



# Plague Doctor Mask



by vivid-and-trivial

So after looking around online I decided I didn't quite like any of the plague doctor masks that I was seeing as far as tutorials, it all seemed like a lot of extra work for something that never turned out very clean. I decided to throw caution to the wind and just take elements of masks I've seen that I liked for inspiration and try and make one up on my own. I decided on a base of crafting foam, I've yet to see one made out of it which surprised me (maybe I wasn't looking in the right places) but it bends nicely and still has a firmness to it. So here's what I did if anyone is interested:

You'll need:

- Crafting Foam sheet (x2, one for the mask and one for the straps for the back)
- clear colored plastic binder divider

- fabric of your choice (thinner/lighter the better, you'll be hand-stitching a lot)
- wire gauge, stiff enough to hold a shape on it's own and not instantly bend
- thread
- black paint (forgot to picture, i used acrylic)
- hot glue gun and sticks
- scissors
- needles of your choice (need to be durable and go through a lot)
- any decor embellishments
- paper and pen (to make the template)
- something round to make the circles for the eyes and something straight to draw the lines

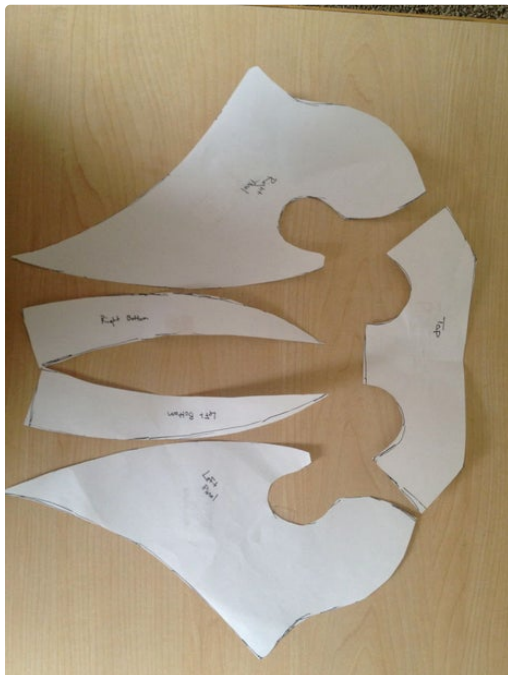


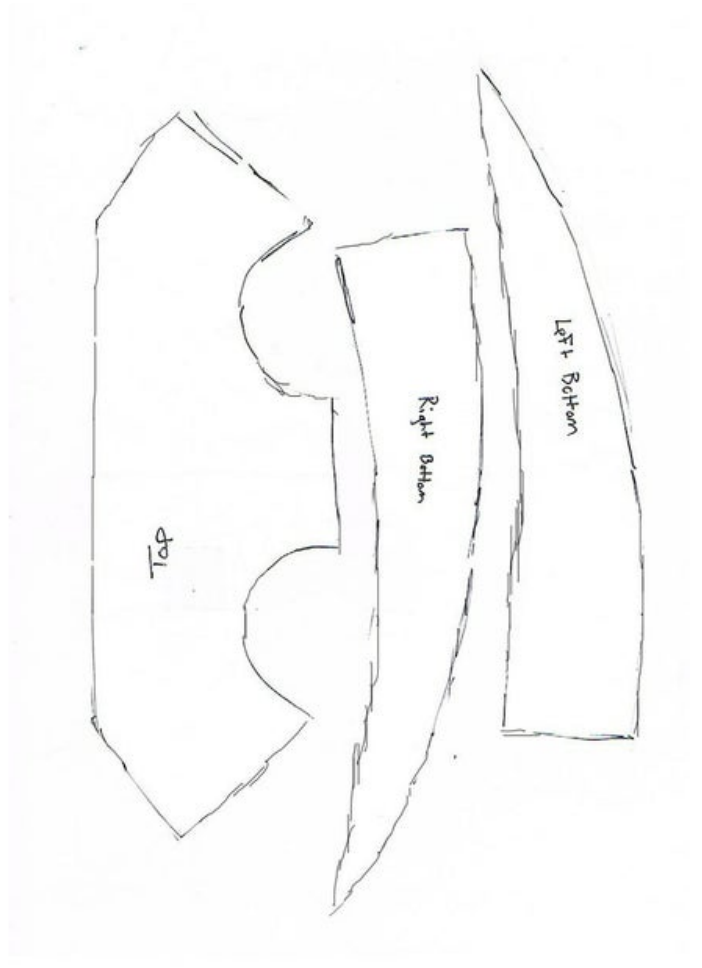
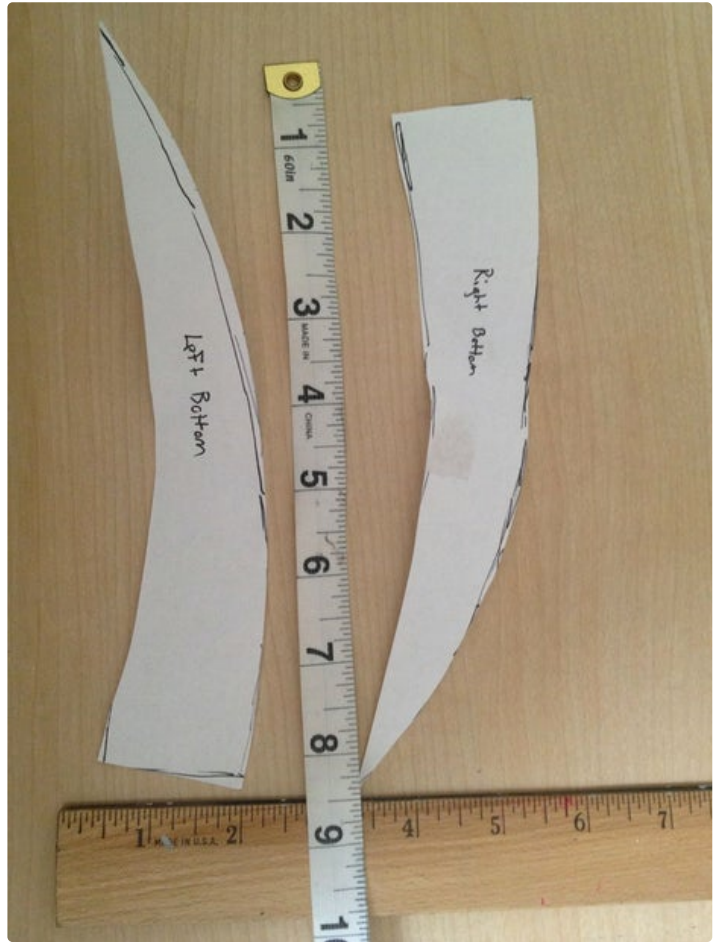
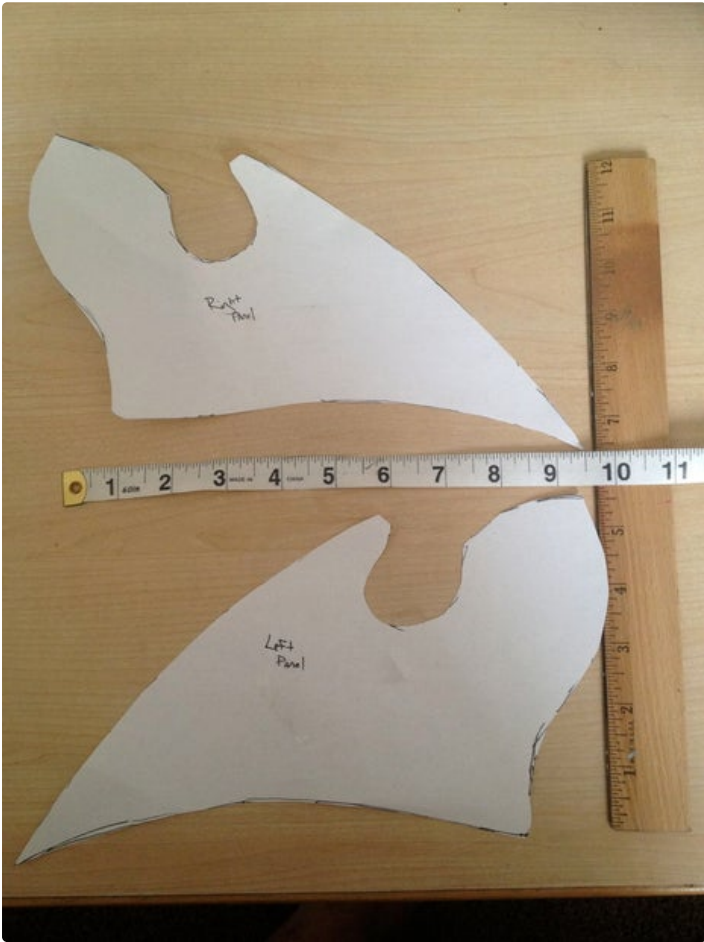
## Step 1: Make a Template

