

# Leah's Pony

Book by Elizabeth Friedrich

Unit study written by Celia Hartmann

Printables by Ami Brainerd

## Social Studies

### Geography: Dust Bowl Region

The story does not give the specific state in which the story took place. However, the Dust Bowl affected the Great Plains of the United States (See map). Locate the Great Plains on a map or globe. Make a story disk (a spotted pony and a tractor). Choose Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, or Texas, locate on globe/map, and place disk.

### History – The Great Depression & The Dust Bowl

Discuss October of 1929 and the years following. The Great Depression was a hard time for our country. People didn't have extra money; sometimes they couldn't even buy or get what they needed, so they improvised. The Great Plains had another struggle on top of the Depression; they were experiencing the Dust Bowl as well. The Dust Bowl was a period of major drought (no rain) in the Great Plains area. The dryness of the land led to soil erosion (the wind began to blow the dirt away). The drought began in 1933 and lasted through 1940. During this time, the farmers weren't able to farm the land. People experienced Dust Storms (it was if the earth was raining dirt and dust). Since the land wasn't yielding any food, the farmers couldn't make any money. This was on top of an already depressed economy (due to the Great Depression). People couldn't pay their taxes. Farms were foreclosed. Businesses failed. The Dust Bowl was hard on the land, the animals, and the people. Read the author's note at the end of the book with your child for further information.

### Library List

*Dust for Dinner* by Ann Warren Turner

*Rose's Journal: The Story of a Young Girl in the Great Depression* by Marissa Moss  
the Kit books from the American Girl Series

*Children of the Dust Days* by Karen Mueller Coombs

*Children of the Dust* by Jerry Stanley

### History – Penny Auctions

Help your child understand that Leah's father needed to borrow money from the bank to be able to plant corn, but that the corn did not grow and so he did not have any corn to sell to repay the money. The bank decided to sell the farm and everything on it to get back the money that Papa borrowed. Help your child understand what an auction is. Then explain that a "Penny" Auction was auction where neighbors would place a bid far below what the item was worth and no one would bid against them. Then they would give the items back to family. (Read author's note at end.)

Go-along book: *Saving Strawberry Farm* by Deborah Hopkinson (don't miss this wonderful book!)

### Human Relationships: Sacrifice

A sacrifice is when you give up something that you highly prize in order to get something else that is of greater value. Leah was willing to sell her beloved pony in order to save the family farm. She knew that no matter how much she loved her pony, she and her family needed the farm more.

### Acts of Kindness/Generosity

The people attending the auction, very poor themselves, gave a little of what they had for an item and then turned around and gave those items back to Leah's family. By each person chipping in a little, Leah's family would still be able to farm and make a living. Mr. B. was generous with his own act of kindness.....he returned Leah's pony to her.

### Resourcefulness / Using Creativity to Survive

"Repair, reuse, make do, and don't throw anything away!" was a motto of the Great Depression Era. How is this noted throughout the story? Mama used the sacks that flour came in to sew underwear for Leah. After the dishes were washed, the water was given to plants to keep them growing. During hard times, nothing is wasted. Discuss with your student ways in which your household can be resourceful. Try to implement one of the ideas! (Read author's note at end; More Information)

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## Language Arts

### Literary Device: Alliteration

This is the repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables. Modern alliteration is predominantly consonantal. Can your student find examples of alliteration throughout the story? Some examples are:

"crossed...cloud-capped cornfields....cattle"

"...special spot"

"dry, dusty, days"

"worried and waited and wondered"

"sun-burned soil"

"...coop, and cattle called for their corn."

### Writing: Interview

If possible, locate someone who remembers The Great Depression and/or the Dust Bowl. Interview and record their memories of that time.

Ideas for Interview Questions:

1. How old were you when you saw your first dust storm?
2. What did people do when they saw the dust coming?
3. Did everybody get scared?
4. How many dust storms came in a year?
5. How did farmers try to protect their crops?
6. What were commodities and did you use them?
7. What did you eat and how did your family get by?
8. What other things did you do to survive?
9. What did you do for amusement?
10. How did you (or your mom) deal with all the dust in the house?
11. Did a lot of people move away? Did your friends move away?
12. What happened if a dust storm started while you were at school?

### Research Assignment

An older child (or an enthusiastic young horse lover) might be interested in researching and learning to identify the names for markings on the face of a horse (stars, snips, stripes, bald faces, blazes). A young horse-loving child could be shown

pictures of each marking and told the name; then ask the child to identify each marking. Make two copies of each picture and play a matching game.

### Creative Writing: Poem

Write a poem entitled "Dust" or "Grasshoppers" or "Sacrifice" or "My Pony" or "Corn"

### Wind Copywork

Who Has Seen the Wind?  
Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you:  
But when the leaves hang trembling  
The wind is passing thro'

Who has seen the wind  
Neither you nor I:  
But when the trees bow down their heads  
The wind is passing by.

The Wind  
Robert Louis Stevenson

I saw you toss the kites on high  
And blow the birds about the sky;  
And all around I heard you pass,  
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,  
But always you yourself you hid.  
I felt you push, I heard you call,  
I could not see yourself at all--  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,  
O blower, are you young or old?  
Are you a beast of field and tree,  
Or just a stronger child than me?  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

### Vocabulary

swift--capable of moving with great speed; fast

sturdy--having or showing rugged physical strength

girth--a strap encircling an animal's body in order to secure a load or saddle

auction--a public sale in which property or items of merchandise are sold to the highest bidder

bid--the amount a person is willing to pay for an item at an auction

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### **Art**

#### Medium: Oil

Note how oil painting are generally "built up." The backgrounds are done first, and then the items are added layer upon layer until the foreground is complete. You might want to allow your student to experiment with oil paints on a canvas.

#### Showing Effects of the Wind

The wind cannot be seen, but effects of the wind can: trees blowing back and forth, hair flying out, etc. Illustrator Michael Garland shows the effects of the wind blowing the mane of Leah's pony and her hair by making it fly back behind them as they gallop across the fields. Have your budding artist draw a picture that shows the effects of the wind.

#### Facial Expressions

Notice on the cover of the book that Leah is smiling happily. At what time in the story does this picture represent? Looking at the green grass in the background, we can assume that this picture takes place before the hard times hit the family. Look at the picture near the end of the story where Leah is holding her money in

front of her...she is worried that she does not have enough money to save their farm. The final picture of the story shows Leah's surprise at finding her pony back in its stall. Practice drawing different expressions.

