



The Pinhead Pattern

The Pinhead Pattern

The Pinhead Pattern is part of the Simple Series at Project Puppet. Like our other patterns, it focuses on a basic headshape, specifically a pointed or conical shape, on which to build your own original puppet characters. This pattern, although basic in design, can be used to produce a very professional-looking finished hand puppet in a matter of hours. The first and single most important step in crafting a memorable and unique puppet is **character creation**. A puppet's physical appearance should offer a visual clue as to the character's personality. We recommend sketching your character first. Then build the puppet. By doing so we know you will be even more pleased with the final result. That having been said, let's begin!

Material List

$\frac{3}{4}$ yard of fabric (antron fleece, polar fleece, furry fleece, terry cloth – we recommend a fabric that has some stretch to it)

6 X 9 piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch polyfoam

$7\frac{1}{2}$ X 11 piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch polyfoam for optional foam skull

5 X 8 piece of posterboard or stiffened felt

5 X 8 piece of felt (usually red, black, or pink for mouth interior)

Hot glue and glue gun or fabric glue

Basic sewing supplies

Polyester fiberfill

1 Prepare the Pattern

Print and cut the pattern pieces for these instructions. If you are planning to machine sew your puppet, include the additional portions of the patterns outlined by the dashed lines.

We suggest rough cutting the individual pattern pieces out, gluing them to posterboard or another stiff material, and then carefully trimming around the edges of each piece. Preparing your pattern in this way will facilitate many uses in the years to come.

2 Trace and Cut the Materials

Fabric

Position and trace the Head Pattern, the Front Body Pattern, and the Back Body Pattern on the fabric you have chosen for your puppet. Follow the instructions on the actual pattern pieces. Don't forget to mark the centerline on both the Front and Back Body Patterns.

Carefully cut all the pattern pieces mentioned above along the traced lines. Cut four $5\frac{1}{2}$ " X 12" rectangles from the fabric, preferably with the grain running lengthwise. We will use these pieces for the arm and hands of the puppet.

Polyfoam

Lay the polyfoam flat. Position and trace the Foam Mouthplate Pattern onto the material. Cut out the foam mouthplate with an X-Acto™ knife.

Felt

Position and trace the Felt Mouthplate Pattern on your felt piece. Mark the two center points and cut with scissors.

Posterboard or Stiffened Felt

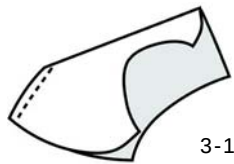
Position and trace the Mouthplate Pattern on the posterboard or stiffened felt. Again, mark the center points and cut two pieces from the posterboard or stiffened felt.

3 The Head and Body

The Head

3-1

Sew the darts (Seam 1) on each of the two head pieces.



3-1



3-1

3-2



3-2

Sew the two head pieces together by sewing Seam 2 and Seam 3.

3-3

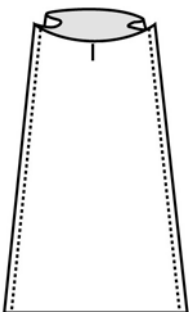
Using a simple whipstitch, sew in the felt mouthplate by hand. Line up the center points that you marked on the felt previously with the top head seam (Seam 2) and the lower jaw seam (Seam 3). Pin the felt in place and stitch.



3-3

The Body

3-4



3-4

Sew Seam 4 and Seam 5, attaching the front body piece to the back body piece. You may also, at this point, put in a simple hem around the bottom edge of the body for a finished look.

3-5

Now we'll sew the head to the body. First, turn the head right side out. The body should remain inside out. Place the head face down into the opening at the top of the body (The Neck Hole). Line up the head's lower jaw seam (Seam 3) with the center point marked on the front body piece. Line the top head seam (Seam 2) with the center point marked on the back body piece. Pin in place and whipstitch the head to the body. The head and body base is complete!



4

The Mouthplate

4-1

Lay the foam mouthplate piece flat.

4-2

Use fabric glue (or hot glue) to glue the two mouthplate pieces, cut from the stiffened felt or posterboard, in position. Use the white dashed lines found on the Foam Mouthplate Pattern as a guide.

4-3

With the the head and body turned inside out, glue the felt mouthplate directly onto the two mouthplate pieces fixed to the foam. Make sure the top head seam (Seam 2) is toward the top of the mouthplate and centered.

4-4

Turn the puppet right side out. With the mouthplate installed this will be a little more difficult than before. Just turn the mouthplate any way you can to get the puppet right side out. The mouthplate is semi-flexible so don't be afraid to bend it if you must. A little twisting and bending won't hurt at all.



