

UnEarthed

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Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers of UnEarthed,

UnEarthed's Executive Board and our student-led team of writers, editors, and designers are so excited to bring you our thirteenth issue of UnEarthed! Welcome to PLAY, where you can find articles on topics such as board games, animals, sports, and much more!

We chose the theme PLAY this year because, when thinking about our own childhoods, we all shared memories of genuine enjoyment playing in a variety of ways. From playing playground games with friends to playing video games, or even reading plays, there is no one right way to play. As young readers, we hope you will be able to connect with many of these articles and also learn something new! Playing is an important part of growing up and is something that stays with us even as we get older (yes, even we, as adults, still like to play!)

One of the main reasons we created UnEarthed was to remind readers of the exciting things they experience each day and to motivate them to learn and discover new ways of viewing and exploring the world around them. Our writers were encouraged to think about their own playful experiences while coming up with article ideas, doing research, and writing. When you read our articles, you're playing right alongside us. In PLAY, we thought about the things we see (sometimes daily!) in our world, and challenged ourselves to break down where they really came from, how they are made, and why they matter. These questions don't end with the subjects we chose, though – we hope we can inspire you to keep thinking about how and why you should keep playing in new, stimulating, and spontaneous ways.

The fun doesn't end with our articles; be sure to check out the end of our magazine to find puzzles and games! This is your chance to engage with PLAY, by playing one of the games that we designed for you. The signature page is for you to get creative — draw a picture, record observations from science experiments, or get your friend's signatures like you would in a yearbook.

We had a lot of fun creating PLAY and we are already working hard on making our next issue. We publish a new magazine twice a year and distribute it to students in Philadelphia, like yourself. We are always trying to write about new topics to make an article for everyone, so we welcome any ideas you might have. If you want to suggest an idea for an article or interactive page, please let us know using the suggestion box on our website: (<https://www.unearthedpenn.com/suggestion-box>)

Our website has a lot more than just a suggestion box, though! At www.unearthedpenn.com, you can also find exclusive digital-only articles, interactive quizzes, videos, and read-along audio for articles. We are planning to come out with more content for the website, so stay tuned!

We hope PLAY will give you the tools you need to explore the world. Stay curious and keep asking questions!

Aylin Ergin
EDITOR IN CHIEF
Antonio Meloni
MANAGING EDITOR

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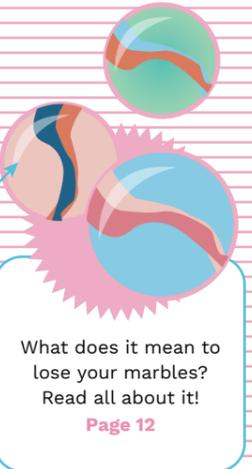
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WONDERING WHAT TO READ?

Our articles are now ranked by difficulty!

- EASY
- MEDIUM
- DIFFICULT





The Magic of the Theater

Writing by LAYLA SAYED • Editing by ALBERTINA LEE & SHIRLEY YUAN

Once upon a time, long ago, before TVs and smartphones, there was a magical place called the theater! When you think of theater, what comes to mind? Maybe you see the large cast and crew, or the beautiful costumes and makeup. Maybe you hear the music and acting or the applause of the crowd. Whatever you imagine, one thing that rings true is that theater has been enchanting audiences for centuries, yes **CENTURIES!**

Theater can be traced back to **ancient Greece**, around the 5th century BCE. In the bustling city of Athens, people gathered to watch performances in **amphitheaters** (outdoor theaters). Simple yet powerful, these early plays usually featured one actor known as the **protagonist**, along with a chorus to help tell the story. A **chorus** was a group of singers and dancers who added rhythm and emotion to the story unfolding on stage.

However, as time went on, plays continued to evolve. Playwrights began to add characters and it was no longer a one-man show. It went from just a protagonist to another character often referred to as the **antagonist**. While the protagonist was the main character of the play, the antagonist was usually written to be their adversary. The playwright **Aeschylus** added an antagonist to his play, "**The Persians**," and this led to a massive reduction in the size of the play's chorus from **50** members to just **12!** However, despite these smaller choruses, the plays often became more enjoyable as they became filled with more drama and conflict.

Theater continued to evolve over the centuries, becoming a beloved pastime for people of all ages. In the 16th century, a talented playwright named **William Shakespeare** captured the hearts of audiences with timeless classics like "**Romeo and Juliet**." This tragic love story, set in the streets of Verona, Italy, enchanted audiences and continues to do so today.

Originally, Romeo and Juliet was performed in a very simple set. The stage was mostly empty with just a fake balcony. William Shakespeare intended to have minimal props and scenery so the audience would focus on the beauty of the **language** and the **emotions** conveyed by the actors. However, over time the production became more popular. As the story became more well-known and more money went into its performance, the play included more details. Costumes became more intricate and the set design became more extravagant.

Fast forward to modern times, "Romeo and Juliet" is still being performed around the world. From high school stages to professional theaters like the **Swan Theater** in London, England, audiences are still captivated by the timeless tale of forbidden love. There have even been movie adaptations, including one starring the talented **Leonardo DiCaprio!** Other movie adaptations take a more fun approach such as the film "**Gnomeo and Juliet**" which starred famous actress **Emily Blunt**. Other plays such as "**West Side Story**" have been greatly inspired by Shakespeare's original piece and The play "Romeo and Juliet" has even found its way into modern music, with artists making references to the play directly and indirectly. Even sayings like "**star-crossed lovers**" originated from this play.

"**Romeo and Juliet**" is an example of a play that has evolved and affected modern culture in so many ways. However, countless others have done the same. Today "**Hamilton**," a popular play, has broken records and made over 854 million dollars since its debut in 2015. Writer Lin-Manuel Miranda stated, "My only responsibility as a playwright and a storyteller is to give you the time of your life in the theater."

So the next time you hear the word "**theater**," remember the rich history behind it and the countless stories waiting to be told. Who knows? **You might just write the next big play or discover one that you love!**

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Five of The World's BIGGEST, Craziest, Most Unique

AMUSEMENT PARKS

Writing by
ERICA EDMAN

UNIVERSAL'S ISLAND OF ADVENTURE

(Orlando, Florida) Movie lovers will love the immersive and thrilling attractions at Universal's Island of Adventure. Here you will find the all-wizarding village of Hogsmeade and the majestic Hogwarts castle. You can even join Hagrid on a Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure. In the Jurassic Park Discovery Center, you can view paleontological displays and "fuse" your DNA with that of a dinosaur's to see what that creature would look like. Do not forget to say hello to Thing 1 and Thing 2 in Seuss Landing before you leave!

