



the eyes have it

Make sure your dolls have it, too:

*A look that's unmistakable.
Perfect eye cutting gives you the edge.
Here's how to achieve it.*

by Sheryl Williams

I'm sure you've heard the saying that the eyes are the window to the soul. What's true for humans works for dolls, too - with a slight twist. Your doll's eyes are what give her soul. If the eyes are cut poorly your doll will lack the realism that makes the best work so compelling. Eye cutting can seem daunting. You have to be precise, and you have to be

versatile: Doll eyes come in an amazing number of shapes and sizes; you have to be capable of adjusting your cutting and beveling skills to match the eye that best suits your doll. But these challenges don't mean that good work is impossible - or even difficult. All you need to succeed are a few guidelines, the right tools and a little practice.

Eye Cutting Method #2 and #3

If you don't pour your own greenware, you may receive a head that's been prepared in one of two different ways. Eye Cutting Method #2 addresses a soft-fired head that has a small hole cut into the center of the eye or does not have any opening started in the eye.

Overview: Mark the eye shape with a sharp pencil and enlarge the opening up to the eye edge.

1. Using a very sharp pencil, mark the inside edge of the eye sockets. This pencil mark will be your guide as you cut the eye opening. In this photo, you can see where I've marked the eye on the right-hand side of the picture. The hole was cut into the center at the greenware stage. I've already cut the eye opening on the left-hand side.

2. Insert the point of your Featherknife into the opening in the center of the eye. If there is no such opening, slowly rotate the point of the knife in the eye until it drills through. Enlarge the eye opening, cutting from the middle to the corner, up to the pencil line.

3. Work on only one corner at a time (here I'm starting with the inside corner), alternating between the upper and lower eyelid edges. Scrape slowly and hold the head gently; the soft-fired ware can chip and break easily. By cutting and scraping from the middle of each eye to the corners, you'll maintain the correct angle and definition. When the pencil line marking the shape of the eye begins to disappear, the eye cut is finished.



TIPS

- ▶ Soak the head before beginning the cut by placing it in a plastic tub of water that is at room temperature. The moistened head will be softer and easier to cut.
- ▶ Use a sharp knife; a dull blade could cause a break or chip.
- ▶ Keep the cut to the inside of the edge of the eye, so that you do not enlarge it too much, and so that you leave room to make corrections.
- ▶ Turn the head upside down when you work on the cut for the lower eyelid. Doing so makes it easier to keep the cut inside the edge.

Method "pros"

- ▶ Saves time when casting the greenware. .
- ▶ The pencil line provides a good visual of the eye shape.
- ▶ Accurate.

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For questions about this project feel free to contact Sheryl at: sherylwilliams99@yahoo.com

All molds, china paints and most tools and supplies available from Seeley's. Eyes can be purchased from various doll supply companies.

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