

CREATIVE MIND



ACTIVITY BOOK
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THE FERN FLOWER

SUMMARY: On the night of St. John / Ivan Kupala the fern flower blooms, and only a pure and generous heart can handle the enormous power it holds. Jacek, a young dreamer, has been looking for it since he first heard of its existence.

He will search for it for years until, finally, he finds it and forgets everything else, including his family and loved ones. Only many years later he realises that although he has found the flower, he has lost the true meaning of happiness.

ORIGINAL TITLE: KWIAT PAPROCI

KEYWORDS: FLOWER; NIGHT; DESIRE

GENRE: LEGEND

AGE: 7–8 YEARS

THE FERN FLOWER

It is said that there was a time when the fern flourished. In the short night of Ivan Kupala, far from inquisitive eyes and in the secret of the undergrowth, the magnificent and bright flower opened to life on one day only, the day of the summer solstice.

Witnessing it with your own eyes was not easy, picking it – an impossible task.

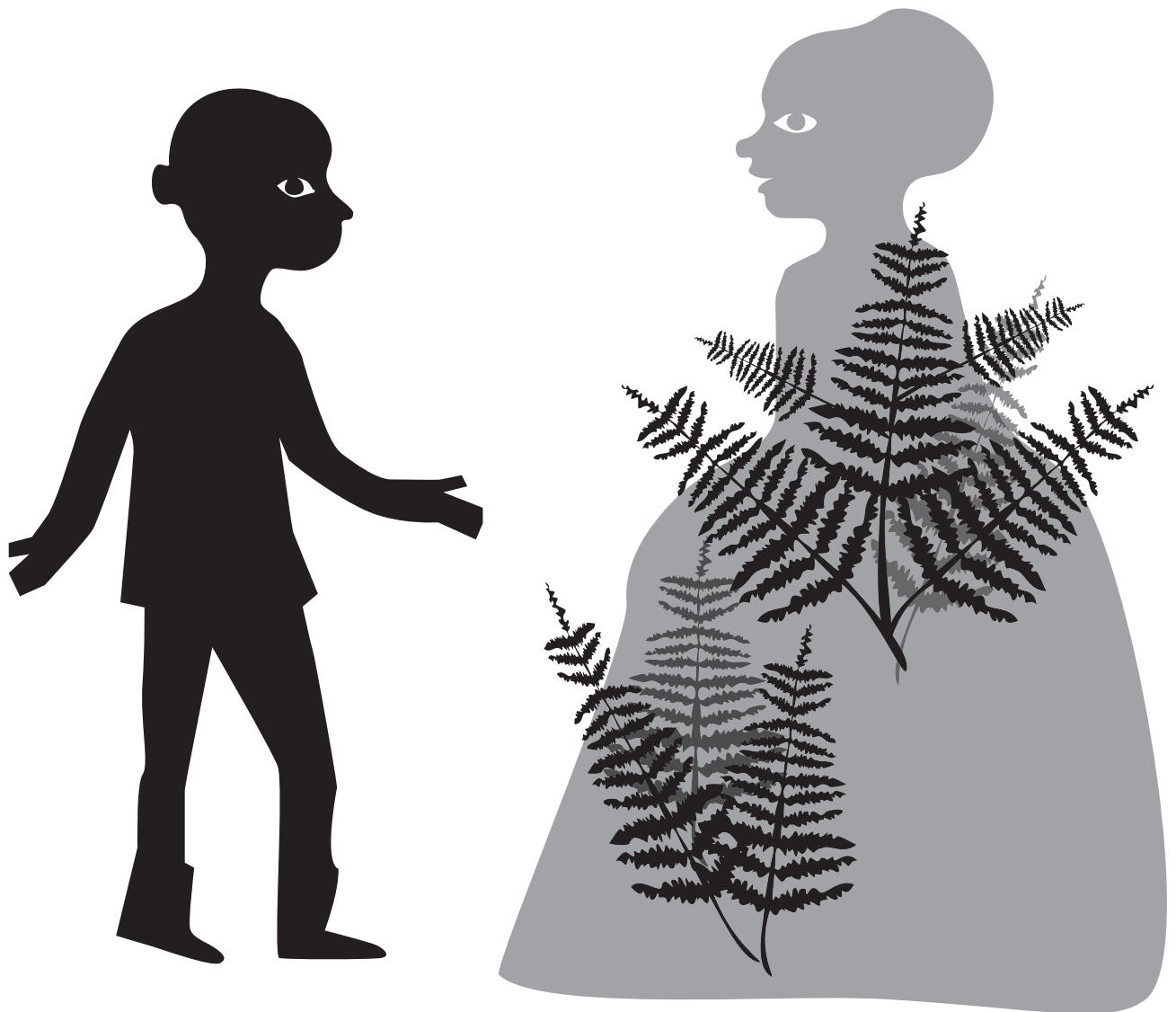
Surrounded by evil spirits, the flower opened as if it were a bright spark able to illuminate the darkness, and only a pure heart could truly possess it.

In a village not far from the forest lived young Jacek, known to all as Jacek the Dreamer, who spent hours dreaming. When he looked up at the sky, he saw more than simply clouds but ships ready to leave, dragons to defeat and castles to conquer.

On the first day of summer, while walking in the forest, Jacek heard a voice. He looked around but could not see anyone, yet the voice sounded so close that it seemed to be right behind him.

He turned around and saw a large stone covered with a soft and green moss.

The moss was laughing. Jack was afraid, but his curiosity was stronger than his fear, so he went closer.



Suddenly the figure of an old woman appeared, as if it were a reflection in the water slowly taking shape in front of him.

“How did you do that?” asked Jack.

“I did it thanks to the fern flower,” the woman answered.

“Many years ago, I was walking in this forest, when suddenly a great glow drew my attention. I couldn't believe my eyes, but in front of me stood the fern flower.

It looked like a living flame, it seemed to light up and jump from plant to plant, like a magical little firebird chirping in the night.

I reached out and picked it a moment before it disappeared at sunrise. Since that day, I can achieve anything. Every one of my wishes can come true, but the greatest joy of all is to fulfil the wishes of others. Thanks to the flower's power, I can become invisible, listen to people's dreams and make them come true.”

So allured by the promises of the flower's power, Jaceks' mind started wandering, already picturing himself with the flower. He thanked the old woman and continued into the forest, which was becoming darker and darker.

At every step he felt as if he was being watched, small red eyes followed his movements, the weight of those stares seemed to make his legs heavy and walking became more difficult. The plants twisted around his feet, the thorns of the shrubs scratched his face, yet his will to pick the flower seemed stronger than any obstacle.

An oak tree with a majestic trunk stood in front of Jack and it was so large that his gaze could not reach its end. He walked, and walked around, trying to get around it, but the oak never ended, as if it had existed there since the dawn of time.

Finally in that deep darkness he saw a bright, flashing light and in its midst, the fern flower, just as the old woman had described it. Jacek tried to run and pick up the flower but saw it disappear before his eyes.

In the depths of the forest, he had not realised that it was a new day and that the night was over. The fern flower would return, but only in a year's time for one night only. Jacek was not sad, however, but felt determined in his purpose. Every day he returned to the forest to learn more about it.



The time passed by quickly, the leaves fell and the cold became sharp. Soon, the snow covered the forest with its white mantle, and Jacek's footprints came to look like interwoven embroideries which revealed his long and silent walks. He was eager to learn and discover every hidden place in this intricate and magical forest.

