

# MY SOUTH AFRICAN

PANDEMIC STORY (Grade 1 - 4)



SOUTH AFRICAN ADAPTATION OF  
"MY PANDEMIC STORY"

A GUIDED ACTIVITY WORKBOOK FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S  
YOUTH, FAMILIES, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS.

14TH ED. (KLIMAN ET AL.)

BY THE SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE (SII), SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT UNIT,  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT)

*A guided activity workbook for South Africa’s youth, families, teachers and caregivers, based on 14<sup>th</sup> Ed, “My Pandemic Story”.*

*Modified and augmented by Jennifer Davids<sup>i</sup> (M.Sc. Clinical Psychology, UCT), Patti Silbert<sup>ii</sup> (PhD, Education, UCT) and Tembeka Mzozoyana<sup>iii</sup> (BSW, Social Work, UCT) with permission of The Children's Psychological Health Center, Inc; Beth Silbert (M.Ed, Education, UWC).*

*Cover design: Gabriel Sieff 2020*

## **Preface to the 2020 Guided Activity Workbook: South Africa**

Children in over 200 nations, are facing two mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic: millions of mostly older people they love are getting sick and many are dying; the second mental health challenge is the psychological distress related to school closures and confinement. The experience of isolation has also resulted in increased patterns of domestic violence and hunger for many people, placing enormous physical and psychological demands on children and their families.

Children and their families are facing various degrees of trauma. We know that children and youth who are hungry, stressed, anxious and afraid cannot learn effectively. More than ever before, psychosocial support is of paramount importance - especially in communities that face multiple and consistent crises.

While the world’s pandemic scientists search for better tests, treatments, cures and vaccines, parents, teachers and caregivers everywhere have the opportunity to improve their children’s knowledge and mental health. This guided activity workbook is a small step in that direction. It is for giving “psychological first aid” right now.

**Gilbert Kliman, M.D., Medical Director, The Children’s Psychological Health Center, Inc.**

**Adapted by the Schools Improvement Initiative in collaboration with Beth Silbert (Shine Literacy) for the South African Context.**

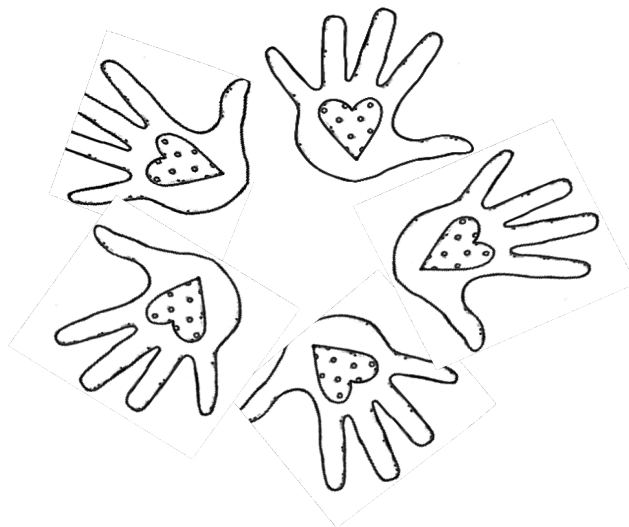
# Guide for Teachers, Parents, Grandparents and Other Caregivers

As someone who works with children, it is your privilege to try to help them connect with you at a time of great importance in their lives. You may help change a stressful and possibly traumatic situation into a constructive experience of learning and coping – one which promotes trust and emotional strength. When you engage with children, by thinking and feeling together with them, it can help them to feel less overwhelmed and safe. This workbook is designed to strengthen both you and the children you know, love and care for.

## Giving Children Psychological “Hands” With Which to Work in a Crisis

The term “giving children psychological hands” - “H.A.N.D.S.” - is a short way of saying children must be helped to “Honestly communicate, Actively cope, Network with peers and adults, in a Developmentally Specific way.” This workbook has been designed by parents and mental health professionals to help children have “hands”, to develop a sense of being in some control of their own safety, emotions and learning in the face of a large crisis.

The novel coronavirus pneumonia (officially called “COVID-19”) pandemic can be a totally negative experience for children – creating loss, fear, worry, doubt and confusion; or it can become a manageable event for children, which can stimulate learning and growth. All of our futures improve when we and our children work together. The pandemic is an opportunity for the world to cooperate on behalf of future generations.



## Getting Started

It will help if you (the teacher, parent or caregiver) read the whole book yourself first before presenting it to the child.

The book belongs to the child. It is not a school workbook so they do not need to be forced to do any activity against their will. They should be allowed to stop using the book for a time whenever they want, even though the section may not have been completed. It is the child's book to use in a way that is meaningful to them. The entire book does not have to be completed for the book to help.

It is likely that the teacher will start the process. The child should be allowed to take the book home to continue with it, with an older person/people whom they trust and feel comfortable with. **It is important that you, the adult, are there to support the child in these activities. The absence of adult leadership, absence of adult initiation of discussion and absence of social support has been shown to be harmful in crisis situations.**

### For Teachers

You can use *My South African Pandemic Story* in the classroom with children working individually or in small groups. Social support in a group can be very effective for supporting group togetherness and in reducing children's anxieties. If you pick up that a child is resisting any of the activities, encourage him/her to do some free drawing or writing on the blank pages at the back of the book, while the rest of the class are doing their activities. The child may need a break and it is likely that they will return to the activity when ready to do so.

### For parents and Caregivers

Allow your child to select which parts of the book s/he would like to work on. They can work for only a few minutes, to half an hour at a time. You can help your child to write what they want to say, even if they are able to write. Take your time. Keep in mind the wise saying: '**EASE CREATES, URGENCY DESTROYS**'.

If you have children of different ages at home, allow the younger children observe and be part of the process. At times, you may need to share unpleasant facts - even about people the child knows who are sick or have died. Withholding the facts keeps the child from trusting you.

## Drawing and Colouring, and How This Helps

Most of the activities start with asking the child to draw or create a picture. Drawing and colouring are calming and are excellent ways for children to express their feelings – even those who can write. Pictures are also useful as a starting point for discussions. After your child has done a drawing, you could ask: "What is happening in this picture?" or "What are you feeling now? This helps your child to feel your care and support, knowing you are "with" them in what they're experiencing.

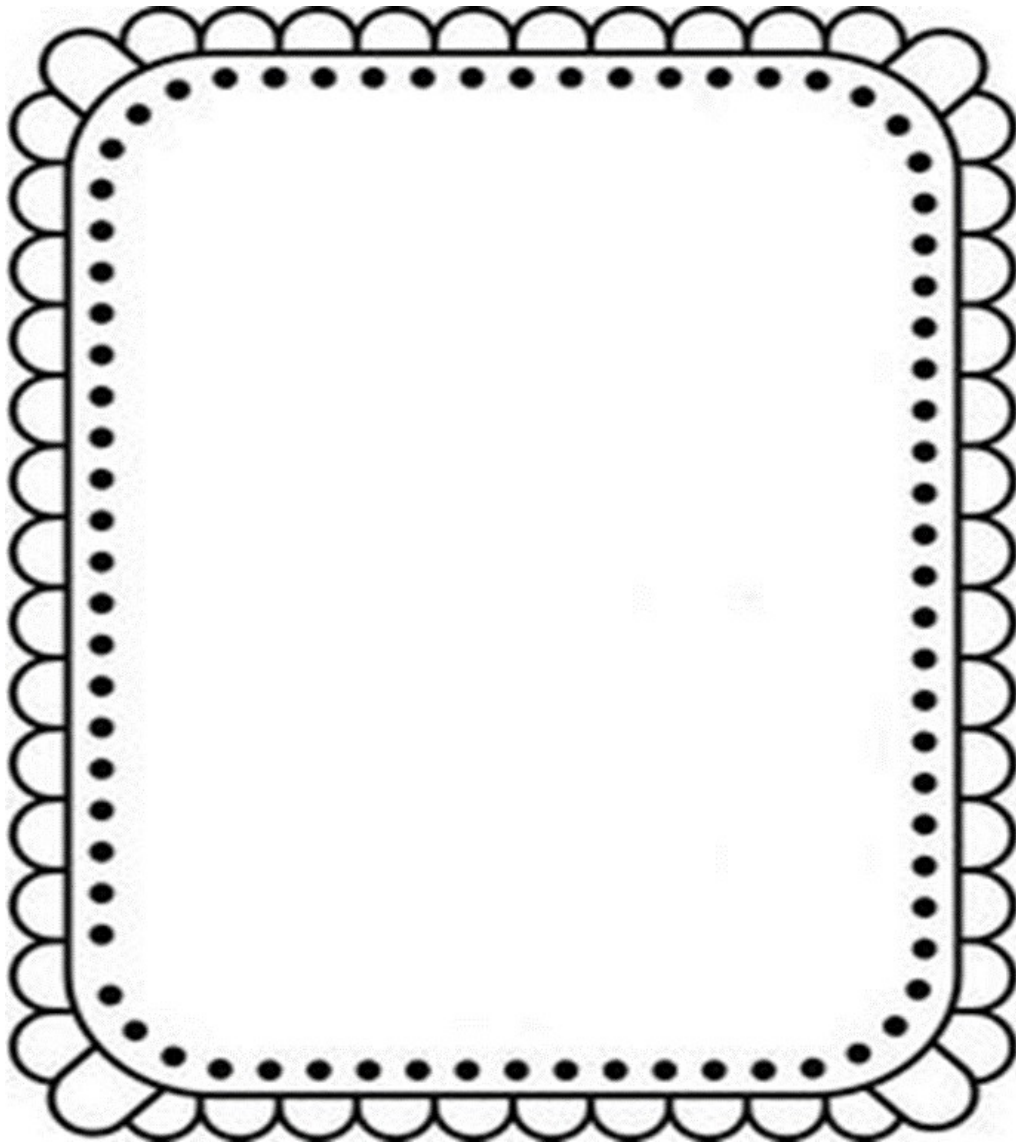
## Adult Helpers Can Benefit from This Book

You, the adult, may also feel burdened or even traumatized by some of the same events that affect your child – or perhaps you are having to deal with sick or other psychologically distressed people. You, too, therefore, may find this book helpful...you may find that drawing or colouring or even writing about your own experiences can help you to feel calmer. It is worth remembering that no matter how mature and strong, anyone can be emotionally stressed. But even the most traumatized people can grow through writing their history and through helping children

## MY SOUTH AFRICAN PANDEMIC STORY

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

*This is me*



*I am starting this book today on* \_\_\_\_\_

# Who I am

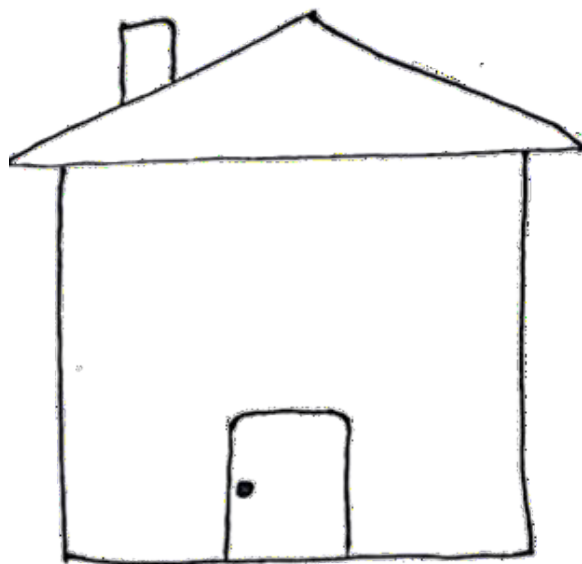
## ***My birthday is...***

Write the date in the cake. Draw extra candles to show your age. Colour the cake with your favourite colour icing.

