

When we needed puppets to do a skit at our church’s vacation bible school, I searched online. I quickly found that purchasing the number of puppets needed would not be practical (especially when you add in shipping and handling fees). No problem, I thought, somebody’s got to know how to make these things. Besides people post countless “How To” articles about things that are much simpler. All I’d have to do is track down a site that could teach me how. Much to my surprise, I couldn’t find one. I found a lot of sites showing me how to make a “hand puppet” that didn’t have a working mouth and was only 8-10” tall. That wouldn’t meet our needs and certainly fell short of my hopes.

I wound up purchasing an eBook on the subject for a reasonable price, and was disappointed at the (lack of) quality. After some trial and error, wasted material and serious thinking, I figured out how to make them my own way. Now I would like to share what I’ve learned with you FOR FREE. My goal is that these instructions would be very detailed and thorough so that someone who is just beginning to sew or who has very basic sewing skills could make their own puppet. Youth and children’s ministries tend to have tight budgets, but I haven’t known them to lack willing, creative people. So, if you're looking at the task of making a puppet and thinking you don't have "what it takes" to make one, then I'd like to take you up on that challenge. I think you can! Aside from having prepared a materials/tools needed list, as well as 5 pages of exhaustive step-by-step instructions, I've included printable patterns with instructions on them, and over 50 full color actual photographs that I took during the process of making a puppet.

Don't be overwhelmed by the amount of "directions" there are. I'm preparing this in hopes that a 12 year old girl will be able to complete her own puppet with minimal assistance. I know how confused I was reading the eBook I purchased; it gave me an equal amount of questions as it did answers. If I hadn't had any sewing experience in the first place, it would have resulted in considerably more wasted material and frustrating evenings. I do not want this to be the case for people who come across my instructions, so, in short, I over-simplified them.

After you've made your first puppet, you'll find that if you make another, it will likely take you half the time and you'll only glance at the directions as a reference. Even though the process may seem like a hassle, keep in mind, properly handled, your puppet will last for years and bring multitudes of smiles to people's faces.

The finished puppet will have a working mouthpiece, arms allowing puppeteers to create gestures, will be approximately 16" tall (from top of head to bottom of body),

and will allow for a youth or medium adult hand to fit comfortably inside. (I say a medium adult hand because when my husband goes to use these puppets, which he can & does, he does stretch the felt slightly when pushing his fist through the neck opening. This is nothing to be concerned about; felt has a lot of “give” to it & as long as you have secure, strong seam work, it will have no impact on your puppet’s “lifespan.”) You will need the following to make one puppet:

Materials:

- 1/2 yard cream (antique white), tan, OR brown felt for puppet’s skin: You may use other colors if you choose, these would be the more ‘natural’ options. Craft felt is sold by the yard in most large craft stores. You could use 7 (9x11”) individual felt squares, but these may not be available in the color(s) you desire.
- 1 (8x10” or 9x11”) squares black felt: for puppet’s mouth & other features
- 1 (8x10” or 9x11”) square of felt that either matches or compliments your puppet’s skin color: For example, if you do not have the exact same color, you could use white felt if your puppet’s skin is cream, yellow, peach, etc. and black, brown or tan felt with darker skin colors. The purpose for this piece of felt is to cover the inside portion of the mouthpiece. Although this felt will not be directly visible, if you use a black felt under a cream colored skin, you will be able to detect the darker color under the skin because felt, especially when stretched, does allow some light through.
- 1 piece (*at least 4x4”*) red felt: for puppet’s tongue
- 1 piece (*at least 4x4”*) white felt for puppet’s eyes OR one pair 1½” or bigger plastic ‘googly’ eyes
- 1 (8x8”) piece of stiff cardboard to form the puppet’s mouth: can be solid or corrugated cardboard, use a section from a sturdy card board box. Do not use thin/flimsy ‘carton’ type that is used for cereal boxes, notebook covers, etc. It isn’t durable or thick enough.
- 1 bag of Polyester Stuffing: If you already have polyester batting on hand, that can be pulled into pieces & used as well.