Spring returned. The white mantle vanished and in its place the forest donned a cape of colourful flowers that spread throughout the trees. The buzzing of insects joined the rustling of leaves and gems as they sprouted and grew and danced.

There were flowers as far as the eye could see, but one of them was still missing, the one Jacek wanted above all. Time seemed to stand still and the wait for the solstice became almost painful, until it finally came at the same time it does every year.

Jacek adorned his head with a garland of ferns and walked into the woods.

He walked along those paths traced in the snow,
as if they were engraved in his heart.

He went around the big oak in a flash, passed through the shrubs without being injured, and felt a new feeling, no longer a fearful one but one that was almost seductive and attractive.



Jacek walked through the dense forest and suddenly a sparkling/flashing glow lit the forest as if the trees had thinned out. On a tall brilliant fern he saw the flower. His fingers had barely managed to touch it, but just like the year before, the flower vanished.

This time Jacek cried with anger and spite. He was full of envy towards the old woman who possessed the flower. A large, bitter lump seemed to take hold of his heart and he resumed his wandering in the forest with fury.

His mother and brother, who at first had smiled as always at Jacek's dreamy thoughts, began to worry about his repeated absences but, above all, about this obsessive thought of his. However, their words of caution went unheard.

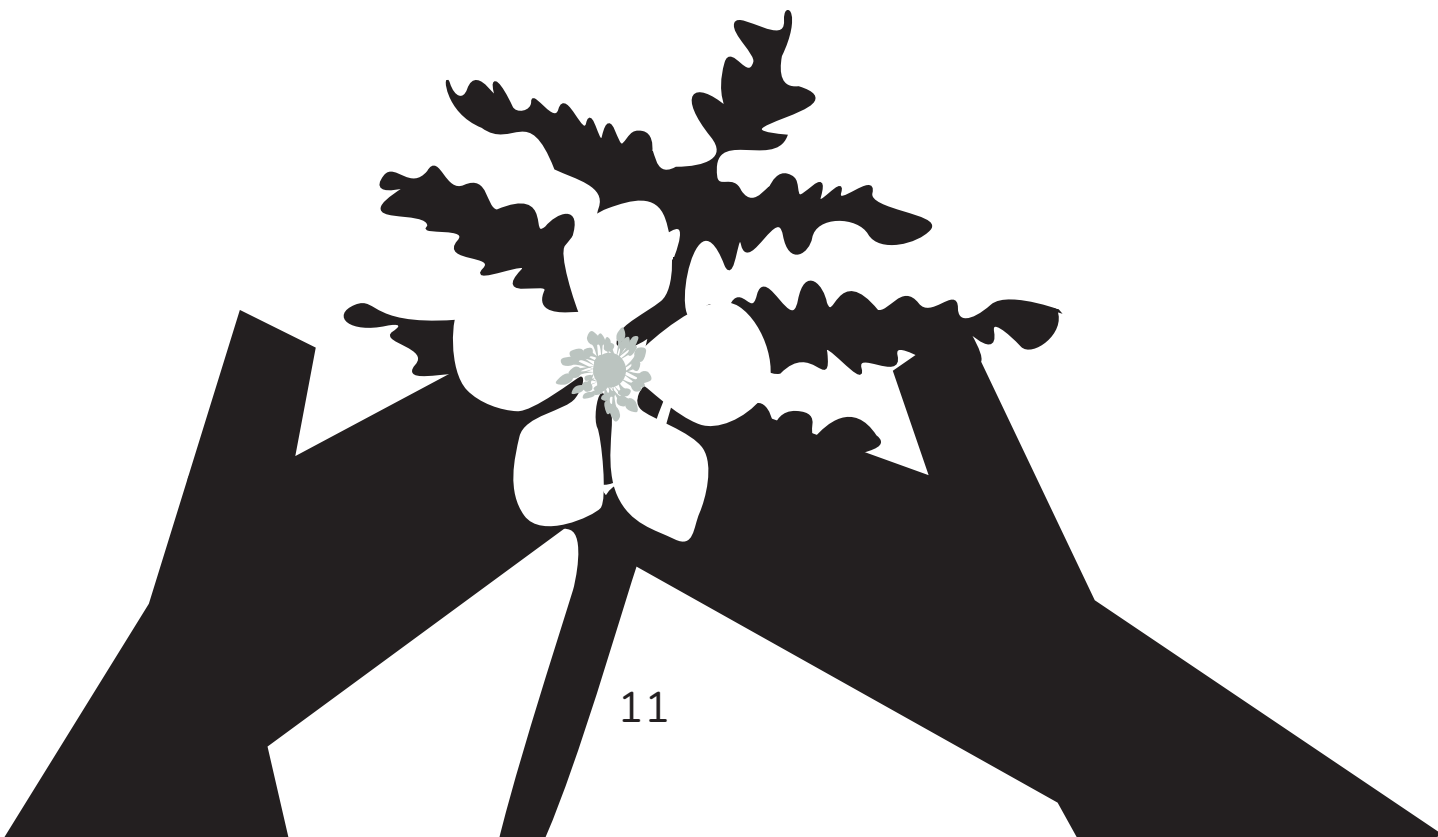
Jacek returned to walking in the woods, now indifferent to everything unrelated to his mission.

He walked in the pouring rain, the lashing wind and the burning sun.

The days followed one after the other, with Jacek walking through the length and breadth of the forest. There was no tree, no plant or blade of grass, and no den or nest he didn't know about.

The forest had become his home, so when the summer solstice came around again, Jacek found himself in the right place at the right time.

All he had to do was reach out his hand and find the flower. The flower not only glowed like a flame but also possessed a vivid heat, which stung Jack's fingers like a stinging tongue.



Despite the pain, however, this time he did not withdraw his hand but squeezed even harder until the flower detached itself from the fern and finally became his.

Immediately he expressed his wish to own a castle, the most majestic and largest ever seen. He asked for a carriage drawn by six horses, which materialised pawing and rushing as soon as he had finished thinking about his desire.

Finally, after a long time, Jacek smiled. He smiled to himself, pleased and satisfied. Everything Jacek wanted immediately appeared before his eyes, filling his life with all kinds of objects and riches.

However, they never seemed to be enough for him and the more he achieved his vain desires, the lonelier he felt. Years went by and now he was a cruel and bitter man of power. His townfolk were dying of hardship and misery while he was living in luxury and comfort.