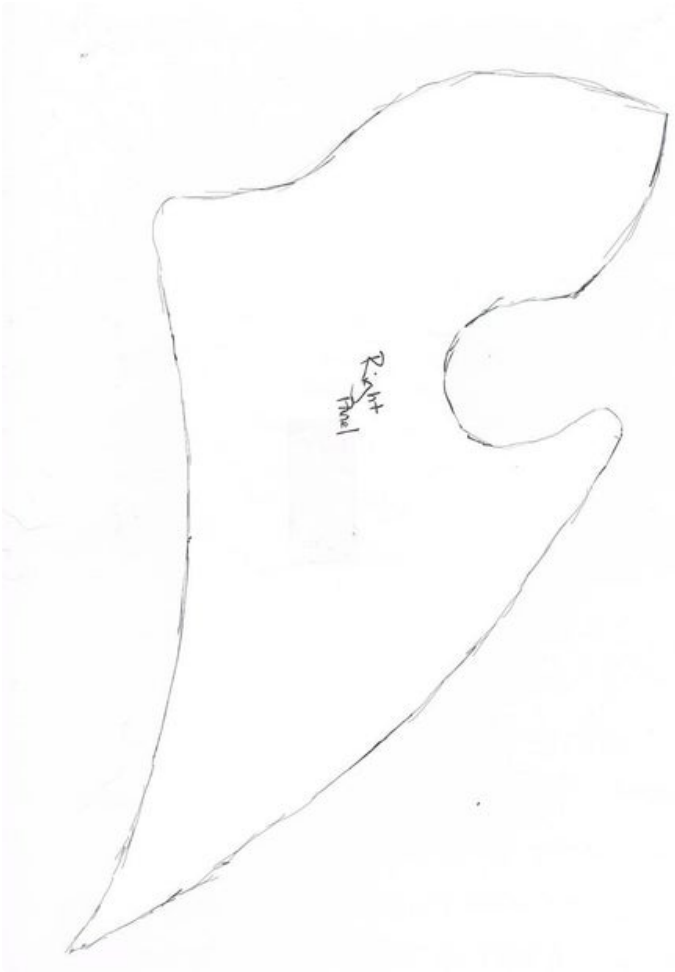
using sheets of paper determine the size and shape you want your mask to have. The key elements are the left/right side panels, the bottom left/right panels, and the top panel (later you'll make the eye cutouts and head straps).

same as the left, just face the flip side up and then they are symmetrical \*also sorry for the poor lines, my scanner did not like me but I tried my best\* originally cut out of computer paper so when I scanned it in I kept the same dimensions)

(attached are the scans of mine, the right panel is the







## Step 2: Test Your Template

using tape try and test the shape, make sure it fits yourself or whoever will be using it comfortably

