



SCAN ME

JANUARY 2026

# Highlights

FUN WITH A PURPOSE

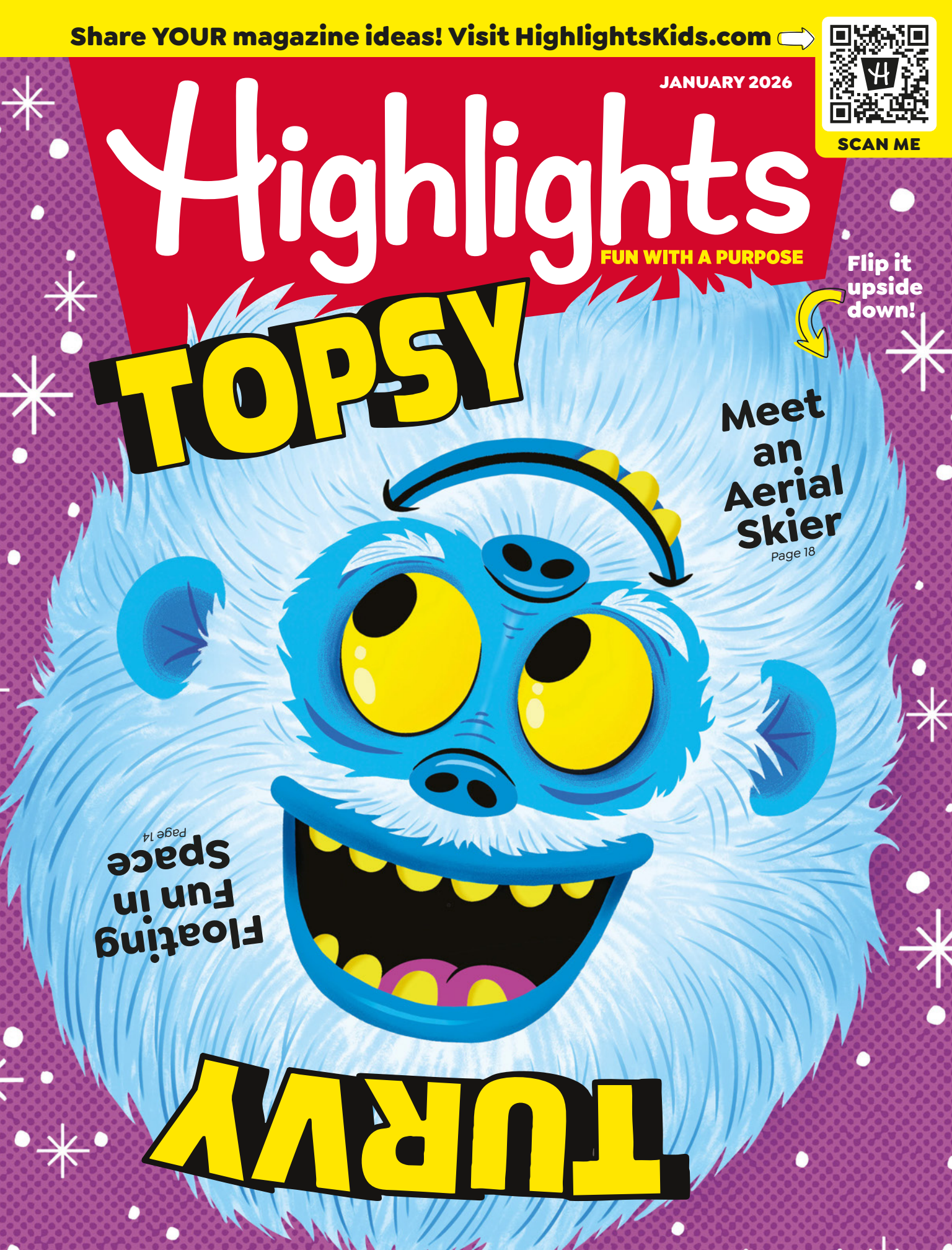
Flip it  
upside  
down!

# TOPSY

Meet  
an  
Aerial  
Skier  
Page 18

Floating  
Fun in  
Space  
Page 14

# TURVY



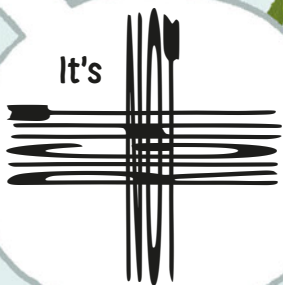


# TILTED RIDDLES

The two-word answers to each riddle are in stretched text below. To read the first word, hold the bottom of the magazine at eye level. To read the second word, hold the right edge at eye level.

Why is  $2+2=5$  like  
your left hand?

It's

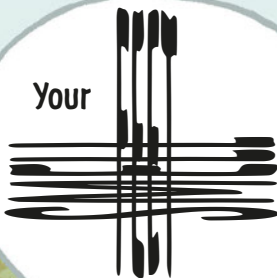


What kind  
of tree has  
hands?



How do you know when  
you're upside down?

Your



... and  
your



# Hello, Friends!



DEAR READERS

Write to  
Chantel!

She'll  
write  
back!

Welcome to a brand new year! Since this is our very first issue of the year, let me introduce myself. I'm Chantel, and I'm your friend at *Highlights* who answers all of the mail and messages that you send us. I love reading your poems, seeing your drawings, and most of all, reading and responding to the wonderful letters you send.

I'm so excited about our Topsy-Turvy theme this month. It made me think of hanging upside down on the monkey bars as a kid. Have you ever done that? Suddenly the ground is above your head, and the sky is down by your feet. It always made me wonder: What if the world really worked that way?

That same sense of upside-down wonder is what you'll find in this issue. I can't wait for you to read "Opposite Day," where Sammy discovers the fun of doing things differently. And if you're a thrill seeker like me, don't miss the fascinating peek into the science behind roller coasters.

I hope you'll write to me throughout the year. I'm always excited to hear what you have to say.



Your friend,

*Chantel*  
**Chantel**

## WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

I like setting up a tent  
to make it look like  
a special hideout.

**Adelaide**  
Age 8 • New York



I felt like a hero when I  
gave my sister something  
she really wanted.

**A.J.**  
Age 9 • Virginia

If you  
could flip one  
thing in your  
day, what  
would it be?

Chantel,  
our kids'  
mail editor



**WRITE TO ME** at  
Chantel@Highlights.com  
or mail me a letter! See page 38







# Shining Light on Justice

By Evelyn Calkins

In a world of shadows and shifting light,  
Where choices often blur the line,  
Stands a beacon, steadfast and bright,  
Whispering, “The time is always ripe to do right”

King spoke with a voice so profound,  
A symphony of hope rising above the ground.  
Amidst the turmoil, amidst the night,  
He reminded, “The time is always ripe to do right”

Not tomorrow, not in hindsight view,  
But in the present, where dreams come true,  
For justice isn’t seasonal, or linked to the light,  
Every heartbeat, every thought holds its might.

This mural in Washington, D.C., by artist Francisco “Enuf” Garcia, features Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights activists.



DO GREAT THINGS

# Shake It Up!

Using a challenge jar is a fun, easy way to try new things.

**TRY THESE, OR COME UP WITH OTHERS!**

Help out with something you've never done.

Try a new topping on your sandwich, pizza, or ice cream.

Learn a new word. Try to use it throughout the day.

Practice a new sports skill.

Write a note with the hand you don't normally use.

Dance to a parent's favorite music.

Make a comic strip.

Learn to count to 7 in another language.

On a walk, notice at least 5 new things.

Ask a librarian to pick a surprise book for you.

Invite a shy kid to play with you at recess.

Turn a photo upside down and draw it.

Invent a twist on your favorite game.

Tell us about your favorite challenge!  
See page 38.



**1** Cut strips of paper.

Make a new snack for the family.

**2** On each strip, write a new thing to try.



**3** Put the strips in a jar.



**4** Each morning (or whenever you'd like), shake the jar, pull out a paper, and try to complete the challenge before the end of the day!



