

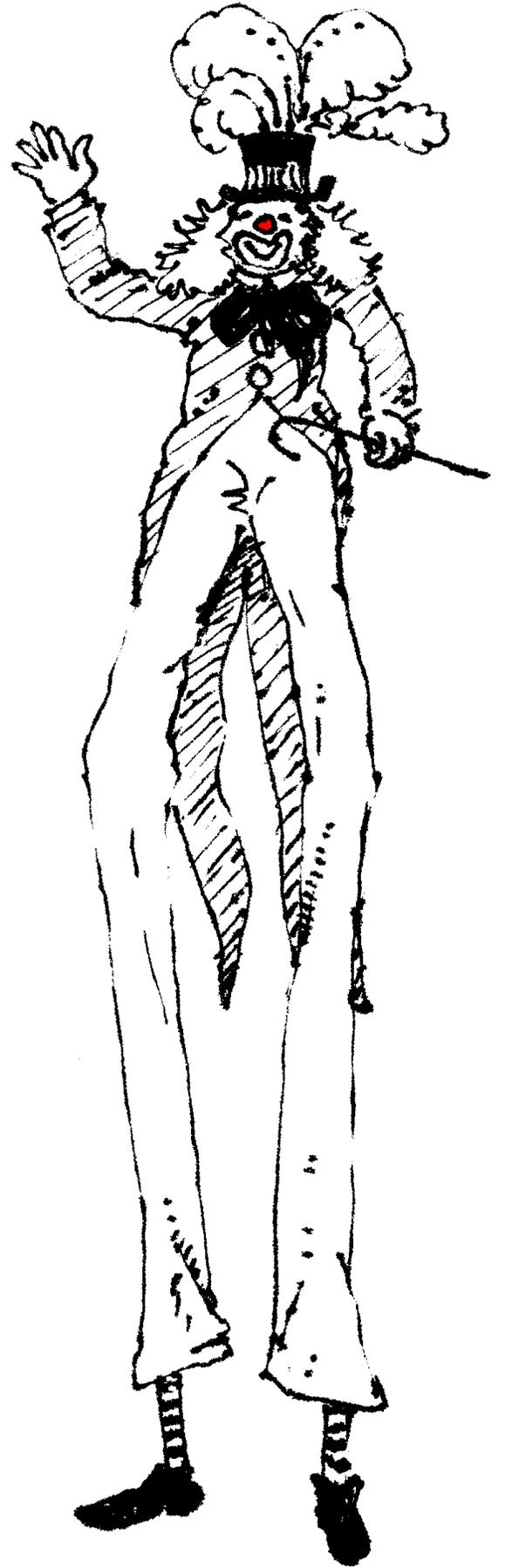


# THE ART OF CLOWNING



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# “CLOWNING”

means happiness and laughter to many people. Clowns add much color and enjoyment to parades, community events, and promotional activities. Clowns interact with the audience as they wave, perform antics, and visit personally with young and old.

4-H clowning provides unique opportunities for individuals to develop physical and performing skills as well as participate in a variety of fun events. It helps develop communications and relationships with others, and strengthens self-confidence.

## Opportunities

4-H clowns can become involved in many community activities and events. A clown may make people feel welcome to a grand opening or may urge people to patronize a car wash, a food stand, or a special attraction. Local service and community organizations often invite clowns to appear on their programs to entertain the audience.

Clowning is an excellent way to promote the 4-H program and can be incorporated into any project area. Clowns take part in parades, fairs, community functions, and 4-H variety shows. School functions, banquets, parties, style reviews, and mall days are other events in which a 4-H clown can become involved.

Clowns can be teachers, too, as they give demonstrations and perform skits and routines on specific topics to share with the audience.

Clowns support organizations by providing information and publicity for their service projects.

Children and families are delighted to have a clown lead them in games and activities at birthday celebrations, reunions, and parties.

Clowns also receive personal satisfaction as they bring a bit of cheer to hospital patients, homebound persons, and residents of convalescent homes.

Whether or not your clown club decides to be a service club, performing club, promotional club, or a combination, there are plenty of ways to involve everyone.

# The History of Clowning

Some of the earliest clowns were court jesters. During the Middle Ages they performed for royalty, wearing festive costumes trimmed with tinkling bells. They made the king and courtiers laugh at their funny stories and wild antics.

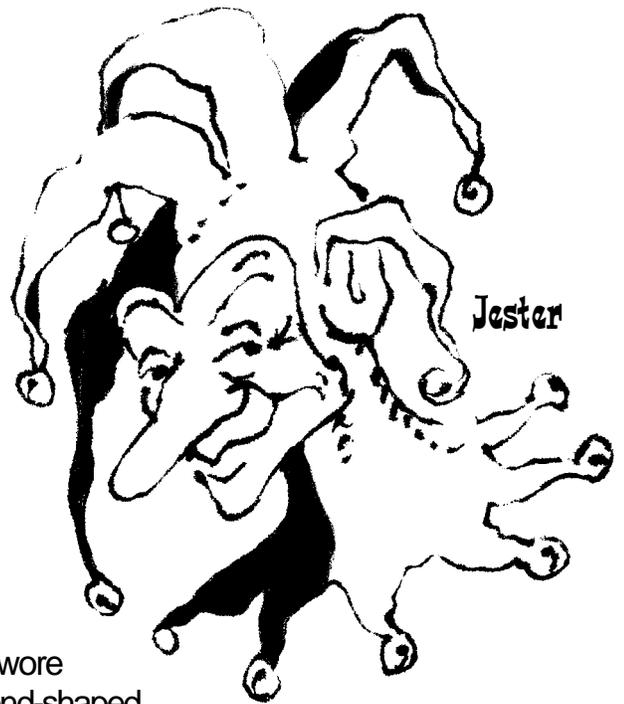
Harlequin clowns came after the jesters, appearing on the scene in sixteenth century Italian theater. They always wore tight-legged, full-sleeved costumes, bright with color in diamond-shaped patterns. They also wore black half-masks and white ruffled collars.

Then came the Pierrot clowns. They had big pompons, like huge buttons, down the front of their loose-fitting white tunics and on the peaks of their pointed hats. They usually wore ruffled collars, and they were the first clowns to use white makeup.

The clown suits worn to Halloween parties today are like the Pierrot costumes.

The first great clown of the modern circus was Joseph Grimaldi. He appeared in London, England, in the early 1800s. At that time circuses were very small and had only one ring; thus, clowns were able to talk or sing directly to the fans. One of Grimaldi's great songs was called "The Oyster Crossed in Love." He sang it tenderly to an oyster, then ate the oyster. Joseph Grimaldi was so famous that clowns since then have been known as "Joeys."

One of America's first great clowns was Dan Rice. He worked with performing pigs and stubborn mules. His funniest act was called "Pete Jenkins from Mud Corners." The act began as the ringmaster sadly announced the great bareback-riding star was sick and could not perform. Dan



would then stumble down from the stands. He bragged that he would take the place of the star. The audience laughed because Dan looked so funny in his baggy clothes. Dan rushed at the loping horse and snatched at its tail. He slid around the horse's back and fell off clumsily. The audience laughed louder. Dan then began to shed his clothes to reveal spangled tights and would ride expertly.

As circuses became larger, three rings were too big for singing and talking clowns. They developed skits that called mostly for action. For example, a trained dog was put in a machine. When a crank was turned, a chain of hot dogs came out the other end. Clown policemen brandished rubber clubs and walloped other clowns. When a clown was hit, a big bump (really a red rubber balloon) rose on his head. There were animal clowns and sad-faced clowns. There were clowns with high, pointed heads. There were clowns with stomachs so big with padding that they had to be propped up. "Carpet" clowns marched around the track, stopping every so often to put on their acts.

Part of the clown's job was to fill in time. Performances had to keep moving, so when riggers put up apparatus for aerialists or wire-walkers, the clowns ran into the Big Top and did their acts. The audience was kept busy watching their antics, while the other work was going on. The moment the rigging was finished, the clowns chased each other out of the tent, with cap pistols banging away. At times clowns were called upon in emergencies; there were bad accidents even in the best of circuses. A beautiful lady on the flying trapeze might take a nasty fall. Or, a daring horseback rider might slip under a horse's hooves. At that point the clowns came tumbling out to take people's minds off the accident. The show went on as if nothing had happened.

"Clown Alley" was a special part of the circus set aside for the clowns. It wasn't really an alley, simply a strip of the backyard alongside the Big Top. It was covered with a canopy that extended from the Big Top itself and was close to the back door of the main tent. The back door had to be easily available, because the clowns were in and out of the tent so many times during the show.



In a dressing tent in "Clown Alley," the clowns put on their special costumes and makeup. First, they put on white stocking caps to protect their hair. Then they smeared their faces with a grease paint known as "clown white." After that, each clown was on his or her own. No two clown faces could be alike. A clown began to

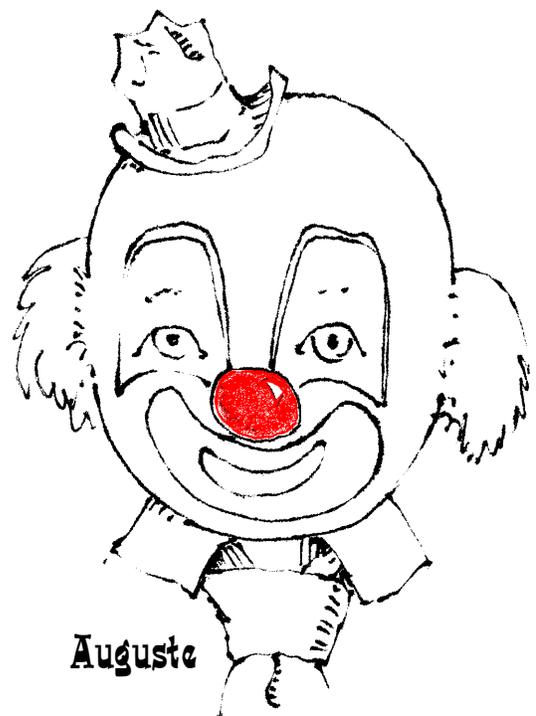
create a face as a “First of May,” as clowns were called during their first season with the show. Even as a “Johnny Come Lately,” in the second season, he or she made changes. Finally, the clown found just the right face. Each clown had special makeup and no other clown would ever copy it.

Clowns were the only “kinkers” (circus entertainers) who could eat in the cookhouse while wearing makeup. They were allowed this privilege because it took so long to put on makeup and take it off.

Clown Alley was also a storage place for the larger props needed in the acts. There were the stilt walker’s ten-foot stilts, the funny carts, and the tiny fire wagon. There were the human-size razors that turned up in the barbershop act. There were bicycles, hoops, and collapsible chairs.

The clowns spent a great deal of time in Clown Alley. There was always laughter, for the clowns loved to play jokes on each other. Clown Alley was no place for someone who couldn’t be a good sport.

It was there, too, that young clowns learned the art of clowning from their elders. Many of the older clowns had once been great performers. When they grew too old for acrobatics or swinging high above the crowds, they turned to clowning. They could not bear to give up the life of a circus trouper.



