

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Sarah's Secret



Story by Robert McConnell Illustrations by June Lawrason Napoleon 



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Teacher Resource Package prepared by
Ruth Sidorchuk
of the Scarborough Board of Education
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How To Use This Package

This activity package contains suggestions for bulletin board displays, biographies and pictures of the author and illustrator, as well as reproducible blackline masters for student activities such as paper-bag puppets. Also included are activity cards which may be mounted on bristol board and laminated.

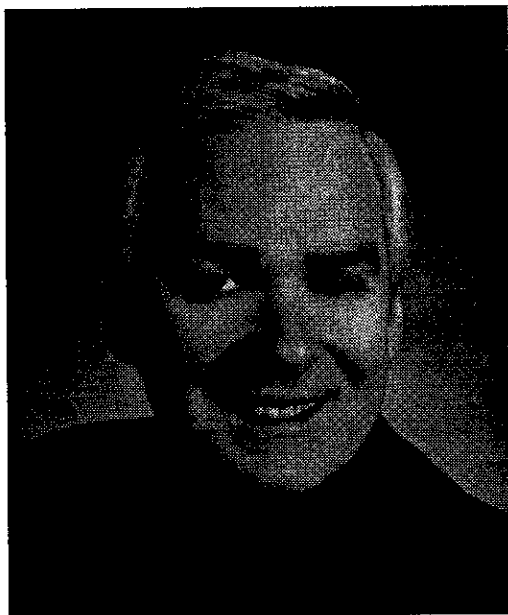
The whole unit may be stored in the envelope provided, which could also be laminated, or the cover of the envelope may be glued to a storage file folder.

These activities can be used for whole group work, small activity centres, or for independent work which would require a specific number of activities to be completed in a given time. Each child should be provided with a folder in which to store the completed material.

Before beginning the activities, be sure the children are familiar with the story and have heard the cassette of the author reading it. Use the pictures of the author and illustrator in preparing bulletin boards or author visits.

Enjoy!





Robert McConnell

Robert McConnell, the author of the *Norbert Nipkin* stories, is Co-ordinator of Modern Languages for the Toronto District School Board. He is also the author of more than 200 books in French as a second language, ranging from primary through university levels. He has a wide range of teaching experience, having taught both elementary and secondary school French and secondary school German. In addition, he has lectured in both French and German methodology at the University of Toronto.

Mr. McConnell's versatility is evidenced as well through his work as the author/editor of a number of trade and limited edition books on Canadian art, including major publications on A.J. Casson and wildlife artist Glen Loates.

His children's publications, under the **Napoleon Publishing** imprint, are:

Norbert Nipkin, illustrated by Steve Pilcher

Norbert Nipkin and the Magic Riddle Stone, illustrated by Steve Pilcher

translated into French as **Norbert Nipkin et la Pierre aux énigmes**

Nip and Tuck, illustrated by James Watling

translated into French as **Emonde et Scie**

The Strawberry Jam, illustrated by Christine Lott

translated into French as **Fraises en déconfiture**

Boid and the Bullies, illustrated by RC Williams

Baby Boid, illustrated by RC Williams

Sarah's Secret, illustrated by June Lawrason

Gobley for Mayor, illustrated by Linda Potts

Davenport Dumpling, illustrated by Christine Lott



June Lawrason

Illustrator June Lawrason is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design who began her career as a caricaturist and a fashion illustrator. Her work has evolved into a delicate, realistic style and she is versatile in a variety of media. She works primarily in the children's book publishing industry, where she has illustrated four children's books and many book covers for junior and young adult novels. She has also worked with many educational publishers.

June Lawrason teaches courses in illustration and particularly illustration for children's books at both the Ontario College of Art and Ryerson Polytechnical University in Toronto. She lives busily and happily with her husband and two children in Toronto.

June Lawrason has illustrated the following books:

- The Toymaker** (Scholastic)
- Amanda and her Bear** (Ginn)
- Zoo Food** (Ginn)
- Sarah's Secret** (Napoleon)

Preparation for Reading

Robert McConnell's books present important messages about the day-to-day problems and situations which life presents to children. Each book, as well as being a good story, contributes to the child's development of strong values and fosters moral growth.

In *Sarah's Secret*, Sarah confronts her feelings about being a younger sister. She is quite determined to make the very best snowman possible, and to do it without the help of her older brother. When she sees her snowman come to life in a Christmas Eve frolic, her family will not believe her story. Even though Sarah herself has proof positive that the event did take place, she decides in the end to keep this as her very own special secret.

Prior to reading the story, discuss sibling relationships. How does it feel to be the older or younger child in the family? Discuss how a child learns to fulfil his or her own desires in a family of brothers and sisters.

Secrets

Discuss the word "secret". What is a secret? Why do people share a secret with someone? To whom do you tell your secrets? What sorts of things become secrets? Write down a secret wish you might have.



Understanding the Story

Sarah wanted to build her snowman all on her own, without her brother's help, to prove she was growing up.

Tell about a time when someone in your family told you that you were too young or too small to do something that you wanted to do.

Tell about a time when you did something special all on your own.

How do children show their family that they are really grown up?



Words in the Story

Robert McConnell writes in a very descriptive way, making pictures come alive by the words he uses.

In *Sarah's Secret*, snow is described as *sifting*, *drifting*, *glittering*. See how many more words you can find to describe snow. You will find more words in the book itself.

When Sarah peeked out her window just before dawn, she saw an *incredible scene*. Look up the word "incredible" in the dictionary. What does it mean?

Tell about something *incredible* that has happened in your life.



Sarah's Home

Pretend you are peeking out the window in Sarah's home. Draw all the things you would see around her house – plants, trees, snowmen, Christmas lights, footpaths and much more. Look through the pictures in the book for more ideas.



On another page, draw the inside of Sarah's house. Be sure to show the Christmas decorations. Perhaps you could show her family around the tree.

Be an Illustrator Like June Lawrason!

An illustrator like June Lawrason draws the pictures for the story. Pretend you were asked to be the illustrator for *Sarah's Secret*. How would you make the snowman look?



Be an Author Like Robert McConnell!

An author writes the words for a story. Pretend you are an author and write another adventure for Sarah and her snowman.



A Secret Word Search

Try to find all the words listed at the bottom of the page. In the Word Search Puzzle, cross off each word as you find it.

