

# Asia 1-2-3

A TOOLKIT OF BOOKS AND HANDS-ON PROJECTS  
FOR KIDS, TEACHERS, & LIBRARIANS

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# Introduction

## Welcome to Asia 1-2-3!

Asia 1-2-3 is a non-commercial, freely distributed guide created by and for librarians, teachers, and anyone who works with children interested in international ideas and cultural programming. Our goal is provide readers with ready-to-go activity ideas to introduce children ages 4-11 to some basic Asian culture, art, language, history, and games. The activities in this book are compiled from a variety of people and sources (which have been attributed throughout the book). The original materials in this book (see each page for details on content) are released under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivatives license](#), which means that you can reuse the book's contents as long as you credit those who developed the materials, do not use them for commercial purposes, and do not change the contents. (However, please feel free to use excerpts from the book rather than the entire package, as we will be adding additional content over time.)

In order to enhance the activities described in this e-book, the editors have also included a list of books that may be useful to librarians or teachers in planning longer programs. Most books can be easily found through public libraries or online bookstores, and for the few out-of-print titles, we had great success searching online used bookstores such as [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com). Web resources and other guides are also provided wherever possible!

Activities are listed according to common material or technique, and suggestions for age-appropriateness and estimated length of time for each activity are given on each pages.

Activities are also identified by the country flag on each page—this is meant to assist librarians and teachers who are looking for country-specific content. However, due to the long history of shared culture, holidays, and ideas between many Asian nations, it is often hard to assign just one country to a particular activity! You may find this cross-cultural theme helps to show how culture spread through Asia!



*From left to right: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam*  
(Activities for countries listed in pink are still under development and will be released soon!)

Among those who have assisted in compiling the activities in this e-book are:

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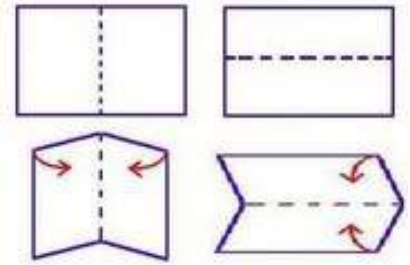
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This e-book is a labor of love and as such may contain occasional errors, although we have tried our best to edit and test all projects before inclusion in this book. If you find any errors, confusing wording or instructions, or have any other difficulty using this book or questions about content, please contact Jennifer Murawski at [jennm@pitt.edu](mailto:jennm@pitt.edu) with details and we will do our best to respond to your inquiry!

# Notes about the Activities

- **Folding paper Hot Dog style or Hamburger style**

This is nothing new for many educators, but paper that is folded “Hamburger style” (on the left side of the diagram) is folded across the shorter side to resemble a standard greeting card, whereas paper that is folded “Hot Dog style” (on the right side of the diagram) is folded down the longer side, resembling a large dollar bill.



- **Is this activity suited to my group or situation?**

Please use your best judgment to decide if an activity listed in this guide is suitable to the age and abilities of the children you are teaching. Some activities use materials that may require adult supervision, and others may involve some degree of physical contact. We give loose recommendations for length of time and materials needed, but the actual program is up to you! We also recommend that you try the activity yourself first or make a sample to display.

## Common materials used in projects



# NEW YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

In most Asian countries, the new year holiday is very important!  
Here are some activities you can do to bring in the new year.

- Paper Lanterns (China)
- Cardboard Firecrackers (China)
- Double Happiness Cutout (China)
- Spring Festival Tree (China)
- New Year's Postcards (Japan)
- *Fukuwarai* Funny Face (Japan)
- *Jegi Chagi* Hacky Sack (Korea)





# New Year's Holiday

## Chinese New Year: Chūnjié



In Chinese culture, the most important holiday of the year is the Spring Festival, which is often called the Chinese Lunar New Year in the United States. Falling on the first day of the first lunar month—usually in early February—it marks the transition from winter into spring. In Chinese, this holiday is called *Chūnjié* (chun jee-ay), or Spring Festival, and to say “Happy Spring Festival” you can say *Chūnjié kuài lè* (chun jee-ay kwai luh)!

The Spring Festival is celebrated in a variety of ways. People often go to visit various family members and wish them good luck in the new year. At this time, children and teenagers receive gifts of money from their relatives.

They eat luxurious meals of special foods, especially those with auspicious meanings. For instance, the name of the New Year's cake *niangao* sounds like “higher and higher, year after year,” and the *jiaozi* dumplings are believed to be auspicious because their shape resembles that of the Chinese *tael*, a weight measurement that was also once a form of currency.

Decorations are also a distinctive part of Spring Festival celebrations. Chinese people decorate with calligraphic couplets that wish for good luck in the coming year. They also hang up paper lanterns and papercuts. Often, these decorations are red because according to legend, the color red scares away a beast that used to come to villages and eat people. Furthermore, the word for “red” in Mandarin Chinese sounds like the word for “prosperous.”

On the following pages, you will find instructions on making paper lanterns, firecrackers, and several traditional papercuts. These traditions often originated in mainland China, but many come from Taiwan, Japan, and Korea as well, and are used around the world for many holiday decorations. You can also learn about papercutting traditions from Eastern Europe and many other nations if you enjoy these activities!



# New Year's Holiday

## Korean New Year: Seollal

Koreans celebrate both the Gregorian and the Chinese Lunar New Years, but the Lunar New Year, *Seollal* (Sul-lal), is by far the more important of the two. It is a very family-oriented holiday, and one traditional activity is returning to one's family hometown to offer respect to one's ancestors. Food is also very important because it is believed that if one eats a lot during *Seollal*, one will not go hungry during the year. A soup made with rice cakes called *tteokguk* (tok-gook), is supposed to grant the consumer luck and another year of life.



Games played during *Seollal* include *yut* (yoot), a board game played by throwing sticks, and *jegichagi* (jeh-gee-cha-gee), which is similar to a combination of hacky sack and shuttlecock. See the following pages for instructions on how to make a *jegi* and what kind of games one can play with one!

## Japanese New Year: Shōgatsu

The Japanese New Year, known as *Shōgatsu* (show-gah-tsu), used to be celebrated at the same time as the Chinese Lunar New Year, but now it is celebrated on January first of the Gregorian calendar. This holiday is Japan's biggest national holiday, similar to Christmas in the United States. Families spend several days cleaning their homes and preparing special foods before coming together to relax, visit a temple at midnight, watch TV specials, and enjoy each other's company!

The Japanese have a tradition of sending New Year's postcards known as *nengajō* (nen-gah-joe), much like the Western world sends Christmas cards. The cards are often decorated with conventional short greetings and/or images of the coming year's Chinese Zodiac animal. Pre-printed postcards can be purchased, but many people make their own. These cards are collected by the Post Office throughout December and bundled according to address, and then on January 1st, all postal workers spend the entire day delivering the bundles of postcards to each family.



On New Year's Day, they may play games like *hanetsuki* (ha-nay-tsu-key), a game somewhat similar to badminton or ping pong that uses wooden paddles and shuttlecocks; *karuta* (kah-roo-tah), a card-matching game based on seasonal poetry; and *fukuwarai* (foo-koo-wah-rah-ee), in which a blindfolded person tries to place features onto a blank face drawn on paper.



# Animals of the Chinese Zodiac

## What Chinese Zodiac sign am I?

According to the Chinese Zodiac, people's personalities are based on the year in which they were born and the animal that year is associated with, which changes with each New Year's festival. Look in the chart to see what animal you are and what that says about your personality! Do you think it's right?

Chinese Character	Animal	Year			Personality Characteristics
鼠	Rat	1984	1996	2008	Intelligent, patient, "people person"
牛	Ox	1985	1997	2009	Reliable, strong, determined
虎	Tiger	1986	1998	2010	Natural leader, independent, sensitive
兔	Rabbit	1987	1999	2011	Gentle, social, creative
龍	Dragon	1988	2000	2013	Brave, virtuous, ambitious
蛇	Snake	1989	2001	2014	Stylish, smart, deep thinker
馬	Horse	1990	2002	2015	Cheerful, friendly, loves beauty
羊	Goat (or sheep)	1991	2003	2016	Soft-spoken, artistic, liked by all
猴	Monkey	1992	2004	2017	Free spirit, skilled hands, generous
雞	Rooster	1993	2005	2018	Hard-working, clever, follows rules
狗	Dog	1994	2006	2019	Loyal, honest, team player
豬	Pig (or boar)	1995	2007	2020	Intelligent, good-natured, optimistic

Note: if you were born in January or February, you may have a different animal year than listed. This is because the Chinese zodiac is based on the **lunar calendar**, so the first day of the year is different each year.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 – January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004: **Sheep** January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 – February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005: **Monkey**

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 – February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006: **Rooster** February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007: **Dog**

If you're interested in learning more about the Chinese Zodiac, you may enjoy the book *Animals in the Stars* by Gregory Crawford, from which the characteristics chart was adapted. Lunar year dates were found at [www.chineseart.com/chinese-zodiac.htm](http://www.chineseart.com/chinese-zodiac.htm).



# Paper Lanterns

AGE LEVEL: 4-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 15 MINUTES

## Materials

- 8.5x11 inch paper (any color)
- Glue or clear tape
- Scissors
- Crayons, markers, or paint



## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

Chinese lanterns are a fun art project for celebrating Chinese New Year or learning about China! Kids under age 6 should do this project with an adult supervising or making the scissor cuts for the child.

