

CREATE 30 EXERCISES

**Creative Capital
of Canada**



CREATE 30

This Create 30 program, designed to help people expand their creative skills, was developed by the membership of the Creative Capital of Canada. CCOC is a grassroots movement of community and business leaders seeking to help shape the identity of the Waterloo Region by celebrating our successes, and extending our lineage of creative problem solving to the next generation.

As a teacher, parent, or Waterloo resident, you play a critical role in instilling creative skills in tomorrow's

generation. With this program, we hope we can help. Create30 consists of a series of mental and experiential exercises that you can lead yourself or others through.

Creativity is about how you think. It's about being curious when you look at a problem, and letting your mind imagine that there could be solutions. It's also about playing with ideas and sharing them with others who might be able to help bring them to life.

* **Observing:** Creative people are really good at looking at the world around them, and noticing interesting, everyday things that most of us forget to see...like shadows or the different shapes of trees.

* **Changing Perspectives:** Creative people not only observe life all the time, but they also try to change the way they see things to help place emphasis on different objects. Maybe they imagine what things would look like if they were short like a dog. Or maybe they try to imagine what a telephone pole would say if it could talk and had feelings. It might be concerned about that short dog coming up the street.

* **Super Play:** Creative people will grab things and start mixing and matching just to see what happens. They may not even have any idea what they are trying to create, but they enjoy the results of adding, subtracting, or turning things upside down. Super Play is all about open experimentation. It's like starting a story with a sentence and then turning to a friend and asking them "And then what?" in hopes that they can continue the story; then doing that over and over until they can hardly believe the story they've written. It can be fun to let go of all agendas and just wait to see what happens.



Fearlessly Failing. That's right - failing is what creative people do. Their willingness to fail might be their most important activity.

Pick any job, skill, or subject...physics, basketball, or even stand-up comedy. What is the most common factor at becoming the best at it? Talent? A good education? Well, these things can be useful, but they don't always make a difference. The most common factor is really quite simple - people who are the best at something didn't quit when they failed.

Let's look at comedy. Some people dream of becoming a famous comedian. They all start out in clubs performing for crowds, likely with jokes that aren't funny - even suffering entire shows with few laughs. No one is great right away.

For some, a "bad night," or "bomb", leads to instantly quitting. They didn't like the feeling of failure and they're scared to try again. Others keep going and learn from their bombs, and this trial and error happens over and over.

Regardless of talent, many people quit because they fear failing. Eventually, only a handful of people are left trying. They keep attempting new things, learning, failing again and learning again. This is called "FEARLESS FAILING", and those who practice it end up being the "best" partially because a lot of the competition simply quits when they bomb.

Some of your experiments or creative exercises are going to fail. There is probably a 100% chance of that. But does that mean you failed? No; not if *you* keep going, learn from your mistakes, and try again.

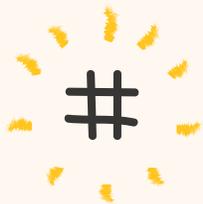
Fearless Failing is a critical step to success for two reasons:

- It teaches valuable lessons to some and;
- It causes the others to quit - creating less competition for those who practice Fearless Failing

So try. Fail. This isn't a school math test. This is about being creative and doing something no one else has done before. FAILURE IS GOOD. That should be on a t-shirt.

These exercises are simple, fun, impactful, and only take 30 minutes.

30 minutes of creativity can help us train our brains to do the things creative people do all the time: observe, shift perspectives, play with opposite combinations, and disregard worry about perfection - that's right, perfection-striving can often be the biggest killer of creativity.



Looking for some quick starter exercises for all ages? Find the ones that have a spark around them. This indicates exercises that are approachable for all ages and easy to accomplish with items you already have on hand.

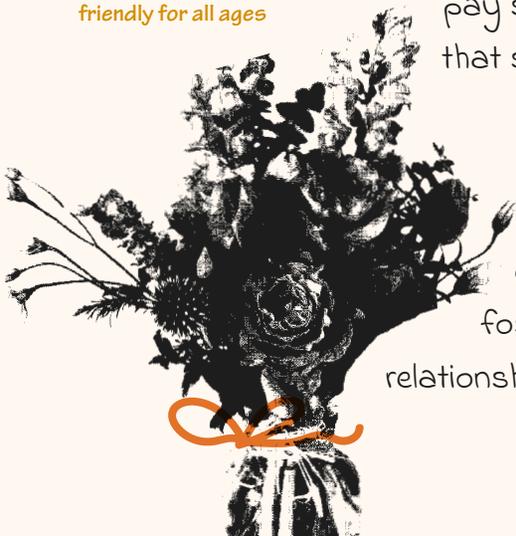
We've got lots of ideas to help spark your creative problem-solving skills. These activities can be done individually or in group settings. Enjoy creating!

1. TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF JUST SHADOWS (younger kids can just observe shadows). We are used to looking at the world in a certain way, but what if it wasn't clear what we were looking at? Make note of the way in which a shadow can distort the object to which it is attached.



3.

friendly for all ages



PICK A BOUQUET. Walk through your neighbourhood (or a field) and pay special attention to the nature that surrounds you. Look for leaves and/or pretty wildflowers and bring them together in a nice bouquet. Bringing different elements together helps with fostering new "object" relationships.

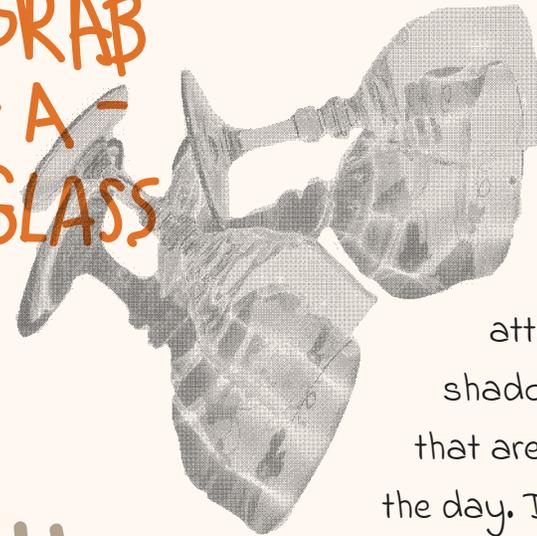
2.

friendly for all ages



START A COLLECTION. This can be anything from rocks to stamps to documenting the snails and bugs you find. First, sit down and build a "collection kit" (ie. stamp book, field book, magnifying glass). Then, start building and documenting your collection. Note: the items should be ones that you can find for free.

