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# dandelions

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE  
**MIDDLE AGES**



05

Spring  
2025

- ↓ Fantastic Pets
- ↓ The Story of LEGO® Bricks
- ↓ Military Kids Have Their Say

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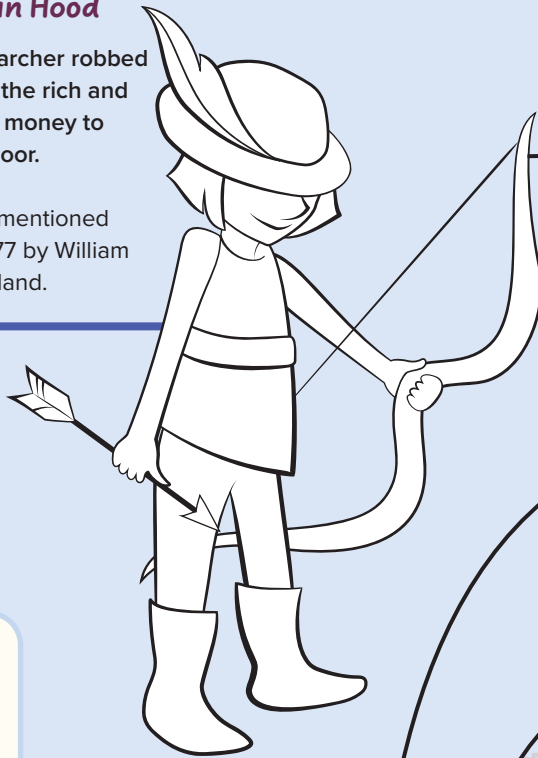
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### Robin Hood

This archer robbed from the rich and gave money to the poor.

First mentioned in 1377 by William Langland.

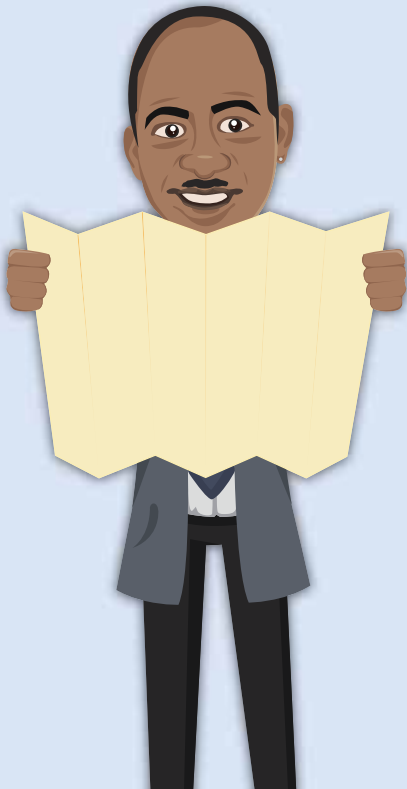
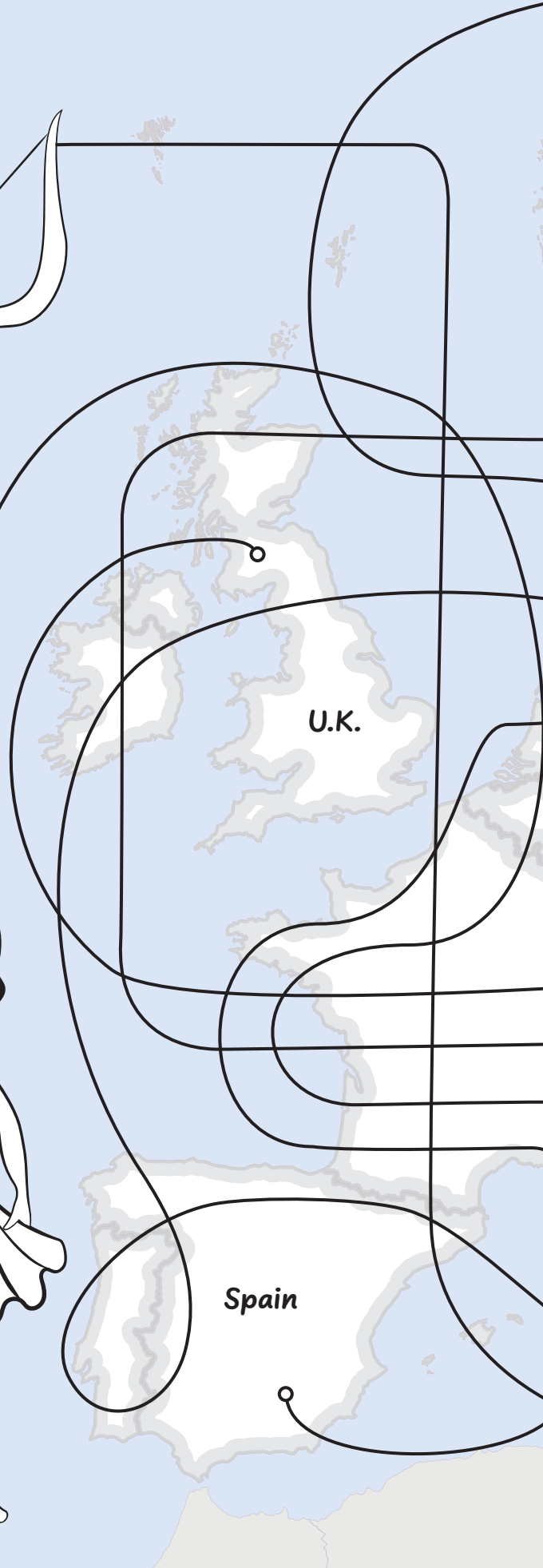
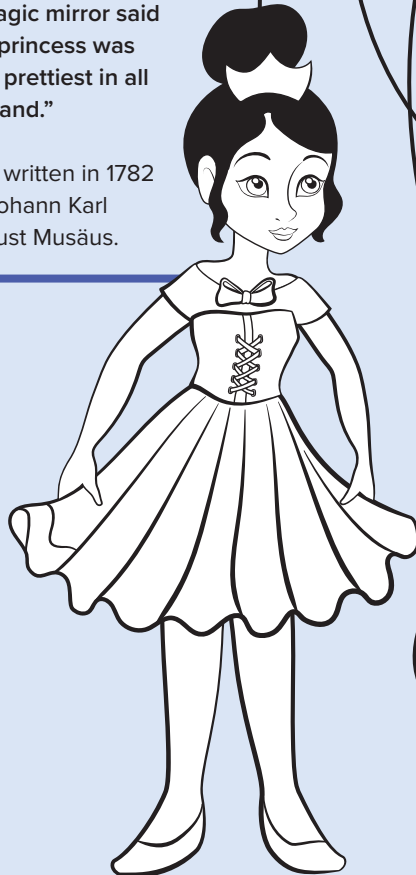


**Hey there, I'm Al!**  
Would you help me  
color each storybook  
character to match  
their homeland?  
Follow the paths to  
find out where they  
are each from!

### Snow White

A magic mirror said this princess was "the prettiest in all the land."