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## Math

### Play Auction

If child buys more than one item, have him/her count out the total amount. If he buys five cows for a nickel each, how much total (skip count by 5s or multiplication  $5 \times 5$ ). Create situations to use the skills your child needs to review.

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## Science

### Ponies and their Care

Explore ponies in as much detail as your child wishes (unless you have an ardent horse lover like I do and we could spend years on this topic and still not satisfy her!). Here are a few items to get you started:

#### What's the difference between a pony and a horse?

The difference is more than their size! Ponies and horses are part of the same family, just as zebras and donkeys are, but there are a few differences besides their size. Horses and ponies are measured by a unit called hands (abbreviated hands is *hh*) and inches. Each hand is equal to 4 inches. A horse is measured from the withers (near the bottom of their mane) down to the ground. You can calculate a horse's height (at the withers) by multiplying the number of hands high by 4 inches and then adding the number of inches. For example, let's say you owned a pony that was 14.1 hands. The number to the left of the decimal point (14) is the number of hands. The number to the right of the decimal point (1) inches. So, if we take  $14 \times 4 + 1$  to come up with the size in inches, so your horse would be 57 inches (or 4 foot and 9 inches) tall.

As a general rule of thumb, most ponies are under 14 hh and most horses are over 14 hh. Besides their size, ponies have thicker manes and tails--their coat is usually thicker as well. This is much more obvious in winter time, when a pony's coat is

often much longer and shaggier than a horse's. The necks of a pony are thicker, and their heads shorter with a broader forehead. Ponies' backs are shorter and stronger. Their bones are thicker and they do not look as sleek as many horses--ponies look more sturdy. (Find pictures of Shetland or Welsh ponies and compare with an Arabian, Morgan, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred or other horse. Have your student point out the differences.)

#### What's involved with the care of a pony?

Leah would brush and care for her pony. What all is involved in caring for a pony?

He will need proper food--grass/hay and grains--and plenty of fresh water twice each day. If the pony lives in a stall most of the time, his stall needs cleaned out daily by removing the soiled straw or bedding and replace it with fresh. If the pony does not have a stall, but is left to run freely over acreage, then he needs some kind of shelter he can get in to get out of the wind and cold as desired. If he gets his water from a trough (vs. a stream on the property if he's free to roam) and it has iced over, then his owner needs to break through the ice during the feeding times to allow him access to fresh water. Salt is a needed mineral for horses and ponies that is often provided in the form of a brick or block of salt, which he can lick as needed.

It is important for the health of the horse that he be ridden and/or exercised often. A pony should also be groomed often. This involves brushing his coat, mane, and tail to remove dirt and tangles. There are several different brushes to groom him with, and each has a special function or part of the body to be used. He will need various immunizations (shots) and worm medicine to help keep him healthy. His hooves need checked, trimmed, and cared for regularly. His teeth should be examined periodically and cleaned and cared for as needed.

A lot is involved in taking care of a pony or horse, but they can be a great friend and a lot of fun!

#### Why is it important to properly place and tighten the saddle?

In our story, Papa taught Leah to properly place the saddle on the pony's back and tighten the girth around the belly. This is a very important part of tacking up (getting ready to ride). If you place the saddle too far up on the neck or too far back on his hindquarters, it will rub and hurt the pony. When a person starts to

tighten the girth around a pony's belly, he will usually expand himself and hold his breath until you have tightened it. Then when you're done, he will let the air back out and then the saddle will be loose. A saddle that is loose while riding is dangerous to the rider, as he could slip and fall under the pony's hooves. A good rider will tighten the girth, then wait a bit and re-tighten it. He might then finish tacking up and then re-check the snugness of the girth and re-cinch it even tighter again before actually getting on the pony to ride.

Resources & Activities:

*Horse Facts* by Susan McBane and Helen Douglas-Cooper

*Young Rider* by Sandy Ransford

## Insects – Grasshoppers

### Anatomy

Grasshoppers are insects and like all insects, they have two antennae, a hard exoskeleton, six jointed legs, and three body parts- head, thorax, and abdomen. Most have two pairs of wings, but some (such as a housefly) only have one pair. God designed grasshoppers to be long jumpers! You can easily spot them by looking for long, powerful back legs. If you look at the back legs, you will notice that the "knees" stick up above the grasshopper's body. The back legs are made for jumping and the front legs are made for walking and holding prey (or dinner!). Grasshoppers also have large heads and large compound eyes.

A grasshopper's body is covered with a hard exoskeleton, and it breathes through a series of holes on the sides of its body. These holes are called spiracles. You will find grasshoppers in a few different colors/shades of green and brown which help them blend in with their surroundings.

### Species

There are hundreds of different kinds of grasshoppers (10,000 different species)! The smallest are only 1/2 long while the largest ones can reach up to 6 inches! The two largest groups are short-horned grasshoppers and long-horned grasshoppers. The short-horned have short antennae (usually less than half the length of the body) while the long-horned antennae are usually as long as the body or longer!



## Distinguishing Grasshoppers from Crickets

Grasshoppers and Crickets are close relatives. There isn't a hard and fast rule to tell the two apart, but grasshoppers are usually the ones you see flying (most crickets can't).

## Where to Find

You can usually spot these creatures along paths, trails, and roadsides. Of course, they are plentiful in fields (or yards) where grass has become long and overgrown.

## Diet

Grasshoppers eat plants.

## Predators

Their predators include birds, beetles, rodents, reptiles, and spiders.

You may also want to discuss the destructive nature of hordes of them.

## Wind/Air

The wind is moving air. You can feel it and you see how it blows things around, but you cannot actually see it. Some winds are gentle; some winds are dangerous.

Discuss different kinds of winds: breezes, gales, hurricanes.

If it's a windy day, go outside with your student (or watch out the window) and look for the effects of the wind (laundry flying in the breeze on the clothesline, tree limbs dancing, trash rolling down the street). If it isn't a windy day, create your own wind using a sheet (hold on to one end while your student holds the other and move it up and down until you feel the wind). Wind is fun to explore. You can fly a kite (you can even make a kite), you can make a pinwheel, a windsock, or some wind chimes together. You can also get dad involved and make a parachute! Have fun experiencing the effects of the wind.

## Library List

*Air is All Around You* by Franklyn M. Branley

*The Four Elements: Air* by Maria Rius

*Air* by David Lloyd (note: has one reference to "millions of years.")

