



Festivals

Christmas

The following cultural notes describe both the origins and the current traditions of this festival. Explain as much as you feel is relevant to the class.

- Christmas Day is celebrated in countries around the world on 25 December, to commemorate the birth of Jesus. In the weeks before Christmas, people decorate a Christmas tree with ornaments. They usually put a star on the top to remind them of the story of the birth of Jesus and the Three Wise Men. People also like to send each other Christmas cards with typical Christmas scenes and a Christmas message. Younger children write a letter to Father Christmas, or Santa Claus as he is sometimes called, to tell him what they would like for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, 24 December, they hang a Christmas stocking at the end of their bed or by the fireplace, if they have one. This stocking is similar to a very big sock. Traditionally Father Christmas arrives in his sleigh pulled by reindeer. He flies through the air, lands on the roofs of children's houses and delivers the presents by climbing down the chimneys with a huge sack of presents!
- On Christmas Day, families come together to eat a traditional midday meal. This consists of roast turkey, with vegetables. Dessert is a rich fruit pudding served with a brandy sauce that is set alight! The table is decorated with candles and brightly coloured crackers. Everyone pulls the crackers which make a loud bang. Children love to look inside the crackers to find a colourful paper Christmas hat, a small toy and a Christmas joke.

Christmas worksheet 1

- Pupils need scissors, coloured card, glue and sticky tape.
- Pupils colour and mount the Santa Claus and chimney onto card. They then cut along the dotted lines.
- They fold a piece of A4 coloured card in half. They open the card, and place the Santa Claus behind the chimney, and tape the sides of the chimney to the front of the card so that the Santa can slide up and down easily.
- Write *Merry Christmas!* on the board. Pupils copy the message inside the card and sign their name.
- They illustrate the inside of the card with presents, Christmas trees, candles, etc.
- While pupils are working, circulate and ask questions, e.g. *What's this? What colour is the Christmas tree?*
- **Optional follow-up activity:** Pupils give the card to a member of their family and say *Merry Christmas!* They then name all of the things they have drawn on their card.

Christmas worksheet 2

- Pupils colour the four pictures and read the words. Ask them to cut out the four pictures. Staple the four pictures together to make a book making sure that the half-way lines coincide. The children then cut along the horizontal line of the pictures stopping before the stapled strip. By turning the different pages of the book, they can invent new Christmas characters.
- **Optional follow-up activity:** Pupils work in pairs, A and B. Pupil A makes up a new Christmas character without showing Pupil B. He/she names it, and Pupil B must make up the same character. They swap roles.

Pancake Day

- The following cultural notes describe both the origins and the current traditions of this festival. Explain as much as you feel is relevant to the class and ask pupils to point to the relevant items on the worksheet that you use first.

- Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, as it was originally known, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Shrove Tuesday is one of the moveable feasts in the Christian church calendar and is directly related to the date on which Easter falls. Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, so the date varies from year to year and falls between 3 February and 9 March. The name Shrove comes from the old word *shrive* which means to confess. On Shrove Tuesday, in the Middle Ages, people used to confess their sins so that they were forgiven before the season of Lent began. Lent is a time of giving things up. Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to use up the foods that aren't allowed in Lent. Pancakes are eaten on this day because they contain fat, butter and eggs which traditionally were forbidden during Lent.
- More than a hundred years ago, Shrove Tuesday used to be a half-day holiday. A church bell, called the *Shriving bell*, was rung signalling the start of the holiday and to call people to church to confess their sins. The church bell was rung at eleven o'clock in the morning, as a reminder to housewives to prepare their pancake batter. The bell became known as the Pancake bell. Tradition tells of a housewife who was busy making pancakes when the bell rang. So she ran to church tossing her pancake! People in the Middle Ages held pancake tossing races and they are still held today! The bell is still rung in villages across the United Kingdom, although Shrove Tuesday is no longer a public holiday.

Pancake Day worksheet 1

- Ask pupils to look at all of the food in the fridge on their worksheet and tick the food that they think goes into pancakes. Students then compare their answers with a partner.

Key: lemon, flour, butter, sugar, eggs, milk.

- **Optional follow-up activity:** Bring in the real ingredients of a pancake to show to the class, or find and cut out pictures from a magazine and stick them on the board. Write the words on pieces of card, or write them in random order down the side of the board. Read each word. Ask pupils to help you match the ingredients/pictures to the words.

Pancake Day worksheet 2

- Ask pupils to look at the pictures and to match the corresponding instructions to the lines beneath. Mime making a pancake with them.

Key: Put some flour in the bowl. Put an egg in the bowl. Put some milk in the bowl. Stir the pancake. Toss the pancake. Put some lemon and sugar on the pancake.

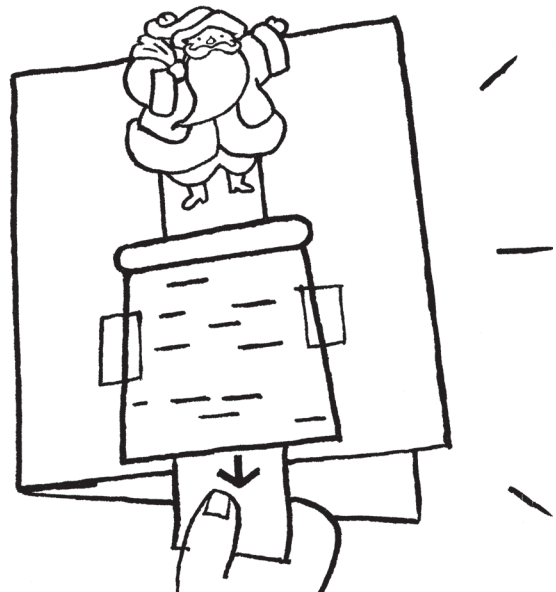
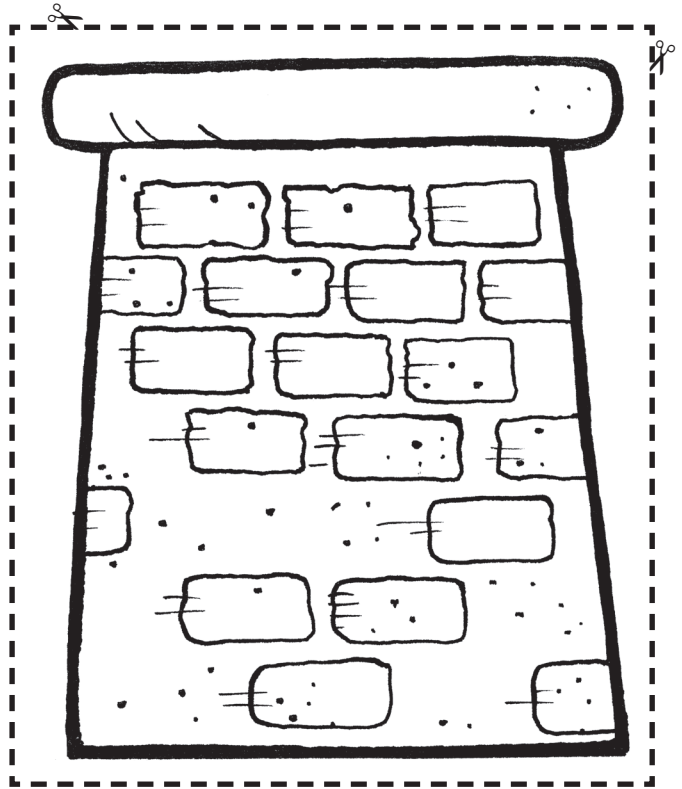
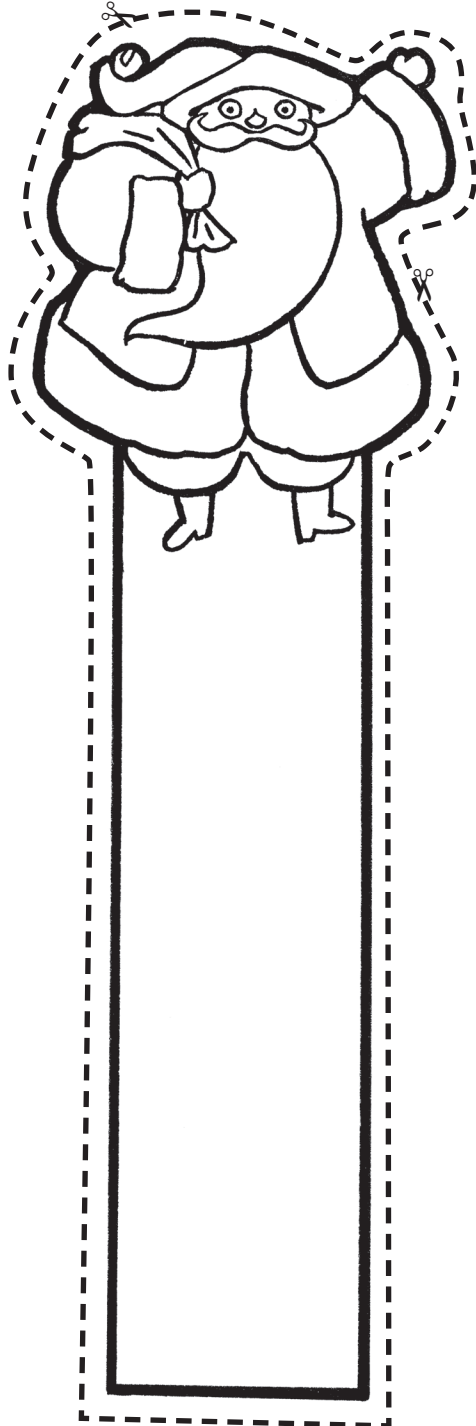
- **Optional follow-up activity:** Give each group a dice. Pupils take it in turns to throw the dice and must 'race' to finish their pancake first. To do so, they must tick and name all the stages as they throw the number. However, the steps must be ticked in order so a player cannot even begin until he/she has thrown a 1. He/she must then throw a 2, etc. The winner is the first player to tick all six stages.



Christmas worksheet 1



Make a Christmas card.

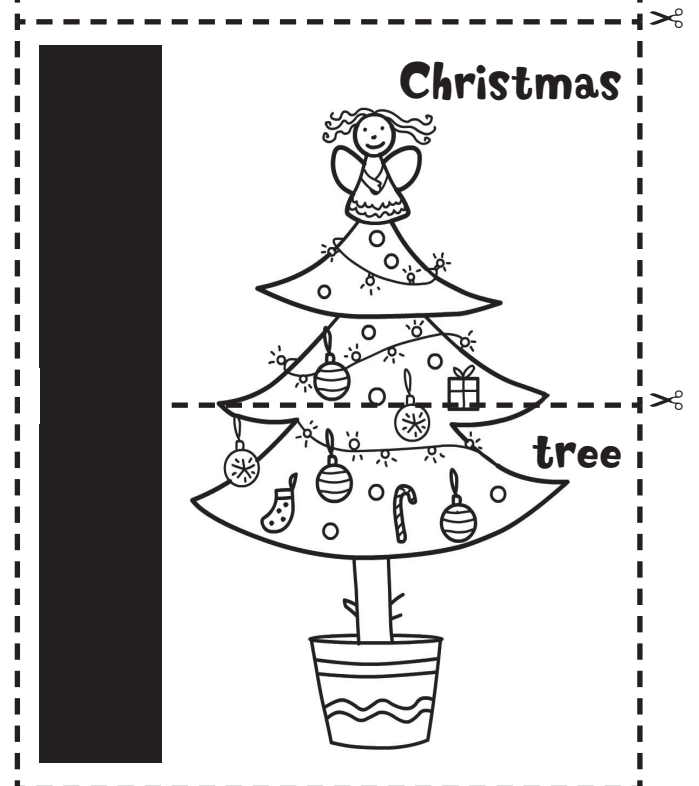
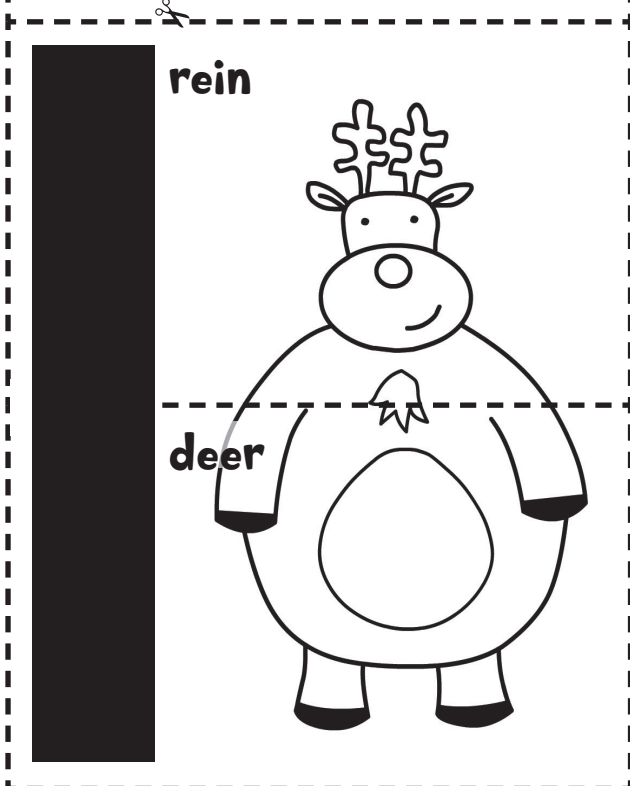
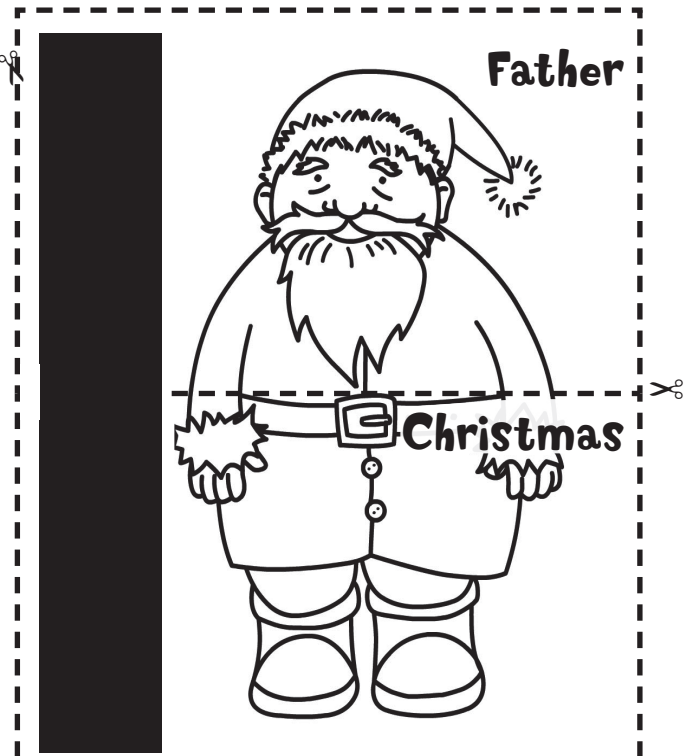
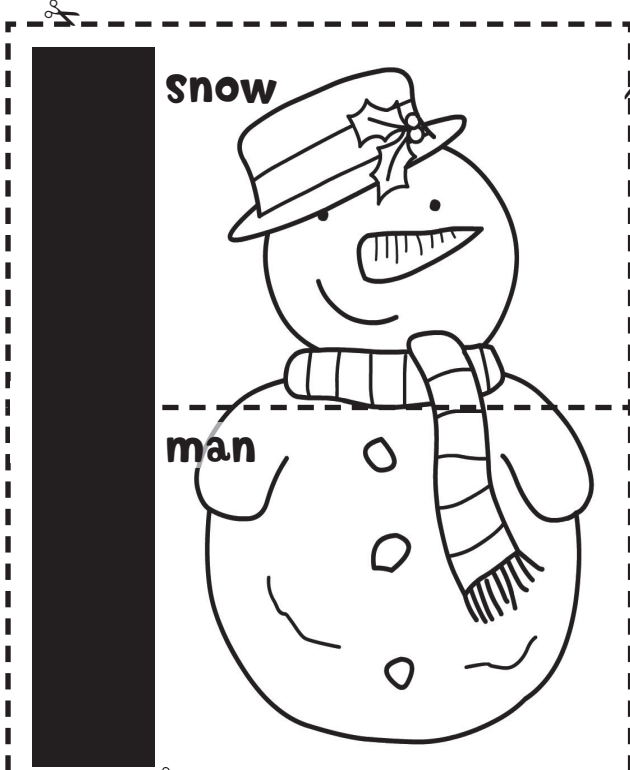




Christmas worksheet 2



Colour and play.

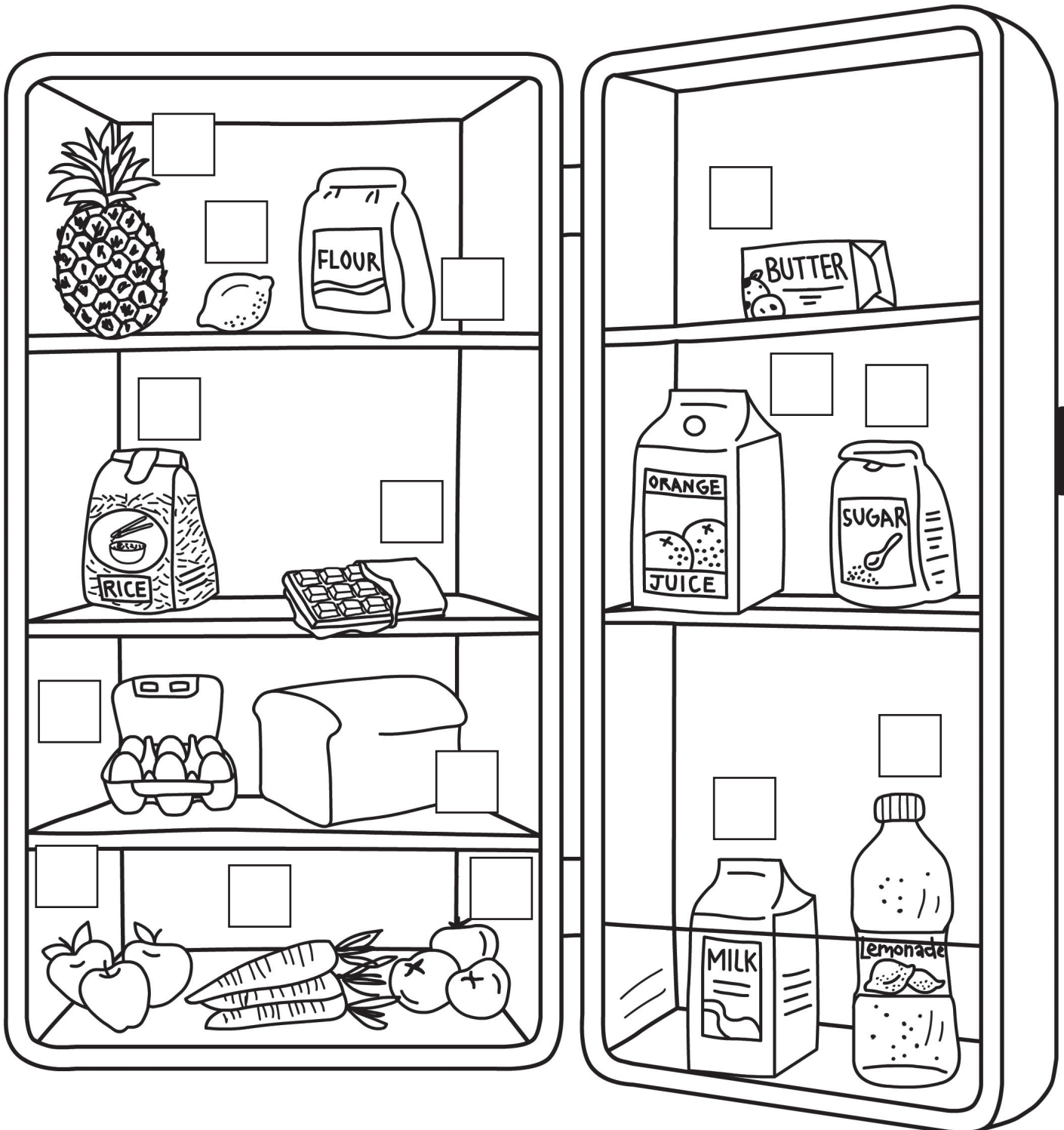




Pancake Day worksheet 1



Look, think and tick.





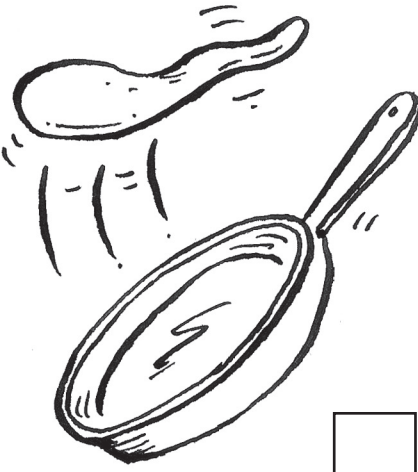
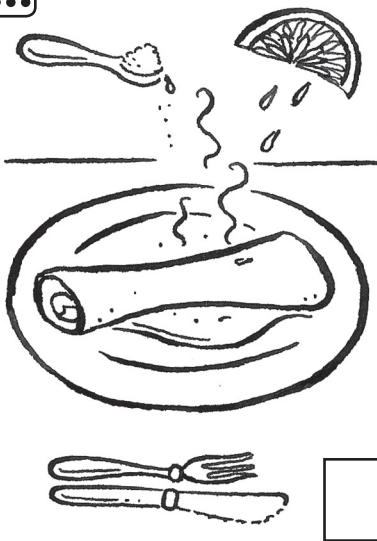




Pancake Day worksheet 2



Match and play.

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- Put some milk in the bowl.
- Put some flour in the bowl.
- Put some lemon and sugar on the pancake.

- Toss the pancake.
- Put an egg in the bowl.
- Stir the pancake.