



Lower Elementary | Performance Guide



Walton Arts Center



# Bear State of Mind

Photo credit: Ironside Photography

Separated from his family, Bear travels the state of Arkansas where he meets new friends, Owl, Mockingbird and Woodpecker. His journey leads him through three of Arkansas' geographic regions, and uncovers native wildlife, folklore and symbols. Playwright Ashley Edwards, songwriter Shannon Wurst and Trike Theatre share their love for Arkansas' unique beauty in this special performance of *Bear State of Mind*, an original play produced and presented by Walton Arts Center.

Ideas for Curriculum Connections to Common Core State Learning Standards:

CCSS: RI.2.1 and 9; RI.3.3, 7 and 9; W.2.8; W.3.7 and 8; SL.2.1a,2,3 and 4; SL.3.4; L.2.6; L.3.3



Photo credit: Ironside Photography

## The Story

Lost in the woods, an Arkansas Black Bear seeks his family in a journey through the state. Bear meets new Arkansas native friends and uses his senses to navigate home and reunite with his family. Bear's journey and discoveries in Arkansas inspire young learners to appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of Arkansas.

## The Artists

The script and production of *Bear State of Mind* developed through a partnership between Walton Arts Center and Trike Theatre, Northwest Arkansas' professional theater for youth. This is the second production relating to Arkansas that the partners have created together, the first being *Digging Up Arkansas*, written by playwright and Arkansas educator Mike Thomas. The creation of *Bear State of Mind* involved a collaborative story phase from which the script was adapted by Arkansas playwright Ashley Edwards, and original music and lyrics composed by Arkansas singer songwriter Shannon Wurst. Puppets were conceived and constructed by Robin Murray, Jason Suel, Alex Newby and Brandi Hoofnagle. The unique setting was designed and constructed by members from the Walton Arts Center technical team including Pete Croken and Alex Newby.

## The Performance

*Bear State of Mind* is a uniquely staged performance with the audience in close proximity to the actors. The audience is seated on the floor in circular space, within a setting that suggests a campsite. As children take their seats, sounds of the natural world, bugs and insects are audible. This innovative seating plan evolved from the fact that young learners are more attentive when allowed to move. The interactive theater experience invites the audience to turn their bodies as they follow along with the play's action. The performance physically engages the audience while the story unfolds. The play includes three actors who perform multiple roles through puppetry. As puppeteers they use choreographed body movement, rhythm and precise timing to create all the characters in the story.

## The Artform of Puppetry

A puppet is any inanimate figure manipulated by a person called a puppeteer. Even very simple puppets when well manipulated are powerful in their ability to bring stories to life. The art of puppetry begins in a good story, imaginative use of stage space and the animation of puppets. *Bear State of Mind* features different types of puppets, including rod puppets, figures manipulated by rods and shadow puppets. Puppets are created spontaneously from object found at the play's campsite. During the performance the puppeteers are visible on stage as they operate the puppets.

# Learning Activities

## Looking and Listening

Discuss with students the difference between domestic and wild animals.

Ask students to:

- > Look and listen for the domestic animals that live in their neighborhood.
- > Look and listen for wildlife.
- > Listen for birds.
- > Listen for insect sounds in the spring and summer.
- > Look and listen for the natural diversity of animals, reptiles and insects in Arkansas.
- > Describe which sounds best describes their neighborhood.

## Describing

Learn about Arkansas state birds in *Arkansas Backyard Birds* from Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Ask students to complete the statement:  
"I'm as \_\_\_\_\_(color)\_\_\_\_\_  
as a \_\_\_\_\_(bird)\_\_\_\_\_."

Later, students can draw a picture of their bird to go with their statement.

## Treasure Hunt

Create a treasure hunt for students using state symbols including: honeybee, diamond, apple blossom and black bear in sequence. After the show, ask students to create a sequence of the state symbols in order of their appearance in the show. Learn more about the state symbols at: [http://www.soskids.ar.gov/pdfs-09/Arkansas\\_State\\_Symbols.pdf](http://www.soskids.ar.gov/pdfs-09/Arkansas_State_Symbols.pdf)

After seeing the performance ask students to put the text card sentences, below, in sequence.



