

A Year with
COLTALE THE DRAGON



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Inspired by the ideas of the children and
adults from the City of London

Graphic illustrations by Paul Ricketts

Dear parents and carers,

Spending just 5 minutes a day reading to your child, will help them develop social and emotional skills and become confident, happy learners.

For more tips, book suggestions and fun activities, head to our social media pages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and look for the Coltale blue dragon on SqMileFamilies.

Happy reading!



COLTALE
is a very friendly dragon.
He has yellow horns, yellow spikes
and big blue and yellow wings
to fly around.

COLTALE
has big blue ears with
which to hear you.
Watch out!
He breathes fire.

JANUARY Submitted by Charterhouse Square School

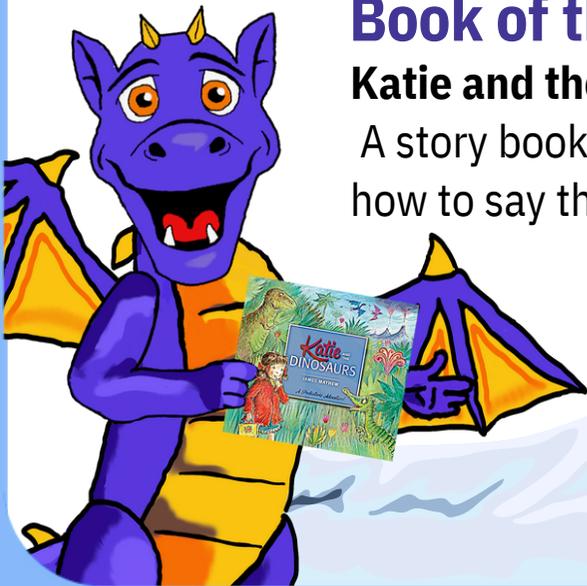
Coltale's Top Tips - Model correct speech

Model the correct way of saying things rather than drawing attention to your child's mistakes. If your child says "Look, my doddy." Support them by saying "It's a lovely dolly."

Book of the month

Katie and the Dinosaurs by James Mayhew

A story book that also teaches the children how to say the names of the dinosaurs!



Rhyme/song time

Koo Koo - Dinosaur Stomp (find on YouTube)

Join in with your child with this dance:

"Pick up your foot and stomp it stomp it. (x3)

Open your jaws and chomp it chomp it! (x3)

Straight till the end!"



Fun activity

Make a fun dinosaur dig excavation!

Mix Dirt – 1 and 1/4 cups, Flour – 1 and 1/4 cups,

Sand – 1/2 cup, Salt – 3/4 cup.

Slowly add water until you reach a clay-like consistency.

Put your toy dinosaurs in it and leave it to dry!

Grab your toy tools and dig out the dinosaurs!



Coltale's Top Tips - Give Time To Talk

When something captures your child's imagination, talk to them about it. Instead of questions, comment on what they're doing and saying. This reinforces language and shows that you're interested and listening to them.

Book of the month

When I Look in the Mirror by Sopoiea Greywolf

A beautiful book about developing positive self-image and self-knowledge, particularly for black children.

It's an important lesson for every child, so take a look in a mirror and talk about what you can see!



Rhyme/song time

Little Girl In The Ring (find on YouTube)

*"Little girl in the ring, tra la la la la!
There's a little girl in the ring, tra la la la la!
Little girl in the ring, tra la la la la!
She looks like a sugar in a plum - plum, plum!"*



Fun activity

Make some Rock Cakes!

Ingredients - Self-raising flour, caster sugar, baking powder, butter, dried fruit, an egg, milk, vanilla extract.

Super easy and children can enjoy the texture of combining the ingredients into a cake mix with their hands. By the time you have cleared up the mess, the cakes are ready to take out of the oven!



MARCH Submitted by Ceri Wilkins,
City of London Common Councillor

Coltale's Top Tips - Have family time

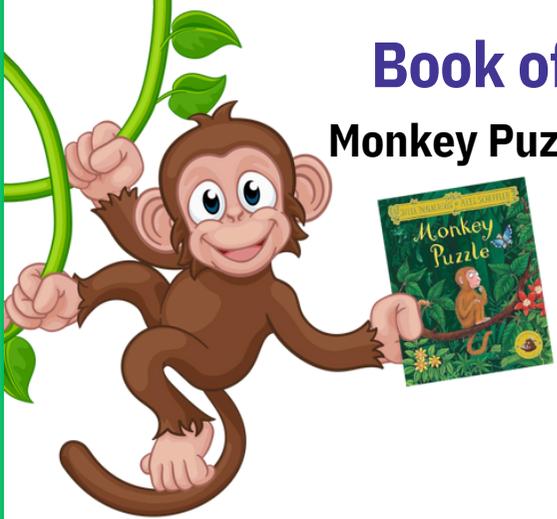
Do interesting family things together at least once a week. Take photos and display them so they can be used as a prompt for your child to remember and talk about their experiences. Mealtimes are a good time to chat.



