

A 2021 South Asia Book Award Honor Book

A 2021 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People

A 2021 ALA Rise: A Feminist Book Project's Top Ten Book

A 2020 Kirkus Reviews' Best Picture Book



EDUCATOR GUIDE



Picture Book | 5-7 Years | Grades K-2

Key Themes: Civil rights, LGBTQ+, Same-sex weddings, Cultural celebrations, Homophobia, Communities & Neighborhoods

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Ayesha is excited to attend her cousin Ritu's wedding. She can't wait to dance at the baraat ceremony! But not everyone is happy that Ritu is marrying her girlfriend Chandni. Some have even vowed to stop the celebrations. Will Ayesha be able to save her cousin's big day?

Centering Ayesha's love for her cousin as much as it showcases Ritu and Chandni's love for each other, this warmhearted debut from Ameya Narvankar celebrates the power of young voices to stand up against prejudice and bigotry.



AN IMPRINT OF SAMBASIVAN & PARIKH

“Simultaneously confronts homophobia and celebrates child-powered change in Hindu communities: a delight.” –Kirkus Reviews (STARRED)

“With a dearth of picture books authentically addressing marriage traditions within the South Asian community, and particularly LGBTQ+ couples, this is a welcome attempt at rectification.” –School Library Journal

“. . . a lively procession of jewel tones and golden yellows . . . to stand up for love against hate.” –Foreword Reviews

Resources for the classroom

Educator Guide

Author’s Note

Downloadable Activities

Book Trailer

Flip Book with Audio Narration

Pronunciation Guide



Ameya Narvankar is a multidisciplinary designer, visual artist, and bookmaker from India. An alumnus of IIT-Bombay, Ameya believes in the power of design to bring about change, which he hopes to achieve through his foray into children’s literature. He loves, in no particular order, cats, bearded men, and Beyoncé (who doesn’t?).

Connect with him at [@ameyazing](https://www.instagram.com/ameyazing) on Instagram.





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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Part A: Vivid Verbs

In *Ritu Weds Chandni*, the author uses a variety of verbs to portray the many emotions that the characters experience in the story. For example, instead of using the word *said* over and over again, the author uses words like *answered*, *blurted*, and *asked*. Descriptive verbs create vivid imagery in our mind and this allows the narrative writing to come to life.

In this activity, students will be brainstorming a list of common verbs and then work in pairs to replace them with more descriptive verbs.

Remind students what a verb is and how it is used in a sentence. For example, write the following sentence on the board: “*Jina ran toward the bus stop.*” Ask students to identify the verb in the sentence. Students can work with a partner to think about more descriptive ways to say “ran” so that it more clearly illustrates how Jina is running. Reconvene the class after a few minutes so students can share their ideas. Discuss how using descriptive verbs (darted, sprinted, jogged) changes how you read and understand the story.

Students can work in groups of three to brainstorm descriptive verbs for each of the common verbs below.

Common Verb	Descriptive Verb
walk	
eat	
think	
speak	
sit	
look	
smile	



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Part B: Play the Vivid Verbs Game

In this activity, students will practice using descriptive verbs instead of common verbs.

What You'll Need:

- A copy of the game board (Print and use the sheet on the following page)
- Game pieces (a penny, eraser, paperclip—anything will do!)
- Die
- Small whiteboards and markers for each student
- Timer (optional)