Photo credit: Ironside Photography

## Text Cards for Comprehension

- > An Arkansas Black Bear was chased through the woods by a honeybee and lost his family.
- > A Barred Owl found Bear and invited him on a journey to find the scary Gowrow monster.
- > Bear and Owl traveled over the hills of Crowley's Ridge to the Arkansas Delta.
- > Bear and Owl met two birds who love to sing, Mockingbird and Woodpecker.
- > Bear and Owl traveled down the Mississippi River to the Coastal Plain of Arkansas.
- > Bear and Owl met a White Tail Deer who showed them how to be still and listen carefully.
- > Bear and Owl hiked to the Ozark mountains and found the Gowrow.
- > Bear and Owl discovered that the Gowrow was friendly and loved living in Arkansas.
- > Bear and Owl followed the Gowrow to the Ozark Mountains.
- > Bear found his family and Owl and Gowrow became friends.



# Learning Activities

## Sound Story

To create a soundscape of Arkansas, retell the story of *Bear State of Mind*, focusing students' attention on the sequence of regions that Bear visits. Ask students what wildlife Bear might have met in these regions. Then, listen to bird and mammal sounds online (see websites listed on page 8). Using their bodies and voices, students can recreate the sounds of birds, insects and animals found in Arkansas. Ask students to vocalize the sequence of sounds to show where Bear traveled.

## Monster Imagination

Monsters appear in many folk legends. Ask students to name their favorite monsters and then to draw them in detail. Ask students to give their monster a name. Next, ask them to record any features of the Gowrow that they remember from the performance. Students can draw a picture of a Gowrow and write simple sentences describing the monster, then share their monster pictures and writing. As a class, choose the monster that might be found in Arkansas.

## Mapping

Ask students to trace or draw the shape of the state of Arkansas. Show them where to find the five geophysical regions. Ask students to label the five regions. Students can draw a bear or owl on the three regions that Bear visited. Ask students to create a word wall describing the terrain of Arkansas.

## Sequencing

Ask students:

>What animal did Bear meet first?

>Who came next?

(characters met in order are honeybee, black bear, mockingbird, white tailed deer and pine tree)

>What clue helped Bear find the Gowrow?

Photo credit: Ironside Photography



## Pre Performance Discussion

- > Have you ever seen a performance using puppets?
- > Have you ever used puppets to tell a story?
- > What do puppets look like?
- > Where do puppets perform?
- > Is a puppet's stage different from a stage for people?
- > How do puppets move?
- > What is a puppeteer?

## Reflect and Assess

### Ask students:

- > How would you describe Bear and Owl?
- > What did the actors do with their voices and puppets that made the characters special?
- > How would you describe Mock? Wood? Deer? Pine Tree? the Gowrow?
- > Describe the set. How did the designers make it feel like you were outside?
- > What sounds did you hear?
- > What state symbols did you know before the performance? What symbols do you know now?
- > If you performed *Bear State of Mind*, how would you play Mock and Wood? Black Bear and Barred Owl? The Gowrow? Why would you perform them that way?
- > How did the performance make you feel?
- > What moment in the performance do you remember most?
- > Think, plan and write a description of that moment for someone who was unable to experience the performance.
- > What did you learn about the state of Arkansas?
- > What questions do you have about Bear State of Mind?