# Clown Makeup

## Types of Clown Faces

The main types of modern clowns are the White Face, Auguste Face, and the Hobo (tramp) clown.

The White Face is the conservative one of the group. This clown wears a white background upon which the other facial features are drawn, usually in red, blue, green, or another bright color. Features are less exaggerated and the costume a little less gaudy than the Auguste.

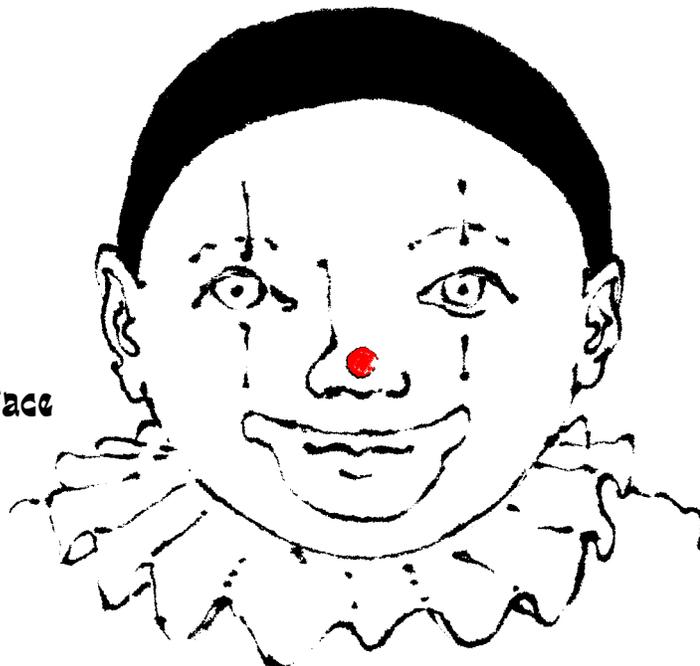
The Auguste, gaudiest of all clowns, wears flesh-colored makeup as a background for the large exaggerated features of the mouth, nose, and eyes. The costume is usually oversized, with bright flashy colors, and comes complete with huge, floppy shoes.

The Hobo or tramp clown is the one clown who can be untidy. The clothes are ragged and patched, gloves usually have the fingertips missing, and the shoes are often oversized with worn-out soles. Makeup is flesh-colored to the beard line, then blackened to simulate a beard. Red is sometimes used on the cheeks to give a ruddy look to the complexion which very often includes a red nose. Often the mouth and eyes are accented with white.

You must decide what type of clown you'd like to be. But remember, each clown face and costume must be original. No two clowns are exactly alike. Clowns do not copy the face or costume design of another clown. Study pictures of clown faces in books, magazines, and any other resources—but for ideas only . . . then be creative!

For your convenience, the following instructions for applying clown makeup are repeated in full for each type of clown face—Hobo, Auguste, and White Face.

**White Face  
Clown**



## White Face Clown

The White Face is the most conservative of the group. He or she wears a white background upon which the other features are drawn. Red is usually selected along with blue, green, or another bright color. The features are less exaggerated and the costume a little less gaudy than the Auguste.

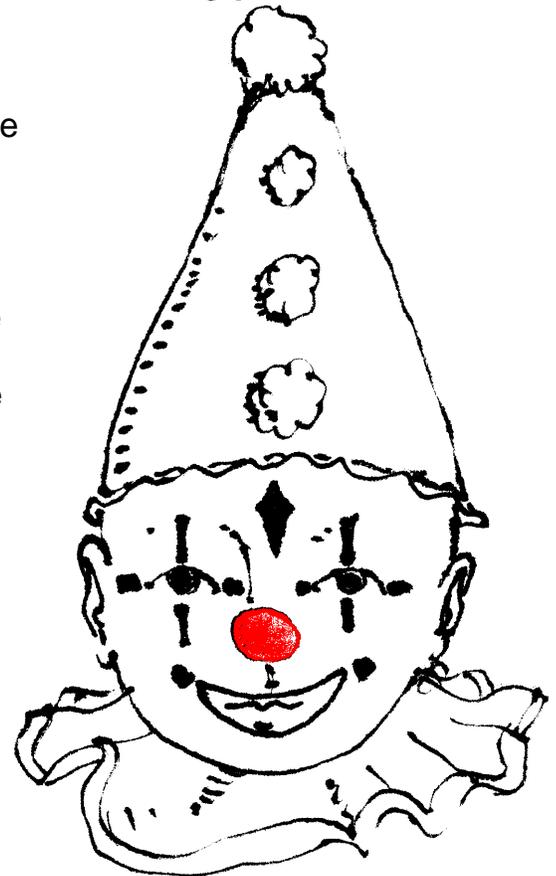
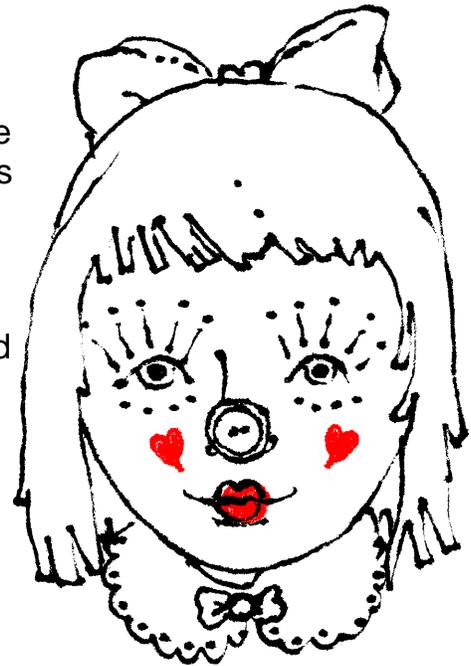
To design your face, use the makeup worksheets at the end of this section and draw several sketches of your clown face on paper. Take into consideration the natural lines of your face, especially the laugh lines. Include glasses if you plan to wear them as a clown. Use your favorite sketch as a guide to help you remember your design.

### Equipment and Supplies Needed for White Face Makeup

(Check for sensitivity to supplies.)

- Hair covering to keep hair out of face and eyes\*
- Smock or cover-up (optional)
- Self-standing mirror, 8"x10"—magnified on one side
- Baby oil, mineral oil, or cold cream for makeup removal
- Tissue
- Talcum powder—must be white
- Shaving brush or soft brush—one for white and one for color
- Large powder puffs or powder socks\*\*—at least one for white and one for colors
- Clown grease white
- Color grease paint in sticks or jars
- Swab sticks or makeup brushes for applying color grease paint
- Eyebrow pencil—black
- Eyelashes, glitter, bulb nose, etc. (optional)
- Latex glue or spirit gum for applying eyelashes, glitter, nose, etc. (optional)

Assemble supplies before you apply makeup.



\*Hair covering—can be made from the top of pantyhose. Cut and remove legs from pantyhose. Use the top portion for a head covering. Gather the excess at the crown and tie or sew together.

\*\*Powder sock—can be used instead of a powder puff to apply powder. Make powder sock by filling a white cotton sock about 1/4 full with white talcum powder. Tie open end into a knot. It is slapped or patted lightly on the face. This is especially handy to carry for quick touch-up jobs when performing. Keep the sock in a closed jar with powder so that the powder is on the outside as well as the inside of sock.

## **Applying the White Face Makeup**

Cover your hair or tie it back away from your face. To apply the white face, first make sure your face and hands are clean and dry; men should be smooth-shaven. If you have dry skin, apply oil first, then wipe it off.

Apply clown white with fingers, starting with your forehead and applying to just below the neckline of your costume. To get a smooth look, pat and slap your face and neck using fingers. **NO NATURAL SKIN COLOR SHOULD SHOW** after your wig and costume are on.

Next, powder your face and neck with a powder sock or powder puff that has been generously dusted with white talcum powder. Don't be stingy with the powder. The powder sets the clown white so it will not fade or run, especially in warm temperatures. **POWDER ENTIRE WHITE AREA.** Let the powder set for a minute or two before removing excess powder with brush.

Refer to your sketch and, using eyebrow pencil, lightly draw facial features—mouth, eyes, etc., on your face.

Fill in your features with the desired color. You may apply the color over the clown white with color grease paint or remove the clown white from the area to be colored. Use oil to remove the white and apply color directly onto the skin. To apply color, use a colored stick, or, for better control, use a swab stick or makeup brush. Powder the colored areas generously to set the grease paint. Wait a moment, then brush off excess powder.

Outline colored features with black eyebrow pencil.

If you want to add a nose, use an artificial bulb nose, small pompon, button, etc., and apply it with latex glue, spirit gum, or tie it on with clear fishing line. (Make sure the nose does not have any sharp edges that can cut your face.) You can also draw a small circle or design on the end of your own nose.

Next apply eyelashes, glitter, etc., with latex glue or spirit gum. You may wish to do this after you have put on your costume.

Thoroughly remove your makeup each time. Apply oil or cold cream, remove with tissue, and then wash as usual. Put on a moisturizer if needed.

Practice applying your clown makeup until your face is exactly the way you want it. Once your face is on, **DON'T TOUCH IT!**

## Auguste Face Clown

The Auguste is the gaudiest of all clowns. He or she wears flesh-colored makeup as a background for the large exaggerated features of the mouth, nose, and eyes. The costume is usually oversized, with bright flashy colors and huge, floppy shoes.

To design your face, use the makeup worksheet at the end of this section and draw several sketches of your clown face on paper. Take into consideration the natural lines of your face, especially the laugh lines. Include glasses if you plan to wear them as a clown. Use your favorite sketch as a guide to help you remember your design.

### Equipment and Supplies Needed for Auguste Face Makeup

(Check for sensitivity to supplies.)