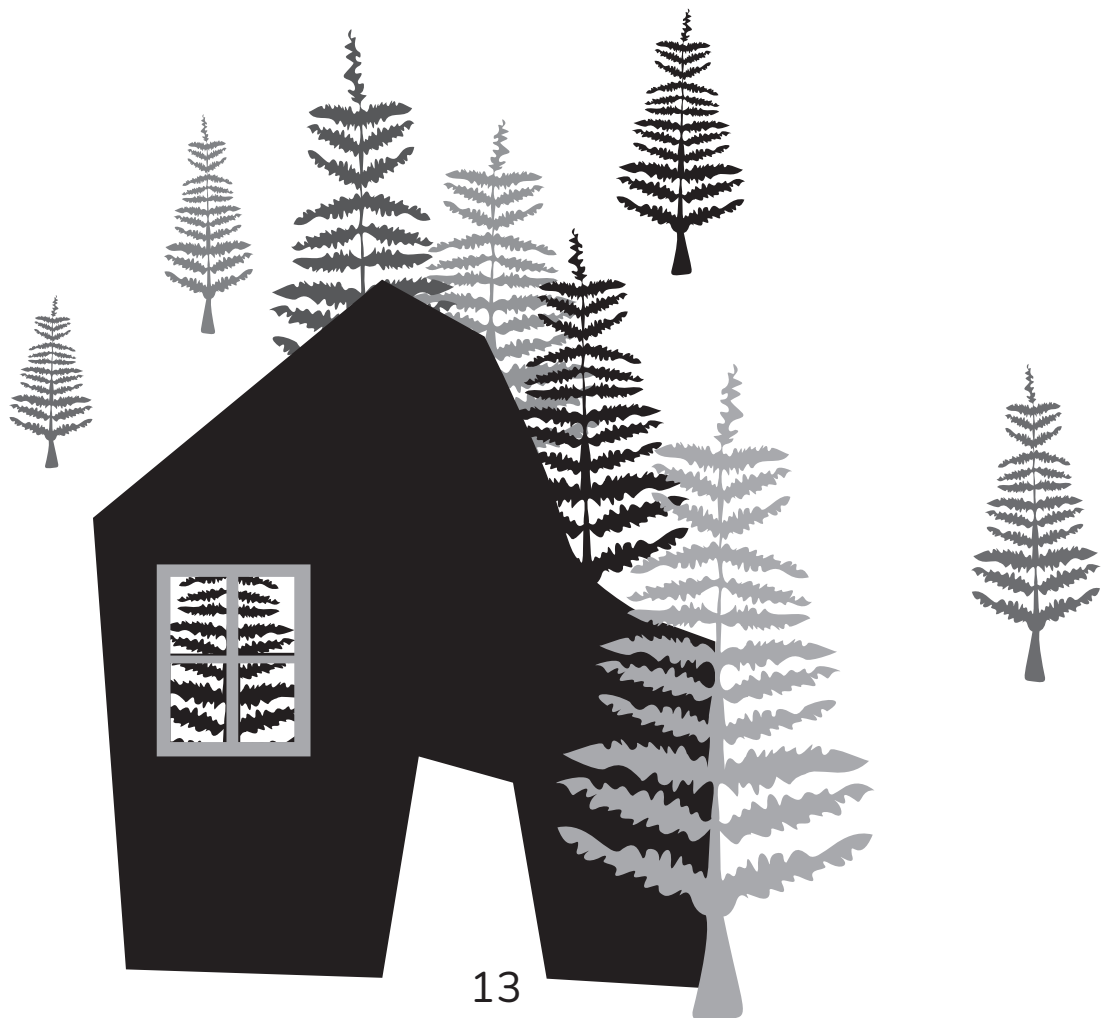
One day his carriage drove past a small house, and his shrivelled up heart leapt. That house had once been his.

“Stop!” he ordered, “I want to get out.”

As he approached, he noticed that the roof had collapsed and the hinges of the doors and windows were battered, as if no one had been living in that house for a long time.

“Where are the people who lived here?” asked a passerby.

“They are dead,” the old woman answered. “It was a long time ago: the youngest son Jacek disappeared one summer night and since then his mother and brother have had no peace. They looked for him everywhere, but time passed and they had no news of him. The mother fell ill with grief and died, followed soon after by the eldest son.”

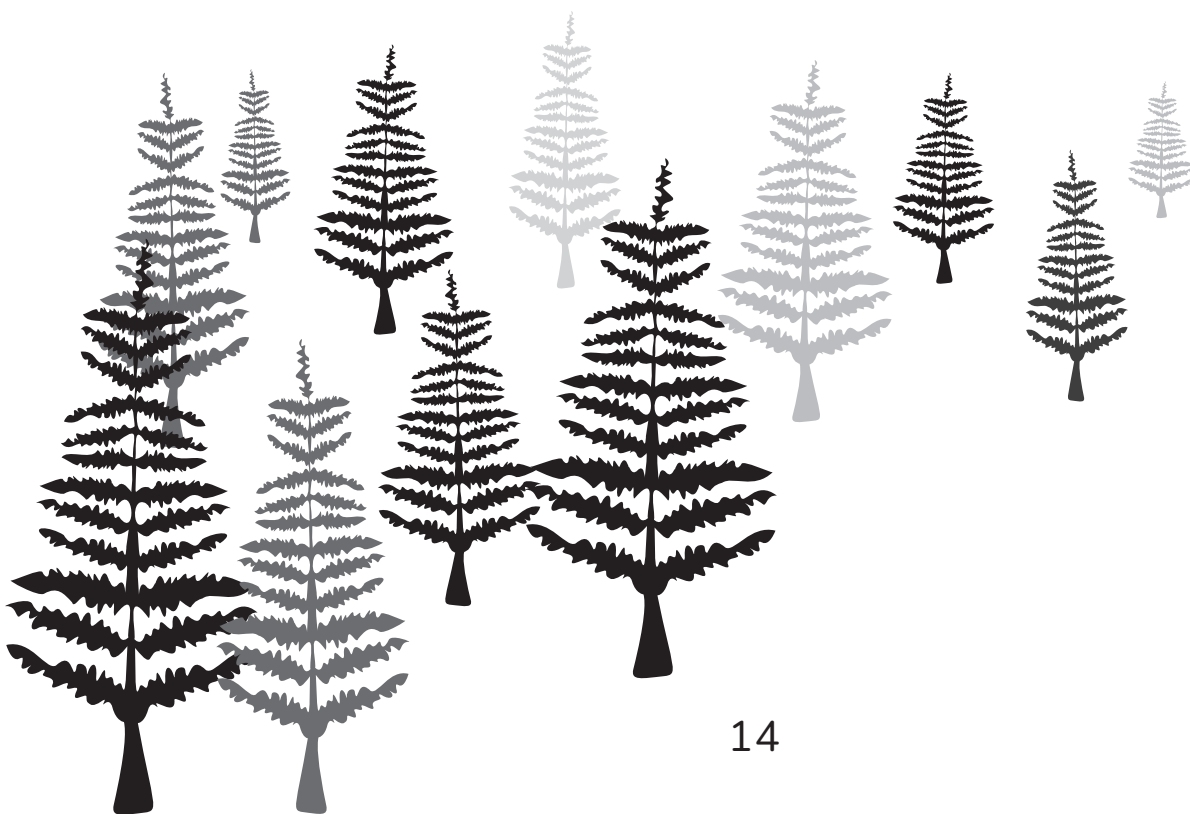


The old woman shook her head with sincere sadness, then continued:

“How sad... Everyone knew Jacek as a dreamer, someone who could turn a cloud into a ship or a dragon, but perhaps those dreams have become such blinding illusions that he could no longer see the truth.”

“Thank you,” Jacek answered, in a voice so moved and gentle that he thought someone else had said it. With his head down and his heart in a vice, Jack finally understood what the old woman had predicted that day many years before. Helping others realise their dreams, sharing happiness, that was what he had not done and why he had felt so lonely all those years.

He brooded over his thoughts while walking and found himself in the forest which he had loved and hated in equal measure.



He wished the carriage would disappear and with it the castle and all the riches it contained. And lastly, he wished to disappear with them.

One by one, Jacek and his possession and riches started vanishing, becoming indistinct and vague.

They lost their contours and disappeared from people's memories as if they had never existed.

Yet even today there are those who remember a certain Jacek, as if he were a warning: the memory of a boy who found the fern flower but lost himself in it.

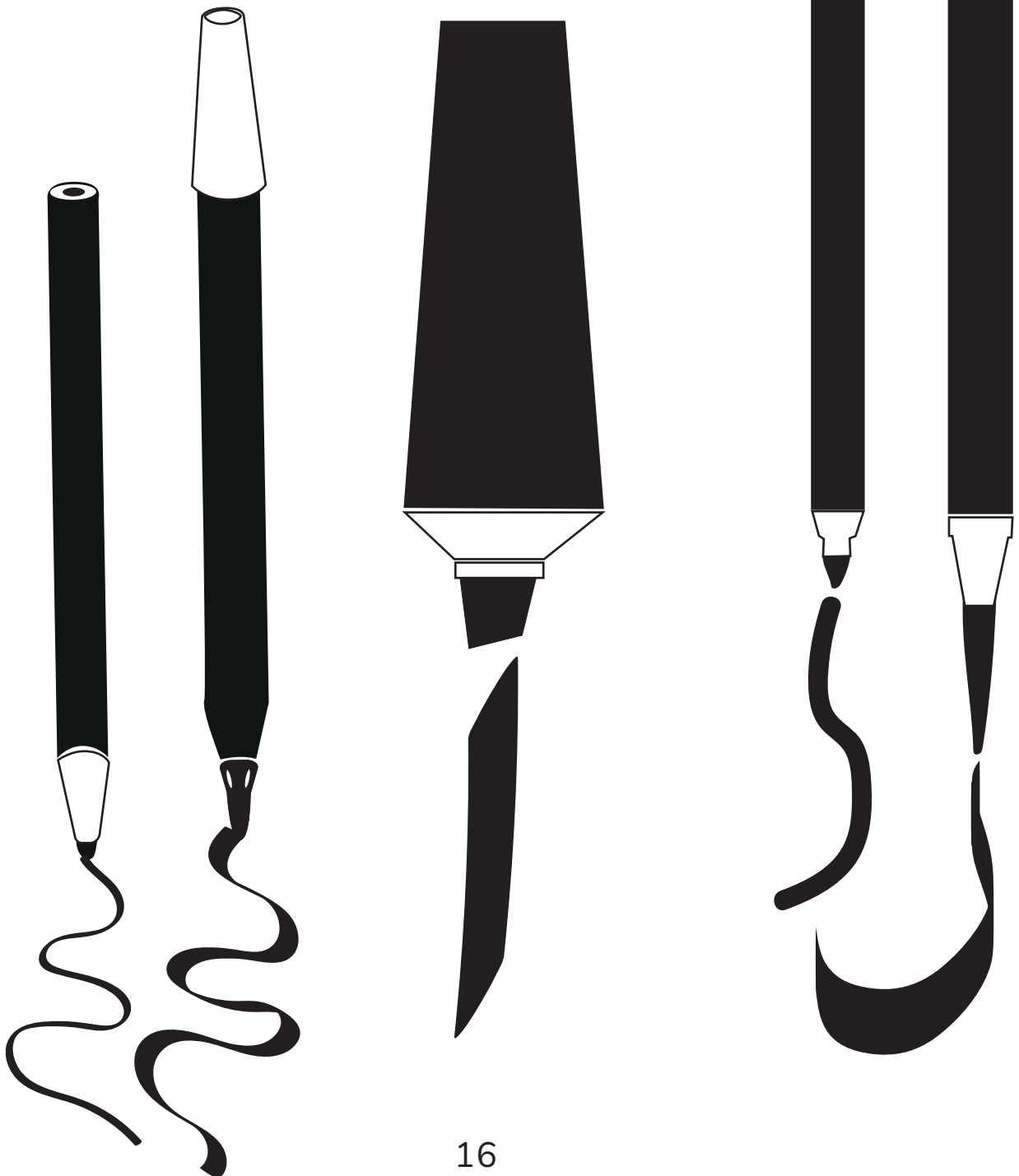


ACTIVITIES

The tools we draw with are important.

Get markers with different tips: flat, round, brush.

You can choose black or any other colour you like.

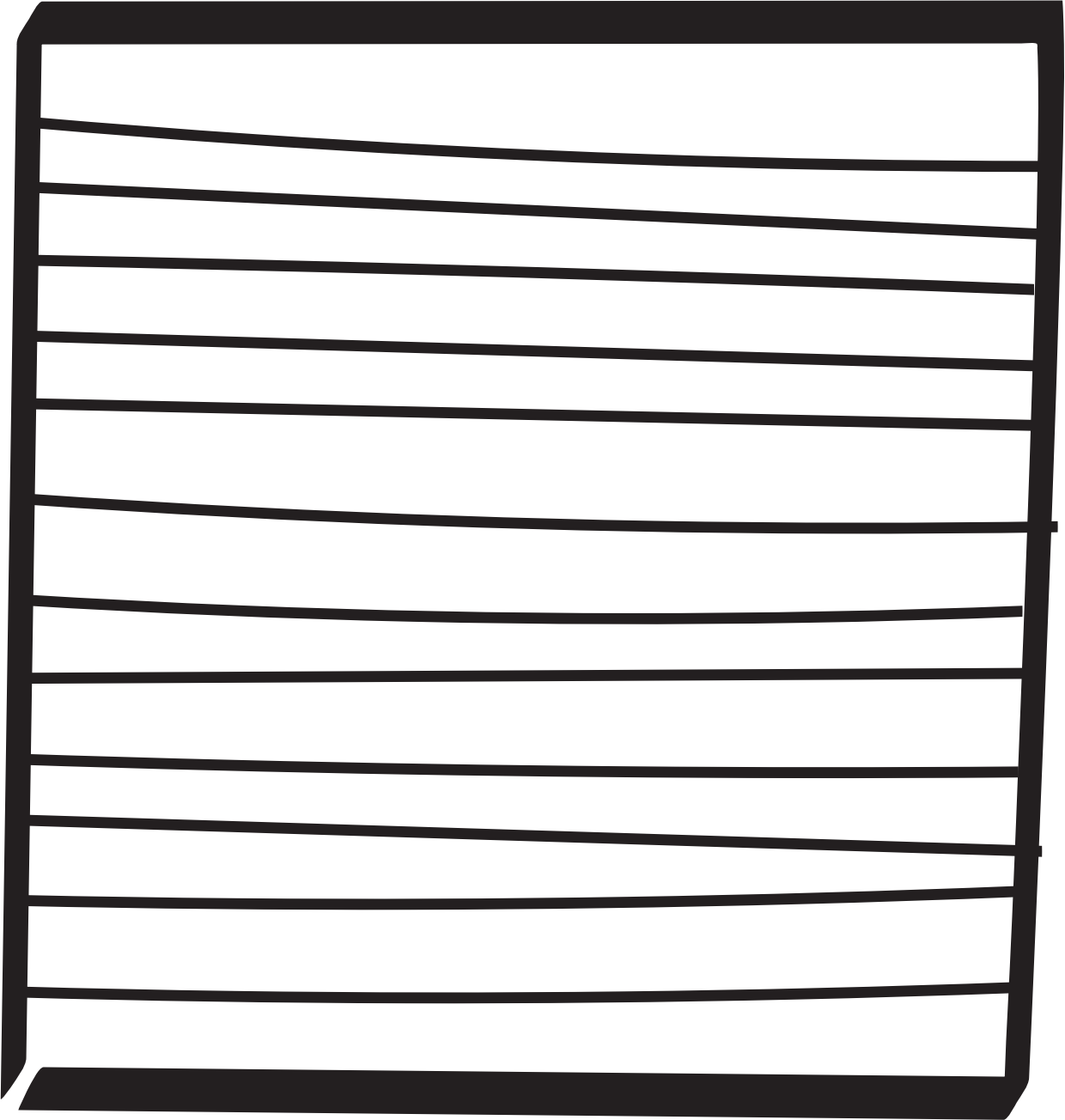


Use your sketchbook: draw a frame and then, alternating between the various tools, draw continuous lines trying to go as straight as you can.

