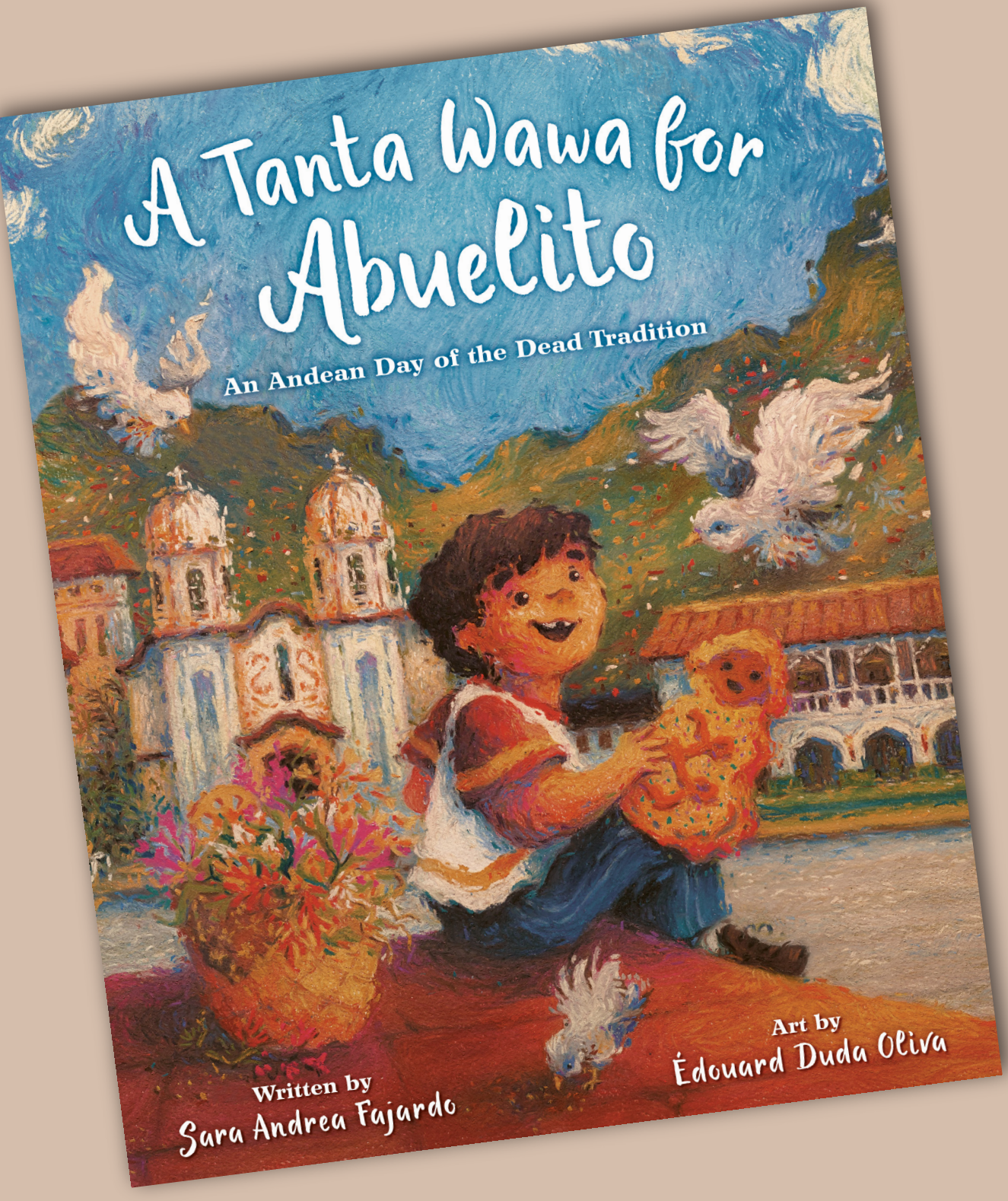
Educator Guide



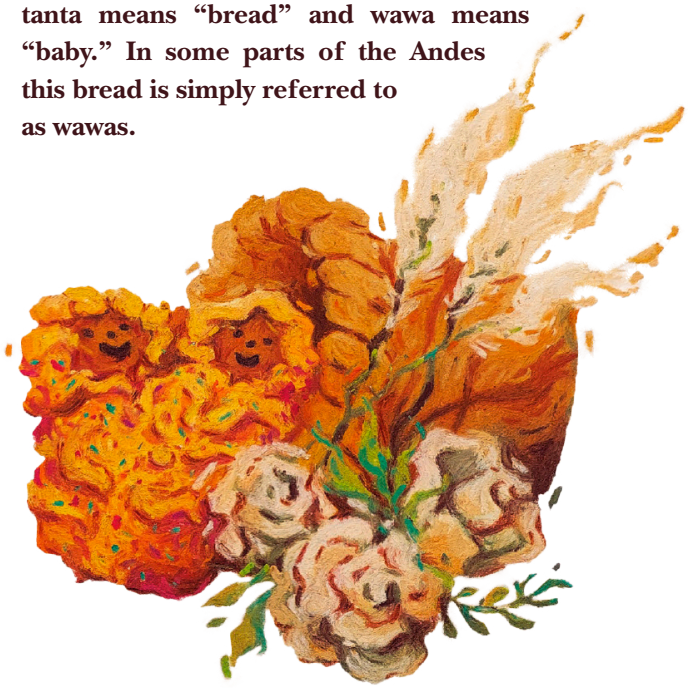
About the Book

It's Tortolito's first Día de los Muertos without his abuelito, and Tortolito misses him every day. He's determined to celebrate his grandfather to the fullest. And that means buying Abuelito's favorite foods, wearing new clothes, and, of course, bringing a delicious tanta wawa—a traditional Andean bread—to visit Abuelito's grave.

Even during his family's celebration, Tortolito misses how close he and Abuelito used to be. By remembering and honoring his abuelito with his loved ones, can Tortolito learn to keep Abuelito's spirit with him every day?

What is a Tanta Wawa?

A bread shaped like a baby that is exchanged in the Andes as part of the traditions of All Souls Day and Day of the Dearly Departed, more commonly known in the U.S. as a Day of the Dead. In Quechua the word tanta means "bread" and wawa means "baby." In some parts of the Andes this bread is simply referred to as wawas.



Reviews and Praise

"A contemplative look at a child's grief. A perfectly pitched portrait of the personal and collective, and of real grief juxtaposed with real life."

- Publishers Weekly, starred review

"Impressionistic art flows across the pages, capturing the motion of dance and flicker of candlelight with an immersive jewel-toned palette. This special, familial story focused on Peruvian traditions of Día de los Muertos is a welcome addition to books on this topic. A warm story."

- ALA Booklist, starred review

