Early Learning Classroom Package

Heritage Michif

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

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 it's 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 shiikawk 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 Corrigal
Laura Burnouf
Maureen Belanger

Michif French Contributors:
Mataant Ang
Pawpaw Sonny
Maymair Phyllis

Use these apps for pronunciation:

Northern Michif To Go | Heritage Michif To Go | Michif French

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

Discover learning, language,& culture resources!

métisgathering.ca

Classroom Labels



la taab

the table

enn shayzh

a chair

laarlozh

clock

lii zarmwayr

the cabinets

li sink

the sink

la kornish

the shelf

li fridge

the fridge

lii lumyayr

the lights

aen pwel

a stove

li plaanshii

the floor

li meur

the wall

la twaalet

the bathroom

la kaan poor
kaa waypinikayhk

the garbage can

li shaasii

the window

la port

the door

li balay

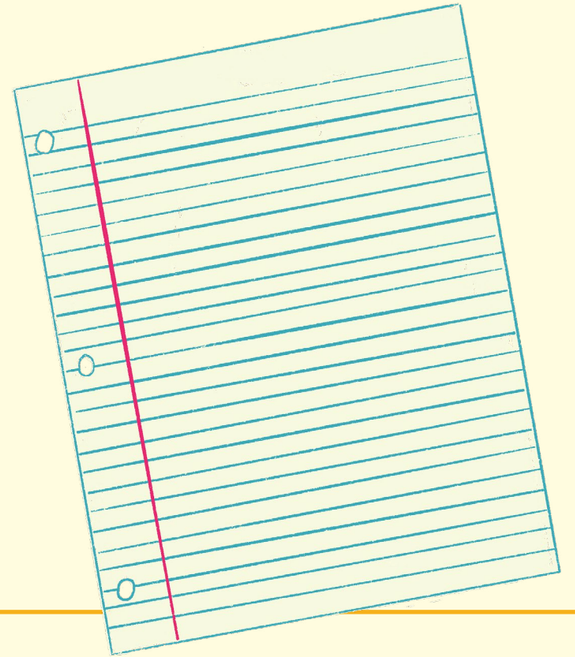
the broom

li savoon

the soap

li paapyii

the paper



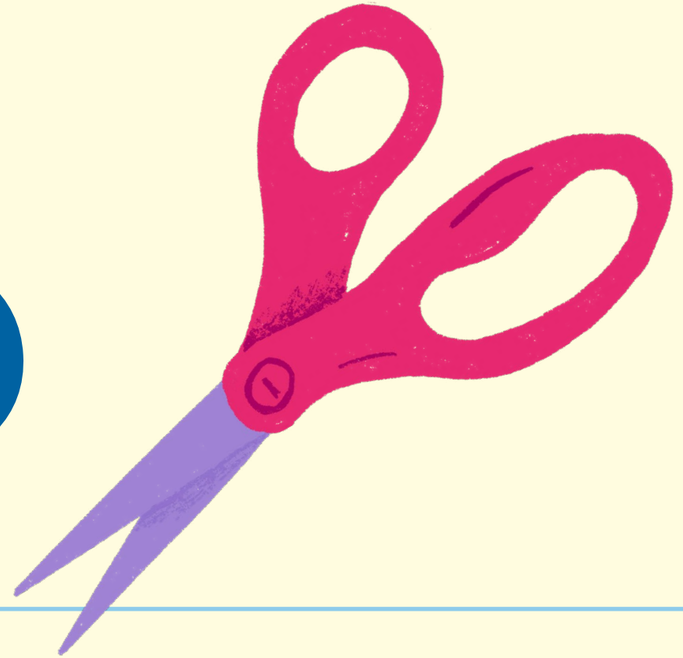
li bus

the bus



lii siizoo

the scissors



la kol

the glue



kaashiipayikun



eraser

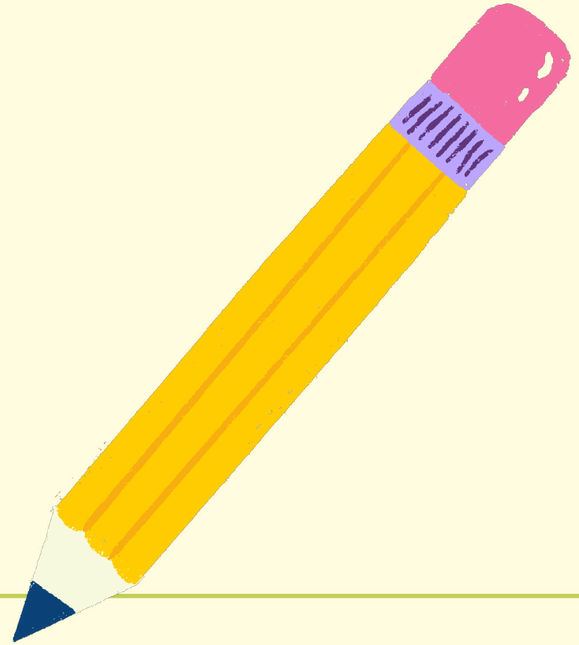
mayławay

play



aen kriyoon

a pencil



aen krayoon

a crayon



aykooshi

that's it; that's all



miina ka waapamitin(awow)

see you later (everyone)



taanishi

hello



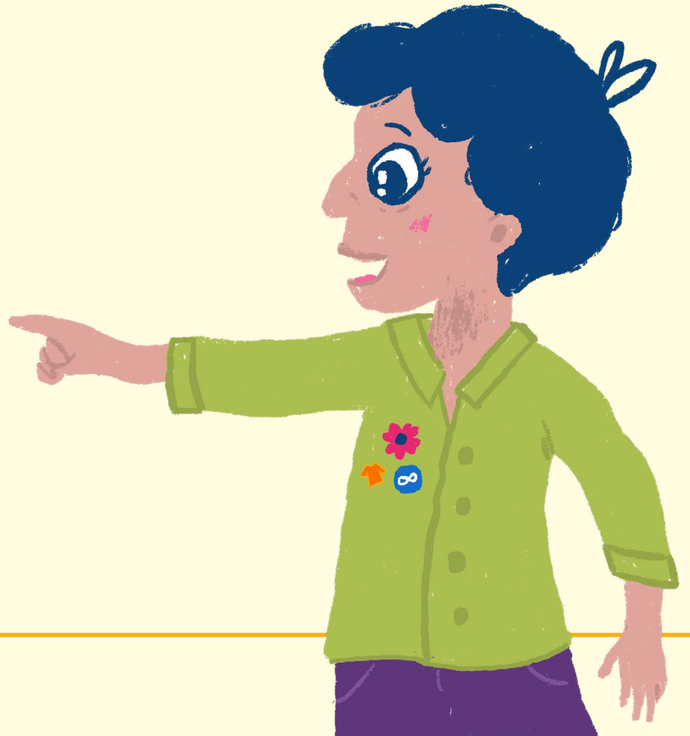
aashtum(ik) oota

come here (all of you)



oota itapi(k)

look here (everyone)



moon
noon si...

my name is...



dishinihkaashoon

my name is...



ni miyeuyhtayn

I'm happy



s’id valeur

I’m sad



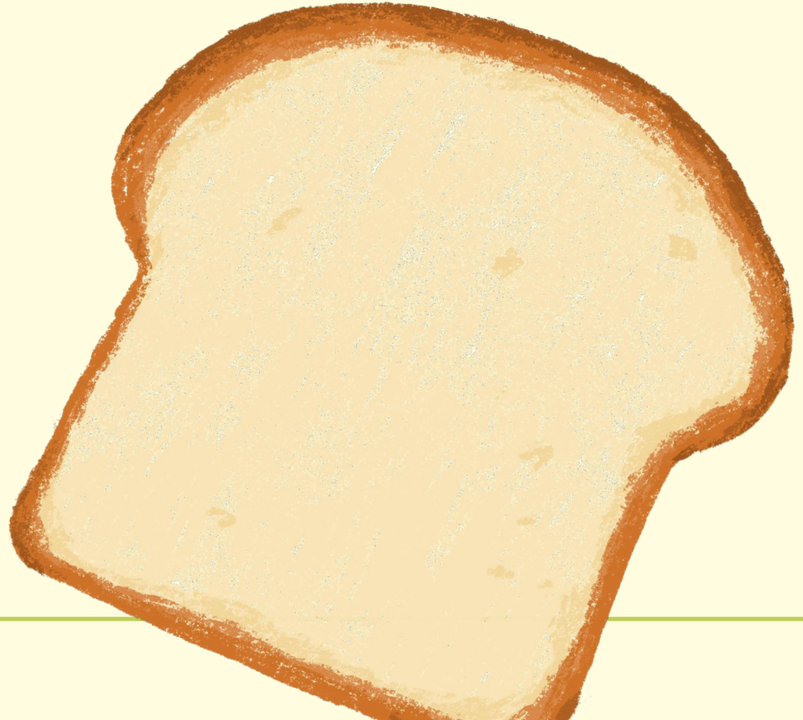
kaa niikaniit

leader



li paen

bread



maytres d'ikol

teacher (female)



la chwiizinn

kitchen



maytr d'ikol

teacher (male)



