

How to make... a Milk Bottle Wizard Puppet!

By Toby Olie

Wizarding definitely has its perks.

Why not join us in making this awesome milk bottle wizard puppet. We promise you its a doable task. Even though you won't need any magic spells to complete this craft, we implore you to come up with your own while making.

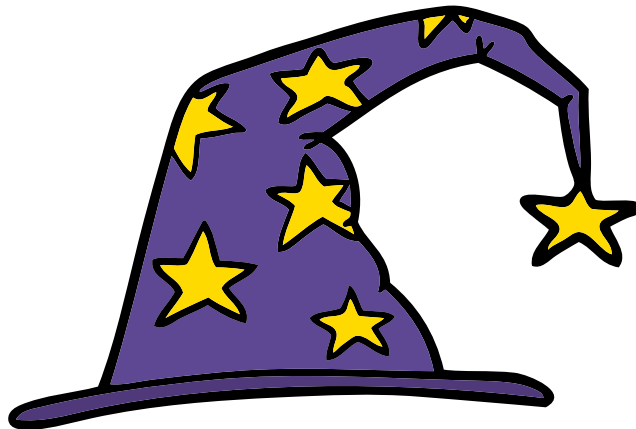
Could you turn a hair band into a rabbit? A cereal box into robot? The world is yours young ones. Go out there and create magic :D



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You will need:

- 2 x Empty one pint milk bottles
- 1 x Empty two litre drinks bottle
- 4 x Paper drinking straws
- 1 x Wooden dowel (approx 30cm long & 1.5cm diameter)
- 2 x Short garden canes or chopsticks
- Thick string (approx 90cm)
- 2 x paper pulp balls (approx 2cm diameter)
- Sheet of felt (approx A4 sized)
- Large piece of lightweight fabric (approx 1m x 60cm)
- Tube of all purpose glue
- Strong sticky tape
- Scissors or craft knife
- Marker pen
- Ruler
- Scrap paper



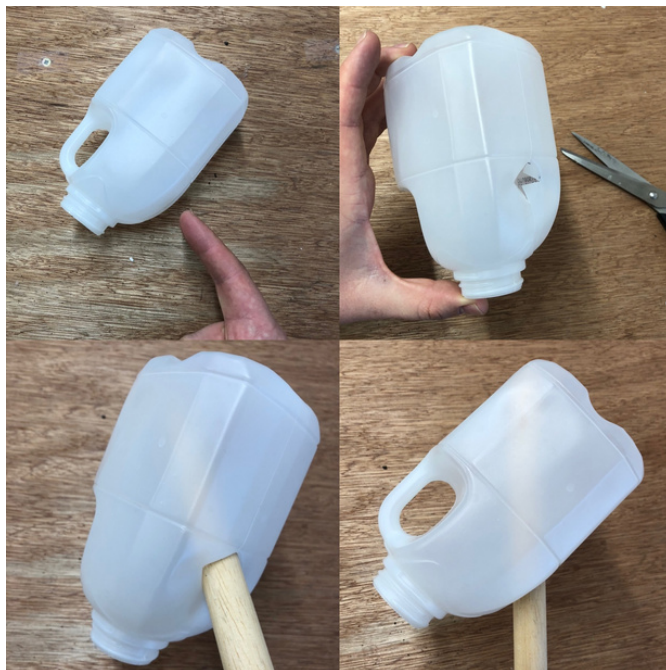
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Instructions

Step 1: Head & Neck

To make the wizard's head, turn one of your one pint milk bottles upside down. Then on the opposite side of the bottle to the handle, cut a small hole about a third of the way up from the opening.

For the neck, take the wooden dowel and cover one end in glue or double sided tape, then insert the dowel into the hole you have cut in the milk bottle, stick the end of dowel to the inside of the bottle on the opposite side to the hole, ensuring that your puppet's mouth (the bottle's opening) is roughly at a 45 degree angle to the dowel rod.



Step 2: Body

To make the wizard's body, take the two-litre drinks bottle and carefully cut off the domed top third. Next with your pen mark two dots that are each 3.5cm down and on opposite sides of the bottle's neck, then pierce these two dots to make two small holes.



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Step 3: Cloak

Cut a 60 x 60cm square from the lightweight fabric and fold it in half, then fold it in half again, pressing down the folded edges to crease the fabric slightly. Open the fabric back out to show the centre point where the two creased edges cross, then cut a small hole at the centre point.

At this point, use a ruler to measure 3.5cm down the back of the wizard's neck dowel from the mil bottle and use your pen to mark that point. Finally push the end of the neck dowel through the hole in the middle of the fabric.



Step 4: Arms

Find the middle point of your string and tie it around the wooden dowel at the point you marked in the previous step, secure the knotted string in place with a bit of glue or tape. Then feed the two ends of the string and the dowel through the bottle's neck before threading each end of the string out of the small holes you pierced. Tie a knot in the string on the outside of the bottle to secure the dowel inside the body, but leave a little bit of slack so the neck can twist, allowing the head to look from side to side.

Next cut your drinking straws into four 10cm lengths, and thread two of these lengths onto each piece of string emerging from the body to create the wizard's arms, leaving around 5cm of string sticking out of the end, trim off any excess string.



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Step 5: Hands

Draw and cut out a template of your wizard's hand from a scrap piece, roughly half the height of the milk bottle head. Then position your hand template on the curved edge of the second milk bottle and draw around it using the marker pen. Flip the template over and draw around the template again (flipping it over means you get a left and a right hand).

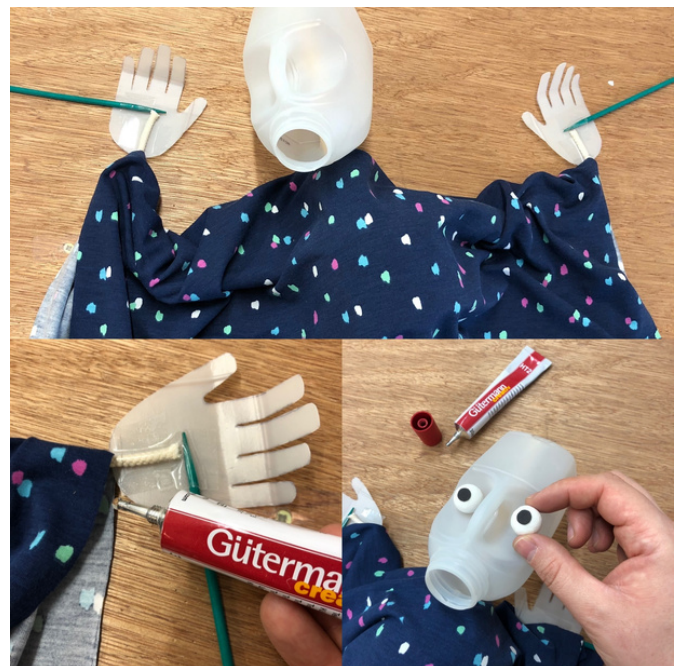
Cut both hands out and stick one on each end of the arm strings, ensuring you leave around half a centimetre of string between the straws and hand to allow the arms to bend. Then stick one of your garden canes or chopsticks to each hand to create a control rod.



Step 6: Cloak & Eyes

Stretch out both of the arms and arrange the fabric so it hangs evenly on the front and back of the wizard, then use a tiny blob of glue to stick the fabric to itself underneath the string wrist joint - this will stop the cloak from sliding back down the wizard's arms when he is being animated.

Next take your two paper pulp balls and draw on pupils with the marker pen, you can also use beads, buttons or small discs of card to be the pupils. Stick the eyes into the sunken 'eye sockets' section of the milk bottle either side of the handle 'nose'.



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Step 7: Beard & Hair

Draw some templates on scrap paper for the wizard's eyebrows, moustache and beard. For the moustache and beard you can fold the paper in half and draw just one half of each, ending at the folded edge - that way once you've cut them out and opened out the paper you will have symmetrical pieces.

Trace around your templates onto the felt and cut out the different sections with scissors. Stick the bits of facial hair onto the wizard's head, start with eyebrows, then beard and finally moustache. When glueing the beard on, leave a tiny amount of the milk bottle's opening peeking out over the top as this creates the impression of an open mouth and top lip!



Step 8: Hat

Position a dinner plate or large pan on the underside of the remaining piece of lightweight fabric, draw around the outside with a pen and cut out the circle. Then cut from the outside edge of the fabric circle into the centre, then position the fabric with the cut at the top of the circle (like a hand on a clock pointing to 12) and fold the right side of the fabric down on itself.

Next cut into the excess fabric that isn't folded down on itself, leaving a tiny slither of the material attached to the underside of your folded section. Finally run a line of glue along this exposed slither of the fabric's underside, then fold and stick the slither onto the outside of the folded fabric to create a cone. Use small blobs of glue on the milk bottle's corners to stick your wizard's cone hat to its head.



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Step 9: Make Some Magic

Your wizard puppet is now finished, so have fun animating it - try making your wizard walk, run, jump or even cast a spell on a friend or pet!

Now you've made one puppet why not try make another from your own imagination? You can remake the basic head, body and arm pieces of this puppet, but dress and decorated to be any person or character you like - for example you could cover all of the body parts with tin foil to make a robot puppet, decorated with bottle caps and old buttons to look like dials and lights. The possibilities are endless...



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