

You Can... **Get creative with 'Puppets'**

Children are often fascinated by puppets – there is something magical about seeing an inanimate object being 'brought to life' by the person operating it. There are many different kinds of puppet you might create – from the simple finger or sock puppet, to the more complex marionette.

Thinking points

- As well as thinking about the moods and emotions that the puppets will have, get your children to think about how they might speak or the kind of noises they would make.
- This design and technology theme has obvious links to drama and storytelling. Music might also be incorporated into a puppet show.
- In addition, you could look at the history of puppets. Look at www.lepetitprince.com/en/ROI/histoire_marionnette.php for a brief outline.

Tips, ideas and activities

- Try this drama exercise as an active starter for this theme:
 - Work in an open space, with the children, in pairs.
 - One child in each pair is the 'puppet' and the other is the 'puppet master'.
 - The puppet has invisible strings at various points on his or her body.
 - To start with, these are on the head, hands, elbows, knees and feet.
 - As the puppet master 'pulls' the string, the puppet moves that part of the body.
 - The aim is to make it look as though there are actually strings attached.
 - Get half of the class to watch the other half moving their puppets – talk about who is doing it well and why.
 - As the pupils get more confident, make their puppets interact (for instance, shaking hands). Add more strings (for instance, on the fingers).



- Scholastic has published books incorporating finger and hand puppets, which would be great for this theme – see www.scholastic.co.uk/zone/book_hand-puppets.htm for details. See also *The Muppets Make Puppets* by Cheryl Henson (Workman Publishing).

- Take this topic one stage further, by getting the children to make their own theatre, and perform some of their puppet shows to an audience. To make a theatre:
 - Get hold of a large cardboard box – one big enough for the children to stand inside.
 - Create a square flap, cutting around the top and the two sides. The flap can be folded up and down as a 'curtain'.
 - Decorate the box with paint or a collage effect.
 - Choose a name for your puppet theatre.
 - Design some backdrops – position these on the back wall of the box, so that they are seen behind the puppets.
 - Devise and present your shows!