

CELEBRATE WITH CHINA

China has a population of about 1.3 billion. This means that if your class represented the earth's total population, 25% of students would be from China! With this number in mind, can students guess what is the world's most widely celebrated holiday? Here's a hint: How often does New Year's Day come around? When is New Year? Most people will answer January 1. Well, that is correct. But if we want to be more specific, it depends on which calendar system in use. With the calendar most of us use, a new year begins every 365 days, on January 1. But suppose you



had two calendars to follow, each with a different number of days? A new year would begin at a different point on each calendar. **Before you tell them, have students practice their calendar-reading skills by searching to find the answer on a monthly calendar: Chinese**

New Year. This year, on January 31st, well over 1.4 billion people will be celebrating a new year a month late, at least according to many of us. Why is it on a different day? They'll be celebrating the lunar new year, and bringing in Chinese Lunar Year 4712, the year of the Horse.

[2014 will be lunar year 4712 in the Chinese calendar system. It is not really the "Chinese New Year" as most of us call it but rather the "Lunar New Year" as the date is celebrated by many others besides the Chinese.]

The solar new year happens every year on January 1st, but the lunar new year happens on the second new moon of the year, which happens a different day each year. This auspicious holiday, which has been observed

annually in China for more than 5,000 years, falls on a different date each year because the Chinese calendar is based on a combination of the lunar and solar cycles. In the lunar



calendar, the first day of the month coincides (happens at the same time) with the new moon and the middle of the month usually coincides with the full moon. The new year arrives with the second moon following the winter solstice (the shortest day of the year, where we have the shortest

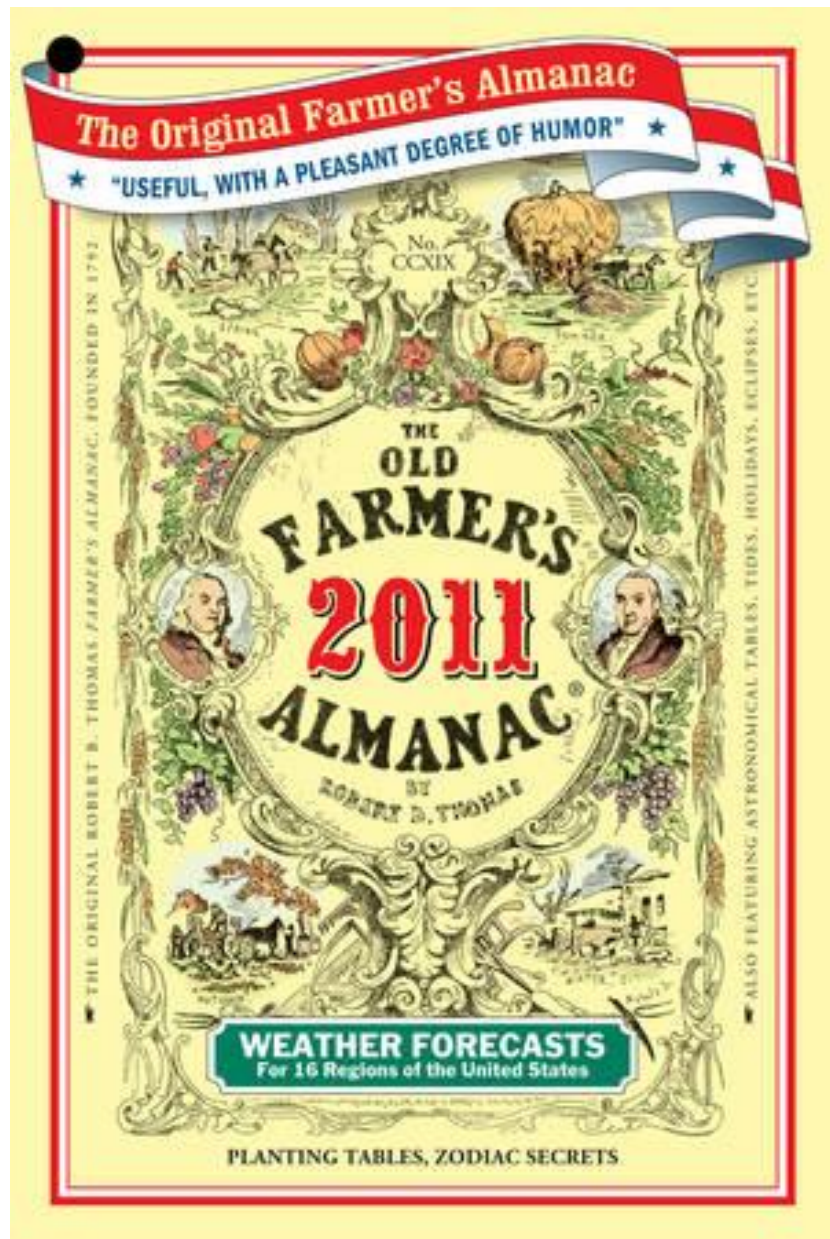
amount of daylight, and the day when the midday sun (at noon) is at its lowest point above the horizon, usually on or about December 21) and the lunar new year begins between January 21 and February 20. Thus, Chinese New Year falls sometime between January 21 and February 20.

The Chinese word Nian means ripe grains. The word dates back to oracle (a prophet or predictor of the future) bone inscriptions (carvings) dating back three thousand years ago. A good harvest or the process of a harvest was considered a year. The whole purpose, in history, of creating a calendar or keeping track of time was to help with agriculture. It was important to know when to till the soil and sow (plant) the seeds. You can say that the first calendar in China was sort of put together for the benefit of agriculture production.



Since the beginning of the Han Dynasty (A dynasty is a succession of people from the same family who rule a country for many years), New Years Day and Winter Solstice were the emperor's most important times. (Emperor: A ruler of great power and rank, esp. one ruling an empire). It was the responsibility of the emperor to keep track of the time, to perform traditional rituals before these dates, and tune and select the music so that heaven and earth were in harmony. Winter Solstice was the most important event because if an emperor blundered (messed up/did it wrong) that day the kingdom wouldn't know which day marked the coming of the new year. These two days are the only days that don't change on the lunar calendar.

The festival was a way of letting the people know what time it was and what to do. The lunar calendar had all sorts of important days that kept people in tune with their daily rituals and mother nature. Keep in mind that the emperors did not do everything by themselves and had experts or "officials" to help out, but they were responsible to keep the mandate (commands). By insuring the accuracy of these dates, the state and the people knew when to work and when to do what (the lunar calendar is like the farmer's almanac which is an annual (once a year) magazine or book including calendars with weather forecasts, ocean tides, full moon dates, weather history, sun rise & set times, best planting dates, and folklore, etc.) **If possible, show students an almanac and read samples of what it contains.**



Chinese New Year is a time to dance with the dragon, but it is also a time to welcome good fortune into our lives, a time for family and a time for tradition. This is when we forget negative words and things and concentrate on the positive things in our lives. It is a time to bless with happiness and prosperity (success). Of all the traditional Chinese festivals, New Year is perhaps the most elaborate (complex), colorful, and important. The Chinese New Year is a 15 day festival quiet with the hope of good fortune, yet booming with the spectacle (demonstration/show) of exploding firecrackers and dancing dragons. It is marked not only by number but also by animal. This is a time for the Chinese to congratulate each other and themselves on having passed through another year, a time to finish out the old, and to welcome in a new year. The seventh day of the Chinese New Year is called Yan Yat, "Everybody's Birthday."The origins of the Chinese New Year celebrations were born out of fear and myth (legends).

Chinese Legends

Besides historical records, there are also many stories and legends worth mentioning. The first and perhaps most enjoyable is the story of Nian (Year "Nian" as in New Year –"Xin Nian"). Chinese legends and stories about the New Year traditions have been told for many centuries. Stories often are slightly different depending on the region that you are in, and the personal beliefs of the person telling the legend of the New Year.

There are three basic stories about how the Lantern Festival came to be, some older than the Han Dynasty, like the Legend of Nian. Chinese legends and stories often include the beast Nian, a monster that preys on children, livestock, and crops. In some stories, Nian rises from the bottom of the sea or from deep within the mountains, coming to destroy life and property.



It's Madness, Glib Madness

Listen to Learn: As you read the following original story of Nian, the Chinese New Year Story, have the students fill out the included story sheet [Waiting for Nian] picking out relevant details, plot details, answering questions, etc.

Next: Talk with students about how to create their own Mad Libs® style stories. Point out that one easy way is to begin by writing or using a synopsis of a familiar story such as a fairy tale or folktale, like the original story of Nian, that you just read.



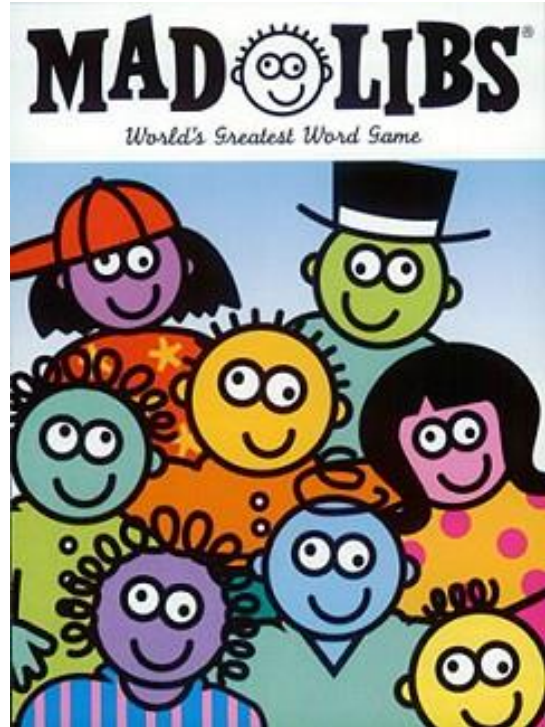
Sample:

Long ago, 1. _____ ruled the 2. _____ and the world was not a safe place for 3. _____. There was one 4. _____ 5. _____ that 6. _____ out of the 7. _____, or deep from within the mountains one day each year to 8. _____ people. This monster was named Nian, he was a 9. _____ and angry creature with the body of a 10. _____ and the head of a lion. He had a 11. _____ so big he could 12. _____ several people in a 13. _____ bite. The people marked the end of their 14. _____ by his visits to their 15. _____. His 16. _____ is where the Chinese word for year came from.

- | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----|------------------|
| 1. | Plural noun | 9. | Adjective |
| 2. | Noun | 10. | Noun |
| 3. | Plural Noun | 11. | Noun (body part) |
| 4. | Adjective | 12. | Verb |
| 5. | Noun | 13. | Adjective |
| 6. | Verb | 14. | Noun |
| 7. | Noun | 15. | Noun |
| 8. | Verb | 16. | Noun |

Mad Lib Variation A: Then, using a highlighter, have students go through the synopsis and delete at least ten important story words. Also have students put in spaces for more vivid words to strengthen the story, etc. Talk with students about how they can use the spaces to change the story, even to change the purpose of the writing- to persuade, report, entertain and have them look for transition words.

To develop a list of clues, suggest that students use a dictionary to check each highlighted word's part of speech. Explain that if the word is a proper noun that names a specific type of person, place, or thing, they should note this in the clue. List the parts of speech on the Clue List in the same order they appear in the story. Once they have made their clue list, have them rewrite their story on the Final Draft sheet, replacing the highlighted words with blanks, writing the appropriate clue in parentheses under the blank. Once students have developed their clue lists, have them complete each other's Mad Libs® style Nian stories in the traditional way. The student will ask a classmate to supply words that fit their Clue List while they transfer their classmate's Clue List words into the appropriate blanks on their Final Draft and then have fun reading the Mad Libs® with their classmates!



