

PAPER DOLLS

Paper dolls are one of the oldest and simplest crafts to make. From the very simple garland type (hand to hand stretched across like a paper chain) to the elaborate paper dolls with clothes from the 1800's, we imagine Elsie would have liked making these fun and inexpensive creations. The great thing is that you can do a project like this by yourself or with your friends and family. Play with them, decorate your room with them, or give them to your friends as gifts. As always, be creative, have fun and smile - just like Elsie!

PAPER DOLL GARLAND

Materials needed: paper, scissors, colored markers, glue stick and other tiny decorations (optional).

Take a long piece of paper and fold it like an accordion. (Hint - to check yourself, the paper should fan out in even-sized sections.) Now, keeping the paper folded like that, draw or trace your design on the top flap of your accordion only. Make the arms of your doll reach all the way to the edge of the paper on both sides. If your "doll" is very simple (and believe it or not, the basic shape of a girl outlined on most public restroom doors is one great idea to copy!) all you need to do is carefully cut it out. Be sure that you don't cut through the folded edge of the paper. And viola! You should have a garland of dolls - holding hands - to drape across your headboard, or mirror, or doorframe or even your baby brother!! Feel free to use colored paper or markers, glitter and other decorations, if you like. Hearts, stars, and flowers are other cute ideas for paper garlands. And don't worry if it takes a few tries to get it just right. Experimenting is part of the fun of creativity. Enjoy!

VICTORIAN DRESS-UP PAPER DOLLS

Materials needed: white poster board, white paper (the heavier weight the better), scissors, crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils, glue stick, tiny buttons and beads, thin ribbon (1/8th or 1/16th of an inch wide), tiny bows, scraps of lace, tiny silk flowers, pretty floral wallpaper, magazine pictures and/or fabric scraps, and modeling clay (optional).

This project is only limited by your time and imagination - half the fun is using bits of this and scraps of that to make something unique and beautiful! But first, you must decide on a basic design for your doll. You may want to trace or draw several patterns on scratch paper first until you get "her" just right. Remember she is the basic form and all her clothes will be added later - so keep it simple. Then copy that outline onto white poster board and carefully cut her out. Good job!

Now, the next step may take some trial and error - the doll stand. Again, simple and sturdy is what you want. You can either cut a 1-inch slit up from the bottom center of your doll (if you have designed her with a hoop-skirt shape) and insert a 2-inch half-

moon shaped piece of cardboard into the slit (curved part goes up) to make a stand. Or you can place the doll in a small amount of soft modeling clay. If you designed a doll with legs, you can adapt the idea but, you'll need two smaller stands or you could cut a triangle shaped piece of cardboard with a small flap and glue that to the center of her back. The long edge would trail down her back and the shorter, wide edge would become the base of the stand. Experiment! These are only a couple of ideas and you may have a better one.

Once your doll and her stand are done - your doll needs to come to life! Again, make some sketches on scratch paper first. You will want to carefully draw her face and color her hair and maybe even add her "little gold locket" with a metallic marker. But, remember, Elsie didn't wear blue-sparkly nail polish!

Her clothes and accessories are next - what fun! It's always helpful to look through magazines and picture books of the Victorian and Civil-War eras for ideas on dresses, bonnets, gloves, shoes and even lacy pantaloons! (Don't forget the pretty "cover girl" on the Elsie books and Web site for inspiration, too.) This is where all your creativity and fashion flair will take over. Floral wallpaper and fabric scraps make really nice dresses and hats. Tiny buttons, bows and even flowers make things pretty and one-of-a-kind. The only real rule to remember is that all her clothes and accessories must have tabs. Everything must have tabs! Add about a 3/4 inch tab in several key spots on your dresses, etc. so that your doll's fashions stay put until you want to make a change.

This activity is so much fun and you can spend hours designing and playing with these dolls. You could easily make an Elsie doll plus dolls for other characters from the books. And what's to stop you from taking a large piece of poster board and designing a "set" that looks like Roselands or Ion? This could be a great party idea, too. Invite some friends over to work on this together - your bits of "this" and their scraps of "that" just might make something even greater than if you work alone. Oh, and don't forget to make Elsie's "little Bible" - no Elsie paper doll would be complete without it!

Your local library will have many books under the subjects of antebellum clothing and Victoriana. Also, if you have a set of encyclopedias at home, look up those subjects in them too. The magazines called *Victoria*, *Southern Lady* and *Southern Living*, which are filled with information and pictures about Victorian styles. (The magazines are sold at newsstands and you can probably find copies in the public library.)

If you have a local auto club office in your area, you can get some free travel brochures from southern tourist attractions (i.e., Traveler's Rest, Cheekwood and Belle Mede Mansion in Nashville, Tennessee, or other places where they do historical reenactments and have actresses that dress up in old-fashioned clothes).

You can also do a search on the Internet for Victorian clothing and see what comes up. If you find pictures, then you can print them out, trace them and color them. You could also look for books or information about the movie "Gone with the Wind" which had southern belles in it.