

Crow Boy

Book by Taro Yashima

Unit study by Casey Kelly; printables by Ami

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography: Japan

The name Japan means "the sun" and Japan is also referred to as "the land of the rising sun." The Japanese flag is a red circle (sun) on a white background. Have students use red and white construction paper to make a Japanese flag.

The country of Japan is made up of over three thousand islands. Many of these islands are mountainous and some are volcanic. Japan's highest peak is a volcano called Mount Fuji. Have your students research how islands are formed.

In the book, *Crow Boy* the story takes place in a village in Japan. A village is a small community of perhaps 5 to 30 families that settled in a rural area. In Japan, villages are often farm or fishing communities. Your older students can research Japanese villages and create their own on paper.

Even though Japan is relatively short on real estate, it has the world's tenth largest population with about 128 million people.

Japanese Culture

Food: In Japan, people eat their food with chopsticks. They also have different dinner etiquette. For example, it's considered very rude to ever point with your chopsticks or leave your chopsticks sticking up in your bowl of rice or other food. You should never use your chopsticks to stab or skewer food. When serving food from a common platter, you should use the opposite ends of the chopstick than what you put in your mouth. It's also considered good manners to pick up a bowl of rice and hold it right below your mouth so the rice doesn't fall in your lap. Making slurping sounds when eating soup or drinking something is a compliment to the chef.

Buy inexpensive chopsticks for your students to try using them. Have them practice using the chopsticks by picking up cotton balls before they try eating with them. When ready, give your student a small bowl of sticky rice to try.

Clothing: Both women and men wear the kimono, but kimono are very rarely worn as every day clothing today. Sometimes if one travels to a rural area in Japan or a smaller island like Okinawa, you will see the kimono worn by elders. A Japanese woman usually owns only one kimono in her lifetime. It's a special kimono worn for the coming of age ceremony on her 19th birthday. Kimono are still popular in wedding ceremonies, but are typically rented. The traditional shoe worn with a kimono is a pair of geta sandals. They look very similar to American flip-flops. The Japanese also have special socks to wear with their geta sandals. They're called *tabi* socks. The socks are kind of like mittens for feet. The big toe is separate from the rest of the toes to make wearing sandals easier. A white pants and shirt set is called a gi. Gis are typically worn in a dojo when practicing martial arts such as karate.

Chop: A chop is a personal seal and is sometimes used as a signature. Chops are often found on scrolls, screens and official documents. Traditionally, they are usually carved in soft stone, bone, or wood and are made of symbols that say something about the owner or are things important to them. When an artist was done creating his work of art, he would dip his chop in red ink and stamp it onto the piece.

Have your students create their own chop by carving it into a small block of craft foam or a gum eraser. For younger students, you may want to have them draw a simple design on paper and then transfer it to the chop and carve it yourself. Or you can use a readymade stamp from the store that has a picture that has meaning to the child. Be sure to remember to carve the design in reverse so it shows up correctly when stamped. Once you have the chop, your student is ready to use a red ink pad to stamp away.

Writing: The teacher liked Chibi's writing. How do the letters look different than the way your student's letters look? Japanese writing is different (and beautiful!).

Human Relationships: Making Fun of Others

The children in the story make fun of Chibi by calling him names like slowpoke and stupid. This is so unkind. Discuss name calling with your student and why she should not participate in it. Also discuss how she should react if someone makes fun of her.

Human Relationships: Recognizing talents in other people

Mr. Isobe saw something special in Crow Boy-- something that none of the other teachers or students saw. What was it? Something good! Crow Boy wasn't weird or stupid. He was smart and special. Encourage your students to think of family members, friends, and other people they know. What talents do each of these people possess? What makes each person special?

LANGUAGE ARTS

Vocabulary

forlorn - lonely and sad

trudging - to walk laboriously or wearily along or over

honored - high respect, as that shown for special merit; esteem

graduation - the successful completion of a program of study

attendance - the frequency with which a person is present

imitate- to copy exactly

Discussion Questions/Writing Prompts

How do you think Crow Boy felt when his classmates made fun of him? How do you think he felt when they gave him the nickname Crow Boy?

If you were Crow Boy, how would you have liked to be treated?

What lesson do you think Crow Boy's classmates learned?

Aesop's fable: The Crow and the Pitcher

After you study crows this week, you may want to read this story together which shows that humans have regarded crows as an intelligent bird for a long time.

