Unit Name: **Sensory Sessions**

Stage: Stage Three

Lesson name: **Flexagon**

Duration: 90 Minutes

Lesson Overview

Big idea: Sometimes artists make art with more than one purpose. I am an artist and I can make a sensory tool to help me regulate sensory input.

Throughout this lesson, students will create an artwork that doubles as a sensory tool. Students will produce a "Flexagon" that can help refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm. These Flexagons are designed to help children self-regulate, whilst keeping their hands busy. This sensory tool is great to use for calming, grounding and distraction.

Students will start the lesson by participating in a card tower-building challenge to help improve focus. They will then view slides that present the importance of sensory tools to those experiencing sensory challenges. They will learn how some people need extra help to concentrate and that sensory tools, such as fidget tools can help them focus. Students will also learn who artists are, what they do and what they make. After exploring the idea that artists can make beautiful things that are also useful, students will create their own sensory tool. Prior to constructing their own Flexagon, students answer prompts relating to the usability of their sensory tool. Students will then reflect on their learning by communicating the impact their sensory tool could have on their self-management skills as well as commenting on the production of their artwork.

Lesson Outcomes

A student will learn to:

- think about their artmaking as a kind of social practice that employs both their own resources and their understanding of art
- interpret subject matter which is of local interest in particular ways in their making of artworks
- organise and assemble materials in various ways in the making of artworks suited to particular purposes and think about the meaning of their decisions

A student will learn about:

- how artists engage in the form of social practice in making art and contribute to the field of the visual arts
- a range of concepts and subject matter that is of interest to the art world and community

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- how concepts and materials are thought about, organised and assembled, and serve different ends in artworks that they and others make
- how artworks can be subject to different interpretations by artists and audiences.

Syllabus Outcomes	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Creative Arts **Making** **VAS3.2** Makes artworks for different audiences, assembling materials in a variety of ways. **Appreciating** **VAS3.3** Acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks. **VAS3.4** Communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks. **Science and Technology** **ST3-2DP-T** plans and uses materials, tools and equipment to develop solutions for a need or opportunity **English** **EN3-1A** communicates effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and language forms and features **PDHPE**	**TEACHING -** Learning intention **Warm-up** 1. Card tower In teams, students have 5 minutes to create a card tower. The aim is to be the team with the tallest tower made only of playing cards when the timer goes off. The focus of this warm-up is for students to practise keeping focus on a specific task for a set time frame. The hope is that over time, you will be able to steadily increase the time limit when attention spans develop. **LEARNING** **Group Activities: Lesson Content** **1.** Display Sensory Tools Toolkit or the Sensory Session Toolkit Fact Sheet and have a brief discussion on sensory tools and how they can positively impact our day-to-day life. - *More than 4.3 million people in Australia have a disability. Some disabilities include sensory challenges.* - *We have 8 senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, proprioception (where I am in space), vestibular (my sense of balance) and interoception (how I feel inside).* - *Sensory tools help us to regulate sensory input. They help us to receive sensory information in a manageable way.* - *Sensory tools are useful for helping people stay calm, feel safe and concentrate.*

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PD3-1 identifies and applies strengths and strategies to manage life changes and transitions **PD3-9** applies and adapts self-management skills to respond to personal and group situations	- *Sensory tools, such as fidget tools, can help build a mental wall to separate everything going on in our head and around us so that you can focus on the task at hand.* - *Some people may seek to stimulate their senses or increase their alertness. Others may want to minimise sensory input or decrease alertness.* - *Some people may have difficulty processing specific types of sensory information.* - *Some examples of sensory tools are weighted animals, fidget tools (squishy balls, spinners, cubes, putty) balance items (boards, cushions) auditory reducing ear muffs.* Alternatively, share the Toolkit slides to Google Classroom and have the students take notes. **2.** Display An Artist... Discuss with students: - *Who are artists?* (A person who creates art using conscious skill and creative imagination.) - *What do they do?* (Painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, cinema, music, theatre.) - *What do they make?* - *Artists can make things that are useful as well as pretty. What is something that was made to look beautiful but also has another purpose?* (E.g. stained glass windows, hand-painted bowls, First Nations rock art.) **Individual activities** **1.** Prior to constructing their own Flexagon, students complete the Flexagon Planning Sheet individually, or you may choose to have a class discussion led by the following guiding questions: - *Synonyms for calm* (tranquil, serene, harmonious, peaceful, restful, composed, content, untroubled) - *I feel calm when* - *Ways I can calm myself down* (deep breathing, colouring in, listening to music, fidgeting with a sensory tool, talking to someone you trust) - *The three colours I will use on my flexagon are* - *Materials I will need* (templates, colouring in utensils, scissors, glue)

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2. Display Flexagon Instructions

Flexagons refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm.
These Flexagons are designed to help children self-regulate, whilst keeping their hands busy.

You may choose to print a copy of the Flexagon Instructions (pages 7 - 12) for students to use, and/or display the slides for students to follow.

3. Using the Templates students create their own Flexagon.

Group Activity: Reflection

Students may complete the Flexagon Reflection Sheet individually, or you may choose to have a class discussion led by the following guiding questions:

- *What is a Sensory Tool?* (Something that you can hold which helps create calm and gives you the mental capacity to focus on the task at hand)
- *Why did we make these Flexagons?* (To fidget with, refocus attention, create calm)
- *Why did we choose to make them out of paper?* (easy for lots of people to gain access to, can use colours to personalise, quiet when fidgeting with, paper folds well unlike cardboard or something more rigid)
- *When would be a good time to use my sensory tool?* (when feeling overwhelmed/scared/anxious/angry/distracted/nervous)
- *Who else could this sensory tool help?* (Anyone who is feeling anxious or upset or needs help with sensory stimulation)
- *How could I help someone when they don't feel comfortable?* (Ask if they need help, find an adult who could help, be kind, lower my voice, remove loud noises, give them something to fidget with or something they find comforting)
- *What materials did I use to create this sensory tool?* (templates, colouring in utensils, scissors, glue).

Some students may benefit from completing the Flexagon Differentiated Reflection Sheet.

1. Students would colour the faces that match the emotion for both of the following questions:

- *I could use my Flexagon when I am feeling*

  Pictured: happy, angry, hungry, nervous, sad, tired

- *My Flexagon can help me feel*

  Pictured: angry, excited, content, lucky, sad, happy

2. Students circle the pictures of the items they used to make their Flexagon.

   Pictures from left to right are as follows

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	- Top line: scissors, sock, glue, Colour Centres templates - Bottom line: Flexagon template, broccoli, pencils - Items listed that students would **not** circle: sock and broccoli.
Adaptations, Considerations and/or Adjustments **Note:** Think about how this lesson may affect students in your class and make any of these adaptations that you feel necessary.	**Physical:** - The Card Tower warm-up calls for students to use their hands. If this activity is not suitable for some students, replace the warm-up with the Timed Task Cards from Stage 2's lesson plan. - Students may require assistance handling the equipment required to create their sensory tool. Students with dexterity issues may need help cutting and folding their Flexagon. **Vision:** - When displaying instructions and visuals, it may be beneficial to increase the size of fonts or pictures. - Instructions may also be given verbally. - Ensure students are seated near the front of the room to view visuals/videos. **Hearing:** - Include visuals to support lesson activities. - Have instructions written simply on the board. - Some assistance or a sound device may be needed for direction during the whole task. **Sensory:** - Create a space in the classroom that gives students a 'break' from constant environmental stimulants. **Non-verbal:** - Support students' preferred ways of communication. - Incorporate technology or devices in group discussions. - Ask targeted closed questions. **EAL/D:** - Display questions and instructions on the board for each activity in the lesson for clarification. - Include visuals in addition to written resources. **Other:** - Be mindful of the word "disability" on the second page of the Sensory Tools Toolkit. As this page may lead to discussion, ensure not to use words such as "special needs," "crippled," "unfortunate," or "handicapped". Also, do not refer to people without disabilities as "normal" or "healthy." Always ensure you are using

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	first-person language such as “Person with disability” rather than “disabled person” or “person who uses a wheelchair” not “wheelchair bound person” or “Boy with autism” not “autistic boy” etc. - Please read PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability before starting this unit of work. This guide is a helpful resource, as it has been written by people with disability to assist the general public in respectfully talking about disability. It is important to be aware that the language that is used when talking about people with disability has an impact on how they are perceived and treated. - This lesson introduces a fair amount of new information. In order to keep engagement levels high, some students may benefit from having this lesson split up over multiple sessions.

Resources

- Learning Intention
- Card Tower
- Flexagon Planning Sheet
- Sensory Tools Toolkit
- Sensory Session Toolkit Fact Sheet
- An Artist...
- Flexagon Instructions
- Flexagon Templates
- Flexagon Reflection Sheet
- Flexagon Teacher Guide

Resources for Adjustments (if applicable)

- Flexagon Differentiated Reflection Sheet

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Lesson Evaluation/Reflection	Yes
The lesson adequately addresses syllabus outcomes.	❑
The lesson reflects the needs, interests and abilities of all students.	❑
The lesson provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.	❑
The lesson includes a variety of teaching and learning activities and resources to address the learning needs of all students.	❑
Additional comments and suggestions for improvement:	

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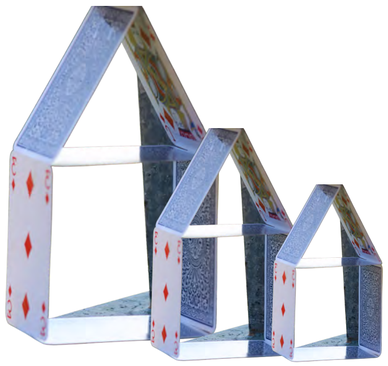
Big Idea

Sometimes artists make art with more than one purpose.
I am an artist and I can make a sensory tool
to help me regulate sensory input.

