

# Educator Guide

## CRACK! Goes the CASCARÓN



Words by  
Sara Andrea Fajardo  
Art by  
Rocío Arreola Mendoza



## About the Book

Shell-abrate a joyous Latine tradition, with Toti and his family in this upbeat bilingual story, hatched in time for Easter!

### What are cascarones?

Cascarones are empty egg shells that have been colored, filled with paper confetti, and sealed!

The hunt is on to figure out who will be the reigning champ of Cascarones, and Toti knows that he has his family beat. His parents are too easy, they make old-school cascarones with confetti inside. His sister, Carlita wishes she could create cascarones like him, and his Abuela doesn't even stand a chance. When the day of Cascarones arrives, will Toti seize his moment or will it be scrambled when he learns someone has switched his cascarones for fake ones!

### Reviews and Praise:

★ “Peppered with Spanish words that are translated easily from context; prankster energy; and wide, oversized smiles on every family member from Toti to Abuela, readers will no doubt be inspired to eat their eggs and save the shells so they, too, can dive into the tradition of cascarón making with their own families—no matter which holidays they celebrate.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

“The playful tale captures the joy of family traditions and the delight of creative pranks, inspiring readers to make their own fun... Sure to make readers smile, this sparkling story affirms cultural traditions.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Fajardo lets the egg puns fly throughout this playful work (“You wanna hear a yolk?... Time to scramble!”), while Arreola Mendoza’s digital illustrations display the planning stage, and subsequent familial hijinks, in bold hues and sprawling lines.”

—*Publishers Weekly*



## About the Creators



### Sara Andrea Fajardo

is the author of the Junior Library Guild Gold Standard book, *Alberto Salas Plays Paka Paka con la Papa: Join the Quest with Peru's Famed Scientist and Potato Expert*. Sara has been on a life-long path of telling stories: first as a photojournalist, then as a multimedia storyteller for humanitarian aid organizations, and now as a children's writer. She has lived in Peru, Finland, Japan, Kenya and currently resides in the San Francisco Bay Area, with her husband and two children.



### Rocío Arreola Mendoza

is a freelance illustrator and co-founder of Cúrcumas Creative Studio. She has worked with Matamoros City's Government in Mexico, making commercial illustrations for social media and printed campaigns. She lives in Mexico with her husband, child, and cats.

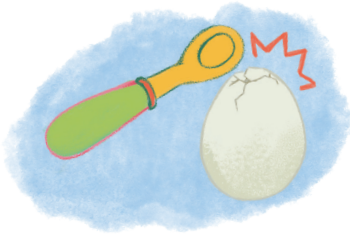




# How to Make Your Own Cascarón

**CASCARONES** are eggshells filled with confetti and are for anyone and everyone!  
Join Toti and his family in the cascarón fun!

- 1** Carefully crack the top of an uncooked egg and empty it.



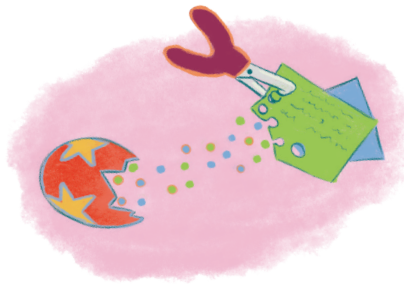
- 2** Gently wash and dry the shell.



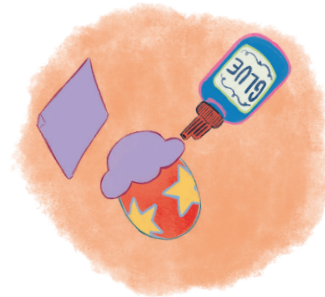
- 3** Decorate the egg to your liking.



- 4** Fill the shell with confetti made by punching out recycled paper.



- 5** Seal the hole with a piece of paper or masking tape.



- 6** Crack the egg on a friend's head.



- 7** And laugh loudly because you eggsecuted the fowl deed!







