

# SOCK PUPPETS

**T**his sock puppet is one of the simplest yet most effective puppets you can make—and one of the easiest to operate. Use it to practice your puppetry basics.

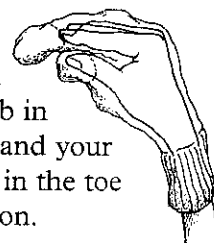
You probably have some old socks lying around your house (this is the perfect job for a sock without a partner). Experiment with different colors and sizes—kids' socks work well for smaller hands. We used buttons for eyes, but you can also use the eyes that come with this book or make your own kind.

This puppet has wire rods that operate his hands. You can also use wooden rods like chopsticks; attach them with white glue and give them time to dry.

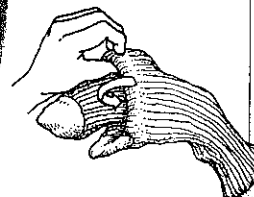
## WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE TOMMY:

- 1 old sock
- 2 button eyes with felt pupils
- 1 button nose
- a needle and thread
- 1 piece of felt (for arms)
- 2 8-inch pieces of wire

**1.** Put your hand in the sock, with your thumb in the heel and your fingers in the toe section.



**2.** Take hold of the excess fabric above your knuckles and fold it over into a ridge, with the fold toward the



### TOMMY "THE TOE"

**BIRTHPLACE:**

New York City

**OCCUPATION:**

Detective

**LIKES:** Clean floors, shag rugs

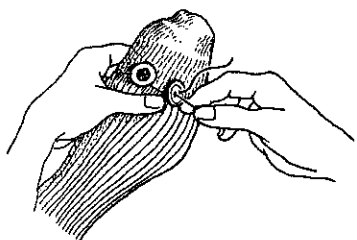
**DISLIKES:** Smelly sneakers, bleach

**QUOTE:** "I lost my partner a while back. Things were pretty lonely in that drawer. Now I'm busy solving crimes...like the case of the lost long johns."



puppet's "nose." This creates the eyeline. Tack it down with a needle and thread, or use a safety pin.

**3.** Sew on buttons at the eyeline as shown. Glue the pupils to the center of the buttons.

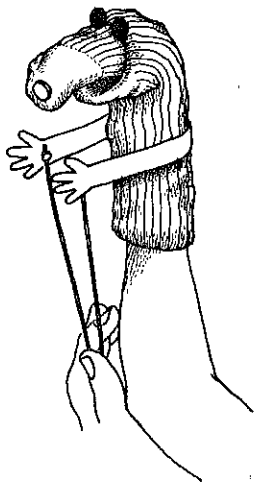
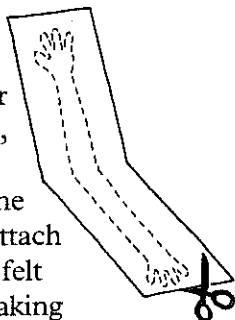


**4.** Sew on the nose.

**5.** Cut arms out of felt and sew or safety-pin them

on. You can cut them out separately or in one piece, as shown.

Then take the wires, and attach them to the felt hands by making a little loop in each wire and sewing it to the hand.



## PERFORMING YOUR PUPPET

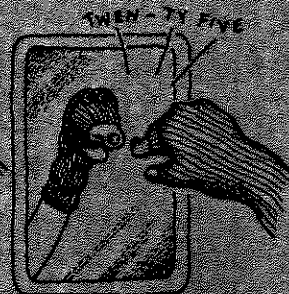
**H**ow does a mouth move? To find out, go to your bathroom or bedroom mirror and watch yourself talk. Notice that most of the movement is in your lower jaw. Your upper lip moves a little, but the rest of your face and your head stay still. This is how your puppet should talk.

For best results with this sock puppet, hold your top fingers as still as you can and move your thumb up and down to operate the puppet's lower jaw. Practice these movements in front of the mirror until your puppet's "mouth" begins to move naturally.

Still in front of the mirror, say the following simple sentence: "Big boys play ball." See how your mouth opens up on each word? Now try it with your puppet. Exaggerate. Open the puppet's mouth wide for each word: "Big. Boys. Play. Ball." It will take quite a bit of practice, but your puppet will soon look as if he's actually saying the words.