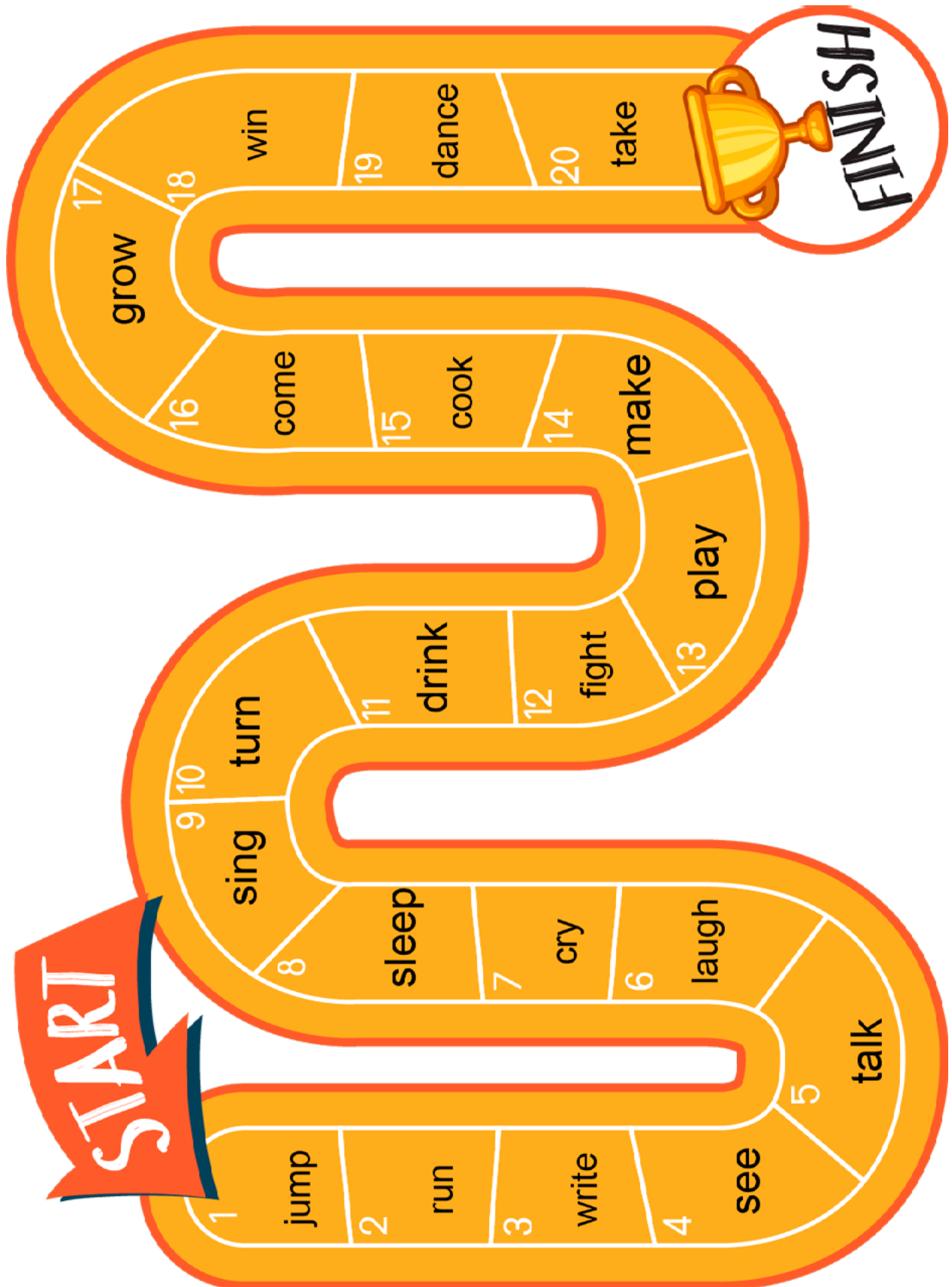
Instructions:

Students will play the Vivid Verbs Game in groups of 2 to 4. Each student will put their game piece on the spot marked “Start” on the game board. Player one will roll the die and advance the number of spaces indicated on the die. The word written on the square is a common verb. Using their whiteboards, player one will have 2 minutes to brainstorm as many descriptive verbs to replace the common verb.

The player will be awarded one point for each unique descriptive verb generated. This process is repeated for the next player. When the first player reaches the finish line, the player with the most accrued points wins the game.



VIVID VERBS GAME



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Part C: Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

In this activity, students will be putting their vivid verbs to work by creating their own descriptive paragraphs. As a whole class, discuss the language and techniques used to create vivid imagery, and explain concepts such as sensory details (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell), and literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and the use of adjectives.

Re-read *Ritu Weds Chandni* and ask students to find examples of descriptive passages.

Introduce the structure of a descriptive paragraph: Topic sentence, supporting details, and closing sentence. As a class, choose a topic (for example, a wedding, a day at the beach) and brainstorm sensory details about that topic or memory. Model the process of writing a descriptive paragraph using one of the ideas from the brainstorming session. Think aloud to show how to incorporate sensory details and descriptive language effectively.

Have students work independently to compose their own descriptive paragraphs using the graphic organizer below.

Topic:				
Sights:	Sounds:	Smells:	Tastes:	Textures:
Main Idea/Topic Sentence:				
Supporting Details:				
Concluding Sentence:				

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Civic Ideals and Practices

Understand concepts and ideals such as: individual dignity, fairness, freedom, the common good, rule of law, civic life, rights, and responsibilities



SOCIAL STUDIES

Standing Up To Bullying

Not everyone in Ritu's family or neighborhood is happy that Ritu is marrying her girlfriend Chandni. The two brides encounter a group of people who attempt to block their route to the wedding venue. They douse the brides with cold water in an attempt to stop the celebration. In this moment of fear and misery, Ayesha stands up to the bullies by dancing. Her actions reflect her love for her cousin, and her determination to ensure that Ritu's special day is not ruined. Ayesha's spirited stand inspires the rest of the baraat; the wedding takes place as planned.

In this scenario, Ayesha provides an example of how children can demonstrate respect for the rights for others, even other adults, and participate, or even take on a leadership role in the resolution of conflict.

While the main conflict in this book stems from homophobia, Ayesha's example can be used as inspiration to stand up against any form of bullying.

Topic for classroom discussion

How does Ayesha feel when the riders on horses block the baraat? How does she feel when she sees a heartbroken Ritu? How do you think she feels when she starts to dance? Use the pictures for clues to understand Ayesha's emotions.

Suggested Activities

Dance like Ayesha! Play some Bollywood music and use the description in the book to follow her moves and have a blast!

Try telling the story from the point of view of Chandni, Ritu's girlfriend.

Further Reading For Educators

Attitudes toward homosexuality in India—
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/02/homosexuality-india>

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Civic Ideals and Practices

Analyze how specific policies or citizen behaviors reflect ideals and practices consistent and inconsistent with democratic ideals

Locate, access, organize, apply information from multiple sources reflecting multiple points of view



SOCIAL STUDIES

Marriage Equality Around the World

In *Ritu Weds Chandni*, author Ameya Narvankar shares:

This book centers Ayesha's love for her didi as much as it showcases Ritu and Chandni's love for each other. Ayesha wanted her favorite cousin to be happy on her wedding day, and she found it difficult to understand why others were against a union of two women. As of the year of publication, such a marriage would not be legally recognized in India, where same-sex relationships have only recently been decriminalized. Such a couple would likely face an uphill battle to be accepted within their families.

Discuss the concept of marriage equality and why it is an important social issue. Ask students if they are familiar with the term and what they know about it. Briefly address any misconceptions and provide context if needed. Include relevant articles, videos, and other resources that best reflect your learners.

In this activity, students will be exploring marriage equality around the world using the [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#) and [The Pew Research Center](#).

Direct students to the website and have them explore the information individually or in small groups. Students may take notes on key findings, focusing on the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in their pursuit of marriage equality. After students have explored the websites independently or in small groups, bring the class together to discuss. Highlight key sections and navigate through relevant pages. Discuss the data and information presented on the website, including the countries where marriage equality is recognized, those where it is not, and regions where progress is being made.

Facilitate a class discussion using the following questions:

- Which was the first country to make same-sex marriage legal?
- What patterns do you see on the maps featured on the websites?
- What are some of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in advocating for marriage equality?

Have students share their notes and findings from their individual exploration, contributing to the class discussion.

National Core Arts Standards, Media Arts: MA:Pr5.1.3: Exhibit developing ability in a variety of artistic, design, technical, and organizational roles, such as making compositional decisions, manipulating tools, and group planning in media arts productions.

ARTS

Mehendi Hands

Notice the illustration below? These intricate designs are known in India as *mehendi*—the painting of henna on the body. This form of art has been practiced in many South Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries for centuries. Henna leaves are dried, ground up, and made into a paste. The paste is squeezed out of a cone like cake icing to create designs on skin. Henna is a temporary dye that lasts a few weeks. Traditionally, mehendi is worn on special occasions like weddings.

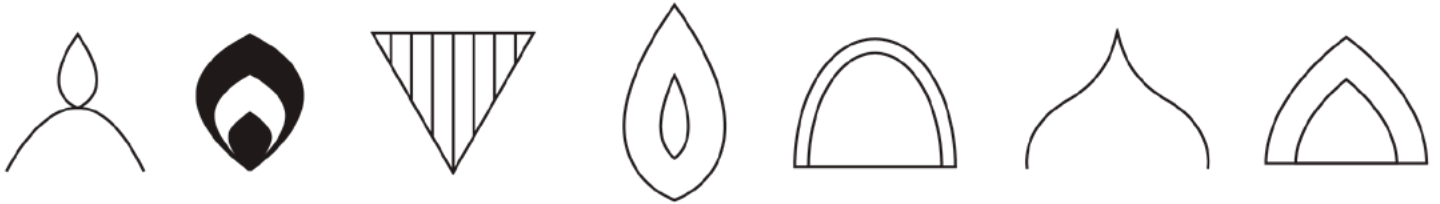
In this activity, students will be learning about various mehendi designs in different cultures.

Students can research different [mehendi designs across cultures here](#). Invite students to identify common features in the line art: swirls, dots, flowers, teardrops, etc.

Students can trace their own hands or use the template on page 11. Using a pencil, lightly sketch a mehendi design that incorporates features of line art that they have noticed in other mehendi designs. They can use traditional shapes and patterns that they observed in their research or build new ones using simple shapes. Students will then use a marker to trace their design and add color.



MEHENDI HANDS



Make an eye-catching mehendi design! You can use the simple shapes above to create patterns. Repeat the shapes to create flowers, vines, leaves, and more.



New York State Next Generation Mathematics

Learning Standards: NY-5.MD

Recognize volume as an attribute of solid figures and understand concepts of volume measurement.



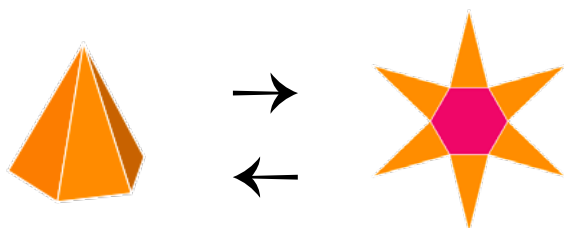
MATHEMATICS

Fashion Design and Geometry

Ritu Weds Chandni illustrates the many glamorous outfits that might be worn during an Indian wedding. Both Ritu and Chandni are wearing red *saris*, while Ayesha is dressed in a *lehenga* (skirt), *choli* (top), and *dupatta* (long scarf). The illustrations depict men wearing *sherwanis* and *kurtas* (tunics). Some men are wearing an Indian headdress known as a *pagari* or turban.

Part A: Exploring 2D Nets and 3D Shapes

In this activity, students will explore 2D nets and 3D shapes using [Mathigon's virtual interactive](#). Students can investigate various 3D shapes and click “unfold” to see the corresponding 2D shapes that make up the 3D shape. Students can use the 2D shape polygons to create their own net and fold them into 3D shapes.



Part B: Make Your Own Lehenga

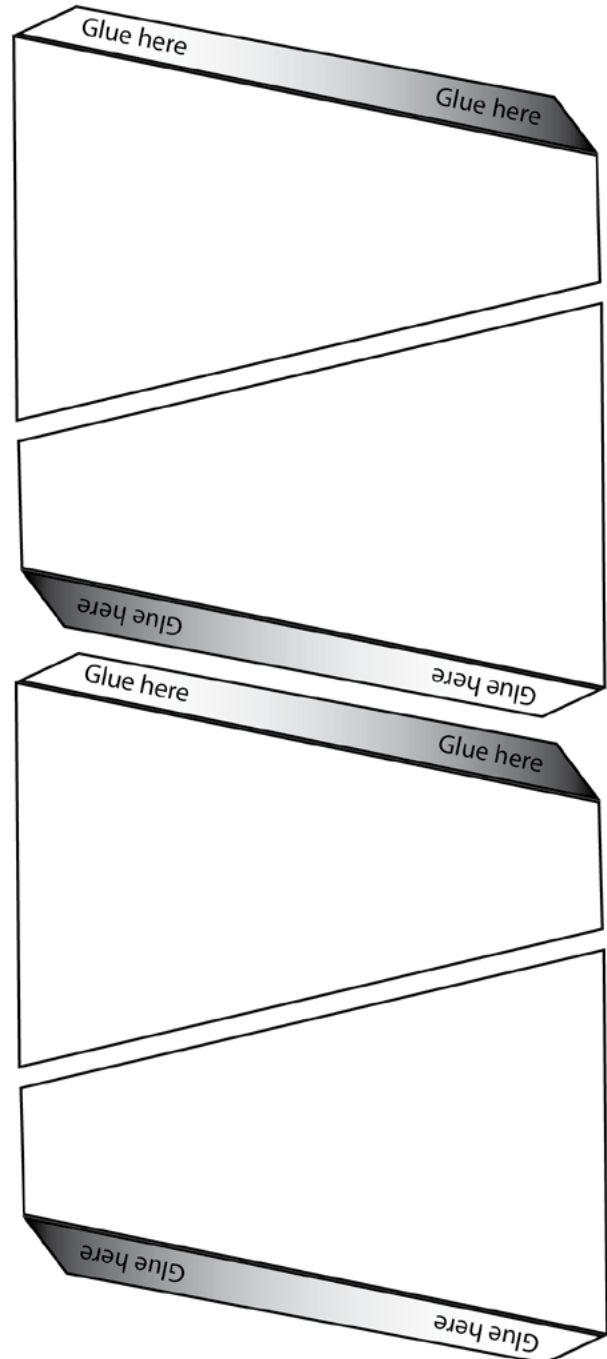
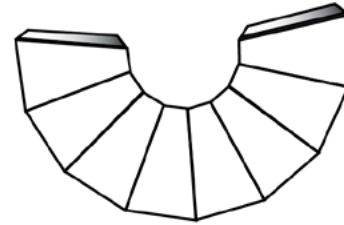
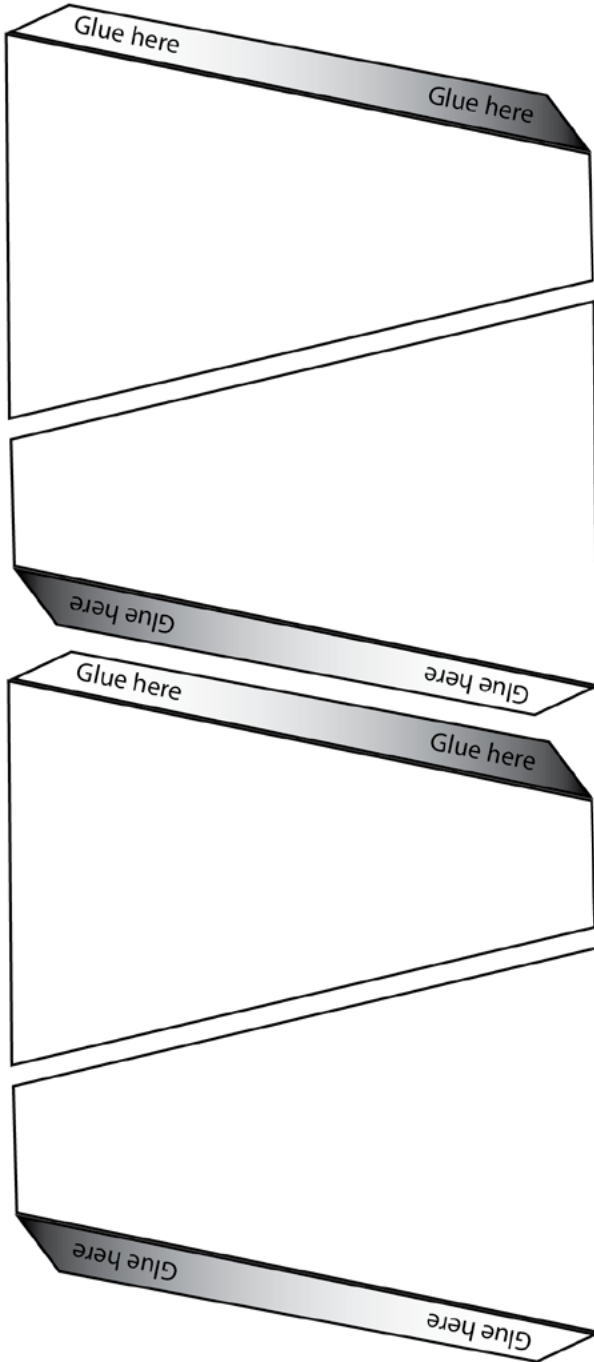
In this activity, students will be exploring the connection between clothing design and geometry. Begin the discussion by showing students how fashion designers need to understand geometry in order to design and create clothes. Show students tools like [Tailornova](#) that help designers create technical sketches and flat patterns. Students will create 2D nets and use them to visualize and understand how they can form into 3D clothing shapes, such as a lehenga.

Designers often use simple 2D shapes to create clothing. For example, a lehenga can be created with a series of quadrilaterals cut out from a long rectangle. Working in pairs, students can create a technical drawing of a lehenga and a flat pattern that consists of basic 2D shapes. They will need to create a scaled pattern on grid paper and then use construction paper to construct their 3D clothing design.

For younger students, use the template provided on the next page.

BUILD A 3D LEHENGA

Cut out the shapes on this sheet and create patterns. Add color and then glue them together to create the pattern shown here:



What You'll Need:

- This sheet printed on construction paper
- Color pencils or markers
- Scissors
- Glue or tape



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This guide was prepared by **Anjali Joshi**, a science teacher and curriculum developer by day and children's book author by night. She has 15+ years of experience in the field of K-12 science education, and recently completed a Master of Science at the University of Oxford where she had the opportunity to research educational technology and the effective implementation of K-8 STEM curriculum.

At dawn and dusk, she spends her time fighting monsters, training Pokémon, and playing dress-up with her two amazing kids. Connect with her at authoranjalijsoshi.com.