



SCOUTS[®]
Nibnu Dinja Ahjar



THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION
OF MALTA

*Beaver Scouting
at Home
and Online
2020*



Beaver Scouting at Home and Online

Dear Beaver Leader,

These months have been a feat for you. This difficult situation has turned everyone's lives upside down.

We have learnt much and more from this situation. Be Prepared ! As quite wisely our Scout Motto states. In order to ensure that we are really and truly prepared should this kind of situation hit us once more, we have collected all sorts of ideas shared by leaders with the Training Team so far and compiled them in this easy-to-use booklet.

Items are divided into categories to be easier to locate. You will find quite a lot of ideas herewith, however if you still get stuck... do not worry... visit Scoutkeeper's downloads section and under Beavers you will find all that you require to carry on working unhindered.

Happy Beavering!

Yours in Scouting,

Keo

Assistant Commissioner for Training and Programme
Beaver Scout Section



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Badgework Challenges

Challenge 1

So, our first Challenge is about the Membership Scout Award. This Challenge will help you to get to know more about the Beaver and your own Group. This Challenge also includes the Discovery Challenge which is aimed to open up the Beavers' minds to the world around them whilst learning and having fun at the same time.

- 1) *Find a creative way to make your own Scout Group's Scout Scarf out of any recyclable material that you find at home.*

Suggestions: You can draw it at the back of a cereal box

You can make a collage with paper, bottle tops, etc

You can draw it on an old t-shirt

The choice is yours..... Let your Creativity flow!!

- 2) *Teach the Beaver Promise to someone at home. Take a video of you and this person saying the Beaver Promise together. (Do not forget the Scout Sign!!)*

- 3) *Build a Beaver out of recyclable materials that you have at home. With the help of an adult find pictures of a real beaver so that you will know how it looks like. You can also do Ganni Beaver if you like.*

Take pictures or videos of the construction and the finished product and send them to Keeo.

Please send everything by _____

Challenge 2

Our second Challenge is about the Discovery Challenge:

*Choose **any** two of the countries listed below:*

*Mexico
South Africa
Kenya
India
New Zealand
Tonga
Canada
China
Mauritius
Japan
Russia
Hawaii*

Using your creativity produce a small presentation on these countries. The presentation can include the following:

What is the national language

How do they say Hello and Goodbye in this country

National Flag

What money do they use

Typical food

Typical Costume

Animals that live there

(Feel free to add more items if you wish to)

For this task you can produce crafts, charts, etc. You can even ask the help of an adult to make and wear a typical costume. The choice is yours. Be creative and use recyclable materials as much as possible.

With the help of someone at home take a video as you give a short presentation on each country. No time limits.

Take pictures or videos of the construction and the finished product and send them to Keo.

Please send everything by _____

Challenge 3

Our third Challenge is about the Personal Challenge. The Personal Challenge is aimed to help Beaver Scouts' learn to take care of themselves and their belongings. Beavers learn the importance of keeping one's self clean and tidy.

Ask a family member to take videos or pictures while you are:

- 1) Doing your bed*
- 2) Cleaning your room*
- 3) Helping a family member in the kitchen*
- 4) Helping a family member sort the trash*

Take pictures or videos and send them to Keeo.

Please send everything by _____

The 50 Point Challenge – Beavers at Home 2020

Beavers are to complete this challenge. The idea is to do all 50 activities, tick them all off when you have completed them (keep a record by taking a photo).

*Get an adult to sign off when you have done something. An * next to an activity means that the Beavers should not do it on their own. Make an adult is nearby, so that no accidents occur.*

Let's Get Started!

- 1. Build a tent and sleep in it*
- 2. Know the first eight cardinal points on a compass.*
- 3. Tie three different knots.*
- 4. Read a book and explain what it was about.*
- 5. Make a model out of playdough or clay.*
- 6. Make and fly a paper aeroplane.*
- 7. Make a sandwich.*
- 8. Look at the moon through a telescope or binoculars.*
- 9. Try some food that you have never eaten before.*
- 10. Whittle a carrot (you can use a veg peeler!) *.*
- 11. Make your bed.*
- 12. Learn how to say “hello” and “goodbye” in another language.*
- 13. Sail a homemade cork toy boat.*
- 14. Spell your name using the phonetic alphabet.*
- 15. Have a picnic in the yard or on the roof.*
- 16. Do something kind or helpful for someone else.*
- 17. Have a water fight.*
- 18. Learn a new song and sing it for your parents.*
- 19. Tidy your room.*
- 20. Make a fruit kebab.*
- 21. Tie your shoe lace.*
- 22. Bake something sweet.*

23. *Set the table.*
24. *Clear and wipe the table.*
25. *Take an original selfie.*
26. *Grow something from seed (a flower, vegetable etc)*
27. *Wear a costume.*
28. *Funky hair day.*
29. *Draw a shadow of a toy animal.*
30. *Make a wind chime.*
31. *Paint with straw blowing.*
32. *Take out the garbage.*
33. *Peel an apple (you can use a veg peeler!) *.*
34. *Play charades.*
35. *Create an instrument.*
36. *Build a replica of a statue. 3*
37. *Make a pizza.*
38. *Hang the clothes to dry.*
39. *Wash 5 toys.*
40. *Colour on a t-shirt.*
41. *Paint on a glass door or window.*
42. *Wash the glass door or window.*
43. *Squeeze some oranges.**
44. *Cut paper dolls or flowers with scissors on paper.**
45. *Make a science experiment.**
46. *Make a real size dinosaur foot print and compare your foot to it.*
47. *Freeze a toy and see it melt.**
48. *Crack an egg in a bowl.**
49. *Learn your parents mobile numbers.*
50. *Vacuum a carpet.*

Cooking at home (under adult supervision)

With the help of parents/guardians, beavers get to cook something as simple as cookies whilst at home. Possibly during the meeting.



Mug Cakes

Ingredients:

Betty Crocker Mix

Method:

Betty Crocker mix in a mug


Put in a Microwave


2 minutes to bake.

Beavers can then decorate for fun

Nutella Cookies

Ingredients:

180g nutella 

150g selfraising flour 

1 egg 

Method:

Mix everything together

Cook at 180 degrees for 15mins.



Veggie Bugs

Ingredients:

Vegetables

Fruit

Jelly tots

Or Choc chips

Method:

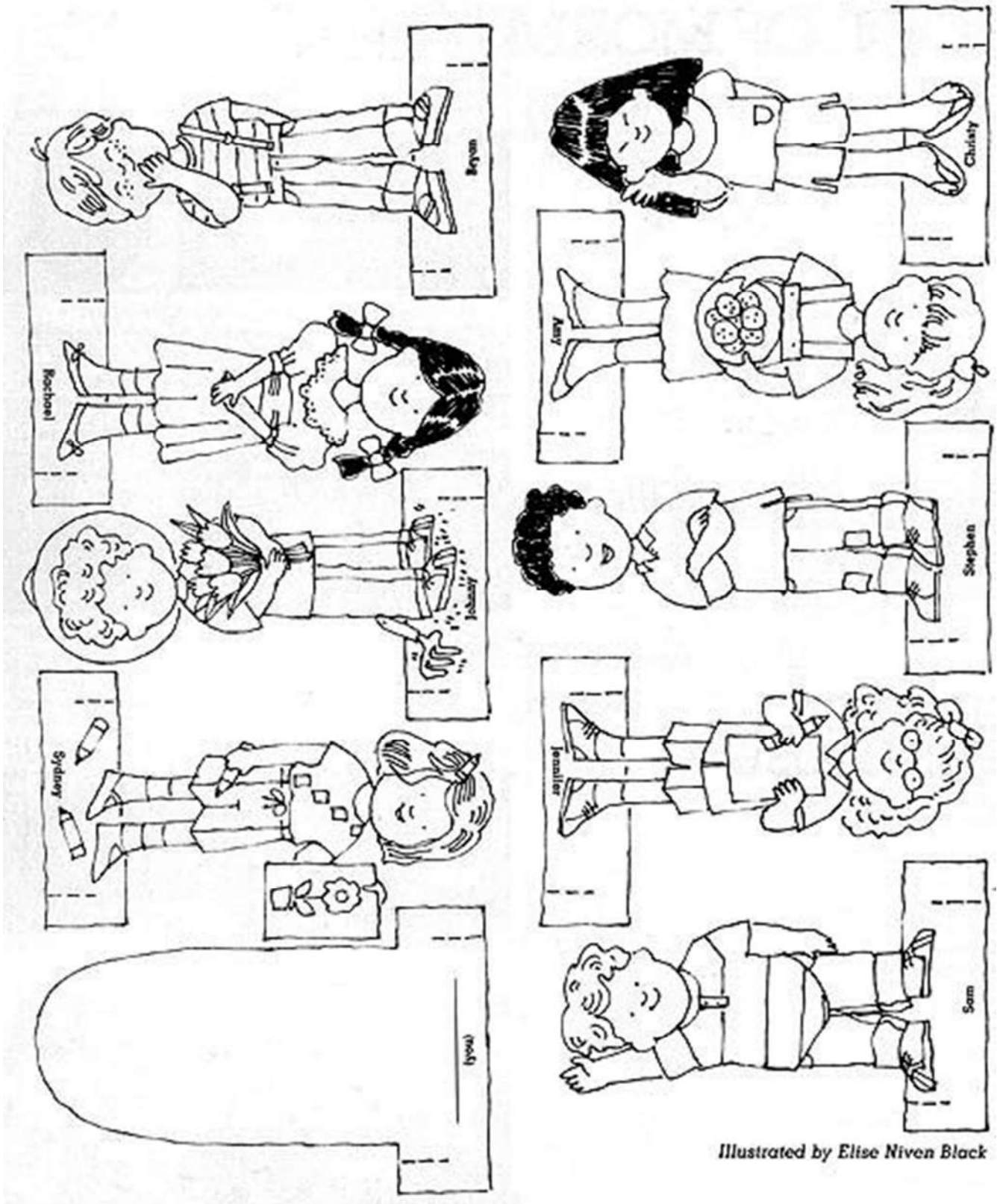
Cut the items into circles, semi-circles, halves, etc

Build your own bug as shown in the picture.