# Artists create *Bear State of Mind*



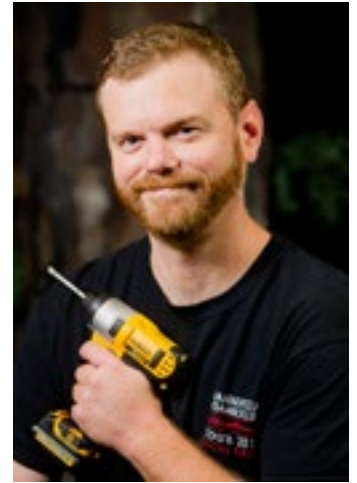
Ashley Edwards, Playwright



Kassie Misiewicz, Director



Shannon Wurst, Actor and musician



Alex Newby, Designer

Photo credit: Ironside Photography

## Who's Who in the Play



Playwright - Ashley Edwards

Music & Lyrics - Shannon Wurst

Director - Kassie Misiewicz & Christopher Parks

Stage Manager - Carley Tisdale

Actors - Shannon Wurst, Jason Suel, Julie Gabel

Set Design - Alex Newby and Peter Croken

Puppet Concepts - Robin Murray, Jason Suel,

Brandi Hoofnagle & Alex Newby

Puppet Design & Construction - Robin Murray,

Brandi Hoofnagle & the cast

Costume Design - Tessa Miner

Sound Designer - Will Eubanks

Crew - Josh King & Walton Arts Center Tech Staff

Producers - Laura Goodwin, Dr. Patricia Relph &

Katie Williams

# Artists create *Bear State of Mind*



Julie Gabel, actor



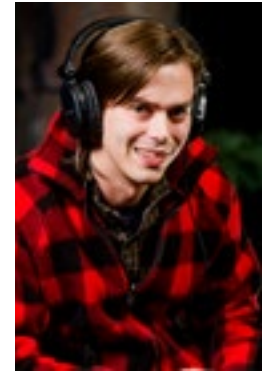
Jason Suel, actor



Carley Tisdale, Stage Manager



Tessa Miner, Costumer Designer



Will Eubanks, Sound Designer

Photo credit: Ironside Photography

## People who put on a show

- > Producers – people who put productions together, solve problems and keep track of budgets.
- > Writers – people who imagine the people, places and actions in a story and write down all the words, song lyrics and music. The writers are: playwrights, lyricists and composer.
- > Directors – people who create the vision of the show. They work with designers and performers to bring the play to life on stage. They are problem solvers and decision makers.
- > Designers – people who imagine the scenery, costume, lights, properties and sound in the play.
- > Technicians – people who build the sets, sew the costumes, hang the lights, build properties and record the sound imagined by the designers.
- > Puppeteers - people who design and tell stories with puppets.
- > Performers – people who act, sing, play an instrument or dance in the play.
- > Stage Managers – people who oversee the actors and crew for the production each day, organize and problem solve.
- > Crew – people who work backstage during the performance to keep it running smoothly.
- > Learning & Engagement Team – people who develop workshops, study guides or learning activities for audiences who will see the show.
- > Marketing / Communication – people who design posters, create advertisement or communication to tell people about the show.
- > Underwriter – people or organizations who provide money to create the show.
- > Audience – people like you, who come to see a performance!



Photo credit: Ironside Photography



# Puppetry Activities

Two characters in *Bear State of Mind* are an honeybee and a Barred Owl. Ask students to create a story about a bird and insect adventure in Arkansas. Use templates found on pages 9 - 12 to create simple Bee and Owl rod puppets, pictured below.

## Create a Bee Rod Puppet

- >Color Bee body (front & back) and wings.
- >Cut out Bee body and wings.
- >Color both sides of BEE wings.
- >Attach wings by gluing the letter A tab on the wing to the letter B on the Bee body and make the wings fold down. Do the same with the letter C tap to the letter D.
- >Attach a pencil or popsicle stick halfway up between the non-colored sides of the Bee body making a sandwich. Glue the bodies together as well.
- > Show the movement of BEE in flight. Move the BEE from right to left across the body. Turn the stick/rod at the end of the motion to continue the flight of BEE from left to right in a return path across the body.

## Create an Owl Rod Puppet

- >Color OWL body (front & back) and OWL wings.
- Hint : Draw shapes for eyes, beak, and texture for feathers
- >Cut out OWL body (front & back) and OWL wings.
- >Students color other side of wings.
- >Use a glue stick or tape to attach wings. Make the letter A on the wing tab cover the letter B on the body. Make the letter C wing tab go on top of the letter D on the body. Do the same idea on the other side. You should be able to see the letters A, C, E, & G on the backside of the OWL when done correctly. Fold wings in like the OWL is hugging itself.
- >Attach a pencil or popsicle stick halfway up between the non-colored sides of the OWL body making a sandwich. Glue the bodies together as well.
- >Flap your OWL puppet wings by making a windshield wiper movement!

## Create Performance

- In small groups, students:
- Create a puppet story using Bee and Owl as the two characters.
  - Select a place in Arkansas where Bee and Owl will travel. (example: your school)
  - Research what features make your place special.
  - Write sentences for Bee and Owl that will be their dialogue.
  - Plan how they move from beginning, middle and end of the story.
  - Use high, medium and low levels in your movement.
  - Narrate the story, and show movement of the puppets.
  - Rehearse and Share with another group.



Puppeteer Brandi Hoofnagle, designed two simple rod puppets that could be created in a classroom. Owl and Honeybee are two characters who are part of the story of *Bear State of Mind*. Puppet Patterns are found on pages 9-12 of this guide.



Puppeteer Jason Suel, uses a found object, a life preserver, to create a puppet of Owl. Puppets can be created from any highly visible object including: coffee pots, kayaks, life preservers, ponchos, gourds and cloths pins.



Photo credit: Ironside Photography

## Teacher Resources

> [www.butlercenter.org/publication/books/arkansasatlas/index.html](http://www.butlercenter.org/publication/books/arkansasatlas/index.html)

Read *ARKANSAS: An Illustrated Atlas* by Tom Paradise. The atlas has maps, Arkansas History and information to help students research what is unique in Arkansas.

