decade, the Sockett® making team of Tigercandy Arts has innovated and perfected techniques that have elevated sock puppet craft to an art form. Moving from the basic to the complex, this book will take you on an instructional journey through the Tigercandy Arts' world of sock puppet design and show you how to make your own one-of-a-kind puppets utilizing the tips, tricks, and original construction methods of the professionals.

Most how-to books are written with preconceived patterns and step-by-step designs intended for the reader to replicate. In *The Ultimate Sock Puppet Book*, you won't be told specifically *what* to make or exactly *how* you *should* make it; rather, you will be given the tools necessary to access your own unique vision and design sense.

This book is a great tool for crafters but is also intended for anyone interested in making original sock puppets or utilizing the medium as a creative outlet, for a performance, or to work with children and adults via the exploration of their own creative potential.

It is not necessary to read this book from cover to cover, although it certainly is an option. This book has been designed for you to select information, as needed, and apply it to your puppet designs as you choose. For example, if you are making a dog sock puppet and want to research how to make tails, you can do so. In this book, you will find multiple tail types, suggestions for materials from which to make them, and application methods. All of the options are laid out for you. In many places, both sewing and gluing techniques are offered, allowing you to make your selections also based on skill level and construction needs.

Part reference guide and part art lesson, this book is intended as an instrument for creativity. Bundling the accumulated knowledge of Tigercandy Arts into an invaluable resource, this book will become an indispensable tool for solving problems, answering construction questions, and overcoming obstacles related to creating elaborate sock puppets. *The Ultimate Sock Puppet Book* is a must-have for every artist and crafter's shelf.



Unearth Your Inner Sock Puppet

SOCK PUPPETS HAVE BEEN part of popular cultural for at least 100 years. They have a quality that appeals to people of all ages and backgrounds. Although part of their charm is in their accessibility, they are often mistakenly thought of as unsophisticated, “throwaway” puppets. In actuality, sock puppets can be beautiful, whimsical, and charming works of art. Unique among puppets for its close fit on the hand, the sock puppet is, by its very nature, more expressive than other types of hand puppets and more intimately an extension of its user.

At one time or another, nearly every parent or child has put a sock on his or her hand and pretended to make it speak. For children, there is an allure to seeing a familiar, inanimate object suddenly transform into something exciting and alive. In adults, sock puppets give rise to a sense of nostalgia for childhood and simpler, more playful times as well as the basic act of spontaneous creation from which we have become so far removed.

There are many concrete reasons why people are inspired to make sock puppets. A teacher may want to make a set of puppets to tell a story. Parents may use a sock puppet to get their child through a violin lesson. Therapists use sock puppets to assist with communication. At times, children will confide in a puppet, telling

secrets that they will not share with a human being. Sock puppets are the answer if you are looking for a fun activity to do with your kids, want to put on a puppet show on a rainy afternoon, or wish to give an original gift to someone you love.

Then there are the indefinable variables that serve as inspiration for creation: a feeling evoked by a photograph, the sensation of a luxurious faux fur on your fingertips, a scent in the air, the natural world around us. If you are interested in exploring your own creativity, puppetry can be extremely rewarding. Let the things that inspire you bring you back to that nostalgic place of play. This is where you will find your most interesting designs.

CONTEMPLATING YOUR DESIGN

A sock puppet at its essence is a caricature, a soft sculpture created within the dimensions of a sock while simultaneously reaching beyond those boundaries to capture the appearance and personality of a character.

Designing a sock puppet is different from making a doll or a stuffed animal. When you make a sock puppet, you

are transforming one complete, preexisting form into another. The look of a sock puppet is affected not only by the elements from which it is made but also by the way it fits the puppeteer's hand. With each new hand, there is a unique fit, turning the shape of the hand into an integral part of the design.





In the act of making a sock puppet, you are doing two things. First, you are illustrating what the sock is going to be (e.g., a cat, a dog, a donkey). Second, through individual, sometimes subtle design choices, you are creating the puppet's personality (e.g., an old mouse, a pirate dog, a sleepy donkey).

There are two general ways to approach designing your sock puppet. The first way is to begin with a concrete idea like a cat or a dog, a mermaid or a princess. Look at images of your subject and then choose materials that communicate the character's personality to you.

The second way is to let the *materials* inspire you. Choose a sock you love and gather an assortment of puppet-making goodies, such as felt, pompoms, or faux fur, that interest you for their color or texture or both. Holding these materials next to the sock body allows intuition and your natural creativity to be your guide.

Even if an idea comes easily, knowing where or how to begin can sometimes be difficult. If this happens, start with the basics. If you are using a picture or a real-life example as a model, study the face of your subject. Identify the basic shapes within its features. Are the ears elongated ovals or short triangles? What shape are the eyes? Shapes can be turned into the felt or fabric features of your sock puppet. If you are working from your imagination, there are a couple of ways to approach a new design. Try drawing a rough sketch of what your character looks like in your mind. Then identify the simple shapes within your drawing. Another approach is to begin with an assortment of small, precut, felt shapes and experiment by piecing them together. Overlap and layer the shapes in different configurations to arrive at interesting features for your puppet.



DESIGNING WITH CHILDREN

Making sock puppets is a great project to do with children. Socks are relatively easy to come by, you can utilize many different craft materials (even scraps), and inspiration is everywhere. With some basic guidance and a quick lesson in shapes, every child can create a great sock puppet.

When beginning a sock puppet project with kids, it is usually best to have them choose a subject before they start working. Their design will most likely evolve as they go, but choosing ahead of time will give them a goal and keep them focused. This is especially helpful for children who aren't artistically adventurous or who get frustrated easily.

If a child is having difficulty selecting a subject, it is okay to make suggestions. Sometimes, setting parameters is helpful. For example, if you are working in a classroom, tell everyone to choose an animal. Follow up with a discussion about what their animals looks like. Show pictures if you can, and ask them to identify the animals' basic attributes. You may choose to begin a project with a variety of shapes cut from paper or felt. Discussing the differences among the shapes, ask the children which shapes they detect in their physical environment. Then show them the images of animals and ask them to do the same thing. Holding the shapes they identify up to a sock, illustrate how they will apply shapes to create their own animal sock puppets. Basic shapes like triangles, ovals, circles, and rectangles are easy for kids to make and will help them pull off their designs effectively. Once the faces have been built, they can detail their puppet with manes, tails, teeth, feathers, and so on.

Although a child may be developmentally ready for the next step, sometimes the best method does not imme-



diately occur to him or her. For example, one particularly bright eight-year-old girl was making a dolphin sock puppet. After studying the features, she saw that she would need to give it a fairly large nose with an unusual shape. She reached for a handful of acrylic pompoms, a material she enjoyed and was familiar with. Her intention was to glue a row of pompoms together to create the long nose. The instructor acknowledged the child's ingenuity but also knew it was an impractical solution because the structure would be too unstable. Using the opportunity to teach a new skill, she showed the girl how to make a stencil by sketching the shape of the dolphin's nose onto paper, cutting it out, and then tracing it onto stiff felt, effectively creating the nose as one single piece. The little girl was quite impressed and took to the method rather quickly, making stencils for other features she saw, as well.

Although it is important to work with children at their level and to allow them to explore and discover things on their own, it is also necessary to expose them to new ideas in order for them to learn and build skills. Take some time to study the techniques in this book before embarking on a sock puppet project with kids. You will be better prepared to instruct and guide them toward selecting the best methods necessary to realize their vision.

SELECTING SOCKS

You may have a specific idea about the character you want to make and choose a sock with a personality to match, or you may have a cool sock that inspires your design, such as a striped sock to make a zany snake or a fluffy pink chenille sock to turn into a pig.

If you are using a sewing machine, then choose a sock with a fairly tight knit. Tacky glue will run through a loosely knit sock. If you are using hot glue, then the knit is not as important. When selecting a sock, consider the puppeteer. Choose one that suits his or her tastes and requirements. For example, a sock puppet for a small child should be made on a child's sock. He or she is more likely to use and enjoy a puppet that fits well. If your user has any tactile sensitivities, choose a sock that is very soft. Consider the puppet's purpose. For instance, if you are making a puppet for a show, then you may want to choose a sock with a long cuff to hide the performer's arm.



SELECTING MATERIALS

You don't need a lot of different materials to make amazing sock puppets. Most of the sock puppets shown in this book are made with four primary ingredients: ecofriendly felt, faux fur, yarn, and acrylic pompoms. Additional materials used for trim and stuffing include nylon fishing line, ribbon, and polyester fiberfill. Of course, if ever there were a time to be creative, it is when you are designing sock puppets! Their very name suggests a toy born from ingenuity. Depending upon whether you are gluing, sewing, or using a combination of the two methods, there are numerous materials and fabrics that can be incorporated into your construction. Nothing is off-limits. Even the hardware store can be a good place to find puppet-making elements. Here is a list of the most common, easy-to-use, and readily available materials. If you are a crafter, many of these items may already be in your closet. If not, they can be found at your local craft store. For a more diverse selection, check specialty stores and independent online providers.

1. Felt is the perfect material for making sock puppets in terms of both cost and functionality. The two most popular types are wool and synthetic, or ecofriendly, felt. Felt is available in myriad colors and prints. It can be easily cut into any shape. It can be quilted. It can be glued or sewn and does not fray. It can be marked with pen, marker, pencil, or chalk. Synthetic felt is washable, as is some wool felt. Felt is great for making sock puppet ears, eyes, noses, limbs, tails, spots, stripes, teeth, and clothing.

2. Stiff felt is acrylic felt that has been factory treated with a fabric stiffener. It is easy to cut but is not malleable the way soft felt is. If it gets bent, it will crease irreversibly and lose its stiffness. It is better glued than sewn. Stiff felt is best used as a second or inner layer to make ears stand up straighter or tongues stick out farther. It can also be used to make animal whiskers, teeth, and props such as swords.

3. Fabrics that cut easily and don't fray are recommended. Among these are anti-pill fleece, cotton jersey knit, suede, leather, and vinyl. You will want to test your fabric to make sure that it adheres or sews easily depending upon the method you are using. Common uses for these materials are puppet clothing, and they can also be used creatively as ears and limbs.

4. Faux fur can be glued or sewn. It is available in hundreds of colors, textures, and pile lengths. Pile refers to the individual fur strands. Thickness of pile refers to the distance between the strands. The quality and softness of faux fur varies a great deal. Lower quality faux fur tends to shed and has a rougher texture. Higher quality fur is often softer, denser, and more luxurious, but also more expensive. Faux fur can be used for making animal fur, manes, and tails.

(Continued)





5. Yarn can be made from natural or synthetic fibers. It comes in a wide spectrum of colors, textures, and qualities, ranging from basic acrylic to cotton to specialty wools and silk. A related material, wool roving, closely resembles actual human hair and comes in every natural shade as well as an abundance of colors. Yarn can be sewn, but it can be difficult to attach with cold glue; a glue gun makes things a bit easier. Yarn can be used as tails, manes, whiskers, and hair.

6. Pompoms are available in both wool and acrylic. Acrylic is the most common and readily available as well as very inexpensive. Pompoms come in many different colors and about ten standard sizes. They can be sewn with practice but are extremely easy to glue with either tacky or hot glue. Their round, fluffy shape makes them particularly ideal for noses, pop-up eyes, and bunny tails.

7. Craft foam, aka fun foam, is a synthetic material with a soft smooth texture. Packaged as sheets or pre-cut shapes, it is available in a wide variety of colors and patterns. Craft foam can be marked with ink and easily cut with scissors, a hole puncher, or a leather punch. Craft foam cannot be sewn, but it can be easily adhered with cold or hot glue. Craft foam can be used as eyes, noses, teeth, spots, and whiskers.



8. Feathers are attractive for their color and texture, particularly with kids, but they are not the easiest material to use in sock puppet construction. They are difficult to sew and messy to glue. Their delicate nature makes them a poor choice for a permanent design. If using feathers, hot glue is recommended. Popular uses for feathers are as bird wings, tail feathers, and head-dresses. These features can also be achieved with soft felt.

9. Fiberfill stuffing is cotton or synthetic filling generally used for making pillows and stuffed animals. For sock puppets, it is good for stuffing things like horns, tusks, and tails.

10. Found materials such as buttons, beads, baubles, ribbons, and nylon fishing line can all be useful in sock puppet design. Buttons can be sewn or glued and make terrific eyes. Pieces of broken jewelry can be added as embellishments. Fishing line is particularly good for making whiskers. Most of these materials can be found at your local craft store, but for fancier and more diverse choices, check your local specialty stores and independent online providers.



GLUING VS. SEWING

Whether to glue or sew your sock puppet or combine the two methods is one of the most important design decisions you will make. It needs to be made early on in your process because it will affect most of your other choices. In this book, we will be showing you sock puppets made using both gluing and sewing techniques. For expediency, we will be using a glue gun.

GLUING

Glue is a popular choice because it is accessible to everyone. You don't need sewing skills. It is probably the better choice for a classroom or when working with small children. Glue lets you use a wider variety of craft materials because not everything can be sewn. Using glue makes construction time shorter. On the flip side, a glued sock puppet will have a limited choice of mouths (stiff only). Glue will also give your sock puppet a more rigid feel and appearance. Glued puppets cannot be washed. The life of a glued puppet may ultimately be shorter.

Recommended Glues

If your situation allows and using hot glue is not a safety concern, a glue gun is the best method for gluing sock puppets. Hot glue not only provides the strongest and longest lasting bond but also has the fastest drying time. It cools in a matter of seconds and is instantly

secure. A glue gun and glue sticks are relatively inexpensive and can be purchased at a craft store. Use caution when using a glue gun. It is extremely hot, as is the glue when it is in a liquid state. A hot glue gun is not recommended for use around children without close supervision.

If hot glue is not an option, tacky glue is the most reliable nontoxic, cold glue. It adheres to a wide variety of natural and synthetic materials and creates a strong, long-lasting bond when completely dry. Tacky glue has a very long drying time (minimum 24 hours) and needs to be applied liberally to work well. It is water-soluble, so puppets constructed with tacky glue should not be washed.

TIP

"School" glue is not recommended for making sock puppets. It will not effectively adhere most craft materials to each other or to a sock and may result in a frustrating experience.



SEWING

There are some definite benefits to sewing your sock puppet. If you have basic sewing skills, then you may want to incorporate them into your construction process. You can use a sewing machine or sew by hand. As long as you use washable materials (e.g., felt or faux fur), a sewn sock puppet will be washable. A sewn sock puppet will have a neater, softer look and feel and the option of a soft mouth. Because sewing (particularly machine sewing) is stronger than glue, the life of the puppet will be longer. On the flip side, sewing sock puppets can be time consuming. Small parts require you to sew very slowly and carefully, and sewing will limit your choice of materials.

GLUING AND SEWING TOGETHER

A flatbed sewing machine can be perfect for sewing puppet parts, such as ears, face patches, limbs, and clothing. The closed-up, tubelike nature of the sock, however, makes it tricky to use the flatbed for attaching those parts. Although they can be hand sewn, this is difficult due to the limited visibility and the tendency of the needle to get tangled or caught in the knit. If you have sewing skills, combining gluing and sewing may be the best option for speed and ease. Sew the puppet's mouth, limbs, clothing, and most features separately, and then use a hot glue gun to attach them to the sock puppet's body.



Tricks of the Trade

MAKING SOCK PUPPETS is a diverting and enjoyable project, even at the most basic level. If you are interested however in more than an activity; in excelling past the beginning stages of the used sock, button eyes, and pompom nose then this chapter will teach you well-developed, time-tested, and routinely perfected tricks of the trade that will turn your sock puppet craft into an art form.



DYEING SOCKS

Chances are, if you are making a sock puppet or two, that you will be able to find a sock in a color that makes you happy and suits your needs. If not, you can always dye your own. Just about any color that you can conceive can be found in a basic, colorfast dye for home use or can be created by mixing two or more colors. Dyeing your own socks is also a creative way to add patterns and flair to your puppet. For instance, you can tie-dye spots on the skin of a frog or an asymmetrical striped pattern onto a tiger.

When dyeing socks at home, always follow the directions on the package you are using. Here are some basic tips for a more successful dyeing experience.

- ▶ Use a sock with as high a cotton content as possible; 80 percent or more is best. The other material should be nylon, not polyester. Polyester and other synthetics do *not* dye well and will leave your sock looking faded or blotchy.
- ▶ Use a fixative whenever possible. A fixative will preserve the color and, if you are sewing, make your puppet more washable.
- ▶ If using your dryer, add a piece of clean cotton towel as a dye catcher to help prevent the dye from staining your dryer.

TIE-DYE

MATERIALS



- 1 white or light-color sock
- 15 narrow rubber bands
- 10 wide rubber bands
- rubber or latex gloves
- 1 package dark-color dye
- 1 package fixative

Directions for Tie-Dyeing Spots

- 1 Gather small bunches of the sock, and tie them tightly with narrow rubber bands.
- 2 Wet the sock and squeeze out all the excess water.
- 3 Put on rubber gloves. Soak the sock in dark dye, following the directions on the package.
- 4 Rinse in clean water, use a fixative, and rinse again.
- 5 Dry completely in the dryer or on the line.
- 6 Remove the rubber bands.
- 7 Briefly return the sock to the dryer or air dry if the sock is still damp where the bands have been removed.



TIP

To make *symmetrical* stripes, fold the sock in half lengthwise and wind the rubber bands tightly and evenly, spacing them 1" (2.5 cm) apart.

Repeat this process until the sock is tied.

Directions for Tie-Dyeing Asymmetrical Stripes



- 1 Fold the sock in half lengthwise with the top of the sock facing out (or bottom, depending upon which side you want the stripes to appear on).
- 2 Beginning with wide rubber bands, wind them unevenly one at a time around the sock.
- 3 One-third of the way up the sock, reverse the fold.
- 4 Tie one or two more wide rubber bands. Reverse the fold again and tie more rubber bands until you run out of room.
- 5 Fill spaces in between with narrow rubber bands.
- 6 Wet the sock and squeeze out all the excess water.
- 7 Put on rubber gloves. Soak the sock in dark dye, following the directions on the package.
- 8 Rinse sock in clean water, use a fixative, and rinse again.
- 9 Dry completely in the dryer or on the line.
- 10 Remove the rubber bands.
- 11 Briefly return the sock to the dryer or air dry if the sock is still damp where the bands have been removed.



CREATING THE MOUTH

Mouth, maw, piehole, or kisser—no matter what you call it, every sock puppet needs one to communicate! This very important feature comes in two basic styles: soft and stiff. The one you choose may in part depend upon whether you are gluing or sewing.

SEWN SOFT MOUTH

Best achieved with sewing, a soft mouth will give your sock puppet a round, gentle, seamless look. It allows for a wide range of motion and gives your puppet the ability to make different facial expressions.

MATERIALS



- 1 sock
- ruler or tape measure
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- 5½" (14 cm) circle in felt color of choice
- Soft Mouth stencil, page 132 or 133
- stickpins
- sewing materials

Directions

- 1 Place the sock flat (vertically) with the underside facing up.
- 2 Approximately 1½" (3.8 cm) from the top, draw a thin, vertical line approximately 1¼" (3.1 cm) long in the center of the sock and equidistant from both edges.
- 3 Using sharp scissors, cut along that line, creating a small slit in the sock. Turn the sock inside out.



Steps 4 through 8 may take practice. Do not get discouraged if you have to repeat the steps a few times to get them right.

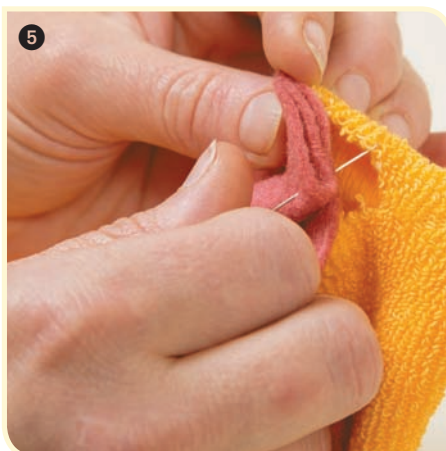
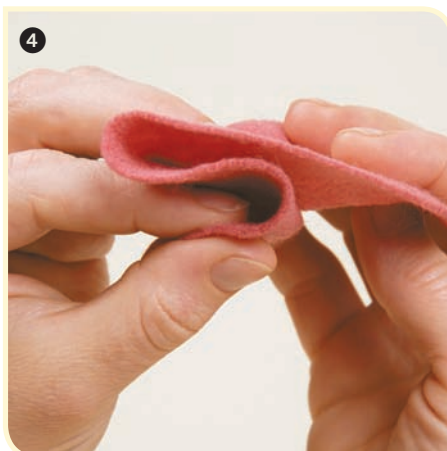
- ④ Holding the felt circle, carefully fold the felt in on itself twice, making a fan fold approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ " (3.1 cm) wide (leave enough felt to make three more folds).
- ⑤ Beginning at the top of the sock slit, carefully pin the fold to one side. Make sure the edges of the felt line up neatly with the edge of the sock slit.
- ⑥ Make another fan fold in the felt and pin that next to the first fold, completely filling the top of the slit.
- ⑦ Turn the sock around (not over) so the bottom, unpinned portion of the slit is on top.
- ⑧ Make two more fan folds and attach them to the unpinned portion of the sock slit. When finished, there should be four folds in total. The felt circle will be completely pinned in and resemble a small cup.
- ⑨ If there is a gap, add an extra pin to close it up or re-pin the entire circle as necessary.

- ⑩ **For hand sewing (A)** use a tight whipstitch to secure the mouth to the sock. Take care to sew completely through the felt and the sock, preserving the fan folds. Remove the pins.

For sewing by machine (B) use a topstitch (leave $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch [5 mm] seam allowance) to secure mouth to the sock. Take care to sew completely through the felt, preserving the fan folds. Remove the pins as you go. Check your work and sew over any missed areas.

- ⑪ Turn the sock right side out. Tuck the mouth in. Ta da!





MATERIALS



- Stiff Mouth stencil A (page 134)
- Stiff Mouth stencil B (page 134)
- 1 sheet 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in color of choice
- 1 sheet 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) stiff felt in color of choice (or craft foam or cardboard)
- sharp craft scissors
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- 1 sock
- ruler or tape measure

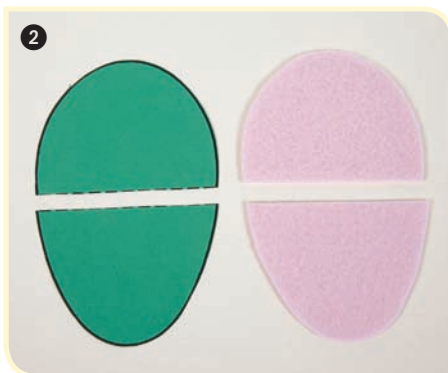
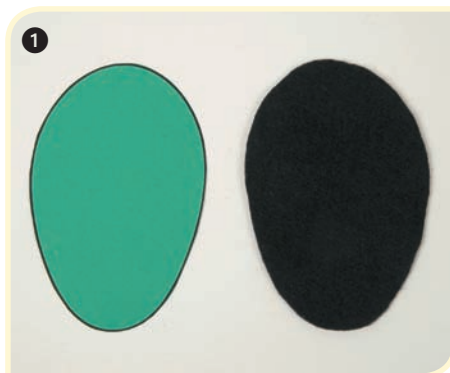
GLUED STIFF MOUTH

Easily attached with glue, the traditional stiff mouth is fast and simple to make. Hot glue is recommended, but tacky glue will also work. A stiff mouth will give your sock puppet a more angular expression than a soft mouth. The mouth will be larger and will open wider, but it will not be as flexible or able to make different facial expressions.