Following Materials are Optional, but Recommended

Yarn or Faux Fur: Hair adds personality to your puppet. Large chain craft stores often sell a variety of colors/textures of yarn as well as faux furs that work well as hair. Faux furs are expensive, however, they are usually priced per yard. Check with a clerk to see what the minimum purchase is (you may be able to purchase less than ¼ yd) or if they have remnants for sale. While yarn is readily available in countless colors, faux furs are much easier to secure to your puppet’s head. Yarn can be used to make pigtails, ponytails, braids or buns. If you’re using yarn, you will probably need to have

some rubber bands.

1 or 2 of each: ($\frac{1}{4}$ " x 3') Dowel Rods and Small Eye-Screws: These will allow you to move your puppet's arm(s) while remaining out of view behind your puppet stage. Gestures such as waving to the audience, placing hand in front of the mouth as though yawning, and scratching the top of the head will help your puppet seem more lifelike & interact better with others.

Tools/Supplies:

Access to a Printer: You will need to print the patterns included in these directions.

Scissors: Sharp scissors will make this *much* easier. I would not recommend using children's school-sized scissors.

Box Cutter/Exacto Knife: Not essential, but helpful in acquiring & scoring cardboard for mouth.

Needle & Thread: Puppets can entirely hand sewn OR by machine with minimal hand sewing. You can get thread to match your puppet's skin color if you like, but it's not necessary.

Small Box of Straight Pins

Marker(s): Preferably washable, with various colors, however an ordinary ballpoint or felt-tip pen would work

Hot Glue Gun with a Full pkg. of Glue Sticks: It would be easy to underestimate the amount of hot glue it takes to hold a puppet together, make sure you have a large supply of glue sticks- *at least* 20 sticks if you're using a mini glue gun.

Card board from an empty toilet paper or paper towel roll: optional, but *very* helpful in attaching arms to the body.

Clear or Masking Tape: optional; only a few pieces to help you decide where you want to put features before gluing them on.

Seam Ripper: optional, but may come in handy if you find you need to correct some sewing.

Ready to Begin?

If you've gathered the necessary materials & tools/supplies, here's the next step:

A. Prepare your puppet body pattern:

1. Print all 3 of the pattern pages included at the end of these instructions. You can use black ink on plain white letter-sized ($8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11") paper. Please check your printer settings and make sure they are set to print on letter (8 1/2x11") paper. Make sure the orientation is set to "portrait" and change the margins to the smallest allowable value. (The fastest way to do this would be to type in "0" for

the margins at the top, bottom, left & right. You should receive an alert message pointing out that "one or more of your margins are set outside the printable area" and you can opt to "fix" them.) Due to variations in the printable area of different printers, each pattern page has a "Center Reference Line" printed in gray. Fold the paper on this line. If it is perfectly centered (which is possible) then continue. If the edges & corners do not match up evenly, cut off any excess on the longer side (*remember to do this for all of your pattern pages*) before continuing. This will ensure the symmetry of your puppet. [A1]