Crafts

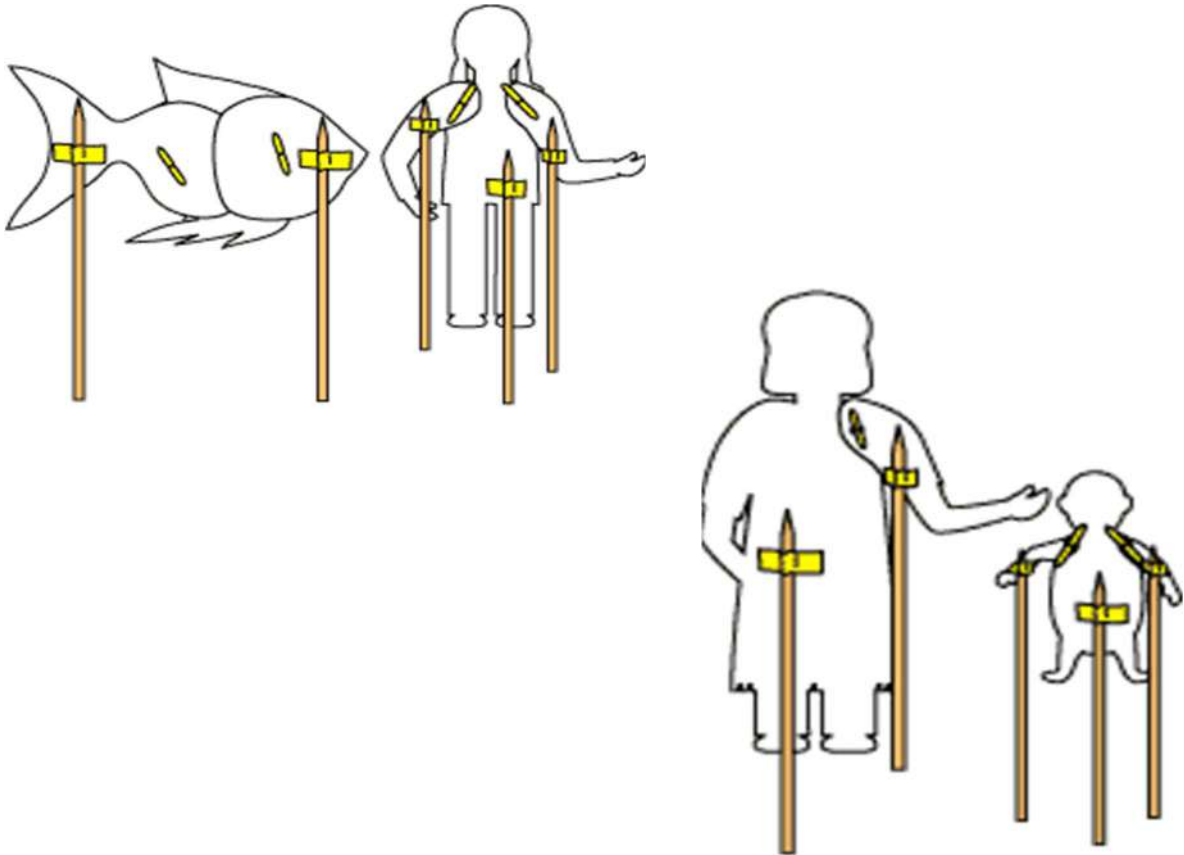
Making stick puppets:



Illustrated by Elise Niven Black

Making stick puppets:

How sticks should be attached at the back of the puppets:



Mother's Day Cards with paints:



30 Day

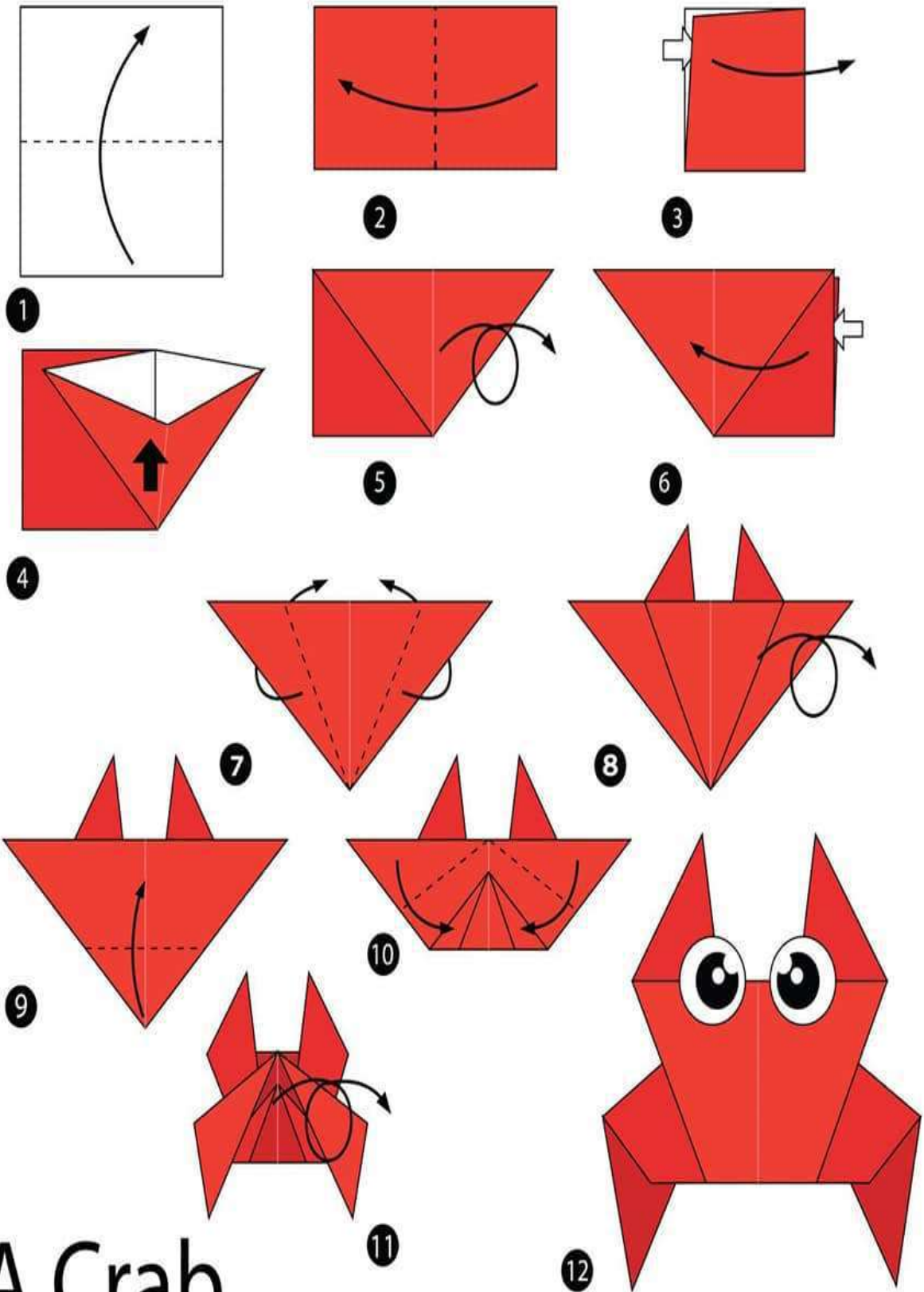


Challenge

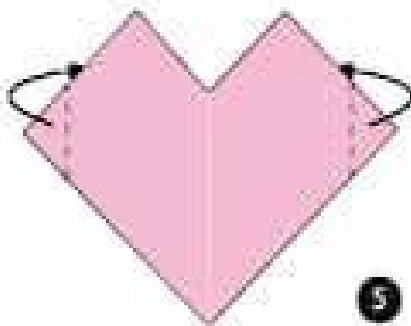
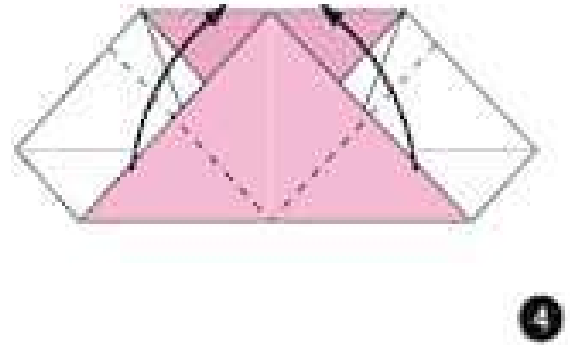
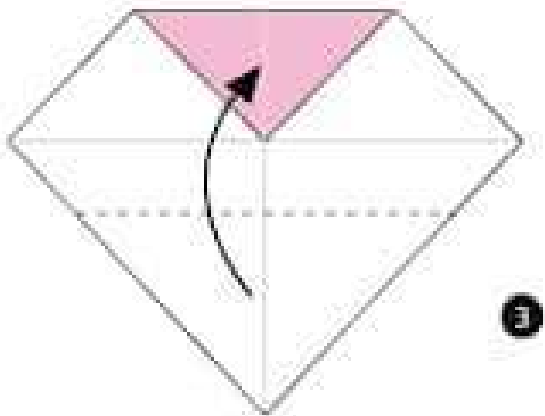
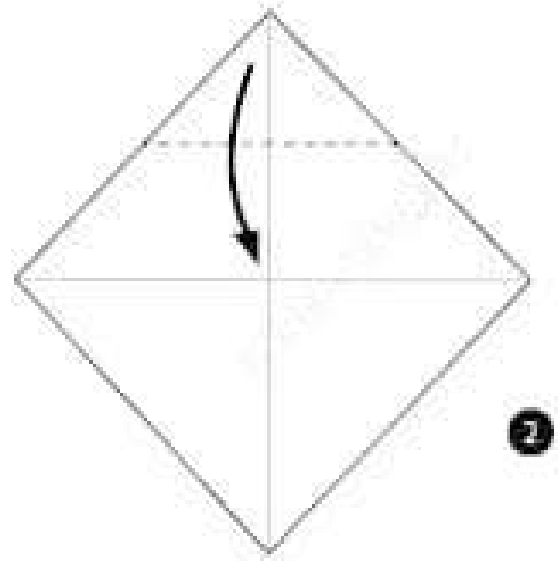
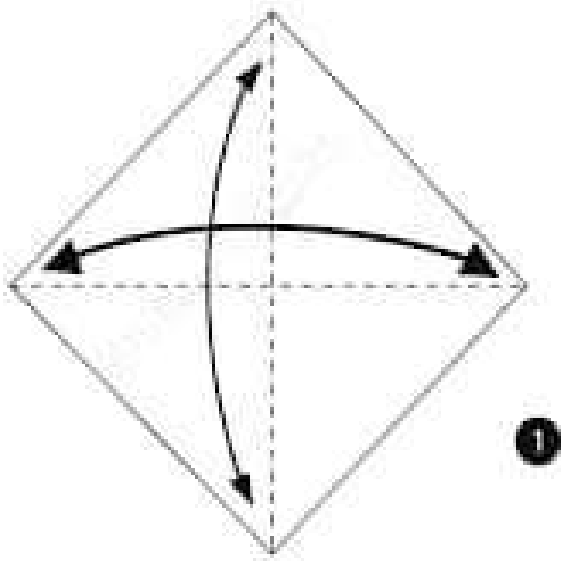
Follow the instructions for each day. The only rule is to have fun and use your imagination!

