

CREATIVE MIND



ACTIVITY BOOK
OF



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THE LABYRINTH

SUMMARY: Theseus, son of Aegeus, the Athenian king, volunteers to kill the Minotaur, a cruel creature who lives imprisoned in a labyrinth on the island of Crete. He succeeds thanks to the help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos, king of the island.

ORIGINAL TITLE: THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

ORIGIN: GREECE

KEYWORDS: LABYRINTH, TRIBUTE, THREAD, SAIL,
MINOTAUR

GENRE: MYTH

AGE: 7–8 YEARS

THE LABYRINTH

It was a time long ago when capricious gods banished boredom by becoming entangled in the lives of human beings.

Young Theseus lived in that time, and it was him whom those same gods had made proud and strong.

His body was agile and snappy and his gaze was full of such arrogance that he thought he could do no wrong...

Theseus wore a sword and golden sandals, a gift from his father Aegeus.

Aegeus was the king of Athens, a beautiful but troubled city, as for some years now it had been forced to pay a sad and horrible tribute to the Cretan king Minos: after a defeat, it was decided that seven girls and seven boys had to leave Athens to meet their fate on the island of Crete.





The island hid a terrible secret, which was guarded in the most intricate and impenetrable of buildings. To build it, Minos had commissioned Daedalus. Perhaps had he found the solution on his own, or perhaps Daedalus had looked into the heart of Minos who was grieving for the loss of his son, to the point of becoming cruel and deaf to the pain of others.

Thus, Daedalus built a labyrinth, where he hid and imprisoned that horrible, hideous secret.

A monster.

A creature that was half-man and half-bull, an evil joke from the gods. A being so frightening that people were even afraid to name it, or even to meet it in their worst dreams.

From his birth, the Minotaur had been locked up in the dark depths of that building made of intricate and twisted paths.

His very thoughts soon began to resemble them: they became equally dark and cruel.

The Minotaur ate human flesh and the Athenian children would serve him as a meal.

But Minos also had a daughter named Ariadne, who found the sky above her island too dark and too heavy to bear, a foreboding sky that crushed her heart.

Ariadne was as young as the boys from Athens, and she dreamed of distant lands that held no secrets and of a place where she could live out her youth.



One day, while looking out over the sea surrounding the island, that sea she loved and hated in equal measure, she saw the ship arrive with its sad cargo.

Among those fourteen young children, however, she did not yet know that Theseus was hiding.

“I want to go too, father!” he had said to Aegeus.

“I will hide myself among the others and kill the monster to put an end to this!”

Aegeus begged him not to leave, fearing for his son’s life. Nothing he said, however, convinced the boy to change his mind. So that morning at dawn Theseus embarked with the other frightened and crying boys.

“I ask you just this,” said Aegeus, “when the ship makes its return, hoist a white flag in place of the black one if your life has been spared. If you fail in your mission, let the black banner flutter instead. I ask this of you so that I may know when the ship will appear on the horizon.”

Theseus promised his father and embarked on the journey, his gaze downcast so that no one could see the courage and determination in him.

And so, he arrived on the island, hidden among the others.

Nevertheless, one glance was enough for Ariadne to understand that this young man was different, that he had not come to sacrifice himself but to fight, to try to kill the monster and change the fate decided by the gods. Ariadne went down to the beach, determined to help him, because Ariadne did not agree with her father’s insistence to have that tribute.

She, instead, wanted a simple life of love and perhaps she believed that that young man with the golden sandals could be the answer to her desires.

Approaching Theseus, she handed him a sword with a sharp blade. “In return,” asked Ariadne, “you will take me with you, away from this island!”

Theseus promised and Ariadne gave him a long skein of thread, tying one end around her waist and giving the other to the boy.

“You will need it for finding your way back to me.

