

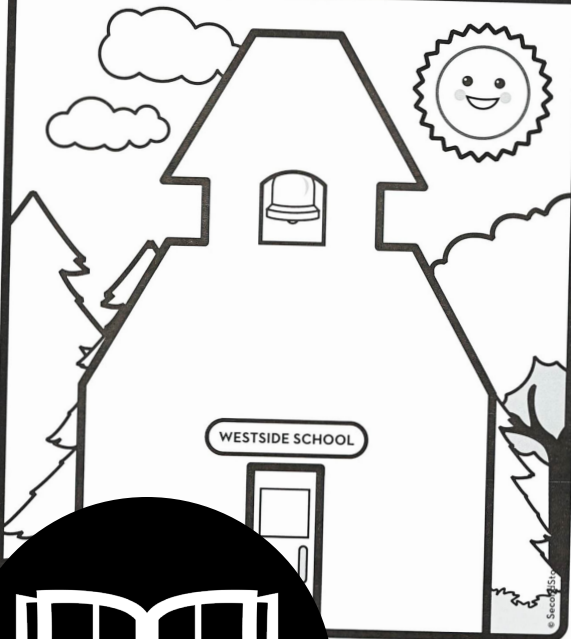
# PATTERN

# BLOCKS

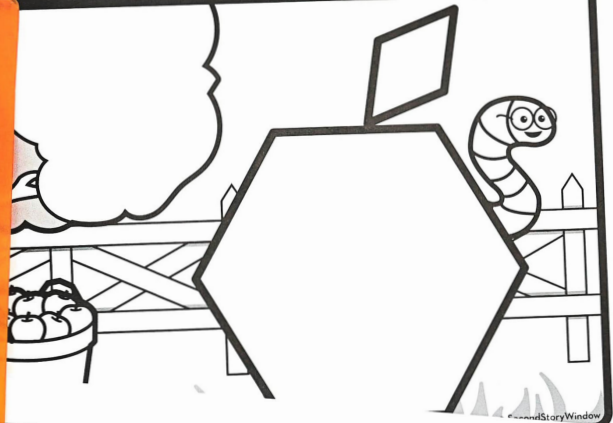
## for the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

## 20+ PRINTABLE MATS

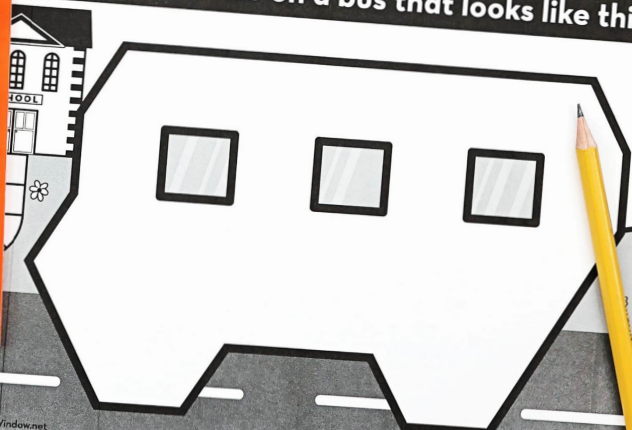
Use the blocks to make a school.  
What does your school look like?



Use the blocks to make an apple.  
Do you like red, yellow, or green apples best?



Use the blocks to make a bus.  
Would you like to ride on a bus that looks like this?



SECOND STORY  
WINDOW



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You **CANNOT** change or sell this resource...because, well, c'mon! It took a long time and a lot of effort for us to make it!

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR DOWNLOAD!



SHOP

Hello there! We are a set of sisters who are the brains behind the 'Second Story Window' brand. We are both former 2nd grade teachers and current preschool teachers with a combined 17 years experience in the classroom. We love to make life just a little easier for teachers by designing curriculum that is both rigorous and easy-to-use!

*Emily & Heidi*

TRANSFORM YOUR

## Word Work INTO Word Play

- A COMPREHENSIVE PHONICS CURRICULUM -

*Ready to take your word work  
to the next level?*

CLICK THE BUTTON BELOW TO TRY OUT OUR  
PHONICS CURRICULUM... COMPLETELY FREE!

**I WANT WORD PLAY!**



# TEACHER'S GUIDE

On my first day as a teacher, I carefully centered a cute all-about-me paper on each desk. But, when faced with a bunch of questions to read, some of my new little sweethearts thought they were already failing at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade! That's when the crying started. And when one kid gets going... You know how it goes!

Lesson learned: nothing academic to start the year! I set out safe, friendly coloring

pages after that. But I didn't like handing out the crayons before we could set discuss them. (Not that I worried they'd misuse crayons in the first minutes of school, it just stole the thunder of introducing them in a fun way later in the day.) So what to do? Nothing academic. Nothing that used a school tool I wanted to explain later... And that's how I switched to starting the first day with pattern blocks!

## BENEFITS

Think about everything that's going on that first morning. You're finishing last minute prep and kids are showing up early (so early!). You're posing for first day pictures, you're helping your new students figure out where to go. But then you need something for those early arrivals to do while you help the next kids with their backpacks. This is where pattern blocks save the day. No joke. They are first day heroes! Look at everything pattern blocks have to offer:

- They're open ended. They keep kids engaged for a long time so you can sort school supplies, help kids find where they need to go, and submit your attendance.
- All kids love them. Kindergarteners jump right in. Reluctant 6<sup>th</sup> graders sit with them and then get absorbed in intricate designs. (That's why I also set out pattern blocks for any siblings who tag along to parent conferences.)
- They don't require instructions. You don't have time to explain an activity to each kid individually. Kids see pattern blocks and know just what to do.
- They're calming. On such a high-intensity morning, the tactile nature of the blocks and the way they lend themselves to making patterns makes it a really peaceful experience at the start of your day.
- Creating next to each other is a low-stress way for your students to start to get to know each other. It's easier to chat with a stranger if your hands are busy.

# OVERVIEW

- **EDITABLE WELCOME SLIDES**

You can project these so kids know what to do when they arrive.

- **12 BACK-TO-SCHOOL THEME MATS**

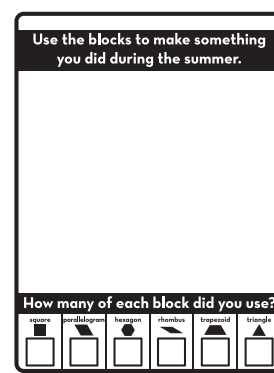
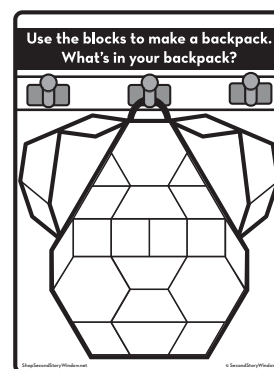
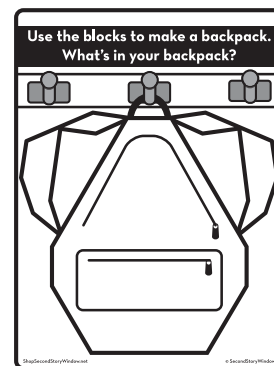
Each mat is available with the inside shapes marked or as an open outline. We recommend using the open outline with most students (even our preschoolers manage it just fine). It's more engaging to have to figure out which shapes can fill the design than to have to match each shape exactly.

- **GET-TO-KNOW-YOU QUESTIONS**

At the top of each mat is a get-to-know-you question to promote discussion between the kids as they work. If you have a few minutes between sorting school supplies and submitting your attendance, you can circulate among the students and admire their creative designs. The prompts on the page give you an easy way to connect with your new students. "Oh, you're making the pizza slice! What do you like to eat for lunch?"

- **BUILDING PROMPT MATS**

Use these as a fun challenge or a way to get to know a little more about your students. They include prompts like, "Use the blocks to build the first letter of your name," or "Use the blocks to build your favorite animal." (*Heads up, these types of prompts might be stressful for younger learners who aren't able to make their block designs match the image in their minds.*)



## TIPS & TRICKS

You really can just dump a pile of blocks in the center of each table (or a smaller pile at each desk) and be good to go. But here are some tips and tricks that might be useful.

### WHERE TO GET BLOCKS

You need a lot of blocks to keep a whole class engaged for 20-30 minutes. Hopefully you own a large stash of pattern blocks, but if you don't, here are some suggestions.

- Put them on your wish list and ask parents to supply what you need. You honestly cannot have too many pattern blocks. They make a great inside recess activity. They make a great time-filler if you find yourself with a few extra minutes. I always put them out for siblings to play with during parent conferences. The more pattern blocks the better!
- Post your request on social media or apply for Donor's Choose. A lot of people are eager to help teachers get what they need and pattern blocks have a lot of learning benefits beyond starting the first day.
- If you can't get any donated, ask your coworkers to borrow theirs. If they're not using them in the morning, they likely won't need them on the first day. Just keep track of which blocks belong to which teacher. Maybe make a note, "The blocks on tables 1 and 2 belong to Jennifer. The blocks on tables 3 and 4 belong to Sheryl." Nothing sours relationships quicker than borrowing something from a coworker that you don't return!

### MAKING IT WORK

- You can leave the blocks in a pile. However, if you want something more organized, the ideal containers are shallow (like trays, desk organizer bins, etc.). Kids like to be able to see which blocks they're reaching for. Hit up the dollar store if you need some new, cheap containers.
- Print however many mats you need to keep kids engaged. If you want to use these again next year, you may want to laminate them.
- Many kids will want to make their own designs rather than use the mats.
- Edit the welcome slide and display it so kids know what to do. As students arrive,

help them with backpacks and lunchboxes and then direct them to explore with the blocks while they wait.

- Kids sometimes want to hoard the yellow hexagon blocks. You may need to keep an eye out for that!
- You may want to just use the shape outlines for the first activity and save the building challenges for later. You could print those mats on paper so kids can write on them, or use dry erase markers on lamination.
- To use the building mats as a get-to-know-you activity, give the whole class the same prompt, give them some time to work, and then let students share their creations with a partner or with the whole class.

For several years, we've suggested that teachers start the first day of school with pattern blocks. The teachers we've heard back from all rave that they loved starting the school year this way. They all discovered, like we did, that pattern blocks take the stress out of one of the most stressful mornings of the year.

We'd love to hear about your experience! Join us in our ***Teacher Approved Facebook*** group and let us know how about your first day.

# PATTERN BLOCKS FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Google Slides Link

## Directions:

- These files are for classroom use only. Do not post them on any public website or sharing sites/groups.
- Purchase is for one classroom only. Multiple licenses for additional teachers at one school can be purchased at a discount.
- **Before clicking these links, be sure to sign into the Google Drive you will use to share the files with your students.**
- Click each link and you will be prompted to make a copy to your own Google Drive account. You can organize the files any way you wish!
- Google Forms requires students to have an e-mail address in order to use automatic grading but that feature can be turned off.