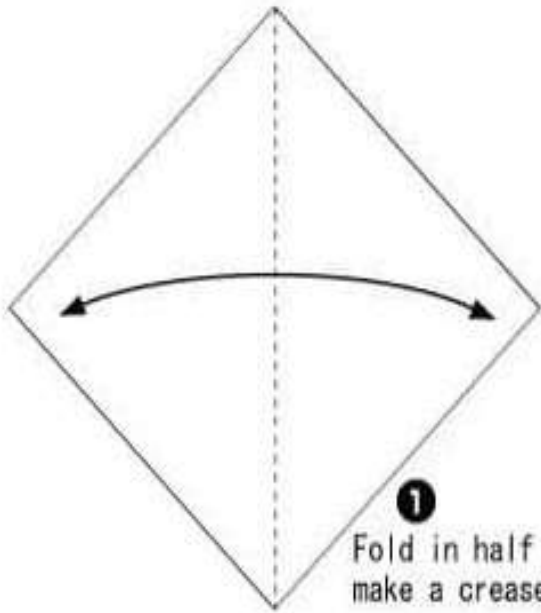
Day 1 You were hired by an amusement park to create a new roller coaster.	Day 2 NASA needs you to build a new rocket.	Day 3 Your parents want to build a new home and they want you to build it.	Day 4 Hollywood hires you to build a movie set for a new Star Wars movie.
Day 5 You enter a contest to build the world's tallest tower. Will you win?	Day 6 You are stuck on Mars and need to build a new ship to get home.	Day 7 Ford hires you to create the toughest pick up truck in the world.	Day 8 You and 4 friends are stranded on an island. Build a boat to find a way home.
Day 9 Captain Hook needs a new pirate ship and wants you to build it.	Day 10 You and your friends decide to build a tree house.	Day 11 Prince Charming hires you to build a castle for him & Cinderella.	Day 12 Dr. Who hires you to build a new TARDIS.
Day 13 You are asked by the President to build a new monument to George Washington.	Day 14 Mr. Hilton hires you to build a new hotel.	Day 15 There is a circus in town. Build a place for the performance.	Day 16 Help your fellow pioneers build a wagon to make it across the country.
Day 17 The city wants you to build a bridge to connect one side of the town to the other.	Day 18 Pizza party! It is up to you to make a pizza for all the guests.	Day 19 Do you wanna build a snowman? Get in the winter mood and build a snow scene.	Day 20 Design and build your dream bedroom.
Day 21 You are hired to build a brand new hospital.	Day 22 The fence is broke and the dog keeps escaping. Build one he can't get out of.	Day 23 You are now in medieval times. You are commissioned to build a jousting arena.	Day 24 The local bank keeps getting robbed. Build a safe no one can crack.
Day 25 You are elected ruler. Build a flag for your land.	Day 26 The aliens have taken over. They are impressed by your robot. They want you to build one for them.	Day 27 There is blizzard. You will need to build a snowmobile.	Day 28 You are hired to build a house entirely out of yellow Legos.
Day 29 You are hired to build a house entirely out of yellow Legos.	Day 30 There is blizzard. You will need to build a snowmobile.		
<p>What was your favorite day?</p>			

Origami Collection:

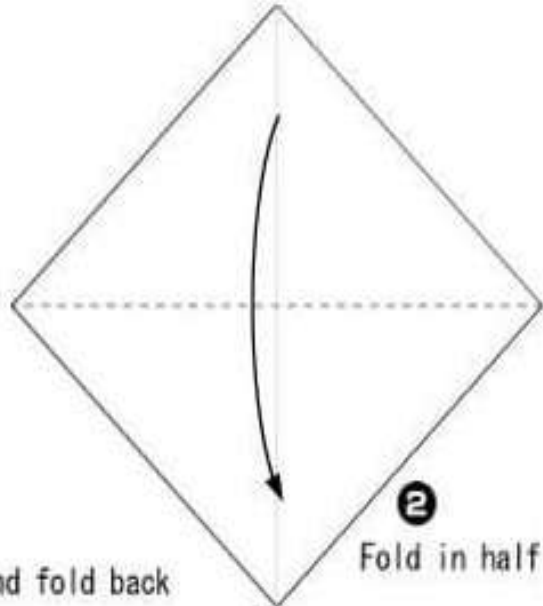


A Crab

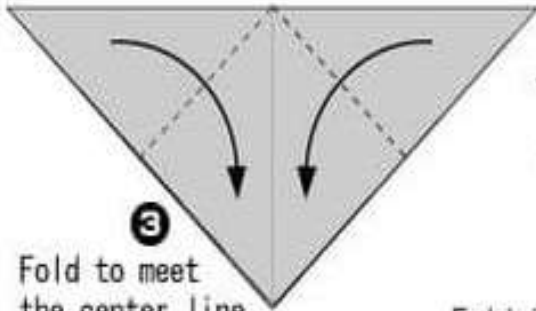




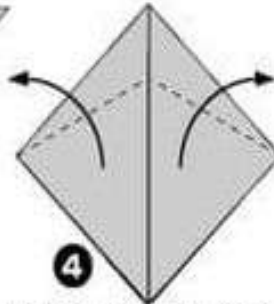
1 Fold in half to make a crease and fold back



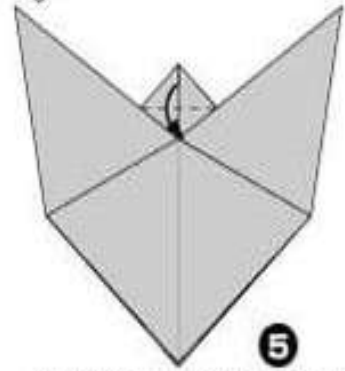
2 Fold in half



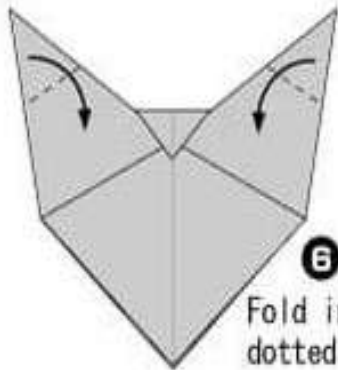
3 Fold to meet the center line



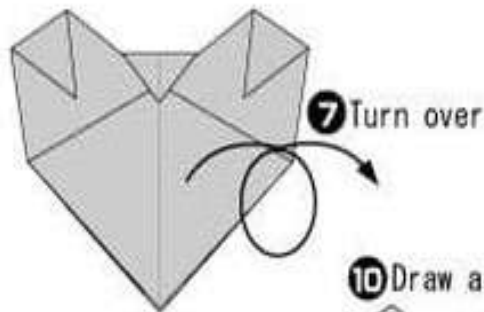
4 Fold in the dotted line



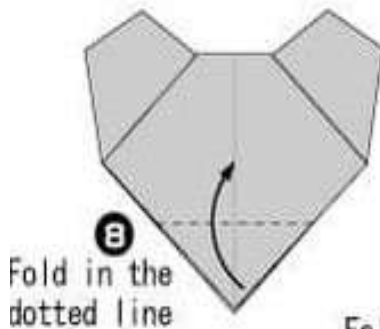
5 Fold in the dotted line



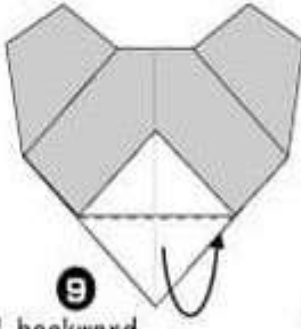
6 Fold in the dotted line



7 Turn over



8 Fold in the dotted line



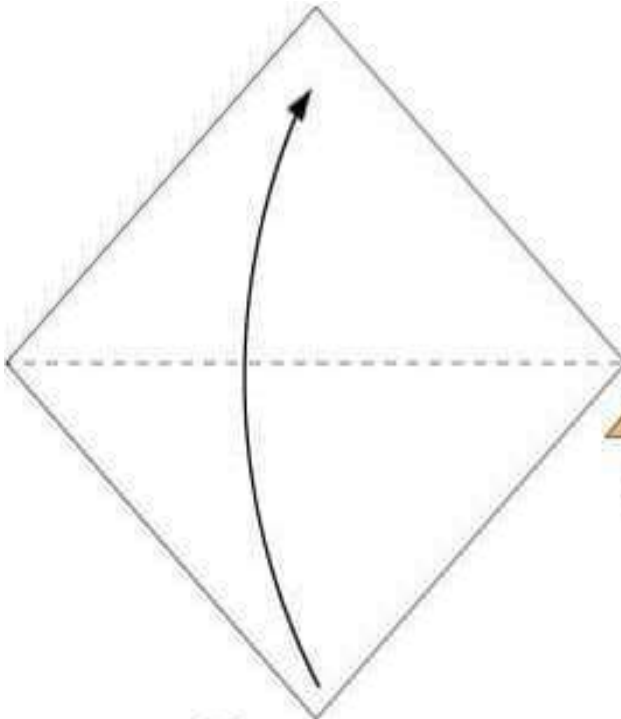
9 Fold backward in the dotted line



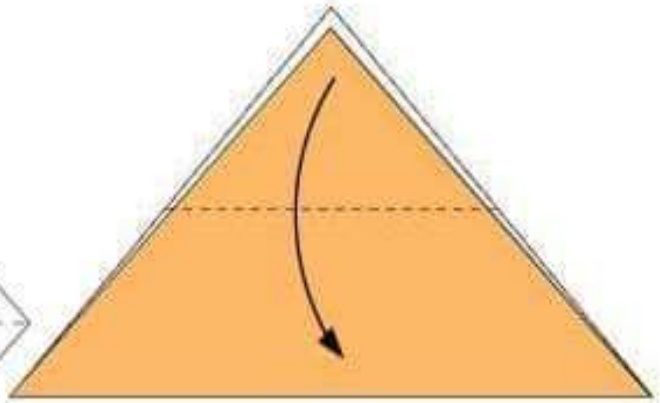
10 Draw a face and finished

A koala (face)