2. Cut along the solid black lines of each pattern (see notes on each page). At a few locations there will be a blank space (called the margin) between the "cut" lines & the edge of your paper, but just continue cutting the line as though it extended to the edge of the paper. This will be at the bottom of your puppet's body, at your puppet's neck, and on the end of each of the arms. [A2]
3. Cut out a 18 x 11" rectangle¹ of skin-colored felt. Fold it in half to make a 9 x 11" rectangle that is 2 layers thick. Press the layers firmly together & be sure that edges & corners are matched up. Set your felt on a hard surface with the folded edge on the left side. Lay your Body Pattern on top and secure it with straight pins, making sure to go through both layers of felt. [A3] Cut the felt to be the same shape as the pattern. Cut as closely to where the "cut lines" of your pattern were as possible without cutting into or under your Body Pattern (then it would be too small). [A3a]
4. Use a marker (preferably washable & a color only slightly darker than the felt, such as yellow for white felt, orange for cream & lighter tans, black for darker browns) to draw lines marking where the Arm Openings will be on the felt body.
5. Sew along the edges of the body where the * appear,² leaving about ¼" space between your stitches and the cut edge of your felt. You may leave the paper Body Pattern on & sew right through it (it will rip off easily when you're done) or you can take the pattern off & set it aside to use as a reference. One disadvantage to leaving the paper on is that you might not be able to see if the under layer(s) of felt shift or wrinkle. Also it won't be as easy to stitch close to the edge, leaving you with a smaller puppet. Be careful not to sew across the arm openings, across the neck opening or the bottom.
6. When you've completed the sewing for your body, remove the straight pins & Body Pattern (if you haven't already) and carefully cut a slit³ for the arm opening in the fold of the felt. Use your marker lines and the Body Pattern as a guide. Do NOT cut

¹ If you are using 9x11" felt squares, simply place two of them tightly together & proceed.

² If you are using individual felt squares, you will have to sew along both sides of your puppet's body. If you used one piece that was folded, you will only need to sew the right side of your puppet's body; see note on Body Pattern.

³ Skip this if you are using individual felt squares.

into the puppet body, rather cut in line with the crease so that it looks the same as the existing arm opening. [A6]

B. Prepare your puppet's head & arms patterns:

1. For the Head & Arms Patterns: Set 2 layers of skin-colored felt on a hard surface. Lay your pattern on top and secure it with straight pins, making sure to go through both layers of felt. [B1] Cut the felt to be the same shape as the pattern. Cut as closely to where the “cut lines” of your pattern were as possible without cutting into or under your pattern. On the head you will not cut the mouth slit yet [B1a]; for the Arms Pattern you will not cut between the fingers yet. Once you've cut out both arms (a total of 4 pieces of felt), arrange them in a neat pile and trim the end of the arms to the same length if necessary. (They turn out different lengths because most printers have a greater margin on the bottom of pages than on the tops.) Use your marker to draw lines marking where the various openings and cut lines (see notes on each Pattern) will be on the felt.
2. Sew along the edges of the felt & wherever the * appear. [B2] You will sew the entire arm & hand before cutting the fingers apart. This is much easier than trying to keep the fingers lined up and sew them as close to the edge as possible. Also, note that your puppet only has 4 fingers, not 5, which is standard for this type of puppet. I was curious about this & tried making a puppet with 5 fingers- don't bother. Instead of being less distracting it was more distracting. Puppets' fingers are simply too wide to proportionally allow them to have 5 fingers without having to make a very large puppet to match the hands.
3. When you've completed sewing the head & arms, carefully cut the fingers apart [B3] & make the slit for the mouth opening [B3a], being sure not to cut into your stitching. When you cut the slit for the mouth, it is particularly important to make it a single smooth cut into the fabric. Other cuts you make are generally sewn around & then turned inside out, this will not be the case with the mouth. The edge of the felt will be glued onto the mouthpiece forming lips, so you won't want it to be choppy. Do not turn any of the felt puppet pieces right-side out yet (the seams should be visible to you).

C. Attach your puppets head & arms:

1. Lay your puppet body flat in front of you. Match one arm with the arm opening on

the body. If the arm opening isn't exactly the same size⁴ on the body as it is on the end of the arm, do not worry. Felt has a little bit of “give” to it. Gently stretch the smaller opening with your hands until it matches the other one. Place an empty paper towel or toilet paper roll inside the body, sticking half way out the arm slit. Then slide the opening of the arm over the exposed cardboard until it meets the edge of the body felt. [C1] Double check that your thumbs are pointed up, line up the edges and pinch them together upward (toward yourself) as you sew. [C1a] Carefully hand stitch the arms onto the arm openings. using small stitches that are close together. Your puppet will be moving his/her arms a lot, and we wouldn't want any stuffing to escape! If you are not using cardboard to hold your felt open, make sure you don't accidentally go through too many layers of felt. The arm opening needs to remain accessible through the body so that you can stuff it later. Follow the same procedure to attach the remaining arm.

