

Guideline for young people participation



If you wish to build a ship, do not start by sending people to collect wood, nails, tools, strings, and other materials.

Instead, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Who is this guide aimed at?

The guide is intended for teachers working in the field of special education and has been drafted as part of the **HEDY (Health Education for Young People with Disabilities)** project.

This material draws attention to the right and need of the child or adolescent (teenager) with cognitive disabilities - moderate degree, to take part in decisions concerning him, to make the right choices and to be aware of his actions and of the consequences of his acts.

The guide is structured into five chapters, combining specialty theory with practical activities, examples of exercises, sheets and games meant to stimulate students' (pupils') skills, dynamism and independent decision-making process.

The activities proposed in this guide may be carried out by teaching staff of the primary cycle, as well as teaching staff of the lower secondary cycle (middle school) or by the support staff. You are invited to adapt the activities proposed to the needs you are confronted with.

You can share your experience with us by writing to us at the following e-mail address: **office@raa.ro**

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Chapter 1

1.1 *General Framework*

1.2 *Stages of Decision-Making*

1.3 *Personal Decision-Making Styles*



1.1 General Framework




Humans are rational beings and, from almost the earliest ages, find themselves in the situation of making choices and decisions. A decision is defined as “a resolution made after examining a problem or a situation, a solution adopted from several that are possible” (DEX - The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language).

The relation between **choice** (the primary form of a decision, favoring or designating a variant) and **decision** consists in that the decision is the result of repeated, sustained, and conscious activities of making choices, engaging in actions, and maintaining the direction set. A decision is mentally more elaborate than choice, because it involves: an analysis of options, benefits and drawbacks, and a mobilization of forces along the direction set. For instance, we decide that we want to change our car and then we choose from the available models. We decide we want to eat at a restaurant, then we choose from the dishes on the menu. Decision and choice are two sides of the same medal. And this medal is the cognitive activity and draws to itself all the resources a human being has.

We can **define** decision as being the result of conscious activities of making a choice, engaging in an action, and going in that direction.

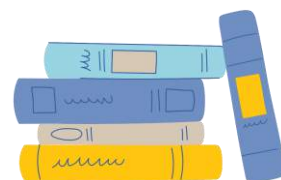
The decision belongs to a person or a group of persons who have the necessary abilities and are responsible for the choice made. The decision may also fall under the responsibility of an authority or a legal entity.

Depending on the factors involved, decisions fall into three **categories**:

-  **decisions of the organization or organizational decisions;**
-  **personal individual decisions;**
-  **personal group decisions;**

1 **Organizational decisions** are the most elaborate, rational and effective ones, speaking in terms of human capacities, and they have great value and time implications. They are always subject to analysis, improvement, and adjustment in real time to external conditions. Decisions within an organization include those decisions which determine the objectives, resources and policies of the organization/ institution. Strategic decisions are, for instance, those made by the school with regard to educational policies, to strategic objectives, and to the development of a managerial plan.

2 **A personal individual decision** is the process by which we choose one alternative from several available at a given time, on the basis of certain criteria. It implicitly means that certain options are removed. A personal decision indicates the individual traits of every human. Its role is to indicate the type of decision-making behavior, but





also to shape it. Knowing one's personality traits is enough to let us become aware of their decision-making behavior. The essential characteristics of personal decision are as follows:

- it is triggered in a choice-making situation,
- there are several variants,
- it is only possible to choose one of the available variants,
- choice based on analysis, weighing,
- choice based on at least one criterion

3 Group decision - it is a situation in which individuals collectively make a choice from the alternatives before them. The decision is therefore no longer attributable to any individual who is a member of the group. This is due to the fact that all the individual and social group processes, such as social influence, contribute to the outcome. Decisions made by groups are often different from those made by individuals.

Manners in which a group can make decisions, according to author Edgar Shein – *Process Consulting*:

- ✓ **Decision made by lack of response**
- ✓ **Decision made by authority**
- ✓ **Decision made by minority**
- ✓ **Decision made by majority**
- ✓ **Decision made by consensus**
- ✓ **Decision by unanimity**

The effectiveness of group decision-making depends on the concentration of purpose, the availability of resources, time planning, feasibility, appropriateness. In the case of decisions made by several team members, decisions must be accepted by everyone, by those who are responsible for their implementation, as well as those who bear the consequences.

1.2 Stages of Decision-Making

Adults, children, organizations find themselves in the situation of making a decision on a daily basis. To facilitate the process, we can follow and analyze the 7 stages, thus identifying the level at which difficulties occur, especially in children, and removing them by engaging in various activities that develop mental components.

Stage 1

Identifying the need and reflecting on the necessity to make a decision.





Stage 2

Collecting relevant and useful information.

Stage 3

Identifying options – as relevant information is gathered, more possibilities and alternatives will emerge..

Stage 4

Assessing options – mentally choosing an alternative to check on its probable consequences.

Stage 5

Selecting an option.

Stage 6

Analyzing some arguments and outlining some positive measures in order to implement that decision.

Stage 7

Assessing the decision and its consequences. Reflecting on the decision made.



The human mind does not limit itself to making decisions, because this process depends on other processes, such as attention, memory or perception, but decision-making is a critical resource of the processes of learning, establishing relations, adapting to the environment, even survival.





1.3 Personal Decision-Making Styles

People make decisions in different ways, by engaging different internal components. Beliefs, training, principles and lifestyle control most often the manner in which decisions are made:

- **The rational style** – uses logic, analysis and the organization of a plan
“I know the pros and cons of each variant.”
“I have thought about the future consequences of each alternative.”
“I have made the decision after carefully weighing all the alternatives.”

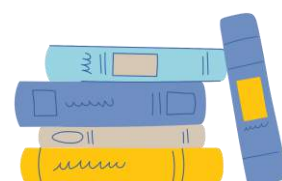
- **The dependent style** - looks for advice, help, acknowledgement from an authority or close persons in making decisions and hesitates to take full ownership of their decision. It may be controlled by fear, anxiety, lack of self-esteem.
“I’ll go where my friends go.”
“The others know best what’s right for me.”
“I cannot upset my family.”

- **The avoidant style** – is patient and waits for problems to resolve themselves.
“This is not the right time to make this decision.”
“If you let time pass, things will work themselves out.”
“Leave till tomorrow what you can do today, because the day after tomorrow you might not even have to do it anymore.”

- **The intuitive style** - momentary impressions and intuitions weigh heaviest in making a decision
“I always do what I feel like doing.”
“Something tells me this is the best solution.”
“My intuition never fails me.”

- **The spontaneous style** - decisions are made on the spot, under the impulse of the moment, without weighing the arguments
“I decide without pondering too much.”
“First, I’ll jump and then I’ll see how I can manage.”

There is no right or wrong, good or bad manner of making decisions, because all personal structures of the individual are activated, and these can vary throughout the stages of life, but certain components of the psyche can be strengthened and trained so as to enrich the decision-making experience of a person. The more a human experiences different types of decision-making (and this involves even just merely observing how others around him act), the more he will tend to try to use more manners of acting himself/herself and keep the methods that result in the most favorable outcomes.





CONCLUSIONS:

- ✓ Choices and decisions are a constant part of human activity.
- ✓ Decision-making is a superior cognitive function which involves several components of the human psyche (observation, thinking, communication, attention, memory, projection, energy channeling, character, personal preferences). The level of development of the above helps shaping the most effective strategies of decision-making for the future.
- ✓ The goals and effects of decisions are both at individual and group level.
- ✓ The pronounced social nature of the human being determines certain particularities of the decision-making process.



Chapter 2

- 2.1. Involvement of the child in making choices as one of his fundamental rights – legislative benchmarks*
- 2.2. Roger A. Hart's Ladder of Participation*
- 2.3. Encouragement, stimulation and preparation of children with special educational requirements (CES) in the choice-making process*



2.1. Involvement of the child in making choices as one of his fundamental rights – legislative benchmarks

Children are fragile beings in the making, and their specific characteristics, correlated with the constant interest and projections of adults, especially those who care for them, have led to the proposal, adoption, amendment, supplementing and maintenance at the forefront of public consciousness of legal measures, rights, legislation, highlighting and ratifications of children's rights, regardless of age, category, citizenship, complex state of health, etc. Thus, children are entitled to enjoy full rights. They benefit from all human rights and all fundamental rights and are the subject of special regulations meant to meet their specific interests and needs.

Involving the child in decisions, consulting him, informing him and listening to his wishes is not only recommended for his development, but even mandatory, as stipulated by the entire national and international legislation.

Romania ratified, through Law no. 18/19901, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20th November 1989. According to it, children's rights are grouped into three categories: protection rights, development rights, and **participation rights**.

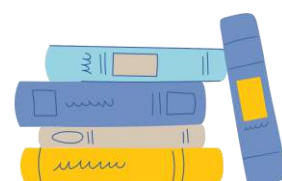


Constitution of Romania

- Article 49 – Protection of children and young people (1) Children and young people shall enjoy special protection and assistance in the pursuit of their rights... (5) The public authorities are bound to contribute to securing the conditions for the **free participation of young people in the political, social, economic, cultural and sporting life** of the country.

Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of children's rights

- Article 28 (1) **The child has the right to freedom of expression.** (2) The child's freedom to seek, to receive and to impart information of any kind, which aims at promoting his or her social, spiritual and moral welfare, his or her physical and mental health, in any form and by any means available, at his or her choice, is inviolable. (3) The parents or, as the case may be, other legal guardians of the child, the persons who are legally responsible for children (who foster children), as well as persons who, through the nature of their positions, promote and ensure the observance of the rights of children must **provide information, explanations and advice according to the children's age and degree of understanding, as well as allow them to express their own point of view, ideas and opinions.** (4) Parents are not allowed to restrict the right of the minor child to freedom of expression, except in the cases expressly stipulated by the law.





Law no. 1/2011 on National Education, as further amended and supplemente

- **The principle of respecting the school student's (pupil's)/college student's right to opinion as a direct beneficiary of the education system.** Article 4. The education and professional training of children, young people and adults have as their main purpose the **development of skills, understood as a multifunctional and transferable set of knowledge, habits/abilities and aptitudes**, which are necessary for: b) social integration and active citizen participation in society.

Framework Regulation for the organization and operation of pre-university education units, published by the Ministry of Education on 11th September 2020

- Article 3 (2) The management staff of educational units ground their decisions on dialogue and consultation, 1 Law no. 18/1990 published in the Official Journal, issue no. 314 of 13th June 2001.

School Student's Stature

- Article 4. Pre-university education is student-focused. All major decisions are made by consulting student representatives, namely the National School Student Council and other school student representative bodies, as well as by mandatory consultation with representatives of trade union federations, secondary and tertiary beneficiaries, respectively representative associative structures of parents, business environment representatives, local public administration authorities and civil society.

Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination

- Article 1 (2) The principle of equality among citizens, the exclusion of privileges and discrimination are guaranteed in particular in the exercise of the following rights: ... (viii) the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- Article 2 (1) According to this ordinance, discrimination means any difference, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, ... and any other criterion which has the purpose or effect of restricting, removing the recognition, use or exercise, under conditions of equality, of human rights and fundamental freedoms or rights recognized by law, in the political, economic, social and cultural fields or in any other fields of public life.

Civil Code

- Article 488: Specific duties. (1) Parents have the duty to raise the child in conditions that ensure his physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social





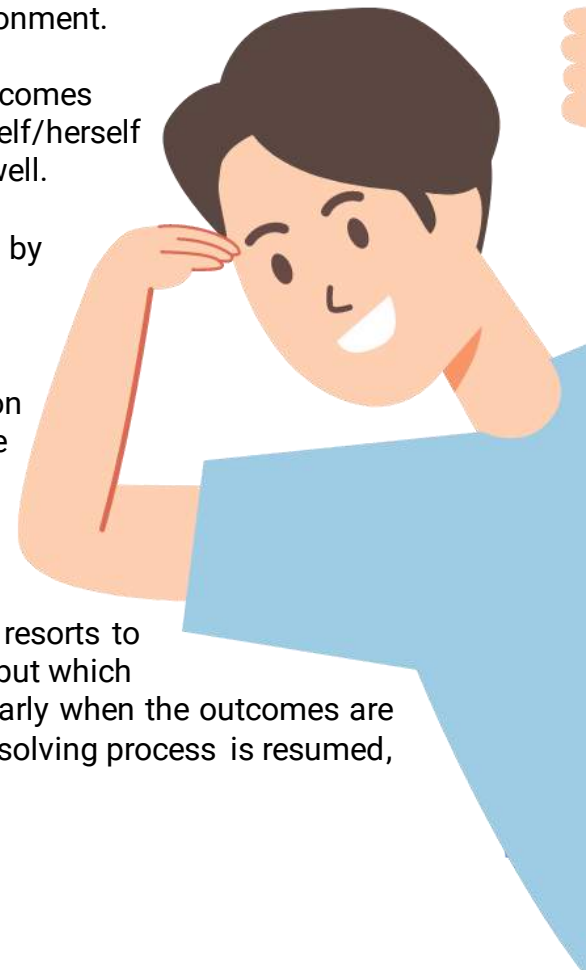
development in a harmonious way. (2) For this purpose, parents have the obligation: ... b) to present and allow the child to be informed and clarified about all acts and facts that might affect him and to take his opinion into account;

Although the child, adolescent or adult who is in the process of developing puts in effort, learns, performs tasks, fulfills requirements, solves exercises, the need to be involved in choices and decisions is required for the development of consistent personal autonomy, for increasing self-esteem and for the crystallization of a harmonious personality. Executive functions are beneficial, but they are not sufficient to stimulate personality development at a higher level, especially since a very strong argument is the generally young age at which learning by imitation manifests itself, which gives it far too little depth to allow it to be the only source for the development of decision-making plans.

2.2. Ladder of Participation – Roger A. Hart

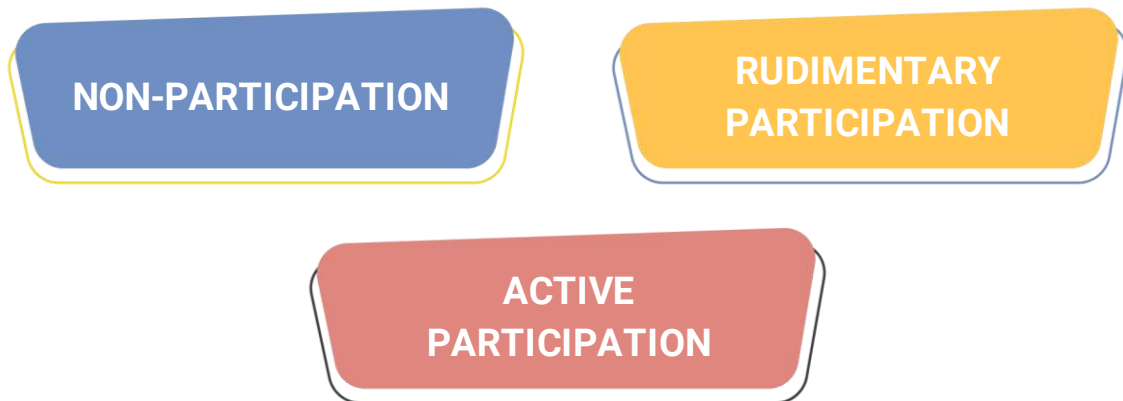
In the process of making choices and decisions, there are multiple benefits noticeable in children who are actively involved from the youngest ages:

- This teaches him to be responsible. Making a choice involves selecting a single variant and cancelling the other ones, so that the child will learn about renunciation and taking responsibility for it, thus increasing the responsibility with which he will make decisions in the future.
- Increased sense of strength and balance. Not to be ever able to make a decision contradicts the idea of human identity, that is why children wish to be able to control even small aspects of their life and their immediate environment.
- Self-confidence is stimulated especially when the outcomes of choices turn out to positive. The child is proud of himself/herself and will wish to make the right decision in the future, as well.
- Increased sense of self-worth. Choices are respected by the others, thus his role within the group is validated, he feels valued and respected.
- Self-knowledge – the more he chooses and decides on his own with regard to activities concerning him, the more the child will be learning about himself and will be able to use the information.
- It stimulates problem-solving. The brain receives the decision-making situation as a problem to be solved, and resorts to strategies, even if rudimentary ones in the initial phases, but which subsequently become more and more elaborate. Particularly when the outcomes are not as expected, and the choice proves to be wrong, the solving process is resumed, until the expected results are achieved.





Although in recent years schools have placed more importance on students' participation in actions and elections, there are still many limitations in this respect. The child's participation in decision-making is a progressive process and depends on his level of development. A tool by which children's participation could be analyzed and measured was developed in 1992, known as **the "Ladder of participation"**. Roger A. Hart identified **three manners of involvement** in the collaboration between children and adults:



Each level is structured into several steps, as described by Roger Hart in the ladder of participation:

Non-participation

1. Lack of participation - the children are not involved at all, the adult carries out the task, makes the choice, makes the decision
2. Adults lead - children are led by adults
3. Adults lead gently - children are closely guided by the adult, without being given autonomy in choosing the response and active participation

Steps 1, 2, 3 indicate a lack of involvement and inclusion of children by adults. The adults tend to make decisions for the children and to guide them towards a choice. This procedure is to be avoided, because it does not respect the child's rights and reduces him to a mere extra (figurant) in his own life.

Rudimentary participation

4. Manipulation - children do not understand the essence of the project and do not have the ability to execute their own actions, but apparently they are active and a democratic style is displayed. This model is also to be avoided, but adults resort to it because they do not know what the children's actual capacities are, or they do not adapt the process to the children's comprehension capacity.
5. Decoration - next to manipulation, it designates situations where children do not participate in an authentic manner, but are part of the adults' activity.
6. Symbolic participation or "Tokenism"- from the English "token"- the term refers to the way in which children are put on display or used in the organization of conferences, events, etc. Students with a good degree of





autonomy or talent level are selected to participate in the discussion or to give a speech. However, they do not understand the criteria by which they were selected.

7. Assignment by adults and keeping the children informed - in order for this to be a developmental step, children need to understand what their role is, children understand what the purpose of the project is and decide whether they want to be involved or not.

Active participation

8. Children are consulted and informed - children participate in the process, they are asked for an opinion, and their opinion is taken into consideration, although adults are the ones who lead the process
9. Joint decisions - decisions are made together
10. Children decide - adults help
11. Children are responsible for their own decisions - this is the ideal manner of empowering children. The decision becomes a peer-to-peer negotiation between children and adults

It is important to consider the ladder of participation in order to create as many opportunities for student participation as possible. Unfortunately, for students with special educational requirements (CES /SER), teaching practice shows that, most of the time, optimal conditions are not created for **children with special educational requirements (SER)**, and many of them lack fundamental abilities to make a choice, because:

- they were not taught how to make choices
- adults choose for them
- the opportunities or situations in which they should make a choice are limited
- they have poor communication skills
- they may have sensory impairments that prevent them from gathering enough information
- they have low self-esteem
- they are very eager to fit in and give up expressing their opinion if it is different from those of others

2.3. Encouragement and stimulation of children with special educational requirements (SER/ CES) in the choice-making process

Children with SER need an adult to show them they can be autonomous and to support them in the stages of their development, so that involvement, participation, choice become habitual practices in class and at school.

How you can prepare a favorable environment for the development of the students' ability to choose in class:





Teaching the necessary abilities

For the identification of primary preferences such as those regarding taste, smell, texture, color, etc., you must provide as many sensory experiences as possible and the reactions to them. The child learns smells, tastes and associates them with the things generating them, thus creating a map of preferences, supplemented by images, drawings, words, anything that the child can understand. This must actually be taught as a lesson, the child must be taught to associate the image with the smell/taste/texture/color in question, and with an emoticon representing a LIKE / DISLIKE.

Regardless of the complexity of the choice, you must first of all identify the individual needs. Choices may be simple, such as choosing between two toys, objects, clothes, activities, or complex, such as deciding which lesson they would like to learn. After identifying the child's preferences (by using any contact, activity and concrete situation to fill in the **MAP OF PREFERENCES** with everything you notice he likes, meaning that he likes constantly, not just once, by accident), offer him two or more options from which to choose and which will be linked to those preferences, so that the expression of what he wants is stimulated.

Repeating, supporting and guiding the choices causes them to become permanent habits of the children.

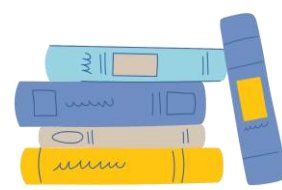
Creating opportunities to use the ability to choose

Most often, such situations occur spontaneously and allow the student to gain control and independence. Regardless of the environment – in the classroom, in the hallway, in the courtyard, during breaks – when you notice an opportunity or a situation in which the child can express preferences and make choices, encourage him to do so.

Set a general framework in which children should know when they can make choices and when they can make decisions. Not every situation is right for letting children choose.

Use the following strategies, by which children with SER can develop a healthy routine of making choices:

- **Daily decisions/ choices:** choosing clothes for school or leisure time, spending breaks, a leisure-time activity, writing with a certain instrument, spending time with a colleague, choosing a worksheet after completing the compulsory activity, order of going to the blackboard, choosing work tasks: watering the flowers, wiping the blackboard, dusting the table, organizing the writing materials, choosing the meal break (first, second, third break), choosing the object of study (leaf or blade of grass, fruits or vegetables)
- **Weekly decisions/ choices:** choosing a common activity in the family or at school, choosing a collective game, choosing between 2 topics proposed for the homeroom





(form) teacher's class, choosing an award at the end of the week (from 2 awards proposed by the teacher), choosing a class leader

- **Monthly decisions/ choices:** choosing the topic of a joint project, choosing a gift for a loved one from school (e.g., in a Secret Santa event),
- **Half-yearly decisions/ choices:** choosing a part to play in a festivity, choosing some sheets for the portfolio, choosing an activity with the entire class, choosing the seat on the right or left, choosing the classroom decor, choosing the class council

Accepting all forms of communication

You must accept and encourage any form of communication of choices, including non-verbal ones, such as touching an object, pointing at it, a sign, a drawing, etc.

Making a choice does not necessarily require a good level of expressive language. Therefore, irrespective of the level of development of communication, of his cognitive or social skills, every child has the right to choose and must be encouraged to make decisions.

Choice options fall into 7 categories. According to the model known as "The Model of Choice Diversity" (Brown, Belz, Corsi & Wenig, 1993), we have the following situations:

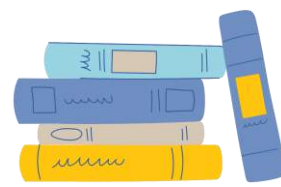
- Between activities (choosing an activity from several)
- Within the activity (choosing materials or the working method)
- Refusal (choosing to refuse an activity. E.g.: do you want to do the drawing or not?)
- With whom? (choosing the person the child prefers for the activity concerned - parent, teacher, colleague)
- Where? (choosing the place of the activity. E.g. during the break do you want to sit in your classroom or in the hallway?)
- When? (choosing when the activity will start)
- Termination (choosing to end an activity)

Routine activities during classes provide many opportunities to make the child choose. The participation of students with cognitive disabilities in decision-making is an integral part of their development, and the school setting can offer multiple possibilities through which students learn what a participatory process, that will lead to autonomy in making choices and decisions, means.

Increasing self-confidence and self-esteem

Sometimes, children persuade themselves that the outcomes of their personal choices will be disastrous. Especially, children with SER have low self-esteem as a result of their life experience which is rather limited by the specific conditions surrounding them, therefore, they need, more than anyone else, constant validations of their actions.

As a support measure to stimulate them towards making personal decisions they feel responsible for, you can offer them a lot of safety measures for cases where things go wrong, provide support in order to diminish, remedy, remove the effects.





You must provide support throughout the entire process and reduce the possible negative impact. You can also provide the student with your own example of taking responsibility for decision-making and negative effects through stories, parallels and comparisons with your own examples of similar situations.

Learning what their rights are and respecting all people

Most children and even a lot of adults do not know what their rights and responsibilities are as citizens, as members or as participants in the community, in the social, economic life, groups, categories, etc. As a responsible adult, and even more so as a teacher, you should help children to gain access to such information, by processing it in the form of images, videos, thematic animations (cartoons), lessons, activities, exercises, games. All children, regardless of their pace of development, can learn simple ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE behaviors, manage to understand prohibitions and follow simple and clear rules, provided they are repeated, practised, and become a goal in themselves in several pedagogical activities.

The more children practise respect for others, the more they will build a clearer image of themselves within the group, within society and the world, this becoming an important pre-construct on the way to achieving personal autonomy and independent decision-making in life.

We must bear in mind that, because of the busy schedule, the natural occurrence of situations which offer the possibility of exercising choice is limited, but in the process of education and development we can artificially include moments of decision-making. The younger the developmental age of the child (irrespective of his chronological age, the actual mental age must be taken into account), the simpler the situations and options must be: choices between slightly different variants, choices of objects or simple actions, choices that take little time.



CONCLUSIONS

Any form of activity involving children must take into consideration the legislation in force, which clearly stipulates the child's right to be involved in decisions.

Stimulating children to make choices has multiple benefits in terms of their personal development.

The Ladder of Participation - a tool developed by Roger A. Hart - helps adults understand what are the steps of involvement of the child.

School students with SER need special attention in order to develop their decision-making skills.

The success of the process of involvement of the student with SER in making decisions is conditioned by the intentional and constant creation of optimal conditions in his working environment.



Chapter 3

- 3.1. Individual abilities required in the decision-making process***
- 3.2. Exercises for the formation and development of basic decision-making skills - adapted to students with SER***
- 3.3. Self-knowledge in the decision-making process***
- 3.4. Exercises for personal development in the self-knowledge process***



3.1. Individual abilities required in the decision -making process and components involved

The main goal of education is the formation of adults with a high degree of independence, who are able to participate in group-, organizational and individual decision-making processes that are as diverse and, especially, as effective as possible. Decision-making skills are important in the personal development, autonomy, independence and effectiveness of a human being, both as part of the social group to which he belongs and as a free entity. People who can identify all options and compare them in terms of effectiveness will be faster, more productive and happier.

Decision-making, like any other trainable human trait, is built over time and requires going through some stages, integrating some primary circuits, some basic functions, the formation and use of certain skills which are considered necessary in order to improve choice-making processes. The child is born with the capacity of learning to decide as an adult, but he needs first a base of behaviors and abilities, capacities and competences. School students, including and especially the category of students with SER, need guidance and the practice of the following abilities and processes that will help them in the decision-making stages:

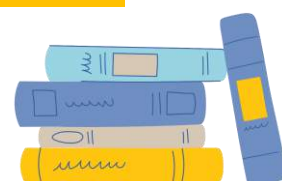
- the ability to observe and collect information
- active listening
- time management and organization of work tasks
- the ability to discover, to create, to be curious
- using a system of analysis, comparison and substitution
- collaboration, communication, vocabulary development
- analysis and self-reflection
- negotiation and exchange
- emotional self-regulation

3.2. Exercises for the formation and development of basic decision -making skills - adapted to students with SER

The exercises below may be used at the beginning of the lessons as an energizer, they may be incorporated into the lessons as didactic exercises by preserving the form of organization and using the information specific to the lesson, or they may be done in the afternoon, as part of the therapy lessons.

The ability to observe and collect information

The ability to observe and collect information - - allows for as much information as possible to reach the subject and to be stored, so as to be subsequently integrated into more complex analysis processes, as part of decision-making. The exercises will develop the students' fund of experiences and information, will help integrate primary analysis strategies and will enhance a sense of reality.





Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Observation and collection of information

Resources:

- Objects (items) of various shapes, textures, colors, sizes (fruit, tools, household appliances, clothing, sponge, soap, bread crumbs, shells, stone / pebble, glove, socks, etc.)
- Pictures of objects, scenes with several characters or objects – See *Appendix 1*
- Worksheets containing incomplete drawings/ images
- Magazines containing pictures, people

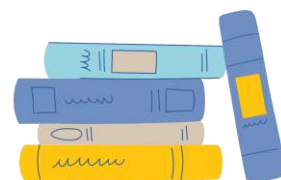
Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Group students into pairs
- Distribute/ offer an object to each pair
- Ask each team to examine the object for 5 minutes.
- After the 5 minutes have expired, each team must answer a few questions in writing. If they are unable to write, the students should answer verbally, and the worksheet should be filled in by the teacher.
- Ask the students
 - *what is the shape of the object*
 - *what color is the object*
 - *what material is it made of*
 - *what is it used for*
 - *what it is made up of*



Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Repeat the stages above, giving each team two objects
- After 5 minutes of observation, each team must answer a few questions in writing. If they are unable to write, the students should answer verbally, and the worksheet should be filled in by the teacher.
- Ask the students:
 - What are the similarities between the objects?
 - What are the differences between the objects?
- Ask each team to designate a representative who should read out/present the work they did together
- Listen to the presentations of each team





Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 6 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

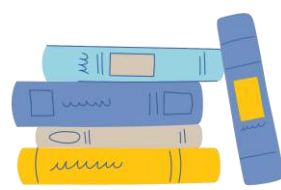
- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will work individually
- Distribute to each student a picture that is different from those of his colleagues
- Ask each team to examine the picture for 5 minutes.
- After the 5 minutes have expired, each student must answer a few questions which are different, depending on the picture shown
 - ✓ Where is ...x (a small detail that is harder to notice in the picture)?
 - ✓ What does the character at the back/ front/ right/ left hold in his hand?
 - ✓ What does the character at the back/ front/ right/ left do?
- Make sure you listen to the answers prepared by all students.





Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this activity, students will work individually
- Distribute to each student an incomplete picture/ worksheet containing an incomplete picture that is different from those of his colleagues
- Examples of incomplete pictures:
 - *bicycle without a wheel,*
 - *umbrella without a handle,*
 - *house without a roof,*
 - *clock without hands,*
 - *table without legs, etc.*
- Ask each team to examine the material for 5 minutes.
- After the 5 minutes have expired, each student must answer the question
 - What is missing?
- Make sure you listen to the answers prepared by all students





Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, you should prepare a bag containing various objects: a bread crumb, a bar of soap, a candle, a piece of chewing gum, a sock, paper, a lighter, a cucumber, etc.
- Students are arranged in a circle
- Explain to the students that the bag will circulate among them and that each student will have to extract a certain object named by the teacher, without looking (with their eyes closed) - just by feeling it
- The student who extracts the wrong object must put it back in the bag. The bag is passed on in the circle to another colleague, who will give it a try

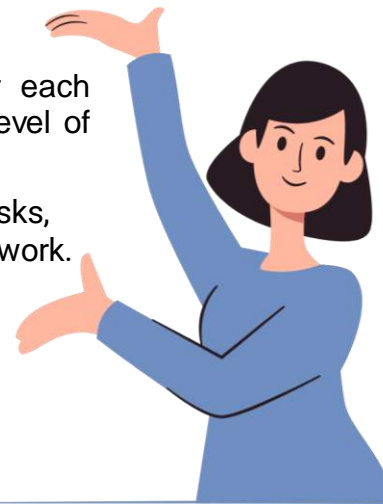
REMARKS:



Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.



If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself in the students' work.



Active listening

Active listening - developing attention to what others are saying and understanding information are necessary skills for group decision-making, for the development of comprehension and the enrichment of experiences. A student who manages to listen actively will be able to participate in decision-making processes at both a group and individual level.

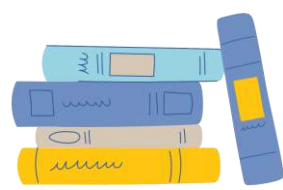
Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Active listening

Resources:

- Worksheets containing short texts/ sentences
- Tape recorder/ laptop/ telephone/ loudspeaker
- Writing/drawing sheets, crayons





Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Choose a text that also contains figures, depending on the group you are working with.
- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will work individually.
- Ask students to pay attention to the text you are about to read and to clap their hands/write in their notebook/draw a dot whenever they hear a figure in the text being read.
- When you have finished reading the text, ask the students to tell you how many figures they have identified in the text.
- If several omissions have been recorded, read the text again more slowly.

Remark:

You can use this kind of exercise to establish a connection with the next class/theme by selecting a text and asking them to discover other elements: such as colors, people's names, etc.



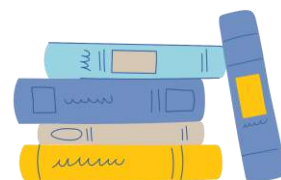
Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare, on two audio devices (e.g.: laptop and telephone), two audio clips in which recordings of different noises/ sounds/ songs/ voices (chirp and bell, cow and rooster, trumpet and sheep, whistle and cat, etc.) can be heard.
- Explain to the students that they will have to identify what they are hearing simultaneously.
- Turn on the two devices and let the students listen and identify what they are hearing simultaneously.
- Ask the students to say what sounds they have identified.
- If identification is too difficult, repeat the exercise but turn on the sounds out of phase from each other, to make it easier to identify the former of the two.



Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form pairs, according to a criterion set by you, by them, or at random.
- Ask the students who are grouped into pairs that, for 5 minutes, they should tell their colleague the following:
 - *What is your favorite food?*
 - *What is your favorite color?*
 - *What is your favorite game?*
- After the 5 minutes have expired, ask each student to talk about what he has found out about his colleague.





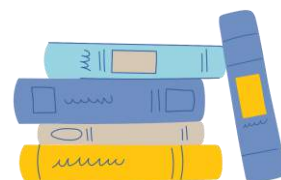
Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 11 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form pairs or small groups, according to a criterion set by you, by them, or at random.
- Explain to the students that they will have to find words belonging to a certain category - NAME - PLANT - ANIMAL, which begin with a certain letter.
- Ask a student in the pair/ team to choose a letter from the alphabet.
- Ask each student in the pair/ team to name, by respecting the indicated order, one element from each category, all of them having to start with the letter chosen by their colleague (Amalia - acacia - alligator, Peter - pepper - pig).



Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 9 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare a text appropriate to the students' level
- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will work individually
- Explain to the students that you will read a text which contains a few errors and that you need their help in order to correct them.
- Ask the students to pay attention and to correct the errors present in the text
- Nominate the students who should answer or accept the answers in the order in which they are offered.
 - Examples of sentences with formal errors: *I drink water from a cum. The child pleiz with toys. Now we are on school. The sun is high in the ski. If it rains, I ope the umbrella.*
 - Examples of sentences with content errors: *We drink water from a shoe. The child eats toys. Flowers smell bad. Now it's nighttime. Before eating, we wash our hair.*





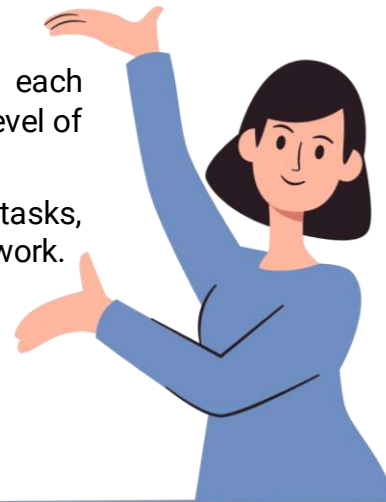
Exercise 6: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 11 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will work individually or they can form pairs if some of the students need help from their colleagues. In such a case, ask the students to form pairs
- Prepare a few tasks, as shown in the examples below:
 - Draw a big circle on the sheet, then draw a small square next to it
 - Color the circles blue, then place the green crayon on the sheet
 - Write numbers 1 to 5, then circle the last number
 - Circle letter A, then underline letter B
 - Draw a tree, then a house
 - Draw a house, then a tree
 - Color the sun, then the flower
- Make sure the students have a sheet of paper and a writing instrument
- Explain to the students they will have to carry out two tasks, exactly in the required order.
- Ask the students to fulfill the tasks described above.

REMARKS:

➡ Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.

➡ If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself in the students' work.



Time, Space, and Task Management

Time, space, and task management - necessary for improved mental organization, plan preparation, and developing a sense of reality. The exercises will help develop attention, memory, orientation, and especially will support the cognitive function. Also, they contribute to increasing the response speed, which helps render decision analysis more effective





Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

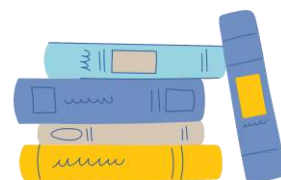
Theme: Time, Space, and Task Management

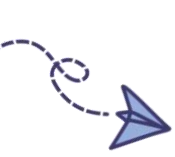
Resources:

- Simple stopwatch/ watch with second hand
- Writing sheets/ writing instruments
- Cards indicating actions
- Worksheets showing mazes/ tangled routes, which are difficult and complex
- Pictures of cut-out objects
- Cardboard boxes
- Colored yarn/ adhesive pads/ colored stickers

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 11 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will answer individually.
- Explain to the students that, as part of this activity, they will practise the capacity to estimate the duration of an activity so that, little by little, they can plan their time better, both in class and at home.
- Examples of activities to be estimated:
 - *Eating a sandwich.*
 - *Mother cooking a dish.*
 - *A flower growing.*
 - *Decorating a Christmas tree.*
 - *Copying a sentence.*
 - *Going to the store.*
 - *Catching a fly.*
 - *Drinking a glass pf juice.*
 - *Going to school.*
 - *Returning from school.*
- Ask the students to take turns estimating the time needed for carrying out these activities.
- Depending on the students' level, continue the discussion by referring to the daily schedule, the clock/watch, etc.
- Ask the students to fulfill the tasks described above.