DIGGERLAND (Multiple locations in England, and one location in New Jersey)

Diggerland is a unique amusement park that puts you in the driver's seat of real-life construction machinery. From mini diggers to giant excavators, you'll have the opportunity to operate a variety of heavy-duty machines. It's a hands-on experience where you will dig, scoop, and crush. When you are done with the steamrollers and backhoes, there are also rides and roller coasters all made of construction equipment, rope courses and rock walls to climb.

Editing by
IVY LO
ALBERTINA LEE

SIX FLAGS GREAT ADVENTURE

(Jackson, New Jersey) Looking for a thrill? Here you will find the world's tallest roller coaster: Kingda Ka. Kingda Ka is known for its upside-down U-shaped track and giant hill, which riders climb before plunging 456 feet down at nearly a 90-degree angle. The ride starts by going from 0 to 128 miles per hour in 3.5 seconds, which is faster than even most cars can go. Six Flags Great Adventure is also home to one of the largest safaris outside of Africa. Safari Off Road Adventure offers a wild expedition through 350 acres of natural habitats, where you can encounter fascinating animals from all around the world, including giraffes, rhinos, monkeys and zebras!

RUSH MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE PARK (Keystone, South Dakota) Young adventurers, this park is for you! You can speed downhill on a thrilling mountain coaster rider, or soar through the air like an eagle on a unique 630-foot long zipline. Grab a pan and try your luck at the Gemstone Mining Sluice. Sift through sand and gravel in search of gemstones, fossils, arrowheads and other treasures. The highlight of Rush Mountain Adventure Park, however, is venturing into the breathtaking Rushmore Cave, a real underground cave. There, you can marvel at stunning rock formations, crystal-clear pools, and mysterious passages as you explore this underground labyrinth.

TOKYO DISNEYSEA (Tokyo, Japan)

Those looking for a maritime adventure will love Tokyo Disney Sea! The entire park has an aquatic theme. On the Nemo and Friends SeaRider, you shrink down to the size of a fish, and interact with Nemo, Dory and co. to explore marine life. You can also join Captain Jack Sparrow on an adventure in Pirates of the Caribbean, or board a submarine and go 20,000 Leagues under the sea in search of Atlantis! Triton's Castle overlooks Mermaid Lagoon, and while in the castle, you feel as though you are underwater.

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Word Play!

Written by **SRISHTI BANSAL** Edited by **MIA HAIL & IVY LO**

Words are fascinating things. They allow us to transform the thoughts in our head onto paper or into sound waves in the air, and others, miraculously, to understand them! They also allow us to have a little bit of fun. Here are some different ways that we can play with our language, while still using it to communicate!

Puns

One of the most hilarious (or should we say punny) ways to play with words is a good **pun**. This form of wordplay is usually a little joke that plays on similar-sounding words or homophones in order to relate two unrelated ideas. Though these might cause you to groan (some might even call the puns in this listicle pun-ishingly bad, but hopefully they're pun-believable hilarious), they often allow people to be creative and relate different ideas!

Portmanteaus

Another form of wordplay involves combining two words to form a new idea. For example, if you're going to get "brunch," you're not getting breakfast or lunch, but something new that's a combination of the two! In fact, even this listicle is not exactly a list nor an article, but something in between. This is called a **portmanteau**, which used to be a word for a suitcase that folds into two parts, and was given a new meaning by Lewis Carrol (author of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland!)

Anagrams

Do you know how to nag a ram? No? Speak in **anagrams**! An anagram is a word or phrase that, when you rearrange the letters, leads to another word or phrase! (like anagram and nag a ram). Some anagrams are truly amazing, like how an anagram for "decimal point" is "I'm a dot in place", and an anagram for "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind" (a quote by Neil Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon) is "A thin man ran; left planet, makes a large stride, pins flag on moon. On to Mars!"

Palindromes

Palindromes are words or phrases that are the same read forwards and backwards! These can be simple like the name "Hannah" or the word "noon," or more complicated like the phrase "A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama" (which refers to Theodore Roosevelt and the building of the Panama Canal). If you try reading it backward, it's the same sentence! Try writing out the words racecar, starships, and taco-cat backward to see which ones are palindromes!

As you can see, words are more than a way to communicate, but can also truly be a way to express your creativity! Now that you've learned about a few new ways to express yourself, try to find examples of these word-plays yourself!

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Design by
MELODY ZHANG

Weird Sports Around The World

Writing by WANGARI MBUTHIA

Editing by JOYCE LEE & MAYA GOLDSTEIN

Sports have been played around the world for thousands of years. Initially, people played sports to train to hunt or prepare for war, but over the years, sports became so much more. People play sports to compete, to keep fit, or just to have fun! Now, we've all heard of football, basketball, and baseball, but did you know that there are about 200 internationally recognized sports? This is only a fraction of an estimated 8,000 sports worldwide, so here's a list of four weird sports around the world you may not know existed.

1. Toe Wrestling

Founded in 1974 in a small town called **Derbyshire in the UK**, toe wrestling has grown to be an international competitive sport. Just like arm wrestling, toe wrestling involves two players – except instead of locking hands, they lock toes and compete to get the other player's foot to touch the wall on either side of the platform. Matches are played in three rounds and can last as long as two hours. It can be a very painful sport, as knees hurt, blisters form, and toes can even break. Every year the world championship is held in August in the same town as the sport's founding.

2. Professional Pillow Fighting

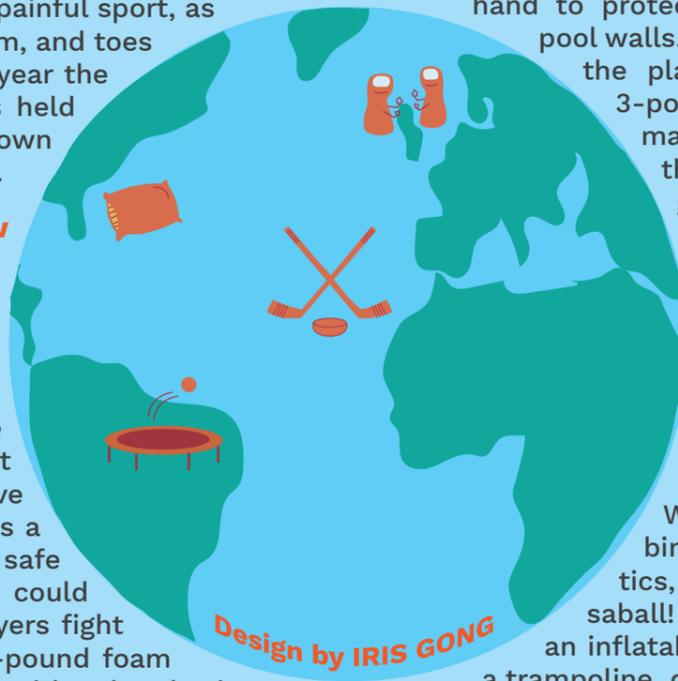
Pillow fighting is not just for sleepovers anymore; in fact, it's a sport with its own championship league that is even broadcast on ESPN. Competitive pillow fighting began as a way to create a safe combat sport that could appeal to all ages. Players fight with a specialized 2.2-pound foam pillow in a nylon case with a hand grip. The sport is won through a point system that rewards strikes to the head, knockdowns, and showmanship. The first championship was held in January 2022 in **Miami**, but the sport has also expanded to host additional leagues in **Brazil** and **Nigeria**.