## Erosion (lesson contributed by Gail)

Erosion was the major cause of disaster in the story and it still is a concern today.

Different topics you can discuss with your students include erosion control-- wind

breaks, contour farming, strip cropping, grass waterways, and winter cover crops. Each of these practices is designed to slow down the effects of wind and water erosion.

For a water-erosion experiment, you can fill a cookie sheet with soil. Tip on an angle and pour a stream of water from a glass and note the effect on the soil. Next, take a cookie sheet put a layer of sod (or soil and plant grass seed and wait for it to grow) Now tip the pan and slowly pour the stream of water and watch the effect with grass to slow down the water. You can also do similar experiments with the cookie sheets and a fan to watch wind erosion.

You can also take your child on a walk and notice the pattern of the soil/grit on the edge of the street from the rain.

As a result of the dusty 1930's came government agencies such as The Soil Conservation Service. They have agronomists on staff which will come to your farm and check out environmental and conservation issues specific to your farm and outline a plan for you to combat undesirable actions such as wind and water erosion, run off, pollution, etc. They have government funds available to help with the costs if you qualify. My father-in-law was awarded the Soil Conservation Farmer of the Year award back in 1975. So, you see this topic is very near and dear to our hearts.

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation Agency for the names of some farms that might allow you to see their conservation practices in person.

### Plants & Seeds

What does corn (or any plant) need to grow? Sunlight, air, water, soil. Must have all, or they will not grow. During the Dust Bowl years there was not enough rain and the wind blew away a lot of the top layer of soil. At times the dust was so great, that it blocked out the sun!

Experiment: Start three seeds (any seed will do as long as they sprout), using three separate containers, a couple weeks before sharing the book. After they have sprouted, place one of them under a hot lamp for most of every day and do not give it any water. Place the other inside a Ziploc bag and seal it tight. After several days compare the plants? What happened to the one that was given hot "sun" and no "rain?" What about the one that didn't get any air?

Monocot and Dicot Seeds

Dissect a corn kernel and a bean seed to see which kind of seed it is (corn is monocot, bean is dicot). Place a bean seed and a corn seed (one set for each student) on a moist paper towel and fold it up and let sit overnight. The next day, have the children examine each seed by opening them up. Notice how different they are from one another. Bean seeds are easy to open and have two parts; the corn seed is harder to open and has only one part. Bean seeds belong to the dicot family of plants because they have two parts that will become two cotyledons. The corn kernel only has one cotyledon, so it is a member of the monocot family of plants. Tip: "mono" means one, "di" means two.

Another way to determine if a plant is a monocot or a dicot is by looking at the seed leaf (the first "leaf" that appears when the seed sprouts).....a monocot will have one leaf, a dicot will have two leaves. You can also tell by counting the flower petals.....if it is four or five or a multiple of four or five, then the plant is dicot.

Most plants are dicots, as are flowering trees, shrubs, and herbs. Most grasses are monocots, as are palm tree, bamboo trees, daffodils, tulips and lilacs.

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## **Bible / Character Development**

Sacrifice: You can parallel Leah's example of sacrifice with stories in the Bible. You may want to read the story of Abraham and Isaac with your child (Genesis 22). You may also want to discuss Christ's death (Mark 15), and that he was the sacrifice that paid for our sins.

Moses: Eighth Plague --Locusts (Exodus 10)

God: Could compare how we cannot see the wind but we know it exists with how we cannot see God.

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## **Just for Fun**

Cooking: On Saturday morning, make coffee cake to eat for breakfast.

Field Trip: Go to an auction and listen to the auctioneer cry the auction. (It's difficult to explain the job of an auctioneer, and near impossible to explain how

they talk! Got to hear it!)

Field Trip: Go to a horse farm and brush a pony's coat, learn how to tighten the saddle.

Fly a kite.

Do a Random Act of Kindness

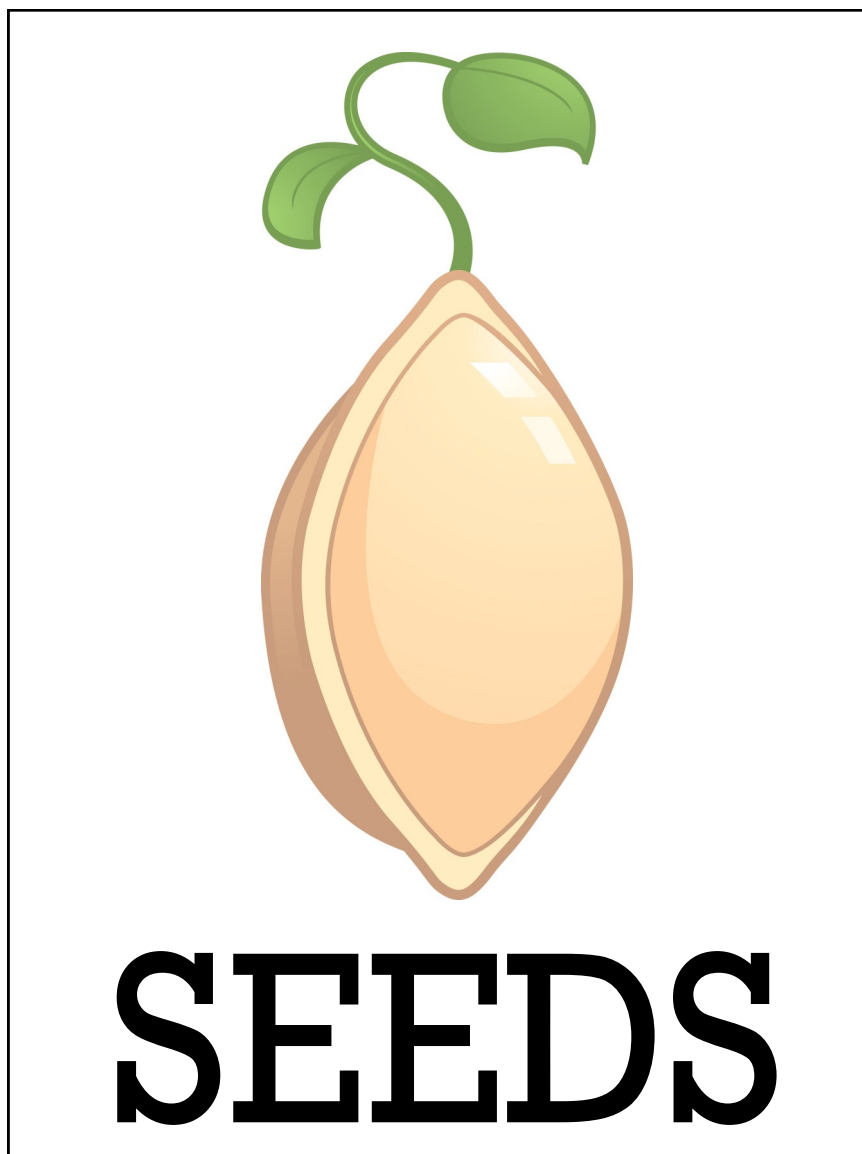
Make your church offering truly sacrificial this week.

