

Cootie Catchers in our Spanish Class

Cootie catchers have been an all-time favorite between kids. Who doesn't like to hear you will be as strong as Superman or as popular as Selena Gomez? I remember when I created one to predict what we would be when we grew up. None of the predictions actually came true but it was fun to see what we got!

Cootie catchers are also known as a fortune teller. They are called "sacapijos" or "comecocos" in Spanish. They are a form of origami where through our choices we can discover hidden messages. A person usually asks a question and it is answered by the cootie catcher. To get to the answer, the person holding it over his fingers asks for a color or number and uses this information to open and close it a certain number of times that can be determined by the number of letters, or by spelling the word. Then we choose a flap and under it we can find our fortune!

We just need a little imagination to change them around and use them in our classrooms or at home to review Spanish. I have used them to practice vocabulary, answering questions and making sentences. They are great to review verb conjugations. Kids really have fun playing with them. You can even have them create their own and share it with other students.

Let's first learn how to create one.

Materials

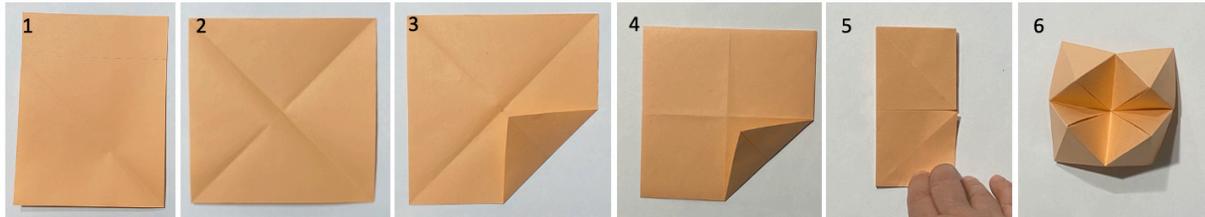
A piece of paper
Scissors
Color or markers
Pen or pencils
Ruler

Instructions

1. We need a square piece of paper. Just fold one corner over the edge and cut the extra flap.
2. Find the center of the square. Fold the other corner and crease. Unfold the paper and you will see the two diagonal lines.
3. Fold each corner point into the center of the paper.
4. Flip to the other side then fold each corner point into the center of the paper.

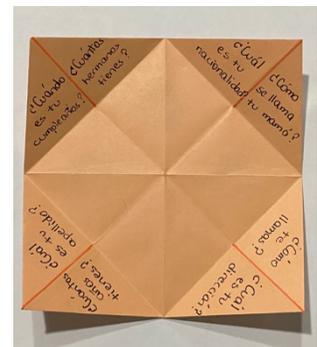


5. Fold the square in half from side to side. Then unfold it and fold the square in half from bottom to top.
6. Slip both thumbs and index fingers under the flaps and bring them together. All flaps will meet at a point in the center



I created this cootie catcher to review giving out personal information. In the top squares I put the colors red, blue, green and purple. The student chooses a color like “rojo” and spells R-O-J-O while the person holding the cootie catcher opens and closes it 4 times (once for each letter). Then they choose one of the 4 numbers that are visible and selects one. Again they can count up to that number while we open and close it. Finally, they choose the number of the flap to see what question they will get. Inside I wrote the following questions:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. ¿Cómo te llamas? | What is your name? |
| 2. ¿Cuántos años tienes? | How old are you? |
| 3. ¿Cuántos hermanos tienes? | How many siblings do you have? |
| 4. ¿Cuál es tu dirección? | What's your address? |
| 5. ¿Cuál es tu nacionalidad? | What is your nationality? |
| 6. ¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños? | When is your birthday? |
| 7. ¿Cómo se llama tu mamá? | What is your mother's name? |
| 8. ¿Cuál es tu apellido? | What is your last name? |



We can make a variation of this cootie catcher for advanced learners. Since making questions is harder than answering, instead of putting numbers we can put key words so students ask the question: nombre (name), edad (age), número de hermanos (number of siblings), dirección (address), nacionalidad (nationality), cumpleaños (birthday), nombre de tu mamá (mother's name) and apellido (last name). The questions would be under the flap so they can check they got it right. An extra advantage is that the person holding it can answer the questions!

We can put other things on the top squares like animals, family members, fruits, etc. You can even put pictures for them to recognize. Here are some ideas that you can use:

- Ask about their likes and dislikes.
- Ask about their favorites: color, animal, food, fruit, toy, movie, cartoon, singer, etc.
- Review vocabulary: animals, fruits, school supplies, etc.
- Talk about routines
- Review verb conjugations (especially irregular ones)
- Say the time
- Describe people or things

As you can see, you can adapt them in different ways. The possibilities are endless! Just take advantage of this fun activity and start playing while learning!

Have fun!

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