



Early Learning Classroom Package

Heritage Michif





Michif Language Development Labels

How to Use the Labels

1. Label Placement:

- For larger items, place the label directly on or near the object to create a visual connection between the item and its Michif name. For example, attach the label “chair” to a chair in the classroom.
- For smaller or abstract items, use the image-based labels to reinforce recognition. These can be placed on posters, in learning centers, or on flashcards.

2. Interactive Language Practice:

- Educators and caregivers can reference the labels during daily routines, introducing the Michif term naturally. For instance, while setting up for snack time, point to the labeled “plate” and say the word in Michif.
- Begin with just a few key labels in your space, and slowly add more as children become familiar and confident with the Michif words.
- Use online recordings and Michif dictionaries to support accurate pronunciation and model the words confidently for children.

3. Language Games:

- Use the labels for matching games where children pair objects with their Michif labels or images.
- Create a scavenger hunt where children find items with their matching labels around the classroom.

4. Routine Integration:

- Incorporate the labels into daily songs, stories, or discussions to foster familiarity and repetition.
- Encourage children to repeat the Michif words and use them in sentences during play and structured activities.



About Michif Language

Métis people have been multilingual since the birth of the Métis Nation, speaking the languages of their neighbours and trading partners in addition to their own. This multilingualism allowed the Métis to prosper during the fur trade era, and language remains an important part of Métis identity in contemporary times. You may have heard of Michif, a language spoken among some Métis throughout the homeland; in fact, “Michif” has come to refer to any of three unique languages that formed alongside Métis culture: Heritage Michif, Northern Michif, and Michif French.

Heritage (Southern) Michif: Heritage Michif, also known as Southern Michif, or Michif, is spoken mainly from western Manitoba all the way to central Alberta, in addition to Northern North Dakota and Montana. It originated among the bison-hunting Métis who lived on the plains. Today in Saskatchewan, it is spoken especially in the Yorkton, Cypress Hills, Qu’Appelle Valley, Regina, and Round Prairie/Saskatoon areas.

Linguistically, it is considered to be one of the most unique languages in the world – described somewhat simplistically – as a blend of French nouns and Cree verbs. The French element of Heritage Michif mostly comes from Michif French, with the majority of the Algonquian element coming from the Plains Cree (Y dialect) and a small Western Ojibwe (Saulteaux) influence. That said, Heritage Michif has solidified into its own language: it contains elements from its source languages, but also has characteristics that are unique to it alone. A good example of this is the way in which some French elements are “sandwiched” in Cree grammar, like the French noun *le vieux* (‘old man’) becoming a verb in phrases like *ni maachi li vyeu-iwin* (‘I am getting old’). It is important to note that for the majority of its existence Heritage Michif has been an oral language passed down through oral transmission. Today, there is no universal standardized spelling system in Heritage Michif. Spelling systems can vary from speaker to speaker, or province to province. At MN-S we have adopted the double vowel spelling system used by mother tongue speaker Norman Fleury and linguist Peter Bakker. Other examples of spelling systems exist, with different variations of the double vowel system being used, as well as a phonetic spelling system used by some speakers.

Northern Michif: Northern Michif is primarily spoken throughout North-Western Saskatchewan and parts of Northern Alberta. Notable communities in Saskatchewan include Green Lake, Meadow Lake, Beauval, Île-à-la-Crosse, and Buffalo Narrows. Many consider it a dialect of Cree, but with a noticeable French influence. Northern Michif is a historic language that holds stories and cultural teachings. It is likely that as Métis began moving north in greater numbers, they began to speak Cree to easily communicate with their First Nations kin and neighbours. Speakers say that the French vocabulary in Northern Michif was introduced by the clergy and school system, rather than coming from Michif French, and the Cree (Plains Cree Y-Dialect), came from First Nations neighbours. As missionaries and voyageurs followed the river systems from Red River to Northern Saskatchewan, Cree was the language they heard. It is through this connection to the land that Northern Michif gives identity to those who speak it, a connection to where they come from. In terms of a writing system, Northern Michif follows the Standard Roman Orthography (SRO). SRO is a system for writing the Cree language that uses a modified form of the Latin alphabet. It provides a consistent way to represent Cree sounds, assigning one letter to each distinct sound or phoneme.



Michif French: Michif French, sometimes referred to as French Michif and Michif, is known to be spoken in regions such as St. Laurent, St. Eustache and Saint Ambroise in Manitoba, St. Louis, Batoche, St. Laurent, Duck Lake areas in Saskatchewan, and the Lac la Biche, St. Paul, St. Albert and Bonnyville areas in Alberta, with slight variations in the language within regions. It is said to have been the language primarily spoken in the Red River area in the 1870s. Linguists often refer to Michif French as a dialect of French; however, traditional speakers of the language refer to it as Michif, the language of their Red River Métis families. It is said to have been influenced by the phonological and syntactic features of Algonquian languages, as noted in examples such as the word 'window' in French, which is 'fenêtre' but is shaasii or vett in Michif French, and the term 'skunk' in French is 'moufette' but is shiikawkw in Michif French.

For more information on the Michif languages, please visit: [Three distinct languages | Metis Gathering](#)

*If your classroom or center is interested in using this resource in a different Michif language, please contact metisgathering@mns.ca

Special Thanks

This important cultural resource was created in cooperation with several Michif language speakers in Saskatchewan. Métis Nation–Saskatchewan would like to give thanks to these contributors. We are grateful to have their expertise during the creation process.

A special thank you goes out to the people listed below:

Heritage Michif Contributors:

Dr. Elder Norman Fleury
Koohkum Rita Ducharme

Northern Michif Contributors:

Vince Ahenakew
Sandra Laliberte
Leda Corrigan
Laura Burnouf
Maureen Belanger

Michif French Contributors:

Mataant Ang
Pawpaw Sonny
Maymair Phyllis

Use these apps for pronunciation:



Discover learning,
language, & culture
resources!

metisgathering.ca



Classroom Labels





la taab



the table



enn shayzh



a chair



laarlozh



clock



lii zarmwayr

the cabinets



li sink

the sink

The background is a solid pink color. On the left and right sides, there are faint, stylized floral or leaf-like patterns in a slightly darker shade of pink. The main text is centered and reads "la kornish" in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font.

la kornish

the shelf



li fridge

the fridge



lil lumyayr



the lights



aen pwel

a stove



li plaanshii



the floor



li meur

the wall





la twaaleet



the bathroom



**la kaan poor
kaa waypinikayhk**



the garbage can



li shaasii



the window



la port

the door



libalay

the broom



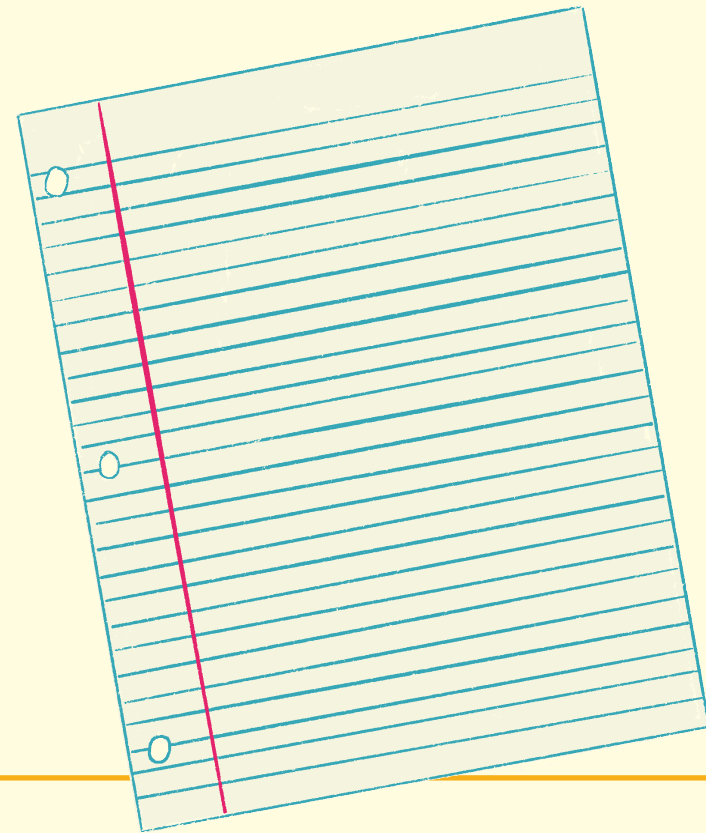
lilisavoon

the soap



li paapyii

the paper



libus

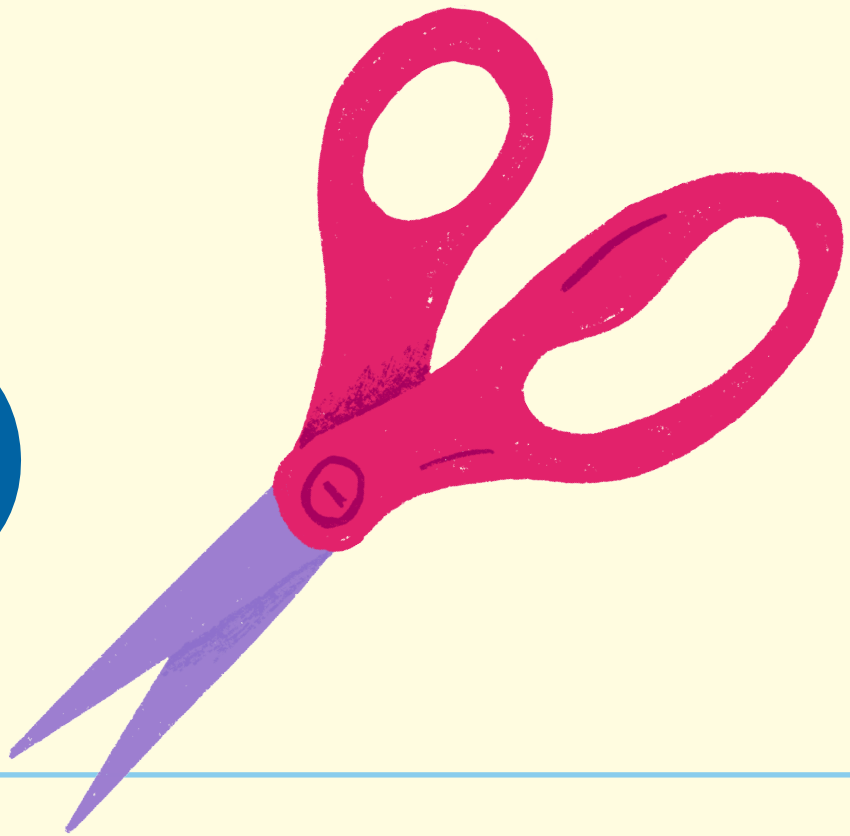
the bus _____

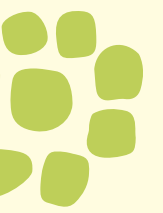




lilii siizoo

the scissors

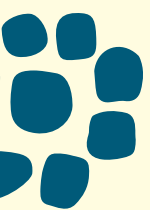




la kol

the glue





kaashiiipayikun

eraser





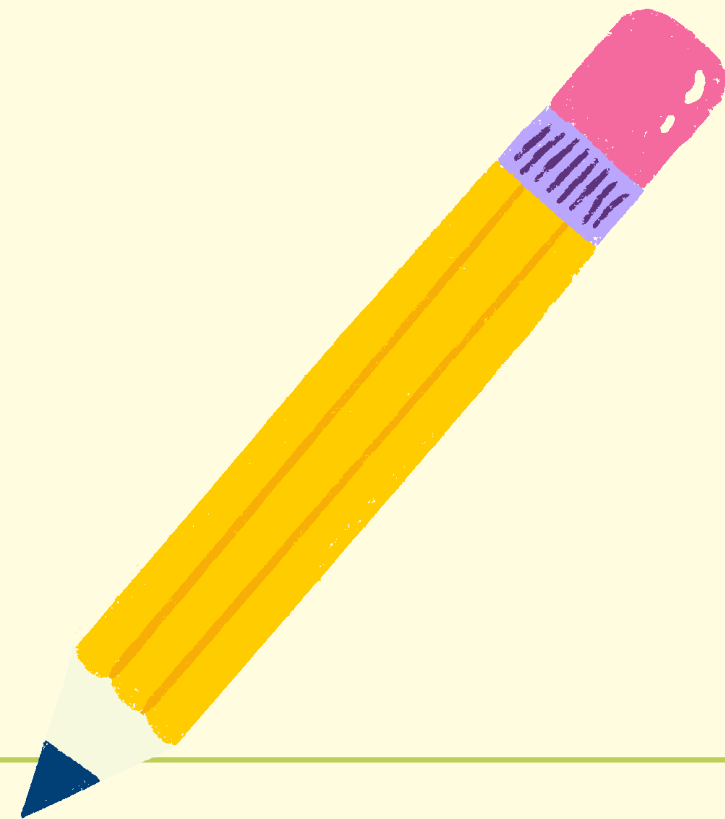
maytaway

play



aen kriyoon

a pencil



aen krayoon

a crayon





aykoooshi

that's it; that's all



**miina ka
waapamitin(awow)**

see you later (everyone) _____



taanishi

hello



aashatum(ik)

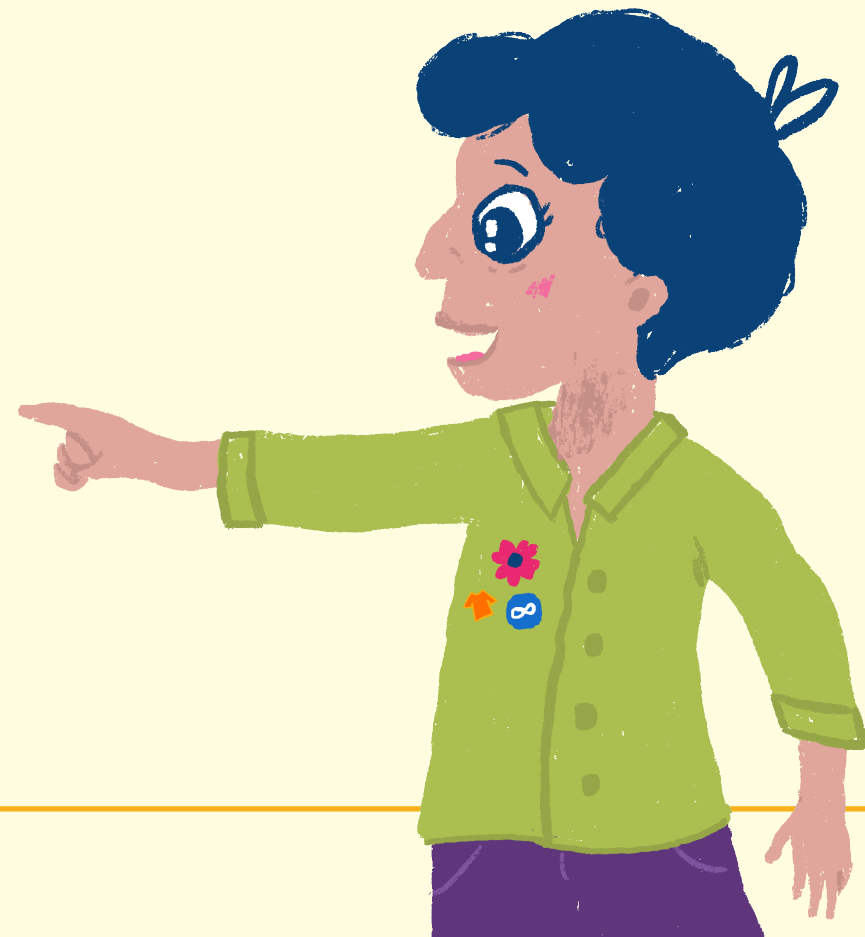
oota

come here (all of you)



oota itapi(k)

look here (everyone)

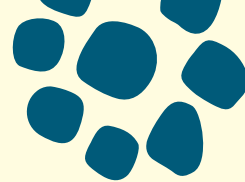


**moon
noon si...**

my name is...

