



# Sadako's Cranes for Peace



# Sadako's Cranes for Peace

Produced by CND Peace Education, 2 Ashgrove, Bradford,  
BD7 1BN [peaceeducation@cnduk.org](mailto:peaceeducation@cnduk.org) 01274 730 908



## Contents

Overview for Teachers.....	4
The Story of Sadako's Cranes for Peace.....	5
Comic Strip Activity 1.....	8
Comic Strip Activity 2.....	9
How to make a Paper Cranes.....	10
What are Cranes.....	11
Diary Entry Activity.....	12
Question Sheet.....	13
Links with National Curriculum.....	14

## Sensitive Issues

**What is a nuclear bomb:** The simplest way to explain what a nuclear bomb is to say that it is very different from any other kind of bomb. It is much, much bigger and can destroy whole cities. It also makes a type of poison that can make people ill long after the bomb has gone off. With younger children it is best to keep the bombing in a historical context without going into too much detail about current nuclear stockpiles. There are 26, 000 nuclear weapons in the world today held by 8 countries. Britain has approximately 160, each one has 8 times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb.

**Bombing of Hiroshima:** Children may well ask who dropped the bomb and why. It is important to stress that this is an event that people have very different views about. Some people think it was necessary to end the war quickly, but others believe that it is never justified to kill thousands of innocent people, especially when Japan was in the process of surrendering.

**Childhood illness/death:** Children may be worried about the death of Sadako, especially if they know somebody with cancer or leukaemia. It is important to reassure them that there have been medical advances in leukaemia treatments since Sadako was ill and now 4 out of 5 children survive the disease.

**Feeling sad about Sadako:** Children may well feel very sad when they have heard the story. Reassure them by pointing out that they are still talking about her more than 50 years after she died (and thousands of miles away) and remembering her wish for peace. She has not been forgotten. She made a huge difference and encourages people all over the world who are working towards peace and the disarming of nuclear weapons.

Please note that there is an alternative ending to the story in which Sadako does achieve 1000 cranes. This version is more likely to be true, but the one included in this resource is much more popular. This could provide an interesting point of discussion with your class.



## The Story of Sadako Sasaki

Sadako helped her little brother with his shoe laces.

'Sit still Eiji,' she told him, 'or I won't be able to do it.' He was excited because today was Peace Day.

'Sadako, what is Peace Day?' he asked.

'It's a day when we remember the bomb that fell on this city, and all the people who died.' He nodded, but she knew it was a difficult thing for him to understand; he had not even been born when it happened.

Even though she was only 2 years old, Sadako could remember the day that the bomb was dropped so clearly. Breakfast time. A brilliant white flash, brighter than a thousand suns. Sadako's miso soup and rice spilling all over the floor. Rubble falling, people screaming. Sadako's mother pulling her away from the blazing house. Sadako's cheeks burning from the heat. Whilst Sadako, her parents and her brother escaped to safety, lots of other people were killed, including Sadako's Obasan (grandmother). Nearly the whole city was destroyed in seconds and the bomb released a horrible poison that went into people's bodies.

When Eiji's laces were tied, he ran to hold his mother's hand. Then the family left their home to join in with Peace Day. When they got to the Peace Park some people spoke on a stage, and then a bell rang, so that everyone knew to be silent, and remember all the people who had died.

Later that evening, Sadako and her family went down to the river. Lots of people carried coloured lanterns which they placed onto the water. The lights bobbed and reflected. It looked magical. Sadako's aunt told her that the lanterns were like the souls of the innocent people who had died. Some people were crying, others just watched. Further along the river, there was a man singing. It was a sad song, and people hushed to hear it.

Several weeks later at school, Sadako's Year 6 class were doing P.E outside, when suddenly, Sadako fainted. She soon opened her eyes again, but everyone was very worried about her, so the next day, Sadako had to see a doctor and have lots of tests. When the results were ready, Sadako's father went to meet the doctor. It was bad news. The doctor said that Sadako had leukaemia –a type of cancer caused by the bomb. She was very ill and would have to go into hospital straight away. She might only have one year to live. Sadako was confused – it had been 10 years since the bomb went off!

Sadako's parents were heartbroken. They could not bear the thought of losing Sadako. They also did not want Sadako to feel scared about going to hospital, so her mother made her a kimono -a special Japanese dress. The material had pictures of cherry tree blossom, and it helped Sadako to feel better about being away from her friends and family.

One day, Sadako's friend Chizuko came to visit. She told Sadako that she had a gift for her. It was a bird made from folded gold paper.