GRAB
- A -
GLASS



4.

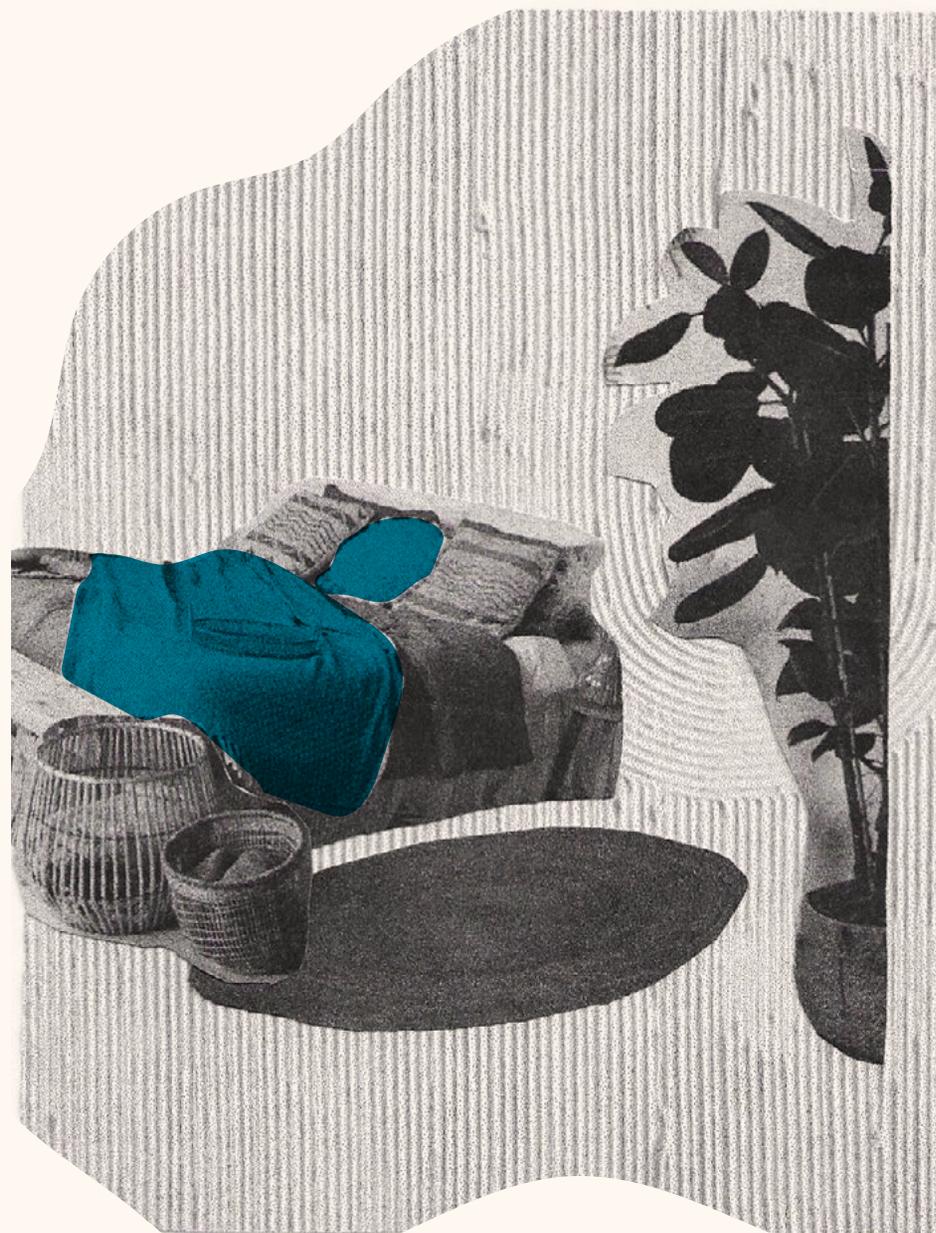
LIGHT VS. DARK. Hang some glass objects in the window. Pay attention to the shadows and shapes that are cast throughout the day. Document the ways that they move and change.



5.

friendly for all ages

DRAW OR WRITE A DESCRIPTION OF YOUR BEDROOM FROM MEMORY. Try to include as many details as possible. Later, compare your drawing/description to real life. What details (if any) did you forget? Think about why you may have forgotten them.



6. FIND A GARDEN OR MAKE A GARDEN. Plant your favourite vegetable/herb seeds and bring those seeds to life. Document the process. What do you see? What do you smell? What did you find to be the hardest part of growing your own garden?



7. COMMUNITY

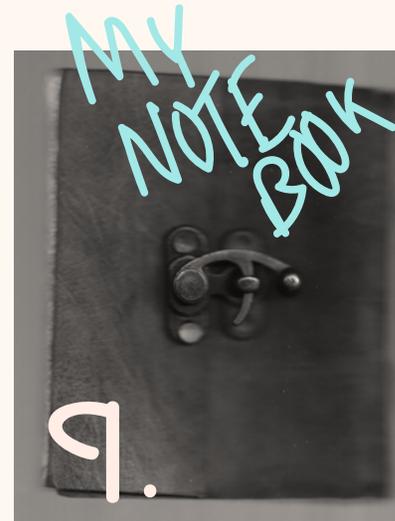
GO OUT INTO YOUR COMMUNITY and visit a local store or restaurant you've never been to before. Think about what they do from the minute they open to the minute they close. For high school students and above - visit and interview the owner, or the chef of the business, and ask them what their daily tasks include.



8.

