Gather and cut the pieces

Create a puppet with a mouth that moves when you pull a string. Read all the steps before you begin.

You will need

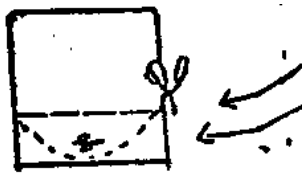
A smooth wooden stick, 30 cm long; heavy white cardstock, 12 × 20 cm; construction paper for the face, chin, mouth and tongue; three reinforcing strips, each 3 × 20 cm; rubber bands; 50 cm of string; yarn for hair; craft glue; stapler; pencil; metric ruler; compass or a round object; scissors; and a small-hole paper punch.

Adult preparation

Drill a small hole through the stick, 12 cm from its lower end. Smooth any rough edges. An adult should handle drilling and help with staples.

1. Shape the white foundation.

Lay the 12 × 20 cm cardstock upright, with a 12 cm edge at the bottom. Draw a light line across it, 7.5 cm (75 mm) above the bottom. Below that line, draw a rounded chin curve and cut away the bottom corners, as shown.





Fold and punch

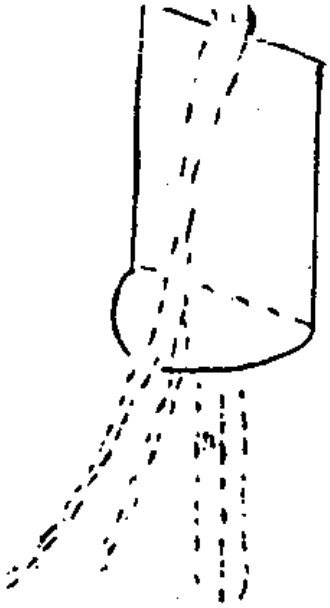
Fold the rounded section along the pencil line so it can move like a hinged flap. Punch two small holes in the flap, near its center. Place a staple between the holes to strengthen this area.

The white cardstock is the puppet’s foundation. Keep this hinge free to move.

Attach the stick and chin

2. Fasten the foundation to the stick.
Place the stick vertically against the back of the white foundation. Let its top extend 1 cm above the cardstock; the lower end becomes the handle. Glue the straight upper section to the stick and reinforce the join with staples where possible. Do not glue the hinged flap to the stick.

3. Connect the moving mouth.
Following the drawing, lead the rubber band(s) upward through the flap holes and the string downward through them. Secure the elastic to the stick so it gently returns the flap when released. Use the drilled stick hole as an anchor for the mechanism. Tie the string securely to the flap and leave a long end below it to pull.



Check the motion now
Hold the stick and gently pull the string. The flap should move; release the string and the elastic should return it. Adjust the elastic before adding the outer paper.

Builder’s note: The original drawing does not specify the knots, elastic size or exact anchoring route. An adult should trial-fit this connection first.

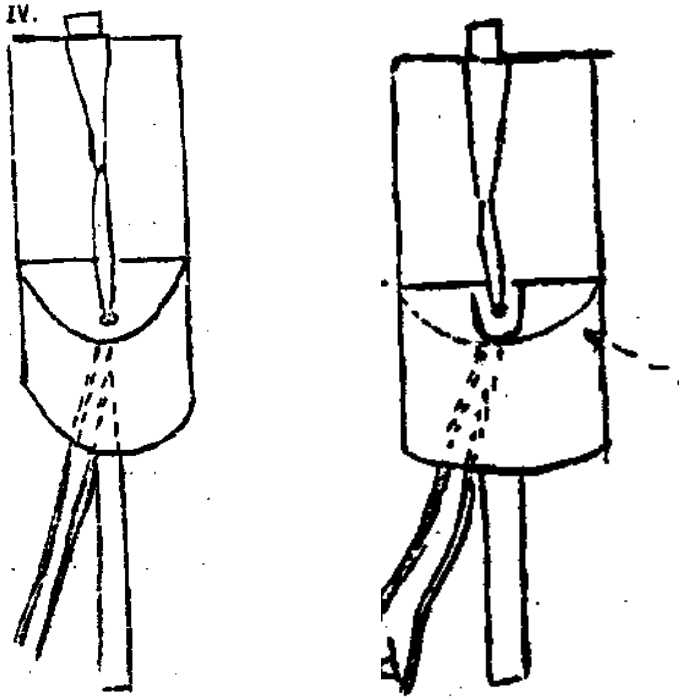
4. Make the outer chin.
Cut a construction-paper piece wide enough to curve around the chin, with extra length for overlap. Fold a 3 cm strip along one long edge. Snip from that edge up to the fold to make glue tabs. Do not cut beyond the fold.

Curve the chin paper around the rounded white flap. Glue the tabs to the flap, keeping the hinge and holes clear. Let the glue dry.

Line the mouth and add the face

5. Cover the inside of the mouth.
Cut a rounded piece of construction paper to cover the top of the white chin flap and hide the glue tabs. Make it slightly larger than needed. Glue it in place, let it dry, then trim the edges. Keep the holes and moving parts clear.

6. Add a tongue.
Use a 5 × 10 cm piece of construction paper. Cut a small rounded tongue and glue it inside the mouth. Keep it clear of the string and elastic.



Mouth lining Tongue added

7. Reinforce the bottom of the face.
Cut the face paper large enough to curve around the upright white foundation. Along its bottom edge, glue three strips of paper, each 3 × 20 cm, one on top of another. With the face paper, this makes four layers at the mouth edge. Let dry.

8. Wrap and glue the face.
Curve the face paper around the upper foundation. Glue one side in place and let it dry; then glue the other side. Position the reinforced lower edge just above the chin so the mouth can still open. Do not glue the face to the moving chin.

Give your puppet a character

9. Add the features and hair.
Mark the eyes about 15 cm below the top of the head, as in the original directions. Check the placement before gluing. Add a nose, mouth details and ears. Glue on yarn for hair, then style it.

10. Make a body and clothing.
Cut a body from construction paper or cardstock. Decorate it with paper clothing or lightweight fabric scraps. Glue the body to the stick below the head. Leave the handle and pull string accessible.

11. Let dry, then rehearse.
Wait until all glue is dry. Hold the stick in one hand and gently pull the string with the other. Release it to close the mouth. Practice moving the mouth as your puppet speaks.



If the mouth will not move
Check for glue across the hinge, a snagged string, tight elastic, or paper rubbing against the chin. Free the hinge or trim the paper a little at a time.

If the mouth will not return
Check that the elastic is attached securely and has enough tension to bring the chin back.

Ready for a story
Name your character. Try a greeting, a question and a surprising answer. Your stick now has something to say.

Before using with a group: Build one sample to check paper sizes and the elastic-and-string connection. The original source does not give exact dimensions for every outer paper piece. Illustrations adapted from the supplied scans; drawings are not to scale.