



The Paper Dolls

Education Resource Pack





Based on the original book '*The Paper Dolls*' – written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated Rebecca Cobb.

When a little girl cuts out a string of paper dolls she takes them by the hand and together they go on a **fantastical adventure** whirling through their home and garden. Ticky, Tacky, Jackie the Backie, Jim with two noses and Jo with the bow fly through time and tear across worlds of fun and excitement.

They face the Jurassic clutches of a toy dinosaur and the snapping jaws of the oven-glove crocodile, and then a very real boy with very real scissors threatens to snip their adventure short...

Introduction



About Little Angel Theatre



John Wright, the founder of Little Angel Theatre, was born in South Africa in 1906. He travelled to England in 1935 and worked as an assistant stage manager for the Ballet Rambert while studying at the Central School of Art and Design. During this time he saw a puppet performance by Podrecca's Piccoli and became hooked. John made his very first puppet in 1938.

In 1961 John and his troupe found a derelict temperance hall in Islington and transformed it into a theatre, designed for the presentation of marionette shows. It opened on Saturday 24th November 1961. This was to be the first purpose built puppet theatre the country had seen for many years and the only one with a permanent long string marionette bridge constructed backstage. The bridge was designed for puppeteers to stand on while they manipulate long stringed puppets who perform on the stage below leaving the audience unable to see the puppeteers. The original bridge is used to this day. The theatre has a traditional 'proscenium arch' and seats 100 audience members.

John Wright died in 1991 but the work of the theatre continued apace with family, friends and supporters working tirelessly to continue in his footsteps to make sure John's legacy would delight generations to come.

Alongside our work on stage, our creative learning department delivers imaginative education and participatory activities in our venues, in schools and in community settings.

[Join our National Schools Partnership Programme](#)

To broaden the reach of our schools engagement outside of our local area we are excited to introduce our **National Schools Partnership Programme**. This is an opportunity for all schools, no matter where they are located, to engage in and enjoy our performances and educational material.

Visit our Website to find out more;

[National Schools Partnership Programme](#) | [Little Angel Theatre](#)

Author and Illustrator Study

Julia Donaldson

Julia Donaldson MBE is an English writer, playwright and performer, and the 2011–2013 Children's Laureate. She was born in 1948 and brought up in London.

She has over 150 published works - lots of which you will probably know! Her first published children's book was *A Squash and a Squeeze* (published in 1993) which was originally a song. She is most famous for her rhyming stories which include titles such as *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom* and *The Snail and the Whale*.



Julia Donaldson has worked with a wide range of illustrators on her books. Perhaps her most famous partnership, is with Axel Sheffler who illustrated the books listed above, as well as many more of her titles, but she has also worked with many others including Lydia Monks, David Roberts and Nick Sharratt to name a few.

Julia had the idea for the story of *The Paper Dolls* a long time before the book was actually published, and was very pleased to find Rebecca Cobb to collaborate with on the book.

Rebecca Cobb

Rebecca Cobb has illustrated a range of children's books by authors including Helen Dunmore, Richard Curtis, and of course, *The Paper Dolls* by Julia Donaldson. She also collaborated with Julia on *The Everywhere Bear* and *Who Lives Here*. She has also written and illustrated four of her own picture books. Her work has been nominated for various awards.

Rebecca grew up in Buckinghamshire and Somerset. She studied illustration at Falmouth College of Arts and has been living in Falmouth and working as an illustrator ever since.



She has a very distinctive style of illustration which is a little bit like childhood drawings. When she is working on the illustrations for a book, she first works in pencil, and then colours in her drawings using watercolours, inks and coloured pencils. She chooses these because they all make different kinds of marks – scratchy, neat or messy, so she can choose which type of colouring works best.

Lesson Ideas

Creative Writing / Group Story-Building Exercise

First, make and decorate your own string of paper dolls - you can find lots of useful links to help you at the back of this pack.

Now can you give names to them and write an adventure story for them? Where will they go, who (or what) will they meet and what will they get up to?

Use a real location as a starting point for your adventure, just like in the book. Perhaps their adventure could start in your classroom or your own bedroom at home – who or what will your paper dolls meet first?



Where can they go and what challenges and obstacles will they meet on their adventure? Have a think about what toys, objects and equipment you have that they could interact with. How will your story end?

You could do this as a group story building exercise where the whole class could be involved in coming up with ideas for the Paper Dolls' adventure. Get lots of suggestions for each part of the story and choose the most exciting or interesting ones. You could write the story up and turn it into a display, with drawings of each part.