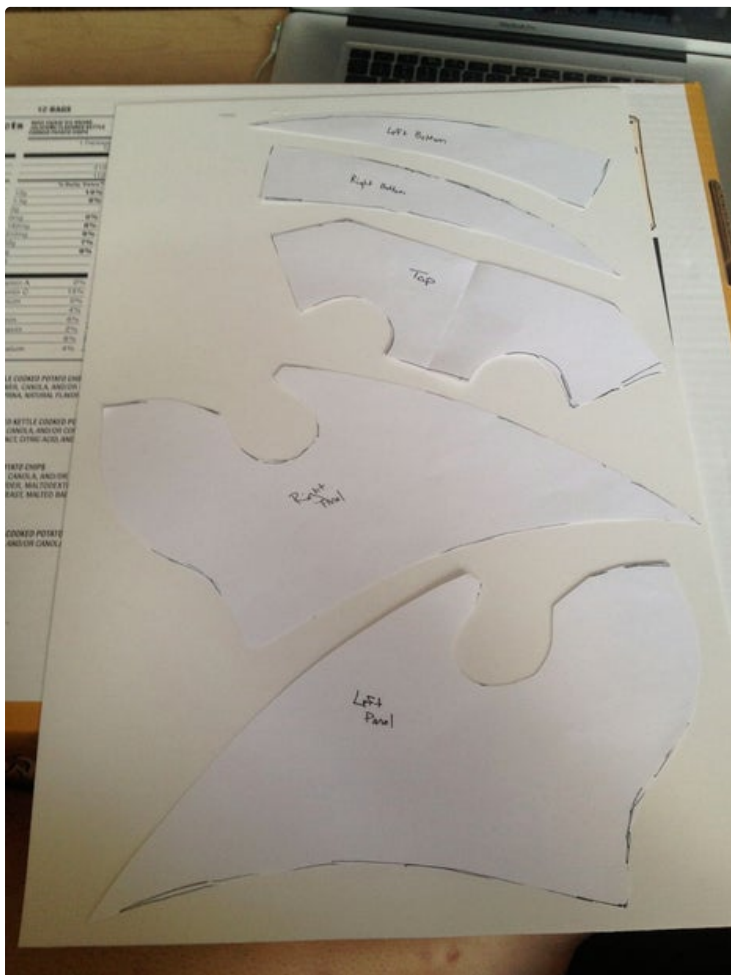




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### Step 3: Cut Out Your Foam

I was able to fit all of the template pieces (including eye cutouts, excluding straps) on one sheet. It goes a long way. (12x18 inch sheet)



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### Step 4: Fabric

Lay the foam onto the fabric, and outline in marker with an additional ~half inch margin around the pieces (enough to fold over). Cut out the fabric and fold over/hot glue the interior so the edges are also covered





## Step 5: Assembling

Here you have two choices, you can dive into stitching or glue first. Gluing will make stitching a bit harder in the long run, but you get the reassurance everything fits in the right places. I personally glued first as this was my prototype but in the future if I make another I'm going to dive into stitching.







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### Step 6: Stitch the Seams

Start hand stitching! It's time consuming and depending on how much foam/hot glue/fabric is layered certain areas will be harder than others, but it's all doable (some will require a nice sturdy book to press the needle against to get it to go through all the layers), and some will cut through like it's just a cheese clothe. Focus on connecting pieces, the beak and the top. This is the connection time.







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## Step 7: Eyes!

For the eyes now we get to repeat the process! Take something round, (I used a roll of tape but it was too large and I cut it so much I really don't know what to recommend as far as the round size ratio but I threw in the final measurements for you if your going by my size choice), cut out the foam. Once you do that do the same with the fabric with the margins. When gluing the foam to fabric, it may help to cut little vertical slits (edge of fabric into the foam) in the fabric so it's easier to fold and glue.

Once the fabric is glued on, stitch the interior of the circle edge.

cut the plastic divider and hot glue to the interior

Then (if you want to glue first you can, I did, and) stitch the exterior of the circle onto the mask.









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### Step 8: Side Stitch and Hot Glue

Stitch the sides/edges of the entire piece, and cut/hot glue the wire (I did two circles of support) inside the beak







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## Step 9: Paint

My stitches weren't as dark as I'd like, so I took some black paint and darkened the area of the stitches to make them more apparent.





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### Step 10: Create a Strap and Embellish

A made two rectangles out of foam, did the fabric stitch paint process, and then did the same with the strap (I made it a one size strap). Attached it to the mask and added the embellishments (three metal studs on each side)



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### **Step 11: And Done!**

And we're done! Take photos and do with as you'd like!  
(the interior I never cleaned up, no one but me will see the inside so I stopped there, but if you'd like to clean up the inside I'd just change the fabric to double over on the inside or create a cutout panel and glue it on).