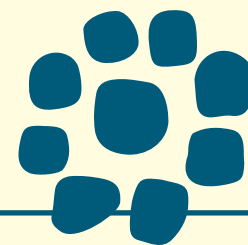


my name is...



dishinihkaashoon

my name is...



ni miyeuyhtayn

I'm happy





s'id valeur

I'm sad

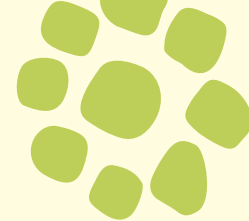
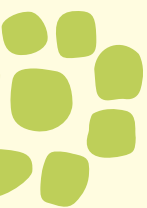




kaa niikaniit

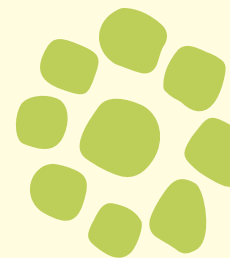
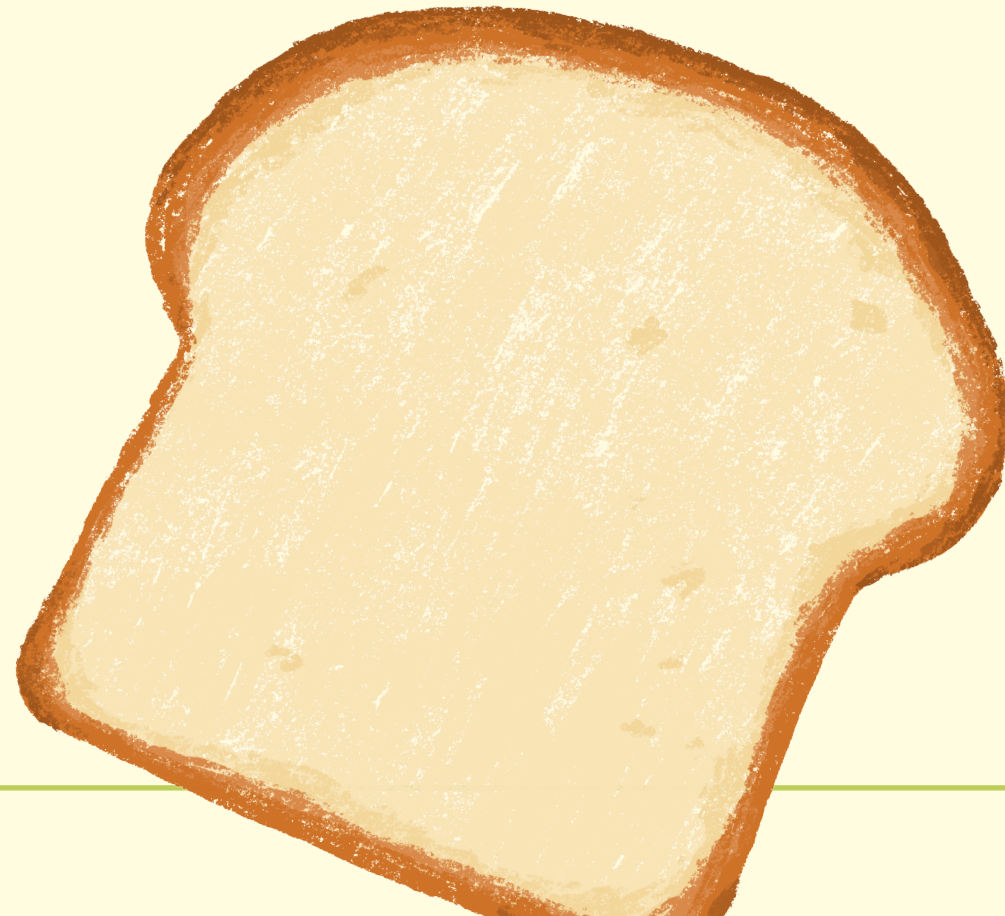
leader





li paen

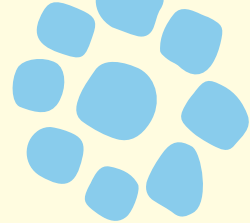
bread



maytres d'ikol

teacher (female)





la chwiiinn

kitchen



maytr d'ikol

teacher (male)





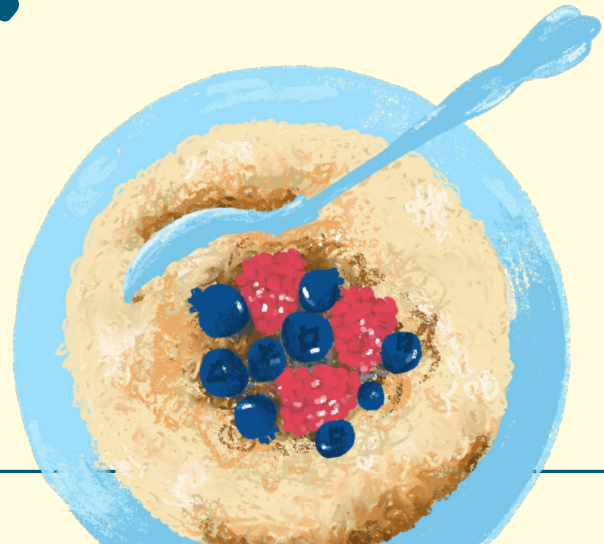
la soup

soup



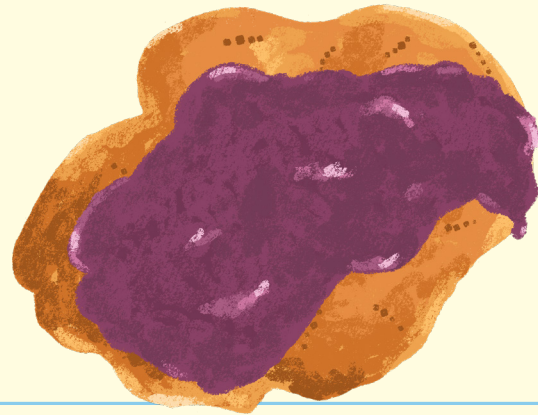
li porridge

oatmeal



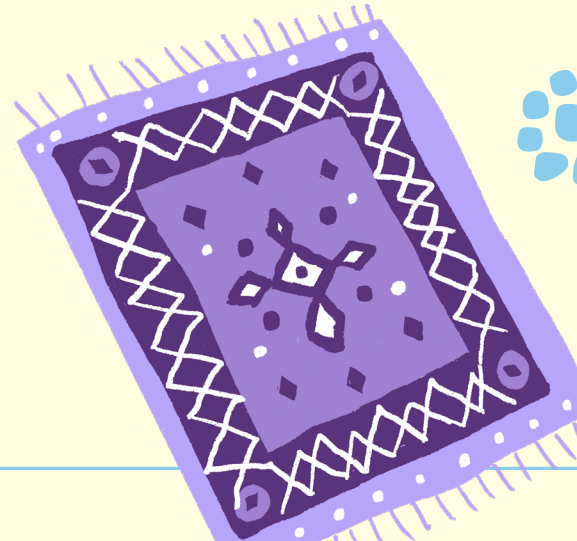
la gaalet

bannock



aen tapii

a rug





enn

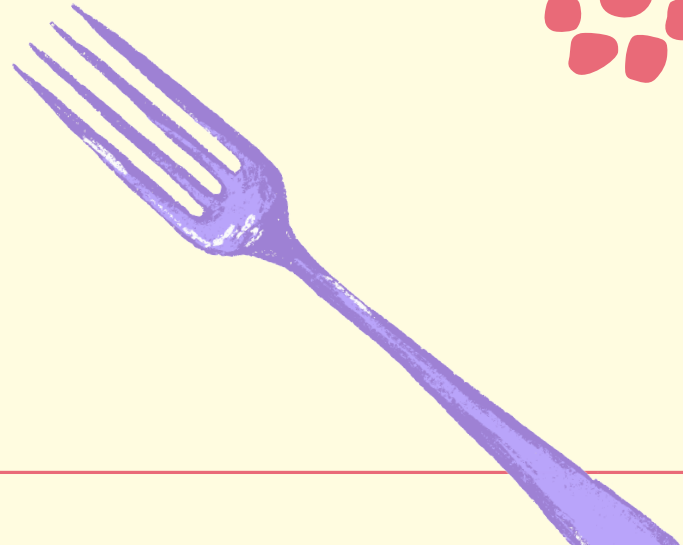
chooyayr

a spoon

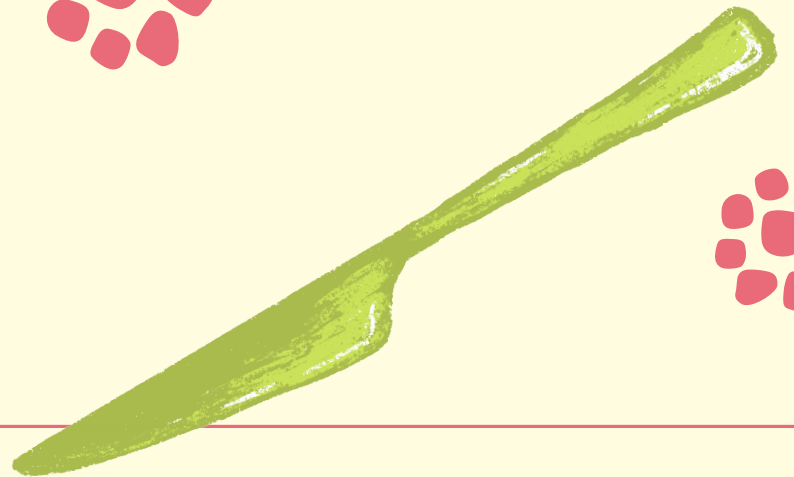


enn foorshet

a fork



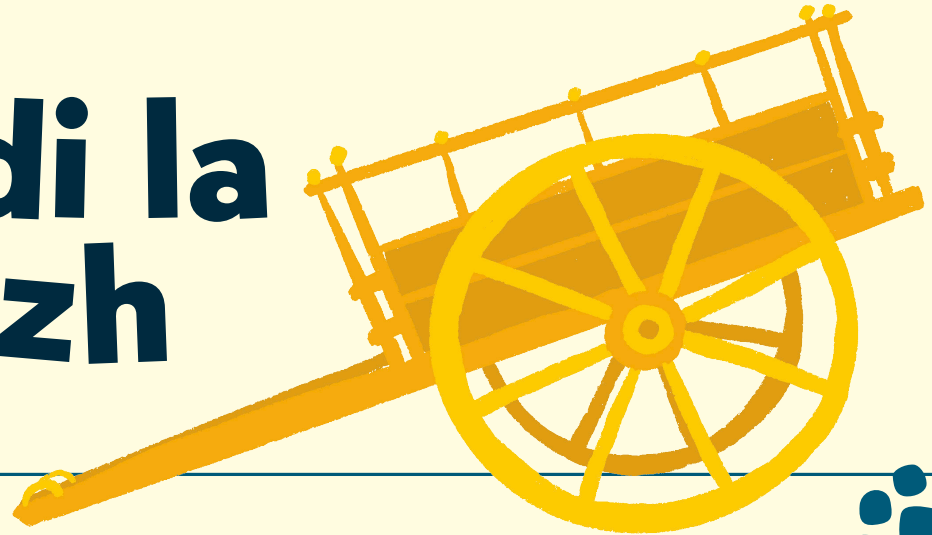
 aen
kootoo
a knife





la shaaret di la rivyayr roozh

the red river cart



**aen
paviiyoon**
a flag



enn bol

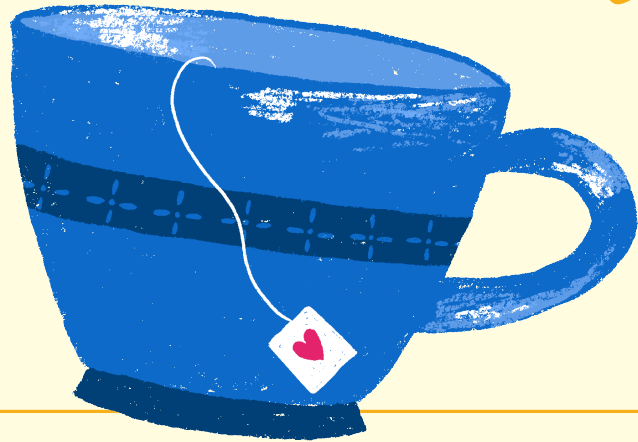
a bowl





enn bol

a cup

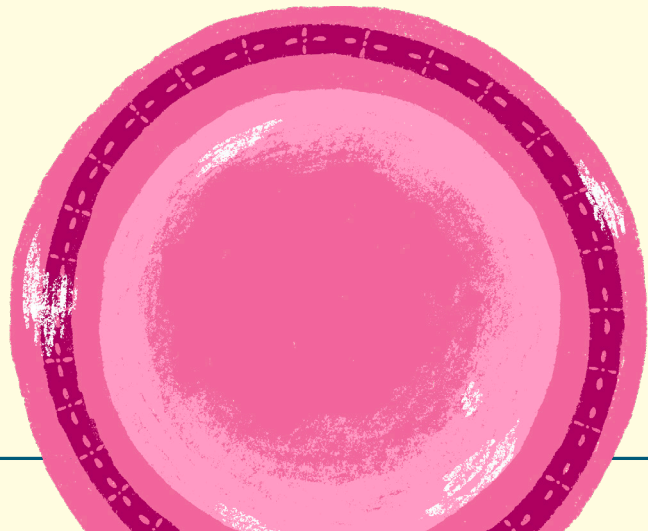


dilet

milk



**aen
naasyet**
a plate





enn sayncheur

flayshii

a sash



**aen
vyayloon**
a fiddle



Classroom Posters

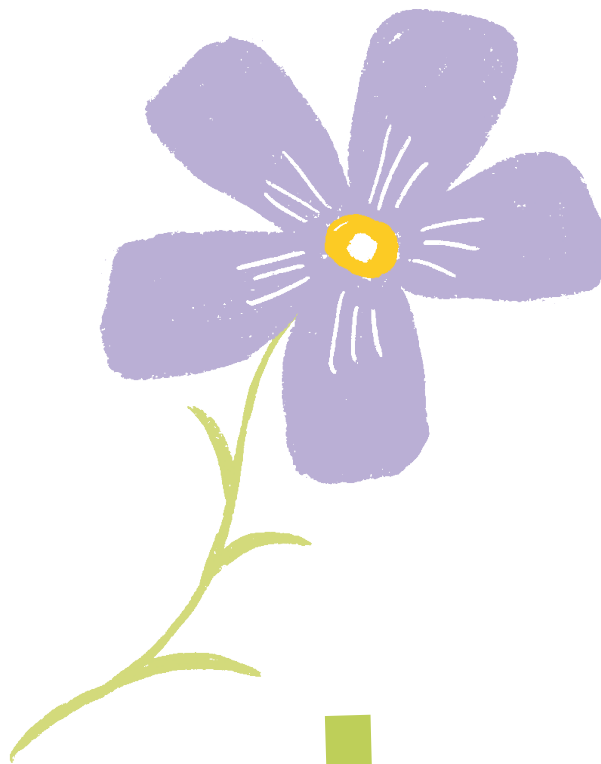
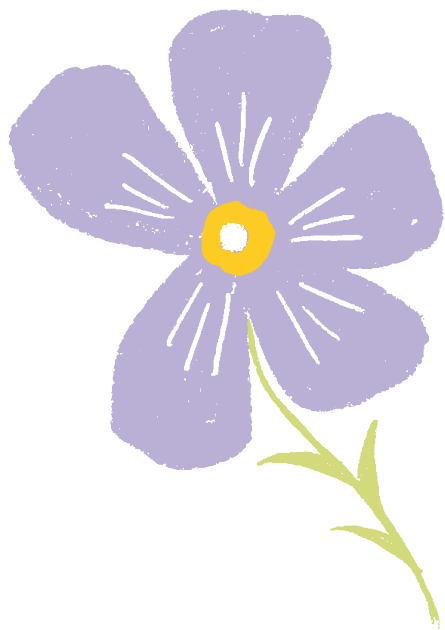


1



henn

2



deu

3



trwaa

4



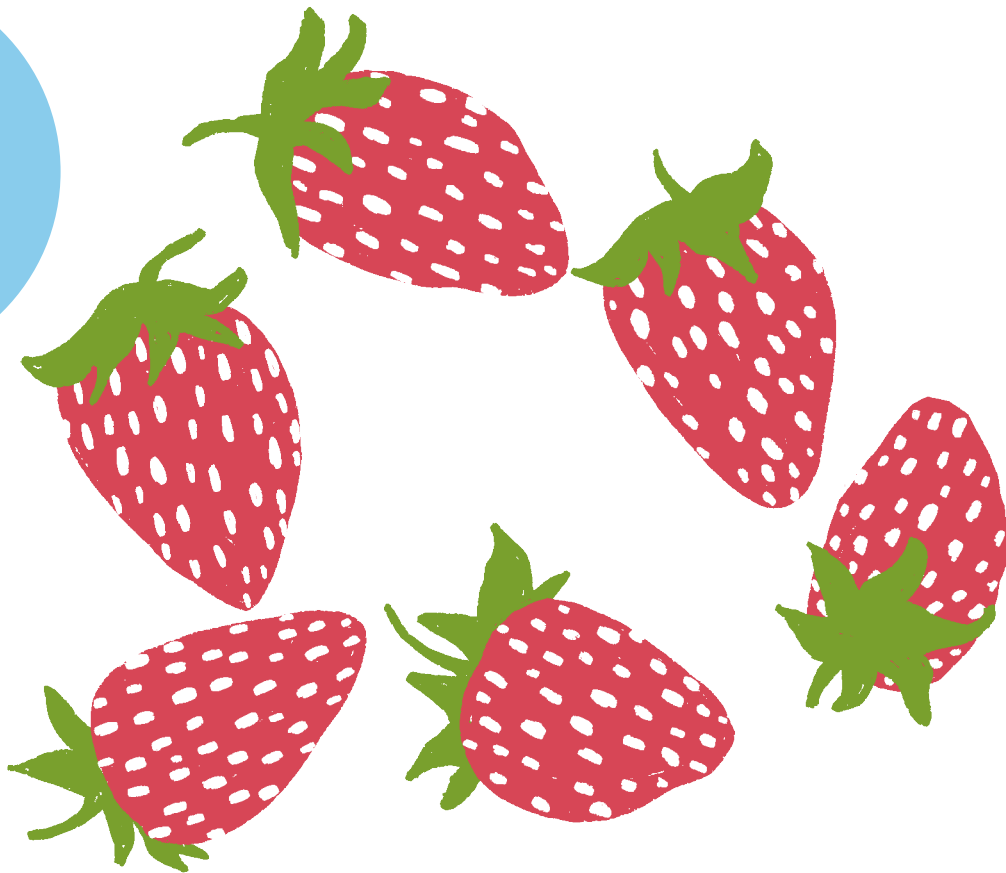
kaatr

5



saenk

6



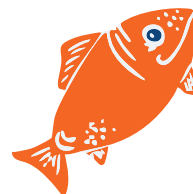
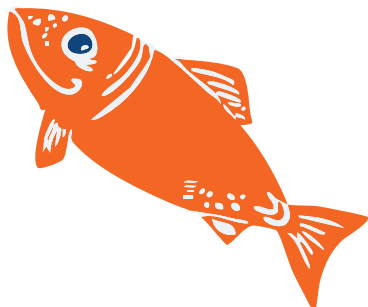
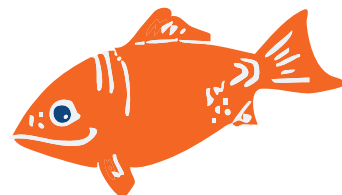
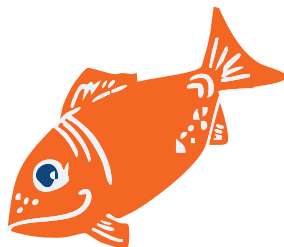
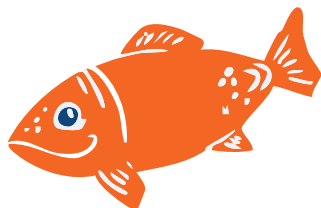
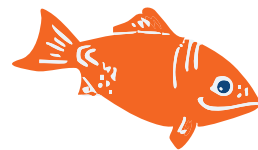
sis



set

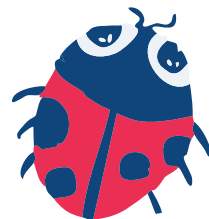
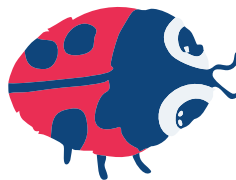
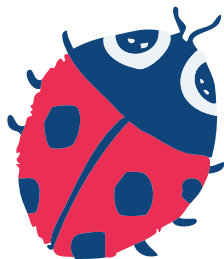
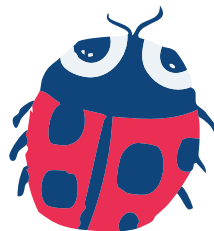
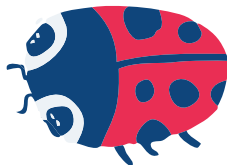
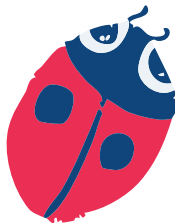
8





