



## **PLANNING PACKET FOR SHORT THE SQUIRREL'S 3rd Birthday: SHORT's Reading Blast-off**

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### **CO-FOUNDERS AND AUTHORS:**

Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett

Monica Anderson Young



**[www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com)**

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# SHORT the Squirrel

A literacy initiative promoting waiting time is reading time!

Dear Alabama Educators,

We are excited to be celebrating SHORT the Squirrel's third birthday as SHORT and his new friend, Owl-Livia, enjoy a Reading Blast-off! This fun event promotes reading in your classroom, throughout the school, and across the community. You now have access to the birthday video link in YouTube format introducing SHORT the Squirrel and featuring the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Please feel free to incorporate the video and activities in your classroom as your schedule allows. The video has been designed for you to pause at various locations for student interaction to sing along, discuss unique items featured in the video, answer questions, etc. Bonus features are also included to use as part of the birthday party or at a later date. Please note closed captioning is available. Research indicates the use of closed captioning is a way to improve reading!

Attached is the lesson plan packet to begin preparing for the celebration of literacy. The lesson plan is correlated to the Alabama Course of Study and has numerous supplemental activities to use across all subject areas. Enjoy the provided materials and educational resources with your students. We only ask that you respect the copyright of the material which means:

1. Please do not alter the handouts in any way.
2. Please do not forward the handouts or video to other colleagues. Instead, please direct them to register at [www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com). Many grants require data on impact, and these registrations provide the metrics for our program. Your RSVPs are precious for tracking and help us keep in touch with educators!

We look forward to a long partnership with educators as SHORT finds fillable gaps within community settings to encourage reading. Please send any suggestions to [contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com). We are here to support you and can make classroom/school visits (in-squirrel or virtual)!

Let's get your students to the launching pad as we prepare for a birthday event that is out of this world!!!!

See you **SHORT-ly!**

Sincerely,  
Monica and Dee, Co-Founders

**Please:**

- Visit SHORT the Squirrel to learn more at [www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com).
- Follow, like, and share your class events on Facebook and Instagram (@shortthesquirrel)
- Video link for the birthday celebration has been sent to you!
- Share this information with your principals, colleagues and community leaders.
- Contact us with any questions! [contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com)

SHORT the Squirrel is a non-profit founded in 2020 and created to encourage waiting time as reading time!



# SHORT THE SQUIRREL

## Alabama's Literacy Mascot

**Waiting time is reading time!**



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**A "SHORT" HISTORY:** Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett and Monica Anderson Young are co-founders of SHORT the Squirrel, a unique literacy initiative that transforms "waiting time into reading time." The idea originated in Mobile, where Monica's daughter, McRae Young, a young assistant district attorney at the time, noticed how many children were languishing in courtrooms with idle time. The initiative received Governor Ivey's endorsement, and SHORT was named Alabama's Literacy Mascot!



**CELEBRATING READING:** Each February SHORT the Squirrel's virtual birthday party celebrates reading. A reading pep rally from Montgomery's Rosa Parks Theatre rang in SHORT's first birthday. Year two celebrated with a reading parade in SHORT Goes to Mardi Gras. For 2023, SHORT's Reading Blast-off was filmed in Huntsville at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center with 35,000+ attending SHORT's parties. SHORT makes "in-squirrel" and virtual visits to schools and summer reading camps to promote reading.



**INTERACTIVE MATERIALS:** While the idea started as providing activity sheets for the Mobile courtrooms, SHORT the Squirrel has grown exponentially. We now have over 10 literacy kits and our first picture book, *Why SHORT Loves to Read*. The first literacy kit, *SHORT in Court*, is in all 67 Alabama courtrooms through Alabama Law Foundation grants. Based on the premise that waiting time is reading time, *SHORT Gets Sick* launched in partnership with Birmingham's Children's Hospital ER. *SHORT Recycles* was created to encourage recycling. *SHORT's Money Tree* introduces financial literacy and is a joint project with Alabama's Securities Commission. *SHORT's Feelings* is a partnership through Alabama NAMI/Department of Mental Health. *SHORT Tours the Town* explores community connectivity. *SHORT Visits Cousin Dot*, also through the Alabama Law Foundation, gives incarcerated individuals a chance to connect with young visitors through literacy.



**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:** Montgomery and Monroe County Schools have been selected to pilot *SHORT's Money Tree* in conjunction with Alabama Securities Commission. All first graders will receive a literacy kit to include the interactive booklet, a sticker, pencil, crayons and money log. Each teacher will receive a lesson plan to complement the booklet and tied to state math and reading standards.

- Follow SHORT the Squirrel on [social media](#).
- Watch his videos on [YouTube](#).
- Stay connected using the educator friendly [website](#).
- Share SHORT with early childhood teachers you know.



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Monica Anderson Young and Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett, Co-founders—  
[contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com)



# Lesson Plan

SUBJECT	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
<b>LANGUAGE &amp; LITERACY</b>		
Understanding and Expressing by Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	<p><b>1 a: Receptive Language:</b> Children will gain information by understanding the meaning of words and gestures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide trade books for reading center, read aloud or story time (sample list provided)</li> <li>• Promote literacy with color by sight word pages (included)</li> <li>• Arrange a special visit to the library as SHORT's favorite place</li> <li>• Host literacy &amp; language circles using the questions related to planet vocabulary cards.</li> <li>• Create a class book using the pages students create about traveling to space (included)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>1 b: Expressive Language:</b> Children will use words and gestures to express their thoughts, feelings and needs to others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretend to pack for a long journey to space. Pretend to be excited for the trip. Pretend to say goodbye to friends and family. Pretend to be excited when they arrive back from their trip to space.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2a: Comprehension:</b> Children will demonstrate emerging understanding of both the written and spoken word.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using SHORT's Reading Blast-off (by order), trace the words that show different components of tools used in space on page ____.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2c: Alphabet Knowledge:</b> Children will demonstrate an emerging understanding that letters and letter sounds represent the sounds of spoken language</p>	
	<p><b>3: Emergent Writing:</b> Children will demonstrate emerging understanding that writing is a way to communicate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a postcard to send to space using Blue Origin's Club of the Future program. Downloadable postcard templates and mailing instructions can be found here: <a href="https://www.clubforfuture.org/missions/">https://www.clubforfuture.org/missions/</a></li> </ul>



