



## Teacher Lesson Plan

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### **CO-FOUNDERS AND AUTHORS:**

Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett

Monica Anderson Young

**[www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com)**

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# SHORT the Squirrel

A literacy initiative promoting  
waiting time is reading time!



**A "SHORT" HISTORY:** Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett and Monica Anderson Young have created a literacy initiative for Alabama called SHORT the Squirrel. The idea originated in Mobile, where Monica's daughter, McRae Young, a young assistant district attorney, noticed how many children were languishing in courtrooms with idle time since electronics are not allowed, and many families did not pack anything to fill the time. The initiative received Governor Ivey's endorsement, and SHORT was named Alabama's Literacy Mascot!



**CELEBRATING READING:** Over 30,000 children learned about SHORT through an interactive virtual reading pep rally as a birthday celebration across the state for SHORT's first birthday – a reading pep rally filmed in Montgomery's Rosa Parks Theatre where some beloved university mascots wished SHORT a happy birthday. Education influencer Principal Gerry Brooks emceed (he's also a board member). SHORT began to make in-squirrel and virtual visits to schools to promote reading and became very popular this summer in the many reading camps hosted by Alabama school districts.



**INTERACTIVE MATERIALS:** While the idea started as providing activity sheets for the Mobile courtrooms, SHORT the Squirrel has grown exponentially in scope. The first literacy kit, *SHORT in Court*, is in all 67 Alabama courtrooms. Based on the premise that waiting time is reading time, *SHORT Gets Sick* is being piloted in Birmingham's Children's Hospital waiting room. The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission Head Start/ Early Head Start Program is sharing *SHORT Gets Sick* in a back-to-school initiative. *SHORT Recycles* was piloted in Troy City Schools as part of an Earth Day celebration. This fall SHORT's newest title, *SHORT's Money Tree*, introduces financial literacy while continuing to promote reading.



**IN FLIGHT FOR 2022:** Montgomery and Monroe County Schools were selected to pilot *SHORT's Money Tree* in conjunction with Alabama Securities Commission's emphasis on financial literacy. We are seeking two more counties (urban and rural) to pilot *SHORT's Money Tree* with second graders in April. This includes an accompanying lesson plan tied to state math and reading standards. *SHORT's Feelings* will be produced with the Alabama Department of Mental Health's partnership. Our first trade book, *Why SHORT Loves to Read*, will be funded through a grant from the Daniel Foundation. Please:

- Follow SHORT the Squirrel on [social media](#).
- Subscribe and watch his videos on [YouTube](#).
- Stay connected using the educator friendly [website](#).
- Share SHORT with early childhood teachers and parents/guardians.



Monica Anderson Young and Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett, Co-founders—  
[contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com)



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SUBJECT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<b>LANGUAGE &amp; LITERACY</b>		
Understanding and Expressing by Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	<p><b>1 a: Receptive Language:</b> Children will gain information by understanding the meaning of words and gestures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide trade books for reading center, read aloud or story time (sample list provided).</li> <li>• Promote literacy with color-by-sight-word pages (included).</li> <li>• Arrange a special visit to the library as SHORT's favorite place.</li> <li>• Host literacy &amp; language circles using the questions related to SHORT's part of speech and squirrely words (included).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>1 b: Expressive Language:</b> Children will use words and gestures to express their thoughts, feelings and needs to others.</p>	
	<p><b>2 a: Comprehension:</b> Children will demonstrate emerging understanding of both the written and spoken word.</p>	
	<p><b>2 c: Alphabet Knowledge:</b> Children will demonstrate an emerging understanding that letters and letter sounds represent the sounds of spoken language.</p>	
	<p><b>3: Emergent Writing:</b> Children will demonstrate emerging understanding that writing is a way to communicate.</p>	



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<b>MATH</b>		
Exploring, Processing and Logical Reasoning	<b>2a:</b> Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction; Add and subtract within 20.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build addition/subtraction facts using “A-Corn” chips, corn puffs, or corn nuts as manipulatives.</li> <li>• Measure items in the classroom using SHORT’s tail or Moon Pies and record findings for data analysis (chart and image included).</li> <li>• Fill a jar with corn puffs, nuts, or small pinecones and have students estimate how many are inside the jar and record their guesses.</li> </ul>
	<b>4b:</b> Collect and analyze data and interpret results.	
<b>PLAY AND LEARNING</b>		
Developing Skills and Attitudes for Success	<b>A:A2.2:</b> Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a cape or use a household item (towel, pillowcase, etc.) as a literacy cape to promote captions such as: Reading as a super power, Reading taking you anywhere, etc.</li> <li>• Design a cape (included) to showcase things that represent each student.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE – New! SHORT’s super reading, satin, child-sized cape is now available at <a href="http://www.shortthesquirrelstore.com">www.shortthesquirrelstore.com</a> as several educators have requested. \$10/each so perhaps one classroom version for the day’s super reader! Metallic super reader soirit ribbons also available (sets of 10).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>



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<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>		
Learning about Myself, My Family, and My Community	<b>1.3</b> Recognize leaders and their roles in the local community and state. (Alabama).	Celebrate reading by taking pictures of SHORT and class favorite books/locations he visits through reading (image included) – Then send to <a href="mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com">contact@shortthesquirrel.com</a> for social media posting and sharing with Governor Ivey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play SHORT’s videos from YouTube featuring Governor Ivey, including one from the Jumbotron at the Iron Bowl, to foster discussions about state leadership (and the love for literacy). Available on SHORT the Squirrel’s YouTube channel.</li> <li>• Invite local stakeholders to sponsor snacks for the Mardi Gras celebration and tell about their role in community.</li> </ul>
	<b>1.5:</b> Identify historical events and celebrations within the local community and throughout Alabama.	
<b>SCIENCE/ MEDIA LITERACY</b>		
Exploring the World Around Me	<b>R6:</b> Produce, review, and revise authentic artifacts that include multimedia using appropriate digital tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record/FaceTime children reading aloud to share with SHORT’s Grand Friends (aka residents of nursing home or assisted living).</li> <li>• Design a birthday card using digital software.</li> <li>• Host an outdoor scavenger hunt for things squirrels like or use.</li> <li>• Record the similarities and differences between parades and parties (included).</li> </ul>
	<b>R9:</b> Use a variety of digital tools collaboratively to connect with other learners.	



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<p><b>CREATIVE ARTS</b></p>		
<p>Exploring Feelings and Ideas through Art, Music, Movement and Drama</p>	<p><b>A.</b> Children will demonstrate an emerging understanding and appreciation of art, music, drama, and dance as forms of self-expression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and color SHORT’s Folly Mardi Gras birthday hat (included).</li> <li>• Reenact a trade book and record for students to share as class movie.</li> <li>• Pretend to perform music for the party or in a parade using paper made instruments (included).</li> <li>• Design a new Mardi Gras cape for SHORT to illustrate a favorite book title or character (included).</li> </ul>
<p><b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b> Growing Strong, Healthy, and Resilient</p>	<p><b>1.4 Locomotor skills:</b> Combine locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills in rhythmic activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Mardi Gras props and the children’s favorite books, host a parade throughout the school to celebrate reading.</li> <li>• Model the term ‘second line’ from the video by dancing with umbrellas for a real Second Line Parade. (use link below as another example)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2.1 Movement Concepts:</b> Space Demonstrate moving in personal and general space while maintaining self-control, in response to designated class expectation.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.fox10tv.com/news/mobile_county/second-line-to-newly-reopened-mardi-gras-park-kicks-off-the-2022-mardi-gras-season/article_423ce12c-8b8b-11ec-90b6-07839bf852a3.html">https://www.fox10tv.com/news/mobile_county/second-line-to-newly-reopened-mardi-gras-park-kicks-off-the-2022-mardi-gras-season/article_423ce12c-8b8b-11ec-90b6-07839bf852a3.html</a></p>

**Promote literacy and instructional standards all year with SHORT the Squirrel Merchandise. Visit SHORT’s Store at [www.shortthesquirrelstore.com](http://www.shortthesquirrelstore.com) for great reading incentives!**