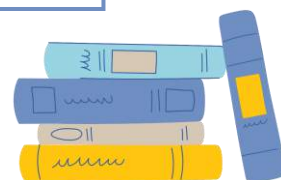






Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 11 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will answer individually.
- Explain to the students that, as part of this activity, they will practice the capacity to estimate the duration of an activity so that, little by little, they can plan their time better, both in class and at home.
- Ask the students to take turns estimating the time needed for carrying out the following activities:
 - *how many figures (digits) they can write down in one minute*
 - *how many letters they can write down in one minute*
 - *how many circles they can draw in one minute*
- Write down the answer of each student, then ask the students to fulfill the requirement, while looking at the stopwatch.
- Write down the time recorded on the stopwatch and compare results with the estimates
- Discuss the differences found with the students



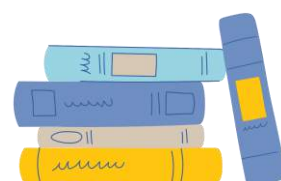
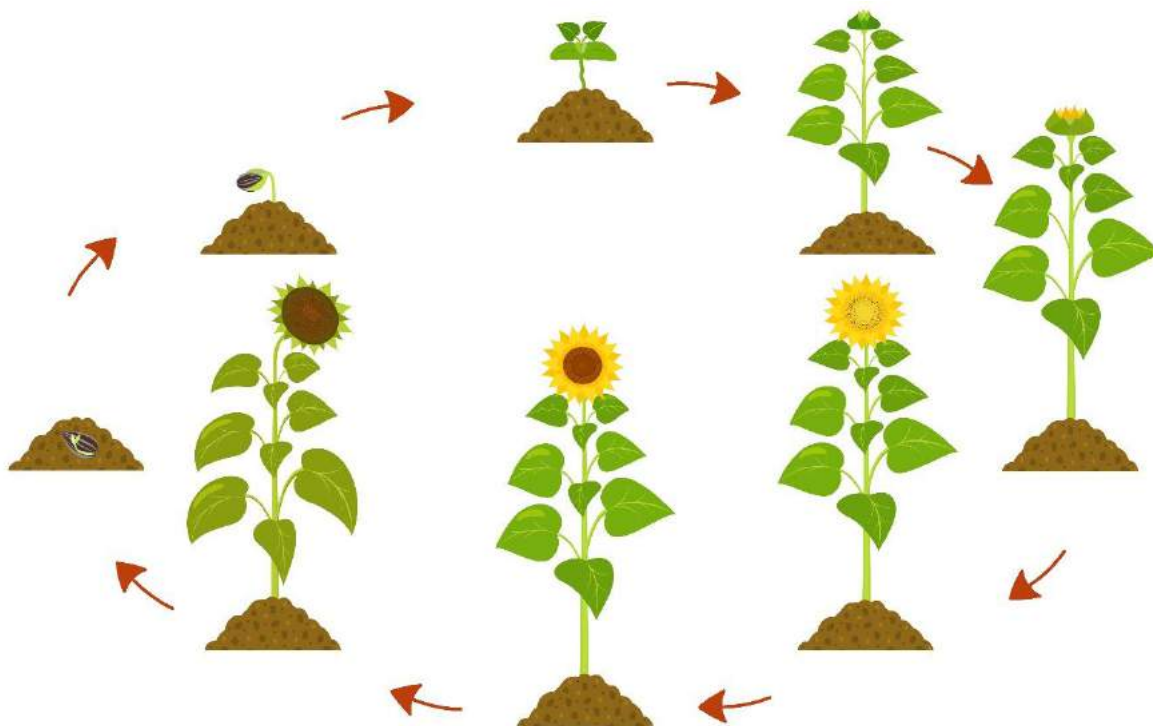


Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to form pairs or small groups, according to a criterion set by you, by them, or at random.
- Ask each team/ pair to describe 3 actions, following the FIRST – THEN – IN THE END pattern, in order to carry out a specific activity
 - Examples of activities to be described:
 - *I want to make a salad.*
 - *I want to wash my hair.*
 - *I want to buy milk.*
 - *I want to put on my pyjamas.*
 - *I want to eat milk and cereal.*
- Give 5 minutes to the teams/ pairs to describe the actions according to the FIRST – THEN – IN THE END pattern established
- After 5 minutes, ask the pairs to present the result of their work
- Discuss the sequencing of the activities and planning thereof.

Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare several series of pictures showing a chain of activities.
 - E.g.:
 - *A seed is in the ground, a stalk grows, the flower blooms, the plant dries up*





- *A cleanly dressed child, he plays in the mud, the child now has dirty clothes.*



- *Child waking up, child going to school, child doing homework, child getting ready for bed*

- Help the students to form small groups (3 to 5 people), according to a criterion set by you, by them, or at random.
- Distribute a set of pictures to each team.
- Ask each team to look at the pictures and to place them in the natural chronological order.
- Ask each team to present the series of activities placed in the natural chronological order.



Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare some sheets showing maze-like routes.
- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will work individually.
- Distribute a sheet to each child and ask him to color the shortest route.
- Specify that the working time is 5 minutes.
- After all the students complete their sheets, check the sheets produced.





Exercise 6: Appropriate for students with ages between 5 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare several pictures representing objects that may form baggage (luggage).
- For this exercise, the students may work individually or you may form homogeneous teams, if some students require more help from their colleagues.
- Announce the theme of this exercise: We are arranging the baggage!
- Offer to each team a “suitcase”, either in the form of a small box, or of a sheet on which a suitcase is drawn and a series of pictures/objects that represent the “products” (clothes, hygiene products, toys).
- Ask the teams to arrange the products as well as possible inside the suitcases, trying not to leave anything out.
- Specify that the working time is 5 minutes.
- Then, check the suitcases and provide help where necessary.

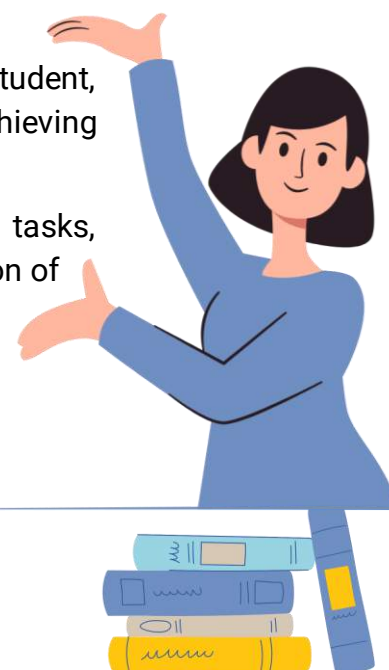
Exercise 7: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Arrange various simple routes (at least 2) inside the classroom premises by using colored yarn, colored sticky sheets, stickers or adhesive pads. The routes may include obstacles – chairs – or they may be straightforward
- Then ask the students to follow through a route or two, and time the duration of the journey along each route.
- Write the stopwatch results on the blackboard.
- Then, discuss with the students the following aspects:
 - *Which was the easiest/ hardest route?*
 - *Which was the shortest/ longest one?*
 - *What obstacles might we encounter in the street?*
 - *What can we do when we encounter an obstacle in our way?*

REMARKS:

➡ Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.

➡ If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself from the position of a student.





Discovery and Creativity Skills

Discovery and creativity skills - Creativity is a process which consists in using personal potential for the purpose of developing the abilities to generate new ideas and original and useful concepts, but also to solve practical problems. The main goal of these activities is to allow students to put to use their creative potential and they are very helpful in terms of stimulating students' curiosity, so that they can subsequently cultivate personal interests on which involvement, choices and decisions are based.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

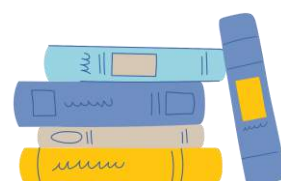
Theme: Discovery and creativity skills

Resources:

- Simple household substances: sugar, salt, ink, vinegar, baking soda, oil, water, paper, cardboard, cotton wool, metal teaspoon, plastic straws
- Worksheets containing stories/ brief short stories
- Cardboard/ plastic boxes/ opaque bags
- Plasticine/ modeling clay/ paste
- Surprise gifts/rewards – caramels, pencils, toy cars, lollies, stickers, badges, colored balls, etc.

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, explain to the students that they will answer individually.
- Explain to the students that you will name an object, and they will have to think, for 5 minutes, about as many usages of that object as possible, in addition to its main usage
 - *Examples of objects: apple, stick, bag, rubber glove, plastic bottle, orange, chalk, plastic plate, plastic cup, cardboard box, plastic caps, scarf, etc.*
- Encourage all students to answer. Accept even repeated answers.





Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

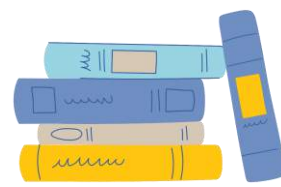
- Help the students to form pairs.
- Let the students know that they will receive various substances/ materials and that you will use them in experiments made together.
 - Examples of experiments:
 - melting sugar/table salt/chalk
 - coloring sugar/chalk with ink,
 - obtaining a reaction by mixing vinegar with baking soda,
 - soaking paper with water,
 - soaking cardboard with water,
 - coloring the piece of cotton wool with ink,
 - blow-drying wet paper,
 - trying to melt the metal teaspoon with water
- Make sure all the pairs make the same experiment at the same time.
- After each experiment, ask the students to tell you what they have noticed

Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form pairs, according to a criterion set by you, by them, or at random.
- Let the students know that you will read a story/ narrative, without the ending, and that their task will be to create, together with their teammate, an ending imagined by them for the story in question
- Read the beginning of the story and let the teams work for 10 minutes
- Read/ listen to all the variants created

Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this activity, students will work individually
- Explain to the students that you have prepared for each of them a box/ bag and that they have 5 minutes to think about what it contains.
 - *The clue is that it is a pleasant surprise, which they will most likely enjoy*
- Listen to the answers given by each student
- After all students try to guess, offer them the little boxes/ bags and let them discover the content thereof.
 - *The content of the little boxes/ bags may be individualized, depending on the students' preferences, or it may be the same in all boxes.*
 - *Examples of content: lollipops, caramels, colored erasers, sharpeners, stickers, badges, colored beads, balloons, toy cars, fluffy notebooks, glass balls, figurines, etc.*





Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, the students may work individually or you may form homogeneous teams, if some students require more help from their colleagues.
- Explain the students that you will read a number of sentences without an ending and that it will be up to them to complete it with an action
 - Examples of sentences:
 - *Michael was going to his grandparents' house when he saw...*
 - *Jane went to the store to buy...*
 - *Children know and can...*
 - *If I had magic powers for one day, the first thing I would do would be to...*
 - *If people had green hair, then...*





Exercise 6: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, students may work individually or you may form homogeneous small teams, of 3-4 members, if some students require more help from their colleagues
- Explain to the students that you are asking them to imagine they have received 100 refrigerators for free, and to answer the question: *What would I do with 100 refrigerators?*
 - The boldest answers will be favored
- Listen to all answers provided by participants

Exercise 7: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, the students will work individually.
- Distribute plasticine or modeling clay to the students and ask them to model a sculpture representing them or someone they know
 - *Working time 20 minutes*
- Ask each student to talk about the person they have chosen to model and why
- Exhibit all the models

Exercise 8: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, help the students to form homogeneous small teams, of 3-4 members, if some students require more help from their colleagues
- Explain to the students that they will receive 10 plastic cups which they will use to make a construction that does not collapse
 - *Students may also use glue, colors, cardboard*
 - *Working time 20 minutes*
- Ask each team to present the result of their work

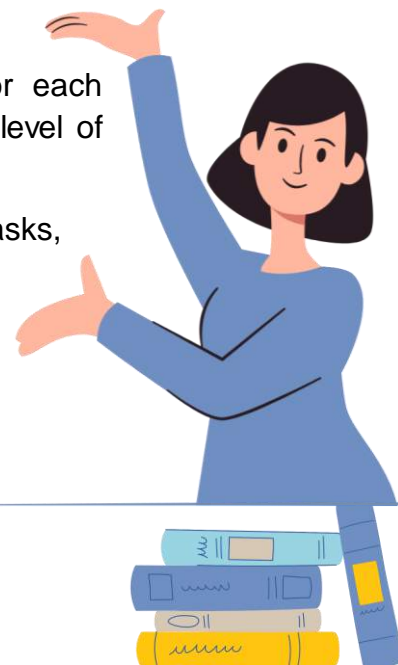
REMARKS:



Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.



If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself from a student's position.





Collaboration, Communication, Vocabulary Development

Collaboration, communication, vocabulary development - students have, most of the time, the opportunity to experience different group activities, as they belong, since the beginning of school, to at least one group (the class), therefore communication is very important in the process of integration, learning and participation in games, activities and group decisions.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Collaboration, communication, vocabulary development

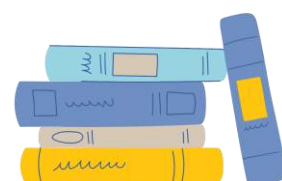
Resources:

- Simple pictures of objects or scenes
- Small objects – sharpeners, clock/watch, eraser, napkins, balls, scissors, glass, mirror, etc.
- Worksheets containing sentences

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, help the students to form pairs.
- Offer each team two cards, face down, so that the team members cannot see the pictures.
- Ask the students that, by turns, one member of each pair should pick up a card, look at it and, over the course of 5 minutes, describe to his colleague what he sees, providing as many details as possible.
 - *The pair partner does the same thing*
- After each of them finishes telling the story, the card is shown to the pair partner.

Ask each student whether the description made by their team colleague was accurate and whether he had imagined precisely what was in the picture.



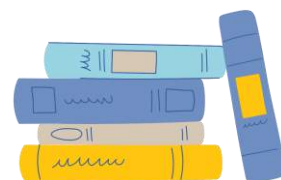


Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, the students may work individually
- Ask the students to look at the objects you have prepared on the table
- Explain to the students that you will hide the objects and that you will put one of them in a box, separately
 - *Example of objects: eraser, sharpener, pencil case, pack of napkins, chalk, sponge, plastic cup, glove, hair clip, ball, orange, apple, horn, notebook, pencil box.*
 - *Ask the students to ask questions that you may answer by YES or NO in order for them to guess which object you have put in a separate box*
 - *Tell the students that they can ask you questions regarding shape, size, color, use*
 - *Examples of possible questions: Is it round in shape? Is it green in color? Is it soft? Is it big? Is it something to eat? Does it break? Is it used for writing?*
- After several questions, give students the opportunity to guess what the object is
- If too few correct answers are received, the teacher must give examples of questions and answers, by taking on the role of the student.

Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- For this exercise, help the students to form homogeneous small teams, of 3-4 members, especially if some students require more help from their colleagues.
- Explain to the students that you will read a few short sentences and that each team will have the task of changing the sentences by using different words, while preserving the meaning.
 - Working time 10 minutes
 - In the case of older students, worksheets containing the written sentences will be distributed
 - Examples of sentences and possible changes:
 - *I like apples a lot - I am a great fan of apple tree fruit;*
 - *We are disciplined in school - Our class respects the rules at school;*
 - *There is a pigeon on top of a house - A bird is resting on the roof of a dwelling;*
 - *The light bulb in the classroom has blown out - The light bulb in here no longer works.*
- If students have difficulty with the task, repeat the exercise by asking them to replace a single word with its synonym.





Analysis and Self-Reflection

Analysis and self-reflection - students have, most of the time, the opportunity to experience different group activities, as they belong, since the beginning of school, to at least one group (the class), therefore communication is very important in the process of integration, learning and participation in games, activities and group decisions.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

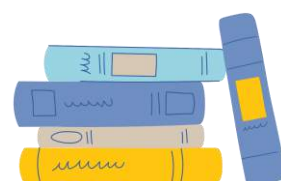
Theme: Analysis and Self-Reflection

Resources:

- Themed-picture cards – clothes, food, toys, activities, places for leisure, seasons, cars, telephones. Models as varied as possible
- Pictures of right/ wrong, polite/impolite, safe/dangerous actions

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 6 and 8 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Before the activity, prepare several cards from various categories:
 - *clothing*
 - *footwear*
 - *food*
 - *personal items - watches, jewelry*
 - *cars*
 - *toys*
- Distribute 3 cards from the same category to each student.
- Ask the students to carefully examine the pictures and to choose the one they like most, putting the favorite cards on the right. Explain that they do not need to think of a justification, the only criterion is their own desire.
- Specify that they have 5 minutes available for this activity.
- Ask each student to present his choices to his colleagues.



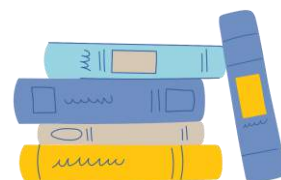


Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Distribute one card from several categories to each student:
 - *furniture*
 - *clothing items*
 - *objects in the street*
 - *animals*
 - *tools*
 - *food*
- Ask the students to carefully examine the pictures and to answer a few questions:
 - *What do you think you can pick up off the ground?*
 - *What do you think you could do yourself?*
 - *What do you think you could use easily?*
- Specify that they have 5 minutes available for this activity.
- Ask each student to present his choices to his colleagues.

Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Invite the students to think for 5 minutes about a situation in which they had to make a choice.
 - *at school*
 - *at home*
 - *on vacation (holiday)*
 - *at the store*
 - *at the restaurant*
- After a few minutes of thinking, encourage and help the students to talk, by turns, about the situation they have identified.
 - *Guide the discussion by asking students whether they were happy with the choice they made*
 - *If you think this would help, talk to them about a few situations you encountered yourself*
 - *I chose from a menu something to eat at the restaurant*
 - *I chose something to buy from an aisle at the store,*
 - *I chose from several destinations where to go on a weekend*
 - *I chose what clothes to wear today*



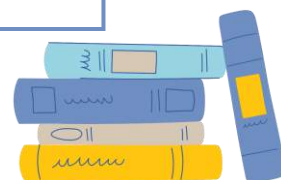


Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare a brief story, about the choices of other children and the consequences thereof.
- Examples:
 - *The children in a class chose to go to the seaside on a one-day trip. But the journey was very long, and they were only able to lie on the beach for 2 hours.*
 - *A young man received a sum of money as a birthday present. Even though he needed new sneakers for school, he chose to buy a sweater and a cap.*
 - *A student refused to skip the last class with other classmates, and received a high grade because he knew very well the lesson taught during that class.*
 - *Two little girls cycled to school every day, and were in a good physical condition as a result. Then they participated in a running race and won nice prizes.*
 - *then announce the task: analyze the behavior, determine whether it was right or wrong.*
- Read out the story and urge the students to pay attention and to listen.
- Help the students to form work pairs/ small teams (2 to 5) and to think for 10 minutes about the following aspects:
 - *How they think the characters acted*
 - *What they think about the consequences of the choices made by the characters*
 - *Do they think the situations are similar to things that happened to them, or do they know someone who has gone through a similar situation*
- At the end of the time allotted, listen to all the students' opinions.

Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare pictures of pairs of actions: polite/ impolite, easy/difficult, safe/dangerous.
- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Invite the students to look at the pairs of images and then to determine into which category each of them falls.
- Initiate discussions taking as a starting point the pictures shown with regard to
 - *personal behaviors - how we behave in general*
 - *choices - why it is good to choose certain behaviors*
 - *solutions in similar situations - how we can avoid danger*
- Encourage the students to express their own opinion.





Risk Anticipation and Assessment

Risk anticipation and assessment - a capacity without which it is impossible to choose an option that is optimal, effective and as safe as possible in terms of consequences in the decision-making process.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

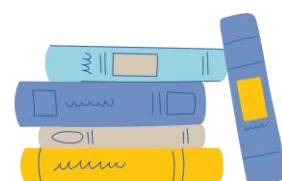
Theme: Risk Anticipation and Assessment

Resources:

- Cards containing images of actions (done by animals or humans)
- Cards containing images of objects
- Simple objects with which we can perform actions – plastic cup, stick, ear cotton swab, scissors, needle, yarn, glue, brush, nail polish, toy saw, sheet of paper, stone, napkins, water bottle, mug, spoon, cardboard, tweezers, pencil, etc.

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare cards containing pictures, as in the following examples:
 - *an elephant hanging from a tree branch*
 - *water flowing in a large volume down the river bed*
 - *child throwing a ball into the window*
 - *child slipping into a puddle of mud*
 - *snowman standing in the sun*
 - *child in front of a plate of food*
 - *car not stopping at a stop sign*
 - *two people meeting on a very narrow bridge*
 - *a big stone on top of a small pebble*
 - *a fallen tree supported by a stick*
 - *a lot of dark clouds gathering in the sky*
- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually, or you can guide them to choose a partner for a pair.
- Ask the students to carefully examine each picture and to tell what they think will happen if the activity in the picture goes on.
- Encourage the students to tell their opinion about each individual picture. Ask clarifying questions in order to guide the discussion.





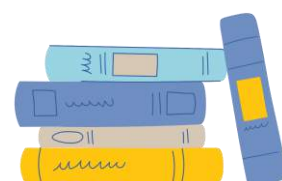
Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 6 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Distribute to each of them two objects / pictures of objects, one of which is right, while the other is wrong for an action, as shown in the examples below:
 - *to eat - spoon, toothpick*
 - *to fish - axe, spear*
 - *to paint - stick, brush*
 - *to write - pencil, brush*
 - *to drink water - glass, spoon*
 - *to blow my nose - tissue, scarf*
 - *to glue - glue, water*
 - *to start a fire - lighter, stones*
 - *to dye - dye, nail polish*
 - *to cut paper - scissors, saw*
- Ask the students to look at the objects you have/ pictures, then tell them which is right for the action in question (the teacher also announces the action for each pair of objects)
- With older students, you can initiate a discussion on the following topic:
 - *Let's imagine and talk about what happens if we carry out the task using the wrong object.*



Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Prepare pictures showing various simple actions:
 - *running, climbing, crossing, cooking, skating, swimming,*
 - *car driving, walking in the park, paying at the store, etc.*
- Help the students to choose a picture and to answer the question you are about to ask.
- Depending on the picture chosen by the students, ask questions such as
 - *How is it safer to run, in slippers or in sneakers?*
 - *How is it safer to climb, with a helmet or with a cap on our heads?*
 - *How is it safer to cross, slowly or by running?*
- At the end, discuss with the students which is the safest way to do the actions in question and why.





Development and Use of an Analysis, Comparison and Substitution System

Development and use of an analysis, comparison and substitution system - components of thinking that help rational decision-making. By encouraging the analysis and debate of certain situations, students will go through several stages: proposal, choice, argumentation, analysis of answers, proposal of solutions, and even decision-making.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

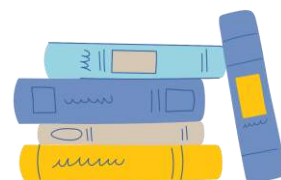
Theme: Development and use of an analysis, comparison and substitution system

Resources:

- Cards showing pictures or objects: towel, shoe, pencil, flower, flake, egg, stone, plate, napkin, box, yarn, scissors, telephone, book, cotton pad, bow, hammer, leaf, etc.

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they can work individually or they can form pairs of their choice.
- Prepare a set of pictures representing various actions:
 - *we eat*
 - *we put on our shoes*
 - *we write*
 - *we get home*
 - *we clean a wound*
 - *we protect ourselves from the rain*
 - *we drink water*
 - *we wipe the blackboard clean*
- Show the students the picture of each action and ask the students “How can we achieve this action if we do not have the usual instrument/ object?”
- Encourage the students to answer with regard to each action.



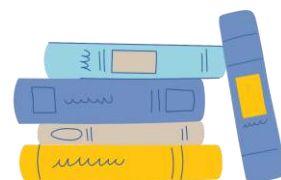


Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, they will work individually.
- Distribute to the students cards showing pictures of objects, or even the objects themselves, as in the examples below:
 - *towel*
 - *shoe*
 - *pencil*
 - *flower*
 - *flake*
 - *egg*
 - *plate*
 - *napkin*
 - *box*
 - *book*
 - *cotton pad*
 - *leaf*
- Ask the students to analyze the pictures/ objects for 5 minutes, then to answer the question:
 - *What does this look like?*
- Encourage the students to find the most appropriate answers.

Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to students that, for this activity, you will help them form teams (4-5 members).
- Prepare a number of pictures of objects, or even small objects, such as:
 - *watches*
 - *cars*
 - *hygiene items*
 - *cooking items*
 - *toys*
 - *furniture*
 - *flowers*
 - *clothes, etc.*
- Distribute at least 10 pictures/objects to each group.
- Invite the students to look at the pictures/ objects and to arrange them into groups according to a common criterion they notice
 - *If necessary, you can help the students with clues for grouping them – shape, color, texture, size, use*
- At the end of the activity, the teams present the groups they formed and the criteria they used.





Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form teams (4 to 5 members).
- Present the situation below and ask the students to find, over the course of 15 minutes, as many solutions as possible for this situation
 - We have a sum of money and you must find the best solutions to spend the money for the class (objects, equipment, arrangements, activities, etc.)
- At the end of the activity, ask each team to present the results of the discussion, and request arguments and answers.

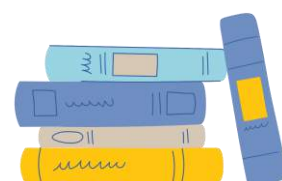
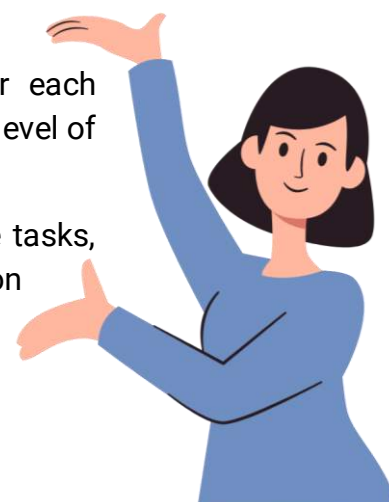
Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form small teams.
- Present the situation below and ask the students to find, over the course of 10 minutes, as many solutions as possible for this situation
 - *We have found we have a mouse in the classroom! What do you think we should do?*
- Invite the students to work in teams and to propose solutions.
- Write on the blackboard each answer and analyze with the entire class the pros and cons of each proposition.

REMARKS:

➡ Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.

➡ If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself from the position of a student.





Negotiation and Exchange

Negotiation and exchange - essential for the identification of needs, awareness of possibilities, of the potential and personal rights, and important in making personal decisions

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

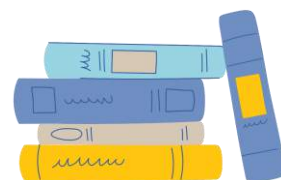
Theme: Development and use of an analysis, comparison and substitution system

Resources:

- Cards showing pictures or objects: towel, shoe, pencil, flower, flake, egg, stone, plate, napkin, box, yarn, scissors, telephone, book, cotton pad, bow, hammer, leaf, etc.

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Help the students to form pairs.
- Prepare beforehand several sets of objects/ pictures (at least as many as the number of teams)
- Examples of sets:
 - *Spoon - fork - knife,*
 - *Telephone - charger - phone case*
 - *Seeds - earth - flower pot*
 - *drawing pad - watercolors - brushes - water jar*
 - *shoes - trousers (pants) - blouse - jacket*
 - *wheel - steering wheel - gasoline - headlights*
- Distribute to each team one object from the set, the sets being thus incomplete
- Ask each team to negotiate item exchanges with one another, so that in the end each team manages to complete one set.





Emotional Self-Regulation

Emotional self-regulation - it is important for the student to take the necessary time to make a correct decision and go through all the stages, without feeling pressured to accept the first available variant, and to be able to manage a situation with which he does not feel comfortable. Another aim is to also develop the student's empathy, so that he is able to use balanced emotional cues in decision-making.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

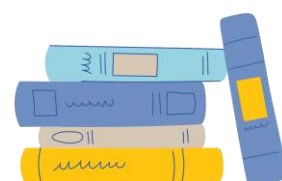
Theme: Emotional self-regulation

Resources:

- Audio device – nature sounds, relaxing music
- Pictures / short videos/ happy/ sad stories
- Set of expressive faces, as varied as possible: happy, angry, frowning, bored, angry, scared, amazed, suspicious, tired, etc.

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to the students that they will work individually.
- Induce a calm, relaxing ambience by playing relaxing music or recorded nature sounds.
- Ask students to close their eyes for 5 minutes and to think of something they like – an action, a person, an object, a place, an animal, etc.
- Maintain a calm and quiet ambience in the classroom throughout the exercise.
- At the end, encourage students to narrate or draw what they imagined
- Encourage students to use this exercise whenever they have a difficult task to do, a tough choice to make, or are simply in a charged emotional state.





Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 9 and 12 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

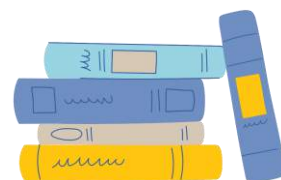
- Explain to the students that they will work individually.
- Speak in a calm, soothing voice, and you can play relaxing music or recorded nature sounds.
- Ask the students to close their eyes for 5 minutes and imagine that they are plants/ trees/ flowers, and that their limbs are part thereof and move gently in the wind. The movement should be calm, relaxing.
- Guide and help each student to find a relaxing pace of movement.
- Encourage students to use the relaxation method whenever necessary, for example, through coordinated use in the classroom.

Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 10 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Explain to the students that they will work individually.
- Prepare beforehand pictures / short videos/ happy/ sad stories
- Ask the students to listen to/ look at/ watch pictures / short videos/ happy/ sad stories
- Ask the students to describe how they feel after looking/ watching/ listening, or they may choose a suitable expressive face to express their emotions
- Constantly encourage the students to express their state in relation to other activities, events in the classroom, school, by presenting the cards.

Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Ask the students to work individually.
- Choose a simple sentence, as in the following examples:
 - *I have finally arrived*
 - *It's so good to be home*
 - *There is no food left*
- Ask the students to repeat the sentence, but in different voices, expressing various emotions, as indicated by you through an emoticon or a word: anger, fear, joy, surprise, fatigue, impatience, disappointment, fright, etc.
- Repeat the task several times, until each student has expressed at least 3 different emotions.
- If necessary, give examples of your own for emotions that are harder to express.





Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Ask the students to work individually or help them form pairs if there are students who require more help from their colleagues.
- Prepare several situations beforehand:
 - *a child has been injured and is in a cast*
 - *two children have lost their way*
 - *a child is a victim of bullying at school*
 - *a child's parents do not have money to buy him clothes for school*
 - *a child has no electricity [at home]*
- Distribute/ read by turns the situations below (written or read).
- Then ask the students to think of a drawing or a letter of encouragement for the protagonists of the situation received.

REMARKS:



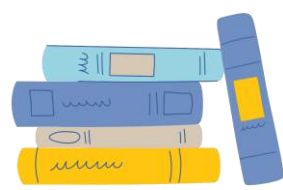
Repeat the exercises periodically, with the same tasks for each student, so that you can notice and assess individual progress at the level of achieving the task more quickly, more accurately.



If no improvements are noted in the manner of achieving the tasks, repeat by showing the solution, and involving yourself from the position of a student.



Generally speaking, games and short activities can help participants achieve several goals: develop cooperation skills in order to find together solutions to various problematic situations, produce ideas that can be applied both individually and in groups, get involved in solving some problems, improve their manual skills and other parts of the locomotor system; use their imagination and memory in a creative way, overcome the fear of experimenting, exploring and discovering new things and situations.





3.3. Self-Knowledge in the Decision-Making Process

Sometimes the lack of an appropriate response from children, low motivation, non-involvement or passivity in an action may also be caused by insufficient self-knowledge. This often leads to low self-esteem, which can affect the entire personality level of the child, implicitly leading to lack of trust in themselves, insecurity and unresponsiveness in making decisions related to themselves or within the group.

Self-knowledge is the answer to the question “Who am I?”, leading to the mental formation of the self-image (about one’s own person).

Self-image has three components:

1. Physical self-image - the perception of one's own body
2. Mental self-image - the perception of one's own psyche and behavior
3. Social self-image - the social perception of oneself

An important part of self-knowledge lies in how we recognize and manage our own emotions. Teachers and parents can help children become more aware of their own emotions, by accepting them and by supporting the children to express them in acceptable ways.

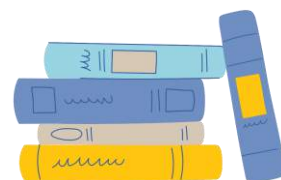
Self-knowledge entails several benefits:

- the ability to regulate our own emotions and moods/humors
- harmonious relations with the people around us
- acceptance of who we are and how we look
- autonomy in thinking
- the ability to respond rather than react
- the ability to make decisions

In the self-knowledge process, it is important to answer honestly a few questions about ourselves:

1. *What do I know?*
2. *What can I do better?*
3. *What do I wish for? What would I like to do?*
4. *What is important to me?*
5. *What am I like? Who am I?*
6. *Where do I feel safe*

Children with special educational requirements (SER) need to have more time allotted to the personal development and self-knowledge process, more patience from those around them, they have a strong need for affection and support from adults in order to succeed in creating an appropriate self-image.

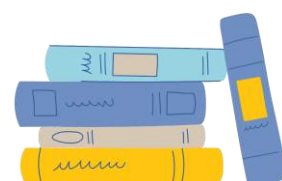




Teachers can decisively influence a child's self-image, through their own behavior that can be taken as a model, as well as, and especially, by creating situations in which children get to know themselves better.

Teachers who work with this category of students must take into consideration the following:

1. **OBSERVE** - pay attention to the child's behavior in various situations, to the way in which he reacts, how he relates to the group, the way in which he takes care of his things, the manner in which he talks to adults, to colleagues, what he likes to do.
2. **TAKE ACTION** - discover his qualities or weaknesses; in order to contribute to the formation of a high self-esteem of the child, it is necessary to adapt your expectations and requirements to his actual capacities. Organize some activities to which the children would participate with pleasure. As time goes by, their level of resilience will increase. The child's skills can also be developed through extracurricular activities.
3. **DO NOT DECIDE FOR HIM** - sometimes decision-making autonomy is mixed up with control, out of the educators' fear that students will become naughty. Encourage the child to express his opinion and participate in making decisions that concern him directly: the choice of clothes, music, the kind of food he wants. By encouraging the child to make decisions and speak his mind, we will help him become more responsible and self-confident.
4. **REWARD** - encouragement, words of praise are welcome when the child is tenacious and acts decisively toward achieving his goals.





3.4. Self-Knowledge in the Decision-Making Process

EXERCISES FOR CREATING A SELF-IMAGE OF ONE'S BODY

Exercise 1: HALF OF FACE - appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Print half of a photo of the student's face on a cardboard card.
- Distribute the cards to the students and ask them to continue the drawing so as to make their own portrait.
- Discuss each drawing individually.

Exercise 2: BODY MAPPING - appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

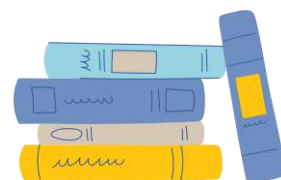
- Have a student lie horizontally on a flipchart.
- Ask the other students to draw his outline, then to complete the drawing within the group by adding details: e.g.: blue pants, brown hair, green eyes, etc...

! This is an exercise that helps students to also become aware of the manner in which others perceive them.

Exercise 3: MY SUPERPOWER - appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Distribute to each student a sheet having a photo of him standing printed on it.
- Ask the students to look at the photo, then ask them what their superpower is
- Ask the students to add to the drawing an element that shows what their superpower is
 - wings so that he can fly,
 - oversized ears so that he can hear thoughts,
 - big eyes so that he can see only beautiful things
 - huge feet so that he can run fast, etc.

Discuss with the students how they can do what they want without having these superpowers.



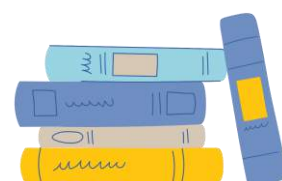


EXERCISES FOR CREATING A SELF-IMAGE OF ONE'S PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND OWN BEHAVIOR

Exercise 1 TRICK QUESTIONS - Appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare slips of paper with some of the questions below
- Help the students arrange themselves in a circle
- Ask the students to take turns drawing a slip and to answer the questions
- Examples of questions:
 - *Who do you talk to when you have a problem? How does that person help you?*
 - *What do you do for fun?*
 - *What worries you?*
 - *What do you wish your parents knew about you? What do you wish your friends and classmates knew about you?*
 - *If you could be granted one wish, what would it be?*
 - *What makes you feel ashamed?*
 - *Where do you feel safest?*
 - *If you weren't afraid, what would you like to do?*
 - *What does failure mean to you? Have you ever felt you failed? How did you deal with it?*
 - *How do you know when you're about to get angry? What does your body tell you? What do you think about?*
 - *How are you different from others?*
 - *What did your parents/grandparents/teachers tell you that you still remember fondly?*
 - *What do you do when people around you don't seem to like you?*
 - *What is your greatest achievement?*
 - *What are the things you have control over? What is out of your control? How do you feel when you realize that there are things that are out of your control?*
 - *What do you like about school? What exactly don't you like?*
 - *What do you do when you are stressed?*
 - *What nice thing could you say to yourself?*
 - *What is the most beautiful memory you have?*
 - *What do you do when you feel down? Do you think it is ok to cry? Do you think it is ok to scream?*
 - *What is your favorite book? Your favorite movie? Your favorite musical band? Your favorite food? Your favorite color? Your favorite animal?*
 - *What are you grateful for?*
 - *What do you like about yourself?*

Exercise 2: MY VISIT CARD - Appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.



- Distribute colored sheets and felt-tip pens to the students.
- Explain to the students what a visit card is.
- Ask the students to make their own visit card, on which they should include the following elements:
 - Name and/ or nickname:
 - Age:
 - Where they can be found:
 - What makes them special:

EXERCISES FOR CONSOLIDATING ONE'S SELF-PERCEPTION

Exercise 1: THE ONION - Appropriate for students with moderate cognitive disabilities with ages between 12 and 16 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Distribute to each student worksheets having each of the colors presented below.
- Guide the students by explaining them what to do: They should fill in the answers to the questions on the worksheets
 - **Red**
 - What music do you like to listen to?
 - What do you do in your leisure time?
 - **Green**
 - What do you appreciate in other people?
 - What would you like others to say about you?
 - **Yellow**
 - What do you like most about yourself?
 - What would you like to change about yourself?
 - **Blue**
 - What do you want to become?
 - What is the thing you are most proud of?
- Fold the colored sheets in the shape of an onion, starting with the blue ones and ending with the red ones. All the onions will be mixed together.
- Help the students to form two teams. Each member will pick an onion and try to identify the colleague to whom the onion belongs. They can consult one another within the team.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The action of making a decision involves all personal structures, it activates components of the psyche and of personality.
- To support and improve students' ability to make choices, it is necessary to develop and practice basic structures and acquisitions such as observation, attention, communication, self-image, curiosity, interest.
- Children with SER (CES) should be involved in activities and exercises as often as possible.
- Self-knowledge helps students with SER (CES) to form and develop their self-image and to gain greater confidence in the decision-making process.
- Games for self-knowledge may be used by teachers in personal development classes.

Chapter 4

4.1. Group Decisions, Group Dynamics, Group Behaviors, Types of Decision-Making

4.2. Benefits of Student Participation in Group Activities and Decisions

4.3. Practical Exercises Intended to Form and Strengthen the Cohesiveness of Student Groups

4.4. Involvement of Student Groups in Decision-Making



4.1. Group Decisions, Group Dynamics, Group Behaviors, Types of Decision-Making

Parents and teachers have a tendency to make decisions for children/ students, because this is more time-effective, they rely on a richer experience, there are purposes and effects that the child is unable to grasp. But, as emphasized previously, the student's involvement in making decisions also brings a lot of benefits for personal development, and as a result, the entire school activity in which children with a good level of personal development participate will become more effective.

At school, the activity carried out is aimed at a set of fixed goals and objectives, established by law, as well as by various deeds, rules, regulations (school curriculum, education law, organizational and operational regulation, Constitution of Romania, etc.), but, despite all this, students can be involved at all levels in choices and decision-making processes.

Making decisions in a group depends on certain strategies of coordination of the interactions of the group members. To increase the quality of a collective decision, it is recommended to use a set of rules or regulations that the team members should follow when contributing to a decision that belongs to their group.