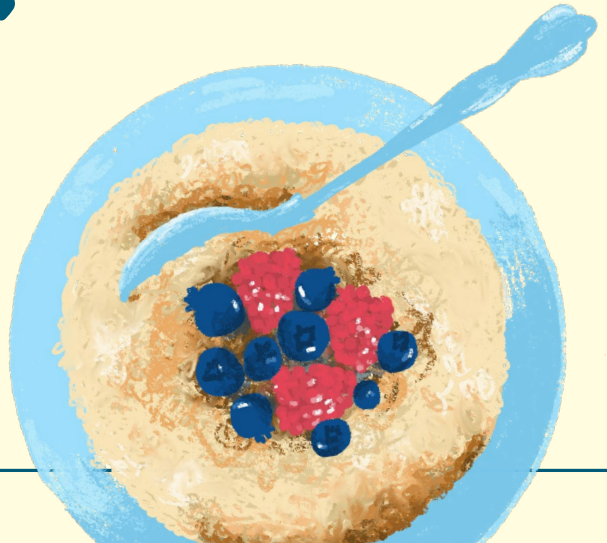
la soup

soup



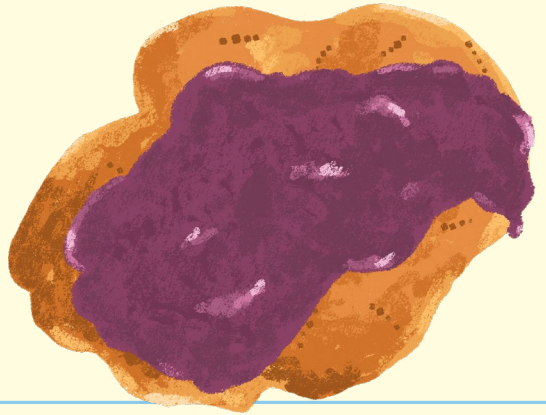
li porridge

oatmeal



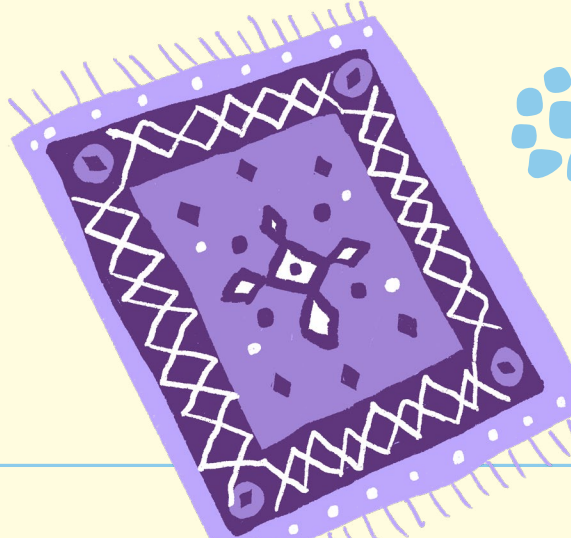
la gaalet

bannock



aen tapii

a rug



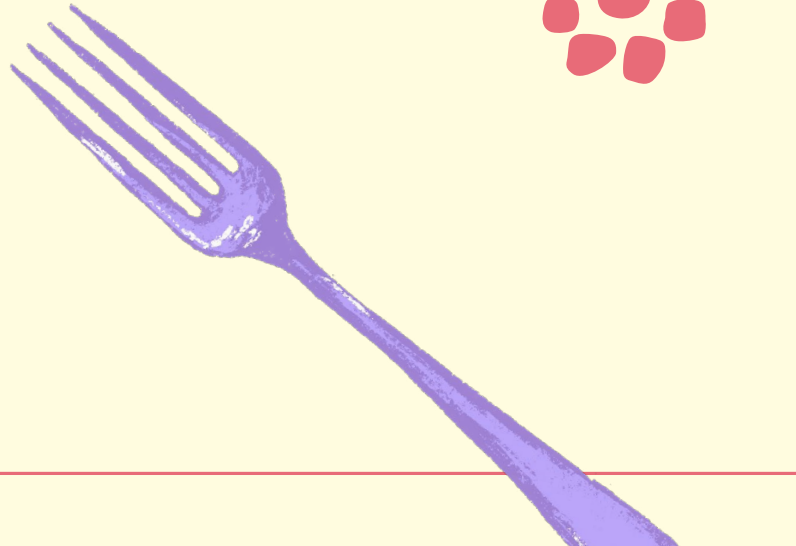
enn
chooyayr

a spoon



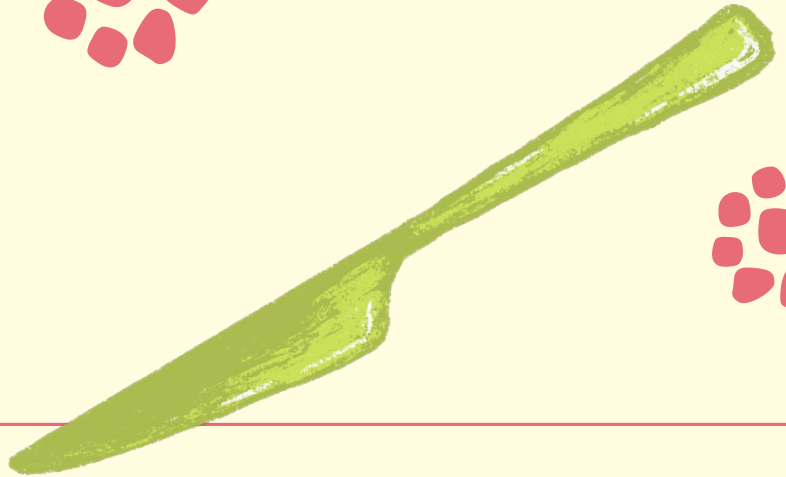
enn foorshet

a fork



aen kootoo

a knife



la shaaret di la rivyayr roozh

the red river cart



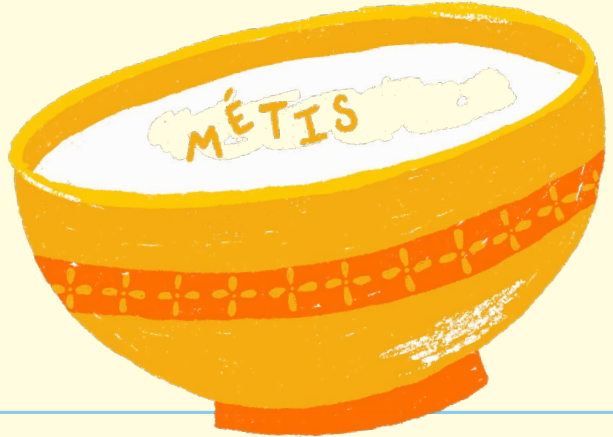
aen paviiyoon

a flag



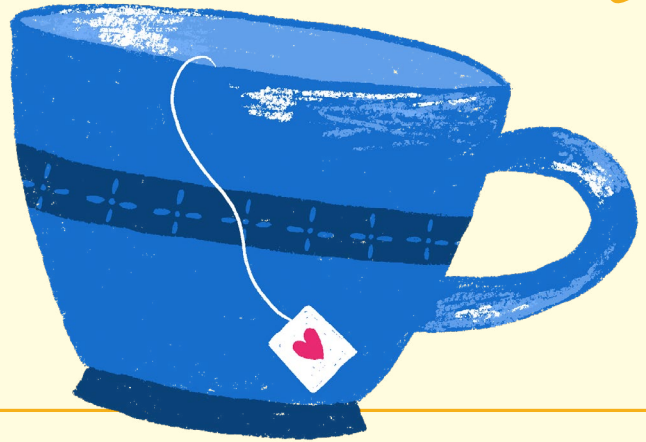
enn bol

a bowl



enn bol

a cup



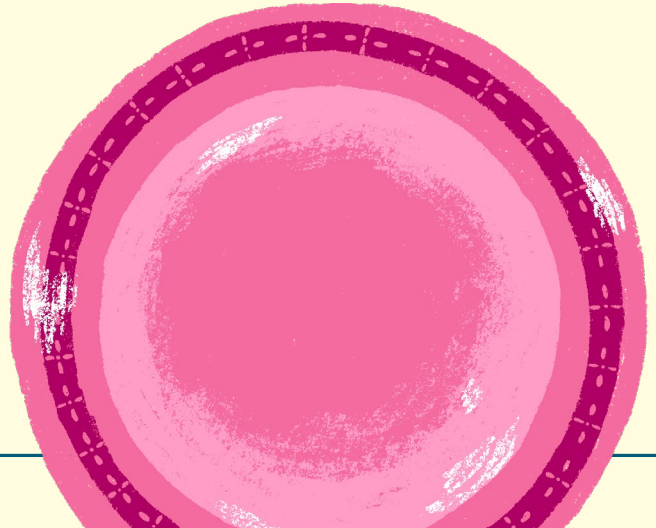
dilet

milk



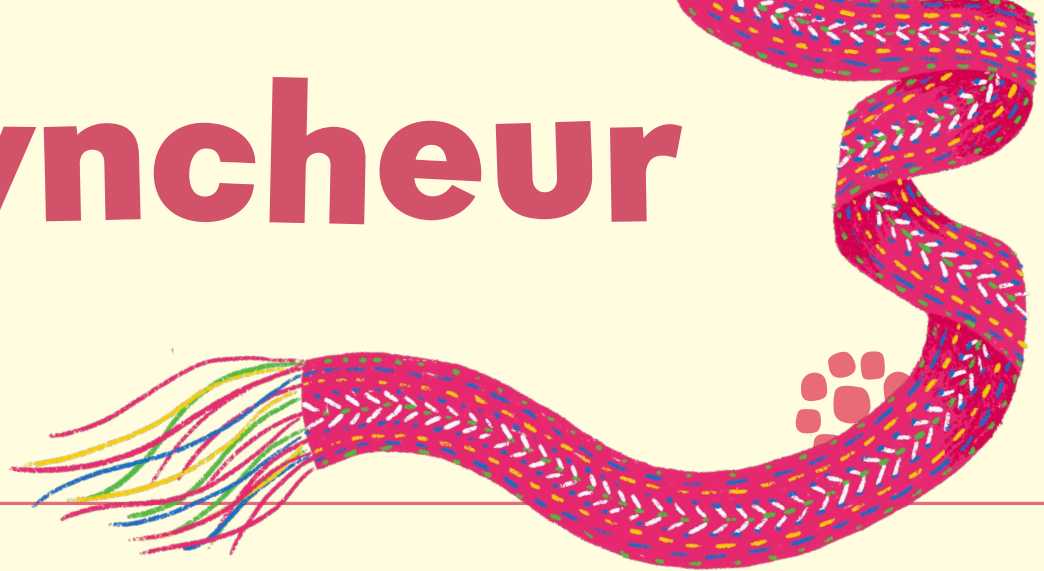
aen naasyet

a plate



enn sayncheur flayshii

a sash



aen vyayloon

a fiddle



Classroom Posters



1



henn

2



deu

3



trwaa

4



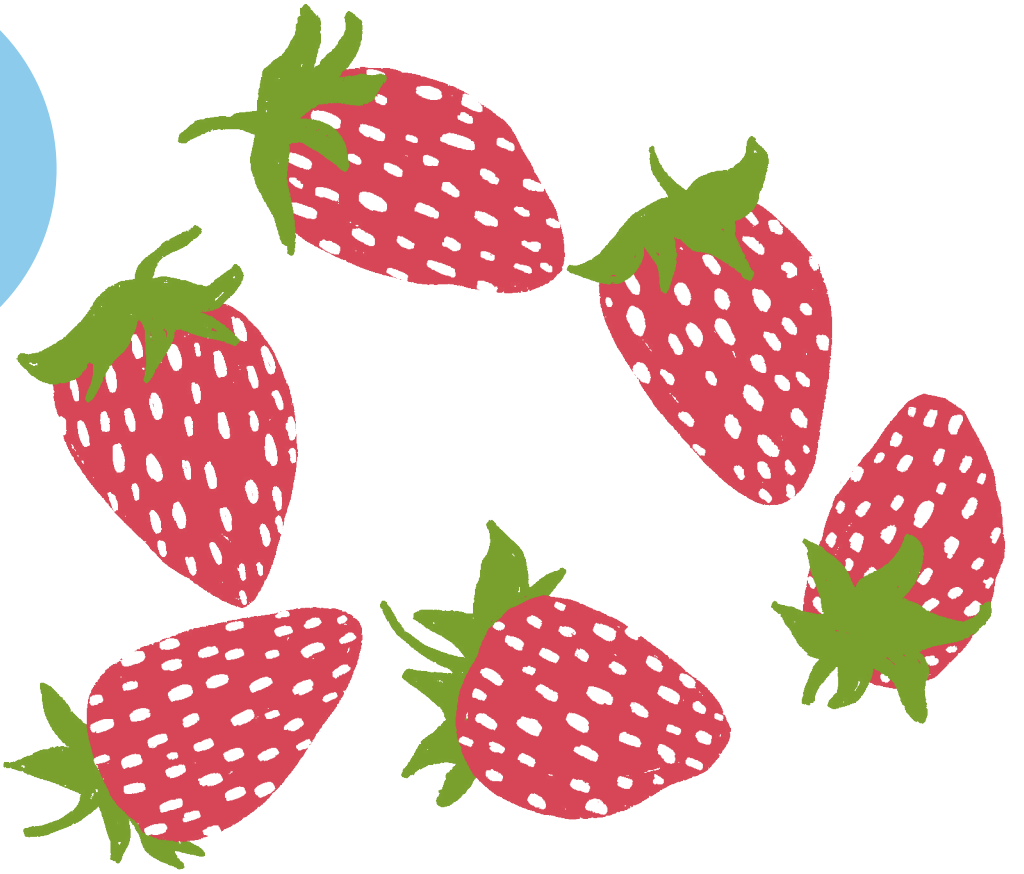
kaatr

5



saenk

6



sis

7



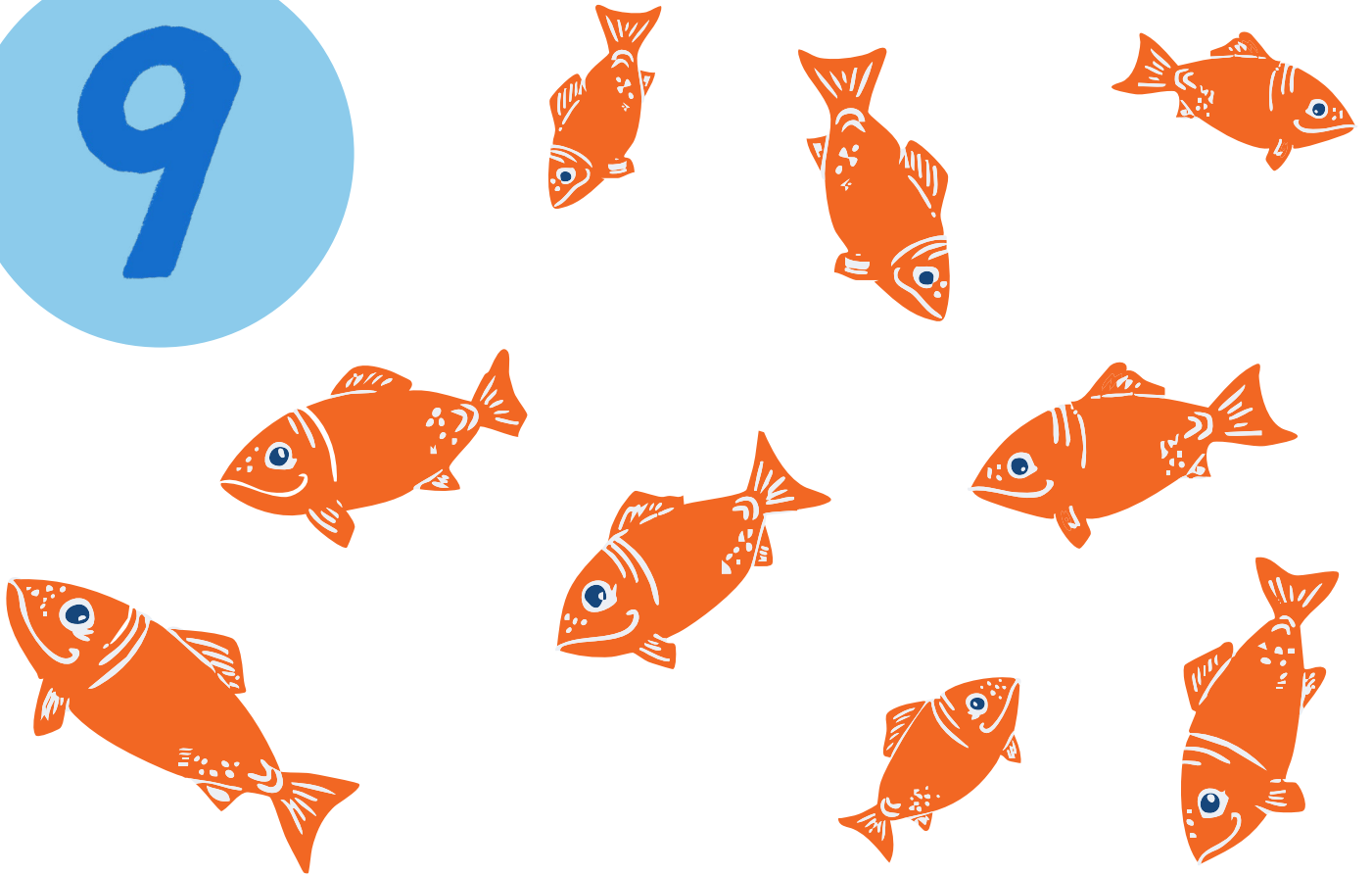
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8



