

Year 4
Week 4: Magic

English

Read Houdini's biography.

(Copy attached)

Reading Activity 1

Use our classroom strategies to check that you understand the tricky words in the text,

Match the words to their symbols.
(Copy attached)

Reading Activity 2:

After reading the biography, answer the comprehension questions to check that you have understood what you have read.

(Questions attached)

Writing Activity:

Write an advertisement to encourage audiences to come and see one of Houdini's shows.



Spelling

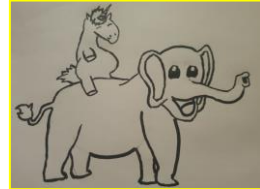
__ture
__sure

To help you spell these words, remember....

tiny Unicorns ride Elephants

or

Small Unicorns ride elephants



Nature
Picture
Structure
Future
Leisure
Measure
Treasure
Pleasure

Choose the correct spelling options to complete the sentences.

(Sentences attached)

Shapes

Maths activity 1:

Have a close-up look at the Doctor Strange's magic circle.

What shapes can you see? What types of quadrilaterals are there? What types of triangles?



[Quadrilaterals video link](#)

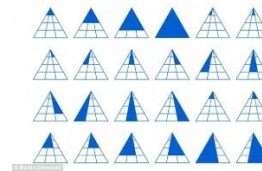
*A trapezoid is called a Trapezium in the UK, but the properties are the same and it's a great song!

[Triangles video link](#)

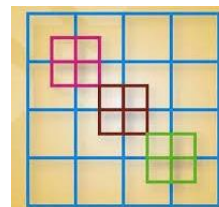
Maths Activity 2:

Do you remember when we asked you how many triangles you could see?

Here's a systematic way to find the answer.



Use the systematic way to spot how many squares there are.



Wider Curriculum

Spanish Activity 1:

Have you ever seen the magic trick where hundreds of coloured scarves appear out of a magician's sleeve?



Here are 2 songs to help you learn your Spanish colours.

[Song 1](#)

[Song 2](#)

Spanish Activity 2:

Use your colour knowledge to describe these magical-looking frogs in Spanish.



Wellbeing

Make yourself and other smile by recreating the magic tricks

Biography Harry Houdini



- **Occupation:** Magician and Escape Artist
- **Born:** March 24, 1874 in Budapest, Austria-Hungary
- **Died:** October 31, 1926 in Detroit, Michigan
- **Best known for:** Performing dangerous and innovative escapes.

Where was Harry Houdini born?

Harry Houdini was born on March 24, 1874 in Budapest, Hungary. When he was four years old his family moved to the United States. They lived in Wisconsin for a while and then moved to New York City.



Early Career

Harry worked various odd jobs to help out the family while growing up. He worked as a locksmith for a time where he became an expert at picking locks (this skill would come in handy later). Young Harry always had an interest in magic and performing. Around the age of seventeen he began doing a magic show with his brother "Dash" called "The Brothers Houdini." Harry would spend hours working on magic tricks and practicing quick hand movements.

A New Partner

While Harry and his brother were working at Coney Island, Harry met a dancer named Bess. They fell in love and married a year later. Bess and Harry started their own magic act called "The Houdinis." For the rest of his career, Bess would act as Harry's assistant.

Tour of Europe

Upon the advice of his manager, Martin Beck, Harry began to focus his act on escapes. He would escape from all sorts of things like handcuffs, straitjackets, and ropes. He then traveled to England to perform. At first, he had little success. Then he challenged the English police at Scotland Yard to an escape. The police searched Harry thoroughly and handcuffed him inside a cell. They were sure they had him secure. However, Houdini escaped in a matter of a few minutes. They couldn't believe it! Now Harry was famous and everyone wanted to see his amazing escapes.

Famous Escapes and Illusions

Harry travelled around Europe and then returned to the United States performing all sorts of dangerous escapes and amazing illusions. These escapes made him the most famous magician in the world.



- **Water Torture Cell** - In this trick, Harry was lowered head first into a glass tank filled with water. His feet were chained with locks to a lid that was then locked to the tank. A curtain would cover the front while Houdini worked his escape. Just in case he failed, an assistant stood by with an axe.
- **Straitjacket Escape** - Houdini took escaping from a straitjacket to a whole new level. He would be suspended in the air by his feet from a tall building while strapped into a straitjacket. He would then escape from the straitjacket with everyone watching.
- **Box in a River** - This trick seemed especially dangerous. Houdini would be locked up with handcuffs and leg-irons and placed into a crate. The crate would be nailed shut and tied with ropes. It would also be weighed down with around 200 pounds of lead. The crate would then be tossed into the water. After Houdini escaped (sometimes in under a minute), the crate would be pulled to the surface. It would still be nailed together with the handcuffs inside.
- **Other escapes** - Houdini performed a variety of escapes. He often invited the local police to try and handcuff him or hold him in a cell. He always escaped. He also performed an escape where he was buried alive six feet underground and another where he was put in a casket under water for over an hour.

Later Life and Career

In his later life, Houdini took on many other activities such as making movies, learning to fly an airplane, and debunking psychics (proving they were fake).

Death







One night before a show in Montreal, Canada, two young men visited Houdini backstage. Rumor had it that Houdini was invincible to blows to the body. One of the students decided to test out this rumor and punched Houdini in the stomach. A few days later, on October 31, 1926 (Halloween), Houdini died from a ruptured appendix.

Interesting Facts about Harry Houdini

- One of Houdini's most famous illusions was the "vanishing elephant" during which he caused a 10,000 pound elephant to disappear.
- Houdini may have worked as a spy for the British Secret Service gaining information while performing for world leaders such as Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and Tsar Nicolas II of Russia.
- He was an excellent athlete and long distance runner.
- He taught U.S. soldiers how to escape capture during World War I.



Reading Activity 1

	locksmith	
	suspended	
	Wisconsin	
	cell	
	straitjacket	
	debunking	



Reading Activity 2

Retrieval Questions	Inference Questions
1. When was Houdini born?	1. Why was his first job useful later on in his career?
2. What was Houdini's first job?	2. Why did he challenge the police at Scotland yard to an escape?
3. Name 3 of Houdini's escape acts.	3. How did Houdini help in the war?
4. How heavy was the elephant that Houdini made disappear?	
Opinion Question	
Which part of Houdini's life do you find most impressive? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.	

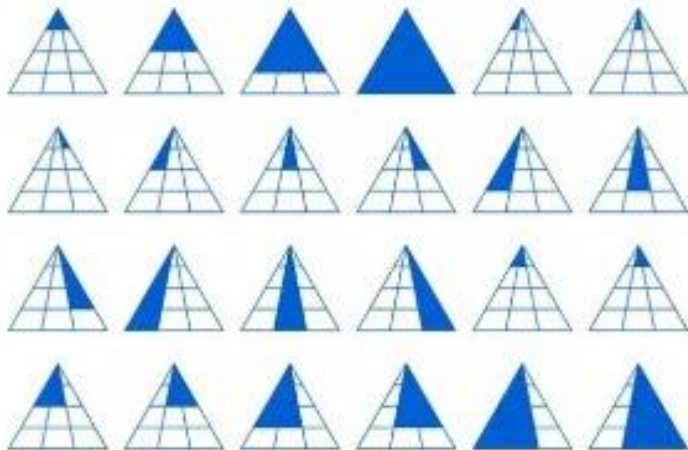
Maths Activity 1:



What shapes can you see?

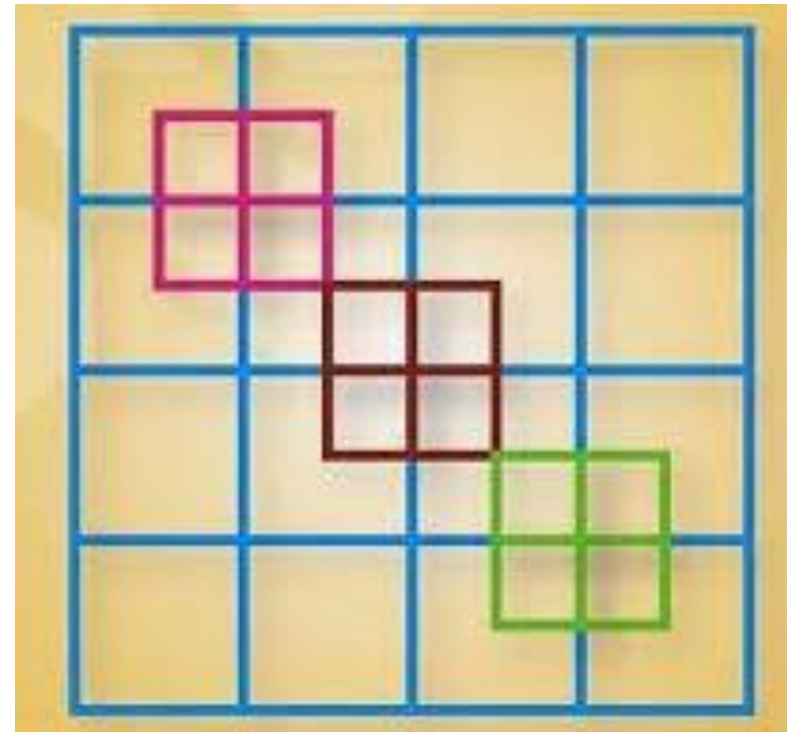
Maths Activity 2:

Use this example of systematically finding all the triangles...



© Martin Dreyfus

to find all the squares.



Spelling activity

Choose the correct spellings to edit the sentences

1. The unusual **creacher/creature** has six green ears.
2. Grandma polishes **furniture/furnitcher** every day.
3. We need to **measure/meashur** the rainfall for our Science experiment.
4. I painted a **picher/ picture** of my family.
5. Pirates hunt for **treasher/ treasure**.
5. I love to visit the **nature/ nacher** reserve.
6. Reading for **pleasure/pleature** is a great way to unwind.
7. The **leisure/ leischer** centre has basketball courts inside.

Magic tricks

clinging cutlery

A fork is made to cling to the outstretched palm of your hand. The secret is explained, but moments later the fork is made to cling to your hand again in an even more amazing way!



1 Hold a fork in your closed left fist. Grip your left wrist with your right hand and open the left fingers wide. The right first finger secretly stretches out to hold the fork in place.



2 From the front, it looks as if the fork is stuck to your hand. You can stop the illusion here, but you can also go a step further. Turn your hands around, exposing the method to the trick.



3 Return to the same position. The right hand is now removed completely, yet the fork still stays suspended from the left hand. How?



4 This exposed view shows how a knife is held under your watchstrap from the outset. When you pretend to reveal your secret, the knife is covered by your first finger (see step 1).

thumb off

You apparently unscrew the top of your thumb and then screw it back on. This is one of the oldest and most popular tricks in existence. When done well it is an amazing optical illusion.



1 Form a circle with the thumb and first finger of your right hand and insert the thumb of your left hand into the hole.



2 Twist your left hand back and forth, explaining to the audience that you are unscrewing your thumb.



3 With a quick shake of your hands adjust them by bending in your left and right thumbs. Then use your right forefinger to cover the area where the thumbs meet. This is an exposed view.



4 From the front the illusion is perfect. Wiggle the tip of your right thumb, which people will assume is still your left thumb.



5 Now slide your right hand along the side of your left forefinger, then slide it back again.



6 Finish with a quick shake of the hands to readjust them to the position in step 2, as you supposedly screw your thumb back on.