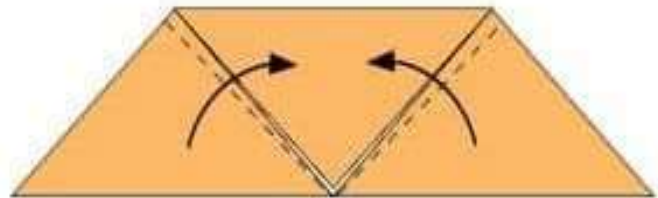
Copyright: Fumiaki Shingu



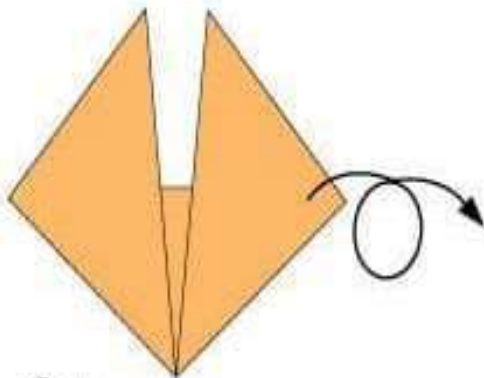
1 Fold in half



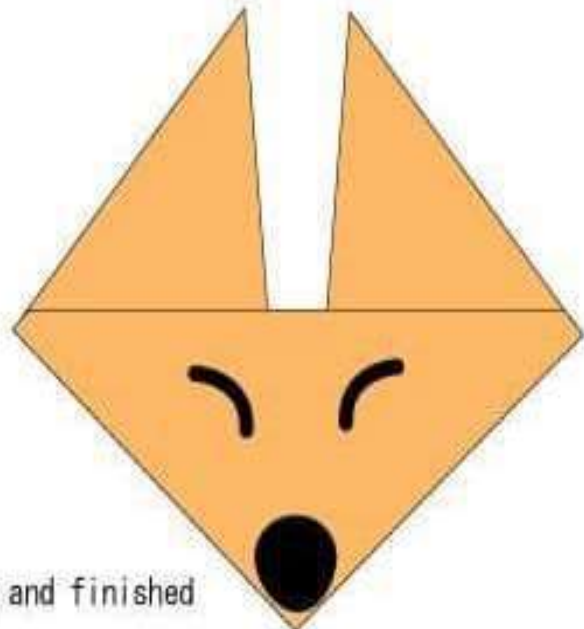
2 Fold in the dotted line



4 Fold in the dotted line

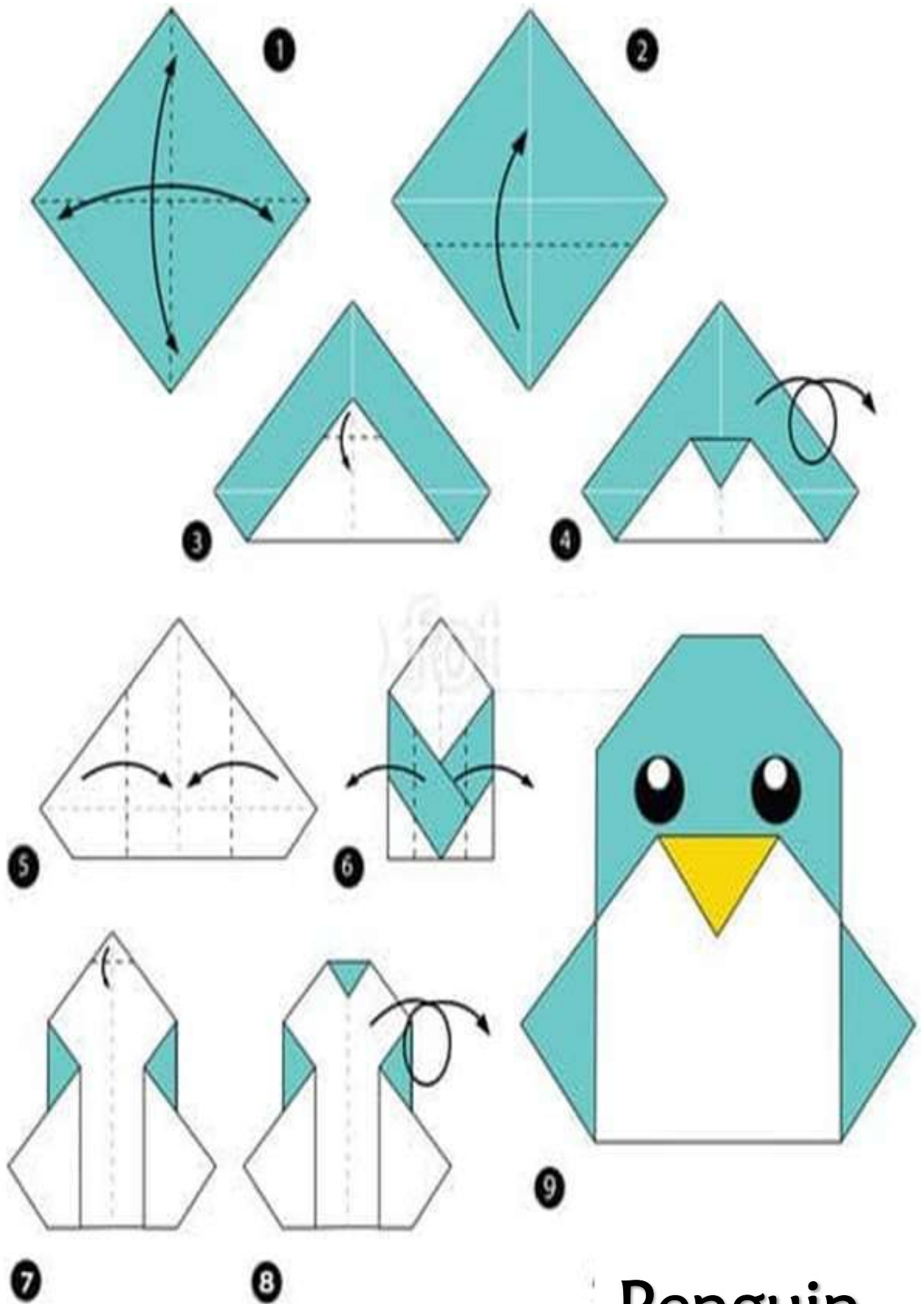


3 Turn over

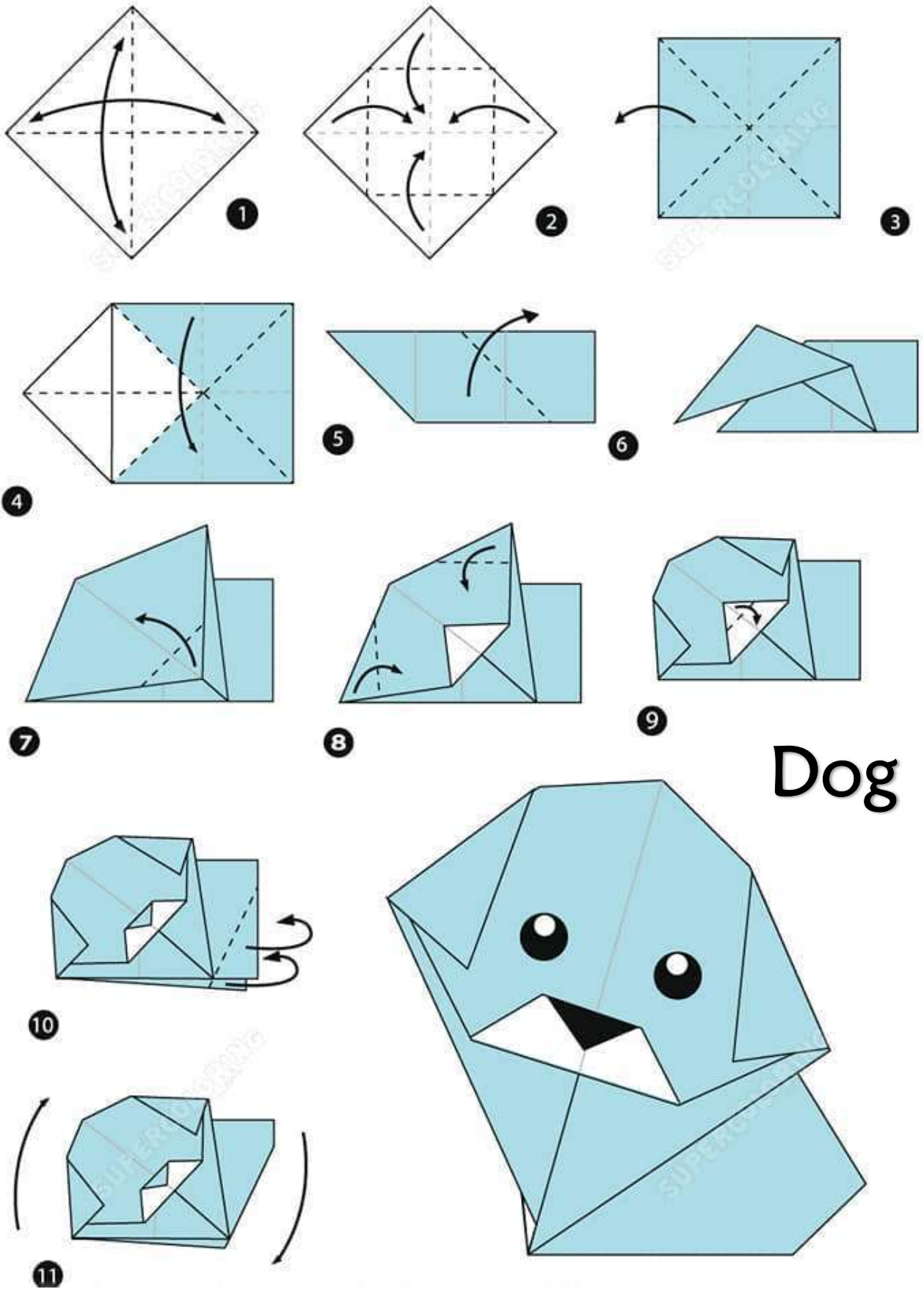


5 Draw eyes, a nose and finished

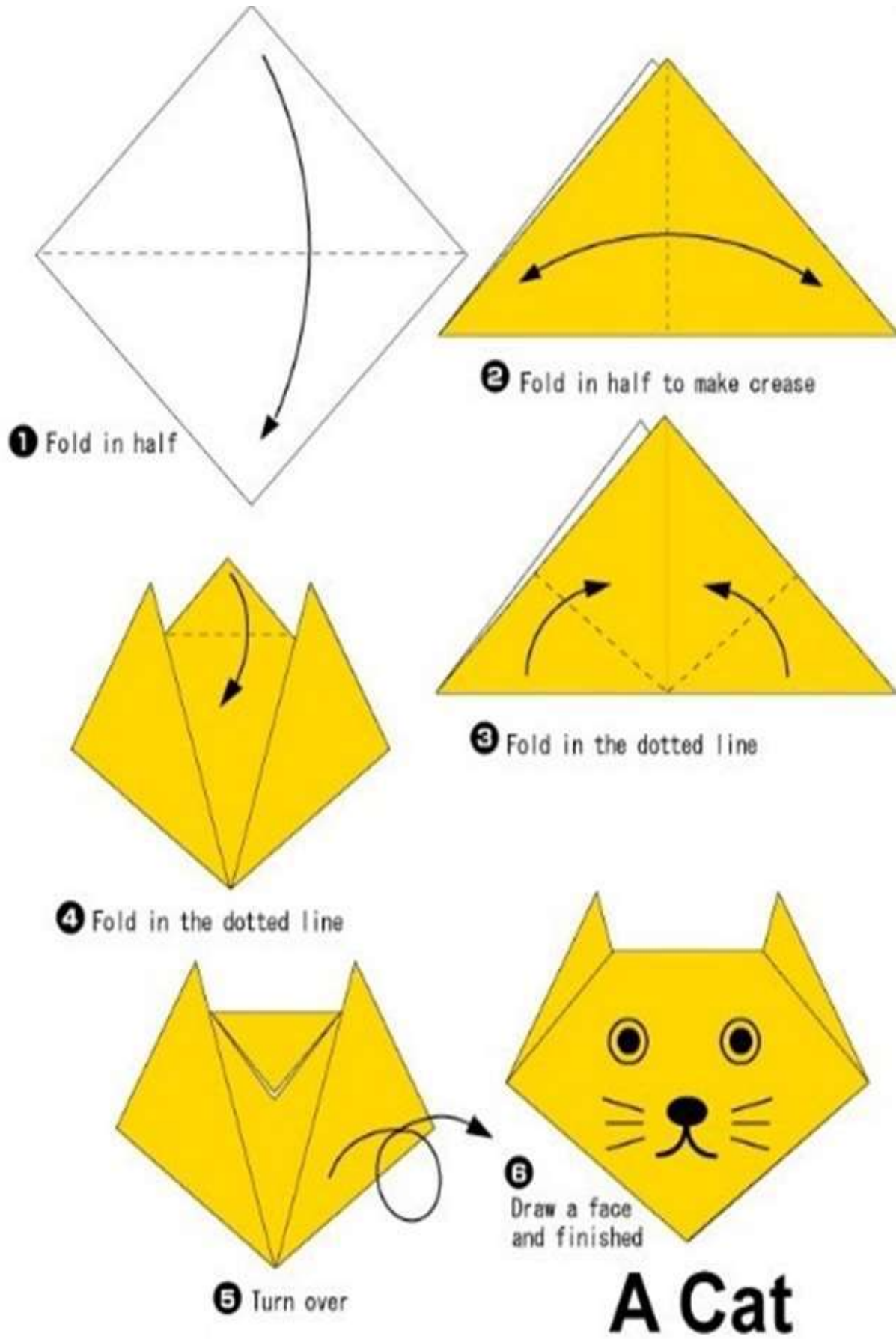
A Fox (face)