neuf

10



jhis



roozh





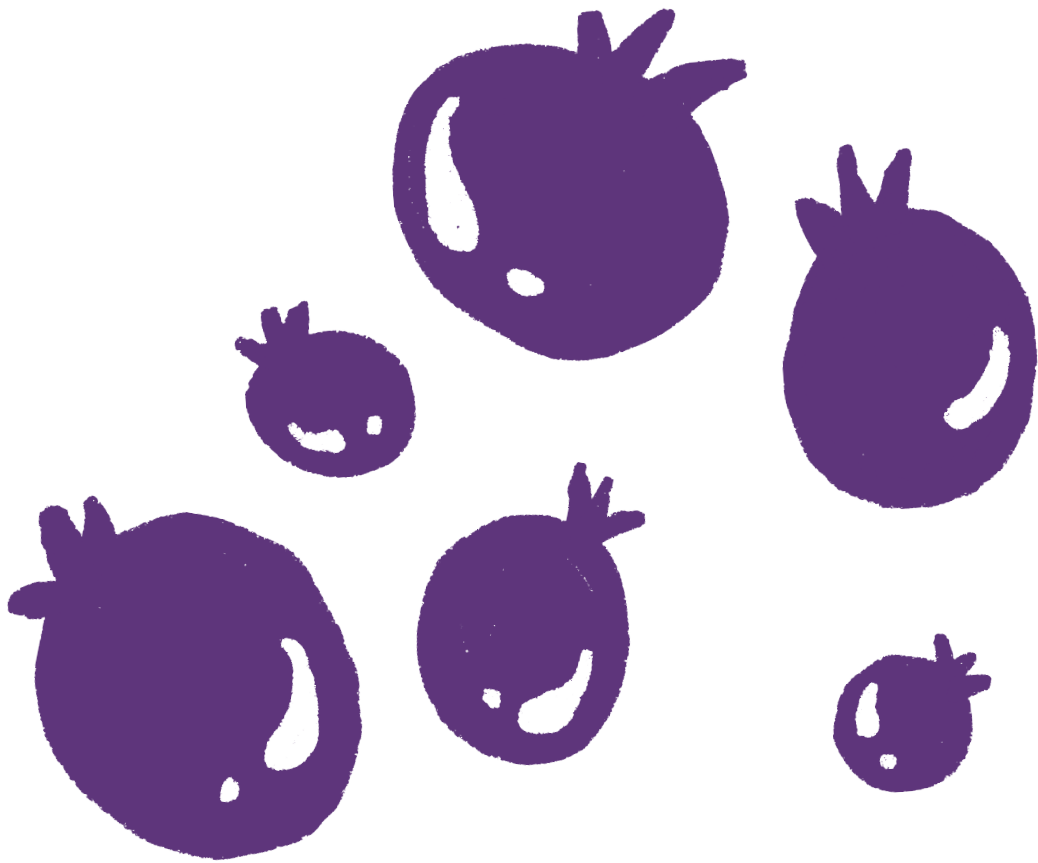
zhoon



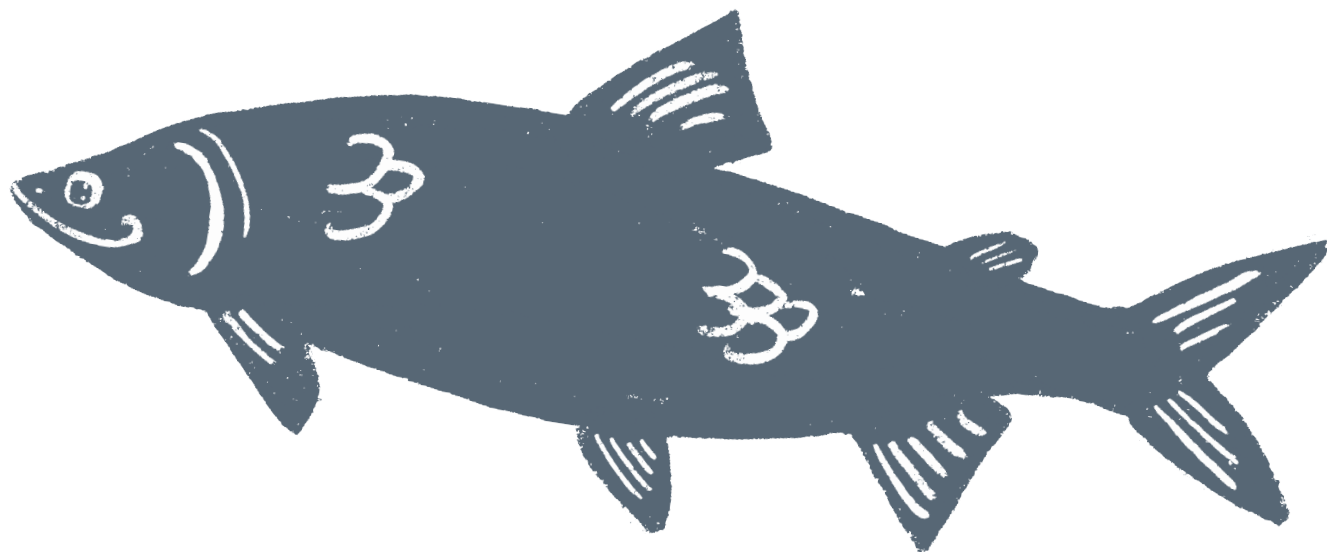
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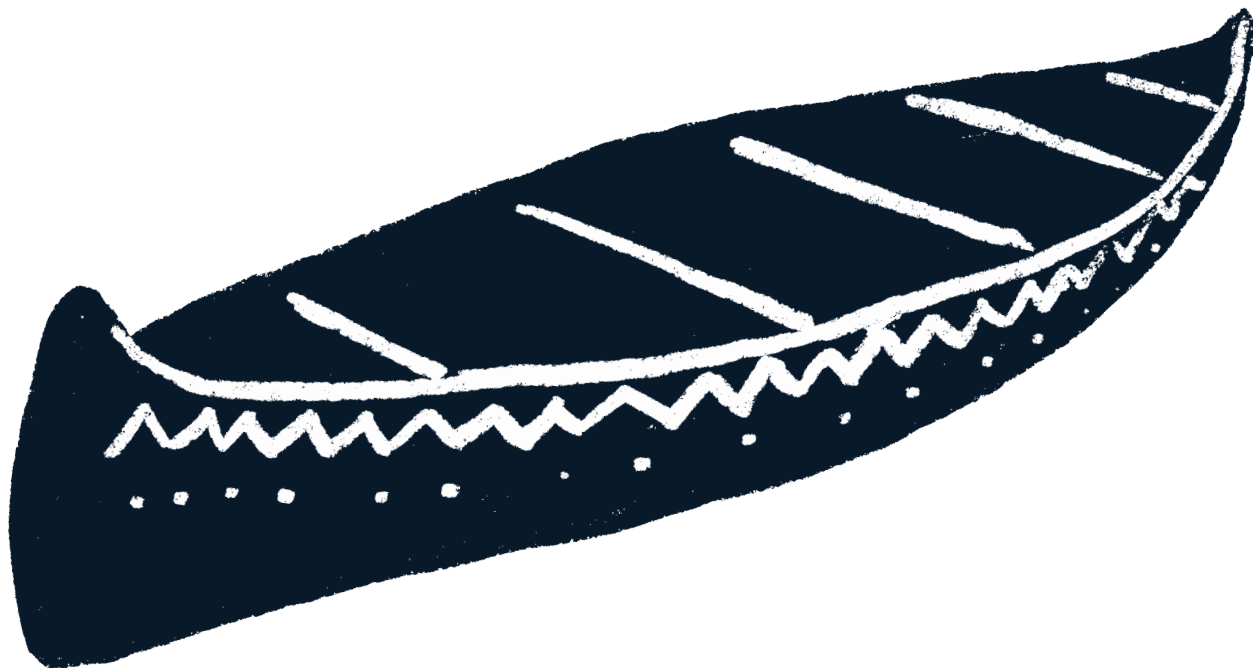
bleu