2. You need to place your hand inside the body and reposition it so that it is laying flat with the seams on both sides of the neck matched up and the material creased at the front and back of the body. Imagine you were positioning your puppet to lay on his side so that his shoulder were facing up toward yourself. Line the head (laying flat) up with the neck opening. [C2] Sew them together in the same way you attached the arms. Start at the back of your puppet's head (the side without the mouth slit, there head seam should be centered on the back of the neck). [C2a] This way if you have sewn most of the way around & realize that there will be a wrinkle or pucker that is unavoidable, it will be in the back of the puppet rather than the front.

D. Prepare your puppet's mouthpiece:

1. Draw or trace (*see if you have a bowl, lid, plate or coffee can the right size*) a circle with approximately a 7" diameter on the piece of cardboard you will use for a mouthpiece. It doesn't matter if the cardboard has printing on it or gets marked up, it will be covered in felt. Use a good scissor to cut out the circle, being sure to make the edges as smooth & rounded as possible. Measure the diameter of your circle & put a short line in the center. Then measure again, perpendicular to your

⁴ If there is a significant difference in size, such as $\frac{3}{4}$ " or more, examine the parts you have to see which one is in error. If the opening on the body is too large, simply stitch along the side until the opening remaining is the appropriate size. If the end of the arm opening is too large, you will need to gradually reduce the arm size by sewing at an angle inside the existing stitching (see note on photo). If one opening was mistakenly made considerably too small, use a seam ripper to remove the stitching & create the proper size opening. Be sure to retie any thread that you snip so that the remaining portion of your stitching won't unravel! Generally you should be able to simply stretch the fabric, however, if there is an arm opening that is too small to even allow for turning the garment inside out or filling it with stuffing, then it may need to be redone.

first measurement, find the center & draw a line completely across your circle. [D1]

2. Score the mouthpiece [D2] (make a very shallow cut; do not go even half the depth of the cardboard) along the line. Fold the cardboard along the line a few times. [D2a] This is your puppet’s mouthpiece. Lay it flat & hot glue a piece of black felt onto the inside (the side that isn’t visible when the mouthpiece is folded closed) and a piece of felt complimenting or matching⁵ your puppet’s skin color to the other side. Use generous amounts of hot glue. I would recommend using something (the back of a spoon, or even hold a scrap of cardboard in your hand) to push down & smooth any bumps in the glue while it is still hot. [D2b] Allow it to cool & then cut the excess felt off from around the circle. Check the edges of the felt and add additional glue as needed to keep the felt tightly against the cardboard in all places. Keep the scraps of black felt for later use.

Keep up the hard work!

Your puppet’s beginning to take shape!

E. Begin Stuffing!

1. Carefully turn your puppet right-side-out. Using the blunt end of a pen or pencil may be useful to very gently turn the fingers right-side-out. Push stuffing into each finger & hand, filling them enough to give them shape & ‘plump’ them out. Do not over-stuff so that they are firm & rigid; you will need a majority of your stuffing for the puppet’s head. Fill the arm about half way up, until you reach where the puppet’s elbow would be. Leave a small gap in the stuffing & make 2-3 stitches through both layers of the felt to create a bending point. [E1] The stitches will help keep the stuffing from shifting so your puppet’s arm will more readily bend. Continue to fill the arms until you reach where they meet the body.
2. Puff open & put generous amounts of stuffing into the top of the head. [E2] When it holds its shape well, you are ready to put in the mouthpiece. Bend your puppet’s mouthpiece a few times before placing it inside your puppet. Ideally it should rest in a 90° or less angle. Your mouthpiece will get less stiff with use. Slide the mouthpiece up into the head & position it behind the opening. [E2a]

