

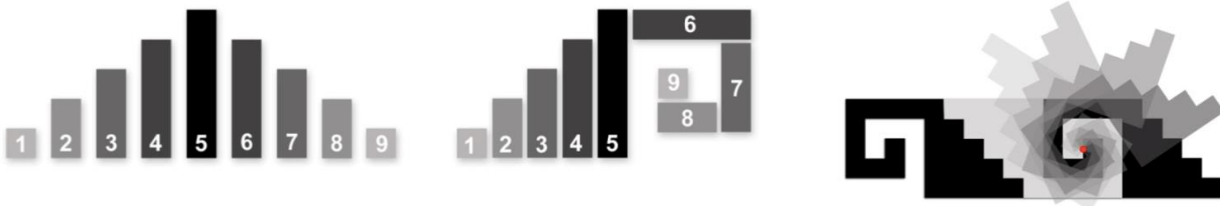
# Greca Escalonada (Stepped Fret)

This activity was created by Penn Museum Global Guide [Carlos José Pérez Sámano](#): "The Stepped Fret is a drawing that you can easily do that is full of meaning. This figure has been found from Arizona in the U.S. to Argentina and Peru. For several cultures like Aztecs, Mayans, Mixtecs, it represented the perfect harmony of the universe, the balance between forces, the constant transformation of the matter into spirit, and the movement of life. As simple as it looks, it is the most important graphic symbol in Mesoamerica."



## Why is it so important?

First of all, it is a form that has been used in practically the entire continent. From U.S. to the very south of South America. For the Aztecs, it represented the cycle of life and death, but also the internal path to discover the consciousness within oneself. It is the representation of a shell seen from one side and from the center at the same time. The shell represents the constant cycles of consciousness and the return to the beginnings.



If we analyze the form in a geometrical way, it can help us to understand it's meaning. It has the same elements arranged in an opposite order. And there is a clear symmetry of how it's arranged. But also the number nine, means the concepts of the other world and the possibility of death and life at the same time. Unity and opposition at the same time. The path down is the path up. The internal path is also the external path.

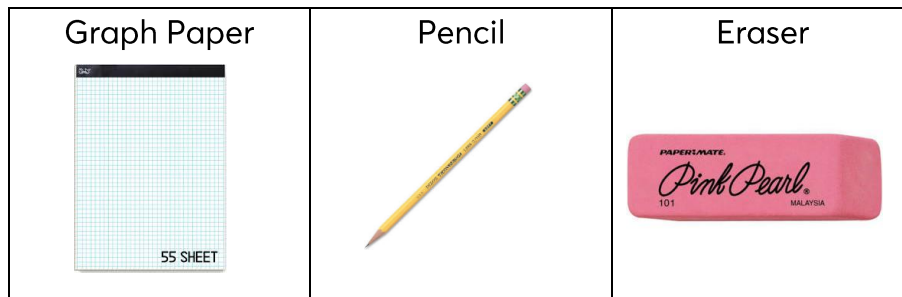


Can you spot the *Greca Escalonada* on the bowl and textile below?



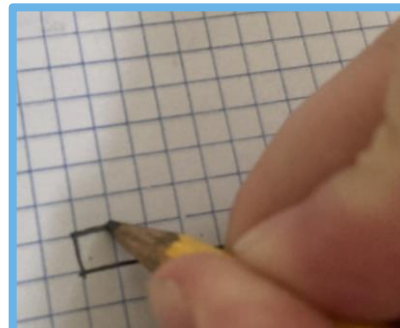
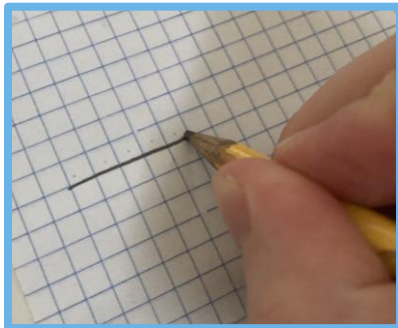
# Greca Escalonada (Stepped Fret)