Read Aloud-- *Pickles* by Linda Yeatman

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Cut rectangles out. Stack in order and staple on the left side of the front cover.

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What is a dicot seed?

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**DICOT**

List some examples.

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What is a monocot seed?

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List some examples.

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**MONOCOT**

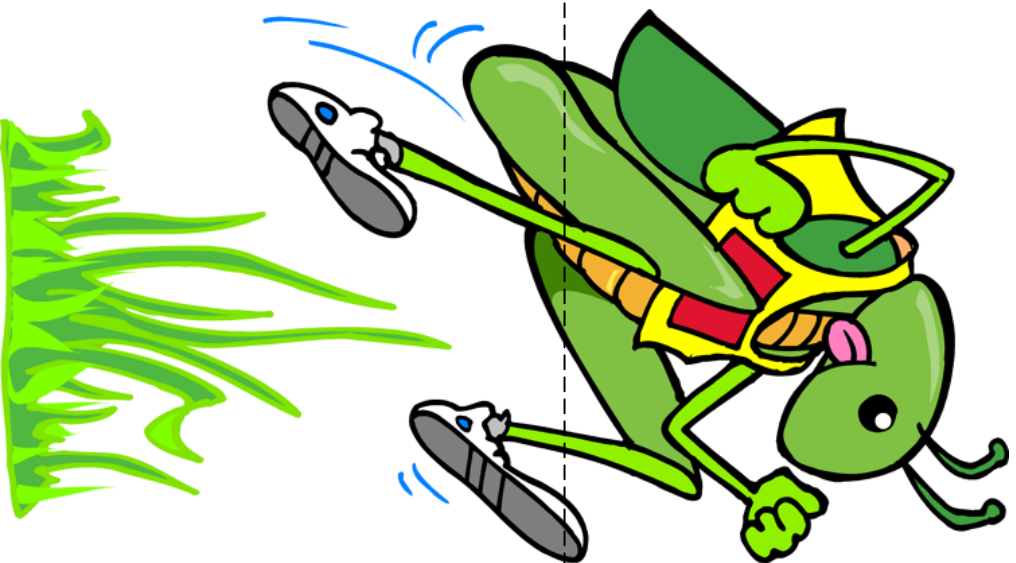
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Cut book out as one piece. Fold in half. Unfold. Cut on dotted line to form two flaps.

# GRASSHOPPER



FRONT LEGS

BACK LEGS



# Words to Look for

blast  
blow  
breezy  
current  
draft  
gale  
air  
gust  
whirlwind  
howling  
puff  
blustering  
tornado  
hurricane  
windy  
wild  
wispy

B L O W Y I N G B Z W S W R O  
L D R Q U E E G R A W Z H U W  
A I R W I A W V E S I X I L I  
S G U R G S Q B E D L C R P S  
T O R N A D O M Z F D V L H P  
A J W T L F I H Y G R G W U Y  
S K A H E V O G V Y F F R I R R  
G L W J O B P I C J A F N E F  
H H S K P M L G U S T D D I E  
N W I N D Y K U R K I K G C E  
B T X X O N A D R A F T F A P  
V T C Z I Z Q I E I O L D N U  
M U W H O W L I N G P P S E F  
H I W V I T D O T L J O D A F  
K B L U S T E R I N G I F Z W

Cut out book above as one piece and fold in half. Complete the word find. Cut out cover piece (on the next page) and paste on front cover.

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# All About Alliteration



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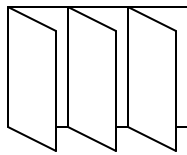
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Cut out each shape (cut along the dark black lines; do not cut any gray lines). Fold each book in half on the gray line (three small books and one large book). Glue the back sides of the small books into the inside of your large book.

