

Art and
Culture

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ORIGAMI

Dividing Fractions



Heather E. Schwartz



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A Mysterious Assignment

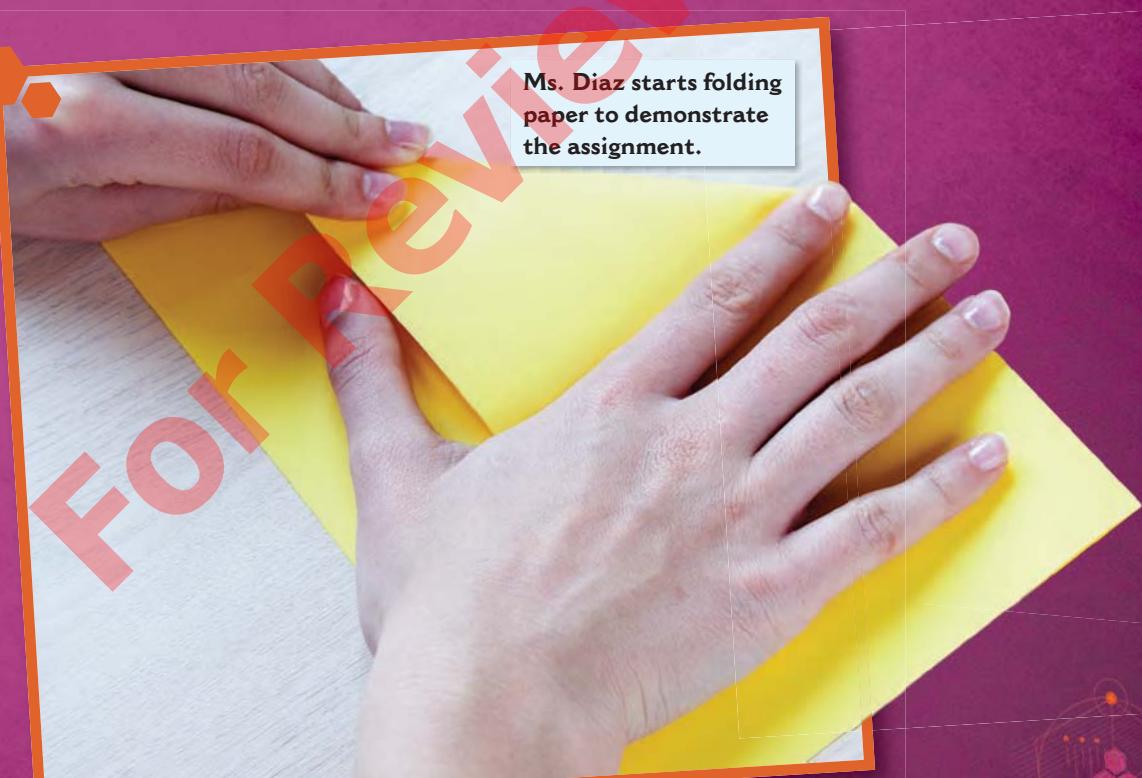
Alexis glanced at the clock. Time was running out; social studies class was almost over. Ms. Diaz surely would have mentioned any homework assignment by now. It wasn't that Alexis minded homework so much, and she even liked social studies. But the textbook was so heavy! She just hated lugging it home.

Suddenly, Ms. Diaz clapped her hands together and stopped the lesson abruptly. "We have to end here," she announced. "I have an important assignment to talk to you about—you'll start work on it this weekend!"



Ms. Diaz sounded excited, but Alexis was **skeptical**. Her teacher was probably going to assign the end-of-chapter questions as homework like she did after every unit. And as usual, Ms. Diaz was trying to make it sound more interesting than it really was. Besides, whatever the assignment, it was sure to require carrying that huge textbook home.

Alexis and the rest of the class waited for Ms. Diaz to begin a **prolonged** explanation about the assignment. But their teacher didn't say a word. Instead, she took a sheet of yellow paper from the bin of art supplies and began to fold it carefully on top of her desk.



Ms. Diaz starts folding
paper to demonstrate
the assignment.

The New Kid at School

As Ms. Diaz folded and creased the paper, she said, “*Origami* means ‘to fold paper’ in Japanese.” She then explained that people can make many different things from a square piece of paper. Everyone laughed when she held up her finished design. It was a paper airplane!

“I thought you said you didn’t want any **contraband** in your classroom,” called out Kenji, the outspoken new kid. A week earlier, he’d been texting during class, and Ms. Diaz had taken his phone away until after school.

“That’s right, I did say that, and I meant it, too,” Ms. Diaz **concurred**, her tone stern. “But this is more than just a paper airplane. This is educational.”

Alexis groaned inwardly. *Educational?* As she held her pencil above her notepad, waiting to write down the assignment, she couldn’t help thinking that this assignment would be boring.

“How can a paper airplane be educational?” Kenji asked, sounding genuinely curious. Alexis noticed Ms. Diaz was letting him get away with not raising his hand. Ms. Diaz wasn’t always **stringent** about that particular class rule. It was fine with Alexis, who was curious too, but was shy talking in class.

“That’s for you to discover as you work,” Ms. Diaz said. “We are learning about cultures from around the world. Your assignment is to work in groups of two and research Japan’s culture through origami. Please take your instructions for this assignment from the front of the room as you leave.”



LET'S EXPLORE MATH

Ms. Diaz's paper airplane was 8 inches long. Kenji asked to decorate it with different colored stripes. He made each stripe $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide. Draw an area model like this one. Use it to find out how many stripes Kenji made.

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Alexis, Kenji, and the other students stood up and moved to the front of the classroom to pick up the instruction sheet. Alexis looked it over quickly before she put it away in her messenger bag. Their research on origami and Japanese culture needed to be creative and meaningful. Ms. Diaz suggested planning a skit, and Alexis predicted that most kids would do that. She wished there was some way to do the report without feeling so uncomfortable in front of the class. What a **conundrum!**

Ms. Diaz had paired up the students' names in two columns at the bottom of the page. Alexis scanned the pairings, looking for her name. There it was—she was paired with Kenji.

Remembering how talkative Kenji had been in class, Alexis hoped he wasn't a troublemaker. As she was walking toward the door, she glanced toward Kenji's desk and saw that he was sitting down instead of getting ready to leave like everyone else. He'd torn a sheet of paper out of his notebook and was busy folding it into different shapes. *Another paper airplane? What was he up to?* Alexis wondered.



Kenji folds a paper airplane
before going to art class.

A color photograph of a young girl with blonde hair tied back, wearing glasses, a light blue button-down shirt, and dark jeans. She is smiling and holding several books and notebooks against her chest. A brown backpack hangs from her shoulder. The background shows a classroom setting with yellow chairs and a green geometric wall mural.

Alexis gets ready to leave Ms. Diaz's room to go to art class.

For Review Only