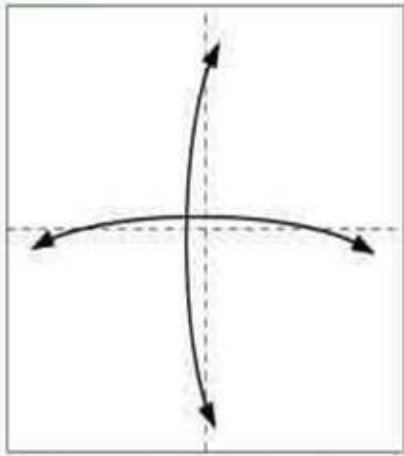


Penguin

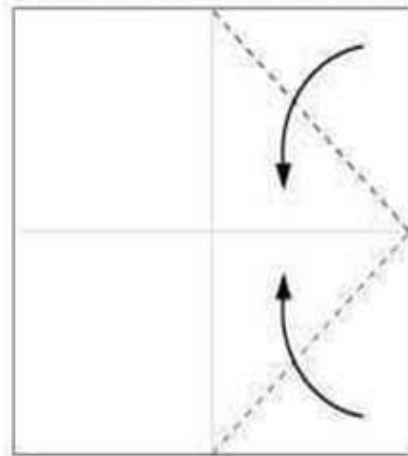


Dog

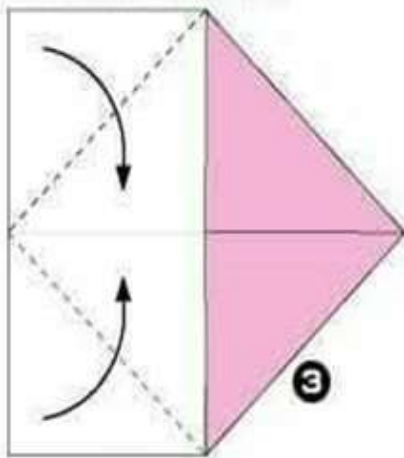




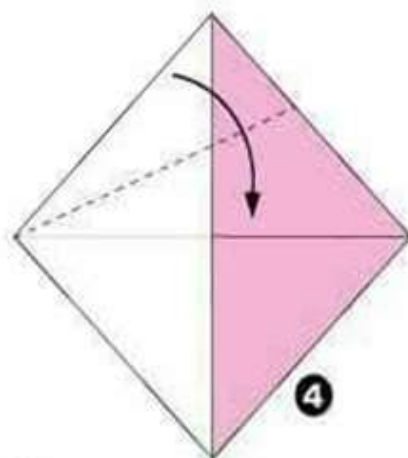
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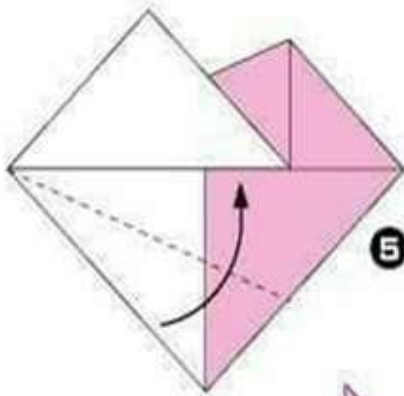
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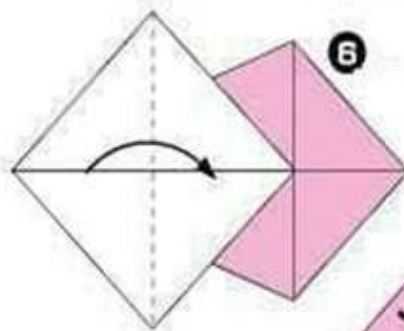
3



4

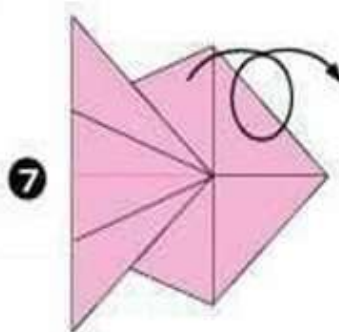


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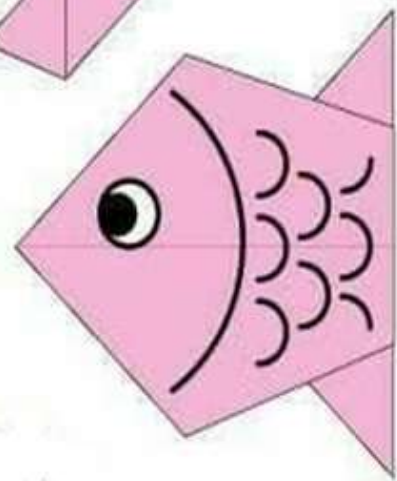


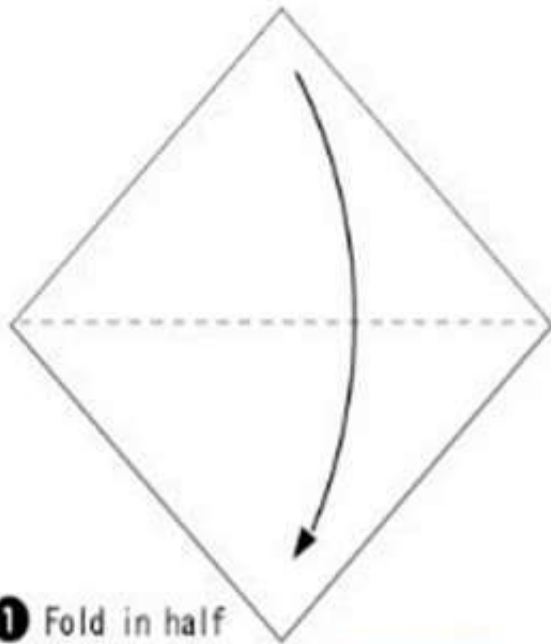
6

Fish

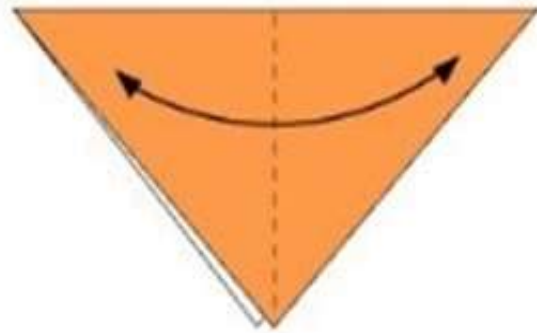


7

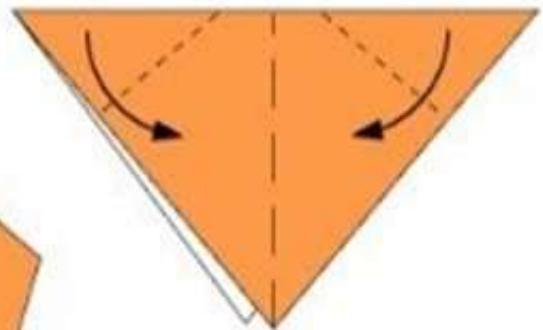




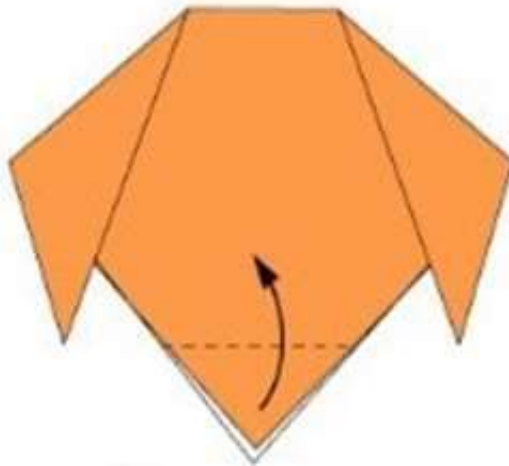
1 Fold in half



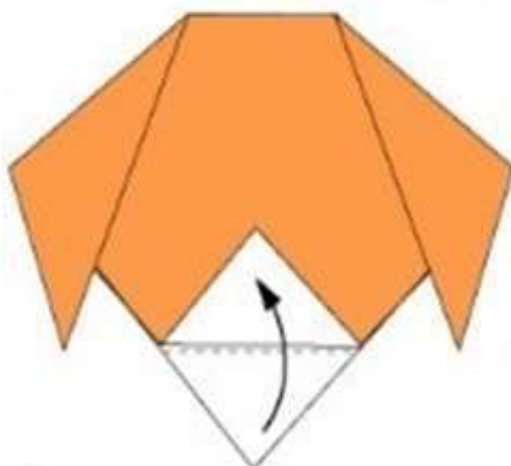
2 Fold in half to make crease



3 Fold in the dotted line

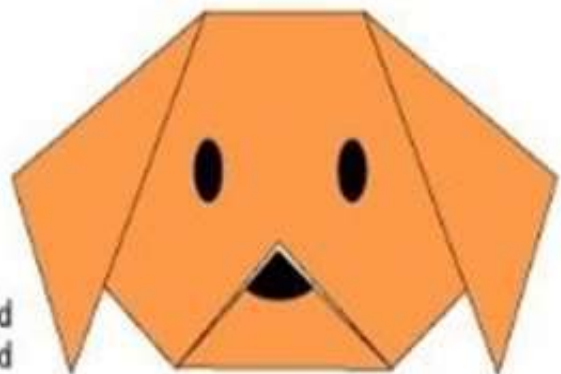


4 Fold in the dotted line



5 Fold in the dotted line

6
Draw a
face and
finished



Dog

Recycling Project: Milk Carton Plant

What you will need:

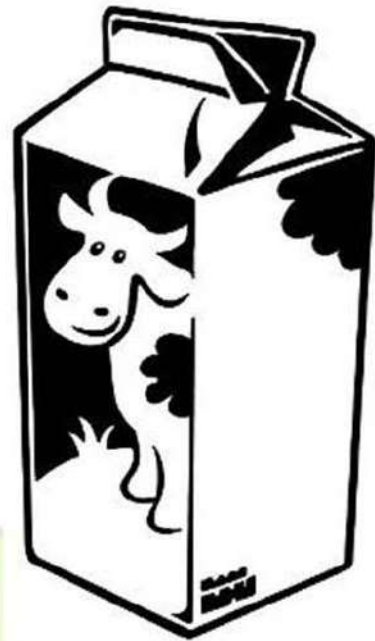
- Empty Milk Cartons
- Plastic Drinking Straws
- Potting Soil
- Seeds
- Seeds pictures
- Decorations of your choice

How to make it:

- Collect empty milk cartons.
- Wash them thoroughly
- Add dry potting soil and drop in two seeds.
- Staple half of the top leaving the other half open.
- Place a straw in the soil. This will become a support for the plant growing inside.
- Cut out a picture of the plant you want to put inside the carton and paste it on the outside of the milk carton, together with instructions on how to take care of the plant.
- Decorate the outside of the milk carton.
- Water plant regularly.

