



Girl Guides
of Canada
Guides
du Canada

DeCode

Sparks Program



GGC is grateful for the support from MediaSmarts in building DeCode.



Sparks DeCode Challenge

This challenge is designed to help you better decode the digital world, especially how girls are represented and treated in digital media.

DeCode should take you between two and four meetings to complete. Mix and match activities that you and your unit want to do. They can be led by anyone. If there are activities in other branches that your unit would like to try, go for it! A DeCode crest is available to celebrate all your hard work.

For your meetings, we suggest:

- The starter activity
- One (or more!) activities from each theme
- The closing activity

Share your experiences with us on social media using **#GirlsDeCode** and the tags:



Girl Guides of Canada



@girlguidesofcan



@girlguidesofcanada

Objectives and Outcomes

Objective:

To learn more about the digital world and explore how you interact with digital media.

Outcomes:

You will:

- Think critically about what you see in digital media.
- Discover ways to create safer and more positive online experiences.
- Learn to recognize when you need to disconnect with technology, and how to reconnect in real life (IRL).



Look for the **OUTDOOR** icon throughout this Challenge. This icon identifies activities that can easily be done outdoors with little or no modifications.



Look for the **TECH NEEDED** icon throughout this challenge. This icon identifies activities that work best with technology included.



≡ **BEGIN** the Challenge with this Starter Activity ≡

Starter Activity – Tech Time: Sparks

What sort of things do you like to do online?

Skills you'll build:

- Observation
- Self-awareness

You will need:

- Two different coloured dots or stickers each
- Paper and markers
- Tape for hanging paper on the walls

Time it takes:

- 5 – 10 minutes



What to do:

1. As a group, talk about some of the ways you use technology or ways you've seen others use technology. Write or draw each thought/answer on a separate piece of paper.
 - You can group similar ideas together into categories like “videos” or “games” to make it easier.
2. Hang the answers around the room.
3. Give everyone a sticker. Everyone will go around the room and put a sticker on their favourite way to use technology.

Stuff to talk about:

- What received the most stickers? Why do you think this way of using tech is so popular?
- What's your favourite way to use technology?



Remember:

Screen time and tech time is different for each Spark and their family. This could include the types of tech they are using and the amounts of time they are spending with it. It is important to keep this in mind as you go through DeCode.



≡ **CONTINUE** your meeting by selecting one or more activities from each of the themes below. ≡

Theme 1 - My Digital World

In these activities, think about what you see and experience online. How does it make you feel?

Theme Activities: Unbox Yourself

YouTube has thousands of surprise videos where someone opens up a box to see what's inside. What surprise would you like to find inside?

Skills you'll build:

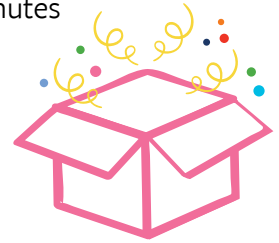
- Imagination
- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness

You will need:

- Boxes or gift bags of various sizes, one each
- Paper, markers, or craft supplies

Time it takes:

- 15 – 25 minutes



What to do:

1. As a group, talk about the types of things you've seen being unboxed in videos. Why do you think people like to make or watch these kinds of videos?
 - Together, you can watch or perform an unboxing video so everyone knows what to expect.
2. Take a moment and think about what you would want to find in a surprise box.
3. Secretly pick one of the things that you would like to find in your surprise box.
4. Create the thing you picked. You can do a craft, build it using clay, or draw a picture of it.
5. When you are finished, give everyone a box or bag to put their picture/craft in. If there's time, this can be decorated too.
6. Bring everyone together or form smaller groups of around 8 to 10.
7. Take turns pretending that you're making a surprise video by unboxing your craft for everyone to see. You can react to each unboxing, too!

Stuff to talk about:

- How did you feel while everyone was unboxing their crafts?
- Do you like watching surprise or unboxing videos? Which are your favourites to watch? Why do you choose to spend your tech time watching videos?
- What do these types of videos usually show? What don't they show?
- Do you think that these types of videos are ads? What are the ways that they're like ads and that they're not?