vyalet



grii



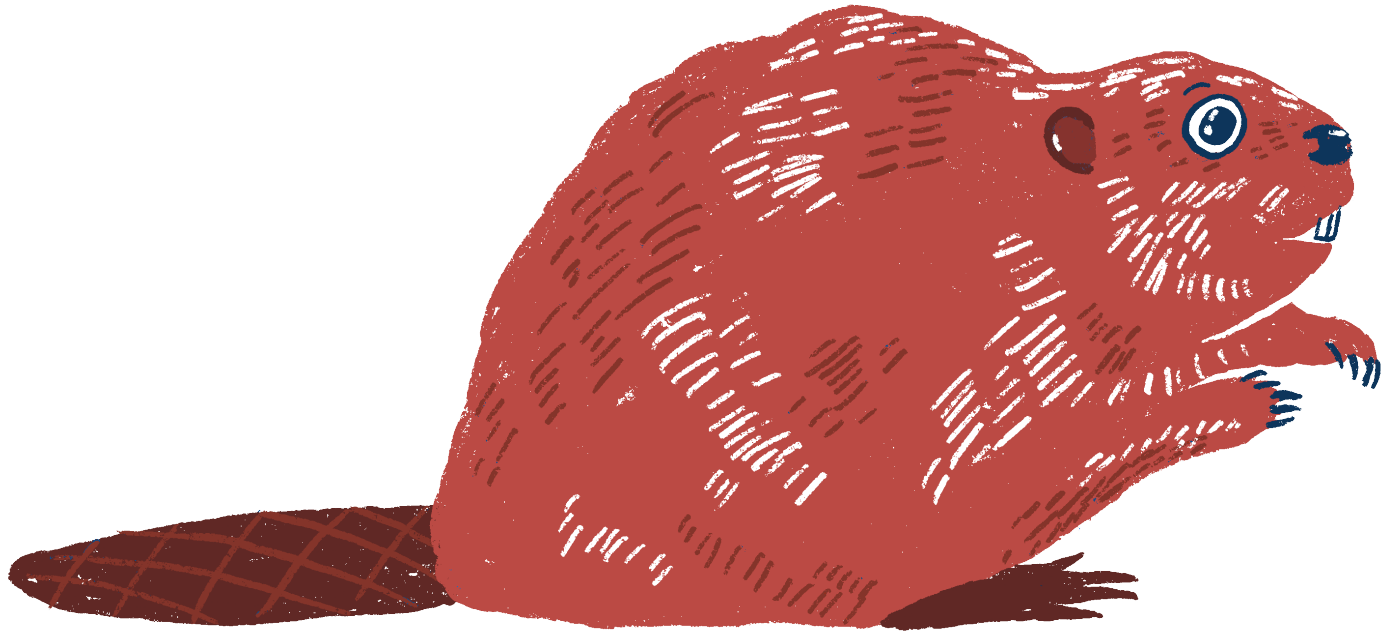
nwayr



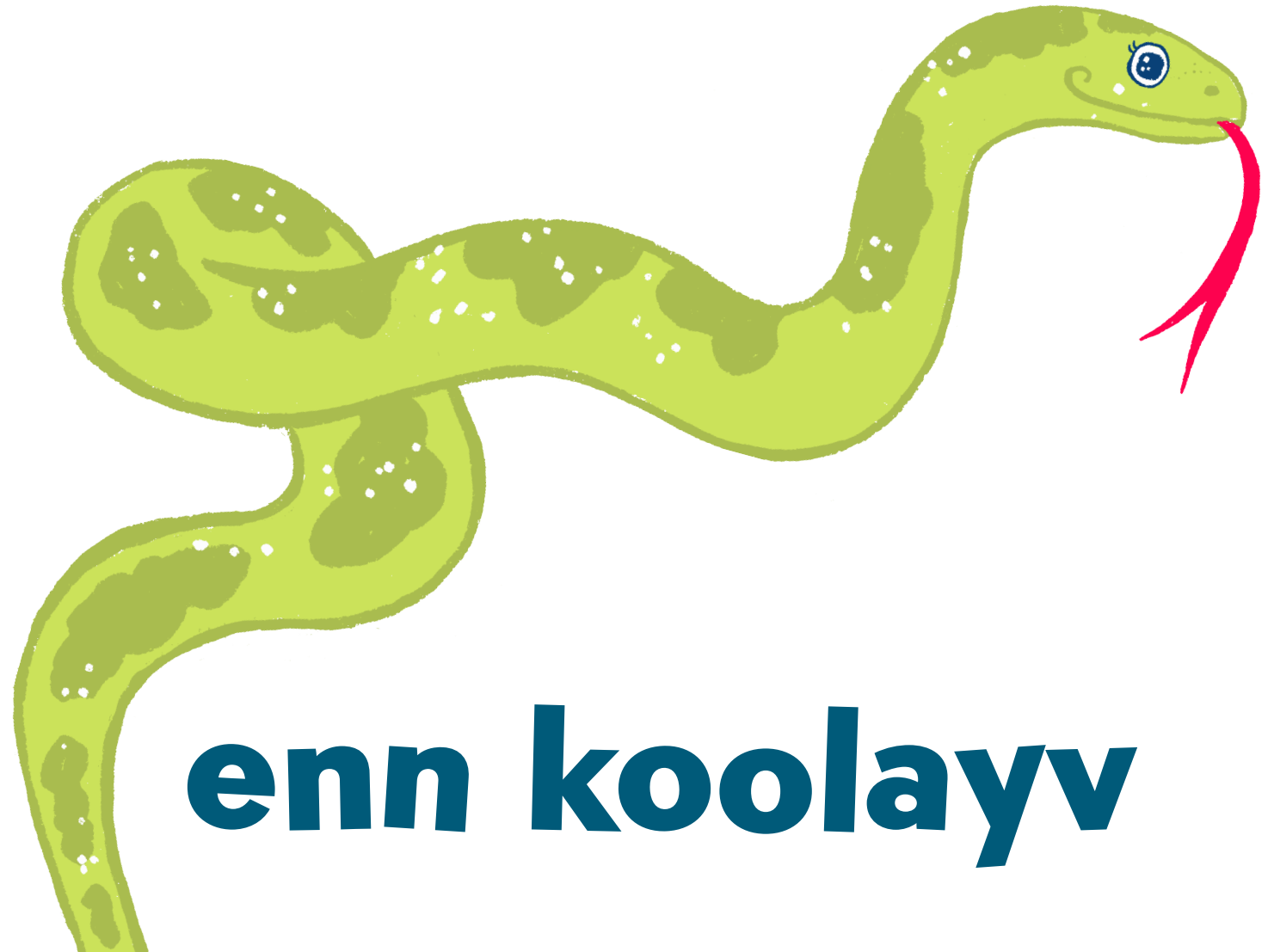
blaan



aen shikaak



aen kaastor



enn koolayv



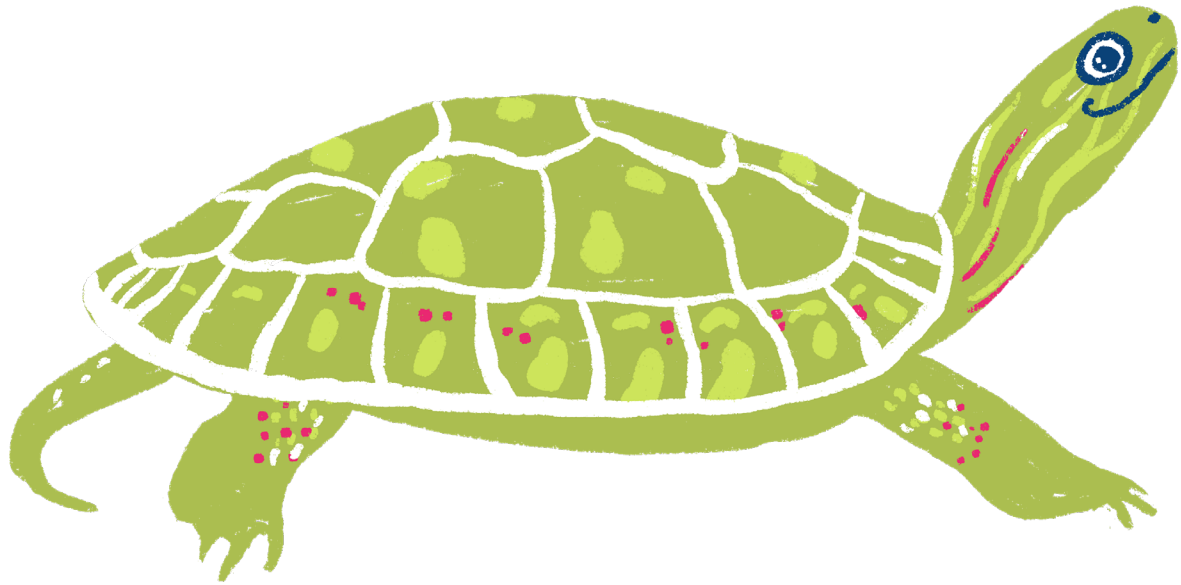
aen noor



aen rinaar



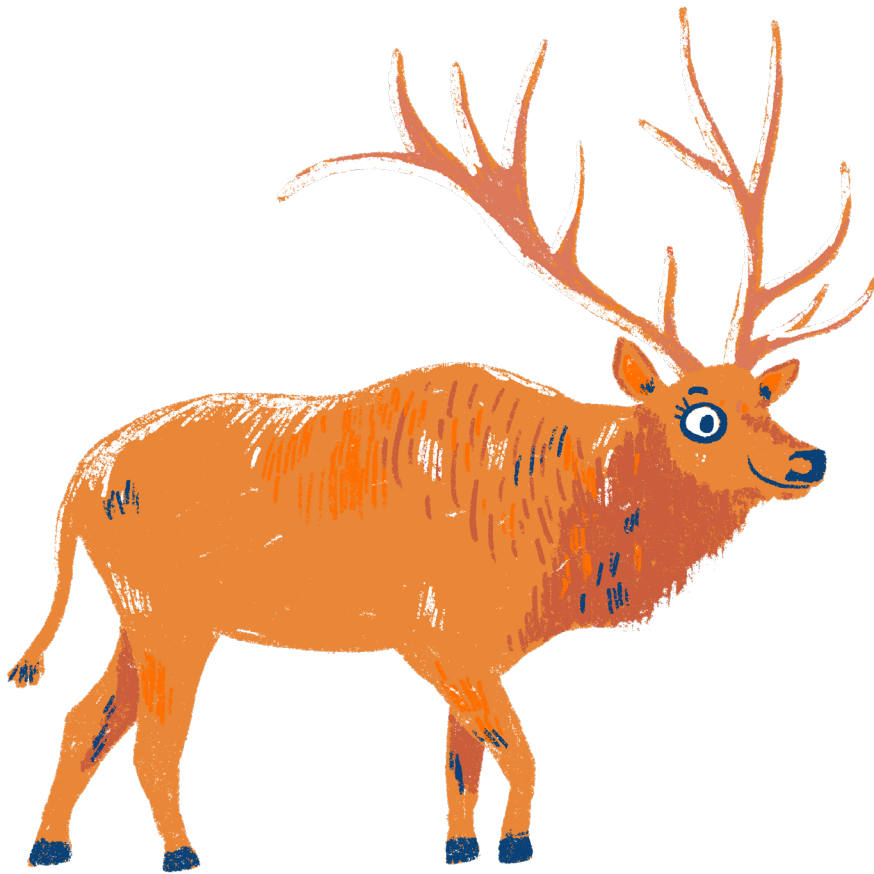
aen raakoon



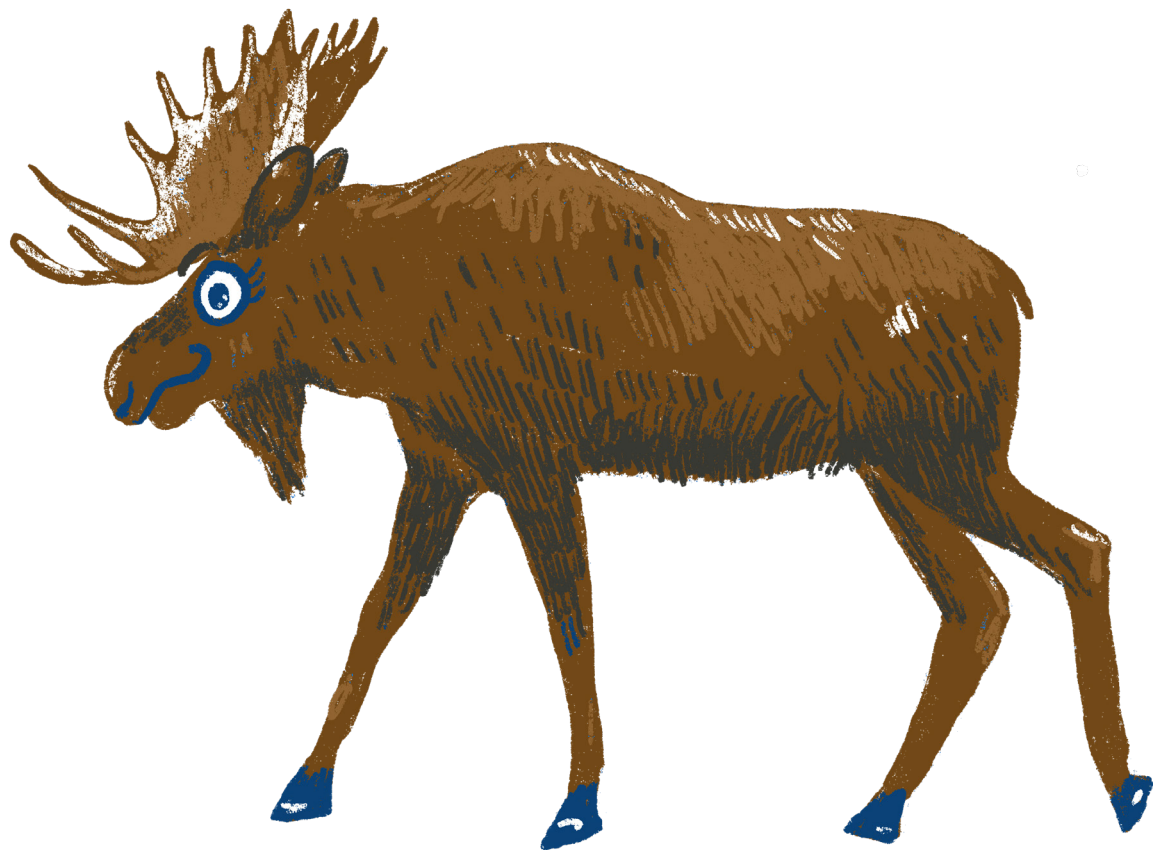
la torcheu



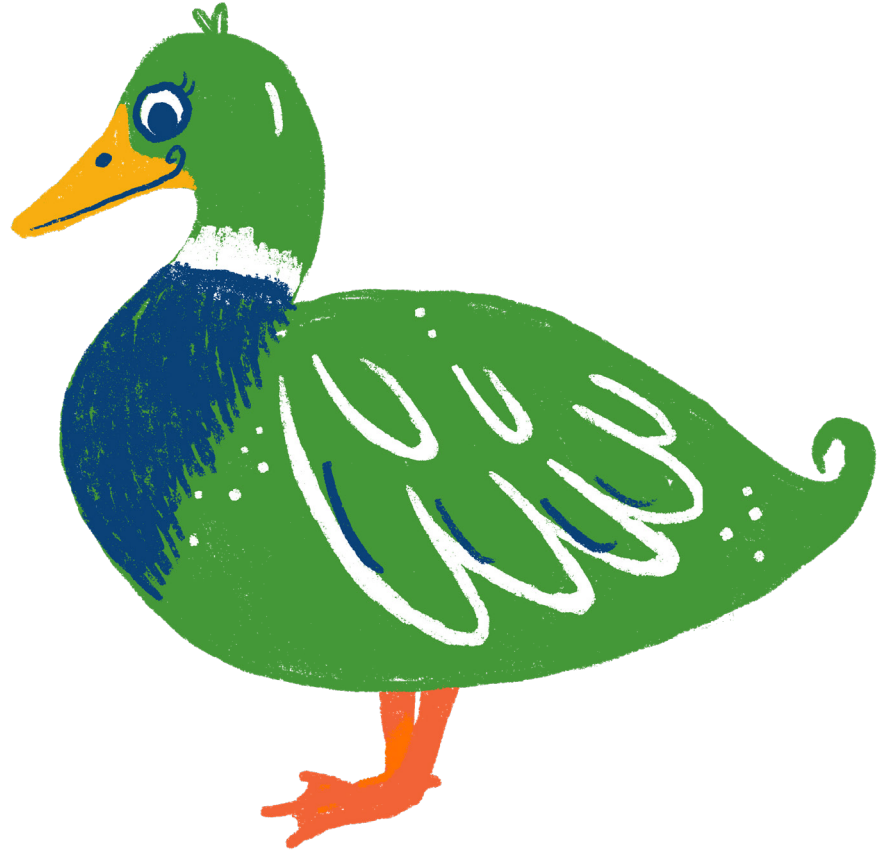
enn swiss



enn bish



l'aariyaanl



li kanaar



la poul



aen nwayzoo



aen loo



aen shoorii shood



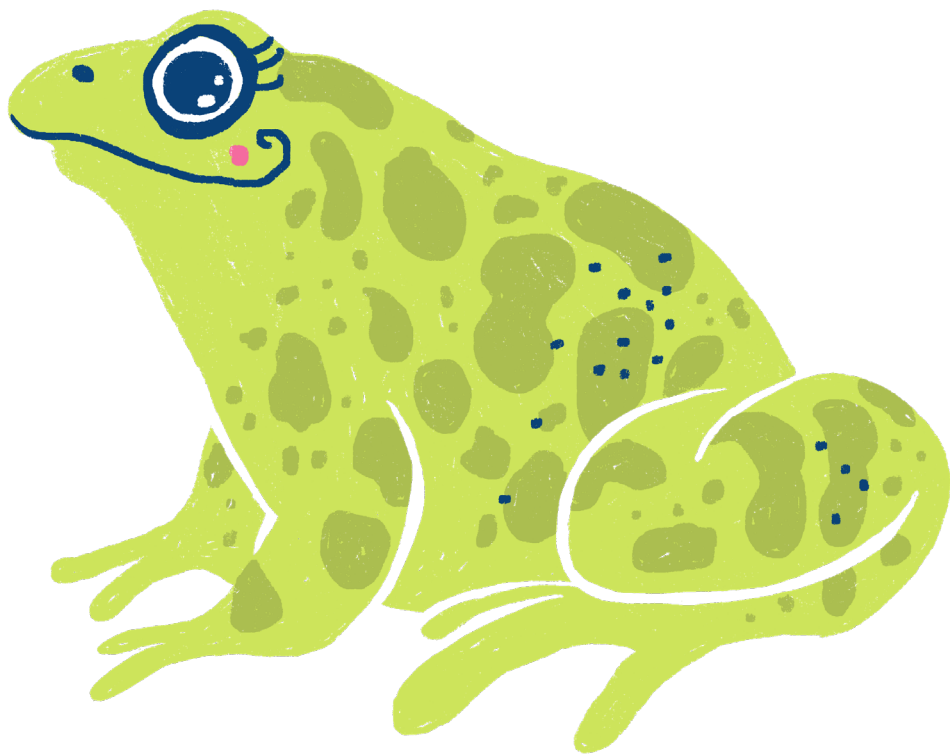
aen yiiboo



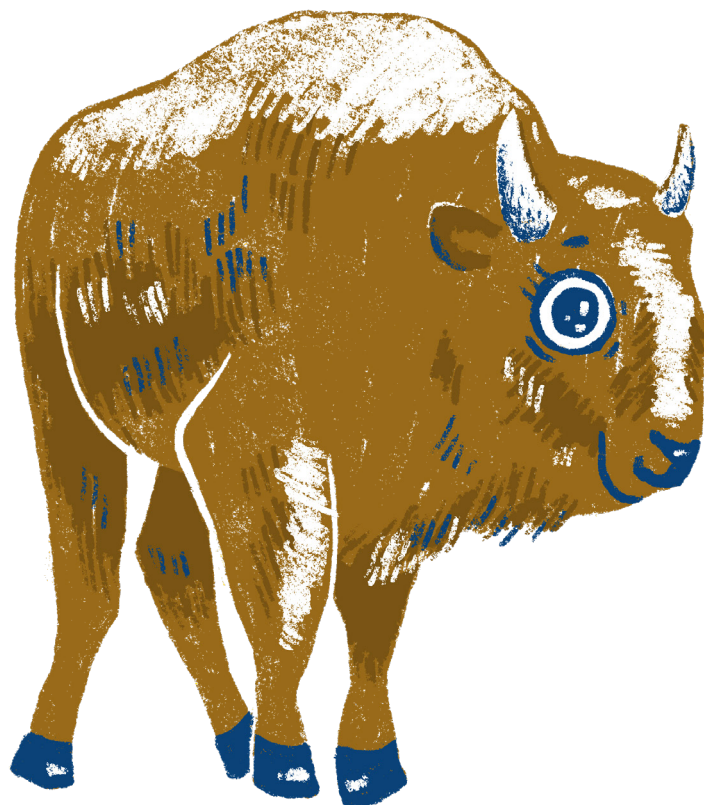
li pwasoon



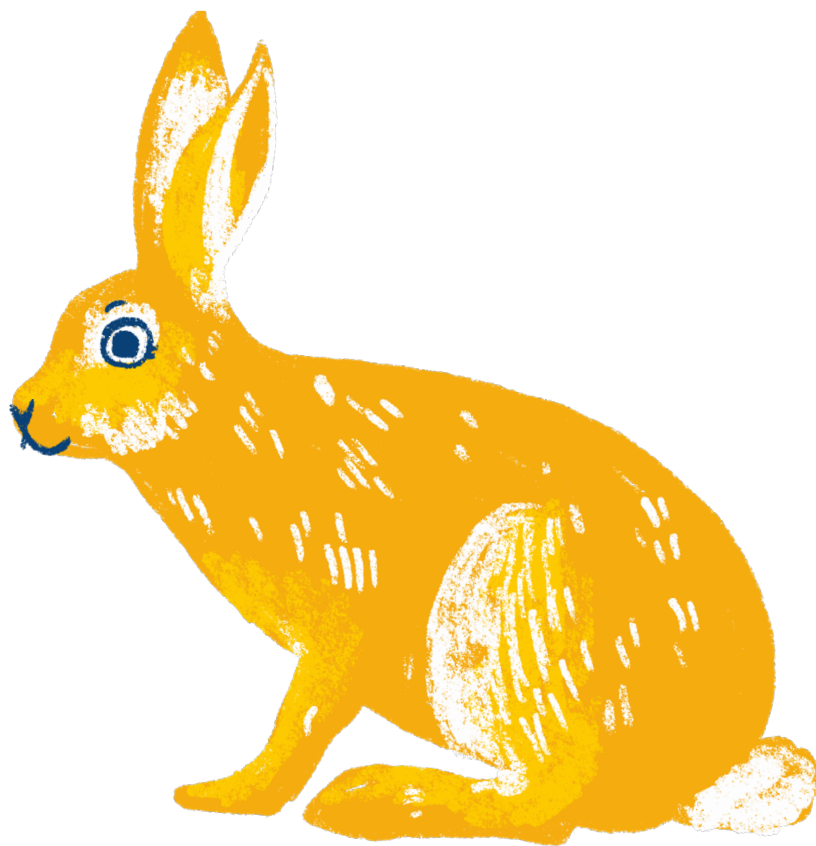
aen portipik



enn goornouy



li bufloo



aen lyayv

Classroom Calendar

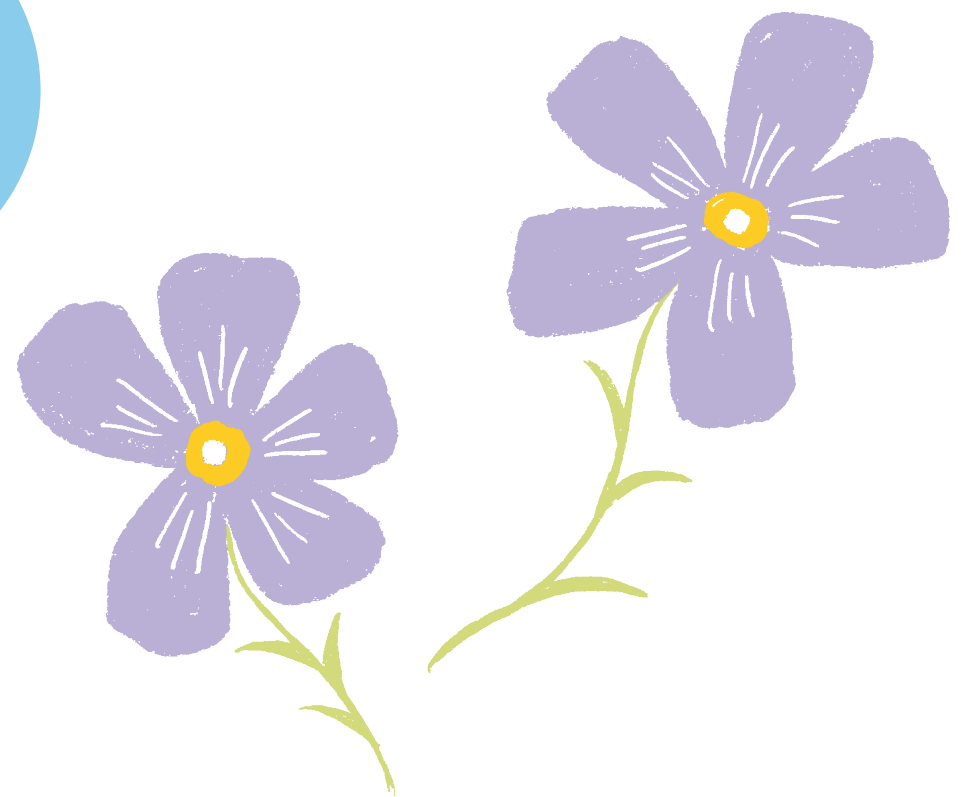


1



henn

2



deu

3



trwaa

4



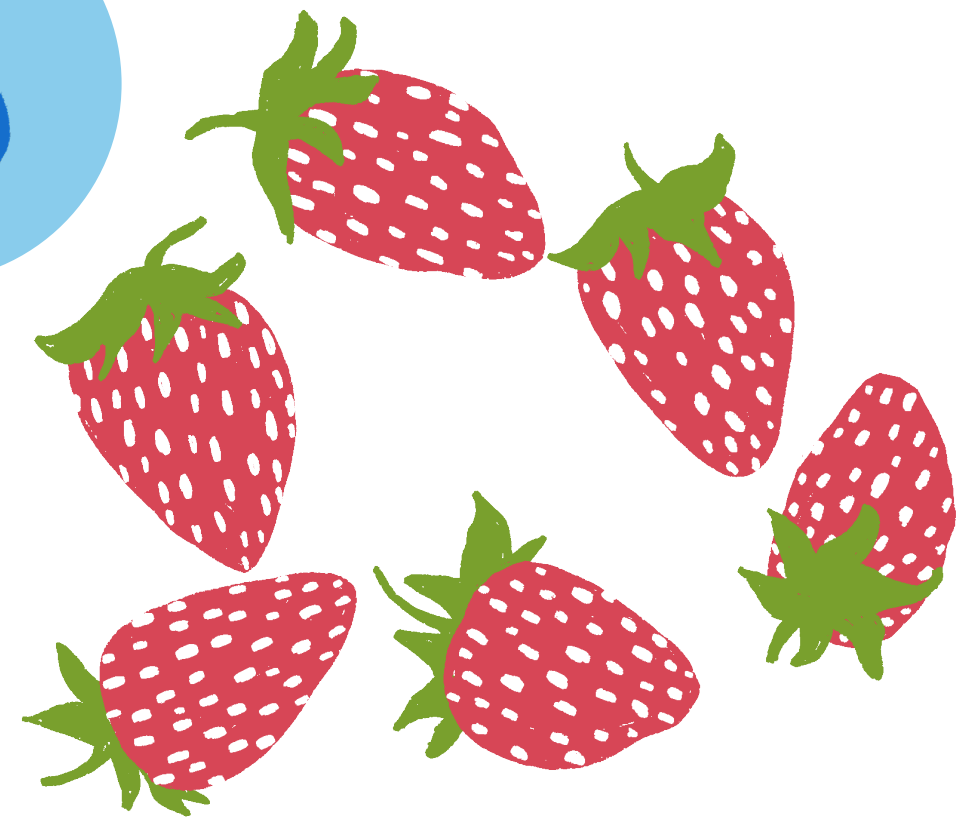
kaatr

5



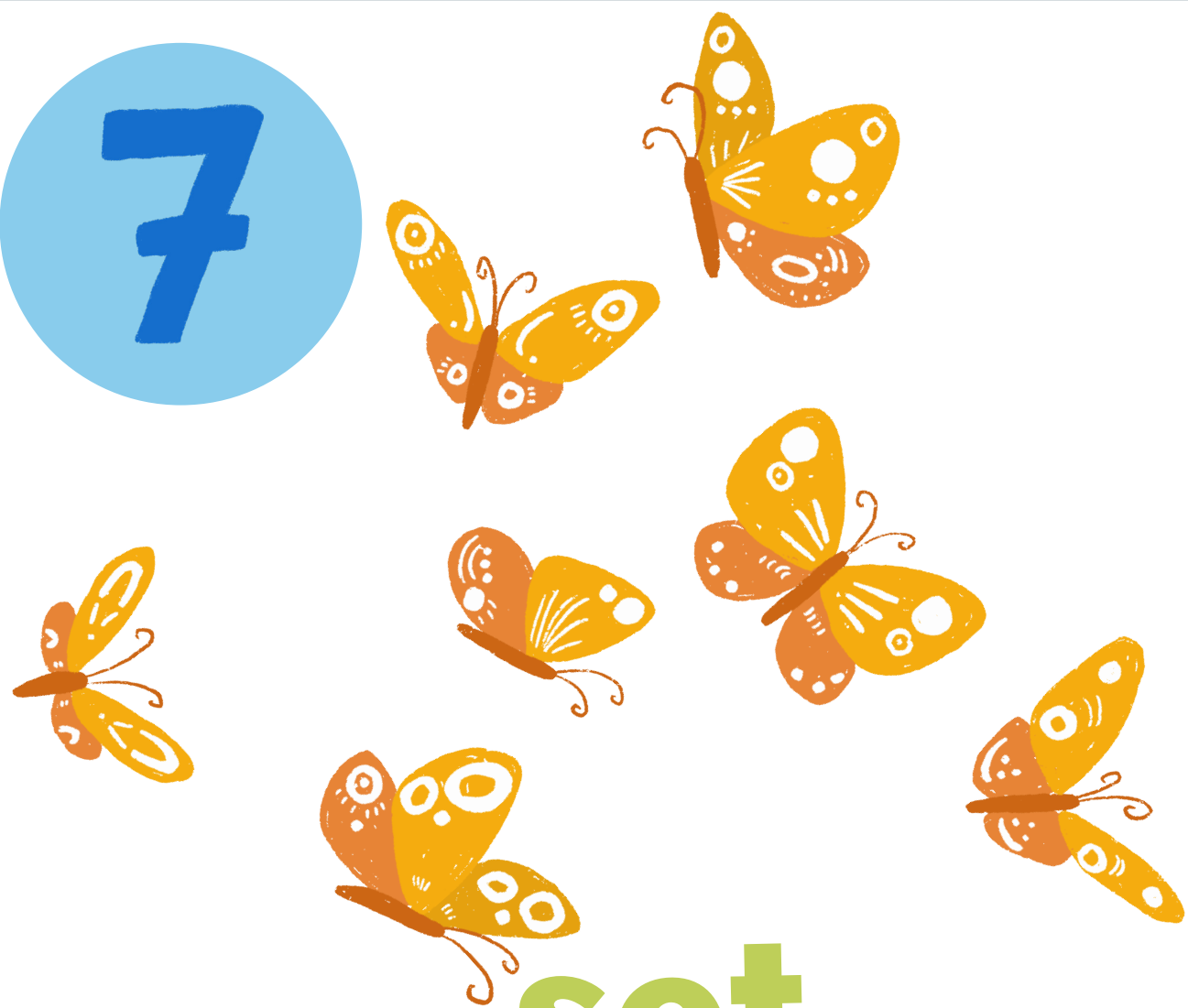
saenk

6



sis

7



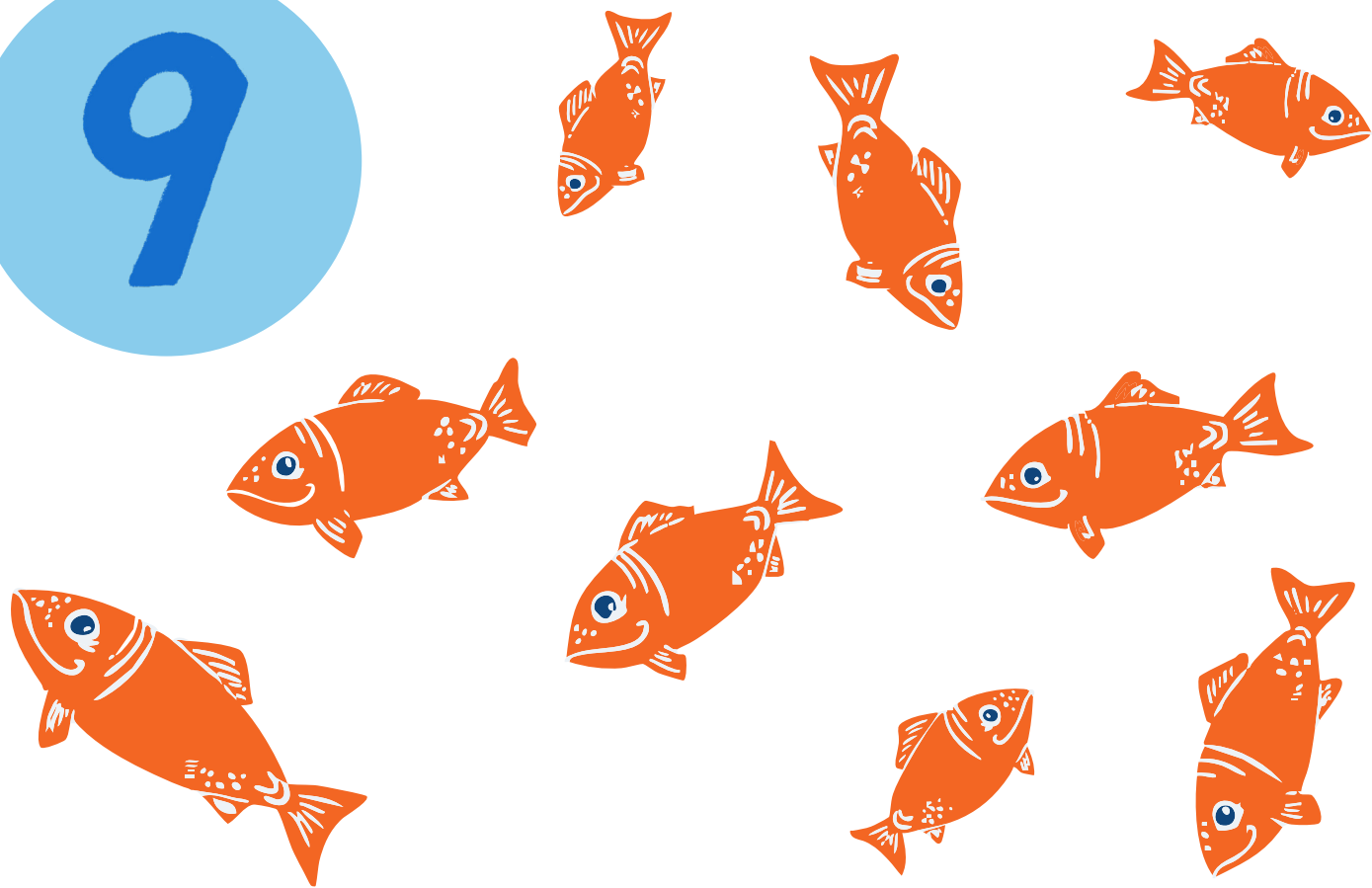
set

8



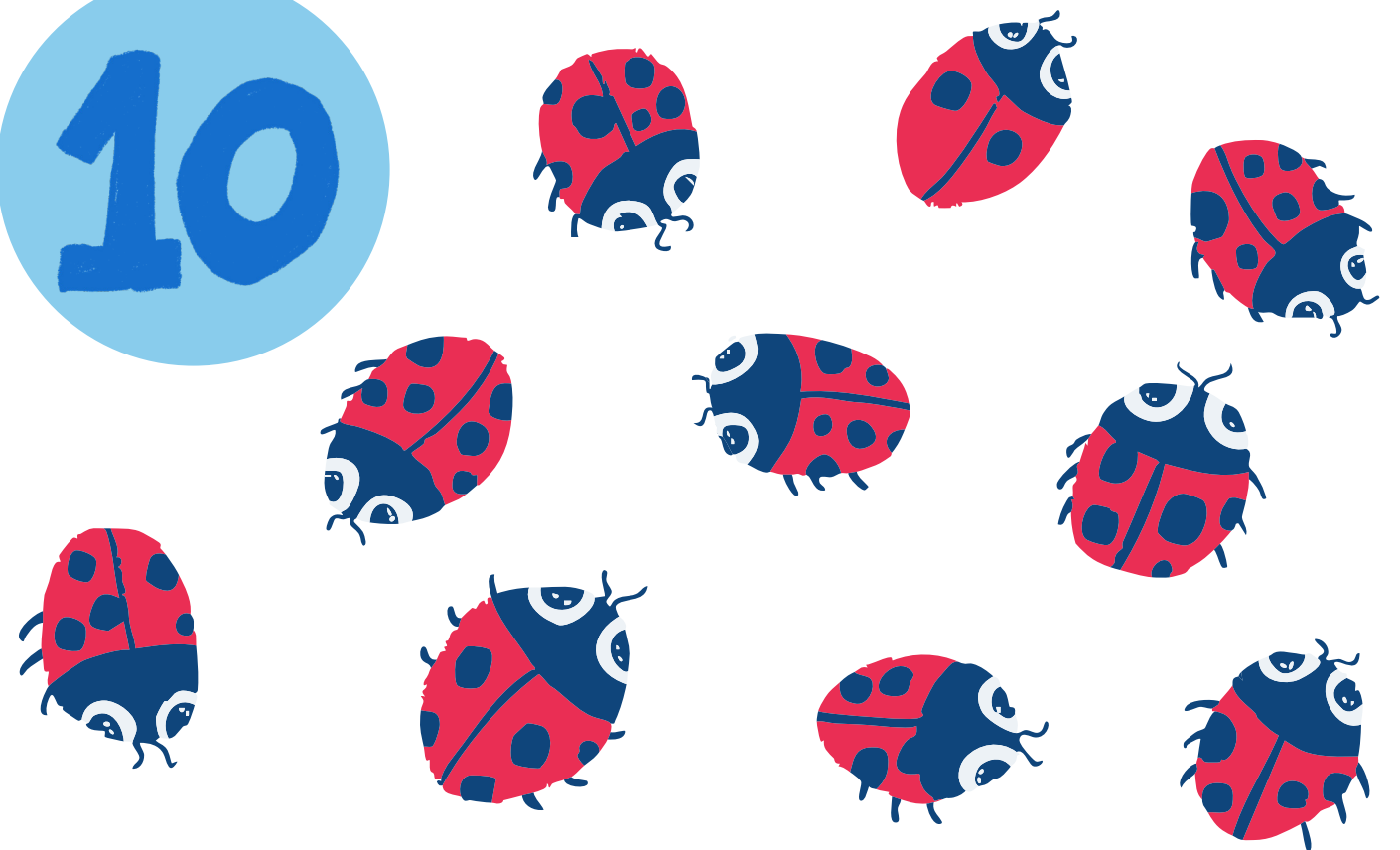
wit

9



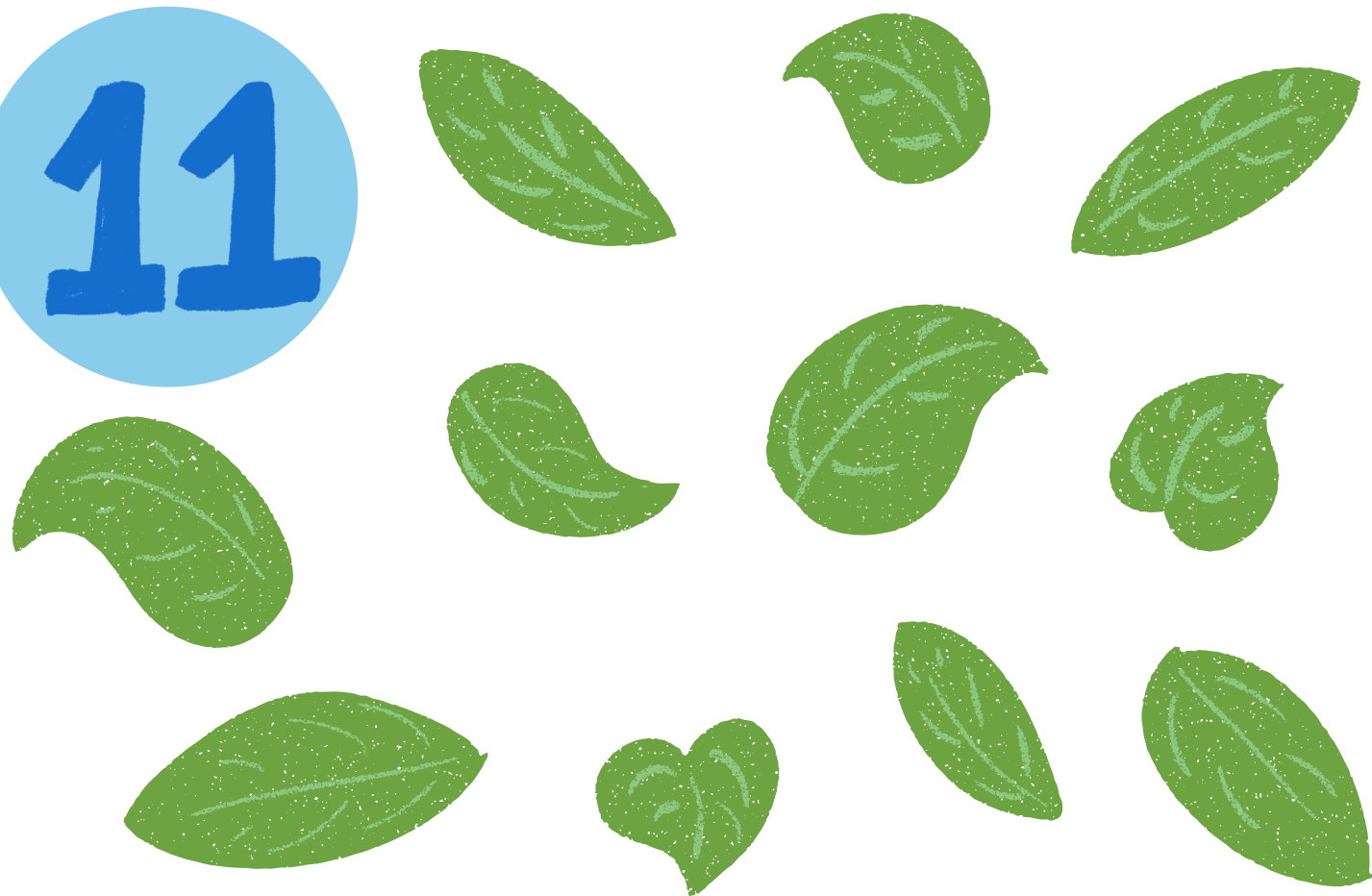
neuf

10



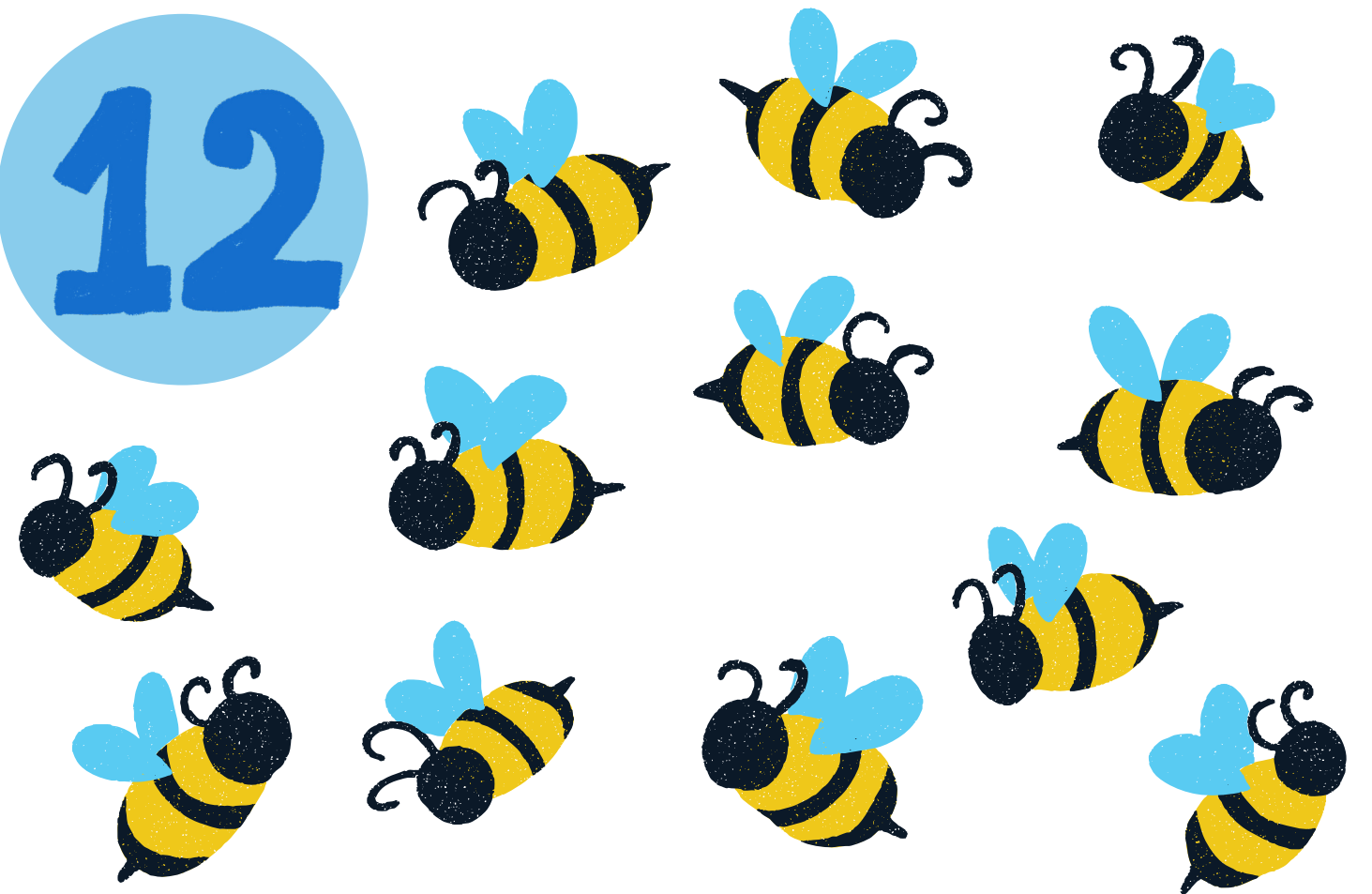
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11