Book of the month

Monkey Puzzle by Julia Donaldson

It's no fun being lost in the jungle, and little monkey wants his mum. Luckily a kindly butterfly is keen to help monkey. They find lots of other animals on the journey back to find monkey's parents.



Rhyme/song time

I'm A Little Teapot (find on YouTube)

*"I'm a little teapot, short and stout,
Here is my handle, here is my spout
When I get all steamed up,
Hear me shout,
Tip me over and pour me out!"*



Fun activity

A pretend tea party

Have a mid-afternoon tea party with your child and even their friends. You can use a toy mini tea set, some water and a teabag! Don't forget to have a good chat and some delicious party snacks always helps the conversation flow along!



APRIL Submitted by Georgina Poullais,
(Family Support Worker) Aldgate Children's Centre

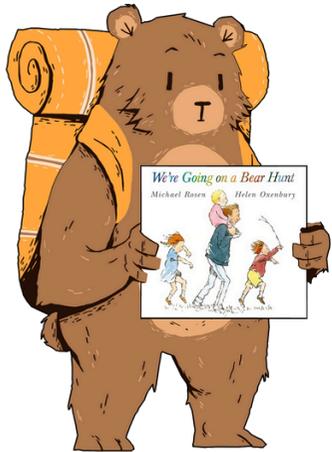
Coltale's Top Tips - Get their attention

If you want your child to listen, give them the best chance to hear you. Turn off background noise. If your child is engrossed in play you may need to say their name first. When they are looking at you, then you can start talking.



Book of the month

We're Going On A Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen



Join in the family's excitement as they wade through the grass, splash through the river and squelch through the mud in search of a bear. Plus the surprise when they finally reach the cave at the end of the forest!

Rhyme/song time

Hand Washing Song (to the tune of Brother John)

“Wash your hands (x2)

Remove your rings (x2)

Wet your hands with running water (x2)

Apply the soap” (x2)

Fun activity

Wet and Dry Game

You need: small pots, a waterproof bag (not transparent). Different materials – for example, rice, pasta, stone, sponges, cereal, flannels, dried fruit and water.



Let your child touch the wet, dry materials, ask how they feel different? Ask them to shut their eyes and try to match the wet and dry versions of the same item.

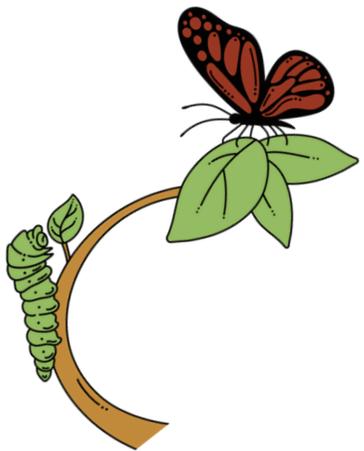
MAY Submitted by Natalia Bohun,
Barbican Newpark Childcare

Coltale's Top Tips - Imaginative play

Have a dressing up box at home. Children love to pretend. By imagining being someone or something else they use a wide variety of language and develop their creativity. Extend their vocabulary by joining in with the game.

Book of the month

Caterpillar to Butterfly by Camilla de la Bedayere



What do the caterpillars eat?
Where do butterflies lay their eggs?
How long do butterflies live?
The book has all information you need to explain to your child about the amazing stages of the different life cycles of this beautiful insect!

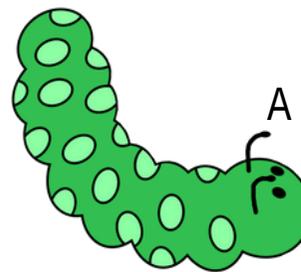
Rhyme/song time

The Tiny Caterpillar Song (find on YouTube)

“There’s a tiny caterpillar on a leaf,
(wiggle, wiggle).

A cocoon is what he’s spinning for his home,
(spin, spin).

