

Inspiring Our Community to Explore, Discover, & Connect



COUNTY of VENTURA
Library

READER

Monthly Newsletter of Ventura County Library

January 2026



EMBRACING THE POSSIBILITIES OF A NEW YEAR

A Message From

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Happy New Year from Ventura County Library!

As we welcome 2026, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to every member of our community. Your curiosity, creativity, and love of learning inspire the work we do every day across our twelve branches and Mobile Library.

A new year always brings a sense of possibility: a chance to set fresh intentions, discover new interests, and reconnect with the people and places that enrich our lives. At Ventura County Library, we're excited to support those new beginnings and help you explore all that the library can offer.

With that spirit of renewal in mind, we're also delighted to share the return of the Ventura County Library Reader, our community newsletter designed to keep you connected with library programs, stories and updates from across the county. We're bringing it back in a refreshed, engaging monthly format for the year ahead.

Let's kick off 2026 with a renewed commitment to learning, discovery and community connection. We truly hope to see you at the library soon!

Warmest wishes for a joyful, inspiring New Year,
Nancy Schram
Library Director, Ventura County Library



IN THIS ISSUE

- p. 3** A New Chapter for E.P. Foster Library
- p. 4** Two opportunities to give your input this January
- p. 5** Ron Solórzano: 10 years at Ojai Library
- p. 8** Events to Bookmark!
- p. 9** Craft Corner: Create paper dice!

LIBRARY UPDATE

BIG CHANGES AHEAD

FOR THE E.P. FOSTER LIBRARY

The E.P. Foster Library in Downtown Ventura is preparing to turn the page to an exciting new chapter!



Following the announcement of a \$13 million renovation project, the City of Ventura and Ventura County Library have confirmed that preparations are officially underway to launch this long-anticipated effort.

This renovation will reimagine the historic library as a modern, accessible community hub, designed to better serve residents year-round. Once complete, the updated facility will not only enhance traditional library services but will also play a vital public-safety role by operating as a cooling center during extreme heat events.

Construction is slated to begin this Spring, with project completion expected by Fall 2027.

To help keep the community informed, Ventura County Library has created a dedicated information page, including a Frequently Asked Questions section, that will be regularly updated as work progresses.

More Library Flexibility:

Open+ Express Hours at Hill Road, Meiners Oaks, and Fillmore libraries

As we welcome 2026, we're highlighting the Open+ Express Hours program at Hill Road, Meiners Oaks, and Fillmore libraries. Hill Road was the second library in the country to offer this innovative service, giving patrons access to library resources outside regular hours. Meiners Oaks enters its first year using Open+ Express Hours this January.



Open+ Express Hours lets registered users access the library during extended hours—early mornings, evenings, and weekends. Borrow books, use computers, or study on your schedule!

Simply register for a special Open+ Express Hours card and enjoy flexible, secure self-service. Start the year right by taking advantage of this convenient service. For more details, visit your local Hill Road, Meiners Oaks, or Fillmore library.

Two Surveys, One Community

Share your voice!!



Local libraries are strongest when they reflect the needs and hopes of their communities. While circulation numbers tell part of the story, surveys give people a direct voice in sharing their experiences and shaping the library's future. This January, the **Ventura County Library** invites the community to participate in two important surveys to help guide how we serve you:

Strategic plan

1/08/26 - 1/24/26

This survey focuses on library services, programs, spaces, and long-term priorities. Community members can share their thoughts by completing the survey online, or by participating in one of several in-person focus groups taking place this month:

- January 8 Albert H. Soliz Library 7:00-9:00pm
- January 13 Hill Road Library 6:00-8:00pm
- January 24 Oak View Library 10:30am - 12:30pm
- January 21 Piru Library 6:00pm - 7:00pm
- January 24 Foster Library 2:00pm - 4:00pm



Every Story Counts

1/25/26 - 1/31/26

During the last week of January, the Ventura County Library will also take part in Every Story Counts, a statewide initiative designed to understand what libraries mean to the people they serve. This survey invites you to share your personal experiences: how you use the library, why it matters to you, and the role it plays in your life. Make sure you stop by your local branch the week of 1/25/26 - 1/31/26 and look for the Every Story Counts survey.



Share your story!

CELEBRATING

Ron Solórzano 10 years of service

Ron Solórzano, a Ventura County Library regional librarian, marked ten years of dedicated service at the Ojai Library, having guided the library through memorable events and challenges while leaving a lasting impact.

Over the past decade, Ron has seen the library's role in the community continue to evolve. During times of crisis, such as the Thomas Fire in 2017 and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ojai Library adapted to meet urgent community needs by providing Wi-Fi when the building was closed, distributing face masks, and sharing vital information. "Being a part of those efforts was something really special for me," Ron shares.

For Ron, the joy of being a librarian often comes from personal interactions with patrons.

"So much of librarianship is about finding out what it is that people need and helping them get it"

When visitors arrive at the Ojai Library facing challenges such as homelessness, Ron steps up to help, turning each interaction into an opportunity to learn and grow alongside those he serves. "It can be an opportunity for a real moment of introspection," he explains. "Situations and behaviors that create challenges are also opportunities to explore and exercise empathy."