3. Underwater Hockey

Yes, you read that right, not field, not ice, but underwater hockey. Underwater hockey is a non-contact competitive sport invented by the British Navy in the 1950s to keep their divers fit. Now, the sport is played in more than **40 countries** around the world. The game features six players on each team who wear large fins, a snorkel mask, and a thick glove on their playing hand to protect them from rubbing the pool walls. Using a small pusher stick, the players compete to push a 3-pound puck which they must maneuver to the other end of the pool to score. Without a goalie, teamwork and communication are essential as players take turns diving and resurfacing for air. Underwater hockey is the only sport that requires you to hold your breath while you play!

4. Bossaball

What do you get if you combine volleyball, soccer, gymnastics, and some great music? Bossaball! Bossaball is a sport played on an inflatable volleyball style court with a trampoline on either side of the net. Players in teams of four can reach new heights (literally) as they use any part of their body to strike the ball over the net. The game was created by a Belgian named Filip Eyckmans, who was inspired while visiting one of Brazil's beaches. The sport is now played in **Argentina, Netherlands, Spain, Egypt and more!**



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Which sport would you play?

LEVELING UP!

THE EVOLUTION OF VIDEO GAMES

Writing by COLEMAN WAMPLER
Editing by ANTONIO MELONI & SOPHIA JARRAR

Video games are fun, new, and everywhere! Have you ever wondered how your favorite games like **Fortnite, Minecraft, and Roblox** came to be? Well, it didn't start out with the small gaming consoles, handheld phones, and computer systems that we know today.

In fact, the first computers took up whole rooms and could only run games that were just a few pixels!

These first video games were **Computer Space (1971)** and **Pong (1972)** by the Atari company, and they launched the video game sector itself into outer space!



Many companies that you now know today like **Nintendo** and **Namco** were created soon after. Also, early versions of handheld systems like you know today were invented. Finally, people could play the games they loved anytime and anywhere! These included the **GameBoy** and **GameBoy Color**, with some classic games like **Mario** and **Zelda**. It is crazy to think about how far these characters have come... they are almost 50 years old!



Throughout the 90s and early 2000s, both computer and console gaming increased in popularity.

DESIGN by SYDNEY LIU



By the late 2000's and early 2010's, mobile gaming was all the craze. Games like **Angry Birds, Fruit Ninja, Candy Crush, and Subway Surfers** took the world by storm. For the first time ever, video games were no longer in their own separate world, but combined with the device you used every single day! Video games were now accessible to everyone and for cheap.



Many new consoles like the **Playstation, Xbox, and Wii** were introduced to gamers, and rivalries among fans and companies alike began on the best console. **Which one do you like best?**



Nowadays, our powerful computers and smart engineers can make games that look exactly like real life. Console, computer, and mobile gaming are beloved by many. New games are made every single day, and the industry makes billions of dollars every year.

What does the future look like?

Recently, video games have gotten even more futuristic. Although the idea of **virtual reality** has been around for a long time in pop culture and inventions, it has recently come to life through many different headsets. For example, the Apple Vision Pro was just released, a VR device that combines real life and the virtual world, otherwise known as augmented reality. Soon, we might be living in a world straight out of the movie Ready Player One! Video games are no longer just simple stories and fun gimmicks, they involve social connection and combination with everyday life as well!

With even more convenience and creativity, video games are definitely **"leveling-up."**

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Exploring the Origins of Playground Games

Writing by ALLAHA MOHIBY
Editing by ANTONIO MELONI & SHIRLEY YUAN

Playground games have been an important part of childhood for generations. Have you ever joined in on a fun playground game and wondered where it came from? Playground games have their own fascinating origins and variations! Let's dive into the history of some popular games that kids like us love to play.

Miss Mary Mack is a game that originated in African American communities in the United States during the 19th century. Its rhythmic chants and catchy tunes have been passed down through generations. In some regions, you might hear slightly different rhymes or clapping patterns, but the essence of the game remains the same – fun and friendship-building! The game usually starts with both players clapping their own hands together a certain number of times, followed by a series of coordinated hand claps between them. The hand claps might include movements like slapping hands, tapping knees, or clapping in specific patterns. As they perform the clapping sequence, the players recite the lyrics of the rhyme, which often begins with "Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack, all dressed in black, black, black." The rhyme continues with a description of Miss Mary Mack's various activities or attributes, accompanied by corresponding hand movements and claps. For example, "She asked her mother, mother, mother, for fifty cents, cents, cents" might be followed by a specific clapping pattern.



Hopscotch is a timeless game with a rich history that spans cultures and centuries. Its origins can be traced back to ancient Rome, where it was known as "ludus pen-telici," a game played by Roman soldiers to improve their agility and balance. Over time, hopscotch evolved and spread to different parts of the world, taking on various forms and names. In the 17th century, English children played a version called "scotch-hoppers," while in France, it was known as "escargot" or "marelle." The game gained popularity across Europe and eventually made its way to other continents through colonization and cultural exchange. Today, hopscotch remains a beloved childhood pastime enjoyed by children worldwide, serving not only as a source of entertainment but also as a way to develop physical coordination and social skills.

London Bridge is a classic singing game that started in England during the 17th century. Players form two lines, creating an arch with their raised arms to mimic the famous bridge. As they sing the rhyme "London Bridge is falling down," one player passes through the arch, and the others lower their arms to "capture" them. The player passing under the arch chooses a partner from the opposing line during the song's lyrics, such as "Take the key and lock her (or him) up." The chosen partner then joins hands with the passerby, and they raise their hands to form a new arch. The game continues with another player passing through the new arch until all participants have had a turn or until the players decide to end the game. Variations of this game can be found in different countries, each with its own twist on the lyrics or actions.

A Sailor Went to Sea is a rhythmic hand-clapping game enjoyed by children around the world. Its origins can be traced back to traditional nursery rhymes and children's songs, originating in the United Kingdom in the 19th century. Players sit or stand in a circle, chanting the catchy verses and performing synchronized hand motions. As the game progresses, new actions are added, adding to the excitement and challenge.

