A MAP OF ME

Education Packet

SUMMARY

Grieving the loss of his grandmother, ten-year-old Ben finds a map in her coat pocket that sends him on an odyssey around the city of Chicago. Accompanied by his wise, hip babysitter, Trav, Ben searches for the deeper message his grandmother left behind, meeting an eclectic cast of characters along the way. The play speaks to young people who feel grief but don't know how to process it, and invites them to journey through the city around them and build lasting memories.

IN THIS PACKET....

Page 1.....Summary & Contents
Pages 2-3.....Locations
Pages 4-5.....History
Pages 6-7.....Murals
Page 8-9.....Food in Chicago
Page 9.....Jewish Culture
Page 10.....Celebrations of Life
Page 11.....Leaf Etching
Page 11-12.....Haiku Activity
Page 13.....Additional Reading

Key

? Discussion Questions

Fun Fact

! Activity

Additional Reading

THE THEATRE SCHOOL AT DePaul University

LOCATIONS



ROGERS PARK

A diverse neighborhood on the North side of Chicago with more than 60 languages spoken. Home to Loyola University, many cultural restaurants, and long-standing theater spaces. Take a short walk East and you'll find the lakefront and classic architecture designed by Frank Loyd Wright.

BRONZEVILLE

A neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, historically known as "The Black Metropolis" due to it being a home to thriving Black businesses and arts development starting in the early 20th century. Bronzeville has its own Walk of Fame featuring influential Black artists and public figures, a famous restaurant scene, murals, and The South Side Community Art Center, which hosts community events and art exhibits.





HUMBOLDT PARK

A predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhood on the West Side of Chicago featuring lots of restaurants, murals, and public art like the archway shown here.

HANCOCK BUILDING

Currently the 5th tallest building in Chicago, this skyscraper on Michigan Ave features an observation deck that you can visit to peer over the entire city!





OSAKA JAPANESE GARDEN

A garden in Jackson Park featuring Japanese plants and architecture, such as a pavilion and moon bridge. The garden was a gift to Chicago from Japan for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair!

LOCATIONS

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICAN ARTS AND CULTURE

A museum located in Humboldt Park, founded in 2001, featuring exhibits from many art mediums by artists from the Puerto Rican diaspora. The museum also hosts community events, book clubs, and small festivals.



NATIONAL MEXICAN ARTS MUSEUM

A Mexican and Chicano arts and culture museum in Pilsen with exhibits from all throughout history and across multiple art forms.





MARGIE'S CANDIES

Margies is a 1920s-style candy shop. They sell a variety of chocolate, candy, ice cream, and cake. Margie's has several locations, but its most famous ones are in Bucktown and Ravenswood.

MANNY'S DELI

A historic Chicago Deli operating since 1942, serving sandwiches and old school classics. Manny's is the oldest cafeteria-style Jewish deli in the country, and is considered a Chicago Food Institution. Manny's is most known for their massive hand-carved corned beef and pastrami sandwiches!



? Questions

1. What are some important Chicago locations for you and your family?
2. Which of these locations and neighborhoods listed above have you been to?
3. Which of these places would you be excited to visit in the future?

Consider a field trip or family outing to one or more of these landmarks!

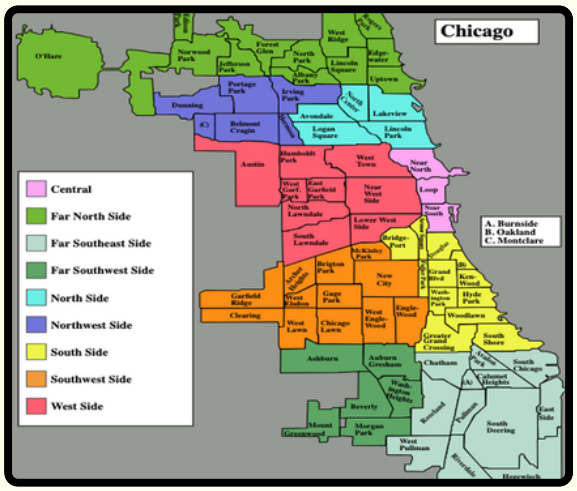


OZ PARK

A park in the neighborhood of Lincoln Park with tennis courts, basketball courts, a playground, and unique sculptures of characters from *The Wizard of Oz*.