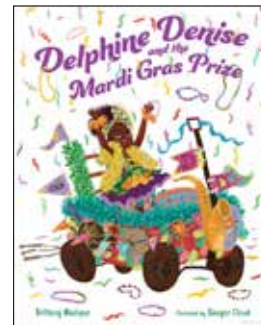
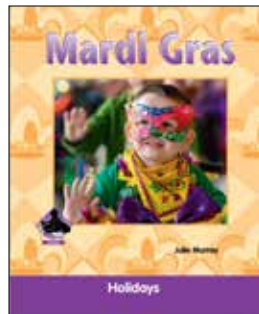
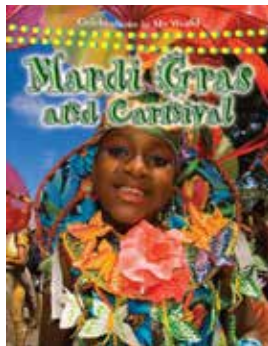
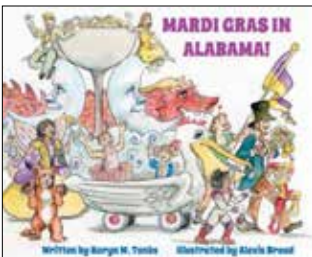


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# SHORT's Book List

Please find below some great titles for birthday celebrations and promoting a love for reading:

Title	Author	Book Level
Clifford's Birthday Party	Bridwell, Norman	2.5
Happy Birthday, Moon	Asch, Frank	2.6
Happy Birthday to You!	Dr. Seuss	3.1
Happy Birthday, Thomas	Step into Reading	1.1
Arthur's Reading Race	Brown, Marc Tolon	1.5
Hooray for Reading Day	Cuyler, Margery	2.4
Look! I Can Read!	Hood, Susan	0.9
When Will I Read?	Cohen, Miriam	2.3
I Can Read with My Eyes Shut	Dr. Seuss	2.2
Junie B. Jones and the Meanie Jim's Birthday	Park, Barbara	2.8



Mardi Gras in Alabama by Karyn Tunks

Mardi Gras and Carnival by Molly Aloian

Mardi Gras by Julie Murray

Mimi's First Mardi Gras by Alice Couvillon and Elizabeth Moore

Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize by Brittany Maziqu

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Please help us grow this list by making recommendations at [contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com).



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\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

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This lesson plan promotes reading with cross-curricular activities to emphasize Alabama geography and history.

## SHORT Adventures

Referencing the teaser video or first few minutes of the birthday video, have students view the many waterways of Alabama and locate their community waterways. Determine the following:

1. What direction did SHORT travel to get from Montgomery to Mobile?
2. Besides a boat, how else could SHORT have traveled to Mobile?
3. What is the best for SHORT to travel to our community?
4. What direction will SHORT travel to get to Huntsville from Mobile?

Alabama is known for its wildlife and environmental conservation. Ask students to identify the wildlife SHORT saw as he traveled to Mobile. Then, create a list of wildlife they may see in the community where they live.

## SHORT's Party Words

- What are some **NOUNS** we use at a birthday party?
- What are some **VERBS** we will do at a birthday party?
- What are some **SYNONYMS** for **HAPPY** that will describe a birthday party?

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## SQUIRRELLY Words

- Create a list of **HOMONYMS** that might be part of SHORT's Celebration. Examples:

**tail, tale   cents, sense   two, too, to   sale, sail  
buy, by, bye   train/train (as cape in video)**

- Create a list of **ACTION WORDS** that one might identify when watching a Mardi Gras parade.

**run, climb, scamper, eat, stare, etc.**

- Create a list of new vocabulary related to Mardi Gras (included).

**Cape, train, beads, float, mask, etc.**

- Explore vowels by creating a list of words that change with just a silent 'e'!

**cap/cape   hop/hope   man/mane   rob/robe   plan/plane**

## SHORT Order

To prepare for the reading celebration, SHORT had to complete a series of tasks. Using the sequencing cards (included), help SHORT keep his tasks in order and understand the process of planning the event. Tasks include: travel, invite, plan, host, thank you)

Using the notecard (included), encourage students to write a thank you note to someone who helps them 'celebrate' reading!



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## SHORT Math:

- Using small snack cake or a Mardi Gras King cake, estimate measurements (or fractions) needed to share the special treat.
- Practice patterns by making a bead Mardi Gras necklace or crown.
- Using wrapped Moon Pies or the squirrel tails (included), have students measure items in the classroom and complete the chart below to compare shortest to longest.

Item	How Many Tails?	Notes

## Parade Throws for SHORT

- Match the number of parade throw items SHORT got at the parade to the number word. In the box provided, write the numeral that correlates with the number word (included).

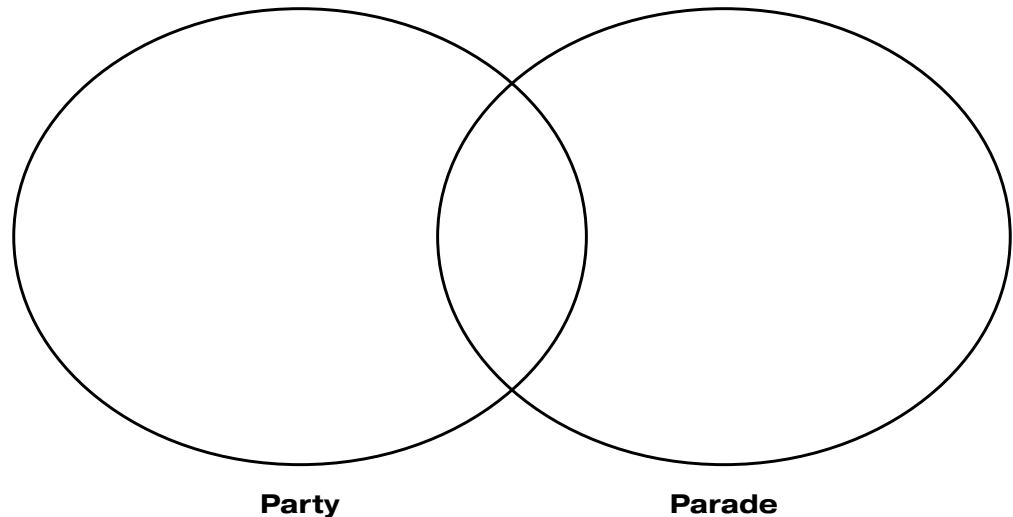
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## SHORT's Compare and Contrast

- Using a diagram, identify characteristics of a celebration to determine similarities and differences of party and parade.



## Nothing SHORT about YOU!

- Take King Terrell's advice and create unique capes (included) by allowing students to draw special things on their cape that represent them. Educators can even share the article where King Terrell's cape was featured in National Geographic magazine. **Is Mobile, Alabama home to America's oldest Mardi Gras celebration? ([nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com))**
- Using the city map (included), encourage students to create a tour of their town spotlighting the special places to visit in the community.
- Have each student select a favorite book or book character and host a Mardi Gras book parade throughout the school.
- Taking the advice of Ms. Karyn Tunks, author of *Mardi Gras in Alabama*, encourage student to explore writing using journaling, story starters, and creative writing based on their own experiences or desires to expand knowledge.

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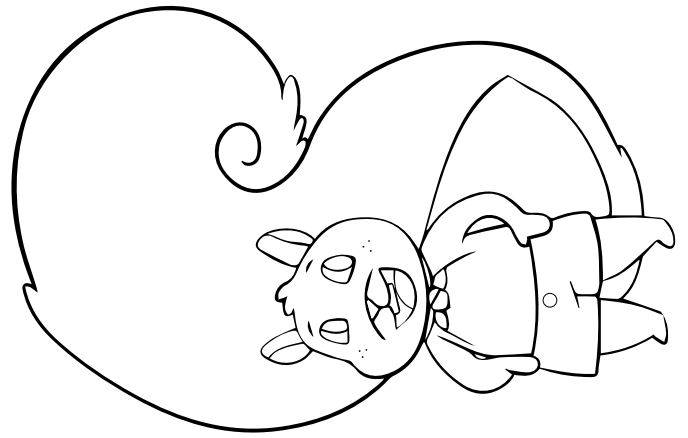
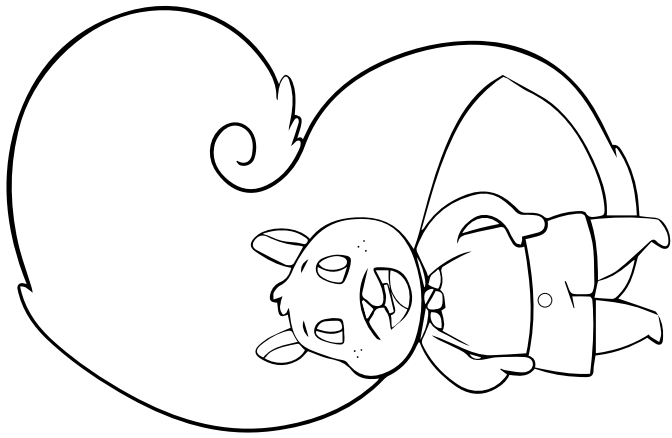
## SHORT Tales

- Make a class book to reinforce the celebration of literacy in a reading parade! The students will create a page of the class book by completing the writing prompt and developing an illustration to accompany their sentence. Then, all pages are bound or scanned to create a class book, e-book, or slideshow.

