

Family Holiday Music-Making Kit

Activities

<i>The Nutcracker in a Nutshell</i>	p.2
<i>“Trepak” Cup Challenge</i>	p.3
<i>Nutcracker King Coloring Page</i>	p.4
<i>Dance of the Snowflakes Musical Maze</i>	p.5
<i>Nutcracker Suite Word Search</i>	p.6
<i>Finding Fritz and Clara’s House</i>	p.7
<i>Mouse King Cheese & Crackers Snacks</i>	p.8



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The Nutcracker in a Nutshell

What is The Nutcracker?

The Nutcracker is a two-act ballet written by Russian composer Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky. A nutcracker is a tool used to break open hard-shelled nuts like walnuts or pecans.

What's the story of the ballet?

Act I

A young girl named Clara receives the gift of a nutcracker at a Christmas party from a family friend named Drosselmeyer. Clara's brother, Fritz, accidentally breaks the nutcracker during the party, but Drosselmeyer repairs it.

After the party ends and the family goes to sleep, Clara dreams about adventures of the nutcracker. First, she finds herself in the middle of a battle between the gingerbread soldiers and mice, led by a king. The nutcracker battles against the Mouse King. When Clara helps him win the fight, the nutcracker is transformed into a Prince.

The most recognizable music from Act I is the "March of the Toy Soldiers" and "Waltz of the Snowflakes."

Act II

Clara and the Prince continue their adventure in the Land of Sweets, which is ruled by the Sugar Plum Fairy. The Prince tells the story of how Clara helped him defeat the Mouse King, and a celebration begins to honor Clara. She watches as sweets from all over the world present beautiful dances. At the end of the celebration, Clara and the Prince ride off in a reindeer-drawn sleigh.

In Act II you hear the famous movements "Trepak (Russian Dance)," "Dance of the Reed Flutes," "Waltz of the Flowers," and "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy."

See it for yourself!

Many dance schools and ballet troupes perform *The Nutcracker* each December—look around for a live performance in your area. If you can't see it in person, there are many performances available to view on YouTube and various streaming services.

“Trepak” Cup Challenge

“Trepak” (Russian Dance) is one of the character dances from Act II of The Nutcracker. It is based on the traditional Russian folk dance.

The form of “Trepak” is AABA. Learn two rhythm routines and take the Cup Challenge!

Materials:

- Large plastic cup
- Recording of “Trepak (Russian Dance)” from The Nutcracker
- Any number of family and friends!


Instructions:


1. Clap/say the rhythms on these slides.
2. Watch this video to learn the cup routines.
3. Practice each section without the music.
4. Turn on the recording and perform the routines with the music. Anyone who finishes the song without making a mistake wins the challenge!
5. Take it to the next level—if you have mastered this cup challenge, try the advanced level! Practice the rhythms and watch the video.





Nutcracker King Coloring Page

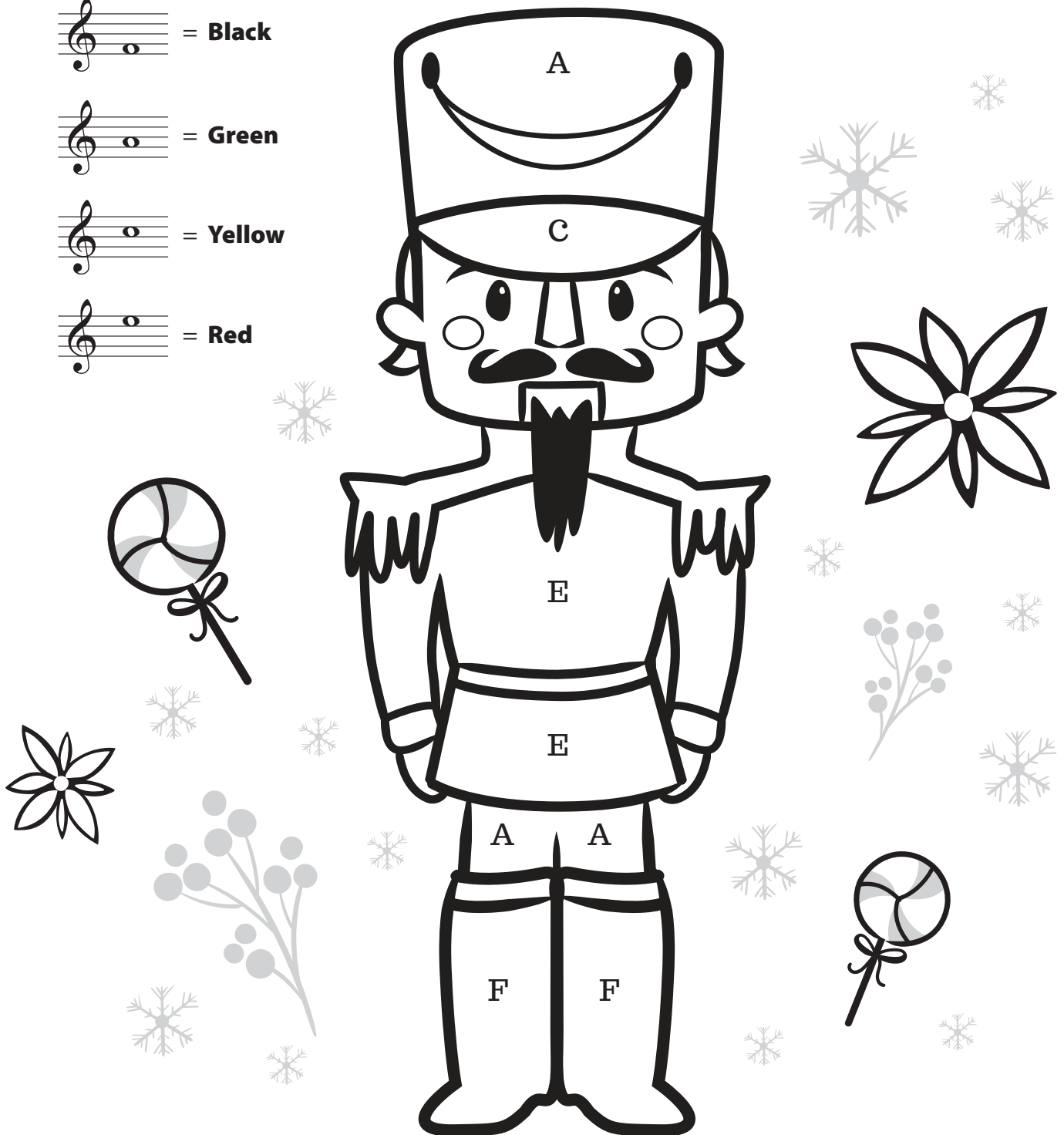
Using the key below, color the picture.

 = **Black**

 = **Green**

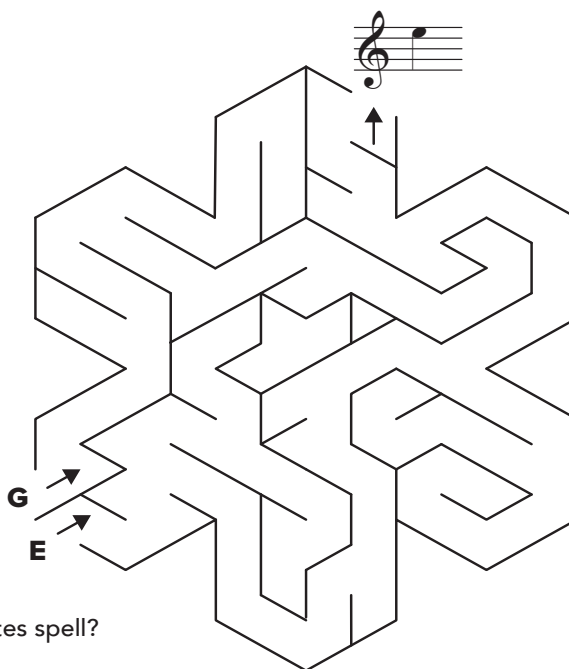
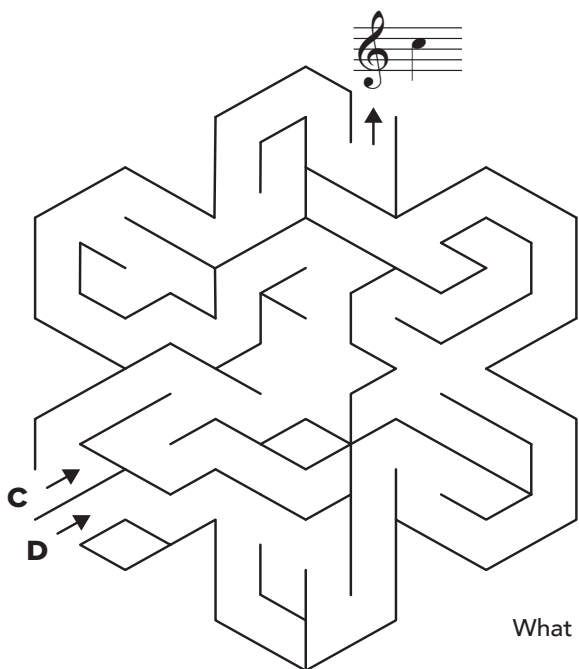
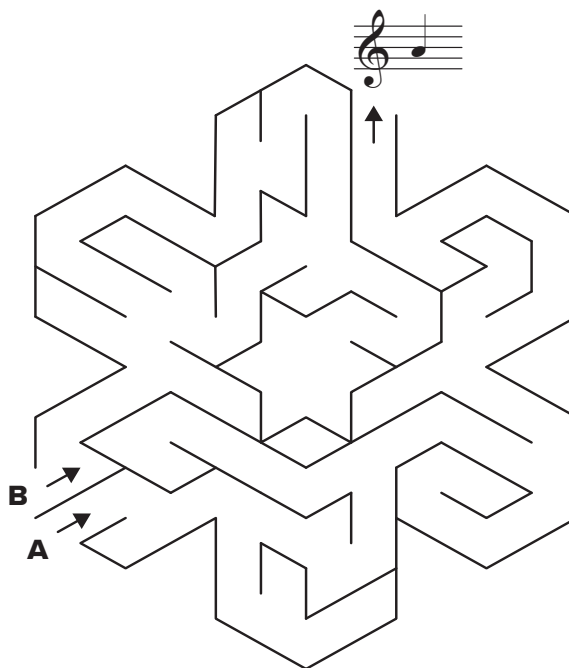
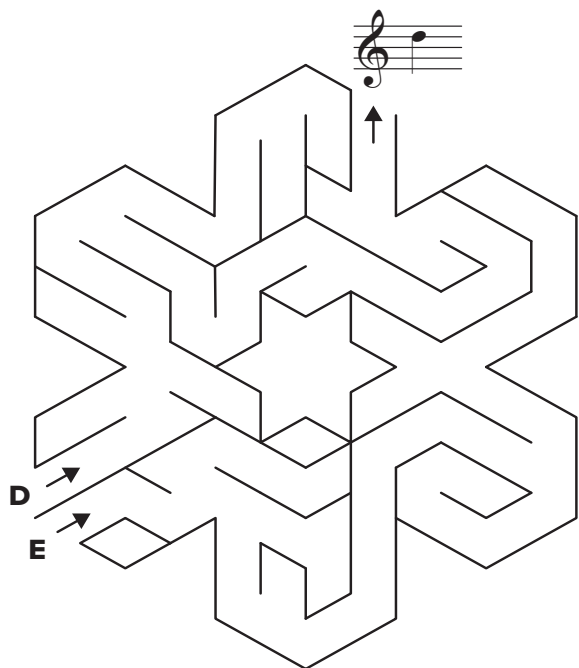
 = **Yellow**