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<b>MATH</b>		
Exploring, Processing and Logical Reasoning	<b>2a:</b> Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction; Add and subtract within 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build addition/subtraction facts using space counting sheets.</li> <li>• Measure items in the classroom using star from die cut machine or plastic ones purchased at craft stores and record findings for data analysis (chart and image included).</li> <li>• Practice a backwards countdown for the rocket blast-off ( 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 – Blast-off!)</li> </ul>
	<b>4b:</b> Collect and analyze data and interpret results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After measuring with stars in previous activity, how many items took 10 stars? How many took five stars? How does the measurement correlate to size? (The more stars, the larger the item is.)</li> </ul>
	Foundations of Counting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplicate and extend simple patterns using concrete objects such as rocket, star, planet or items SHORT used to make his rocket.</li> <li>• Have students write numbers or number words backwards to countdown the blast-off.</li> </ul>
	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow students to create story problems to illustrate equations for number of stars or planets or time/distance for traveling in space.</li> </ul>
<b>PLAY AND LEARNING</b>		
Developing Skills and Attitudes for Success	<b>A:A2.2:</b> Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a cape or use household item (towel, pillowcase, etc.) as a literacy cape or part of a space suit to promote captions such as: Reading as a superpower, Reading taking you anywhere, etc.</li> </ul> <p>(NOTE – SHORT the Squirrel classroom reading capes are available at the SHORT the Squirrel store at <a href="http://www.shortthesquirrel.com">www.shortthesquirrel.com</a> )</p>



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<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>		
Learning about Myself, My Family, and My Community	<b>1.3</b> Recognize leaders and their roles in the local community and state. (Alabama).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate reading by taking pictures of SHORT and class favorite books/locations he visits through reading (image included) – Then send to <a href="mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com">contact@shortthesquirrel.com</a> for social media posting and sharing with Governor Ivey.</li> <li>• Invite local stakeholder to sponsor snacks for the party and tell about role in community.</li> <li>• Develop an aviation and space current events bulletin board.</li> </ul>
	<b>1.5:</b> Identify historical events and celebrations within the local community and throughout Alabama. (Alabama).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about Mae Jemison, an Alabama native and the first African American woman to go to space. <i>Rookie Biographies: Mae Jemison</i> by Nancy Polette <i>Mae Among the Stars</i> by Roda Ahmed</li> </ul>
<b>SCIENCE/ MEDIA LITERACY</b>		
Exploring the World Around Me	<b>R6:</b> Produce, review, and revise authentic artifacts that include multimedia using appropriate digital tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record/FaceTime child reading aloud to share with SHORT's Grand Friends (aka residents of nursing home or assisted living)</li> <li>• Design a birthday card using digital software</li> <li>• Host an outdoor scavenger hunt for things squirrels like or use</li> <li>• Record the similarities and differences between humans and squirrels as mammals (included)</li> </ul>
	<b>R9:</b> Use a variety of digital tools collaboratively to connect with other learners.	<p>Discuss collaboration and teamwork needed to attend space camp or be an astronaut.</p> <p>Link for space camp: <b>What's it like to go to Space Camp?</b> - YouTube</p>



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Environmental and Physical Science	Investigate the resulting motion of objects when forces of different strengths and directions act upon them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a moon rover (lunar rover) out of Legos. Test each with critical questions or experiments. (included)</li> </ul>
	Demonstrate and explain how structures made from small pieces (e.g., linking cubes, blocks, building bricks, creative construction toys) can be disassembled and then rearranged to make new and different structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a rocket out of pattern blocks or geoboards and share its features and special effects</li> <li>Use the scientific method to design new invention or improve current machines..</li> </ul>
	Make observations from media to obtain information about Earth events that happen over a short period of time or over a time period longer than one can observe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcase interviews with NASA experts sharing experiences and knowledge of earth and space.</li> </ul> <p>Link for video library: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/@RocketcenterUSA">https://www.youtube.com/@RocketcenterUSA</a></p>
	Observe, describe, and predict patterns of the sun, moon, and stars as they appear in the sky.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a moon phase model as demonstrated by Happy Tot Shelf (included)</li> </ul>
<b>CREATIVE ARTS</b>		
Exploring Feelings and Ideas through Art, Music, Movement and Drama	<b>A.</b> Children will demonstrate an emerging understanding and appreciation of art, music, drama, and dance as forms of self-expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and color SHORT's birthday hat (included)</li> <li>Reenact a trade book and record for students to share as class movie</li> <li>Design a space cape for SHORT to illustrate a favorite book title or character (included)</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b> Growing Strong, Healthy, and Resilient	<b>1.4 Locomotor skills:</b> Combine locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills in rhythmic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model the earth rotation around the sun after showing supporting video: <i>Earth's Rotation &amp; Revolution: Crash Course Kids 8.1</i> - YouTube</li> </ul>
	<b>2.1 Movement Concepts:</b> Space Demonstrate moving in personal and general space while maintaining self-control, in response to designated class expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students pretend they have to move in a small space with no gravity. How would they control their motions if they were weight-less? Share this short video (start at 1:40) which shares disabled children and adults getting to fly in zero gravity. <a href="https://youtu.be/QvP8fd2W_6A">https://youtu.be/QvP8fd2W_6A</a></li> </ul>



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## SHORT's Blast-off Recommended Reading List

Please find below some great titles for birthday celebrations and promoting a love for reading:

### Title, Author

About Mae Jemison, Alabama native and first African American woman in space:

**Rookie Biographies: Mae Jemison** by Nancy Polette

**Mae Among the Stars** by Roda Ahmed

**SHORT's Reading Blast-off** by Dr. Dee Dupree Bennett & Monica Anderson Young  
More information below.

**If You Had Your Birthday Party on the Moon** by Joyce Lapin

**Fly Guy Presents: Space** by Tedd Arnold

**Scholastic News Nonfiction Readers Biographies: Sally Ride** by Catherine Nichols

**Flat Stanley: Stanley in Space** by Jeff Brown

**Moonshot** by Brian Floca

**International Space Station** by Josh Gregory

**The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System** by Joanna Cole & Bruce Degen

**My First Book of Space** by Alice Peebles

**Space is Awesome** by Alice Harman

**A is for Astronaut** by Astronaut Clayton Anderson

**Look up with Me: Neil deGrasse Tyson: A Life Among the Stars**  
by Jennifer Berne & Lorraine Nam

**The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars** by Rachel Montez Minor



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### HOW TO ORDER:

Order copies of the interactive booklet, **SHORT's Reading Blast-off**, for students to practice reading and travel with SHORT to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. Booklets can be ordered through the website ([www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com)) or by emailing [operations@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:operations@shortthesquirrel.com).

The cost is \$2.50 each plus shipping. The SHORT the Squirrel organization is on the Alabama State Vendor list.

Please help us grow this list by making recommendations at [contact@shortthesquirrel.com](mailto:contact@shortthesquirrel.com).