## Discussion Questions

Making and breaking cascarones is a tradition in several Latin American countries and parts of the United States. It's a playful way to bring families and communities together. **What are some of your traditions? How do you celebrate them?**

Author Sara Fajardo used puns throughout the book *Crack Goes the Cascarón*. **Why did she make this creative choice? How does this wordplay amp up the sense of fun in the story?**

Rather than relying on old-school confetti, Toti engineers his own cascarones including flour filled "smokescreen cascarones, tiny "stealth cascarones" made from quail eggs, and slime-filled "ooze and confuse" cascarones. **How would these types of cascarones help Toti gain advantage over his familia and help to crown him the King of Cascarones?**

**Why isn't Toti upset about losing the cascarón crown to his Abuela? What aspects of his personality help him keep enjoying the fun, even if he isn't the Cascarón King?**

**Throughout the story Toti underestimated his family's ability to steal the crown, how did his family use this to his advantage?**

**At the end of the story we see a hint of Toti planning for the next Cascarón face-off? What is Toti's plan? How can it help him win the crown next time around?**

Rocio Arreola Mendoza's art is full of energy and movement. Look at how she uses body language to show reactions, love, and action. **How can you add movement and energy to bring your own illustrations to life?**

In a wordless spread of the book we see Toti's familia walking away with his eggs while Toti is dreaming of his triumph. **How does the illustration help to add to the fun, mystery and tension in the unexpected turn of events? What clue does the cat on the next spread provide to help us know that something is amiss with Toti's cascarones?**

# Writing Activities or How to Write Punny

*Crack Goes the Cascarón* is an eggcellent eggssample of how to use puns to add yolks to a story. But what is a pun? A pun is a playful way of replacing the right words with other words that sound like them but mean different things. Or a pun can come from playing with words that mean more than one thing, such as scramble an egg or scramble away from a situation.

In *Crack Goes the Cascarón*, we really got cracking on coming up with ways to play around with the idea of eggs, by adding the word “egg” to words that sounded similar such as eggcellent or eggcited, or using egg-themed elements such as shell to shellabrate word play.

**How many puns can you identify in *Crack Goes the Cascarón*?** After a while they’re hard to eggignore because there are some on nearly every page.

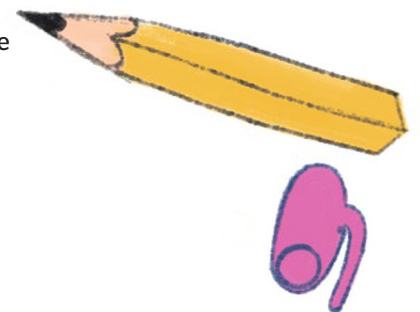
## How to add puns to your own writing:

The author, Sara Fajardo, started by using online resources to compile a list of different egg puns. Think of a topic you’d like to eggsplore and use these online tools to start compiling your own list of puns and word play:

- **Punfinity:** This powerful tool allows you to look for puns in numerous ways from look-a-likes and sound-a-likes. It can also help you generate funny character names to use in your own stories.
- **Puns.co:** This generator powered by AI will generate a list of puns that play on the elements of the topic you’re searching for.
- **Pun Generator:** With Pun Generator you can do two types of searches: puns related to your topic and common phrases where your topic might appear.
- **Punepedia:** An online encyclopedia of puns, this resource is a wealth of puns at your fingertips. Puns are listed in categories that to select from.

You can also use a basic web search by typing in phrases like “egg jokes” or “egg puns” and get countless results for online resources and articles with puns that can help pun-ch up your writing.

Incorporate word play into your own classroom writing by having students come up with topics and research ways to add puns to their stories. Challenge your students to find puns on different topics and collect them into a classroom puncyclopedia.





# Engineer Your Own Cascarón

In *Crack Goes the Cascarón*, Toti engineers cascarones “the world has never seen,” using flour to fill a “smokescreen cascarón,” tiny quail eggs to make “stealth cascarones,” and slime for “ooze and confuse” cascarones.

What kind of cascarones can you come up with? What would they be filled with? What would you name it? How would this type of cascarón help you become the King or Queen of cascarones in your familia?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Draw and name your cascarón**

**Draw and label your ingredients**

**Draw yourself using your cascarón**



**Write about how you become the Cascarón King or Queen.**







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