friendly for all ages

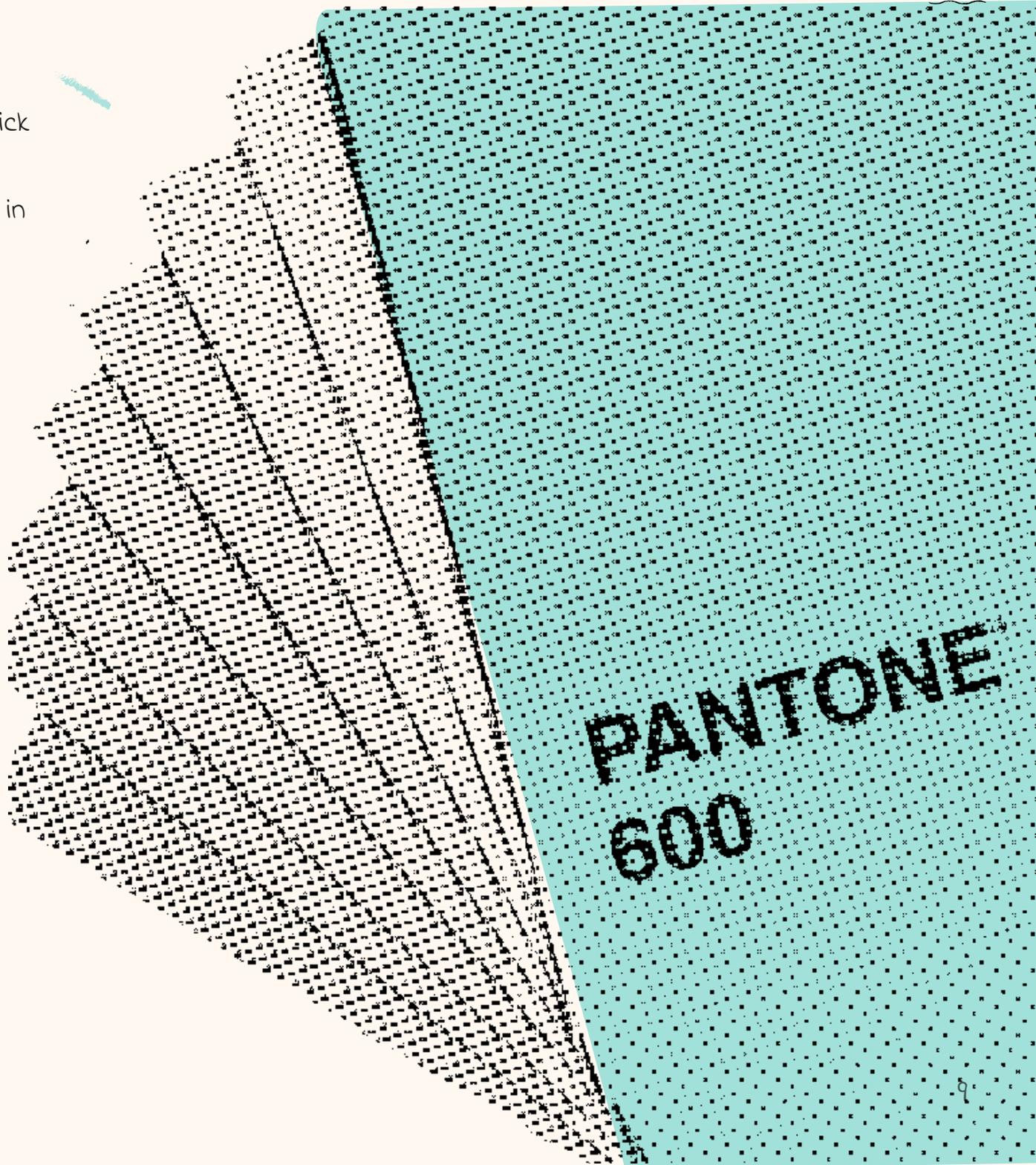
WHAT KIND OF ANIMALS DO YOU SEE IN THE CLOUDS? There's nothing better than an afternoon in the park. While you're there, find a nice grassy spot to sit on and look up at the sky. Take turns trying to spot different animals. Be creative! Don't be afraid to make them up.



CARRY AROUND A NOTEBOOK (even better if it's homemade). This is an exercise in long-term observation. Bring your notebook everywhere, and record anything that looks interesting or snippets of conversation that you overhear. This can be a great place to collect ticket stubs, dried flowers, or anything you find that you want to keep.

10.

A WORLD OF COLOUR. Pick a row of paint chips and try to find those colours in nature. Document them.





FIND IT. Pick a random object, and record the number of times and places you see it throughout the day.

BOOM - BANG!

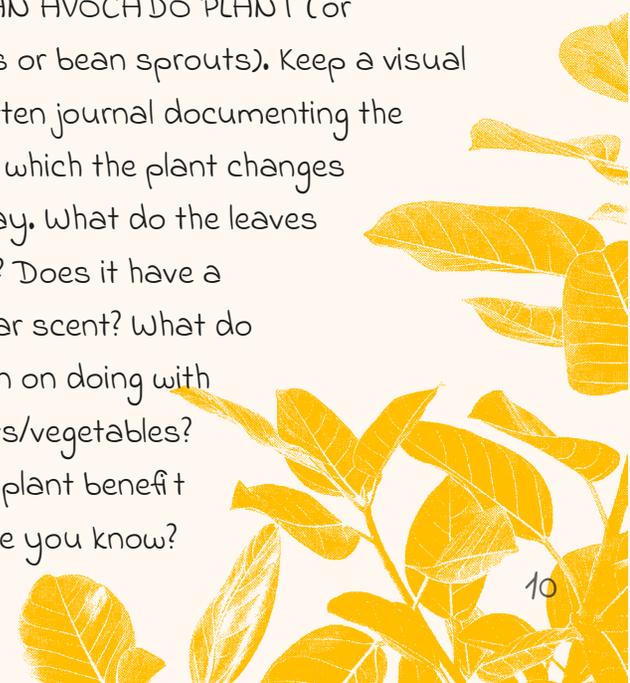
13. **START A SOUND DIARY.** Throughout the day, record the different sounds you hear and note where they come from. Do you hear similar sounds throughout the day? Do they remind you of anything else?

UNEXPECTED ART. Take a walk in your neighbourhood. Do you see any art that wasn't intentional? Maybe someone spilled red paint all over the road or someone tagged a building in an interesting way? Take pictures or write down what you see.



GROW AN AVOCADO PLANT (or radishes or bean sprouts). Keep a visual and written journal documenting the ways in which the plant changes every day. What do the leaves look like? Does it have a particular scent? What do you plan on doing with the fruits/vegetables? Can the plant benefit someone you know?

14.