Mad Lib Variation B: Using the pre-prepared sheet have students fill in the blanks with their choice of appropriate opening sentences, topic sentences, closing sentences, and supporting sentences.

Mad Lib Variation C: Using the pre-prepared sheet have students fill in the blanks with their choice of appropriate adverbs, nouns, adjectives, regular, irregular, action, and linking verbs.

Group work: For time considerations, if you plan to read the students Mad Libs style story as a class, you may want to assign pairs or groups to a specific paragraph or set of numbers, ex. 1-10, rather than having students work on the entire sheet.

THE CHINESE NEW YEAR STORY

Long ago, monsters ruled the world and the world was not a safe place for people. There was one dangerous monster that came out of the ocean, or deep from within the mountains one day each year to eat people. This monster was named Nian, he was a strong and angry creature with the body of a bull and the head of lion. He had a mouth so big he could swallow several people in a single bite. The people marked the end of their year by his visits to their village. His name is where the Chinese word for year came from.

Nian spent his days and nights in the bottomless sea, or deep within the mountain caves hunting for food. Towards the end of winter the land grew empty and there was nothing to eat. This is when Nian would visit the villages and attack from the shadows, eating whatever it could. The villagers would live in fear over the winter waiting for Nian. Every year all the villagers would take their old and young deep into the mountains to hide from Nian and stay up all night, watching the darkness, listening for the sound of his footsteps, hoping he wouldn't find them.

There lived an old wise man in the village. He thought it was the fear in people that made the monster so brave and strong and over the years he had seen that Nian was afraid of three things: the color red, the light of fire, and loud noises. So one night when Nian was seen coming down the mountain the old man asked people to work together to scare the monster away. He said if they beat drums and gongs, hung red banners, burned bamboo, and lit fireworks they would chase the monster

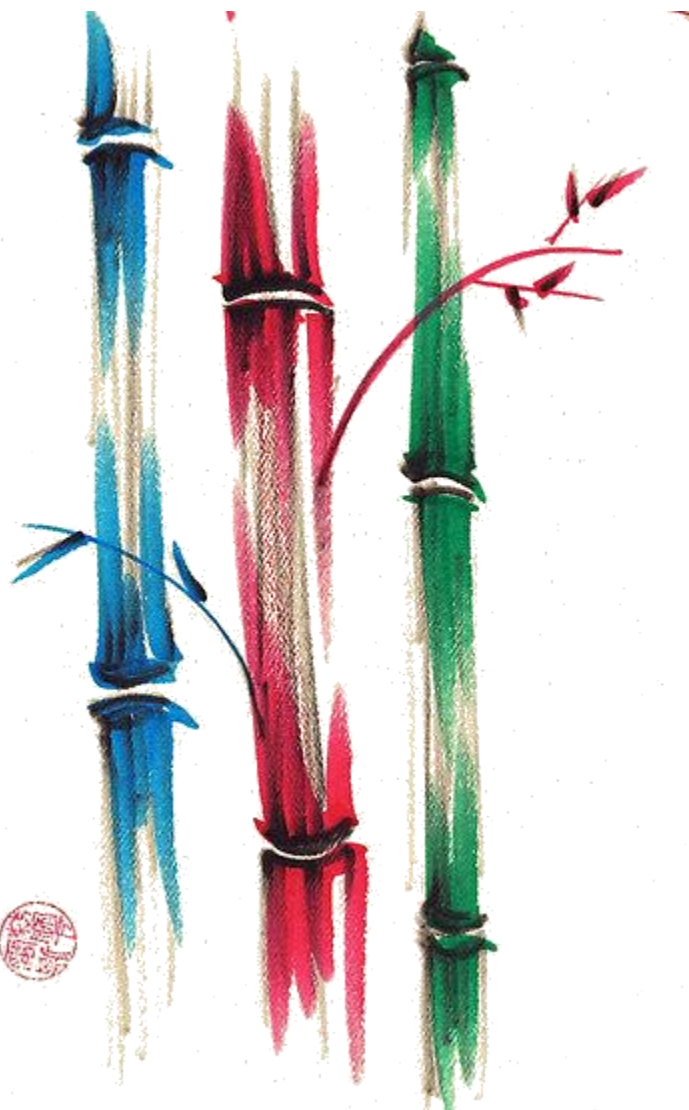


away. Some people were too afraid to stay, and ran away into the caves, but some agreed to try. The villagers spent all night working, getting ready as the monster was coming. They hung red banners throughout the village and lit all the lanterns in every house and along the streets and gathered bamboo to burn. Then, they waited and listened for the smell of his breath and the sound of his footsteps.

On that moonless and freezing cold night, the monster, Nian, appeared again, coming to destroy the village as it did every year. The moment it opened its mouth to eat someone, the villagers lit the bamboo and it cracked and burnt, sounding like many people shooting guns. Frightened by the noise, the flashes of light, and red banners flying from the doors in the wind, the monster quickly turned and ran! Wherever the monster went, it was forced to back off by the terrible noises of the burning bamboo, the flapping of the red banners, and the burning of its eyes by the lights of the lanterns. The monster couldn't stop running until he escaped into the sea, just as the sun's first rays touched the earth.

The people had lived through the long night and saved their village! The next morning when the frightened people from the caves came home to their safe village everyone had a big celebration. The next year they repeated the ritual and it has been passed down generation to generation until today. This legend explains many of the Chinese traditions related to New Year, even in 2014.

Since then, people have kept the tradition of Nian, or the new year, by hanging red banners, setting off fire crackers (which sound like burning bamboo and give off light, want to know how they work? Watch this! <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/videos/chemistry/fireworks.html>), lighting their lamps, and staying awake the whole night, keeping Nian away, and awaiting the Chinese New Year. The custom spread far and wide and became a grand traditional celebration of the "Passing of Nian" ("Nian" in Chinese means "year"). Even today families



let their children stay up as late as they can because it is believed that the longer the children stay up, the longer their parents will live.

Waiting for Nian

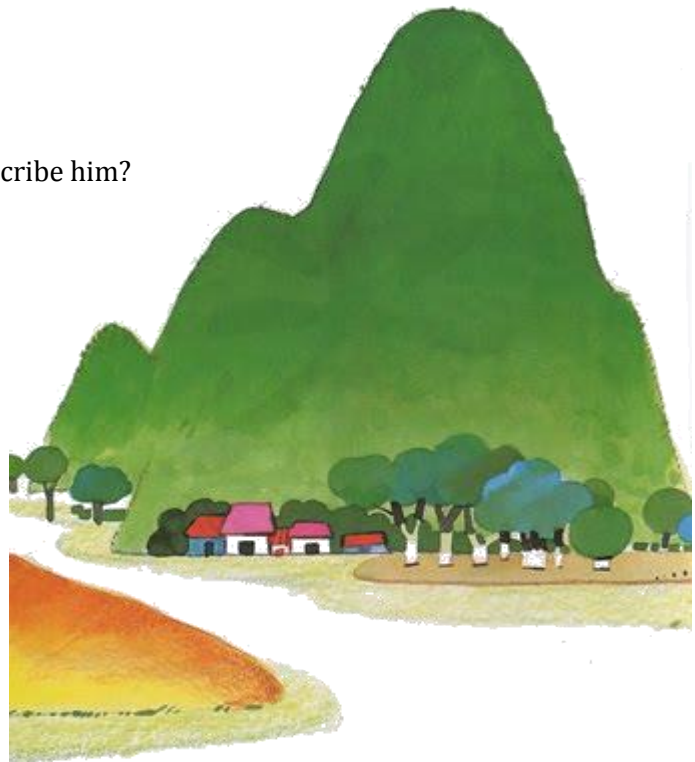
What does Nian look like? How would you describe him?
What kinds of adjectives would you use?:

What was Nian afraid of?

Who figured out how to frighten Nian away?

How would you have defeated him?

What if you were Nian and you had been hungry for the last 2,000 years, what could you do to defeat the villagers?



Re-write the story with a different ending or different events in the space below:

Did Nian win?

Why do people still celebrate Chinese New Year with lanterns, the color red, and fireworks?

What traditions does your family keep? Do you know how those traditions got started?

Draw a picture of Nian on the back of this sheet.

A: Mad Lib It!: The Story of Nian

Long ago, monsters lived and the world was not a safe place for people. One monster named Nian, was a strong and angry creature with the body of a bull and the head of lion. He had a mouth so big he could swallow several people in a single bite. The people marked the end of their year by his visits to their village. His name is where the Chinese word for year came from.

Nian spent his days and nights hunting for food. Towards the end of winter there was nothing to eat and Nian would attack the villages eating whatever it could. The villagers would live in fear all winter waiting for Nian. Every year all the villagers would take their old people and children into the mountains to hide. They would stay awake all night hoping the monster wouldn't find them.

There lived an old man in the village. He had learned that Nian was afraid of three things: the color red, fire, and loud noises. One night the old man asked people to work together to scare the monster away. He said if they beat drums and gongs, hung red banners, burned bamboo, and lit fireworks they would frighten Nian. Some people were too afraid to stay, and ran away into the caves, but some said they'd help. The villagers spent all night working.

The next night, the monster came to find them. When it opened its mouth the villagers burnt the bamboo and it crackled like many people shooting guns. Frightened by the noise, the flashes of light, and red banners flying from the doors in the wind, the monster quickly turned and ran, not stopping until he escaped into the sea.

The people had lived through the long night and saved their village! The next morning when the frightened people from the caves came home everyone had a big celebration. The next year they repeated the ritual and it has been passed down generation to generation until today. This legend explains many of the Chinese traditions related to New Year, even in 2014.

Clue List



Mad Lib It!: The Story of Nian

Clue List



B: Mad Lib It!: The Story of Nian

1. _____ . One monster named Nian, was a strong and angry creature with the body of a bull and the head of lion. 2. _____ . The people marked the end of their year by his visits to their village. His name is where the Chinese word for year came from.

3. _____ . Towards the end of winter there was nothing to eat and Nian would attack the villages eating whatever it could. The villagers would live in fear all winter waiting for Nian. 4. _____ . They would stay awake all night hoping the monster wouldn't find them.

5. _____ . He had learned that Nian was afraid of three things. 6. _____ . One night the old man 7. _____ . He said if they beat drums and gongs, hung red banners, burned bamboo, and lit fireworks they would frighten Nian. Some people were too afraid to stay, and ran away into the caves, but some said they'd help. 8. _____ .

The next night, the monster came to find them. 9. _____ . Frightened by the noise, the flashes of light, and red banners flying from the doors in the wind, the monster quickly turned and ran. 10. _____ .

The people had lived through the long night and saved their village! 11. _____ . The next year they repeated the ritual and it has been passed down generation to generation until today. This legend explains _____ .

