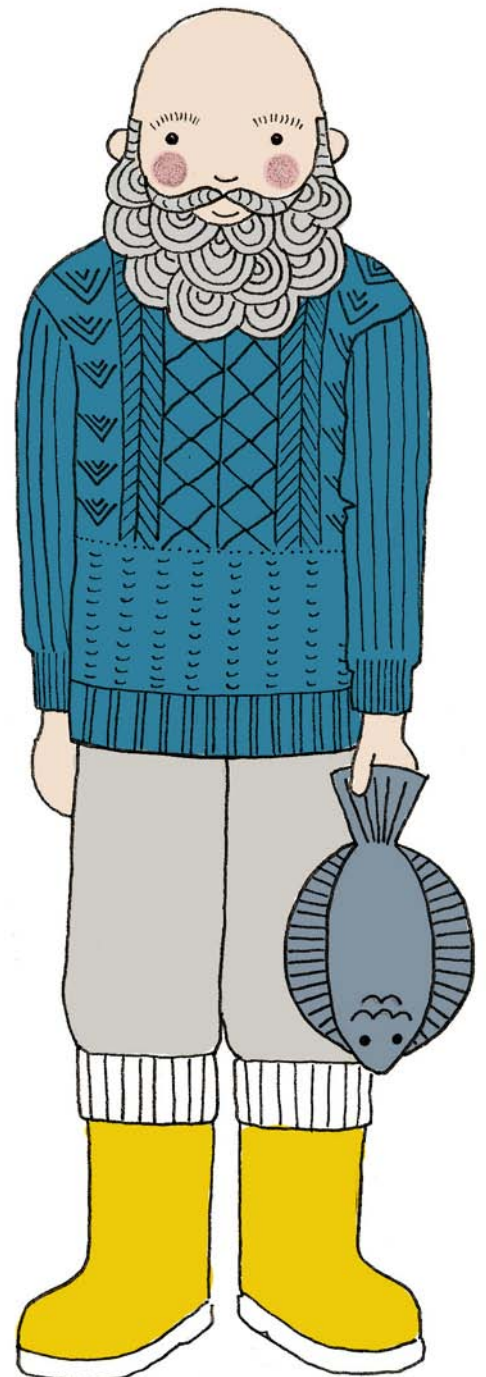


ganseys



**a creative resource for primary schools
and young people under 12**



This project pack explores the topic of Ganseys, their history, patterns and traditions.

Students will have the opportunity to learn about the secret patterns and traditional construction of ganseys and why they have been worn by fisherfolk over several centuries.

The project pack is divided into three sections:

- background information
- museum activities
- creative activities

ganseys



Teaching Notes

This project pack introduces students to the Gansey, a traditional hand-knitted jumper worn by fisherfolk for many hundreds of years.

Students will have the opportunity to learn about the history of the gansey and how they are created, to discover the secret meanings of the shapes and patterns found in these garments and to explore the museum for ideas and inspiration to create their own designs.

The project pack is divided into 3 sections:

background information

Background information which can be discussed and translated with your group. Written from the perspective of a fisherman and his wife these sheets talk about the history of the gansey, how it is made and some of the quirks of gansey design... Students might want to tell you which shapes and designs they would have knitted into a gansey to identify their dead body if "lost at sea"!

in the museum

Younger groups should explore the museum to collect shapes, patterns and motifs which relate to the sea, fishing and all things nautical. Students should draw some of their favourite patterns on the worksheet to help them with their creative activities. Look out for ropes, anchors, shells, boat shapes, etc.

Older groups may want to use this worksheet in the same way, or start to collect ideas for patterns and images they would knit into a gansey to identify themselves. Look out for nautical text, numbers, signs and symbols.

creative activities

Classroom or education-space activities which allow students to explore and create their own gansey design.

Gansey Bunting - Younger groups can use their museum research to design a pattern for their own gansey using repeat pattern. They should design both sides of their gansey using lots of colour and seaside shapes. Once the design is complete students can cut out, fold and hang their gansey onto string to form a length of "gansey bunting".