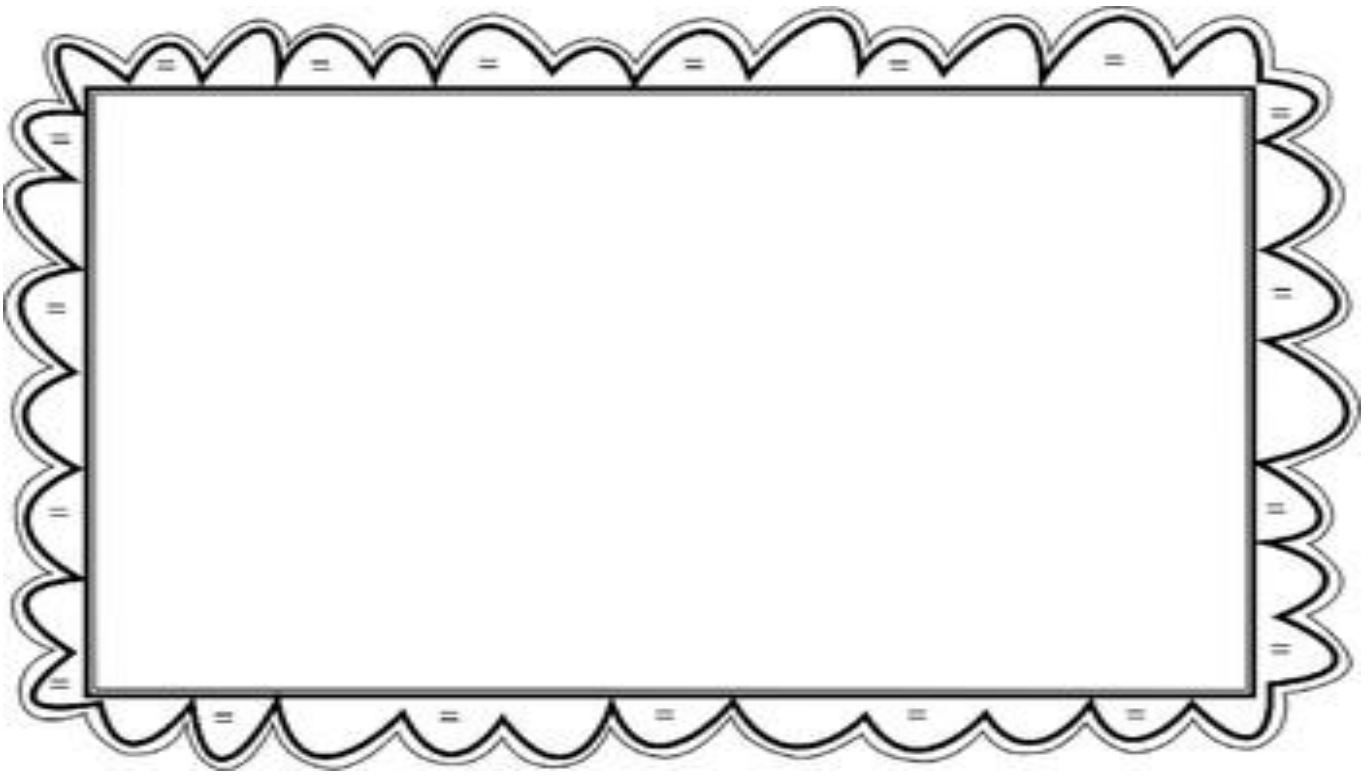


## ***I live at...***

Write your address inside the house. You can draw the number on the door or the roof or anywhere else you would like to put it. You may add anything else you would like to add, to your home.



***These are the people who live with me***



If you would like to write their names, you can write them in the picture.

***Here is a drawing of me with someone who loves me and who takes care of me***





**What do I like to do?**



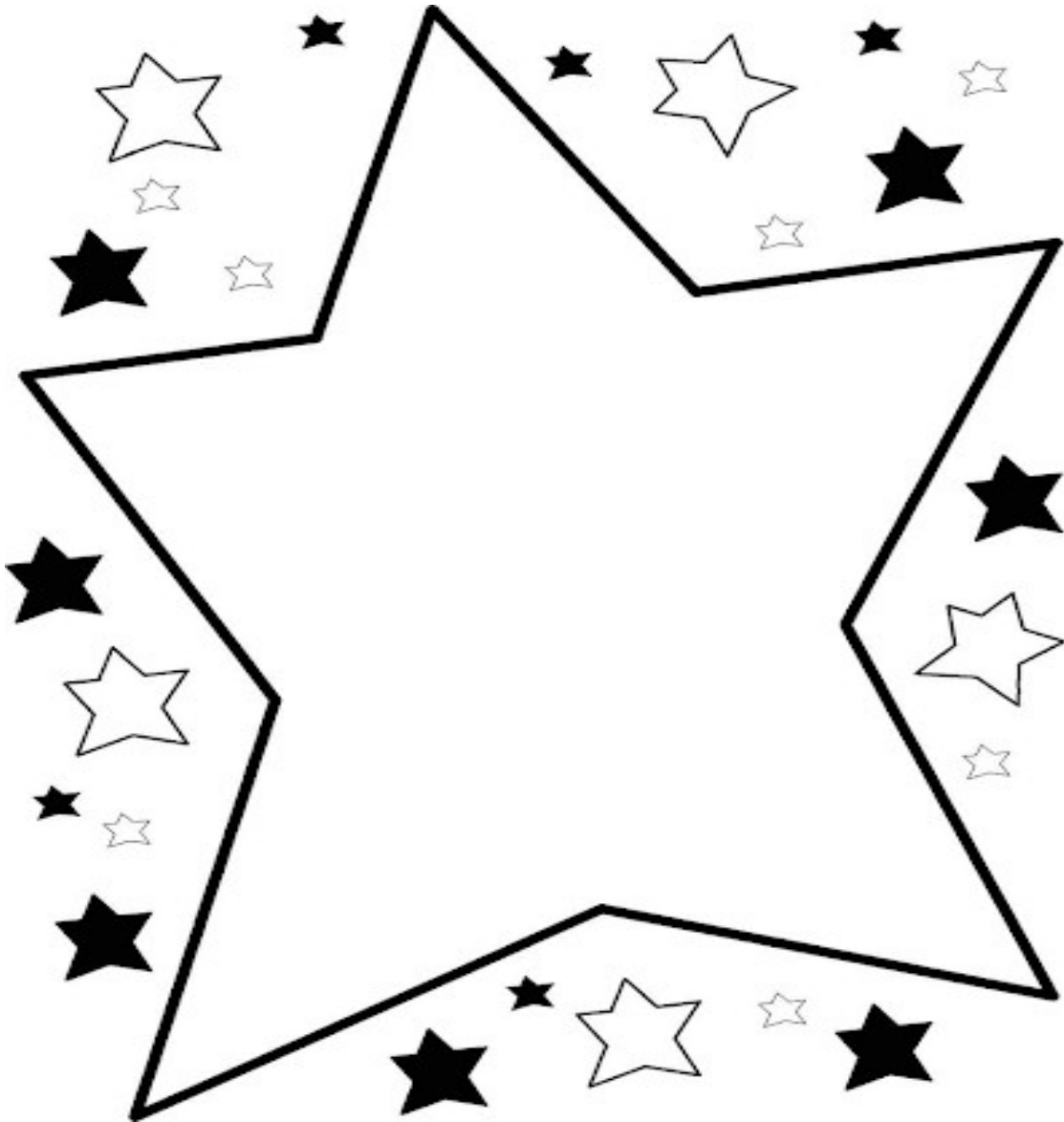
Draw a circle around the picture that shows what you like to do. In the space below, draw a picture of something else you love to do.

A large rectangular frame for drawing. The frame is composed of solid lines for the top and bottom edges, and dashed lines for the left and right edges. At each of the four corners, there are three stars arranged in a small arc. The interior of the frame is blank, intended for a drawing.



***When I close my eyes and think of a wish, I wish that .....***

Draw your wish in the wishing star.

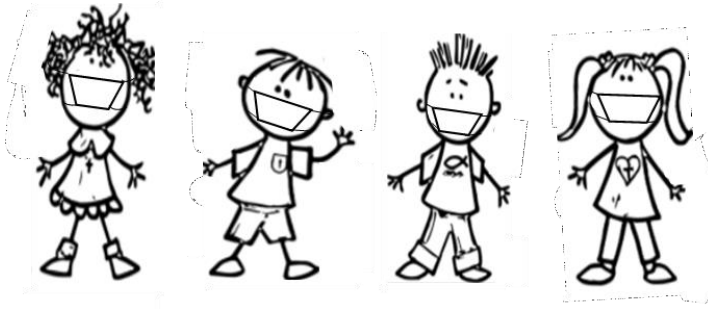


If you would like to write your wish, you can do it here. If you need help, your grown-up person who is helping you with this book, can help you to write.

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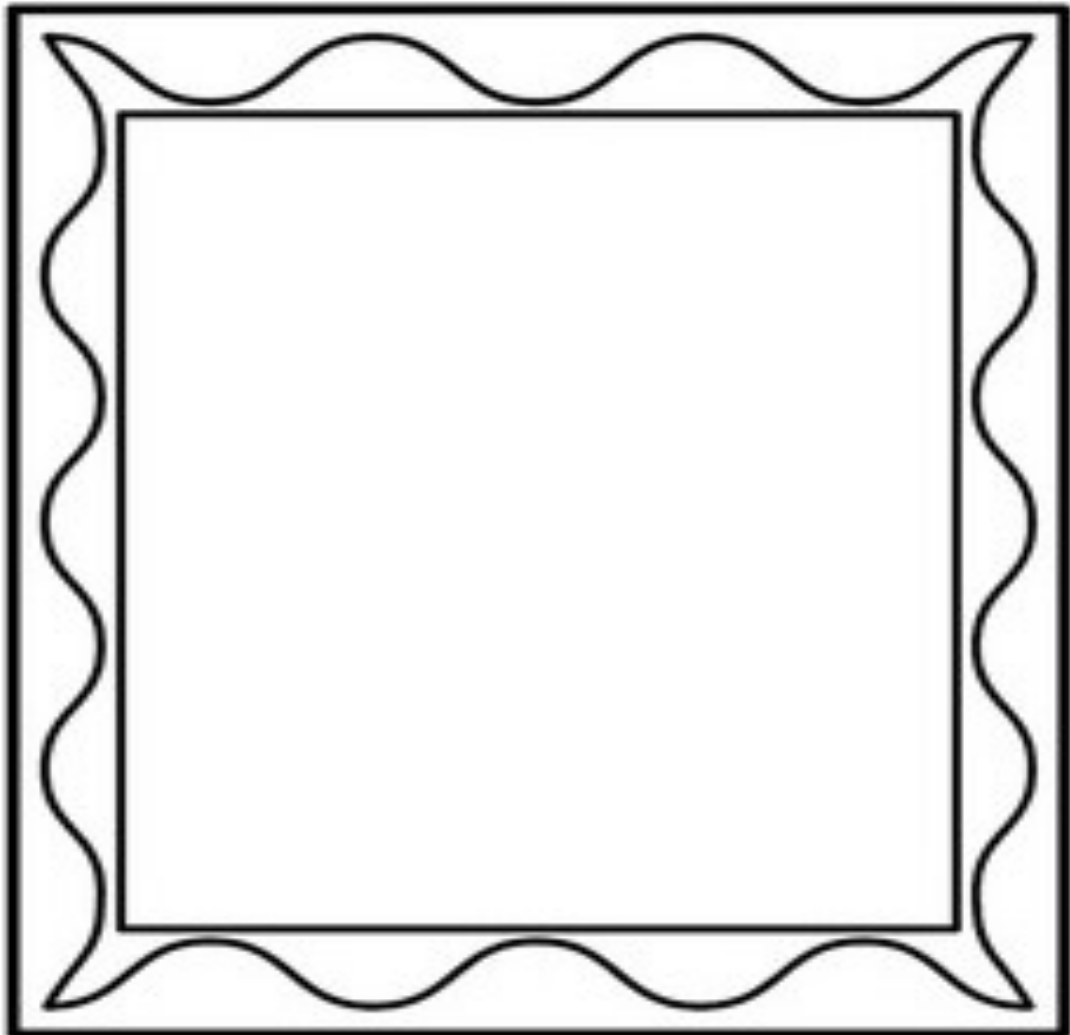
# My Friends