 = **Red**



Dance of the Snowflakes Musical Maze

Only 1 path will lead you out of the maze! Choose the correct letter that corresponds to the note on the staff to solve the maze.



What do these notes spell?

— — — **N** — — —

Nutcracker Suite Word Search

Find and circle all the words listed at the bottom of the page.
Words may be forward, backward, horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

S	A	J	F	T	C	H	A	I	K	O	V	S	K	Y
Y	N	F	S	A	H	D	R	R	D	F	S	Q	J	G
P	R	O	X	R	Q	B	A	L	L	E	T	K	C	O
Z	Z	I	W	A	E	K	T	R	E	P	A	K	R	S
B	E	P	A	Q	N	I	R	J	V	X	K	K	E	T
U	Z	H	G	F	U	H	D	I	Y	I	D	C	F	E
R	S	Z	T	F	M	E	N	L	K	T	N	T	R	E
C	Y	E	B	P	V	U	E	R	O	I	W	B	I	W
Q	R	Z	J	H	G	P	L	N	R	S	X	U	T	S
W	C	N	I	T	M	J	S	P	K	A	Y	E	Z	F
N	U	T	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	R	E	O	R	O
R	Q	D	W	P	Q	O	Q	Z	S	A	S	Z	T	D
Z	T	L	A	W	D	F	X	X	U	L	G	O	C	N
T	M	O	U	S	E	K	I	N	G	C	L	U	X	A
D	R	O	S	S	E	L	M	E	Y	E	R	W	S	L

BALLET
CLARA
DROSSELMAYER
FRITZ
LAND OF SWEETS

MOUSE KING
NUTCRACKER
PRINCE
SNOW QUEEN
SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

TCHAIKOVSKY
TOY SOLDIERS
TREPAK
WALTZ

Mouse King Cheese & Crackers Snack

Ingredients:

Round wheat crackers
Cheese wedges (any flavor)
Black peppercorns
Almond slices
Slice of American or cheddar cheese
Red apple
Green onions

Missing anything? Be creative and replace it with something else you have in the kitchen!

Directions:

Head and Body

Cut or unwrap cheese wedges. Place one on top of a cracker. The cracker is the body of the mouse, and the cheese is the head.

Nose

Slice the apple, then cut small triangle shapes. Add one triangle to the tip of the cheese wedge. This is the mouse's nose.

Ears

Carefully insert two almond slices near the back of the cheese wedge to create ears.

Eyes

Take two peppercorns and place them in the middle of the cheese wedge to make eyes.

Whiskers and Tail

Slice the green onions into narrow strips. Use a toothpick to poke two short onion strips into both sides of each cheese wedge near the nose to create the whiskers. Poke a long strip into the back of each wedge at the bottom to add the tail.

Crown

Cut the sliced cheese into crown shapes and place in front of the almond slice ears.

Enjoy!