Clue List

1. Opening sentence
2. Supporting sentence
3. Topic sentences
4. Supporting sentence.
5. Topic Sentence
6. Supporting sentence
7. Supporting sentence
8. Closing sentence
9. Supporting sentence
10. Closing sentence
11. Supporting sentence
12. Closing sentence



C: Mad Lib It!: The Story of Nian

Long ago, 1. _____ ruled the 2. _____ and the world was not a safe place for 3. _____. There was one 4. _____ 5. _____ that 6. _____ 7. _____ out of the 8. _____, or deep from within the mountains one day each year to 9. _____ people. This monster was named Nian, he was a 10. _____ and angry creature with the body of a 11. _____ and the head of a lion. 12. _____ had a 13. _____ so big he could 14. _____ several people in a 15. _____ bite. The people marked the end of their 16. _____ by his 17. _____ visits to their 18. _____. His 19. _____ is where the Chinese word for year came from. Nian spent 20. _____ days and 21. _____ nights 22. _____ for 23. _____. Towards the end of winter there was nothing to eat 24. _____ Nian would 25. _____ the villages 26. _____ whatever it could. The villagers would live in 27. _____ all winter 28. _____ for Nian. Every year all the villagers would take their 29. _____ people and 30. _____ into the mountains to 31. _____. They would stay awake all night hoping the monster wouldn't 32. _____ 33. _____.

There lived an 34. _____ man in the village. He had 35. _____ that Nian was 36. _____ afraid of three things: the color red, 37. _____, and 38. _____ noises. One night the old man asked people to work together to 39. _____ the monster away. He said if they beat drums and gongs, hung 40. _____ banners, burned 41. _____, 42. _____ lit fireworks they would frighten Nian. Some people were 43. _____ 44. _____ to stay, and 45. _____ away into the caves, but some said they'd help. The villagers spent all night 46. _____. The next night, the monster came to find them. When it opened its mouth the villagers burnt the bamboo and it crackled like many people 47. _____ 48. _____. Frightened by the noise, the flashes of light, and red banners flying from the doors in the wind, the monster quickly turned and ran, not stopping until he escaped into the 49. _____ sea. The people had lived through the long night and saved their 50. _____! The next morning when the frightened people from the caves came home everyone had a big celebration. The next year they repeated the ritual and it has been passed down generation to generation until today. This legend explains many of the Chinese traditions related to New Year, even in 2014.

Clue List

1. Plural noun
2. Noun
3. Plural Noun
4. Vivid Adjective
5. Noun
6. Adverb
7. Verb
8. Noun
9. Verb
10. Adjective
11. Noun
12. Pronoun
13. Noun (body part)
14. Verb
15. Vivid Adjective
16. Noun
17. Adverb
18. Noun
19. Noun
20. Pronoun
21. Vivid adjective
22. Action verb
23. Noun
24. Linking Verb
25. Action Verb
26. Irregular Verb
27. Adjective
28. Action Verb
29. Adjective
30. Plural Noun
31. Irregular Verb
32. Verb
33. Plural Pronoun
34. Adjective
35. Action Verb
36. Adverb
37. Noun
38. Adjective
39. Action Verb
40. Adjective
41. Noun
42. Linking Verb
43. Adverb
44. Verb
45. Action Verb
46. Action verb
47. Action Verb
48. Noun
49. Adjective
50. Noun

Fighting Nian: Flameless Lanterns

Build a battery powered circuit lantern that lights up the night!

Discuss: When you need to light up a room, or a city, in order to frighten Nian what can you do? You plug a lamp into the wall or hang up a lantern! But what if you only have a 9-volt battery, some wire, and a couple of Christmas lights and Nian is charging down the mountains? Is there any way to create light? We've got you covered with the Light Circuit experiment. It's like a flameless Chinese New Year Lantern or firecracker in your hand!



Materials

- 9-volt battery
 - Christmas lights
 - Alligator clip wires
 - Toggle switch
 - Scissors
1. Have students use the scissors to cut two lights off of a working strand of Christmas lights. Leave 1-2 inches of wire hanging from each light.
 2. Have them strip the rubber insulation off half of the wire's length on both ends. If they are using the scissors, caution them to be careful not to cut through the wire, only the insulation.
 3. It's time to create a simple circuit... Have students touch one of the stripped wires to the negative side of the 9-volt battery and the other wire to the positive side of the battery. Both of the Christmas lights should light up. If they don't, you may need to find two more lights.
 4. If you don't have a toggle switch and alligator clip wires, it's okay. You've already created a circuit. If you do have a toggle switch and alligator clip wires, keep reading to discover how to create a circuit that you can open and close with the flip of a switch!
 5. Use one alligator clip wire to connect the positive side of the 9-volt battery to one ground on the toggle switch. Use another alligator clip wire to connect the negative side of the 9-volt battery to the other ground on the toggle switch.
 6. Now use two more alligator clip wires to connect the positive and negative sides of the battery to the exposed light wires.

7. Play with the toggle switch to turn your lights on and off. You have created an open and closed circuit!

How does it work?

What you have created here is a battery powered circuit. Circuits work by electricity cycling through the conducting parts of wires, lights, and batteries. In the first part of the experiment without the toggle switch, you built a closed circuit when you connected the light wires to the positive and negative sides of the 9-volt battery. The battery supplies electricity, the exposed wires (made of conductive copper) carry the electricity, and the lights use the electricity to "turn on" before releasing the electricity back into the system.

When you implement the toggle switch, you've introduced the ability to control the flow of electricity in the circuit. When the toggle switch is "off," the electricity is stopped because the circuit is incomplete. But when the toggle switch is "on," you have a complete circuit and the electricity can flow freely. You have essentially created a simplified version of a light switch in your house. Flipping the light switch "on" or "off" is the same as opening and closing the toggle switch.

Fighting Nian: Brave Buzzing

Nian is still coming and we have light but we need sound to frighten him away! The firecrackers got all wet in the last rainstorm and so what can we do? The old man says, "Want to make a ton of noise and make his ears ring? The Buzzing Noise Maker experiment is perfect for you! It's just the thing!"

To watch how to put the project together, and see larger step by step images, before working with your students, go to

<http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/experiment/buzzing-noise-maker-sick-science> and click on the video tab above the experiment directions and on the pictures, to bring up larger images.

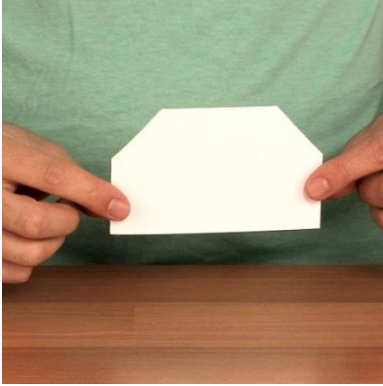


Materials [per person]

- Index card
- Wide rubber band
- 2 adhesive backed foam pieces
- String or yarn

- Jumbo craft stick (tongue depressor)
- Scissors

1. Use the scissors to cut two of the corners off of a long side on the index card.



2. Cut two pieces of adhesive foam. The pieces should be about 2 cm x 5 cm.
3. Place the jumbo craft stick on the long, uncut end of the index card. Only half (lengthwise) of the craft stick should be touching the index card.



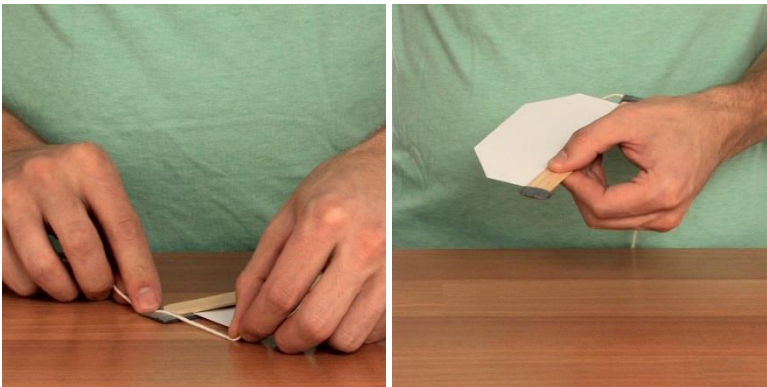
4. Fold one piece of the adhesive foam around the end of the craft stick and index card to hold them in place.



5. Use the scissors to cut a length of string or yarn 1 meter in length. Lay the string across the second piece of adhesive foam. Leave 5-10 cm on one side of the foam



6. Fold the second piece of foam with the string around the other end of the craft stick and index card.



7. Stretch a wide rubber band over each of the foam pieces ensuring that the rubber band isn't twisted.



8. Twirl the Buzzing Noise Maker overhead.

Observations

- How does the pitch change when you shorten or lengthen the string?
- What happens when you change the twirling speed of the Buzzing Noise Maker?
- Can you twirl the Buzzing Noise Maker backwards? Why or why not?

How does it work?

The buzzing noise produced by your Buzzing Noise Maker is produced by the rubber band vibrating against the craft stick. The vibrations are caused by air movement around the rubber band and are maximized when the Buzzing Noise Maker is moving parallel to your twirling motion. The apparatus itself is designed so that aerodynamic drag will keep the Buzzing Noise Maker parallel to air flow.

You may have noticed that the speed of your twirl directly affects the pitch of the noise made by your Buzzing Noise Maker. The faster you spin your Buzzing Noise Maker, the higher the pitch produced by the vibrating rubber band will be.

Additional Info

- What else do you think will affect the noise that comes from the Buzzing Noise Maker? Try using different sizes of craft sticks, rubber bands, or even index cards.
- Is the shape we made with the index card the best shape for this experiment? Try using different shapes that you think might work better.

Fireworks in a Glass

Fireworks are a beautiful and fun part of celebrations like Chinese New Year, but usually not something you want kids to make themselves. However, even very young explorers can experiment with these safe underwater 'fireworks'.

What You Need

- water
- oil
- food coloring (liquid kind)
- tall clear glass
- another cup or glass
- fork

Create Fireworks in a Glass



Image Credit: Juggling with Kids.

<http://www.jugglingwithkids.com/2011/08/fireworks-in-glass.html>. Copyright 2011. All Rights Reserved.

1. Fill the tall glass almost to the top with room-temperature water. Warm water is ok, too.
2. Pour a little oil into the other glass. (1-2 tablespoons)
3. Add a couple of drops of food coloring. Use one drop of blue and one drop of red, but you can use any colors. Don't be tempted to add lots of food coloring, your water will turn dark quickly. I am only telling you from experience.
4. Briefly stir the oil and food coloring mixture with a fork. You want to break up the food coloring drops into smaller drops, but not thoroughly mix the liquid.
5. Pour the oil and coloring mixture into the tall glass.
6. Now watch! The food coloring will slowly sink in the glass, with each droplet expanding outward as it falls, resembling fireworks falling into water.

How It Works

Food coloring dissolves in water, but not in oil. When you stir the food coloring in the oil, you are breaking up the coloring droplets (though drops that come into contact with each other will merge... blue + red = purple). Oil is less dense than water, so the oil will float at the top of the glass. As the colored drops sink to the bottom of the oil, they mix with the water. The color diffuses outward as the heavier colored drop falls to the bottom.

Now, as for the real thing, to the average person, a fireworks display represents a colorful way to wrap-up a great holiday celebration. But for us, fireworks are the perfect opportunity to share a colorful lesson in chemistry. – Find out more about fireworks by watching the following video at the link: <http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/lab/videos#?video=the-science-behind-fireworks>

Fireworks Spectacular!

Have students explore and create their own fireworks show online at the following link.

<http://www.crayola.com/kids-playzone/fireworks-spectacular.aspx>



Why Not January 1st?

January 1st celebrates the new solar year on the solar calendar, based on the earth's movement around the sun. The Chinese calendar is a lunar calendar, it is based on the movement of the moon around the earth, or the moon's phases (full, half, etc). Chinese new year celebrates the new lunar year. So why is it a different day every year? Because each year, the start and end dates of each month drift by 11 days.

