

Early Learning Classroom Package

Michif French

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:
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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

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métisgathering.ca

Classroom Labels



la taab

the table

la shayzh

a chair

laarlozh

clock

lii zarmwayr

the cabinets

le sink

the sink

la taablet

the shelf

le fridge

the fridge

lii lumyayr

the lights

aen pwel

a stove

le plaanshii

the floor

le meur

the wall

la twaalet

the bathroom

la kaan poor
le garbaazh

the garbage can

aen shaasii

a window

aen port

a door

aen balay

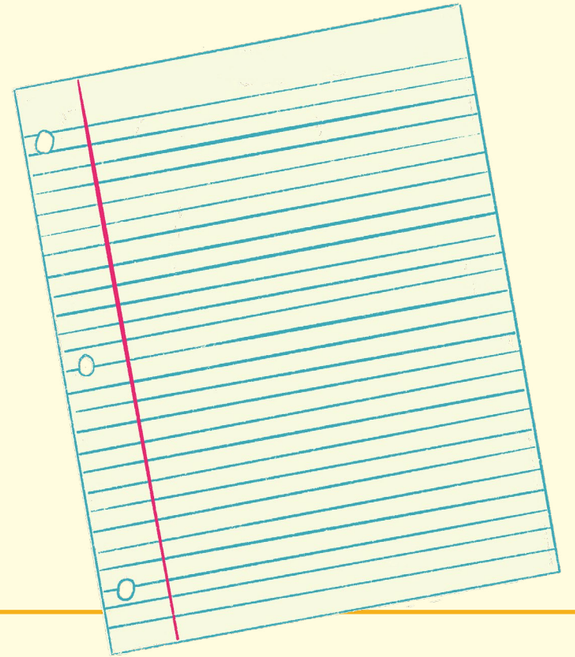
a broom

le savoon

the soap

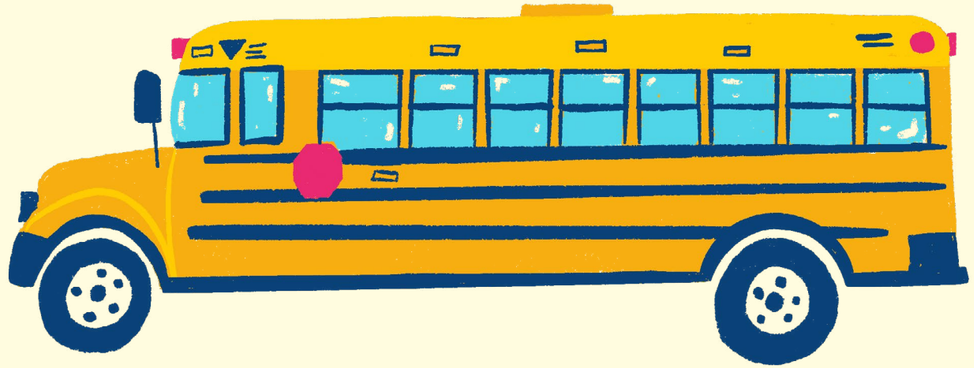
le paapyii

the paper



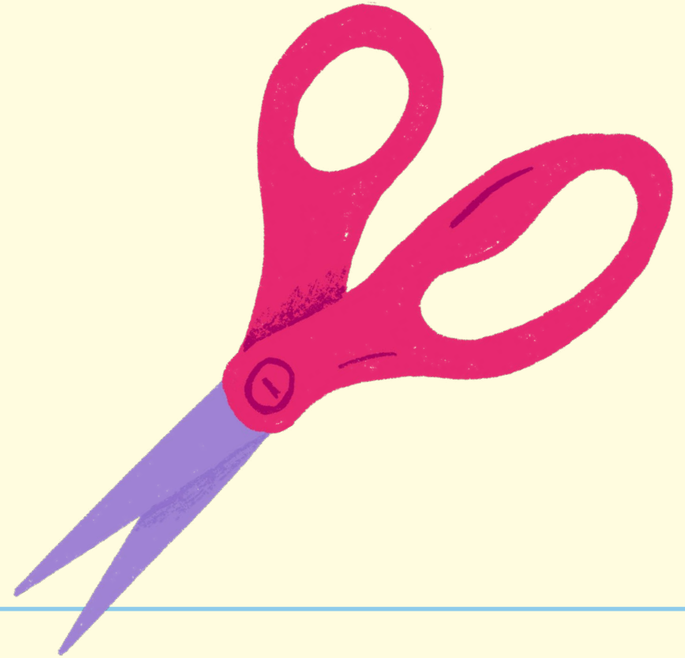
aen lautobous

the bus



lii sizoo

the scissors



lakol

the glue



aen fasswayr

eraser



zhoue

play



aen kriiyoon

a pencil



aen kriiyoon de kooleur

a crayon



sitoot

that's it; that's all



on va twayr plu tard

see you later



bonn zhour

hello



vyen icit

come here



gawrd icit

look here



oorevwayr

goodbye



monnom ay...

my name is...



ji kontaan

I'm happy



jui trist

I'm sad



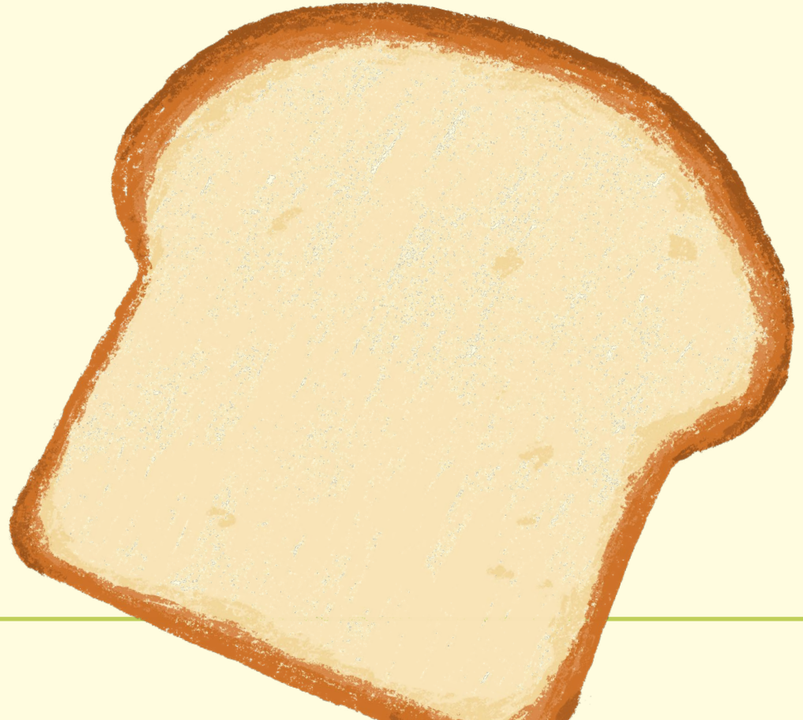
aen shaarzh

leader



le paen

bread



met'd ikol, maytress

teacher



kwiizin

kitchen



met'd ikol

teacher



la soup

soup



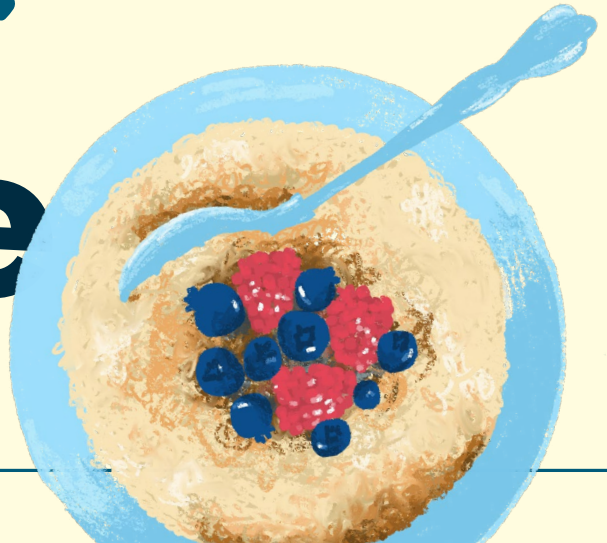
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read