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\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

Promote reading all year with SHORT the Squirrel Merchandise. Visit SHORT's Store at [www.shortthesquirrelstore.com](http://www.shortthesquirrelstore.com) for great reading incentives!

This lesson plan promotes reading with cross-curricular activities to emphasize Alabama geography and history.

## SHORT's Party Words

- What are some **NOUNS** we use at a birthday party?
- What are some **VERBS** we will do at a birthday party?
- What are some **SYNONYMS** for **HAPPY** that will describe a birthday party?

## SQUIRRELLY Words

- Create a list of **HOMONYMS** that might be part of SHORT's Celebration. Examples:

**tail, tale   cents, sense   two, too, to   sale, sail**  
**buy, by, bye   train/train**

- Create a list of **ACTION WORDS** that one might identify when describing a squirrel.

**run, climb, scamper, scurry, etc.**

- Create a list of new space vocabulary (included).

**lunar rover, telescope, satellite, etc.**

- Explore vowels by creating a list of words that change with just a silent 'e'!

**cap/cape   hop/hope   man/mane   rob/robe   plan/plane**

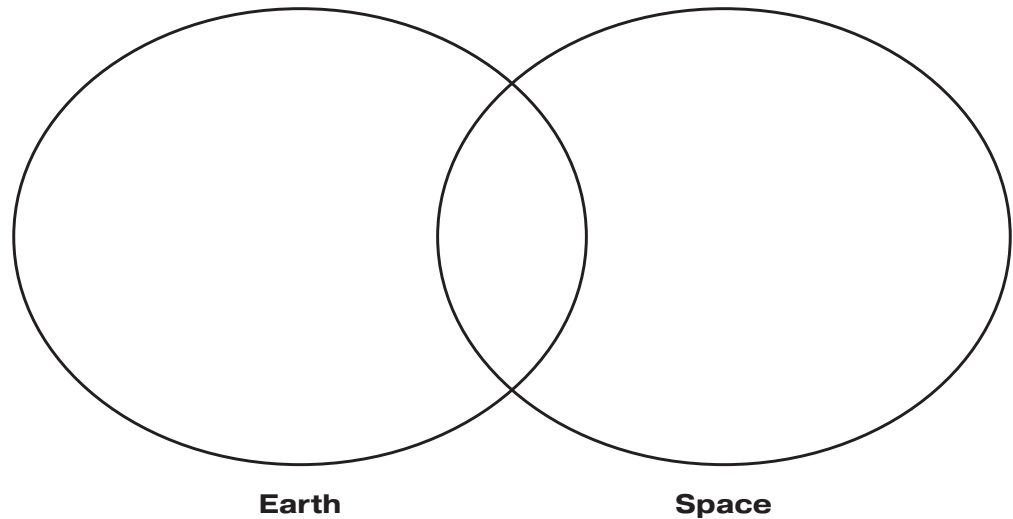
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## SHORT's Compare and Contrast

- Using a diagram, identify characteristics of a celebration to determine similarities and differences of earth and space.



## Nothing SHORT about YOU!

- Create unique capes (included) by allowing students to draw special things on their cape that represent them.
- Have each student select a favorite book or book character and share this book on the postcard template.

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\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

## SHORT Tales

- Make a class book to reinforce the celebration of literacy in a reading reading blast-off! The students will create a page of the class book by completing the writing prompt and developing an illustration to accompany their sentence. Then, all pages are bound or scanned to create a class book, e-book, or slide-show.

**When I land on the moon, I will feel...**

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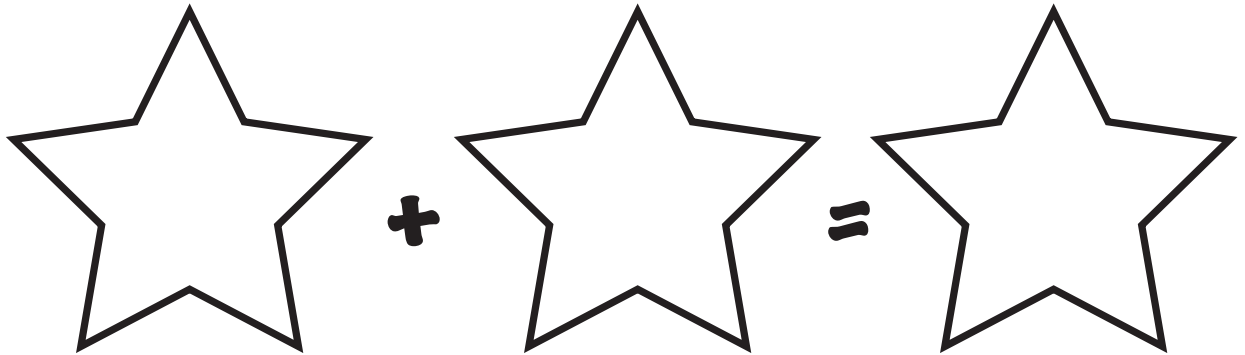
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## SHORT Math:

- Using die cut stars or plastic stars have students measure items in the classroom and complete the chart below to compare shortest to longest.

Item	How Many Stars?	Notes

- Build addition facts using space counting sheets.



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## Phases of the Moon Model (as designed by Happy Tot Shelf)

- 2 large clear plastic cups
- Black permanent marker pen
- 1-inch diameter yellow circle
- A piece of black construction paper
- Basic stationery like glue, tape and ruler

A fun and interactive way to learn about phases of the moon, there is little wonder why this is our most popular DIY learning toy! As the cup turns, the child will see the moon change throughout the lunar phase. Here's how to make one!

1. Measure the height of the plastic cup. Cut a rectangular piece of black construction paper with the height of the plastic cup as the length of the paper.
2. Paste the yellow circle on the black construction paper.
3. Roll the black paper up with the yellow circle facing out. Making sure that the yellow circle is not covered by the black paper. Insert the roll of black paper into one of the plastic cup. Then secure the black paper onto the cup.
4. Put this plastic cup with the black paper and yellow circle INTO the second plastic cup. NOTE: We will be drawing on the second plastic cup that's outside in the following steps.
5. Start by locating the yellow circle and write the name full moon under the yellow circle.
6. Imagine the cups like a clock, with the full moon as the 12'o clock position, turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 3'o clock position. Trace the outline of the left half of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The left half of the yellow circle will be covered and the right half will appear as a half moon or first quarter moon. Write the name below.
7. Now turn the cup so that the yellow circle is in the 6'o clock position. Using the black permanent marker pen, trace the outline of the yellow circle and fill in completely with the black marker. The yellow circle will be covered and will look like the new moon. Write the name new moon below.