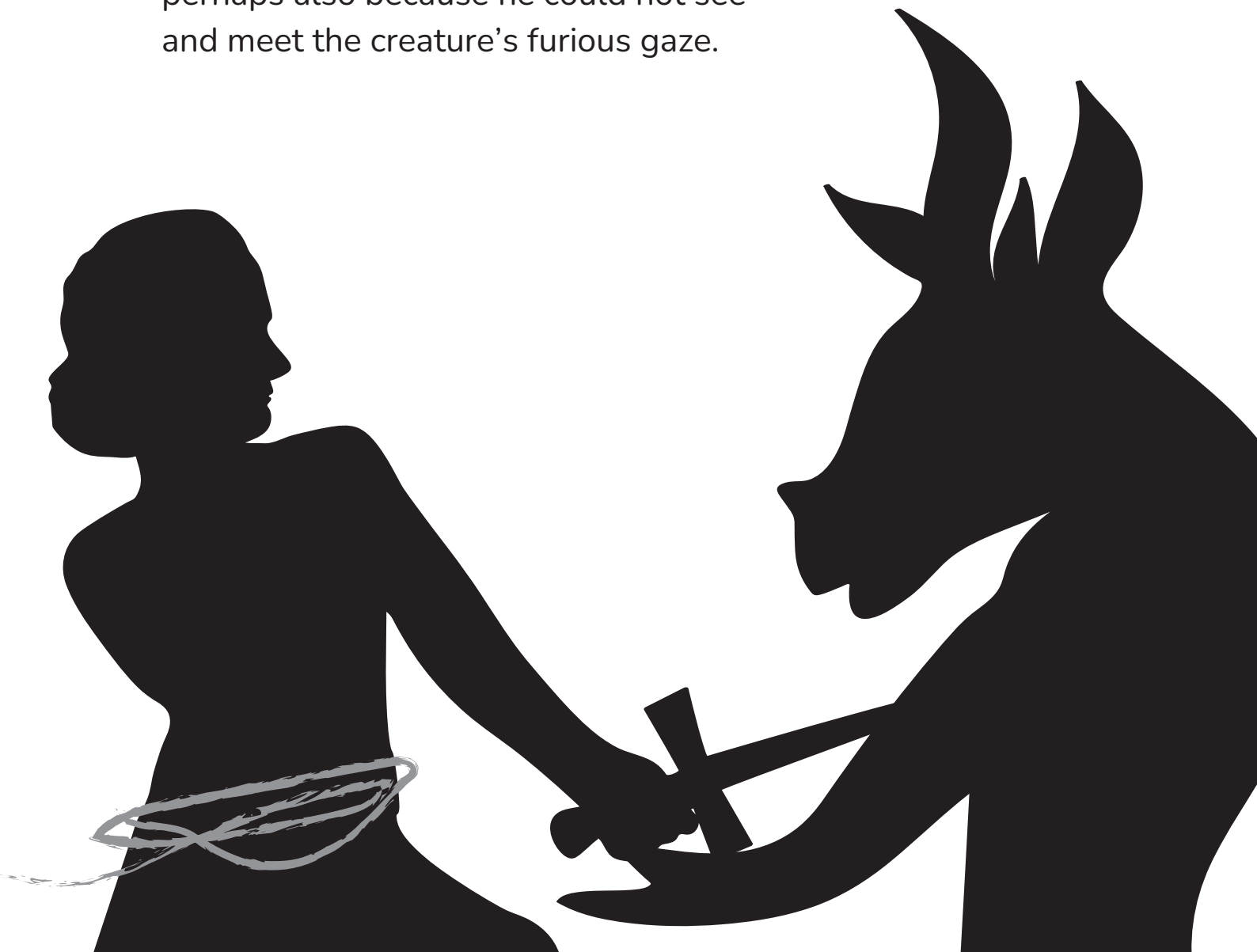
No one knows how to get out of the labyrinth, not even the Minotaur, who has always lived there. However, his eyes have gotten used to that dark place, and he knows every crevice, every room, every burrow and path. You will get lost following your fear, and he will find you following it”.