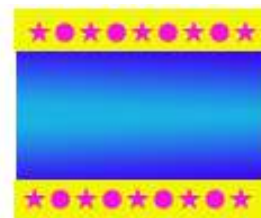


Chinese Paper Lanterns

Photo by [Pennstatelive](#)

## Instructions

- Take the sheet of paper and have the child color their own design on it, or for a faster project, use color construction paper.
- Cut another sheet of paper into a series of strips approximately 8.5" long and 1.5" wide. These strips will later become the handle of the lantern.
- Fold the paper in half hot dog style with the crease at the bottom and the open flaps facing upwards. Using a ruler if desired, begin cutting through both sides of the paper leaving a row of strips, but being careful to leave at least 2 inches of uncut paper at the top. (See diagram to the left, where the tip of the arrow marks the point at which you should stop cutting each strip.)
- Unfold the paper and bring the ends of the paper together in a cylinder with about 1 inch overlap. Using glue or tape, seal the overlap so that the paper can stand on its own.
- Take one of the pre-cut strips and glue or tape it to the inside of the top of the cylinder like a handle. Now you have your own paper lantern!







# Cardboard Fire Crackers

AGE LEVEL: 7-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES

## Materials

- Two paper towel rolls, cut in half
- Red construction paper
- String or yarn
- Crayons
- Scissors and tape

### Cardboard Tube Red Fire Crackers

Photo and art by  
[Amanda Formaro](#)



## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

Firecrackers are used as decoration at Chinese New Year. Chinese tradition says that throwing firecrackers scares away evil spirits. Kids can decorate them with designs using crayons, markers, or glitter paint. Red and gold are considered lucky colors in China, but kids can use any colors they wish!



## Instructions

- Use a half sheet of red construction paper to cover each section of the paper towel roll. Put on a piece of tape to secure the paper. Tuck extra paper inside of the roll on both ends.
- Decorate the tube with shapes, dots and stripes. If you are using glitter paint, allow some time for it to dry.
- Tape a string inside one end of the tube.
- Make two or more firecrackers to make a strand. Hang them at different lengths. Tie a knot at the top of the strings to hold them together in a bunch.
- Hang up your firecrackers!



Based on a project from Kaboose Crafts: <http://crafts.kaboose.com/cardboard-tube-red-firecrackers.html>



# Double Happiness Cutout

AGE LEVEL: 8-12

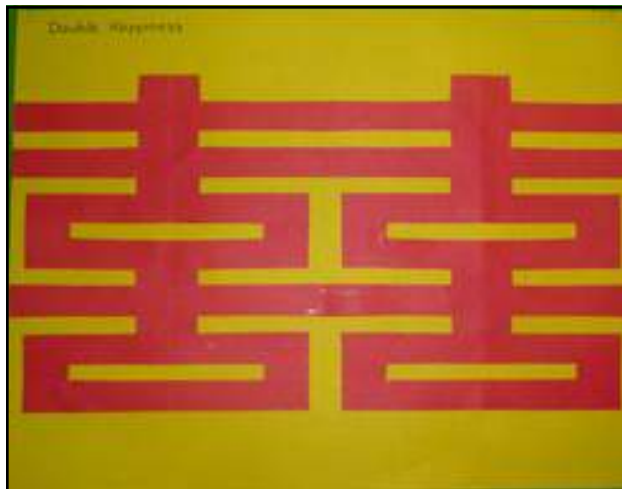
ESTIMATED TIME: 15 MINUTES

## Materials

- 2 sheets of colored paper (8.5"x11")
- Scissors and glue
- Cutout template

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

This is the Chinese character for “happiness” written twice, pronounced *xing fu* (shing foo). Explain to the children that the Chinese phrase *fu dao le* (foo dao lay) means 'happiness is upside down.' But in Chinese, the same words pronounced with different tones mean 'happiness has arrived!' They can turn their sign upside down to show happiness has arrived in their house—perhaps because they learned something new! This pattern is commonly used for weddings and is usually made with red and yellow or gold paper.

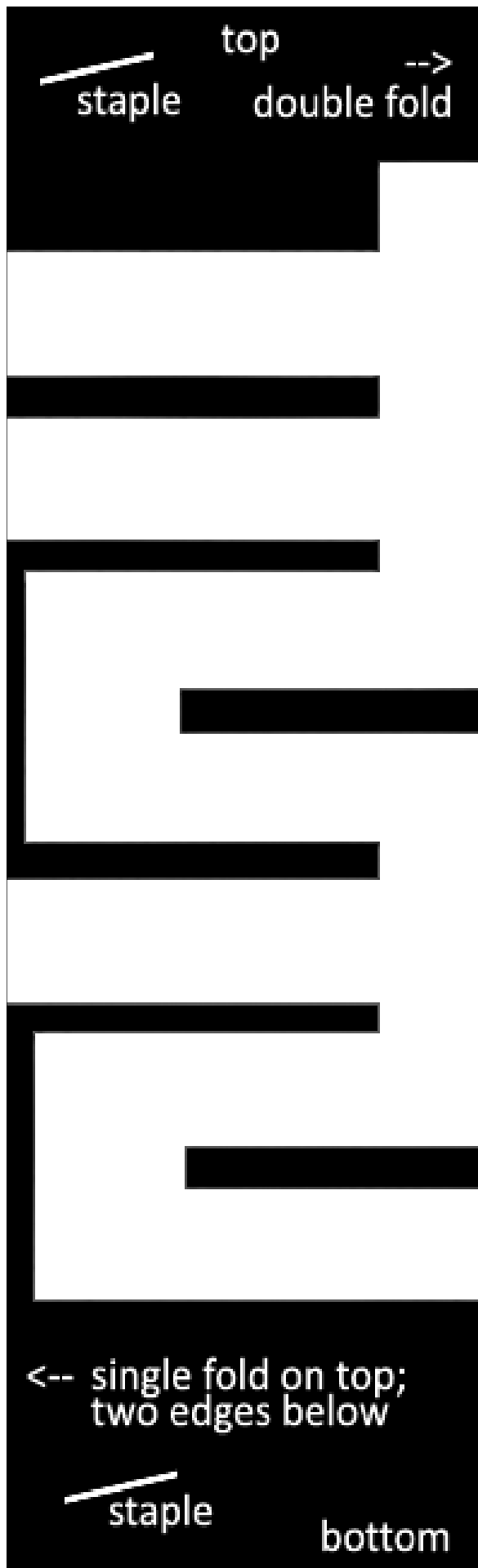


**Double Happiness Finished Character Cutout**

Photos and art by Julie Kant

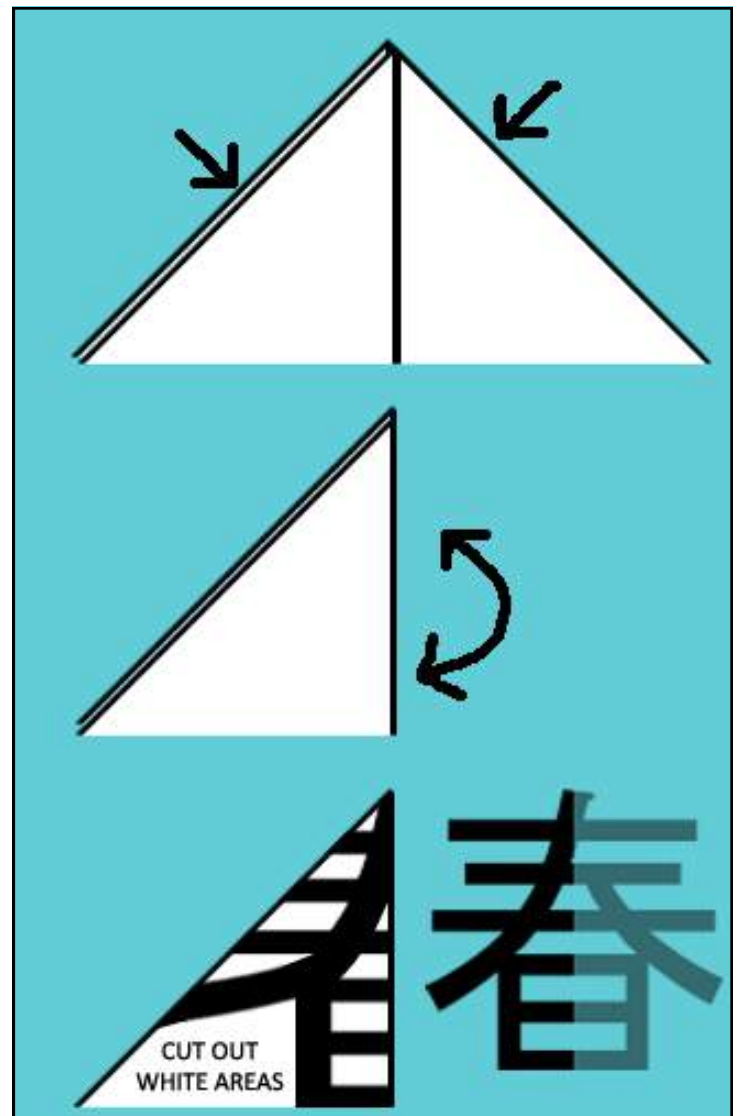
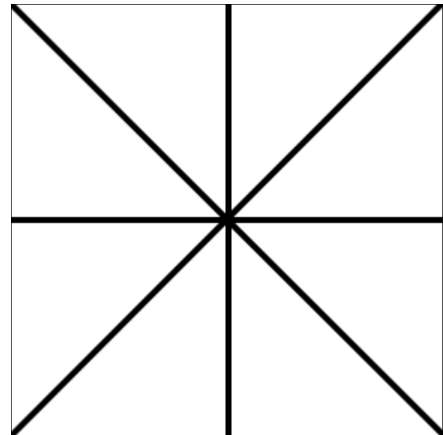
## Instructions

