

Abuela's Weave

book by Omar Castaneda

unit study prepared by Debbie Palmer

Social Studies

Geography

Abuela's Weave is set in Guatemala. You could have your child label the map with the capital city (Guatemala City), Lake Atitlan (Northwest of Guatemala City) and other areas of importance such as where the grasslands (south), tropical forests (north) and mountains (west) are located.

Culture: The Maya

Esperanza and her abuela (Grandmother) are descendants of the Ancient Maya. The Maya lived in Central America in the area of southern Mexico and Guatemala. Around A.D. 1000 the Mayan way of life changed and the civilization declined and the people moved out of their great cities. Today the ruins of the Mayan civilization can still be seen in place like Tikal in northern Guatemala. The ancient Maya were experts in math, astronomy, and science. The Maya were the only ones at the time in Central America that developed a system of writing using hieroglyphs. If your child has sufficient interest, you could check out a book at the library about their hieroglyphs. The Mayan also had their own calendars and counting system.

Language Arts

Vocabulary

Huipiles (wee-pee-lays)-woven blouses used by Guatemalan women

Quetzal (ket-saul)-national bird of Guatemala

birthmark-mark on the skin that has been there since birth

ancestors-people in your family that came before you (i.e. your great-great grandparents, great grandparents, etc.)

fumes-polluted air that has a strong smell and may look like smoke

wares-items a person is going to sell

tapestry-a woven cloth with beautiful designs and/or pictures

nimble-quick in motion

Similes

A simile is a comparison between two things that uses the words “like” or “as”. There are several similes used in the book...

“so the threads stay close, like family” (1st page)

“She wanted to catch just a sight of her grandmother’s shawl, like a blackbird hopping from branch to branch in a forest of people.”

“the tapestry’s colors shone as brightly as the sun over Guatemala’s Lake Atitlan.”

Have your own student write some similes describing the beautiful tapestries in the book.

Art

Weaving and looms

the loom that is shown in the book is called a back strap loom because of the strap that is worn around the back of the weaver. The loom consists of only ropes, sticks and the strap. This type of loom could be owned by almost anyone and used almost anywhere. For your younger child you could have them weave paper. Take two pieces of contrasting colored paper. Cut one of the sheets into 1 inch strips. Cut the other paper in 1 inch strips horizontally but leave about a one-inch border around all four edges. The child can then weave the papers.

Colors

Since the colors are so bold and bright in many of the illustrations your child could go over the concept of cool and warm colors. The warm colors (reds, oranges, and yellows) dominate many of the pictures with the cool colors (greens, blues, purples) in the backgrounds and interwoven with the warm colors in the tapestries. You could also talk about the concept of neutral colors (browns, grays, black, white) since these are used as a background to let the tapestries “pop off the page”.

Math

Mayan number system

The Maya had the concept of zero and a number system based on 20.

Please see the activity pages for an introduction to the Mayan number system along with activities using the Mayan number system. Use the parts that are appropriate for your child's age and ability level.

Marketplace

Since part of the story is set in a marketplace, it might be fun to set up a marketplace in your own house. Your child can decide what he/she wants to sell and you could set prices for items. You could even create your own money for the marketplace! Many times kids will really get into an activity like this. Another activity would be to work with your older child on making change...for example, if your total is \$4.35 and you give the clerk a \$10 bill how much change will you get back?

Science

Quetzal

The Resplendent Quetzal is the national bird of Guatemala and lives in most of Central America. It has long been considered sacred by the Mayan. It is also a symbol of liberty because it has been observed that many times it will try to kill itself if caged. The male's tail feathers can grow up to 3 feet in length, but the females have much shorter feathers.

[Jan Brett Quetzal coloring page](#)

Birthmarks

You may want to have a discussion about birthmarks and the different types. Some of the types of birthmarks are called stork bites (small irregular pink marks), strawberry mark (red and bumpy resembling a strawberry), café au lait spot (small light brown colored area) or a port wine stain (deep wine color blotch on the face). It is not entirely clear what causes birthmarks.

Bible/Character

Teasing

You could talk about teasing and how damaging it is to the receiver. Esperanza's abuela was teased and then tried to avoid the stares by covering her face when they went to the market. This might be a good time to review the golden rule (Matthew 7:12). We don't like being teased so we shouldn't do it to others. Romans 13:10 is another good verse to add to this topic. Proverbs 18:21 speaks of the power our tongues have over people...to either destroy them or build them up.

Beauty

You could also talk about how our world puts so much emphasis on beauty and that those who have flaws are looked down upon. God puts more emphasis on the condition (or "beauty") of our hearts than what is on the outside. (1 Samuel 16:7)

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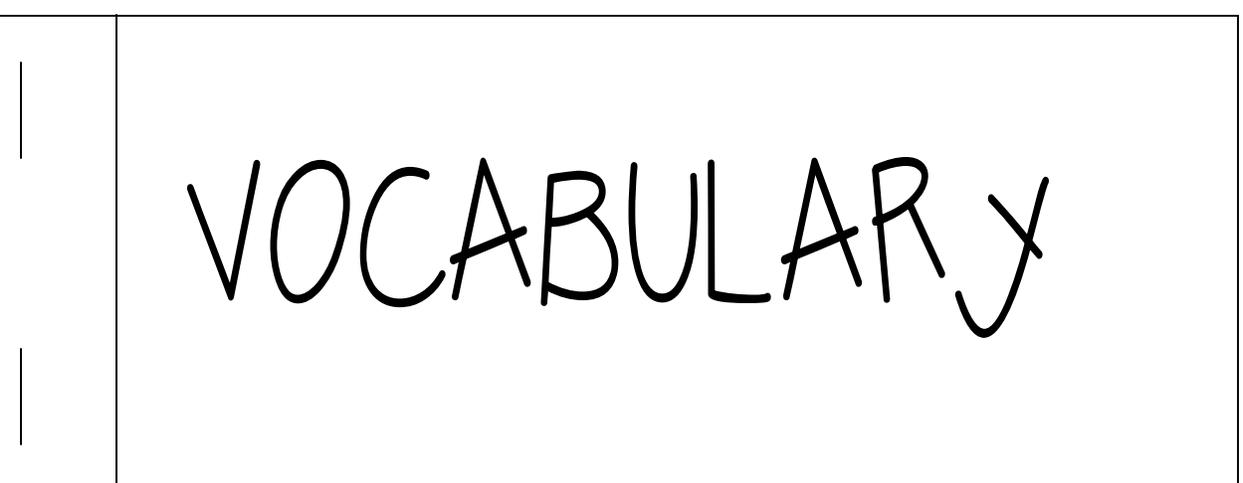
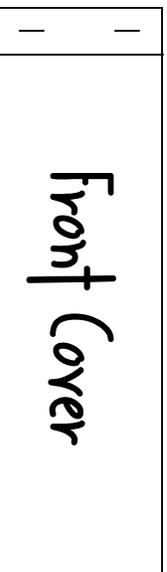
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Cut out each rectangle (solid black lines). Fold like a hotdog on center gray line. Cut dotted gray line. Repeat steps with each rectangle.

The definition for each vocabulary word will go under the flap. Definitions can be cut/pasted (see last two pages) or written in.

Stack rectangles together (putting the "vocabulary" cover on top) and staple on the left side. You will be able to lift the front of each strip up. You should also be able to flip in your book from strip to strip.

See below for what the front of your book will look like. Using cardstock may make your book too thick.

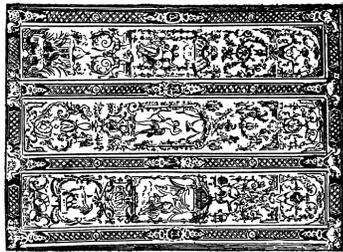


birthmark



ancestor





tapestry



nimble

fumes



wares



mark on the skin that has
been there since birth

people in your family who
came before you

polluted air that has a strong
smell and may look like smoke

items a person is going to sell

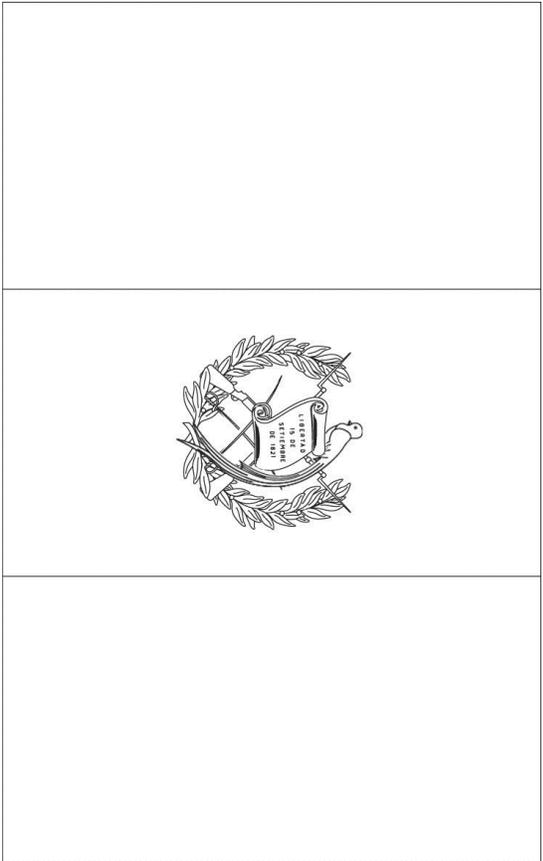
a woven cloth with beautiful
designs or pictures