A great exercise is to have your puppet say the alphabet or count to 25. In

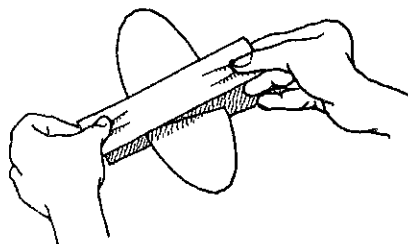
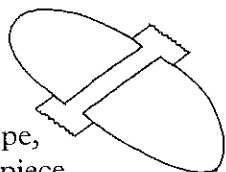
the case of words with a few syllables (like *twenty-five!*), you'll probably want to open the puppet's mouth for each syllable. For more complicated words or speeches, however, you'll have to cheat a bit and miss a few syllables or even words.



Once you've got this technique down, play a recording of a song to which you know the lyrics and have the puppet sing along in front of the mirror. Concentrate on making the puppet's mouth open on each separate word.

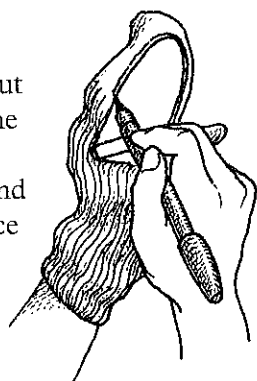
When you're satisfied, it's time to give your puppet a little attitude—to make him look like he's actually performing the song. Have him bob to the beat, for instance, or move your wrist to make him dance. Use the rods, holding both in one hand, to move your puppet's hands. For more careful movements, you can pin one of his hands to his body and use just one rod to operate the other hand.

**1.** Cut 2 pieces of cardboard to make the top and bottom of the dragon's mouth. Make a flexible hinge for the puppet's jaw by connecting the 2 mouth pieces with tape, spacing each piece about 1/4 inch apart on the tape so that the tape acts as the hinge. Use one piece of tape beneath and one on top. Heavy tape with a fabric backing, like electrical or

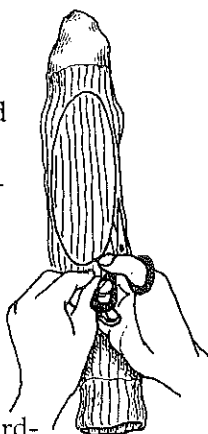


gaffer's tape, works well for puppet hinges. Glue felt or fabric to one side of the cardboard mouth. Add a felt tongue.

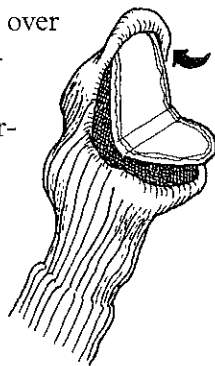
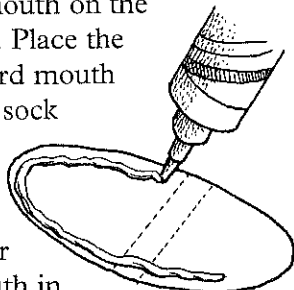
**2.** Put the sock on your hand and place the cardboard mouth between your thumb and your other fingers. Use a pen to trace a line on the sock where you want the mouth to be.



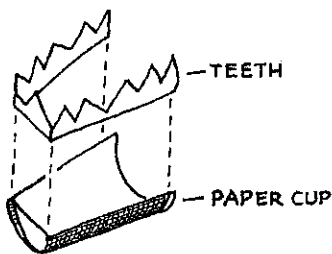
**3.** Take the sock off your hand and cut slightly inside the outline traced for the mouth.



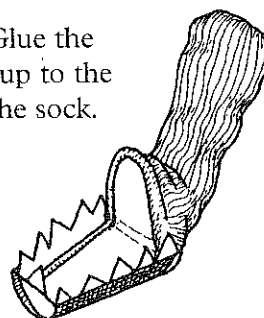
**4.** Put glue around the edge of the cardboard mouth on the felt side. Place the cardboard mouth into the sock body, being careful to center the mouth in the sock. Press the sock edge over the glued surface of the mouth, gathering the fabric to fit. Use straight pins to hold it in place while drying.



**5.** Cut a paper cup in half. Glue white felt teeth to the lower edge of the cup.

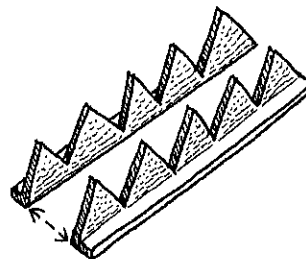


**6.** Glue the cup to the top of the sock.



**7.** Attach foam ball eyes and pom-pom nose to the cup with glue or double-stick tape.

**8.** Decorate the sock with felt scales and spines. The spiky scales on Dixie's back are 2 identical pieces of cut felt. Fold a piece of felt and cut it into the shapes you



want. Then paste the shapes together, leaving a length of a half-inch on the bottom of each shape unglued. Spread this "seam" out and sew it to the sock where Dixie's spine would be.