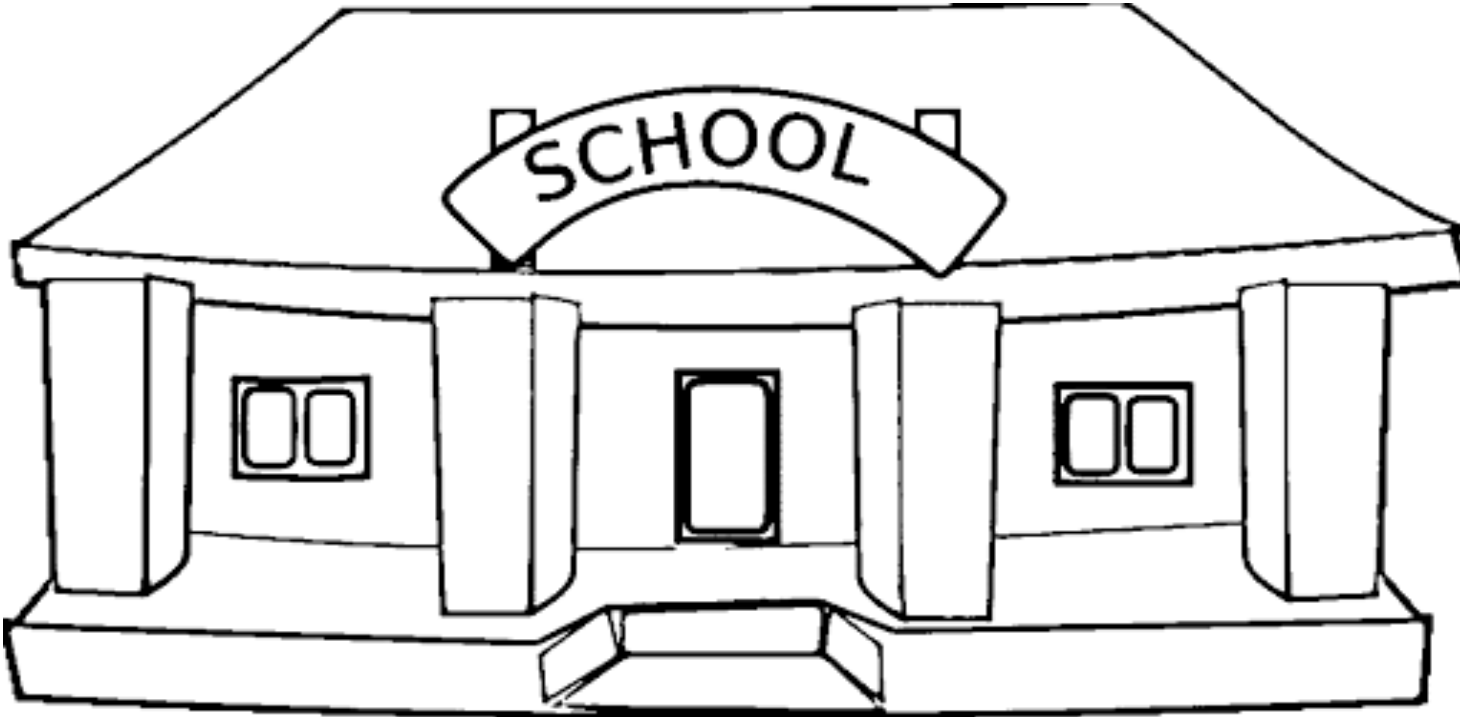
*My best friend's name is* \_\_\_\_\_

*My other friends' names are* \_\_\_\_\_

*Here is a picture of me and my friends*

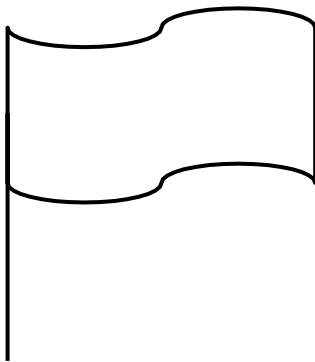


## About my school

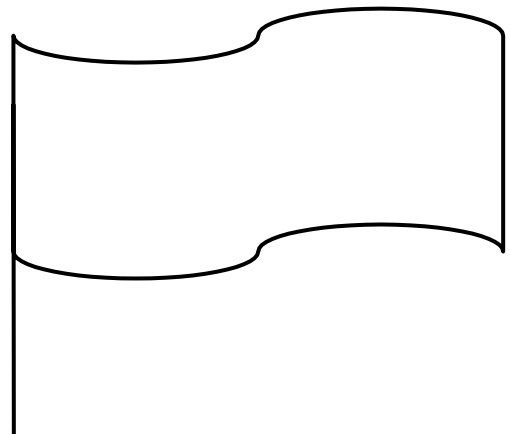


Choose a place, on the school building, to write the name of your school.

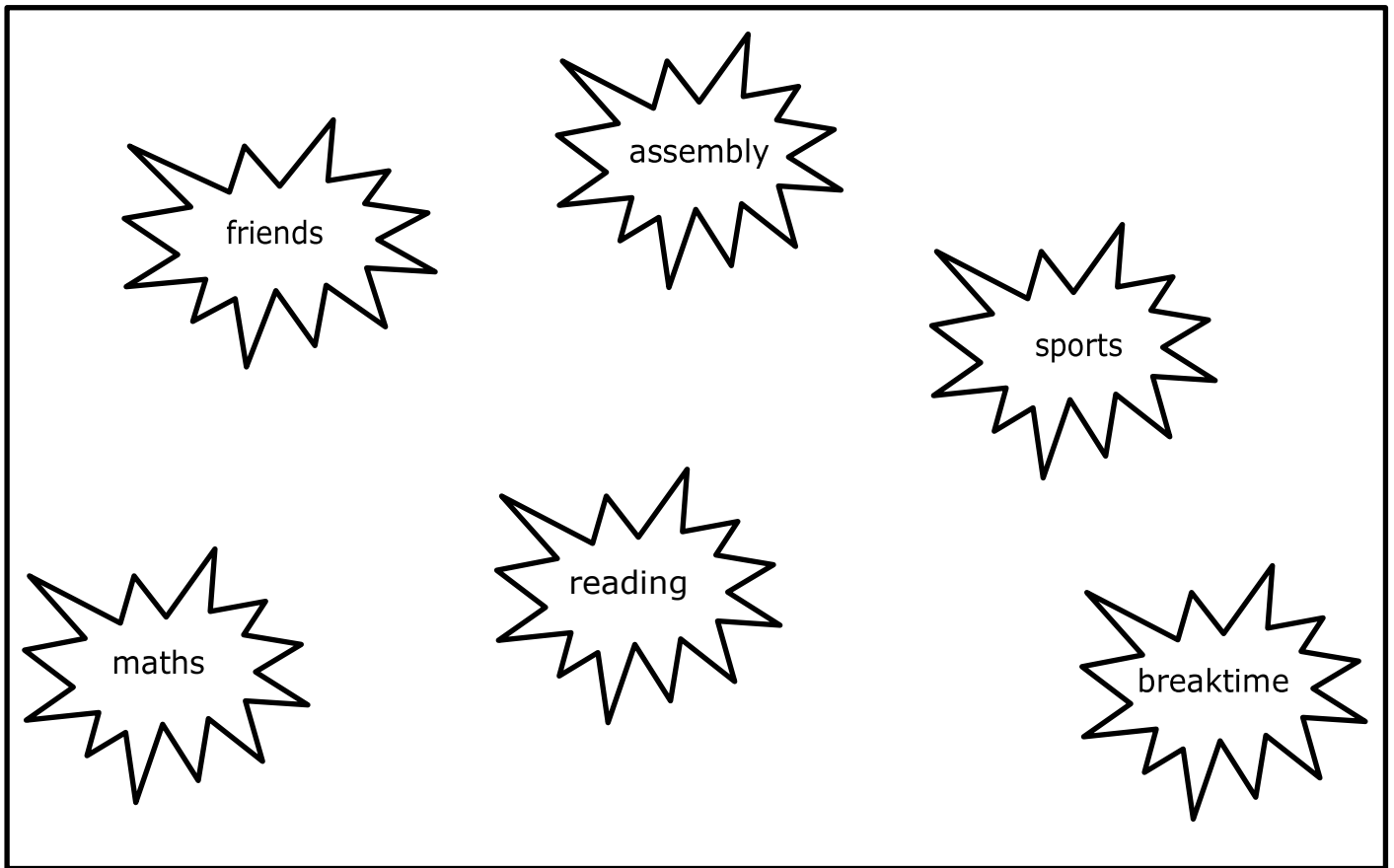
*I am in Grade... (write it in this flag).*



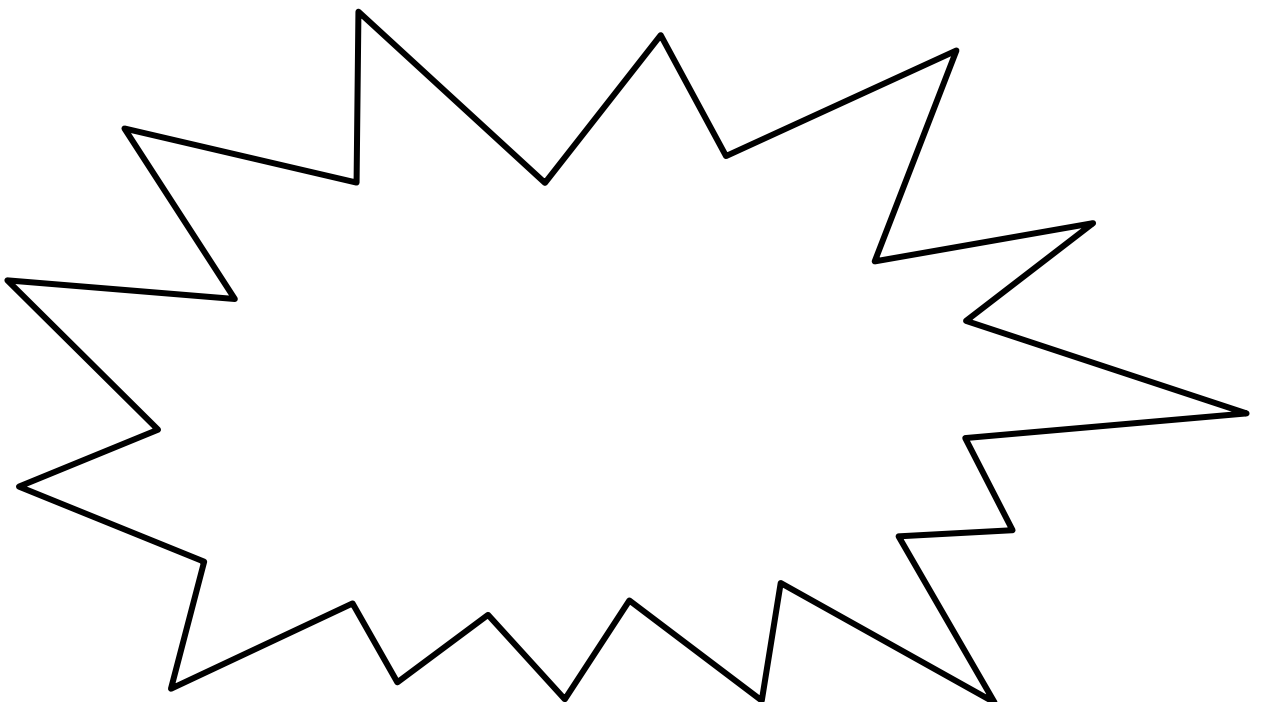
*My teacher's name is..(Write in this flag)*



**These are the things I like about school....** Draw a circle around the things you like.



**What I love most about school is....** Think of one word and say it out loud. It can even be something different to the words in the stars above. Now, in the big star below, write your word - or you can write a sentence or a few sentences.



