

Youth One Book,  
One Denver  
2020 Selection

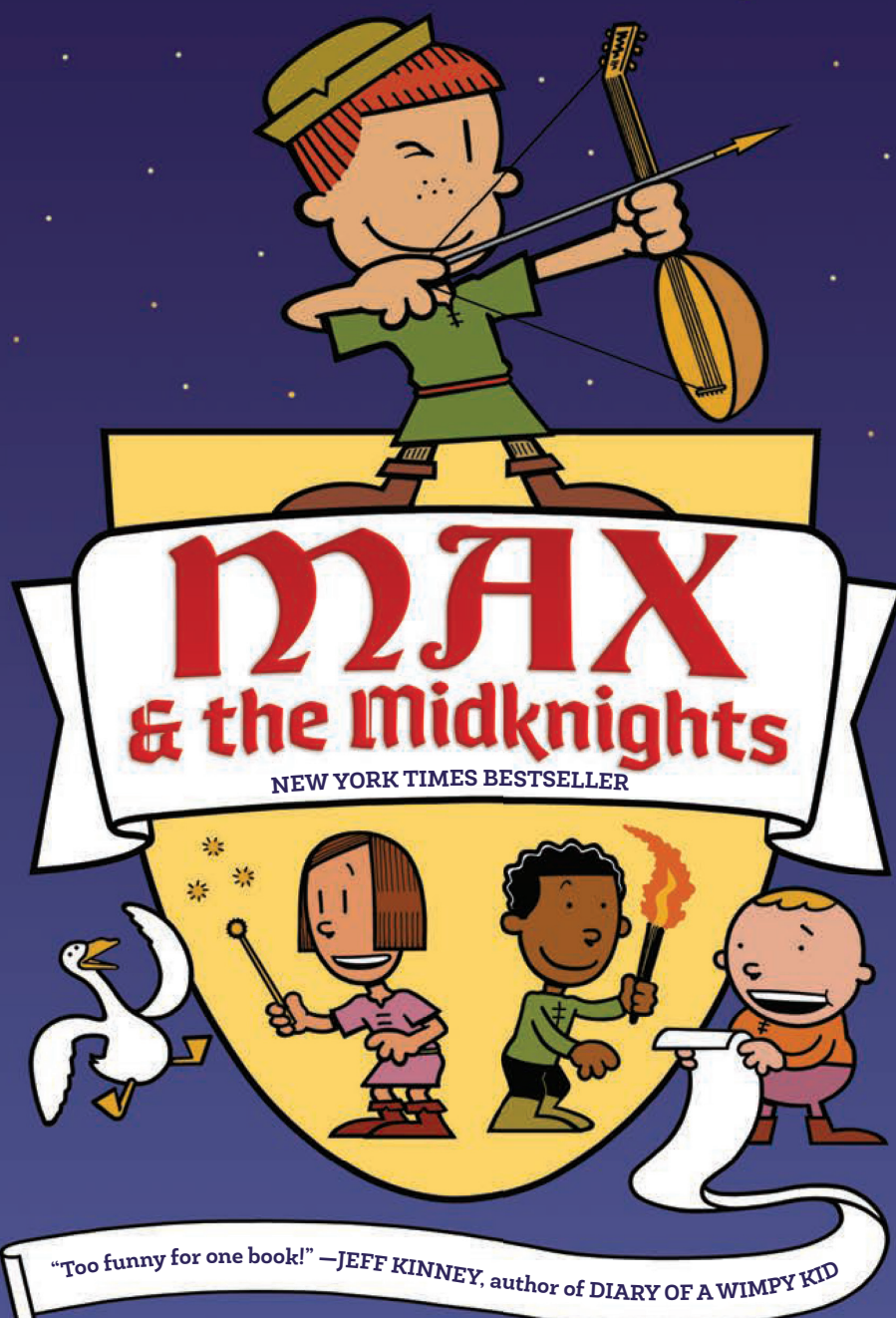


Denver Arts & Venues Presents:

# THE MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE GUIDE

"I loved it!" —DAV PILKEY, author of DOG MAN

Creator of **BIG NATE**  
**Lincoln Peirce**



**ABOUT THE BOOK** Max wants to be a knight! Too bad that dream is about as likely as finding a friendly dragon. But when Max's Uncle Budrick is kidnapped by the cruel King Gastley, Max has to act...and fast! Joined by a band of brave adventurers-the Midknights-Max sets out on a thrilling quest to save Uncle Budrick and restore the realm of Byjovia to its former high spirits!  
Source: PenguinRandomhouse.com

**Lincoln Peirce** is a *New York Times* bestselling author and cartoonist. His comic strip **Big Nate** appears in more than 400 newspapers worldwide and online at [gocomics.com/bignate](http://gocomics.com/bignate). In 2010, he began a series of illustrated novels based on the strip, introducing Nate, his classmates and teachers to a new generation of young readers. In the past seven years, 20 million **Big Nate** books have been sold. *The New York Times* bestselling **Max and the Midknights** originated as an unfinished spoof of sword and sorcery tales. Returning to the idea years later, Lincoln rewrote the story around Max, a ten-year-old apprentice troubadour who dreams of becoming a knight.

When he is not writing or drawing, Lincoln enjoys playing ice hockey, doing crossword puzzles, and hosting a weekly radio show devoted to vintage country music. He and his wife, Jessica, have two children and live in Portland, Maine. Source: Book jacket

### Five Fun Facts about Lincoln Peirce

- 1 Loves cheez doodles
- 2 Loves dogs
- 3 Loves the Red Sox
- 4 Loves the **Peanuts** comic strip
- 5 ABHORS egg salad

### A Brief Overview of the Middle Ages in Europe (5th - 15th Century)

The Middle Ages spanned a period of roughly one thousand years beginning with the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century and ending with the start of the Renaissance at the end of the 15th century. The term "Middle Ages" was first used by historians living during the beginning of the Renaissance. They used the term to lump all the years together between the Ancient World of Greece and Rome, a time period they admired, and their own day. Some historians of this era believed that people living during the early Middle Ages didn't care about learning or the arts, so they called these years the Dark Ages ("dark" meaning uneducated). Eventually, historians came to realize this wasn't true so many stopped using this term.

The Middle Ages is divided into three periods: Early Middle Ages (476-1000), High Middle Ages (1000-1300), and Late Middle Ages (1300-1500). Most of our ideas about knights and castles come from the High Middle Ages. The story of **Max and the Midknights** takes place during the Late Middle Ages (approximately 1390).

**Welcome!** Now in its ninth year, the Youth One Book, One Denver reading program is a citywide, shared reading adventure just for kids. Pick up a copy of this year's book, *Max and the Midnighters* by Lincoln Peirce, and join in the fun!

## How to Use Your Adventure Guide

1. Complete activities in any order and at any time while reading the book.
2. Keep track of the activities you complete on the adventure tracker by coloring in an icon above each group of activities.
3. Throughout the summer, don't forget to check the Youth One Book, One Denver calendar at [ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD](http://ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD) for upcoming free events!

## Disclaimer

Reading, doing science experiments, cooking, visiting websites and exploring our city can be a wonderful adventure for you and your family! It's very important that you participate in these activities with a parent, guardian or other trusted adult. Not only is it safer, but activities are also more fun when you have someone to share them with!

## ACTIVITY TRACKER



### On the Trail with Sir Budrick

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The Strangest Silliest Song - p.9  
Cook Like It's the Middle Ages - p.28-29



### In Byjovia

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A Caring Community Starts with Me - p.26



### King Gastley's Castle

Pick Your Prophecy - p.7  
Break the Mold - p.10  
Barrel Roll - p.26



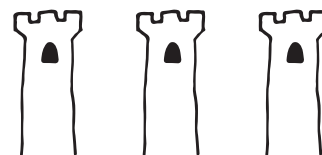
### Trail of the Dead

Build Your Own Trebuchet p.8-9  
Create a Coat of Arms - p.20-21  
Finding North - p.25



### Fendra's Cottage

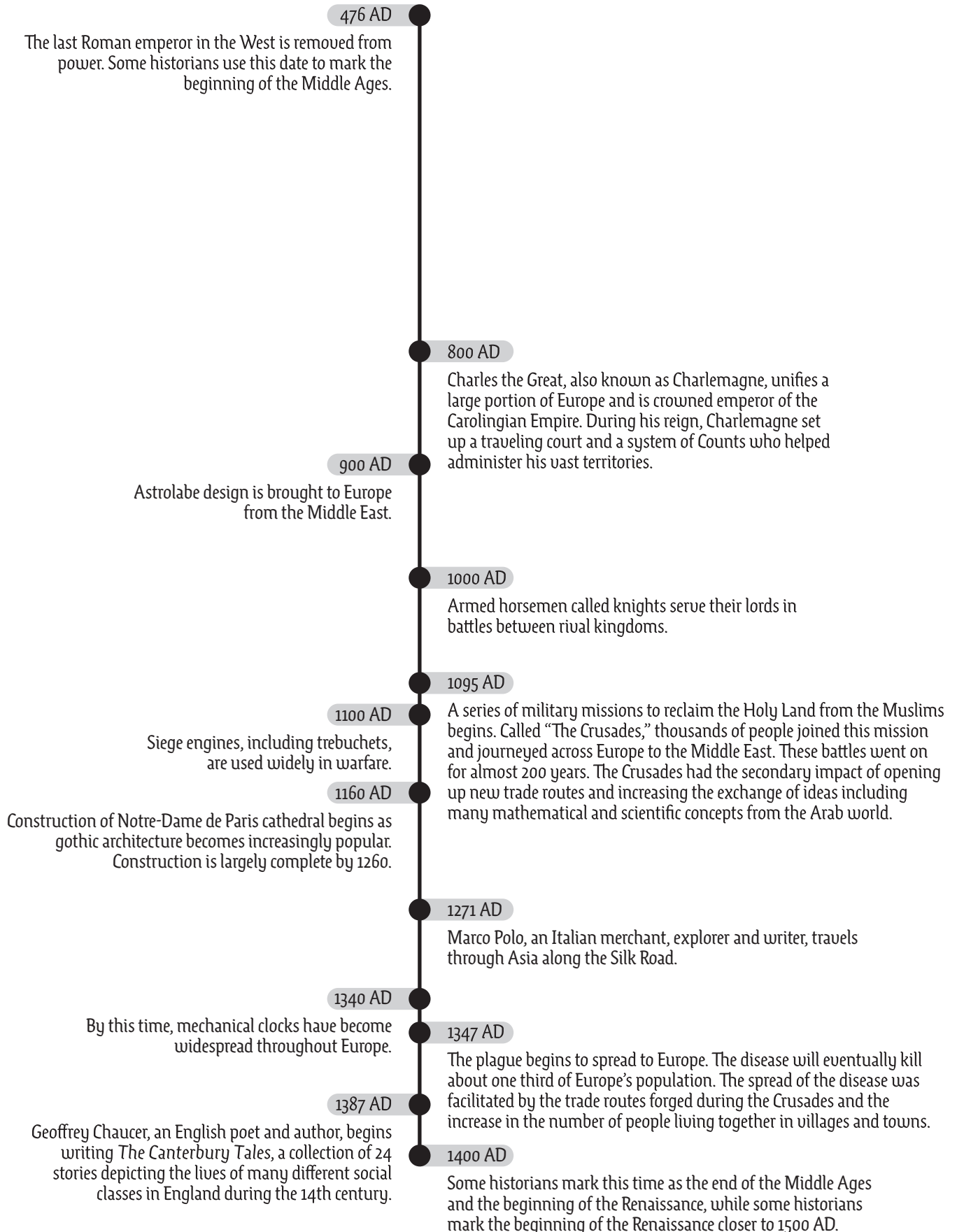
Good News/Bad News - p.7  
Your Words, Your Power - p.24  
My Own Pet Monster - p.25



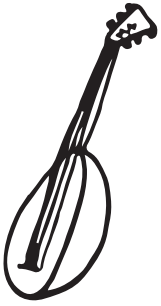
### The Marble Tower

Tell Your Tale - p.5  
Story Tapestry - p.10  
Navigate by Astrolabe - p.12-13

## Significant Events in Europe During the Middle Ages





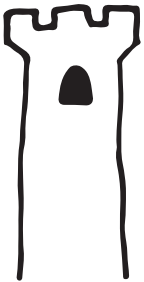


## Music Maker

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 rectangular tissue box
- 1 cardboard tube (wrapping paper or paper towel roll)
- Scissors
- 5 rubber bands
- Strong tape
- Markers
- Other decorations, if desired

Sir Budrick accompanies himself on a lute (p. 2). Make your own cardboard lute and discover your inner troubadour! To assemble the tissue box lute: lay the tissue box short-side up, place the cardboard tube in the center of the short side, and trace around the circle with a pencil. Next, cut out the circle, insert the tube into the hole and secure with strong tape. To finish, stretch five to ten rubber bands lengthwise around the tissue box and over the tissue box hole. To create different notes, use rubber bands of different widths. Customize your lute with markers or other embellishments, and then perform one of Uncle Budrick's songs or one of your own!



## Tell Your Tale

Gather 'round and hear a tale! Troubadours like Sir Budrick traveled from town to town telling tales and entertaining onlookers to earn a living. Telling a story is more than just reciting some words, it's about captivating your audience through effective public speaking and connecting to their emotions. Storytellers use rich details to help their listeners "see" the story in their minds. They use vocal pacing techniques like speaking slowly, speaking quickly and adding dramatic pauses to build suspense and highlight important parts of the story. Storytellers also choose an exciting opening line and a clear last line. Think about a moment in your life that really sticks out in your memory and maybe even caused you to change in some way. Jot down a few ideas before selecting the story you plan to perform. Next, write an attention-grabbing opening line, a few key details and a strong closing line. Practice telling your story a few times before recording it using a smartphone or performing it for an audience. Hear some great stories at [ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD](https://ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD).

### ASK A GROWN-UP:

What kind of music did you like at my age? What were a few of your favorite songs?  
What's one musical memory you can share with me?



# Word Search

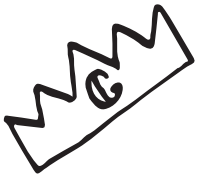
## INSTRUCTIONS:

Can you find these words hidden in the grid? Words may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and even backwards.

## WORDS:

Budrick, Byjovia, Max, Millie, Simon, Gastley, Conrad, Fendra, Kevyn, Nolan, Alice, Gadabout, Mumblin, Bruce, Dusty, Dragon, Cave, Lute, Troubadour, Magic, Castle, Tower, Forest, Wand, Ostler, Knight

M	D	W	M	C	K	P	D	A	C	G	O	H	W	V	T	H	P	T	R
X	X	A	M	V	I	C	G	A	C	Q	M	T	R	E	C	X	R	E	F
Z	I	A	U	M	H	G	I	O	P	I	L	U	A	I	Z	O	L	P	Z
R	W	Q	L	E	X	X	A	R	P	Q	F	O	M	A	U	T	Z	H	P
J	L	X	W	I	L	L	N	M	D	G	X	K	O	B	S	J	L	J	J
A	R	F	K	T	C	T	S	G	N	U	X	C	A	O	L	W	P	X	R
Z	E	H	A	R	I	E	S	E	U	G	B	D	S	Q	M	I	K	D	D
F	C	X	G	I	F	U	N	A	T	C	O	N	R	A	D	S	N	Z	T
O	U	T	Z	I	K	H	R	M	C	U	N	Y	V	E	K	Q	H	Y	M
A	R	U	P	B	O	E	A	C	R	M	L	X	A	I	V	O	J	Y	B
R	B	O	U	T	W	G	A	G	Y	M	W	K	A	C	P	P	B	C	N
T	G	B	F	O	R	O	B	T	H	X	V	M	E	L	R	B	I	A	L
D	N	A	T	C	J	P	S	S	C	L	M	I	O	M	O	H	L	L	C
A	N	D	M	A	O	U	Z	E	T	G	Q	L	H	L	P	O	X	T	G
A	U	A	S	V	D	V	H	R	V	U	G	L	P	A	N	G	J	V	J
D	B	G	W	E	P	X	K	O	C	D	W	I	K	D	R	A	G	O	N
X	I	U	R	T	P	V	O	F	V	A	R	E	O	P	V	D	F	N	C
N	J	C	Z	H	K	N	I	G	H	T	R	R	C	W	A	H	N	L	F
M	P	O	Y	N	G	A	S	T	L	E	Y	Y	C	I	B	M	A	E	H
J	H	N	O	M	I	S	X	W	U	Y	G	R	R	V	T	Y	H	R	F



## Pick Your Prophecy

According to Mumblin the Magician, the *Byjovian Book of Prophecies* is said to “have accurately foretold every major event in the history of the kingdom” (p. 125). A prophecy is a statement that something will happen in the future. What if you could see the future? Find a quiet space where you can think deeply about your goals for the next five years. If you could write your own prophecy about your future, what would you want it to say about the next five years? What do you hope the next school year will hold? What important friendships will you have in your life? What adventures will you have? What do you predict in terms of sports and hobbies? Write out your prophecy and share it with your family before sealing it in an envelope. Write a date five years in the future on the outside of the envelope. Keep it in a safe place to open later and see how much of your prophecy came true!

## The Truth About King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table

The tale of King Arthur with his shiny armor, magical sword, knights seated at a round table and grand life in a castle called Camelot, is just that, a tale. Historians aren’t even sure if King Arthur was a real person. If he was, it’s most likely he would have lived during the 6th century at a time when castles and knights didn’t yet exist. So what explains the Arthurian tales? They’re probably based on legends of a heroic figure, but then embellished by medieval storytellers in the 12th century to include castles, knights, magic and mystery.



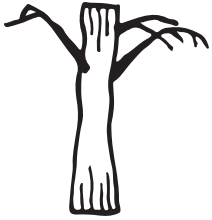
## Good News/Bad News

Shortly after leaving Fendra’s cottage, Max and the Midknights find themselves surrounded by giant rats, which quickly scatter when something else approaches. This prompts Kevyn to comment “I believe that’s what’s called a good news/bad news scenario” (p. 197). Have you ever experienced something that was “good news” in one way, but “bad news” in another? Invite a friend to play a game of “good news/bad news.” In this game, one person suggests a scenario that would seem like a good thing, like “your family decides to go to your favorite restaurant” and the other person responds with a scenario that connects to this idea, but presents a negative outcome, like “...but they stopped serving the lasagna you liked so much.” Take turns presenting the “good news” and responding with the “bad news.” Now reverse it! Think of a “bad news” scenario first and then try to think of how it might have a good outcome. How creative can you get?

### ASK A GROWN-UP:

When you were a kid, what job did you want to have as an adult? How did your ideas change over the years? What goals do you have for the years still to come?





## Build Your Own Trebuchet

During the Middle Ages, armies often surrounded, or besieged, an enemy's castle and waited for its defenders to run out of food, firewood and arrows. At the same time, soldiers tried to break through the castle walls using machines called siege engines. One such type of siege engine was the trebuchet (pronounced TREH-boo-shay). You can make a toy trebuchet using materials found at home!

**Safety Note:** Never aim projectiles at people or animals. A toy trebuchet might seem harmless, but even a small projectile can hurt someone.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

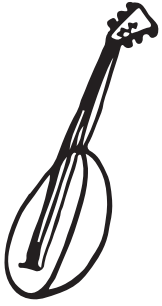
8 popsicle sticks (includes required sticks and a couple extras)  
1 pencil with eraser  
1 paperclip  
1 AA battery (or another object to serve as a counterweight)  
1 jumbo straw  
1 piece of cardboard (roughly 12" by 12")  
string, tape, rubber bands, scissors

Online Resources: See a video of a full-sized trebuchet in action at [ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD](http://ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD)

### WHAT TO DO:

- 1.** Make 2 side A-frame pieces: Use 2 full popsicle sticks and 1 half-piece of popsicle stick to form an "A." Cross the long sticks in such a way to create a "V" at the top of the "A" so there is a place for a pencil (the cross beam) to rest. Use strong tape to secure the sticks in place.
- 2.** Stand the 2 A-frame pieces parallel to each other and about 3 inches apart. Secure the A-frame structures to the cardboard with glue, tape and some extra popsicle stick pieces (if necessary) so they remain standing on their own.
- 3.** Build the trebuchet's arm: Attach a loop of string to a AA battery using rubber bands or tape. Hang the battery from 1 end of the popsicle stick and secure the string with tape, glue or rubber bands. Create a hook to hold the "sling" (the place where the projectile will go) by unbending one end of a paper clip so it is almost, but not quite, straight. Attach the flat part of the paper clip to the other end of the popsicle stick, with the straightened part pointing outward and up. Cut a 1-inch piece of jumbo straw and attach it to the popsicle stick arm using rubber bands. The straw piece should be perpendicular to the arm and much closer to the counterweight than to the hook.
- 4.** Assemble the trebuchet: Slide the pencil into the jumbo straw. Rest the pencil in the V-notches on top of the A-frame structure and secure with rubber bands to form the trebuchet's crossbar. Pull out the eraser from the pencil and attach it to a small loop of string. Hang the eraser from the paper clip hook as the projectile.
- 5.** Test the trebuchet: BE SURE THE AREA IS CLEAR of people, pets and breakable objects. Pull down on the eraser with your finger to raise the counterweight. Then, let go!
- 6.** Tinker with the trebuchet: What adjustments will launch your projectile the farthest?

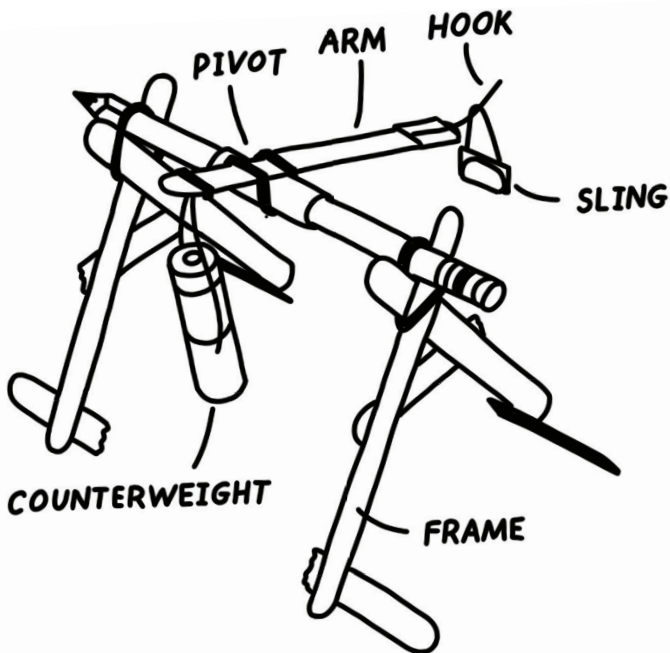




## The Strangest Silliest Song

"Me me me meeee!" How would you entertain a crowd if you were a troubadour like Uncle Budrick? Reimagine an existing song by changing up the lyrics to make it the strangest, silliest song you can imagine. Maybe you decide to take a preschool classic like "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and change the lyrics to "My Aunt Gertrude Had a Swamp" and describe all the weird creatures to be found there. Let your imagination run wild as you write down your silly song lyrics. Practice your new song and then gather your audience for a performance!

MODEL OF A TOY TREBUCHET YOU CAN BUILD AT HOME



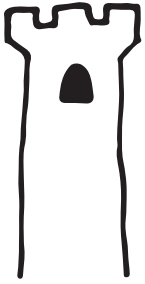
## Should I Call You "Sir"?

In the Middle Ages, many European societies had a system of titles to reflect a person's rank in society. In medieval England, a king or queen was addressed as "your Highness," a duke (a high-ranking nobleman), was called "your Grace," and other noblemen and noblewomen were addressed as "my Lord" or "my Lady." Knights were called "Sir." Peasants, servants and many workers didn't have titles, so they were called by their first names. Polite medieval children always called their parents "Sir" and "Madam."

### ASK A GROWN-UP:

When was a time you tried something and failed? What did you do to get through that time? What did you learn from that experience?





## Story Tapestry

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

1 piece of paper  
Sheets of felt  
Fabric scraps  
Yarn  
Scissors  
1 pencil  
Glue

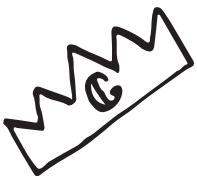
Castles were heated only by fireplaces, so to make the rooms feel warmer and more inviting, people hung woven and embroidered wall hangings. The most elaborate wall hangings were tapestries, which often showed detailed scenes from history, songs and legends. Think back through the book to find an important moment in the story to capture in your tapestry. Start by sketching out your design on paper. Next, use a piece of felt or fabric as the base layer and add additional pieces of felt, fabric and yarn to create the details. Stick everything together with glue and allow to dry before hanging your masterpiece on a wall. Feeling ambitious? Make a series of tapestries to capture other important moments from *Max and the Midnighters*!

## Learn to Speak Middle English!

We speak Modern English, but during the high Middle Ages (1000-1300), people in England spoke Middle English. Try out these Middle English words:

MIDDLE ENGLISH	MODERN ENGLISH
Fauntekyn	Small child
Jape	Joke or trick
Poke	Bag or sack
Bord	Dinner table
Wood	Crazy
Sey sooth	Tell the truth

Source: *Did Castles Have Bathrooms?* By Ann Kerns



## Break the Mold

There's only one YOU, so break the mold and be your awesome self! Max is shocked to find out that girls and boys in Byjovia learn different trades and that girls can't grow up to be knights (p. 83). Are there family traditions, cultural norms and unspoken "rules" that impact your options? If so, what are they? Do you feel your family has certain expectations of you? What are they? How do you feel about them? Do you adapt to these expectations? Or ignore them? Or challenge them? Write a letter to yourself detailing everything you know to be true about who you truly are and what goals are important to you. Keep this letter safe so you can reread it whenever outside ideas start to make life feel limiting or confusing. Becoming the fullest version of your unique self is the greatest mission of all!



## A Scribe's Script

Kevyn creates a scroll titled "The Tale of Byjovia" explaining Byjovia's recent history (pp. 38-40). Before the printing press was invented, it was the job of scribes to make copies of books by hand. These books were copied using specific handwriting styles and often included fancy initial letters filled with illustrations called "illuminated letters." Study the style of Kevyn's scroll and the medieval script shown below and then create your own mini book using the template on the center page of this guide.

### HOW TO FOLD YOUR MINI BOOK:

Check out the videos at [ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD](https://www.ArtsandVenues.com/YOBOD) for instructions, examples and ideas.



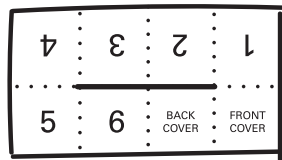
FOLD



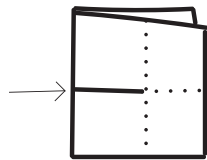
FOLD



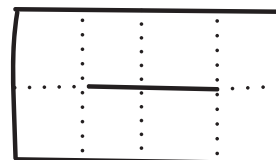
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LAYOUT



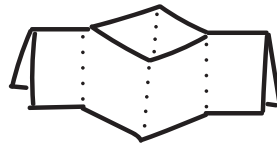
CUT AT THE ARROW...



...SO THERE'S A SLIT  
IN THE MIDDLE



FOLD



POP IT OUT



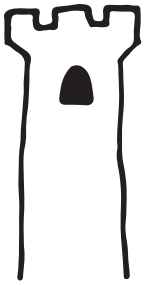
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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

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## Navigate by Astrolabe

By the 13th and 14th centuries, a navigation tool called an astrolabe (pronounced AS-tro-layb) was commonly used by mariners. With an astrolabe, they could use the night sky or the position of the sun to determine their latitude. When astronomers describe the position of a star in the sky, they measure its position relative to the horizon. An astrolabe measures how high above the horizon the star is in degrees. This information can in turn be used to determine latitude.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Astrolabe template from page 13 of this Activity Guide

1 plastic drinking straw

a 9-inch piece of string

a washer (or other weight that can be tied to a string)

clear tape

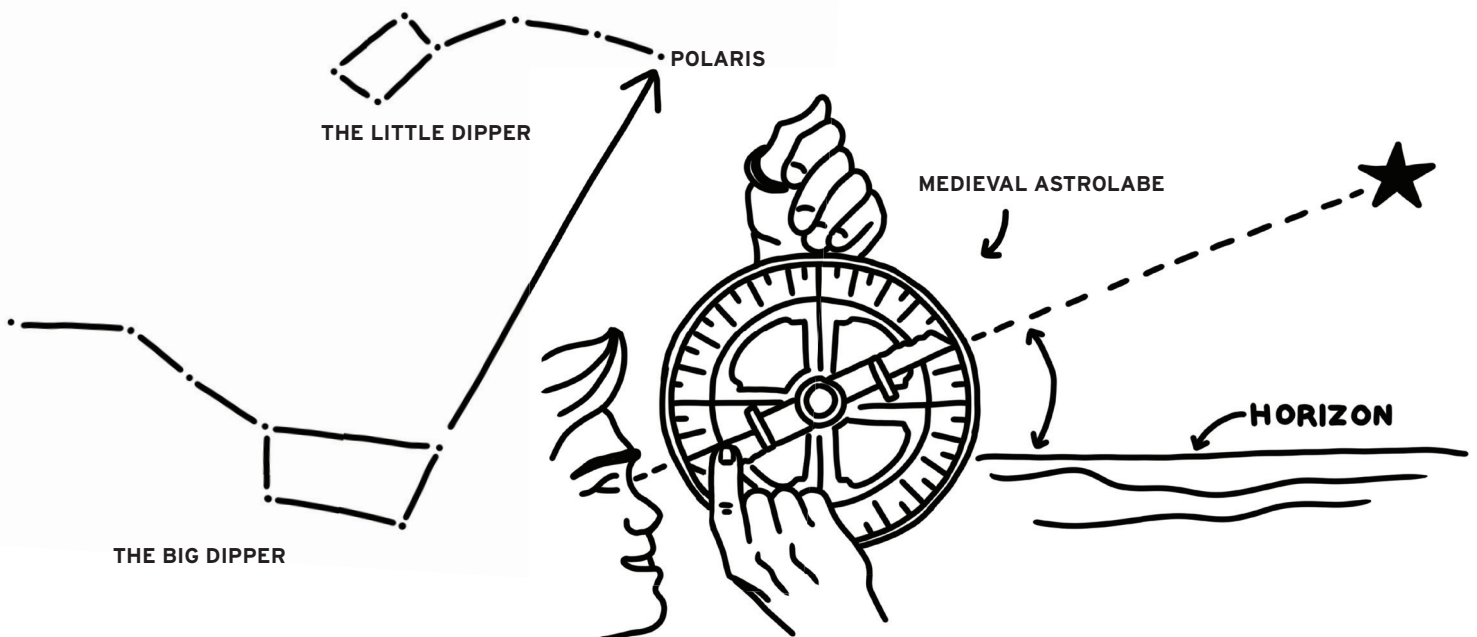
scissors

### TO MAKE AN ASTROLABE:

**1.** Carefully cut out the astrolabe template using scissors. Next, make a small notch at each of the lines marked along the curved edge of the astrolabe. Cut a drinking straw to the same length as the top edge of the astrolabe and attach it using tape. Poke a small hole where indicated on the template. Pass one end of the string through the hole and tape it to the back of the astrolabe. Attach a washer (or other weight) to the loose end of the string.

**2.** To determine your latitude: At night, sight the star Polaris through the straw on your astrolabe (make sure you have the astrolabe oriented so the straw is the top edge and the curved side is pointed towards your face). Have a friend or parent note the degree measurement marked by the string on the protractor using the set of numbers from 0-90 degrees. This measurement is called the “zenith angle.” Calculate your latitude using the formula below:

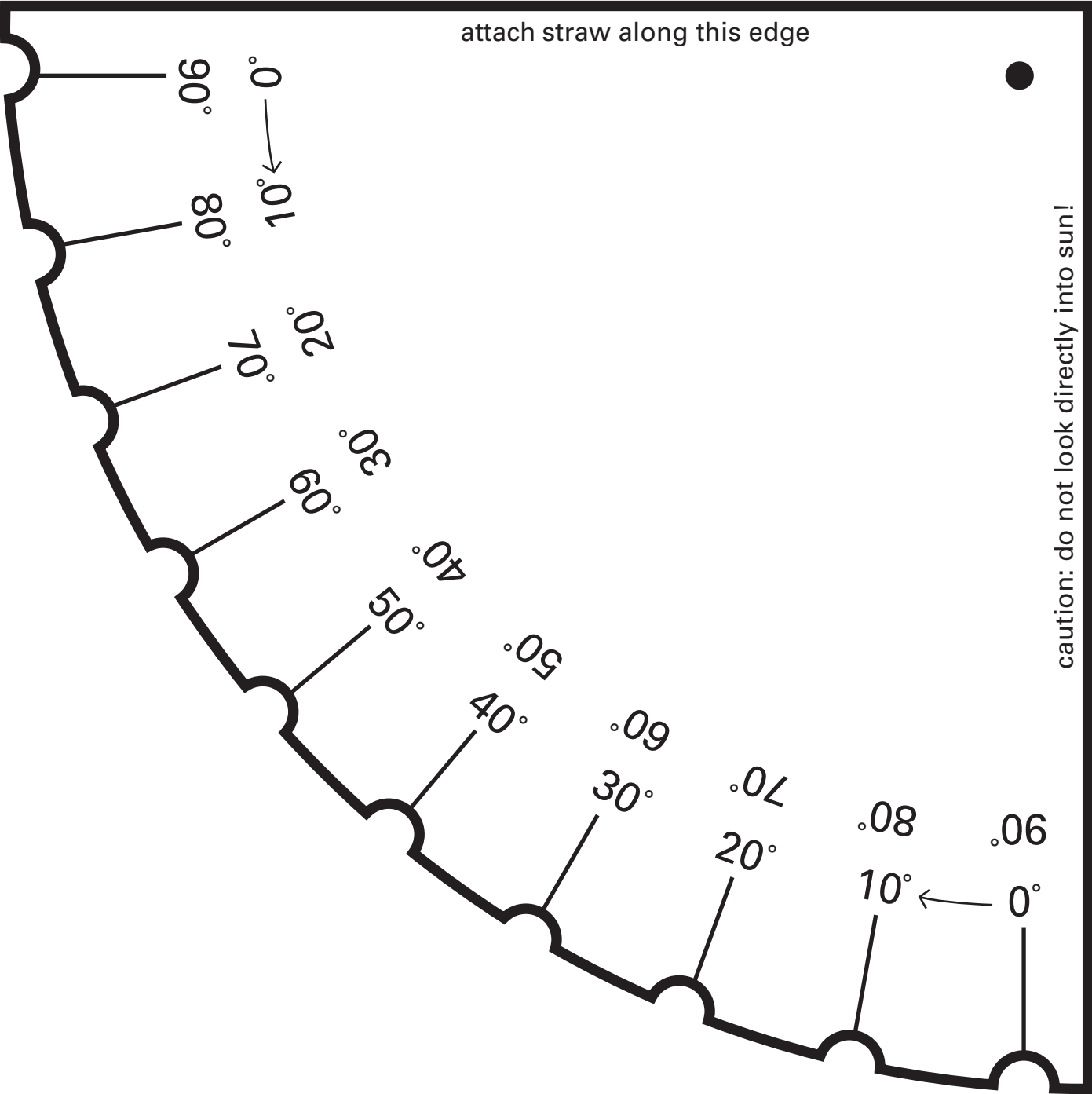
CALCULATE:  $90^\circ - \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$  (zenith angle) = My Latitude:  $\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$





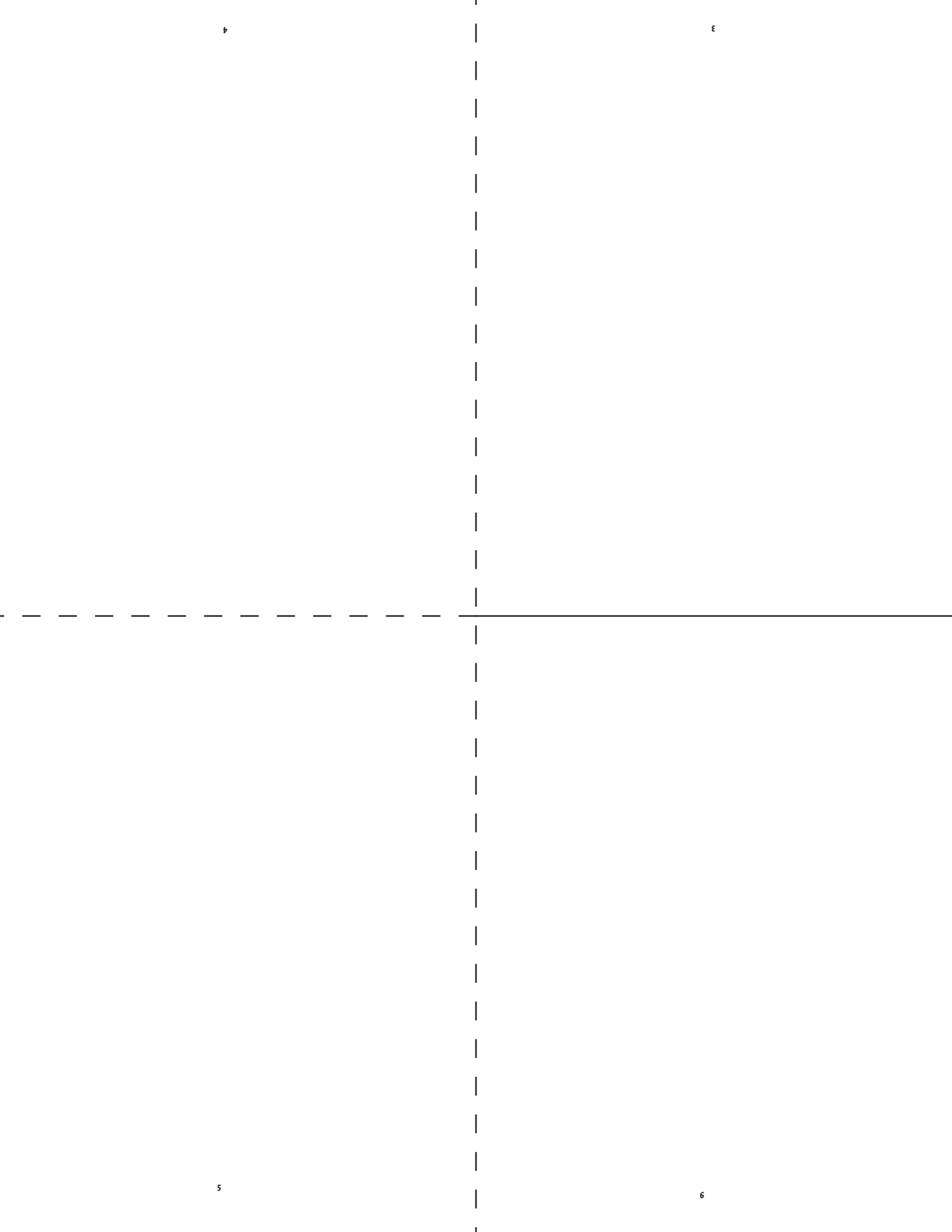
Carefully remove these center pages without tearing out the staples.  
Make sure to leave the rest of your Adventure Guide intact.

Astrolabe Template









4

3

5

6



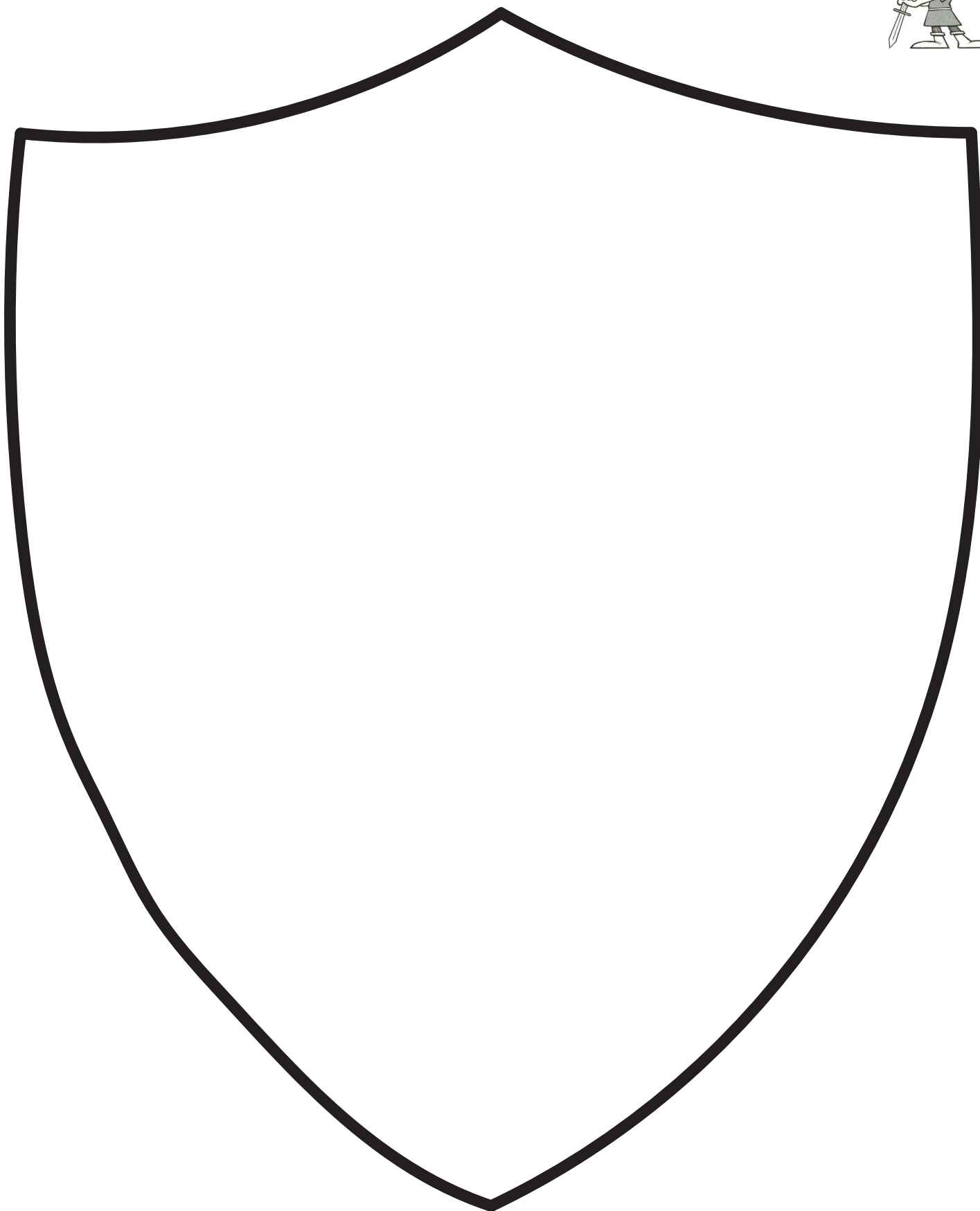






## Coat of Arms Template

Did you know? Knights used bright designs on their outer garments to help distinguish themselves from other fighters on the battlefield. Learn what different colors and symbols meant in Medieval times on page 21.







## Create a Coat of Arms

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Coat of Arms template from page 20 of this Activity Guide

pencil

markers

Knights used bright designs on their outer garments to help distinguish themselves from other fighters on the battlefield. These designs became known as "coats of arms." What story would you want your Coat of Arms to tell about you? Cut out the Coat of Arms template from the center pages of this guide. Look through the Coat of Arms Symbolism Chart and choose colors and symbols that reflect qualities that are important to you. Sketch out your design in pencil before adding color with markers. Display your coat of arms proudly!

### COAT OF ARMS SYMBOLISM CHARTS

#### The Meanings of Common Colors and Symbols

A knight's battle gear spoke to all of his achievements, so the coat of arms evolved into a status symbol that provided the story of the knight's family history, property and profession.

COLOR	MEANING
Gold	Generosity
Silver or white	Peace, sincerity
Red	Warrior, military strength
Blue	Truth, loyalty
Green	Hope, joy
Black	Sadness, grief
Purple	Justice, royalty
Orange	Ambition

#### Beasts and Birds

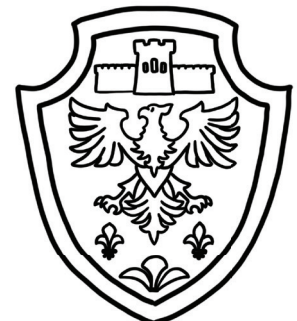
Animals were frequently used as a central element in coats of arms and traditionally shown in combat postures. Usually the animals chosen were fierce and ferocious, or they represented positive traits such as wisdom, resourcefulness and loyalty.

ANIMAL	MEANING
Bear	Strength, a fierce protector
Boar	Bravery
Dolphin	Swiftness, diligence, charity, love
Dove	Love, peace
Eagle	Noble protector, strength, bravery, alertness
Hawk or falcon	One who does not rest until they've achieved their objective
Horse	Readiness for all employments for king and country
Lamb	Gentleness, patience

#### Plants

Flowers usually represented hope and joy while fruit signified happiness and peace.

PLANT	MEANING
Apple	Generosity, peace
Berries	Generosity, peace
Grapes	Generosity, joy, peace
Oak Tree	Great age, strength
Olive Branch	Peace
Red Rose	Grace, beauty



Source: [genesreunited.co.uk](http://genesreunited.co.uk)



## Job Interview

Max and the other kids are all expected to pursue the same profession as their parents (pp. 82-83). Have you ever wondered what do adults do at work? What do they enjoy most about their work? What are some of the challenges? What have they learned from their job? Brainstorm a list of questions and then interview a parent or other adult. After the interview, write about whether you would like to pursue the same type of work as the adult you interviewed. What do you think your dream might be?

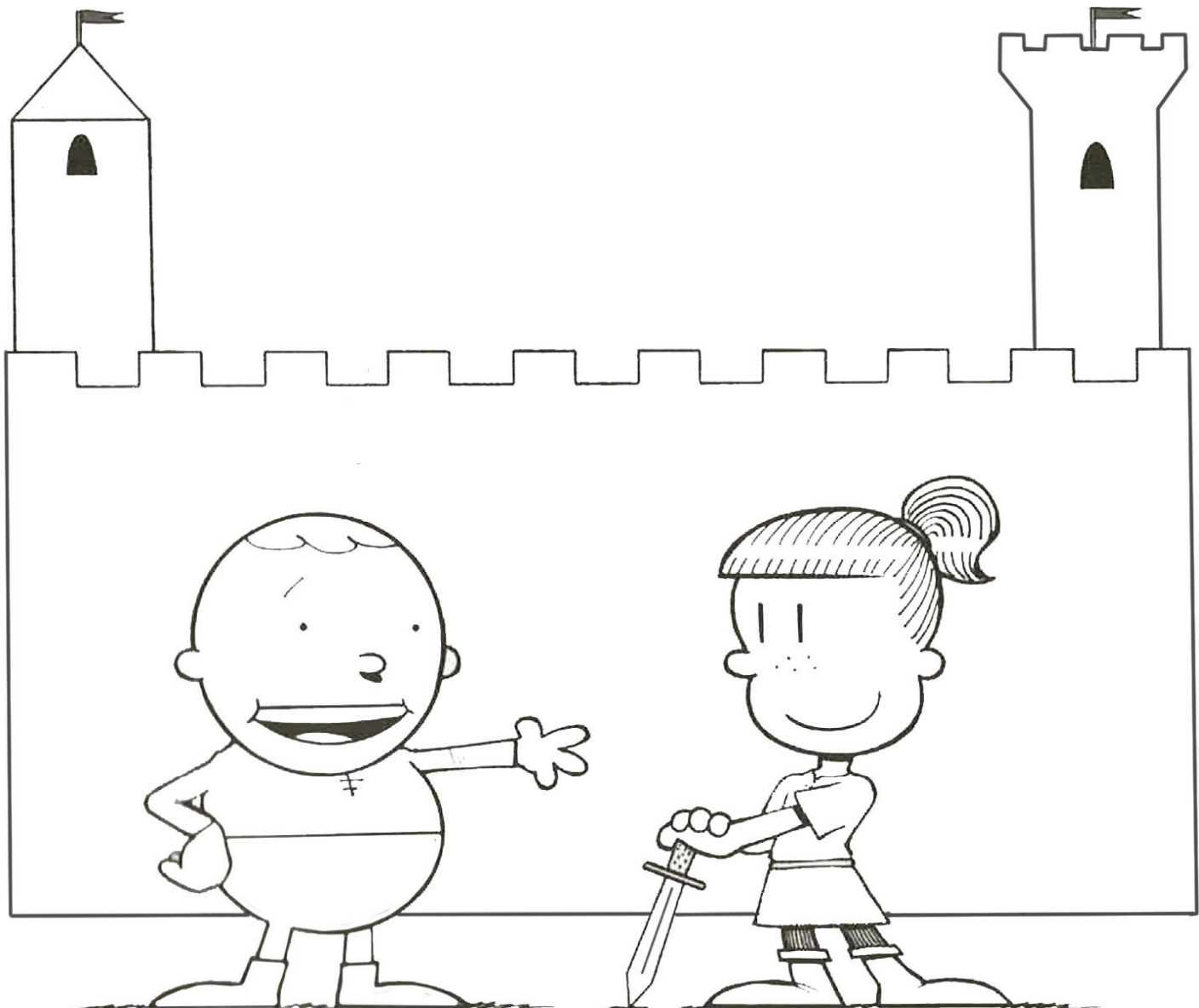
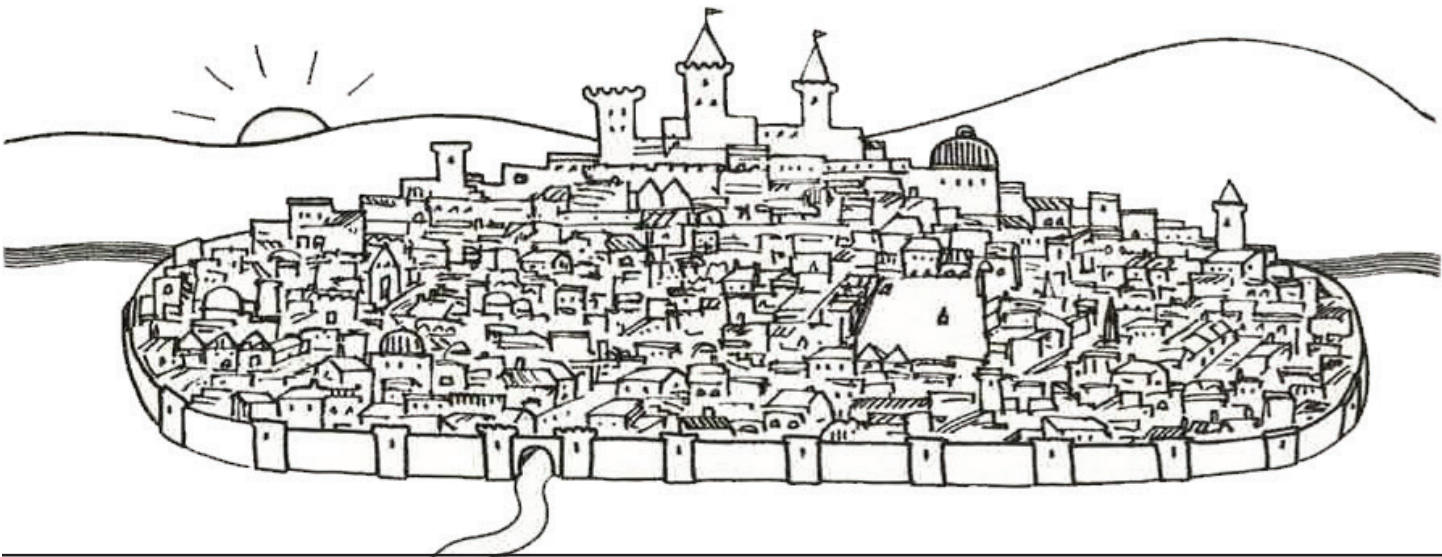
## Medieval Society

Life in the Middle Ages was governed by a strict social structure called feudalism. At the top of the hierarchy was the king who held all the power, owned all the land and governed all the people living in his kingdom. Kings granted land to noblemen in exchange for loyalty and a commitment to rally an army to fight on behalf of the king in times of war. Knights were men from high-ranking noble families that pledged to serve their lord in battle in exchange for land. Nobles could grant land to other nobles in a similar way to create "manors." Manors usually featured a castle or manor house where the noble family lived, a village where peasants lived, a church, a mill for grinding grain and an oven for baking bread. Peasants lived and worked on the manor where they rented houses and small strips of land from the lord. Peasants worked in the lord's fields to pay their rent. Farmers, laborers and peasants made up about 90% of the social pyramid and produced the majority of food that everyone ate during this time period.

## Make Your Own Comic Strip

Think about a funny thing that happened recently and turn it into a short comic!


Coloring Fun





## Your Words, Your Power

When Sir Gadabout is injured by Fendra's magic, Millie says, "If I were better at magic, maybe I could have cured him." Kevyn reminds Millie that she shouldn't think that way, as she's just a beginner. Instead he encourages her to remember that learning takes time, patience and practice (pp. 177-178). Words can be powerful. Especially the words we use when we talk to ourselves. Kevyn encourages Millie to have a "growth mindset," which is a way of thinking where people realize their efforts have an effect on their success, and they look for new strategies to try when one doesn't work. When people have a "fixed mindset," they believe there are limits to how much they can achieve. You can choose to look at the world in a way that makes you feel strong and joyful, or in a way that makes you feel frustrated and weak. Developing a growth mindset take practice. Take a look at these examples of fixed mindset statements and growth mindset statements. Do any of them look familiar? Challenge yourself to use more growth mindset statements every day. Choose to level up!

### FIXED MINDSET

I'm not good at this.  
I give up!  
I can't do this.  
I won't try because I might fail.  
This is too hard.  
  
This is too easy.  
I made a mistake. I'm a failure!  
My first plan didn't work.

### GROWTH MINDSET

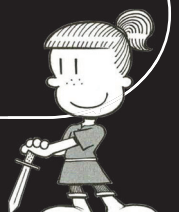
I'm not good at this YET, but I can get better.  
I can succeed if I keep trying.  
I need to find some new strategies and ask for help from others.  
If I fail, I can try again until I succeed!  
This will require more effort and time, but I can grow my brain by learning hard things.  
How can I make this more challenging so I can grow even more?  
Mistakes help me learn.  
It's good there are other plans to try!

## Growing Up to Be a Knight

A noble boy's journey to becoming a knight usually began around age seven or eight when he was sent off to live with another noble family where he served as a "page." As a page, he learned how to ride horses and care for them, fight with a sword and shoot a bow and arrow. Around age 12, he became a squire and began working for a knight by caring for the knight's horse and carrying the knight's weapons. In exchange, the knight trained the squire for combat. By age 20, a well-trained squire was ready to be dubbed a knight by another knight, a lord or his king.

### ASK A GROWN-UP:

If you could cast magic spells, what spells would you cast? Why? Do you think there are ways you could accomplish even a part of these goals without magic?





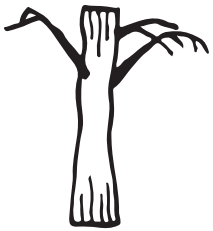


## My Own Pet Monster

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

An old sock  
scissors  
glue  
decorative embellishments

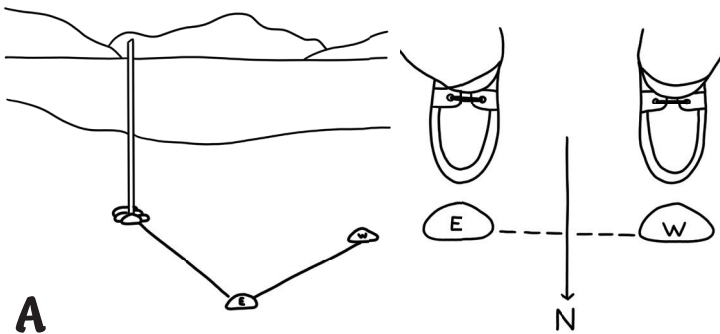
Fendra transforms herself into a fearsome (or maybe kind of adorable?) monster (p. 185). Let's make pet monsters! Using an old sock, scissors, glue and decorative embellishments, create your own sock puppet monster. Will it be a silly monster? A scary monster? A monster that looks like Fendra's monster? Once your monster is complete, gather friends and family for a puppet show!



## Finding North

Max spins a dagger on the ground to find the direction to head with the Midnighters. Nolan notices that the dagger points north (p. 136).

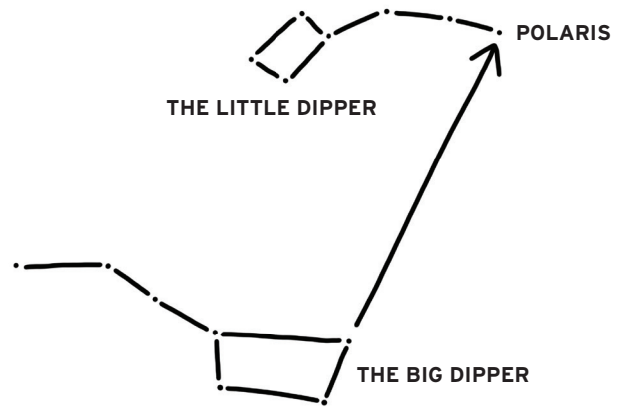
Try these daytime and nighttime methods for finding north without a compass or a smartphone:



**A**

### DAYTIME: SHADOW STICK METHOD

Find a straight stick that's at least two feet long. Poke the stick into an area of ground that is flat and clear of debris. Mark the end of the shadow created by the stick to record its original location. Since the sun moves across the sky from east to west, it's casting a shadow on the opposite side. This means that the shadow's original location is your westernmost point. Wait for the shadow to move. This might take 20-30 minutes to notice. Mark the shadow's new location. As the sun moves, the shadow will move east. Draw a line between the two marks to create an "east-west" line. Mark the original shadow location with a "W" for west and mark the second shadow location with an "E" for east. To find north, stand facing the line with your left foot on "W" and your right foot on the "E." When you're in this position, your toes will be pointing north!

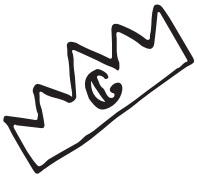


**B**

### NIGHTTIME: NORTH STAR METHOD

Locate the Big Dipper (Ursa Major), a group of seven stars that looks like a saucepan or a spoon with a long handle. The two stars that form the outside edge of the spoon/pan are called "pointer stars" because they literally point toward Polaris. Locate these stars and let your eyes follow this invisible line up through the top of the spoon/pan into the sky. Polaris is the star at the end of this line. It also forms the end of the handle of the Little Dipper (which looks like a smaller saucepan or spoon) and is the brightest star in this constellation. Face Polaris and you're facing true north!

**Safety Note:** If you're lost in the wilderness, the best survival tip is to stay put. This helps rescuers find your location more quickly. If you keep moving, rescuers will have to spend time tracking you.



## Barrel Roll

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

1 piece of cardboard

1 medium-sized box

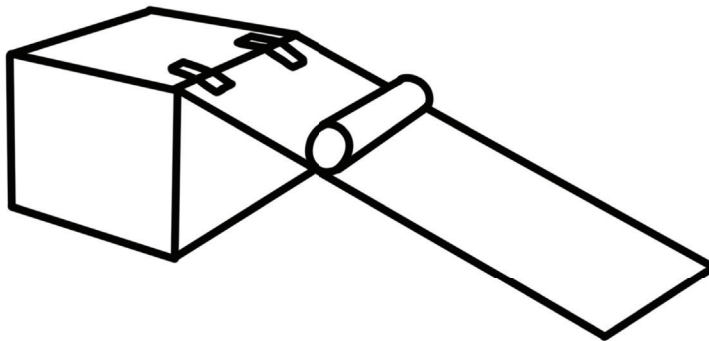
Several toilet paper tubes

Tape

Dried rice or beans

### READY, SET, ROLL!

Max and the Midnights use barrels to defeat a pair of gargoyles (p. 97). Conduct your own barrel rolling experiment to explore the question: How does weight affect the distance an object will travel after it rolls down a slope? Build a barrel rolling ramp by taping one end of a sheet of cardboard to the top edge of a cardboard box and allowing the other end of the sheet to rest on the ground. Create “barrels” of different weights (light, medium and heavy) by taping one end of a cardboard tube closed, adding different amounts of dried beans or rice and then sealing the other end of the tube. To conduct the experiment, place each barrel, one at a time, at the top of the ramp and allow it to roll down and come to a complete stop. Measure the distance from the bottom of the ramp to the point where the barrel has stopped. Record your results in a chart. Test each barrel several times to calculate an average distance for each weight. Which barrel rolled the farthest?



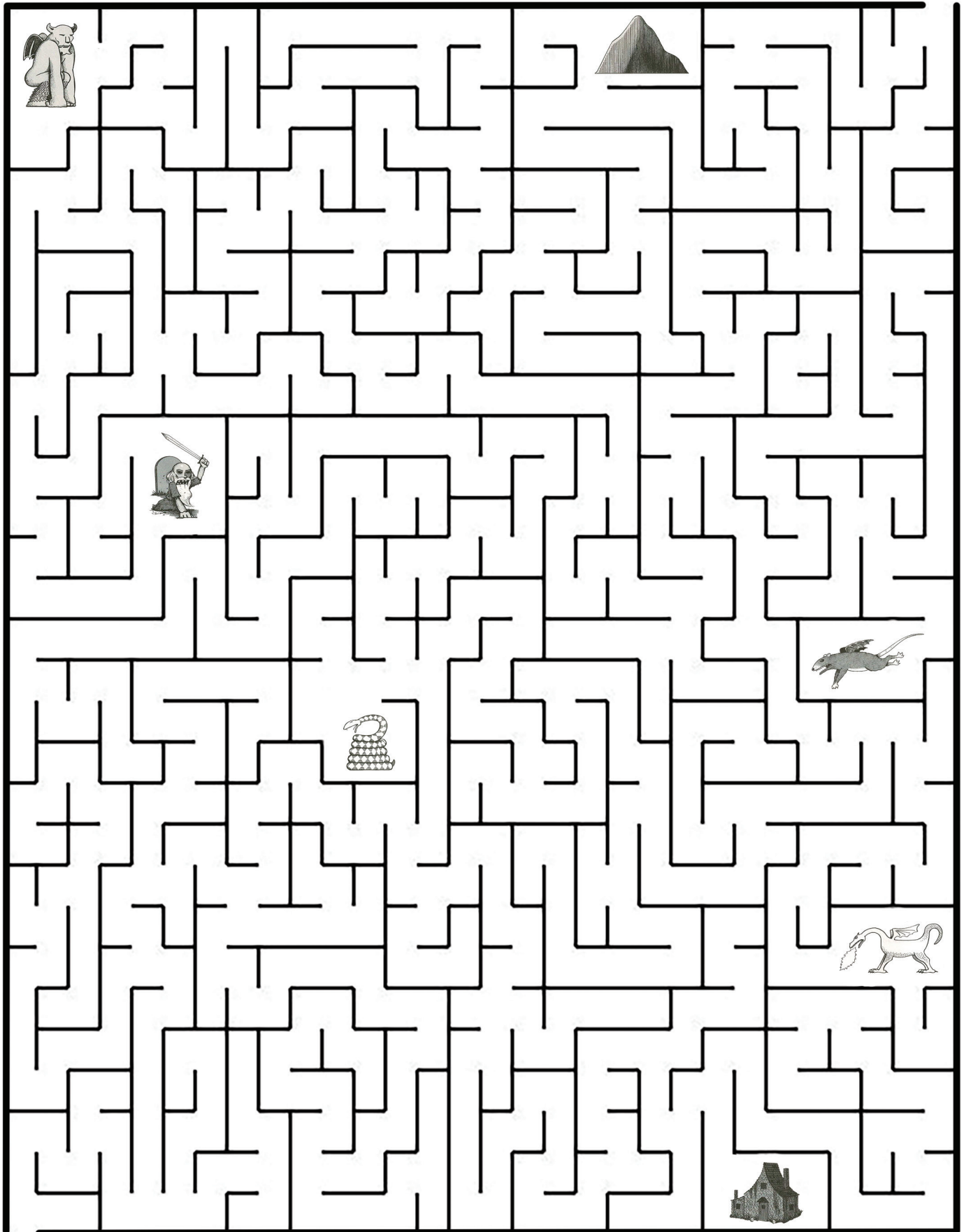
## A Caring Community Starts with Me

In the land of Byjovia, people are thrown into jail for poverty and vagrancy (p. 45). These problems exist in our own world, but aren't solved by punishing people. We all have the power to make a difference in our community regardless of our age or background. Start brainstorming ways to make a difference in your community by making a list of things people need to survive and thrive, like access to healthy food, education, clean water, etc. Next choose a need from your list and brainstorm ways to meet that need. For example, if you chose “access to healthy food” as a resource people need, some ideas to help meet that need could be supporting a community garden, running a canned food drive or volunteering at a food bank. Work with a trusted adult to help put your plan into action!

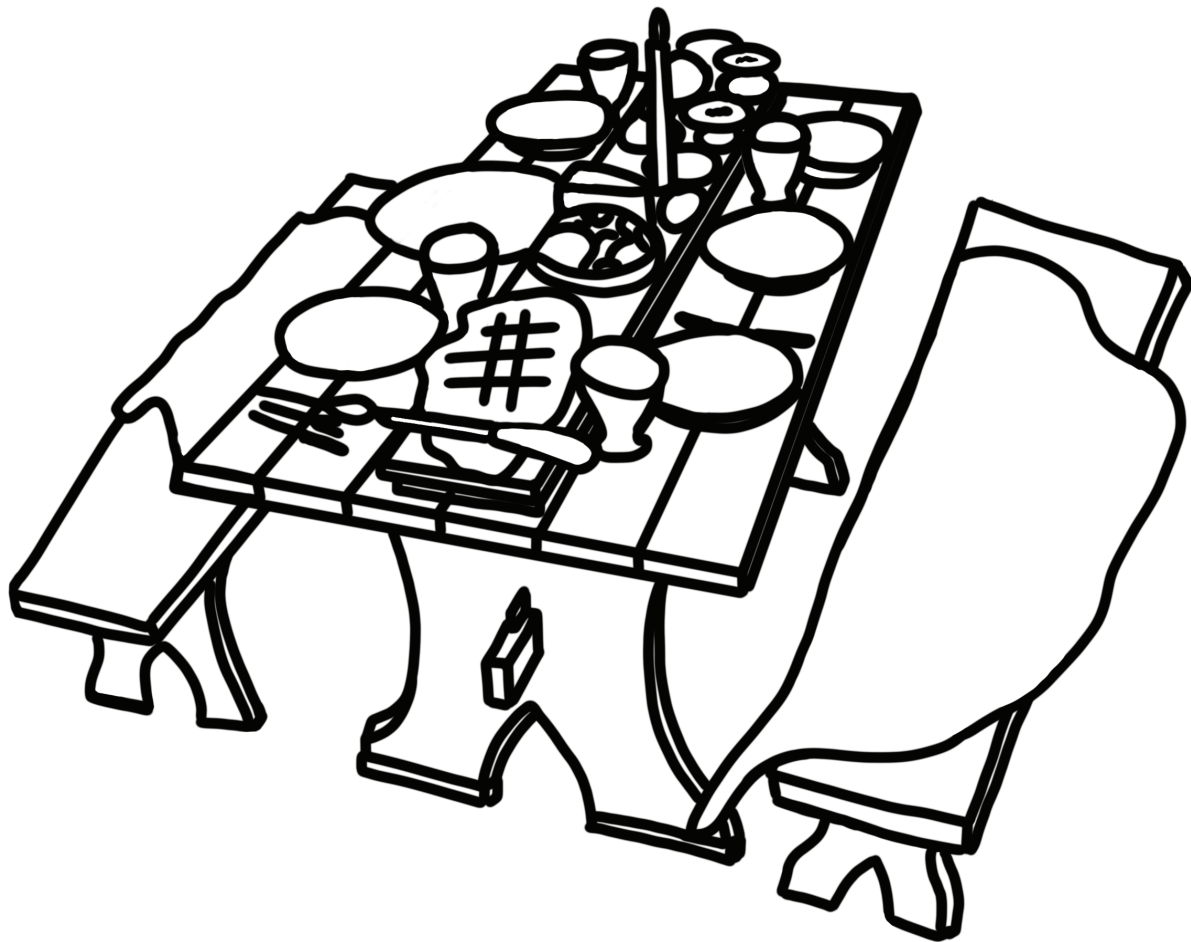
# Maze

Help Max navigate through the maze by avoiding dead-ends and other dangers.

START HERE



FINISH



## Cook Like It's the Middle Ages

In the 14th century, bread and pottage were staples in most people's diets. Taste history with these recipes based on historical texts!

**Safety Note:** Always ask an adult for help when cooking in the kitchen!

### Cabbage Pottage

Adapted from a recipe by Shelagh Caudle, [Medieval-Recipes.com](http://Medieval-Recipes.com)

Servings: 4

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander or ground cardamom
- 1 head green cabbage
- 2 medium yellow onions
- 2 whole leeks
- 3 cups broth (chicken, beef or vegetable)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Wash and chop the cabbage and leeks. Thinly slice the onions.
2. Put all the ingredients together in a large pot. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft.



## Rye Bread

Recipe adapted from a recipe by Gabby Yezbick of Good Bread Bake Shop, [goodbreadbakeshop.com](http://goodbreadbakeshop.com)

Yield: 1 large or 2 medium round boules or tin loaves

### INGREDIENTS:

2 Tbsp active dry yeast  
2 1/3 cups 170°F water  
5 1/3 cups whole wheat rye flour  
1 Tbsp kosher salt  
1 Tbsp plus 2 tsp ground coriander seed  
1 Tbsp plus 1 tsp molasses

### OTHER THINGS YOU WILL NEED:

Mixing bowls, whisk, kitchen towel, cooking thermometer, bread tins or dutch oven or pizza stone

### DIRECTIONS:

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, combine the heated water and rye flour until all the flour is completely saturated. Leave to sit at warm room temperature for 3-4 hours.
- 2.** Dissolve the yeast in 1/2 cup of room temperature water before whisking in molasses. Add the yeast and molasses mixture to the dough along with the salt and coriander seed. Mix until thoroughly combined.
- 3.** Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and divide into the desired number of loaves.
- 4.** To create boules: Shape rounds using liberally floured hands, and transfer to bowls lined with smooth kitchen towels that have been sprinkled with flour. Cover with a kitchen towel and leave at warm room temperature (or put the dough in an oven with only the oven light on to create a small incubator) for about 3 hours, or until dough has increased in volume nearly 50%. -OR- If using tins: Grease tins before transferring the portioned dough. Use a wet rubber spatula or bowl scraper to spread the dough evenly into the tin. Sprinkle flour over the top, cover with a kitchen towel, and leave to proof at warm room temperature (or put the dough in an oven with only the oven light on to create a small incubator) for about 3 hours.
- 5.** Preheat oven to 450° F for 45 minutes. If making boules, put an appropriately-sized Dutch oven or pizza stone in the oven while preheating. Once oven is preheated, place dough in Dutch oven or on pizza stone to bake.
- 6.** Bake loaves for 45-50 minutes, or until the interior of the loaf reaches a temperature of 191° F.
- 7.** Allow loaves to cool completely before slicing. Bread will intensify in flavor over several days, and will hold in a linen or paper bag at room temperature for up to seven days.

## Great Books Spark Great Conversations

After reading *Max and the Midknights*, use these questions to start a book chat with a friend or family member.

- 1.** Uncle Budrick is a traveling entertainer, or troubadour. How does Max feel about this occupation? What do you think you'd enjoy about being a troubadour? What do you think you wouldn't like?
- 2.** Why do Max and Max's friends decide to call their group "Max and the Midknights"? When you first read the title of this book, did you have other guesses about the origin of the word "Midknights"? If so, what were they?
- 3.** What are Max's desires for the future? Do you think it's likely Max will achieve these dreams? Why or why not? What are some of your desires for your future? How will you work toward these goals?
- 4.** Certain clues in the *Byjovian Book of Prophecies* seem to indicate a difficult, but heroic journey for Max. If prophecy books really existed, would you want to read the chapter describing your life? Why or why not? How do you think reading a prophecy about your life would change the way you lived your life?
- 5.** On p. 144, an old man shouts "Get away, girl! This is no job for children!" What do Max and Simon say in response? Have you ever been told you can't do something because you're a child? What happened? Do you think certain things should be only for adults to do? Why or why not?
- 6.** When Max complains that the group doesn't know where they're going, Sir Gadabout replies that "sometimes those are the best kinds of journeys" (pp. 172-173). Can you relate to Gadabout's comment? When was a time in your life when you didn't make an exact plan, but things turned out?
- 7.** Millie uses a sleeping spell she has just learned from a textbook she found on Fendra's bookshelf to defeat the monster (p. 186). When was a time you applied something you learned at school to a situation outside of school? What skills have you learned from books that have helped you in the real world?
- 8.** Knights of the Middle Ages tried to live up to a code of knightly behavior that was called "chivalry." Chivalry is a combination of qualities expected of an ideal knight, especially courage, honor, courtesy, justice and a readiness to help the weak. What examples can you find of Max and the Midknights demonstrating chivalry through their words or actions?
- 9.** When Max asks King Conrad why girls can't be knights he says "Because that's the way it's always been." (p. 239) Has anyone ever told you that "it's just the way it is"? What happened and what did you feel about this response? Do you think there are some things that can't change even if we want them to? Why or why not?
- 10.** Both Gastley and Conrad agree that a king must be strong. What do you think "being strong" means to each man? What examples can you find in the story to support your idea? What does "being strong" look like to you in your own life?
- 11.** Thinking about the book as a whole, what were some of its main messages? What did the characters learn? What will you remember most about this book?
- 12.** What was one of your favorite parts of the story? What was one of your favorite illustrations?

## Resources: Dive in and Learn More About Life in the Middle Ages!

### INFORMATIONAL

*Life in the Middle Ages* by Louise Park

*Sweaty Suits of Armor: Could You Survive Being a Knight?* By Chana Stiefel

*The Horrible, Miserable Middle Ages: The Disgusting Details About Life During Medieval Times* by Kathy Allen

*A Kid's Life During the Middle Ages* by Sarah Machajewski

*Manners and Customs in the Middle Ages* by Marsha Groves

*Food and Feasts in the Middle Ages* by Lynne Elliott

*Science and Technology in the Middle Ages* by Joanne Findon and Marsha Groves

*Did Castles Have Bathrooms? And Other Questions About the Middle Ages* by Ann Kerns

*DK Eyewitness Books: Medieval Life* by Andrew Langley

### DVDs

AVAILABLE THROUGH DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

*The Life in the Middle Ages* video series by Tremendous! Entertainment offers entertaining and informative summaries of life in the Middle Ages.

Episodes include:

A History of the Middle Ages  
Social Structure in the Middle Ages  
The Doctor  
The Monk

The Merchant  
The Noble  
The Serf  
The Knight

### HISTORICAL FICTION

*Till Year's Good End* by W. Nikola-Lisa

*Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess* by Richard Platt



Calendar Images c. 1412, from *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*

## Check Out These Great Reads!

If you enjoyed reading *Max and the Midnighters*, the children's librarians at Denver Public Library think you'll enjoy reading these books too.

### IF YOU LIKED *MAX AND THE MIDKNIGHTS*, HERE ARE A FEW OTHER BOOKS WE RECOMMEND...

*Sanity & Tallulah* by Molly Brooks

*Rutabaga the Adventure Chef* by Eric Colossal

*The Inquisitor's Tale* by Adam Gidwitz

*Interactive History Adventure: Life as a Knight* by Rachael Teresa Hanel

*Cape* by Kate Hannigan

*The Life of Zarf: The Trouble with Weasels* by Rob Harrell

*Medieval knights: Europe's fearsome armored soldiers* by Blake Hoena, illustrated by János Orbán

*All's Faire in Middle School* by Victoria Jamieson

*Pie in the Sky* by Remy Lai

*Hocus & Pocus* by Manuro

*Knightology: being a true account of the most valiant knights, of their great chivalry and wondrous feats of arms* by Sir Lancelot Marshal, master of the secret order of the round table

*Queen of the Sea* by Dylan Meconis

*Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet* by Zanib Mian

*Knights vs. Dinosaurs* by Matt Phelan

*Astronaut Academy: Zero Gravity* by Dave Roman

*Good masters! Sweet Ladies!: voices from a medieval village* by Laura Amy Schlitz, illustrated by Robert Byrd

*5 Worlds: The Sand Warrior* by Mark Siegel, et al.

*Phoebe and Her Unicorn series* by Dana Simpson

*The Deep & Dark Blue* by Niki Smith

### IF YOU LIKED *RISE OF THE EARTH DRAGON*, HERE ARE A FEW OTHER BOOKS WE RECOMMEND...

*Fly Guy Presents: Castles* by Tedd Arnold

*Zoey and Sassafras: Dragons and Marshmallows* (book 1) by Asia Citro

*Cici, A Fairy's Tale: Believe Your Eyes* (book 1) by Cori Doerrfeld

*The Magical Animal Adoption Agency: Clover's Luck* (book 1) by Kallie George

*Time Jumpers: Stealing the Sword* (book 1) by Wendy Mass

*Dragon Slayers' Academy: The New Kid at School* by Kate McMullan, illustrated by Bill Sasso and Stephen Gilpin

*The Kingdom of Wrenly: The Lost Stone* (book 1) by Jordan Stone

*Adventures in Cartooning series* by James Sturm

*A Dragon's Guide to the Care and Feeding of Humans* by Laurence Yep and Joanna Ryder