Hair covering to keep hair out of face and eyes\*

Smock or cover-up (optional)

Self-standing mirror, 8"x10"—magnified on one side

Baby oil, mineral oil, or cold cream for makeup removal

Tissue

Talcum powder—must be white

Shaving brush or soft brush, one for white and one for each color

Large powder puffs, or powder socks\*\*—at least one for white and one for colors

Flesh- or tan-colored grease paint for base

Color grease paint sticks or in jars

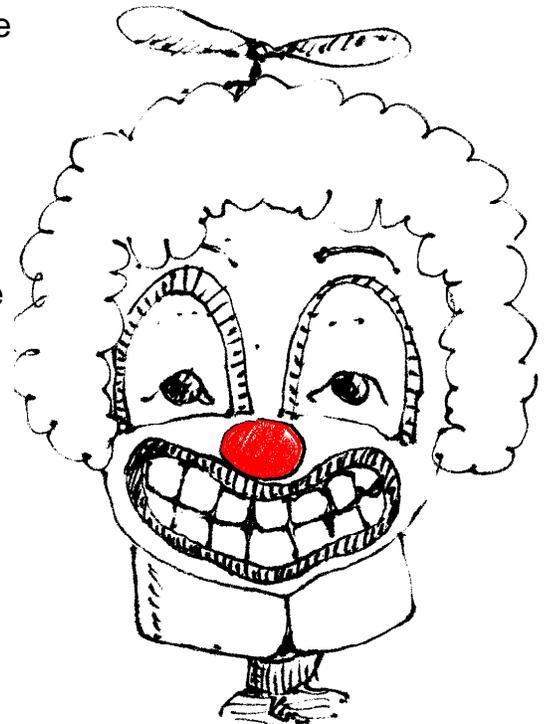
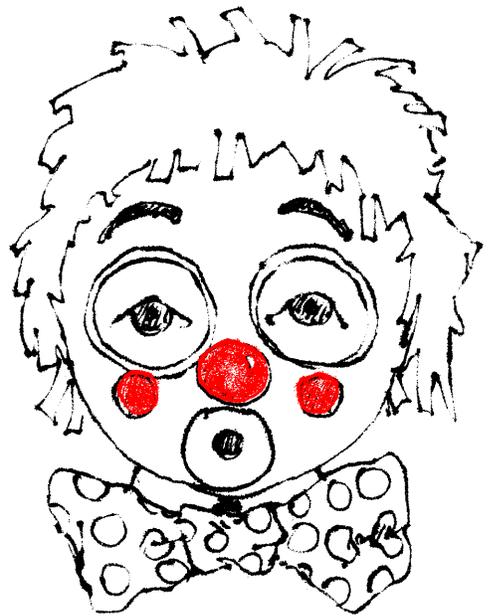
Swab sticks or makeup brushes for applying color grease paint

Eyebrow pencil—black

Eyelashes, glitter, bulb nose, etc. (optional)

Latex glue or spirit gum for applying eyelashes, glitter, nose, etc. (optional)

Assemble supplies before you apply your makeup.



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\*Hair covering—can be made from the top of pantyhose. Cut and remove legs from pantyhose. Use the top portion for a head covering. Gather the excess at the crown and tie or sew together.

\*\*Powder sock—can be used instead of a powder puff to apply powder. Make a powder sock by filling a white cotton sock about 1/4 full with white talcum powder. Tie open end into a knot. It is slapped or patted lightly on the face. This is especially handy to carry for quick touch-up jobs when performing. Keep the sock in a closed jar with powder so that the powder is on the outside as well as the inside of sock.

## **Applying the Auguste Face Makeup**

Cover your hair or tie it back away from your face. To apply the Auguste face, first make sure your face and hands are clean and dry; men should be smooth-shaven. If you have dry skin, apply oil first, then wipe it off.

The Auguste clown should apply colored features directly onto flesh- or tan-colored grease paint. Apply with fingers, starting with your forehead and continuing to just below the neckline of your costume. To get a smooth look, pat and slap your face using your fingers. **NO NATURAL SKIN COLOR** should show after your wig and costume are on.

Next, powder your face and neck with a powder sock or powder puff that has been generously dusted with white talcum powder. Don't be stingy with the powder. The powder sets the flesh-colored grease paint so it will not fade or run, especially in warm temperatures. **POWDER ENTIRE COLORED AREA.** Let powder set for a minute or two before removing excess powder with a brush.

Refer to your sketch and, using eyebrow pencil, lightly draw facial features—mouth, eyes, etc., on your face.

Fill in your features with the desired color. You may apply the color over the base with color grease paint or directly onto the skin. To apply color, use a color stick, or for better control, use a swab stick or makeup brush. Powder the colored areas generously to set your grease paint. Brush off excess powder.

Outline colored features with black eyebrow pencil.

If you want to add a nose, use an artificial bulb nose, small pompon, button, etc., and apply it with latex glue, spirit gum, or tie it on with clear fishing line. (Make sure the nose does not have sharp edges that can cut your face.) You can also draw a small circle or design on the end of your own nose.

Next, apply eyelashes, glitter, etc., with latex glue or spirit gum. You may wish to do this after you have put on your costume.

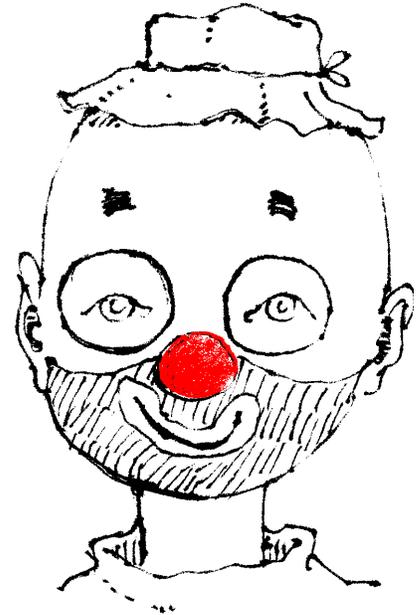
Thoroughly remove your makeup each time. Apply oil or cold cream, remove with tissue, and then wash as usual. Put on a moisturizer if needed.

Practice applying your clown makeup until your face is exactly the way you want it. Once your face is on, **DON'T TOUCH IT!**

## Hobo Clown

The Hobo or tramp clown is the one clown who can be untidy. The hobo's clothes are ragged and patched, gloves usually have the fingertips missing, and oversized shoes are often worn. The makeup is flesh-colored to the beard line, then blackened to simulate a beard. Sometimes red is used on the cheeks to give a ruddy look to the complexion and very often a red nose is added. The hobo's mouth and eyes are often accented with white.

To design your face, use the makeup worksheets at the end of this section and draw several sketches of your clown face on paper. Take into consideration the natural lines of your face, especially the laugh lines. Include glasses if you plan to wear them as a clown. Use your favorite sketch as a guide to help you remember your design.



### Equipment and Supplies Needed for Hobo Clown Makeup

(Check for sensitivity to supplies.)

Hair covering to keep hair out of face and eyes\*

Smock or cover-up (optional)

Self-standing mirror, 8"x10"—magnified on one side

Baby oil, mineral oil, or cold cream for makeup removal

Tissue

Talcum powder—must be white

Shaving brush or soft brush, one for white and one for each color

Large powder puffs, or powder socks\*\*—at least one for white and one for colors

Red, black, and white grease paint plus flesh color

Swab sticks or makeup brushes for applying color grease paint

Eyebrow pencil—black

Eyelashes, glitter, bulb nose, etc. (optional)

Latex glue or spirit gum for applying eyelashes, glitter, nose, etc. (optional)

Assemble supplies before you apply your makeup.



\*Hair covering—can be made from the top of pantyhose. Cut and remove legs from pantyhose. Use the top portion for a head covering. Gather the excess at the crown and tie or sew together.

\*\*Powder sock—can be used instead of a powder puff to apply powder. Make a powder sock by filling a white cotton sock about 1/4 full with white talcum powder. Tie open end into a knot. It is slapped or patted lightly on the face. This is especially handy to carry for quick touch-up jobs when performing. Keep the sock in a closed jar with powder so that the powder is on the outside as well as the inside of sock.

## Applying Hobo Face Makeup

Before applying your makeup, cover your hair or tie it back from your face. Make sure your face and hands are clean and dry. Men should be smooth-shaven unless the beard is to be used as part of the hobo face. If you have dry skin, apply oil first, then wipe it off.

Refer to your sketch and, using eyebrow pencil, lightly draw facial features—mouth, eyes, etc., on your face.

Apply white grease paint around your mouth with your fingers. To get a smooth look, pat your mouth area with your fingers. You may also want to put white around your eyes.

Next, powder your white area with a powder puff or sock that has been generously dusted with white talcum powder. Don't be stingy with the powder. The powder sets the grease paint so it will not fade or run, especially in warm weather. Let powder set a minute or two before removing the excess powder with a brush. Apply flesh-colored makeup on down to the beard line.

Next fill in your eyebrows and beard area with the black color stick. A swab stick or makeup brush may be used for better control while coloring. When you have filled your color in smoothly, you are ready to powder. **DO NOT PAT!** Just powder generously to set your makeup. Remove excess powder with second brush. For better results repeat powdering process. Brush well.

If you want to add a nose, use an artificial bulb nose, small pompon, button, etc., and apply it with latex glue, spirit gum, or tie it on with clear fishing line. (Make sure the nose does not have any sharp edges that can cut your face.) You can also draw a small circle or design on the end of your own nose.

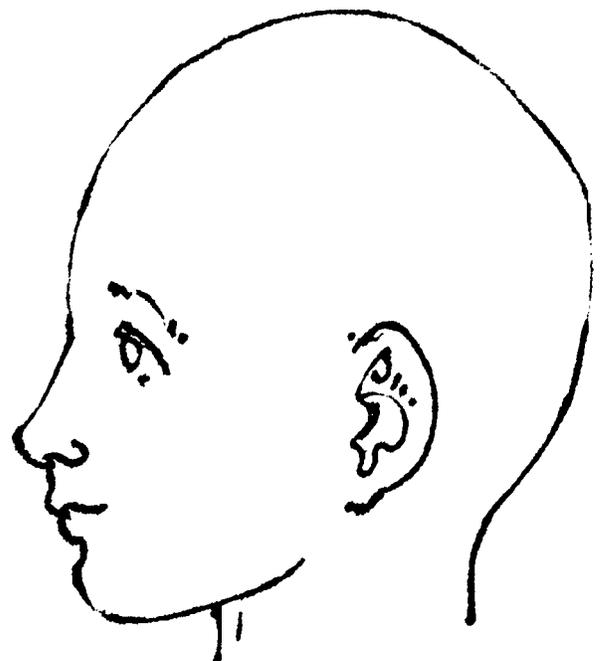
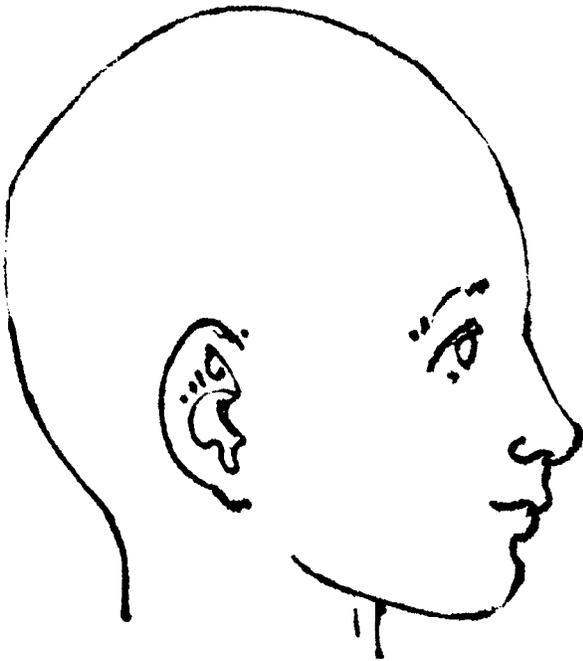
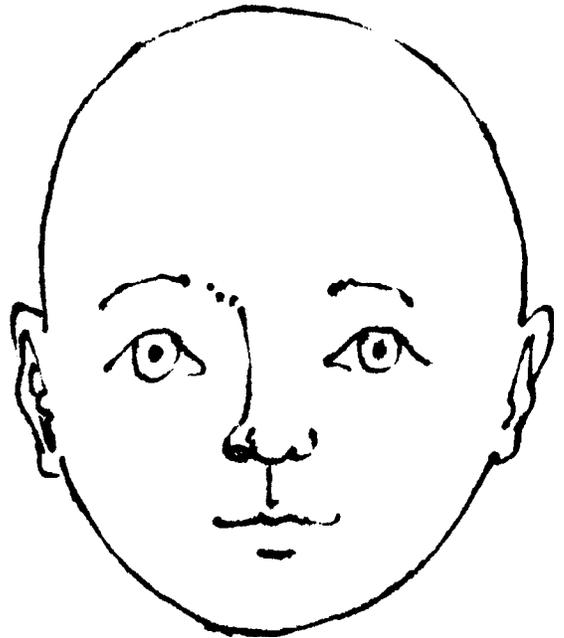
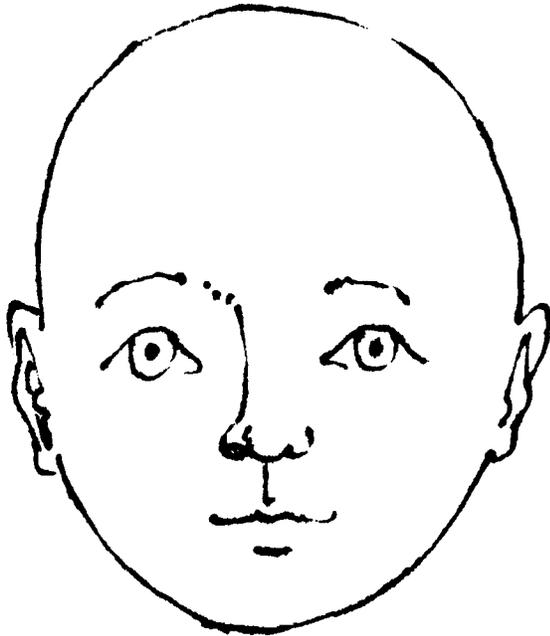
Next apply eyelashes, glitter, etc., with latex glue or spirit gum. You may wish to do this after you have put on your costume.