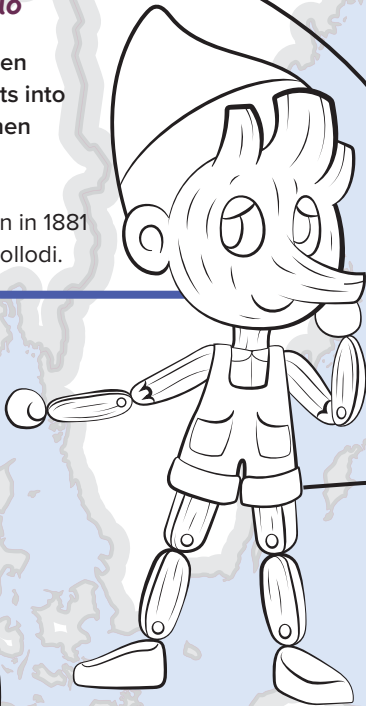
First written in 1782 by Johann Karl August Musäus.



### Pinocchio

This wooden puppet gets into trouble when he lies.

First written in 1881  
by Carlo Collodi.



### Puss in Boots

This sneaky cat uses tricks to help his poor master become the king.

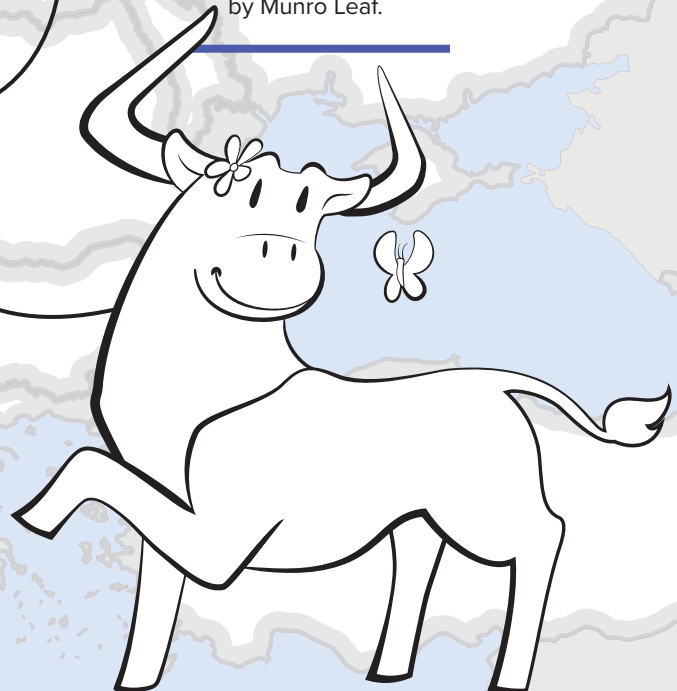
First written in  
1551 by Giovanni  
Francesco Straparola



### Ferdinand

Instead of fighting,  
this peaceful bull  
just likes smelling  
the flowers.

First written in 1936  
by Munro Leaf.



Germany

Czechia

Italy

# A QUICK GUIDE TO THE MIDDLE AGES

By Tamala Malerk

**T**he Middle Ages is also known as the Medieval Ages. This was a time period in Europe from 500 AD (or CE) to 1500 AD (or CE). It was a time of kings, queens, knights and castles. Here are some fast facts about the era.

## WHO'S WHO IN THE MIDDLE AGES?



**Royalty:** The king and queen were the most powerful people in the country. They would give fiefs to the nobility. Fief is just a fancy way of saying pieces of land to build houses and farms on.



**Nobility:** People who paid taxes and rent to the king and queen. Usually a man called a lord was in control of their own fief. They also had to give the king soldiers when he asked.



**Page:** At age 7, a boy could become a page and start to train to be a knight. He was sent to live with another family. He learned how to ride a horse, use a sword and dance. It was expensive. So, only boys from families with a lot of money could become knights.



**Squire:** At age 14, a page could become a squire. He learned how to fight on horseback and went into battle with the lord. In battle, he would look after the lord's weapons and his horse.



**Knight:** At age 21, squires could become knights. They fought in battles. They took part in jousting tournaments.



**Peasants:** People who had less money than nobility and knights. Sometimes they owned small businesses like making swords or baking bread. They had more money and freedom than serfs.



**Serf:** A serf worked on the fief for their lord. They had to work on the fief until they could afford to pay off the debt they owed.

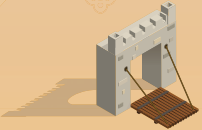
## PARTS OF A CASTLE



**Arrow Loops:** These were very skinny windows. Archers defended the castle by shooting arrows from behind the loops.



**Tower:** People looked out from the tower to make sure no danger was coming.



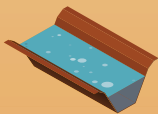
**Drawbridge:** The bridge was lowered over the moat or ditch. This let people in or kept them out.



**Bailey:** This area had churches and stables. It also had servants' areas and kitchens.



**Dungeons:** This is where they kept prisoners. It was cold, wet and dark.



**Moat:** People dug a wide and deep trench in the ground around the castle. Then, it was filled with water. This kept enemies out and helped fortify the castle.

