



TalkforWriting

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

# Alfie's Star

by Sue Cove



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[www.talk4writing.com](http://www.talk4writing.com)



## How to use this booklet

TalkforWriting

**Teachers:** This booklet is to support teachers in delivering an engaging unit of English work either in school or remotely. We advise that, for the majority of the activities, you guide the children with a short input to explain the task and set expectations.

**Children at home:** If you are a child at home, working on this unit, or a parent trying to help, we've tried to make the activities as clear and engaging as possible. Hopefully, you can do most of them on your own but it's often better to have someone to talk to about your work so, if family members can help, that's great.

This booklet is based on a story about a star that falls to earth and is found by a hedgehog, an owl and a badger. Each of them use it in a different way and once the star has helped them all it returns to the sky. If it ever stops raining, look out at the night sky and talk about stars and why they fascinate us so much.

In this unit, you will explore these engaging, fun and purposeful activities:

- ★ Story talk – answering and asking questions about the story
- ★ Exploring words
- ★ Exploring story structure
- ★ Word and sentence level activities: Building sentences
- ★ Planning and writing your own story
- ★ Speaking and listening: Guess which star game
- ★ Short- burst writing: A missing poster
- ★ Word level activities: similes and compound words
- ★ Poetry and rhymes
- ★ Creative activities: art and craft ,baking.
- ★ Changing the story
- ★ Star fact-file

Each activity explains what you will do and there are extra notes for guidance as well as additional ideas and resources. You can also listen to a recording of the story 'Alfie's Star' here: <https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/alfies-star-by-sue-cove/s-hTvin7swOPN>

At the end of the booklet, your child can talk about how they got on with their learning and you can add your comments too.

Here are two versions of Alfie's Star for you to choose from. The first one is more challenging. The second is easier so you might want to read that one first.

## Alfie's Star

Once upon a time, there was a little boy called Alfie who liked owls, dinosaurs and ice cream but, most of all, he liked stars. When Alfie felt happy, they beamed with him; when he felt sad, they made him smile and when he felt alone, they were his friends.

Late one cold, frosty evening, Alfie gazed up at all the stars flickering like fireflies in the night sky. Suddenly, to his amazement, the biggest and brightest star began spinning down through the darkness and fell into the forest next to his house.

First, a prickly hedgehog who had lost his way came snuffling through the forest. He found the star, shining as bright as the sun, in the middle of a small pile of leaves. "This star will help me find my way home on this dark night," he said. So, he pushed the star along the path until he arrived safely outside his front door.



Next, a barn owl flew down, as silent as a floating feather. "This star will help warm my owl babies on this wintry night," she said. So, she snatched the glowing star, flew up into the trees and gently dropped it into her nest beside the owlets.



But the owlets wriggled and they jiggled and they flipped the star right out of the nest!

After that, a weary, old badger came shuffling along. He saw the star winking at him like a lighthouse from the branches of the tree. "That star will help keep me company tonight," he said. So, he reached up, lifted the

star down and carefully carried it back to his sett. Once inside, he placed the star on his rocking chair, made a mug of cocoa and settled down by the fire to read a bedtime story.



Soon, badger fell asleep dreaming of sunny Spring days when he would play with his friends again. As his dreams became wishes, the star rose up, swept out of the window and streaked into the sky.

Finally, the next night, when Alfie searched for the biggest and brightest star, he found it once again dazzling like a huge diamond overhead. Alfie smiled contentedly and, although he couldn't be sure, it seemed the star was smiling back.

*The end!*

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*If you want to try to learn the story, here is a simpler version of the same story.*

Once upon a time, there was a little boy called Alfie who loved stars.

Late one cold, frosty evening, Alfie gazed up into the night sky. Suddenly, to his amazement, the biggest and brightest star tumbled down into the forest next to his house.

First, a prickly hedgehog came snuffling along and found the star. It was shining like the sun in the middle of some leaves. "This star will help me find my way home on this dark night," he said. So, he pushed and he pushed and he pushed the star until he arrived safely outside his front door.



At that moment, a barn owl flew silently down like a white feather and snatched the star. "This star will help warm my owl babies on this wintry night," she said. She flew up into the tree and dropped the star into her nest where it glowed beside the owlets.



But the owlets wriggled and jiggled and flipped the star right out of the nest!

After that, a weary, old badger came shuffling along and saw the star winking like a lighthouse in the branches of the tree.

“That star will help keep me company tonight,” he said. So, he carefully lifted the star down and carried it back to his sett. Then he put the star next to his chair, made a mug of cocoa and settled down to read a bedtime story.



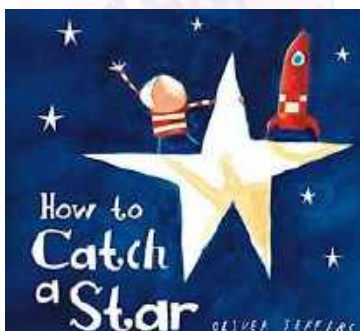
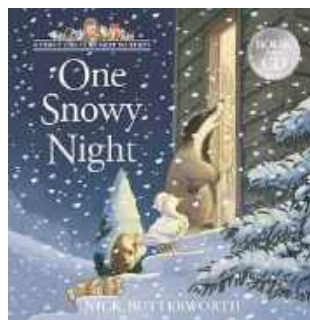
Soon, badger fell asleep, wishing for sunny spring days when he would play with his friends again.

While badger was dreaming, the star quietly floated out of the window and back up into the sky.

Finally, the next night, Alfie was happy to see the star shining down once again as dazzling as a diamond. He smiled and, although he couldn't be sure, it seemed the star smiled back.

