

# January

This Primary Writing Companion is intended for students in Grades One and Two.

Adapt activities to fit your child's skills and needs.

## *Dear Families,*

Welcome to the January edition of the Primary Writing Companion. This is a collection of activities and ideas to support and inspire you in teaching writing to your beginning writer. Our theme for January is **"Winter Adventure"**. Our weekly topics include The Gingerbread Man, Winter Animals, Winter Sports, and Winter Escape.

In January, we focus on the essential skills of writing sentences with pictures and writing acrostic and shape poems. We are using fun activities to play with words and language. We are building sensory experiences to write about. When you write together, have a list of descriptive words to include in your sentences. Think of words to describe what you see, hear, smell, feel and taste. Think of words that describe sounds like boom, crash, bang, and sizzle. Descriptive words and vivid verbs conjure action pictures in your mind, and bring ideas to life. Extend your sentence writing skills by adding adjectives and adverbs. Also, try writing two or more sentences to describe pictures.

This is a month of beginnings. We start a fresh, new year full of promise and adventure. Like a gingerbread man, fresh from the oven, we are off into a great, wide world of learning. Take joy in the excitement and wonder of seeing your child experience something for the very first time. Acknowledge and celebrate how much they've grown. As adults, for most things in life, we have been there and done that. That's why God gives us six-year-olds. So we can share in the joyous marvel of seeing God's creation with brand new eyes. (And God gives us homeschooling so we have time to grow and learn with our family.) So, like the gingerbread man, run as fast as you can, don't let your heels cool, discover what's around the bend – what marvels are in store for you this year? Take lots of photos, enjoy the journey, and don't forget to write!

When you see the printer icon there will be a printable page to go with the activity.



(\*Remember to write the date on all of your writing, sometimes it takes a while before being put into your portfolio.)



Essential Skills: January  
 Writing Sentences with Pictures  
 Acrostic and Shape Poems

(add your own ideas)

<i>Things to do</i>	<i>Materials to use</i>	<i>Big Picture Ideas</i>
journal writing home baking – mmm nothing smells as good as bread or cookies in the oven build and decorate a snowman go sledding, skiing or skating write thank you notes for Christmas gifts you received donate old toys to make room for new ones cozy up with a good story make hot cocoa with marshmallows take a winter walk and see if you spot any wildlife do a snowflake craft build a winter obstacle course in your yard – race through the course OTHER...	pens markers pencils scissors paper binder page protectors paper labels glue paint glitter photos OTHER...	sentences start with a capital letter  sentences end with punctuation ( . ? or ! )  sentences have a subject and an action/verb  add descriptive words to give more details  write two or more sentences to give more details

**Notes:**

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**MY GOALS THIS MONTH:**

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# January Notes

## Extending Sentence Writing Skills

A sentence is a group of words that starts with a capital letter, has a subject and an action, forms a complete thought or idea and ends with punctuation. In the world of the early writer, writing simple, complete sentences is a big step. There is a transition from writing words that label a picture to writing complete sentences. As early writers learn more about writing skills and formats from modeled activities, they begin to express themselves in simple sentences with invented spelling (writing the sounds you hear in a word).

Extend sentence writing skills by adding descriptive words to give more details. Try writing two or more sentences describing a picture. Children are bursting with ideas and have many stories to tell. Continue to scribe longer stories with your child and extend their writing skills with short, independent activities.

## Acrostic and Shape Poems

Check out this website for information about acrostic poems.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/>

An acrostic poem uses the first letter in a topic word to begin each line. The words in each line describe the topic word.

Shape poems describe an object and are written in the shape of that object. See this weblink.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/filef/resources/interactives/shape/>

The Man In the Hat by Patrick Winstanley

I'M THE MAN OF 100 HATS,  
THE BLACK TOP HAT FOR DAYS AT ASCOT,  
THE GREY TOP HAT FOR WHEN FRIENDS TIE THE  
KNOT, THE BOWLER HAT FOR THE JOB IN THE CITY,  
THE BOATER FOR A REGATTA AT HENLEY, THE HARE  
COURSING HAT FOR (OF COURSE) COURSING HARE,  
THE DEERSTALKER HAT FOR (OH DEAR) STALKING DEER,  
THE BUSBY, THE FEZ AND THE PITH HELMET, BUT I HAVE TO  
ADMIT TO ONE BIG REGRET, I'D ADORE A FEDORA BUT I DON'T HAVE ONE YET

© funny-poems.co.uk

OR

DO

|

~

# My January Plan

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>

## January Week One: The Gingerbread Man

### Activity One: "The Gingerbread Man" Sequence Story



By following the path of the gingerbread man on the maze activity sheet retell the story. As the gingerbread man passes by each character exclaim,

"Run, run as fast as you can,  
you can't catch me,  
I'm the gingerbread man."



### Activity Two: Make Gingerbread Cookies \* Take photos as you go.\*

Traditional Gingerbread (Fort Edmonton Recipe)

Thoroughly mix: 1/3 cup butter, 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1 egg, 2 Tbsp. molasses

Blend in: 1 1/4 cups flour, 1 tsp. soda, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, 1/2 tsp. ginger, 1/4 tsp. cloves, pinch of salt

Roll dough to desired thickness. Cut cookies. Bake at 375° approximately 10 to 12 minutes.

Variation: Roll dough into small balls and dip in sugar prior to baking.

Don't drop the egg on your leg! Can YOU make up funny rhymes while you are baking? Don't get molasses on your glasses!

### Gingerbread Chant

Introduce the senses to your child with a delicious rhythmic chant. Create paper gingerbread stick puppets to perform the chant. Take time to decorate the puppets using a variety of art materials, including buttons, pom poms, stickers, fabric.

Extend the learning experience by providing cooking utensils (wooden spoons, pots and pans) for children to use as rhythm instruments.

Gingerbread boy looks so neat!  
Gingerbread boy smells so sweet!  
Gingerbread boy tasty treat!

Gingerbread girl looks so nice!  
Gingerbread girl smells like spice!  
Gingerbread girl tastes better than rice!



[www.janbrett.com/video/gingerbread\\_baby.htm](http://www.janbrett.com/video/gingerbread_baby.htm)  
Jan Brett shares her story.

## January Week One: The Gingerbread Man

### Activity Three: Rebus Story



Read the Rebus Story (see print out section).

A rebus story is a picture book or poem that combines words and pictures to tell a predictable story. In the story, a familiar pictorial representation is used time and time again for a particular character or item.

Create your own Rebus Story. Draw pictures or use stickers.

Check out: <http://abcteach.com/directory/basics/rebus/>  
<http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/imaainative-crafts3.htm>

### Activity Four: Shape Poem

A shape poem is a poem which forms a shape. There are no essential guidelines to writing this type of poetry. The poem may either be about the created image or the image may simply be something fascinating to look at for the reader.

Write a gingerbread man shape poem.  
What word will you choose for the buttons?

[www.parkerusd.k12.az.us/WES/documents/ShapePoems.ppt](http://www.parkerusd.k12.az.us/WES/documents/ShapePoems.ppt)  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/shape/>

### The Senses of Gingerbread

What do you feel?  
The cookie dough,  
It's smooth and soft to touch.  
Cool and squishy in my hands.  
I like it very much.

What do you hear?  
The rolling pin.  
It's rolling out the dough.  
"Rrr-rr" sounds the rolling pin.  
A rolling to and fro.

What do you smell?  
A spicy scent.  
It's filling the room.  
Sweet and strong, it smells so good.  
Much better than perfume.

What do you see?  
A fresh baked treat.  
The color is just right.  
What a lovely golden brown.  
A very pretty sight.

What do you taste?  
The delicious gingerbread!  
A spicy treat or two.  
Sweet and yummy.  
Now I will share some with you.



## January Week One: The Gingerbread Man

### BIG PICTURE PROJECT: Gingerbread Man Shape Book



What better way to stir up a child's senses than by baking gingerbread cookies? Plan two sessions to complete this activity: one for preparing the dough and another for cutting, baking and decorating. See Activity Two on page 5. Take photos during the process (preparation, decoration and eating) to use in your Gingerbread Man Shape Book.

Before you begin, ask your child (ren) to concentrate on what they see, hear, smell, feel and taste during the cooking experience. Periodically ask questions during each stage of the preparation, such as, "How does the cinnamon smell?" or "Does the dough feel thick or thin? Sticky or smooth?"

After having baked, decorated and enjoyed the cookies use the gingerbread man template to create a shape book. Discuss experiences and record simple sentences under appropriate pictures. An alternative may be to label individual pages with the headings: **See**, **Hear**, **Touch**, **Smell** and **Taste**. Now, create a unique version with pictures and descriptive sentences. Take the opportunity to discuss how God has given us five senses to help us learn.



## January Week Two: Winter Animals

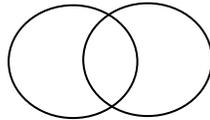
### Activity One: Read About Animals in Winter

Choose one animal that you have read about today.

Write 2 or more sentences about what you have learned.

Draw a picture to go with your sentences.

### Activity Two: Venn Diagram



A Venn Diagram is a visual way of comparing and contrasting. Characteristics which are alike are written in the space where the circles overlap, while characteristics which are different are written in the non-overlapping parts of the circles. For more information about Venn Diagrams, refer to <http://www.graphic.org/venbas.html>

Using your own words and ideas, create a Venn Diagram that compares and contrasts two different animals or an animal in its winter and summer habitat.

Check out Canadian wildlife at Hinterland Who's Who:

<http://www.hww.ca/en/index.html>

### Animals in Winter Reading List

- Hibernation Station by Michelle Meadows
- Animals in Winter by Harrietta Bancroft, Richard Van Gelder, and Helen Davie
- In the Snow: Who's Been Here? by Lindsay Barrett George
- Who Lives in the Snow? by Jennifer Berry Jones and Consie Powell
- What Do Animals Do in Winter?: How Animals Survive the Cold by Berger and Harrison
- Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints by Millicent Selsam and Marlene Hill Donnelly
- Those Darn Squirrels! By Adam Rubin and Daniel Salmieri
- Backyard Birds of Winter by Carol Lerner
- Birds in Your Backyard by Barbara Herkert
- Winter Lullaby by Barbara Seuling
- Waiting for Winter by Sebastian Meschenmoser

## January Week Two: Winter Animals

### Activity Three: Helping Winter Animals

A big winter challenge for many Canadian wild animals is finding enough food. You can make the winter easier for them by decorating your yard with tasty treats!

You will need some or all of the following:

popcorn, peanuts in shells, apples, cranberries, peanut butter, suet (from butcher), string, needle and strong thread, scissors, knife, pine cone, empty onion bag

What to do:

1. String the popcorn and cranberries on a long, doubled piece of thread. String the whole peanuts on another thread.
2. Put peanut butter or suet into the holes in a pine cone. Tie a string to it.
3. Cut suet into large pieces and put it into an onion bag.
4. Decorate your yard by hanging the food from trees and bushes in sheltered areas, where you can see it.
5. Watch for animals tasting the treats! Be patient. It takes time for them to find the food. Try different locations.

**Note: If you choose to feed winter animals regularly, try to do it throughout the winter. They start to depend on you and may have trouble finding other sources of food later in the winter.**

Activity adapted from Science Made Simple: <http://www.sciencemadesimple.com>

### Activity Four: A Thank You Note

Imagine yourself as one of the animals that found food in your yard. Use the printable page cloze activity to write a note thanking the wonderful people who put it out for you.

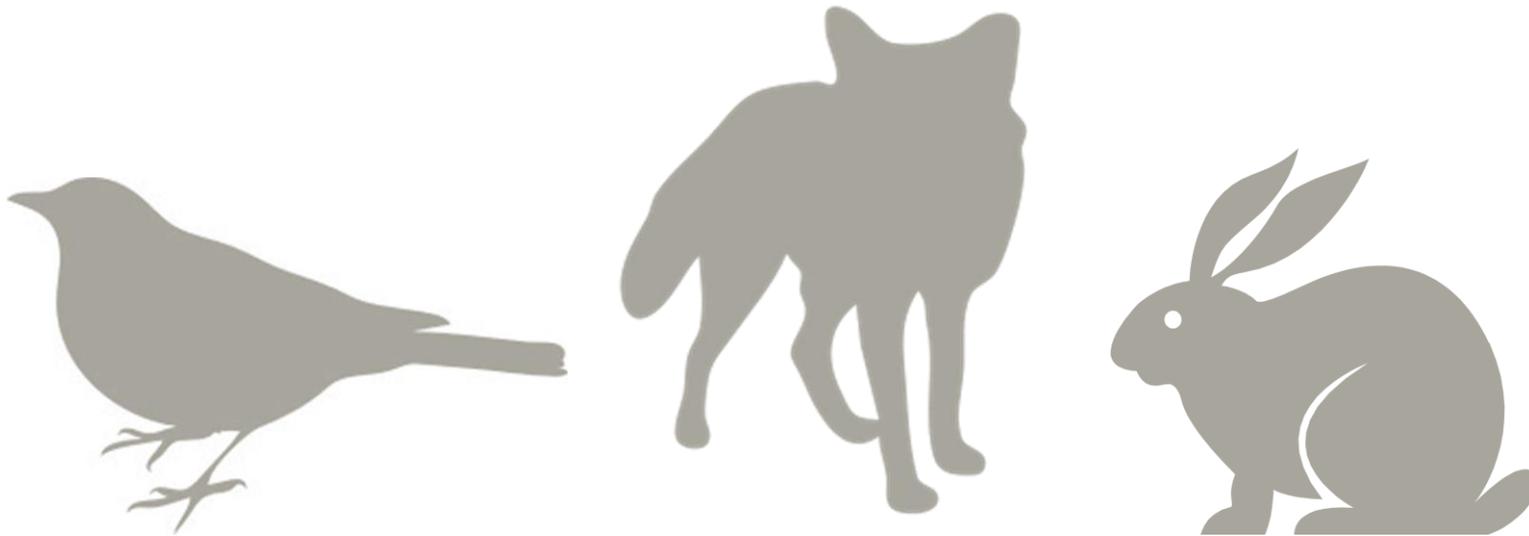


## January Week Two: Winter Animals

### BIG PICTURE PROJECT: Shape Poem



Earlier this month, we explored shape poetry. Let's revisit the genre and apply your skills to this week's theme. Think of words and phrases that are related to your favourite winter animal. What does the animal look like? Where does it live? How does it move? What sounds does it make? What does it eat? Use your descriptive ideas to create a shape poem about your favourite winter animal.



**WRITE** a note to your child and attach it to something he or she has added to the portfolio this week.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The best thing you did this week was \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_! Love Mom & Dad

## January Week 3: Winter Sports

### Activity One: Word Lists

Create a variety of word lists to help you with your writing. The words you choose should be related to winter sports or activities.

Possible lists include:

- Adjectives (sharp, smooth, shiny, slick, powdery)
- Sounds (swish, swoosh, plop, crunch)
- Action words (slide, spin, glide, twirl, slip)

### Activity Two: Photos and Sentences

Find pictures of people participating in different winter sports or use your own family photos. Write two or more sentences describing the activity in the photo(s). Try to include:

- People (who is in the photo)
- Setting (where the activity occurred)
- Action (what is happening)
- Time (when the activity took place)

### Activity Three: Acrostic Poem

This type of poem is based on a noun (person, place, thing, or feeling). Each of the letters in the chosen word is used to begin a line of the poem. Each line has a word or phrase that tells about the noun.

Here are some examples:

#### **SKATES**

Sharp blades  
Knots in my laces  
Arena that is freezing cold  
Toes in woolen socks  
Energy required  
Skates

#### **SKATING**

Spin  
Kick and twirl  
Axles and toe loops  
Twist, turn and tumble  
Imbalanced landing  
Never give up  
Get up and glide

Write your own acrostic poem based on the 'winter sports' theme!

## January Week 3: Winter Sports

### Activity Four: Write a List

Write a list of the equipment needed to participate in your favourite winter sport. Don't leave anything out!

OR

Write a list of instructions explaining how to play a winter sport. Make sure your list is sequenced correctly. You may even want to create your own sport and develop instructions for it.

Don't forget to include some of the words from your word lists!

The next Winter Olympics will be held in Sochi in 2014. Visit the Olympic website at [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org).

### BIG PICTURE PROJECT: Sequence Story "The Jacket I Wear in the Snow" by Shirley Neitzel

Before reading: Brainstorm a list of clothing items we wear out in the cold weather. Focus on your child's own items of clothing and think of words to describe each item.

Examples: My coat is red and puffy.

My scarf is long and striped.

My boots are warm and comfy.



Together, read aloud "The Jacket I Wear in the Snow". Before you turn each page, predict which item of clothing will come next.

Read the story several times and encourage your child to join in as he/she discovers the rhyme, rhythm and repetitious pattern of the story.

After you have enjoyed the story, print off and cut out the sequence strips found in the "January Printable Pages" section of this document. Have your child complete each sentence using words from the list you brainstormed earlier. Put the strips in order to match the sequence of items in the story. Glue the strips onto a piece of paper.

\*You may adapt this activity, using different articles of clothing for different seasons (example: *These are the sandals I wear to the beach.*).

OR... Write your own version adapted for your favorite winter sport.

*These are my skates, tightly laced, now I'm ready to play hockey.*

## January Week Four: Winter Escape

### Activity One: Choose a Getaway Destination

Pick somewhere warm and sunny that you would like to travel to as a winter escape. Write two or more sentences about your getaway destination. Include downloaded photos or drawings of you and your family on your "winter getaway trip".

Here is a great website for travel information. Click on the map and discover a whole new world...

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations>

### Activity Two: Write a List

Write a list of everything you need to pack for your winter escape.

Can you list one thing for each letter of the alphabet?



*DID you know that January is summer at the South Pole / Antarctica?*

### Snowbirds

Canadians are often called Snowbirds because many move to warm, southern destinations to spend the winter months. There's even a Canadian Snowbird Association with a great website of travel tips and information.

See – [www.snowbirds.org](http://www.snowbirds.org)

Do you know any snowbirds in your family?

Would you like to spend winter in a warm, southern destination?

Where would you like to go?

Is there anything you would miss about winter?



## January Week Four: Winter Escape

### Activity Three: Indoor Picnic

Are you suffering from cabin fever? Celebrate the cold weather with an indoor picnic featuring games and food that the whole family can enjoy.

Here are some possible themes that simulate summer:

Camping In  
Teddy Bear Picnic  
Picnic At the Beach

Here are some things to consider along with your theme:

attire  
decorations  
food  
music  
games

Enjoy your winter escape! You might want to write an invitation to your event.

### Activity Four: Journal Entry

Write two or more sentences about your picnic. Use lots of descriptive words. Include photos or drawings of your winter escape.

### Festive Drink Umbrellas

To conjure up the feeling of a day at the beach under a shady umbrella, try this craft idea from marthastewart.com

#### Drink Umbrella How-To

A soup can makes a handy template for origami-paper umbrella tops. Cut paper with pinking shears or scallop scissors for a decorative edge. From each circle, remove a pie-slice shape measuring about 1/8 of the circumference. Fashion into a cone, slightly overlapping straight ends; use a glue stick or double-sided tape to secure. Dab white craft glue inside nose of cone, and pierce tip with a wooden skewer (snip skewer for a custom fit); allow to dry.



Check out the Kraft Canada website for great picnic recipes.

[http://www.kraftcanada.com/en/recipes/holidays-and-entertaining/entertaining/PackAPicnic.aspx?cm\\_mmc=srch-\\_-Google-\\_-Kraft-Picnic-EN\\_-picnics](http://www.kraftcanada.com/en/recipes/holidays-and-entertaining/entertaining/PackAPicnic.aspx?cm_mmc=srch-_-Google-_-Kraft-Picnic-EN_-picnics)

## January Week Four: Winter Escape



### BIG PICTURE PROJECT: Create a Postcard

Create a postcard with a written message that's addressed to send back home. Write about your imaginary winter escape destination, or write about your indoor picnic.

Write 2 or more sentences. You might want to include this information:

Where are you?

What does it look like there? How is the weather?

What are you doing?

What do you like the most about your destination?

When are you coming back home?

On the reverse side of your postcard draw a picture of your sunny destination.

You might want to draw lines on the printable postcard for writing on.

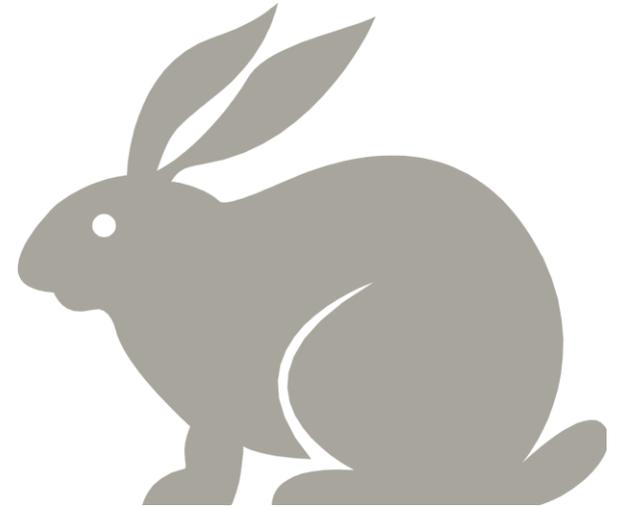
**WRITE** a note to your child and attach it to something he or she has added to the portfolio this week.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I had so much fun writing with you this week because \_\_\_\_\_! Love Mom & Dad

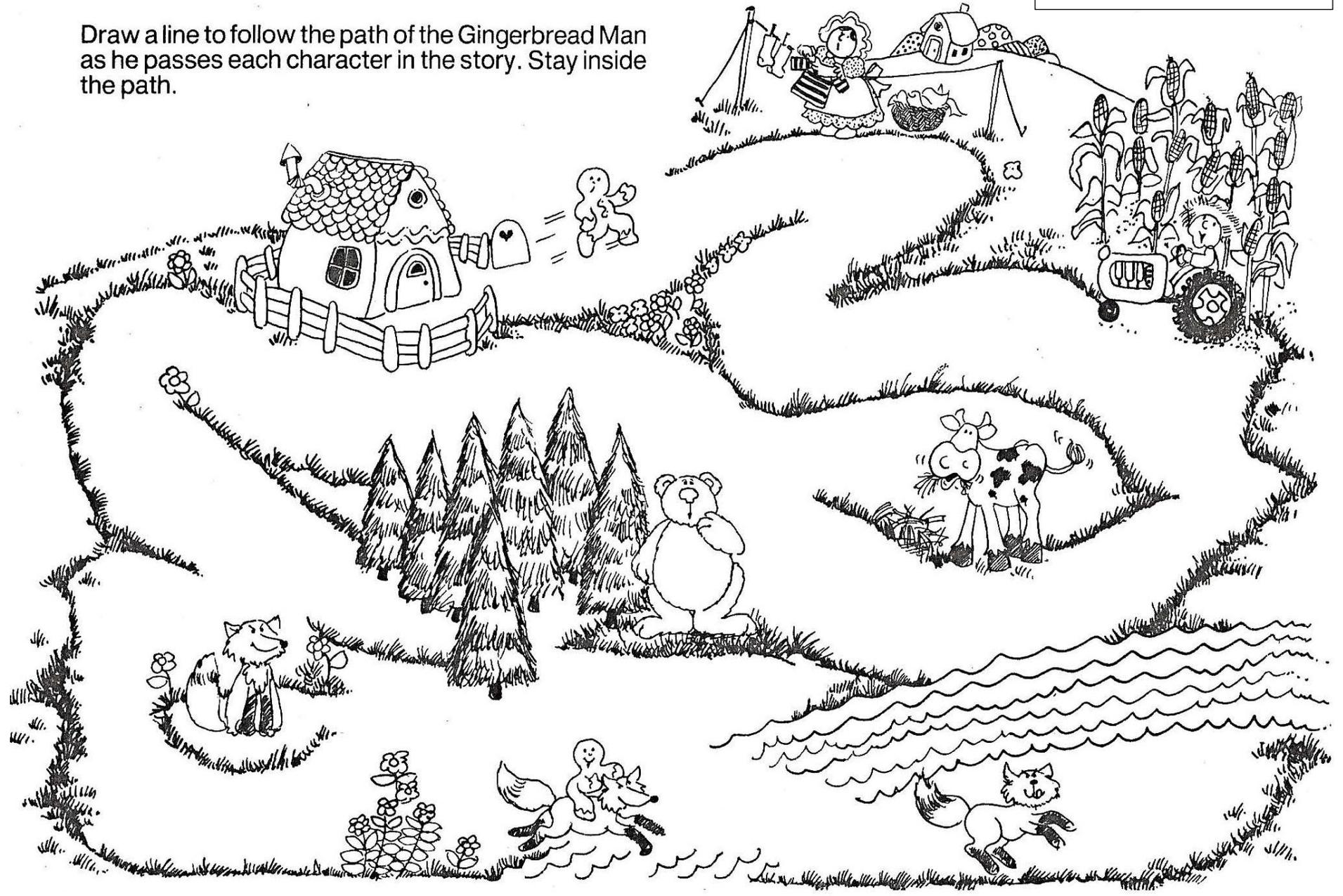
Use this page with Week Two,  
Big Picture Project.

# *January: Printable Pages*



Use this page with Week One,  
Activity One.

Draw a line to follow the path of the Gingerbread Man as he passes each character in the story. Stay inside the path.



**Storytelling**  
**Folk and Fairy Tales**

**THE GINGERBREAD MAN**  
A Rebus Story

Key:	
	—old woman
	—old man
	—gingerbread man
	—garden
	—oven
	—cow
	—bear
	—fox

This story may be reproduced and distributed to each child in the class, who then calls out the correct words for each rebus picture as you read the story.



ONCE upon a time, a little  and a little  lived in a lovely cottage with a white fence, next to a beautiful .

One day, as the little  was baking gingerbread cookies, she said, "I will make a little .

 He had two juicy raisins for eyes, a tiny ball of dough for a nose, and shiny red icing for a mouth. The little  also gave him a coat with red candy buttons and white icing trim.

She placed him carefully in the  to bake, and went outside to hang her wash. When the  had grown puffy and brown, he opened the  door, jumped out, and ran swiftly out of the house.

The little  saw the  running away and screamed, "Stop! Stop!" But the  kept running and ran past the little , who was plowing in the cornfield. "Stop! Stop!" the little  cried, but the  only replied,

Run, run as fast as you can,  
You can't catch me, I'm the .

The  ran on until he came to a  by the side of the road. "Stop! Stop!" said the . The  laughed and said,

Run, run as fast as you can,  
You can't catch me, I'm the .  
I ran away from the little ,  
and the little ,  
And I can run away from you, I can.

And the  couldn't catch him either.

Off he ran to the woods where a big  lived. "Stop! Stop!" called the , but the  called back,

Run, run as fast as you can,  
You can't catch me, I'm the .  
I ran away from the little ,  
the little , and the ,  
And I can run away from you, I can.

And away he ran.

Now the  was sure that nobody could catch him. Just then a  called out, "Stop! Stop!" And the  replied,

Run, run as fast as you can,  
You can't catch me, I'm the .  
I ran away from the little ,  
the little ,  
the , and the ,  
And I can run away from you, I can.

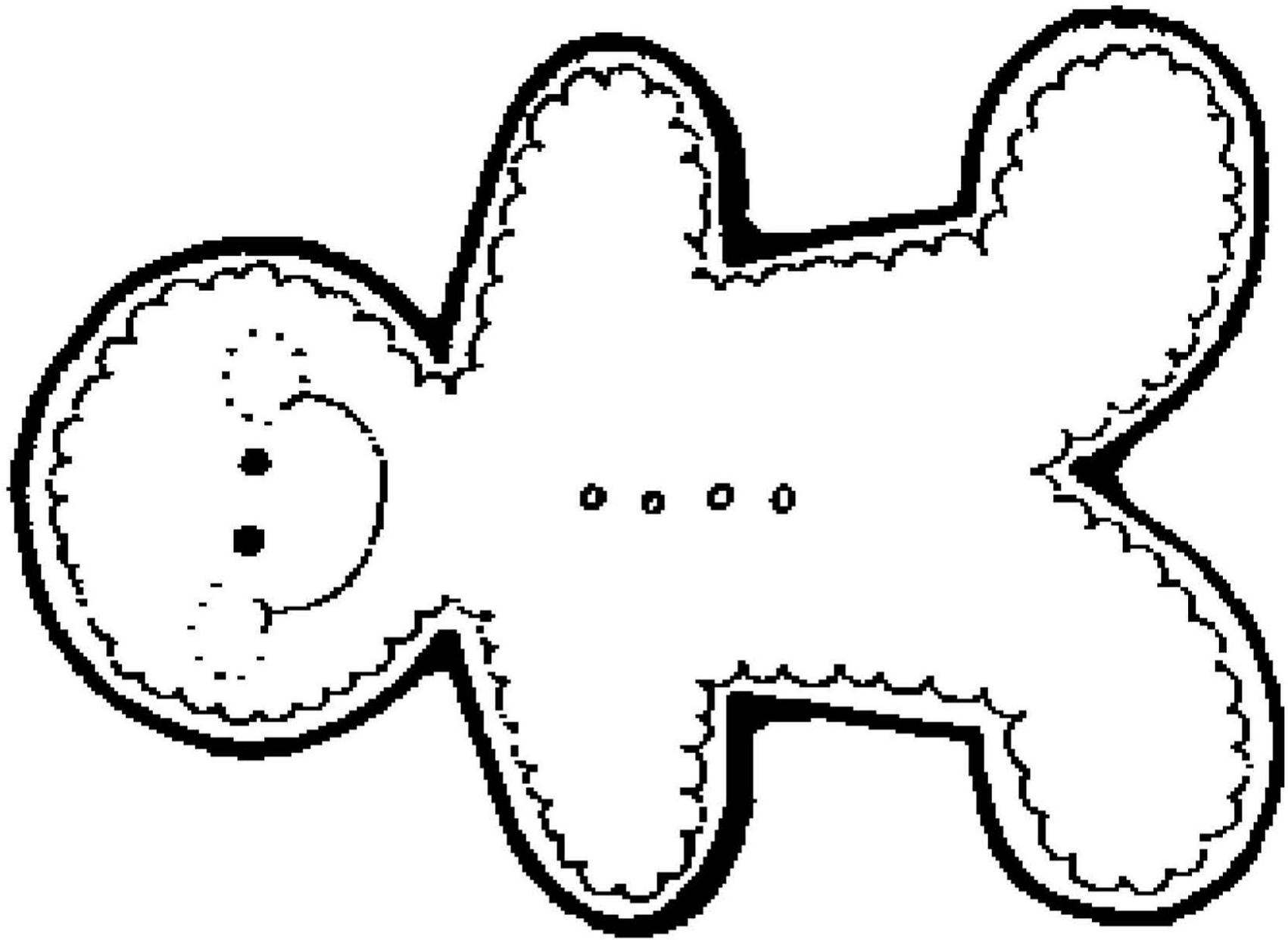
But the  ran alongside the  and answered, "Catch you? Indeed, I only wanted to help you across the river. Jump on my tail." So the  jumped on the tail of the , and the  swam down the river. Soon the  said, "Jump on my back and you'll be safer." So the  jumped on the back of the .

The water got deeper, and the  said, "Come up on my nose so you don't get wet." And the  jumped up on the nose of the .

The  never did make it to shore, but the  was smiling when he climbed out of the river.

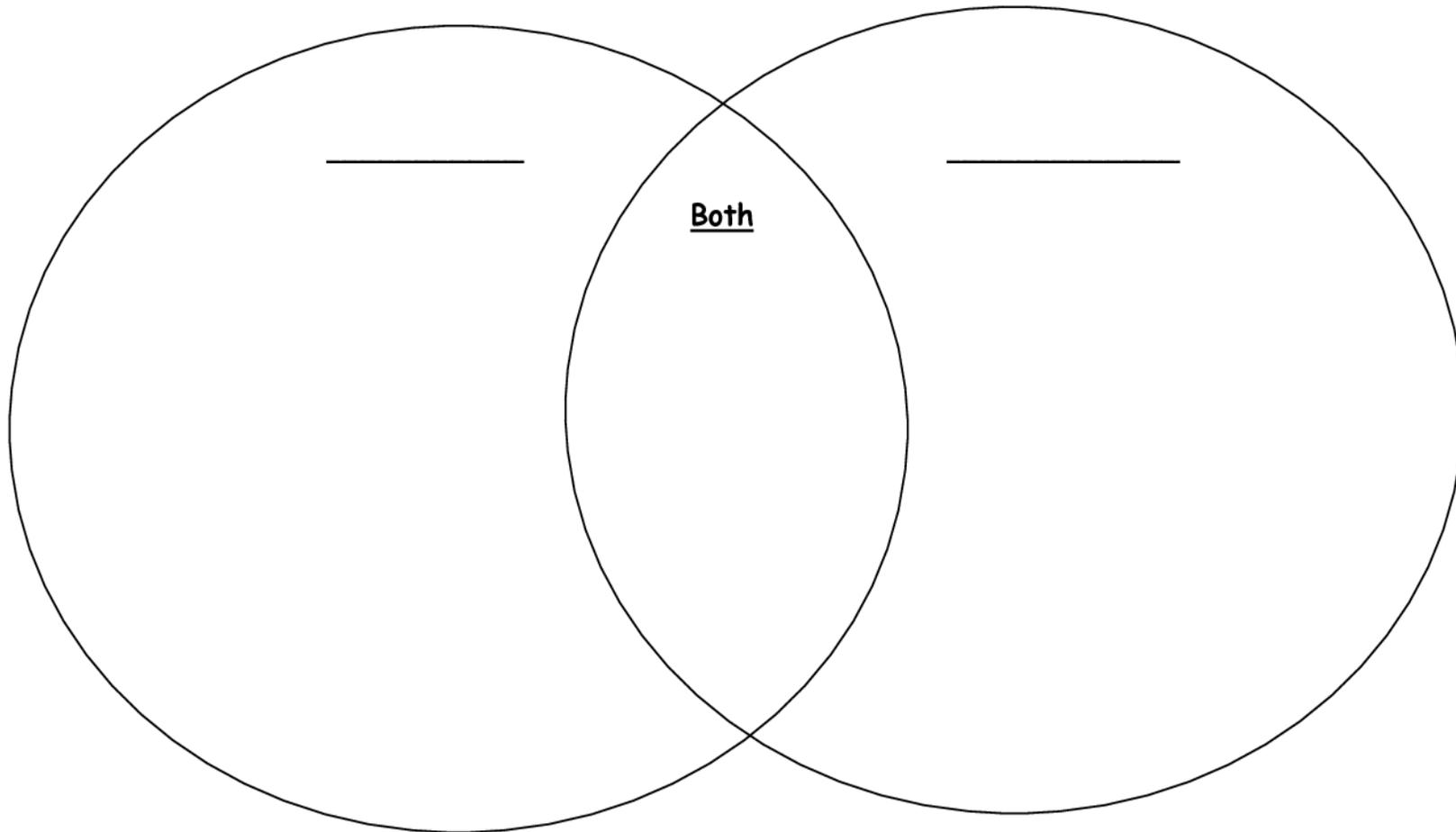
Use this page with Week One,  
Activity Three.

Use this page with Week One,  
Big Picture Project.



### Compare and Contrast

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_



(Street Address)

(City, Province)

(Postal Code)

January \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you very much for the \_\_\_\_\_. It caught my eye when I saw  
the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ looked  
\_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ smelled  
\_\_\_\_\_. When I tasted the \_\_\_\_\_, it was  
\_\_\_\_\_. I had to eat quickly, because I saw a \_\_\_\_\_  
coming towards me. Thanks again for your kindness!

Sincerely,

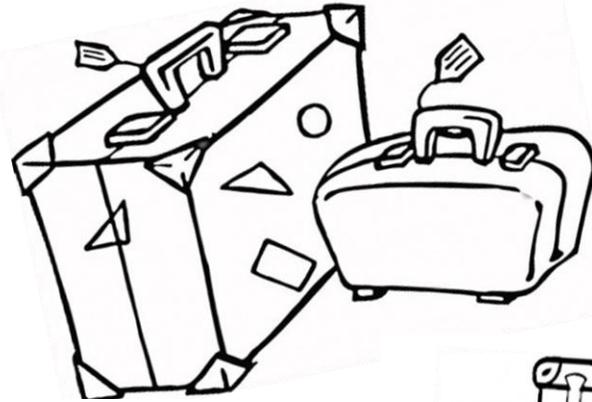
\_\_\_\_\_

Use this page with Week Three, Big Picture Project.

The _____ jacket I wear in the snow.	
The _____ scarf I wear in the snow.	
The _____ hat I wear in the snow.	
The _____ mittens I wear _____ the snow.	
The _____ sweater I wear in _____ snow.	
The _____ jeans I wear _____ the snow.	
The _____ boots I wear in the _____.	
The _____ long underwear I wear in the _____.	
The _____ socks I wear _____ the _____.	

## What I Need For My Winter Escape

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



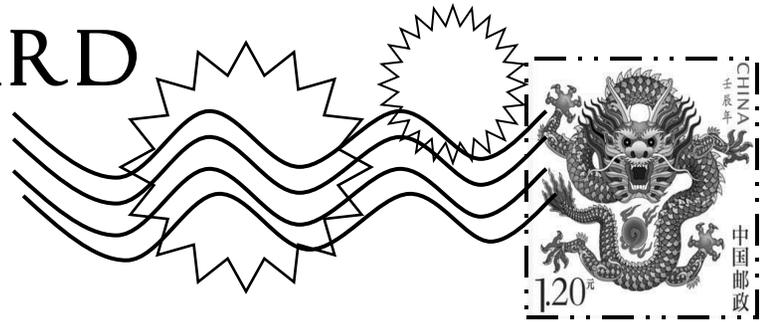
Use this page with Week Four,  
Big Picture Project.

## Postcard Template

<p style="text-align: right;">_____ date</p> <p>Dear _____,</p>         <p style="text-align: center;">Yours truly,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">[ stamp ]</p> <p>To:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Use this page with Week Four,  
Big Picture Project.

# POST CARD



*Wish you were here!*

## January Extras

Check out these *COOL* snowflake crafts...

<http://www.dltk-holidays.com/winter/crafts-snowflakes.htm>



For advanced scissor skills try this website for snowflake patterns.

<http://www.marcel-kid-crafts.com/snowflake-pattern.html>

Moms and teachers with blogs are awesome! Check out the great gingerbread man ideas here.

<http://mrsbremersk.blogspot.com/2011/12/gingerbread-manand-girland-giveaway.html>

Make the perfect picnic refreshment - pink lemonade!

### Ingredients

1 cup granulated sugar  
2 1/2 cups fresh lemon juice, plus 4 lemons, thinly sliced crosswise, for garnish  
1 1/2 cups superfine sugar  
2 cups cranberry juice

### Directions

1. Bring granulated sugar and 1 cup water to a boil in a medium pan over high heat. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Refrigerate until chilled, about 1 hour.
2. Add lemon juice, superfine sugar, cranberry juice, and 1 1/2 quarts water to a serving container. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Refrigerate until ready to serve, up to 1 day.
3. To serve, add ice cubes to fill and garnish with lemon slices. OR, try adding fresh raspberries or strawberries, too!

<http://www.marthastewartweddings.com/223942/pink-lemonade>