Thoroughly remove your makeup each time. Apply oil or cold cream, remove with tissue, and then wash as usual and put on a moisturizer if needed.

Practice applying your clown makeup until your face is exactly the way you want it. Once your face is on, **DON'T TOUCH IT!**

# Worksheet

On this page are face models that you can draw on to develop the clown face that is right for you. No two clown faces are alike; each one is unique.



# Clown Costumes

Designing your clown costume is fun and very important. It should fit the clown character you are creating. It should be appealing to look at, roomy—large enough to wear over a sweater or coat—comfortable, and practical. If you choose a one-piece outfit, put the zipper in the front to make it easier to get into and out of. A two-piece costume is usually more convenient. Your costume can also have a high collar or ruffle collar with elastic or a drawstring. Whichever style you choose, your costume must cover you completely.

Clown costumes are as individual and unique as clown faces. The costume you select will depend on whether you're going to be a Hobo, White Face, or Auguste clown. If you are a Hobo, you may want to obtain old clothing and sew on patches and have a burn hole or some paint "spilled" here and there. Rummage sales, thrift stores, or clothes salvaged from friends, neighbors, or relatives are sources for clown outfits. No matter how ragged, your costume must always be clean.

Most places that sell fabric have pattern books containing one or more traditional patterns for clown costumes; however, you don't need to buy a clown pattern. Use a nightgown, pajamas, smock, or dress pattern for the top; and make the bottoms to match or coordinate. They do not have to come all the way down to the ankles and can be worn short like knickers with either brightly colored socks, unmatched socks, or tights. But, **NO SKIN CAN SHOW!**

Sources for materials are: store-bought fabrics, sheets, curtains, dresses, pajamas, etc. Choose materials that are durable, but not too heavy and not transparent.

You will need lots of pockets for your props and personal items. Pockets should be large enough for easy access and coordinated with your costume. If you plan to do balloon artistry, have a separate pocket for each type of balloon you'll be using. A hidden pocket with a zipper, snap, or hook and loop closure is nice for carrying personal items such as money or car keys.

Costumes are much more colorful when trimmed with coordinating patches, rickrack, ribbons, lace, ball fringe, ruffles, fancy stitching, pompons, buttons, etc. Insert a long shoelace or elastic in ruffled collars.

Most clowns wear something to cover their hair. You may choose either a colorful crocheted wig, hair wig, or skull cap; or if you prefer, change or restyle your own hair. To complete your costume, wear a hat or decorative head covering.

Wear gloves at all times. Clean, white gloves are most attractive, but you may dye them to match your costume. They should always be clean, so carry an extra pair. If you are a Hobo, or work with balloons, you will have to cut the fingertips out of your gloves in order to work.

Your name tag is a part of your costume. It identifies you. Your name should be short and easy for kids to read and say.

Shoes should be comfortable. Clowns walk a lot! Shoes that are too large or too small can cause discomfort. You can use old shoes, but make sure they are comfortable. You can dye or

paint shoes, or glue patches on them. Clowns often wear their regular shoes inside a much larger pair, although this can be very painful. ALWAYS WEAR SOCKS.

If you must wear a ring, watch, or other personal jewelry, don't let it show. The best policy is to leave these valuable items at home.

If you wear glasses, decorate them or design your face to be worn with your glasses.

Your costume must always look neat and clean. Appearance is how the audience first judges a clown.

Types of clown shoes, beginning at upper right and continuing clockwise:

Curved Comedy (double shoe) 16" x 6"

Ball Toe Comedy (double shoe) 15" x 6"

Chicken and Duck Feet (double shoe);

Pointed Comedy (double shoe) 16" x 5 1/2"

Large Comedy (double shoe) 15" x 9"

Small Comedy (double shoe) 14" x 6"



# Make a Crocheted Loop Wig

## Material:

4-oz. skein, Knitting Worsted Yarn, or 1 1/2—3 oz.-skein rug yarn  
(you may use 2 skeins of different colors and alternate them)  
size F crochet hook  
cardboard of desired width for loops

## Directions:

Use double crochet; this will make the wig cool and comfortable.

Chain 5. Join with a slip stitch to form a ring.

Chain 3. (Yarn over hook, insert hook in ring. Yarn around cardboard [of desired width] clockwise.) Pick up with hook, work off 2 stitches, work off 2 more stitches (Double Loop Crochet made).

Repeat 11 times. Join and Chain 3 (12 double loop crochets made).

Row 1. Work 2 DLC in each st around. Join.

Row 2. Ch. 3. \*Work 1 DLC in 2 sts, 2 DLC in next st, \* Continue around.  
Join and ch 3.

Row 3. \*Work 1 DLC in 2 sts, 2 DLC in next st, \* Repeat around, join and ch 3.

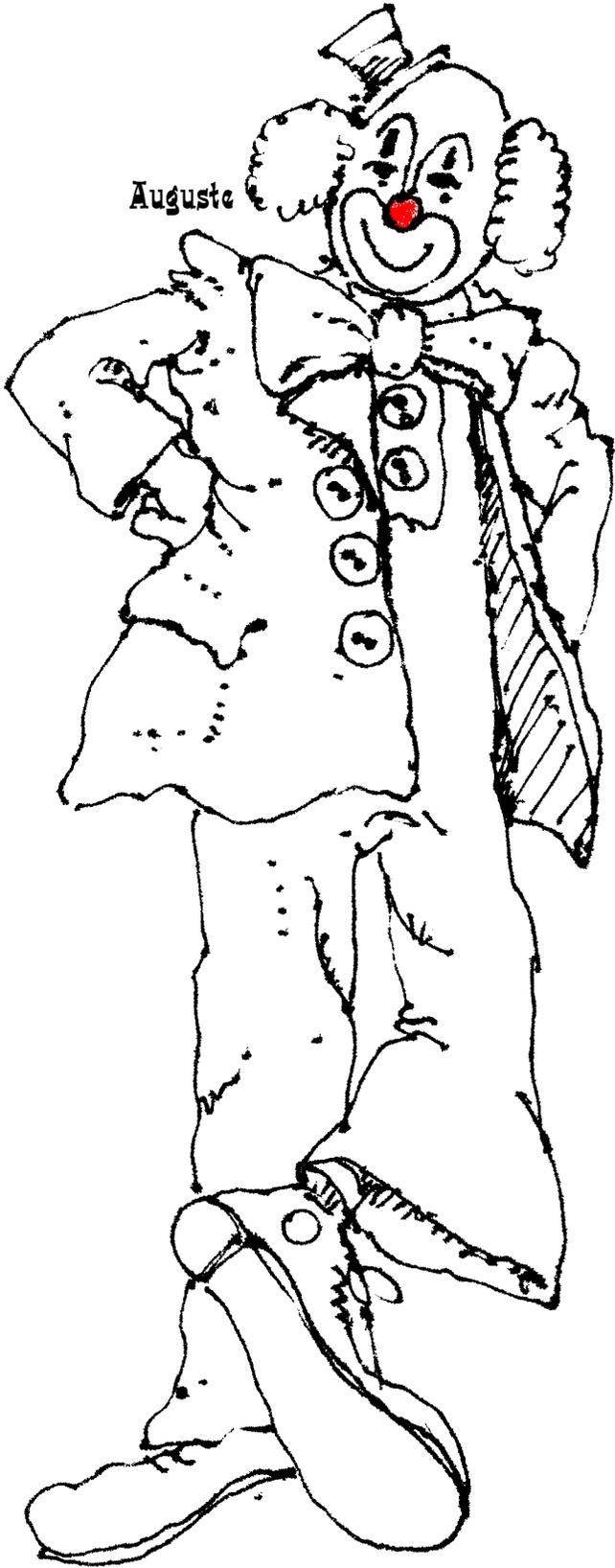
Row 4. \*Work 1 DLC in 3 sts, 2 DLC in next st, \* Repeat around, join and ch 3.

Row 5. \*Work 1 DLC in 4 sts, 2 DLC in next st, \* Repeat around, join and ch 3.

You should have 72 sts. Now you put 1 DLC in each st around, join and ch 3. Repeat this until wig covers your ears. You will have from 13 to 15 rows, depending on the yarn you use.



Auguste



White Face



Hobo  
(Tramp)



# Communicating as a Clown

Clowning refers to the act of presenting a message while dressed as a clown. Although clowns follow a strict code of ethics and have rules about their costumes and makeup, just about anything goes as far as the messages they can present. Clowns can perform skits, give demonstrations, supervise exhibits, appear on television and videotape, and use just about any other communication method they choose. Clowns face some special challenges though, and they will be discussed here.

## The Clown's Audience

An effective clown performance is aimed at a particular audience. Find out some things about your audience before you begin to plan your act. In addition to the basic questions a clown should ask about an audience, such as its size, age, group, or educational background, a clown must also consider the following:

How does the audience feel about clowns? Young children who have never seen clowns may be frightened by their exaggerated features. Many adults are uneasy around clowns—perhaps because of scary childhood experiences, or because the clown's "humanity" is hidden behind makeup.

How far away from the audience will you be? A general rule of thumb is the farther away the audience, the more exaggerated should be the features and gestures you use. Wildly swinging arms and whoops of noise may be very funny ways to express mock fear from a distance, but up close they may be more distressing than funny.