Then he’ll be a butterfly and fly away,
(flap, flap).”



Fun activity

Yoga

Have a Yoga session with your child. Yoga helps children manage their anxiety, emotional regulation, boosts self-esteem, awareness, mindfulness, concentration and memory. Plus develops children's strength and flexibility. Try fun and simple exercises like ‘lunge’, ‘Giraffe’, ‘Turtle’ and ‘Butterfly’.



JUNE Submitted by Nathalie Said,
Speech and Language Therapist

Coltale's Top Tips - Turn taking

Turn taking is an essential communication skill. Babies learn it when they make a noise, you repeat it back to them and then they feel encouraged to make it again. Toddlers love repeating games like peepoo. Older children have it reinforced during activities such as playing board games.

Book of the month Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell



Telling this story on its own or with animal props is great for attention and listening skills. Children can anticipate the boxes being opened and develop their vocabulary in using the names of animals and colours.

Rhyme/song time

Old MacDonald had a Farm (find on YouTube)

“Old MacDonald had a farm, Ee i ee i oh!
And on that farm he had some chickens, Ee i ee i oh!
With a cluck-cluck here, And a cluck-cluck there.
Here a cluck, there a cluck, Everywhere a cluck-cluck,
Old MacDonald had a farm, Ee i ee i oh!”



Fun activity

On The Look Out Game

When you are out and about with your child, engage and encourage them to look around. To talk about what you/they see, help them guess hidden items, make them look and listen. Ask your child questions that will encourage activity. Such as, can you find somewhere to: (a) hide? (b) balance? (c) swing? (d) jump?



JULY Submitted by Claire Pompey,
Barbican Playgroup

Coltale's Top Tips - Give time to respond

Children often need time to put their thoughts together. Give them longer to respond than an adult. Try counting to 10 in your head so you don't fill in the gaps for them.

Book of the month

Sharing a Shell by Julia Donaldson

A charming underwater tale of friendship and fun, as a crab has to contemplate sharing his home. There's lots of activities that can be initiated while reading this book to your child. Talk about sharing, helping friends or being kind to other people. You can also count the other creatures in the rock pool or rhyming words.



Rhyme/song time

Once I Caught A Fish Alive (find on YouTube)

“One, two, three, four, five. Once I caught a fish alive.
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Then I let it go again.
Why did you let it go? Because it bit my finger so.
Which finger did it bite? This little finger on my right.”



Fun activity

Make A Rock Pool

Make a rock pool in the garden by collecting rocks and putting around the edge. Use shredded blue tissue paper to re-create coral plants. Use leaves, plants for seaweed. Add water and some toy fish and you're ready for an underworld adventure!



AUGUST Submitted by Beth Jeyes,
Teacher at Aldgate School

Coltale's Top Tips - Be at your child's level

This will show your child that you are interested in them.

Also by being able to look at them directly at eye level, also shows that you are going to pay proper attention to what they have to communicate to you.

Book of the month

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davis



Most real sharks are not what you might expect. Some are no bigger than a chocolate bar, and most wouldn't go near a human, even if you were wearing a sign saying "dinner"!

Entral your child with this informative, entertaining and factual book about sharks.

Rhyme/song time

Down Under The Sea (with Makaton actions on YouTube)

“Whales and sharks in the big blue ocean.
Whales and sharks in the deep blue sea.
Whales and sharks in the big blue ocean.
Down there under the sea.”



Fun activity

Fun Facts about Sharks

After reading our recommended book, why not test your child's knowledge? Can they find 5 fun facts about sharks? It's a great game to play when making a trip down to the sea or especially on a visit to an aquarium. Have a go at writing them down!



SEPTEMBER *Submitted by Smithfield House Nursery*

Coltale's Top Tips - Re-read books

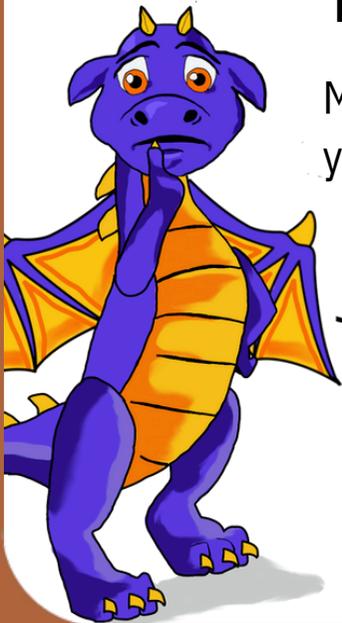
Children will read the same books again and again. Repetition helps them to understand and remember words. Research shows that children who read daily are used to discussing books and are more educationally successful.