4-2



4-3



4-4



5-3



5

Arms and Hands

5-1

Take two of the 5 ½" X 12" pieces of fabric and lay one on top of the other with the right sides together. Trace the Arm Pattern on the top piece.

5-2

Machine sew along the traced lines

5-3

Now trim away the excess fabric. Carefully cut around the stitching of the arm and between the fingers. Then turn the arm and hand right side out.

At this point you may choose to stuff the arm and hand with the polyester fiberfill. To ensure the puppet's joints move correctly, stuff the arms and hands in sections. Stuff each finger separately, then the palm, the lower arm, and the upper arm, leaving the wrist and elbow with little or no stuffing. The arm will naturally bend where there is no fiberfill.

5-4

Repeat the above steps to complete the other arm and hand.

5-5

Position both arms on the body of the puppet and pin in place. As a general rule you may place the puppet's arms centered on Seam 4 and Seam 5 of the body and about ½ inch down from the neck seam. Of course, if the character calls for a different positioning of the arms feel free to experiment. Stitch the top of the arms to the body using a simple whipstitch.

You may use some polyester fiberfill to round the top of the head. Or for a more professional look, add the optional foam skull as outlined below.



6

Foam Skull (Optional)

The foam skull facilitates a consistent headshape and adds to the professionalism of the puppet.

6-1

Trace and cut the Foam Skull Pattern according to the instructions on the pattern piece. Cut the foam with an X-Acto™ knife. You will have two foam pieces as shown (6-1).

6-2

Hot glue Seam 1 together on both foam skull pieces. Then glue the two pieces together along Seam 2.

Here are a few tips on hot gluing foam:

- ▶ Apply the hot glue to only one edge of the seam, but be generous.
- ▶ When applying the glue, get close to the edge but not over.
- ▶ Glue one to two inches at a time, less if you are gluing around a tight curve.
- ▶ Press your seams together, line the surfaces with each other, and hold it in the most natural position possible. Foam will stretch and although this can be a redeeming feature it can also be a downfall. Again, try to keep the foam in a natural position and allow the glue to cool completely.
- ▶ Look ahead to ensure your seams are ending where they should. Foam will stretch, but it is better to make adjustments gradually and not all at once.

5-5



6-1



6-2



That's it! The foam skull is complete. Now, insert the foam skull into the puppet's head. Adjust it so that the head's center seam (Seam 2) lines up with the foam skull's center seam (Seam 2). Seam 1 of both of the pieces of the foam skull should be toward the back of the puppet's head and the front of the skull should set right on top of the upper mouthplate. Now it's time to add the puppet's features!

7 Character Features

Adding Features to Your Character

There are so many possibilities when it comes to character features, we can't even begin to think of everything that might work. We strongly suggest referring to your original character sketches or character ideas. The goal is to find, in the three-dimensional world, a way to mimic the two-dimensional features drawn on paper. Always stay true to your character. Some suggestions of materials you may consider are listed below.

Eyes

- ▶ Ping pong balls
- ▶ Racquetballs
- ▶ Foam practice golf balls
- ▶ Plastic spoons
- ▶ Marbles
- ▶ Buttons
- ▶ Foam or fabric eyelids
- ▶ Fake eyelashes
- ▶ Pipe cleaner eyelashes

Noses

- ▶ Foam balls
- ▶ Foam practice golf balls
- ▶ Patterned sheet foam
- ▶ Carved foam
- ▶ Sewn noses

Ears

- ▶ Foam balls cut in half
- ▶ Patterned sheet foam
- ▶ Carved foam
- ▶ Sewn ears