Gansey ID - older groups can design and create their own gansey which acts as their special ID (how could their gansey help to identify them if they were "lost at sea") Using pattern, drawings or collage students can create a design using images that 'say something' about them (ie. footballs, musical notes, favourite colours). Students can also complete the ID tag which can be attached to their gansey when displayed.

ganseys



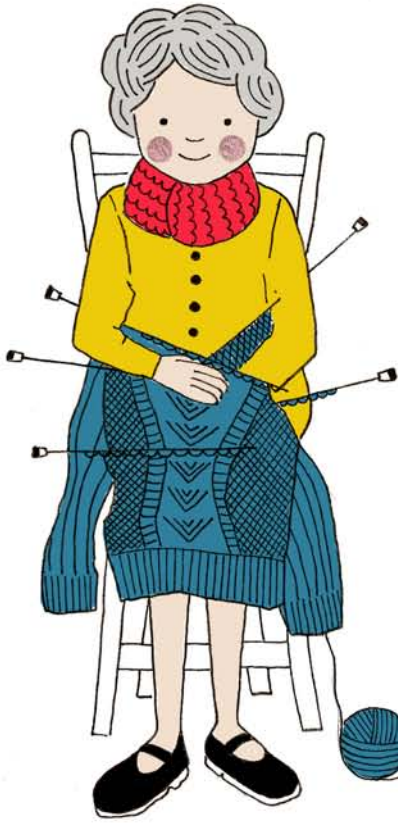
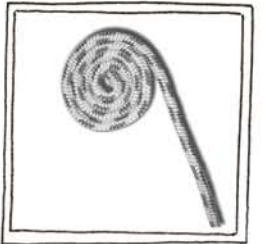
So, what is a gansey? Or a Jersey? Or a Guernsey?

Well, as long as our men have been out at sea, us women have been knitting thick woolly jumpers to keep them warm and dry.

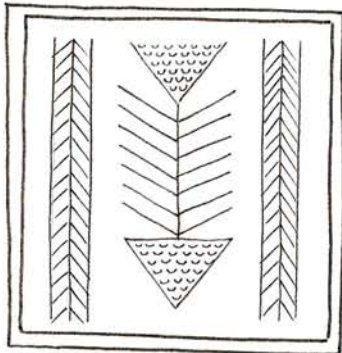
A gansey (that's what we call them up here in Scotland) is a jumper knitted using five or six knitting needles – quite a handful! We knit them with a square neck so they can be worn either way round, which is pretty handy when Jock spills his soup down his front!

We don't write our knitting patterns down, its all in our heads, and we can pretty much knit them with our eyes closed (and the lights off!) I learned to knit a gansey from my mum, who learned from her mum.... and I've taught my daughter all my patterns too and hopefully she'll pass them on to her daughter.

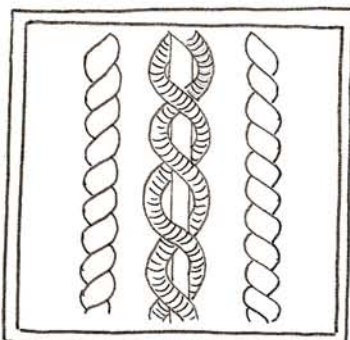
Mind you, my dad was pretty good at knitting up a gansey – not much different from mending the fishing nets, I guess, so it wasn't always us women that did the knitting.



ahoy there



fish skeleton?



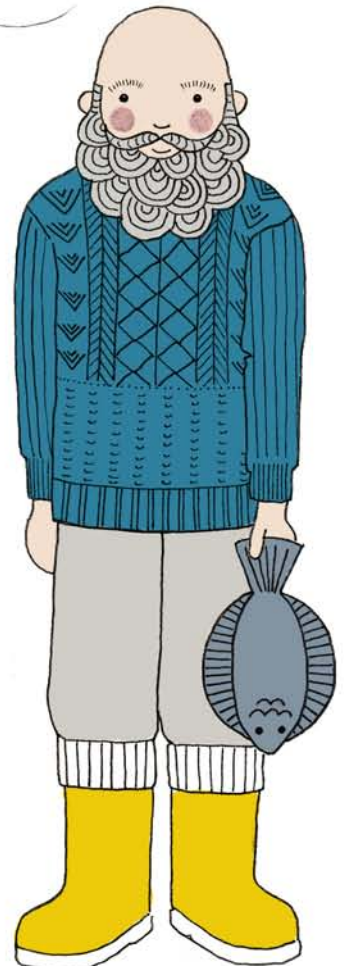
ropes?

So you want to know about ganseys? Well, I've had this one for more than 15 years now and have worn it every day except Sunday when I wear my special gansey. The sleeves get a bit tatty after a while but Jean just unravels them a bit and knits them up again good as new. The sleeves are a bit short on ganseys, it stops them getting soggy or catching on the fishing hooks when I'm out on the boat.