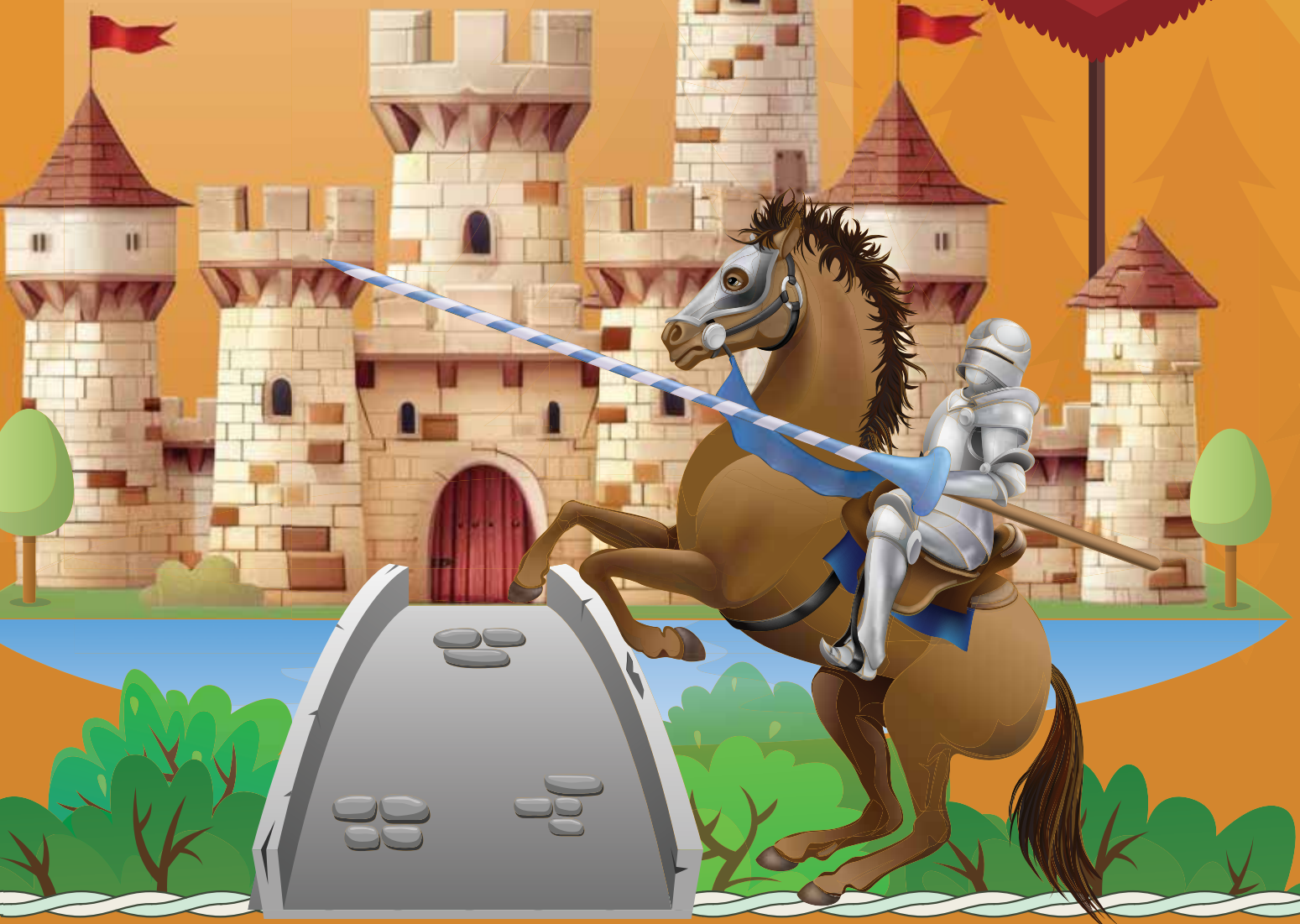
## MEDIEVAL WORDS YOU CAN USE

**Groke:** To look at someone when they are eating in hopes they give you some food. Dogs are known to groke.

**Wit:** To know something. Ask someone, "Do you wit what day it is?"

**Elflock:** Tangled hair. The name comes from hair that has been tangled by elves.

**Clinomania:** A strong want to stay in bed.





**A** coat made of arms would be tough to wear. Don't worry. A coat of arms isn't what it sounds like. A coat of arms is a symbol of a family that dates all the way back to the 1100s. It is a shield that is decorated with colors, shapes and animals.

The creation of a coat of arms was a big deal in the Middle Ages. Knights carried them around when they fought in battles. Because they were wearing helmets to protect their faces, people could not always tell who was who. The coat of arms let fellow knights and people from far away know which family they fought for. Several jobs were created just for coats of arms.

**Heralds** were in charge of researching coats of arms and recording new ones. They knew the meaning of each shape, color and animal used. This included traditional colors and also charges. **Charges** are shapes and designs added to the background of the coat of arms. Heralds also made sure that families each had their own, unique, coat of arms.

Today, the royal family of the United Kingdom has a very famous coat of arms that is still seen on buildings and royal paperwork.



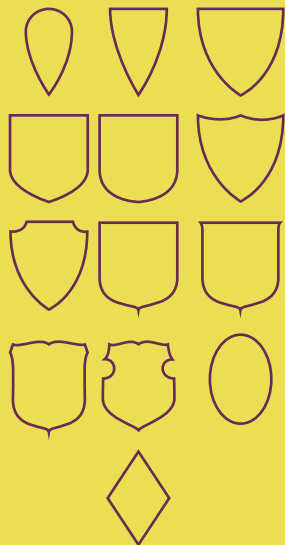
The **High Court of Chivalry** makes sure that people follow the rules about coats of arms. When two families in the Middle Ages wanted the same coat of arms, the High Court decided which family got to use it.

Sometimes two coats of arms are combined to make a new one. This is called **marshalling**. This usually happens when a man and a woman get married, and both families have "rights" to display their coat of arms. Creating the two equal sides is called **impalement**. The right side has the wife's coat of arms. The left side has the husband's coat of arms. As time went on, coats of arms got more complicated as different families married each other. ●

# Design your own Heraldic Achievement

Create your own **coat of arms** with our handy guide.

To start, choose your **escutcheon** (eh-skut-shin)—this is the shield.



Next, decide what the **field**, or background, of the shield will be. This could be a solid color, or it could be divided and include multiple colors. Here are a few common divisions.

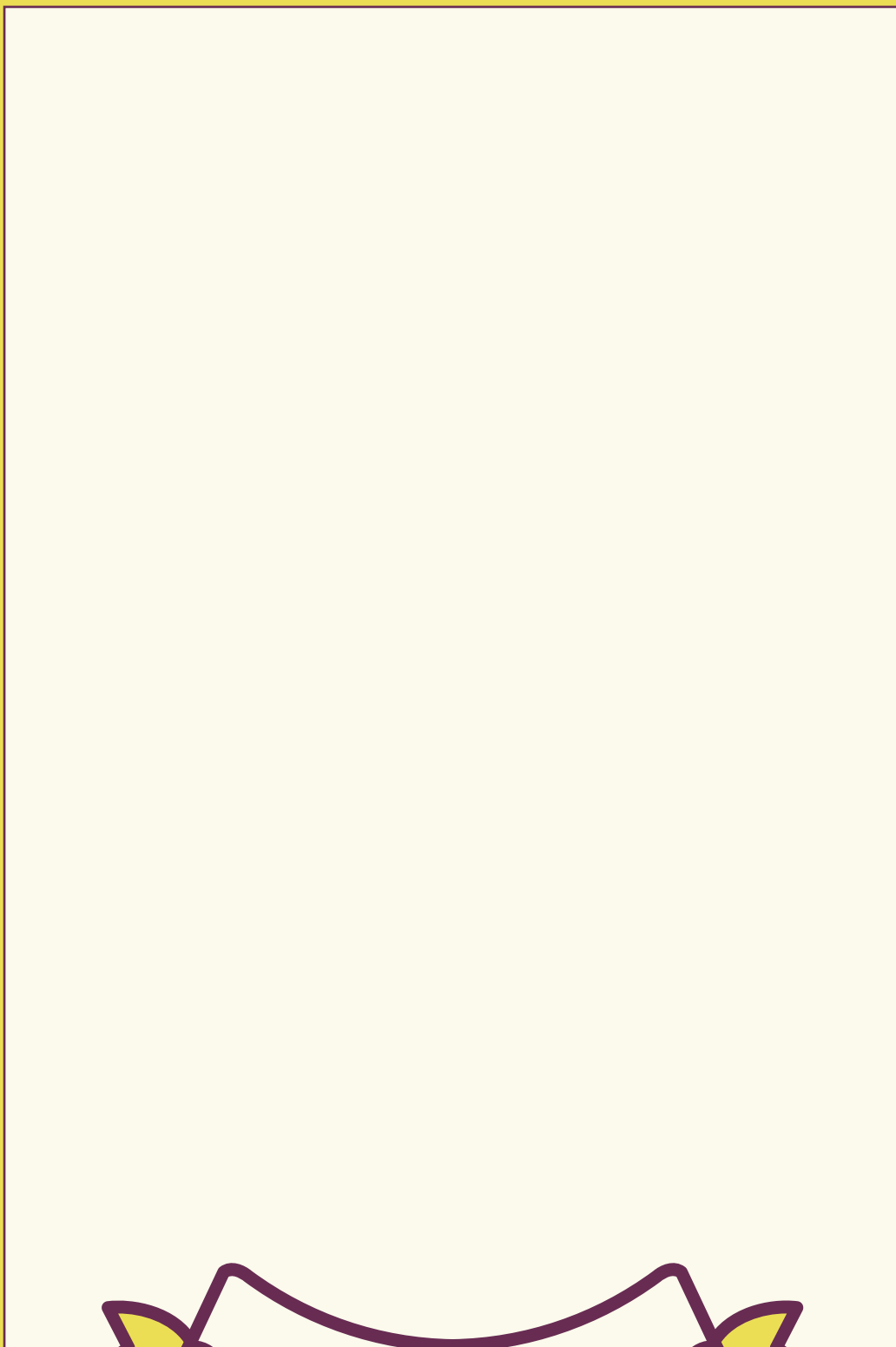


Traditional colors to consider: Red, blue, orange, green, black and purple

Common **charges** (or emblems) to put into the shield: Flowers, anchors, diamonds, leaves, crosses, dogs, eagles, cats, lions, birds, fish and badgers. Here are a few suggestions you can use:



**EXTRA** If you want, you can add a **supporter** to either side of the shield. These are often unicorns, lions, dragons, griffins, birds or knights.