Princess Power



Princesses are some of the most popular online characters for young girls. But digital media often shows princesses in stereotypical ways by focusing on their looks instead of their special skills and talents. Often, they also need to be rescued. In this game, turn those stereotypes around by becoming princesses who are heroes of your own stories.

Skills you'll build:

- Critical thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Self-awareness

You will need:

- An open space to run

Time it takes:

- 10 – 15 minutes

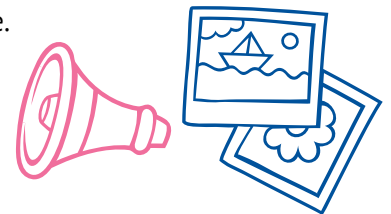
What to do:

1. As a group, talk about how many girls use their tech time to watch shows or play games with princesses in them:
 - Why do you think princesses are so popular?
 - Who are your favourite princesses?
2. Ask everyone to make a princess pose. How would you pose if you were a hero? Make a hero-princess pose.
3. In this game, you are going to be hero princesses working together to escape the ice dragons. The ice dragons will try to tag you to freeze you. If they catch you, another princess needs to tap you or crawl under your legs to unfreeze you.
4. Choose two or three girls to be the ice dragons. Everyone else will be a princess. Take turns being dragons and keep playing as long as you want.



Stuff to talk about:

- How did it feel when you were rescued by another princess? Have you seen a princess be a hero before? Who were they and what did they do?
- If you could make up a princess character, what would they be like?
- If you don't like princesses, what other characters do you like to watch? How could you change the game to use those characters instead?
 - For example, if all the princesses were doctors, the ice dragons could be viruses.
 - You can play this game with those new characters if you have extra time.
- What would you think if a boy wanted to play as a princess? What do you think other boys or girls would think? Do you think that's fair? Why or why not?





THEME 2 – Safe and Positive Spaces

Before you can make your mark on the digital world, you need to feel safe and supported. In these activities, you'll find ways to protect yourself online and create safe spaces.

Theme Activities: Secret Identity – Sparks

What is okay to share about yourself with others online? Keeping your identity invisible online can be easy-peasy-lemon-squeezy.

Skills you'll build:

- Critical thinking
- Curiosity
- Responsibility

You will need:

- Disappearing ink from one of the recipes (page 7)
- Paper, several pieces each

Time it takes:

- 20 – 30 minutes



What to do:

1. Ask everyone to imagine they have a secret identity:
 - Who would you share your identity with?
 - What is privacy? Who would you want to keep your identity private from?
2. Next, you're going to create a secret picture with invisible ink!
3. Make your disappearing ink. (Choose one of the recipes below depending on what supplies you have.)
4. Draw a picture with the invisible ink of something that makes you feel good or happy.
5. When your picture is ready, put it in the centre and everyone will reveal the hidden message using the recipe notes.
6. After the messages are revealed, try to match the picture to the person.

Stuff to talk about:

- What types of profile pictures are the best to use? Should you use pictures of yourself in your profiles?
- Would information would you keep private online and only share or reveal to your family?
- What information could you reveal to your friends online or (in real life) IRL?
- Why is it important to keep all or some of your information invisible and private online?





Disappearing Ink Recipes

Option 1: Lemon Juice Light Bulb

You will need (for small groups of 4 to 6 Sparks):

- Cup of lemon juice
- 3 drops of water
- Small bowl or cup
- One cotton swab each

What to do:

1. Mix the lemon juice and water together.
2. Dip the cotton swab into the mixture and write a message onto the white paper.
3. Wait for the juice to dry so it becomes completely invisible.
4. When you're ready to read your secret message or show it to someone else, heat the paper by holding it close to a light bulb.

Option 2: Covert Crayon Creations

You will need (for each girl):

- A white crayon or white birthday candle
- Food colouring or water colour paint
- Small cup of water
- Paintbrush
- White paper

What to do:

1. Use the white crayon to draw on the white paper.
2. Mix five or more drops of food colouring and water together in cup.
3. Use the paintbrush to brush the watercolour mixture over the writing.
4. Let it dry to reveal your message.

Adventures with Avatars

When you go online, how can you hide what you don't want others to see or know?