Among his ten years at the Ojai Library, one unforgettable highlight was the August 21, 2017 eclipse viewing event, which drew around 500 people to the library. Eclipse-viewing glasses were handed out, and both the front patio and the library's Secret Garden were packed with enthusiastic attendees. "It was a great event that succeeded beyond our wildest expectations," Ron recalls.

Looking ahead, the next several years promise continued growth and transformation. Plans are underway for a large-scale renovation of the Ojai Library, creating a modern space that reflects the character of Ojai and serves the community for years to come. "I hope to continue serving Ventura County, supporting staff, and rising to each new challenge bolstered by the strength of all members of our community," Ron says.



LINDA

"I love being a part of building early literacy and social skills while kids think they're just playing."



5

MAYRA

"My favorite part of being the mobile library supervisor is serving the various communities across Ventura County. I love serving our customers at our regular stops providing library services, or reading storytime."



5

MICHAEL

"Working in IT for our dedicated Library system, I feel rewarded seeing our efforts make a meaningful impact on the public and the staff we serve."



5

Library Staff Highlight

Hours of Service Awards

We're proud to celebrate Ventura County Library staff members marking 5 and 10 years of service. Join us in congratulating them on their commitment to our community!



10

RON

"When I was first starting out in libraries I thought I would work in an academic or school system, but once I started working with the public it felt like I was right where I needed to be. Ten years in I still feel the same, and I am so glad to have built strong relationships with my colleagues and community."



10

DEANNA

"I kid you not; my first Circulation Desk supervisor's name was Nancy Drew! To this day, I am grateful for the confidence she had in me!"



10

Photo: Soliz Library. 1999

TAWNY

"I am truly delighted—I get paid to spend my days where every corner holds a spark of magic."

COMMUNITY *Chronicles*

Fillmore Residents Ring in 2026 With New Skills Thanks to a Standout Program

As 2026 begins, a group of Fillmore residents are starting the new year with fresh digital skills thanks to one of last year's most impactful local programs. Fillmore Library wrapped up its computer basics series, offered in partnership with the Economic Development Collaborative's highly regarded Upskill Digital Initiative, a program widely recognized for expanding digital literacy across Ventura County.

The 10-week course welcomed five adult learners eager to build the essential computer skills needed in today's tech-driven world. Aimed at adults looking to enter the workforce, change careers, or move into higher-paying positions, the series provided

hands-on training in everything from using a computer for daily tasks to searching the internet and applying for jobs online.

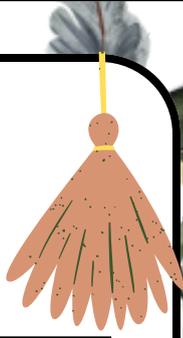
Participants reported leaving the course "empowered and more confident" in their ability to navigate technology. By the final session, learners were creating emails, conducting job searches, and tackling online tasks that once felt intimidating.

The curriculum was developed with support from CA Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, whose advocacy helped secure funding to launch and pilot the program in Ventura County. Thanks to this investment, Fillmore learners are poised to step into 2026 with stronger digital confidence and new opportunities ahead.



EVENTS to BOOKMARK!

JAN 5
THROUGH
FEB 28



ADULT WINTER
READING
CHALLENGE

Warm
A.N.D.
Cozy



Visit your local VCL branch to pick up a Winter Reading Challenge bookmark, complete activities by Feb. 28, and return it to collect library-themed stickers.

JAN 10

E.P. FOSTER LIBRARY

AMAZING
SUCCULENTS!

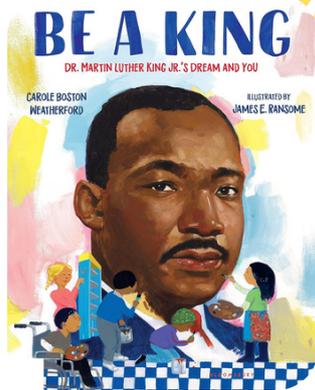
Join the Master Gardeners of Ventura County on Jan. 10 at 11am, for a hands-on class on succulent care, from soil and irrigation to pests, pruning, and fertilizing!



JAN 19

ALL VCL BRANCHES
CLOSED

MARTIN LUTHER KING
JR. HOLIDAY



JAN 25-31

EVERY STORY
COUNTS!



We want to hear from you! *Every Story Counts* is a statewide initiative to capture data, stories and photos about how and why Californians use their local public libraries. Visit your local VCL branch to share your story!

MUSEUM of
VENTURA
COUNTY



On The Record:
Documenting Your Story

FREE!

JAN 31

SATURDAY / 10:00 AM

ON THE RECORD:
DOCUMENTING YOUR
STORY

Stop by our resource table during *On the Record* event at the Museum of Ventura County. This event will guide you in discovering meaningful ways to explore your family history & preserve your stories.

SUNDAYS

OJAI LIBRARY / 2:30 PM

WONDER WORKSHOP

The January project is
Fabric Crowns.

Adults, Join us at the Ojai
Library to design, and create
your very own fabric crowns!





PAPER DICE

FOLD, GLUE, PLAY!

Craft your own dice from paper in minutes. Just cut, fold, and glue, perfect for games, learning, or creative fun!

INSTRUCTIONS

KEY

FOLD ———
CUT - - - -

MATERIALS

Printed Pattern
Scissors
Colors
Scoring Tool
Glue or Tape
Patience

Cut out all the pieces

Carefully cut along the dashed line.

Score the fold lines

Lightly run a blunt edge (like a closed pen) along all solid lines.

