



4A KIDS Autumn 2020 - this is the first ever 4A KIDS kit!



[chunyinrainbowchan.com/](http://chunyinrainbowchan.com/)

Chun Yin Rainbow Chan is a vocalist, producer and multi-disciplinary artist, who makes songs, performances, artworks and research projects.

For 4A KIDS, Rainbow investigates a special word - and makes character shapes in clay!



[idalawrenceprojects.wordpress.com/](http://idalawrenceprojects.wordpress.com/)

Ida Lawrence is a visual artist who weaves stories through her art and education projects.

For 4A KIDS, Ida guides us through making an 'almost' batik artwork and remembers a great holiday!



[marikitsantiago.com/](http://marikitsantiago.com/)

Marikit Santiago is an artist who lives in Western Sydney, where she makes artworks that investigate culture and her own Filipino background and Australian nationality.

For 4A KIDS, Marikit makes an appropriation artwork with us - perfect for this time of isolation!

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah is an artist who lives in Western Australia and makes artworks that feature animals and memories, often carved out of wood.

For 4A KIDS, Abdul-Rahman shares info about some of the many animals he likes - and you can colour his artworks in!

[abdulrahmanabdullah.com/](http://abdulrahmanabdullah.com/)



4A KIDS is a 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art project connecting kids with contemporary Asian and Asian Australian contemporary art, culture and ideas. All activities are commissioned from artists and each 4A KIDS kit has activities for kids ranging from 5-17 (and beyond!) Want more? Visit [4a.com.au](http://4a.com.au)



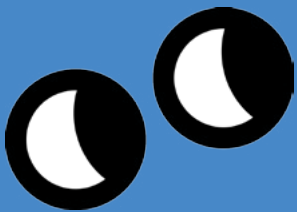
## Word Histories and Futures with Chun Yin Rainbow Chan

Have you ever wondered where our words come from? The study of words and how they change over time is called “etymology” (eh·tuh·mo·luh·jee.) Just as English has changed over time, languages across the world have changed too.

The Chinese language is interesting because it is not made up of letters of the alphabet. Instead, Chinese words are made up of little image-based parts, sometimes looking a lot like the things they are trying to represent. This type of writing is called “logography” (Egyptian hieroglyphics is another example, but very different.) Logography is one of the oldest systems of writing in the world.

If we think about it this way, words have a fascinating history living inside of them. Can they tell us something about the people and societies who once used them?

Let’s take a look at a very popular word in Chinese 明 míng which means “bright.” You might have heard it before when people talk about the “Ming Dynasty” in China which is famous for its porcelain. 明 míng is made up of two smaller parts — the characters for sun 日 and for moon 月. Before modern times people didn’t have electricity so they depended on natural sources of light. If you combine the sun and the moon into one, you’ll get a very “bright” object indeed!



But there are some people who think this word history is not quite right. They looked at older versions of how 明 míng was once written and realised that something was different. The sun 日 part of 明 míng actually used to look like 囧 or the word for “window.” This suggests that ancient Chinese people thought about brightness not as the sun and moon combined. Instead brightness was represented by moonlight shining through their window. What a lovely image!

Words change shape and meaning all the time. Sometimes they change spellings or become adopted by another culture. Other times, words are lost altogether. Maybe there are other word histories that you would like to know more about? Or maybe you would like to imagine some of your own word futures? One thing is for certain, words are great story-tellers!



# Activity: Making word sculptures for 明 míng, “bright.”

with Chun Yin Rainbow Chan

For this activity, we will be making dough word sculptures. Why dough, you might ask? As we now know, words change shape and meaning all the time. Dough is squishy and stretchy, so can we use dough to show the flexibility of words? Not only is it fun to play with, it is also wonderfully easy to make and bake at home!

## STEP 1

Mix flour and salt together in a bowl. Slowly mix water, a few tablespoons at a time, into flour mixture until dough is smooth and easy to handle. Add colouring if using. Knead dough for 10 minutes and let rest for 20 minutes.

## STEP 2

Preheat oven to 120°C.  
Get an adult to help you with this!

### All you need is:

2 cups of flour  
1 cup of salt  
1 cup of cold water  
Food colouring (optional)

## STEP 3

Form dough into shapes based on the character 明 míng. You can be as imaginative or abstract as you want here! Will the two small parts be joined together? Will the character be completely taken apart?

(Note: if you want to turn your sculpture into a necklace or a hanging ornament, add a small hole to the top of each shape so you can string them together after they are baked.)



## STEP 4

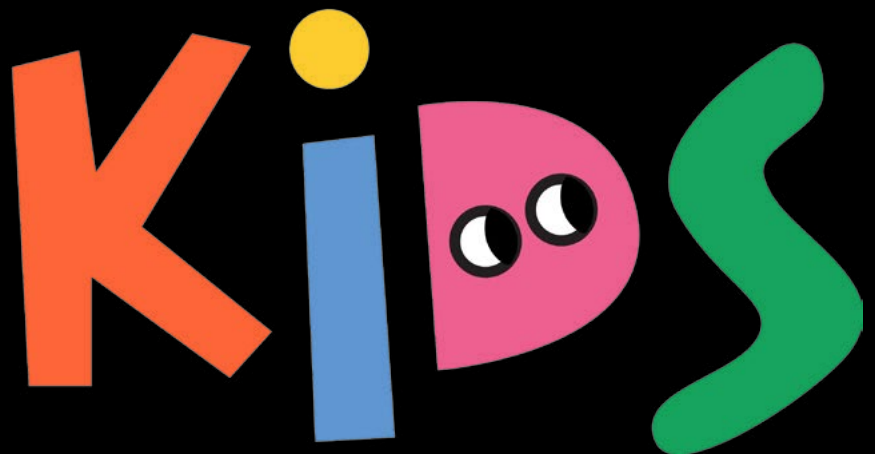
Arrange on a baking sheet and bake in the preheated oven until dry and hard, about 2 hours.

When done, get an adult to help you get your shapes out of the oven. Allow to cool completely before assembling.

Once you are done, you can gather your pieces together, or sit them next to your favourite toy – my 明 looked good with my octopus!

Thanks for learning with me + 4A KIDS!  
Chun Yin Rainbow Chan





Thanks for having fun with 4A KIDS - see you next time!  
[4a.com.au](http://4a.com.au)