F. Install your puppet’s mouthpiece:

1. Check to see if the slit for the mouth opening has been cut far enough. You will

⁵ See the note following this item under the “Material List.”

want the corner or your mouthpiece to have $\frac{1}{4}$ " of skin colored felt stretched across it [F1] so that you can fold it over and glue it down. If necessary, equally snip a little more on each side to lengthen the opening. [F1a] If you do need to cut the slit longer, make sure to have a nice smooth edge to your cut since it will be exposed as the puppet's "lip". Just trim the edge of the lip so that it has a smooth curve to it and it isn't noticeable that you just made an additional cut. [F1b, F1c] Also take a moment to look at the front of your puppet's lips, where the seam lines are. It's likely they will appear "pointed" [F1d]. Trim them to round them as well. [F1e]

2. Starting at the center of the top lip, use hot glue to secure the edge of the skin-colored felt to the inside (only overlapping $\frac{1}{2}$ " onto the black) of the puppet's mouth. [F2] Work in small sections, only adding glue for 1-2" along the edge of the mouthpiece before pressing the felt down. [F2a] Hot glue cools quickly and the cooler it is, the less it will soak in and adhere your felt. Continue this way until you are about 1" from the corner of the mouth. Then return to the center of the top lip & do the same thing in the other direction. Repeat this for the bottom lip. [F2b] Then you are ready to glue the corners of your puppet's mouth. This is where you have to take your time & go slowly to ensure that you have the slit cut far enough, but not too far. Open your puppet's mouth wide and practice smoothing the felt down as though you were pressing the glue in. [F2c] It should fit snugly, but remember it also has to be able to adhere well in the crease because your puppet will be doing a lot of talking. If opening the puppet's mouth makes the skin colored felt pull where it's already been glued to the mouthpiece, then you'll need to follow the directions above to lengthen the mouth slit. If you've accidentally made a mouth slit that is too large, you have a few options. (Before you do either of these, make sure to do "practices" with your puppet's felt, holding it and laying it in place where you would need it to go before stitching or gluing.) First, you could hand stitch the very end of the mouth slit tightly together so it would be the appropriate length. Otherwise, you could use a dot of glue to hold the lip $\frac{1}{4}$ " into the mouthpiece directly in the crease. Then you would need to manipulate the remaining felt, folding it under itself where the excess occurs and gluing it securely. If excess glue is visible on the black felt, color it in with black permanent marker to make it less noticeable. [F2d, F2e]
3. Stuff the puppet's upper lip, bottom jaw & the back of his head. Fill them until they've rounded out (especially near the seams) and hold their shape. Also be sure to add stuffing to the corner of your puppet's mouth, where the "jaw" would be. This will give a cushion so the mouthpiece isn't rubbing on the inside of the puppet's "cheek" and also helps reduce how noticeable the felt used in covering the back of the puppet's mouthpiece is. [F3, F3a, F3b]