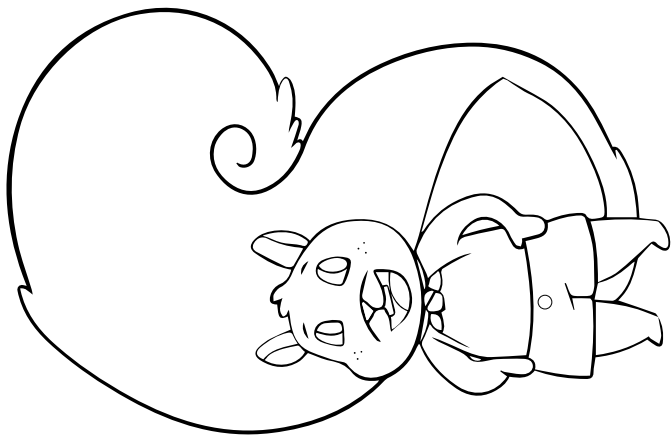
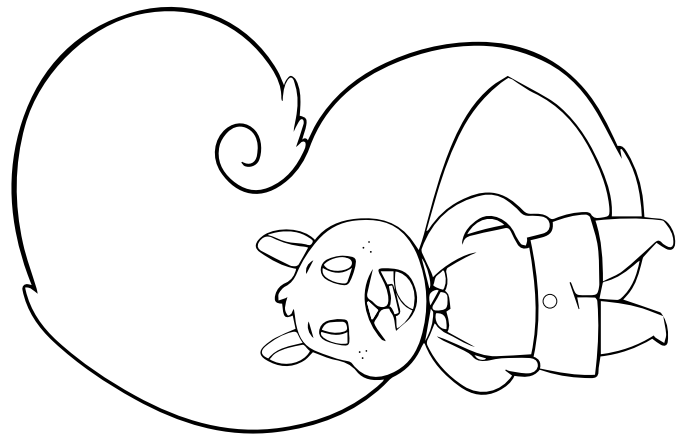
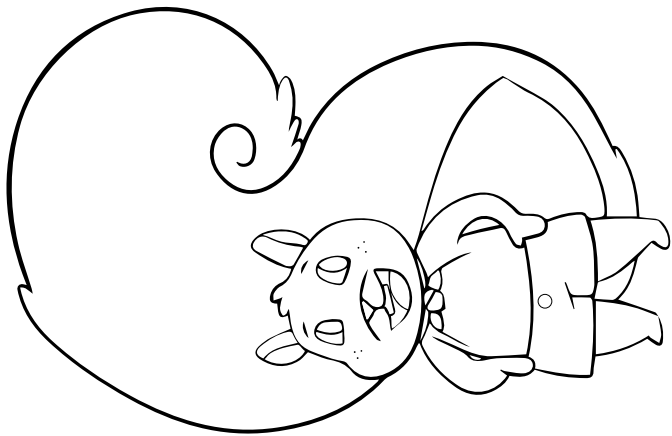
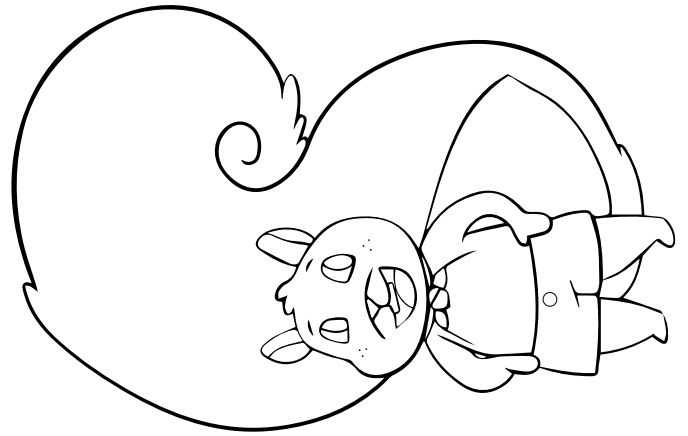
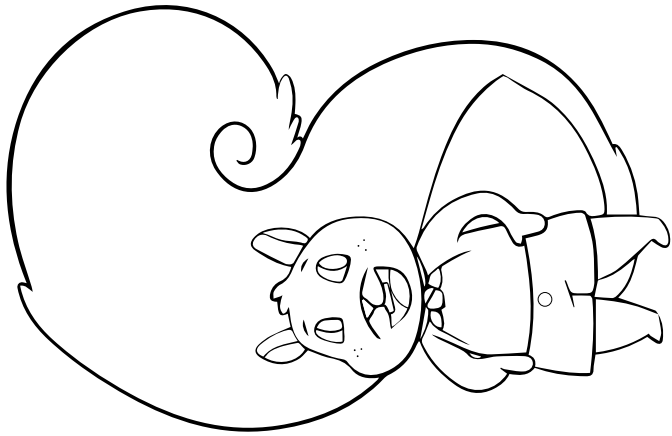
**When I am in a parade, I would like to**

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**SHORT Tails**





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## SHORT Puppet



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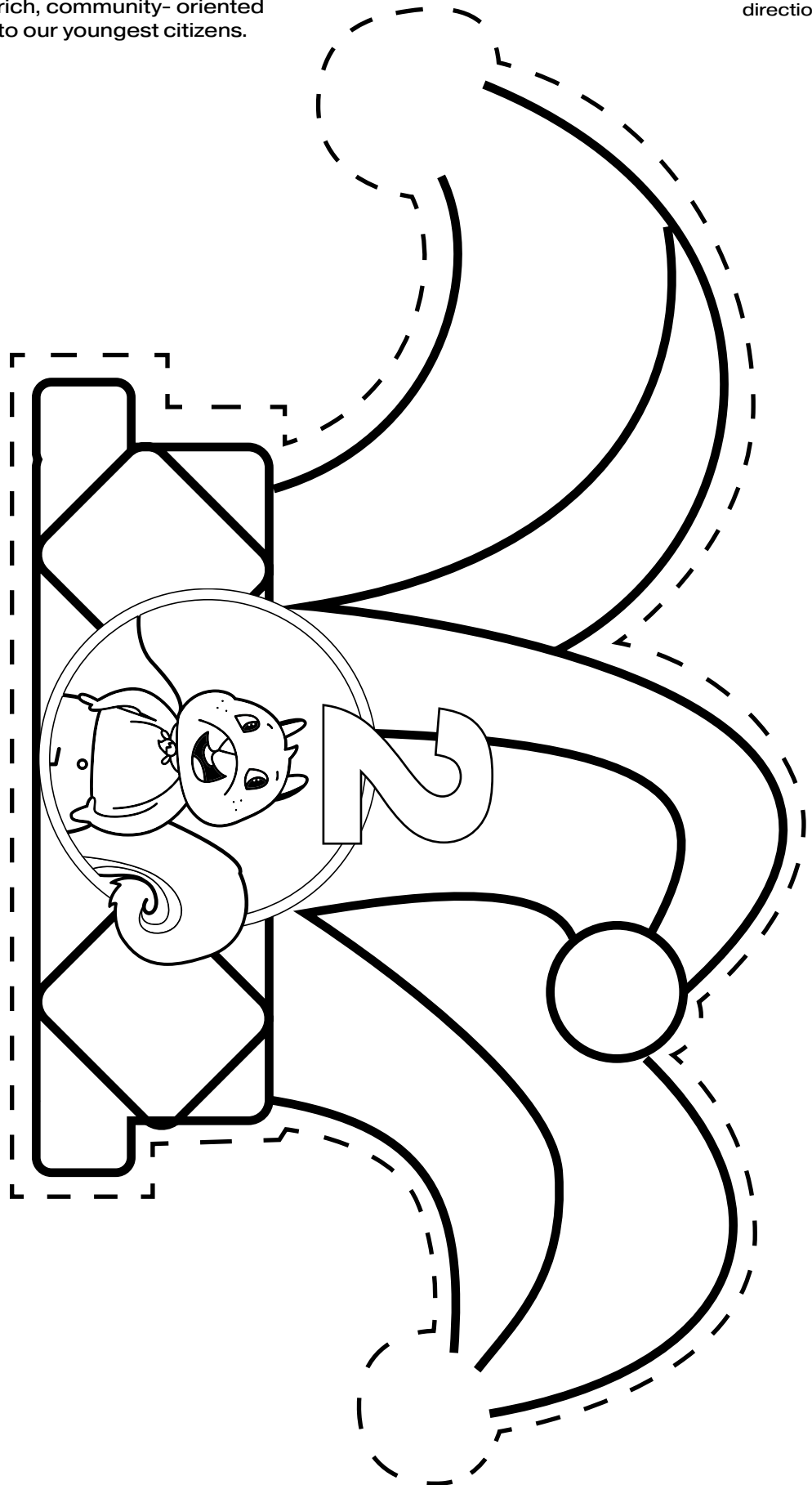