'The bird is called a crane' said Chizuko, 'There is an old legend, that if you make one thousand of these, then you can make a wish.' As soon as Chizuko had said these words, Sadako knew that this was what she must do.

'I will make one thousand cranes! Then maybe I will get a wish.' The two girls were excited and began folding immediately. Sadako was slow to start with, but it was not long before she could remember every fold and the pile of paper cranes began to grow. They had made 23 when Chizuko's parents arrived to take her home.

'Please don't go yet Chizuko!' begged Sadako, but it was no use. Her friend hugged her, and walked away.

From her hospital window, Sadako watched as Chizuko waved goodbye. A single, salty tear ran down Sadako's face as she thought of everything she was missing at school. She remembered going down to the grass by the river with her friends. They played 'tag' and splashed in the water. She smiled at the memory. Sadako never felt freer than when she was running. She loved the feeling of the wind in her hair and the pounding of her feet on the ground.

Day after day, Sadako worked hard, folding the paper cranes. There were so many cranes lying around her room, that one of the nurses decided to help Sadako hang them up. The cranes looked pretty, draping like the branches of a willow tree. She was happy. She was half way through – 500 cranes!

Sadako looked everywhere for paper to make new cranes. News spread throughout the hospital about her task and patients sent her their old newspapers and wrapping paper and the nurses sent her wrappers from packets of medicines.



Sadako wrote to her schoolmates, telling them about her wishes for peace, and how making cranes gave her hope: if she could just make the thousand of the cranes, she would surely start to get better. Her classmates sent her a traditional Japanese Kokeshi doll to raise her spirits.

Folding the cranes made Sadako very tired, and sometimes, just moving caused her pain. She knew that the illness was getting worse, and this upset her. However, she desperately wanted to achieve her goal of one thousand cranes. Everyday, she tried hard to sit up enough to fold her paper but this got harder and harder, until one day she folded her last crane. Number 644.

Soon after, early in the morning, Sadako's parents got a telephone call from her doctor, telling them to come into hospital straight away, because Sadako was dying.

When Sadako's parents arrived, her father made some Ochazuke, a special dish of rice in tea. Sadako ate some, but could not finish it.

'That was delicious,' she said. Then she rested, and closed her eyes.

Sadako lay still. Her breathing was slow and heavy. She knew her family were by her side, but she could no longer see them, or hear their words. Instead, she found herself rushing through the most wonderful dream. It was a dream of being a child and playing with the beads from a broken necklace; of holding her baby brother in her arms for the first time; of walking through trees with her father, looking up at the pink cherry blossom and blue sky. It felt as if every moment in her life was being replayed.

Sadako's body did not hurt any more. In her dream, she danced through petals of blossom that sprinkled like snow. Soon everything became distant, she was leaving it behind. She turned; through the trees her family stood. They looked happy. They waved at her. She waved back, watching them.

A warm breeze touched her skin, and Sadako heard a familiar sound, like the rustling of paper. Then beneath her hands something soft moved. There was a fluttering all around her, and little by little, Sadako felt herself being carefully lifted up from the ground, and flown away; riding on the wings of a thousand cranes.



At Sadako's funeral, her parents gave out the paper cranes to her school friends. They were pleased, but felt deeply shocked and upset by Sadako's death; it seemed so unfair. They talked to each other about how they felt, then someone had the idea of making a statue to tell people about Sadako, and all the other children who had died because of the bomb. The children agreed that this was a good idea, but they knew it would be very expensive. They would need help.

At Sadako's old school, the teachers helped her schoolmates to make leaflets and posters. Then they gave these to head teachers at other schools, so that they could tell Sadako's story, and ask for money to help make a statue. They also published a book of Sadako's letters calling for peace and named it Kokeshi after her beloved doll.



It was not long before school children from all over Japan were sending donations. Eventually, enough money had been raised, and a memorial statue of Sadako was put up. Sadako's friends stood around it. They felt proud of Sadako. As her smiling face looked down on them, they were reminded of another time they had seen her happy.

It was in the summer before she got ill. The class relay team had been practising hard, and now it was time for the school race. The pistol went off, and everyone cheered. Sadako's team were doing well, until another class started over-taking them. Then it was Sadako's turn to run. She zoomed ahead of all the others, running with all her might. She sped past the finish line: they had won! Her friends gathered round her to celebrate. She puffed from the effort, but her face beamed with joy. 'We did it!' she had said, and laughed happily.