Tips:

- If planting a seed that you have never planted before, you might wish to ask for the advice from a professional gardener.
- Maybe a visit to your local plant shop would be of help to. This might make an ideal gift for mother's day!



Sock Puppets



Dilemma

Who to throw overboard?

Religious Leader



Politician



Builder



Farmer



Scientist



Who to throw overboard?

5 People are on a boat (see previous page).

There is a hole in boat



The boat is sinking – the only way for anyone to survive is to throw one person overboard which will raise the hole above water level.



Each person must argue their case as to why they should NOT be thrown over – why are they more valuable to society than the others in the boat?

Games

Charades

Cutlery Game

A leader holds a knife, fork or spoon out of sight. Chooses one and keeps it in his hand but still out of sight. Count down 5 4 3 2 1. In the 5 seconds Beavers must choose one of the 3. Then hold it up for all to see. When the leader puts his cutlery item up, those beavers who have the same item will get a point.

Dress up Race

Put on as many items of clothes you can all at one go in a small amount of time. Alternatively a theme could be given and the Beavers could invent their own costume version according to theme.

Evacuation game

Beavers are given a few minutes to grab an empty backpack and pack what they would be taking with them should someone tell them that they are evacuating. Once everyone is done then everyone compares what they have packed and why

Guess the Doodle

Online Jig Saw Puzzle

Quizzes

Recognize the sounds

Keeo records some different sounds. The Beavers listen to them then try to guess what each sound is.

Recognize the pictures

Keeo takes a picture and cuts it out or bends parts of it. The Beavers have to guess what is on the picture. If they guess wrong another part of the picture is revealed until they finally manage to guess.

Recognize the Parent/Guardian

Parents sent to Keoo, pictures of when they were very young. One by one the pictures are shown to the Beavers and they have to guess who the person in the picture is.

Scavenger Hunt for Items with your Scarf Colours

Scavenger Hunt for Items with a Theme

Scarf Games

Scout Bingo

Scavenger Hunt Game

EARLY YEARS
direct.com

Lockdown nature trail... Spotted?

Out for a walk or staying in - how many of these can you see or hear?  tick here



Look out for a ladybird...

How many spots can you count?

Can it fly?

bzzzz
bzzzz

Can you hear the busy bees buzz?



Be careful it has a sting!

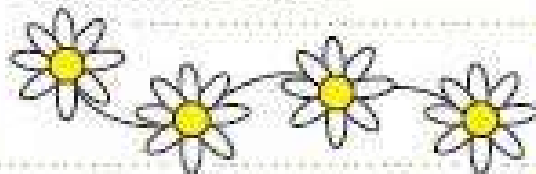
Pigeons love living in towns and cities.



Pigeons always know their way home, do you?

Oops a daisy!

Can you make a daisy chain?





Are there any tadpoles wiggling in the pond?

What do they grow into?

You can find zebra spiders on your windowsill...



They are tiny and they jump!



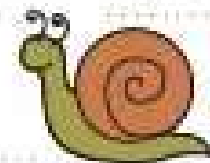
Did you know wood lice are related to prawns.

Some curl into a ball.



Snails always stay in, their homes are on their backs!

They are very sloooooow...



Ants build underground cities.



One day a year they fly!

Can you blow a dandelion clock?



Dandelion means 'lion's teeth' in French.



Earthworms are good for the soil.

You might see them on the surface when it rains

Please use this sheet under adult supervision.

Did you find them all?

Mobile Applications

Sky Map

Sky Map is a hand-held planetarium for your mobile device. You can use it to identify stars, planets, nebulae and more.

Songs

Bear Hunt

We're goin on a bear hunt.
Gonna catch a big one today
I see grass ahead
We can't go over it
Can't go under it
We have to go through it.
Swishy swishy swishy swishy

We're goin on a bear hunt.
Gonna catch a big one today
There's a lake ahead



We can't go around it
Can't go over it
So we gotta go through it
Slosh slosh slosh slosh

We're goin on a bear hunt.
Gonna catch a big one today
There's a supermarket ahead

We can't go around it
Can't go over it
So we gotta go through it
'Scuse Me 'Scuse Me 'Scuse Me

Oh Bugs Bunny

Oh Bugs Bunny had a fly upon his nose

Oh Bugs Bunny had a fly upon his nose



Oh Bugs Bunny had a fly upon his nose

And he flipped at it

And flopped at it

And it flew away!!

Alice the Camel

Alice the camel has - ten humps,
Alice the camel has - ten humps,
Alice the camel has - ten humps,
So go, Alice, go! (Bump-bump-bump...)

Alice the camel has - nine humps,
Alice the camel has - nine humps,
Alice the camel has - nine humps,
So go, Alice, go! (Bump-bump-bump...)

....eight

....seven

....six

....five

....four

....three

....two

....one

Alice the camel has - no humps,
Alice the camel has - no humps,
Alice the camel has - no humps,
'Cause Alice was a HORSE



Themes

Friendship

- Sharing is Caring
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=km5X-LKdE88>
- True Friends Always Help Each Other:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azTmOYUKBrU>

Feelings Cards

- See Annex 3 – Feelings Cards

Learning about Community Workers

- Seen Annex 4 – E-book – Crafts for kids who are learning about community workers

Lifeguard

- See Annex 1 – Presentation on the Lifeguard

Music

- Musical Instruments
 - Bagpipes
 - Piano
 - Xylophone
 - Trumpet
- Unusual Musical Instruments
- Make your own Musical Instrument from recycled items

Plant a Tree

- See Annex 2 – Plant a Tree

Sea

- How Deep is the Sea?
 - https://neal.fun/deep-sea/?fbclid=IwAR2VVV_DpZMhB2SL_TJxQeSJreylMH9cjlYzJv5Gzqs6tgbNY4x0FB5EafY

- What does the lifeguard do?
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw61y2EwgzE>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivD6XqeeOvM>

Science

- www.sciencekids.co.nz
- <http://www.sciencefun.org>

Space

- Aliens
- Astronauts
- Rockets
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R8V68viXgk>
- Satellites
- Solar System
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w36yxLgwUOc>
- Space Ship building
- Space Shuttle
- Making Space Suits out of soil
- Telescopes
- Travelling to Space

Spy Kids

- 3D Glasses
- Clues
- Hidden Messages
- Magic Ink – Using Lemon Juice
- Simple Codes

Weather

- Climate Change
- Effects on Nature
- Water Cycle

Virtual Activities

Costume Creation

Beavers create a costume out of whatever items they find at home. A few guidelines such as a theme could be given to them. Alternatively, do not give them anything just let their creativity shine through.

Virtual Campfire

One of the leaders builds a campfire or projects a video of a campfire. The whole colony and Leaders can then sing and tell stories 'around' the virtual campfire.

Virtual Pet show

Each beaver has to show the pet they have at home and say a few words about it. Should they not have any pet they can invent one (even a fantastical one) and share it with the rest of the colony.

Virtual Cultural Tours

The biggest and most famous museums worldwide are currently offering virtual tours of their exhibition halls. All you have to do is find the museum you wish to visit and click onto their virtual tours.

You can use your computer or your mobile (possibly one with a big screen) and literally admire the wonders of the world's culture while staying safe at home.

Websites

Heritage Malta

<https://heritagemalta.org/>

Jigsaw Planet

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/>

Mossy Resources

This site <https://mossyresources.com/> has a collection of digital resources created by an individual called Mossy. Their main focus is Beaver Scouting, though over the years they have expanded the site to cater for all the Sections of the Group.

The creators are also very willing to help should the need arise.

World Wildlife Fund

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/>

Once upon a time...



A Mouse So Small

A cold wind rustled through the wood. "Autumn is nearly over," Bear told Millie Mouse. "It's time for my long winter sleep."

Millie gave Bear a hug. His tummy rumbled. "Are you hungry?" she asked. "Yes," yawned Bear, "but I can't stop to eat – I might fall asleep, right here in the wood!" "You must hurry home, Bear!" exclaimed Millie. "Goodbye!"



"See you in the spring," he promised.

"Poor Bear is going to bed hungry," thought Millie as her friend tramped away through the autumn leaves. "I have to help him!"

She looked around. "Ooh, blackberries! Bear would love those," she thought.

But the blackberries were too high to pick. Millie frowned.

"I'll get you somehow," she said, "I won't let Bear go hungry."



Millie tried jumping, but her legs were too short. She tried knocking them down with a stick, but still she couldn't reach. Then she spotted a tree stump. Up she scrambled.

"Just a bit higher," Millie puffed as she stretched towards the blackberries...

But as she grabbed a branch to pull the berries close, she wibbled and wobbled and slipped off the stump!

"Help!" yelled Millie, dangling from the blackberry bush.



Luckily, Fox was passing by.

"You're too small to climb up there," he said, lifting her down.

"I'm not too small," huffed Millie. "This blackberry bush is too tall!"

"Let me help," Fox smiled as he pulled the branch close.

Millie picked the three fattest blackberries.

"Thank you," she said. "These are for Bear."

Millie set off through the wood to Bear's den.

But three fat blackberries were heavy to carry. First she dropped one. Then another.

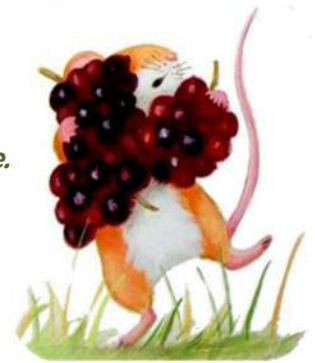
"You're very greedy for such a small mouse," chuckled Squirrel.



"I'm not a small mouse!" insisted Millie. "I haven't finished growing yet. And I'm not greedy either - these berries are for Bear."

"Why don't you pull them along on a leaf?" suggested Squirrel.

Millie found a big leaf and piled the blackberries on top.





"Thank you, Squirrel," she said. But Squirrel had already hurried away to bury food for the winter. Millie pulled the berries up the hill.

"I hope Bear is still awake," she puffed. Suddenly she heard a grumbling voice. "What a

nuisance! How annoying!"

Hedgehog had something stuck in his prickles. "It's a nut!" said Millie. "It's in a very awkward place," muttered Hedgehog.

"I can help," cried Millie. She stood on tiptoes and reached carefully into his prickles. "Got it!" she cheered.

"You can have it!" grunted Hedgehog and he scurried off.



Millie added the nut to her pile. But when she tugged the leaf, everything toppled off

and rolled





"Come back!" cried Millie as she raced after them. When she reached the bottom of the hill there was just one berry left!

"I can't even run as fast as a blackberry!" she huffed, "I'm just too small!"

Millie sat and sighed sadly.

A flock of birds flew overhead, on their way

to find a warmer home.

A chilly breeze rustled the leaves and rattled the fir cones.

"Winter's nearly here," thought Millie, "and Bear is going to bed hungry." She picked up the last berry.

"At least this will be better than nothing," she decided, and she started back up the hill. When Millie arrived at Bear's den he was very surprised to see her.