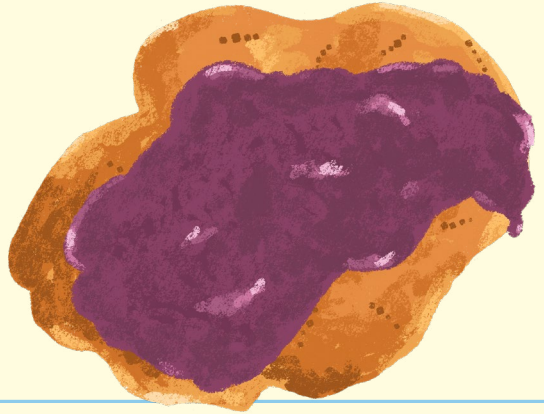
le porridge

oatmeal



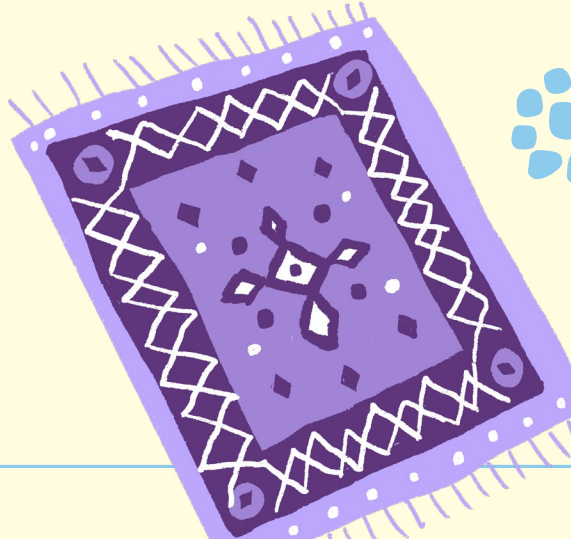
gallette

bannock



aen tapii

a rug



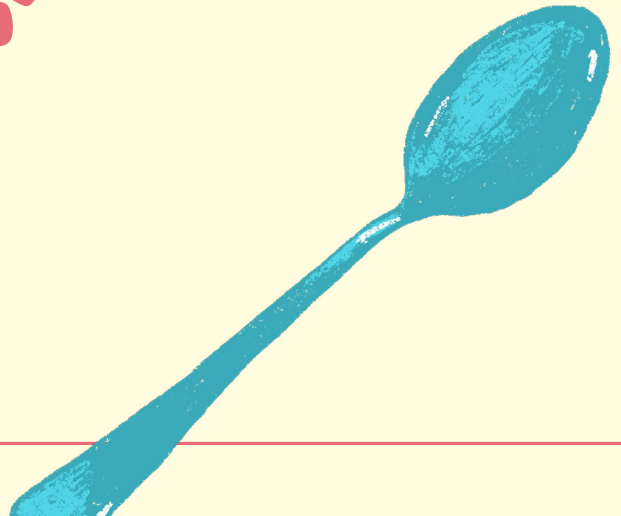
aen fridge

fridge



aen kwiiyayr

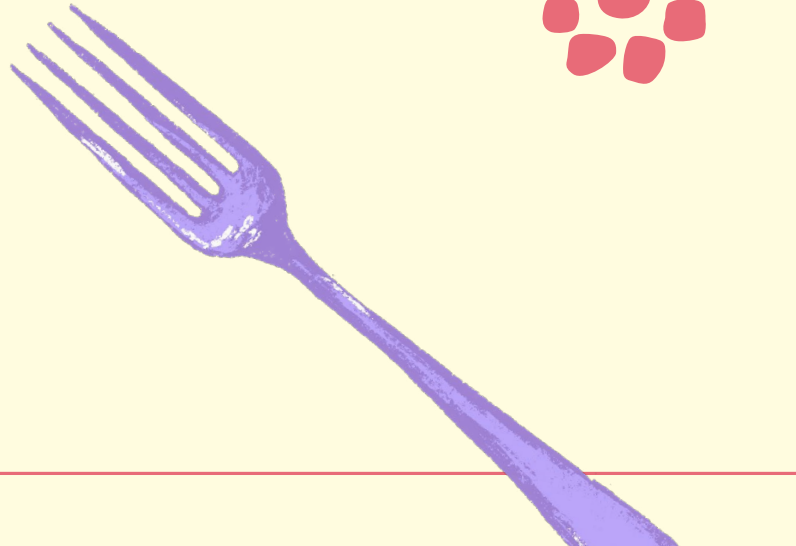
a spoon



lii

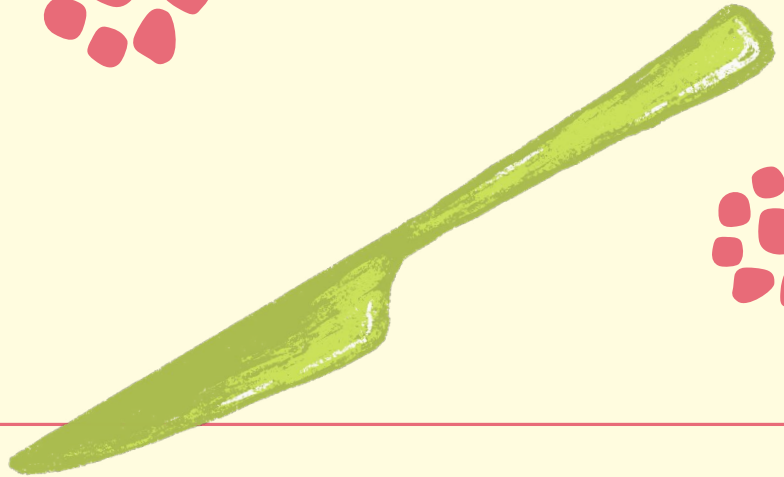
foorshet

a fork



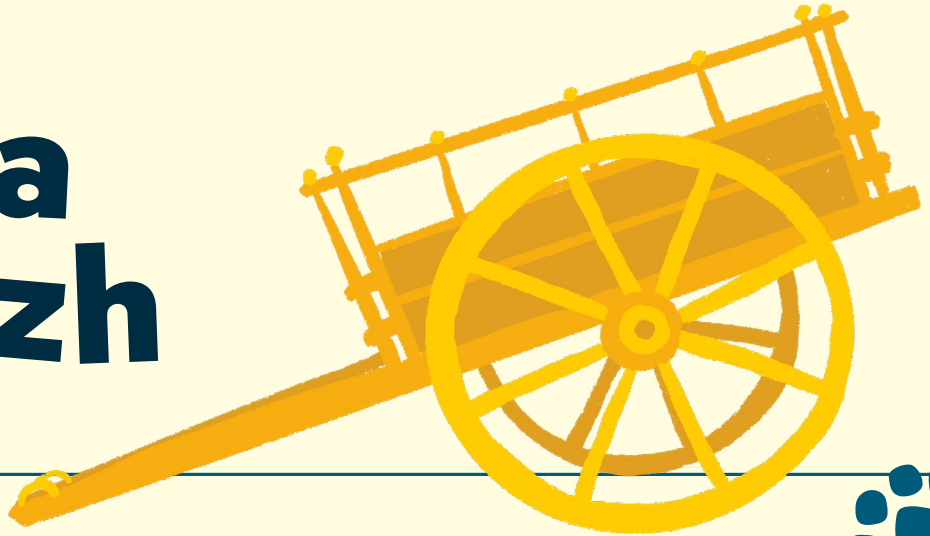
aen koutou

a knife



charret di la rivyayr rouzh

the red river cart



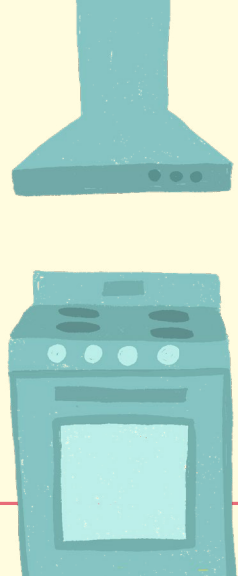
paviiyoon

flag



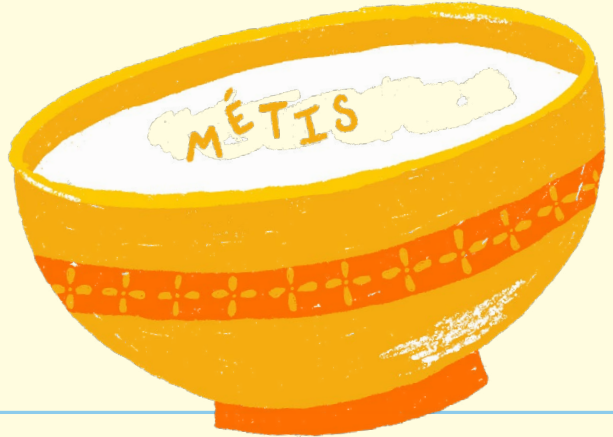
aen pwel

stove



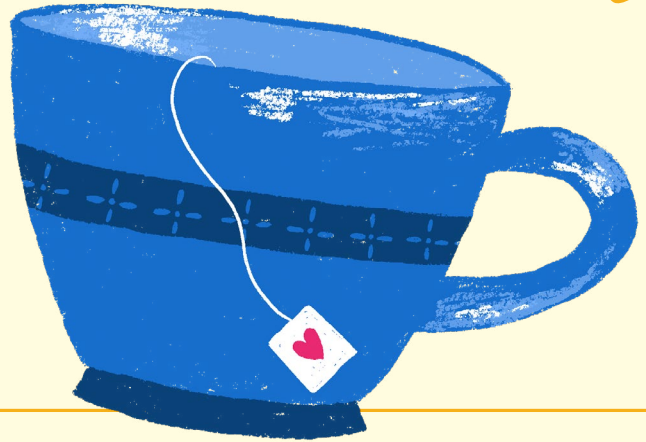
aen bool

a bowl



aen taas

a cup



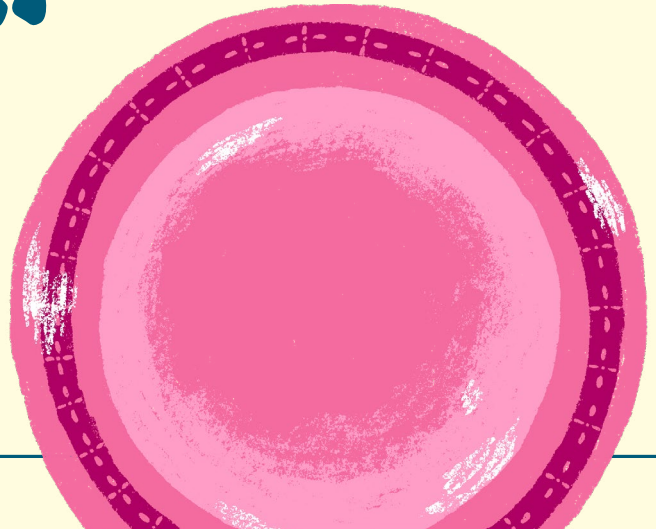
le lett

milk



aasyet de maanzhii

a plate



sayncheur flayshii

sash



aen vyayloon

a fiddle



Classroom Posters



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3



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4



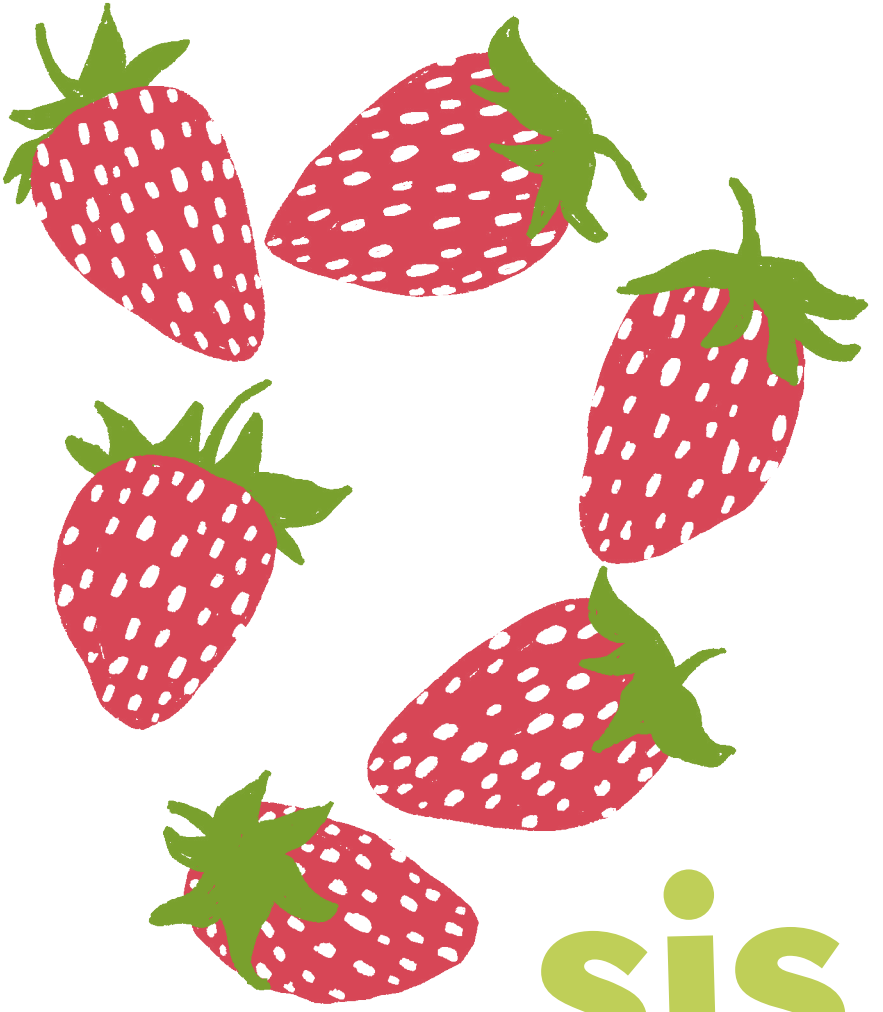
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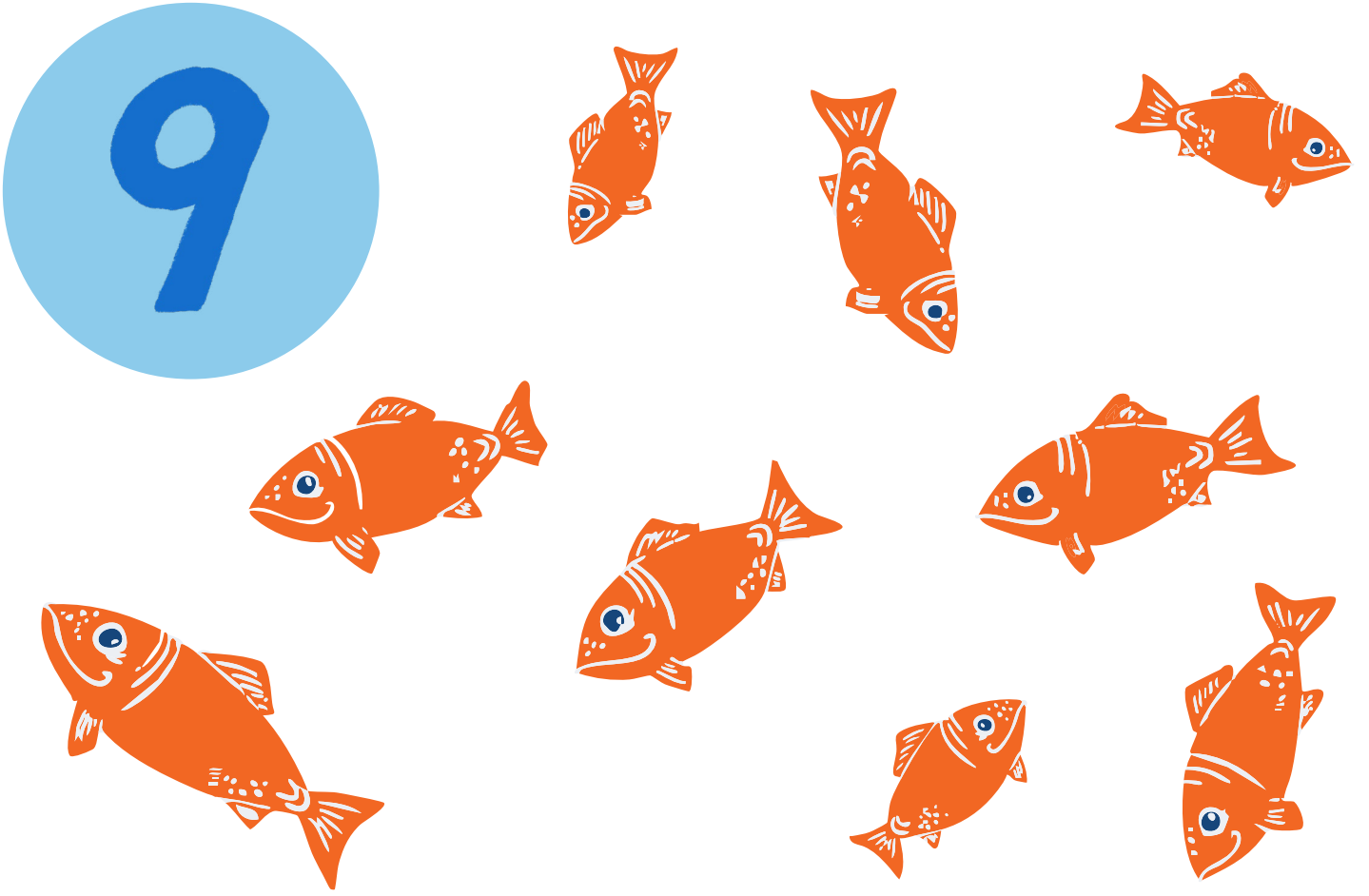
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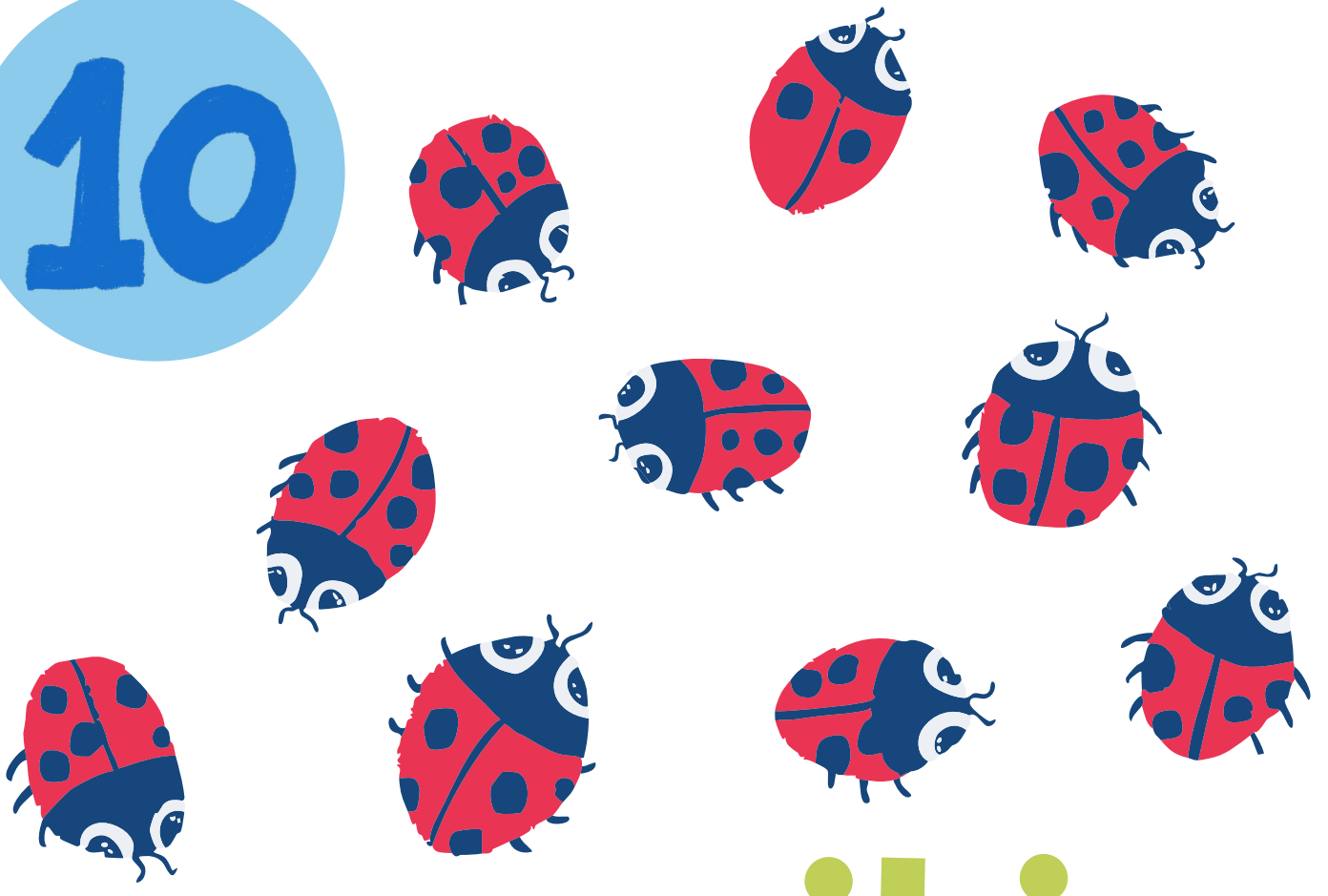