"Fajardo tackles a weighty subject with great compassion and nuance, exploring the swirl of emotions that often arise from the loss of a loved one. Likewise, Oliva's superb, lush pastel-and-pencil art softens the impact of Tortolito's poignant journey down memory lane. A bittersweet treat."

- Kirkus Reviews

About the Creators





PHOTO BY GRACE HENNING

Sara Andrea Fajardo

is a Peruvian-American author whose stories celebrate. her mixed heritage and Andean roots. Her book Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka con la Papa, received the Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal and earned her the Ezra Jack Keats award. Sara grew up listening to her father's stories of a childhood in their nearly 400-year-old ancestral home in the Peruvian Andes. Just like Abuelito, she always picks the Tanta Wawa with the most sprinkles on it. She teaches first-grade dual immersion in Northern California where she lives with her husband, two kids, and very playful cat. You can find more about her at www.sarafajardowrites.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Duda Oliva

is a Latin American Illustrator from Brazil deeply inspired by impressionism and magical realism. Through traditional techniques like soft pastels, ink and pencils, his art tells stories that hope to empower, comfort, and surprise children through folklore, literature, nature and South and Central America imagery. In his free time, Duda's usually found in museums, parks, or hanging out and drawing with his friends. You can find more of him at www.dudaoliva.com.