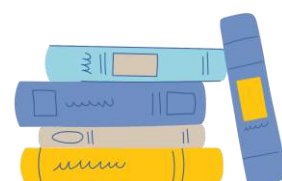
A group decision in class depends on

- **the use of the resources of all students** - the task falling upon the teacher is to include any student in decision-making groups, and in order to achieve this, he must create united groups which are based on cooperation and mutual respect within the class of students
- **the time allotted to complete the process** - which must be individualized depending on the particularities of the group required to make the decision, as it has already been demonstrated that the exercise of group decision-making activities stimulates an increased speed and, therefore, a shorter necessary time
- **the result that must be at least satisfactory for the majority/ all of the team members** - the teacher must know or, at least, have an intuition of the personal needs of the students involved, in order to be able to provide the necessary guidance for achieving effective outcomes for everyone

Each group has specific dynamics, well-established rules and principles, and the members' behaviors, attitudes and decisions are influenced thereby; the teacher can diminish or remove such obstacles by supporting an ambience of cooperation, by constantly practising group activities and by involving himself personally at key times of deadlock.

Whether it is a working group, play group, class group, or parents' group, the same coordinates are observed

Group rules, to which the class members relate, are generally of several types: relational (with whom one can/cannot relate), of communication (types of





communication allowed by the group), affective (emotions and emotional ties can be expressed, are/are not allowed), and of discipline (which sanctions are allowed and for which specific behaviors).

Problems consist in stressful experiences within a group, and they measure and emphasize multiple aspects of group dynamics (cohesion, roles, effectiveness, etc.). Problems seem threatening; therefore, conflict is often avoided. However, the group of students can become even more united after successfully solving a difficult situation. Signs of conflict can be easily noted in children's behavior (they blame one another, have no patience with one another; proposals are criticized before they are elaborated; colleagues make no effort to understand one another's perspective).

Therefore, because difficult and problematic situations require choices and decision-making, the dynamics of the student group decisively influence the next stages of the school activity. People and their roles in the group become more important than the objective, individual analysis of the problem, so **decisions can be made in the following ways:**

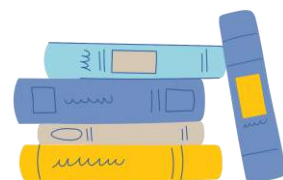
- The leader decides on his own on behalf of the entire group
- A member who is very interested in a particular outcome puts pressure on the other members
- A compromise is reached by weighing the smallest negative effects possible
- It is put to vote and the decision belongs to the majority

For a student, choosing and deciding by himself is very different from the situation in which such process is collective. As regards personal life, he can manage on his own, but in the school activity, decisions which regard and affect all the members of the group are more effective if made collectively.

4.2. Benefits of Student Participation in Group Activities and Decisions

From a psychological perspective, the interaction of the child (especially of the child with SER) with the group is necessary from very early ages. Even if initially it is a smaller group, such as the family, subsequently opportunities for broadening the child's horizons will arise. From simply observing a close group to taking up the role of member, any person - child, adolescent, or adult - has a multitude of benefits [in relation to a group]:

- Observes a variety of human typologies, records different stimuli and enriches his sensory experience
- Develops the ability to focus and pay attention, understanding the situations and options he has more easily
- Accepts differences more easily, thus developing a wider range of variants, options, solutions
- Has increased frustration tolerance, accepting more easily immediate unpleasant consequences of his choices. Analyzes and compares human behaviors, including manners of choosing and deciding





- Learns or diversifies his range of reactions, attitudes, and responses
- Completes his self-image and learns new things about himself, guiding his choices according to more realistic benchmarks regarding his own needs
- Experiences new, nuanced emotions
- Develops finer communication, cooperation and social skills, becoming braver in expressing opinions and engaging in group decisions

Participation in school life brings along a new group to which the student will belong and, as studies on the impact of children's and young people's participation in the development of public policies also show, the existence, creation and maintenance of opportunities to participate in collective decision-making has a positive effect on their health and well-being. Children develop their level of knowledge and understanding of their own rights and, most importantly, they can acquire new skills related to private or public decision-making.

All students, irrespective of SER, of age, religion or any other aspect, can and must be involved in decision-making at group level. The first step the teacher can take in class to achieve this goal is to form one or more groups (within the same class) that should include members as diverse as possible, to maintain balanced dynamics.

Whether it is the first day of school in the preparatory class (preschool), or the first day of the last high school class, the class coordinator (primary school teacher or homeroom teacher) must give special importance to the participation, involvement and group cohesion of students, considering that the end result is an active involvement of the student with SER in group decisions. The more students get used to working in groups, the easier it will be for them to perform group-decision actions.

4.3. Practical Exercises Intended to Form and Strengthen the Cohesiveness of Student Groups

Group-forming activities - energizing games by which participants can be helped to form pairs and homogeneous groups when necessary. These techniques help break down cliques – groups of friends who do not want to be separated in order to participate in one game or another.

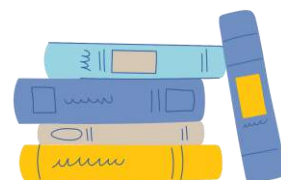
Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Group-forming activities

Resources:

- Cards with pictures, or objects: numbers, geometric figures, colors, animals, fruits, vegetables, letters





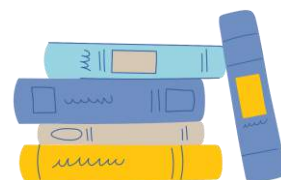
Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Mix cards showing numbers, colors, animals, geometric shapes, etc. in a small bag (about 3-4 of the same kind)
- Ask the students to take out one card at a time, without looking at what they are taking out, to look at the card taken and to look for classmates who have the same kind of cards in order to form a team with them
- After the teams were formed, discuss together the topic of the common criterion that brought them together, looking for the positive aspects
- Examples of criteria/ discussions:
 - *red color – means love*
 - *cherries are red, I have a red blouse, mother has red hair, etc.;*
 - *number 2 – we have 2 hands, 2 legs, 2 eyes, I live at no. 2, 2 is company, etc.*
 - *triangle – means an arrow, pyramids, I have earrings of that shape, I can easily draw a triangle, it resembles A from Adina, etc.*



Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level

- Prepare a few simple questions (depending on the students' age), which the students can answer by YES/ NO
- Examples of questions:
 - *Would you like to dress in red?*
 - *Do you like the apple?*
 - *Do you like dogs?*
 - *Do you like football?*
 - *Would you like to eat mushrooms? Etc.*
- Read each question and encourage students to listen attentively and to answer Yes or No
- Students may answer in writing, by raising their hand, verbally.
- Help the students to find colleagues who answer in the same way and to form a team!
- After forming the teams, students have 10 minutes available to discuss and to present arguments for the answer that brought them together (Why I want/ do not want to dress in red).





Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare beforehand a list of things / characteristics the students might have in common.
- Examples of criteria:
 - *they have brothers / sisters / siblings,*
 - *they are wearing a black top,*
 - *they talk a lot on the phone,*
 - *they like football,*
 - *they like dolls,*
 - *they have a dog in the yard,*
 - *they come to school by bus, etc.*
- Ask the students to listen to the criterion being read and to go: those who answer NO to the right, and those who answer YES to the left. Then, for the following criterion, form groups again.
- At the end, discuss with the students the dynamics noted.





Games of self-knowledge, presentation and interpersonal knowledge within the group - help the participants to describe their own person, to explore their self-conception, to capitalize on the positive personal and group qualities, to recognize their own value and the value of others, to recognize the changes that happened to them in the course of time, to examine their circle of friends and relationships, to respect differences between group members.

Activities of this kind offer participants opportunities to explore personal characteristics and to practise different ways of expressing their personality, allowing comparison with other participants in order to discover their own individuality and uniqueness.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Games of self-knowledge, presentation and interpersonal knowledge

Resources:

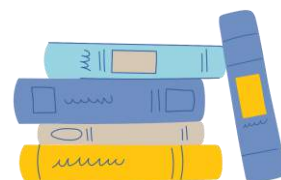
- Ball/ plush toy/ soft toy
- Real seeds/ cardboard seeds
- Writing sheets/ pencils
- Cardboard clocks / cards with a printed clock face

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Guide the students to form 2 big concentric circles – one inside the other.
- Ask the students in the inner circle to turn their face toward students in the outer circle, to quickly introduce themselves and to shake hands warmly.
- Ask the students in the outer circle to always rotate to the left, and those in the inner circle to move to the right, until all participants meet again one another.
- Coordinate the movement of the two circles, making sure they have enough time to introduce themselves.

Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Guide the students to form a big circle in the middle of the classroom.
- Sit in the middle of the circle and hold a ball/light object in your hand.
- Start the game by explaining to the students that you are going to throw the ball up and utter the name of a student. The one whose name is uttered must come quickly, trying to catch the ball, and then do the same, by calling the name of another classmate.
- The game goes on until everyone has caught the ball at least once.





Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

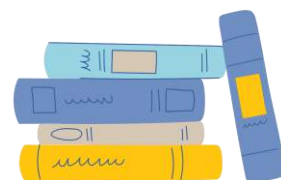
- Invite one student at a time in front of his classmates
- Help the student in front of the class to write the name of a classmate in the air. The classmate identified will come to take his place.
- Offer help whenever necessary so that the student can manage to fulfill his task
- For students who meet for the first time, the task can be for them to write their name in the air and for the classmates to figure out what the name is.

Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to form a circle.
- Start the first round and say your first name out loud, then each student on the right must say their first name.
- In the second round, think of an adjective that would describe you
 - The adjective must begin with the same letter as the first name
 - e.g.: *I am Florin and I am fabulous*
- I am Sorina and I am smart
- During the last round, name an animal (names of birds, insects are also accepted) beginning with the same letter as the first name.

Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to arrange themselves in a circle, standing or sitting on chairs
- Sit among the children
- Leave a vacant place, on the right of someone
- That student asks a classmate to come and sit on the vacant seat,
 - e.g., *"I would like Lily to come and sit on my right side". Lily makes the move, and now the student on whose right a seat has become vacant calls another person to come and sit on his right.*
- The game goes on until everyone has participated at least once.





Exercise 6: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare as many seeds as the number of students, e.g., if there are 15 people in the class, each of them will receive 15 seeds
- Distribute the correct number of seeds to each student
- Students put the seeds in a pocket/ bag/ envelope, and the other pocket is left empty
- Students have 10 minutes available to introduce themselves to one another, by saying:
 - their name,
 - their age,
 - their interests, etc.
- The one who speaks gives a seed to the one who listens, when he listens, it is his turn to receive a seed from the other one. The seed must be placed in the empty pocket
- The game goes on until each student is left with just one seed in the first pocket, which means that all students have talked to their classmates.





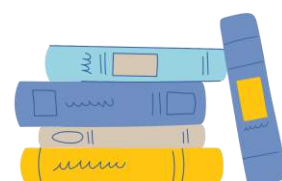
Exercise 7: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Guide students so as to form pairs.
- Distribute to each pair the following worksheet, with the task that each pair member should fill it in:

Worksheet with sentences

- Before I came here, my biggest interest was
.....
- The manner in which I would describe my family is
.....
- The thing I remember best from school
.....
- My most unusual friend is
.....
- The thing I cherish most
.....
- My favorite way to spend my time is
.....
- The thing that troubles me most is
.....
- Some things that make me happy are
.....
- In five years' time I hope to get
.....
- The thing I want to accomplish this year
.....
- On the first day we met, the things I noticed about you were
.....
- Since then, the things that have surprised me have been
.....
- What I like about you is
.....
- It seems to me that a significant difference between us is
.....
- I think the most important thing I have learned from this discussion is
.....

- If it is too difficult, you can shorten the worksheet and present it verbally in the form of a discussion.
- Go to each team and help with moderating the discussion and filling in the answers.





Exercise 8: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to write their first name and four statements about themselves (3 being true and one false) on a sheet of paper
 - e.g., *“Andrew likes to sing, to play football, he has five children and communicates a lot with other people”*. They can also be drawn
- Guide the students to form pairs, to show each other what they have written/ drawn and to try to determine which of the statements is false
- Then guide the students to change pairs, in order to find out what the statements of another colleague are
- Repeat the exercise several times
- Participate with your own true and false statements

Exercise 9: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Distribute to each student a sheet of paper on which a clock is drawn, with the hours marked
- Help the students to set up appointments with each other and to write down the names next to the hour in question, as marked on the clock.
- After all the students have set appointments with their classmates, announce an hour at random, let the students meet as scheduled, with the classmate set, and discuss the topic noted on the blackboard/ announced for the hour concerned
- You can simplify the discussion topics, depending on the age of the students

Examples of discussion topics according to hours:

- *01:00 o'clock. After eating I prefer to...*
- *02:00 o'clock. It's time to brag about...*
- *03:00 o'clock. I like to wear...*
- *04:00 o'clock. It's time for gossip (“It is said that...”)*
- *05:00 o'clock. My favorite kind of music...*
- *06:00 o'clock. If I were an animal, I would like to be...*
- *07:00 o'clock. My pet is...*
- *08:00 o'clock. How do I spend my leisure time...*
- *09:00 o'clock. Of all sports, I prefer...*
- *10:00 o'clock. My friend (my girlfriend) is...*
- *11:00 o'clock. At the weekend I will...*
- *12:00 o'clock. My favorite food...*





Working groups on certain simple themes - It is good to use these techniques frequently in the classroom so that students have the opportunity to work with different colleagues, with different experiences, with different ways of thinking and acting. Giving simple tasks, so that they can be easily fulfilled, helps to increase their confidence in themselves and in the team, increases the motivation for involvement.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

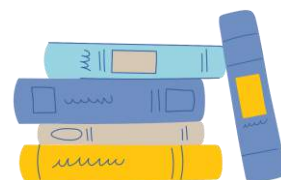
Theme: Working groups on predefined themes

Resources:

- Large flipchart sheets/ duplex cardboard
- Crayons/ felt-tip pens/ marker pens

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to group themselves into 2 or 3 teams and to set up a workspace in the classroom.
- Distribute to each team a sheet of flipchart/duplex cardboard and as many different colors as there are team members.
- Explain the task to the students: Each team will complete a drawing in which each color finds its place, meaning that each student has participated in the creation.
- Examples of drawing themes:
 - *a landscape*
 - *a fashion show*
 - *a city of the future*
 - *my class*
 - *alien life*
 - *favorite toys*
 - *a park*
 - *a farm, etc.*





Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to form small teams, of 3 to 4 members.
- Display a theme on the blackboard (or announce it verbally)
- Explain to the teams that they have 15 minutes to work on the assignment. At the end of the time, each team must present the results of their work.
- Examples of themes:
 - *a list of classroom rules,*
 - *a list of schoolyard rules,*
 - *a school uniform model,*
 - *a menu for a picnic,*
 - *healthy/unhealthy foods for children,*
 - *the best cartoons/video games, etc.*
- Assess and report all results at the end.

Projects carried out by students - the themes are more comprehensive, related to recently-taught lessons. The outcomes must be material, physical (boards, model, diorama, drawings, painting, mascot, costumes and masks, potted plants, etc.). Thus, students learn how to collaborate, to listen, to respect their colleagues, to look for arguments in order to support their own choices.

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

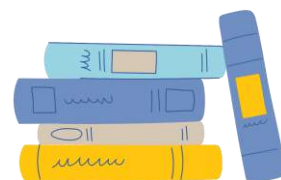
Theme: Projects carried out by students

Resources:

- Large flipchart sheets/ duplex cardboard
- Crayons/ felt-tip pens/ marker pens
- Animal figurines, characters, cardboard, glue, scissors, pictures, string, crepe paper, cardboard boxes, plastic cups, plastic bottles, cotton wool, glitter, adhesive tape, plasticine
- Children's magazines, pictures, newspapers, cartoon illustrations, stickers

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare beforehand enough materials for all the teams: figurines, cardboard, glue, scissors, pictures, string, crepe paper, cardboard boxes, plastic cups, plastic bottles, cotton wool, glitter, adhesive tape, etc.



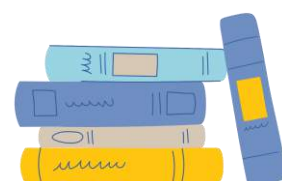


- Help the students to form 3 teams, the teacher having to make sure the students are distributed homogeneously.
- Explain to the students that, for the theme written on the blackboard, they will be able to choose the necessary materials and to create a representative scene
- Examples of themes:
 - *domestic animals*
 - *springtime*
 - *in the park*
 - *at school*
 - *fruits and vegetables*
 - *in the forest*
 - *on the mountain*
 - *wintertime, etc.*
- Working time: 40 minutes
- Closely monitor the teams, help and encourage all the students to participate in the work
- At the end, show your appreciation for all the projects



Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Prepare beforehand enough materials for all the teams: magazines, pictures, newspapers, cartoon illustrations, duplex cardboard
- Help the students to form 3 teams, making sure the students are distributed homogeneously
- Explain to the students that they are going to create a presentation poster for a particular cartoon or character found in the pictures provided
- Guide the teams how to choose their materials, how to cut, draw and glue in order to carry out the task
- Working time: 40 minutes
- Closely monitor the teams, help and encourage all the students to participate in the work
- At the end, show your appreciation for all the projects





Socialization, cooperation and knowledge activities - Cooperation contributes to creating a friendly ambience, of mutual help, trust, gentleness, open communication, making the process of learning and of cohabitation in a group easier. The main purpose of games of this type is group consolidation and the promotion of effective communication among participants

Teaching Worksheet

Students: 1st to 8th Grades - Moderate cognitive disabilities

Theme: Socialization, cooperation and knowledge

Resources:

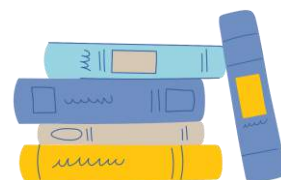
- Stickers/ adhesive sheets
- Boxes/bags of wheat, sand, cotton wool, sponge
- Audio device/ upbeat songs

Exercise 1: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to form pairs and sit behind each other, with the person behind holding the shoulders of the person in front.
- Place a sticker on the back of the student at the back.
- Explain to the students that you will all go around the classroom like toy trains, and try to take other teams' stickers while protecting your own. The student at the back must not take his hands off the student at the front.
- Working time 15 minutes.
- At the end, discuss with the students about challenges, successes, strategies used.

Exercise 2: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Guide the students to work individually.
- Prepare and give each student a box/bag with light objects inside, which they have to place on their head.
- You can participate in the exercise to demonstrate and help students
- Explain to the students that you are going to move around the classroom to the beat of the music, while trying to keep the object on your head. If someone drops the object, he must stay still. Colleagues can help him put it back on his head, but without dropping their own objects.
- The time allotted to this activity is 15 minutes.
- At the end of the exercise, discuss with the students the situations in which one should help their colleagues.
- You can start a dialogue about the value of helping in relation to individualism and competition, even by taking a personal risk.





Exercise 3: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

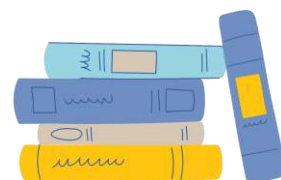
- Divide the students so as to work in two large groups, or you can work with the entire class at once.
- You can participate along with the students.
- Explain to the students that they will be put in the situation of imagining that they are an orchestra, each of them representing an instrument and having to make a specific noise (whistling, buzzing, sighing, trampling), then you will perform a familiar song together.
- Record the orchestra in action, then watch the video in class to discuss ways of improving the performance.

Exercise 4: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help students form 2 to 3 teams.
- Present a resume (CV) to students and explain what it contains.
- Explain to the students that each team must prepare its own resume and present all the advantages that an employer would have if they hired that team.
- Allow a working time of 20 minutes for completion of the task.
- Encourage and help the teams to discover all the strengths of each participant.
- Ask each team to present what they have written in their common resume.

Exercise 5: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Create a relaxing and warm atmosphere in the classroom.
- Allow and guide the students to move freely around the room, waving their hands gently and feeling comfortable.
- After a certain time, announce "Find someone who wears/has...",
- Each student will look for a classmate who meets the criterion and will walk toward him.
- Repeat the task several times, using different types of clothing/ shoes/ qualities.
- Working time 15 minutes.





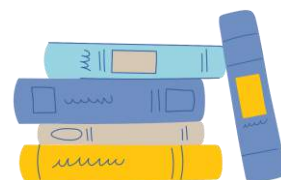
Exercise 6: Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Divide the students into two groups - taxis (cabs) and customers. You can draw lots
- Explain to the students that “taxis” have a list of pieces of information they need to find out from their “customers”. After a sound signal from you, the taxis will travel, picking up customers they [as taxi drivers] need to have a discussion with
- Discussion topics (themes):
 - *where they live*
 - *how old they are*
 - *where they come from*
 - *where they go to*
 - *what their name is, etc.*
- You can play a few rounds, then reverse roles, with taxis turning into customers
- At the end, ask the students what they found out, how the conversation went, what else they would like to talk about, how they felt playing the role.

Exercise 7: Appropriate for students with ages between 12 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help the students to form small teams.
- Explain to the students that each team will choose a leader, who, after a discussion with his colleagues, will present:
 - *the names of his team colleagues*
 - *something he likes*
 - *something that each of them does not like*
- Working time 15 minutes.
- At the end, ask the leader to present the information found about his team.
- In the next round, change the composition of the teams and the leader.

By organizing these games, students will be able to feel they are part of a group, to develop self-confidence and confidence in others, to distinguish emotions from thoughts, reality from fantasy, to learn to research and analyze reality, to make decisions independently and in a group, to show empathy and provide mutual help, to express their opinions freely, to face stress and fear, to find non-violent ways of working and communicating, to develop assertive communication skills.





4.4. Involvement of Student Groups in Decision-Making

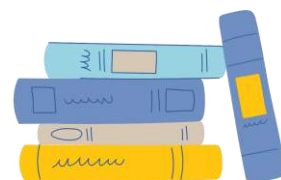
The school where students with disabilities learn must include in its educational strategies those organizational decisions that support a culture of participation of the entire group consisting of teachers, students and parents. Where good practices are frequently present, the student grows and is educated in a healthy educational environment which he feels he is part of as an individual who matters.

From the moment we enter the gate of the institution, we can tell, from the way in which the school is organized, how much emphasis is placed on the opinion and choices of the students. E.g.:

- There is a students' staircase and a teachers' staircase, the students' entrance and the teachers' entrance.
- The information present in the institution contains materials that are not accessible to students with special needs (interpretation in sign language or Braille images) or even to students in general.
- Learning spaces are closed.
- The spaces used by students are clearly delineated (e.g.: spending breaks in the hallway in front of the class, access being prohibited to a certain area of the school, in front of the teachers' room, the gym and the field being only used during sports class, etc.).
- Classrooms have furniture that does not allow students to look at each other (e.g.: sitting behind one another).
- The classrooms have decorative materials/panels made by the teaching staff or are decorated without the involvement of the students.
- Students are not asked for their opinion with regard to internal regulations, extracurricular activities or optional subjects they are going to study.
- Parents do not take active part in the life of the school (e.g.: they are called to parent-teacher conferences or when there are difficult situations to resolve).

Although this may not be specifically highlighted in theory, involving students in decision-making, consulting them, valuing their opinion and respecting the choices they make is an ongoing aspect of the teacher-student relationship, it is a vital condition for an affective bond to be established between children and their teachers.

Teachers reported they had achieved good results when they had acted for the benefit of and with respect for students:





"I had recently received the task to act as coordinator of the National Community Action Strategy (SNAC) in the school and I had managed to collaborate with a nearby elementary and middle school, we were preparing for the county dance competition. My students (from the special school) love music and dance, so it was a perfect fit.

Students from the 8th grade (mostly girls), who were very good at dancing, came to rehearsals. Together with their partners from my class, they chose the song, the dance, the steps, the pairs. I was very pleased that I had had the inspiration to let them decide what to present in the competition, because that way they got more involved, they were able to figure out more quickly which steps were the most suitable for them. Even in terms of the costumes for the show, I proposed a few variants and let them decide what the final costume they would wear on stage would be, because in the end they were the ones who were going to dance and wear those costumes.

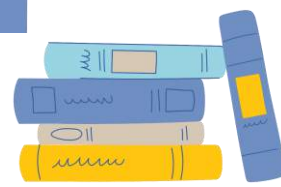
And, because we had already become a united team, thanks to the time spent together, but also to their active participation in each stage, I decided together with them which photos were to be displayed on a board in the school. We were all proud of our participation in this event and of the results achieved."

Special School Teacher

"The possibility to choose their worksheets, exercises, games and rewards renders the children more involved, more active and increases their trust in me. I feel like we are truly a team! This exercise also gives me the opportunity to get to know them better, and that helps me

a lot when I have to set goals or exert a personalized intervention. In fact, we make work easier for each other by collaborating and choosing together, each of us taking on responsibility according to our respective roles."

Special School Teacher





"In the speech therapy office, I have a lot of toys and games, stored in transparent boxes.

I have made it a habit to let the students decide what they want us to play with, and they choose what appeals to them, because they are much more motivated when they can express their own desire."

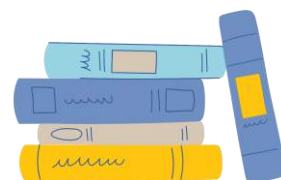
Speech Therapist Special School

"A colleague from the special school, who is very skilled and energetic, organized workshops for making traditional March amulets (mărțișoare) with the students who wanted to take part, and then a fair to sell them. The products were successful, so a substantial amount was raised from the sale. All students who participated knew constantly what the amount was.

We, the teachers, agreed to let the children decide what they would do with the money, but we imposed the rule that it should not be something unhealthy for them (juices, sweets, etc.). The students cooperated and finally decided to go on a trip to the Zoo. Their desire to also include in the group for the trip the colleagues who had not participated in the making the amulets led us, teachers, to identify alternative sources of funding for this trip.

So we got a sponsorship for the transport. We were able to include, in addition to the Zoo, Curtea Domnească (the Royal Court), Chindia Park and Chindia Tower, located in Târgoviște. It was a very nice trip and the children were very proud to have contributed through their own efforts to making this trip."

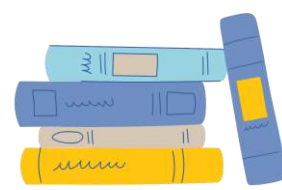
**Teacher-Educator,
School Center for Inclusive Education**











How we can create a favorable environment for the development of students' abilities to make choices at school level:

- ➡ Proposal for an extracurricular activity organized by the children - it can be an autumn festival, a Christmas celebration, a party, a fair to sell products. Teachers can be observers and can intervene for a good organization and unfolding of the event, but the students will have the main role.
- ➡ Providing a school space for students to decorate as they wish - it could be a wall, a room where they spend breaks, or some other place owned by the school, but which the students manage.
- ➡ Suggestion box - a mailbox for suggestions can be installed in a space within the reach of students. The students will be able to propose various ideas that can be put into practice in the school (e.g.: homemade slippers' day) and, once a month, the headteacher (principal) can call the students for a discussion and organize a vote on the best idea to be implemented that month.
- ➡ Students are supported and coordinated in order to nominate a class representative. These representatives can participate in or even organize discussions, meetings, short sessions with the teachers/headteacher, on specific topics such as rules of conduct, activities during breaks, proposals, desires, questions from students in the classes they represent.
- ➡ Organizing a "Teachers' Gala" activity, where awards will be given for "the best teacher", "the most cheerful teacher", "the most energetic teacher", etc. The students will designate the winners by voting, they will hand out the prizes (which can be made by them).
- ➡ Several "voluntary jobs" can be made available to students - setting up classrooms, the school library, observing compliance with the rules of conduct during breaks, checking the toilets, distributing consumables, etc. These can be carried out for one hour a week and will allow students to participate alongside adults or even by themselves in simple administrative tasks. Students can submit their application to the homeroom teacher.
- ➡ Students can participate in determining the supply needs of the class - they can propose various writing materials, other materials, certain types of products.
- ➡ At the beginning of the year, students receive the "Activities Calendar" in which extracurricular activities proposed for the class, the school, inter-school activities, etc. are presented, and they can sign up for the ones they want to take part in.
- ➡ Participation of the students in choosing a "Different Kind of Week" (Săptămâna altfel) and consulting them with regard to the activities to be carried out.

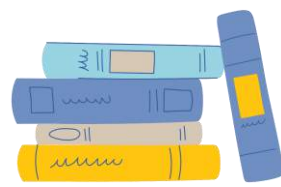




In carrying out an intentional and coordinated process of involving students in group decisions, after teachers apply a number of measures to strengthen cooperation between students within the group, even if the students form a coherent and participative group, some drawbacks or deadlocks might stand in the way of their effectiveness:

-  group members might hold back from expressing an idea because they do not want to interrupt another colleague
-  they might feel uneasy about the possibility to be evaluated negatively by other colleagues
-  they were interrupted by another person, such as a domineering peer
-  they are predisposed to social laziness, according to which individual effort decreases in proportion to the increase of the group size, hoping that everything will work itself out without any input of their own
-  members may ignore the input of their colleagues because they are unwilling to consider points of view different from their own
-  they are distracted as they struggle to follow the conversational flow in order to find opportunities and ideas

Thus, to increase efficiency by removing/ diminishing the above barriers and obstacles, several group **decision-making techniques** may be successfully used that vary in the manner in which they structure group problem-solving, depending on the problems identified and targeted by the coordinating teachers. The teacher can become the leader and the person who guides the group of students through all these techniques, accompanying them constantly in order to help them to successfully go through all the stages.





Brainstorming

Groups sometimes fail to make final decisions because they either fail to find solutions, or cannot make up their mind to choose between the alternatives considered as appropriate.

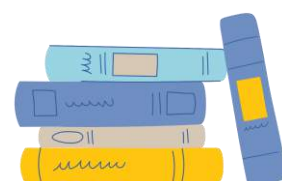
Brainstorming is a group decision-making technique used in order to reduce the former of the two problems, that is, to increase the volume of ideas and solutions. Brainstorming groups are specially formed to generate as many alternative ideas as possible.

Brainstorming does not provide the solution to the problem or a decision in itself, but it brings up a list of ideas that will later be considered, discussed and evaluated when the time comes to reach a final decision.

The basic rules include the following:

- Remove criticism: the teacher announces to the students that none of their ideas/solutions will be judged
- Allow freedom of expression: the teacher allows students to express even ideas that may seem crazy, impractical or risky
- Support quantity: encourage students to express as many ideas as possible without worrying about quality. All ideas should be expressed. This is meant to encourage students to move beyond their favorite ideas
- Encourage creativity and cooperation: the teacher allows and encourages students to build on the ideas of their peers
- Remove seniority: during brainstorming, group members should act as if they all had the same rank, and the teacher can be the most realistic example in this respect. The exercise should be characterized by a relaxed, cooperative, uninhibited, sympathetic and egalitarian atmosphere.
- Make sure all voices are heard: It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure all students participate in the exercise no matter how reluctant they are
- Record all ideas: every idea produced during the exercise should be recorded/ noted/ drawn/ displayed for further discussion

The purpose of brainstorming is to stimulate divergent thinking, to produce a lot of different ideas in a short period of time and to encourage the full participation of all students. It is designed to reduce the rejection of others' ideas by domineering peers, interpersonal conflicts, stereotyping of others, and habitual non-participation patterns. The most effective way to implement brainstorming within the group of students is to allow them to individually generate ideas at the same time. Whether they write them down, draw them, or tell them to a teacher, the fact that they do not have to wait for a colleague to finish what he has to present, and thus forget or modify their ideas, leads to the production of many more alternatives/ideas/solutions. It also avoids the social anxiety, fear of evaluation and shyness that can prevent some students from speaking in front of others.





Nominal Group Technique

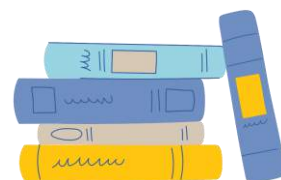
The nominal group technique supports both the generation and evaluation of ideas. Unlike brainstorming, this strategy results in a final group decision. The nominal group technique generally involves the following steps:

- Privately write down the ideas: the teacher makes sure he/she explains the situation/problem to be solved, after which the students generate the ideas silently - written, drawn, recorded, passed on to an adult. No discussion with peers is allowed at this time.
- Record ideas one after another: students take turns presenting their ideas to the group while the teacher writes them down on the blackboard/ flipchart. Again, no discussion takes place within the group at this stage. This listing continues until students run out of ideas to share.
- Discuss the ideas: the teacher moderates the discussion around the ideas. The purpose of this action is to clarify, criticize or defend ideas.
- Vote on the ideas: students vote, anonymously, on the ideas they think are the best
- Calculate the group's decision: the teacher calculates the score obtained by the ideas through the team's vote. The final decision is the cumulative result of individual votes.
- Repeat if necessary: the teacher can suggest repeating the steps until all students understand, participate in and are satisfied with the final decision.

The nominal group technique was developed to overcome a number of deadlocks in the decision-making process. The structured and task-focused nature of this strategy is believed to encourage an effective use of time. The nominal group technique can reduce worries about evaluation/ criticism/ judgment from others through the fact that students produce their ideas privately. Taking turns in the presentation of written ideas encourages a balanced participation and discourages dominant students from blocking the input of others. Students are also likely to have an increased sense of accountability, given that they are required to present their ideas publicly. Finally, the rotational listing of ideas prevents groups from evaluating solutions too hastily.

Delphi Technique

- It is a method of collecting, organizing, analyzing and reviewing the opinions of a group of people who do not have the opportunity to meet frequently.
- It can be used by teachers for group decisions at school level.
- This procedure, led by a non-participating coordinator, produces a group decision without physically bringing the members together. Ideas are requested and obtained through questionnaires.





The Delphi Technique involves the following stages:

- Request contributions: the coordinating teacher sends the initial questions through questionnaires/ worksheets distributed to classes
- Allow independent idea-generation: students in a smaller group/ classes do brainstorming, then fill in the collective questionnaire.
- Summarize the answers: the coordinating teacher summarizes the contributions received from classes, keeping the answers anonymous.
- Distribute the summary: the coordinating teacher sends the summary obtained to all classes
- Review previous answers: after reading the summary, students have the opportunity to review their previous contributions, to refine ideas, to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas, and to propose new ideas. After finishing, they send again their answers to the coordinator.
- Repeat as needed: The stages may be repeated, until students have nothing more to add
- Develop the final decision: The coordinating teacher requests classes to vote on the solutions, thus declaring a winner the final decision with the highest score.

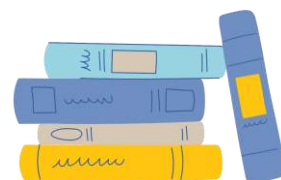
By requesting the groups of classes to work independently, through the Delphi Technique you can promote responsibility, diminish social laziness, you can equalize participation, you can remove the bias effect of dominant members, you can prevent the deterioration of communication arising from disagreements and unproductive conflicts, avoid the logistical issues that arise when trying to bring together a large group such as an entire school community, and make sure that no premature decision is made before all ideas have been expressed.



Research has shown that groups structured according to the Delphi technique are happier with the final decision than nominal groups and conventional consensus groups. However, the Delphi process might take a long time, therefore it must be minutely planned before deciding on the time budget allocated to this procedure.

"Ladder" Technique

The "ladder" technique is a strategy of group decision-making which sets stages for the admission of members into a group. It facilitates the generation and assessment of ideas but, at the same time, allows groups to develop a final decision in a collaborative and collective manner.

- Form a core pair (two students). These two students begin the discussion about the problem in question by presenting their individual ideas to each other.
- When you think they have understood each other's ideas, a third student is brought into the core group. This new participant presents his ideas and a preliminary discussion takes place.



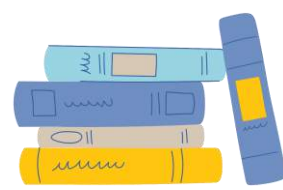
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- Next bring in a fourth member who should present ideas, then take part in the preliminary discussion. This process goes on until every student has joined in.
 - Once they are all present, the group works together toward developing a final decision.

There are four basic rules to be observed:

1. Allocate enough individual problem-solving time: Each student must have enough time available to think about the problem in question before joining the core group. The teacher may present the problem/ situation in advance (one day in advance) and announce the date scheduled for completion. Visual markers, display, message on the blackboard, a student - announcer may be used to maintain interest and attention, and to help the students involved manage their time.
2. Ask incoming members to speak first: Upon entering, the student must present all his ideas before hearing the preliminary solutions of the core group.
3. Allocate enough time to group discussions: the coordinating teacher must allocate adequate discussion time to discussing the ideas immediately after an incoming student presents his ideas.
4. Postpone final decisions until everyone is present: The group must be fully formed, with all students present, before deciding on a final solution.

By requesting each student to present ideas independently and without knowing the ideas of the others, this technique can promote responsibility, diminish social laziness, reduce conformity, and equalize participation. Moreover, it can reduce the bias effect of dominant peers, offering each member an opportunity to give an uninterrupted presentation upon admission into the group.

By comparison with members of groups that use a conventional, unstructured approach, of consensual meeting, students in the “ladder” groups have reported feeling less pressure to conform, are more inclined to consider their group friendly and to believe they have collectively agreed on a final product, that they have worked unusually well together, that they have worked hard on the task, that they have acted in an organized manner and that they have produced a good solution.





365 Method

It is used to find as many solutions as possible to a problem. Emphasis is placed on quantity, just as in the case of brainstorming.

The name of the method synthesizes the three components: 6 participants - 3 solutions - 5 minutes

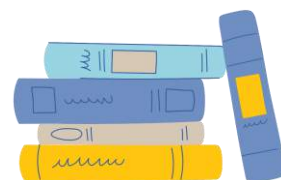
- Propuneți o anumită problemă unui grup de șase elevi cereți să stabilească opțiuni de rezolvare a acesteia. Fiecare elev trebuie să noteze pe o foaie trei soluții. Apoi membrii fac schimb de foi și propun alte trei soluții. Se pot roti astfel de mai multe ori, până ce elevii epuizează toate ideile
- În final, ideile astfel generate sunt supuse votului grupului mare de elevi, astfel încât decizia să implice întregul colectiv
- Ca profesor coordonator trebuie să urmăriți câteva principii:
 - *Prezentarea prealabilă a problemei să fie realizată cât mai clar, cu explicații și informații suplimentare dacă este cazul, pentru a se asigura că elevii au înțeles în profunzime ceea ce trebuie să construiască*
 - *Selectarea elevilor din grupul celor 6 trebuie să țină cont de preferințele, relaționarea și aprecierea tuturor elevilor*
 - *Ideile prezentate să nu fie supuse criticii/ judecății, se urmărește cantitatea*

Dialectical Research Method

It is a complex technique, in which the teacher uses a creative conflict to help create new perceptions among the people involved.

As a rule, the dialectic process is centered around disagreements between the ideas / solutions proposed by students, which should then turn into agreements, or around orienting dialogue in this direction.