- Copy the template pattern on the next page to a sheet of red paper using a photocopy machine, or use it as a guide to trace the shape onto red paper.
- Fold the red paper in half hamburger style. Fold it in half again in the same direction. You will end up with four layers of paper, with a fold on top of two single edges on the left and a double fold on the right (*see diagram*).
- Staple the four layers of paper together in the two marked areas to keep the layers from shifting when you cut.
- Cut away the areas that are shaded black.
- Open your folded red paper and glue the stylized character to the yellow background paper for your own “double happiness” artwork!
- Watch it made on Youtube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTnyMjiyW-k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTnyMjiyW-k)



**Left side:** Pattern for “Double Happiness Cutout”

**Below:** Crease pattern and illustrated instructions for “Spring Festival Tree”. Crease pattern shows the ways that the paper must be folded before making the tree. Illustration instructions show how the triangles should look before being folded into the tree shape, and shows how to draw the “spring” character pattern onto the paper.





# Spring Festival Tree Cutout

AGE LEVEL: 10-12

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES

## Materials

- 1 sheet of square paper per child (origami paper may work, or any colorful scrap paper that isn't too thin)
- Pencil or marker to draw the shape of the "tree"
- Scissors

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

This is a 3-D "tree" that is actually the Chinese character for "spring", or *chūn*. The spring festival tree can be a little complicated for some children, as it's very difficult to photocopy the pattern in such a way that it will still fold accurately, and some children have trouble telling which area to cut out. We have provided you with a pattern to follow on the previous page.



Spring Festival Tree

Photo and art by Jenn Murawski

## Instructions

- Take a sheet of square paper of any color, and crease it in 4 directions: hamburger style, hot dog style, and diagonally in both directions. Unfold it again.
- Hold the paper by the middle of each side and press this section in so that the paper folds two triangles. (See pictures to the right, as this is hard to describe!)
- Fold the triangle shape in half so that the fold is on the right side and all of the triangle flaps are on the left side. (See photo again.)
- Draw or trace the "spring" character pattern on the previous page so that the fold will become the "tree trunk" and the "branches" spread out to the left. You can use a marker to color the parts of the paper that will get cut out (see photo to the right—the unnecessary sections are colored black to make them easier to identify when cutting.)
- Using scissors, carefully cut through all of the black / "non-tree" sections until you have the shape of half of the "spring" character remaining.
- Unfold the tree so that it becomes a 3-D version of the character for "spring"! You can use clear tape or glue to connect the branches and trunk on each side if they paper is popping out too much.







# Nengajō New Year's Postcards

AGE LEVEL: 5-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 10-40 MINUTES

## Materials

- At least one postcard-sized piece of cardstock for each child
- Colored pencils, markers, stamps, stickers, etc. for decorating the cards

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

Japanese *nengajō* are often decorated with pictures of the upcoming year's Zodiac animal along with traditional Japanese greetings. Many families make their own postcards using digital art or create handmade cards featuring stamps, artwork, stickers, and calligraphy, with a brief personal message to the recipient on the back. Some cards are simple and elegant, others are colorful and cartoonish—do what you like!



**Making Ink Painting Tiger Cards for 2010 New Year**

By [Lawrie Hunter](#)

**New Year's 2011 Card**

By [Acejeppo](#)



## Instructions

- Allow the children to decorate the postcards however they wish. Some common elements used in New Year's postcards are:
  - Chinese Zodiac animals. The zodiac animals of the upcoming few years are as following: the Dragon in 2012, the Snake in 2013, the Horse in 2014, and the Sheep in 2015. For an extended list, see [Wikipedia](#).
  - Famous cartoon characters such as Snoopy
  - The upcoming year
  - A brief phrase such as "Happy New Year" or "Wishing you happiness in the new year" or a message of thanks for friendship
  - Images associated with the new year in one's culture—for the U.S., this could be fireworks, the Big Apple in New York's celebration, a countdown to midnight, etc. In Japan, there are many traditional images, such as folding fans, oranges, rice cakes, Mount Fuji, bamboo decorations, etc.



**New Year's Postcard Supplies**

Photo from [Wikimedia Commons](#)



# Nengajō New Year's Postcards

あけまして  
おめでとう  
ごきげんよう



HAPPY★OMEDETO  
NEW★SHOGATSU  
AKEMASHITE YEAR.



アッ  
あけまして  
おめでとう  
A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!



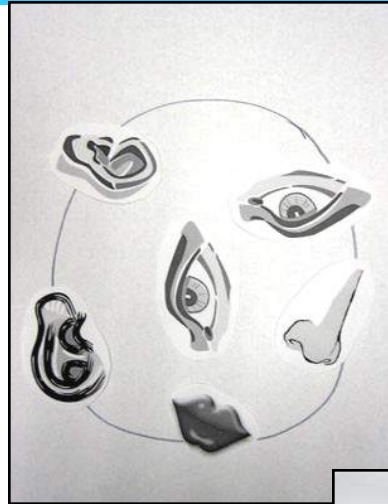
# Fukuwarai Funny Faces

**AGE LEVEL: 4-11**

**ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES**

## Materials

- Blindfold
- Blank face outline on 8.5"x11" white paper (or make a blank face with hair attached out of construction paper)
- Unattached facial features, cut from magazines or drawn/printed on paper and cut out very closely, including facial hair (moustaches, beards) if desired
- Envelopes or paper bags (one for each group)



**Top: Photo by Rachel Jacobson**

**Bottom: Photo and Art by Jennifer Murawski**



## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

This game works much like "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." You can use the *fukuwarai* (foo-koo-wah-rah-ee) features provided on the next page, or you can make your own—the sillier the better! To make the game particularly interesting, consider using some features that appear strongly masculine and some that seem strongly feminine, or make multiple sets of features and put them all in the same envelope. Kids will get a kick out of mixing them up!

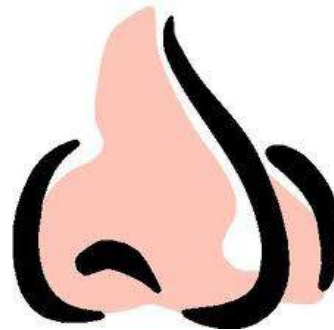
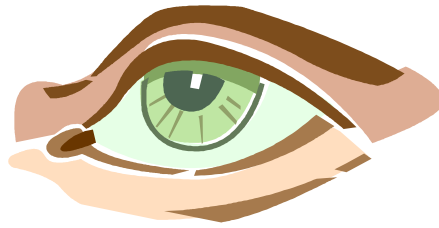
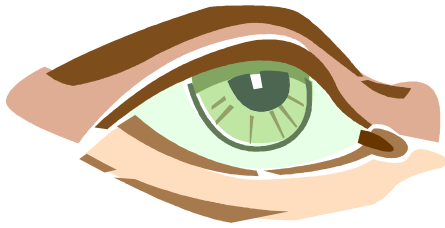
## Instructions

- Draw the outline of a face on a large sheet of paper, and provide enough face outlines for each group to have one copy.
- Place the collections of facial features into a paper bag or an envelope, providing enough sets for each group. In general, groups should receive multiple sets of features in the same envelope, and are most successful with 2-4 students per group taking turns placing features on the face.
- A blindfolded child draws the features out of the bag/envelope and tries to arrange the facial features (eyes, mouth, nose, etc.) on the blank face outline.
- This game can be played without competition, with the point being to laugh at the funny faces that result. Alternately, the "winner" can be the group or child who creates the funniest face, or the face most resembling a normal face (although some "peeking" may be required!).





# Fukuwarai Funny Features







# Jegichagi Hacky Sack Game

AGE LEVEL: 5-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES

## Materials

- One plastic bag per *jegi* (jeh-gee)
- 3-4 penny coins
- String (or rubber band)
- Scissors
- Clear tape

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

*Jegichagi* (Jeh-gee-cha-gee) is a game that is very similar to the popular game of [Hacky Sack](#). The popularity of this game faded over the years in Korea, and so to keep the sport alive, the national Board of Education in South Korea declared it a mandatory activity for physical education courses in schools, and now all children learn how to play! *Jegichagi* is very similar to the Chinese sport of *jiànzi* (jee-enh-zuh), which has an ancient history of over two thousand years. You can watch a video of people in a park playing the game [here](#). Some modern *jegi* are made with metallic streamers to be very colorful!



