

School is More Than a Building!

Resource Pack



KelleyDonner.com

Dear Reader,

In this resource pack, you will find 40 pages of lesson plans and ideas free of charge.

If you enjoy using any of my material, please help me out by telling your friends about my book, promoting it on social media, and writing an honest review on Amazon, Goodreads, or on your platform of choice. It is not easy to make a living being a writer/illustrator. Only with your support can I continue to bring more books on the market and offer my lesson plans for free.

For contact info, please see the last page of this document.

Thank you!

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly D." with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

School is More Than a Building!

Lesson Plans



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Lesson Plan Options:

1. **First Day of School**

The first day of school is always exciting, but also a bit scary. This lesson plan helps children to understand all of the wonderful things that they can do at school and the great things that the school can do for them.

2. **Back to In-Person School**

Whether your classes were completely remote or hybrid, this lesson plan offers discussion questions and activities to help process the transition back to school.

3. **Our School is a Community**

Now more than ever, children need to learn about how they can be a part of a community. This lesson plan offers discussion on empathy, diversity, and global citizenship.

4. **We Are Your School**

Who works at your school and what roles do they have? This lesson plan is great for new students as it will help them to learn about the different people who work at their school. Includes student-staff interview sheets.

Each of these lesson plans is full of worksheets, activities, discussion questions, and ideas. I do not expect anyone to use all of them, but I know from being a teacher that it is better to have too much to choose from than too little.

Option 1: First Day of School

Pre-Book Activities

Discussion

1. Are you happy to be in school?
2. What has been the most exciting thing so far?
3. Did anything surprise you?
4. Were you nervous about going to school?
5. What are you most looking forward to this year?

Mindmap

Write the word school in the center of your mindmap. Now ask the children the following question and based on their age and ability level, either have them make their own mind map or do one together.

Why do we go to school?

Discuss your answers.

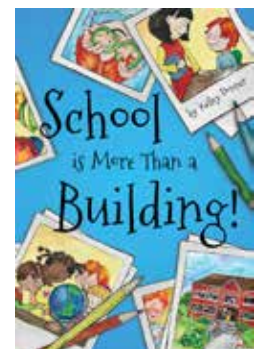
Analyze Cover:

Often children don't think about what a cover says about the book. Show the cover of *School is More Than a Building* and ask the children to think about the following question and discuss:

1. *What do you think this book is about?*
2. *What is the title?*
3. *Who is the author?*
4. *Can you see a picture of a school? How do you know that it is a school?*
5. *What are the children doing in the pictures?*
6. *Look at the back of the book and then the front again. Who do you think is the narrator of the story? (You may need to explain the word narrator).*

Read Book

Read the story *School is More Than a Building*, from Kelley Donner out loud to the children. It may be helpful to read the book twice and the second time to think about who is in charge of each of the different activities that are spoken about.



Post-Book Activities:

Worksheet 1: Who works at my school?

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who Works at My School?” and have children work on it together in groups or if possible, send the children around the school to find out the answers.

Worksheet 2: Who is ____?

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who is ____?” Based on your mindmap from the beginning of the lesson, assign groups of children a staff member to interview. Once children have completed their interviews, discuss.

Discussion Questions: Why do we go to school?

When children first begin school they think it is purely to learn to read, write, and do math. The book *School is More Than a Building* gives a glimpse into some of the other aspects of school that children may not be aware of. Here are some discussion questions to get the children thinking about what school is and is not and who they can turn to if they have a problem.

1. *Why do we go to school?*
2. *What do we learn at school?*
3. *What other things do you do at school besides learning?*



Discussion Questions:

Who will listen?

It is important that children who are new to school understand that they have people that they can go to and talk to if they have questions or problems. Open the book to the page “it is a place where people listen.” Then discuss the following questions.

1. *Who do you go to if you are late for school?*
2. *Who do you talk to if you don't feel good?*
3. *Who can you go to if you are scared or worried about something?*
4. *Who can you talk to if you are having a bad day and need someone to listen?*

Based on how your school is set up. Feel free to add your own questions and discussion topics to this list.

Worksheet 3: Who helps me to?

Option 1: Use as a handout. Option 2: Ask the students each question and then show the page in the book that it relates to and discuss. For example, Who helps me to be healthy? Look at page 18-18 “a place where I can learn to be healthy.”

Fun Author Facts:

“When I grew up in Kansas, I remember getting on the yellow school bus and heading off to my first day. Having two older brothers, I was so excited when I finally was able to join them in the morning and see what school is all about. Nevertheless, my own children have had very different experiences to me. We have lived in a few places throughout the world. When my oldest son turned 5 we were in New Zealand. There you go to school for the first time on your fifth birthday. When we lived in Germany, my middle son had his first day of school. In Germany, you begin when you are 6 and there is a big celebration at the school for the new students. The second graders put on a show and welcome the first graders and you get a big cone filled with candy and toys. It has been exciting seeing how different the first day of school can be in different places. No matter where you are, your first day of school is a day you will never forget.”

Art Project:

Art Activity sheet: I Love My School Self-Portrait

Hand out the art activity sheet 2, “I Love My School Self-Portrait.” Follow the instructions and have children make self-portraits of themselves.

Art Project:

Art Activity sheet 3 and 4: Draw a picture of your school

Hand out the art activity sheet 3 or 4, and ask students to draw a picture of their school. You could also hang these up with their self-portraits on the bulletin board.

Bulletin Board Idea

“Our school is more than a building”

Hang up all of the pictures that the student have made with the corresponding interviews if applicable. Make sure that the names are clearly marked. On the blackboard (see bulletin board sign) write Our School is More Than a Building!”

Art Project:

Coloring sheets:

Don't forget that there are numerous coloring sheets which you can hand out to students who just want to color.



Option 2: Back to (In-Person) School

Pre-Book Activities:

Worksheet 3: My Pandemic Experience

Hand out the worksheet titled “My Pandemic Experience” either as homework before the lesson or during. If this is for young children, perhaps you could have the parents help them fill it in and then read through them yourself before the discussion.

Discussion

1. Are you happy to be back in school?
2. What are some things that you missed?
3. How is life at school different than school at home?
4. Was it better for anyone being at home? Why?
5. What do you love most about school?



Mindmap

Write the word school in the center of your mindmap. Now ask the children one of the following questions and based on their age and ability level, either have them make their own mind map or do one together.

Why do we go to school?

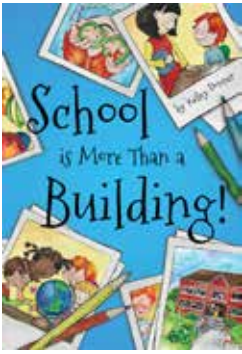
Why are you happy to be back at school?

Discuss your answers.

Analyze Cover:

Often children don't think about what a cover says about the book. Show the cover of *School is More Than a Building* and ask the children to think about the following question and discuss:

1. *What do you think this book is about?*
2. *What is the title?*
3. *Who is the author?*
4. *Can you see a picture of a school? How do you know that it is a school?*
5. *What are the children doing in the pictures?*
6. *Look at the back of the book and then the front again. Who do you think is the narrator of the story? (You may need to explain the word narrator).*



Read Book

Read the story *School is More Than a Building*, from Kelley Donner out loud to the children. It may be helpful to read the book twice and the second time to think about who is in charge of each of the different activities that are spoken about.

Fun Author Facts:

“On the last page of the book is a picture of Max holding a photo and saying “I love my school.” The expression on this boy’s face was inspired by my middle son Lukas who on the first day of school after a long period of homeschooling due to the pandemic, closed his eyes, smiled, and said, “I’m going to school.” I have three boys and it was really tough for us, just like many, to try to make the most out of homeschooling. My boys were all very happy when they could return to school. It was on this day, the first day of them being back in school, that I went home and began to write this book.”

Post-Book Activities:

Worksheet 3: Who helps me to?

Option 1: Use as a handout. Option 2: Ask the students each question and then show the page in the book that it relates to and discuss. For example, Who helps me to be healthy? Look at page 18-18 “a place where I can learn to be healthy.”

Worksheet 2: Who is ____?

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who is _____?” Based on your mindmap from the beginning of the lesson, assign groups of children a staff member to interview. Once children have completed their interviews, discuss.

Art Project:

Worksheet: I Love My School Self-Portrait

Hand out the worksheet, “I Love My School Self-Portrait.” Option 1: Have students do self-portraits. Option 2: Instead of having the children make a picture of themselves, have them do a portrait of the staff member that they interviewed.

Bulletin Board Idea

“Our school is more than a building”

Hang up all of the pictures that the student have made with the corresponding interviews if applicable. Make sure that the names are clearly marked. On the blackboard (see bulletin board sign) write Our School is More Than a Building!”

Option 3: We are a community

Now more than ever children need to be aware that they are part of a larger community. Looking at how a school functions and how everyone plays apart in its success is a great way to show children how a positive community can work. In this lesson plan, I've given various options for learning about community.

Pre-Book Activities:

Mindmap:



Write the word “school community” in the center of your mindmap. Now ask the children the following question and based on their age and ability level, either have them make their own mind map or do one together.

Who is part of our school community?

You may need to help students to come up with some of the people who work at the school that they do not know. Once you have done this mindmap, make a new one next to it and write the word “city community.” Now add a line and connect it to your school mindmap. Explain to children that a school is only one part of a larger community. Now add to your mindmap some of the other elements that make up a community. You can ask children the question?

Who is part of our city community?

Depending on your pupil's age level and ability, you can also continue to increase your mindmap until you have connected it to the global community. If you do not have time to do this, then I would at least discuss how your school community is connected to the larger whole.

Worksheet 3: Who helps me to...

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who helps me to” and have children work on it together in groups. Make sure to let the children know that there is no correct answer. It is possible that they may have different answers depending on who they would go to. After children have answered the worksheet, come back together and discuss.

Worksheet 1 and 2: Who works at my school? and Who is _____?

Either of these worksheets also fits in well to the topic and could be used.

Coloring Sheet 6 and 1: Are you a star? and Our school is a community

This worksheet asks students to think about how they contribute to their school.

Analyze Cover:

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Read Book

Read the story *School is More Than a Building*, from Kelley Donner out loud to the children. It may be helpful to read the book twice and the second time to think about who is in charge of each of the different activities that are spoken about.

Post-Book Activities:

Discussion Questions:

School is More Than a Building gives examples of positive ways that schools can influence children. Often children do not even think about why they go to school or what a school does for them. Discussing these ideas can help children to understand how their school acts as a community and shows them that a great school only works when all of its parts work well together.

1. *Why do we go to school?*
2. *How do your teachers welcome you to school?*
3. *How do your teachers help you to learn?*
4. *Do your teachers and friends care about you? How do you know?*
5. *Do you feel like everyone is accepted at your school?*
6. *Is your school a community? Why?*
7. *What do you love about your school?*

Fun Author Facts:

My husband is German and we lived in Germany many years. The first day of school in Germany was a very big deal. You begin when you are 6. Not only does the child get a big cone filled with candy and toys, they also have an entire program at the school just to welcome them. The second graders usually sing a song or do a skit and have the job of welcoming the first graders to the school. I always liked this idea and I think it helps build a community spirit within the school.

Worksheet 5: Find Someone Who

This worksheet is for older children who have no difficulties reading short sentences. It is a fun activity as it gets the children moving through the classroom (If this worksheet is too difficult, please consider the other ones below).

Hand out the worksheet, "Find Someone Who." Tell the children they will have 10 min to try to fill in as many of the boxes as possible. Then let the students go around the room and question each other. When the students are finished, make a circle and go around discussing some of the answers.

Worksheet 4: How am I part of a community.

Hand out the worksheet titled "How am I part of a community." This worksheet may be a good one to do in small groups as some of the questions are a bit more abstract than children may be used to. However, it is a good idea for children to think about how they react with others in their school and home community.

When the children are finished filling out the worksheet, come back together in a group and discuss.

Worksheet 7: This week I will.

Hand out the worksheet titled "This week I will." This should be given as homework. Students are asked to mark different things that they will do this week related to a community. I have left blanks at the end in case as a class you want to add more ideas.



Art Project:

Worksheet: I Love My School Self-Portrait

Hand out the worksheet, "I Love My School Self-Portrait" and have students make a self portrait of themselves. Then hang them up together on the bulletin board with the title, "Our School is a Community."

Bulletin Board Idea

Our School is a Community

Hang up all of the pictures that the student have made. Print and hang up also the picture of Max from the story School is More Than a Building and on a piece of black construction paper write "Our School is a Community."

Option 4: We are Your School

This lesson plan has various possibilities. You can use it to introduce new children directly to the school team or have the older children in the school interview the staff and introduce them to the newbies. Or perhaps your school is rather large and you would like to use this an opportunity for your class to get to know their school staff better. No matter why you have chosen this option, you should find plenty of material on the topic of “We Are Your School.”

Pre-Book Activities:

Mindmap:

Write the word school in the center of your mindmap. Now ask the children the following question and based on their age and ability level, either have them make their own mind map or do one together.

Who works at a school?

Students will likely have no problem coming up with “teacher” and “principal” but they may need some prompting on some of the other staff, such as “custodian/janitor” or “nurse.” In addition, larger schools will have more staff than smaller ones.



Worksheet 1:

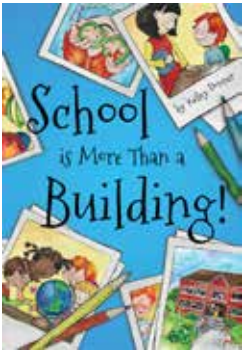
Who works at my school?

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who Works at My School?” and have children work on it together in groups or if possible, send the children around the school to find out the answers.

Analyze Cover:

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Read Book

Read the story *School is More Than a Building*, from Kelley Donner out loud to the children. It may be helpful to read the book twice and the second time to think about who is in charge of each of the different activities that are spoken about.

Fun Author Facts:

“When I was in first grade, I went to a very small rural school in Kansas. Because my class only had 4 pupils, we were together with the class above us. My teacher taught both first and second grade together. Our entire school only had 40 students and our principal only came by about once a week. When I was little my father always told me stories of when he was in school. He went to a one room school house and had to walk to school about a mile and a half. I always felt lucky that I was able to take the school bus. When I finished third grade our little school closed and I had to take the bus to another town a few miles away.”

Post-Book Activities:

Worksheet 3: Who helps me to?

Option 1: Use as a handout. Option 2: Ask the students each question and then show the page in the book that it relates to and discuss. For example, Who helps me to be healthy? Look at page 18-18 “a place where I can learn to be healthy.”

Worksheet 2: Who is ____?

Hand out the worksheet titled “Who is ____?” Based on your mindmap from the beginning of the lesson, assign groups of children a staff member to interview. Once children have completed their interviews, discuss.

Art Project:

Worksheet: I Love My School Self-Portrait

Hand out the worksheet, “I Love My School Self-Portrait” but instead of having the children make a picture of themselves, have them do a portrait of the staff member that they interviewed.

Bulletin Board Idea

“We are your school”

Hang up all of the pictures that the student have made with the corresponding interviews. Make sure that the staff member’s name is clearly marked. Write in large letters at the top either “We Are Your School!” or “ We Will Listen!”

Name _____

Worksheet 1:

Who works at my school?

Write the name of each school staff member on the line.

1. Our principal is _____

2. Our receptionist is _____

3. Our custodian is _____

4. Our nurse is _____

5. Our librarian is _____

6. Our lunch person is _____

Who does which job? Match the words below:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| principal • | • greets people who visit the school |
| receptionist • | • helps you when you fall down |
| custodian • | • is the head of the school |
| nurse • | • helps you find a book |
| librarian • | • offers you delicious food to eat |
| lunch person • | • cleans and maintains the school |

Name _____

Worksheet 2:

Who is _____?

Interview Questions:

1. What is your job title?

2. Who do you do?

3. What is your favorite part of your job?

4. What are your hobbies?

5. What did you want to be when you were my age?

6. Write your own question here:

Answer to question:

Name _____

Worksheet 3:

Who helps me to?

Answer the following questions.

1. Who welcomes me and says hello?

2. Who helps me to learn?

3. Who listens to me when I need to talk?

4. Who helps me be creative?

5. Who helps me be healthy?

6. Who helps me when I am hurt?

7. Who helps me when I am angry or sad?



Worksheet 4:

How am I part of a community?



Answer the following questions.

1.. Who can I say hello to in the morning?

2. How can I help a friend?

3. Who can I get to know better?

4. How can I help my teacher?

5. What can I do at home to help?

6. What can I do in my neighborhood to help?

Name _____

Worksheet 5:

Find someone who...

<p>Find someone who has been to a foreign country. Which country did they visit?</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Find someone who empties the dishwasher at home sometimes: Write their name here:</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Ask someone what their middle name is:</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Find someone who plays at least 3 sports? What is their favorite sport?</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Learn a new word in a language that you don't know. What is the word:</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Find someone who has a weird hobby. What is it?</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Ask someone what the name of their pet is:</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Find someone who has to take out the trash at home: Write their name here:</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Find someone who eats something that you don't. What is the name of the food?</p> <p>_____</p>

Name _____

Worksheet 6:

My Pandemic Experience

Answer the following questions:

1. Are you happy to be back at school? _____

2. Did you like having school at home? _____

2. How did you feel when you found out you couldn't go to school?

3. What was different about school at home?

4. What was the hardest about school at home?

5. What was your favorite part of the day during homeschool?

6. What did you miss about school while you were home?

7. What is something about the past year that you will never forget?

Name _____

Worksheet 7:

This week I will...



- Talk to someone new.
- Ask someone how they are doing.
- Help my parents with a job at home.
- Help a friend with an activity.
- Ask an adult if I can help with something.

School is More Than a Building!

Activity Sheets/ Art Projects



Worksheet 1:

I love My School - Self-Portrait

Instructions:

- Cut out the face.
- Add a mouth, eyebrows, and glasses if you wear them.
- Then add hair using cut construction or crepe paper.
- Glue on "I love my school because..." box below your name.



Hair Tips:

- Cut out a rectangular piece of construction paper.
- Fold it lengthwise about 1 cm from the top.
- Cut strips to the fold line.
- Cut into pieces about 4-5 cm long.

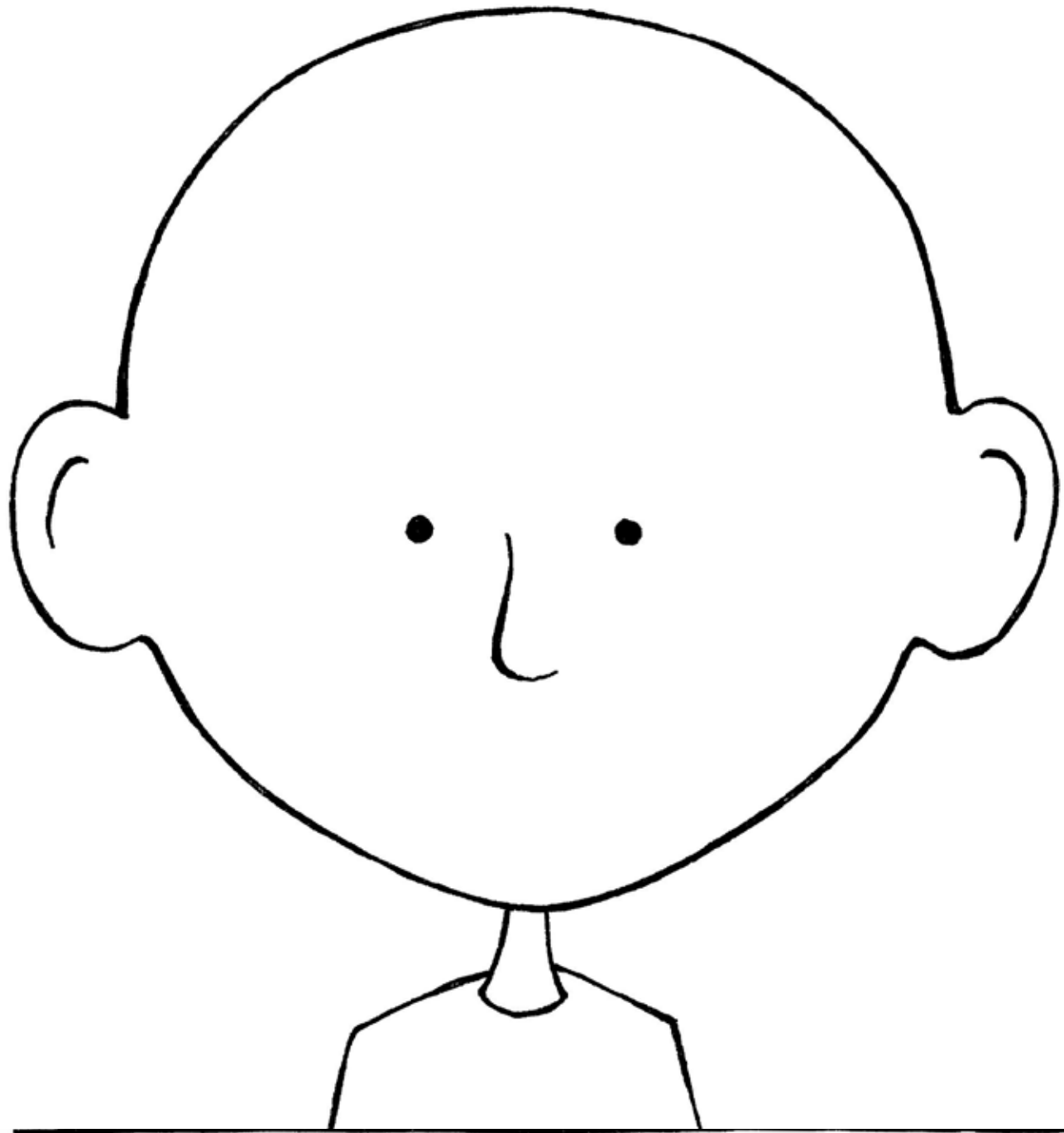


- Paste onto top of head and fold down into place.
- Cut hair with a scissors.
- Style hair by rolling it over a pencil.

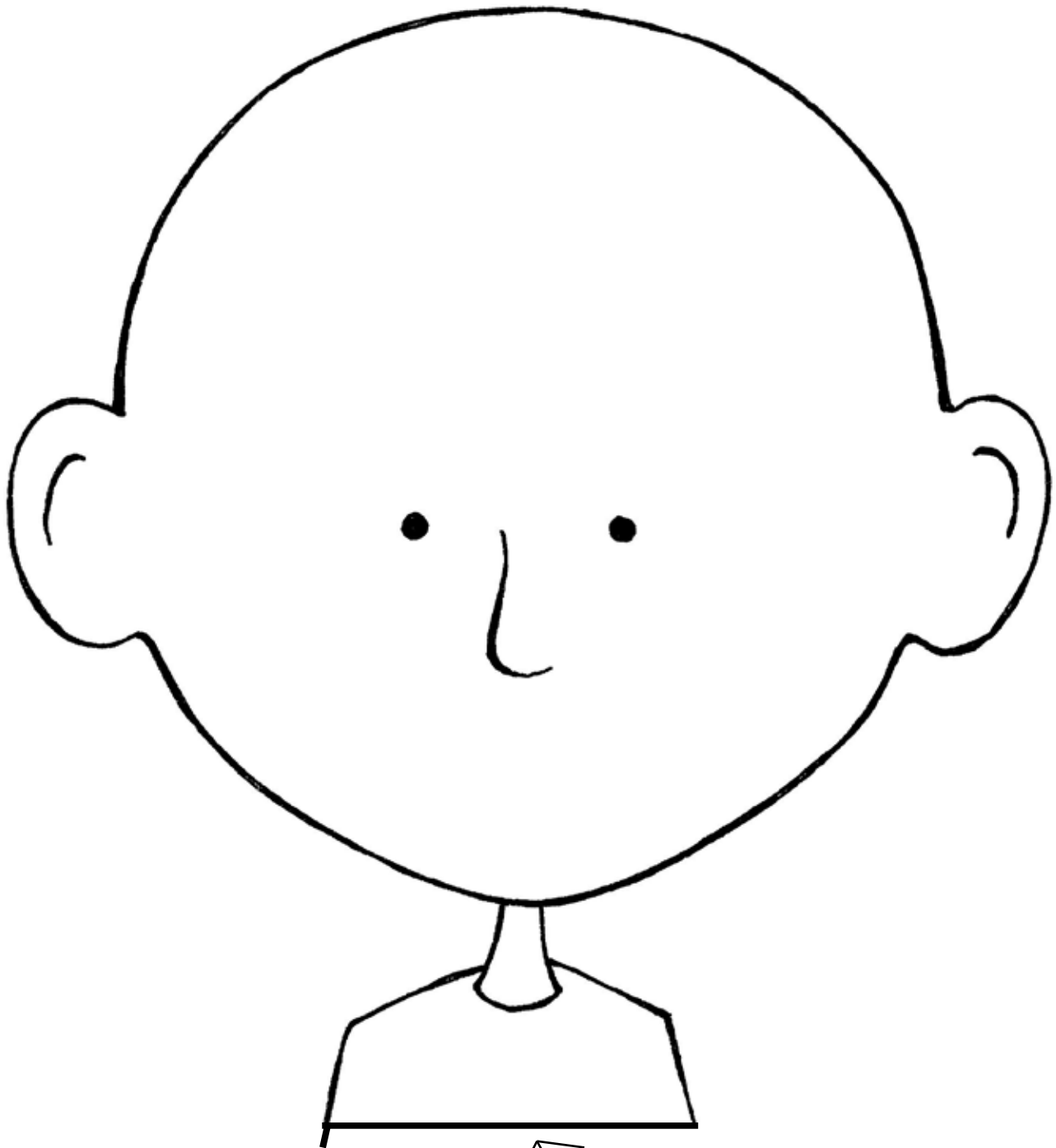
Examples:

- Here are some examples of self-portraits. Thank you to Oaks International School in Cambridge, UK for permission.





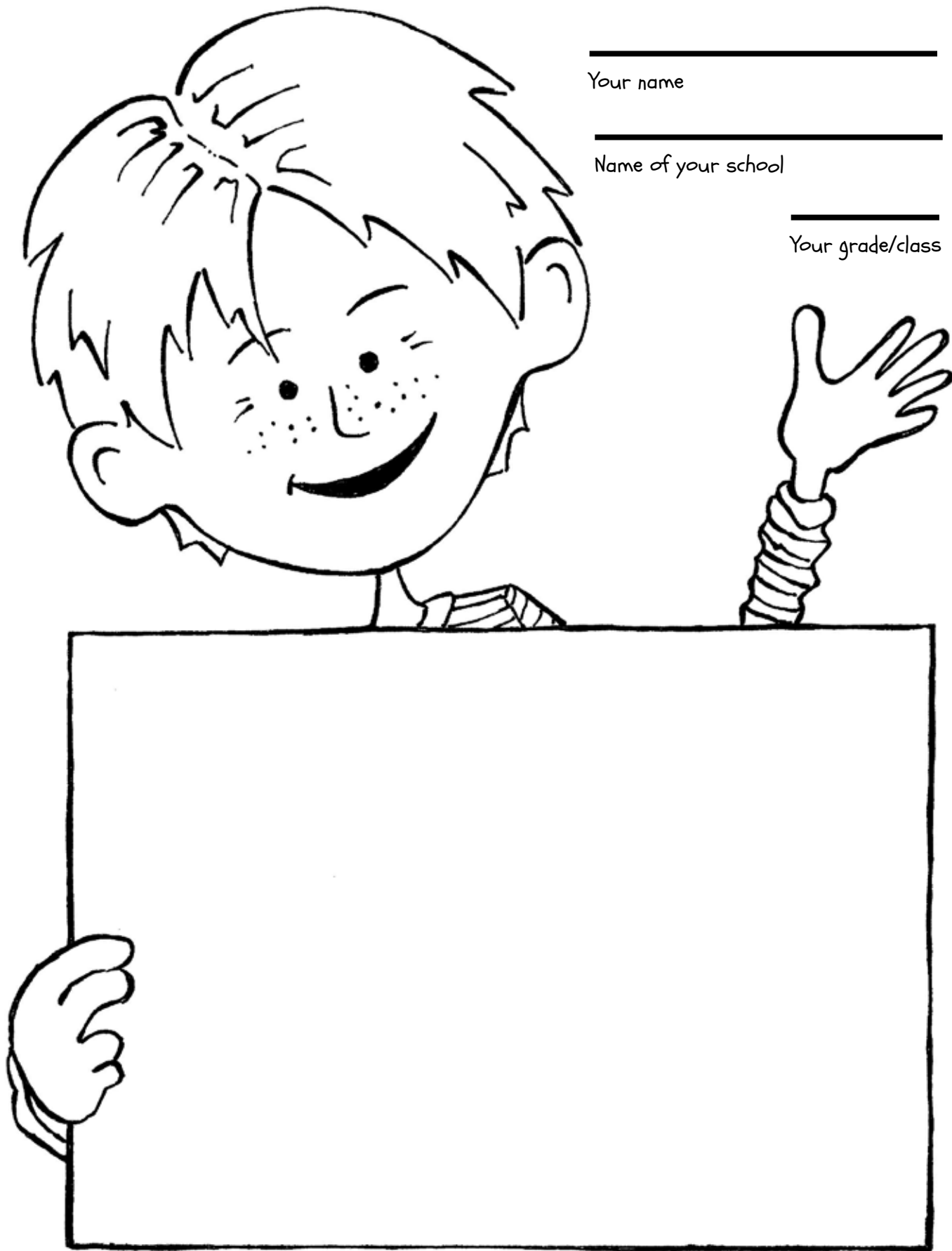
I love my school because _____



Cut out head.



Write your name here.



Your name

Name of your school

Your grade/class

Draw a picture of your school:

Your name

Name of your school

Your grade/class

School is More Than a Building!

Bulletin Board Ideas



Bulletin Board Ideas:

“Welcome Back” - Student Activities

Whether you have been doing online school, hybrid, or are already back in school, a Welcome Back bulletin board is a great way to start your year off right.

- **Option 1:** Print off Art Activity Sheet 1: I Love School - Self Portrait and hang them up on your bulletin board showing everyone (especially new children at the school) just how great school can be.
- **Option 2:** Use Art Activity Sheet 2 and have students draw a picture of either their school or something they love doing at school.
- **Option 3:** Fold a piece of construction paper in half. Have each student write down one word about what they love about their school, such as friends, fun, food, play, etc... (or alternatively, one sentence). Build a school on your bulletin board using your I love my school bricks.



“Welcome Back” - Teacher and Staff Activity

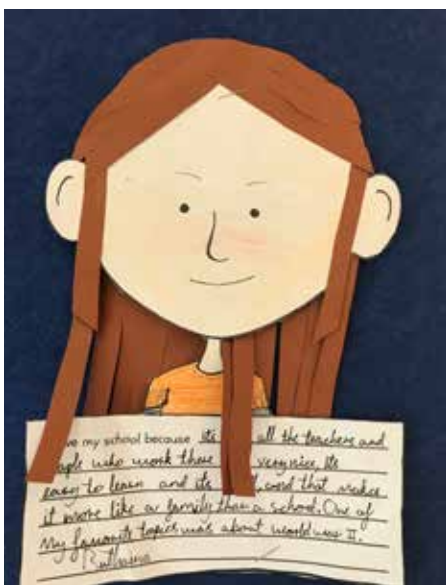
Use Art Activity Sheet 1: I love School - Self Portrait as an activity with teachers. Then hang them up and show your students just how much you love your school.

“We Are Your School” - Teacher and Staff Activity

Use Art Activity Sheet 2: I love School - Self Portrait as an activity with staff. Instead, label each portrait with the teacher or staff member's name and then write with chalk on a piece of black paper - We Will Listen.

“A Library is More” - Student Activities

- **Option 1:** Have students draw a picture from their favorite book. Use this along with the sign from the book of Max holding the chalk board. On a piece of black paper (the chalk board) write “A Library is More Than Just A Room Full of Books.” Hang up sheets.
- **Option 2:** Use Art Activity Sheet 2: I love School - Self Portrait and have students make their favorite character from a book.



If you have a great idea for how to use School is More than a Building on a Bulletin Board, please send me your ideas to kelly.donner@gmail.com. I would also love to see your finished bulletin boards and add them to my I Love My School Showcase on my website at KelleyDonner.com/school-is-more-than-a-building. Thank you!

Bulletin Board Sign:

Print this picture out on A4 or A3 paper and add to your bulletin board display. For the sign, use chalk on a large piece of black paper.

You can either color in the black and white version on this page or print out the





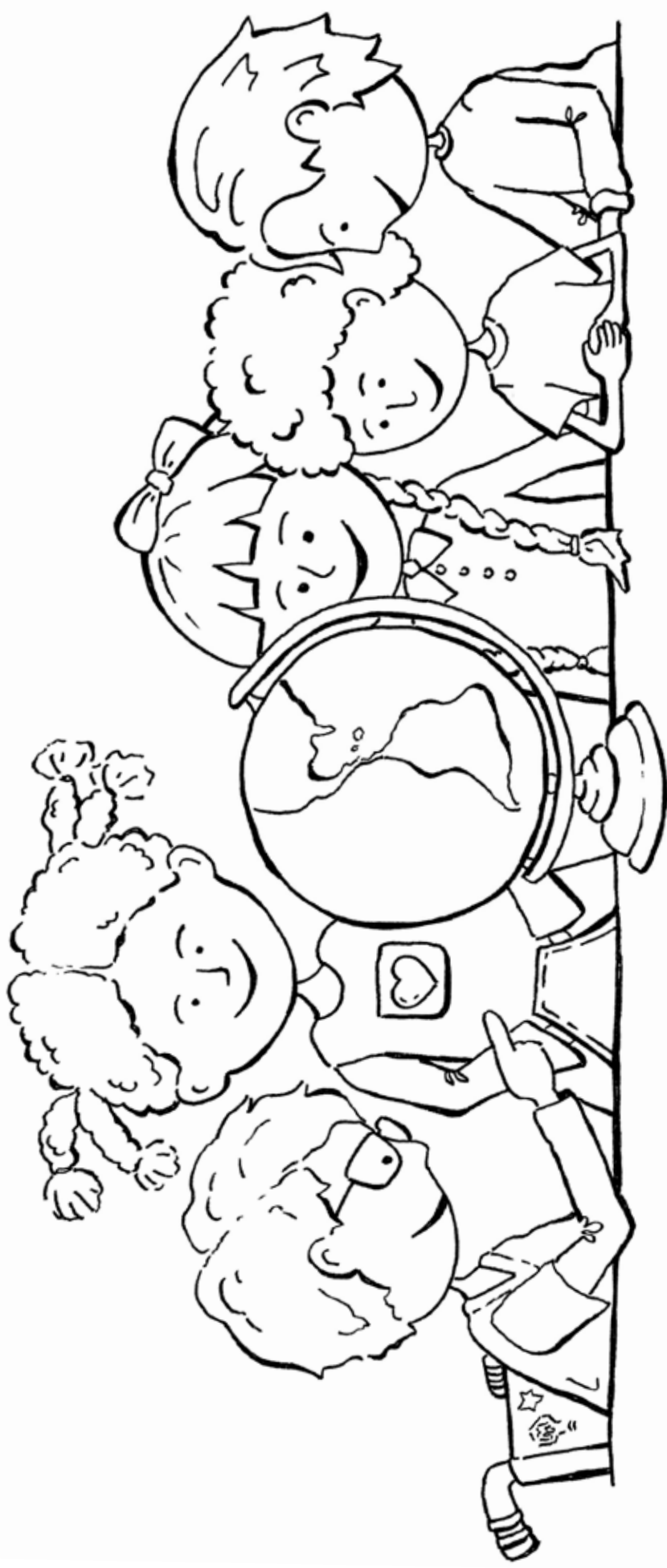
School is More Than a Building!

Coloring Sheets



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Our school is a community!



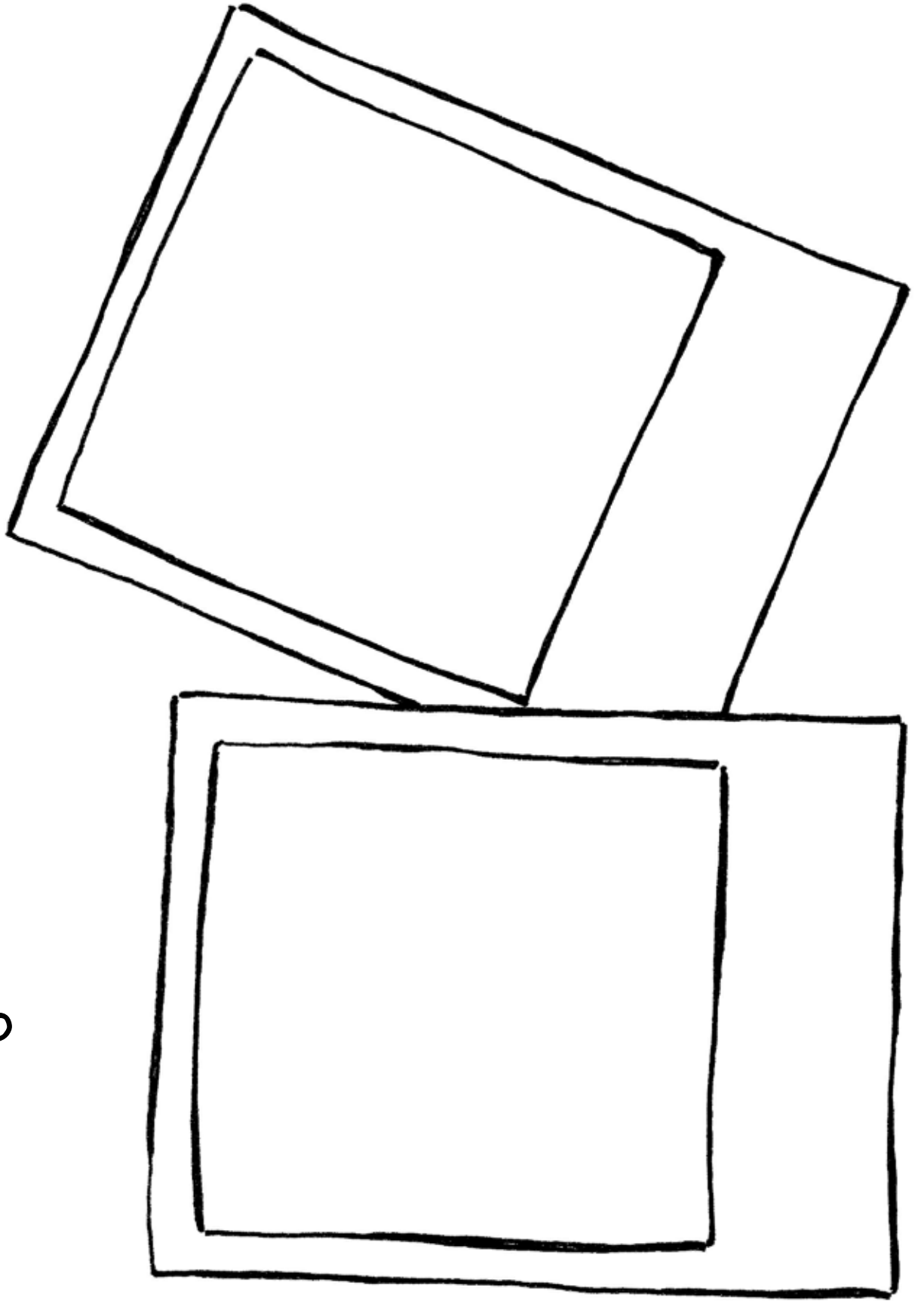


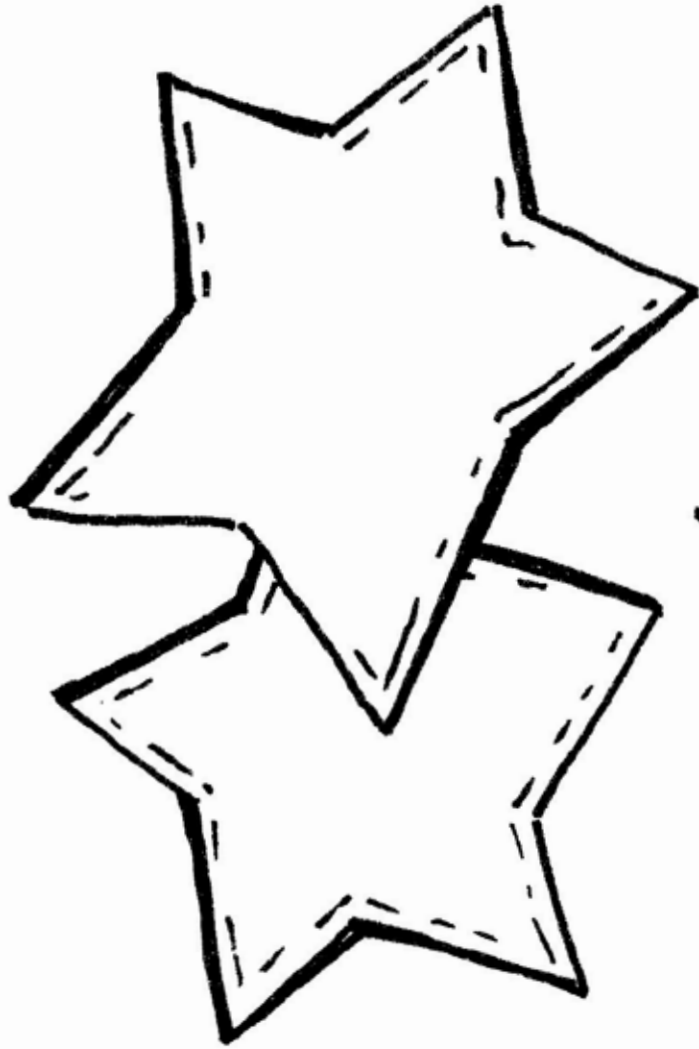




I am
unique!

What do you love about school?
Draw two things:





Are you a **star**?

How do you contribute
to your school's community?

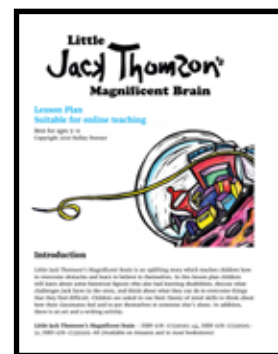
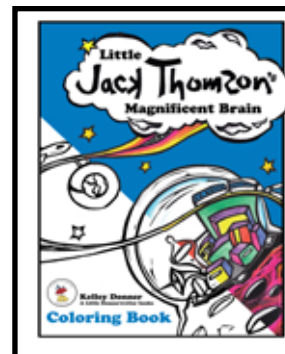
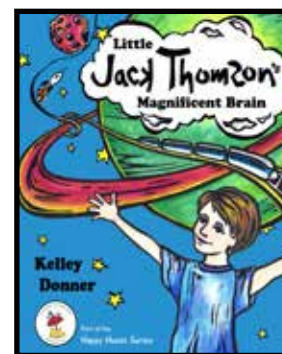
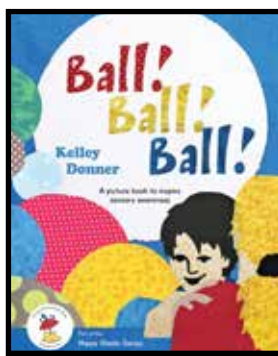
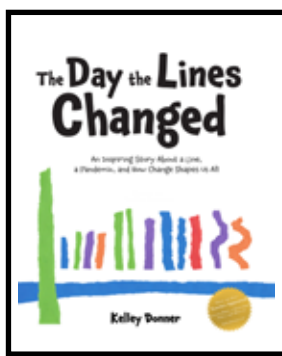


I contribute to my school by _____

A Little Donnerwetter Books

There are a variety of books and lesson plans available from A Little Donnerwetter Books. From sensory activities to coloring pages, funny Zoom plays for Christmas to lesson plans about the pandemic, you'll find just what you need at:

KelleyDonner.com



Share your story:

Do you have a great school? Is your school more than just a building? If so, then submit your school's story to the I Love My School Showcase.

- K-6 teachers, principals, librarians, and all school staff: Please send a photo of your school and/or one paragraph (No more than 200 words) explaining why you have a great school.
- K-6 pupils: Please send an image of your school (a photograph, drawing, painting, or collage) and/or explain in one to five sentences why you think you have a great school. You can use the art activity sheets for help.

This is not an contest. I do not expect perfect images or stories. I am looking for images and stories that reflect how positive schools can be. Experiences that show how important schools are for children's health and well-being. Show me how your school is part of the broader community. For more info, go to:

KelleyDonner.com/school-is-more-than-a-building

Follow along:

If you would like to be a part of the School is MORE than a Building creative process, then please join my Facebook Group - **School is MORE than a Building** where I explain my creative process and ask you for feedback along the way.

Thank you!

If you enjoyed these lesson plans, please share them with your friends and on social media and consider heading to your favorite platform to write an honest review. It is only with your support that I can continue to write and illustrate books for kids. Thank you!

Contact:

If you would like to share a personal story with me. let me know how things went in your classroom, or give me a heads up about a mistake in the text, you can email me at:

kelly.donner@gmail.com