"I didn't want you to be hungry," explained Millie, offering Bear the blackberry. "I wanted to bring you lots, but I was too small to reach them, and too small to carry them, and too small to catch them when they rolled away!"



Bear lifted her gently onto his paw.

"You may be small, Millie," he said with a smile, "but you have a very BIG heart!"

He pointed inside his store cupboard and Millie stared in amazement. It was full of food

that Bear had gathered!



"Berries grow on bushes and nuts grow on trees," said Bear, "but best friends aren't so easy to find."

Millie gave Bear her BIGGEST hug. And together, the two friends sat and watched the sun sink in the autumn sky, until it was time for a long winter sleep.



Angela McAlister

A mouse so small

London, Little Tiger Press, 2015

ON SUDDEN HILL

Birt and Etho are best friends.

They spend hours together playing on Sudden Hill. Then one day a new boy arrives. He wants to join them. Can two become three?

Two cardboard boxes, big enough to sit in, hide inside.

Birt and Etho take them out each day, climb up Sudden Hill and sit in them.



Sometimes they are kings, soldiers, astronauts. Sometimes they are pirates sailing wild seas and skies.

But always, always They are BIG friends.

Their sailing, running, leaping, flying, their chatter and giggles, him and Etho, their silences and watching small movements in the valley and feeling big as Giant Kings.



Birt loves their two-by-two rhythm.



And then one Monday (it is cramping cold) they meet another box-carrier who wants to join them.



This tiny boy's called Shu.

He has watched Birt and Etho every day and finally found a big enough box and courage to ask if he can play too.

Etho smiles and says, "Sure!"

And so the three sit in their boxes, watch one kestrel and two lost clouds.



Sometimes they are dragon-slayers side-by-side house dwellers and skyscraper dancers.

But Birt feels strange.

One night, Birt smashes his box, stamps on it, rips it to bits.

His dad shouts something flat from the front room about being quiet and that's enough!

Birt stops going up Sudden Hill.

Etho and Shu call round sometimes. Birt avoids them.





Instead he stays at home, mostly drawing pictures of two boxes, side-by-side. But he misses Etho. He misses their cardboard castles on Sudden Hill.

One day, a knock on the door.

He hears Shu's voice. "We made you something. Please come out!"

All Birt can see as he peeks from the curtain is a box. But it is much, much more

than a box.

It's got bright, waving things attached to it like huge kites.

It's got colors.

It's got sound.

It's got, it's got —
WHEELS!

The HUGE box on-the-wheels (that they call Mr ClimbFierce) is hauled up Sudden Hill.

It's amazing!

An incredible Monster Creature Box Thing!

It's a supersonic rocket blaster!





A triple jet transformer!

A sparkling glitter king!

It's even got boxes inside, one with biscuits,
one with lemonade. Birt likes Shu.

Shu is kind. Shu is funny. Shu is daring and brave.

Burt loves their time together.

Their Etho-Shu-Birt-iness.

He loves their three-by-three
rhythm.

It's new.

And it's good.



Linda Sarah & Benji Davies

On Sudden Hill

Simon & Schuster Children's UK, 2014

PROBLEM OR SOLUTION ?



It was 1933. I had been laid off my part-time job and could no longer make my contribution to the family larder. Our only income was what Mother could make by doing dressmaking for others.

Then Mother was sick for a few weeks and unable to work. The electric company came out and cut off the power when we couldn't pay the bill. Then the gas company cut off the gas. Then the water company. But the Health Department made them turn the water back on for reasons of sanitation.

The cupboard got very bare. Fortunately, we had a vegetable garden and were able to cook some of its produce in a campfire in the back yard.

Then one day my younger sister came tripping home from school with, "We're supposed to bring something to school tomorrow to give to the poor."

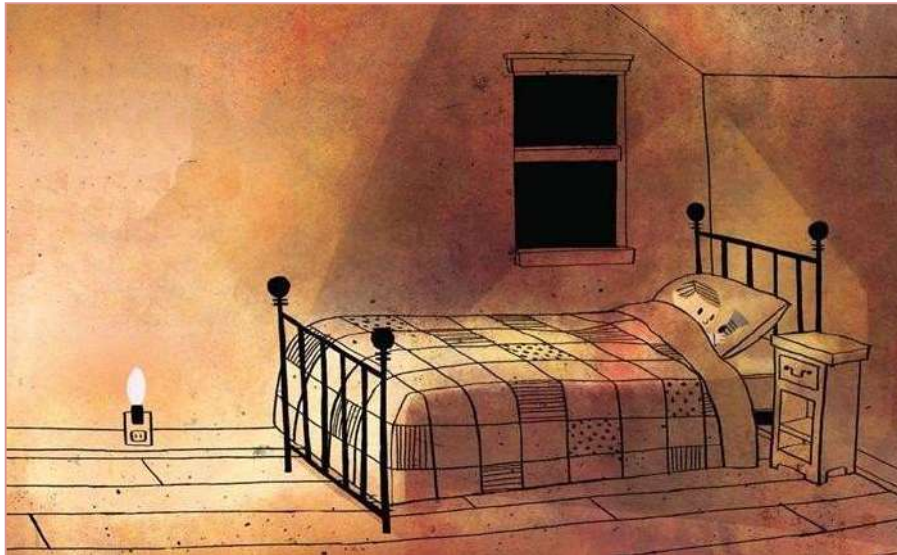
Mother started to blurt out, "I don't know of anyone who is any poorer than we are," when her mother, who was living with us at the time, shushed her with a hand on her arm and a frown.

"Eva," she said, "if you give that child the idea that she is 'poor folks' at her age, she will be 'poor folks' for the rest of her life. There is one jar of that homemade jelly left. She can take that."

Grandmother found some tissue paper and a little bit of pink ribbon with which she wrapped our last jar of jelly, and Sis tripped off to school the next day proudly carrying her "gift to the poor."

And ever after, if there was a problem in the community, Sis just naturally assumed that she was supposed to be part of the solution.

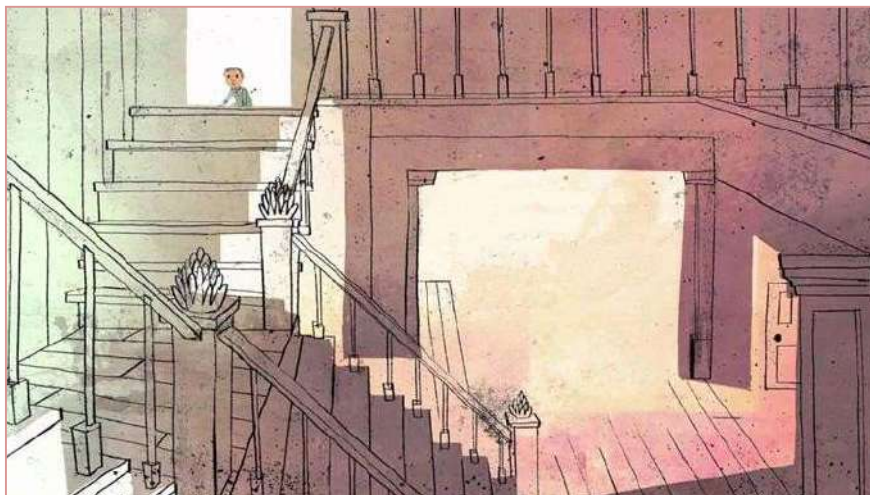
Edgar Bledsoe



★ THE DARK ★

Laszlo was afraid of the dark. The dark lived in the same house as Laszlo, a big place with a creaky roof, smooth, cold windows, and several sets of stairs.

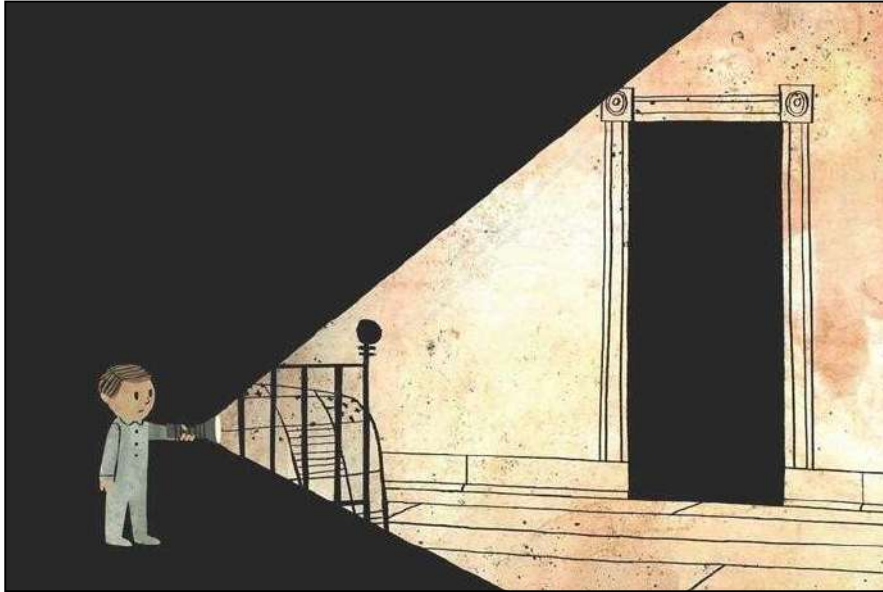
Sometimes the dark hid in the closet. Sometimes it sat behind the shower curtain. But mostly it spent its time in the basement.



All day long the dark would wait in a distant corner, far from the squeaks and rattles of the washing machine, pressed up against some old, damp boxes and a chest of drawers nobody ever opened.

At night, of course, the dark went out and spread itself against the windows and doors of Laszlo's house.

But in the morning the dark would be back in the basement, where it belonged.



Laszlo would peek at the dark every morning. “Hi,” he would say. “Hi, dark.”

Laszlo thought that if he visited the dark in the dark’s room, maybe the dark wouldn’t come visit him in his room.

But one night—it did.

“Laszlo,” the dark said, in the dark.

The voice of the dark was as creaky as the roof of the house, and as smooth and cold as the windows, and even though the dark was right next to Laszlo, the voice seemed very far away.



“What do you want?” asked Laszlo.

“I want to show you something,” said the dark. “In here?”

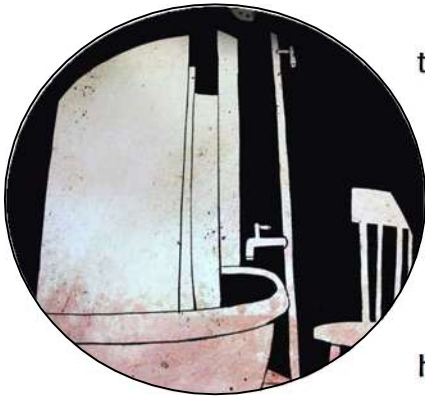
“No,” said the dark.

“Here?”

“No, no,” said the dark.

“Downstairs.” “Downstairs?”

“Yes,” said the dark.



In Laszlo's living room was the biggest window in the house.

Laszlo looked out at all the dark outside. Above him the roof creaked, and he closed his eyes. Now the dark was all Laszlo could see.

"No, no," said the dark again. "Not there. Down here."

"In the basement?" asked Laszlo. "Yes," said the dark.

Laszlo had never dared come to the dark's room at night.



"Come closer," said the dark. Laszlo came closer.