**Top: Homemade Plastic Bag Jegi**  
Art and photo by Rachel Jacobson



**Bottom: Feather Jianzi Toy from China**



## Instructions

### Making the Jegi (Birdie)

- Pile the coins and tape them together
- Prepare the plastic bag by cutting into a square about 10 inches wide.
- Place the coin stack in the middle of the plastic bag
- Hold the coins inside the plastic bag and tie it using a string or rubber band
- Cut the untied part of the plastic bag into thinner strands (about a half-inch wide) using scissors.



### Playing Jegichagi

- Some versions of the game are played like hacky sack, alone or in groups, in which the *jegi* is kept aloft by kicking it. Other variations include kicking it towards a target, kicking the *jegi* as far as possible, doing tricks while kicking it, and playing a volleyball-like game on teams using the *jegi*.



# More Winter Fun: SETSUBUN

The New Year is not the only winter holiday celebrated in East Asia! Check out these other fun winter activities for the February holiday known in Japan as *Setsubun* (Sets-oooh-boon).

- *Setsubun* Bean Throwing (Japan)
- Kick Bad Habits! (Japan)
- *Oni* Masks



# Setsubun Festival

## Setsubun: Fun in February!

*A Japanese winter festival for getting good luck and losing bad habits*

If you are in Japan on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, you might overhear cries of “*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*” And if you stood too close to an open window or doorway, you just might be hit in the face with a handful of roasted soybeans! Both of these activities are customs associated with the winter festival of Setsubun (節分). Literally meaning “the division of the seasons”, *setsubun* was originally a more generalized term referring to the change in any of the four seasons; however, these days it mostly refers to the February 3<sup>rd</sup> celebration of the coming of spring, also called *Risshun*.

*Setsubun* was also closely tied to the Lunar New Year in the past; in fact, it was sometimes called New Year’s Eve, and in 2011 Chinese New Year and Setsubun fell on the same day. Because of this connection, many of the rituals of Setsubun are dedicated to cleansing the home from the evil spirits of the old year and praying for good fortune in the new.

The most well-known of these Setsubun rituals is the *mamemaki* (mah-may-mah-key) or bean-throwing ceremony. In this ceremony, the male head of the household or a male born in the same Chinese zodiac sign as the upcoming year throws handfuls of beans either out the door or at someone dressed up as an oni, a Japanese-style demon. Everyone says together, “*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*” which means “Oni out! Luck in!” The beans are meant to chase away any “demons” that might cause bad luck or poor health in the coming year. Then, to bring good luck in, each member of the household picks up the number of beans corresponding to his or her age and eats them.

Large-scale versions of this ceremony take place at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Priests throw not only beans but also prizes such as money and sweets. It is also common to eat an uncut roll of “lucky direction” sushi while facing the yearly compass direction. Other families may hang decorations of holly leaves and sardine heads over the door. The *oni* hate the smell of sardines and are afraid of pricking their fingers on the holly’s thorns!



Setsubun “Oni” masks  
Photo by [kengo](#) (background removed)

### Further References

For more information on the origins and celebration of *Setsubun*, see the following websites.

- [www2.gol.com/users/steve/setsbun.htm](http://www2.gol.com/users/steve/setsbun.htm)
- [web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/february/setsbun.html](http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/february/setsbun.html)



# Setsubun: Bean-Throwing

AGE LEVEL: ALL AGES

## Materials

- A large quantity of small, edible, bean-like objects (roasted soybeans, peanuts, wasabi peas, M&M's?!)
- *Oni* (ogre) mask—see instructions on the upcoming pages!

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

*Oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi!* is pronounced “oh-knee wa soh-toe, foo-coo wa oo-chee.” It means “Out with the ogres! In with luck!”

In this case, “ogres” are equivalent to bad luck! This activity is usually done on a doorstep leading to the outdoors to avoid mess, and the ogre is usually a bit more cute than scary looking! Japanese children who are familiar with this holiday practice are loud and boisterous but are usually warned against throwing beans at other kids—use your best judgment if crowd control seems necessary!



Get out, oni!  
Photo by [Ali San](#)

## Instructions

- Choose one person, such as a teacher or another adult, to be the “ogre” (*oni*), and have that person put on an *oni* mask and wait outside the room.
- Give the children a quantity of “beans” to throw and teach them the chant.
- When the *oni* comes in the door, have the children throw the “beans” at him or her, shouting, “*Out with bad luck! In with good luck!*”
- The *oni* should flee from the onslaught—be as dramatic as you wish!
- After the *oni* leaves the room, have the children count out a number of “beans” corresponding to their current ages (not the ones that were thrown, of course!) and eat them to guarantee luck in the coming year!





# Kick Those Bad Habits!

AGE LEVEL: 7-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES

## Materials

- *Oni* drawing to color (see following page, or invent your own)
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

This can be done before the bean-throwing activity on the previous page, so that when the students are chasing the “ogre” out, they are actually chasing out their own bad behavior and trying to be aware of situations where they could be a little nicer or more thoughtful to others!



Let's chase the ogres out of our hearts!

Photo by Jennifer Murawski

## Instructions

- Hand out photocopies of the *oni* ogre drawing on the next page. This picture was used by the Japanese elementary school in the photo above, or make your own suitable image and tell the students to think of a time when they perhaps could have been nicer or more thoughtful to another person. Japanese children often write things such as “The ogre says I shouldn’t be mean to my little sister!” or “Go away, the ogre who makes me stay up too late!” (Choose a phrase that is suitable for your group and age level.)
- Color the oni. Oni are traditionally red-skinned and blond-haired with leopard-skin loincloths, but children can pick any design they like. When the oni are complete, hang them on the wall and perform a bean-throwing ceremony (see previous pages). Out with bad behavior, in with good luck!





# Oni Ogre Masks

AGE LEVEL: 7-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES

## Materials

- One paper bag per child
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils, etc.



## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

The traditional image of the *oni* (ogre) features yellow horns, red skin, pointy teeth and often yellow curly hair. However, in this activity, the children are limited only by their imaginations!

Once the masks are made, they can be used in any number of activities. In Japan, the “it” of games such as tag, hide-and-go-seek, and the “*oni* in the middle” game on the next page is called the *oni*, so adding the mask to these traditional games can spice them up!



Girl in Oni Mask

Photo by Jennifer Murawski

## Instructions

- The paper bag will form the main part of the mask. Cut a pair of eye-holes in each bag.
- The children may then decorate the masks however they like with whatever supplies are available. Popular choices include making little horns out of construction paper, turning a mess of yarn into curly hair, adding scary or surprised eyebrows, big smiles or pointy teeth, etc. These masks are a Japanese equivalent to a Halloween jack-o-lantern, so both scary and cute features are equally popular!



# Oni in the Middle Game

AGE LEVEL: 4-9

ESTIMATED TIME: 10 MINUTES

## Materials

- Open space such as that needed for “Duck, Duck, Goose” game
- A blindfold or other means of hiding one’s vision

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

This game is known as “*Kagome, Kagome*” (Birdcage, Birdcage) in Japan because there is an accompanying song by the same title (which you can listen to [here](#)), but the game is a fun way to introduce children familiar with Duck, Duck, Goose and other similar games to a Japanese game with similar rules. As American children use the term “it” (as in “You’re it!”) to refer to a person with a special role while playing games, in Japan, that person is often referred to as the *oni* (oh-nee), or ogre. Thus, this game is not necessarily related to the Setsubun winter holiday, but can actually be a fun way to have children practice a song that they are expected to learn, as the game’s repetitive nature can add some fun to choir practice!



Photo by [Nico Cavallotto](#)

## Instructions

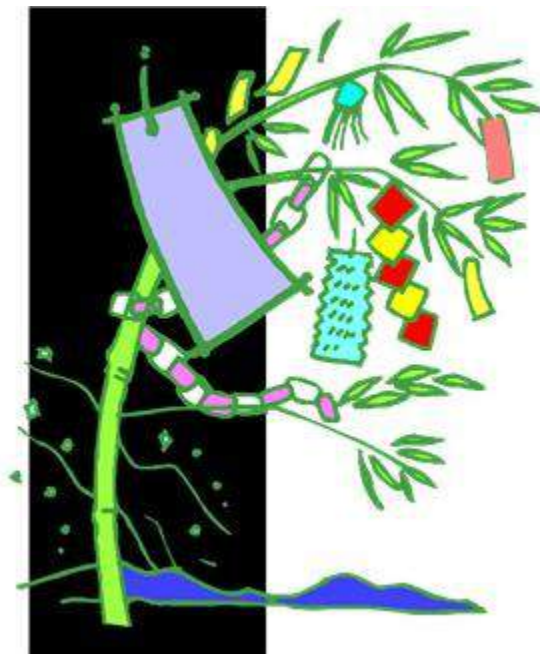
- Children should stand in a circle holding hands, leaving an open space in the middle.
- One child should be picked to start out as the *oni* (or “it”), and they can be blindfolded and must stand in the middle of the circle at a stationary point, with their back to one point in the circle.
- The children in the outer ring, while holding hands, can sing a short song (any familiar nursery rhyme or children’s song will do). When the song ends, the blindfolded *oni* must try to guess who in the circle is the child standing directly behind them.
- If they guess correctly, the child exchanges places with the *oni*, putting on the blindfold and becoming the new *oni*.
- A rule may be needed that puts a limit on the amount of time spent in the role of *oni* if children are prone to guessing incorrectly or prolonging their turn.
- This game can be a good way to involve children who may not have the physical capability of playing more active games such as Duck, Duck Goose.



