

Under the Same Sky Teaching Notes

Written by Robert Vescio

Illustrated by Nicky Johnston

Published by New Frontier Publishing



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Synopsis

Two children on opposite sides of the world crave friendship. Is it possible to be friends across the miles?

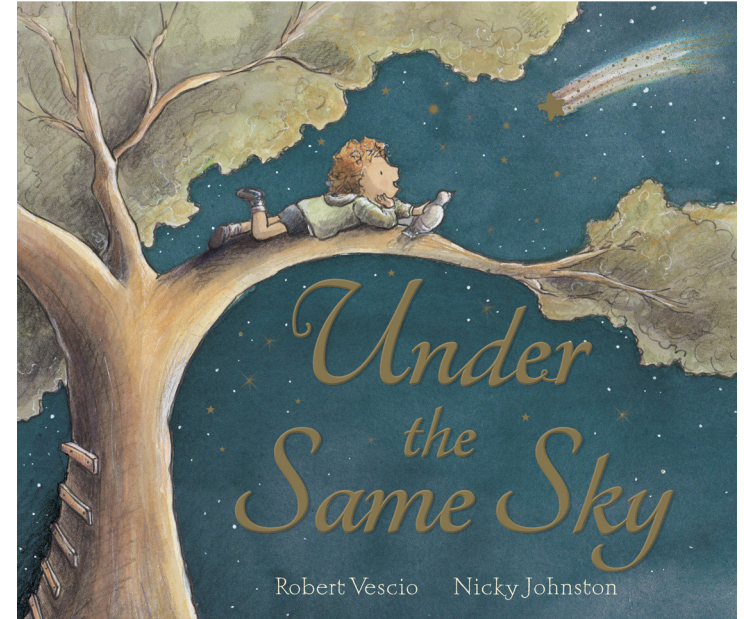
Under the Same Sky is a gorgeous picture book that features two children from diverse backgrounds. The book introduces children to the idea of a long distance friendship, cultural differences and very subtly hints at a child living in a country experiencing conflict.

About the Author

Robert Vescio is an award-winning children's author. He is dedicated to inspiring children with his passion for stories. When he is not writing, he enjoys visiting schools to share his imaginative tales. Robert lives in Sydney and enjoys spending time with his children, who are an endless source of inspiration.

About the Illustrator

Nicky Johnston is a mum to four boys, an artist, a primary educator and a children's book author and illustrator. She is based in Melbourne and as well as teaching, she works from home writing and illustrating in her art studio.



Discussion Topics and Activities

Discussion Topics

1. Show the children the book cover. Ask them about what they can see and what they think the book might be about.
2. On the third and fourth page, can the children recognise that although the pictures are quite different, that they are also very similar?
3. Do they notice that for one child, there are a lot of things in the background, while the background for the other child is more empty? Do they have any ideas for why this is?
4. Did they realise that pigeons could be used to send messages?
5. Ask the children what they thought of the story. Did they like it? What was their favourite part and why?
6. Explain the concept of a penpal and ask if any of the children have one.
7. Or do they have any friends that have moved away? How do they keep in touch with them now?
8. Is it difficult to be friends with someone who lives so far away? Or does the distance make it even more special when they do meet up?
9. Have any of the children thought about living in another country? If so, which country would they choose and why?

Activities

1. Activity 1 Letter Writing
2. Activity 2 Maze (solution provided on the next page)
3. Activity 3 Drawing
4. Activity 4 Colouring In
5. Activity 5 Spot the Difference
6. Activity 6 Pipe Cleaner Star Craft



Letter Writing

Letter writing is a fun activity that helps children improve their communication, social and handwriting skills. A letter is also a valuable keepsake, and demonstrates a sense of thoughtfulness and effort that isn't always present in emails and texts. Especially in these uncertain times, when it is not always possible to see family and friends face to face, the joy of receiving a letter is perhaps more prevalent than ever.