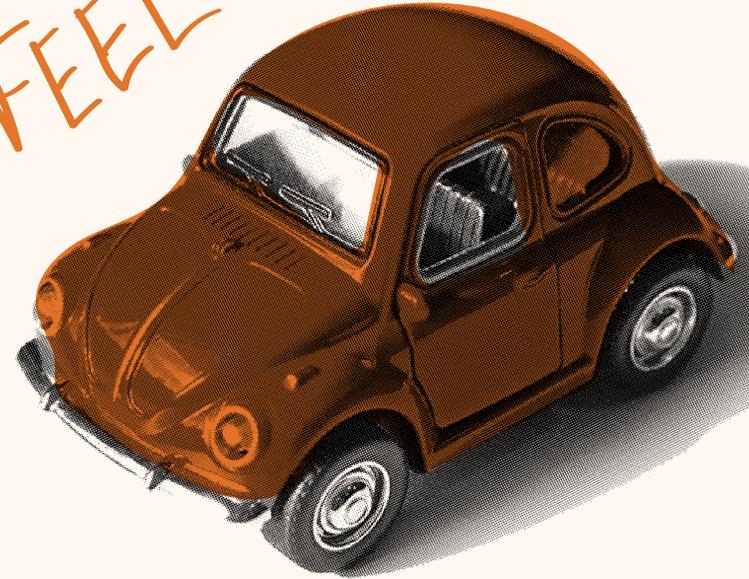


FOUND PATTERNS. Patterns surround us. Using thin tracing paper, make rubbings of as many textures as you can. These can be of things you find outdoors or inside. Observe the differences and similarities of the patterns, put them in a book, and save them for future projects.

16.

friendly for all ages

FINDING FACES. How many naturally occurring faces can you find in different objects? Think plumbing parts, electrical fixtures, and even in nature.

TOUCH
FEEL

17.

friendly for all ages

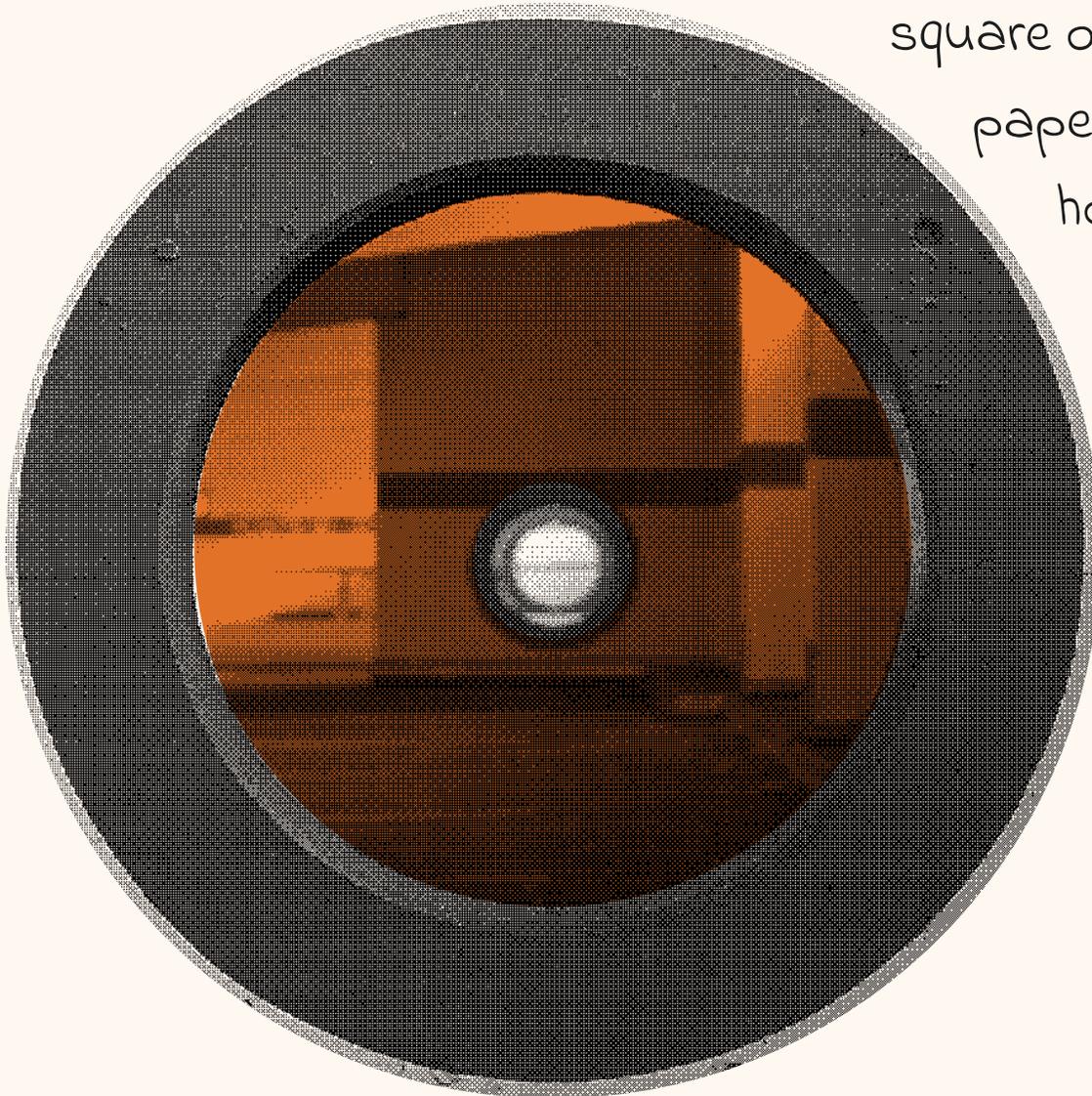
EXPLORE YOUR SENSE OF TOUCH. Have a friend place small objects in a bag. Try to describe them using only your sense of touch.

18. SIDE
WALK

STEP ON THE CRACKS. Walk down the sidewalk, stepping only on the cracks. Notice how far away they are from each other and the sensation of adapting your movement to accomplish this task.



14.



A PIECE OF THE PIE. Cut a small square out of a piece of paper. Look through the hole, and draw the partial images you see. Trade drawings with your friends and try to figure out what each other's images really are.

20.

DISCOVER THE LOST AND FOUND. Choose an item from a Lost and Found. Next, come up with a two-page story about the item in which the item has human characteristics and answers the following questions: How did the item become lost? Does anyone miss it? How does the item feel living in the Lost and Found bin? How do we resolve the story?



22.

SOME ONE

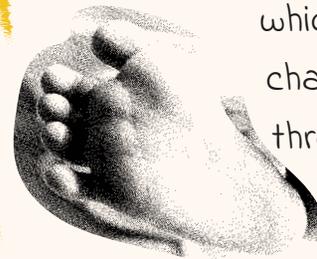
STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION with someone. Find out where they came from, and ask them about some of the unique customs they have at home. Tell them about your background and customs. Compare the similarities and differences.



BODY

21.

CREATE A CHARACTER from a part of your body (such as your big toe). How does it feel and act? Create a two-page story about the body part in which it has human characteristics and lives through a situation.



23.

FIND A RANDOM OBJECT in your house, and imagine it has magical properties. Write about all of the things it can do, and how magic changes the object's function.



24.

