



# A Child of Books

TEACHERS' GUIDE



# A Child of Books



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## About the Book

A little girl sails her raft across a sea of words, arriving at the house of a small boy and calling him away on a literary adventure. Through forests of fairy tales and across mountains of make-believe, the two travel together on a fantastical journey that unlocks the boy's imagination and opens him up to a lifetime of magic and adventure.

Stories bring us together, provide shared experiences and glimpses into the unknown, broaden outlooks, entertain, transport, educate, and inspire. Reading is the foundation of every child's education, and fostering a love of story is the first step in creating a reader. In this stunning prose poem on the rewards of reading and sharing stories, *New York Times* best-selling author-illustrator Oliver Jeffers and fine artist Sam Winston have crafted an immersive and unforgettable experience that will inspire young readers to create, to question, to explore, and to imagine.

## About the Creators



Photo by Erika Holmstrom

**Oliver Jeffers** is the author-illustrator of many books for children, including *Once Upon an Alphabet*, which received a *Boston Globe–Horn Book* Honor, and *Lost and Found*, which was a Nestlé Children's Book Prize Gold Medal winner. He is also the illustrator of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Day the Crayons Quit* and its follow-up, *The Day the Crayons Came Home*, both written by Drew Daywalt. Oliver Jeffers lives in Brooklyn.

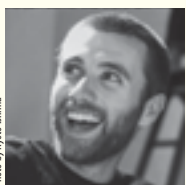


Photo by Kyoto Shima

**Sam Winston** is a fine artist whose work has been featured in many special collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, the Tate Britain in London, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. *A Child of Books* is his first children's picture book. He works and lives in London.



## Mapping Your Own World of Stories

In *A Child of Books*, two travelers traverse a world of stories. Invite your students to reflect on the places that books have taken them and to represent their journeys visually. Students can either collaborate to produce a large mural, depicting the worlds of their favorite stories, or they can create individual maps. They should begin by brainstorming lists of their favorite storybook locations and examining the illustrations in *A Child of Books* to draw inspiration from Jeffers's and Winston's images. Then offer students various art supplies (markers, crayons, collage materials, recycled print materials) with which to create a composite map of their story locations. As students work, talk about what authors must do to bring a setting to life. What techniques do authors use to create the sights, smells, sounds, and feel of a storybook world?

## Today's Future Classics

What makes a classic a classic? Which of today's books have the potential to become the classics of the future? Invite your students to consider these questions. What are the attributes of a book that has appeal across generations? Ask your students to pick a favorite book that they feel will stand the test of time. Students should write and then present an argument for their book, building from the class discussion of the characteristics of a classic book and providing evidence that the book they have selected meets those criteria.

## A Time Line of the Classics

*A Child of Books* features forty classic works of children's literature and lullabies. (The titles are listed on page 11 of this guide.) Divide your students into small groups, assigning responsibility to each group for a portion of the titles. Then guide them through the process of researching these titles to answer the following questions:

- When was the work published?
- What genre is the work?
- What is the age range of the ideal audience for the work?

Create a large time line and have groups place their titles on the years they were published. Use this time line as a visual survey tool. Display the time line in the hallway and invite your school community members to write their names underneath the titles that they have read. Then analyse the data to see which titles have been most read and by whom.



## Which Classic? A Matching Game

Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston hope that *A Child of Books* will inspire young readers to explore the children's classics to which they pay tribute. Work with your school librarian to gather a collection of these titles to bring into your classroom and explore them in any or all of these ways:

- Play a matching game by providing your students with a variety of passages from the books and asking them to match the passages with their book titles.
- Invite students to discuss which titles and passages from the books intrigue them and why.
- Have each student select one title and create something based on that book. Let each one pursue their own creativity with their piece by making the project very open-ended. A student could create a new book jacket, tell a story based on the main character, draw a favorite scene, write a poem about the book. . . . The options are endless!
- Set a class challenge to read a certain number of these works (maybe all forty!) across the course of the school year. Titles could be read aloud to the class, used in literature circle explorations, or read independently at school or at home. Develop a recording sheet to track the class progress through the titles and a forum for students to share their responses to their reading.



## An Artist's Book

Explore with your students the concept of an artist's book, a book that expresses meaning through image, text, and, most importantly, its form and structure. View examples of artists' books online at places such as the Center for Book Arts, the Jaffe Center for Book Arts, and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. Collaborate with your art teacher or an artist from your local community to offer students the chance to create an artist's book. Students might select the topic and theme for their book, or you could invite them to create one representing their favorite stories. While older students can experiment with different media and structures in their books, a simple pop-up structure might be most appropriate for younger students.