Does your audience have any special features? Clowns often perform for special audiences—children in hospitals, elderly nursing home patients, etc. Ask yourself how your clowning act can be tailored to fit the audience's special needs. Sick children might appreciate a quieter humor than kids of the same age at a birthday party. People with sensory handicaps such as blindness or deafness will get more from your performance if you plan with their handicaps in mind.

## Purpose

It's true that clowning can be a great way to present lots of messages, but don't get carried away in your enthusiasm. Clowning is not always an appropriate communication tool. Whether or not you should use clowning will depend a lot on the purpose of your message. Here are some basic do's and don'ts.

## **DO USE CLOWNING IF:**

Your message is humorous. A funny skit or puppet show that is meant to entertain can usually use a clown.

Your serious message can be illustrated in a humorous or exaggerated way. Hunter safety, for instance, is a very serious topic—but your message may sink in just as well by showing a clown experiencing a series of accidents because of carelessness.

You are tired of doing the same old thing, and you think clowning would add some life to your message. If you think clowning will fit—try it.

## **DO NOT USE CLOWNING IF:**

You don't intend to rework your message to make it a clowning message. For instance, it's not enough to deliver the same old demonstration while dressed up as a clown.

You want to make a serious impression. Think of how you want the audience to view you. It's hard to convince a group that you are a serious, sophisticated problem-solver if you approach them as a clown.

You want to establish a person-to-person contact. Remember, when you are dressed as a clown, you are no longer you—you are a clown. Your features are hidden or distorted by makeup; people expect you to act like a clown; you will attract a lot of attention. If you want your audience to get a feel for you—the person—don't meet them as a clown.

Your intentions could be mistaken. Because people expect a clown to be funny, they often take everything a clown says in a funny way—even when he or she is trying to be serious. Make sure your message won't be misinterpreted.

## **Message**

If you've decided that working as a clown will please your audience and suit your purpose, your next step is to make your message a clown's message. You may use clowning with a variety of communication methods including demonstrations, skits, and exhibits, but here are some rules to follow for any message you choose.

**Exaggerate.** Make your words and gestures fit your character. If you're showing how to make a salad, for instance, use oversize utensils, search the area for rabbits, or use other gags to make the demonstration part of a clown act.

**Decrease the words, increase the action.** Try to illustrate ideas through your clowning actions instead of relying on words. Act out ideas instead of talking about them.

**Keep it simple.** Most people enjoy watching clowns. If your message is too detailed or complicated, they may miss a lot of what you say because they may be concentrating on your funny shoes instead of on your words.

# Clowning and the Media

**Newspapers.** Contact the paper if you will be performing in public. They may be interested in a story and pictures.

**TV.** If your clown act will be performing in public, contact your local stations' news editors. Use TV community calendars to advertise your performances.

**Radio.** A lot of a clown's effectiveness is visual; but if your clown character has a distinctive voice or accent, you might be able to use radio as a part of your act. Talk to your local radio station program manager about possibilities for interview shows, public service announcements, etc.

**Videotape.** Videotape can help you perfect your act. Tape rehearsals and check for flaws; watch your costume and makeup to see the effect they produce. You could also consider giving tapes of your performances to homebound persons or others who wouldn't be able to see you perform live.

**Newsletters.** Use newsletters to keep in touch with other clowning groups and share ideas and experiences. Let other 4-H groups know how your clown group can help with their activities by contacting them through their newsletters.

**Live Performances.** Anything that requires actors or speakers (demonstrations, skits, exhibits, public speaking, puppet shows) can usually be adapted for clowns. Just alter your message to accommodate clowning.



# Clown Etiquette

Being a clown is more than painting on a face and wearing a funny costume. Professional clowns have a strict code of ethics. The following suggestions will make you a better clown and help you maintain a professional image.

## Checklist for Clowns

1. Allow ample time to apply your makeup and think about your clown character. Mentally become the character you represent as a clown.
2. Always stay in clown character when clowning in public.
3. Practice—perfect your skits, routines, pantomime, and use of props.
4. Never use bad language, smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or advertise these products.
5. Always be on time for any activity for which you are clowning.
6. Always consider others and exhibit self-control.
7. Make others feel good!
8. Demonstrate good sportsmanship.
9. Be understanding and “back off” from someone who doesn’t wish to be approached by a clown.
10. Be at children’s eye level when talking to them.
11. For safety reasons never throw candy or other items into a crowd. Pass candy or other items directly to individual people.
12. To avoid getting overheated in a parade—slow down and sit on the curb if necessary, and have someone meet you at the end of the parade with transportation and a refreshing drink.
13. Take care of yourself—be in good physical and mental condition.
14. Be neat, clean, and well-groomed.
15. Have an appealing costume that is neat and clean.
16. Wear white gloves and carry an extra clean pair just in case.

# Performing a Skit

4-H clowns have many opportunities for live performances. From entertaining children at a birthday party to telling an adult community service club about the 4-H program, skits can be a valuable communication tool for your clown group's live performances.

The following will help you decide when to use a skit and will teach you the basic skills needed to produce a good one.

## When to Use a Skit

A skit can be for fun or to present a serious message. There aren't many rules to producing a skit, and any that exist are often broken with no harm done. Here are some ways you can use skits in clowning.

**Entertainment.** This is probably how you'll use skits most. It's fun for the clowns and audience and can liven up an otherwise dull meeting or gathering.

**Education.** Skits can be used to convey serious messages in a humorous way. Usually a skit emphasizes the main points of an educational message—the details might be supplied in a handout for the audience after the show.

**Announcements.** Sometimes skits are used to act out "previews of coming attractions" to help the audience remember the event and when it will be held.

**Experience before a group.** Because skits are fun, they are a good way to practice appearing before an audience.

## What You'll Need

Skits have only a few requirements.

**Stationary audience.** A skit usually tells a story from beginning to end, so your audience needs to see the whole thing to get the message. For this reason, skits don't work very well in shopping malls, fairs, or other places where people wander about. One way to get around the problem is to post a schedule of performance times.

**A place to perform.** A stage isn't necessary, but you need room to move around. Avoid crowded rooms or places where commotion in the surroundings will detract from your performance.

## Choosing Skit Material

Why a skit? Is it just for fun? Will you try to get a specific message across to a certain audience? Your purpose will influence your choice of material.

How much time? How long will the group have to rehearse? How long should the finished production be?

Audience. How old are they? How many people should you expect? What are they interested in?

When you have a firm idea of your purpose, cast, audience, and the time you'll have, you are ready to find something to perform. There are three basic ways to come up with material for a skit:

Choose a skit from a book. Most libraries have several books of skits for all ages and all occasions.

Write an original skit. This can be a team effort, or left up to one creative playwright. (See the following section on skit writing.)

Start with an existing skit, play, or short story, and adapt it. This may be a lot easier than writing a skit from scratch.

## **What Makes a Good Skit?**

It's hard to pinpoint just what makes a good skit. As you consider material, put yourself in the place of the audience and ask:

Does this skit hold attention? Is the story well-told, with a definite beginning and end? Is it funny?

Is the skit appropriate for the clowns and the audience? If the cast is inexperienced, it's best to stick to a short, simple story. If you are performing for young children, make sure they will be able to understand what's going on.

Make your own tape recording of the dialogue or narration, complete with sound effects if you wish, and act along with it. This isn't easy, but it can be fun for the cast and the audience.

These hints may help you come up with some material, but don't take them too seriously. Skits are a very flexible form of communication, and just about anything goes. Try your ideas, and if they challenge the actors and interest the audience, you've got it made.

## **Casting**

Once you've got the skit that fits your clown group, purpose, and audience, start the production. The first step is to decide who plays what character. You may leave it up to the group to decide who would be best in what role.

## **Production**

When you've chosen the cast, it's time to rehearse. How much rehearsal time you put in will depend on the skit and the cast; but, even a simple, informal production should be rehearsed until the actors are quite familiar with their roles.

A general rehearsal schedule might go something like this:

Read through the skit. Let the actors get the feel of the characters and their lines. If some lines or sequences seem unnatural, this is the time to change them.

Walk through the skit, figuring out where to position the characters for the best effect. Make notes on the scripts to remind actors where they should be, what gestures they should use, etc. This will save time later because the actors can study the script to help them learn their motions. Make sure there is no object between a speaking character and the audience.

Rehearsal. Discard the script and act the skit out as you have walked it through. Sometimes when the whole skit is rehearsed, lines or actions that were all right on the walk-through will seem artificial or out of place. If this happens, rework the faulty area.

Dress rehearsal. Run through the whole skit, using props and costumes. This rehearsal is to give the actors a feel for the whole skit and shouldn't be interrupted. If an actor flubs a line, the rest of the cast must carry on as they would during a performance.

You may go through each of these steps several times, or discard the steps you don't need. However you rehearse, make sure each session is used to build the skit. Work at it, adding corrections and changes, and polishing performances. Rehearsals that are merely repetition of lines or scenes soon become boring to the actors, and the life of the skit is lost.

## **Skit Writing**

Regardless how simple or elaborate your act is, a good clown presentation must be well-planned and a script developed. But, where do you start with ideas? You can take a normal situation and build it into a skit. Or, you might think of a gag first and then figure out a situation to lead into the gag. Study old silent movies featuring such greats as Charlie Chaplin for ideas. You can check out movies or videos from the library.

Keep the skit short. Clowns fill between acts, providing needed time to change sets, or come to the rescue, keeping audiences entertained with impromptu sketches, during unexpected delays.

While you're reading our examples of situation-based and gag-based skits, watch how every action and line moves you along to the punch. Think of how you could use the same ideas. Keep your own list of skit ideas to work from. Whenever you get an idea for a situation for a skit, write it down. You'll always have a pocketful of ideas.

Start with the least important ideas first. As you go into the skit, ideas get more important. Finally, there's the gag or punch line.

## To Start with a Gag

A gag is any funny stunt worked by one or two clowns with a minimum of props. Here is an example of starting with a gag and then setting up a situation.

### Sucker on the Line

Two clowns: One clown calls the other and asks, "Have you been doing any fishing?"

Other clown says: "Have I been what?"

First clown: "Have you been doing any fishing?"

Second clown says: "I can't understand you."

First clown says: "We must have a bad connection. I'll check my line."

(Go into audience and bring a person back and have him or her hold arms out like a telephone pole.)

First clown calls again: "Have you been doing any fishing?"

Second clown: "I still can't understand you. Let me check my line."

(Then second clown goes out in the audience and brings back a person and has him or her hold his/her arms out like a telephone pole. Can be repeated as often as desired. Usually about 4 or 5 people is enough.)

Second clown: "Fine, I can hear you very well."

First clown: "Have you been doing any fishing?"

Second clown: "Don't need to do any fishing. We already have plenty of suckers on the line."

(Suggested props—Use two tin cans as receivers with a long string in between.)

## Start with Your Own Idea

List five situations you could use to get to the same gag as the "Sucker on the Line" skit. For future reference in developing skits, write down any ideas for situations and gags as they come to you.