Teeth

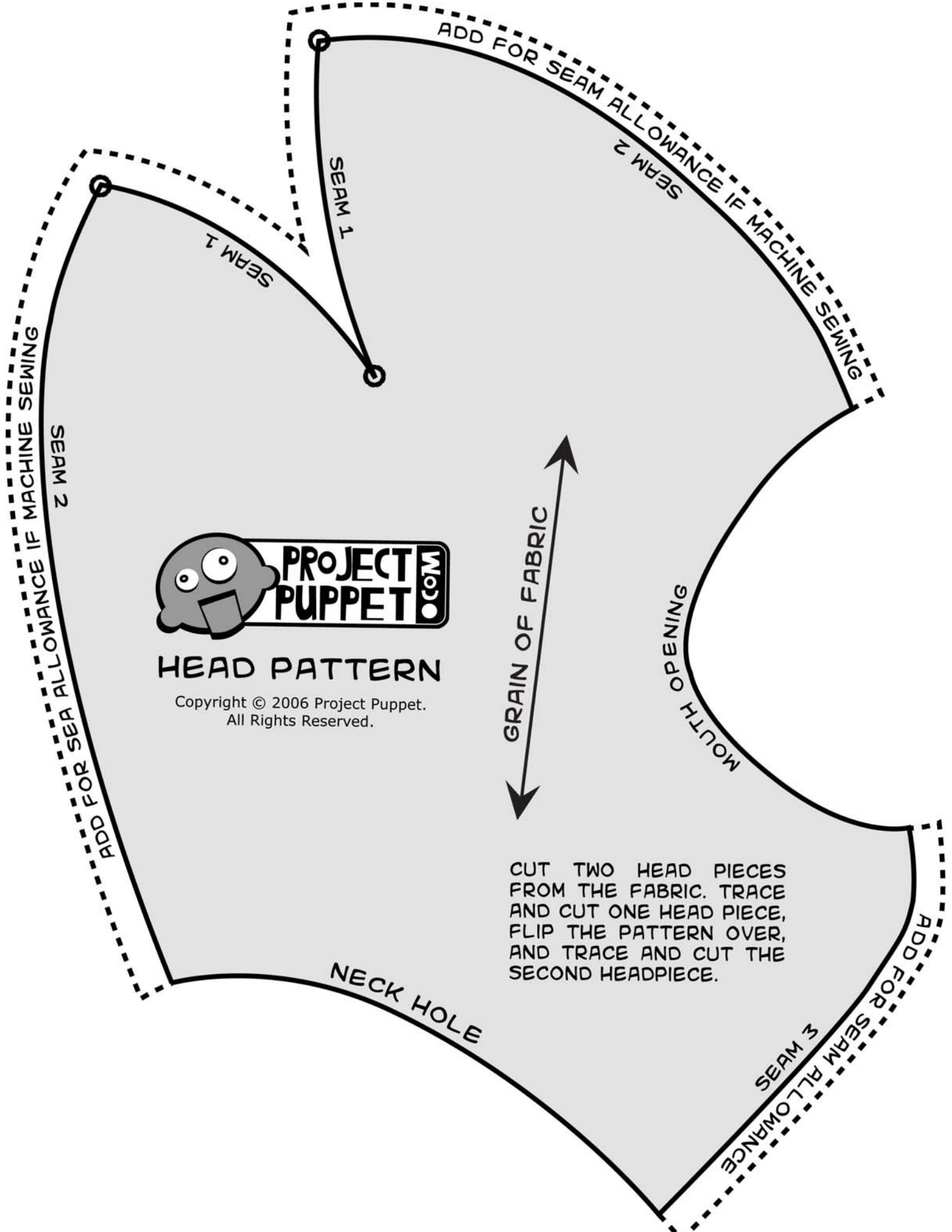
- ▶ Strip of 1/2" sheet foam
- ▶ White pipe cleaner
- ▶ Carved make-up sponges (our favorite)
- ▶ Craft foam

Tongues

- ▶ Felt
- ▶ Sheet foam
- ▶ Craft foam

Hair

- ▶ Fake fur
- ▶ Old wigs / hair pieces
- ▶ Feather boas / Ostrich feather boas
- ▶ Yarn
- ▶ Foam strips
- ▶ Craft feathers



HEAD PATTERN

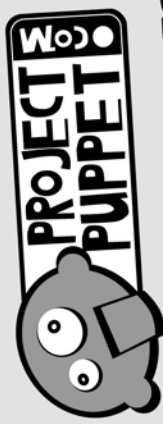
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CUT TWO HEAD PIECES FROM THE FABRIC. TRACE AND CUT ONE HEAD PIECE, FLIP THE PATTERN OVER, AND TRACE AND CUT THE SECOND HEADPIECE.

CUT TWO FOAM SKULL PIECES.
TRACE AND CUT ONE SKULL
PIECE, FLIP THE PATTERN
OVER, AND TRACE AND CUT THE
SECOND SKULL PIECE.