- As a coordinating teacher, write down conflicting ideas and use them as a starting point for the exercise
- The “devil’s advocate” method is a similar approach, in which one group member (it can even be yourself, as the teacher) deliberately criticizes the favored decision. This helps the group look at things from a different perspective, and make an informed decision.
- By this method, you are helping students to communicate better, to also understand in depth that the solutions which favor them can have a negative impact on others.





The themes (topics) on which you can practice these techniques with the students may be real ones, but most often they may be imaginary, because it is more effective to prepare decisions for problematic situations in the absence thereof. In choosing the theme, you must take into account the children's degree of development. The younger the students are, the more helping and coordination tasks you should take on during the performance of exercises, but in a discreet enough manner to allow recording the contribution of each student.

Examples of themes / situations / problems:

- We have a visit from some inspectors at the school;
- There is heavy snow on the road and half of the teachers are unable to get to the school;
- We will receive sponsorship for Christmas, what can we do with the money for the school;
- There is no running tap water, we have no water at all in the school;
- A few students in our school are victims of bullying, what can we do about it;
- The yard does not look good, what can we do to improve it;
- A lot of cars travel at great speed in front of the school, which is very dangerous especially for younger students, what can we do about it;
- Some students would like to go to the store near the school, how can we handle the situation as effectively as possible so that all students are safe.

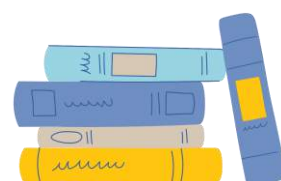
CONCLUSIONS

The stimulation of group dynamics in the classroom has benefits for the personal development of each member.

The inclusion of students with SER (CES) in specific group activities/ games aims to develop the mental components on which the ability to make choices depends.

By encouraging students to work together, relationships among them and the active participation of each member in group decisions are strengthened.

The teacher must be closely involved in solving the students' communication and decision-making challenges, by also using specific techniques when appropriate, while intentionally and constantly striving for optimal conditions in the work environment.



Chapter 5

5.1. Stimulating Students to Decide Independently – Practical Activities and Exercises by Which We Can Stimulate This Process in Students with Special Educational Requirements (SER)

5.2. Using Computer Games and Board Games as a Method for Stimulating the Decision-Making Process



5.1. Stimulating Students to Decide Independently – Practical Activities and Exercises by Which We Can Stimulate This Process in Students with Special Educational Requirements (SER)

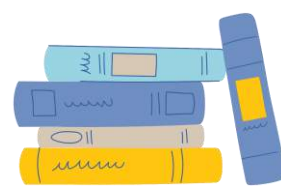
Decision-making is one of the 21st century skills. It can be divided into several components that a student should manifest:

- Interest in asking questions about rights, responsibilities, and additional information
- Expressing opinions, explanations, simple arguments
- The courage to criticize the opinions, explanations and arguments expressed by other people
- The exercise of their rights and responsibilities in making personal and group decisions, while respecting the rights of others
- Supporting with arguments a personal point of view

We make hundreds of decisions every day. Most are trivial and do not have a lasting impact on our lives, while others can change our lives greatly.

As teachers and educators, we strive to help students become individuals who are capable of making good decisions through a multitude of methods.

Before initiating the decision-making process among children and young people with cognitive disabilities, we should consider several steps:



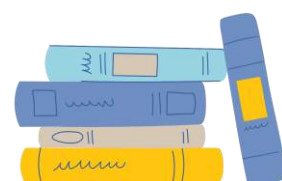


Exercise – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Help students determine the steps to be taken when making a choice
- To make it easier for them to make the appropriate choice, guide the students into following several steps
- This exercise helps developing a habit of analyzing the aspects and alternatives of a situation
- Provide the students with the following analysis chart and encourage them to take responsibility for their decisions:

Opportunities	Weaknesses	Strengths	Alternatives
<p>I can wear the purple dress</p> <p>I can wear jeans</p>	<p>it's a beautiful dress I like it</p> <p>I feel more comfortable in jeans</p>	<p>I won't be able to sit on the floor in order to play</p> <p>jeans are not that special</p>	<p>I can wear a dress and put on a pair of tights</p> <p>I'll wear a dress today, and jeans tomorrow</p>
<p>I can walk in the park</p> <p>I can visit my grandma</p>	<p>I like going to the park for exercise and to enjoy fresh air</p> <p>I get together with my friends - I miss my grandma</p>	<p>if I go to the park today, I will only get to visit grandma in 2 weeks' time</p> <p>I cannot exercise at my grandma's</p>	<p>I'll go to the park with grandma, then we'll go for an ice cream</p>
<p>I can have chocolate</p> <p>I can have ice cream</p> <p>I can have a fruit</p>	<p>the fruit is a healthy choice</p> <p>chocolate is my favorite</p> <p>ice cream is refreshing</p>	<p>chocolate and ice cream contain sugar</p>	<p>I'll have ice cream today because it's very hot and I want to cool down, and then I'll eat fruit for two days</p>

Decision-making is a process consisting of several stages (*the description of stages is shown as follows*) and, at each stage, the students may be asked open questions, in order to identify problems, solutions and, in the end, choices.





Exercise – Stages of making decisions with the teacher’s help – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

Stage 1 - Identify the need you have and think about why it is necessary to make a decision

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: What is not working? What is the problematic situation? Do you need anything? What are you missing?

Example: It is necessary to decide who the class leader will be, to perform the following tasks that no one is performing now: to supervise the class during the break, to communicate homework to absent colleagues, to maintain communication with other classes, etc.

Stage 2 - Collect relevant and useful information

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: What have we got? What haven’t we got? Have you ever encountered anything like this? Does this resemble anything? What does your classmate think about this?

Example: Setting some criteria by mutual agreement:

Who was most active in fulfilling school tasks this week?

Who has had the best attendance? Who has had the best behavior? Who follows routines?

Stage 3 - Identify options as you gather relevant information, and more possibilities and alternatives will emerge

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: What do you think others would do? What was done before in similar situations? What could you do? Whom can you ask for help?

Example: Each student identifies one or two colleagues as options for choosing the class leader. The proposals are written down on the flipchart

Stage 4 - Evaluating the options - mentally try to choose an alternative to see what the consequences would be

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: If we did this, what would happen? But if you chose otherwise, what do you think will happen?

Example: What if Michael will be the leader of the class? Let’s imagine it would be Steven!

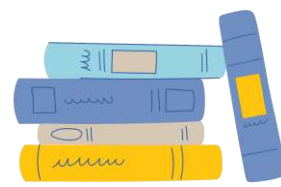
Stage 5 - Select an option

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: What is your vote? What do you choose?

Example: Students vote anonymously to avoid inhibition and fear

Stage 6 - Analyze the arguments and propose some positive measures to implement that decision.

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: Do you think it’s a good choice? What do we do next? Let’s decide on what to do from now on!





Example: Why do you think Michael was elected as class leader this week? When will he take office?

Stage 7 - Evaluate the decision and its consequences. Reflect on the decision made

- Help the students to ask and answer questions such as: How do you feel about this solution? Are you satisfied with the choice made?

Example: What was Michael like as a class leader? Do we keep the same criteria for decision-making or do we change them?

Exercise – Personal choices – Appropriate for students with ages between 7 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- You can encourage children to make personal choices every day. They do not need to be difficult choices, but simple ones, that please them and give them confidence.
- To achieve this goal, you must collaborate with the student's family/ relatives and openly address the topic of stimulating the child's decision-making skills in whatever environment he may be in
- You can set this as a topic of discussion for counseling sessions with parents or common sessions

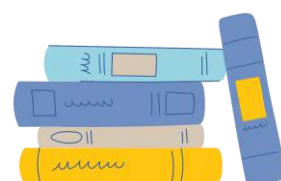
At home

- choosing a favorite activity
- choosing a dish or a dessert
- choosing a household chore
- choosing an outfit
- choosing a place to spend leisure time
- choosing a toy
- choosing a good night's reading
- choosing a means of transport to travel
- choosing a fragrance for personal hygiene products



At school

- choosing a desk to sit/a seat in class
- choosing a colleague/ work partner
- choosing to write with a ballpoint pen, a pen, or a pencil
- choosing an activity during breaks
- choosing a snack





Exercise – “What? Who? Where? When? Why?” - Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-

- Organize group discussions in which students formulate questions about current concerns or concrete problems by using the questions:
 - *what?*
 - *who?*
 - *where?*
 - *when?*
 - *why?*
- Example: Michael is accused of tearing the net of the football (soccer) goal.
 - *What can we say about this?*
 - *Who witnessed it?*
 - *Where did it happen?*
 - *When did it happen?*
 - *What does Michael have to say about this?*
 - *Why did this happen?*
 - *What will be the consequences?*
- Participate together with the students and give examples about how to use the questions/

Exercise – Role-play – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

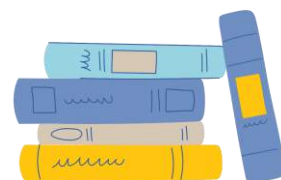
- Organize role-plays that stimulate interest in formulating questions.

Example:

- *Journalist students documenting themselves for articles to be published in the school magazine*
- *Teachers asking students questions in an exam*
- *Employers asking questions in view of hiring young people*
- *Neighbors who have recently moved to the neighborhood and ask for information*
- *Customers who want to buy a house, etc.*

Exercise – This Is ACCEPTABLE, This Is NOT ACCEPTABLE! Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual

- Prepare pictures showing various actions/ behaviors
- Students will look at the pictures and choose whether they fall into the ACCEPTABLE (YES) or NOT ACCEPTABLE (NO) category.





Examples of action tokens:

- *crossing the street running to avoid being late for school*
 - *plucking flowers from the park to offer them to one's mother*
 - *stealing a colleague's sandwich to give it to a hungry colleague*
 - *kicking the dog that bit him/her, etc.*
- Help the students to justify the choices they made and to provide, for each situation, a more appropriate option if the existing one falls in the NOT ACCEPTABLE category.

Exercise – The WHY? Cascade – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

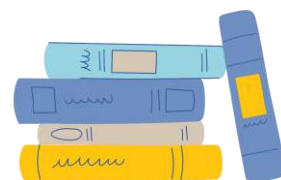
- Present a simple situation, then ask “Why?” in a cascade.

Example:

- *At the end of August, storks fly to hot countries.*
 - *Why? Because in our country the weather is getting cold.*
 - *Why? Because winter is coming.*
 - *Why? Because there are four seasons in Romania.*
 - *Which region do you think the storks are going to winter in?*
 - *Africa.*
 - *Why? Because it is hot there.*
 - *Or in Turkey.*
 - *Why? Because it is closer.*
- Help the students when they are unable to answer.
 - The exercise is very valuable in training the students' ability to argue, which is one of the essential skills in the decision-making process.

Exercise – Classroom rules that take into account the principles of fairness, equality and respect – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- Display the children's rights in the form of pictures or text in the classroom.
- Inform students and explain these rights to them, then suggest establishing classroom rules that respect the same principles
- Consult and prompt students to propose rules
- To encourage compliance with the established rules, you can organize/provide
 - lotteries,
 - contests,
 - the award of prizes,
 - diplomas,
 - badges.





- Students can nominate one another for these awards.
- It is recommended to give each child an encouragement/ reward in these situations;

something like - “A punctual student”, “A child who strives to be respectful”, “A good colleague”, etc.

Examples of rules:

- All students respect each other, speak and behave politely
- All students are equal, have the same rights, observe the same rules
- Students have the right to express their opinion in a civilized manner
- Every student has the right to be heard when he wants to express his opinion
- We listen to what the colleague has to say and do not interrupt him

Exercise – Casting the vote – Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

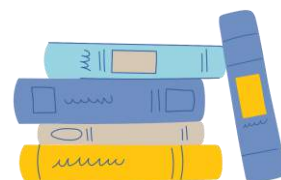
- Prepare several working variants/ exercises for a teaching activity. They must all be derived from the objectives, goals and methods the student pursues, so that, whatever option is chosen, it can be achieved.
- Present to the students the situation, the options and the method by which they will choose
- Encourage students to vote, either anonymously or nominally
- Respect the result of the vote and continue the activity by using the version voted by the students

Examples of variants:

- Choose a rather difficult problem or 3 rather easy exercises from the mathematics lesson
- Today, in the communication class, do you choose to write on the worksheet, in the notebook or on the blackboard?
- Vote if you want us to do this exercise, or this other one!
- Choose whether you want us to watch images on the laptop or to follow the text in the book!

Exercise – Thematic Actions – Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

- You can work with larger teams of students (even from several classes or from the whole school)
- Encourage students and teachers to vote on an upcoming theme:
 - *fruits and vegetables*
 - *sports, games*
 - *marine life*





- *superheroes*
- *magic*
- *numbers*
- *fashion, etc.*
- Encourage students and teachers to choose its duration (an hour, a day, the whole week, etc.).
- Teams must contribute with ideas of images, books, objects, games, activities, colors, materials, etc. that can be used for that theme.
- Participate as a team member or coordinator throughout the duration of the exercise.

Exercise – Campaigns on themes of pedagogical interest – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual

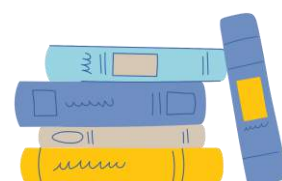
- Work with a team of students (they can be from several classes)
- Announce the theme of the campaign (displayed, communicated, message, flyer, etc.)

Examples:

- *We support plastic recycling!*
- *We eat healthier!*
- *Sport maintains health!*
- *We respect the rights of others! etc.*
- Encourage the teams to choose their theme and work methods, their materials.
- Coordinate and assist teamwork.
- At the end of the proposed period, the teams will advocate for their campaign in front of their colleagues, whom they will try to persuade to join the campaign.

Exercise – Activities inside or outside the school – Appropriate for students with ages between 8 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition

- Work with the class team
- Propose games in the park, a trip, a picnic, going to the theater, a visit at the museum, drawing on the pavement, etc.
- Encourage the students to choose the day, place, time, materials, program, rules to be observed
- Discuss the issue in plenary, listen to all opinions, and submit to vote the aspects that can be voted on





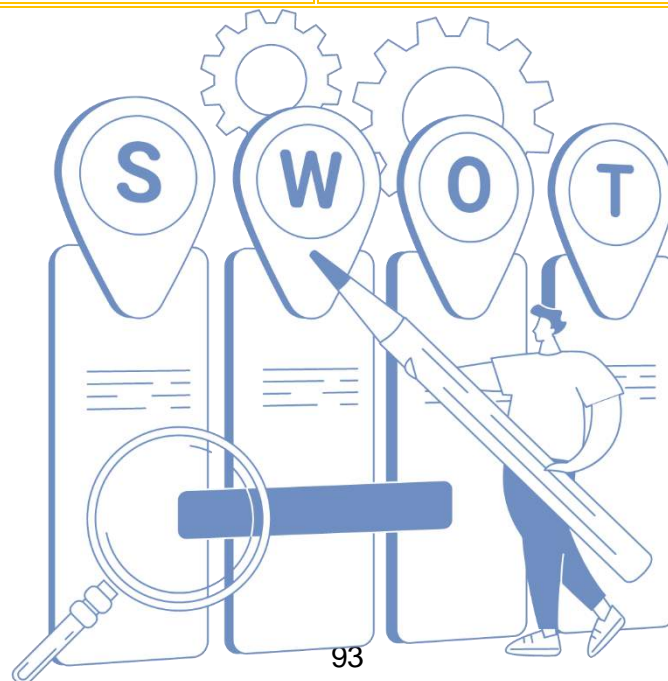
Exercise – SWOT Analysis – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level - it is an instrument that allows finding what the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are, in view of making a decision.**

- Divide the class students into 4 teams/ working groups.
- Each team/ working group will approach one of the four SWOT components (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, or Threats).
- You (or another leader) should state the situation very clearly.

Example: “We’ll be going on a trip to Sinaia next Tuesday! Each team will list on post-it notes of different colors the elements it has identified with regard to going on the trip. One team will write down the strengths/ benefits, other teams will write down the weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. At the end, each team will read out the elements it has identified, and together they will make a decision. The teams will be different for the next situation in which the method will be applied.”

- This exercise is useful for exerting the capacity to make decisions individually.
- Each student can prepare his own SWOT analysis.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS





Exercise – THE LOG OF GOOD DECISIONS – Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition

- Encourage the students to keep a log of their activities. They can record in the log decisions they have made, which they consider to be good. The rhythmical repetitiveness and the routine of keeping a log (or a diary) helps us in the long run to structure our actions and choices much better.
- Offer them daily/ weekly a log page to fill in, as they find fit according to their personal circumstances.

Example - Log Page

Week
Day

<i>Situation I encountered</i>	<i>What did I do?</i>	<i>How did I feel?</i>	<i>What decision I made</i>
<i>E.g. A colleague splashed me with water</i>	<i>I told him it bothered me</i>	<i>Annoyed</i>	<i>To get away</i>

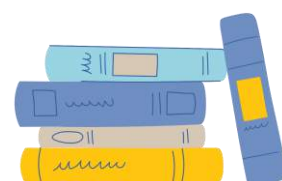
5.2 Using computer games and board games as a method for stimulating the decision-making process - Appropriate for students with ages between 10 and 14 years, depending on the individual knowledge-acquisition level.

Children and adolescents love the games and apps on their telephone, so you can use such tools to stimulate their creativity and to test their decision-making skills. “Video games are played by the vast majority of young people for more than three hours each week, but the extent to which they are beneficial for decision-making skills and the brain is not precisely known,” said Mukesh Dhamala, professor at the Department of Physics and Astronomy and within the Neuroscience Institute of Georgia State University.

“Our work provides some answers in this regard. Video games can be used effectively for training (effective decision-making and therapeutic intervention training) once the relevant brain networks are identified,” Dhamala added.

The work was published in the Neuroimage: Reports journal..

Source: www.descopera.ro





Video games depict an imaginary world and can change the course of the action or the character depending on the decisions made in the game. Therefore, it is okay to let the children play on the tablet or the computer for a certain amount of time, while also introducing game-related discussions into this activity.

- For example, in the game **Need For Speed**, you have to choose the car you are going to use according to the type of circuit you have available, reliability, color, speed, etc. During the game you will make choices related to driving maneuvers.
- In the game **Farmville**, depending on the decisions you make, you will be able to cultivate your land, to have a harvest, to build your barn, and so on. Being highly visual, video games can be a good platform for discussing choices with students in a controlled and safe environment.

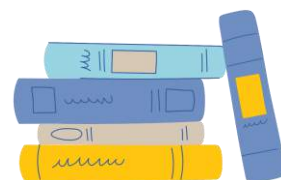
At the same time, you can use **Board Games** in the decision-making process of children and adolescents. They are useful in forming all the necessary skills.

E.g.:

- In the **Monopoly** game, players are required to use their skills in order to win as many properties as possible. They are put in a position to make choices, from choosing the playing pawn, to the decision to make a strategic move, to buy a playing field or to use one of the bonus cards.
- Also, another board game that can be useful in strengthening skills is the **DACIANS and ROMANS** game. Designed as a game for 2 people, The Dacians and Romans is a challenging game, inspired by the history of the Romanian people, with a lot of tactical possibilities, where one has to use one's resources to the maximum in order to win.

CONCLUSIONS:

- ✓ The action of making a decision is an individual process that each child can go through if given some instruments to help him (SWOT Analysis, LOG OF GOOD DECISIONS, CLASSROOM RULES)
- ✓ Children with special educational requirements (SER/ ECS) should be involved as often as possible in activities, exercises and games that give them the confidence they can make effective decisions
- ✓ Simulating situations in which students can train their decision-making capacity, by using computer games and board games.

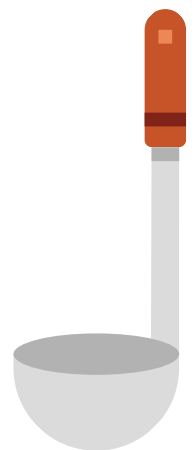
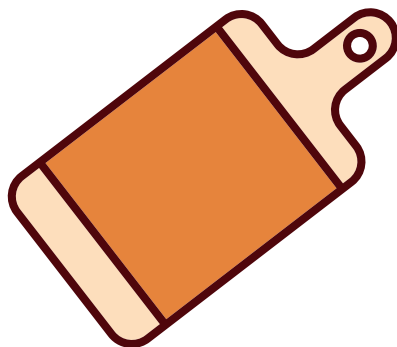
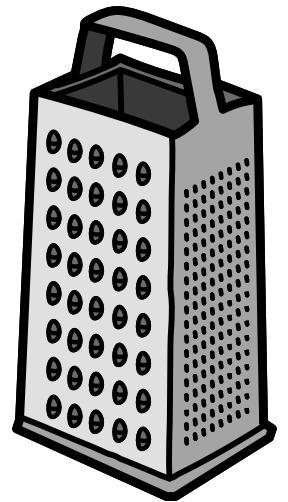
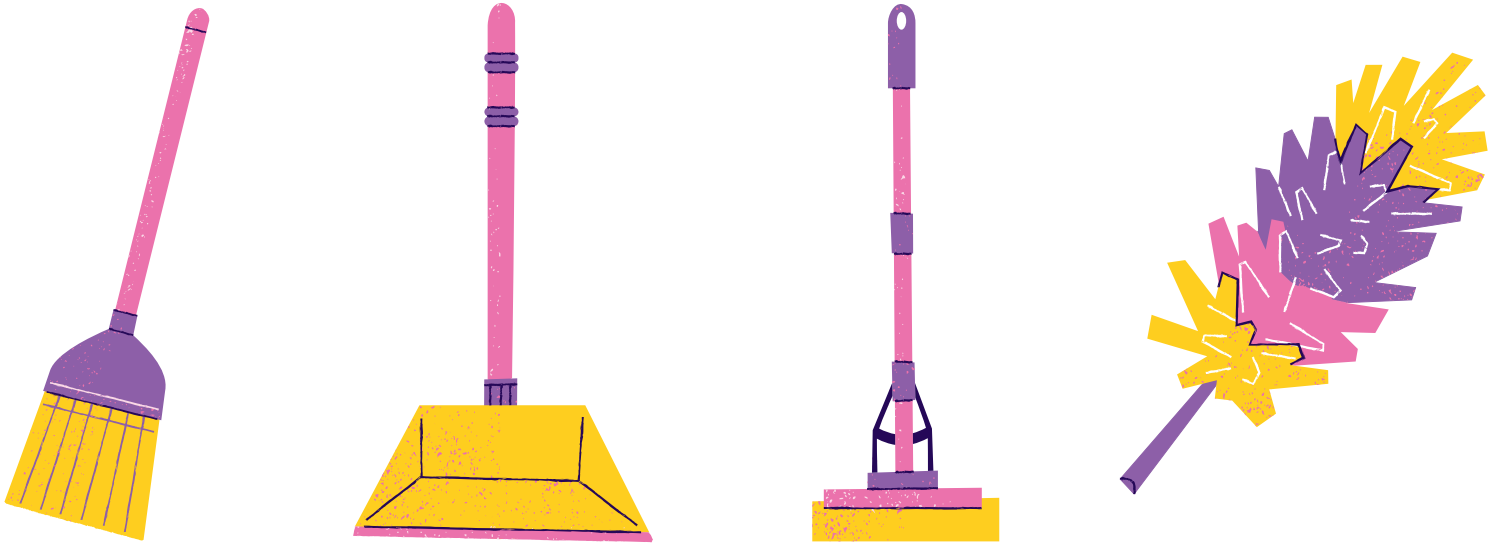


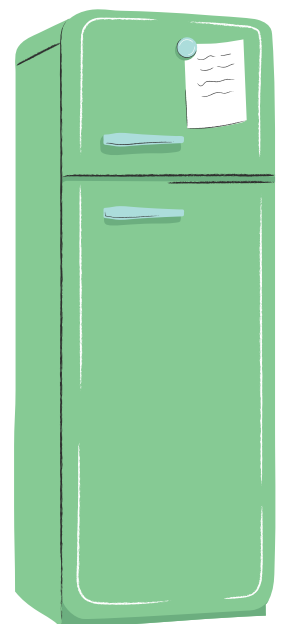
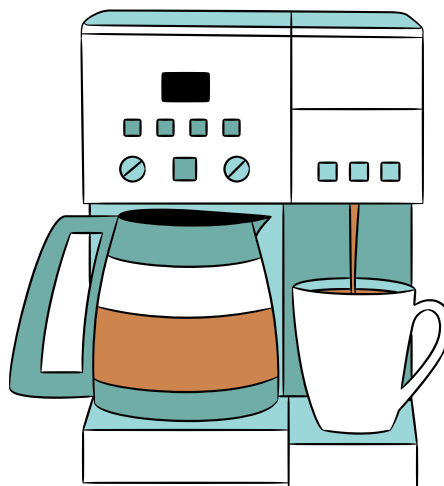
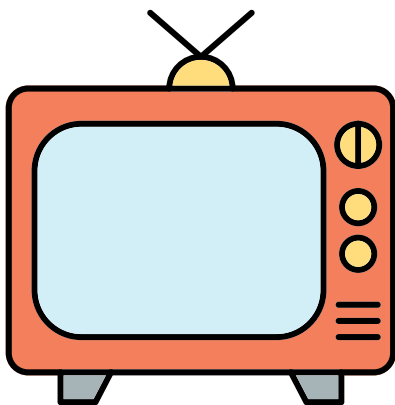
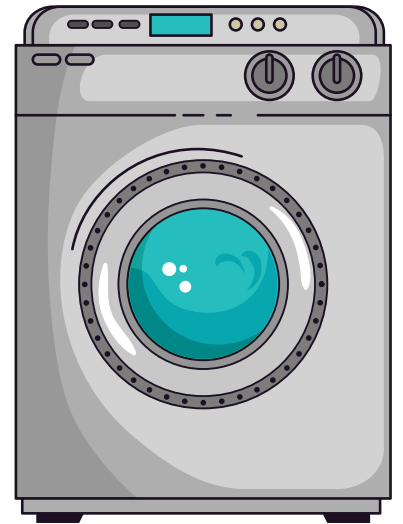
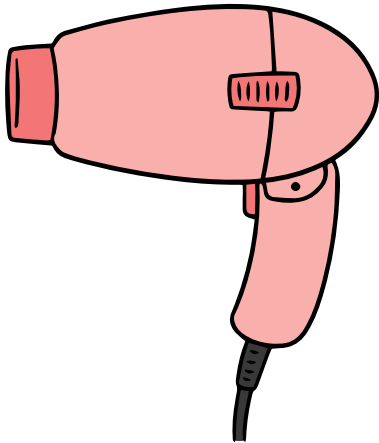
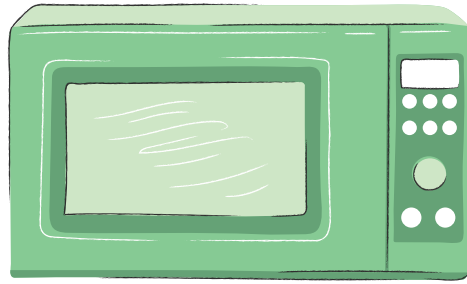
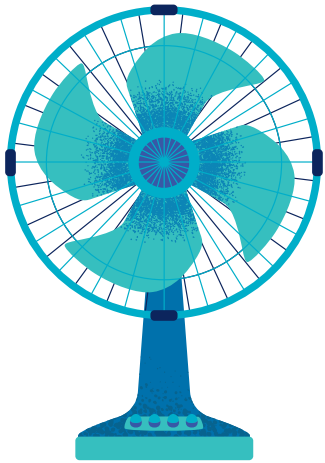
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ANNEXES