Chinese New Year and Astrology

Of all the Chinese legends and stories that are heard around the world, perhaps one of the most popular is that of the Chinese animals that journeyed to the Jade Emperor. Each Chinese New Year is also identified by an animal. For example, the year 2014 is the Year of the Horse. Legend says that the Jade Emperor invited all the animals to come to see him. Of all the animals invited, only the Rabbit, Snake, Horse, Dragon, Ox, Boar, Tiger, Rat, Ram, Monkey, Dog, and Rooster arrived at the palace. In honor of their arrival, the Emperor named a year after each of these animals whose characteristics are thought to be shared by other born in that year.



Other Chinese legends and stories say that Buddha was the person inviting the animals to him to help him reorganize China. Each of the animals that obeyed were given a year to be named after them, and their characteristics would influence events and people born throughout the year. The animals are also connected to the elements, as well. Earth, Water, Air, and Fire are all used to determine which of the animal's characteristics will be most evident through the year. These Chinese legends and stories may be a little different from each other, but many people around the world still follow Chinese astrology carefully.

In the lunar year, which is also made of 12 months, like the solar year, each month is represented by an animal. And these same animals represent the years, every 12 years the cycle starts over.

The animals are the rat, ox, tiger, hare/rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, the dog, and the pig.

Vivid

Verbage

A Daring Legend of the Chinese Calendar and How the Animals for the Chinese New Year Won Their Places

Of all the animals in the world, why were these 12 chosen?

Have students give you ideas of why those certain animals might have been chosen. What animals would they have chosen instead?

List them on the board. There are many legends explaining this and they all share a similar theme: there was a race and the first 12 animals who arrived at the finish line were chosen.

Read the animals again and have students vote who they think came in first and who came in last. Write their votes and/or names with their predictions on the board. Work as a group and have the students describe what they think each animal was like using adjectives.

Before telling the animal race legend:

Take the included characters and word list and cut them out. Put small pieces of sticky magnet (or tape) on the characters and props so that they will stay on the white board. Then draw a river on the board in front of the room. Have the students identify what words go with each character or object. As the story goes along move the characters into the appropriate places along the river. You may wish to assign the students a specific character



and have the students come up and move the characters into the appropriate positions as you tell them the story.

As the poem progresses have students keep track of what place each animal ended up in and see if they are correct at the end of the story.

Did the story turn out how they wanted?

Work with your students to add in descriptive adjectives, additional nouns, and vivid verbs to the poem as a group. Guide students and work together to use vivid verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to change the poem. Then, add in additional animals and verses to the race.

Point out to students that in the poem the rhyme scheme is A/A/B/B and that additional verses will need to follow the same rhyming pattern.

Things to consider/discuss:

- If all the animals that existed were gathered together, what happened to the rest of them?
- What other animals could have/should have won places in the calendar?
- What happened to the chicken or could a beaver win the race?
- What verbs might make the story more interesting or completely change the whole outcome?

SAMPLE: Changes to 2nd, 3rd, and 7th Stanzas

You'll flounder across the river, then struggle onto shore;

The first one to be eaten is the first one to my door."

"Hooray!" they all sobbed. "Let the races begin!"

What a sad sight! What a scramble as the wretched creatures flopped in!

Clever cat and shrewd rat kept close watch from the start,

Saw the current was swift so they played the game smart.

Each other they fought athwart the ox's slick back,

And wrestled and slithered to the rear of the pack.

Clinging to a thorny log for the rest of the trip,

With a hot gust of garlicky wind helping to guide his ship.

In fifth fluttered the dragon, a rather odd spot

For a beast who could have just burned up the whole lot.

Tell me, please, what are they like?

Pigs are: _____.

Rats are: _____.

Sheep are: _____.

Horses are: _____.

Dragons are: _____.

Oxen are: _____.

Roosters are: _____.

Tigers are: _____.

Snakes are: _____.

Monkeys are: _____.

Dogs are: _____.

Rabbits are: _____.



The Tale of the Great Calendar Race

1. Emperor Jade called the animals near,
Saying twelve would be named for each
calendar year.
“Because it’s my birthday I’m having a race;
Your spot in the cycle’s determined by
place.”

2. You’ll swim cross the river, then run on
the shore;
The first in the cycle’s the first to my door.”
“Hooray!” they all yelled. “Let the races
begin!”
What a sight! What a zoo as the creatures
jumped in!

3. The cat and the rat, BFF’s from the start
Knew the current was swift so they played
the game smart.
Together they climbed on the ox’s strong
back,
And sailed on his boat at the front of the
pack.

4. What happened next? To the feline’s
chagrin,
Just midway across, Rat pushed the cat in!
As he desperately struggled to swim to the
shore
Cat caught a glimpse of rat reaching Jade’s
door.

5. “If I make it to land,” the cat said in his
mind,
“I swear to revenge for that rat and his
kind!”
With no points awarded for virtue, rat won!
Then ox came in second in Jade’s birthday
run.

6. Finishing third was the tiger, what
strength!
Having battled the current the whole river’s
length.
And coming in fourth, but as dry as a bone,
Was the rabbit who hopped halfway there
stone by stone.

7. Then rode on a log for the rest of the trip.
With the gust from a wind that helped sail
his ship.
In fifth flew the dragon, a rather strange
place
For a beast who could fly with such speed
and such grace.

8. The thing that had kept him from finishing
first?
He stopped to make rain to quench
peoples’ thirst.
Then after the dragon the horse ran ashore
He should have been sixth to the palace’s
door.

9. But he balked at the end when he saw in a
poof!
Out jumped the snake who had hid in his
hoof!
Sheep, monkey and rooster sailed in on a
raft,
Then eleventh came Dog after taking a
bath.

10. The last of the creatures to fill in the gap
Was the pig who had stopped for a meal
and a nap.
The sated pig said, when asked about that,
“At least I can say I have beaten the cat!”

The Tale of the Great Calendar Race

(Have students add in verbs and adjectives to make their own story)

1. Emperor Jade _____ the _____ animals
near,

Saying twelve would be _____ for each
_____ calendar year.

“Because it’s my birthday I’m _____ a race;
Your spot in the _____ cycle’s _____ by
place.”

2. You’ll _____ cross the river, then _____ on
the shore;

The first in the cycle’s the first to my door.”
“Hooray!” they all _____. “Let the races
_____!”

What a _____ sight! What a _____ as the
creatures _____ in!

3. The cat and the rat, BFF’s from the start
Knew the current was swift so they _____
the game _____.

Together they _____ on the ox’s _____
back,

And _____ on his boat at the front of the
pack.

4. What happened next? To the feline’s
_____,

Just midway across, Rat _____ the cat in!
As he _____ to swim to the shore
Cat caught a glimpse of rat _____ Jade’s
door.

5. “If I make it to land,” the cat said in his
mind,

“I _____ for that _____ rat and his
kind!”

With no points awarded for virtue, rat won!
Then _____ ox came in second in Jade’s
birthday run.

6. _____ third was the tiger, what strength!

Having _____ the _____ current the whole
_____ river’s length.

And coming in fourth, but as _____ _____
_____,

Was the rabbit who hopped halfway there
stone by stone.

7. Then _____ on a _____ log for the rest of
the trip.

With the gust from a wind that _____ sail
his ship.

In fifth _____ the dragon, a rather strange
place

For a beast who could _____ with such speed
and such grace.

8. The thing that had kept him from finishing
first?

He _____ to make rain to quench peoples’
thirst.

Then after the dragon the horse _____
_____.

He should have been sixth to the palace’s
door.

9. But he _____ at the end when he saw in a
poof!

Out jumped the _____ snake who had hid in
his hoof!

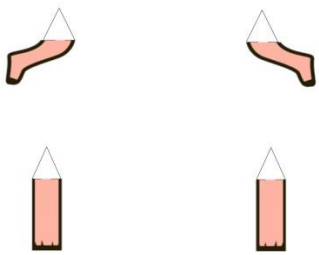
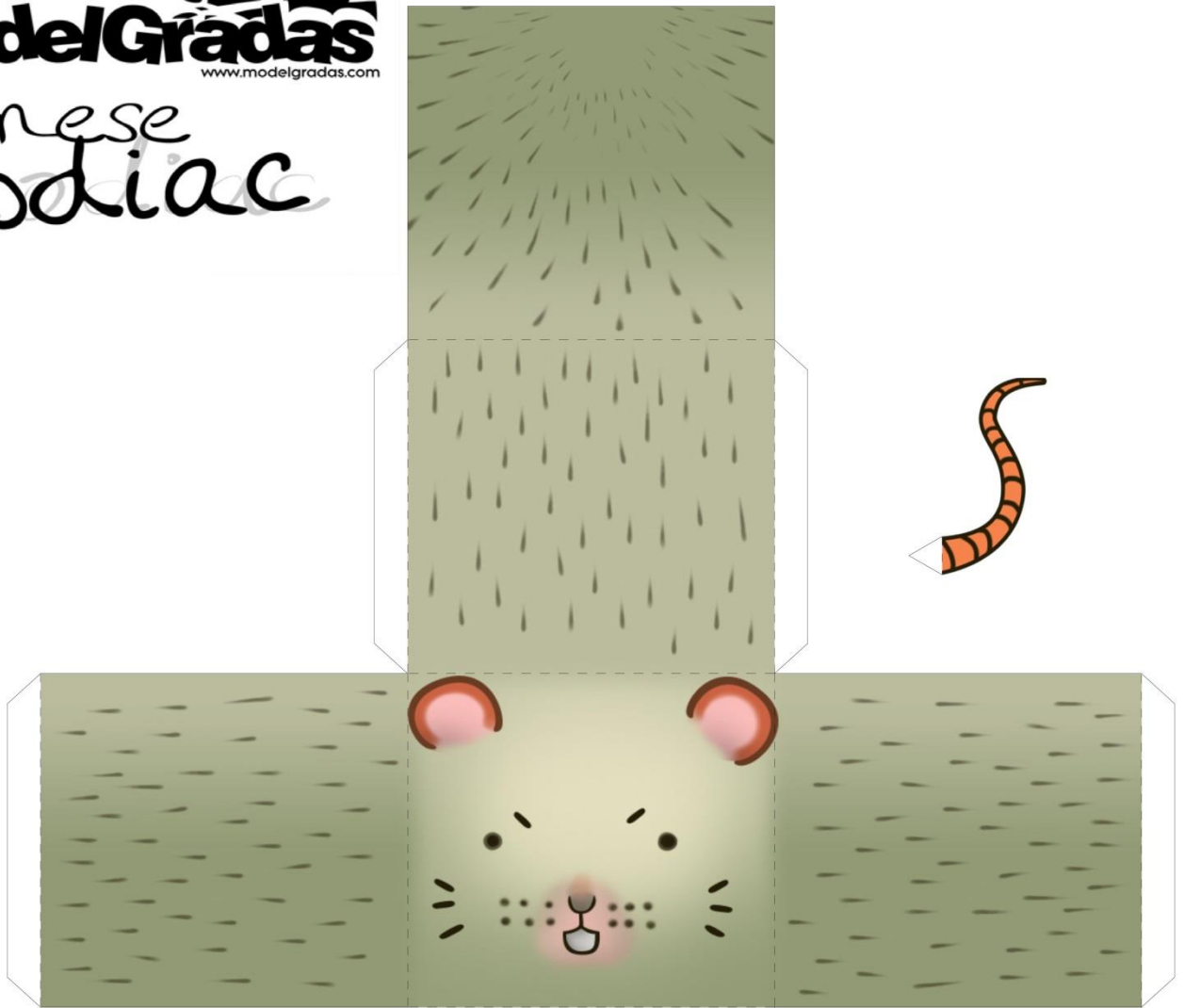
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The sated pig said, when asked about that,
“At least I can say I have beaten the cat!”