SEAM 1

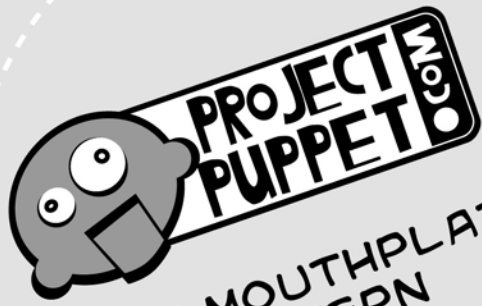
SEAM 2



FOAM SKULL PATTERN

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SEAM 1



FOAM MOUTHPLATE
PATTERN

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MARK CENTER
POINT

MOUTHPLATE PATTERN

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MARK CENTER
POINT



FRONT BODY PATTERN

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ADD FOR SEAM ALLOWANCE IF MACHINE SEWING

SEAM 4

ADD FOR SEAM ALLOWANCE IF MACHINE SEWING

SEAM 5

MARK CENTER
POINT



BACK BODY PATTERN

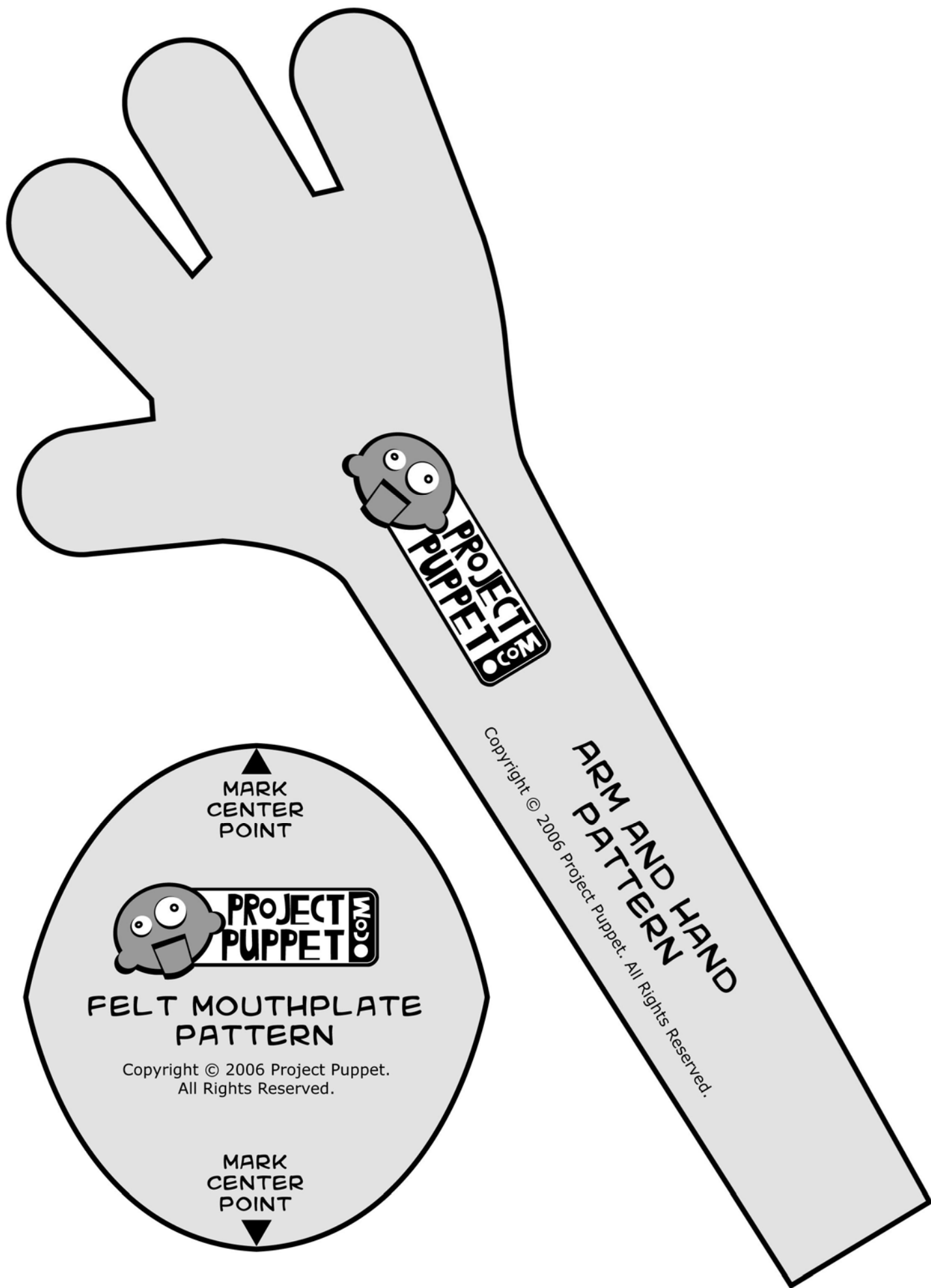
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SEAM 4

SEAM 5

ADD FOR SEAM ALLOWANCE IF MACHINE SEWING

ADD FOR SEAM ALLOWANCE IF MACHINE SEWING



▲
MARK
CENTER
POINT



FELT MOUTHPLATE PATTERN

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MARK
CENTER
POINT
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