Images Worksheets











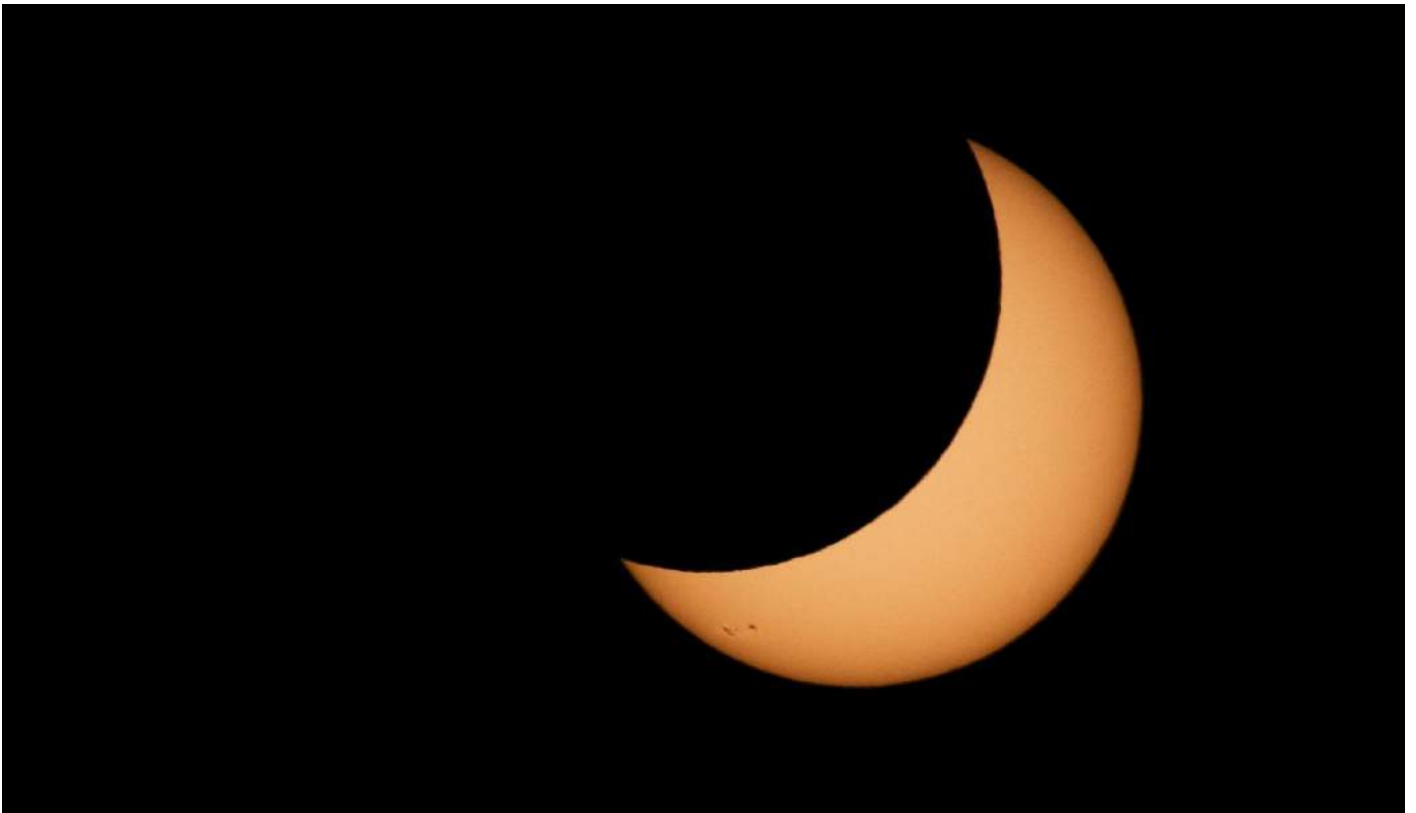












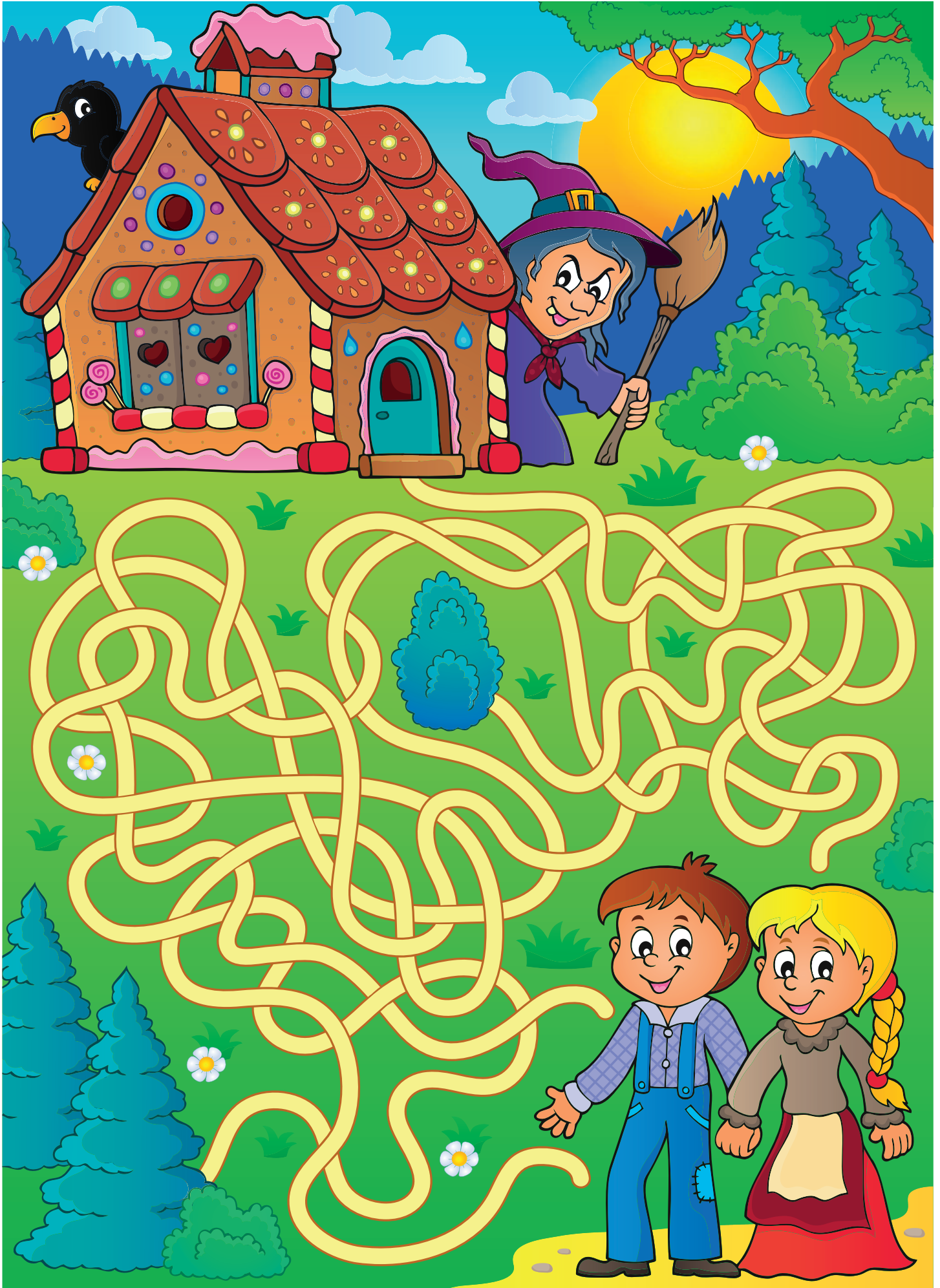








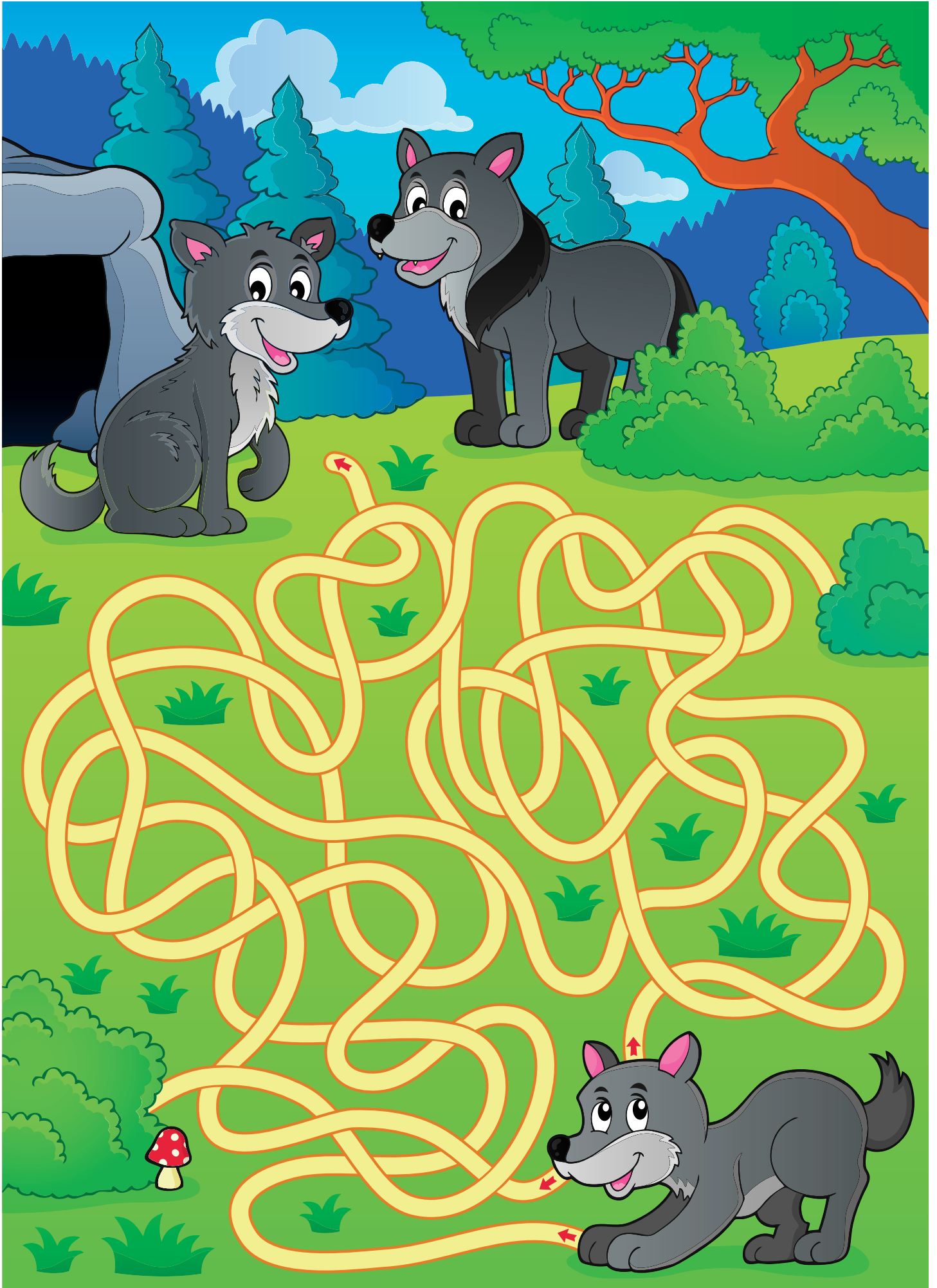


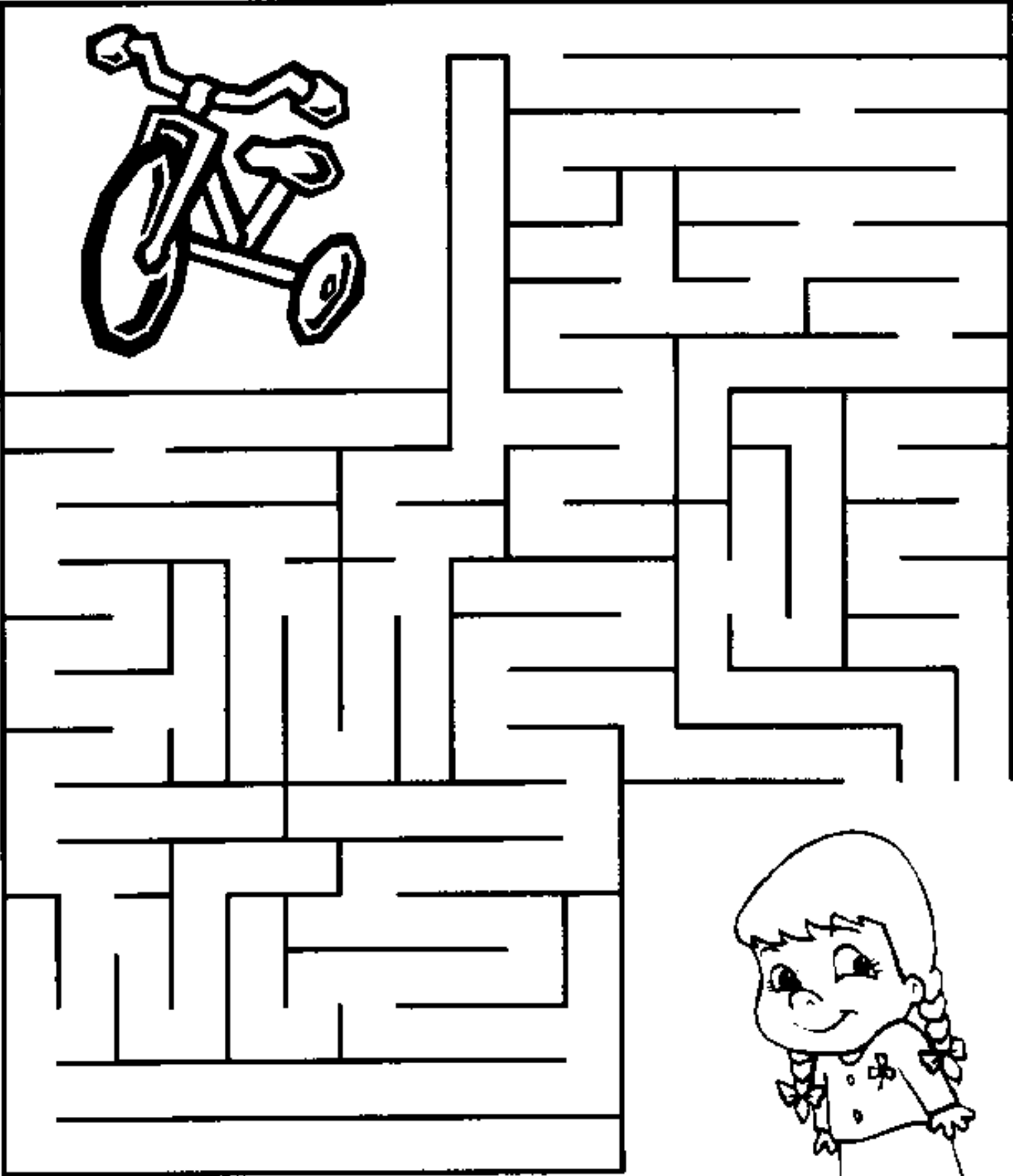


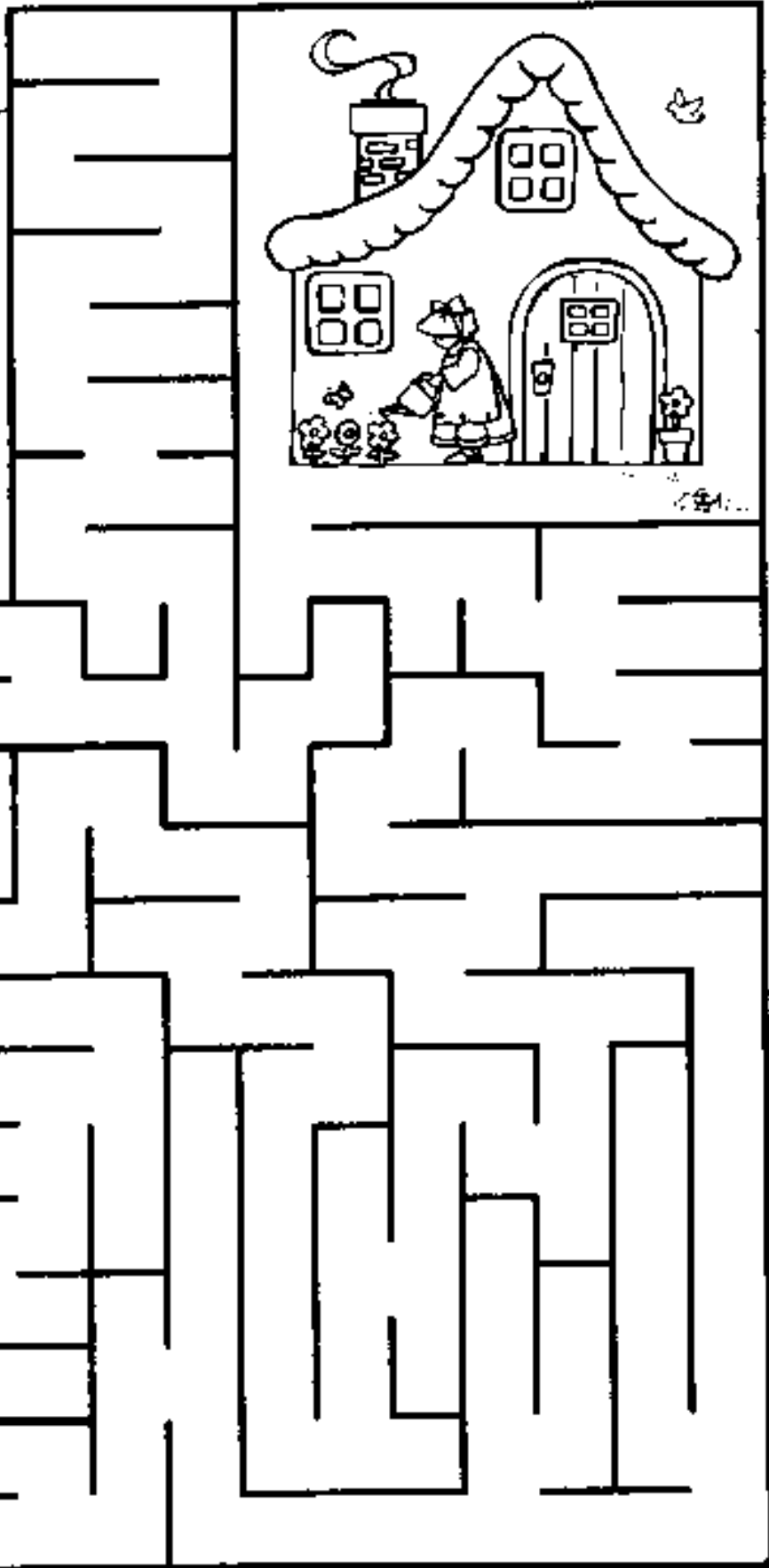


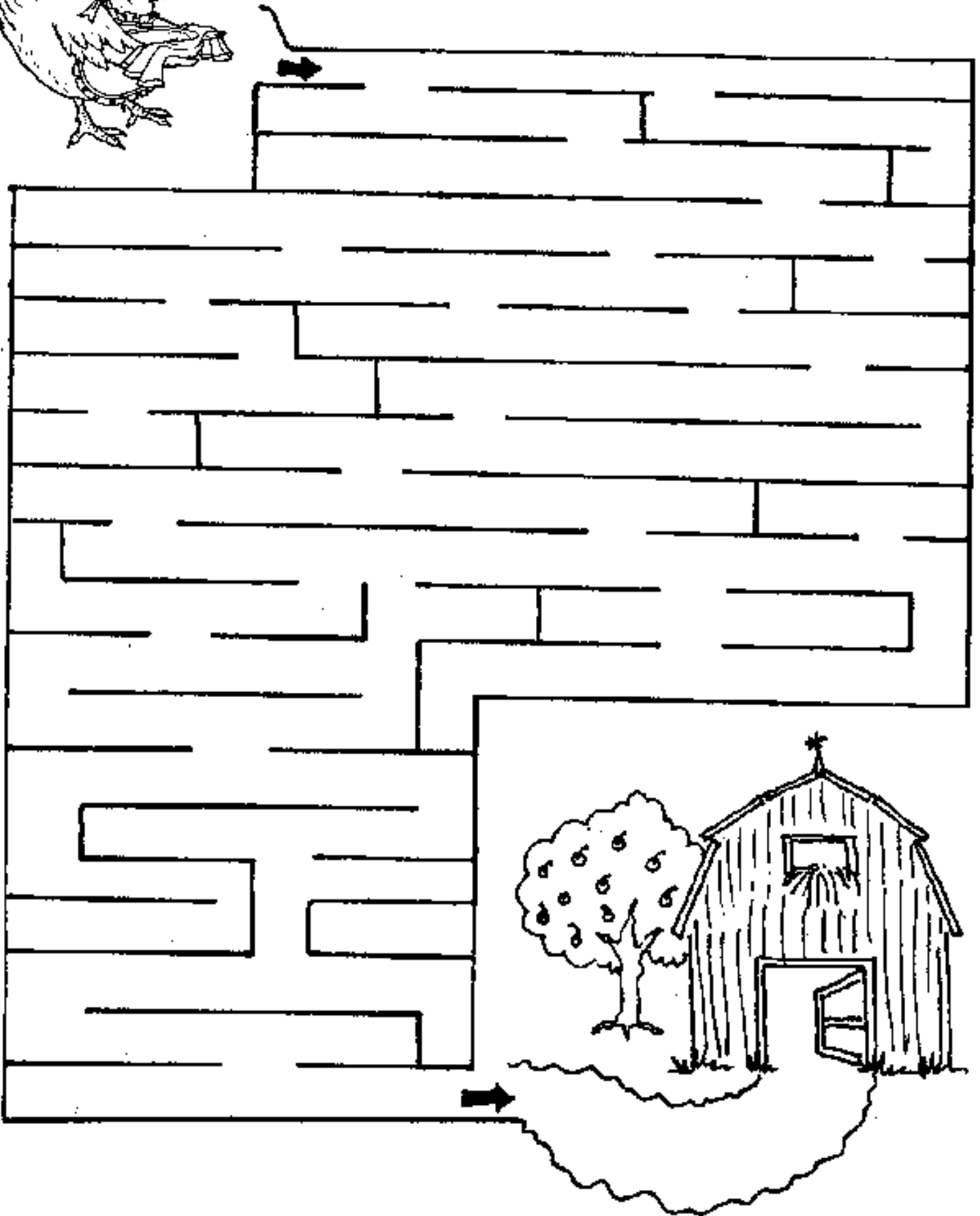


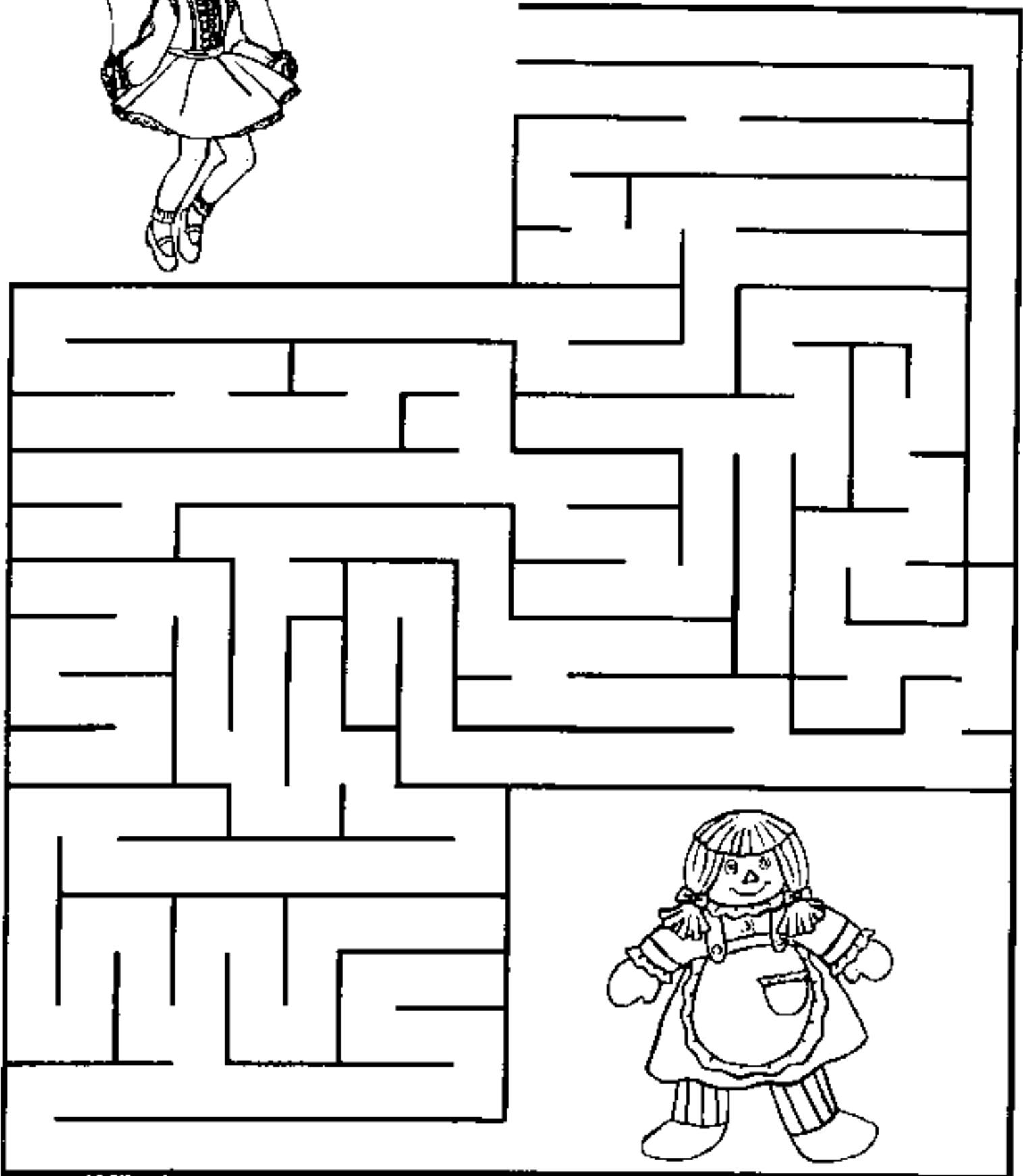


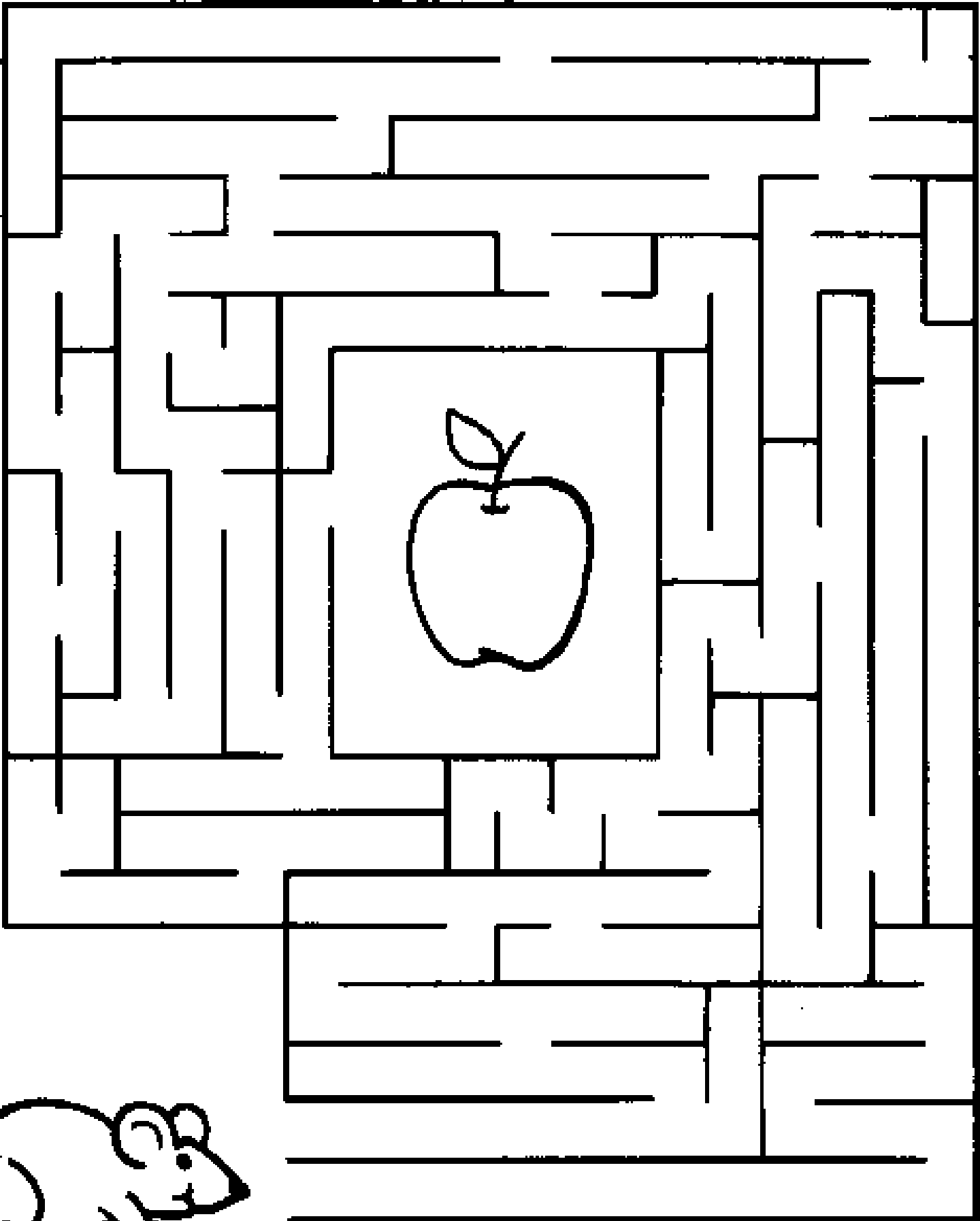


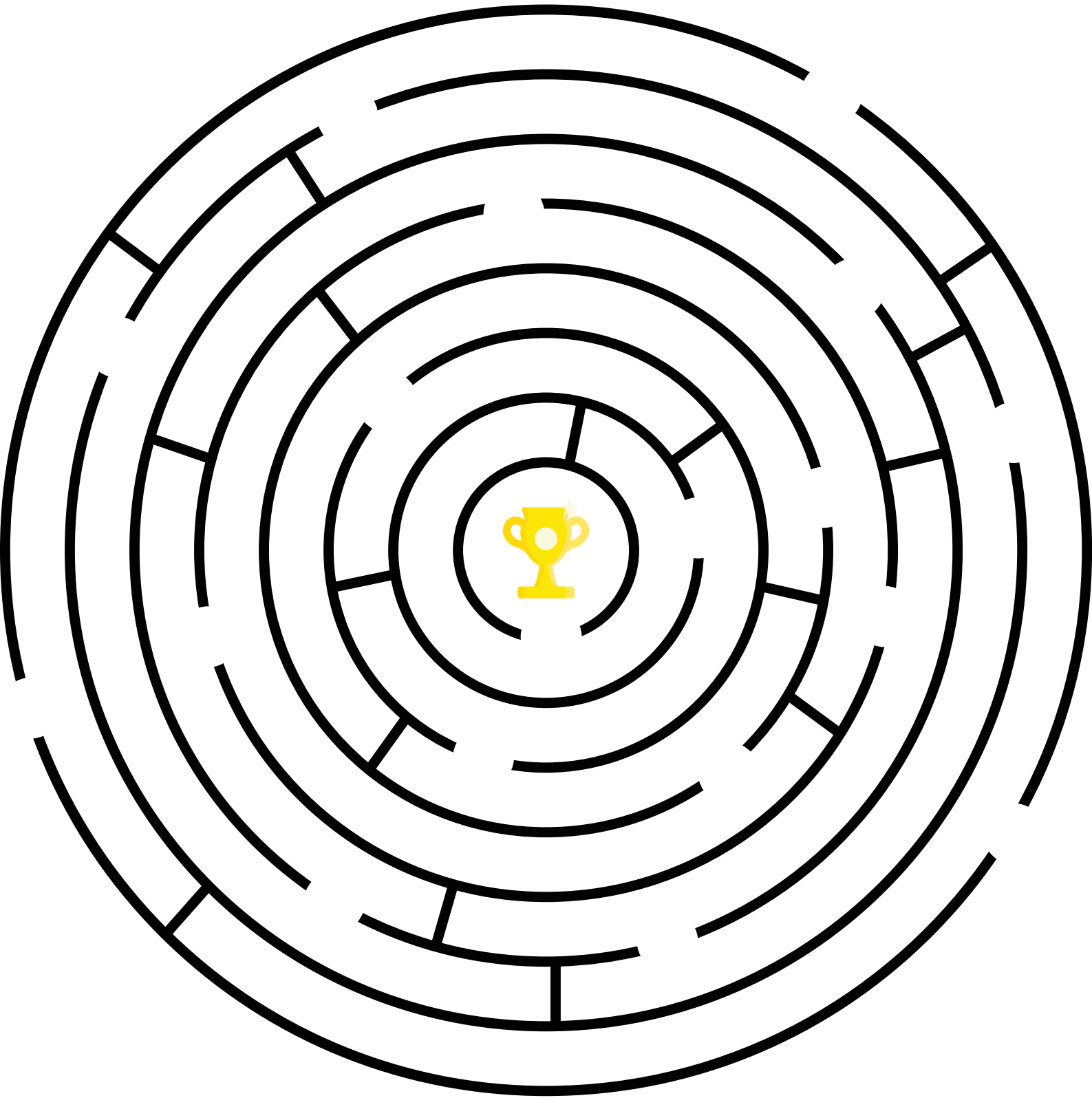


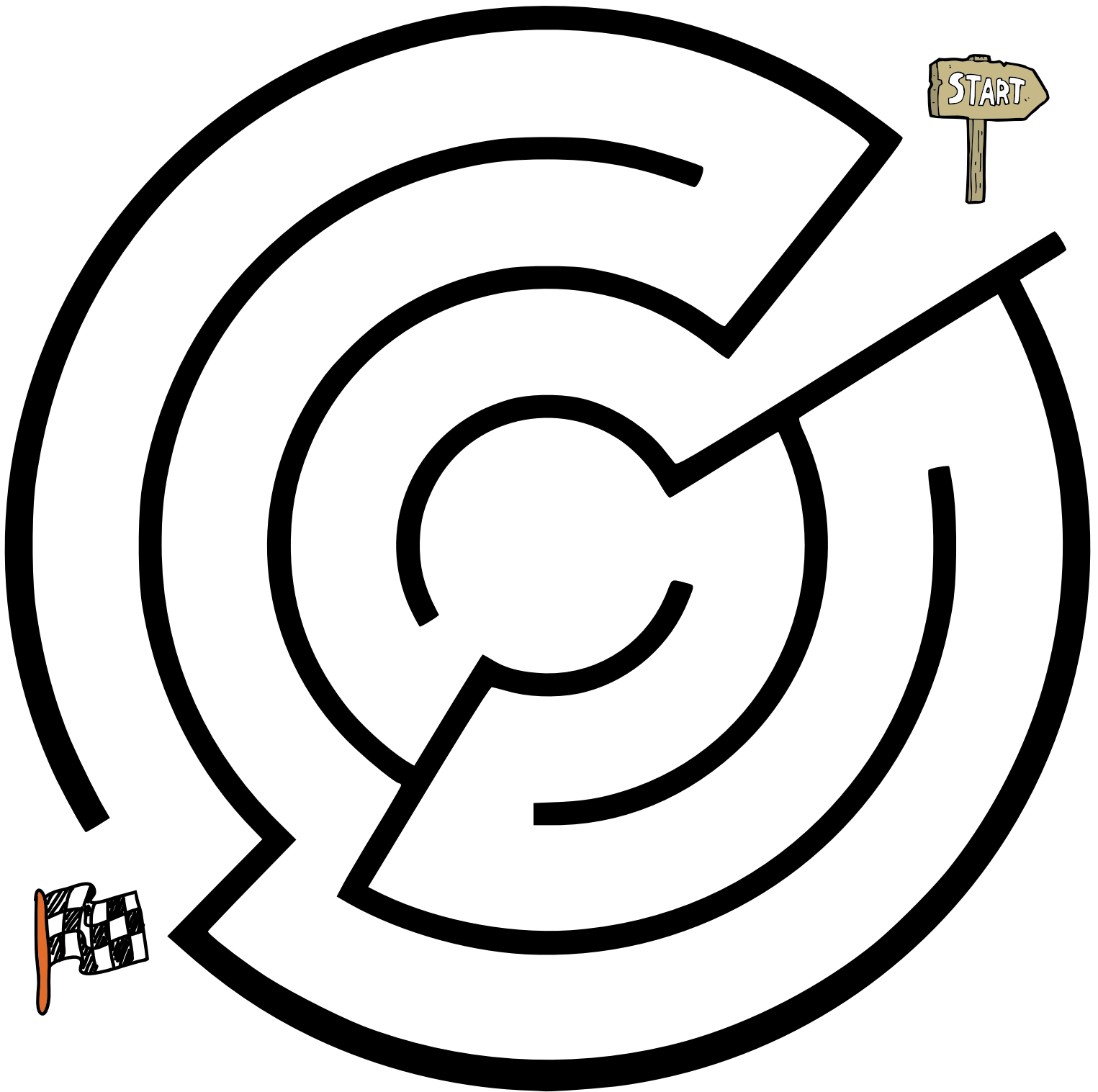


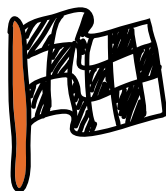
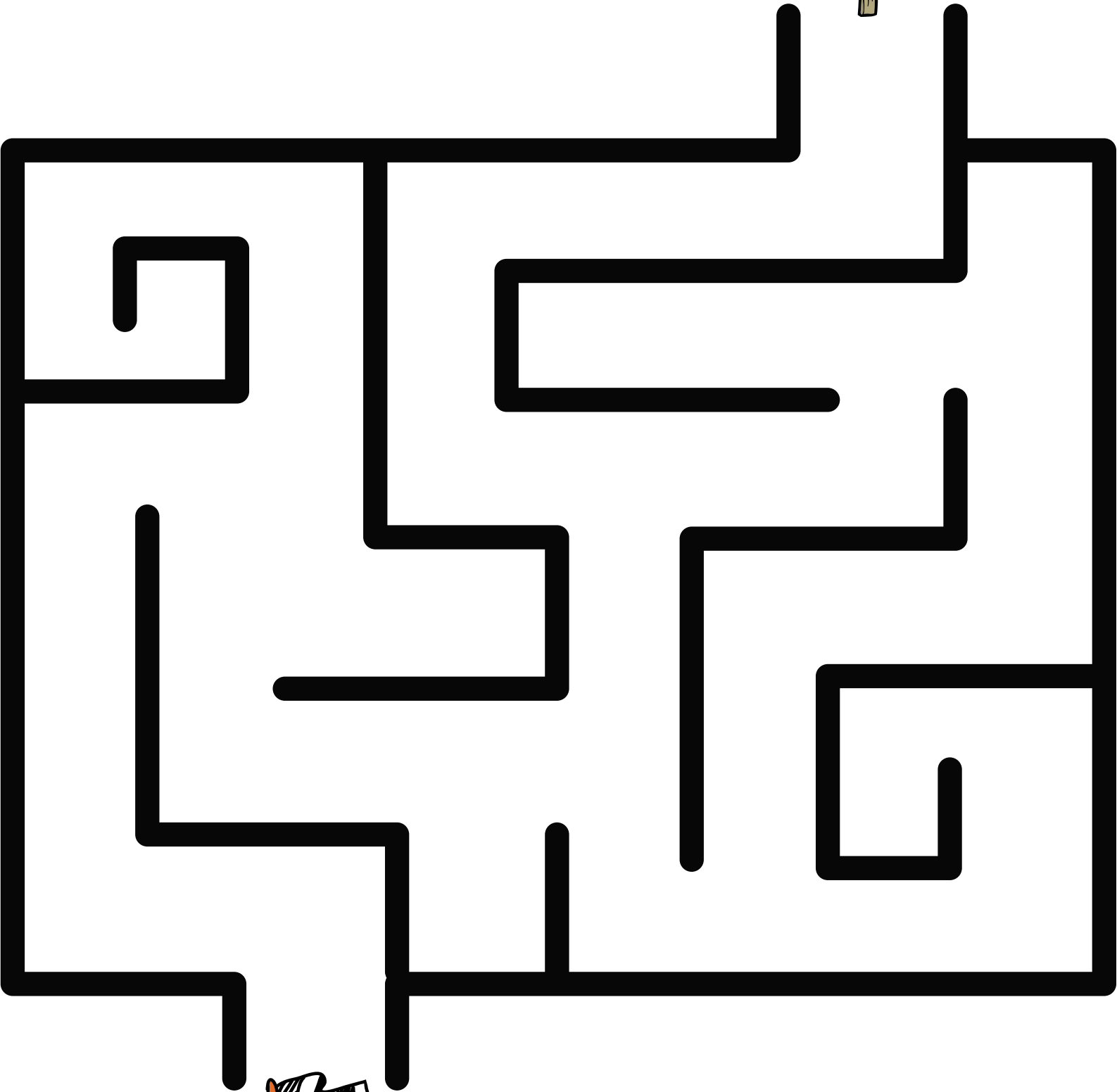


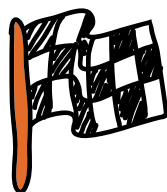
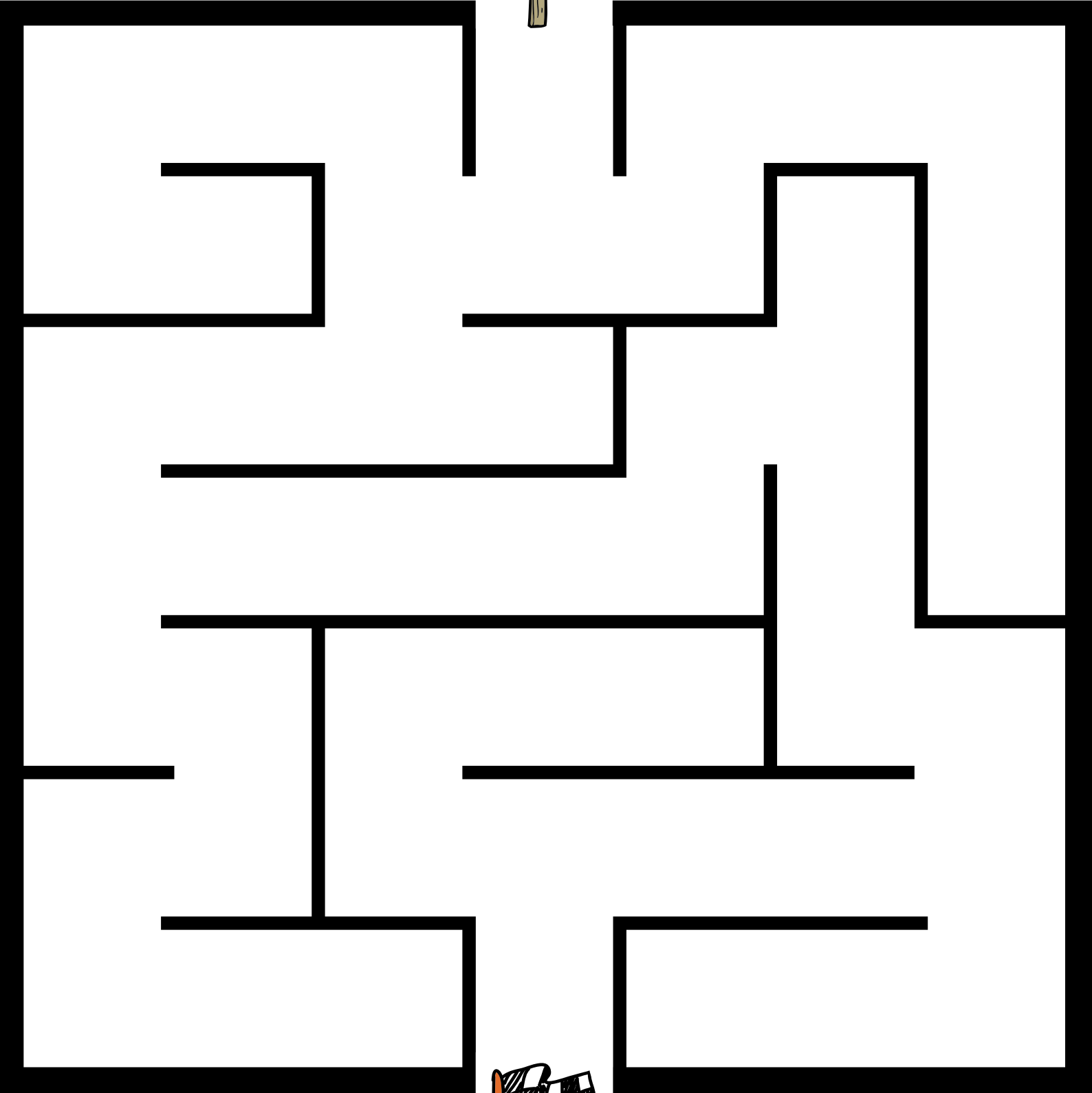
















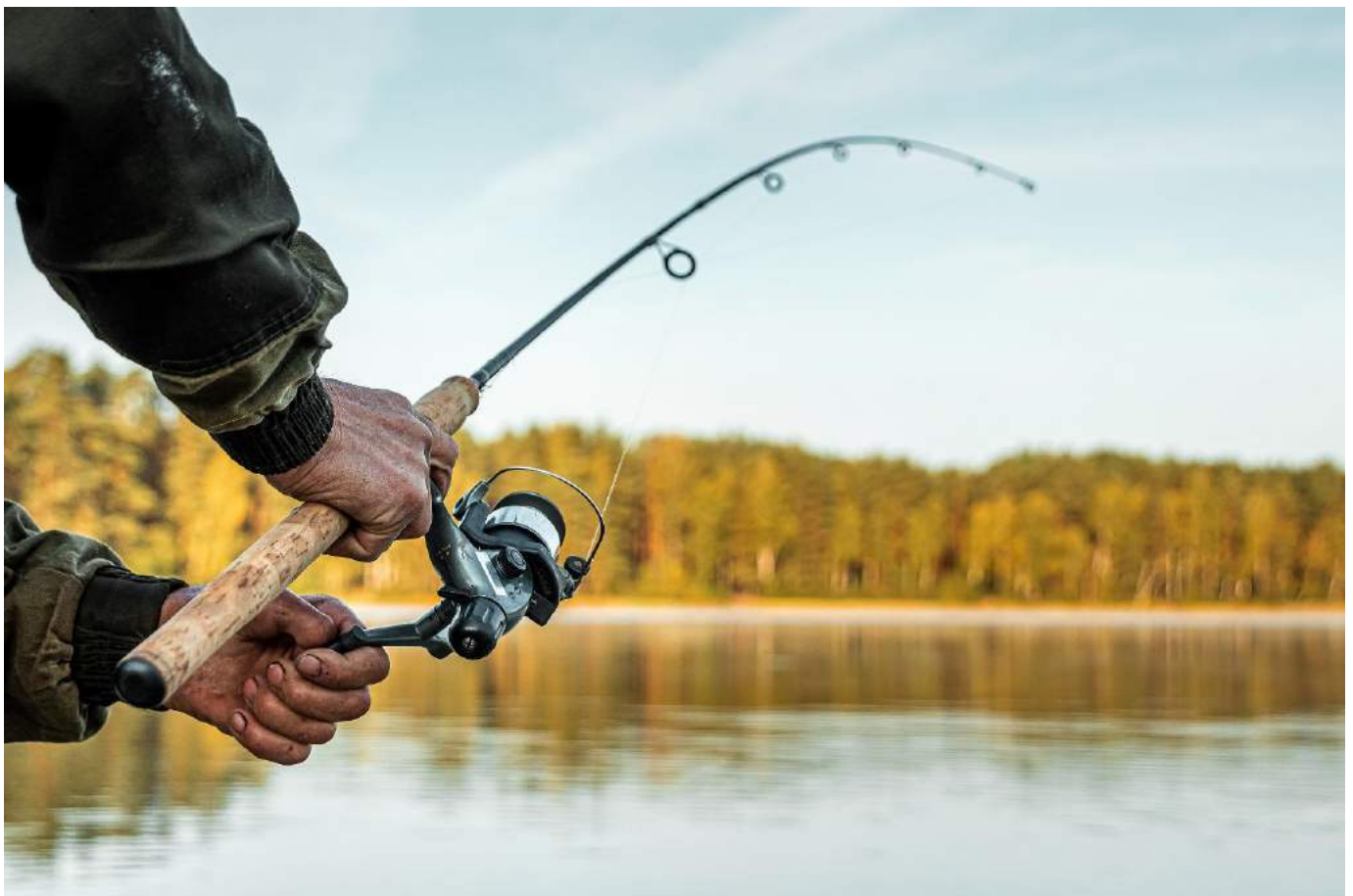


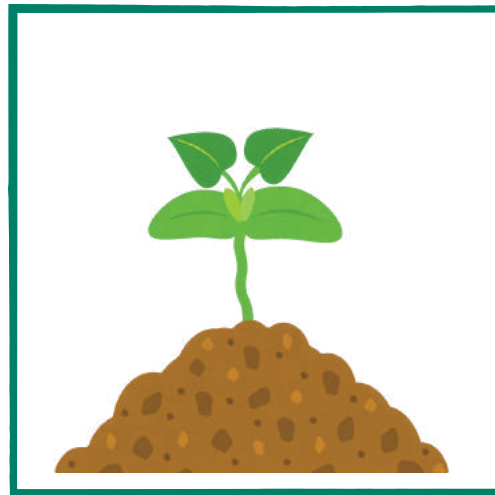
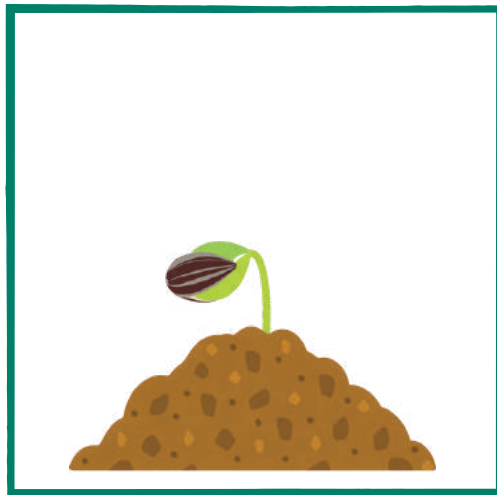
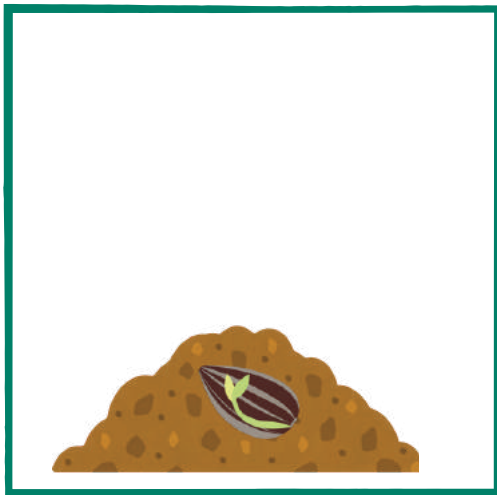