Theseus went in with the youths and, immediately, the huge entrance closed behind him, obliterating any possibility of exit in an instant.



The frightened youths remained close to each other, as if to form a single body to oppose the enemy, as if by uniting their fears they could transform them into hope, the hope of getting out as Theseus had promised them. Theseus separated himself from the small group and began to wander in the dark cavern. He searched with his hands for a direction, a way that would lead him to the monster, unrolling the skein behind him, thus marking the path to take back. Wandering in that dark space, he seemed to float as if he was weightless, until his hands touched something shaggy. It was the monster's hair.

Theseus unsheathed his sword and began to cleave the air and respond to the attacks of the Minotaur, who pressed him with his huge horns. Theseus, however, was not afraid, perhaps also because he could not see and meet the creature's furious gaze.



So, after a long fight, Theseus defeated the monster. Clutching the thread that Ariadne had given him tightly, he wrapped it around his hand as he went along until he found himself facing the others and then outside the labyrinth, he finally found Ariadne.

They all boarded the ship and quickly set sail, leaving behind that horrible dream. Ariadne felt happy, she felt that a new life was ready for her. Just for a moment, she turned back to watch her island become small and disappear, giving it a final farewell with her gaze.

Theseus felt invincible and kept his eyes only in front of him; not even for a second did he look back at Crete, as if everything already belonged to a distant past. Everything seemed forgotten to him: the Minotaur, the labyrinth, the island, even Ariadne. He did not feel any gratitude for her but annoyance, as if she was a shadow cast over his feat.

So, when he spotted the island of Naxos from the ship, he told her that they had to disembark. Ariadne disembarked and waited for Theseus' return. Remembering the events and the great emotions of that day, she fell asleep confidently, dreaming her own dreams of happiness. Theseus was so beautiful and she felt that she loved him very much.



When Theseus boarded the ship, Ariadne was still asleep. She awoke suddenly as if someone had shaken her, as if a loud noise had startled her, just in time to recognise the distant silhouette of the ship, gliding silently away, still waving the black banner.

“May my pain be your pain” she cursed Theseus between two sobs.

It is perhaps her tears that moved Dionysus, the god of fertility and drunkenness, who, seeing her so beautiful and sad, wanted to take her with him and make her his bride.



Aegeus, meanwhile, watched the sea, scanned the horizon while waiting for the ship, to see if his son had succeeded in that mad venture. Finally, there in the distance, appeared the great silhouette of the ship, the oars propelling it swiftly forward, diving forward in unison.