How to Make Your Own Tanta Wawa



Tanta Wawa Recipe

Makes 4 tanta wawas

For the bread

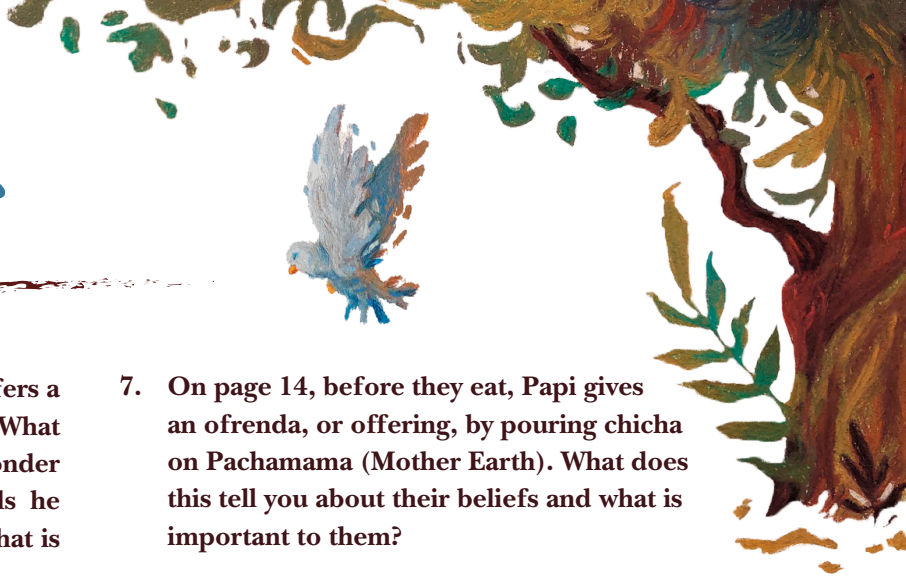
Water, enough for 1 cup after boiling for the spice infusion
3 cinnamon sticks
5 cloves
3 teaspoons anise seeds
1/4 cup milk, heated and cooled until lukewarm
1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 quarter-ounce package active dry yeast
4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for kneading the dough.
2 cups whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of salt
2 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature, plus more for greasing

For the decorations

Raisins, 1 egg for egg wash, sesame seeds, and colored sprinkles

- **In a small pot of water, boil the cinnamon sticks, cloves, and anise seeds for about 10 minutes. Let cool. Discard the cinnamon sticks and cloves, but keep the anise seeds in the infusion to add to the dough later.**
- **In a small bowl, combine the milk, tablespoon of sugar, and yeast. Let the mixture stand for about 10 minutes. The yeast is activated when it begins to look bubbly.**
- **Sift the all-purpose and whole wheat flours into a large mixing bowl, add the ground cinnamon, cup of sugar, and salt, and mix until combined.**
- **Add the eggs and 1 cup of the spice infusion to the flour mix.**
- **Add the yeast mix and the vanilla extract, and mix to combine.**
- **Add the butter, and mix with a spoon, a stand mixer, or your hands until well incorporated.**
- **Turn the mixture onto a floured surface, and knead for about 10 minutes. The dough should be soft and tacky but not sticky. If sticky, add flour as you knead. If too dry, wet your fingers and continue kneading**
- **Place the dough in a greased bowl, and cover it with a damp dish towel. Let the dough rise in a warm, dry place until doubled (up to two hours).**
- **Preheat the oven to 400°F**
- **When the dough has doubled, place it onto a floured surface. Cut it into five even pieces (one piece will be used to make decorations; the other four will be used to shape the wawas).**
- **With your hands, flatten a piece of dough into a long oval, pinch it near the top where the neck will be, and shape the top part so it's circular, this will be the head.**
- **Take two pinches of dough, and roll them into long strips. Weave the strips together, and place them around the head like a braid or crown.**
- **Add two raisins for the eyes and one for the mouth.**
- **Take another pinch of dough, and form a long strip. Spiral and loop it along the body.**
- **Whisk an egg, and brush it onto the dough.**
- **Scatter sesame seeds and colored sprinides on top.**
- **Repeat the shaping and decorating processes three more times.**
- **Place each wawa on a greased baking sheet, and bake for 20-30 minutes.**
- **The bread will appear browned and glossy when done.**

Discussion Questions



1. In the title spread, illustrator Duda Oliva offers a vivid glimpse of daily life in an Andean city. What do you notice? What does it make you wonder about the story? How do the visual details he includes let you know that you are in a city that is not in the United States?

2. Giving tanta wawa around November 1st and 2nd to godparents, loved ones, and relatives is a tradition in the Andes of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Traditions help us connect to our culture and customs. What are some of the traditions from your culture? How do they help you connect to your heritage?

3. Tortolito and his family gather all Abuelito's favorite foods, including a tanta wawa to take to the cemetery. How does this act of gathering these foods help them connect, remember, and honor Abuelito?

4. In the market scene on pages 8 and 9, you get a feel for the types of foods that are popular in this part of the Andes. What do these foods tell you about the culture? How are they like the foods you eat? How are they different?

5. Throughout the book, the author uses Spanish and Quechua words to bring the culture of the Andes to life. How does saying and hearing words such as tanta wawa or the call of the birds cucurrucu make you feel closer to Tortoliot's culture?

6. On page 13, Tortolito shines Abuelito's gravestone and then "shows" him his toothless smile. He says, "I'm growing taller than the ichu grass." What does this let you know about how much Tortolito has grown?

7. On page 14, before they eat, Papi gives an ofrenda, or offering, by pouring chicha on Pachamama (Mother Earth). What does this tell you about their beliefs and what is important to them?

8. You can see the day progress through colors in Duda Oliva's illustrations. They shift from a cheery blue, to golden, to pink tones, to a dark blue as the day fades into night. How do these color changes mirror the emotions of the story? How do they help connect us to the emotions that Tortolito is feeling throughout his day?

9. On the last spread, there is only the sound word cucurrucu and the image of the birds flying over the city. Why do you think the author and illustrator decided to end the story this way? What does it make you feel? What do you think the birds over the city are meant to represent?

10. Even though Abuelito is not alive in the book, you still get to know him through the stories and memories the family shares about his love of birds, playing games of cards, and what it was like to dance with him. How do these little stories make you feel like you know Abuelito? What stories can you share about a loved one that could make your readers feel like they know them?

11. Throughout the book, Tortolito and his family talk about how only Abuelito could get the birds to eat from his hand and how it required patience. Yet on the dedication page, you see a photo of Tortolito with his parents with a bird eating from his hand? What did Tortolito learn by remembering Abuelito with his family that helped him finally get the birds to eat from his hands? What does it tell you about Tortolito and his continued connection to Abuelito?

Sensory Mapping
A Tanta Wawa for Abuelito



Author Sara Andrea Fajardo relied on sensory details to bring the Andes and the tradition of tanta wawas to life. Throughout her writing, she was mindful to use all five senses so that people who are not familiar with this custom might feel immersed in it.

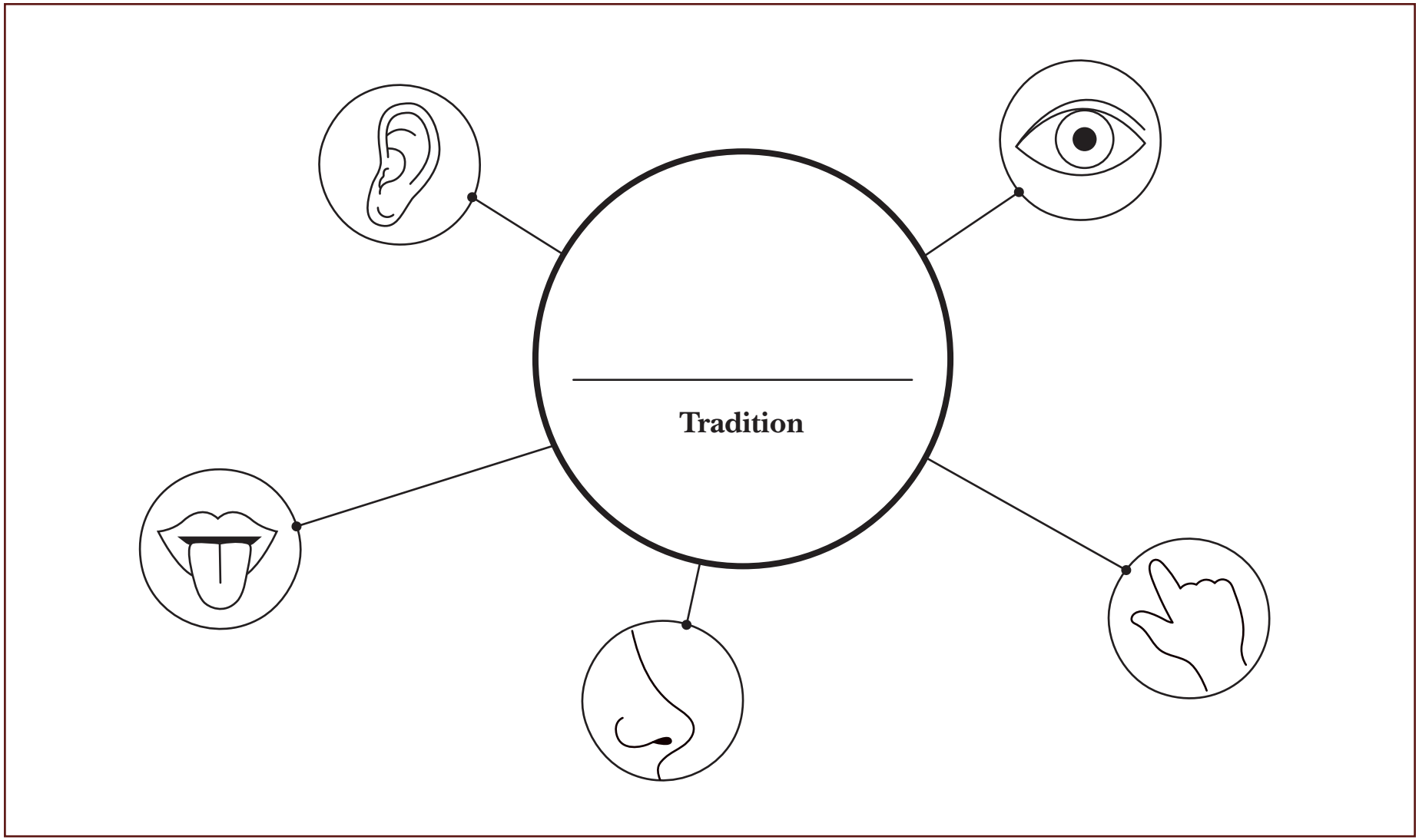
As you reread the story, use this map of sensory details to help your students think about how they work together to make the reader feel like you're living this day through Tortolito's eyes.

Now think of your own culture and traditions and come up with at least one sensory detail for each of the senses to bring your tradition to life for others. Ask yourself what does it look like? Taste like? Sound like? Feel like? Look like? Is there one thing that jumps out or are there multiple things? For example, in *A Tanta W**Wawa for Abuelito*, was not just the bread, but the whole atmosphere, the bustle of people, the vendors calling out, people milling about the cemetery.

Page	Sight	Taste	Touch	Sound	Scent
5	Dress shoes gleam		Carrying the basket heavy with Abuelito's favorite foods		
6				Cucurrucu, you cooed like a dove and nestled like a lovebird into his heart	
7			Chilly treat	Rin rin rin Metal scrapes ice Chicharrones crackle	Scent of juicy pork belly frying
8	(vendors) wave	Savors their Sweet cinnamony softness		Tanta wawa vendors sing	
13	Gritty dust dims Abuelito's bright name		Cool marble		
16	Papi wets the Earth	Tangy offering			
17		As sweet as mouthfuls of tanta wawa		Cucurrucu sings tío Danny	
18		Tortolito sways to the music		Notes spill from tío Danny's guitar like raindrops on a tin roof Melodies carry like a dove's cucurrucu	
22	With a strike of a match the wick flickers to life	Cucurrucu the doves coo lullabies	Papi's warm hand squeezes his		
24	Hundreds of flames dance— a glowing river of light carrying memories into the night				