HISTORY

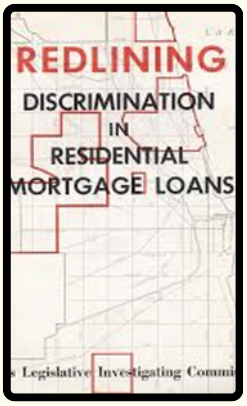
Chicago is known for its many vibrant neighborhoods. Each has a unique culture, history, and identity. A person's neighborhood shapes their sense of culture, opportunities, school experiences, and even sense of belonging.



> ***Fun Fact***
> Chicago has over 70 nieghborhoods!

Map of Me asks you to consider: How does where you live shape who you are?

REDLINING



Redlining was a practice in the 1930s–1960s where banks and government agencies decided which neighborhoods were "safe" to invest in. Neighborhoods with mostly Black residents or immigrants were outlined in red on maps (hence the name redlining). People in these areas were often denied loans, mortgages, and investment opportunities. This made it much harder for families to buy homes or build wealth.

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation was one of the largest contributors to the project, which helped create these maps and ideas. Redlining was "banned" in 1968 (through the Fair Housing Act), although its impact is still felt today.



GENTRIFICATION



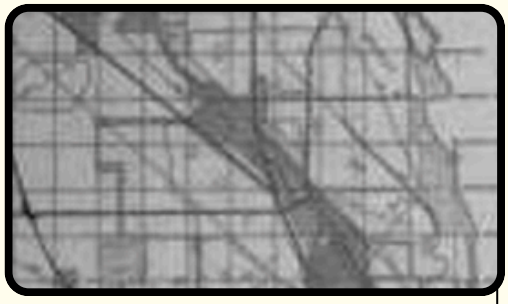
Gentrification occurs when wealthier people and businesses move into a neighborhood, changing its makeup in major ways. For instance, expensive new restaurants, cafes, apartments, and businesses are built in these neighborhoods, making property value and rent go up significantly. Longtime residents of Chicago neighborhoods like Pilsen, North Halsted, Uptown, and Logan Square have experienced this in recent years. While gentrification aims to bring greater community investment and upward mobility to neighborhoods, it also raises concerns about the displacement of current community members.

HISTORY

THE GREAT MIGRATION & SEGREGATION

Between 1916 and 1970, millions of Black Americans moved from the South to cities like Chicago in what is called the Great Migration. Many settled in neighborhoods like Bronzeville. Because of discrimination, these folks were often restricted to specific areas. This led to segregation, where communities are divided by race and class.





Questions

1. Why do you think some neighborhoods get more resources than others?
2. Is change in a neighborhood always good? Why or why not?
3. In what way has redlining affected your neighborhood or community? Can you name one example of redlining seen in Chicago?
4. Have you ever seen your neighborhood change? How did it feel?
5. What makes a place feel like home?
6. How can communities keep their culture and history alive?

Reading

How to Draw a Map By Malcolm Swanston and Alex Swanston

How to Draw a Map traces the story of mapmaking (cartography) from the first scratchings on cave walls to the detailed high-tech `navigator'. In this book, father and son cartographers Alexander and Malcolm Swanston demonstrate the skill, creativity, and care involved in the timeless art of creating maps.

https://www.amazon.com/How-to-Draw-a-Map/dp/0008275793

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



https://tillapp.emmett-till.org/items/show/22

https://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-great-migration-mississippi-chicago/

Reading

How to Read a Map By Waldron, Melanie

Maps are essential tools for understanding the world around us. This book explores the different types of features used on maps and how to make sense of them.

https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C1553500

Chicago, Baby! By Flores, Feather

This book takes readers on a tour through some of Chicago's most popular attractions and features. An adorable unnamed narrator and her biracial family experience the zoo, an air show, and even some famous deep-dish pizza.