Art Activity

Look at the page in the book where the Paper Dolls go into the little girl's memory and find all the things she has there;

... 'white mice and fireworks, And a starfish soap,

And a kind granny,

And the butterfly hairslide,

And more and more lovely things each day

And each year.'

Can you draw a picture that combines all of your favourite memories?

What setting would you choose?

Which people, objects and moments would be in your picture?



Puppet Making

There are a range of puppet styles in the show –

these include:

- Bunraku Puppets
- Hand Puppets
- Rod Puppets

The puppets in the show are made from a range of materials including foam, fabric, Styrofoam, paper and foam board.



These materials make the puppets as lightweight as possible so that the puppeteers are comfortable when performing. Foam is a great material for puppet making as it can be cut and carved and is flexible for great movement and realistic ‘fleshy’ touch.

The bunraku puppets are controlled with small rods attached to their heads, hands and feet. They are often operated by more than one puppeteer. The flexible nature of the materials they are made from means movement can be created easily.

When you design and make a puppet make sure you think about these things:

- Decide on the character **first** (before you start drawing or making). Is it a person, an animal or a made-up creature? Is it a character for a show you will be performing? What is that character like? Match the character with a suitable puppet style (marionette, glove, rod, finger, shadow etc.)
- Decide what your puppet will need to do if it is performing in a show (walk, swim, fly, nod, wave?) Which parts need to move or not?

Materials

Remember that puppets have to be held up and moved by a puppeteer so choose light materials. If you make your puppet too heavy you won't be able to use it! **You don't have to use specialise materials to make a puppet – many everyday items can be used** such as from boxes/containers/old magazines and wrapping paper/tubs/tubes/wool/ string/clothes/bottles etc..

- **Draw a design for the puppet and remember to include:**

1. What materials you will need.
2. Which parts of the puppet will move – How?
3. Will any parts be jointed? (elbows or knees)
4. Don't forget to draw the rods/strings/controls etc that move the puppet so that you know where they will go.

Behind the Scenes-Puppet Making

Set & Puppet Designer and Maker Lyndie Wright in the workshop. Lyndie is working on the puppets of the little girl who is called Rosie in the show, and Rosie's daughter (who appears right at the end of the play when Rosie is grown up).

Lyndie's designs closely resemble Rebecca Cobb's illustrations from the picture book, even down to the tiniest details.

The back cloth which re-creates the beautiful illustration of Rosie's memories. First the cloth is painted and then it will be embellished with mirrors, ribbons and other textures to bring it to life under the theatre lights.



Behind the Scenes-Puppet Making



The Paper Dolls appear in various sizes throughout the show – here is a small scale version of them riding on the bus!

Work in progress on the 3 pigs from Rosie's toy farm. The puppet makers work from detailed plans to carve the parts of the puppet from Styrofoam before painting and decorating with final details.



Puppet Making Instructions

Make an Envelope Hand Puppet

In both the book and the production of The Paper Dolls, Rosie's mum has an oven glove which is like a crocodile. In Rosie's imagination, the crocodile comes to life and snaps at the Paper Dolls.



A puppet worn on the hand is called a Glove puppet or Hand puppet – here's how you can make a simple puppet with a mouth that can open and close – or go snap snap snap!

You could create any kind of creature using this method – a bird, frog or fox, or maybe a dragon or an imaginary monster. Or how about making your own tiger or crocodile, just like the ones in the show?

You will need:

- C5 Envelope (A5 size) which opens at the short end
- Masking tape
- Tissue paper in various colours
- Glue stick / double sided sticky tape
- Scissors

What to do:

1) First you need to make a mouth by re-folding the envelope. Put your hand inside the envelope and push the middle of the closed end inwards.



2) Keep pushing inwards until you create a mouth shape with two pointed lips.



3) Now flatten out the envelope so that it has folds along the sides that were previously flat.



Puppet Making Instructions

Make an Envelope Hand Puppet—Continued

- 4) If you want to, you can make the lips a different shape (e.g. curved) by folding inwards and taping, or trimming with scissors, and re-sealing the ends with masking tape.
- 5) You can add on other features such as ears, horns, wings etc by cutting out and taping on card shapes.
- 6) Now you are ready to decorate your puppet – use tissue paper to cover the envelope all over so it no longer looks like an envelope. Create the texture of fur or feathers by scrunching paper, or cutting feather shapes and layering the paper. You can add eyes by sticking on balls of tissue paper and add teeth or a tongue inside the mouth.
- 7) Wear your puppet on your hand with your fingers in the top part of the mouth and thumb in the bottom part of the mouth so you can make it open and close. Can your puppet talk or make an animal noise? Can it eat, yawn or nibble someone's fingers?