My gansey's pretty tight too – keeps out the wind and draughts. Mary next door knits hers ganseys so tight I can hear her kids screaming when they get them pulled over their heads – sometimes their earlobes even bleed!!

Our Scottish ganseys are a pretty fancy – lots more pattern than my English fisher friends. The patterns are all inspired by our fishing life – nets, ropes and fish bones – see if you can spot them. Jean even puts in some "marriage lines" –the zigzag patterns which show the ups and downs of married life (cheeky).

There are even a few wee mistakes in my gansey – the lifeboat crew can use these to identify my body if I ever come a cropper out at sea!!



background information

Here's a true wee tale in traditional Scots about the life of a fisherman's wife... Can you translate it?

Mah name is Mary Anne French but fowk caa me Miran or Ma French.

Ah bide up th' toon with ma dochter and her man and twa bairns. Her mans at sea mastly, engineer oan a trawler. Sae it's a women's hoose.

I divnae like the sea. It tacks tay mony ay us. Ah am aye telling' th' bairns nae tae gang doon the toon tae th' harbour. But Ah ken they dae.

Ah dae wiving o ganzies for folks aboot here. Bring me th' yarn and Ah can hae it dane in twa tae fower days. I dinna seek oniething for it but they aye gie me a fry or a shillin or twa.

Ah hud foorteen bairns but only three are alife. Mah man wis a ships' carpenter but he wis at the pictures and hid a hert attack, draped deed. Sae we hae bin strugglin oan since then. Mah loon left skale an' worked as a grocers loon an mah eldest dochter works in th' bakery. Sae thaur is aye something' at the end ay th' day. The dochter Ah bide wi is the youngest.

Ah broocht up three ay mah grandbairns. Their ma deed. Its aye bin a foo hoose here. Naebudy chaps the door. It's aye open and they just caa oot an say fa it is.