ART

Mixed Media

Yashima used crayon, ink, pencil, and tempera to illustrate this book. Can your student pick out the various media in the pictures? ("Do you see where the crayon is used? The ink? Pencil?"). Discuss that when illustrators combine media, we call this *mixed media*. After studying the illustrations together, go to your art supply cabinet and let your student choose two (or more) different media to combine to create a picture of his own.

Black and White drawings

Just for fun, let your student try a black and white drawing like Chibi. Does he like it or would he rather add color? Discuss these things. Look at other books you may own that only have black and white drawings. Would your student add color to them or leave them black and white? Why?

Japanese Artist Study

Katsushika Hokusai lived September 23, 1760 until April 18, 1849. He was a Japanese painter and printmaker from the Edo Period and is most famous for his series of woodblock prints called "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji". One of the views, "The Great Wave Off Kanagawa," has become most popular and is studied by art students all over the world.

Hokusai was born in what is now called Tokyo, Japan. During his life, Hokusai produced tens of thousands of prints, paintings, and illustrations. Hokusai's themes were usually the Japanese countryside, the people and legends. Many years later, Hokusai's prints influenced other great artist like van Gogh, Monet, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Activity-- you may consider trying woodblock prints with your students.

How to make wood blocking prints:

- 1.) Start with a rough sketch of what you would like your finished print to look like. You might look up examples of other wood blocking prints online to get some ideas.
- 2.) Once you have your design sketched out, start making your drawing for the key block. This is best done on tracing paper.
- 3.) Sandwich a piece of carbon paper between your drawing and your block of wood. Typically, a Japanese artist would use a block made of wild cherry, but any block of soft wood will do. Make sure to place your sketch face down so it will come out right when printed. (This is why doing your drawing on tracing paper is a good idea. You can turn the paper over and still see your lines to trace them.) Using a pen or stylus, trace over your design to transfer your drawing onto the block of wood.

4.) After you have transferred your design to the wood, remove the drawing paper and carbon paper. Using very fine carving tools (or plain nails from the hardware store) start carving your design into your key block.

5.) When you have completed your carving, now you can test your design. Using an ink pad or ink roller, ink the carved side of your wood block. Be sure to apply the ink evenly. While the ink is still wet, place onto a piece of scrap paper. Press down evenly and lift your key block straight up (so not to smudge the design). Then allow your impression to dry. Evaluate your design and make adjustments to your carving as necessary.

6.) Repeat step 5 until you are happy with the results. Then stamp your design onto your final project this can be canvas, paper, cloth, etc. Color in with colored pencils, paint, or leave in black and white.

*Note- For younger students you may try letting them carve on something softer like a Styrofoam meat tray.

Japanese Garden (design project)

The Japanese place great value on their gardens. Garden designers are considered artist. Gardens are typically representing a miniature world. Since space is rare many gardens are sculptured to represent a miniature world. Items placed in the garden represent larger landforms. Rocks for example symbolize mountains; trees represent forests and so on.

Make your own miniature Japanese garden. You can find many attractive containers are your local gardening or home improvement store. Look for a container that is long and doesn't have very high walls such as a large saucer for a terra cotta pot. You can research plants that typically grow in Japan and see if they are available in your area. If not, any plants will do, just remember this is supposed to be a miniature world so small plants are best to work with. Once you have your container and plants all you need now is rocks and pebbles and any other embellishments you might want to add such as sand for a beach or desert perhaps. While you're at the store you might also look for decorative bamboo. They have become very popular over the last few years. These plants have been bent to grow into decorative patterns.

If your student is feeling particularly creative you might try experimenting aluminum foil or other plastic containers to add water features. Or you might try

adding small pebble painted blue (such as fish tank gravel) to represent the water features instead.

This is a great time to introduce younger students to what makes plants grow and different land features. Older students might enjoy researching Japan's land features and using the miniature garden for making a replica of the country.

SCIENCE

Crows

Discuss the following information with your student. You may also want to check out some library books about crows. Be sure to watch the video clips below as your student will really get an understanding for just how smart this bird is!

Anatomy:

Crows comprise the genus *Corvus*. These birds are usually black with black beaks and black legs, some have white, brown, or gray coloring in addition to their black. The common crow is approximately 8-12 inches long.

Diet:

Crows will eat just about anything (they are omnivorous eating plants and animals). Their diets include worms, insects, road kill, mice, berries, crops, (especially corn), the eggs of other birds, and anything else they can find (even fast-food!). An adult crow needs 11 ounces of food each day. Despite their bad reputation for eating crops, crows also eat a number of pests which are harmful to those same crops, including cutworms, wireworms, grasshoppers and even noxious weeds.