Chinese Zodiac



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RAT

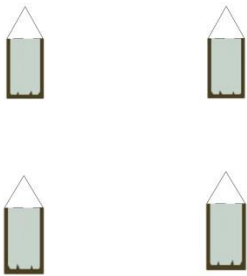
Rat

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DOG

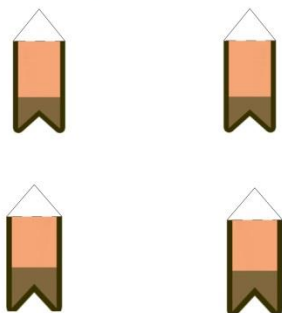
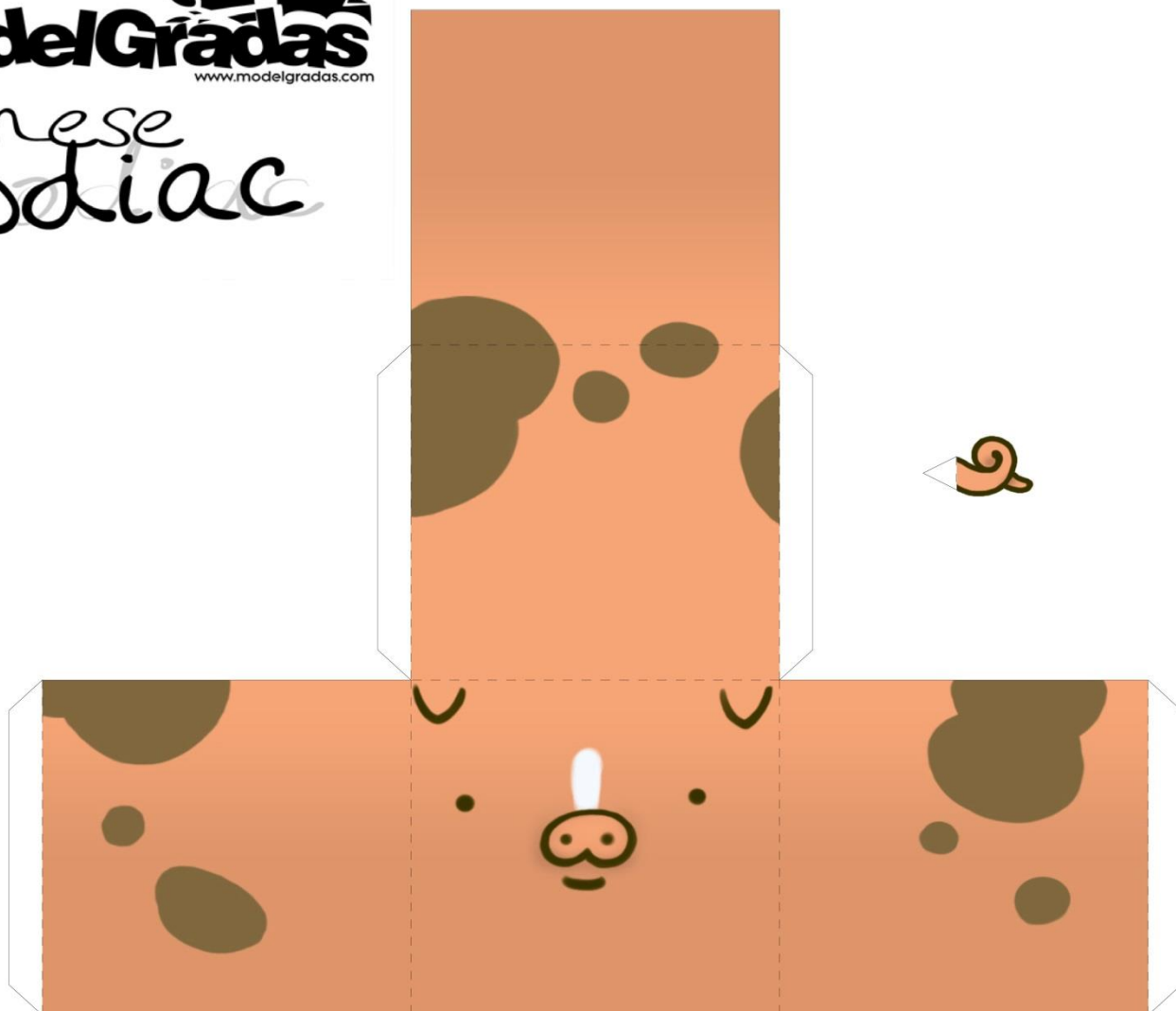
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PIG

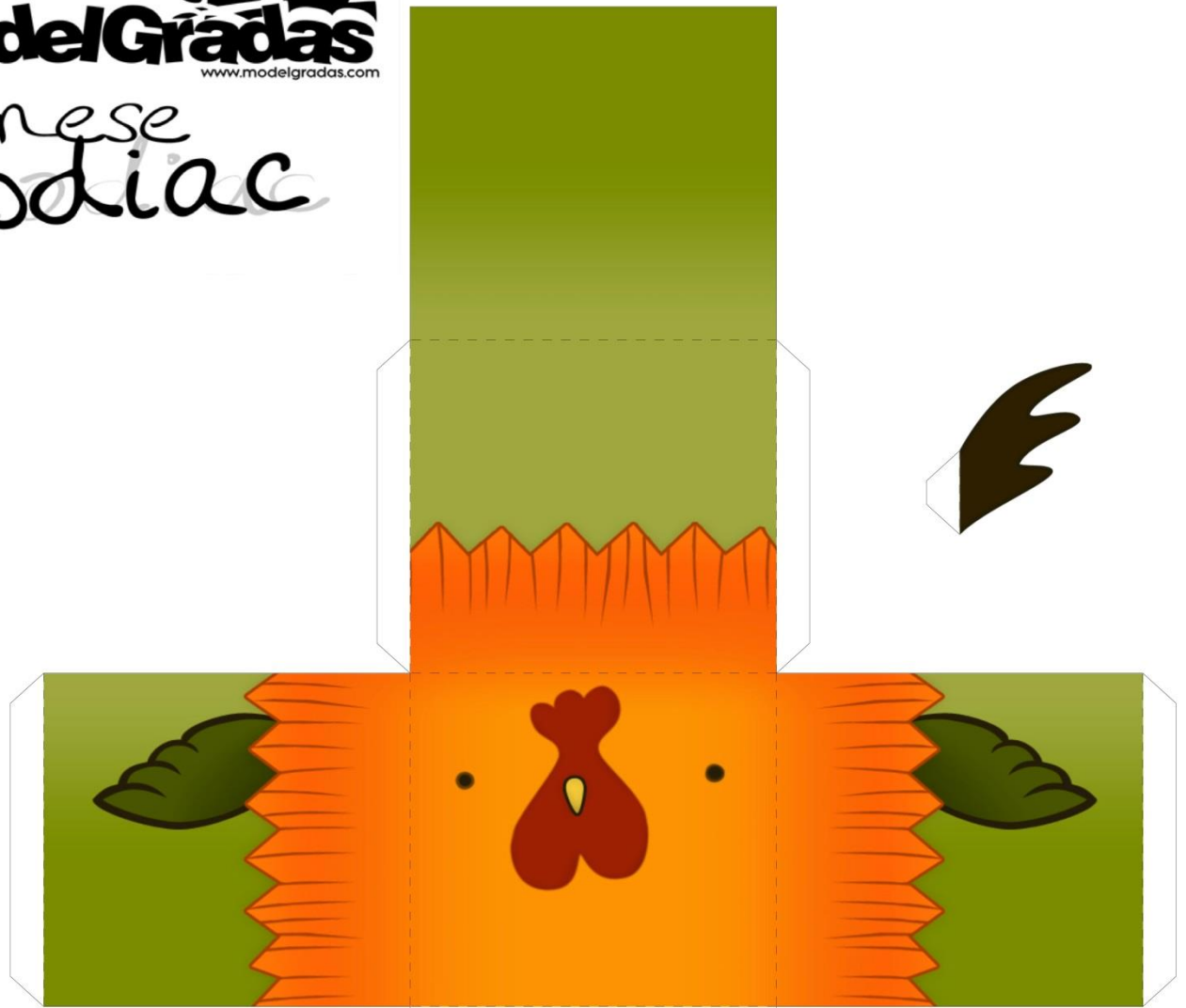
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ROOSTER

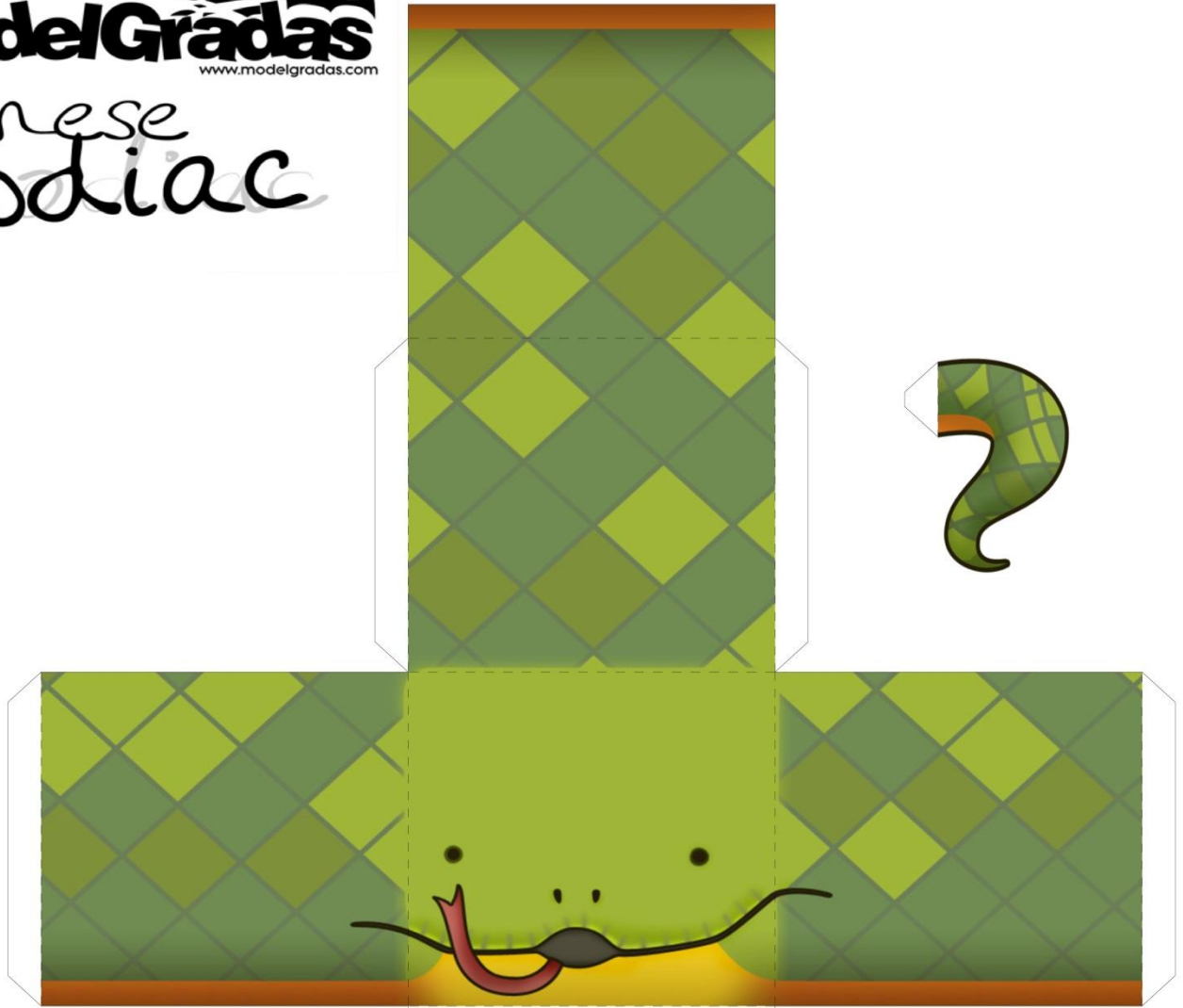
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SNAKE