G. Add facial features to your puppet:

1. Make a puppet nose by experimenting with different sizes and shapes. Using leftover skin-colored felt, cut out 2 identical shapes: circles (for round noses), ovals (longer noses), or even kidney bean shaped noses for added variety. [G1] Looking at the nose material, decide where you would like to attach the nose to the head & mark a 1" opening. You will need an opening to turn it inside out & stuff it. Since you need to hand-stitch the opening closed, it will be less noticeable if the hand stitched portion is where the nose attaches to the face. Sew around the edge of the nose, leaving the opening. [G1a] Turn the nose right-side-out & fill it with stuffing. Hand stitch the nose closed & then stitch it to the puppet's face in the desired location. [G1b]
2. *If you purchased plastic 'googly' eyes, skip this step.* Use the white felt and the scraps of black felt to make eyes. Cut out circular or oval white felt pieces & smaller circular or oval black pieces for pupils. You can set the black onto the white and try different combinations until you find one you like. When you find an eye you like, cut around each shape closely so that you have 2 that are symmetrical. Lay them together & trim them if needed so they are the same size (if desired). Keep in mind that most puppets are supposed to be fun, and often, look funny. Try out different shapes & sizes. Despite how small our puppet appears now, oversized features add a lot of character. Hot glue the pupils into place on the whites of the eyes.
3. Use tape to position the eyes in different places (or they will sit on the felt on the head without any tape at all). Once you've found a location you feel comfortable with, remove the tape & hot glue the eyes to the head, applying a gentle pressure before the glue cools.
4. Use red felt to make a tongue for your puppet. The tongue will be hot glued into the mouth, with the back edge of the tongue up against the crease in the mouthpiece. You will need to have about ½" gap (so black felt is visible) between the tip of the tongue and the puppet's "lip". You could make a simple "U" shaped tongue or experiment with rounded out wide heart shapes. Just make sure to position the tongue in the mouth without gluing it until you are satisfied with the size, shape & location. Once you've decided those things, secure the tongue in place with hot glue. [G4]

H. Give your puppet hair:

The next feature I would suggest adding to your puppet would be hair. It

sounds odd, but you may not even need (or want) ears depending on your puppet's hairstyle. You can always add ears on after the hair is in place, but putting hair around ears is a bit trickier. If a puppet's hair will be tied up or back and you have decided for sure you will make ears, you can make a small, curved raise in the hairline to compliment the ears [H6, H6a]. Note that my puppet who has her hair in pig tails doesn't have ears at all and it looks natural. Here is where my instructions cannot be incredibly specific. Depending on what hair you've chosen: yarn, faux fur or some other material, you may have different preparations. I suggest reading the information in this section to get an idea of what would work best for your puppet/purpose. There are two basic options for attaching your puppet's hair: gluing or sewing.

Gluing the puppet's hair on is much simpler, less time consuming & is my recommended method for attaching faux fur. You will need to have a large amount of glue sticks for your hot glue gun on hand while attaching the puppet's hair. you do not want to be half way through this task & have to run for more. If you are not comfortable with your ability to make & conceal the knot in your thread as well as make small, precise stitches, I suggest hot gluing. Whether you choose to have your glue gun set on high or low is up to you. If you've used glue guns frequently & are working at a quick pace, set it on high. If you're going slowly to try and create a very neat/specific hairstyle, then set it on low. These photos [H3,H3a] are of the first puppet I ever made, her hair is hot glued on and though less than tidy up-close [H3b], her hair appears just fine to an audience [H3c] attending a puppet show! Practice helps gain skill, but it won't lead to perfection- don't sweat it!

You can sew hair on by hand, which is very time consuming but produces excellent results due to the control of each "strand" of yarn/hair. Photo [H] shows how I was sewing my puppet's hair on to make it appear that she had a "part" down the center of her head and her hair was in a pony tail. The easiest way I found was to use a dot of glue to secure the end of yarn to the puppet's head. From that point, I used two threaded needles to continue securing the hair. I made an "S" shaped pattern by doubling the yarn back and securing the "loop" with a single stitch at each end. This way, one threaded needle was used to secure the hair at the part at the top of the head, and the other was used to secure the hair around the hairline. As much as possible, use one long, continuous piece of yarn that weaves back & forth either across the whole head or from the part to the hairline. The more times you cut the yarn, the more ends you have to hide & secure. Be sure to sew yarn right up to where you attach the pony/pig tails, overlapping to blend them in. I would recommend using thread that matches your puppet's skin or hair very well. If you're

taking the time to lay every piece of "hair" you want the distraction of people squinting to see the stitches.

