

Puppet Skills & Safety

Timing

5 minutes (for 1-4)

Space

Kids sitting at desks or on the rug with a clear view of the teacher

Additional supports

Visit
TeachwithArtsConnection.org



Do this demonstration, before you pass out the puppets to the kids!

1. How should I hold my puppet?

Model holding it *incorrectly*- Hold your puppet with your hand covering the character (not holding the stick.)

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice**- Can everyone see my puppet character? Where should I hold my puppet so that you can see the character? What might happen with this stick if I'm not holding onto it?
- **Take kids' advice**- (Adjust your hand to hold the end of the stick) We have to hold the end of the stick, so that don't cover the character and so that the stick does not poke anyone.
- **Add kids' advice** to a "How to use a puppet" chart

2. How can I keep my puppet safe?

Model being *unsafe*- Hit your puppets together

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice**- What do you think will happen if I bang my puppets together or if I bang my puppet into the floor or desk?
- **Take kids' advice**- (stop before you do it!) My puppet is only made of paper and it will break if I bang it. If your puppet characters are doing battle, you have to pretend, like this...
- **Model a slow-motion battle**- (Make one puppet "attack" another puppet in slow motion with sound effects. Do not really make them touch. Make the attacked puppet react in slow motion to the hit with a big, slow "owwwch!") Did my puppets really touch?

3. What speed makes the story clear?

Model *super-fast and sloppy* puppet battle

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice**- Was the battle better when it was fast or when I did it in slow motion! Puppet actions are more interesting if you stretch them out. If puppets move too fast you can't them clearly.
- **Chart the kids' advice**- Add kids' advice safety and speed

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4. How or when should the puppeteer move?

Model moving your body instead of the puppet.

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice-** That time, did you see my puppet or did you see me? Is it a puppet show or a teacher show?
- **Take kids' advice-** (calm your body and focus on your puppet movements) I really have to keep my body calm, keep my eyes focused on my puppet and make my puppet do the movements.
- **Chart kids' advice**

When to demo 5 & 6

Only when and if kids are transitioning from play into sharing or presenting their puppet stories

5. Where should the puppet look?

Model holding it *backwards*- Hold your puppet by the stick so it is facing you.

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice-** Can everyone see my puppet character now? What do I need to do so that you can see the character? Should the puppet look at me, or look out at you?
- **Take kids' advice-** (turn your puppet to face the students) The puppet should be facing the audience. I notice that when I do that, I am looking at the back of my puppet.
- **Add kids' advice to the "How to use a puppet" chart**

6. Where does my body go?

Model *blocking the puppet*- Stand with your back to the kids & your body covering the puppet

Sample Script

- **Ask kids' advice-** Can everyone see my puppet character? What do I need to do with my body so that you can see the character?
- **Take kids' advice-** (adjust your body) If I'm showing to someone else, I need to make sure that my body is not covering my puppet!

Add Kids' advice to the "How to use a puppet" chart

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How to use a puppet

Hold the end of the puppet stick(s)

Keep you and your puppets safe

Stretch out the puppet action. Try slow motion!

Keep your body calm and put the movement into your puppet

Focus your eyes on your puppet

Make sure that the audience can see your puppet (if presenting)