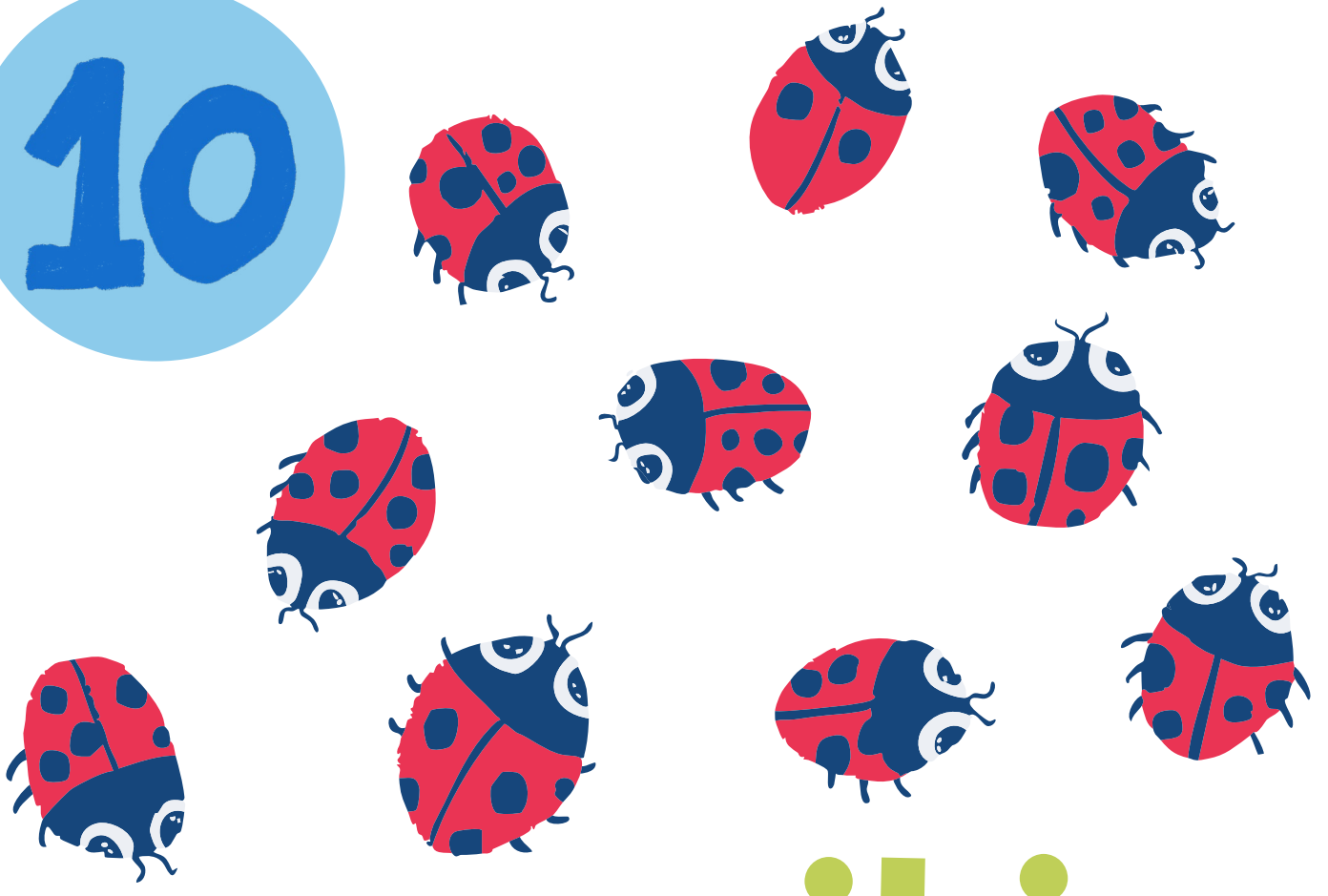
wit

9



neuf

10

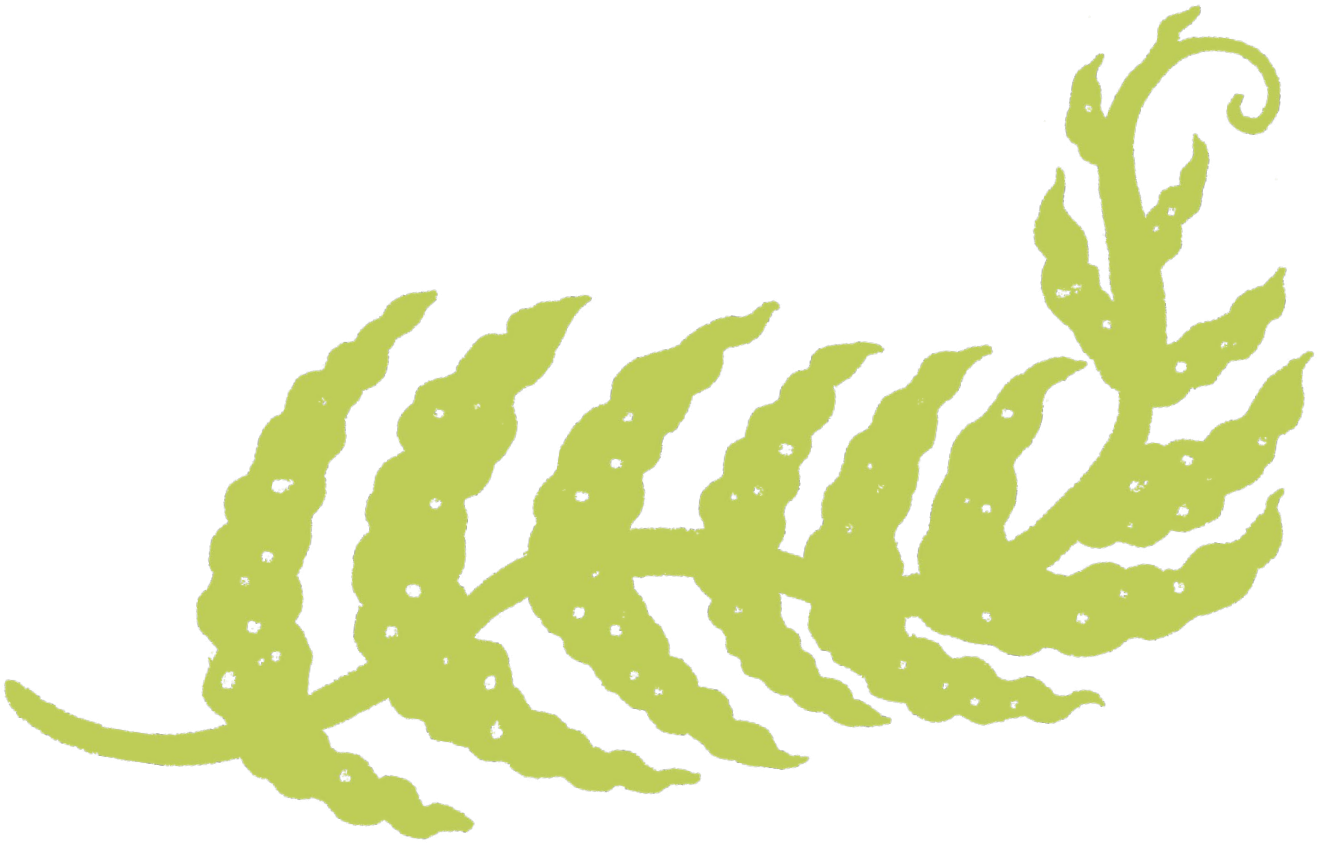


jhis


roozh


oraanzh

zhoon



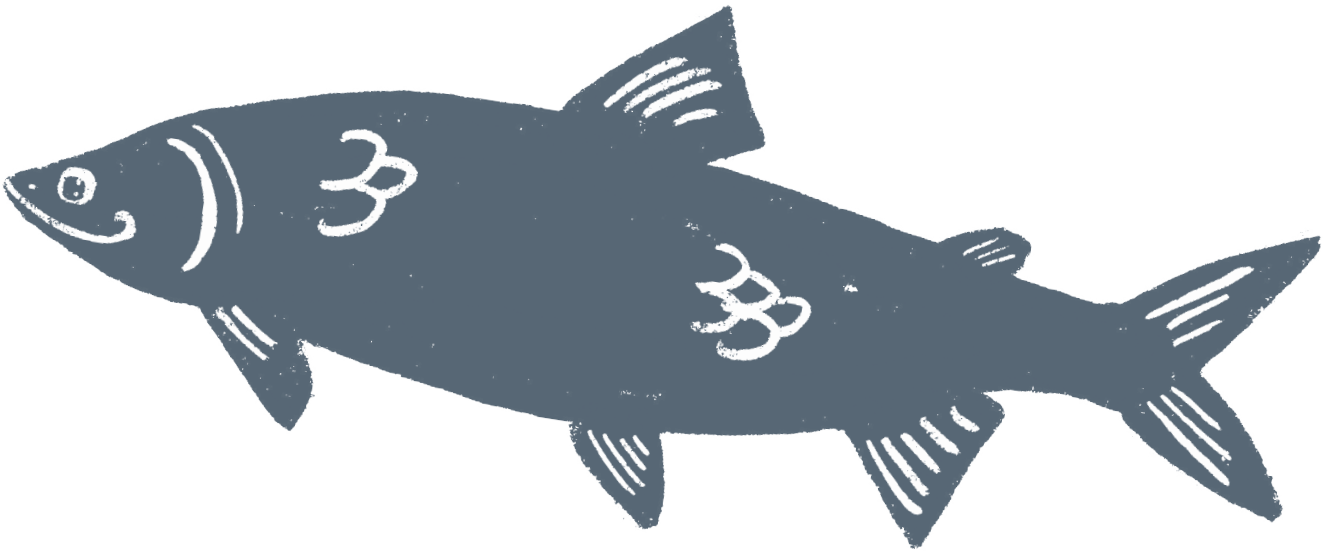
ver



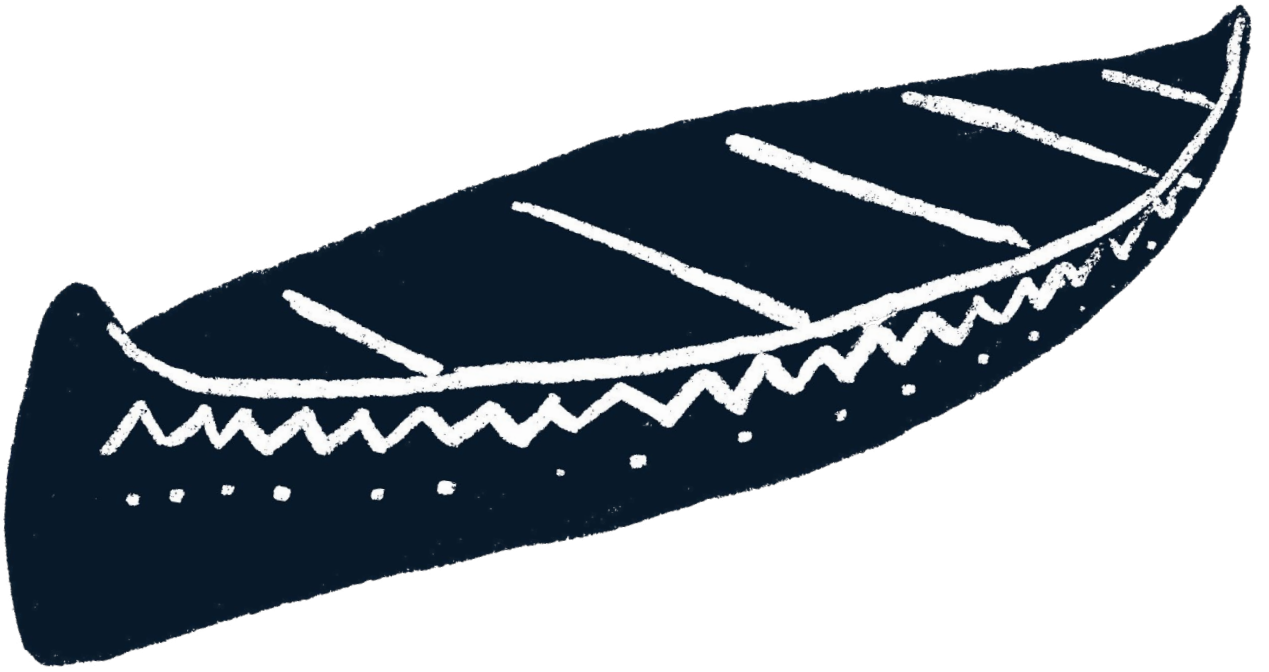
bleu



vyalet



grii



nwayr



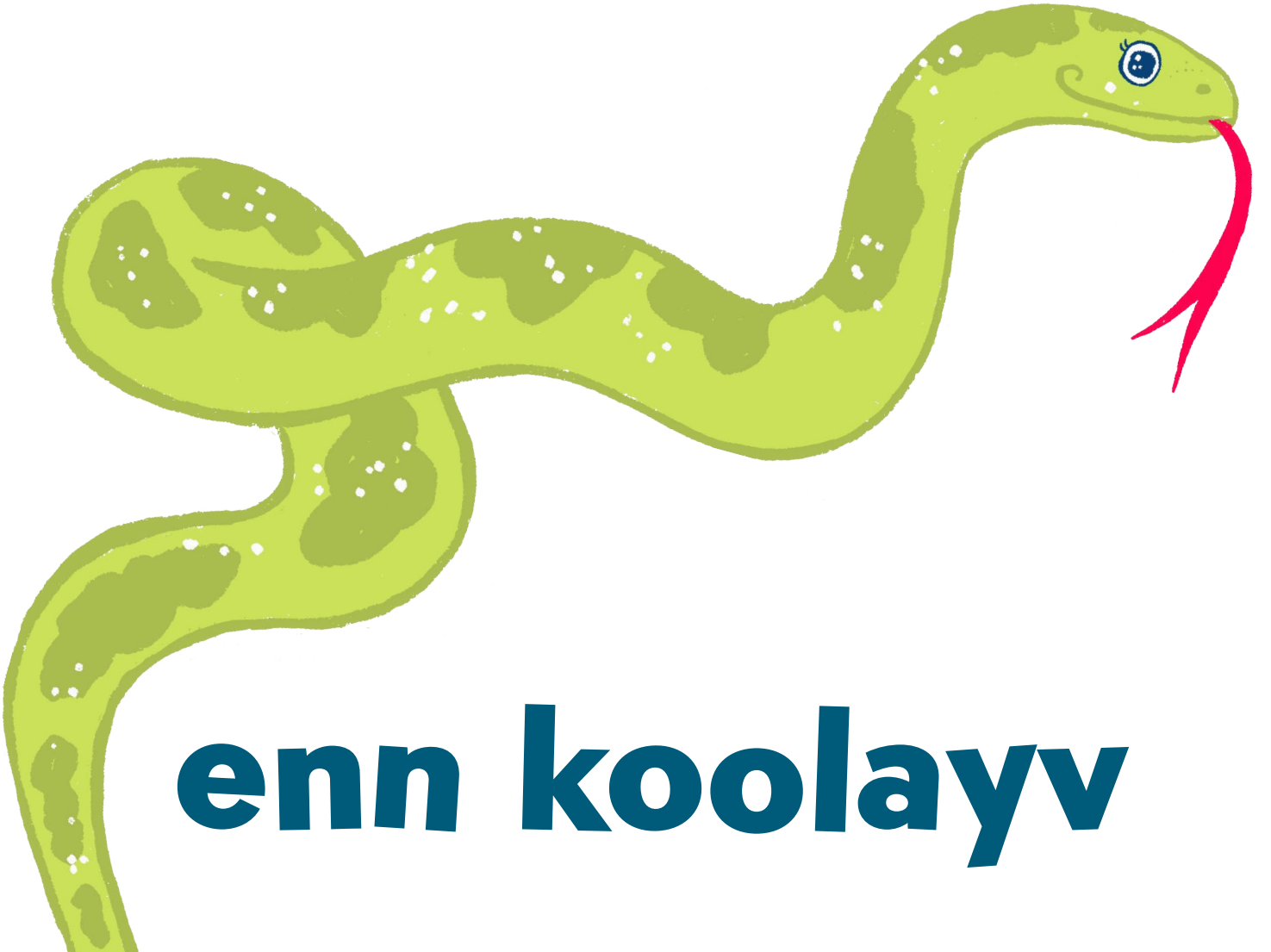
blaan



aen shikaak



aen kaastor



enn koolayv