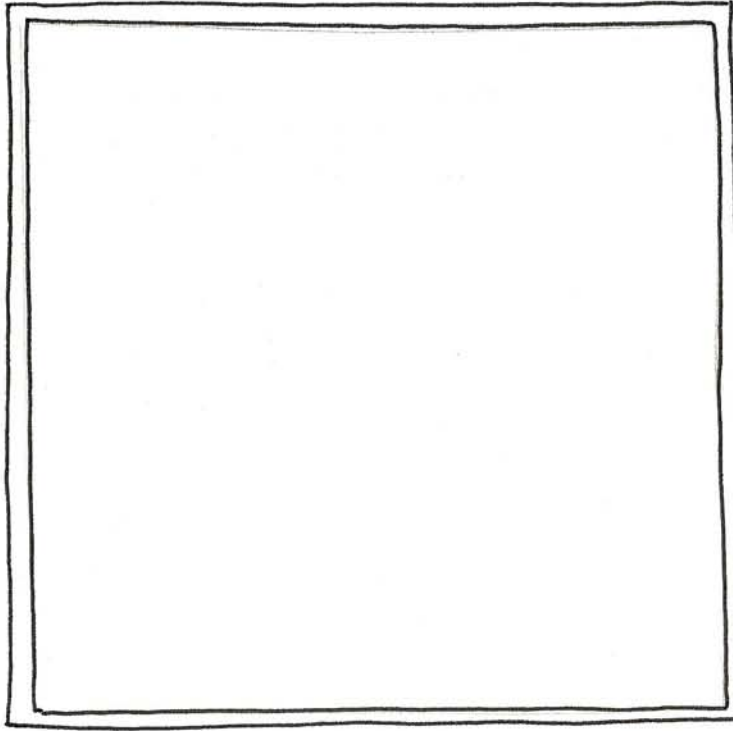
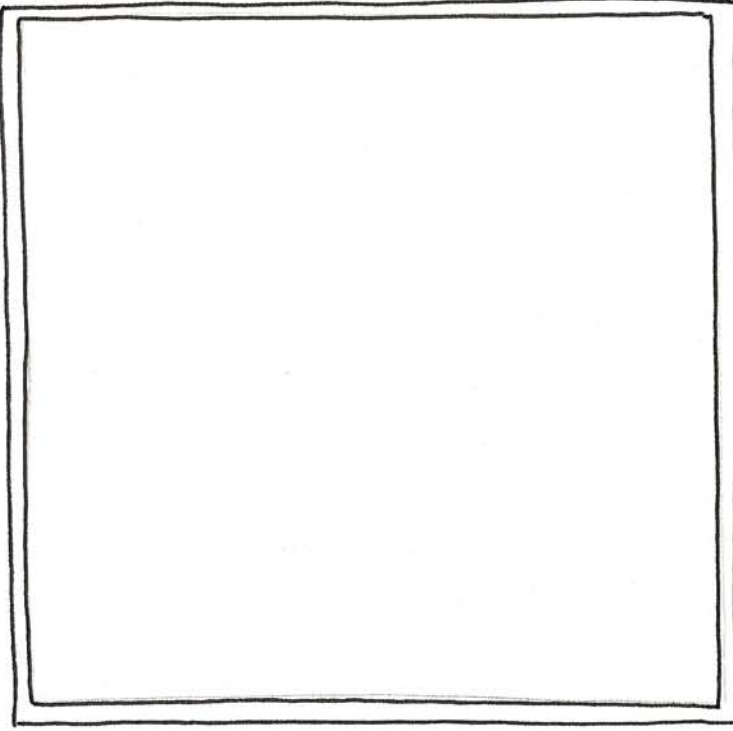
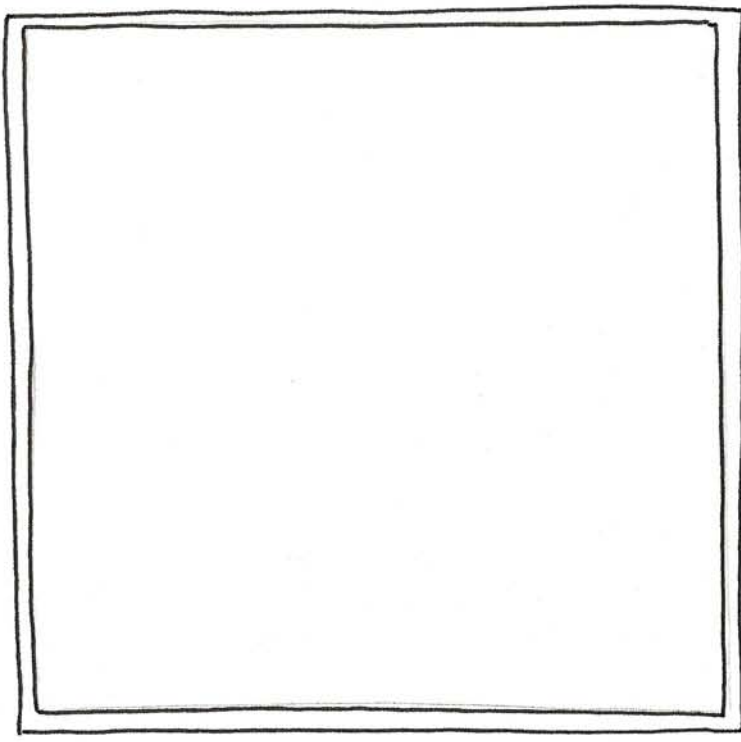
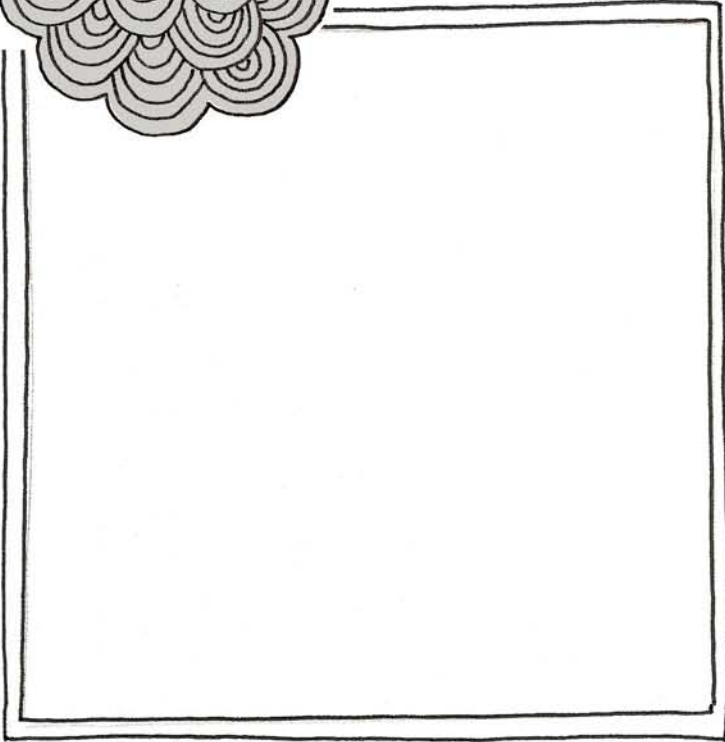
Thaur's th bairns back wi some partins an buckies. Sae aam aaf tae bile them. They like tae eat th buckies wi a pin frae a poke.