LOOK AT THE LARGEST BUILDING NEAR YOU, and try to imagine all the different people that are in that building. Make a list of the different types of people, describing them in detail.



25.

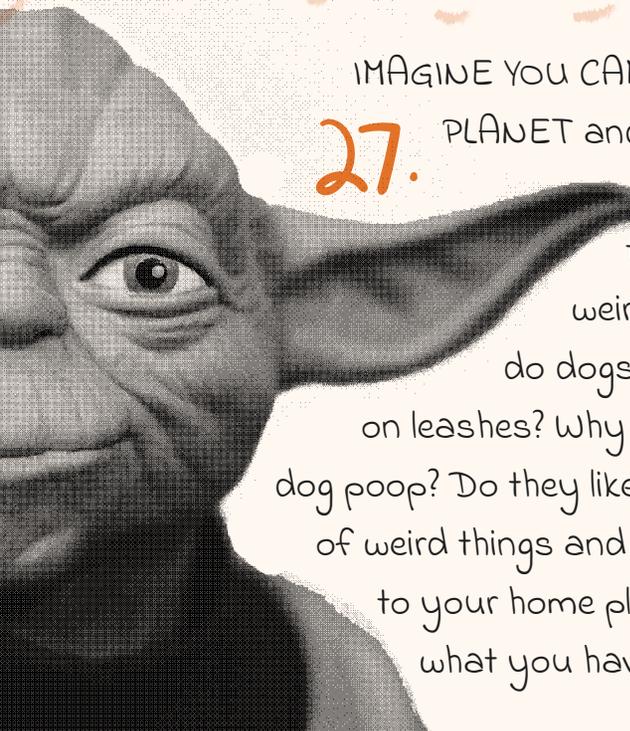
DRAW A PIECE OF FURNITURE THAT IS MISSING IN THIS WORLD.

friendly for all ages



IMAGINE YOU CAME FROM ANOTHER

27. PLANET and didn't know anything. What things would seem weird to you? (ie. Why do dogs pull people around on leashes? Why do people pick up dog poop? Do they like it?) Collect your list of weird things and write a letter back to your home planet telling them what you have learned.



26.

DIG THROUGH YOUR RECYCLING and find something that can be reused for the better. If applicable, how could the item then become a product?

EVERY THING HAS A VOICE

MAKE THE INANIMATE REAL. Pretend that inanimate objects can talk. What would they say to you? What kind of advice would they give?



28.

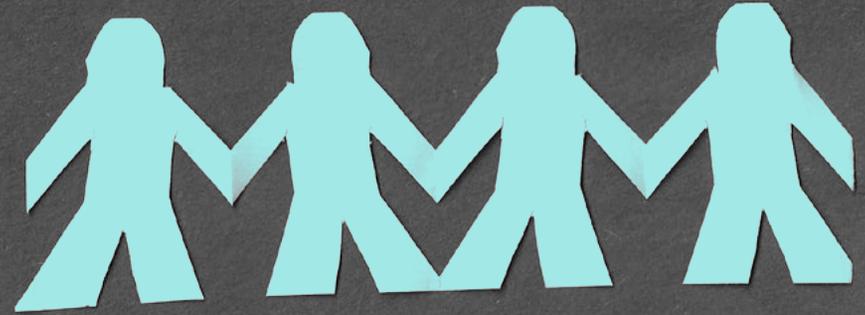


29. PICK A PERSON THAT YOU ADMIRE and pretend to be them for a day. If you could be anyone in the world, who would it be? What qualities do they possess that you admire? Make a list of these traits, and make suggestions for how you might adopt some of them.

30.

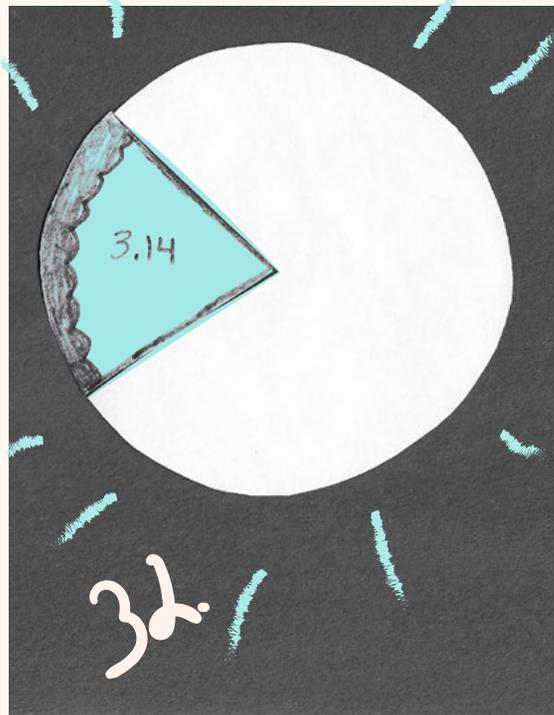


IMAGINE THAT TIME TRAVEL IS REAL. Where would you go and what would you do there? How could you apply those possibilities to your life as it is now?



LEARN A WORD OR A SENTENCE IN A NEW LANGUAGE. Not only will you be working on your memory and listening skills, but, by immersing yourself in a different language, you'll also have the opportunity to understand and promote multiculturalism.

31.



CREATE A SURVEY. Ask 10 people 5 questions, and then create a graph (any kind) to document the answers. What are some of the similarities and differences? Why do you think each person said what they did?

32.



TRY A NEW TYPE OF FOOD. Broaden your palate! Don't get stuck eating only the things you already know. Explore foods from different cultures, and learn why people eat them. This exercise will help you to gain a better understanding of other traditions, and what better or more fun way to do that than with food?

34.

PART
ONE

GO ON A DIG. Choose 5 items and write down the memories associated with each one. Use all of your senses. How did you feel at the time of the memory? Were there any particular smells? What else did you see?

PART
TWO

GO ON A DIG PART 2. Take those same 5 items and write a short story featuring each one. Make sure you include some tactile details.

POST CARD

35.

CREATE A POSTCARD for a place that doesn't exist. Then, write a message imagining you are vacationing in that place.



37.

FILL A PAGE WITH THE FIRST 50 WORDS THAT COME TO YOUR MIND. After the 50 words, tell the group that they must write a short story using those 50 words.

COOL
FUNK!
BUNCH
WILD!

36.

friendly for all ages

Dive into the recycling. Collect 5 things from the recycling bin, rip up the pieces, and create a collage.