Here are some ideas for using your Paper Dolls inspired puppets:

Being a puppeteer is different from acting. Don't forget that that puppet is the actor not you! Here are some tips to help you bring the puppet to life and be the star of the show:

1. Look at your puppet. If you keep your eyes on your puppet while you are using it you will be able to see what it is doing and make sure the movements look good. This is also the best way to keep everyone's focus on the puppet and not the puppeteer. Remember, the puppet is the star!
2. Give your puppet breath and keep it alive! Even if the puppet isn't doing anything at certain points don't let the puppet flop. Keep your eye on the puppet and what it is doing. Even if it isn't talking it should still be breathing and moving, even if it is asleep!
3. Where is your puppet looking? Make sure your puppets eyes are facing the right way. If your puppet is talking to another puppet they should be looking at them. If something happens is your puppet paying attend to it?
4. Is your puppet moving realistically? Try and think about how a real croc moves. Can you make your puppet move in a similar way or do things that a real crocodile does? Can your puppet swim? Crawl? Open it's mouth? Lie down? Roll over?
5. Give your puppet a voice. How does your puppet bark? Not all dogs sound the same. If your puppet can talk, what does it's voice sound like?

Practice these actions with your puppet to improve your puppetry skills:

- Your puppet is sleeping.
- Your puppet slowly wakes up.
- Your puppet is still tired, it goes back to sleep gradually.
- Your puppet is woken up suddenly by a loud noise.
- Your puppet is scared and is looking around to see what the noise was..
- Your puppet is happy that there is no danger. Your puppet goes for a little walk,
- Your puppet meets another croc. They greet each other and check each other out.
- Your puppet slides into the water.
- Your puppet swims away.

Now that you have puppets you can use them to explore characters and tell stories.

- In pairs learn about another puppet character. Talk to each other in character and find out their name and three other facts about them by asking questions.
- Puppet talent show! Think of a special skill that your puppet has. Practice performing this. Put on a talent show.
- Play with story ideas in groups. Use the ideas you come up with as starting points for story writing. Note down your ideas.

Useful Paper Dolls Links

About Julia Donaldson

<http://www.juliadonaldson.co.uk/>

Julia Donaldson's official website, including lots of information about her work.

[An interview with Julia Donaldson in The Scotsman Newspaper, which includes some information about The Paper Dolls](#)

About Rebecca Cobb

<http://www.rebeccacobb.co.uk/>

Illustrator Rebecca Cobbs official website

Information and resources about *The Paper Dolls*

<http://www.panmacmillan.com/paperdollsworldrecord>

Information and resources about the successful world record attempt to create the longest chain of Paper Dolls in the world! The page also includes video clips and templates to download.

How to make Paper Dolls

You can find many many pages online with useful instructions for making paper dolls here are just a few!

- <http://www.auntannie.com/FridayFun/DollChain/>
- <https://origami-resource-center.com/paper-dolls/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oITiIL5HBU>

To decorate your paper doll chain, why not use a range of materials including paint, pencil and crayons as well as fabric scraps, coloured paper, doilies, wool, feathers, cupcake cases and shiny paper. Can you make each doll look totally different even though they are the same shape?



About Little Angel Theatre

www.littleangeltheatre.com

Find out about our shows, tours, workshops and activities.

Join our National Schools Partnership Programme

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Visit our Website to find out more;

<https://www.littleangeltheatre.com/for-schools/schools-partnership-programme/>

Shows At Your School

We have a range of productions which tour into schools, some which are available as part of a tour and others which are available all year round. Enjoy the magic of Little Angel Theatre in your very own School Hall.

[Find out more!](#)

Workshops

If it's a workshop you want, look no further! We have years of experience offering workshops for schools. Whether it is one of our curriculum focussed puppet workshops or you want a more bespoke offer, we have something suitable for all students.

[Book a Workshop!](#)

Come to us

We have lots of exciting productions at our venues for you to see, as well as a huge catalogue of wonderful and free digital shows for you to watch in your classroom.

[See for yourself!](#)