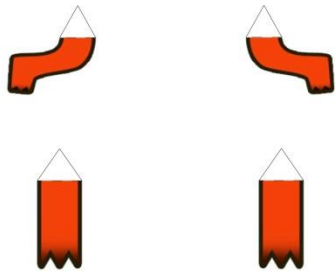
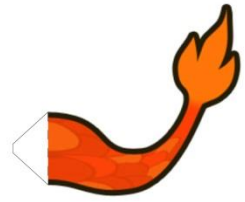
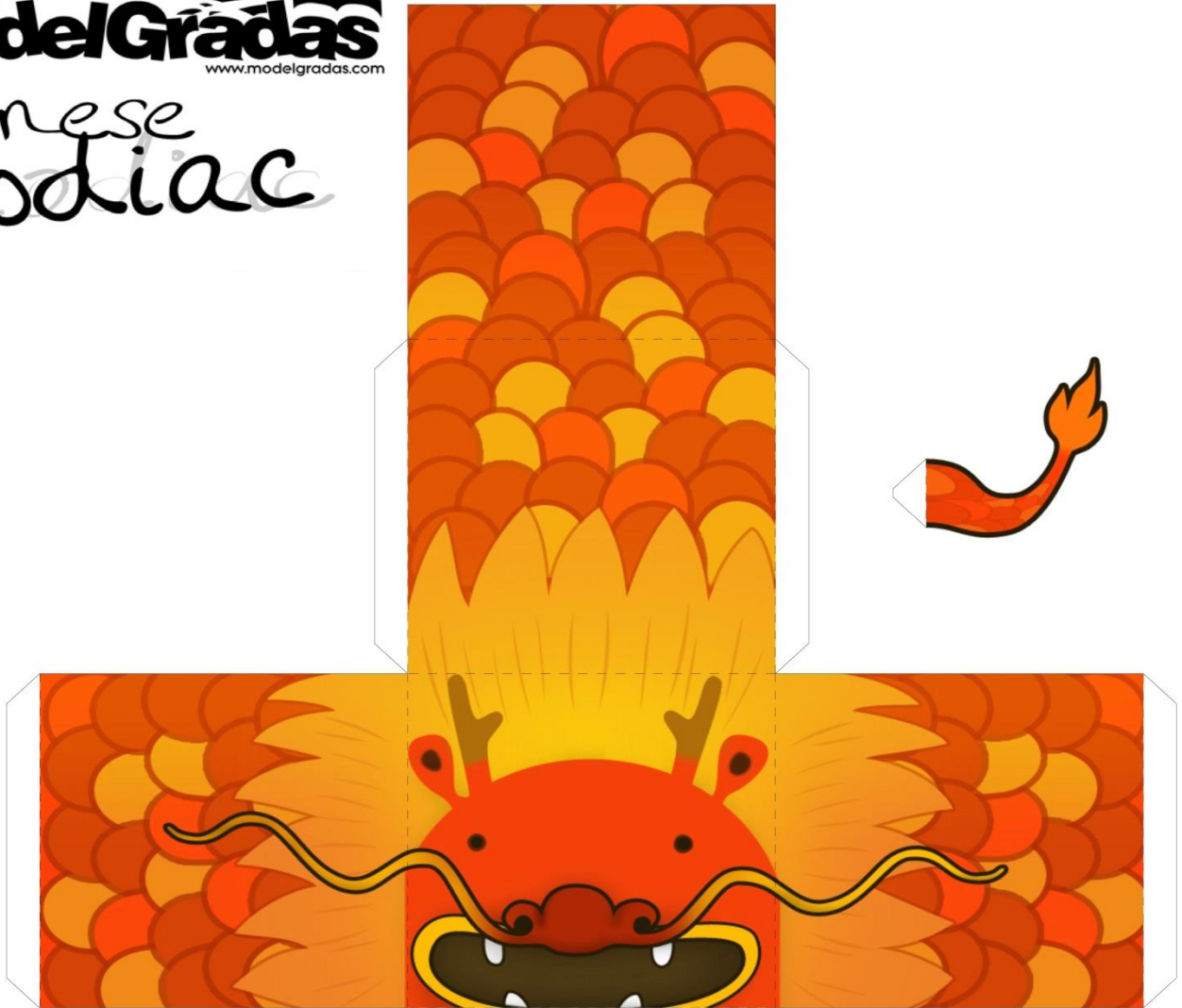
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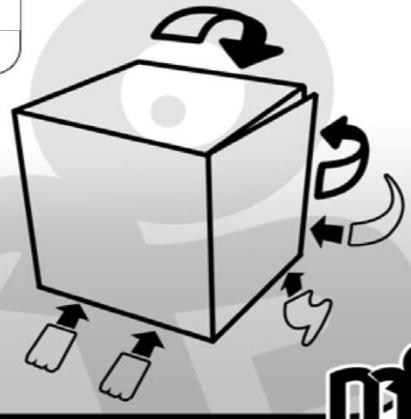


DRAGON

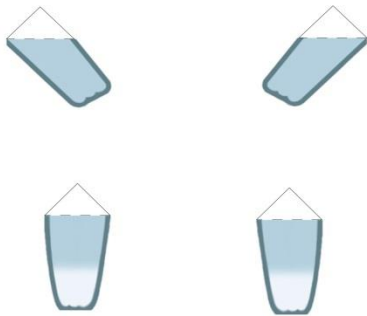
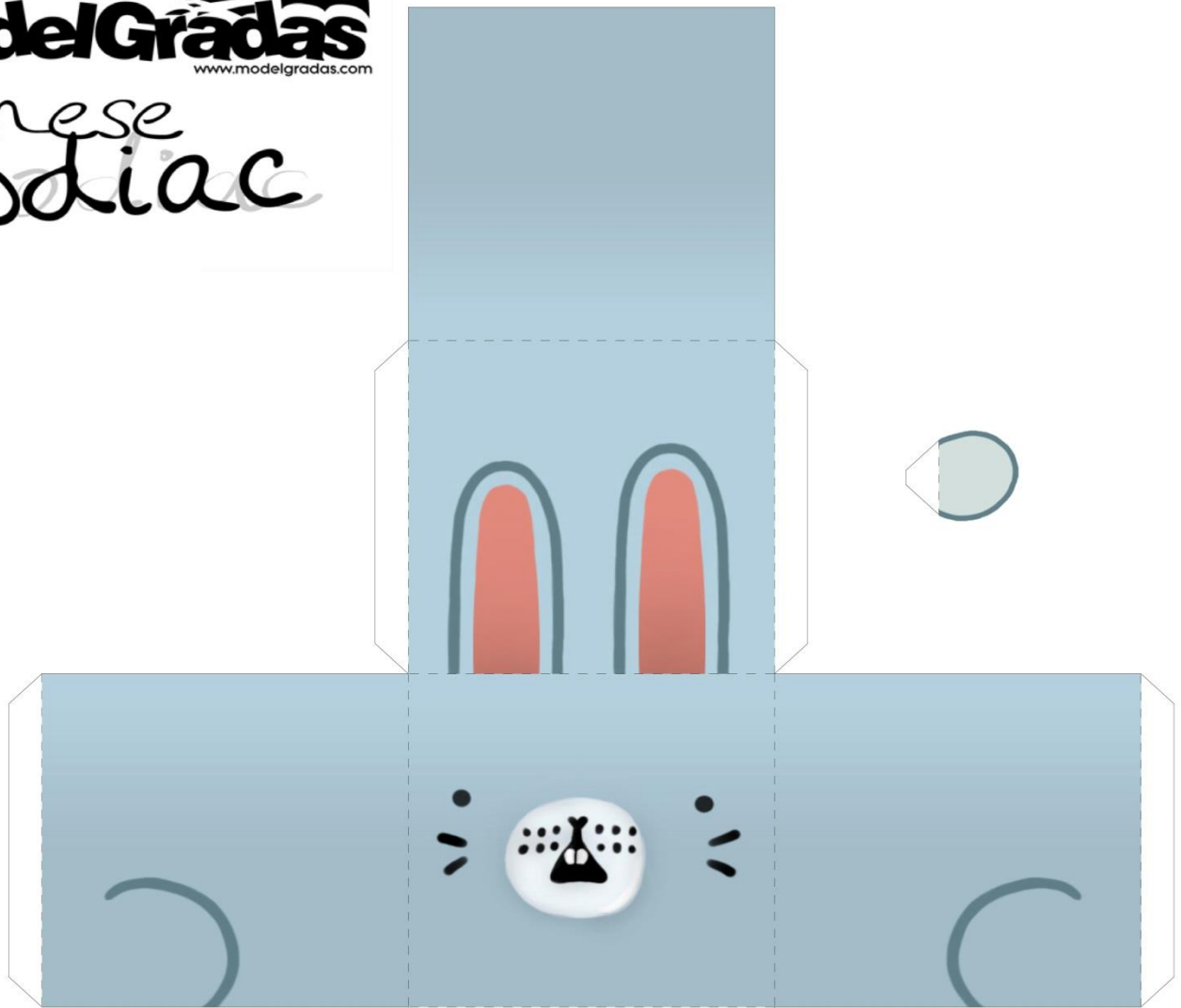
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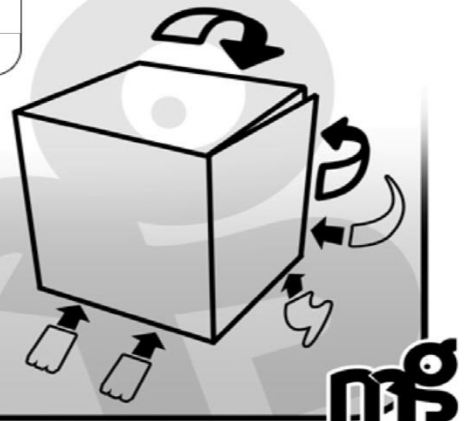