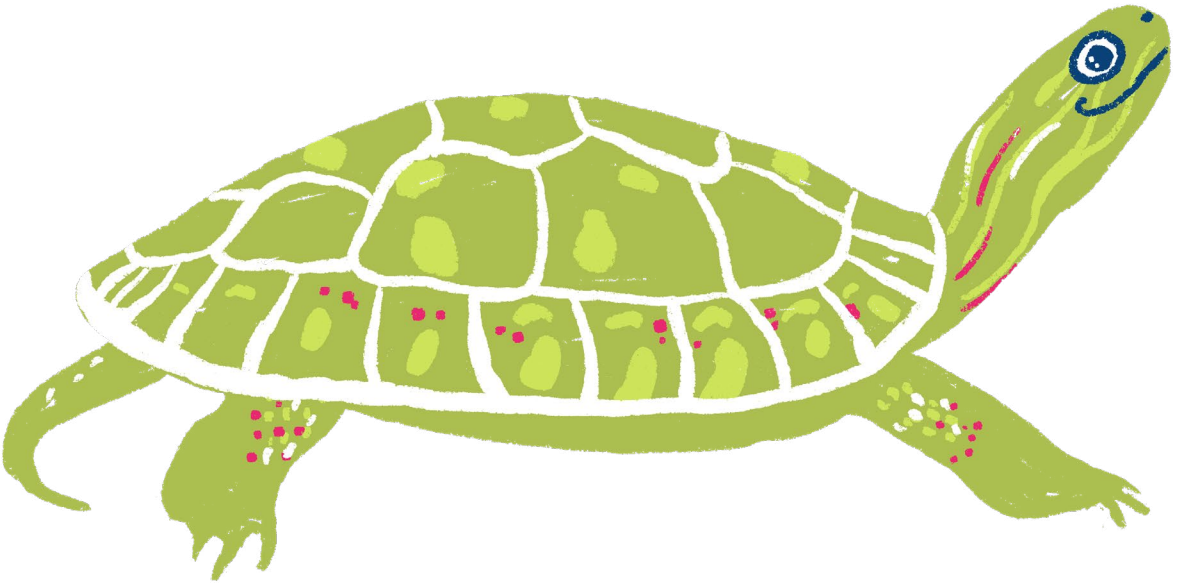
aen noor



aen rinaar



aen raakoon



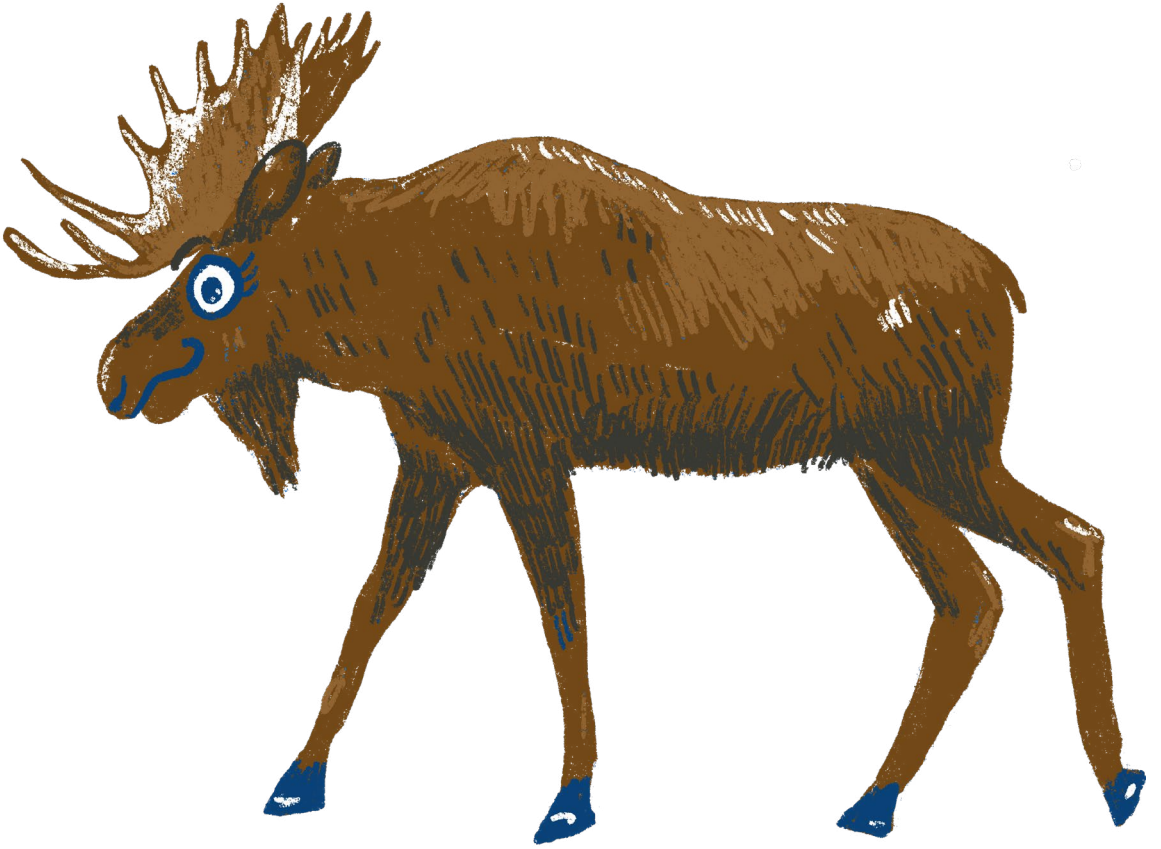
la torcheu



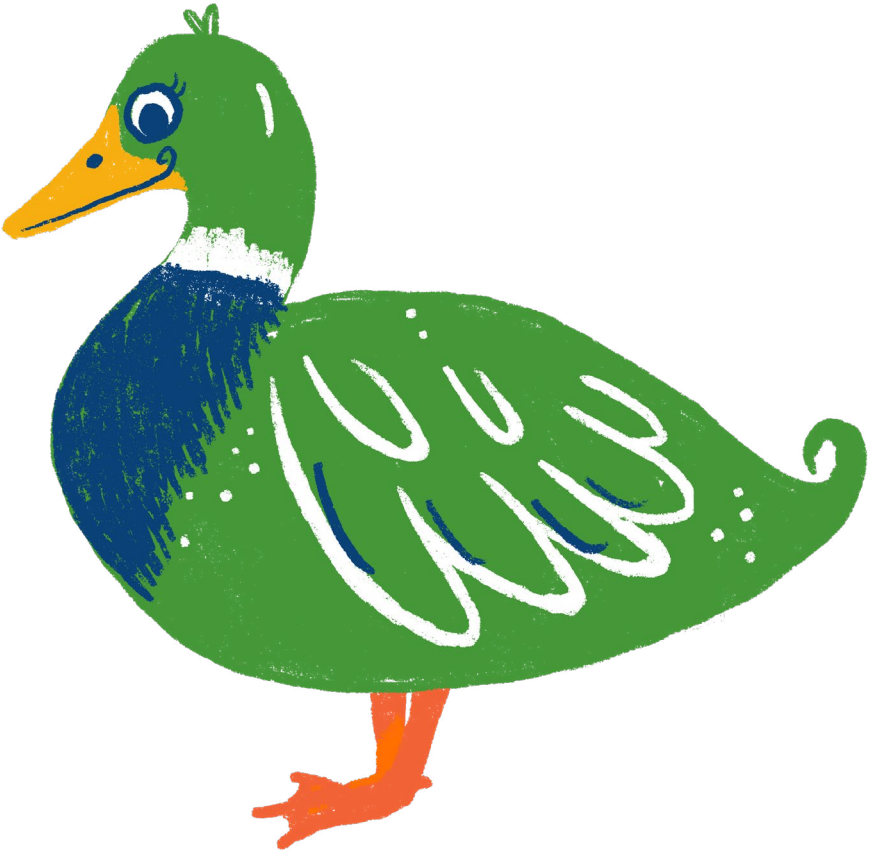
enn swiss



enn bish



l’aariyaanl



li kanaar



la poul



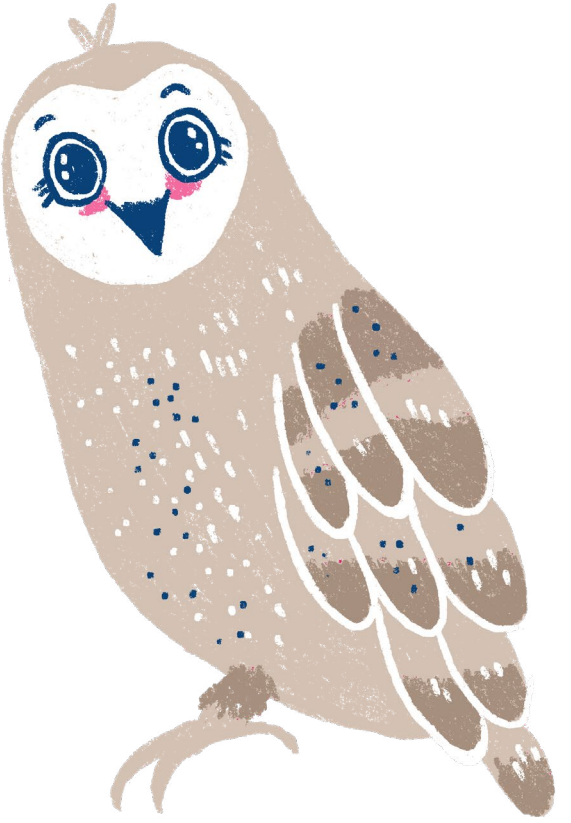
aen nwayzoo



aen loo



aen shoorii shood



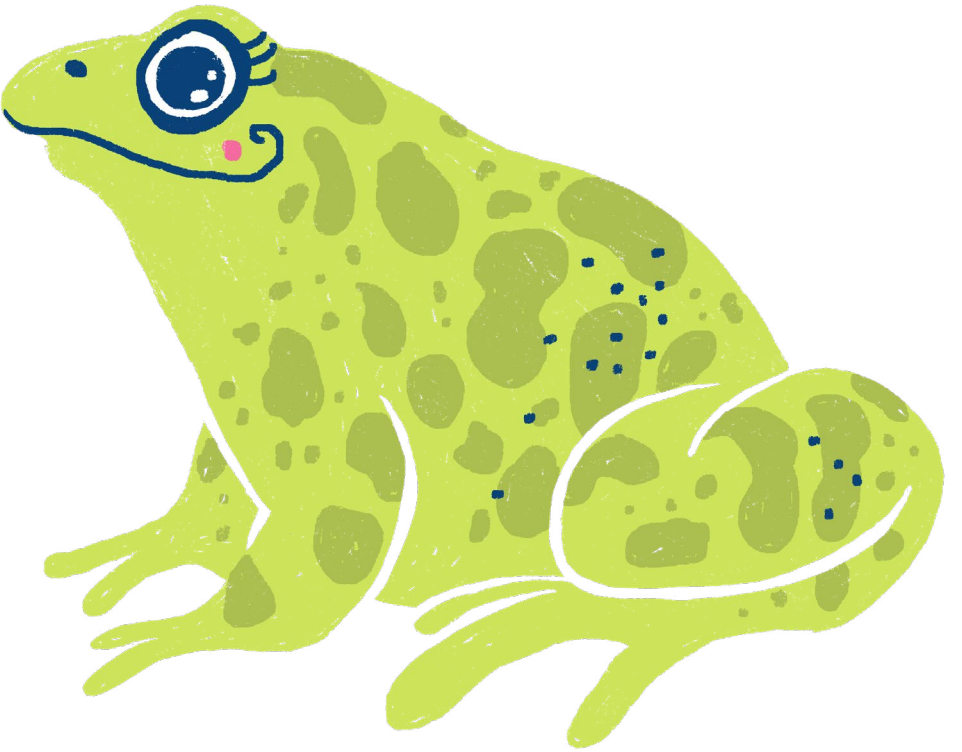
aen yiiboo