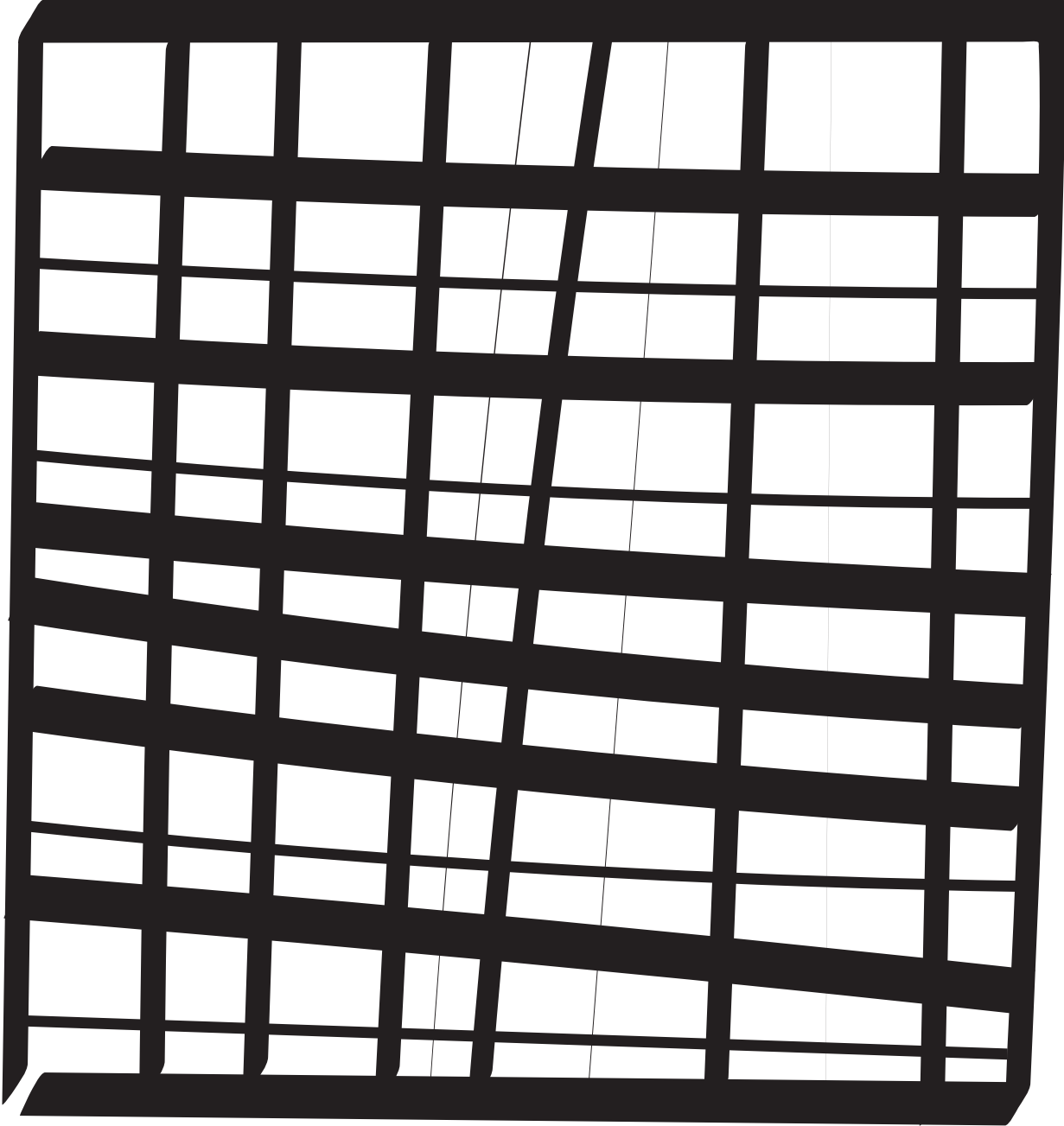
Draw each line without ever removing your hand from the paper.

Proceed with other tools and lines.

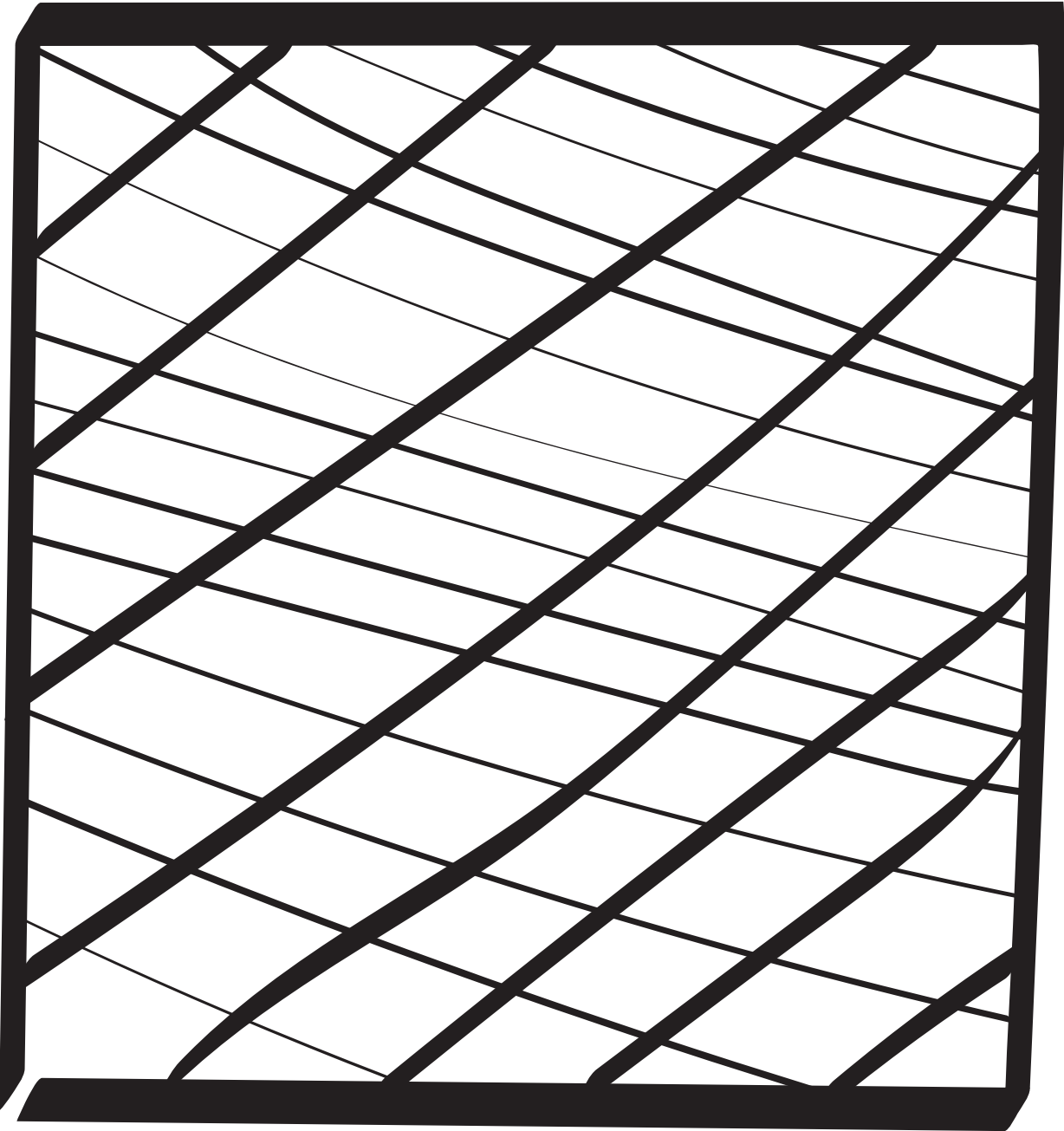
If you want, alternate between two colours.