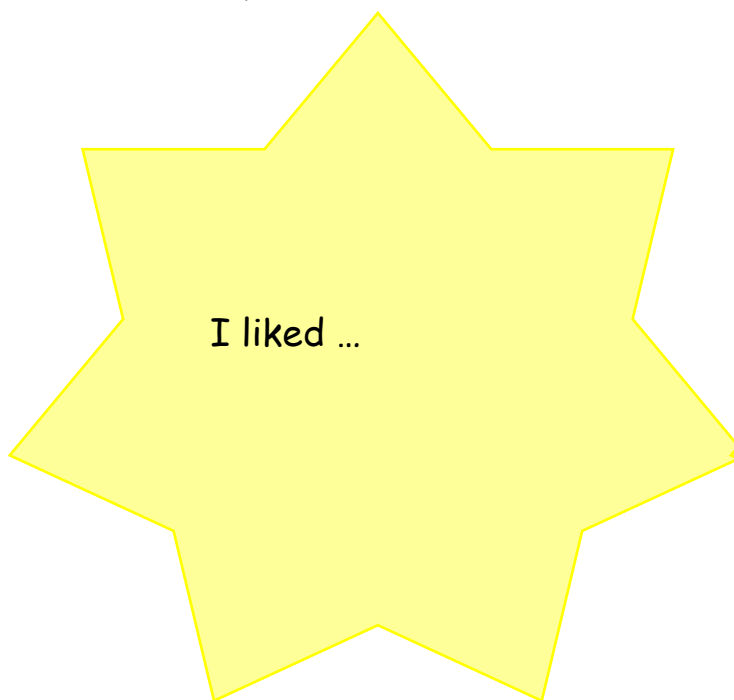
## Other related books

Try reading other similar stories. This will give you more words and ideas to support you when you create your own stories.

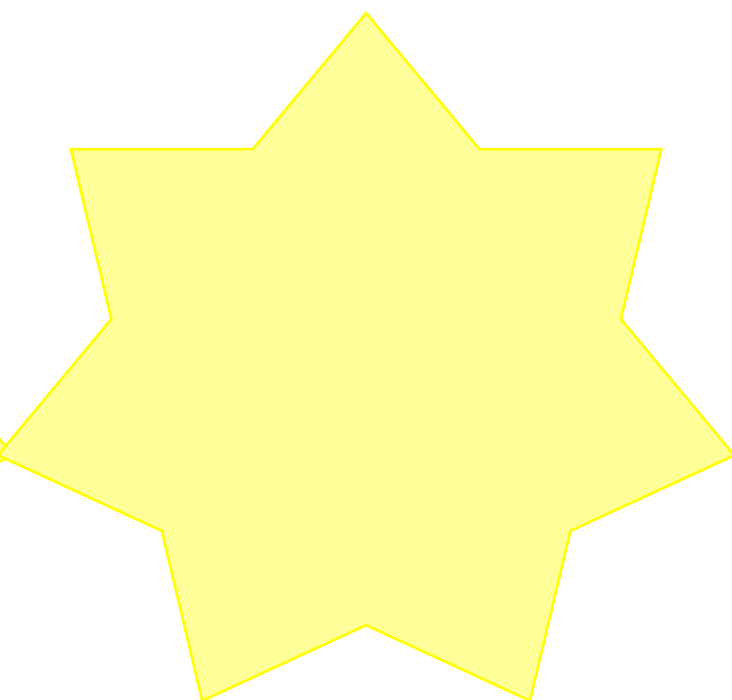


★ Think about the story. If possible, talk about the story with someone at home and fill in the stars.

What did you like about the story?



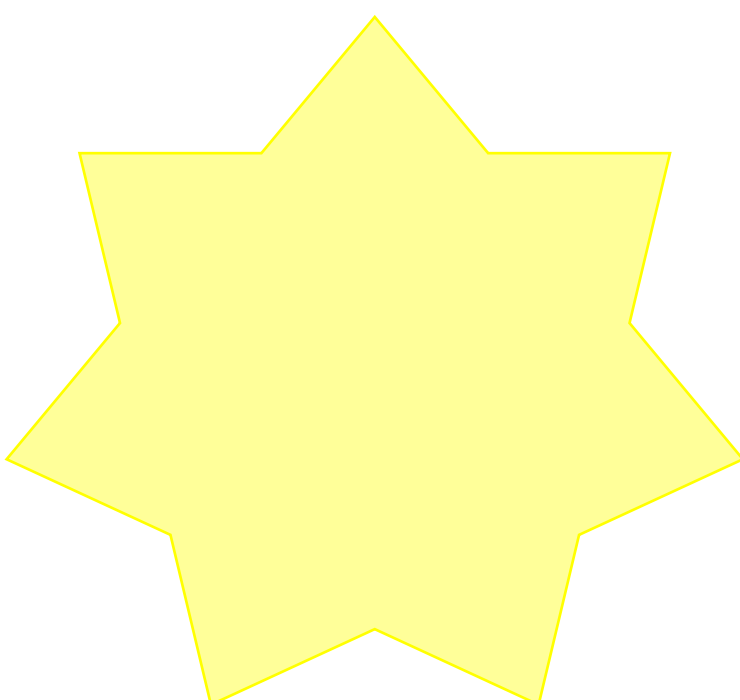
Are there things that keep happening in the story?



Have you got any questions about the story?



Do you know any other stories about stars or animals ?



- ★ Can you remember who said what in the story?
- ★ Read the story again and draw those characters next to their speech bubble.
- ★ In the blank speech bubble, write what you think Alfie might have said at the end of the story when he sees the star back in the sky.

That star will help keep me company tonight.

This star will help warm my owl babies on this wintry night.

This star will help me find my way home on this dark night.



## Quiz time!

Try to answer these questions in sentences.

- ★ Tell me why you think Alfie likes owls, dinosaurs and ice-cream?

*Alfie likes them because ...*

- ★ Tell me three things that you like

*I like ...*

- ★ How do you think he felt when he saw the star fall down into the forest?

*I think Alfie felt ...*

- ★ Tell me, why do you think the star tumbled out of the sky?

*I think the star tumbled out of the sky because ...*

- ★ Who found the star? Could any other animals have found the star?

- ★ How did the star help each animal ?

- ★ Why does this story happen at nighttime?