Overall, ~7 hours, but I think next time now that I'm not making it up as I go I imagine ~5 hrs



I love the plague it has been on my Halloween costume since i was 8 and i finally made it thank you



I know it didn't work, but it's my first try and I like plague doctors so I liked to do this mask. Thanks and goodbye



Great pattern. Thank you very much. I brought it into Illustrator and cleaned and tweaked it a bit. I used a pair of Dollar Store sunglasses for lenses so it took some trial and error to work them in. I'm very happy with the result. and it will make a great gift for my daughter.



My son really wanted to be a plague dr for halloween. Here's my version.



It really is based on these instructions, just didnt work out the way it should :)





Amazing...I was looking for it. Now the crow will fly!!!

Where to buy craft foam in Perth, Australia? Plz help I need it for this Halloween!

how many yards would you recommend I buy to make two of these?

I used three quarters of a yard but this also gave me a hat and a shoulder cloak so I would say three quarters of a yard would do two

Made this for my son...used the pdf from in the comments and so the shape isn't quite as hooked as the one shown in your instructable. But so pleased with this, thanks. I used sellotape and stitched rather than hot glue oww oww, glue guns should be banned



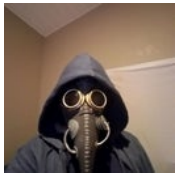
Thank you so much for the how to! I made a form and crocheted around it to give an authentic fabric look i can breath through. hehe



Is this inch or cm?

inches :)

I'd finished in around the same timeframe, although mostly a part of me just looking for materials. I used the template (although technically drawing out my own because the printer as broken), and added some decoration of my own, making it more a steampunk/apocalypse type mask. Overall, great tutorial and pattern. I'm really happy the way this turned out!



This is really helpful. I do have one question though. About how easy was it to breathe? Like, how often would you have to take the mask off to breathe fresh air?

The original masks had breathing holes, they were from a time when it was thought that bad smells transmitted disease so the beaks were filled with aromatic herbs for protection.

I sewed the bottom of mine together and the gaps in the bottom allow for breathing.

Awesome instructions thanks so much :) heres mine used ur basic design with an extra piece underneath because it was a bit small. Used sheet copper pop rivets and glue in parts for the decor, not quite finished yet still cant decide how to do my strap (any ideas?) and might get a bronze graffiti pen or paint to do some further decoration!



gonna make it for this #eldiademuertosparty, i will post the results in a few hours! great job, thanks!!



THANKS!



I made this for my Hoodoo-themed Plague Doctor costume. The mask is made from black craft foam, burlap, jute twine, hot glue, metal, paint, and a pair of red goggle lenses. Staff and raven from Etsy. Help me win my Costume Contest at work, today 10/28/2016 by clicking here and liking my picture. <https://www.facebook.com/rimmkaufman/photos/a.1203...>



I made one based on your pattern. Here's a pdf of the pattern....  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/zcpvntnkwi3gy1c/2016-10-24\\_52158.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/zcpvntnkwi3gy1c/2016-10-24_52158.pdf?dl=0)



Wow! Looks wonderful!



no foam.. No wire.. Faux leather sewing machine.. Eye rings are snap together shower curtain rings.. Hot glued sun glass lenses to the inside.. Holds it shape well.. Thanks for the idea.



Is there a picture with all the cutout pieces on it?



Thank you so much! I had to tweak it quite a bit for it to custom fit my son's head but it turned out really well! We are using a head lamp to light the eyes (i also used the rubber from an old pair of goggles to make the eyes a little more defined).



Wow :O That's amazing



Traditionally I'm an armorer, so I'm going to try making this from galvanised steel. I'll probably paint over it all with some high gloss black enamel.



Hey, thanks a lot for the tutorial! This really helped me out.

I used the templates by Adriaan Dippenaar, he 's got a blog on the web where I downloaded the files.

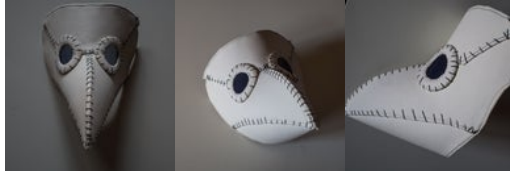
I used 2mm craft foam and covered it with faux leather. Then I used as little glue as I could to attach the pieces to each other and hand-stitched them with black thread.