**FUN**  
THIS  
MONTH

**JANUARY**

**JANUARY 2**

## Mew Year's Day

**Happy 2026 to you, human!**

And on January 2, it's Happy Mew Year for Cats Day! Created as a way to celebrate the *purr*-fect felines in your life, it's also a day to think about shelter cats who need a "mew" home. Can't have a cat? Make a Mew Year's resolution to be kind to cats.

WHAT'S  
YOUR "MEW"  
YEAR'S  
RESOLUTION?



## GET COZY THIS MONTH!

January gives you lots of chances to get your snuggle on.

**3RD**

**Festival of Sleep Day**

Sleep in, nap, or head to bed early!



**6TH**

**National Cuddle Day**

Wrap yourself in a blanket or curl up with a favorite stuffy or pet.



**8TH**

**Bubble Bath Day**

Soak in the suds and have fun in the foam!



**21ST**

**International Sweatpants Day**

Cozy, comfy clothing is key today.



**JANUARY 5**

## NATIONAL WHIPPED CREAM DAY

This tasty topping dates back to the 1500s. Back then, chefs in Italy had to beat heavy cream for about an hour by hand, probably using a bunch of twigs. They called it "neve di latte," which translates to "snow of milk." As you top your hot cocoa or waffles, give a cheer that your arms didn't tire out making the whipped cream!



JANUARY 18

# NATIONAL THESAURUS DAY

A thesaurus might sound like a kind of dinosaur, but it's a collection of synonyms: words with similar meanings. This date marks the birthday of Peter Mark Roget, who created a well-known thesaurus. So celebrate—or . . .

PRAISE, SALUTE, APPLAUD,  
CHEER, COMMEMORATE,  
OR OBSERVE!

JANUARY 19

# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY



The poem on page 2, "**Shining Light on Justice**," was written by then-16-year-old Evelyn Calkins and celebrated last year in a poetry contest hosted by the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee of Santa Barbara. Honor the civil rights leader by writing your own poem about what it means to "do right."

JANUARY 29

# National Puzzle Day

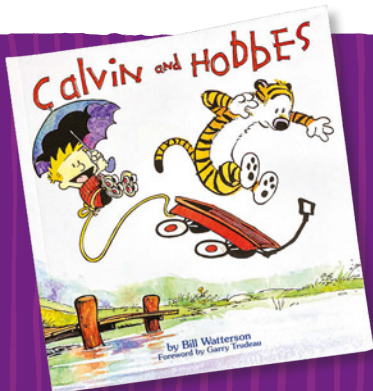
Celebrate by doing your favorite kind of puzzle, whether it's a jigsaw, word puzzle, logic puzzle, or other kind of brainteaser. Start with this Hidden Pictures puzzle!

**Can you find the banana, toothbrush, slice of pizza, pennant, ruler, and crescent moon?**



Answers on page 38





One of my favorite books is *Calvin and Hobbes*.

**Julia**  
Age 7 • Illinois

I love watching football on TV. During the playoffs, I cook dishes to match the colors of the teams who are playing.

**Ethan**  
Age 8 • Ohio



I like axolotls because they live in water and they look cool.

**George**  
Age 7 • New York



I play the clarinet. Recently I was chosen for honor clarinet!

**Emily**  
Age 10 • Connecticut

# ABOUT YOU

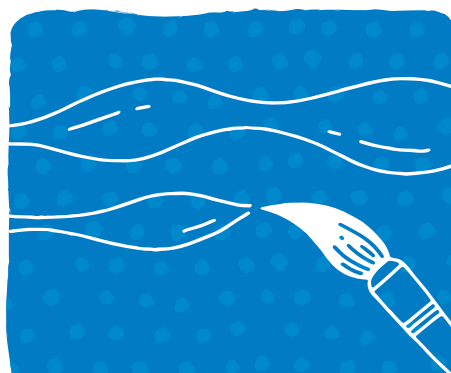
Stuff you love, things you tried, and what you wish other kids knew about you.

**SEND US YOURS!**  
SEE PAGE 38



I love working with leather. I won a scholarship for \$500!

**Elijah**  
Age 11 • Michigan



I like to do artwork with my mom. It's very peaceful.

**Clark**  
Age 5 • Colorado

I love to make creatures out of old socks! It's a fun way to reuse fabric and make something beautiful.

**Samaya**  
Age 13  
California



**AWESOME IDEA!**



I love to sing and dance. I put on performances for my family where they pretend to be the judges!

**Eliza**  
Age 9 • Washington



## HIDDEN PICTURES



fish



fishhook



slice of pizza



candle



ice-cream cone



sailboat



banana



domino



glove

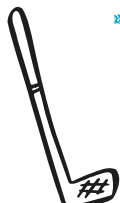


kettle

# Sloth Gymnasts

## BONUS!

Can you also find the paper clip, elbow noodle, and horseshoe?



golf club



mallet



baseball bat



slice of lemon





Excuse  
me?

Good night,  
Mom. Have  
a bad day  
at work!



# Opposite Day

By Katherine Pebley O'Neal  
Art by Pablo Pino

**S**ammy checked his calendar.

"Yes!" he cried, jumping out of bed. "I mean NO! It's Opposite Day!"

He put his shirt on inside out and walked backward down the hall.

"Good night, Mom," he said in the kitchen. "Have a bad day at work!"

Mom tilted her head. "Excuse me?"

"It's Opposite Day!" Sammy explained.

"Would you like some pancakes?" Dad asked.

"No, thanks," replied Sammy, holding out his plate. "They look terrible."

Dad raised his eyebrows. "Opposite Day!" Sammy said again.

Sammy and Marcie met at the bus stop and waved. "Good-bye!" they said at the same time.

At school, the kids were entering through the door marked *Exit*.

"Aren't you using the wrong door?" asked the principal.

"It's Opposite Day!" said the students.

In the classroom, the kids stood at their desks instead of sitting down.

**Sammy and Marcie met at the bus stop and waved. "Good-bye!"**

When Sammy spilled his pencil box, Marcie said, "I won't help you" and bent to pick up some of his pencils.

"Thanks very little," he said, smiling.

"You're not welcome," she replied with a grin.

During math, the kids added when the sign said to subtract, and they subtracted when the sign said to add.

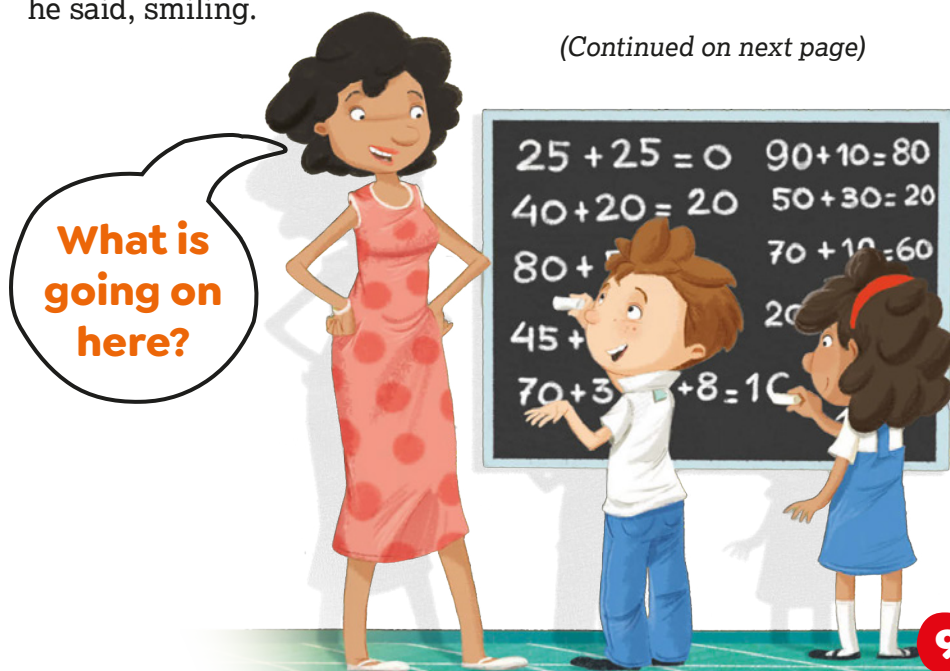
"What is going on here?" cried their teacher, Ms. Trix.