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8. Turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 9'o clock position. Trace the outline of the right half of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The right half of the yellow circle will be covered and the left half will appear as a half moon or last quarter moon. Write the name below.
9. Turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 1.30 clock position. Trace a crescent on the left of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The right uncovered part of the yellow circle will appear as the (waxing) gibbous moon. Write the name below.
10. Turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 4.30 clock position. Trace a gibbous (less than the full circle, but larger than the semicircle shape) on the left of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The right uncovered part of the yellow circle will appear as the (waxing) crescent moon. Write the name below.
11. Turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 7.30 clock position. Trace a gibbous (less than the full circle, but larger than the semicircle shape) on the right of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The left uncovered part of the yellow circle will appear as the (waning) crescent moon. Write the name below.
12. Turn the cup so that the yellow circle is now in the 10.30 clock position. Trace a crescent on the right of the yellow circle and fill in with the black marker. The left uncovered part of the yellow circle will appear as the (waning) gibbous moon. Write the name below. The learning toy is completed! Now to play and learn with it!
13. Illustrate the phases of the moon using chocolate sandwich cookies. For more information go to <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/moon-phases-with-cookies.htm>.

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## **Design a Moon Rover (aka Lunar Rover as described by Adventure in Mommydom)**

Get your students' creative juices flowing with this fantastic moon craft activity. There is a list of different criteria they'll need to follow when constructing their simple moon craft. They will only need some Legos and plenty of imagination!

- Must be able to go down a four-foot board at a 45-degree angle and not break as it came down.
- Must be able to move at least two feet when Mommy pushes the moon rover (I was the person pushing so no one could be said to cheat and push harder or softer)
- Must be able to hold two people
- Must be able to hold cargo in it, and the cargo cannot fall out during any of the tests
- Must stay in one piece for the crash test

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## Design Your Own Rocket:

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## A SHORT Rotation Earth Rotation Creative Movement

This modeling activity will show the movements of the Sun, Earth, and Moon. You will need lots of space such as a grassy area, gymnasium, etc. It is so important to go over behavior expectations ahead of time and to explain that all movements should be done slowly and with thought to prevent injury.

- Divide the class into 3 groups:
  - 1 student will be the Moon,
  - 3 students will be Earth
  - The remaining students will be the Sun.
- Have the students who are modeling the Sun hold hands and form a large circle. Direct them to rotate their circle counterclockwise. Let them rest in place while you set up the Earth model.
- Next, have students who are modeling Earth hold hands and form a circle. Direct them to rotate counterclockwise and then have them continue to rotate while moving as a group to revolve around the Sun. Let them rest in place while you set up the Moon model.
- Then, direct the student who is modeling the Moon to rotate counterclockwise while revolving counterclockwise around Earth.
- Finally, have the class do all the movements together so that the Sun is rotating in place, the Earth is rotating while revolving around the Sun, and the Moon is rotating while revolving around the Earth.

Creative movement exercise designed by Two Teaching Taylors.

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## SHORT Puppet



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## SHORT Puppet



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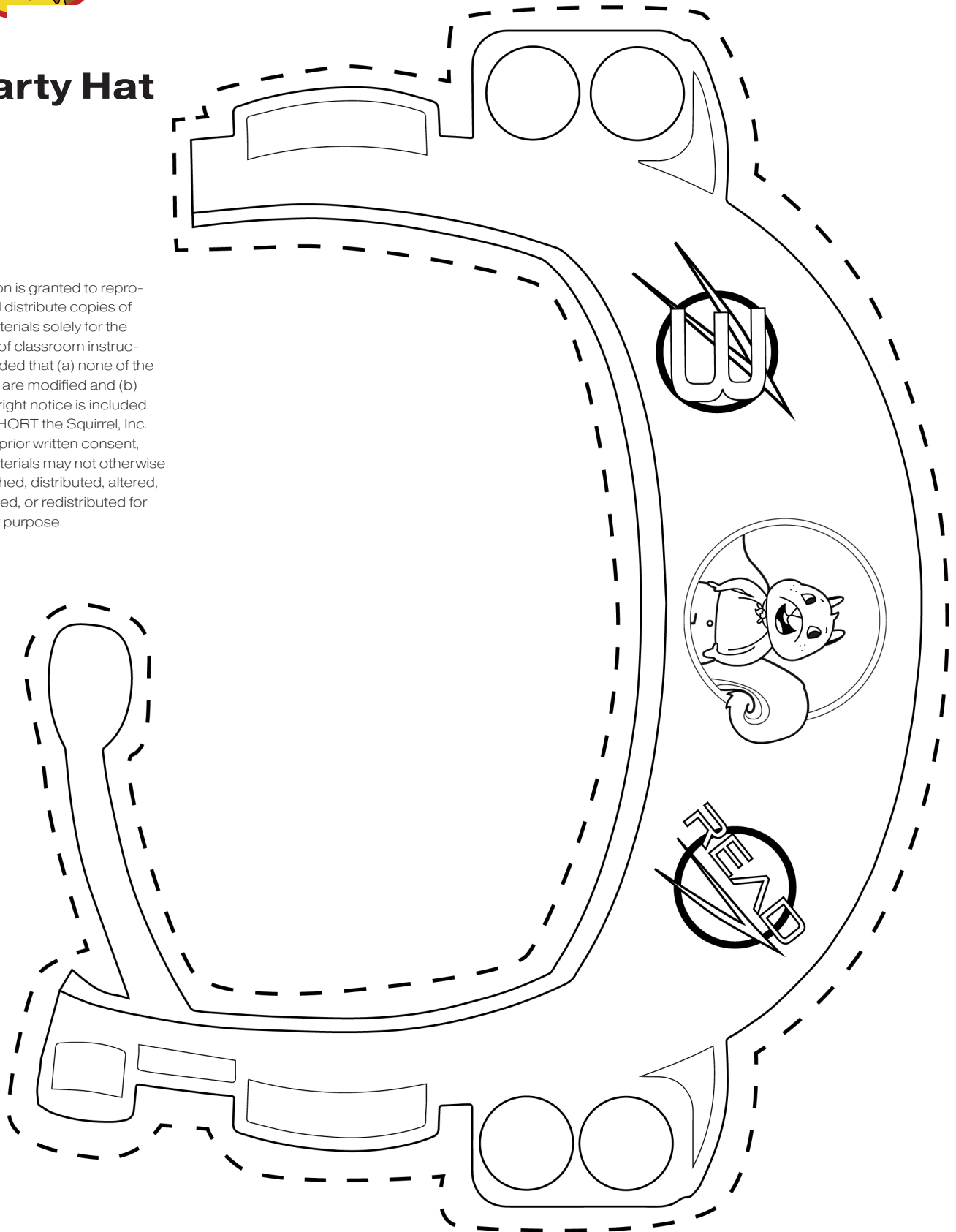


**SHORT the Squirrel™** is a non-profit organization. Our mission is to spread literacy-rich, community-oriented content to our youngest citizens.