Directions

- 1 Trace stencil A onto soft felt and cut out shape.
- 2 Cut stencil B along cut line. Trace both top and bottom halves onto stiff felt with chalk. Cut out shapes.
- 3 Align the top half of the stiff felt shape with the top edge of the soft felt shape. Glue down.
- 4 Align the bottom half of the stiff felt shape with the bottom edge of the soft felt shape. Glue down. Let dry. The center fold will be the mouth hinge.
- 5 Place the sock flat (vertically) with the underside facing up. Make a small mark in the center of the sock approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from the top.
- 6 Place the top edge of the felt mouth over the mark. Glue the top half completely to the sock. Then glue the bottom. If using tacky glue, weigh down the mouthpiece while it dries to ensure a secure bond.



MAKING STENCILS

Once you have figured out the design, shape, and size of a part, stencils can be an invaluable tool and a great time-saving device. Stencils are useful for achieving symmetry between features such as ears, and they will help you avoid making mistakes and wasting materials. Stencils can also give you the opportunity to try different features before attaching them to your sock puppet permanently. Creating stencils is quite easy; they can be made from shapes you sketch by hand. Programs such as Photoshop and Illustrator can also be useful for stencil design. They are well stocked with symmet-

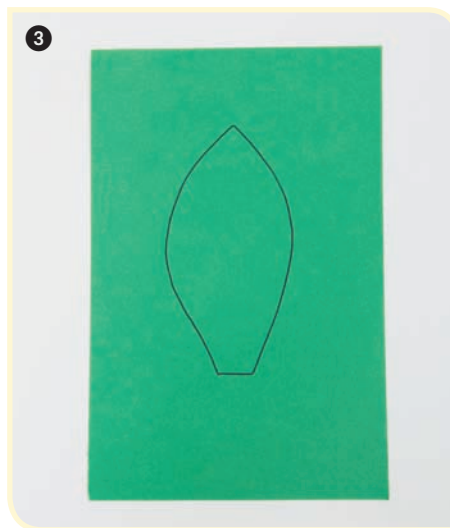
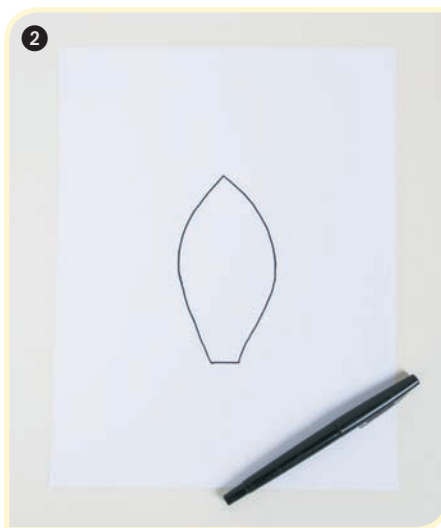
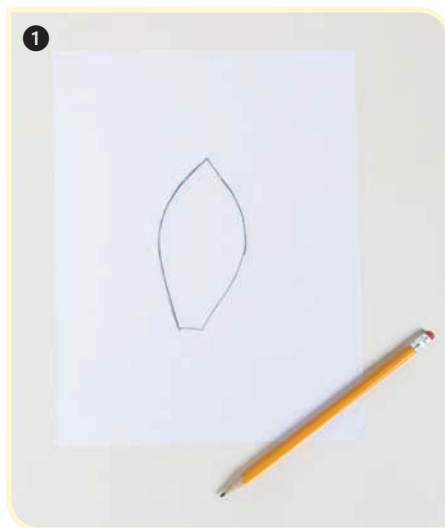
rical versions of standard shapes, such as hearts, stars, squares, and circles, and easy-to-use tools with which to design your own custom shapes.

Store all of your stencils for future use. They are a great way to keep records. Stencils can be used for making multiple puppets of the same design, and they can be altered when necessary to make something similar. You never know when you might have a sock puppet emergency!

MATERIALS

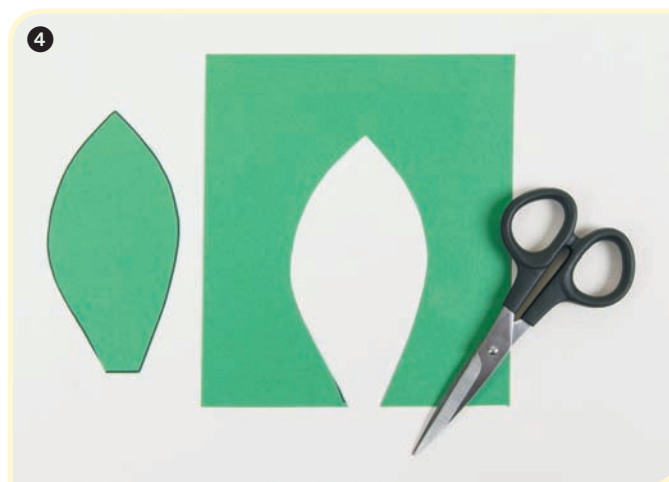


- pencil and eraser
- sketch paper
- dark pen or thin marker
- scissors
- cardstock (or cardboard or stencil plastic)



Directions

- ❶ With pencil on sketch paper, sketch the shape you want.
- ❷ Give it a dark ink outline. Cut it out.
- ❸ Use your printer to copy the shape onto cardstock or carefully trace it onto cardboard or stencil plastic.
- ❹ Cut the stencil out. Voilà, a stencil is born!



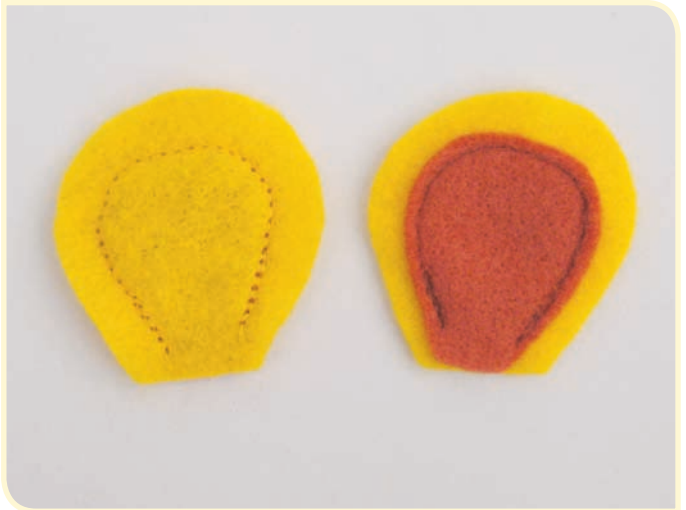
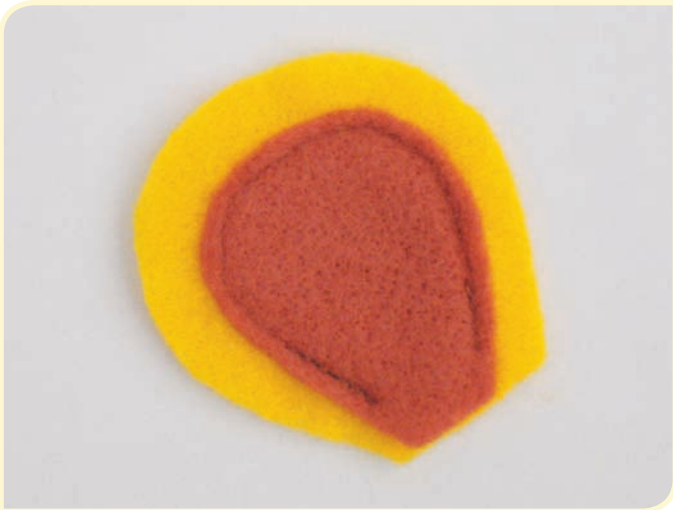
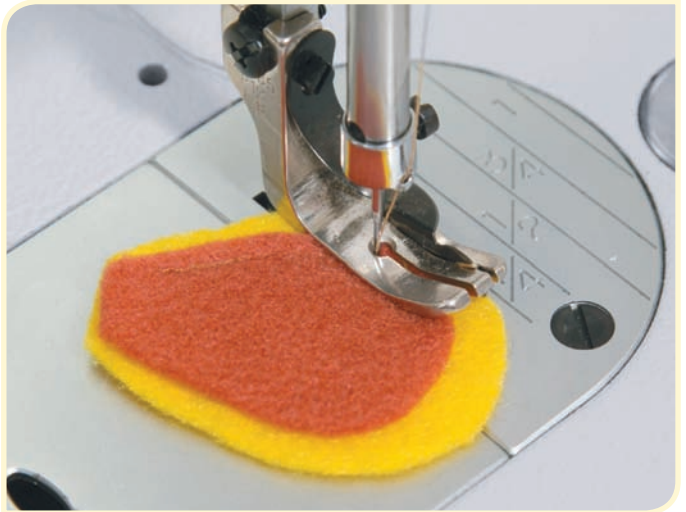
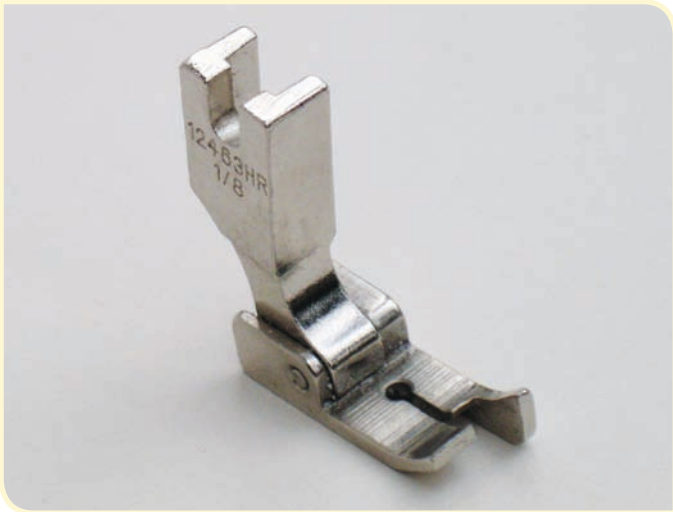
TIP

Assorted stencils can be found in the back of this book on pages 132-143. You are encouraged to modify them as necessary.

SEWING TIPS

Sewing sock puppets is more difficult than sewing a doll or a stuffed animal because you are sewing onto a premade, closed-up, tube-shaped item, which allows you less maneuverability and limited visibility. Additionally, the stretchiness and tightness of the knit can vary quite a bit from sock to sock. Another important issue is that many of the parts you will be sewing are quite small, so you have to sew very slowly and carefully. Here are some helpful tips to guide you through the complexities of sewing sock puppets.

- ▶ For most applications presented in this book, use a topstitch with a sewing machine and a tight, straight stitch for hand sewing *unless otherwise indicated*.
- ▶ It is possible to utilize a flatbed sewing machine for most, but not all, applications; however, a free arm or post machine is recommended because it will reduce the need to be constantly pulling your sock out of the way of the needle. Hand sewing is also a good method, albeit much slower going.
- ▶ Due to the unusual sewing process, the sock often has to be pulled or contorted, at times making traditional stickpins slip out of place. Should you experience this, use a *small* dab of hot glue in place of pins to lightly tack parts together and to the sock before sewing them down.
- ▶ Because of the limited visibility you have when sewing parts onto a sock, you should routinely check to make sure you are not accidentally sewing the sock to itself.
- ▶ For sewing very small parts, it will be necessary to utilize the hand crank rather than the foot pedal of your sewing machine in order to control the speed.
- ▶ Due to the small and, at times, irregular shapes you will be sewing, it can be difficult to maintain a constant, even seam allowance. A presser foot and guide is an invaluable tool. Place the presser foot and guide along the edge of the felt as you sew around the shape using a topstitch. If you keep the guide hugging the edge, you will have a neat, even, professional-looking seam when you are done.
- ▶ Thread color can be a fun, creative component of your design. When utilizing the doubled and appliquéd techniques, in particular, experiment by using one color for the top thread, which will appear on the front of your piece, and a different color for the bobbin thread, which will show on the back.



DOUBLED AND APPLIQUÉ TECHNIQUES FOR MAKING APPENDAGES



Regardless of the style of the feature or appendage you are constructing, using a *doubled* or an *appliqué* layer of felt will add beauty and strength and enforce the illusion of depth. For example, on an ear, this is achieved by making both an outer and an inner ear. On a *doubled* ear, the outer and inner ears are the same size. For an *appliqué* look, the inner ear is the same shape as the outer ear but $\frac{1}{4}$ " to 1" (6 mm to 2.5 cm) smaller, depending upon your design. Most people use the same color for the outer and inner ears when they use the doubled technique and contrasting colors or shades when they use the appliqué technique.

MATERIALS



- Ear stencil(s) (page 134–136) *or make your own*
- 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in color of choice
- 1 sheet 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in a contrasting color (optional)
- faux fur (optional)
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

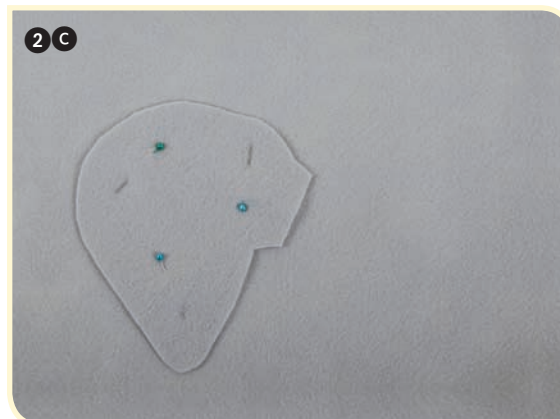
DOUBLED APPENDAGES

Directions

1 Trace the Ear stencil onto felt (or faux fur, depending on your animal). Flip the stencil and trace again. Cut out the parts.

2 **If gluing:** *Double* the ear by gluing to an unused portion of felt **(A)**. Cut out the shape **(B)**. Repeat for the second ear.

If sewing: *Double* the ear by pinning to an unused portion of felt **(C)**. Sew around the outer edge to secure. Trim excess. Repeat with the second ear **(D)**.



Note: For convenience, the doubled and appliquéd techniques are being demonstrated on ears; however, they can be applied to most appendages, including legs, beaks, wings, fins, teeth, tongues, and more.

APPLIQUÉD APPENDAGES



Directions

- 1 Trace the outer ear stencil onto your felt (or faux fur, depending on your animal). Flip the stencil over and trace another ear next to it. Cut out both ears.
- 2 Repeat step 1 with the inner ear stencil on the contrasting felt.
- 3 Place the inner ear in the center of the outer ear, leaving some felt showing on all sides (except when making a *split* ear [page 54]).

- 4 **If gluing:** Carefully glue the inner ear to the outer ear. Let dry completely **(A)**.

If sewing: Use either stickpins or a few drops of hot glue to secure the inner ear in place **(B)**. Sew around the outer edge of the inner ear to attach the two pieces together **(C)**.



ATTACHING APPENDAGES

Attaching appendages such as ears, tails, horns, and limbs to a sock puppet can be awkward and messy. If you want ears to stand up straight, this can also be difficult. Felt *buttons* are a great way to solve these issues and are one of the best tricks in sock puppet design.

A *button* is a simple, circular shape that will help securely attach many features, limbs, and appendages. *Buttons* lend your sock puppet a clean, professional look by making features appear as though they are truly attached to the body rather than simply “stuck on.” A button is usually made from the same material as the appendage it is attaching, except in the case of yarn or fur. The button should be as small as possible but still large enough to accommodate what has to pass through it.

Note: For convenience, the *button* technique is being demonstrated on an ear; however, it can be applied to nearly all appendages that extend from the body. For appendages other than ears, disregard the word



TIP

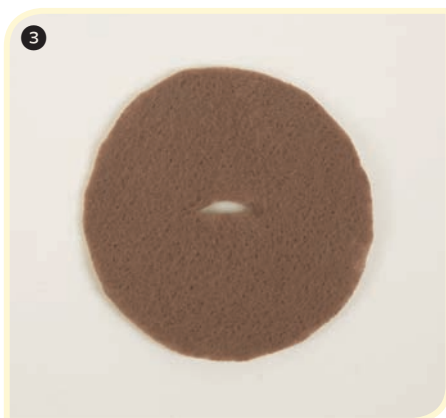
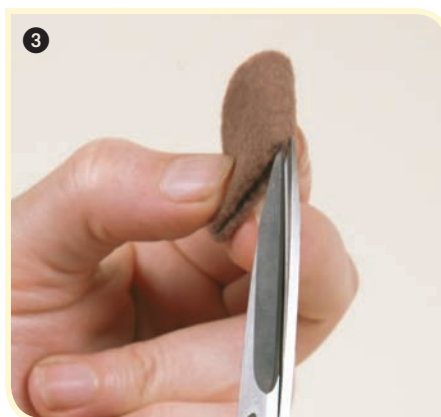
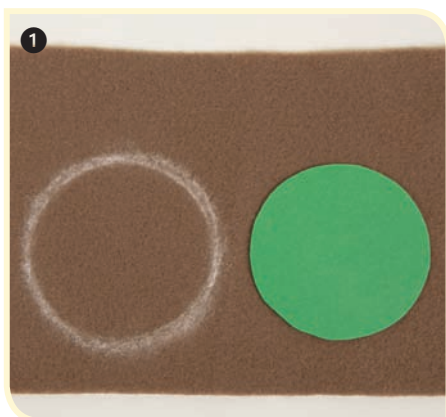
Chalk is a good tracing medium because it won't leave a permanent mark on your fabric.

stem in the directions and instead pull the end of the appendage through the *button*. Follow the rest of the directions accordingly. Feel free to combine gluing and sewing methods to suit your needs.

MATERIALS



- *Button* stencil (small, medium, or large, page 135)
- 1 sheet 9" x 6" (23 x 15.2 cm) felt in same color as ear
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials



Directions

- 1 Trace the *Button* stencil onto the same color felt as the ear. Cut it out.
- 2 Locate the center and fold the *button* in half twice.
- 3 Make a very small incision in the center of the fold.

4 **If gluing:** Glue the base of the ear and pinch together while it dries, creating a stem (A). Pull the stem through the incision. Trim the stem if it is too long but leave enough to glue to the sock (B). Add a little glue to the end of the stem and all the way around the underside of the button (C). Firmly press the *button* to the desired place on the sock. Add more glue if needed (D).

If sewing: Pinch the ear base together, creating a stem. Pull the stem through the incision (E). Fold the *button* in half *toward the ear* and sew the *button* to the stem. Be sure to pass through all three layers. After sewing, trim the stem if it is too long but leave a little sticking out (F). Put a small amount of hot glue on the end of the ear stem and



stick it to the desired location on the sock. This will do two things: It will make the ear stand up straight, if desired, and it will hold the ear in place **(G)**. Sew around the outer edge of the *button*, fully attaching it to the sock **(H)**.

GETTING AHEAD: PERFECT PLACEMENT OF FACIAL FEATURES



Keep it short! The appearance of a head and body are illusions created by careful proportion and placement of facial features. Short faces are cuter and help define where the head ends and the body begins. A short face will animate your puppet and facilitate eye contact with the audience. Once the mouth has been put in, you can determine the ideal facial feature placement by following these rules.

GUIDELINES FOR PERFECT FEATURE PLACEMENT

- ▶ Whenever possible, assemble and complete *all* of your sock puppet's parts *before* attaching them to the sock. It is easier to add than to remove.
- ▶ Always determine placement with the sock on your hand, never with it lying flat on the table, because the sock puppet will change shape when it is worn.
- ▶ The ears and hairline should always be placed on or just below your knuckles.
- ▶ Eye placement is extremely important. The eyes should be placed directly on or slightly above the center finger joints and very close together. Eyes should be touching or very nearly.
- ▶ The pupils, if you are using them, should be placed slightly off center and close to the bottom inner corner or edge of the eye while still leaving the underlying layer visible on all sides.
- ▶ The nose should be centered below the eyes. Size, shape, and proximity will vary greatly with each design.





Making Animal Faces

THE SECRET TO CONSTRUCTING a successful sock puppet animal is to capture the spirit of the animal without completely losing the essence of the sock. With a focus on heads and faces, this chapter is filled with possibilities for actualizing your original animal designs. You will learn professional techniques for identifying the key features unique to your subject and rendering them in sock puppet form.

WORKING FROM LIFE AND PICTURES

The easiest way to explore an animal's features is to look at pictures. You can also use a real-life model such as your dog or cat. Ask yourself what characteristics specifically make an animal look like that animal and what makes it look different from other animals. Remember, less is more. Start small and try not to get bogged down by too many details. These can be added as you go. Keep in mind that you are working within the confines of a sock. A sock that is overloaded with material will lose flexibility and make your puppet more difficult to manipulate.



- ▶ The focus is on the most obvious features—the neck and head—rather than the whole body.
- ▶ Tie-dye has been used to suggest the giraffe's pattern and to keep the sock flexible and free of extra material.

- ▶ The size and shape of the ears, the long mane, small horns, and the brush lashes communicate “giraffe” immediately.
- ▶ This design is very effective while using relatively few parts.

FACIAL STRUCTURE

In addition to the placement of features, altering the appearance of facial structure may be necessary to effectively represent your animal. Because socks have no angles or naturally occurring hard edges they do not easily communicate bone structure (i.e., the bridge of the nose, skull, muzzle, or jawline). Incorporating a felt face patch can change the contour of the animal's face. Face patches are often the same color as the sock but can also be used to represent bicolored animals, such as cows. Face patches are frequently placed beneath more prominent features, such as the eyes and nose.





- Face Patch stencil (page 135) *or make your own*
- 1 sheet 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in color of choice
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- stickpins
- sewing materials

Directions

- 1 Trace the Face Patch stencil onto the felt and cut out the shape.
- 2 Put the sock on your hand to determine placement (page 45). Secure the face patch to the sock by placing a few drops of hot glue on the back center or by using stickpins.
- 3 **If Gluing:** Slowly add hot glue around the edges a little at a time to completely secure face patch to sock **(A)**.

If Sewing: Using hand or machine, sew around the edges of the patch, completely securing it to the sock **(B)**.



EARS

The ears are one of an animal's most distinctive attributes. Exaggerating or elaborating on these features will bring forth the spirit of the animal and play on the caricature-like style of the sock puppet.

Animal ears come in many shapes and sizes, and for each one there is an ideal way to create it and attach it to your sock puppet. Although there are endless design

possibilities, nearly every type of sock puppet animal ear can be placed into one of three categories pertaining to its method of attachment: *button*, *floppy*, and *split*. For best results, read this entire section before beginning work because ear construction and ear attachment methods are frequently interconnected. All of the felt ears being presented in this chapter will be constructed using either the doubled or appliqué technique.





- Ear stencil (Button, page 135; Floppy, page 136; or Split, page 136) or *make your own*
- 1 or 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in color of choice
- 1 or 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in contrasting color
- faux fur (optional)
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

BUTTON EARS

The *button* ear is named for its *button* attachment (page 41). This style is most effective when used on large ears that stand up or out, away from the animal's head (e.g., bunny, horse, giraffe, cow).