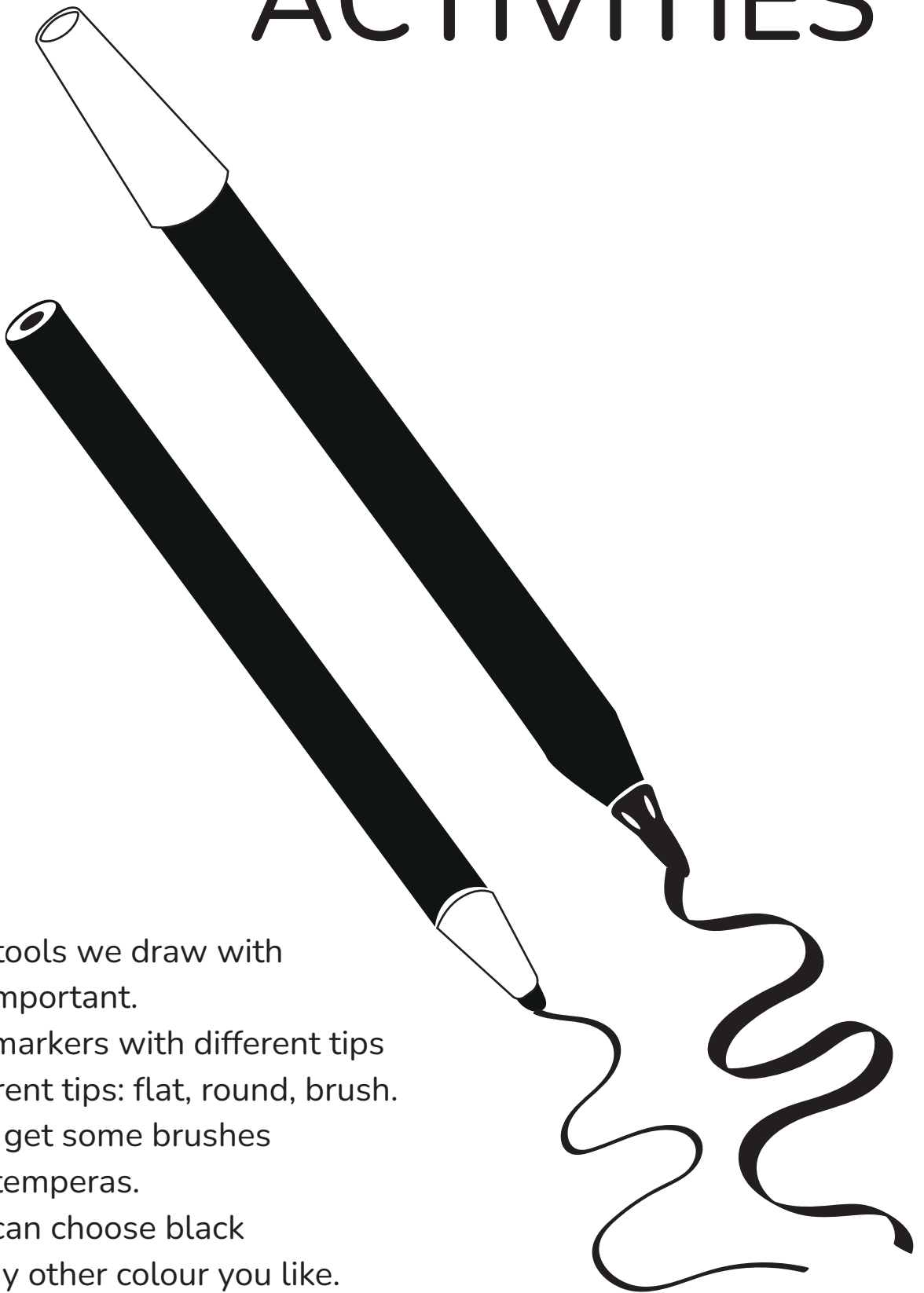
Aegeus squinted his eyes to get a better look at every little detail, but he was only interested in the colour of the flag... Black.

And the blackness overcame his heart. Aegeus could not bear so much pain and he threw himself into the sea, the waves swallowing him up whole.

As misfortune would have it, the black banner was still fluttering above on the ship because Theseus, being too self-absorbed, had not only forgotten Ariadne but also the promise he had made to his father.

Upon his arrival, he heard the sad news of his father's fate and, feeling heartbroken by his own loneliness, Theseus was able to understand the loneliness he himself had inflicted by abandoning Ariadne.

ACTIVITIES



The tools we draw with are important.