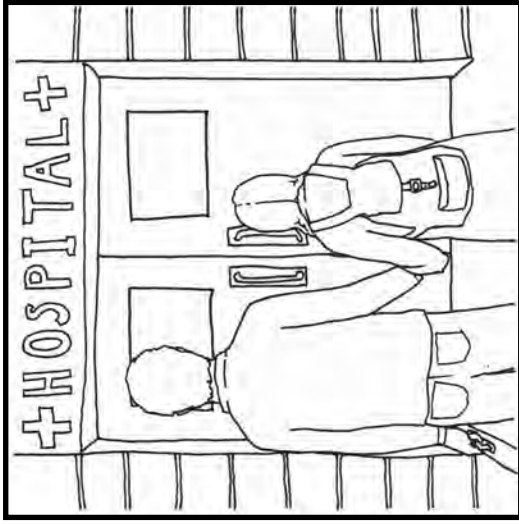
Written on Sadako's statue are the words:

This is our cry,  
This is our prayer:  
To create peace in the world

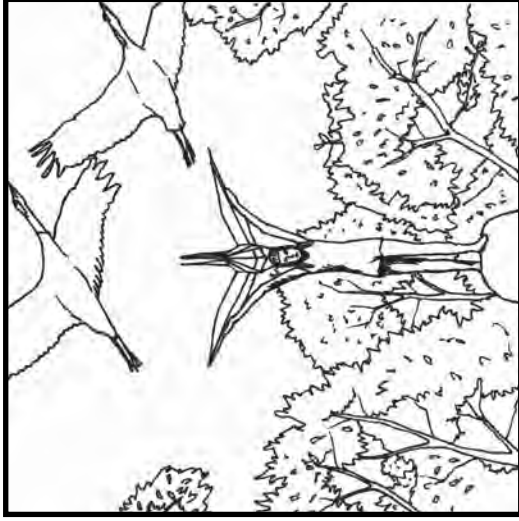
Many, many people visit the statue to think about this message.

Every year, on Peace Day, thousands of paper cranes lie at its feet. These cranes can never give Sadako her life back. However, maybe if enough of us folded a paper crane, and hoped for peace, then one day, *our* wish could come true.





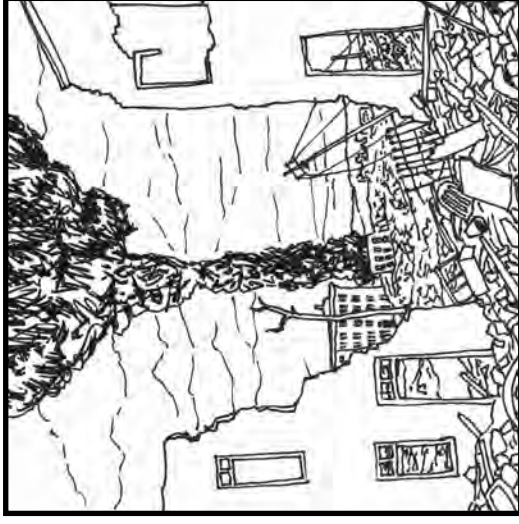
When she got to hospital, Sadako was told that she had leukaemia, a type of cancer from the bomb



After she had died, Sadako's friends wanted to make a difference. They had a statue put up and published her letters so that nobody would ever forget how war can affect children.



Sadako worked very, very hard making cranes. With each fold she wished for peace and hoped to get better. She also wrote letters to her friends.



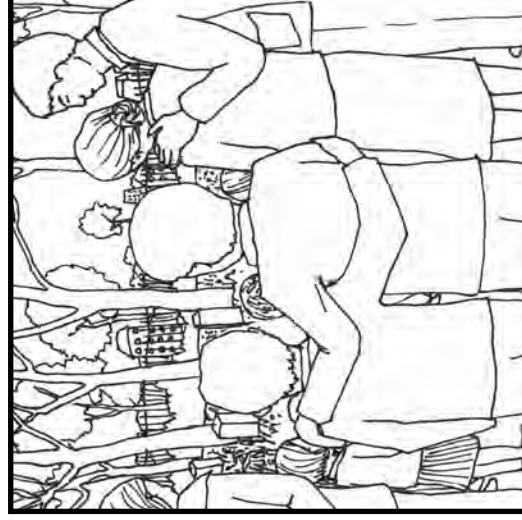
The Peace Day was to remember when a nuclear bomb dropped on the city. Many people were killed and many more got poison in their bodies.