Range:

The 40 some members of this genus can be found just about anywhere in the world (except Antarctica, New Zealand, and South America). They thrive in mountains, woodlands, across plains and farmers' fields, and throughout urban areas.

Nesting Habits

Crows build bulky nests out of twigs and line them with bark, grass, and/or small roots. The female lays the eggs in the nest (usually 4-7) and the male helps with

the incubation. Once the eggs hatch, the baby birds remain in the nest for 6-8 weeks while their parents bring them food.

Intelligence:

Crows (and ravens) may be the most intelligent of all birds.

Five Senses

Chibi uses his five senses to explore the world around him. Review the five senses and discuss how we use each one. Can your student recall examples from the story of how Chibi uses his sense? (sight-- the desk, the patch on a boy's shirt; hearing- he closed his eyes and listened on the playground; touch- insects and grubs).

Consider taking your student outside this week. Go on a sense walk (you may want to do different walks on different days). You could go for a listening walk. What do you hear? Birds? Can you mimic their calls? You could also go on a touching walk (you may need to learn about a few poisonous plants in your area first) or a looking walk; you could even go on a smelling walk. Enjoy nature together as you teach your student to really observe the world God has made.

Day/Night

Japan is on the other side of the world. Students can learn about the sun and the moon. Asia, including Japan, is located in the Eastern Hemisphere. We are located in the Western Hemisphere. When the Eastern Hemisphere is experiencing daylight the Western Hemisphere is experiencing darkness. Locate Japan on the globe. Using a flashlight, show that when we have daytime, Japan has nighttime.

MATH

Estimation

Use a bag of rice to introduce estimation and how to use a scale. Prepare small cups with the following quantities of rice a head of time; 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 (if you're feeling ambitious). Show your student 10 pieces of rice and ask them to count the grains in the pile. After your student has come up with the correct number of grains, then explain to them that now they know what 10 pieces of rice look like. Ask if using that information can they make an estimation of how grains are in the next cup. After they have guessed count with them the number of grains (20). Then repeat the procedure. Once you have gone through all of the pre-

measured cups, you might encourage your child to grab a small handful of rice on their own and then both of you can make a game of take turns guessing how many grains are in the new pile. Count the grains of rice with your child and see who was the closest.

Measure out rice into small sandwich baggies (you may want to pre-measure the bags beforehand so you get even round numbered weight). Using a scale, let your child measure the smallest bag and record the weight. If your student is already comfortable using a scale, you may try using the bags in a similar fashion to the activity above to expand on estimation. You can also use the bags and a balance scale to have your student see what pairs of bags would equal the first bag placed in the scale. For example, if you place a 10 oz. bag in the first half of the scale, your student would have to place two 5 oz. bags in the second half for the scale to equal out.

Time Zones

Have your older students research time zones. Then have them figure out how many hours apart your time zone is from Tokyo, Japan. Make up a worksheet of different times and have them write down what time it would be in Japan. For example, if it's noon here, what time is it in Tokyo?

Abacus

There is an abacus in the classroom in this story. What is an abacus? An abacus is a manual aid to calculating that consists of beads or disks that can be moved up and down on a series of sticks or strings within a usually wooden frame. The abacus itself doesn't calculate; it's simply a device for helping a human being to calculate by remembering what has been counted.

JUST FOR FUN

Cooking: Rice Balls

1. Boil the rice in a rice-cooker.
2. Put a little salt into a glass of water until it tastes salty, and prepare the stuffing of rice balls --- pickled plums ("umeboshi"), cod roe or salmon, a piece of fruit.
3. Cool the boiled rice until you can handle it (but not too cool. The rice won't become a 'ball' if you cool it too much).

4. Take small handful of the boiled rice with your two hands. (It's a good idea to wet your hands so the rice won't stick.)
5. Put the stuffing in the center of the boiled rice.
6. Grip the boiled rice in your hands forcefully with the fingers of the left hand, and the middle finger and the third finger of the right hand, and the palms of the two hands and squeeze several times.
7. Finally, wrap it with a piece of strip nori (found in most ethnic aisles of the grocery store).

Rice is one of the most universal foods on the planet. Nearly every culture on the planet has its own unique rice dishes. Research rice dishes from other countries and make a cookbook that includes recipes from countries from all over the world. This is a great time to bring up that even though, we may have many differences, we are still very similar at the same time.