RABBIT

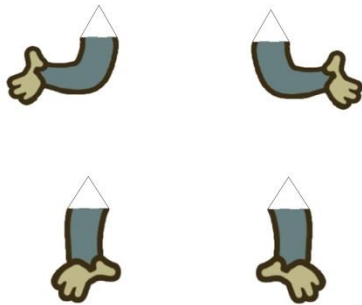
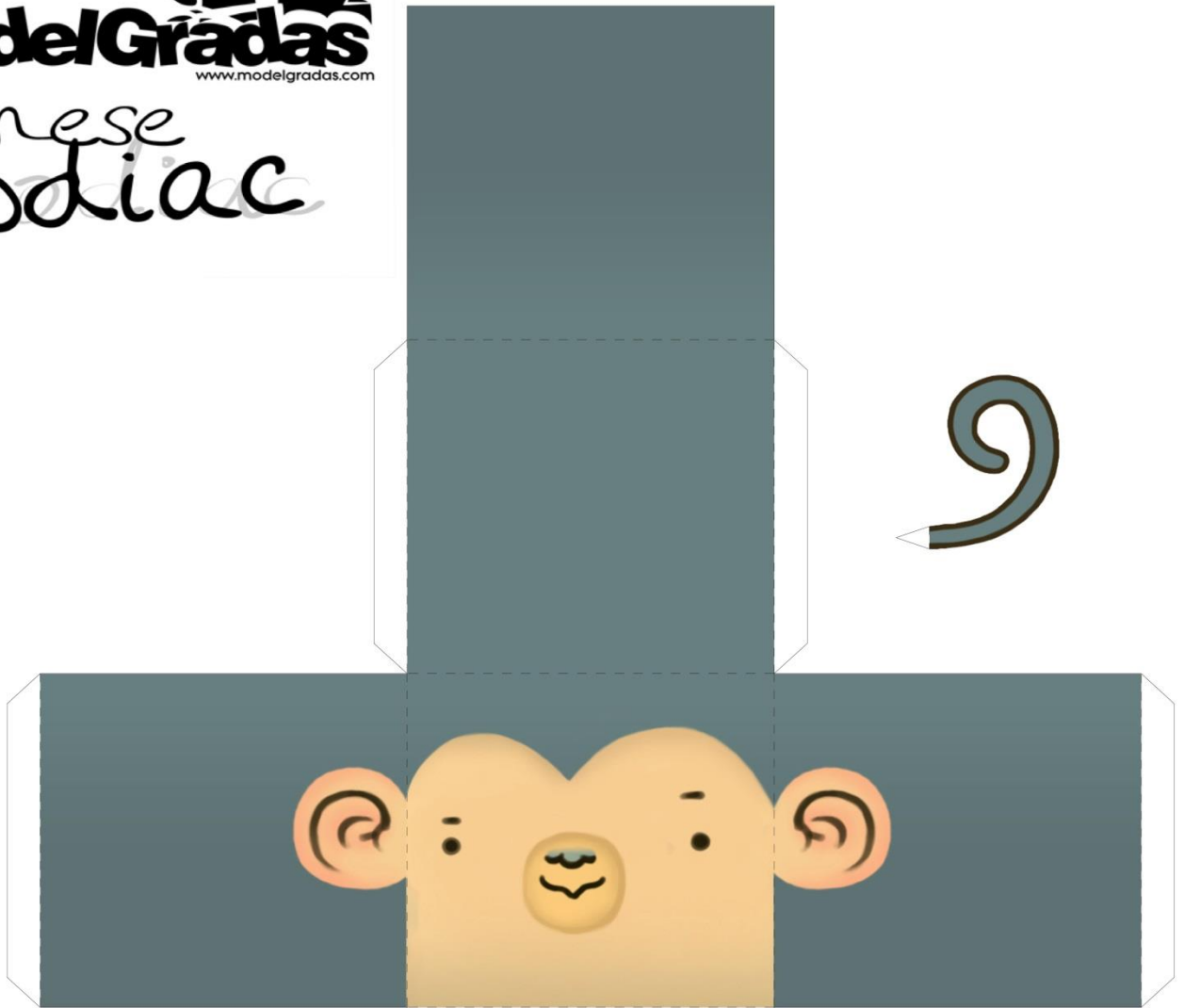
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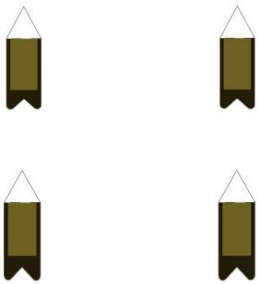
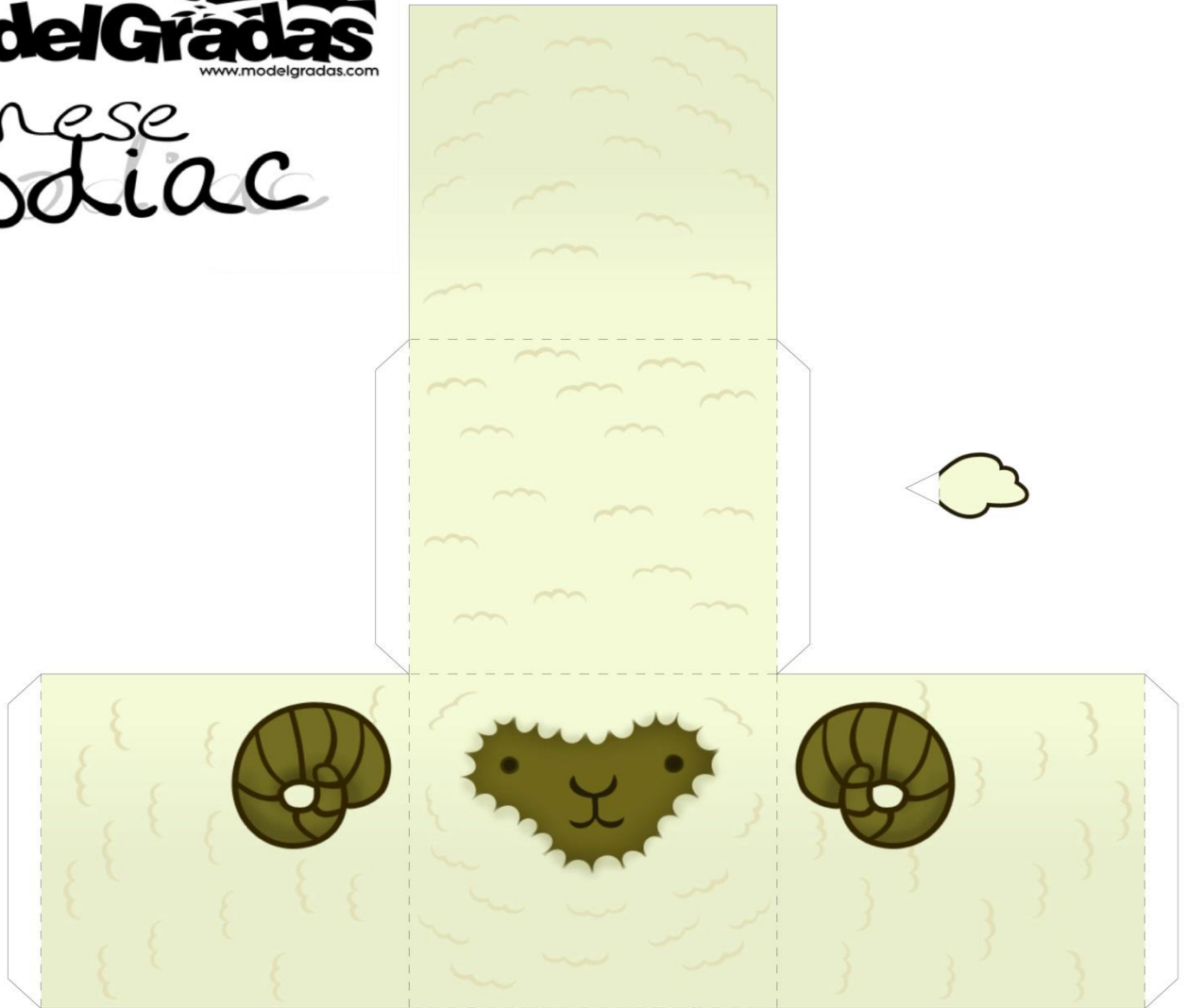
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SHEEP

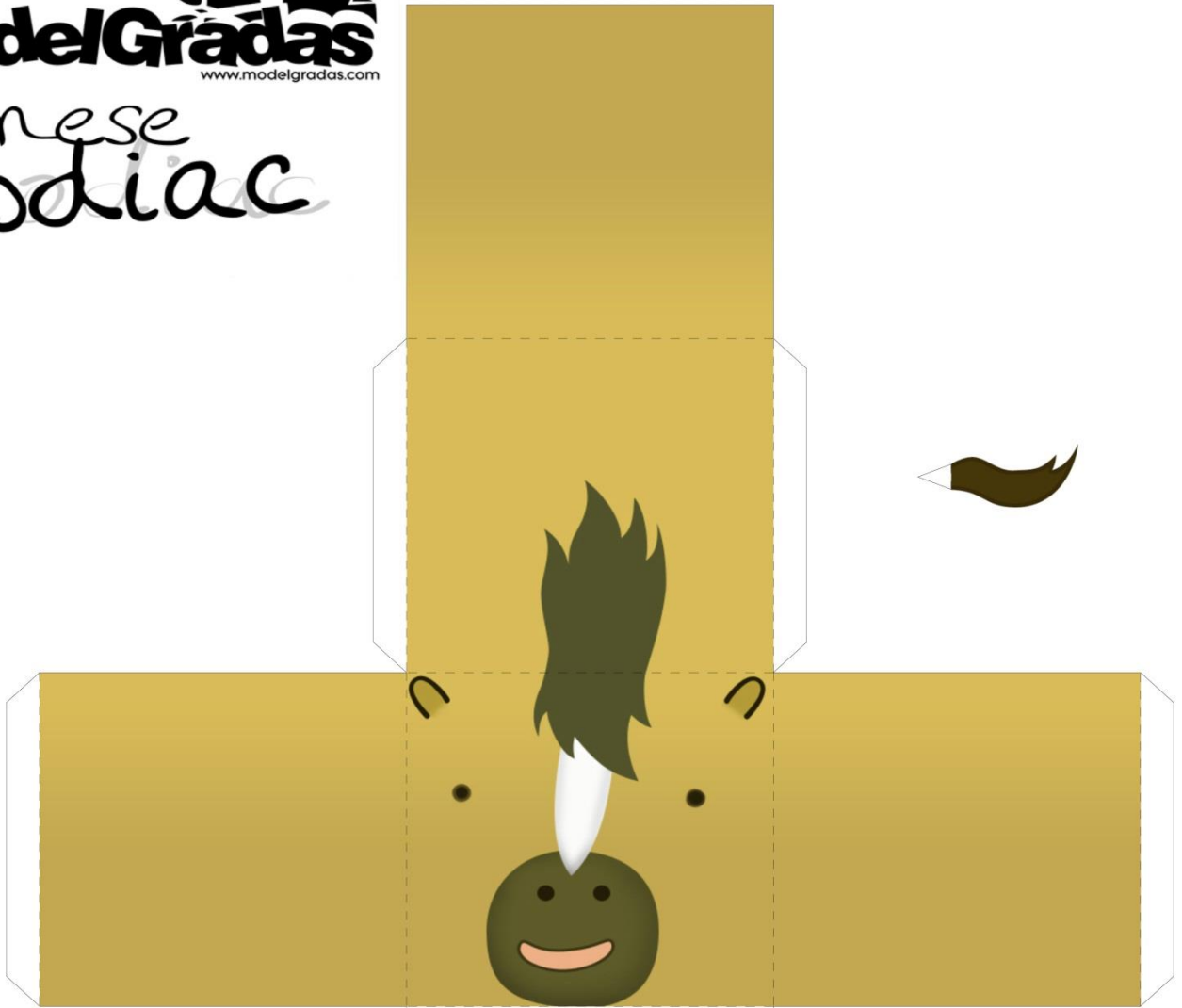
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HORSE

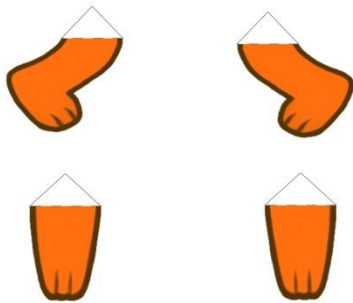
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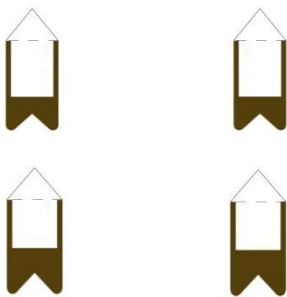
Tiger

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OX

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The Chinese New Year Calendar With Its 12 Animals

The lunar Chinese New Year calendar below shows which of 12 animals you are! Because it's a 12 month lunar calendar, the animal depends on the year in which you were born. Work with your students to figure out which animals they are according to the year they were born, have them gather together according to their signs. Discuss how the students describe their animal on their sheet. Then tell them their characteristics, based on that animal's description on the Chinese calendar. Make sure to discuss any unfamiliar vocabulary/adjectives with the students. Do they agree with the calendar, or their previous description?