For the eyes I cut my old sports trousers, it's some sort of mesh. It's quite easy to look through when wearing the mask but from "the other side" with a little more distance you can't really see through it.

Unfortunately I'm wearing glasses, I didn't consider that when working on this. It's quite uncomfortable to wear the mask with glasses underneath, but I think I'll get over it... :-)

Thanks again for the tutorial!

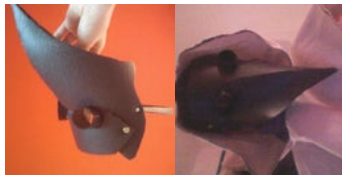
Greetings from Germany



I used 3mm foam sheet instead of 2mm and i found that I didn't need to use the wire reinforcement. It's fairly sturdy. I also used black outdoor thread which was easy to use. I purchased the same set of repair needles in the supplies image. I tried the larger curved upholstery needle first. Switching to the leather needle made things go much more quickly. I didn't glue the pieces together, I just stitched everything.



mine is from foam & glue



I made this mask, very helpful tutorial.

however, here are some tips to help other users not make the same mistakes i did while making this costume.

1. I accidentally bought foam board instead of craft foam. Don't do that. 'nuf said.
2. At jo ann fabrics, i found my materials for putting over the foam in the red tag section. I used black fake leather for mine, works great. Just make sure to use a big needle.
3. I used tape to hold my pieces together while sewing. Makes it a lot easier for the item to hold its shape while sewing. I used both hot glue and stitching to hold mine together, as well as a bit of e 6000 to patch up some parts.
4. For my eyes, I used some hardware such as washers and plastic mesh to make somewhat steampunk eyes, I used stitches, hot glue, and e 6000 to hold the eyes in place.
5. I used elastic for my strap, much easier and holds the mask to your face better. I stitched my elastic in and then used hot glue to hold it in place as well.
6. When hot gluing, i reccomend gluing the middle of the fabric to the mask so that i lies flatter.

Overall great tutorial, I just wanted to help people not make the same mistakes I did.



yeah i got foam board 2



finished! 2 bad it rained this halloween



Hey before I make this I wanted to ask how you get the measurements



I made my side pieces around 9" long and the top piece around 9" as well



a photo of the completed mask





Thank you for the instructions, you made it much easier for me to get along with my project.



What were the originals made of? leather?



yeah



Mine was made out of a fabric I found at Joanns that that had a leather look but was actually a very thin fabric, the thinner the fabric with this method the better as stitching will then have less to go through! if you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask!



making this 4 halloween. wish me luck!



Would leather work just as good?



Done the same as the one featured here except i used curtain rings for the eyes and didn't do the wider parts on the side of the straps.....no lenses in the eyes allows you to breath ok.



Love it! A whole lot more steampunkier it is! Now, where did I see that.... \*runs off to get supplies\*



The stitching was a bit tricky but so far I've made the main part of the mask. I just need to craft a pair of eyepieces. I would include an image but I don't have a working camera at the moment.



I MADE IT! Thanks for the help!



I like this build AND the instructions. The only thing i would change is make the lenses black or red. It just looks cool.



Of all the tutorials out there with both the ones being sold and free on the internet, this one was easy to follow with only a few steps. It allowed for me to tweak it a little to fit my forehead better. It also leaves room for the maker to modify it a bit to change the beak shape and such. I made mine out of white soft thin craft foam (stuff they use to line the inner part of the shoes, table mats, and coasters) and hand stitched it all together with black thread using the ladder stitching style that looks like a bunch of Xs lined up..I did not have time to do the proper mod you had for the eye sockets, but I put a quick projector sheet cut out and glue....The head strap is just a strip of the foam I hand stitched on that acted as a rubber band like thing that made the mask stay on.. It took about 5 hours because of the hand stitching and no glue..Oh and how did you breath out of yours? I had to cut out a 2 inches x 0.5 inch rectangle holes on each of the right and left bottom, which were only noticable if I looked way up or looked under the beak..

