

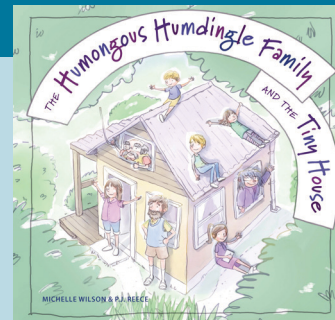
Title: The Humongous Humdingle Family and the Tiny House

Author: Michelle Wilson | **Illustrator:** P.J. Reece

ISBN: 9781922539922 | **Publication date:** Feb 2025

Audience age: 4-8 years

Key Curriculum Areas: English, Mathematics, Science / STEAM, Health and Physical Education, Drama, Visual Arts



SYNOPSIS:

There's not a lot of space in the humongous Humdingle family home, but they wouldn't have it any other way in this charming story about minimalism, multi-generational living, and the importance of appreciating what we have.

Welcome to the Humdingle family! There's Grandma and Grandad, Mum and Dad, the children and the pets... and they all live in one tiny house. It's a little squashy and noisy in the house, and sometimes the Humdingles wish they didn't have to share quite so much. After all, one toilet between three generations can get tricky! Find out what happens when, one magical day, the Humdingles' wishes are granted. Will all the space they could dream of make them happier? Or was there, perhaps, something special about living in the tiny, squashy house after all? This lively, light-hearted book will delight little readers with its playful language and illustrations. Carrying a heartfelt message about the importance of family connections, it is the perfect story for parents and grandparents to share with younger family members. It also opens the door to conversations about materialism, and is a joyful reminder to see the good in what we have.

THEMES:

• Family – multi-generational living • Minimalism • Appreciation • Sharing

SELLING POINTS:

- A joyful representation of multigenerational living, highlighting the importance of family connections.
- A fantastic tool for teaching children about sharing, and that possessions don't equate to happiness.
- Great potential for use in the classroom to engage students in themes such as sustainability and the family unit.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

This book was conceived after thinking about how little my family really needs to thrive. We have a large 5 bedroom house to fit our 'big' family, yet many nights we all end up sleeping snug in the one room. We are also a multigenerational family sharing bathrooms and other communal spaces, which can lead to entertaining scenarios. We squash onto couches, squish around dinner tables and run into each other in the hallways but we all wouldn't want it any other way.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Michelle Wilson lives in a busy, noisy, entertaining household in the Noosa Hinterland, Australia. She works as a primary school teacher, and holds a Bachelor of Communication and a Diploma in Primary Education. Michelle loves the lighter side of life and a good belly laugh. She writes from the heart with a down-to-earth style, peppered with plenty of humour. Her stories spark curiosity and help children better understand themselves and the world around them.

PJ Reece is an Australian illustrator whose past work includes illustration for Blake Education, and designing greeting cards which sold at various retail outlets. His traditional pen/pencil and wash style illustrations have evolved into digital illustrations using an iPad and drawing app.

INTERVIEW

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

Despite having a large house with plenty of space, my family prefers to live on top of each other. One night, as I gazed around at the sea of mattresses on my bedroom floor, I laughed at the fact we have this huge house with so many bedrooms, yet here we are all scrunched up next to each other. It was also a multi-generational household at the time, with two dogs and many humans coexisting under the one roof. We were often squeezing on couches and running into each other in the hallway. I knew there was a great story there.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Knowing other families around the world will be connecting with this story while snuggling close to each other, thinking about what really matters to them. It's a story from my family to yours.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

Narrowing down and deciding which humorous situations to include to show the chaos and closeness of the family. I needed to really exaggerate the scenarios to make the story work.

ILLUSTRATOR

What media do you use to create your illustrations? Briefly describe your process.

I illustrate using an iPad and drawing app called Procreate. After reading through the story I usually do some quick sketches to capture the main features of the characters in the story. I then do thumbnails which are small sketches showing how each page will look – these sketches don't have a lot of detail but show the composition of the illustration and where the main parts of the drawing will go. Then I do rough drawings which are full sized illustrations and then I do the final illustrations in full colour, solid line work and backgrounds.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Seeing the characters come to life and developing their individual personalities and quirks. It's also great when you are happy with an illustration and you can go on to the next one.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

Definitely the number of characters to draw. Eight people and a handful of pets with some pages featuring multiple illustrations was a lot to draw!

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students.

DISCUSSION: BEFORE READING

- Ask students to bring a photo or draw a picture of the family members (including pets) who live in their house. Share with the class or a friend.
- Ask students to discuss the family dynamics of the household. For example, where do family members eat dinner? Watch TV? Use the bathroom/s? How many people per bedroom? Where do the pets sleep? How many cars? and so on.
- How do all of these factors impact on daily living? Which parts are challenging? What do you like the most about living this way?
- Look at the cover of 'The Humongous Humdingle Family and the Tiny House'. What do you notice? Who do you think each character might be? How might the Humdingles feel as a big family in a tiny house? How does the cover make you feel? What does the term 'humongous' mean? What might the title tell you about the story? What does it make you wonder?
- Do you think this book will be helpful? Why?

DISCUSSION: DURING READING

- How many people and animals live in the tiny house?
- What are the positives and negatives about them all living together, being squashy and noisy, but 'never lonely or boring'?
- Do you think they will really be happy with a humongous house? Why or why not?
- What do you like about their new house?
- In what ways does the humongous house feel 'empty'?
- How did the Humdingles improve their situation? How did they feel in the end?
- What do you think will happen next or after the story finishes?

DISCUSSION: AFTER READING

- What did you like / dislike about this story? How did it make you feel? What was your reaction to the ending?
- What did you learn about the Humdingle family and their home? Who are the characters? How many generations live in their home? What did they each like/dislike about their house? Draw a web chart of the Humdingles. See **BLM 4**.
- How did the Humdingles' feelings about their house change from the start to the end of the story? Why do you think this is?
- Write down all the words from the story that relate to the feeling of 'unhappiness'. For example, 'complained', 'grumbled', 'moaned', 'sighed'. Write down more feelings that the family may have felt throughout the story. Make a table of the positive and negative feelings.
- Discuss the importance of family and living together and sharing things / spaces. Write down five benefits to your own family's living arrangement. Are there any disadvantages? What strategies do you use or can think of to overcome any difficult aspects of the way you and your family live?
- What are the similarities and differences between your own family and the Humdingle family? Create a Venn Diagram to show these similarities and differences. See **BLM 5**.
- How important is the size of your house and owning lots of possessions? Write down 5 to 10 'things' you and your family own and rate their level of importance in order from highest to lowest on a Ranking Ladder. Is there anything even more important in life than these things? Write down and rank these as well.
- Guide a discussion around sustainability in terms of only using / consuming what we need, such as earth's natural resources and material things. How do students feel about this, and how we can we continue to care for our planet, especially in our own homes?

- What else does this story make you wonder about? What would you like to know?
- What do you like about the illustrations? How do the colour choices, textures, perspectives and vignettes help to show the emotions, settings and character differentiations in this story? How do the facial expressions and body language show how the family members are feeling in different parts of the story?
- How can you relate to this story? Have you had moments where you felt squashed, or your family was too noisy, or you miss an old home? What are your relationships with each of your family members? Why is family important?

ACTIVITIES:

ENGLISH

Vocabulary: Spelling 'Hh' phoneme

(AC9EFLY10) (AC9EFLY12) (AC9EFLY13) (AC9EFLY14) (AC9E1LY11) (AC9E1LY13) (AC9E1LY14) (AC9E2LY09) (AC9E2LY10) (AC9E2LY11)

Identify the 'Hh' letter and sound as in 'Humongous Humdingle' and practise spelling these and other 'h' words in varying techniques and formats. Students can:

- Say the words out loud
- Clap the syllables in each word
- Write the words broken up by syllables. Eg. H/u/mon/g/ous
- Write the 'h' words with different media (pencils, crayons, letter stamps, rainbow textas, glitter pens, etc)
- Make up sentences that are alliterated. Eg. The humongous Humdingles were happy in their home.

Vocabulary: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives

(AC9EFLA08) (AC9E1LA07) (AC9E2LA07) (AC9EFLY13)

- Locate in the book the nouns, verbs and adjectives relating to the Humdingles' feelings and the characteristics of their house/s. Students could use **BLM 1** to sort the words into groups.

Nouns: *house, family, couch, car, television, table, bicycle, toilet, bedroom, chair, stars, sky, dogs, chickens, cats, backyard, palace, kennel, games, stories, etc.*

Proper Nouns: *Humdingles, Lucy, Grandma, Dad, Thomas, Alexandra, William, Mama, Grandad, Hide and Seek.*

Verbs: *lived, wish, complained, snoring, grumbled, watch, moaned, sighed, dropped, squeezed, stared, bark, cluck, purr, stretched, fighting, snuggle, tickle, sharing, laughed, liked, etc.*

Adverbs: *terribly, awfully, never, wonderfully, perfectly, etc.*

Adjectives: *humongous, tiny, squashy, lonely, boring, stinky, happy, bright, empty, soothing, warm, furry, quiet, cold, old, etc.*

- Students could add to these lists and create sentences including some of these terms. They could illustrate sentences with pictures of the Humdingles in their tiny or humongous house, or themselves in their own home.

Vocabulary: Synonyms and Antonyms

(AC9E1LA07) (AC9E1LA09) (AC9EFLY09) (AC9E2LA09) (AC9EFLY13)

With the adjectives used to describe the characteristics of the Humdingles' two houses, students can identify and add words that are **synonyms** (words with similar meanings), and words that are **antonyms** (words with opposite meanings).

For example, the synonyms of 'tiny' include *small, miniature, minute, petite*, etc.

The antonyms of 'tiny' include *humongous, big, giant, enormous, gigantic*, etc.

- Students can write their own sentences or lists using synonyms and antonyms. They might like to fold a piece of paper in half, showing the tiny house on one side, and the humongous house on the other side. See **BLM 2** for a house template.

Comprehension: Cloze

(AC9E2LE02) (AC9EFLE05) (AC9E1LE05) (AC9E2LE05) (AC9EFLY05) (AC9E1LY05) (AC9E2LY05)

- Students can write the following sentences, filling in the gaps with words or phrases that make the most sense.

'The Humdingles were a _____ family who lived in a _____ house.'

'It was terribly _____ and awfully _____.'

'_____! The most humongous _____ landed in their _____.'

'Even though it was filled with everything they had _____ for, it felt _____.'

'It was _____ squashy, _____ noisy, and never ever _____ or _____.'

- Students can illustrate a sentence of their choice.

Comprehension

(AC9EFLE01) (AC9EFLE02) (AC9E1LE02) (AC9E2LE02) (AC9EFLE05) (AC9E1LE05) (AC9E2LE05) (AC9EFLY05) (AC9E1LY05) (AC9E2LY05)

- Ask students to think about the text and how this connects to what they know. Answer and write about the following questions.

Knowledge: Who was in the story? What was the problem? Where did the story take place? When did the Humdingles want a bigger house? When did they change their mind? Was everything the same in the end?

Comprehension: Retell the story in your own words. What was the main idea? What are the similarities and differences between the two houses?

Application: How are the Humdingles managing being 'squashy' and 'noisy'? Why was it important for them to have a bigger home? How is being quiet and boring related to their unhappiness? What are the instances of 'comfort' or 'togetherness' in the story?

Analysis: What are the features of the tiny house and features of the humongous house? Draw a diagram of each. What are the features of their multi-generational family? Draw a family tree of the Humdingles. How does the way they feel about their tiny home in the beginning compare with the way they feel about it in the end? Why did they change their minds?

Synthesis: Predict how the Humdingles might use their humongous house in the future. What other ideas can you think of for sharing small spaces and minimal possessions? What might happen if the family members had a disagreement? How would you design your own humongous house?

Evaluation: Do you agree that family is more important than material things? Why or why not? What is the most important thing the story is teaching us? What do you think about the way the Humdingles live in their tiny house?

Creative Writing: Innovation on Text

(AC9EFLE01) (AC9EFLE05) (AC9E1LE05) (AC9E2LE05) (AC9EFLY06) (AC9E1LY06) (AC9E2LY06)

- Students can write short stories, poems or lists about the following idea with their own descriptions. Include interesting or emotive words or phrases.

'The Humdingles were a HUMONGOUS family who lived in a tiny house with...'

Narrative Writing

(AC9EFLE01) (AC9EFLE02) (AC9E1LE02) (AC9E2LE02) (AC9E1LY01) (AC9E2LY01) (AC9EFLY06) (AC9E1LY06) (AC9E2LY06)

- Students can write a narrative story based around a family with a home upgrade, or living with a multi-generational family, or a story around sustainability / consumerism. This could be heartfelt, informative, funny or exciting.
- Ask students to think about who their characters are, and what might be the conflict or problem to solve. What events or situations might be experienced (real or imagined)? What is the tone of the story? What personal emotional or physical challenges might need to be overcome? How will they be resolved?
- Begin your narrative with a sizzling start, such as dialogue, onomatopoeia, action or scene setting. Think about using interesting figurative and emotive language.
- Set it out with a beginning, middle and end.

Recount / Reflective Writing

(AC9EFLE02) (AC9E1LE02) (AC9E1LY01) (AC9E2LY01) (AC9EFLY06) (AC9E1LY06) (AC9E2LY06)

- Encourage students to think about a time when they experienced a family issue, a change to their living arrangements, or would like to write about their family (See BLM 3). Students could write the plan/brainstorm page and then write a short piece about what happened/their experience, how they or their family felt, how they managed the situation, the challenges and outcomes.

MATHEMATICS

Space: Prepositional Language

Measurement and Geometry: (AC9MFSP02) (AC9M1SP02) (AC9M2SP02)

- Create a house layout scene by drawing a variety of furniture and household items on a large sheet of paper, including a car, couch, table, television, bicycle, toilet, bed, etc. Using figurines or small objects, in partners, students take turns to instruct the Humdingle family members in and around the scene. Students need to ensure they are using prepositional language.

Examples of terms to include:

on the couch, **in** the car, sit **beside** William at the table, **behind** Lucy, **in front of** the television, ride **across** the road, etc. Other terms might include: **up, down, through, under, next to, inside, outside, over, into, before, above, among, left, right, between.**

Extension - Grid Maps:

Draw a smaller map of your house scene on grid paper using grid references/coordinates, a key and instructions for the Humdingles.

SCIENCE / STEAM

Family Trees

Science links: Biological sciences - ([AC9SFU01](#)) ([AC9S1U01](#)) ([AC9SFH01](#)) ([AC9S1H01](#)) ([AC9S2H01](#)) ([AC9SFI01](#)) ([AC9S1I01](#)) ([AC9S2I01](#)) ([AC9SFI02](#)) ([AC9S1I02](#)) ([AC9SFI03](#)) ([AC9S1I04](#)) ([AC9S2I04](#)) ([AC9SFI04](#)) ([AC9S1I05](#)) ([AC9S2I05](#)) ([AC9SFI05](#)) ([AC9S1I06](#)) ([AC9S2I06](#))

- Through interviews with an older family member, students will discover and record their family lineage/heritage by completing their own family tree.
 - Draw/fill in a family tree of their family, specifically including parents, siblings and grandparents.
 - Students can include photos and/or pictures.
 - Alternatively or in addition, students might like to fill in a family tree for the Humdingles.
 - See **BLM 6**. More templates are available at [Family Tree Template - Superstar Worksheets](#).

What are Stars?

Science links: Earth and Space sciences - ([AC9S2U01](#)) ([AC9SFH01](#)) ([AC9S1H01](#)) ([AC9S2H01](#)) ([AC9SFI01](#)) ([AC9S1I01](#)) ([AC9S2I01](#)) ([AC9SFI02](#)) ([AC9S1I02](#)) ([AC9SFI03](#)) ([AC9S1I04](#)) ([AC9S2I04](#)) ([AC9SFI04](#)) ([AC9S1I05](#)) ([AC9S2I05](#)) ([AC9SFI05](#)) ([AC9S1I06](#)) ([AC9S2I06](#))

The Humdingles stared up at the stars and wished for something HUMONGOUS.

Learn more about the stars.

- Watch a video about stars: [What Are Stars? \(youtube.com\)](#)
- A video about constellations:
[Let's Look at Constellations! | How We Study Space | SciShow Kids \(youtube.com\)](#)
- Instructions for making a planetarium can be found here:
[How To Make A Planetarium - Little Bins for Little Hands](#)
- Questions for students to explore:
 - What is a constellation?
 - What is the purpose of studying constellations, or why are they used as landmarks in the sky?
 - What are the names of the different constellations?
 - What do they look like? What does each kind of constellation represent?
 - What can you discover through your planetarium?

House Explosions (Baking Soda and Vinegar Reaction)

Science links: Chemical sciences - ([AC9SFU03](#)) ([AC9S2U03](#)) ([AC9SFH01](#)) ([AC9S1H01](#)) ([AC9S2H01](#)) ([AC9SFI01](#)) ([AC9S1I01](#)) ([AC9S2I01](#)) ([AC9SFI02](#)) ([AC9S1I02](#)) ([AC9SFI03](#)) ([AC9S1I04](#)) ([AC9S2I04](#)) ([AC9SFI04](#)) ([AC9S1I05](#)) ([AC9S2I05](#)) ([AC9SFI05](#)) ([AC9S1I06](#)) ([AC9S2I06](#))

The Humdingles' HUMONGOUS house exploded with a BANG! in their backyard.

Students can experiment with their own house explosions!

- You'll need baking soda, liquid watercolours or food colouring, vinegar, dish soap and jars / containers / boxes decorated like a house.
- Add the baking soda to the bottom of your 'house' and add food colouring with a dropper. Mix a squirt of dish soap to the vinegar, and then pour into your house.
- Experiment with variations like leaving out the dish soap, or adding the dish soap to the baking soda first. Predict, observe and record the findings. Which explosions worked the best?

Science involved: The baking soda (base) and vinegar (acid) mixed together releases carbon dioxide (gas). There is a further reaction when the carbon dioxide mixes with the soap.

STEAM: Design and Build Your Own Tiny House and Humongous House

Science links: Physical sciences - ([AC9SFU02](#)) ([AC9S1U03](#)) ([AC9SFH01](#)) ([AC9S1H01](#)) ([AC9S2H01](#)) ([AC9SFI01](#)) ([AC9S1I01](#)) ([AC9S2I01](#)) ([AC9SFI02](#)) ([AC9S1I02](#)) ([AC9SFI03](#)) ([AC9S1I04](#)) ([AC9S2I04](#)) ([AC9SFI04](#)) ([AC9S1I05](#)) ([AC9S2I05](#)) ([AC9SFI05](#)) ([AC9S1I06](#)) ([AC9S2I06](#))

Design and Technologies links - ([AC9TDEFK01](#)) ([AC9TDE2K01](#)) ([AC9TDE2K02](#)) ([AC9TDEFP01](#)) ([AC9TDE2P01](#)) ([AC9TDE2P02](#)) ([AC9TDE2P03](#)) ([AC9TDE2P04](#))

Visual Arts links - ([AC9AVA2E01](#)) ([AC9AVAFD01](#)) ([AC9AVA2D01](#)) ([AC9AVAF01](#)) ([AC9AVA2C01](#)) ([AC9AVAFP01](#)) ([AC9AVA2P01](#))

Watch the video and learn about the engineering design process at:

[Engineering Design Process - TeachEngineering](#)

- Label a diagram of a house, including different rooms, furniture and fixtures. See **BLM 1**.
- Students can design and build their own cardboard houses in either of the following ways:
 1. Design a house that will be built as a tiny home AND an identical HUMONGOUS home. The tiny home is the model of the larger home, which could be big enough to fit inside. An example can be found at: [Charcoal and Crayons: Ollie's House](#)
 2. Create a cutaway house that shows the storeys and rooms inside the house. This could be created by decorating shoe boxes and stacking them into the shape of a house.
 3. Other cardboard craft house ideas can be found at: [Cardboard Crafts for Kids: Five Fun Ideas \(artprojectsforkids.org\)](#)
- Students follow a design process to imagine, plan, create, test, and improve their houses (in small or large groups).
- Use ideas, shapes and images of houses to inspire the design.
- Address the importance of using re-used or environmentally sustainable products as a part of their designs.
- Evaluate the model's effectiveness, appearance, durability and function in meeting the needs of its target audience.

Another video on teaching engineering to children can be found at:

[\(149\) Engineering Design Kindergarten Science - YouTube](#)

VISUAL ARTS**Family Member Puppets**

([AC9AVA2E01](#)) ([AC9AVAFD01](#)) ([AC9AVA2D01](#)) ([AC9AVAF01](#)) ([AC9AVA2C01](#)) ([AC9AVAFP01](#)) ([AC9AVA2P01](#))

- Students can create stick (or other) puppets based on either their own family members or the Humdingles. Suggested materials could include: popsticks, craft paper, cardboard rolls, plastic bottles, split pins (for moving parts), and to decorate with paper, fabrics, other craft items.
- Students can share their process and describe why they chose their design.

Family Portraits

([AC9AVA2E01](#)) ([AC9AVAFD01](#)) ([AC9AVA2D01](#)) ([AC9AVAF01](#)) ([AC9AVA2C01](#)) ([AC9AVAFP01](#)) ([AC9AVA2P01](#))

Show students the images in 'The Humongous Humdingle Family and the Tiny House' where they are seen as a whole family. What activity or setting can you see them in? For example, standing together, on the couch, in the bed, around the table, on the garden chair, throwing pillows.

- Ask students what medium they think the illustrator used. What do they notice about the technique? The shading? The mood or setting?
- Students can choose to create a watercolour and line painting to reflect their family in their favourite spot in or around their home. How will the image and mood be represented?

THE ARTS – DRAMA

(AC9ADRF01) (AC9ADR2E01) (AC9ADRF01) (AC9ADR2D01) (AC9ADRF01) (AC9ADR2C01) (AC9ADRF01) (AC9ADR2P01)

- *Recreate 'The Humongous Humdingle Family and the Tiny House' through dramatisation – improvise or retell the story. Students might like to use their family puppets (see Visual Arts) to act out their play.*
- **Identifying Feelings** – The book explores challenging feelings of unhappiness, loneliness, boredom, emptiness, and the opposite positive feelings of togetherness, safety, comfort, satisfaction, and so on. Can students use body language and facial expressions only to act these out? For example, covering ears when it's noisy, squashing together, yawning when bored, droopy head and shoulders, hugging when together, smiling, etc. A partner or the class can guess what they're expressing.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body Ideas:

(AC9HPFP01) (AC9HP2P01) (AC9HPFP02) (AC9HPFP03) (AC9HPFP04) (AC9HP2P02) (AC9HP2P03) (AC9HP2P04) (AC9HPFP05) (AC9HP2P05) (AC9HPFM01) (AC9HPFM02) (AC9HP2M01) (AC9HP2M02) (AC9HPFM03) (AC9HP2M03) (AC9HPFM04) (AC9HP2M04) (AC9HP2M05)

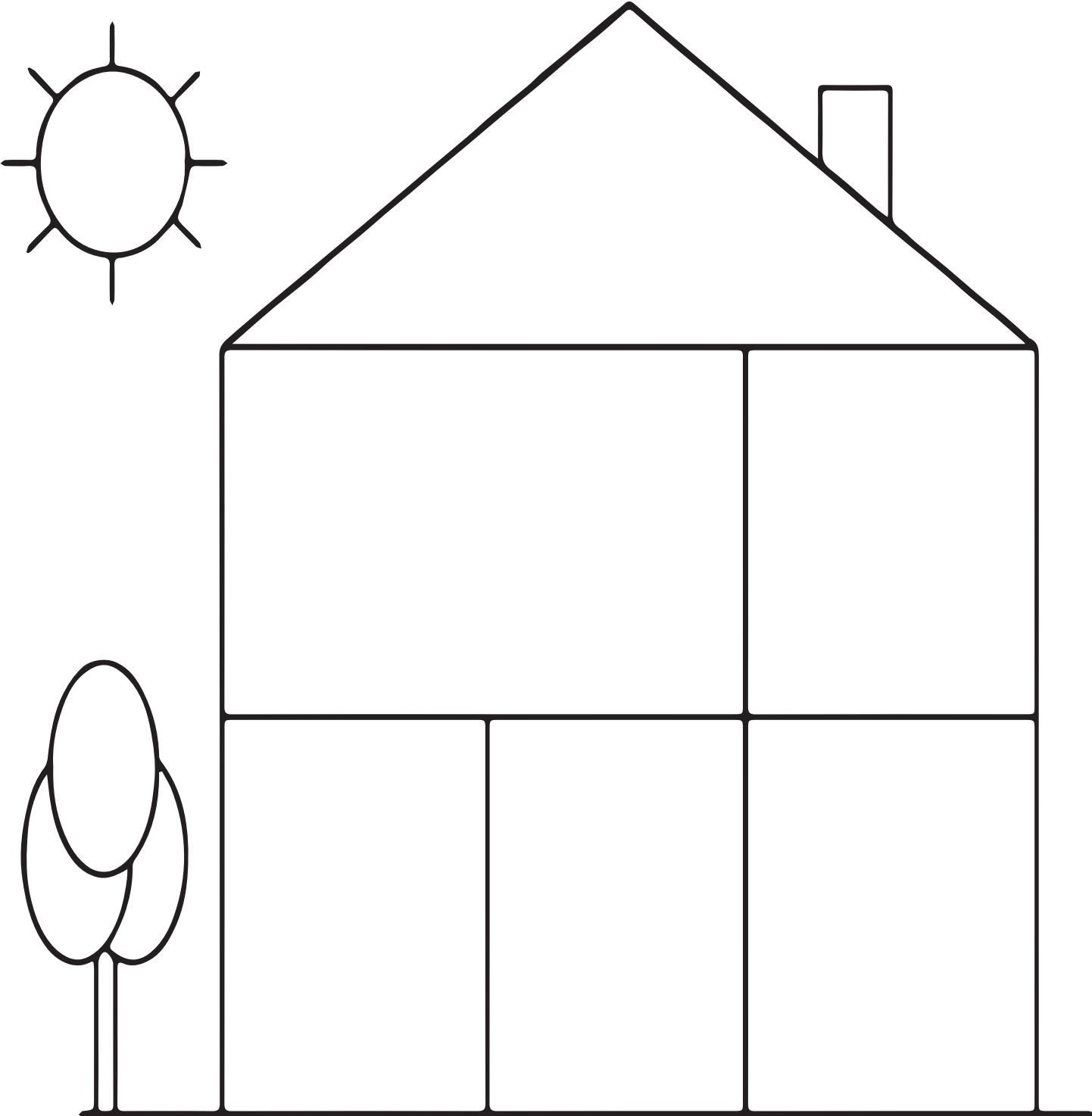
Mindfulness and physical activity are ideal for mental and physical health, as well as building relationships with family and friends.

- Engage in family activities, such as watching TV together, making a favourite meal together, going on a car trip, a bike ride, or another activity you all enjoy.
- Play a game (like Hide and Seek) or a sport as a family.
- Take the pets for a walk together.
- Hold a paper plane contest as a family.
- Spend time star gazing together. What would you each wish for?
- Have a conversation about the best (and least best) things about living together.
- Write and draw ideas about what you enjoy most and what else you'd like your family to do together.
- Sort through your possessions and decide what is and isn't important. Is there a way to donate or declutter the things that aren't necessary?
- Interview your parents and grandparents about how they grew up in their childhood home. What made them the happiest?
- Share old and new photos with the generations of your family.
- Choose or make a toy that will help you feel less lonely and safe.
- Write, tell and read stories about families, as a family.
- Go camping or have a slumber party together!

House Template 1

NAME _____

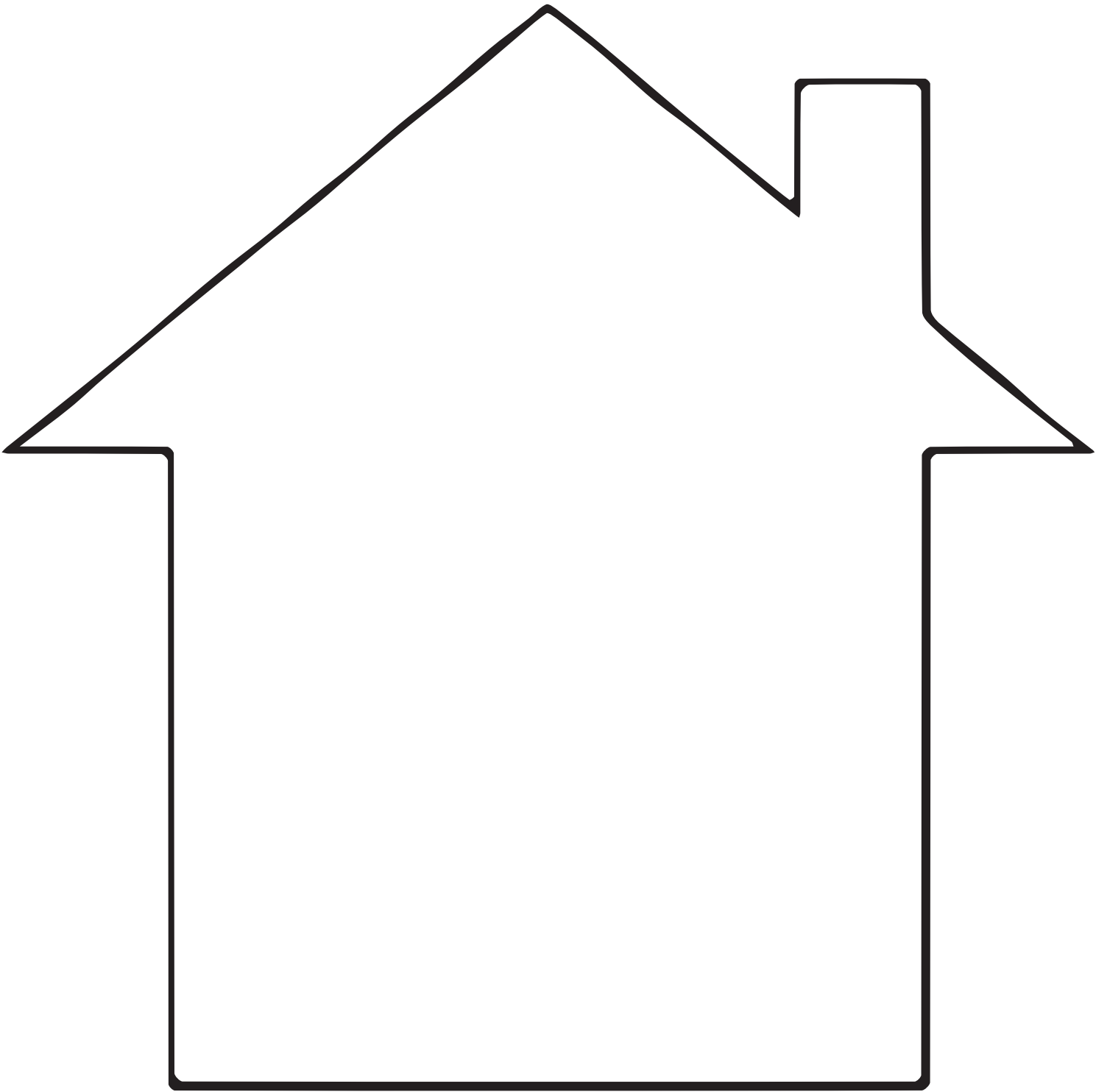
DATE _____



House Template 2

NAME _____

DATE _____



All About My Family

NAME _____

DATE _____

Fill in the boxes to share more about your family!

This is what we like to do for fun:

Family members in the home:

Draw a picture!

My family is different because:

What I love about my family is:

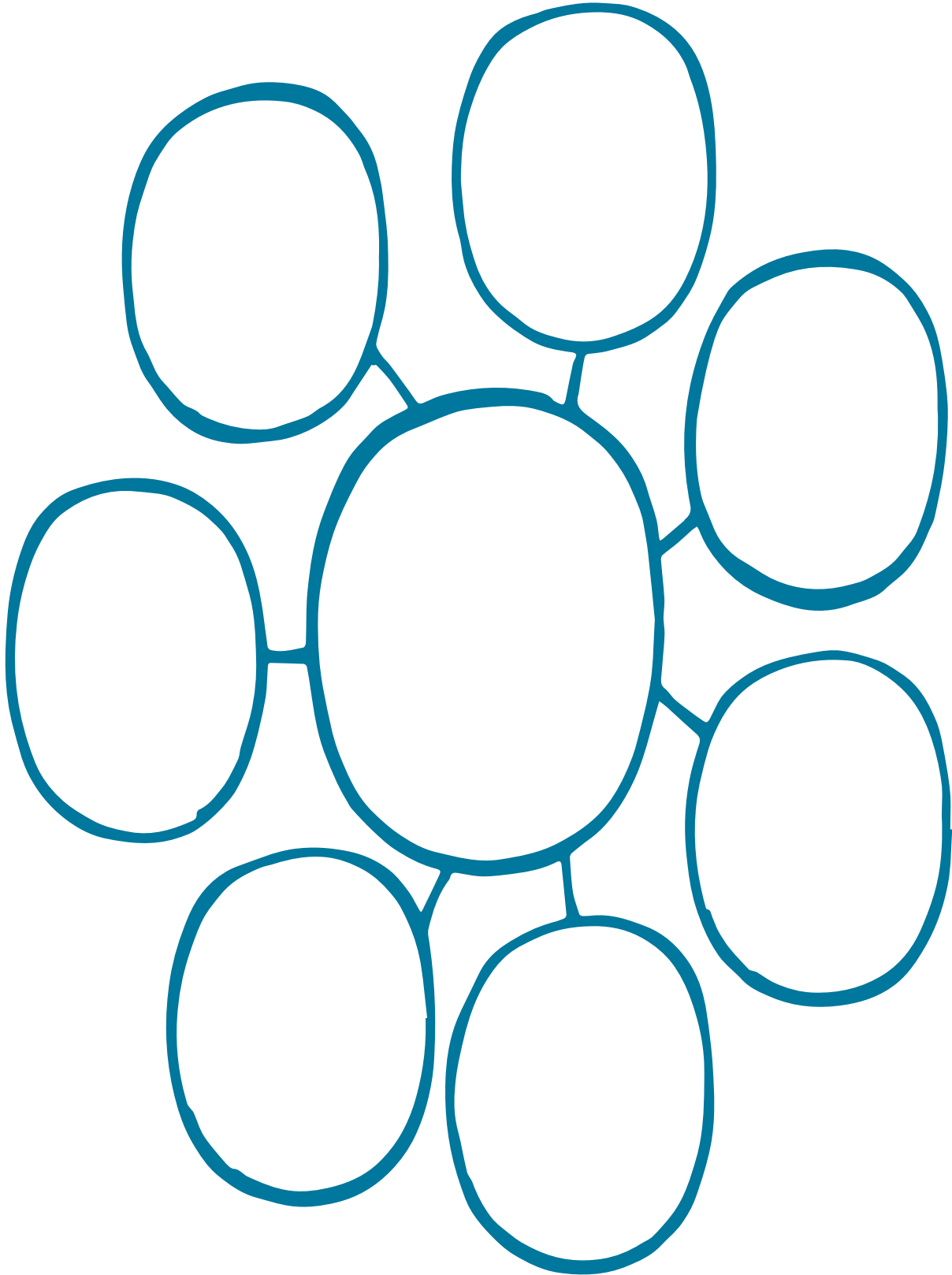
Something I would change about my family is:

My favourite family memory is:

Concept Web

NAME _____

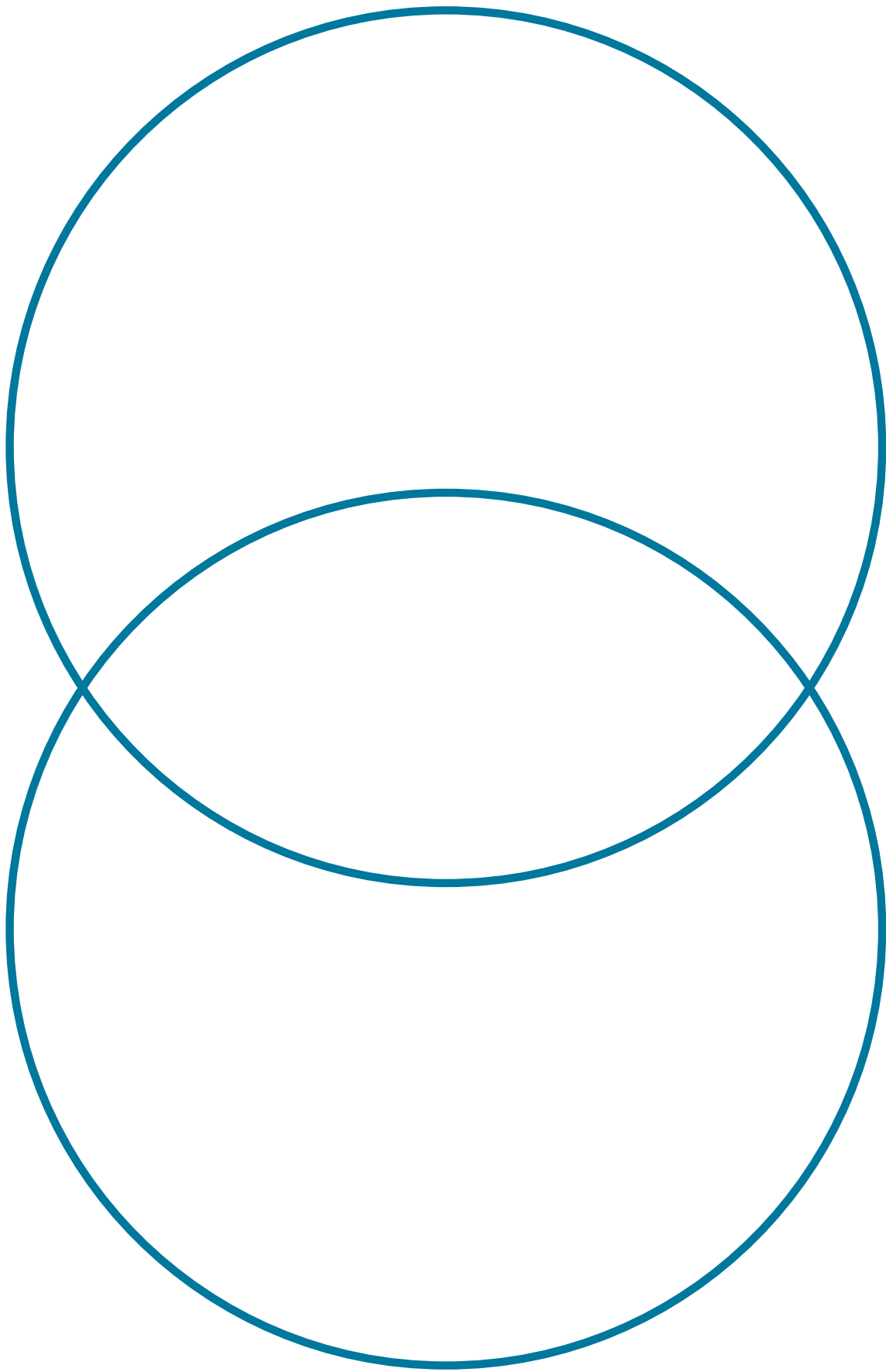
DATE _____



Venn Diagram

NAME _____

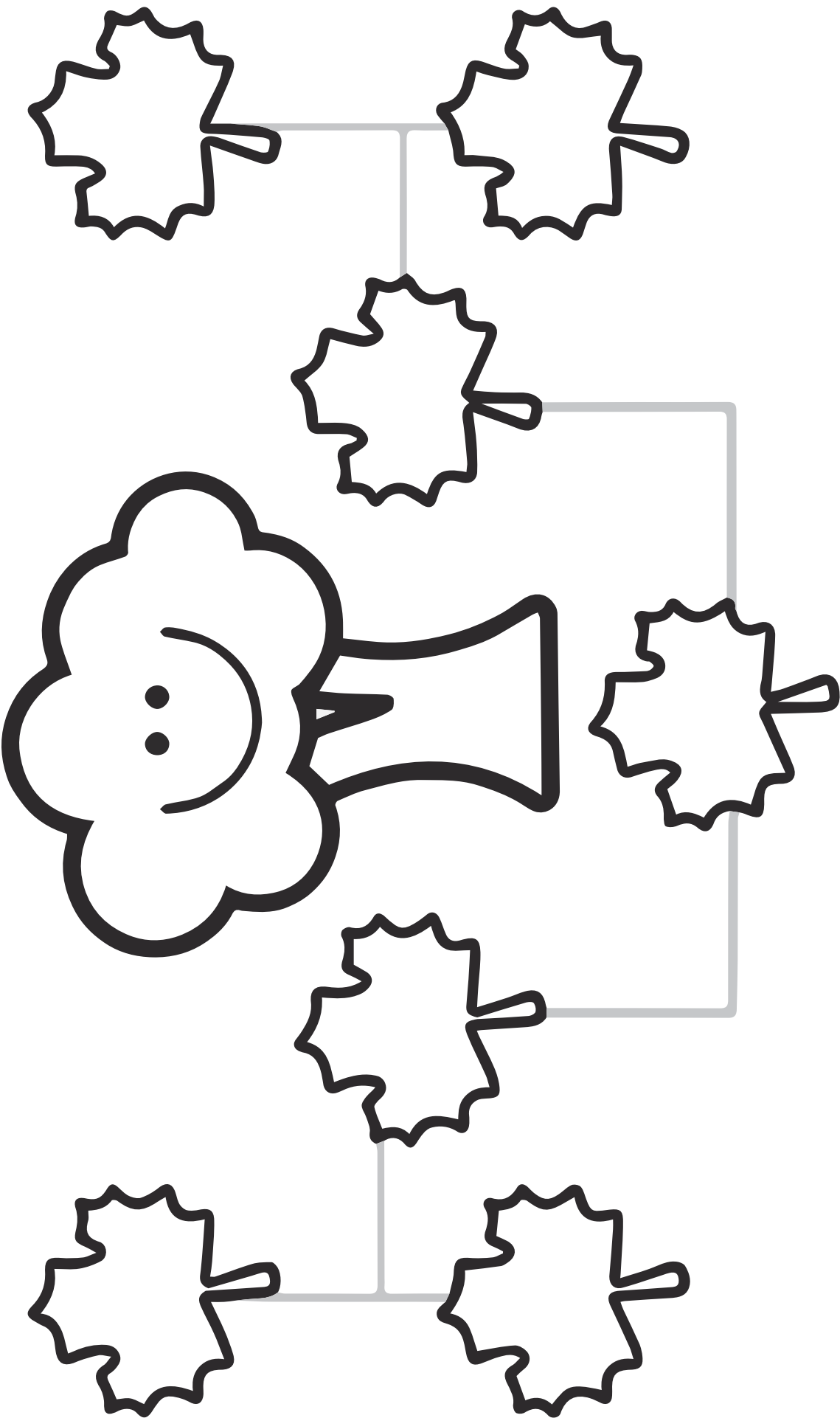
DATE _____



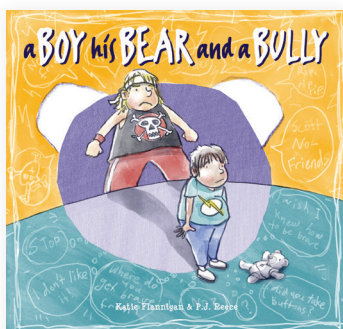
Family Tree

NAME _____

DATE _____



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Join Sam as he finds out the value of looking after our belongings in this whimsically illustrated story about how children can have a part in reducing plastic waste and taking responsibility for the environment.

THEMES: RECYCLING, SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT

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