For faux fur & fabric types you simply need to position material onto puppet's head to determine where you want hair to cover. Check & double check size/shape/direction the faux fur lays before cutting into pieces. you may need to cut slits and/or fold the faux fur over in places to achieve the look you want. Get it to set just the way you want it (using straight pins to hold it if needed) before gluing or sewing on a single spot. Once you know just how/where the faux fur will lay, then start gluing/sewing small sections into place at a time. Glue/sew close to the edges of the fabric so they stay firmly in place. Save your scraps because they come in handy for eyebrows, goatees, sideburns, or beards. [I1]

If you're using yarn and you'd like to have braids, pony or pig tails-

1. Decide what length you want the pony tail or pigtails to be. Use one continuous strand of yarn wrapped around two points (or an object) that are appropriately spaced apart. I did this by tying a slip-knot to one post of my wooden chair and then wrapping the yarn around the top of the chair. See photo [H1] You will want to have a bundle about a 1½-2" thick. (If you'd like pigtails, remember to make your yarn "bundle" long enough to account for the fact that the finished hair will be shorter after it's been braided. Divide the yarn into 2 equal piles & proceed.)
2. Secure one end of the yarn strands tightly with a rubber band, about 1" from the end. To help keep hair secure I slide a short piece of yarn through the loops at the end of the bundle and tie it firmly [H2]. If desired, you can braid each bunch of yarn and secure the bottom with another rubber band. You will attach your pony/pig tails to the puppet's head first & add the rest of the hair afterward (to cover up where the bundle of hair is attached). If your rubber bands don't match the hair color well, I would suggest wrapping a piece of yarn around each rubber band a few times & hot gluing it in place to make the rubber bands less noticeable. Otherwise using a child's ponytail holder can add some color. This doesn't matter too much for a pony tail or the end of pigtails, but you may not want the rubber band showing where a pigtail meets your puppet's head.
3. Hot glue the yarn bundles onto the desired positions on your puppet's head. Remember that most likely your audience will be seated directly in front of, and possibly at a lower level than your puppet's face, so it's not advised to have them too far to the back of the head or they won't be

- visible. Use common sense & glue the ends of the yarn bundles to the head in the same direction you'd anticipate hair would naturally be pulled from. For example, it wouldn't make sense to have low pigtails and glue yarn downward where it'd cover the neck. You'd want the ends spread upward & to the sides, leaving the neck bare.
4. You may use a portion of wire to make your puppet's braided pigtails stick out (like Pippi Longstocking). I used a portion of a plastic coated wire hanger. The wire would need to be inserted VERY carefully through the center of each braid, making sure it went through rubber bands on both ends to help keep it secure. This should be done with great caution because you do not want the wire to snag as you are sliding it in, or you may end up having to redo your puppet's braids altogether. Also, do not expect that this will make your puppet's hair permanently in that position. [H4] The wires will twist, come loose from one or more of the hair bands, and/or otherwise reposition in such a way that you'll have to gently manipulate them back into place to recreate your desired look.
 5. Glue the same color yarn to the remaining area of puppet's head to create a full head of hair, with or without bangs and/or a part down the middle. Push yarn lightly down into hot glue to secure it. You won't want your puppet's hair to snag on anything or seem as though it's unraveling because pieces are too loose. This is tedious but pretty self explanatory. Remember to glue yarn in a position/pattern that would seem natural if it were real hair. [H, H3] As much as possible use one long, continuous piece of yarn that weaves back & forth either across the whole head or from the part to the hairline. The more times you cut the yarn, the more ends you have to hide & secure. Be sure to glue yarn right up to where you attached the pony/pig tails, overlapping to blend them in. The above basic technique of attaching hair could be used to create a variety of styles, such as afros, mullets, old-lady buns, etc.
 6. If your puppet has long hair, it is more likely that ears would stick out & look awkward. If your puppet is bald or has relatively short or sparse hair, then ears may be an important part of the overall look you aim to achieve. Follow the same basic procedure that is described for making a nose (section G.) to experiment with making ears. Just be sure to cut out 4 identical shapes of skin-colored felt (2 for each ear) before you start sewing anything.