# Artists in Europe

## Inspired by Mosaic

By Katie Wells

There are many famous artists who come from Europe. They all have unique styles. Each of these artists used mosaic as inspiration in their artwork. A mosaic is an artwork made by putting together small pieces to create a picture or pattern.



### Antoni Gaudí

Catalan, Spain

**Art Style:** Architecture and design

Gaudí was a great architect. However, he also created amazing mosaics and is known as “The Mosaic Genius of Barcelona.” He used the *trencar* technique. *Trencar* means “to break” in Catalan. It is when an artist uses broken ceramic pieces like tiles and plates to create new shapes and designs. Throughout the city of Barcelona, you can see Gaudí’s bright, colorful designs dancing across buildings and along walkways. The Park Güell is another place where you can see his architecture and mosaics. A giant mosaic salamander that looks like it came straight out of a fairytale will welcome you at the entrance.

### M.C. Escher

The Netherlands

**Art Style:** Graphic design and optical illusions

Escher is one of the world’s most famous graphic artists. He was born in the Netherlands. He also lived in Rome and Switzerland. During his travels he enjoyed the mosaic tilework at the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain. Escher was inspired by mathematics and optical illusions. An optical illusion is when an image tricks our brains into seeing something that may or may not be real. Escher did this by using patterns, mathematics, colors, shading and light. When looking at one of his drawings, you might see a duck at first, and then suddenly see a fish.



### Gustav Klimt

Vienna, Austria

**Art Style:** Symbolist painting

Klimt was an Austrian artist mainly inspired by Japanese art. But it was during trips to Italy, where he saw beautiful mosaics. They inspired his ‘golden phase’. Klimt combined gold leaf painting techniques with imagery from the Byzantine Empire. In famous works like “The Kiss,” Klimt pieces together smaller images like swirls and flowers, to make the larger images more meaningful. For example, the flowers in the woman’s hair in “The Kiss” make her look more pretty and connected to nature. ●

“A mosaic is an artwork made by putting together small pieces to create a picture or pattern.”

Black-Eyed Peas

Kidney Beans

# Let's Make a MOSAIC!

By Katie Wells

**Mosaics** have been around since the 3rd millennium BCE, and were made from shells, stones and ivory thanks to the **Greeks**. However, the most well-known mosaic works come from the **Romans**.

You can easily make a mosaic too! Mosaics can be made from many materials like tiny pieces of paper, scraps of fabric, pinecones and leaves, even beans! If you've accidentally broken a plate or cup, there is no need to worry or even throw it away. With the help of an adult, you can collect the broken pieces and make a beautiful mosaic from those too!

## Let's make a mosaic of beans!

### What you'll Need:

- ☐ 5x7 inches (or larger) piece of cardboard
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Craft glue like Modge Podge
- ☐ Acrylic paint (your favorite colors)
- ☐ Paint brushes
- ☐ A pencil or pen
- ☐ Beans or peas (make sure they are the hard ones in a bag).

**TIP!** Get a variety for different shapes and sizes like kidney beans, lima beans or black-eyed peas.

**2.** Sketch your ideas onto the cardboard with a pen or pencil. Simple is better.

**3.** Paint small areas of your design with the craft glue and press the beans into the glue. If a bean doesn't fit, try re-arranging or using a different type of bean. Once you are finished with a section, let the area dry.

**5.** Repeat steps three and four until your mosaic is complete! ●

**4.** Then, paint the beans the color you want them to be. You can also leave your beans and peas unpainted if you like the natural colors.

Acrylic Paint

**1.** Cut out a piece of cardboard 5x7 inches or larger. An old box is a great choice!

Finished Mosaic!

# the story of LEGO® bricks

By Kat Nickola

**2022.**

The company celebrated its 90th anniversary.

**2014.**

The "LEGO® Movie" comes out.

**2018.**

"The Toys That Made Us" episode 7 premieres on Netflix. It's all about the LEGO® company.

**1998.**

The company works with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to make the first robot-building system.

**1978.**

The first LEGO® Minifigure is made so kids can play with even more of their own creations.

**1958.**

The LEGO® brick is patented. This means other companies can't copy the special design.

**1960.**

A fire destroys the wooden toy warehouse. The LEGO® company decides to focus on its plastic building system. No more wooden toys are made.

**1949.**

The company begins making plastic bricks for kids to build with.

**1955.**

The LEGO® System is launched. This is the first toy of its kind with all the different pieces fitting together.

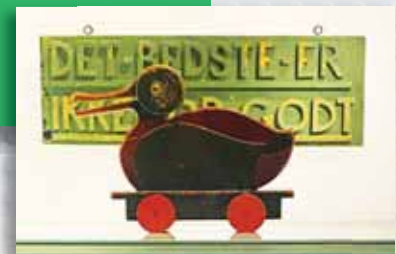
**1916.**

Ole Kirk Kristiansen becomes a woodworker in **Billund, Denmark**. He built houses, doors, chests and carts.

**1932.**

Kristiansen starts making wooden toys like cars, airplanes and yo-yos. He names the new toymaking business "LEGO®."

*LEGO® is short for "Leg godt," which means "play well."*



**P**eople all over the world love LEGO® bricks. These small toys can be used to build anything! They allow you to use your imagination and creativity while having fun.

## WORK at LEGO® HEADQUARTERS

In the Creative Play Lab at the LEGO® Headquarters, people work on finding new ways for kids (and adults) to play. They have jobs for all kinds of different designers, engineers, architects, technicians and artists.

## FUN at LEGOLAND®

There are 10 LEGOLAND® Parks around the world. You can enjoy rides and watch shows at these amusement parks. You can also see lots of amazing things made with LEGO® bricks and even build some of your own creations.

There are three resorts in Europe:

### LEGOLAND® Billund Resort.



- 1 This is the original resort located in **Denmark**. It was built in 1968. Nearby is the **LEGO® House** where you can learn about the company.

### LEGOLAND® Deutschland Resort.

- 2 This resort in **Germany** has a massive shop where you can get hard-to-find LEGO® pieces.

### LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort.

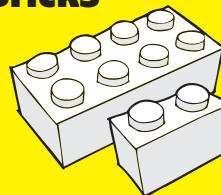
- 3 This is the biggest resort and is located in **England**. It has 12 different worlds to explore. ●

## ELEMENTS

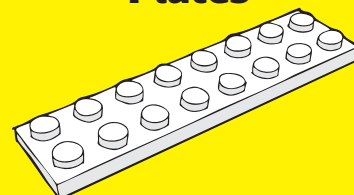
LEGO® pieces are called “elements.”