# SUMMER FUN

The following activities are suited to the hot summer months.

- Summer Wish Tree (Japan)
- *Dorodango* Shining Mud Ball (Japan)
- *Teru Teru Bōzu* Weatherman (Japan)



# Summer Holidays

## The Seventh Evening Festival

In China, it's called *Qixi*; in Japan, *Tanabata*; in Korea, *Chilseok*; and in Vietnam, *Ngày mưa Ngâu*. This festival, celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh month of the traditional Asian lunar calendar, originated in China as a way for young women to demonstrate their domestic arts and pray to find a good husband. For this reason, another old name for the festival is "The Festival to Plead for Skills." Each country celebrates this festival differently. What they have in common is the story of two stars, known in English as Altair and Vega, who according to legend are a husband and wife separated by the river of the Milky Way—and fate has made it so that they can only meet on the night of this festival.

### China—Qixi (七夕, "Seventh Evening") or qǐ qiǎo jié (乞巧節 "Festival to Plead for Skills")

This festival has been celebrated since ancient times and has several facets. In the past, it has been an opportunity for young women to pray to the Weaver Girl for skill in needlework and weaving, once-crucial skills for finding a husband. Old traditions related to this aspect of the festival include:

- Young women would gather in groups of seven to bake a needle, a copper coin, and a red date into separate dumplings. The one who found the needle was supposed to be blessed with perfect needlework skills, the one who found the coin would be blessed with good fortune, and the one who found the date would be blessed with an early marriage.
- In some regions, young women made offerings of fruit and pastries to pray for a clever mind. If spiders happened to spin webs on the offerings, it was taken as the favorable response of the Weaver Girl.
- Young women held sewing and needlework competitions, such as competing to thread seven needles in the space of a single breath.
- Young women would throw a sewing needle into a full bowl of water. If it floated, that meant that the young woman was particularly skilled at sewing.

When the story of Altair and Vega, called Niulang and Zhinü in Chinese, became associated with it, Qixi became a day for young couples, occasionally even called a "Chinese Valentine's Day." Young people would visit the Matchmaker's temple; couples would visit to pray for their continued love and the possibility of marriage, while singles would pray for luck in love in the upcoming year. In recent years, however, young Chinese have been more likely to celebrate the Western Valentine's Day.

### Japan—Tanabata (七夕, "Seventh Evening," also pronounced *shichiseki*)

The festival entered Japan from China during the Heian Period (794-1185 C.E.). At that time, it was popular with the Imperial Court in Kyoto; however, by the early Edo period (1603-1868) it spread to the general public through the practice of writing wishes on paper strips called *tanzaku*, to be hung on bamboo trees. In the past, girls would wish for skill in sewing and craftsmanship, while boys would wish for good penmanship. However, nowadays any kind of wish can be made. Most Tanabata festivals take place on July 7th, although the biggest Tanabata festival in Japan is held the city of Sendai in mid-August, and the entire city is filled with huge decorations resembling giant origami creations. For a great explanation of the festival, visit <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/folk/tanabata>.

\* **Book suggestion:** *Wish: Wishing Traditions Around the World*, by Roseanne Thong



# Summer Wish Tree

AGE LEVEL: 4-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 5-45 MINUTES

## Materials

- Colored paper cut into long strips about 3-4" wide and 8-10" long
- Hole Punch
- Markers
- Ribbons cut into 5-8" lengths
- Branches or strings

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

There are many ways to hang up wishes—for our display, we have painted dried bamboo sticks, attached paper leaves, and placed them in a sturdy pot. If you find that children's excitement makes it hard for the wish paper to survive intact, you may find hole-punch reinforcement stickers a useful addition.



**Tanabata Wishes**

Photo by [Klara Kim](#)



**Origami Decorations**

Photo by [Vanessa Smith](#)

## Instructions

- The first step is to decide how to display the *tanzaku* wish papers—this will require a little advanced planning. There are many choices, from using actual bamboo to hanging string around the activity area for children to attach their wishes for display.
- Each child will need a strip of colored paper (pre-punched with a hole at the top for threading with ribbon), a marker or other writing tool to write their wish (wishes are traditionally anonymous and are often written in the form of "I wish \_\_\_\_."
- When the wish is written, the child can string the ribbon through their paper and proceed to tie it (with help if necessary) to the display.
- Wishes can be left hanging in hopes of coming true, although according to legend, when it rains on Tanabata, the two lovers are unable to meet and so no one's wish will come true that year due to their great sadness.



**Sendai Tanabata Festival**

Photo by [Vanessa Smith](#)



# Dorodango Marble Mudballs

## Materials

- Ordinary garden dirt
- Filtering screen to remove rocks from dirt (kitchen sieves work well)
- Plastic re-sealable bag (gallon size)
- Soft cloth
- Old plastic containers (large size)

AGE LEVEL: 6-12

ESTIMATED TIME: SEVERAL DAYS

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

It took a professor at a Japanese university over 200 tries using an electron microscope for analysis to painstakingly document the process for creating *dorodango* (doh-roh-dan-go) after a preschool teacher showed him one she'd created with her students! A It takes a lot of patience to make a refined one, but the process of creation causes people to become fond of their work, and kids can learn a lot about art and patience in the process!



*Left: Examples of a very fine completed dorodango.*

Photo by [sawako](#)

*Right: A children's guide to making dorodango.*

Photo by [Kida Yasuo](#)



## Instructions

- Detailed instructions with photos/video can be found [here](#) or [here](#).
- Pack some ordinary garden dirt (it will need to be at least somewhat moist in order to form a shape) into your hand, and squeeze out the water while forming a ball shape.
- Add some dry dirt to the outside (coating the entire ball as evenly as you can), and continue to gently shape the mud into a sphere.
- When the mass dries, pack it solidly with your hands, and rub the surface until a smooth film begins to appear. Careful—applying too much pressure may cause the ball to crack or crumble!
- Rub your hands against the ground to coat them in a fine layer of dry dirt, then continue to pat and rub the fine, powdery dirt onto the sphere. Continue this for up to two hours to achieve the maximum shine—taking breaks is OK, but be careful when and where you set the ball down!
- Seal the ball in a plastic resealable bag for three or four hours, taking care not to touch or move the bag too much! Upon removing the sphere, repeat step 4, and then once again seal the sphere in a plastic bag.
- Remove the ball from the bag, and if it is no longer wet, polish it with a soft cloth until it shines! You can display the ball, which can last from a few days to many months, or take a photo and then put it back in the garden!

Project instructions adapted from [web-japan.org](#).





# Teru Teru Bōzu Weatherman

AGE LEVEL: 4-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 10 MINUTES

## Materials

- 2 to 3 sheets of plain white paper towel per child (you can substitute white cloth or white tissue paper if preferred)
- 16-20" pieces of string or yarn
- Black markers

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

*Teru* means “to shine” (like the sun), and a *bōzu* is a Buddhist monk, or in modern slang, someone who is bald or who has a close-shaven haircut, such as a little boy. These dolls are attached to strings and hanged by children the night before a big outdoor event in order to wish for sunny weather! There is a nursery rhyme song that goes with hanging a *teru teru bōzu* doll, which you can hear at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=reLSYByhJ7c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reLSYByhJ7c).



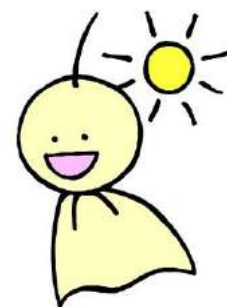
A Happy  
Teru Teru Bōzu  
Photo by [gaelx](#)



Teru Teru Bōzu hanging at a school in Japan  
Photo by [Jackson Boyle](#)

## Instructions

- Take a single sheet of paper towel and crumple it into a round ball. While holding the ball in your hand, take another sheet of paper towel (or tissue paper / cloth) and using a piece of string or yarn, tie the inner ball of “stuffing” into a head shape. (See image to the right.)
- Knot the string to keep the doll’s head in place, and using a marker draw a face on the doll. The remaining length of string should be used to tie the doll from a branch or other means of display.
- Traditionally, the dolls are hung outdoors so that the weather will wear them away, which is associated with a wish coming true (or in the case of bad luck, being “erased”).
- The lyrics to the song (linked above) give some clues as to the tradition: *Teru-teru-bōzu, teru bōzu / Please make tomorrow a sunny day / Like the sky in a dream sometime / If it's sunny I'll give you a golden bell! Teru-teru-bōzu, teru bōzu / Please make tomorrow a sunny day / But if the clouds are crying / Then I shall snip your head off!*



# PAPER CRAFTS

Fun with folding, cutting, and shaping paper

- Origami: Jumping Frog (Japan)
- *Norigae* hanging charm (Korea)



# PAPER CRAFTS

## Fun with folding, cutting, and shaping paper!

Paper was invented in China more than 2,000 years ago. At first paper was made from mulberry tree bark and was very thick, so it was used to make clothes, blankets, and even shoes! The Chinese also used paper to make playing cards, money, and wallpaper.

Paper is still an important part of many Asian cultures, especially through crafts made for holidays and family celebrations. In China it is popular to cut red paper into designs like animals of the zodiac. For the new year festival, Chinese families often hang sheets of red paper with calligraphy that represent good luck, health, and wealth.

### Books about Paper Crafts

- Origami Activities (Asian Arts and Crafts For Creative Kids), by Michael G. LaFosse
- Asian Kites (Asian Arts and Crafts For Creative Kids), by Wayne Hosking
- A Kid's Guide to Asian American History: More Than 70 Activities, by Valerie Petrillo
- Asian-American Crafts Kids Can Do!, by Sarah Hartman
- Moonbeams, Dumplings & Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities & Recipes, by Nina Simonds
- Hands-on Asia: Art Activities for All Ages, by Yvonne Young Merrill

### Web Resources

#### A New Year's paper project by Asia Society

Asia Society is a nonprofit educational institution, and they have created a great project with instructions for children to learn about the history of paper in China. On their website, you can find a brief description of the history of paper in China, and instructions for a great project at: <http://asiasociety.org/education-learning/lesson-plans/pre-k-grade-2/chinese-cut-outs> .

#### A great online guide to paper folding by Origami Club

Origami Club is a Japanese website that has a big English language section on many fun origami paper folding projects with lots of photographs and instructions that are easy to follow and can be printed for easy reference. You can find many projects on their site at: <http://en.origami-club.com> .

# PAPER CRAFTS: Origami

## Origami: the art of paper folding!

**Origami** is the Japanese art of folding paper into three-dimensional objects. In Japanese, *oru* means folding and *kami* means paper. Paper folding has been popular in Japan for hundreds of years, and most people, from children to businessmen, know how to fold at least a few basic models.

Traditional models are usually folded from square sheets of paper. You can buy special origami paper, but wrapping paper, glossy magazines, old photo calendars, newspapers, and even junk mail also work well, just as long as the paper can be folded into sharp creases. Origami teachers use specific written symbols to show how to make different folds. Online video instructions may be more useful for beginning teachers, not only because you can pause and replay as you learn, but because the videos model how to *teach* simple projects, like the *kabuto* helmet that follows. As Michael LaFosse says, origami is a “show-me” art! **Can you tell what kind of paper was used to fold the *kabuto* (warrior helmet) in the picture to the right?**



Origami *kabuto* warrior helmet  
Photo by Julie Kant

Reusing and re-purposing materials reflects the Japanese concept of *mottainai* [Pr: mot-tie-nigh] – according to Japan’s Minister of the Environment, “the Japanese word *mottainai* means ‘it’s a shame for something to go to waste without having made use of its potential in full.’”

### Bibliography:

- Fukumoto, Jodi. *The Guide to Hawaiian-Style Money Folds*. (2005)
- Gross, Gay Merrill. *Origami: Easy-to-make paper creations*. (2001)
- LaFosse, Michael. *Kids Guide to Origami* series
- O’Brien, Eileen and Kate Needham. *The Usborne Book of Origami*. (1996)
- Temko, Florence. *Origami Magic*. (1993)
- **Daily Origami video series**, home page at [www.youtube.com/user/happypuppytruffles](http://www.youtube.com/user/happypuppytruffles)





# Jumping Frog

**AGE LEVEL: 8-12**

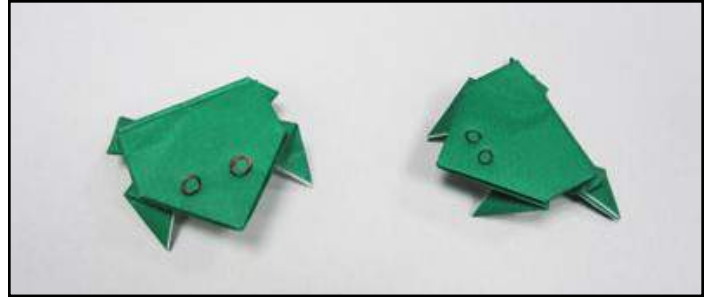
**ESTIMATED TIME: 20 MINUTES**

## Material

- 1 square of origami paper per child (some additional backup pieces are a good idea as well)

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

After you make origami frogs, you can hold jumping contests to see whose frog can hop the farthest!



**Origami Jumping Frogs**

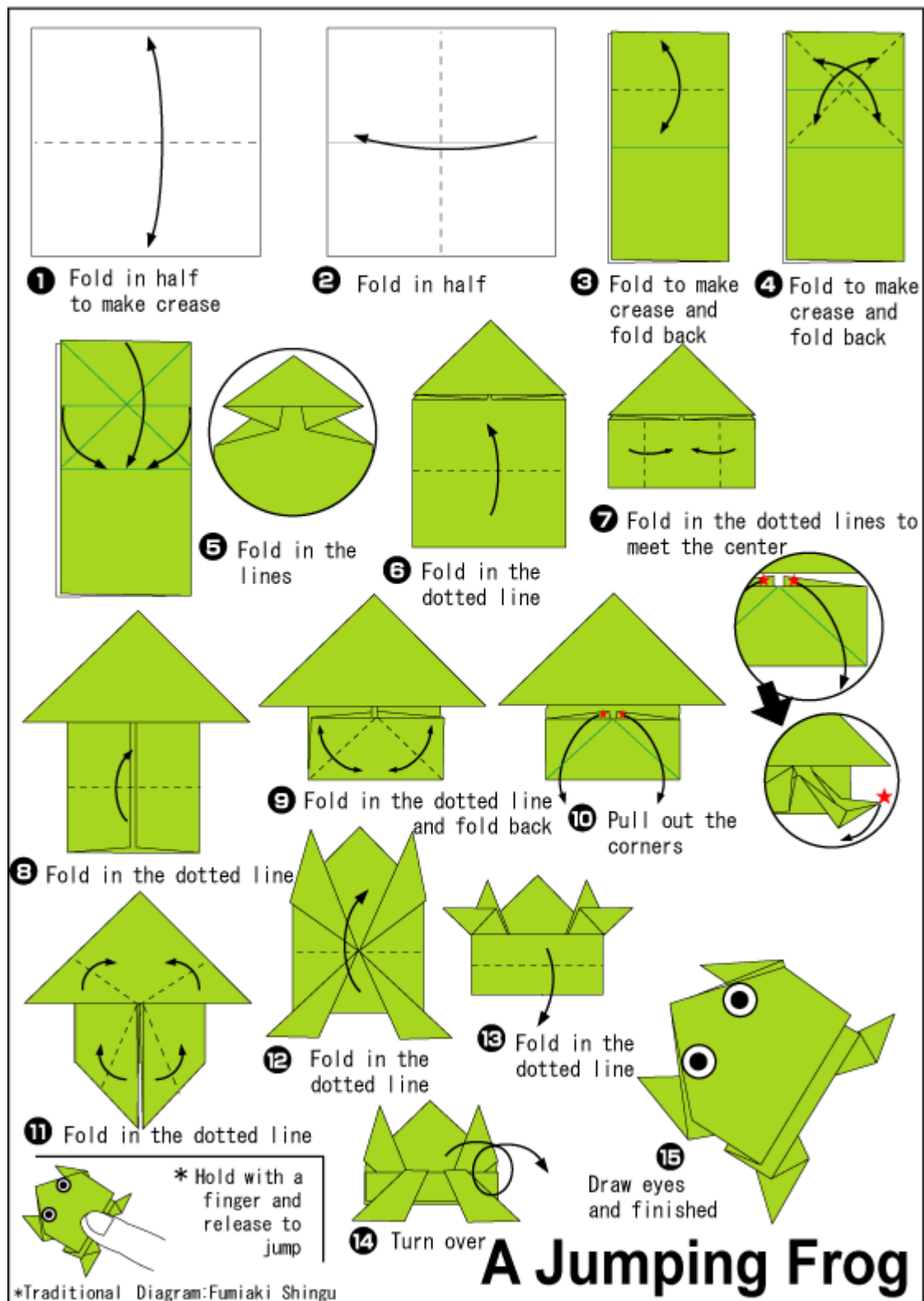
Photo and art by Rachel Jacobson

## Instructions (*See following page for diagram*)

- Fold the paper in half sideways. Fold the top corners down and unfold them right away.
- Flip the paper over and fold the top of the paper down to the spot where the diagonal creases meet. Unfold right away.
- Flip over again and fold the two edges toward you so they meet. The top of your rectangle will fold down to form a triangle.
- Fold the bottom of the paper up so that its edge meets the bottom of the triangle. Fold the two corners of the triangle up to form the frog's front legs.
- Fold the sides inward to meet at the center.
- Fold the bottom of the paper up so that it touches the bottom of the legs. Unfold right away.
- Put your fingers into the flaps and pull the bottom corners out to the sides so that the bottom edge comes up to touch the bottom of the legs.
- Fold the corners down so they meet at the bottom of the figure. Fold the bottom corners out to form the back legs of the frog.
- Create a zigzag fold at the bottom of the frog by folding the bottom half up and then the bottom quarter back down.
- Your frog is ready to jump! Press its back and release to make it hop.



# Jumping Frog (continued)





# Norigae Pendant Charm

AGE LEVEL: 9-12

ESTIMATED TIME: 25 MINUTES

## Materials

- Pastel Tissue Paper
- 1/4—3/8 inch ribbon
- Cardstock or manila folders
- Fine-tip colored markers or colored pencils
- Scissors
- A pencil
- Glue sticks or tacky glue
- Clear adhesive tape

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

In Korea, women and girls wear decorative pendants called *norigae* (no-ree-gah-eh) on their *hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing). Here you can make one with a butterfly pendant. Shapes such as circles, rectangles, gourds, pomegranates, and bats are also popular designs!