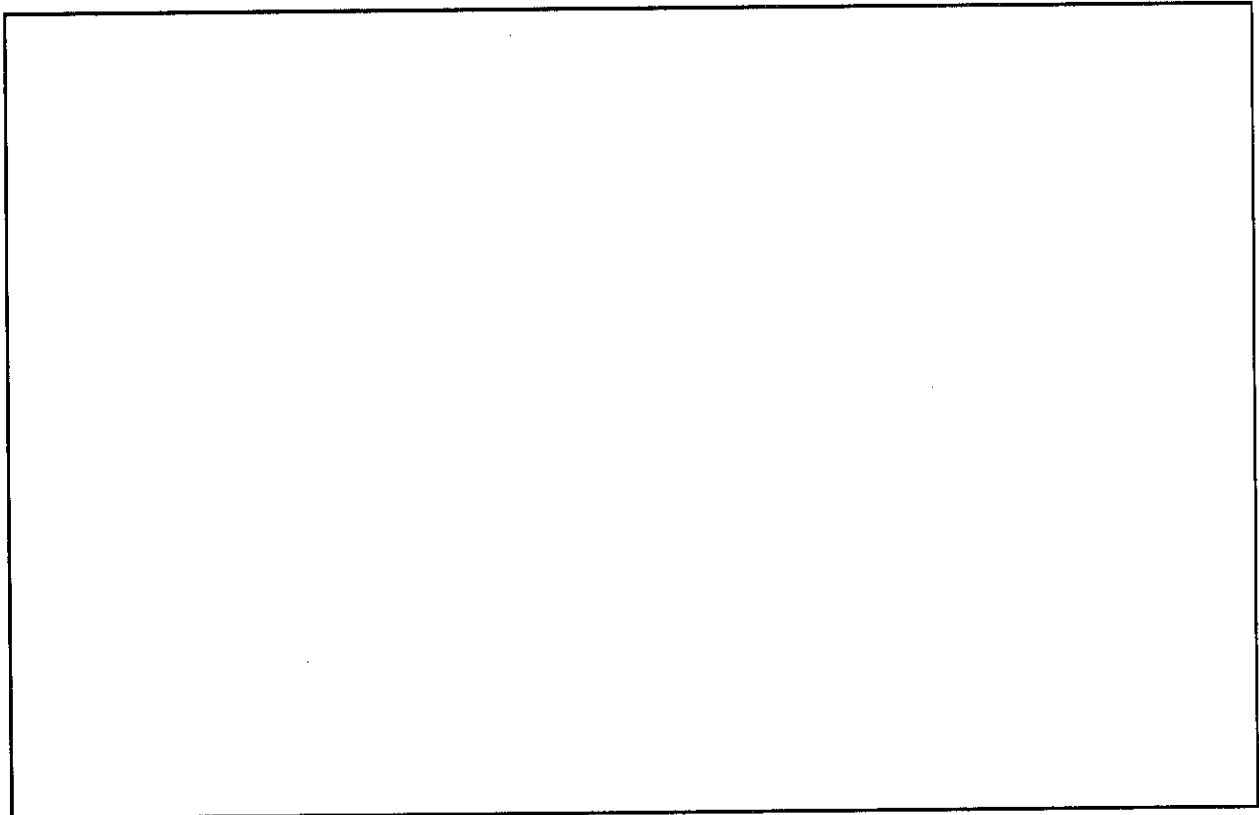
D R E A M B S T S Q W M A W S
E L E G A N T P U J G O S B E
S N O W M A N B R M R X C N P
E C F H A L Q M P S A R A H A
C T C W G F B A R M N B R O R
R R A C I R R R I P D T F A E
E E N E C O O B S H M U C W N
T E E P A S T L E C A R R O T
M Q U I L T H E S O T K A J G
I X B P H Y E A E I R E U T R
C J F E Y B R J M Q E Y E S A
H C H R I S T M A S A K W I N
A C T I P P E D X M R Z I E D
E C H A R C O A L K S A N U P
L B E C R E A T I O N G K O A

SNOWMAN, MAGICAL, SECRET,
QUILT, SARAH, GRANDMA, SCARF,
CARROT, TURKEY, PIPE, EYES,
CHRISTMAS, BROTHER, MAX, WINK,
CHARCOAL, MICHAEL, PARENT,
MARBLE, SURPRISES, DREAM, CANE,
GRANDPA, TREE, CREATION,
TIPPED, EARS, ELEGANT, FROSTY



Be an Artist Like June Lawrason!

Here is my favourite part of the story.



I like this part because



Pretend You Are a Publisher!

A publisher, like Napoleon Publishing, is the company that takes the story and the illustrations and creates a book. Pretend you are the publisher of *Sarah's Secret* and design a poster to advertise the book.





*MY NEW ADVENTURE WITH SARAH AND
THE SNOWMAN*

BY _____

Special Stories at Christmas Time

Sarah had a wonderful adventure on Christmas Eve, and she decided to keep it her very own secret. At this special time of year, many exciting things happen.

On the following pages, there are a few beginnings to stories of things that could happen at Christmas time. Choose one that interests you or has happened to you and write a story.

When you are finished, draw a picture for your story and make a cover page to produce your very own Christmas book. Maybe a publisher will print it for you!



A Special Gift

Sarah received a special gift from her snowman – a wink to prove he was real.

Suppose *you* were someone's special gift. What would you be and to whom would you give yourself?



Christmas Carolling with Friends

Write about a time when you went Christmas carolling. Perhaps you saw something wonderful while you were out carolling.



The Night Before Christmas

Sarah saw her snowman come to life on Christmas Eve. It was a very special gift to her. Suppose you heard some strange noises on Christmas Eve and you crept downstairs to have a look. Tell what you saw.



Special Happenings at Christmas

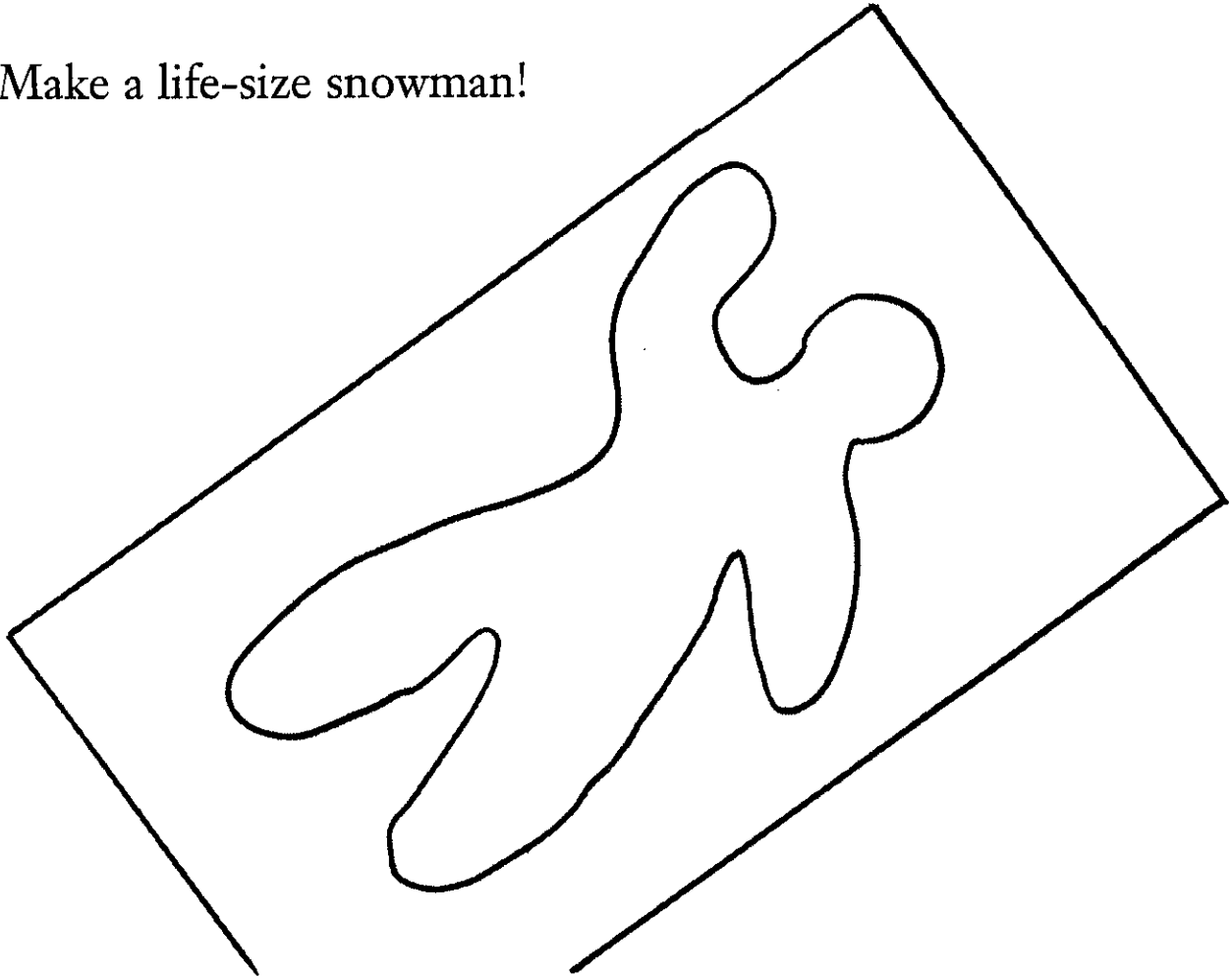
Sarah's home was decorated for Christmas and her family was going to spend Christmas with her grandparents.