Origami

Origami literally means "folding paper" and is the art of paper folding. There are many books and free resources on the internet available with patterns and techniques for making origami. Find a few suitable patterns for your student's level and make a mobile from the finished product.

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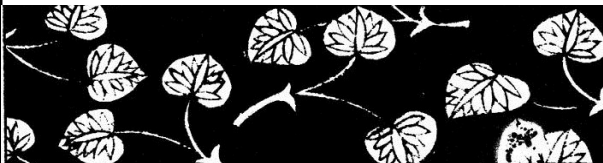
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Cut out pages. Color images.

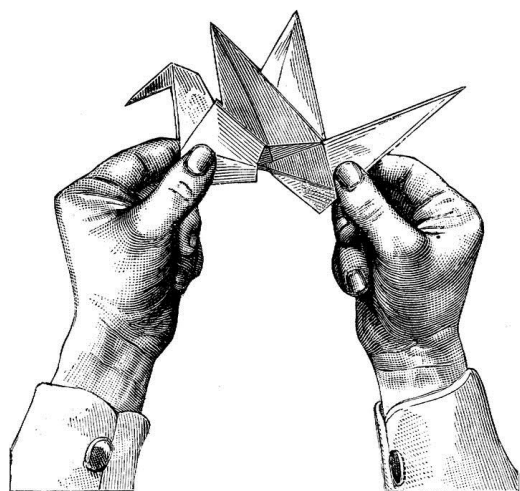
Stack pages to show the order of the pictures.

Tea

Japanese
Culture



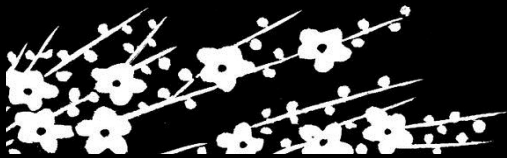
origami



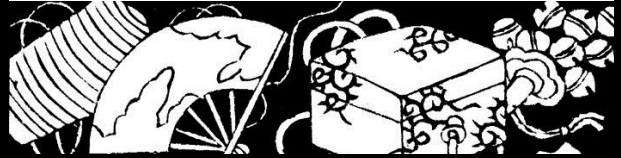
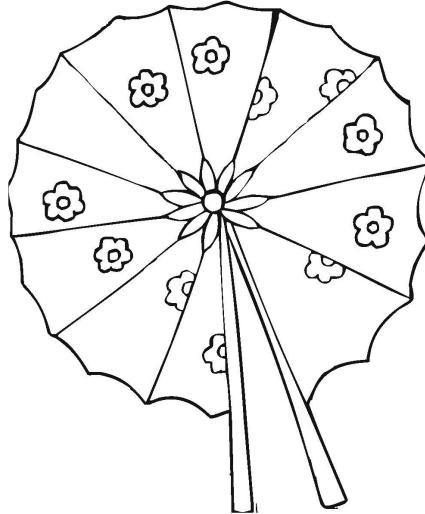
Chopsticks



Kimono



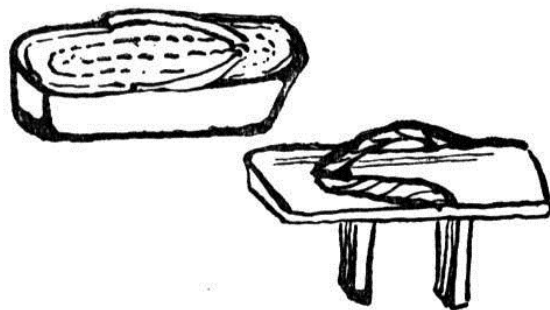
Fan



Low table

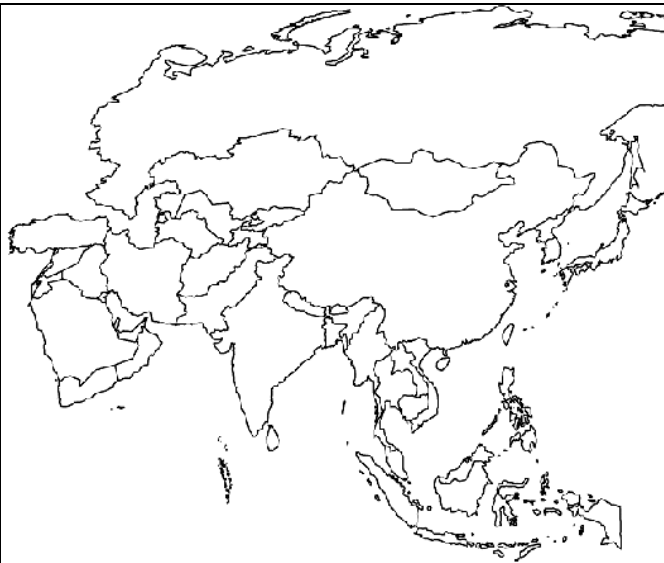
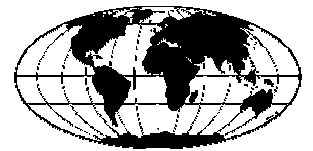