Book of the month

That's Not My Dog by Fiona Watt

More than a book to read, this is a book where your child can literally feel every page.

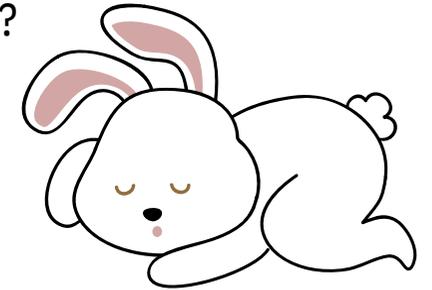
Eye-catching illustrations are combined with sensory patches that encourage little fingers to feel all the contrasting textures, as they discover dogs with soft ears, a fuzzy tongue and fluffy paws. Ask your child to say what they see and feel.



Rhyme/song time

Sleeping Bunnies (find on YouTube)

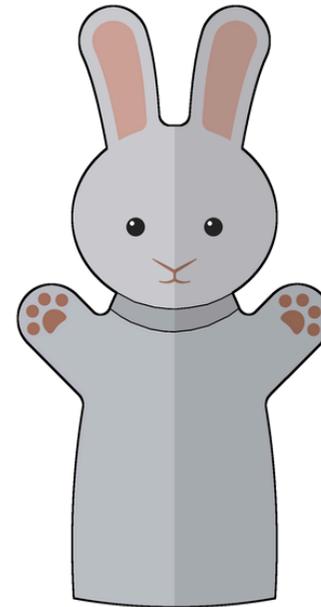
“See the little bunnies sleeping till it’s nearly noon.
Shall we wake them with a merry tune?
They're so still, are they ill? No!
Wake up bunnies!
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop. (x3)
Hop little bunnies, hop and stop!”



Fun activity

Make a bunny puppet

Draw your own rabbit or copy the picture on the left to use as a template for a bunny puppet. You can make it out of scrap material so your child can put their hands inside. Or you could draw the design onto paper or cardboard, cut it out and then stick your bunny onto a lolly stick.



OCTOBER Submitted by Sona Kalenderian,
(Library Manager) Shoe Lane Library

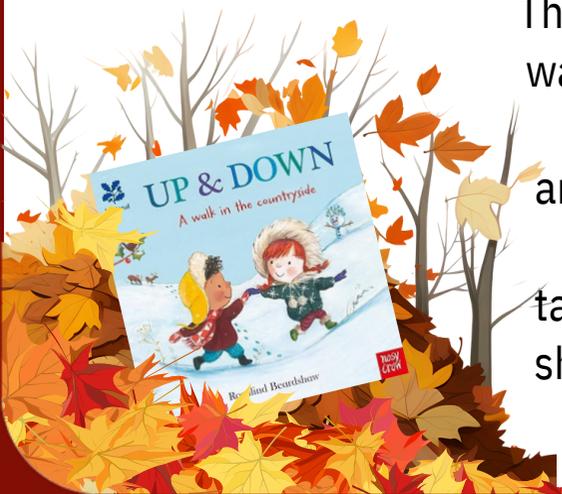
Coltale's Top Tips - Rhymes and songs

Rhyming makes new words and sounds memorable to children. Sing songs you learned in childhood and your child will love them too. Regularly borrow books, CDs, and attend rhyme-time sessions at your library or children's centre.

Book of the month

Up & Down: A Walk in the Countryside
by Rosalind Beardshaw

This book guides children on a winter walk through the countryside, going up and down, from cold to warm and light to dark. It's a great way of bringing children closer to and talking about nature. Plus this book should be available to borrow from City of London libraries.



Rhyme/song time

Walking Walking Song (find on YouTube)

“Walking, walking, walking, walking.
Hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop.
Running, running, running.
Running, running, running.
Time to stop, time to stop!”



Fun activity

Make a Leaf and Flower Collage

Talk about nature and do this craft with your child at home. Collect leaves, flowers and petals when out on a walk. Once you return home, encourage your child to arrange and glue your leaves and flowers onto paper to make a fun nature picture!