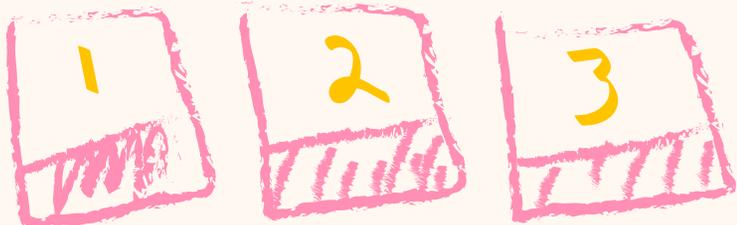
39.

SPONTANEOUS COLLECTION. Pick up the first thing you see on your morning walk (ie. a blade of grass, a stone, a leaf). Continue to pick up items and draw parallels between them. Are they the same colour, texture, size? You decide the variables.



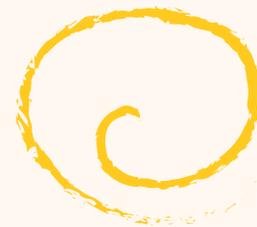
41.

RENAME COLOURS. Pick out 10 paint chips and rename the colours according to emotions. Get creative!



40.

PARALLELS BETWEEN SOUND AND COLOUR. Close your eyes, and write down all of the sounds you hear in a 15-minute time frame. Now, give each sound a colour, and describe why you picked it. Don't worry; there are no right or wrong answers.



42.

IS A STAIN JUST A STAIN? Outline stains that you find (on clothing or kitchen countertops) on a piece of paper. Move them around, squint at them, colour them in. What do the stains remind you of? Could they be part of a bigger picture? What would that picture be?

STAIN

DISCOVER

43.

Discover a city. Pick a random city anywhere in the world and learn everything you can about it. What is its population? What are the citizens' customs? What is the city's history? Share your information with friends and compare the similarities and differences.

44.

COLLECT OPPOSITES and find ways to arrange them into similarities. Think of this exercise like putting together a puzzle that doesn't quite make obvious sense. You will boost your problem-solving skills and increase your capacity for creative thinking.

45.



BUILD THINGS WITH CARDBOARD BOXES using nothing other than what is in the current room you are in.

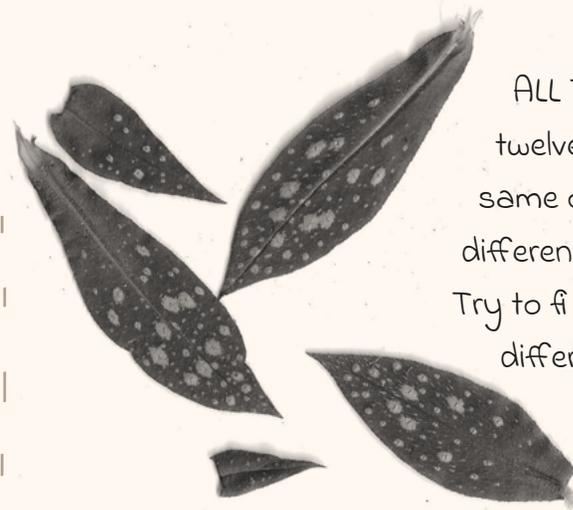
46.

friendly for all ages

BUILD A FORT using only the things in your room. Work together to build a fort you can all hide in. Plan it out, create your design, and then take turns being the "engineer".

47.

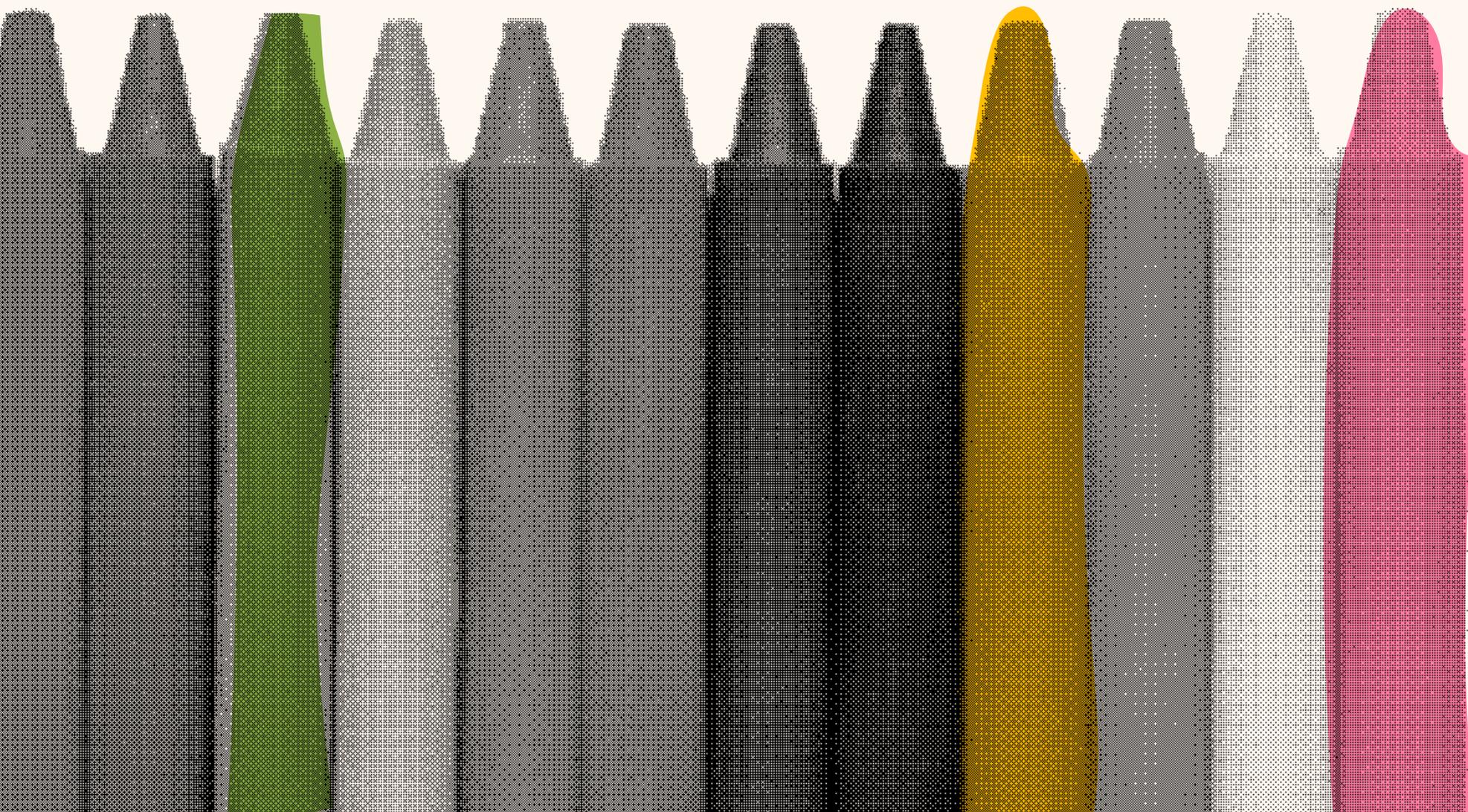
ALL THE SAME? Collect twelve versions of the same object and note their differences and similarities. Try to find at least 10 differences.