Here are the most common types:

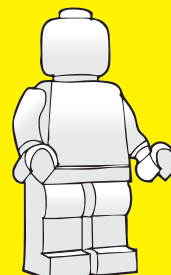
### Bricks



### Plates



### Minifig

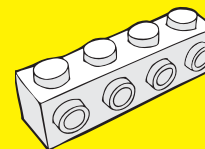


### Clip

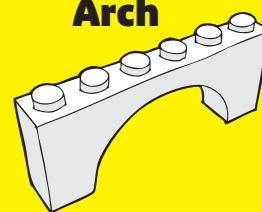


### SNOT

(Studs Not On Top)



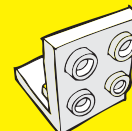
### Arch



### Curved



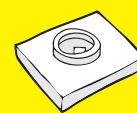
### Bracket



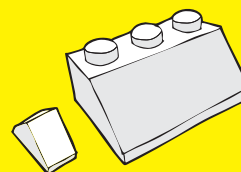
### Tiles



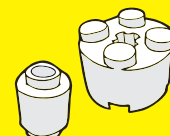
### Jumper



### Cheese/Slope



### Round



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# Toys from back in Time

by Kat Nickola

*Kids in the past loved to play, just like you! Fancy toys were hard to get...so, kids used simpler things to play with. Here are some old-timey toys that are still fun!*

## Jump Rope

You can jump or skip rope on your own. It's even more fun when two people turn a long rope for a friend to jump. The next level is "Double-Dutch," with two ropes turning!

There are lots of old jump rope rhymes. They help you keep the beat while you jump. This one has actions to do while jumping!

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,  
turn around.*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,  
touch the ground.*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,  
touch your shoe.*

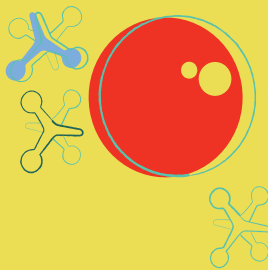
*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,  
that will do.*



## Jacks

A game of jacks has 10 counters and a bouncy ball.

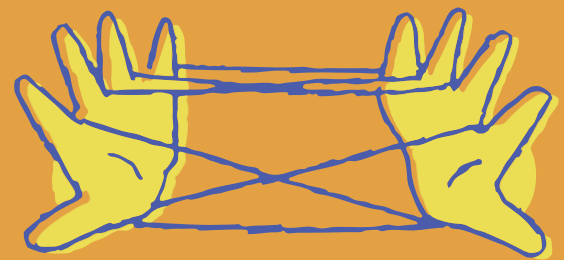
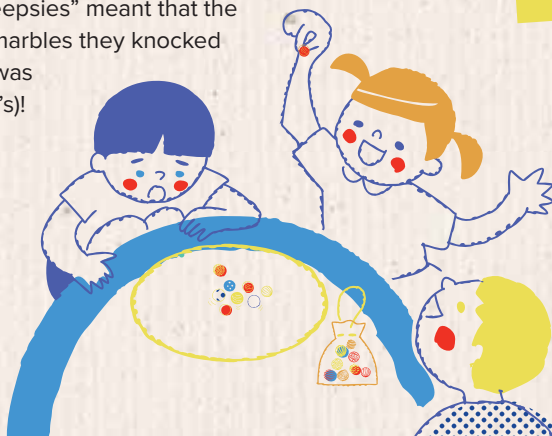
1. Scatter the jacks on the ground.
2. Toss the ball up and use one hand to grab 1 jack before the ball bounces. Catch the ball.
3. Do it again, but grab 2 jacks, then 3, then 4 and so on...
4. Your turn is done if you can't grab the correct number of jacks or if you don't catch the ball. Start over on your next turn.
5. Take turns with other players. The first person to get to 10 wins!



## Marbles

Back in time, kids collected marbles by playing a game. They drew a large chalk circle on the ground. Each player would put the same number of marbles in the circle. Taking turns, they'd flick their big 'shooter' marble from the edge. The goal was to knock out other marbles.

Playing for "keepsies" meant that the shooter kept marbles they knocked out (even if it was someone else's!)



## Cat's Cradle

This game is played with a large piece of looped string. You hold it in a pattern between your hands. Your friend uses their fingers in a specific way to take the string. This makes a new design between their hands. You pass the string back and forth making fun designs. ●



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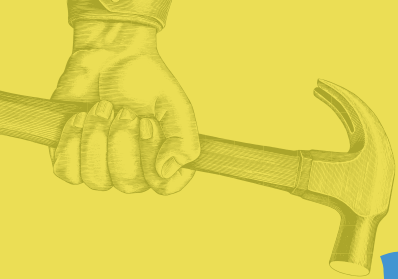
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# [EXTREME] Playgrounds

By Kat Nickola



## [Construction Playgrounds]

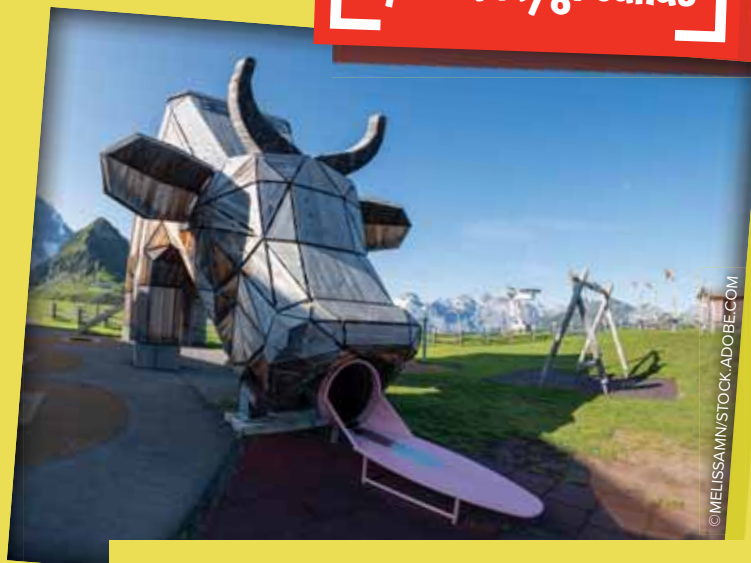


©BAUSPIELPLATZ SCHWERIN

A “Bauspielplatz” (bao•shpeel•plahts) in Germany is a place where **kids can build with wood, nails, saws and hammers**. They can make fires or paint graffiti. They can also climb walls and trees.

You can play at one in the city of Köln at the Friedenspark. It's connected to an old fort. The playground is nicknamed the Baui and parents aren't allowed inside!

## [Alpine Playgrounds]



©MELISSAMIN/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

**These playgrounds are built high in the Alps mountains.** They use nature as part of the play. There may be long slides down hills or playhouses in grassy meadows. Sometimes you need to hike a little way between each play area.

At the Villaggio delle Marmotte playground in Italy, you can even see the local colony of marmots!



## [Adventure Playgrounds]



Big wooden castles, swinging bridges and ropes to climb make an adventure playground really fun. They are perfect for playing hide-and-seek. **Many are in forests and have small ropes courses between the trees.**

The playgrounds at High Lodge in England are all over the Thetford Forest. ●



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# THE LION AND THE UNICORN

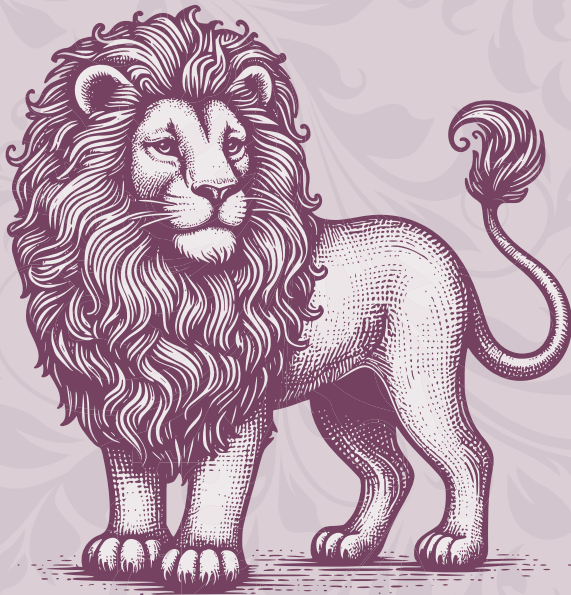
By Katie Wells

A very large lion shakes the last of winter's snow out of his thick golden mane and steps into spring. A unicorn, not too far away, stomps the last glaze of ice from the lake and takes a long refreshing drink, the dew on her horn shimmering in the morning light.