Skills you'll build:

- Critical thinking
- Responsibility
- Creativity

You will need:

- One paper plate or mask template each (page 14)
- Markers
- Glue and other craft supplies
- Ribbon, string, and/or sticks (to hold up the mask)

Time it takes:

- 15 – 20 minutes

What to do:

1. Take turns sharing what avatars you've seen or the avatars you've used.



An avatar is a picture or character that you use with your profile instead of using an image of your "real" face. It could be a cartoon, an animal, an imaginary creature, or an object that you like. For example, on LEGO Life, you can create a mini-figure for your avatar. On Club Penguin Island, you use a funny penguin.



2. Think about what avatar you would like to be. It could be:
 - Something you like to do
 - Your favourite creature
 - What you might look like as a cartoon character
3. Choose any one of your ideas, and create a mask to become an avatar! You can also give yourself a fun new name like Sparklepants or the Mayor of Glittertown.

Stuff to talk about:

- Why should you use an avatar instead of a photo of yourself online?
- What other information should you keep private when you are online?
- Why is it important to keep some information private online?



Privacy Protector



Argh! Keep your information safe from pirates!

Skills you'll build:

- Critical thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Responsibility

You will need:

- Sticky notes, three each
- Writing materials
- Scotch tape (in case the sticky notes fall off)

Time it takes:

- 10 – 15 minutes

What to do:

1. Brainstorm and talk about things you should keep private from people you don't know online.
2. Give everyone three sticky notes.
 - Write your name on one to represent your identity.
 - Draw your home on another to represent your address.
 - Draw your school on another to represent your location or where you spend your day.
3. Choose two to three people to be privacy pirates. Everyone else will stick their sticky notes to their sleeves – use tape if they fall off.
4. The object of the game is to keep your private information (the sticky notes) from the pirates. When the game starts, the pirates are going to try to get as much private information as possible by grabbing the sticky notes. Everyone else will try to escape the pirates and keep their information private.
5. Play for as long as you want or until the pirates have collected at least one note from each person. Take turns being the pirates and play again.



Stuff to talk about:

- What information should you never share with others online?
- Why is it important to keep your information safe when you're online?
- What could happen if someone finds out your information online?



Did you know? Girl Guides are pros at hiding their identities! In 1910, girls signed up for the Crystal Palace Boy Scout rally by only using their first initial. No one knew they were girls until they showed up!

THEME 3 – Disconnect and Reconnect

These activities will give you a chance to disconnect from tech and reconnect with others in real life (IRL).

Theme Activities: Open Spaces – Sparks



Stretch your eyes and your imagination.



Skills you'll build:

- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness
- Observation

You will need:

- A large open space

Time it takes:

- 10 – 20 minutes

What to do:

1. Everyone needs a partner. Stand facing them. For each of the activities below, take two or three steps apart and take turns pretending to be:
 - a. Texting or looking at something on a phone
 - b. Playing a game or watching a video on a tablet
 - c. Watching TV
 - d. Watching a movie
 - e. Looking out a car window at posters or ads
2. After each activity, you can choose to share with the rest of the group what you noticed about how your partner looked while they were pretending. Make sure you're taking two or three steps apart in between each activity so you end up further and further apart from your partner!



A lot of technology can be pretty close to your face, like a phone or tablet. And when tech gets further away like on a TV or movie screen, the images get bigger so you can still see them clearly. Your eyes have a lot of work to do when there is so much to look at or watch!



3. Finish the activity by moving two or three final big steps apart. Face your partner and take a moment to look at them and give your eyes time to stretch. You can take turns holding up your fingers to give you something to focus on. Have your partner guess how many fingers you are holding up. Make it harder by moving farther apart or wiggling your fingers around.

Stuff to talk about:

- What did you notice about your partner’s body as they were using technology? Where were their eyes looking? What were their arms and shoulders doing?
- How did it feel to stretch your eyes?
- How often do you think your eyes need a break from screens?
- How do you feel when you get up and start moving?
- What are some other things you can do if you have been sitting and looking at a screen or tech for too long?

Fuzz-emojis

Make a friend for a friend! All the emoji fun without being online.