quick in motion

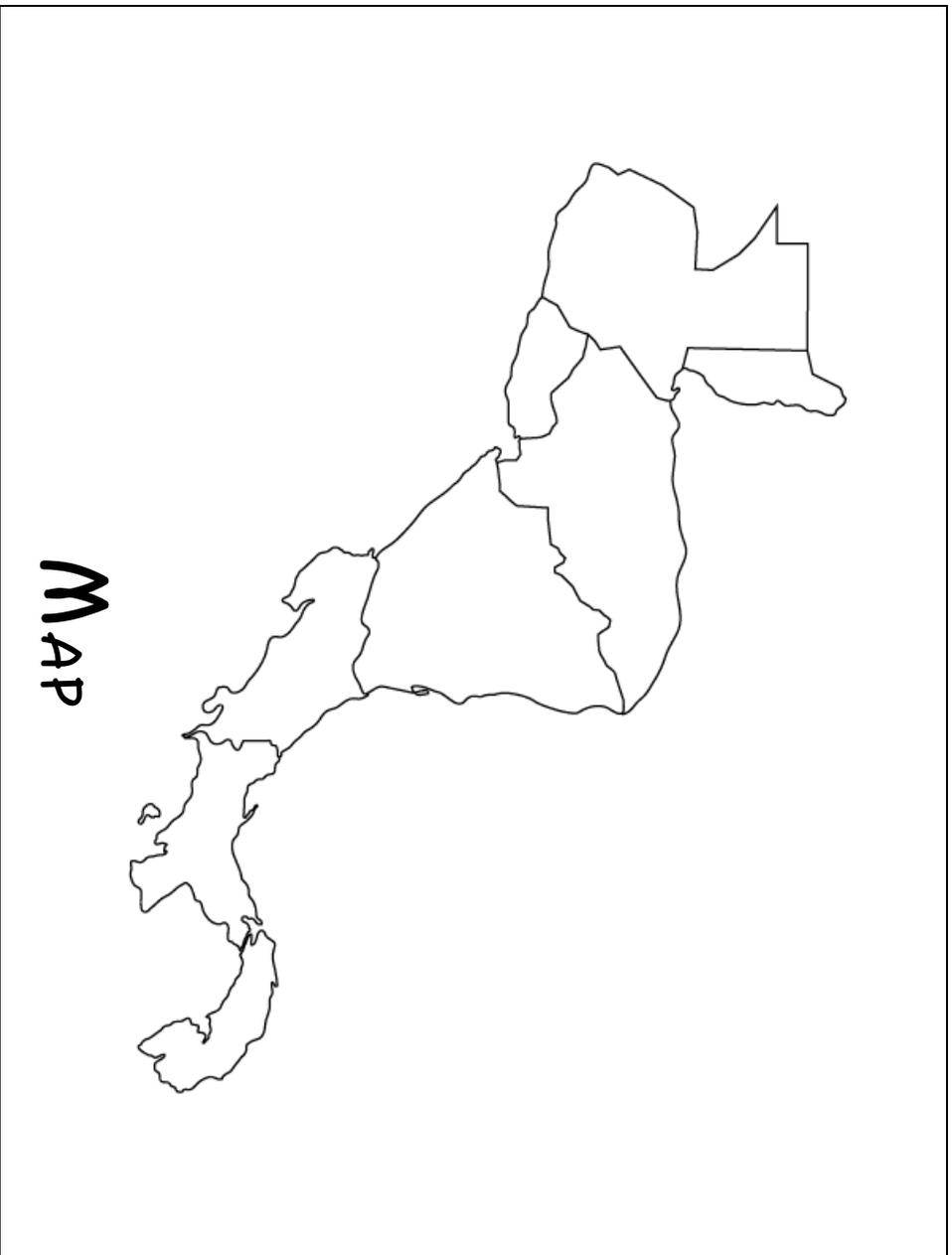
GUATEMALA



Directions: Cut out the rectangle on each page. Stack together with the smallest on top and the largest on the bottom. Staple at the top.