Discuss the following questions with your class to help them understand the importance of letter writing.

- Have you ever received a letter? Who was it from? How did it feel to get a letter? In the story, how do you think the children felt to receive a letter from each other?
- Did you keep the letter to read again?
- Have you ever sent someone a letter? Who did you send it to?
- Do you think people like to receive letters? Give reasons for your answer.
- What do you think is the difference between a handwritten letter and an email?

On the next page there is a template for an informal letter which can be cut out, you can ask the children to write a short letter to a friend or family member that they can't visit right now.



Letter Writing Template

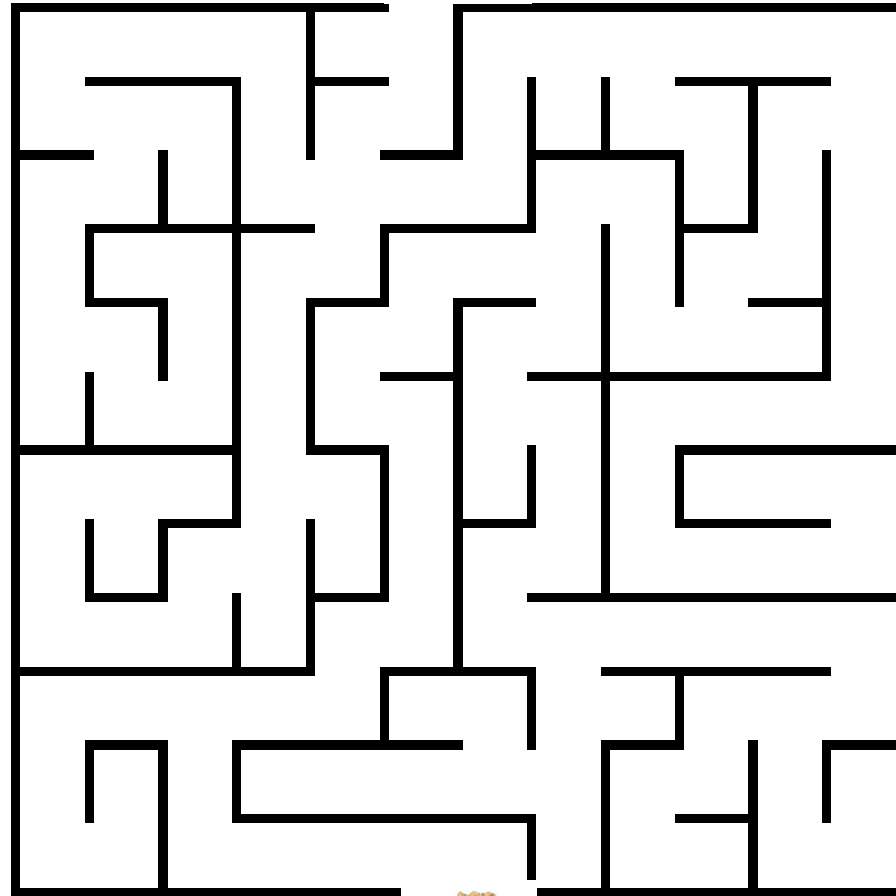
Your Address:

Recipient's Address:

Date:

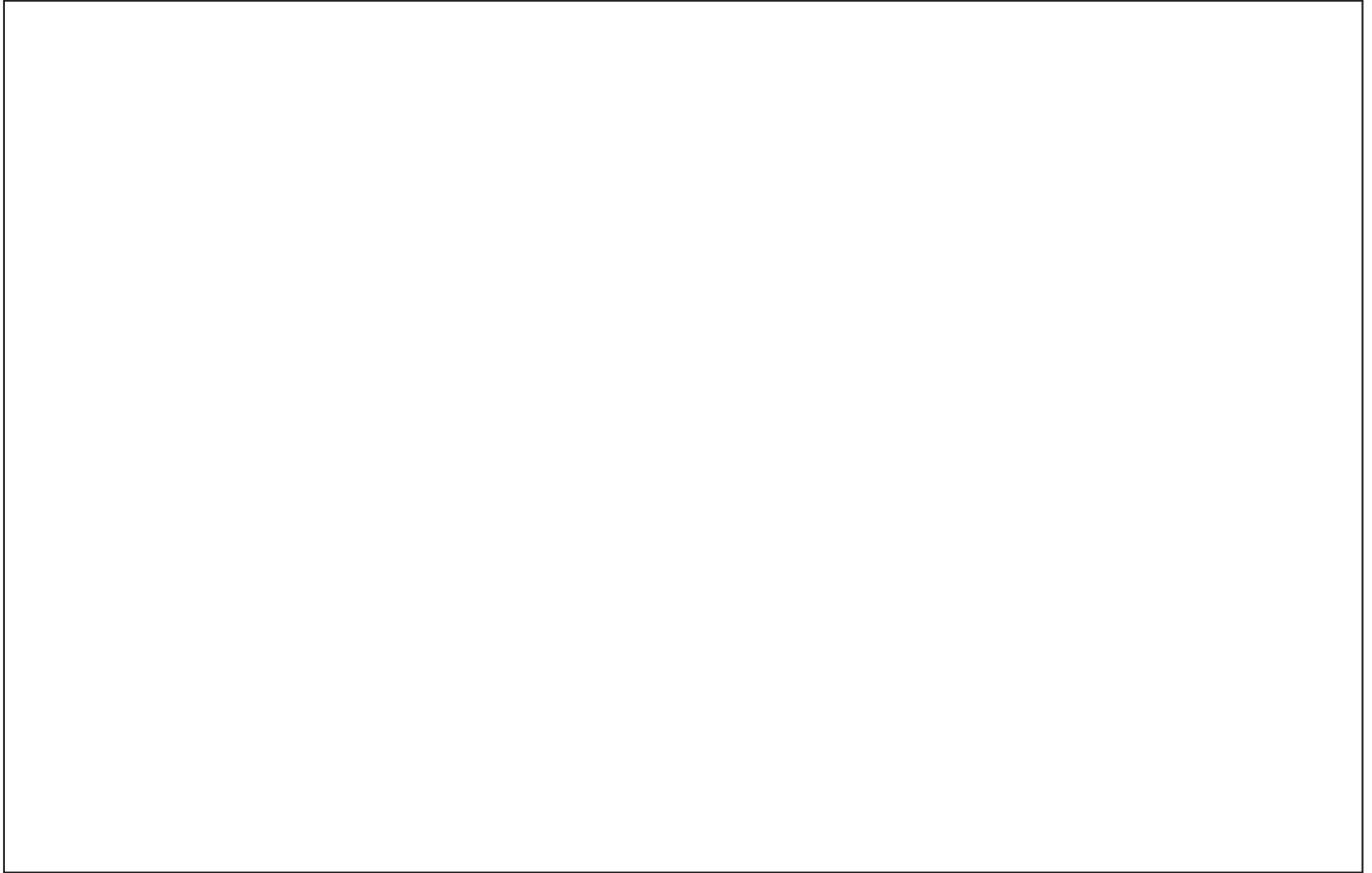
Maze

Can you help the children finally meet each other?



Drawing Activity

Do you think the two children from the book will meet one day? Draw what you think this meeting might look like in the space below.