> <http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/barred-owl>

See video and hear the sounds of a Barred Owl.

> <http://mdc.mo.gov>

Learn about Ozark Night Sounds at the Missouri Department of Conservation.

> [www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com)

Learn more about animals in Arkansas and state history.

> [www.agfc.com/education/justForEducators/Pages/lessonPlans.aspx](http://www.agfc.com/education/justForEducators/Pages/lessonPlans.aspx)

Explore teacher and student resources.

> [www.naturalheritage.com/education/outreach/lesson-plans](http://www.naturalheritage.com/education/outreach/lesson-plans)

Many teacher resources on the natural diversity of Arkansas.

> [www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/framlst.html](http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/framlst.html)

Quick finder for bird sounds and identification tips.

Hear bird calls and songs at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

> <http://education.usgs.gov/primary.html>

Learn more about maps, geography, birds, insects, bats, amphibians and ecosystems.

## Volume 12 Number 1

Colgate Classroom Series performances help students meet Common Core Standards.

**Learn more at:**

**[www.waltonartscenter.org](http://www.waltonartscenter.org)**

### Walton Arts Center

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Sallie Zazal, *Schools Coordinator*

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Kassie Misiewicz, *Trike Theater*

#### AHA! Arkansas History through the Arts

The arts help students deeply respect, understand and remember the history of our state. Walton Arts Center's Arkansas History through the Arts (AHA) Program enriches the school experience in Northwest Arkansas and supports real learning outcomes. Students learn to love Arkansas history when they see *Bear State of Mind*, *Digging Up Arkansas*, *An Ozark Journey* and *Down the Dirt Road Blues*.

Teachers appreciate AHA performances for the way they engage students and make learning last.

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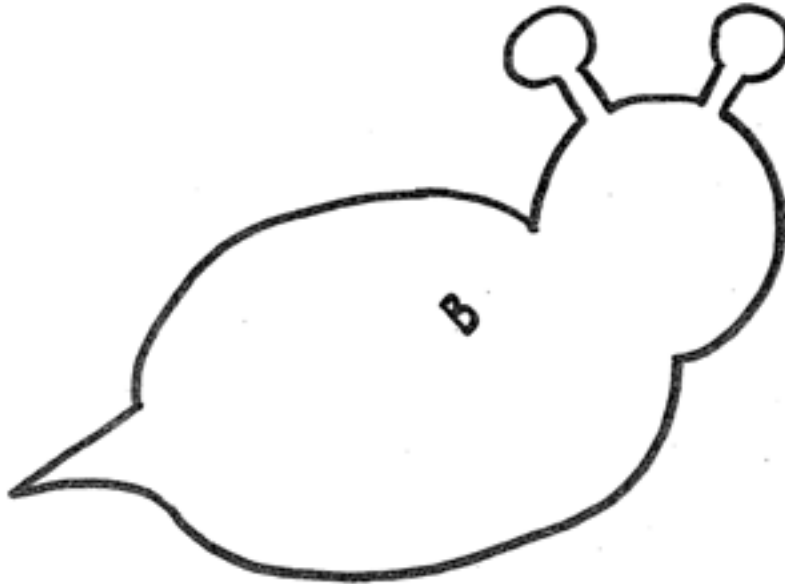
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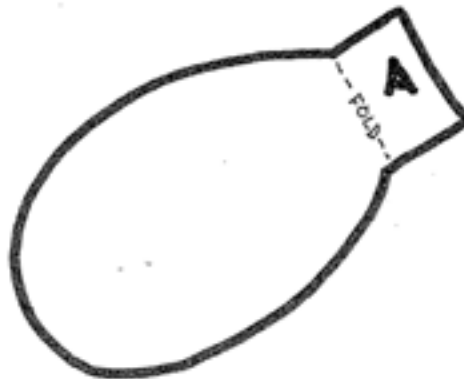