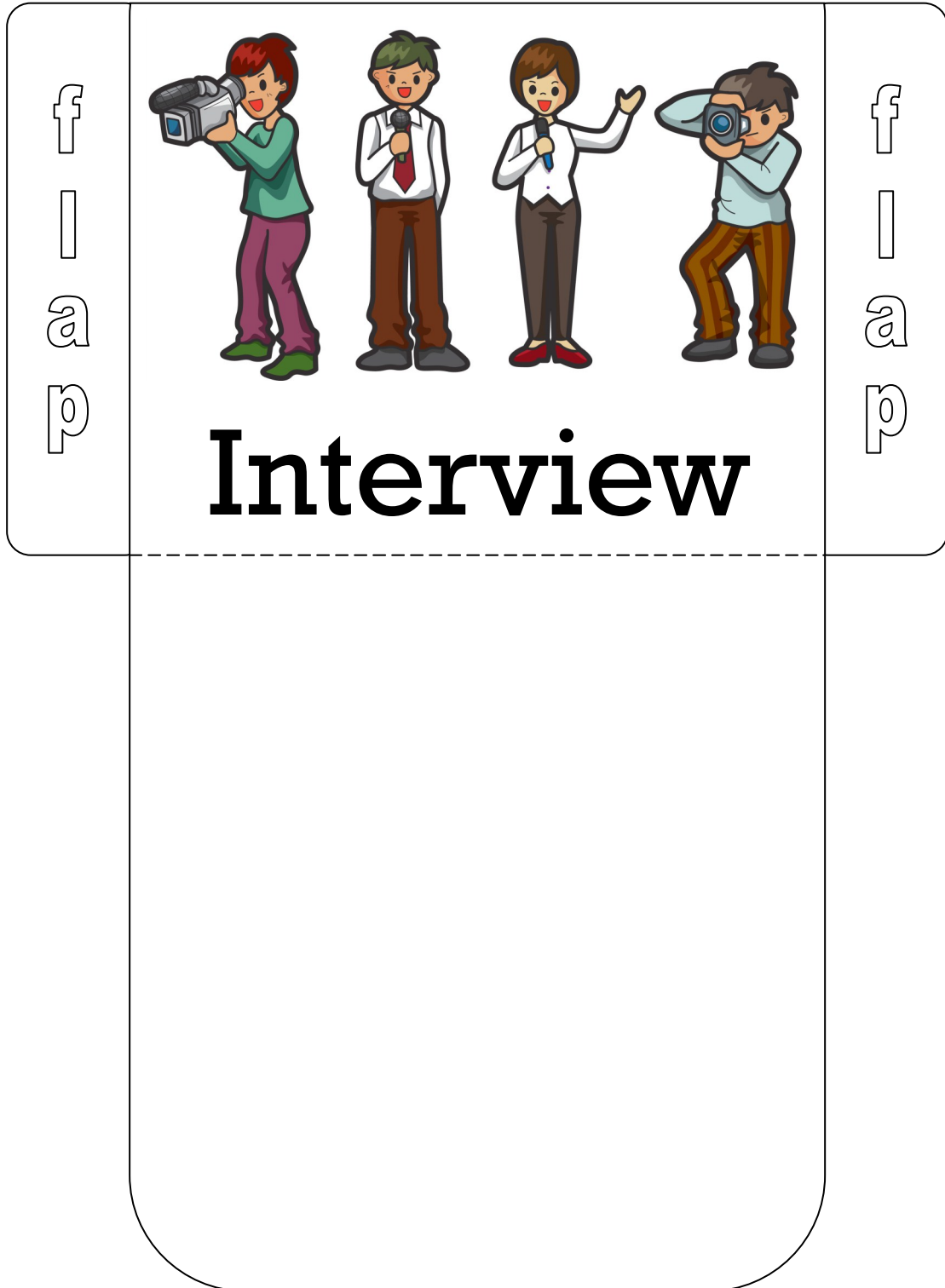


**What Is  
Alliteration?**


	<p><b>My Example</b></p>
	<p><b>List Examples From The Story</b></p>

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Cut pocket out as one piece. Fold back up and wrap flaps around. Glue flaps to the back of the pocket.



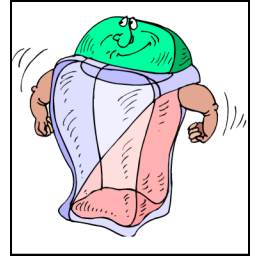
Cut pocket out as one piece. Fold back up and wrap flaps around. Glue flaps to the back of the pocket.

f l a p	<h1>Wind Copywork</h1> 	f l a p
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		

the amount a person is willing to pay for an item at an auction



a public sale in which property or items of merchandise are sold to the highest bidder



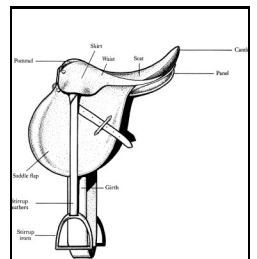
a strap encircling an animal's body in order to secure a load or saddle



having or showing rugged physical strength



capable of moving with great speed; fast

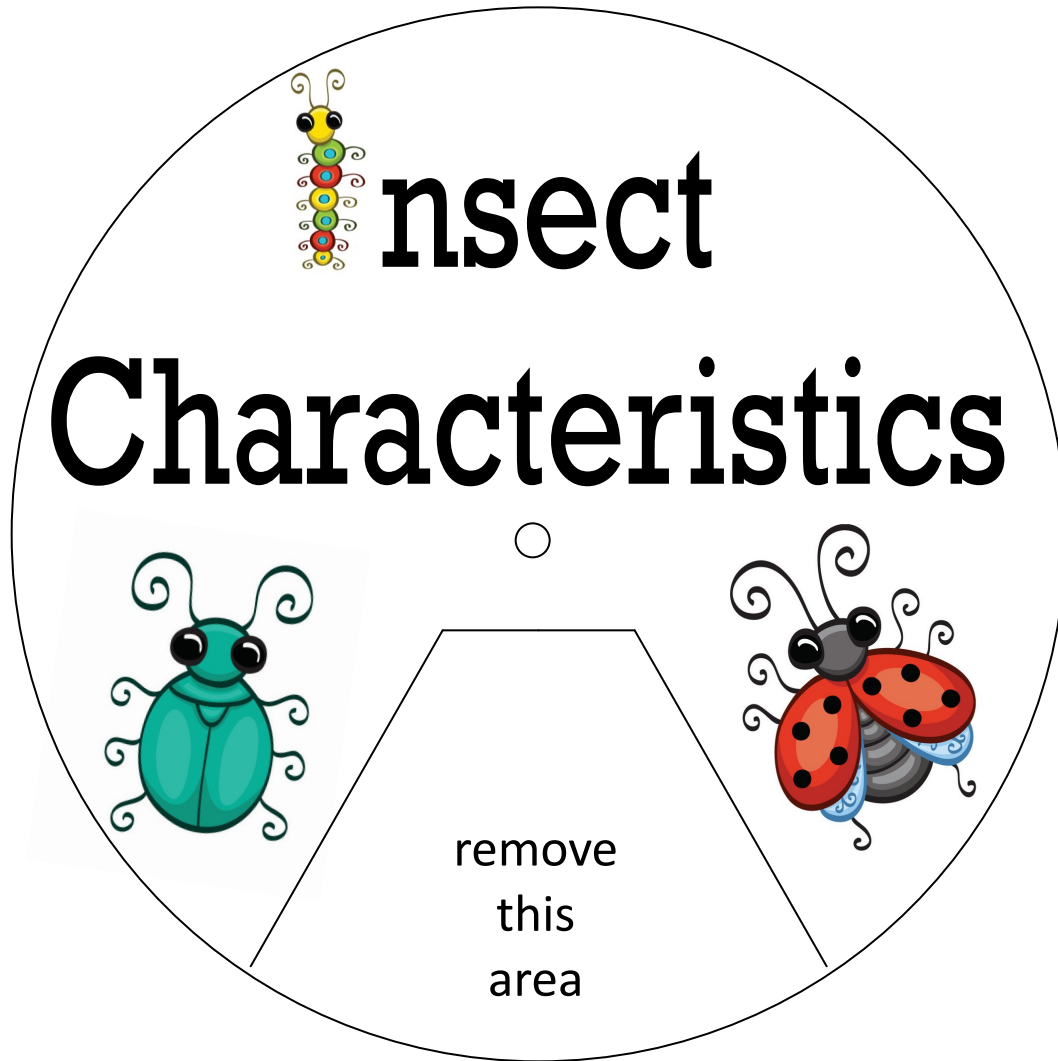


# Vocabulary

Cut each piece out on the solid black lines. Cut out clip-arts. Let your student write the correct vocabulary word and paste on the correct picture to each page. Stack together and attach with brass fastener where indicated.