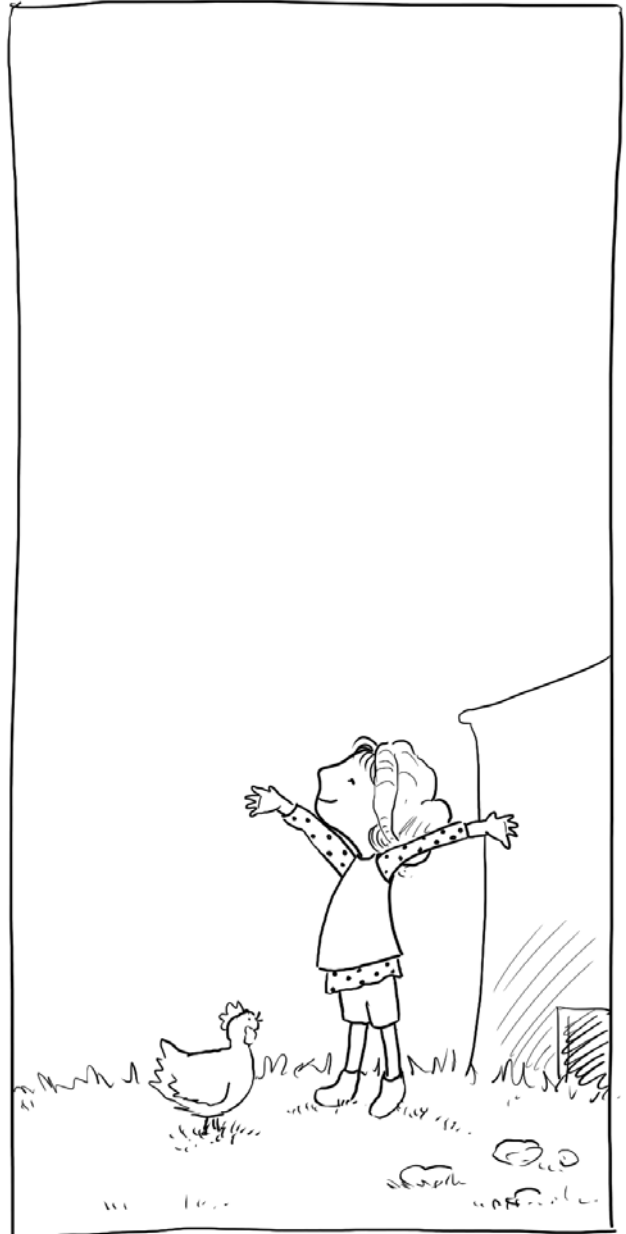
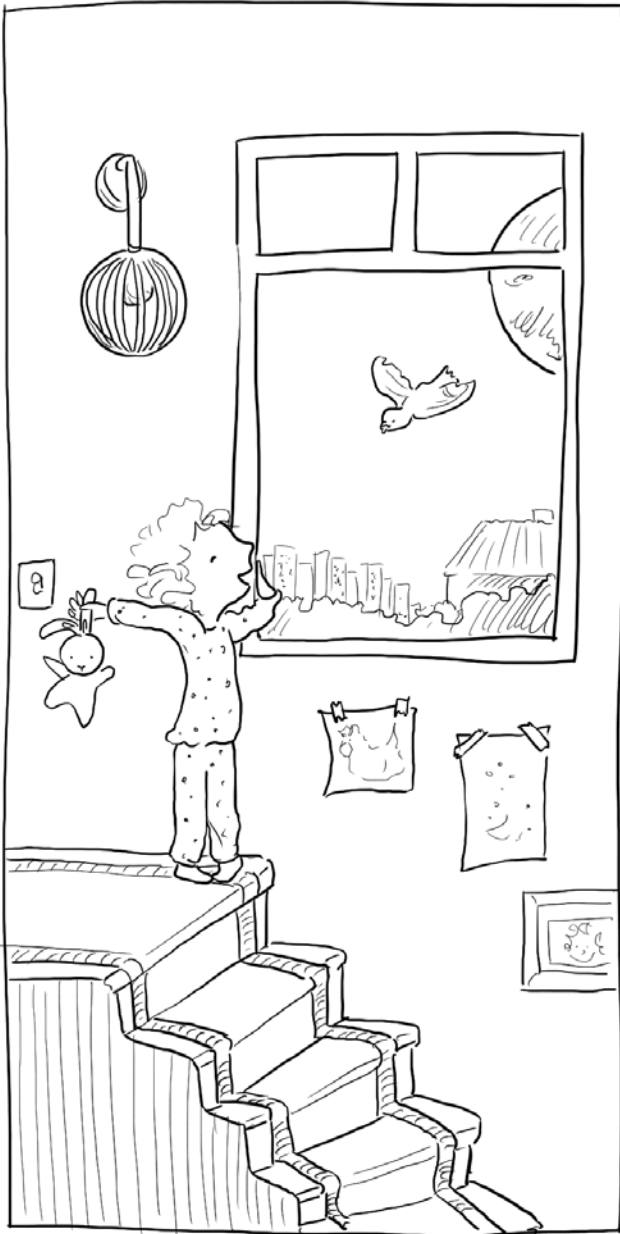