# Front of Bee



## Create a Bee Rod Puppet

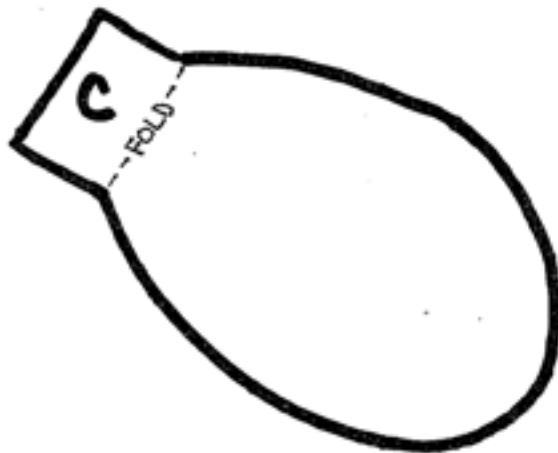
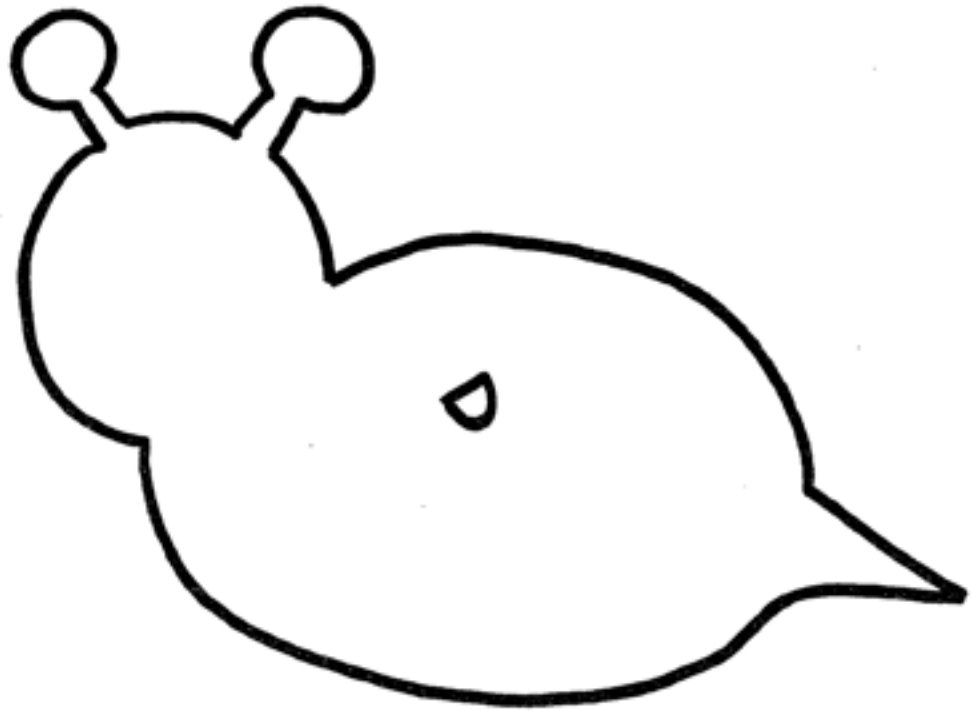
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- >Color the other side of BEE wings.
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- >Attach a pencil or popsicle stick halfway up between the non-colored sides of the bee body making a sandwich and glue the bodies together as well.
- > Show the movement of BEE in flight.  
Move the BEE from right to left across the body. Turn the stick/rod at the end of the motion to continue the flight of BEE from left to right in a return path across the body.



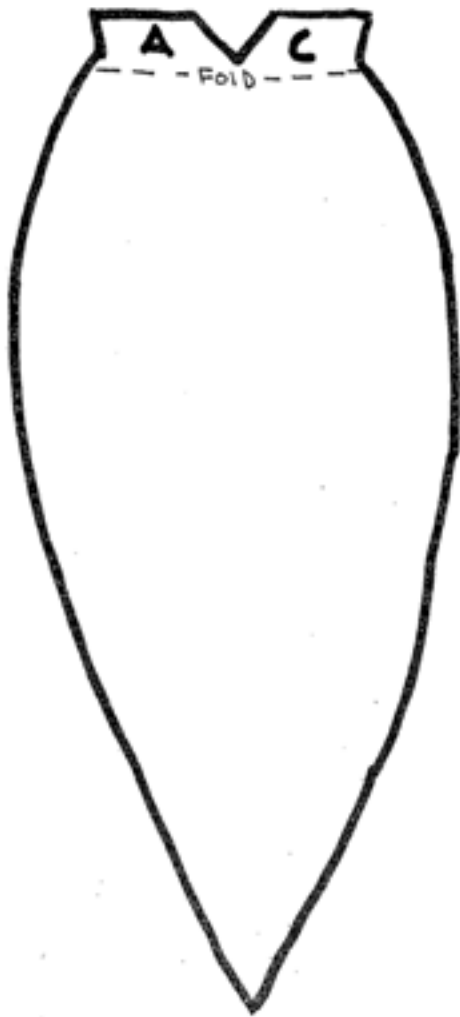
FRONT of BEE

Designed by: *Brandi Hoofnagle*  
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# Back of Bee



# Front of Owl



## Create an Owl Rod Puppet

>Students color OWL body (front & back) and OWL wings.