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nauf

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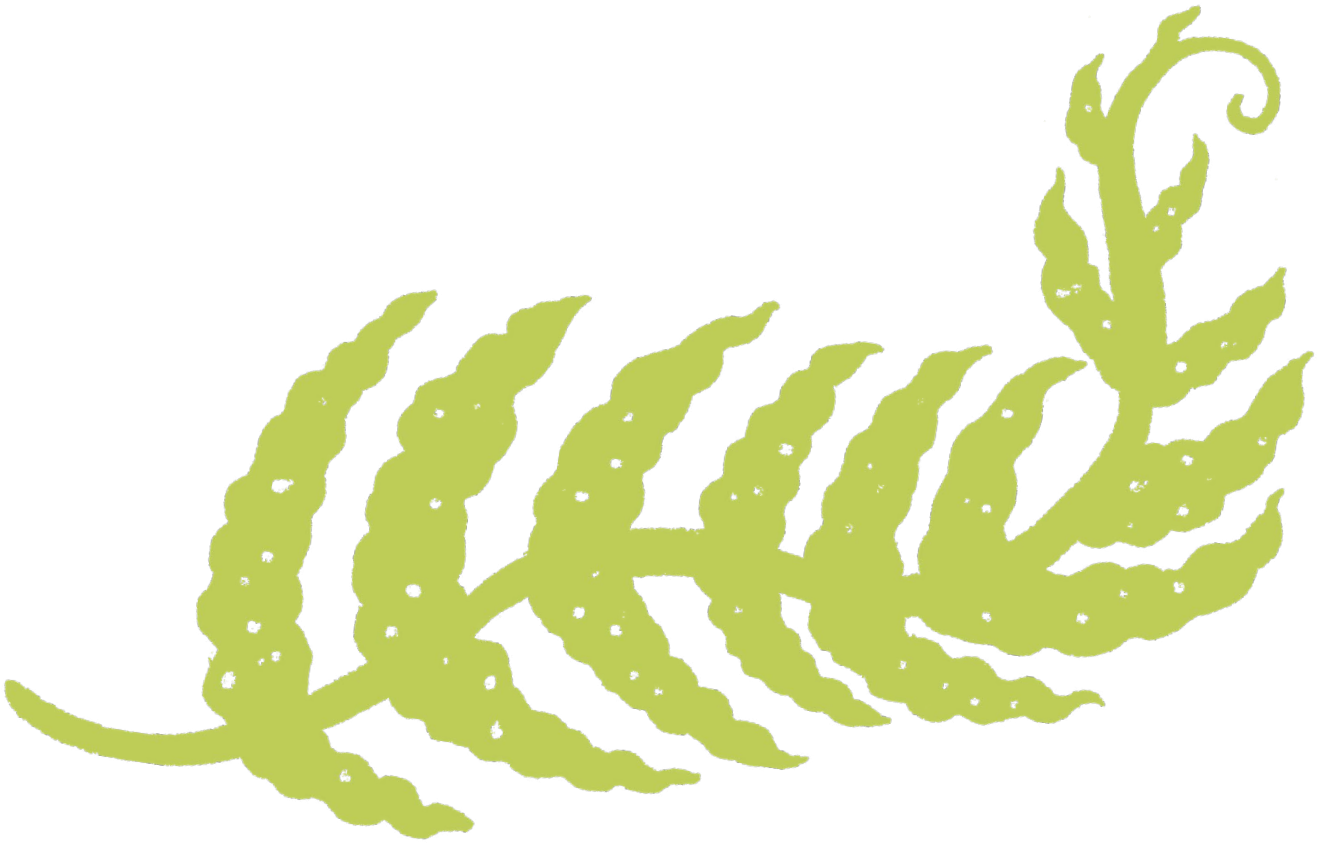
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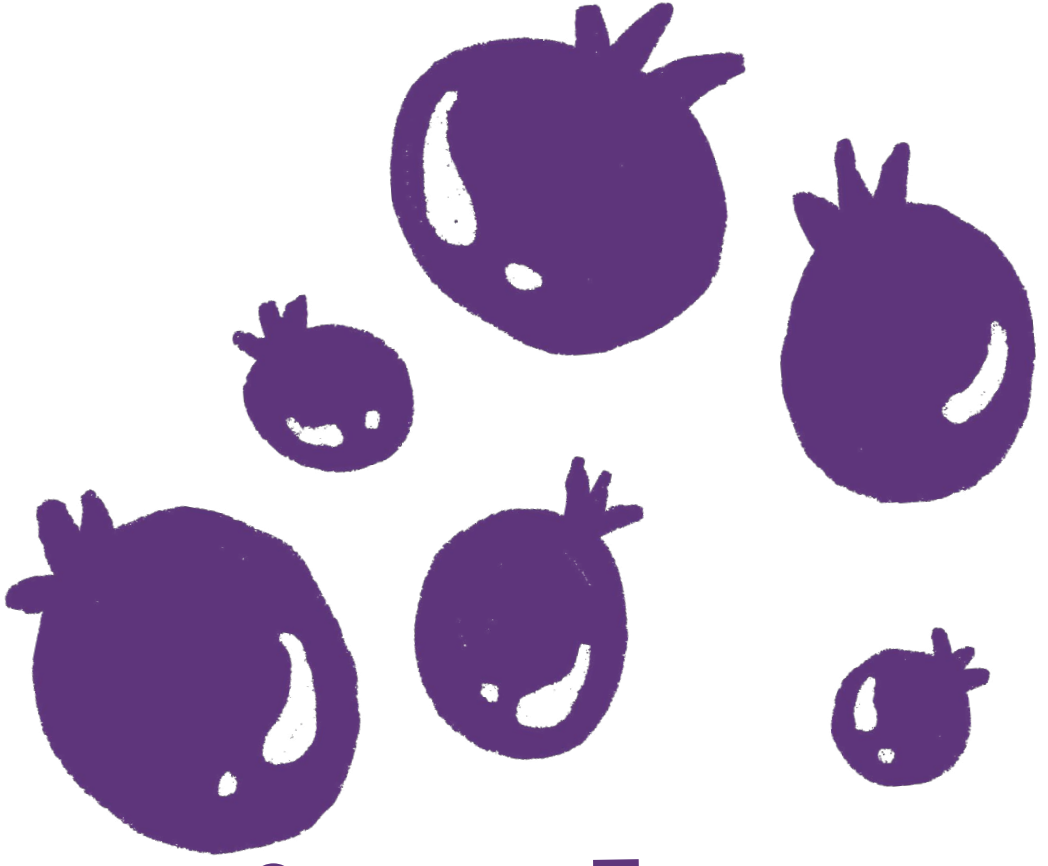
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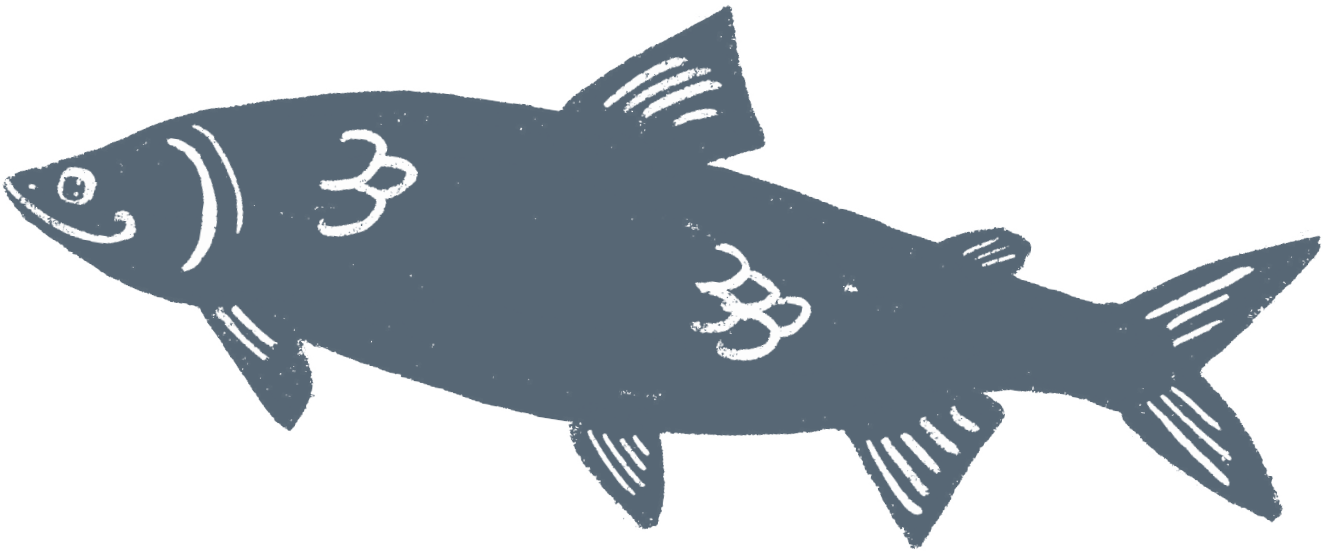
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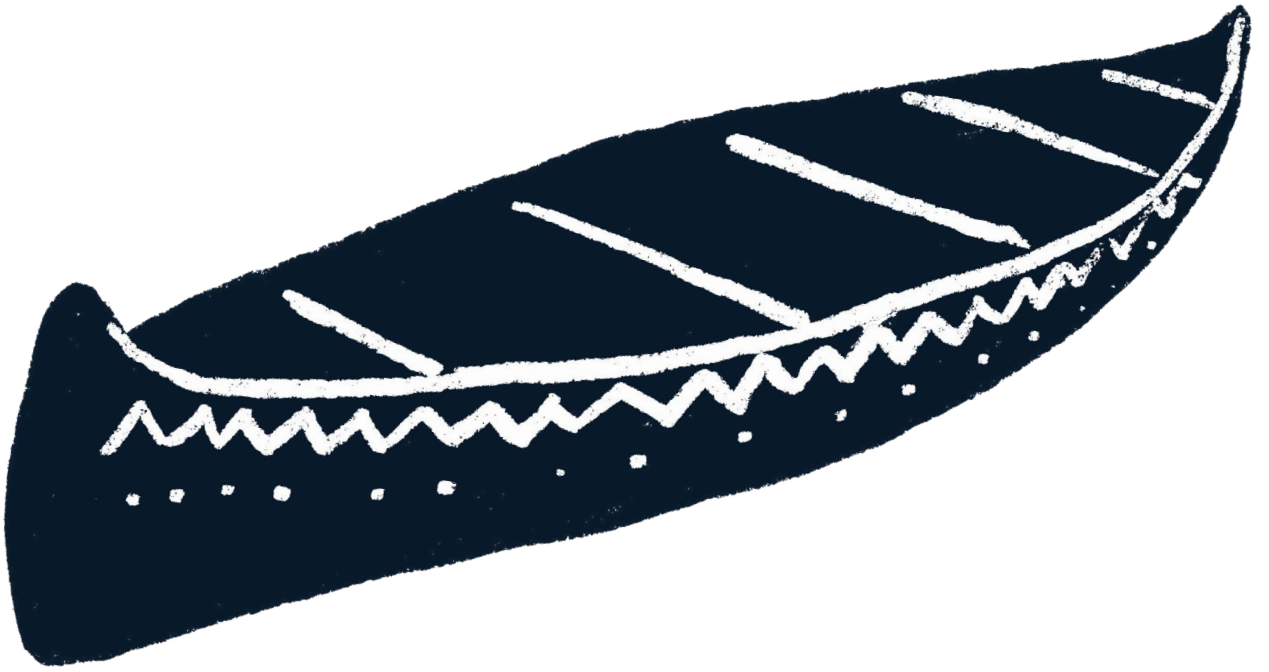
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viyalet



grii



nwayr



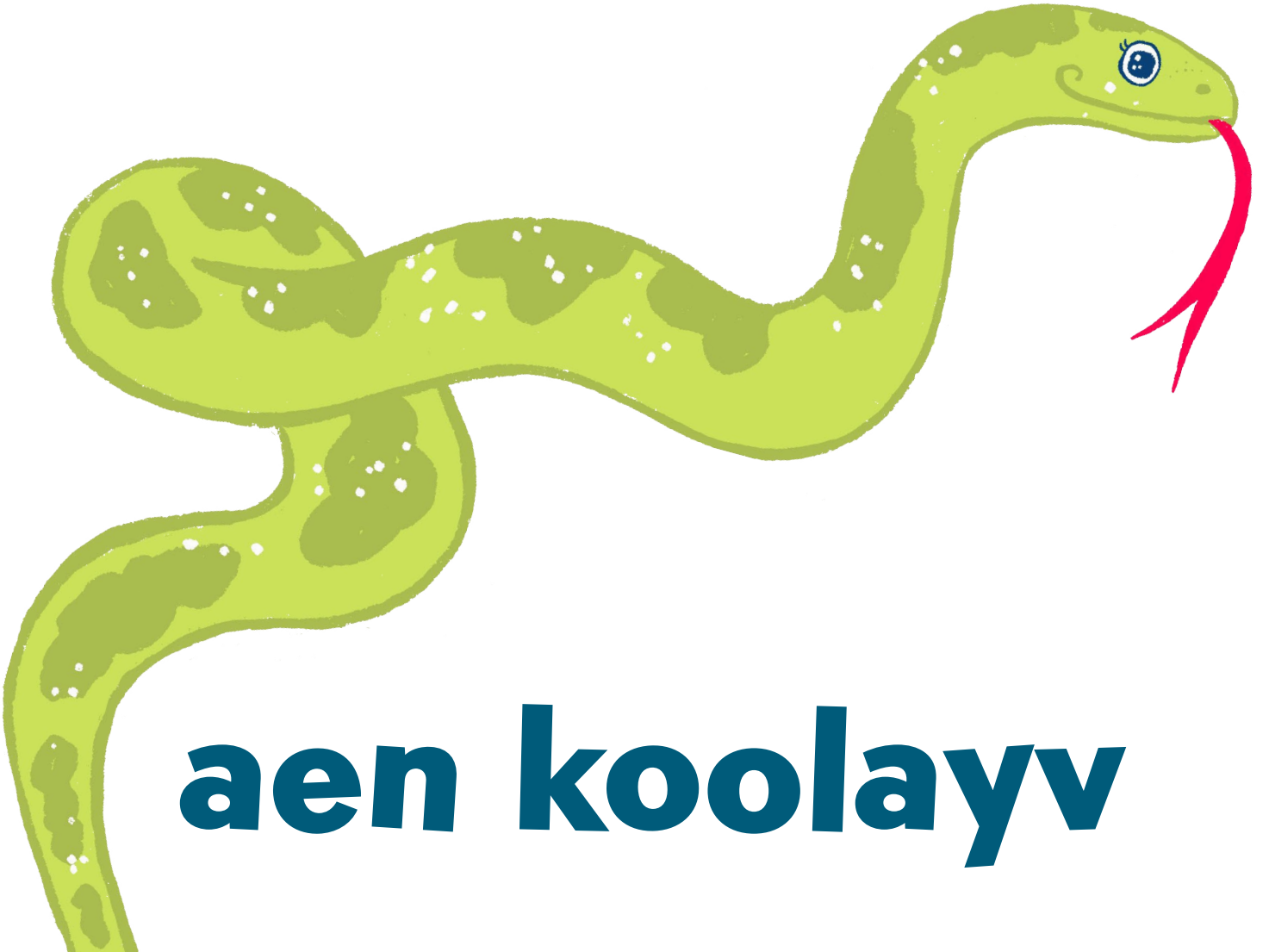
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aen shiikawk