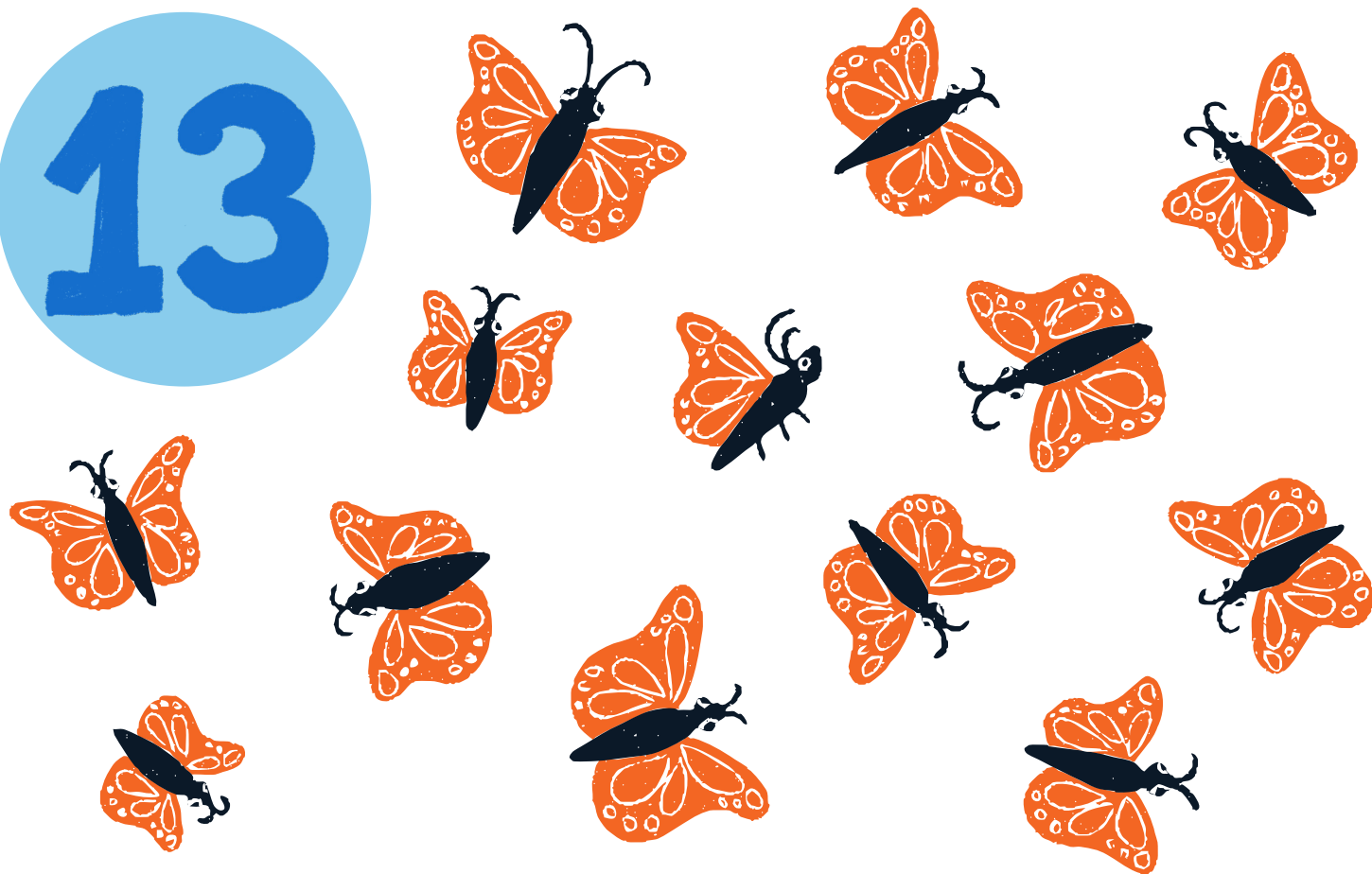
oonz

12



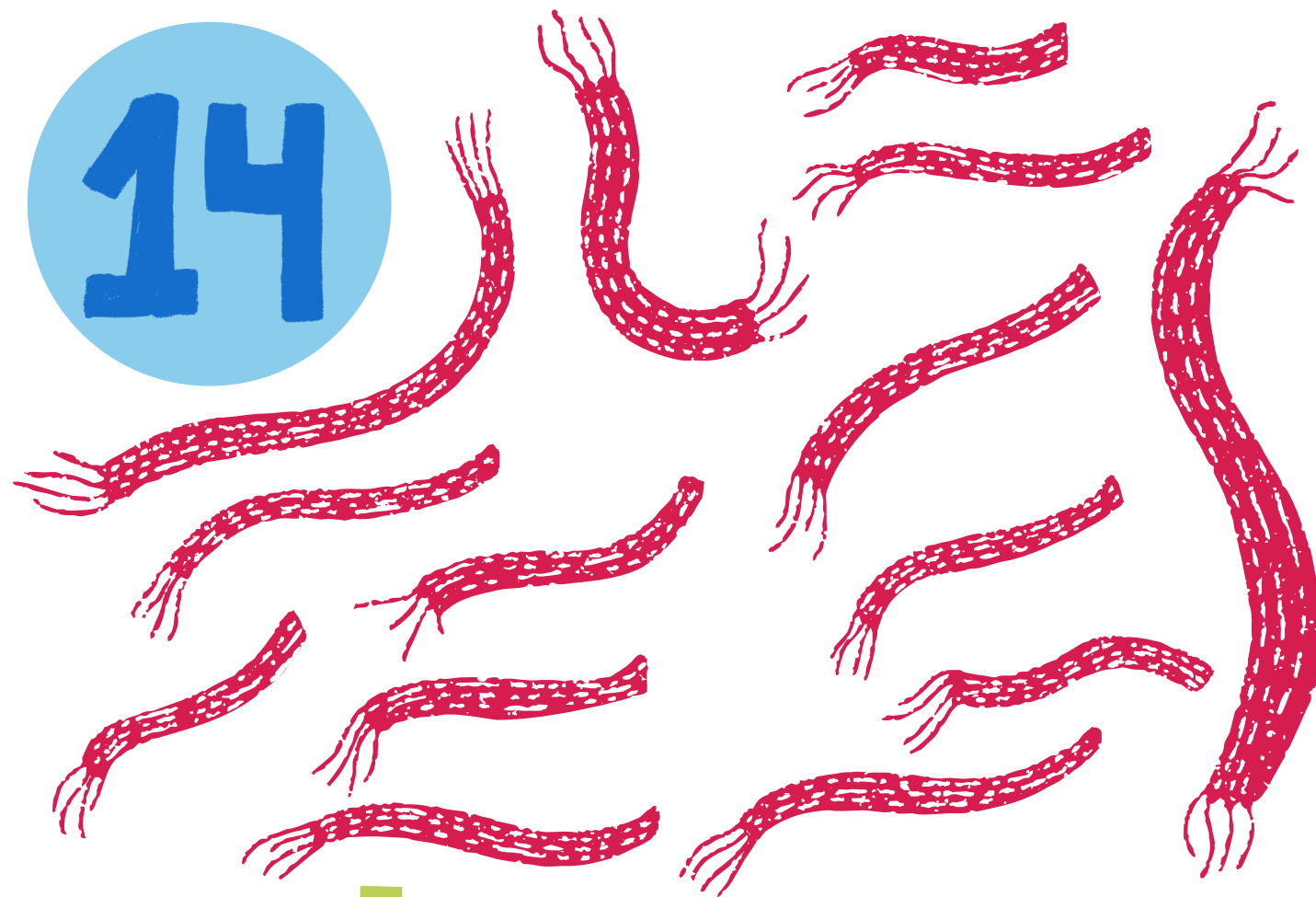
dooz

13



trayz

14



katorz

15



kaynz

16



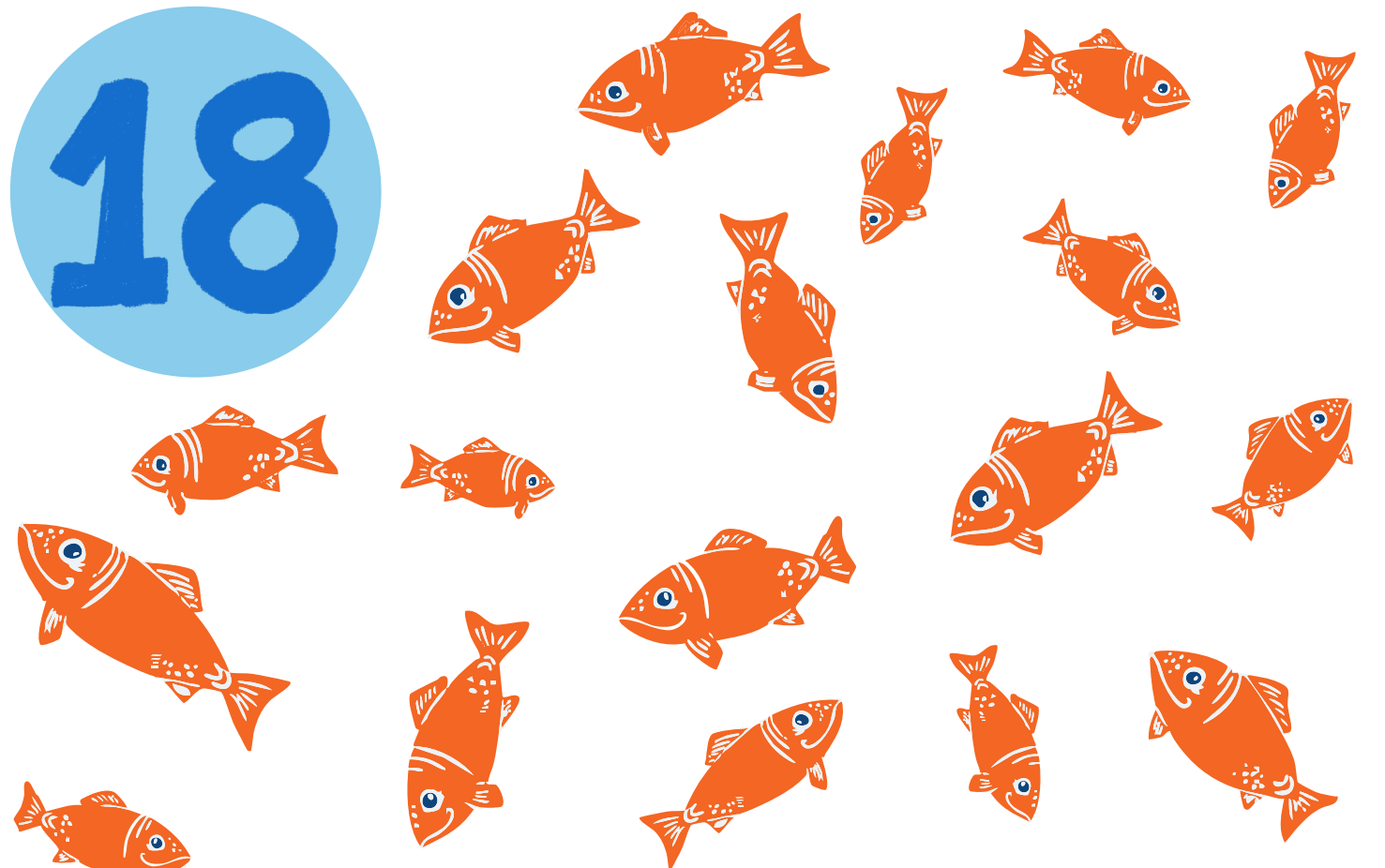
sayz

17



jhiset

18



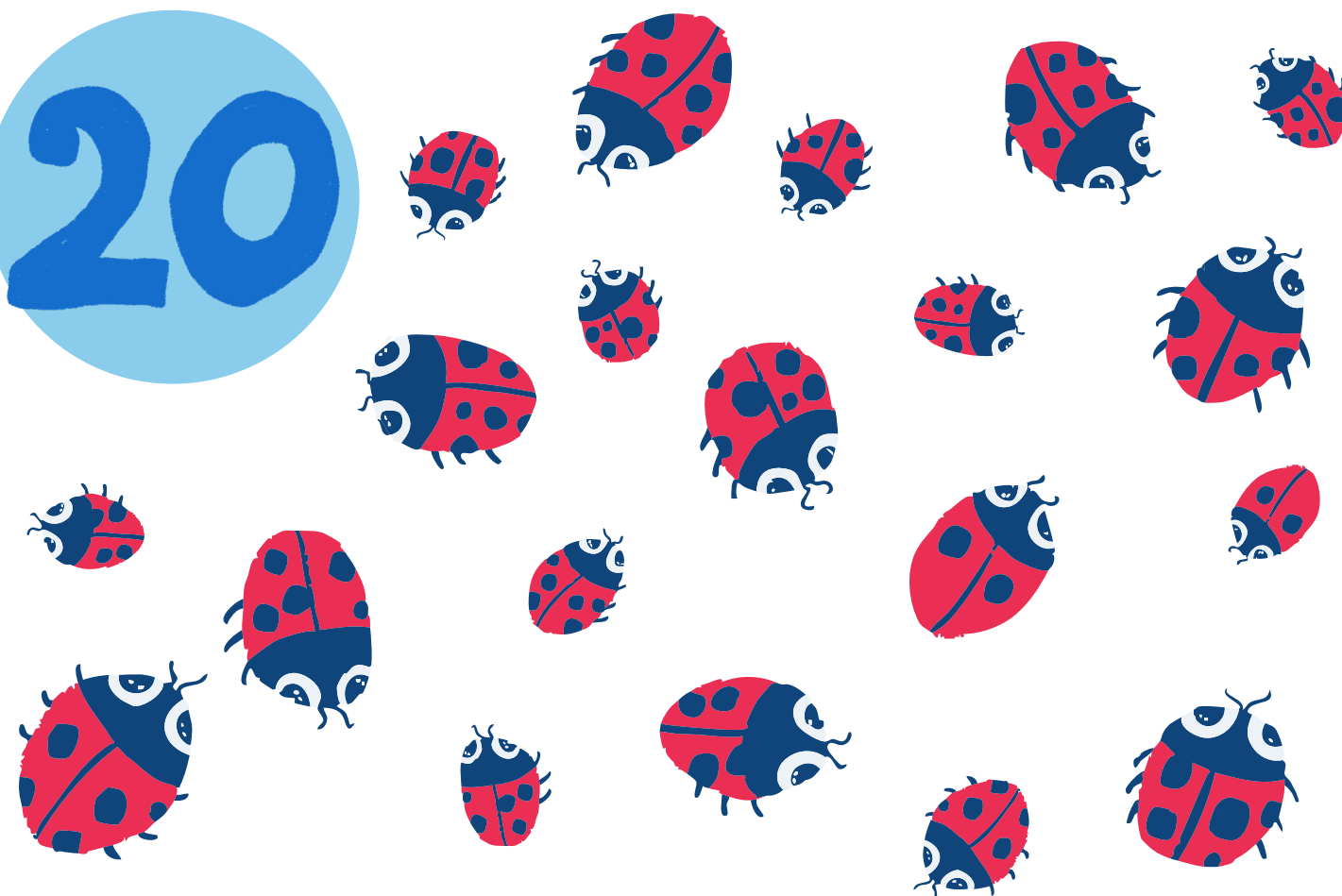
jhis wit

19



jhis neuf

20



vaen

21



vaentyayn

22



vaen deu

23



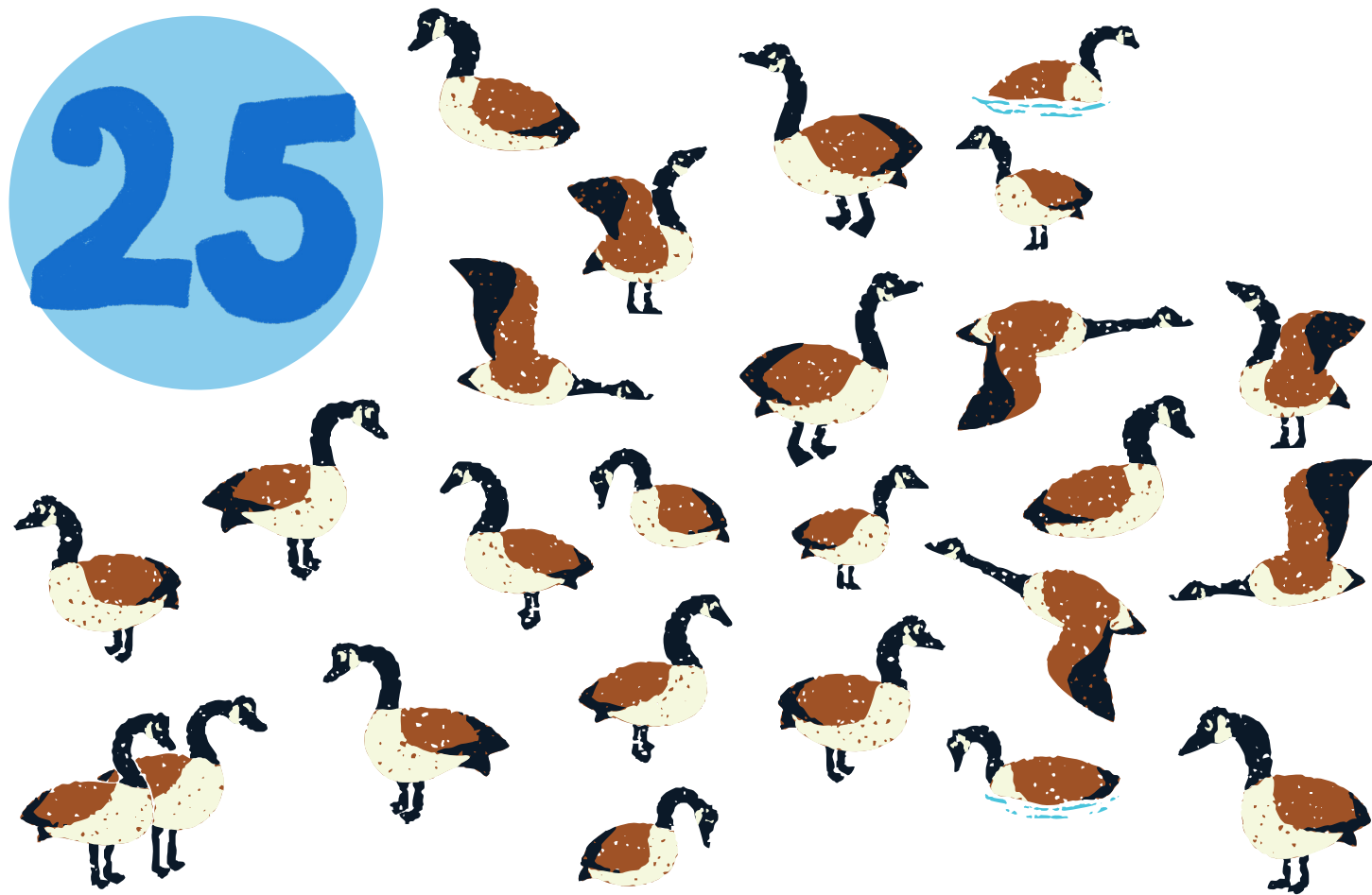
vaen trwaa

24



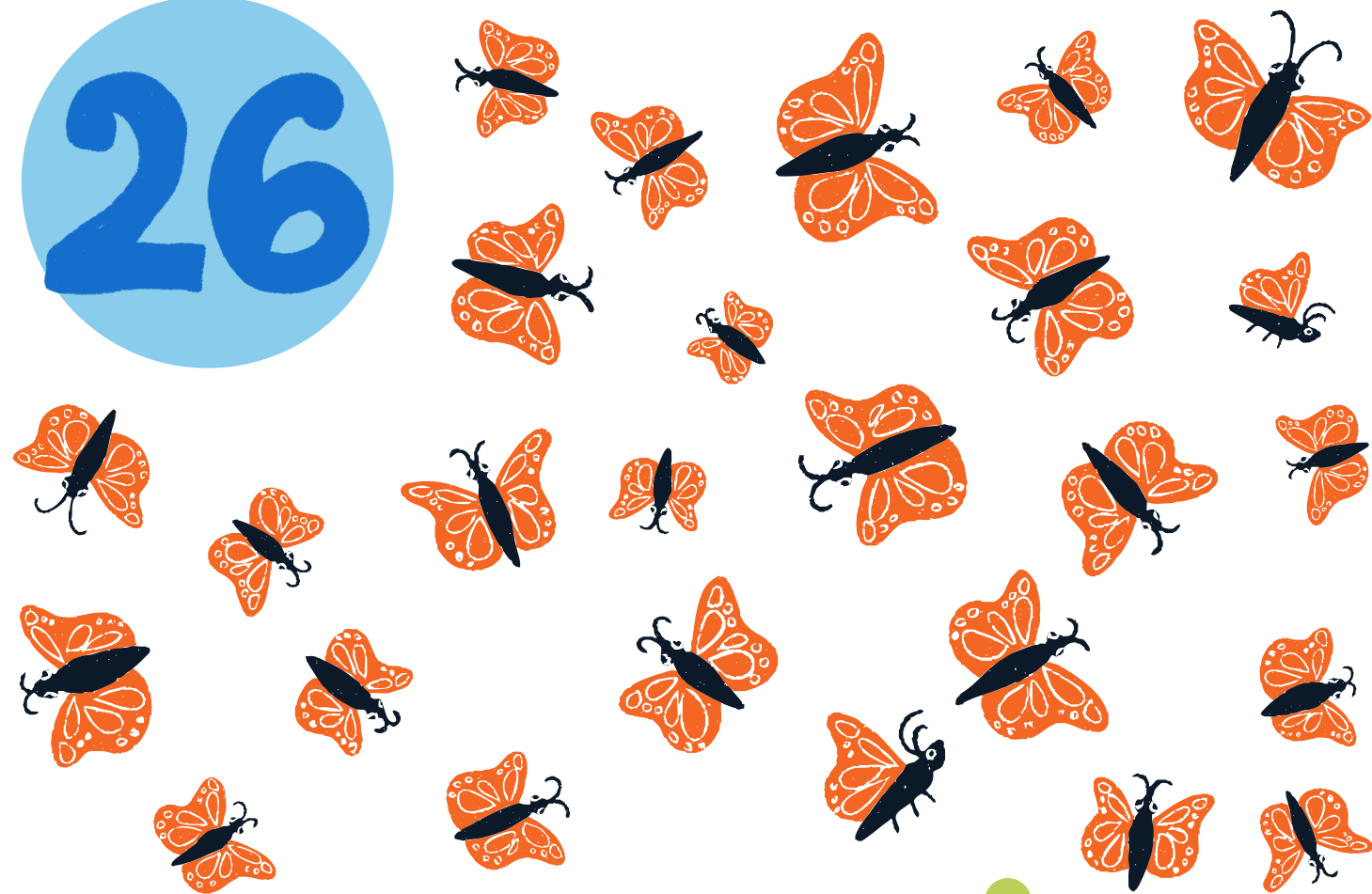
vaen kaatr

25



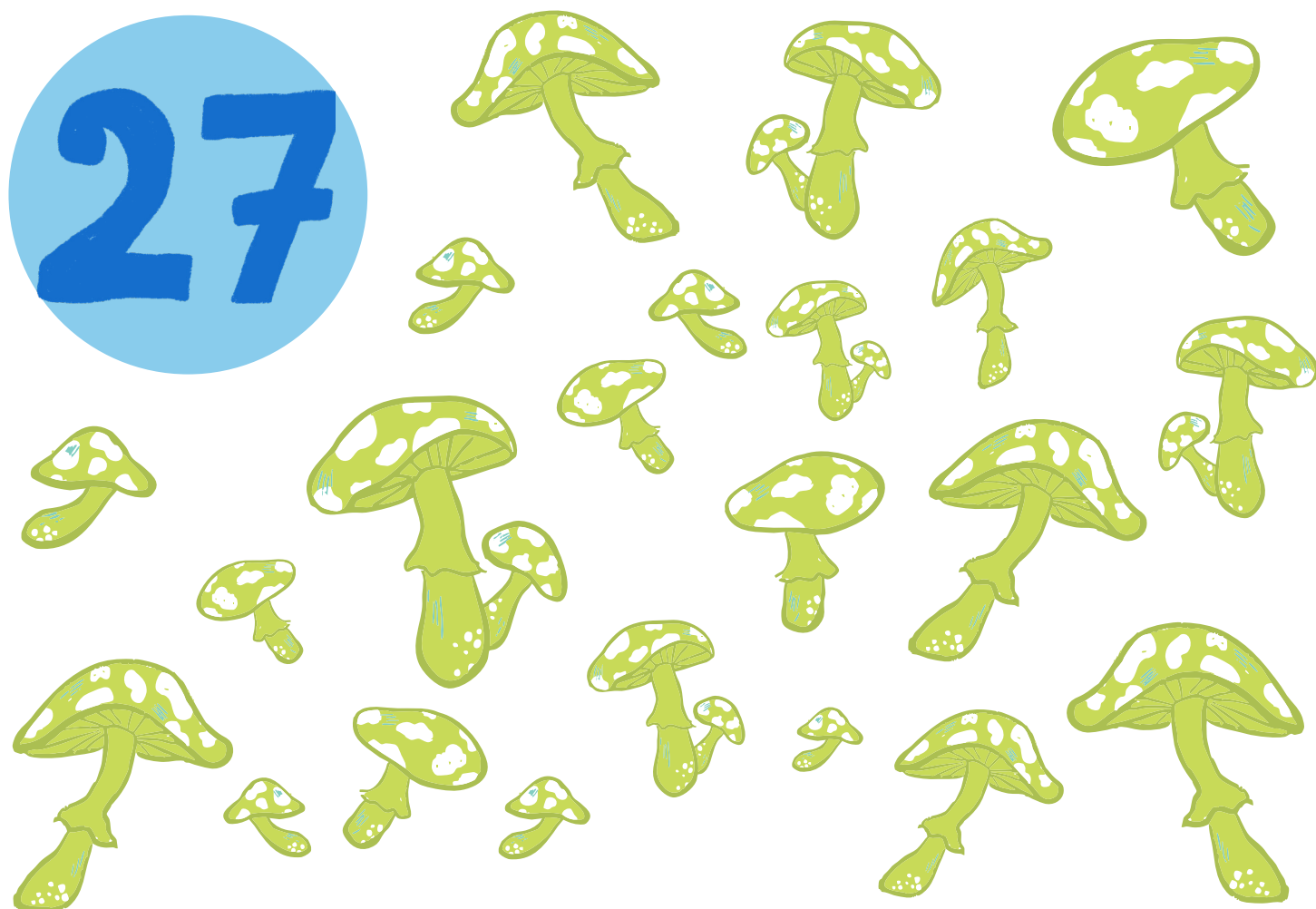
vaen saenk

26



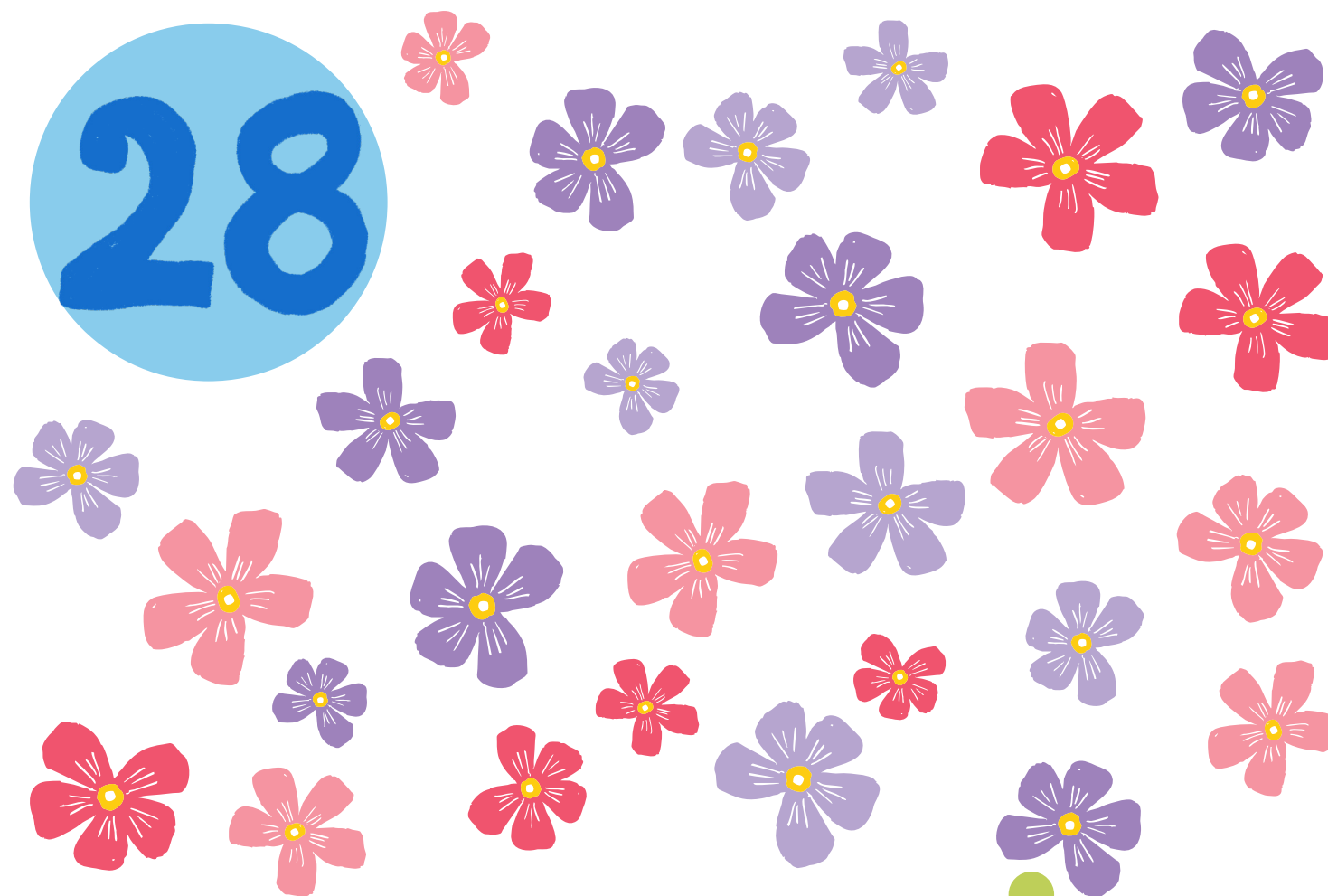
vaen sis

27



vaen set

28