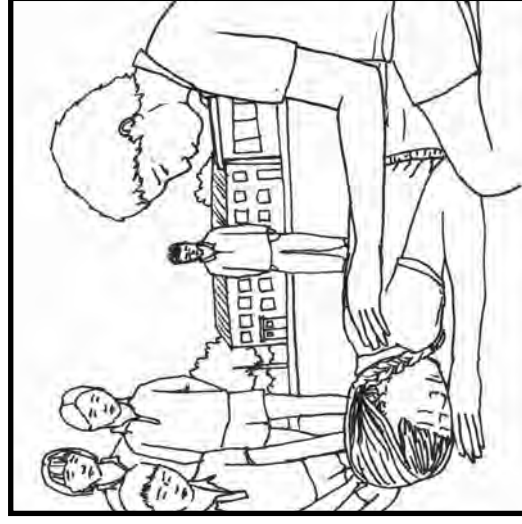
Sadako awoke early. Today was the Hiroshima Peace Day.



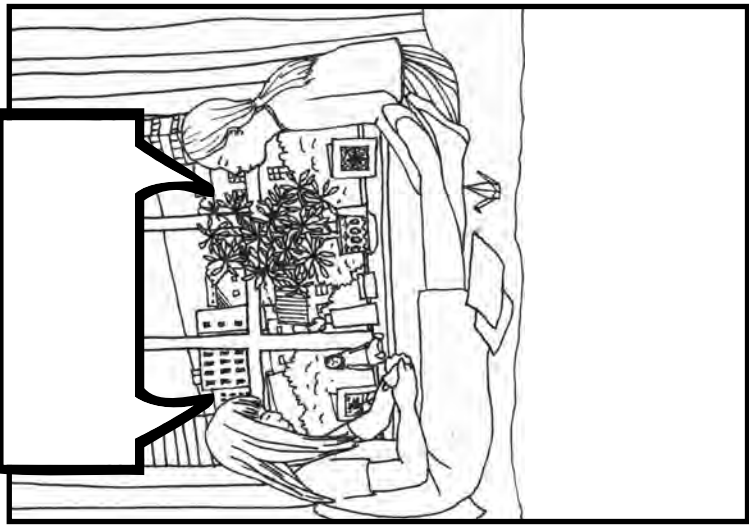
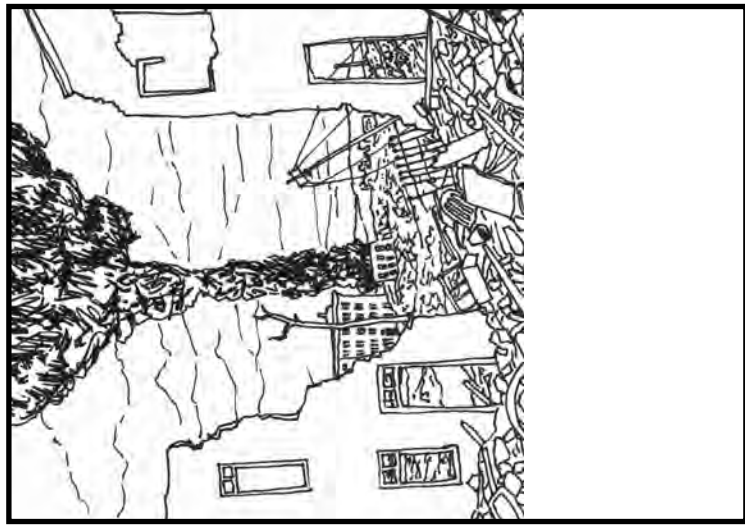
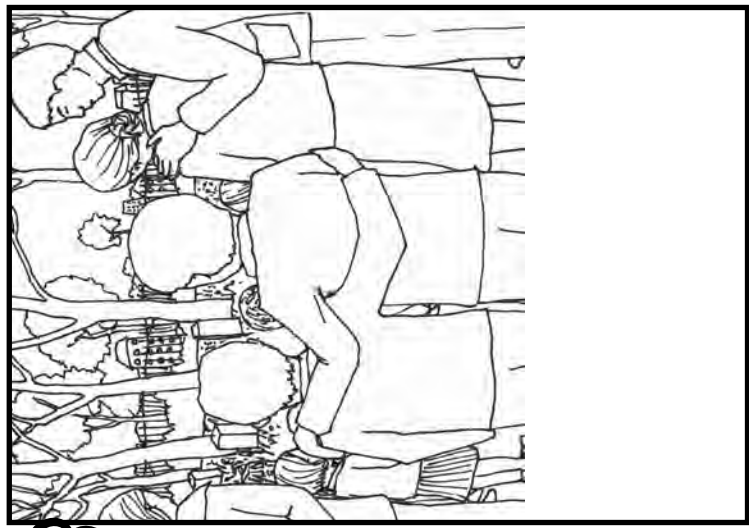
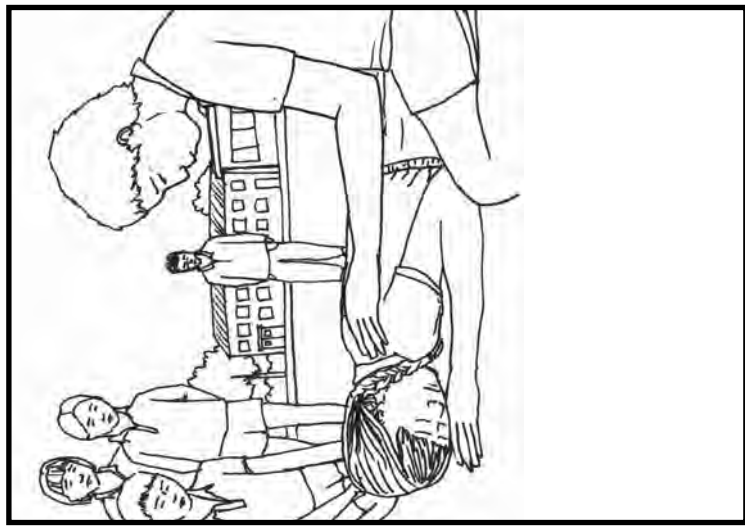