Directions

- 1 Follow directions for Doubled Appendage (page 38) or Appliquéd Appendage (page 38).
- 2 Attach ears using buttons (page 41).





FLOPPY EARS

A *floppy* ear is an ear that hangs down (e.g., many types of dogs and floppy-eared bunnies) and gets attached directly to the animal's head in one place. A *floppy* ear can be easily modified to include faux fur, if desired.

Directions

- 1 Follow directions for Doubled Appendage or Appliquéd Appendage (page 38).
- 2 If you are not adding faux fur, skip to step 4. If adding faux fur, cut a piece of faux fur slightly larger than the ear.
- 3 **If gluing:** Add glue to the back of the felt ear everywhere you wish the fur to attach. Add fur. Let dry **(A)**.

Trim excess fur carefully, following the shape of the ear. Retain the pile length **(B)**.

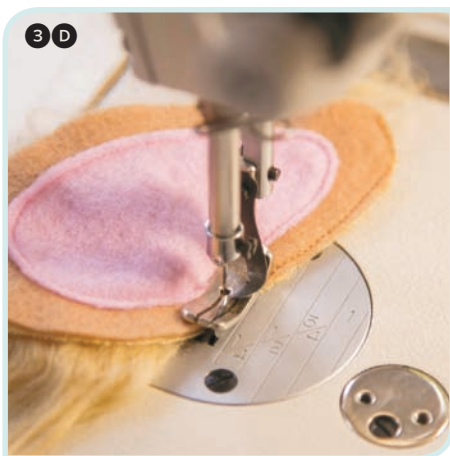
If sewing: Add a few drops of hot glue to the back of the felt ear. Secure the faux fur in place. Let dry. Trim excess fur carefully, following the shape of the ear **(C)**.

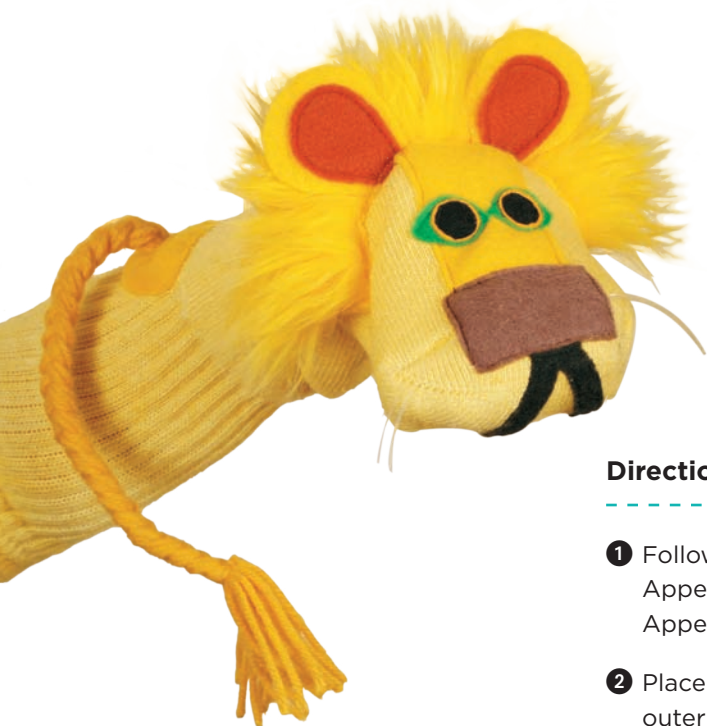
Sew around outer edge to attach the felt ear and the faux fur layer together **(D)**.

- 4 To attach ears to sock, put the sock on your hand and find the knuckle line. Place a mark (or pin) approximately 1" (2.5 cm) in from both edges of the hand.
- 5 **If gluing:** Place a line of glue along the top edge of inside ear. Press firmly to secure it to the sock **(A)**.

If sewing: Pin the ears to the sock to hold in place. Sew the ears to sock along their top edge, following their natural shape **(B)**.







SPLIT EARS

A *split* ear is an ear whose size or shape may not easily accommodate a *button* (e.g., cats, tigers, lions, and elephants). A *split* ear attaches to the head in two places. The bottom of the inner ear folds and attaches forward while the bottom of the outer ear folds and attaches back.

Directions

- 1 Follow steps 1 and 2 for Doubled Appendage or Appliquéd Appendage (page 38).

- 2 Place the inner ear on top of the outer ear and line up their bottom edges.

- 3 **If gluing:** Leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) unglued at the bottom, add hot glue to the back of the inner ear. Firmly attach the inner ear to the outer ear **(A)**.

If sewing: Using stickpins or a few drops of hot glue, secure the inner ear to the outer ear **(B)**. Sewing around the outer edge of the inner ear, attach the two layers together. Leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seam allowance *unsewn* at the bottom to be used later to attach the ear to the sock **(C)**. Repeat with the second ear.

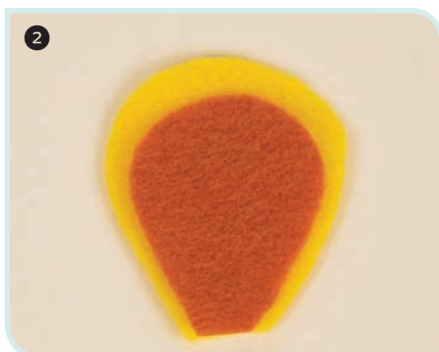
- 4 Put the sock on your hand and find the knuckle line. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) in from

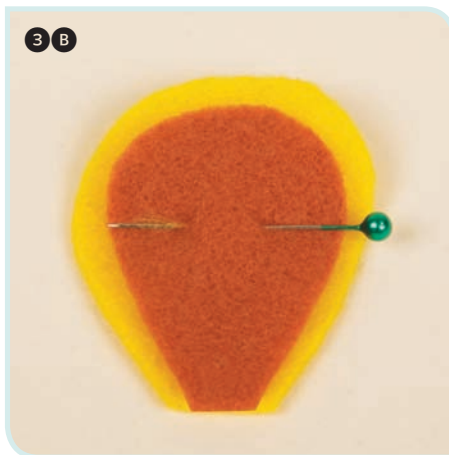
either side, place a pen mark or a straight pin where you will put your ears.

- 5 **If gluing:** Fold the unglued edge of the inner ear forward and the unglued edge of the outer ear backward. Place a line of glue on the underside of folded front edge and glue to the sock in the desired place **(A)**. Gently lift the folded back edge, place a line of glue, and adhere it to the sock **(B)**.

If sewing: Fold the unsewn edge of the inner ear forward and pin it to the sock in the desired place **(C)**. Fold the unsewn edge of the outer ear backward and pin it to the sock **(D)**. Remove the sock from your hand and sew a seam, attaching the front fold to the sock. Repeat with the back fold. Remove pins **(E)**.

- 6 Trim threads and excess fabric as needed.







EYES

Puppets are meant to engage an audience, and their eyes are the means by which they make contact. In some ways, the sock puppet's eyes are the most important feature. You may choose to represent the shape and color of your animal's eyes realistically, or you may aim for something more fantastical. Some eyes are made from stacking flat felt or fabric pieces. Others utilize three-dimensional elements. They can be as simple as a pair of buttons, or you can create more complicated versions by combining felt or foam with pompoms to make eyes that pop up. Whatever style you choose, for optimal eye contact, certain guidelines universally apply (page 45).

STACKED EYES

There are many ways to create a sock puppet's eyes. If you begin with a flat eye base, you can build it up by stacking layers on top to add depth. This generally means adding at least an iris and a pupil. Strong, contrasting colors will add light and sparkle and enhance their liveliness.

TIP

Once the first eye layer is glued to the sock, you cannot make any changes, so it is best to construct an entire stacked eye *before* attaching it to the sock.

When making animals, there is no reason to stick to conventional eye shapes. By making stencils, you can design and cut out your own unique eye bases. Both felt and craft foam are available in a wide, colorful assortment of precut shapes and sizes. Squares, hearts, triangles, and stars all make interesting eyes. Hole punchers work particularly well on craft foam.

Gluing Stacked Eyes

The small size of eye parts can make sewing them difficult. Using glue is a practical solution. The advantage to glued eyes is that you can use foam or felt and you can assemble them faster. It also allows you to create a variety of sets to try on your puppet without having to attach them first. Note that foam eyes will appear very three-dimensional while felt eyes will be more compressed.



Sewing Stacked Eyes

Sewing the eyes may be challenging, but it does have its benefits, including a beautiful appliquéd look and a permanence not typical of glued parts.

Directions

- 1 Sewing carefully around the perimeter of each piece, attach the eye parts to the sock *one at a time*.
- 2 If you are sewing by machine, to accommodate the small parts, sew *very slowly* using the handwheel.



EYES WITH HEAVY LIDS AND LASHES

Eyes can be made even more expressive by adding eyelids and eyelashes. Something as simple as changing the size of an eyelid can alter the personality of your puppet. Large brush lashes and heavy lids will make your puppet appear sleepy or grumpy, while shorter lids will make the eye appear more open and lively.

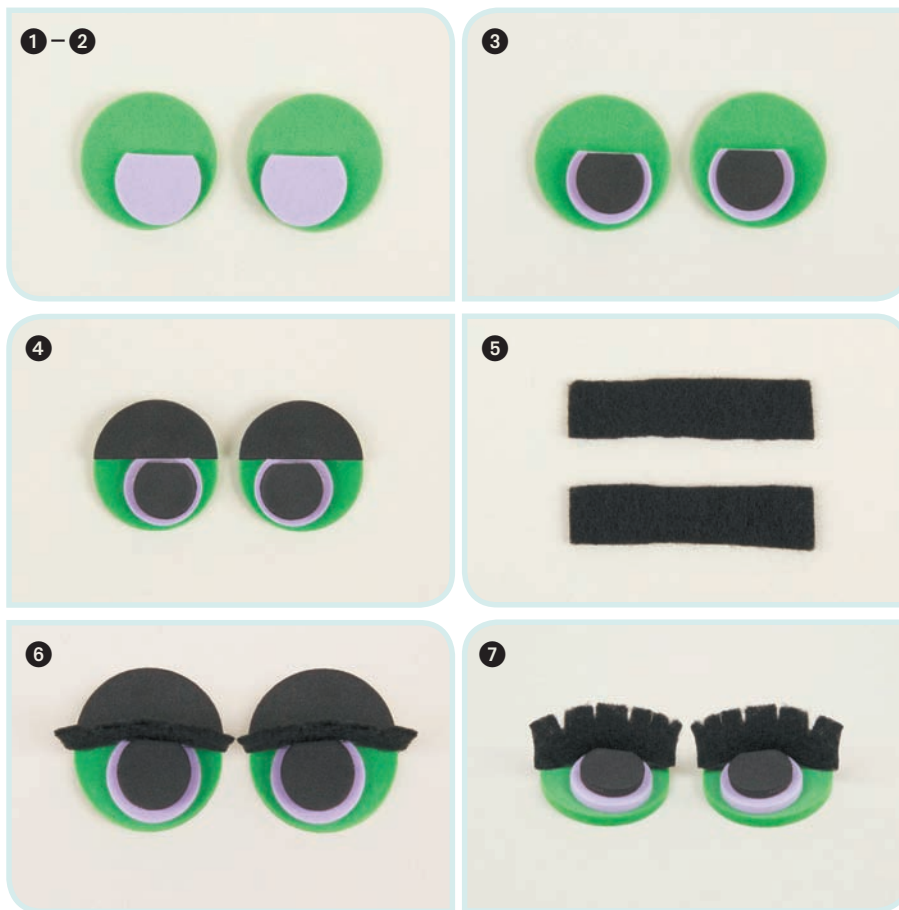
MATERIALS



- two $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles in white or light color (for iris)
- two 1" (2.5 cm) circles in a dark color (for eye bases)
- two $\frac{9}{16}$ " (1.3 cm) circles in black (for pupils)
- 1" (2.5 cm) circle in black (for lids)
- 3" \times 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (7.5 \times 11.4 cm) piece black felt (for sewing)
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

Directions for Gluing

- 1 Trim the tops off $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles. Make both circles match.
- 2 Carefully glue $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles to 1" (2.5 cm) circles. Position them slightly off center toward the inner edge.
- 3 Trim the tops off of $\frac{9}{16}$ " (1.3 cm) circles. Glue the $\frac{9}{16}$ " (1.3 cm) circles to the $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles, lining up the top edges.
- 4 Cut a 1" (2.5 cm) black circle in half. Glue a half circle to the top of each eye.
- 5 Cut two strips from black felt for lashes, making them approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) wide by $1\frac{1}{4}$ " (3.1 cm) long.
- 6 Place a line of hot glue on the edge of the eyelid and glue the lash strip down.
- 7 Once the glue has dried completely, fringe the felt strip to create eyelashes. Trim excess felt on either end.

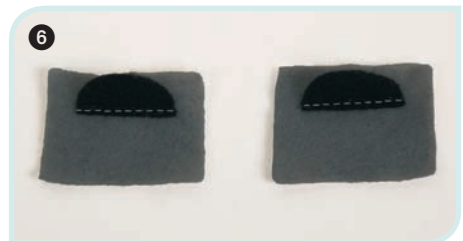
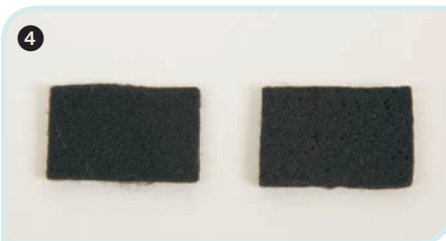


TIP

You can substitute your own sizes for the eye base, iris, and pupil. The lid should always be the same shape and size as the eye base.

Directions for Sewing

- 1 Using a *small dab* of hot glue, tack 1" (2.5 cm) circles to the puppet in the desired location. Sew them down.
- 2 Using a *small dab* of hot glue, lightly tack $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles on top of the 1" (2.5 cm) circles. Place them slightly off center toward the inner edge. Don't sew them down.
- 3 Using a *small dab* of hot glue, tack $\frac{9}{16}$ " (1.3 cm) circles on top of the $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.5 cm) circles. Sew them down.
- 4 Cut two strips from black felt 1" (2.5 cm) wide by $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (3.8 cm) long.
- 5 Cut a 1" (2.5 cm) black circle in half. These will be the eyelids.
- 6 Place one lid near the top of a black strip. Sew them together through the bottom edge of the lid. Repeat with the other eyelid.
- 7 Trim excess felt on the left and right sides of the eyelid. Repeat with the other eyelid.
- 8 Use a stickpin to tack the lid in place over the eye (the eyelash felt will temporarily cover the eye). Sew all the way around the perimeter of the eyelid. Repeat with the other eye.
- 9 Push the eyelash felt up with your finger. Trim it to the desired width and length. Fringe the lash. Repeat with other eye.





POP-UP EYES

An example of a three-dimensional eye is the *pop-up* eye. A *pop-up* eye is a stacked eye made from felt or foam and then backed by a pompom. This type of eye is particularly good for achieving eye contact because it sits high on the puppet's head. Some examples of animals that might use a *pop-up* eye are frogs and fish;

however, your puppet design is entirely your own. The simplest way to create a *pop-up* eye is to glue a stacked eye directly onto a pompom. For a more elaborate method, use sewing to incorporate the pompom into the *stacked* eye.



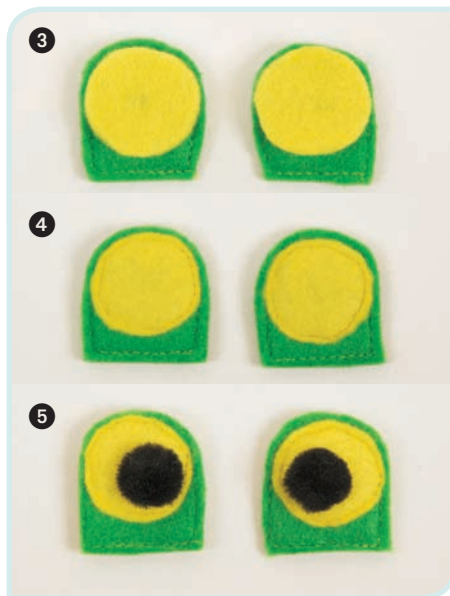
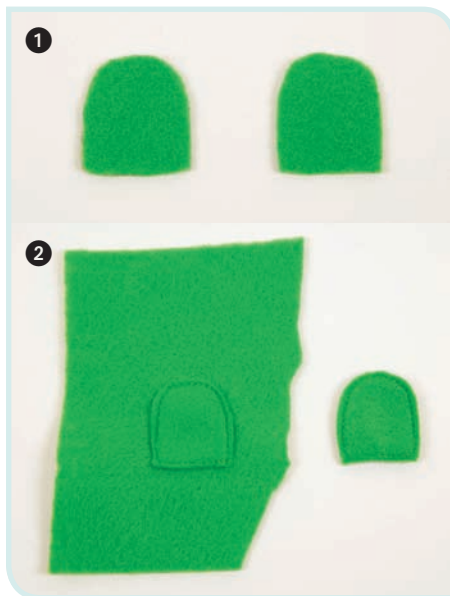
MATERIALS



- Pop-Up Eye stencil (page 136)
- two 3" x 4½" (7.5 x 11.4 cm) pieces felt in dark color
- two 1" (2.5 cm) felt circles in light color
- two ¼" (6 mm) black pompoms
- two 1" (2.5 cm) pompoms matching felt color
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

Directions for Sewn Pop-Up Eyes

- 1 Trace the Pop-Up Eye stencil onto a 3" by 4½" felt sheet. Flip the stencil over and trace another eye next to the first one. Cut out both shapes.
- 2 Sew the cut-out eye base shapes to a second sheet of 3" by 4½" felt. Neatly cut both shapes out.
- 3 Use a *tiny* dab of hot glue to tack a 1" (2.5 cm) felt circle to an eye base. Position it *slightly* toward the inner edge. Repeat with other eye.
- 4 Sew around the perimeter of the circles, attaching them to the eye bases.
- 5 Sew or glue the ¼" (6 mm) black pompoms to the 1" (2.5 cm) felt circles. Position them *slightly* toward the inner edge.
- 6 Put the sock on your hand. Find the middle finger joints. Just above the joint line, pin the eyes to the sock in the desired location (page 45).
- 7 Sew the eye base to the sock along the flat edge. Repeat with other eye. Trim excess thread.
- 8 Push eyes forward. Glue 1" (2.5 cm) pompoms to the sock, directly behind the eyes.
- 9 Add glue to back of the felt eyes and secure them to the pompoms.



TIP

When sewing pompom eyes,

- ▶ Change the shape and size of the eyes by adjusting the stencils and using smaller or larger pompoms.
- ▶ You may substitute 1/4" (6 mm) circles for 1/4" (6 mm) pompoms.



WHISKERS

Many animals have whiskers. The material you choose for your whiskers can have an effect on the personality of your animal. For instance, whiskers made of yarn will droop; therefore, they would be a good choice if you want your animal to appear sick, sleepy, or old. Some materials, such as stiff felt or craft foam, can be bulky but fun and may be a good choice for children because they are easy to handle. If you are using tacky glue, which has a slow drying time, thicker whisker materials will hold their place better. Nylon fishing line is the most popular choice for whiskers. It looks real, holds its shape well, and is fairly simple to attach with hot glue.

TIP

If using yarn or fishing line for your whiskers, tie the strips together to prevent them from slipping out of place while gluing.

MATERIALS



- whisker material of choice (fishing line, yarn, foam, etc)
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks

Directions

- 1 Cut three or four thin strips approximately 4" (10.2 cm) long.
- 2 Line up whiskers and find the center (strips should be equal length on either side). Using as *little glue as possible*, attach whiskers to the sock where the nose will go.
- 3 Center and glue or sew the nose over the whiskers.
- 4 Once the nose is attached and glue is completely dry, trim the whiskers to the desired length or leave them as they are.



NOSES



Animal noses come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Nearly as varied are the ways they can be represented and the selection of materials available with which to do this; felt, foam, and pompoms all make great noses.

Sock puppet animal noses fall into two categories: two dimensional and three dimensional. By examining your animal's face, you can determine which nose is appropriate. In some instances, a combination of the two is the correct choice. For example, you might decide to make a face patch (two dimensional) to indicate the bridge of the nose and add a pompom (three dimensional) on top to represent the nose itself.

TWO-DIMENSIONAL NOSES

The two-dimensional nose is essentially a flat nose that sits close to the face rather than being built or sculpted outward. Any type of material that can be cut into the desired shape (e.g., felt, fabric, or foam) will work. A

two-dimensional nose is made by creating a stencil in the desired shape and tracing it onto your material (page 34).

Sometimes, a two-dimensional nose is best combined with a face patch. For instance, to depict an animal with a broad face, such as a lion, you might make a long, wide, rectangular face patch to form the bridge of the nose and then add a smaller felt piece at the end for the nose itself. For a cat or tiger, for example, you might use a face patch that is more slender and curved.

To create the illusion of a wide, round snout such as on a cow or pig, you can use an oval or circular-shaped two-dimensional nose.

Some animals may require only nostrils to represent the presence of a nose such as on a reptile, horse or giraffe. In this case, the flat shapes would be separate pieces and much smaller. Nostrils can also be layered on top of two-dimensional noses for greater effect. For directions on securing a two-dimensional nose, see page 49.



THREE-DIMENSIONAL NOSES

The three-dimensional nose stands out away from the face. This nose can be represented simply with the use of an acrylic pompom, a foam shape, a button, or a bead.

Pompom Noses

Pompoms are good for representing many types of animal noses. They come in a wide variety of colors and sizes that can radically alter the personality of your puppet. For example, if a pompom is used for a dog's nose, a change in size can help define the look of a particular breed. The simplest way to attach a pompom nose is with hot glue, but there are also sewing methods (see opposite page). This method is for hand or machine sewing only.

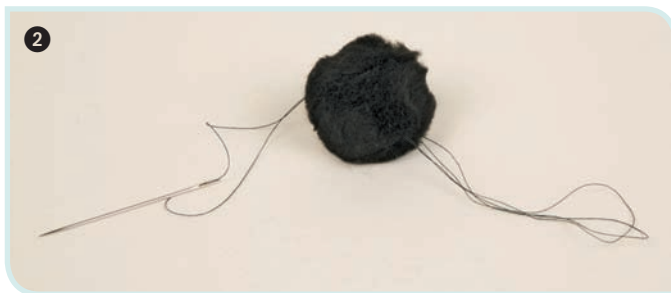
TIP

Sewing machines will have different tolerances for this particular application. To avoid needle breakage, try slowing the speed or using the handwheel when sewing on pompoms.

