

Cat and Rat

Focus

Developing spatial sense, constructing mazes

Groupings

Whole class, individual

Materials

Cat and Rat Activity Sheet (1 copy per student)

bell, colored pencils, and white paper transparent enough to use for tracing

Activity

1. Discuss the history of mazes with the class, including these facts:

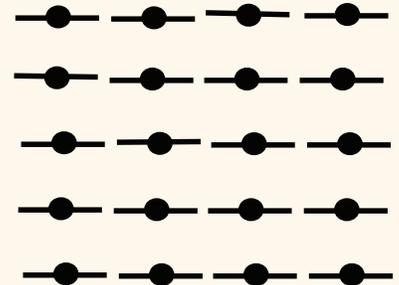
- We do not know who made the very first mazes.
- There is a well-known legend about a monster called the Minotaur, who was imprisoned in a labyrinth (a place with mazelike passageways). The Greek hero Theseus entered the labyrinth, slew the Minotaur, and then found his way out of the maze by following a thread he had unwound as he entered it.
- Coins with a labyrinth design were minted on the island of Crete in about 67 B.C.
- In ancient Rome maze patterns, thought to bring good luck, were often used in mosaics.

2. Take the class outside or to the gymnasium to play Cat and Rat.

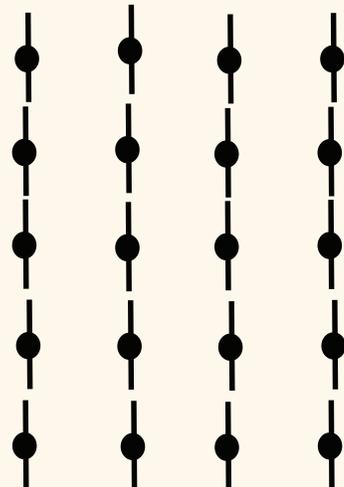
You will need three volunteers—a “cat,” a “rat,” and the “wind.” Have the other students form a human maze by standing in a grid formation close enough so that their fingers touch when they stretch out their arms. Explain the rules:

- The rat starts at one corner, the cat at the other.
 - The cat tries to catch the rat by moving through the maze.
 - The wind decides when to ring the bell, signaling each of the students in the maze to turn 90 degrees. This makes it difficult (or sometimes easier) to catch the rat!
 - At the end of the round, the cat, rat, and wind select replacements.
 - Play until each student has had a turn as the cat, rat, or wind.
3. Back in the classroom, distribute the activity sheet and paper to use for tracing. Assist students as needed to design their own mazes. If you wish, make several copies of the completed mazes for students to share with classmates or family members.

Students in grid with hands outstretched and fingers touching

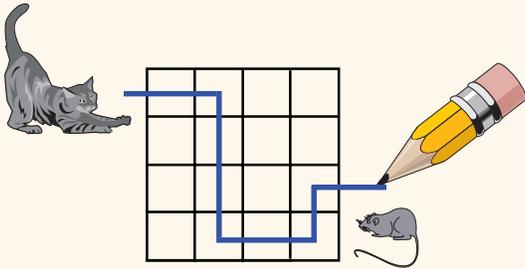


Students turned 90 degrees

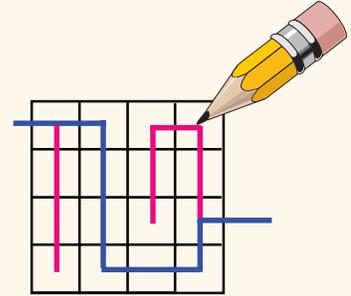


Cat and Rat

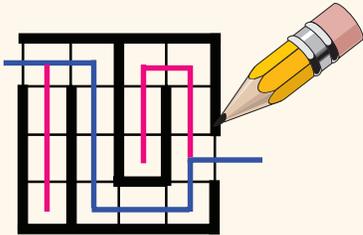
Activity Sheet



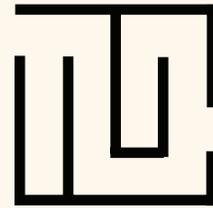
1. Use a colored pencil to **draw a path** from the cat to the rat. Draw through the centers of the squares. Make a complicated path with lots of turns.



2. **Using a different color, draw dead-end paths** leading off the first path. When you are done, there should be a path through every square.



3. Put tracing paper over the grid. **Trace all lines of the grid except for the lines that have been crossed by colored-pencil lines.** Trace the cat and rat, too.



4. Share your maze with a friend or family member.