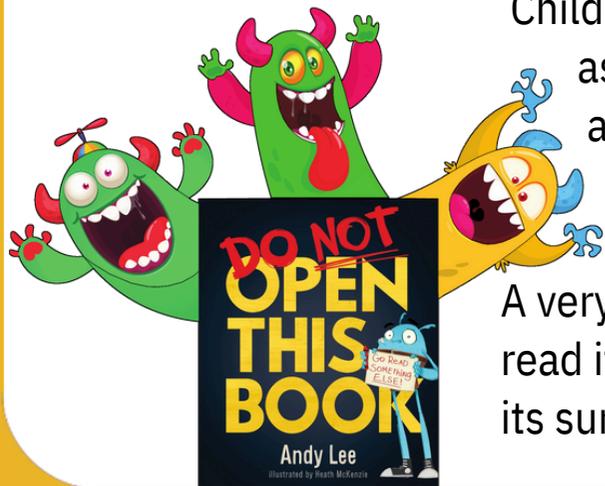
NOVEMBER Submitted by Isabelle Deninee, Brenda Tubbs, Amrul Khan (CoL Early Years SEND Team)

Coltale's Top Tips - Adhoc learning options

The possibilities for chat and learning new vocabulary are endless. Make the most of the opportunities that present themselves; don't give those shoes to the charity shop – let them dress up. Someone's going to the Tate for a visit – join them. If you have leftover spaghetti – let them play with it.

Book of the month

Do Not Open This Book by Andy Lee



Children love doing things they are asked not to, and by not obeying and turning the pages they discover Monster's hilarious secret at the end of this book! A very funny book (particularly if you read it using different tones of voice), its sure to make your child giggle!

Rhyme/song time

The Happy Song (find via Smile is Priceless on YouTube)



“Brring, brring, brring, the bicycle.
Beep, beep, in the car.
Ping, ping, a submarine.
Shoo, shoo, a helicopter.
A choo, choo, train, an airplane.
A weeee, down the slide!”

Fun activity

Khana Massi (blind fly)

Put a blind fold on your child, spin them around once or twice on the spot. Then ask them to try to locate where other people are hiding in the room! This activity is great fun, but make sure you keep a careful eye on your child to make sure they don't walk into unsafe situations!



DECEMBER Submitted by Nike Johnson (Children's Services Librarian), Laura Smith (Principal Library Assistant)

Coltale's Top Tips - Let your child lead

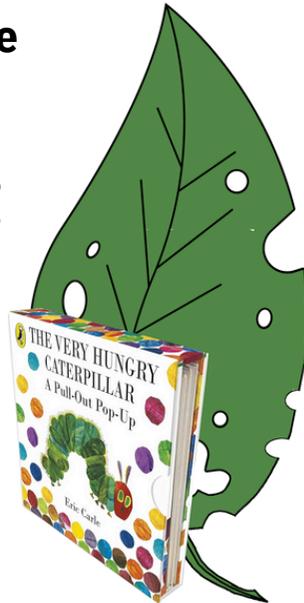
Children don't like to have their play directed by an adult.

They learn more successfully when doing things that interests them. Listen to what they say, watch what they do and join in. It's a more rewarding experience for both of you.

Book of the month

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

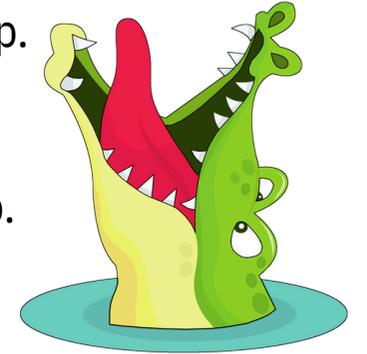
Combine this timeless story with an interactive craft for a fantastic storytelling experience. When reading along with your child, you can take turns "feeding" the caterpillar as they follow the story – you can let them identify each food item, use the food items to teach colours, and even use them as a way to introduce children to the real life foods!



Rhyme/song time

Snap, Snap, Snap! (find on YouTube)

“Snap, Snap, Snap. A crocodile sat on my lap.
I stroked him ever so gently,
And now he’s taking a nap.
Snap, Snap, Snap. He’s woken from his nap.
And now he’s ever so hungry.
Snap, Snap, Snap!”



Fun activity

Feed the caterpillar!

Use an empty tall crisp tube to make your caterpillar's body. Decorate with paint, or crepe paper using glue, scissors, and a stapler to cover face and body. Draw food on paper or print out pictures of food items. Make sure that they are small enough to fit into the caterpillar's mouth.



MAKE YOUR OWN...