A routine is two or three clowns doing one stunt dealing with one subject.

A production is a larger group of clowns doing a 5-10 minute performance on a major subject with a number of small gags by members of the group building up to a surprise ending.

## Develop a Routine

Take your audience from the first idea (flagging down a taxi, entering a restaurant) through the situation to the punch line (here's a tip...) or the gag (a sucker on the line). Lead them straight to the gag with funny developments (falling out of the taxi, missing the chair the waiter pulls out). Keep the skit short and simple. And, keep them laughing.

## To Start with a Situation

Let's take a situation and build it into a skit: a taxi ride. What could be funny about three or four clowns taking a taxi? Brainstorm. Write down everything that comes to mind. Later you can take out what you don't like and what you think doesn't work.

At a clown session, a group took four chairs and set them up to represent taxi seats. They set the chairs up on a diagonal so that all the clowns could be seen clearly by the audience. When you plan a skit, remember where your audience will be.

Back to the taxi. The first thing a person might do is flag down the taxi. The driver stops, gets out and opens the door. The riders enter. Then the driver wants to know where to? They point the way. But wait a minute—the riders are all pointing in opposite directions. They try again, pointing in opposite directions again.

The driver shrugs his shoulders and pantomimes starting up and taking off.

He goes around sharp curves, everyone leans. Another sharp curve dumps out a clown, who spills the contents of his suitcase. But, the driver doesn't notice. The other clowns stop him and make him back up the taxi. They help the unfortunate clown pick up

the contents (which can be gag items) and put them back into the suitcase.

Back into the taxi. This time the driver speeds around a corner and hits a very bumpy road. The clowns bounce up and down and all over. Now they want out. The driver goes through the motions of stopping the car. The passengers get out and pay the driver. "Hey, where's my tip?" yells the driver. Comes the reply, "My tip to you is take some more driving lessons." They exit still bouncing up and down as they walk. Another ending might be with the driver chasing the passengers off the stage.

In practicing the correct pantomime moves for this, get into a car and go through each of the moves needed for the skit. Learn where the shift, keys, steering wheel, doors, and so on are located. What positions are your hands in when you steer? How do you get into a vehicle? You have to bend down or hit your head.

When you speak, speak toward the audience or you won't be heard. Usually, you must turn toward the audience. The only time your back should be to the audience is when it is part of the skit.

Try other situations like crossing a busy street, eating in a restaurant, or walking a dog. List ten of your own situation ideas right now.

## "Slop Jokes"

Sooner or later, the subject of slop jokes comes up. These are jokes that use water, pies, etc. Give this subject careful consideration. Is it really appropriate? What kind of a mess would you create for the janitor? (You may want to use the building again.) If you're outdoors, will your partner catch cold? All such jokes are carefully preplanned. The "victims" are other clowns or "plants" in the audience who know ahead of time that they are going to receive a pie, for example. Slop jokes come at the very end of the show, because they cause a mess and ruin clown makeup. Pies are not real. They are made from shaving cream (not menthol, it hurts) so that no one's costume or clothing will be ruined.

# Pantomime

Clowns often use pantomime, the art of performing a skit without using props or words. It is an important and useful skill that takes a great deal of practice. Some rely on the pantomime skit entirely, while others may use that type of act only when performing for a large audience in a situation where dialogue would be difficult to hear.

Pantomime is an art and a craft. It is a way of expressing oneself by using the body only. The whole body is used to create an illusion and to make a statement for the audience to interpret. If you hold an imaginary glass in your hand, it must become visible to the audience and to you. The imaginary is made visible and tangible. You must make your mind aware of the glass so that you can actually “feel” it in your hand with your mind.

A good pantomime makes an outer world seem to exist; and at the same time, expresses an inner world of imagination.

If you touch a wall you must feel the wall touching you. One common error made when someone begins to use pantomime is using motions that are too fast for the audience to really see what the mime is doing. The audience needs time to not only see what is going on, but to translate your movement into meaning. If the movements are too rapid, the observer’s mind simply does not have time to absorb what’s happening and make sense out of it. Practice in front of a mirror to tell if the movements really look like they feel.

Many talents can be used in the art of clowning. Clowns and mimes study gymnastics in order to keep their bodies limber so they are capable of many different moves and antics. Clowns use many skills taught in schools for pantomimists. Many such schools now offer special classes and seminars for clowns. They include classes in makeup, skits, ballet, and gymnastics. Some even include fencing and Japanese martial arts.

## Practice for Pantomime

For many years, pantomime has been used in basic clown acting. Talking is not allowed in true pantomime. For example, to pantomime playing golf, pretend you are taking a golf club out of the bag, putting a tee into the ground, placing a ball on the tee, swinging the golf club, and watching the ball fly through the air. All of this is done without really touching a golf club, tee, or ball. To make these actions believable for the audience, the pantomimist must use facial expressions. Without animated facial expressions, the movements are boring and ineffective.

Practice the following five basic facial expressions. Each expression uses a particular group or combination of facial muscles. All of them are exaggerated. These exercises will increase your flexibility and control of your facial muscles. For best results, practice in front of a mirror.

Happy: Every muscle of your face should be uplifted in an expression of joy. Raise the eyebrows and cheek muscles. Your eyes will squint and your mouth should form a large, open smile.

**Sad:** Pull the muscles of the face downward. Form your mouth into a frown. Pull up the inner corners of your eyebrows.

**Surprised:** Draw up the muscles of your face and raise your eyebrows. Form your mouth into an exaggerated “oohh.”

**Angry:** Draw or bunch up your facial muscles toward your nose. Wrinkle your nose, squint your eyes, and furrow your eyebrows. Your mouth should form somewhat of a frown, almost a pucker. This one is the most difficult.

**Fearful:** Combine the upper half of the “sad” face with the lower half of the “happy” face or open your mouth widely. Open your eyes as wide as possible.

Practice each of the expressions slowly. Begin with happy and overlap into the next one. Then repeat in reverse order starting with fearful. When this becomes easy, go through each expression rapidly, returning to a normal facial expression between each.

Here are some clown pantomimes for you to practice.

**Running:** Run in place bringing your knees up to your chest and moving your arms like pistons. Pause to show you are out of breath.

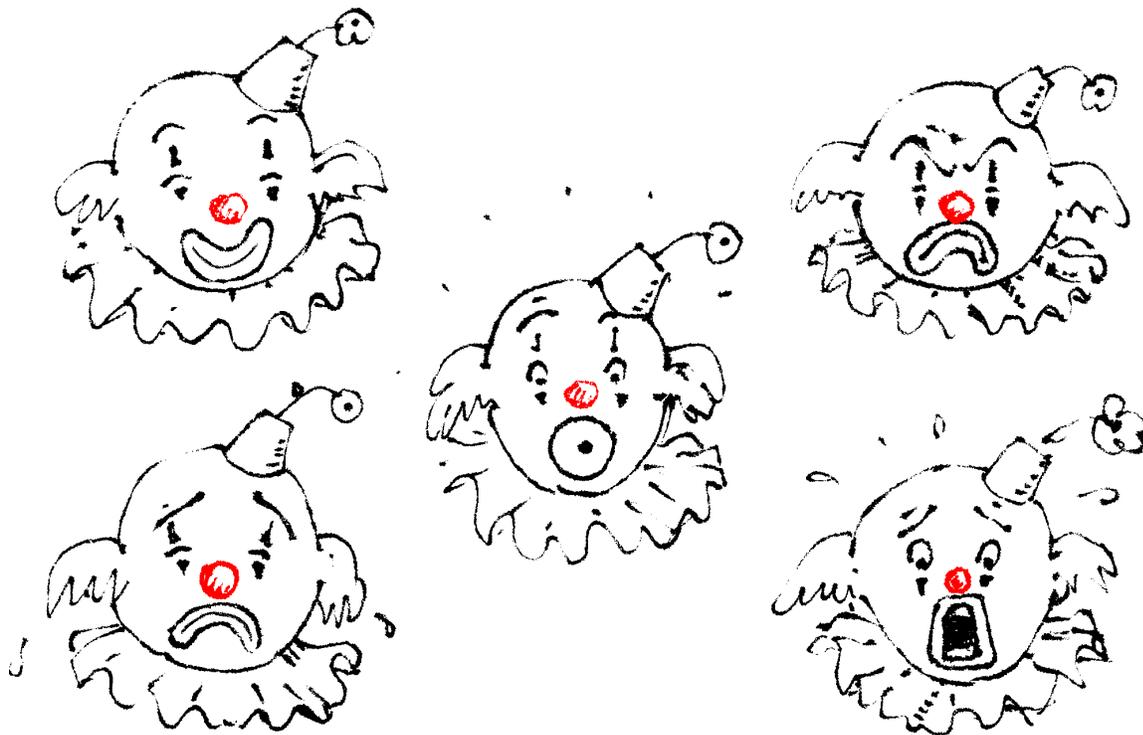
**Odors:** Screw up your face and hold your nose.

**Food:** Rub stomach.

**Pleasure:** Click your heels together while jumping in the air. Clap your hands.

**Pride:** Puff out your chest. Put your thumbs in your imaginary suspenders, palms out, and spread your hands.

**Fear:** Shake and tremble. Hide behind another person or an object. Cover your head with your arm.



## Practice Pantomiming these Actions

Play hopscotch  
Pet a dog  
Fly a kite  
Drive a car  
Play jacks or marbles  
Walk like an old person  
Hear a strange sound  
Hammer a nail  
Hang a picture  
Mop a floor  
Tie your shoe  
Comb your hair  
Eat an ice cream cone  
Blow up a balloon  
Pick an apple  
Open an umbrella  
Play golf  
Take a picture  
Walk a tightrope  
Conduct a band  
Walk upstairs  
Jog a mile  
Brush your teeth  
Paint a sign  
Open a present  
Sew on a button  
Place a phone call  
Do exercises  
Read a newspaper  
Purchase a bag of popcorn  
Catch a butterfly  
Direct traffic



# Puppetry

Puppetry is another tool clowns use. The most common are hand puppets. Some clowns use a large hand puppet or a ventriloquist figure (dummy) they carry around with them. The puppet usually rests on one arm while the other arm works it. With lots of practice anyone can learn to be a ventriloquist.

Practice the following exercises to add interest to your act if you're using a puppet. There are many good books on making your own puppets in the library.

## When to Use Puppets

A clown may use puppets to convey serious messages or entertain. If you're thinking about using puppets to convey a message, ask yourself:

Am I trying to reach a small audience? Puppet shows are usually limited to 30 or fewer people.

Can my message be presented in the form of a conversation between characters?

Is my audience fairly uniform—in age, interests, abilities, etc.?

Do I have some dramatic ability—to recite lines with expression, for instance? Do the people I'll be working with have this talent?

If your answer to any of these questions is “no,” use another communications method.

## Advantages

In addition to the appeal of a theatrical production, puppets offer these advantages:

Your cast is unlimited. A puppet show can be put on by one person or 20. Regardless of the sex, age, or appearance of the puppeteers, the puppets can represent anything or anybody.