### Norigae Charm

Photo by [Angelina Koh](#)



### Tissue Paper Norigae

Photo & art by Julie Kant

## Instructions



- Trace the butterfly (or pomegranate) shape onto cardstock 3 or 4 times and cut out. Draw the “embroidered” designs with markers or pencils and color them.
- Cut a 15” length of ribbon and fold it in half to make the hanging cord. With the fold of the ribbon at the top, glue the decorative shapes onto the ribbon, one above the other, an equal distance from each other. The raw edges of the ribbon at the bottom will be joined to the tassel.
- To make the tassel, cut 3 pieces of tissue paper (different colors if you wish) measuring 10” x 15.” Stack the sheets, aligning the edges. Position your stack of paper with the 10” edge at the top. Fold the top edge down to meet the bottom edge and crease. You will have 6 layers of paper. Measure about 1 ¼” down from the fold and lightly mark a line in pencil across the top of your paper, parallel to the fold. Tape the open side edges of the tissue paper together above the line, up to the fold, on the left and right sides. This will

help hold your paper together for cutting.

- Using the scissors, you will cut the paper into fringe. Make cuts through all layers from the bottom of the paper stack to the pencil line, but NO further. Cuts will be about 3/8” apart, parallel to the sides and to each other.
- Turn the paper sideways so you can roll the folded edge up around the eraser end of a pencil, rolling it tightly. Smooth out the fringe frequently so it doesn’t get caught and torn as you roll.
- When you have about ½” left to roll, hide the raw ends of the ribbon below the fold, taping them in place, and finish rolling up the fringe. Tape the fringe closed. Enjoy your norigae!

Based on Korean Pendant activity from *Hands On Asia*, by Yvonne Y. Merrill (p.43).

# STORYTELLING GAMES

The following activities are creative ways to involve others in story-telling.

- *Ekaki Uta* Drawing Chants (Japan)
- *The Boy Who Drew Cats* Storytelling Scroll (Japan)
- *Kamishibai* Story Card Theater (Japan)







# Ekaki Uta Drawing Stories

AGE LEVEL: 4-10

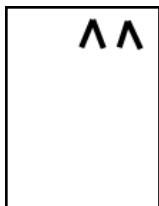

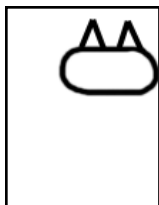





ESTIMATED TIME: 5 MINUTES

## Materials

- One piece of paper (if demonstrating, should be hung vertically)
- Marker, pencil, pen, etc.

*Ekaki uta* (eh-kah-kee ooh-tah), literally “picture-drawing songs,” are simple chants or songs that guide children through the process of drawing a simple object such as an animal. They make a fun, quick transition between two more complicated activities. Once a child memorizes an *ekaki uta* — which is usually easy because the lyrics are simple and the tune or rhythm is catchy — they can easily draw what the song describes! Some children may also wish to make up their own *ekaki uta* using tunes they are familiar with and things they like to draw.

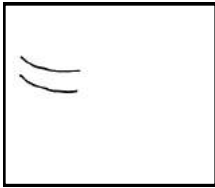
Here’s an example of an English *ekaki uta* sung to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. Each step shown below is a continuation of the same drawing, and each line is sung as the corresponding part of the drawing is being completed. The songs on the following page are not set to music, but can be told as a story while drawing each step.

	START HERE		Nothing’s biting, but why not?
→	Set our tents up	→	
			(Note that “tail” is made of 2 question marks.)
→	By the lake	→	Nothing’s biting, but why not?
			
→	Dropped our hooks in	→	Looking down into the lake
			
→	Six-hour wait	→	Silly squirrel forgot the bait!
	CONTINUE IN NEXT LINE		THE END!

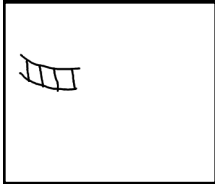


# More Ekaki Uta Drawing Stories

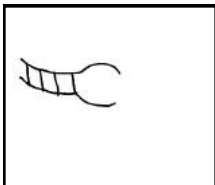
START HERE



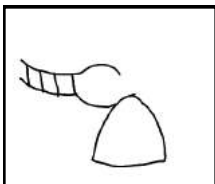
The little bridge



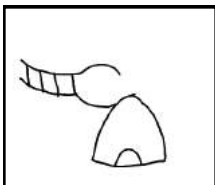
Goes on forever



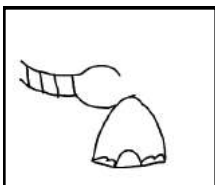
Cross the  
railroad tracks



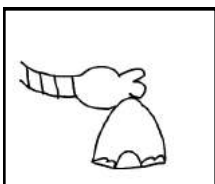
Go over the  
mountain



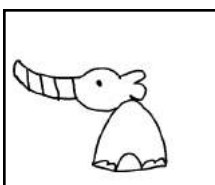
And through the  
tunnel



You can hear  
the waves

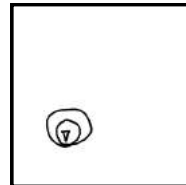


At three o'clock

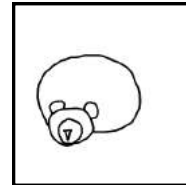


Plant a seed

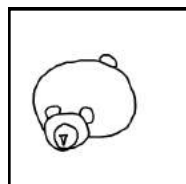
START HERE



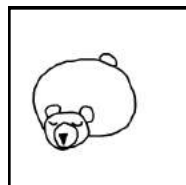
Circle, circle,  
triangle



Bump, bump,  
Biiig bump

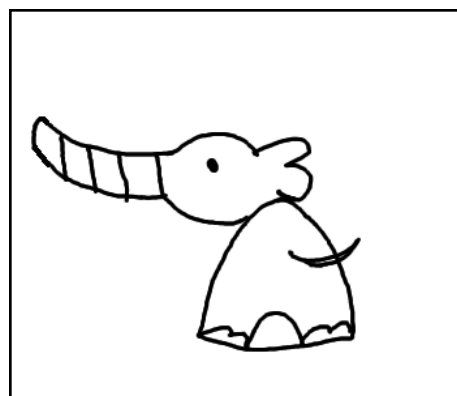


Here comes the  
moon



While the bear  
hibernates

THE END!



And an elephant will grow!

THE END!

Art by Rachel Jacobson. Songs and pictures from  
[www.geocities.jp/ekakisong/list\\_all.htm](http://www.geocities.jp/ekakisong/list_all.htm) and translated from  
Japanese by Rachel Jacobson.

# The Art of Scrolls

The story scroll is an ancient form of storytelling in which pictures and sometimes text are displayed on a long scroll that is gradually unrolled. The unrolling process created suspense as the story was revealed, and the focus on pictures allowed even those who couldn't read to enjoy the story.

Scrolls were once very popular throughout East Asia, especially those with pictures, which ranged from black ink art to elaborately painted illustrated novels. Initially, they aided in the spread of Buddhism. Over time, however, they came to be used as storytelling objects, and are considered to be one origin of Japanese *manga* (comic books) that are popular today throughout the world.



Rolled-up Storytelling Scroll

Art and picture by Julie Kant



Scene from the *Tale of Genji* handscroll.

Image in Public Domain; retrieved from [Wikipedia](#)



Scene from the *Scroll of Frolicking Animals*, depicting frogs and rabbits wrestling.

Image in Public Domain; retrieved from [Wikipedia](#).

One famous example of their use in literature is Japan's *The Tale of Genji* handscroll, which was created circa 1130 C.E. It was based on *The Tale of Genji*, which was written around 1000 C.E. and is considered to be the world's first novel, written by a female author known as Murasaki Shikibu. Another famous storytelling scroll from Japan is known as *The Scroll of Frolicking Animals*. It used pictures of animals to parody human life. Unusually, it contains no text, only pictures.

Scrolls can be an easy and fun way to introduce children to a variety of storytelling techniques, whether they write and illustrate their own scrolls or adapt an existing story to this format.

In addition to storytelling, scrolls can be adapted into a hanging artwork by using the scroll background to mount a piece of art and perhaps a poem or calligraphic work, which can be easily hung on a wall or rolled and stored for future use.



# The Boy Who Drew Cats Scroll

AGE LEVEL: 6-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 10-60 MINUTES

## Material

- Two empty paper towel rolls
- Eight feet of poster paper
- Double-sided tape
- Ribbon
- Black paint (optional)
- Origami paper (optional)
- Glue (optional)

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

If you want to make the scroll paper look aged, some tricks include using wet teabags of black tea to stain the paper to look extra authentic! You can draw your own illustrations or paste existing pictures onto the scroll with glue.



Unrolled Story Scroll Sections

Made by Julie Kant, art repurposed from illustrations.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Storyteller Dianne de Las Casas shows how to use the scroll story method for the Japanese folktale, "The Boy Who Drew Cats." Instructions on who to make the scroll and tell her version of the story can be found in *Handmade Tales: Stories to Make and Take*, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. Patterned origami papers make a colorful addition glued to the exposed ends of the paper towel rolls, and Dianne's refrain encourages audience participation: "Big cats, small cats, short cats, tall cats. Here cats, there cats. Everywhere, cats! Cats, cats, cats. He drew cats, cats, cats."