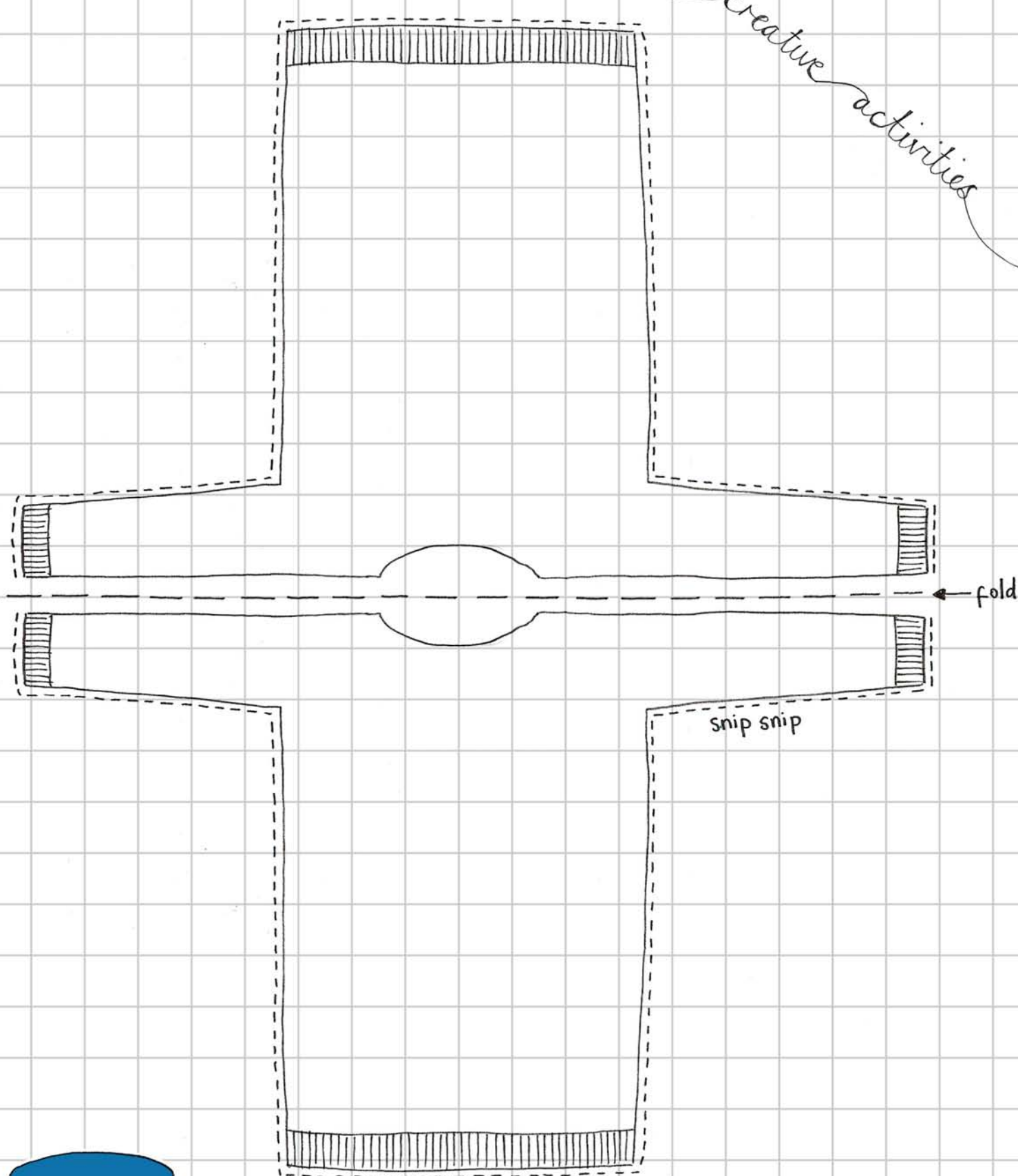
ahoy there!