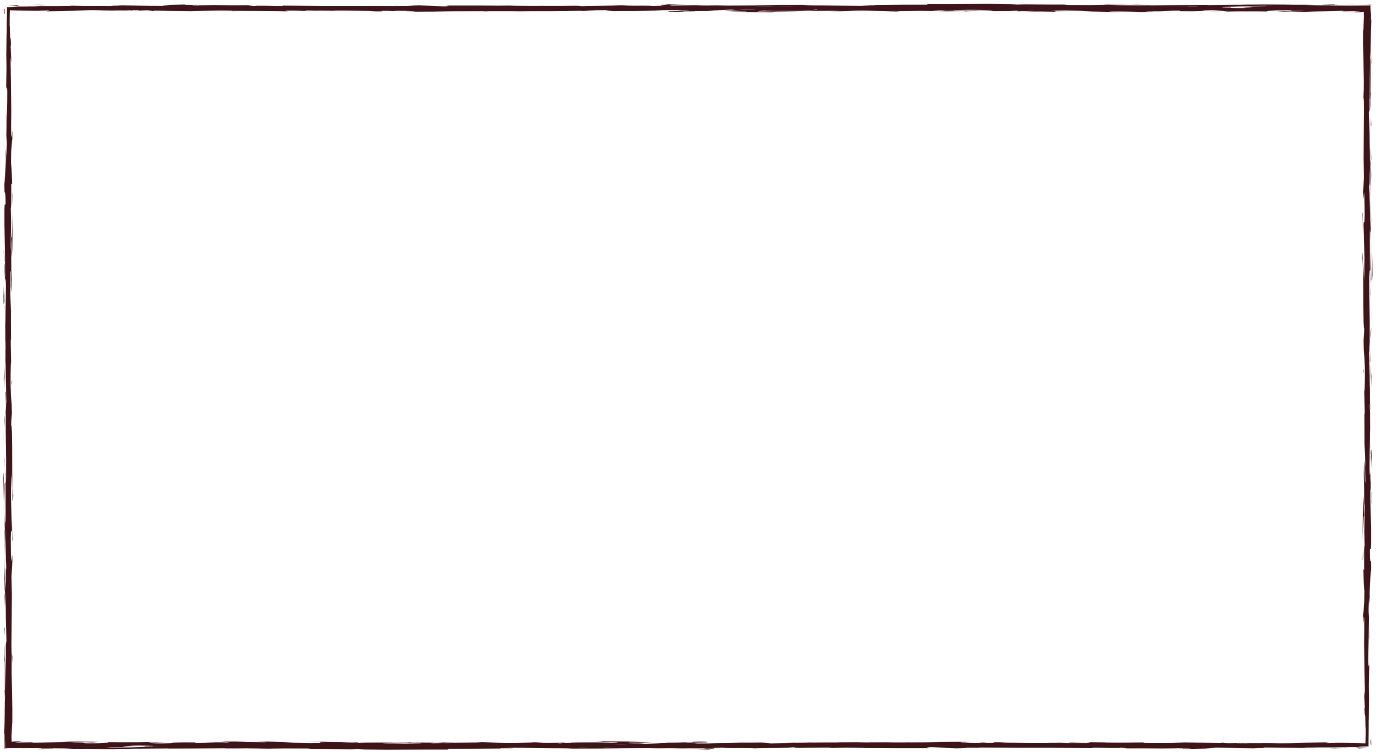
Name: _____ Date: _____

Select one tradition and use the sensory bubble map to brainstorm sensory details that can help you describe it.