THE FLAG



Options:

1. Color Guatemala
2. An older student may want to label every county.

FIVE FACTS I'VE LEARNED



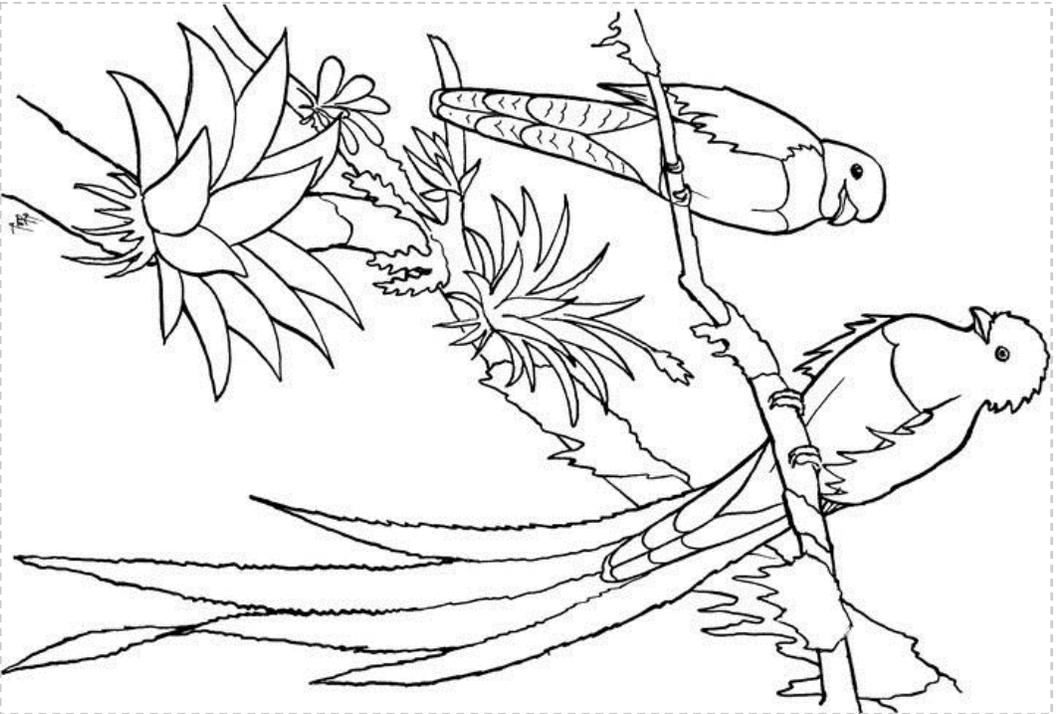
Anatomy

Diet

Predators

QUETZAL

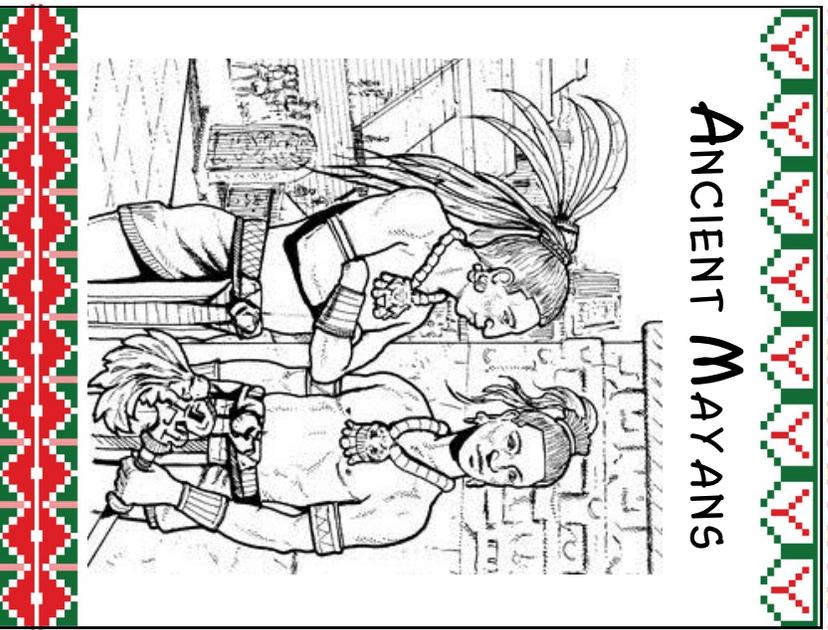
Directions: Cut out file folder book as one piece. Fold in half. Use image on next page to paste to front cover, if desired.

