

STORY OF MY LIFE

Did you know that shells have growth rings like trees? The scientific name for these is “increments”. On most shells, you can’t see them easily without a microscope, but they are pretty clear here on this tuangi/tuaki | NZ cockle.

Growth rings are made annually (every year). Over time, the lines create the pattern of the shell and record information. They tell us how old the mollusc is and also about the environment that it grew in. If shells had a diary – this would be it!



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Use our instructions to make your own shell that tells the story of your life so far...

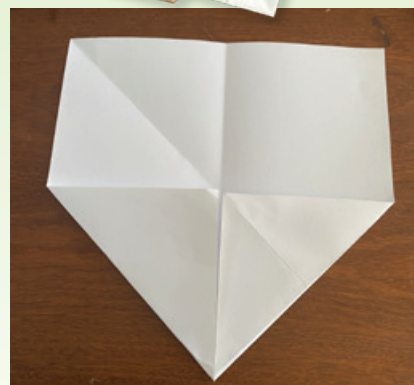
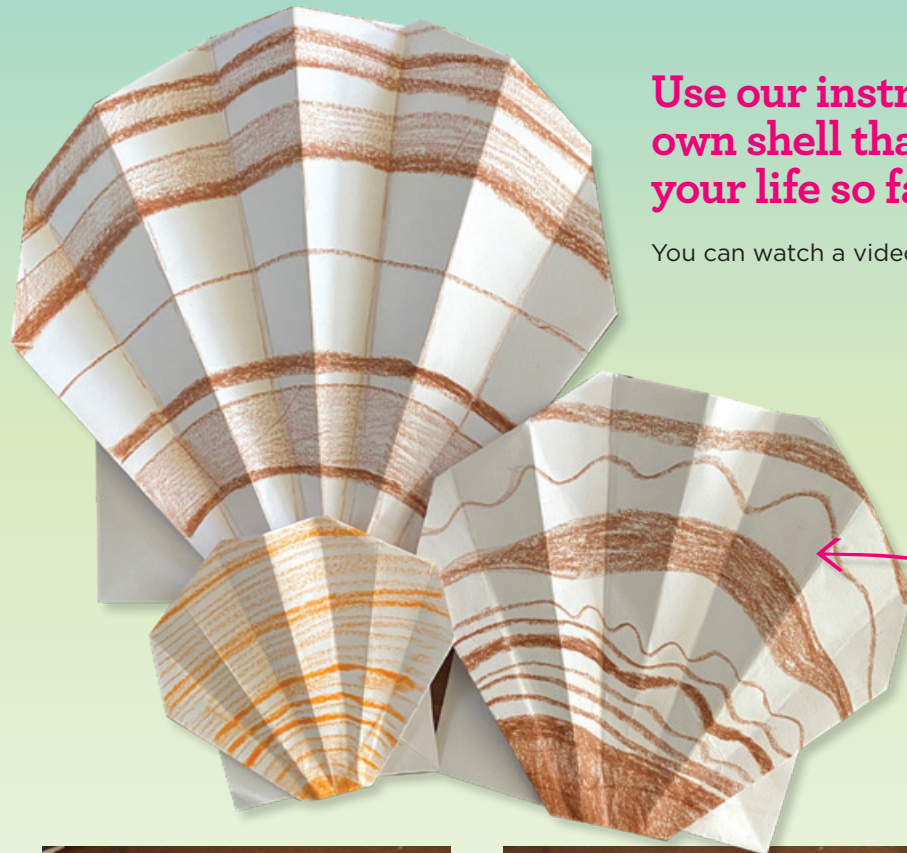
You can watch a video at kcc.org.nz too.

You'll need:

- A piece of paper
- A crayon

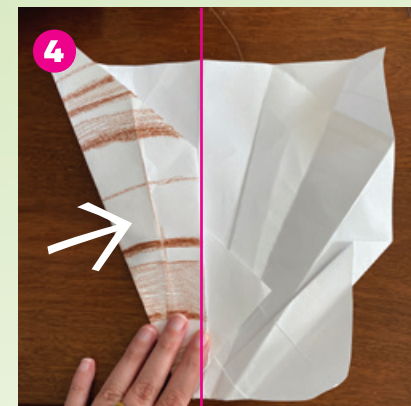
Send a photo of your mahi to kcc@forestandbird.org.nz

This person felt that 2019 and 2021 were a bit wobbly, and 2020 was really important, so they showed it in the way they drew their growth rings.



SETTING IT UP: Make sure your paper is square, then fold it in half lengthwise. Fold the bottom corners into the middle to make a point, then fold each flap back on itself to make the shell have a square-shaped hinge. Fold up the point like in the last picture.

RECORDING YOUR STORY: Turn your shell over. Draw in your growth rings (e.g. if you are eight years old, draw eight lines). Then start filling in the detail of your story through your patterning. For years that were really important for you, you might like to make the lines thicker or darker. If the time between two birthdays was really eventful (i.e. lots of cool stuff, or hard stuff, happened), you might want to show this with shading.



= middle



FOLDING YOUR SHELL: Turn your shell over again. You are going to fold in the ridges and grooves now. Fold one side in like in the first photo, then fold it in again like the second photo. Turn your shell over. Fold the side back on itself from the middle, like in the last photo. Repeat for the other side (photos 4, 5, 6).



FINISHING IT OFF: Once you have done your folding, your shell should look like this first photo. Turn your shell over and fold down the points sticking up.