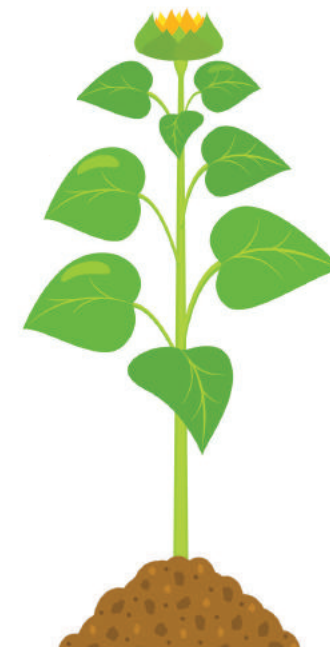
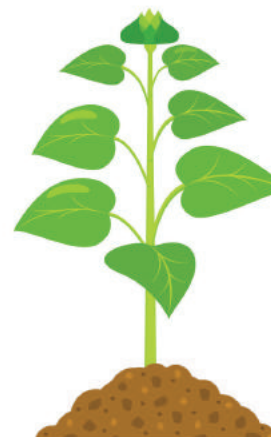
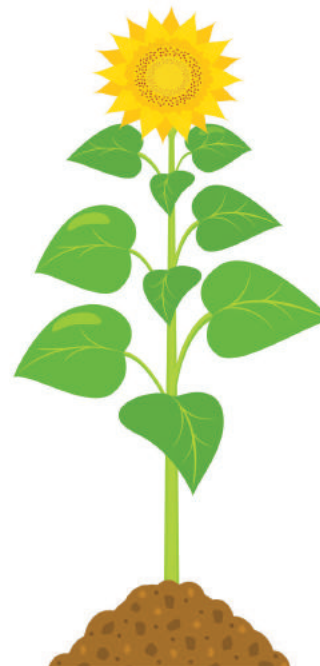
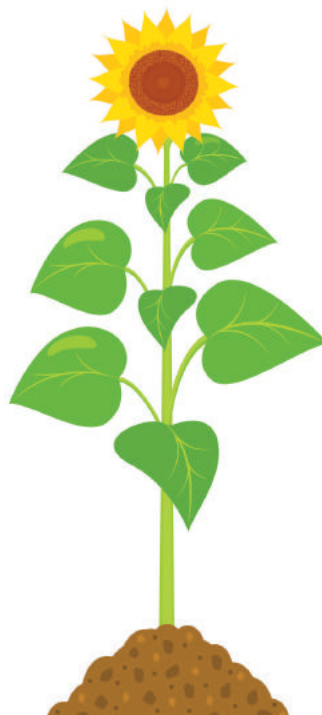




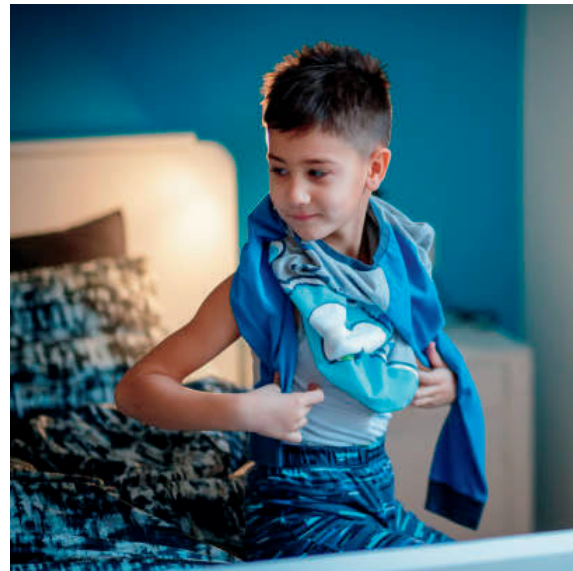






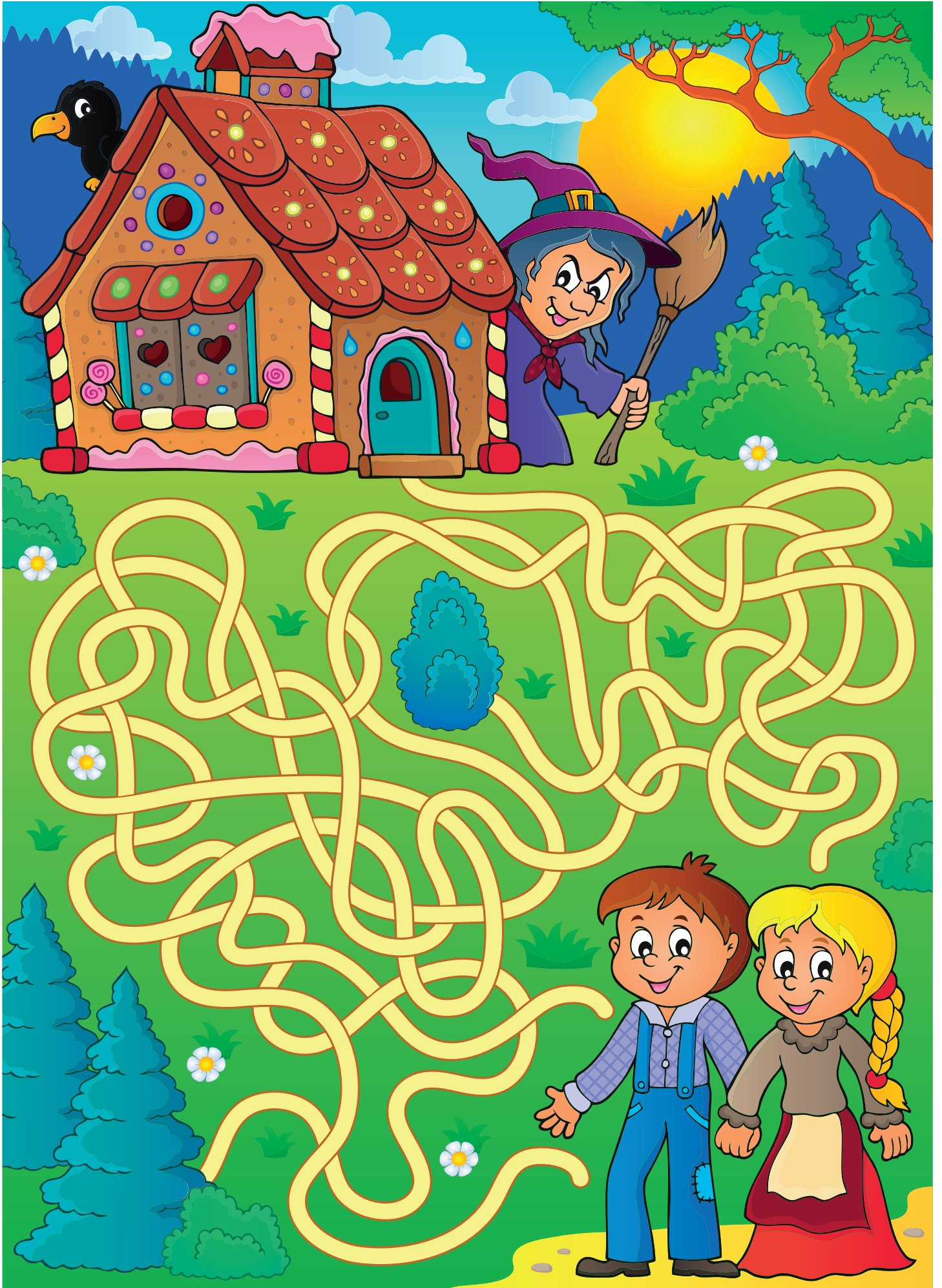








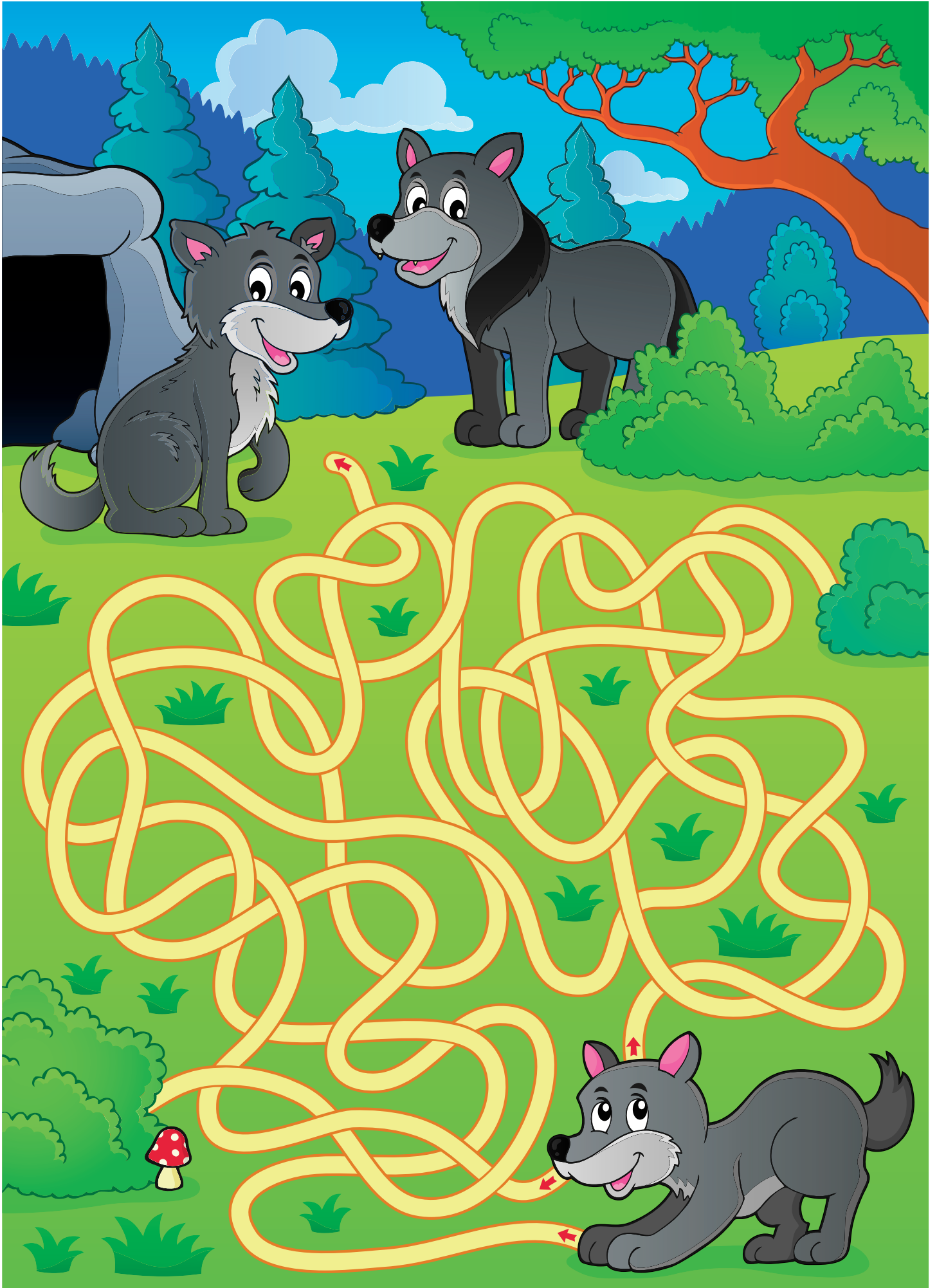


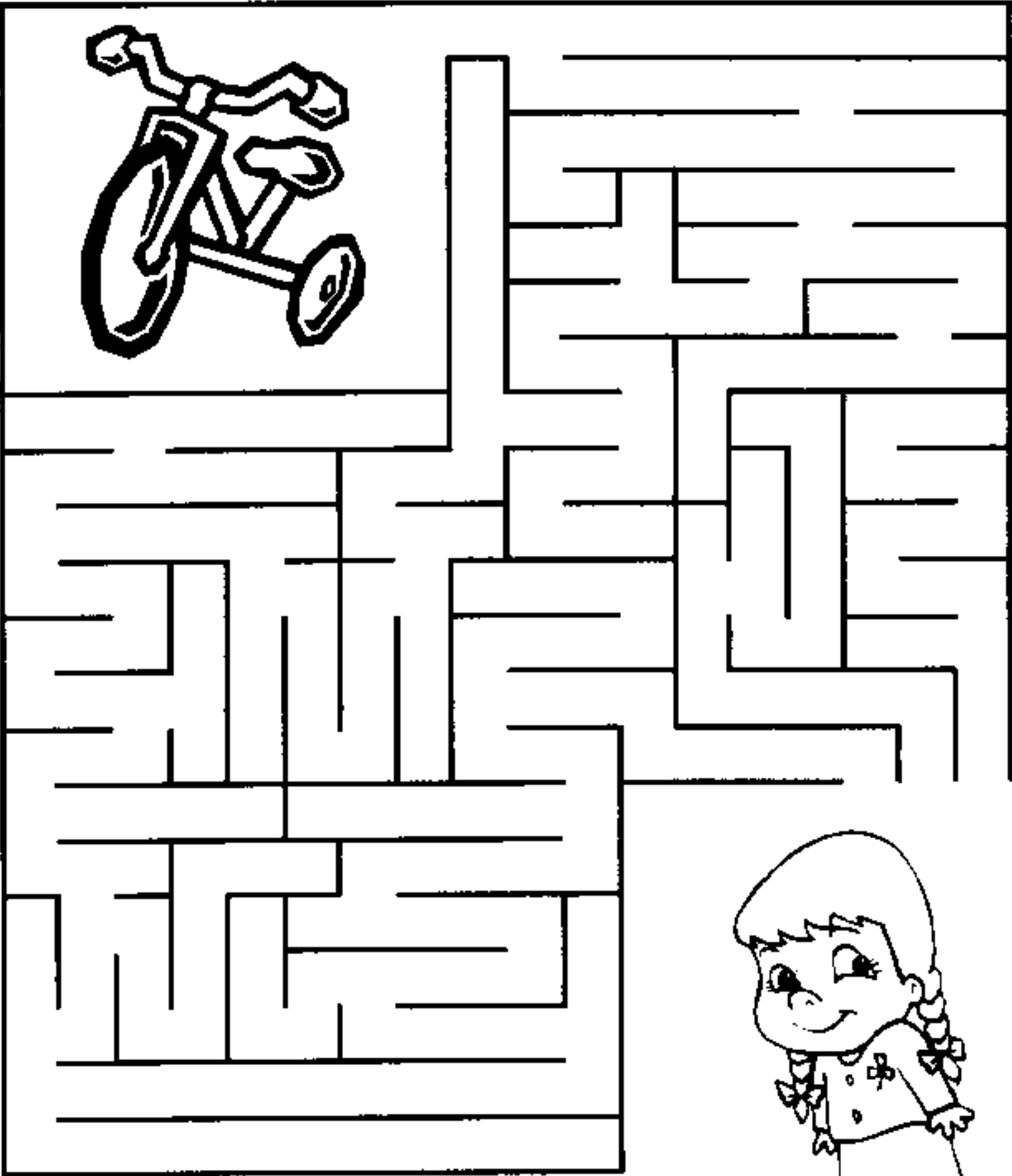


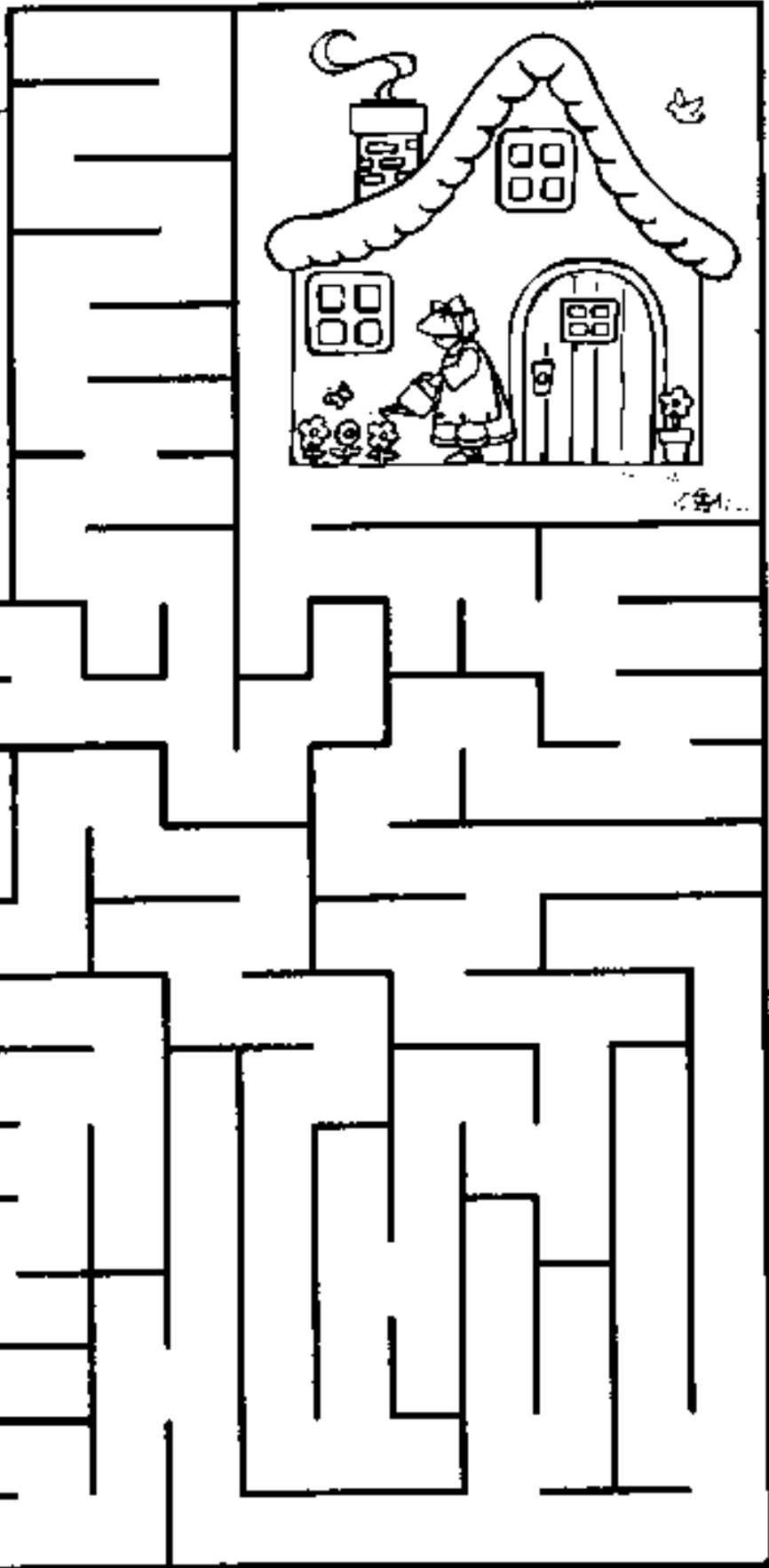
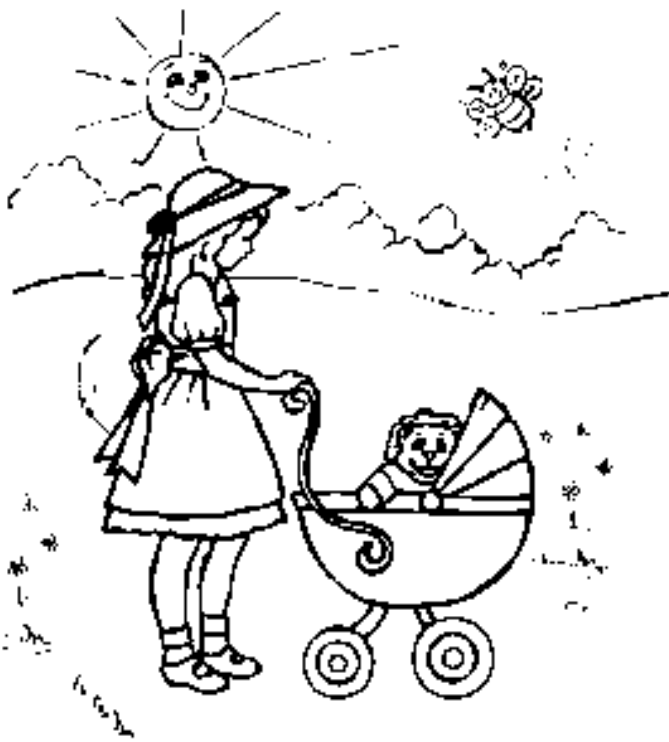