Decorate each piece

Add pips, numbers, colors, or designs before gluing—it's easier while the pieces are flat.

Fold along the scored lines

Fold all edges and tabs to prepare for assembly.

Glue tabs to matching letters

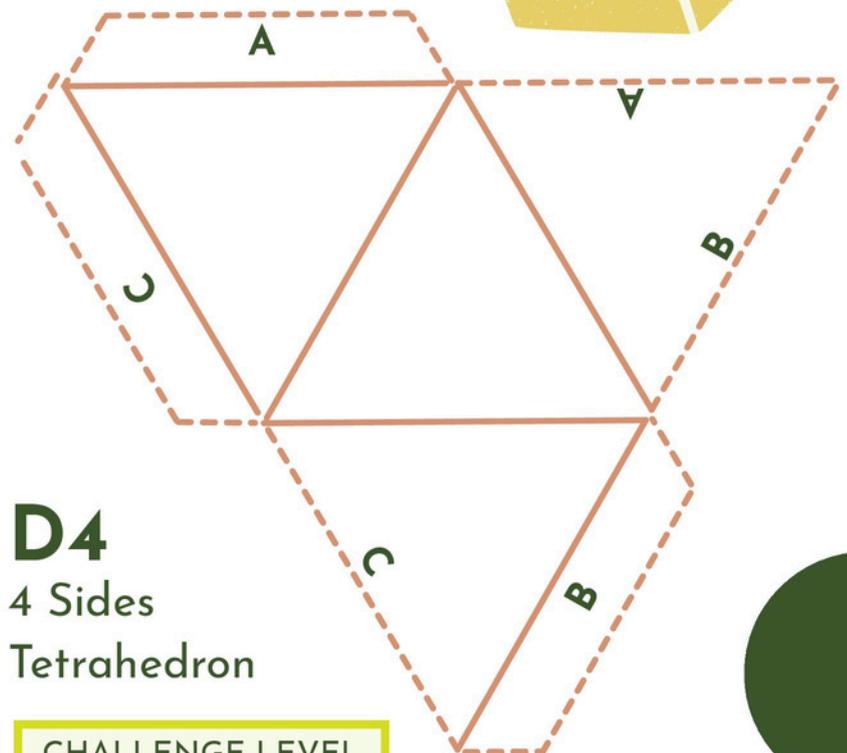
Apply glue to each tab and attach it to the piece with the same letter.

Press and hold each joint

Hold each glued tab for a few seconds

Let it dry

Wait for the glue to fully set before using.



D4

4 Sides

Tetrahedron

CHALLENGE LEVEL





COUNTY of VENTURA
Library

CRAFT CORNER

PAPER DICE

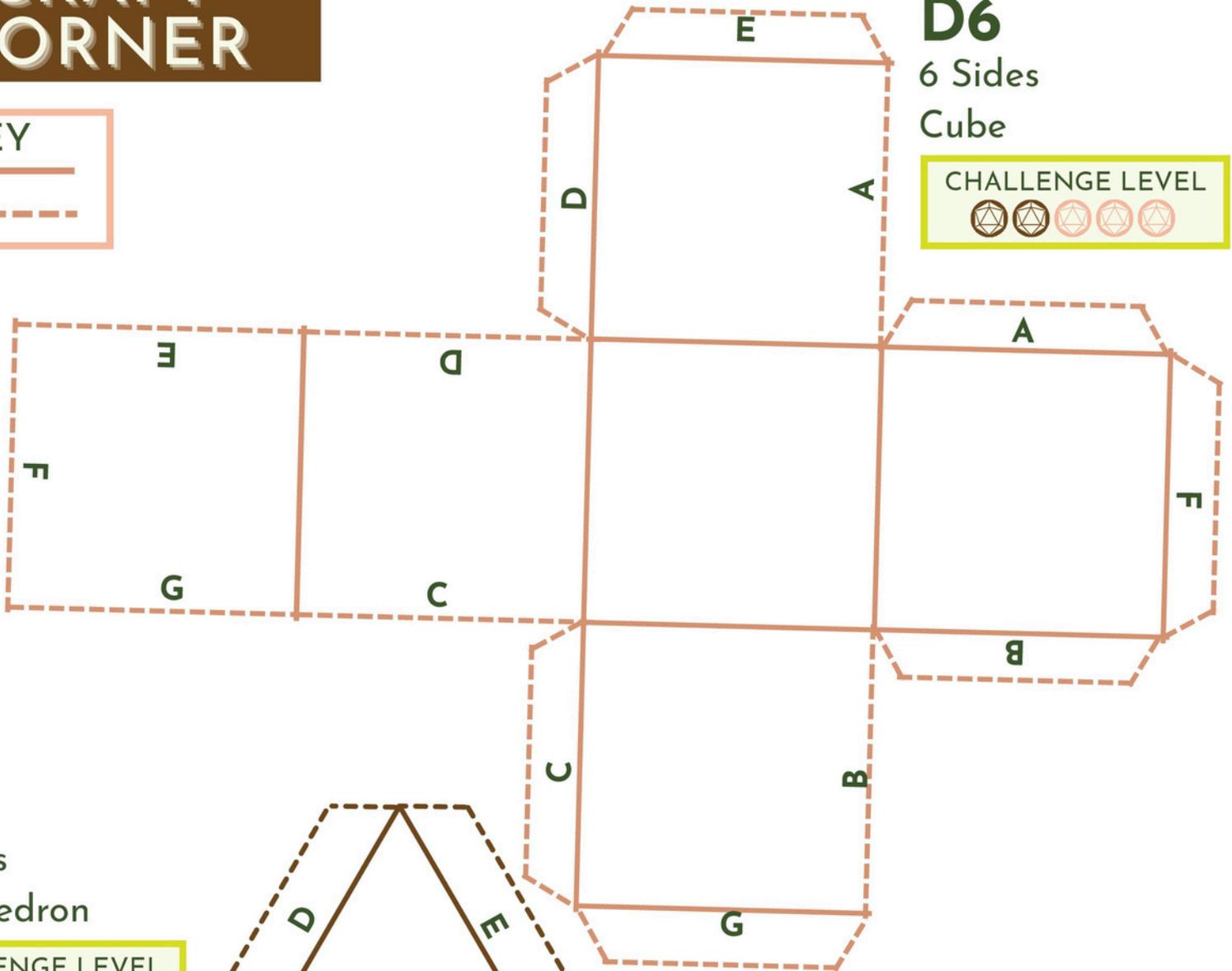
FOLD, GLUE, PLAY!