Learning Intentions

- I can make artworks for different audiences, assembling materials and using tools in a variety of ways
- I can apply and adapt self-management skills and communicate how my sensory tool will help with my emotions



CARD TOWER

CHALLENGE

In teams, you will have 5 minutes to create a tower using only playing cards

The aim is to be the team with the tallest tower when the timer goes off.

Name: _____

Circle the synonyms for calm

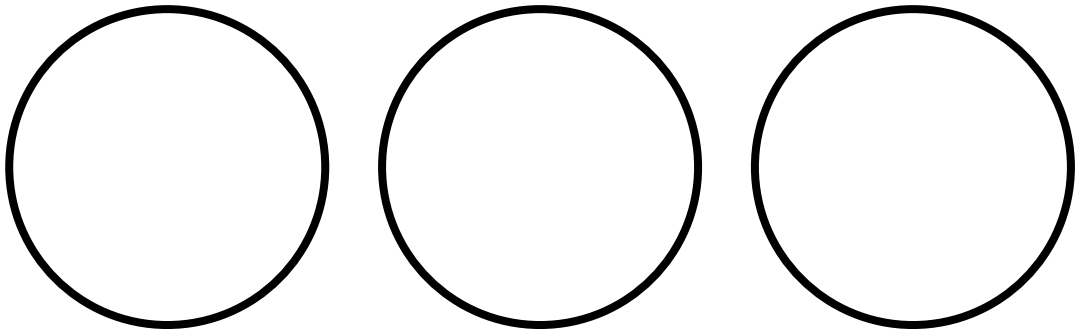
tranquil furious
hungry serene
harmonious mad peaceful
restful aggravated
composed content
untroubled

I feel calm when:

Ways I can calm myself down:

Flexagons refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm.

The 3 colours I will use on my Flexagon are



Materials I will need:

Sensory Tools

More than 4.3 million people in Australia have a disability.

Not all disabilities are obvious. Some of these disabilities include **sensory challenges**.

All day, every day, we are
surrounded by and experience
sensory stimulation.

Our 8 Senses:

1. Sight
2. Smell
3. Taste
4. Hearing
5. Touch
6. Proprioception
   Where I am in space.
7. Vestibular
   My sense of balance.
8. Interoception
   How I feel inside.

Sensory *tools help us regulate sensory input.*

They help us to receive sensory information in a manageable way.

They can provide calming relief, a therapeutic distraction/replacement, or predictable and repeatable sensory input.

Sensory tools can assist to

calm

focus

distract

Lots of different people benefit from using some sort of external ‘sensory tool’ to enable them to:

- concentrate
- regulate their emotions
- absorb information within the environment around them

Working memory helps prioritise tasks and only keeps what is needed at the forefront of our thoughts.

THINK TANK

Listening

ASSignment

Thirsty

Soccer

Social Media

Gaming

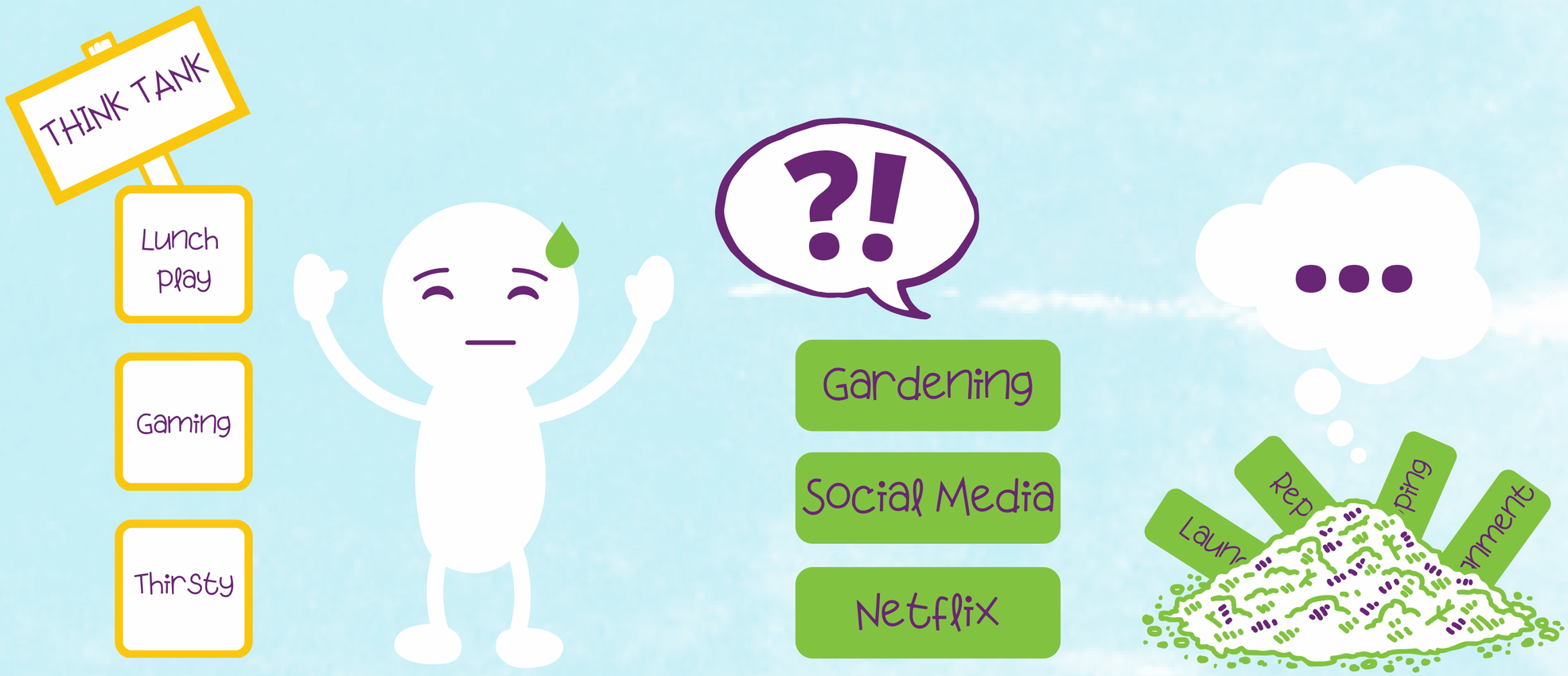
Gardening

Netflix

Your pet

Lunch play

Some disabilities, learning difficulties, or even stress,
can affect how your working memory functions,
allowing ALL of the other things you could/should be doing
to fight for space in your thoughts.



Build a Wall!

Sensory tools, such as fidget tools,
can help build a **mental wall** to separate everything else
so that you can focus on the task at hand.

Some sensory items are designed to help be the buffer, and can create a temporary shelter.

Once feeling more secure,
a person is better able to deal with current situations and environments.

Sensory tools

help us regulate sensory input

provide calming relief

are a therapeutic distraction/ replacement

help us to receive sensory information in a manageable way

provide predictable and repeatable sensory input

Some people may seek to **stimulate their senses** or **increase their alertness**

for example, people who have ADHD

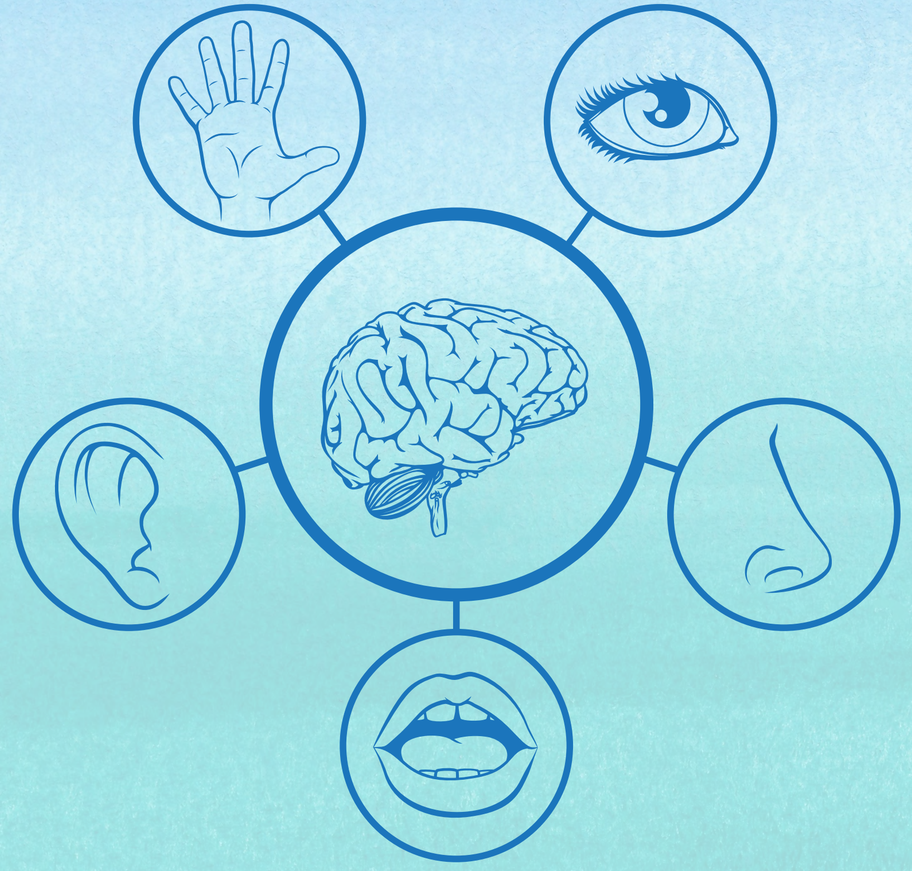
Others may want to **minimise sensory** input or **decrease alertness**

such as those with autism or anxiety

The difficulty for others may lie with

processing specific types of sensory information

such as a specific frequency of sound.