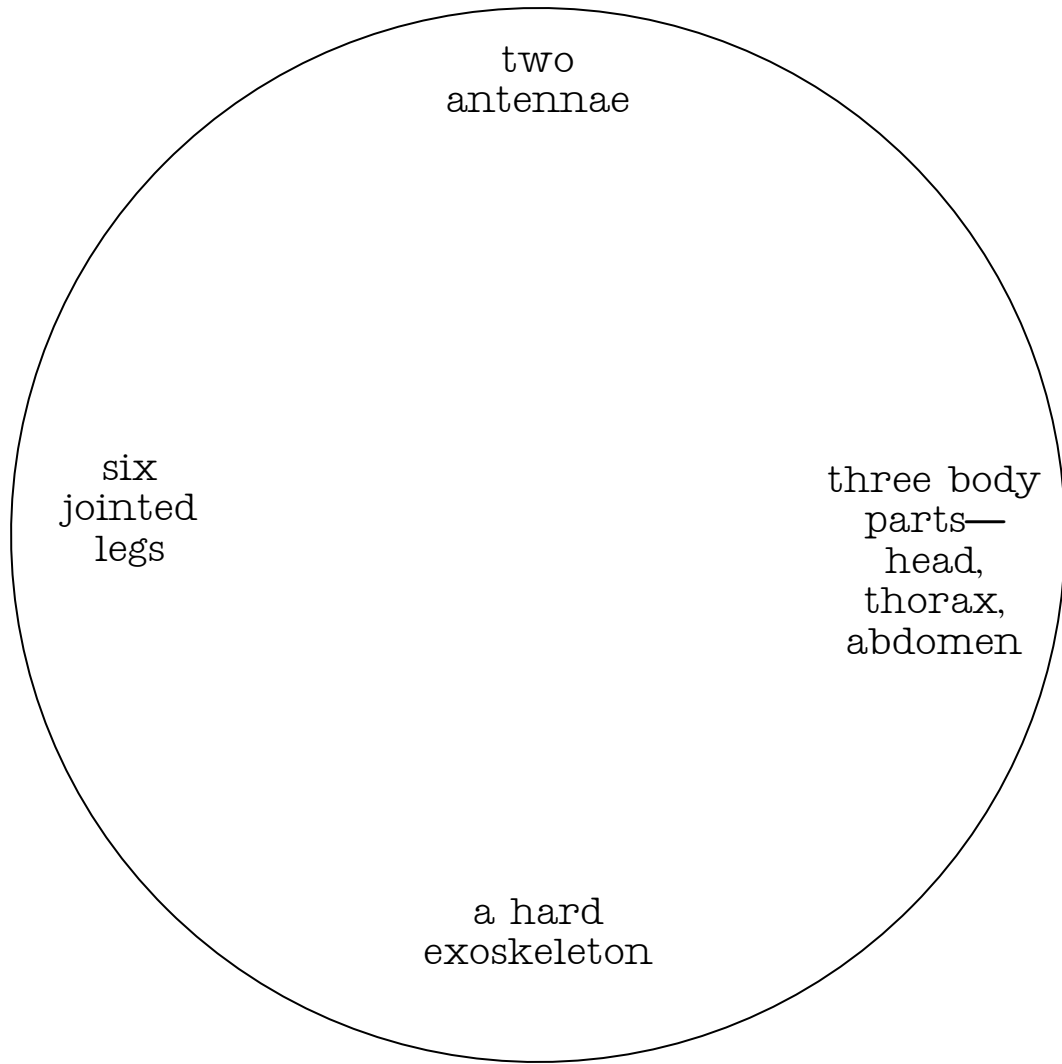
Cut out wheels. Cut away the extra area on the cover wheel (where indicated).  
Attach wheels together using a brass fastener.



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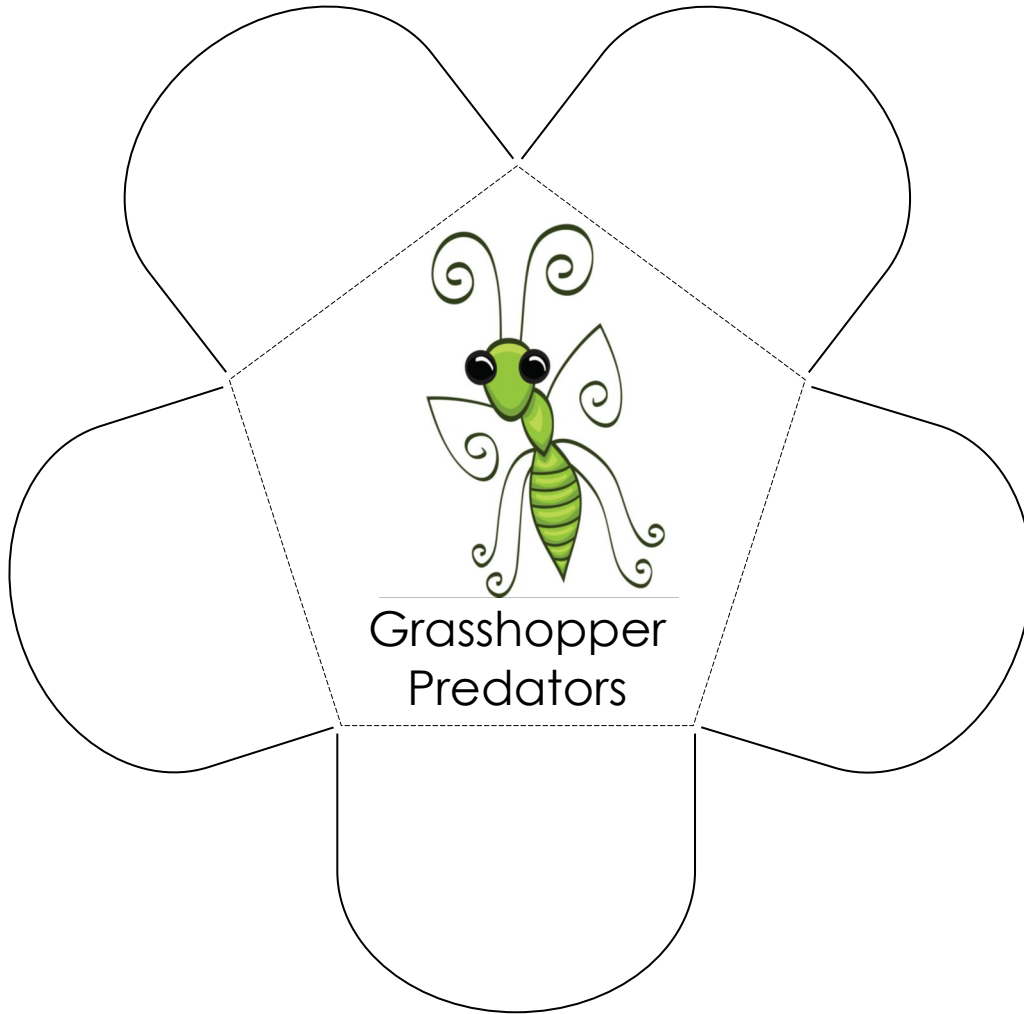
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Cut shape out as one piece. Fold flaps in using the dotted lines as your guide.  
Tuck the last flap under so that book will stay closed.