This folktale features a boy living in a temple in which he has drawn pictures of cats all over the walls, and when the temple is invaded by a giant rat, the cats come to life at night and kill the rat to protect the boy. It's a tiny bit spooky, but very . However, some illustrations feature the cats with some blood on their claws or mouths after killing the rat, so you may choose to make your own drawings or edit existing drawings to eliminate the blood if it's a little too scary!

Other versions of the same story include:

- *The Boy Who Drew Cats*, adapted by Margaret Hodges with pictures by Aki Sogabe (New York: Holiday House, 2002)
- *The Boy Who Drew Cats*, retold and illustrated by David Johnson (Westport, Connecticut: Rabbit Ears Books, 1991)

Based on a project from Dianne de Las Casas's *Handmade Tales: Stories to Make and Take*.





# Kamishibai Story Card Theater

AGE LEVEL: 4-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 10-20 MINUTES

## Materials

- Hands
- *Kamishibai* Story Cards (purchase an authentic set or illustrate and write your own!)
- Stage or frame to hold cards (optional)

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

*Kamishibai* (kah-me-shi-buy, literally “paper theater”) is a storytelling form that uses pictures and dialogue to craft a story. It originated in Japanese Buddhist temples in the 12th century and was popular during the 1920s through the 1950s, when wandering storytellers would make money by selling candy to the children who came to hear their stories. Allen Say’s picture book *Kamishibai Man* tells the story of one such storyteller and makes a great introduction to the idea. While special *kamishibai* stages as well as *kamishibai* cards can be purchased from [www.kamishibai.com](http://www.kamishibai.com) or [www.storycardtheater.com](http://www.storycardtheater.com), the stage is not necessary; *kamishibai* can be performed just as easily without a stage—some people even feel it is easier to hold and switch the cards without one.



Performing *Momotaro* with an optional wooden frame to hold story cards. Photo from [storycardtheater.com](http://storycardtheater.com)

## Instructions

- If using a stage, you can start with the pictures in the stage beforehand or carry them in and slide them into the stage in order to indicate that the show is about to start.
- To perform, display the cards as a single stack with the current picture facing towards the audience. The reverse of the previous card, which will be located at the back of the stack, displays the text to be read. So, for example, when the picture on the first card is being displayed, read the text that appears on the reverse of the last card. Then slide the first card out to the left, place it at the back of the stack, and read the text on the reverse of the first card as the picture on the second card is displayed.
- Noriko Matsui’s *How to Perform Kamishibai Q&A* offers the following tips for perfecting your *kamishibai* technique and creating “the world of the story”:
- When performing with a stage, stand to the left of it rather than behind it. This allows for better communication between the performer and the audience.
- Allow for dramatic pauses in reading, especially when sliding one card to the back. This builds suspense and gives the audience time to process the deeper meaning of what is being read.

# Games

Here are some fun games—some familiar, and some completely new!

- Rock-Paper-Scissors (Japan)
- *Janken* Island (Japan)
- *Karuta* Matching Game (Japan)
- Ladder Lottery (China, Japan, and Korea)





# Rock-Paper-Scissors—Japan Style!

AGE LEVEL: 5-12

ESTIMATED TIME: 5 MINUTES

## Materials

- Nothing but your hands!

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

The most common version of Rock-Paper-Scissors played in Japan is called *Janken* or *Janken Pon*. The good news is that the rules and gestures are the same as in English. Rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, paper beats rock. In Japanese, **Rock** is called *guu*, **Scissors** is called *choki*, and **Paper** is called *paa*. Note that these are not the normal words for those items in real life, but they are much easier to say quickly during the game!



**First Comes Rock!**

Photo by [Hector Garcia](#)

## Instructions

- Players start by chanting together "Sai-sho wa guu!" ("First comes rock!") and while they chant it, they make the gesture for **rock**.
- This is quickly followed by the semi-nonsense phrase "Janken pon!" and on the syllable "pon", both players show their hands in front of them, displaying their hands showing rock, paper, or scissors.
- If there is a draw, both players chant "Aiko desho!" ("Looks like a tie!"), and on the syllable "sho!" both players show their hands again.

Janken is played by people of all ages to settle disputes, and teachers often use it as a method of "fair" selection of a winner out of a large group. This can be easily done as follows:

- The game is played with the teacher versus the entire group or class at once.
- The teacher calls out the "Saisho wa guu! Janken pon!" chant, and as he or she says "pon!", the entire class individually chooses their gesture.
- The scoring of winners and losers is as follows:
  - If you tied with the teacher (by showing the same symbol), you remain standing.
  - If you won against the teacher, you remain standing.
  - If you lost to the teacher, you must sit down and are "out" of the round. The final person left standing is the winner!



# Janken Island Game

**AGE LEVEL: 7-12**

**ESTIMATED TIME: 5-15 MINUTES**

## Materials

- Full sheets of newspaper (double-sized pages only, no single insert sheets)

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

In this game, students stand on top of newspaper islands and compete in a Rock-Paper-Scissors tournament. Every time your team loses or ties, you must fold your island in half and stay standing on it with no one falling off.

This game can be relatively calm, or it can become a “Twister”-like exercise where students try all manner of acrobatic positions to remain in the game. It is recommended to consider separating groups by gender if being in close quarters is a concern. Make sure everyone removes their shoes to avoid accidental injury, and declare a winner when the islands are getting too small! If a student can’t play due to physical condition, consider making them the official game photographer, as it can be just as fun to watch others try to stay on the island!



**Falling Off the Island**

Photo by Jennifer Murawski

## Instructions

- Split the group or class into a number of smaller, evenly sized groups. Each group receives 1 full sheet of newspaper to become their group’s “island”.
- Students should remove shoes and stand on the island together. A team captain can be selected to make things easier if preferred.
- The captain, or the group members in rotation, plays Rock-Paper-Scissors against a neutral player, or for smaller games with only two groups, each other. Anyone who ties or wins is safe for the moment, but those who lose the round will watch their island “sink” into the water a bit and must fold their sheet of newspaper in half, while keeping all group members on the island!
- As the game progresses, it becomes harder for all of the group members to keep both feet on the island. Bearing in mind the rules and behaviors that are OK, you can either let groups continue playing until all but one group have “fallen off their island” into the “sea” of the floor, or you can pick a point at which the island is small enough to be uncomfortable to declare the group with the biggest island the winner!





# Alphabet Karuta Game

AGE LEVEL: 4-11

ESTIMATED TIME: 10 MINUTES

## Materials

- Cardstock or other durable paper

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

*Karuta* (car-ooH-tah) is a word that Japan borrowed from the Portuguese word *carta*, used to refer to sets of cards used to play games (although not standard playing cards, which are known as *toranpu*, or trump). These games are used to help children learn alphabets or writing systems as well as classical poetry such as haiku! One popular variation is called *iroha karuta*, or alphabet cards, as the Japanese spend a lot of time on writing and reading instruction and this game makes it a bit more fun! However, *karuta* can be adapted to any theme you like.



Japanese schoolchildren playing *karuta* with pictures of fruit, searching for the English words spoken by their teacher.

Photo by [daedrius](#)

## Instructions

- There are several variations of *karuta*. One can be played like the American matching game "Memory." Pairs can be made matching letter cards to pictures of objects starting with those letters, or to phrases or sentences starting with those letters.
- Place the cards face-down and have children turn over two cards at a time, trying to find a match.
- When they turn over two matching cards in the same go, they can keep that match. The one with the most matches at the end is the winner.
- Another involves spreading picture or phrase cards face-up in front of a group of children and calling out a letter. In the case of younger children who might have trouble being quick, multiple sets can be used.
- The children should then try to be the first one to find the picture or phrase that starts with that letter and touch that card.
- If two children touch the same card at the same time, the tie can be settled with a quick round of *janken pon* (see preceding pages).
- Keep going until all the cards are gone. The one who has collected the most cards is the winner.



## ESTIMATED TIME: 10 MINUTES

## Material

- One piece of paper
- Ruler (if needed for drawing straight lines)
- Writing utensils (pen, pencil, marker, etc.) - different colors may be helpful to distinguish between children

## Tips, Tricks, & Notes

	a	b	c	d	e	f
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Image from [Wikipedia](#)

## Instructions

-

# CREDITS AND THANKS

## Project Ideas and Artwork

Some projects have been adapted from information on the following websites:

- Photographers offering their work under Creative Commons non-commercial licenses (see photos for artist information and link to their original image/site)
- [asiasociety.org/education-learning/lesson-plans/pre-k-grade-2/chinese-cut-outs](http://asiasociety.org/education-learning/lesson-plans/pre-k-grade-2/chinese-cut-outs)
- [crafts.kaboose.com/cardboard-tube-red-firecrackers.html](http://crafts.kaboose.com/cardboard-tube-red-firecrackers.html)
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- [www.youtube.com/user/happypuppytruffles](http://www.youtube.com/user/happypuppytruffles)
- Credit for clip art images to [office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/) and [office.microsoft.com/ja-jp/images/](http://office.microsoft.com/ja-jp/images/)



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