Skills you’ll build:

- Creativity
- Empathy
- Self-awareness

You will need:

- One slip of paper with each person’s name on it
- Hat or container for the slips
- One cardboard heart each (page 15)
- One large pompom each
- Glue – hot glue works best
- Googly eyes
- Markers and other decorating supplies like pipe cleaners

Time it takes:

- 15 – 25 minutes

What to do:

1. Talk about different ways you can communicate with your friends using tech.
 - Do you use emojis to communicate? Would you like to? Why?
2. You will be making a fuzz-emoji for someone in your unit. It’s like an emoji but in real life (IRL).
3. Have everyone pick a name from the hat.
4. Give everyone a cardboard heart and have them pick a pompom.





5. Glue a pompom onto the heart. The heart will be the feet of the fuzz-emoji.
6. Glue on googly eyes or draw a face on it with markers. You can also decorate it.
7. When it's dry you can give it to your friend!

Stuff to talk about:

- What do you like to do with your friends IRL? How is it different from spending time using tech with them?
- Why do you think it is helpful to use emojis? What can emojis do that it's hard to do with just words online?
- When might it be better to use words to chat?
- When might it be better to communicate without tech?

Cup Communicators



Before there was digital media, kids would find fun ways to connect with each other in real life (IRL). They would write notes to each other, come up with secret codes, or make interesting devices or gadgets. In this activity, you'll connect with each other by creating cup communicators.



Skills you'll build:

- Imagination
- Self-awareness
- Creativity

You will need:

- 2 plastic cups each – tin cans also work
- One 10-metre piece of string (like fishing line, twine, or yarn) each
- Sharp pencil or nail
- Optional: Paper clips and duct tape (for around the outside edge)

Time it takes:

- 15 – 25 minutes

What to do:

1. As a group share some of the ways you connect or talk with your friends. What are some things you like to do when you're together in real life (IRL)? Do you ever create things with your friends? What are some things you like to make together?
2. Give everyone two cups and a piece of string.
3. Poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup. You can work together to make this easier.





4. Push the string through the hole. To stop it from falling out, you can tie a knot at the end or tie the string to a paper clip.
5. Find a partner. You'll each hold one of the cups. Walk away from each other until the string pulls tight and isn't touching anything.
6. Have your partner hold the cup up to their ear. Say something funny into your cup. Could they hear you? Switch and see if you can hear them.
7. Keep playing for a few minutes. You can also switch partners. Bring your cup communicators home to try with your friends or family.

Stuff to talk about:

- What are some of the best parts about talking with friends face-to-face when playing with them? How is it different when you are talking while you play with tech?
- When is it better to talk IRL?
- What are some other ways you can disconnect from tech and reconnect with family and friends IRL?





≡ **CONCLUDE** the Challenge with the following Closing Activity. ≡

Closing Activity – Digital Me – Sparks

Through DeCode, you learned more about the digital world and how you interact with digital media.

Skills you'll build:

- Self-awareness
- Reflecting
- Critical thinking

You will need:

- One tablet template each (page 16)
- Markers and colouring materials

Time it takes:


- 5–10 minutes

What to do:

1. Give each Spark a tablet template.
2. As a group, talk about some of the things you like to see online. Draw an icon on your tech template to remind you of what you like to see.
3. Talk about some of the things you can do to protect your privacy online. Draw an icon to remind you of what to keep private online.
4. Talk about some of the things you can do to disconnect with technology and reconnect IRL. Draw an icon to remind you how to disconnect with tech.



An icon is a little picture that goes with an app or a program.

The YouTube icon is:  The GGC app icon is: 