## A Collage of Quotes

Explore the art of typography by inviting students to create a collage of images using passages from their favorite books. Visit Sam Winston's website and offer students additional examples of the work of typographic artists. Collaborate with your art teacher or technology specialist to explore high- and low-tech mediums for creating typographic art. Students can select passages from a favorite or influential book to create their own work of typographical art.



## The Power of Story

Reread the final pages of *A Child of Books*, beginning with the image of the spinning globe and the text “For this is our world we’ve made from stories. . . .” Ask your students how stories help us to shape our world and record their responses on chart paper. Following this whole-group discussion, offer small groups the opportunity to read and discuss quotes that describe the power and potential of reading. These quotes can be found using Pinterest or other search engines. Provide each group with a large piece of chart paper to post their quotes on along with group-authored interpretations of each one. Regroup for a whole-class discussion and to create a class list of “Reasons to Read.” Share your list with others at your school by posting them outside of your classroom door.



## Books Across Generations: Interviewing Readers

Engage your students in an inquiry project to investigate reading practices across generations. Work together to brainstorm a list of interview topics, such as books remembered from childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. What kinds of books do the interviewees enjoy? When and how often do they read? How do they describe the influence that books have had on their lives?

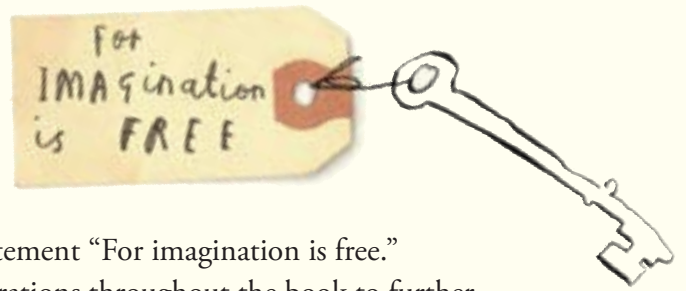
Have each student come up with two or three people they could interview. Encourage them to consider people both in and outside their families. Create a class list of candidates organised by age or generation and select interviewees using this list to ensure that you have a representation of different age groups. Then send students to conduct their interviews. Have them write up the conversations and post them on a wall display in order of age. After they have read their classmates’ interviews, conduct a discussion of their findings, noticing the variations and similarities in reading practices.

## My Reading History

How do books influence our lives? Which books stay with us, standing out in our memories? Students in year two and above can be invited to reflect on their personal reading histories either in narrative writing or through visual representation. Ask students to begin by making a list of the books they remember reading. Using a two-column chart, students can record book titles in the left column and write brief notes about their memories of the books in the right column. This prewriting activity can be built into a variety of response options that elaborate their histories as readers. Students could write an essay, create a slide presentation, or design a poster to share their identities as readers and the books that have influenced them.

## *A Project for Older Students*

### **Who Holds the Key? Access to Books**



The last image in *A Child of Books* is a key labeled with the statement “For imagination is free.” Ask your students to discuss this image and to revisit the illustrations throughout the book to further explore the metaphor. This figurative exploration can serve as a lead-in to an investigation of access to books in our everyday lives. How do your students obtain books to read? Researcher Susan Neuman has correlated access to books with reading achievement in children. As a class, read David Bornstein’s Opinionator article “A Book in Every Home, and Then Some” (the *New York Times*) as well as selections from Neuman’s co-authored article “Access to Print in Low-Income and Middle-Income Communities: An Ecological Study of Four Neighborhoods” (*Reading Research Quarterly*). Conduct an inquiry to learn more about how books are made available in socioeconomically diverse communities, researching libraries and library-funding structures. Extend the study with a service-learning component: your students could organize a book swap, a book donation drive, and/or write opinion pieces advocating for additional library or school resources to purchase books.

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### **REPRODUCIBLE INSTRUCTIONS**

Use the following reproducibles with your class to provide ways of sharing books they enjoy and to help them make connections with one another.

#### ***Books Make Us Feel***

Have each student fill in the titles, authors, and illustrators of books that inspire different feelings in them.