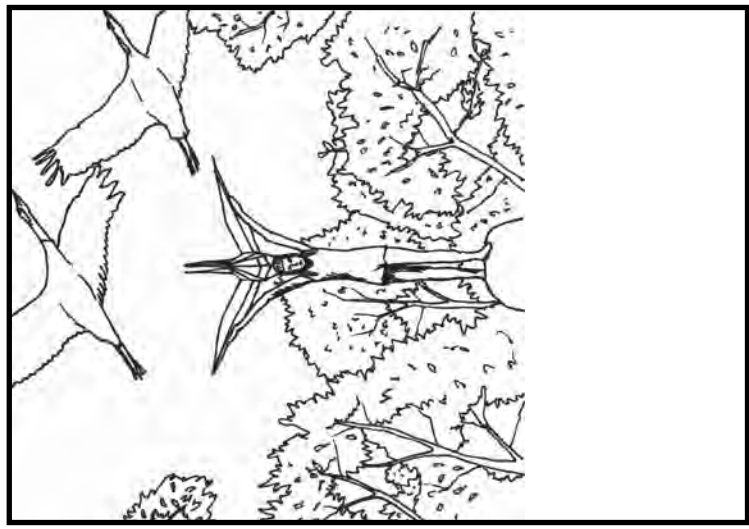
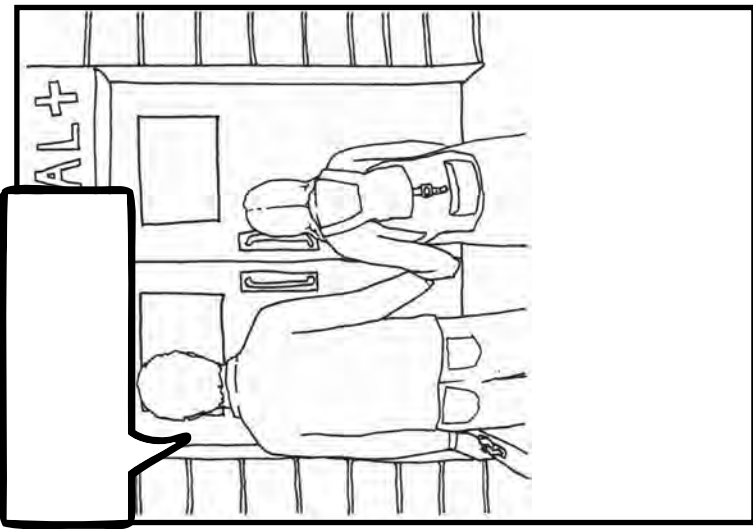
Later that day, Sadako's best friend, Chizuko, came to visit with a special gift. It was a gold paper bird called a crane. Chizuko told her that if she made 1000 more then she would get a wish, and be better.