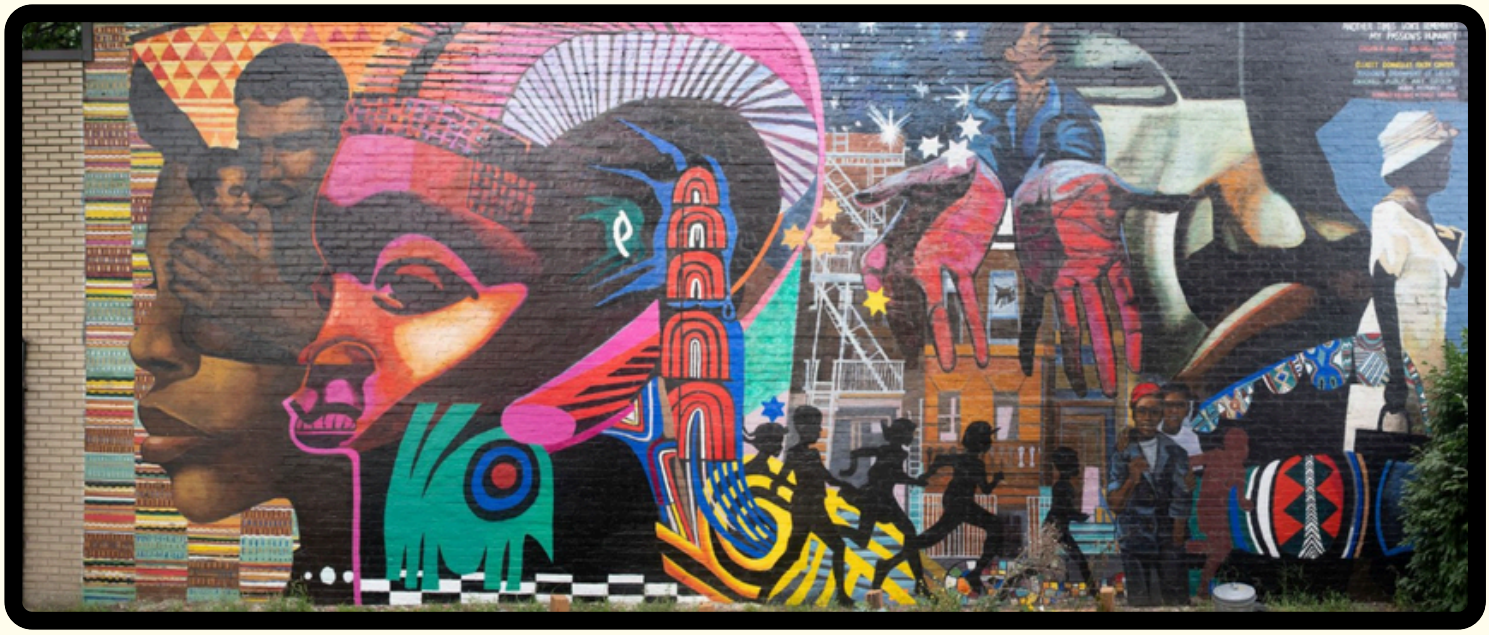
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2404783

MURALS

A mural is a large painting that uses a building's wall as its canvas. You may have seen murals all across Chicago! Some of the city's oldest murals were created during the Great Depression almost one hundred years ago, but new murals are being painted on public buildings and walls every day.

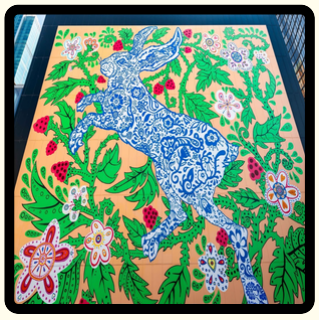
Murals and other kinds of public art disrupt the cityscape with color, creativity, and a commitment to shared values. Many murals around Chicago memorialize important people or moments in our city's history.













? Questions

As you take a look at the murals on this page, consider some of the questions that are posed to Ben in *A Map of Me*:

1. What do you notice in the mural? What stands out to you?
2. How does the mural make you feel?
3. What do you think the artist is trying to say?