Puppets are inexpensive. You can make hand puppets from almost any scrap material—and puppets are much easier to outfit than human actors.

A puppet show is flexible—it can be an excellent way to present educational materials to a class or promotional material to mall shoppers (set up some chairs around your stage). But unless it's shown on television, this is not a good way to reach large, diverse audiences.

## How to Write Puppet Scripts

Impromptu (without advance preparation) acting can be fun, and it's good practice for puppeteers. To help guarantee a professional show, however, write a script. Whether you write lines to be memorized, to read, or just to provide general instructions depends on how complicated your message is and how capable your puppeteers are.

Here are some tips for a script:

Keep it short. Ten minutes is usually long enough.

Keep your audience in mind. If you are performing for very young children, keep the lines short and simple and include lots of action. Older youths and adults like puppets, too, but may prefer more sophisticated humor—with more witty lines and less slapstick comedy.

Combine dialogue and narration. Use narration to set the scenes and present background material.

## How to Use Hand Puppets

Hand puppets are available at most toy stores, but it's usually more fun to make your own. Use socks, styrofoam balls, papier-mâché, and draperies or other materials to make the characters for your play.

Make sure the puppet fits firmly on your hand, and practice working the puppet until you have good control. Then follow these techniques to polish your puppet's acting ability.

## Acting

Because puppets usually cannot change their facial expressions, the puppeteer must use the puppet's movements to show feelings:

**Sadness.** Use slow movements. If the puppet's face has a happy expression, cover its face with its hands or turn its back to the audience and make its shoulders drop.

**Happiness.** Use quick, bouncy movements. Clap hands, dance, wiggle.

**Anger.** Shake fist, clap hands to head in exasperation, or pace back and forth shaking the head firmly.

**Sleep.** Turn puppet's face away from the audience or put its hands together and rest its face on them.

Keep your eyes on the puppet and exaggerate its actions. Exaggerated movements are often used in puppetry to show emotions.

## Voicing

Pay special attention to these rules of voicing:

Speak slowly and clearly.

Give each character a voice of its own. It is often funny to give puppets surprise voices—a deep, tough voice for a tiny mouse, for instance.

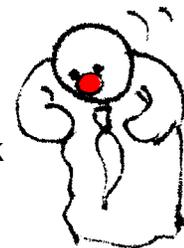
Only the speaking character should move—otherwise it's hard for the audience to keep the characters straight. When puppets are not "speaking," they are usually paying attention to the character who is.



**Sad**



**Happy**



**Angry**



**Sleepy**

# Ventriloquism

Ventriloquism is the art of talking without moving the lips. It's an excellent tool to make your hand puppets more effective. You must learn to use the stomach and diaphragm muscles to control your voice.

## Step One

First try the mouth position in front of the mirror. Start with your mouth closed. Bring your teeth together but just barely touch them. Now part your lips slightly. Your jaw must be relaxed. Your tongue should be able to move around freely. You must learn to use your tongue inside your mouth.

Now practice saying the beginner's alphabet: A C D E G H I J K L N O Q R S T U X Z.

Keep practicing in front of a mirror until you can say all of the above letters without moving your lips. Then you will be ready to go on to the next part.

## Step Two

You must master the more difficult letters one at a time. You will be learning to substitute a different letter for the actual letter you are using.

For the letter B you will need to use the letter D. Here is a practice sentence. The boy bought a basketball. You will be saying, "The doy dough a dasketdall."

When you are practicing this, concentrate on the sound of the letter B while actually saying D. Practice until the sound comes out right without moving your lips. Be sure to watch yourself in the mirror.

F—use "TH" but think "F." Practice saying, "If good fortune follows a fellow he's fine." "Ith good thortune thollows a thellow he's thine."

M—use "N." Don't forget to concentrate on "M" while saying "N." Practice sentence—"Many men make money," or as you will say it, "Nany nen nake noney."

P—use T. "Please play the piccolo"—"Tlease tlay the ticcolo."

V—use Thee. "Values in veal and venison." "Theealues in theeal and theenison."

W and Y—use "o" and "i" together. Say them as fast as you can. "When we work we will win." "Oihen oie oiork oie oill oin."

Think about what your tongue is doing when you practice these exercises. You must learn

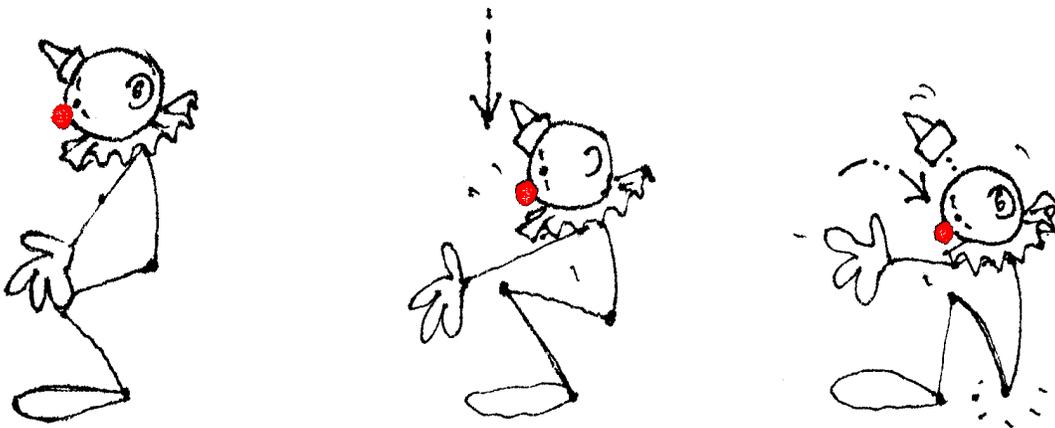


to use your tongue against your teeth in such a manner that it replaces the need to put your lips together for the sound of difficult letters. You must also force the air and sound up from your stomach. Singing exercises may help.

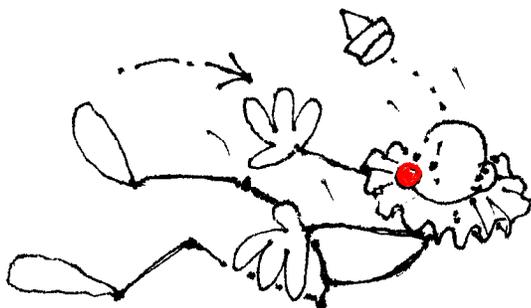
Start practicing the above exercises in your “ventriloquial voices.” You have two voices, falsetto, which is high, and the pinched voice.

For the first one all you have to do is practice speaking about as high as you can get. With the second voice you talk “through your nose.” Tighten your throat and vocal cords and try not to breathe through your nose as you talk. It will take lots of practice in both voices to become really good, but anyone who isn’t afraid of hard work can do it. One other thing—the “dummy” you see on the ventriloquist’s knee is known to the professional as the ventriloquist “figure.”

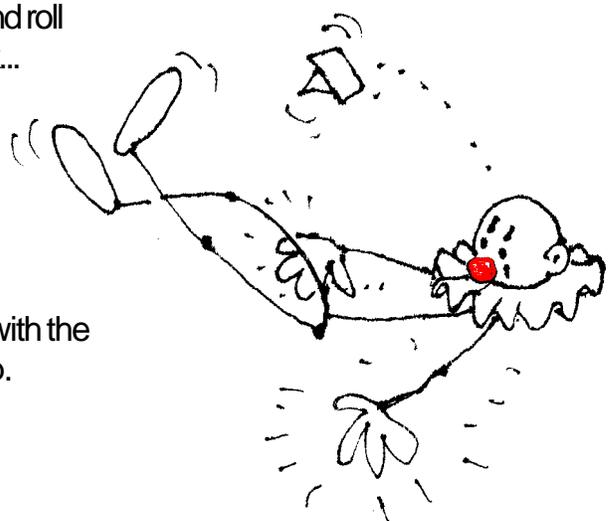
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Do a fast squat-&-sit...



...tuck your chin to your chest and roll back...



...and slap the ground with both arms. Slap with the whole length of your arm and keep your head up.

# Clown Props

Props are an important part of a clown costume or the skits the clown takes part in. Props can be anything: large or small, homemade or manufactured. Let your imagination be your guide to what props will be part of your clown image.

Consider the kinds of activities you will be using the props in. For skits and indoor activities, the props can be larger; but for parades and outdoor activities that require a lot of walking or moving about, the props should be smaller and lightweight. Props can feel very heavy in long parades.

Carry small props in your pockets. Put larger ones in a bag or basket. If you are making props, be sure they are safe and good-looking. Props must be moved around, so don't make large props that cannot be transported easily.

The following are simple examples of what might be used for props:

- Sponge rubber cake with shaving cream frosting

- Noisemakers

- Big bat and little ball or little bat and big ball (plastic)

- Large toothbrush or comb

- Camera squirt gun

- Fly swatter

- Walking or pull toys

- Siren or gong

- Swat stick—lightweight wood: two sticks, 30 in. long, 3 in. wide, 1/4 in. thick, screwed together at one end to form a handle. Approximately midpoint, fasten a 1/4-inch wedge to one slat to spread ends. The ends clap together when an object is struck.

- Big old shoes—stuff them to fit around your own shoes

These are just a few ideas. Use your imagination to make props that fit your needs. Rummage sales are excellent places to find props to use in skits and other activities in clowning. You can use just about anything as a prop if it accents your clown image.



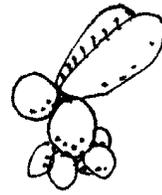
## Falling

If you plan to use falling in your act, the best way to learn to do it well and safely is to take a beginner's course in judo. Check the yellow pages in your phone directory.

For a simple back fall, start in a standing position. Then squat on your heels, tuck your chin on your chest, and gently roll back onto your seat and then your back. Let your feet rise and gently lower to the floor, relaxed. Slap with both arms, using the whole arm, resisting the temptation to "catch" yourself with your wrists or elbows.

Your head should not touch the floor. Practice on a mat or thick carpeting, slowly at first. You can also learn side falls and forward falls. Good luck!

# Balloon Artistry

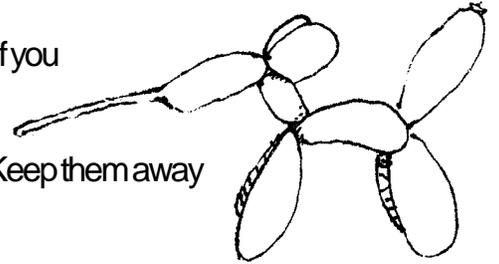


Rabbit

Most audiences, young and old, are fascinated watching a balloon artist at work. A 4-H clown can draw a large crowd by adding this easily learned skill to any performance. This section contains some suggestions to help you create intriguing balloon animals.

An experienced balloon artist knows that good strong balloons are the first key to success. To lessen balloon breakage, follow these suggestions before you begin.