48.

WHAT SOUND?

WHAT IMAGES DO SOUNDS MAKE? With a crayon and a piece of paper in hand, close your eyes and try to draw the sounds you can hear. What do they represent to you? Write your thoughts down.



44.

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COLOUR AND SOUND. Red can be an angry colour, but it can also be the colour of love. The question here is: what does the colour red sound like? Pick 5 colours, and give each one a sound.

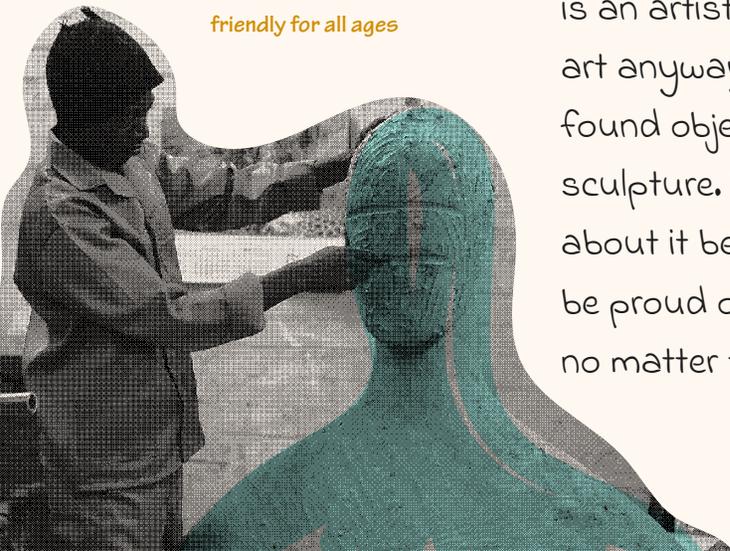


LOVE

50.

friendly for all ages

FOUND ART. Everyone is an artist, but what is art anyway? Using only found objects, create a sculpture. Don't worry about it being perfect; be proud of your work, no matter the outcome.



RE-USE

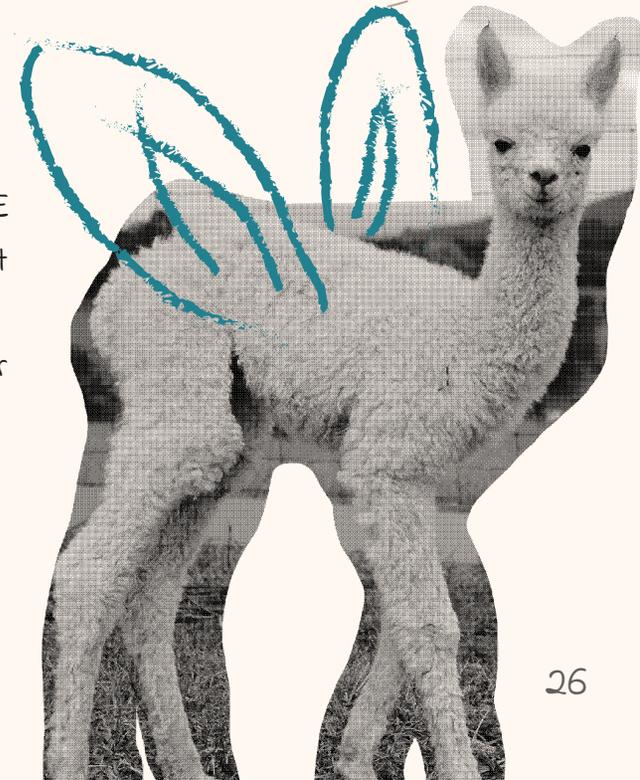
51.

REPURPOSE OBJECTS. Take 5 objects you use every day, and come up with other uses you might have for them.



52.

WHAT IF? WHAT IF THE SKY WAS GREEN? What if dogs could fly? What if people walked on their hands? Make up fifteen "what if" questions and try to answer them.



53.

(PATTERN)

REPURPOSE OBJECTS. Take 5 objects you use every day, and come up with other uses you might have for them.

a. **PATTERNS FROM OBJECTS.** You'll need paint or an ink pad. Using different objects, like twine, flowers, rocks, or forks, create as many different patterns as you can.



OPPOSITES ATTRACT.

Find opposite objects, such as light vs. dark or natural vs. man-made, and find a way to bring them together. Is there more than one way to do this? Document your experience.



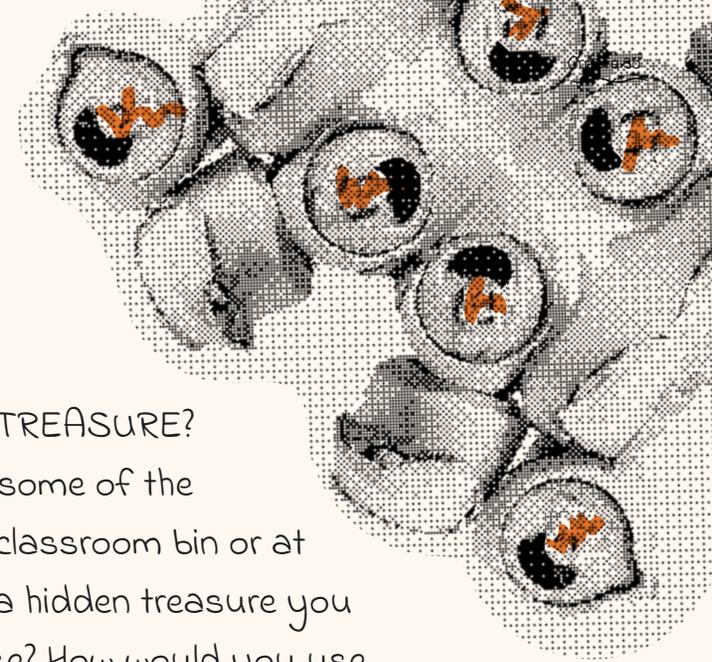
54.