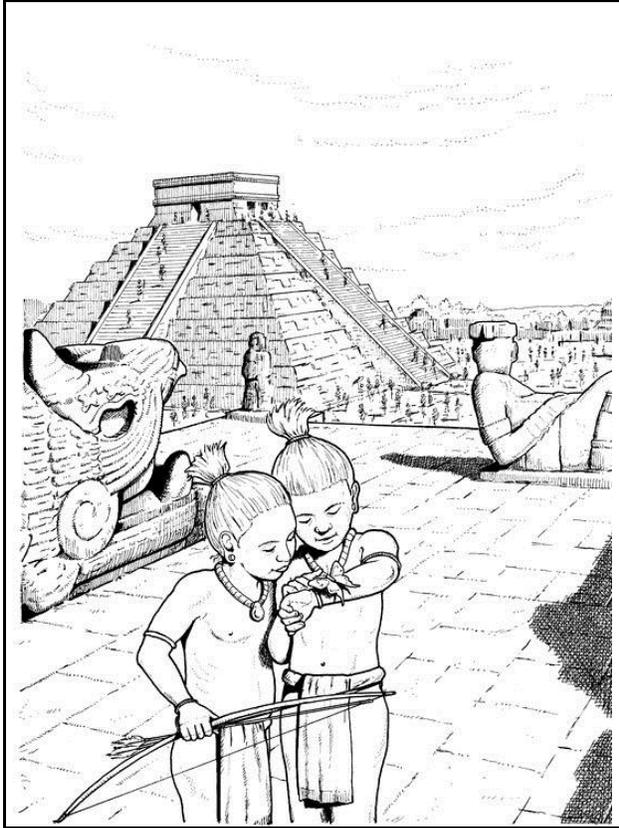
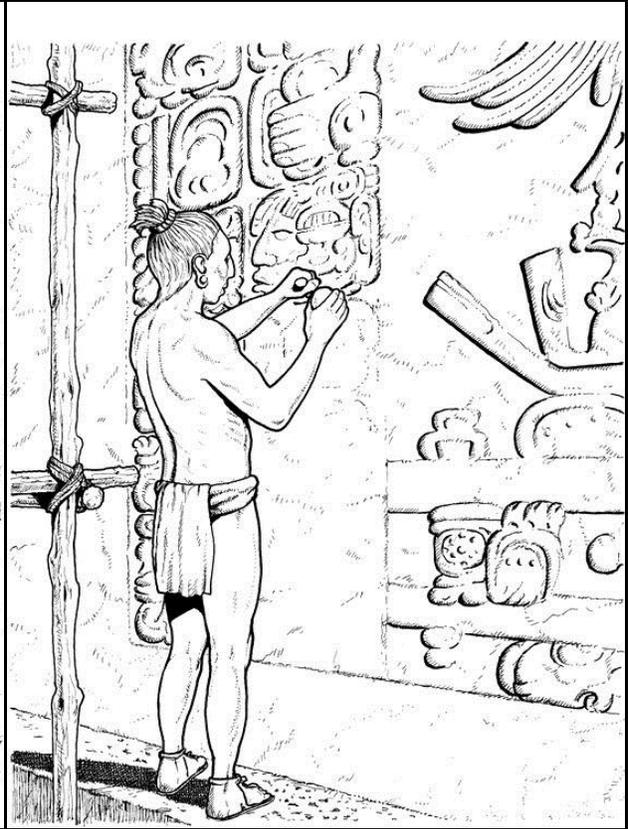
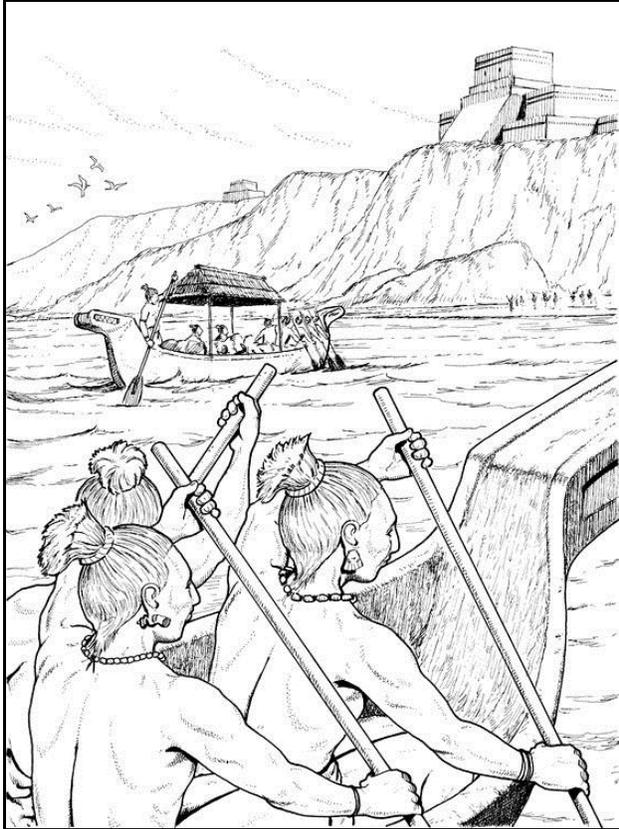