MATERIALS

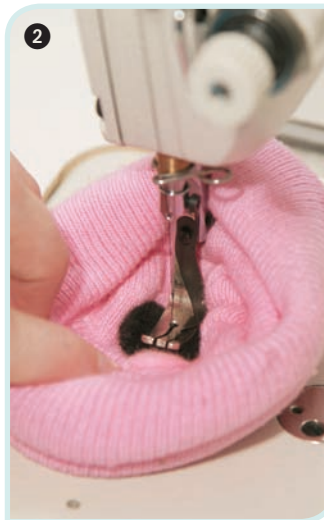


- pompom
- sharp craft scissors
- SEWING MATERIALS:
 - sewing machine (use medium-to heavy-weight needle)
 - hand sewing (use heavy-weight thread)



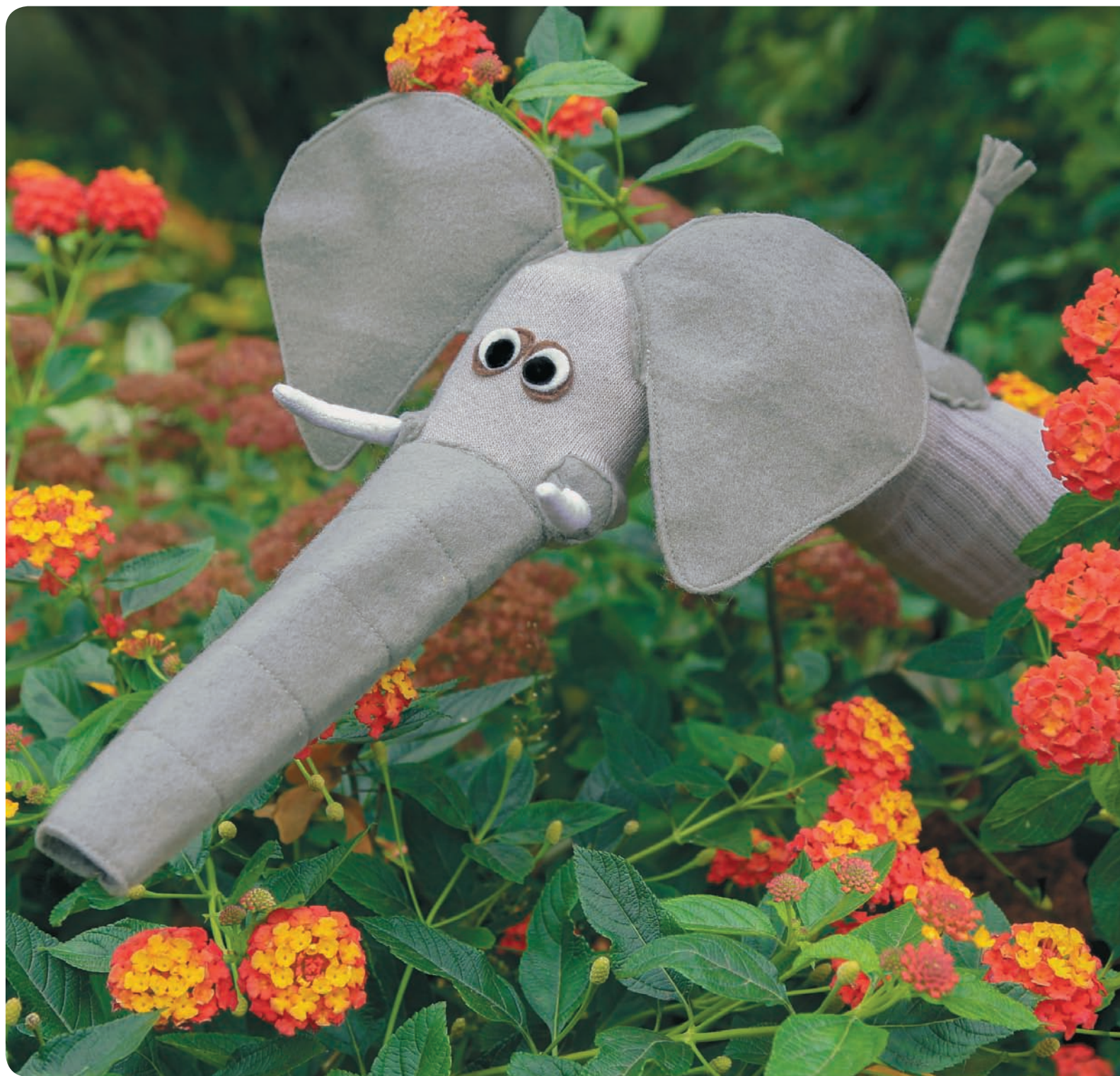
Directions for Hand Sewing

- ❶ Double the thread. Tie a large knot at the end to prevent slipping.
- ❷ Starting from underneath, attach the pom-pom to the thread by pushing the needle up through the center of the pom-pom. Reverse direction and sew through the pom-pom again, pushing the needle down.
- ❸ Once the thread is attached, place the pom-pom in the spot on the sock where you want the nose to go. Using four or five stitches, sew the pom-pom to the sock, not unlike sewing a button to a shirt.
- ❹ Turn the sock inside out. Knot the thread. Trim excess.



Directions for Machine Sewing

- ❶ Tack the pom-pom on the sock where the nose will go using a *small dot* of hot glue.
- ❷ Place the sewing machine foot directly over the top of the pom-pom.
- ❸ Create a short seam down the center of the pom-pom. Forward and backstitch a couple of times to firmly attach and secure stitches.



Sculpted Noses

A three-dimensional nose can also be achieved through more complex methods such as the layering and sculpting of felt. For this example of a sculpted nose, we will use an elephant's trunk. This method is for hand or machine sewing only.

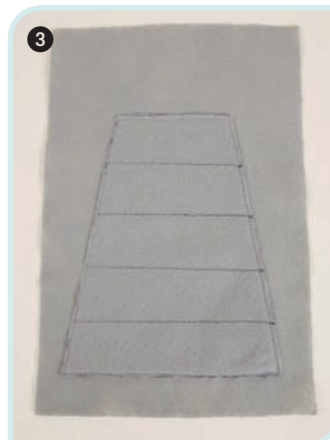
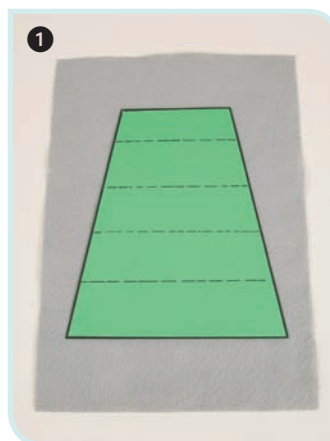


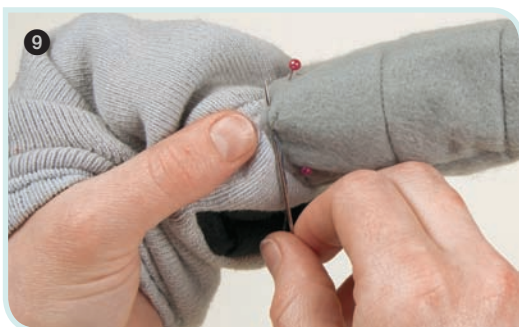
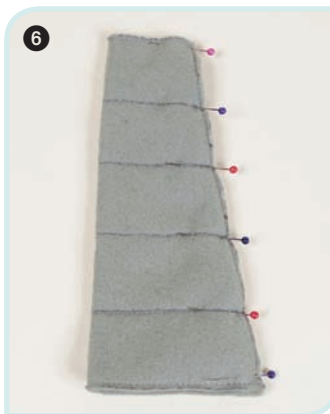
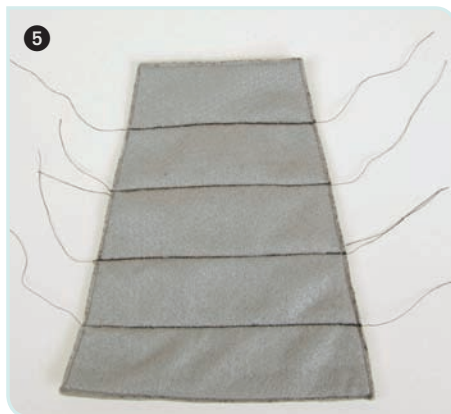
- Elephant Trunk stencil (page 137)
- 2 sheets 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) gray felt
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- sewing materials
- stickpins

Directions

- 1 Trace the stencil onto a sheet of gray felt. Cut it out.
- 2 In pencil, draw four horizontal lines 1½" (3.8 cm) apart on the cut-out trunk.
- 3 Place the felt trunk on top of a second sheet of gray felt. Sew all the way around the outer edge.
- 4 Neatly cut out the doubled trunk shape.

(Continued)





TIP

To glue the trunk on, slowly apply a thin line of glue to the trunk, *not* the sock, pressing tightly to adhere. Glue one small section at a time. Remove the pins as you go.



- 5 Sew directly over each of the horizontal pencil lines. Trim any hanging threads.
- 6 Fold the trunk in half, inside out and lengthwise (the long way), lining up the stitches on both edges. Pin it in place.
- 7 Sew the two aligned edges together. Remove pins.
- 8 Turn the trunk right side out. Puff it out to form a cylinder.

- 9 Put the sock on your hand with seam facing down. Center and pin the trunk in place directly above the puppet's top lip. Maintain the cylindrical shape while pinning (this may take a few tries).
- 10 **For hand sewing:** Leaving a very small seam allowance, hand-sew the trunk to the sock. Remove pins.

For machine sewing: Use a sewing machine only if it allows for a wide enough range of motion.

TEETH, TONGUES, TUSKS, AND HORNS

It can be fun to add extra elements such as teeth and tongues to further enhance your animal's appearance. In this instance, it is important to utilize *selective placement* to avoid overloading your sock puppet's mouth with unnecessary material. One way to determine what to add is to decide what emotions or presence you want to elicit from your character. For example, if you are making a dog that is happy go lucky, friendly, or goofy, a long tongue for giving wet sloppy kisses could be perfect. On the other hand, if you are creating a wild, ferocious dog or a wolf, then adding pointy canines would be a better option. Sometimes, you may feel that the addition of teeth is essential to your character, such as tusks on an elephant or walrus. In this case, you may choose to make that the only extra you add to the mouth.

TEETH

Craft foam, felt, and stiff felt are the easiest materials to use for teeth because they can be cut into any shape. It is essential to use selective placement in the application of teeth. Too many teeth or teeth that are too long will interfere with the way your puppet's mouth opens and closes. The object is to create the *suggestion* of teeth. When making a tiger, for example, two triangular-shaped canines strategically placed should be enough to say "ferocious teeth!"



Square Felt Teeth

This technique is being demonstrated with square teeth; however; it can be used with any shape teeth.



MATERIALS

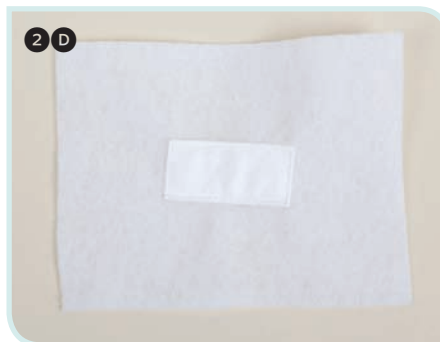


- 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) sheet white or off-white soft felt
- ruler
- pen or thin marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

Directions

- 1 Determine the size of rectangle or square needed for your teeth: large for horse, small for rodent, and so on. Measure and draw the shape onto the felt. Cut it out.
- 2 **If gluing:** *Double* the teeth by gluing them to an unused portion of felt. Cut out the doubled teeth (A). Cut slits in the felt to form teeth (B). For a soft mouth, glue the uncut edge directly beneath the top seam inside the mouth. For a stiff mouth, glue directly *in front* of the mouthparts (C).

If sewing: *Double* the teeth by sewing them to an unused portion of felt (D). Sew multiple, short seams to create individual teeth (E). Pin teeth into place. Sew the first seam along the top edge. Sew a second seam parallel to the first, directly across the individual teeth (F).





- Shark Tooth stencil (page 136) or *make your own*
- 6" x 6" (15.2 x 15.2 cm) square white or off-white craft foam
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks

TIP

Whenever possible, create the teeth stencil as one piece with a flat top edge. This will make it easier to attach them to your puppet.

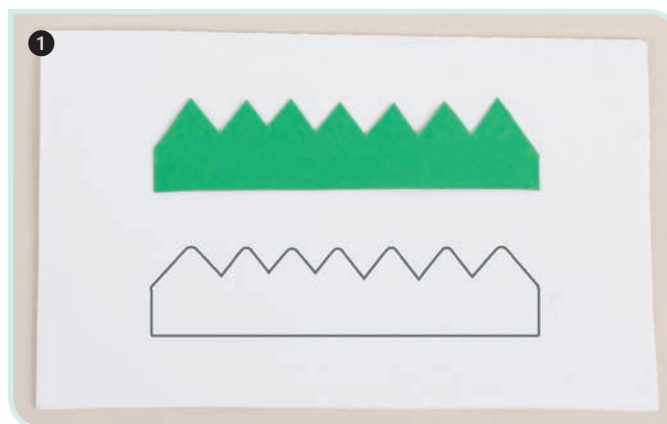
Pointy Craft Foam Teeth

This technique can be used with any shape teeth. Craft foam can be applied only with glue.

Directions

- 1 Trace the stencil onto the craft foam. Cut out teeth.
- 2 **For a stiff mouth:** Glue the flat edge of the teeth directly onto the gum line.

For a soft mouth: Glue the flat edge of the teeth directly *beneath* the top seam inside the mouth.



TONGUES

While not a necessary attribute, tongues add flair to a sock puppet and they are always an unexpected surprise when the puppet opens his mouth. In some instances, a tongue can help develop your character. For example, a long, fly-catching tongue is a great feature to add to a frog puppet. A punk rock pig puppet might have a pierced tongue. If you want to make a character appear sickly, then a green tongue is the way to go.

Directions

- 1 Design a tongue shape for your character. Make a stencil (page 34).
- 2 Follow the directions for the *doubled* technique (page 38).
- 3 **If sewing:** You can enhance the tongue by sewing a seam down the middle.
- 4 Attach the tongue by gluing it or sewing it inside the puppet's mouth.



TUSKS

The stuffed, felt tusk method is for hand or machine sewing only.

MATERIALS



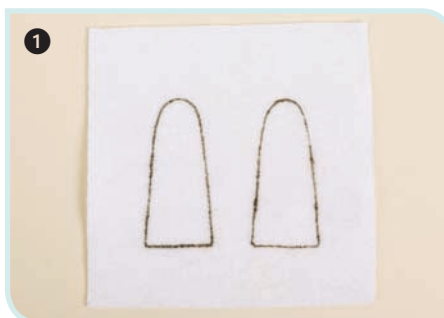
- Tusk or Horn stencil (page 138 or 143) or *create your own*
- 6" × 6" (15.2 × 15.2 cm) square white or off-white felt
- fiberfill stuffing
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- stickpins
- sewing materials
- chopstick or 1/4" (6 mm) wooden dowel
- hot glue gun and glue sticks

HORNS

Horns are made in the same way as tusks. It is merely the size and placement that change. For a large horn, use the Horn stencil. For a small horn, use the Tusk stencil. Horns can be attached using the *button* technique or, when appropriate, substitute a round *button* for a section of faux fur or a body part.

Directions for Hand or Machine Sewing

- 1 Trace the Tusk or Horn stencil twice onto a felt square.
- 2 Cut pieces out.
- 3 Fold one tusk (or horn) in half. Pin if needed. Sew the edges together. Repeat with the second tusk (or horn).
- 4 Using the chopstick (or dowel), firmly push on the wide end, slowly rolling the felt down until the piece is completely right side out. Repeat with the second piece.
- 5 Use the chopstick to densely pack the tusks or horns with small pieces of stuffing.
- 6 Attach the tusks or horns to your puppet using small felt *buttons* (page 41).



DIRECTIONS FOR GLUING

1. Create a tusk or horn shape and make a stencil.
2. Trace the stencil onto felt. Cut it out.
3. Follow directions for the *doubled* technique to make tusks or horns (page 39). Glue directly to your puppet in the desired location.



BEAKS



If you are making a bird, a beak is essential for defining the look of your puppet. Other animals such as a platypus, an octopus, and even some dinosaurs also have beaks. Beaks can be applied in one of two ways: inside the mouth or outside the mouth. The method you choose will largely depend upon what animal you are making, which materials you are using, and whether your sock puppet has a soft or a stiff mouth.

BEAK ATTACHED INSIDE THE MOUTH

Feel free to create your own beak shape to use with this technique.

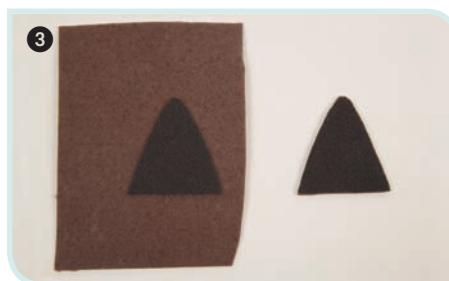
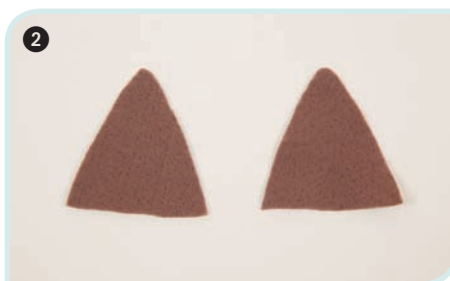
MATERIALS



- Triangular Beak stencil (page 139) or *design your own*
- 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) sheet soft felt in color of choice
- 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) sheet stiff felt in color of choice (optional)
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- ruler
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

TIP

To make a craft foam beak, use craft foam in place of felt and follow the directions for gluing the beak. Disregard step **3**



Directions

- 1 Trace the stencil onto soft felt. Flip the stencil. Trace it again.
- 2 Cut out both beak shapes (bottom and top).
- 3 *Double* the beaks by gluing or sewing each one to an unused portion of the felt (you may use stiff felt for this second layer if you like). Trim excess felt.
- 4 Put the puppet on your hand with the mouth open. Make sure the sock is centered. Insert the beak evenly.
- 5 **If gluing:** Place a line of hot glue along the flat edge of top beak. Glue it to the roof of the mouth approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from the opening (A). When glue dries,

add more glue where needed to secure (B). Repeat steps A and B with the bottom beak. Make sure that the top and bottom beaks align before gluing (C).

If sewing: (for soft mouth puppets only) Pin the top beak into place approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from the opening of the mouth. Sew one seam along the flat edge of the top beak, attaching it to the roof of the mouth (D). Sew a second seam approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from the first, securing the beak to the "lip" of the sock just outside the mouth (E). Repeat steps D and E for the bottom beak. Make sure that the top and bottom beaks align before sewing (F).



DUCKBILL ATTACHED OUTSIDE THE MOUTH

Feel free to create your own beak shape to use with this technique.

TIP

To make a craft foam duckbill, use craft foam in place of felt and follow the directions for gluing the duckbill. Disregard step 3

MATERIALS



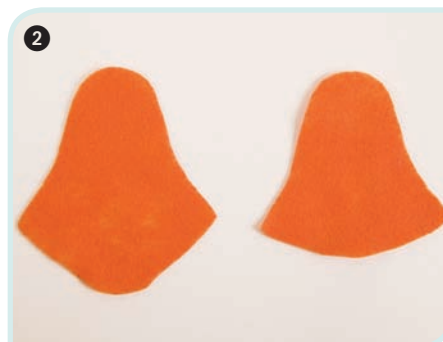
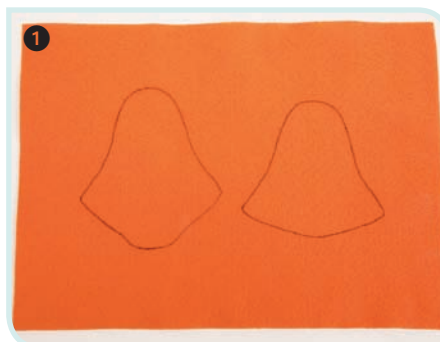
- Duckbill stencils (page 138) or *design your own*
- 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) sheet soft felt in color of choice
- pencil, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- ruler
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins



Directions

- 1 Trace both stencils onto the felt.
- 2 Cut out the shapes.
- 3 *Double* the bill shapes by gluing or sewing each one to an unused portion of the felt. Trim excess felt.
- 4 Center the puppet on your hand with the mouth open to make sure the bill is applied evenly.
- 5 **If gluing:** Place a line of hot glue along the top edge of the upper bill. Glue to the sock approximately midway between first and second finger joints **(A)**. Place a line of hot glue along the top edge of lower bill. Glue under the mouth, just beneath where your thumb extends forward when the mouth is open **(B)**. Add more glue as needed to secure.

If sewing: (for soft mouth puppets only) Pin upper bill to the sock just above the sock seam (approximately midway between first and second finger joints) **(C)**. Remove the sock from your hand. Sew the beak down, removing pins as you go **(D)**. Pin the bill to the sock under the mouth, just beneath where your thumb extends forward when the mouth is open. Remove the sock from your hand. Sew the bill down, removing pins as you go **(E)**.





Making Animal Bodies

THE UNIQUE LOOK of most animals extends past the head and face to the body. Such characteristics include, but are not limited to, distinctive markings, furry manes, and interesting tails. With a focus on animal bodies, this chapter explores the different ways to execute these individual attributes and fully realize your sock puppet design.

MARKINGS, MANES, AND FUR



Adding decorative elements such as markings and fur will bring out the unique qualities of your animal. The abundance of colors, styles, and textures available makes faux fur hard to resist and, in many instances, the easiest to use; however, faux fur can weigh a sock puppet down. Therefore, when using fur, it is best to aim for *selective placement*. Small patches added to the top of the head, between the ears, or on the chest can be very effective. For example, by backing floppy ears with faux fur, you will represent a shaggy dog without actually having to cover the entire sock with fur. Similarly, markings should be used sparingly. Keep in mind that the object is to capture the characteristics of the animal without completely losing the essence of the sock or the flexibility of the puppet.

MARKINGS

Animal markings such as tiger stripes and leopard spots can be created through the application of small felt or fabric pieces. Creative dyeing is another way to represent these markings. Dyeing the pattern offers the distinct advantage of using less material on the sock and thereby retaining more of the puppet's flexibility.

MANES

If you are making an animal that has a mane, such as a lion or a giraffe, there are a number of different materials that can be used. Selecting a material for its texture as well as color will help you create an accurate representation of your animal. Manes can be placed horizontally, vertically, or curving around the contours of the sock. Yarn and faux fur are the most obvious materials, but felt can also be used to create the look of fur.

Faux Fur Manes

When using faux fur, it is important to observe the direction in which the pile naturally falls, so you can use it to your advantage within your design. Take care to cut along the fabric base in order to preserve the length and integrity of the pile. The easiest way to form a mane is by cutting a rectangle out of the fur. The width and length of the rectangle, along with the placement, will vary according to the animal you are creating.

MATERIALS



- 12" x 6" (30.5 x 15.2 cm) piece faux fur
- ruler
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

Directions

- 1 Using a ruler, measure and trace a rectangular mane onto the wrong side of the faux fur. Take care to place the pile in the direction you desire *before* tracing.
- 2 With fur side down, carefully cut out your shape along the traced line. Take care to keep the scissors blade on the fabric backing. *Avoid cutting the actual pile.*
- 3 Choose the desired location for the mane. For manes that follow the contours of the face, such as lions, tack the mane in place with the sock on your hand.
- 4 Apply a few drops of hot glue to the fabric backing and lightly tack the mane in place on the puppet.
- 5 **If gluing:** Slowly apply hot glue around the underside edges of the fabric backing to completely secure the mane to sock (keep in mind that the more glue you use, the stiffer and less flexible the puppet will be). Firmly press the mane into place as you go. Take care not to get any glue on the actual fur **(A)**.