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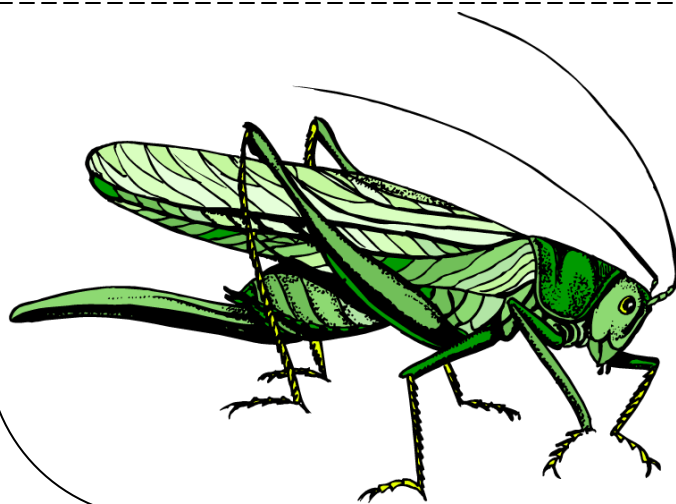
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# Label A Grasshopper

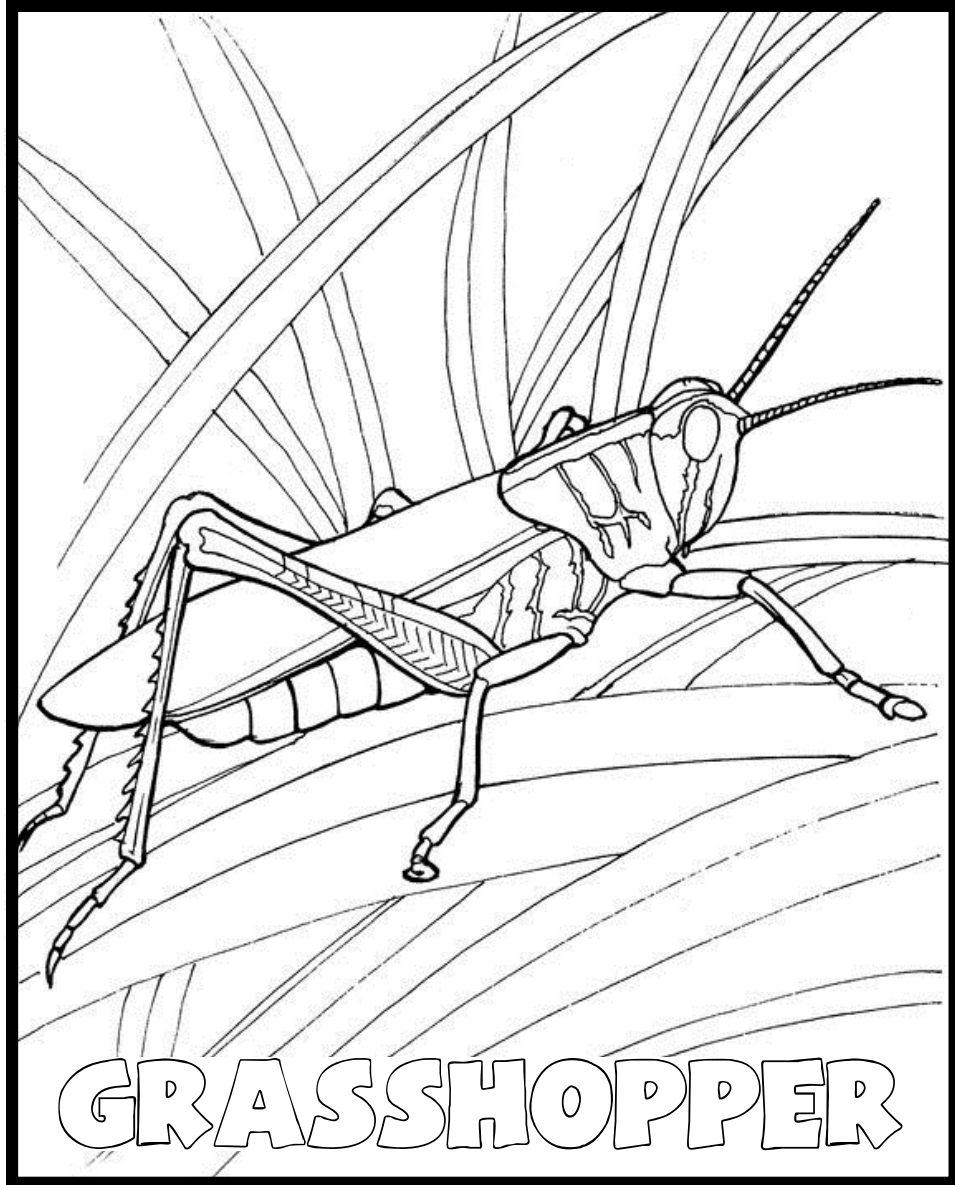
If desired, print out a grasshopper to label from [www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)  
Make a simple fold book out of the print-out. Cut and paste graphic (above) on to the book.

[www.homeschoolshare.com](http://www.homeschoolshare.com)

Cut book below out as one piece and fold in half.



How Does a  
Grasshopper  
Breathe?



Color and add to lapbook or notebook, if desired.

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Cut out book as one piece. Fold in half on the dotted black line. Cut on the lines to form three flaps.

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for cutting out the book. It contains three sections defined by solid lines:

- Left section:** An oval containing a black and white illustration of a spotted horse standing in a field. Below the illustration is the word **HORSE**.
- Middle section:** An oval containing the word **BOTH**.
- Right section:** An oval containing a black and white illustration of two people riding horses. Below the illustration is the word **PONY**.

# The Effects of the Wind



It would be best if you have a full size artwork to study for this exercise.

Cut out the book as one piece (you are looking at the inside) and fold in half. Cut out cover piece and paste on the front.

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What colors are the trees?

What color makes the trees look like they are blowing?

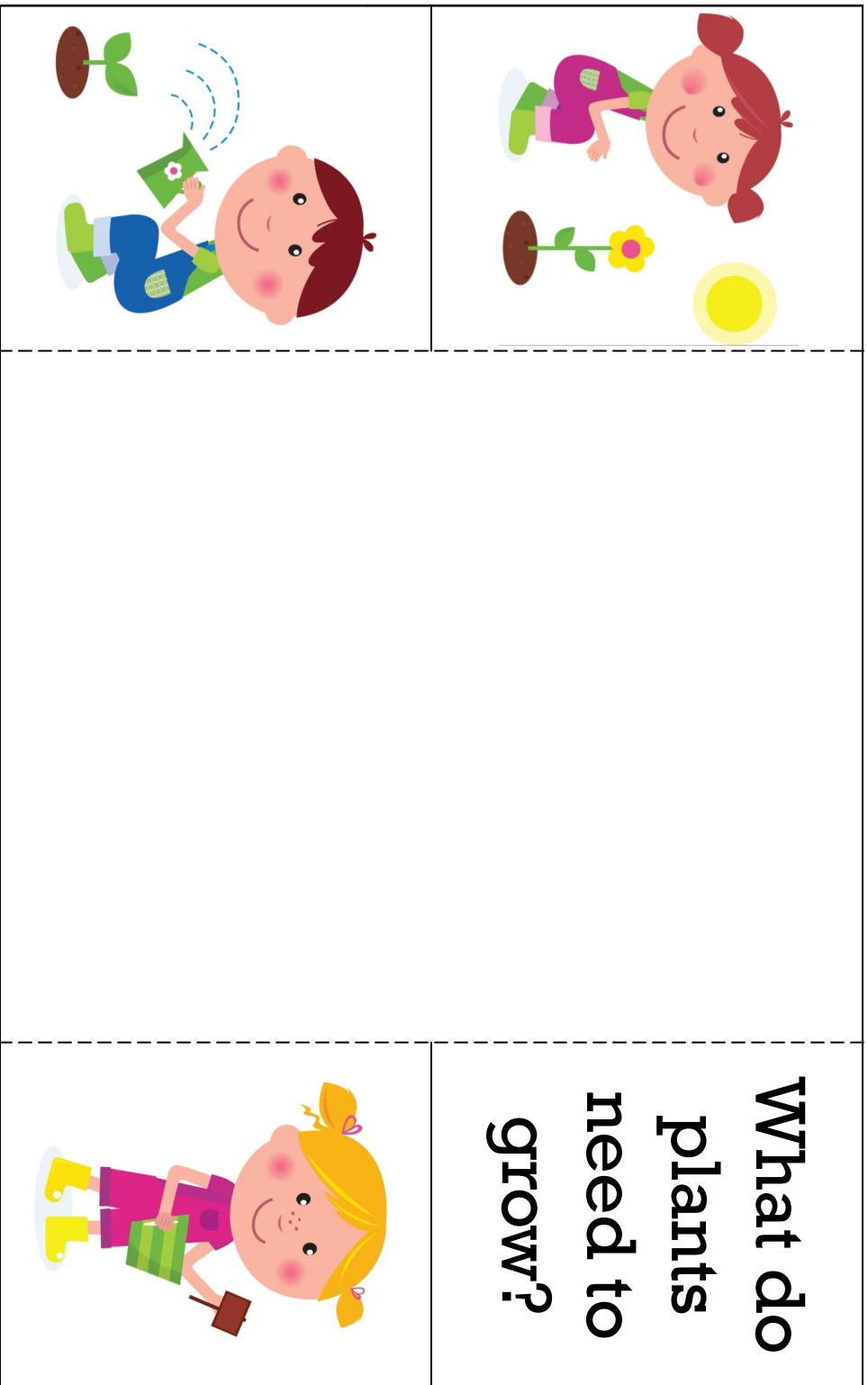
What color is the grass?

What colors make it look like the grass is blowing?

What colors make the wind look like it's blowing in the sky?

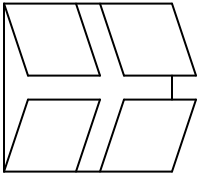
Make a list of objects that are not blowing in the picture?

What do you think the dancing red specks are (at the bottom)?



You are viewing the outside of the book.

Cut on solid lines. Fold on dotted, folding the flaps to the front of the book.







**What Was the  
Dust Bowl?**

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**What Was the  
Great Depression?**

Cut book out as one piece. Fold ends under. Write answers under flaps.

Cut out book as one piece and fold matchbook style. Unfold. Cut on dotted line to form two flaps. Refold.

 <i>KINDNESS</i> 	
Examples from the Story	Ways I Can Show Kindness

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You can use this book in two ways:

1. Learn more about how people were resourceful during the Great Depression and write one way on each petal.
2. Discuss ways you can be more resourceful and write one on each petal.

Cut shape out as one piece. Fold flaps in using the dotted lines as your guide. Tuck the last flap under so that book will stay closed.

What is a sacrifice?

What did Leah sacrifice? Why?

Who is the ultimate example of sacrifice?

# Sacrifice



Cut out book as one piece. Fold left side in. Fold right side (it should be on top).  
Unfold. Cut on lines to form three flaps. Refold book.

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