Create a character:

Your puppet can have personality and style!

I. Finishing Touches:

1. Before adding many more features/details to your puppet, consider carefully all the circumstances you plan on using your puppet for. Will you need your puppet to act as both a young girl and/or an adult woman? Is your puppet always going to be considered a “bad guy”? Certain features will give your puppet a certain “personality” that will be associated with the character he/she is acting as. That being said as a cautionary note, have fun & use your creativity. This is the most fun part of making a puppet because you are making this puppet *yours*. Up until a certain point in these directions, all the puppets made by individuals would look very similar, but after adding eyes, nose, tongue, hair & other features, they’re as unique as can be! Use scraps of felt, faux fur or other material to experiment with giving your puppet eyebrows, sideburns, a beard or goatee, eyelashes and/or red or pink lips. [I1, I1a, I1b, I1c] Always see how it looks setting on the puppet before you glue it on. For an ‘evil’ or ‘angry’ character, angle eyebrows downward at center. Aim them upwards at center for a ‘surprised’ or ‘energetic’ expression.
2. You may have noticed that your puppet has pretty poor posture, they tend to “slouch” their shoulders [I2]. I would suggest using a small padded hanger [I2a] to help keep your puppet's shoulders in position. This is not necessary, but I found it to be simple & helpful. The most difficult part of it may be attaining the right type of hanger. The ones I have are from clothing layettes received as baby gifts. I'm sure other materials or hangers would work as well; use your ingenuity. I simply inserted the hanger gently into the puppet's body, the hook of the hanger extended up into the stuffing in the back of the puppet's head. [I2b] After a little rearranging, it wasn't at all visible from the outside [I2c] I then used thread matching my puppet's skin color to make a few stitches through the puppet's back (where a “shoulder blade” would be, toward the end of the hanger) and into the padding of the hanger. This held the hanger in place so it would not become askew or dislodged during puppeteering. The padded hanger was much more comfortable on the back of my hand than the regular one I'd tried. If someone with large hands will be using the puppet frequently, have them try using it with the hanger in it before stitching it in place. If it's too uncomfortable for them, then simply don't use one.
3. To allow you to move your puppet’s arm, you can screw the eye-screw into the end of a ¼” x 3’ dowel rod. Then simply sew a couple stitches through the eye-screw and into the back of the puppet’s hand(s). If you anticipate that having the dowels on for storage or transport would cause difficulty, you could secure the eye-screw to the back of the puppet’s hand(s) with a medium to large safety pin

(instead of stitching it on) for fast removal. I would recommend using a safety pin just so you can remove the dowel if it's unneeded. If your puppet only has 2 lines and won't be gesturing, then having dowels hanging from his hands would be a hassle for you and a distraction to your audience. Most times you'll only be using one of your puppet's arms anyway (because your other hand will be busy working the puppet's mouth/head) and having a safety pin allows you to quickly choose whether you'd like to use the right or left arm.

4. Clothing for Your Puppet: Sizes 12 -18 month baby clothes should fit your puppet well. Avoid clothes with baby themed patterns or decals, unless you want this particular puppet to be viewed as an infant. [14] Second-hand stores, garage sales & thrift stores are great places to pick up some puppet clothes if you don't know anyone who would have a few items to spare. You could also make your own puppet clothes, but if you don't need a specific outfit/costume, it may not be worth the trouble you'd go through. You will be able to make a variety of 'characters' by having a few different styles of clothing, so try to pick up T-shirts, button-up collared shirts, solid colors as well as bright & bold patterns. Get dresses, jackets, hats & you could even pick up a pair of eyeglasses- just be sure to remove the glass lens for safety & so your audience can see your puppet's eyes clearly. (If necessary, you could loosely stitch around the frame of the glasses in a couple locations to help secure them during your puppet show. You could easily snip the stitches when you're ready to remove the glasses.)