Clogs



Is
Japan?

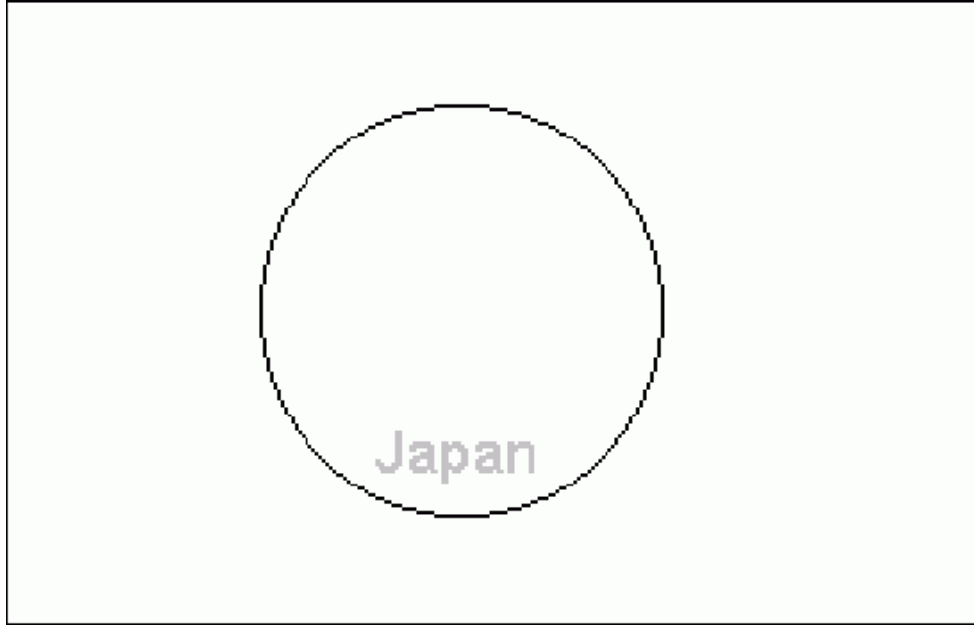
Where
in
the
World. . .



What continent is Japan on?

Find Japan on the map and color it in.

Cut out shutter book and map on solid lines.
Fold shutter book on dotted lines so that words
are on cover. Glue map into book under shutters.



Cut "Flag of _____" book
out as one piece. Fold in half.
Cut out flag. Color. Paste in-
side book. Older students may
want to write a few flag facts
in the book as well.