li pwasoon



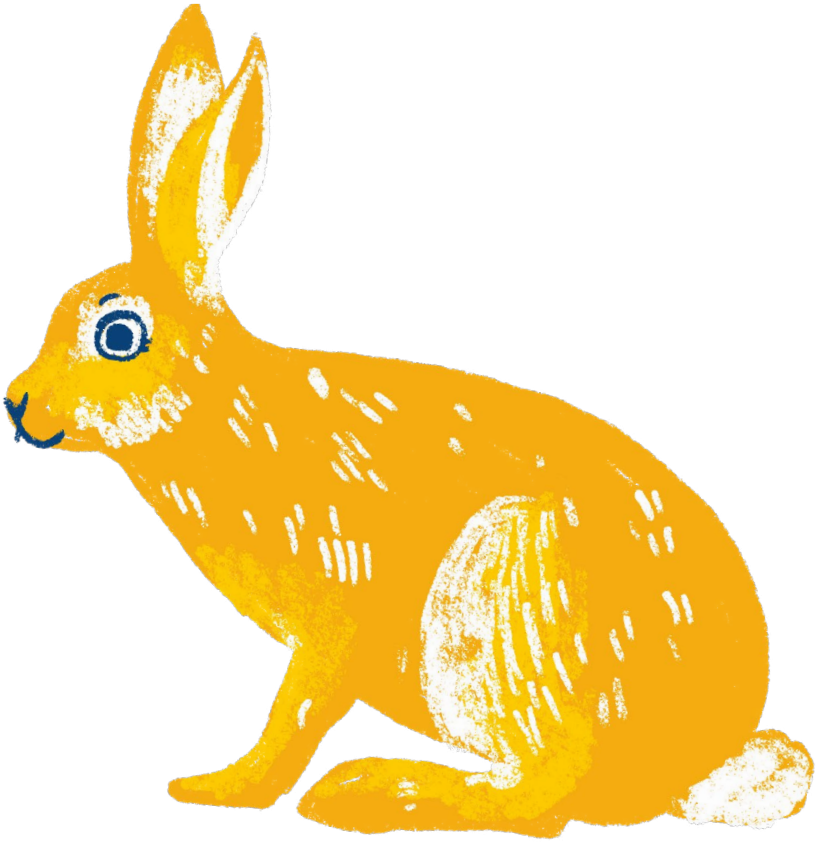
aen portipik



enn goornouy



li bufloo



aen lyayv

1



henn

2



deu

3



trwaa

4



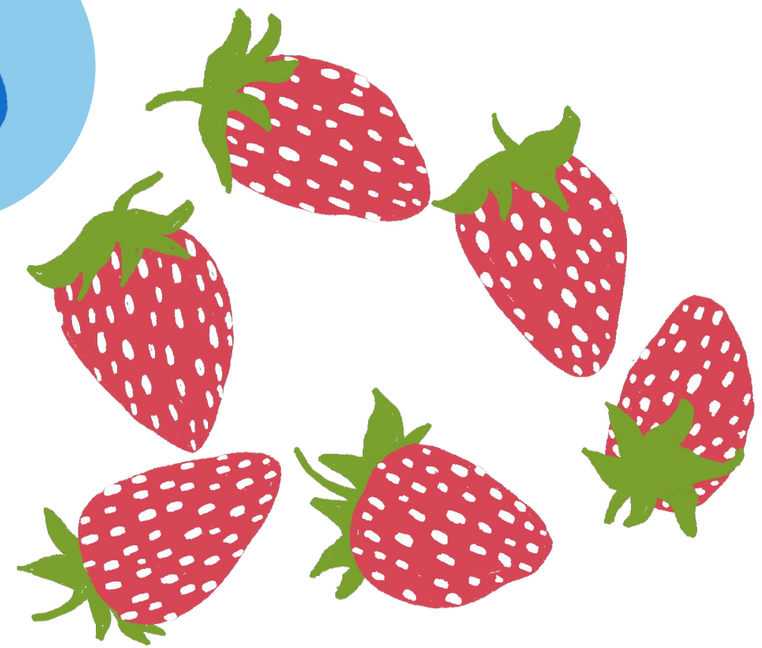
kaatr

5



saenk

6



sis

7

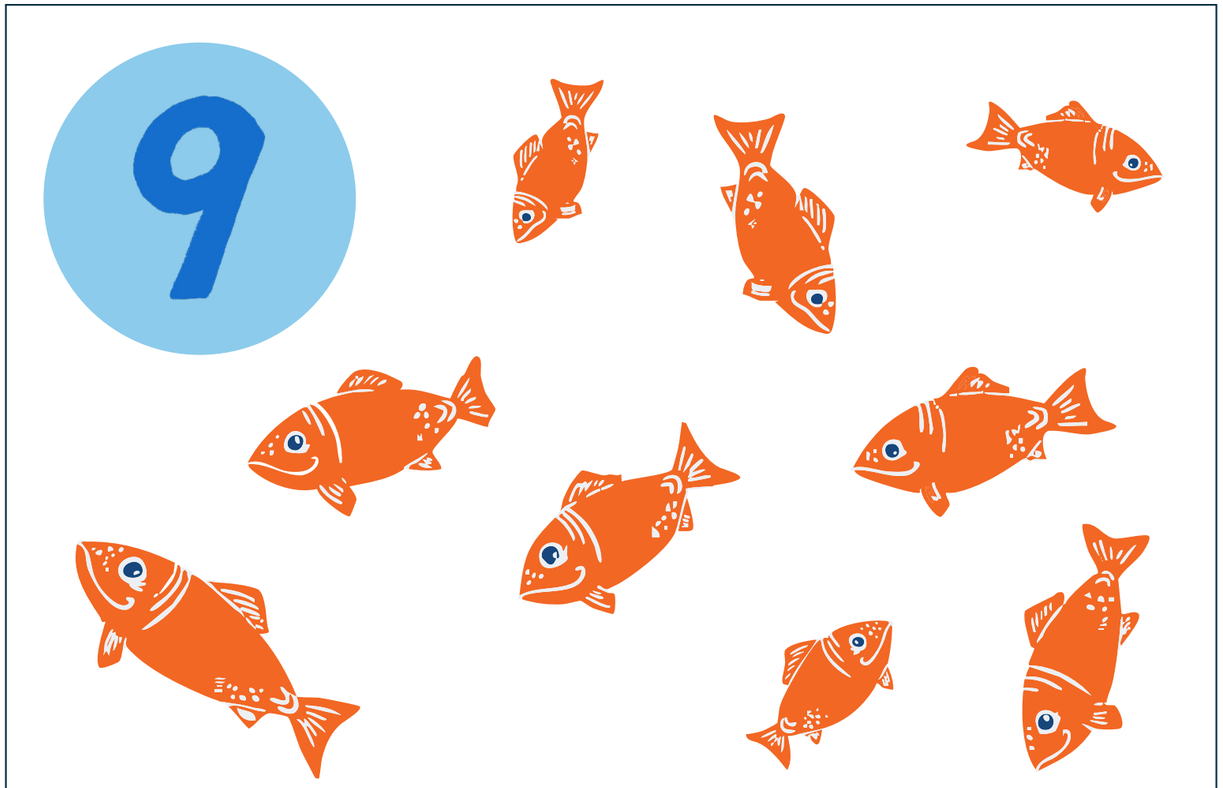


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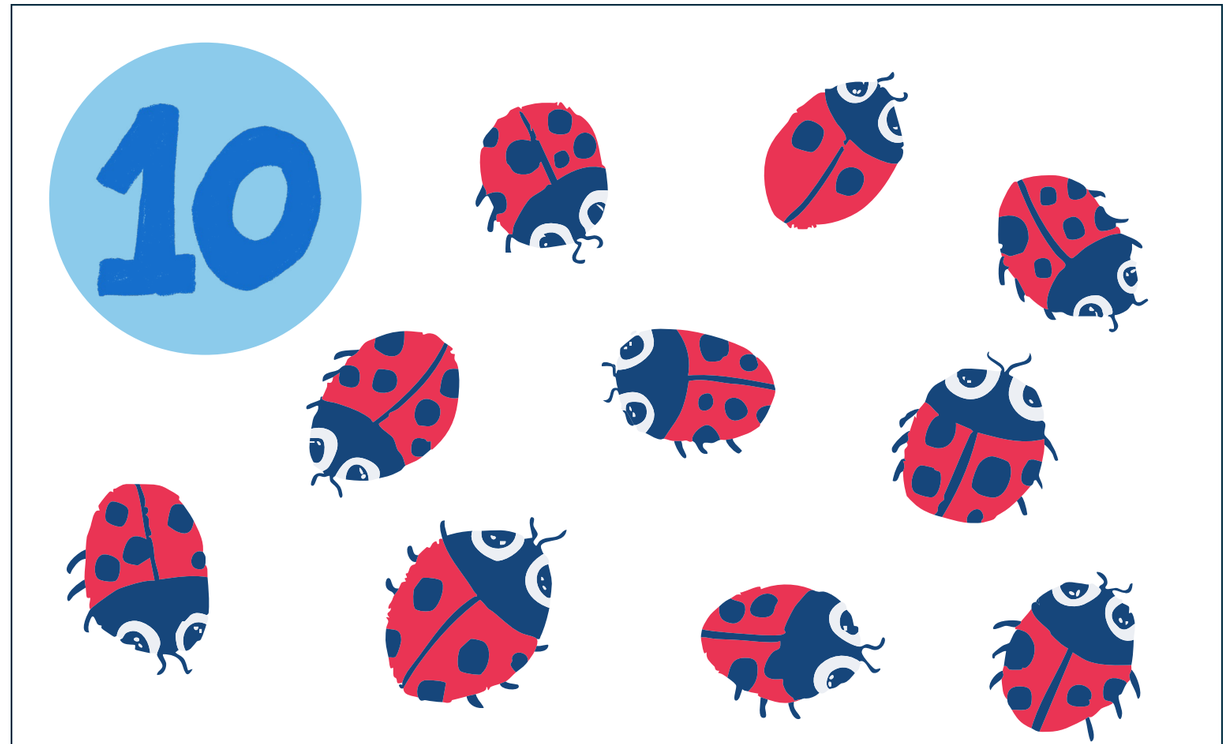
8