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## Party Hat



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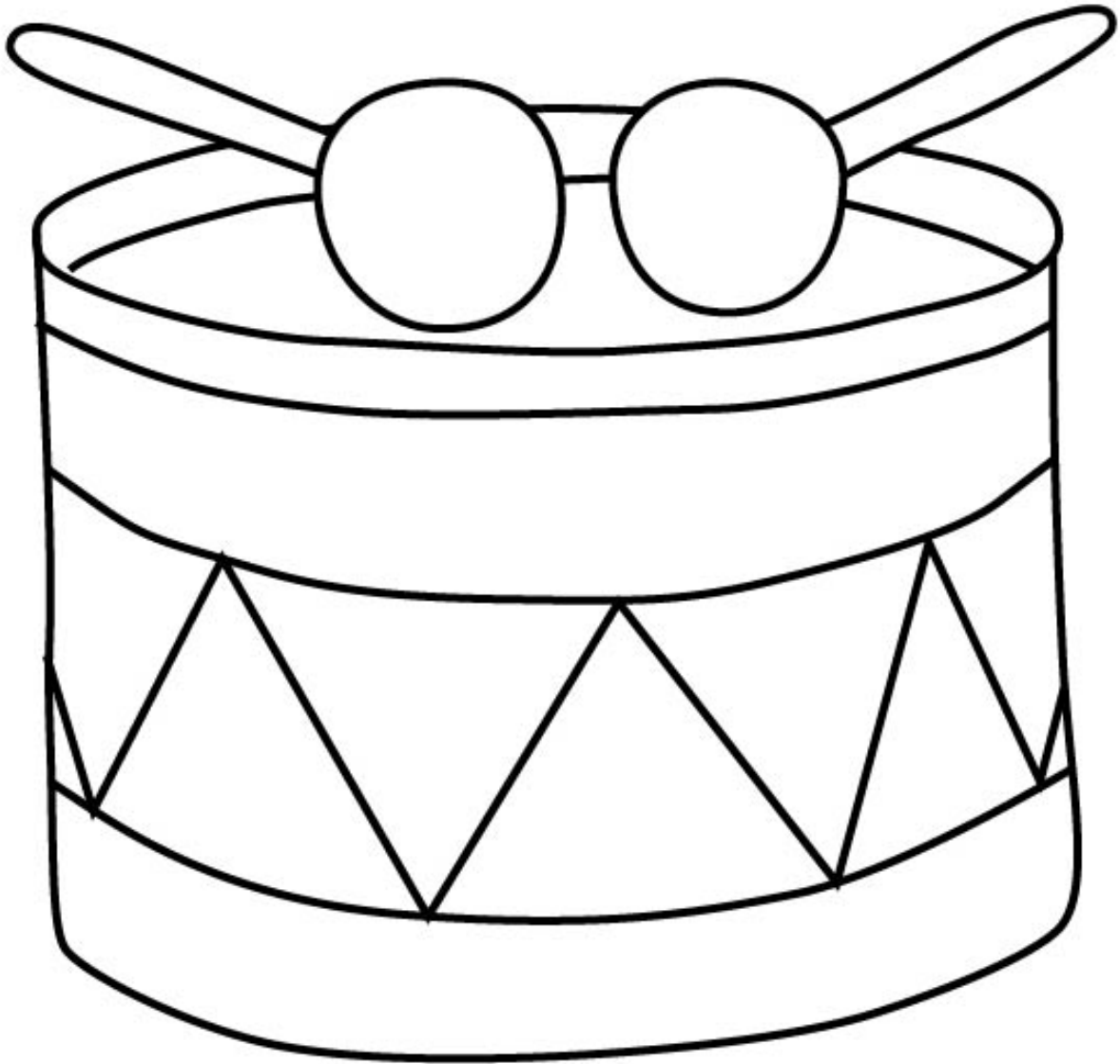


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## Drum



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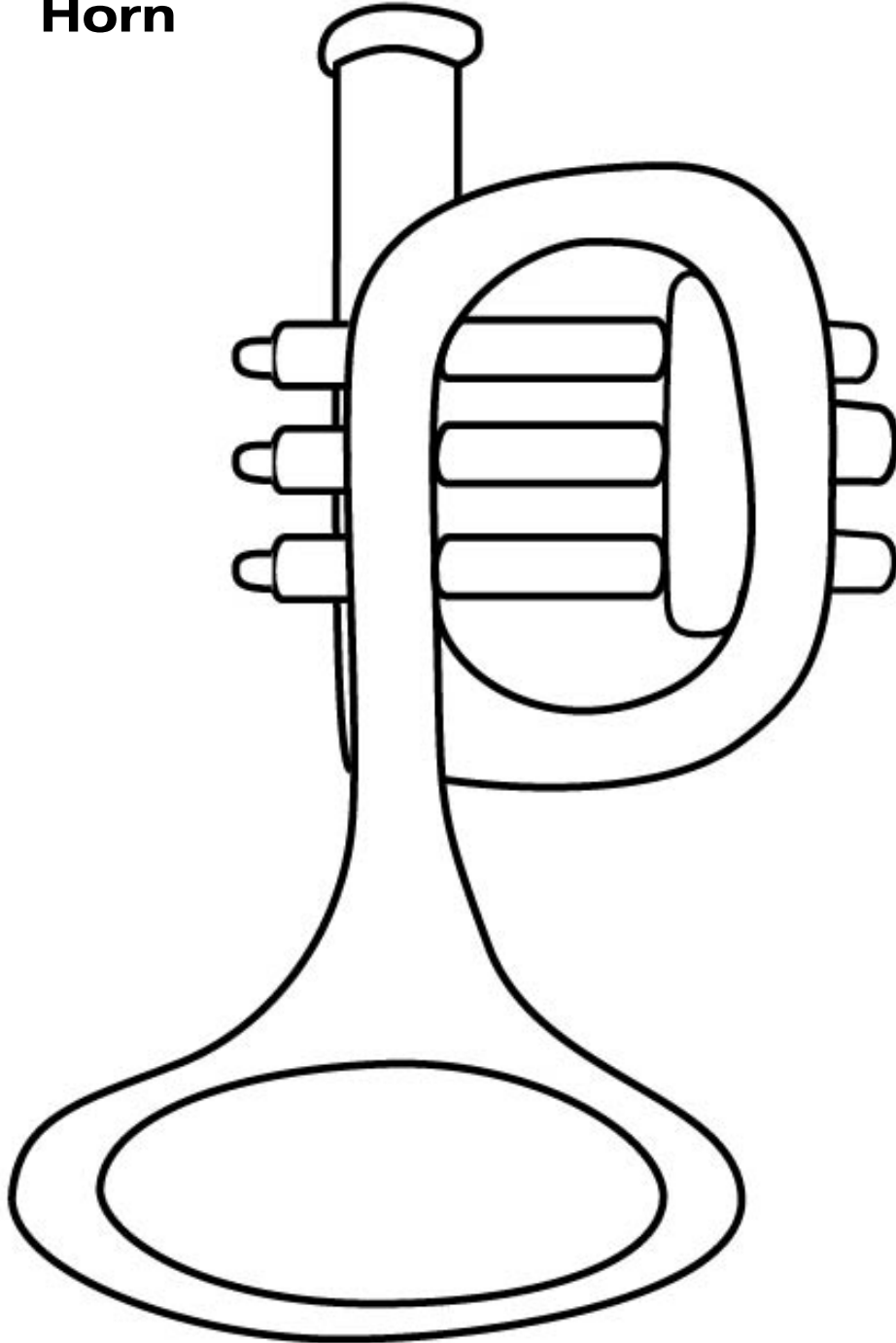