1. Purchase balloons from a reputable source.
2. Make sure your balloons are fresh.
3. Be aware different manufacturers have different names for the same balloon. The small diameter balloon recommended for balloon animals is called Twist-eez, Pencils, Skinnies, etc.
4. Take the attitude that balloons are purchased to be used; if you don't use many, don't buy many. Don't count on good results if you keep them on hand for long periods.
5. Store balloons closed up in the original box or one like it. Keep them away from heat, sunlight, or extreme temperatures of any kind.
6. Stretch the balloon before you blow it up.
7. Don't blow the balloon up too fast.
8. Don't put too much air into the balloons (allow for the twists you will make).
9. Make sure your hands are not rough.
10. Avoid sharp objects.
11. When coming in from the cold outdoors, roll the balloon between the palms of your hands and breath on it to warm it up. When the balloon is warmed, blow it up.
12. Don't blow up balloons by mouth for an extended period of time. Use a hand pump for inflating large numbers of balloons. It's faster and safer.



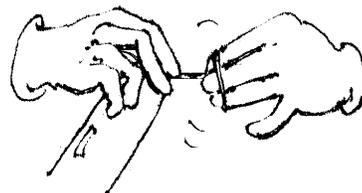
Armadillo

## Balloon Animals

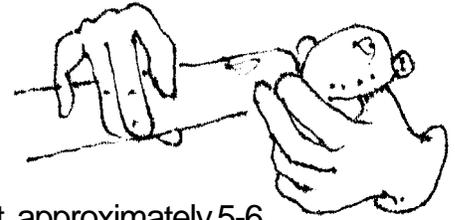
The balloon animals in this section are based on the basic animal. Before trying any of the other balloon animals, follow the step-by-step instructions for making the basic animal. Once you have learned basic balloon artistry skills, design your own balloon creations.

### Making the Basic Animal

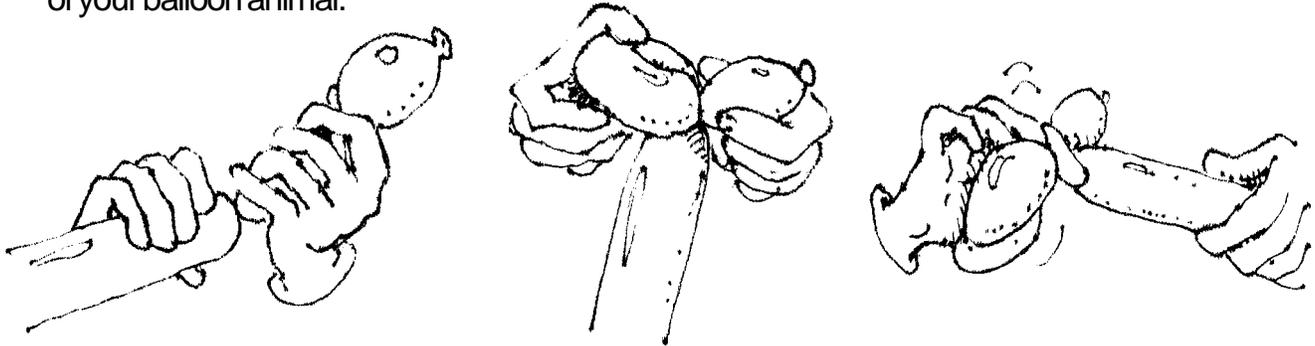
Stretch a No. 245 balloon. Inflate the balloon, leaving 4-5 inches at the end uninflated. Tie the end.



Pinch the balloon between thumb and first finger, approximately 3 inches from the tied end. Twist the main portion of the balloon away from you. This makes the nose or head of the animal.

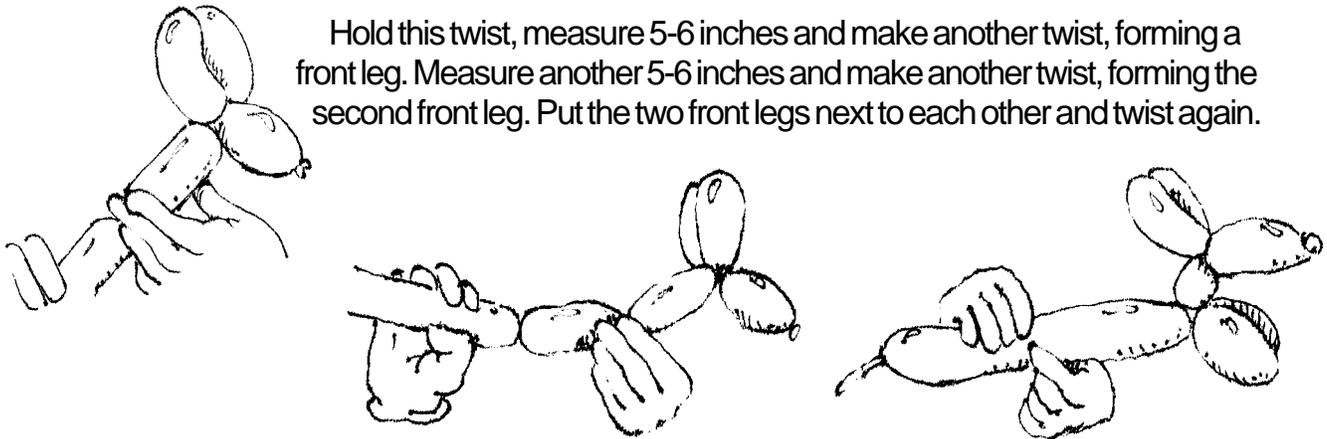


Holding the first twist in your left hand, make a second twist, approximately 5-6 inches behind the first twist. This will form an ear. The second ear is formed by making a third twist. Put the two ears (bubbles 2 and 3) next to each other and twist. This locks the first part of your balloon animal.

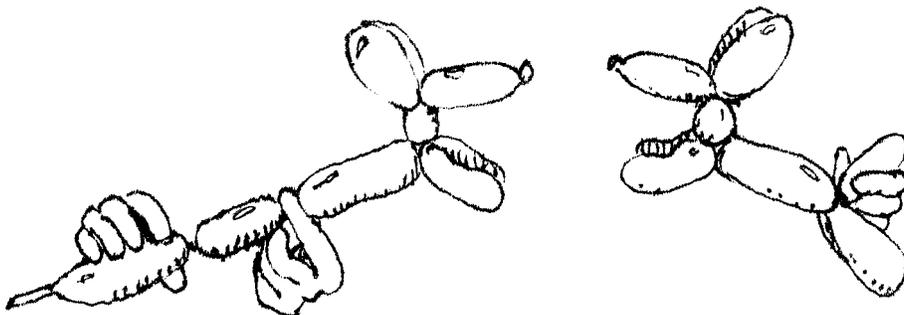


To form the neck, pinch the balloon between thumb and forefinger approximately 3-4 inches behind the ears. Twist the long part of the balloon away from the body.

Hold this twist, measure 5-6 inches and make another twist, forming a front leg. Measure another 5-6 inches and make another twist, forming the second front leg. Put the two front legs next to each other and twist again.



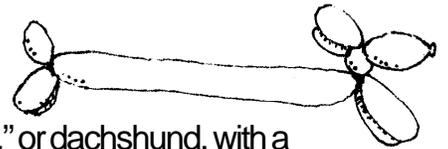
Make the body by twisting the balloon 3-4 inches behind the front legs. Form a rear leg by measuring 5-6 inches and making another twist. Form the second rear leg by measuring another 5-6 inches and twisting again. Place the two back legs next to each other and twist again to lock. Adjust the tail for the completed animal.



Use these same procedures to make other animals. These all use No. 245 balloons.

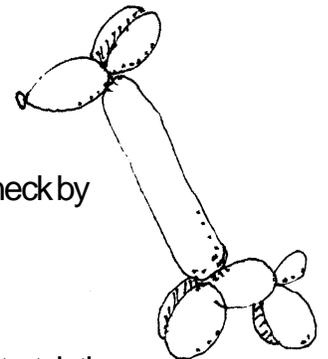
## Dachshund

The public expects every balloon artist to make the “sausage dog,” or dachshund, with a long body and short legs. To make one, use the same twists as in the basic animal, but make the rubber bubbles different lengths.



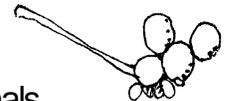
## Giraffe

The giraffe is a bit like the dachshund tipped up on end. Make the front legs longer than the hind legs, to create the effect of a sloping back. Shape the neck by squeezing and bending the balloon.



## Mouse

Use the moves of the basic animal and keep your balloon bubbles small. Stretch the balloon only from the neck to the halfway point. To form the mouse, blow the balloon up about halfway, and then let a little of the air out before starting to twist. Form the same as the basic animal, but keep the bubbles small and equal in size for head and ears. Squeeze a little air into the end of the balloon each time you make a twist. This keeps the balloon bubbles small. The unfilled part of the balloon gives your mouse a long tail.

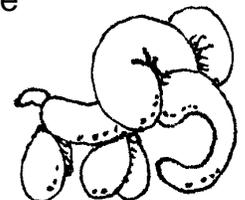


By giving different names to the same basic things you can create more animals. For example, putting a poodle type head on the mouse lets you call the animal a chihuahua. Just add long ears and long back legs and make larger spaces between twists.

## Elephant

You will make the basic animal shape, except for the trunk. Hold the balloon stretched out while you blow it up to make a thin tube of air. Shape the elephant's trunk as follows:

1. Stretch the top inch of the balloon (the mouth end) a few times.
2. While stretching this top inch out to 3 or 4 inches, fill it with air by gripping the top rim of the balloon in your teeth and pulling against the grip. Since the air cannot go beyond where you are holding it, blow into the balloon and form a little sausage of air.
3. To prevent it from getting any larger, curl your left hand around the little sausage, as you blow up the rest of the balloon.
4. Leave a 4- to 5-inch tail at the bottom.
5. Before uncurling your left hand, tie off the neck, and make your first twist about two inches beyond your left hand. This is the head. The trunk is in your left hand.
6. Measure off the length of your thumb, fold the balloon back on itself (without twisting) and twist this loop at the head for one ear.
7. Do the same with the other ear. Each ear will be about the length of your thumb.
8. Squeeze the trunk to form a ball shape at the end.
9. Make the neck, front legs, body, back legs, and tail according to the directions for the basic animal.



# Performing with Your Balloon Animals

Beginning balloon workers are often disturbed over breakage. Any professional balloon worker knows that balloons sometimes break. When one breaks during a performance, make a joke out of it. Stare at the balloon and say, "Hey, what kind of dog was that? You don't know? That was an air-dale!"

Turn any such mishap into your immediate advantage. When it breaks, take a firm grip at the twist, where the air is still held in it, and tear off the twisted part. Turn to a member of the audience and say, "Here, hold this." When the person reaches for the balloon, let go; and with nothing to keep it inflated, it will fly through the air, making a shrill sound. You might say, "Well, you just lost your job as my assistant!"

In working with balloon animals, give the impression of great speed, but actually keep your movements deliberate.

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The following sources can also provide information on clowning:

- Clowns of America Association, 2715 E. Fayette, Baltimore, MD 21224
- Clown's Alley*, a magazine for association members
- Costume stores
- Drama teachers
- Improvisational theater groups
- Libraries
- Magic shops
- Professional clowns
- Referral to local association chapters
- Toy stores





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