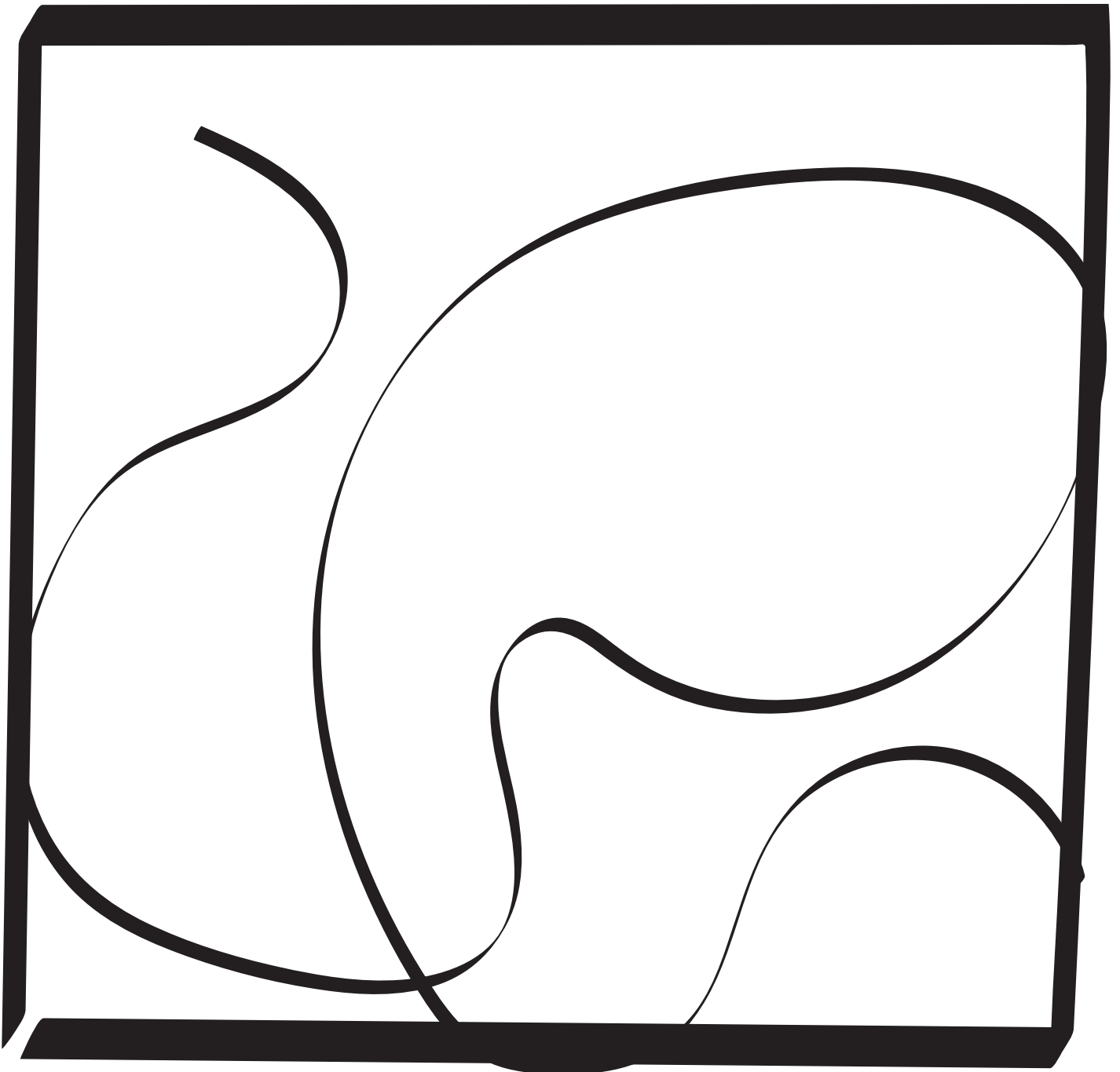
Get markers with different tips
different tips: flat, round, brush.

Also get some brushes
and temperas.