#### ***Connecting Books and Readers***

Have each student complete a Connecting Books and Readers graphic organizer and provide a large space on which to post their completed projects. Using two different colors of yarn, students can then make connections between their own organizer and others’. One color yarn should be used to indicate books that they have in common, connecting rays with matching titles. The second color of yarn should be used to connect their names with two to three books listed by classmates that they have not yet read but, based on the description offered by their classmates, they would like to read.

#### ***We Are a Family of Books***

Distribute the book tree image and have children write the names of their family members on the dashed lines and each family member’s favorite books on the connecting branches. Encourage children to colour in their book tree.

#### ***I Am a Child of Books***

Reinforce the idea that every child in your class is a Child of Books by having each one create a portrait of the reader they are.

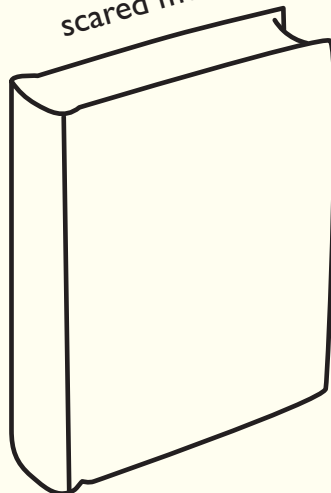
## **WALKER BOOKS**

This guide was written by Erika Thulin Dawes,  
a professor of language and literacy at  
Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

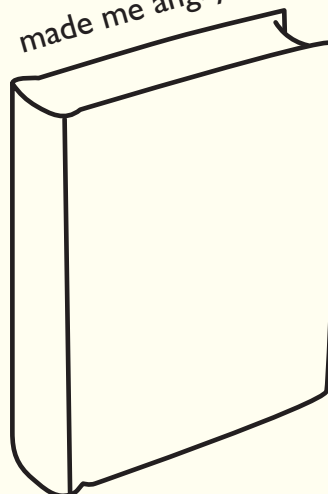
# Books Make Us Feel

This book . . . .

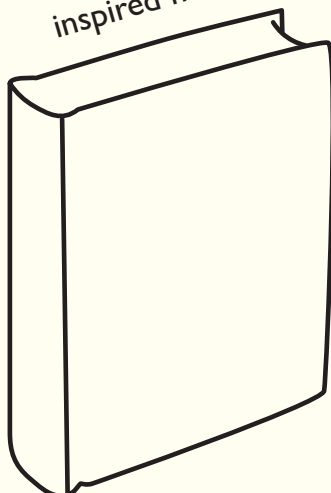
scared me:



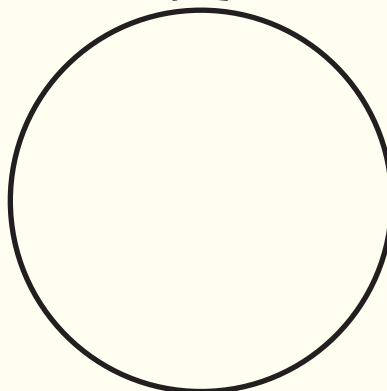
made me angry:



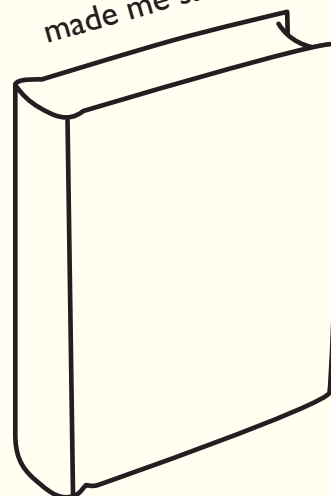
inspired me:



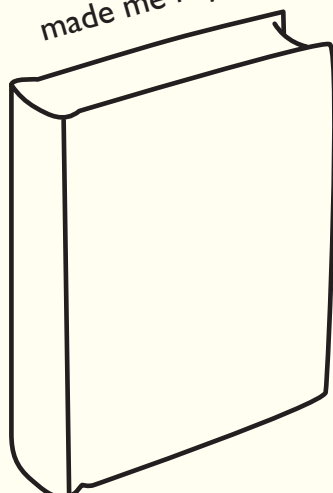
ME



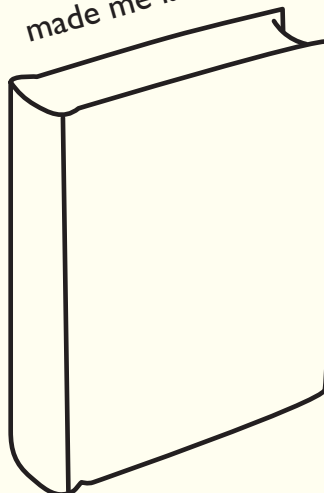
made me sad:



made me happy:



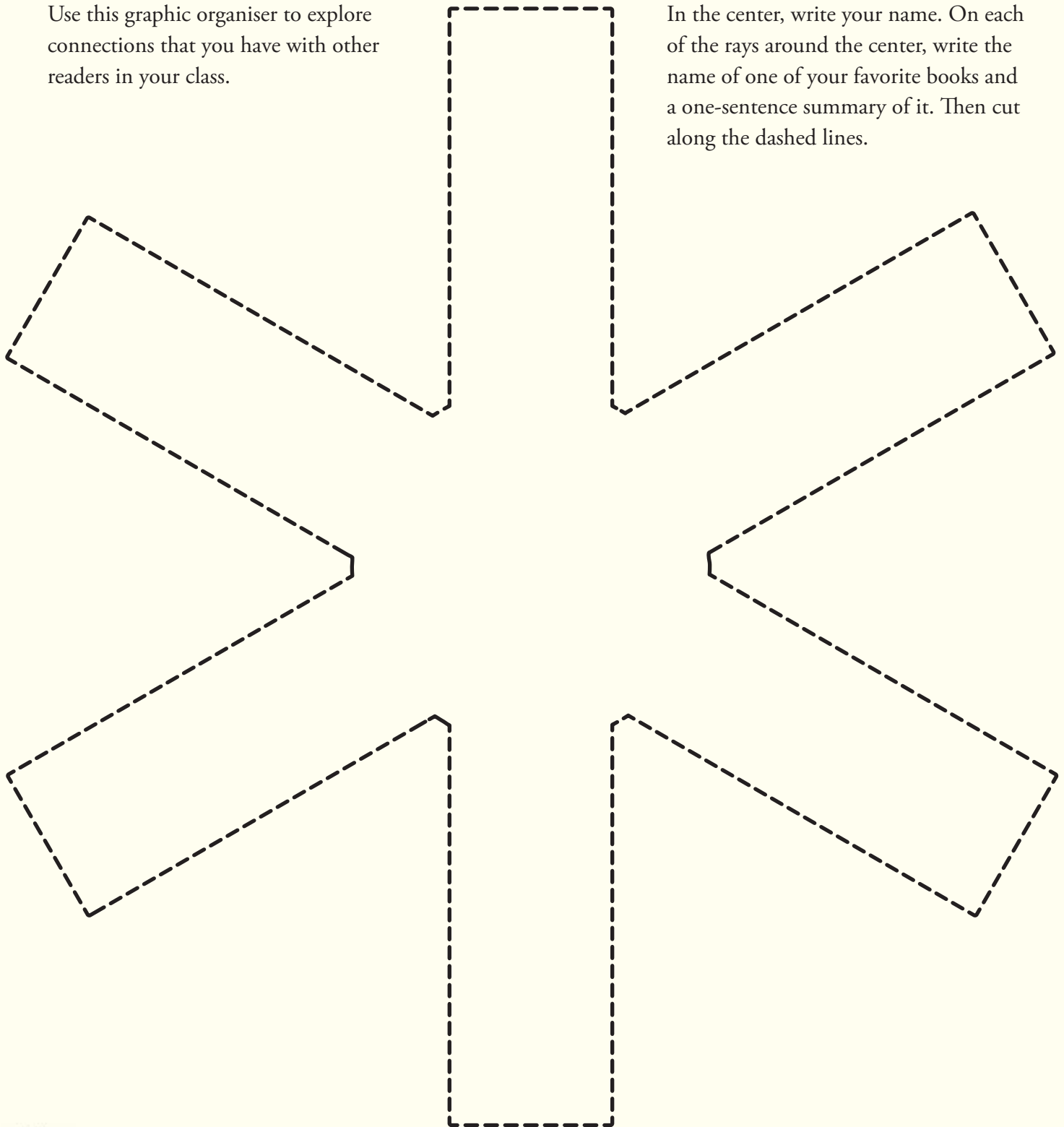
made me laugh:



# Connecting Books and Readers

Use this graphic organiser to explore connections that you have with other readers in your class.