KEY

FOLD ———
CUT - - - - -

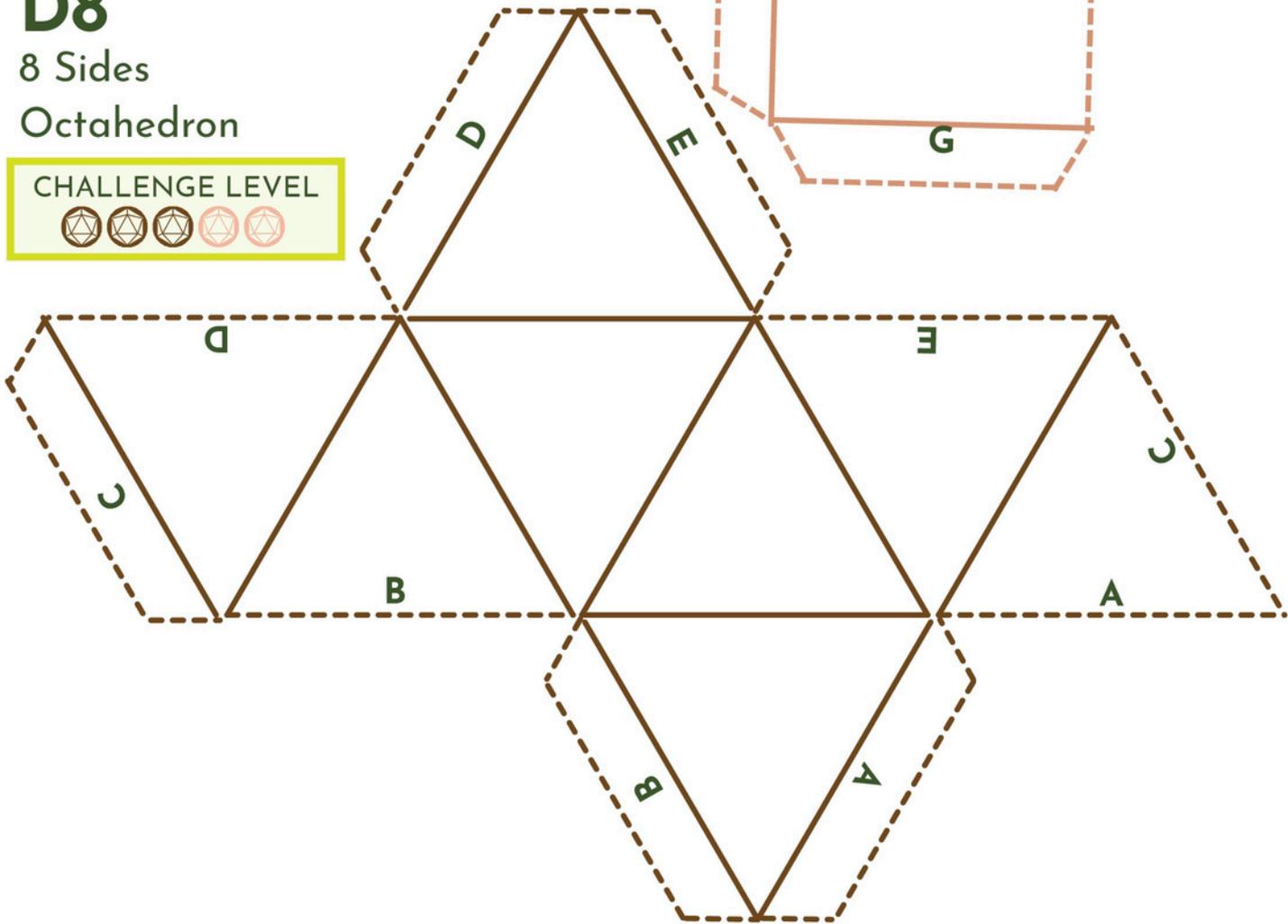
D6
6 Sides
Cube

CHALLENGE LEVEL



D8
8 Sides
Octahedron

CHALLENGE LEVEL



PAPER DICE

FOLD, GLUE, PLAY!