# Staying at home

During lockdown nobody could go to school.

*This is how I felt....*



disappointed



surprised



worried



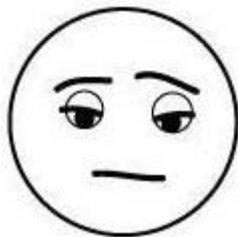
safe



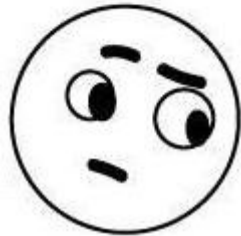
happy



cross



afraid

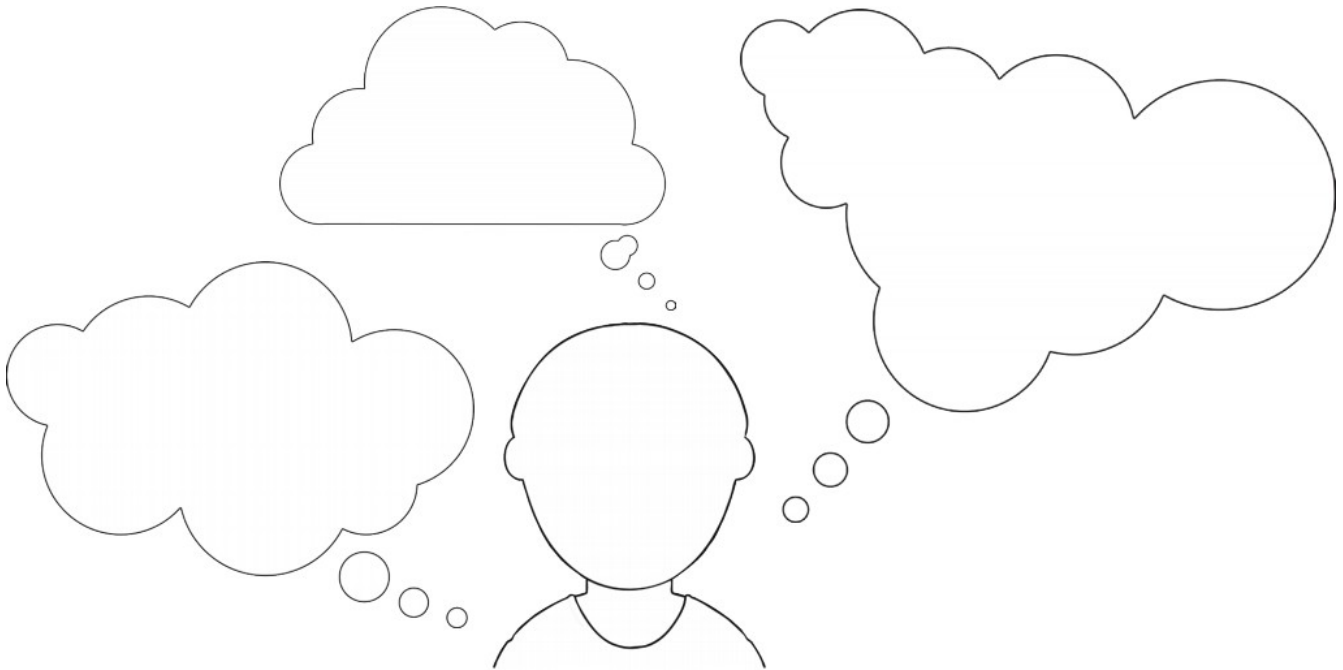


sad

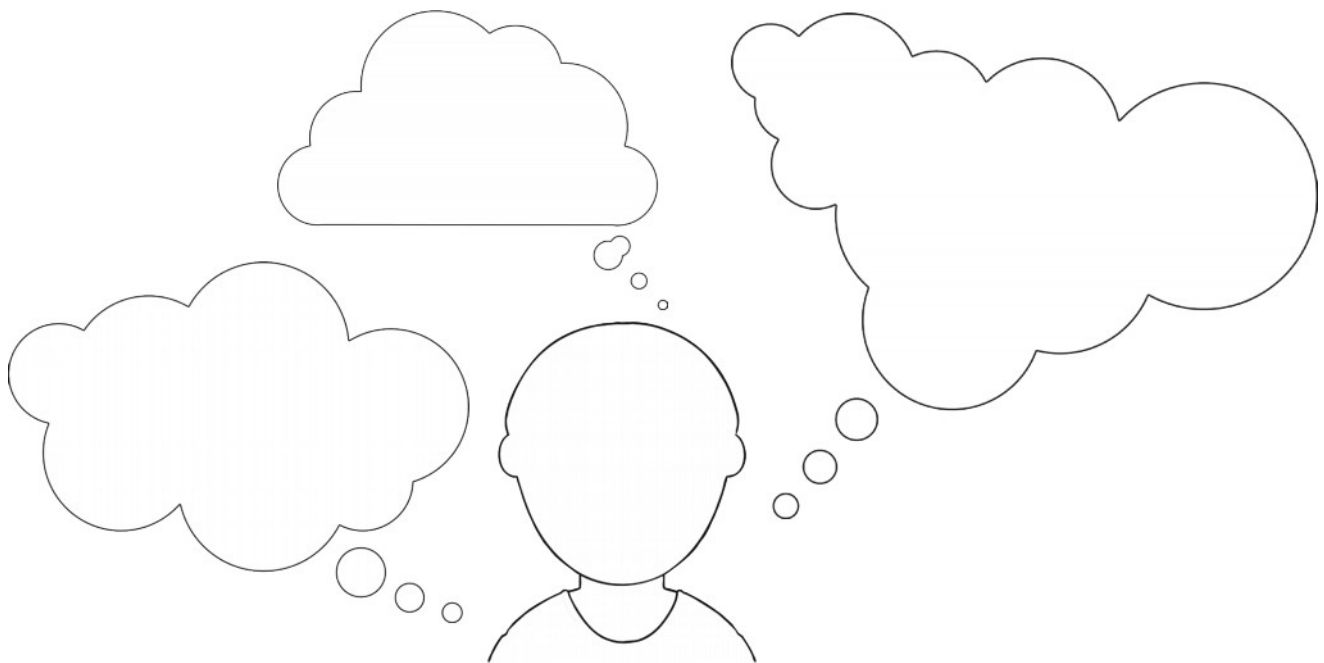
Can you match the words and pictures? Draw a line from each word to the picture that you think is a good match for that word. Which of these feelings did you feel when you weren't able to go to school? Colour in those faces.

Now choose ONE feeling that was your biggest and write it, as big as you can, in this block.

Were there some things that you did not like about staying home during lockdown? Talk about your ideas with a grown-up. Draw or write an idea into each thought bubble. Draw yourself feeling sad.



Were there some things that you liked about staying home during lockdown? Talk about these ideas with your grown up. Draw or write an idea into each thought bubble. You can draw a smiley, happy picture of yourself.



# My Worries

*When I first heard about the Coronavirus, I felt...*

<b>Not worried</b>	
<b>A little bit worried</b>	
<b>Very worried</b>	
<b>Very, very worried</b>	

Put a ☑ in the correct box.

*I was worried about....*

myself

my grandmother

my mom

my dad

my cousin(s)

my friend(s)

my sister(s)

my grandfather

my brother(s)

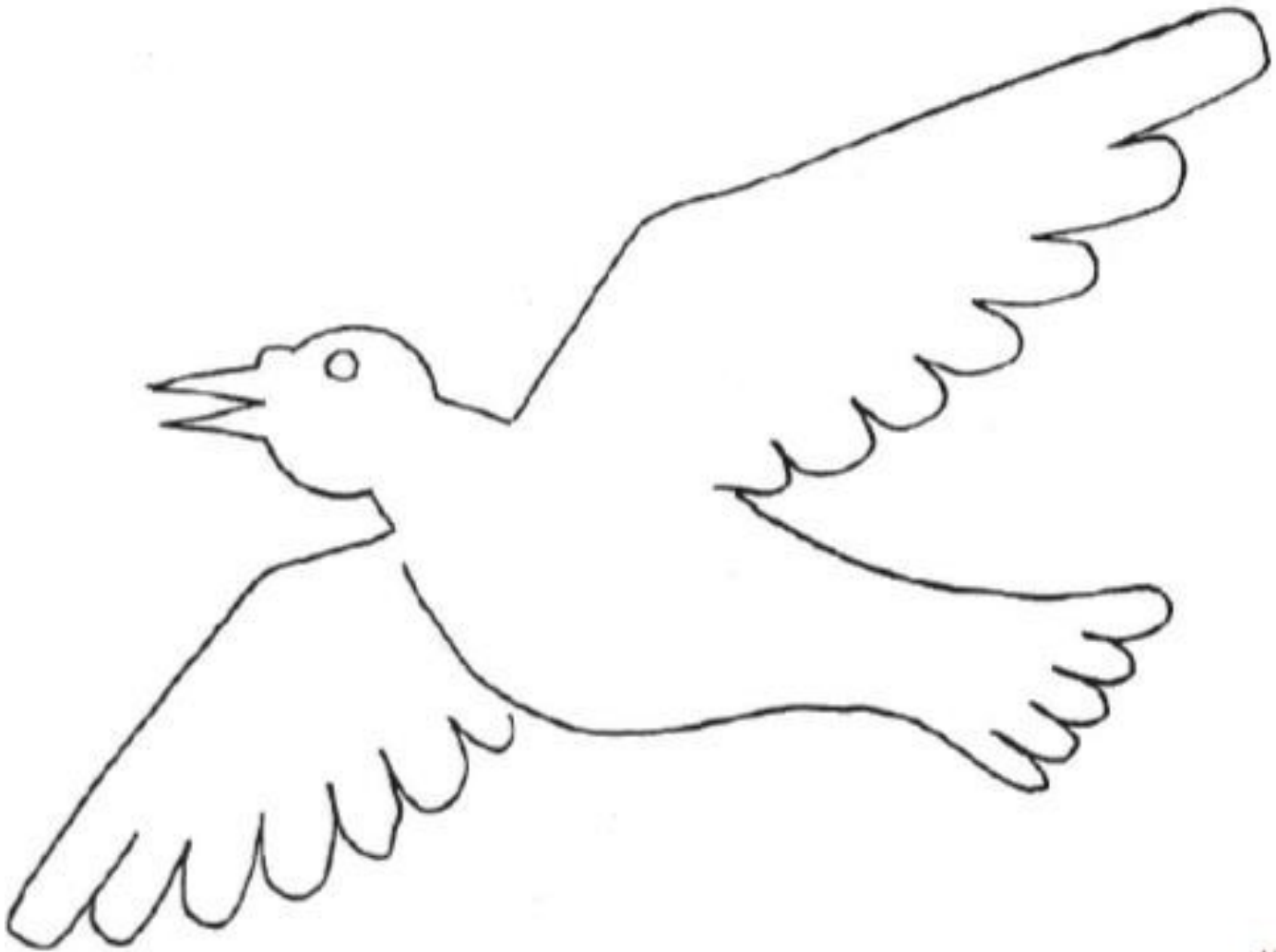
my teacher

Draw a circle around the person (or people) you were worried about. In the empty block, you can write down any other person you were worried about too



If someone you know died, close your eyes and think about that person.