aen kaastor



aen koolayv



aen noors



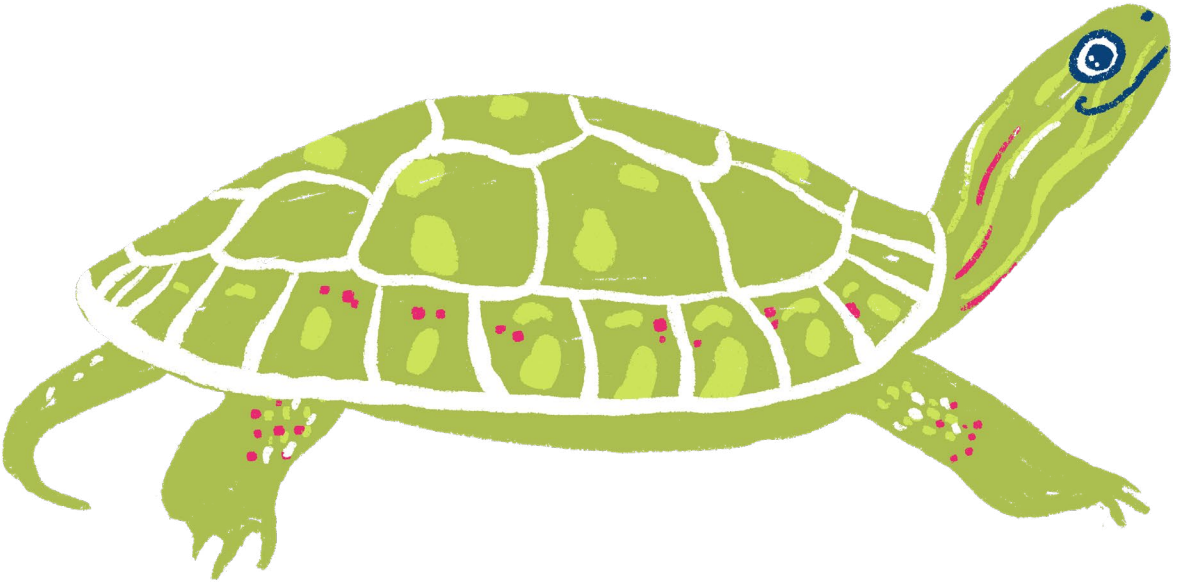
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aen shoovreu



aen raakoon



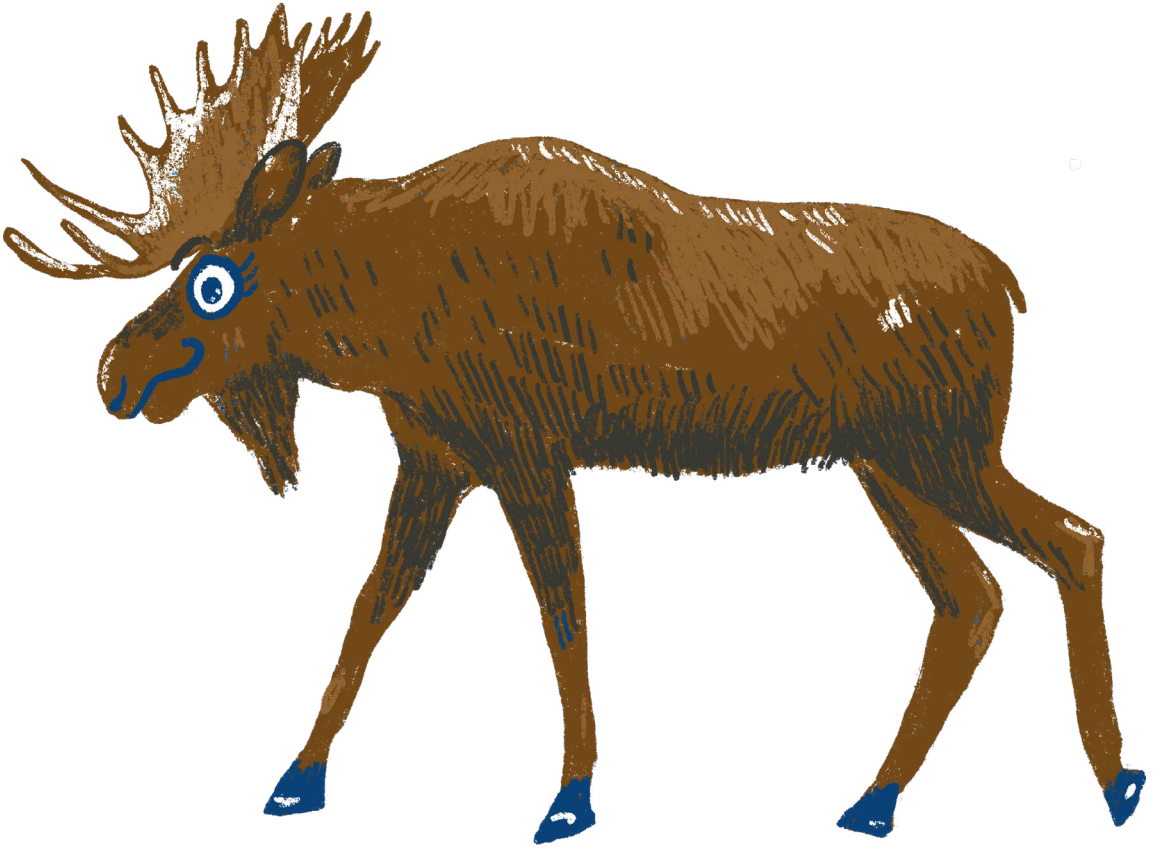
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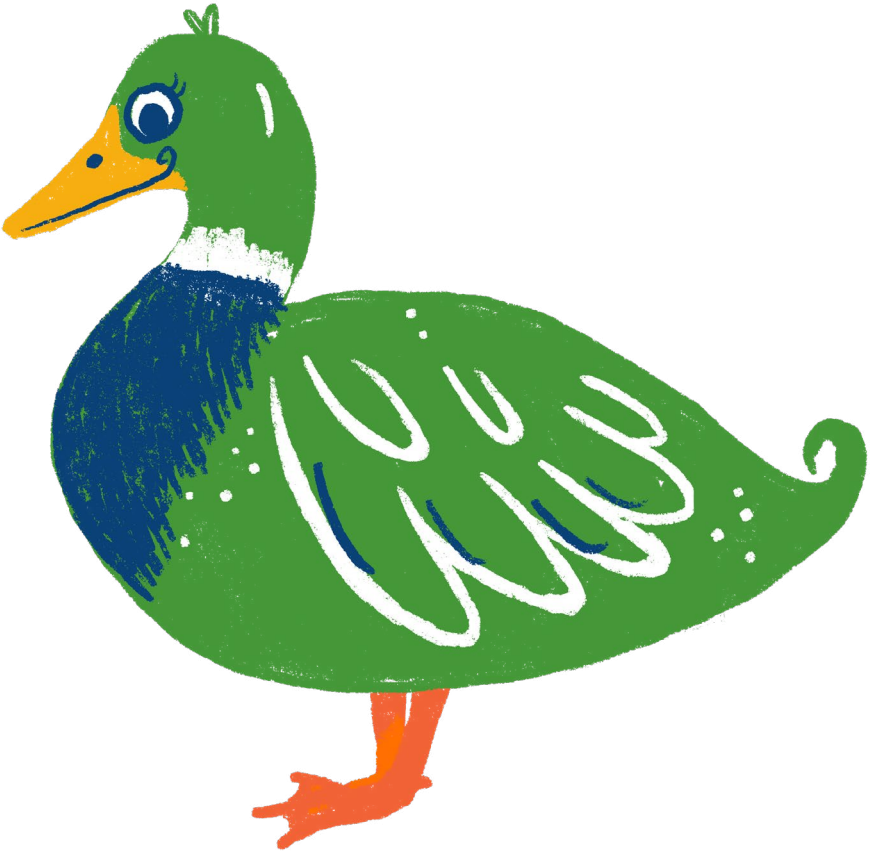
aen swiss



aen bish



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aen nwayzoo



aen loo



aen zourii shood



aen poul di prayrii



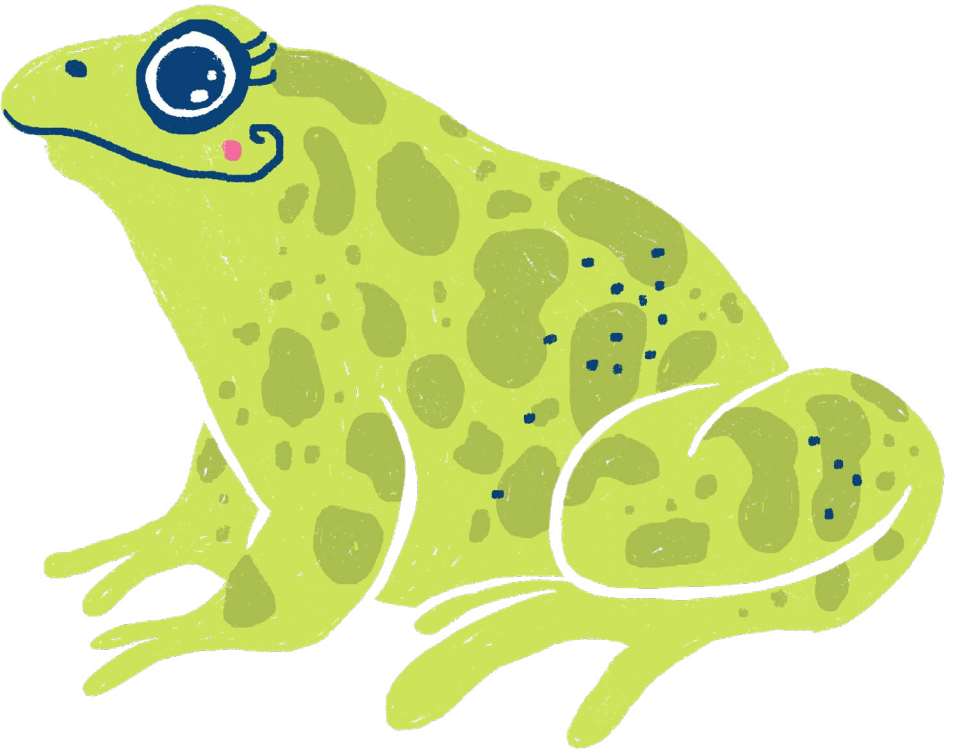
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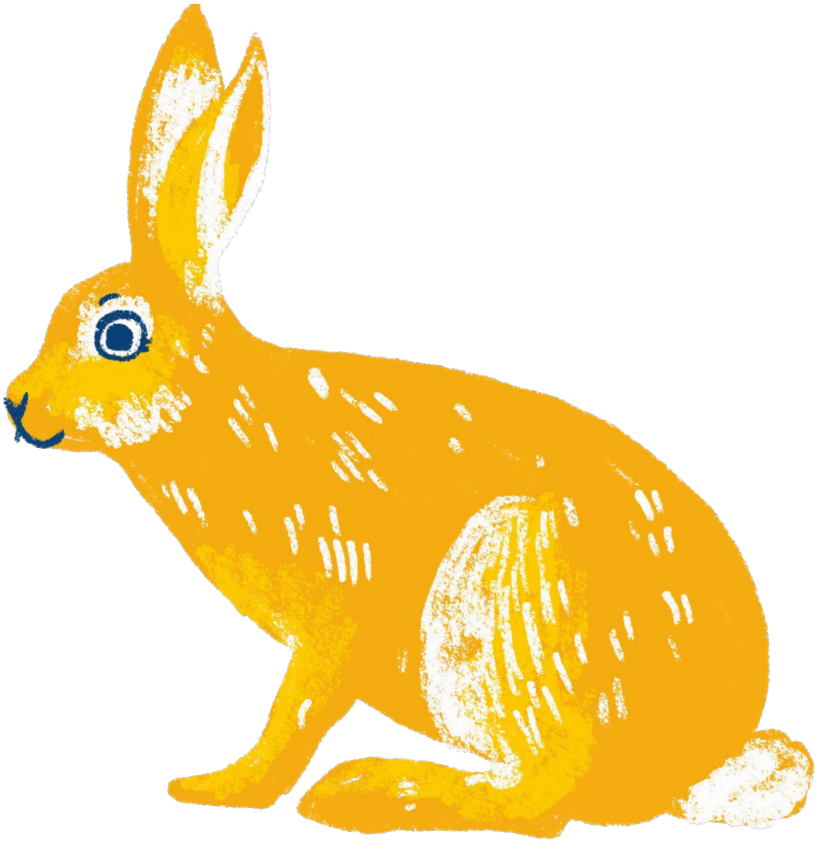
aen portipik