## MATERIALS:



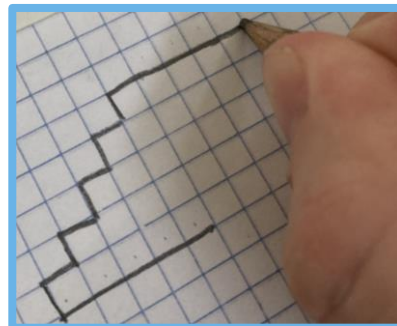
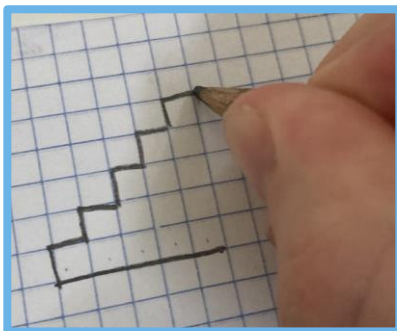
**STEP ONE:** Draw a horizontal line of 5 spaces.

**STEP TWO:** At the far left, draw a vertical line one space up, then draw another horizontal line of one space.



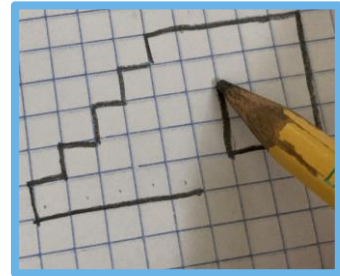
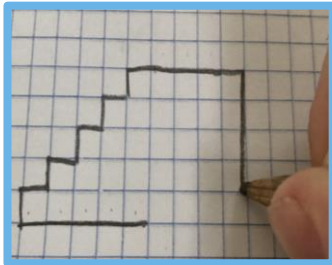
**STEP THREE:** Keep repeating this (one vertical, one horizontal of one space each) until you have a stair of 5 steps.

**STEP FOUR:** Now continue the horizontal line until it has in total 5 spaces (counting the last step or the top of your stair as one space too). So you are going to add only 4 more spaces.

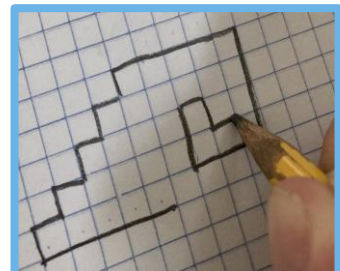
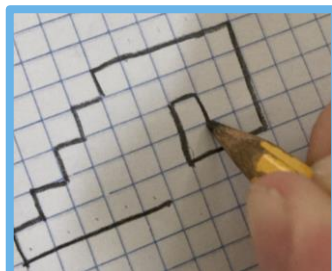
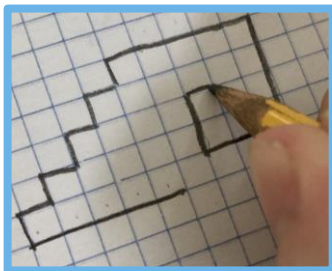


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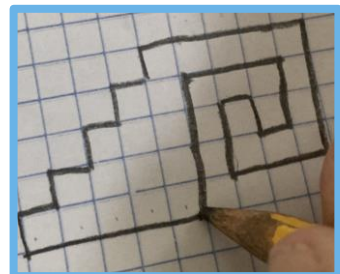
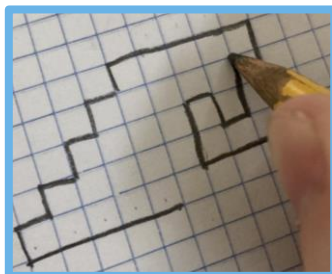
**STEP FIVE:** Go down four spaces, then to your left three spaces. After that, go up two spaces.



**STEP SIX:** Move one space to the right, then one space down, one space to the left.



**STEP SEVEN:** Now, we begin counting again: two spaces up, three spaces to the left. And finally, we close the drawing going down four spaces.



You have it! How do you like it? As you will see, this form is very interesting. Now, what you can do is to repeat this form being sure that you leave one space before starting again. You'll notice the space in between also forms a pattern:

