

## Study Guide

### Kellie Haines Ventriloquist

The story of *A Space to Play!*



#### Overview

Kellie Haines is a ventriloquist who weaves storytelling, singing, movement, puppetry, music and improvisation into her interactive shows that are hilarious to watch. You never know what will happen next with her two puppets Kamilla the frog and Magrau the bird. Ventriloquism is 'magic with puppets'. She started performing in her school gymnasium at a talent show with her puppet Magrau the bird.

Today Kellie tours throughout North America in her theatre shows and does voice work and puppetry for television. She is working on a tv show called the Not 2 Late Show which is a talk show for kids [www.not2lateshow.com](http://www.not2lateshow.com). Whether the audience is a volunteer, or someone who sits back and listens, everyone is actively helping the show move to the next adventure and time flies by!





## Kellie Haines bio:

At the age of eight, Kellie got the notion to take her bird puppet Magrau on stage with her at her school talent show and improvise. Little did she know that she was doing something called ventriloquism. She would continue to perform with Magrau the bird in her primary school and later win her high school and University talent show competitions. Magrau the bird was joined by Kamilla the frog and the rest, according to Magrau, is history.

Ventriloquist Kellie Haines is an experienced and multitalented entertainer who inspires children of all ages. During her interactive performances, Kellie draws on her background in theatre, puppetry, dance, singing, clowning and ventriloquism as she explores a wide variety of topics with humour, compassion and boundless energy.

Kellie has a Bachelor of Arts (honours degree in drama and minor in English) from the University of Guelph and she specializes in performing shows and presenting workshops for children with special needs and their teachers. Kellie wrote and performed two long-running ventriloquist stage shows, which were presented at the HR MacMillan Space Centre planetarium. *Frogs In Space: Kamilla's Quest*, and *Rocket Magrau: Space Bird!* were hugely successful multi-media shows. *Rocket Magrau* opened at the Vancouver International Children's Festival where Kellie released her CD *Songs From Space*.



From performing her first ventriloquist act at eight years old in her school gymnasium to currently touring North American theatres and working as a puppeteer and vocalist for television, Kellie has never forgotten what she wants to do when she grows up.

Her interactive performances bring belly laughs to kids, youth and adults as they get caught up in the magic.

“Is there a tape-recorder inside?”

A frequent question from adults and kids is the one that asks if there is a recording device inside the puppets that makes them talk. While you watch the show, see if you can decide how and when Kellie talks without moving her mouth.

***A description for the performance/event:***

Three friends, ventriloquist Kellie Haines, Kamilla the frog and Magrau the bird, explore the differences in people, nature and the universe and discover how important diversity is. Magrau wants to help protect the mountain caribou by finding them more space to play, while Kamilla wonders if she is the only frog in the universe. With the help of the audience's imaginations, the trio flies through the constellations before landing on a mysterious planet. A Space to Play is a hilarious, interactive musical adventure that will have you moving to the beat and getting caught up in the magic of ventriloquism.



***Notes for audience:***

Kellie knows how difficult it is for her to sit for long periods of time! One of her specialties is keeping her audience actively engaged. She creates moments for the kids to clap their hands and move to the beat as well as sit still and listen. This show is 50 minutes with a 10 minute question and answer period. Volunteers are invited onto the stage at strategic moments in the show. Lots of laughter is encouraged. Often Kellie asks for teacher volunteers but only at times when the teacher is interested in participating. Shy or timid students know that they can sit back and watch from afar. The puppets let the students come to them and are never overwhelming.

**Technical Requirements:**

*Set-up time: 1 hour*

*Please have a chair and table with access to an electrical outlet.*

*All audio equipment is provided by Kellie.*

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***Themes:***

*Acceptance of differences in others*

*Self acceptance*

*Embracing talents and creativity*

*Fears and how to deal with them*

*New experiences*

*Team work*

*Never giving up*



### *Classroom Discussion before the show:*

#### **What is ventriloquism?**

The art of ventriloquism began in ancient times, somewhere around the sixth century BC. The name "ventriloquist" means "belly speaker" in Latin. Ventriloquism happens when the ventriloquist makes the puppet talk without moving his or her mouth. Kellie uses soft puppets in her shows. Other ventriloquists may use wooden figures commonly called "vent figures." Kellie uses hand puppetry with her puppets and at the same time uses ventriloquism to help her puppets talk...and sing!

#### **What is puppetry?**

Puppetry is a form of theatre. It is very ancient, and is believed to have originated around the year 30,000 [BC](#). Most puppetry tells a story. Some people believe that puppetry pre-dates actors. There are many different kinds of puppets from different countries.



**Jim Henson** created Sesame Street and the Muppets. Jim Henson was inspired by a ventriloquist named Shari Lewis.

**Shari Lewis** was an American ventriloquist, puppeteer, and children's television show host, most popular during the 1960s and 1990s. She was best known as the original puppeteer of Lamb Chop.



Kellie has been inspired by Shari Lewis and Jim Henson. She gives credit to both of them for helping her learn that puppetry and ventriloquism is an incredible and fun art form. Kellie knew what she wanted to do when she grew up from a very young age and she is doing it today in her performing.

## Classroom discussion after the show:

- Was there a time when you forgot that Kellie was doing ventriloquism?
- Did the puppets seem alive to you? Why?
- What was the show about?
- Kellie talked about wanting to be a ventriloquist since she was 8. What do you want to do when you grow up?
- What talents do you have that you have been working on since you were very young? Do you see yourself using your talents in your professional work?

## ARTS ACTIVITIES

### Create Your Own Sock Puppet



Materials - Sock (smaller sizes work well for children's hands. You can use a larger size for your teacher's puppet).