KEY

FOLD ———

CUT - - - - -

D10

10 Sides
pentagonal
trapezohedron

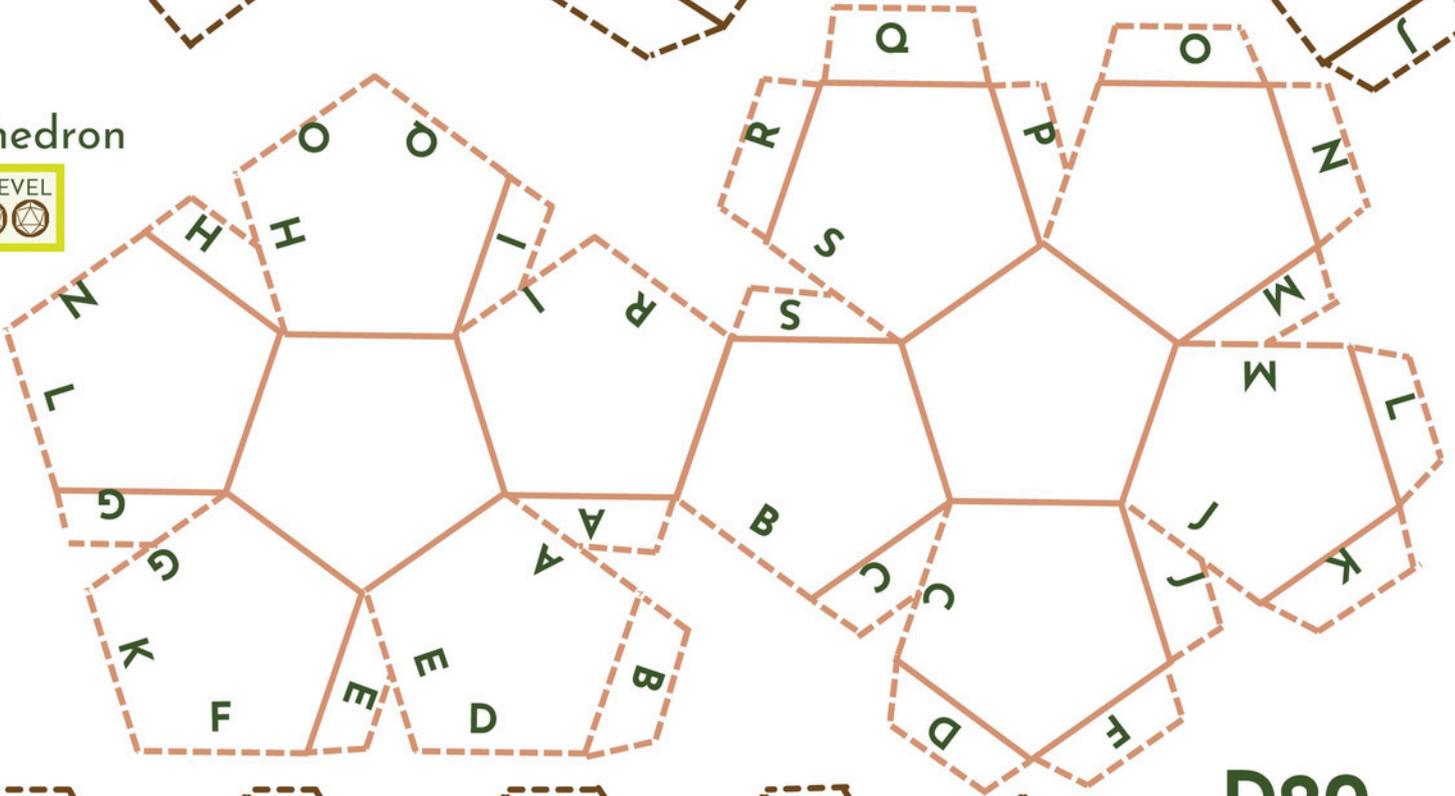
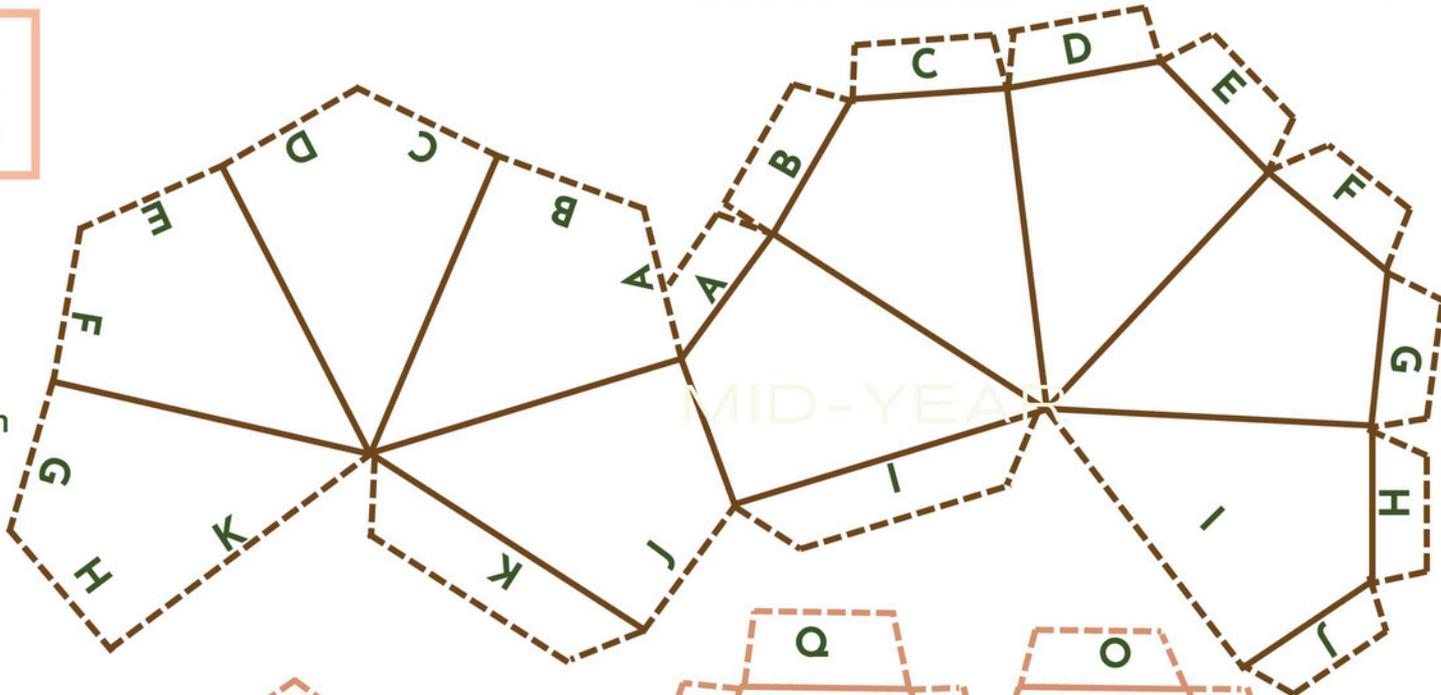
CHALLENGE LEVEL