Across the lake, silver specks catch the lion's eye. *It's been a while since I've stretched these legs, he thinks, perhaps I'll go see what's over there.*

The unicorn glances up and across the lake where she sees flecks of gold nearly as bright as the sun. *Hmm, she thinks, I wonder if it's a sign or the horn of another unicorn. Perhaps I'll go over there and check it out. The quickest way will be across the lake, the ice should hold.*

The lion begins his walk, but quickly stops. *What if it disappears before I make it around the lake? The ice is still thick enough, I'll just pad across.*



So, both the unicorn and the lion set out across the lake with the sun shining brightly along the horizon.

*Are the silver specks getting closer to me?* the lion wonders. *Ah, it appears a creature is walking towards me.*

*The golden flecks are dancing towards me!* thinks the unicorn. *No, wait. I think it's another creature.*

The two meet in the middle, shocked at what they see.

"You!" says the unicorn.

"It appears we meet again," says the lion.

They turn their attention below them, where at the bottom of the lake is a bejeweled crown.

"What color do you see?" asks the unicorn.

The lion chuffs, "Why it's King Edward's crown: royal purple, adorned with amethyst, rubies and emeralds of course. Do you still not see it, Unicorn?"

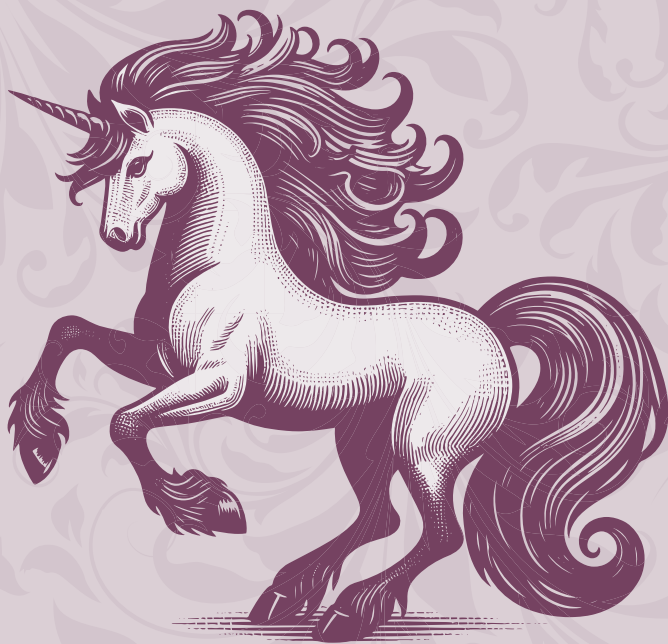
The unicorn dips her horn. "How is that what you see Lion? Clearly, it's the royal red crown of Scotland adorned with pearls and oakleaves." She raises her horn through the air like a prized sword.

"It seems after all these ages we still cannot agree. When the sun is at the highest point in the sky we'll begin again," declares the lion.

"At least we can agree on that," states the unicorn.

The two wait and watch. The ice beneath them hisses and creaks ready to release its grip on the lake.

"NOW!" The lion roars as the sun hovers above a mountain peak.



The unicorn whinnies and both bolt in opposite directions in a race to see who can encompass the earth, the moon and the stars first.

The unicorn is ahead as she takes a great leap from the Cliffs of Moher and follows the path of the constellation Monoceros, dust from her horn making each star shine brighter.

The lion bounds mightily from the White Cliffs of Dover and steals the lead as he pounces from the nose of the constellation Leo and circles the moon.

It is now the last day of spring, and the sun rises from the east with the summer solstice. The unicorn gallops with all her might down the hills and through the forest from the north, leaving bright purple thistles in her wake. The lion leaps his way through the forest from the south, summer flowers sprouting each time his paws touch the earth.

The unicorn splashes into the water braying as she hoofs her way to the center. The lion pounces into the lake and dives straight down.

In one solid motion he resurfaces with the crown. He walks to shore and shakes off the water. The sun is full and bright, his mane dries instantly and is fuller and more golden than before.

The unicorn trots out of the water. "You've bested me again, old friend." She bows her head and with her silver horn, places the crown atop the lion's mane.

The lion bows his head in thanks, "Until next year, friend," and lets out a roar to announce that it is summer. ●



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# SPRAY

By Caden Polzer

**Welcome** to the uneventful town of Sallerville.

I go to Sallerville Crickets Elementary School. Our principal, Ms. Shady, made the school mascot a cricket, which is a terrible mascot!

My best friend's name is Cody Belle; he's a great guy. I'm David and I want to be a detective when I grow up. Usually, our town is pretty quiet and boring, but not today.

The day started out normal with Dad driving me to school in his yellow BMW SUV. The school drop-off line was long and looked like a snake as usual. I opened the skylight window to let the light and wind flood in. When I finally got into school, I sprinted up the stairs and into our dingy school like normal. My classroom is 307 and my teacher, Mr. Parker, was behind his desk grading papers again. I was a little early, so I finished some schoolwork.

Finally, Cody came!  
**"Hey bro,"** I said.  
**"Hi,"** he said back.

Our first subject is always math, and then we have recess. During recess, I accidentally bumped into someone at soccer. It was just an accident, but people said it was on purpose, so I went to the principal's office. This was my first time in the principal's office, so I was surprised by the smells of cookies and biscuits wafting through the air and into my nose.

*If this is what it's like to be a principal, it could be a career for me,* I thought to myself.

**"Sit down,"** the principal said in her cold, deep voice.  
**"I heard you purposely hurt someone during recess today,"** she said.

**"I didn't...,"** I pleaded, but I knew it was pointless.  
**"HUSH!!!"** she shouted.  
*But you're being very loud,* I thought.

Behind the principal. I noticed something glinting in the office. As she dismissed me with a pink detention slip in my hand, I snapped a picture of the glinting object with my phone. (Luckily, she didn't catch me having my phone out in school).

As I zoomed in and focused on the object, it looked like a can of spray paint!

After school, I buckled my overcoat in the cold, crisp afternoon air. Then, I put on my neon green helmet and got on my bike. I started pedaling down towards Cody's house. I was so excited to tell him about what I saw in the principal's office.

As I stepped into his warm house, it felt really comforting. His mom gave us cookies and we sprinted up to his room. When we discussed the spray paint I found in the principal's office, we concluded that if there's new graffiti on a wall in town, I should tell the police about what I saw in her office.



I expected nothing out of the ordinary in our boring town, but sometimes you can't predict the future.

The next day started the same until I noticed some yellow caution tape near the school. On one of the school walls, there was a huge, new graffiti mural. The police were there questioning everyone because it is a crime and the person who did it would owe a \$2,000 fine. I knew who might have done it, so I told the police they should check the principal's office. When the paint in her office was a match with the paint on the mural, Mrs. Shady lost her job.