People usually decorate their homes at Christmas time. Many families have special traditions. Write about what your family does to get ready for Christmas.



Create a Wall Mural of the Snowman's Party on Christmas Eve!

Make a life-size snowman!

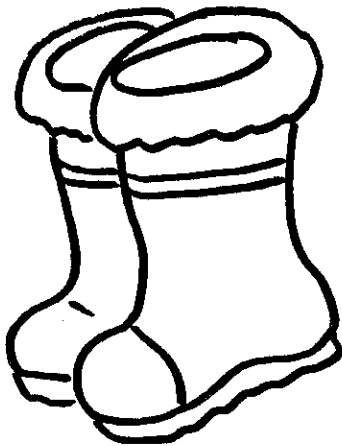
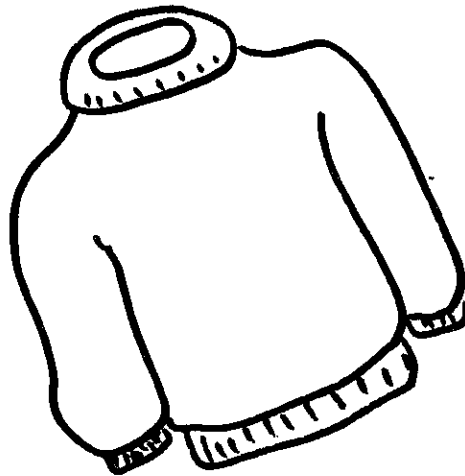
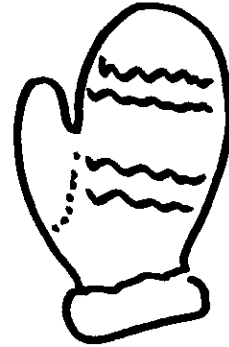
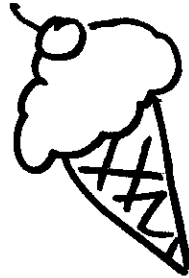
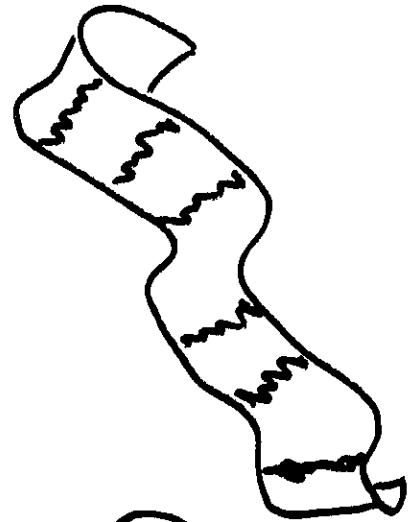


Lie down on a large sheet of paper. Place your hands and feet as if you were dancing. Have a friend trace all around you. Now paint your shape to look like one of the snowmen in the book. To make their party, display them together on a wall.



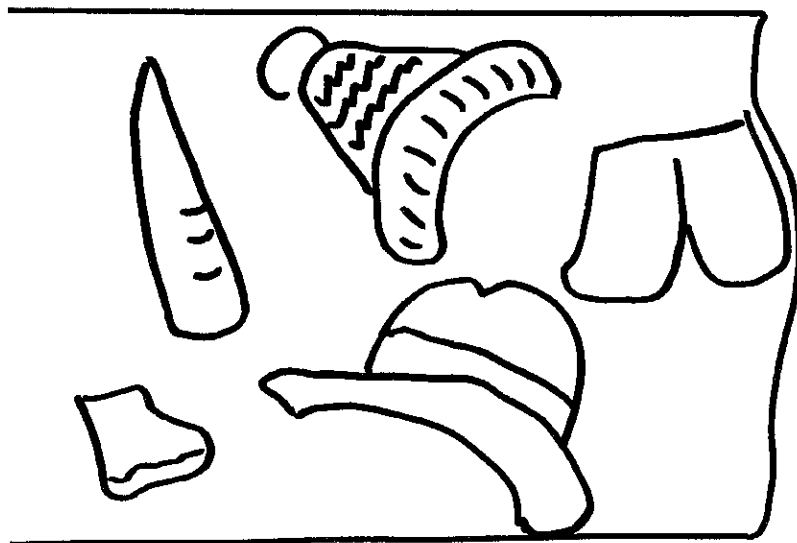
Brrr . . . It's Cold Outside!

Colour the things you might put on when it's cold outside.



Match the Shapes!

Cut and paste the shapes from the small box onto the snowman picture.



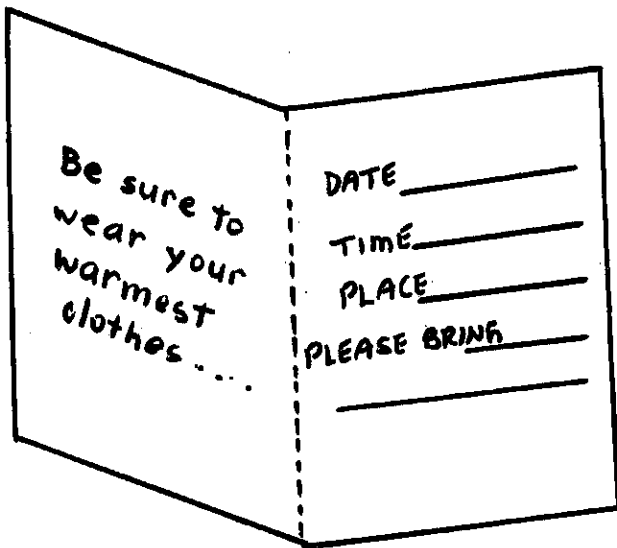
Plan a Snowman Party!

Invite your friends to a party to build a snowman. Serve food and play games indoors.

Create your own invitations!

COVER

Use a snowman or a snowflake (or both) for the cover of your invitation.



INSIDE

Tell your friends the date, time and place where the party will be held.

Tell them also what they should bring in order to make a special snowman.

Be sure to remind them to wear warm clothes as the first part of the party will be outdoors.

SEE SAMPLE INVITATION ON THE NEXT PAGE.



A Snowman Party!

How could you dress yourself and your guests as snowmen for the party?
What things would you need?

What food would you serve at your party? Are there some frozen foods which you could serve and pretend they are snowballs? Think of other creative things that snowmen would eat.

What music would you play at your party?
Is there a snowman song you could use to play musical chairs?

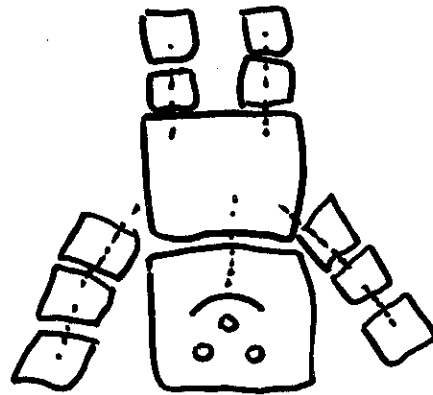
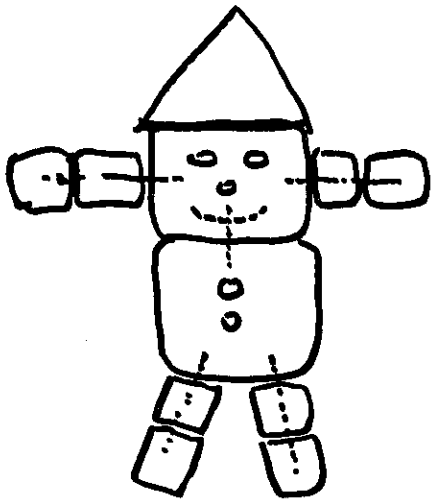


A Snowman Party!

Make a marshmallow snowman as a treat.

You will need: large and small white marshmallows, tooth-picks, white icing to use as glue, pieces of cherry, chocolate chipits, sprinkles etc., coloured paper for hats, feet and hands.

Ideas:



For a special treat, you could make a snowman-shaped cake covered in coconut to look like snow!



A Snowman Party!

Play "Place the Hat on the Snowman"!

Use the shape below to make a large snowman on a large blue background.



Make different-coloured hats for each of your guests.

Blindfold the guests, one by one. Make a masking tape roll for the back of each hat. Have the guests try to place the hat on the snowman as accurately as possible.

Hint: you could make eyes and noses too!

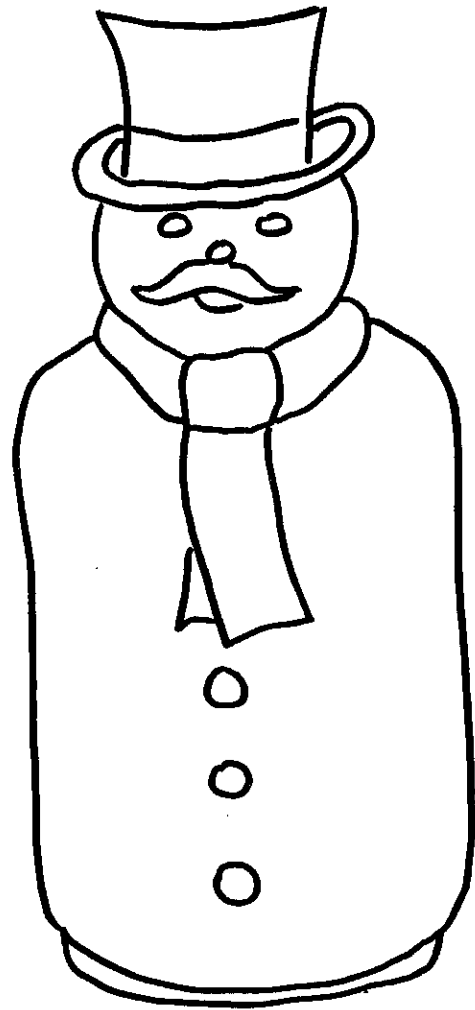


Make a Snowman Candy Jar!

This will make a wonderful Christmas gift for a candy-loving friend.

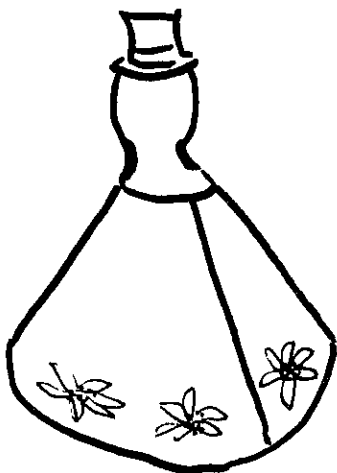
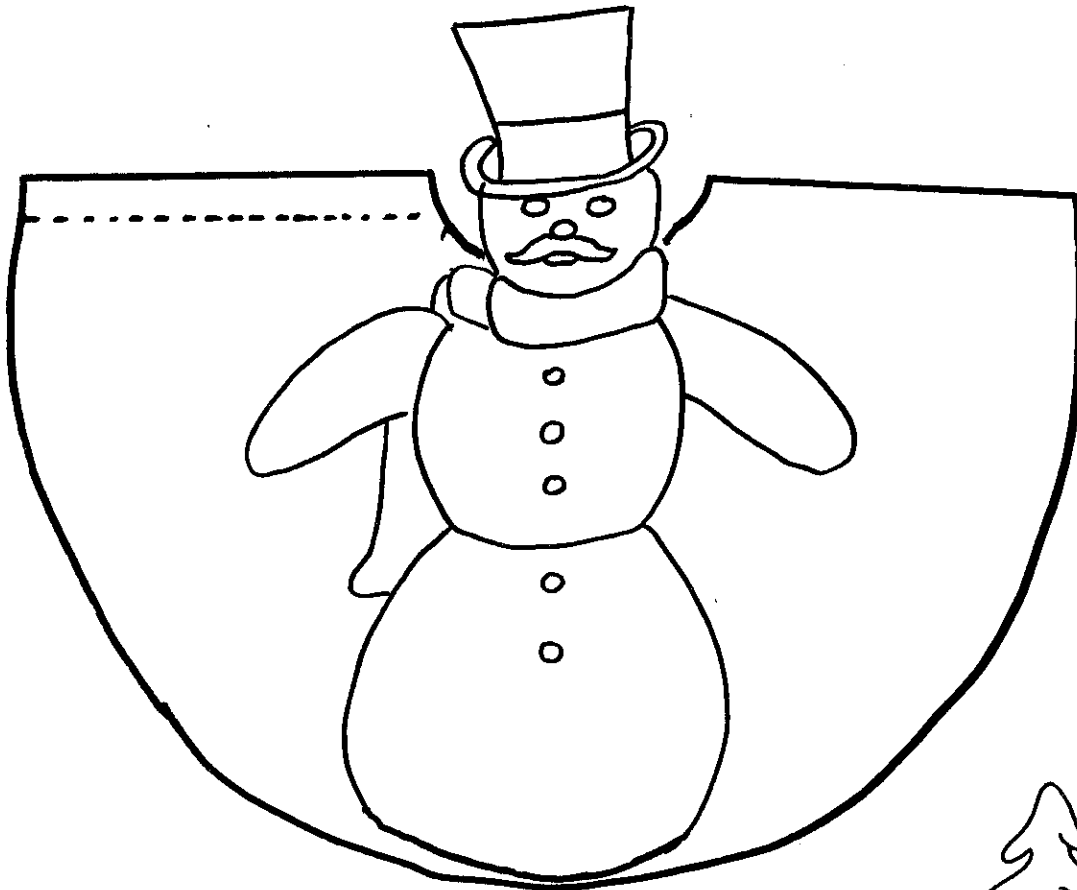
You will need: an empty jar with a lid, cotton batting, felt, fabric, ribbon, glue, and a bag of candy.

To make the candy jar, spread glue over the sides of the jar and put cotton batting all over it. Roll cotton into a ball, or cover a styrofoam ball with cotton and glue it onto the lid. Fill the jar with candy and put the lid back on. Use the felt and fabric to decorate the snowman. Tie a scarf around his neck to cover the join between his head and body. Use the felt and fabric to decorate the snowman.



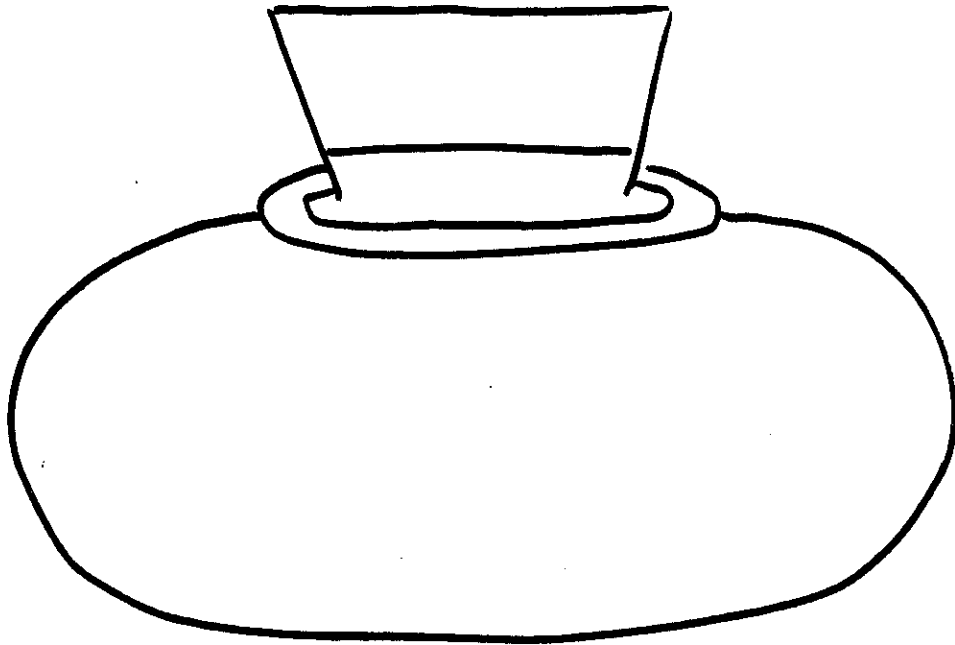
Snowmen Place Cards

Make snowmen place cards for your Christmas table. Add other Christmas decorations to make them special.



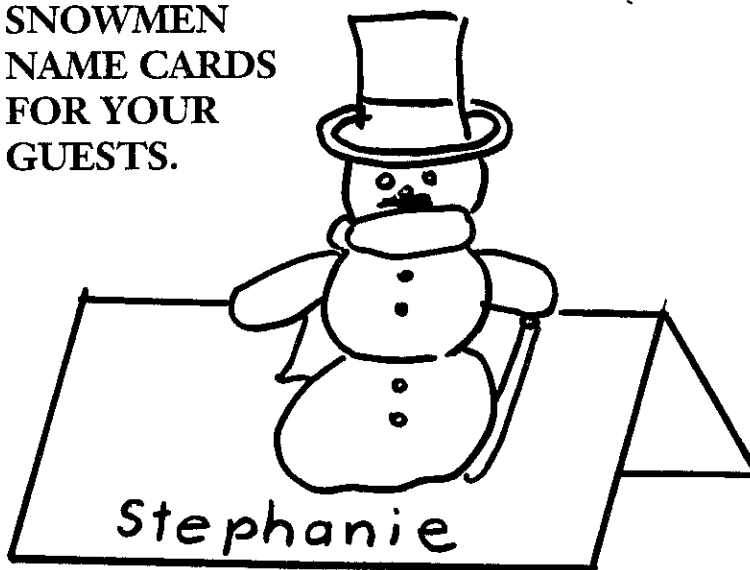
A Snowman Party!

Make Snowman Faces for Placemats!



Supply crayons for your guests, so they can decorate their placemats. Perhaps you could have a small prize for the most unusual placemat.

**MAKE
SNOWMEN
NAME CARDS
FOR YOUR
GUESTS.**



Christmas Wrapping Paper

Print your own Christmas wrapping paper with a snowman theme.

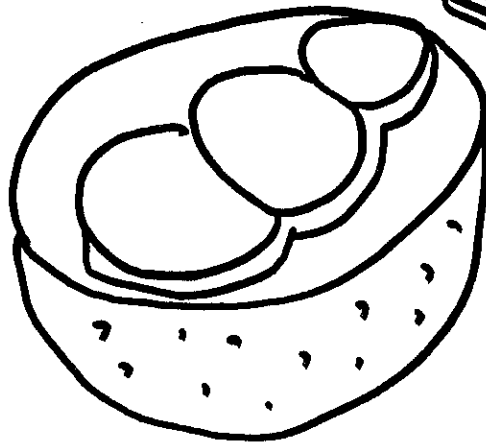
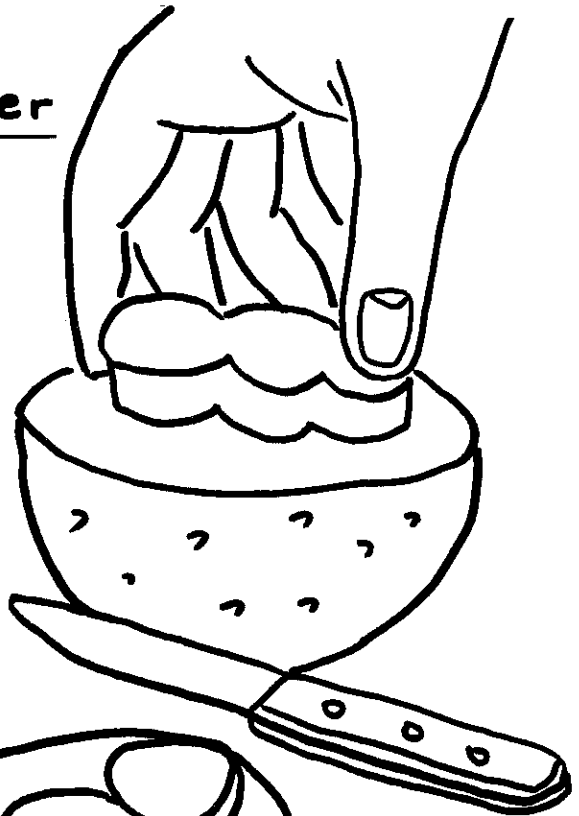
You will need: a potato, a cookie cutter shaped like a snowman, a saucer, a sharp knife, sheets of white paper, and poster paints.

To Make Your Printing Stamp

Cut the potato in half. Press the cookie cutter firmly into one of the surfaces. Using a sharp knife, cut away the surrounding potato.

