



Can't Talk, Write

**Writing activities to improve your
mental and emotional wellbeing**

A toolkit for young people

Welcome

Writing is a great way to express your thoughts and feelings. It can also help you make sense of any issues you're experiencing, or deal with pressures at home or in school. It's a creative escape from phones, tablets and other screens, too.

Almost half of the young people we spoke to told us that writing things down makes them feel better when they're sad. They also said that writing made them feel calm (47%) and helped them to make sense of their thoughts and feelings (37%).

To help you write more – and to improve your wellbeing – Royal Mail, The Prince's Trust and Action for Children have come up with 10 creative writing activities.

The activities are fun, and can be done in any order. You can try all or some of them – it's completely up to you. We hope that you'll find at least one activity you really like and that works for you. We also hope you'll do them again and again, and share them with family and friends.

How to use the activities

- Find a place where you feel comfortable doing some writing. This could be your bedroom, outdoors, a classroom, café or library.
- Print out the activity worksheet or make sure you have a journal or notepad handy. You'll also need a pen or two. You can go through each activity either by yourself or with a friend.
- After each activity, spend a bit of time thinking about how you feel. What have you learnt about yourself? Think about whether the activity has helped you, and how.

Activity 1

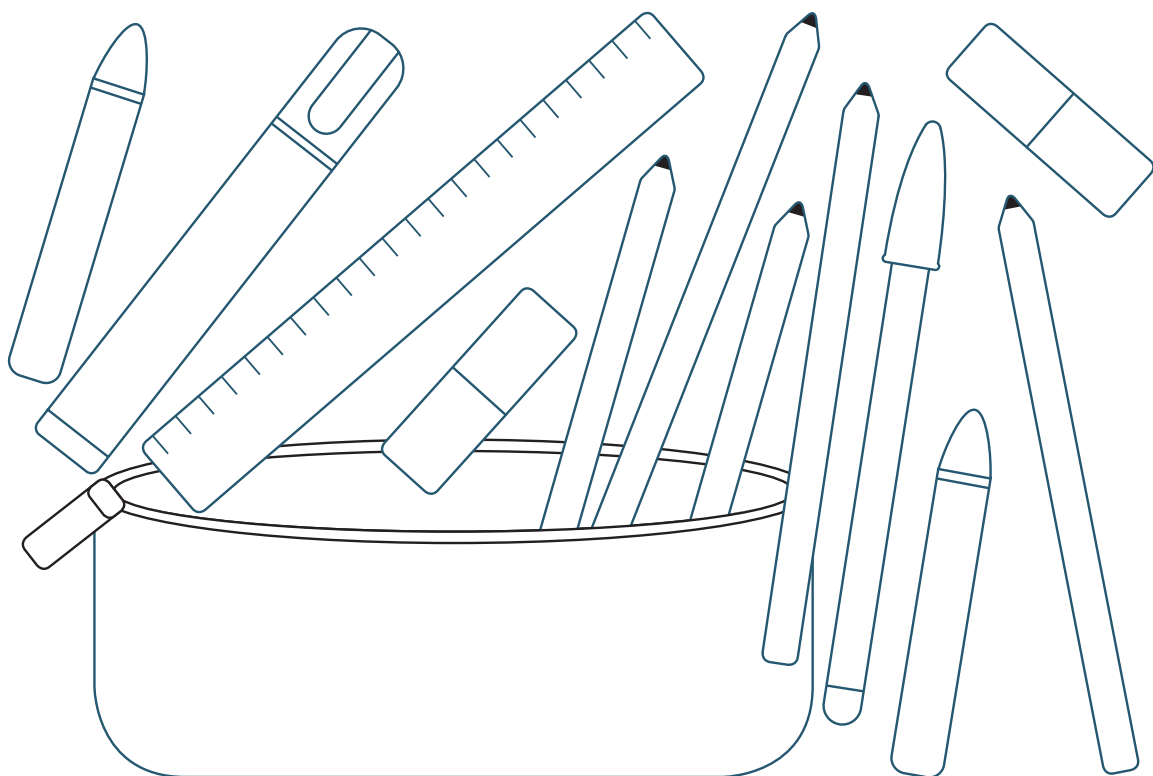
How does writing make you feel? On a blank sheet of paper, list some of the words that come to mind.

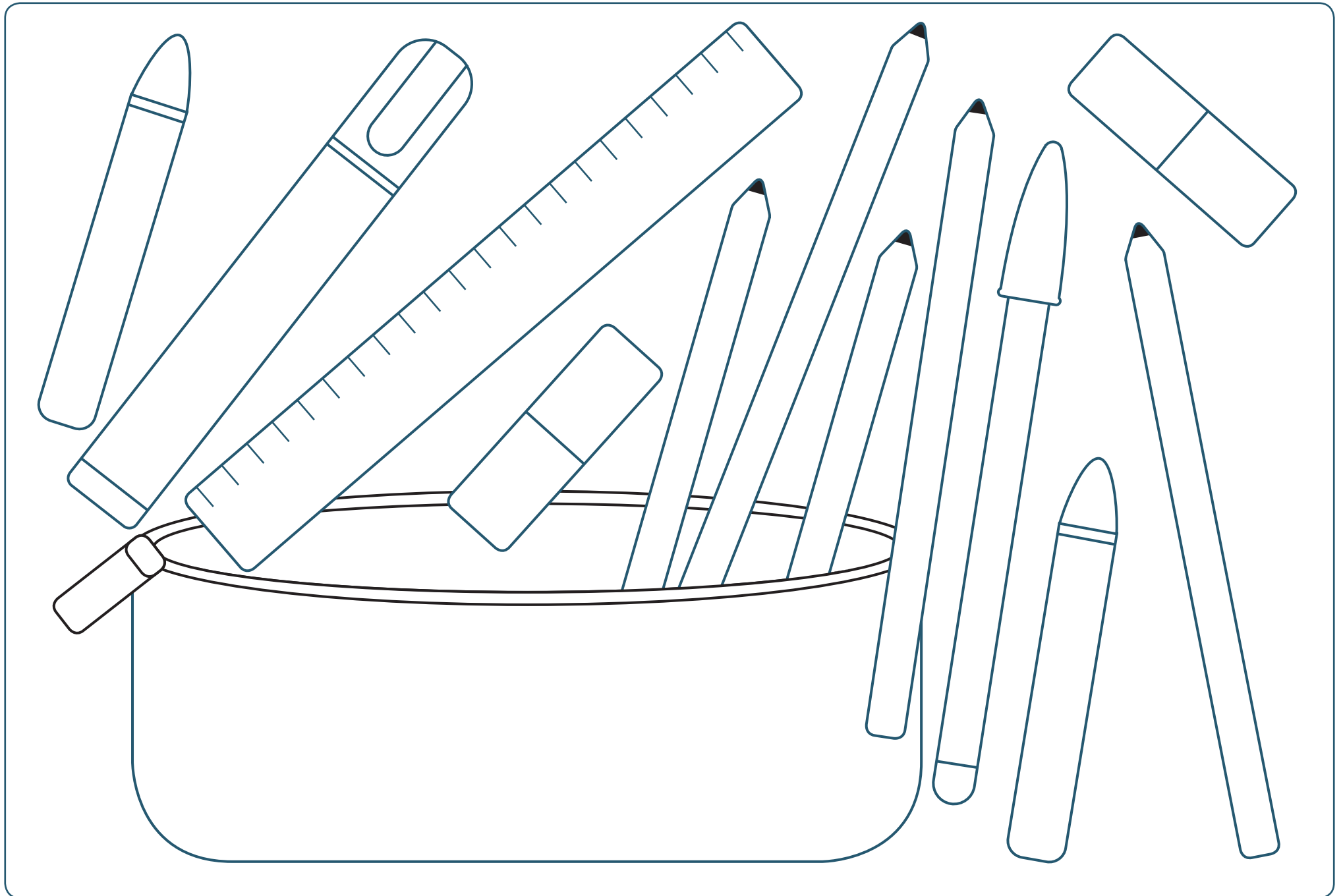
Take a look at the *What does writing mean to me?* activity sheet.

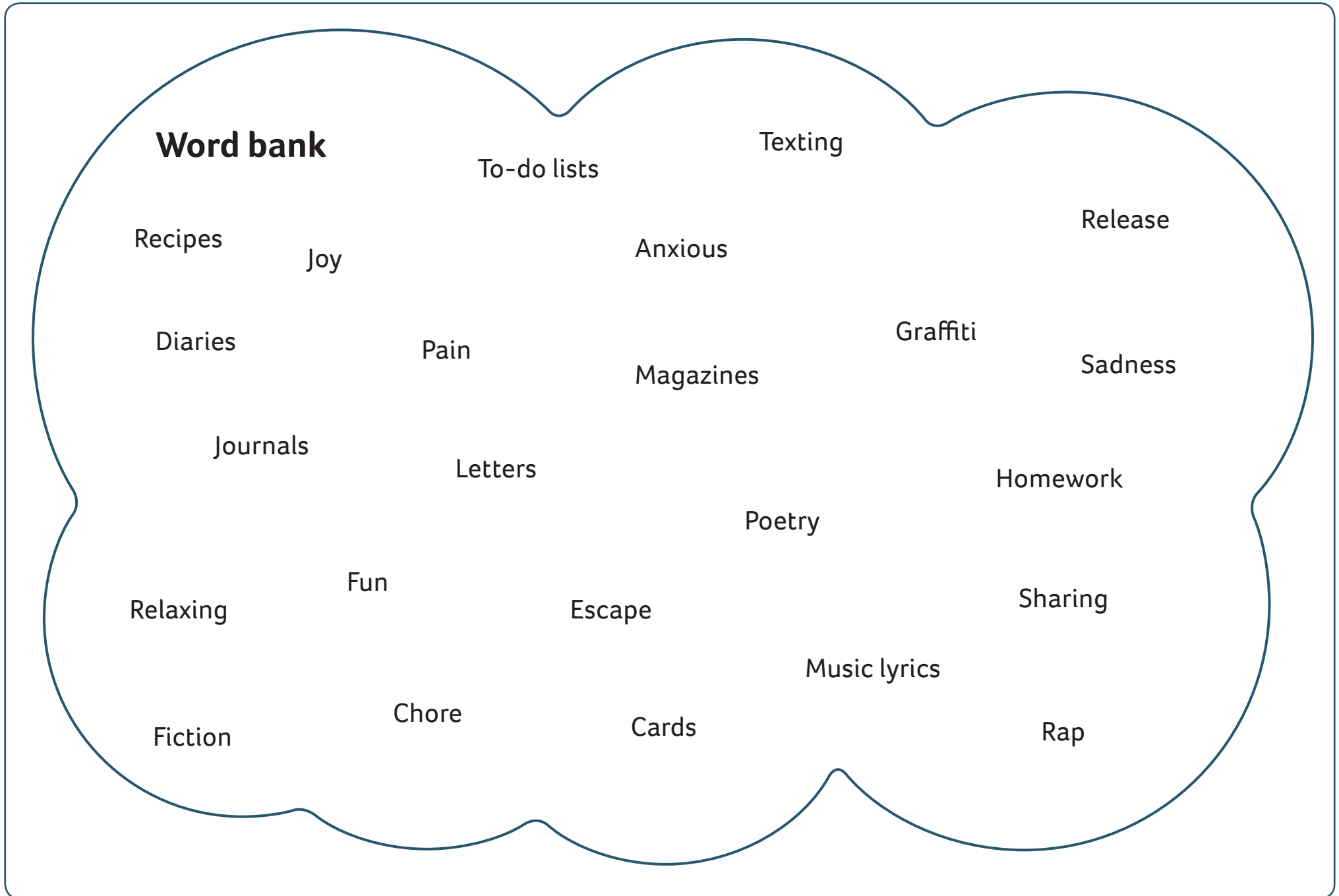
Decorate the pencil case using words from your list, or from the word bank. You can write in any format you like – for example, a list, a poem, a rap, text message, etc.

Think about different formats of writing and how they reflect your wellbeing, and how you are feeling (happy, sad, upset, positive, angry, optimistic, hopeless, etc).

Writing can help you to express your feelings, share your emotions with others and improve your wellbeing.







Word bank

Joy Pain Fun Escape Music lyrics Cards Rap
Fiction Relaxing Journals Letters Poetry Homework
Diaries Magazines Graffiti Sadness
Recipes To-do lists Texting Anxious Release
Chore

Activity 2

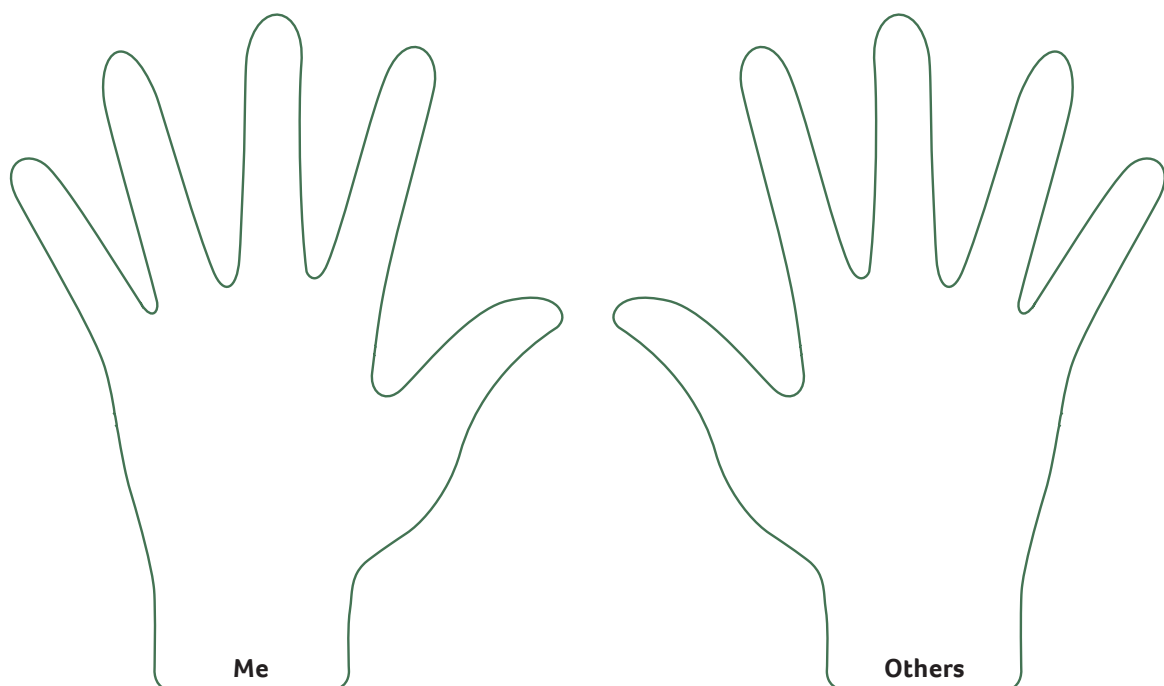
Think of a person you admire. It could be anyone! What are their qualities, strengths and values? Write a list under three headings.

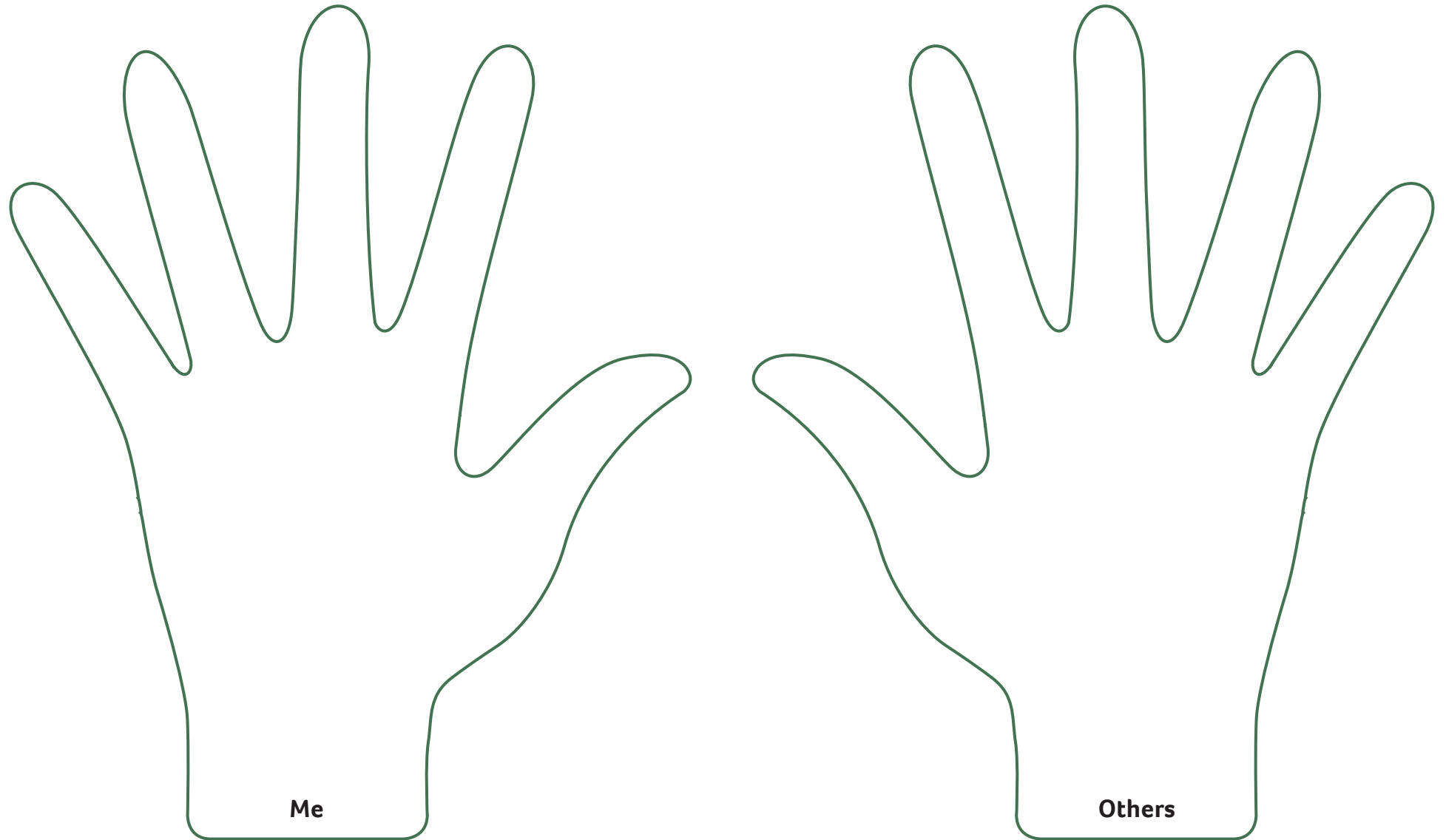
Take a look at the *What do I like about me? What do others like about me?* worksheet.

Write down your qualities, strengths and values on the left hand. Then, on the right hand, write down the qualities, strengths and values other people see in you. What would a friend say about you?

If you get stuck, use the word bank to help you.

What's the difference between how you see yourself and what others see in you?





Word bank

- Friendship
- Home
- Family
- Peers
- School
- Relationships
- Community
- Clubs
- Personality
- Character
- Uniqueness
- Leaders
- Sport
- Likes
- Emotions

Activity 3

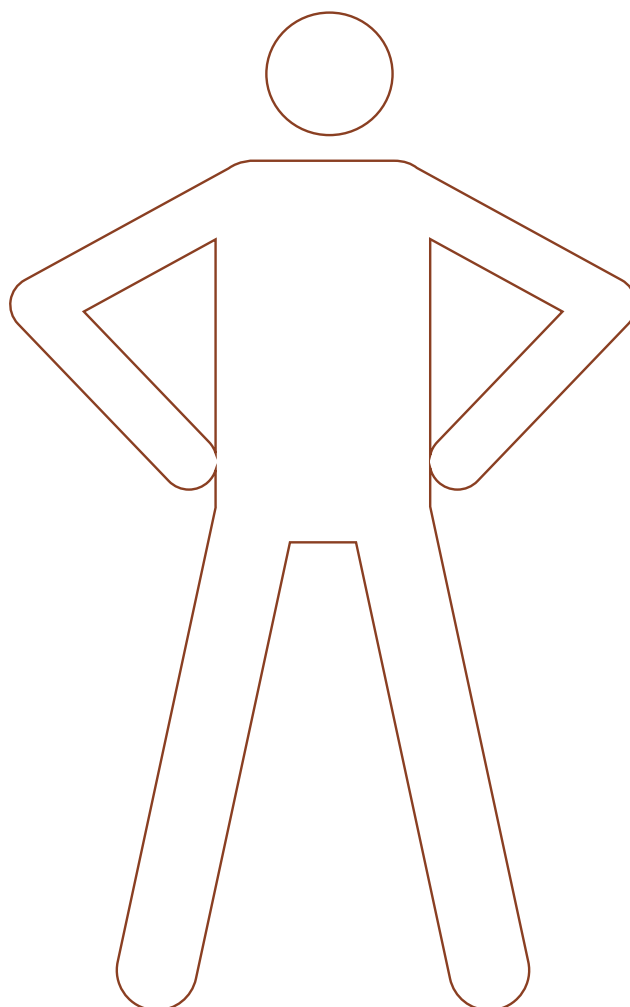
Take a look at the *What makes me, me?* activity sheet.

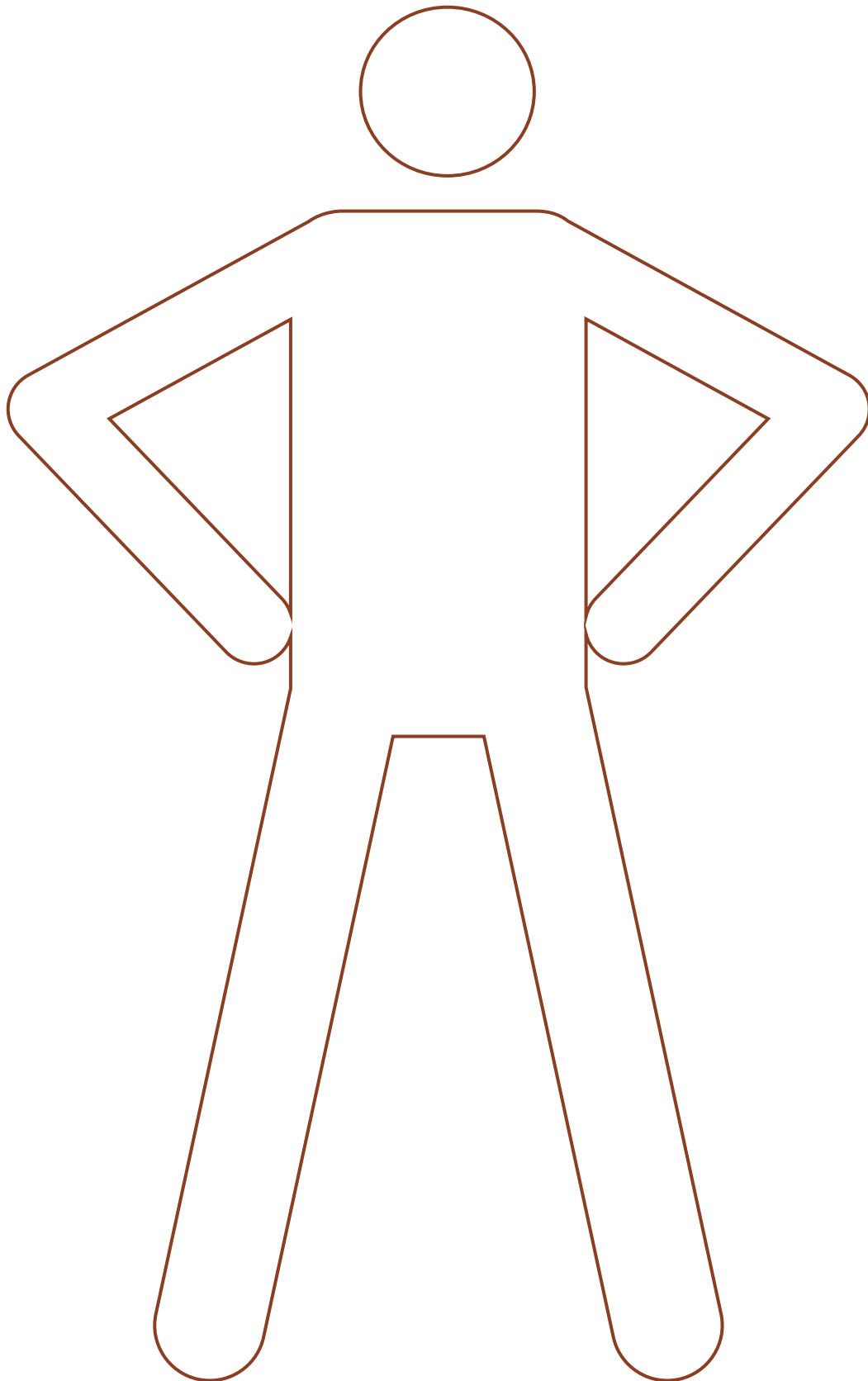
Write down some words that describe who you are or what you want to be. Examples could be: family, home, strong, determined, anxious, friends, school, future, etc.

Use these words – or some from the word bank – to fill in the body template.

Think about the things in your life that have a positive impact on your wellbeing. What makes you feel happy?

How did it feel to write down some words that describe who you are? Are you surprised by how many things you wrote?





Word bank

- Family
- Hope
- Inspiring
- Positive
- Loyal
- Determination
- Champion
- Strong
- Emotion
- Negative
- Friends
- Giving
- Balance
- Kind
- Resilience
- Teachers

Activity 4

A superhero is someone who has amazing qualities. Who is your superhero? It might be a celebrity, a sports person, a family member or a made-up character.

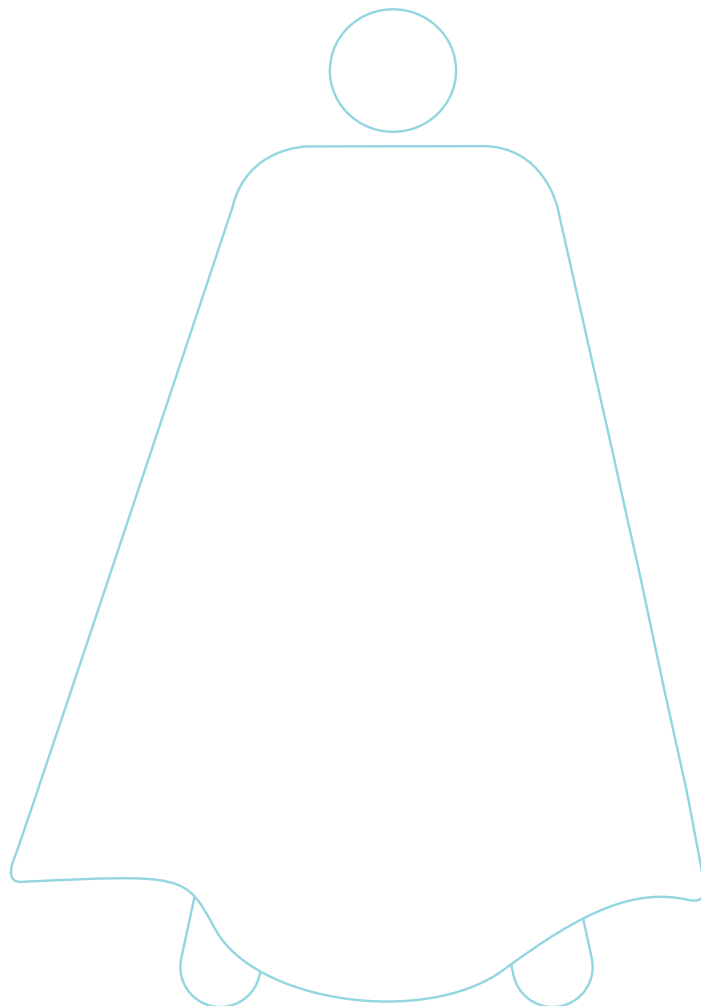
Create a list of superhero characteristics – for example, brave, caring, strong, determined.

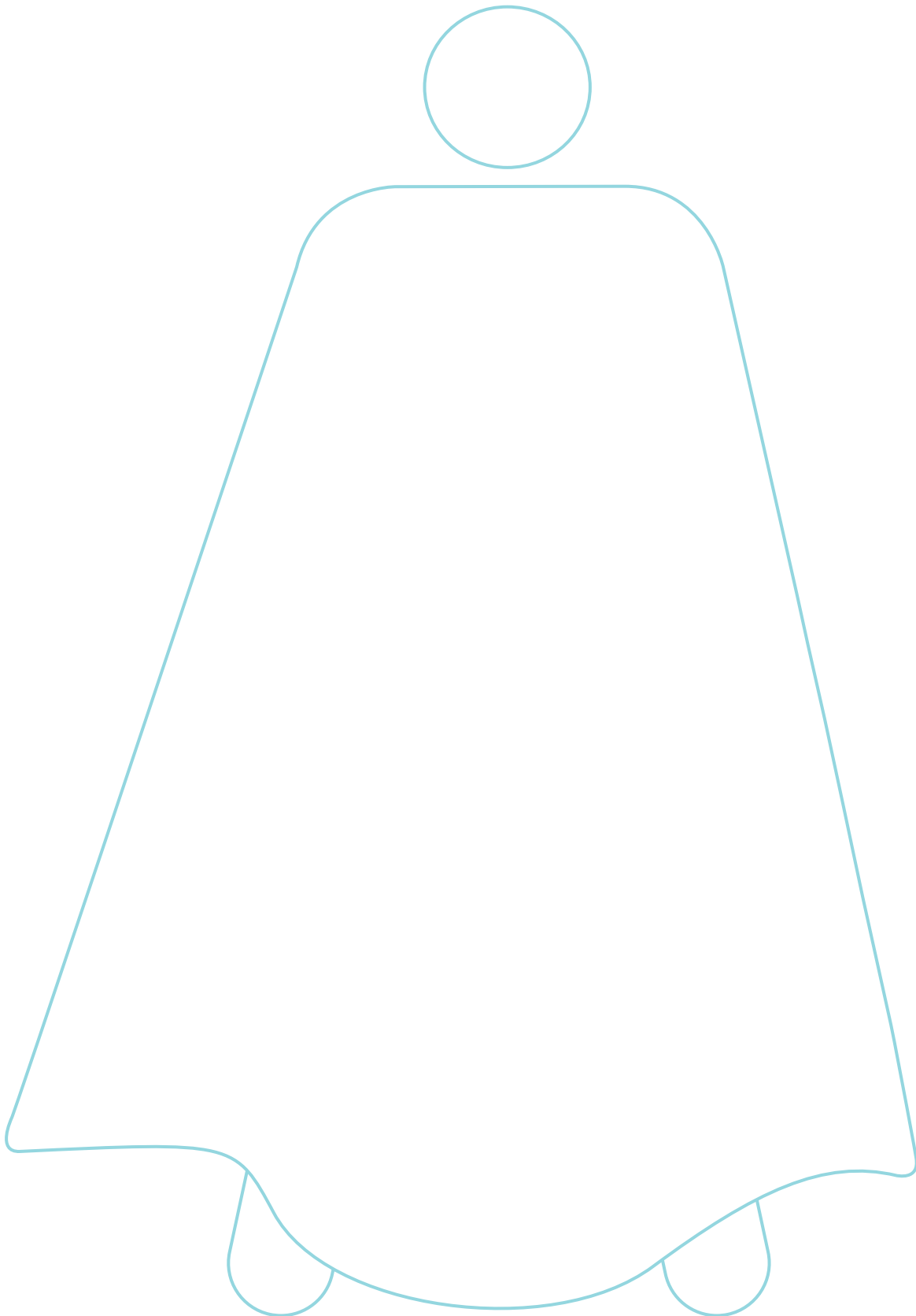
Think about resilience and what it means to you. How does your superhero demonstrate resilience? For example, a footballer will keep trying to score a goal even when their team is losing. A family member will look after others even when they're tired. These people carry on when things are tough.

Decorate the cape with words that are linked to resilience. Why did you choose these words?

Think about how resilience helps us when things get tough, just like the footballer who keeps going 'til the final whistle.

What are your superhero qualities? Are you strong, sad, happy, determined, etc.? Write them down.





Word bank

- Thoughtful
- Consistent
- Caring
- Strong
- Determined
- Positive
- Fun
- Committed
- Solid
- Brave
- Resourceful
- Available

Activity 5

Think about the ingredients you'd need to create your perfect day.

Create a list – for example:

- A sprinkling of summer.
- A cup of the beach.
- A litre of Christmas.
- A pinch of holiday.
- A tablespoon of friends.
- A kilo of love.

Draw a large mixing bowl on your worksheet. Write down the ingredients you've chosen, either using words from your list or the word bank to create a 'my best day' recipe.

What made you pick these ingredients?

How did it feel to write about your 'best day'? For example, did you feel good, nostalgic, sad, happy, excited, etc.?

Ingredients

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Method

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Ingredients

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Method

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Word bank

- Friends
- Where
- Season
- Events
- Pictures
- Spoons
- Feelings
- Who
- When
- Place
- Activities
- Ingredients
- Mixing Bowls
- Cakes
- Celebration

Activity 6

Have a read through the inspirational quotes on the *Motivated me* worksheet. Do you feel motivated?

What is motivation? Write down some motivational words – or your own short quote – in the blank spaces.

How does it feel to write these words down? For example, positive, determined, driven, encouraged, etc.

Why is motivation important and how does it affect self-esteem?

Think about how you feel when you're de-motivated. For example, you might have negative thoughts and feelings, want to give up easily, or lose interest in doing things you enjoy.

Motivation helps us achieve our goals, be successful, learn new things, and enjoy life.

*Motivation is the driving force that helps us achieve what we want.

**Feeling motivated helps us to feel positive.



I was always looking outside myself for strength and confidence, but it comes from within. It is there all the time.
Anna Freud

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.'
Mary Anne Radmacher

Perhaps this is where you breathe deep and take the leap.
Morgan Harper Nicholls

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.
Barack Obama

You are brave. Even when it does not seem that way. And your bravery shows up in your choice to keep going every day.
Morgan Harper Nicholls

Word bank

- Inspiration - Belief - Passion - Resilience - Persevere - Dream - Imagination
- Motivation - Strength - Drive - Opportunity - Achieve - Hope

Activity 7

Writing down your thoughts, feelings and what you're doing can improve your wellbeing.

Have you used a journal before? Write a list of words you associate with keeping a journal – for example, worries, happy memories, private, personal, diary, etc.

There are lots of different ways to keep a journal. You can write your thoughts on a notepad or in a diary, create notes on your phone, send text messages to yourself, etc.

It's helpful to find a quiet place so you can write in a way you're comfortable with. If you're new to journaling, why not practice for five minutes every day to get into the habit? Think about what you want to write about, what you've been doing, and how it made you feel.

Use the *My journal* worksheet to write your own journal entry.

Writing a journal might help you:

- Understand and express your emotions.
- Organise and make sense of your feelings.
- Highlight negative thoughts so you can do something to stop these.
- Celebrate things that make you happy.

You can use this worksheet as many times as you like.



A spiral-bound notebook with ten horizontal lines for writing. The notebook is oriented vertically and has a dark grey cover. The spiral binding is on the left side. The pages are white with ten horizontal lines. The notebook is centered on the page.

Activity 8

Think about a time when you needed help. It could be anything, from help with homework to getting a lift somewhere.

Write a list of possible support networks – for example, mum, dad, brothers and sisters, teachers, friends, helplines, etc.

Take a look at the *My appreciation certificate* worksheet. Who would you give a certificate of appreciation to? And why?

How does saying ‘thank you’ to someone who’s helped you make you feel?

Hopefully, this activity will help you to identify the people you can turn to when you need support. Accepting that you need help is a good thing, and shows great resilience. Doing nice things for others makes us feel good, too.



APPRECIATION CERTIFICATE

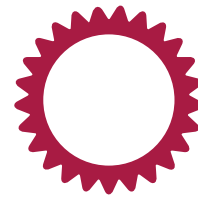
Awarded to: _____

For making a difference by:

Impact this had:

From: _____

Date: _____



Activity 9

Write down a list of things people might worry about. These could include: school, exams, family, friends, money, illness, etc. Next, write down one of your own worries on the worksheet.

If you have more than one, write them down, too

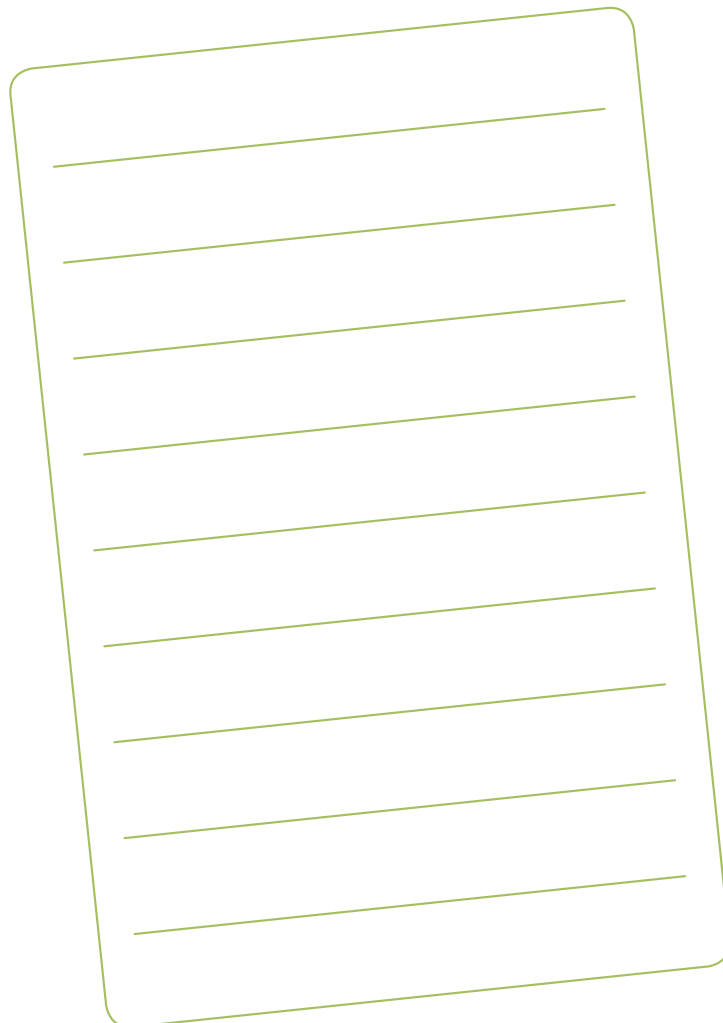
Do you have any worries that are out of your control? Do you have any worries you can let go of?

It's important to accept that some things are out of our control. We can't change these things by worrying about them. Everyone has worries like these sometimes.

Select the worries you can let go of. Write them on another sheet of paper and destroy them – tear them up and place them in the bin.

How do you feel now you've got rid of some of your worries? Are you relieved, happier, less anxious?

Even if you can't let go of a worry, writing it down will help you to manage it better.

A worksheet with ten horizontal lines for writing, tilted slightly to the right. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the sheet.

A large, rounded rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for writing. Inside the box, there are ten horizontal green lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for text entry.

Activity 10

Think about what you've achieved. What would you celebrate?

This could be anything – from getting to school on time and making a nice meal, to passing your driving test and doing well in your exams.

Celebrating can range from giving yourself a pat on the back to throwing a party. Recognising you've done something to be proud of is a celebration.

Write the things you've chosen to celebrate on the *Celebration bunting* worksheet.

How did it feel to write these down? For example, good, proud, positive, happy, excited, etc.

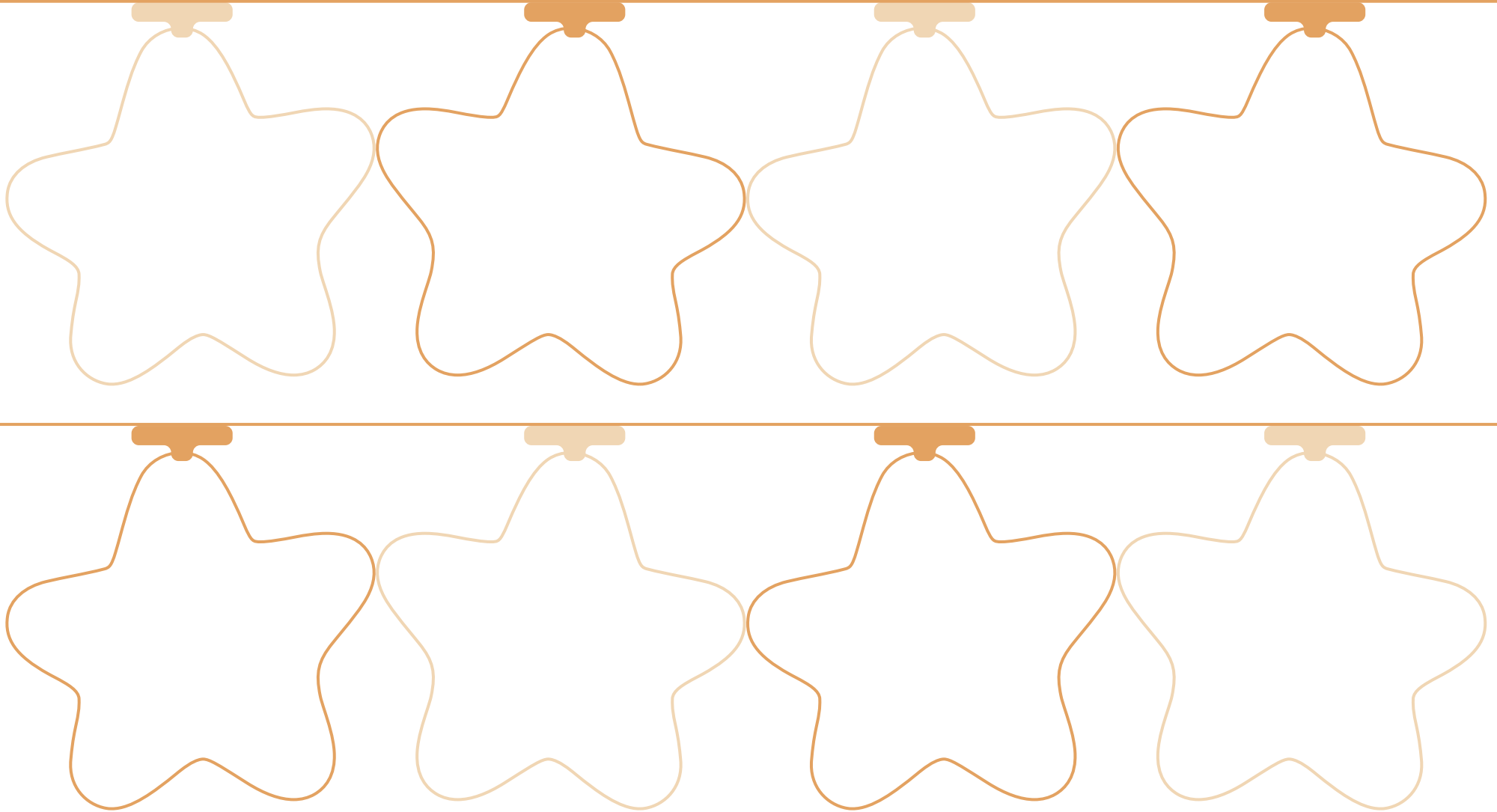
Next, take a look at the *Dream me* worksheet.

Think about where you'd like to be in the future. What would you like to be doing in a few years? How will you achieve this goal?

Write your goal at the end of the 'path'. Starting at the 'me today' point, imagine the steps you'll need to take to make this happen.

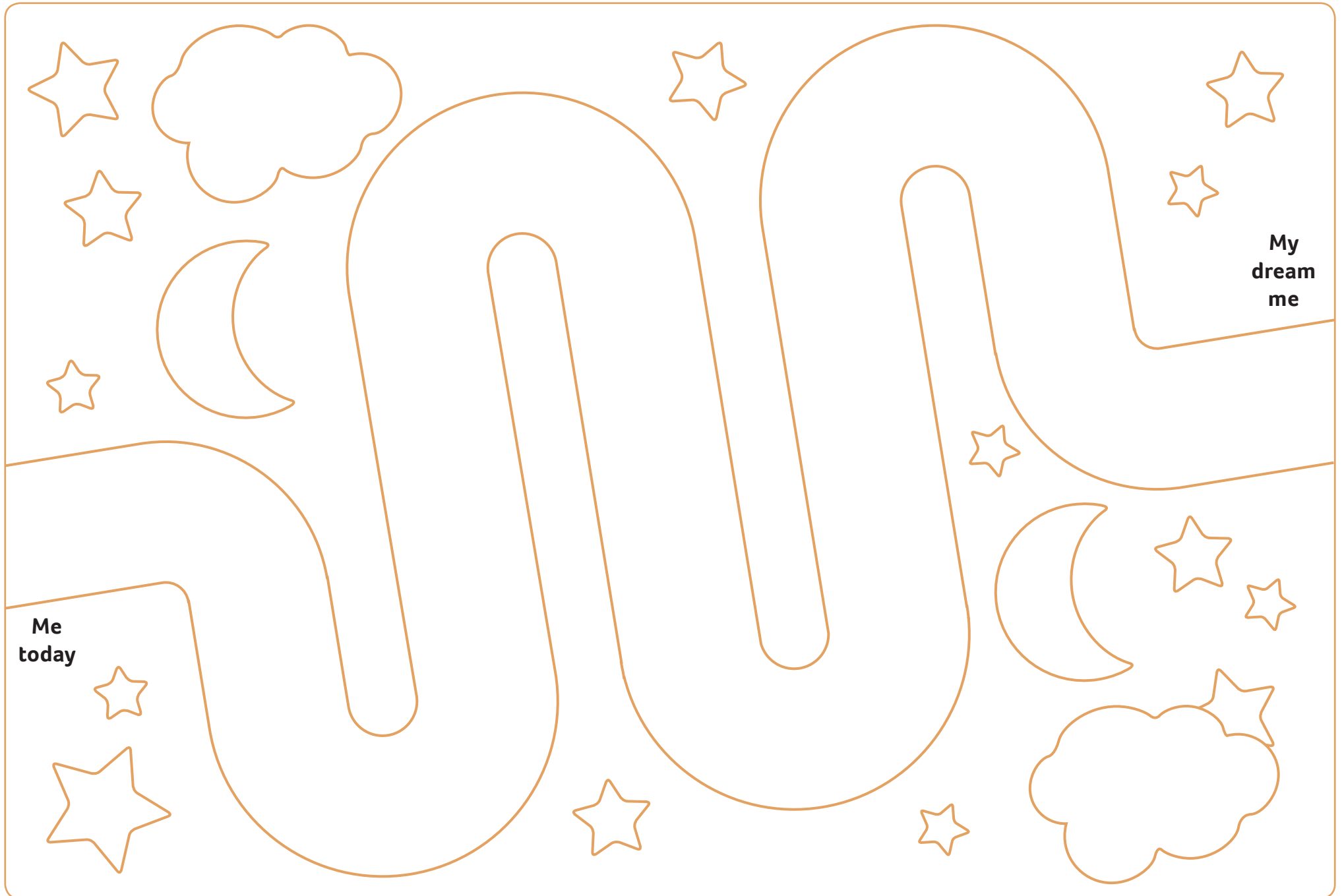
Writing down a goal can make it seem more achievable. It'll help you to feel more positive and motivate you to get there.





Word bank

- Success
- Achieve
- Pride
- Joy
- Congratulating
- Appreciate
- Positive
- Party
- Hope
- Happy
- Celebrate
- Progress
- Milestone
- Goals
- Gaining





For more information and support, visit:

actionforchildren.org.uk

princes-trust.org.uk

For mental health resources for parents, visit:

buildsoundminds.org.uk

Disclaimer

This toolkit is designed to help you to explore your feelings and emotions through writing and/or other activities. It should not be used as a substitute for conventional clinical, psychological and/or therapeutic treatment. In the absence of any negligence or other direct breach of duty by us, we are not responsible for any adverse outcomes in relation to the use of this toolkit. If you feel that you are struggling with your mental health, please seek the help and/or advice of a certified practitioner.