D12

12 Sides
Dodecahedron

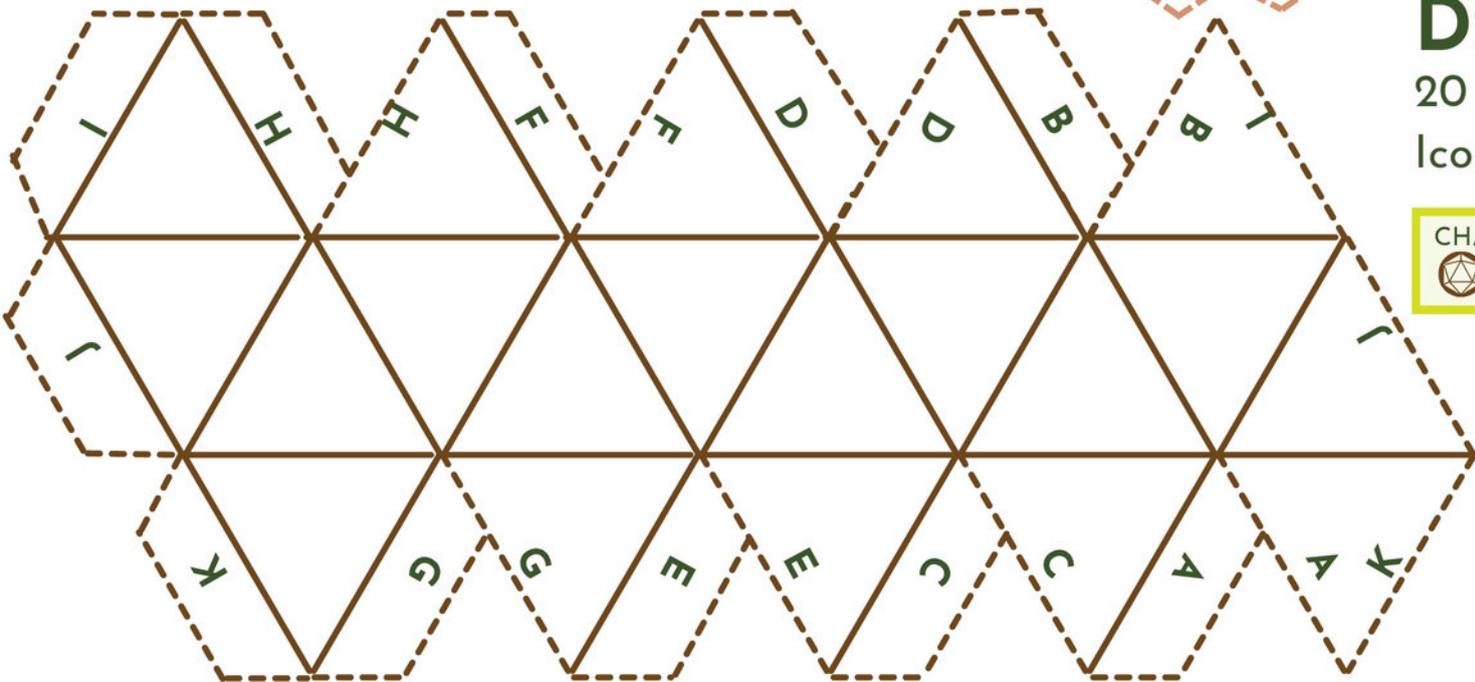
CHALLENGE LEVEL



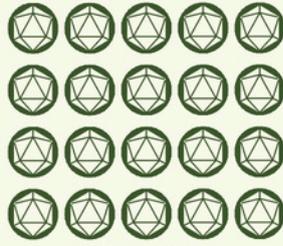
D20

20 Sides
Icosahedron

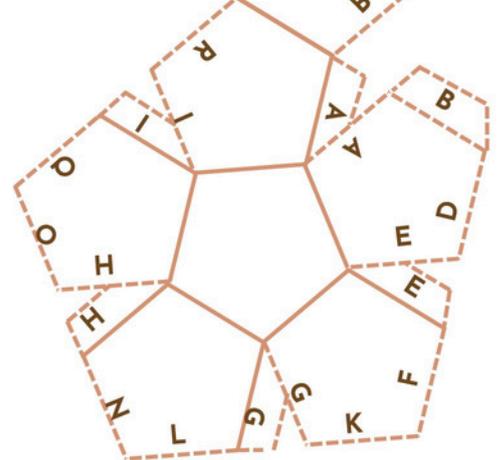