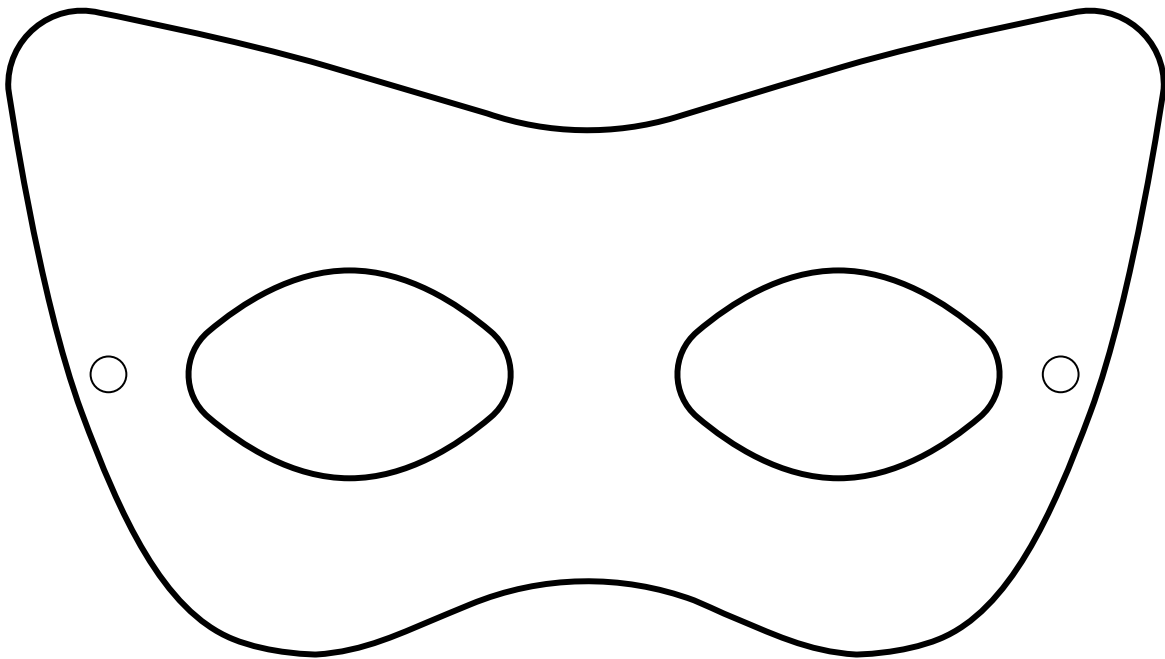
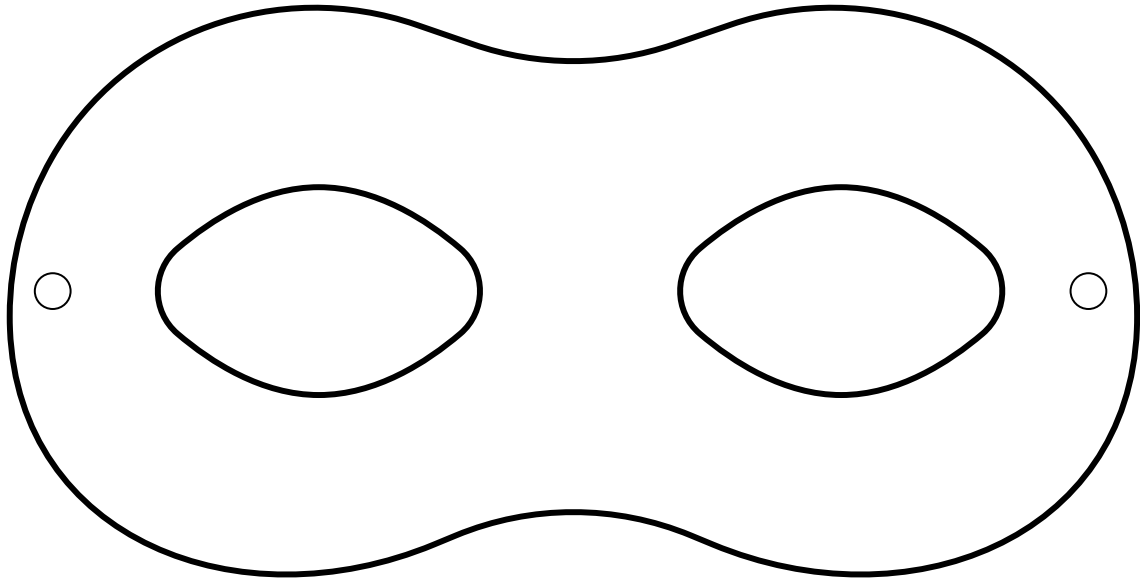
Stuff to talk about:

- How will you use your icons to remind you about what you did in DeCode?
- How can you use your icons to share what you know from DeCode with your friends and family?
- Where can you put your tablet to help you remember all you know from DeCode?



