

# Playful puppetry

## Sock puppets are fun to make and fun to play with By Tamlyn Vincent

One of life's great mysteries is that of lost socks. Where do they go? Why can you never find them? And what do you do with one sock? Unless you only ever buy white socks of the same brand (a clever idea, by the way) you're likely to have a draw full of single socks. To save yourself from wearing mismatched socks, why not let your children turn the lonely hosiery into sock puppets?

### You'll need:

- Single socks (specify this to your children before letting them loose on the sock draw) – long thick socks and those that don't fray too much will work better
- Buttons or wobbly eyes
- Felt, wool, material scraps, cardboard, pompoms and other odds and ends for decorating
- Permanent marker, preferably one you can use on fabrics
- Glue gun and glue sticks, or glue that will work on fabric



### The basic process

**1** Place your hand inside the sock, and turn the toe inwards to create a mouth. This will give you some idea of where you'll place your eyes, nose, or other additions. It may also give you some inspiration as to who your sock puppet will be – a long striped sock could work well as a zebra, while a short white one may work as a pig or bunny.

**2** You can leave the mouth empty, or add a felt tongue. Alternatively cut out an oval piece of cardboard and colour it in red, or glue red felt to it. Fold this in half and glue it into the mouth. You can also cut the sides of the mouth if you want it to open wider, but you'll then need to sew or handstitch the edges to prevent fraying.

**3** Stick on googly eyes or sew on buttons. You can place a circle of felt underneath the button as well. Or use wool to stitch on eyes.

**4** Stitch on two black nostrils, stick on a felt nose, or use a permanent marker to draw on nostrils.

If your puppet requires hair, you can use wool to sew loops through the sock, cutting the tops of the loops to create the hair.

**5** You can then add felt ears, polka dots, pipe cleaner horns, or anything else you and your children want to add.

**6** The final step is to put on a puppet show: make sure each child has at least one puppet and let them perform for you. Their stage can be your dining room table, a kitchen counter or the back of a couch. The possibilities are endless.

### Sock puppet inspiration

- Cow** – add black or brown dots, some horns and ears
- Reindeer** – make antlers from cardboard and glitter, and add a red pompom nose
- Zebra** – use your stripy socks to make a zebra, with ears and a woolly mane
- Monsters** – anything goes for this one – green spots, yellow eyes and crazy orange hair would all work
- Dinosaur** – long socks can be turned into a dopey dinosaur, with big button eyes, and a patch of hair
- Bunny** – you'll need long felt ears, black button eyes, and a cute wool nose
- Pig** – add floppy triangle ears and little black eyes. Cut out an oval of pink felt and use a permanent marker to draw on two black nostrils for a snout.