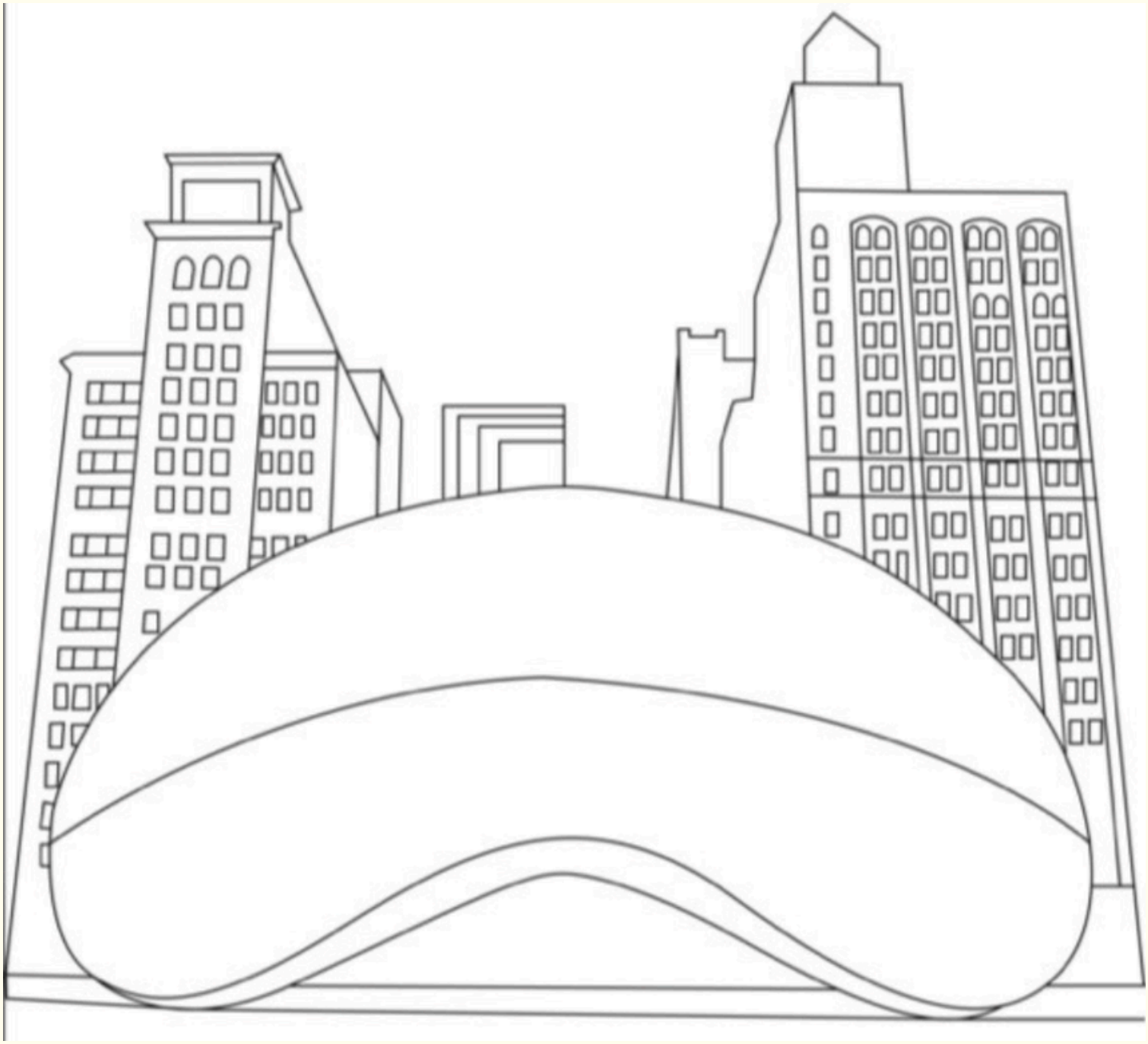
MURALS

Activity

Consider the murals that are already a part of your own lives:

1. What are some of your favorite murals around the city?
2. Are there any murals that you see almost every day? How do they make you feel?
3. Why do you think murals and other kinds of public art are important in cities like Chicago?

Now imagine that you were asked to paint a mural on *Cloud Gate*, or "The Bean," the iconic piece of public art In Chicago's Millenium Park. Create that mural below:



FOOD IN CHICAGO

CULTURAL CUISINES



Corned Beef Sandwich: A classic deli-style sandwich with salt-cured beef. Traditionally, it is served on rye bread and topped with mustard or Russian dressing, coleslaw or sauerkraut, and a pickle on the side



Kugle: A traditional Jewish baked casserole or pudding, most commonly made from egg noodles (lokshen) or shredded potatoes.