We got a new principal named Mr. Light. Now everyone at school thinks I was an amazing detective. And since I solved the crime, I got to pick the new school mascot. I chose a shark because sharks beat crickets all the way! ●

**Author Caden Polzer is a fifth-grade student at Kaiserslautern Elementary School in Germany. If you have a great story, email it to us at [contentteam@stripes.com](mailto:contentteam@stripes.com)!**



Scan the QR code for more stories by student writers, including **"Runaways"** by Claire M. and **"Lena and Sam: The Different Cake"** by Sydney G.



# FANTASTIC PETS

## AND HOW TO CARE FOR THEM

By Katie Wells

From tiny to large, and slimy to furry, there are many pets that can make wonderful companions! But don't forget pets are living creatures too. They need lots of love, care and attention. Here are some of the best and most unique pets to welcome into your family.

## COLD-BLOODED PETS

Cold-blooded animals regulate their body temperature with their surroundings. This means they need a little extra help with things like heat lamps and thermometers to make sure their environment is comfortable.

### CORN SNAKE

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Lifespan:** Up to 20 years

**Diet:** Whole, thawed frozen rodents like mice.

**Baby name:** Snakelet

Snakes are pretty neat! They shed their skins and grow a lot in their lifespan. You will need to upgrade their enclosures from time to time as they get 4-6 feet long. They don't mind being handled, but don't love to be touched when shedding. They need moss, plants and heat and humidity, as well as a nice hideaway.

### GUPPIES

**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Life span:** 2 years

**Diet:** Fish flakes

**Baby name:** Fry

For beginners, guppies are a great first pet. Their tank needs filtration, routine cleaning and water changes. You can add fun aquatic plants and decorations to their environment like a treasure chest or castle. It's fun to watch them swim. They are easy to feed with just a couple of pinches of fish food per day.



### GECKO

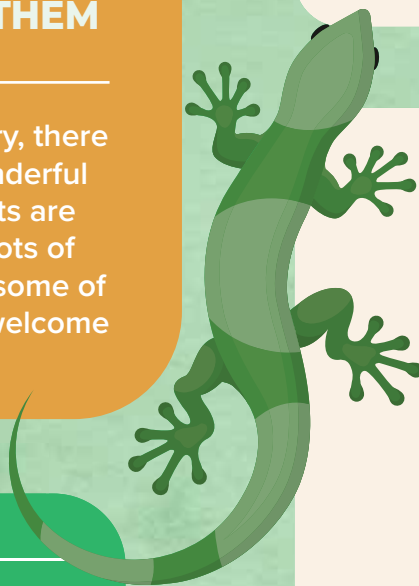
**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Lifespan:** Up to 15 years.

**Diet:** Crickets, worms, mealworms, fruit flies, moths, mice

**Baby name:** Hatchling

Geckos are such a cool pet! They can be held, and you can set up interactive environments for them. Because they are from tropical areas, they need a cage that stays warm. A heat lamp can help! There should be some moisture in the cage, too. You will need to prepare live meals for them.



### AXOLOTL

**Level of difficulty:** Hard

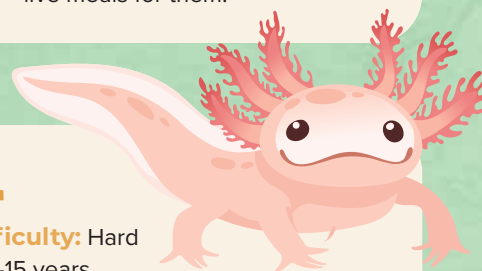
**Lifespan:** 10-15 years

**Diet:** Insect larvae, worms, crustaceans

**Baby name:** Larvae or pup

Axolotls are a very cute member of the salamander family. For them, the bigger their water tank with lots of neat places they can hide, the better. Maintaining their temperature is very important. They are most comfortable kept in water between 15-20°C (60-68°F). They need weekly water changes. Their excrement needs to be cleaned daily from the tank with a turkey baster since they are prone to diseases.

**Tip:** Use soft-tipped tongs to wiggle Axolotl's food so they have more desire to eat it.



## WARM-BLOODED PETS

Warm-blooded animals can maintain their body temperature. They have ways to help them adapt to colder or warmer environments and don't need as much help to cool down or warm up.



### PARAKEETS

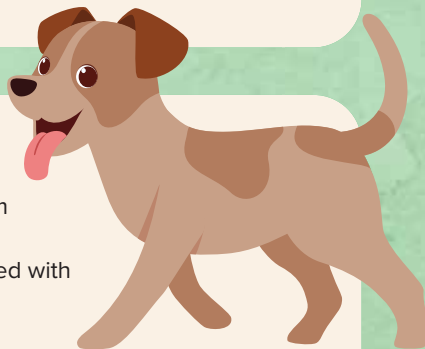
**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Lifespan:** 5-8 years

**Diet:** Good-quality seed, leafy green veggies, carrots, fruits

**Baby name:** Chick

Parakeets are known as "love birds" because it's best if they are kept in pairs. They enjoy daily handling. You can even teach them commands. Many can learn to speak a few simple words. They need a large, open enclosure with plenty of perches, a bird bath and toys.



### DOG

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Life Span:** 10-13 years

**Diet:** High quality kibble mixed with wet, protein-rich food is best.

**Baby name:** Puppy

Dogs are very loyal best buds. They often match their owner's energy and will take naps with you or play chase for hours. Different breeds have different temperaments, so do your research before picking one. It is very important that dogs go for daily walks to support their hips and joints.

### HORSES

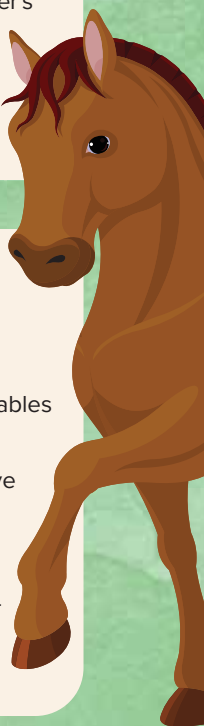
**Level of Difficulty:** Hard

**Lifespan:** 25-30 years

**Diet:** Pasture grass, hay, grains, salt concentrate, vegetables

**Baby name:** Colt

Horses have special bonds with their owners and can live for a long time. They need proper grooming and a lot of land to gallop. They need a feeding schedule and thrive with routine and exercise, so make sure you are riding them. It's beneficial for horses to have at least one other horse for companionship. For the active kid, horses are great! You can even do competitions together!



### RAT

**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Lifespan:** 2-4 years

**Diet:** Fruit, seeds, mealworms, vegetables and rice

**Baby name:** Pup, Pinkie, Kitten

Rats are extremely affectionate animals and intelligent. They are pretty robust and make great companions, especially for kids. You can set up mazes and foraging toys by hiding treats in toilet paper tubes for them.



### CAT

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Lifespan:** 13-20 years

**Diet:** A mixture of high-quality, protein-rich wet food and dry kibble is best.

**Baby name:** Kitten

Cats are soft and cuddly, and very fun to play with. They love kicker toys and will chase plush mice. They can be high energy but also sleep a lot. Getting them a scratching post helps them maintain their claws. They need fresh water daily and they can have treats. If they are an indoor cat you will need to scoop the litter box daily as well.



## SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are usually dogs and are a very special type of pet. They provide comfort and aid to kids and people who have mental and physical disabilities. They are highly trained working animals and can alert for things like anxiety attacks, seizures and low blood sugar. They may help guide the blind or make social settings easier for people with autism. They can brace people who struggle with mobility issues like arthritis. Hearing dogs can alert and lead their owners to a noise.