55.

friendly for all ages

GARBAGE OR TREASURE?

Take a look at some of the garbage in the classroom bin or at home. Is there a hidden treasure you could repurpose? How would you use it differently?



EVERY OTHER WORD. Take a newspaper or book, and write down every second word for a few

pages. Now, write a poem or piece of prose using those words.

57.

OPPOSITE WORDS. Think of 1 word and write down something completely different. Do this 9 times. Read the poem you've created aloud.

BLANK PAINT

56.

friendly for all ages



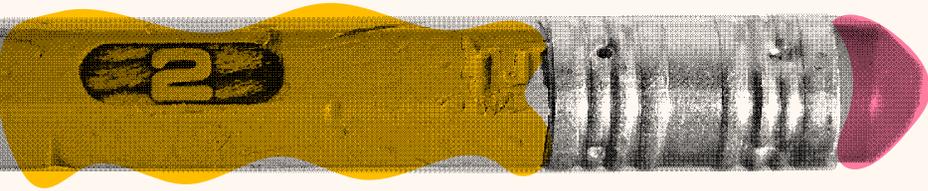


5).

DIG DEEP. Think about all the things that interest you. Pick one topic that you want to know more about, and take your knowledge to the next level. Treat this subject like a mystery that needs to be solved, and go all in. Reach out to experts, dive into the internet, and take out every relevant book from the library.

59.

COLLECT ALL OF THE ITEMS AND GENERAL RULES that are used to erase or cover up mistakes (Hints: liquid paper tape, delete button on your keyboard, erasers). For one day, do not use these "cover-ups". Try writing without erasing or crossing anything out. Read your work aloud. Is there evidence for how mistakes might have led to improvement?



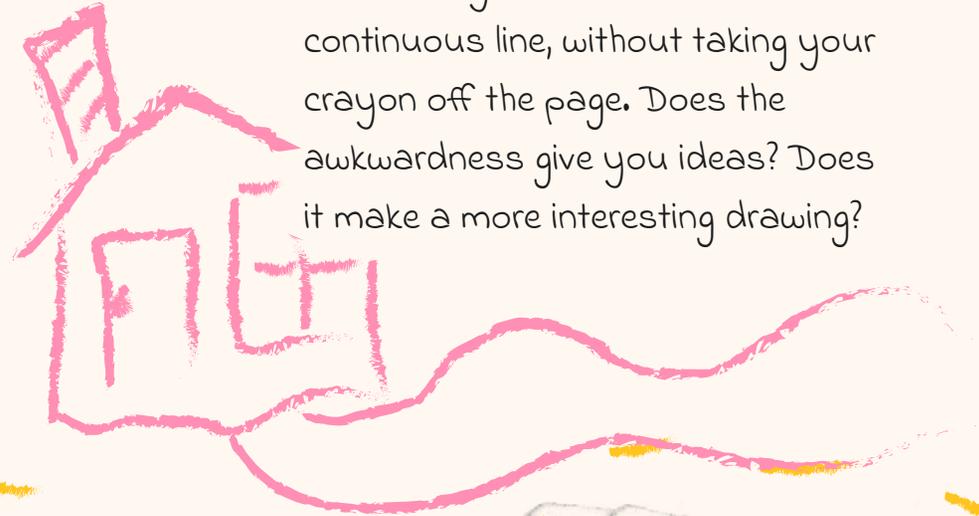
61.

AS A CLASS, LEARN TO CELEBRATE MISTAKES. When one happens, ring a bell: everyone offers a round of applause for the attempt, and works collaboratively to articulate what can be learned.

CELEBRATE

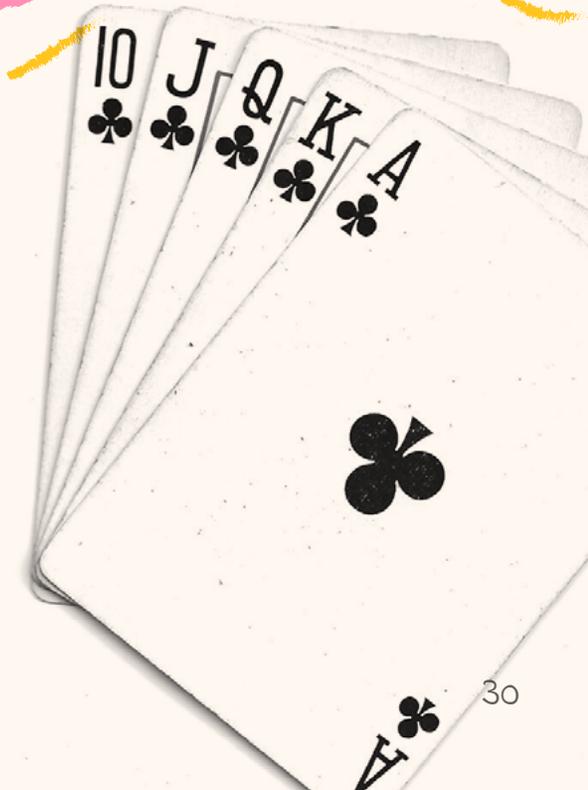
66.

DRAW YOUR DREAM HOME using crayons. This might sound easy... but not if you do it in one continuous line, without taking your crayon off the page. Does the awkwardness give you ideas? Does it make a more interesting drawing?



62.

PLAY A CARD GAME and try to lose. It's natural to try to win when we play a game, but how much fun is it when you aren't aiming to be the best? What can we learn from trying to lose?



63.

TAKE THE SPAGHETTI AND MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE. In a small group of 3-4 people, take 45 minutes to try to build the tallest free-standing structure possible with only the following materials: 20 pieces of spaghetti, 1 marshmallow, 1 yard of string, 1 yard of tape. After the challenge, assess: what didn't work? What did the mistakes teach you?

64.
- FAILED
- FAILED
- FAILED

CREATE A SHORT LIST OF SOME THINGS YOU HAVE "FAILED" AT. This can be as simple as spilling a plate of food or losing a game or not finishing a homework assignment. Now write down why each failure happened, and add some things that you learned from the experiences.

65.

WRITE A STORY about the biggest lesson you've learned from a mistake. Include a paragraph about the reasons you are grateful for having made the mistake. Read your story to the class or to a friend. Keep it in a special place, and re-read it often.

66.

friendly for all ages

CREATE A POSTER THAT SAYS:
Just because my idea failed does not mean that I am a failure. It means that I am one step closer to a success.