Hint : Draw shapes for eyes, beak, and texture for feathers

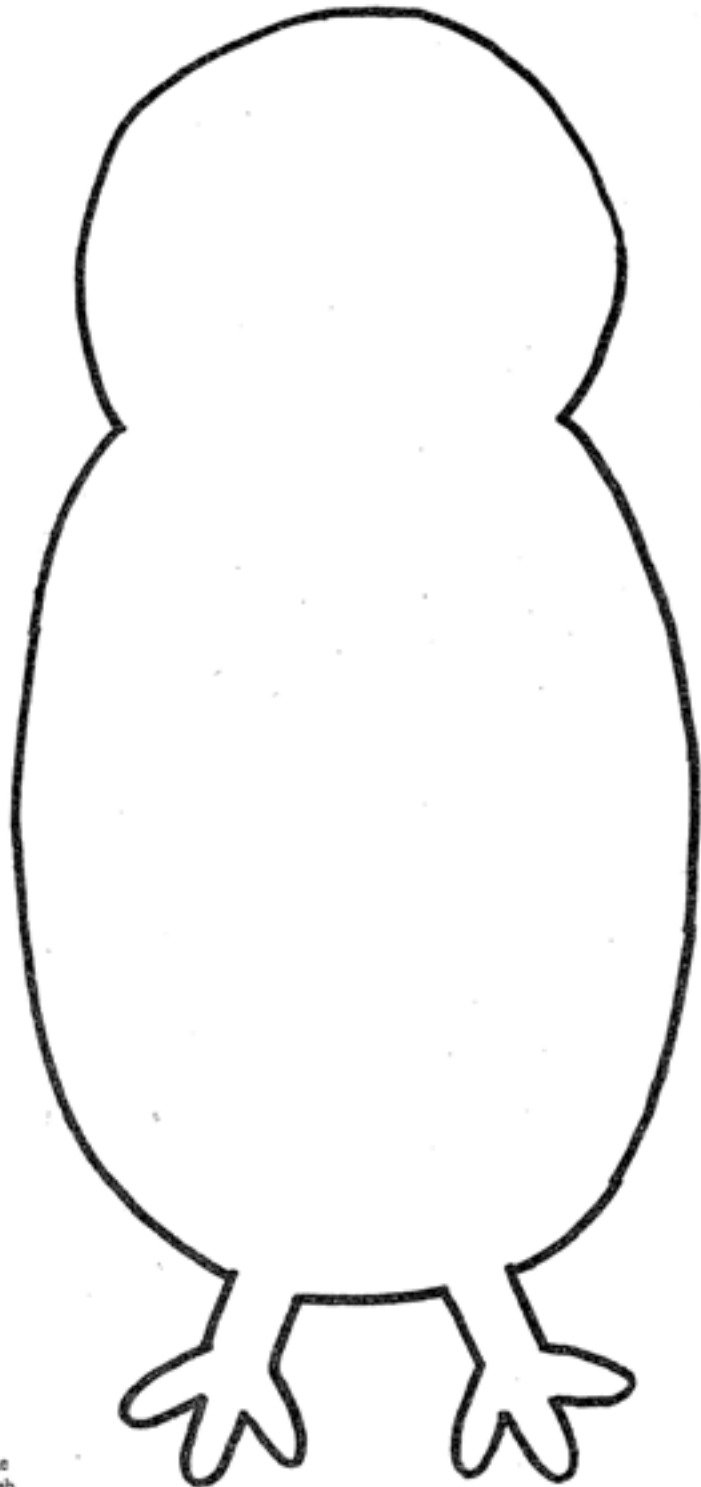
>Students cut out OWL body (front & back) and OWL wings.

>Students color other side of wings.

>Use a glue stick or tape to attach wings. Make the letter A on the wing tab cover the letter B on the body. Make the letter C wing tab go on top of the letter D on the body. Do the same idea on the other side. You should be able to see the letter A, C, E, & G on the backside of the OWL when done correctly. Fold wings in like the OWL is hugging itself.

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>Flap your OWL puppet wings by making a windshield wiper movement!



Designed by: *Brandi Hoofuagle*

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# Back of Owl