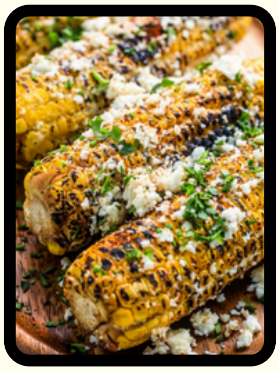
Matzo Ball Soup: Traditional Jewish food featuring light, airy dumplings in chicken broth



Chopped Liver: You may hear someone say “what am I, chopped liver?”, but it’s not just a saying. This is actually a common food in Jewish culture!



Jibarito: Instead of bread, a jibarito uses flattened, fried, green plantains as the “bun” which are traditionally stuffed with steak, cheese, lettuce, tomato, and garlic-mayo.



Elote: A popular Mexican street food consisting of grilled or boiled corn on the cob, slathered in a creamy mixture of mayo or crema, usually topped with cotija cheese, chilli powder, and fresh lime juice.

Fun Fact

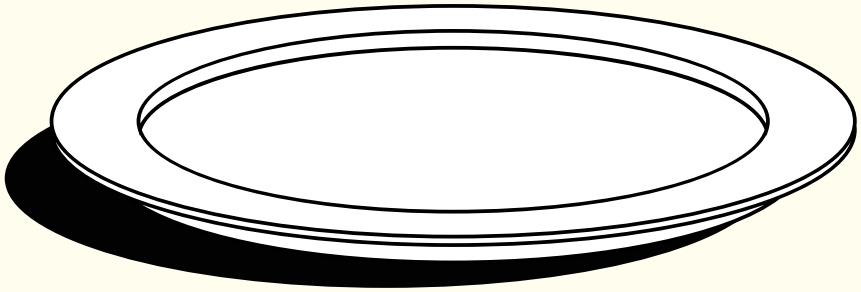
What is a Food Institution?

Throughout the play, certain restaurants are referred to as “Food Institutions.” A food institution is a beloved, longstanding dining establishment or culinary tradition that has woven itself into the cultural fabric of a city.

FOOD IN CHICAGO

Activity

Using the plate below, draw your favorite Chicago food or a dish from your culture.



Questions

1. Have you seen any of these Chicago foods in your neighborhood?
2. What food or restaurant would you try? Why?
3. What's your favorite Chicago food?

JEWISH CULTURE

Shiva: A traditional practice of mourning a family member or close friend. Family and friends gather to celebrate their loved one's life and care for the mourners, taking on everyday tasks in support of them. "Shiva" is the Hebrew word for "seven," and traditionally, a shiva takes place over seven evenings!
Bubbe: A Yiddish word that means grandmother. Yiddish is an historical language of the Jewish people, most spoken by those whose ancestors spent time in Eastern Europe.
Boychik: A yiddish word that means "young boy".

Reading

What Jewish Looks Like By Kleinrock, Liz

"There are over fifteen million Jews in the world, which means there are more than fifteen million ways to look and be Jewish. Nevertheless, they are threaded together by one unmistakable truth: their lives, work, and commitment to Jewish values."

https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2604964

Just Shy of Ordinary By Sass, A. J.

"Shai, a thirteen-year-old nonbinary homeschooler, attempts to find a "new normal" post-pandemic as they start public school, meet new friends, and learn about their Jewish identity."

https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2562473

CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

SHIVA



Depending on your family's culture you might have a unique way of celebrating the lives of your ancestors. In *A Map Of Me,* Ben and his family sit Shiva, a Jewish ritual, to celebrate his grandmother's life. Shivas are meant as a way for families to gather and share food and stories about their departed loved ones while caring for the mourners.

OBON

Obon is a Japanese Buddhist tradition honoring the spirits of one's ancestors. Families gather and clean the graves of their ancestors while performing a traditional dance to welcome and celebrate their spirits. The families light lanterns to guide their loved ones' souls to their resting place.



QINGMING



Qingming Festival is a traditional Chinese holiday in which families clean their ancestors' graves and bring them ritual offerings. These offerings include traditional food and the burning of joss sticks (a candle in stick form).

DIÁ DE LOS MUERTOS



Día de los Muertos means "Day of the Dead" in Spanish. Families set up an ofrenda, or "offering" with pictures of their ancestors to honor their lives.

Questions

1. How does your family celebrate the lives of your ancestors?
2. What is something that these traditions have in common?
3. What are some cultural celebrations of life you know of that weren't mentioned?
4. Why is it important to remember and honor the lives of our ancestors?