This big bird is called the Freedom Bird. Draw a picture of this person, sitting or standing or lying down on the Freedom Bird. Choose a place on the bird to write the name of this person.



What would you like to say to this person? You can say it out loud, if you want to.

Write these words down, if you can. If you need help, ask the grown-up who is helping you with this book, to write the words down. Your words can be written all around the Freedom bird.

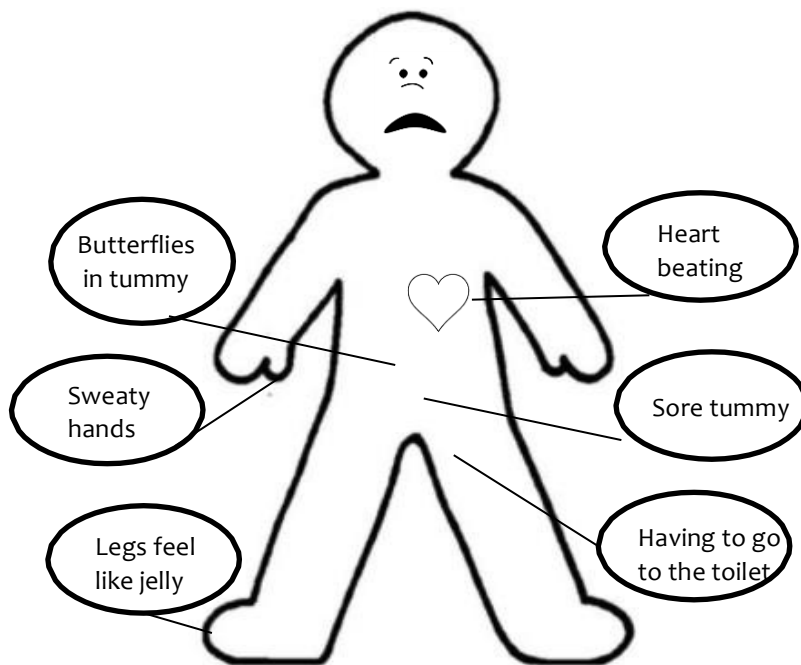
## Sometimes I still feel worried

True	
Not true	

In the box above, put a  in the box if it true. Put a  in the box if it is not true.



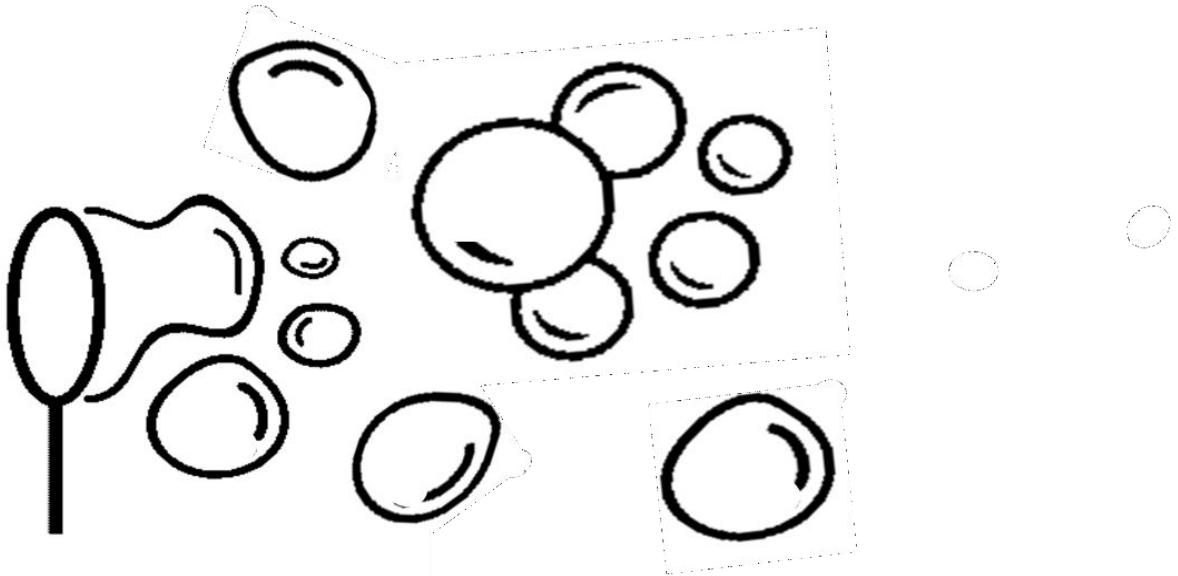
If you are feeling worried now, close your eyes and think of where you feel that worry in your body. Put your hands on that part of your body. If you don't feel worried now, but can remember a worried feeling in your body, where was that feeling? Think of a colour for your worry and colour whichever circles you are feeling now or that you have felt before.



**Worries sometimes get stuck in our bodies, but they don't like to be there. Because you are bigger and stronger than your worry, you can help it to come out of your body. Here are some things you can do...**

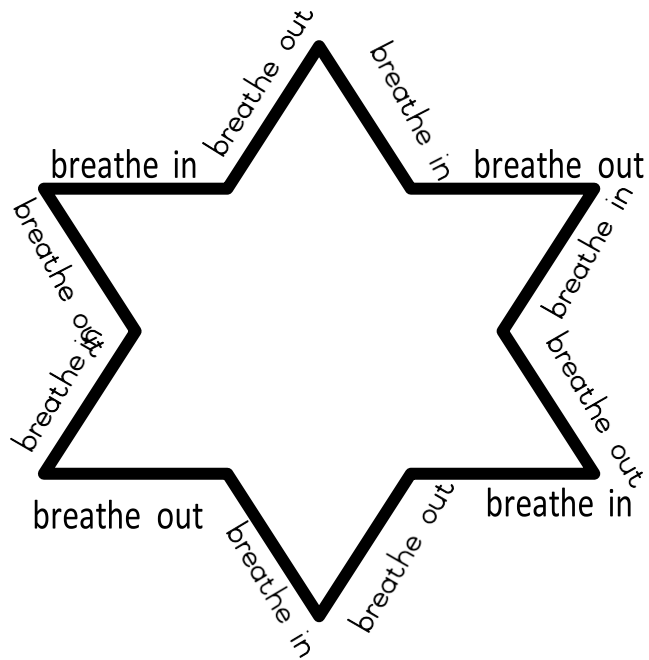
### Worry Bubbles

Think about all the different worries you may have. Write each worry inside a bubble. If you need help with writing, ask a grown-up to write them for you. Each time your worry is written down, take a deep breath and imagine blowing it away.



### Worry Star

Use your finger to trace around the star as you take a deep breath in, then a deep breath out. Try breathing like a star with your whole body.



## Worry Buddy

A 'Worry Buddy' can also help to get the worry out of your body.

With the Worry Bubbles and Worry Star, we use our *breath* and our *bodies*. With Worry Buddies, you need to use your *voice* and *words*. A 'buddy' is another word for ..... 'friend'.

Worry Buddies always have smiles on their faces and love in their hearts. A 'Worry Buddy' is there to listen to your worry.

Choose one of these Worry Buddies to be your special friend. Colour in your Worry Buddy, with your favourite colours for his or her clothes.



Even though your Worry Buddy won't be able to talk to you, they can listen. When you have a worry, look at your Worry Buddy and tell him or her about it.

It can also help to use your voice and words with **real people**. People that we trust can help us to get our worries out of our bodies. What does it mean when we say: 'people that we trust'?

Look at the sentences below. If they are difficult to read, your grown-up helper can read it with you. Put a circle around the block if it means we **CAN** trust someone.

Someone that I  
feel safe with

Someone who is  
mean to me

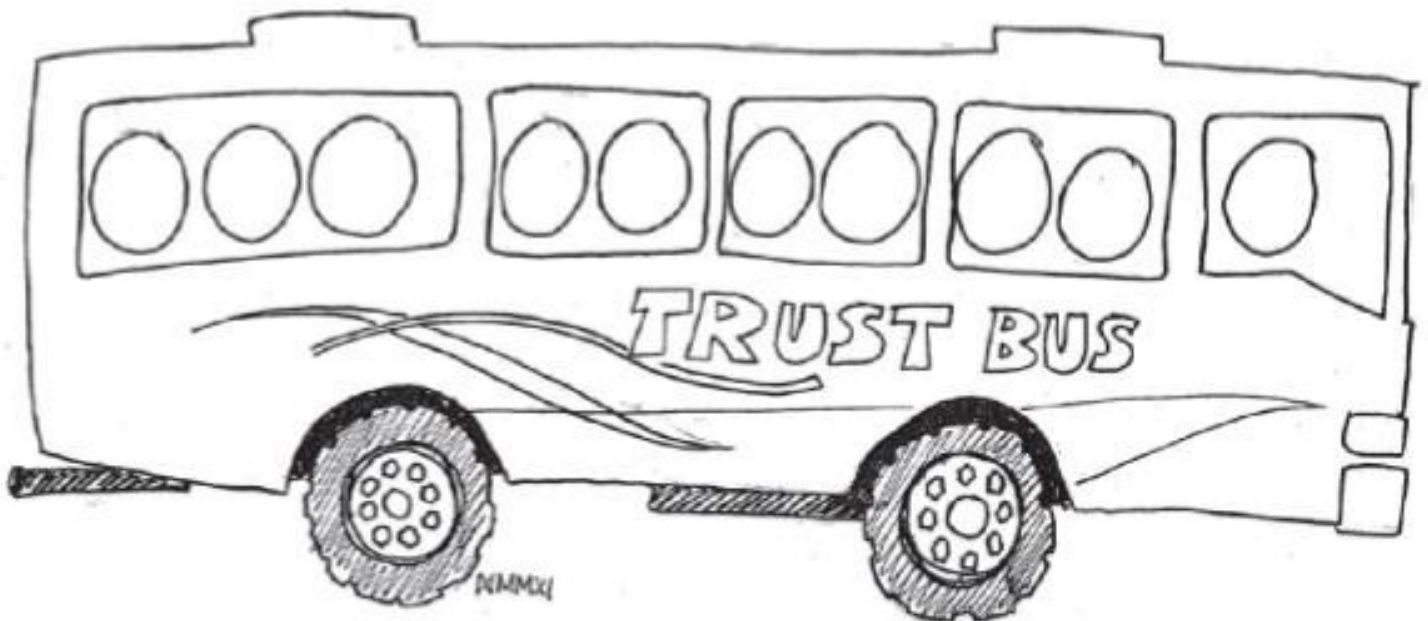
Someone who  
lies to me

Someone who  
protects me

Someone who  
hurts me

Someone who  
cares about me

Here is a Trust Bus. People who you trust, are sitting on the bus. Draw the faces of all the people who you love and trust. You can write in their names too.