"It's Opposite Day!" said the class.

"That's right," Ms. Trix said. "In that case, there's no homework tonight."

"Yay!" said the kids. But then they remembered what

*(Continued on next page)*





(Continued from page 9)

day it was. Ms. Trix wrote their assignments on the board.

In the lunchroom, students went backward through the lunch line and ate their desserts first.

"What's going on?" asked the cafeteria helpers.

"It's Opposite Day!" the kids said.

"You can't sit by me," Sammy told Marcie.

"Good. I didn't want to," she said, putting her tray beside his.

That afternoon, Ms. Trix asked the kids to present their book reports.

Oh no! thought Sammy. He'd been so excited about Opposite Day that he had left his report at home.

Sammy put his head in his hands and thought. He could make something up, or he could tell the truth.

"Ms. Trix," he confessed when she called on him, "I won't be able to present my book report today."

Ms. Trix squinted at Sammy and smiled. "Well,

it's Opposite Day. I guess that means you *will* be able to bring it in *tomorrow*! I expect it to be awful. And by that I mean great!"

Sammy sighed with relief.

After school, at Sammy's house, Marcie and Sammy climbed a tree and played on the swings and laughed until their sides hurt.

"This is so boring," Marcie said.

"You're the worst friend in the world," Sammy replied.

"You too," said Marcie. "Just be sure to forget your book report tomorrow."

"I will," said Sammy, smiling.

Opposite Day was no fun at all. 🙄







# WHICH WAY IS UP?

Answers on page 38

Find at least 20 differences between these two images.

Art by Amanda Cotan





MAKE



short  
cardboard  
tube

Launch pompoms,  
cotton balls, or  
other "snowballs."



wiggle  
eyes

# Blizzard

**1** Glue **craft paper** around a **short cardboard tube**.

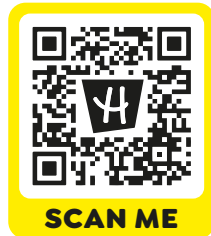
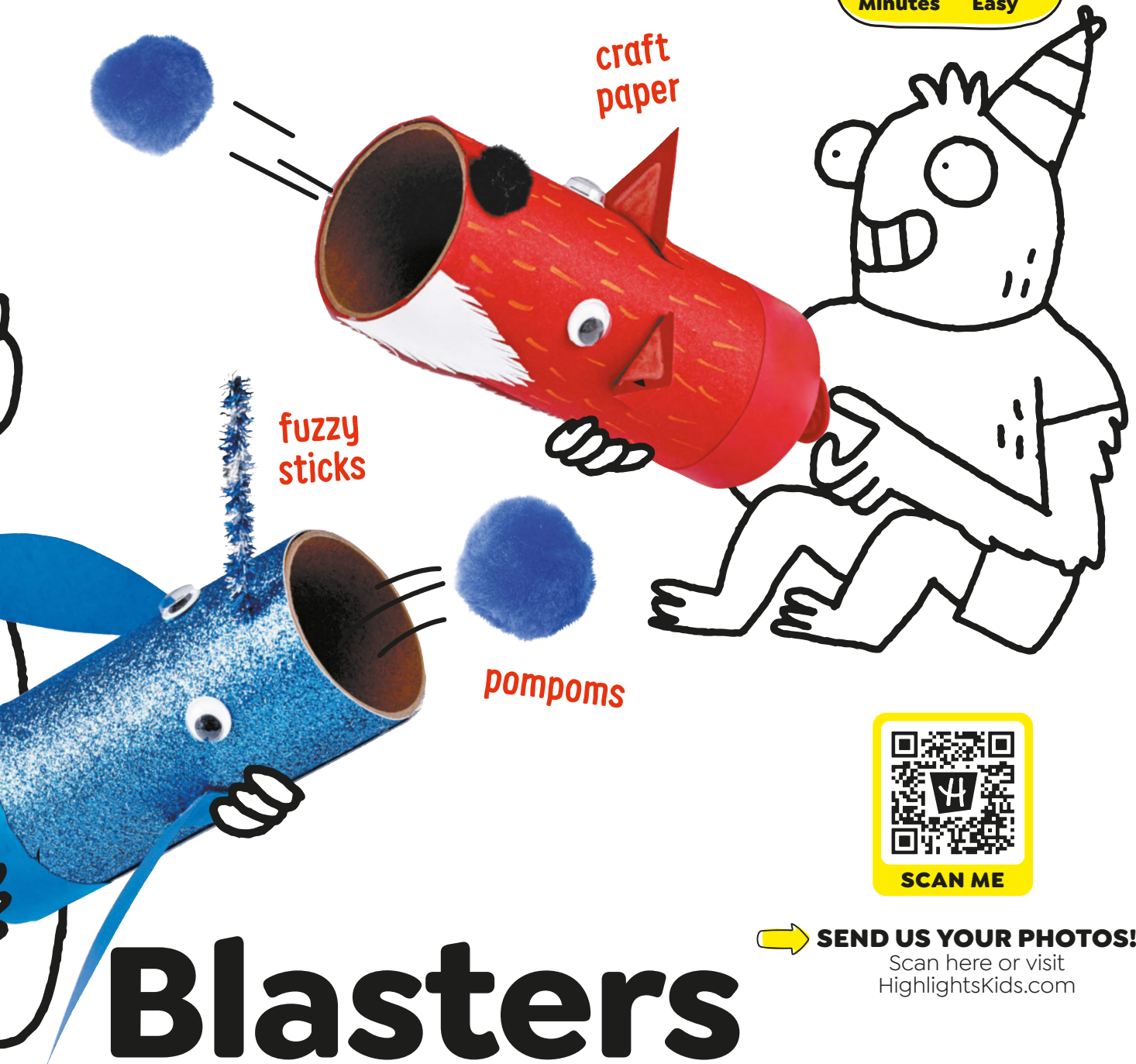
**2** Decorate the tube to look like a winter animal.

**3** Knot the open end of an uninflated **balloon**.




  
**45**  
**Minutes**

★★★☆☆  
**Fairly**  
**Easy**



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# Blasters

**4** Cut off the opposite end, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way into the balloon.

**5** Stretch the cut opening around the decorated tube. Use regular or double-sided **tape** to hold it in place.



**balloon**

**6** To launch a **pompom**, place it inside the tube. Pull back the balloon knot, then release!





My lunch!

# Floating

Discover

what life

is like in

microgravity.





**W**hat if things in your home—your toothbrush, books, pillows, even you!—suddenly seemed weightless and began to float? That's what it's like on the International Space Station (ISS), a research lab that orbits our planet about 250 miles above the surface. Inside the ISS, anything that isn't secured in place floats. The reason for this is microgravity!

### How Microgravity Works

What is gravity? And since *micro* means “super tiny,” what is a super-tiny amount of it?

Gravity is a force that's always pulling down on us and everything around us. It holds things down. It makes things fall. It makes a soaring ball stop rising and come back down.