If sewing: Sew around the edges of the mane, completely securing it to the sock **(B)**.



Felt Manes

Looping, doubling, and fringing felt are some of the methods that can give it the look of fur. These techniques can be easily executed by either gluing or sewing.

MATERIALS



- 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) sheet felt in color of choice
- ruler
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

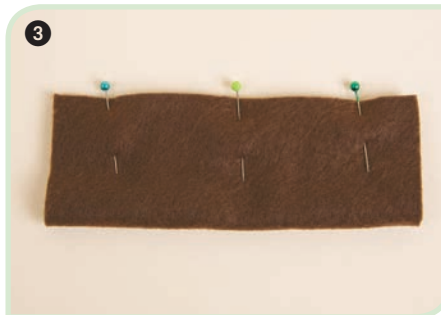
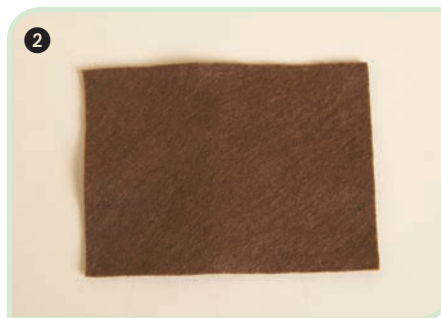
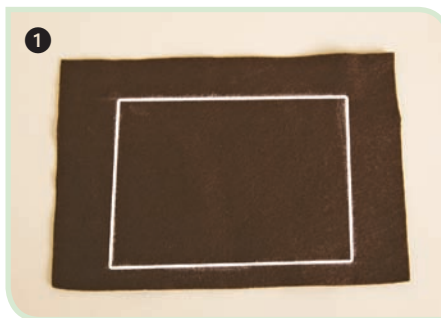


Looped Felt Mane

Directions for Looped Felt Mane

- 1 With a ruler, measure and trace a rectangle onto the felt 6" (15.2 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide. If using a child's sock, make it 5" (12.7 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide.
- 2 Cut it out.
- 3 Fold the rectangle in half length-wise. Pin if desired.
- 4 Glue or sew the edges together, removing pins as you go.
- 5 On the folded edge, make several cuts into the felt about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) apart and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (3.8 cm) deep.
- 6 Choose the direction of the mane (vertical, horizontal, or curved).
- 7 Place the sock on your hand. Using a small amount of hot glue, tack the mane into place.
- 8 **If gluing:** Add more hot glue to secure the mane in place.

If sewing: Create a seam by sewing the flat edge to the sock **(A)**. Further secure the mane to the sock by sewing a second seam just beneath the loops (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " [2 cm] from first) **(B)**. Close up the sides, if desired.



Directions for Fringed Felt Mane



- 1 Follow steps 1 through 4 for Looped Felt Mane.
- 2 Cut along *folded edge only*, separating the mane into two halves but leaving it connected on one side.
- 3 Using sharp scissors, make multiple cuts on the open side about 1½" (3.8 cm) deep. For fewer fringes, leave more space between cuts; for more fringes, leave less space. Take care not to cut through the attached side.
- 4 Follow steps 6 through 8 for Looped Felt Mane.



TAILS

Adding a tail to your animal sock puppet will make your character more recognizable and will extend the parameters of the body by giving it a back side. In nature, tails come in thousands of interesting shapes and sizes. In sock puppet design, there are nearly as many fun ways to represent them. By incorporating one or a combination of techniques you will be able to approximate the look of your animal's unique tail. Common materials used for tails are yarn, faux fur, and felt.

YARN TAIL

The two best ways to make a yarn tail are loose and braided. A loose yarn tail creates a flowing look (e.g., horse). Knotting the ends of the individual strands will prevent the yarn from unraveling. To create a yarn tail with a tighter, sleeker look (e.g., lion), you may want to braid the yarn. Try combining different colors to enhance the effect. For example, you can create a realistic-looking zebra tail by braiding black and white yarn together.

MATERIALS



- yarn
- ruler
- sharp craft scissors



Directions

- 1 Determine the length of your tail.
- 2 Cut approximately 21 strands of yarn.
- 3 Gather and tie them together at one end using another piece of yarn.
- 4 For a braided tail, braid the yarn and tie the end tightly. Trim excess.
- 5 For a loose tail, knot the individual strands at the ends to prevent unraveling.
- 6 Use a *button* to attach the tail to your puppet (page 41).



FAUX FUR TAIL

Making a fur tail is a good example of *selective placement*. It will communicate that your animal is furry without you having to overuse the fur or cover the entire

sock, which can restrict movement. Fur tail techniques are for hand or machine sewing only and are not for use with glue.





- 8" x 8" (20.3 x 20.3 cm) square faux fur
- ruler
- pen or finer marker
- sharp craft scissors
- stickpins
- sewing materials
- chopstick or 1/4" (6 mm) wooden dowel

TIP

When measuring faux fur, the word *length* refers to the direction of the pile.

Directions

- 1 Place your fur piece with the fabric underside facing up and with pile facing down.
- 2 Using your ruler, draw a rectangle 8" (20.3 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide on the fabric underside.
- 3 With fur side down, carefully cut out your rectangle along the drawn line. Keep the scissors blade on the fabric backing and *avoid cutting the actual pile*.





- 4 Fold the fur rectangle in half with right sides (fur) together and pin in place.
- 5 Sew the edges together. Remove pins.
- 6 Using the chopstick or dowel, firmly push on the wide end, slowly rolling the fur down until the tail is completely right side out.
- 7 Sew the tip of the tail closed.
- 8 Use a large *button* to attach the fur tail to your puppet (page 41).



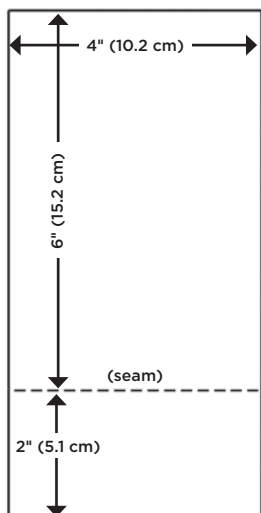


Diagram A



Diagram B



Tipped Faux Fur Tail

- ❶ Choose two colors of faux fur: one for the tail and one for making a tip.
- ❷ Follow the directions for Faux Fur Tail (page 95) with these changes to step 2: Using your ruler, draw one rectangle 6" (15.2 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide on the fabric underside of the main color fur. Draw another rectangle 2" (5.1 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide on the fabric underside of the tipped color fur. Cut out and sew together (diagram A).

Striped Faux Fur Tail

- ❶ Choose two to four colors of faux fur.
- ❷ Follow the directions for making a Faux Fur Tail (page 95) with these changes to Step 2: Using your ruler, draw five rectangles 2" (5.1 cm) long by 4" (10.2 cm) wide on the fabric undersides of the faux fur. Cut out and sew together (diagram B).

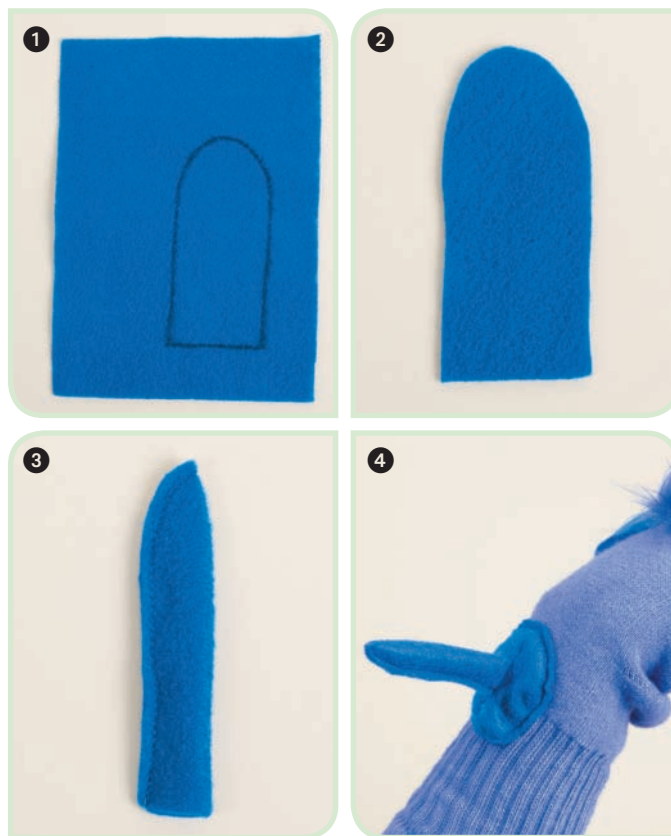
MATERIALS

FELT TAIL

Felt tails can be made in any number of ways simply by changing the length and shape of your stencil, adding stuffing, rolling the felt, or attaching faux fur.



- Tail stencil (small or large, page 139) or *create your own*
- 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) sheet felt in color of choice
- fiberfill stuffing (optional)
- 2" x 2½" (5.1 x 6.4 cm) faux fur (optional)
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins
- chopstick or ¼" (6 mm) wooden dowel (optional)



Directions

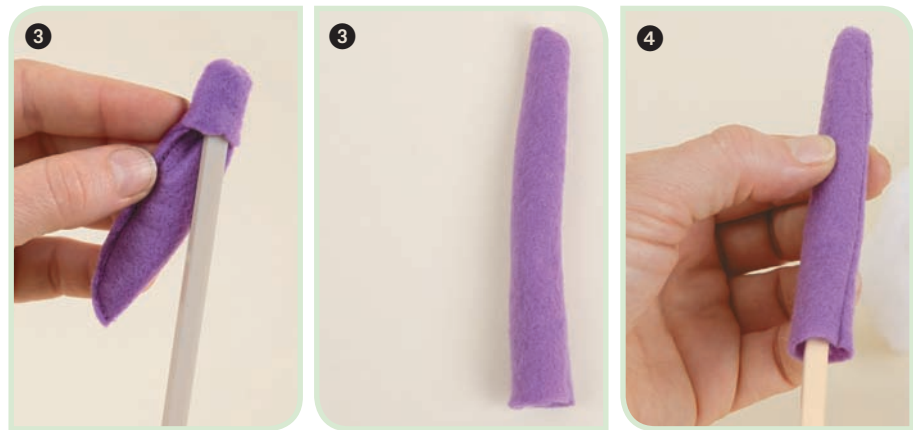
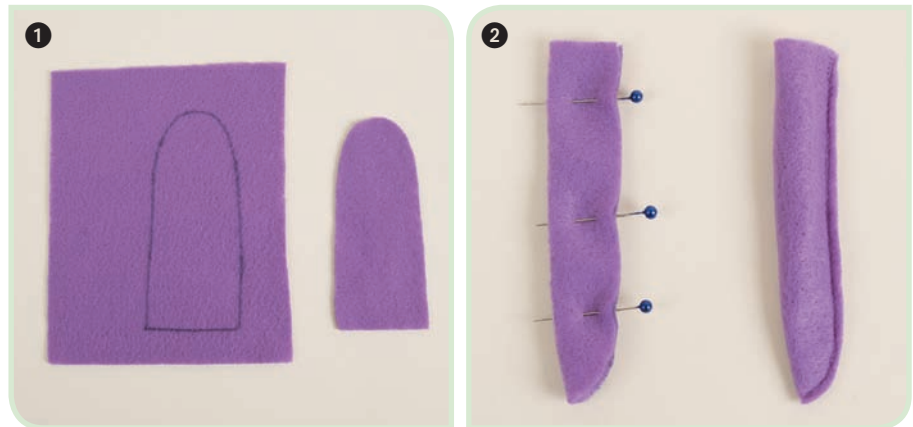
- 1 Trace the Tail stencil onto felt.
- 2 Cut out the tail shape.
- 3 Fold the tail in half. Glue or sew the edges together.
- 4 Use a medium *button* (page 41) to attach the tail to your puppet.

Stuffed Felt Tail

The longer and more densely packed a stuffed appendage, the more curve it will have. Stuffed felt tail methods are for hand or machine sewing only.

Directions

- ❶ Trace the tail stencil onto felt. Cut out the shape.
- ❷ Fold the tail in half, pin, and sew both halves together along the edge.
- ❸ Using the chopstick or dowel, firmly push on the wide end, slowly rolling the felt down until the tail is completely right side out.
- ❹ Starting with small pieces of stuffing, use the chopstick to fill the tail.
- ❺ Use a medium *button* to attach the tail to your puppet (page 41).



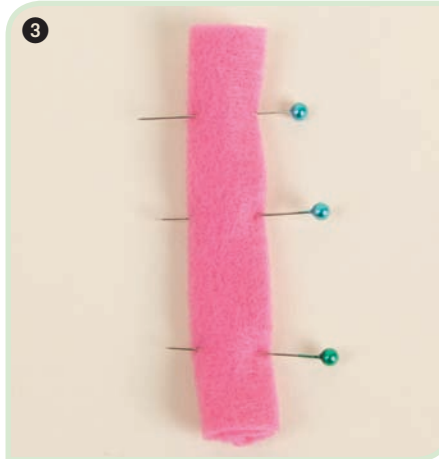
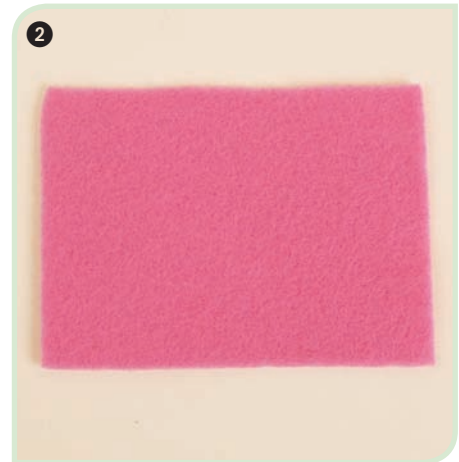
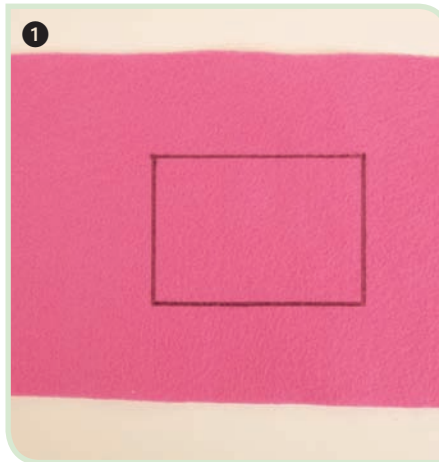
Rolled Felt Tail

Rolled felt tails can be easily made from a rectangle. Adjust the size to accommodate your specific animal. Add a fringe or faux fur tip to complete the look.

Directions

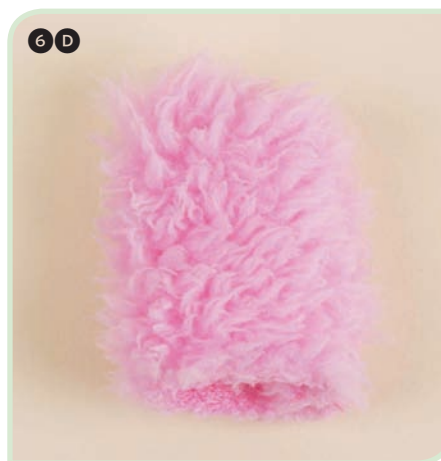
- 1 Measure a rectangle onto the felt. For example, a long tail might be 5" (12.7 cm) long by 3½" (8.9 cm) wide; a medium tail might be 4" (10.2 cm) long by 1½" (3.8 cm) wide; and a short tail might be 3" (7.6 cm) long by 2½" (6.4 cm) wide.
- 2 Cut out the rectangle.
- 3 Fold or roll the tail three or four times. Pin in place.
- 4 Glue or sew the edge down. Stop 1" (2.5 cm) before the end.
- 5 *Optional:* To add fringe, make multiple small cuts in the remaining, unglued/unsewn end of the tail.
- 6 *Optional:* To add fur:

If gluing: Adding hot glue as you go, wrap the remaining 1" (2.5 cm) of the felt tail in faux fur. Trim fur piece if necessary **(A)**.



If sewing: Fold fur in half with right sides together (fur facing in) and pin **(B)**. Sew along the edge **(C)**. Turn the fur right side out **(D)**. Insert the unsewn end of the tail into the sewn fur piece. Sew along the connecting edge to secure **(E)**.

- 7** Use a medium *button* to attach the tail to your puppet (page 41).



TIP

Experiment with the rolled tail technique by designing your own stencils. To make a rodent's tail, create a stencil that is 9 inches (23 cm) long and gets narrower toward one end.

WINGS AND FEATHERS

You have a number of options when it comes to adding wings and feathers to your sock puppet. First, of course, are *actual* feathers. These are commonly available in craft stores and in catalogs. They come in many different sizes and colors and originate primarily from chickens and turkeys. The advantage to using real feathers is that they look, well, *real*, adding an authenticity to the design. This can work just fine for a puppet that will be used as an art piece or for a short production. For long-lasting durability, however, or if you object to using animal products in your crafts, real feathers are not practical. With felt (wonderful felt) you can create lovely wings and feathers. Faux fur works well, too, especially for fuzzy baby bird puppets.



MATERIALS

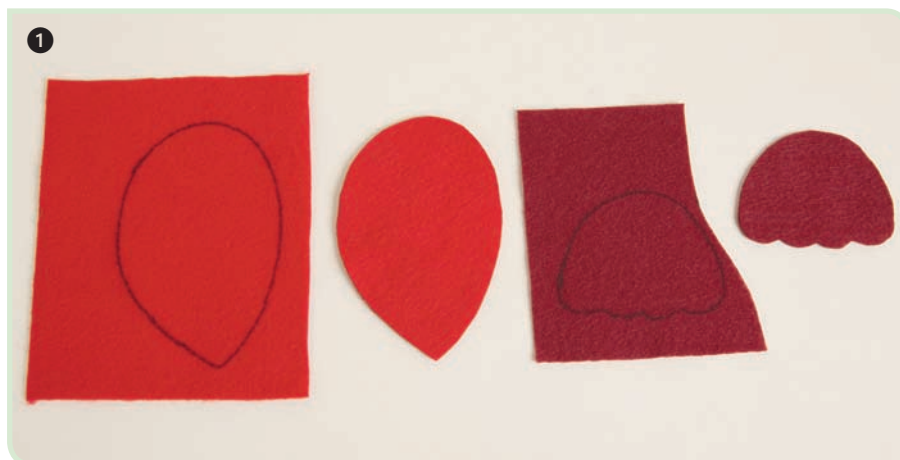


- Wing Base stencil (page 139) or *design your own*
- Wing Cap stencil (page 139) or *design your own*
- 9" x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) sheet soft felt in color of choice
- 9" x 6" (23 x 15.2 cm) sheet soft felt in second color of choice (optional)
- 12 to 16 real feathers approximately 4½" (11.4 cm) long in color(s) of choice (for real feather wings only)
- pen or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

WINGS

Wings and feathers made from felt can be either glued or sewn, depending upon your preference. You can add zest and dimension to your design by using different colors for the wing base and the wing cap.





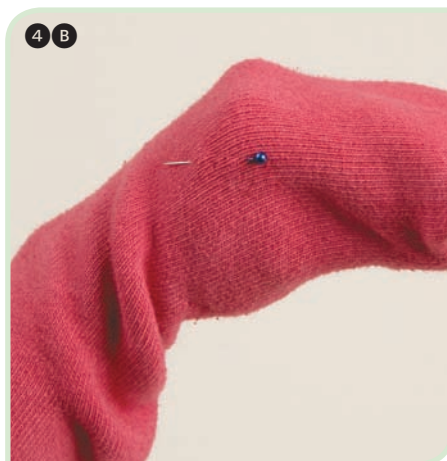
Directions

- 1 Trace the Wing Base and Wing Cap stencils onto felt. Cut out the shapes.
- 2 *Double* the base by gluing or sewing it to an unused portion of felt. Trim excess felt.
- 3 Align the cap on top of the base and glue or sew it down.
- 4 **If gluing:** In the base, make four parallel cuts beginning at the point and ending between the notches indicated in the cap **(A)**. Repeat for second wing. Put the puppet on your hand to determine wing placement. Mark the location with a straight pin **(B)**. Place a line of glue on the back of the base around the top curve only. Glue wings and hold while glue dries **(C)**.

If sewing: Sew four parallel seams from the point of the base to the top of the cap, passing over the notches in the cap **(D)**. Repeat for second wing. Put the puppet on your hand to determine wing placement. Pin in place **(E)**. To attach the wings, sew around the top curve. Tack stitches at both ends by sewing back and forth over the same area **(F)**.

TIP

Before attaching the wing to your puppet, be sure to have the face completed. Adding the wing should be one of the last things you do. This will help ensure proper placement. Once the wing is glued on, it cannot be removed.



REAL FEATHER WINGS

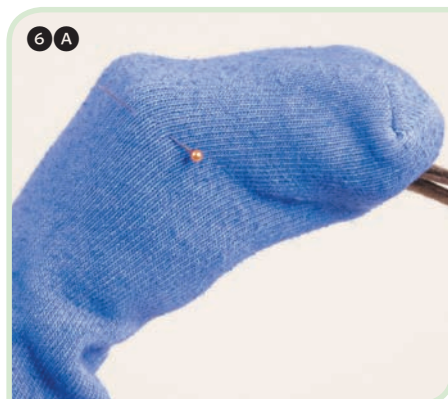
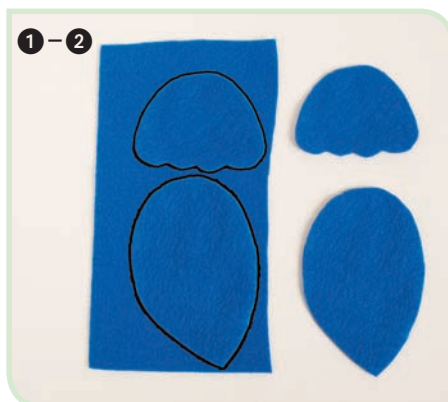
Real feathers can be applied with hot glue or by sewing. The best way to utilize real feathers is to first attach them to a felt backing. This can serve as the wing base.



Directions

- 1 Trace the Wing Base and Wing Cap stencils onto felt, twice.
- 2 Cut out the shapes.
- 3 With the stems of the feathers pointing toward the top of the wing base, create two layers (three or four feathers each) by gluing or sewing them on, one at a time, to the felt base (if gluing, add glue under each stem and lay feathers flat but slightly overlapping). Trim any part of the stem that extends above the base. The fluffy tops of the feathers should extend to *just below* the base.
- 4 Align the cap on top of the base, sandwiching feathers in between. Glue or sew around the perimeter of the cap to secure.
- 5 Repeat steps 1 through 4 for the second wing.
- 6 **If gluing:** Put the puppet on your hand to determine where the wings will go. Mark places with straight pins **(A)**. Place a line of glue on the back of the base around the top curve only. Glue wings on and hold while the glue dries **(B)**.

If sewing: Put the puppet on your hand to determine wing placement. Pin in place **(C)**. To attach wings, sew around the top curve. Tack stitches at both ends by sewing back and forth over the same area **(D)**.