Other animals make great service animals too! In Boston, Capuchin monkeys are trained to be the hands of people who have limited mobility. Pot belly pigs, known for their intelligence and gentle nature, can be trained to help children with autism and people struggling with mental health. Parrots are used for treating psychiatric disorders. They can de-escalate stressful situations and be taught to repeat helpful phrases like "It's ok, I'm here for you." Ferrets have been trained to alert their owners to take medications and to detect seizures. They burrow close to their owner to provide extra comfort and support. ●

# EXTREME ANIMALS

By Katie Wells

Animals can do some pretty extraordinary things! Did you know...

**Snails can stay awake for 30 hours** or more and on the flipside, can hibernate for three years.



**Owls can twist their heads 270 degrees.** That's almost an entire circle!



**The cheetah is the fastest land animal** running up to 80 miles per hour. Yet, the **Peregrine falcon can fly as fast as 200 miles per hour.**

**The Mantis shrimp can see more colors than we can even imagine.** They have 12-16 different photoreceptors, while humans only have three.



**Axolotls have amazing regenerative powers.** This means they **can regrow missing limbs, tails, spinal cords and even parts of their brains.**



**Capybaras are the largest rodent** in the world.



**Electric eels can transmit a shock between 600-800 volts.** That's enough to power an electric car!



**The slowest animal is the sloth,** moving at only .15 miles per hour.

**Johnathan, a Seychelles giant tortoise is the oldest living tortoise in the world.** As of 2024, he is 192 years old (or older)!



**Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backward.**



While **saltwater crocodiles have the strongest recorded bite on Earth** with 3,689 pounds of pressure, the **Tasmanian devil has the strongest bite per body mass.** They can apply approximately 94 lbs. of pressure. Their bite is so strong it can break through metal.



**The horned dung beetle is the strongest bug,** lifting 1,141 times its body weight.



**Eagles have the best eyesight** in the animal kingdom. They can spot prey up to two miles away.



**Reindeer eyeballs which are gold in the summer, turn blue in the winter** to help them see at lower light levels. They are the only mammals known to have this ability.



# Which pet should be my new best friend?

Do you like to play outside, or do you prefer to stay indoors?

**Play outside.**

Do you prefer leisurely walks or more intense sports?

**Walks.**

A **puppy** will be your new best pal!



**Sports.**

Do you like real or imaginary pets?

**Real.**

A **horse** of course!



**Imaginary.**

A **unicorn** will be your friend forever!



**Stay indoors.**

I want a pet I can cuddle with.

**Yes.**

How do you feel about cleaning cages?

**No.**

How do you feel about bugs and snakes?

**Scary!**

What about an aquatic, land or flying animal?

**It doesn't matter to me.**

Are you highly motivated or a little bit lazy?

**Motivated.**

Do you want a big challenge or a little challenge?

**Lazy.**

Can you maintain a feeding schedule?

**Big.**

Level up a Guinea pig for a **capybara**!



**Little.**

Explore the forest with a **fennec fox**!



**Yuck!**

A **kitten** would be purrfect for you!



**I don't mind.**

Try a **bunny, hamster, rat** or **Guinea pig**!



**Aquatic.**

Can you follow a schedule?

**Land.**

A **gecko** would be great!



**Flying.**

A **bird** would be best!



**Fascinating!**

Are you ok with a poisonous pet?

**Yes.**

You and a **sloth** are two peas in a pod.



**No.**

A **pet rock** may be best!



**Yes.**

Try an **axolotl** or a **turtle**!



**No.**

Start with a **snail** or **fish**!



**Yes.**

Try a **tarantula**!



**No.**

Get a **corn snake**!



# Military Kids Have Their Say

## Favorite Video Games



From 2nd grade students at **Ramstein Elementary School** in Germany.

### **Pokémon GO™** | Phone or Tablet

In this game, you walk around in real life trying to find Pokémon™ in the game's map as you go.

### **Super Smash Bros.™** | Nintendo

In this game, you can play as your favorite Nintendo characters. You then fight using special moves and powers.

### **Minecraft™** | All Platforms

In Minecraft™, everything is made of blocks that you can mine out, build with and use as resources.

## Favorite Book Series



From Ms. Smith's class at **Patch Elementary School** in Germany.

### **"Goosebumps" by R.L. Stine.**

There are over 100 books in this series of scary books.

### **"Harry Potter" by J.K. Rowling**

Follow along as Harry attends Hogwarts school of wizardry and battles evil.

### **"Elephant and Piggie" by Mo Willems**

These funny books are all about two incredible friends.

### **"Dog Man" by Dav Pilkey**

Dog Man is a series of graphic novels about a funny police hero who is half dog, half man.

### **"Ivy + Bean" by Annie Barrows**

Read about all the trouble goofy Bean and quiet Ivy get into. Ms. Smith's class also noted that they watch the Ivy and Bean movies!

### **"Last Kids on Earth" by Max Brallier**

A series of graphic novels about life after a worldwide disaster. This serious topic is treated in a funny way.

### **"Big Nate" by Lincoln Peirce**

Nate has a tough time in middle school in these funny graphic novels.

### **"Wings of Fire" by Tui T. Sutherland**

This fantasy series is all about a world of dragons.

## Cool Jobs

### **Military Esports**

These are professional gamers! An Esports team plays video games in competitions. Team members who play for the military have other jobs, too. They play Esports as a special duty or just as a hobby.

### **U.S. Army Esports**

The Army was the first military branch to have an Esports team. They play at competitions all over the United States.

### **Navy Team: Goats & Glory**

There are 12 sailors on this team. They travel around the United States competing against other teams.

### **Air Force Gaming**

Air Force Gaming gets airmen and guardians to play together online. They also have small teams who play certain games.

### **Marine Corps Gaming (MCG)**

The MCG hosts gamer events for Marines. They also put together special teams for competitions.

“

**Do you have something to share with other military kids?** Send your thoughts to [contentteam@stripes.com](mailto:contentteam@stripes.com) for a chance to get printed in our next “Dandelions” magazine!

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# A DANDELION IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

By Tamala Malerk

**Fill in the correct part of speech to finish the story!**

**Noun:** a person, place, thing or idea

**Adjective:** describes a noun

**Verb:** an action word

**Adverb:** describes a verb (often ends in -ly)

Jordan left school and saw something \_\_\_\_\_ on the ground.  
(adjective)

"Oooh, a lucky \_\_\_\_\_!"  
(noun)

Picking up the object, a large \_\_\_\_\_ blew, and Jordan woke up in medieval times.  
(noun)

An old man with a \_\_\_\_\_ beard shouted, "Who are you, \_\_\_\_\_ stranger?"  
(adjective) (adjective)

Jordan brushed the \_\_\_\_\_ off their \_\_\_\_\_, stood up, and said "I am Jordan. Who are you?"  
(noun) (noun)

"I am the famous \_\_\_\_\_, Merlin, and we have to get you back to your \_\_\_\_\_."  
(noun) (noun)

"Wait," Jordan begged, "We are \_\_\_\_\_ about medieval times in \_\_\_\_\_."  
(verb ending in -ing) (noun)

Let me \_\_\_\_\_ around first."  
(verb)

Jordan \_\_\_\_\_ climbed the nearby \_\_\_\_\_ to see knights jousting with \_\_\_\_\_ and riding  
(adverb) (noun) (plural noun)

on \_\_\_\_\_ horses. He saw King Arthur tapping a \_\_\_\_\_ on his shoulders, "Arise Sir \_\_\_\_\_."  
(color) (noun) (name)

Then Merlin waved his magic \_\_\_\_\_, and Jordan was \_\_\_\_\_ back to school.  
(noun) (adverb)



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