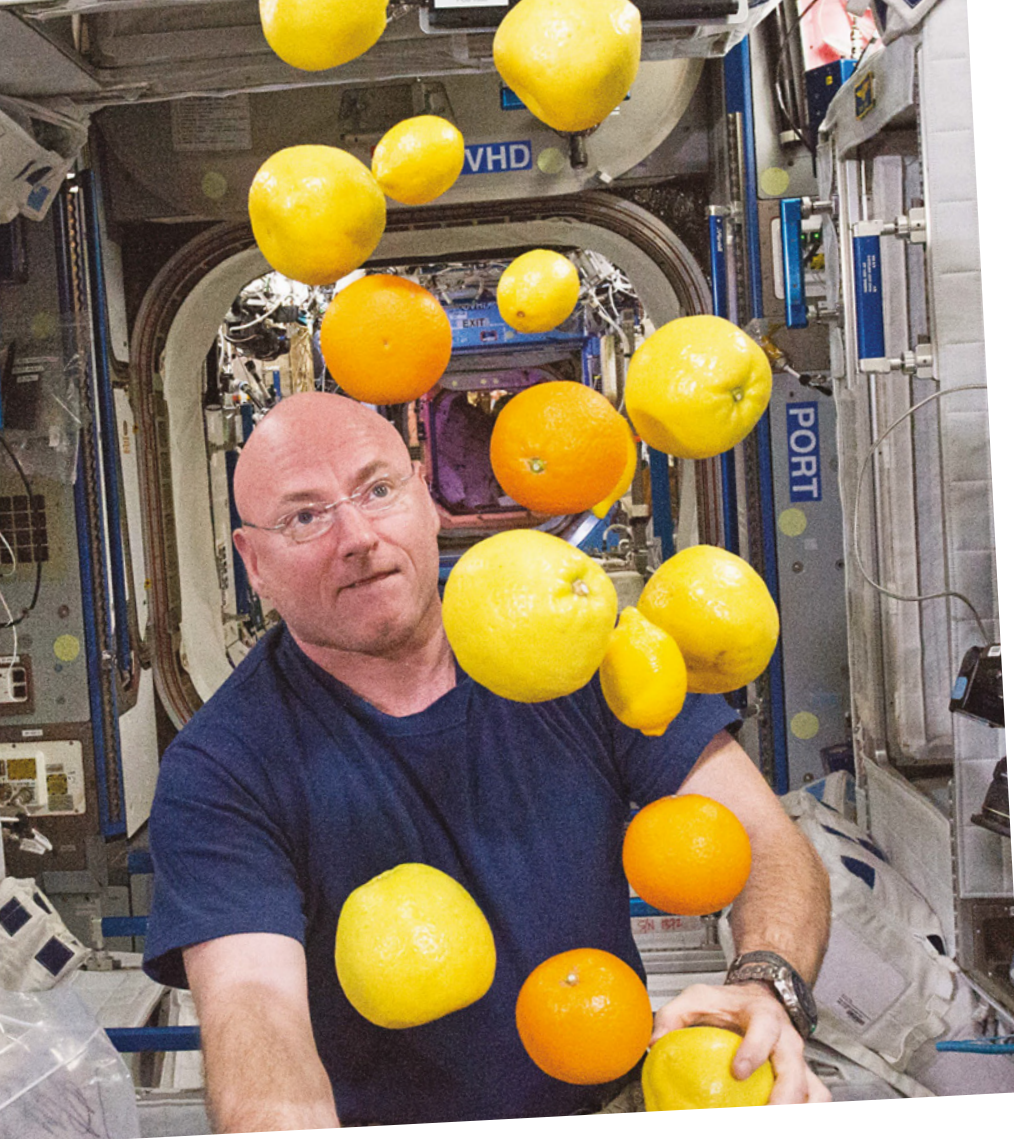
In microgravity, only a small amount of gravity seems to be pulling on an object. Even though the ISS and the astronauts inside are in space, Earth's gravity is still pulling on them—just not as strongly as it would at Earth's surface.

Because of this gravity, the ISS is always falling toward Earth. At the same time, the ISS is moving sideways very quickly—at about 17,500 miles per hour. The speed causes it to fall in a curved path *around* the planet, keeping the ISS in orbit.

*(Continued on next page)*

# FUN!

By Angela Modany



(Continued from page 15)

The ISS isn't the only thing that's falling around the Earth—everything inside of it is too. The astronauts and other items on board float because they are all falling at the same rate.

Think of riding a roller coaster that drops. Your body feels weightless because you're falling with the roller-coaster car. A similar drop is always happening on the ISS.

## New Routines

Living in microgravity is pretty cool. Need to get from one place to another? Just push off a surface and glide there!

## Astronauts aren't allowed to eat anything on the ISS that creates crumbs.

But astronauts also have a lot to get used to.

Take food. Astronauts aren't allowed to eat anything on the ISS that creates crumbs. That's because loose crumbs could float into equipment, damaging it. Also, the ISS doesn't have food refrigerators. Many meals come in vacuum-sealed packages. Others are dehydrated. Astronauts add water from their supply and

# STRANGE SPACE

Some odd stuff happens to the human body in outer space!



## Food tastes blander.

Fluids shift within the body, blocking nasal passages. This affects your sense of smell, which contributes to taste.



## You can "grow" about 3% taller.

That's because there's not as much gravity pressing on your spine.



## Your legs can get skinnier.

This happens because fluids shift from the lower to the upper body.

warm the food in a special oven.

Astronauts don't have showers or running water on the ISS. So they wash their hair by squirting water and no-rinse shampoo onto their scalp. They may have to catch the water droplets as they float off!



## At bedtime, astronauts climb into sleeping bags.

At bedtime, astronauts climb into sleeping bags. The bags are attached to the walls of the station. Astronauts zip themselves into their bags so they don't drift around while catching some Z's.

## Staying Strong

In addition to adopting new routines, astronauts have to keep their bodies strong. On Earth, a person's bones help hold up their body against gravity. There's less stress on bones in space, where gravity is weaker. Also, muscles aren't used as much because astronauts are floating. So bones and muscles grow weaker. Even astronauts' hearts can weaken because they don't have to work as hard to pump blood.

To counter these effects, every astronaut exercises for

about two hours a day. Most of the exercise equipment is specially designed to imitate the feel of gravity. This allows astronauts to get their blood pumping and muscles moving.

## Work and Play

Astronauts on the ISS spend much of their time working. They conduct a lot of experiments—from observing how yo-yos behave in microgravity to growing crystals in space! They also monitor the station to make sure all the equipment is working. Sometimes they do spacewalks to make repairs to the outside of the station.

When they have free time, astronauts kick back by watching movies and TV shows, reading books, and gazing down at Earth. And, of course, they use microgravity to have some fun. For instance,

one astronaut dressed up as Superman for Halloween and “flew” around the station. And in 2024 a crew of astronauts pretended to hold their own version of the Olympics, easily doing flips and lifting weights.

It's official: Despite some challenges, life in microgravity is mega-fun! 🕹️

Feeling the burn!



Chilling above Earth!



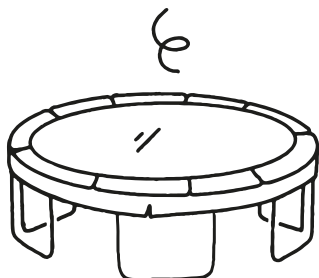


## 5 QUESTIONS FOR AN...

By Gail Skroback Hennessey

# Aerial Skier

**Kaila Kuhn won two gold medals at the 2025 world championships.**

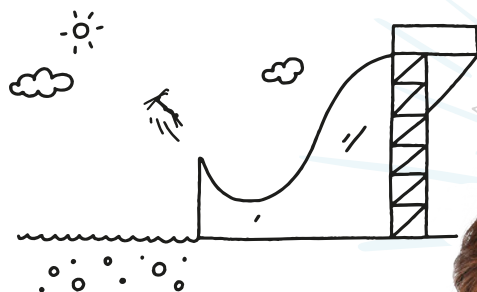


### 1 HOW DID YOU START AERIAL SKIING?

I was skiing and doing gymnastics, especially the trampoline, from an early age. When I was 13, someone suggested I try aerial skiing. It was the perfect combination of what I loved! At 15, I was the youngest member of the U.S. National Aerial Team. I competed in the 2022 Winter Olympics (Beijing), finishing in 8th place.

### 2 HOW DO YOU TRAIN?

I practice on ski jumps that lead to a special pool made for aerial skiers. It has a bubble system to break the surface tension when landing. On the snow, I reach speeds of 40 miles per hour as I approach a jump. I do acrobatics, such as flips and double flips. I do triple backflips reaching 60 feet into the air—something just 10 women are attempting right now.



### 3 WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT AS YOU PERFORM?

I focus on where I'll land and how much time I have before I hit the ground. I have to regulate my speed depending on what I'm trying to do. To go faster, I keep my arms at my sides. To slow down, I raise my arms in the air.

### 4 WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF AERIAL SKIING?

Definitely the mental part. You need to manage your fear—of being so high in the air and the possibility of injury—and channel it into fuel to do better.



**Sky's the limit!**

### 5 WHAT WOULD YOU TELL KIDS?

Believe that anything is possible. It doesn't matter what resources you do or don't have. You need to believe in yourself and have passion to become the best you can be. I like to say "Go big or go home!" The first time I said that, I was just two years old!

Photos: (top) GIAN EHRENZELLER/EPA-EFE/  
Shutterstock; (right) Harry How/Getty Images



# MUTTS

## AT THE MOVIES

### PUZZLES



Each of these four pups is about to order a different movie snack and see a different movie. Using the clues, can you figure out which movie each dog is going to see and what they'll snack on during the film?

- 1 Pawla is getting Bacon Bites, but she's not seeing *Beauty and the Beagle*.
- 2 Barkley loves movies about pugs.
- 3 One of the dogs is getting Pawpcorn and seeing *Finding Doggo*.
- 4 Clawdine always gets the Peanut Butter Bones.

PUT AN **X** IN BOXES THAT CAN'T BE TRUE AND AN **O** IN BOXES THAT ARE TRUE.

	TRIASSIC BARK	FINDING DOGGO	THE THREE LITTLE PUGS	BEAUTY AND THE BEAGLE	PAWPCORN	BACON BITES	PEANUT BUTTER BONES	TREATUMS
Pawla								
Barkley								
Howlbert								
Clawdine								



By Tracy Vonder Brink

# Whe

## Roller-coaster designers use science for fun.

**H**ave you ever wondered how a roller coaster gets designed? It's the work of engineers. Engineers use science and math to build things and solve problems.

When designing a roller coaster, engineers think about force. A force is a push or pull that changes an object's movement. Quick shifts in speed or direction—like when a ride zooms up and down a big hill—change how these forces act on your body. They can make you feel as heavy as an elephant at the bottom of a

hill or lighter than air at the top.

Are roller coasters safe? Engineers make sure of it. "There are a lot of rules we have to follow," say engineers at The Gravity Group, a company in Ohio that designs roller coasters. Coaster cars have wheels that roll on the top and sides of the track. Another set of wheels goes underneath. These wheels work together to keep the cars on the track. And strong harnesses or lap bars make sure people won't fly out—even if the ride goes upside down! 🌀





# eeee!

The Helix is a good name for this roller coaster at Liseberg Park in Sweden. A helix is a kind of spiral.

Engineers design roller coasters to fit the needs of different amusement parks. Some parks have lots of space. Others need roller coasters to go around and over other rides or buildings.



MAKE

soy  
ramen

Garden  
Slurp

carrots

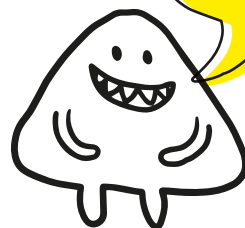
mushrooms

green  
onions

corn

# Noodle Palooza

Sluuuurp!



**Build your dream bowl of ramen  
noodles with tasty toppings.**



Ask an adult for help with anything sharp or hot.



**45**  
Minutes



**Serves**  
1

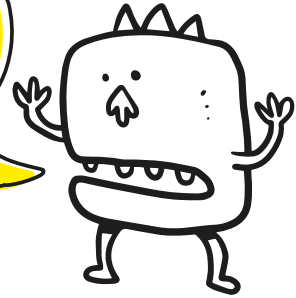


**Fairly**  
Easy

## Beef 'n' Broc



What other  
flavors will  
you create?



## Teriyaki Twist



## Sweet Heat Shrimp



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# Little. Surprises

By Beverly J. Letchworth  
Art by Letícia Moreno







**K**enzie and her friends walked home from the bus. They really missed their friend Holly, who was at home recovering from surgery. She was going to have to stay home from school for the next two weeks!

"When my mom was in the hospital after my baby sister was born, people brought her gifts," said Maya. "We should bring gifts to Holly!"

"Good idea," said Kenzie. She had been planning to make Holly a card, but gifts sounded even better.

"I'm going to get her a cool necklace-making kit," said Brynlee.

"I'm going to buy that paint set we saw at the mall," said Maya.

"I'm going to get her a gift card," said Ava, "so she can buy the video games she wants."

"What will you give her, Kenzie?" Maya asked.

"Um, I haven't decided yet," Kenzie answered. She wanted to give Holly something meaningful. But Kenzie's family was saving money for a new car, and she knew it wasn't the time to spend a lot.

They had reached her house, so she veered off the sidewalk into her front yard. "See you later," she said.

Kenzie's brother, Nathan, had just gotten home too. He rushed past her to the kitchen and grabbed the last peach yogurt from the refrigerator. "Beat you to it," he whooped.

"It's fine," said Kenzie, taking an apple from the fruit bowl. She flopped down on the sofa. She couldn't wait for her mom to get home from work so

**"What will you  
give her, Kenzie?"**

she could talk to her.

Later, while her mother prepared dinner, Kenzie told her about Holly. "We want to give her gifts to let her know we've been thinking about her."

"Oh, that's a sweet idea," said Mom, as she placed hamburger patties into a skillet. "Kenzie, would you spin the salad, please? And Nathan, please come set the table."

As she spun the salad, Kenzie explained what each of her friends was giving Holly. "They're spending a lot on the gifts," Kenzie said.

"Sounds like it," said Mom.

"I want to give her something special too," Kenzie continued. "How can I do that without a lot of money?"

"I know you can do it.

*(Continued on next page)*



(Continued from page 25)

You're creative," said Mom. "You don't need to spend a lot to show that you care."

On Monday, Kenzie and Nathan had dentist appointments. They opened their goody bags on the way home. Inside were the usual toothbrush and toothpaste along with a few other things.

"Look," said Nathan, with a grin. "It's a super bouncy ball and a press-on tattoo."

"And a glow-in-the-dark ring," added Kenzie, slipping it on her finger.

"Cool," said Nathan. "It's fun finding little surprises."

It is fun, thought Kenzie. Then she realized Nathan had just given her an idea for Holly's gift. She'd buy and make little things that would be special to Holly.

Over the next few days, Kenzie worked on her gift, thinking hard about what would make Holly smile.

On Friday, Maya's mother drove the girls to Holly's house. Holly was sitting up in bed when they got there.

The girls placed their gifts on the bed. "Open mine first," said Maya.

Kenzie's heart beat faster. She had thought her idea was a good one, but now she wasn't sure. Would her gift look silly next to the others? As Holly opened Maya's present and then Brynlee's and Ava's, ooohing and ahhhing at each, Kenzie's

doubts grew.

Finally, Holly reached for Kenzie's gift and grinned at the words on the box: *Stuff to Make You Smile*.

She opened the lid and began unwrapping. "Silly stickers! A headband! And here's one of those rubber-band bracelets you make. It's purple and neon green."

"I know those are your favorite colors," said Kenzie.

"They are." Holly smiled. "Wow! Did you make this snow globe too?"

**Nathan had just given Kenzie a great idea for Holly's gift.**

Kenzie nodded. "It's little cats playing in the snow."

"I can't wait till we can do that again," said Holly as she gave the snow globe a shake. She reached into the box one more time. "And homemade chocolate-chip cookies?! Yum!"

Soon they had to leave so Holly could rest. "Get well soon!" they all said.


"I feel better already." Holly smiled. "I'm glad you came to see me."

Kenzie was glad too. She had worried for nothing. Her mom had been right—friendship and thoughtfulness were what really counted.

"We'll come back soon," Kenzie said. 🍷







**“Wow! Did you  
make this snow  
globe too?”**



# GOOFUS & GALLANT

There's a little bit of G & G in us all. Let your Gallant shine!



## YOUR Goofus and Gallant Moments

I felt like Goofus when I tracked mud in my grandmother's house after I played outside.

**Abby**

Age 11 • Pennsylvania

I felt like Gallant when I helped my friend feel less anxious about a test.

**Nathanial**

Age 9 • California

I felt like Goofus when I tripped my little brother.

**Ruth**

Age 8 • California





By Sara Matson

**Arsh Pal uses his artistic talents to help others.**

# Paintings with Heart

**A**rsh Pal started painting when he was very young. At age 8, he began selling his artwork to raise money for charity. Now 15, Arsh is still going strong!

## How did you get started?

The first painting I sold was to my piano teacher for ten dollars. After that, I reached out to my principal about my goal of raising money by selling my paintings. She offered to have a display of my artwork in the school during parent-teacher conferences. A lot of my paintings were bought by parents and teachers.

## How did your project grow?

I started getting different opportunities to display my art at restaurants and art galleries. I also displayed it on social-media sites under the name Art by Arsh.

## Arsh's Favorites



**School  
Subject  
Science**



In all, I have donated over \$23,000 to different charities, such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Compass to Care, Make-A-Wish Foundation, and Easterseals.

## How do you decide what to paint?

I like painting landscapes. When my family goes on vacations, we take pictures, and usually I end up painting those pictures. Sometimes, I get orders from people. They tell me what to paint—what size, what colors—and then I paint it and send it to them.

## What have you learned through sharing your art?

No matter how old you are, you can do something to change the world and bring good to the community. Whenever I pick up a paintbrush, I say to myself, *I know this painting is going to help someone.* That motivates me to keep painting. 🍷



# CREATE



I like to sew animals.

**Quinn**

Age 10 • Colorado



My family, my grandparents,  
and my aunt and uncle—  
I love them all so much!

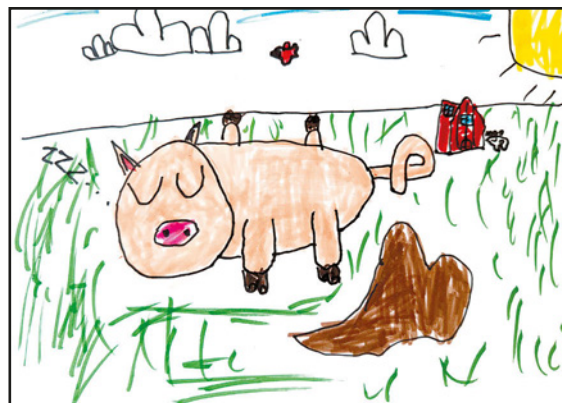
**Austin**

Age 12 • South Carolina

He has a happy wagging tail.  
He barks at the lady who brings the mail.  
When it comes to food, he's a hog.  
He is my bestest friend—he is my dog.

**Izzy**

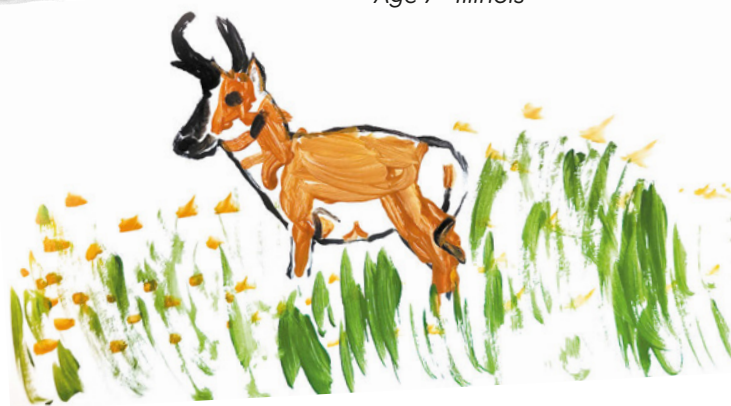
Age 11 • Arizona



**Pig Sleeping  
at a Farm**

**Lucas**

Age 7 • Illinois



I painted this pronghorn  
as a Christmas gift.

**Daniel**

Age 7 • Colorado

**Art Is Art**

Art is art

Big or small

Red or blue

Dark or light

Art is life

Anything you can believe

Art is art.

**Evan**

Age 9 • Texas

**If I Were Leader**

From the mountains to the grass,  
from a tree to a seed,  
a great world I would stand for and lead.  
All animals shall have rest,  
and may peace fall on them.  
I would have many helping hands to lend.  
Every day and every night,  
I will lead the world toward what's right.

**Hazel**

Age 11 • Alaska





## Ballerina Wearing Pointe Shoes

**Talullah**  
Age 8 • Maryland

## The Way to Go

The way to go is the way to go.  
If you go somewhere  
or come somewhere,  
the way to go  
will bring you there.

**Mina**  
Age 5 • Minnesota



## A Good Grand Piano

**Aaron**  
Age 7 • California



I drew giraffes on the plains  
because I want to go to the savanna.

**Evelyn**  
Age 6 • West Virginia

## Winter Poem

She tells me to come out and play.  
Winter creates snow, hail, and rain all day.  
She wants me to ride my sled down lots of hills.  
Winter sits on her throne wearing a snow cloak.  
She talks in a nice soft voice.  
Winter freezes me with her icy power.  
She makes all the kids happy while she is here.  
Winter.

**Lincoln**  
Age 9 • Oregon

## The Air Chair

There once was a girl named Claire  
who tried to sit down in a chair.  
She was reading a book,  
she just didn't look,  
and all that she sat on was air!

**Kiara**  
Age 9 • Florida



## Snowman

**Bennett**  
Age 6 • Maryland

## Kickball Poem

Kickball, kickball, kick it toward the sky.  
Kickball, kickball, look how far it can fly.  
Round the bases, one, two, three.  
Home run fills me with glee.  
Kickball is so fun to play,  
Especially on a sunny day.  
But if the skies are filled with clouds  
And the rain is pouring down,  
You might as well get some rest  
So tomorrow you can be the best.

**Theo**  
Age 10 • New Jersey



## EVER WONDER?

### Why does dropped toast land butter-side down?

Kassandra  
Age 8 • Nevada

It's true that toast lands this way more often than not. Is it just bad luck? No, scientists tell us. Their experiments show that it's not caused by the weight of the butter, either, as long as it's evenly spread.

Rather, it's all about toast acrobatics!

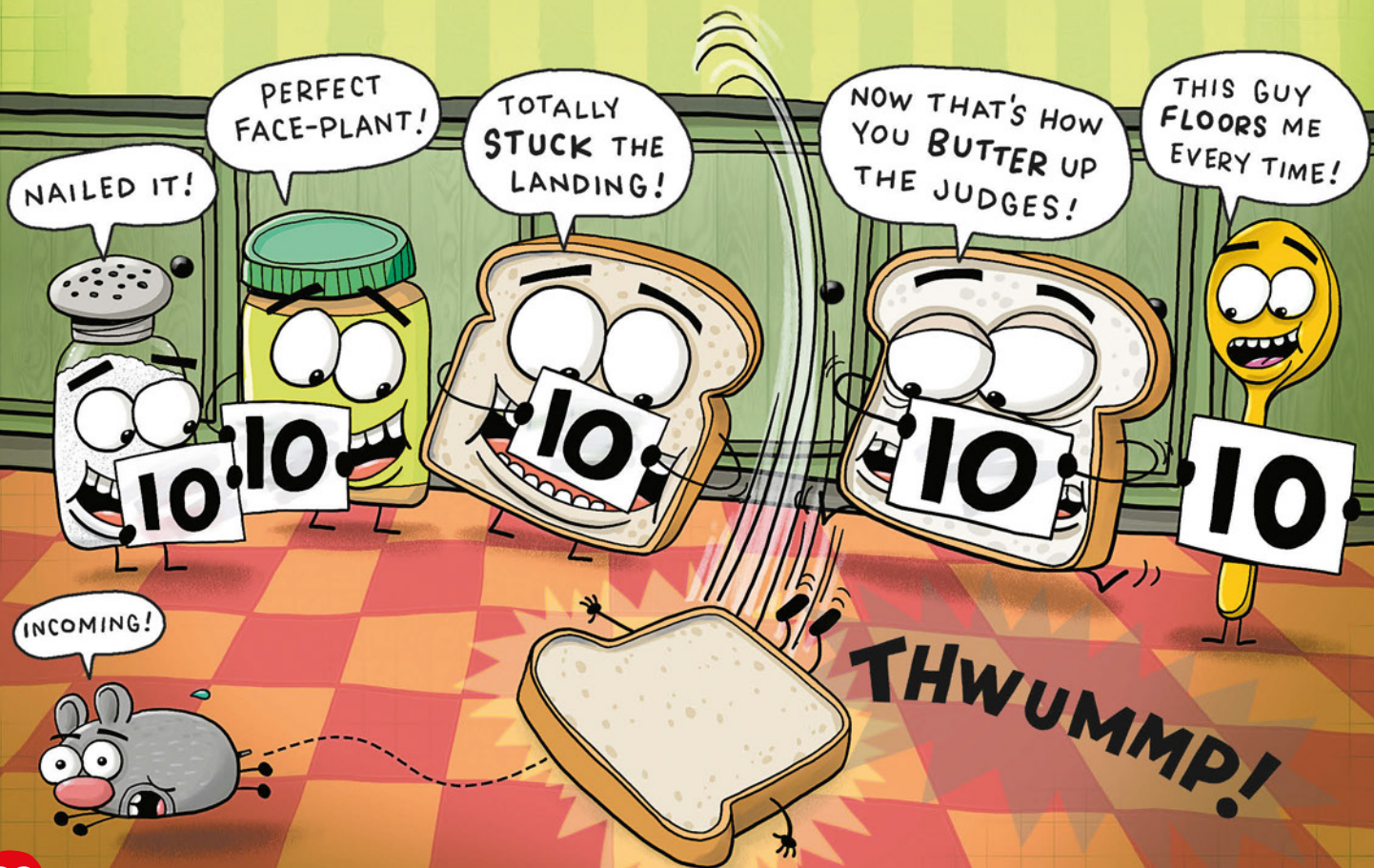
Often, toast falls because we accidentally knock it off a table, or tilt our plate, causing the slice to slide off. Imagine a piece of toast being pushed off a table. When more than half of it moves past the edge, the slice flips over as it falls off. It keeps turning at a steady speed until it hits the floor. But most of the time, the distance to the floor isn't very far. And the toast isn't spinning fast enough to make a complete flip. It usually makes only about half of a rotation before it lands—butter-side down.

To land butter-side up, it would need to do one or more *full* rotations. That means

it would have to fall from a greater height. So, if a slice were dropped from, say, nine or ten feet off the ground, it would likely have time to make a full rotation and touch down on its unbuttered side.

A slice of toast would also land butter-side up if it didn't have time to rotate. That might happen if the slice were very quickly pushed off a surface. The movement would cause the slice to stay butter-side up for longer. That would make it less likely to flip before it landed.

But even if your toast lands on the dry side, it's still on the floor. *Ugh*. Maybe the best way to enjoy toast is to make sure it doesn't fall at all! 🍷





**START!**

Take your brain on a hike.

Can you remember the **FIRST THING** you said this morning?



NAME **5** THINGS YOU DO EVERY EVENING.



WHAT ARE SOME OBJECTS THAT SPIN?

If you made lunch for your family, what would you serve?



What would your **SUPERHERO NAME** BE?



What helps you keep trying when the going **GETS TOUGH**?



WHAT WOULD YOU MAKE FROM THIS BALL OF CLAY?



Could scissors be used

to slice a **cake**?



**CAN YOU BALANCE ON ONE FOOT?**

**ON YOUR HEELS? ON YOUR TOES?**



THE END

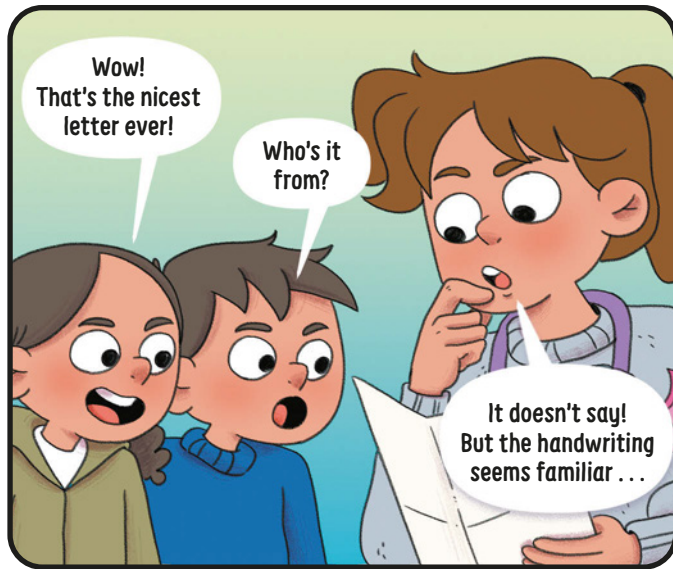


# The Case of the Mysterious Letter



**CRASH!**





(Continued on next page)





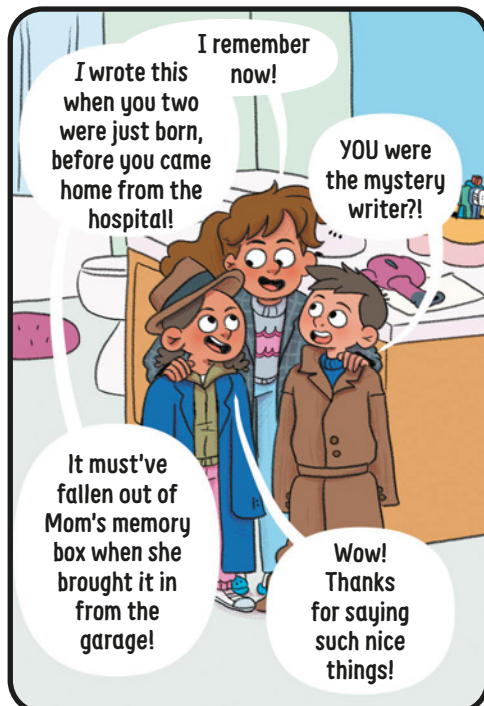
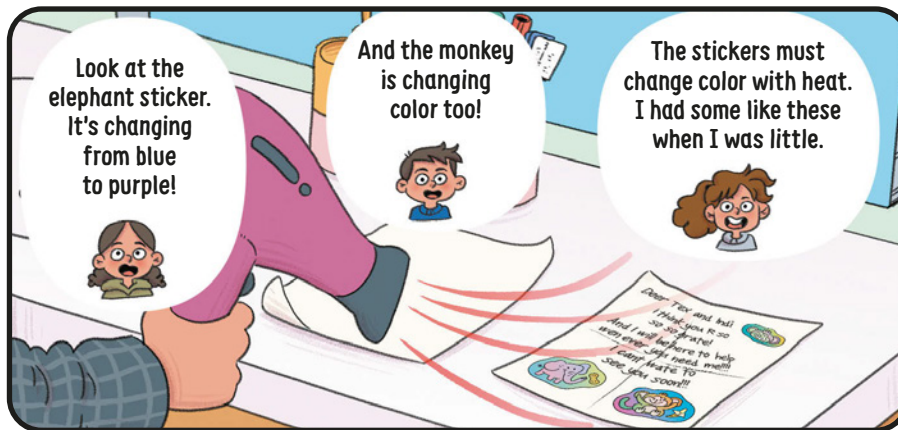
Next stop was Lily's house. Indi said Lily loves making cards.







Well, no words appeared on the blank paper.  
But the letter was sitting next to it, and . . .







I like going to football games with my dad.

Emily

Age 11 • Tennessee

I would not want a pet dog or cat—I'm allergic!

Luke

Age 9 • Georgia

I agree, no dogs!

# Share Your Stuff!

## UPLOAD IT

Go to the Share section of HighlightsKids.com



Or **MAIL IT** to  
Highlights  
803 Church Street  
Honesdale, PA 18431

Please include your name, age, and address.

We do, Anita!



You should do a puzzle magazine. It would be mind-boggling!

Anita  
Age 8  
New Jersey

**TAKE THE MAGAZINE SURVEY!**  
Visit [HighlightsKids.com](https://www.HighlightsKids.com)

50%  
I flip around.

WHERE DO YOU START READING YOUR MAGAZINE?

3%  
At the back

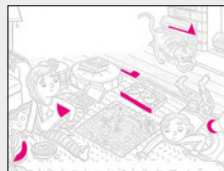
47%  
At the beginning

## Answers

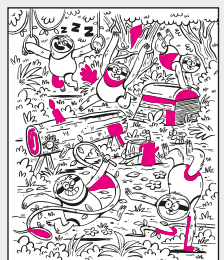
### INSIDE FRONT COVER Tilted Riddles

- It's NOT RIGHT
- PALM TREE
- Your FEET SMELL . . .
- and your NOSE RUNS

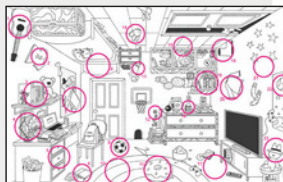
### PAGE 5 National Puzzle Day



### PAGE 7 Sloth Gymnasts



### PAGE 11 Which Way Is Up?



### PAGE 19 Mutts at the Movies

Pawla: *Triassic Bark*,  
Bacon Bites

Barkley: *The Three Little Pugs*,  
Treatums

Howlburt: *Finding Doggo*, Pawpcorn

Clawdine: *Beauty and the Beagle*, Peanut Butter Bones

### INSIDE BACK COVER Puzzle-A-Day Challenge



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HL\_AB637



# Jokes and Riddles

What do tigers get into when they're upset?

Rawr-guments.

**Diana**

Age 6 • Tennessee

Why did the pepper put on its winter jacket?

It was a little chilly.

**Benjamin**

Age 9 • Ohio

Did you hear the joke about the letter with no stamp? You won't get it.

**Harper**

Age 9 • Tennessee

What has four legs and only one foot?

A bed.

**Kenzi**

Age 8 • Indiana

What do vampires eat?

Neck-tarines and blood oranges.

**Henry**

Age 6 • Virginia

Why did the cell phone get glasses?

It lost all its contacts.

**Porter**

Age 11 • Texas

What do you call two bananas?

Slippers.

**Abigail**

Age 8 • Virginia

# Wacky Captions

LAUGHS FROM YOU

THAT BANANA PEEL CAME OUTTA NOWHERE!

**Henry**

Age 8 • Colorado

THAT'S THE SEAL-IEST JOKE I'VE EVER HEARD!

**Patrick**

Age 10  
North Carolina

GO ON WITHOUT ME!

**Adele**

Age 11  
New York

LOOK, I'M MAKING SAND ANGELS!

**Jacob**

Age 7 • New York

# Funny But True

One time, when my family was at the beach, I was wading through the ocean and I felt something brush my leg! Was it a shark? I screamed and then I looked closer and it was just some floating seaweed.

**Caleb**

Age 9 • Texas

Once I was going to field day at school, and my mom and I couldn't find the sunscreen. Later, when my mom was at her job, she found it in her lunchbox!

**Morgan**

Age 8 • Florida

One time, my sister, my mom, and I were making sugar cookies. After multiple batches, we still couldn't figure out what was wrong with them. Then we realized we forgot the SUGAR!

**Lula**

Age 11 • South Carolina



SEND US YOURS! SEE PAGE 38



## DEAR HIGHLIGHTS

My glasses sometimes distract me in school. What can I do?

**Frances**  
Age 8 • Vermont



Great job noticing this! You're already on your way to finding a solution.

Think about how your glasses distract you. Do you take them off and play with them? If so, hold a small toy or squishy ball instead, if your teacher allows it.

Do your glasses slip down your nose? They might need to be tightened.

If your glasses hurt your eyes or make it hard to see, perhaps it's time for a new prescription.

Talking with a parent or another trusted adult is always a good idea. They care about you and want to help you feel comfortable and able to do your best.

I want to teach my new dog tricks. How can I start?

**Jordan**  
Age 10 • Ohio



Teaching a dog tricks can be lots of fun. To get started, choose a simple trick such as "sit" or "shake hands." Find a quiet place where your dog can listen and focus.

Each time your dog does the trick, give a treat right away and say something in a cheerful tone, like "Good job!" This helps your dog understand what to do.

Practice for just 5–10 minutes each day. Short lessons work best. If your dog seems confused, take a break and try again later.

With an adult, you can find dog-training tips online or at a library.

Be patient and gentle. Some tricks may take a while to learn. With lots of practice and praise, your dog will learn tricks while having fun with you!

## ADVICE FROM YOU

The hiccups are *sooo* annoying! How can I get rid of them?

**Missy**  
Age 7 • New York

I take a big breath of air and then hold it.

**JoJo**  
Age 11 • Colorado

Sip cold water until they stop.

**David**  
Age 7 • Pennsylvania



### HAVE A QUESTION?

Write to us at [Letters@Highlights.com](mailto:Letters@Highlights.com) or by postal mail (see page 38).



# EDITORS' PICK

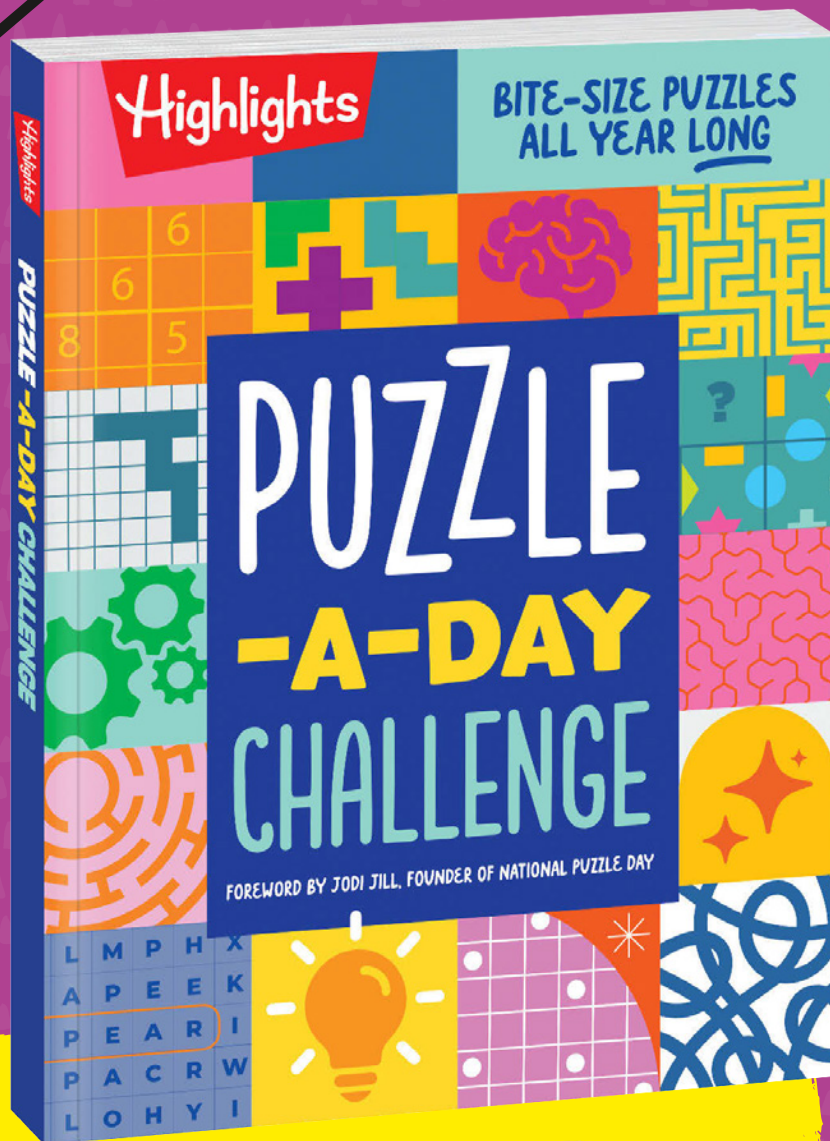
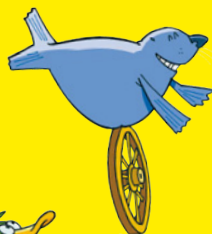
Happy New Year! We're excited to puzzle all throughout 2026.

## CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!

We'll need to stay sharp if we want to have what it takes to puzzle all year long. We can't wait to flex our brains with a new puzzle every day.

## SOLVE THIS PUZZLE FROM THE BOOK

Two of these animals must switch places so that everyone is in the right spot. Can you figure out which two?



Answer on page 38

**PARENTS, FIND THIS WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD! AVAILABLE JANUARY 27.**



It's up to you!

