

Let's Play Games Done by American and Japanese Children

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For children, Games are the base of their lives. Games reflect the culture of the country and local area. And it shows not only history and tradition but today's society and the way of thinking.

We started making our teaching material to improve international understanding through children's games. In making the teaching material for international understanding, introducing children's' games is very effective because games are very basic items for children and it's easy for them to accept the games naturally. And each game has historical, social, and cultural background. Especially we focused on the games played in US and Japan.

Making the teaching material, we tried to include the idea that helps students understand American and Japanese culture. We hope this work will show the preferable ways for international understanding.

When teachers use our teaching material, please try following different usage for each student's age.

- In lower grades in elementary school, please stress on the students' experiences of playing games.
- In middle grades in elementary school, please give students some experiences of different culture through American and Japanese traditional games.
- In higher grades in elementary school and junior high school, please use this teaching material as the material to let students understand different culture.(Especially in junior high school, you can use this material to teach historical, social, and cultural background.)

In this way, we give the suggestion to use our teaching material. We hope teachers who use this material will improve the usage. And we also hope American and Japanese children will find their own traditional culture through playing such traditional games.

My name is Ken Nagata. I'm in the eighth grade. My sister, Rika, is in the second grade.

Now we are in Greenville, North Carolina, USA We are staying in Mr. MacDonald's house. There are four families, Father, Mother, Tommy:eighth grade boy, and Katie:second grade girl.

1. In Boys and Girls Club

Now we have summer vacation. Tommy's parents went to work. My sister and I came to the neighbor "Boys and Girls Club" with Tommy and Katie.



Boys and Girls Club

(In the gym)

Tommy: This is the place that children gather during the summer vacation and after school. We can play and study here. The age of the children is various; from kindergarten kids to high school students.

Ken: Yes. You have very many children here.

Tommy: The maximum number of children is about 1,600.

Ken: That's great! And this is my first time to see so many types of children who have different colors of skin and hair.



Children playing with jump rope

Tommy: Do Japanese people have the same color of skin and hair? I have many friends who have different colors of skin and hair.

Ken: I see. Oh, they are playing with "nawatobi". They are using 2 ropes. They play very well.

Tommy: It's called "jump rope". We can use 2 ropes. Everyone can do it. Why don't you play with "Mancara" in the next room?

Ken: "Mancara"? I've never heard this name. Please tell me how to play with it?
Mancara

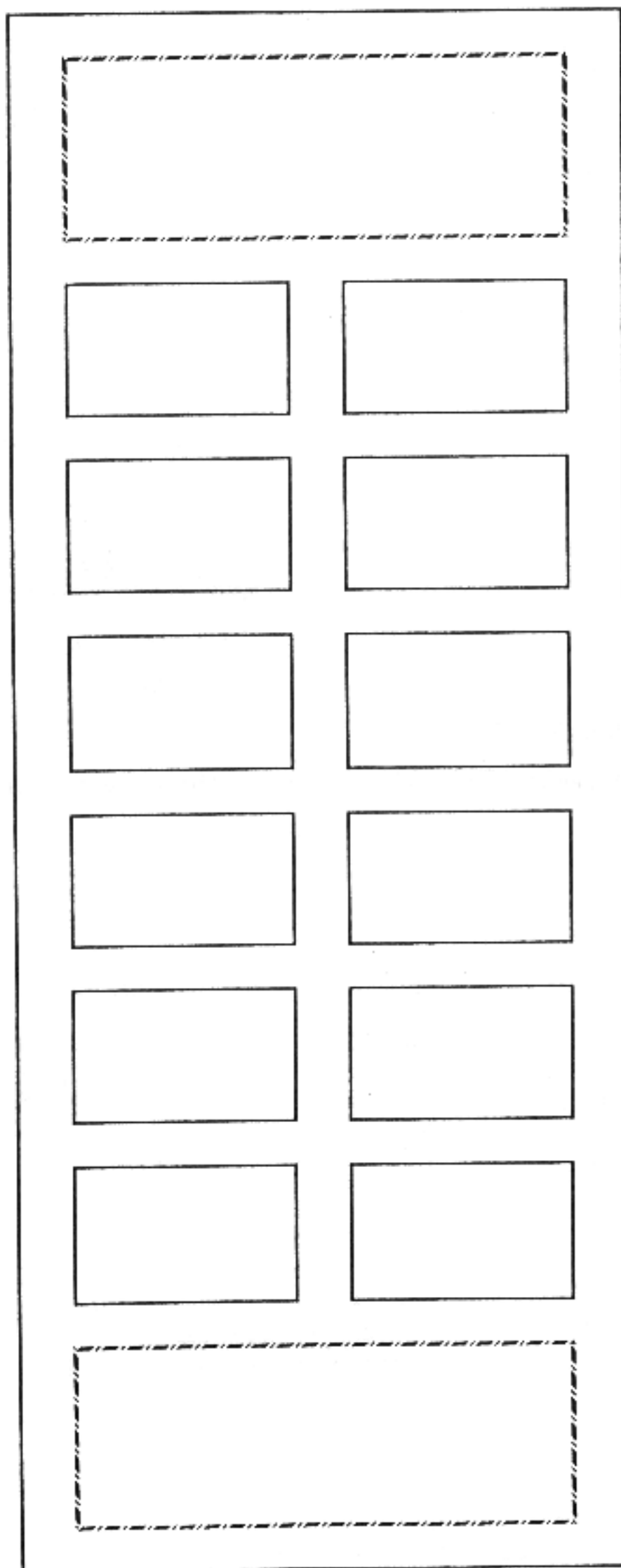


Children playing with

©Let's play!

Let's play with Mancara. Here is the board for Mancara.

Ken's
position



← Tommy's
Karaha

Tommy's
position

Ken's →
Karaha

(In the playroom)

Rika: I've seen that play in Japan.

Katie: We sing songs with clapping hands.

2 persons or 4 persons play this game.

What song do Japanese children sing?

Rika: "88 nights". It is sung when people gather tea leaves. In the beginning of the song, we say "Sessee sessee se".

Katie: This is similar with American ones.

Rika: The girls are playing with "Ayatori".

Katie: Cat's cradle? You have cat's cradle in Japan.

This is "cup and saucer"

Rika: I've never seen this one. Do you know this?

This is "ladder".

Katie: I know this. But we call it "St. Jacob's ladder".

Rika: I see. Next. This is "broom".

Katie: We call "witch's broom".

Rika: This is "river".

Katie: "Candle". This is "soldier's bed".

Rika: We call "tanbo", Japanese rice field. The shapes are the same, but the names are different. Why?



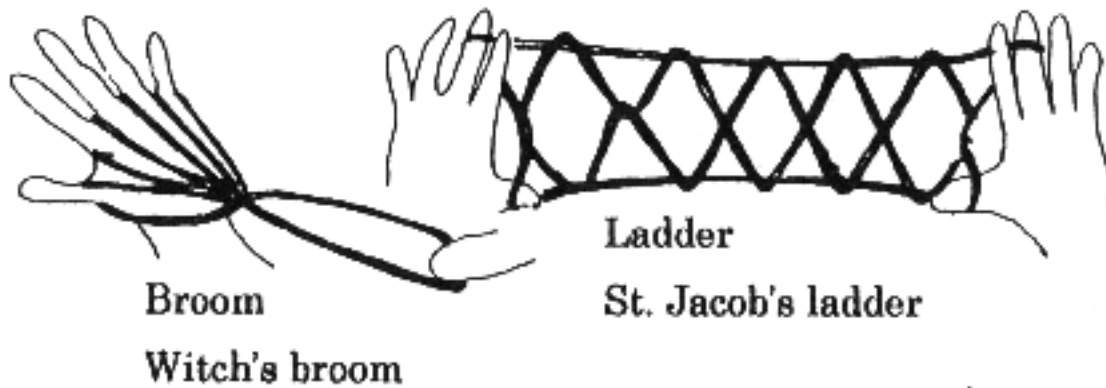
The girls singing and clapping hands.



Children playing "cat's cradle"

©Let's consider

Katie and Rika made these shapes. What do you imagine from them?

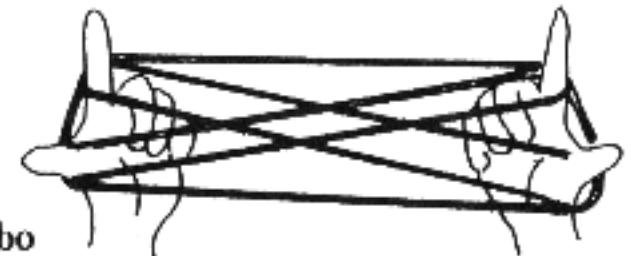


Broom

Witch's broom

Ladder

St. Jacob's ladder



Tanbo

Soldier's bed

River
Candle



©Let's play

Let's play American and Japanese cat's cradle. Look at SUPPLEMENT 1.

2. At the dinner in MacDonald's house

Rika and I told Tommy's parents about the experience in boys and girls club.

Father: What did you play in boys and girls club?

Rika: We played clapping hands game and cat's cradle. They were very similar with Japanese ones. I could join soon.

Katie: When we played cat's and cradle, we found that the names were different between Japanese cat's cradle and American one.

Father: For example, "St. Jacob's ladder", "St. Jacob" is the person in Bible. "Witch's broom", It has been said that witch can fly with a broom. Though the shapes are same, we look them in different way of thinking.

Mother: How about you, Ken?

Ken: It was the first time for me to play with Mancara. You have many kinds of rules in Mancara. We played with jump rope, too. American children can play with 2 ropes. I was surprised.

Tommy: The games produced in America are very interesting.

Mother: Were Mancara and jump rope produced in America?

Tommy: I'm sorry, I'm not sure. Ken, shall we go to the library to examine the origin of these games?

3. In the library

We are examining about Mancara and jump rope in ECU library. Katie and my sister are playing with children near Katie's house.

Tommy: Ken, I found the book about Mancara. "Mancara" is Egyptian word. At first, Mancara was used for the ceremony in the court. It is one of the oldest games in the world. Mancara was spread from Egypt to all over Africa, and many rules were made. The rule I told you yesterday is the way in Ghana and Kenya. This rule is the most popular now.

Ken: Look. This is the book about jump rope. The origin isn't written, but it was played in Africa, too.

Tommy: I thought Mancara and jump rope were produced in America. But African American



people brought them to America.

Ken: Yes. The origin isn't in America. I think it's interesting to examine Japanese games.

4. In the living room

While Tommy and my brother go to the library, I played with Katie and her friends in the living room. Now I'm showing Japanese games.

Rika: Now I show you "origami". We can make many things from this square paper. This is a balloon. This is a ship, and this is pinwheel.

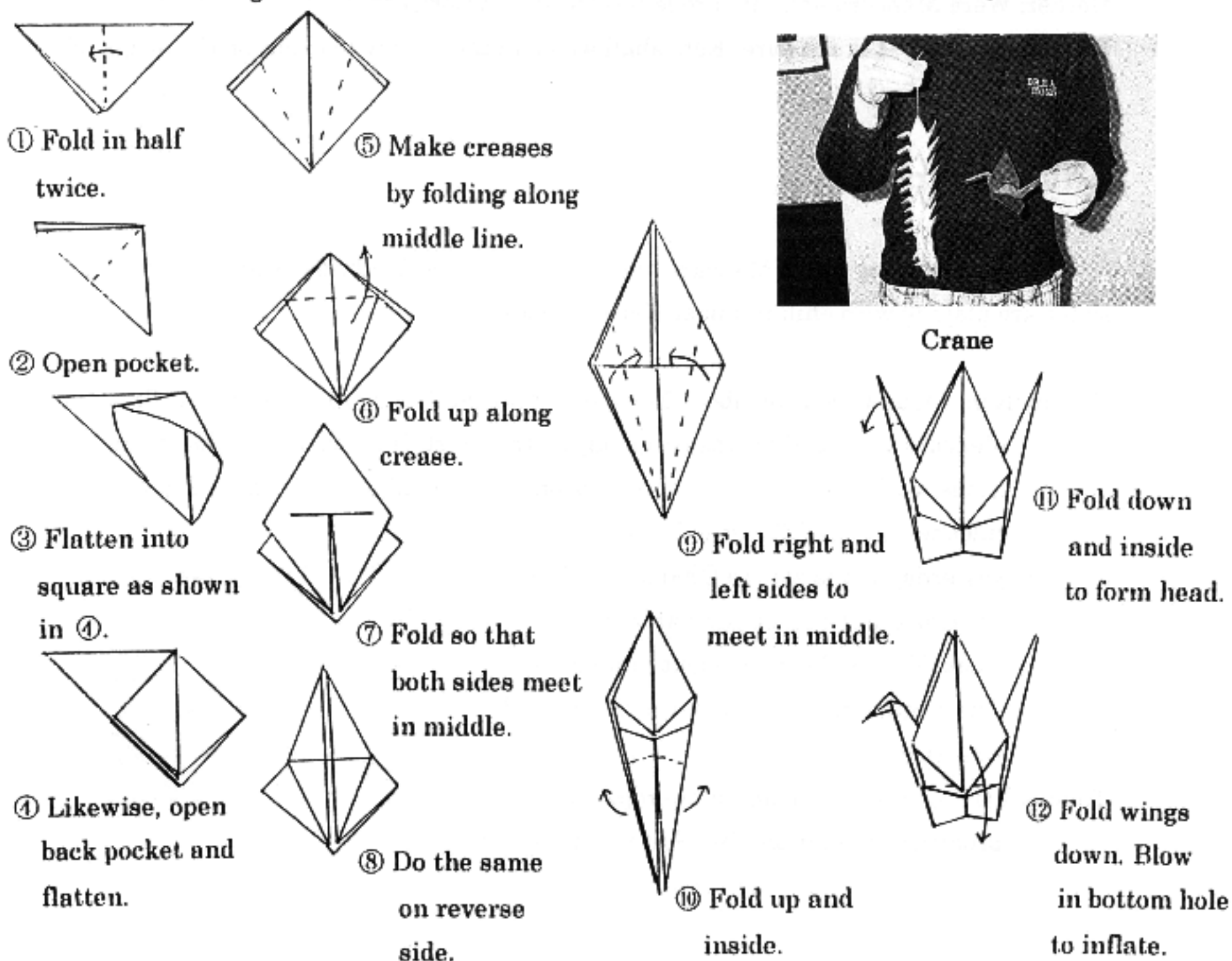
Katie: Wonderful! You can make many things from mere square paper. You don't use scissors and glue. This is a magic!

Rika: This is a crane. It is said in Japan that our dream comes true if we make 1,000 cranes.

Katie: That's great! Please tell us how to make cranes.

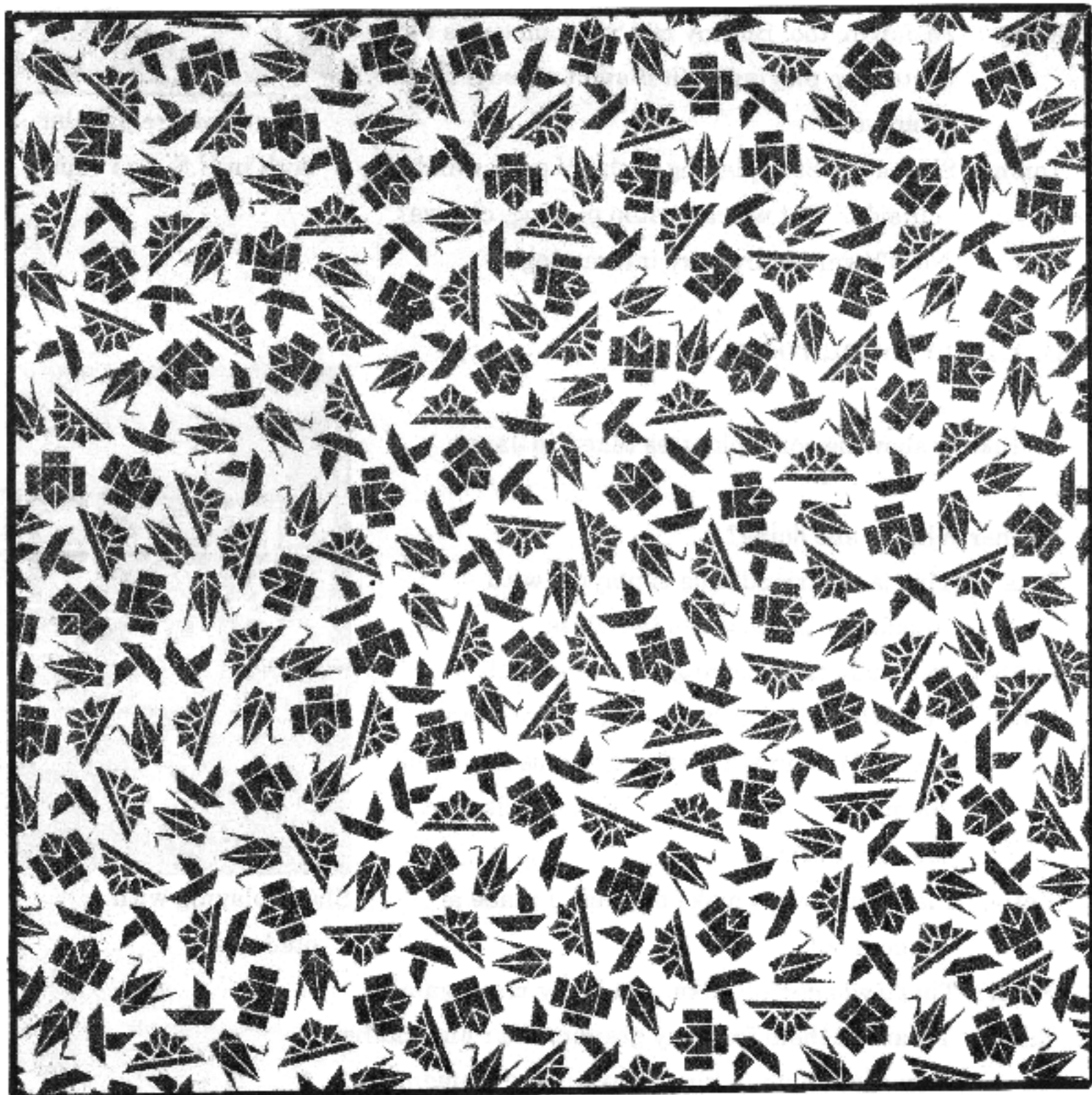


The child making origami



©Let's play

Let's fold a crane. Look at the manual on the previous page. Cut the paper for origami from this page. If you want to make other things, please look at SUPPLEMENT 1.



5. In Tommy's room

Tommy and I went back from the library.

Ken: The book on your desk is the book about TV games.

Tommy: Do you know such books? TV games are very popular among children.

Ken: In Japan, too. But my mother sometimes tells me to stop playing with it and to study. How about you?

Tommy: She says, "Stop playing with TV games and play outside." But we can't stop playing, can we?

Ken: No. TV games are very interesting.



TV games are popular both in U.S. and Japan.

6. In the living room

Rika is showing some pictures taken in Japan.

Mother: What is she doing?

Rika: This is my friend. She is playing with "otedama" in social studies class.

Mother: You study traditional games at school.

Rika: Yes. "Otedama" is balls which have bean inside. We throw them up by turns and catch them. We throw up more than 3 balls. But it's very difficult.

Katie: I learned how to make origami. I made a crane. Look.

Father: That's wonderful! Rika, you know many games.

Rika: I learned them from my grandmother and mother. I learned them in kindergarten and elementary school, too.



She is playing with "otedama".

©Let's consider!

Why do Japanese children study traditional games at school?

7. In Tommy's room

Before sleeping, Tommy and I are talking about American and Japanese children games.

Ken: Recently, in Japanese elementary school, lower graders are learning new subject. This subject integrates social studies and science. Children learn traditional games in this subject.

Tommy: We've never learned traditional games in class.

Ken: I think it is very important to inherit our tradition.

Tommy: Is it so important? I think it is more important to keep good relationship with people from other countries than to inherit each race's tradition. So looking for new types of games is more important and more interesting.

Ken: But through traditional games, you can learn different ways of thinking. And you can learn more about people from other countries.

Tommy: I see. I hear many people from other countries are living in Japan, too.

Ken: Yes. We see many foreign people. Learning traditional games and making new types of games with them is very important to make friends with them. But TV games are exciting, too.

Tommy: Playing both traditional games and TV games are exciting!

Ken: Yes. I agree.

◎Let's consider!

Please talk about the impression of this homestay in Ken's and Tommy's points of view.

Please consider about understanding people from other countries and about making friends with them.

References

Jennifer Prior "The Games of Africa" Harper Festival

Louise Orlando "THE MULTICULTURAL GAME BOOK" SCHOLASTIC
PROFESSIONAL BOOKS

Hiroshi Noguchi "Ayatori Asobi" Kinensya

Michie Yamauchi "Origami Club" Daisen Syoten

SUPPLEMENT 1

-For more study-

1. Mancara

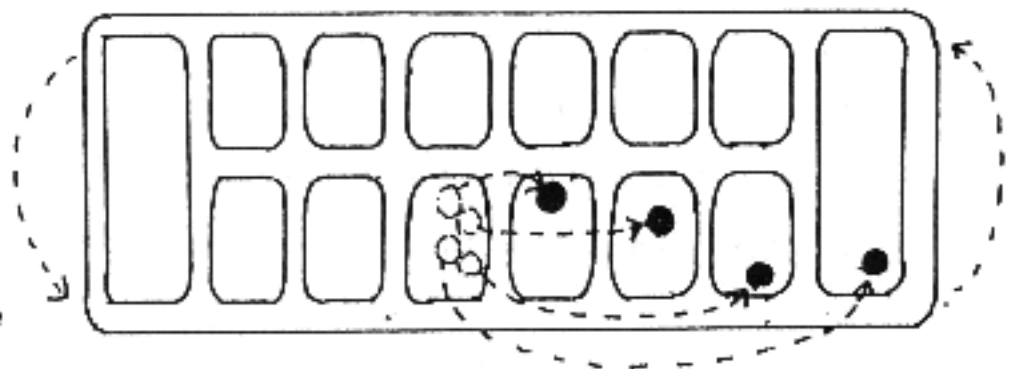
We have many rules in Mancara. We show the rule that Tommy and Ken played with.

- ① Bring 48 marbles.
- ② Face each other. Put 4 marbles in each small hole. Don't put marbles in Karaha(2 big holes).
- ③ The 6 small holes on your side and the big hole on your right side are your position.
- ④ Choose 1 hole in your position, and pick up all the marbles in the hole.
- ⑤ Put 1 marble in each hole.

Put the marble from the right side hole.

※Don't put your marble in your partner's Karaha.

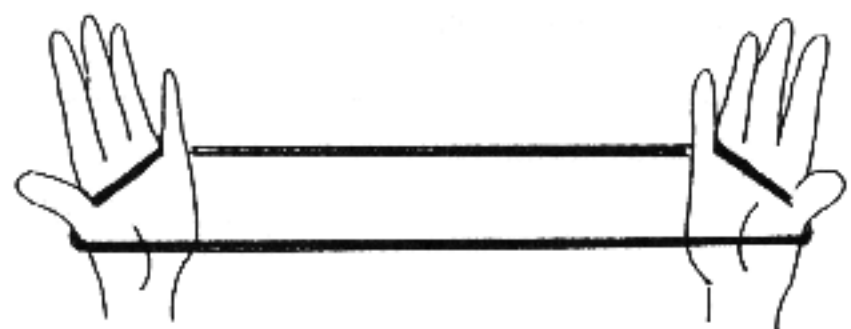
- ⑥ Gather as many marbles as possible in your position.



2. American and Japanese cat's cradle

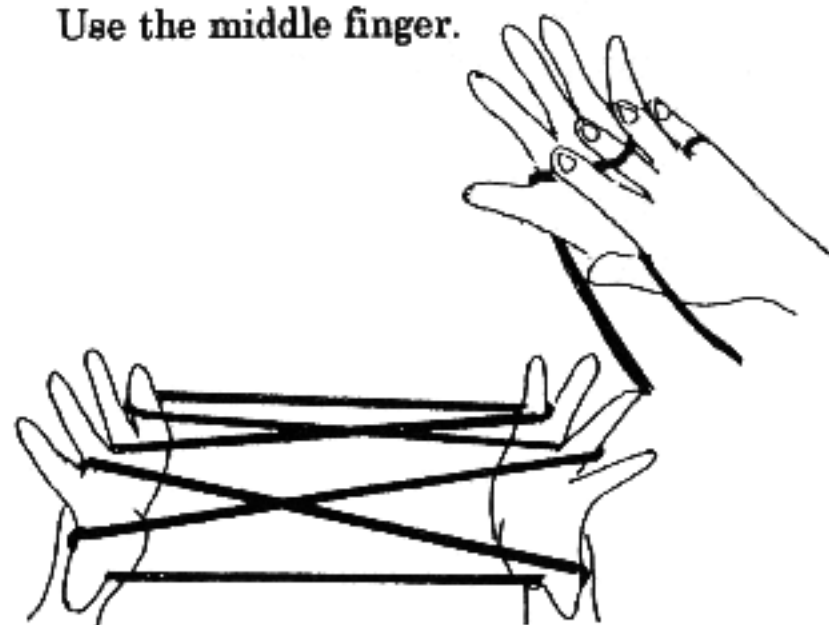
- ① Prepare string or knitting wool.
- ② Hang the string on your both hands. →
- ③ Make the basic shape.

In America and Japan, the shape is the same. But the fingers to use are different.



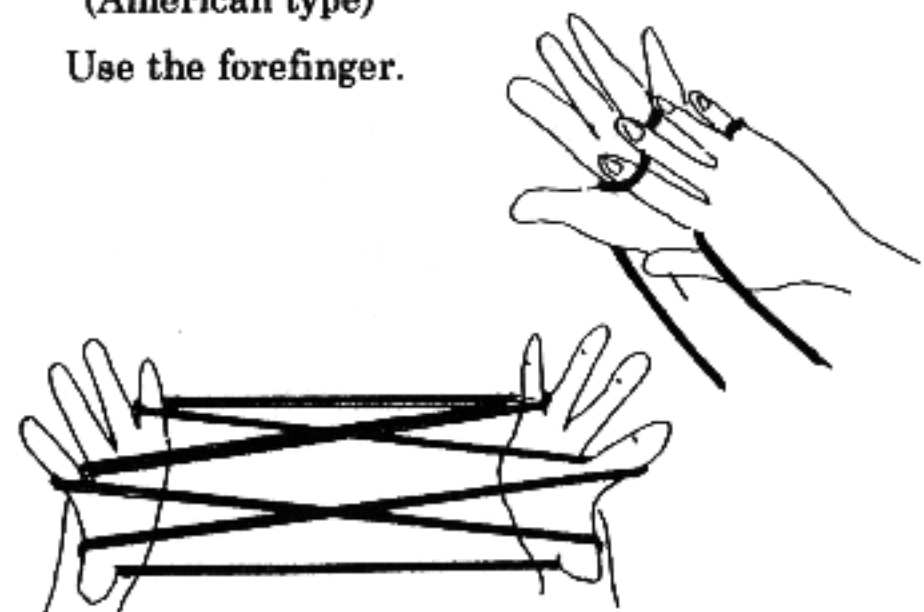
(Japanese type)

Use the middle finger.



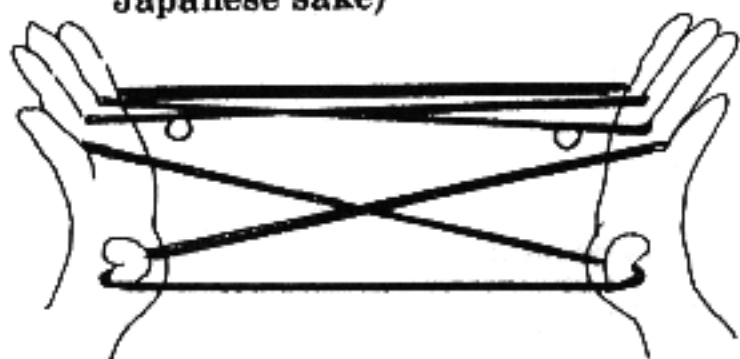
(American type)

Use the forefinger.

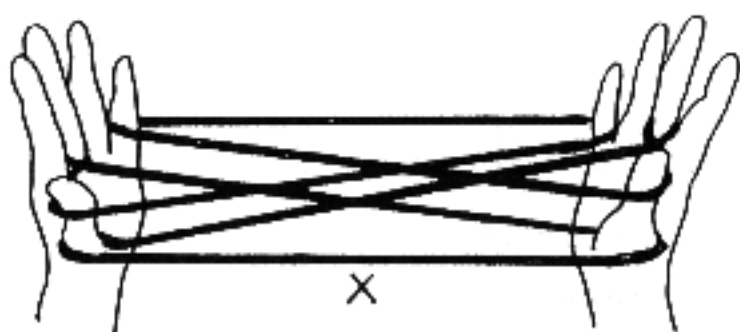


Japanese cat's cradle

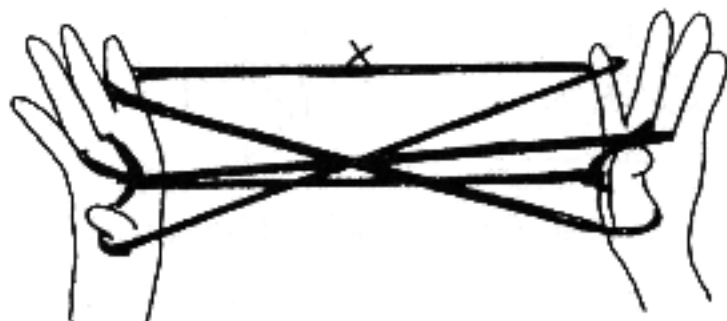
Sakazuki(a small cup to drink
Japanese sake)



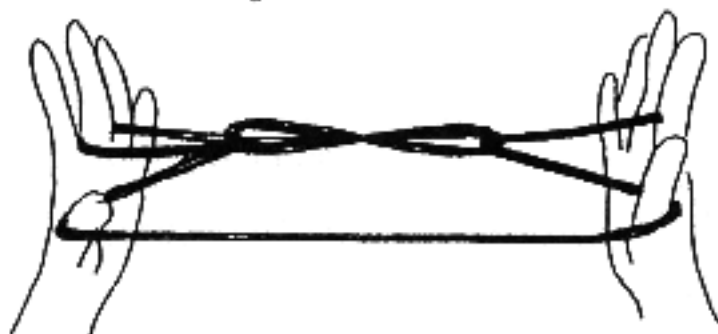
Take the ○ parts with your thumb.



Take off the × part from your thumb.



Take off the × part from your little finger.



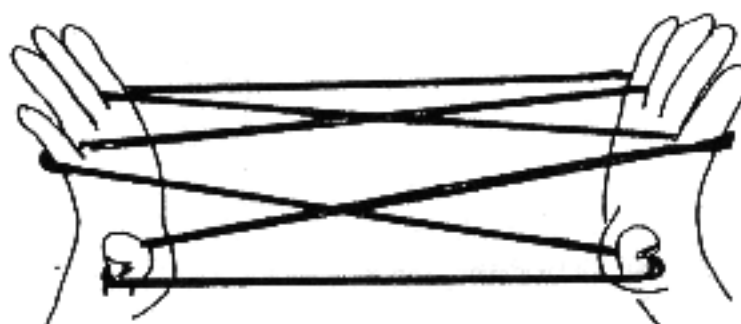
Turn your thumb inside out.



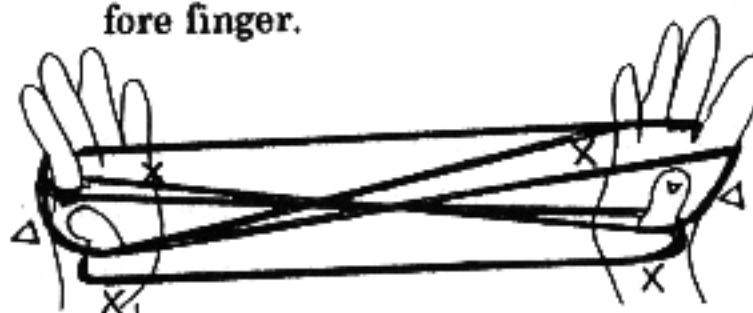
Finished!

American cat's cradle

Carrying lumber

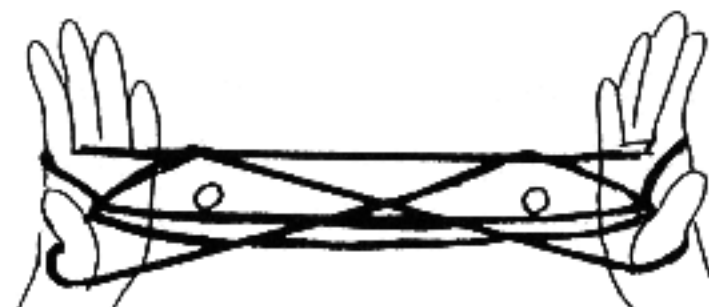


Move the string on your little finger to your thumb and fore finger.



Take off the × part from your thumb and fore finger. (Take off it out of the Δ part.)

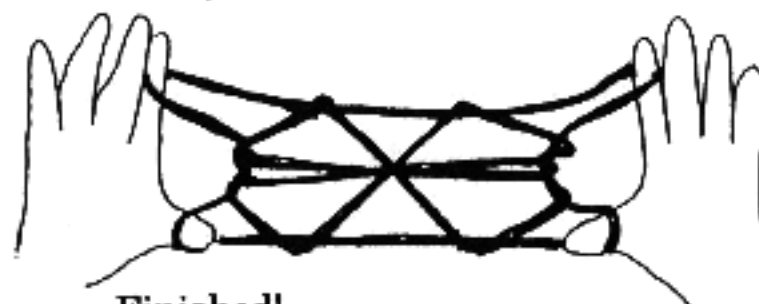
Drop the × part on your palm.



Hold the ○ part on your thumb.



Pull the ○ part to the ↓ direction with your thumb.



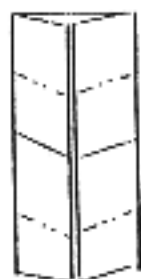
Finished!

3. Other Japanese origami

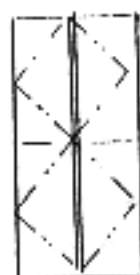


① Make creases.

Fold in half.

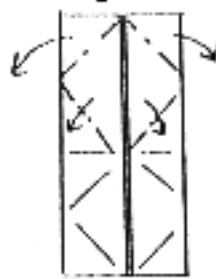


② Make creases again by folding to middle.



③ Make creases

to open.



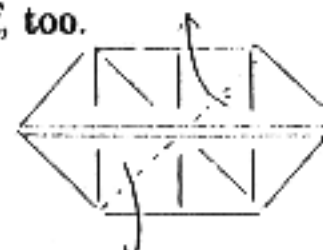
④ Open upper half to left and right, and flatten into ⑤.

《Pinwheel》

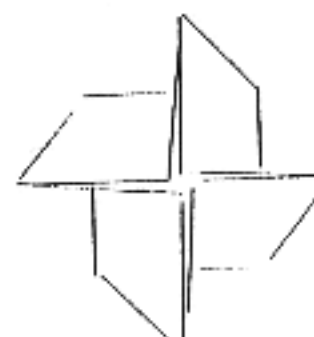


⑤ Do the same

for bottom half, too.

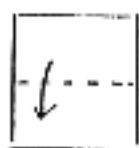


⑥ Fold diagonally according to arrows.



Finished

《Balloon》



① Fold in half.



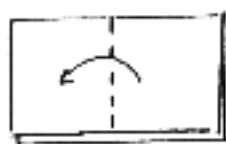
④ Repeat on reverse side.



⑦ Fold right and left flaps to meet in middle.



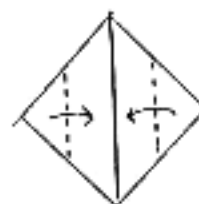
⑩ Fold both tips down once. Then fold them down again and insert them into pockets. Do the same on reverse side.



② Fold in half again.



⑤ Fold right and left flaps to meet in middle.



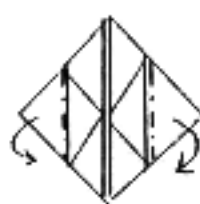
⑧ Fold in both tips to meet at center.



③ Open pocket and flatten into triangle.



⑥ Turn over.



⑨ Do the same on reverse side.

⑪ Blow into bottom to inflate.



Finished