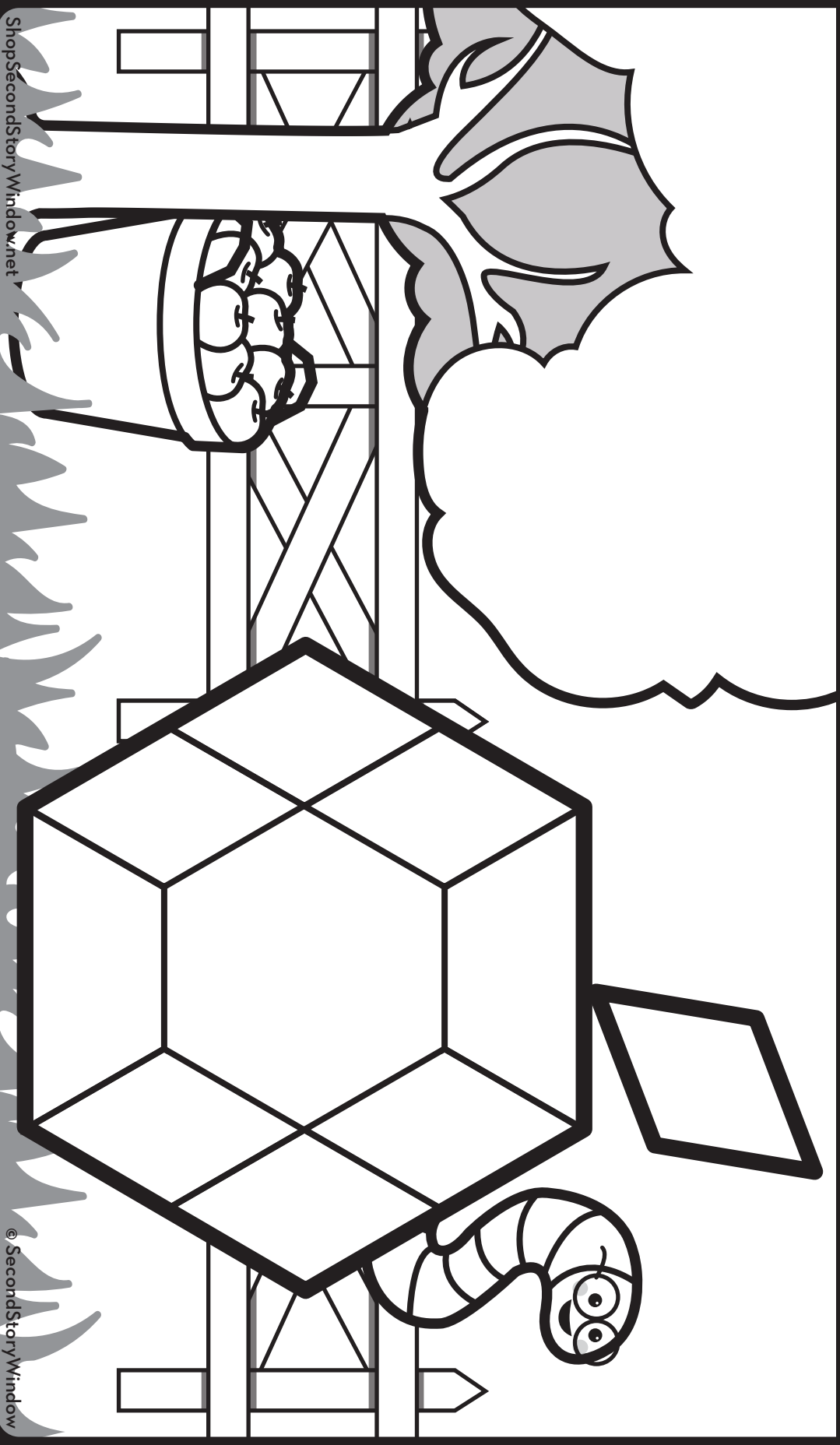
## Links:

- [Pattern Blocks Direction Slides](#)

## Help?

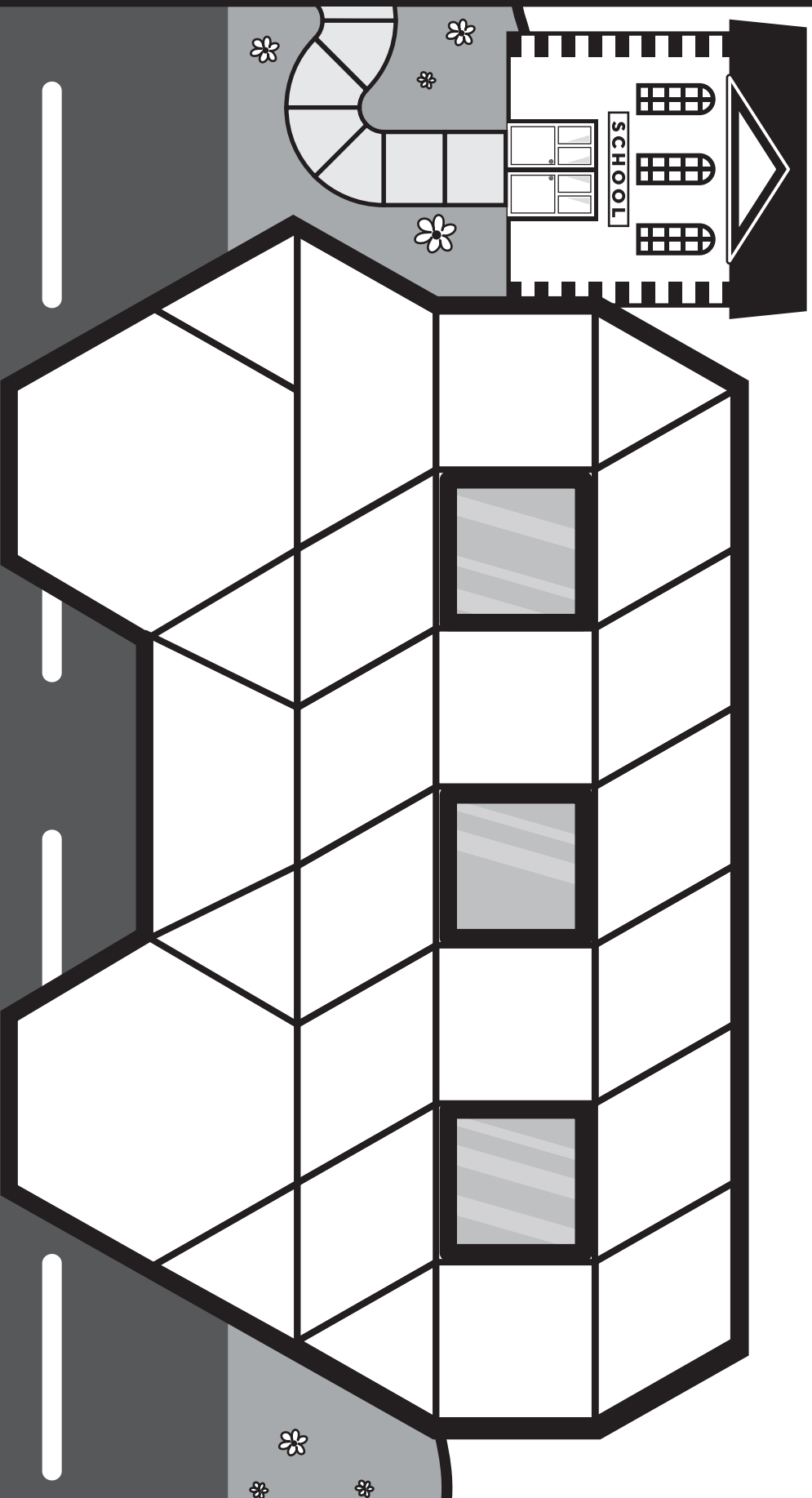
If you have problems please e-mail us at [hello@secondstorywindow.net](mailto:hello@secondstorywindow.net)

Use the blocks to make an apple.  
Do you like red, yellow, or green apples best?

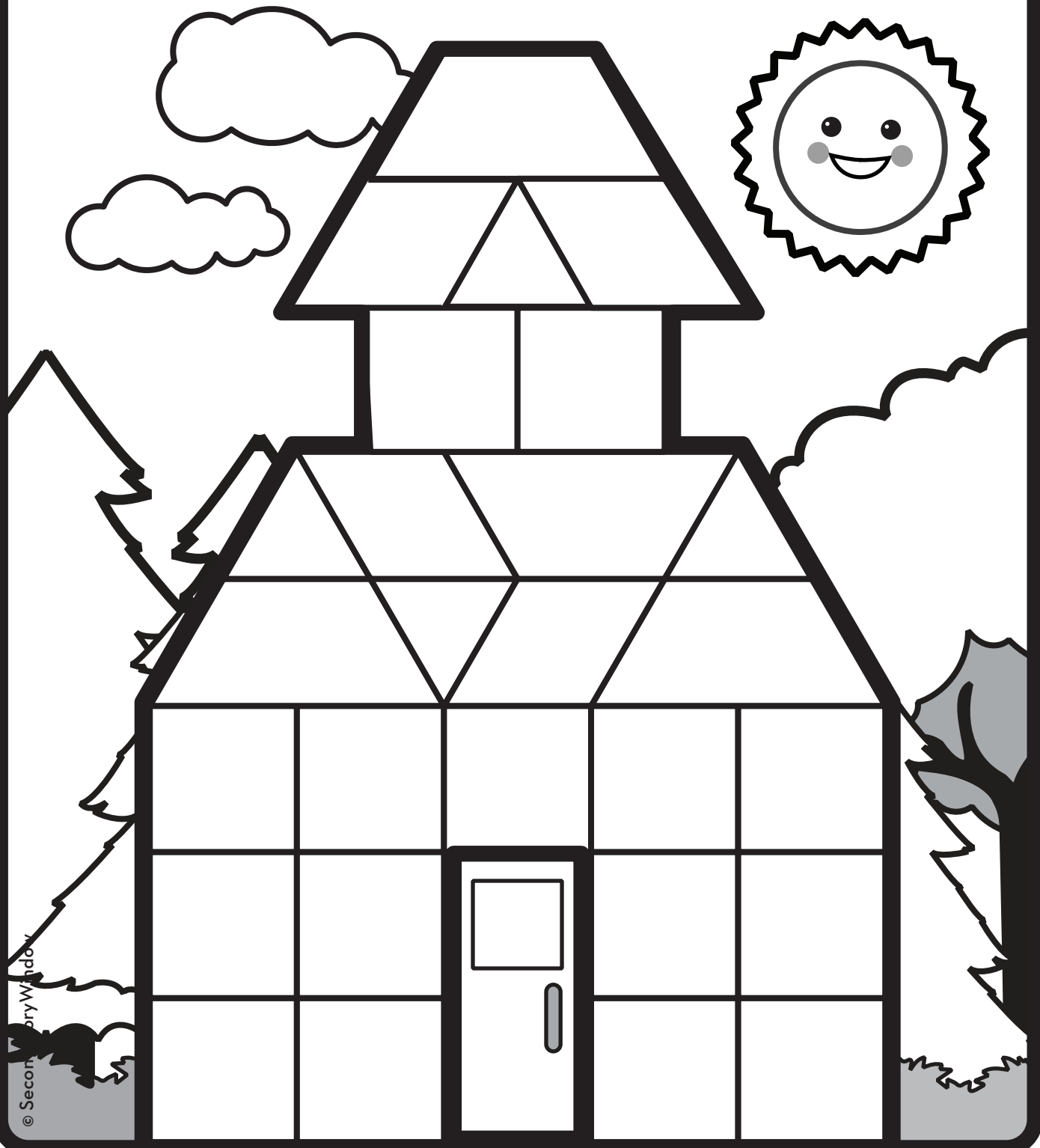


Use the blocks to make a bus.

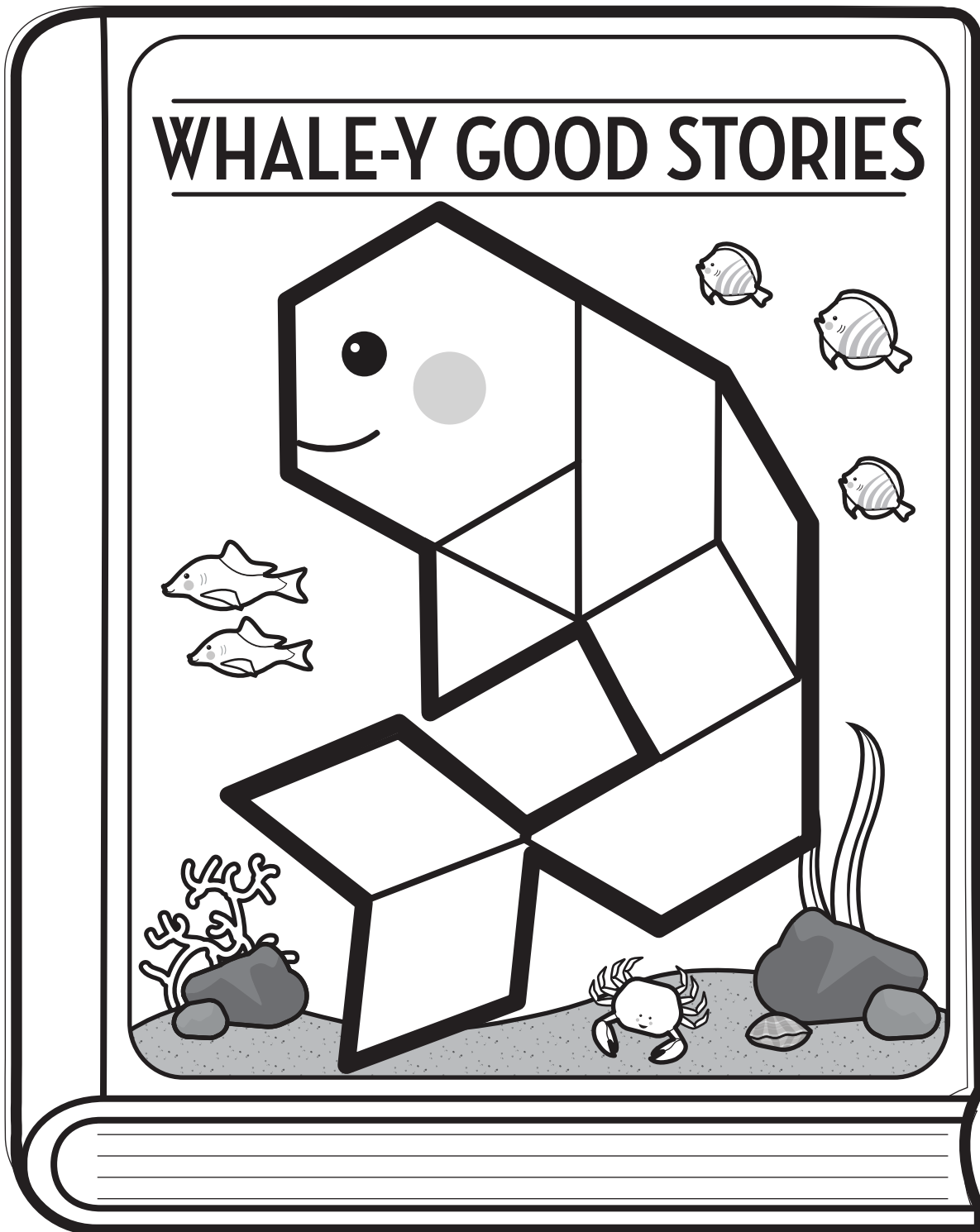
Would you like to ride on a bus that looks like this?



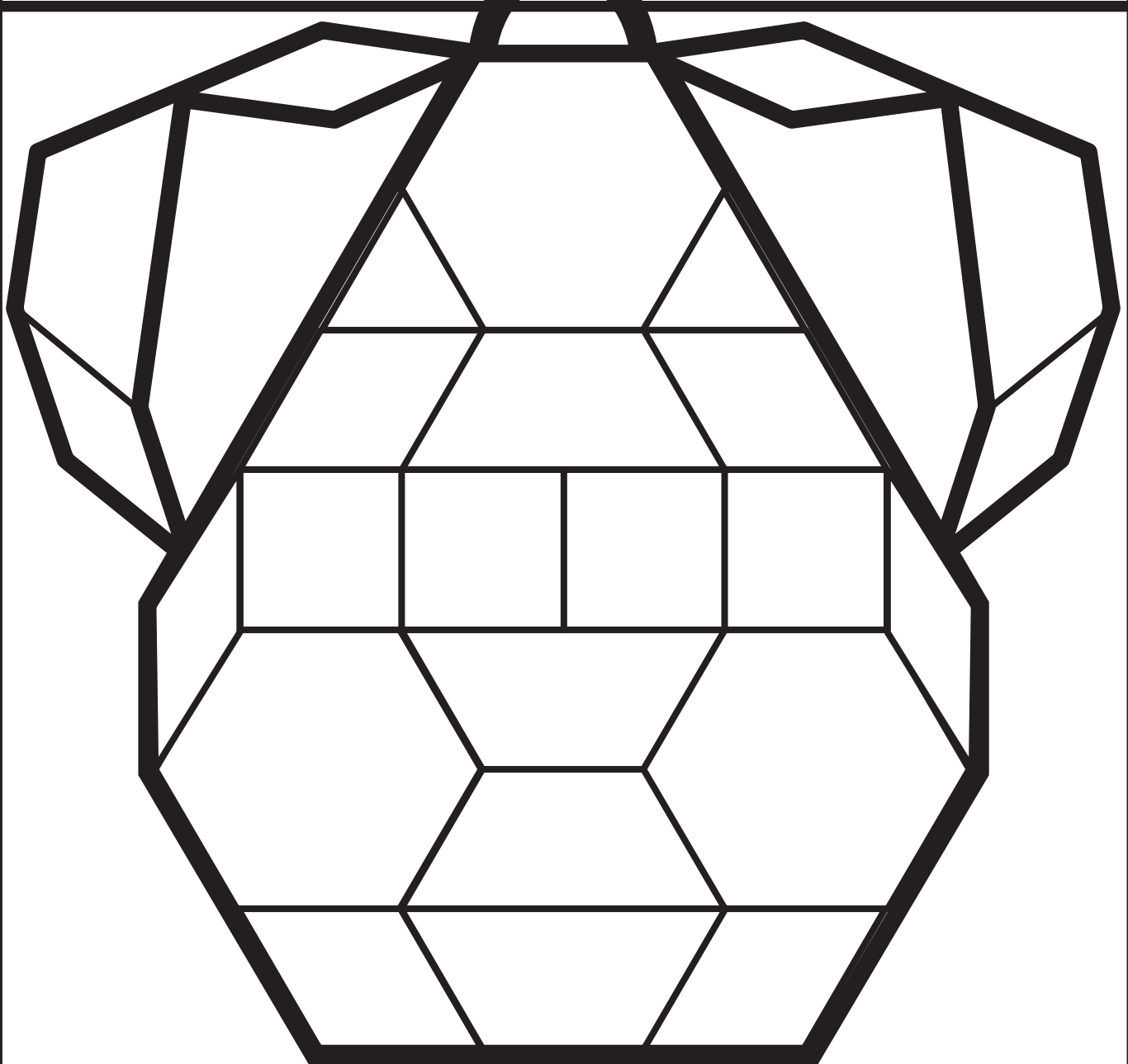
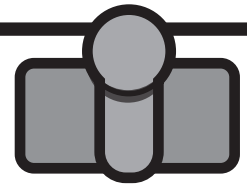
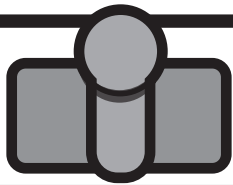
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What does your school look like?**



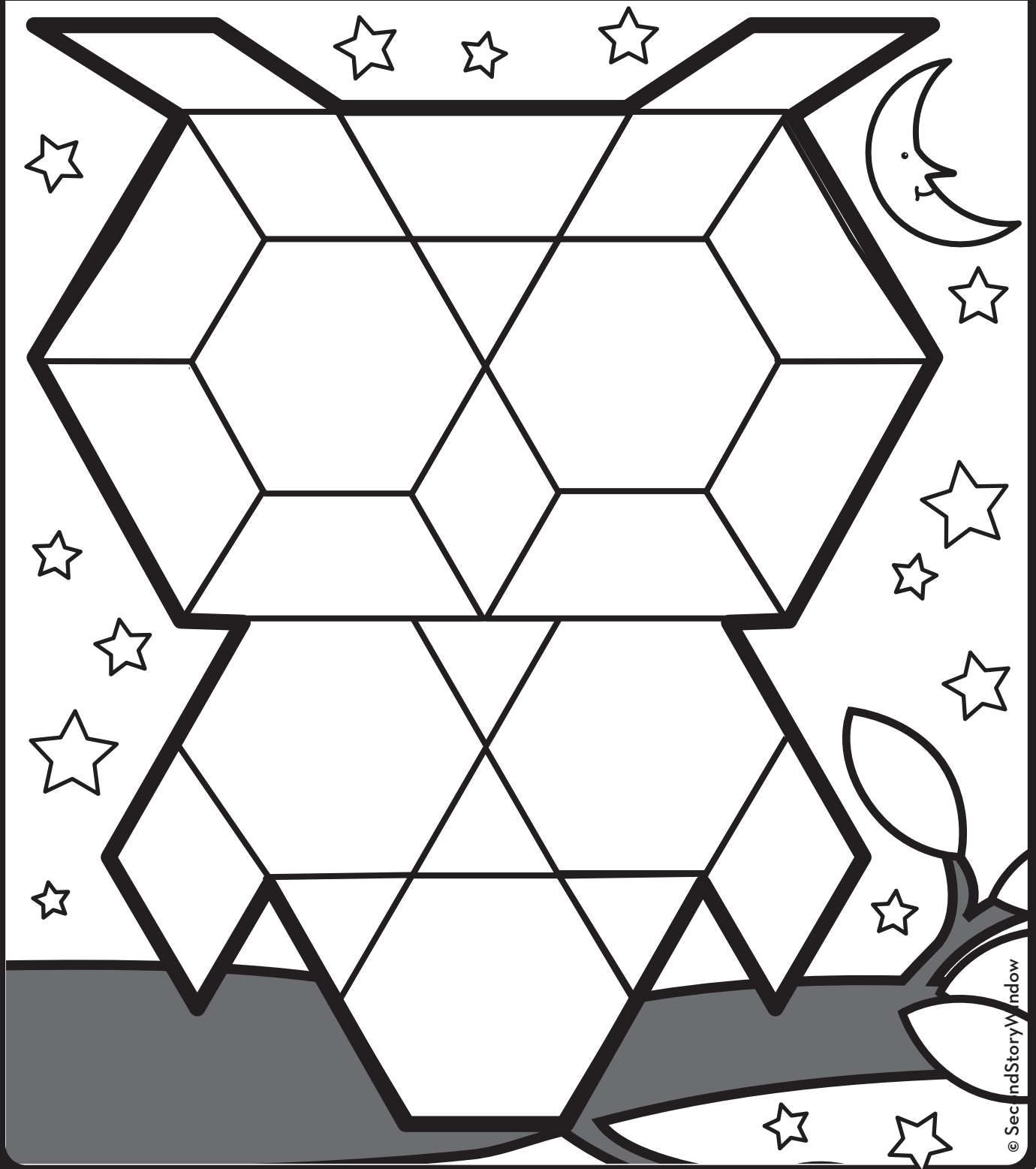
**Use the blocks to make a whale.  
Do you like books about animals?**



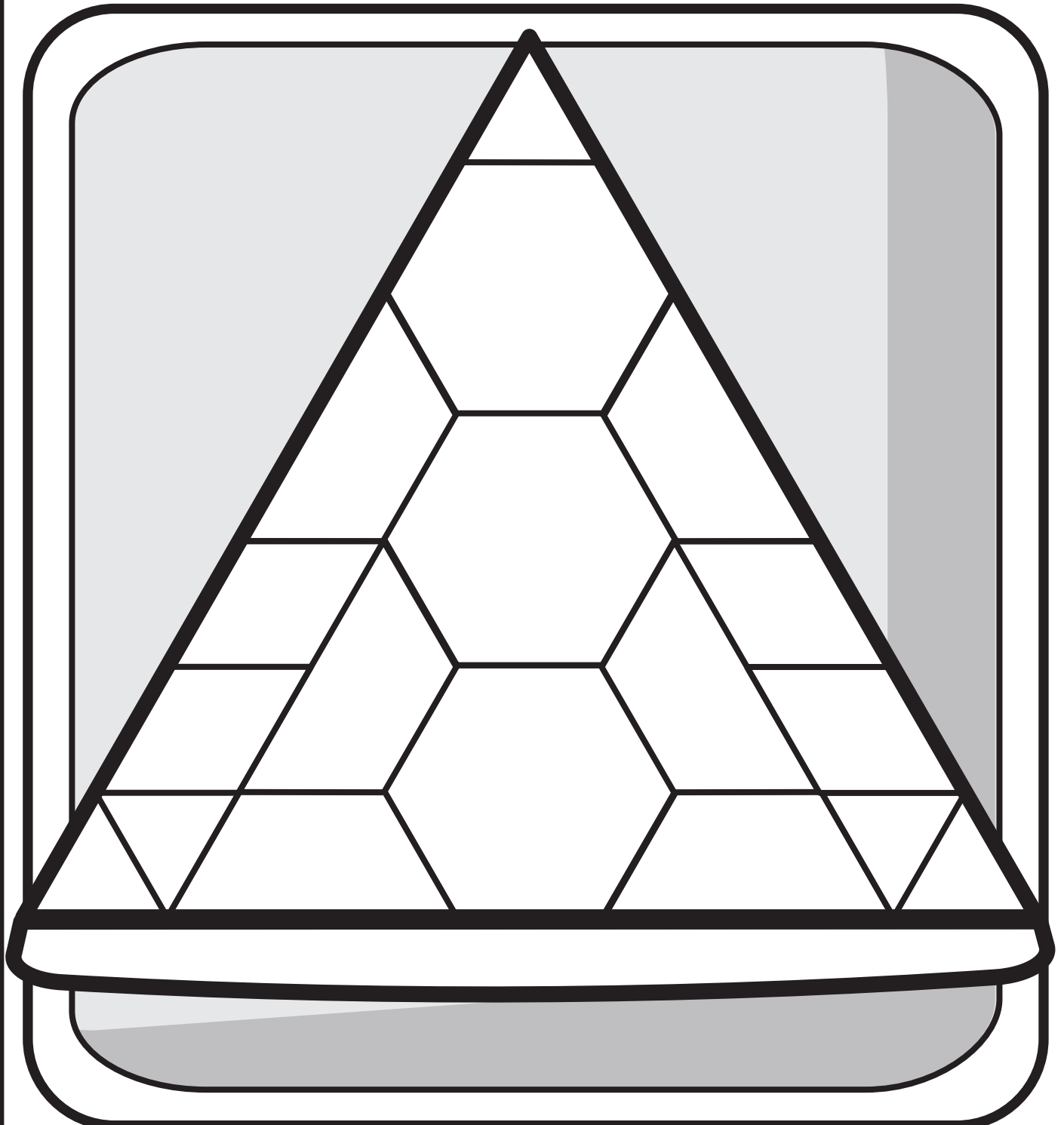
**Use the blocks to make a backpack.  
What's in your backpack?**



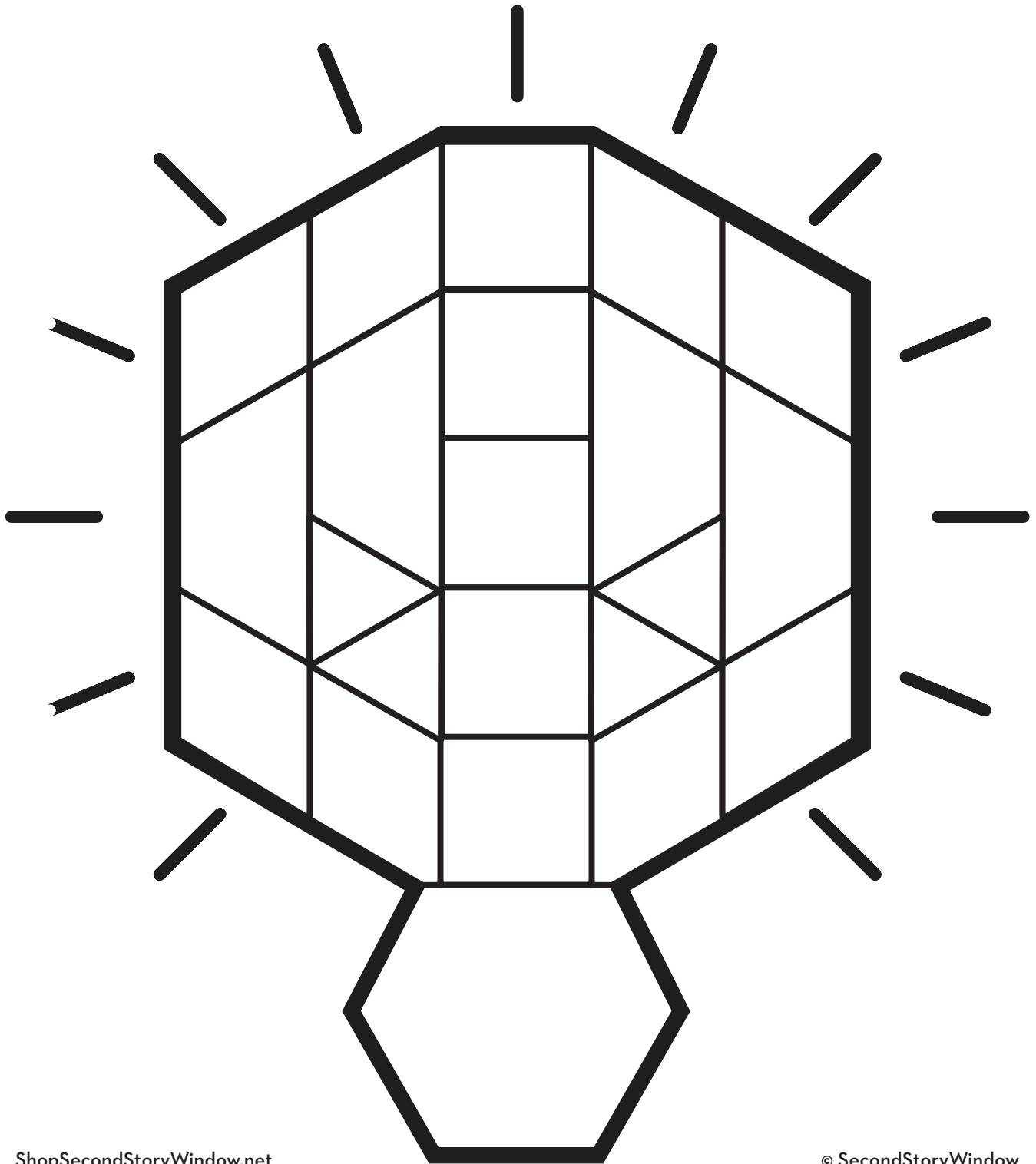
**Use the blocks to make an owl.  
What would you ask the wise old owl?**



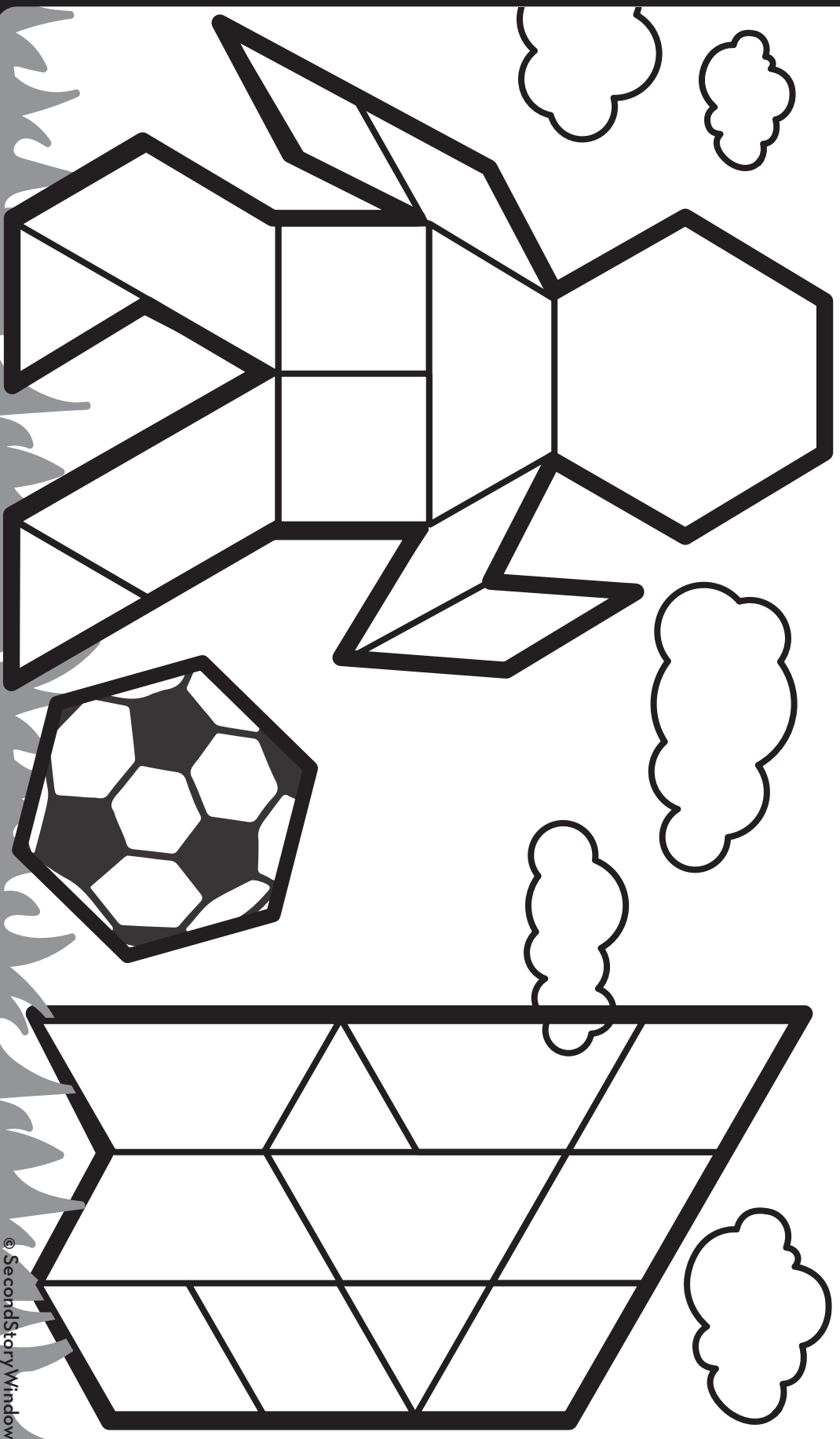
**Use the blocks to make a pizza slice.  
What do you like to eat for lunch?**



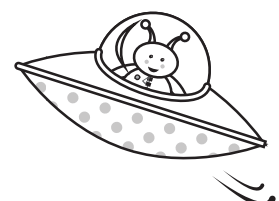
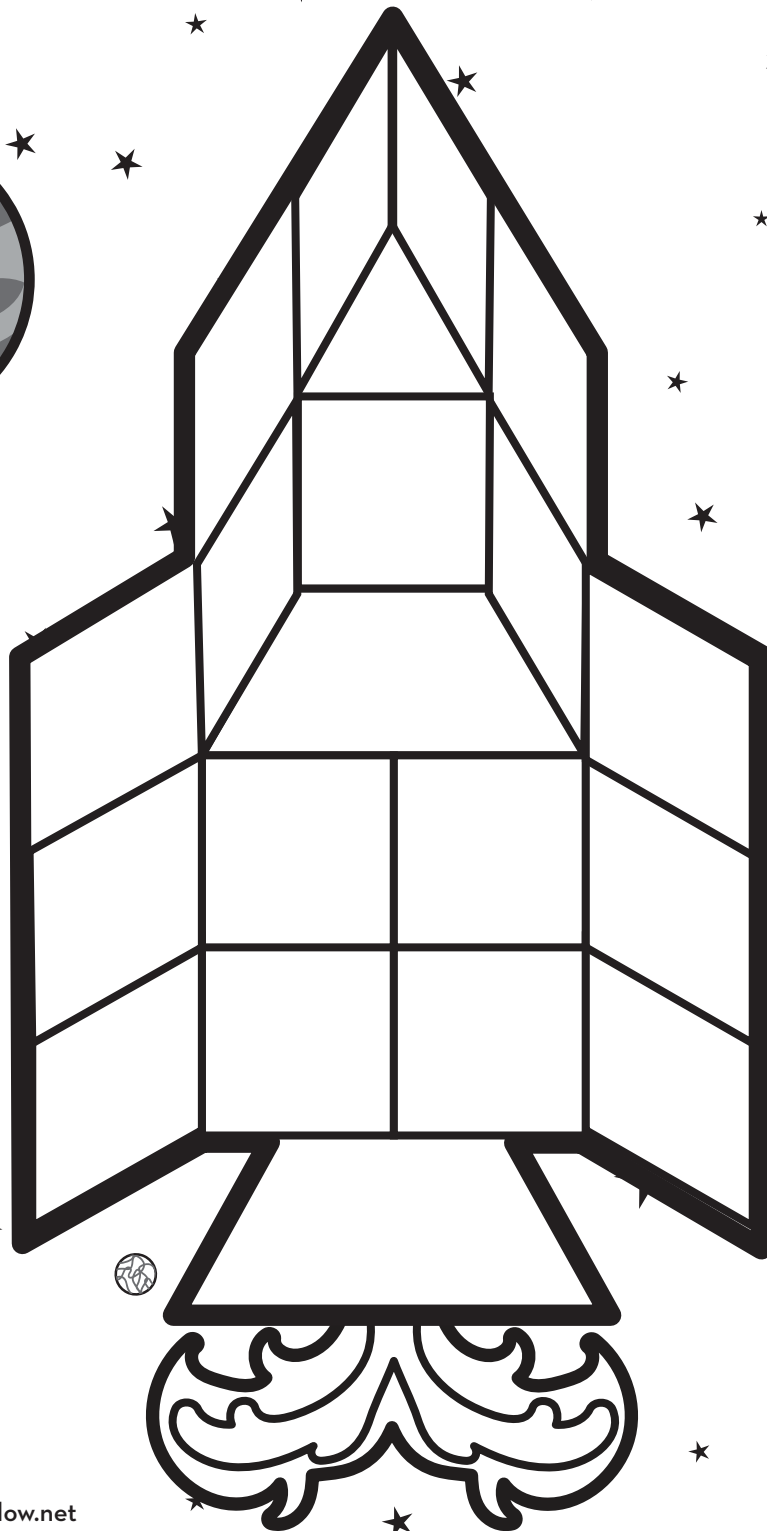
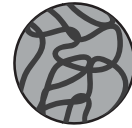
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What are you excited to learn about?**



**Use the blocks to make a soccer player.  
What do you like to do at recess?**

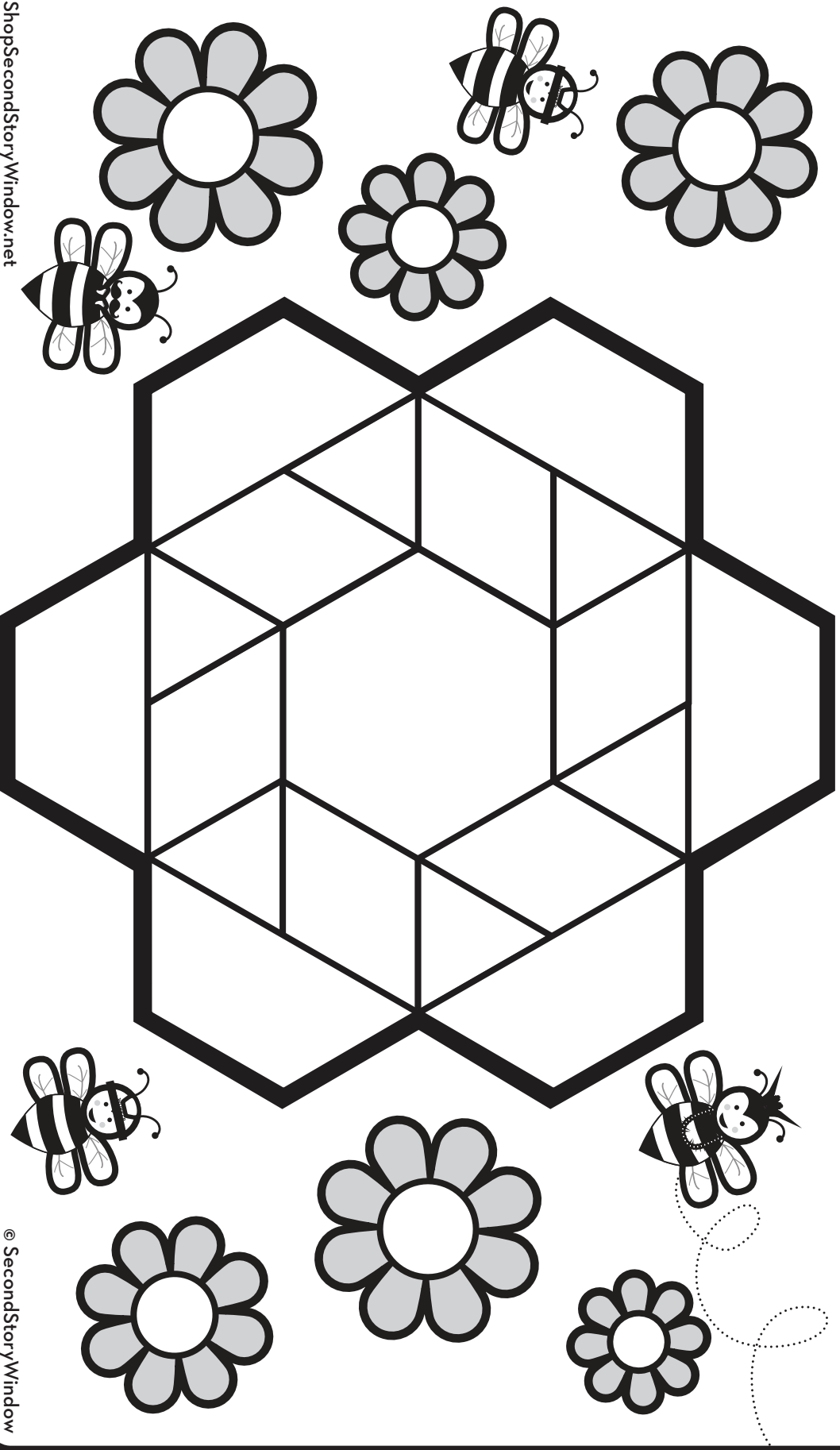


**Use the blocks to make a rocket.  
Do you like learning about space?**

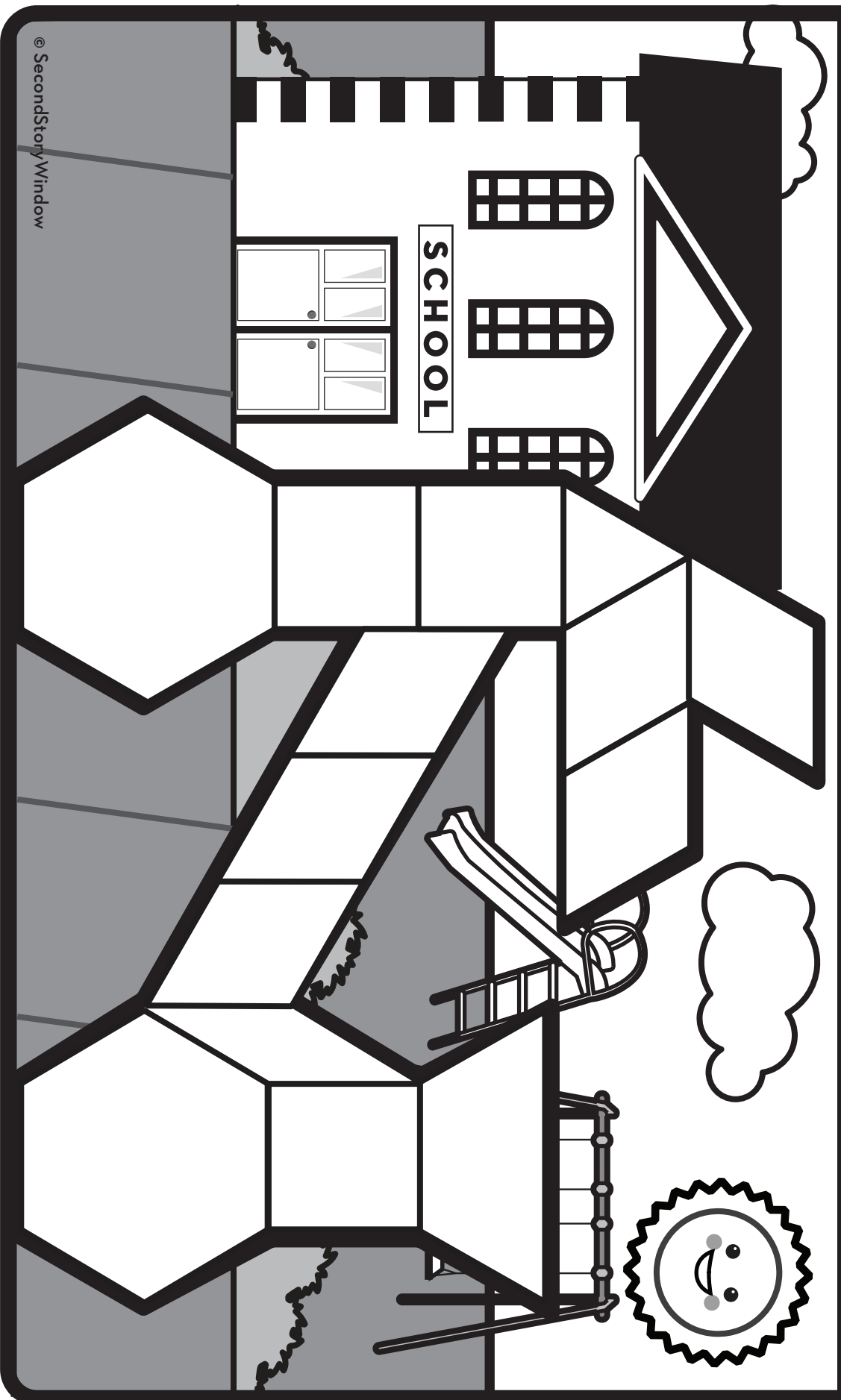


Use the blocks to make a flower.

What kind of flower would you give your teacher?



Use the blocks to make a bike.  
How do you get to school?

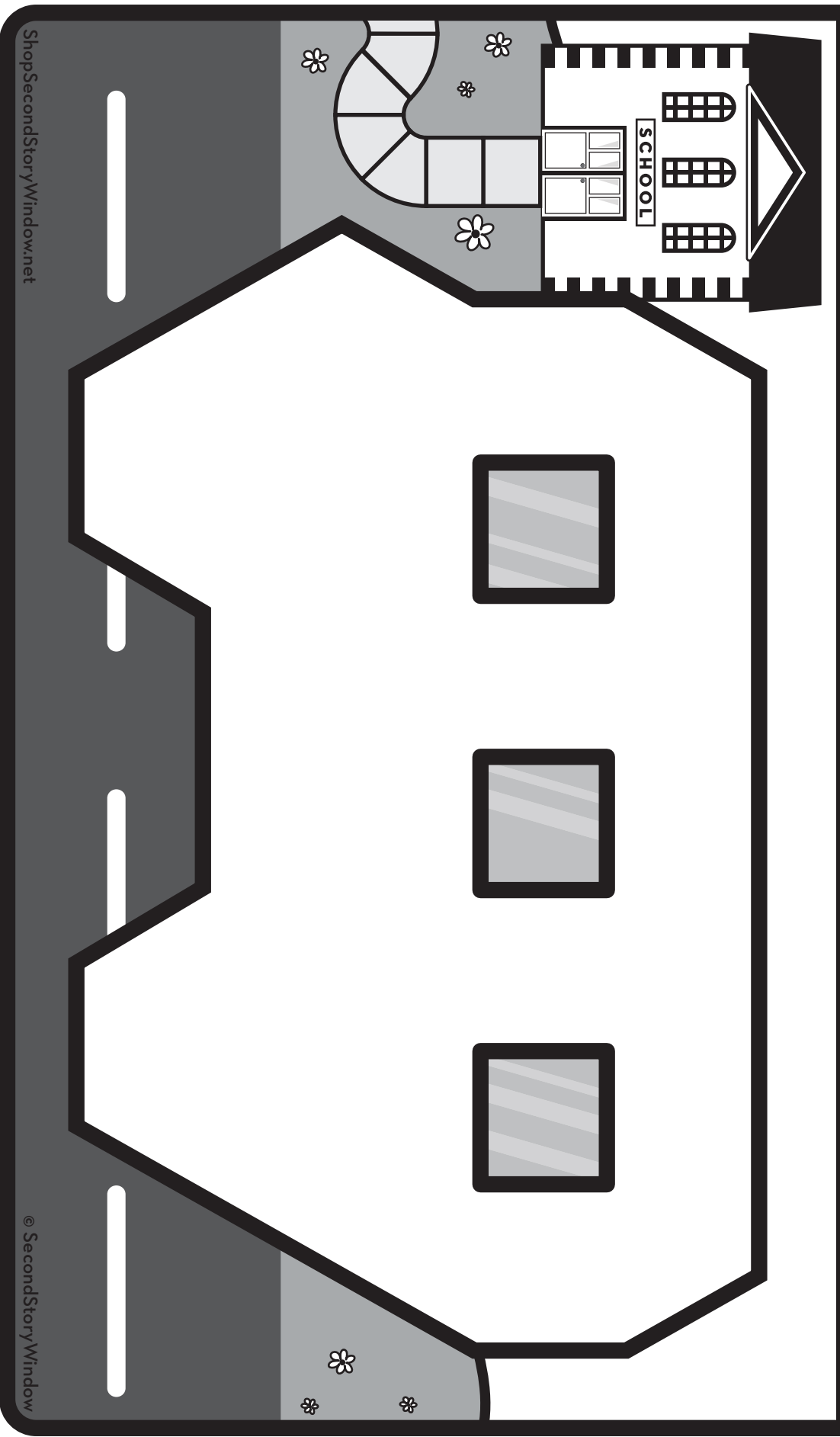


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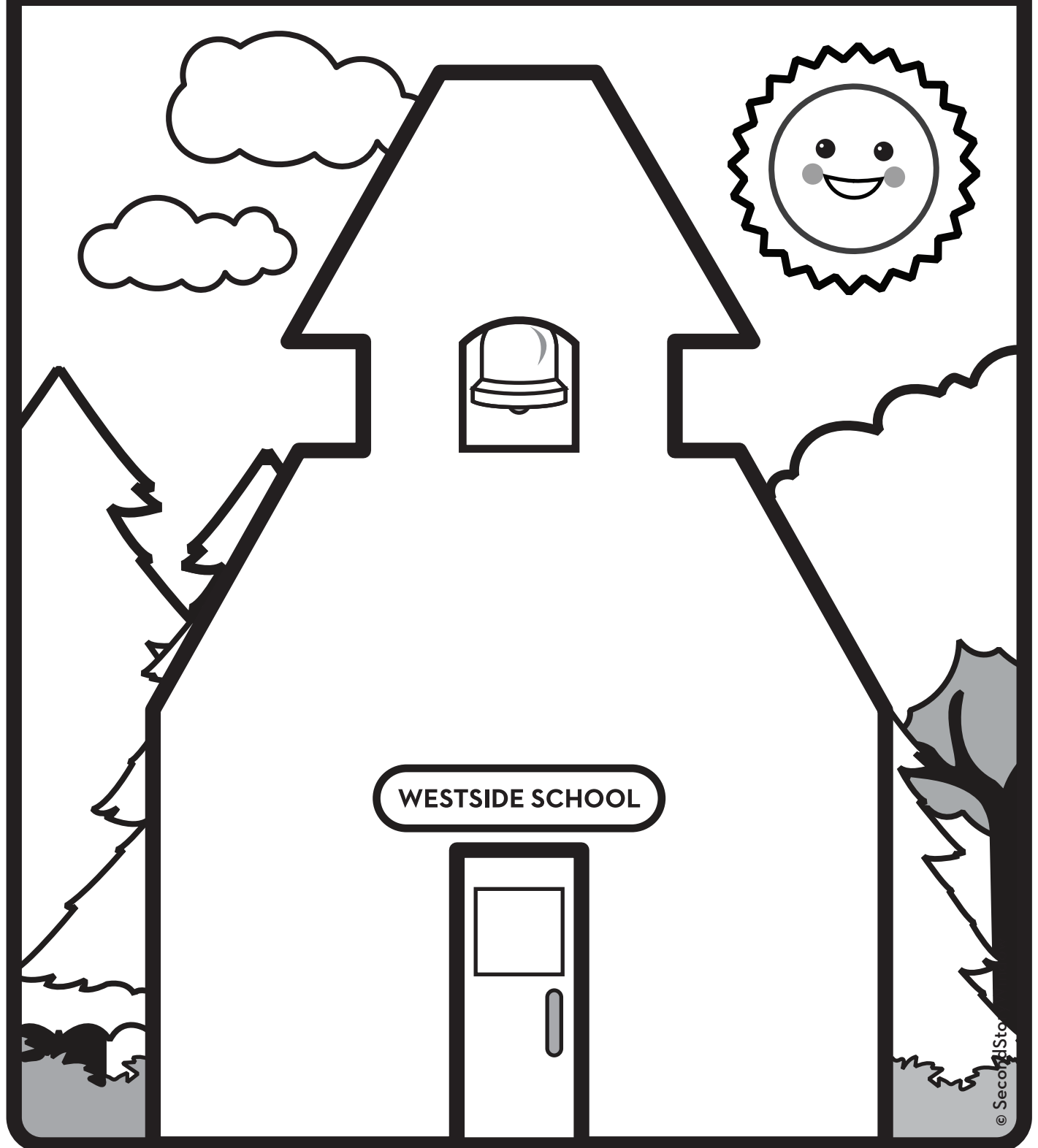


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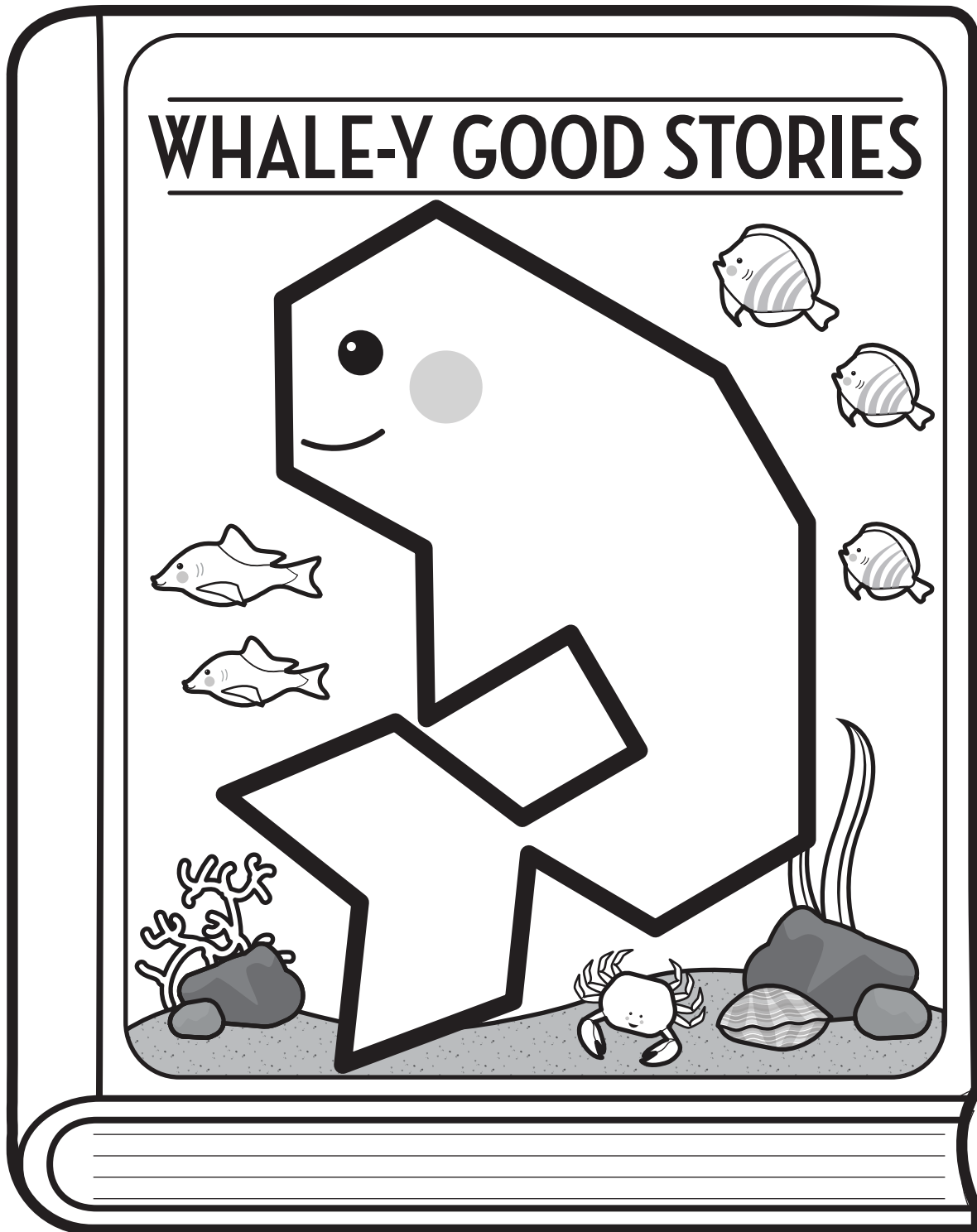
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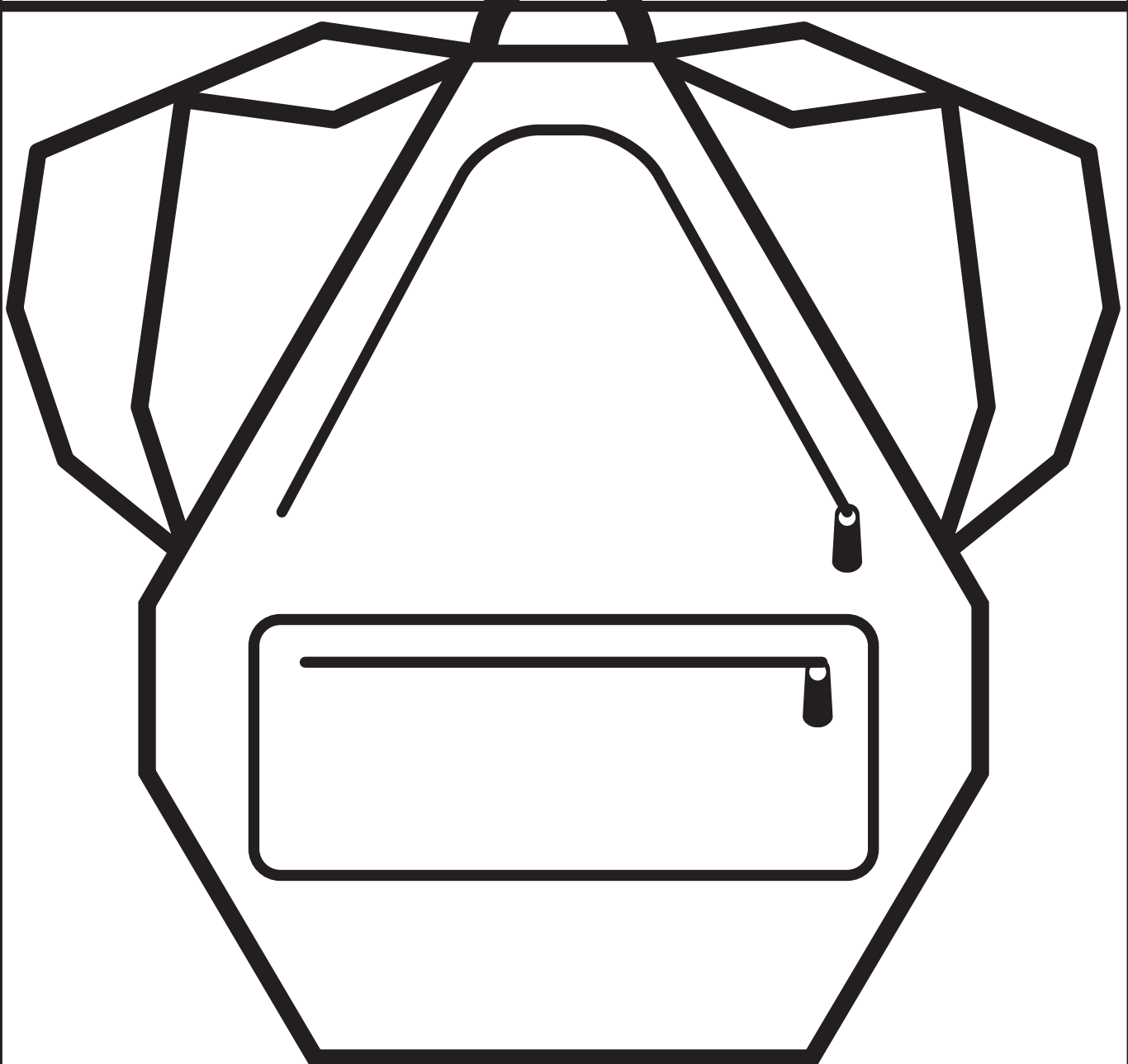
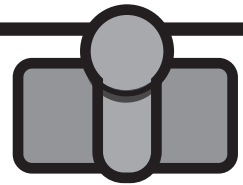
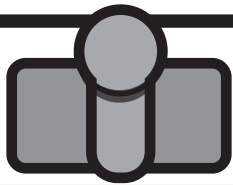
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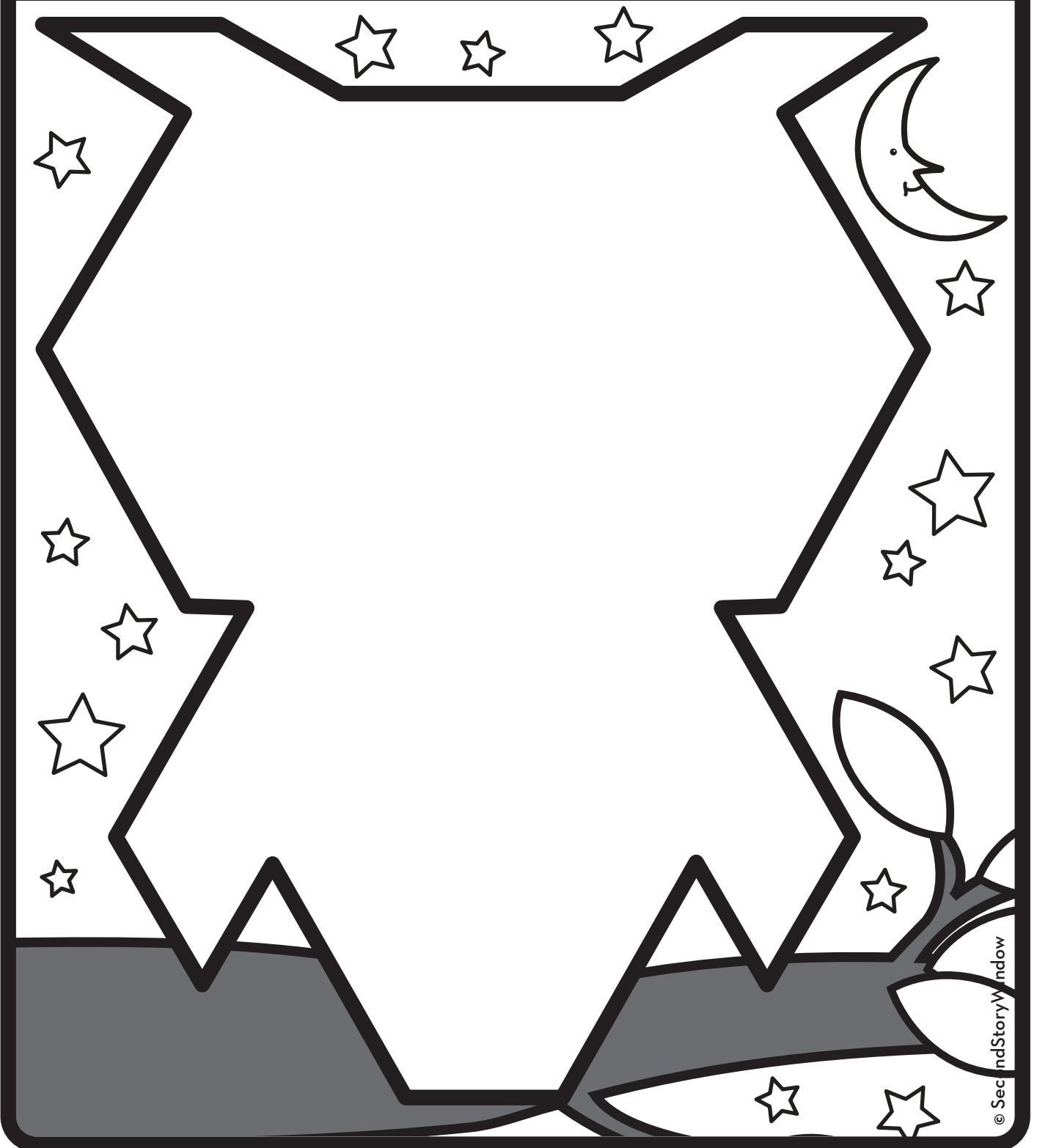
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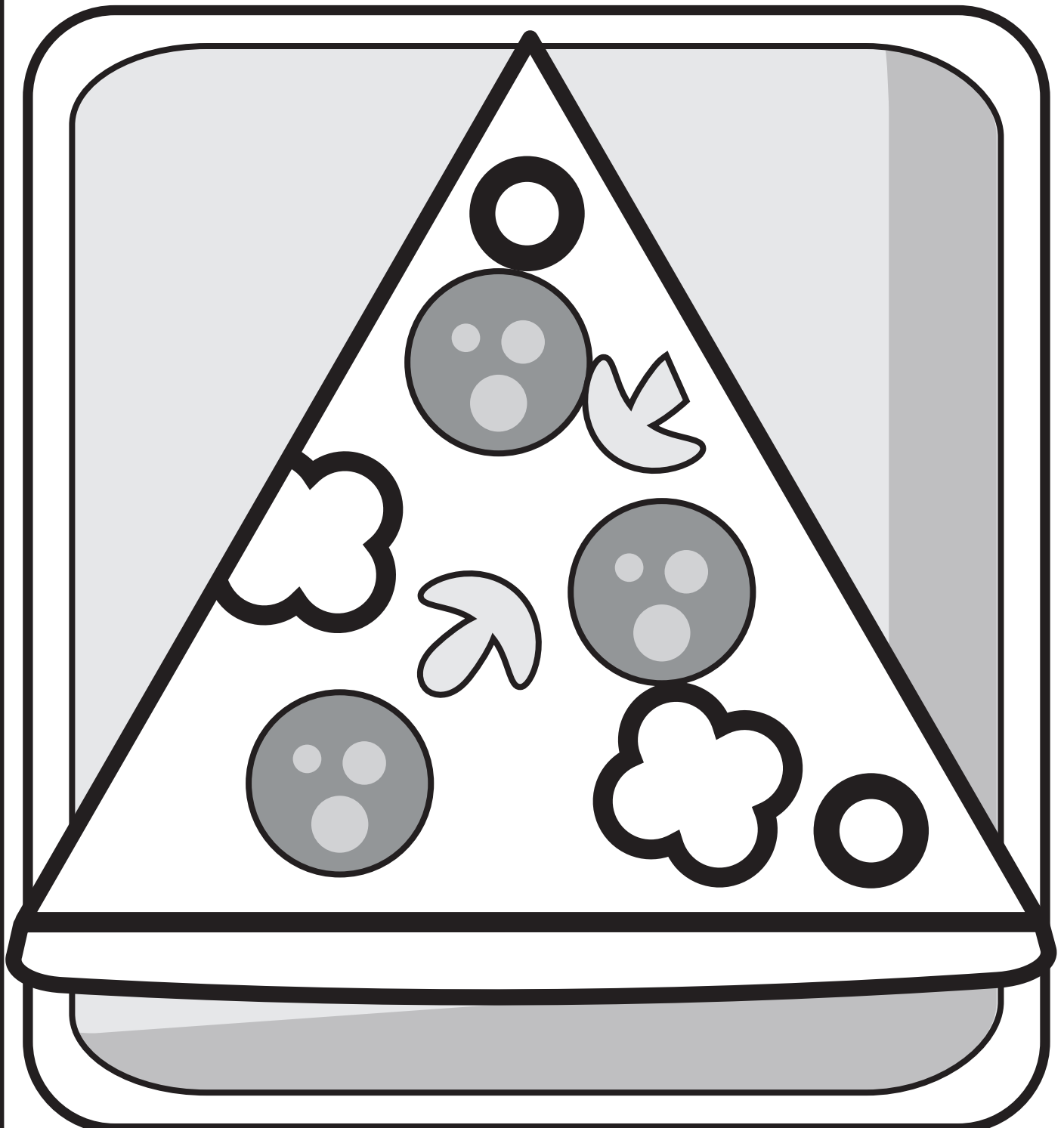
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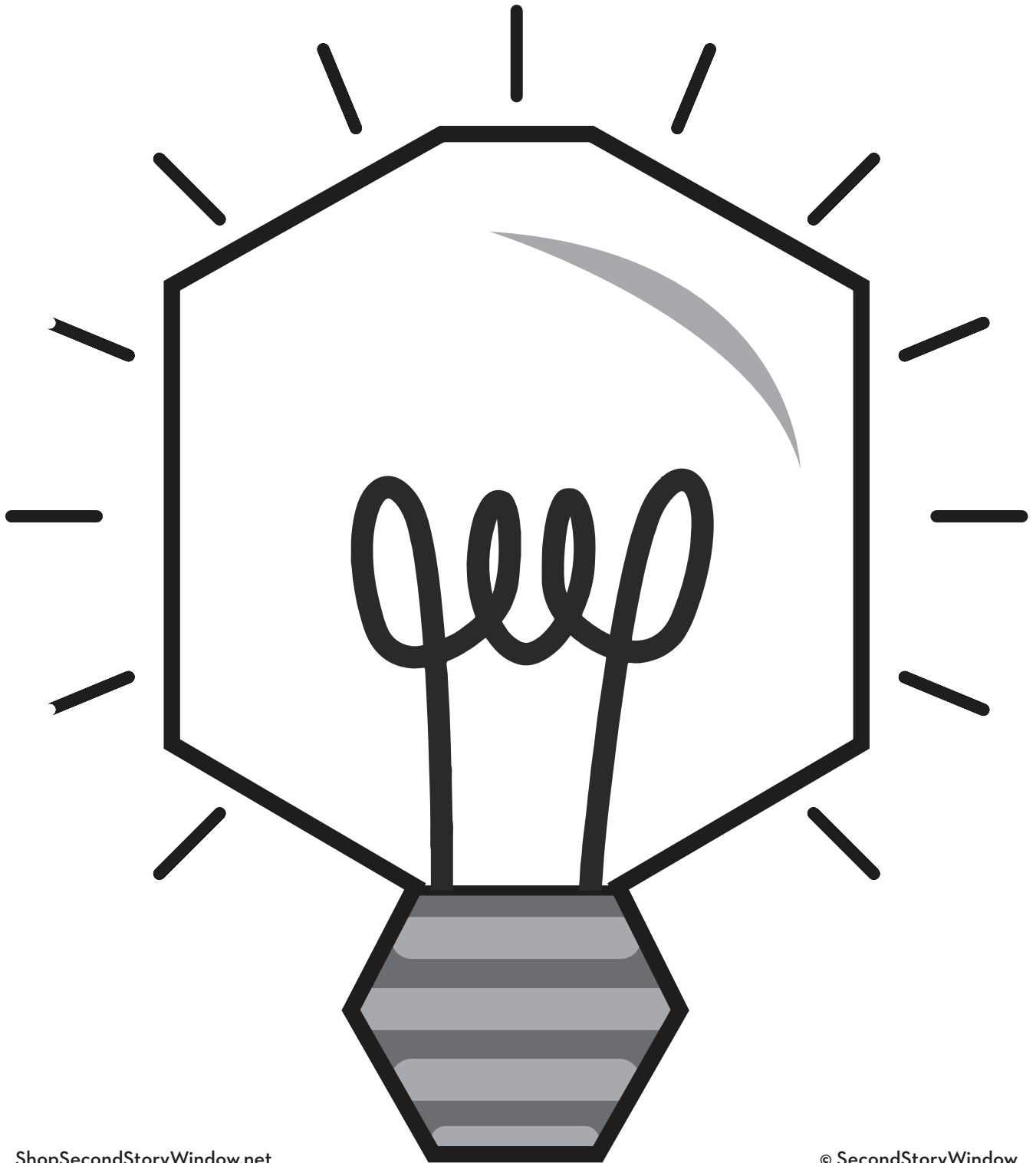
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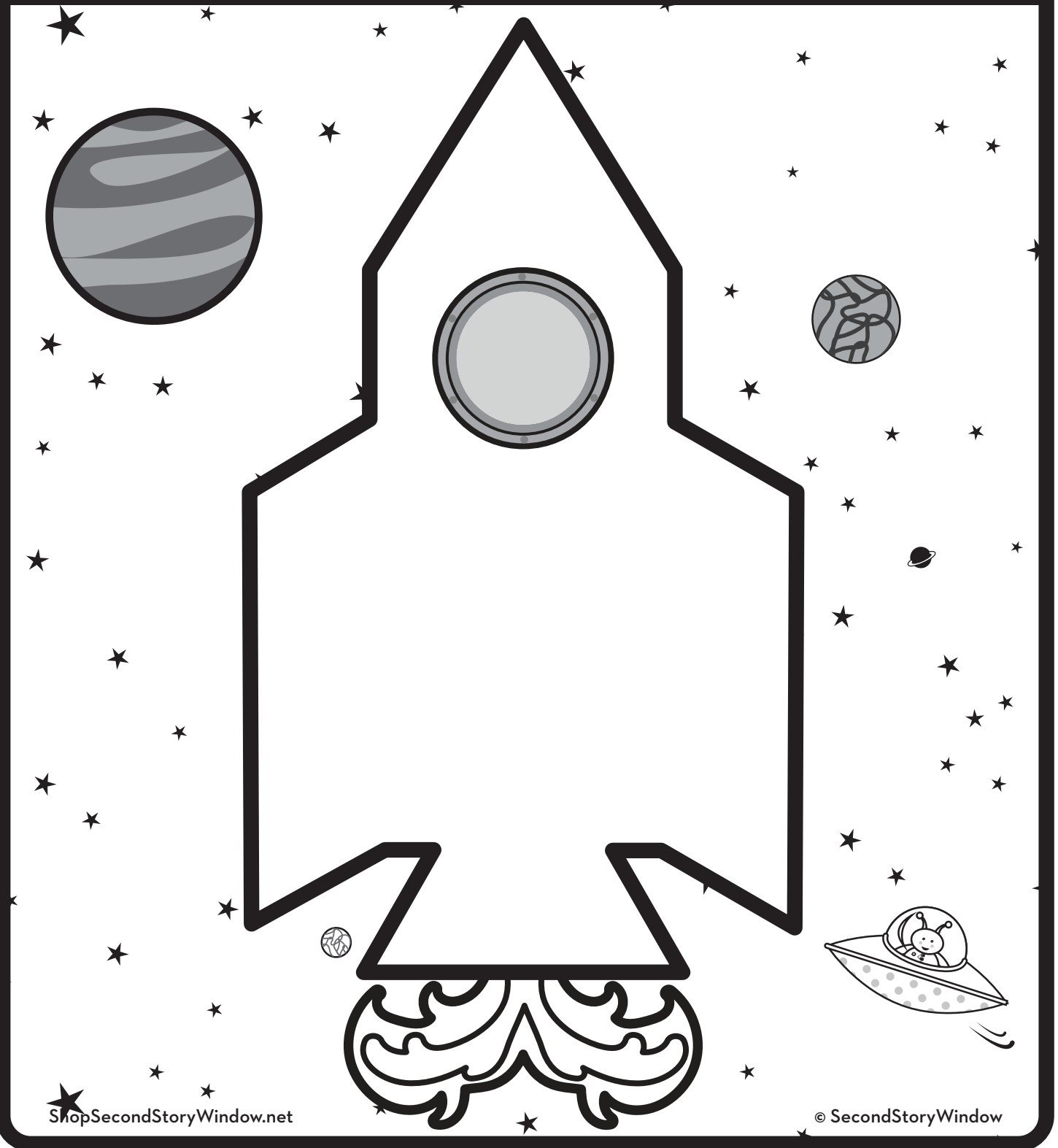
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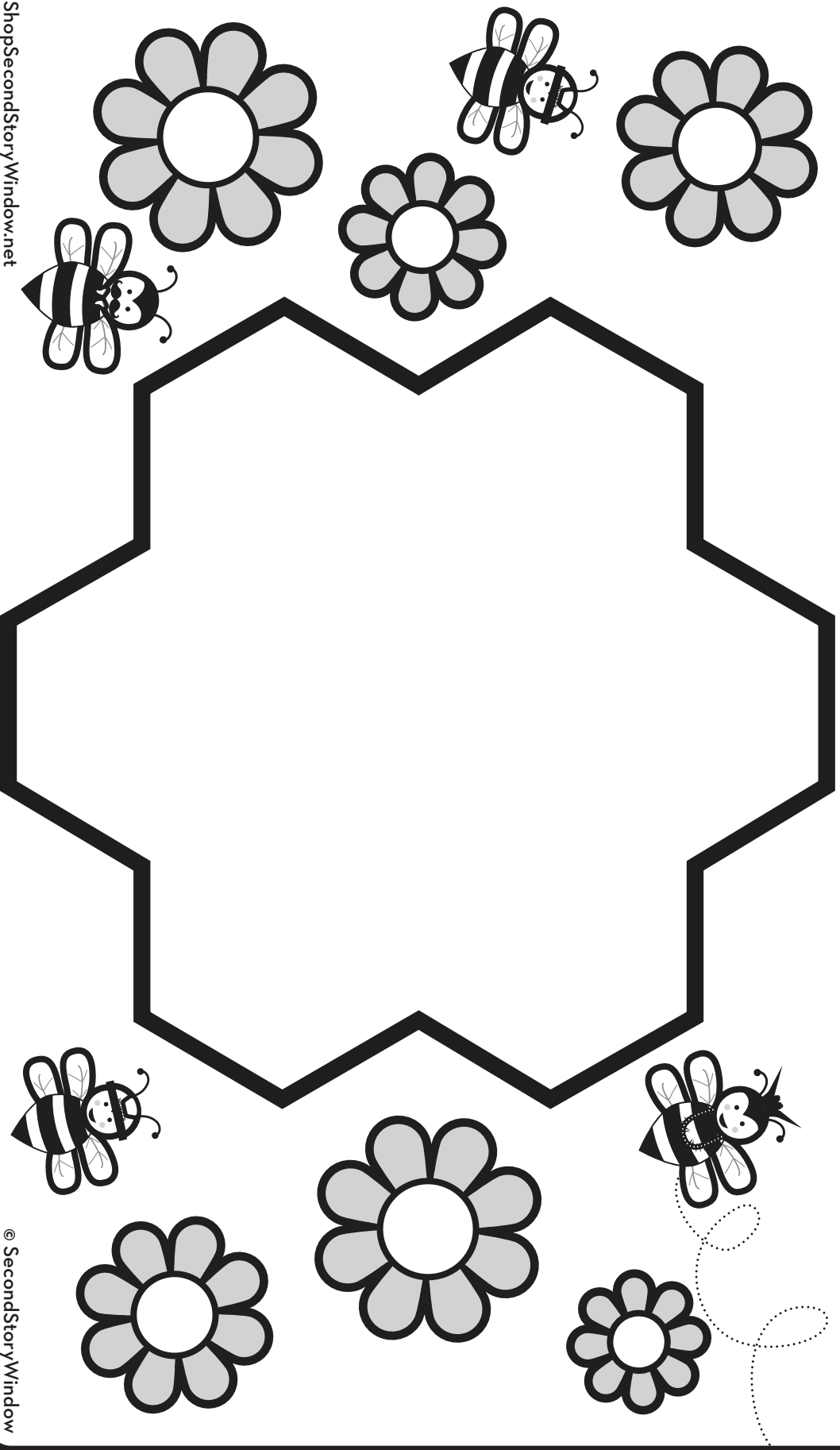


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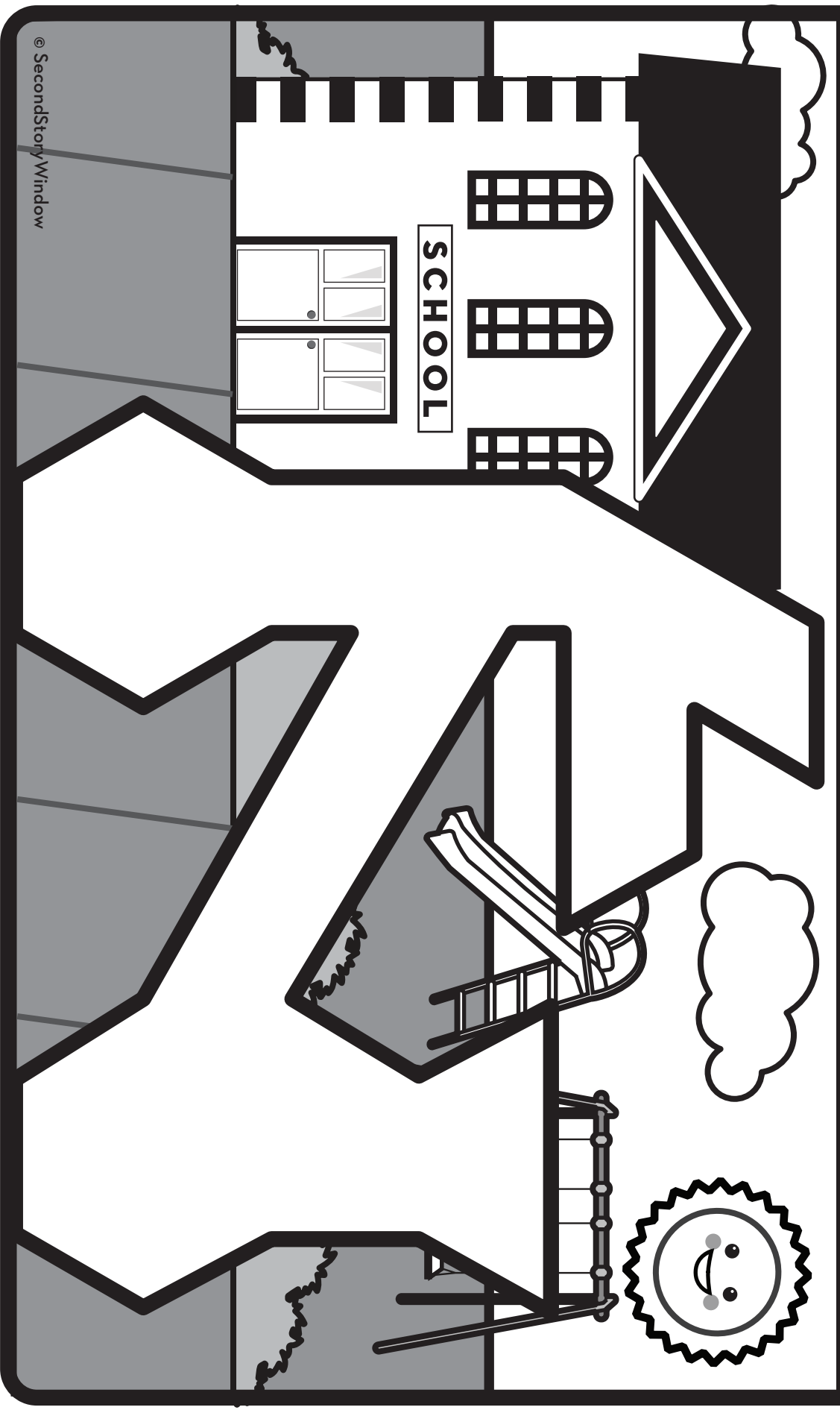


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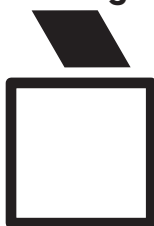
**Use the blocks to make the  
first letter of your name.**

**How many of each block did you use?**

**square**



**parallelogram**



**hexagon**



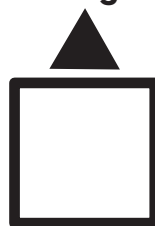
**rhombus**



**trapezoid**



**triangle**

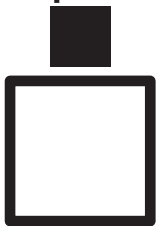


**Use the blocks to make  
your favorite animal.**



**How many of each block did you use?**

**square**



**parallelogram**



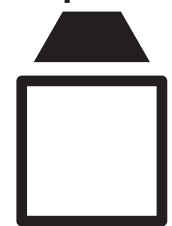
**hexagon**



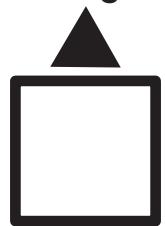
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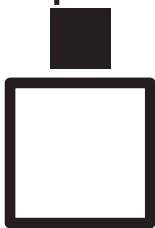
**triangle**



**Use the blocks to make  
something you like to eat.**

**How many of each block did you use?**

**square**



**parallelogram**



**hexagon**



**rhombus**



**trapezoid**



**triangle**



**Use the blocks to make something  
you did during the summer.**



**How many of each block did you use?**

**square**



**parallelogram**



**hexagon**



**rhombus**



**trapezoid**



**triangle**