aen goornouy



aen bufloo



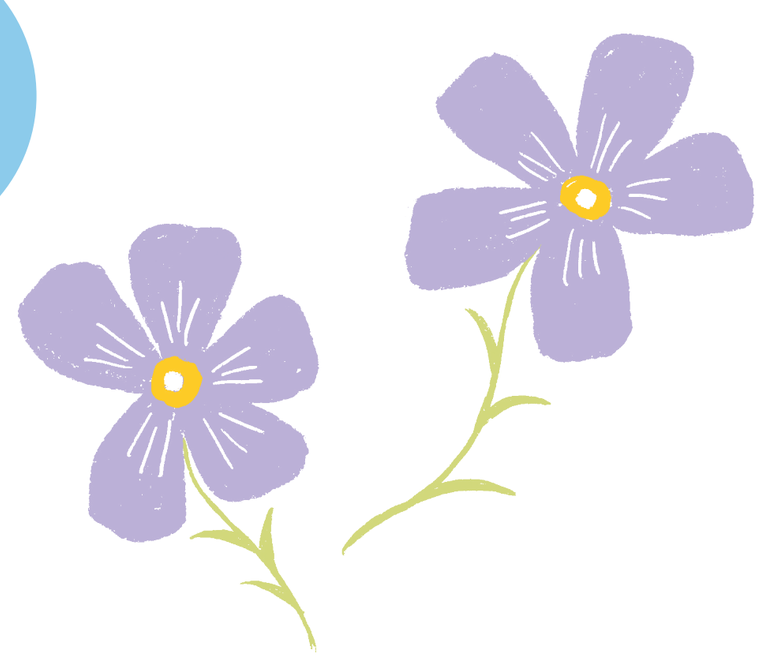
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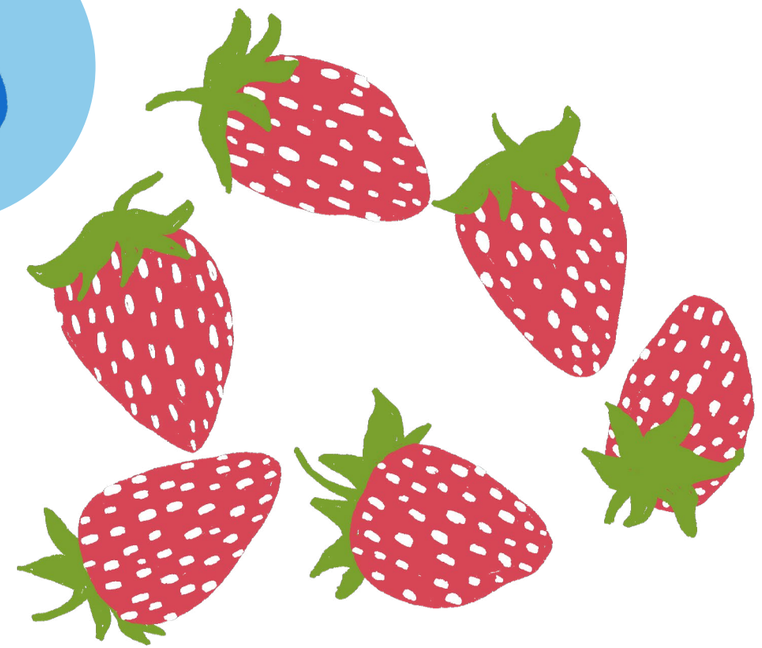
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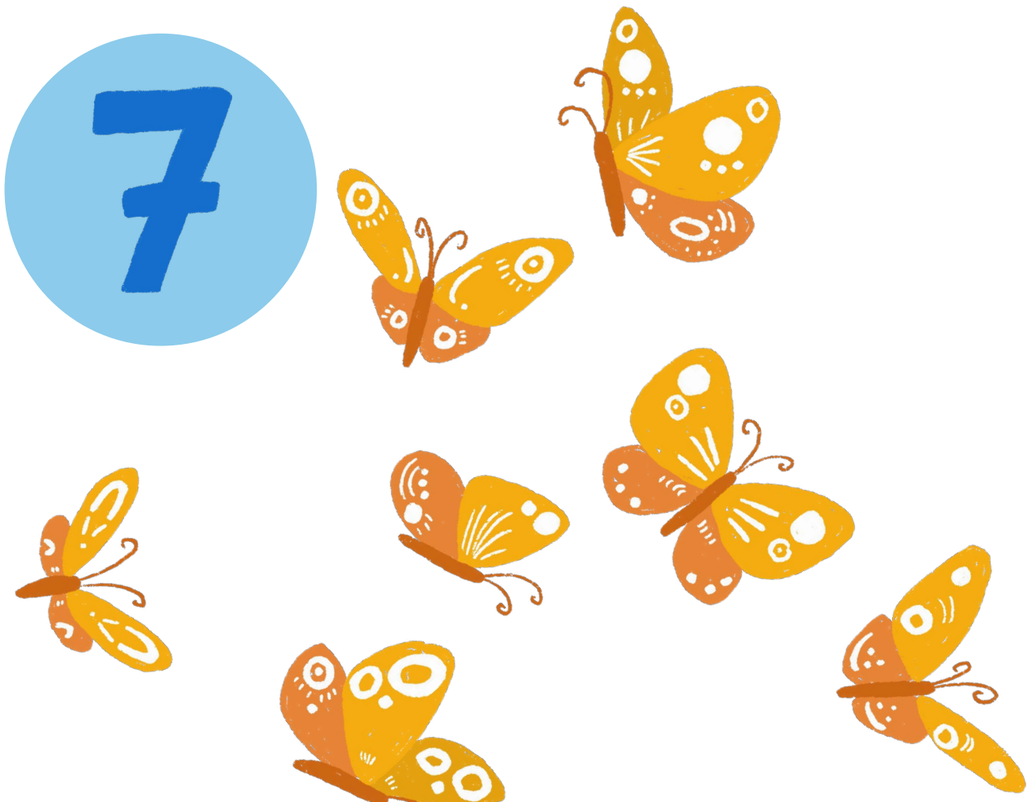
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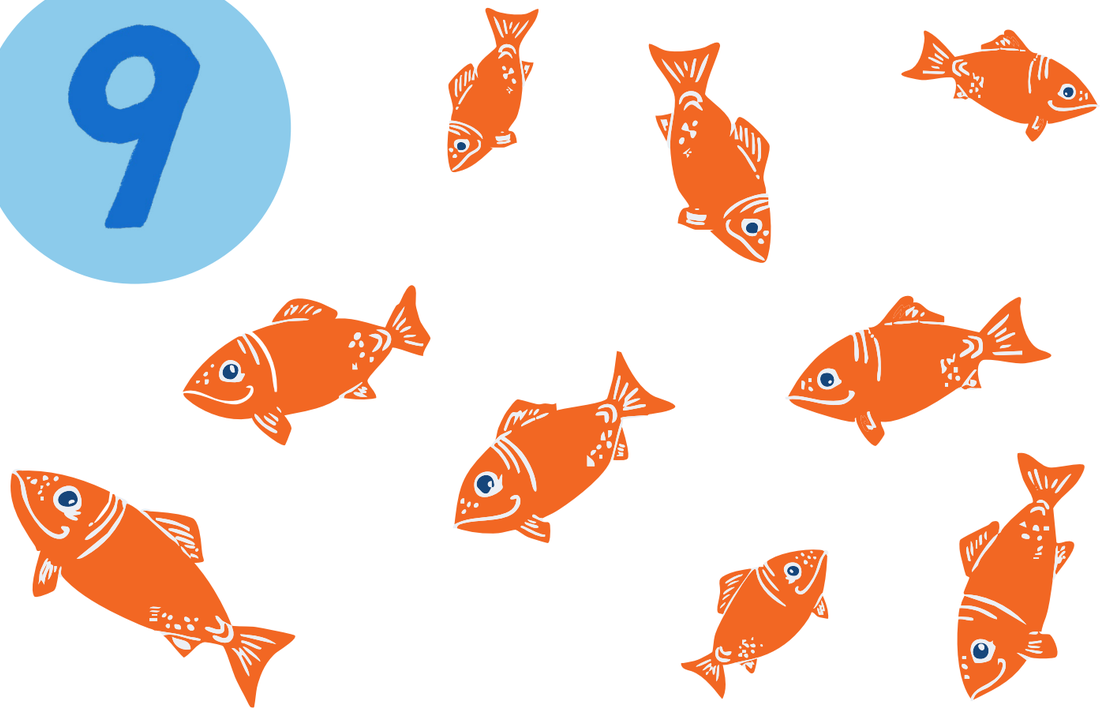
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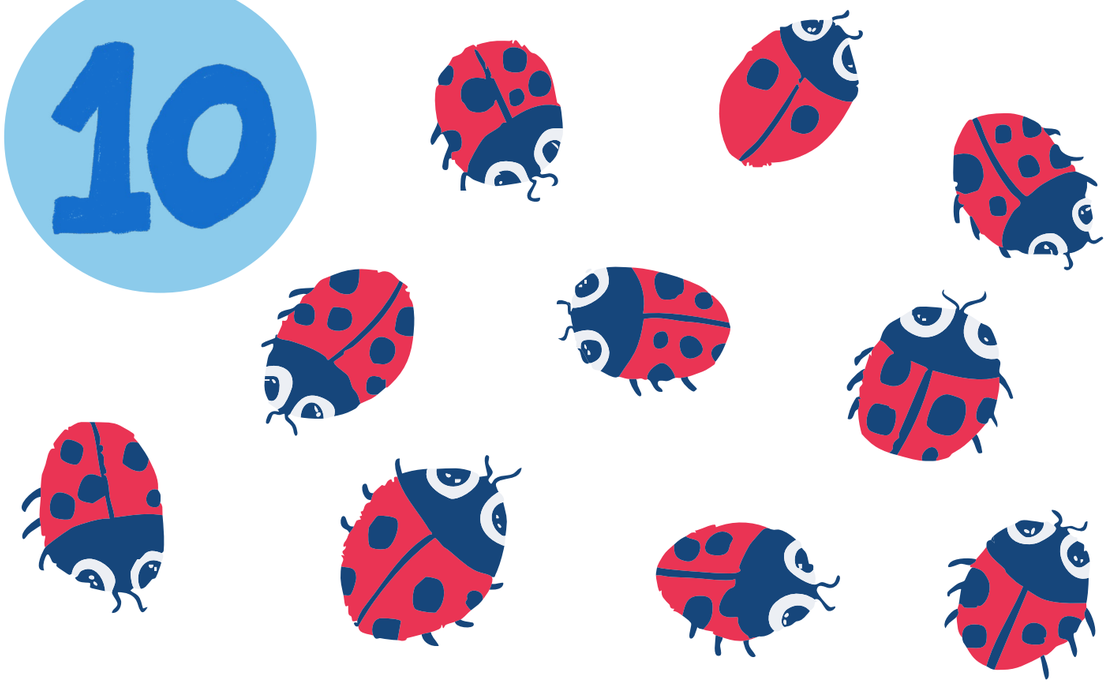
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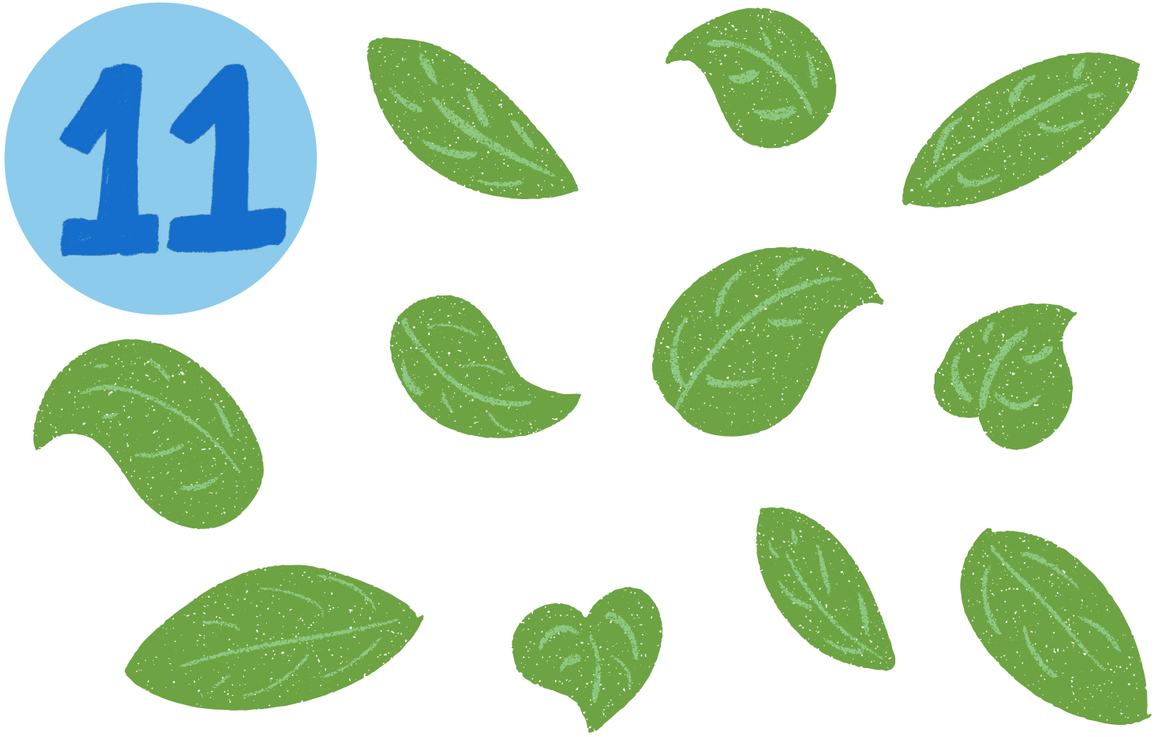
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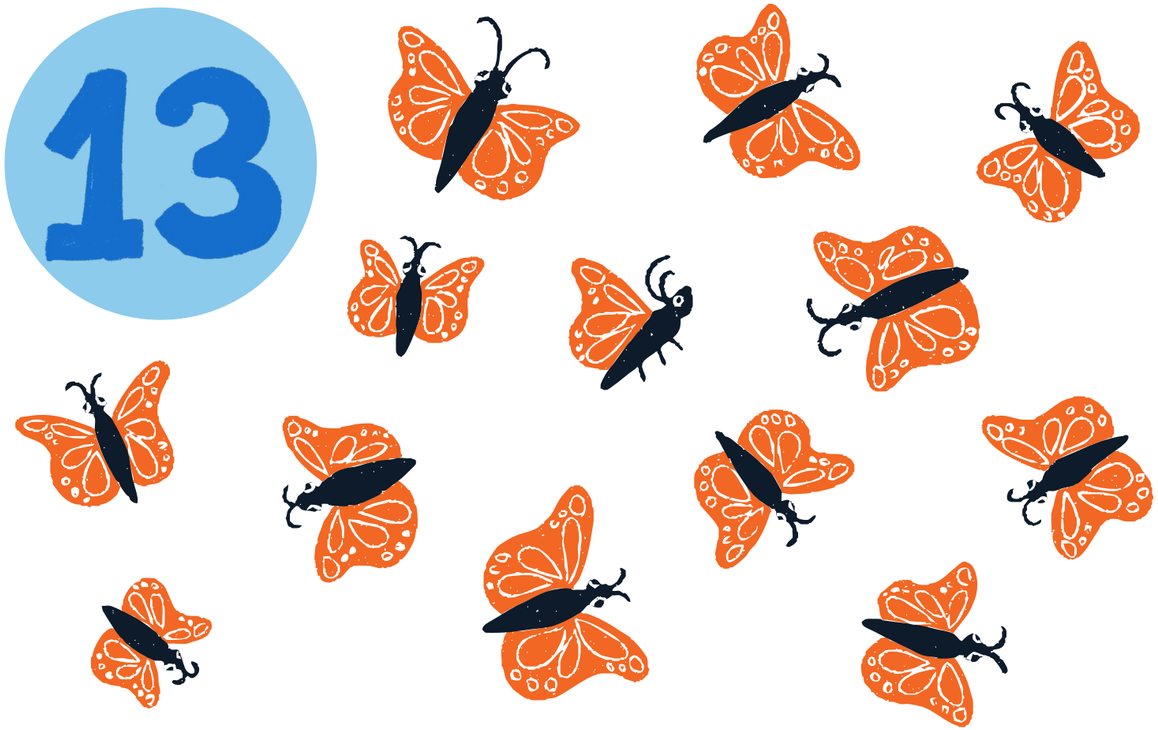