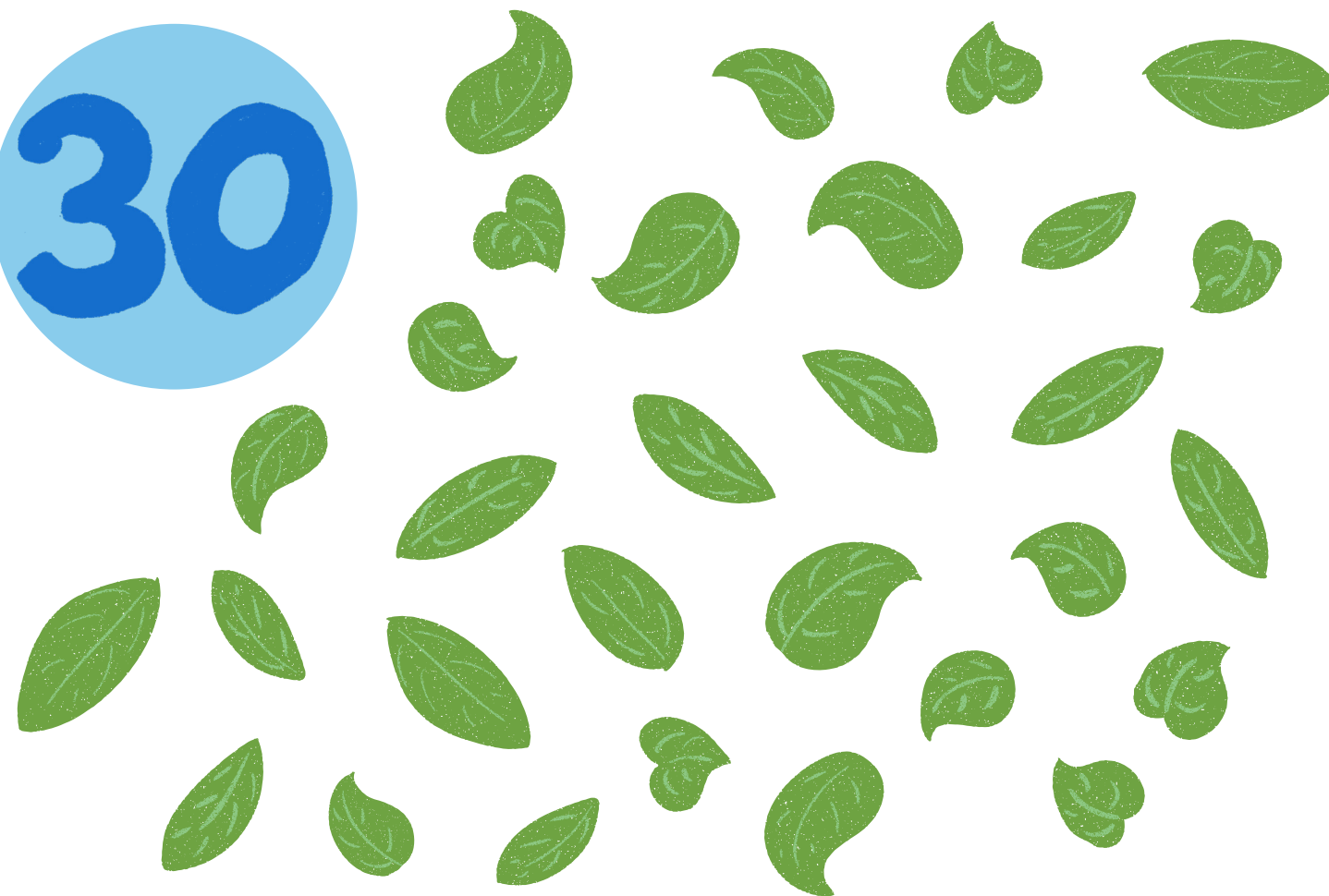
vaen wit

29



vaen neuf

30



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31



traantayayn

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11

oonz

12

dooz

13

trayz

14

katorz

15

kaynz

16

sayz

17

jhiset

18

jhish wit

19

jhish neuf

20

vaen

21

vaentyayn

22

vaen deu

23

vaen trwaa

24

vaen kaatr

25

vaen saenk

26

vaen sis

27

vaen set

28

vaen wit

29

vaen neuf

30

traant

31

traantyayn



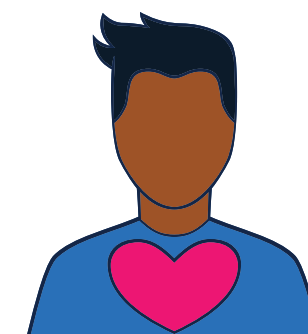
li hallowe'en



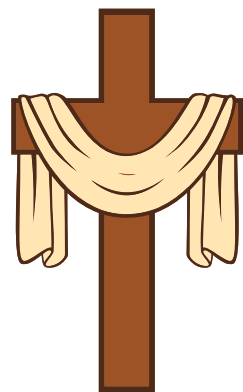
tipishkum!



