Did you know that there are over 500 different breeds of chickens across the world? Chickens are found all over the world, pretty much anywhere that there are people, because they are a domesticated group of animals. Domestication is the process of adapting wild plants and animals for human use, and a species is considered domesticated once it is genetically and physically modified through human-influenced breeding and is reliant on humans on some level. Much like dogs being domesticated from wolves, chickens were originally domesticated over 7,000 years ago from the Red Jungle Fowl that lives from India all the way to the Philippines!



Chickens are omnivores, which means they'll eat both plants and meat; most of the time they eat grass seeds, fruits and veggies, and the occasional insect, though they have been known to eat mice! Though they are very common in most countries the world over, that doesn't mean these T. rex relatives don't have some very cool adaptations to survive wherever their humans take them; they can live in the tropics, in cold and snowy Montana, in temperate forests, and many other places. Here are just a few of their adaptations:

- Males have spurs on their legs that they can use to fight each other or predators.
- Their senses of sight and hearing are both very strong, and great for finding food while watching for predators.
- Chickens are social animals and do best when they live in groups called flocks; they can care for each other, help find food, and sound the alarm when there are predators!
- Their wings and body shapes are not ideal for long flights, but in an emergency, most chickens can fly a short distance, like up into a tree, to avoid predators.
- Like nearly all birds, their bones are mostly hollow, making them light but strong.

There are so many breeds of chicken with all sorts of feather colors; can you color this flock?



Did you know there are different kinds of feathers? We don't just mean across species, but on nearly every species of bird, there are at least 5 different types of feathers with different jobs!

Color in the feathers and draw an arrow from each to match them to their jobs.



Wing Feather



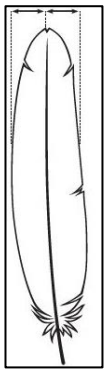
Contour Feather



Down Feather



Semiplume Feather



Tail Feather

Steering & braking during landing.

Strong & windproof, key for flight.

Hidden under Contours, provide structure & warmth.

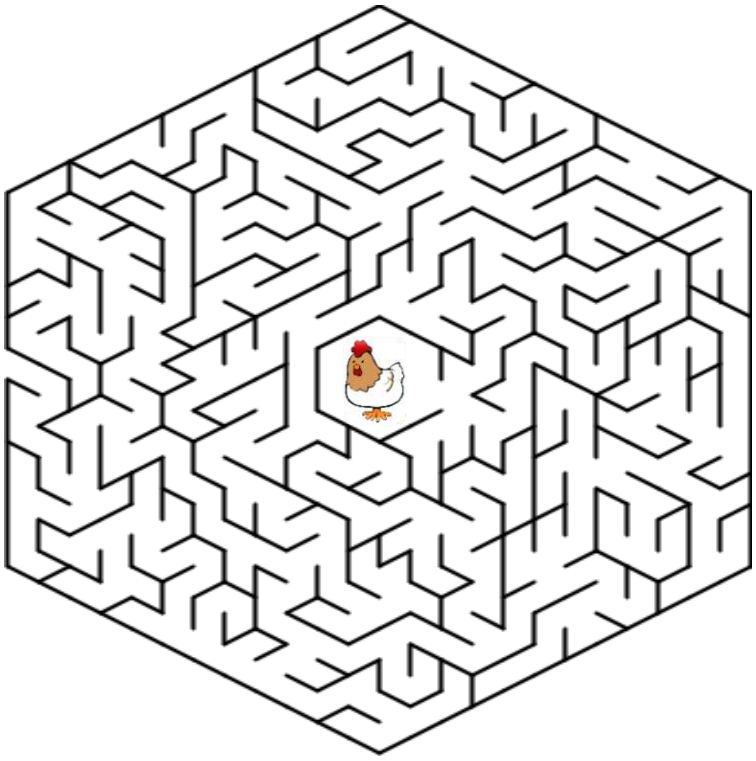
Visible on body, above Semiplumes, interlocking pieces keep bird dry.

Fluffy edges right against the body help hold heat in.

(Adapted from Ask A Biologist Feather Activity page: askabiologist.asu.edu/activities/coloring)

One of the ways Chickens and other birds take care of their feathers is by taking a dust bath. Now, this may not sound very clean, but it actually helps them get extra oils out from between their feathers and can also help them get rid of any bugs or other pests that are trying to hitch a ride on their skin! Can you help the Chicken find her way through the maze to the dirt patch so she can take her bath?





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