TIP

To create matching tail feathers,

1. Use the Tail Feather Base and Cap stencils (page 140).
2. Follow the directions for the Real Feather Wings or Felt Wings technique and attach to the rear of your bird.



MATERIALS

LARGE FELT FEATHER

Felt feathers can be used individually or in groups to create full tail plumage such as on a rooster, turkey, or peacock.



- Large Feather stencil (page 140) or *create your own*
- Button stencil (page 135) or *create your own*
- 1 or 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) felt in color(s) of choice
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials

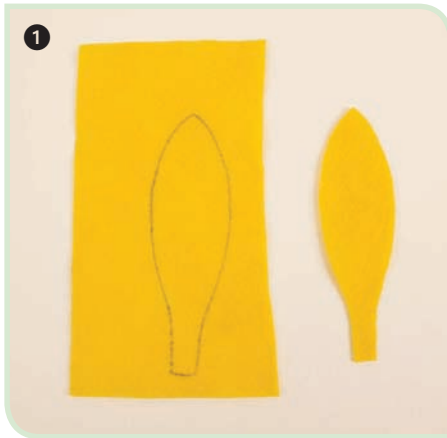
Directions

- 1 Trace the feather stencil onto felt. Cut out the shape(s).
- 2 **If gluing:** *Double* your feather by placing a line of hot glue down the center and adhering it to an unused portion of felt. Trim excess **(A)**. Add more glue between the two layers, but don't go all the way to the edges **(B)**. Make multiple diagonal cuts, fringing the edges. This will enhance the feathered look. **(C)** For multiple feathers, repeat steps as many times as needed.

If sewing: *Double* the feather by sewing around outer edge, attaching it to an unused portion of felt. Trim excess. Sew one long seam down the center of the feather. Tack at both ends. Sew multiple diagonal seams from the outer edge of the feather to the center seam, mimicking the veins in a real feather. Tack at both ends **(D)**.
- 3 Attach feathers to the puppet using a felt *button* (page 41). For a tail plume, make multiple feathers and attach to your puppet using a large button.

TIP

For a little pizzazz, try using a different color of felt for each layer.



FLIPPERS AND FINS

If you are making a fish, shark, dolphin, or sea lion, the most outstanding features are their flippers and fins. This means that adding them is essential to your design. Felt is a great material with which to form fins and flippers. If you are primarily gluing your sock puppet together, stiff felt and craft foam can also be used.

First, determine the shape and size of the animal's fins or flippers and create a stencil(s). More than one may be required as many fish and marine animals have side (pectoral), back (dorsal), and tail (fluke, caudal) fins. Techniques for attachment will vary depending upon the shape of the appendage and where it is being secured.





- Fin stencils (pages 141 and 142) *or make your own*
- 1 to 3 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt
- 1 or 2 sheets 9" × 6" (23 × 15.2 cm) decorative soft felt in color(s) of choice (optional)
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins

SMALL PECTORAL FINS USING THE BUTTON TECHNIQUE

Directions

- 1 Using a Small Fin Stencil, follow directions for "Making a Layered or Appliquéd Appendages" on page 38.
- 2 Add any decorative accouterment desired.
- 3 Use the *button* technique to attach to puppet (page 41).

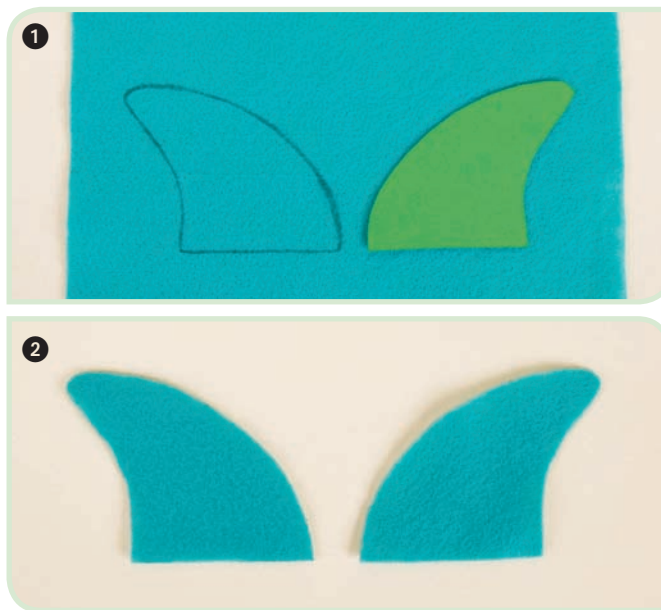


DORSAL AND LARGE PECTORAL FINS USING THE SPLIT TECHNIQUE

Directions

- 1 Trace the Dorsal Fin stencil onto felt. Flip the stencil and trace again.
- 2 Cut out both shapes.
- 3 **If gluing:** Line up the fin shapes. Place a line of glue all the way around the edge of one shape, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) at the bottom unglued. Adhere the shapes together **(A)**. *Optional:* Add decorative accouterment, if desired **(B)**. Put the puppet on your hand to determine placement. Mark with a straight pin **(C)**. *Split* (page 54) the unglued edge of the fin and add glue to both sides. Adhere to the puppet **(D)**. *Use caution: Once glued, it cannot be unglued!*

If sewing: *Optional:* Sew on decorative accouterment, if desired. Line up the fin shapes and pin together, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) at the bottom unpinned **(E)**. Sew the shapes together, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) at the bottom unsewn **(F)**. *Split* (page 54) the unsewn edge and pin both sides to the puppet **(G)**. Sew down on both sides. Tack stitches at each end **(H)**.
- 4 Repeat steps 1 through 3 for the Pectoral Fins, as needed.



TIP

To glue pectoral and dorsal fins made from stiff felt or craft foam,

1. Trace a stencil onto your preferred material.
2. Cut out the shape.
3. With the sock on your hand, determine and mark placement.
4. Add glue to the flat, bottom edge of the fin and adhere it to the puppet.



TAIL FINS AND FLIPPERS

Directions

❶ Using a Tail Fin stencil, follow directions for Doubled Appendages or Appliquéd Appendages (page 38).

❷ With the sock stretched flat on the work surface, align the tail fin so that the end just overlaps the opening of the sock. Pin in place.

❸ **If gluing:** Add a line of glue along the flat edge of the tail fin and adhere it to the sock **(A)**.

If sewing: Sew a seam along the flat edge of the tail fin, securing it to the sock **(B)**. *Use caution: Do not sew the sock together.* To prevent flopping, sew a second seam parallel to the first approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" (1.3 to 2.5 cm) down **(C)**.

❹ Add decorative accouterment, if desired.

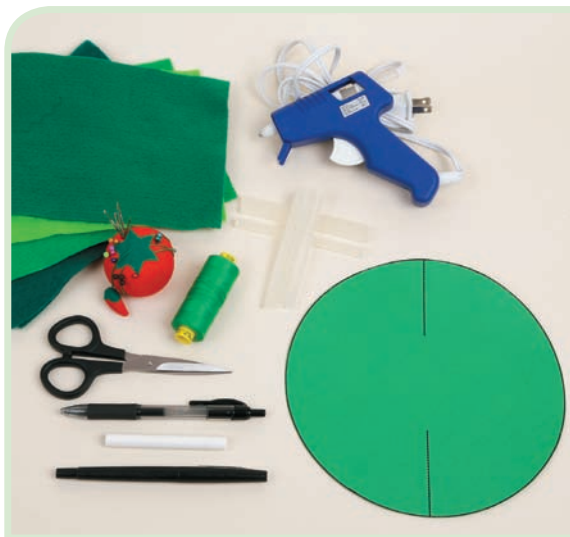


DOMESHELL

A basic dome-shaped shell for a turtle or a bug is relatively easy to make by either gluing or sewing soft felt to your sock. Changing the color and other decorative

elements will effectively alter this single method to fit a number of different animals and insects.

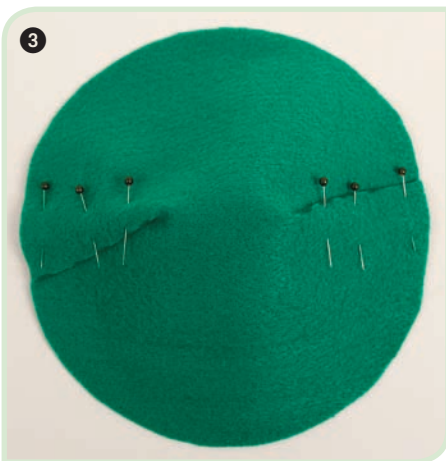
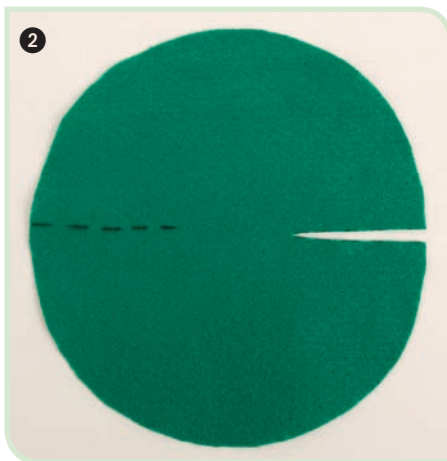




- Dome Shell stencil (page 142)
- 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) felt in color of choice for shell
- 1 to 3 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) felt for decorative elements (optional)
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- straight pins

Directions

- 1 Trace the shell stencil onto both sheets of felt. Cut out the shells.
- 2 On one shell only, draw the cut lines indicated on the stencil. Cut slits in the shell. This will be the top shell.
- 3 Overlap the slits approximately 1/4" (6 mm) and pin them together. Secure by sewing or with a thin line of glue.
- 4 *Optional:* Cut out your decorative elements and glue or sew them to the top shell.
- 5 *Optional:* If adding feet and/or tail, *double* the appendages (page 38) and glue or sew them to the underside of the top shell.
- 6 Place the top shell upside down on the work surface. Place the bottom shell, right side up, on top. Align the shells and carefully pin the edges together, leaving the spaces where your arm passes through unpinned, approximately 5 1/2" (14 cm) at either end.
- 7 Before gluing or sewing the edges together, put the sock on your arm and slide it into the shell to make sure it fits well. Adjust pins if necessary.
- 8 Remove your arm and carefully glue or sew the edges together, removing pins as you go. If gluing, stay close to the edges so as not to lose room inside the shell. If sewing, remember to close your seams at both ends.
- 9 Slip your arm with the sock back into the shell. If making a turtle, secure the top shell to the sock with a little glue or a short seam at the back center point where the shell meets the middle of the forearm. This will enable the turtle to pull his head into his shell. For other shelled creatures, secure at the *front* most center point where the shell meets the wrist.



LIMBS

Traditionally, on a sock puppet the majority of detail is added to the head and face because this is what is most visible during performance and play. Additionally, a sock puppet is relatively small with limited space for decorating, so you want to choose your features carefully. The best time to add appendages such as legs, feet, or claws is when the addition is needed to help visually reinforce what type of animal you are making. For example, if you are constructing a frog that doesn't have much detail on its head or body, adding its distinctively springy legs will help make your puppet look that much more like a frog. Many birds share similar attributes, but their feet are often different. For example, adding webbed feet to a duck or claws to a chicken will help distinguish these birds from one another.

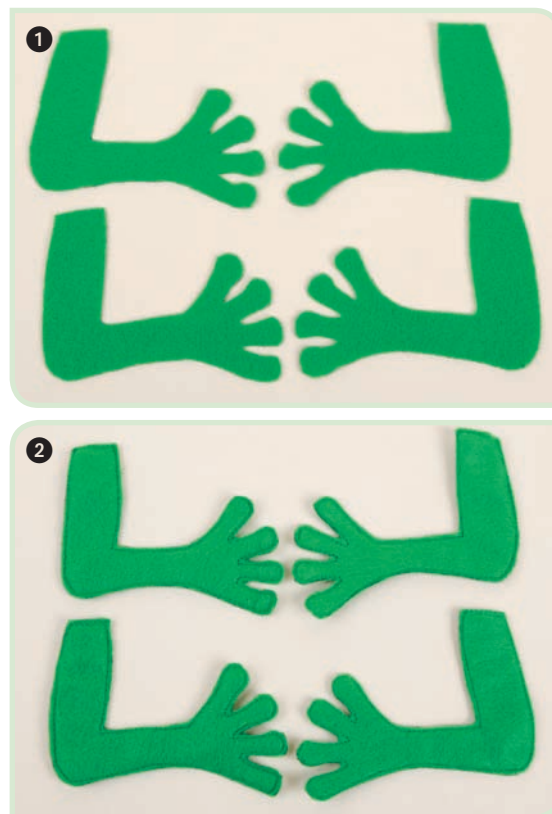


JOINTED LIMBS

We are demonstrating this method with a frog leg; however, you can make many different types of animal legs by creating a stencil that suits your needs. This method also utilizes the doubled appendage and *button* techniques (pages 38 and 42).



- Frog Leg stencil (page 141) or Duck Leg stencil (page 143) or *create your own*
- 2 sheets 9" × 12" (23 × 30.5 cm) soft felt in color(s) of choice
- chalk, pen, or fine marker
- sharp craft scissors
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- sewing materials
- stickpins



Directions

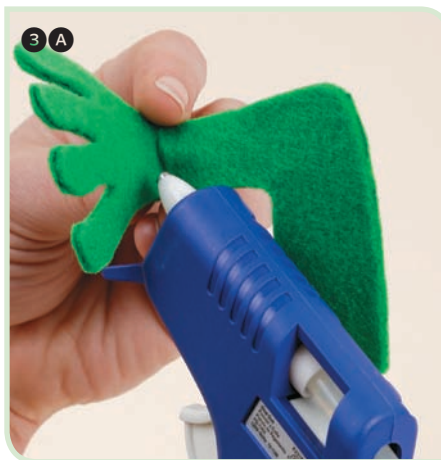
- 1 Trace the stencil onto felt twice. Flip and trace again twice so you have four separate pieces. Cut out all four pieces.
- 2 *Double* the legs by placing them ink side down and gluing or sewing them to an unused portion of felt (feel free to use different color felt for this second layer, if desired). Trim excess.

(Continued)

- 3 If gluing:** Locate the ankle and place a thin line of glue horizontally across the front **(A)**. Fold the leg forward at the ankle, creating a horizontal crease. Hold in place while the glue dries. Repeat this step for the remaining legs **(B)**. Locate the knee and place a thin line of glue diagonally on the *back* **(C)**. Fold the leg backward, creating a diagonal crease at the knee. Hold in place while the glue dries **(D)**. Repeat this step for the remaining legs.

If sewing: Fold the leg forward at the ankle, creating a horizontal crease. Pin in place **(E)**. Sew a seam along the crease **(F)**. Repeat this step for the remaining legs. Fold the leg *backward* at the knee, creating a diagonal crease. Pin in place **(G)**. Sew a diagonal seam along the crease **(H)**. Repeat this step for the remaining legs.

- 4** Put the sock on your hand and determine placement locations. Mark with stickpins.
- 5** Use the *button* technique (page 41) to attach the legs to the puppet.



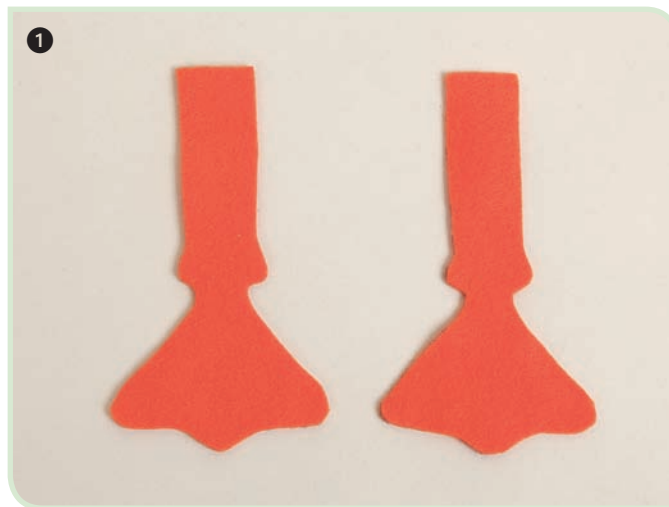


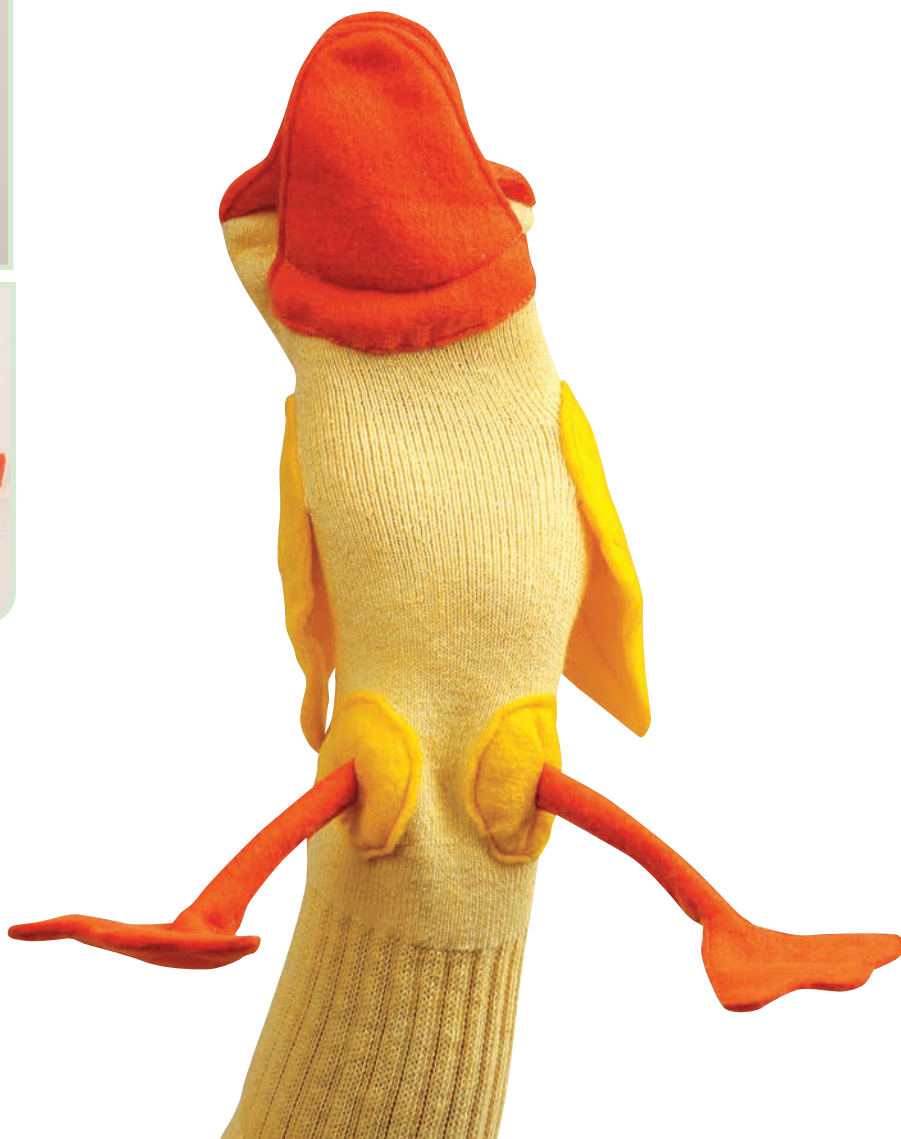
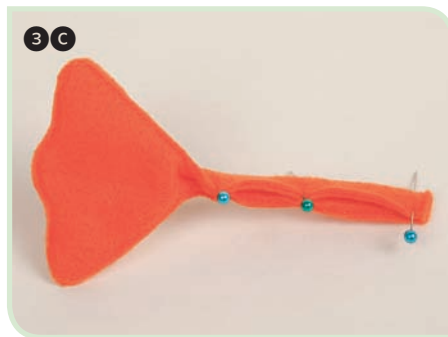
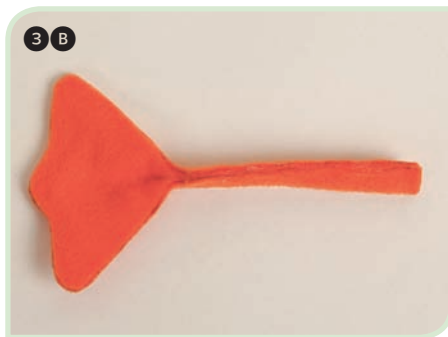
UNJOINTED LIMBS

Limbs made using this technique do not have joints; however, their hollow, or folded, nature gives them a distinctly three-dimensional appearance. This method works particularly well for making a variety of bird legs.

Directions

- 1 Trace the stencil onto felt. Flip the stencil and trace a second time so you have two legs. Cut out both legs.
- 2 *Double* the legs by placing them ink side down and gluing or sewing them to an unused portion of felt. Trim excess.
- 3 **If gluing:** Fold the legs in half lengthwise (**A**). Beginning just above the foot, slowly add glue to a folded leg, holding it closed as the glue dries. Continue adding glue until the leg is completely glued together (**B**). Repeat with the other leg. Once dry, use sharp scissors to carefully trim any excess glue.
- If sewing:** Fold the legs in half lengthwise. Pin in place (**C**). Sew a seam from the top of one leg to where the leg meets the foot. Tack stitches at both ends (**D**). Repeat for the other leg.
- 4 Put the sock on your hand to determine placement. Mark with stickpins.
- 5 Use the *button* technique (page 41) to attach the legs to the puppet.





Gallery

AFTER LEARNING THE METHODS presented in the preceding chapters, you will have all the tools necessary to create any sock puppet animal design you can conceive. The *doubled* and *appliqué* techniques will serve nicely as the foundation on which to build all manner of body parts, appendages, and accessories. The varied attachment methods will secure them nicely to your sock puppet. Take stock in your new collection of stencils. Don't be afraid to modify them, and definitely add to them. They will take you anywhere you want to go in the universe of sock puppet design!

Initially, you were encouraged to explore the basic, most defining characteristics of your subject, to capture its essential elements for translation. As you become more confident in your abilities, you can begin to play with bigger and bolder ideas. Add more details, experiment with color, and seek out interesting materials, always keeping in perspective the need to retain the functionality of the puppet and the “essence” of the sock.

Look for subjects that lend themselves to sock puppet design, and then play with making them your own. Push the limits of your imagination by spontaneously

combining features. Wildlife photography and records of extinct animals can be fabulous hunting grounds for subjects to turn into sock puppets.

To successfully achieve more elaborate designs, you will need to use a combination of techniques and delve more deeply into the use of decorative elements. The best feature additions will do both, by adding detail while also serving a practical purpose in the puppet's construction.

Shaggy Terrier

The extra use of shaggy fur gives this pup a look distinctive from many other sock puppets. Sewing around the perimeter of the fur only and avoiding glue helps maintain the sock puppet's flexibility. The intense terrier personality comes through button eyes standing at attention, while the natural folds add a bit of playfulness. Accents include a long felt tongue and a medium-length faux fur tail that serves to reinforce the shagginess of this dog.



Zebra

Purple and white tie-dye in asymmetrical stripes gives this puppet a unique pattern with fantasy flair. A soulful personality is indicated through the use of eyes with heavy lids with lashes. The lush, two-tone mane is achieved by alternating colors of small faux fur rectangles. A simple, braided-yarn tail attached with a button completes the purple and white camouflage effect.