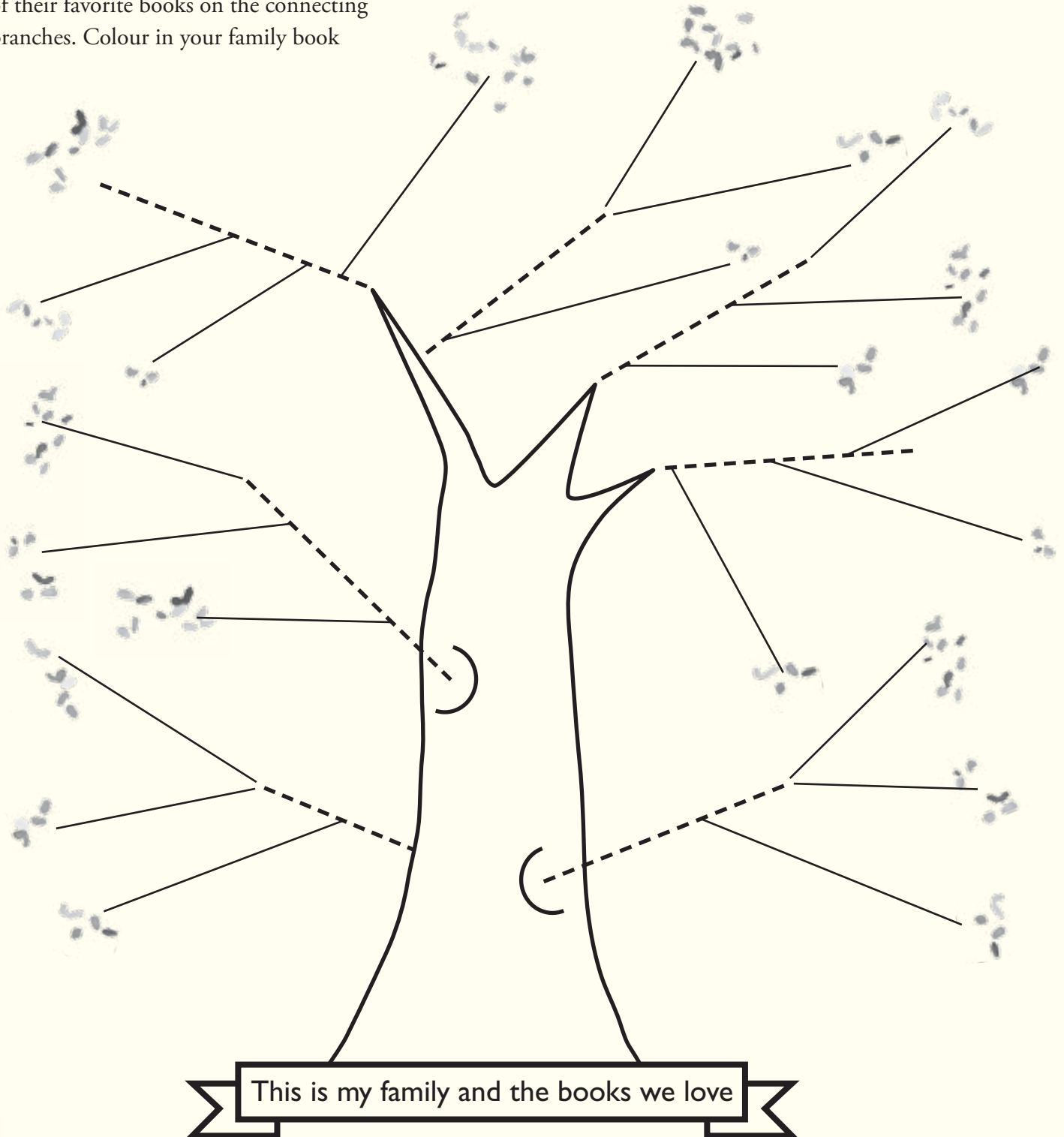
In the center, write your name. On each of the rays around the center, write the name of one of your favorite books and a one-sentence summary of it. Then cut along the dashed lines.





