

Activity

The Magic of Puppets

Use the activity below to guide your students in a puppet-making activity using objects found in your classroom!

Materials Needed: Found objects

1. Gather students in a circle and tell them they're going to be creating their very own elephant puppet!
2. Divide students into small groups and give each group a set of standard classroom items like paper, markers, tape, string and any other crafty supplies that might be available. Encourage the groups to brainstorm ideas for their elephant puppet. They can decide its size, shape and what type of action it will perform. For inspiration, show them videos of the incredible puppetry seen in Broadway productions like *Life of Pi* and *War Horse*.
3. Guide your students through the process of crafting their elephant puppets using the materials provided. They can use their imaginations to bring their elephants to life, whether they're tiny finger puppets or large, majestic puppets.
4. Once their puppets are made, ask each group to determine how their puppet will be manipulated. How many puppeteers are needed for the puppet to move? What parts of the body is each puppeteer responsible for?
5. Give students time to explore how their puppet moves and interacts. Encourage students to start by exploring how their puppet 1) breathes 2) focuses on different points throughout the room and 3) walks and interacts with other humans, puppets or objects in the space.
6. Once the elephant puppets are ready, help each group brainstorm and plan a short action or movement routine for their puppet. It could be a graceful dance, a playful trick, an emotional scene inspired by *The Vanishing Elephant* or another story you're reading as a class.
7. Give each group time to practice their puppet's action. Encourage them to experiment with different movements and gestures, and to think about their puppet's unique personality, background and dreams.
8. Gather all the groups to showcase their elephant puppet and share their puppet's action.
9. Offer a rousing round of applause for each group's fantastic puppetry performance!

Reflection Questions:

How did you work as a group to create your puppet and its story?

What was the most challenging part of bringing your puppet to life? How did you overcome it?

Why do we use puppets when telling a story? What can a puppet do that a human can't do?