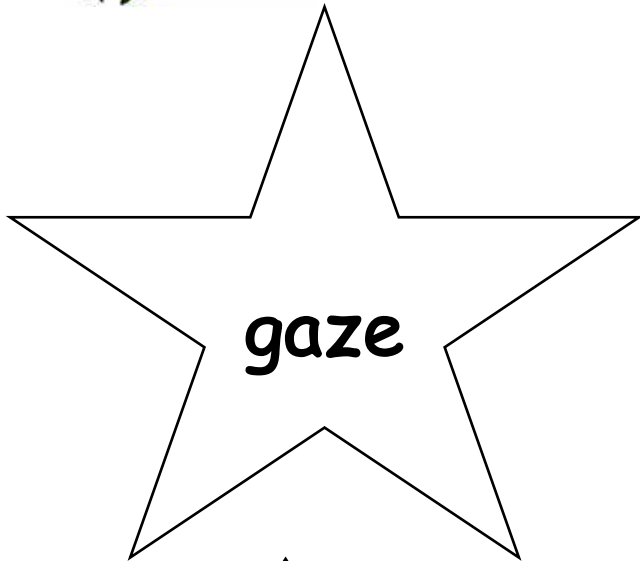
- ★ How do you think the owl babies and their mum felt when they realised the star had fallen out of the nest?

- ★ Why do you think the star went back into the sky?





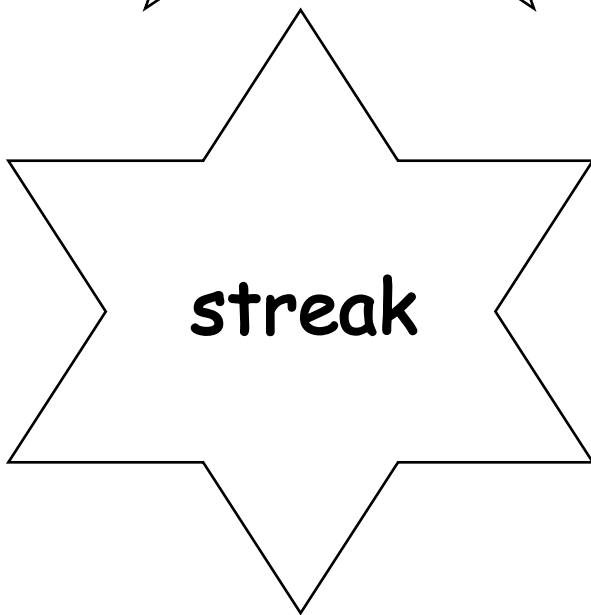
## Words about stars



If you gaze at something, you look at something for a long time. A person who looks at stars regularly is called a **stargazer**.

You might have **gazed** into the sky and made pictures from the clouds .

Try **gazing** at an object near you or maybe gaze at someone in your family!



A streak is a thin line of something that usually moves fast. It can name something or be an action.

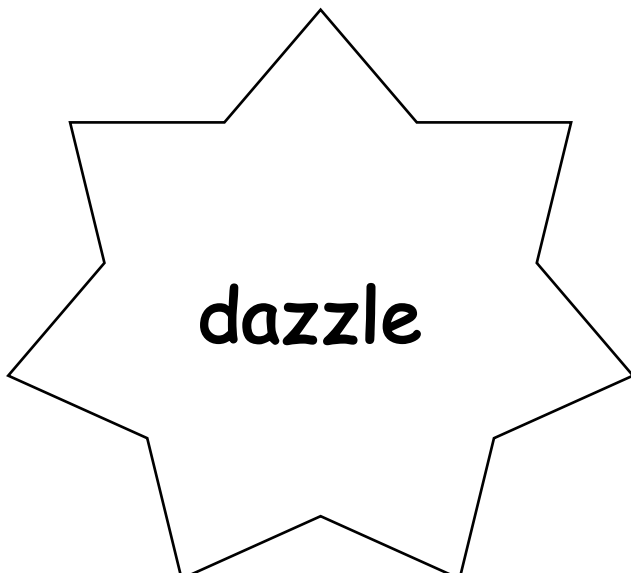
The shooting star **streaked** past.

A **streak** of lightning lit up the sky.

Lightning **streaked** across the sky.

**Streaks** of rain poured down.

Draw a picture to illustrate the word.



Something that dazzles shines brilliantly. It could be so very bright that you can only look at it for a short time.

If someone takes a picture of you with a flash, you might be **dazzled** and blink.

Can you think of three things that might dazzle you?



★ Star words!



star

fish

starfish

Some words are made from two words joined together. These are called *compound words*. Can you think of any more compound words that have 'star' in them? Write them down. If you are stuck, look at the list at the back of this pack.

## ★ Our story-mountain planner

Think about the five parts to the story.  
In the blank squares below, draw the main events that happen before and after the owl appears and snatches the star. To help you, I've written in the words on the story mountain that introduce each stage of the story.

Next,

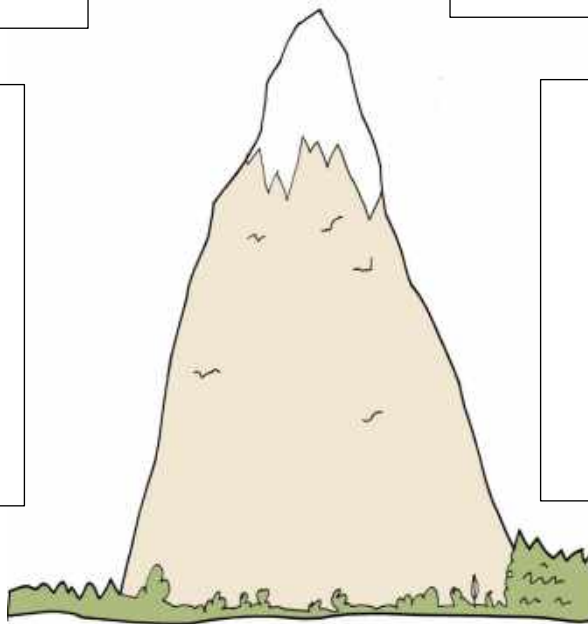


First, ...

After that, ...

Once upon a time, ...

Finally, ...





## ★ Superstar word detectives!

- ★ In the story, there are words that describe stars. Can you be a word detective and track them down?
- ★ Write a list of them on this star. Can you think of more words to describe a star and add them to your list? This will help you when you write your own story about a star.

What they are like?

bright

Think about what stars do and add your ideas to the list in the star below.

*What do they do?*



glisten  
shine

Next, try and combine the words to make sentences such as:

Bright stars shine.

Then, think about all the places that you might find stars.

*Where you might see stars.*



the top of a  
Christmas tree

Finally, combine your idea to make different sentences. See how many you can create and choose your favourites to write below.

A bright star shines at the top of a Christmas tree.

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

★ \_\_\_\_\_

## ★ Secret star!

★For this activity, you have to have someone else to work with because you have to guess which star the other person has chosen.

Choose a star but don't say which one you have chosen.

Your helper is going to ask you questions like, 'Does the star you've chosen got stars inside it?' You can only answer 'Yes' or 'No'.

Your helper has to guess which star you have chosen.

Now swap roles so you have to ask the questions and guess which star your helper has chosen.





## ★ Star similes

Similes are comparisons using *like* or *as* to help describe what things look like. Here are two similes from the story that describe the star. Find some more and then make up some of your own. Write them down in a list.

Stars flicker *like* fireflies.

Stars are *like* silver rainbows.

Stars shine *as* bright *as* the sun.

Stars are *as* shiny *as* diamonds.

A large rectangular box with a folded bottom-right corner, containing six horizontal lines for writing.

A large rectangular box with a folded bottom-right corner, containing six horizontal lines for writing.

## ★ One of our stars is missing!

In our story, the biggest and brightest star fell from the sky. Can you design a missing poster to help find it. You will need to describe the missing star using adjectives and similes so people know what it looks like.

**MISSING!**  
Have you seen this star ?

Last seen:

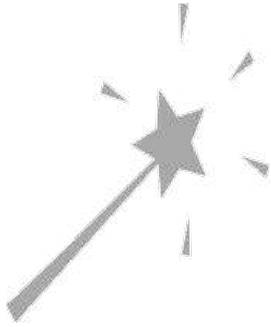
Description:

Reward:

Contact:

## ★ How to use a star!

In the story, the animals used the star for light, warmth and company. Imagine you found a star. How many different ways can you think of to use it? Draw or write down your ideas.



I would use my star as a magic wand.

I would use my star as a ...

I would use my star as a ...

I would use my star as a ...

I would use my star as a ...

I would use my star as a ...

Decide which ideas you like best and use them to plan your story.

## Now use the story mountain to plan your story

Use my five-part story planner to help you write your own story. First decide on your main character (it could be you!). Then choose 3 animals that will find the star and decide what they will do with it. Draw your animals in the stars below and decide how to begin each section and how you will end your story.

1<sup>st</sup> animal and what they did with the star

First, ...

—

2<sup>nd</sup> animal and what they did with the star

Next, ...

3<sup>rd</sup> animal and what they did with the star

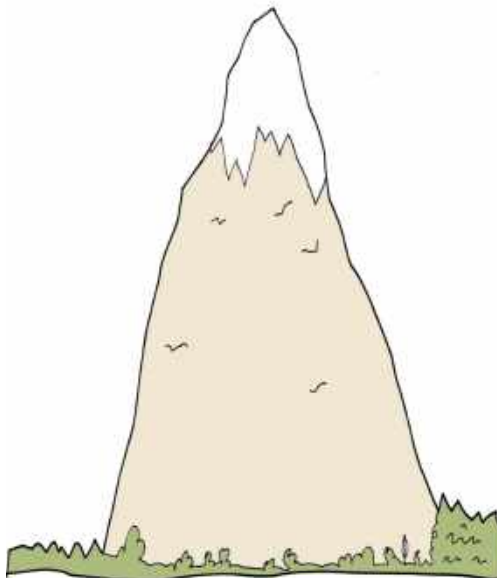
After that, ...

Once upon a time, ...

Put your main character's name here:

—

Finally, ...



On a separate piece of paper, write your story. You can use ideas and phrases from my story to help you plus all your ideas about stars. Don't forget to draw pictures to illustrate your story. Then read your story to someone in your family.

## ★ Now for poems about stars

Stars have inspired poems for hundreds of years because human beings are fascinated by them. We are going to read just a few of them.

Read this poem or click on this link to hear the poem:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/stars/s-bCDfrsG9XsC>

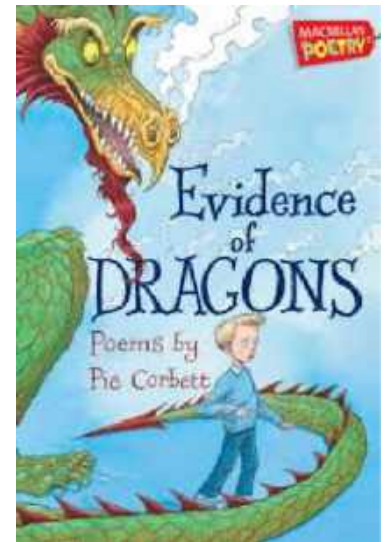
It's from a book called *Evidence of Dragons* by Pie Corbett. If someone is helping you, discuss what it means together.

### Stars

Stars

are to reach for,  
beautiful freckles of hope,  
speckles on velvet,  
to steer ships,  
to comfort those trapped  
in the darkness of their making,  
to lead the wayward when the compass falters,  
to remind us that the day is almost breaking,  
dawn is just out-  
taking time to warm  
the other side of the world.  
Stars are for wishes.

Stars are  
tiny lights of hope,  
fireflies in the night,  
golden specs to gaze at,  
tin tacks on a dark cloth,  
studs glittering,  
sequins on a first party dress.