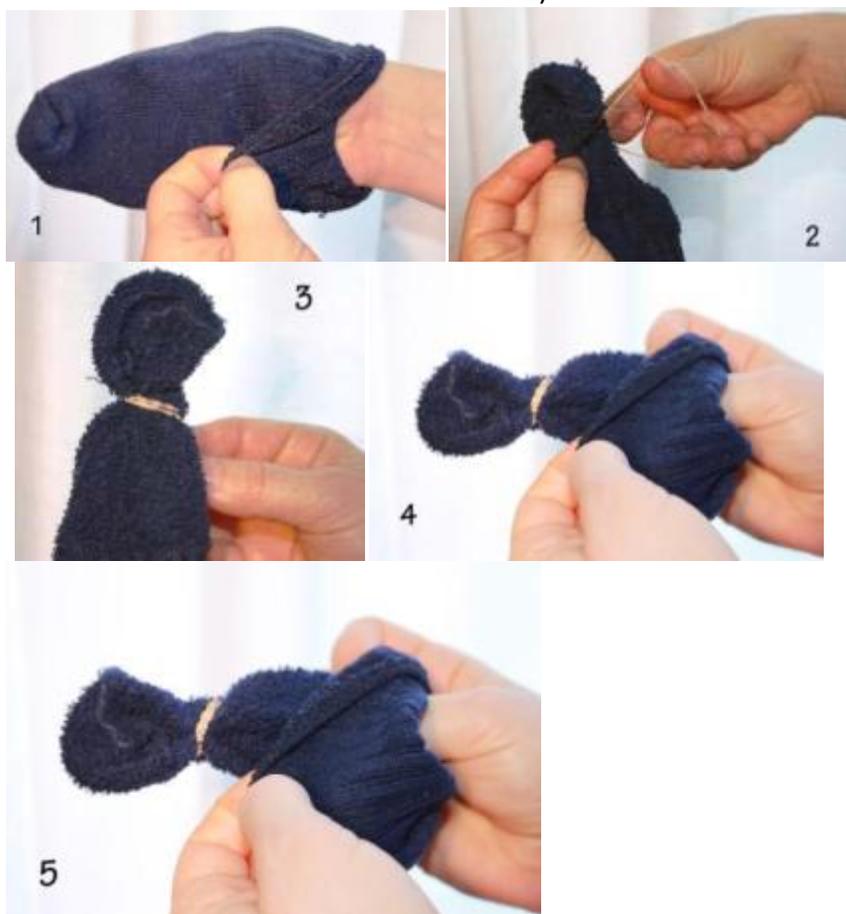
Googly eyes  
 Ball for nose  
 Yarn and/or string for hair  
 Elastic bands  
 Newspapers to cover tables  
 Fabric glue  
 Paper plates and popsicle sticks for glue

Remember, the sky's the limit when it comes to decorating and personalizing your puppet, but your puppet has to be operational. In addition, the more you decorate the puppet, the more the puppet needs to be re-glued. Create a special place for the new puppets to sleep until they are ready to get up and play. You may choose to have the children make little blankets for the baby puppets.

Make the puppets before morning recess and wait until after lunch to use them, or make them at the end of the school day to allow the glue to cure overnight. What do you do when a nose falls off in the middle of a performance? Smile! Have a table where the children can go to make repairs. The show goes on!

## STEPS FOR PUPPET CREATIONS

1. Pull your sock inside out then put an elastic band around the end of the sock, about 2-4 centimeters from the end, then pull the sock back. You will see it is easier to see the puppet's mouth now. This is key for easy manipulation. The bunched-up bit gathered with the elastic band will be cupped in the user's hand. (You may tie the elastic band around the sock ahead of time for K-1)



2. Decorate your puppets. If your puppet is an alien, he/she may need 2 noses.



3. Talk about respect and teamwork when making puppets. Let puppets dry on a special table.



NOTE- by placing the eyes closer together you get a younger looking puppet. An older puppet has their eyes placed further apart.

This puppet making activity is most effective when it is done at the end of the day or before recess so the puppets can dry. Also, it is an effective technique to let the students know ahead of time that they will have the chance to practice talking without moving their mouths later when they go to recess or at a break. Trying to talk without moving your mouth is often so much fun that a room can be filled with many budding ventriloquists trying out their new skills!

## Questions to ask your class

- What is your puppet's name?
- Does your puppet speak a different language?
- Where was your puppet born? (What country, planet, town?)
- How old is your puppet?

## Ventriloquism Lesson

When a ventriloquist has to say words that are difficult to pronounce without moving their mouth, they substitute a different letter that sounds the same.

Eg. Try to say B, F, P, V, W without moving your lips. It's difficult isn't it?

Now, keeping your mouth slightly open and relaxed, substitute the following letters.

For B – use a D sound. Instead of saying "I believe" say "I delieve."

For F- use a soft "TH" sound. Instead of saying "I am having fun" say "I am having "THun."

For P- use a hard 'K' sound. Instead of saying "please shut the door" say "Klease shut the door."

For V- use a hard "TH" sound. Instead of saying "I am very tired" say "I am Theyr tired."

For W – use "ooh-ahh" sound. Instead of saying "what time is it?" say "ooh-ahh...t time is it?"

Once your activity of the day is over, ask the children to wait until recess or after school to continue practicing ventriloquism in front of a mirror. Mention that Kellie taught herself how to talk without moving her lips by looking in the mirror and saying her ABC's. You can use this mirror exercise as a homework assignment. When they come back to school the next day, the students can talk about their experience, draw a picture or write in their journal.