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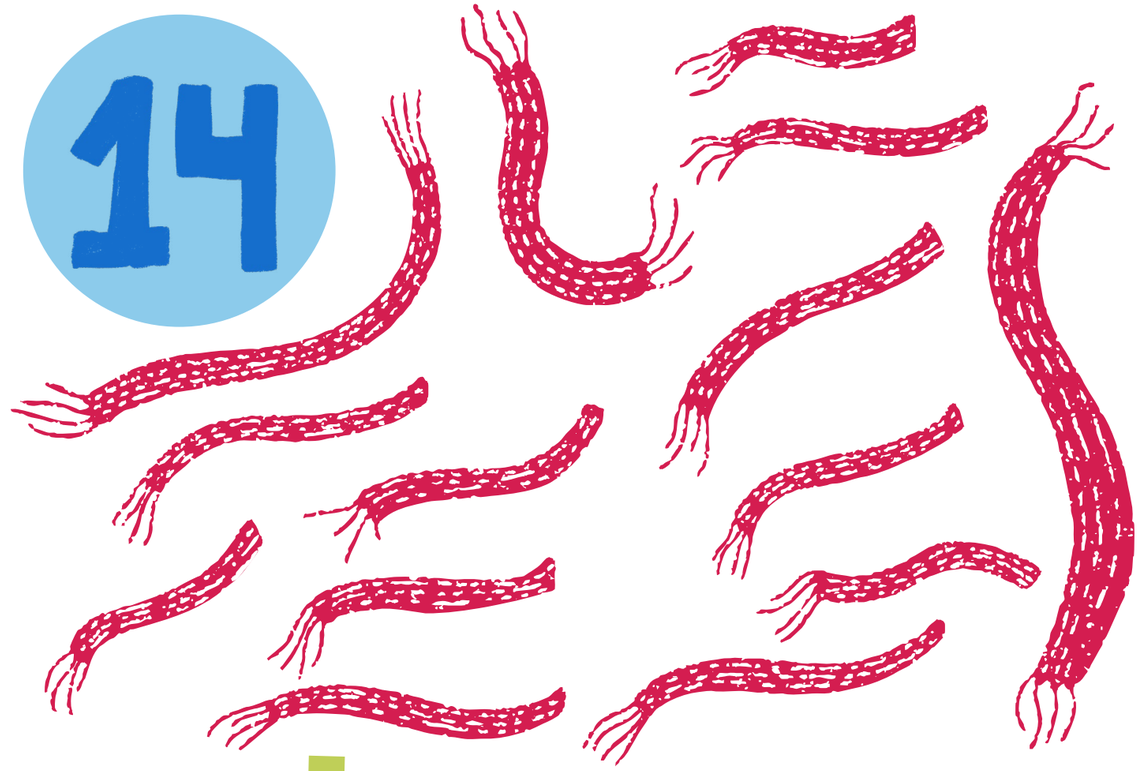
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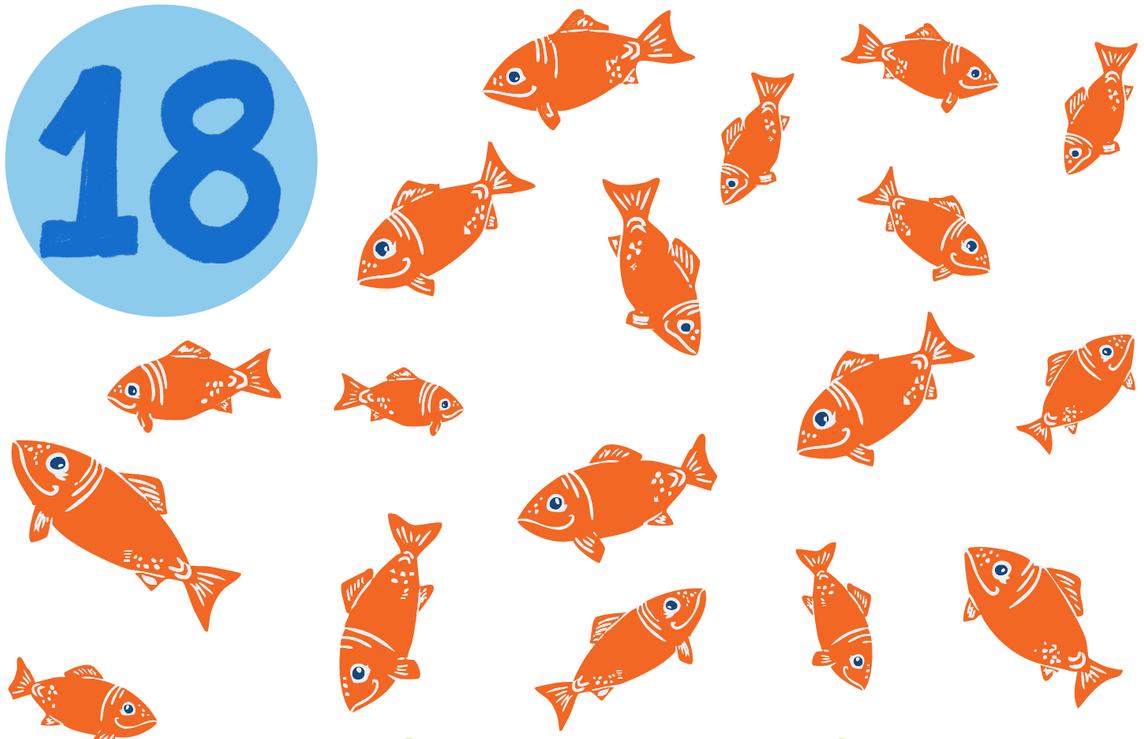
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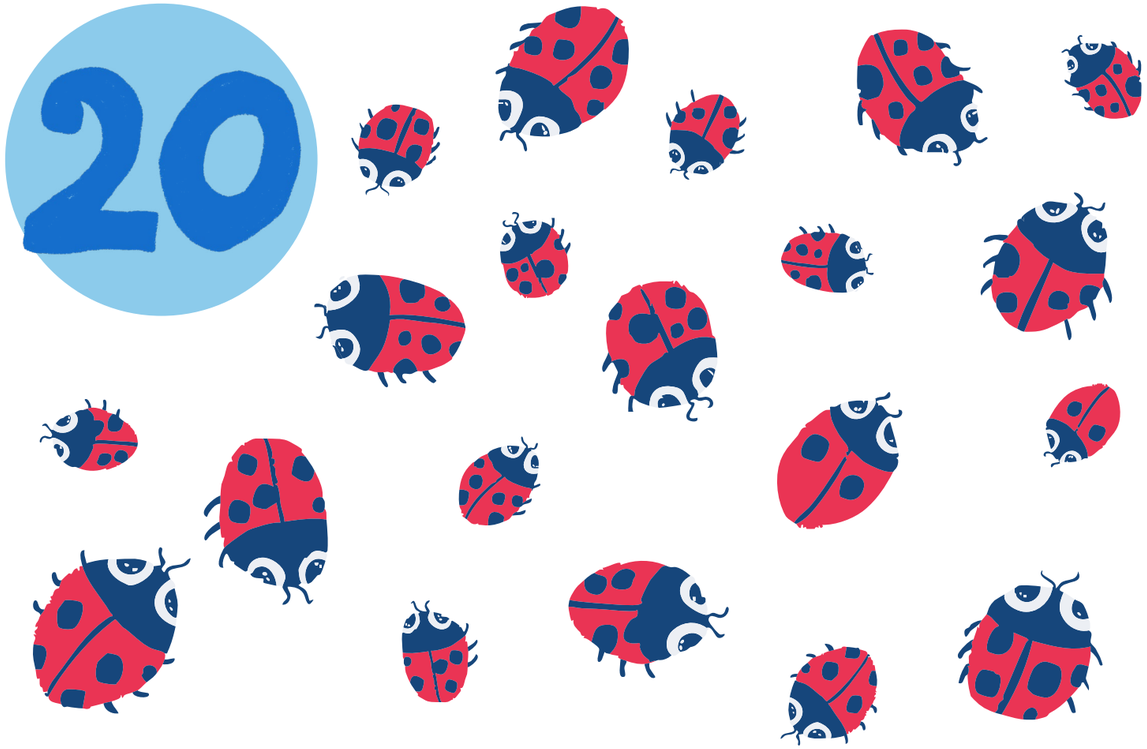
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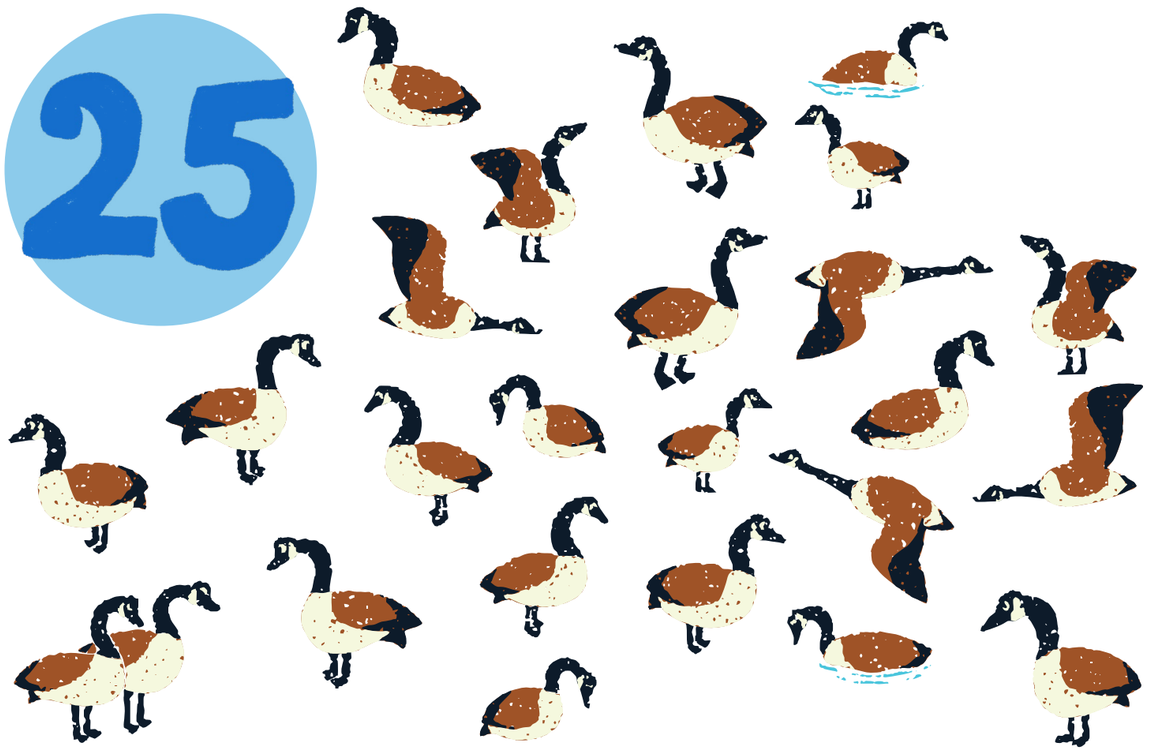
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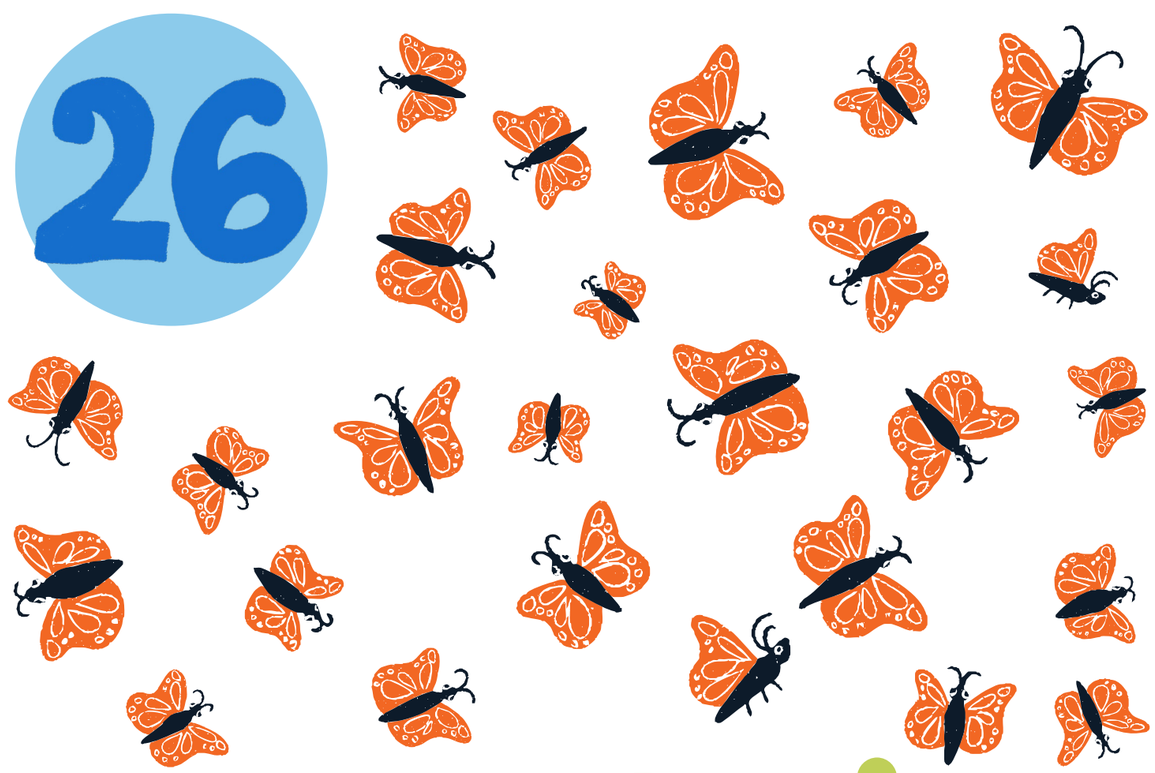
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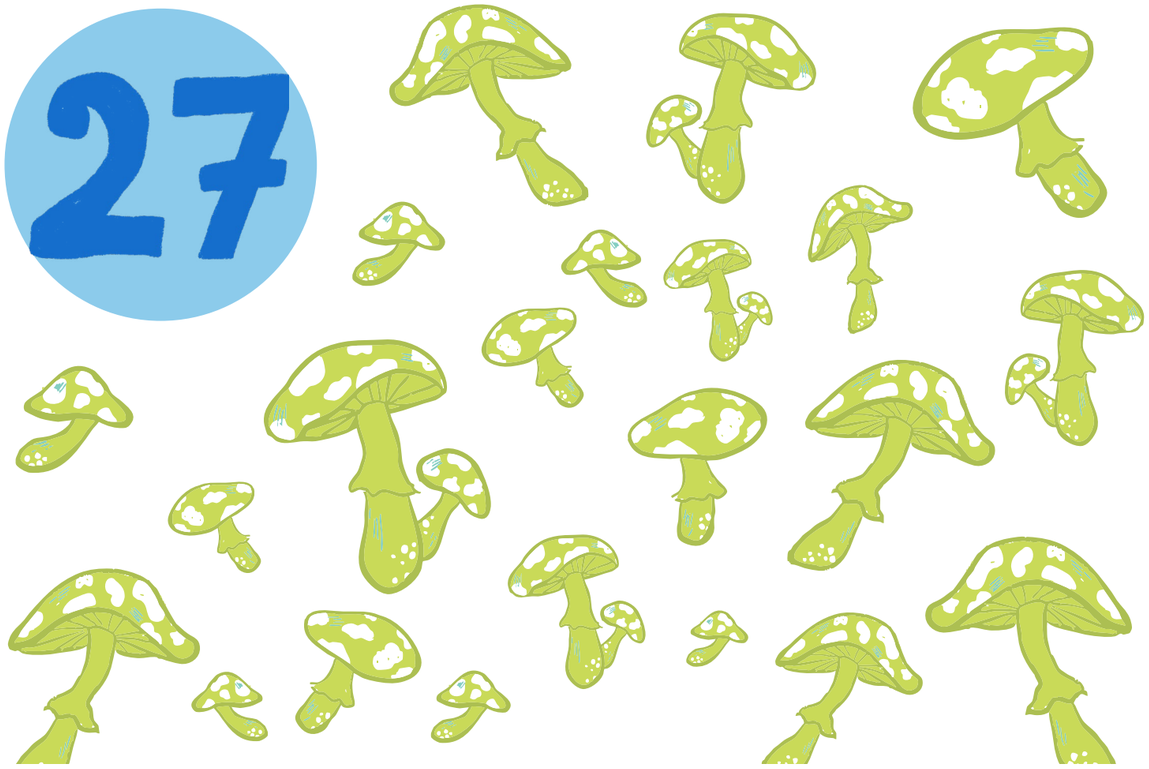