Paste vocabulary
mini-fold here

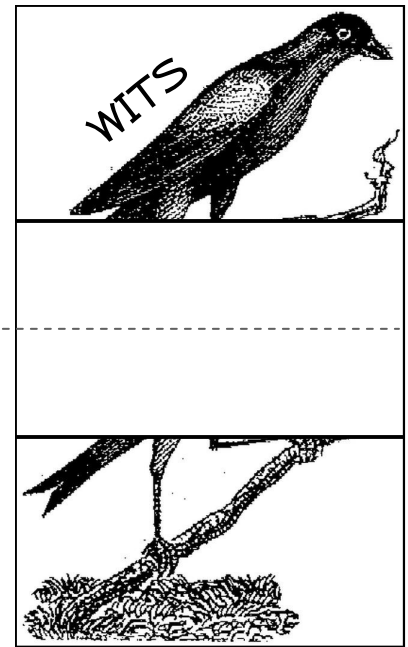
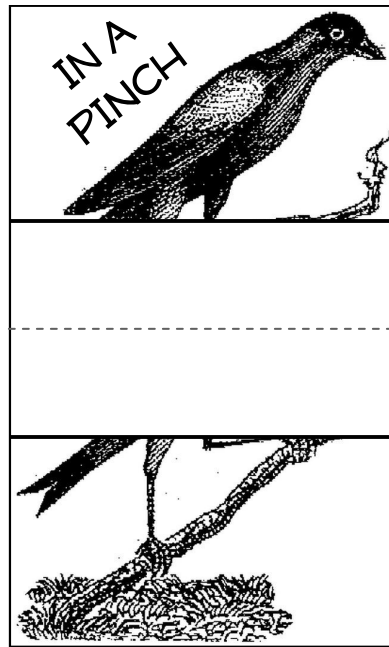
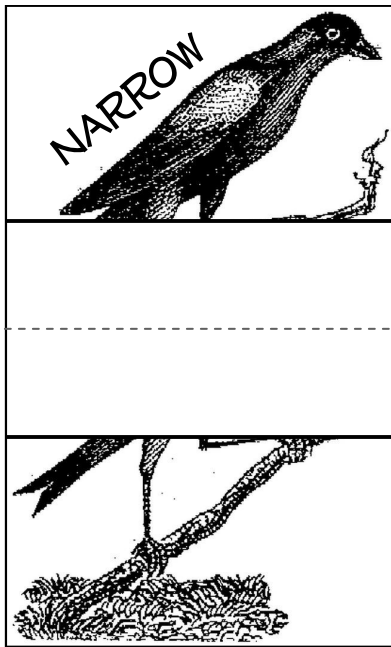
Paste moral pull-
tab here

Paste vocabulary
mini-fold here

Paste vocabulary
mini-fold here

Paste story here

Paste title here

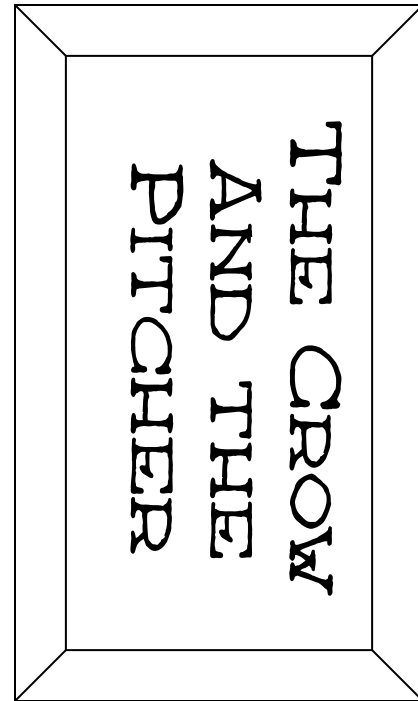


OF SLENDER
WIDTH

AN EMERGENCY
SITUATION

INTELLIGENCE

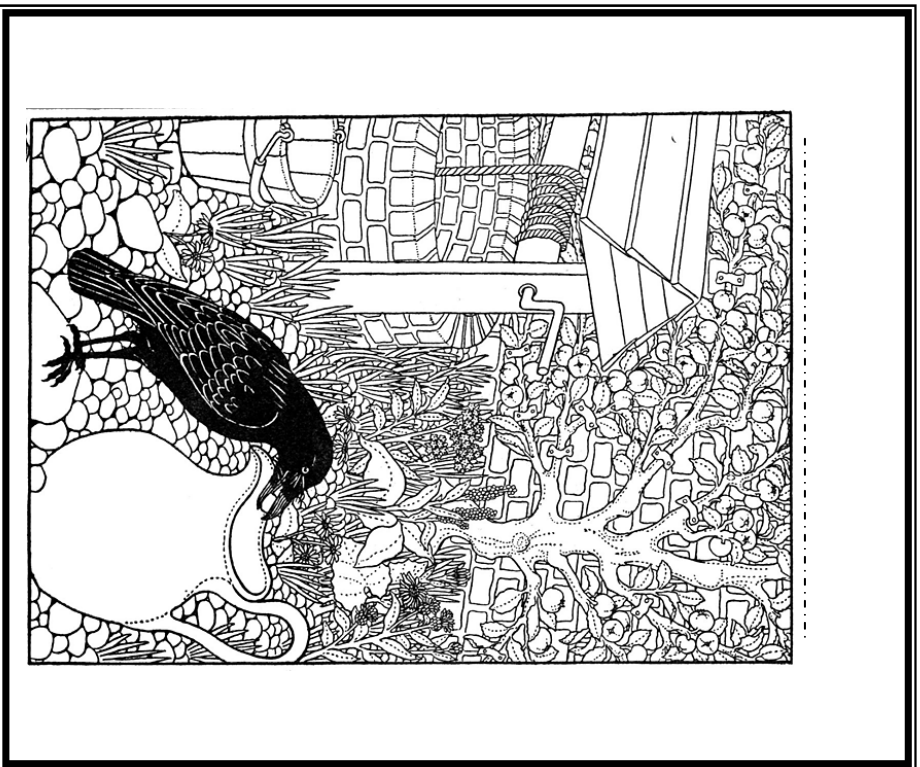
Cut out each mini vocabulary fold. Fold on dotted lines so that the top of the crow meets the bottom of the crow. Paste definitions inside each book.



