



## World of Art – Russia – Matryoshka

### Here's What You Get!

- 5 Printed Dolls
- 5 Blank Dolls
- 10 Nesting Boxes
- 8 Markers

### Introduction

Matryoshka dolls are a popular art from Russia. A set of Matryoshka dolls consists of several wooden dolls in different sizes. Each doll comes apart at the middle so the dolls nest together, or fit inside each other. The name "Matryoshka" means "little doll" or "little lady." The dolls are sometimes called Russian Nesting Dolls or "Babushka Dolls," meaning "grandmother."

The very first Russian Nesting Doll set was made in 1890 by two artists for a Children's Education Workshop. It had eight nesting dolls. The largest doll was painted to look like a mother. The smaller dolls were her children. The smallest doll was the baby. The doll set was very popular, and when the Children's Workshop closed, the art of Matryoshka moved to a Russian city famous for making toys. The dolls were presented at a big show in Paris, France in 1900 where they won a prize. Soon afterward, Matryoshka dolls were made in several Russian cities and shipped around the world.

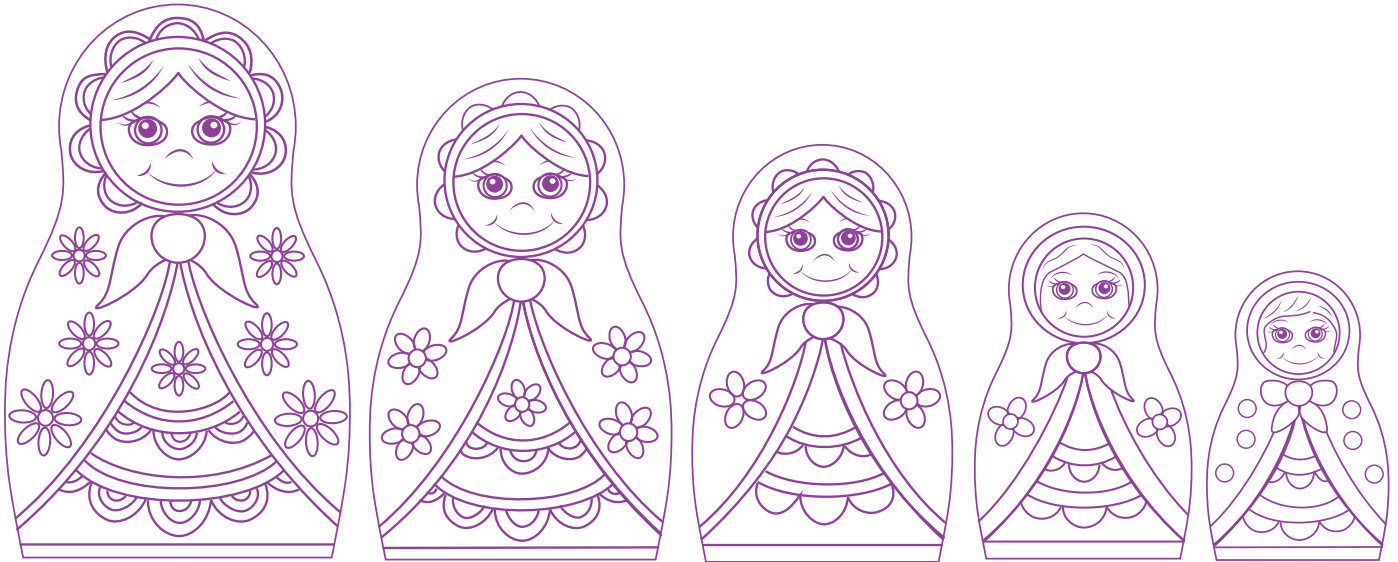
The nesting dolls are typically made from Linden wood. Artists use machines and hand tools to shape and smooth each doll. Then the dolls are painted by hand. Usually the dolls show Russian girls in traditional clothes, often with floral or nature-related designs. The biggest doll in each set has the most detail. Fairy tale characters are also very popular – the nesting dolls can be used to tell a story.

Usually, each set has 3 – 5 dolls that nest together. The largest set in the world has 51 hand-painted dolls! The tallest doll in the set is 21" tall, the smallest doll is about 1/8" tall – about the size of a grain of rice. Arranged side-by-side, the dolls would span almost 12 feet.

Today, modern artists make many different styles of nesting dolls. The Matryoshkas always have a theme – each doll is related to all the others in the set. There are doll sets for holidays such as Christmas and Easter. There are doll sets of animals instead of people. There are even doll sets of historical figures, musicians, athletes, and movie stars. Many people like to collect different kinds of Matryoshka dolls. When people visit Russia, they often buy a Matryoshka set as a souvenir.

**World of Art – Russia – MATRYOSHKA** (continued)**Make a Matryoshka Doll Set**

Open the set that has the 5 printed dolls. Color each doll with markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Did you notice that the largest doll has a lot of detail, and each smaller doll has less detail? When you are finished coloring, put the dolls in order, from largest to smallest.



Next, take out one set of 5 flat boxes. Find the largest one. Gently pull the sides apart. Put your hand inside and push the bottom down so it pops into a box shape. Remove the protective paper and press the largest doll onto the adhesive. Do the same with the rest of the boxes and dolls. Be sure to match each doll with the right size box.

Would you like to design your very own Matryoshka set? Begin by planning a theme. Your theme could be animals, people in your family, your friends, or characters in story. Draw the animals, characters, or people on the doll templates. The largest doll should have the most detail. Color your drawings, make the boxes, and press each doll onto the right-sized box.