

Tap into their inner thespian with a little drama. This script (on page 2 & 3) lends itself to a simple play or puppet show or an elaborate production with sets, costumes and props. Either way, there is lots of fun and learning to be had in putting on a performance.

Costumes and Props

Dressing up is always fun. Create costumes with details from your observations in nature or create something new. Make your own masks. A simple template for a bird mask can be found here at [Cool Australia](#).

A stage and props are not required, but can provide a learning opportunity. Consider drawing on what you know about your focus bird's habitat, where it lives, to set your stage.

Create your own puppets

Stick puppets are simple to make. Use pictures or draw the characters on paper. You may wish to use a bird you created with our *Build A Bird* activity. Colour them and cut them out. To make your puppets more durable glue the cut outs to some boxboard (cereal box) and cut out. Tape your finished characters to a stick or pencil. Voila - a cast of puppets is ready to perform. Puppets can be one-sided, two-sided and even three dimensional with wings, legs, feathers, tails, and googly eyes. Be creative.

Shadow puppets - Use silhouettes of the characters to make stick puppets. A doorway makes a good frame for a stage. Make a screen by hanging a plain bedsheet from the top of the doorframe with thumb tacks. It's important the screen is flat so your shadows look their best. Place a large piece of cardboard across the bottom part of your screen. This will create a "stage" and hide the puppeteers sitting on the floor. Use a clamp-on reading lamp as a spotlight. It is bright and easy to direct. There are great ideas to be found at [My Kids' Adventures](#).



Sock puppets are fun to create and more expressive as "actors". You can glue eyes, wings, tails and so on to your sock. Better still would be to practice some needle work. Stich on features such as button eyes or wings cut from fabric scraps or feathers made from yarn. Slip the sock over a tall plastic cup or a jar before you begin dressing up your puppet. This old darning trick makes stitching easier. It will also prevent accidentally stitching or gluing the sides of the sock together. Finally, a use for those single socks!



Finger puppets - Little finger puppets don't need a big stage, the backyard picnic table or the kitchen table will do. Recycle a rubber glove by cutting off fingers or fashion a puppet from paper. There plenty of templates online. There is an origami bird puppets here [Red Ted Art](#).

Record the performances to watch together and share with family and friends. Write a play for someone special and send them a recorded performance to brighten their day.



Mr. BIRD SINGS

Characters:

- ⇒ Rocky Raccoon
- ⇒ Mr. Bird - brightly colored
- ⇒ Ms. Bird - camouflaged coloration

You can alter the script and use your focus bird (from *Be a Birdwatcher*) for Mr. and Mrs. Bird. Use its song and include some of the behaviors you have observed, for example how your bird walks, flies or perches.

Prop: Sign saying: Next day 5:00AM

Opening Scene: Rocky Raccoon is sleeping, Mr. Bird is perched and singing.

Mr. Bird: Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tee, Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees.

Rocky Raccoon: (waking up) Uh, Mr. Bird, Mr. Bird. You have been singing that same song with those same words over and over and over again since 5:00 this morning. No offense, but it's driving me crazy! If you insist upon singing for so long, can't you at least change the song?

Mr. Bird: Change the song! I can't just change my song. It'd be like asking you to start barking like a dog.

Rocky: What do you mean? I hear lots of different bird songs.

Mr. Bird: Yes, but they're coming from lots of different birds. Each different kind of bird has a different special song of its own and mine is Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees, Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees . . .

Rocky: Yes, yes I know what your song is. Ok, I accept the fact that you only sing one song. But why do you have to keep singing it?

Mr. Bird: Because I'm looking for a mate, a partner, a Mrs. Bird . . .

Rocky: Oh brother, I should have known, the same old story.

Mr. Bird: That's what my song means: Twee Tweedle Dee, Come see me, Twitter Tweeter Tees, I 'm in these trees (flies off singing)

Rocky: Twee Tweedle Dee, Come see me. I think this bird is going to drive me crazy. I think it's driven me crazy. I'm starting to talk to myself. Well, I think the only way to get that bird to stop singing is to find him a mate. Here goes: Twee Tweedle Dee, Come see me. Twitter Tweeter Tees, I'm in these trees. Come on audience, I could use some help. Twee Tweedle Dee. Come see me.

(Ms. Bird appears)

Ms. Bird: Why I could have sworn I heard Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees coming from here. But I don't see any bird like me around. (starts to leave)

Rocky: Don't leave yet, Ms. Bird. If you go right by that tree over there, I'm sure you'll find yourself a handsome mate.

Ms. Bird: Thanks for the advice, Rocky. (leaves)

Rocky: Oh. I think this is going to work. Maybe I'll be able to sleep late now. (Mr. and Ms. Bird seen flying around together) It looks good. It looks very good! Thank you so much for the help audience. No more 5:00 mornings for me. (lies down, snores a little; sign saying Next Day 5AM appears)

Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees. Then (repeat)

Continued

Mr. BIRD SINGS continued

Rocky: (waking up) I don't believe it. He's still singing at 5:00 in the morning. Mr. Bird. What is going on? I found you a mate.

Mr. Bird: Yes, but my song is not only to find me a mate.

Rocky: But you told me it meant Twee Tweedle Dee, Come see me. Twitter Tweeter Tees, I'm in these trees. Isn't that right audience? (pause)

Mr. Bird: Yes, but it also means: Twee Tweedle Dee, Stay away from me Twitter Tweeter Tees, These are my trees.

Rocky: One song means two different things?

Mr. Bird: You said it. To a Ms. Bird it means one thing and to a Mr. Bird it means something else.

Rocky: But why are you trying to keep birds away?

Mr. Bird: Because this is my territory, my home. Mrs. Bird and I are going to build a nest and raise young here. My song will keep other birds like me away.

Rocky: Have you ever considered No Trespassing signs?

Mr. Bird: I'd rather sing.

Rocky: So when spring is over and Mrs. Bird and you have built your nest, raised your young, and we're well into summer, then will you be quiet?

Mr. Bird: Well, not completely quiet. I won't be singing my Twee Tweedle Dee so much. but I'll still be making my short calls to warn others of danger and tell them where there's food.

Rocky: As long as there won't be quite so much Twee Tweedled Deeing.

Mr. Bird: Speaking of which, I better get singing. Twee Tweedle Dee, Twitter Tweeter Tees, Then Bye, bye everyone. Twee Tweedle Dee . . .

THE END

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Take it all outside - put on your puppet shows and play in the yard. Hold a shadow theatre performance in the dark of the night.

Or

Find a shade tree to sit under and turn a script or story into a dramatic reading. Take turns reading parts while making up the characters' voices and the sound effects.



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