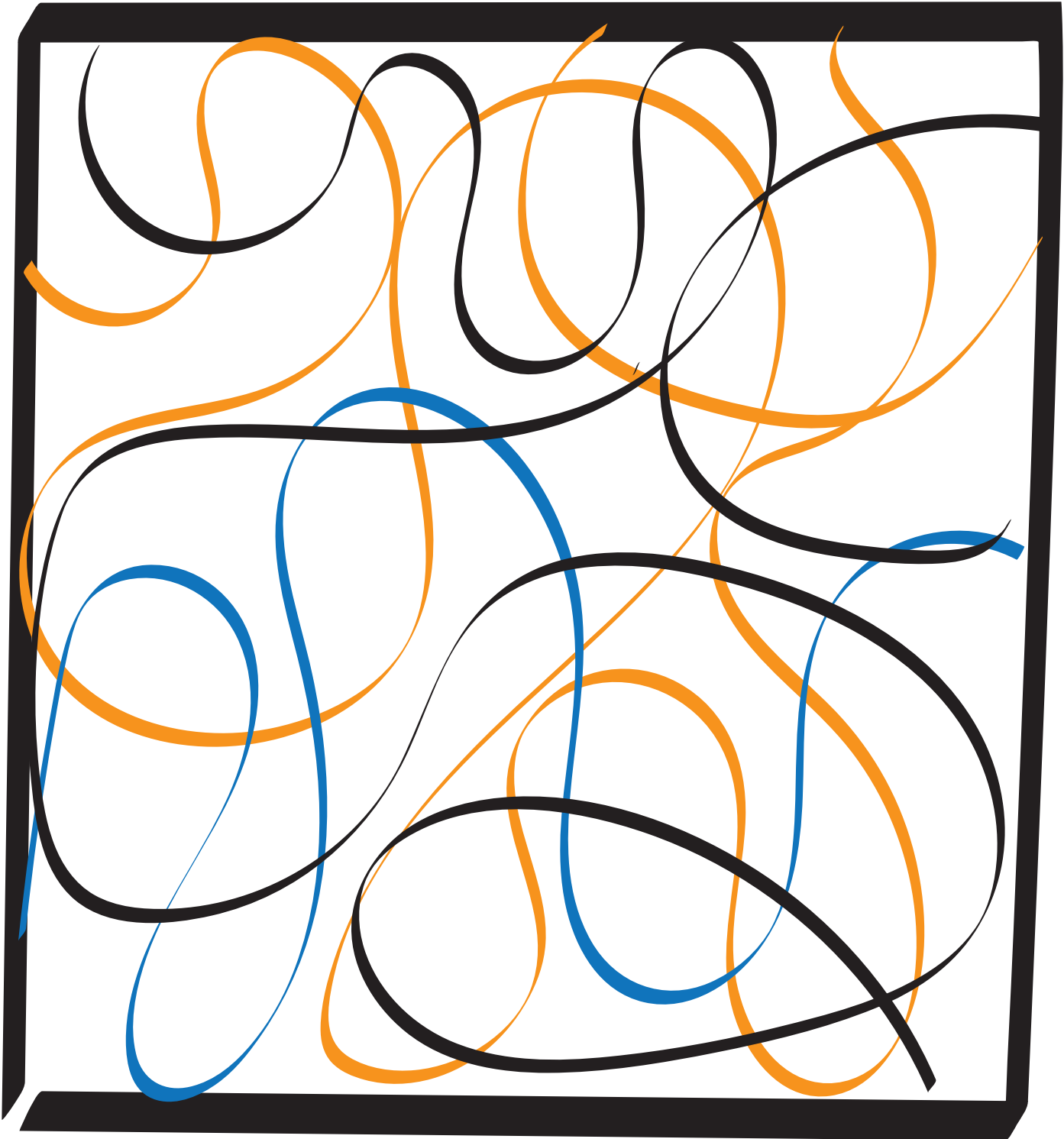
You can choose black
or any other colour you like.