Draw more frames.
Invent different ways of drawing lines in each frame.

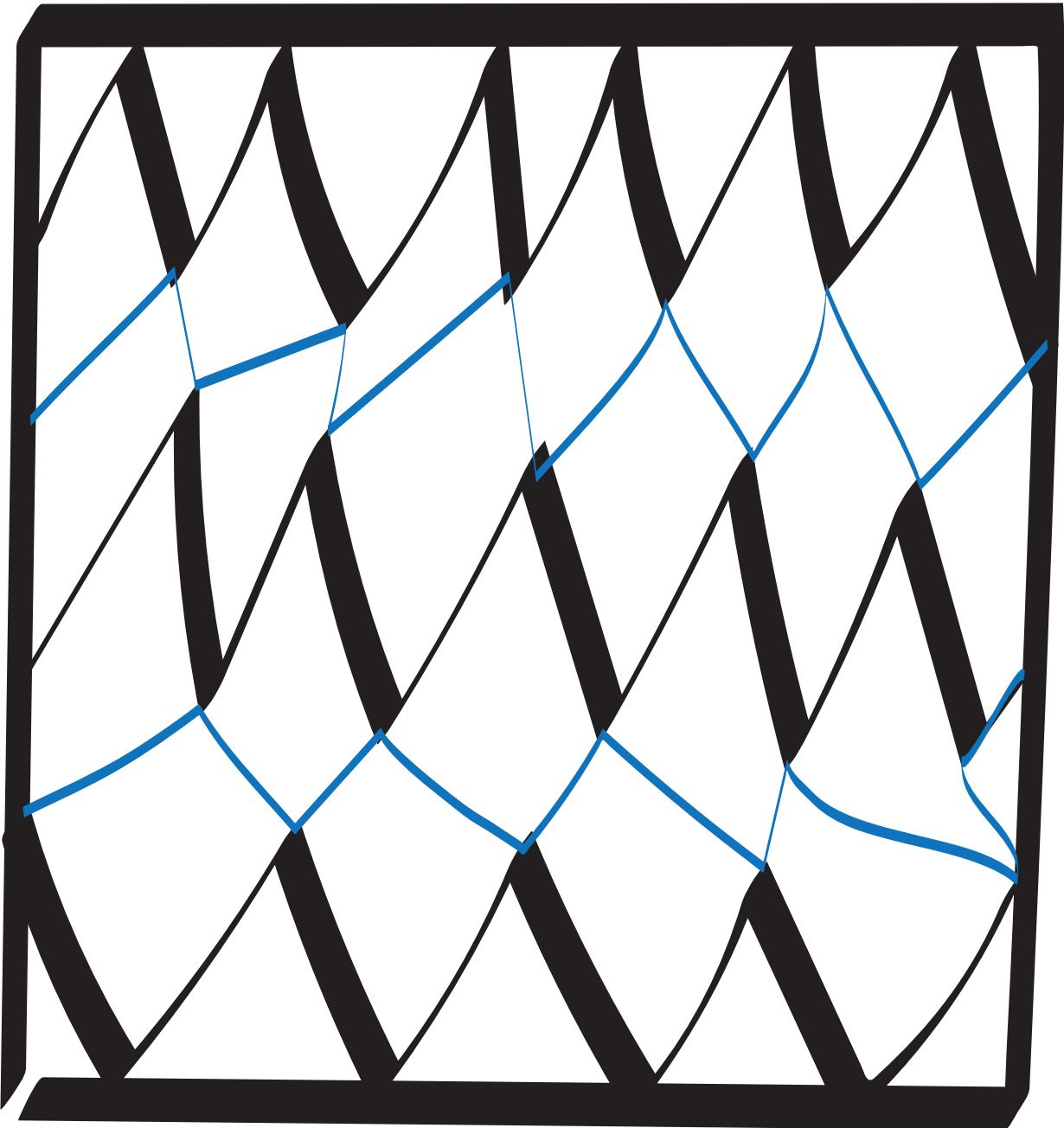


Draw overlapping oblique lines within a frame.
You can use tools with different tips and colours.