Bumblebee

The distinctive coloration is achieved with black on yellow tie-dye in a symmetrical, striped pattern. A photograph serves as the example from which to render the specific wing shape. The appearance of veins on the wings is achieved by stitching seams in white-on-white doubled felt, and the bouncy antennae are thin strips of craft foam hot glued to the back of small pop-up eyes.



Monkey

Split ears placed on either side of the head, rounded features, and hands are descriptive of this funny animal's distinctively humanoid appearance. The arms are made using a doubled limb, modified by inserting a chenille stem between the felt layers. A chenille stem has also been added to lend curve and flexibility to the long tail that utilizes the stuffed felt technique. The whole design is brought to completion with a fluffy, faux fur mane that wraps around the monkey's head.



Triceratops

The felt head frill is made using the *doubled* technique. The appliquéd stripes add strength, depth, and definition. These techniques, combined with added seams, give the frill its curve as well as the ability to stand up, away from the head. Using the *button* technique, the larger horns are stuffed and pulled through a single rectangular piece of felt made in the same color as the frill, creating the illusion of one continuous appendage. The tail is a modified, extra-long version of the *stuffed tail* technique. The beak is made using an altered duckbill stencil. It serves a dual purpose in that it is also supporting the horn in place of a button. The use of large, overstuffed parts creates the illusion of a very heavy, massive animal without taking away from the sock or the flexibility of the puppet.



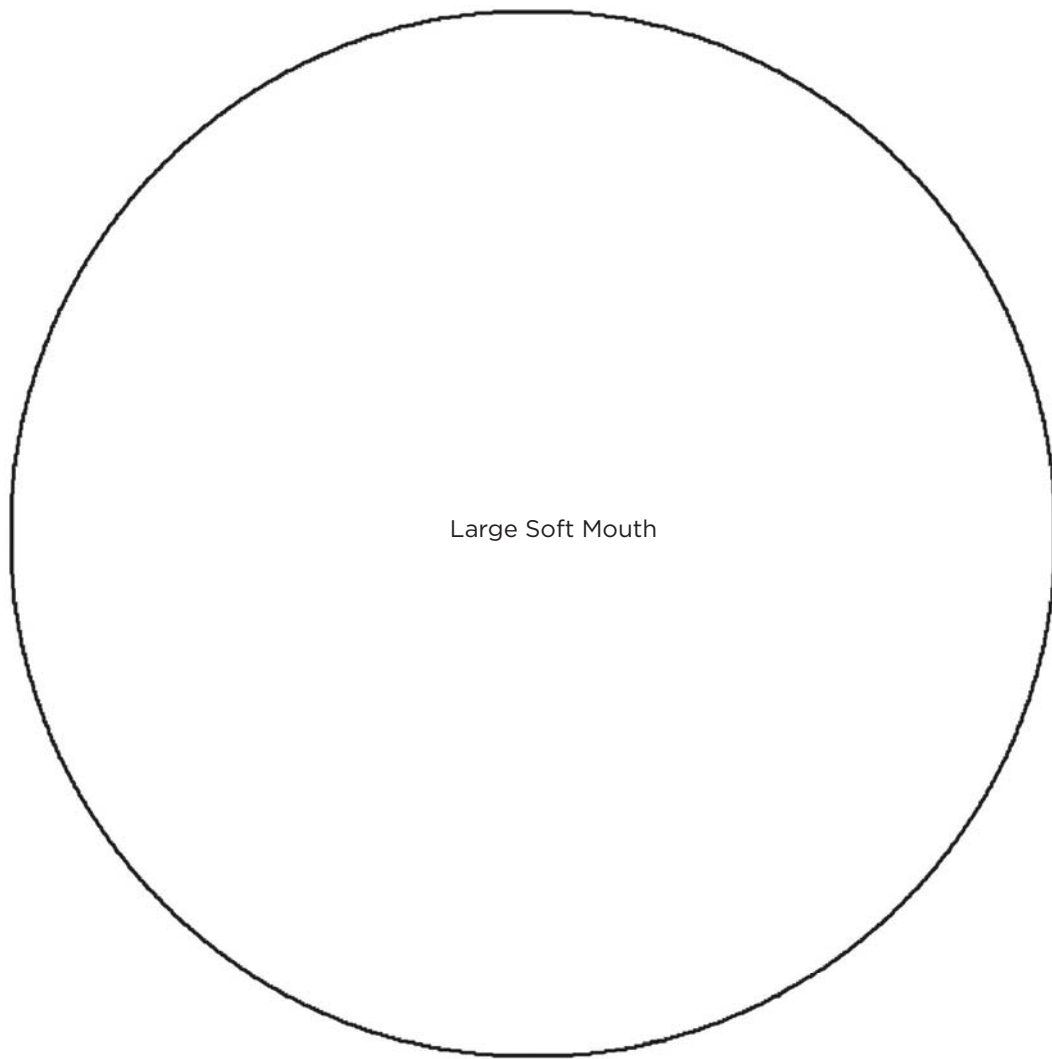
Bat

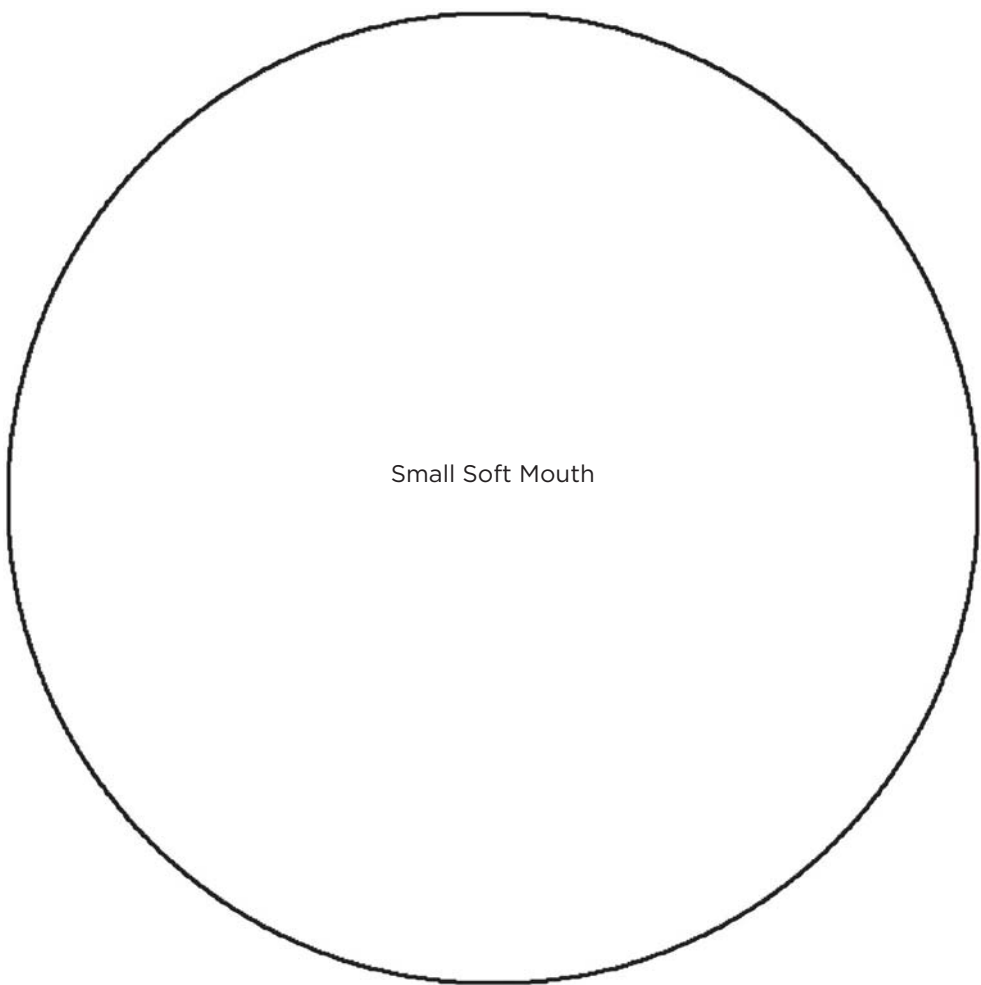
The wings are made using the *doubled* technique with an appliqué design. This not only adds color but also serves to strengthen the wing and helps it remain outstretched, giving the appearance of flight. The extra seams lend a gentle curve, so they can also fold inward to appear at rest. The pop-up eyes are modified, using a smaller $\frac{5}{8}$ " (1.6 cm) felt circle and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (7 mm) acrylic pompom. The whole design is coordinated by appliquéing the tiny button ears with blue felt to match the wing stripes.

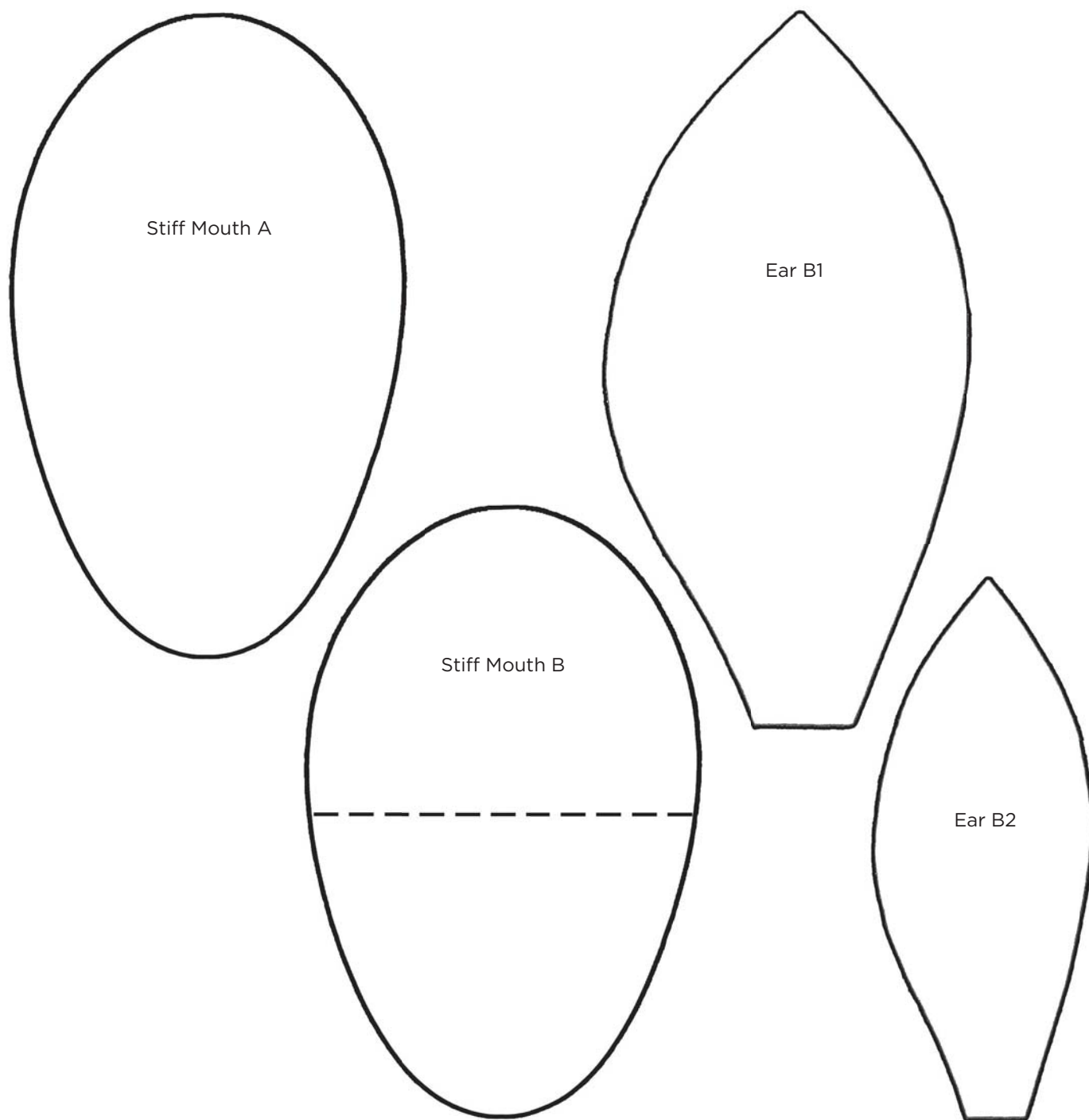


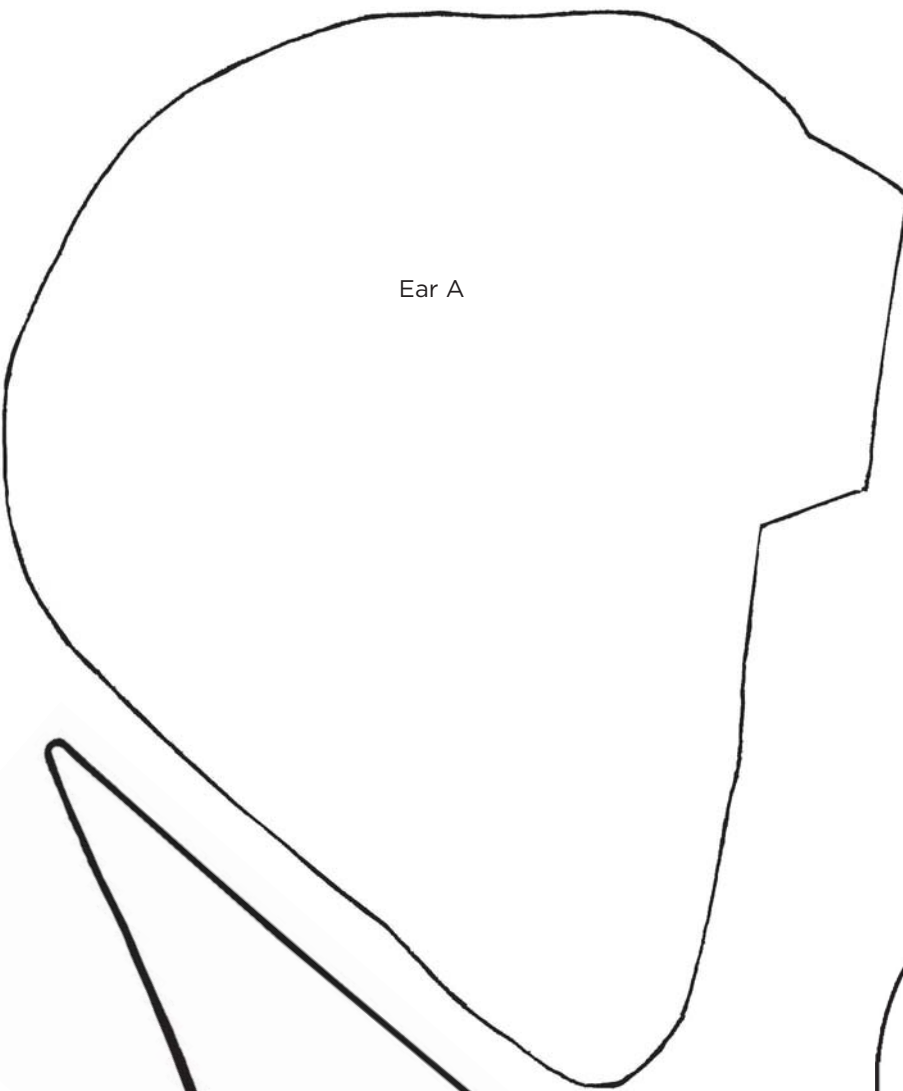


Stencils

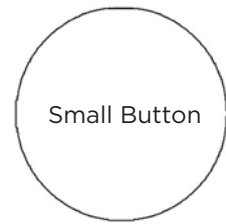




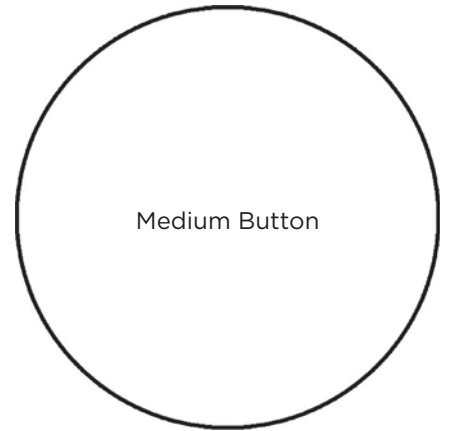




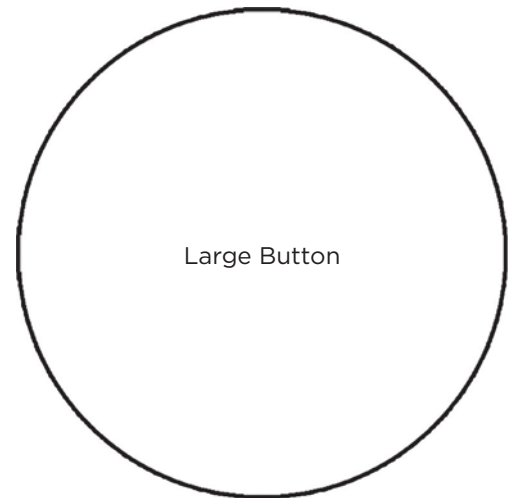
Ear A



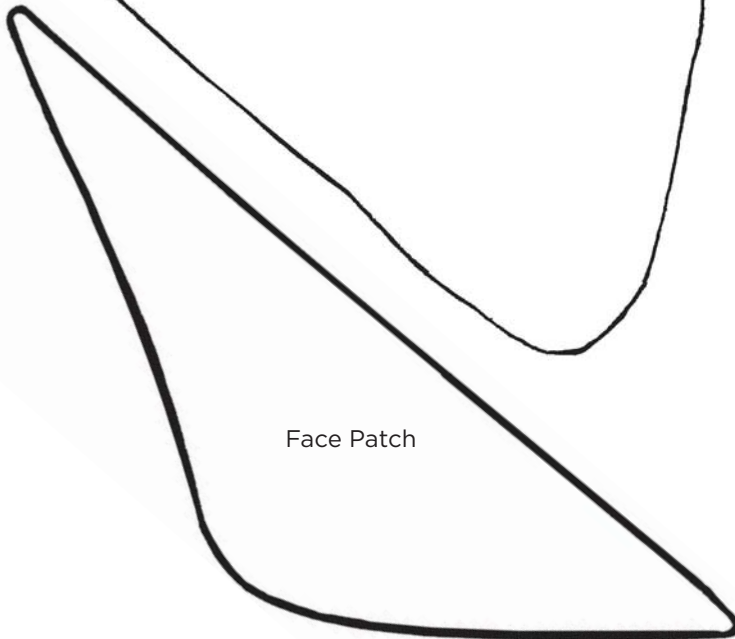
Small Button



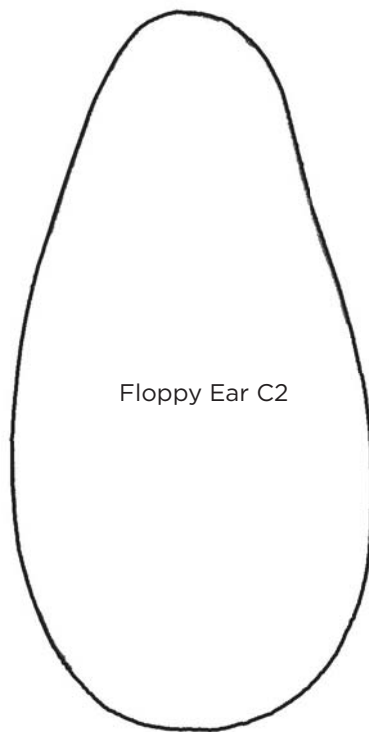
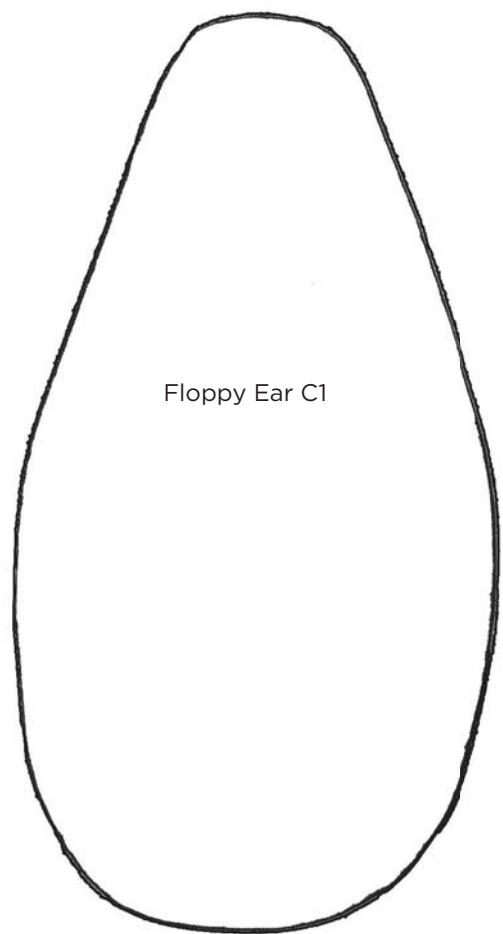
Medium Button