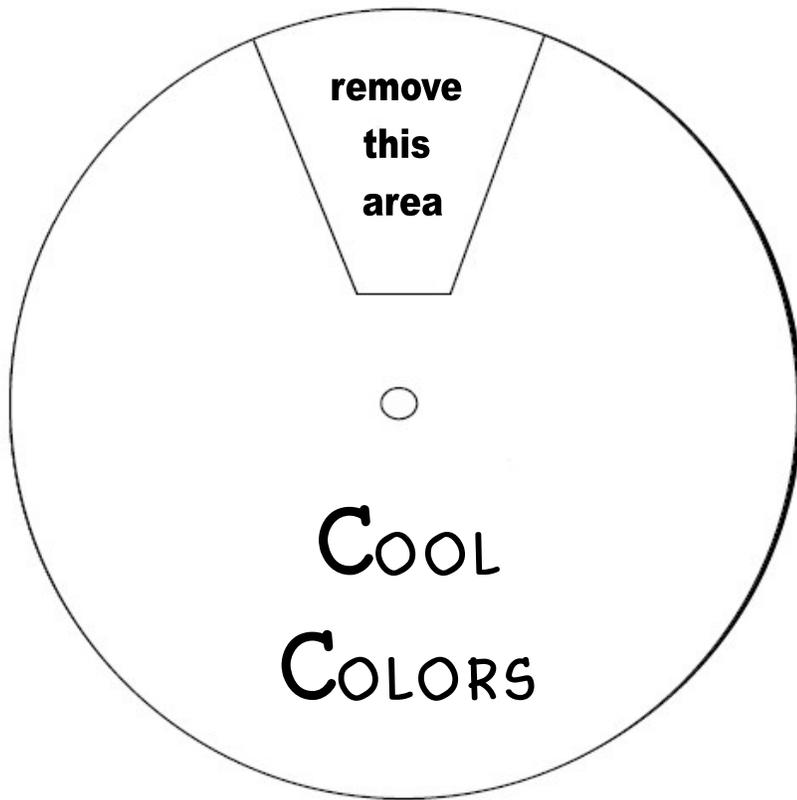
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Directions: Cut out cover page and the coloring pages on the next page. Stack together and staple at the top of the book.

An older student could use the pictures to write a book or story.