Stars are  
our brightest and best,  
shards of hope to keep us going, marking the place,  
making the seasons,  
giving us reasons  
because, somewhere out there,  
there are other stargazers  
gazing back.

© Pie Corbett

**Now choose some words from the poem that you would like to talk about.  
Write down five of the words you like best and explain why you chose them.**

1.

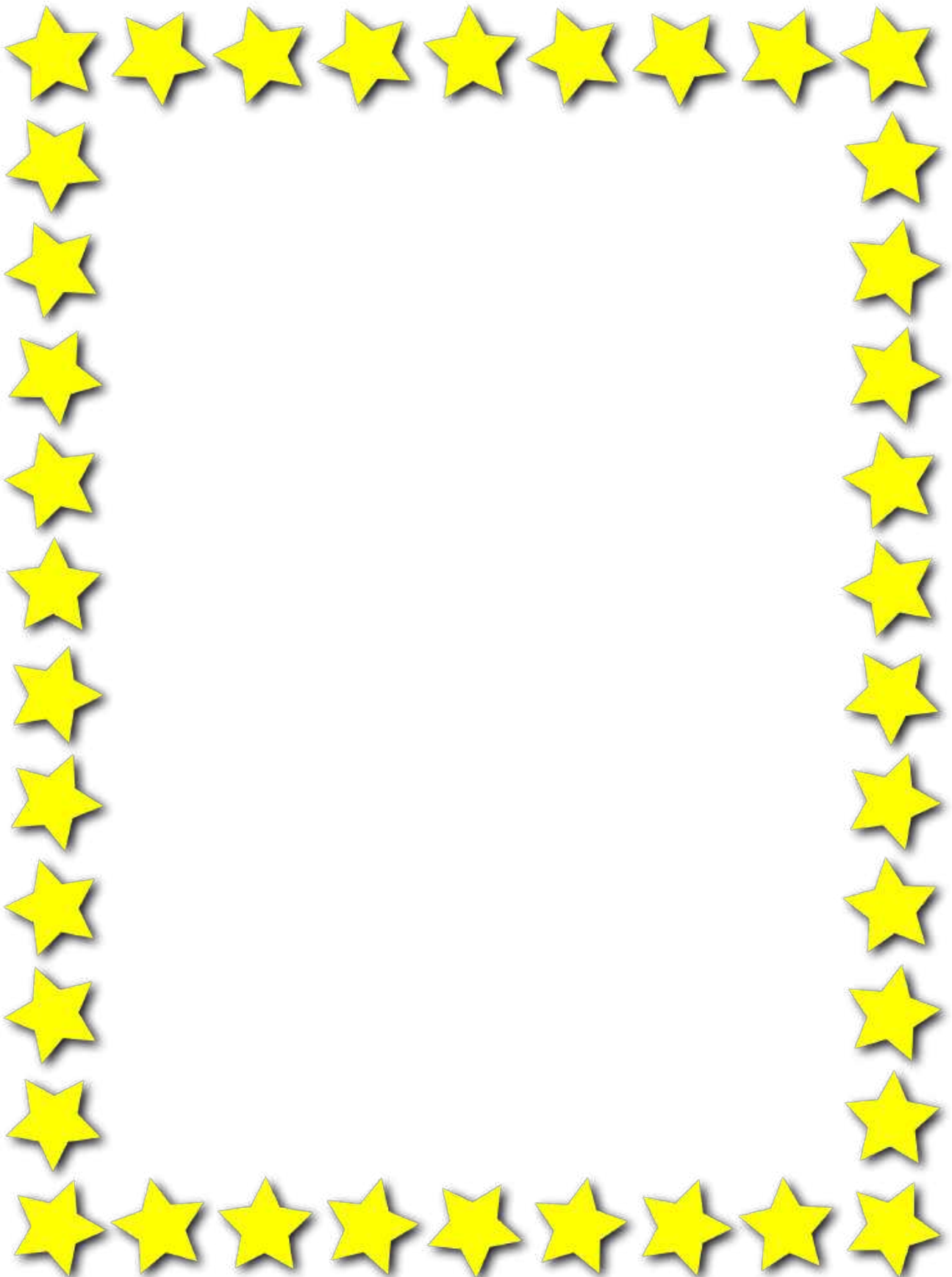
2.

3.

4.

5.

Read or listen to the poem again. As you listen, think carefully about the words and the pictures that you see in your head. Which words and phrases help you to see the pictures most clearly? Draw the images that you saw.