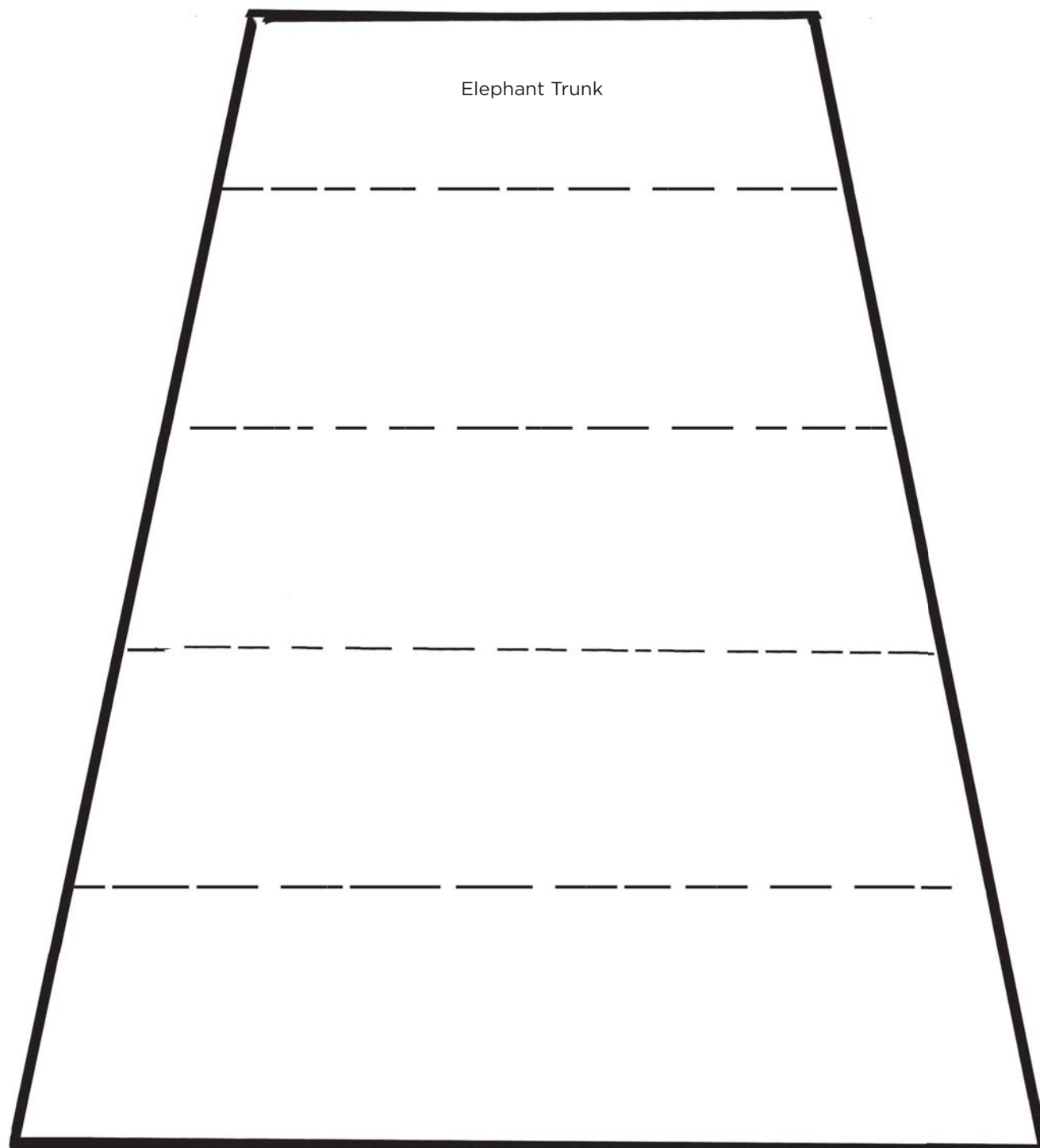


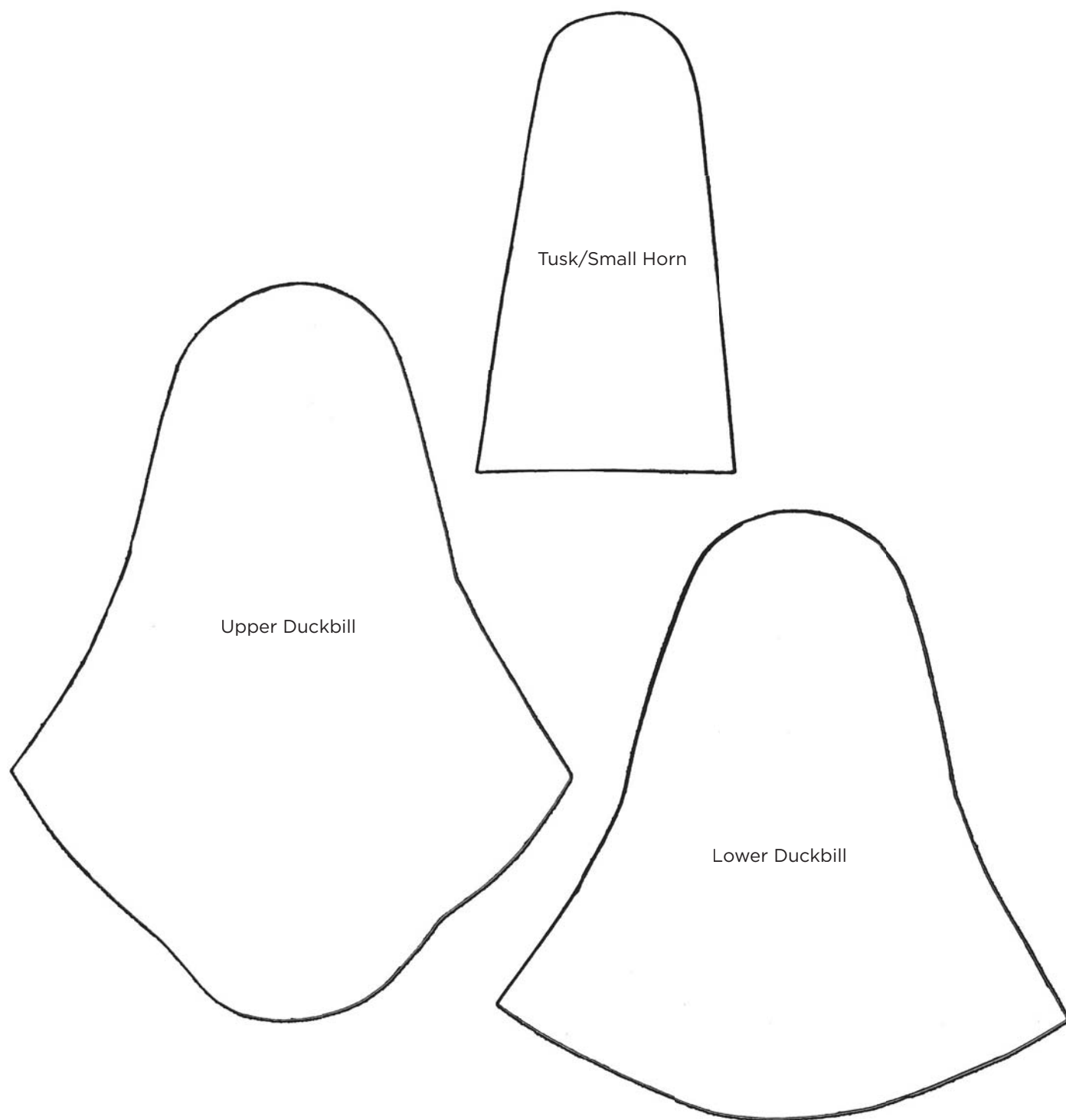
Large Button

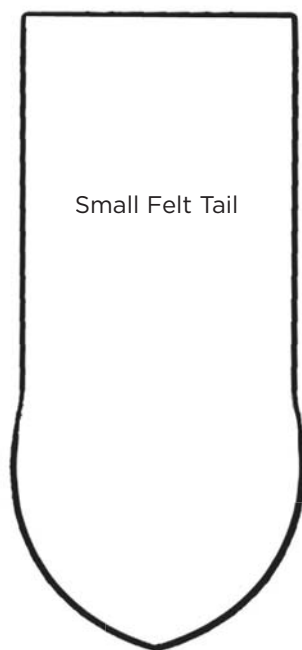


Face Patch

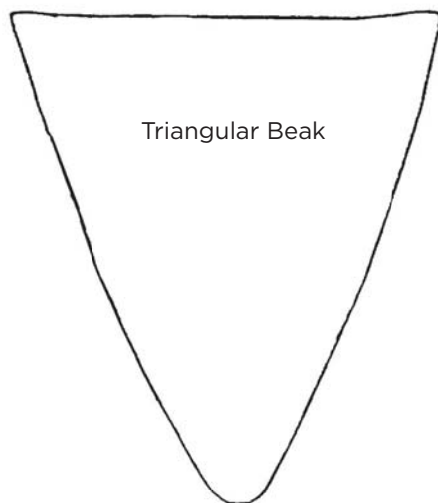




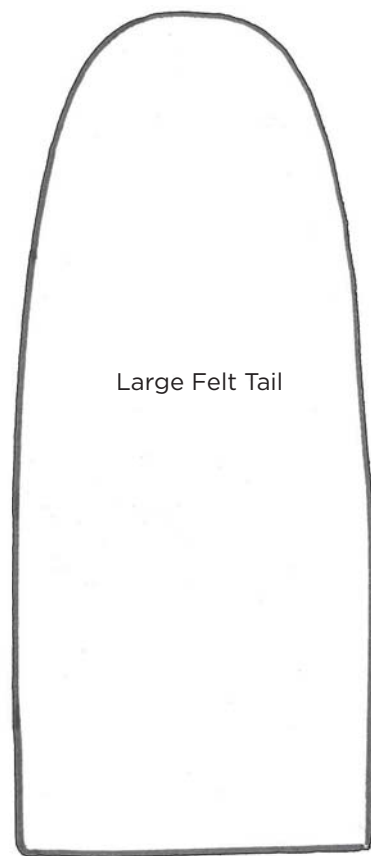




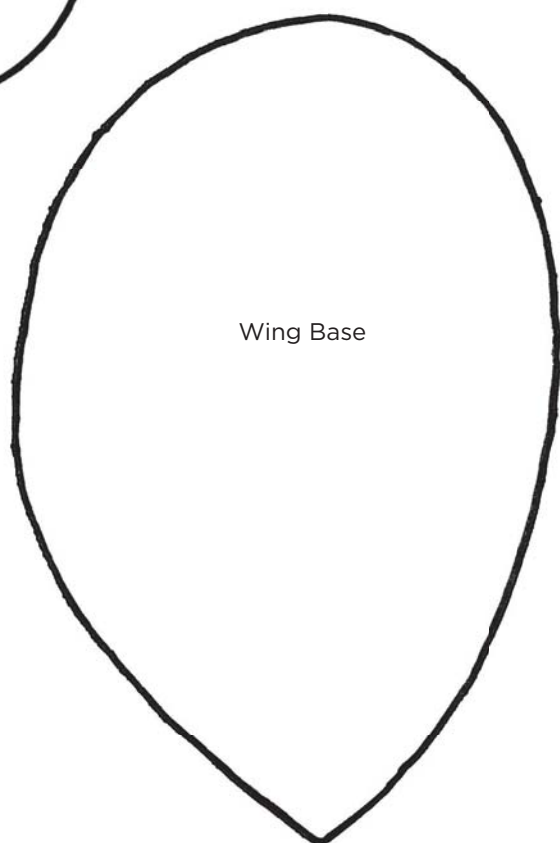
Small Felt Tail



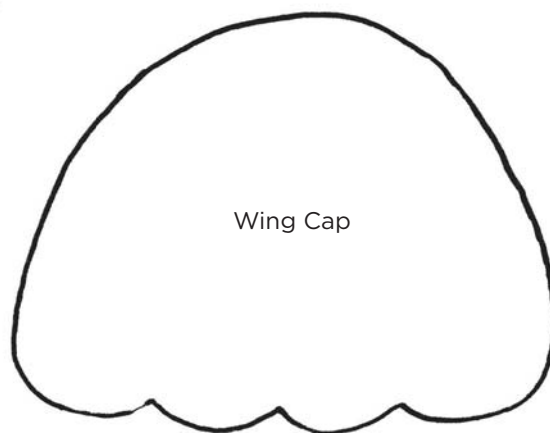
Triangular Beak



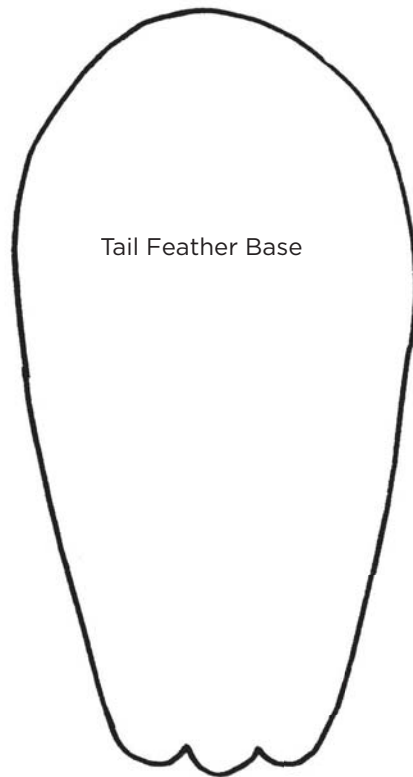
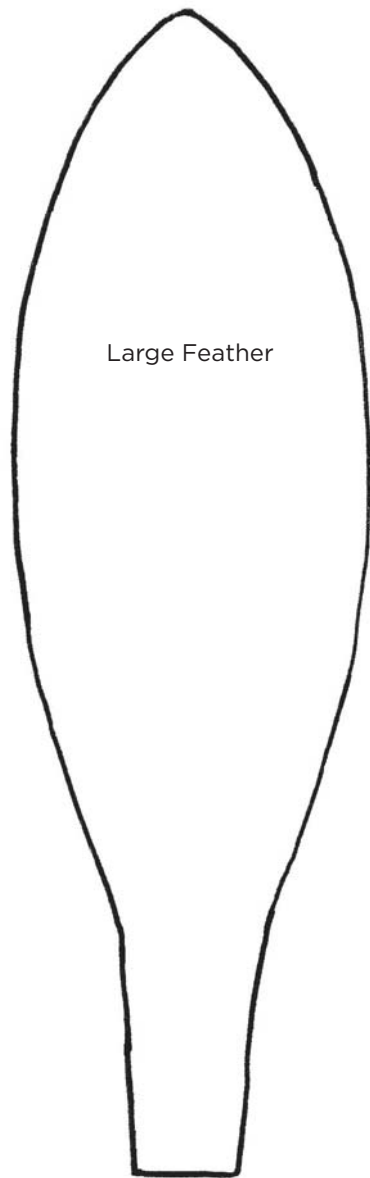
Large Felt Tail

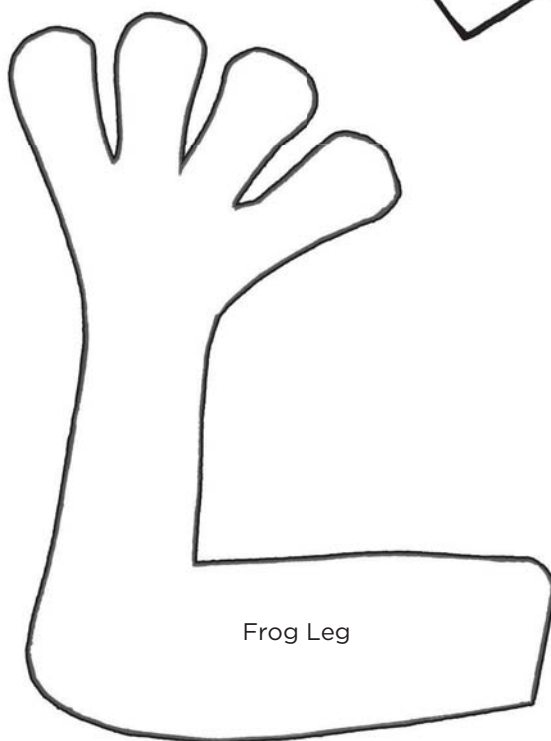
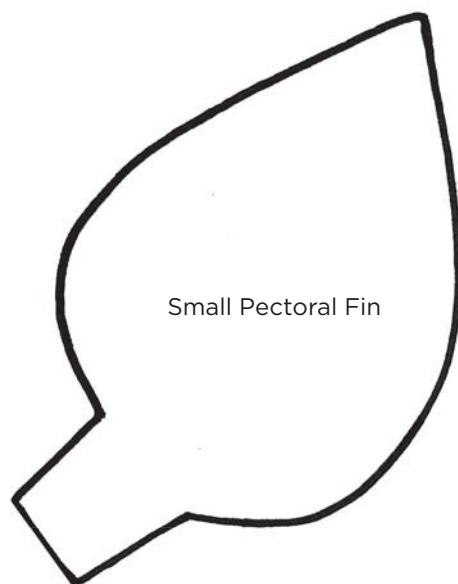
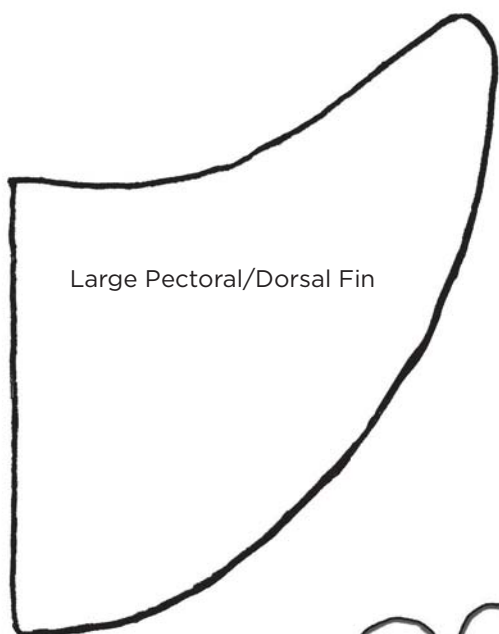


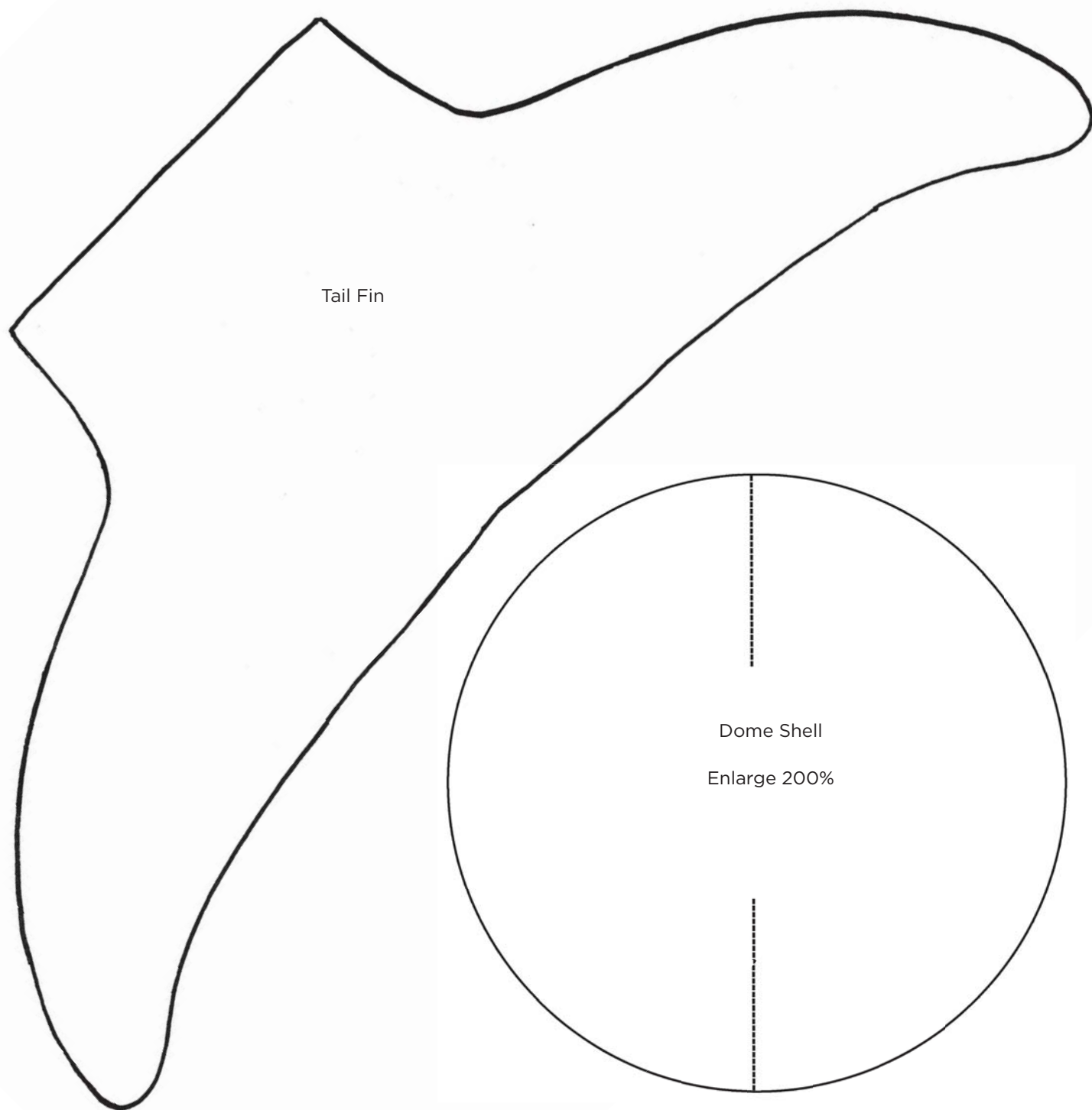
Wing Base

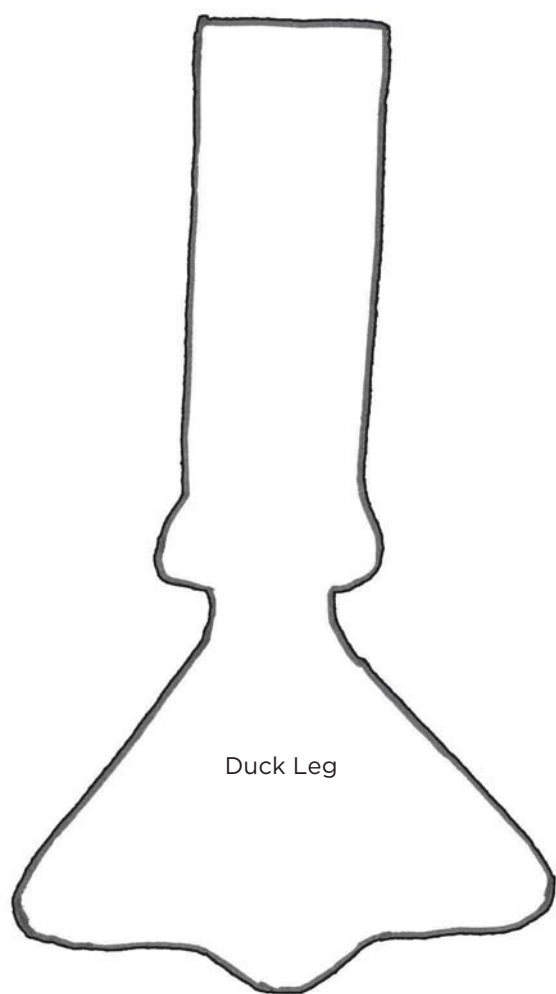


Wing Cap

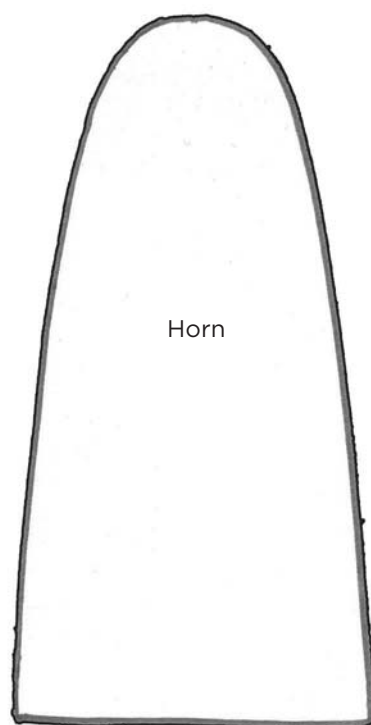








Duck Leg



Horn

About the Authors

TIGER KANDEL is a multi-media artist and educator. She has an MS in art therapy and a BA in art history and child development. Tiger has designed and implemented numerous art workshops and puppet-making techniques for educational, recreational, and therapeutic venues. At times, she conducts professional development workshops educating others in her original methods of teaching puppet making and three-dimensional art to regular and special needs populations.

HEATHER SCHLOSS has an MS in art therapy and a BA in costume and theater design. A multimedia artist and designer, Heather is well versed in folk art, costuming, mask making, and puppet design and has incorporated her experiences in the theater and her knowledge of design history to create the highly detailed and fanciful look of Socketts®. She began developing educational art activities for preschool and kindergarten children while working in early childhood centers in Vermont and New York.

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