vaent saenk

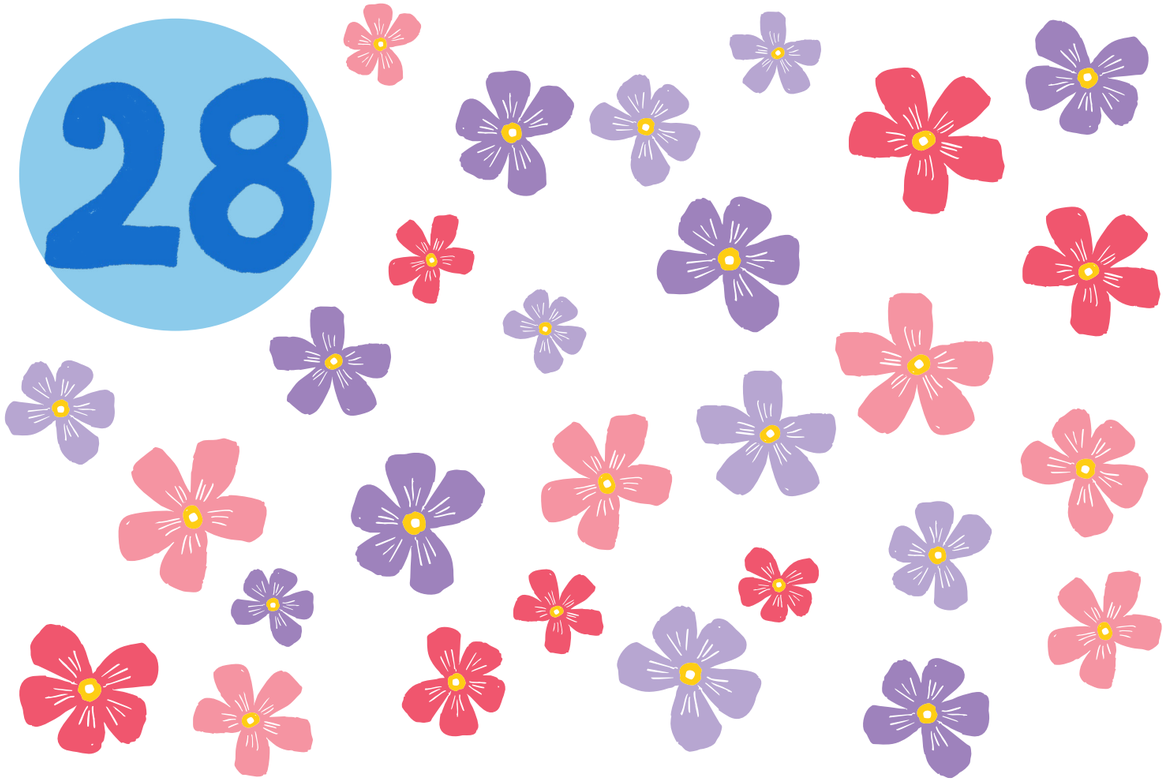
26



vaent sis



vaent set



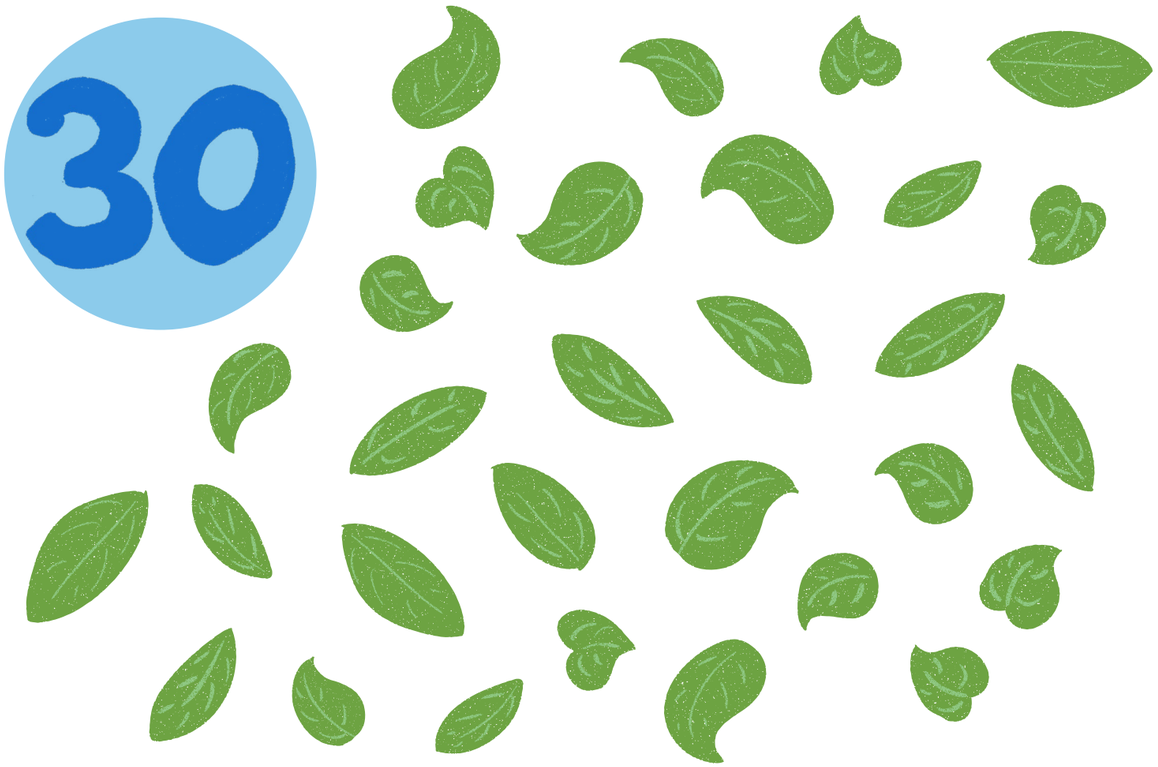
vaent whit

29



vaent nauf

30



traante


31
traantay aen

Classroom Calendar



1 *aen*	2 *deu*	3 *trwaa*	4 *kaat*	5 *saenk*
6 *sis*	7 *set*	8 *whit*	9 *nauf*	10 *jhis*
11 *oonz*	12 *dooz*	13 *trayz*	14 *katorz*	15 *kaynz*

16 *sayz*	17 *jhiset*	18 *jhiswhit*	19 *jhis nauf*	20 *vaen*
21 *vaentay aen*	22 *vaent deu*	23 *vaent trwaa*	24 *vaent kaat*	25 *vaent saenk*
26 *vaent sis*	27 *vaent set*	28 *vaent whit*	29 *vaent nauf*	30 *traante*

31

traantay aen



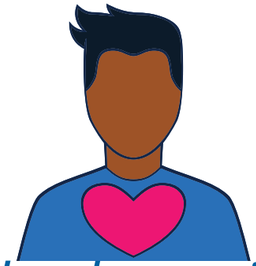
halloween



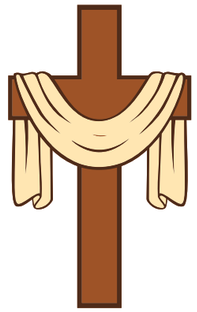
bonn fayt



le daaryiin zhour d'ikol



la zhournii poor lii paapaa



le zhour di paak



li zhour di raamoo



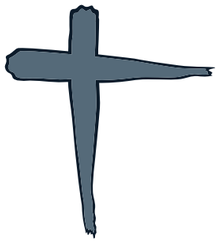
li zhour di paak



li zhour di St. Patrick



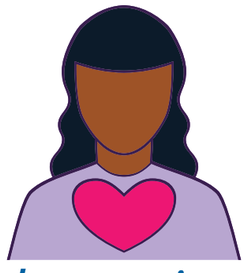
le zhour de tayr



mikarjii dii saandr



la zhourii di shmiizh oraanzh



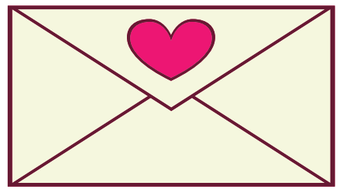
la zhourni poor li mayr



le saan zhour d'ikol



le zhour d'laan



la fayt de St. Valentine



le zhour de nowel



nowel



le zhour de nowel



nowel



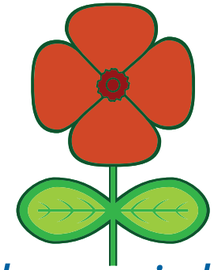
le promii zhour d'ikol



le zhour de swiss



la zhournii de Louis Riel



zhourni dju souv'nir



zhourni di l'action d'graas

laindji

monday

mardji

tuesday

mikradjii

wednesday

zhudjii

thursday

vandradjii

friday

samjii

saturday

djiimanch

sunday

septaamb

september




awktub

october




noovaamb

november

desaamb

december




zhaanvyii

january




fevriyii

february

maars

march




avril

april







mai

may




jwaen

june



l'itii

summer





latonn

fall





l’ivayr

winter





praentaan

spring



awzhourdjwii

today


dimaen
tomorrow



eyayr

yesterday

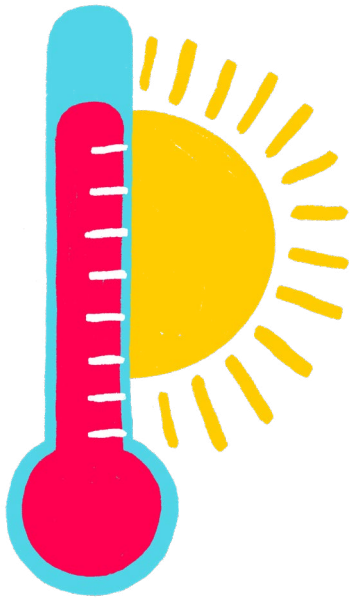






Word of the day

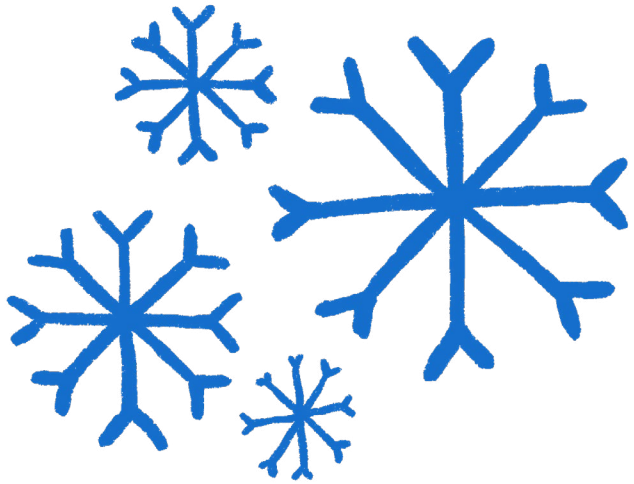




shoo
warm



groovaan
windy



ill niizh

snowing



solay

sunny



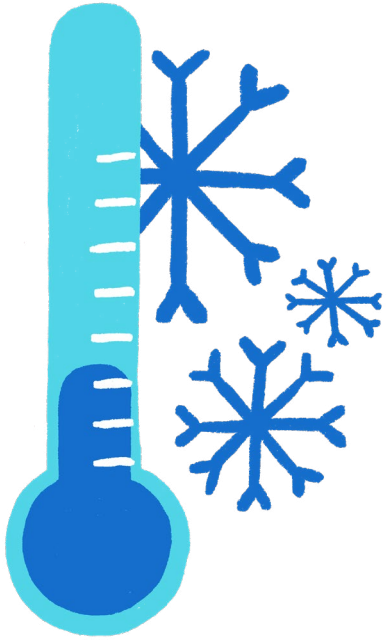
taan koover

cloudy



il moiy

raining



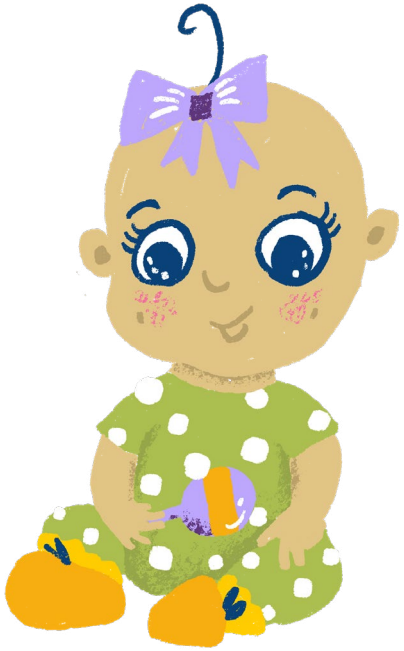
fret
cold



l'ark aan syel
rainbow



kouzin



aen
pchi baybii



aen shyaen



aen shaa



mon frer



ma seur



pawpaw



mawmaw



graanpayr



grandmayr



maarsh



garochii



daans



soot



bwair



maanzh



graapii



nawj



fawnd le bwaa



koor



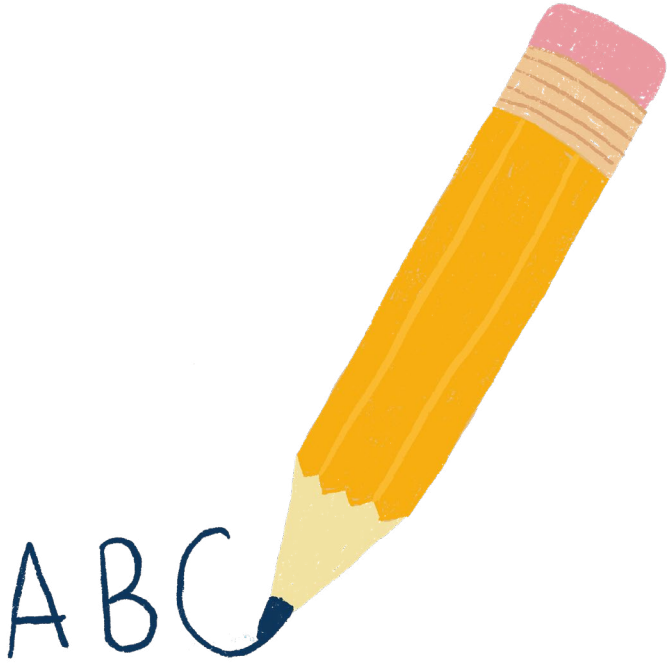
laav tii maen



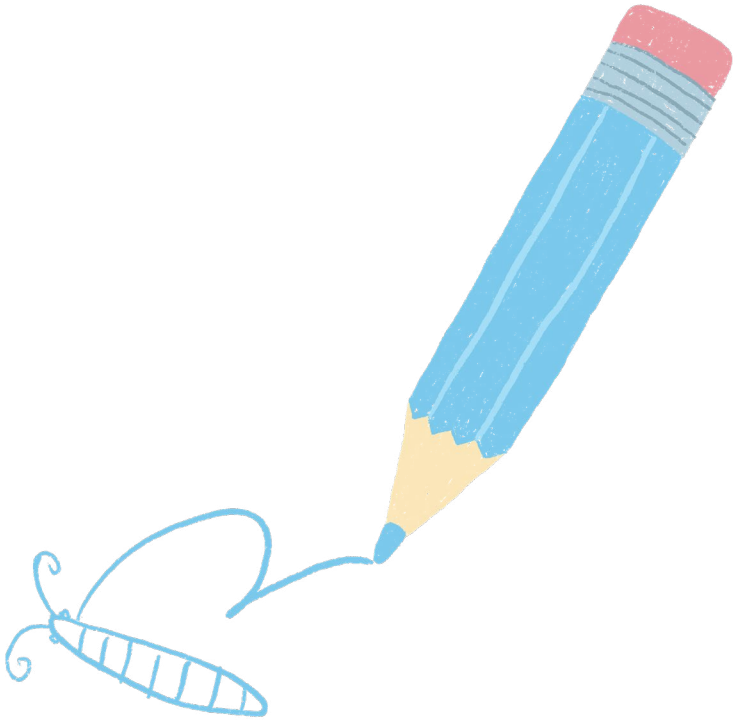
asi



aen
zhoo zhoo



aycrii



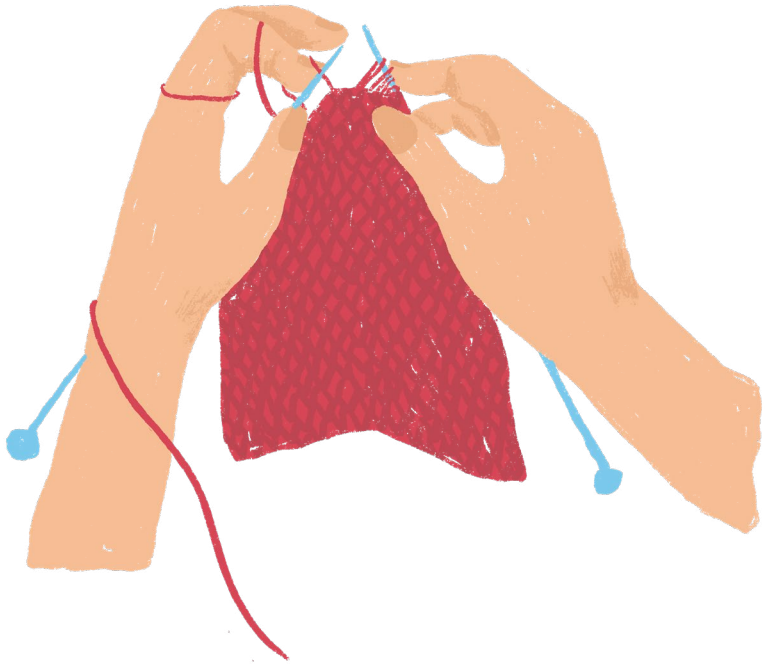
dessinii



countii



ferr kwiir



ferr



abii tway



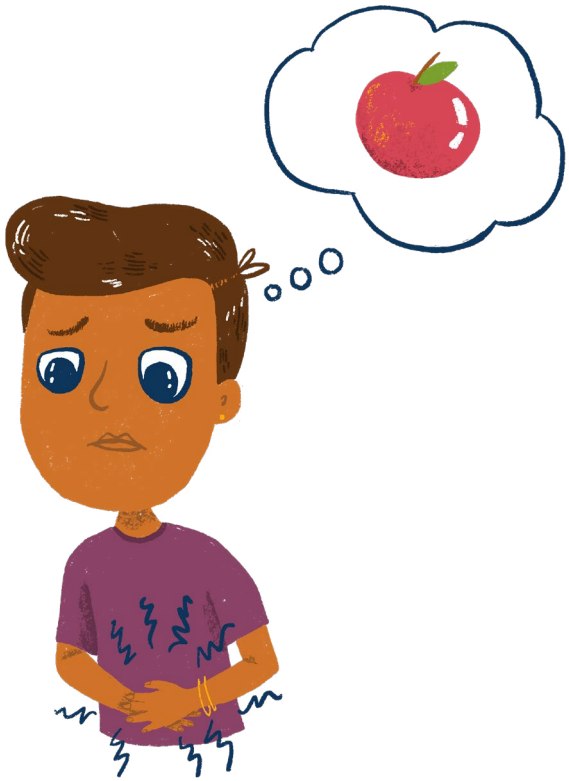
emmen



koodipyii



poingyii



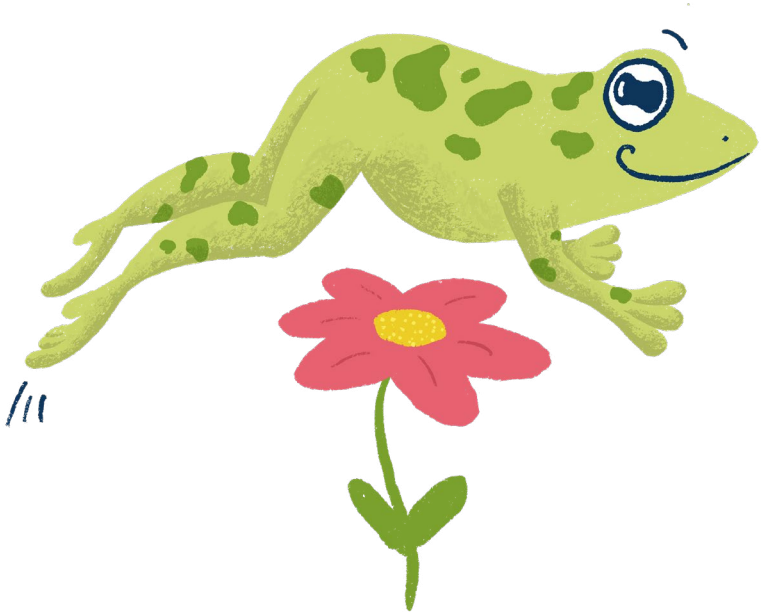
ja faen



frappii



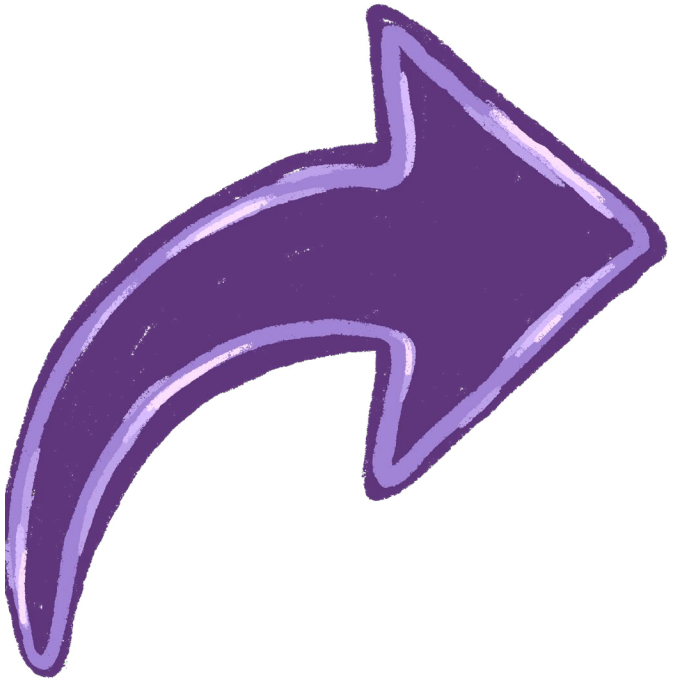
maashchii



grooii



la goosh



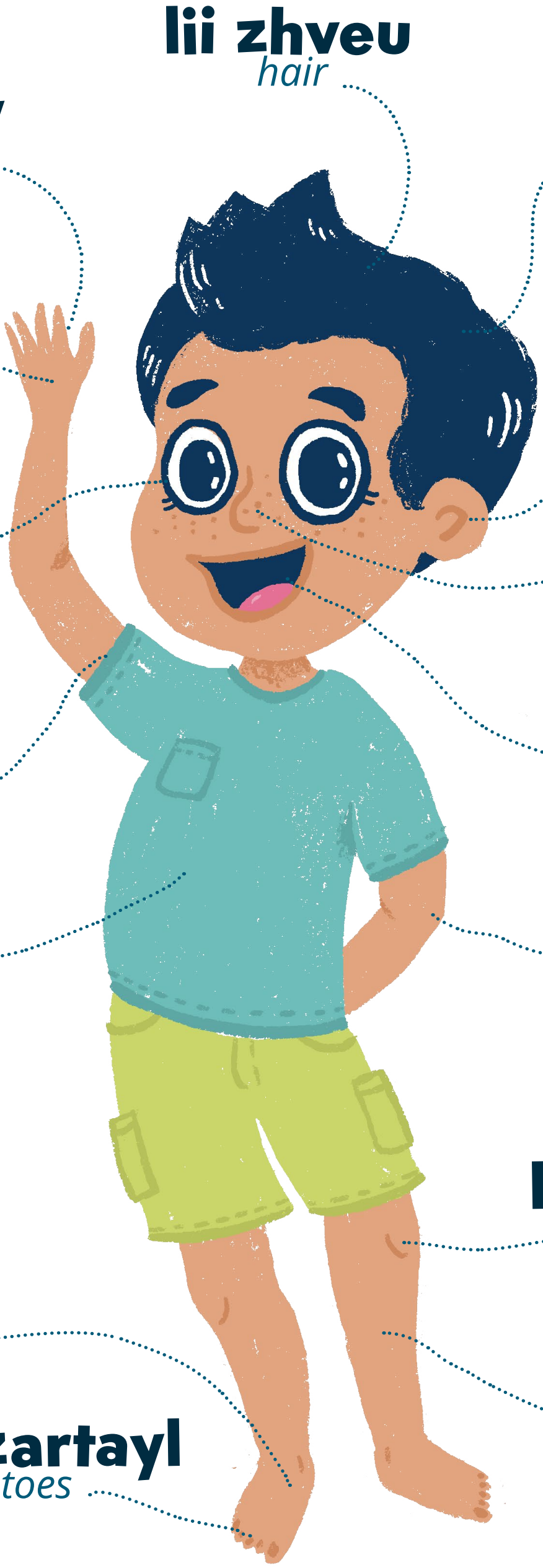
adret



netawyii sa

li korr

the body



lii zhveu
hair

lii dway
fingers

la tet
head

maen
hand

lii zaryl
ear

lii zyeu
eyes

le nii
nose

la boosh
mouth

aen braa
arm

lii koodr
elbow

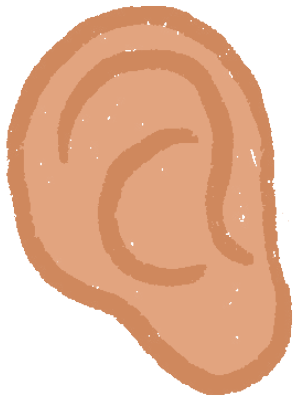
le vaant
stomach

lii zhnoo
knee

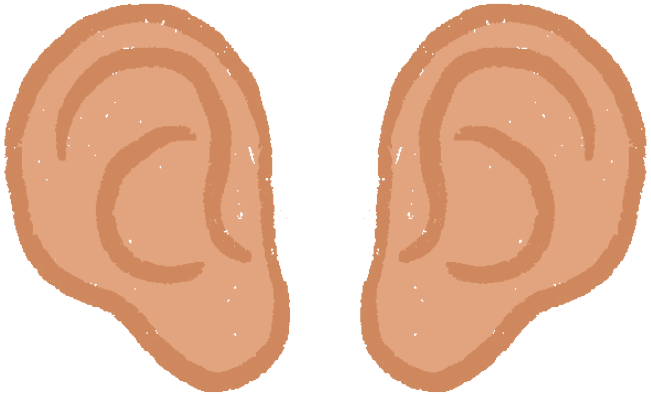
lii pyii
feet

lii jaamb
legs

lii zartayl
toes



zaray



lii zaray



zyeu



lii zyeu



le nii



maen



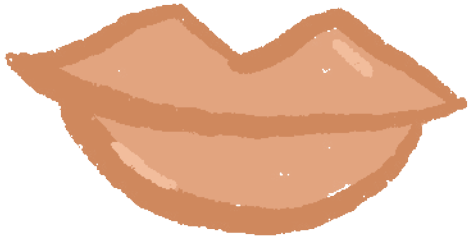
pyii



la boosh



la laang



lii babinn