time to explore...use this sheet to collect some nautical shapes and patterns in the museum.



in the museum

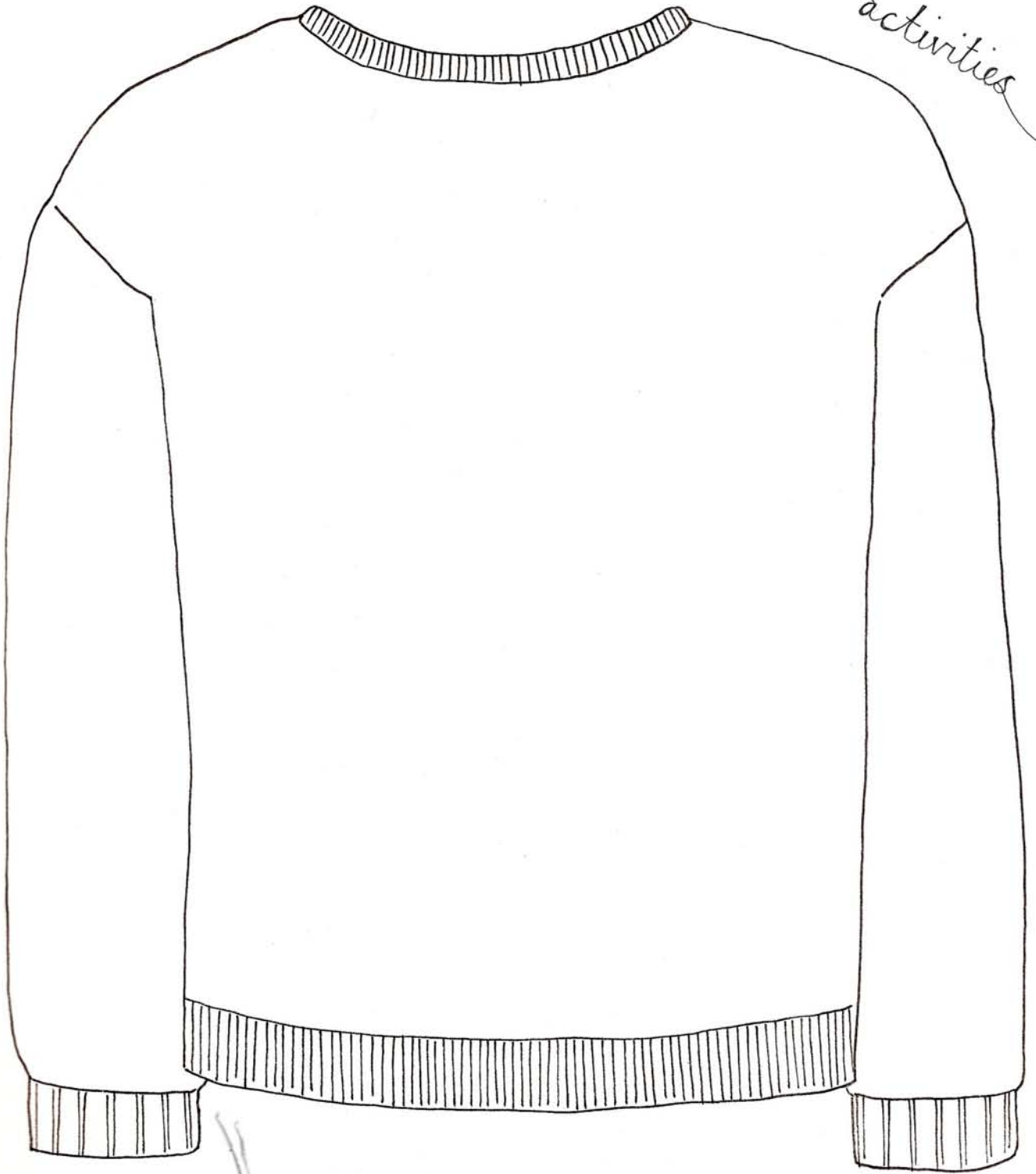
creative activities



anchors away!
lets get to work...

What will your gansey look like?
Design your gansey using lots of
nautical patterns then cut it,
fold it and hang it up. Good luck!

creative activities



How will the lifeboat crew identify you using only your gansey?

Design a gansey that is "all about you" then fill in your ID tag.

You can cut out the finished gansey and attach the tag using string... can your crew identify you?