Title piece

Cut out book as one piece. Fold in half. Paste image to the front.

	<p>In a spell of dry weather, when the birds could find very little to drink, a thirsty Crow found a pitcher with a little water in it. But the pitcher was high and had a narrow neck, and no matter how he tried, the Crow could not reach the water. The poor thing felt as if he must die of thirst.</p> <p>Then an idea came to him. Picking up some small pebbles, he dropped them into the pitcher one by one. With each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it was near enough so he could drink.</p>
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MORAL

In a pinch a
good use of
our wits may
help us all.

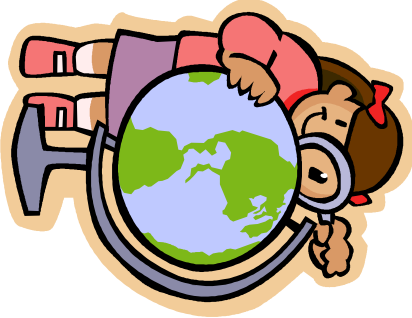
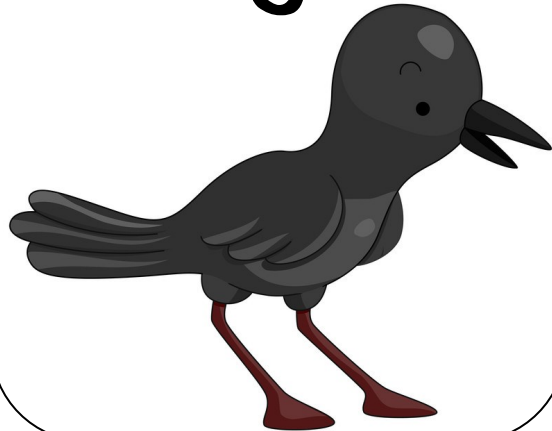
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Print on cardstock. Cut out both pieces. Cut the slit on the dotted line of the **FRONT** piece. Insert the **PULL TAB** through the slit. When you glue down the book, make sure to glue only around the outermost edges and not in the center. You want the slider to remain free to move up and down.