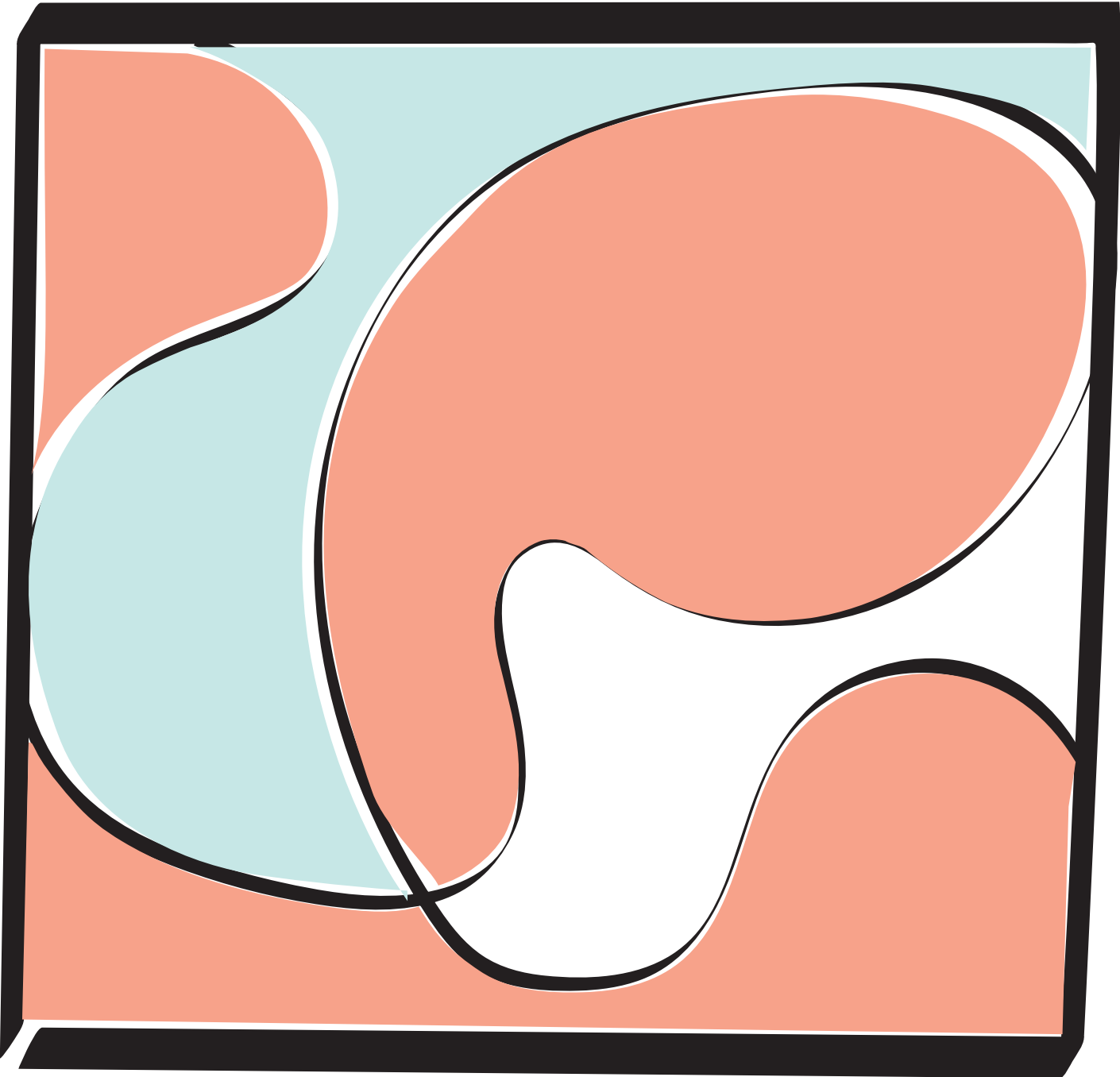
Use your scrapbook: imagine you are drawing Ariadne's thread, make sure you create many small areas like the example below.
Try to be very precise.