Submitted by Nadine Licence, (Library Assistant) Shoe Lane Library

Parents often ask us for messy play recipes/ideas so here are our recipes!

Play Dough

Ingredients

2 cups plain flour
1 cup salt
1 tbs oil
1 cup cold water
liquid food colouring

Method

Mix until you form a dough.
Add more water or flour if needed. Split into smaller amounts, add drops of food colouring, and knead well.

Top Tip: Mix up smaller amounts and put drops of food colouring into the water before you mix it in – saves a lot of kneading! The Play Dough will keep for a couple of weeks in an airtight container.

Cloud Dough

Ingredients

5 cups of flour
1 cup of oil

Method

Mix together & that's it!

Top Tip: If you haven't got play sand, cloud dough is a great alternative. Use baby oil, or cooking oil if your child might eat it!



LEARNING RESOURCES

Edible 'shaving' foam

Drain the water from a tin of chickpeas into a bowl - save the chickpeas for dinner! Whisk the water. It will turn from yellow liquid into white liquid, then start to stiffen. Keep whisking until you make stiff peaks (like making meringue) then your foam is ready to use. For extra messy fun, pick up a handful of foam then clap your hands together to make it snow! (Warning: do not do this unless you're prepared to clean up after!)

Make a building site

Get your child to make 'cement' for a building site within a tray. First put dry porridge oats into the tray and then let your child add water to the oats, mixing them together to make 'cement'. Ask you child questions as the mixture changes and hardens, re-enforcing learning about how combining different substances can change their properties. Once the 'cement' has fully hardened your child can use small toy cars/lorries to run on the surface of their new building site. They can also use toy bricks to build houses on their site.

Shower painting

If you haven't got a lot of space for messy play, why not try in the shower? Use washable paints to paint on the shower tiles, shower curtain or even in the bath. The perfect place to draw some very colourful fish, sharks, whales or other creatures from under the sea. Then after your child's masterpieces have been completed, you have the added bonus that you can easily wash down the shower/bathroom walls and the child at the same time!

QUIZ TIME ACTIVITIES

Coltale Wordsearch

N	R	G	K	E	A	R
E	O	H	I	E	R	M
T	S	G	S	N	C	O
S	I	T	A	L	K	U
I	A	B	K	R	B	T
L	A	A	O	E	D	H
K	A	E	P	S	T	S

Find the six words listed below hidden within the grid. Words can be found across, downwards and diagonally. Words can also be written forwards and backwards! So the words you are searching for are:

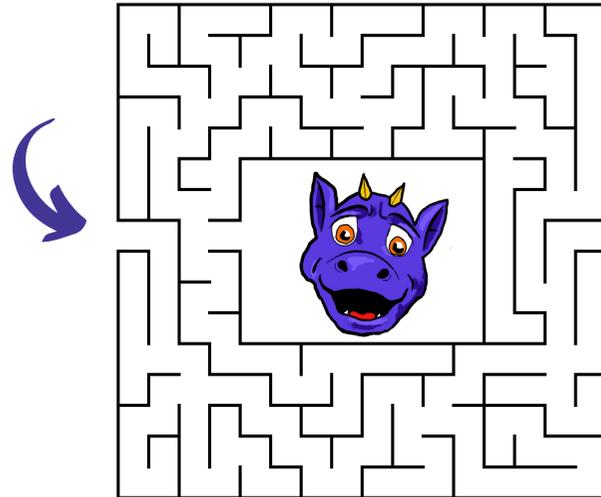
1. TALK
2. EAR
3. SPEAK
4. LISTEN
5. MOUTH
6. DRAGON

Coltale Maze

Coltale the Dragon has made his way into the middle of this maze.

But can you help him find his way out? Use a pencil to trace your route towards Coltale and then you can follow it back to the exit.

There is only one way in and out. So, have an eraser handy to rub out your route if you hit a dead end!