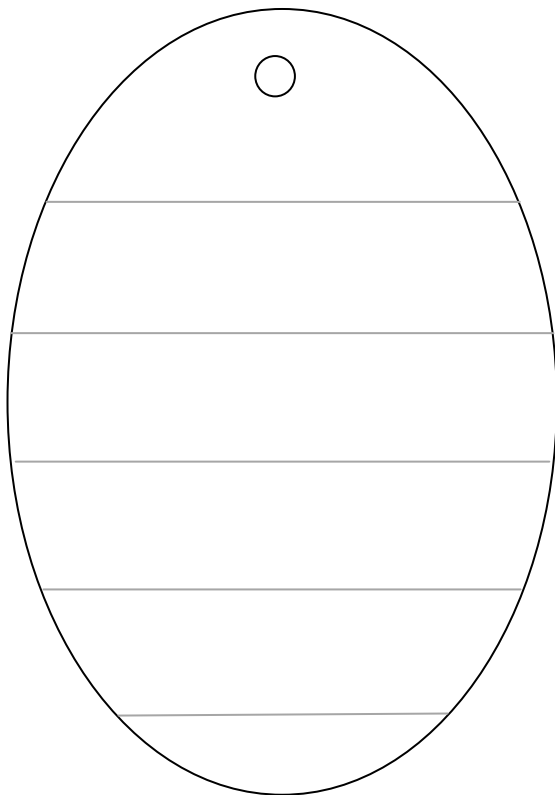
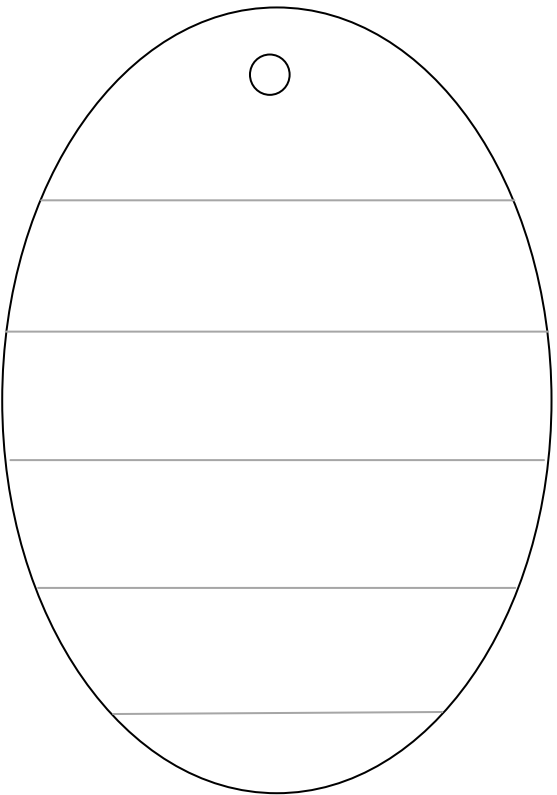
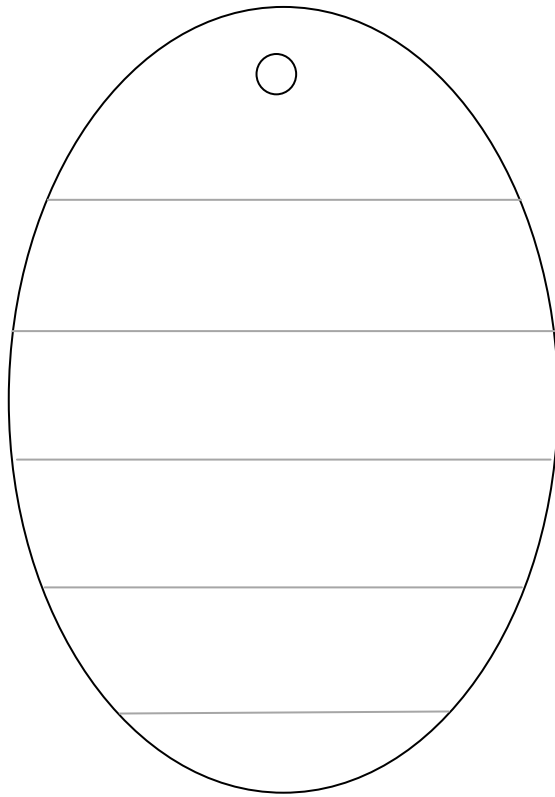
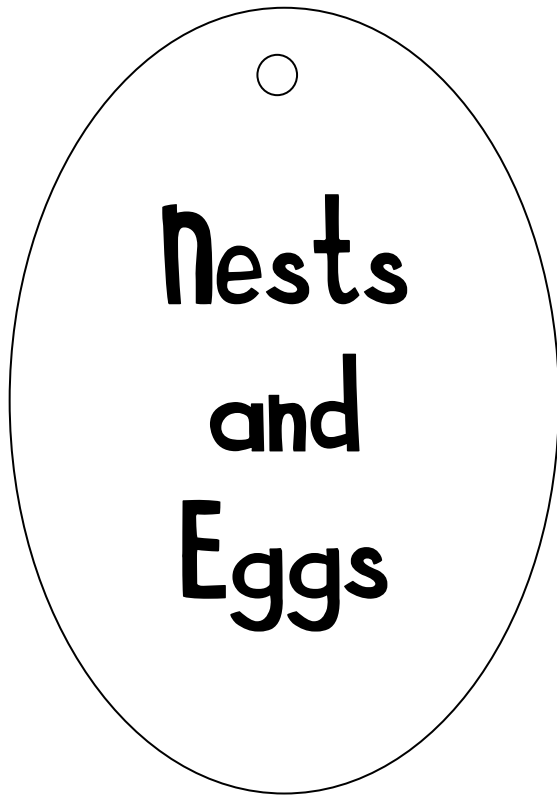
Crow Diet



Intelligence



Range



PRINT ON CARDSTOCK. Cut each piece out on the solid black lines.
Attach with brass fastener where indicated.

Cut out book as one piece. Fold left side in. Fold right side in. Open book. Cut on dotted line to form four flaps. Refold book.

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