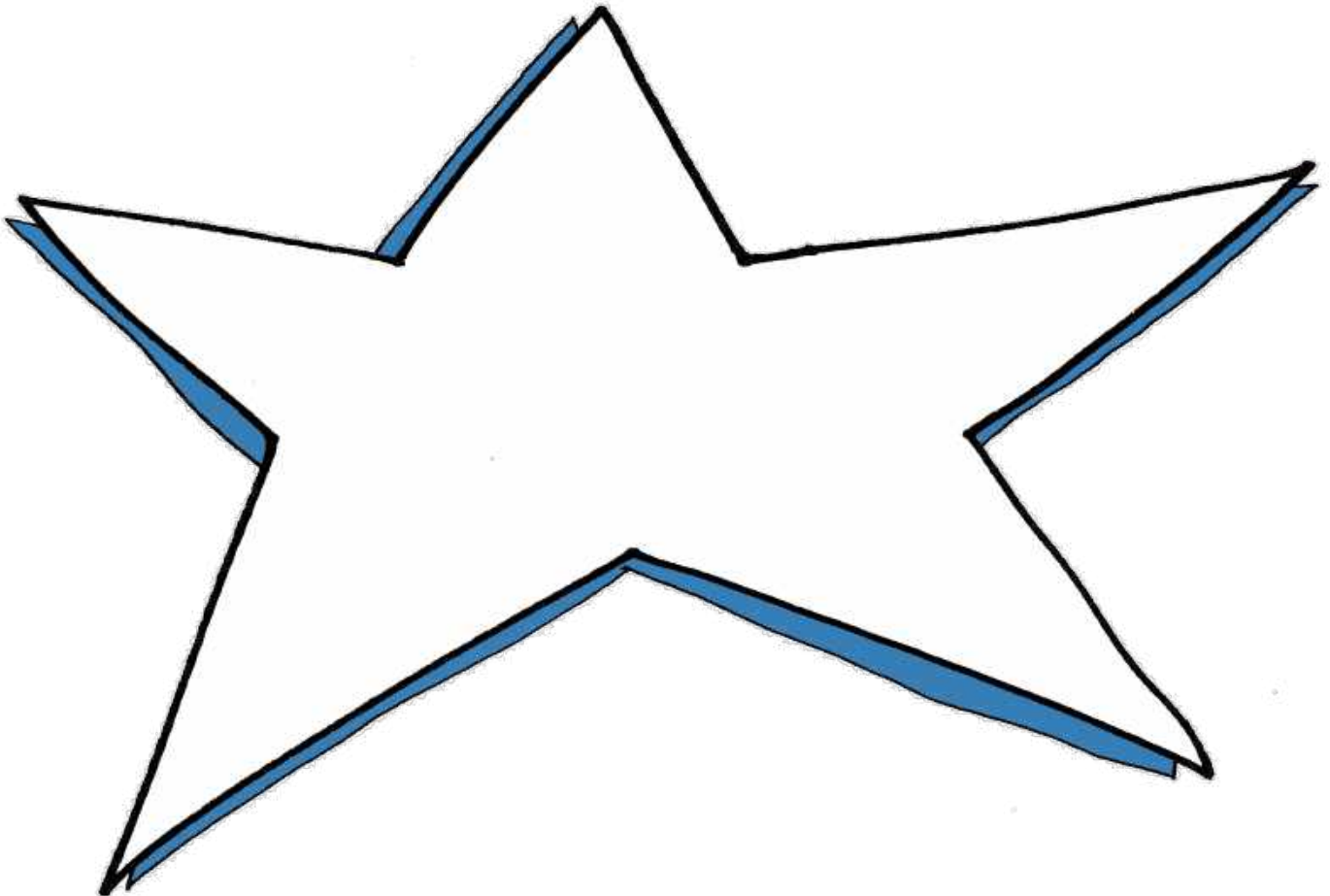
## ★ When you wish upon a star, ...

In Pie's poem 'Star' it says, "Stars are for wishes". Have you ever looked up at a star and made a wish? People often say a rhyme when they do this. Here are two examples. Try saying them with someone else in your family. Tonight, choose a star, say a rhyme and make a wish!

*Star I see, star so bright  
Make my wish come true tonight.*

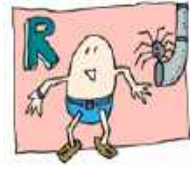
Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight,  
I wish I may, I wish I might,  
Have this wish I wish tonight.

*Draw or write your wish inside this star.*





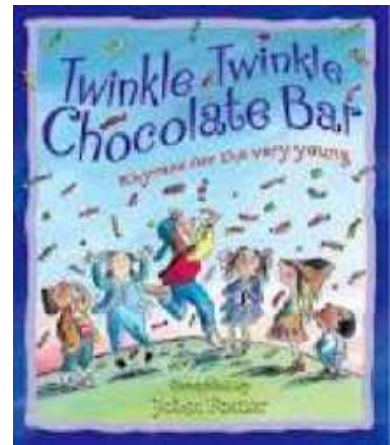
## ★ Rhyme time!



Here are three rhymes. The first one you may know off by heart. Try saying the next two to the same tune .

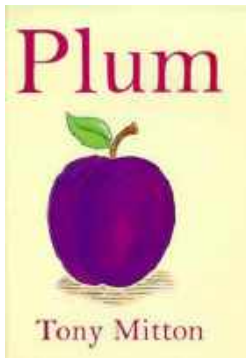
Highlight the words that 'rhyme' – the words that sound the same. What do you notice? Try making up a new rhyme with the same pattern.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.



*Twinkle, twinkle chocolate bar,  
my mum drives a rusty car,  
start the engine, pull the choke,  
then off we go in a puff of smoke,  
Twinkle, twinkle chocolate bar, my mum drives a rusty car.*

Twinkle, twinkle traffic light  
On the corner, shining bright.  
Red means, "Stop"  
Green means, "Go"  
Yellow means, "Drive very slow".  
Twinkle, twinkle traffic light  
On the corner, shining bright.



This is a great poem about someone who wants to be famous - to be a 'star.' Exploring this theme, the rhyme and steady repetitive beat make it ideal to learn and lots of fun to perform. You can watch

Tony perform his poem at:

<https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poems/i-wanna-be-star>.

## I Wanna Be A Star

I wanna be a star.  
I wanna go far.  
I wanna drive around  
in a big red car.  
I said yeah yeah yeah  
I wanna be a star.

I wanna be a hit.  
I wanna be it.  
I wanna see my name  
all brightly lit.  
I said yeah yeah yeah  
I wanna be a hit.

I wanna be the scene.  
I wanna be on screen.  
I wanna make the cover  
of a magazine.  
I said yeah yeah yeah.  
I wanna be the scene.

I wanna be a star.  
I wanna go far.  
But I've only got a job

in a burger bar -

so far...

The poem *I Wanna Be A Star* from *Plum* is used with the kind permission of Tony Mitton.

## ★ Shortbread stars



*This recipe was created by Sophie Hansen.*

What you need:

- ★ 1/2 cup butter (softened)
- ★ 1/2 cup caster sugar
- ★ 1 egg
- ★ 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ★ 1 1/2 cup plain flour
- ★ Icing pens and decorations, lolly sticks and ribbons  
(You may want to omit the wooden sticks and ribbons.)

1. Preheat the oven to 180C (160C fan-forced) and line two baking trays with paper and set aside.
2. Cream the butter and sugar together with an electric mixer until pale. Add the egg and vanilla and mix again for another couple of minutes. Fold in the flour until you have a smooth dough. Wrap this in plastic and leave to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes.
3. Roll out the dough until about 5mm thick then cut out biscuits using a star-shaped cookie cutter. Arrange on the baking tray then carefully push the wooden sticks into the biscuits (in the corner between two points of the stars).
4. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until light golden then let cool completely before decorating.
5. Pipe or write (using an icing pen) dots or add a lacy border around the edge of each biscuit then tie a bow around the handle.

**Notes:** *To stop the wands breaking while decorating, hold the biscuit not the stick and keep them on the work surface at all times.*

*To make these even easier, skip the wooden sticks, make a batch of stars and just decorate them.*

## ★ Artful 3-sided stars



These stars can stand on a table or be hung up with string. Don't worry! There's a 3-sided-star template on the next page.

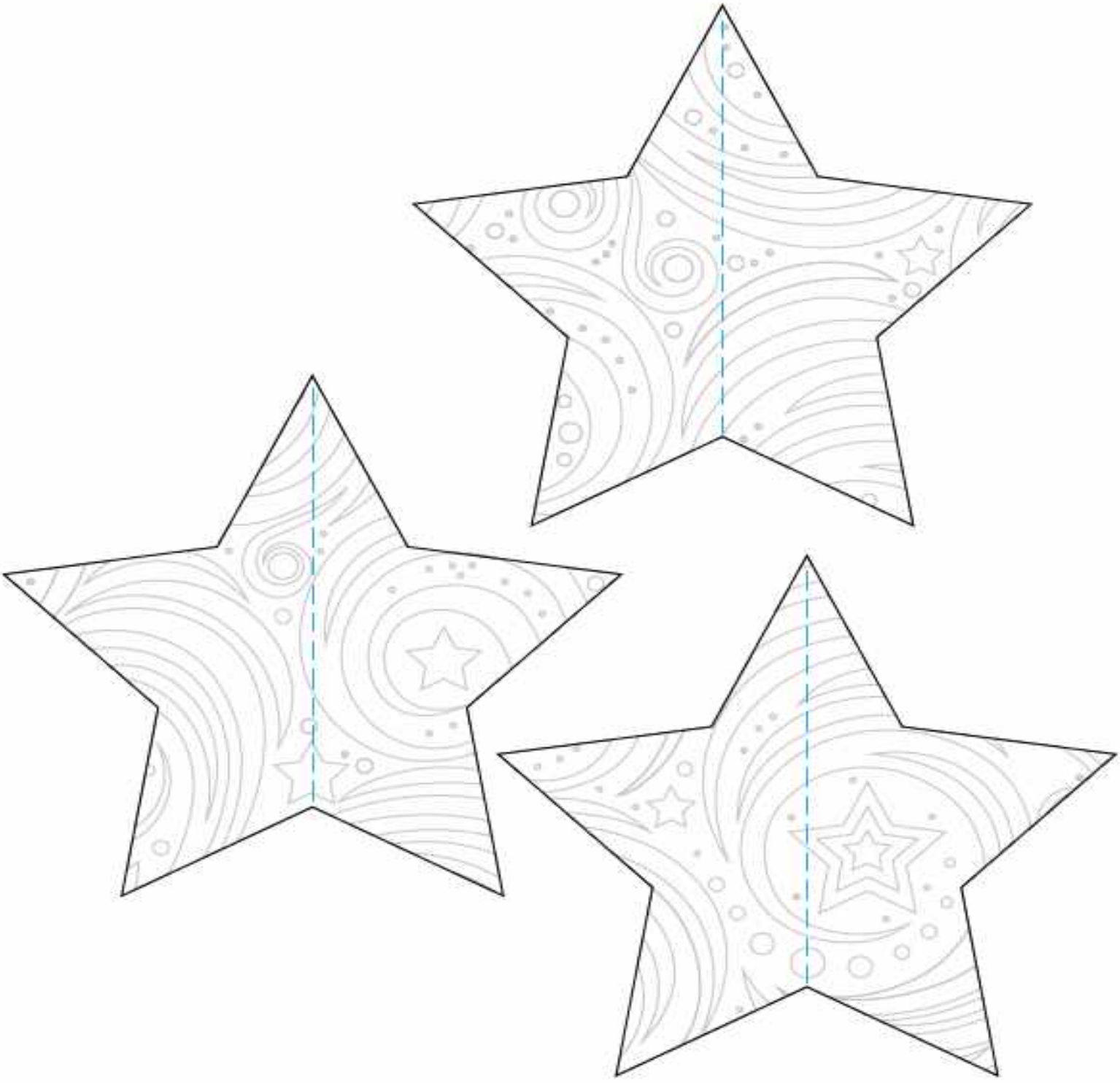
### What you need :

- ★ card or heavy paper
  - ★ 3D star template
  - ★ scissors
  - ★ art supplies, such as tempera paint, and/or markers
  - ★ glue
- Optional: string or embroidery thread, embroidery needle, beads.

### What you do:

1. Cut out 3 stars.
2. Fold each star inward along the dotted
3. Decorate the stars.
4. Spread glue on just one half of the back of your first star, then attach it back-to-back to ONLY ONE side of the second star.
5. Spread glue to the entire back of the third star and glue it back-to-back to the two-star group from step 4, completing the star all the way around.





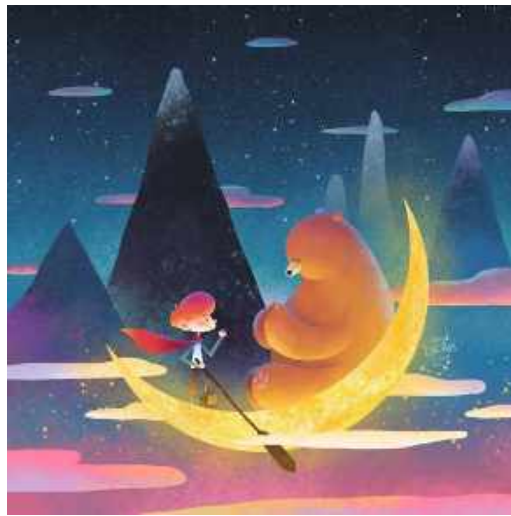
<https://www.dixiecrystals.com/sites/default/files/activity-pdf/3-Sided-Paper-Star-Ornament-DC.pdf>

## ★ Creating a new story

In our story, a star fell from the sky and was used by the animals in three different ways. Imagine if you saw the moon fall to earth! Who might find it? How could they use the moon? These pictures might give you some ideas. Use your ideas to change the story. For example, you could use your own name in the title. Mine would be *Sue's Moon*. Use the plan on the next page to help you decide on what happens.



Credit: Lena Gnedkova



[https://www.onceuponapicture.co.uk/portfolio\\_page/rowing-the-moon/](https://www.onceuponapicture.co.uk/portfolio_page/rowing-the-moon/)

If you would like to write another story, you could think about what other things might fall from the sky – a raindrop, a snowflake – maybe even a giant! Use these ideas and what you've learned to write and illustrate a new story.



Credit: Adrian Borda 'Private Moon'



Adrian Borda called this image of snowflakes 'Fallen Stars'

## ★ Now plan your very own moon story

Use the five-part story planner again to help you write your own story. First decide on your main character (it could be you again!). Then decide on three things that happen when the moon falls. Draw your ideas in the boxes below and use the last box to show the moon happily shining in the night sky again.

First, .../ One dark night,

...

—

Next, .../ Suddenly, ...

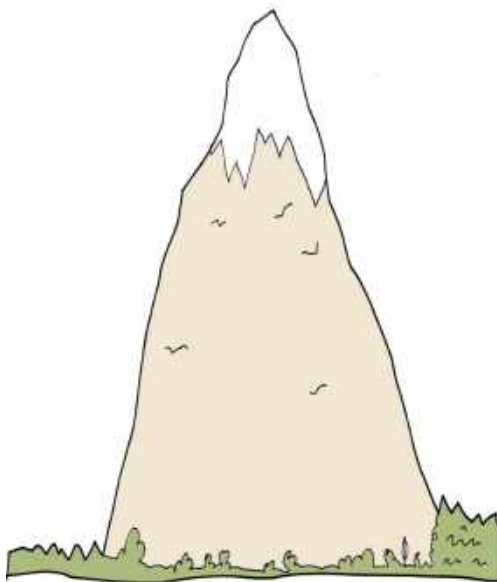
After that, .../ Fortunately, ...

Once upon a time, ...

Put your main character's name here:

—

Finally, ...



On a separate piece of paper, write your story. You can use ideas and phrases from my story or invent all your own ideas. Don't forget to draw pictures to illustrate your story. Then read your story to someone in your family.

## Star fact file

Have you ever gazed up at the stars and been puzzled? Do you wonder what they are? Read these fantastic facts and leave your friends starstruck by your dazzling knowledge.

### What are stars ?

Stars are gigantic balls of hot gas just like our sun.

They look so small to us on earth because they are so very far away.

### Where are they found?

There are huge groups of stars in space. These are called galaxies. The galaxy we live in is called the Milky Way. There are about 1000 billion stars in this galaxy.

### What are stars made of?

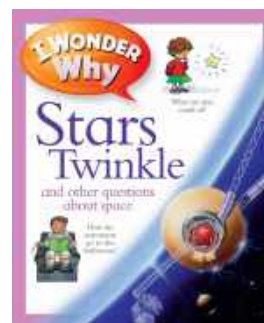
Stars are made of mainly two gases called hydrogen and helium. The star makes light and heat from these gases. Did you know the sun is a star?

We can feel its heat because it's closer to earth than the other stars.

### Surprisingly stars are actually round like balls!

As the light from a star travels to earth, it gets bent and wobbled by hot and cold air. This makes the stars look like they are twinkling and shimmering.

Light bends when it passes through things. If you put a straw in a glass of water, it will look bent because it's half in the water and half in the air.







## Moon fact file

What do you know already about the moon? What would you like to find out? Find some facts about the moon and write your own fact file. See if you can amaze your reader with something they will be really surprised to find out!

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/science/space/facts-about-the-moon/>

What is it like on the moon?

What is the moon made of?

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## Supporting resources and useful websites

### Words to describe what stars do and what they are

twinkle, sparkle, gleam, glimmer, glint, glow, glitter, shimmer, shine, beam, blaze, radiant, brilliant, blink, dazzle, flash, flicker, pointed.

### Compound words including star

- stardust
- starship
- starfruit
- starburst
- starlight
- starboard
- starstruck
- stargaze
- popstar
- superstar
- megastar

### Original Rhyme published as 'The Star' by Jane and Ann Taylor in 1806

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,  
When he nothing shines upon,  
Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the trav'ler in the dark,  
Thanks you for your tiny spark,  
He could not see which way to go,  
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,  
And often thro' my curtains peep,  
For you never shut your eye,  
Till the sun is in the sky.

'Tis your bright and tiny spark,  
Lights the trav'ler in the dark,  
Tho' I know not what you are,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

<https://www.onceuponapicture.co.uk/>

<https://artfulparent.com/how-to-make-3d-paper-star-ornaments/>

<https://www.dixiecrystals.com/kids-in-the-kitchen/projects/kids-craft-ideas/Paper-Star-Ornament>

<https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html>

[https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/?s=space&post\\_type=](https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/?s=space&post_type=)



Well done! I hope you enjoyed the story and activities.

How did you get on? Colour in the stars to say how well you think you've done: Why not award yourself 3 stars!



★ *What was your favourite activity?*

*My favourite activity was ...*

*because ...*

★ *Think of one thing that you now know that you didn't know before.*

*I have learned ...*

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Inspired by Alfie

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**Many thanks to Jon Ralphs for the cartoons: [jonralphs.com](http://jonralphs.com)**

**The poem 'Stars', from 'Evidence of Dragons', is used with the kind permission of Pie Corbett.**

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