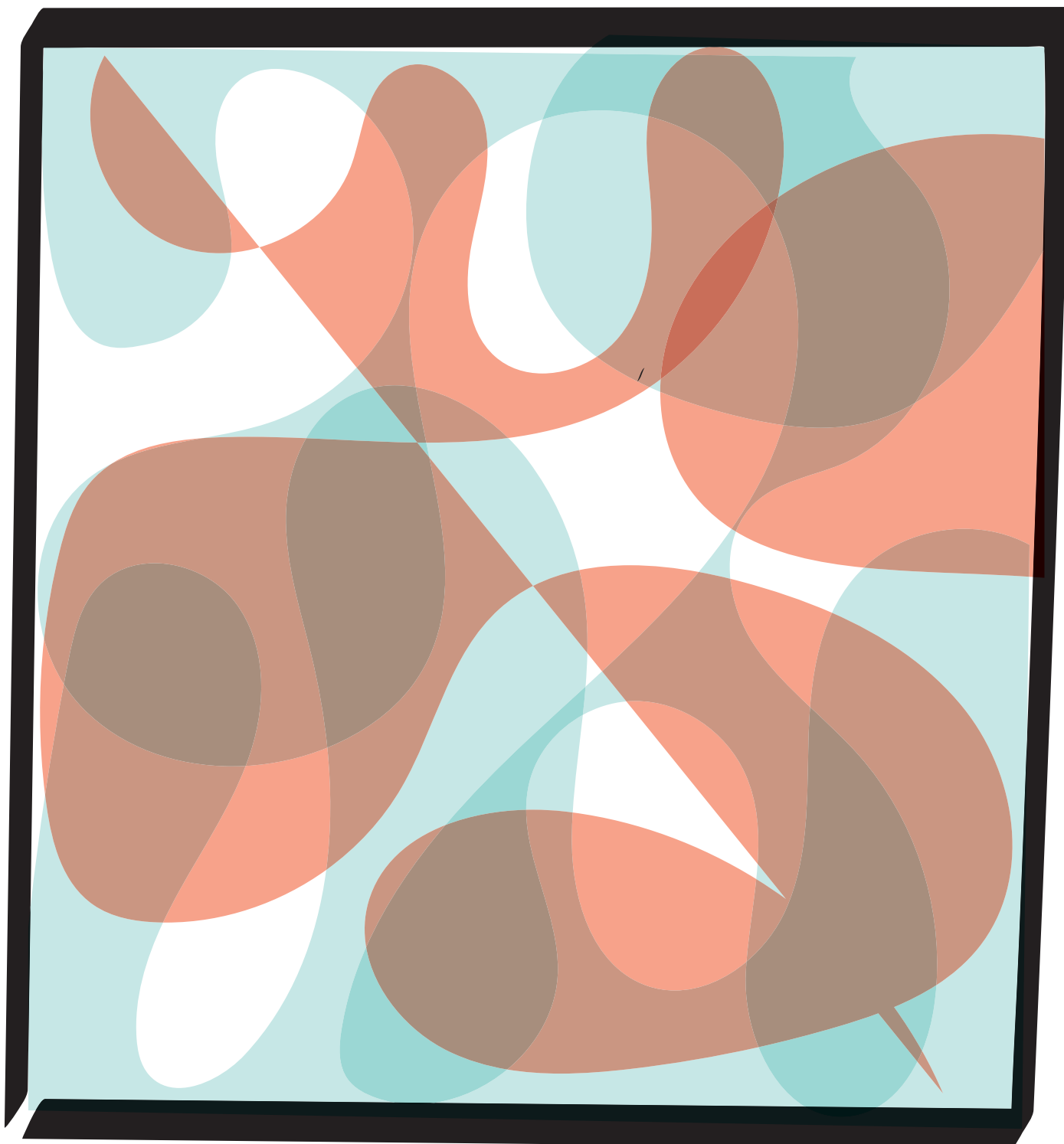
Draw more frames.
Draw many Ariadne threads that intertwine, creating
many small spaces.
Do this by alternating different tools and colours.



Use one of these frames, to colour the created spaces.
You can use tempera: be very careful and do it carefully.



Using tempera, you can make your coloured shapes overlap. When the designs have dried, choose the ones you like best to write inside!



Using a marker, write one of the key words in your frame.
Write it two or more times.



Cut your design into small pieces to create a puzzle.





Swap your “puzzle” with your deskmate for their own and try to assemble it.

In another frame, write a sentence by trying to occupy the entire area of the frame. Try to write legibly.



Ariadne's thread

Continue as before, swapping it with other children in your class, playing at reassembling your sentences.





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