Teach them how to write their signs in Chinese using the included pages. Then have them make their own animal, putting their sign, and adjectival description. Inside or on the back before folding. *Note: If they were born in January or February you need to check if their birthday was before or after the date of that Chinese New Year (if it was before this day your animal is the one shown for the previous year).*

Rat	1900	1912	1924	1936	1948	1960	1972	1984	1996	2008
Ox	1901	1913	1925	1937	1949	1961	1973	1985	1997	2009
Tiger	1902	1914	1926	1938	1950	1962	1974	1986	1998	2010
Rabbit	1903	1915	1927	1939	1951	1963	1975	1987	1999	2011
Dragon	1904	1916	1928	1940	1952	1964	1976	1988	2000	2012
Snake	1905	1917	1929	1941	1953	1965	1977	1989	2001	2013
Horse	1906	1918	1930	1942	1954	1966	1978	1990	2002	2014
Sheep	1907	1919	1931	1943	1955	1967	1979	1991	2003	2015
Monkey	1908	1920	1932	1944	1956	1968	1980	1992	2004	2016
Rooster	1909	1921	1933	1945	1957	1969	1981	1993	2005	2017
Dog	1910	1922	1934	1946	1958	1970	1982	1994	2006	2018
Pig	1911	1923	1935	1947	1959	1971	1983	1995	2007	2019

ZODIAC SIGNS

RAT

鼠



CHARACTERISTICS

Rats are ambitious and determined yet honest, sociable, intelligent, charming and thrifty (good with money). Best matched with Dragons and Monkeys. Worst match is Horses.

OX

牛



Oxen are known for their honesty, steadfastness, dependability, diligence, stubbornness and ability to speak well. Best matched with Snake or Rooster. Worst match is Sheep.

TIGER

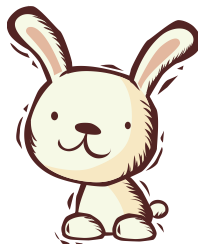
虎



Tigers are enthusiastic, brave, magnetic (attractive), candid (blunt), warm, sensitive, sincere and impetuous (impulsive). Best matched with Horse and Dog. Worst match is Monkey.

RABBIT

兔



Rabbits are the luckiest of all signs. They are also talented, good speakers, shy, quiet yet ambitious. Best matched with Sheep and Pig. Worst match is Rooster.

DRAGON

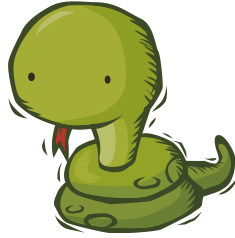
龍



Dragons are strong, imaginative, passionate, complex, sentimental and flamboyant (loud and showy). Best matched with Monkey and Rat. Worst match is Dog.

SNAKE

蛇



Snakes are wise, attractive, smart intuitive, high tempered and like to spend money. Best matched with Rooster and Ox. Worst match is Pig.

HORSE

馬



Horses are attractive, popular, competitive, charismatic, impatient, cheerful and talented. Best matched with Tiger and Dog. Worst match is Rat.

SHEEP

羊



Sheep are affectionate, creative, elegant, timid, trusting, sensitive and determined. Best matched with Pig and Rabbit. Worst match is Ox.

MONKEY

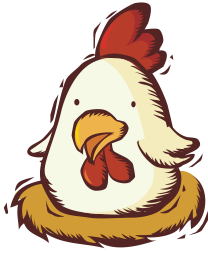
猴



Monkeys are intelligent, humorous, witty, inventive and mischievous. Best matched with Dragon and Rat. Worst match is Tiger.

ROOSTER

雞



Roosters are proud, determined, selfish, enthusiastic, candid and eccentric. Best matched with Snake and Ox. Worst match is Rabbit.

DOG

狗



Dogs are loyal, trustworthy, honest, generous, intelligent, and dependable. Best matched with Horse and Tiger. Worst match is Dragon.

PIG

豬



Pigs are noble, hardworking, caring, honest, gallant and stubborn. Best matched with Rabbit and Sheep. Worst match is Snake.

鼠

Rat

牛

Ox

虎

Tiger

兔

Rabbit

龍

Dragon

蛇

Snake

馬

Horse

羊

Sheep

猴

Monkey

雞

Rooster

狗

Dog

豬

Pig

Glossary of Terms

- **Adjective:** An adjective modifies (describes or says something about) a noun or pronoun.
- **Adverb:** An adverb modifies (describes or says something about) a verb, or an adjective, or another adverb. The adverb is usually formed by adding an -ly ending to an adjective.(soft=softly, quiet=quietly, strong=strongly, etc.)
 - EXAMPLE—modifying a VERB (verb+adverb):
 - sang beautifully
 - drove carefully
 - studied well
 - ran quickly
 - screamed loudly
 - sobbed quietly
 - EXAMPLE—modifying an ADJECTIVE (adverb+adjective+noun):
 - outrageously expensive dress
 - incredibly rich dessert
 - luxuriously appointed sports car
 - really difficult exam
 - EXAMPLE—modifying an ADVERB (verb+adverb+adverb):
 - ran incredibly quickly
 - screamed unbelievably loudly
 - drove very carefully
 - studied really well
- **Subject complement:** the word which completes the meaning of the sentence.
- **Action Verbs:** The active or action verb tells what action the subject does and answers the question, “What did [the subject] do? Remember that 99 percent of the time, an action verb is one which can be demonstrated (run, walk, sing, talk, cry, laugh). Unlike linking verbs, sentences with ACTIVE VERBS will not allow any changing of positions, without ruining or changing the sense of the sentence:
 - Jean hit the ball.
 - The ball hit Jean. (Notice this changes the entire meaning of the sentence.)
 - The class read three books.

A Note on Bad vs. Badly

Students who want to speak English correctly have trouble deciding when to use bad or badly. Before we can discuss this question--there's always a catch--we must talk about the two types of English verbs. Action verbs show any action which one can readily demonstrate or visualize. Linking verbs show a state of existing or being. They are hard to visualize or demonstrate. Linking verbs include all forms of the verb “to be” and “sense” verbs which relate to the five senses. Using correct English, you would say the following:

- His stereo sounds **scratchy** (adjective).
- This milk tastes **rancid** (adjective).

You should not say, “His stereo sounds scratchily” or “This milk tastes rancidly.” because the complement of the linking verb must be either a noun or an adjective, never an adverb; likewise, you cannot say, “I felt badly about hurting his feelings.” Feel is a linking verb and must take an adjective (bad) as its complement. The correct sentence is “I felt bad about hurting his feelings.” Otherwise you are saying your sense of touch has somehow gone wrong.

- Three books read the class.
 - Beth bought a new car.
 - A new car bought Beth
- **Linking verbs**-Linking verbs are verbs that do not show action; instead, they connect the subject of the verb to additional information about the subject. These verbs usually can't be demonstrated. Linking verbs include the following: forms of the verb "to be": am, is, was, were, will be, had been, etc. & verbs of "sense": seem, appear, look, smell, taste, sound, etc. in many cases, the LINKING VERB works like an EQUAL SIGN to show that the subject and the subject complement are equal. The part of speech which completes the meaning of a linking verb will be either a noun or an adjective. When the main verb in a sentence is a linking verb and the complement is a noun, THE SUBJECT AND THE COMPLEMENT ARE EQUAL. Look at this sentence:
 - Susie is head cheerleader.

We can CHANGE THE POSITION of the subject and the complement in this sentence, making the complement the subject and the subject the complement:

 - The head cheerleader is Susie.

In other words, Susie = cheerleader.

 - A HINT: If a student can't decide whether a verb is active or linking, have them try to substitute one of these words--am, is, was, were--in the sentence.
 - Mary APPEARS snobbish.
 - Mary IS snobbish.
 - Mr. Smith LOOKED unhappy yesterday.
 - Mr. Smith WAS unhappy yesterday.
 - The speaker SEEMED nervous before the crowd.
 - The speaker WAS nervous before the crowd.
 - In the sentences above, appears, looked, and seemed are linking verbs, based on this substitution.
- **Regular verbs**- These are verbs that can easily be conjugated- accept- accepted, accepting etc. They follow a pattern. To form the past tense of a regular verb ending with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u), add a d to the word. To form the present/past perfect tense, add a d plus a helping verb (have, had, or has).
 - For example, the verb share ends with the vowel e.
 - share = present tense
 - shared (share + d) = past tense
 - had shared (had + share + d) = past perfect tense (have is the helping verb)

If the regular verb ends with a consonant, add ed for the past tense. Add ed plus a helping verb for the present/past perfect tense.

- For example, the verb pour ends with the consonant r.
 - pour = present tense
 - poured (pour + ed) = past tense
 - have poured (have + pour + ed) = present perfect tense
- **Irregular verbs-** A verb that's past tense is not formed with the past tense of -ed. It doesn't follow the regular forms of conjugation and unlike regular verbs, irregular verbs do not follow a pattern. You must memorize them.
 - For example, the irregular verb see has three principal parts: see, saw, seen.
 - I see the stars= present tense
 - I saw the stars= past tense
 - I have seen the stars= present perfect tense

For a list of irregular verbs and a few tricky regular verbs that students often misuse go to:

http://www.stlcc.edu/Student_Resources/Academic_Resources/Writing_Resources/Grammar_Handouts/verb_list_irregular.pdf

- **Imagery:** Imagery involves one or more of your five senses (hearing, taste, touch, smell, sight). An author uses a word or phrase to stimulate your memory of those senses.
- **Metaphor:** Comparing two things by using one kind of object or using in place of another to suggest the likeness between them. Ex. Her hair was silk.
- **Onomatopoeia:** Naming a thing or an action by imitating the sound associated with it. Ex. buzz, hiss, roar, woof.
- **Hyperbole:** Big exaggeration, usually with humor. Ex. Mile high ice cream cones.
- **Personification:** Giving something human qualities. Ex. The rock screamed in pain when we stepped on it.
- **Simile:** A figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as. Ex. The sun is like a yellow ball of fire in the sky.
- **Alliteration:** The repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables. Ex: The wild and woolly walrus waits and wonders when we'll walk by.
- **Assonance:** The repetition of vowel sounds but not consonants in words (as "red hen") for poetic effect. the use of words that have the same or very similar vowel sounds near one another (as in "summer fun" and "rise high in the bright sky.")
- **Consonance:** Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds, but not vowels, as in assonance. Example: lady lounges lazily, dark deep dread.