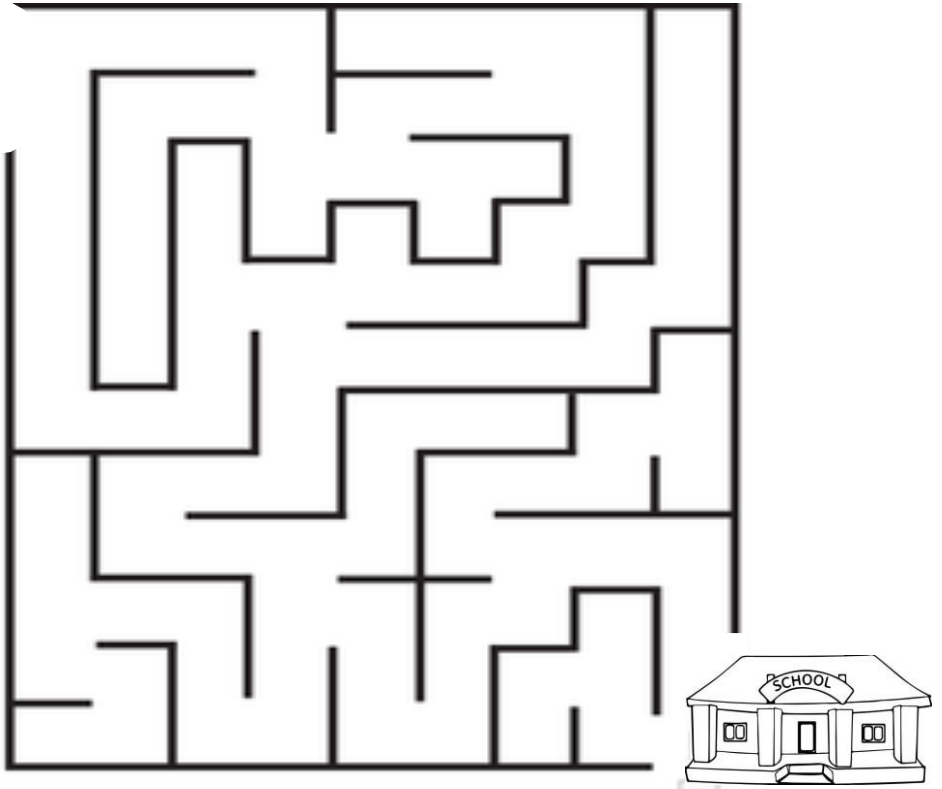
When you have a worry, choose one or more of the people on the Trust Bus to tell about your worry. Talking about your worry can help to take the worry away.

# Back to school

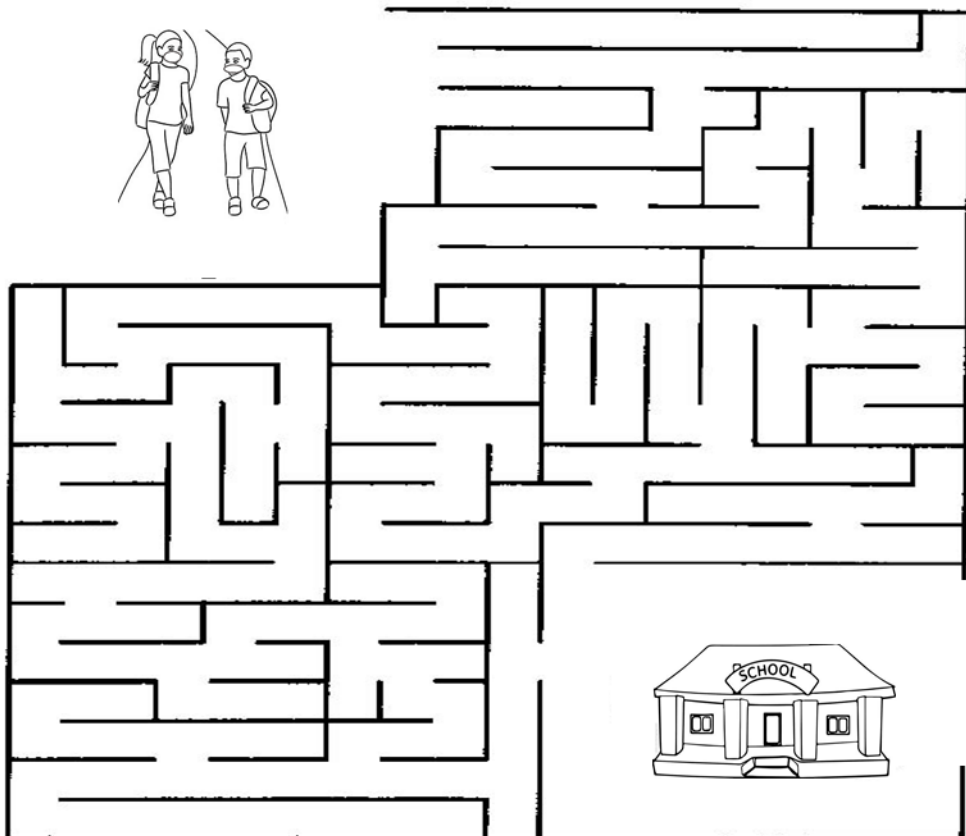
Can you find your way back to school through the maze? Number 1 is the easier way to get to school. Number 2 is the difficult way to get to school. Which way would you like to go?



1

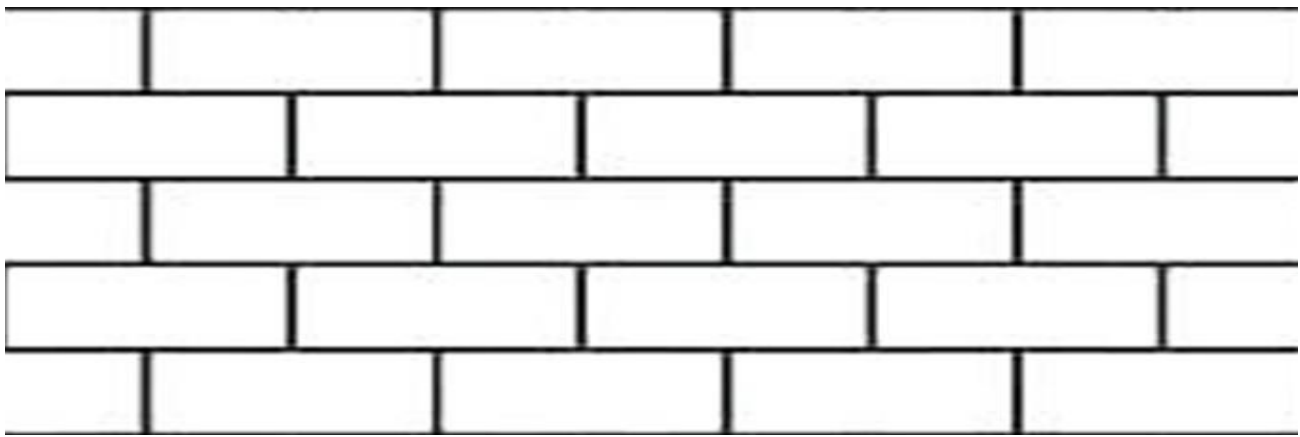


2



How did you feel when you went back to school? Let's make a Feeling Wall.

Look at the feeling bricks at the bottom of the page. Choose which bricks you want to use to build your Feeling Wall. You may choose one feeling or many feelings. Write down the words in your feeling wall. You can write the same word as many times as you like. If it is difficult to write, ask your grown-up helper to help you write them down.



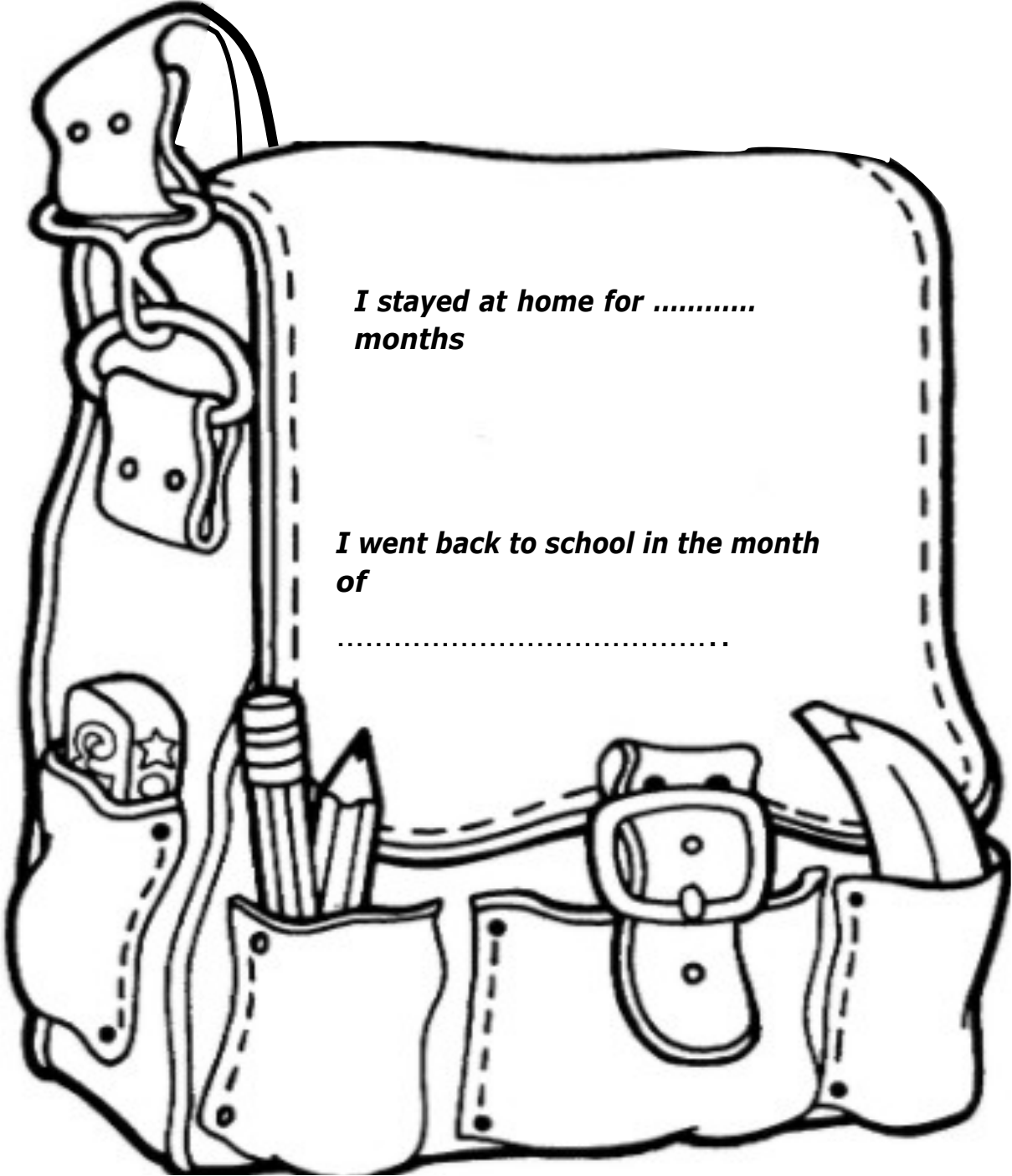
When you have finished making your Feeling Wall, read the words that make you sad or worried. What colour can you choose for those words? Use this colour to colour in the sad-feeling bricks. Now read the words that make you happy. What colour can you choose for those words? Use this colour to colour in the happy-feeling bricks.

Draw a picture of yourself sitting or standing on your Feeling Wall.



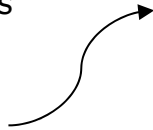


Think about the different things you take to school. Draw those things in the space on top of this school bag. Fill in the sentences, then colour in the picture.