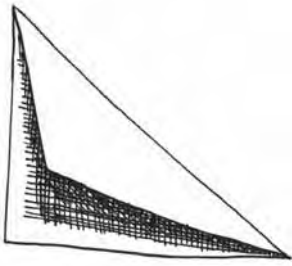
Sadako made 644 cranes before she died. Her friends made the rest of them so she could be buried with 1000.



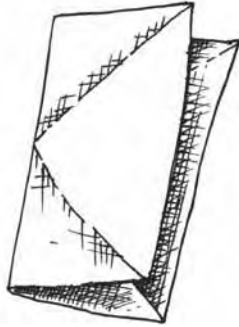
Several weeks later, Sadako felt ill and collapsed.



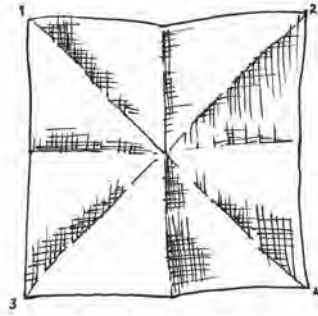
# Fold Your Own Crane for Peace



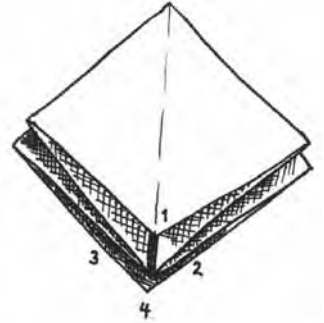
a) Using a square piece of paper, fold diagonally in half, so that it is the shape of a triangle. Then unfold back to a square, and fold it diagonally the other way. Unfold back to a square.



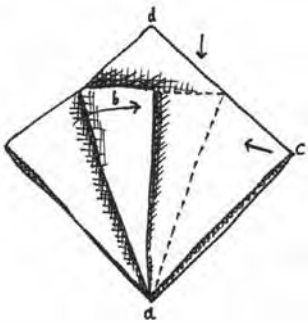
b) This time fold your square in half, across the middle, so that it forms the shape of a rectangle. Unfold it again, and fold it across the middle the other way. Unfold back to a square.



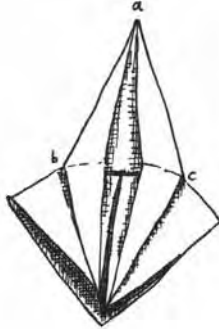
c) Your square should look like the picture above. Now imagining that its corners are numbered 1-4, fold 1 across to 4.



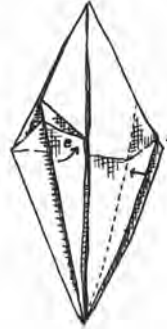
d) Following the numbers of this picture, now fold 2 and 3 inwards, so that your paper is in a small square.



e) Fold down the top of your square, as the diagram shows. Then fold the sides in as well, but open them up again. Next turn over and fold the sides of the square on the back in the same way and open them up again.



f) Take the bottom point of the shape and lift it up and over. You can now carefully press it down - it should be the shape of a diamond. Do exactly the same thing on the other side.



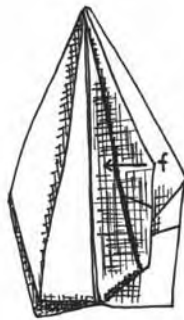
g) Fold in the sides of your diamond. Do this on the other side as well.



h) Take the right-hand edge of your diamond shape, and fold it over, like you are opening the page of a book. Press this down. Then turn your diamond over and do the same on the back.



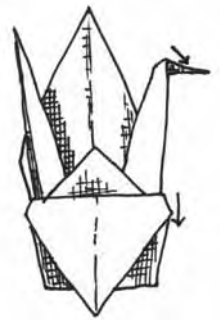
i) The top of your origami should be two points with a gap in between them; a bit like a crab's claw. Fold up the bottom point so that it reaches the 'crab's claw'. Do the same on the other side.



j) Taking the right-hand edge of the shape, fold it over like before (as if opening the page of a book). Turn over and do the same on the back, press down.



k) You now have two points sticking up in between two flat sides. These two points will become the crane's tail and head, they just need to be pulled out slightly.



l) Pinch down a beak for the crane, and if you want, you can fold down the wings. Your crane is finished!

**"I will write 'peace' on your wings and you will fly all over the world." Sadako Sasaki, 1943-1955.**

## What are Cranes?



### What are Cranes?

A crane is a big bird with long legs and a long neck that is found in many parts of the world. The Japanese crane can grow to 140cm high which is about the height of a 10-year-old child! In Japan the crane is thought to be very special and they appear in many different stories. They are said to live for a thousand (1000) years and this makes them a sign of good luck. In Japan there are even pictures of cranes on their money!

### What is Origami?

Origami is the ancient art of paper folding and it comes from Japan. There is a legend that if somebody makes a thousand paper cranes then they will be granted a wish. The legend also says that if a sick person makes them they will be given good health. The Japanese word for a thousand paper cranes is Senbazuru. They are often given at weddings and to new babies as a sign of good luck. Because of the story of Sadako Sasaki, cranes are now also a symbol of peace. Every year, 10 million cranes are sent to the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima (where Sadako was from) calling for world peace and an end to nuclear weapons.

