

3rd & 4th Class
History



The Piñata

You may remember that we explored Mexico in a previous Geography lesson.

We looked at where Mexico is, its food and the history of the country. We also learned about the famous tradition of the piñata!

A piñata is a large hollow shape (usually an animal) that's filled with sweets or small toys. The idea is that you are blindfolded and you have to try and whack the piñata to break it. When you do, all your friends get to run in and gather up all the treats that have fallen out! Most people associate the piñata with Mexico as they are hugely popular there.





The Piñata

However, it is believed that piñatas may have come from China! It is believed that the explorer Marco Polo brought the piñata to Europe after his travels in China in the 13th century.

Chinese piñatas were usually in the shape of a cow or ox to celebrate the Chinese New Year.



When the Spanish went to Mexico as part of the brutal Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire, they brought these brightly coloured hollow shapes with them.

By the way, have you noticed the squiggle above the n in piñata? That is called a Tilde. It is used in Spanish and Portuguese to help pronounce a word a certain way. Piñata is pronounced like “Pin-Yata.”



Make Your Own Piñata

What you will need: 100 grams of flour, 250ml of water, some old newspapers, and a balloon. And some patience as you need to leave the piñata for a day or two to dry.

Step 1

Blow up your balloon. Place the balloon on a plastic cup so you don't have to hold it.

Mix the flour and water together in a bowl to make a paste. Take your old newspaper and cut it into strips. Then take a piece of paper and soak it in the paste.





Make Your Own Piñata

Then place the newspaper strip on the balloon.



Repeat until you cover the whole balloon.





Make Your Own Piñata

Step 2

Once you have one layer done, **leave it for between a day and two days.**

Then apply another layer and let that dry for a day or two. Then add a third layer. You can stop at three layers but four layers will make your piñata nice and strong like below! Note how you can see the balloon at the bottom.

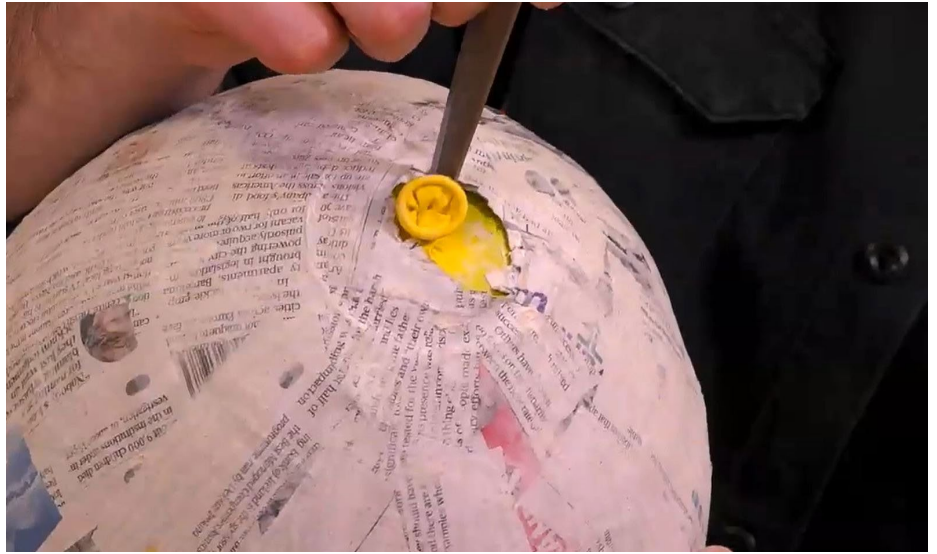


Step 3

It's time to pop the balloon! You can use a scissors or a pin. Ask for adult help when doing this.



Make Your Own Piñata



You will be left with a hollowed ball shape!
Give it a knock to see how hard it is!



Now fill the papier mache with treats and confetti using the hole at the bottom. Once it is filled, tape the hole over so nothing can fall out.



Make Your Own Piñata

Step 4

Time to decorate your piñata. You can pick any design or colour. Múinteoir John painted his like a hot air balloon!



Step 5

Now we're ready to hang it, blindfold ourselves and spin around till we get dizzy and see if we can hit it!

Now be very careful when you're using a piñata that you don't hit someone. Ask for adult permission before you start hanging your piñata. As you can see Múinteoir John really went for it!



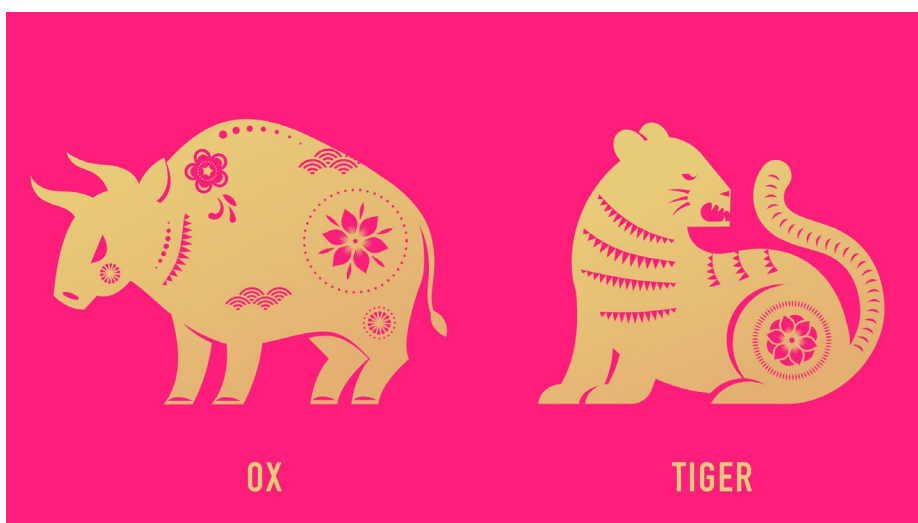


Make a Tiger!

Múinteoir John told us that the piñata comes from China and it was used to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

The Chinese New Year does not occur on January 1st like it does in Ireland. In China, the New Year is calculated based on the lunar cycle or moon. That means the Chinese New Year changes each year, but it will always be sometime between 21 January and 20 February. In Chinese tradition, each year is named after one of twelve animals.

2021 is the Year of The Ox. Next year, 2022, will be the Year of The Tiger. So let's make a tiger!



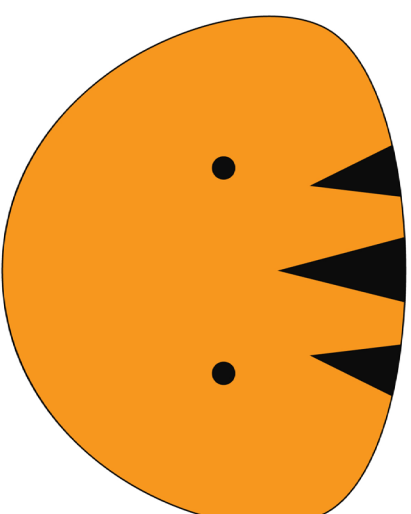
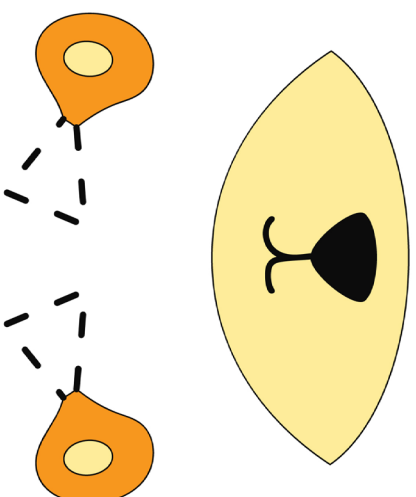
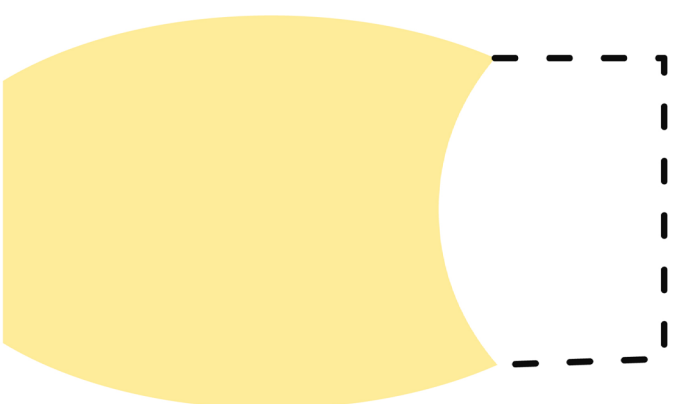
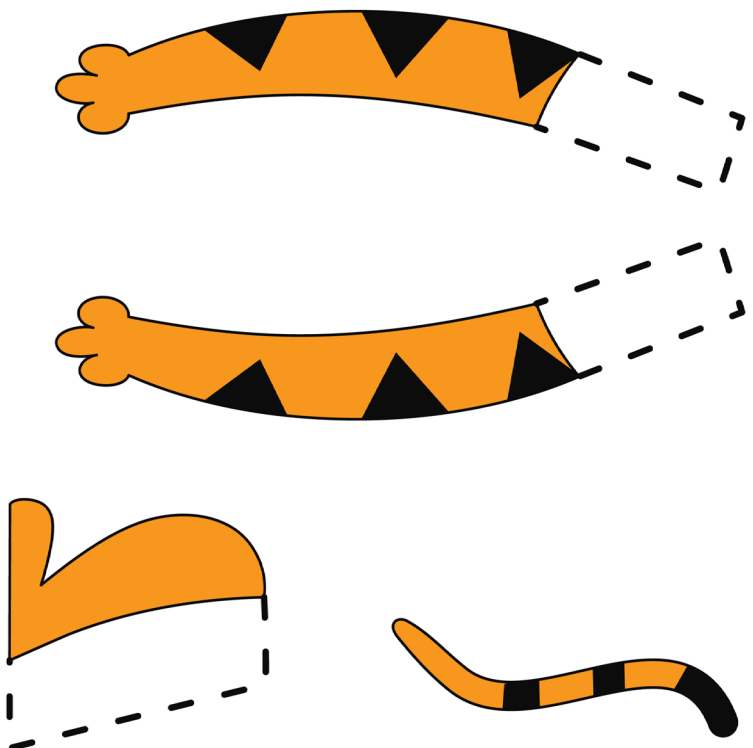
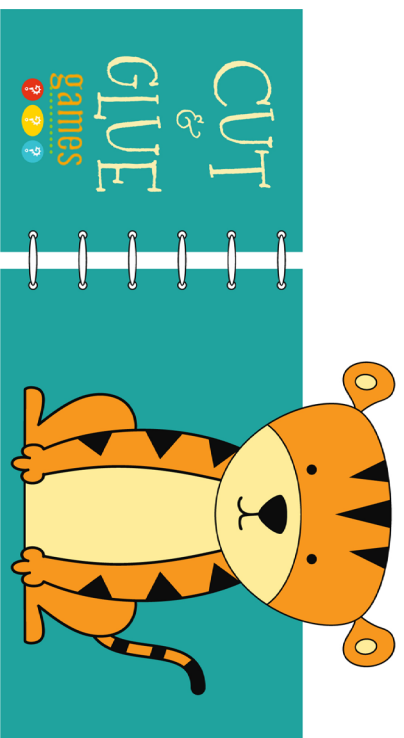
What you will need: Glue and some scissors.

Step 1

Cut each of the individual shapes, including the dotted lines. Ask for adult help when using scissors.

Step 2

Once all the shapes are cut out, you can start putting your tiger together. Add the glue on the white spaces where the dotted lines are.



TIP

Parts circled with dashed lines are glued under another part of the puzzle