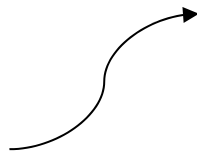
***What I do not like about  
being back at school is...***

Write or draw about this  
on the opposite page



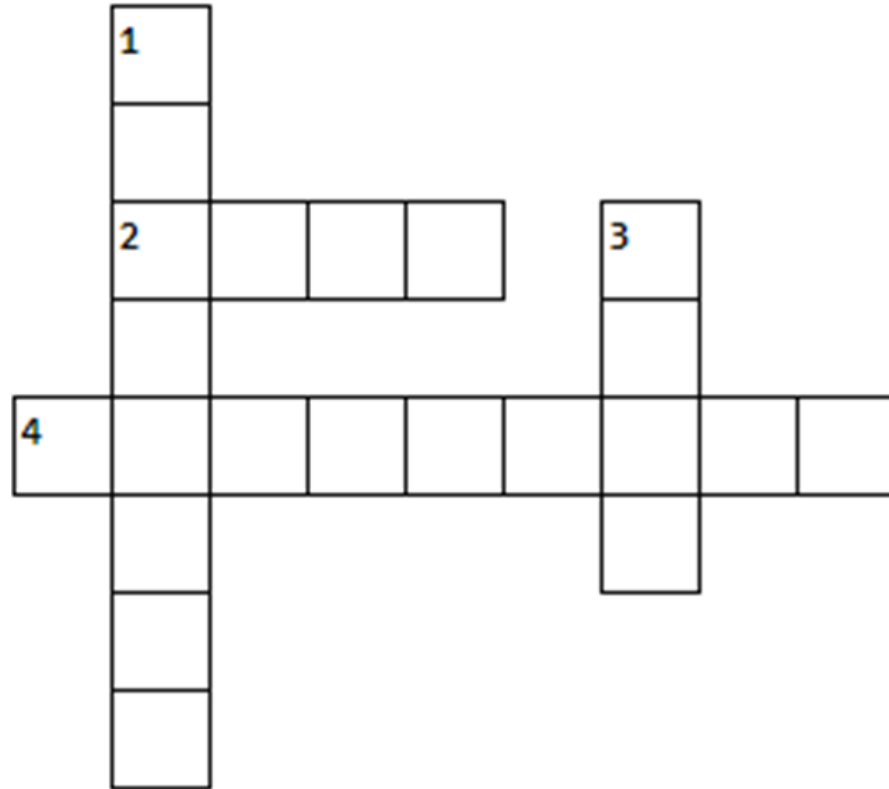
***What I like about being at  
school is...***

Write or draw about this on the  
opposite page



# Staying Safe

Use the clues below, to fill the words into the crossword puzzle.



## Across

2. I must wash my hands very well with \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I must use \_\_\_\_\_ when I arrive at school and other places.

## Down

1. We need to keep social \_\_\_\_\_ from others
3. I need to wear a \_\_\_\_\_ I go out.

distance	soap	mask	sanitiser
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## Washing with Soap



***My favourite colour soap is.....***

***It smells like .....***

Close your eyes and imagine the soap is in your hand..... Imagine its lovely smell....  
Now open your eyes and colour in your soap. Think about its smell, while you're colouring in.

## Hand Sanitiser



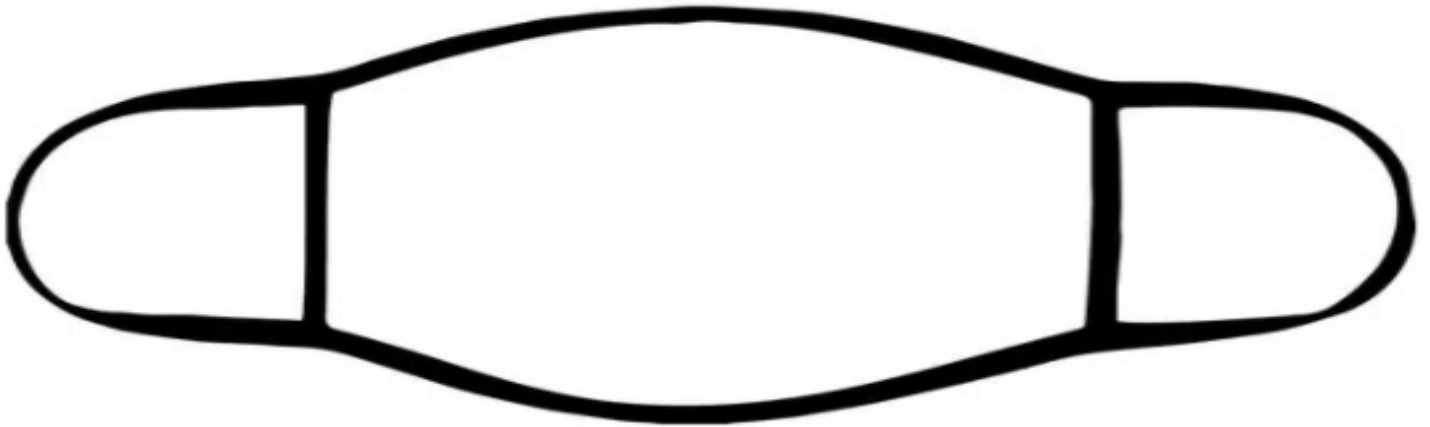
**Oops!**

*Can you unscramble the word and write it, correctly,  
on the line below?*

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My Face Mask

My best face mask



This face mask is for you to decorate. You can make it look like your own, real face mask – or you can design a new one. Add patterns or pictures and use whatever colours you would like to use, to make it the best face mask you’ve ever seen.

Choose one of the sentences below – or both of them. Remember, your grown-up helper can help you write it down.

I like wearing a face mask because \_\_\_\_\_

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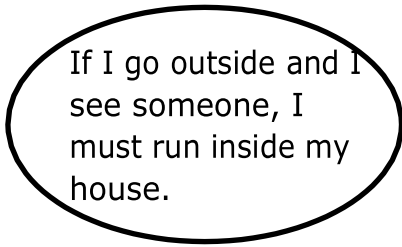
I don't like wearing a face mask because \_\_\_\_\_

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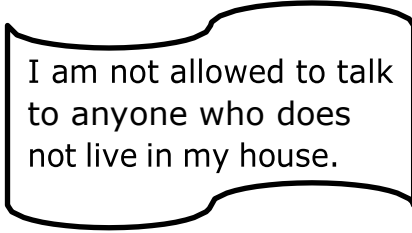
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# Social Distancing

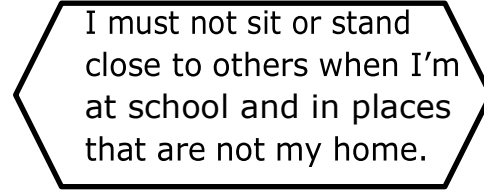
Social Distancing means.....



or



or



Which one of these shapes is the correct one?  
Colour in the correct shape.



or



or



?

**Social distancing is good because** \_\_\_\_\_

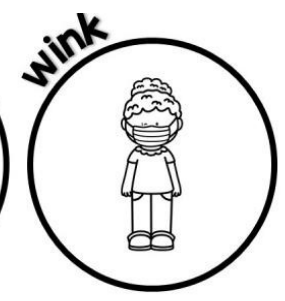
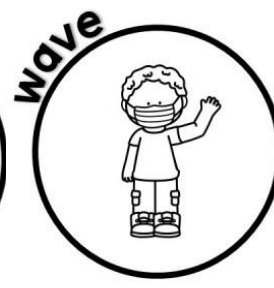
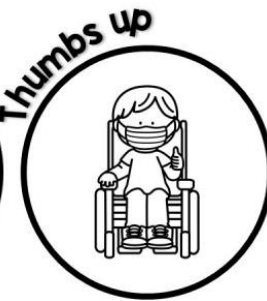
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**I don't like social distancing because** \_\_\_\_\_

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**My favourite kind of greeting is** \_\_\_\_\_

## People Who Help Us

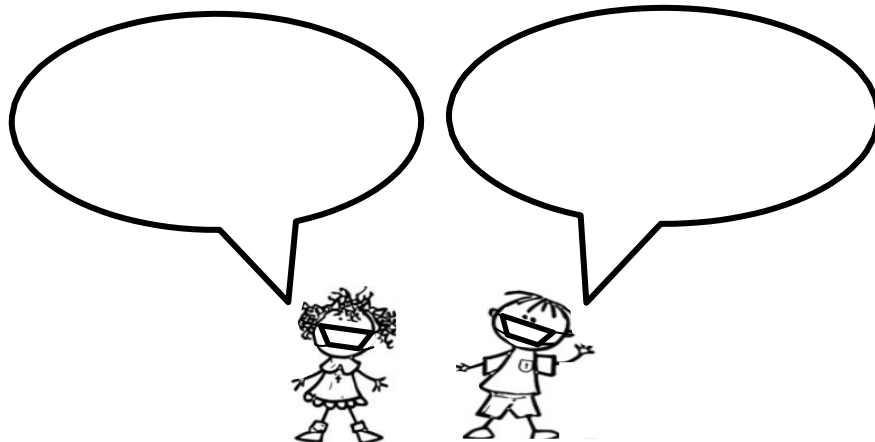


I am going to give  claps to our doctors and nurses. (Write in the number.)

How many ways can you say "thank you"?

English <b>Thank you</b>	isiXhosa <b>Enkosi</b>	Afrikaans <b>Dankie</b>	Setswana, Sepedi <b>Ke a Leboga</b>
<b>Ngiyabonga</b> isiZulu, siSwati, isiNdebeli	<b>Ke a leboga</b> Sepedi	<b>Ndza Nkhensa</b> Xitsonga	Tshivenda <b>Ndo Livhuwa</b>

Write thank you in your language

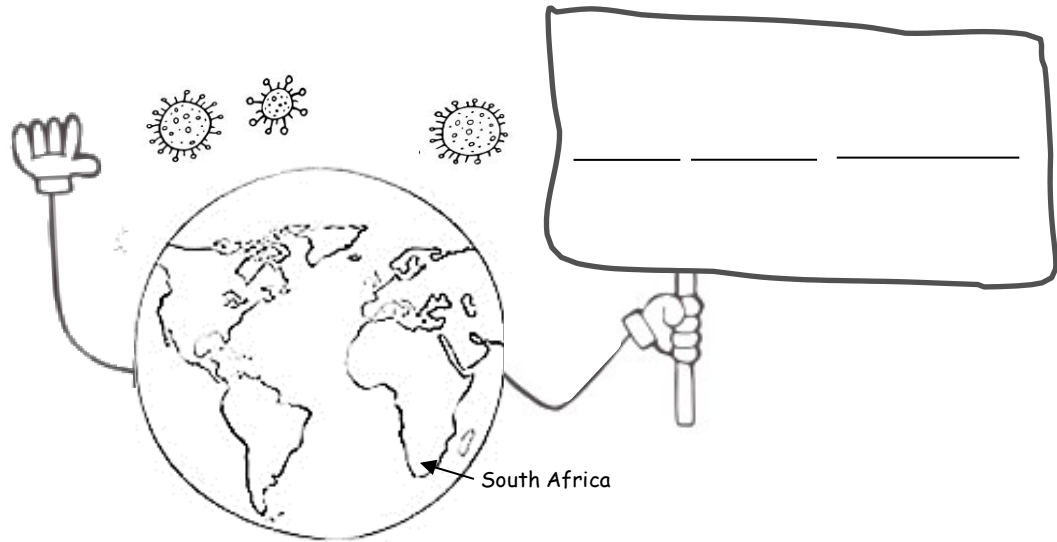




# My South African Pandemic Story

*This book is about me. It is my story. It is my pandemic story.*

'Pandemic' is a big word – it means that the Coronavirus has been in South Africa and all over the world.



Write the word 'pandemic' in the banner.

My worst thing about the pandemic has been..... (Write it here)

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing the worst thing about the pandemic.

My best thing about the pandemic has been .... (Write it here)

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing the best thing about the pandemic.