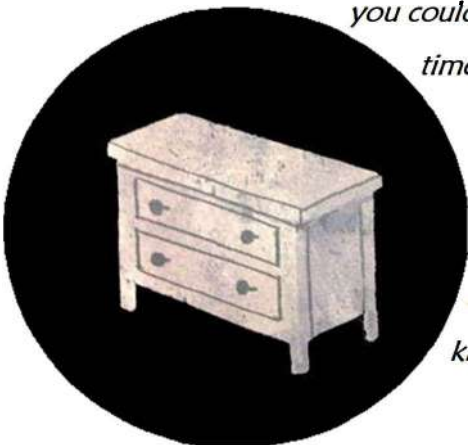
"Even closer," said the dark.

You might be afraid of the dark, but the dark is not afraid of you.

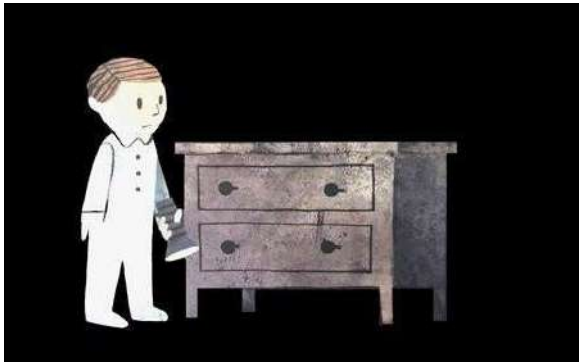
That's why the dark is always close by.

The dark peeks around the corner and waits behind the door, and you can see the dark up in the sky almost every night, gazing down at you as you gaze up at the stars.

Without a creaky roof, the rain would fall on your bed, and without a smooth, cold window, you could never see outside, and without a set of stairs, you could never go into the basement, where the dark spends its time.



Without a closet, you would have nowhere to put your shoes, and without a shower curtain, you would splash water all over the bathroom, and without the dark, everything would be light, and you would never know if you needed a lightbulb.

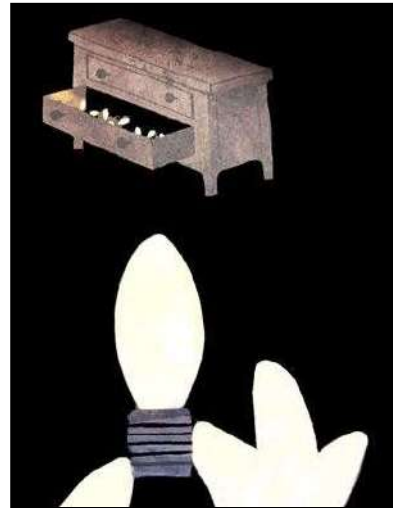


“Bottom drawer,” said the dark. “What?”

“Bottom drawer,” said the dark. “Open the bottom drawer.”

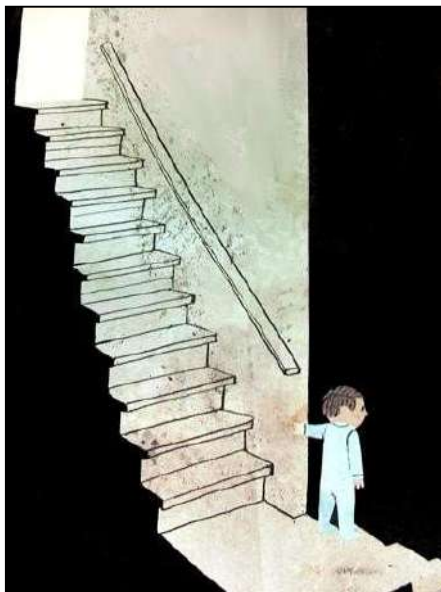
“Thank you,” said Laszlo. “You’re welcome,” said the dark.

By the time Laszlo got back into bed, the dark was no longer in his room, except when he closed his eyes to go to sleep.



The next morning, Laszlo visited the dark in the basement.

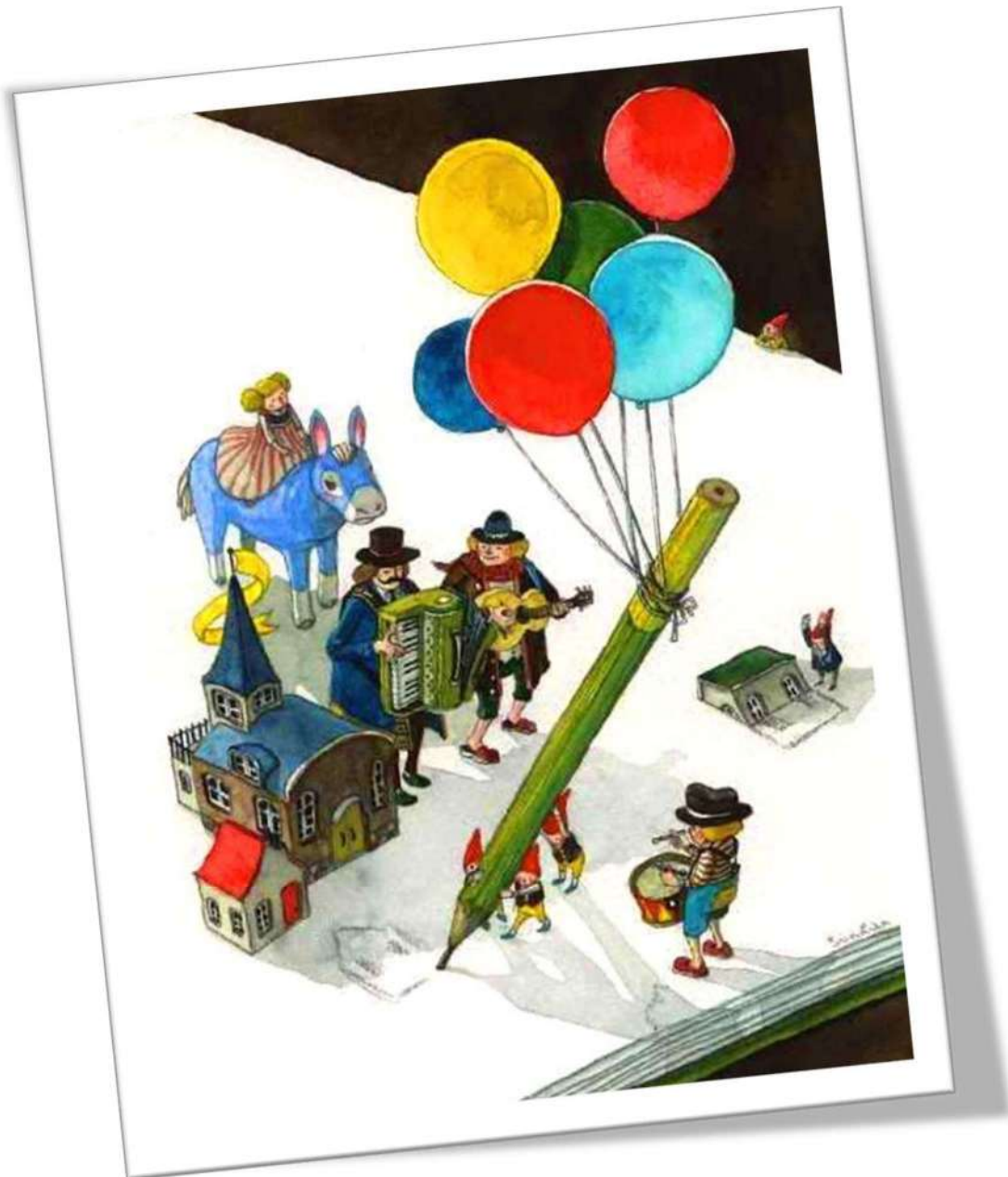
“Hi,” he said. “Hi, dark.”



The dark didn’t answer, but the bottom drawer was still open, so it looked like something in the corner was smiling.

The dark kept on living with Laszlo, but it never bothered him again.

Lemony Snicket
The dark
London, Orchard books, 2014



THE DRAWING THAT TALKED

Pinty Tailor was a little boy who enjoyed going to school and doing all sorts of things, except for art and writing. Using brushes and pencils did not come easy to Pinty, so his works of art did not end happily, and he would just give up in disgust.

But one day Pinty found a pencil of such lovely colours that he could not resist, and he tried drawing a circle. As

ever, it did not go well, and he was about to throw the pencil away when his drawing began to speak to him.

'Psst! You aren't going to leave me like this, are you? Come on, the least you can do is draw me a pair of eyes!' said the drawing. Pinty was understandably shocked, but he managed to draw two little spots inside the circle.

'Much better, now I can see myself,' said the circle, looking around at itself... 'Arghh! But what have you done to me?'

'I don't draw very well,' said Pinty, trying to make excuses.

'OK, no problem,' the drawing interrupted him, 'I'm sure that if you try again you'll do better. Go on, rub me out!' So Pinty erased the circle and drew another one. Like the first one, it was not very round.

'Hey! You forgot

the eyes again!'

'Oh, yeah.'

'Hmmm, I think I'm going to have to teach you how to draw until you can do me well,' said the circle with its quick, squeaky little voice.

To Pinty, who remained almost paralysed with shock, this did not seem like a bad idea, and he immediately found himself drawing and erasing circles. The circle would not stop saying 'rub this out, but carefully; it hurts,' or 'draw me some hair, quickly, I look like a lollipop!' and other funny remarks.

After spending nearly the whole afternoon together, Pinty could already draw the little figure much better than most of his classmates could have. He was enjoying it so much that he did not want to stop drawing with this crazy new teacher of his. Before going to bed that night, Pinty gave his new instructor a hearty thank you for having taught him how to draw so well.

'But I didn't do anything, silly!' answered the little drawing, in its usual quick manner. 'Don't you see that you've been practicing a lot, and enjoying it all the while? I bet that's the first time you've done that!'

Pinty stopped to think. The truth was that previously, he

had drawn so badly because he had never practiced more than ten minutes at a time, and he had always done it angrily and grudgingly. Without doubt, what the little drawing had said was correct.

‘OK, you’re right, but thank you anyway,’ said Pinty, and before he went to bed he carefully placed the pencil in his school bag.

The next morning Pinty jumped out of bed and went running to find his pencil, but it was not there. He searched everywhere, but there was no sign of it. And the sheet of paper on which he had drawn the little figure, although still full of rubbing out marks, was completely blank. Pinty began to worry, and he did not know if he had really spent the previous afternoon talking with the little man or whether he had dreamt the whole thing.

So, to try to settle the matter, he took a pencil and some paper and tried to draw a little man.

It turned out not bad at all, except for a couple of jagged lines. He imagined his bossy little teacher telling him to round out those edges, and that it looked like he was trying to give him spots. Pinty gladly rubbed out those bits and redrew them. He realised that the crazy little teacher had been right: it made no difference whether you had the magic pencil or not; to manage to do things, you only needed to keep trying and to enjoy doing so.

From that day on, whenever Pinty tried to draw or paint, or do anything else, he always had fun imagining the result of his work protesting to him and saying ‘Come on, my friend, do me a bit better than that! I can’t go to the party looking like this!’

Pedro Pablo Sacristán



THE *Scout* ASSOCIATION
OF MALTA