wit

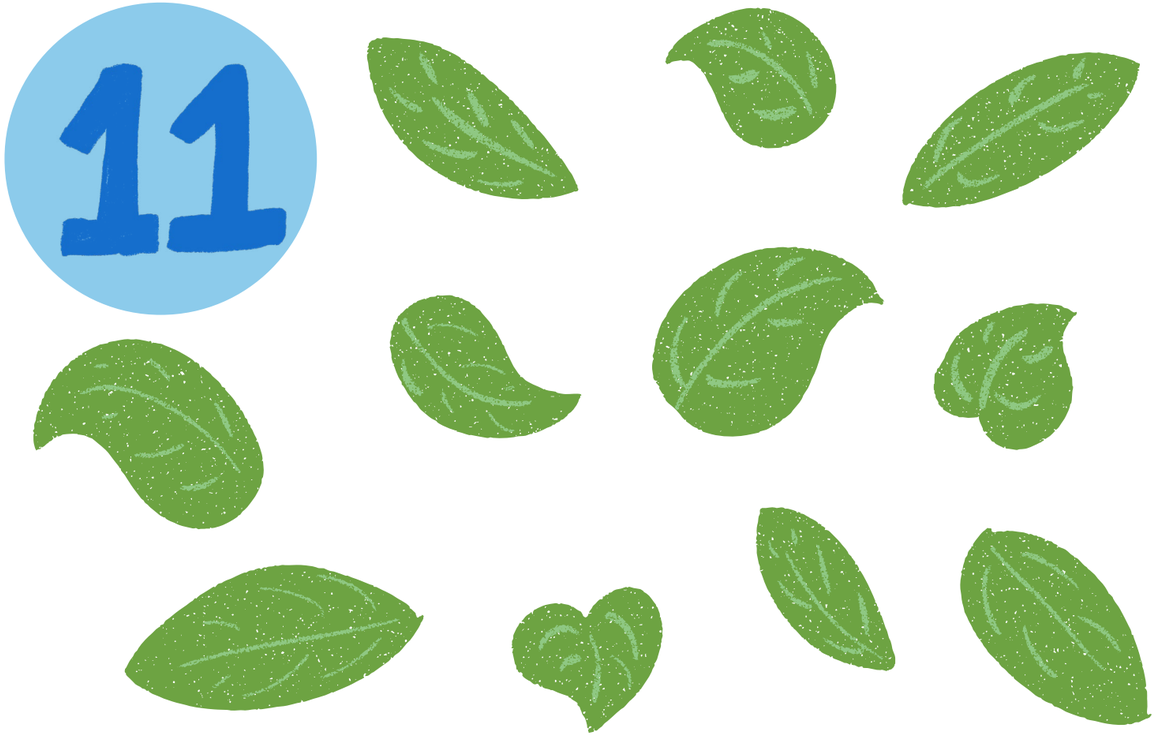


neuf



jhis

11



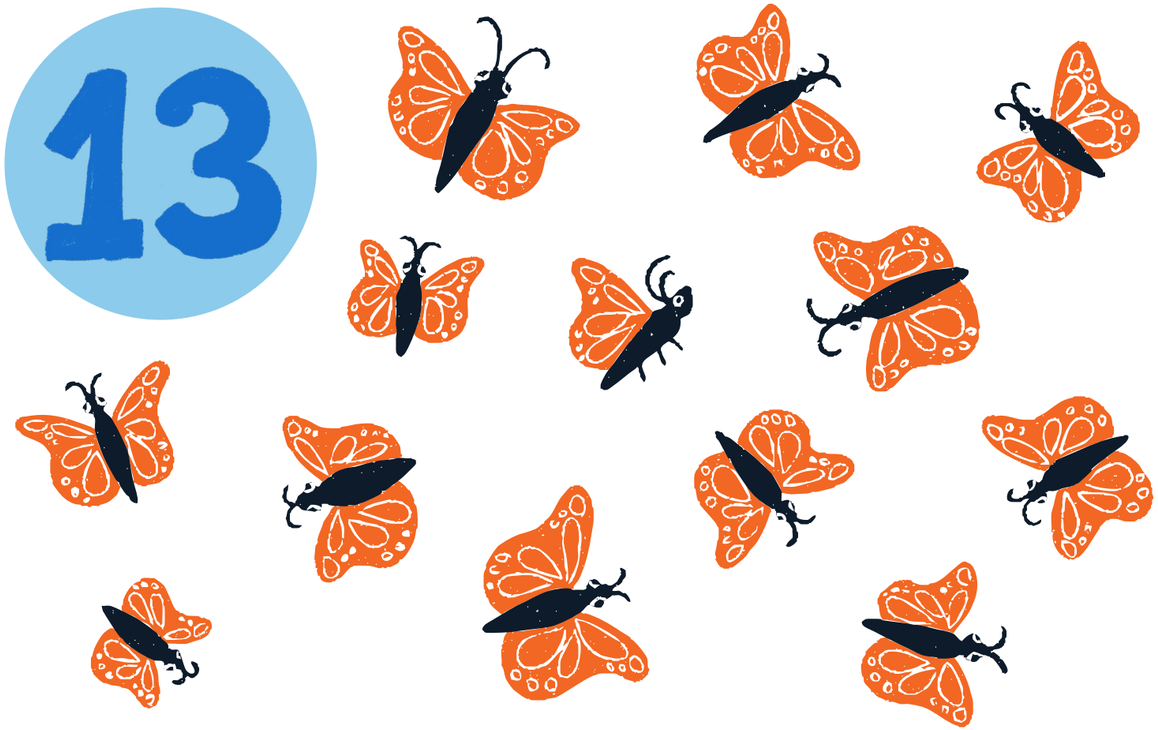
oonz

12



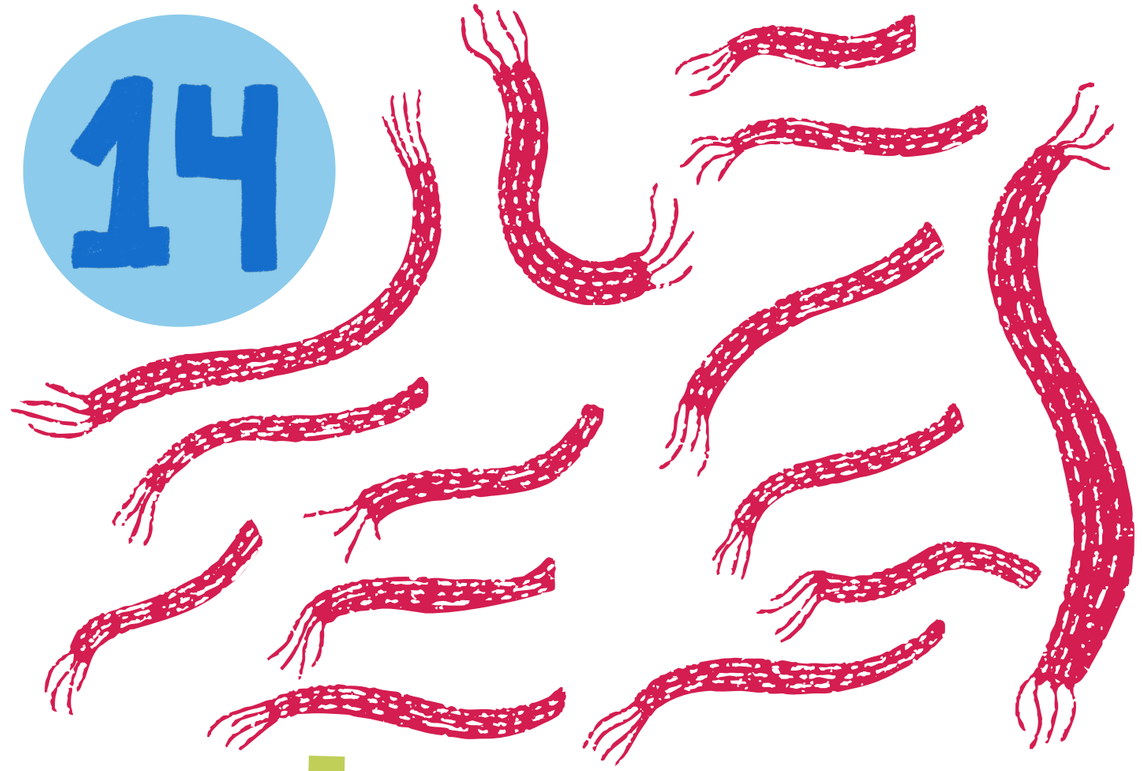
dooz

13



trayz

14



katorz



kaynz



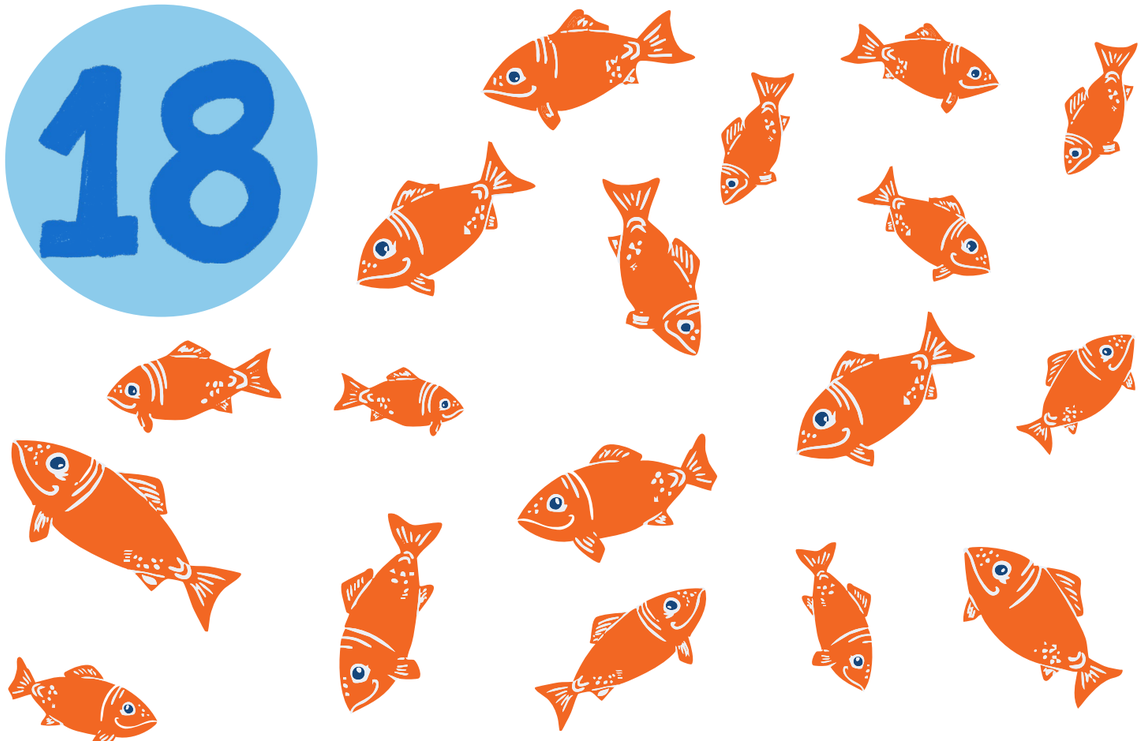
sayz

17



jhiset

18



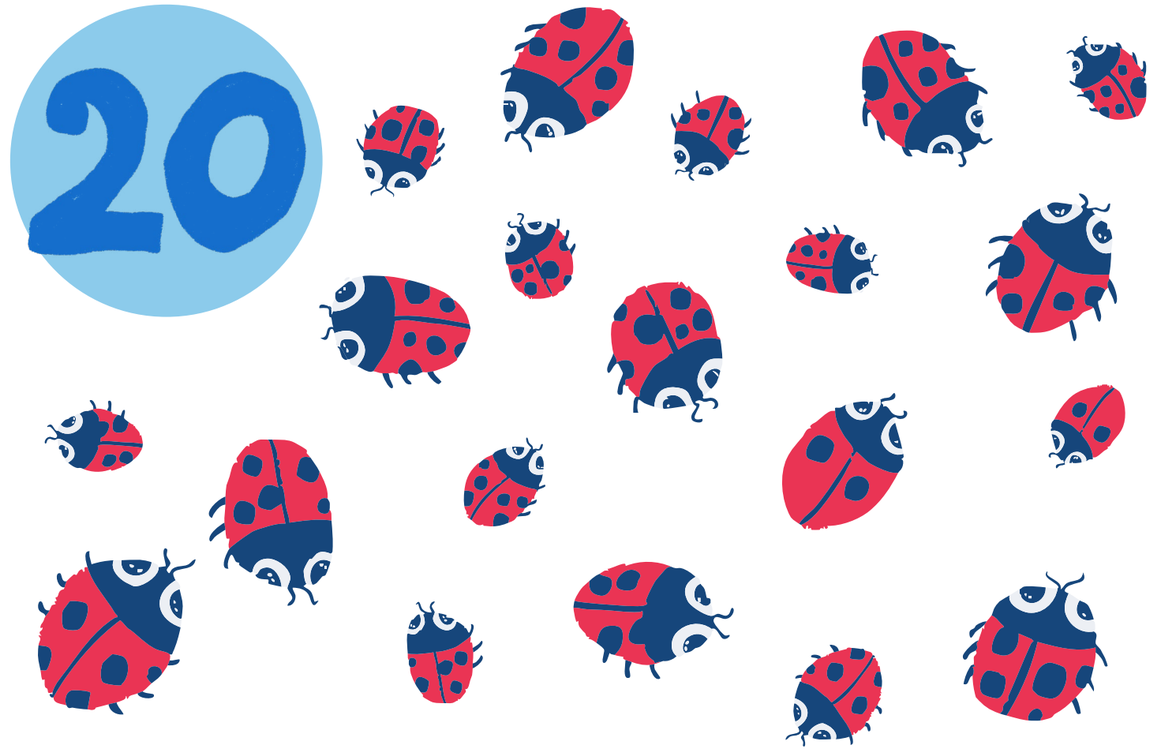
jhis wit

19



jhis neuf

20



vaen

21



vaentyayn

22



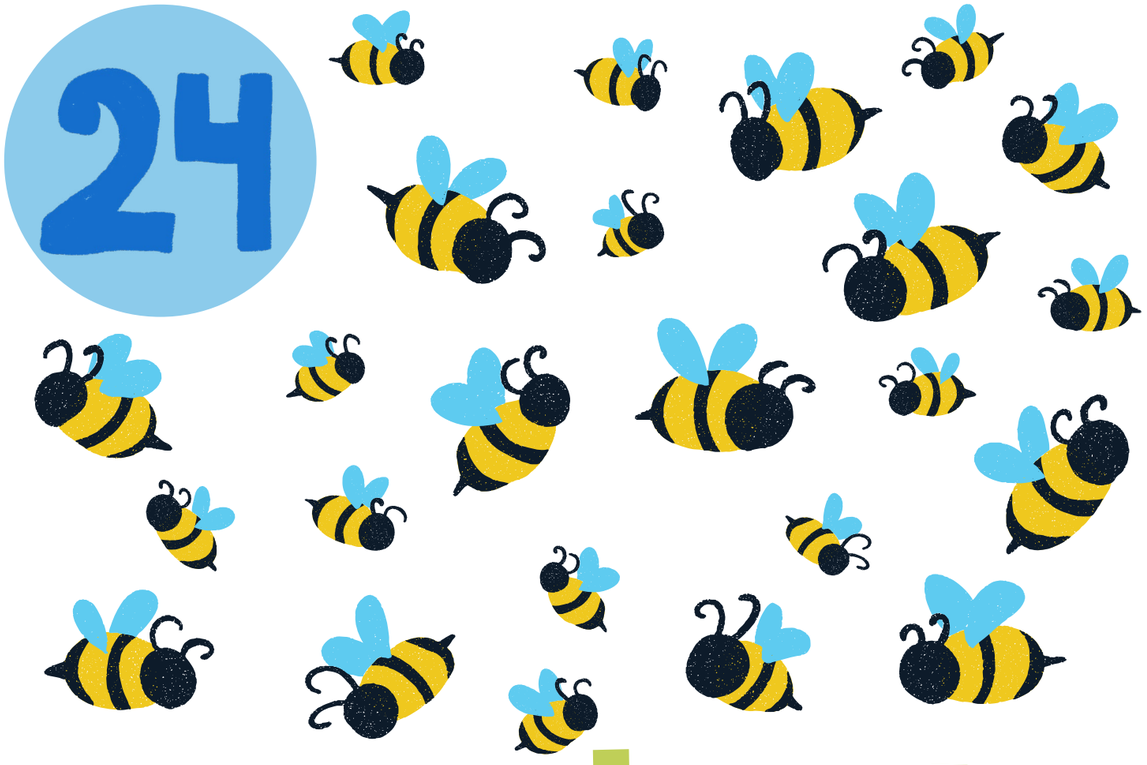
vaen deu

23



vaen trwaa

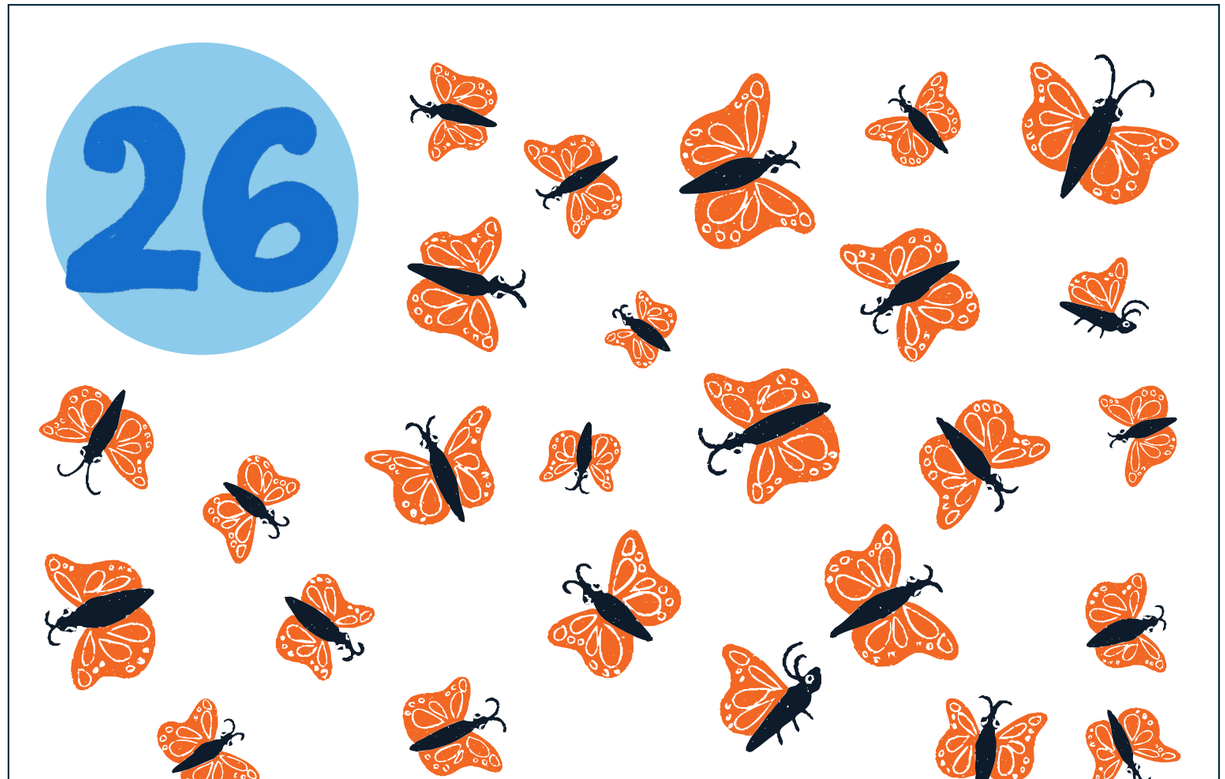
24



vaen kaatr

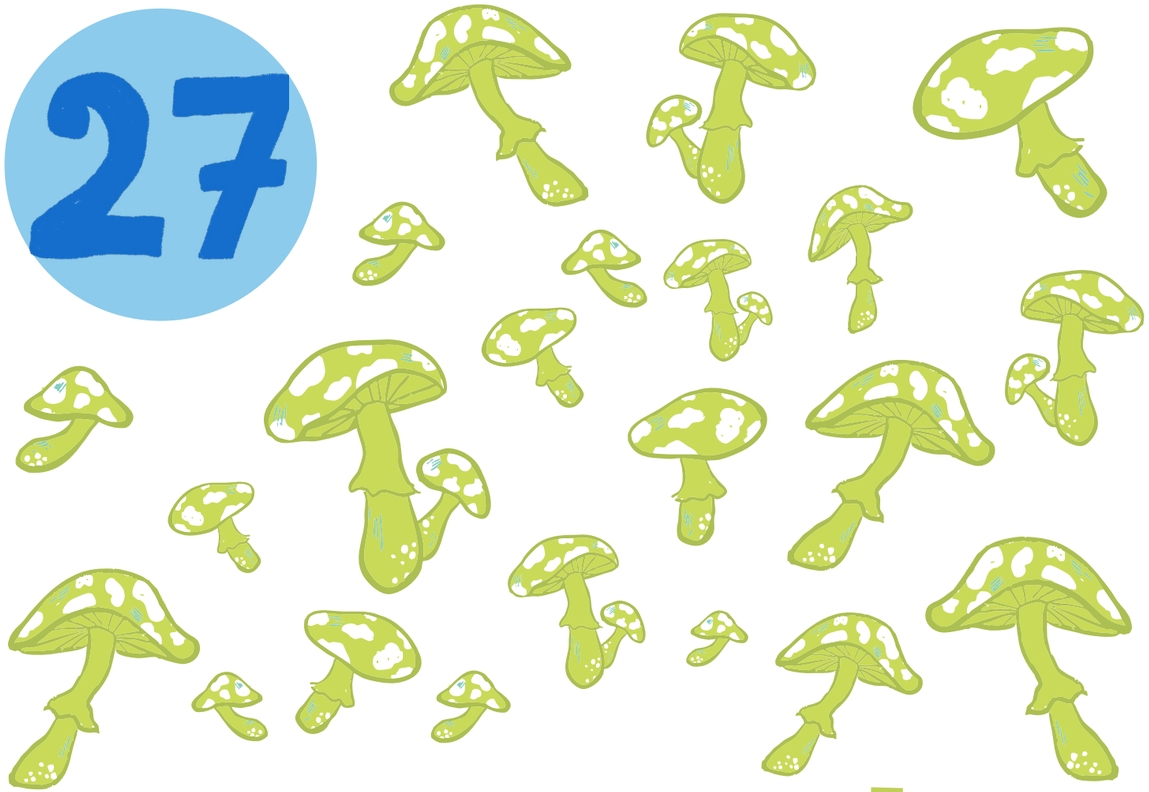


vaen saenk



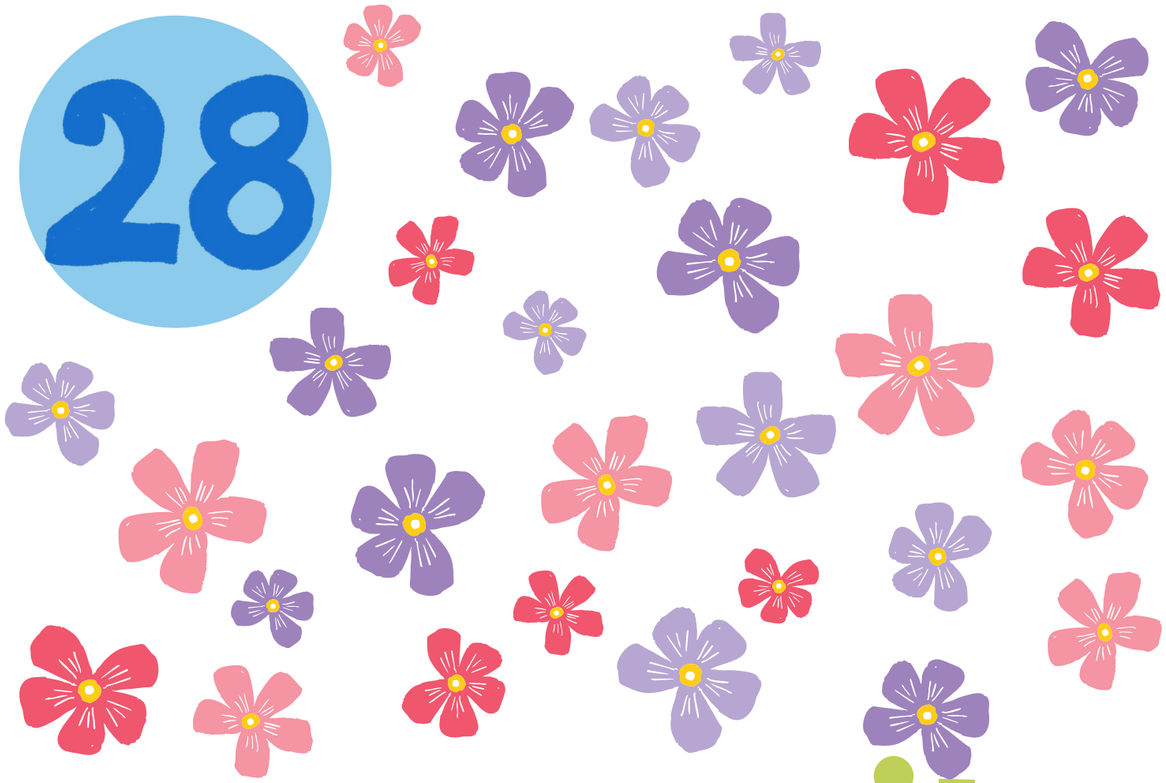
vaen sis

27



vaen set

28



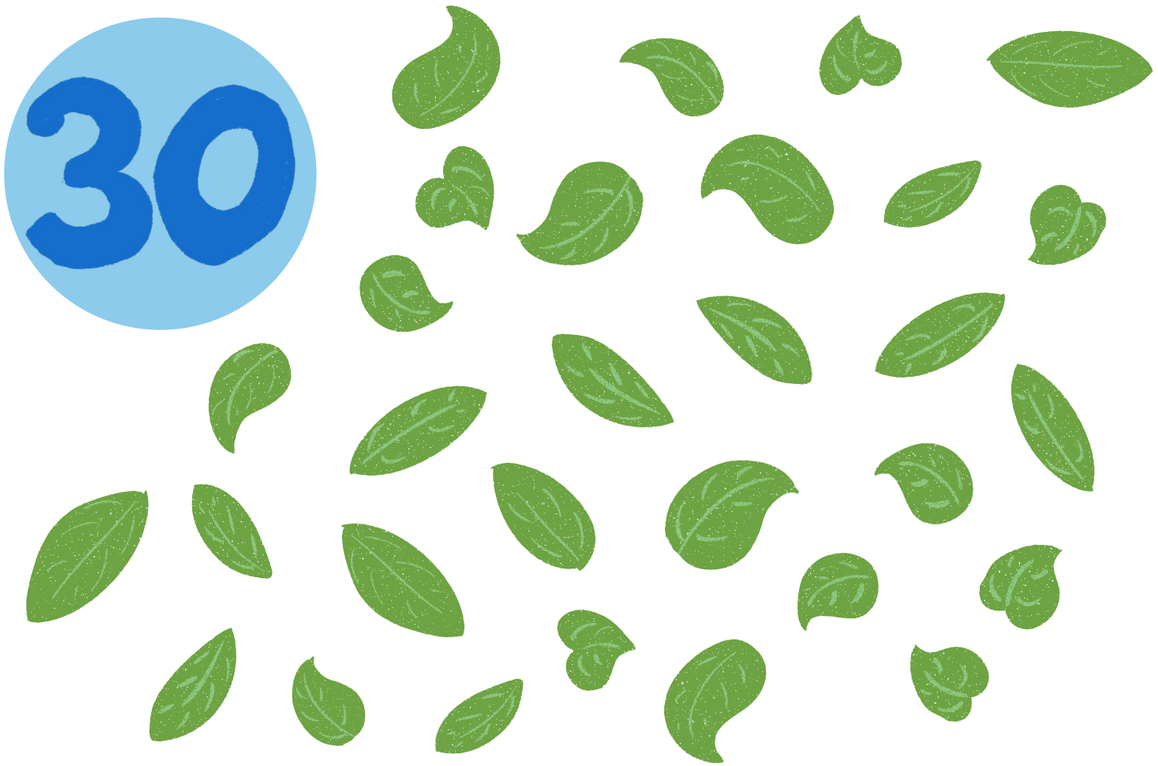
vaen wit

29



vaen neuf

30



traant


31
traantyayn

Classroom Calendar



1 *henn*	2 *deu*	3 *trwaa*	4 *kaatr*	5 *saenk*
6 *sis*	7 *set*	8 *wit*	9 *neuf*	10 *jhis*
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 *traant*

31

traantyayn



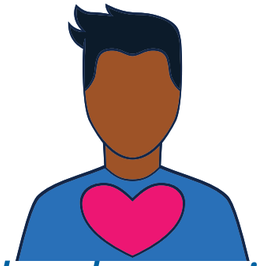
li hallowe’en



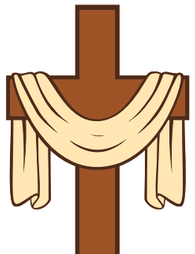
tipishkum!



li daaryiin zhoor d’ikol



la zhoornii poor lii paapaa