*We are all in this together*

I am safe

I am strong

I am brave

I am kind

I am awesome

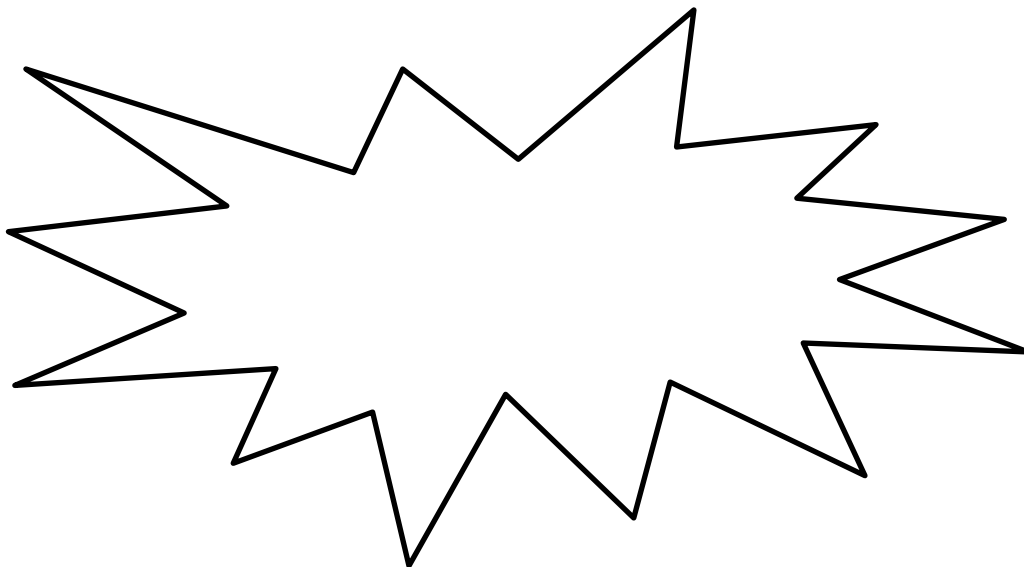
I am loved

I am helpful

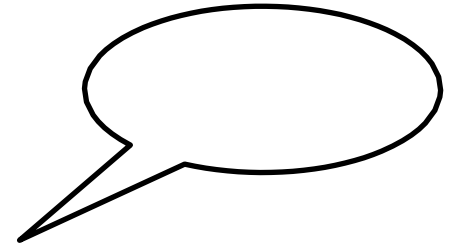
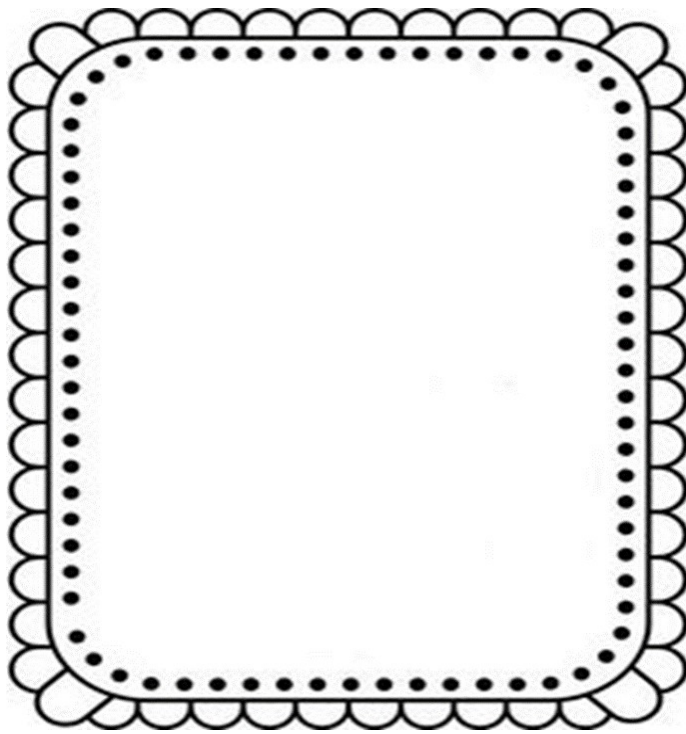
I am special

I am wonderful just  
the way I am

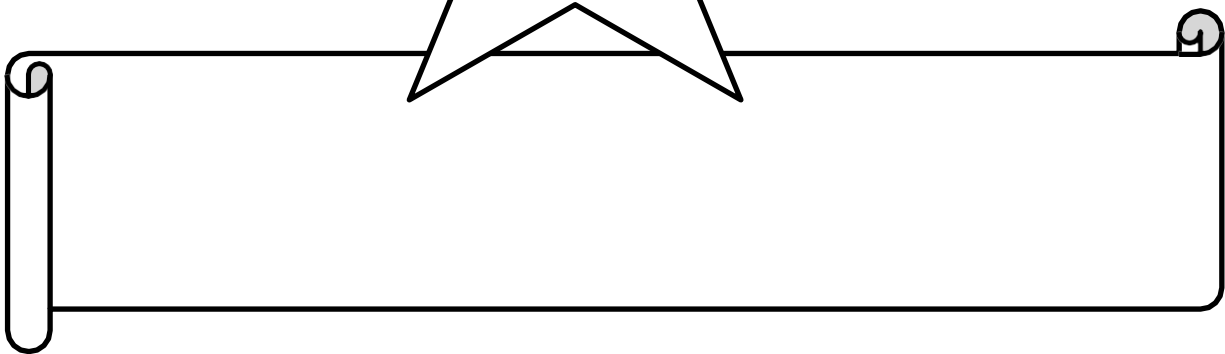
Read the words in each star, out loud, with your grown-up helper. Choose one that is your favourite and write it in the star below.



***This is me today***



In the speech bubble, write the same words that you wrote in the previous star.



Today's date is \_\_\_\_\_

These people helped me with this book \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Information for Adults - Guidelines for Support

(Adapted from: "10 PHRASES PARENTS CAN USE TO HELP KIDS UNDERSTAND SOCIAL DISTANCING". - Rebecca Schrag PhD)

### **1. We're all in this together**

Children respond well when we personify things that are difficult to understand. They often think of the world in terms of good guys and bad guys, superheroes and villains. If we speak about germs as if they are tiny villains we are attempting to fight, children have a mission - a purpose that extends beyond just obeying their parents' instructions.

For example, you could personify the virus (and give your child a "mission") by saying, "Right now we are all working together to stop coronavirus from spreading. The good news is that germs can't jump very far! If we stay far away from people, then the germs can't jump from person to person and make us all sick."

### **2. Here's what we can do**

When we speak to children about this new reality, it's important to be clear about the things that we cannot do - for example: "Right now, we can't hug, or hold hands, or put our arms around our friends and other people who don't live with us. What we *can* do is talk on the phone and talk to our friends and other people, as long as we're not standing close to them."

It's important to note the things we still *can* do in order to maintain strong connections with our loved ones. After all, physical distance is not the same as emotional distance, and many children can grasp that there are ways to feel very close to someone, even without being physical with them.

### **3. This is strange and different.**

Children take comfort in knowing they are not alone in their emotional reactions. Pointing that out that everyone is feeling the same will do a lot to reassure them.

### **4. A lot of things are still the same.**

When we acknowledge how different things feel right now, we also need to draw attention to things that are the same. This helps children recognize that there are still many parts of their lives that are familiar. Discuss, together, which things they can still do. And they're still just as loved as ever—in fact, even more.

### **5. You are safe.**

Children show their stress in different ways: for example, being more moody, irritable or more emotional, in general. This is their way of

showing that they're worried. There is nothing more valuable than giving them a hug and letting them know you've got them and it's all going to be okay.

**There are so many grown-ups working together to help.**

In times of crises, it is important to look for the helpers. Talk to your children about the scientists working on finding the right medicines and vaccines, the doctors and other health care workers, the police and the supermarket stockers working hard to help us all.

**6. It is horrible**

It really is! And our children will benefit if we acknowledge this, rather than trying to deny it or always paint a rainbow on it. It is horrible that we can't go to our favourite place or that we can't do sports and that we can't play like we used to with our friends. With your child, talk about other things too and it is fine to say: "it is really, really horrible!"

**7. But also, there's a bright side.**

It is always good to point out the silver linings – and they are! We don't have to get up so early for school! We don't have to go out in the cold! Talk with your child and count all the things that are positive.

**8. We are all in this together.**

Children—and grown-ups—feel more secure when they recognise that they are part of a larger community. For younger children, it can be helpful to name everyone else who is staying home as part of social distancing. For older children, it can be comforting to talk about the different cities and countries which are experiencing this – eg. "10-year-olds in so many places aren't allowed to hug their friends right now."

**9. We are taking this one day—sometimes even one hour—at a time.**

Children (and again, grown-ups too) will get overwhelmed if they start thinking about having to make these life adjustments for too long. Focus on what is going to happen *today*, and on what we can do to in the present moment.

And remember that sometimes giving comfort isn't about having "the right words" at all—it's as simple as a really long, extra-tight cuddle.

## WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

**Gilbert Kliman, M.D.**, is Director of The Children’s Psychological Health Center in San Francisco, California. He has 50 years of experience in psychological disaster response. He is the founder and former director of the nation’s largest situational crisis facility, the non-profit Center for Preventive Psychiatry in White Plains, New York. He and that Center’s staff helped many thousands of severely stressed persons following deaths, injuries, and violent experiences including aircraft accidents, floods and tornadoes, urban crimes and homelessness. Author of Psychological Emergencies of Childhood, he pioneered the concept of “psychological immunization” by small doses of honest communication. Recipient of over 40 service and research grants and Editor of The Journal of Preventive Psychiatry, in addition to over 70 scientific articles, Dr. Kliman wrote Responsible Parenthood with Albert Rosenfeld. That book won an international literary prize for "world’s best book concerning the well-being and nurture of children." He is the inventor of Reflective Network Therapy for children in classroom groups, and the creator of manuals for carrying out that therapy and its short form called The Guided Activity Workbook Method. He recently won the Dean Brockman Award for his Unifying New Theory of PTSD, the 2016 Anna Freud Award for his preschool research and service, and in 2020 the first Humanitarian Award of the American Psychoanalytic Association. See [www.childrenspsychologicalhealthcenter.org](http://www.childrenspsychologicalhealthcenter.org) for a fuller description of his work and that of the agency he directs.

**Anne Kuniyuki Oklan, R.N.**, the first illustrator of much of the original My Earthquake Story workbook, is a nurse as well as a parent-child and family therapist and psychological Coach. Along with Edward Oklan, M.D., she co-founded and co-directed PREGNANCY TO PARENTHOOD and served as its Infant Developmental Specialist. She and Edward Oklan are the parents of three children.

**Edward Oklan, M.D., M.P.H.**, A child and family psychiatrist and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Oklan founded the PREGNANCY TO PARENTHOOD FAMILY CENTER, a model non-profit program offering preventive mental health services to childbearing families and young children under stress. He specializes in work with children, adults and families who have experienced severe psychological trauma, and practices in Marin County.

**Harriet L. Wolfe, M.D.** Dr. Wolfe was President of The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis, a Director of Education for the Department of Psychiatry at San Francisco General Hospital, and President of the American Psychoanalytic Association. She practices psychoanalysis and couples’ therapy in San Francisco. Currently she is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco and President-elect of the International Psychoanalytical Association. What agencies and people collaborated to help make this guided activity book available to children, families, teachers and caregivers?

1. The Children’s Psychological Health Center, Inc., ([www.childrenspsychologicalhealthcenter.org](http://www.childrenspsychologicalhealthcenter.org)), San Francisco, California. 94115. See their series of disaster response guided activity workbooks.

Gilbert Kliman, MD, Medical Director (see above)

## **South African Adaptation: Images**

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<sup>iii</sup> Beth Silbert: M.Ed (UWC) works for Shine Literacy, a non-profit organisation that seeks to improve literacy outcomes for young children from disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Beth is the Centre Manager at Good Hope Seminary Junior School in Cape Town – her role being to manage and supervise volunteers to provide individualised support to children in Grades 2 and 3 to strengthen their English reading, writing and speaking skills. She has worked as a teacher in Early Childhood Education and in Primary and Pre-primary School Teacher Education.

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