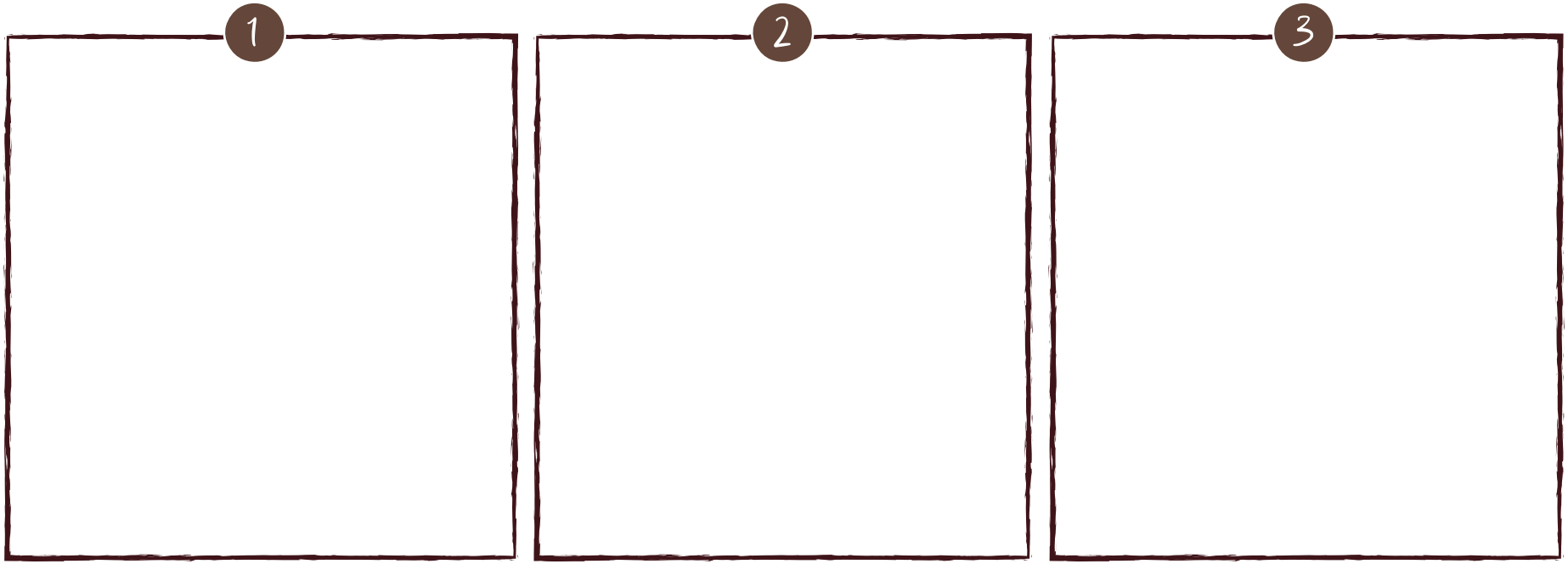
Name: _____ Date: _____

Use your sensory map to help you write a description about your tradition.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Illustrator Duda Oliva played with the light and colors throughout the book to give readers a sense of time passing throughout the day. Think of your own tradition. When time of day does it take place? How would the light change throughout the celebration? Describe it in your own words.



What do you notice?
What do you wonder?

Tanta Wawa may be an Andean tradition, but that doesn't mean that all tanta wawas look or taste the same. What do you notice about these three different tanta wawa from 1. Ayacucho, 2. Cuzco, and 3. Huancavelica? What do you wonder? Why do you think they differ so much from region to region? Which one would you want to eat?

1.



2.

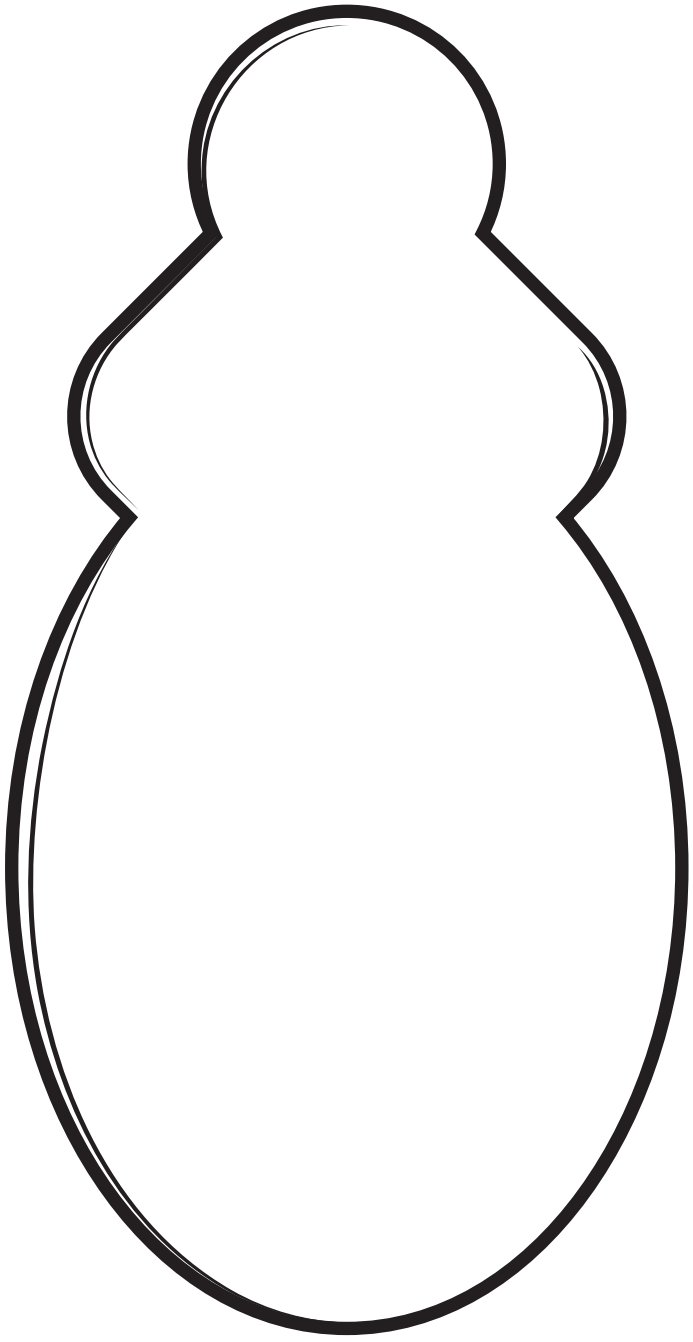


3.



Design your own Tanta Wawa

How would you decorate your own tanta wawa? Would you use raisin eyes and extra sprinkles the way Abuelito likes? A painted mask? How would your tanta wawa design look?



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