\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

## Party Hat

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# SHORT the Squirrel goes on a picnic.

them

how

them

how

may

by

and

like

by

how

can

and

can

of

word..... color

- can..... red
- of..... orange
- and..... yellow
- by..... green
- them..... blue
- how..... purple
- like..... brown
- may..... black

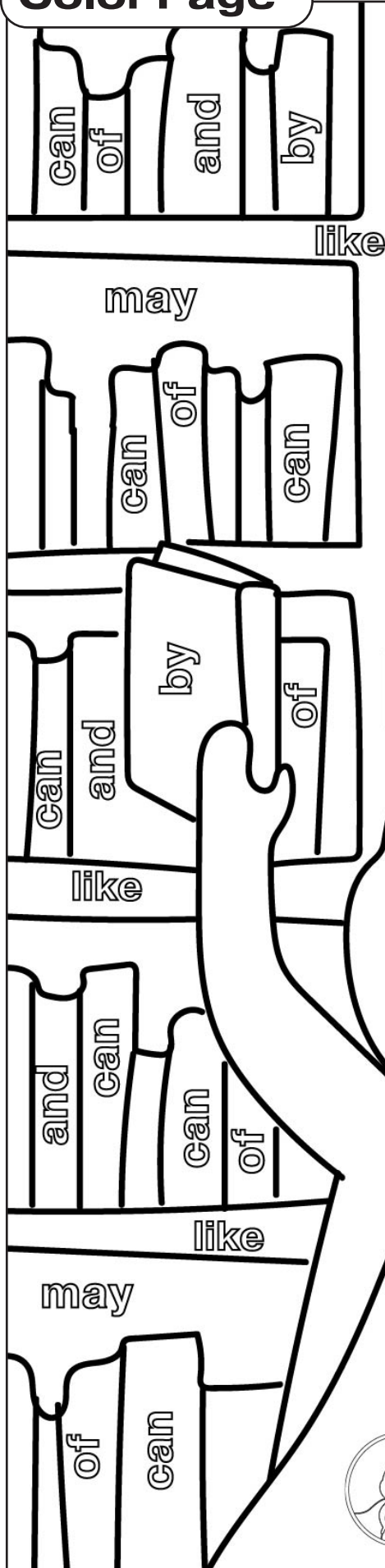


**SHORT the Squirrel** brings literacy moments to our youngest citizens. Learn more by visiting [www.shortthesquirrel.com](http://www.shortthesquirrel.com)

# Color Page

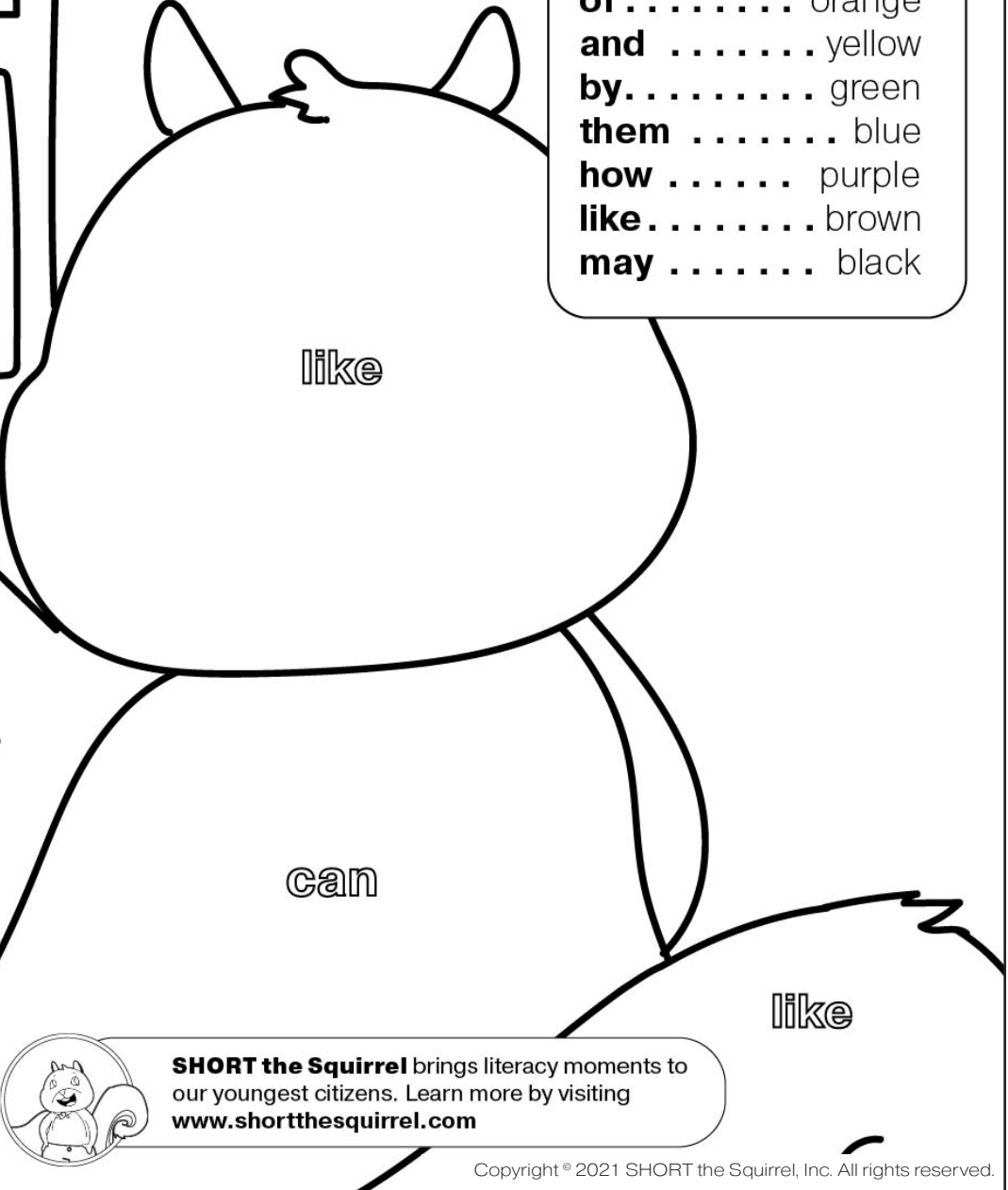
\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