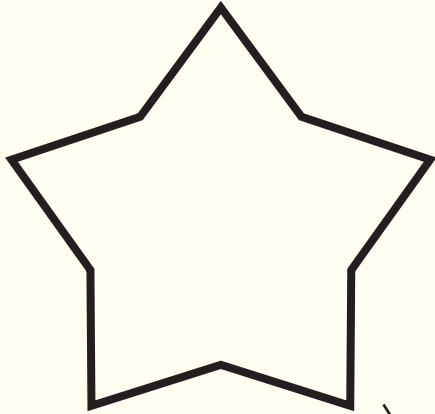
# We Are a Family of Books

Write the names of your family members on the dashed lines, then write the names of their favorite books on the connecting branches. Colour in your family book

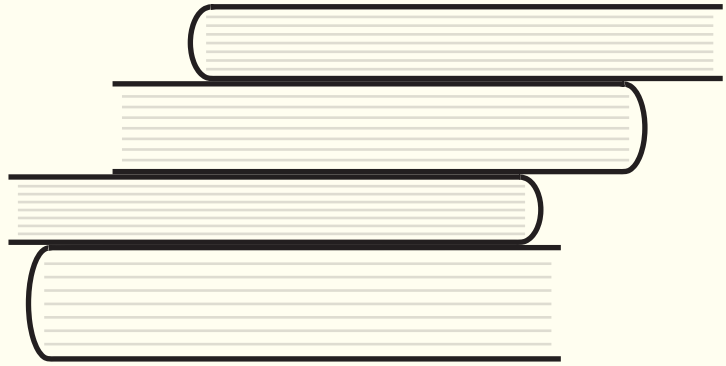


# I Am a Child of Books

My reading role models are:

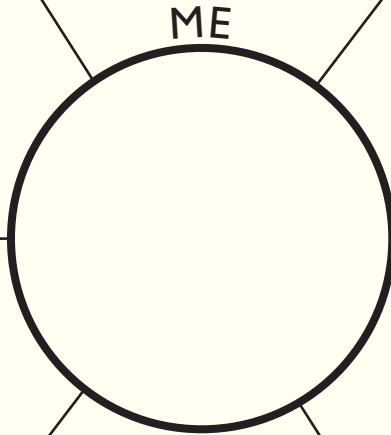


My favorite books are:

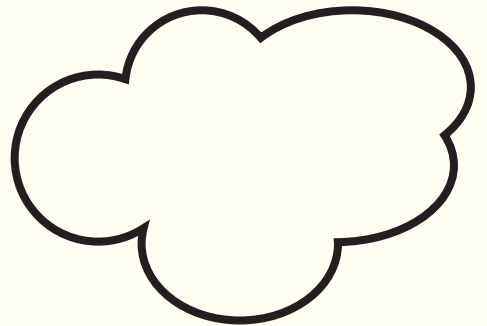


My reasons to read are:

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My favorite reading space is:

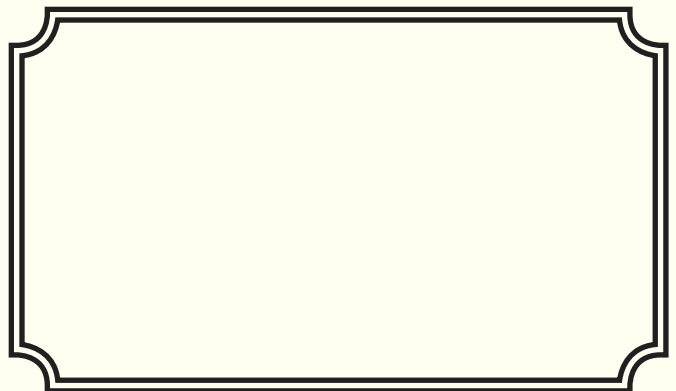


I find the best books at:



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My reading partners are:



## ***A Child of Books* features forty classic works of children's literature and lullabies.**

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

*Around the Moon* by Jules Verne

*Beauty and the Beast*

by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont

*Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell

"Brahms' Lullaby" by Johannes Brahms

*The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas

*Dracula* by Bram Stoker

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

"The Golden Goose" as told by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

*Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift

"Hansel and Gretel" as told by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

*Heidi* by Johanna Spyri

"Hush-a-by Baby" as adapted by John Newbery

*Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson

*The Legends of King Arthur and His Knights*

by Sir Thomas Malory and Sir James Knowles

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving

"Little Red-Cap" as told by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

*Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville

*Peter Pan and Wendy* by J. M. Barrie

"Rapunzel" as told by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

"Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving

*Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

"Snow-White and Rose-Red"

as told by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

"Suo Gân" as adapted by Robert Bryan

*The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss

*The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

*The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas

*Tom Thumb* as told by Richard Johnson

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne

"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" by Jane Taylor

*The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle* by Hugh Lofting

*The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum

