

## DIY Haiku Cubes Game

### What is a Haiku?

A Haiku poem is a traditional Japanese form. It is a three-line poem with seventeen syllables. In a traditional haiku, the first line is 5 syllables long. The second line contains 7 syllables, and the third line contains 5 syllables once more. This form often focuses on images from nature, and emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression.

Matsuo Bashô (1643-1694), widely regarded as the master of the form in all of his work, has a very famous haiku about a frog jumping into a pond. This is the original poem, written in Japanese:

(5) Furu ike ya  
(7) kawazu tobikomu  
(5) mizu no oto

Many, many poets across the world have since tried to translate this poem in the centuries since it was first written. Here is just one translation by Eli Siegel that maintains the 5/7/5 formula.

(5) Pond, there, still and old!  
(7) A frog has jumped from the shore.  
(5) The splash can be heard.

Fun fact: many other attempts at translation do *not* maintain the 5/7/5 structure as many translators find that the 5/7/5 structure is not quite as easy to achieve in English as it is in Japanese. Nevertheless, there are still many beautiful haiku written in English. The restriction of the form can push writers to produce images and lines that they might never otherwise come up with on their own!

In this DIY Haiku Cube activity, you will build word cubes to randomly generate and then craft haiku of your own!

### You will need:

- DIY Haiku cube templates, printed out
- Pen or Pencil
- Scissors
- Clear tape or glue stick
- A cleared surface (table or floor)
- Dictionary (optional)

## Directions

**Important:** fill out word boxes first *before* cutting and folding the templates into cubes. Assembly will be much easier this way!

### What to write

As you will see, some of the boxes have already been filled with words. Now, it's your turn to fill out the blank word boxes so you can have more words to build your haiku.

Use a mix of 1, 2, and 3 syllable words. Use a mix of verbs, adjectives, and nouns to help you create the most surprising lines!

**Tip:** Clap along as you say each word aloud to help you measure the amount of syllables within each word. Also, if you are having difficulty coming up with words, you can flip through the dictionary (or any text, really!) to randomly select words.

### Assemble (Photos below)

Cut along the outside of each template. **Don't** cut inside any of the squares. Each template needs to be one connected piece.

Next, fold each square along the line to create edges of the box.

Finally, fold the template to form a cube. Start by folding the squares marked "X" into one another. Tape down each joining edge. See pictures below.

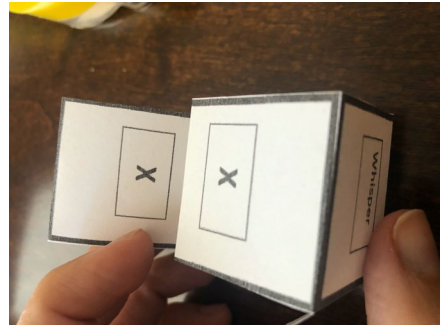
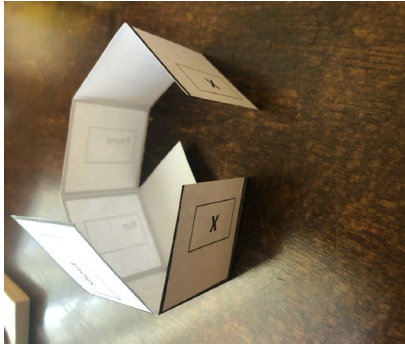
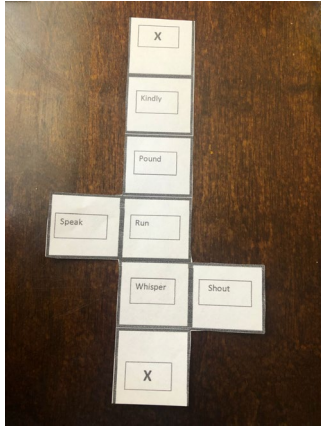
**Tip:** This is a great task to do with friends and/or family!

### Play

Clear off space on a table or floor. You will need space to roll your cubes and to stack your haiku as you build them.

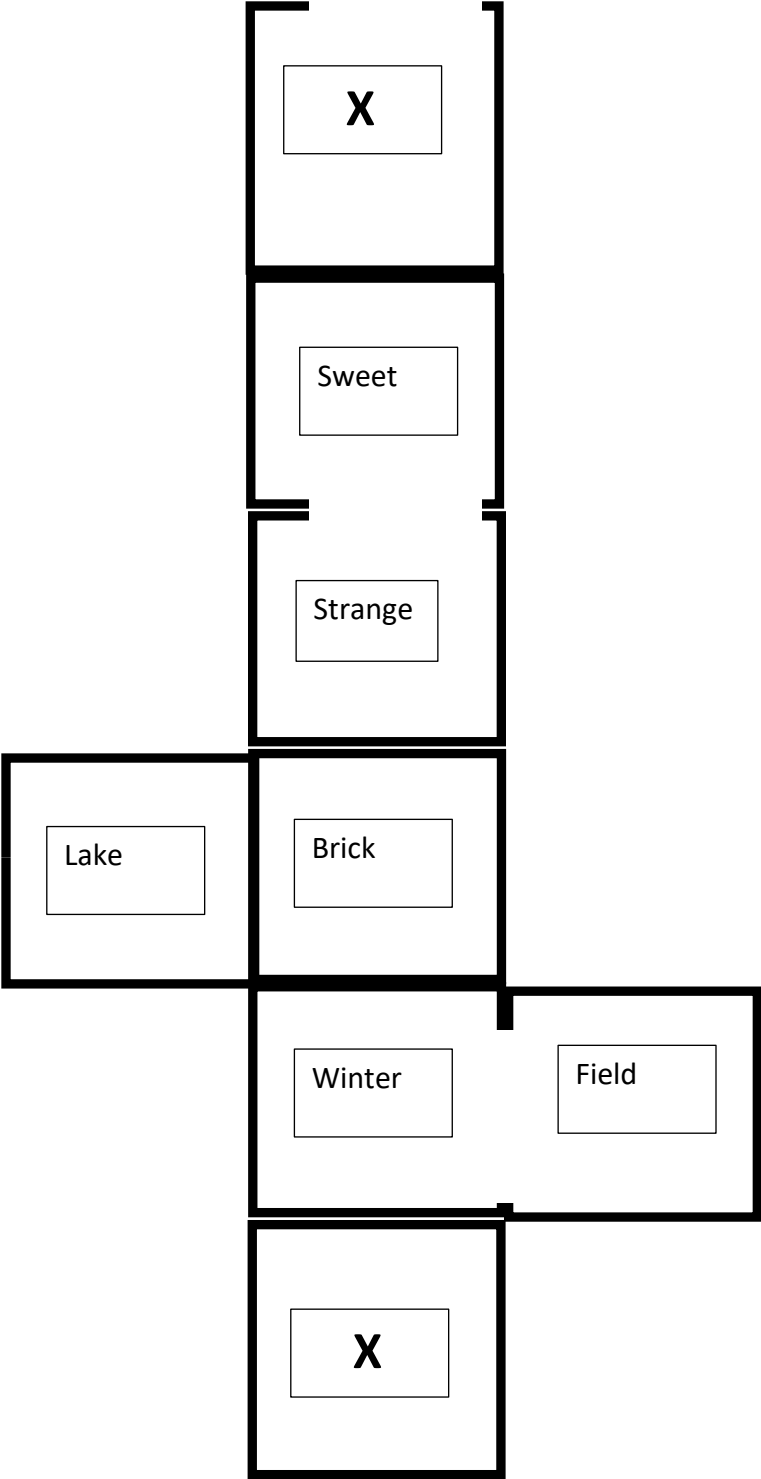
Roll each cube like you would roll a dice. Craft one line at a time, making sure that each line fits the syllable count requirements. Remember: 1<sup>st</sup> line: 5 syllables. 2<sup>nd</sup> line: 7 syllables. 3<sup>rd</sup> line: 5 syllables. Done! Stack the cubes from each line on top of each other as you complete them to build your haiku. Take a picture of your new haiku or copy it down on a piece of paper so you can remember it. **Most importantly: HAVE FUN! Don't overthink it! If the line doesn't quite make perfect grammatical sense, but you enjoy the word combinations and images you have made...that is the most important goal!**

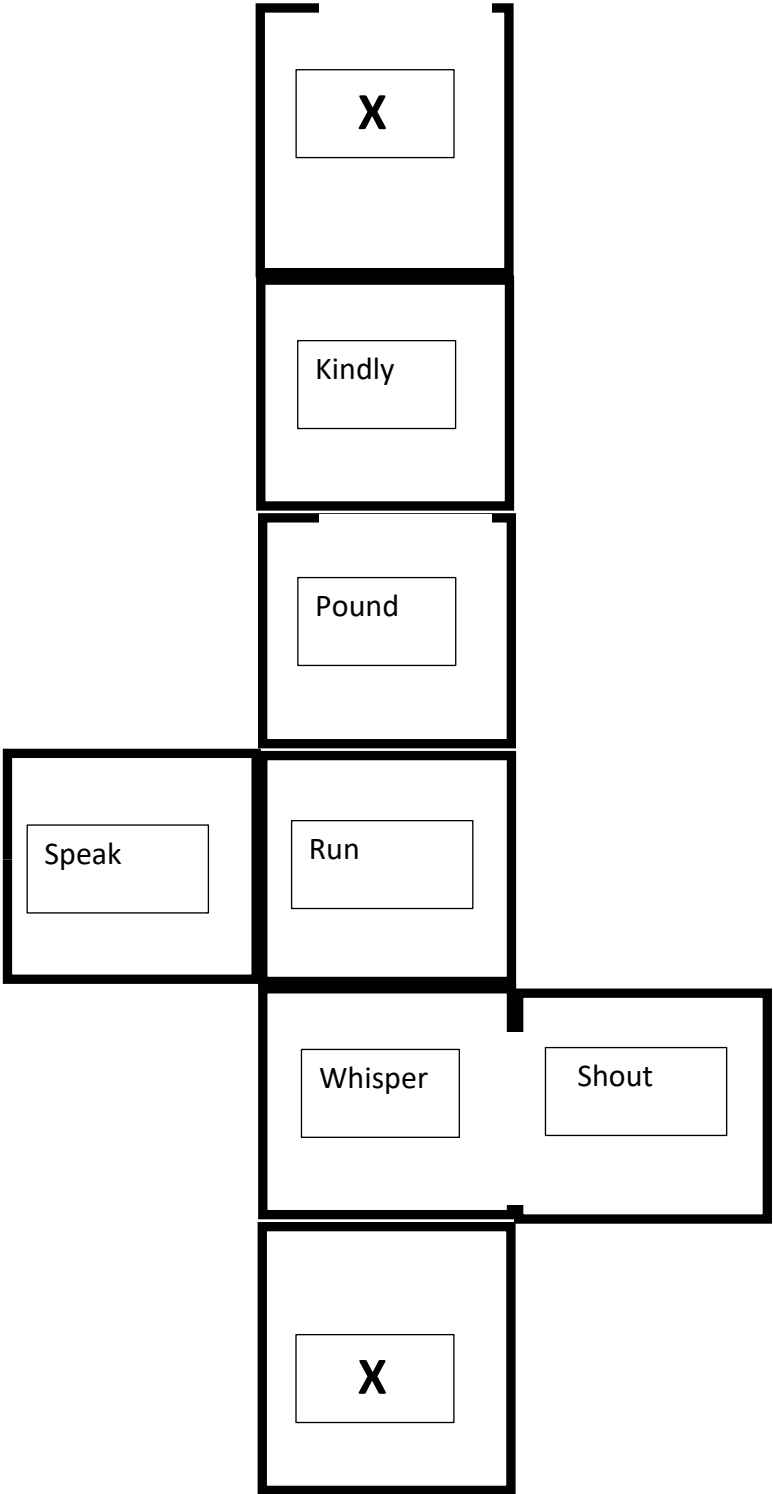
Sources/Further reading



- 32 Translations of the Frog Haiku: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/gateway/passages/basho-frog.htm>
- About the Haiku: <https://poets.org/glossary/haiku>
- Mastuo Bashō: <https://poets.org/poet/matsuo-basho>







**X**

Kindly

Pound

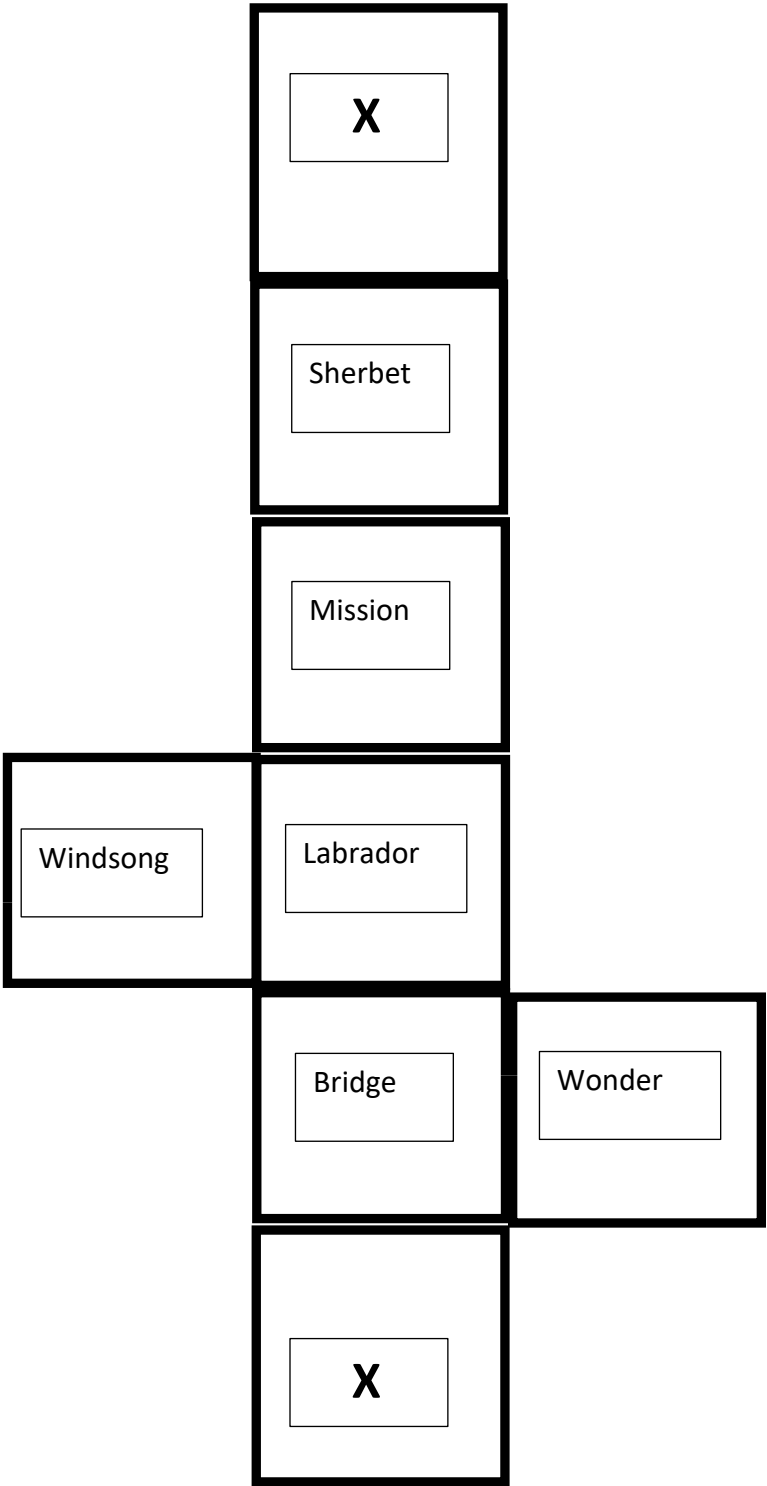
Speak

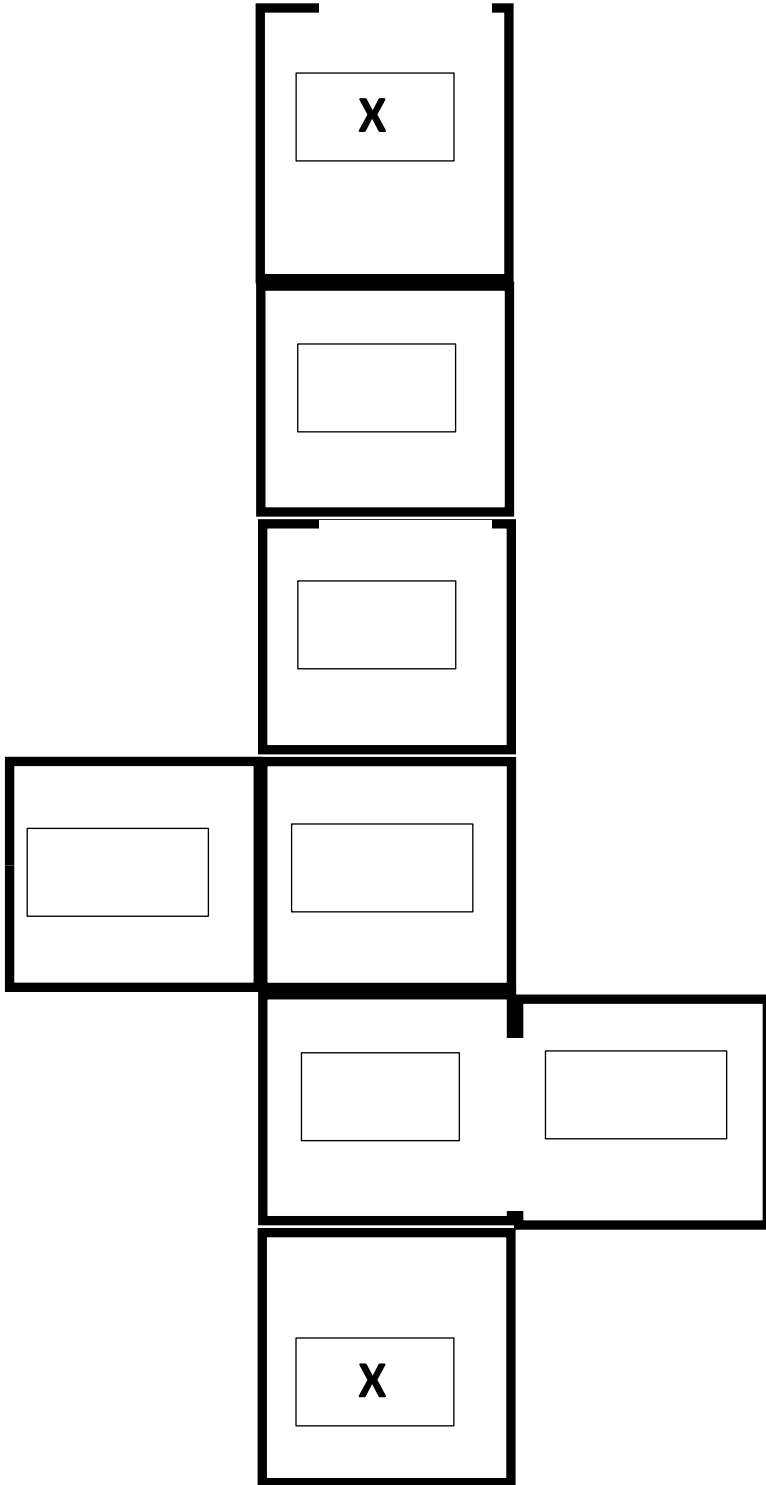
Run

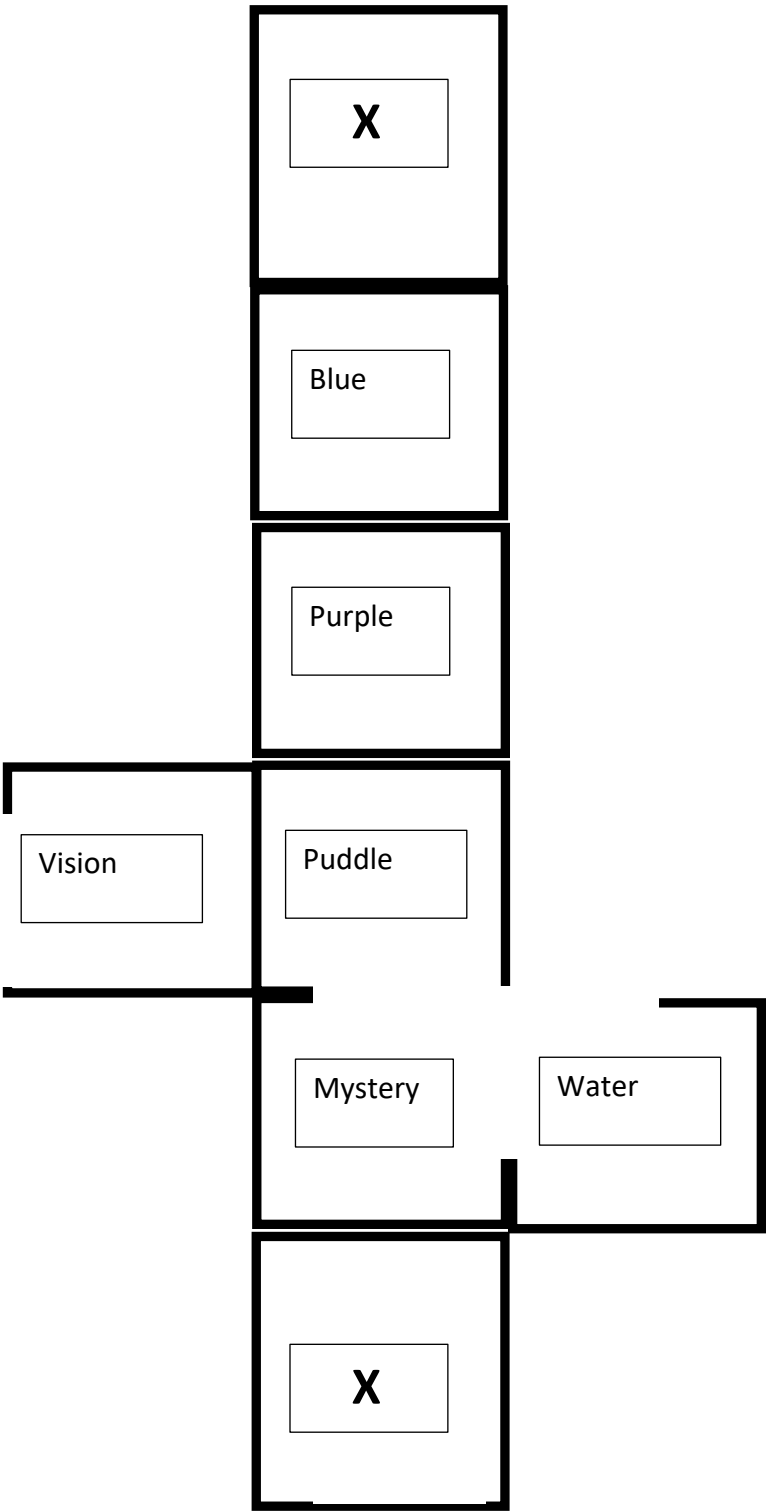
Whisper

Shout

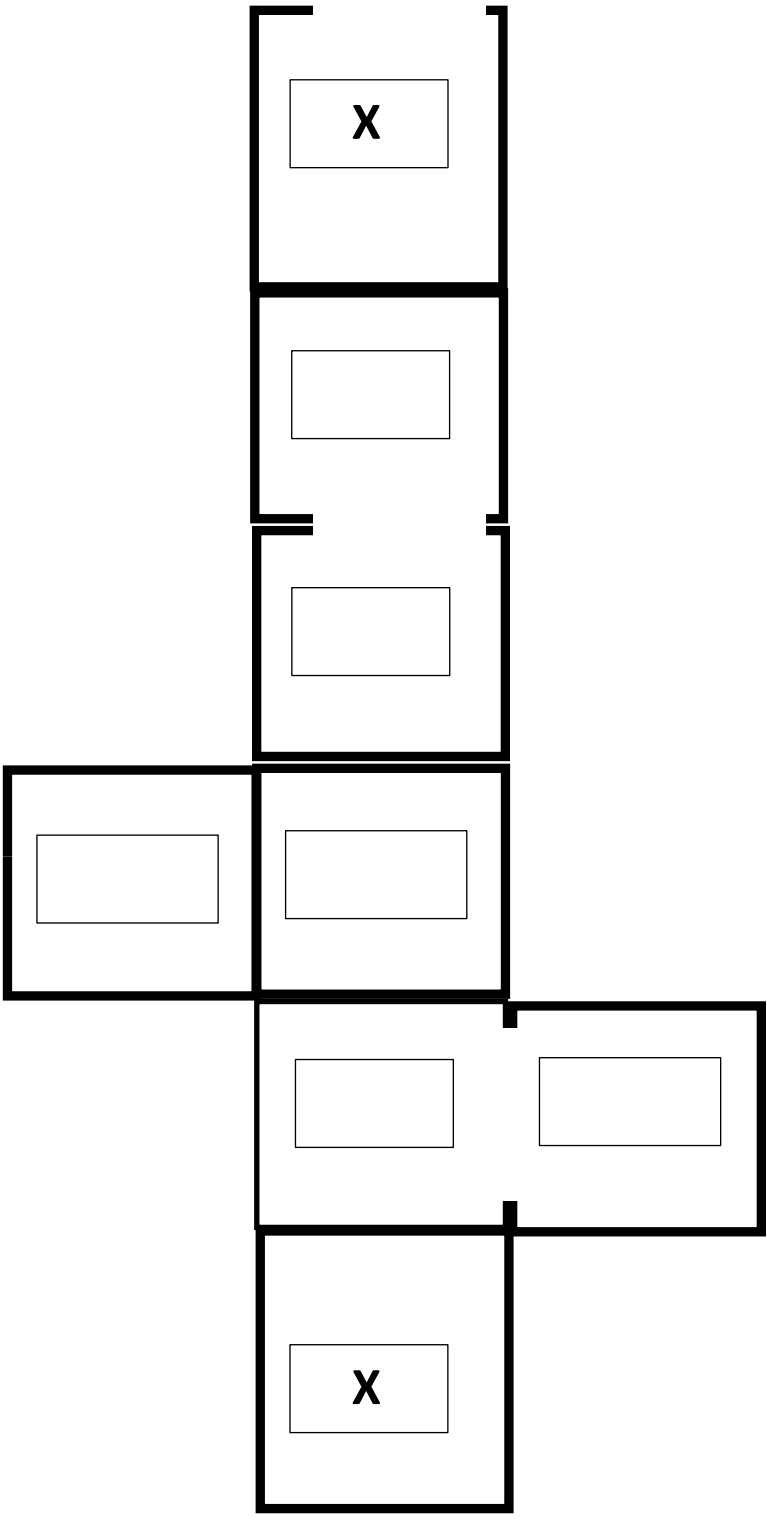
**X**

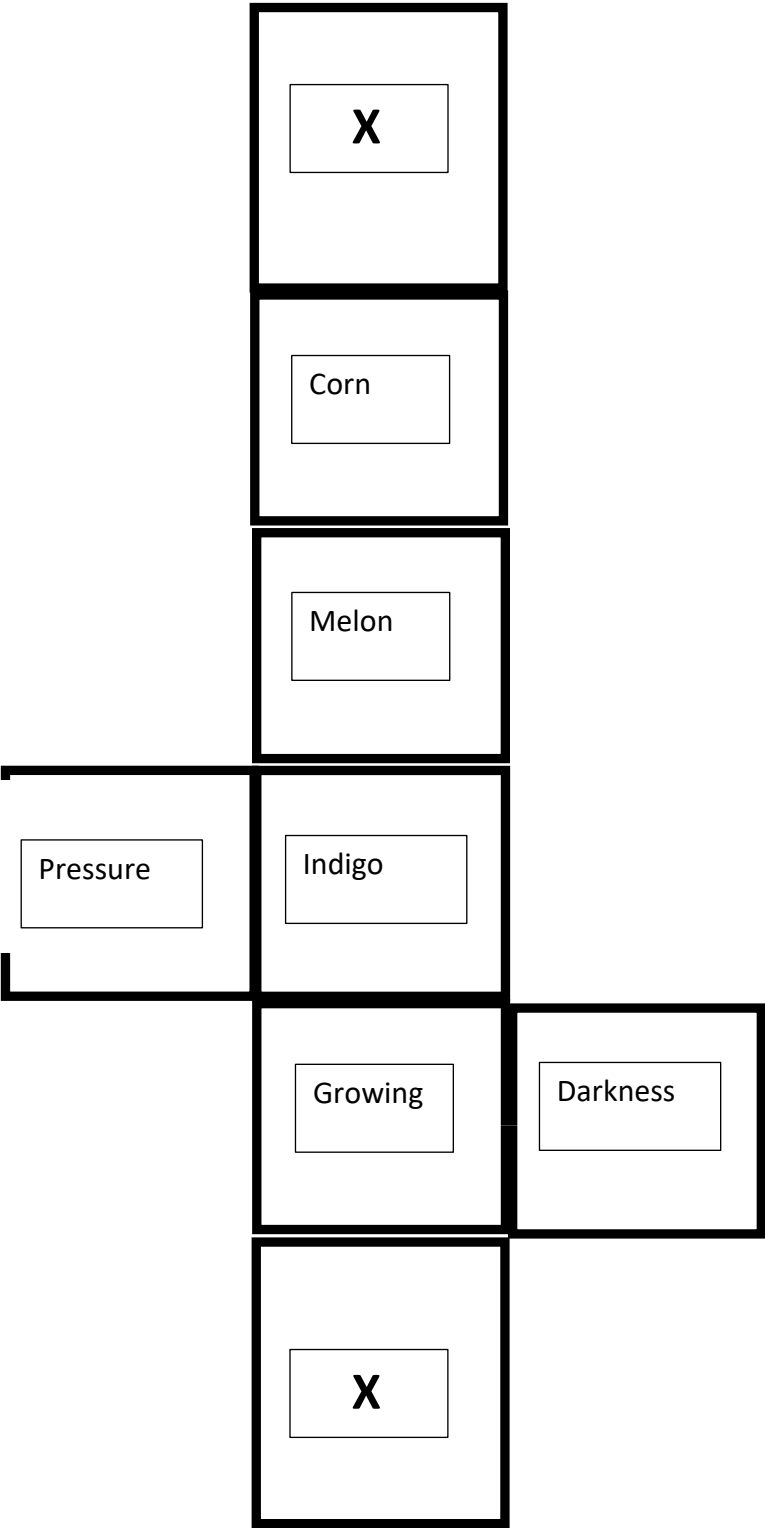


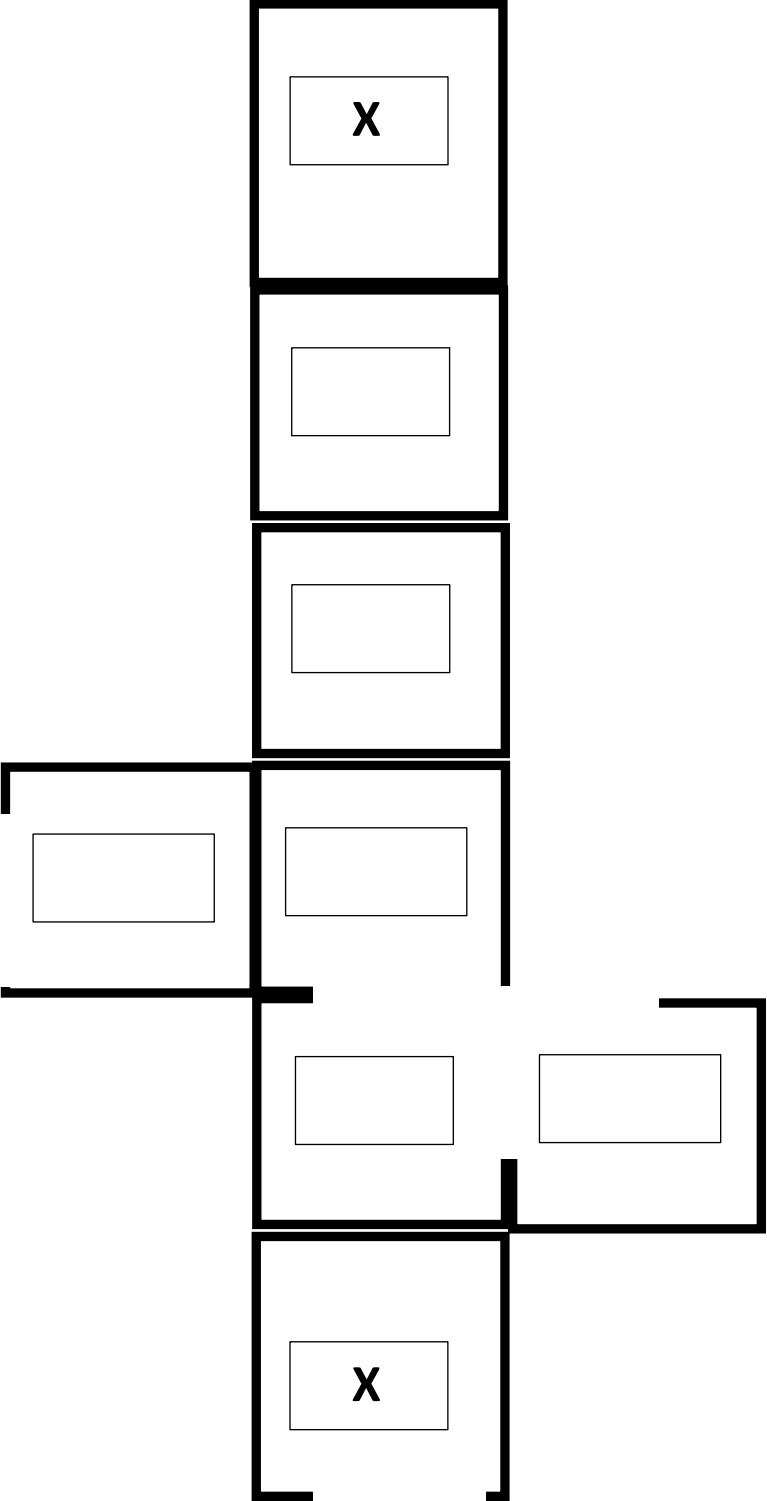


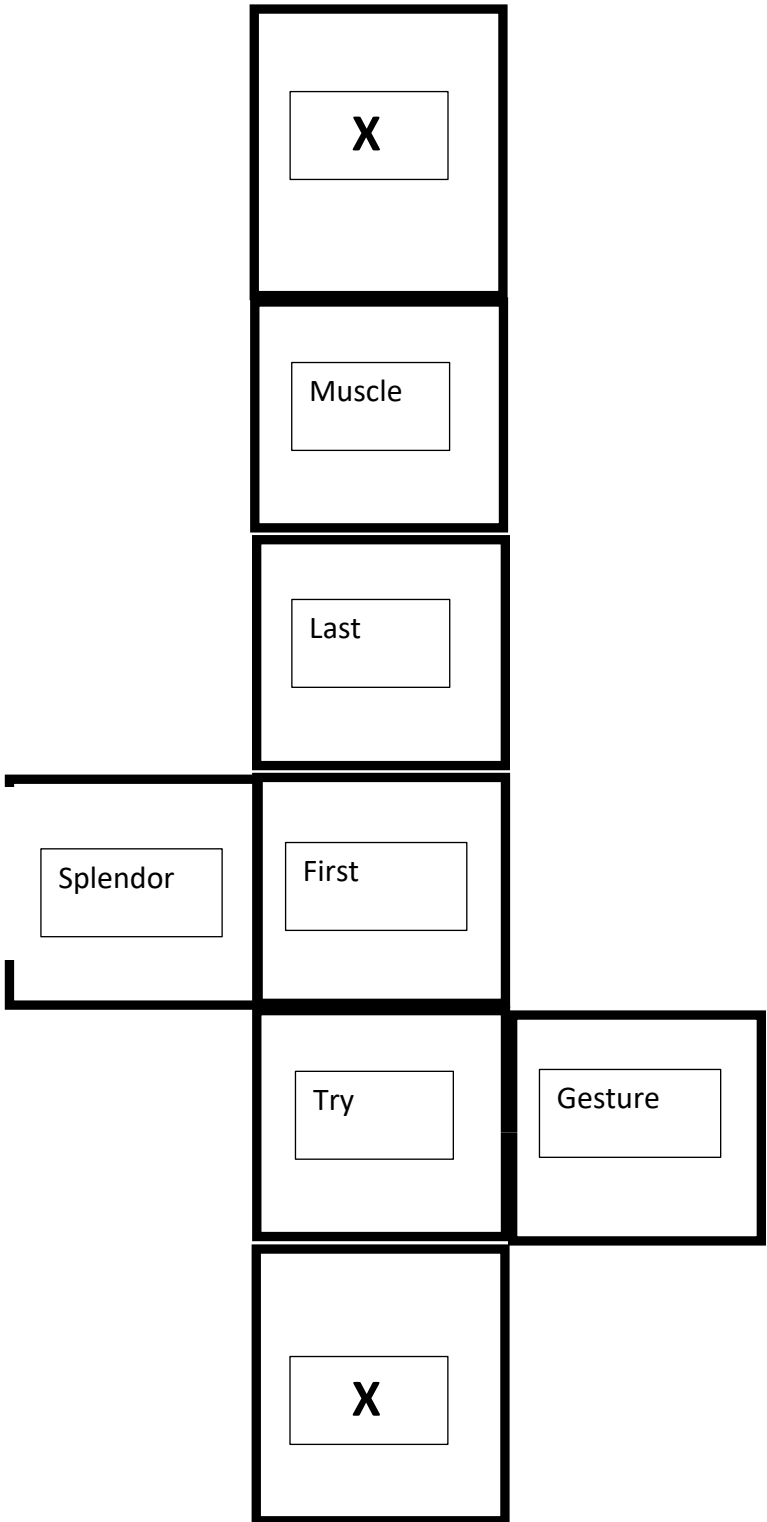


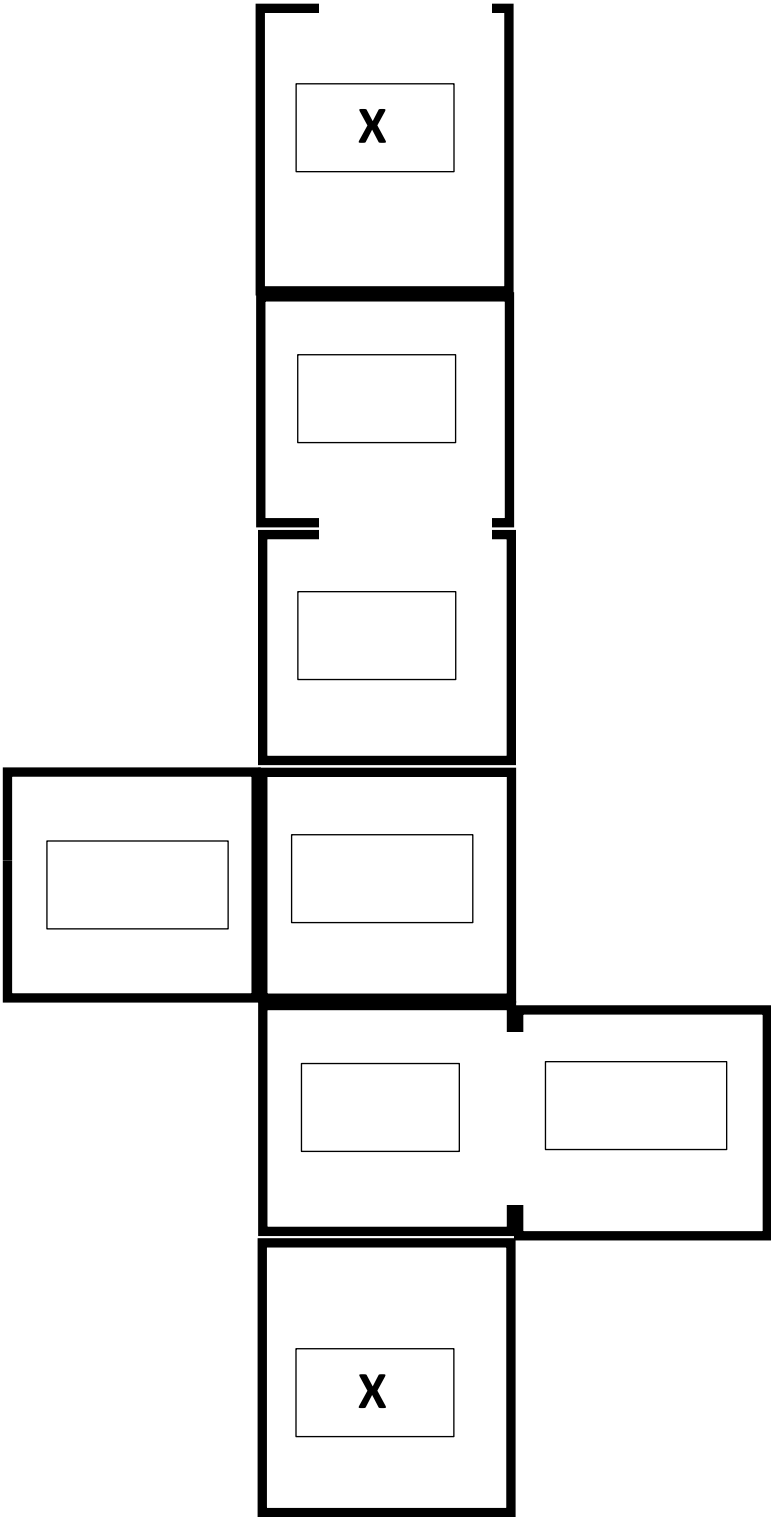


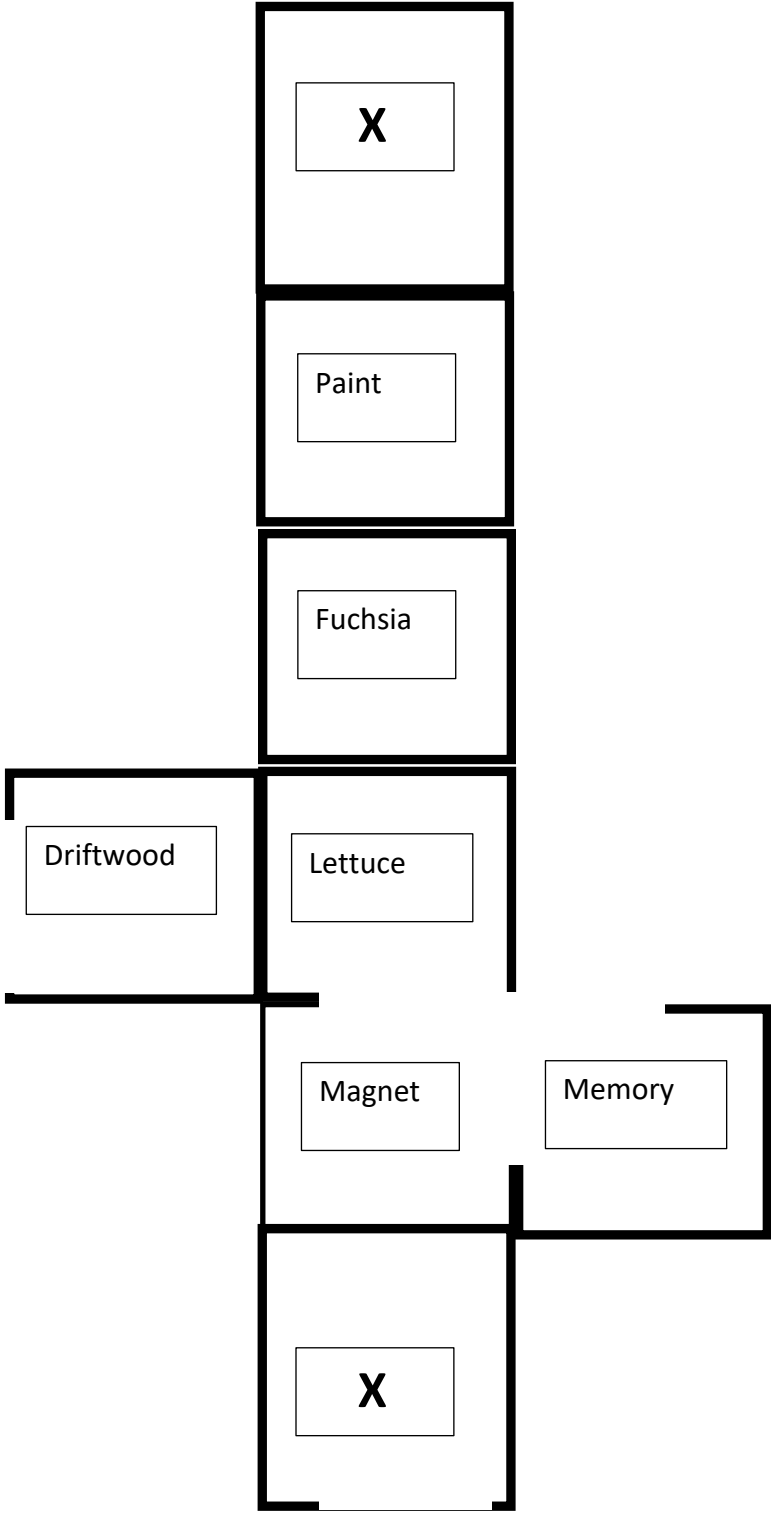


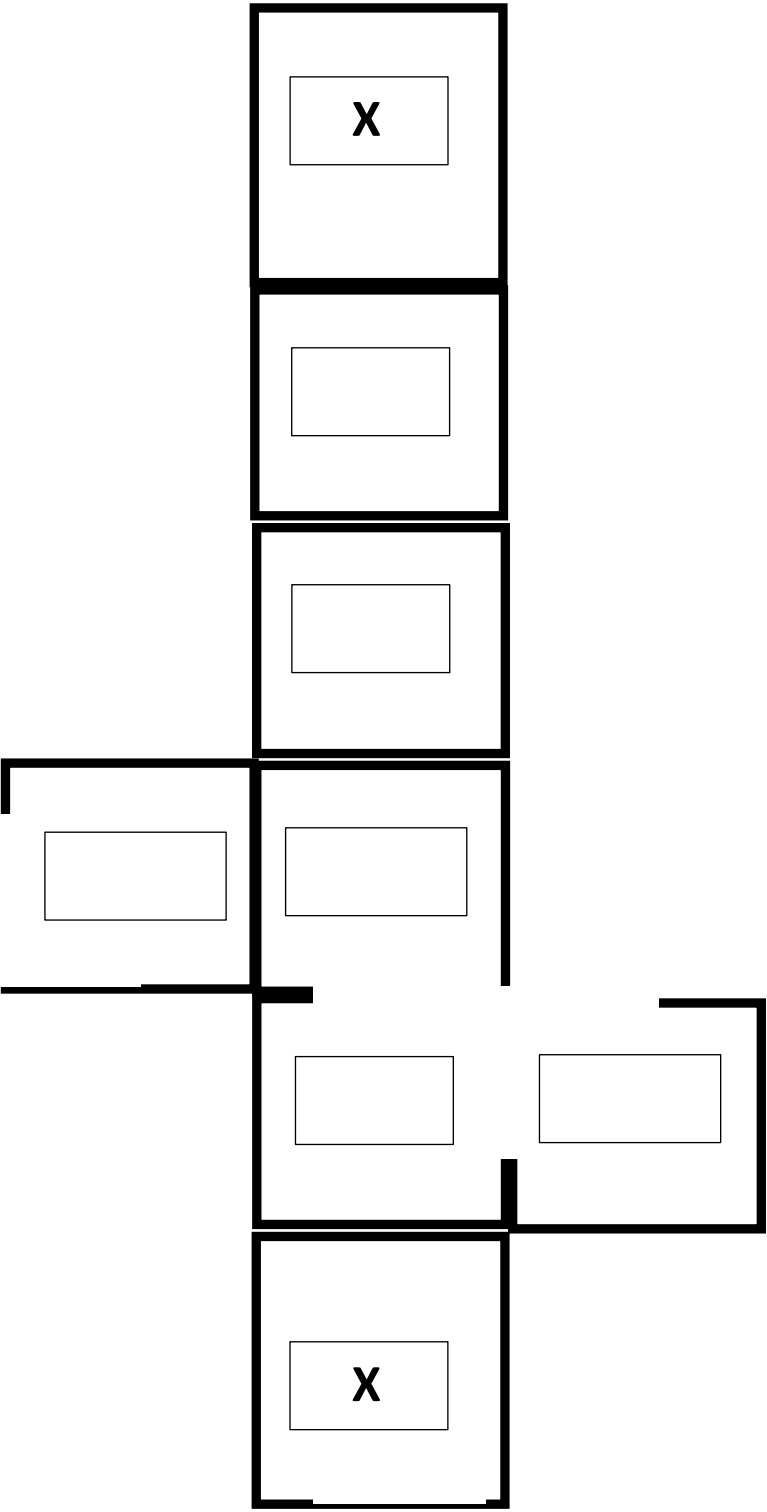












**X**

Mischief

Shake

After

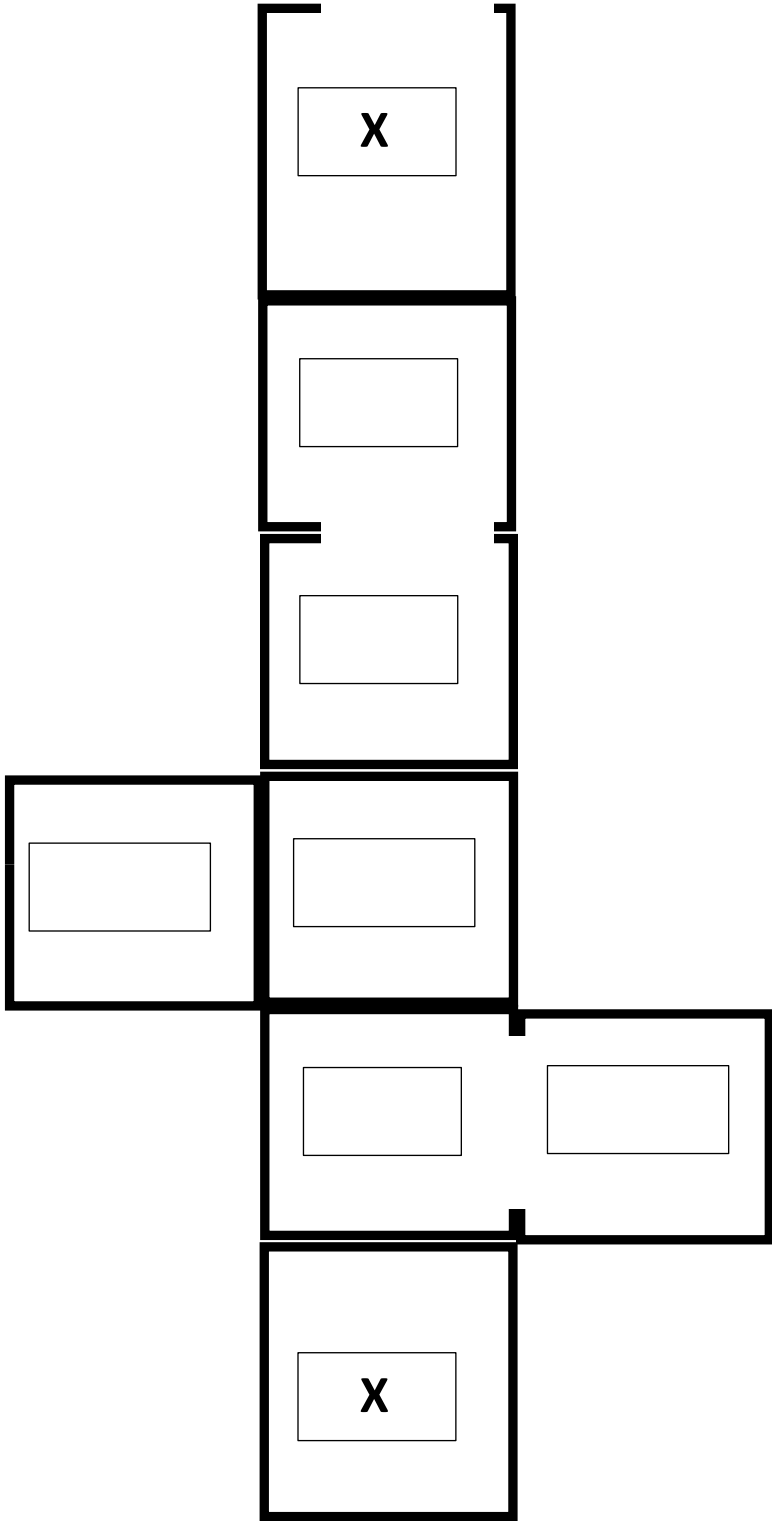
Speedy

You're

We

**X**





X

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if

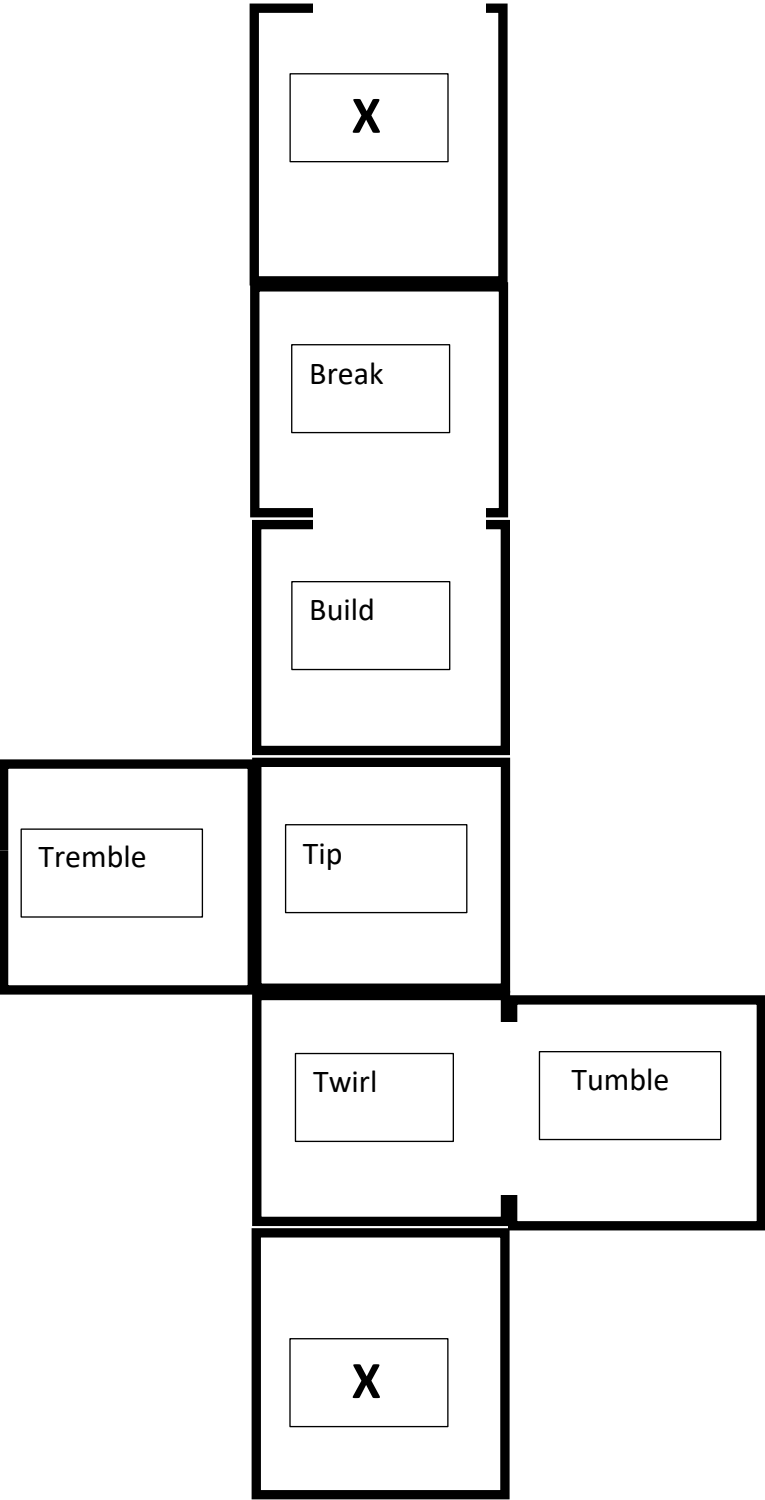
For

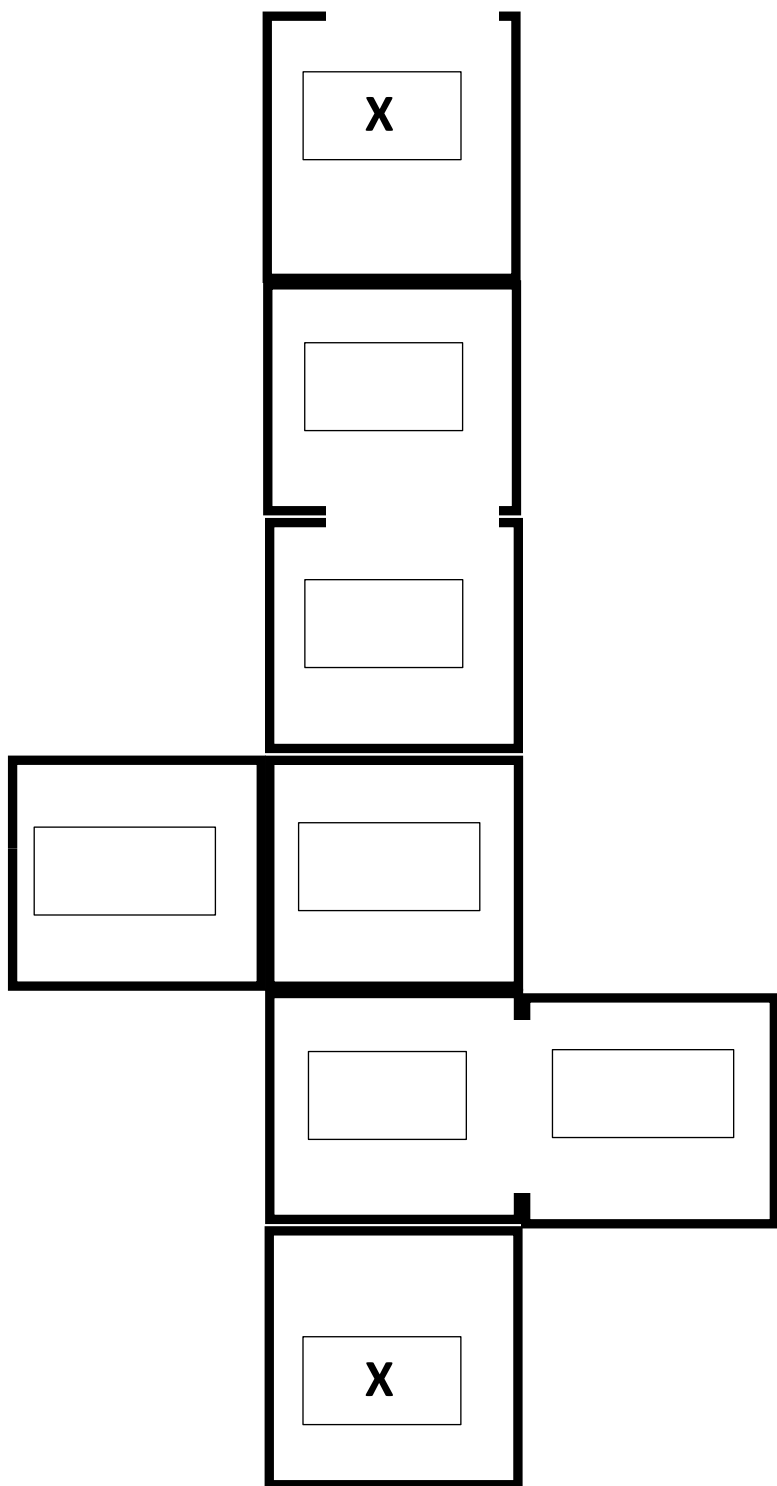
What

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X

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