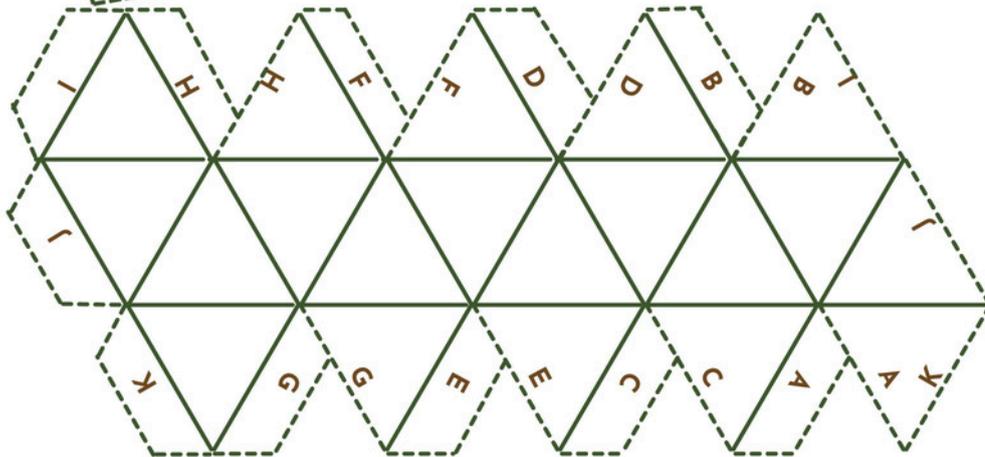
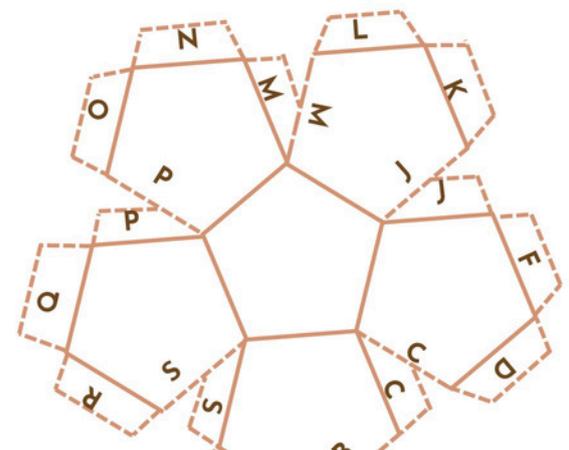
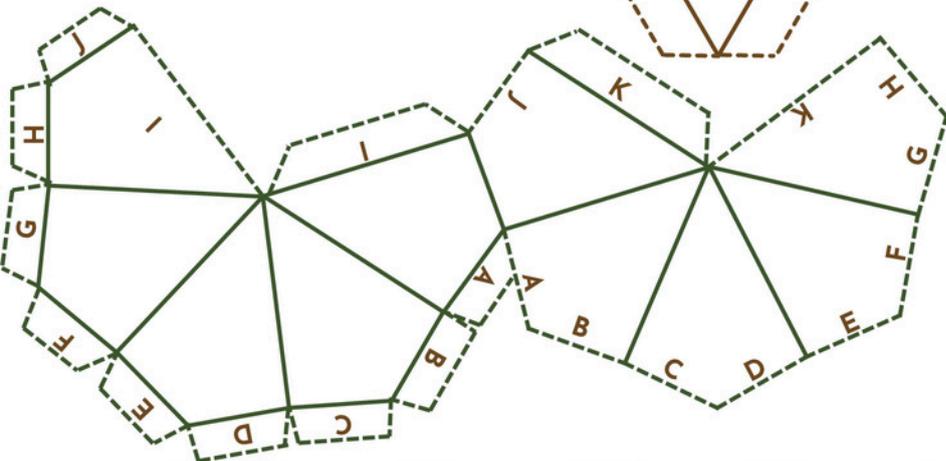
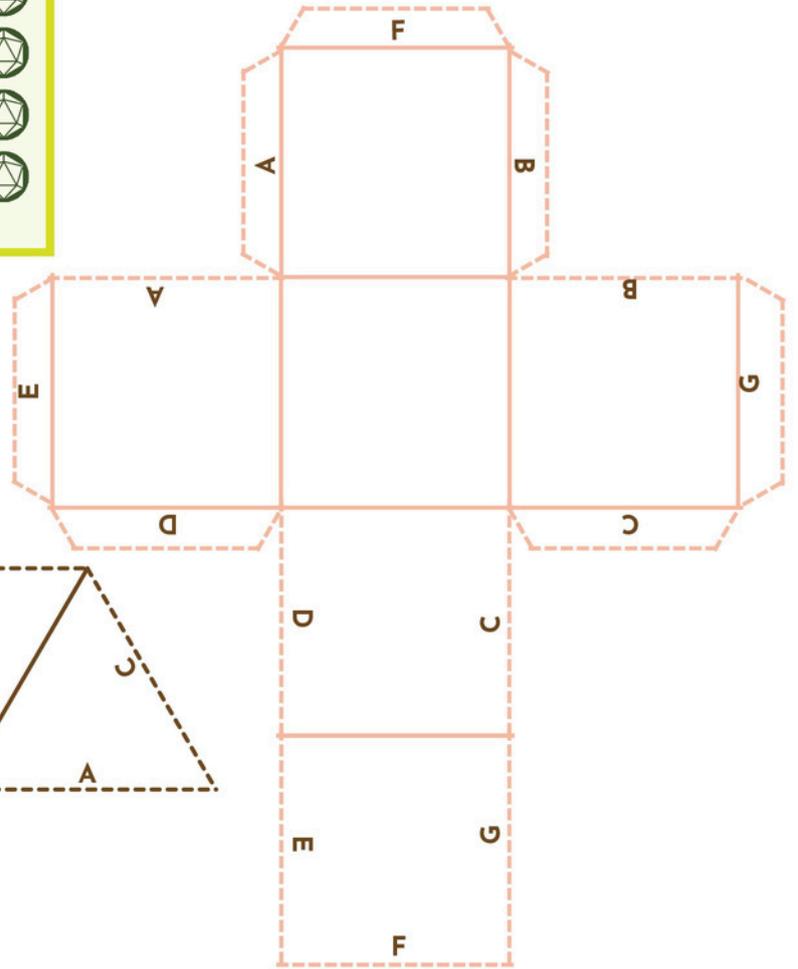