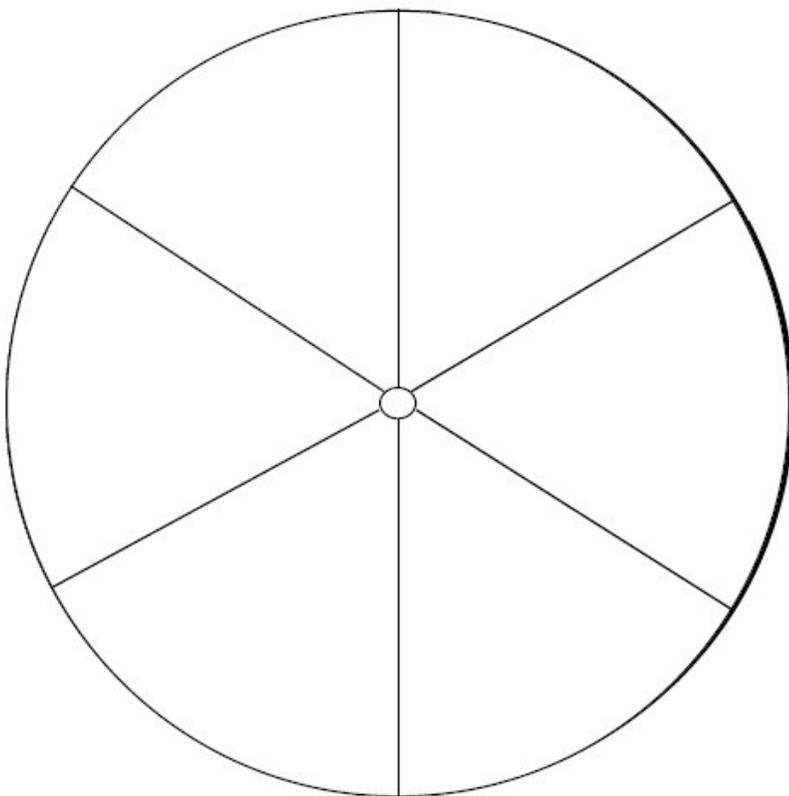


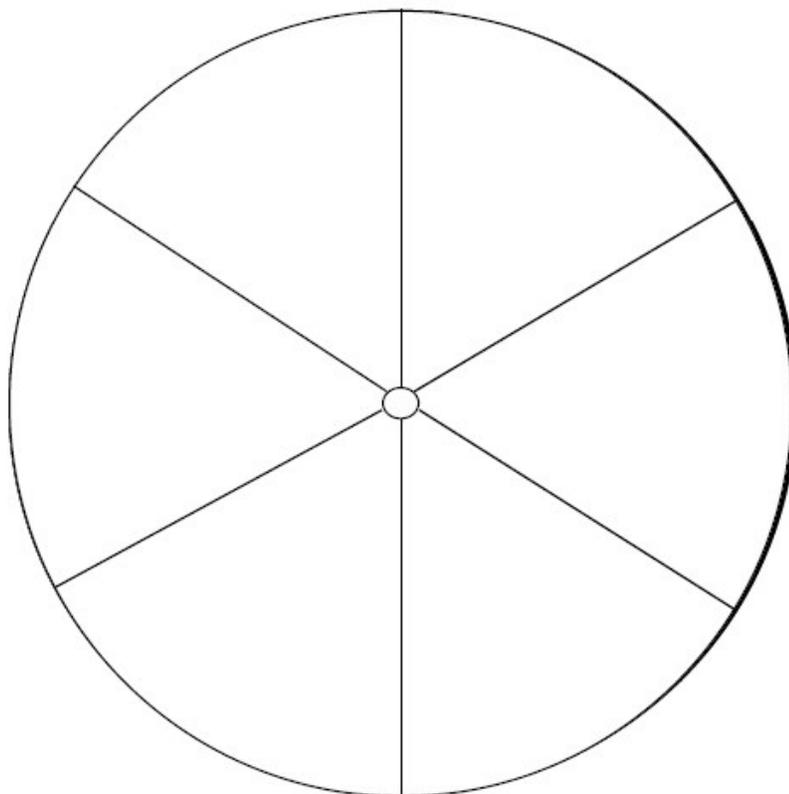
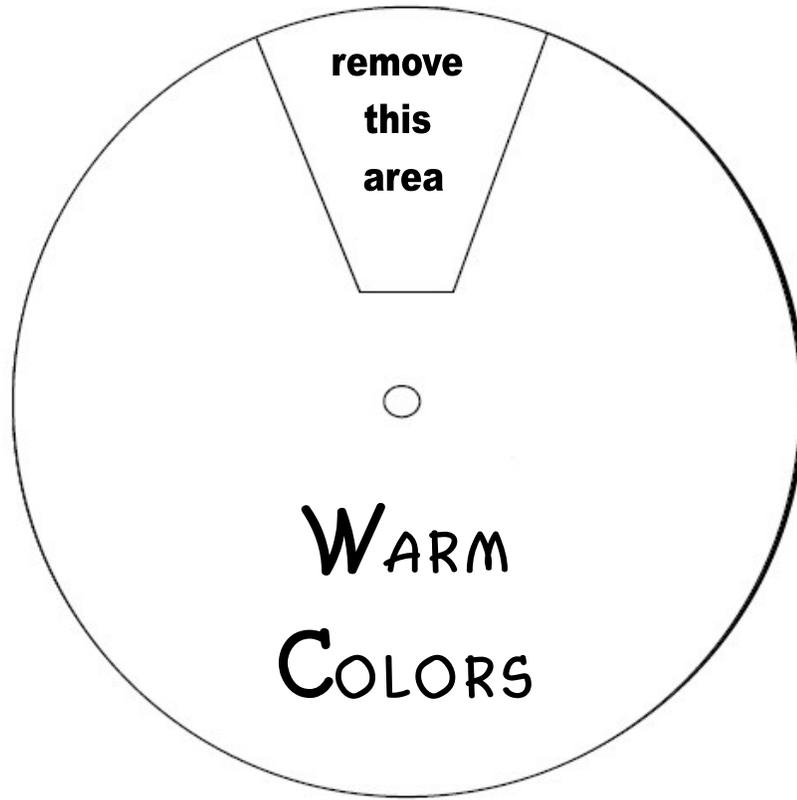
Use this after you discuss the colors lesson with your student.

Cut out the four circles. Ask your student to find six cool colors from his crayon box and to color those colors on the wheel in the spaces provided. Attach the two wheel pieces (the cover and the part your student colored) with a brass fastener.

Repeat with warm colors.

If you have LOTS of different colors of crayons, try this variation:
have your student color the wheels with warm and cool colors that were used in the story.





MAYAN NUMBER SYSTEM

0	1	2	3	4
	•	••	•••	••••
5	6	7	8	9
				
10	11	12	13	14
				
15	16	17	18	19
				

 Mayan numerals.

Explanation

The Mayan used three symbols in their number writing: the eye shape for zero, the dot for one, and the line for a five. These were then combined to make other numbers. When the Mayan reached twenty they would move the signs up one line to represent 20 like this....

- (1x20)
-  (0x1)

Directions: Cut out the large rectangle book (next page) as one piece. Fold (valley fold). Open. Using an exacto knife (only an adult should do this), cut around three sides of each number square so that you have little windows (or flaps); you will do this ten times.

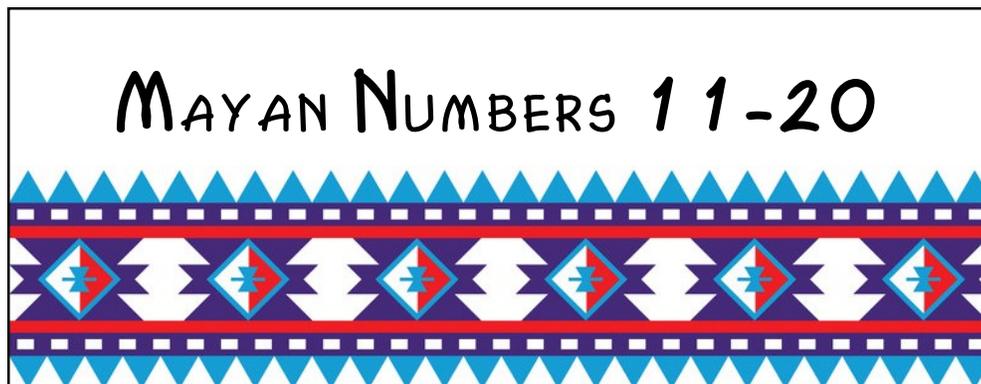
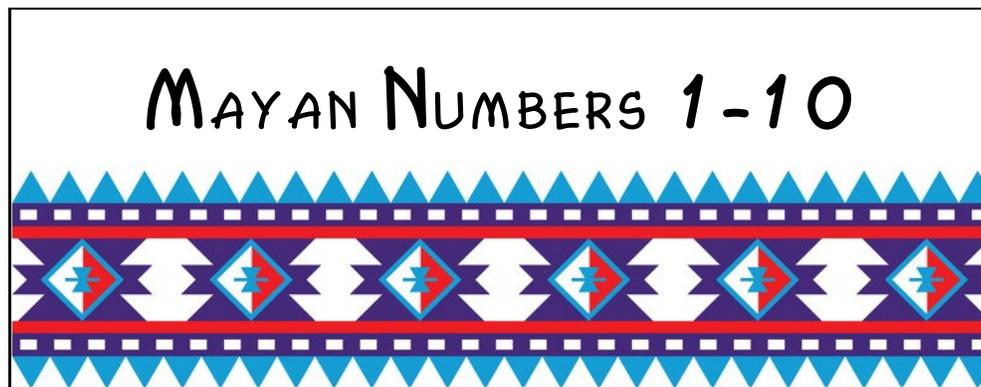
Have your student write the Mayan numbers in order (1-10) on the smaller rectangle. Using tiny dots of glue, glue the Mayan numbers rectangle behind the windows you made. Your student should be able to open each window and see the corresponding Mayan number.

Fold to close book and add cover (below).

Repeat for the second book (numbers 11-20).

Cut out the rectangle above and paste it on the front cover of your book (from previous page).

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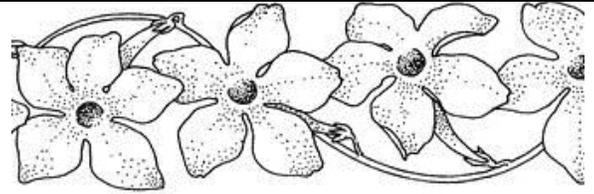
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

Directions: Cut each book out as one piece. Fold matchbook style. Cut and paste verses (next page) into the correct books.



Should we tease
other people?
What does the
Bible say?



What's more
important--
inner beauty or
outer beauty?

But the LORD said to Samuel,
"Do not consider his
appearance or his height,
for I have rejected him.
The LORD does not look at the
things man looks at. Man looks
at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the
heart."

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said unto Samuel,
Look not on his countenance,
or on the height of his stature;
because I have refused him: for
the LORD seeth not as man
seeth; for man looketh on the
outward appearance, but the
LORD looketh on the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

So in everything, do to
others what you would
have them do to you,
for this sums up the
Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12

Therefore all things what-
soever ye would that
men should do to you, do
ye even so to them: for
this is the law and the
prophets.

Matthew 7:12