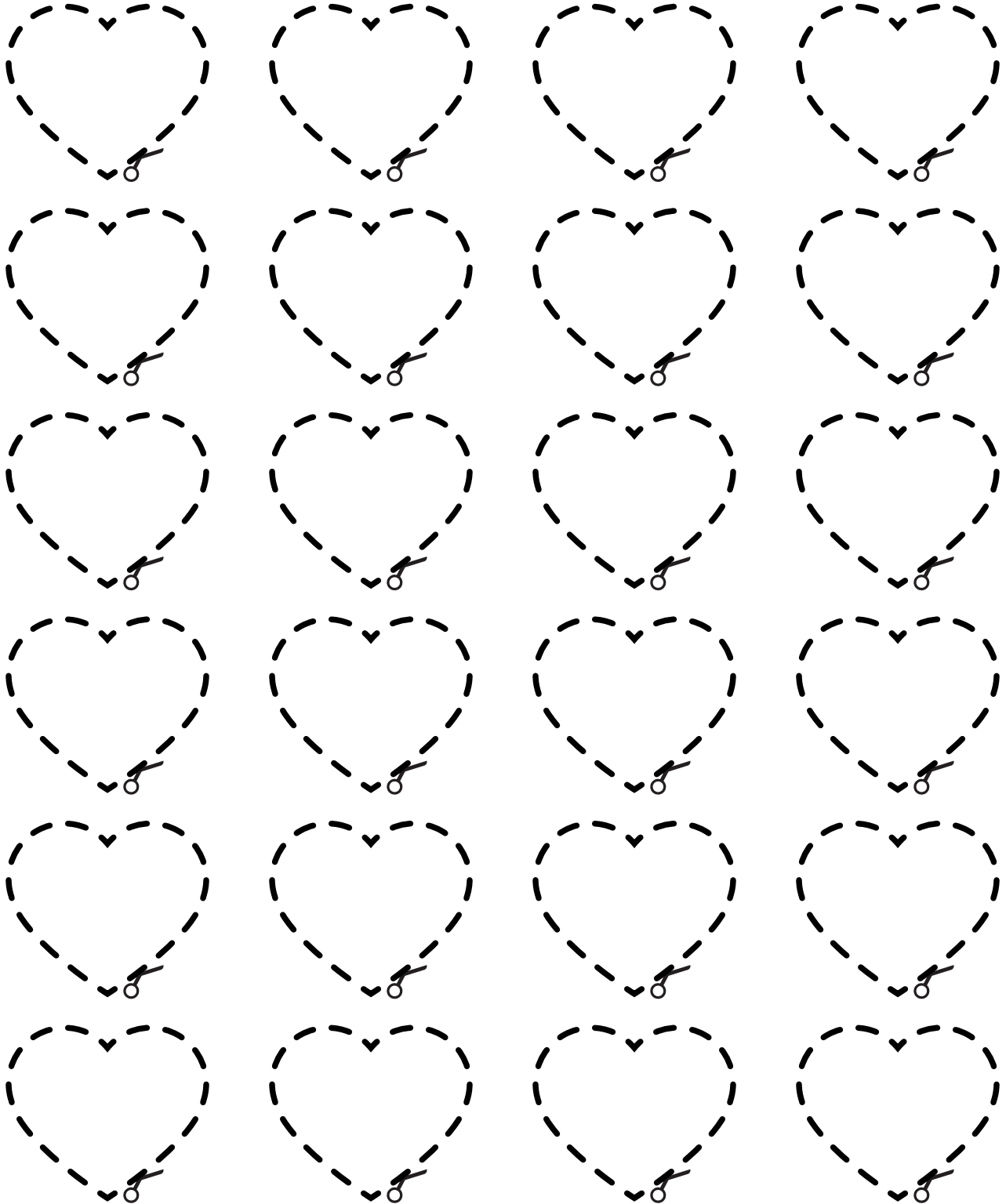


Resources: Mask template





Resources: Heart template





Resources: Tablet template