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Day or night?

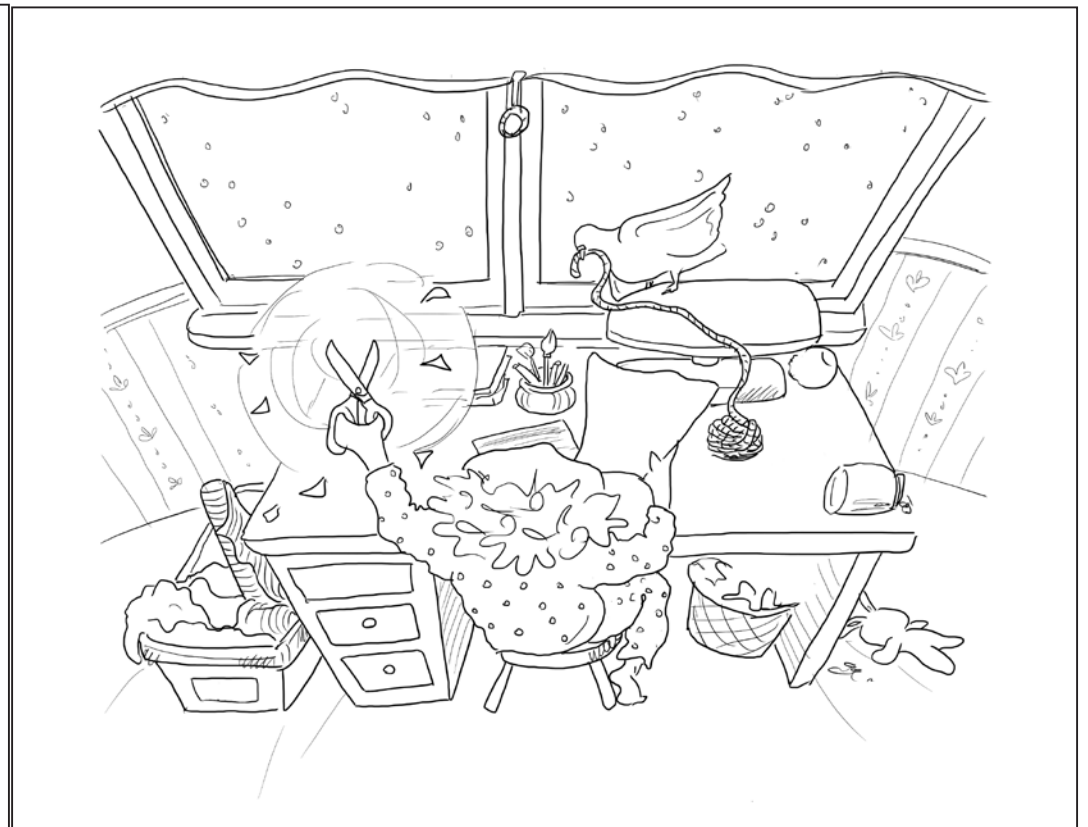
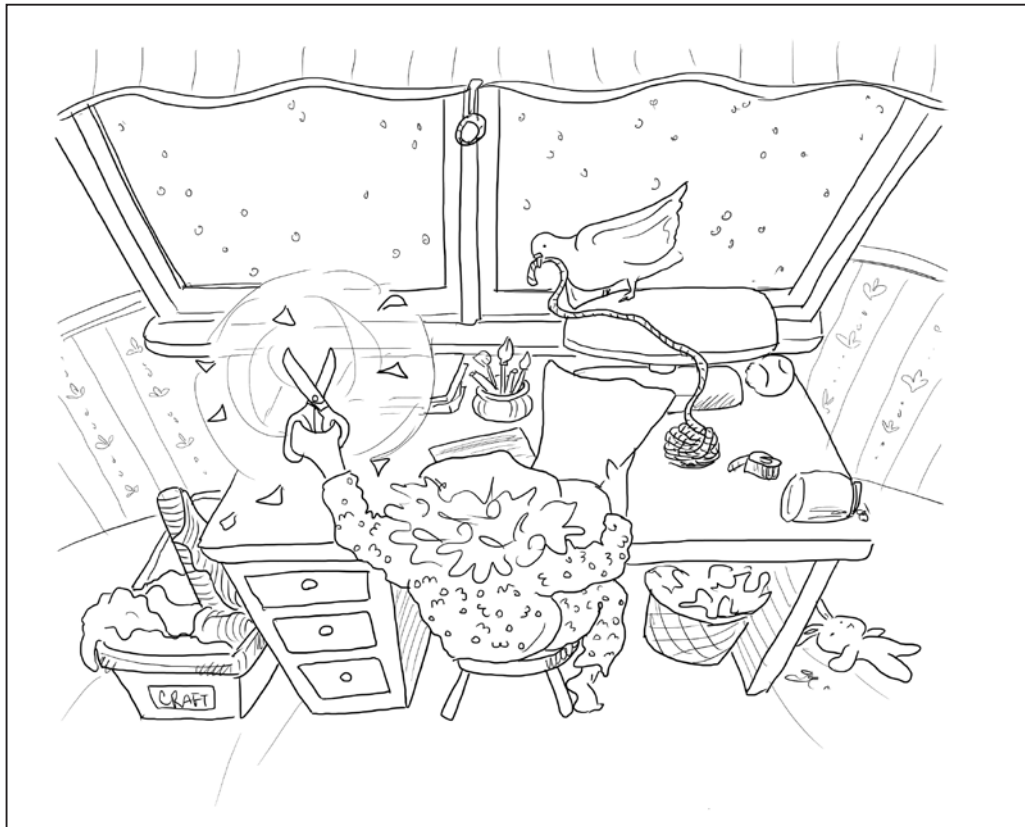
Colour in both to make one day and the other night



Under the Same Sky

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE (12)

Robert Vescio & Nicky Johnston



Pipe Cleaner Star Craft

What you will need:

- Pipe cleaners (about 50cm long)
- Pony beads
- And that's it!

Instructions

1. First pick out which colours of pony bead you want to use. I would recommend six for each side of the star.
2. Then pick a pipe cleaner and fold a little bit at the very end so that the beads don't fall off. Now slide on your first six beads to make the first side of the star. I found it easiest to start with the top-left side.
3. Then fold the pipe cleaner outwards and thread six more beads. Fold inwards and repeat. As you go along you'll be making your star come into shape.
4. By the end you should have ten sides, the final one you create will be the top-right side, to join up with the top-left.
5. You should have about 3-4cm of pipe cleaner left over. Unfold the section of pipe cleaner that you folded in step 2. Twine this section around the bottom of the 3-4cm left over pipe cleaner to hold your star together.
6. You can fold the left over pipe cleaner into a little hook or twine it around something to hang up your star (be careful of the wire at either end of the pipe cleaner, it can be pointy)
7. The end result should look something like this photo.