Reading

Together We Remember By Morera, Jackie

A Latina child works to cheer up her Papi after her Mami dies by going on all the adventures they had planned in their imaginations. This is a tender story of how a dad and daughter build their relationship and lives after losing their most loved one.

https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2637390

Cont.

The Remembering Candle By Goldberg, Alison

On the one year anniversary of his Grandpa's death, a boy and his family light a special candle. He and his family spend time remembering Grandpa and sharing stories.

https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2652285

LEAF ETCHING

Activity

Supplies:
Leaves, paper, and coloring and writing materials

Instructions:
1. Take your class outside and have them go look for a leaf that they like. After everyone has a leaf, return to your classroom
2. Give each student a piece of paper and coloring materials, and ask them to place the paper on top of the leaf
3. Have your students begin coloring over the leaf, pressing down firmly to capture the texture of the leaf under the paper
4. When they are done, ask your students to cut out the leaf (some students may require extra support). If students want, they can add additional designs to their leaf etches.



HAIKUS

In *A Map of Me*, Ben and Trav write haikus to discuss their surroundings. Haikus come from Japanese poetry, dating back centuries!

A haiku is a poem made of three lines. The first line uses 5 syllables, the second line uses 7 syllables, and the third line uses 5 syllables. Haikus are one of the shortest forms of poetry, and they are meant to show that simplicity can create beautiful art!

Fun Fact
In Japan, the number of syllables in a haiku was believed to be the duration of a single breath.

Example:

Haikus are so cool
A Map of Me is a play
We all love theatre

Now try clapping out the syllables!

Ben and Trav write haikus about the mural in Bronzeville, the chopped liver at Manny's Deli, and the ice cream at Margie's. How can we take events from our everyday lives and turn them into art?

HAIKUS

! Activity

Make a haiku about your life!

Here are some questions to help you along:
What is your favorite book?
Who is someone in your life that inspires you?
What is your favorite family tradition?
How do you feel when you listen to your favorite song?
What do you think your pet is thinking?
What do you want your older self to know?

Write your haiku down on a piece of paper and save it. Each day this week, create a haiku using these questions or some of your own. At the end of the week, take a look at your collection of poems and reflect.

? Questions

1. How did writing haikus help you appreciate the small things in your life?
2. Was it hard to write a poem that only uses 5, 7, and 5 syllables? Why?
3. Why are haikus a valuable form of art?
4. How can you use haikus in your everyday life?
5. Why do Ben and Trav write haikus?

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

MORE READING

And They Walk On by Maillard, By Kevin Noble

An indigenous boy visits his grandmother's house after she dies, and he feels her presence in the kitchen where she shared her love through cooking and food.
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2657888

Follow That Map! By Tan, Sheri

Pablo and his friends want to spend the last day of summer at Coney Island. They need to figure out how to get to Coney Island; all they need to do is read the map to find their way.
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2165431

The Wrigley Riddle By Kelly, David A.

During a visit to the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley field, cousins Mike and Kate investigate why someone has been tampering with the famous ivy vines growing on the outfield walls.
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C1866109

Lonely Planet Kids The Maps Book: Discover the Amazing World of Cartography Ancient Times to Present Day How to Read Symbols, Keys & Grid Lines Fascinating Facts By Joanne Bourne

Explore the amazing world of maps from the first sketches on cave walls to real-time maps on phones. Discover their incredible history and marvel at ancient maps, interactive maps, and more.
https://www.amazon.com/Lonely-Planet-Kids-Maps-Book/dp/1837580073

Let's Meet Chicago, Real Kids in the Windy City By Dizik, Alina

Meet children from all around Chicago and hear about their life in their own words
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2279217

The Dubious Pranks of Shaindy Goodman By Lowe, Mari

Helping her popular next-door neighbor Gayil set up what she thinks are harmless pranks, 12-year-old Orthodox Jewish girl Shaindy must figure out how to stop these pranks before they escalate and she herself becomes the next target.
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2551798

Montgomery and the Case of the Golden Key By Crowder, Tracy Occomy

In 2008 South Side Chicago, ten-year-old Montgomery "Monty" Carver's hunt to find the origins of a mysterious golden key leads him to discover the rich history of his community.
https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S126C2545640

A MAP OF ME

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