**SHORT the Squirrel**  
**visits the library.**  
them



how

word.....	color
can.....	red
of.....	orange
and.....	yellow
by.....	green
them.....	blue
how.....	purple
like.....	brown
may.....	black

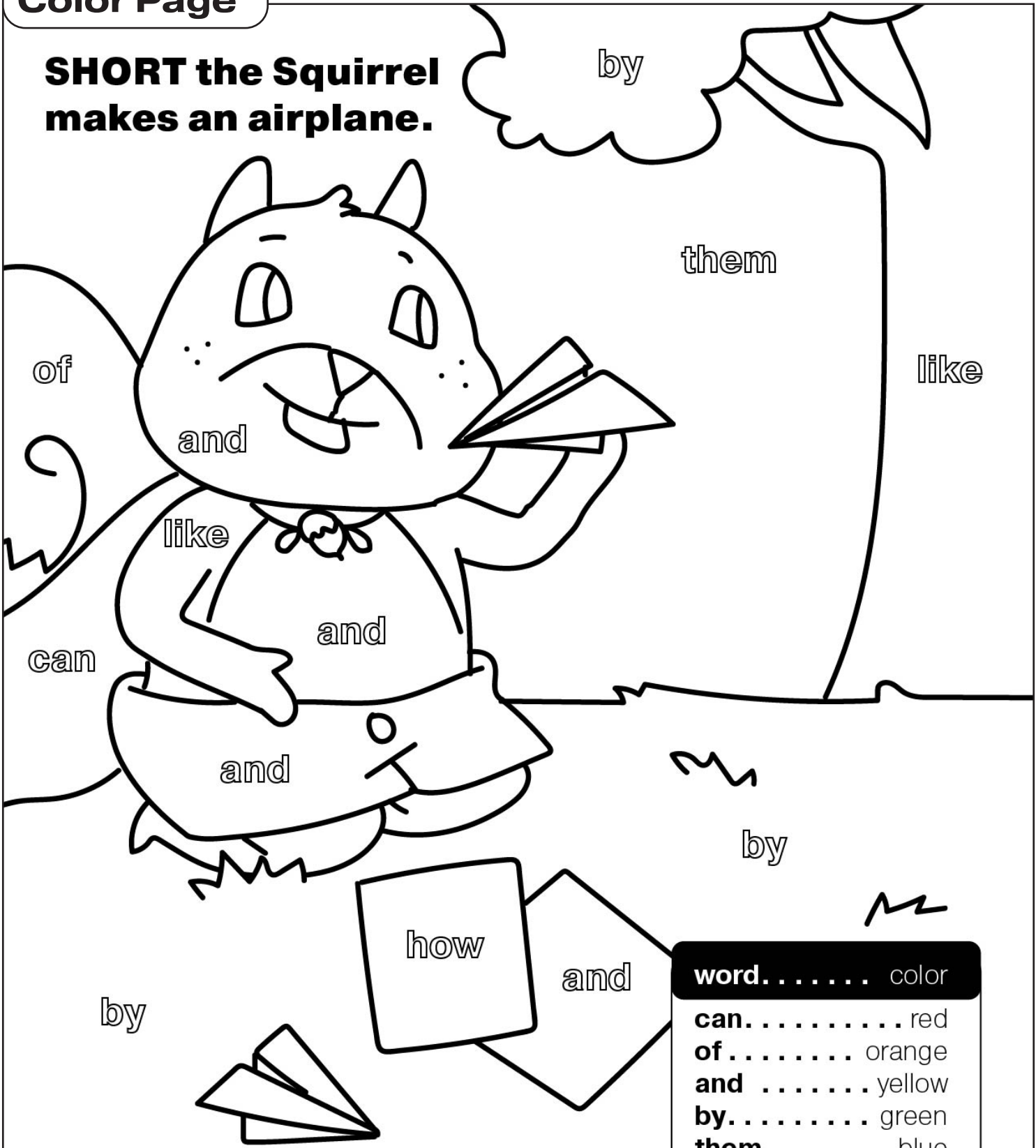


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# Color Page

\*See lesson plan outline for specific directions.

## SHORT the Squirrel makes an airplane.



word.....	color
can.....	red
of.....	orange
and.....	yellow
by.....	green
them.....	blue
how.....	purple
like.....	brown
may.....	black

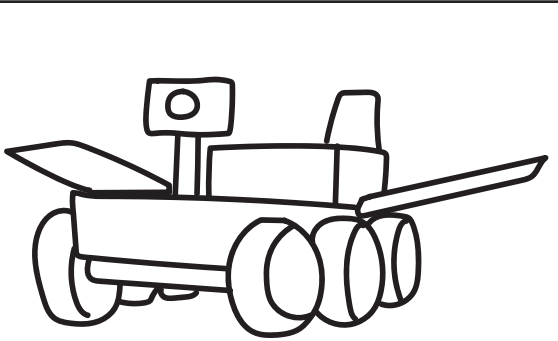


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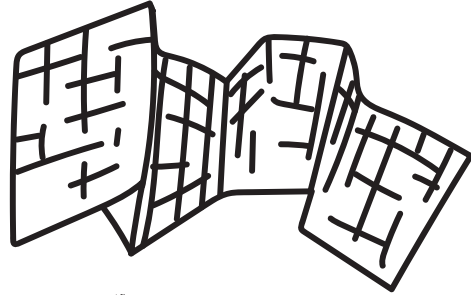


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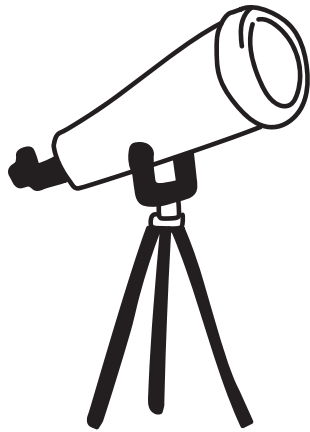
## Vocabulary words for tracing