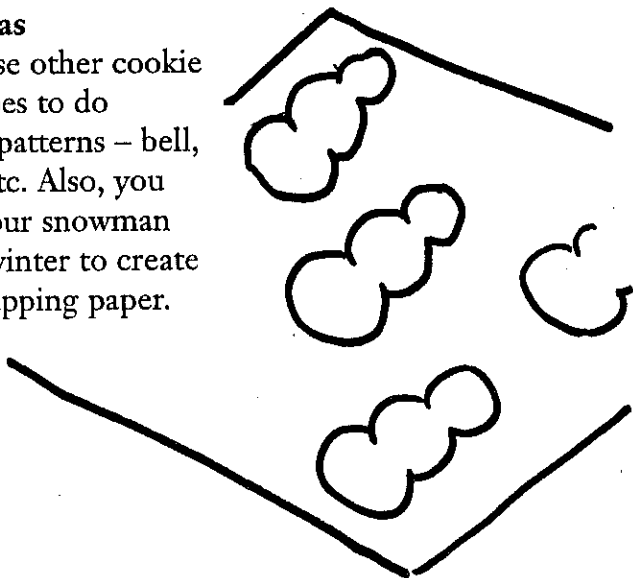
To Print with the Stamp

Put some paint into the saucer. Dip the stamp so that only the raised part touches the paint. Press firmly on the white paper. Repeat the design all over the paper.



Other Ideas

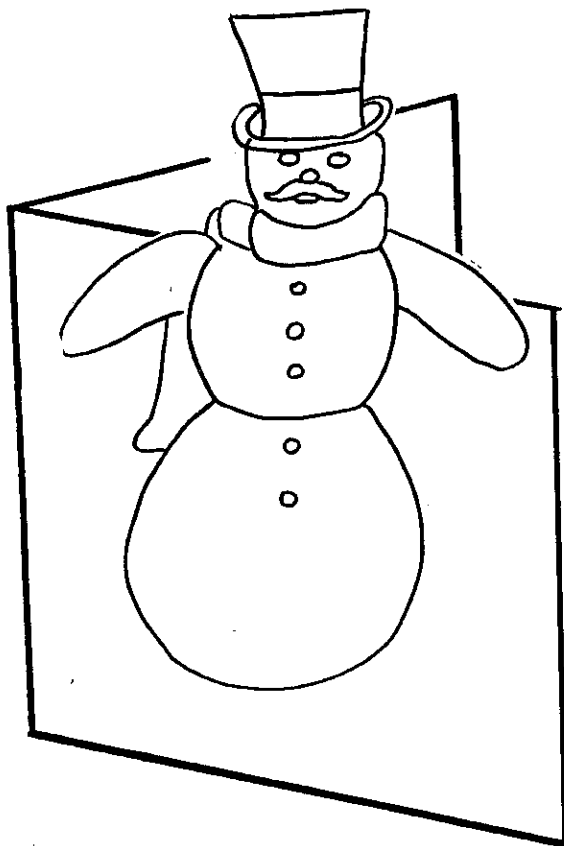
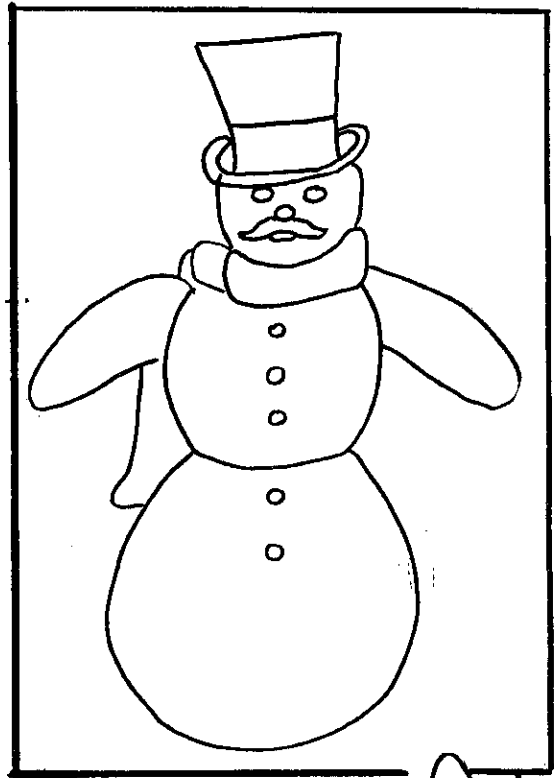
You may use other cookie cutter shapes to do additional patterns – bell, tree, star etc. Also, you may use your snowman stamp all winter to create special wrapping paper.



A Snowman Christmas Card

You will need: some coloured cardboard, paints, markers or crayons, glue.

To make your card, glue one of Sarah's Snowmen on the front of the folded cardboard. Cut through both thicknesses of the cardboard to outline the snowman's head. You may use markers, paints or crayons to decorate the card. Also, you may use pieces of felt or fabric to decorate the snowman.



Make a Snow Shaker Scene

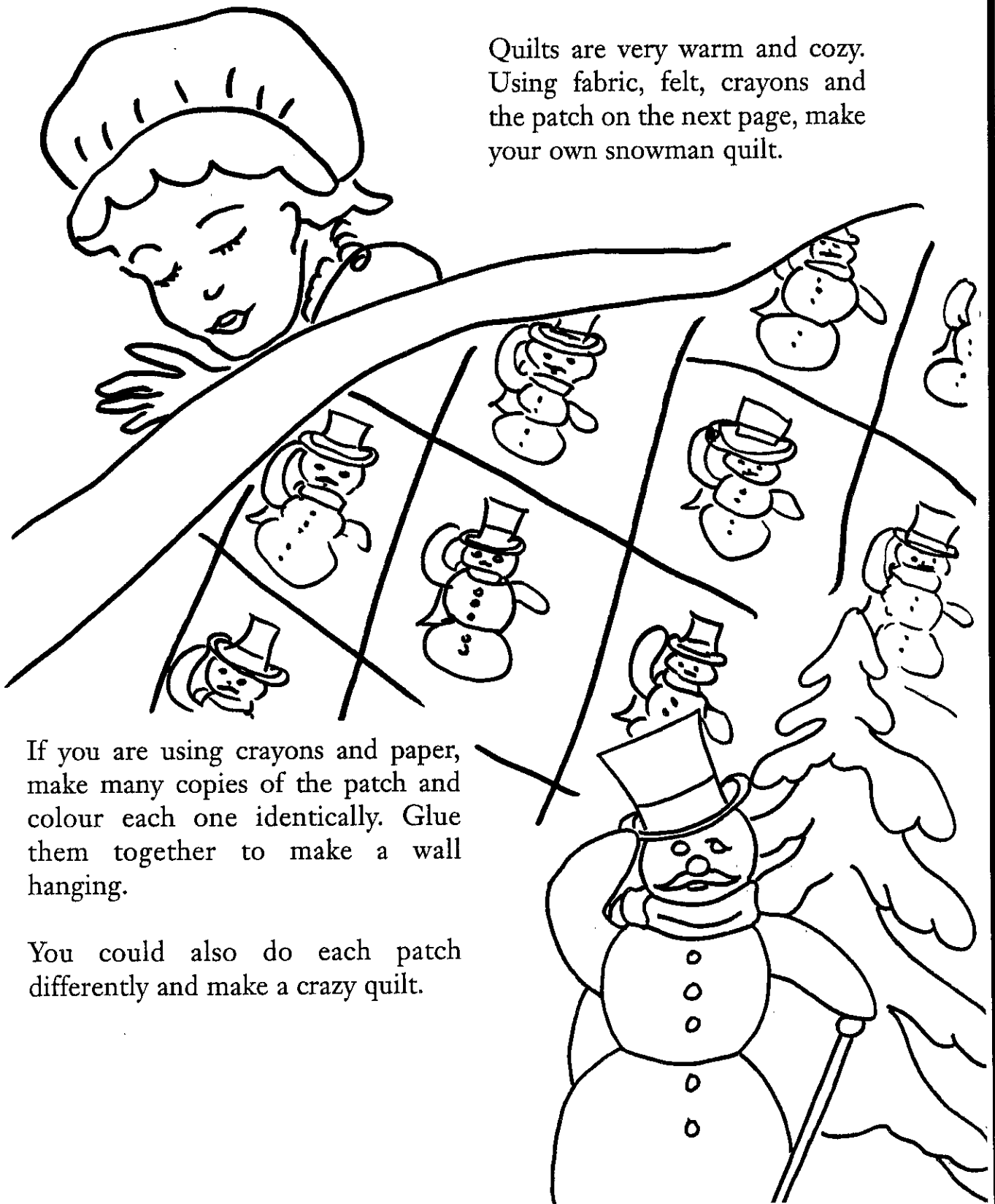
You will need: an empty jar with a tightly fitting twist-on lid, cut-outs of Sarah's snowman, trees, glue, a jar of glitter or artificial snow.

To make your shaker, open the jar and glue the shapes for your snow scene firmly to the bottom of the jar. Let the glue dry thoroughly. Pour in the glitter or artificial snow. Shake the jar. Watch the snow fall on your winter.



Create a Snowman Quilt!

Quilts are very warm and cozy. Using fabric, felt, crayons and the patch on the next page, make your own snowman quilt.



If you are using crayons and paper, make many copies of the patch and colour each one identically. Glue them together to make a wall hanging.

You could also do each patch differently and make a crazy quilt.



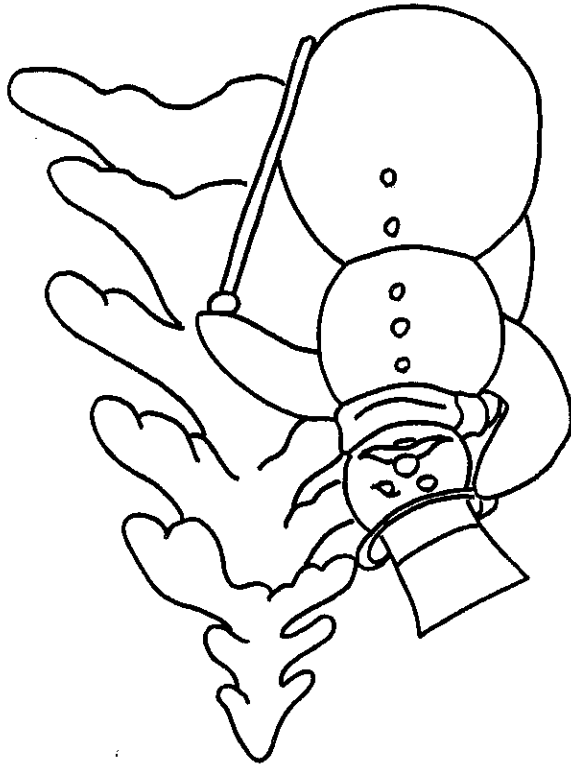
Design a New Wardrobe for Sarah!



Design a wardrobe for Sarah. Make the clothes like paper doll clothes so that you can dress her.

Remember it's winter and it's Christmastime. She will need outdoor clothes, such as a snowsuit, hat, mittens and boots. Since it is Christmas, she will also need indoor play clothes and party dresses.

Make a list of the clothes you are going to make. Have fun!



YOU ARE
INVITED TO A
SNOWMAN
BUILDING
PARTY!

Be sure to wear all your warm outdoor clothes and boots so you will be warm while we are outside making our snowmen.

DATE _____

TIME _____

PLACE _____

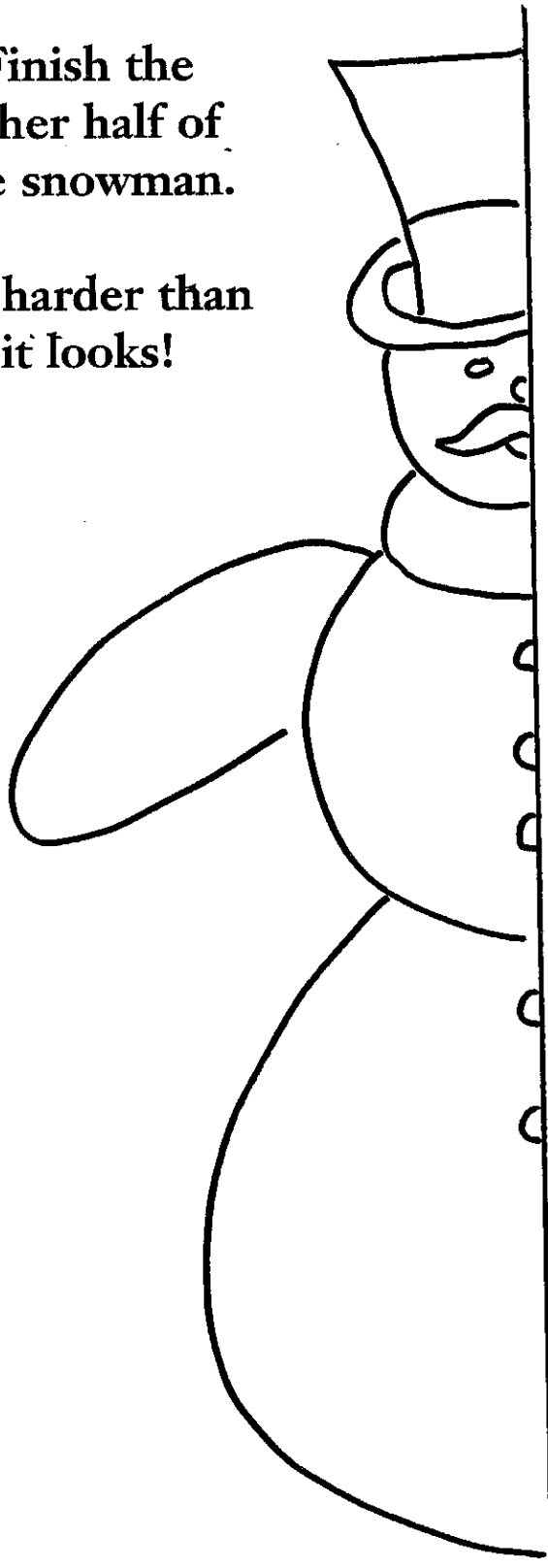
Please bring scarves, hats, or any other items to decorate your snowman.



Halfway Drawing Fun!

Finish the
other half of
the snowman.

It's harder than
it looks!



Snowman Screen

Create a whimsical snowman screen by fan folding into four a piece of 12" by 24" bristol board. Decorate the front and back with snowmen.

Use the screen as a table centrepiece or as a shelf decoration.



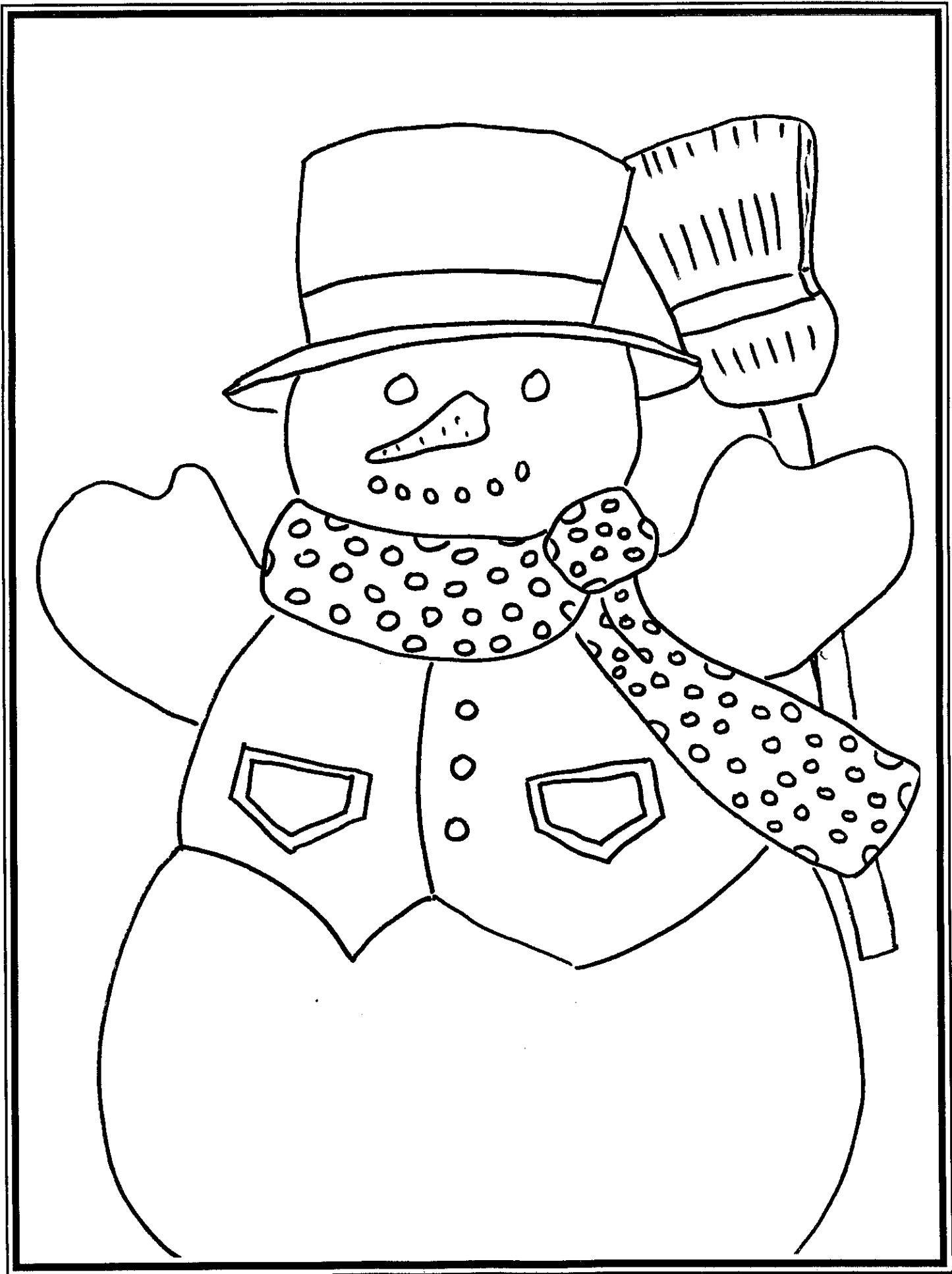
The following pages present a number of snowman design suggestions. You could also use the snowmen faces from the story.

These designs could also be used as covers for snowman adventure books.

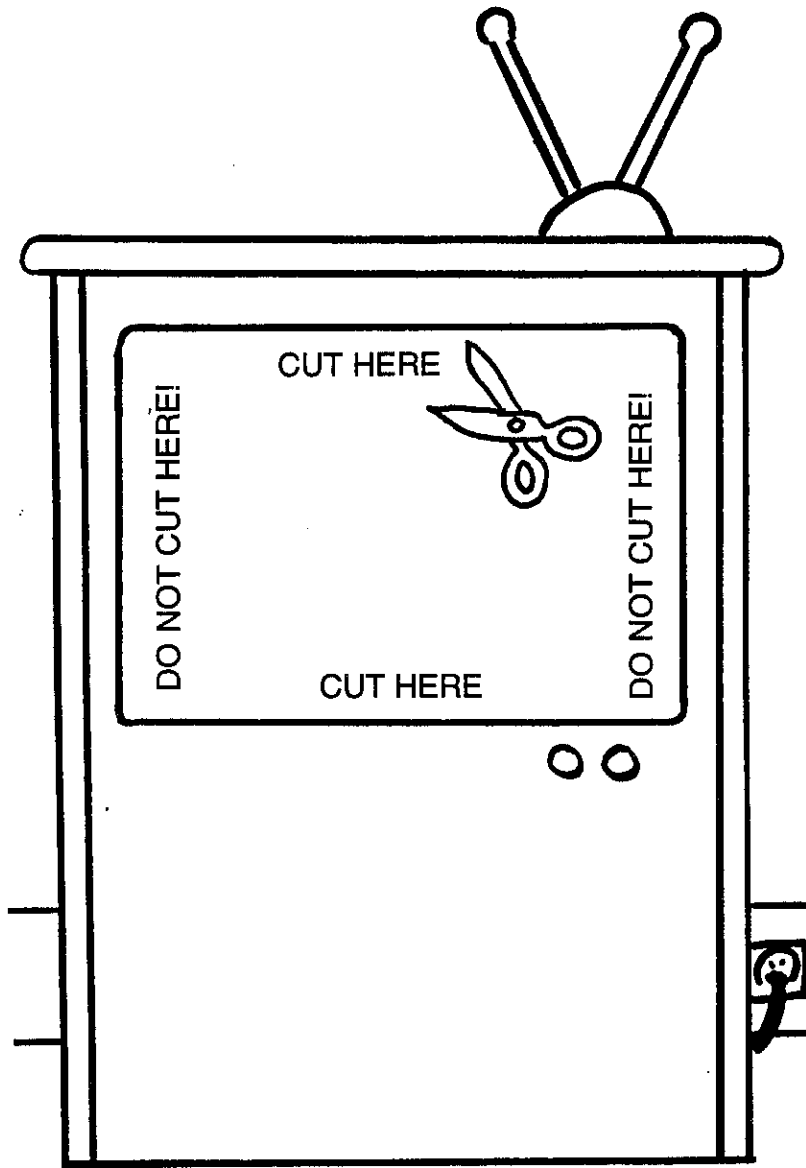








Make Your Own Television Story About Sarah and her Secret!



Cut along the top and bottom of the TV screen. Insert your TV strip through these slits and slide your story to show your own version of *Sarah's Secret*.