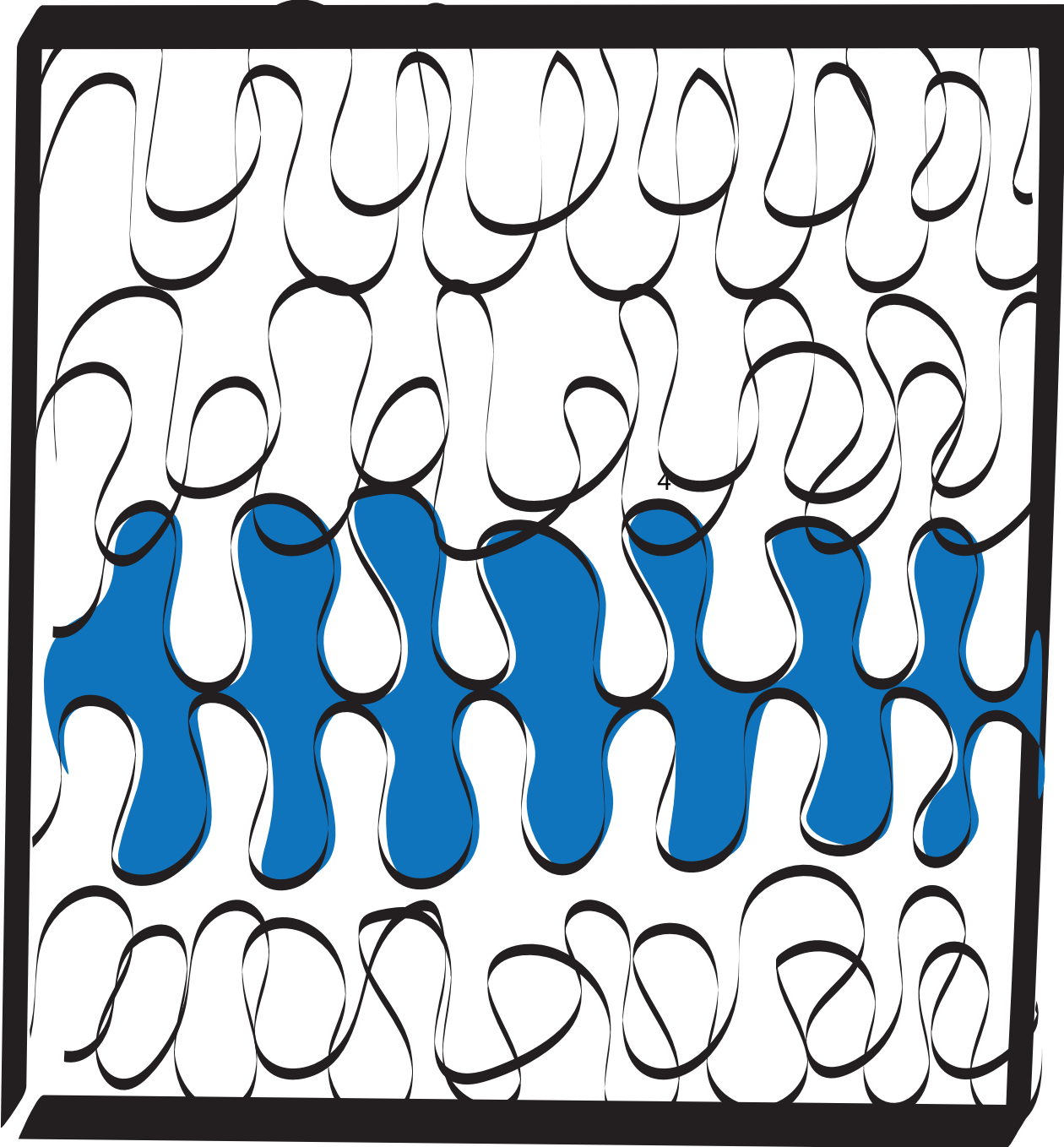


Within the frame, using tools with different tips, draw zig-zag lines, connecting them so as to create a drawing with rhombuses.

You can use the drawing to colour the rhombuses, alternating the colours as in a chessboard.



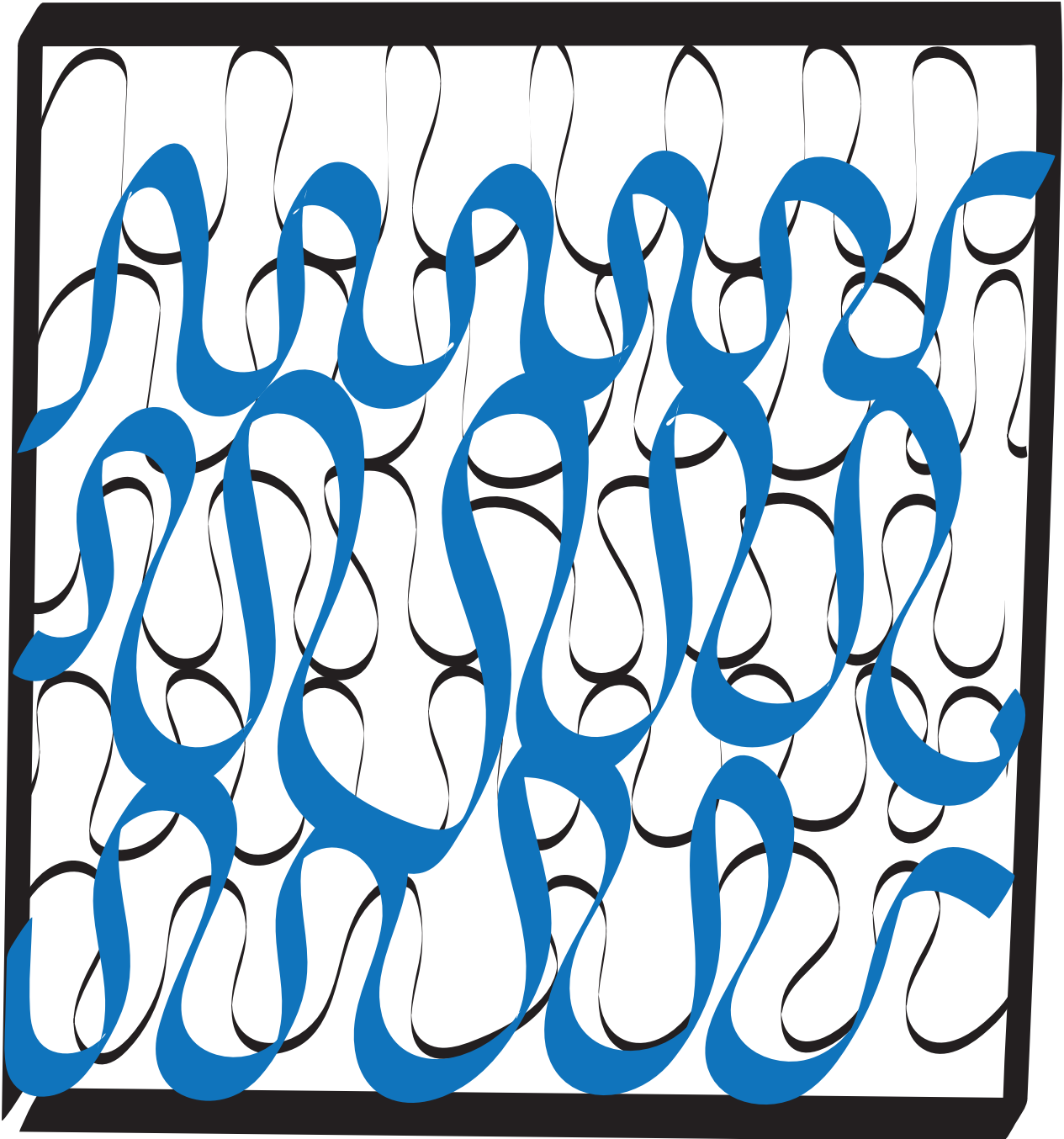
In another frame, draw many sinuous intertwining lines.
Colour the created drawing by using different colours
for the different spaces.