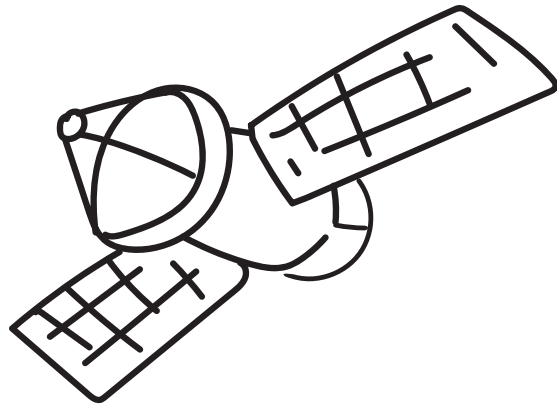
Lunar Rover



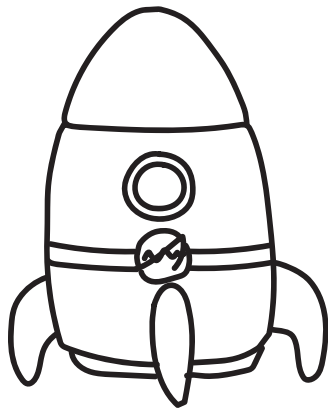
Charts



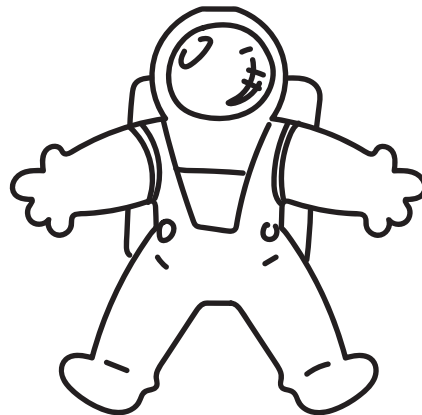
Telescope



Satellite



Rocket



Astronaut

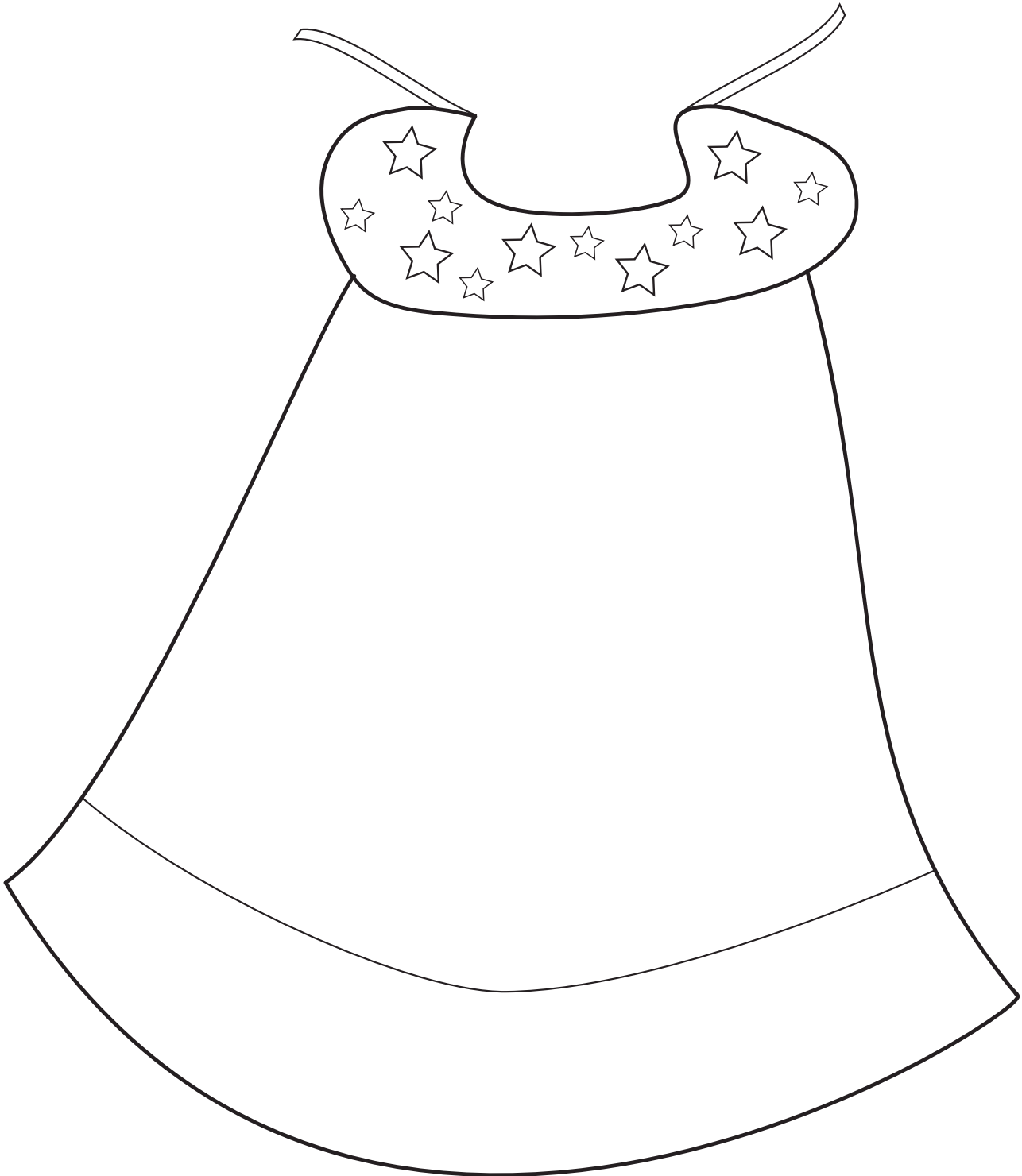




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**Imagine how your cape would be designed.**





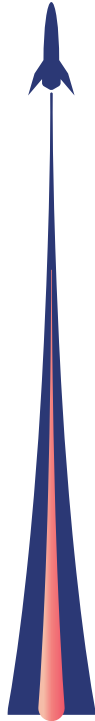
## Send your postcard to space!

On the blank side, draw or write your ideas about how we can use the view from space for the benefit of Earth — or any other message you'd like to send.

On this side, write your return address and add a stamp. Then place the postcard in a stamped envelope and mail to:

**Club for the Future**  
35961 State Highway 54  
PO BOX 1552  
Van Horn, Texas  
79855-1552

The Club will fly your postcard to space on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket, then return it to you stamped "Flown to Space."



Place  
Stamp  
Here

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State/Province

\_\_\_\_\_  
Country/Zip Code

**CLUB FOR THE FUTURE**  
[clubforfuture.org](http://clubforfuture.org)



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Country/Zip Code

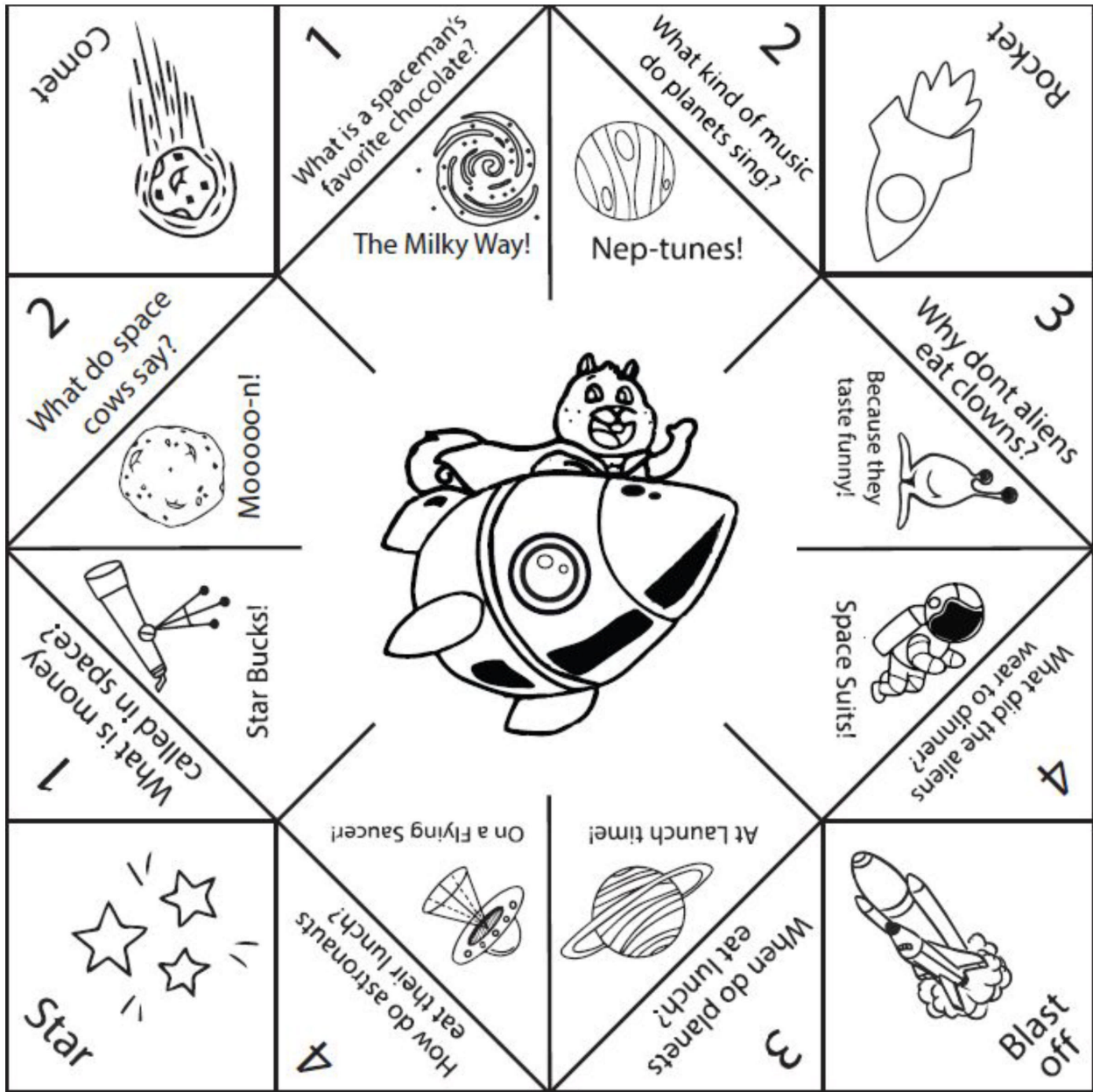
**CLUB FOR THE FUTURE**  
[clubforfuture.org](http://clubforfuture.org)

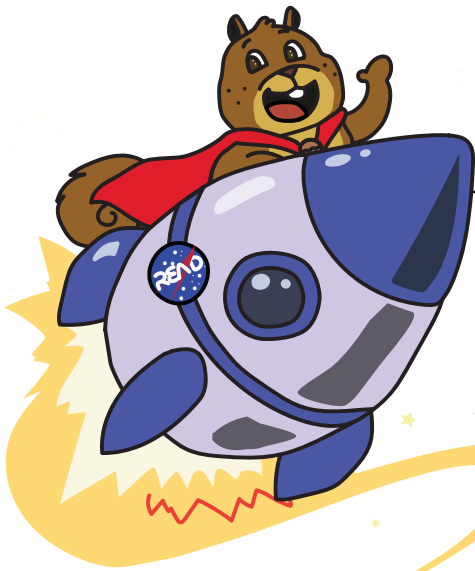




# How to use the Joke Teller

1. Print and fold a joke teller. Pair up, and pick one person to operate the joke teller and one to play.
2. Have the player choose one of the top four squares. The operator spells the object while opening and closing the joke story teller for each letter
3. Player selects a number. The operator counts out loud while opening and closing the joke teller for each count.
4. Player selects a number. The operator tells the joke under the number and then opens the flap for the answer.
5. Then the player becomes the joke teller operator.
6. You can also use the joke teller alone!





Literacy and STEAM education go hand-in-hand just like SHORT and his new friend, Owl-Livia. Emerging readers can thrive as they learn in environments where subjects are intertwined to encourage the whole-child. This year's Reading Blast-off reinforces reading as well as mathematics, science, social studies, art, and creative movement. The thematic approach offers support to the learning objectives recommended by the Alabama State Department of Education promoting Grade K-3 content standards where "students have opportunities for appropriate investigation and observation of the world around them."

This year's birthday event has been made possible with the help of many individuals and organizations. A special thank you to the following for this lesson plan:

Alabama Math, Science, Technology Initiative

Alabama Reading Initiative

Alabama State Department of Education

Pat Ammons and Mallorie Vanghel, U.S. Space and Rocket Center

Ed Noreiga, Troy University: Design Center

Debbie Jones, Curriculum Designer

Dr. Shannon Dadd, STEM Professor, Troy College of Education

Dr. Nickey Johnson, Regional Coordinator, Office of Mathematics Improvement

Ms. Cora Evans, Faulkner Career Tech Center



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### **Enjoy the U.S. Space & Rocket Center as a class or as an educator!**

The U.S. Space & Rocket is popular with school groups who come for STEM enrichment and to meet Alabama curriculum requirements for teaching space history. Alabama school students attending with their schools receive a deep discount on all Space Camp programs, and the Alabama legislature makes possible the Space Academy for Leading Students in Alabama (SALSA) program and the Alabama Space Academy for Educators. In the SALSA program, legislators may nominate one female and one male middle school student from their districts to attend Space Camp for free. Likewise, Alabama teachers may apply to attend the educator program for free, gaining techniques for teaching STEM subjects and accruing 45 hours of continuing education units.