Slide, Down Down Baby, also known as Roller Coaster, is a popular clapping game that originated in the United States during the 20th century. Its roots lie in African American communities, where it evolved as a form of rhythmic expression and social interaction. Players clap, chant, and perform synchronized movements, creating an energetic and engaging atmosphere. Different regions may have their own variations of the game, adding to its richness and diversity.

Stella Ella Ola is a joyful singing game that originated in Canada, particularly among French-speaking communities. Players form a circle, singing and dancing to the lively tune. The game celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Canada, with variations reflecting the unique traditions of different regions.



Say, Say Oh Playmate is a cheerful clapping game enjoyed by children worldwide. Its origins can be traced back to the early 20th century in the United States, with variations of the game emerging over time. Players sit or stand in a circle, clapping hands and reciting the classic rhymes found in the lyrics. The game promotes teamwork, coordination, and creativity, making it a beloved pastime for kids of all ages. With its catchy tunes and playful rhythms, Say, Say Oh Playmate continues to bring joy and laughter to playgrounds everywhere, connecting children through shared traditions and timeless fun.

Each of these playground games has its own story to tell, passed down from one generation to the next. Whether you're clapping, singing, or dancing, these games bring us together and make our playtimes more fun! So next time you're on the playground, remember the history behind the games you love to play, and keep the tradition alive for years to come!

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Marbles, Jacks, and More: Games Beyond the Board

Writing by Quinton Geller | Editing by Shirley Yuan and Mia Hail | Design by Jhaughanessy Morris

The room pulses with excitement as the dice clatter across the table. Everyone holds their breath as they wait for the dice to reveal their numbers, hearts racing and minds whirring with strategy. "Double sixes!" you exclaim, triumphant, as you direct your last piece to the end of the board, seizing first place!

We've all experienced the thrill of board games, whether with family around the dinner table or with friends at school. But have you ever paused to think about the games that came before? From marbles to jacks, pastimes beyond the board have woven their way into the fabric of childhoods past and present. Let's delve into the fascinating history and gameplay of some of these timeless classics.

Marbles has been played for millennia with any round object children could get their hands on. Pebbles and nuts served as the earliest game pieces when even the formidable Roman emperor Augustus delighted in the pleasure of marbles! By the early 1800s, developments in marble technology introduced marbles made of china, clay, and glass. Machine-made marbles were introduced in the coming decades, and many types gained characteristic names—for example, those made of alabaster were called "alleys," while clay marbles were called "commoneys."

With such generic game pieces, it is no surprise that there are countless games involving marbles. Some of the most popular include:

- Ring Taw: players try to knock mibs (target marbles) out of a ring by flicking taws (shooter marbles) at them
- Bridgeboard/Nine Holes: players shoot marbles through nine numbered archways, either in order or for points
- Cherry Pit: players try to knock mibs into a central hole without shooting their taws in as well

The traditional prize for winning such games was getting to keep a share of your opponents' marbles, which is how we obtained the phrase "to lose one's marbles."

Jacks, like marbles, is an ancient game with many variations and commonplace game pieces. From stones and coins to buttons and more, there are endless possibilities. A few ways to play are listed below:

- Classic: a set of jacks is thrown into the air, and players try to catch as many as possible with one hand. Points are determined by how many the player catches and misses, making this a thrilling game of skill.
- Common Playground Variation: players toss a ball into the air and grab as many jacks as they can with one hand before catching the ball. The target number of jacks gradually increases, and a player's turn ends when they fail to catch the ball.

Unfortunately, the constant presence of digital media is eliminating children's need to find entertainment in batches of mismatched objects. Even more importantly, less perceived interest in these toys has made them much harder to find in stores and on the playground. Yet, as long as there are children like you who are eager to embrace the joy of play, the legacy of marbles and jacks will live on in the simple pleasures that make our childhoods so magical.

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On Your Marks Get Ready, Set, Pull!

Writing by MARCELLA SOEWIGNJO | Editing by SOPHIA JARRAR
& ALBERTINA LEE | Design by JHAUGHANESSY MORRIS

Ever wonder how your toy car can roll without an engine? Pullback motor cars were invented in 1952 and have remained popular toys over several decades. But what's the science behind how they work?

In order to get objects to move, we need energy. In the case of real cars, energy is found in the form of fuel. However, in the case of our pullback toy cars, energy is found in the form of a coil. A coil is a long stretchy band that wraps around an axle, a long rod that runs through the center of the wheels of a car. The axle allows a car to move properly and ensures that the wheels stay put as the car drives. When the car is pulled backward, the coil wraps up super tight and builds up energy, just like when a rubber band is stretched out between your fingers. This type of energy is called elastic potential energy and can be found in objects that stretch and compress. When you let go of the car, all of that built-up tension is released in the form of kinetic energy. This causes the car to move forward.

Potential energy is stored-up energy waiting to be released. When potential energy is released, it is converted to a different form of energy called kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is the energy of movement. Many other toys use elastic potential energy such as trampolines, diving boards, and slingshots. Even day-to-day household items such as sponges have elastic potential energy! When you squeeze one of your kitchen sponges in your hand, notice how it quickly bounces back once it is released. That is due to the stored potential energy being converted into kinetic energy!

So does this mean you can transform a regular toy car into a pullback car with the help of a coil and some elastic potential energy? The answer is yes!

Remember, pullback cars use coils as a way of storing potential energy. By adding a coil to your regular toy car, it is possible to turn it into a pullback car. Here is what you need to get started:

Materials

- Toy car with a visible axle running through the rear wheels
- Card stock
- Tape
- Scissor
- Ruler

1. Cut a strip of cardstock approximately the same width as the axle of the toy car, with a length of around 10 inches.
2. Attach the strip of cardstock to the rear axle of the toy car with tape.
3. Wind up the axle, ensuring that the coil is able to wrap around it tightly
4. Place the car in the desired position and let it drive!



REFERENCE:
Pull Back Cars: Can you transform a toy car into a pull-back car?

PLAYTIME!!

Editing by SOPHIA JARRAR & JOYCE LEE

Have you ever wondered why those little toddlers running around with their sticky fingers and giggles seem to be having the time of their lives? Well, guess what? There's more to their playtime than meets the eye! Keep reading to learn more about why playtime is so important for toddlers and their development.

Physical Benefit

This one might be a little obvious, but playing is a great way to increase one's mobility and physical fitness. For kids, play often involves movements that are a great form of exercise. Beyond that, play allows a young child to improve their fine motor skills, like buttoning a button or zipping a zipper. We all once lacked the ability to hold ourselves up. Playing leads to greater strength in the body so we can overcome everyday hurdles. Finding the balance to walk, being able to put the star block into the star-shaped hole, and throwing a ball forward several feet are just some of the skills that toddlers gain over time while playing. Such actions cannot be taught without physical effort. They might fail time and time again but they eventually get it right!

Brain Workout

While play and exercise make the body sweat, for young toddlers, it can make their brain sweat too! In the same way that math and science are forms of education, play is a form of education for a young child. A fascinating experiment on rats' brains found that rats raised in playful environments had more of a protein that grows and maintains brain cells. Although we look and act very differently to rats, these findings likely apply to humans. We can assume that children raised in playful environments will also have more of the protein that leads to advanced brain development.

Play can also improve the way the brain functions. For children at this young age, the most developed parts of their brains are the parts that respond to active experiences. Active experiences are those that encourage children to use their bodies, senses, and minds in stimulating ways. Active forms of play can lead to greater memory support. Even something as simple as peek-a-boo teaches a toddler the skill of object permanence, which is an understanding that something exists even if you can't see it. From puzzles to tag, studies have also shown that play can help with language, problem-solving, and math. Who would have thought that chasing a butterfly could help a toddler with addition and subtraction in the future?



Social Skills

Play is also important for the development of social skills. Playing pretend is a common game for young children; while on the surface it may just look like toddlers imitating the TV show they watched, it also shows that these children are learning and exploring the world around them. Even newborn babies have forms of play that improve their social skills. When an infant laughs and sees another person smile back, they associate their happiness with the happiness of another. Such emotional connections are formed at a very young age.

Play often also can involve other people. Especially when encountering other individuals their age, the way in which they interact and connect involves playing. Whether it's sharing a ball or working together to complete a puzzle, toddlers learn the importance of working with others.

Emotional Well-Being

While playing can help toddlers create emotional connections with others, it is also a way to improve their own emotional state. There is actually a lot going on inside the body when a child plays. When a child is playing, their brain releases two chemicals: oxytocin and dopamine. Oxytocin helps to regulate one's emotions and support social skills. Dopamine impacts memory, motivation, attention, and mood. These are positive emotions that flood a child's head when they play. Because of that, play is often a treatment used to treat young children with difficulty with their emotions, like those diagnosed with anxiety or who have suffered a form of trauma.

As you can see, playtime isn't just about having fun, it's a fundamental part of a toddler's development, offering a bunch of benefits that extend far beyond the playground. From building physical strength and agility to enhancing brain function and social skills, play lays the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. So, next time you see those little toddlers running around with their sticky fingers and giggles, remember, there's a whole world of growth happening beneath the surface. Whether it's chasing butterflies or building block towers, playtime is serious business for our youngest learners, shaping the bright minds of tomorrow.

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Design by SALLY HUANG

HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN TREE FORT

You may one day find yourself wanting to explore the wonders of nature. One way to get the full experience is building a tree fort! It is the perfect way to get yourself comfortable in the great outdoors. Follow these step-by-step instructions to create your very own sanctuary among the trees!

- 1. Find a Location:** Find a sturdy tree with branches close to the ground. Make sure the area is not located near anything that might be dangerous.
- 2. Gather Your Materials:** Collect branches, twigs, and leaves from the forest floor. You'll also need rope, a saw, and a hammer.
- 3. Design Your Fort:** Imagine what your fort will look like. Will it have multiple levels? A secret entrance? Let your imagination run wild!
- 4. Build the Base:** Lay out the foundation by arranging the largest branches in a square or rectangle shape on the ground. Make sure they are securely anchored to the tree by leaning them against the trunk or tying them to low branches with rope. This will be the floor of your fort.
- 5. Construct the Walls:** Use smaller branches to create the walls of your fort. Lean them against the base branches like giant Lincoln Logs, overlapping them slightly to make them sturdy. Weave thinner twigs between the larger branches to fill in any gaps and make the walls stronger.
- 6. Add a Roof:** Cover your fort with large leaves or a tarp to protect it from rain and sun. Lay them over the top of the walls like shingles on a roof, overlapping them slightly to keep out water. Secure the roof with rope or twine tied to branches or nailed down with a hammer.
- 7. Decorate Your Space:** Use your artistic skills to personalize your fort. Hang fairy lights, paint signs, or create a flag to fly proudly from the treetops.
- 8. Enjoy Your New Hideaway:** Once your fort is complete, invite your friends over for a grand unveiling. Spend hours playing games, telling stories, and enjoying the magic of your tree fort retreat.

Writing by ALLAHA MOHIBY
Editing by ALBERTINA LEE
& JOYCE LEE



Design by IR/S GONG

Building a tree fort is a great way to connect with nature and discover the joy of outdoor exploration. Grab a friend, take some tools, and have fun making the fort of your dreams!

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SLIMES!

What is slime? Is it a liquid? Is it solid?

It's both (depending on how you play with it)! This is called a **non-Newtonian fluid**. This gooey substance spreads across the surface like a liquid, yet it can also easily be picked up by the hand. It can come in many consistencies and colors—some thicker, crunchier, softer, or even smell like food. Yes, you read it right, food.

Writing by AILING CHEN
Editing by SHIRLEY YUAN
& ALBERTINA LEE

The History of Slime: From Goo to Glee

Slime was first introduced in 1976 by the **Mattel Toy Company**. It wasn't until 2015 that the trend of slime arose with the popularity of social media when young individuals started posting videos of their own slime creations. As the trend grew, so did the creativity! People began adding in all sorts of special ingredients from essential oils for extra fragrance, styrofoams for that oh-so-satisfying crunch, and even shaping it to look like mouth-watering treats or cool objects! Adding solid objects inside slimes such as shapes, beads, or glitter takes slime play to another level.

More than Just Goopy Fun... The Benefits of Slime

Aside from the fun, slimes have many benefits, especially **sensory stimulation**. Sensory play can allow you to explore your senses, enhance creativity and curiosity, and manage anxiety. The calming feeling of the gooey substance in your hands paired with the silly blurbs and crunches are great stress and anxiety reducers, similar to widget toys. It's like having your own personal stress ball, but way gooier!

Ready to unleash your inner scientist and make your own slime? It's easier than you think! Here's a simple recipe you can whip up right at home.

Design by SYDNEY LIU

How To Make Slime

1. Squeeze an entire **4 oz. bottle of white glue** into a bowl or container.
2. Add **2 tablespoons** of your desired **food coloring** and **1 cup of water** to the glue.
3. Stir to combine.
4. Add **2 tablespoons of lotion** and **1 cup of shaving cream** (any kind works!) to the glue mixture.
5. Stir to combine.
6. In a **separate** bowl or container, mix **1 tablespoon of Borax** Multi-purpose Household Cleaner* with **1 cup of hot water**.
7. Add the Borax water to the glue mixture.
8. Keep stirring until the mixture begins to clump together. You may use your hands to knead it around as well.

And voila! You've just made your very own slime. When stored in a tightly sealed container at room temperature, this slime can last for several days.

***Caution: DO NOT EAT BORAX.**
This homemade slime is NOT edible!

Fun Fact

Vinegar completely dissolves slime. Go ahead, try it for yourself!

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PREVENTING — — PREDATORS

Writing by ANJALI SHANKAR

Editing by IVY LO & MAYA GOLDSTEIN

There are three things we do when we encounter danger: fight, flight, or freeze. Animals have come up with clever strategies, called adaptations, to avoid predators. They help animals survive many different obstacles, such as living in tough climates, finding food, and avoiding animals that eat them called predators. You can probably imagine some animals fighting and others “flying” – either literally or running away. However, freezing can also be really effective. Some animals have become Oscar-worthy actors! They “play dead” so that predators won’t want to eat them. Even predators play dead sometimes to trick their prey into thinking that there is no danger. Certain snakes, opossums, spiders, ducks, sharks, beetles, and so many more have developed this technique. Each animal plays dead in their own special way, so let’s explore some of the most common ones.

Opossums are the most well-known for playing dead. In fact, the term “playing possum” means playing dead, which directly comes from the opossum’s theater performances. The technical term is “tonic immobility.” Common predators of the opossum include dogs, foxes, or coyotes. Let’s consider an encounter between an opossum and a coyote. The opossum is in danger of being eaten, so they enter that state of tonic immobility! The opossum stays perfectly still for up to four hours and does not respond to the environment in any way. Their heart rate and breathing reduce, and they become unconscious and stiff. Even their body starts to release a nasty odor that copies the scent of a rotting corpse. The coyote can now be convinced that the opossum is actually dead. All predators know that rotting corpses don’t taste as good as fresh opossums, so the coyote has suddenly lost its appetite. The opossum wakes up again after the coyote goes away, and both animals go on with their lives.

The Eastern Hognose Snake is another animal that plays dead for its predators, which



Design by SALLY HUANG

include raccoons and, ironically, opossums. Maybe this species of snake learned a few tricks from the enemy! In their unmoving state, the snake’s belly faces up towards the sky and their tongue sticks out. Their body emits a nasty odor as well that drives predators away. The snake’s strategy seems to work well since other animals use it too. For example, black widow and wolf spiders also act like hognose snakes; they stay still and smell really bad to survive!

Finally, grasshoppers use their stiff body so that they don’t become the food of frogs. They stick out their long legs and stay still. If the frog doesn’t fall for the trick, the grasshopper is very difficult to chew, so a lot of frogs spit out the grasshopper. All of these animals are very creative to escape becoming someone else’s dinner!

Another group of animals takes the trickery even further and plays dead as the predator. The Yellow Jacket Cichlid, also cleverly known as the sleeper fish, lies down at the bottom of their habitat when their prey is around. They wait for smaller fish to approach, thinking that the coast is clear, and attack when they are nearby. Pselaphidae beetles have a similar approach, where they lie dead. They are carried by the ants towards the ant’s nest, where they suddenly spring alive and eat the ants.

So, when you encounter a threatening animal, should you also play dead? We usually resort to fight or flight since humans cannot undergo tonic immobility. You can’t become unconscious and change your breathing and heart rate. Still, freezing might be a decent strategy when encountering a bear. In front of black bears, experts say that the best strategy is to fight. Don’t fight the bear directly, but make yourself look bigger to intimidate the black bear. That usually scares them off. Brown bears, however, are much more dangerous. Here, the best strategy is to freeze and “play dead.” You won’t outrun the bear and you certainly can’t fight the bear due to the size difference. As for polar bears, none of the three options are that great. Luckily, we don’t have to escape polar bears very often!

Animals have a vast variety of tricks up their sleeve. If you ever see an animal that looks perfectly still, just remember that they might be tricking you and its predators!

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Writing by KRISTINE ENEMUO • Editing by MAYA GOLDSTEIN & ANTONIO MELONI

Once Upon a Chessboard: The Story of a Royal Game



Chess has a rich and ancient history dating back to the 6th-century CE in northwest India. It was originally coined as **chaturanga** (chuh-thu-rung-uh), with the game pieces representing the four divisions of the Indian army at the time: foot soldiers, horsemen, elephants, and chariots, led by a noble king. But chaturanga was not just a game; it was a **secret weapon**, used by Indian princes to master the art of military strategy.

In the 7th century CE, chess traveled from India to the ancient land of Persia, known today as Iran. Here, the game transformed into “**chatrang**,” with exciting new rules and a brand-new piece—the **advisor**. When players launched a daring attack on their opponent’s king, they cried out “**Shah!**” (the Persian word for king). When the king was attacked and could not escape, players cried out “**Shah Mat!**” meaning “the king is helpless”—the ultimate victory cry that we now know as “**Checkmate!**”

After the Arab Muslims conquered **Persia**, the game spread like wildfire across the Arab world. It found its way to the far corners of East and Southeast **Asia** and across the vast lands of **Europe**, where chess truly began to take shape as we know it today.

In 15th-century Europe, the game underwent a great transformation. The pieces were renamed to reflect European medieval figures—**pawns, knights, bishops, and rooks**. The elephant piece, which became the **bishop**, was granted more power. The advisor was also elevated to the Queen—the **most powerful piece on the board**, possibly inspired by a rising number of queens coming to power at the time. These changes brought a new energy to the game, shortening matches that once lasted for hours or even days.

The late 19th century was marked by the rise of international chess competitions, with the first **World Chess Championship** being held in 1886. Yet, one of the greatest showdowns of all time occurred in the 20th century when a machine named **Deep Blue** defeated the reigning chess champion, a battle that would forever change the course of chess history.

Today, technology has made chess available to many people around the world. Anyone, even children, can learn to play chess at home. **And guess what else?** Technology helps chess experts get even better at the game. From its beginnings in ancient India to the digital screens in our homes, chess has been captivating hearts and minds for over 1500 years.



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FINE-TUNING THE GUITAR

Written by ALLIE FRYDRYCH | Edited by IVY LO & ALBERTINA LEE

Although the first appearance of a guitar-like instrument was over **5,000 years ago**, the modern design of the guitar has been fine-tuned within the past couple of centuries. Changes to its materials and shape have helped the guitar become a musical staple today!

The earliest instrument known to precede the guitar was called **the lute**. The lute strongly resembled the guitar with its plucked strings, which were often made from the intestines of cows or sheep. The first record of the lute appeared in 3500 to 3200 BC in Southern Mesopotamia, where a woman was pictured strumming its strings. Despite its similarities to the guitar, the lute lacked the curved waist of guitars seen today. Instead, it had a rounded, teardrop-shaped body. The lute passed through many different cultures and continued to evolve, with some versions even having up to **30 strings!** To play the instrument, a device called the **plectrum** was developed from materials such as string or bone—like a plastic guitar pick today. The lute slowly went out of style when new instruments, such as the **vihuela**, were developed with sleek, hourglass shapes.

The lute was effectively replaced around the 15th or 16th century when a new instrument arose in Spain: **the Baroque guitar**. The Baroque guitar was noted for its five **double-course strings**, meaning two strings were placed close together and played as one. Throughout the 17th century, the Baroque guitar became a beloved instrument used for both solo compositions and vocal accompaniment across Italy and France. By the end of the 18th century, **six single strings** became the norm like it is today.

One influential guitar maker was **Christian Frederick Martin**, who immigrated from Germany to the United States in 1833. Coming from a family of woodworkers, Martin was determined to improve the guitar’s design and make it more durable. One of these changes was the guitar’s **bracing**—wooden pieces added to the inside of the guitar, which ensured the stiffness of the guitar’s body and enriched the tone. Martin’s “**X-bracing**” technique—placing these pieces of wood in an “X” shape—helped support the guitar’s structure. This additional strength allowed for more changes to the guitar, such as the use of **steel strings**, which put more tension on the guitar’s body than the traditional animal-based strings. The steel strings also helped the guitar play sounds much louder. Today, Martin’s methods are still used by his brand, **C. F. Martin & Co.**, as well as by manufacturers all around the world.

Although the guitar has evolved through time, some basic features, such as the wooden body, are still in use today. Even **electric guitars** are still made from wood! The C. F. Martin & Co. guitar factory uses around 250,000 square feet of lumber each year for crafting its guitars. Here, 250 guitars are finished each day through a process of laser cutting, bracing, gluing, polishing, and, of course, stringing.

Perhaps, some extra appreciation for this unique, long-lasting instrument will be the inspiration you need to start strumming!

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Design by MELODY ZHANG

D E S I G N B Y
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HIGHLIGHTING PHILLY PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Design by NATALIE CHENG

Editing by
SOPHIA JARRAR
MAYA GOLDSTEIN
Writing by AYLIN ERGIN

In the heart of our city Philadelphia, there are magical places where kids can play and have fun! From towering slides to cozy picnic spots in nature, there are so many parks and playgrounds waiting to be explored that make our city unique.

West Philly's Clark Park is popular with children, families, dogs, and on Saturdays, you'll even see college students and older adults stopping by the Farmer's Market to pick up fresh groceries. The park was established in 1895 on land donated to the city by developer Clarence Clark, who wanted the park to be dedicated to children. Before its founding, in the 1860s, the area used to contain Satterlee Hospital, a 4,500-bed military hospital that treated those wounded at Gettysburg during the Civil War. Today, the area by Baltimore Street has walkable paths, tables, and benches for sitting, and hosts weekly Farmer's Markets. By Chester Avenue, you can find more open spaces, a playground for toddlers and one for bigger kids, a basketball court, and "the bowl", which is a dog park and also a great place to go sledding in the winter! The park also hosts seasonal events such as foam sword fighting and Shakespeare in the Park.

Franklin's Square in Center City is one of the five original open space parks planned out by William Penn in his 1862 map of Philadelphia. It was originally called North East Public Square, but was renamed to Franklin's Square in 1825 in honor of Benjamin Franklin, a founding father. The park features a carousel, Philly-themed mini golf stations, Franklin's fountain, and two playgrounds.

The park also hosts many events throughout the year, including The Electrical Spectacle Light Show in the winter and the Chinese Lantern Festival in the summer.

In Chestnut Hill, Jenks Playground was built by community volunteers over an 11 day period in 1997 and is named after its elementary school. The playground is unique because it contains a mostly wooden design instead of the typical plastics and metals used by most playgrounds. For playing, there are balance beams, swings, a sandbox, towers for climbing, and slides.

Pennypack Park in the Northeast is Philly's third largest park, spanning around 1,600 acres and was established in 1905. The park offers hiking and bike trails, playgrounds, and bridle paths for horseback riding. It's also home to many animals, including over 150 bird species, deer, bats, foxes, rabbits, turtles, frogs, and fish. In addition, the park contains several historical structures such as the King's Highway Bridge which was built in 1697 and is the oldest stone bridge still in use in the US today. Other historic sites include the Pennepack Baptist Church which was established in 1688 and the Verree House which was a raid site by British troops during the Revolutionary War. Hidden throughout the park are also remnants of abandoned railroads and early mills that can be fun to rediscover with friends or family!

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Rain, Rain, Stay and Play!

When the raindrops just won't seem to stop falling, it's time to embrace the magic of a rainy day! Bid farewell to boredom and explore some of these exciting activities perfect for transforming a gloomy afternoon into a fun adventure.

Design by YOONJAE KOH

Writing by AMALYA KNAPP
Editing by JOYCE LEE & MIA HAIL

1. Indoor Treasure Hunt

Turn your home into a treasure trove! Construct a series of clues leading from one room to another, with a hidden treasure waiting at the end. Let your friends work together to decode your puzzle and uncover your mystery. Bonus: Challenge your friends to solve your treasure hunt in thirty minutes or less!



2. Rainy Day Cooking Challenge

Head to the kitchen and become a master chef! Select a few random ingredients from your pantry and challenge your friends to a cooking competition. Whether it's concocting a crazy sandwich or inventing a creative dessert, let your taste buds be the judge of your culinary skills.



3. Art Mural

Discover your inner artist with a day of creative expression. Collect an assortment of paints, markers, stickers, paper, and any other art supplies you have at home. Pick a theme and team up with your friends to collaborate on a large mural. Transform your home into an art gallery and see how each of you expressed the same theme in your own unique ways!



4. Hallway Bowling

Roll, aim, and strike down makeshift bowling pins for an exciting indoor adventure! Assemble 10 upside-down plastic cups and use a softball to create a "bowling alley" in your hallway. Take turns rolling the ball to knock down the pins. Keep score and enjoy some friendly competition with your family!



5. Silent Disco Dance-Off

Transform your living room into a festive dance floor with a silent disco dance-off. Give each participant a pair of headphones and have the DJ play upbeat tunes. Let the dance battle commence as each dancer shows off their best dance moves without making any sound! For an added challenge: Have the audience try to guess the song that the DJ is playing based on the dancers' dance moves!



6. Origami Stars

Dive into the world of origami and make charming sparkling stars! Gather colorful square-shaped paper and create handfuls of origami stars using simple step-by-step instructions found online. Use the colorful stars to add a touch of magic to your home or string the stars together to make a mesmerizing garland. The possibilities for decoration are endless!

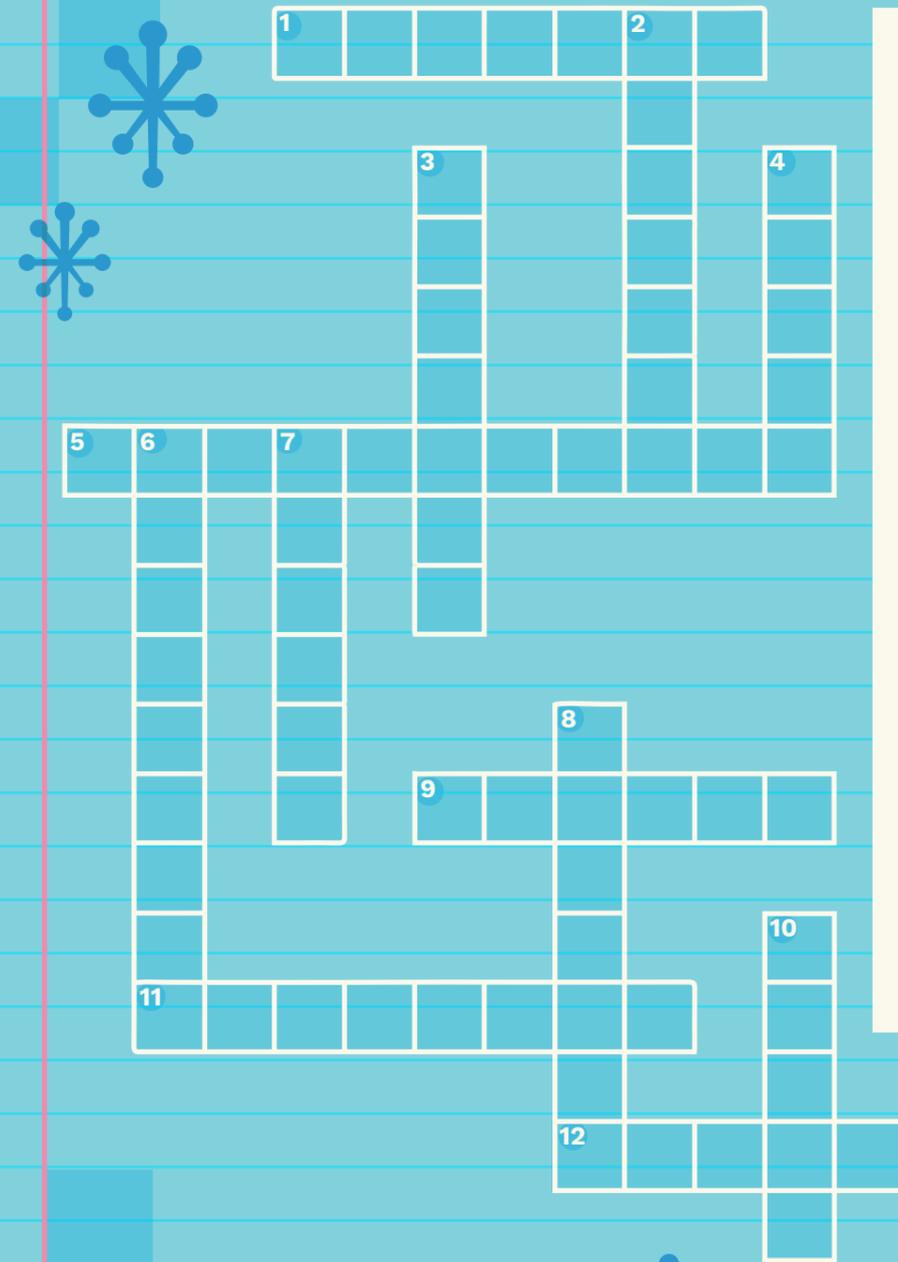


SUDOKU!

How to play: Sudoku is a fun brain game that tests your problem solving ability! To play, fill all the remaining squares with a number from 1-9. Numbers **must NOT** repeat in any row, column, or 3x3 **bolded** box.

		2	8		6	1	7	
	3	8		9		5		
6							8	
	7			5			3	
4	8					2		5
2	5		3		8	6		7
	6		5					1
		7			1			
3	1		6		7			9

CROSSWORD!



ACROSS

- Japanese paper craft
- Last name of the playwright who wrote "Romeo and Juliet"
- An acoustic instrument that usually has 6 strings
- The name of the school in Harry Potter
- Game where you would say the phrase "checkmate"

DOWN

- Board game involving marbles
- Animal that is most well known for "playing dead"
- Goopy substance that is fun to play with
- Children's sidewalk game
- Ka World's tallest roller coaster
- Energy of motion
- Puzzle game called: "Candy ___"

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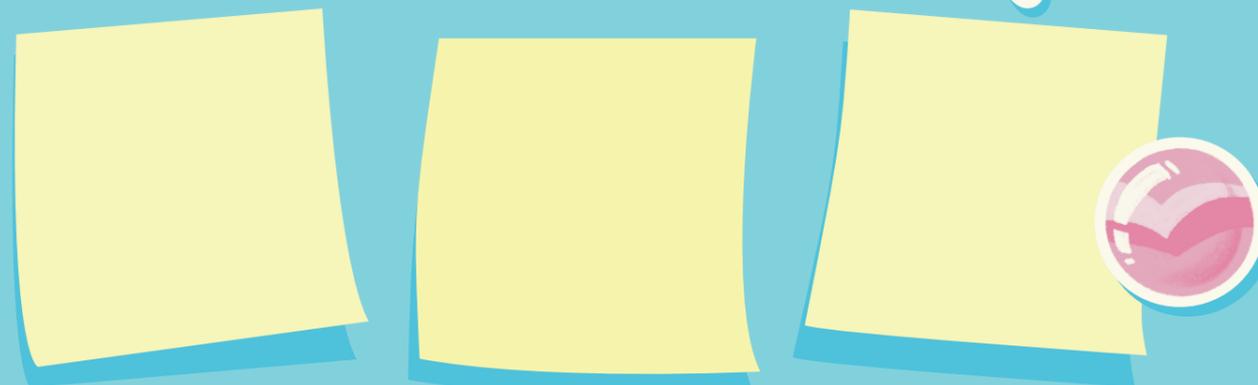

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and write the instructions for how to play
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