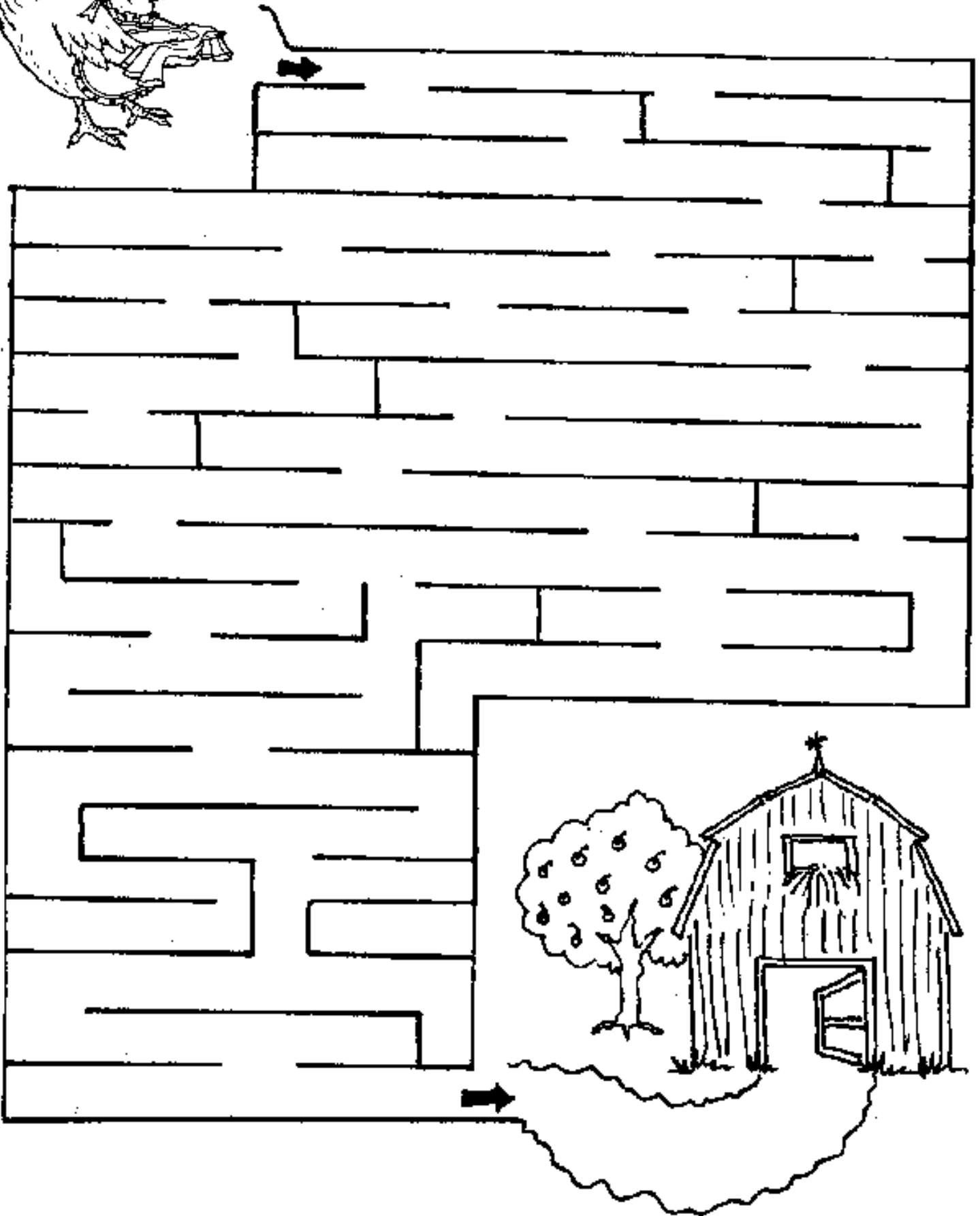


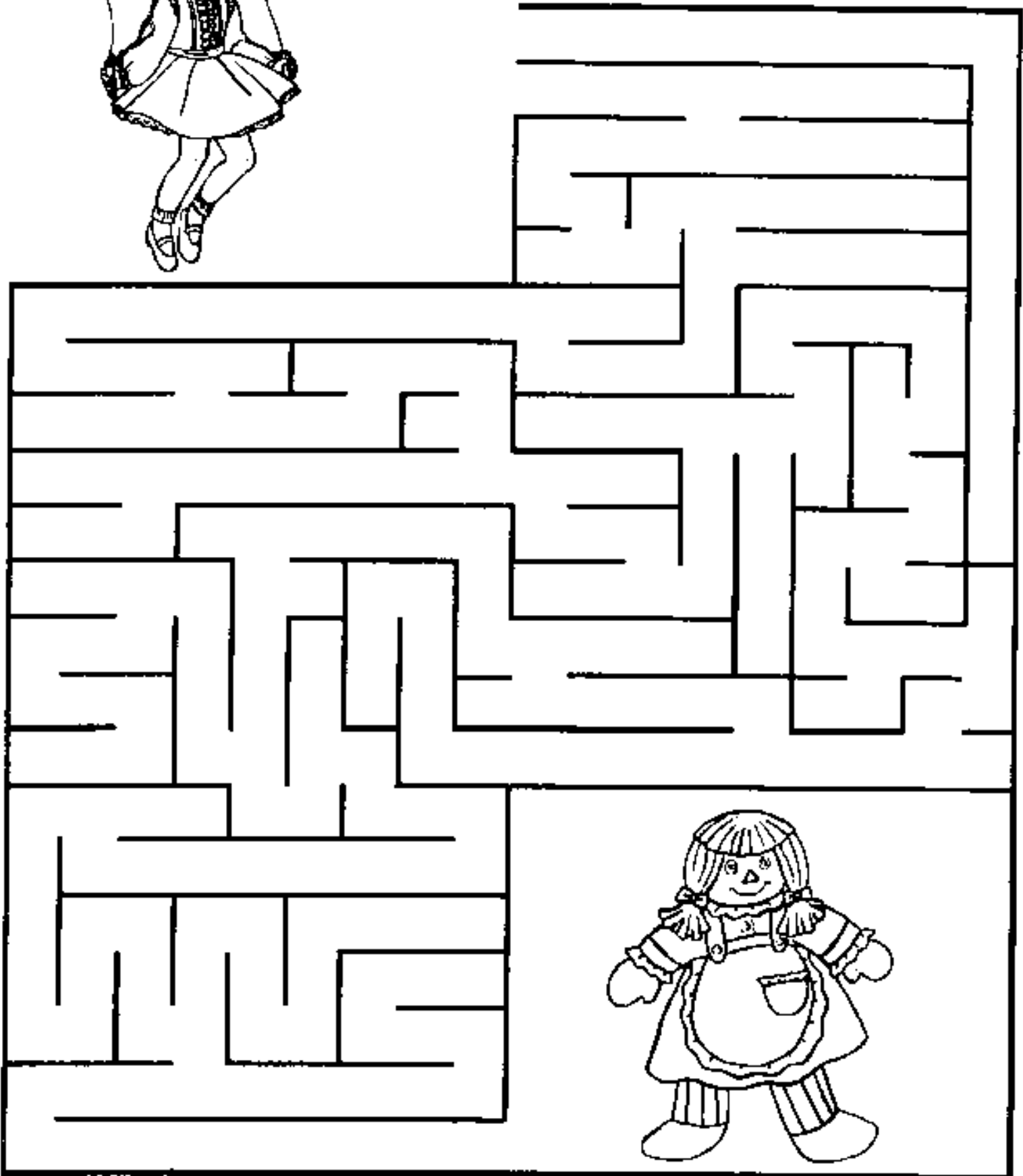


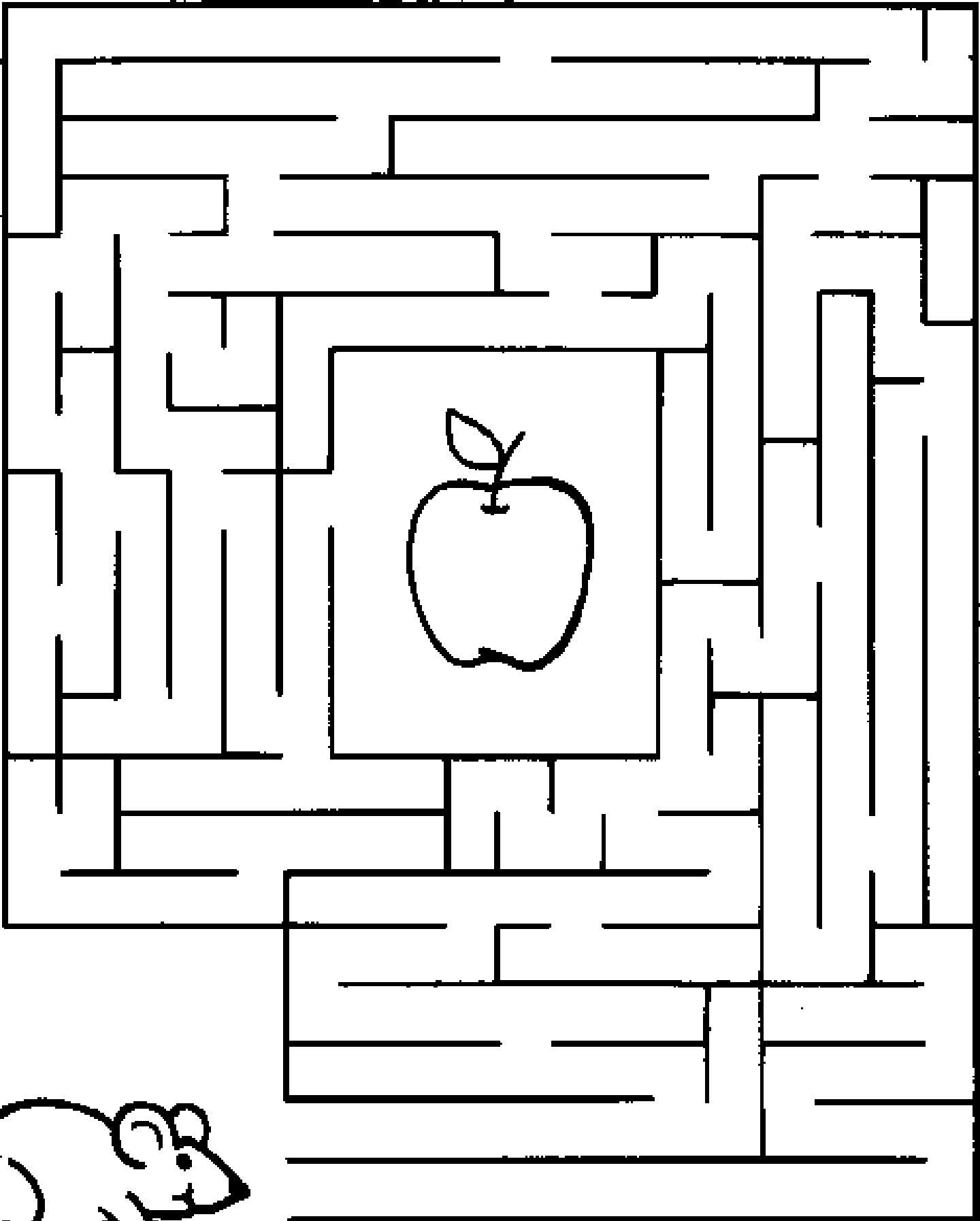


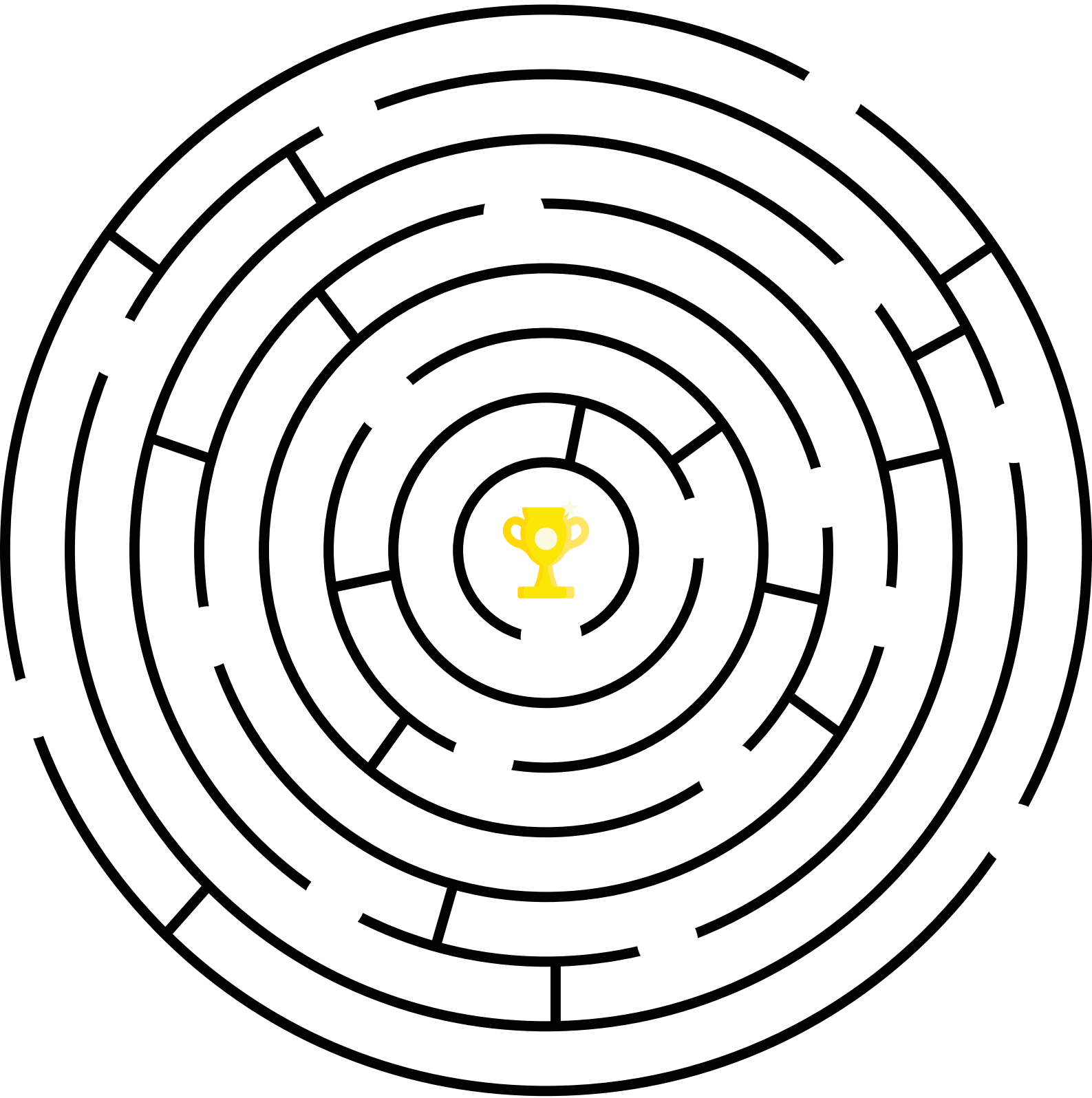


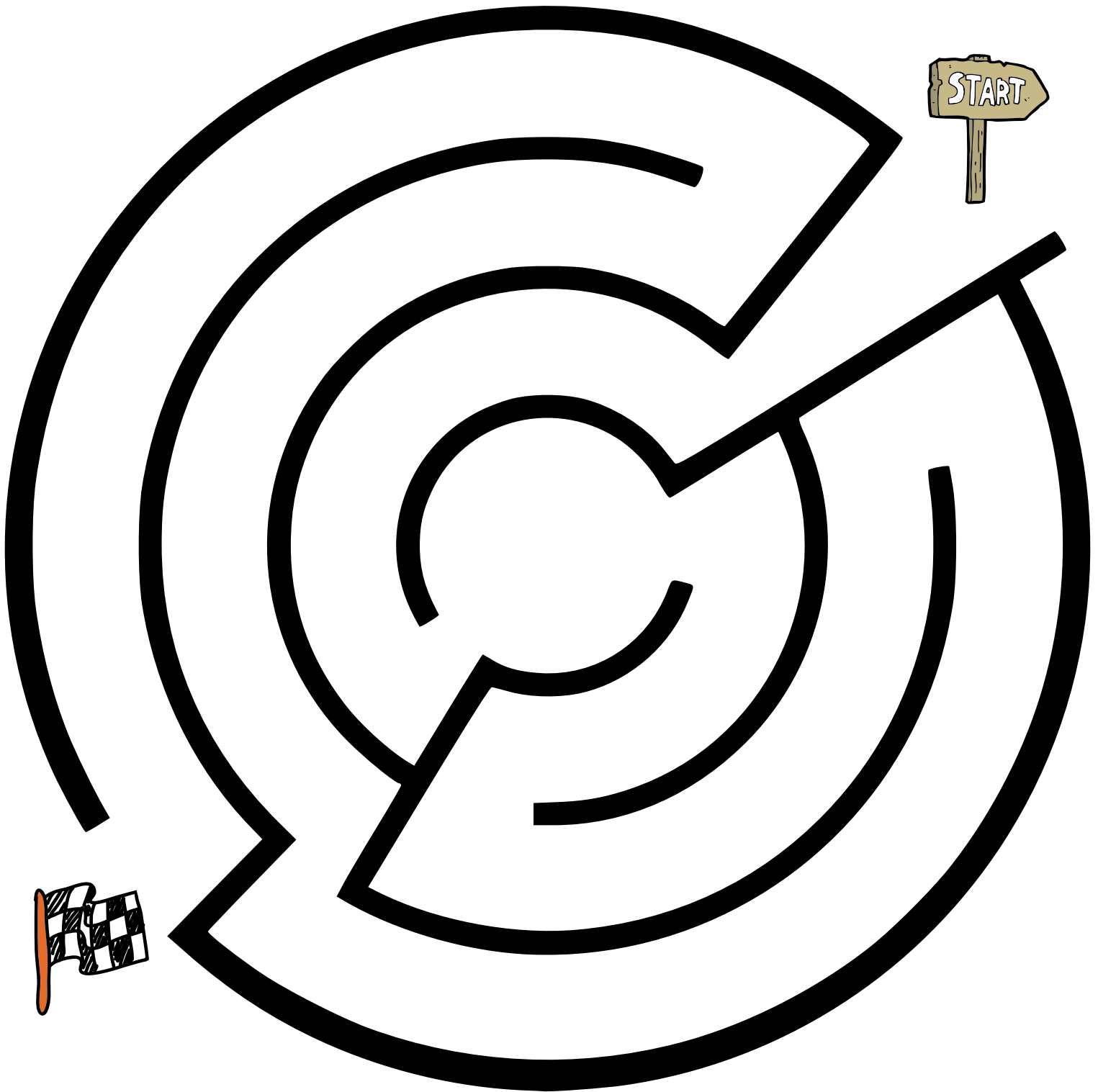


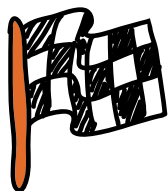
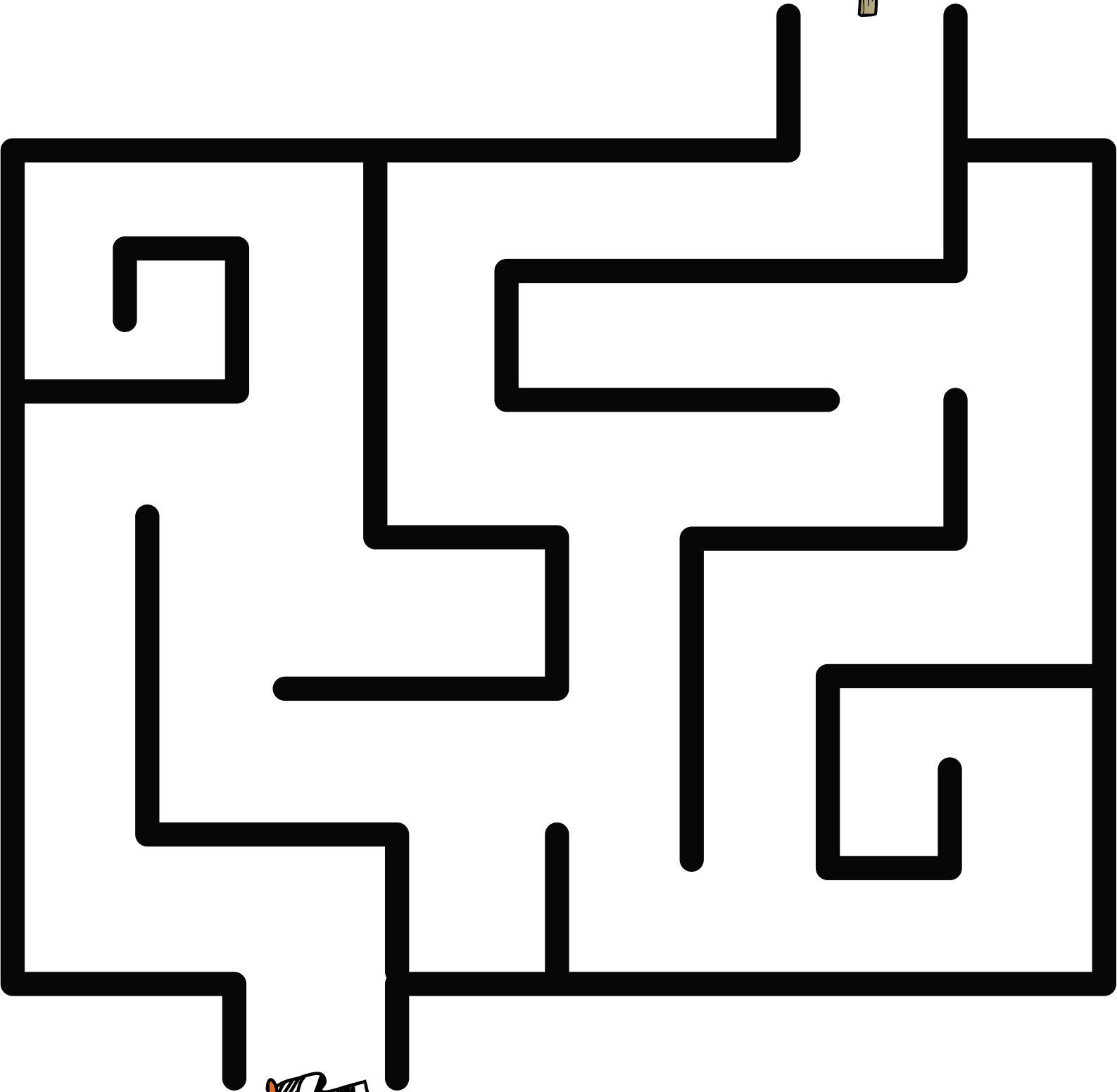


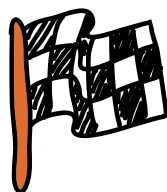
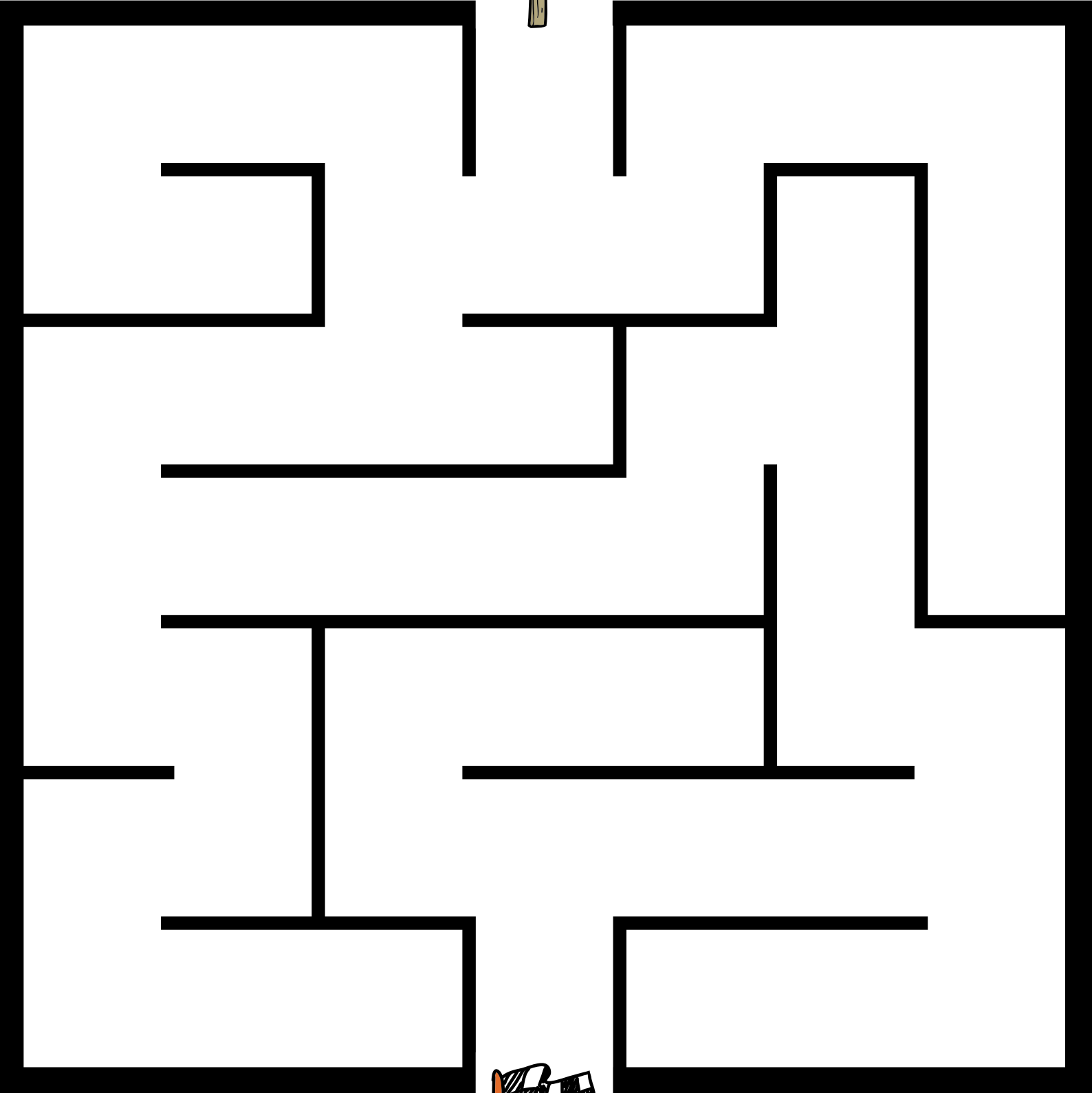




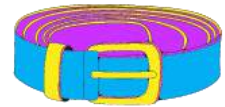


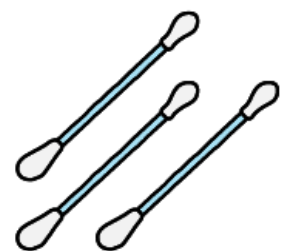
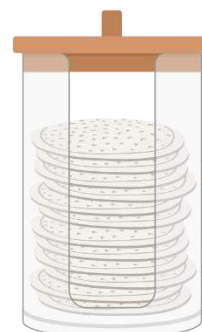
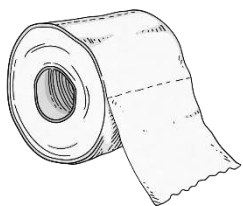
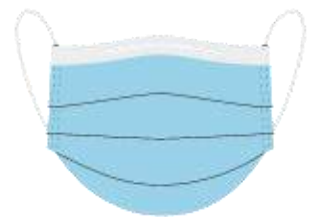
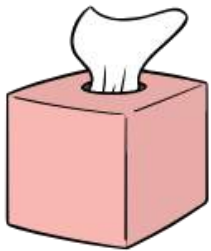
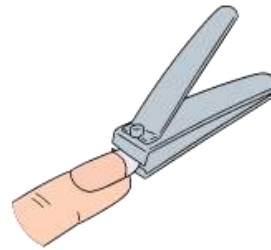


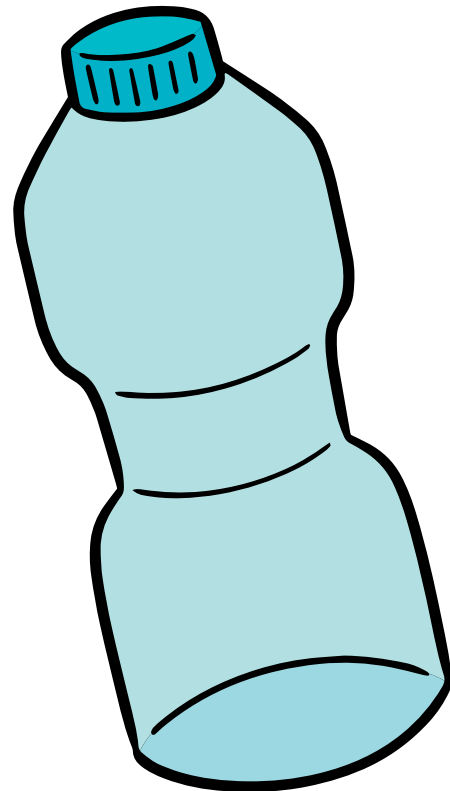
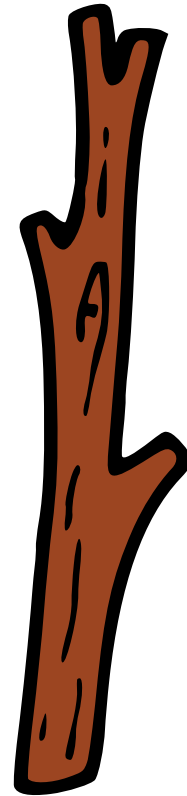
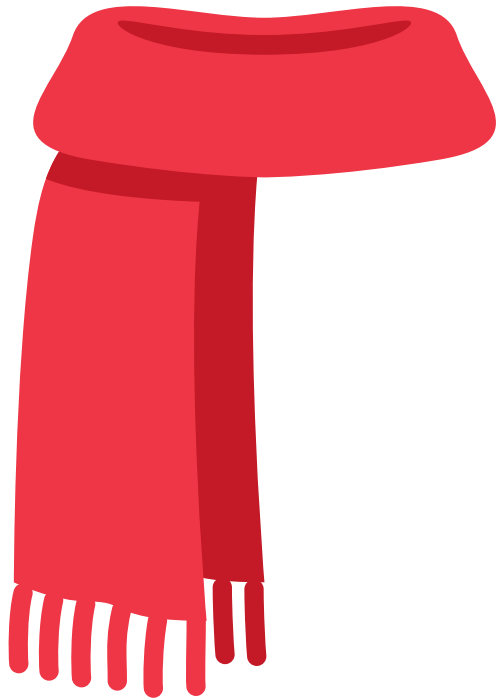


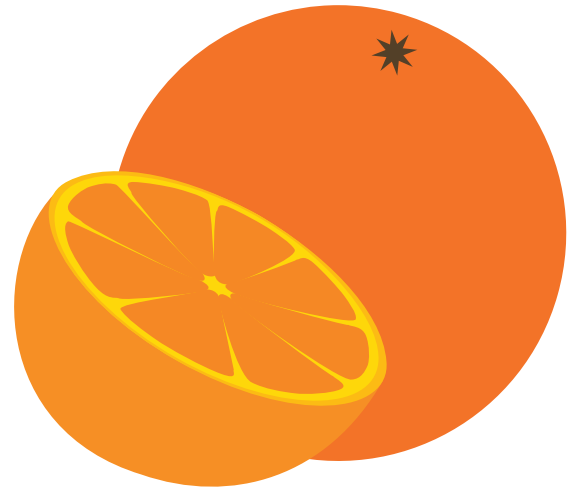
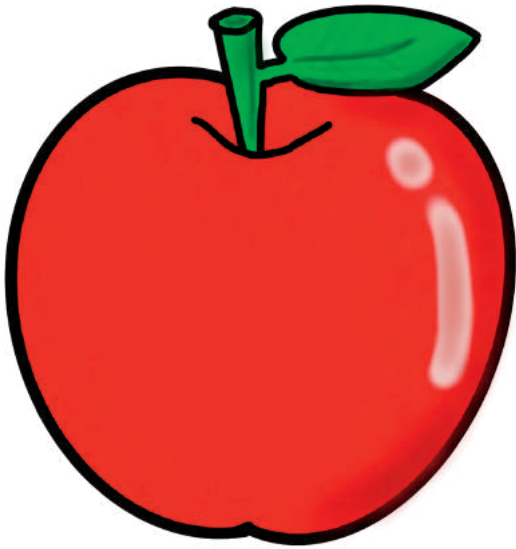


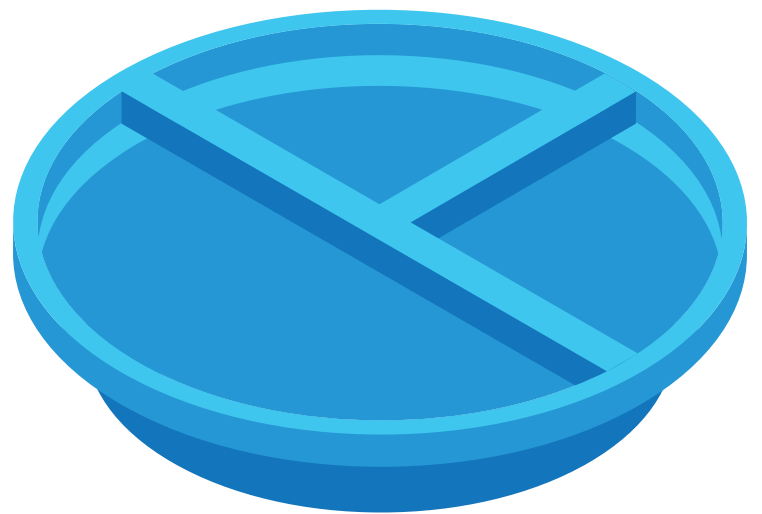
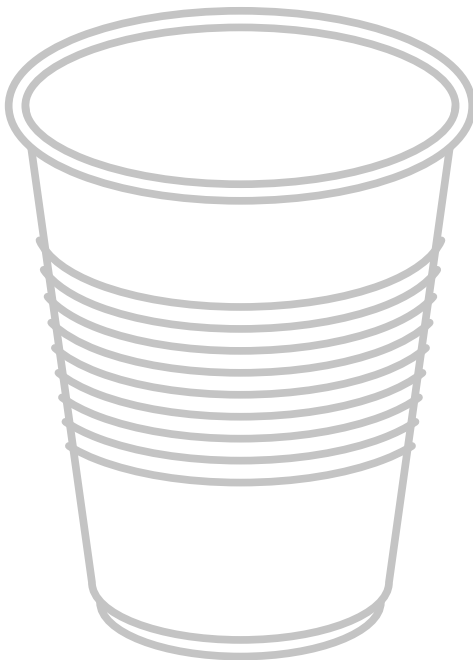
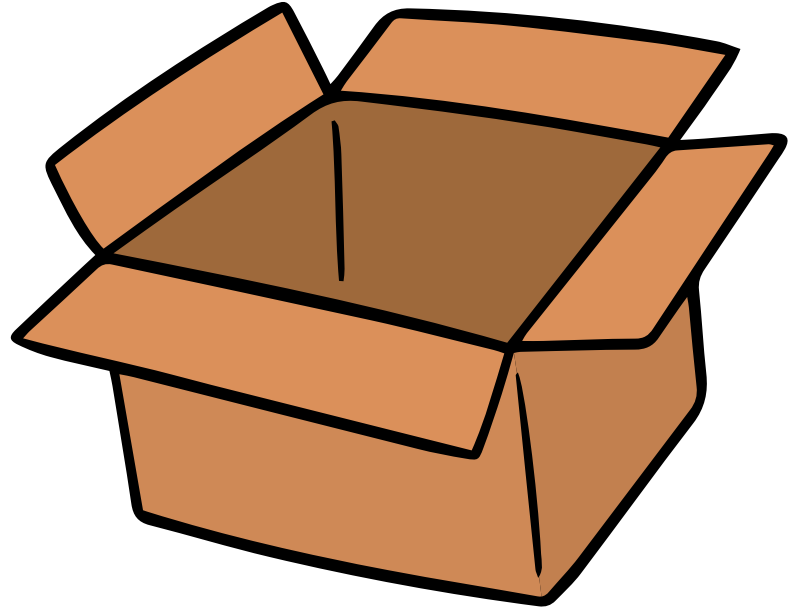






























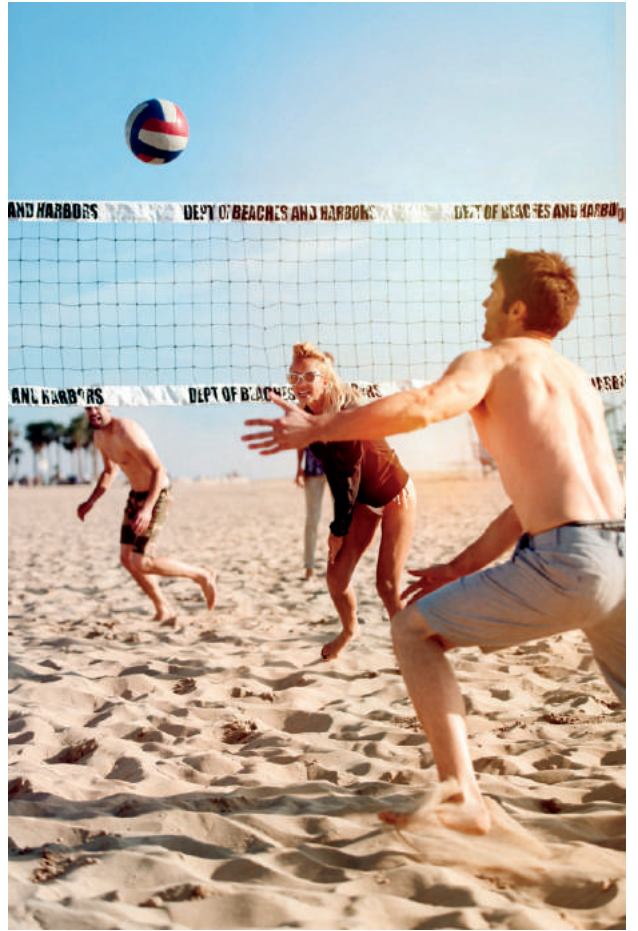




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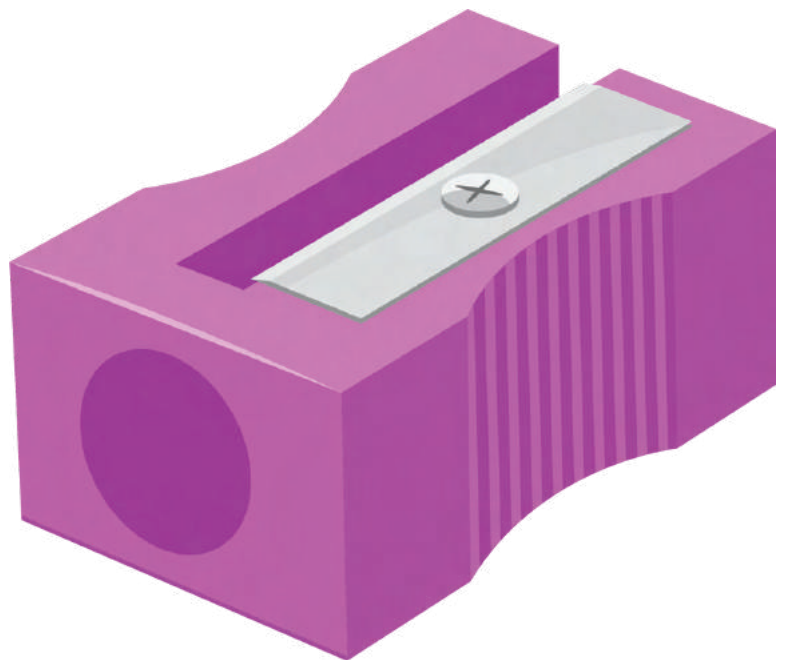
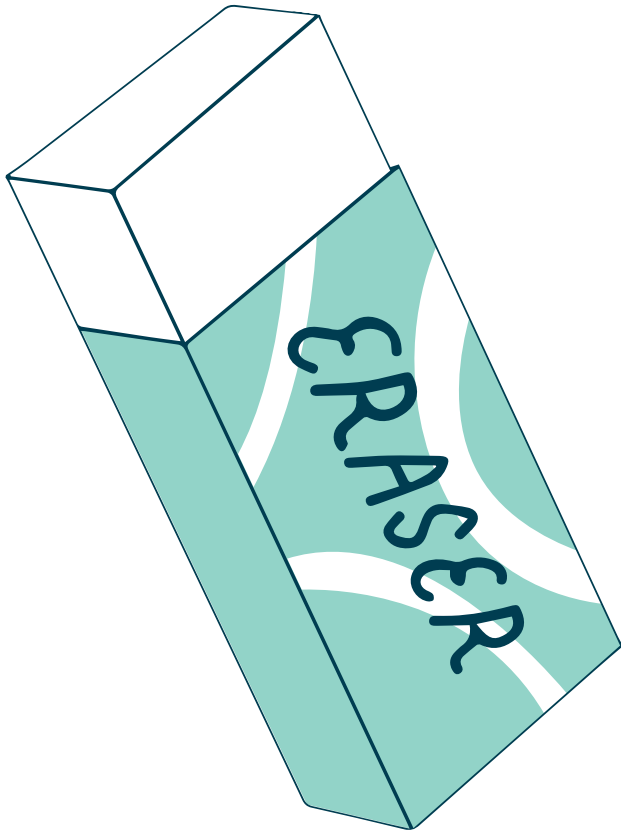


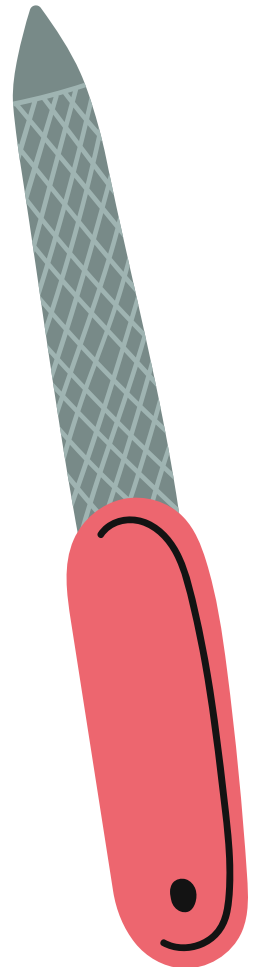
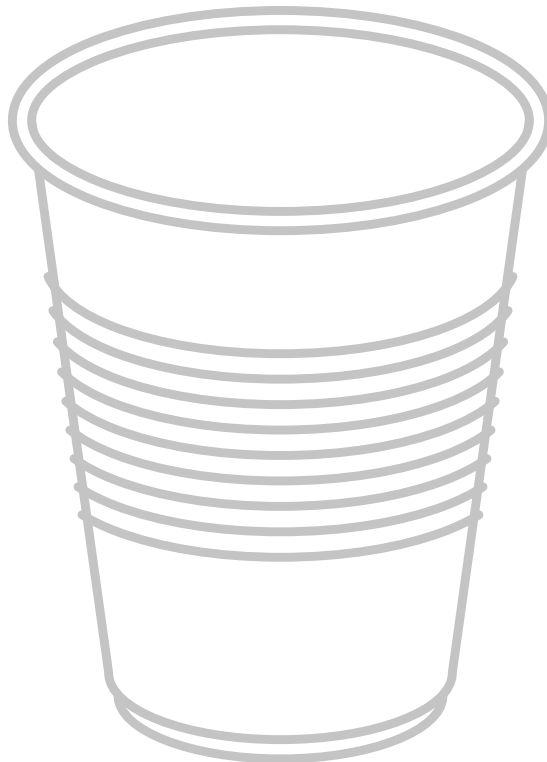
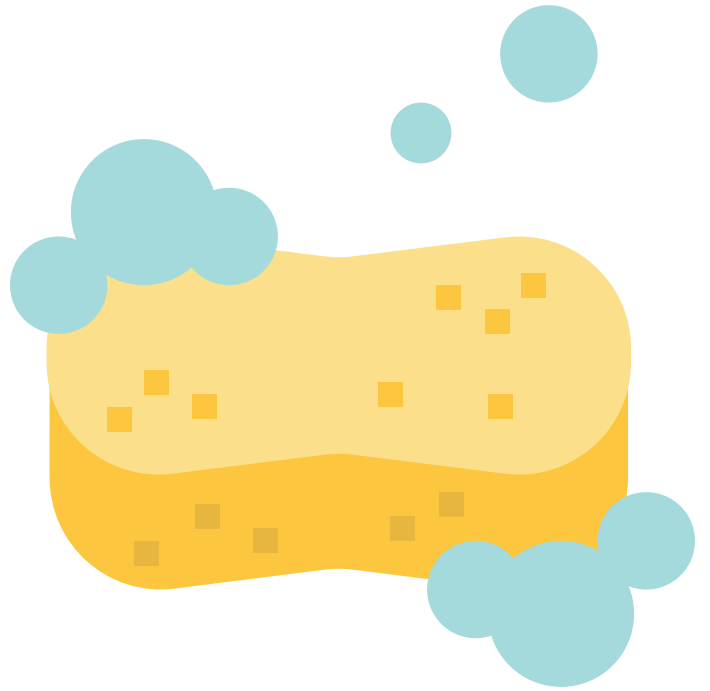


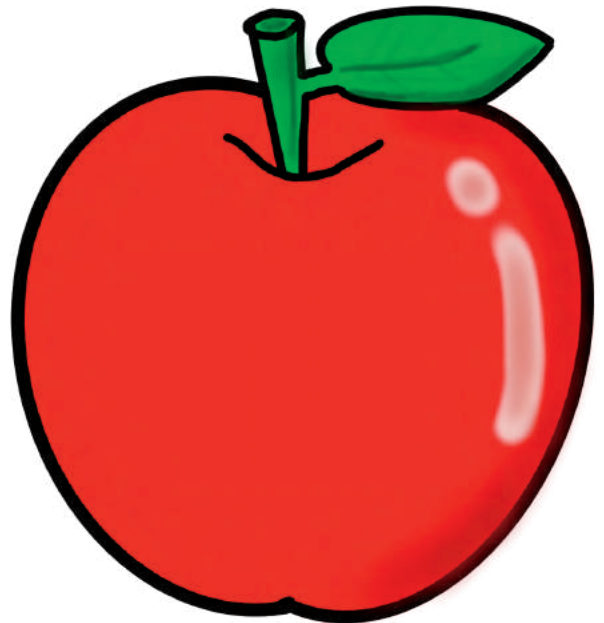
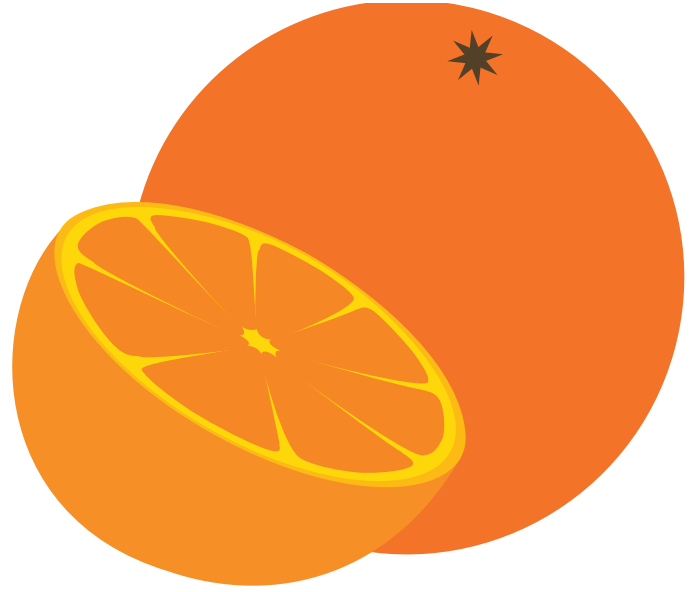


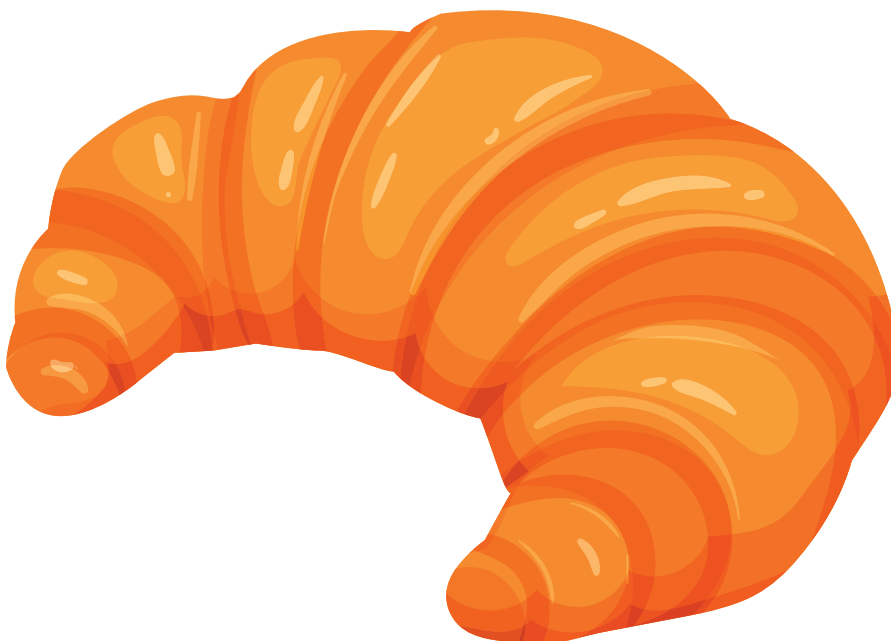
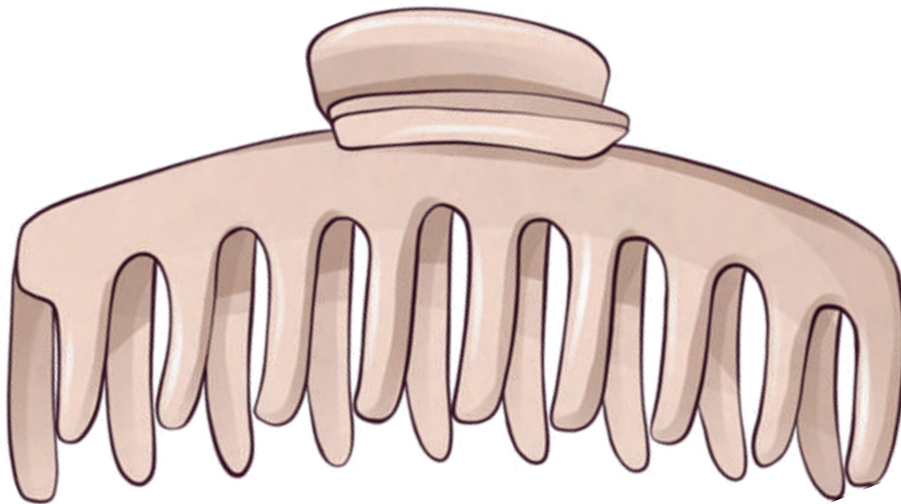
