### Making a Paper Crane

Many people all over the world have been inspired by Sadako Sasaki and fold paper cranes for peace. Even though it can be a little bit fiddly, children and adults both enjoy making cranes. The biggest ever made was more than 78m wide! The smallest was made from

a square only 1mm by 1mm and was folded using a needle, under a telescope. Write your own wish for peace inside the crane and fold as many as you can. Can you make it to a thousand?

### What to do with Your Paper Cranes

- Hang your cranes up at school or home to show it is a place of peace.
- Send the cranes to your MP and ask them to support your call for peace and against nuclear weapons.
- Send the cranes to your Mayor and ask them to be a Mayor for Peace. Mayors for Peace was started by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to call for peace and an end to nuclear weapons.
- Send them to Hiroshima to be put at the Children's Peace Monument:

Peace Promotion Division  
The City of Hiroshima  
1-5 Nakajima-cho Naka-ku,  
Hiroshima 730-0811 Japan

Please make sure your teacher fills out a registration form on the Hiroshima Peace Museum Website.





# Sadako Questions

1. What do the people of Hiroshima remember on Peace Day?

---

2. Why did Sadako become ill?

---

---

---

3. The second sentence of the second paragraph reads: "Breakfast time." What is the effect of writing these words in this way?

---

---

4. Before Sadako dies, she has a happy dream. What words in the story tell you that Sadako feels happy?

---

---

5. What do you think Sadako would have wished for if she had been given one wish? Explain your answer.

---

---

6. What did Sadako's friends do to make sure she was never forgotten?

---

---

7. What do you think Sadako would have thought of what her friends did?

---

---

8. Do you think this story would appeal to a) Adults b) Children, or c) Both? Circle one and explain your answer

---

---

---



# How to use this resource as part of Key Stage 2 Literacy

Suggestions for using the resource based on the Primary Framework for Literacy

## Year 5

### Narrative: Unit 2: Fables, Myths and Legends

The story of Sadako Sasaki is a legend within a legend. Sadako's desire to make 1000 cranes was inspired by an ancient Japanese legend and her actions have become a modern day legend that inspires people to work for peace. This resource can stand alone or would provide a useful comparison to ancient myths and legends.

- Examine the two text types: Short story and comic strip. How do they tell the same story in a different way? Put the comic strip in the right order/write captions to each frame.
- Write in first person in Sadako's Diary. Suggested entries: when admitted to hospital; after learning to make cranes; after making 500 cranes; nearing the end but still filled with determination and wishes for peace.
- Use drama to explore the characters. In small groups, the class should freeze frame panels from the cartoon to explore the characters' thoughts and feelings. Bring the scene to life to retell and expand on the story.
- Encourage the class to think of their own peace legends, or how other myths and legends studied could have a peaceful ending.

### Narrative: Unit 3: Stories from Other Cultures

The story of Sadako and the paper cranes is from Japan and incorporates an ancient Japanese legend that dictates that those who make 1000 paper cranes will be granted a wish. This resource can be used as part of an exploration of other cultures in stories.

- Read the story and the information about the cranes
- Ask students to make a list of Japanese words used within the story with a definition or explanation.
- Ask students to look at the descriptions in the story. Look at the figurative language used. Are these similes and metaphors you would expect to find in a story about Britain?
- Use drama and role-play to explore how different characters within the story are feeling. Freeze frame images in the comic strip and bring them to life.
- Write the letters that Sadako may have written to her friends and the letters they could have written back. Write the letters her friends could have written to the head teachers across Japan asking for their support in making the statue.

### Non-Fiction: Unit 1: Instructions

The making of paper cranes is a great way for students to practice following instructions and instructing other people. This is a good introduction to instructions before moving on to the rest of the module.

- Ask students to fold cranes following the instruction sheet/ PowerPoint (can be downloaded from the CND Peace Education website). How do they help making the cranes and why?
- Ask the students to teach another class how to make cranes/ write instructions. Is it easier to show someone or write it down?

### Non-Fiction: Unit 3: Persuasive writing

At the end of the story, Sadako's friends persuade head teachers from across Japan to help raise money for the Children's Peace Monument. This would be a good starting point for looking at persuasive writing.

- Look at persuasive letters to analyse how they are constructed. These could be fundraising letters for charities or simplified versions of letters to newspapers on the nuclear weapons debate.
- As a class, note the points that Sadako's friends may have made in their letter to the head teachers. How would they have persuaded them to get their school involved in the fundraising efforts?
- Write the letters to the head teachers and also fundraising letters.
- If the class make paper cranes to send, write a class letter to the mayor, asking them to be a Mayor for Peace or to the MP to tell them about their wish for peace.



**Narrative: Unit 4: Short Stories with Flashbacks**

The story of Sadako uses flashback for effect several times throughout the narrative. This can be used in conjunction with Aidan Gibbon's *The Piano* as a written comparison.

- Read through the story and note the way that memory and flashback is used for effect. How is it different to *The Piano*?
- Examine the cartoons of the story. If using the blank ones, ask children to add captions to each frame, bearing in mind the memories they explored from the story. What should they put in the thought bubbles?
- Working in pairs, create a timeline of events. The sequencing cartoon activity may be useful to remind them.
- Use the blank comic strip as a planning framework for an oral or written retelling of the story. Children can write the first sentence of each paragraph under the relevant picture to show the passage of time.

**Non-Fiction: Unit 1: Biography and Autobiography**

The story of Sadako is a true account; it can be used in this unit as a biography. As this is written as a fictional story, students can rewrite in a non-fiction style.

- Read the story and make notes as to the key points of Sadako's life.
- Examine the comic strips – are these the same points that you identified as being key? Why/why not?
- Watch a short YouTube video about Sadako (link to be found on the CND Peace Education Website). Ask: Can you spot any factual differences from the story? Are there any differences in the way it was told?
- In pairs, ask the children to think about what questions they may have about Sadako.
- In small groups, ask the students to do a presentation about the life of Sadako, optionally incorporating drama. Encourage the children to ask each other questions and evaluate the presentations.
- Ask the students to write Sadako's story in the first person as a diary entry. Expand to an "autobiographical" account of Sadako's story. Write these for particular audiences. Share with the class.

**Non-Fiction: Unit 2: Journalistic Writing**

As the story of Sadako is so well known, there have been many newspaper articles about children who have made 1000 paper cranes for peace. These reports could form part of this module.

- Read newspaper articles that relate to Sadako's story (children making the 1000 cranes). Compare different articles and identify key features.
- Children write a short article either about a school that has managed to make 1000 cranes or about Sadako herself and the building of the Children's Peace Monument.

**Non-Fiction: Unit 3: Argument**

This unit could build on work done in Year 5 Non-Fiction Unit 3: Persuasive Writing.

## Art And Design

KS2: 4b, 4c

KS3: 3b, 3c

## Citizenship

KS2: 1a, 2a, 2e, 2h, 2i, 2k, 4b

KS3: 2.3a, 3e

## Religious Education

KS2: 1e, 2e, 3e, 3i, 3j, 3m, 3p

KS3: 2.2a, 2.2c, 3h, 3k

## Philosophy for Children

The topic of Sadako's story is also useful for schools that run a Philosophy for Children programme. Why not use the story or the suggested film clip as a stimulus and get the children to come up with questions as a response. You could prompt them by asking questions such as:

What is the message of the story?

What is peace?

What does Sadako's statue mean to you?

On the base of Sadako's statue are the words:

This is our cry,

This is our prayer:

To create peace in the world

What do you think of this? Would you have chosen different words?



# Sadako's Cranes for Peace

The themes and activities in this resource cover areas of English, Philosophy, Art and Design, Citizenship and Religious Education. It tells the story of Sadako Sasaki, a girl born in January 1943 in Hiroshima. She was 2 years old and about a mile away when the "Little Boy", 15 kiloton nuclear weapon, exploded over Hiroshima on August 6th 1945. Although she was initially unhurt, she began showing signs of leukaemia towards the end of 1954, an effect of the radiation. When she was hospitalised, she began to fold 1000 paper cranes as a display of her hopes for peace and courage to fight her illness. In Japanese legend it is said that a crane will live for 1000 years, and so are a symbol of luck and longevity.

Unfortunately, Sadako only managed to fold 644 before she died aged 12. Her friends made the remaining 356 so she could be buried with 1000. They went on to campaign to have a statue erected in memory of Sadako and all the other children killed in the bombing. Paper cranes have subsequently become a sign of peace across the world, with millions sent to Hiroshima every year to be placed at the foot of the statue. The statue remains as a reminder of the effect war has on children, and as a cry for peace in the world.

## Themes

**Peace:** Imagining a peaceful world, peaceful solutions to conflict

**Courage:** Fighting illness, calling for peace, achieving goals

**Young people making a difference:** Sadako's story is known across the world, the successful building of the statue, young people today still remember Sadako

**The power of legends:** Inspired Sadako and gave her strength.

For use in Year 5 and 6 Literacy and Key Stage 2 and 3 Citizenship



Funded by the Nuclear Education Trust