li zhoor di paak



li zhoor di raamoo



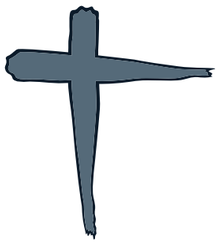
li zhoor di paak



li zhoor di saent Patrick



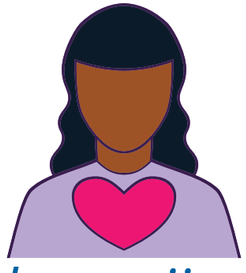
li zhoor di tayr



mikarjii dii saandr



la zhoornii poor kaahkiyow lii naasyoon



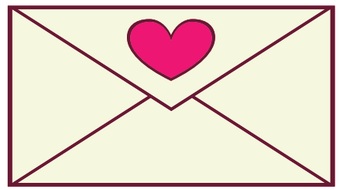
la zhoornii poor lii maamaa



li saan zhoor d’ikol



li zhoor di laan



la zhoornii d'amour



li zhoor avaan krismiss



li krismiss



li zhoor avaan krismiss



li krismiss



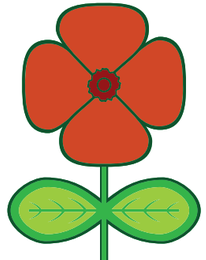
li praamyii zhoor d'ikol



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

jhwiijii

thursday

vaandarjii

friday

samjii

saturday

jimaansh

sunday




septaambr

september







oktobr

october




noovaambr

november

disaambr

december




zhaanvyii

january




fevriyii

february




maar

march







avrii

april









mii

may

jwaen

june



l'itii

summer





latonn

fall





l’ivayr

winter





li praentaan

spring



anoosh

today (is)...

dimaen

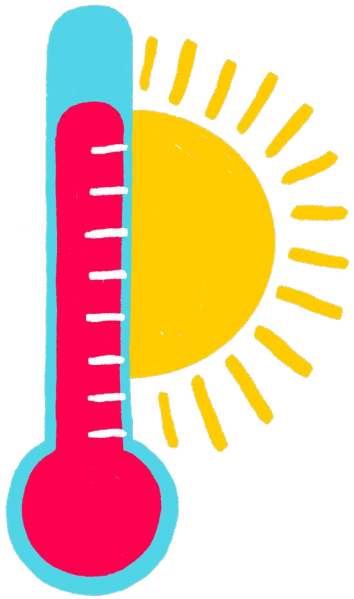
tomorrow (is)...

yayr

yesterday (was)...