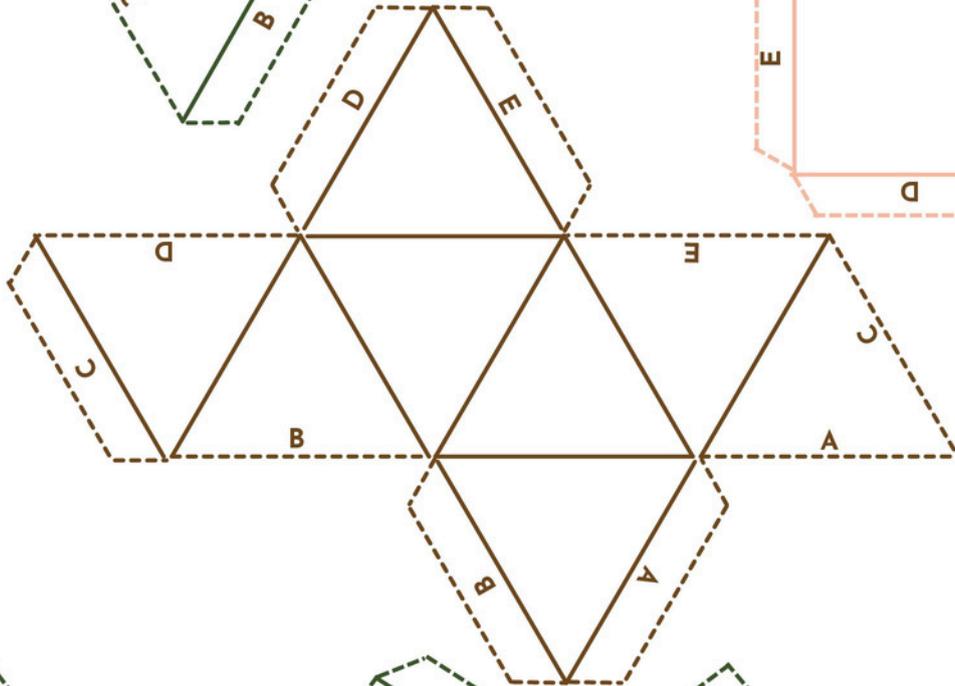
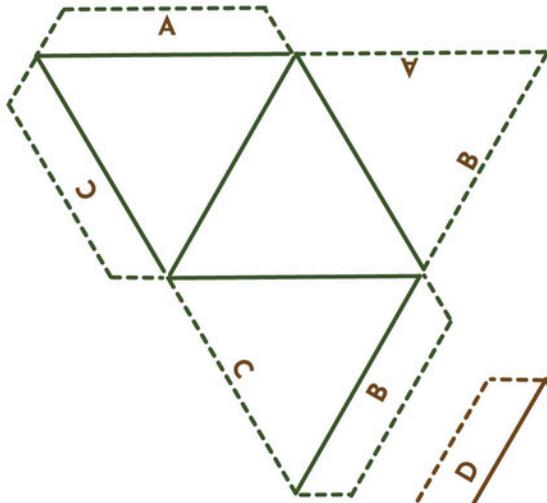
CHALLENGE LEVEL



CHALLENGE LEVEL



ULTIMATE





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