The important thing to remember is that some people experience difficulty with sensory regulation and may require assistance to achieve a better balance.

Sometimes if the situation or environment cannot be changed, people can use **sensory tools to assist them to increase or decrease their alertness**, depending on what is appropriate for the situation.

There are many types of sensory items that might help.

Some common items include:

- weighted animals
- fidget toys
- balance items
- auditory reducing earmuffs

Benefits of creating sensory friendly tools

Build skills and confidence in welcoming people with disability.

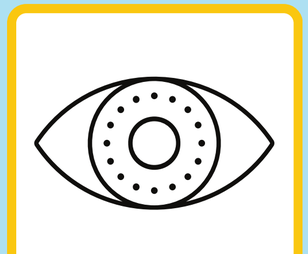
Reduce sensory barriers so everyone has equal access.

Increase the number of people who can participate.

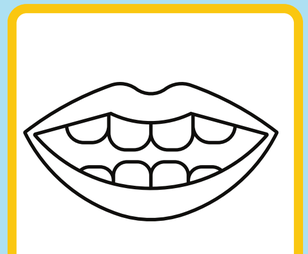
Sensory tools are not only beneficial for those who are neurodiverse - everyone can enjoy them.

Our 5 main senses

Touch

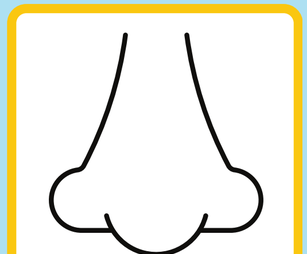


Sight



Taste

Hearing



Smell

Some people have sensory challenges.

Sensory tools can help you feel calm and safe.

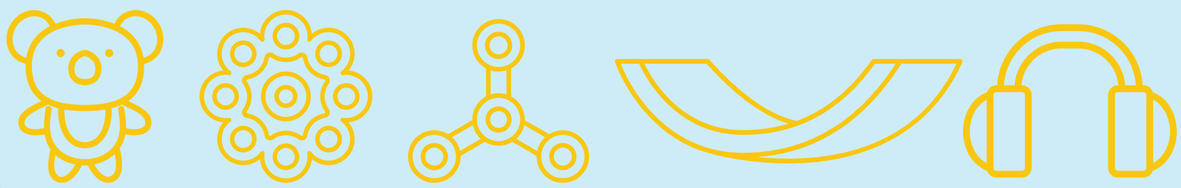
Lots of people use sensory tools to help them

- **concentrate**
- **regulate their emotions**
- **absorb information**

There are many types of sensory items that might help.

Some common items include

- weighted animals
- fidget toys
- balance items
- ear muffs



Artist:

a person who creates art

Such as

- painting
- sculpture
- music
- writing

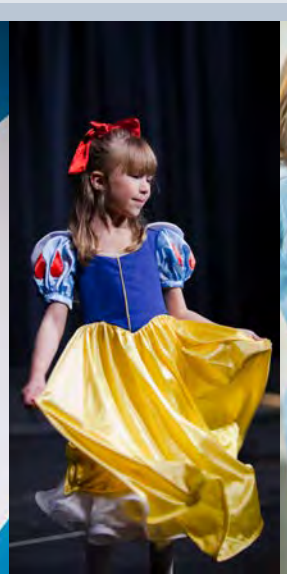
using conscious skill and creative imagination

There are 7 different forms of art

- painting
- sculpture
- literature
- architecture
- cinema
- music
- theatre

Sometimes artists make art *just* for people to

Art for enjoyment



However,

sometimes artists make art with

more than one purpose

An artist created this large sculpture.

It was created to be

beautiful

but...

can you guess what **else** this sculpture was designed for?

It was also designed to be:

a slide!

a playground!

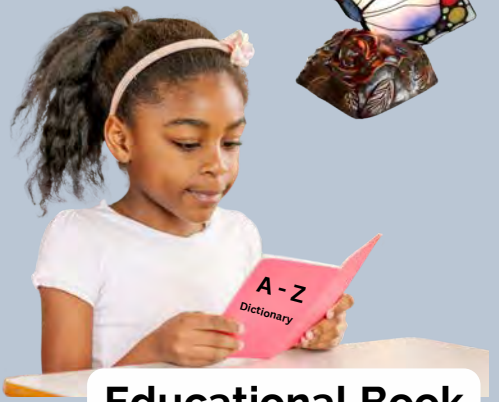
Mosaic Chair

Sensory Tool

Calming Music

Stained Glass Window

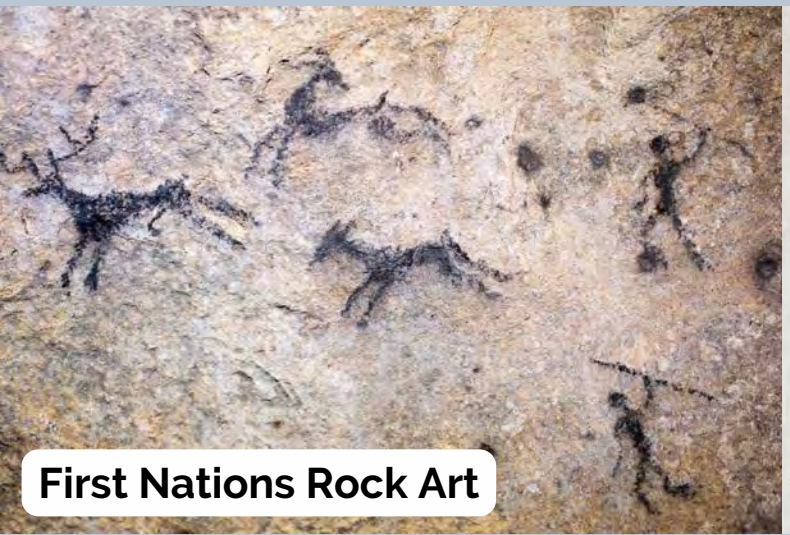
Sculpture Table



Educational Book

Glass Lamp

Art with a purpose


First Nations Rock Art

Sandwich Art

Painted Bowl

These artists created artwork that could be used by *lots of people*.

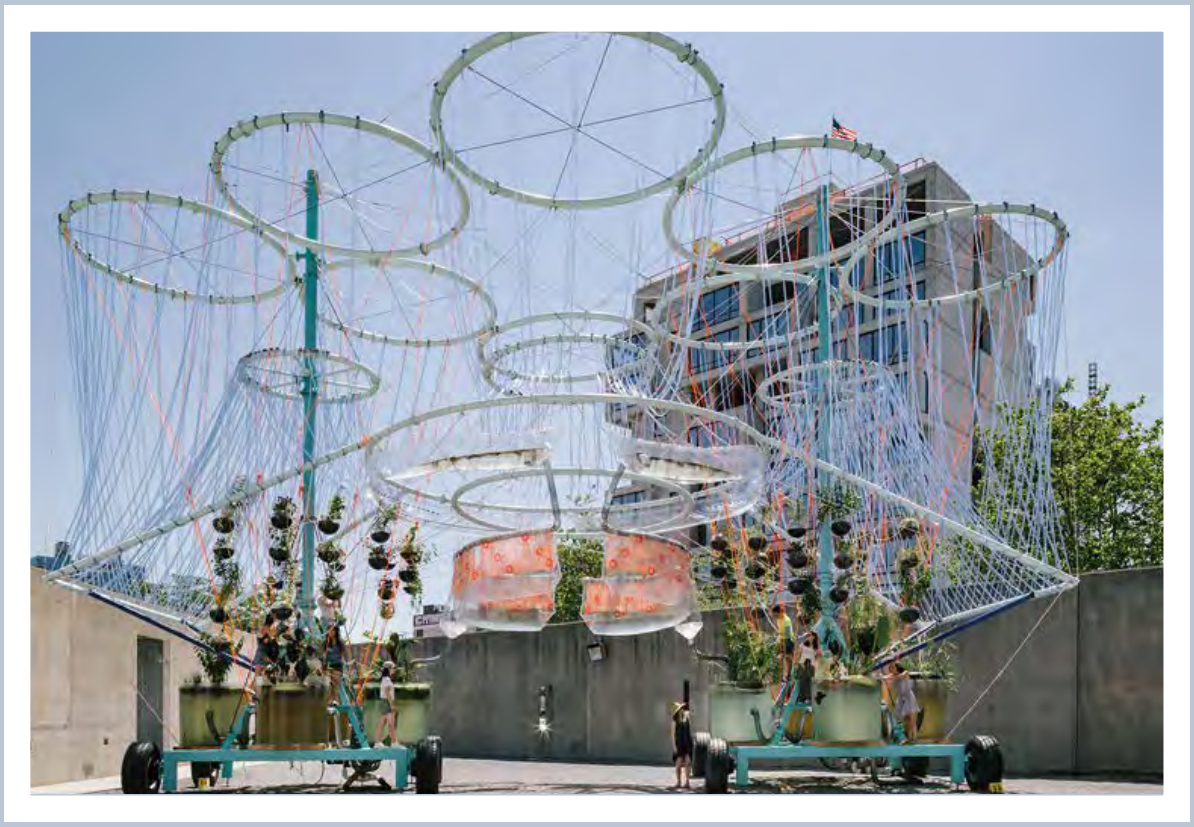
Their art is nice to look at, but it was also created with at least one **other purpose** in mind.

Breathing Pavilion by Ekene Ijeoma - New York

Breathing Pavilion is an outdoor art installation that is intended to create calm by mimicking the speed of a deep breathing technique.

It is a circular space surrounded by columns that light up at intervals. It provides a space for residents to
take a moment and catch their breath.

COSMO by Andrés Jaque and his architecture firm - New York



COSMO is a gigantic structure that features an impressive arrangement of plants and pipes.

It was developed by an architect to process nearly 4000 litres of polluted water a day and make it clean and drinkable.

Amphitheatre by Marta Pan - Netherlands

Amphitheatre is created out of granite and is located in the Kroller-Muller Museum and Sculpture Park.

It was created to provide people with a place for viewing entertainment. It has tiers of seating surrounding the performance area.

Winding Path Labyrinth, by Andrew Rogers - Nepal

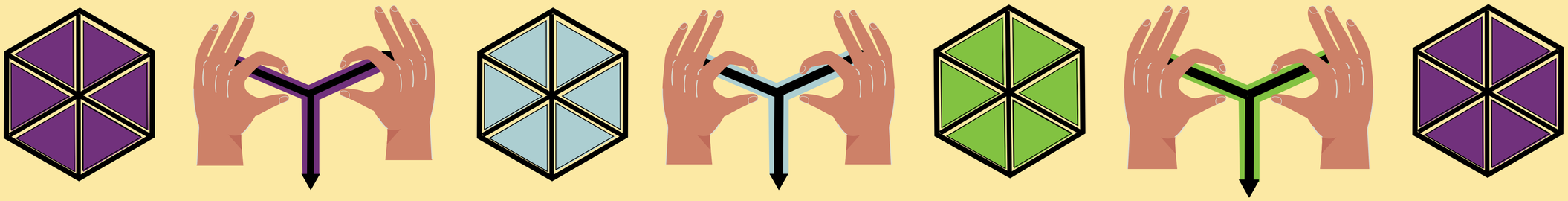
Winding Path Labyrinth is a large-scale geoglyph made out of stone.
It has a single continuous winding path with several loops that lead to the centre.

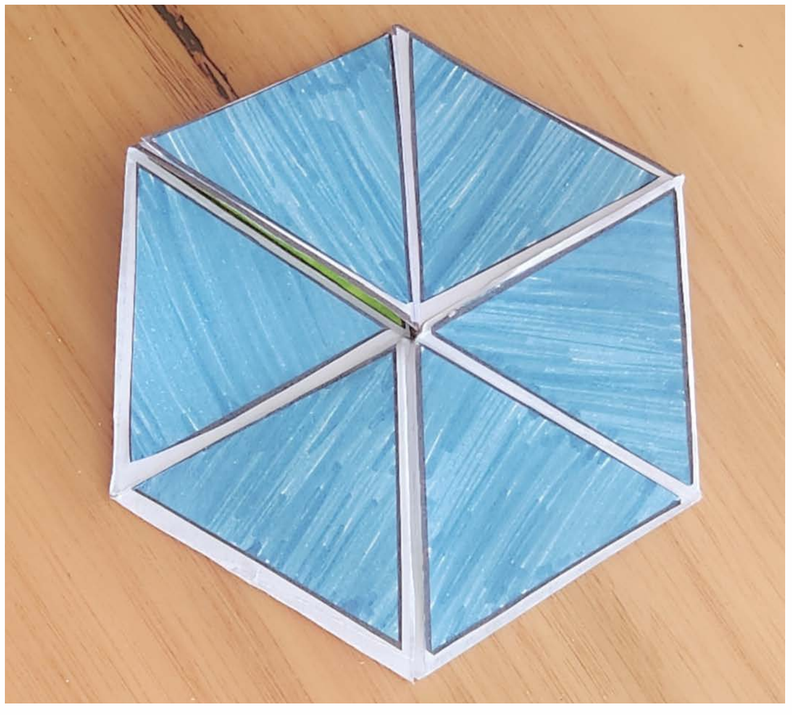
A labyrinth is used for spiritual contemplation. It is a work to be experienced on foot and represents a journey and pilgrimage.

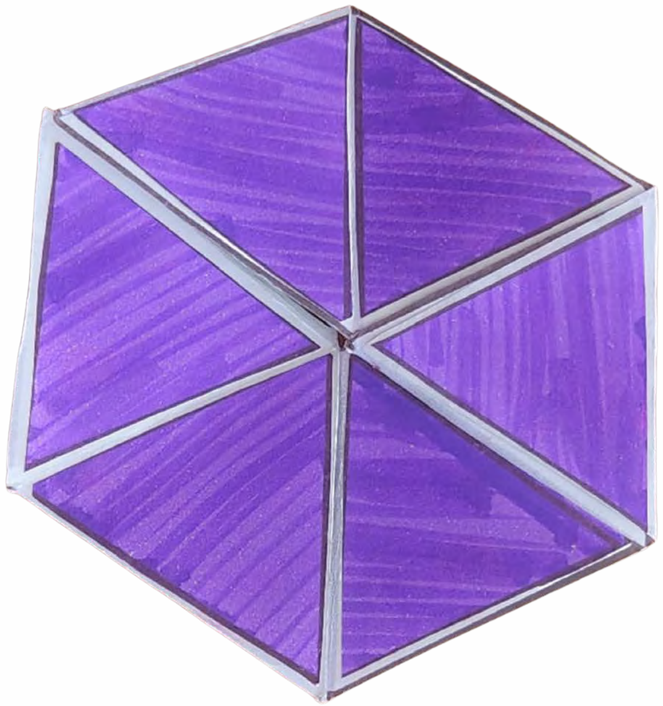
It can also be seen from very far away.

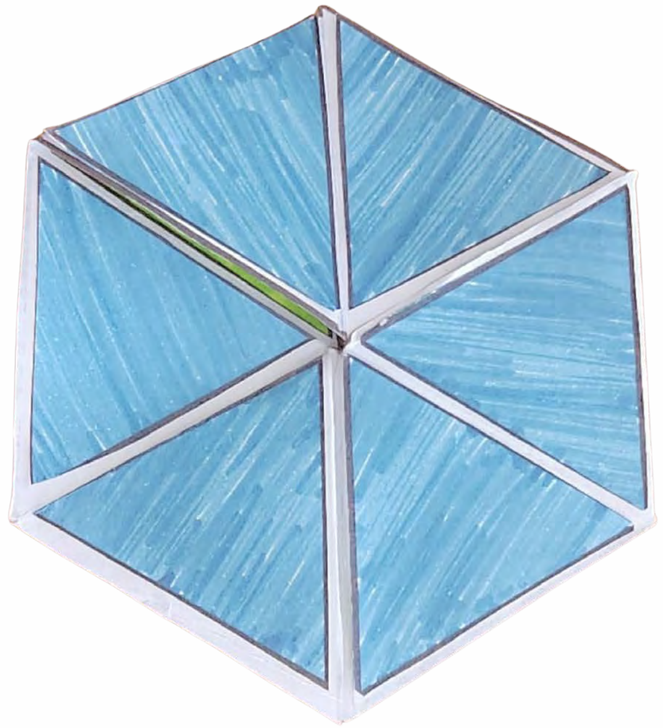
Make your own

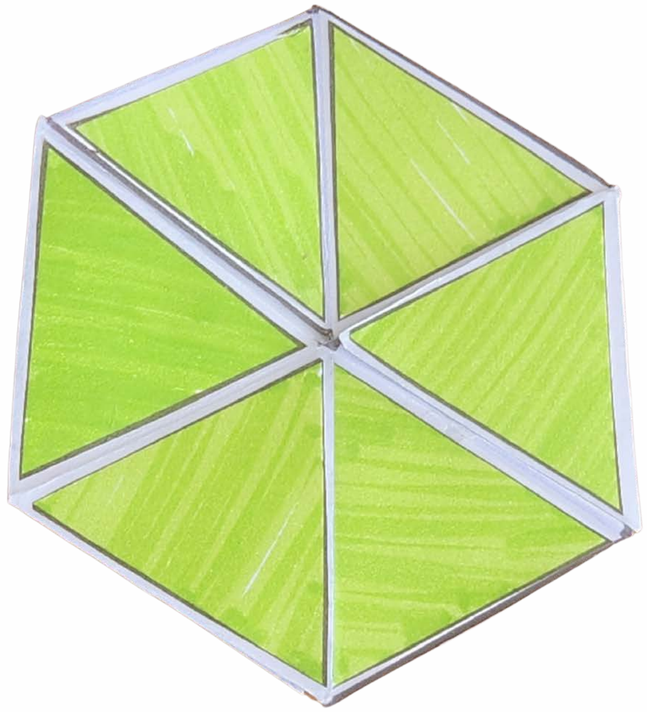
flexagon











Flexagons refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm.

These Flexagons are designed to help children self-regulate, whilst keeping their hands busy.

They are great to use for

calming

grounding

distracting

Instructional Videos

Flexagon Instructional Video:

https://youtu.be/nvy8DFKawel

Flexagon Instructional Video Worded:

https://youtu.be/wkFAuUYocSk

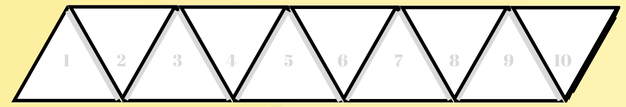
Fidgeting With Your Flexagon:

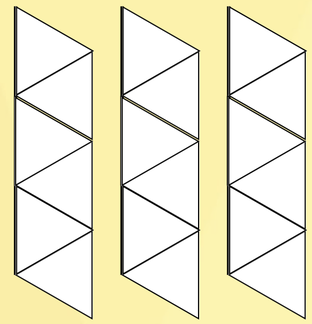
https://youtu.be/ijzK8s9PUMA

Materials and equipment

Materials you need:

- Printed Flexagon template





- Printed Colour Centres templates
- Scissors

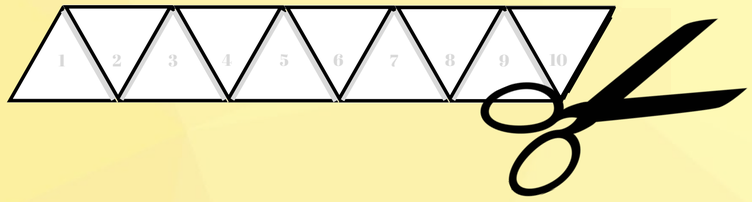
- Glue

- Pencils/crayons/textas

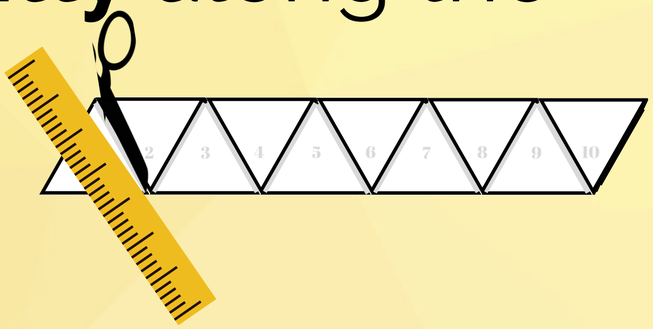
- Ruler

Steps

1. Cut out the template by cutting along the black lines.



2. Score each grey line by opening your scissors and running one of the cutting edges **gently** along the grey lines, using a ruler to guide you.

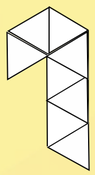


3. Fold each triangle over and then under, along the grey lines (9 folds in total).

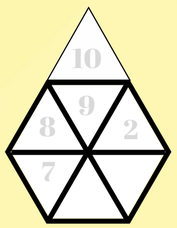
Steps

4 Unfold the template back to its original shape.

5 Fold the template onto itself, so that triangles 3 and 4 are face to face. Your template will now resemble a candy cane shape.

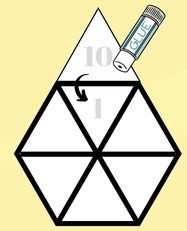


6 Fold template again, so triangles 6 and 7 are back to back (numbers on the outsides). Your template will now resemble a hexagon shape, with triangle 10 sticking out.



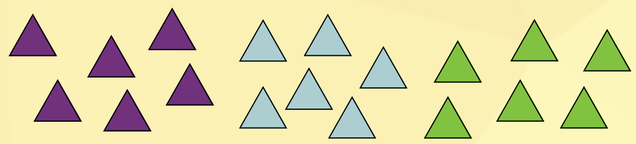
Steps

7 Fold triangle 1 over the top of triangle 9 and then glue triangle 10 onto the face of triangle 1.



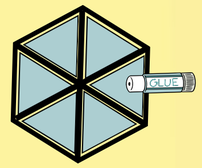
8 Colour each of the 3 “Coloured Centres” templates a different colour.

9 Cut out every triangle from the 3 templates. You will have 18 small triangles in total, 6 of each colour.

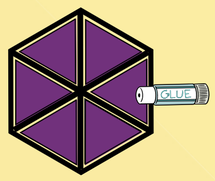


Steps

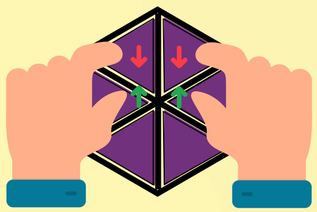
10 Glue the 6 small triangles in your first colour onto one side of the Flexagon.



11 Glue the 6 small triangles in your second colour onto the other side of the Flexagon.

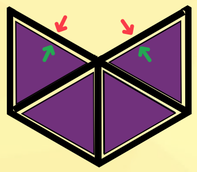


12 Hold the Flexagon in 2 hands. Place your index fingers on the top 2 triangles, whilst holding the 2 side triangles between your thumbs and middle fingers.

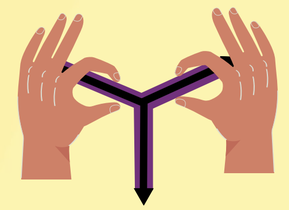


Steps

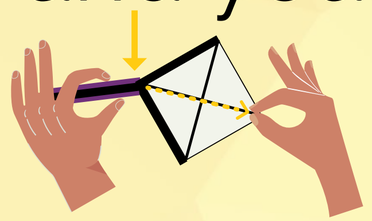
13 Push the top 2 triangles down until they are touching the triangles that your middle fingers are on.



14 Release your middle fingers. You will now be pinching 2 of the 3 sides of your new shape.

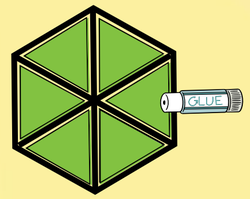


15 Release one of your hands that are pinching a side and use that hand to open your Flexagon from its centre. Release your other pinching hand and your flexagon will open to the final white side.

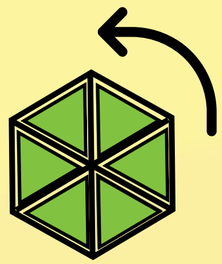


Steps

16 Glue the 6 small triangles in your third colour onto the last side of the Flexagon.



17 Turn your Flexagon 1 triangle to either the left or right. Repeat steps **12 to 15** to fidget with your Flexagon.



Notes

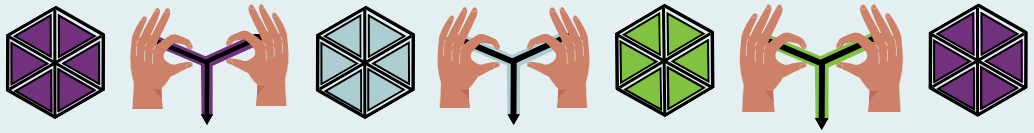
Templates:

- The first template sheet is 1 per student. The next 2 sheets are enough of one part of the template, for 2 students.
- You may choose to print the “Coloured Centres” templates onto 3 different colours of paper, instead of students colouring in their own.

Additional notes/considerations:

- As you are scoring your paper in step 2, you want to ensure that you aren’t damaging the table or surface underneath. Place a book, magazine, cardboard or something solid under your template before scoring your lines.
- Push down GENTLY with your scissors when scoring your lines, so as you don’t rip or cut completely through your paper.
- Print off a few spare Flexagon frames as if you push too hard during the scoring process and rip/cut your template, you will run into troubles later on.
- During step 15, if you are unable to open the Flexagon to the next side, turn the Flexagon 1 triangle to either the left or right. Readjust your fingers to the new triangles and repeat steps 12 to 15.

Flexagon Instructions and Templates



Flexagons refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm.
These flexagons are designed to help children self-regulate, whilst keeping their hands busy.
They are great to use for calming, grounding and distracting.

There are two different flexagon printing options to choose from.

1 - **Per Person Template**: select this option if you are printing on white paper. Each student gets one piece of paper with all of the template components that they need.

2 - **Two Person Template**: select this option if you are printing the centre templates on coloured paper. Print the Flexagon Frames on white paper and the Coloured Centres on 3 different paper colours.

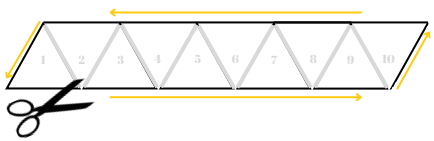
Contents

Instructions	2
Per Person Template	3
Two Person Frames	4
Two Person Centres	5

Click on the links to take you there

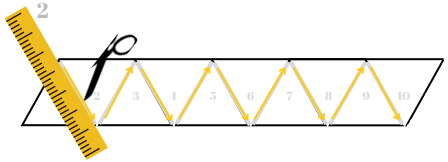
Instructions

1



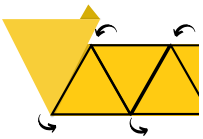
Cut out the template by cutting along the black lines.

2



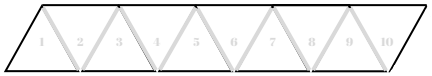
Score each grey line by opening your scissors and running of the cutting edges gently along the grey lines, using a ruler to guide you.

3



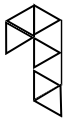
Fold each triangle over and then under, along the grey lines (9 folds in total).

4



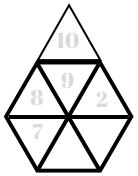
Unfold the template back to its original shape.

5



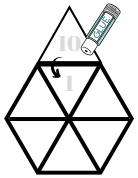
Fold the template onto itself, so that triangles **3** and **4** are face to face. Your template will now resemble a candy cane shape.

6



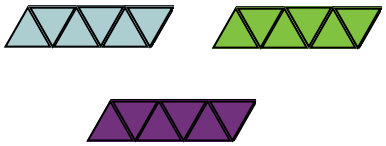
Fold template again, so triangles **6** and **7** are back to back (numbers on the outsides). Your template will now resemble a hexagon shape, with triangle **10** sticking out.

7



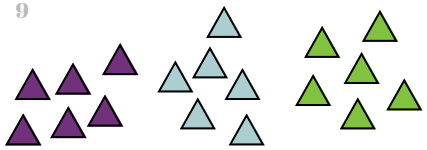
Fold triangle **1** over the top of triangle **9** and then glue triangle **10** onto the face of triangle **1**.

8



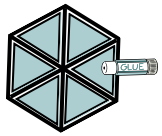
Colour each of the 3 “Coloured Centres” templates a different colour.

9



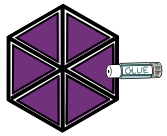
Cut out every triangle from the 3 templates. You will have 18 small triangles in total, 6 of each colour.

10



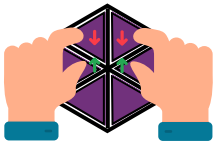
Glue the 6 small triangles in your first colour onto one side of the Flexagon.

11



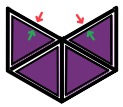
Glue the 6 small triangles in your second colour onto the other side of the Flexagon.

12



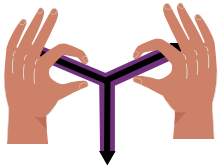
Hold the Flexagon in 2 hands. Place your index fingers on the top 2 triangles, whilst holding the 2 side triangles between your thumbs and middle fingers.

13



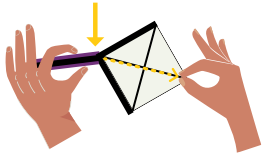
Push the top 2 triangles down until they are touching the triangles that your middle fingers are on.

14



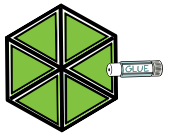
Release your middle fingers. You will now be pinching 2 of the 3 sides of your new shape.

15



Release 1 hand that is pinching a side and use that hand to open your Flexagon from its centre. Release your other pinching hand and your Flexagon will open to the final side.

16



Glue the 6 small triangles in your third colour onto the last side of the Flexagon.

17 Turn your Flexagon 1 triangle to either the left or right. Repeat steps 12 to 15 to fidget with your Flexagon.

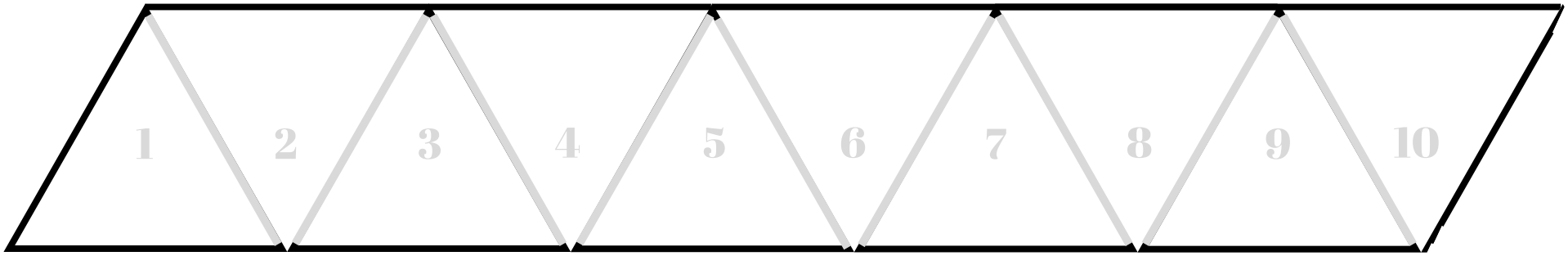
Instructional Videos

Instructional Video:
https://youtu.be/nvy8DFKawel

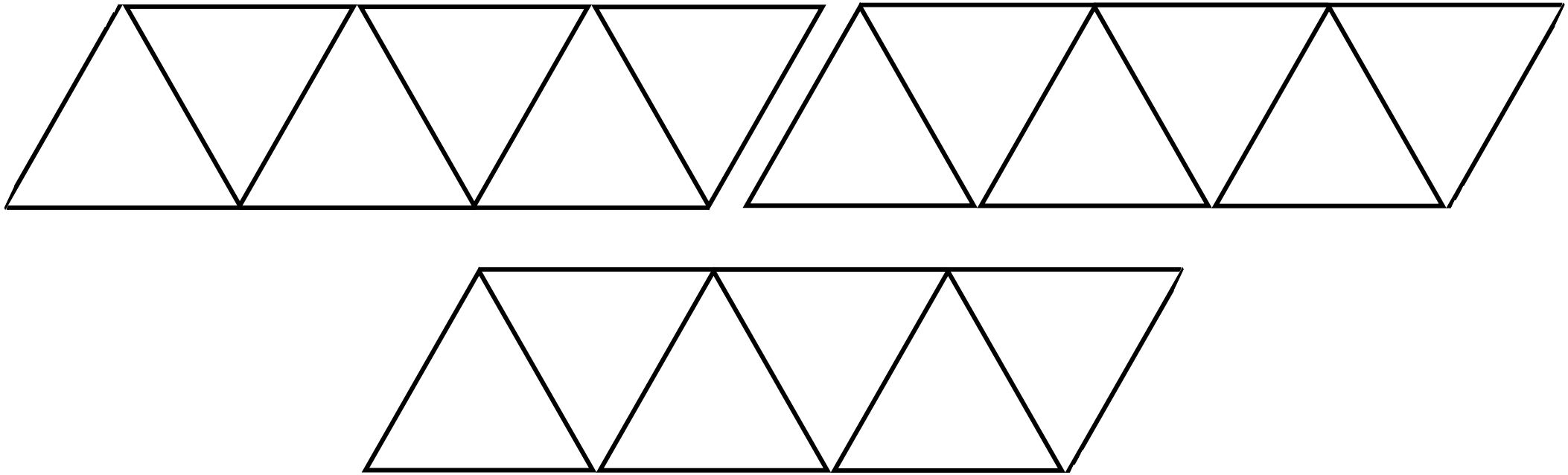
Worded Instructional Video:
https://youtu.be/wkFAuUYocSk

Fidgeting With Your Flexagon:
https://youtu.be/ijzK8s9PUMA

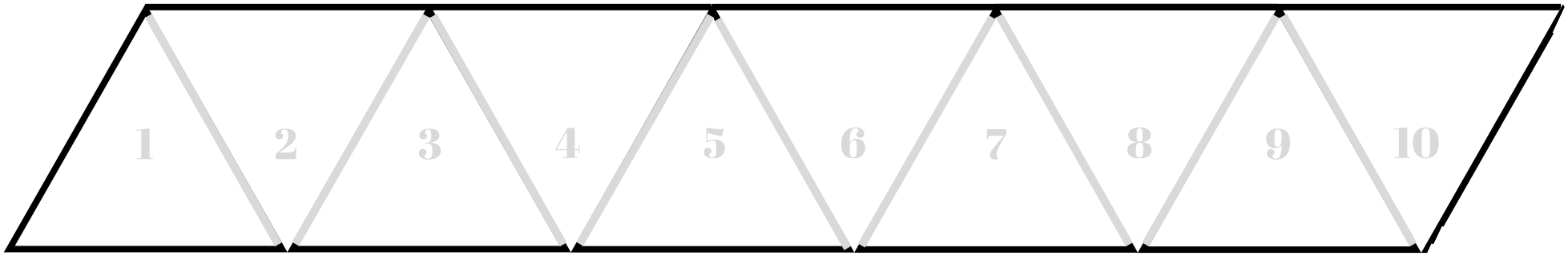
Flexagon Frame

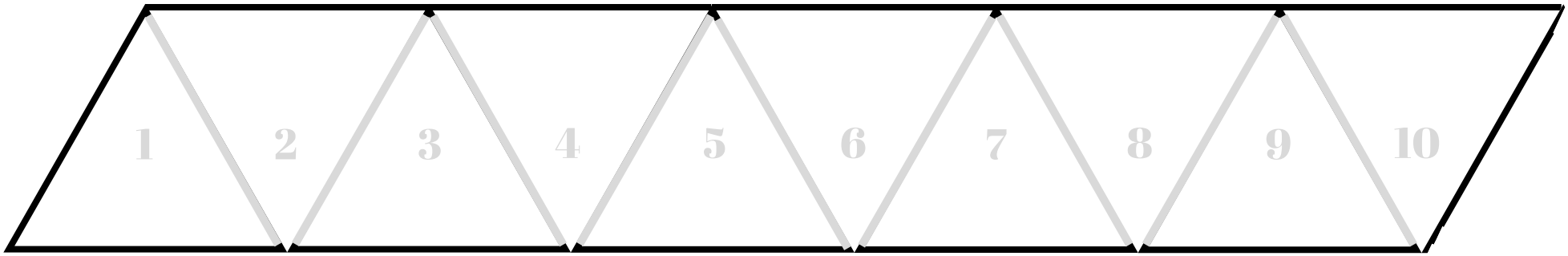


Coloured Centres

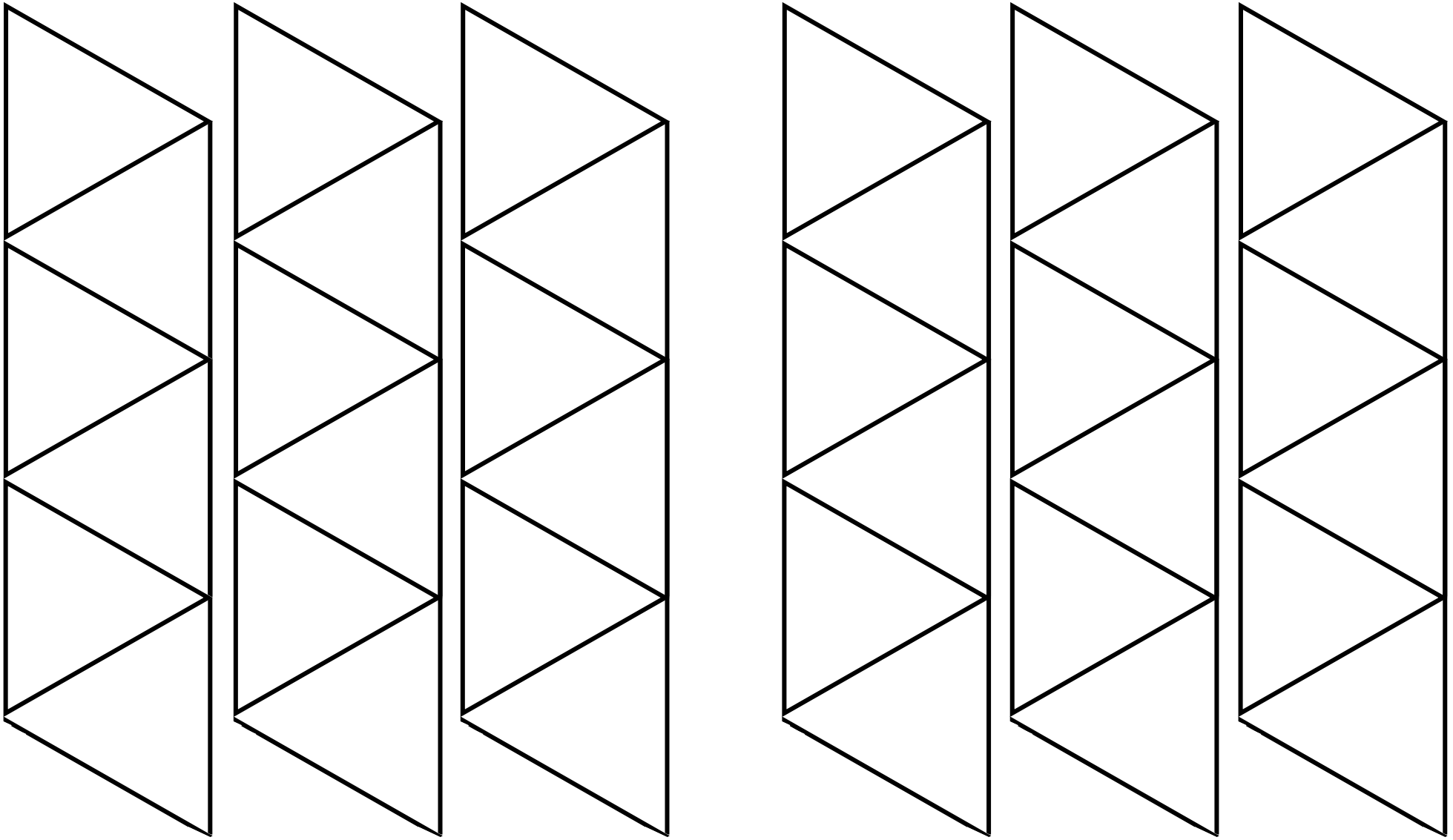


Flexagon Frames





Coloured Centres



Name: _____

FLEXAGON REFLECTION

I CAN USE MY FLEXAGON

When I **feel**: _____

When I **think**: _____

When I **want to**: _____

To make my flexagon I needed:

WHEN MAKING MY FLEXAGON

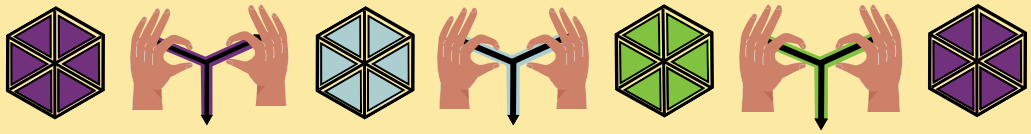
I found it **hard** to:

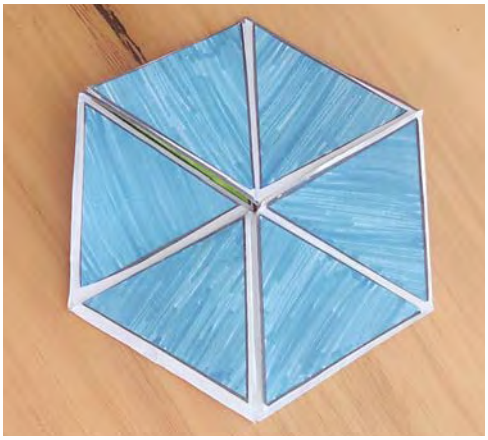
I found it **easy** to:

Stage 3

flexagon

Teacher Guide





FlexagonTeacher Guide

Uses and Benefits

Flexagons refocus attention and use repetitive actions to create calm.
These flexagons are designed to help children self-regulate whilst keeping their hands busy.
They are great to use for calming, grounding and distraction.

Materials and Equipment

Each student needs:

Printed Flexagon template
Printed Colour Centres templates
Scissors
Glue
Pencils/crayons/textas
Ruler

How to make

1. Cut out the template by cutting along the black lines.
2. Score each grey line by opening your scissors and running one of the cutting edges **gently** along the grey lines, using a ruler to guide you.
3. Fold each triangle over and then under, along the grey lines (9 folds in total).
4. Unfold the template back to its original shape.
5. Fold the template onto itself, so that triangles 3 and 4 are face to face. Your template will now resemble a candy cane shape.
6. Fold the template again, so triangles 6 and 7 are back to back (numbers on the outsides). Your template will now resemble a hexagon shape, with triangle 10 sticking out.
7. Fold triangle 1 over the top of triangle 9 and then glue triangle 10 onto the face of triangle 1.
8. Colour each of the 3 "Coloured Centres" templates a different colour.
9. Cut out every triangle from the 3 templates. You will have 18 small triangles in total, 6 of each colour.
10. Glue the 6 small triangles in your first colour onto one side of the Flexagon.
11. Glue the 6 small triangles in your second colour onto the other side of the Flexagon.
12. Hold the Flexagon in 2 hands. Place your index fingers on the top 2 triangles, whilst holding the 2 side triangles between your thumbs and middle fingers.
13. Push the top 2 triangles down until they are touching the triangles that your middle fingers are on.
14. Release your middle fingers. You will now be pinching 2 of the 3 sides of your new shape.
15. Release 1 of your hands that is pinching a side and use that hand to open your Flexagon from its centre. Release your other pinching hand and your flexagon will open to the final white side.
16. Glue the 6 small triangles in your third colour onto the last side of the Flexagon.
17. Turn your Flexagon 1 triangle to either the left or right. Repeat steps 12 to 15 to fidget with your Flexagon.

Templates

- See the templates at the end of this document.
- The first template sheet is one per student. The next 2 sheets are enough for one part of the template, for 2 students.
- You may choose to print the "Coloured Centres" templates onto 3 different colours of paper, instead of students colouring in their own.

Notes

- As you are scoring your paper in step 2 you want to ensure that you aren't damaging the table or surface underneath. Place a book, magazine, cardboard or something solid under your template before scoring your lines.
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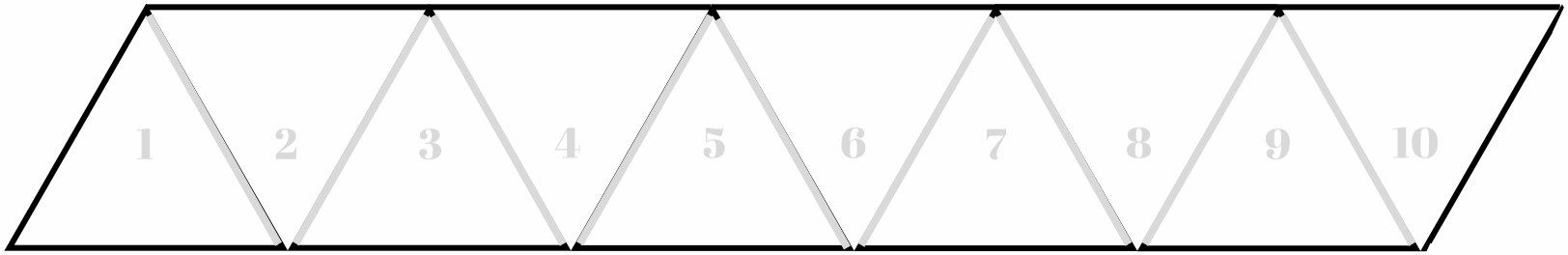
Videos

Flexagon Instructional Video: https://youtu.be/nvy8DFKawel

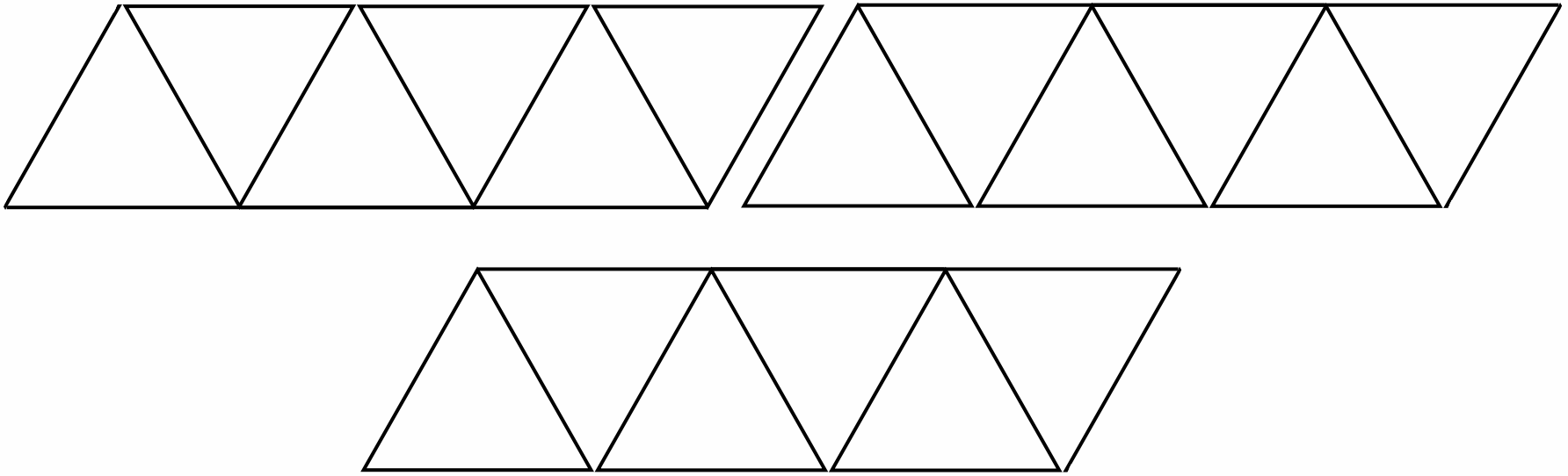
Flexagon Instructional Video Worded: https://youtu.be/wkFAuUYocSk

Fidgeting With Your Flexagon: https://youtu.be/ijzK8s9PUMA

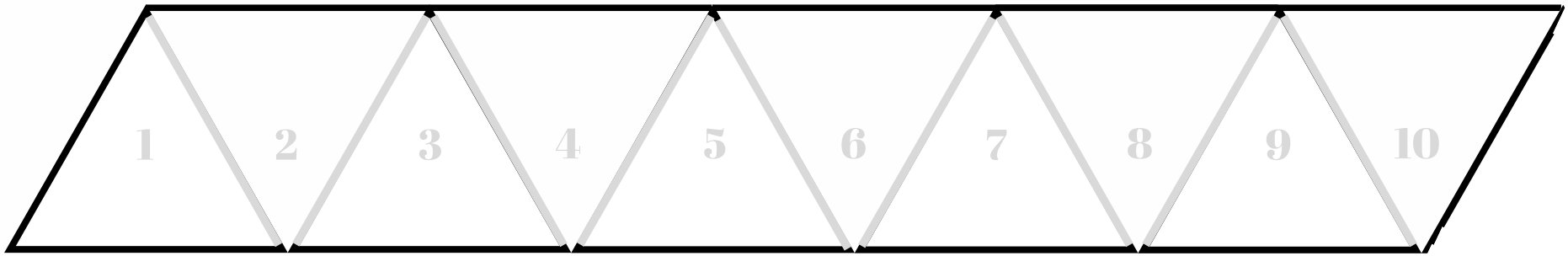
Flexagon Frame

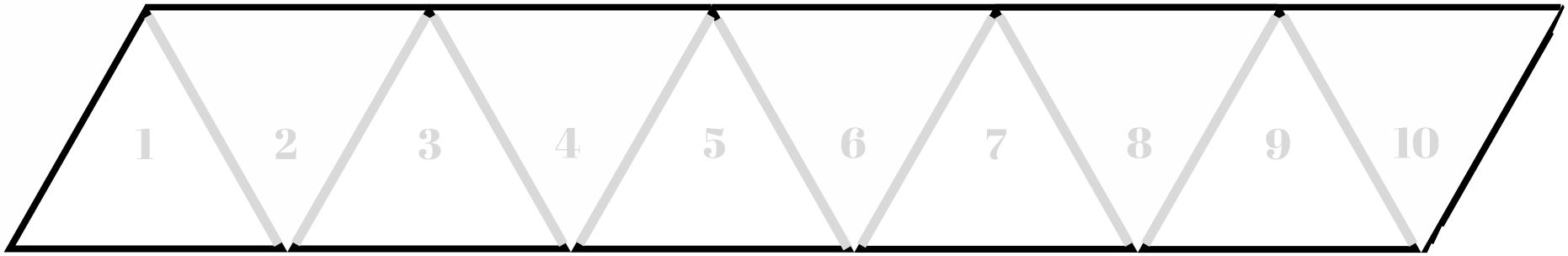


Coloured Centres

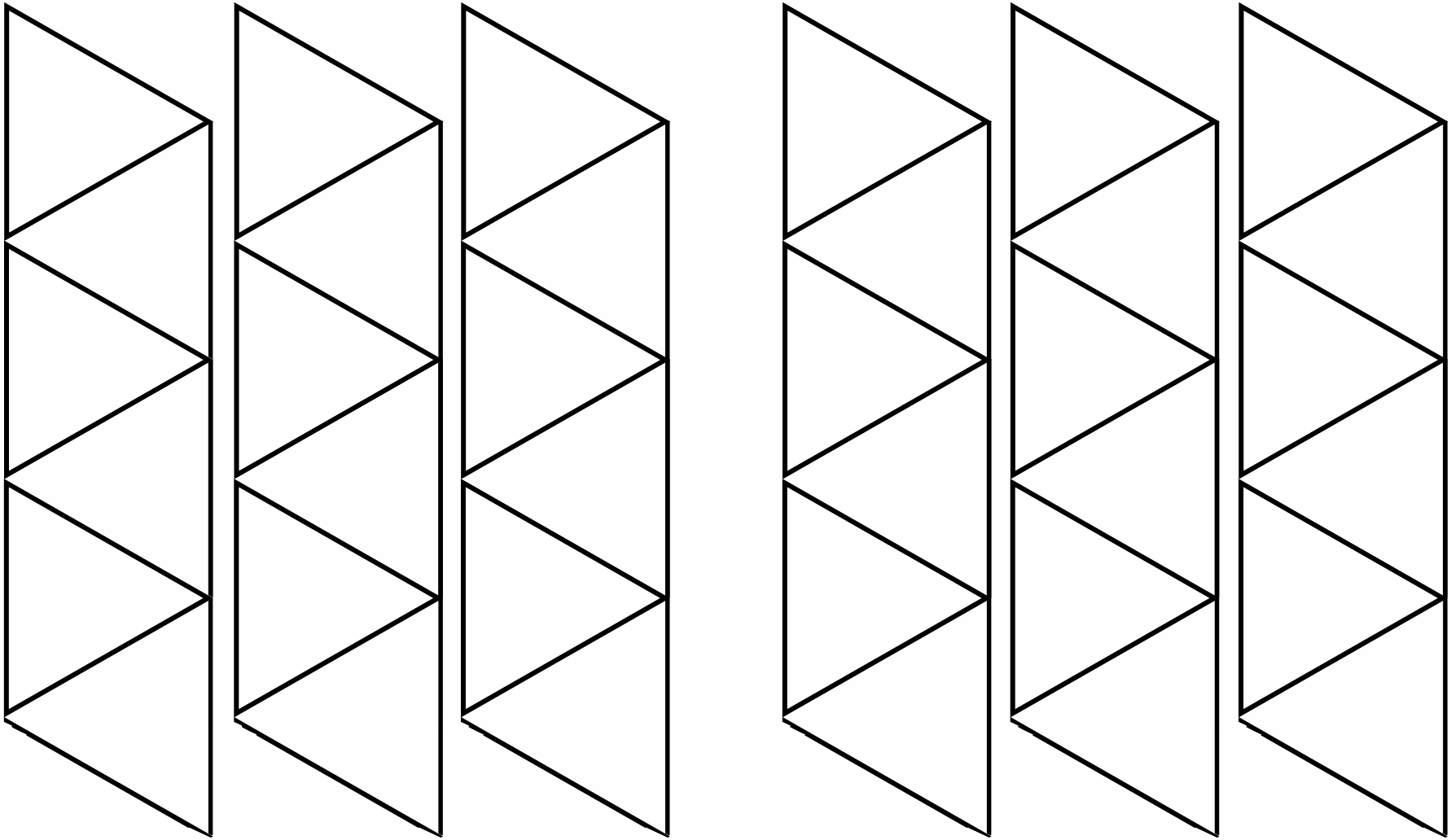


Flexagon Frames





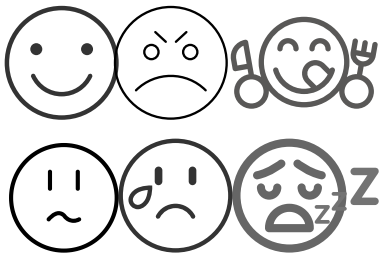
Coloured Centres



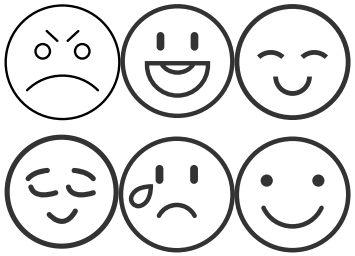
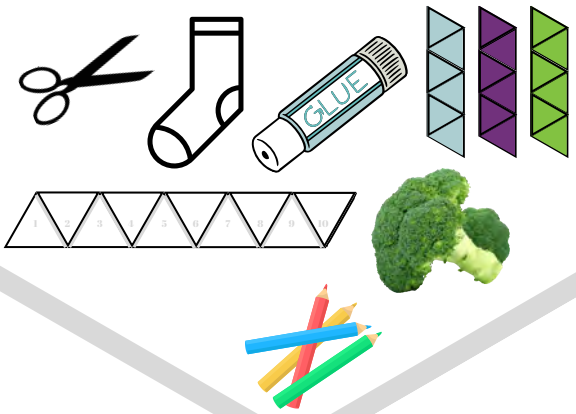
Name: _____

FLEXAGON REFLECTION

I CAN USE MY FLEXAGON WHEN I AM FEELING:



MY FLEXAGON CAN HELP ME FEEL:



TO MAKE MY FLEXAGON I NEEDED: