



Mid-Autumn Moon Festival 中秋節 Learning Activities



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CLASSICAL
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Mid-Autumn Moon Festival Learning Activities



The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is an ancient festival with roots in harvest festival celebrations and moon worshipping rituals. It occurs on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month which happens some time between mid September and early October. This is when the moon is at its fullest after the autumnal equinox.

It is a popular, happy time of year when families get together to share food, admire the full moon, light lanterns and eat mooncakes.

Here is a selection of learning activities designed to help you understand and enjoy this festival. The Mid Autumn Moon posters on our website will give you more information.

中秋節快樂 - Happy Mid-Autumn Moon Festival!

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Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 1

In Chinese culture, the moon symbolizes family reunion, peace and prosperity. Chinese poets throughout the ages have dedicated countless poems to it. Some poets admired the pure and simple beauty of the full moon, especially around the Mid Autumn moon festival. Some used the moon to talk about their feelings, or to make wishes. Others used moon poetry to express feelings of missing home or longing for loved ones who were far away.

Thoughts in the Silent Night (靜夜思)

by Li Bai (李白)

床前明月光, Beside my bed a pool of light
疑是地上霜, Is it frost on the ground?
舉頭望明月 I lift my eyes and see the moon,
低頭思故鄉。 I bend my head and think of home.

Looking at the Moon and Thinking of One Far Away (望月懷遠)

by Zhang Jiuling (張九齡)

海上生明月 The moon, grown full now over the sea
天涯共此時。 Brightening the whole of heaven,
情人怨遙夜, Brings to separated hearts
竟夕起相思。 The long thoughtfulness of night.
滅燭憐光滿, It is no darker though I blow out my candle.
披衣覺露滋。 It is no warmer though I put on my coat.
不堪盈手贈, So I leave my message with the moon
還寢夢佳期。 And turn to my bed, hoping for dreams.

Look closely at the Chinese version of these poems, even if you don't read Chinese. Li Bai and Zhang Jiuling wrote in a classical Chinese style of poetry where each line has 5 (or sometimes 7) Chinese characters, or syllables, as every word in the Chinese language is one syllable long. This was considered very difficult, and masters of this form of poetry were highly respected. It meant that emotions were expressed in only a few words.

What does the moon make Li Bai and Zhang Jiuling think about? Why do you think that? Choose some words or phrases that show what you mean.

What feelings do you think Li Bai and Zhang Jiuling were trying to express in these poems? Why do you think that? Choose some words or phrases that show what you mean.

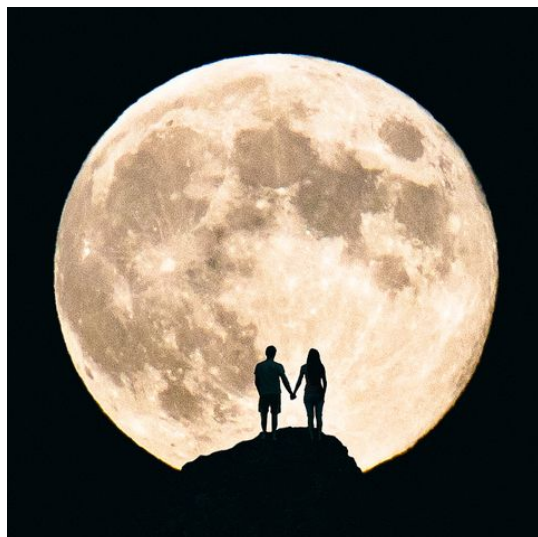
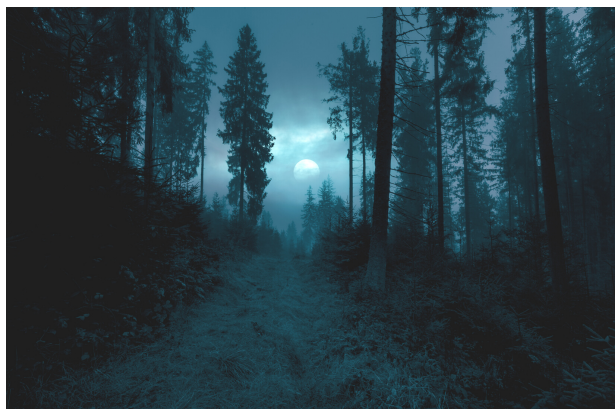


Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 1

Create your own poem: Inspiration

Write a poem based on the moon in a similar style to the poems of Li Bai and Zhang Jiuling.

1. Write down words or phrases that the moon makes you think of. For inspiration, look at these pictures.



Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 1

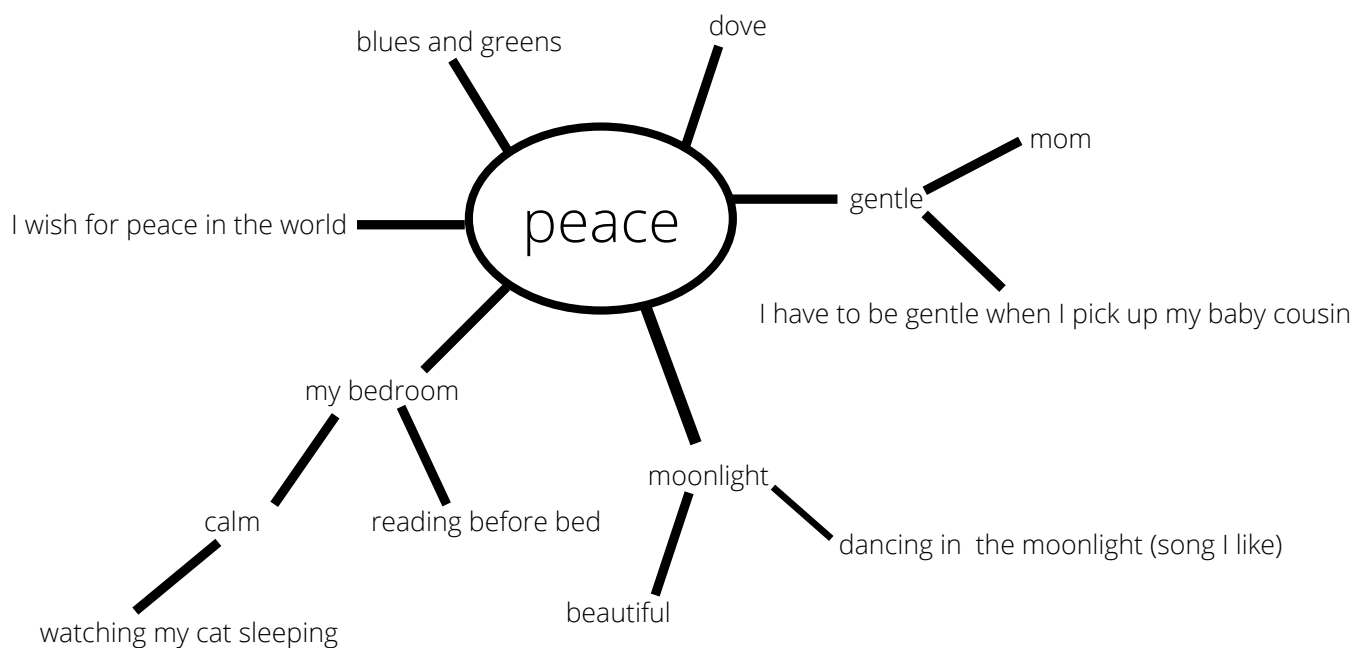
Create your own poem: Developing an idea

2. Look at those words and phrases you wrote on the previous page and choose one as the theme of your poem. For example maybe you wrote the word 'peace' and you would like that to be the theme. Or maybe you would like 'the moon' to be the theme.

My poem's theme: _____

3. Create a mind map, using the theme word in the middle. Mind maps help us brainstorm ideas and create links between ideas. For poetry, they might help us come up with words, phrases or ideas that can be developed into a poem or part of a poem.

This is an example of a mind map using the word 'peace'. It leads to many different ideas.



Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 1

Use this page to create a mind map



Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 1

Create your own poem: draft and final copy

One form of ancient Chinese poetry takes 5 or 7 syllables per line and there are 4 lines per verse. When you create your poem, use this as a model. It's ok to go over by one or two syllables.

Think of expressing feelings and try to create a picture using words. Use your mind map to help you. Here are two examples taken from the mind map on the previous page:

Bedtime

Moonlight appears and
Silver light creates peace.
My cat purrs. Sleep comes.
Calmness in my room.

The Dance

I look up to see the moon.
"Dancing in the Moonlight" plays.
I dance. The moon smiles on me.
I wish peace to the world.

Create your poetry here:

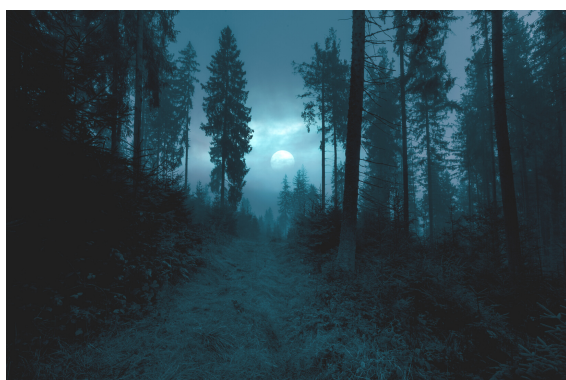


Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 2

Ancient Chinese poets loved the moon and wrote many poems about it. Some poets wrote about the beauty of the full moon and some used the moon to talk about their feelings or make wishes. Other moon poetry talked about love, family or home. Writing moon poetry was especially popular during the Mid Autumn Moon Festival.

Imagine you are an Ancient Chinese poet looking up at the full moon in the autumn sky.

What words or phrases does the moon make you think of? Look at these pictures for ideas.



How does the moon make you feel?

What wishes do you want to ask the moon?



Learning Activities - Moon Poetry 2

The Moon.

Silver shimmering
light. A friendly face,
looking down. I feel calm
and ready to sleep. The
moon is watching over us
all. I wish for
happiness.

Shape poems

Shape poems are poems written in the shape of the thing they are about.

1. Draw a circle on a piece of paper.
2. Using the words and ideas that you had about the moon, write a short poem that fits into the circle.
3. To display your poetry, cut out the circle shape. Stick it on to another piece of paper and create a moon picture with your shape poem as the moon!

Acrostic Poems

In Acrostic poems, each line of the poem starts with a letter that spells a word.

Using the word MOON, use the words and ideas that you had about the moon to create an acrostic poem. You could use other words too, such as MOONLIGHT or FULL MOON.

Mighty moon

Over us all

One bright light in the night sky

Never sleeps.



Learning Activities - Special Days

The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is a happy time of year when we celebrate with family and friends, eat special food, look at the full moon, tell stories and do other fun things. We celebrate it in September or October, when the moon is full.

Different families have different ways to celebrate the festival. Here are some of the traditions that many people know:

Food

A lot of food at this festival is round - the same shape as the moon!

Moon cakes are the most popular food at this time of year. They have special designs on the top and are often filled with a sweet filling such as bean or lotus paste. Delicious!



Families enjoy a meal together. The round shape of the moon means we think about the family joining together, so family members come home to be with their loved ones. Foods are round shaped, like eggs, oranges, grapes or pomelos, a kind of citrus fruit. Tea is served in round cups. Some families eat duck, which is good for our bodies at this time of year.



Decorations

Lanterns are popular at many Chinese festivals but especially at this time of year.

Some children like to make or decorate their own lanterns. Other people buy lanterns and light them at night. Lantern festivals are very popular.

Gifts

People enjoy giving Mid-Autumn Moon gifts to family, friends and co-workers.

A popular gift is a beautiful box of mooncakes. People might also give gifts of tea, wine or fruit.



Activities

An important part of this festival is looking at and admiring the full moon.

Families gather together at a good spot outside to look at the moon. They eat mooncakes, drink tea or wine, take photos and tell stories. Children play with lanterns and everyone remembers family members who are not able to be there.



Stories

The stories behind the Mid Autumn Moon festival are very old.

People remember the sad story of Chang'e and her husband Hou Yi who were separated when Chang'e was sent to live on the moon. They also talk about the selfless Jade Rabbit who lives on the moon with her.

Good Wishes and Giving Thanks

This festival is about giving thanks and sending good wishes to people.

People give thanks for the good things in their lives. They also write wishes to the Moon Goddess, Chang'e. You can say 中秋節快樂 - Happy Mid-Autumn Moon Festival!



Learning Activities - Special Days

Some families celebrate the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. There are many other special days in the year and every family celebrates differently.

What special days do you and your family celebrate?

How do you celebrate your special days? Write or draw pictures.

Food

For example, In my family, we eat turkey at Christmas

Decorations

For example, In my family, we put up Halloween decorations

Gifts

For example, In my family we give Lai See, or red envelopes at the Lunar New Year,

Stories

For example, In my family we listen to the story about Ibrahim at Eid al-Adha

Activities

For example, In my family we light fireworks at Diwali

Giving Good Wishes

For example, in my family, we wish people "Happy Hanukkah!"



Learning Activities - Special Days

Draw a picture of your favourite special day that your family celebrates. Include all the things that people do on that day - the food, games and activities.



Learning Activities - Stories

The stories behind the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival help to explain why we celebrate the festival and why we do some of the traditional activities.

Maybe you know these stories, or maybe you know a slightly different version of them. These legends are very old and over the years people have told them in different ways. Here are our versions of the two most famous: the legend of Chang'e and the legend of the Jade Rabbit.

The Legend of Chang'e

In ancient times, ten suns shone down from the sky and people were made miserable by the extreme heat. The Emperor of Heaven asked Hou Yi, an archer, to shoot down nine of the ten suns with his bow and arrows. He succeeded and the Emperor rewarded him with the Elixir of Immortality.



Hou Yi decided not to drink the Elixir himself but to share it with his beautiful and kind-hearted wife Chang'e so they could be immortal together. He took the Elixir home and presented it to Chang'e to keep.

Unfortunately, Peng Meng, a wicked thief, secretly saw Hou Yi give the potion to his wife. When Hou Yi was next out of the house, Peng Meng broke in and demanded that Chang'e give him the Elixir. In a panic and not wanting Peng Meng to get the drink, she took out the Elixir and drank it all herself. At that moment, she flew out of the window and up into the sky where she came to rest on the moon. Hou Yi returned home to find his wife floating away and in grief he shouted her name to the sky, but she was never to return.

After that, on the 15th day of every 8th Lunar month, he took the food that Chang'e liked the most to an altar and offered it to her. The local people did likewise. This is why even now, on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, we tell the story of Hou Yi and Chang'e and send wishes and prayers to her, the Goddess of the Moon.

The Legend of the Jade Rabbit

Three Immortals, pretending to be beggars, went through the forest asking for food. Fox and Monkey both took pity on the beggars and gave them something to eat. Rabbit did not have any food to give so told them, "You can eat me instead!" and threw himself into the fire.

The Immortals were very moved by the Rabbit's selfless act and as a reward, made him immortal and sent him to live on the moon with Chang'e. If you look very closely at the full moon, you can see the outline of the Jade Rabbit!



www.ThatWizardCameFromTheMoon.com



Learning Activities - Stories

Now you have read the stories, here are some ideas to have fun with them!

Make a play

Act out the stories as if they were a play. Decide who gets the role of Chang'e, Hou Yi, Peng Meng and so on. Collect props to help you.

Make a picture book

Write out the story and create illustrations. Perhaps write the story as if it was for young children.

Make a comic

Try making a comic strip of the stories.

Make a stop-motion movie

You can use free apps on a phone or tablet to do that. Try using Lego or other figures you might have at home!

Re-write them in your own words

Try re-writing the stories in your own words, or tell them to another person.

Translate them

Do you know another language? Try translating them!

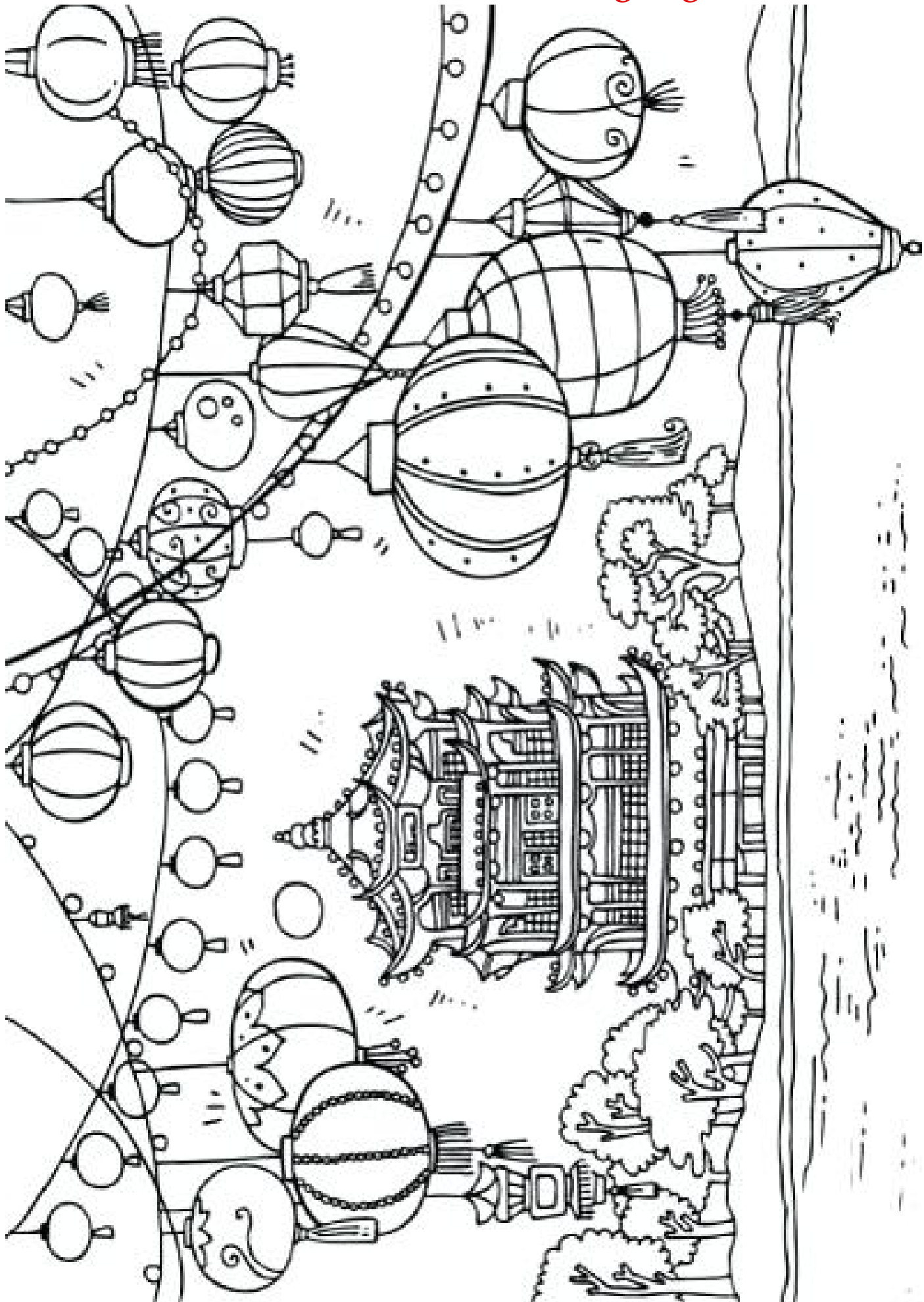
Make art or craft that is inspired by the stories

Try:

- felting a rabbit
- creating a mosaic picture of Chang'e using different coloured squares of paper
- using a paper plate to draw the jade rabbit on the moon
- taking photos of the moon and collecting them over a number of weeks
- collecting/cutting out photos of the moon and creating a collage picture
- creating a picture inspired by Chinese art, or another art form from another country









coloring-forkids.com





Learning Activities - Websites and resources

To learn more about the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, visit these websites:

<https://www.chineseamericanfamily.com/mid-autumn-festival/>

<https://www.globetrottingkids.com/discover-the-mid-autumn-moon-festival/>

<https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/mid-autumn-festival.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-Autumn_Festival

<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/essential/holidays/mid-autumn.htm>

Lantern making:

<https://www.origami-resource-center.com/chinese-lantern.html>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Sky-Lanterns>

Make mooncakes:

<https://www.stockland.com.au/shopping-centres/centres/stockland-merrylands/inspiration/everyday-ideas/recipe/no-bake-mooncake>

<https://whattocooktoday.com/unique-easy-mooncake-recipes.html>

Books:

<https://coloursofus.com/9-childrens-books-about-the-chinese-mid-autumn-moon-festival/>

Further educational resources about Chinese culture, tradition and history (including Chinese-Canadian history):

<https://vancouverchinesegarden.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Resources-for-Educators.pdf>