ART ACTIVITY

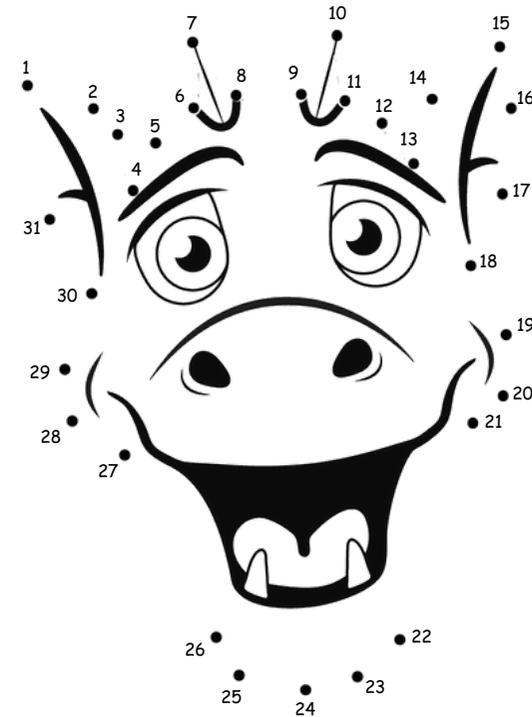
Coltale dot to dot and colouring-in picture

Use a pen or pencil connect the 31 dots to complete this picture of Coltale the Dragon.

To begin the picture follow the numbers starting from dot number 1.

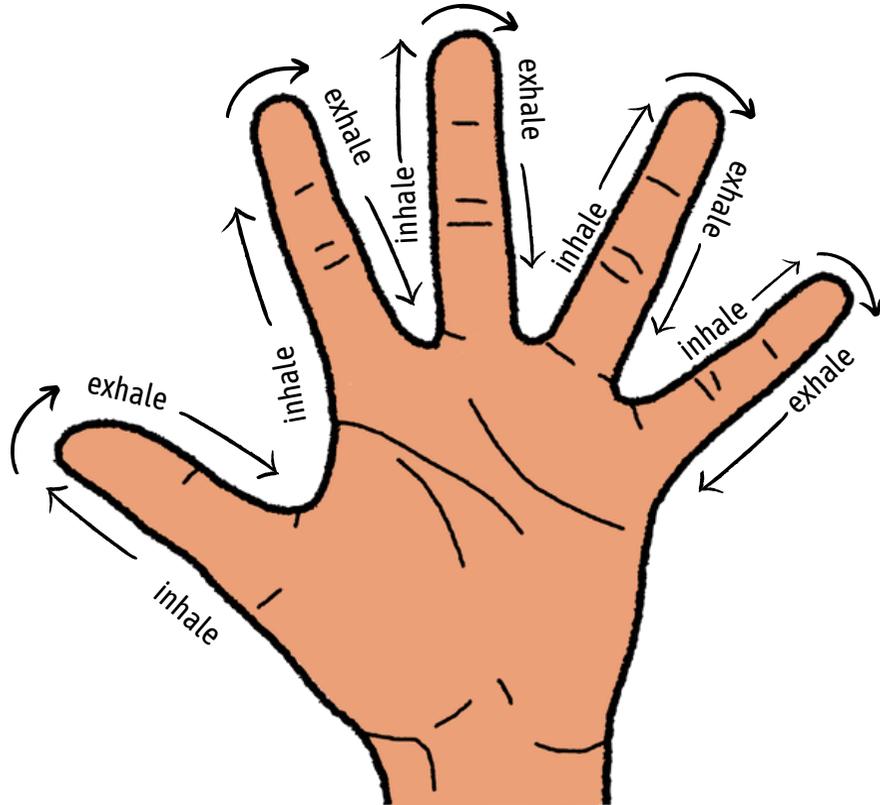
When you reach dot number 31, draw a line to dot number 1 to complete the picture.

Once you have finished it, use coloured pencils, pens, crayons or paint to colour it in!



MINDFUL ACTIVITY

Emotions can be these big, overwhelming, confusing and distracting things. To help, you can use this super simple, yet highly effective activity: **five finger breathing**. Slowly trace a path around your child's hand and ask them to inhale deeply, and then exhale deeply at the points shown on the diagram below. Try and do it with your child in the morning and before going to bed.



With thanks to the children and staff from the City of London Children's Services Team, Barbican Children's Library, Shoe Lane Library, Artizan Street Library, Charterhouse School, St Pauls School, Barbican New Park, Smithfield House Nursery, Hatching Dragons Nursery, Barbican Playgroup, Speech and Language Service and the Aldgate School and Children's Centre.

Don't forget to visit your local library where you can borrow books for free and take part in rhyme and story times.

Barbican Children's Library

Barbican Centre
London EC2Y 8DS

Shoe Lane Library

Hill House, 1 Little New Street
London EC4A 3JR

Artizan Street Library

Library & Community Centre
1 Artizan St, London E1 7AF