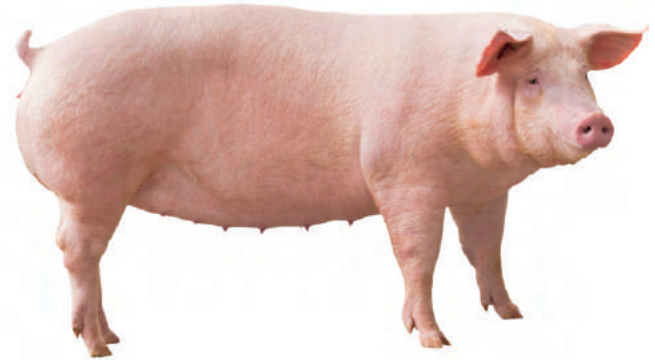




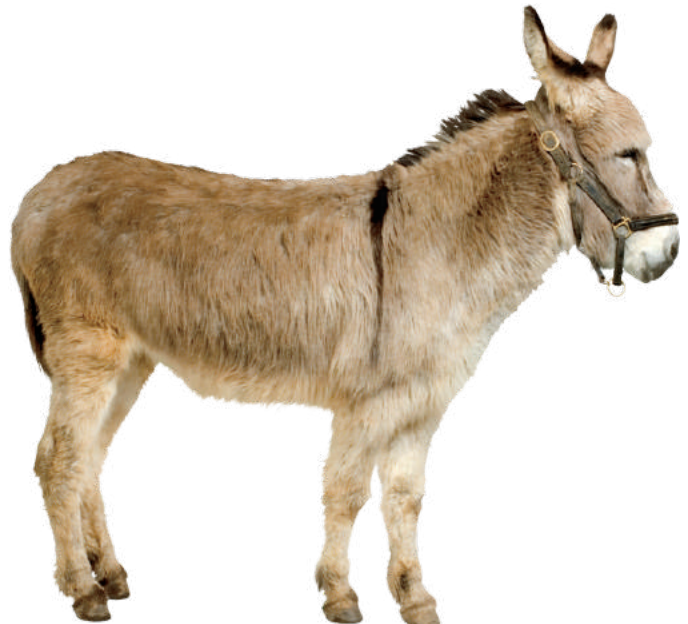
























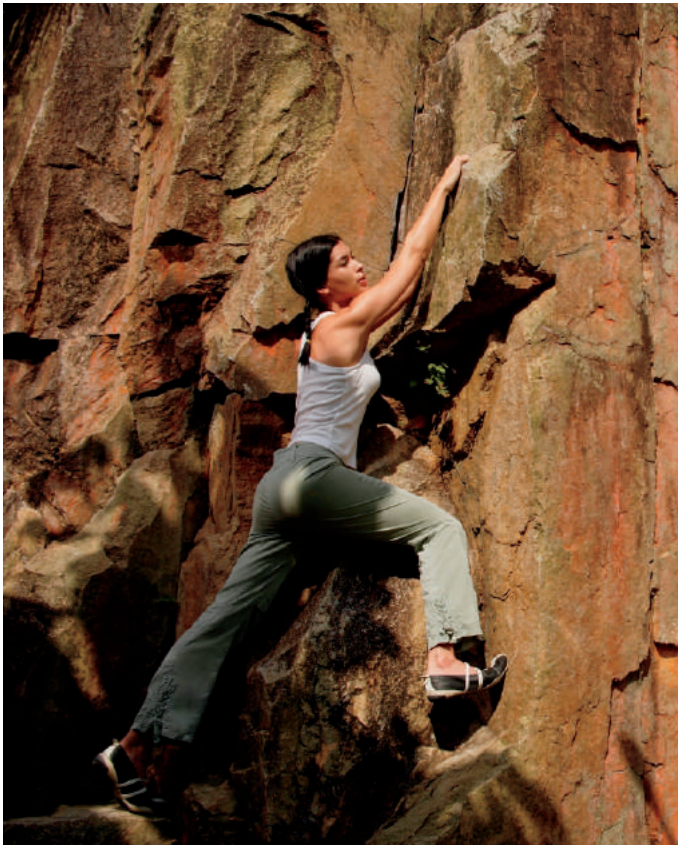














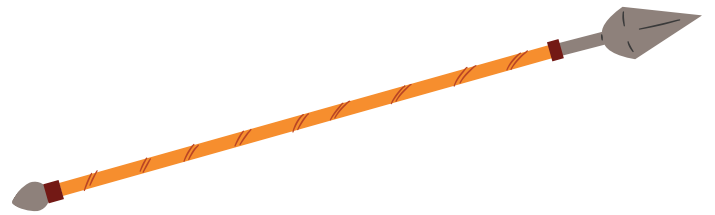




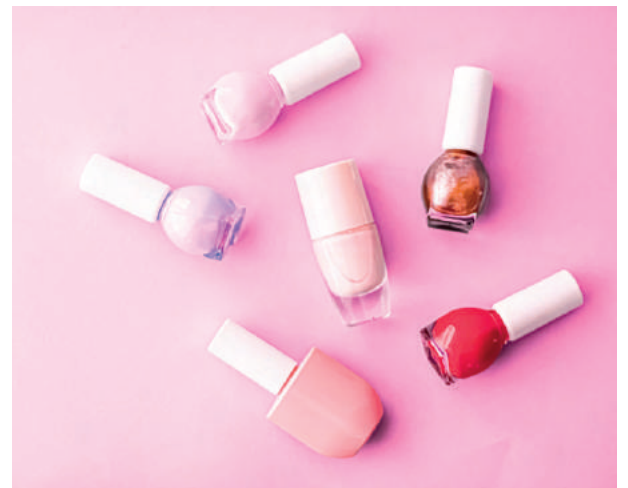


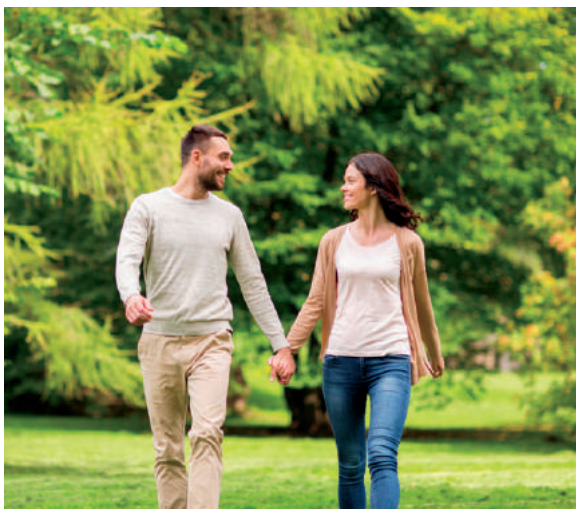




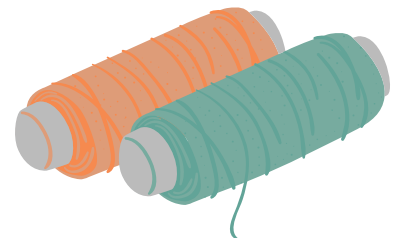
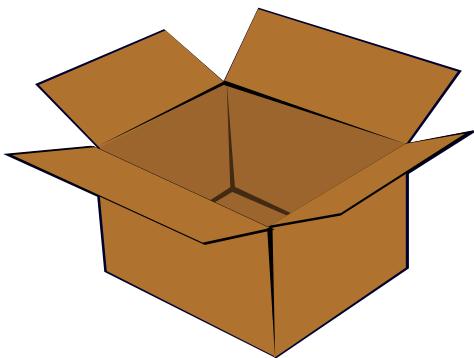
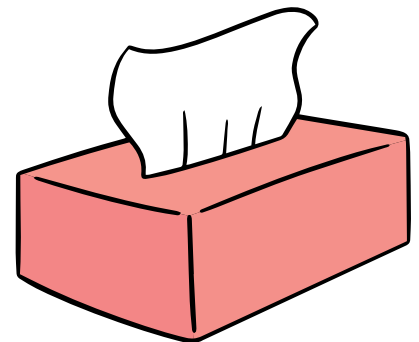
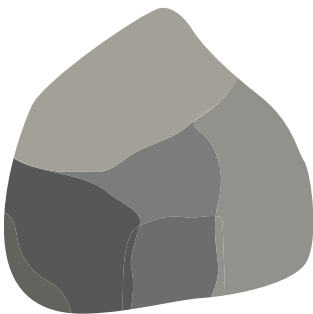
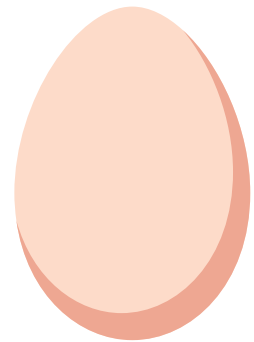
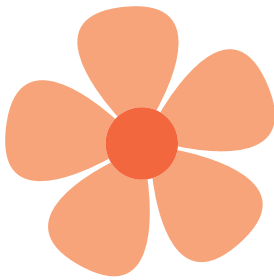
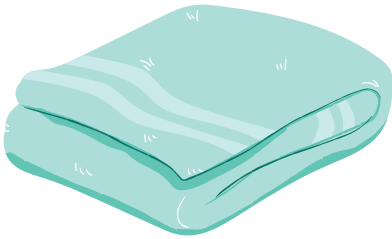


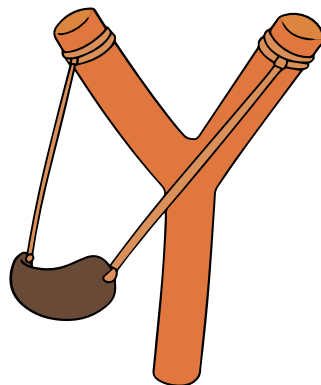
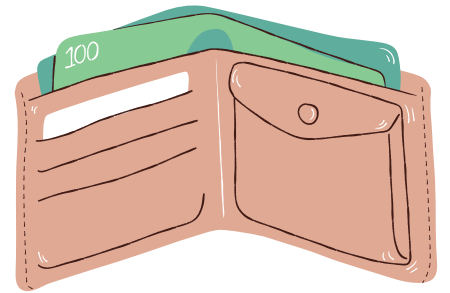
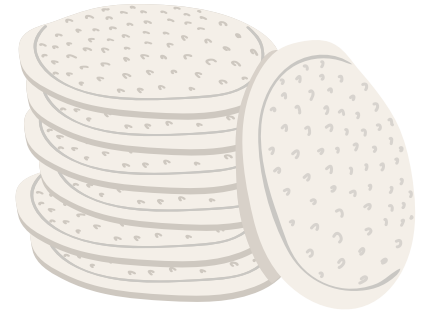
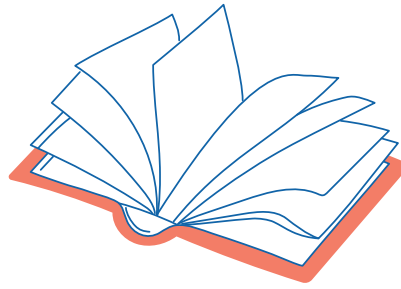


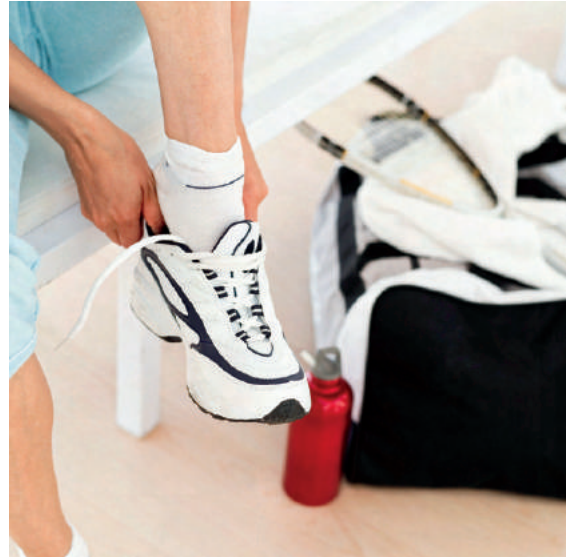




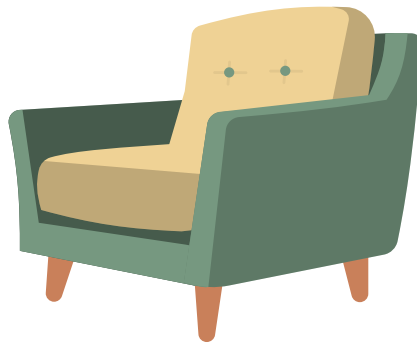
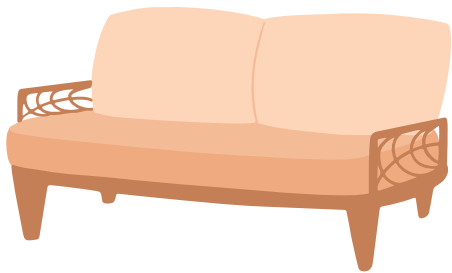
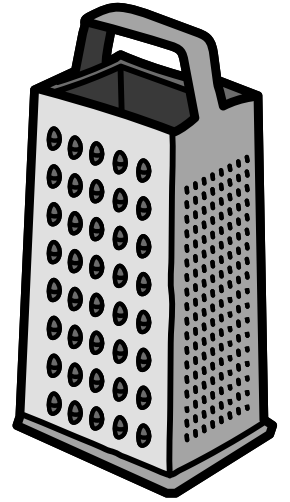
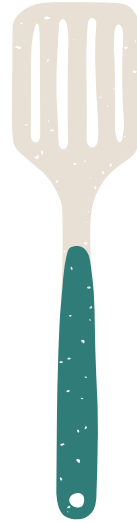
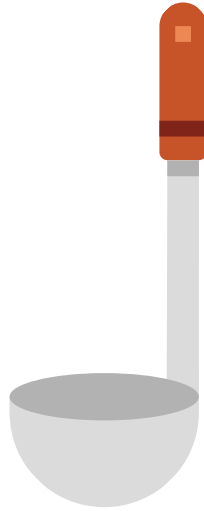


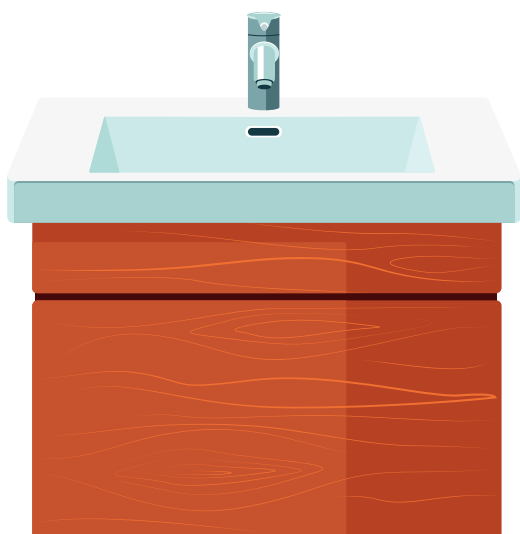
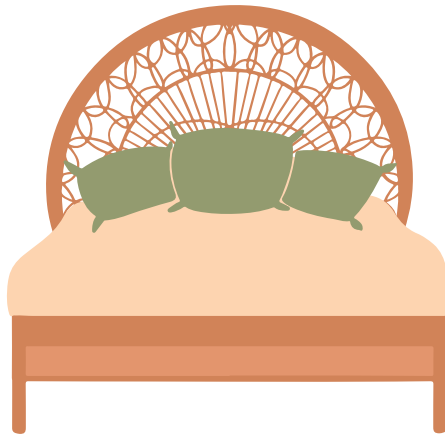


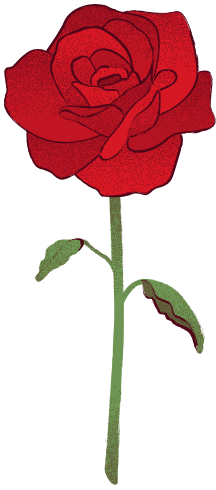










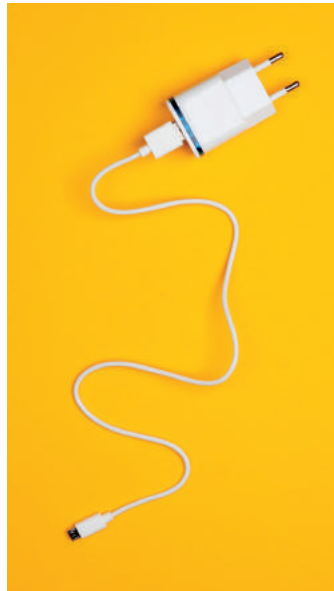








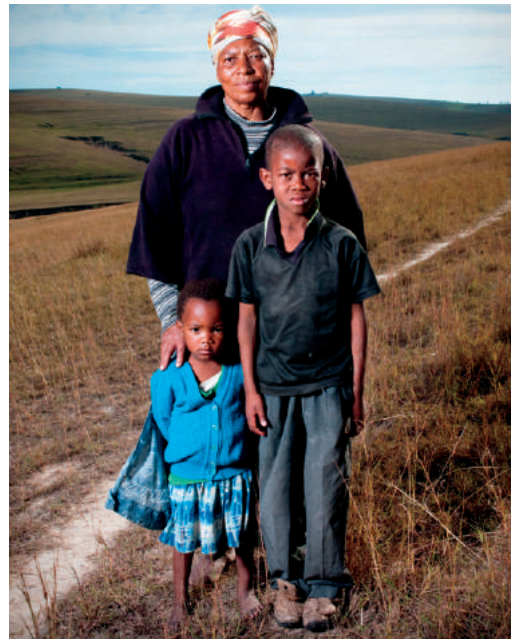


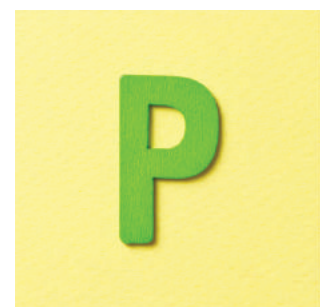
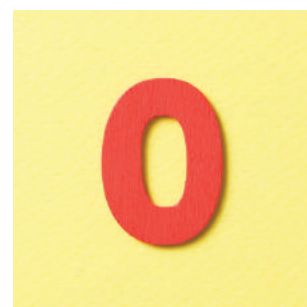
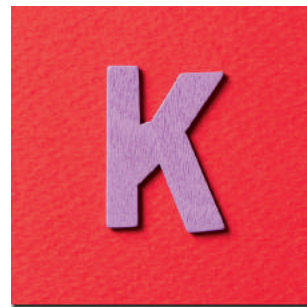
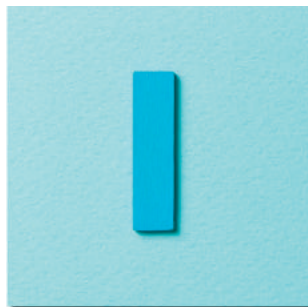
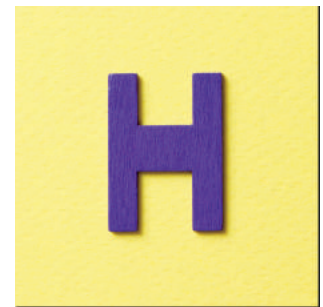
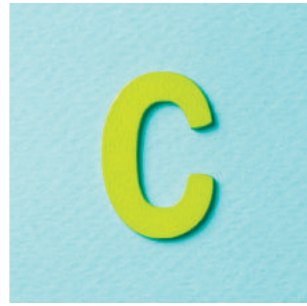
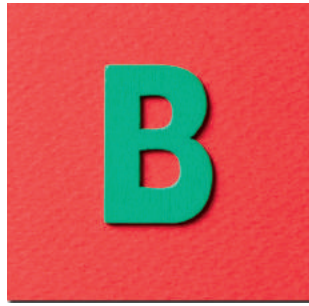


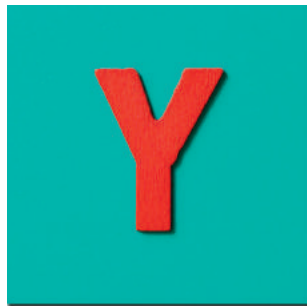












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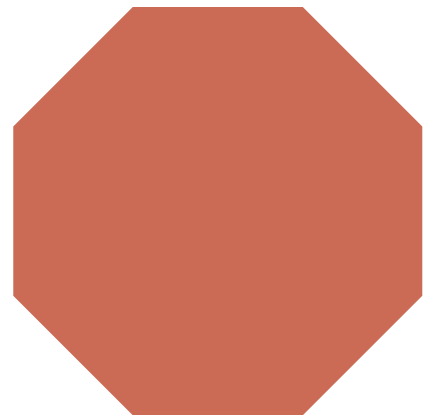
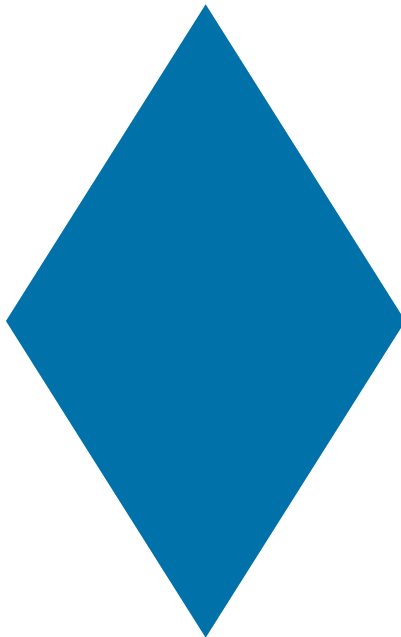
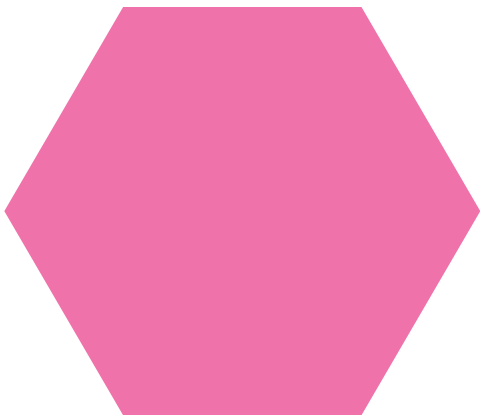
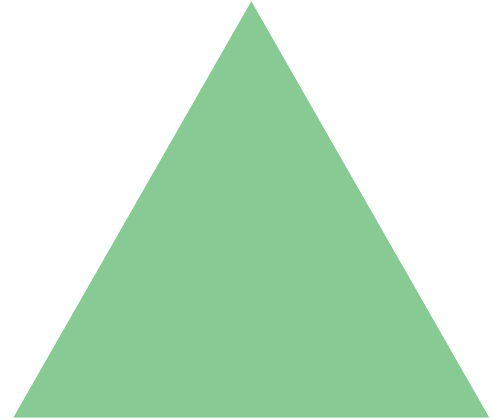
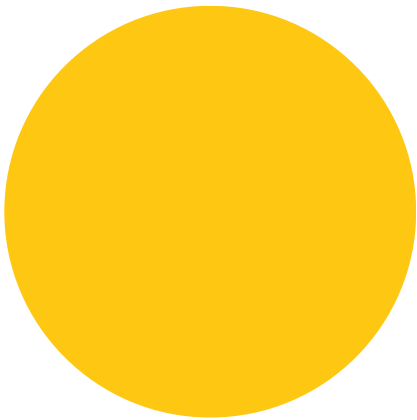
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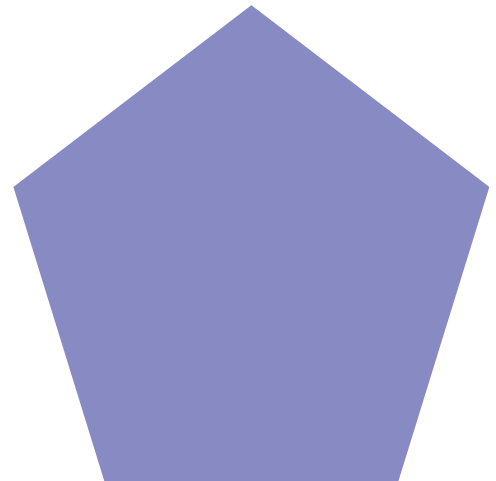
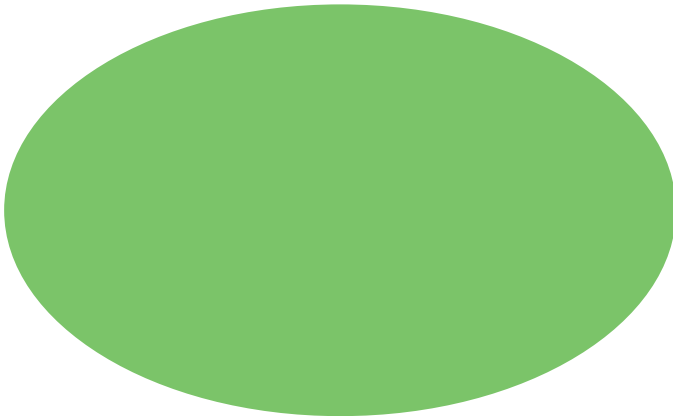
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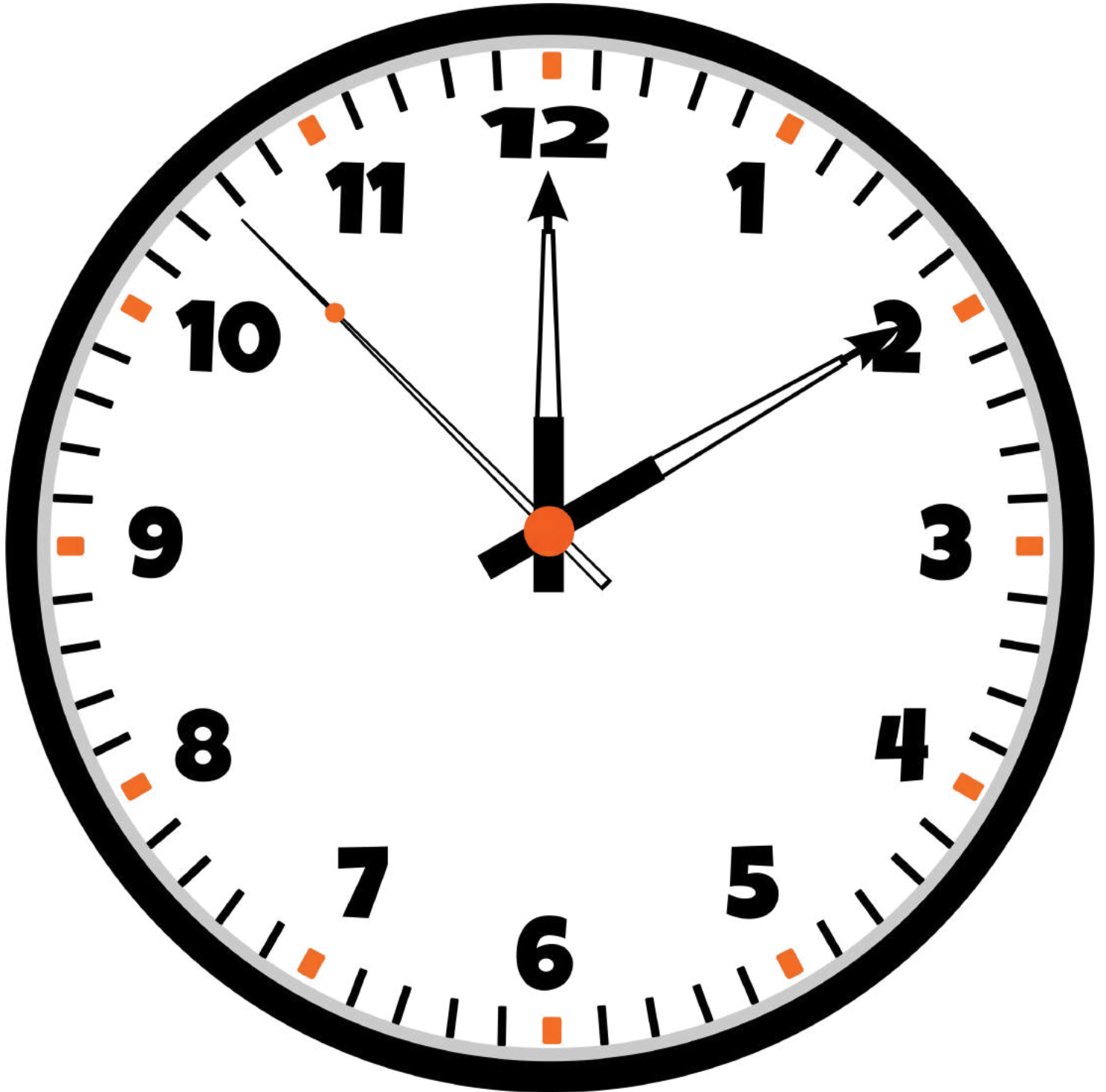
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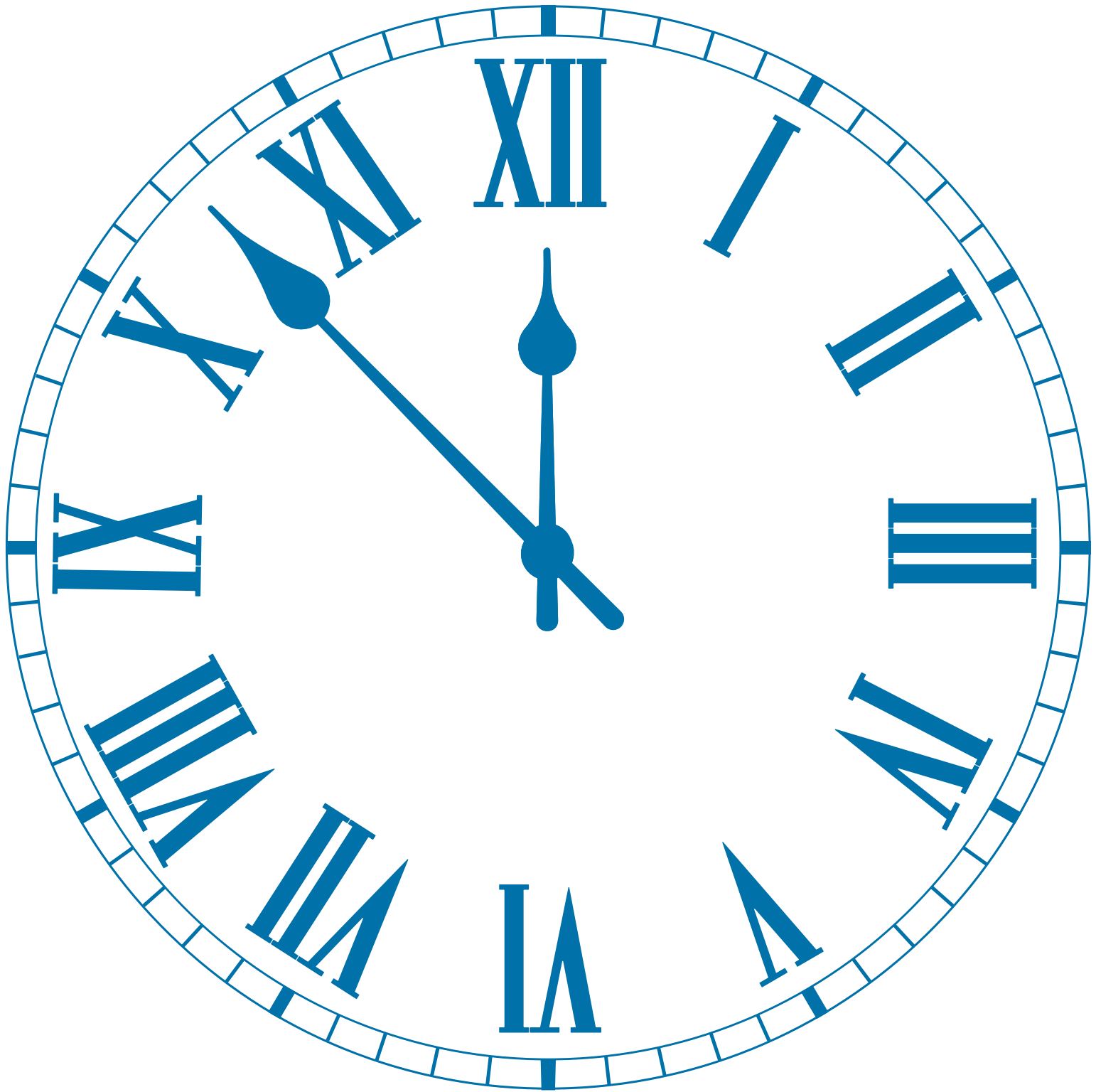


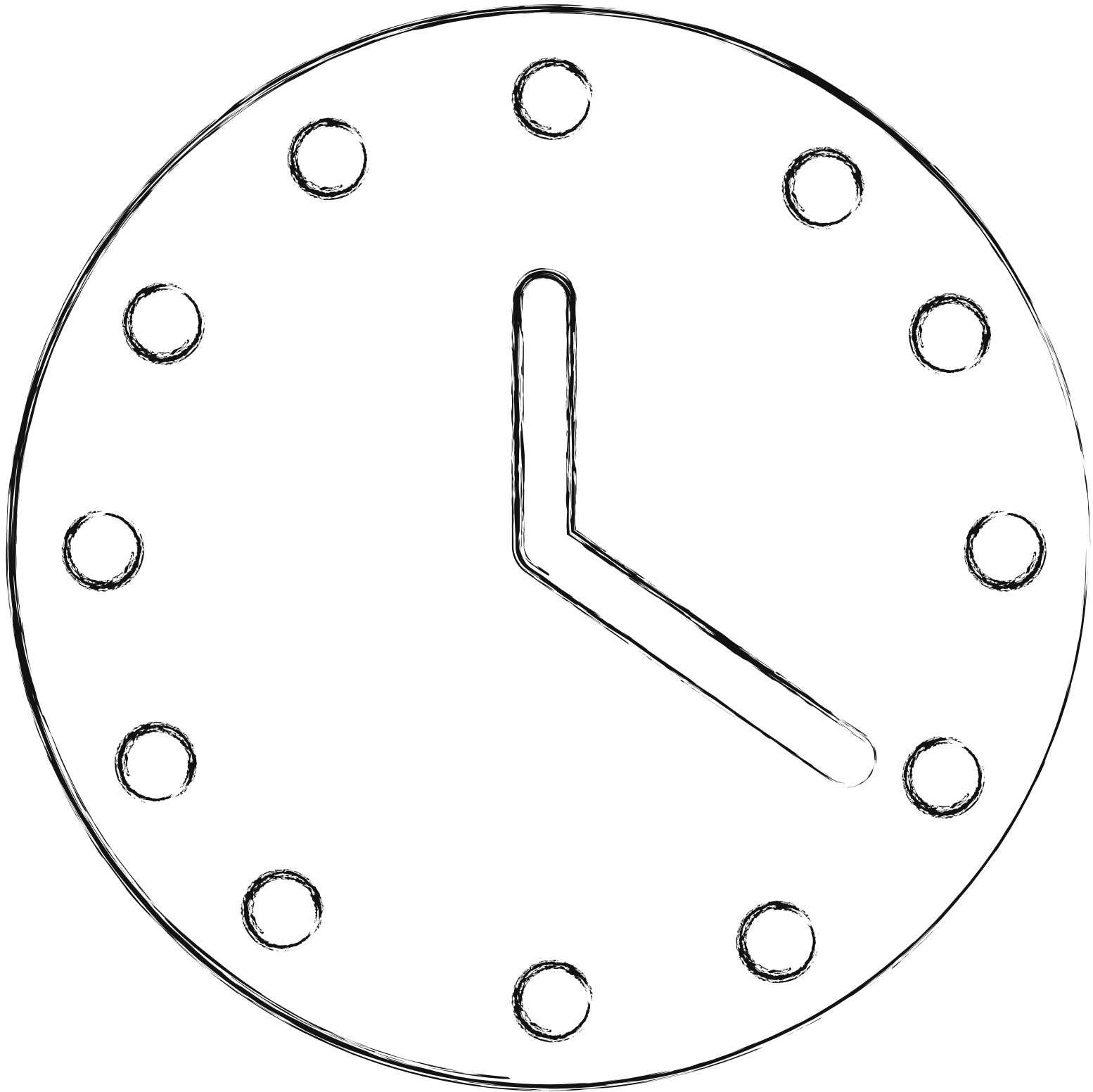


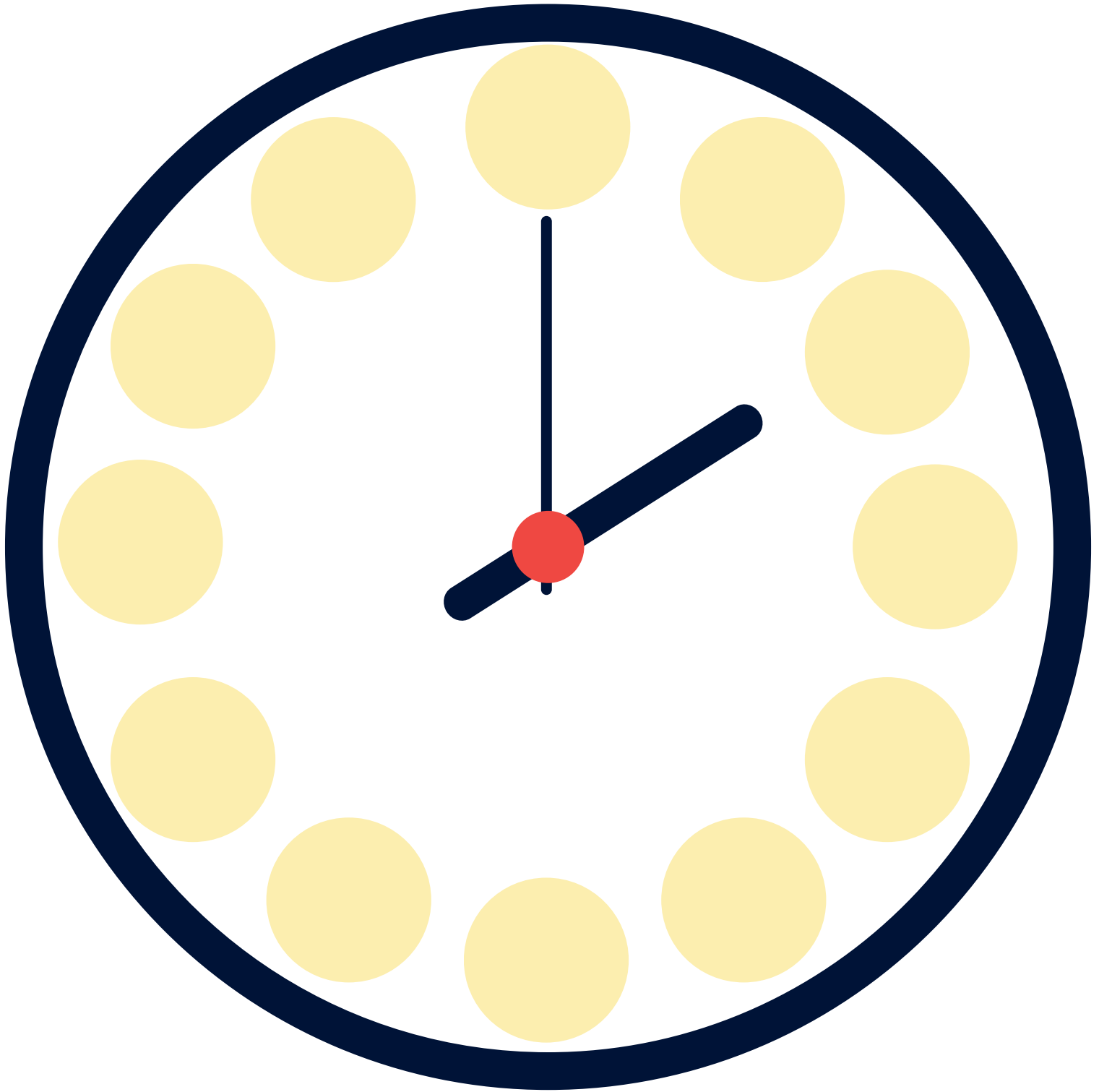


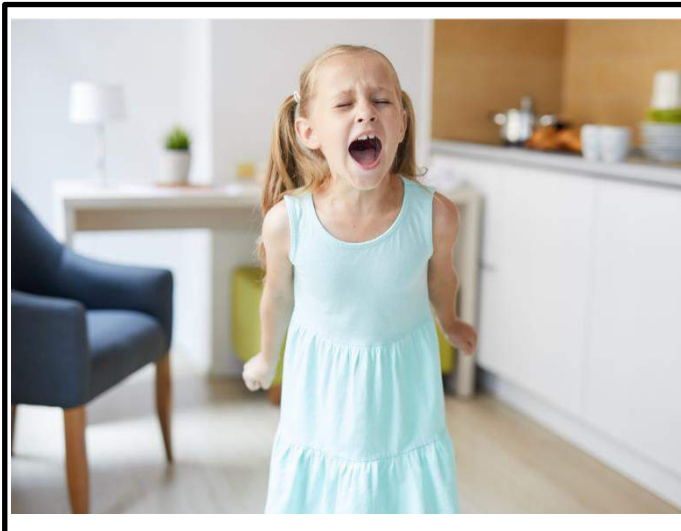


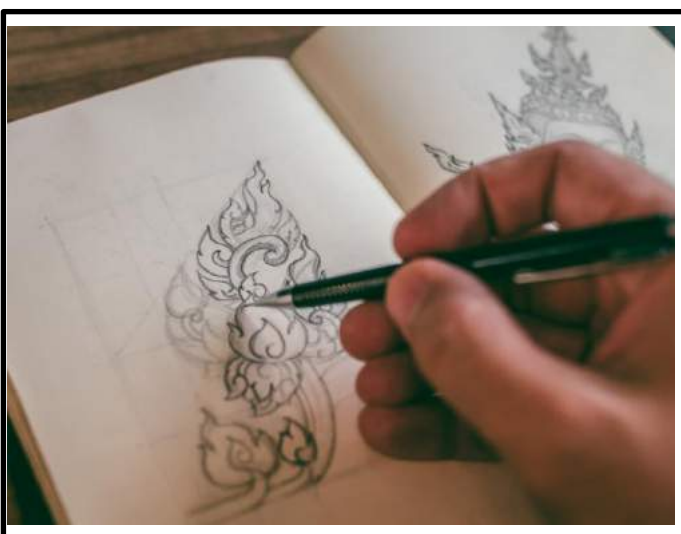
















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