*li daaryiin
zhoor d'ikol*



*la zhoornii
poor lii paapaa*



li zhoor di paak



*li zhoor
di raamoo*



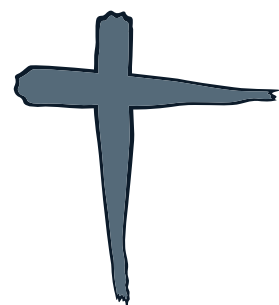
li zhoor di paak



*li zhoor di
saent Patrick*



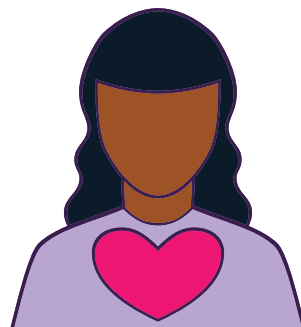
li zhoor di tayr



*mikarjii dii
saandr*



*la zhoornii poor
kaahkiyow lii
naasyoon*



*la zhoornii poor
lii maamaa*



*li saan
zhoor d'ikol*



li zhoor di laan



*la zhoornii
d'amour*



*li zhoor avaan
krissmiss*



li krissmiss



*li zhoor avaan
krissmiss*



li krissmiss



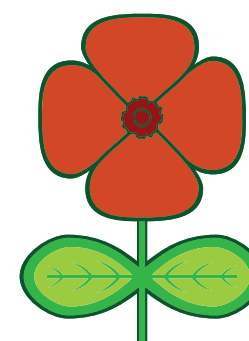
*li praamyii
zhoor d'ikol*



li zhoor di swiss



*la zhoornii di
Louis Riel*



*la zhoornii poor
lii soldaa*



*la zhoornii
maarsii aen
itwayhk*



*la zhoornii di
shmiizh oraanzh*



laenjii
monday





morjii
tuesday

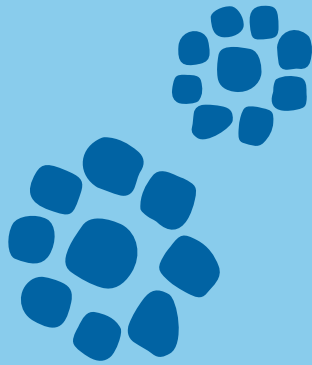


mikaarjii

wednesday



jhwiiijii
thursday





vaandarjii

friday



samjii
saturday



jimaansh
sunday





septaambr

september





oktober

october





novaambur



november





disaambrr

december



zhaanvyii

january



fevriyii
february





maar

march





avrii

april





miii

may





jwaen
june





iiii
summer





latonn

fall





I'ivayr

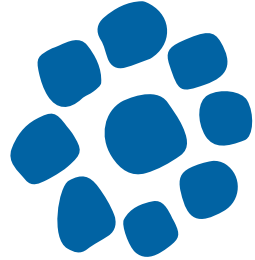
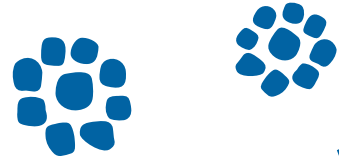
winter





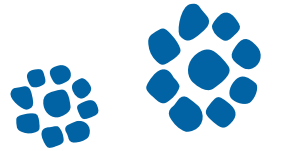
li praentaaan
spring





anoosh

today (is)...





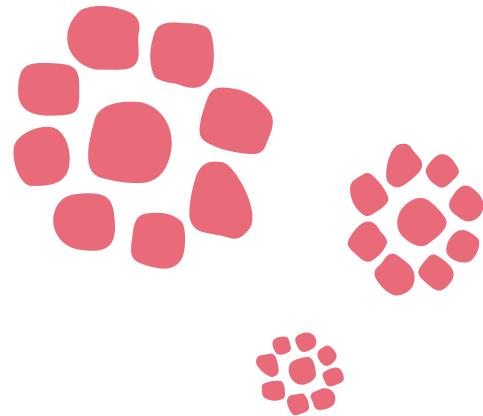
dimaeen

tomorrow (is)...



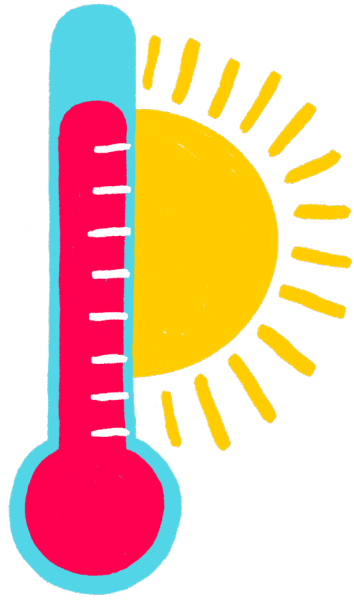


yayr
yesterday (was)...



Word of the day

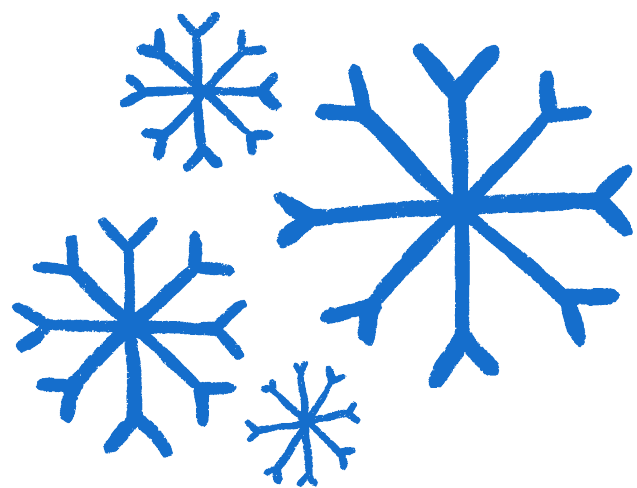




kishitayw
warm



yootin
windy



mishpoon
snowing



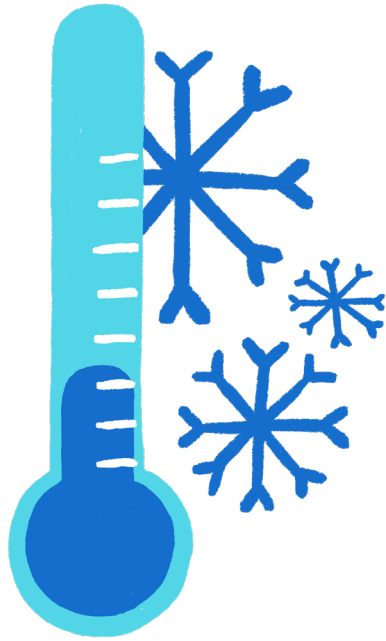
washayshkwun
sunny



yiikwashkwun
cloudy



kimooowun
raining



kishinow
cold



l'ark aan syel
rainbow



lii koozin



**aen
pchi baybii**



aen shyaen



aen minoosh



moon frayr



ma seur



ni paapaa



ni maamaa



ni mooshoom



noohkoom



papaamoohta



pooshinii



niimi



kwaashkwahti



minihkway



miitsho



aamachiway



pimaatakaa



**nikoohtay
li bwaa**



pimbahtaa



kishiipaykishchay



api
sit



lii
zhoo zhoo

ooshipayhikay

ABC



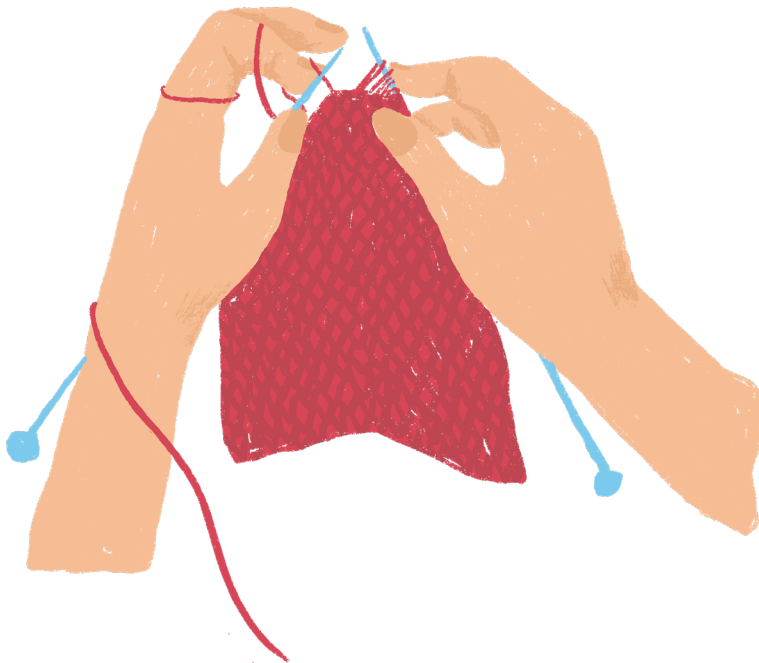
ooshitaahk



akishchikay



kiishisha



ooshtaa



pooshtashakay



payta



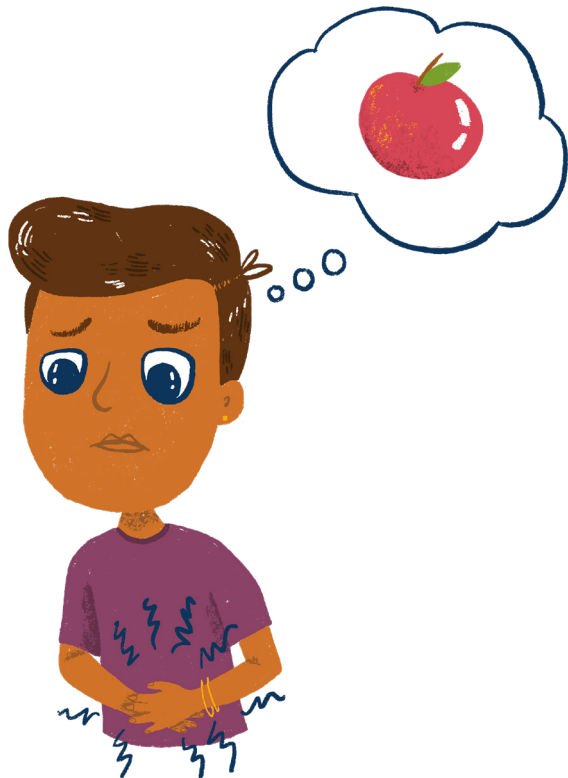
takishkata



kaatchitin



**ni noohtay
yaapakwan**



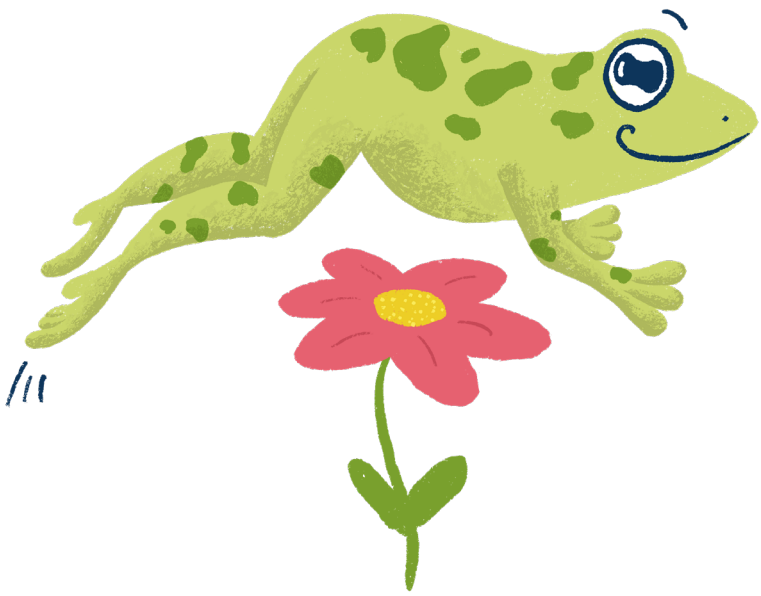
**ni noohtay
kataan**



pakamaha



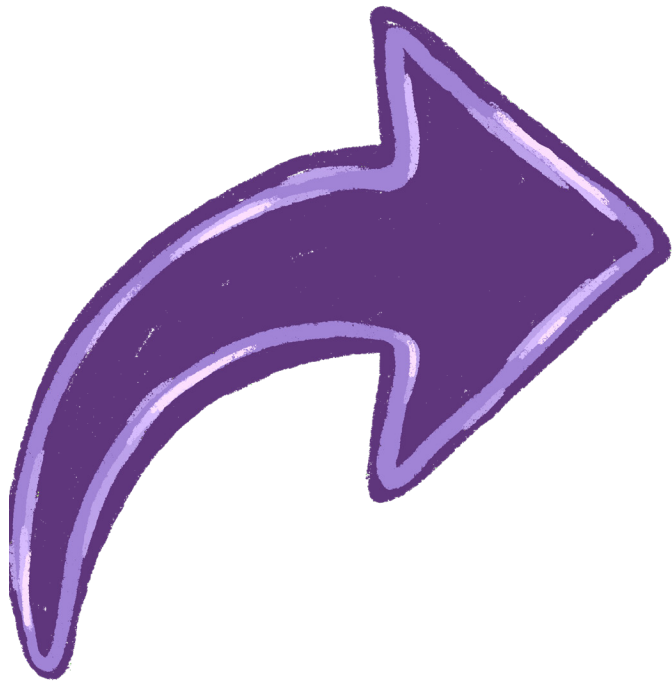
maashchii



kiihtwaam



agoosh



adret



payhkihta



li korr



the body

lii zhveu

hair

lii dway

fingers

la tet

head

li maen

hands

aen naray

ear

lii zyeu

eyes

li nii

nose

aen braa

arm

la boush

mouth

li vaantr

stomach

li koodr

elbow

aen zhnoo

knee

lii pyii

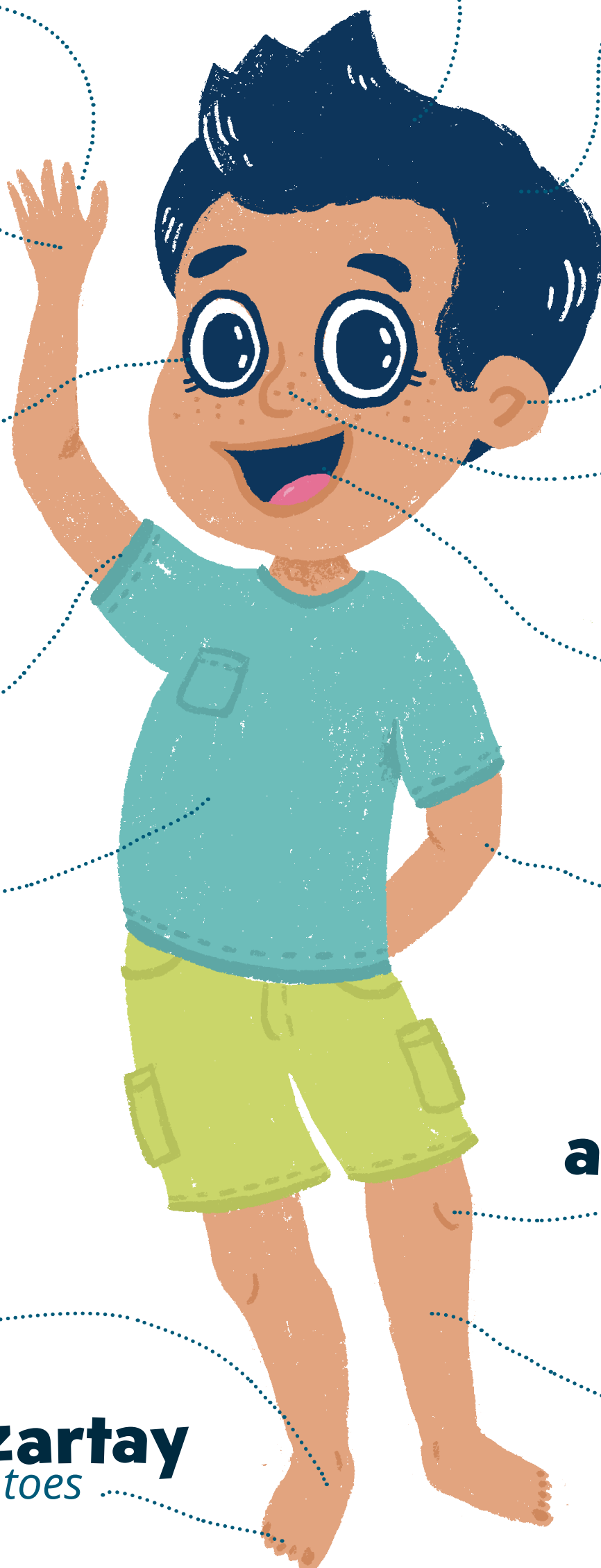
feet

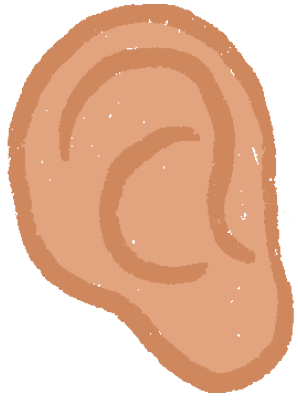
lii jaamb

legs

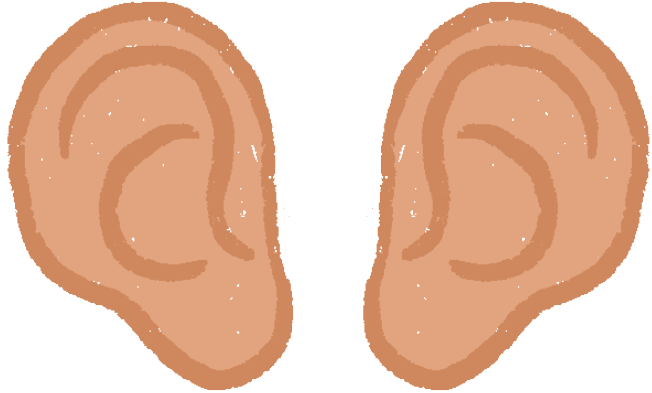
lii zartay

toes





aen naray



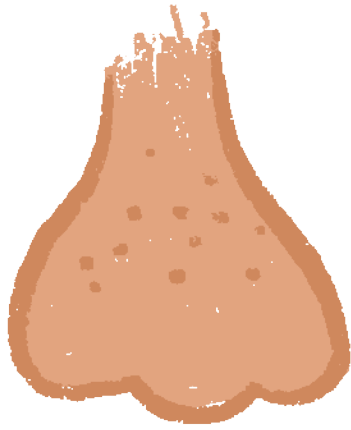
lii zaray



aen zyeu



lii zyeu



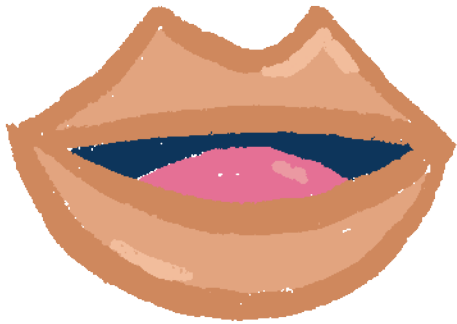
li nii



li maen



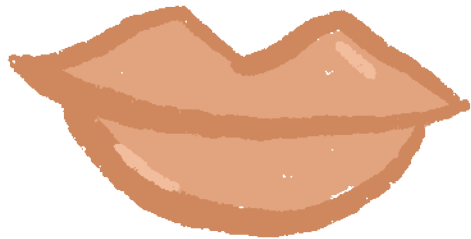
li pyii



la boosh



la laang



lii babinn