Word of the day





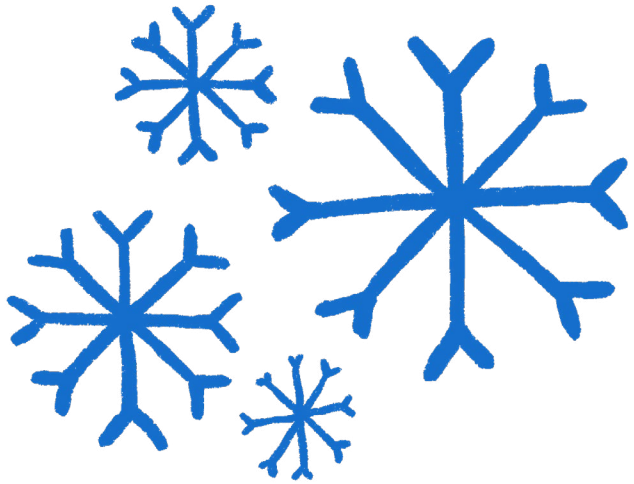
kishitayw

warm



yootin

windy



mishpoon

snowing



washayshkwun

sunny



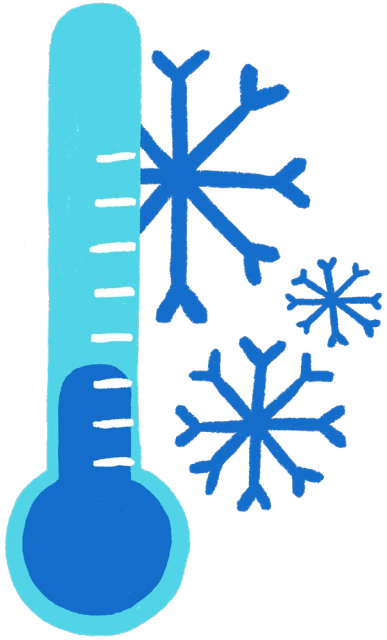
yiikwashkwun

cloudy



kimoowun

raining



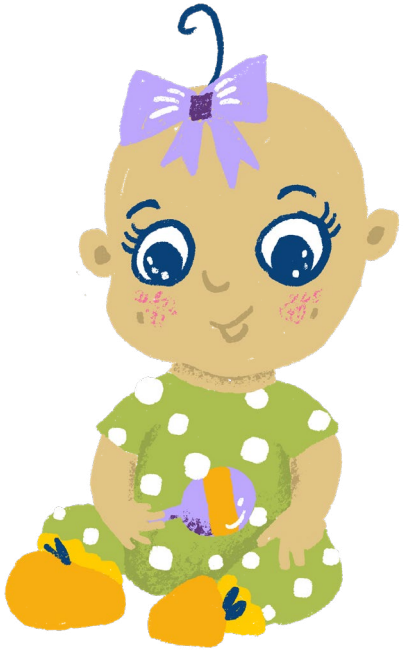
kishinow
cold



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



lii
zhoo zhoo



ooshipayhikay



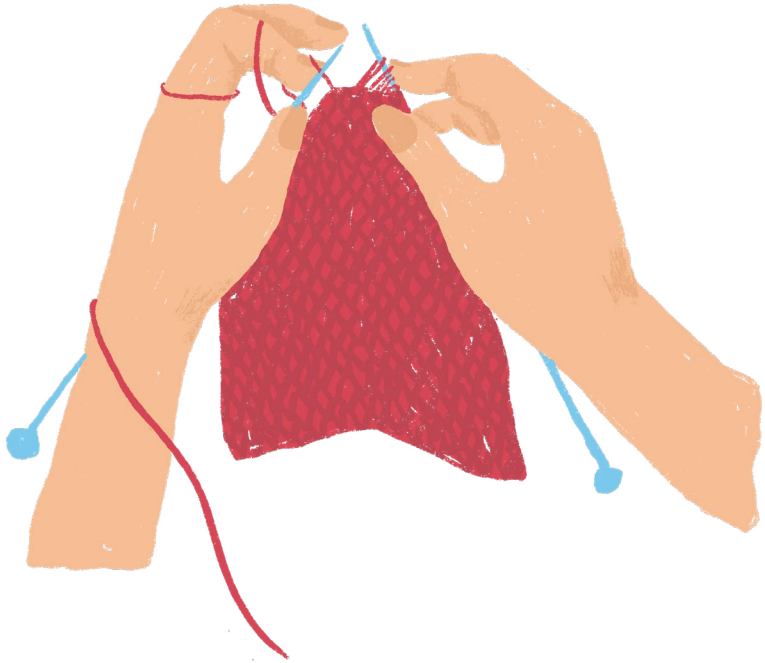
ooshitaahk



akishchikay



kiishisha



ooshtaa



pooshtashakay



payta



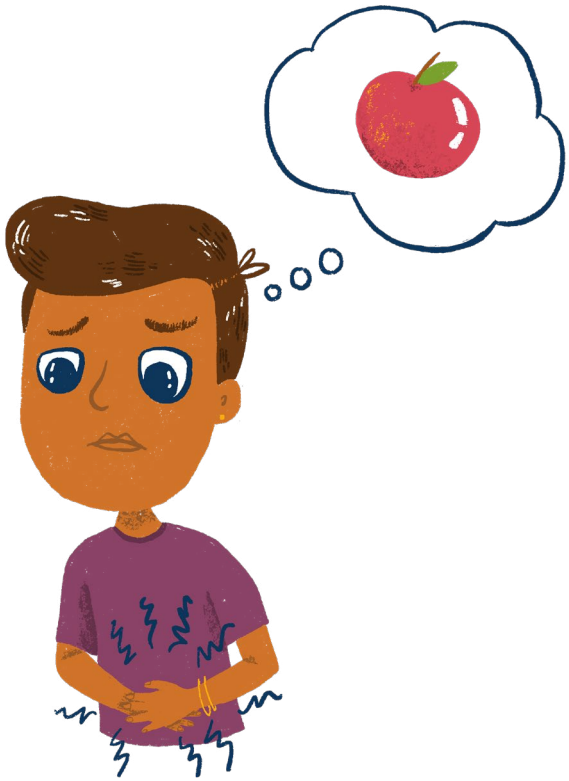
takishkata



kaatchitin



ni noohtay yaapakwan



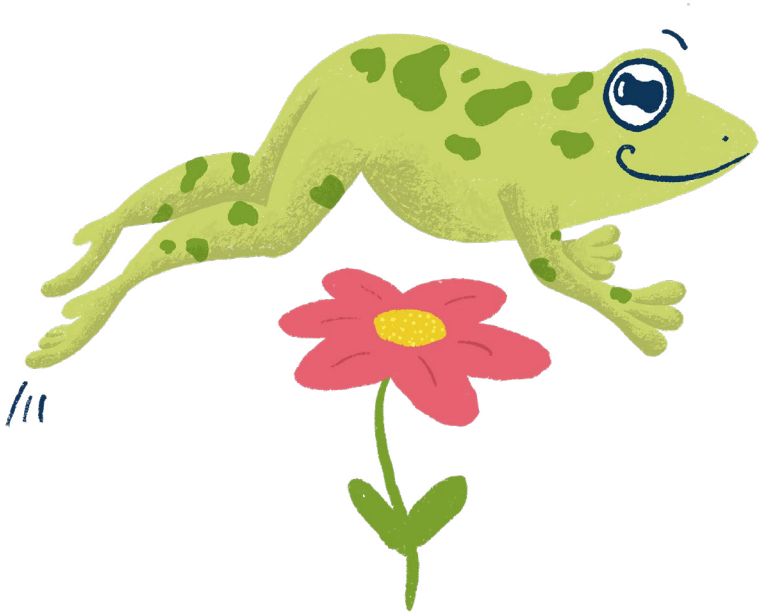
ni noohtay kataan



pakamaha



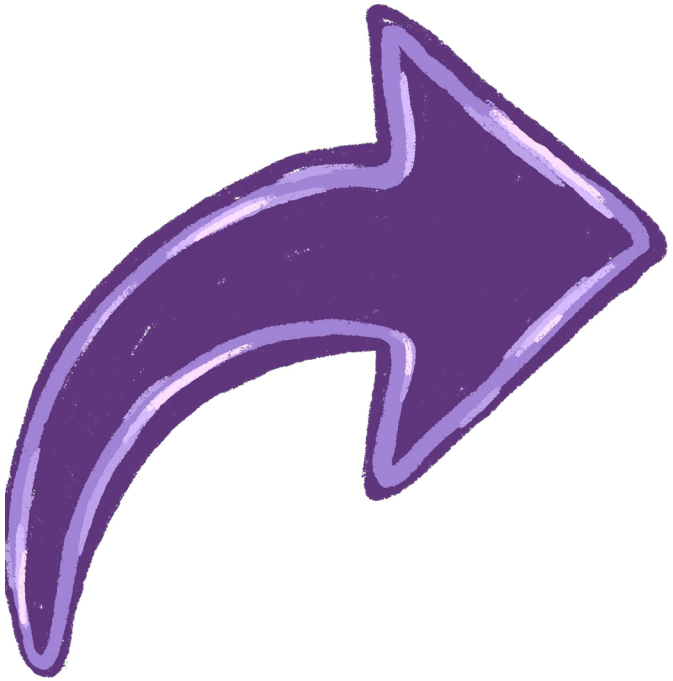
maashchii



kiihtwaam



agoosh



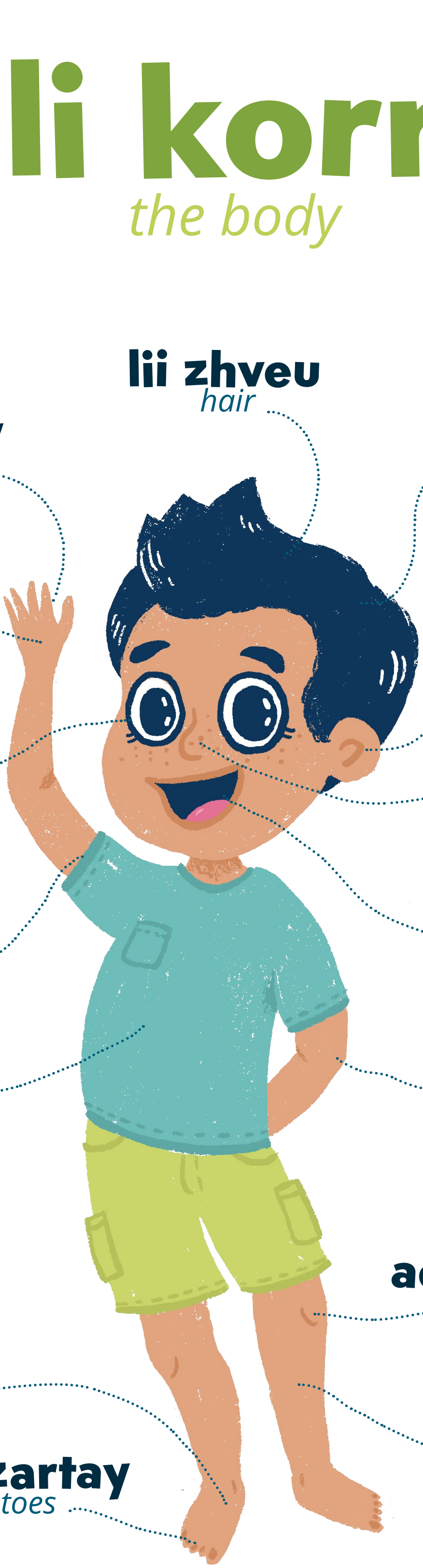
adret



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

la boush
mouth

aen braa
arm

li koodr
elbow

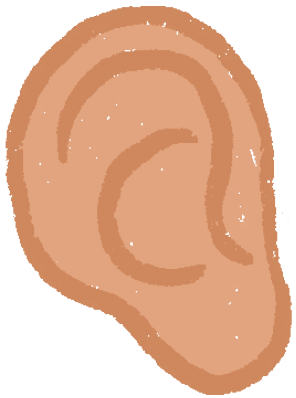
li vaantr
stomach

aen zhnoo
knee

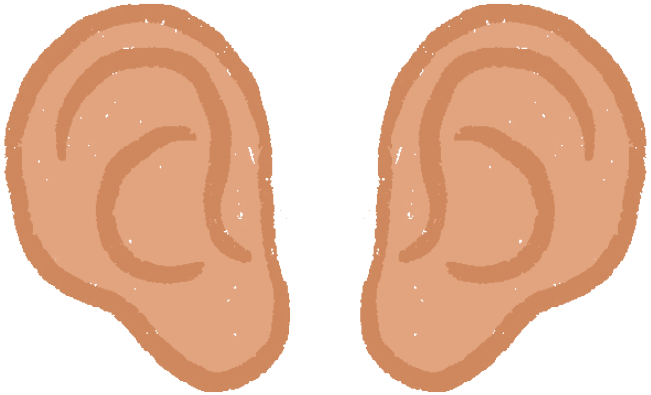
lii jaamb
legs

lii pyii
feet

lii zartay
toes



aen naray



lii zaray



aen zyeu



lii zyeu



li nii



li maen



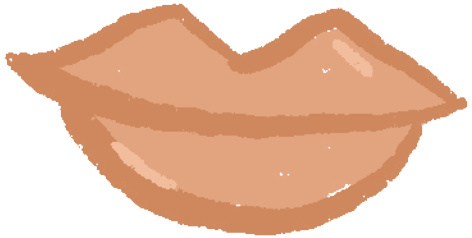
li pyii



la boosh



la laang



lii babinn