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## Horn



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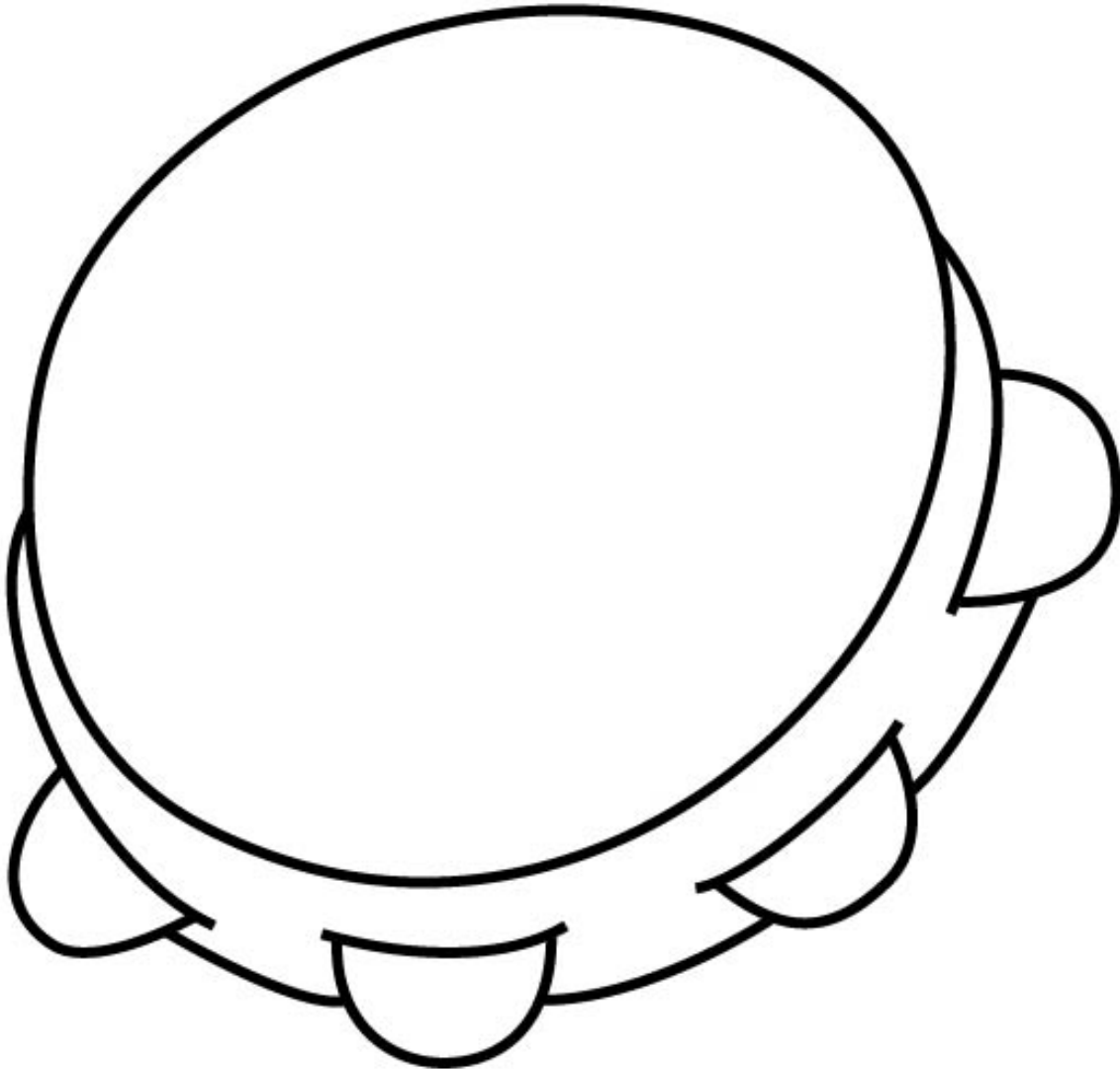


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## Tamborine



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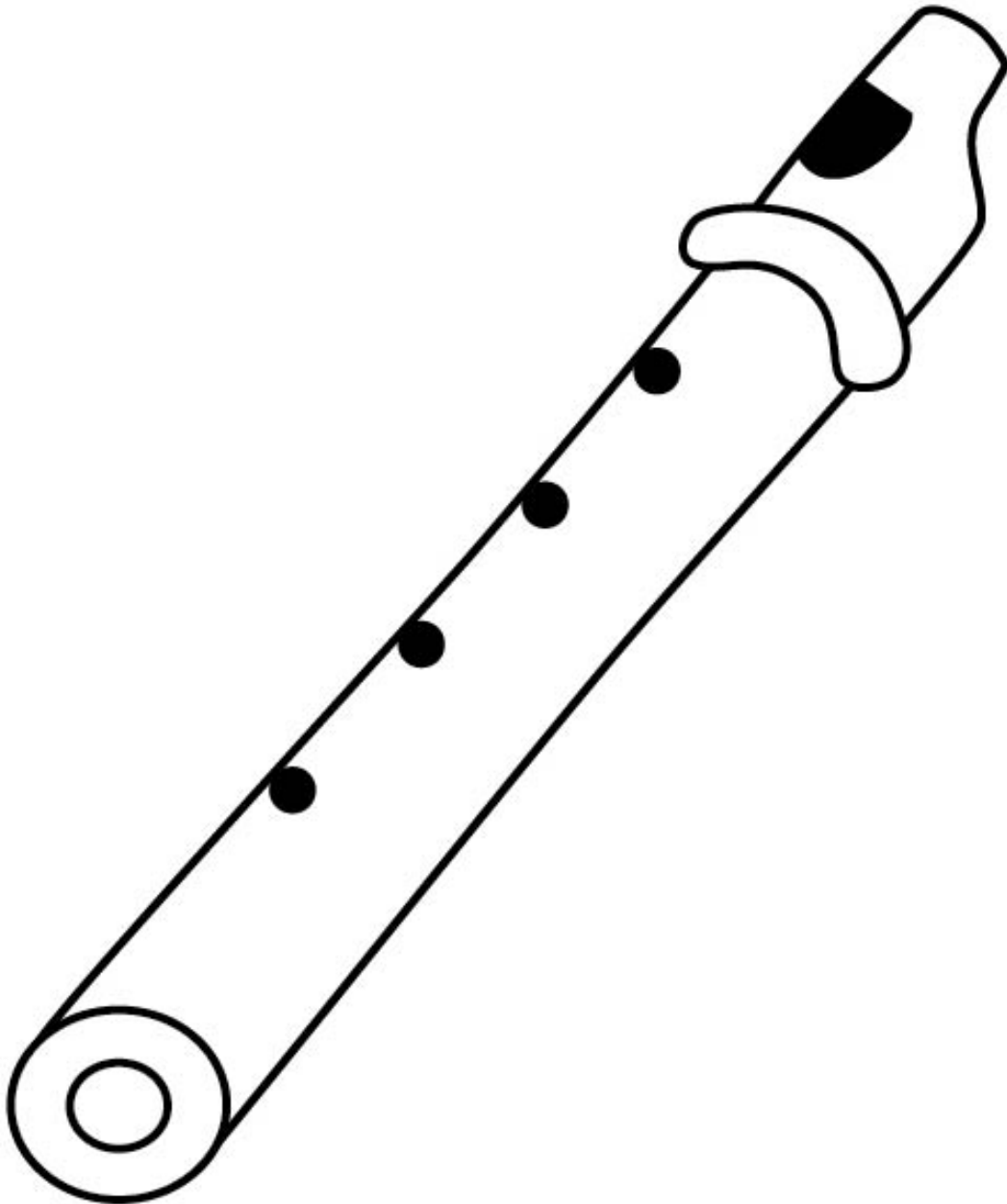


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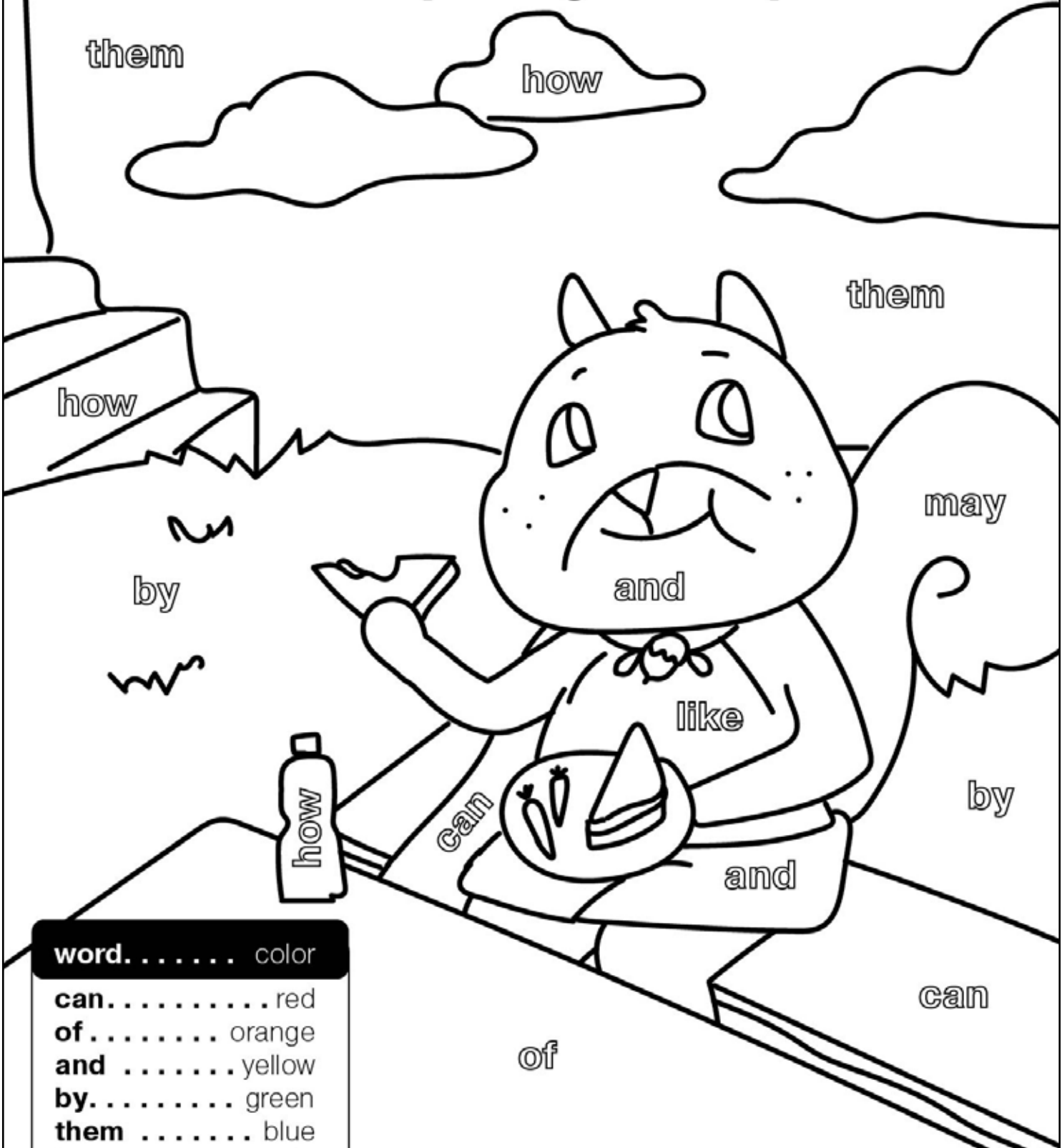
## Flute



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# SHORT the Squirrel goes on a picnic.



word.....	color
can.....	red
of.....	orange
and.....	yellow
by.....	green
them.....	blue
how.....	purple
like.....	brown
may.....	black



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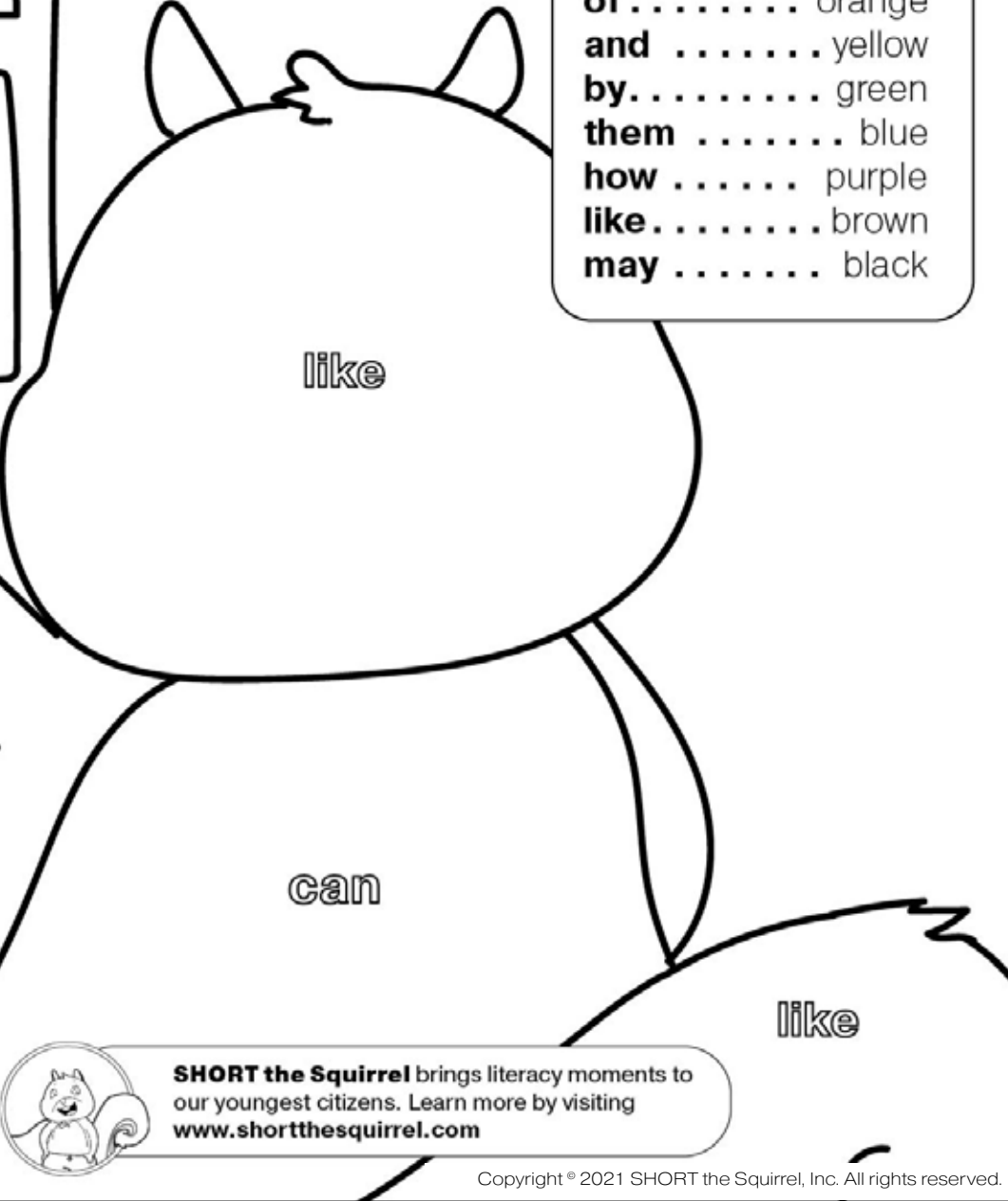
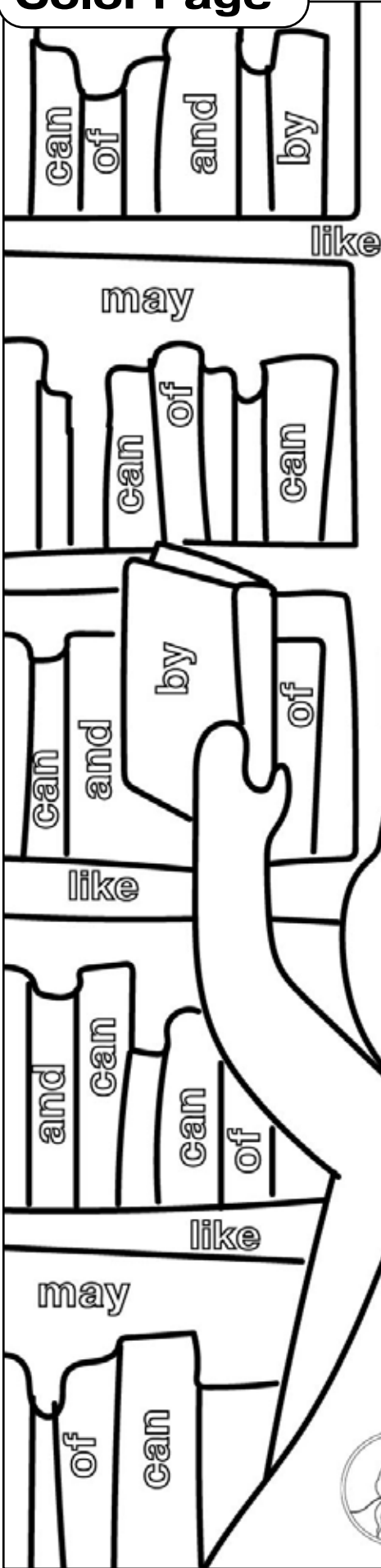
# Color Page

\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

**SHORT the Squirrel**  
**visits the library.**  
them

how

word.....	color
can.....	red
of.....	orange
and.....	yellow
by.....	green
them.....	blue
how.....	purple
like.....	brown
may.....	black

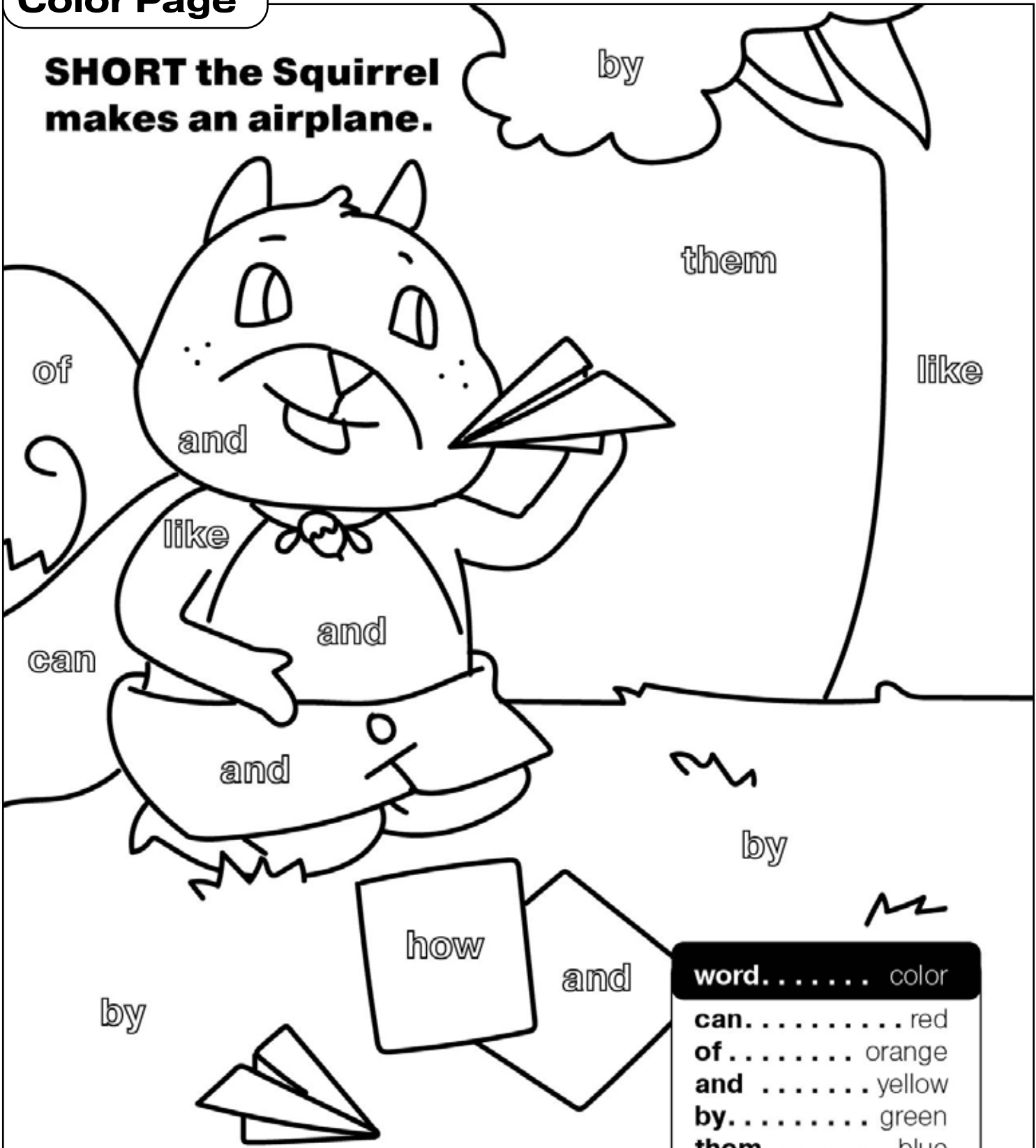


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# Color Page

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## SHORT the Squirrel makes an airplane.



word.....	color
can.....	red
of.....	orange
and.....	yellow
by.....	green
them.....	blue
how.....	purple
like.....	brown
may.....	black

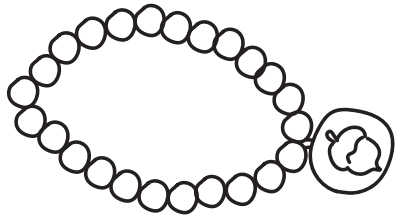


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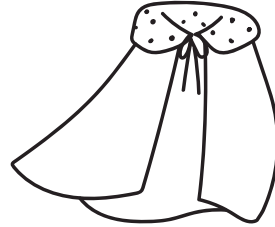


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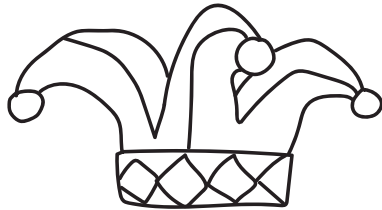
## Vocabulary words for tracing



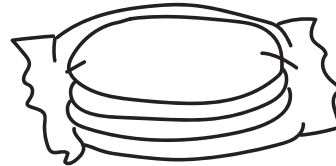
Beads



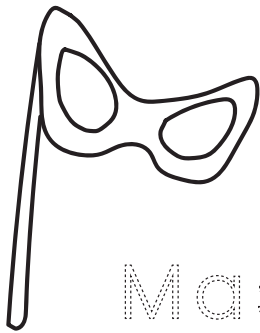
Cape



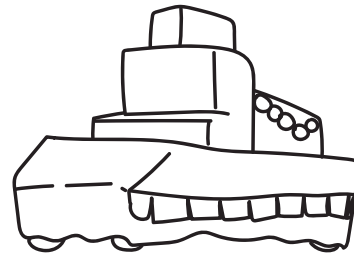
Folly Hat



Moon Pie



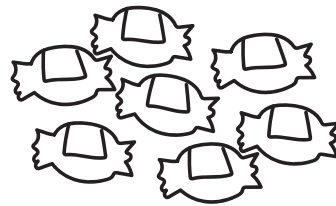
Mask



Float



Band



Candy





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**Thank You!**



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- **Count the parade throws.**
- **Match the parade throws to the correct number word.**
- **Write the numeral for the number word in the box.**

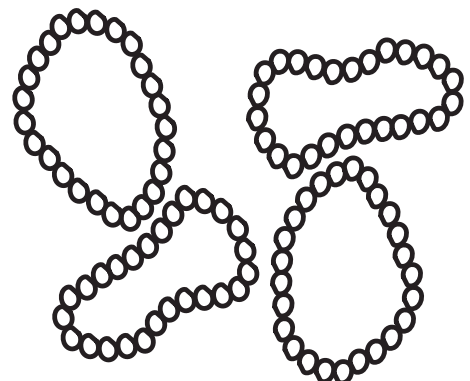
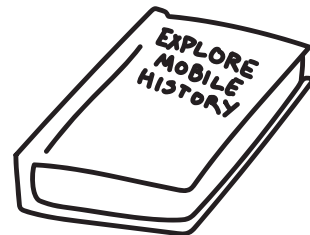
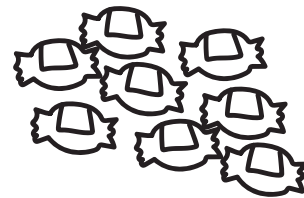
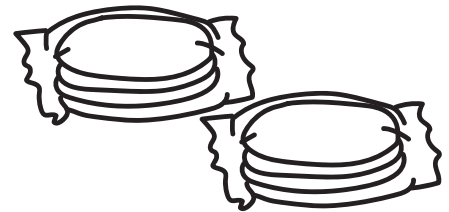
two

one

six

four

eight

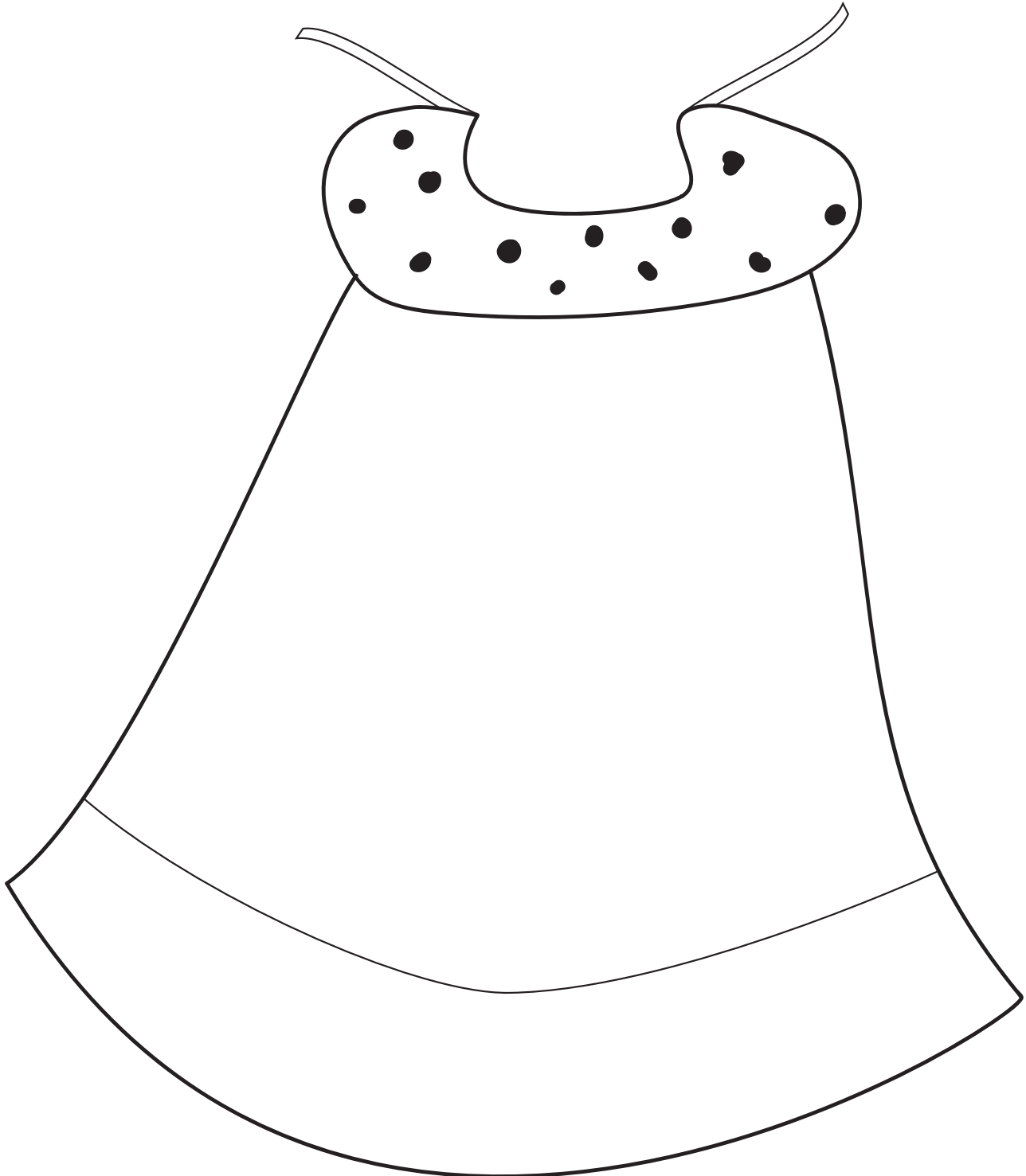




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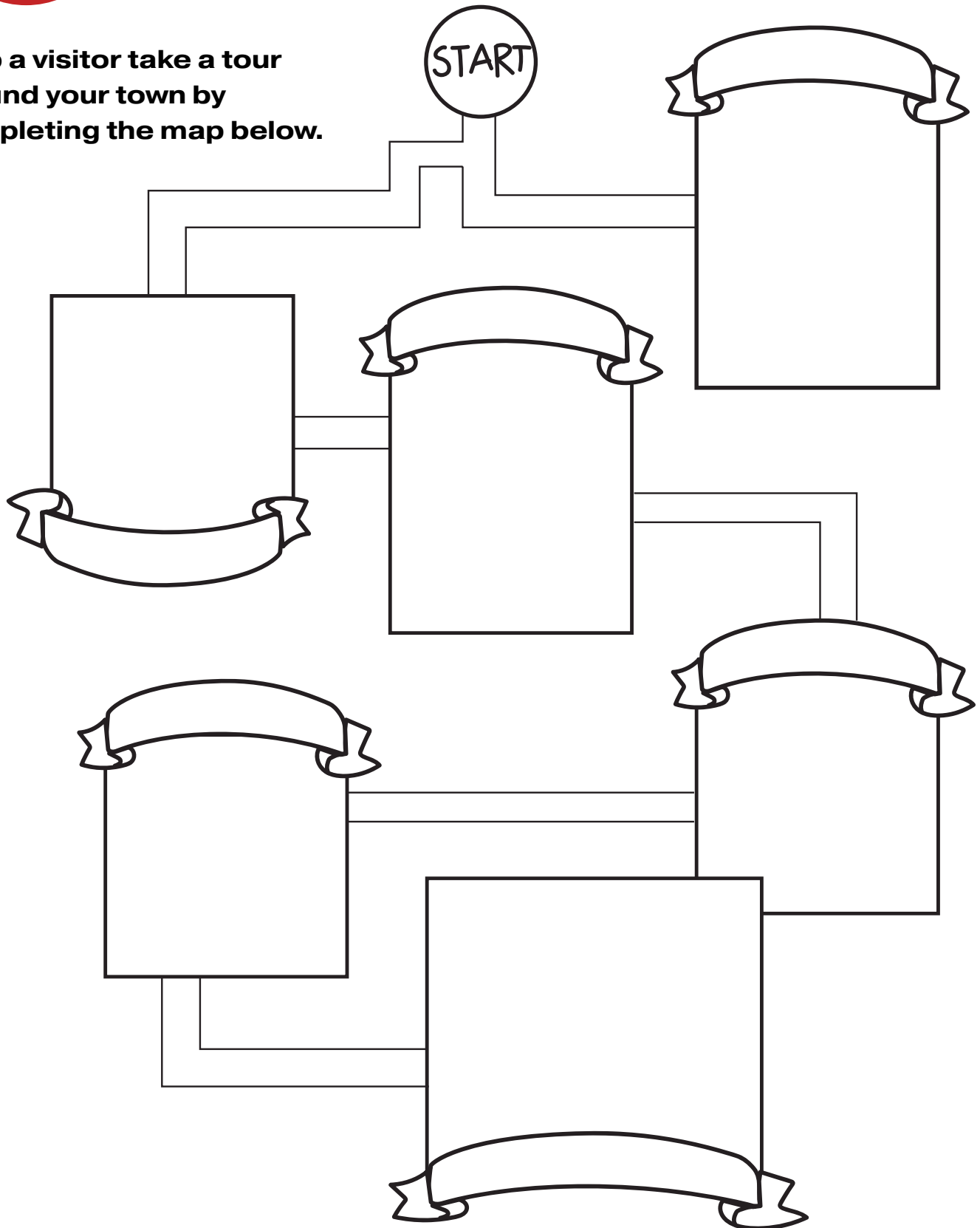
**Imagine how your cape (or train) would be designed.**





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**Help a visitor take a tour around your town by completing the map below.**





**Cut apart each square and place cards in the correct order.**

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travel



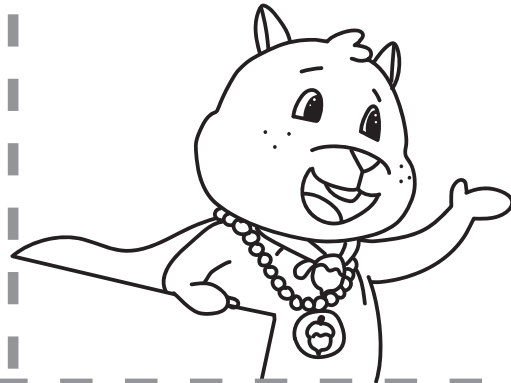
plan



invite



host



celebrate



say

"Thank You"