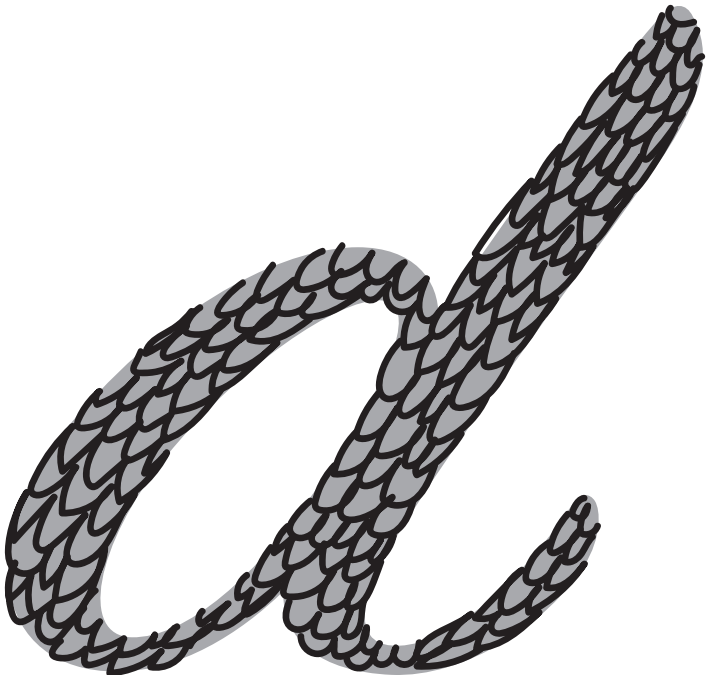
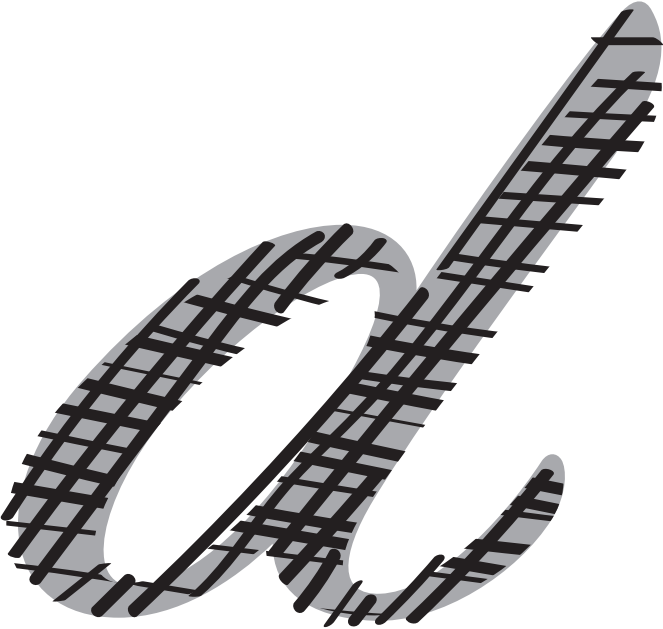
In another frame, using two different colours, draw sinuous overlapping lines.

Each line must be drawn without removing your hand from the paper.

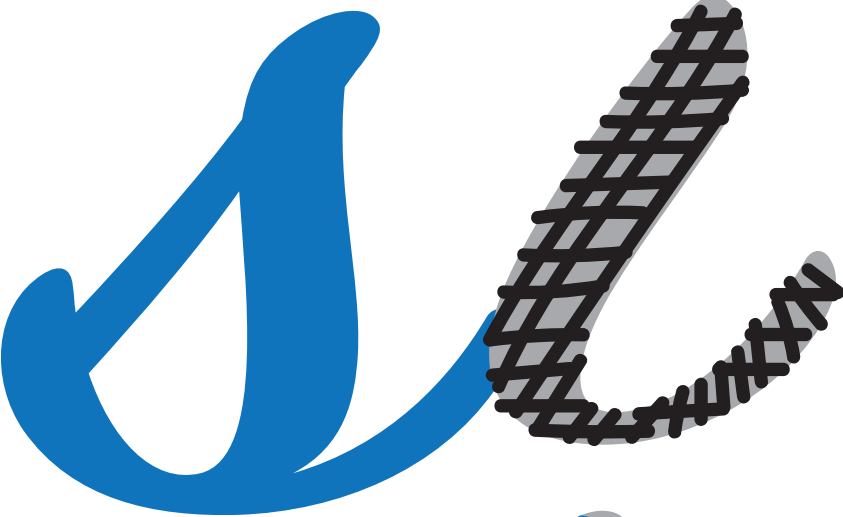
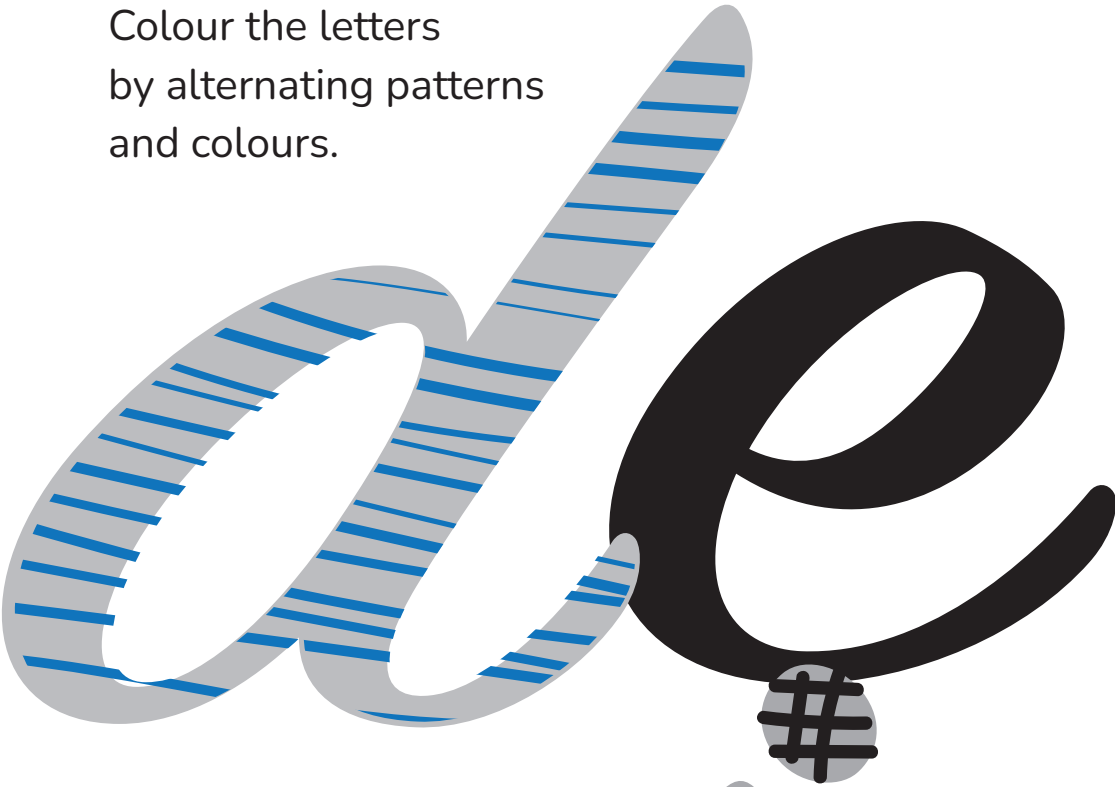
Try to create a pleasing and harmonious composition.

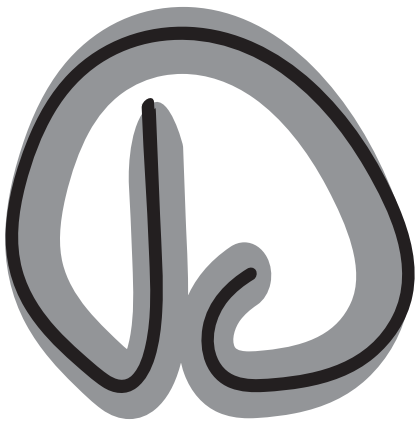


Use lines to fill the entire letterform.
Use crossed lines or wavy zigzag lines:
create your own pattern.



Colour the letters
by alternating patterns
and colours.





Draw the “d” without removing your hand

d d d d d d

d d d d d d

e e e e e e

e e e e e e

e e e e e e

On your album, draw the letters all connected.

Desire

Now try writing the word as if the letters were all units.

Desire

With a transparent paper, trace the word.

Do this several times.

Now draw the whole word yourself.



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