

Nesting Tales: Matryoshka Doll Journey

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Overwhelming: (Verb) /ˌəʊvəˈwɛlmɪŋ/ To overpower or overcome with a great force or intensity.
Example: The feeling of sadness was overwhelming.
2. Array: (Noun) /ə'reɪ/ A large group or number of things that are similar in some way .
Example: There was an array of books on the shelf.
3. Surpass: (Verb) /sə'pɑ:s/ To exceed or go beyond; to be greater than.
Example: The new model of the car surpasses the previous one in terms of speed.
4. Amidst: (Preposition) /ə'mɪdst/ In the middle of or surrounded by; among.
Example: The house was nestled amidst the trees.
5. Nestled: (Verb) /'nesl/ To be situated in a snug or cozy position; to be located in a sheltered or partly enclosed place.
Example: The cabin was nestled in the woods.
6. Fertility: (Noun) /fər'tɪləti/ The quality or state of being fertile; the ability to produce offspring.
Example: The fertility of the soil was ideal for growing crops.
7. Trail: (Noun) /treɪl/ A path or track made across a wild region, over rough terrain, or by the passage of people.
Example: We went for a hike on the trail.
8. Inception: (Noun) /ɪn'sepʃn/ The establishment or starting point of an institution or activity
Example: The inception of the company was in 1995.
9. Concealed: (Adjective) /kən'si:ld/ Kept secret; hidden . Example: The treasure was concealed in a secret compartment.
10. Far cry: (Noun) /fɑ: kraɪ/ A long distance; something notably different from what is expected or desired .
Example: The new restaurant was a far cry from what we had hoped for.



Children today have an **overwhelming array** of toys, including digitally advanced ones that **surpass** the capabilities of computers from half a century ago. However, **amidst** the high-tech options, the charm of simple old toys often stands out. Consider the delight of unraveling a matryoshka nesting doll, revealing progressively smaller ones **nestled** within. This timeless experience traces back to 1890 when a group of artists near Moscow crafted the first matryoshka dolls, gaining popularity in the 20th century after a showcase at the Paris World's Fair in 1900.

What is the difference in the types of toys available to children today, and what is noteworthy about some modern toys?

When and where did matryoshka dolls become popular during the 20th century?

The design typically features a larger doll containing seven smaller ones, all portraying female figures and symbolizing **fertility**. Despite evolving styles, the inspiration for these nesting dolls might have roots in East Asia. In Japan, wooden nesting dolls of the Seven Lucky Gods existed, with the god of happiness and longevity revealing six other gods within. Some suggest that Moscow artists were influenced when the wife of their patron encountered such a doll in Japan, sparking the creation of the matryoshka. However, others dispute this theory, proposing alternative inspirations such as wooden Easter eggs or unrelated sources.

What are matryoshka dolls usually made up of, and what do they represent?

According to one theory, what might have inspired the creation of matryoshka dolls from East Asia?

The historical **trail** of nesting objects extends beyond the matryoshka's **inception** in 1890. In China, more than a millennium ago, people crafted nesting boxes **concealed** within one another, mirroring the concept of the dolls. The roots of nesting dolls in China can be traced to the 18th century, eventually inspiring a similar tradition in Japan. Interestingly, the earliest Chinese nesting dolls contained a piece of rice within the smallest one, a **far cry** from today's concept of toys but a fascinating glimpse into historical practices.

What are some alternative ideas about what inspired the artists who created matryoshka dolls?

DISCUSSION

1. If you could design your own modern matryoshka doll set, what themes or characters would you include in the layers?
2. Imagine a matryoshka doll representing your life stages. What would be on each layer, and what would the smallest one symbolize?
3. If matryoshka dolls had a secret power, what do you think it would be, and how would people use it?
4. Discuss the idea of a "tech-savvy" matryoshka doll. What gadgets or digital surprises might be hidden inside each layer?
5. If you had a matryoshka doll that could transport you to any historical period, where would you go and which doll layer would take you there?

6. In a world where matryoshka dolls are alive, what kind of personalities do you think the different layers would have?
7. Imagine a matryoshka doll painting competition. What themes or designs do you think artists would come up with for their dolls?